



The Old Southendian Organ Society (OSOS)



OSOS Annual General Meeting

Chairman's Report April 2025

After the packed programme of events for our 1923 Centenary the succeeding year was one of consolidation, with completion of remedial work to the organ given first priority. We are most fortunate in having the professional services of Andrew Stevens and Nigel Wood to maintain our instrument in top playing form, regulated and tuned to the highest standards – as was well demonstrated in the concert given on 16th November, presented jointly with past and present school pupils (all of whom distinguished themselves with exceptionally fine performances) while our committee members Joe Zammit and Brian Fletcher put the organ through its paces...and it sounded really magnificent!

As you will read elsewhere, our events are recommencing even before this year's academic year is over, beginning on Saturday 28th June with a 'Play the Organ' open day which will make the instrument available to musicians of all ages and abilities who would like to give organ playing a try. Then, on Saturday 11th October comes another new departure as we feature the 60-piece Southend Symphony Orchestra in a programme which will include major works for orchestra and organ. Yet more initiatives are being planned for the ensuing year to further extend the scope of the already varied OSOS menu and reach out to even wider audiences. Yes, our Society is flourishing, financially sound and - thanks to my hard-working colleagues - enjoys top-class management! I look forward to seeing you all at our forthcoming events.

Gerald Usher



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Publicity and Communications Report April 2025

2024 has been, as expected, a quieter year than the extraordinary centenary celebrations of 2023 – though much has been achieved through our work with organ students, our showcase recital, and organ maintenance. We also have exciting plans for 2025 to share.

It has been a pleasure to work with the Music Department at the school, especially Peter Worth, Rachel Worth, and Max Reinsch, to increase the Society's connection with the school's organ students. We have been able to hold multiple workshops with students, led by none other than our Chairman Gerald Usher, who has enthused them about the organ's history, technical workings, and the plethora of possibilities to explore regarding its sounds, volumes, styles, and uses! We are in the process of expanding this provision, including options for regular formal tuition subsidised by the Society.

Our November showcase is yet another example of the excellent collaboration with the school, highlighting the exceptional talents of current students, nurtured by the department, alongside Old Southendian performers. Almost all styles of score and song could be heard – from jazz standards, musicals and pop, to classical and contemporary, and featuring organ, piano, saxophone, guitar and more.

The showcase came only days after the school's remembrance service which continues to serve as a poignant reminder of the origins of the instrument as a memorial to those members of the school community who gave their lives in the Great War, and the stories of them and others lost in conflicts since. It was fantastic to hear the organ played well by two of the sixth form students for the service, alongside music from the school's band and choir.

In 2025, we are delighted to support the "Play the Organ" year, set up by the Royal College of Organists, with an open invitation to learn about the organ and "give it a go" on Saturday 28th June. Additionally, we look forward to joining with the much-renowned Southend Symphony Orchestra on Saturday 11th October for an exciting programme at the school

which will, of course, make good use of the organ! More information on both events will be circulated shortly. For now: save the date!

We are grateful to all who continue to support the Society financially, including through attendance at our events and through donations. Your contributions, often combined with a helpful “top up” from HM Revenue and Customs through the Gift Aid scheme, ensure we are able to look after the organ well, and encourage the organists at the school. Finally, we must thank the school – not only the Music Department, but a longer list of members of staff who show an interest, and enable and support the Society’s work in many ways.

I look forward to reporting on another successful year and thank you all for your interest and support in the meantime.

Joseph Zammit