

It is my privilege to present this report as Chairman of the South Wessex Organ Society. The organ has often been described as *the king of instruments*—and our activities this past year have shown just how richly that sovereignty is expressed in education, performance, and worship. The Winter Organ School, held from Monday 24th to Wednesday 26th February in and around Lyme Regis, gave us an excellent start to the year's activities. The theme, *J.S. Bach: Precursors and Influences*, allowed us to journey into the rich soil from which Bach's genius sprang. Under the expert leadership of Dr Richard Godfrey and Peter Lea-Cox—whom we thank most warmly for their vision and organisation—we explored music that shaped Bach's imagination. They were joined by Andrew Millington, Peter Parshall, and Philip Scriven, each of whom brought insight and inspiration to the course. This course has become a regular feature of our yearly programme and is highly valued by all who attend it.

Equally important to our life together is the recital series at St Michael's, Lyme Regis. These events continue to enrich the cultural life of the region and provide an opportunity for the work of SWOS to become more widely known. I extend sincere thanks to those who continue to ensure its success, especially Jane Godfrey, whose refreshments are as dependable as they are welcome, and Ian Luckraft, who so ably oversees the technical requirements. Thank you to those on the committee who plan and organise the recitals, and to Peter Parshall who looks after the advertising and our website. Thank you to Alex Davies and all at St Michael's for making us welcome here. Today we were privileged to hear François Cloete (from Westminster Abbey) in recital, and in August we welcomed Oriel Chapman, Gabe organ scholar at St Andrew's, Colyton. Her recital was both accomplished and inspiring; we congratulate her on her recent appointment as organ scholar at Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria, Canada—a significant achievement for which we wish her every success. In October, we have Max Carsley coming to us from Salisbury Cathedral and very much look forward to hearing him on the magnificent Skrabl organ here.

Our other musical ventures have also been memorable. The performance of Handel's *St John Passion* at St Andrew's, Colyton, was an excellent occasion. Likewise, our Sarum Vespers at Whitchurch Canonorum filled the church to capacity, a testament to the power of sacred music to draw people together. I am most grateful to Bijan Omrani, Peter Lea-Cox, and Peter Parshall for their leadership in assembling the choir, selecting repertoire, and preparing the organ music that ensured the success of both occasions.

We were especially encouraged by the *Pipes and Pizza* event in July, which is part of our contribution to the Royal College of Organists' play the organ year. A good number of young people came to explore the organ, many encountering its grandeur for the first time. The combination of serious music-making and informal conviviality proved most effective. We owe thanks to Andrew Millington and our partners at PipeUp, and to Michael Farley, whose expertise as an organ builder inspired both awe and curiosity in equal measure. This work is vital: without nurturing the next generation, there will be no future for the organ or societies such as this.

We also look forward to our forthcoming event designed for those new—or perhaps reluctant—organists who, by duty or necessity, find themselves at the console for Sunday services. To them we say: you are not alone. Support, encouragement, and practical advice await at Beaminster on Saturday 25th October.

Finally, I must thank those whose quiet and steadfast contributions enable the Society to flourish, particularly the members of our committee, with particular appreciation to Jane Winlow for her careful minutes and to Brian Ridley for his diligent stewardship of our finances. Heartfelt thanks to Simon Ford and Ellen Anning at St Andrew's, who have helped us enormously with the preparation of programmes and posters. The labours of all those who support our work in various ways, often unseen, are indispensable and hugely appreciated.

As we look ahead, let us take heart. The organ is not a relic of the past but a living voice, capable of majesty and intimacy, grandeur and prayer. May our Society continue to foster study, performance, and a greater appreciation of the organ, so that future generations may know—as we do—the joy hearing and playing the king of instruments.



The Reverend Dr Steven Martin, Chairman.

14/09/25

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The Reverend Dr Steven Martin, Chairman.

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South Wessex Organ Society			
Receipts & Payments 2024			
	2024	2023	2024
INCOME			
Membership	£ 495.00	£ 565.00	
Gift Aid	105.00	£ 121.25	
Bank Interest	9.45		
Lyme Organ/Concerts	£ 772.91	£ 646.11	
Recital-Bristow		£ 250.20	
Donations	£ 57.70	£ 1,100.00	
Winter Course 2024/23	£ 3,992.90	£ 2,260.00	
Bach Event	£ 947.64		
Winter Course 2025/2023	£ 1,905.00	£ 5,032.80	£ -
Total receipts	£ 8,285.60	£ 9,975.36	
Expenditure			
Printing & Stationery	£ 2.88	£ -	
Winter Course 2024/3	£ 6,418.00	£ 5,637.00	
Bach Event	£ 2,535.16	£ 150.00	
Celebrity Recital-Bristow	£ -	£ 485.90	
Lyme Organ/Concerts	£ 797.10	£ 755.50	
Winter Course 2025			
Promotion& Misc & Insurance	£ 282.31	£ 640.26	£ -
Total payments	£ 10,035.45	£ 7,668.66	
			£ -
Net receipts	-£ 1,749.85	£ 2,306.70	
Cash & Bank Balances	£ 12,504.21	£ 10,197.51	
Cash & Bank Balances	£ 10,754.36	£ 12,504.21	
Cash	£ 20.00		
Bank Accounts- Current	£ 724.91	£ 12,504.21	
Commercial Instant Access Account	£ 10,009.45	£ -	
	£ 10,754.36	£ 12,504.21	