

News of 'The Friends of the Moot Hall Organ' November 2020

Dear Member

I thought I should update you on 'The Friends'!

Sadly, I was told on Monday that the Town Hall had been immediately closed for events with the situation being reviewed early in January; thus both our December and January Recitals cannot take place. This was not unexpected but is nevertheless very disappointing to us and to all those music-lovers who have been so supportive over the last few years. We will be back! We were able to hold five of our planned nine recitals since January; with July, August, November and December cancelled. Those in September and October went ahead with a maximum audience of fifty who were indeed most generous financially; we have also received several supportive donations from those unable to attend. Our grateful thanks to you all!

The two highlights of Colchester's civic year, Mayor-making in May and the Oyster Feast in October were cancelled and the organ's starring role in these events was not to be. The Town Hall's Heritage Open Day in September, when we showcase the organ to the public, was, of course, unable to take place.

You will, no doubt, be aware that, following advice from Harrison & Harrison, in consultation with Dr William McVicker, the Borough Council agreed to install a modern humidifying unit to support the existing equipment. It is of a type not usually used in organ lofts but had been found to be very satisfactory at, for example, Truro Cathedral. This was installed here at the end of May at a total cost of £4735.59 and as agreed 'The Friends' have paid for this. Time will tell how beneficial it will turn out to be.

Ian Ray, as honorary Borough Organist, is continuing to put the organ through its paces regularly, which we trust will keep it sufficiently exercised until we can resume activities.

Usually at this time of the year I am beginning to prepare for our AGM in January; however, you will recall that we made the decision to move our year-end to 31st March from 30th September at this year's AGM, so this means that we will have the next one in June 2021.

We are grateful for your continued support especially as we need a solid attributable income to enable us to obtain gift aid on the collections made at the recitals. So please ensure you continue your membership fee next year.

With my best wishes at this difficult time

Nigel

Nigel Chapman
Chairman The Friends of the Moot Hall Organ