



THE SOCIETY OF RECORDER PLAYERS

President: Jonathan Dove
Registered Charity No.282751/SC038422

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023

Friday, 31st March 2023 in Edinburgh
Officers' Reports, and other reports

Chair's Report

This has been a somewhat complex year, post Covid 19 pandemic. Please note: I did not write 'post Covid' - that virus is still present in our world, just as influenza and AIDS are, but it is no longer, I think, a fearful new phenomenon. Still to be taken account of, but vaccination in particular has done much to help us mitigate the problem. Other economic factors have had an effect on many.

The recovery of recorder playing is, I think, good, but a little patchy. Some events both inside and outside the SRP are very popular, while others have yet to reach their pre-pandemic levels. Possible reasons for this are difficult to determine. There may well be a fear of infection for some players and, in a society with a wide variation of available wealth to spend on leisure activities, some players of all ages may be having to make difficult choices. The financial considerations are not limited to the young. However, I do think that the situation is improving and recorder playing can be an inherently relatively low-cost activity. Beautifully crafted wooden recorders are a "nice to have" item, rather than an essential, and music that sounds good can be made with inexpensive plastic instruments.

This leads me to a second topic which has had some discussion within the trustees this last year - the value for money and benefits of SRP membership. I think it is probably useful to remember when discussing this that any and all the membership fees are a charitable donation. To summarise, the work of the charity is to promote the art of music and, in particular, of the recorder and its repertoire. The benefits to the charity are obvious, the benefits of membership include supporting the legal and insurance structure for the branches, supporting information exchange between recorder players at: branch meetings, workshops, an annual festival, the website, e-news-letter and support for 'The Recorder Magazine' among other things. 'The Recorder Magazine' possibly needs a little more consideration. The Magazine is something of a 'Marmite' topic - players tend to either love or loath it! There are some misconceptions around that it may help to clear up. The SRP itself does not publish the magazine, it is published by Ruth and Jeremy Burbidge of Recorder Music Mail. In any publishing exercise larger numbers of copies produce better economies of scale. The SRP's large order results in a) a very advantageous price, the price on the cover is £6, but the SRP gets the magazine for just over half that sum and this includes UK postage; b) helps to maintain the magazines viability, which is I think is very much in line with the charitable object of the SRP. My thanks go to the whole team that produces the magazine.

Thanks leads me nicely on to my third topic, which is trying to thank all those who make the running of the SRP possible. As with last year, I am acutely aware of the danger of leaving people out. The list is long and many work, as I do, as part of a team and I may only thank the team and not mention the individuals. As I have written in other places, I am very sad if those helping to run the SRP feel that the task is thankless and I ask that every member helps in showing their appreciation of those who work on behalf of recorder players.

First on my list to thank are both the 'old' and the new members of the Walter Bergmann Fund (WBF) committee who process and make recommendations on the many applications for support of younger players. The 'old' fund members are Francis Knights, Barbara Law, Evelyn Nallen and Moira Usher (Chair) who have served the SRP well for many years, in some cases more than ten and I thank them on your behalf. The new WBF committee is Jill Taylor (Chair), Debbie Nicholas (Secretary), Ann Tempest, Samuel Constable and Pat Hopkins. Moira Usher's past role was felt to be very large and the work is now split (Moira is still looking after instruments and music donated to the fund - volunteers to take on this part of the work would be appreciated). The committee is supported by two technical experts, Sarah Jeffery and Chris Orton, both of whom can help with advice on applications to purchase specialist recorders; having both means that if a pupil of one makes an application the other can advise without any conflict of interest. I am very grateful to them for accepting these roles.

Again this year, my fellow officers have worked hard for the SRP.

Our Secretary, Val, has been particularly vigorous in distilling details from past minutes and reports for the Trustees in addition to a near faultless completion of her other tasks.

Our fairly new Treasurer, Erica, brings a vast amount of financial experience to the post. She has made, what I understand to be the difficult transfer from one person keeping the accounts to another doing so, apparently without effort and keeps the Trustees updated on the current situation. The SRP is fortunate to have her doing this work.

Our Membership Secretary, Penny, is one of our longest serving Trustees and is invaluable in keeping these records up to date. Some of you may recall that Penny has taken on an extra task in the administration of the personal membership including the affiliated groups and corporate membership. I hope that, like me, you are very grateful to Penny for all her work for the SRP.

There are five other Trustees who have been working hard on behalf of the SRP in various roles. They are: Steph Sutherland, Jill Taylor, Debbie Nicholas, Samuel Constable and Rod Callow. A big thank you to all five.

Our Musical Advisers, both on and off the committee, have been a great support again. As have the webedit team, those involved with the e-newsletter and the SRP pages of 'The Recorder Magazine', the SRP/Moeck Competition, workshop co-ordinator and gift aid administrator.

We also need to thank the branch officials and visiting conductors.

I feel it may be as well at this point to make clear that I see myself as something of a continuity and stability Chair. While not ruling out ever making big changes, I believe that in general organizations develop best by small incremental changes. These are the principles I have been operating on since elected in 2019. If you want big changes you need to find a new Chair. When I originally took on the post I had not expected to be in office this long. Technically under the constitution my term runs to the spring of 2026 and as the constitution

only allows a renewal once I feel it would be wrong to stand for another five year term. Various health and age issues mean that you may need a new SRP chair before that date.

Despite any of the above I do believe that Recorder playing is in good shape and that the SRP has a bright future in front of it. It is my hope that you will all be able to enjoy your recorders for many years to come.

Jim Grant

March 2023

Secretary's Report

The Trustees have held five meetings since Conference 2022, with three by Zoom, and two in person, in Bristol. It has been much better to meet up in person, to facilitate discussions, and we intend to continue to do so for some of our meetings. The vacancy for a Trustee was filled by co-opting Rod Callow from Lincolnshire, and I am pleased to report that he is standing as a Trustee at the 2023 Conference. We are grateful that he is happy to give up his time to help us. The SRP Officers also held a meeting in Wiltshire in January. Most Trustees have been able to attend every meeting, and each offer expertise in their areas of interest. I am very grateful to all the Trustees who give up their time to attend meetings, and make themselves available at other times to prepare for our discussions.

We do welcome expressions of interest in helping with the organisation of the Society, as a Trustee, or to help us with specific areas, such as publicity and the website, or to offer to host an SRP Festival in future years.

The Trustees are very pleased to see the level of playing being restored in most branches. We are aware that several branches have felt obliged to move location, to comply with post-COVID guidance, allowing better spacing of players. In most cases this has involved extra cost of room hire, but may then allow attendance by more members and visitors, in time. The Society relies on branch volunteers to allow these meetings to run, and we recognise, and thank them for, the time and effort this involves.

The Pastoral Visits are picking up, with a few branches fully using their quota allocated to August 2024. Some branches have not yet taken advantage of the visits on offer; please do take the opportunity to discuss this with fellow branch officials this weekend, or ask your branch officials to contact me if they are unsure how this works. We have sadly lost Wendy Pettitt and Ross Winters from our list of Pastoral Visitors, so there are now 32 visitors listed on the website. We are very grateful to all the visiting conductors, who travel around the country to share their expertise with us. When considering invitations, please look carefully through the complete list of Conductors, not just those you are familiar with, since there is a wealth and variety of talent from which Branches can benefit. The Trustees are happy to receive feedback from branches after pastoral visits, and on the scheme in general. Other candidates are working through the process of approval to be added to the list in the near future.

Four long service certificates have been awarded to branch officials this year; three for 40 years of service, and one of 60 years! Many congratulations, and our thanks, to the recipients.

Our team of Musical Advisers are very important to us; they act as a useful source of advice and information throughout the year. Two advisers regularly attend our Trustee meetings, and can help us at those meetings. Documents can also be circulated to the full team of advisers for comments.

I should like to thank our named post holders for the time and effort they contribute to running the SRP successfully; we would be lost without their expertise.

The website continues to provide useful information for members and the public, and a number of changes have been made during the year, to improve the presentation of, and access to, some of this information. Branch pages vary tremendously in layout and content, as they are managed locally, for which the Trustees are very grateful, but we do encourage branch officials to consider if their page provides all the essential information that an enquirer might wish to see. Meeting dates and venues, and information about special events, with contact information, are essential. Membership subs and visitor fees should be clearly stated, as these vary for each branch. Some background information can also be helpful.

Special events such as Playing Days and Concerts can be added easily to the Events page on the website, by use of "Submit an Event", which helps attract visitors to these events.

The Trustees continue to be advised by the charity regulators, and also make good use of resources from Making Music. We are considering membership of NCVO as an extra source of guidance.

In October the Trustees had a full review of all expenses, and the membership rates, and this will now be an annual review, to ensure that these remain appropriate. Some SRP policy documents are in need of refreshing, and a programme of regular updating is being established.

Val Giltrow-Tyler March 2023

Treasurer's Report (this should be read in combination with the accounts for 2021/22)

Introduction

I am pleased to present the accounts to 31st August 2022. At last we are seeing a return to normal life after two years of restrictions and the accounts reflect the increased activity at all levels of the society.

I have prepared a Statement of Financial Activity and Balance Sheet in a format suggested by the Charity Commission with income and expenditure analysed as incoming resources from voluntary income, investment income and charitable activities and resources expended on charitable activities and governance costs. This is to align our reporting with that of other Charities and also to highlight the charitable nature of our activities which is the important aspect of our charitable status.

I also attach detailed accounts as prepared in previous years and which provide the information which is important to the members and trustees and provides comparisons.

I am very grateful to our auditor Keith Varney for his assistance with the final accounts and the Charity Commission CC17a forms.

I would like to thank the Trustees and other Committee Members and all the Branch Treasurers for their help in keeping the finances running smoothly – it makes my job so much easier!

Accounts 31st August 2022

Central Fund

This is the fund used for the day to day running of the Society. The income derives from members' national subscriptions. In 2021/22 income from subscriptions increased slightly while expenditure reflects the return to meetings and playing in person with financial support for Pastoral Visits to branches, one in-person trustee meeting and costs of Delegates to Conference. The National Festival made a small loss of £1,600.

The fund balance remains unchanged at £71k and should reduce over the next two years as the catch up in financial support for branches continues

- Subs are up £2k (4%)
- Expenditure (excluding Festival) is up £9k (PV travel, Conference, trustee meeting)
- The National Festival income £15k and expenditure £17k resulted in a loss

Arthur Ingram

This is the fund which was received as a bequest in 2001 and is the main means by which the Society supports its charitable activities. The principal source of income is HMRC gift aid recovery. In 2021/22 income reduced while expenditure reflects the return to meetings and playing in person with financial support for Pastoral Visits to branches and workshops. There is continuing support for NYRO and the biennial SRP/Moeck Competition which took place in November 2021.

The fund balance has reduced by £8k to £107k and should reduce over the next two years as the catch up in financial support for branches continues

- SRP/Moeck Competition costs (including Administrator) £6k
- Workshops (6) net cost £1k
- Pastoral Visits (38) contribution to fees £3k
- NYRO Grant £3k

Walter Bergmann Fund

This is a restricted fund which awards grants to young people under the age of 30 born or studying in the UK and Ireland to support their development as recorder players. The principal source of income is donations. In 2021/22 income increased and grants of £8,465 were awarded.

The WBF Committee also recommends the awarding of the Philip Cole bursary if appropriate, and awarded the 3rd prize in the SRP/Moeck Competition.

The fund balance (which includes Philip Cole) remains at £35k

Branch accounts

This is a consolidation of 49 individual branches and reflects the playing activities of members. In 2021/22 there was a substantial return to in-person playing and meeting compared to 2020/21 where there was virtually no in-person meeting

- Total income is up £31k, branch subs £20k, attendance and visitor fees £12k
- Total expenditure is up £33k, mainly room hire and conductor costs

Branch reserves are slightly reduced to £105k

All Funds

Total SRP funds reduced by £10k in 2021/22, mainly due to catch up spending against the increase of £25k in reserves over the last two years. We should remember that the last 2 accounting periods have not been normal years and as a Charity, while maintaining one years operating costs, we should be spending not saving.

Conclusion

After more than two years constrained by the pandemic, our activities have restarted and we look forward to the increased opportunities for meeting and playing and to providing financial support for recorder playing and development at all levels.

Erica Crabtree March 2023

Membership Secretary's Report

Membership Year

Autumn 2022 saw a gradual return to regular branch meetings (post COVID) but notably slower membership renewals. These have been continuing to come in however, together with subscriptions from new members joining at the reduced rate from January 2023. Although visitors to branch meetings should of course be welcomed, encouraging both membership renewals *and* new members is vitally important for continuing the charitable work of the SRP and ensuring players can carry on benefitting from pastoral visits, workshops and festivals.

Merging Membership Secretary and Personal Membership Secretary roles

The start of the 2022/2023 membership year saw the merging of the administration of Branch Membership and Personal Membership. Both are now managed by the Membership Secretary. Since 2021/2022 Personal Members have been able to join, renew and edit their own details online and this has reduced the administrative workload and hence the need for a separate role.

Online Branch Membership

From 2022/2023 branches have been able to offer online joining and renewals. Whether or not they chose to do so was entirely optional and eight branches took up the offer. The advantages were that they were able to:

- send reminder emails with members' current details and renewal instructions.
- allow members to renew online and to update their personal details themselves.
- provide a link for new members to apply online to their branch rather than use a paper form.

Some initial problems (ISPs blocking renewal emails) were resolved and it is hoped that more branches will feel confident to handle renewals in this way in future.

Membership System

There are currently 49 branches in addition to Personal Membership. Branches continue to use the membership database to directly record and manage their branch membership and any donations received. Authorisation to access the database is given to the appointed branch officer(s) by the Membership Secretary on request. The database makes it simple to mark renewals and edit members' contact details as well as keeping a track of the financial reporting. It would be appreciated if branches transferring payments for subs and donations to the central SRP account could ensure these match the totals on their database.

Membership Data over 5 years

	Total	*	*	*	*	*	**		
	Total	Full	Household	Student	Life/LH	Personal Members	Reduced	Affiliated	Corporate
2022/2023	1269	1136	100	22	11	113	36	29	2
2021/2022	1273	1138	108	19	8	127	48	31	2
2020/2021	1226	1093	106	20	7	131	27	24	2
2019/2020	1446	1289	125	24	8	144	56	31	2
2018/2019	1437	1277	127	24	9	127	58	25	2

* included in 'total'

** reduced for new members from 1 January 2023

Penny Clarke

March 2023

Workshop Co-ordinator's Report

Over the last 10 years, 24 SRP branches out of the present 49 have organised a workshop or two, and interestingly, some branches even more, such as Sheffield 11, Wessex 9, Edinburgh and Leicester 5, Durham and Cambridge 4.

Perhaps it's in the branch's DNA after the first workshop experience.

This means that 25 branches haven't taken up the heavily subsidised opportunity!!

What exactly are these branch members and friends missing out on?

- Broadening knowledge of varying styles of music relating to the recorder?
- Being inspired by an excellent, enthusiastic tutor?
- An opportunity to raise one's general playing and technique?
- Socialising with others who have the same hobby, and finding out about other playing opportunities?

Some, or all of the Topics on the SRP Workshop List, on the SRP Website might not appeal, or appear to be relevant

SO----E Berks were asked to help players convert from a C fingering to an F fingering, Playing Up an Octave, and Beginning the Bass.

AND---- a workshop named 'Crossing the Boundaries' was created and was held on 18th March 2023.

Check the List out!!

6 Branch Secretaries replied to an email I sent out to all Branch Secretaries, containing general questions about SRP Workshops. Their observations and suggestions were very welcome and will be addressed in the near future.

SRP Workshops can happen on any day of the week, agreed between the tutor, and the organiser, after consulting the SRP Workshop Co-Ordinator.

5 hrs of tutor contact time for £15.00.

National SRP pays for the Tutor's fees, including transport and accommodation (if necessary).

The Branch pays for the venue and the tutor's lunch out of the £15.00 fee.

One doesn't have to be an SRP member to attend.

The Workshop must be advertised as widely as possible.

SRP Workshops are 'Alive' and 'Changing' all the time.

Don't get left behind, and check out with those of your branch not here today about their Workshop Wishes.

Steph Sutherland March 2023

Walter Bergmann Fund Report

The WBF sub-committee of the SRP administers the fund and meets 3 times a year, usually in February, May and November.

At each meeting we discuss all applications. We agree to provide funds if there is enough financial detail to prove the need for a grant and we agree that they have a case worth supporting within our remit.

During 2022 we had 13 applications for funds in total. 10 were approved, 9 for recorders, 1 for course fees. 2 applications were refused and 1 application is pending awaiting further details.

Money from the Philip Cole Bursary that was awarded in 2021 for a school-based project was paid. This had to be postponed because of the pandemic.

Both music and recorders are either given to the Fund or left to us in wills to sell for the WBF. Donations from fund-raising or in memory of recorder players are also made. All wooden recorders given to us are serviced and a rough value assigned to each. These are offered to participants at places where Moira Usher conducts or teaches and they are the main source of income for the fund. Nothing is sold: donations are made to the fund instead. All the instruments and music are safely stored with Moira.

Debbie Nicholas March 2023

Competition Administrator's Report

2022 was the winner's recital year of the SRP/Moeck solo competition and it was fantastic to be able to hear Charlotte Schneider perform live in Blackheath. Her recital is available to watch on Marquee TV and I would encourage you all to watch as it really was fantastic.

Preparations for the 2023 recital are well underway with a stellar panel of Judges lined up – Erik Bosgraaf, Annabel Knight and Adrian Chandler (violinist/artistic director of La Serenissima). Adrian regularly works with Tabea Debus, the 2020 SRP/Moeck competition winner, so is well aware of the high standard the performers who enter are playing at.

This year's competition will take place at the Recital Room at Blackheath Halls which allows for an audience of up to 120. This means that the audience will more easily be able to access the concert and there will be better facilities available too.

We have had a small number of enquiries already, which is not unusual at this point in the year, although by the time you read this, entries will have closed. We have also had good coverage in Gramophone magazine; both a call for entries and a review of Charlotte's recital.

This year, the SRP committee have kindly increased the value of the prizes for the second (to £1,000) and the third (to £750) prize winners.

Sarah Langdon March 2023

Publicity Officer's Report for Conference

Will be presented by Mary Tyers at the Conference