

FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH TOWN HALL ORGAN TRUST
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2009

The 2009 International Organ series turned out to be one of just two concerts. A concert by the American virtuoso organist **Carlo Curley** had to be postponed because of a health condition. This has now been scheduled for 19 September this year. Thus the first concert of the year was during the Christchurch Arts Festival in August and saw a welcome return to Christchurch of **Christopher Herrick** for a third visit. His programme featured works by a variety of composers, both ancient and modern such as Bach and Brahms, Weitz, Dupre, Hollins and Lanquetuit through to a living composer, Iain Farrington. This concert was well appreciated by an audience of around 700.

The other concert for the year was what has become the almost traditional Show Weekend concert by **Martin Setchell** and once again he featured a soloist from the CSO. This time it was Principal Harp **Helen Webby**. An unusual feature of the concert was that the Bicknell chamber organ was used for a Handel harp concerto (*Concerto in B flat major, Op. 4, No. 6*), which many in the audience would have recognised as one of the organ concerti. The Bicknell organ was also used for the *Harp Concerto in G major* by Wagenseil. The programme was entitled "*Happy Anniversaries*" and marked the 250th anniversary of the death of Handel (the concerto and an arrangement by Martin Setchell of the *Overture to the Occasional Oratorio*), the 200th anniversary of the birth of Mendelssohn (*Organ Sonata in A major Op. 65, No. 3*) and the 350th anniversary of Purcell's birth (a suite of three of his pieces arranged by Martin Setchell). There were also works for organ by Karl Jenkins, Alfred Hollins, Theodore Dubois, Leon Boellmann and Albert Renaud. It was a most satisfying programme played to a good-sized audience. There will not be a Show Weekend concert this (2010) year but there will be three concerts: Thomas Trotter (Birmingham), Gordon Stewart (Huddersfield) and the rescheduled Carlo Curley concert. Instead, Martin Setchell's next concert will be in March 2011 when the new additions to the organ will be featured.

Reference was made in last year's report to the generous legacy from Frank Partridge. I am pleased to report that a contract has now been signed with Rieger Orgelbau for additions to the organ which will be installed during January/February next year (2011). An indication of the changes agreed to upgrade the organ were given in our October 2009 newsletter to members. A full list of the changes is available on application to the secretary.

Once again we are indebted to the Trustees, especially Delwyn Sell (Treasurer), David Towns (Secretary) and Martin Setchell (Organ Curator) for the immense amount of work they have done during the year. Our running of the concerts has involved the Treasurer in added work and a more complicated budget. The Secretary likewise has been involved with extra work, which he carries out most efficiently. He is responsible for all our applications for funding and for each successful application there would be a number of others that are unsuccessful. Also special thanks to Russell Kent for his efforts at the Christopher Herrick concert when Martin was away in Europe.

The Trustees were successful in obtaining financial assistance towards the 2009 Organ Concert Series from the Christchurch City Council, Canterbury Community Trust, Perpetual Trustees (Farina Thompson Trust), Eureka Trust, Creative Communities NZ, Southern Trust, The Press, Christchurch Star, Copthorne Central Hotel, John Rhind Funeral Directors and Link (formerly Pope Print) and we extend our thanks to them. We also thank Vbase for their assistance during the past year. Thanks also to our Auditor, Christopher Stent. Finally, thanks to all members of the Friends of the Town Hall Organ Trust for their continued support.

Peter D Barton

Chairman