

Preserve Harmony



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Editors: Adrian Davis & John Iles

Assisted by: Paul Campion

NEWSLETTER OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF MUSICIANS

THE MASTER ELECT

Frank Fowler

F.I.S.O.B., F.I.M.I.T., F.R.S.A.

The next Master is Frank Fowler whose working life represents the field of musical instrument making, having spent 48 years as a professional organ builder. He started as an apprentice with Hill, Norman & Beard, just after the war, eventually becoming their Managing Director.

He was born in the small market town of Bridport in West Dorset, receiving his education at the local Grammar School. Always interested in music, both light and classical, at the age of only fourteen he was appointed organist and choirmaster at a local village church. He holds a similar post today continuing his interest in, and contribution to, Church Music.

Frank started his organ building career as assistant to the late Mr A.W. Pritchard, the then Bristol representative of H.N. & B. After 18 months based in Bristol undertaking his basic 'outside' field training, he was transferred to London for the factory training necessary to complete his apprenticeship.

After National Service he returned to organ building with H.N. & B leaving them, on getting married, to join J.W.Walker & Sons, returning to live in Bristol. Next he was appointed as their representative in Wales based in Cardiff and then promoted to Midland Area Manager, moving to Leicester. This was followed by a promotion to London where he became Tuning Manager for that company.

In November 1973, he left Walkers to rejoin H.N. & B., being appointed their Managing Director in 1974 and staying with them until his retirement.

Always involved in the attempted betterment of conditions in the Craft of Organ Building, he served for eight years as President of the Federation of Master Organ Builders, for eleven years was Vice President of the Incorporated Society of Organ Builders and still is the President of the Organ Builders Benevolent Society.

His interest in the musical instrument field stretches far beyond organs and for 21 years he was Honorary Secretary of the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology, which covers the whole gamut of instrument making, being their President from 1987 to 1990. He is a Trustee of the Musical Museum in Brentford, founded by our late Liveryman Frank Holland MBE, and also a Trustee of the Alexandra Palace Organ Appeal.

Shortly before retirement, Frank and his wife Margaret moved from West London to the more rural setting of



Photo: Pikeriver Films

Hartley Wintney in Hampshire. The garden of their house had been sadly neglected which gave Margaret considerable scope to exercise her gardening skills.

They quickly became absorbed in local community activities, Frank becoming organist at one of the local churches, Vice Chairman of the local Parish Council and one of the drivers of 'Rosie', the Care Mini Bus, collecting and delivering the elderly who attend the local Day Care Centre, some of his passengers being younger than their driver!

Frank also belongs to the Parish Clerks' Company, being Parish Clerk of St.Benet Sherehog and is pleased to think that he is able to continue the long-standing bond between the Musicians and Parish Clerks.

The Musicians' Company, with changes of staff and twice moving their office in a comparatively short space of time, has had such problems that can be expected from these changes. Our new Master hopes that during his year it may be possible to consolidate the administration procedures and ensure things are pointing in the right direction for the continuing growth of the Company and a successful undertaking of our Millennium projects.