

CMAF Chairman's Report 2013

I think it's fair to say that being chairman of the society since last July has been difficult. Having been secretary for the last 3 years - I thought that being chairman might be a bit less work intensive !! How wrong I was.

Losing Hugh as our chairman and also from the committee was a blow, but more bad news was to follow when Paul and Joan Woodman - who had so successfully run the bar - were also forced to stand down after Paul had surgery on his back.

Nevertheless, last year saw another varied and lively programme that was well attended. After a suggestion raised at last year's AGM we introduced a new event in the form of a Boogie Woogie night, which proved to be very popular and brought the festival to the attention of a new section of the community. We also opened a day earlier – having the art exhibition opening on Thursday and an Old Time Music Hall on the Friday – which was great fun and well attended.

However we cannot ignore the fact that the number of festival friends is reducing and we are not recruiting new friends to fill the gaps.

It took many years of hard work and effort to get us to where we are today and I am mindful of the fact that we are temporary custodians of this unique event while remembering the people who got us to where we are today.

So what of the future? - If we are to continue on this epic journey of growth and discovery we need to raise the profile of our festival.

We could consider holding some events outside festival week perhaps a series of bespoke lunch time concerts for an invited audience of guests from local business or commerce or maybe celebrity concerts and recitals that will bring the festival to the attention of more people from within the local community and surrounding area.

I also hope that with the backing of the festival it may be possible to raise funding for an after school music club for under privileged children.

In the coming year there are plans for Music in Action initiative where local school children combine their investigations into local people who were involve in the war with a music making workshop. (For that reason we have amended our Constitution to include the child protection policy) and we will again have our Young Performers Day and a concert by the Young Carer's Orchestra.

Music is many things; it can be a source of comfort and relaxation – of education and exploration. When this festival was originally set up it was intended to be a celebration of local talent and a source of inspiration and entertainment.

As lovers of music we should be evangelical in our efforts to spread the word and expose as many people as possible to the joys of listening and partaking music. There are so many initiatives where music is used as a source of healing and education - from singing groups for people suffering from Alzheimer's to deaf children feeling the sound waves and vibrations of instruments being played. Music is a very precious commodity.

I believe that music should be shared with as many people as possible; it's not just for lovers of classical music or performers but for society as a whole. I believe that the great composers were known to write 'pot boilers' just to raise cash to pay their bills but these pieces are now considered to be great works - so who knows what future generations will view as classical, Freddy Mercury, Burt Bacharach or maybe Paul McCartney's Liverpool Oratorio?

Who knows what the future may bring - thank you for your loyalty and support during the past year - I look forward to moving on to even bigger and better things in our 2013 season.

I'd also like to thank my son Oli Bolt for helping with the festival bar and Michael Benton for helping to organise the Boogie Woogie night and for the casks of real ale that he managed to get donated.

And lastly – my thanks to our President for her energy and positive attitude and for providing tonight's refreshments and the rest of the committee who worked incredibly hard to make last year's festival such a success – I hope to add to our number for 2013 – also to Marden House and the Town Council for their help and support and to Mary Pilcher-Clayton for providing tonight's musical entertainment.

Glenis Ansell

Chairman