

## Acting Chair Report

30 June 2019

### Annual General Meeting, Royal Academy of Music

Let me begin by writing about how exciting it's been to be back on the Council for the third time as a member and trustee. The interest and activity feels renewed, and so much has been put into place in the last year in terms of the business and charity status of the BFS that we now can use our momentum to renew and rejuvenate actively for our members. I feel the Council has very much been like a swan on a lake...looking serene on the surface but paddling madly underneath!!

I'd like to thank all the hard work that Malcolm Pollock put in to giving the Society a more solid foundation in terms of the Charity and CIO changeover. He stepped down as Chairman in February. Working closely with Julie Butler, who continues to work to the extreme with our finances and charity regulations, the society became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), a structure which will allow us to run the BFS more effectively and in a way more suited to a modern organisation. We are extremely grateful for Julie's expertise in this area and the good nature with which she continues to fulfil the clarity needed for the society to run efficiently. Happily, Malcolm will continue to act as our liaison with the European Flute Council, and Julie has extended her stay on the Council and we are very happy that she is!

Kate Hill has been on the Council since 2011, and from the first meeting when we were both co-opted, she posed a formidable member. She has given so much support to the BFS for these 8 years, and was instrumental in being a huge part of the two SJSS events and helping in huge amounts several of the Platform Competitions. My overriding memory was when she leaned into me at one meeting and told me I was '...one of us'...meaning I'd been made a honorary Brit !! She has given a huge amount of her time and dedication to the society, and continued to clear a path to make ideas happen.

Abby Charles will be missed. Although I didn't have a chance to get to know her, I do know that she tackled a mountainous task sorting the memberships for the BFS. She has been at the heart of getting the society more computer-savvy and worked very closely with council members to finally create a user friendly website so that memberships were easier to manage.

Hugh Philips has been involved with Council activities since the 'dawn of time' and in the beginning of the inception of the BFS. He always had a welcome smile and story, and threw himself into every event he could attend...which was most of them! He loves telling everyone that he's actually a clarinet player, but converted now, of course! Thank you, Hugh, for supporting the AFT for the last 2 decades and being a stalwart supporter of the BFS for forever.

#### FUTURE ACTION

My desire now, as Chair, is to be part of the organising of interests that fire up the Society and the members. The Council found a common thread at our meeting in January when asking whether or not the BFS would be able to continue as a society at all. Everyone at the table offered their opinions which became a very lively discussion for the need to be inclusive, aware and stay true to the ideals that were set when the BFS was formed. We wanted to raise awareness and communication among members and flute players around the Britain, thus encouraging more of a community. To do this, we're planning more local events and a much more accessible media platform. We've had a great response to the online survey, thanks to Rachel Shirley and Sophie McGrath for setting this up. They've been on top of all the media and

emails these past six months. We're addressing the issues and ideas that have been suggested, and many of them are already in the planning stages. There will be an event in Sheffield in November and one in Birmingham in May 2020. We are very inspired by the growing enthusiasm of flute choirs and general gatherings, and want to continue to offer the society and the Council as a 'go to' place for all-things flute related. The Council members have a very diverse skill set and we have had animated discussions at meetings and beyond...with results!

Traditions were formed within the BFS that should be honoured, as well as the mentors and musicians who introduced them. We'd like to keep a closer connection with the trade: they are in touch with players and teachers every day, and are much more aware of the general needs of their patrons. We'd like to invite students to volunteer at events around the country, learning how to organise, host and to lead Flute Days and Flute Choir sessions. There's also a wider flute community worldwide that want to stay connected to the BFS, and would like to collaborate in the future in discussion, performance and in open-forums in education and the continuation of music in schools and beyond.

When I joined the BFS in the early '90's I was so excited to be part of the events and people who I admired so much. Becoming a Council Member was such an honour for me in the late 90's and I felt I didn't have anything to contribute...but I did my part and helped when I could. After more than 25 years as a member, I'm overwhelmed by the feeling of inclusion in this community now, and want to encourage every flute player just to get to an event to meet people. It's absolutely up to each player to choose how they want to be involved, ask questions and just chat!! The Council are up for making the BFS a society that welcomes like-minded players and introduce them to new ones.