



Objectives

The objects of the Society shall be the promotion and encouragement of all forms of interest in, and the preservation of, Fair Organs and Mechanical Musical Instruments. (From the Rules and Constitution of the Society.)

Background

When the early enthusiasts gathered round Tom Albert's 98-key Marengi in Bolton for Sunday recitals back in 1957, they must have had little idea of the impact their decision to form themselves into a Society would have on the preservation movement or of the expansion of the Society to include members from most parts of the world. In those days the number of fair organs in existence was considerable but only a few were in preservation. Some were still in active use but a great many lay abandoned in yards and fairgrounds at the mercy of the weather. The Fair Organ Preservation Society, like most societies, started in a small way, with many of the early members being organ owners. With the advent of steam rallies and other events, interest in fair organs in particular increased rapidly and membership rose sharply during the sixties. The first overseas member was Gijsbert Perlee, organ builder in Amsterdam, and the first United States member was Q David Bowers, dedicated collector and well known as the author of several comprehensive books on mechanical musical instruments. The strength of the Society is the considerable number of enthusiasts who have been captivated by the sight and sound of the astonishing range of fair, dance and street organs. By their very interest they have lent support and purpose to the continuing preservation of these unique instruments.

Committee

The Society is administered by a Committee consisting of the President, Vice-Presidents, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and Publications Editor together with five ordinary members, including the Stock Controller and Russell Wattam. The Committee meets about six times a year, generally between Autumn and Spring.

The Society's Annual General Meeting is usually held in late March or early April, with a different location being chosen each year. The business of the AGM is complemented with a chance for members to meet socially.

Rallies and Events

Members' organs play at steam rallies, county shows, fêtes, street fairs and other events all over the world and individual members use their instruments for special charity collections, particularly during the winter months.

The Society has rally representatives who actively promote the Society on the rally field, providing members and the general public with items for sale related to mechanical music, maintaining contact with members in their own areas, and attracting new members to the Society. Area groups in the UK provide regular entertainment for members and non-members alike and are a source of many new members.

Publications

The Society publishes an English language quarterly journal, *The Key Frame*, which is distributed free of charge to members, who, together with authors from all over the world, are encouraged to make contributions to it in the form of articles, reports and anything else of relevant interest.

If you would like to contribute, please write to the Publications Editor, 12 Creswell Terrace, Botallack, St Just, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19 7QF, UK with information on your article. Word-processed documents can be sent as attachments, suitably encoded. We can handle most formats, on PC or MAC.

Other publications include calendars, postcards and occasional books.

Also in this category is the Organ Availability Register, a listing of members willing to hire or lend their organs for public events. This listing, continuously updated on this site, and is available to anyone requesting a copy. It is published each year in the Spring issue of *The Key Frame*.

Organ Collections

Many fine organs can be found in collections and museums in the UK and elsewhere throughout the world where demonstrations and recitals can be heard throughout the year.

Archives

The collecting of historical records is an important aspect of the Society's work and our [Russell Wattam](#) welcomes any relevant material on the subject of organs, fairs, personalities and so on. The archive is permanently housed within the National Fairground Archive at the University of Sheffield, where it is collated and indexed, and is available for study by prior arrangement with [Vanessa Toulmin](#) of the NFA.

Insurance

The Society has arranged favourable insurance rates for members' organs within the UK. Full details are available from the on acceptance as a member.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone who embraces the objectives of the Society, whether an organ owner or not, on the submission of a completed [application form](#), together with a subscription, to the [Membership Secretary](#). Junior Members (UK only), without voting rights, is open to anyone under the age of 16 years.