

AUGUST 2020 NEWSLETTER

FORTHCOMING LDOA VISITS/EVENTS

Covid-19 and our remaining 2020 visits.

Having been obliged to cancel all our visits from March through to August due to Covid-19 restrictions, whilst we are keen to re-start visits, we are seeing an understandable reluctance from church authorities to permit visits by organisations such as ours, particularly in the context of how to safely accommodate multiple organists all wishing to play their organ. This has already impacted one remaining visit this year, and is making for uncertainty about others, so we will need to update you on the status of visits nearer the time.

We also appreciate that the willingness to attend visits by members, some of whom have been self-isolating, is also a consideration. So, we will seek, and would welcome, feedback from members on how they feel about attending visits in the remainder of this year.

Saturday 12th September 2020 visit to Rugby - POSTPONED

Regrettably, Richard Tanner, Director of Music at Rugby School has advised us that, whilst the school will re-open in September, there are restrictions on who will be able to visit the school, with even parents not allowed on site. With the additional uncertainty as to how they are going to sanitise instruments between players, he thinks it unlikely that he could allow us all to play the organs, which clearly would be a great shame, and spoil the visit. He has therefore requested that we postpone the visit until later in the academic year. Provisional revised date for our visit is now Saturday 11th September 2021.

Director of Music at St Andrew's Rugby, Richard Dunster-Sigtermans, is happy for us to also postpone our visit to St Andrew's until 2021.

Saturday 3rd October 2020 – President's Evening at Lichfield Cathedral

Visit to Lichfield Cathedral hosted by our President, Martyn Rawles, to attend the RSCM Lichfield Area Annual Massed Choirs Festival, commencing at 5.30pm with Evensong, followed by our annual treat of the opportunity to play the magnificent Hill organ.

With the current ban on choral singing, Martyn Rawles has advised that unfortunately '*there is a strong possibility*' that this event will also have to be postponed. We'll provide an update on this when available, and in the meantime, we are looking into the possibility of re-arranging a postponed visit from earlier in the year for the last week in October.

Tuesday 24th November 2020 - Annual Dinner

Date now fixed, but venue to be decided, and could also be impacted by social distancing restrictions at the time.

Other 2020 visits

A November visit, possibly one postponed from earlier in the year. We may also have to resort to Zoom for our 2020 AGM if we are unable to arrange a visit incorporating the AGM.

AN INVITATION TO SHARE YOUR FAVOURITE YOUTUBE CLIPS

In the absence of live organ concerts to attend, on page 3 the on-line broadcasts are your Newsletter Editor's suggestions as to what members might enjoy watching.

So, an invitation to members to let me have any links to their favourite YouTube clips, and the reason for your choice, which they would like to share with other members, and which I will gladly include in the next newsletter. Equally if you have any interesting or amusing anecdotes from lockdown, or organ news you've spotted, and would like to share with other members via the newsletter, please forward to me at: trevorsmedley@ntlworld.com.

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Member

We are delighted to welcome Graham Osmond as a new member joining us since the last newsletter, taking our membership now to 80.

Whilst not an organist, Graham enjoys organ music, but having an automotive background, his main hobby is classic cars, of which he is the proud owner of a number, including a Morris Minor and a Ford Capri. Graham lives in Hammerwich. We look forward to meeting him once we are able to resume visits/events.

Callum Alger

Our congratulations, once again, to one of our student members, Callum Alger, currently Organ Scholar at Westminster Cathedral, London, on being awarded £750 by the IAO's Stanley Vann Fund Committee. From this year's applicants, Callum was the unanimous choice of the Committee, and the money will be used to fund conducting lessons.

[MEMBERS' HAUPTWERK PROJECTS FOLLOW UPS](#)

In the last newsletter, we featured articles on Hauptwerk projects by two of our technically savvy members, and they have each provided follow ups:

[Paul Hodgetts](#)

Paul was asked to provide a contribution for the 3 *Shires Festival*, the brief being for 'a programme for people who wouldn't dream of going to organ recitals!' Paul's four pieces were played on his Hauptwerk organ; they have been uploaded to YouTube, and can be found via <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnjiExJ3sO-a0Vh-kd2iO3g/videos> . Scroll down to near the bottom of the list. Paul advises that the sample set used was a tweaked version of FriesachExt, obtained from https://almorse.net/content_freeorgans.html

Very impressive sound, and the performance is pretty good too!

[Greg Lewin](#)

As a result of finishing his Hauptwerk project, Greg advises that he now has the components of his previous Hauptwerk organ available for sale, which may possibly be of interest to members. He has listed the two ex-Compton Herrburger-Brooks keyboards on Ebay, and this will be followed by other items, including modified 32 note pedal board, bench, a 61-note keyboard by M-Audio (cased to match the Compton ones), table and a Behringer foot controller.

The Ebay listing is at:
https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/193546176130?ul_noapp=true

Details of the original project can be found at:
<http://www.greglewin.co.uk/organ2/compton.htm>

[NEWS FROM THE LDOA COMMITTEE](#)

[Next Committee Meeting](#)

Due in June, but postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions. Will be held via Zoom if social distancing restrictions aren't eased.

[LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL NEWS/EVENTS](#)

[COVID-19](#)

The following update has been posted on the Cathedral's website:

'Welcome Back; We are pleased to announce that from Tuesday 14th July the Cathedral's doors re-open to welcome visitors for sight-seeing (pre-booked only), private prayer and reflection, and attendance of services.'

The website goes on to clarify that all services will be held in the Nave, where a 2m social distance can be maintained but you will be able to sit with those in your household/bubble. To reduce contact points, they will not be issuing service sheets or books to the congregation. Following Church of England guidelines,

there will be no congregational hymns, and so services will be shorter, but at least with the Hill organ finally to be heard again in public!

[Music for Reflection](#)

The 2020 'Music for Reflection' Wednesday lunchtime weekly concerts, which, were listed in the last newsletter, and due to commence on 22nd July 2020, have regrettably all been cancelled. So, unfortunately no opportunity now for us to enjoy a return visit by LDOA student member Henry Metcalfe, who was due to play a recital on 5th August.

[Autumn Evening Organ Recitals Series](#)

It is understood that there are no evening organ recitals planned for autumn 2020.

[NEWS & SNIPPETS FROM THE ORGAN WORLD](#)

[Nantes Cathedral 400 year old organ destroyed by fire](#)

Following the devastating fire at Notre Dame, Paris, in April 2019, which saw major damage to the Cathedral but the organ largely surviving intact, a fire early Saturday morning 18th July 2020 destroyed the 400-year-old organ at Nantes Cathedral, and its platform is very unstable and could collapse. The organ of 4 manuals and 74 stops dates from 1619, originally built by Orgue Girardet, and subsequently Clicquot (1784), Merklin (1866) , Gloton (1933) and Beuchet-Debierre (!971)

The blaze also destroyed the West End stained glass rose windows and priceless artefacts and paintings in the Cathedral of St Peter & St Paul, which dates from the 15th Century. More than 100 firefighters brought the fire under control after several hours. Three fires were started at the site, at the main organ, the smaller organ, and the electrical panel.



[Nantes Cathedral organ – before, and after the devastating fire](#)

A volunteer church assistant, a 39-year-old asylum seeker from Rwanda who has lived in France for several years, has confessed to starting a fire that severely damaged a gothic cathedral in Nantes, but has given no motive.

It was not the first time fire has damaged the cathedral. It was partly destroyed during WW2 in 1944 after Allied bombings. In 1972, a fire completely ravaged its timber roof. It was finally rebuilt 13 years later with a concrete structure replacing the ancient wooden roof.

For images of Nantes Cathedral and organ/console, there's a very enjoyable YouTube clip of of Vierne's *Symphony No. 1 (Final)* being played on this organ, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2435oAvV6s>

An invitation from Daniel Moul

IAO members were invited to join Daniel and the team at Flentrop Orgelbouw for an online Open Day on Saturday, 18 July, at 1pm UK time. We were able to watch films about the first of the new organs for the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, inspired by the work of Arp Schnitger, 'live' in Flentrop's workshop. Informative videos take the viewer step by step through the making of the organ, supplemented with some music recordings. Everyone was able to ask questions in the Chat session, and the Flentrop team answered these live and give direct demonstrations. In Dutch and English, the Open Day can be accessed via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47xhQLyX9v0&feature=youtu.be>

Harrison & Harrison – major organ projects

I'm indebted to Harrison & Harrison Head Tuner Stephen Alliss for providing the following update on their major projects:

York Minster Organ

The York Minster organ was removed in October 2018 by Harrison & Harrison, and taken to their works for a £2m repair and refurbishment. The complete reconstruction based on the Harrison & Harrison musical concept of 1917/1931 is expected to take two years. Work is currently taking place in both their Durham workshop and assembly work on site. Voicing is due to be completed by the end of February 2021.

St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh

Harrison & Harrison are cleaning and overhauling the Henry Willis/Harrison & Harrison organ, with voicing on site due to start in August.

Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia, USA

A new tracker action organ of 2 manuals and 22 stops. The organ is taking shape in the building room at their workshop at Durham, and all of the pipework except the wooden ones are voiced and ready to go. Planned completion date Christmas 2020.

Christ Church, Greenwich, Connecticut, USA

Harrison & Harrison have been commissioned to build a new 4 manual 86-stop landmark instrument for Christ

Church, Greenwich, Connecticut, USA. The organ is to be entirely new, retaining only the bottom octave of the Sub Bourdon, the Chimes and Harp from the present instrument. It will be housed in two chambers on either side of the chancel, each with two new organ cases facing the chancel and the nave. Installation is planned for 2022.

Nicholson – major organ projects

Manchester Town Hall Organ

Nicholson have been commissioned to undertake the historical reconstruction of the organ in Manchester Town Hall. The organ was built by the Parisian organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll in 1877, enlarged by him in 1893, and then rebuilt by the English firms Lewis & Co. in 1912 and Jardine & Co. in 1970. They will be undertaking the work in an equal collaboration with the Dutch firm of Flentrop Orgelbouw.

The organ will be wholly dismantled in the late spring of 2020, with completion to coincide with the re-opening of Waterhouse's much-loved building.

Bute Hall, University of Glasgow

The Bute Hall is the graduation hall of the University of Glasgow and was designed by George Gilbert Scott. In 1901, a four-manual organ by Lewis & Co. of London was built in a fine case in the west gallery of the hall. The organ was dramatically rebuilt in 1962 by Hill, Norman & Beard, with many tonal changes.

As phase two of a planned three-phase project to restore the organ, Nicholson will be undertaking major work on the instrument in 2020.

Radley College, Oxfordshire

Nicholson's have been commissioned to build a new organ for the chapel. This will, once again, be sited in the centre of the west gallery, within a new oak case. The organ will have three manuals and 53 stops, with mechanical action to the manuals and electro-pneumatic action to the Pedal Organ. Construction commenced in 2020, with installation planned for autumn 2021.

YouTube broadcasts in lieu of cancelled recitals

A number of organists, faced with cancelled recitals, have streamed live organ recitals and uploaded them to YouTube, including the following:

- Gert van Hoef, the young Dutch organist, is continuing to give weekly one-hour recitals on Thursday evenings, which are live streamed on YouTube. He uses both his home Hauptwerk organ, and is now also playing various pipe organs in Dutch churches.
- Jonathan Scott, is also continuing to live stream approximately monthly recitals, again via YouTube, with the most recent ones being on 5th June on the J J Binns organ of Rochdale Town Hall, and then on 7th July on the T C Lewis organ of Albion Church, Ashton-under-Lyne.
- Richard McVeigh has given some 30 on-line broadcasts over the last six months, via 'Beauty in Sound' on YouTube, mainly on his home Hauptwerk

organ, including ones on 11th and 18th July played on his home organ using a recently acquired sample set of the renowned St Bavokerk, Haarlem, organ, and which sounds most impressive.

- Due to Covid-19 restrictions, *Sunday Afternoon Organ Music* at Holy Trinity Wordsley, performed by Paul Carr, was suspended after the March event. So, from Sunday 2nd August 2020 at 3pm, Paul Carr will perform a short programme each month online. The video will be hosted on *Sunday Afternoon Organ Music's* Facebook page, which can be found at: www.facebook.com/SundayAfternoonOrganMusic

Mander Organs Ltd ceases trading

In a worrying sign of the times, Mander Organs Ltd announced that owing to cashflow difficulties and the inability to secure sufficient work, after 84 years the company profoundly regrets that it ceased trading on Monday 27th July 2020, and has been placed in the hands of an independent insolvency practitioner.

Founded by Noel Mander in 1936, since 1947 the company has had its premises at Bethnal Green, London. In 1978 the Queen awarded Noel Mander an OBE in recognition of his services to organ building for over 50 years. Undoubtedly the crowning glory of his long and distinguished career was the rebuilding of the Willis organ in St Paul's Cathedral, which was completed in time for the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. In the Midlands, Mander rebuilt the Birmingham Town Hall organ in 1984, and then as part of the Hall's restoration, in 2007 they cleaned and restored the organ.

Another worrying sign of the times?

Currently closed, St Margaret's Church Westminster, where Edwin Lemare was Organist from 1897-1902 and where Thomas Trotter has been Organist for many years, has announced that in order to continue the full investment in Westminster Abbey's music department, Chapter has had to acknowledge that they do not have the resources to offer worship supported by professional musicians simultaneously in two churches next to one another. In future, Chapter plans to concentrate worship and other activities in St Margaret's on its distinctive and growing ministry to Parliament - and the public sector more broadly. They propose to cease Sunday service at St Margaret's, and to ask the congregation to join the Abbey congregation. They are currently reviewing options to involve the current freelance musicians of St Margaret's in the church's future musical provision.

Salisbury Cathedral Choir in Singing Safety Test

Choral and congregational group singing in churches is of course currently banned. A senior medical adviser at Public Health England, Dr Simon Tanner, has confirmed that his organisation was leading a small study with adult male choir-singers from Salisbury Cathedral, and some adult volunteers, to gain a better understanding of transmission.

"This research will help inform government guidance for the performing-arts industry and places of worship during the Covid-19 pandemic, and is due to start in the coming weeks," he said. "The tests are not taking place on

cathedral grounds, or any other public spaces, and the study does not involve people who have the virus."

IAO/RCO MATTERS

IAO e-NewsSheet

The second IAO e-NewsSheet was sent out by email on 15th July. LDOA members who have an e-mail address should have received a copy, but any who didn't, and wish to receive future issues, please contact Richard Syner and he will make the necessary arrangements.

IAO Music Festival 2021

The 2020 IAO Music Festival was to have taken place in Edinburgh, where IAO President Dr John Kitchen is based, from Friday 24th to Tuesday 28th July 2020. Regrettably, because of the Covid-19 restrictions, this has had to be postponed and will now take place in Edinburgh from Friday 23rd to Tuesday 27th July 2021, Covid-19 restrictions permitting.

The next OrganFest will now be moved to 2022.

IAO Midlands Organ Day 2020

The 2020 Midlands Organ Day planned for Saturday 26th September 2020 in Northampton has regrettably also been postponed, and will now take place on Saturday 25th September 2021.

IAO Yorkshire Organ Day

Plans are being made for a Yorkshire Organ Day in Hull on Wednesday 2nd June 2021.

IAO - new website

The IAO has launched their new website, and the 'facelift' has certainly created a more modern appearance that is easier to navigate. Take a look at: <https://iao.org.uk>

Fugue State Films offer

Special offer to *Organists' Review* subscribers and IAO members:

- 20% off *The English Organ* Daniel Moulton DVD Boxed Set and all other DVDs and CDs in the Fugue State webshop at <https://fuguestatefilms.co.uk/fsf-shop/> (aside from the upcoming King's DVD). Valid until 3rd August – please use coupon code fuguestateiao20
- 20% off all 79 films comprising *The English Organ* available from The English Organ at <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/theenglishorgan>. Valid until 3rd August – please use coupon code fuguestate20.

EUROPEAN ORGAN ADVENTURES

Regrettably no visits or recitals to report upon, so we're indebted to an ex-LDOA member for submitting reports on two visits he made to Europe in July 2019. Peter Bowes was Safety Director for Virgin Trains before his retirement,

and so along with his interest in organs, his other passion is trains. As this pairing of interests is not uncommon, as well as the organs he visited, the references to rolling stock in Peter's reports may be of interest to a number of LDOA members also sharing his twin interests.

DUTCH ORGAN ADVENTURE 2019

Tuesday 2nd July

Having retired from Virgin Trains in April, I was keen to use up some free rail passes in Holland and sample some Dutch organs. An early start with an 0430 lift to Birmingham Airport. Slick security left ample time for breakfast prior to boarding Flybe/Maybe 0705 to Amsterdam Schipol. Took off 45' late as 'they'd provided the wrong tow bar' - for the first flight of the day? I expect the plane had sat there all night.

Through passport control quickly enough to recover my planned itinerary, jumping NS Intercity trains to Goes. My train split at Roosendal. I was in the wrong portion but was rescued by the Conductor. Better than the American couple sitting opposite me who thought they were on a Thalys to Brussels!

1330 hrs, Grote of Maria Magdalenakerk, Goes - Recitalist Arno Wan Wijk

As my (randomly thrown together) trip was intended to sample Dutch organs, this was not the best start as the organ turned out to be a 1970 (Danish) Marcussen. That said, this was a lovely recital by the regular organist including Vierne, Bach and Thalben-Ball's *Elegy*. A bit ironic as I'd just come from Birmingham where GTB had been City Organist in my early childhood. Pleasant lunch and cloudy beer at a brewpub in the town square. Then by train back to Amersfoort for the only hotel I'd had time to pre-book, which turned out to be above a great bar overlooking a square full of restaurants and other bars. First drink was on the house, whilst I planned the rest of my trip. Hotel Lang Jan highly recommended.



Marcussen Organ [1970] (Grotekerk, Goes)

2000 hrs, St Joris Kerk, Amersfoort

Embarrassingly, I lost the programme and can't recollect the organist's name. He was very good though! We got two organs for the price of one (8 Euros) as the concert commenced with an improvisation played on the Choir organ – the theme chosen was an English Folk tune as this enabled the organist and audience to poke fun at Brexit. The choir – or choir organ – a 2 manual instrument built in 1967 by Metzler, and newly refurbished this year.



Choor-orgel (Joriskerk, Amersfoort)

The main recital was played on the church's great organ - or 'hoofdorgel' – a large 3 manual instrument built by Carl Friedrich August Naber in 1845.



Hoofdorgel (Joriskerk, Amersfoort)

Wednesday 3rd July

Now armed with a plan and after quickly exploring Amersfoort, I set off for Woerden where I had coffee in a sunny square listening to the Carillon. Very Dutch! And it got better.

1200 hrs, Petruskerk, Woerden - Recitalist Gerben Mourik

Organist of the Grote Kerk te Oudewater, Gerben Mourik played the following programme;

J S Bach - *Franse Suite No 1 in D BWV 812*; Johann Gottfried Walther - *Orgelchroal 'Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele'*; and Johann Christian Kittel - *Fantasia in D*.

The trip highlight, however, was his *Partita* improvisation, which just captured all the elements and romantic sounds of Dutch classical organ playing I've heard on recordings over the years. The organ was built in the 18th century by Batz and has just been restored. I was so impressed I bought a CD of the organ - proceeds go to the restoration fund. This was my favourite concert of the week. So glad I came, as I had a choice of three I knew little about this lunchtime, and hit lucky.



Batz-orgel (Petruskerk, Woerden)

This afternoon I took the train to Hoorn where yesterday I'd booked a stay at the Hotel de Posthorn. There was a great welcome and after a coffee I headed out to explore.

Then into Amsterdam where I fell over (completely sober and, fortunately only my pride injured) in Dam Square. After which I got ripped off (by 5 Euros, but it's the principle at stake) in a restaurant. Come to think of it my meal was steak. And good at that!

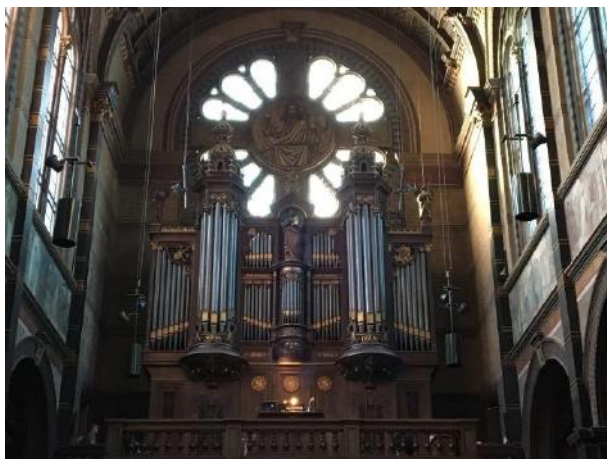
2015 hrs, Basiliek Van De H. Nicolaas, Amsterdam - Recitalist Barry Jordan



Basiliek van de H. Nicolaas, Amsterdam

I've always wanted to visit this vast church opposite Centraal Station, but it's been locked every time I've been before, so this was too good an opportunity to turn down. The church is - as I expected - magnificent. On a grand scale. Sadly, the recital was a bit of a disappointment including (in my opinion) a slightly lack-lustre performance of Robert Schumann's *Six Fugues on the name BACH*, and a concert for organ by Feliks Nowowieski, which simply wasn't to my taste.

The organ is German romantic - built by Sauer 125 years ago, 'modernised' in 1960 to add brightness for baroque, and restored back to original state using Sauer pipes recovered from a similar organ at Middelburg in 2001. Maybe I'm a philistine, but it just didn't do it for me.



Sauer organ (Basiliek van de H. Nicolaas, Amsterdam)

So back to Hoorn for the night where I explored a bit more, and called in a bar to watch The Dutch Women's Football team beat Sweden in the World Cup Semi-final.

Thursday 4th July

After a copious buffet breakfast and for a change this morning I rode on the Hoorn Medemblik Stoomtram - 8 well filled historic (Austrian) coaches hauled by *Bello*, a 105-year old spotless and shiny German steam loco. The line is twinned with our Bluebell and I'm told *Bello* has visited on an exchange trip.



Bello

My journey from Hoorn to Medemblik included lots of level crossings, including one across a 4-lane dual carriageway motorway! I guess the railway must have been there first. I visited the signal box at Medemblik for a guided tour by the signaller who, when I said I am a Tallyllyn Blockman, identified a common acquaintance, who is also a Tallyllyn volunteer in Wales.

Back to Hoorn by bus and then by train to Haarlem. Arrived just as the train service collapsed due to a person hit by a train between Haarlem and Leiden. Sad. Not just a problem in UK then.

Walked into Haarlem and for lunch I had a superb house special goat cheese salad at Wilma's diner outside the Grote Church.

1600 hrs, Grote of St Bavokerk, Haarlem - Recitalist Jos Van Der Kooy



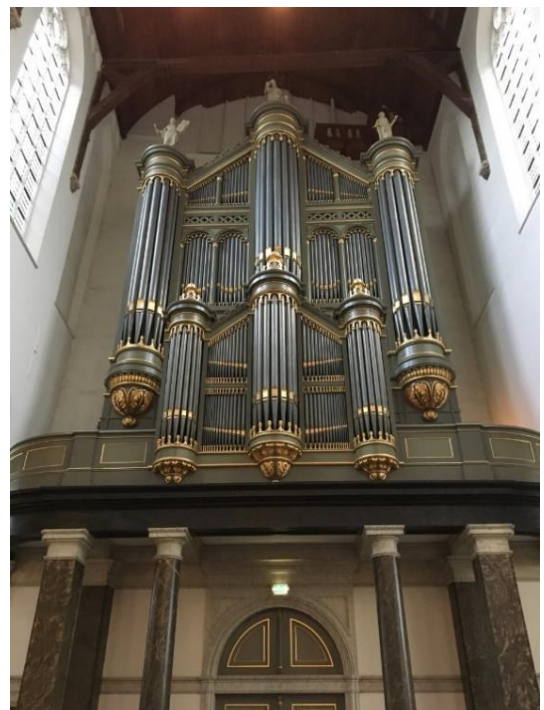
Christian Muller-orgel (St. Bavokerk, Haarlem)

For me, this is the grand-daddy of Dutch organs. The Christian Muller Orgel didn't disappoint. I've heard it once before (same organist) and this time was even better. Jos Van Der Kooy was Haarlem municipal organist between

1991 and 2017, so he's no stranger, and it showed. A popular programme played with panache to a very well filled church. Included Widor *Toccata*; Mozart *Adagio in C*; Bach *Prelude & Fugue in D (BWV 532)*; Jan Zwart *Prelude and Fugue Psalm 72*; Frank Bridges; Guimant and a Jean Langlais encore. A great experience, which didn't disappoint.

By the time I got back to the station, trains were running again, and it was a three quarter hour journey to Delft where I found and checked into the pretty Hotel Leeuwenbrug by a bridge over one of the many canals. Delft is lovely - charming with all the beauty of Amsterdam but without the hordes of tourists and rip-off prices. Explored a bit and got another delicious meal (mussels, squid, chorizo risotto and vegetables) on a boat moored on the canal outside the Oudekerk.

2000 hrs, Oude Kerk Delft - Recitalist Peter Van Der Zwaag



Witte Hoofdorzel (Oude Kerk Delft)

A programme of Dutch Psalms - 16th century Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck; 17th century Anthoni Van Noordt; together with 20th century Cor Kee and Jacob Bijster. All new to me, but sounded great on the Dutch Witte Hoofdorzel dating back to 1857, and crowned by J S Bach's *Prelude & Fugue in C-Dur*. I sat with a group of Dutch organists, who were interested in hearing about my trip and what I did before I retired. I presume they thought I must have had some purpose back then!

After consulting with them, I decided my plan for tomorrow would be a trip to Alkmaar where they thought I'd get the best Dutch organ experience of the options available.

Friday 5th July

Up early for another great buffet breakfast. I reflected that the Dutch trains have been very good; basic but clean, reliable and frequent.

The trains are mostly electric and the Intercity services are mostly double decker units. There're two types - smaller older 4 car sets with all the constituent parts of a loco under an upstairs passenger compartment at one end - and newer 4 or 6 car larger more spacious sets. Other single decker trains are either loco hauled or formed of 'Koploper' units, where the driver sits in a cab above now disused interest corridor connections.

Local trains are known as Sprinters. There are some modern CAF articulated units, but my favourites are an older fleet of late 70's/early80's trains with opening windows and no air conditioning. I remember when they were new! So, I made sure I rode a couple of these types of train this morning on the journey to Alkmaar. A lovely town in the wrong direction for home, but it was worth it.

1200 hrs, Grote Kerk Alkmaar - Recitalist Frank Van Wijk

Two organs again. Starting with the Choor-Orgel. I'm told this is the oldest playable organ in Netherlands - the Van Covelen choir organ in Grotekerk Alkmaar - built in 1511. Restored back to 'original' condition by Flentrop in 2000, organist Frank Van WIJK played two pieces by Sweelinck - the tones of which sounded pretty authentic to me.



Van Covelens Organ (Saint Laurence, Grotekerk, Alkmaar)

I was really impressed with the town of Alkmaar, and especially this massive church, which has been well interpreted as a museum. The concert continued as the organist played J S Bach on the magnificent and imposing Van Hagerbeer-Schnitker Hoofdorgel, which dates back to 1722 and was most recently restored by Flentrop in 2014. Bach's chorale *Allein Gott in der Hoh sei Ehr (BWV 662)* was sandwiched between the *Tocatta and Fugue in F BWV 540* - a fitting and crowning end to my Dutch organ experience.



Van Hagerbeer-Schnitger Organ (Saint Laurence, Grotekerk, Alkmaar)

Then followed a mad dash for the evening Eurostar home from Brussels, although I did stop in Antwerp for an hour as I needed a beer. Queuing for Eurostar was not as chaotic as sometimes, but still a 20' late start. Arrived St Pancras 2145 and I just made what should have been my 27-minute connection to 2200 Euston – Tamworth.

In Summary

It's been a great few days, and I'd recommend any organ enthusiast with the time and ability to travel should give it a go.

All hoofd-orgels I heard were 3 manual. The biggest at The Bavokerk in Haarlem. I'm not sure which was smallest, but probably the first one I heard - at Goes. The choir-orgels I heard were 2 manual.

I'd love to go back, as there's still some famous organs I'd like to hear – especially ones I have recordings of the late Feik Asmar playing including the Grote Kerk at Groningen, which was available but just too far to travel on this trip.

The Dutch Het Orgel website has a great calendar section – that's where I got my ideas from; <https://www.hetorgel.nl/en/>



Bavokerk, Haarlem

A (MOSTLY) ORGAN TRIP TO GERMANY

Wednesday 31st July 2019

I took advantage of a relatively cheap (and, unusually, on time) Flybe flight first thing this morning to Dusseldorf Airport. My intention - to sample some historic German organs in Stralsund and Lubeck. Neither are anywhere near my flight's destination, but it was the best deal I could find, and would give me chance to use up some free DB rail tickets, which were fast reaching their expiry date.

On arrival I found the Sky train out of use (looks like a 1990's hanging monorail, a bit like a modern version of those in Wuppertahl). This was a shame as the system looks fun. So, after a chaotic sky train replacement bus ride, I joined the first part of my trip - operated by National Express for 8' to Duisburg. My DB pass was not valid, but fortunately I was not charged. Throughout the trip, I noticed that pretty much all local and Regional trains are now private operators until we got east of Hamburg, where DB still reigns.

My Intercity DB trains were loco hauled, each with a first class compartment coach. Very pleasant for the six hours of travel to Stralsund, which had commenced early due to Flybe punctuality. So, I decided to break my journey in Hamburg, where I walked into the city and visited St Petri (1955 Beckenrath organ) and St Jacobi (16th century Arp-Schnitger organ) churches. I discovered there is an Orgelsommer programme of recitals through July to mid-September, but the only one I'd be able to attend clashed with my later plans.

1430 hrs Hauptkerke St Jacobi, Hamburg - Recitalist Gerhard Loffker

I did strike lucky though, as during my visit there was an apparently unadvertised recital being played by Gerhard Loffker, the resident organist and Kantor on St Jacobi's second organ - a 68 register and rather impressive enlarged romantic style Kemper instrument, dating back to 1960. I wasn't able to stay for the whole recital, but the highlight for me was Max Reger's *Benedictus* (op 59, number 9) - followed by Cesar Franck *Choral No. 3*.

Back to my intercity journey from Hamburg to Stralsund, where I saw all passenger services remain DB operated, but some new Nordbahn units on test. I suspect this may be a foretaste of further rail privatisation/franchising German style. Called at Bad Kleinen, the junction for Lubeck. This still has a big (empty) freight yard. The station is now a modern DB 21st century style with views of the nearby lake. There's no sign of the old East German (DR) canopies and trumpet fanfare announcements, like we experienced during my first visit nearly 30 years ago, shortly after unification.

Train reversed at Rostock by which time I'd retired to the bar and was talking to a commercial rail manager employed by the Pressnitzalbahn freight sector. He didn't seem too interested in talking about their narrow-gauge steam lines (shame) but we had a great discussion over the nonsense of Brexit! I think he is involved in the preservation of Schaarhoern - a steam ship based at, and running excursions from, a museum in Hamburg.

Not a good start to my Stralsund visit due to hotel farce. My B&B denied any knowledge of my Booking.com reservation (the next day they told Booking.com I was a 'no show' and tried to charge me!). There was a regatta/sailing event in Stralsund so the town was busy and I think I was lucky to find a room at short notice elsewhere - albeit at twice the price.

2000 hrs St Marien Zu Stralsund - Recitalist Peter Westerbrink

Stralsund is an attractive historic seaside city, where the German mainland is joined by a bridge to the Isle of Rugen. I'd hoped for some years that I might hear the 16th century Stellwagen organ in the Marienkirche. It was a bit of a rush after my hotel farce, but I made it to this recital given by Peter Westerbrink, a guest from Groningen, Netherlands. The 3 manual 51 register Stellwagen organ was constructed between 1653-1659, and is largely unaltered. It has lovely baroque tones and is a delight to listen to.



Stellwagen Organ (1659), Marienkirche, Stralsund

Westerbrink's contemporary programme comprised chorales by Heinrich Scheidemann (1596-1664), Jacob Pretorius (1586-1651), Matthias Weckman (1616-1674) and Franz Tunder (1614-1667) who, apparently, was both Buxtehude's predecessor at Lubeck and his father in law. These ably demonstrated the organ's many exciting colours and tones, but were so completely unknown to the audience, most of whom got bored, and after a few false applause sessions, I'm not sure we actually reached the end of his programme before large numbers left. A shame, but I'm really glad I've been. Church and organ both very impressive.

Got soaked afterwards in a rainstorm when I went for a forgettable curry, then back to my hotel.

Thursday 1st August 2019

Slept well, early start and grabbed breakfast to catch the 0700 Regionalzug (unit) onto the Isle of Rugen. Past derelict Stralsund Lok Schuppen 1, 2 and 3 (closed and disused loco sheds), which probably had full allocations (and possibly residual steam engines) during my first early 1990's trip. I noted after Stralsund Rugendamm station there are still rail connected docks at Sudhafen - evidence of aggregates and scrap although I think the branch is out of use.

Onto Rugen over a lifting bridge and after a connecting local train I arrived for a trip over the 2' 6" gauge 'Rasender Roland' railway - a 20+ km system, which runs from Putbus via Binz to Gohren.

Three steam loks were in use. One (an 0-8-0 Tank, 99 4011-5) was a winner for me. A lovely quiet start earlier at 0800 from Rugen behind a DDR standard 2-10-2 Tank 99 782, but standing room only after 1000. I'd never been here in the summer holidays, and couldn't get over how busy the trains (and resorts) are. No time to do the Putbus – Lauterbach, section so I've still got a reason to go back!

Bailed at Binz and walked across town to join a scruffy graffiti daubed 15-year-old ICE 3 from Ostseebad Binz to Rostock. Lovely views of Stralsund approaching over the water. By double decker train from Rostock changing at Bad Kleinen for Lubeck; this section worked by a nearly new Alston DMU with good visibility. I was interested to see Schonberg Mecklenburg Bahnhof still has its old-fashioned tiled DR platform surface, canopy and seats.

1900 hrs Marienkirche, Lubeck - Recitalist Sarah Kim

After checking in to the Hotel an der Marienkirche for two nights, I strolled across the square expecting my (non-researched) trip highlight; a programme including Buxtehude compositions on the organ, and in the church, where he was organist, and to which J S Bach allegedly walked from Leipzig so he could hear Buxtehude play.

I soon realised one should research these things more extensively, as both organs in the Marienkirche are post WW2, when the church was largely destroyed, and Buxtehude's organ had long since been replaced anyway during the ensuing centuries! The Marienkirche had been restored by 1959, and is in the style of north German brick gothic.

That said, the recital, part of Lubeck's Orgelsommer programme, was superb, and I'm very pleased I went. International recitalist Sarah Kim hails from Paris. The first half of her programme was played on the Danse Macabre choir organ - a 1986 Fuhrer & Co of Wilhelmshaven 4 manual 56 stop replacement for the original, which dated back to 1477, but was destroyed in 1942. This tracker action organ is designed for accompaniment, and for playing older music up to J S Bach's era. Sarah Kim played Buxtehude, Duruflé and Howells impeccably, before moving to the second part of her programme on the Main (west end) organ.



Danse Macabre orgel, Marienkirche, Lubeck

The original Marienkirche main organ, which Buxtehude would have played, dated back to 1516 and was progressively extended until replacement with a new 80 stop Schulze instrument. This was installed in the historic case by 1851 but completely destroyed in 1942. The current great organ was constructed by Kemper & Son in 1968, and at the time was believed to be the largest mechanical action organ in the world. There are 5 manuals, 100 stops and over 8,000 pipes with electrically operated tracker action. We were treated to pieces by Mendelssohn and Philip Glass, then concluding with the recitalist's own transcriptions of Mussorgski and Manuel de Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance*. All in all a fabulous concert. Although reasonably well attended, I was surprised there weren't more in the audience, as such concerts in Germany tend to be more popular than in UK.



Marienkirche great organ

My evening concluded with a great Italian meal at the Diablo restaurant outside the church, where I got 20% discount on presentation of my concert ticket.

Friday 2nd August 2019

I had intended to visit another narrow-gauge steam railway (the Mollibahn back near Rostock), but decided this was one journey too far. So, I changed my plans and stayed in Lubeck for a lazy breakfast, and then to explore this lovely city, the centre of which is an island surround by an extensive river/canal system. Lubeck is an old Hanseatic city, and is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I visited a number of historic buildings, including the cathedral (modern post WW2 organ) then a couple of bars before calling into the Willy Brandt house - an interesting museum dedicated to his life, early refugee status from Nazi Germany, and subsequent political achievements in West Germany prior to unification.

1800 hrs Jacobkirche Lubeck - Recitalist Erwin Wiersinga

The Allies must have missed this lovely church, which contains two large historic organs. Both have, of course been enlarged and changed over the years.

The "small" choir organ is a 4-manual gothic/early baroque instrument, originally constructed by Stellwagen in 1637, and most recently restored by Hillebrand in 1977/78. The 4 manual Great organ includes components dating back to 1465, and underwent a fundamental restoration and rebuild by Karl Schuke of Berlin between 1981 and 1984. More recently Flentrop improved the winding system and made changes to the pitch.



Stellwagen orgel, Jacobkirche, Lubeck

Erwin Wiersinga hails from Holland where, amongst other positions, he is Organist Titular at the Martinkirche, Groningen. His programme commenced on the Stellwagen organ including Buxtehude *Preludium in G BuxWV 163* and J S Bach *Prelude & Fugue in C BWV 545*. I'd like to think that, in their day, Buxtehude and Bach might have

both actually played the organs in this church, so these were very opportune pieces to hear.

We also heard pieces by Franz Tunder and Sweelinck, before the recital moved to the Jacobkirche's great organ for a more modern programme of pieces by Bert Matter (*Von Gott will ich nicht lassen*), Jean Baptiste Robin (*Cercles Lointains*), Maurice Ravel (transcription by the recitalist from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*), and Louis Vierne (*Toccata from Pièces de Fantasie*) to conclude. This was a top-class recital, which certainly illustrated some of the Lubeck organ history I had hoped for.



Jacobkirche great organ

Saturday 2nd August 2019

Up at 0400 to catch 0507 Lubeck - Hamburg for my £30 Ryan Air flight back to Manchester. This had been a last minute trip, and I'm very glad I made the effort. Most enjoyable - I'd love to do more. Maybe a bit more research next time though.....

Peter Bowes

VACANCIES

Organist & choir-leader required at All Saints' Church, Sudbury.

The vacancy remains unfilled. See our website www.iao.org.uk/lichfield for details, or contact Alan Smith: alansmith54@tiscali.co.uk /01889 567437

FORTHCOMING LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS

LDOA Members' Recitals/Events

Events listed are as currently advised, but are of course subject to cancellation/postponement due to Covi-19 restrictions, so please check before attending.

Cathy Lamb

In addition to her Lichfield Cathedral School/Lichfield Cathedral duties, Cathy is scheduled to give the following recitals:

- Wednesday 9th September 2020 from 12.30 to 1.15pm at St Modwen's, Burton-on-Trent
- Thursday 14th January 2021 at 1.10pm at Chester Cathedral

Callum Alger

LDOA student member Callum Alger, currently Organ Scholar at Westminster Cathedral, is scheduled to perform the following recitals:

- Monday 12th October 2020 from 1.10 to 2pm at Southwark Cathedral
- Saturday 21st November 2020 from 5.00 to 6.00pm at The Swiss Church, London

Liam Condon

See listing below for St Modwen's, Burton-on-Trent

St Modwen's, Burton-on-Trent

Whilst the June/July recitals had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the very welcome news is that LDOA member Tony Westerman has confirmed he has been given the go-ahead for the 2020 Wednesday lunchtime recitals, from 12.30 to 1.15pm, at St Modwen's to resume in September, as follows:

Summer Recitals – 'Melody, Rhythm & Whimsy'

- 2nd September 2020 – Tom Corfield (Derby)
- 9th September 2020 – Cathy Lamb (Lichfield Cathedral School)
- 16th September 2020 – Ben Mills (Keble College, Oxford)

- 23rd September 2020 – Liam Condon (Lichfield Cathedral)

Note that whilst the recitals by Cathy Lamb and Tom Corfield are confirmed, there might have to be a change in the line-up as both Liam Condon and Ben Mills are awaiting dates from the RCO for their ARCO exams.

Broadway URC, Walsall

LDOA member and Walsall URC Organist & Choir-director Alan Taylor has regrettably been obliged to cancel this year's 'Coffee & Cake' organ recitals.

Recitals In Local Area

Given the current coronavirus restrictions, no local recitals have been listed for August/September and indeed the main website for listing recitals nationally www.organrecitals.com 'has been shut down for the time being' by Steve Smith, although a very basic version of the site has now been set up. It consists of a one-page listing of forthcoming recitals. Its address is: <http://organrecitals.com/1/2020.php> – all pages on the site will redirect to this one, until there are enough concerts to justify reinstating the full site.

The only recitals listed on the site for our area are the ones at St Modwen's Burton-on-Trent in September, and one on Saturday 10th October 2020 at 5pm to 6pm at the Guild Chapel of Stratford-upon-Avon, performed by Paul Walton (Bristol Cathedral)

FINALLY – A LIGHTER SIDE OF LOCKDOWN!

To bring a smile, for a lighter side of lockdown, as submitted by LDOA Committee Member Peter Morris, see the Appendix.

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Ed. – the next newsletter is planned for October 2020, with a deadline for submission of items for inclusion of 24/09/20, to Trevor Smedley by e-mail as above, or by mail to 8 The Parchments, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7NA

APPENDIX

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LOCKDOWN!

Below are two Psalms written by Professor Catherine Clarke, from the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, and from Jim Godfrey, a Verger at Christ Church, Oxford, and a worshipper at the Wesley Methodist Memorial Church nearby:

Psalm I

1. I have dwelt long in the house of lockdown: I have enclosed myself in the habitation of Netflix and groaning.
2. They have set me my bound, which I shall not pass. I keep the statutes and observe the laws.
3. I entered into the supermarket, but it was barren: its plenty was turned into empty shelves, and there was no toilet paper in it.
4. Neither were there delivery slots by day nor by night: verily, not even from Ocado.
5. Deliver us from the wilderness of delivery: and deliver our deliveries unto us.
6. I am become a stranger unto the pub, and unto the office: even an alien unto Pizza Express.
7. The sun ariseth, and I go forth to work and to my labour: even in my pyjamas until the evening.
8. I am weary of Zoom, my throat is dry: it melteth away like wax as my broadband vanisheth.
9. Yet they gape upon me with their mouths and say: thy toddler sitteth lurking in the corner of the screen, and lo he imagineth mischief.
10. And thou, oh daughter of lockdown: thou shalt do thy phonics in exile.
11. Also, thy literacy and numeracy work, and thy comprehension: yea verily, even thy fronted adverbials.
12. They have sprayed markers for my feet: they have set a place for me on the pavement outside Tesco Metro.
13. The unrighteous forget their social distancing: I swerve from their transgressions.
14. The people rebuke each other: and bear in their bosoms the rebukes of many people.
15. A mask hath covered my face and I wash my hands: neither have I found any hand sanitiser to comfort me.
16. The pestilence layeth siege against me: according to the cleanness of my hands shall I be recompensed.

Psalm II

1. Clap your hands, all ye neighbours: clap in the front gardens and on the doorsteps.
2. Make a thankful noise, for it is Thursday: clap your hands and bang the pots; bang the mighty pan from the stove, the frying pan from the draining board, and the little pan from under the sink.
3. Rejoice, for thou hast booked a delivery: a weekly slot even unto the end of June.
4. Surely plenteousness shall be in thy house: goodness shall follow thee, at a two-metre distance, all the days of thy life.
5. Our garners shall be full: and Netflix shall bring forth thousands and ten thousands of new episodes for evermore.
6. Arise! Yea, verily, for the lockdown easeth: gird thy face with apparel and go into the city.
7. Rejoice in the fruitful offices, all ye who were furloughed: but thy going out and thy coming in shall not be on public transport.
8. Rest ye alert by day, and alert by night: and the pillars shall deliver yet out of the wilderness.
9. Judgement and remembrance shall be thine heritage: and ye shall dwell in the house of austerity for ever.