

DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

FORTHCOMING LDOA VISITS/EVENTS

Covid-19 and our 2021 visits.

Having been obliged to cancel all our visits/events from March due to Covid-19 restrictions, at the time of the last newsletter we promised to review the situation at the end of October to see if there was any chance of fitting in a visit before the end of the year. In the event restrictions tightened further, culminating in the current lockdown.

Following the promising news about vaccines, and now the reduction in the national rate of infection, there are grounds for cautious optimism for a return to something more normal in 2021. In expectation of this, we have drafted a provisional programme of visits from Spring next year, which we are all ready to roll out when Covid-19 restrictions permit. The programme includes visits postponed from this year, including the visit to Rugby School now planned for Saturday 11th September 2021, a combined 2020 and 2021 AGM, and some new visits.

We'll keep the situation under ongoing review and be in touch with you about 2021 visits, hopefully by the time of the February newsletter.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The LDOA Committee would like to thank you for your support in a difficult and frustrating year, and with the government now relaxing somewhat the Covid-19 restrictions over Christmas, we extend our good wishes for A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We do hope we can count on your continued support for 2021, and look forward to finally seeing you all again in the Spring of next year, or sooner if we are able.

Do all keep safe and well over the festive season.

IAO/RCO MATTERS

IAO e-NewsSheet

The third quarterly IAO e-NewsSheet was sent out by e-mail on 15th October, and LDOA members who have an e-mail address should have received a copy directly. The next publication is due in January 2021.

London Organ Day

With the prospect of restrictions due to the pandemic likely to continue until at least Spring 2021, the IAO Council has reluctantly decided that this event, normally held in London

on the first Saturday of March, will in 2021 be a 'virtual' event. Its artistic adviser, Tom Bell, is currently revising his plans to create an online programme of recitals and talks. All members of the IAO will be able to attend this FREE event from the comfort of your own home if you have an internet-enabled device such as a computer or smartphone: no need to negotiate public transport to get to the capital! Donations to help defray the costs of the event would, of course, be appreciated and all details will be provided later.

IAO Music Festival 2021

Current plans are that the postponed 2020 five-day IAO festival in Edinburgh will go ahead as a 'live' event 23rd-27th July 2021, with prices and booking details made available in the March edition of Organists' Review. However, the IAO Council wonders how many of the potential audience would be prepared to attend if social-distancing and face-covering restrictions remain mandatory by next summer, so you may receive a questionnaire about this before Christmas.

The next OrganFest will now be moved to 2022.

IAO Midlands Organ Day 2021

The 2020 Midlands Organ Day planned for Saturday 26th September 2020 at St Matthew's Church Northampton was regrettably also postponed, and will now take place on Saturday 25th September 2021.

Details may be found at:

<http://www.northamptonorganists.org.uk/midlands-organ-day>

Yorkshire Organ Day

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

International Organ Day 2021

With the 2020 inaugural National Organ day having been largely cancelled amid the global Covid-19 restrictions, the 2021 celebrations are being designed solely for on-line participation. Activities in the week leading up to International Organ Day will be broadcast on-line, commencing on Sunday 18th April 2021, and concluding with International Organ Day itself on Saturday 24th April 2021.

For more information and details on how to take part, visit the RCO website at: www.rco.org.uk/events/international-organ-day-2021

Grant to The North Hampshire Organists' Association

The North Hampshire Organists' Association has been awarded a substantial grant by the IAO to support an initiative to promote the organ to secondary school pupils with the aid of a DIY-constructed, portable, digital two-manual & pedal instrument. The IAO hopes that associations in other areas may eventually be invited to benefit from this project.

NEWS FROM THE LDOA COMMITTEE

2021 Subscriptions

This year's activities have regrettably been severely disrupted by Covid-19 restrictions, but we have been able to continue to publish bi-monthly newsletters, which hopefully you have found interesting and informative. Whilst the reduction in visits has resulted in reduced expenditure on donations to venues visited, it has also reduced our income, specifically from the Members' Recital donations, and donations received for surplus organ scores offered to members.

The 2021 subscriptions are due on 1st January 2021, and we do hope everyone will 'stick with us' in the hope of better times to come in 2021, when we expect to be able to resume something more like our usual activities, and indeed make up for lost time. We recognise that some members may have had their income severely impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, and as we wouldn't wish to lose any member whose finances may have become severely strained as a result, we will look sympathetically at requests from any member so affected to waive their 2021 subscription.

We've managed to avoid raising subscriptions for the last five years, and we are pleased to be able to confirm there will be no increase in the 2021 subscription. Membership remains at £12 for individual members and £17.50 for joint membership (couples etc.). Membership is free to those in full time education. Unless you pay by standing order, payment arrangements are as follows:

Bank transfers can be made to:
Lichfield & District Organists' Association
Lloyds Bank
Account number 00430916
Sort code 30-95-04

Alternatively, cheques can be made payable to Lichfield & District Organists' Association and sent to: Mike Rudd, 8 Court Drive, Shenstone, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 0JG.

Richard Syner will be sending out a reminder to members during December about payment of 2021 subscriptions.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL NEWS/EVENTS

Covid-19 restrictions required Lichfield Cathedral to close its doors to visitors and for public worship (except for private prayer) from 5th November, but they continued to stream services on-line, which were also made available on YouTube. No organ recitals of course, but YouTube

gives us the opportunity to hear Martyn Rawles and Liam Condon sharing playing duties, with the option, if you so wish, to fast forward through the sermons to hear some fine closing voluntaries! I would particularly recommend the superbly produced Advent Carol Service on Sunday 29th November, which can be found via:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6yPUffw0fc&ab_channel=LichfieldCathedral

After lockdown, we now know we will move into Tier 3, and the public will once again be able to attend services, with social distancing.

The Cathedral Illuminated: The Manger

The award-winning 'The Cathedral Illuminated' is a spectacular light and sound show projected onto the West Front of the Cathedral. This year's event, 'The Manger', is composed of beautiful imagery depicting everything 'Christmassy', the telling of the Christmas Story and this year, to mark the 150th anniversary of Charles Dickens' The Christmas Carol, a special piece has been created in collaboration with the Dickens Museum London to kick off the illuminations, created by the artistic collaboration Luxmuralis.

The event is planned to run from Wednesday 16th to Tuesday 22nd December, and whilst Tier 3 restrictions would prevent this event from going ahead, when local restrictions are revisited on 16th December, it is hoped the event may be able to take place. If so, to offer a truly festive experience that is safe for people to attend, this year's event will be completely outside, with a safe one-way route created around the Close and a significantly reduced number of time slots per evening, with tickets bookable on-line via the Cathedral website.

The Cathedral Choirs' Emergency Fund

Organised by The Cathedral Music Trust, a video went live on Thursday 26th of a virtual performance of J S Bach's *Tocatta & Fugue in D Minor* by 54 cathedral/college/church organists in the UK, plus David Briggs at St John the Divine, New York. Introduced by Clare Balding, and with Nicholas Freestone of Worcester Cathedral as Producer/Film Editor, the video aims to raise money for the Cathedral Choirs' Emergency Fund, to support choirs silenced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many local cathedrals/organists have participated, plus others with Lichfield connections such as Andrew Lumsden. Unfortunately, the Lichfield Cathedral/Martyn Rawles' contribution is, literally, 1 second, which Nicholas Freestone has confirmed relates to some difficulty matching the Hill organ of Lichfield Cathedral at its Old Philharmonic (sharp) pitch with the standard pitch of the other featured organs.

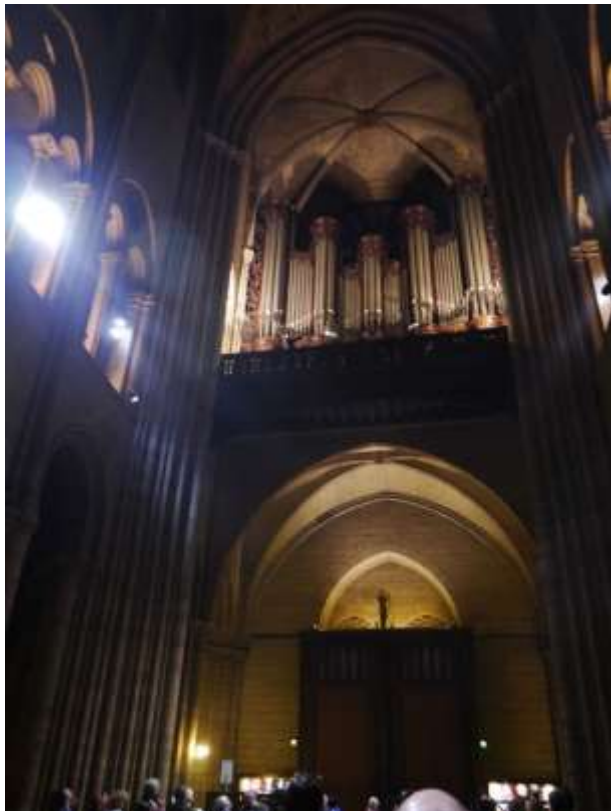
The video may be viewed via:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3uDtz3M-fk&t=5s

NEWS & SNIPPETS FROM THE ORGAN WORLD

Notre Dame Cathedral Organ restoration commences

The organ of Notre Dame dates from 1733, built by French organ builder Francois Thierry. It has gone through numerous iterations since then, most notably the modernisation and significant expansion to 86 stops by

Cavaillé-Coll in 1863-1867, then with subsequent work taking it to 5 manuals with 109 stops and 8000 pipes by the time of the devastating fire which engulfed Notre Dame on 15th April 2019.



The organ of Notre Dame - photo taken on the occasion of Paul Carr's recital April 2017

Miraculously, the Grand Organ was largely unharmed by the blaze itself, and received very little water damage. However, a *Storyville* documentary on BBC4 on 16th November showed just how close it came to the loss of not just the organ, but of the cathedral itself. It follows the team of brave firefighters - from the men and women on the frontline to the brigade chief - as they face the epic responsibility of saving one of the city's most emblematic and much-loved symbols from burning to the ground.

As well as on-the-ground helmet cam and drone footage of the unfolding, dramatic events, the film-makers, the Naudet Brothers, who famously recorded the collapse of the Twin Towers on 9/11 in New York, were themselves at the scene to record a moment in history in their own capital city.

The documentary shows that after the fall of the central spire, it became obvious that the fire in the roof timbers could not be controlled, and it was decided to concentrate fire fighting resources on saving the North and South Towers, which form the beautiful iconic façade of the Cathedral. However, on inspection of the North Tower, it was discovered that the wooden beams supporting the bells were already burning. If the burning beams could not be extinguished, the eight bells in the North Tower, weighing almost 17 tonnes, would crash 150 feet to the ground, bringing down the North Tower. This would then bring down the South Tower, with its two bells, weighing around 19 tonnes, the 13th century Rose window, and the organ, and most probably killing the team of 20/30 firefighters needed to fight the fire in the North Tower.

In footage taken inside the situation room, General Gallet, Commander, and General Gontier, Deputy Commander, of the Paris Fire Department in consultation with President Macron had the agonising decision to make as to whether they risk the lives of the firefighters in saving the Cathedral, or abandon efforts to save the Cathedral from destruction. It was agreed they would risk sending a team up the stairs of the North Tower to deploy hoses hauled up the outside of the tower, and attempt to extinguish the burning support beams. They succeeded in gaining entry from the Gallery of Chimeras and climbed up inside the North Tower to reach the beams, successfully extinguishing the flames. The Cathedral architect later confirmed that had the beams burned for 15 minutes longer, the beams would indeed have collapsed, and the plummeting bells would have destroyed the towers and thus the Cathedral!

Some eighteen months on from the devastating fire at Notre Dame, August 2020 saw the start of the Grand Organ's journey to restoration. However, although the organ had escaped damage by the blaze and received little water damage, the real threat to the Grand Organ was the toxic lead dust that resulted from the 200 tons of molten lead covering the roof cascading through the holes in the vaulted stone internal roof, caused by the central spire collapsing. The lead dust settled on the organ and spread throughout the instrument. Some portions were weakened further by the temperature fluctuations caused by the 2019 heatwave in France that summer.

Restoration work on the Grand Organ was begun with the removal of its five-manual console, and will then proceed to the dismantling of all 8,000 pipes. This process will last until the end of the year. All of the disassembled items will be stored in waterproof containers inside the cathedral. Each piece will wait its turn to be cleaned and restored until the instrument can finally be reassembled. There is also a smaller Choir organ, which is used to accompany the mass. It suffered much more from the disaster and also has to be restored.



Preparations for the removal of the organ of Notre Dame, August 2020

Notre-Dame Cathedral hopes to restore the Grand Organ to the state it was in before the fire. After the restoration work is complete, it will still take about six months to voice and tune the Grand Organ before it can be played again. The goal for the Grand Organ's restoration is to have the work and tuning finished by 16th April 2024, to coincide with the Olympic Games being staged in Paris in 2024.



Notre Dame organ console being removed, August 2020

PS. The fascinating *Storyville* documentary referred to in the article can still be viewed via BBC iPlayer, and links this, and the follow-on documentary showing the work to restore the cathedral, are shown below:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000pic9/storyville-the-night-notredame-burned>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000hbdq/rebuilding-notredame-inside-the-great-cathedral-rescue>

Unique Metzler organ for Stadtcasino, Basel

The Stadtcasino in Basel Switzerland unusually contains a pipe organ and a world renowned acoustic, and for the last four years the building has been undergoing a renovation, to restore it to its 1905 appearance. This includes a new organ built into the original pipework façade by the Swiss organ builder Metzler Orgelbau based in Dietkon, near Zurich, the builder of the 1975 organ in Trinity College, Cambridge.



The new Metzler organ of the Stadtcasino Basel

The organ is inspired by both the French symphonic and English Town Hall styles, with 56 stops and 4073 pipes, and two consoles, one attached and one mobile.

A special feature is provided by a five-stop fifth division, a Winddynamische Orgel, developed by Metzler, used here for the first time in a concert hall organ. Due to its tracker action, this is only playable from the console positioned on the side of the instrument. The rest of the organ uses electric action. The Winddynamische Orgel can regulate the air supply in pipes with the expression pedal and vary the pressure freely. It is also possible to regulate the pipe air supply via the touch-sensitive keyboard; pressure can be changed during a note so the sound can create new floating aerial or percussive sounds, intended to stimulate contemporary composers to write new works. Depending upon how much pressure is applied to the keys when the Quintade and Terzade are drawn, the pipes play harmonics instead of the fundamental sound. In addition, the main part of the organ is equipped with a Winddrossel, a 'choking' device to reduce the air supply to the pipes.

The new organ was inaugurated at an Organ Festival 4-7th September 2020 by Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist), Vincent Dubois (Notre Dame de Paris), Iveta Apkalna (Elbphilharmonie Hamburg) and Martin Sander (Hochschule Basel).

Thomas Trotter honoured

It was announced on 22nd November that The Queen has approved the award of Her Majesty's Medal for Music for the year 2020 to Thomas Trotter, fifteen years to the day since the very first winner was honoured at Buckingham Palace. Awarded every year to an outstanding individual or group of musicians, The Queen's Medal for Music was first presented to Sir Charles Mackerras on November 22nd 2005, the feast day of St Cecilia, Patron Saint of music. The award came at the suggestion of former Master of The Queen's Music, the late Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.

The nominating process for the award is overseen by a committee chaired by the Master of The Queen's Music, Judith Weir. The committee meets annually to discuss their nominees before submitting its recommendation to The Queen for approval.

Commenting on the award, the Master of The Queen's Music, Judith Weir, said: "This year's medal salutes a world-famous organist who has done so much to widen and brighten the realm of this great instrument. Thomas Trotter's series of regular recitals over four decades as Birmingham City Organist is an inspiring example of civic engagement for all performing musicians."

On hearing of the award, Thomas Trotter said: "I am deeply honoured to be awarded The Queen's Medal for Music for 2020. To have my work recognised in this way is totally unexpected and highly gratifying, and it is a privilege to join the list of distinguished recipients of this award."

Dr Arthur Wills OBE obituary

The death has been announced of Dr Arthur William Wills OBE on 30th October 2020. He was Director of Music at

Ely Cathedral from 1958 until his retirement in 1990, having gone to Ely as Assistant Organist in 1949.



Dr Arthur Wills

Born in Coventry, he also held a Professorship at the Royal Academy of Music in London from 1964 until 1992. He has toured extensively as a recitalist in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong, and has broadcast, appeared on TV and made many recordings, both as a soloist and with the Ely Choir. He was a prolific composer of both organ and choral music. In celebration of his 75th birthday, Jeremy Filsell recorded a CD of his organ music on the organ of Tonbridge School Chapel

He was awarded his OBE in 1990.

Harrison & Harrison – major organ projects

I'm again 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. Stephen Alliss visited York on Tuesday 10th November to meet the voicers as they begin the work of bringing the instrument together into a cohesive sound. The layout changes will make this somewhat of a challenge, but at least the departments are sited as complete units now, unlike before.

Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia, USA

A new tracker action organ of 2 manuals and 22 stops. The organ is nearing completion on the building room floor at their workshop at Durham. 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, and work has now begun in earnest in the workshop, with installation 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 Cavallé-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.



Manchester Town Hall organ

The organ is being dismantled in 2020, with completion due by the end of 2023 to coincide in 2024 with the re-opening of Waterhouse's much-loved building. Take a look at a most interesting video recorded by concert organist Jonathan Scott in September 2018, showing the interior of the Town Hall of his home city, and demonstrating the organ in its current state:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fulV1pH_RHY

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, we will be undertaking major work on the instrument. The console will be removed for complete restoration and upgrading, including a new piston capture system and modern playing aids. A new solid-state electrical transmission will also be installed.

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.

Mander Organs Ltd - further update

Subsequent to the report in the last newsletter that F H Browne & Sons Ltd of Canterbury had acquired the trading name and intellectual property rights of Mander Organs Ltd, Stephen Bayley, MD of H Browne, has kindly furnished me with the following official announcement of their plans:

'F H Browne and Sons is proud to announce that it has acquired Mander Organs of London and, from 1st October 2020 will trade under the name Mander Organ Builders.

The acquisition of Mander Organs allows F H Browne, now in its 150th year, to continue recent growth within the organ building industry, reaching a wider market, and building on the collective expertise of both F H Browne and Mander. The company will maintain and extend the provision of all our existing services (new builds, restorations, tuning and maintenance, and coverings), led by the current F H Browne management team.

We are also delighted to welcome John Mander as Chairman of Mander Organ Builders, his expertise and insight will be invaluable to moving the business forward and will also demonstrate continuity with the Mander Organs business which has been successful in the UK and Internationally since the 1930s.

F H Browne moved to a new purpose-built workshop just outside Canterbury at the end of 2019, from where we will continue to base our operations.

All existing staff, of which four are former Mander employees, will continue in their current roles, providing service to existing valued customers'.

Institute of British Organ Building

For a last-minute Christmas present, the IBO *Organ Building Volume Twenty* will be published in December. Recommended by LDOA committee member Peter Morris, the book is a review of the year's organ building, with lavishly illustrated and interesting articles. When published, the journal will be available from the IBO webStore at:

<https://www.ibo.co.uk/webStore/organBuilding.php>

YOUTUBE BROADCASTS IN LIEU OF CANCELLED LIVE RECITALS

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

- Ashley Wagner's recital at Emmanuel Church Wyldes Green on Friday 13th November had to be moved on-line because of the lockdown, so to view the recital see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SilatkyCOJU> The monthly recitals from Friday 4th December are expected to resume as live events.
- *Sunday Afternoon Organ Music* at Holy Trinity Wordsley, performed by Paul Carr, was suspended after the March event. So, Paul Carr is continuing to perform a short programme at 3pm on the first Sunday of the month online. The videos are hosted on *Sunday Afternoon Organ Music's* Facebook page, which can be found at: www.facebook.com/SundayAfternoonOrganMusic
- Paul Carr's 'Thursday Live' series of recitals on the first Thursday of the month at St Chad's Cathedral continue to be broadcast live, featuring both Paul Carr and David Saint, and with the most recent one on 1st November 2020 available via YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3tPBR8ANQ0&t=22s>
- 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, concert organist, is continuing to live stream regular recitals via YouTube, with the most recent ones being at Holy Name Church, Manchester, on 24th October, Royal Northern College of Music (where he spent his formative years studying piano and organ) on 31st October, and two on-line recitals at Ellesmere College, playing the Schulze organ in the 'Big School' Hall on 14th November, followed by the Hill Norman & Beard organ of the Chapel on 21st November.
- Richard McVeigh continues to give frequent on-line broadcasts via *Beauty in Sound* on YouTube, mainly on his home Hauptwerk organ, on which he can access sample sets of a number of different notable organs.
- Southwell Minster's usual summer weekly organ recitals series started on 5th August 2020, but has had to move to on-line only. Played by Rector Chori Paul Provost, the full series can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=southwell+minster+organ+recitals+2020

JONATHAN SCOTT ORGAN TRANSCRIPTION SCORES

Anyone who has heard concert organist Jonathan Scott play can't help but be impressed by his virtuosic playing, and in particular his skilful transcriptions for organ of orchestral pieces, including some major works, many his own imaginative arrangements.

If you're not familiar with Jonathan's playing of organ transcriptions, take a look at the following:

- *Beethoven Symphony No 5* (complete), on the two Rieger organs of the Basilica of St. Lambertus, Düsseldorf, Germany, to celebrate the 250th anniversary this year of Beethoven's birth:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkhoLRaUaYE&feature=youtu.be>

- *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Paul Dukas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7IF6o85y6U&feature=youtu.be>
- Saint-Saens' *Organ Symphony No 3 in C Minor* (complete) performed at Victoria Hall, Hanley: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QT7dQy2YT6Y&t=133s>
- *1812 Overture Op 49* by Tchaikovsky: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qO_h00i6s0Q&feature=youtu.be

With time in lockdown to take on learning new pieces, you might want to consider tackling one of Jonathan's own arrangements for organ of an orchestral work? If so, then over 80 scores of his arrangements for organ solo are available to purchase (as a Pdf sent to you by email) via his website at:

<http://www.scottbrothersduo.com/SCORES.htm>

A very useful feature of the website is that you can click on a score and be linked to a YouTube video of Jonathan performing the arrangement, to check you like it before purchasing the score.

Jonathan has also done his own compositions for organ, as solo organ pieces, or others as organ and piano duets. So if, like me, you are partial to a flashy toccata, take a look at the score of his composition *Fantasy Toccata*, which can be viewed via:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpPraYPAZug&feature=youtu.be>

I've heard Jonathan play this piece in recital, but never heard it played by anyone else, which is rather a shame as it's a worthy composition deserving of wider exposure.

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Members

Ann Tomlin joined us in March 2020 (just in time for the first lockdown!), so cancellation of all our activities since then means that we've had no opportunity to meet and get to know her. Ann took up our suggestion to new members to share with us something of their musical activities, and hence the story below of her 'journey' to now playing the organ at All Saints' Sudbury:

'It goes back to when I was five. I had just started school as there were no pre-school in those days, and Dad found me tinkling on his mother's piano. Granny died in 1945, so I never knew her, and her piano had stood in the spare bedroom till I took an interest in it in about 1970/71. Mum asked at school if I could join a music group to learn to read music, as neither her nor Dad were musical. The school had a recorder group, and I remember Mum taking me to the local music shop to buy a recorder. They were all wooden, and it cost the grand sum of £1, which in today's money is about £15. Mum did mutter to me that I'd better work hard at learning it, as £1 was a lot of money. Dad's wages at the time were £15 per week. The recorder teacher turned out to be a concert violinist so she asked three of us if we'd like to learn the violin, and we were given letters to take home for our parents to give

permission. Dad was chuffed, as he commented his mother's only regret was not learning the violin when she had the chance. Permission was promptly given. I played the violin at my first school concert that Christmas at the grand age of six.

In the meantime, dad had asked at the local music shop if the piano could be tuned, and found it was going to cost £200-300, as bits had rotted due to not being used. Dad could only afford £100, so the man at the music shop suggested a new electric state of the art organ, which had been designed by Bontempi and was the best in its price range. My disabled sister took an interest in this, especially as the volume could be turned up very loud and she thought it was funny to annoy Mum playing it as loudly as possible. After a few weeks, Mum asked at the music shop how much lessons would be, and would he be OK about teaching her disabled daughter. Susan had a short-term memory, so you had to repeat things to her a few times so she could remember what to do. Susan progressed so well that Stan asked Mum and Dad if they could afford a better organ with pedals. Dad told Stan he could afford to pay £3000. Stan told Dad that the £5000 organ he had in the shop was sold, and a £1500 deposit had been paid, but he hadn't seen the buyer since then, which had been two months previously. If the buyer didn't fetch it, he was happy for Dad to buy it at £3500 with a £3000 deposit, and Dad could pay the £500 when he could afford it.

Then at 13, Susan decided she didn't want to have lessons anymore. Mum and Dad didn't really like stopping the lessons, but Stan said he couldn't guarantee when he would have another slot once that was taken, as he was well respected as a teacher and had a waiting list. I heard the conversation, and asked if I could have lessons instead. I had been playing the euphonium at the high school, but hadn't played anything since. Then if Susan wanted lessons again, she could. I was 16 and had lessons until I was 23. Then I didn't play for 25 years, as my life went in a different direction.

I went to live in the Highlands of Scotland, near Inverness in 2012. In 2013 I went to college at The School of Forestry. It was here someone mentioned they played the piano, and her Mum had brought her a keyboard so she could practise while at college. I mentioned I used to play the organ. Caitlin asked me why didn't I buy a keyboard. I couldn't afford much, so I looked online and found Argos sold keyboards. I did a bit of research and decided the best one in my price range was the Casio CTX with 49 keys for £80. I found I could play simple tunes straight away, but couldn't concentrate for more than 15 minutes at a time. I deferred from college due to the doctor thinking I had sleep apnoea, and in 2014 I was diagnosed with chronic tiredness syndrome. The specialist told me I had to keep to a strict routine as I had a chronic sleep pattern. I must get up at the same time every day, and stay awake anyway I could so I was tired enough to sleep. I moved back to the Midlands area in 2017.

I carried on playing the keyboard and I had also brought a second-hand violin for £20 online through Gumtree. The music helped to lift my spirits, and keeping to a routine with my sleep meant that gradually I could practice for 30 minutes, then an hour. The thing that has dampened my spirits was people who didn't understand why I couldn't

practice for at least an hour every day. One person in an orchestra got quite nasty when I played a C instead of C sharp on the violin. 'It would help if you practised', is what I was told. I just wanted to play the violin because I enjoy playing, and practice when my concentration allows me to. Sometimes when I've had a bad day and I am feeling absolutely whacked out when I get home, I have my dinner, sort out the dog and then I can be in bed by 5pm. This means I can't always practice, because I'm just too tired. I have found that people generally understand if they have had to use a CD player instead of having an organist play real music, which is how I began playing at Potters Marston Church. I now play in groups with people who really do understand.

My concentration is now good enough that in September I started the Open University Degree in Music. The degree is mainly theory, so I thought I'd see if I could do the ABRSMs exams for the violin. I am having lessons on the violin with a teacher who is a professional viola player, Hungyu Chen. She is used to teaching children in schools, so she's told me not to worry about the amount of practice I put in. I am back playing a brass instrument, the B^b Bass, with the *Lutterworth Town Band*, who've played something simple so I can play every note. *The Rusty Players* part of the *People's Orchestra* also play pieces everyone can play all or most of the notes.

I have joined this Association, and saw the advert in the newsletter for organ lessons with Callum Alger on the newly refurbished organ at St Peter's Collegiate Church in Wolverhampton. I thought I'd like to pass the RCO exams, so I e-mailed Callum. Before my first lesson, Callum told me not to worry about not having pedals to practice on at home, as I would first need to get used to the organ generally. That gave me the confidence to enquire at All Saints' Church, Sudbury, if they still needed an organist to fill the vacancy advertised in the Association newsletter. They did, and now I am playing the organ there because they think their organ deserves to be played.



Ann Tomlin at the Nicholson & Lord organ of All Saints' Sudbury

My Mum and Dad are no longer here in person, but I believe they are with me in spirit. Dad used to love going to different church services to hear the organ being played. Even though he didn't read music, he appreciated that each organ sounded different. Dad was always hopeful that I would play a real organ one day, as he regarded the organ at home a poor substitute for a real church pipe organ.

Callum laughed, as he had started by playing the piano, when I told him that my auntie had brought her next-door neighbour to listen to me play at the farm all those years ago. Her neighbour, who was a concert pianist, regarded organists as failed pianists. Listening to an audio book on BACH I would say the opposite is true.

My disabled sister taught me at a very early age that no matter what disabilities you have, everyone is good at something. It always amused my dad that she could play a two-manual organ, with about 20 tabs and 17 pedals, but couldn't learnt to drive a car with one steering wheel, one gear lever and 3 pedals!
Ann Tomlin

Ed. Mention by Ann of St Peter's Wolverhampton, if any members are interested, the illustrated book on the history of the organs of St Peter's Collegiate Church Wolverhampton is available from Peter Morris, 8A Newbridge Crescent, Wolverhampton, WV6 0LN. Price £5

[RECENT LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS REVIEWS](#)

Nicholas Freestone recital at Worcester Cathedral Thursday 8th October 2020

With so few recitals to review, I'm indebted to John Allen for a brief review of one of the few recitals in the local area before the lockdown struck. Today's recitalist was Nicholas Freestone, Assistant Director of Music at Worcester Cathedral, and with the Tickell organ still out of action, playing the Rodgers Trillium 967 digital organ.

I didn't know but today was the 150th birthday of Vierne, so as you might guess, we had an all French programme. The recital was well attended – I would say 60 to 70. Nicholas went on at length with comments on his programme, entitled *Louis Vierne & his Contemporaries*, and a life history of Vierne.

The programmed comprised Vierne's *Carillon sur la sonnerie du carillon de la chapelle du Château de Longpont (24 Pieces en style libre Op 31)*, then *Cantabile* by Franck, Vierne's *Romance from Symphony No 4 Op 32*, Duruflé's *Fugue sur le thème du Carillon des Heures de la Cathédrale de Soissons Op 12*, followed by Widor's *Cantabile from Symphony No 4 Op 42 No 2*.

To close, Nicholas returned to Vierne, playing *Carillon de Westminster Op 54 No 6*, with the usual Henry Willis story about the origins of this piece!
John Allen

[VACANCIES](#)

Organist required for St John's Hospital Chapel, Lichfield

The organist of St John's for nearly 50 years, Clive R Ratcliffe, is retiring at the end of the year. They have one Sung Eucharist each Sunday at 9.30am, and are looking for an organist who might be interested in playing regularly, or even not so regularly. The 2 manual 18 stop organ was built by Hill Norman & Beard in 1972, and has direct electric action. They would be willing to pay an honorarium, or on an ad hoc basis.

Please contact the Master, The Revd Helen M Barton, by e-mail on helen@the-bartons.com or on 07549 113371.

NB. Organist & choir-leader vacancy at All Saints' Church, Sudbury is now filled.

FORTHCOMING LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS

LDOA Members' Recitals/Events

Angela Sones, Director of Music at All Saints' Church Four Oaks is giving the recital at Emmanuel Church Wyldes Green on Friday 7th May 2021 at 1pm.

Recitals In Local Area (To end of January 2021)

The main website for listing organ recitals nationally www.organrecitals.com has opened up again, and the few currently listed for our area are shown below, now also including details of local on-line only recitals (clearly marked to avoid wasted journeys!).

December 2020

Thurs 3 December 2020 • 1.15 to 1.45 • St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham Cathedral – **ON-LINE ONLY**
David Saint (St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham) & Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Frid 4 December 2020 • 1.00 to 1.45 • Emmanuel Wyldes Green – **NOTE, NOW ON-LINE ONLY**
Dylan McCaig (Liverpool Cathedral)

Frid 4 December 2020 • 12.40 to 1.20 • St Chad's Shrewsbury (Note - booking required)
Anthony Pinel (St Chad's, Shrewsbury)

Sun 6 December 2020 • 3.00 to 3.20 • Holy Trinity, Wordsley – **ON-LINE ONLY**
Paul Carr (Birmingham)

January 2021

Sat 2 January 2021 • 5.00 to 6.00 • Guild Chapel, Stratford-upon-Avon
Douglas Keilitz (Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon)

Sun 3 January 2021 • 3.00 to 3.20 • Holy Trinity, Wordsley – **ON-LINE ONLY**
Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Thurs 7 January 2021 • 1.15 to 1.45 • St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham Cathedral – **ON-LINE ONLY**
David Saint (St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham) & Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Sun 10 January 2021 • 6.15 to 7.15 • Derby Cathedral
Alexander Binns (Derby Cathedral) - Messiaen: La Nativité du Seigneur

MUSIC & SPIRITUALITY

LDOA member Bernard Salter has kindly offered to share with members the following article he's submitted to *Laudate*, the magazine of the Guild of Church Musicians, on one of the *Bach Cantatas (BWV 106)*:

MUSIC and SPIRITUALITY

The Sacred Cantatas of J.S. Bach

1. Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit

God's Time is Best

BWV 106 ('ACTUS TRAGICUS')

Bernard Salter

Bernard Salter writes: -

There are many ways in which music can mediate the divine. The sacred cantatas of J.S. Bach are a supreme example. It is hoped that this article will help readers of our Newsletter to appreciate one particular Cantata, written in Bach's youth. To get the best from my comments, you are urged to listen (as you read) to a recording of the Cantata, unless you already know the music well. A number of recordings are available on CDs, but for quick access, you could just google **BWV 106 (videos)**. This will offer you a choice including the following: -

A. The Netherlands Bach Society, conducted by Jos van Veldhoven

<https://www.bachvereniging.nl/en/bwv/bwv-106/>

B. The Schola Cantorum of Basel, directed (from the organ) by Ana Maria Fonseca

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2K42gs0Qmg0>

C. The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir directed by Ton Koopman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2i5O923PzeQ>

D. The Hanover Boys Choir, with Collegium Vocale of Ghent, directed by Gustav Leonhard

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snqxsCFY48U>



In both A and B the chorus consists purely of the four soloists, and there is a live audience. C is performed in an otherwise empty church. In D you do not see the performers, but you can follow the music (with lyrics and translations) on a scrolling score. The approximate duration of the Cantata on all recordings is 20 minutes.

oOoOoOoOo

This cantata is thought to have been written in 1707 (when Bach was aged 22) for the funeral of one of his uncles. The subject-matter is death, but (in spite of the sub-title *Actus Tragicus*) the work is in no way gloomy. The text (whose author is not known for certain) makes a comparison between the Old Testament attitude to death and the more positive approach of the Gospels, as epitomised in the words of Jesus to the penitent thief 'Today you will be with me in paradise' (Luke 23:43).

Whilst I believe that BWV 106 is undoubtedly a good starting point for getting to know and enjoy the Bach Cantatas, it is not *typical* of the genre. Indeed, it is hard to find a typical Cantata, because Bach varies the format so much. This one is similar to the others in terms of length; and some of them, like this one, have an instrumental prelude. The theme of death is also very common in the texts which Bach uses: it should be noted that, in his day, death was much more difficult to hide or ignore than it is in our modern society, and Bach (so far as we can tell) shared the view of death that is common to all Christian theology, namely that it is a gateway to a greater life. He is therefore able to set texts about death in a major key; but at the same time (as is clear in this Cantata) he does not ignore the painful realities of suffering and loss. Just as in the other Cantatas, we have here an abundance of actual quotations of phrases or verses from the Bible; but often (as in most of the Cantatas) these seem to be given an equal status with the non-scriptural words, and specifically Lutheran doctrines, of the lyricist.

This Cantata is unusual in the way that its central movements are split into so many different (and short) sections. It is also untypical in that it contains no *recitatives* or self-contained *arias*. The first part of Section 3 is sometimes described as an aria, and this is the term I have used in the notes which follow; but it turns out to be the beginning of a duet between the Alto and Bass soloists. The term *arioso* (used for several of the other sections) might therefore be more appropriate. Here is my detailed commentary on the four movements: -

1 SONATINA

This beautiful instrumental introduction (for two recorders, two violas da gamba, 'cello and organ) begins solemnly, but the mood is lightened by the lovely 'pastoral' melodies of the recorders, as they intertwine with each other. The viola da gamba was a precursor of the modern 'cello: Bach wrote sonatas for the viola da gamba, but its use in his vocal music is rare, the most noted example being its occurrence in the St Matthew Passion as the obbligato instrument for the bass aria towards the end of Part 2 ('Come, healing cross' in most English versions). The instrument that we usually describe as the 'recorder' should more correctly be called the *blockflöte* or wooden flute. Here the two flutes play in unison for most of the movement, but their lines diverge occasionally. It has been suggested that Bach associated the viola da gamba with death, perhaps because he was aware that (following the invention of the 'cello) the older instrument was dying out! It has also been suggested that the flutes in this movement are a musical representation of doves, thus symbolizing God the Holy Spirit.

2 (i) CHORUS

Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit. *God's time is the best time of all .*

A very positive opening statement, in a lively style, or on some recordings more solemn.

In ihm leben, weben, und sind wir, solange er will.

In him we live and move and have our being, as long as he wills it.

A quotation from Acts 17:28, with a little gloss by the lyricist after the comma. Note the increase in tempo, plus Bach's running quavers when he sets the words *live and move*, and also the long held note on **lange long**.

In ihm sterben wir zur rechten Zeit, wenn er will.

In him we die, at the right time, when he wishes.

Here the pace slows, and the harmony is much darker, as the painful realities of death are confronted.

2 (ii) ARIOSO (Tenor)

Ach, Herr, lehre uns bedenken, daß wir sterben müssen, auf daß wir klug werden.

O Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

The text here is a quotation from Psalm 90:12, one of the classic Old Testament statements about human mortality.

2 (iii) ARIOSO (Bass)

Bestelle dein Haus; den du wirst sterben und nicht lebendig bleiben!

Set your house in order, for you will die and not live.

This famous phrase comes from Isaiah 38:1, where the prophet is telling King Hezekiah that he must get ready to die. A notable feature of the music here is the way in which the restless semiquavers of the accompaniment suggest that time is rapidly fleeing.

2 (iv) CHORUS & ARIOSO (Soprano)

Es ist der alte Bund: Mensch, du mußt sterben!

This is the old covenant: Man you must die!

Ja, komm, Herr Jesu! Yes, come, Lord Jesus!

This section might be described as the turning point of the whole composition. It starts with a text about dying under the old covenant, based on Ecclesiasticus 14:17. The music is the beginning of a slow fugue, sung by the three lower voices, in a deliberately archaic style to represent the old order. After 15 bars the fugal music is answered by the Soprano, announcing the new covenant brought about by Christ's victory over death; the words are from Revelation 22:20, the final words of the Bible. The fugue is then resumed, in ever shorter and more repetitious phrases, with *melismas* on **sterben die**, and is then combined with the Soprano solo, leading to an intense climax. A few bars after the Soprano solo begins, and as the gambas enter again, there is a 'hidden' chorale, played by the flutes (hardly audible on some recordings). This may have been one of the hymns which were traditionally sung at Lutheran funerals; the version of the chorale which Bach uses here begins as follows, and is shown with the words traditionally associated with it: -



Ich hab' mein' Sach' Gott heim - ge - stellt: er machs mit mir, wies ihm ge - fällt.....

I have entrusted my case to God; let him do with me as he chooses....

3. ARIA (Alto), ARIOSO (Bass), CHORALE

In deine Hände befehl ich meinen Geist; du hast mich erlöset, Herr, du getreuer Gott.

Into your hand I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth.

The text of the Alto aria is from Psalm 31:5—one of the Seven Last Words quoted by Jesus on the cross. The five-syllable phrase **In deine Hände** is reflected by Bach in the little scales of the continuo part (played on organ and 'cello) - five fingers representing one hand!

Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein.

Today you shall be with me in paradise.

This is perhaps the most memorable section of the whole cantata, where we have the voice of Christ, represented by the Bass soloist, using a sentence from Luke 23:43, the words of the dying Jesus to the penitent thief. Notice the 'heavenly' heights to which the bass part ascends! Notice also how the word **Paradies** is repeated many times (7 times in the first sequence alone) and accentuated even further with the *melisma* shown below. The accompaniment shows that the *melisma* is just an ornamentation of the rising scale in the continuo part, and the fact that it is a *rising* scale is also symbolic.



Bass Solo
Pa - ra - dies, im Pa - ra - dies - ra - dies - sein
Continuo

Immediately after this cadence (about half-way through the Bass solo) there is another chorale: -

Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin in Gottes Willen.

**Getrost ist mir mein Herz und Sinn, sanft und stille,
wie Gott mir verheißten hat: der Tod ist mein Schlaf worden.**

With peace and joy I go there, by God's will. My heart and mind are consoled, mellow and tranquil, as God has promised me: death has become like sleep to me.

This is Luther's 'deathbed' hymn, written in 1524, and the chorale melody (shown below) is voiced by the Alto(s) in long notes. The final part of this section has been described as 'truly breath-taking': the Bass solo (the voice of Christ) comes to a stop whilst the chorale continues *pianissimo* on the word **stille** tranquil, and a little later the music comes to an almost complete halt on the word **Schlaf** sleep - another moment of great beauty.

Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr da-hin in Got-tes Wil - len, ge - trost ist mir mein
Herz_____ und Sinn, sanft und stil - le, wie Gott mir ver -
hei - Ben hat: der Tod ist mein Schlaf wor - den.

4. CHORUS

**Glorie, Lob, Ehr und Herrlichkeit
Sei dir Gott, Vater und Sohn bereit',
Dem Heiligen Geist mit Namen !**

**Die göttlich Kraft
Mach uns sieghaft**

Durch Jesum Christum. Amen.

Glory, praise, honour and majesty be given to you O God, Father and Son, and to the Holy Spirit above all. The divine power makes us victorious through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The final chorus, praising the Trinity, has a calm but joyful beginning, with an unusual, but not unique, syncopated (off the beat) accompaniment, and instrumental echoes after each line. The music features yet another chorale: "In dich hab' ich gehoffet, Herr" (see below). The text is from a hymn by Adam Reusner, written in 1533. Some brief details of Reusner's life can be found at www.bach-cantatas.com/Lib/Reusner.htm where there is also a link to the full text of this chorale. The movement concludes with an energetic section in fugal style on **durch Jesum Christum, through Jesus Christ, Amen**, with snatches of the chorale melody in long notes, and one of Bach's more abrupt endings!

The chorale melody is shown here with the words of Reusner's opening verse:

In dich hab' ich_____ ge - hof - fet, Herr; hilf, daß ich nicht zu - schan - den werd noch
e - wig - lich zu Spot - te. Das bitt ich dich: er -
hal - te mich in dei - ner Treu,_____ mein Got - te

I have put my hope in you, Lord. Help me to avoid disgrace and everlasting scorn. This I beg of you: keep me in your faithfulness, my God.

The Cantata uses the words of the final verse of the hymn—a doxology.

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Ed. – the next newsletter is planned for February 2021, with a deadline for submission of items for inclusion of 24/01/21, to Trevor Smedley by e-mail as above, or by mail to 8 The Parchments, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7NA