

## DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

### FORTHCOMING LDOA VISITS/EVENTS

LDOA 2022 visits/events so far planned are:

#### Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – visit to Holy Trinity Wordsley and St Bartholomew's, Penn

Holy Trinity, Wordsley

Guests of Paul Carr and LDOA member Paul Hodgetts, our visit to Holy Trinity Wordsley will commence at 1.30pm. The IIP/36 organ originally dates from 1838 by Bevington, and has been the subject of rebuilds and improvements over the years, the most recent improvements being by Trevor Tipple and Nicholson & Co. Paul Carr gives monthly organ recitals on this fine organ for his monthly *Sunday Afternoon Organ Music* series.



The console of the organ of Holy Trinity, Wordsley

#### St Bartholomew's, Penn

En route home, after six miles we stop off at St Bartholomew's, Penn, for a visit commencing at 3.30pm. The IIP/21 organ was rebuilt by Nicholson in 1974, and replaced an 1872 Walker organ. Our visit ends at 4.30pm.

For full details of addresses and locations, see the APPENDIX to this newsletter.



The organ of St Bartholomew's, Penn (Photo courtesy of Paul Carr/Paul Hodgetts)

#### Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022 – visit to St Martin in the Bull Ring and St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

St Martin in the Bull Ring, Birmingham

Our visit commences at 10.30am where Stephen Blair-Chapell will meet us and show us the IVP/68 organ. Originally a three-manual instrument built on the north side of the chancel by Harrison & Harrison in 1907, in 1954 it was restored and rebuilt in the north transept as a four-manual organ with an electric console by Compton.

St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

A few minutes' walk takes us to St Philip's Cathedral for a visit at the kind invitation of Ashley Wagner, Organist & Assistant Head of Music, commencing at 12.30pm to play the fine IVP/68 organ, originally by Schwarbrick, rebuilt by Nicholson. Visit ends at 3pm.

#### May 2022

Visit details to be confirmed.

## **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2022 – visit to At Andrew’s Church Rugby and Rugby School**

What promises to be a terrific day in Rugby, visiting two venues with no less than five organs between them!

First, at the invitation of Director of Music Dr Richard Dunster-Sigtermans, a visit commencing at 11am to St Andrew’s Church in the centre of Rugby, where there’s a IIP/48 organ, completely rebuilt by Hill, Norman & Beard in 1963, and more recently overhauled by Peter Spencer in 2005-7.

Then, with plenty of eateries in the centre of Rugby to choose from for lunch, a five-minute walk takes us to the prestigious Rugby School, the home of rugby, but also home to no less than four organs. Visit commencing at 1.30pm at the invitation of Director of Music Richard Tanner.

In the breathtakingly beautiful School Chapel, there is a magnificent IVP/55 Kenneth Jones & Associates organ, on which the opening recital was given by Nicholas Kynaston in 2001. Nicholson has recently carried out a refurbishment, and the re-opening recital by the international concert organist David Briggs took place on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 7.30pm.

There is also a IIP/32 Bryceson organ in the Temple Speech Room, a IIP/6 Harrison & Harrison organ in the Memorial Chapel, and a IIP/5 Škrabl of Slovenia organ in the Music School.

## **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021 – visit to the Chapel of St John without Barrs, Lichfield for 2022 AGM and workshop (provisional)**

Visit to the Chapel of St John without Barrs, Lichfield, hosted by LDOA student member and Organist at St John’s, Liam Condon, for our 2022 AGM, a workshop led by Liam, and an opportunity afterwards to play the IIP/18 Hill Norman & Beard organ.

## **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – visit to Shrewsbury Abbey and St Chad’s, Shrewsbury**

### Shrewsbury Abbey

Two visits organised by Peter Morris with the first visit hosted by Organist Nigel Pursey, commencing at 11am to play the IIP/32 Hill organ, which has just had a £200k restoration by GO Organbuilders of Herefordshire. The re-opening recital on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021 was due to have been given by Thomas Trotter before his arm injury, so James McVinnie stood in.

### St Chad’s, Shrewsbury

The second visit is to St Chad’s Shrewsbury, with its central hall, a sweeping double staircase to the gallery (more like a country house than a church), and its unique circular nave. The visit commences at around 1.45pm, hosted by Director of Music Anthony Pinel, to play the fine IIP/40 organ originally by Norman & Beard, rebuilt by Nicholson in 1963, and then by H & H in 2011.

## **RECENT VISITS/EVENTS**

### **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2021 – President’s Evening at Lichfield Cathedral**

President’s Evening 2020 was a casualty of Covid-19 restrictions, so it was a great relief when our President and host for this evening’s event announced that it could go ahead this year, albeit under the Cathedral’s Covid-19 protocol of wearing masks, social distancing, and forgoing our usual refreshments.



The magnificent Hill organ of Lichfield Cathedral

This event is always one of the highlights of our year, and the 21 members and guests attending proved, if every it was in doubt, that the ‘draw’ of the event is the opportunity to meet with Martyn and, with his support, be let loose on the magnificent Hill organ, rather than the sumptuous cakes and drinks normally on offer!

Having met at the West door, Martyn led us down to the crossing, where socially distanced chairs had been set out for us. With the need to observe Covid-19 protocol, including no more than two people in the organ loft at any one time, the event had to be rather more structured than normal, and so members had been asked to confirm if they wished to play, and what they were planning to play. This enabled Richard Syner/Martyn Rawles to put together a programme to show the order in which members would play, and what.



Socially distanced and masked LDOA members at Lichfield Cathedral

The programme also included a useful reminder of the history of the organs of Lichfield Cathedral from that of Robert Dallum (1639), to the organs of Thomas Swarbrick (1740), Samuel Green (1790), George Holdich (1861), the rebuilds by Hill (1884 & 1908), a new console by Hill Norman & Beard (1974), and finally Harrison & Harrison's addition of a nave division in 2000 to mark the 1300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first church dedicated to St Chad. The programme had the benefit of obviating doubts about who was at the console and trying to guess what was being played, an arrangement that worked well for this event, and which we will no doubt employ again next year.

So, with 12 members keen to play, no time was lost in getting things under way, with Mike Rudd getting us off to a rousing start with Guilment's *Sonata No 4 in D Minor, Op.61: Allegro assai*. Next to two gentle pieces with first *Sheep May Safely Graze (from J S Bach's Cantata BWV 208)*, played by Rosemary Bridge, followed by Healey Willan's *Soliloquy* played by Tony Parker.

Next to Angela Sones for the delightful quicksilver *Impromptu* from Vierne's *24 Pieces de Fantaisie (3ième suite)*. Then to our two youngest student members, brothers William and George Eardley-Taylor, making their first visit with us, who have lessons with Liam Condon. They both chose pieces from *Eight Short Preludes & Fugues*, attributed to J S Bach, with William playing *Prelude & Fugue in F BWV 556* followed by George playing *Prelude & Fugue in A BWV 559*. Then to Peter King, playing *Gavotte in F* by one of Peter's favourite composers S S Wesley.

John Carvell played his own variations and improvisation on the hymn tune *Woodlands*, before handing over to Richard Syner, as usual finding something out of the ordinary, playing *Gaudeamus* by Frank Maurice Jephson. Trevor Smedley played the final two movements *Andante recitativo & Allegro vivace* from Mendelssohn's *Sonata No 1 in F minor*, followed by Ian Boddington playing a nicely judged performance of Sir George Thalben-Ball's *Elegy*.

The evening ended with a thrilling performance by Paul Hodgetts of a piece often chosen to close a recital, the challenging *Final* from *Symphonie No 1 in D Minor Op 14* by Vierne.

Our thanks to all who put themselves forward to play for us this evening, and in particular to Martyn Rawles both for getting the Cathedral's permission to host the event, and for his invaluable assistance with registrations, making the most of our efforts to master the 4 manual 82 stop Hill organ.

A most enjoyable evening, providing at long last the opportunity to finally meet a number of members joining us during the Covid-19 restrictions, including our two youngest student members. We look forward to making a return visit next year, when hopefully normal socialising plus cakes and drinks will also return, Covid-19 permitting!  
TS

### **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – visit to All Saints' Church Alrewas, and presentation by Stephen Alliss**

Our visit this afternoon to All Saints' Church was courtesy of Rev John Allan, who having just contracted Covid was

unable to join us today, but LDOA member Chris Greenhalgh, Organist at All Saints' for some 52 years, stood in admirably to host our visit.

There has been a flurry of major cathedral organ rebuilds in the last few years, so it was opportune that today's visit commenced with a unique opportunity for members to hear a presentation on these major projects by Harrison & Harrison's Head Tuner, Stephen Alliss. Stephen has had links with LDOA over a number of years, as before he joined Harrison & Harrison, he was Organist and DoM of St Michael's Church Lichfield, and was at that time a member of our Association. Stephen learned his trade from LDOA member and local organ builder Mike Thompson, for whom he worked for some 25 years as a contractor, during which time another LDOA member, Clive Smith, in the audience today, often assisted with holding down notes for Stephen when tuning local organs.

After a short delay, and with thanks to Ian Wilkinson for standing in at short notice to provide technical support, Stephen commenced his presentation, supported by screened photos of organs and pipework, showing some of the challenges faced by the organ tuner when tuning large organs.

First to the Willis organ of Salisbury Cathedral, where Stephen spent the first three months of 2020, and the last cathedral organ in the UK to still use cone tuning. Next to St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, then King's College Cambridge, where the rebuild project had to be timed to ensure the organ was back in action for the world-famous BBC Christmas broadcast, a task not helped when asbestos was found during the work. Then to Corpus Christie Oxford followed by Westminster Abbey, which Stephen visits twice a month for tuning.



Stephen Alliss presenting to LDOA members at All Saints' Church, Alrewas (Photo courtesy Colin J Brookes)

During the first lockdown, all tuning work was suspended, but after a tuning visit to Temple Church, word got around that H & H were in London, and requests for tuning visits to a number of other major London venues followed.

Another famous H & H organ in London of course is at the Royal Festival Hall, with its exposed pipework stretching across the entire front of the hall, the sound of which Stephen described as 'brutal, and an assault on the ears when tuning'. Next to another famous London venue, St Paul's Cathedral, where Stephen recounted the circumstances of how this famous Willis organ came to

have a Wurlitzer trumpet. It appears that when it came to adding a special Trompette Militaire to his flagship instrument, Henry Willis III had ordered the stop from Midmer-Losh in America, but they were snowed under with the Atlantic City organ at the time (1930), and so in turn subcontracted manufacture of the stop to Wurlitzer, who supplied a standard Wurlitzer brass trumpet as used in their cinema organs! For this organ Stephen went on to explain that tuning keyboards are used with each department of the organ when tuning.

After Exeter Cathedral, it was back closer to home for Stephen's tuning visits to the Lichfield Cathedral organ, Stephen showing photos of tuning at night at Lichfield and also at Hereford Cathedral.

During lockdown, Stephen's kitchen at home was called into service as a stand-in workshop. At Balliol College Oxford and Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, Covid restrictions were overcome by Stephen and his eldest son Harry teaming up for organ tuning. Harry lives in London, and assists the London team as well as working with Stephen on extended projects, and indeed his youngest son William is also doing some casual work as a note holder. Next, to the recently completed £2m rebuild of the organ of York Minster, where Stephen commented that the 32' Ophicleide is indeed just as powerful as the famed 32' Tuba Mirabilis.

Finally, Stephen's work takes him all over the UK, from such at Exeter Cathedral in the south to Paisley Abbey in Scotland, but as Harrison & Harrison are now building their largest new organ for some 60 years (since that of Coventry Cathedral) for Christ Church, Greenwich, Connecticut, USA, it looks as though he will be making a trip further afield, to the States for tuning of the four manual 86-stop organ in 2022.



New member Andrew Moser at the organ of All Saints', Alrewas

After Stephen's presentation, there was an opportunity for members to play the 1882 2-manual 19-stop Brindley & Foster tracker action organ, rebuilt by Hawkins in 1977, and now maintained by LDOA member Mike Thompson. Ian Boddington, new member Andrew Moser, Peter King, Mike Rudd and Colin Brookes took advantage of the playing offer, whilst other members perused the donated surplus organ scores brought along to the event by Richard Syner.

A most interesting visit, enjoyed by an exceptionally good turnout of some 23 members and guests, including we were delighted to see some from Derby & District Organists' Association.

Our thanks to Stephen Alliss for his most illuminating presentation, and to Chris Greenhalgh and All Saints' Alrewas for the luxury of a warm church and hot drinks for a November visit!  
TS

### **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – Annual Dinner**

Last year's Annual Dinner became a casualty of Covid-19 restrictions, so it was good that not only were we able to hold our dinner, at The Owl at Lichfield, but that there was such excellent support from 23 members and guests.



Members and guests enjoying festive fayre at The Owl at Lichfield



The organ of All Saints' Alrewas, with Chris Greenhalgh assisting

Seated in the conservatory, excellent festive fayre and socialising was enjoyed by all, and considering the restaurant was surprisingly busy for a mid-week evening in November, the service from the staff was commendable. Our thanks to Richard Syner for organising a good start to the festive season! TS

## [LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL NEWS/EVENTS](#)

### Advent & Christmas Services and Events

For full details of the Cathedral's Advent & Christmas services and events see: <https://www.lichfield-cathedral.org/advent-christmas/special-services>

### Lichfield Cathedral Chorus Concerts

- Concert: *A Thrill of Hope* – 7pm Saturday 4th December 2021 at Lichfield Cathedral. After two long and concert-less years Lichfield Cathedral Chorus finally returns for a bumper concert of choral music with a mixture of some well-known favourites from the repertoire and a few lesser-known gems. Directed by Ben Lamb with LDOA student member Liam Condon at the organ, they are also delighted to welcome highly commended *BBC Young Chorister* Josie Sim as soloist in an evening of hope and celebration as they look forward to exciting times ahead. Admission free with retiring collection.
- Carol Concert with the Salvation Army Cannock Citadel Band – 7.30 pm Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at Lichfield Cathedral.

### Bishop Jonathan dies

Tributes have been paid to the 98th Bishop of Lichfield, the Rt Revd Jonathan Gledhill, following his death on Monday 1 November.

Bishop Jonathan, aged 72, was Bishop of Lichfield from 2003 to until his retirement in 2015, and the Bishop of Southampton prior to that, from 1996 to 2003. Shortly before his retirement, he announced that he had Parkinson's Disease. Following his retirement, Bishop Jonathan moved to Canterbury with his wife Jane. At one time, Bishop Jonathan was an honorary member of our Association.

## [NEWS FROM THE LDOA COMMITTEE](#)

### 2022 Subscriptions

The 2022 membership subscription is due on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. We are pleased to confirm there will be no increase in the 2022 subscription. Subscriptions remain 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 shortly send out a reminder to members about payment.

### Season's Greetings

The LDOA Committee would like to thank you for your continued support in 2021, and extend our good wishes for A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you at what we hope to be a return to a full programme of interesting and enjoyable visits and events in 2022, Covid-19 permitting.

### Next committee meeting

January 2022 – date t.b.c.

## [MEMBERS' NEWS](#)

### New Member

We're pleased to welcome Andrew Moser as a new member to LDOA. Andrew plays the organ and describes himself as a volunteer organist. He came along to our Alrewas event, so we were able to meet him in person. He lives in Sutton Coldfield.

### Congratulations to Martyn and Harriet!

Our warmest congratulations to our President Martyn Rawles and his wife Harriet on the birth on 17<sup>th</sup> November of their beautiful baby daughter Felicity Catherine Alexandra. We're absolutely thrilled for Martyn, Harriet and two-year-old big sister Alice Mary.

### Liam Condon York Minster Competition Success

LDOA Student Member Liam Condon has been Organ Scholar at Lichfield Cathedral for the last two years, and is now Honorary Assistant Organist. He has just had success in a composition competition to celebrate the return of York Minster's Grand Organ, following a once-in-a-century refurbishment.

The piece, *Toccata on 'Wachet Auf'* written by David Halls, is the winning entry in the aged 19 and over category of the Grand Organ Composers' Competition, which was launched in June to mark the instrument's return after a £2m refurbishment project which started in 2018.

The competition, which was run in partnership with the Cathedral Music Trust and Banks Music Publications, attracted more than 60 entries from amateur and professional musicians across two categories – aged 19 and over and 18 and under.

The winner of the 18 and under category will be announced next month ahead of the winning composition receiving its first performances during the Minster's Nine Lessons and Carol services on 22 and 24 December.

Ben Morris, York Minster's Assistant Director of Music, said: "We were delighted with the response to the competition, which attracted a high calibre of entries. The competition was designed to celebrate the Grand Organ's return at the heart of worship in the cathedral, continuing a heritage which goes back centuries. It's been fantastic to be able to invite people to be part of this landmark project, adding to this rich musical history while celebrating the instrument's future."

The competition was judged by a panel of industry experts including New York-based composer Nico Muhly, composer and former York Minster Organist and Master of Music Philip Moore, British composer Roxanna Panufnik, Canadian-born organist, conductor and composer Sarah MacDonald and York Minster's Assistant Director of Music Ben Morris.

As well as hearing his piece played at the Minster's Advent Procession service, Mr Halls will receive a financial prize and his composition will be printed by Banks Music Publications.

Second prize was awarded to Stephen Barber for *Toccata on 'Creator alme siderum'*, and third prize to Liam Condon for *Veni ad Salvandum nos*, with both runners-up receiving financial prizes.

Our warmest congratulations to Liam on his success. We look forward to hearing its premiere, which is to be at the **Lichfield Cathedral 10.30am Eucharist on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2021**, when Liam will play his composition as the voluntary. If you're not able to attend the service, as usual it is also being live streamed.

### **Henry Metcalfe appointment**

Members may remember Henry Metcalfe joining us as a student member when he was about 12 years old. He went on to become Junior Organ Scholar at Lichfield Cathedral and after doing sixth form in Bristol, went via Organ Scholar at Hereford Cathedral to study for his degree at King's College, London.

Now in his final year at university, and having been Organ Scholar at St Mary's, Bourne Street, London, he has now been appointed Director of Music at St Mary's, Woodford, which has both adult and junior choirs, and a fine IIP/32 Grant, Degens & Bradbeer organ.

## **IAO/RCO MATTERS**

### **IAO Midlands Organ Day 2021**

Having been unable to attend this event in Northampton, I'm indebted to James Coupe, Secretary of the Worcestershire Organists' Association, for the following review of the event, which included a recital by LDOA student member and former Organ Scholar at St Matthew's Northampton, Callum Alger.

This event took place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September, having been cancelled in 2020. Based at St Matthew's Church in Northampton, three WOA members attended, but it was disappointing that only 30 came in total, including members of the Northampton & District Organists'

Association. It was a very professionally planned and promoted event, and a credit to former president, Alan Cufaude, who was chair of the planning committee.

Justin Miller, the DOM at St Matthew's welcomed us all and gave a brief history of the church and fine J W Walker organ, pointing out that it is probably the only organ where the console is placed at 45 degrees to the building.



The J W Walker organ of St Matthew's, Northampton

He sends his regards to WOA members who will remember him as the sub-assistant organist at Worcester Cathedral until 2018. You can view the organ specification at: <https://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=N01348> The President of NDOA, Richard Tapp, then introduced Callum Alger, recently appointed DoM at St Peter's Wolverhampton, who played a short recital to demonstrate the instrument. There was then a master class on Hymns and Psalms led by Callum Alger, Richard Pinell the DoM at Jesus College Cambridge, and Jonathan Kingston, the President Elect of NDOA and a choral director and organist in the area, who was for a time the DoM at Bromsgrove School.

Over the lunch break, there were open consoles in the town centre at All Saints' and other churches. To our surprise we were offered free transport, courtesy of Alan Cufaude, on a 1947 heritage bus, so around twelve of us including the three WOA members, climbed aboard and received our free 1d tickets in traditional style.

All Saints' Church is an amazing building, and has three organs, so we never got to any other churches that lunchtime. Laurence Caldecote the Assistant DoM was our host, and we first went to the west gallery to view the J W Walker instrument that was installed in 1983 behind the original Thomas Swarbrick 1709 case. Recently overhauled, and now including an upgrade to the electrical transmission by William Drake Ltd, it really is a fine recital instrument.

We then moved down to view the chancel organ, which has two enclosed divisions, unlike the west end organ, and

is now linked to the west end instrument, which can be played using additional pistons and a computer screen. This is useful when there are the large congregations at civic services and provides a splendid sound in the building.



The J W Walker West End organ of All Saints' Northampton

Following our return to St Matthew's, Anna Hallet, the 16-year-old founder of The Organ Manual, explained her motivation for its creation. This was her first public appearance and she thanked everyone for their support. She then outlined her future ideas and plans.

Then it was back to the choir stalls for the second masterclass, this time for Psalms and choral repertoire, following which we had a final performance of masterclass materials.

During a tea break in the Parish Centre, there was a talk and demonstration by Church Organ World, with some organs available to play. A few of us then went to St Michael & All Angels Church for an open console, at which NDOA member John Wilson played some of his own compositions.

The final event of the day was a joint recital with Callum Alger playing *Toccata in E BWV 566* by J S Bach and Elgar's *Sonata in G major op 28*. A splendid performance of the Elgar on an ideal instrument for this work. Following an interval, Martin Baker (standing in at two days' notice for Harrison & Harrison Managing Director Andrew Reid, members of his household having tested positive for Covid-19), after just over an hour of practise, played a stunning recital commencing with *Tuba Tune* by Norman Cocker. Then followed pieces by Sweelinck, J S Bach, Pierre Cochereau, and an improvisation on the hymn tune *Northampton*, finishing with *Allegro Vivace* from Widor's *Symphony No. 5*.

What a conclusion to a most enjoyable day!

James Coupe, Secretary, Worcestershire Organists' Association

## London Organ Day 2022

The London Organ Day 2022 will be held at St Peter's Church, Vauxhall, on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

Entitled *Vauxhall Extravaganza*, a live and in-person London Organ Day makes a welcome return for 2022! What a treat it will be. Taking a lead of sorts from the delights of the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, the day will be diverse, delightful, colourful, and entertaining.

The Lewis organ at St Peter's Vauxhall will come as a surprise to you, as it very much punches above its weight. A remarkable organ will be showcased by a remarkable musician: John Kitchen. Equally striking will be Pam Hulme's arresting and moving combination of organ and electronics, which also will use the Lewis. There will be two other rather different organs on site! Anne Page returns to LOD to play the harmonium; this is something guaranteed to open new worlds for you if you haven't heard Anne play this instrument before. There will also be a Hammond organ – surely a London Organ Day first?! – which will be played by the legendary Jean Martyn. A London Organ Day with a difference!

For booking information see: <https://iao.org.uk/london-organ-day/>

## IAO Festival 2022

Having now suffered two postponements because of the pandemic, the IAO has announced the dates of its Festival 2022 in Edinburgh, which are Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

More details will appear later, but the programme will be similar to that published previously, with minor amendments.

During the Festival, the IAO-RCO Organ Playing Competition will be held. Six competitors will be chosen from submitted recordings to participate in the semi-final round on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July. From there, three will be selected to go through to the final at St Cuthbert's Church on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> July. The adjudicators will be David Hill MBE, John Kitchen MBE and organist/composer Najj Hakim. For full details and application form see:

<https://www.rco.org.uk/events/iao-rco-competition-2022>

## Yorkshire Organ Day 2022

Will be held at Bridlington Priory on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

## Bloomsbury Organ Day 2022

Bloomsbury Organ Day 2022, with the theme of *Trocadero & Town Halls*, will be held at the Central Baptist Church, London, on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2022, from 12.30 - 7.30pm.

It features recitals by Marko Sever and Simon Gledhill, a presentation on organ transcriptions by Philip Norman, a masterclass by Dame Gilliam Weir, and closing with a celebrity recital by Richard Hills.

For details and booking see:

<https://organistsonline.org/bloomsbury/introduction.html>

## RCO International Organ Day 2022

Will take place in various locations and online on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2022.

### New Editor of *Organists' Review* Announced

Following the decision by Sarah Beedle to step down after 18 years as Editor of the IAO magazine *Organists' Review*, Francis O'Gorman has been announced as her replacement.

Despite, surprisingly, Sarah not being an organist, she has done an excellent job as Editor, but Francis O'Gorman is a former Oxford College organ scholar and currently professor of English Literature at the University of Edinburgh. He is no stranger to the magazine as he has been a reviewer for *Organists' Review* for the last 30 years, and during that time has also contributed a number of articles to the magazine, as well as editing many books and other publications. (Peter Morris advises me that Francis O'Gorman learned the organ at St Michael's, Tettenhall, where Peter is now the Organist.)

## NEWS & SNIPPETS FROM THE ORGAN WORLD

### Thomas Trotter back in action

Thomas Trotter had a fall the end of August whilst out jogging, which resulted in a broken bone in his upper left arm and therefore having to withdraw from planned recitals. Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 saw the return of Thomas for his first recital at Birmingham Town Hall since the pandemic struck in March 2020, and for his first recital since breaking his arm exactly three months ago today. Whilst confirming he now feels fine, Thomas had clearly found the rehabilitation a long haul, and indicated he was still receiving treatment.

### Director of Music Appointment

After eight years at St David's Cathedral, Pembrokeshire, Oliver Waterer has been appointed as Director of Music at Selby Abbey. The move leaves a Director of Music vacancy at St David's.

### Francis Jackson at 104

Francis Jackson is still going strong at the age of 104 on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021, and in celebration York & District Organists' Association have produced a programme of Francis Jackson compositions, played by various York musicians. See:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ka89o7IEwFg>

### Harrison & Harrison Ltd – major organ projects

I'm again indebted to Stephen Alliss, Head Tuner at Harrison & Harrison, for the status of their following major projects:

#### Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

Harrison & Harrison have been awarded the contract for the renovation of the 4 manual/88 stop Walker organ of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, Work is progressing well with installation due after Easter 2022, anticipated for completion in autumn 2022.

#### 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, with installation planned for 2022.



The console of the new organ for Christ Church Greenwich, USA

#### Christ Church, Alexandria, VA, USA

The new 2-manual 22-stop organ has been completed awaiting shipping for a year, and now that the USA is allowing UK citizens to travel, is finally on its way to the States.

#### Bristol Beacon (formerly Colston Hall)

Project to restore the 1955 4-manual/94-stop Harrison & Harrison organ. Work is ticking along very well at Durham, although as with any project involving the building trade, the Hall itself is running quite a way behind schedule, so an installation date cannot be finalised just yet.

#### Norwich Cathedral

Now 75 years on from when the 4-manual/105-stop Norman & Beard organ was first restored, ciphers are an increasing mechanical problem. All the pipes need removing, cleaning and restoring, the mechanisms within the organ itself need renewing and modernising, the worn-out key action needs replacement, and the unreliable and outdated electronics of the console brought up to date.

The project is expected to cost £1.8m, inclusive of a new chamber organ. It is proposed that the fundamental sound and character will be preserved, whilst at the same time internally restructuring the instrument so that the sound is distributed more evenly to both sides of the pulpitum screen. Work is taking place both in Durham and on site (mainly measurements actually at Norwich).

#### Canterbury Cathedral

Following completion of the organ rebuild project by Harrison & Harrison in 2020, the Covid-19 delayed inaugural recital, which before breaking his arm was to have been given by Thomas Trotter, was given instead by Nathan Laube on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, and can be viewed on YouTube via:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeF74Dq8v7w>



## Nicholson & Co Ltd – major organ projects

Current projects:

### Radley College, Oxfordshire

Nicholson has 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. Presently the organ is being installed in the chapel, with completion expected by the end of 2021, and the official opening of the organ early 2022.

### St Mary's Church, Portsea

The organ of St Mary's Church in Portsea was built by the London firm of J.W. Walker & Sons for the new church in 1889, and proved to be the first of a series of major contracts in what became a golden period for Walker's.

The project will be the first comprehensive restoration in the organ's life. Alongside the obvious goal of returning the entire instrument to first-class condition, the principal objective will be to conserve and restore the Victorian heritage of this instrument. The pipework will be returned to its original pitch, scaling, pressures and voicing. The wind system and all soundboards and chests will all be thoroughly restored, with new three-stage electro-pneumatic key actions of traditional design being provided throughout. The 1965 console will be replaced with a new console designed in the style of Walker consoles of the 1880s. The factory side of the organ building is now almost complete.

### St Gabriel's, Pimlico

Nicholson's will be rebuilding the 1894 J J Binns 3-manual 36 stop organ afresh. The main priority will be to ensure the reliability of the organ for many decades to come. New slider soundboards with new electro-pneumatic actions are to be provided, along with a wholly new winding system. Significant tonal revisions will be undertaken to bring the tonal centre of gravity of the organ back down towards a Romantic ethos, without trying to replicate the original Binns scheme. A rather unsatisfactory 1970 pipe front in the north aisle will be replaced by a new case of period style.

### Leeds Town Hall

Nicholson has been commissioned to reconstruct the organ of Leeds Town Hall. In what will be one of the most significant concert organ projects of recent times, the instrument will retain the façade and about half the pipework of the present organ, but will otherwise be entirely new. The aim of the work is to create a modern and versatile concert organ for the city of Leeds, with an inspiring musical character that reflects the organ's majestic appearance. The organ will have 103 speaking stops, with six manual divisions (three of which will be enclosed) playable from a four-manual console. The specification has been drawn up in consultation with the city organist Darius Battiwalla.

Work on dismantling the organ has commenced, and completion of the new organ is scheduled for November 2023. The consultant for the project is Dr William McVicker.



Dismantling of Leeds Town Hall organ

Future projects:

### Manchester Town Hall Organ

Nicholson has been commissioned to undertake the historical reconstruction of the organ in Manchester Town Hall. The organ, the most significant surviving instrument of the few built in the UK by the Parisian organ builder Aristide Cavallé-Coll in 1877, was enlarged by him in 1893, and then rebuilt by the English firms Lewis & Co. in 1912 and Jardine & Co. in 1970. Nicholson's will be undertaking the work in an equal collaboration with the Dutch firm of Flentrop Orgelbouw. The organ was wholly dismantled in late summer of 2020, with completion due by the end of 2023 to coincide in 2024 with the re-opening of Waterhouse's much-loved building.

### Henry Willis & Sons Ltd

Current project:

- Liverpool Philharmonic Hall – 1939 Rushworth & Dreaper 3-manual 54-stop organ. Opening recital on the restored organ by Ian Tracey scheduled for Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
- St Michael's Church of Scotland, Linlithgow – 1912 Henry Willis organ
- The University of St Andrew's – 1868 T C Lewis organ
- The Wesley Centre, Malton – 1877 Forster & Andrews organ

## RECENT LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS REVIEWS

### Marcus Huxley recital at Emmanuel, Wylde Green, Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021

Director of Music at Birmingham Cathedral for over 30 years until his retirement in 2017, Marcus Huxley was today making his first visit to Emmanuel Wylde Green, to give the opening recital of the 2021-22 lunchtime recitals series.

Assisted by Ashley Wagner, Marcus opened with the majestic *Marche Pontificale (Symphonie No 1)* by Widor,

followed by a beautifully smooth melody *Andante No 2 in F* by Henry Smart, with Marcus choosing the clarinet for the lovely second subject. Probably the most well-known organ work, *Tocatta & Fugue in D Minor BWV 565* by J S Bach, was followed by the gentle *Folk Tune*, the second of Percy Whitlock's *Five Short Pieces*.

Guy Bovet is a Swiss organist and composer, but from 1979 to 1999 he taught Spanish organ music at the University of Salamanca, and his piece *Salamanca* was described by Marcus as a 'rather bonkers piece'. It opens with a pipe (flute) melody with drum (pedal) accompaniment, which builds to a very full and reedy climax.

After J S Bach's *Air on a G String*, Marcus turned to César Franck's *Piece Heroique*, to provide a stirring close to the recital.

In his closing remarks, Emmanuel DoM Richard Mason updated us on the work being done/planned for the Willis organ. Phase 1 is now complete, Phase 2 is planned for 2022, leaving Phase 3 for the addition of a Trumpet rank, after which Richard is looking to invite Olivier Latry, one of the titular organists at Notre Dame Paris, to fulfil his promise of paying a return visit to give a recital when a Trumpet stop has been added! TS

#### **Martyn Rawles recital at Lichfield Cathedral Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021**

Martyn opened with *Creation Dance* by Neil Cox, the same piece with which he opened his St Modwen recital on Wednesday, and described by Martyn as 'a riotous extravaganza'. As described by Eric Lunt in his eloquent and extensively researched programme notes, 'it's a colourful, lively composition, full of contrasts with a rhythmic energy, which drives it relentlessly forward.'

Next, a change of mood with Vierne's *Étoile du Soir – No 3 from Pieces de Fantaisie Suite No 3, Op 54*, depicting the twinkling of starlight as dusk turns into night. Martyn admitted to a guilty pleasure of enjoying light music, and indeed the next piece was by a composer best remembered as a composer of light classical music, with *Matinale* by Percy Fletcher, a light carefree piece. Then another change of mood to one described by Martyn of 'dark resignation', Franck's *Prière in C Sharp Minor Op 20*, from *Six Pieces pour Grand Orgue*. Next followed *Consolation No 4 in D Flat* by Liszt, a hymn-like work with a slow lingering melody.

Finally, to what was a lockdown project for Martyn, when during the first lockdown, he had no access to the Cathedral's Hill organ, so learnt initially at home on the piano, Reubke's *Sonata on the 94<sup>th</sup> Psalm*. This challenging work was premiered by Reubke on the Ladegast organ of Merseburg Cathedral in June 1857, a year before he died of TB at the age of just 24. One wonders what gems of organ composition would have followed had he not died so tragically young?

The work uses as its inspiration the verses from the *94<sup>th</sup> Psalm*, and requires advanced technical ability and the resources of a large organ, both met admirably by Martyn Rawles and the Hill organ of Lichfield Cathedral. The brooding opening builds dramatically and after the central

expressive *Adagio*, the *Fugue* drives powerfully forward, before rushing inexorably to a frenetic thunderous conclusion. A quite phenomenal performance using the full resources of the Hill organ, to close a superb recital! TS

Ed. If you're not familiar with this work, the YouTube video of Lionel Roth playing it on the Cavallé-Coll organ of Saint-Sulpice, with no thumb pistons to handle the many registration changes and Daniel Roth directing his two registrants, makes for interesting viewing! See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhJ-CQp9lug>

#### **Gordon Stewart recital at Birmingham Town Hall Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

With Thomas Trotter still out of action due to injury, Gordon Stewart was standing in for Thomas for today's lunchtime recital.

Gordon Stewart was born in Dundee and after studies in Manchester and Geneva with Gillian Weir, Eric Chadwick and Lionel Rogg, he was for 15 years a cathedral organist, first in Manchester then in Blackburn. He is no stranger to performing town hall recitals, as for 30 years he was Borough Organist at Kirklees and played the Father Willis organ of Huddersfield Town Hall, where he is now Organist Emeritus. He has played concerts throughout the UK, Europe, USA, South Africa and New Zealand. He is a recording artist, broadcaster, teacher and a former President of the IAO.

Gordon opened with all four movements of Handel's *Overture to the Occasional Oratorio*, arranged by W T Best, which he had some reservations about including in his programme when he later found out that it was written in celebration of victory of the English over the Scots! Then to *A Maggot* – a lively dance – by Thomas Arne, arranged by the London organist Harry Wall.

After J S Bach's *Prelude & Fugue in A Minor BWV 543*, next followed Pierné's *Trois Pièces*: the rippling arpeggios of the *Prelude*, the well-known melody using the Oboe for the *Cantilene* and finally the *Scherzando*, which builds to a grand climax.

Next to a Birmingham born composer, Albert Ketelbey, and *Sanctuary of the Heart*, rarely heard now but which used to feature regularly on BBC Radio's *Your Hundred Best Tunes*. After Robert Cockroft's quirky *Scherzetto*, Gordon closed his programme with Fernand de la Tombelle's *Tocatta in E Minor*, a thrilling opening is followed by a slower central passage, before finally a reprise of the opening provided a frantic ride to a full organ chordal climax.

Just time to squeeze in an encore, with a composition Gordon had received from Noel Rawsthorne, entitled *A Celtic Lament*. A lady in the audience at one of Gordon's concerts was quite taken with the piece, and having asked for a copy, later told him that she had used it for crematorium services. Gordon suggested it was maybe not the ideal choice for such an occasion, as it's based on the tune *Will Ye No Come Back Again!*

A most enjoyable recital, enhanced by Gordon Stewart's humorous narrative. TS

## Cathy Lamb recital at Lichfield Cathedral Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021

For the final recital the year at Lichfield Cathedral, Cathy Lamb, Director of Music Outreach at Lichfield Cathedral School, was the recitalist. As an honorary member of LDOA, unsurprisingly she was well supported by at least ten LDOA members in the audience, and we were delighted to see that she seemed to have recovered well from her recent bout of Covid-19, and was back to her usual bubbly self.

Cathy played *Allegro Risoluto* the first movement from Percy Whitlock's Plymouth Suite at the age of 17 for her audition at Canterbury Cathedral, and this was her choice to open proceedings this evening. Cathy confided that she has an aspiration to record the complete works of Percy Whitlock.

Next to J S Bach's awesome *Passacaglia in C Minor BWV 582*, which begins with the well-known 8 bar ostinato in the pedals, before building in complexity and volume, with Cathy employing the nave division to create an antiphonal effect. Described by Cathy as 'a gem of a piece', Elizabeth Stirling's *Movement in A Flat Major*, from her *Eight Slow Movements for Organ* followed.

Next to a composer with Lichfield Cathedral connections, Sir William Harris, or Doc H to his friends at Lichfield Cathedral, where he was Assistant Organist from 1911 to 1919, a post he held concurrently with that of St Augustine's Church, Edgbaston, and lecturer at the RBC. His most well-known organ piece is *Flourish for an Occasion*, but Cathy's choice was a dramatic work new to me, *Fantasy on Champion's Tune 'Babylon's Streams'*.

Then to Ghislaine Reece-Trapp's *Fantasia on 'Sumer is Icumen in' for Organ*, commissioned by Berkshire Organists' Association to celebrate its centenary and premiered only a month ago in Reading Town Hall by Ben Giddens. It begins in a bagpipe style, and is then transformed into a playful and lively set of variations, building to a joyful coda.

Mendelssohn's sonatas for organ are a favourite of mine, but *Overture to Ruy Blas*, arranged for organ by Edwin Evans Snr, was new to me and in a totally different style, sounding rather like an operatic overture. Then onto more familiar ground with Gounod's *Funeral March of a Marionette*, arranged for organ by W T Best, which for those of us of a certain age will forever conjure up the distinctive profile of Alfred Hitchcock, as it was used as the theme for the television series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* in the 1950's and 60's.

Percy Fletcher's best-known work for organ *Festival Toccata* provided a suitably rousing climax to both the recital and this year's autumn recital series.

A superb recital with Cathy on top form, and clearly having put a lot of effort into learning some new works for our enjoyment. TS

PS. We'd very much welcome back the console video screening for next year, if finances allow!

## Margaret Phillips recital at Birmingham Town Hall Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021

With Thomas Trotter still out of action due to injury, standing in for Thomas today was Margaret Phillips.

One of Britain's most outstanding concert organists and teachers, Margaret Phillips studied with the late Ralph Downes and Marie-Claire Alain. After her début at the Royal Festival Hall, she soon gained an international reputation as a soloist, playing at concert halls and cathedrals throughout Europe and in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and Mexico. Alongside her busy concert career, she was a member of Council of the Royal College of Organists for 20 years, and President of the IAO from 1997–99. From 1996 to 2021, she was Professor of Organ at the Royal College of Music in London. In 1994, Margaret Phillips and her late husband David Hunt founded the English Organ School and Museum in former chapel premises in Milborne Port, Somerset, where they have a collection of organs by English builders from the eighteenth century to the present day. She regularly gives masterclasses and has released numerous CDs.

Margaret opened with a rather strident quirky work by Swedish composer, cathedral organist and conductor Fredrik Sixten entitled *Postlude (from Messa Misterioso)*, which as Margaret observed 'makes a good opening fanfare'. Onto more familiar ground with the next work, J S Bach's *Fantasia & Fugue in G Minor BWV 542*.

Margaret played a sonata duet by Merkel with Thomas Trotter here 35 years ago, and this next piece, Merkel's *Variations on a theme of Beethoven Op 45*, was a lockdown learning project for her. The variations are based on a theme from Beethoven's *Sonata No. 30 in E Major (the 3rd movement)*, and it gets quite lively, 'giving the feet a good work out', as Margaret observed! It ends quietly with a gentle andante.

It's the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year of the death of Saint-Saëns, and his *Sept Improvisations* were written when he was turned 80. Margaret chose to play *No 2 FERIA Pentecostes*, which builds to a grand chordal climax, the lively featherlight *No 4 Allegretto*, and finally *No 7 Allegro Giocoso*, very well-known and very French!

To close Margaret chose a work by another Swedish composer Anders Börjesson, *Toccata*, which won an organ competition, and is based on the hymn *Praise the Lord, the Almighty King of Creation*. A lively toccata in 10/16 time, providing a rousing climax to the recital. TS

## Angela Sones recital at Derby Cathedral Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021

LDOA member Angela Sones is a graduate of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, having studied with Prof. David Saint and Andrew Fletcher. Until recently she served for 27 years as DoM at All Saints' Four Oaks, and is currently Acting DoM at St Alphege, Solihull.

After the introduction by Derby Cathedral DoM Alex Binns, and assisted by Richard Hartshorn, Angela began with *Springtanz* from *Terpsichore*, a lively dance by Michael Pretorius. Angela had mentioned to me that during

practice, the console had suddenly gone off, and sure enough it happened in this piece, but fortunately came back on quickly, and Angela picked very calmly and professionally to complete the piece.

Next to a J S Bach piece I had the good fortune to learn with Angela, *Prelude & Fugue in B Minor BWV 544*, so I was particularly looking forward to hearing my favourite Bach work. Dan Locklair's gentle aria-like pallet cleanser *The Peace May be Exchanged* (from *Rubrics*) was followed by George Thalben-Ball's arrangement of the English violinist and composer Michael Christian Festing's *Largo Allegro & Two Variations*.

To finish Angela chose *Grand Choeur* by Alfred Hollins, a work she first heard played by Gordon Stewart when she was on a trip to Scotland whilst at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. The jolly Lefébure-Wély style opening is followed by a gentle melodic passage, before a reprise of the opening and a final flourish brought the recital to a lively close. TS

### **Angela Sones recital at Birmingham Cathedral Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021**

Hard on the heels of her Derby recital, Angela Sones was welcomed back by Ashley Wagner for a return visit to Birmingham Cathedral, Angela having played here just before the first Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020.



Angela Sones at the organ of Birmingham St Philip's Cathedral, assisted by Richard Hartshorn

With the exception of one piece, the programme was different from her Derby Cathedral programme, and assisted as usual by Richard Hartshorn, she opened with the very well-known lively *Tuba Tune* by Norman Cocker. J S Bach's *Prelude & Fugue in E-flat Major* followed, with

the longest of Bach's preludes leading into the fugue known as '*St Anne*' on account of the theme being the same as the tune of that name used for the hymn tune '*O God our help in ages past*', which builds to end in a grand climax.

After Dan Locklair's gentle *The Peace May Be Exchanged* (from *Rubrics*), to another work I learned with Angela followed, Mendelssohn's *Sonata No 3*, and my favourite of the composer's six glorious sonatas inspired by Lutheran chorales. For the part at the end of the first line of this work, for which the Solo Tuba is usually used, instead Angela chose the Clarinet, but for the reprise of this passage on the penultimate page, I was glad to see 'normal service was resumed' with the use of the Tuba. The sublime Andante provided a nicely registered ending to the sonata.

Today being All Saints' Day, Angela had programmed *Incantation pour un jour Saint* by Langlais. Inspired by Gregorian chant, Angela suggested we should 'allow the piece to wash over you, and not try to analyse it'. Quite discordant and strident, it certainly made full use of the reeds of the Cathedral organ, but the climax didn't so much as wash over us, as unleash a tsunami of sound upon us!

A nicely varied programme, beautifully performed of course, and with Angela receiving good support from some seven LDOA members/guests. TS

### **Tony Pinel recital at Emmanuel, Wylde Green, Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

Today's recital should have been given by James Lancelot, Organist Emeritus of Durham Cathedral. Unfortunately, James was required to isolate because of Covid, so it was with gratitude that we welcomed again Tony Pinel, DoM at St. Chad's Church Shrewsbury. Tony began his recital with a *Fanfare* written by John Cook, a name new to me. Cook was born in 1918, died in 1984 and was organ scholar at Jesus College Cambridge, where one of his tutors was Boris Ord. Cook spent five years as organist of the parish church at Stratford-upon-Avon, before taking up a similar post at St. Paul's Cathedral London. Subsequently he moved to Ontario Canada where he died having struggled with diabetes for almost two decades.

Next Tony played the familiar *Rhapsody No. 1* by Herbert Howells. Then to J S Bach for *Prelude and Fugue in E minor BWV 548*, known as '*The Wedge*' because of the increasing chromatic intervals of the *Fugue*. Lichfield was not forgotten when Tony played William Harris's *Prelude* and *Reverie* from his *Four Short Pieces*. (Tony observed that Harris was organist at St. Augustine Edgbaston and Lichfield Cathedral simultaneously, and wondered how he managed both positions in the absence of the Cross City Line!)

As we were meeting on November 5<sup>th</sup>, Tony slipped in a selection from Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks!* To finish, we heard Marcel Dupré's *Placare Christe Servulis*. Our thanks to Tony for stepping in at short notice, and we look forward to hearing him again at Emmanuel in May 2022, followed in June 2022 by his nephew Richard Pinel.

John H Allen

## Darius Battiwalla recital at Birmingham Town Hall Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Darius Battiwalla was the organist today standing in for the injured Thomas Trotter, and is no stranger to giving town hall recitals as he is now in his third season as Leeds City Organist, programming the very successful Town Hall recital series and giving regular solo concerts. He has also given organ recitals at cathedrals and concert halls throughout the country and abroad. As a pianist, he gives regular chamber concerts with members of the Manchester orchestras, and on the harpsichord, he has played continuo with many UK orchestras, and performed and broadcast harpsichord concertos. Darius has been music director of the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus since 1997, and in the last few years has been increasingly in demand as a silent film accompanist on both organ and piano. Darius was born in Islington, London in 1966. His mother is from Lancashire and his father from a Parsee family in Bombay.



Darius Battiwalla

Darius opened with the work Thomas was programmed to play, *Allegro Vivace from Symphonie No 5* by Widor, a challenging piece played impressively from memory.

Introducing his next piece, Darius described Jeanne Demessieux as having a repertoire of 3000 pieces and the only female organist to have played the whole of J S Bach's works from memory, reputedly also doing a concert tour of the USA taking no music with her! Darius chose two of her more approachable works, first *Rorate Coeli*, a quiet reflective piece, then *Variations on O Filii et Filiae*, with the theme followed by variations.

Next to J S Bach's *Trio Sonata No 3 in D Minor*, in the usual ABA format of his six trio sonatas of lively first and last movements, and a slow adagio middle movement. John Ireland's *Cavatina* is well-suited to a Town Hall recital, and was originally written for violin/piano, but transcribed and expanded by the composer in this arrangement for organ.

Lemare's contribution to the organ repertoire is frequently heard in the form of his skilful transcriptions for organ of orchestral works, but for this final piece in today's recital, Darius chose one of Lemare's own compositions for organ, *Concert Fantasia on 'Hanover'*, using the hymn tune for *O Worship the King, All Glorious Above*. He promised that any colours of the Town Hall organ not yet heard would be heard in this piece. The shimmering introduction progressively builds and then dims, leading into the hymn played 'straight', before lively variations are developed, including some tricky pedalling, before a majestic climax on full organ. A piece well deserving of greater exposure.

A well-played nicely varied programme, but the attendance was still rather disappointing at only about half the normal pre-pandemic level for these lunchtime recitals. TS

## Thomas Trotter recital at Birmingham Town Hall Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

Today saw the very welcome return of Thomas Trotter for his first Birmingham Town Hall recital since the pandemic struck in March 2020, and for his first recital since breaking his arm exactly three months ago today. Whilst confirming he now feels fine, Thomas had clearly found the rehabilitation a long haul, but it was a happy coincidence for him to be making his return today on St Cecilia's Day, Cecilia being the patron saint of music.

The advertised programme for today's recital showed all Saint-Saën's, presumably intended to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in December 1921. In the event, the programme was totally different, with no explanation given for the change, and opening with all four movements of Handel's *Organ Concerto No 16 in F*.

Next to the blind organist William Wolstenholme's *The Question and The Answer*, a typical Town Hall piece, which Thomas's predecessor Sir George Thalben-Ball also used to play. We gathered from Thomas that the question and answer allude to a proposal of marriage by the composer, which in fact was not accepted! Then to *Five Dances* by John Gardner, with first the lively *Lavolte*, then *Pavin*, *Jig* with Thomas using the Krumhorn on the Choir to give a realistic bagpipe effect, and finishing with the toccata-like *Fling* on full organ.

Onto more familiar ground to close, and another blind organist/composer, Vierne. Lots of anguish in his life, reflected in his symphonies, but not in his *24 Pieces de Fantaisie*. Thomas played first *Prelude*, followed by the spooky and mysterious *Feux Follets*, and closing with a piece often favoured to provide a rousing close to a recital, *Carillon de Westminster*.

It was gratifying to see a return today to an attendance closer to pre-pandemic level, to welcome back Thomas to Birmingham after a gap of 20 months. TS

## LOCAL VACANCIES

### Director of Music at All Saints' Church, Four Oaks

Notification of this vacancy was circulated to members by Richard Syner on 28<sup>th</sup> October, including the job specification. See: <https://allsaintsfouroaks.org.uk/director-of-music/>

However, note that the official deadline for applications was 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

### Organist & Choir Director at St Alban's, Birmingham

Historic Birmingham Anglican Church, with fine heritage of music in the Catholic tradition, seeks Organist and Choir Director to take it into the next phase of its development, consolidating its heritage while exploring new opportunities.

Well-maintained Rushworth and Dreaper 3 manual pipe organ and, perhaps, the finest acoustics in the City. The church is regularly used for recordings.

Remuneration in line with RSCM recommendations. Details of the post may be found at: <http://www.saintalban.co.uk/music/newpost/>

Closing date for applications 29th December 2021.

## FORTHCOMING LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS

### LDOA Members' Recitals/Events

#### Angela Sones

- Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 from 1.10pm to 2pm organ recital with Richard Hartshorn at St Alphege, Solihull
- Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2021 from 2.30pm to 3.30pm, organ recital with Richard Hartshorn at Brownhills Methodist Church
- Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 from 1pm to 1.45pm organ recital at Emmanuel, Wylde Green

#### Richard Hartshorn

- Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 from 1.10pm to 2pm organ recital with Angela Sones at St Alphege, Solihull
- Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2021 from 2.30pm to 3.30pm, organ recital with Angela Sones at Brownhills Methodist Church

#### Peter Morris

- Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 at 1pm to 1.45pm, organ recital at Emmanuel Church, Wylde Green

#### Simon Lumby

- Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2022 from 12pm to 12.45pm organ recital at St Paul's, Bedford.
- Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022 from 1pm to 1.45pm organ recital at St Mary's, Melton Mowbray

### Recitals In Local Area (To end of January 2022)

#### December 2021

Thurs 2 December 2021 • 1.15 to 1.55 • St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham  
David Saint (St Chad's Cathedral), Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Frid 3 December 2021 • 1.00 to 1.45 • Emmanuel Church, Wylde Green

Peter Morris (Walsall Town Hall)

Frid 3 December 2021 • 1.15 to 2.00 • St Mary's, Warwick  
Mark Swinton with Lucy Phillips (violin) and Jonny Ingall (cello)

Sun 5 December 2021 • 3.00 to 3.30 • Holy Trinity, Wordsley – **ON-LINE ONLY**

Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Mon 13 December 2021 • 1.10 to 1.50 • St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

Ashley Wagner (St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham)

Wed 15 December 2021 • 1.10 to 2.00 • St Alphege, Solihull – **BOOKING NECESSARY**

Richard Hartshorn and Angela Sones

Sat 18 December 2021 • 2.30 to 3.30 • Brownhills Methodist Church

Richard Hartshorn and Angela Sones

Tues 21 December 2021 • 1.00 to 1.40 • St Andrew's, Rugby

Richard Dunster-Sigtermans (St Andrew's Rugby)

#### January 2022

Sun 2 January 2022 • 3.00 to 3.30 • Holy Trinity, Wordsley  
Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Frid 7 January 2022 • 1.00 to 1.45 • Emmanuel Church, Wylde Green

Christopher Too (Jesus College, Cambridge)

Sat 8 January 2022 • 5.00 to 6.00 • Guild Chapel, Stratford-upon-Avon

Benedict Wilson (Shrewsbury)

For a complete listing of organ recitals in the UK and further details go to: [www.organrecitals.com](http://www.organrecitals.com)

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**Ed. – the next newsletter is planned for February 2022, with a deadline for submission of items for inclusion of 24/01/22, to Trevor Smedley by e-mail as above, or by mail to 8 The Parchments, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7NA**

## APPENDIX

### Addresses and Directions for our visit Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022

#### Holy Trinity Church Wordsley

Our first venue is to Holy Trinity Church Wordsley, located at High Street, Wordsley, Stourbridge, DY8 5RU, on the A491 and lies back on LH side of the road when travelling south from Wolverhampton towards Stourbridge, about 1.8 miles north of Stourbridge. Ample free car parking is available behind the church hall and in front of the church gates.

#### St Bartholomew's Church, Penn

Our second venue is St Bartholomew's Church Penn, located at Church Hill, Penn, Wolverhampton WV4 5JB. From Holy Trinity Wordsley, go back up the A491 towards Wolverhampton, and after 2.1 miles straight on at the roundabout to pick up the A449 Wolverhampton Rd. Follow A449 for 3.8 miles and at The Holly Bush, get in RH lane to turn right into Vicarage Rd. After 0.4 miles, you'll see the church directly in front of you. Car parking either in the small car park on the right off Vicarage Rd, or roadside parking outside the church on Church Hill. On departure, retrace steps to re-join the A449 to Wolverhampton at The Holly Bush. Note that there is a Wolves match today, kick off 3pm, finishing around 4.45pm, so could be some traffic around Wolverhampton.