

**DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER**

**FORTHCOMING LDOA VISITS/EVENTS**

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023 – President's Evening at Lichfield Cathedral**

Once again our President Martyn Rawles has arranged for us to hear and play Lichfield Cathedral's magnificent organ. This year's President's Evening again follows the Cathedral's atmospheric 6pm Advent Carol Service. (There is cake again!)

The LDOA visit will therefore commence at approx. 7.30pm and finish at 9pm. As last year, we will ask for members wishing to play to advise us in advance what they plan to play, so that we can sort out a running order to make best use of playing time available to us. Paul Hodgetts has been in touch with you and it would help if you could let him know what you would like to play. N.B. This is **not** on Sunday December 3<sup>rd</sup>. (My mistake! PM)

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – visit to Pershore Abbey and Worcester Cathedral**

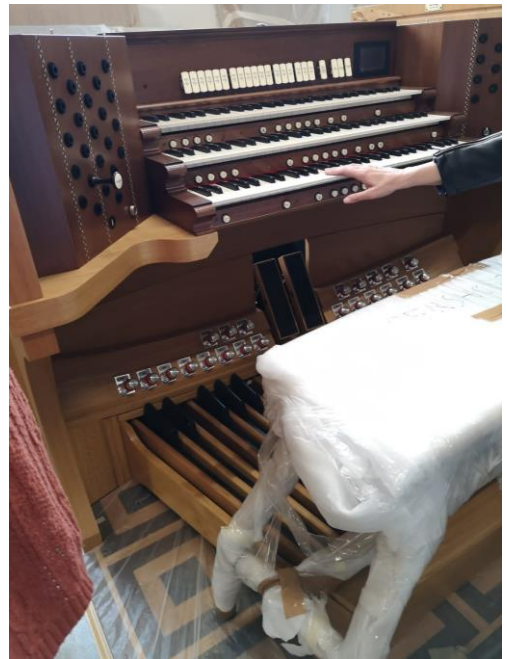
The visit to hear and play the new Ruffatti Organ in Pershore should be an exciting venture. The Italian firm of Ruffatti Brothers, based in Padova (Padua), west of Venice, is one of the world's most prolific organ builders and this is their acclaimed second English organ, following Buckfast Abbey.



A fascinating look at some of their magnificent work elsewhere in the world can be found at

<https://ruffatti.com/en/>

Here are 2 pictures we took on our visit to Padova in 2022 when Michaela Ruffatti showed us the unfinished Pershore console and one of the Ruffatti stock of impressive *en chamade* reed pipes. (PM)





We are booked in for 2.30 at Pershore Abbey and then we move on to Worcester Cathedral, thanks to the Director of Music Sam Hudson, who has invited us to Evensong at 5.30 and then to stay and play after the service.

The Worcester organ was designed and built by Kenneth Tickell and Company Ltd and completed in 2008. It contains over 3500 pipes, spanning the roof spaces on both sides of the Quire.

It should be a fascinating afternoon, with two highly exciting and very modern instruments.

There are offers of lifts to, from and between these two venues. If anybody can offer lifts to or from Lichfield please would you let me know on 07733-225349. If anyone would like a lift, also please get in touch. There may be a charge of £4 per playing person at Pershore, but the Association will pay the £50 that is chargeable for an association visit there. Not surprising on a parish instrument costing £800,000!



Worcester Cathedral Quire.....



.....and our President at the console.

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 visit to Derby Cathedral and St John's Derby**

Another Cathedral visit, at 11.00. Thanks to Alex Binns and Andrew Storer we can visit two of the major organs in Derby.

The Cathedral, with its fine medieval tower and spacious interior designed by James Gibbs (of St Martin in the Fields) has its famous Compton Organ dating from 1939 and opened by George Thalben-Ball. The 4-manual console still has its luminous stop heads.

An interesting description of the ornate ironwork screens in the cathedral which should appeal to organists is 'as delicate as lace and as intricate as a fugue'



The Cathedral organ (above) & St John's Church, Derby (below)



St John's has an interesting organ of 26 stops installed in around 1985 by The Johnson Organ Company and rebuilt imaginatively by Edmund Stow of Derby in 2010. We will arrive there at 1.00 pm.

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 Members' Recital at St Modwen's Church, Burton-on-Trent 4.00**



A more formal recital opportunity will be available to us on this very fine HNB organ, with its Hope-Jones casework. Any members willing to participate in this occasion, which will be open to the public, should contact Paul Hodgetts on [paul@hodgetts.eu](mailto:paul@hodgetts.eu)

## Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024 - RCO's International Organ Day - An introduction to the Organ

This will be held in two venues at the centre and west of our 'patch'. Callum Alger FRCO will lead a training event in St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton and Liam Condon FRCO will lead a similar session on the organ of St John's Hospice in Lichfield. Timings are likely to be 11.00 to 12.00 and 1.30 to 2.30. The success of these ventures relies heavily on members to find likely candidates, likely schools, likely church members etc to spark their interest in playing the organ – central to our mission. Publicity is also key. Please would you help, and perhaps also come along to see it all in action.

There will be further details of other events in later newsletters, but for your diary would you please note the following:

### Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2024 visit to Church Music World

In association with Birmingham Organists' Association we have booked in a visit to the Makin Headquarters at Shaw in Lancashire. There is a huge range of electronic organs, including the very latest new models named after Lake District places and a huge stock of new and used organ music.

A simple journey involves a train to Manchester Piccadilly and a tram to Shaw. Worth seeing and trying (see David Perry's description below).

### Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2024 visit to St Chad's and St Mary's churches in Stafford

### Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July visit to Stoke Minster

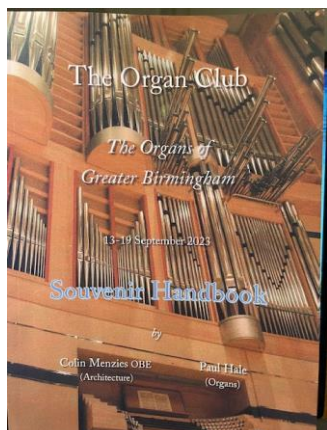
## RECENT EVENTS AND NEWS

### LDOA Dinner

There were around 20 members at the dinner on October 10<sup>th</sup> - the atmosphere was convivial and the food and drink greatly enjoyed. No stuffy speeches. Do come and join us next time if you didn't manage it this time!

### Organ Club Visit

This event mentioned in the last issue was a week-long visit arranged by Paul Hale to the West Midlands in September. A maximum of 51 guests visited Wolverhampton, Walsall and Sutton Coldfield in our region and were duly impressed by the huge range of quality instruments they hadn't expected to find.



## 'Organs, Music and Physics'

was a fascinating illustrated talk by LDOA Secretary Paul Hodgetts held in the Curborough Community Centre, Lichfield on November 6<sup>th</sup>. Aply assisted by committee member Isabel Corkley, Paul negotiated his way through a comprehensive look at the way that the laws of physics applied to music in general and pipe organs in particular. It was thought-provoking, especially about the role played by the overlapping natural harmonics of pipes in producing the timbres of combinations of stops. We had a good audience which included our new member Nigel de Gaunt-Allcoat, the Organ Adviser for the Lichfield diocese (among others) and IAO's General Secretary Alan Taylor.



### Some recital snippets:

1. The recital which was to be given at Emmanuel, Wylde Green by James Lancelot on 1<sup>st</sup> December at 1.00 will now be given by LDOA member Angela Sones. James has not been well for some time and felt it was better to cancel. Our best wishes go to him.
2. On 19<sup>th</sup> December the MD of Nicholson's, Andrew Caskie, who gave us such a good visit to the factory earlier this year, is playing Messiaen's *La Nativité* at Great Malvern Priory at 6.30. A man of many talents!
3. The Walker organ in St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham has its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary concert (already!!) on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February at 1.15. David Saint, Paul Carr and Nigel Morris will be celebrating mightily.

## NEWS FROM THE LDOA COMMITTEE

### Nothing specific at the moment but

we are beginning to think of interesting venues and events for the 2024/5 season and any suggestions from members would be most welcome.

Can I ask again if members could broaden our horizons by sending in information or leads to interesting news and snippets. Please send anything to me at [morrisp@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:morrisp@blueyonder.co.uk)

In a previous issue our member Stephen Carleston expressed his willingness to deputise in the area. Does anyone else wish to be on the list of relief organists? It can sometimes be very difficult to find someone who will allow 'regular' organists a rare Sunday off the bench. Stephen's email address is [carleston108@gmail.com](mailto:carleston108@gmail.com) Ian Boddington 01543 268504 is also available to deputise for services on Sundays or weekdays.



## NEWS FROM THE ORGAN BUILDERS

### Harrison & Harrison Ltd – major organ projects

Thanks again to Stephen Alliss, Head Tuner at Harrison & Harrison, for the status of the following major projects:

#### Norwich Cathedral

has been re-installed. Thomas Trotter's opening recital drew an appreciative audience of 1100

#### Bristol Cathedral

work begins in January. There will be new action and the console will be restored along the lines of the existing Walker style.

#### Winchester Cathedral

is now complete and back in use

#### Guards' Chapel, Wellington Barracks

The installation is progressing well and voicing will commence in January.

#### Jordanhill Parish Church and Ayr Town Hall

work is in progress. The Ayr organ has 27 stops and is largely based on the work of TC Lewis.

#### St Augustine's Kilburn

IV/49 Willis of 1879 which has been rebuilt before by Harrison. The pneumatic action will be retained.

Harrison's are also advertising for a full time tuner. Any applicants reading this?

### Nicholson & Co Ltd – major organ projects

Thanks to Andrew Caskie, who tells us that much of the work which has been filling the factory and which some of us witnessed in March is on its way to completion.

#### Leeds Town Hall

there has been some delay until late 2024 because of ongoing building works in the Town Hall. The construction of the organ is nearly complete and then just (!) the 132-stop console to go.

#### Manchester Town Hall

the first part of the installation happens this month. The rest should start in summer 2024, in conjunction with Flentrop.

St Mildred's Addiscombe, Croydon - a new west-end 32-stop organ using Lewis pipework – will be installed from next month.

St Barnabas, Kensington rebuild of a 3-manual Walker is also in progress.

Gloucester Cathedral organ is waiting in the wings for 'refurbishment and renewal' in 2024 – 2026.

## 2024 SUBSCRIPTIONS

The 2024 membership subscription will be due on 1st January 2024. We were pleased to confirm there would be no increase on the 2023 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

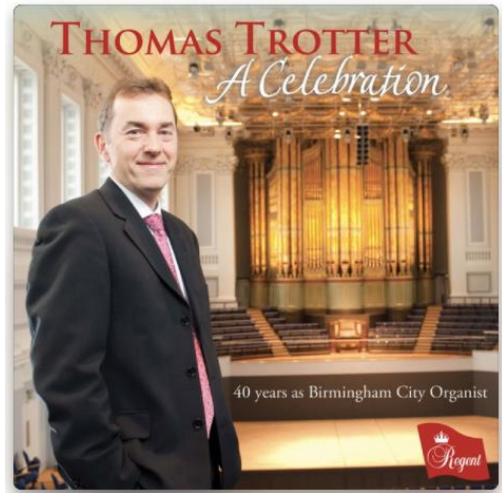
## RECENT ORGAN RECITAL REVIEWS

Supplied by David Perry

### **Monday 9 October 2023 (836<sup>th</sup>)**

#### **Birmingham Town Hall Thomas Trotter**

Thomas continues to celebrate his 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of appointment as Birmingham City Organist – this is his 836<sup>th</sup> lunchtime organ concert.



Bach's arrangement of the *Concerto in A minor*, one of Vivaldi's twelve concertos from the 1711 *L'estro armonico*, performed with precision and jollity, opened the concert. The intimidating 3<sup>rd</sup> movement was taken at a frightening pace, but with the consummate control we expect of him, and was all the more exciting for that potential recklessness!

South-African Kevin Volans (b1949) who studied with Stockhausen, wrote his *Walking Song* in 1984, originally for an unusual instrumental ensemble of flute, harpsichord, and 3 others who clapped and clicked their fingers etc! Inspired by indigenous African tribal music and rhythms, he rewrote it for organ in 1986, in a more simple and primitive style, but rhythmically not for the faint-hearted performer!

Born in Eastbourne, but moving to Canada in his early 30s, Healey Willan (1880-1968) wrote what is widely viewed as his masterpiece – the monumental and virtuosic, *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue*, modelled on the great Bach and Reger passacaglias, but written in the very dark key of E flat minor. It begins with a few bars of quiet strings and then a melodramatic Introduction, quickly leading to 18 (like Bach's) repetitions of the passacaglia theme. This ends with a soft coda, leading into the Fugue which is based on the first five notes of the Passacaglia. Only recently added to Thomas's repertoire during Covid Lockdown!

William Wolstenholme (1865-1931), friend of Hollins and Elgar since he met him at Worcester College for the Blind, wrote over 100 works for organ, but his two signature pieces c1895 are *The Question* and *The Answer op13* (originally published as *Die Frage – Die Antwort*). The former is a reflective and pastoral piece on strings, whereas the latter is jaunty and would be appropriate on Blackpool Tower organ!

Thomas first played Rachel Laurin's (1961-2023) incredibly virtuosic, *Étude Héroïque*, in 2018, and as a result of the impact and reactions received, he commissioned her to write

*Variations on a theme of Sweelinck*. The Étude is “a grand piece – an epic canvas with a stunning impact”, and begins with fanfares, repeated several times throughout the piece, leading to a second, much more mysterious, theme on Vox Humana and tremulant, producing a gurgling sound (he said!). At the end of the work, there is battle between the fanfares and the gurgling. An early page of fearsome pedal solo and a delightful dialogue between a 2' flute and the pedals provide notable milestones on the way. Thomas never met Rachel, but corresponded a lot while she was writing the commission. He dedicated his performance today to her memory, after her premature death, aged 61, 6 weeks earlier.

**Monday 23 October 2023 (837<sup>th</sup>)**  
**Birmingham Town Hall      Thomas Trotter**

For some bizarre and unexplained reason, the auditorium was in deep gloom, as all of the windows were covered with their blinds. So when Thomas made his appearance, he did so in darkness, with only the under-tread lighting on the stairs to guide him! Undeterred, he launched straight into the first of three 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> century works – Buxtehude's *Prelude, Fugue & Chaconne* – with some unusual, reedy registrations giving the well-known piece a new interest. In his welcome, he said it was very nice to see us all, or rather, it *would* be if he *could* see us, as he was standing in a bright spotlight with the audience in the dark!

The 16<sup>th</sup>C Flemish composer and music publisher, Tielman Susato, wrote a set of 60 dances, *Danserye*, for various combinations of instruments, but with the instruction that musicians should feel free to adapt for whatever forces at their disposal. Thomas has arranged five of them for organ: the first (*Mohrentaz* – surprisingly well-known), third (*Bergerette*) and fifth (*Saltarelle*) to exercise different reeds on the organ, and the second (*Pavane*) and fourth (*Ronde*) to show off the flute combinations.

To mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composer's death, Thomas continued with one of William Byrd's (c1540-1623) fantasias, *Fantasy in A minor* which, like its companions, begins in a sombre fashion, and gradually becomes more lively and dance-like, with lots of cross-rhythms towards the end of the 7 minutes.

The 19<sup>th</sup>C began with composers like Mendelssohn and Schumann, and ended with Reger and Karg-Elert who were much more high-romantic and very chromatic and, in between, Rheinberger and Gustav Merkel (1827-1885), bridged the styles. Merkel studied with Schumann, and having learned Beethoven's 1820 *Piano Sonata No 30 in E* op109, based his *Variations on a Theme of Beethoven* on this, in 1868. A pompous introduction on full (for middle 19thC!) organ, leads to the theme on 8-foot stops including the soft reedy keraulophon:



followed by 8 variations (one in minor key). A diminuendo leads to the simple theme, unadorned, as Beethoven did in his own variations, to end the piece.

Thomas reminded us that in each of this year's recitals he will be playing one of the several pieces he has commissioned while City Organist. Today it was Judith Weir's (b1954) *The Wild Reeds*, written for his 30th anniversary. This work had a very prominent performance in 2014 when Thomas played it at the re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall organ, live on Radio 3. It was inspired by a photograph of a Hungarian shepherd, standing in a bleak landscape, wearing an enormous sheepskin coat! Opens with a rustic theme on the Swell oboe, followed by 6 variations portraying the countryside – eg wind, rain, and distant bells.

Eric Coates (1886-1957) provides Thomas with several TH audience favourites, and especially his own arrangement of the *Knightsbridge March*, well-known to those of a certain vintage as the signature tune for the radio programme, *In Town Tonight*.

**Friday 3 November 2023**  
**Emmanuel Church, Wylde Green**  
**Peter King**  
*(Organist Emeritus, Bath Abbey)*



I was fortunate to have received organ lessons from Peter, for two years, when he was Assistant Organist at Lichfield Cathedral, so it was a delight to hear him play again, and chat after 37 years! It was Peter who first asked me to turn pages at the Cathedral, and I am still doing so.

Unfortunately, Emmanuel was not able to offer him a warm welcome as the heating was broken, and he had to resort to rubbing his hands together to keep them warm, while addressing us, and even apologised for talking with his hands in his pockets!

He began with the “English Rachmaninoff”, York Bowen's (1884-1961) *Concert Fantasia in G minor* which was written for Arnold Richardson, Borough Organist of Wolverhampton in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> C, and one of only three organists invited to play at the opening of the Royal Festival Hall organ in 1952. As a small boy, Peter heard Richardson play at the Civic Hall, and quite possibly this very piece. (Peter's early organ playing was at St Michael's, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton (PM)). York Bowen wrote quite a few of the exam pieces on the ABRSM piano exam syllabuses.

Giovanni Pescetti's (c1704-1766) *Sonata in C minor* in three delightful, Scarlatti-like movements, written for the much less well-developed Italian organs of the 18<sup>th</sup> C. Many had only one keyboard and no pedals. Peter said that, as he intended to use all 3 manuals and pedals, we were not getting a HIP – a Historically Informed Performance!

Peter commented that we were such a quiet audience he wondered if we must all have fallen asleep, but decided it was too cold for that!

As well as his large output of orchestral and piano concertos, Saint-Saëns wrote six preludes and fugues and three fantasies, and was declared by Liszt as “the finest organist in the world”, while acting as organist to Fauré’s choir-directing at La Madeleine, Paris. For the *Fantaisie No 3 in C, op157*, Peter provided some signposts and ‘structural analysis’ for listeners:



“When we first hear this theme, we are at the beginning; when we hear it for second time, we have reached the middle, and when it appears for the third time, the end is in sight!”

The first movement of Mendelssohn’s *Sonata III in A* was next. Apparently, he wrote to his sister, Fanny, asking her to send back the copy of the march he wrote for her wedding, as he was very pleased with the start and finish, but wanted to rewrite the middle for inclusion here! Peter ventured the opinion that the resulting fugue was worthy of Bach, with a subject based on the chorale “Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord” – hardly wedding material!

The chosen two of the *Dix Esquisses Byzantines* (1920) by Henri Mulet (1878-1967), *Vitrail* (“stained glass”) and *Rosace* (“rose window”), were inspired by Mulet’s many visits to Montmartre in Paris. (*Tu es Petra* is the most famous of the ten.) *Vitrail* is a dreamy piece with a gorgeous clarinet solo for the second half; *Rosace*’s various tunes are accompanied by cascades of tinkling arpeggios.

*Fugue sur le Thème du Carillon des Heures de la Cathédrale de Soissons* by Duruflé (1902-1986) concluded the recital. Duruflé was a respected composer and virtuoso organist (like his wife). Peter suggested that only Duruflé and Messiaen of the 20<sup>th</sup> C French organists had ventured out of the organ loft with some significant choral and orchestral pieces. The eight-note theme is taken from the carillon in Soissons Cathedral and is presented in augmentation, inversion and stretto, in a toccata wrapper, showing Duruflé’s mastery of counterpoint.

**Monday 6 November 2023 (838<sup>th</sup>)**  
**Birmingham Town Hall**  
**Thomas Trotter**  
**“Angels and Demons”**

A handful of delightful 4ft stops and the first outing of the day for the Whitechapel bells during Handel’s *Four Pieces for Musical Clock* (*Flight of Angels, Variation, Andante, Gigue*), created in the 1730s for Charles Clay’s beautiful clocks which incorporated automata, paintings, sculptures, and pipe organs.

Opposing angels and devils featured in the next two pieces. St Bridgid of Kildare, a 5<sup>th</sup> century Irish nun, and a patron saint of Ireland, founded both a convent and a monastery, believing that both genders had equal roles to play in the religious life. Judith Bingham’s (b1952) *St Bride assisted by angels* (2000) – is

based upon the legend that St Bridgid was flown back in time by angels to witness the Nativity. In 3 sections, the first is based on a folksong, *The Curragh of Kildare*, the second’s faster notes represents the beating of angels’ wings, and the third, the Nativity with a “golden aura” around the return of the folksong. It needed a lot of imagination to identify these components!

The previous week, Thomas played this new work by organist, Thomas Hewitt Jones (b1984), *Defeating Lucifer*, in Buckfast Abbey, which has a Ruffatti organ divided between west and east end, so inviting an antiphonal battle between the devil at the west, and the angels at the east. Not able to do the same in the TH, Lucifer was represented by punctuation from strident, abrupt, staccato reeds and angels by intricate passage-work on a bright diapason chorus. Inspired by verses from the Bible relating to St Michael defeating the dragon (devil).

Franck *Panis Angelicus* (“bread of angels”) started as a vocal work for tenor and orchestra, from one of his masses, and is possibly one of Franck’s best-known and best-loved works.

At the opening of the Notre Dame organ in 1858, Guilmant played his own *Marche funèbre et chant sèraphique* - composed in memory of his mother - with its harp-like accompaniment depicting the angels carrying his mother’s soul up to heaven.

Petr Eben, Czech (1929-2007), spent two years in a WWII concentration camp, but remained a steadfast Roman Catholic, so many of his compositions had a religious basis, while looking back to the bad times. *Moto Ostinato* (from the *Sunday Music* suite of 5 pieces) is based around the story of Jesus casting out devils from a man. It is sinister-sounding, mixing twin themes of good and evil, getting more frenzied, until the last page has ferocious and rapid changes between 3 keyboards. The insistent ostinato theme is introduced as chords,



Arranged from the orchestral version by Edwin Lemare, Saint-Saëns’ *Danse Macabre* (which was originally a vocal setting of poem describing death playing on the violin in a haunted graveyard at midnight!) gave ample opportunity for more bells – the Whitechapel 3½ octaves again, and (I believe) the rarely-heard Cimbelstern!

I am filled with admiration for the slick performance of this stunning chromatic passage where the LH and pedals were kept busy too!





The recital ended with Saint-Saëns' first published and most popular organ work, the *Fantaisie in E flat*, composed for the opening of the organ in St Marie, Paris. In two parts, the opening *Con Moto* features an ingenious alternation of chords between three manuals while the *Allegro di molto e con fuoco* is a spirited march, which introduces a fugato section in the middle, and ends with a grand, virtuosic coda.

**Thursday 23 November 2023  
Worcester Cathedral Martyn Rawles**

As I turn pages at many services for Martyn, I was delighted to be invited to do the same at his lunchtime recital on the 2008 Kenneth Tickell organ in Worcester Cathedral.



While this looks an impressive beast, four of the double columns of stops are inactive, as they were created hopefully to connect to the old (south) Transept Organ if money ever becomes available to complete the project. It has historical significance – the first performance of Elgar's *Organ Sonata* in 1895 by Hugh Blair.

The Tickell organ case is divided, hanging high on both sides of the quire, and so the organist, sitting in the south quire aisle, behind the choir stalls, doesn't get to hear half of it particularly well! Nevertheless, Martyn coaxed beautiful sounds from it.

Mendelssohn's *Prelude & Fugue in C minor* (the first of three P&F op37) opened the event with its noble yet lively prelude, and a dancing fugue subject written for players who are nimble of foot and confident of syncopation!

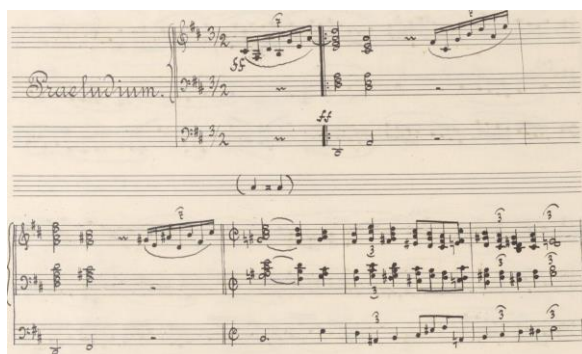
*Where the birds sing*, a work by an exciting young composer (educated at St Peter's Collegiate School, Wolverhampton.(PM)) Grace Evangeline Mason (b.1994), was commissioned by the 2022 Northern Ireland Organ Competition, and written only last year. It celebrates the thought that birds are keen to sing again after a long winter and reflects the relative peace in the country after decades of strife. Dedicated to all those touched by the NI Troubles. In three sections: spring, hope and celebration, and inspired by the opening stanza of the poem "Spring Quiet" by Christina Rossetti. A sleepy, ethereal and atmospheric start as birds awaken after the winter, then a surge of activity as spring begins – fuller, more powerful and celebratory, followed by a reprise of the opening with floating filigree above, representing the arrival of singing birds in spring. Its performance at Lichfield after a service provoked several compliments, including from the choir!

Bach's arrangement of Vivaldi's *Violin Concerto in A minor*, in three movements, revealed the very bright diapason choruses with the required contrasts between manuals cleverly arranged. This was one of my "signing of the registers" pieces during weddings played in my youth. The lovely slow movement had many places where I could stop when the bride and groom emerged. I never needed the challenging final movement, as this is quite a bit more difficult and I never mastered it. Martyn, however, certainly had done so!

The *Adagio* from Brahms' *Third Violin sonata*, arranged by Edwin Lemare, demonstrated the many soft sounds (particularly showing off the wonderful strings) of the Tickell organ. A haunting theme – sing it at your peril!

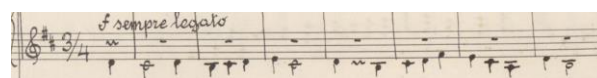


Austrian Franz Schmidt (1874-1939) took themes from his oratorio *The Book with Seven Seals* for this stirring *Prelude and Fugue in D Major*. The fourth of the "Four Little Preludes and Fugues" written in 1928, but not published until 1951, his handwritten manuscript is so perfect, it would easily be possible to play from it:



After the dreamy Brahms, this opening was certainly guaranteed to revive the audience!

The simple fugue subject



was ever present under steadily increasing complexity, becoming really dense writing towards the middle, followed by more and more notes in chords in both hands when the (eventually double) pedals take over the subject. Almost a passacaglia, but the subject is always buried somewhere in the hands too.

**FORTHCOMING ORGAN RECITALS**

**December 2023**

- Friday 1 Dec** Emmanuel, Wylde Green 1.00  
Angela Sones (LDOA)
- Sunday 3 Dec** Holy Trinity, Wordsley 3.00  
Paul Carr (Birmingham)

**Monday 4 Dec** Birmingham Town Hall 1.00  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City organist)  
**Thursday 7 Dec** St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham 1.15  
Paul Carr (Birmingham)  
**Friday 8 Dec** St Chad's Shrewsbury 12.30  
Richard Walker (Shrewsbury)  
**Saturday 9 Dec** Victoria Hall, Hanley 12.00  
Daniel Bishop (Liverpool Cathedral)  
**Tuesday 19 Dec** Malvern Priory 6.30  
Andrew Caskie (Nicholson's)

#### January 2024

**Thursday 4 Jan** St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham 1.15  
Paul Carr (Birmingham)  
**Friday 5 Jan** Emmanuel, Wylde Green 1.00  
Rosemary Field (Worksop)  
**Friday 12 Jan** Birmingham Cathedral 1.10  
Ashley Wagner (Birmingham)  
**Saturday 13 Jan** Shrewsbury Abbey 12.00  
Davon Halim (Cambridge)  
**Monday 15 Jan** Symphony Hall 1.00  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City organist)  
**Saturday 20 Jan** Victoria Hall, Hanley 12.00  
Peter Dyke (Hereford)  
**Monday 29 Jan** Birmingham Town Hall 1.00  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City organist)  
**Wednesday 31 Jan** St. Alphege, Solihull 1.10  
Peter Morris (LDOA) & Jane Eminson Organ & Flute

#### February 2024

**Thursday 1 Feb** St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham 1.15  
David Saint, Paul Carr, Nigel Morris (Birmingham)  
Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday to the Walker Organ!  
**Friday 2 Feb** Emmanuel, Wylde Green 1.00  
Alex Trigg (Cambridge)  
**Saturday 3 Feb** Shrewsbury Abbey 12.00  
Callum Alger (LDOA Wolverhampton)  
**Sunday 4 Feb** Holy Trinity, Wordsley 3.00  
Paul Carr (Birmingham)  
**Thursday 8 Feb** Worcester Cathedral 12.15  
Callum Alger (LDOA Wolverhampton)  
**Monday 12 Feb** Birmingham Town Hall 1.00  
Thomas Trotter  
**Saturday 17 Feb** Victoria Hall, Hanley 12.00  
Callum Alger (LDOA Wolverhampton)  
**Thursday 22 Feb** Bangor Cathedral 11.15  
Peter Morris (LDOA) & Jane Eminson Organ & Flute  
**Friday 23 Feb** St Chad's Shrewsbury  
John Hosking (Blackburn)  
**Monday 26 Feb** Birmingham Town Hall 1.00  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City organist)

#### March 2024

**Friday 1 Mar** Emmanuel, Wylde Green 1.00  
Ashley Wagner (Birmingham)  
**Saturday 2 Mar** Shrewsbury Abbey 12.00  
Francesca Massey

**Sunday 3 Mar** Holy Trinity, Wordsley 3.00  
Paul Carr (Birmingham)  
**Thursday 7 Mar** St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham 1.15  
Paul Walton (Bristol)  
**Friday 8 Mar** St Chad's Shrewsbury 12.30  
David Thomas (Shrewsbury)  
**Monday 11 Mar** Birmingham Town Hall 1.00  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City organist)  
**Monday 25 Mar** Birmingham Town Hall 1.00  
Thomas Trotter with Lichfield Cathedral Choir  
**Thursday 30 Mar** Shrewsbury Abbey 12.00  
Nigel Pursey (Shrewsbury)

Please pardon again my publicity opportunism but Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra's Golden Jubilee Year (and my 20<sup>th</sup> year as conductor) continues with a concert in Wolverhampton Grammar School on Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup> at 7.30. It would be lovely to see any members there! (PM)

**Finally**, huge thanks to David Perry for his reviews and here is what he says of his visit to Church Organ World and a recital by Ian Tracey. (Perhaps you'll be tempted to join us on May 11<sup>th</sup>!) There is also an obituary of Stanley Monkhouse who often came to LDOA events, sent in by Tony Westerman of the Derby Association.

**Church Organ World** is based in Shaw, near Oldham, and also has a showroom full of organs in a converted barn in Mixbury, near Bicester. They provide a complete solution to any church, personal, or hire needs from the four brands, Copeman Hart, Johannus, Makin and Rodgers. More details at <http://www.churchorganworld.co.uk>.

Customers, prospective customers and anyone interested can apply for tickets for the May *Sounds of Summer* event in Mixbury, or October *Autumn Shades* in Shaw. The £10 charge is a donation to Liverpool Cathedral Restoration fund, whilst the generous and delicious hospitality is provided free by MD Dr



Keith Harrington. Also available during breaks and over lunch is a tempting array of sheet organ music – this company is one of the few places left where music can be browsed (and tested on organs!).

As ever, Ian Tracey provided three recitals on three different instruments, punctuated by many wonderful anecdotes, especially from his time studying in Paris with Langlais and others. Ian also updated us on the progress of the 19-year project refurbishing the organ in the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. Now only the bottom octave of two mighty pedal reeds remains to be repaired – by Willis, who had the foresight to make a second set of the innards of the reed pipes and have stored them for a hundred years!

Ian began on the showroom Makin Custom 4-manual (soon to be sold and replaced by a 4-manual Derwent from the new range). A favourite march by Purcell *Fanfare in B flat*, was followed by one of Pachelbel's partitas (on which Bach modelled his), *Was Gott tut das ist wohlgetan*, and Franck's *Pastorale*. Ian reminded us that he had lessons with Langlais, who was taught by Tournemire, who was taught by Franck at St Clotilde, so he was getting authentic instructions on how Franck's works should be played.

The delightful *Will o' the Wisp* by Nevin followed (with Ian saying he would do his best to comply with the final reprise of the opening section, whose instructions said "to be played as fast as humanly possible"! ). An unpublished *Aria in Eb* and *Prelude on 'Nun danket'* by Noel Rawsthorne ,concluded part 1. The *Aria* is published in D major, but Noel once asked Ian to sight-read it transposed into Eb, and decided he liked it better in that key!

Although these gatherings are never a "sales-pitch" and prices of instruments are rarely mentioned, today Keith Harrington introduced us to the new range of Makin instruments, and Ian gave us a thorough tour of the new 3-manual, 53-stop Windermere below. Whilst they may look the same as their predecessors, several significant changes lie inside. All sounds have been re-sampled more thoroughly, including measuring reverberations in different parts of churches using a starting pistol! The memories have been upgraded from the 32 memories (each of which requires the setting of the divisionals), to a bundle of 8 separate divisionals sets, and 256 sets of generals with a sequencer (plus a USB socket for memory sticks for recording settings or providing up to 999 more memories). Oddly the basic model has only one prev/next thumb piston, with prev/next toe pistons available as an optional extra. A number of other small but welcome changes, including a Great Reeds on Choir coupler.



Next, a short walk to the neighbouring Holy Trinity Church, where a 2-manual Thirlmere has been installed to replace an ailing and mutilated pipe organ. (Front pipes have been retained to disguise the speakers.) A versatile Makin organ on which Ian was able to play another convincing recital including works by Gigout (*Grand Choeur Dialogue*), Bach (*Kyrie Gott*), Pescetti (*Sonata in C minor*), Franck (*Chorale 3 in A minor*, again at a very fast and flamboyant pace, which we have to believe was how Franck intended it to be played), Widor (*Symphonie 4, andante cantabile*), Bourgeois (*Serenade* – the wedding march in 11/8 beloved of Thomas Trotter) and a stunning Dubois *Toccata*.

After that feast, and the freezing conditions in the church, we were all ready for the very generous buffet lunch back in the showroom!

The final section was played on the Johannus LIVE III AGO (with its Kindle-like electronic-ink, drawstop labels, that change as different samples are loaded). We heard the Dresden Silbermann and Holy Name Manchester Hill samples which were so authentic it was possible with closed eyes to imagine being in these churches.

Ian played Sibelius's *Korelia Suite: Intermezzo*, Bach's *Liebster Jesu*, a rarely-heard, non-Tuba-Tune item by Cocker, *Intermezzo*, Binge's *Elizabethan Serenade* and Tournemire's *Improvisation sur le Te Deum*. So enthusiastic was the audience's response, that Ian obliged with an encore from memory, Widor's famous *Toccata*.

It's not just the expert performances, the many endearing and surprising anecdotes, the inside story of Liverpool Cathedral organ, or the opportunity to browse over 2000 items of sheet music, or try any of the dozen or so organs during intervals, that makes this a memorable day. It's also the warm and friendly welcome from Keith and his staff, and the generous hospitality and unpressurised atmosphere, like the best family reunions! Old customers, potential customers, and just interested parties are all welcome. Visit the website or ring 01706 888100 for more information, or to order sheet music, etc.

### **Music, Medicine and Ministry The Rev. Dr. William Stanley Monkhouse 1950 - 2023**

Where does one begin to describe a life in which someone has excelled in not just one field of expertise, but in four? 'Four,' you ask? The fourth is family, but I couldn't make the alliteration stretch that far; Stanley, without doubt, would have had an immediate solution.

Of primary interest to readers of this Newsletter is the fact that Stanley was a FRCO and to prepare for the FRCO examination took lessons with Noel Rawsthorne, an experience which both appeared to enjoy. Stanley was a very good musician by any standards, but also one with an open mind; like Marie-Claire Alain, he believed that there was more than one way to perform a piece of music.

This last was brought home to me when he was almost overcome by the phrasing used by Tom Corfield during a performance of Bach's 'Giant' Fugue *Wir glauben all' an einen Gott*. It was clearly something of an epiphany regarding the

interpretation of a piece Stanley knew well; the greater part of his wonderment was that something so simple, a matter of a fraction of a second in the opening phrase, had escaped him – a rare occurrence. I realised very quickly that Stanley not only appreciated the arresting effect this had on the opening, but that he saw the implications this would have throughout the entire piece.

A love of music was clear at an early age when he took piano lessons in the village of Langwathby, Cumbria, where he grew up. The lessons represented an escape from sport, farming and other local interests for which he had no aptitude or interest. He appreciated the thoroughness with which he was taught and, in one of his blogs, offered fulsome praise to the lady who taught him well enough for him to take organ lessons with the organist of Carlisle cathedral, Andrew Seivewright. Stanley's love of organ music and playing lasted a lifetime – a joy to which many of us can relate.

Stanley was a polymath; very little escaped his very sharp and critical mind, a mind that he used to expose humbug and pretention, which he loathed. As the Rev Rod Prince commented in his Eulogy during Stanley's Requiem:

'It has been remarked that Stanley pricked pomposity. He didn't, he detonated it wherever he found it. Status, rank, title – as a number of bishops discovered - and wealth accorded no advantage or protection in Stanley's eyes.'

As one might imagine, some people found Stanley's somewhat direct approach a little hard to take – especially bishops; the sensible ones acknowledged a pointed barb with a smile and moved on - clearly, Stanley never expected, or wanted, preferment in the church.

It was, however, medicine that he studied at Cambridge and not music, which led to a stellar career as a Professor of Anatomy in two leading Medical Schools during which time he revolutionised the teaching of anatomy to medical students. He was also the author of several medical text books that have become standard reading for students of medicine.

Developing the minds of young people and teaching them to question, think and challenge was always part of Stanley's approach. He often provoked people to make them think: the less open-minded took offence; the more open-minded learned from the experience. No matter how challenging Stanley was he was never malicious and often softened his challenges with his wonderful, mischievous sense of humour. He had the ability to see the ridiculous in much of our world and expose it for what it was - particularly with bishops. There were, of course, some bishops for whom Stanley had respect – one of them even arranged for Stan (or Satan, as he sometimes described himself) to meet an Archbishop of Canterbury – please see the first quote from Rev. Prince's eulogy and imagine the result.

Finally, I have arrived at the fourth and perhaps most fundamental element of my good friend Stan that shaped him far more than the other three: his family. Stanley's love for his family was boundless. Susan, with whom he shared fifty years of marriage, is quite possibly the only woman in this country or in Ireland who had the strength of character to deal with him on her own terms and for whom he had great love and

enormous respect. Their son, Hugh, who lived in America, died relatively recently – a great shock to the family and one from which Stanley, even with his great strength of mind, found it difficult to recover. Vicky and Edward are very much chips-off-the-parental-blocks in their own way – there is great strength there yet the character of each is quite different.

One last thought has finally stirred the Muse: Stanley was rather good at inventing words, though this obituary is not a suitable place to discuss most of them. However, he often used the term 'Monkhice' to indicate the Monkhouses in the plural, thus giving me the title for which I fruitlessly searched: Music, Medicine, Monkhice and Ministry.

Tony Westerman

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The next newsletter is planned for April, with a deadline for submission of items for inclusion of 24/4/24, to Peter Morris by e-mail as above, or by mail to 8a Newbridge Crescent, Wolverhampton WV6 0LN.

Any news items, or reviews and news of recitals would be gratefully received.

Happy Christmas and very best wishes for 2024!

