

FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

[FORTHCOMING LDOA VISITS/EVENTS](#)

Covid-19 and our 2021 visits.

Since the last newsletter, the new more infectious variant of Covid-19 struck, leading to the current lockdown. Whilst the infection rate is still running at a high level, putting great strain on the NHS, it does at last look to be falling, and good progress with the roll out of the vaccine gives some grounds for hope that we will move back into the tier system, then move progressively down the tiers as we go through 2021 to some sort of normality.

In expectation of this, we have drafted a provisional programme of visits after Easter, which we are all ready to roll out when Covid-19 restrictions permit. The programme includes visits postponed from 2020, including the visit to Rugby School, now planned for Saturday 11th September 2021, a combined 2020 and 2021 AGM, plus some new visits.

Tuesday 23rd February 2021 at 7.30pm, a virtual demonstration + organ recital by Paul Hodgetts

With no visits possible for the next few weeks, we've decided to 'dip a toe' into the water with an on-line event via Zoom, a 'first' for LDOA.



Paul Hodgetts' home Hauptwerk Organ

We're indebted to LDOA member Paul Hodgetts for agreeing to put on a virtual demonstration of his home Hauptwerk organ using various sample sets, with a short recital. Paul built his 4-manual organ from scratch, and you may recall his project was featured in our June 2020 newsletter, so we're delighted to have an opportunity to hear the results of his efforts. Paul plans to use sample sets of the cathedrals of Friesach, Dudelage and Salisbury, with pieces for the recital chosen to suit these German, French and English sample sets. Let's hope Zoom can do justice to the sounds produced by Paul's Hauptwerk organ!

In advance of the event, Richard Syner will send out to members details of Paul's recital programme, and instructions on how to access the Zoom event.

[IAO/RCO MATTERS](#)

IAO e-NewsSheet

The 4th quarterly IAO e-NewsSheet was sent out by e-mail on 16th January, and LDOA members who have an e-mail address should have received a copy directly. The next publication is due in April 2021.

London Organ Day on-line: Saturday 6th March 2021

London Organ Day's artistic adviser, Tom Bell, has produced an online programme that includes recitals by Daniel Cook (Durham Cathedral) and Francesca Massey (Rochester Cathedral), and a video presentation from Fugue State Films. All members of the IAO will be able to attend this FREE event from the comfort of their own homes if an internet-enabled device, such as a computer or smartphone, is available: no need to negotiate public transport to get to the capital, even if Covid restrictions are being eased by then! Donations to help defray the costs of the event would, of course, be appreciated and all details will be provided by the beginning of March via this link:

www.londonorganday.co.uk

IAO Music Festival 2021

Depending on progress with containing the virus in the UK, it is still hoped that the postponed five-day festival in Edinburgh may go ahead as a 'live' event in July with a similar programme to that publicised last year. Decision on the 'live' event is in abeyance, but Council hopes to make booking details available by the next e-NewsSheet (due mid-April) and in the June edition of *Organists' Review*.

The next OrganFest will now be moved to 2022.

IAO Midlands Organ Day 2021: Saturday 25th September 2021

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

Details may be found at:

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

Yorkshire Organ Day - postponed

Originally planned to take place in Hull on Wednesday 2nd June 2021, given the current uncertainties about the progress of the pandemic and extent to which the public will have been vaccinated by early summer, the organisers of this event have reluctantly decided to postpone it until 2022.

International Organ Day 2021

The Royal College of Organists (RCO) has announced a week-long festival for the 'King of Instruments', culminating in interNational Organ Day on Saturday 24th April 2021.

With 2020's inaugural National Organ Day having been largely cancelled amid the UK's Covid-19 lockdown, the 2021 celebrations are being designed for both live and online participation. An invitation to participate has been extended to the IAO, and has also been extended to organists around the world to make this an international event for the first time.

To further extend the scope and scale of activities, a week of themed days and events is being promoted by the RCO to create a full Organ Week starting from Sunday 18 April.

The Schedule

The entire week will be broadcast online:

- Starting on Sunday 18 April with performances on organs from World Heritage Sites across the world (to coincide with World Heritage Day). Sunday will also be designated RCO Choral Day to highlight the work organists are doing to develop their choirs in the current climate.
- The programme on Monday will highlight the work of local organ associations across the UK.
- Tuesday will feature a programme of cinema and theatre organ music.
- Wednesday will explore organs in different locations, such as in the Masonic London Grand Temple and other Masonic Halls. They will also show how Freemasons are supporting many initiatives across the country to help people with learning the organ.
- A celebrity recital by Stephen Farr, the RCO's Chief Examiner, will be broadcast on Thursday 22 April from Sidney Sussex College Cambridge.
- Friday will put a focus on youth, with a programme designed to showcase the organ and encourage participation.
- And for interNational Organ Day itself on Saturday 24 April, the RCO will feature a wealth of content

submitted by exponents of the instrument from across the globe, and this is where they want as many people as possible to get involved!

For more information and details on how to take part in Organ Week and interNational Organ Day, visit www.rco.org.uk/events/international-organ-day-2021

Organists' Review Lockdown Offer

Having subscribed to the magazine for many years, I can personally highly recommend the IAO magazine *Organists' Review*. Interesting articles, and invariable a good read. Hope is beginning to spring with the new Covid vaccines. However, as we are back in lockdown you may find that you have time on your hands. If this is the case and you would like to receive *Organists' Review* with a 15% discount for your first year's subscription, please visit www.organistsreview.com/subscribe or telephone 0330 088 2735 and quote IAO2021 (case sensitive).

NEWS FROM THE LDOA COMMITTEE

2021 Subscriptions

A reminder was sent out by our Secretary, Richard Syner, that 2021 subscriptions were due on 1st January 2021. We do hope everyone will 'stick with us' in the hope of better times to come in 2021, when we expect to be able to resume something more like our usual activities.

Membership remains at £12 for individual members and £17.50 for joint membership (couples etc.). Membership is free to those in full time education. Unless you pay by standing order, payment arrangements are as follows:

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

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

MEMBERS' NEWS

New Member

June Smith

We're always delighted when a new member joins us, but under the present circumstances, it's even more welcome. June heard of us via LDOA member Peter King, as she used to work at the care home where Peter's late wife Gaye was a resident. Whilst June doesn't play the organ, she accompanied Peter to an organ recital at St Modwen's Burton-on-Trent which she enjoyed, and is now looking forward to attending others when recitals start up again. June lives in Tamworth.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL NEWS/EVENTS

Lichfield Cathedral Closed for Worship

Following the announcement of the national lockdown and the 'stay at home' message to combat Covid-19, on 9th January 2021 Lichfield Cathedral posted the following announcement on its website:

It is with much sadness that the Cathedral has taken the difficult decision to close for in person worship.

'We realise this will be disappointing to all of our worshippers. However, we have grown increasingly concerned regarding the infection rates across the country and we wish to support the stay at home message which is so critical to controlling the virus and protecting the NHS.

All of our services will be live streamed and we would very much welcome you to join us virtually.'

As well as the live streaming, the services are also uploaded to YouTube, providing an opportunity to hear the Hill organ, with Martyn Rawles and Liam Condon sharing playing duties.

Despite not being open for public worship, the Dean of Lichfield The Very Rev Adrian Dorber confirmed that with the Cathedral being such a central focus of community life in Lichfield, the big space in the nave had been offered to The Lichfield Primary Care Network as a centre for Covid vaccinations. The offer was duly accepted, and the first vaccination clinic was held on Friday 16th January 2021.

Other Cathedrals have similarly opened their doors as vaccination centres, including Blackburn and Salisbury Cathedrals.

Lichfield Cathedral Chorister Accolade

Josie Sim (Year 11), a chorister at Lichfield Cathedral, successfully made it through the girls' semi-final held on Sunday 22nd November 2020 to reach the final of *Songs of Praise – BBC Young Chorister of the Year 2020*.



Josie Sim, Lichfield Cathedral Chorister

In a programme presented by Rev Kate Botley, the final was held at Gorton Monastery in Manchester on Sunday

6th December 2020, and comprised three boys and three girls, performing in front of three eminent judges, John Rutter (composer and conductor), Laura Wright (soprano) and Carl Jackson (organist, and Director of Music at the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court since 1996). The boys were mentored by Aled Jones, and the girls by Katherine Jenkins.

The competition was won by Alexander, a chorister from Leighton Buzzard, but despite very stiff competition from the other choristers, Josie Sim was awarded the 'Highly Commended Prize', singing Bob Chilcott's *The Time of Snow*, with judge Laura Wright describing Josie's performance as 'absolute brilliance in her tone, the quality of her voice, and creating such a wonderful atmosphere with the piece of music.'

In a year in which Covid-19 restrictions must have been very disruptive to her choral training and preparations for such a prestigious competition, our congratulations on her success to Josie, and to Chorister Singing Tutor at Lichfield Cathedral, Ailsa Cochrane.

NEWS & SNIPPETS FROM THE ORGAN WORLD

Catherine Ennis Obituary

Catherine Ennis, an ex-President of the association to which we are affiliated, the IAO, sadly died of cancer on Christmas Eve 2020. She had been Organist and Director of Music at St Lawrence Jewry in the City of London since 1985, and President of the RCO from 2013 to 2015. Her death follows the demise in 2020 of two other eminent female organists, Jennifer Bate and Jane Parker-Smith.



Catherine Ennis (1955-2020)

An Organ Scholar at St Hugh's College, Oxford, she became Assistant Organist of Christ Church Cathedral, in an era when such positions for women were scarce. She joined the RCO in 1978. She was a Trustee of the RCO from 2012 to 2016 and Vice-President from 2015, and was also a diploma examiner over many years. As an RCO accredited teacher she was hugely popular with students who came to her for individual lessons, and as artistic director of the RCO Summer Course for Organists in 2017, her warmth of personality and encouraging and reassuring manner proved a hit with the diverse student body.

Her classes for RCO Academy always elicited much positive feedback, both for the knowledge she imparted and for the confidence she inspired in those attending. All this was largely with adult students, but she was also a wonderful teacher on the TOSE Course, gently cajoling

sleepy teenagers first thing in the morning with humour and energy, and providing them with expert advice, clearly expressed in the teaching sessions.

She was a dynamic and energetic force in the organ world, being responsible for the creation of four new organs in London, including the 2001 Klais in St Lawrence Jewry. She also founded the London Organ Concerts Guide, and was president of the Incorporated Association of Organists from 2003 to 2005.

In 2006 she initiated (together with Barbara Hill) the John Hill Organ Series, which showcased emerging young talented organists in a series of Tuesday lunchtime recitals in the City each May. Most recently she became a patron of the Society of Women Organists.

Concert engagements in recent years included Christ Church Spitalfields, Westminster Cathedral, and the Royal Festival Hall. She recorded works by J.S. Bach, Reubke, Guilmant, and English romantic composers, among others; her latest CD for Priory Records of works by various composers on the Peter Collins organ in St Bartholomew's Church, Orford, was released in October 2020.

Wayne Marshall Honoured

Organist, pianist and conductor Wayne Marshall received an OBE for services to music in the 2021 New Year's Honours List.



Wayne Marshall

He was a student at Chetham's School of Music from 1971 to 1979, and I first saw him play when he was Organist at Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. He is known for his brilliant improvisations, and I last saw him play in a Gala Organ Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, London, in May 2018, along with David Briggs and Olivier Latry.

PS. Wayne Marshall is scheduled to play in a *Grand Organ Celebration* at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on Thursday 20th May, along with Olivier Latry, Isabelle Demers, Anna Lapwood and David Briggs.

Harrison & Harrison Ltd – major organ projects

Stephen Alliss, Harrison & Harrison Head Tuner, has advised that work is continuing at pace as, despite many churches being closed currently, many have realised that it is cheaper to have the regular maintenance than face the consequences of a long period of inactivity. I'm once again indebted to Stephen for providing the following update on H & H major projects:

York Minster Organ

The York Minster organ was removed in October 2018 by Harrison & Harrison, and taken to their works for a £2m repair and refurbishment. The complete reconstruction based on the Harrison & Harrison musical concept of 1917/1931 is expected to take two years. Voicing work continues on site, and progress is much improved now that the team is being allowed to work day time hours due to the building being closed to the public.

Christ Church, Greenwich, Connecticut, USA

Harrison & Harrison have been commissioned to build a new 4 manual 86-stop landmark instrument for Christ Church, Greenwich, Connecticut, USA. The organ is to be entirely new, and work is progressing ahead of schedule in the workshop, with installation planned for 2022.

Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

Work starts on 8th February at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. It's a twelve month project to install a new wind system, actions and transmission, together with work to improve the egress of sound, particularly from the Great division.

Nicholson & Co Ltd – major organ projects

Manchester Town Hall Organ

Nicholson's have 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.

Bute Hall, University of Glasgow

The Bute Hall is the graduation hall of the University of Glasgow and was designed by George Gilbert Scott. In 1901, a four-manual organ by Lewis & Co. of London was built in a fine case in the west gallery of the hall. The organ was dramatically rebuilt in 1962 by Hill, Norman & Beard, with many tonal changes. As phase two of a planned three-phase project to restore the organ, Nicholson's will be undertaking major work on the instrument. The console will be removed for complete restoration and upgrading, including a new piston capture system and modern playing aids. A new solid-state electrical transmission will also be installed.

Radley College, Oxfordshire

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

Organ. Construction commenced in 2020, with installation planned for autumn 2021.

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 the Walker firm.

The organ was altered by Walker's in 1965: although the stoplist remained unchanged, many of the reeds were revoiced. The console was replaced with one of modern design. Further work was undertaken in 1981 by George Martin & Partner of Portsmouth; this included lowering the pitch of the organ to nearer standard pitch.

The forthcoming 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.

St Gabriel's, Pimlico

Nicholson's will be rebuilding the 1894 J J Binns three 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 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.

St Mildred's, Addiscombe

Nicholson's has been commissioned to build a new two-manual 35-stop instrument for the west gallery. This will be based tonally on a core of restored Lewis & Co. pipework (with new matching additions) from a redundant instrument elsewhere, and will be wholly new mechanically. The new instrument will have electro-pneumatic action and will be played from a remodelled east end console.

Henry Willis & Sons Ltd

Current projects:

- Liverpool Philharmonic Hall – 1939 Rushworth & Dreaper 3 manual 54 stop organ
- St Michael's Church of Scotland, Linlithgow – 1912 Henry Willis organ
- The University of St Andrews – 1868 T C Lewis organ
- The Wesley Centre, Malton – 1877 Forster & Andrews organ

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire - Flentrop organ installed

In December, Flentrop carried out installation of the new 2 manual 18-stop organ in the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, with voicing to follow when Covid-restrictions permit.



The Flentrop organ of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

L'Orgue du Voyage

LDOA member John Maxwell-Jones is well-known for a love of France and all things French, and on a visit to France he came across a portable organ, not a digital organ nor a one manual box organ, but unusually a 3-manual portable pipe organ. John is also a member of Derby & District Organists' Association, and wrote an article about his visit to this organ for their January/February 2020 Newsletter. I'm indebted to John for agreeing to the inclusion of his article, below, in our newsletter for the interest of LDOA members:

Members who attend DDOA meetings on a fairly regular basis will know that there is light-hearted banter between my good friend, Terry Bennett, and me on the subject of trying organs in France during my annual sojourn there. I have not the confidence to invite myself to try the ultimate masterpiece of the chef d'œuvre of Aristide Cavallé-Coll, in the Abbey Church of Saint Ouen in Rouen under the watchful eye of the notorious titulaire, Maîtresse Marie-Andrée Morisset-Balier. As the church is now deconsecrated, opportunities to hear it are sadly few and far between, there being no Sunday masses to attend. However, this summer I spotted that the church's new, young Co-titulaire, Jean-Baptiste Monnot (JBM), was running a masterclass for a week. Having checked, I found that the sessions would run each morning and that the church would remain open. I was therefore able to attend and, at last, hear the mighty beast. However, it is not the Cavallé-Coll that is the subject of this article.

I returned to the church one afternoon (a two-hour lunch-break is virtually compulsory in France) to hear organ sounds as I entered, but they weren't emanating from the west end buffet. I walked round the apse to find that another instrument had been installed in the Lady Chapel and that was the source of the sound. JBM's orgue du voyage is just that, a transportable pipe organ. Many of us know of 'churches without walls'. The publicity for this instrument uses the same phrase! I was fascinated to see a collection of nine units on castors with a console made of riveted aluminium and four ventilateurs. JBM has abandoned traditional materials in favour of lighter ones, so pine and plywood feature for the 'casework' but the pipes have been collected à la Ed Stow and are mainly late 19th and early 20th century. The layout is also original, but practical, for example en chamade pedal pipes. It is, of course, built on the extension principle and has about 450 pipes. For its size I found the sound excellent and heard it demonstrated (to students on the course) by JBM and by students themselves. The clarity of sound of line was magnificent.



The nine modules of the Orgue du voyage



Jean-Baptiste Monnot bequiles his audience

The instrument was conceived, as its name states, to allow JBM to take the organ 'out to the people'. Although there are many fine instruments in France, there are also a much greater number of churches which have no instrument. The nine modules can be adapted to suit the size and acoustic of the venue. I was able to speak to JBM and ascertain that installation takes an L'orgue du voyage - John Maxwell-Jones hour (including tuning!) He also

uses it to duet with other organs, although I didn't find out whether he intends to rival or resurrect the famous "Battles of the Organs" so beloved of Carlo Curley! He also uses it to accompany choirs and in orchestral concerts. The notes about it I was able to find online say that it will truly 'voyage' next year – as far as Venice, Italy. I look forward to hearing it for a full concert or recital.

John Maxwell-Jones

Ed. There's an interesting video of L'Orgue du Voyage being transported, set up and demonstrated by Jean-Baptiste Monnot, although the narration is in French, so good luck with that! See: <https://vimeo.com/238095277>. Then a further demonstration of the organ being played via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Rzpl7nn8Hs>

ON-LINE RECITALS

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

- *Sunday Afternoon Organ Music* at Holy Trinity Wordsley, performed by Paul Carr, was suspended after the March 2020 recital. So, Paul Carr is continuing to perform a short programme at 3pm on the first Sunday of the month online. The videos are hosted on *Sunday Afternoon Organ Music's* Facebook page, and the most recent recital on Sunday 3rd January 2021 can be found at: www.facebook.com/SundayAfternoonOrganMusic
- Paul Carr's 'Thursday Live' series of recitals on the first Thursday of the month at St Chad's Cathedral continue to be broadcast live, featuring both Paul Carr and David Saint, and for the most recent recital on 7th January 2021 joined also by Nigel Morris, Assistant Director of Music at St Chad's Cathedral. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKOJlt5DI-A&t=17s>
- Gert van Hoef, the young Dutch organist, is continuing to give weekly one-hour recitals on Thursday evenings, which are live streamed on YouTube. He uses both his home Hauptwerk organ, and is now also playing various pipe organs in Dutch churches.
- Jonathan Scott, concert organist, is continuing to live stream regular recitals via YouTube, with his brother pianist Tom Scott joining him for some recitals.
- Richard McVeigh continues to give frequent on-line broadcasts via *Beauty in Sound* on YouTube, mainly on his home Hauptwerk organ, on which he is able to access sample sets of a number of different notable organs.
- St Paul's Cathedral, London, is regrettably currently closed to the public, but in 2021 and 2022, they are holding a special two-year long organ recital series called **Organ Giants** to celebrate 150 years of the Willis Organ of St Paul's. They are presenting the complete organ works of J.S. Bach, Mendelssohn, Robert & Clara Schumann and Brahms. Alongside this will be selected works demonstrating the influence of J.S. Bach. These Sunday recitals commenced on 10th January, and will be livestreamed weekly until at least the end of April via the St Paul's YouTube Channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/StPaulsLondon>

VACANCIES

Organist required for St John's Hospital Chapel, Lichfield

Subsequent to this vacancy being shown in our last newsletter, we are advised by Revd Helen M Barton, that two leads are being followed up, hopefully leading to an appointment in due course.

FORTHCOMING LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS

LDOA Members' Recitals/Events

Angela Sones, Director of Music at All Saints' Church Four Oaks is scheduled to give a recital at Emmanuel Church Wylde Green on Friday 7th May 2021 at 1pm.

Recitals In Local Area (To end of March 2021)

The main website for listing organ recitals nationally is www.organrecitals.com and the few currently listed there for our area are shown below, now also including details of local on-line only recitals (clearly marked to avoid wasted journeys!). Note that any recitals not shown as on-line only will be subject to, and potentially affected by, whatever Covid-19 restrictions are in place for the location at the time of the recital, so please check before attending.

February 2021

Thurs 4 February 2021 • 1.15 to 1.45 • St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham Cathedral – ON-LINE ONLY
David Saint (St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham) & Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Sun 7 February 2021 • 3.00 to 3.20 • Holy Trinity Wordsley – ON-LINE ONLY
Paul Carr (Birmingham)

March 2021

Thurs 4 March 2021 • 1.15 to 1.45 • St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham Cathedral – ON-LINE ONLY
David Saint (St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham) & Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Frid 5 March 2021 • 1.00 to 1.45 • Emmanuel Wylde Green
Charles Francis (Birmingham Cathedral)

Sat 6 March 2021 • 5.00 to 6.00 • Guild Chapel, Stratford-upon-Avon
Benedict Wilson (Shrewsbury)

Sun 7 March 2021 • 3.00 to 3.20 • Holy Trinity, Wordsley – ON-LINE ONLY
Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Frid 26 March 2021 • 1.00 to 1.45 • Emmanuel Wylde Green
James Lancelot (Durham Cathedral – Organist Emeritus)

A MOST PRODUCTIVE LOCKDOWN PROJECT!

Members who have come along to our visits over the years will be well aware that our Secretary, Richard Syner, is not only a fine organist, but has quite a flair for composing and arranging pieces for the organ. He has made good use of enforced time at home during lockdown to embark on the challenging project below, and indeed is encouraging other members to similarly make productive and satisfying use of their free time during lockdown:

52 PIECES FOR A LOCKDOWN YEAR

Not so long before Covid, the church where I play dropped the communion hymn and asked for organ music to be played instead. I had the idea to write a piece for every week of the year specifically to cover those three minutes in the service.

Then Covid appeared and things began to be cancelled, including church. I thought this was probably my chance to kickstart the cycle of pieces. I would have the time to write them even if I wouldn't have the opportunity to play them.

I was using – and continue to use – open source music writing software called Musescore which, in its basic form, is free. It also has a facility (which you pay for) to publish works for other users to download. I had already put many of my choral pieces, organ pieces and transcriptions on there, so I decided I would publish one piece every week on Musescore, hoping the commitment to do so would keep me focussed.

In a way, publishing 'live' took away one of the problems I had envisaged: no two years are the same – there can be various numbers of Sundays before Lent, during ordinary time etc. If the cycle was pegged to the year 2020/2021 as a kind of Covid/lockdown diary, then that particular problem would be solved.

I decided to compose and publish two weeks in advance of the Sunday the piece was intended for in case anyone wanted to play them in real time, in which case they would have a fortnight to prepare. The first Sunday I was aiming for was Lent V for which I arranged the spiritual *He Never Said A Mumblin' Word*. I had thought this would be an easy start as I had arranged it for a soprano around a decade ago. However, I couldn't find the tune I thought I knew anywhere. So I had to start from scratch anyway. I managed to arrange the tune but it clocked in at all of forty-five seconds. I hastily arranged a second verse (vaguely) in the style of Bach and added a repeat mark so the opening could then be reprised. This took it up to the three minute mark and the simple ABA structure is one I would come to use extensively.

1. He Never Said A Mumblin' Word

Spiritual

Lent V

Arr. Richard Syner

Musical score for 'He Never Said A Mumblin' Word'. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It features three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass line. The grand staff begins with a dynamic marking of *p* and a tempo/style instruction 'Like a slow blues'. The bass line starts with a dynamic marking of *mp*. Performance instructions include 'Sw. strings 8'' for the grand staff, 'Gt. or Ch. 8'' for the bass line, and '16' & Sw. to ped.' for the grand staff. The score consists of 16 measures.

Piece #1 – only 51 more to go!

I was still diffident about publishing the piece and committing to a year of writing music but on 16th March Boris Johnson urged everyone to stay at home (at the time there were 85 recorded Coronavirus cases nationally and there had been no deaths). It was a Monday. I was normally home from work at 9pm. That day I was home by 4pm so I decided to polish the piece as best I could and put it online.

The next Sunday I would be writing for was Palm Sunday for which I had nothing prepared. When our children were young, I had contemplated writing some chorale preludes which would also include nursery themes. I recalled thinking the tune to *All Glory, Laud And Honour* could be combined with the tune *Girls And Boys Come Out To Play* because of the words in the refrain of the hymn: *from whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring*. So, I set about trying to merge the two tunes which I did, after a fashion, in the final eight bars.

Musical score for 'Palm Sunday hymn and nursery rhyme combined'. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It features three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass line. The grand staff begins with a dynamic marking of *p*. Performance instructions include 'Ch. 8' flute' for the grand staff and 'Both hands Sw.' for the bass line. The score consists of 16 measures, with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket over the final eight bars.

Palm Sunday hymn and nursery rhyme combined.

Given the crisis in the health service, anything too joyful seemed inappropriate for Easter so instead I wrote a reflective meditation on the tune *Savannah (Love's Redeeming Work Is Done)*. Of course, it wasn't yet done at all, it was all very much ongoing with several health service workers, including several in Derby and Burton, losing their lives.

A musical score for a piece titled "Love's redeeming Work Is Done". It features three staves: a treble clef staff with a melody, a bass clef staff with accompaniment, and a lower bass clef staff with a pedal line. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 6/8. The piece is marked with a dynamic of *mf*. The score includes a fermata over the final notes of the melody.

Single 8' ped. diapason only
or Gt. 8' diapason & Gt. to ped.

Love's redeeming Work Is Done – piece for Easter Day

And so the year rolled on. I found composing to be an absorbing and distracting way of using the free time that had come my way. The pieces divided into three main categories: seasonal British folk songs, American spirituals and meditations on hymn tunes (either communion hymns or hymns specific to a time of year). When it came to hymn tunes, I wanted to include tunes which would be known to a congregation but which they might no longer get to sing such as plainsong melodies (*Come, Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire, Creator Of The Starry Height*) and Lutheran chorales (*Zion Hears The Watchmen's Voices, How Brightly Shines The Morning Star*). It was gratifying to be able to provide pieces for festivals where simple and appropriate organ music has often proved elusive e.g. Trinity, Ascension, Transfiguration, All Saints, Christ The King. Among the folk songs I added a few from further afield such as Bailero (from the Auvergne region of France) just when everyone was thinking about their summer holidays, and The Carol Of The Bells (Ukraine) at Christmas.

A musical score for a piece titled "Carlsle". It features three staves: a treble clef staff with a melody, a bass clef staff with accompaniment, and a lower bass clef staff with a pedal line. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is 6/8. The piece is marked with a dynamic of *mf*. The score includes a fermata over the final notes of the melody and a marking "(Sw.)" in the bass staff.

It was good to write for more obscure festivals such as the transfiguration. This is an extract from a meditation on the tune Carlsle ('Tis Good Lord To Be Here).

I also included a fourth category of transcriptions of works by other composers. Hunting through IMSLP I had discovered several pieces that were exactly the right length, and which were simple and peaceful which was the brief I was writing to. As well as these criteria, I made a rule that I would only include them if (a) they weren't available as organ arrangements elsewhere and (b) the composer had lived into the twentieth century. The first of these pieces was an interlude by Delius from incidental music he had written for the play Hassan. I went on to include pieces by Respighi, Amy Beach, Parry, Puccini, George Gershwin and Rachmaninov.

7. Interlude

from Hassan

Frederick Delius (1862 - 1934)

arr. Richard Syner

Easter IV

A musical score for "Interlude from Hassan" by Frederick Delius, arranged by Richard Syner. It features three staves: a treble clef staff with a melody, a bass clef staff with accompaniment, and a lower bass clef staff with a pedal line. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 6/8. The piece is marked "Very quietly" and includes dynamic markings *pp* and "Swell strings 8'". The score includes a fermata over the final notes of the melody and a marking "Ped. 16' & Sw. to Ped." in the bass staff.

Several people on the site took an interest in the project including an American organist who continues to download and play the pieces as the closing voluntary at his church and an Italian organist who leaves very encouraging comments in excellent English which I (sometimes) attempt to reply to in poor Italian.

There has only been one hiccup. An extract from George Gershwin's Piano Concerto had an embargo put on it in December 2020 as it was still in copyright. As of 2021 it is no longer in copyright and I have lodged an appeal.

If you are curious to see and hear the pieces the best way is probably to type **52 Reflective Pieces For Organ** into Youtube or copy and paste the URL below which should bring up the first piece and the playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TO9ID6uH0sY&list=PLaBwZLwNwaQRtqhkoDefSHPRod6m8Xws>

The Youtube versions also give a link to the piece on the Muscoresite. You have to have at least the free version of Muscoresite to be able to download pieces. However, if you see a piece you would like let me know at richard.syner1@btinternet.com and I will send you a PDF.

The last piece will be published on Monday 1st March – an arrangement of Dvorak's *Songs My Mother Taught Me* for Mothering Sunday (Lent IV). The project has been very pleasurable and rewarding. I would encourage anyone to have a go at arranging and composing as a form of meditation and distraction from the relentlessly grim situation. Publishing the pieces has brought the added pleasure of making contact with enthusiastic and encouraging individuals from all over the world. Hopefully as I begin to play – and revise - the collection from the beginning over the year 2021 – 2022, the situation will gradually improve for us all.
Richard Syner

AN INSIGHT FOR ORGANISTS INTO BELLRINGING

Whilst to my knowledge at least six of our members are both organists and bellringers, for most of us organists who simply enjoy hearing church bells, what goes on in the ringing room is something of a mystery. So, we're indebted to LDOA members, and long-serving Lichfield Cathedral bellringers husband and wife Clive and Lucy Smith, for producing the following article, providing an insight for us organists into the world of bellringing:

An Organist investigates English Church Bellringing

Organists who regularly play for Sunday services, usually arrive early to prepare things at the console. If the church has a tower with bells, he or she, will probably ignore them and with difficulty, greet a few early worshippers.

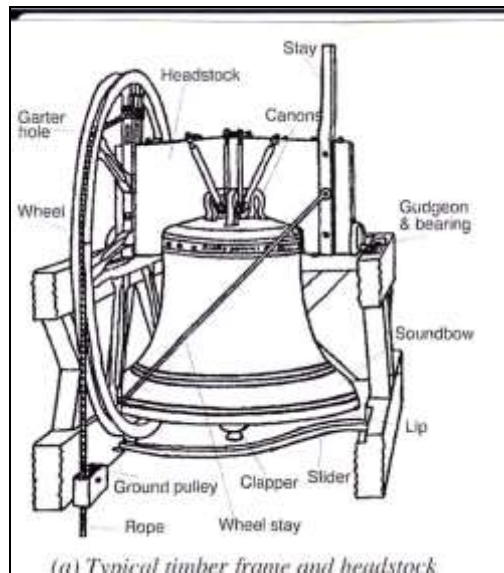
After several months with us, our new organist, Mark, knowing that I was a ringer, asked me to explain what the ringers did. Having the gift of perfect pitch, he had noticed that our bells seemed to be in the key of G, but although a musician, after the sound of a downward scale, he could not follow what we were doing.

On a ringing practice night, Mark and I met and ascended the well-lit spiral stairs for a couple of turns to the ringing room door. After a short while the ringers stopped and on entering, our tower captain, Jill, who knew Mark by sight, welcomed him. He was very surprised at the room which had wall-to-wall carpeting and was tastefully decorated with good lighting. There was seating around most of the walls with a table in the middle, on which were several ringing books, together with copies of "The Ringing World". I explained this was a weekly newspaper, published continuously since 1911, of interest to enthusiastic ringers. On one wall was a flat television screen for use as instruction and connected to a simulator.

"But where are the actual bells?" Mark asked us. "I see there are ropes spaced round the room". There are spaces between each rope to allow at least one ringer per bell to stand apart.

After loaning Mark a pair of ear-defenders, and making certain that the ringers were not going to ring, we ascended further up the tower. As we passed a room empty except for the bell ropes I explained that this helped to reduce the sound, but only partly as it is important that each ringer can still hear their individual bell.

Higher up the tower we arrived at the bells. Each one is bolted to a horizontal cast iron headstock which is hung at either end to bearings containing a ball-bearing race. At one end of the headstock is a fairly large wooden wheel to which the rope is attached from below to one of the spokes. The complete installation is housed in a galvanised steel framework which is firmly embedded into the tower walls. English church bells are swung in a 360 degree circle in either direction, controlled by the ringer below. When the bell is facing upwards the ringer feels the bell at its lightest and can control it with the rope. Meanwhile, a carefully designed and balanced clapper swings inside the bell in the same direction but overtakes it and so strikes it just before the completion of the revolution. This is called 'full-circle' ringing.



Bell in a metal frame facing downwards



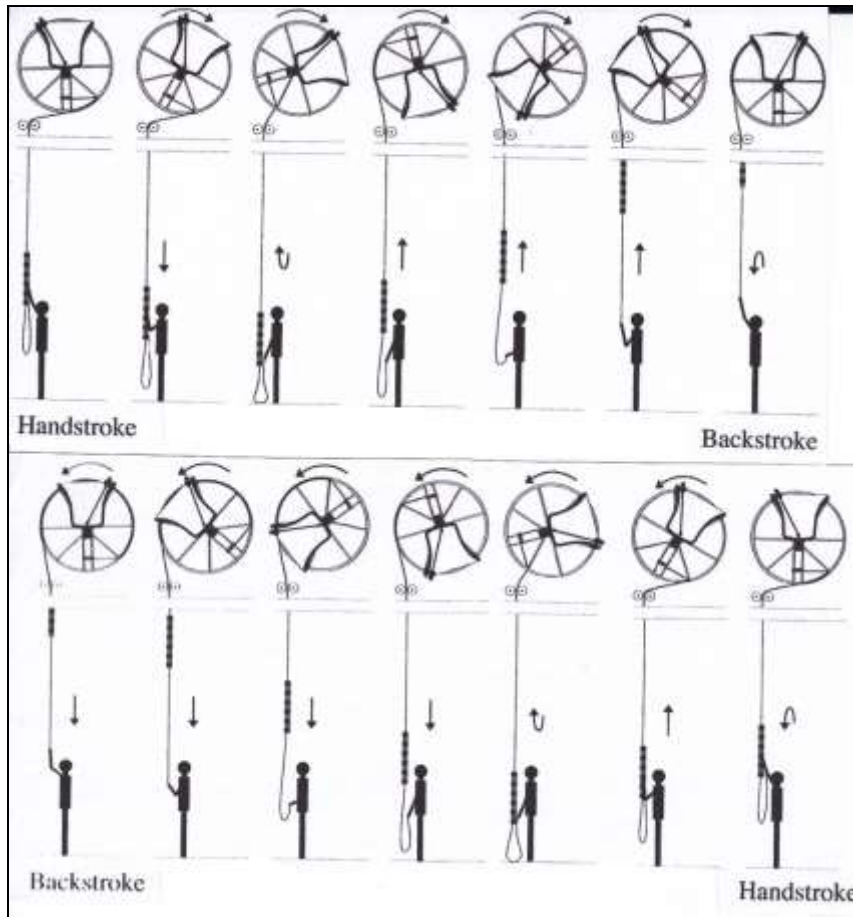
A bell is able to be set in an upwards position when a wooden **stay** (shown pointing upwards in the picture on the left) rests against a **slider** at the bottom of the frame

Beginners have to learn to control a bell. In the ringing-room the end, or 'tail end', of each rope is 'tucked in and back' at the bottom, thus allowing it to be adjusted according to the height of a ringer if necessary. There are two actions that the learner has to learn to control, the 'handstroke' and the 'backstroke'. The 'handstroke' is when the ringer grasps the rope with two hands at a point about six feet up the rope from the tail-end where there is a woolly piece, called a 'sally' usually in the three colours of red, white and blue, woven into the rope at head height, as a protection for the hands; he then pulls the rope downwards before it turns around and goes upwards. He immediately looses the sally while still holding the tail-end and when the bell has turned over once the ringer is holding the end of the rope above his head with his arms fully stretched, before he pulls the rope down to the floor, an action called the 'backstroke', and is ready to catch the sally on its upward movement when the cycle begins again with the handstroke. (See the diagram below)

Like learning to ride a bicycle, it is important that a beginner has to learn to handle a bell properly and safely. This would be on a moderately light bell, as very small ones can sometimes cause 'flighty' ropes, not ideal for teaching. This might take one or two evenings with a competent instructor and two or three other learners. I have met people who have wished to learn and have experienced some unnecessary and unpleasant problems, and given up almost immediately. This is usually the fault of an incompetent instructor. It is sensational newspapers and cartoonists who prefer to portray ringers being lifted off the floor on the end of the bell rope. This, of course, should never happen.

When there is no ringing for several days, for safety reasons the bells should be left in a downward position with their mouths facing the floor. A beginner therefore has to be eventually taught to raise a bell up to a vertical ringing position. Experienced ringers can accomplish this by raising all the bells sounding in rounds all the way up.

The cycle of full-circle ringing



After this explanation I suggested we return to the ringing room for the rest of the practice, before adjourning with the ringers to “The Bull”! After getting in a round Mark asked us how the ringers managed without using musical notation, so I showed him in my specially printed “Ringers’ Notebook and Diary” several tables of numbers showing patterns of varying difficulty with a line drawn through the path of a particular bell which a ringer has to learn and remember. The bells start off by ringing down the scale, which is a familiar sound called “rounds”. This is written out as 1 2 3 4 5 6, if there are six bells involved, with the number “1” representing the lightest bell (called the treble) and “6” the heaviest (the tenor). To ring ‘changes’ bells change their ‘place’ in the row in order each time they strike. For example, the first change after ringing down the scale could be 2 1 4 3 6 5. All the six bells have swapped their place with their neighbours. The next combination is 2 4 1 6 3 5; this time it is the first bell, number 2, which does not move and all the others change places in pairs, except for the 5th. Ringers learn the path that their bell makes through the sequence, as is shown in red below.

Simple ‘changes’
on six bells

1	2	3	4	5	6
2	1	4	3	6	5
2	4	1	6	3	5
4	2	6	1	5	3
4	6	2	5	1	3
6	4	5	2	3	1
6	5	4	3	2	1
5	6	3	4	1	2
5	3	6	1	4	2
3	5	1	6	2	4
3	1	5	2	6	4
1	3	2	5	4	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

The same in
musical notation

B	A	G	F#	E	D
A	B	F#	G	D	E
A	F#	B	D	G	E
F#	A	D	B	E	G
F#	D	A	E	B	G
D	F#	E	A	G	B
D	E	F#	G	A	B
E	D	G	F#	B	A
E	G	D	B	F#	A
G	E	B	D	A	F#
G	B	E	A	D	F#
B	G	A	E	F#	D
B	A	G	F#	E	D

These sequences are known as ‘methods’ and have names such as Plain Bob and Stedman, and older ones are often named after counties or places. New methods are still being ‘composed’ with new names. A popularly rung change you may have easily picked out in the past is ‘Queens’, which rung continually on an octave is 1 3 5 7 2 4 6 8. This was supposedly heard

by Queen Elizabeth I somewhere which gave her great satisfaction. Dick Whittington heard 'Turn again Whittington' 5 3 1 2 4 6 from the six bells then at St Mary le Bow church in London. There is now a new modern set of 12 bells at Bow of 1963, replacing those destroyed in WW2. An 8-note version of 'Whittingtons' is 1 2 7 5 3 4 6 8, which can often be heard on some tower and long-case chiming domestic clocks.

Another means of a less complicated way of sounding full-circle ringing is 'call-changes'. A musician outside may hear that after ringing rounds for a while two bells have changed their positions. one of the ringers having been asked to call out clearly "6 to 7", in which case the ringer of the 6th bell now follows the 7th and the 7th must follow the 5th. This change remains until the next call.

If we multiply $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6$ we find all the possible number of changes, or the extent, 720 in all, taking approximately 15 to 20 minutes to ring. On multiplying $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7$ the total is 5040; this would take between 2 to 3 hours, or around 4 hours on extremely heavy sets, or rings, of bells (e.g. Worcester Cathedral or St Paul's, London). 1×2 through to 12 would be 479,001,600 changes and take, at a rate of 24 changes per minute, 37 years and 355 days to accomplish! We all assume no bellringers are quite that enthusiastic. Seriously, however, the extent on 8 bells is 40,320 changes and was successfully rung in 1963 in 17 hours 58 minutes by eight men at Taylor's bellfoundry in Loughborough. A peal consists of 5000 or more changes, has to be rung continuously with one ringer per bell and no substitutes are allowed; only the more enthusiastic ringers attempt these. All peals have to start and end in rounds no substitutes are allowed and have to be recorded in "The Ringing World". The first peal ever rung is reputed to have been rung at St Peter Mancroft on the 2nd May, 1715.

Many ringers prefer to ring quarter peals, which have to be at least 1260 changes and last approximately 40 minutes.

On normal ringing occasions between shorter lengths, the ringing master, or captain may decide a next method and, its length. This is assuming the band is capable of ringing several different methods competently. One ringer may be asked to conduct a short length of ringing. He, or she, will take part in the ringing and will from time to time call out clearly various words of instruction. The ringers concerned, usually three of them, will know by their position whether they need to alter their line slightly.

"How are the bells made?" Mark asked. He had noticed that they varied in size to produce the various notes, the larger ones the lower sounds. We told him that bells consist of castings of approximately 88% copper and 12% tin - very expensive. At the bell foundry, when completely cold, the bells are tuned on a vertical lathe by shaving off small amounts of metal usually from the inside. Bells are tuned according to their weight, which is determined by the size and strength of their future tower. A bell of middle C will weigh around 25 cwt, a bell sounding an octave below about 3 cwt and a G in between approximately 10 cwt. The smaller the tower the lighter the bells must be. Bells produce many harmonics, but the tuner will concentrate on the important lower ones. First is the hum, next is the principal, then the (minor) third or tierce, next is the fifth, called the quint and lastly the nominal. This last governs the actual 'strike' note. The largest bell in the ring is called the 'tenor' and the smallest the 'treble'.

Various bell founders have experimented in tuning to a major third; however, the resultant sound was neither popular nor pleasant to listen to and the shape of the bell required was a necessarily altered casting. Mark was interested that the final bell sound is caused by a vibration and a minute altering of the shape when struck by the clapper. This is not by a movement of air as in an organ pipe. The bell returns to its original shape and as you hear the sound decrease, the lower harmonics last the longest.

In really top-class ringing by very experienced ringers, one should hear no chords, no grace notes and no gaps, thus producing a markedly strict rhythm.

I am pleased to say that Mark has since joined our band of ringers and also his two teenage daughters. They have started to visit other towers, including St Modwen's, Burton-on-Trent with its eight bells, its tenor weighing 19 cwt in the key of D, rather light for D as normally a 'D' bell would be nearer 25 cwt. The bells were retuned by J. Taylor & Co of Loughborough in 1903 and were originally cast in 1726 by Abraham Rudhall the younger of Gloucester. Also, a visit was paid to St Michael's Lichfield which has a lighter peal of six bells, tuned to Ab, the heaviest being 11 cwt, 3 quarters 9 lbs. Three of these were also cast by Rudhall in 1722, but three have since been recast in 1919 by the long-closed Birmingham firm of James Barwell. Lastly, I took Mark and the girls on a memorable visit to Lichfield Cathedral. In the south-west tower is a splendid set (or ring) of ten bells, with a tenor tuned to D. Although the wooden frame dates from 1688, somewhat patched up, it is still supporting the bells. These were cast at Loughborough in 1947, a gift from the Freemasons of Staffordshire to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the founding of the cathedral. The previous bells of 1688 are reputed to be the first ring of ten bells.



The ten bells of Lichfield Cathedral in the 'down' position. The tenor bell weighs 31 cwt 9lbs and sounds the note D, which is unusually high for a bell of this weight; it would normally be C#



Some of the bells of Lichfield Cathedral in an 'up' position

Some ringers may combine ringing with other interests. They may photograph the churches they ring at and any notable architectural features; they may make recordings of the bells or have an interest in brass rubbings or stained glass. On leaving the pub, Mark said that he had no idea that ringing was far from just pulling a rope and that it was obviously a great social pastime, often countrywide.

Two websites of interest are:

A National body: The Central Council of Bell Ringers: www.cccbr.org.uk

The Lichfield and Walsall Archdeaconries Society of Ringers: www.lwas.org.uk

There are many examples of ringing on YouTube

Clive M Smith/Lucy Smith

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Ed. – the next newsletter is planned for April 2021, with a deadline for submission of items for inclusion of 24/03/21, to Trevor Smedley by e-mail as above, or by mail to 8 The Parchments, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7NA