

## **OCTOBER 2022 NEWSLETTER**

### **FORTHCOMING LDOA VISITS/EVENTS**

#### **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022 – Annual Dinner**

With President's Evening fixed for around the time we normally have our Annual Dinner, it was decided to bring forward our Annual Dinner to October. So, the Annual Dinner for members and guests will be at The School House, Church Hill, Weeford, Nr Lichfield, WS14 0PW. 7 for 7.30pm. We have had excellent annual dinners at this venue in the past, but for anyone not familiar with its location, details can be found in the APPENDIX.

Our recently appointed Secretary Paul Hodgetts has sent out an email on Wed 28/09/22 requesting confirmation ASAP of those members and guests wishing to attend the dinner, with a link to the restaurant's website/menus. See <https://schoolhouse.co.uk/dining/> The two-course fixed price menu is £17.75, and £23.75 for three-courses.

#### **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2022 – rearranged visit to Shrewsbury**

Having had our original visit postponed due to the period of National Mourning for the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, whilst St Chad's is unable to accommodate a visit by us in 2022, our Chairman Peter Morris has managed to rearrange the visit to Shrewsbury Abbey, and to visit Shrewsbury URC in place of St Chad's.

#### Shrewsbury United Reformed Church

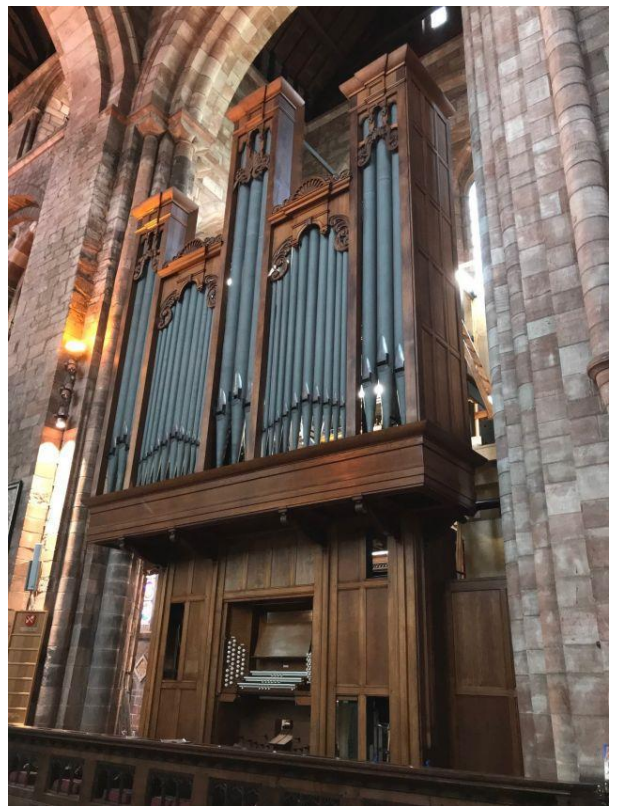


The Norman & Beard organ of Shrewsbury URC

The first visit is to Shrewsbury URC commencing at 1.15pm, hosted by Bill Smallman, to play the IIP/25 Norman & Beard organ, dating originally from 1907.

#### Shrewsbury Abbey

Then on to Shrewsbury Abbey for a visit commencing at 2.45pm, hosted by Organist Nigel Pursey, with a demonstration by Nigel of the IIP/32 Hill organ, which has just had a £200k restoration by GO Organbuilders of Herefordshire. The re-opening recital on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021 was given by James McVinnie. Opportunity then for members to play.



The Hill organ of Shrewsbury Abbey

See APPENDIX for details of addresses and locations.

#### **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2022 – President's Evening at Lichfield Cathedral**

We have had confirmation from Martyn Rawles that Lichfield Cathedral can accommodate President's Evening on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2022, following the 6pm Advent Carol Service.

President's Evening 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 will be in touch nearer the time.

## 2023 Visits

Our recently appointed Secretary Paul Hodgetts is in action planning our programme of visits for 2023, and details of the visits for the early part of the year will appear in the next newsletter.

## RECENT VISITS/EVENTS

Shrewsbury Abbey and St Chad's Shrewsbury advised us that as they were both observing a period of National Mourning following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, our visit planned for 17<sup>th</sup> September had to be postponed, so unfortunately no visit to report on in this newsletter.

## LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL NEWS/EVENTS

### Evening Autumn Recitals Series

Martyn Rawles advises that the Hill organ will be out of action for at least 2-3 weeks. This means that they have had to postpone Peter Stevens' concert on 20th September to a future date. Harrison & Harrison are carrying out minor repairs to both the high- and low-pressure wind feeds, including new blinds and non-return valves, plus some re-leathering of trunks following water damage caused by a faulty humidification unit. It is hoped that the remaining concerts in October will take place as planned, shown below:

- Tues 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 – Martyn Rawles (Lichfield Cathedral)
- Tues 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 – Darius Battiwalla (Leeds City Organist)

Recitals are at 7.30-8.45pm, accompanied by video console screening, and admission is £10 payable preferably by card on the door.

### J S Bach: Christmas Oratorio

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7pm, the Birmingham Bach Choir return to Lichfield Cathedral to perform J S Bach's *Christmas Oratorio (Parts 1,2,5 & 6)* to celebrate 30 years of Paul Spicer's inspirational directorship. They will be joined by a first-class group of soloists, including top international tenor Thomas Hobbs, and baroque style orchestra. Tickets from £15-£32.

## NEWS FROM THE LDOA COMMITTEE

Message from our new chairman, Peter Morris:

*Dear Members,*

*I'm delighted to have been elected chairman of LDOA at the AGM in Lichfield.*

*It's also good to know that the Lichfield Association has good membership numbers and we will try to put together a good programme for you. Any suggestions would be very welcome. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to Trevor Smedley for all his work on our behalf over a number of years and I'm delighted that he is happy to continue with*

*the huge task of producing such an informative and enjoyable monthly newsletter. Thanks are also due to Richard Syner for his work as Secretary, now being taken up by Paul Hodgetts.*

*The first event of the season was to have been a visit to the fine new organ in Shrewsbury Abbey (well worth seeing, hearing and playing) and the fairly recent Harrison restoration in the circular St Chad's Church. Unfortunately, the events following the death of Her Majesty the Queen meant that we had to postpone the visits. However, we're glad to be able to have a visit to Shrewsbury on November 5<sup>th</sup> instead.*

*I hope that many of you will be coming to the Annual Dinner and to the Cathedral for Martyn Rawles' President's Evening and I'm hoping that 2022/3 will be freer of the problems that have beset us all in recent years.*

*Best wishes Peter Morris*

## MEMBERS' NEWS

### New Members

We are delighted to welcome three new members joining us since the last newsletter was published.

#### Paul Russell

Paul had largely not played the organ for 40 years. He was principally a singer/cantor/vocal trainer/conductor until 1996 when he gave up music. He has been pressed into service to play the organ at St Laurence's Coppenhall and St Leonard's Dunston, and has recently acquired a Viscount Chorum 60 for home use. Paul lives at Coppenhall, near Stafford.

#### Michael Homer & Beryl Brake

Michael is retired, and although he doesn't play, he has had an interest in organ music for some time. He lives at Walsall, and heard about us via a flyer at Broadway URC Walsall, and has joint membership along with Beryl Brake.

We look forward to welcoming Paul, Michael and Beryl in person at a future event.

### St Matthew's Church Walsall, Organ Recitals

Having recently been appointed as the Director of Music at St Matthew's Church Walsall, LDOA member Andrew Clayton is beginning to programme a 2023 season of organ concerts. He has invited any LDOA members willing and able to give fee paying public organ recitals to contact him directly if they are interested in offering their services, via: [andrew@stmatthewswalsall.co.uk](mailto:andrew@stmatthewswalsall.co.uk)

Peter Morris, Organist Emeritus at St Matthew's Walsall, who led the restoration of the organ by Nicholson in 1999, will be giving the first of these recitals on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2023 (time tbc)

## Award to St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton

Our congratulations, once again, to Callum Alger, DoM at St Peter's Church Wolverhampton and an LDOA student member, on yet another success.

Cathedral Music Trust and the Edington Music Festival have announced the winner of the 2022 Edington Festival Award: St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton. The announcement was made during the Festival in August with St Peter's Director of Music, Callum Alger, in the congregation.

The Edington Festival Award was set up in 2019, thanks to a legacy from a Festival supporter. Since then, award recipients have been decided in collaboration with Cathedral Music Trust, and the award is administered by the Trust as part of its grants scheme.

The award's aim is to support musical training, and vocal training in particular, for boy and girl choristers at cathedrals and churches which have an established choir and regularly sing services. The award is entirely inclusive, so that training will be supported for all choristers in the choral foundation receiving the award. The choristers at St Peter's are drawn from across the city of Wolverhampton, and the award - £3,000 this year - will mean that every chorister will be able to access quality musical tuition, regardless of background or education.

Callum Alger, Director of Music at St Peter's, said: "*St Peter's has a proud record of supporting vocal education for our choristers, particularly through schemes such as the Royal School of Church Music's Voice for Life awards. Covid has had quite a profound effect on what we have been able to offer, and this has also impacted upon recruitment and membership. Our plans to expand the music department with additional staff, in addition to regular singing lessons for the choristers will aid our recruitment drive and help us go from strength to strength. The generous grant from the Edington Festival will go a long way to help with this.*"

## Organists' Review article by Peter Morris

LDOA Chairman Peter Morris has been Walsall Borough Organist since 2001, taking over from Harold Britton. Harold Britton sadly died in May, and in our June 2022 Newsletter, Peter provided a short personal tribute to this local organist of international repute.

Peter Morris has now produced a most interesting comprehensive article on Harold Britton, which appears on Pages 96/97 of the September 2022 issue of *Organists' Review*.

## IAO/RCO MATTERS

### IAO Yorkshire Organ Day 2022

This event was due to be held at Bridlington Priory on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022, featuring Paul Hale, Colin Wright, and Daniel Cook. Due to the period of mourning for HM Queen Elizabeth and its effect on the availability of participants it has had to be cancelled. It may be possible to rearrange the event in the future.

## London Organ Day 2023

London Organ Day 2023 will be held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at Chelsea Old Church. Details will be available later this year.

## NEWS & SNIPPETS FROM THE ORGAN WORLD

### St Stephen's Church Quilts & Crafts Event

In November 2012 we were kindly invited by St Stephen's Church Cannock to play their recently installed 3-manual 51-stop Makin Westmorland Custom digital organ, which had been designed by Prof Ian Tracey, and who also gave the inaugural recital.

So, when we received a request for volunteers to play the organ for visitors to their church *Quilts & Crafts Event* on 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> August, we were keen to return the favour. We put out a request to LDOA members for volunteers to play, and despite only being able to give a few days' notice for an event at the height of the holiday season, we were delighted that a number of our members responded to the call for help. We are most grateful to those members who volunteered, and clearly also was Peter Martin, Organist of St Stephen's Cannock, who requested that we put on record his appreciation, as follows, in our newsletter:

#### *St Stephen's Church Quilts & Crafts Event*

*I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking all those organists from the Lichfield and District Organists' Association who generously offered their time and talents for the above event*

*For various reasons, the appeal for help came fairly late in the day and August also happens to be the holiday season. However, soon after Trevor had sent out my appeal for help, I received several offers of assistance. I explained to all those offering, that, because the Quilts Fayre was the main event, it was not known how many might be in the audience for any particular playing session. However, it was clear that the LDOA members were very happy to just come along and play. As it happened, each session had a number of visitors. The news quickly spread and the final organ session saw around 30 in the audience.*

*I certainly received a number of very encouraging comments on the variety of organ pieces and styles that were heard during these few days.*

*I'd particularly like to thank all those who played for us – Ann Tomlin, Peter King, Ian Boddington, George and William Eardley-Taylor. I'd also like to thank Richard Hartshorn and Angela Sones who were due to visit us, but for whom last minute difficulties made this impossible. Thanks, too, to Trevor Smedley for liaising with the group and myself*

*Thank you all again. Your support has been very much appreciated*

*Peter Martin – Organist, St Stephen's Church, Cannock*

Peter Martin kindly displayed our flyers at the event, to promote our Association and hopefully attract new members.

### **Harrison & Harrison Ltd – major organ projects**

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

#### **Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral**

Harrison & Harrison have been awarded the contract for the renovation of the 4 manual/88 stop Walker organ of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. Tonal finishing has begun and is due to be completed by the end of October.

#### **Bristol Beacon (formerly Colston Hall)**

Project to restore the 1955 4-manual/94-stop Harrison & Harrison organ. Work continues on the second phase of the project, with installation in the remodelled hall due in 2023.

#### **Norwich Cathedral**

Now 75 years on from when the 4-manual/105-stop Norman & Beard organ was first restored, ciphers are an increasing mechanical problem. All the pipes need removing, cleaning and restoring, the mechanisms within the organ itself need renewing and modernising, the worn-out key action needs replacement, and the unreliable and outdated electronics of the console brought up to date. The project is expected to cost £1.8m, inclusive of a new chamber organ.

The organ is now taking shape in the building room at Durham, and is scheduled to be checked over, taken down and packed for shipping before the Christmas break.

#### **Guards' Chapel, Wellington Barracks**

The Major General Commanding the Household Division and the Guards' Chapel Committee have taken the decision to commission and install a new pipe organ to replace the current 1971 Hill, Norman & Beard organ. This new organ will support not only the Chapel's ceremonial and weekly services, but also a greater programme of recitals and concerts which make use of the Chapel's facilities, including outreach initiatives for the local community and schools. They are seeking to raise £1 million from private donations to provide a new organ worthy of the Guards' Chapel.

Harrison & Harrison were awarded the contract and work now continues on the construction of the new organ, which should be in the building room once the Norwich Cathedral organ leaves the works.

### **Nicholson & Co Ltd – major organ projects**

Current projects:

#### **Leeds Town Hall**

Nicholson has been commissioned to reconstruct the organ of Leeds Town Hall. In what will be one of the most

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

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

#### **Manchester Town Hall Organ**

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

#### **St Gabriel's, Pimlico**

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

Future projects:

#### **Gloucester Cathedral**

Refurbishment and renewal of the organ to commence in 2024, and is due to be completed in time for the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester in 2026.

#### **Charterhouse School Chapel**

New 3-manual 50-stop organ, but utilising good quality pipework from the existing H&H organ. Completion scheduled for Christmas 2027.

#### **St Barnabas Church, Kensington**

Complete restoration of the 3-manual 45-stop Walker organ. Completion planned for 2024.

## St Mildred's Church, Addiscombe

New 2-manual 35-stop organ for the west gallery.  
Completion 2024.

### Appointments

#### Andrew Scott

Andrew Reid has stepped down as Managing Director of Harrison & Harrison, having held the position since 2017. He intends to return to practical music-making, but will remain on the H&H Board as a non-executive director.

Chairman Mark Venning announced that with effect from 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022, their new Managing Director is Andrew Scott. Andy has spent his whole career with H&H, and is currently their Head Voicer and Deputy Managing Director. He thoroughly understands the firm's values, and it is very good news that he is now taking on the leadership.

#### Adrian Bawtree

Adrian Bawtree has been appointed DoM of Rochester Cathedral.

#### Richard McVeigh

Richard McVeigh became well-known for his excellent *Beauty in Sound* postings on YouTube during the Covid-19 lockdown. He has now been appointed Acting DoM at Romsey Abbey.

#### John Hoskings

John Hoskings is to be Organist in Residence at Blackburn Cathedral.

#### Richard Pinel

Richard Pinel is to be DoM St Mary's, Bourne Street, London

## RECENT LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS REVIEWS

### Thomas Keogh recital at Broadway URC Walsall, Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2022

In his introduction to today's recitalist, Alan Taylor explained that to better protect the organ from the extremes of our changing climate, a humidifier had now been installed, made possible by a donation in memory of Dr George Boxer, a long-standing member of the church choir, by his widow, with the installation being carried out by LDOA member Paul Geoghegan, who it was gratifying to see was in the audience today following a long period of ill health.

Since 2015, Thomas Keogh has been Director of Music at Holy Cross Priory, Leicester, a large city centre Catholic church in the care of the Dominican Order. Thomas studied the organ with Michael Overbury at Worksop Priory, before further study at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire with James Parsons and Marcus Huxley,

winning first prize in the Leonard Gibbons Competition. During this time, he was Director of Music at St Augustine's Church, Edgbaston. In addition to his work at Holy Cross, Thomas runs several community choirs in Loughborough and is in demand as an accompanist and teacher. He is secretary of Leicester & District Organists' Association and was appointed Assistant General Secretary of the IAO at the Edinburgh Congress.

Thomas opened with the rousing *Grand Choeur* by Guilmant, followed in gentler mood by *Prelude in E Flat* by William Harris, and Hugh Blair's *The Sunset Hour*. Next to Handel's well-known *Organ Concerto Op 4 No 1*, Thomas playing all four movements, *Larghetto e staccato*, *Allegro*, *Adagio* and *Andante*, followed by Nicolas de Grigny's *Tierce en Taille*.

Then to an arrangement by Samuel Wesley for organ duet, at a time when the English organs had no pedals, of J S Bach's *Fugue in E Flat, BWV 552b*, better known as the *St Anne Fugue*, with Thomas taking the treble part and Alan Taylor the bass/pedals.

After Derek Bourgeois' *Serenade*, with its uneven tempo, Thomas turned to Abe Holzmann's *Blaze Away!* often heard being played by a fairground organ, to provide a rousing close.

A very eclectic programme today, with music spanning some three hundred years, and ranging from Nicolas de Grigny's *Tierce en Taille* to *Blaze Away!* TS

### David Humphreys recital at Lichfield Cathedral Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Having spent 15 years as a cathedral musician, today's recitalist, David Humphreys, now combines extensive freelance work as both conductor and organist with working for the government. He held roles at St Albans, St Edmundsbury and Peterborough Cathedrals, directing and accompanying cathedral choirs on a daily basis, in numerous concerts and recordings, and for many broadcasts. During this time, he spent six months as Acting Director of Music at Peterborough. Away from cathedral music he has worked with numerous choral groups, and most recently leading Grantham Choral Society since September 2019. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Patrick Russill and David Titterington, and then with Thomas Trotter. He read music at the University of Cambridge where, as an award-winning organ scholar at Jesus College, he gained his FRCO.

A full-blooded opening passage heralded Stanford's *Fantasia & Toccata in D Minor Op 57*, before the final lush passage of the fantasia leads to the lively dancing toccata, which ends with a majestic climax. Alain's *Variations sur un Thème de Clément Jannequin JA 118* was followed by a great favourite of mine, *Saint-Saëns Fantasia in E Flat Major*, but I would have preferred a registration that better brought out the echo effect needed for the sublime first movement, which is indeed often referred to as the *Echo Fantaisie*. The thrilling second movement, with its tricky pedalling, was played with a confident flourish.

Whitlock's delightful *Folk Song* from his *Five Short Pieces*, was followed by one of the all-time favourites of the organ

repertoire to close a recital, Vierne's *Carillon de Westminster Op 54 No 6*. TS

### **Martyn Rawles recital at Lichfield Cathedral Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2022**

Today's *Music for Reflection* concert was due to be performed by Ailsa Cochrane (mezzosoprano) and Paul Whitehead (piano), but due to illness, Ailsa was unable to give the recital. To his great credit, at very short notice Martyn Rawles stepped in to play an organ recital, which involved a 6am start this morning to set up the registrations for his programme.

Martyn opened with Mendelssohn's *Sonata No 2 Op 65*, with first the measured *Grave* followed by the lyrical second movement (*Adagio*), then the third (*Allegro maestoso e vivace*) and fourth movements (*Fugue; Allegro moderato*) effectively making a prelude and fugue.

Next to the exquisite *Schmücke dich, O meine Seele BWV 654* by J S Bach, followed by Saint-Saëns' *Prelude & Fugue in E Flat, Op 99 No 3*. Saint-Saëns composed his three *Prelude & Fugues*, in 1894, marking his first significant foray into writing for the organ for almost three decades. This third one is dedicated to Gigout, and opens with a sparkling toccata, leading to the fugue, which gets decidedly lively!

Then to Marcel Dupre's *Nigra sum sed Formosa, Op 18 No 3* which has its origins in an improvisation the composer performed as part of a service of vespers at Notre Dame in Paris in 1920. It is a serene meditation on the antiphon to *Psalms 122*.

To close Martyn chose Vierne's *Final (Symphonie No 1 Op 14)*, and although I've heard this played many times to conclude a recital, Martyn's performance was quite exceptional, demonstrating how to get the best out of the Hill organ. Stunning!

A terrific programme, with a performance to match, that belied the short preparation time available. TS

### **Liam Condon recital at Lichfield Cathedral Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

After the bonus of hearing Martyn Rawles' recital given at short notice just two days ago, today it was the turn of Liam Condon LDOA student member and Honorary Assistant Organist at Lichfield Cathedral. Liam was awarded his ARCO in January 2021 and has recently completed his PGCE in Music with the OAKS, based at Keele University.

Liam opened with *Carillon-Sortie* by Mulet, a vigorous attention-grabbing toccata, followed by Duruflé's haunting *Meditation* published posthumously in 2001, then Vierne's sublime *Lied (No 17 from 24 Pieces en style Libre Op 31)*.

Next to Jehan Alain for his dramatic *Litanies JA 119* with its short plainchant phrase, which is then taken through a series of developments and transformations, driving incessantly forward to a thrilling climax.

Staying with Alain, with Duruflé's tribute to his friend and fellow student for *Prélude & Fugue Sur Le Nom D'Alain Op 7*, which takes up the plainchant theme from *Litanies*, with

a quicksilver opening to the *Prelude*, which leads to the *Fugue*, building to an 'all guns blazing climax' to the recital.

Liam's superbly performed recital was challenging, with the 'all French' programme well suited to the organ enthusiasts in the audience for today's exceptionally well-attended event, but perhaps less suited to the casual lunchtime visitors to the Cathedral.

This was Liam's final recital at Lichfield Cathedral before taking up his post as Acting Assistant Director of Music at Coventry Cathedral, in which role we wish him well. Hopefully he will make a return visit to play for us in the future. TS

### **Ashley Wagner recital at Broadway URC, Walsall, Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

For the final recital in the 2022 *Coffee & Cake Concerts*, Ashley Wagner was the organist. Ashley is assistant Head of Music at Birmingham Cathedral, where he is the principal accompanist to the cathedral choirs, organises the recital series and runs the music outreach programme.

Ashley graduated with a first-class honours degree from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, specialising in organ performance, and assumed his current position during his final year of study. Having studied with Terence Atkins, Robin Walker, Henry Fairs, and Daniel Moulton, he now studies with Thomas Trotter. He has broadcast on BBC radio and TV, and won several awards at regional and international level, including prizes in both the 2021 and 2022 IAO/RCO Organ Competitions.

In his introduction, Alan Taylor explained that sticking Swell shutters had necessitated Ashley making many registration changes to overcome the problem.

Ashley opened in lighter vein with Coleridge-Taylor's gentle melodic *Impromptu in F*, followed by J S Bach's *Trio on Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend BWV 655*. Next to Arcangelo Corelli, the famous Italian virtuoso violinist and composer, for *Concerto IX*, a piece written originally for orchestra, but arranged here for organ by Thomas Billington, Ashley playing all four movements, *Preludio, Allamanda, Adagio* and finishing with the lively *Minuetto*.

Then, in the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year of his birth, to César Franck for *Chorale No 3*, Ashley choosing some imaginative registrations to demonstrate some of the quieter stops of the Broadway organ. Couperin's *Tierce en Taille* was followed by Vierne's *Adagio from Symphony No 3*, a piece requested by Alan Taylor after hearing Ashley play it for the IAO/RCO Festival Competition in Edinburgh.

To close, Ashley chose the dramatic *Jubel Ouverture* by Weber, originally written for orchestra, but arranged here for organ by W T Best. The piece closes majestically with our National Anthem (the same tune as used for the Saxony national anthem), and with some lively figurations in the RH. Worth viewing the YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNrXcD7Arno>) of Ashley playing this piece on what looks to be the organ of Birmingham Cathedral, using the Trumpeta Real very effectively for the climax.

A very different programme, including two pieces (J S Bach and Vierne) played by Ashley for the IAO/RCO Competition in Edinburgh. TS

### **Charles Francis recital at Lichfield Cathedral Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Having spent two years as Organ Scholar at Birmingham Cathedral whilst studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Charles Francis has just taken up the role of Assistant Director of Music at St Peter's Wolverhampton, where of course one of our student members, Callum Alger, is DoM. Charles has already gained his FRCO as well as winning first prizes in both the Gillian Weir Messiaen Competition (2019) and the IAO/RCO Organ Playing competition in Edinburgh (2022).

For his first visit to Lichfield Cathedral, Charles opened with Widor's *Symphony No 5 in F Minor Op 42 No 1*, inspired by Cavallé-Coll's magnificent organ in St Sulpice, Paris. The final movement is the famous 'Widor's Toccata', but in many ways the first movement *Allegro Vivace* is more complex musically, and indeed more challenging to play, superbly registered here by Charles on the Hill organ.

Next to J S Bach for *Organ Concerto in C Major after Ernst BWV 595*, which takes as its starting point a violin concerto composed by the immensely talented Prince Johann Ernst of Sax-Weimar. Then to *Six Canonic Studies Op 56* written for the pedal piano by Robert Schumann, with first the delightfully melodic *No 4 Innig (heartfelt)* then the jaunty *No 5 Nicht zu Schell (not too quickly)*.

To close, Charles chose Parry's stirring *Fantasia & Fugue in G Op 188*, with the soaring opening of the *Fantasia* eventually leading to the animated *Fugue*, which makes considerable technical demands on the player and is dedicated to St Walter Parratt, Organist of St George's Chapel, Windsor, and which builds to a majestic climax.

After the excellent attendance for Liam Condon's recital last week, the attendance today was rather disappointing for a demanding programme confidently performed by Charles Francis. Clearly a hugely talented young man with a very bright future! TS

### **Nicholas Freestone recital at Lichfield Cathedral Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022**

For the final *Music for Reflection* recital of 2022, Nicholas Freestone was the organist. Nicholas is Assistant Director of Music at Worcester Cathedral, where he is the principal accompanist of the Cathedral Choir and directs the Cathedral's voluntary and Youth Choirs. He is accompanist to Worcester Festival Choral Society, and was organist of the Three Choirs Festival in 2021. As well as giving solo recitals in many prestigious UK venues, he is an active choral director and has broadcast on BBC TV and Radio as both an organist and conductor. Prior to moving to Worcester, Nicholas held the post of Acting Sub Organist at St Paul's Cathedral, London, and has held Organ Scholarships at Tewkesbury Abbey, Wells Cathedral, St Albans Cathedral and Worcester College Oxford, from where he graduated with a Degree in Music in 2014.

Nicholas turned to J S Bach for his opening offering, playing *Toccata, Adagio & Fugue in C Major BWV 564*. It opens with manuals only then an extended pedal solo in the *Toccata*, followed by the *Adagio* with its walking bass, leading into the *Grave* section, more improvisatory in character, then the lively dance-like *Fugue*.

Next to Franck's intimate *Cantabile - No 2 of Trois Pieces Pour Grand Orgue*, then *Andante with Variations in D Major MWV 32* by Mendelssohn, with its simple delightful hymn-like theme followed by four variations. *Fountain Reverie* by Percy Fletcher followed with its rippling accompaniment in the RH supporting a flowing sentimental melody in the LH.

Finally, to Guilmant for *Sonata No 1 in D Minor Op 42 – Final: Allegro Assai*, a favourite work of mine, all too rarely heard in recital, which I recall hearing Nicholas play to demonstrate the organ of Worcester Cathedral during Midlands Organ Day 2018. All three movements are superb, but the final movement with some tricky pedalling and taken at a lively tempo, but still with great clarity in the dry acoustic, provided a very fitting climax to the recital and the series.

PS. Special thanks are due to LDOA member Eric Lunt for providing most informative and extensively researched programme notes for the whole recital series. TS

### **Richard Syner recital at St Modwen's, Burton-on-Trent, Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

My first visit to St. Modwen's this year corresponded with a recital given by our own Richard Syner and entitled *Melody, Rhythm and Whimsy*. Richard opened his recital with his own arrangement of the traditional Irish tune *The Last Rose of Summer*. Next J S Bach's *Prelude & Fugue in B<sup>b</sup> minor BWV 867*, arranged by Reger. This was included to mark the 300th anniversary of Book 1 of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Then to Ravel's *Bolero* which Ravel thought was 'rubbish' but time has proved him wrong!

Then a new name to me – Henry Hackett FRCO, born 1872 in Smethwick, organist of Bearwood Birmingham, Kenilworth Parish Church, Bideford and then at St Modwen from 1917. There has been a revival of his works, and Richard played *Romance Sans Paroles*. I have never got to grips with the music of Shostakovich despite being introduced to his *5th Symphony* some 60 years ago! The *March* from his *7th Symphony* has strains of Ravel's *Bolero* and reflects the political tensions of the time. To mark the 150th anniversary of Vaughan Williams' death, Richard played the *Prelude from the film 49th Parallel*. To finish we heard 3 pieces from *Swan Lake* by Tchaikovsky. Apparently, the Russian authorities have played this music to avoid telling the Russian public of its many atrocities.

John H Allen

### **Thomas Trotter recital at Birmingham Town Hall Monday 26th September 2022**

After the summer break, Thomas Trotter's recital today kicked-off the 2022 autumn series of recitals at Birmingham Town Hall, with the opening fanfares of Handel's lively *Organ Concerto Op 4 No 2*.

Next to *Three Jazz Preludes* by the German conductor and organist, Johannes-Matthias Michel, Director of Church Music at the Christuskirche Mannheim. The first prelude, *Swing Five*, was followed by *Bossa Nova*, with shades of *The Girl from Ipanema*, then finally the brash *Afro-Cuban*, sounding very similar in style to the song *America*.

Then in total contrast to J S Bach and *Chorale Partita*, 'O Gott, du frommer Gott', with first the simple tune, followed by eight variations, Thomas changing manuals to reflect, unusually for J S Bach works, the dynamic markings in the score.

A return to jazz swing style with the short Gershwin piece *Walking the Dog*, before closing with more familiar fayre with Guilment's *March on a Theme of Handel* from the *Messiah*, providing a full organ finish complete with double pedalling.

A very eclectic mix of styles in today's programme! TS

### **Martyn Rawles recital at St Modwen's, Burton-on-Trent, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

For the final recital of 2022 series at St Modwen's, the organist was none other than our President, Martyn Rawles, Assistant Director of Music at Lichfield Cathedral. In his introduction, Tony Westerman had first some gifts to award to the tea ladies, who had provided such welcome refreshments for the whole of the recitals series.

In a rather chilly church, something we'll maybe have to get used to with the soaring energy costs, Martyn opened with Guilment's *March on a Theme of Handel*, which coincidentally we had heard just two day earlier, when it was Thomas Trotter's choice to close his recital at Birmingham Town Hall.

Charles Avison (1709–1770) was an English composer during the Baroque and classical periods. He was a church organist at St John the Baptist in Newcastle and at St Nicholas church, later Newcastle Cathedral, and his compositions reflect the period in which the Snetzler organ was installed in this church in 1771. The elegant *Organ Concerto No 1 in G Op 9 No 1* has four movements.

Next to J S Bach for *Prelude & Fugue in C BWV 545*, an exuberant work, followed in total contrast by *Serenade Op 22*, a piece written by Derek Bourgeois for his own wedding in 11/8 time, then 13 beats to the bar! Then to *Prelude & Fugue in B Flat Op 16 No 2* by Clara Schumann, with its Romantic prelude and a fugue that is a masterly exercise in rigorous counterpoint. Dvořák's *Als die arme Mutter* has a beautiful melody which clearly captured the imagination of Edwin Lemare, who arranged it for organ.

Finally, to Lefébure-Wély's irreverent fairground music style of *Sortie in E Flat*, providing a splendid rousing close the recital and the 2022 series.

A varied mix of pieces, impeccably performed as always by Martyn Rawles. TS



Martyn Rawles taking his applause at St Modwen's

## **LOCAL VACANCIES**

### **Organist & Musical Director at St Mary & St Margaret's Church, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham**

The vacancy is for an Organist & Musical Director at St Mary & St Margaret's Church, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham B36 9DE, and the job specification and contact details can be found on the church's website via: [http://www.stmaryandstmargaret.co.uk/files/cms/60\\_Organist%20and%20Musical%20Director%20-%20job%20description.pdf](http://www.stmaryandstmargaret.co.uk/files/cms/60_Organist%20and%20Musical%20Director%20-%20job%20description.pdf)

According to the NPOR, the two manual tubular pneumatic action organ was built by Peter Conacher, and has 18 speaking stops. Closing date for applications has now been extended until Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

## **FORTHCOMING LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS**

### **LDOA Members' Recitals/Events**

#### Peter Morris

- Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 at 4pm, orchestral concert at St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton. Handel *Organ Concerto in F* and Saint-Saëns *Organ Symphony* performed by an invited orchestra, conducted by Peter Morris, with organist Callum Alger. For details, see flyer sent with this newsletter.
- Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2023 at St Matthew's Church, Walsall (time tbc)

#### Callum Alger

- Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 at 4pm, orchestral concert at St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton – see above.
- Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022 from 12 noon to 1.10pm, organ recital at Victoria Hall, Hanley

#### Angela Sones

- Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 at 3pm, organ recital at All Saints', Leamington Spa



- Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 1pm, organ recital at Bradford Cathedral

Martyn Rawles

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022, 7.30 to 8.45pm organ recital at Lichfield Cathedral

Stephen Carleston

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October at 4.15pm at the Chapel of St John's Hospice, Lichfield, a concert by The Hawkesyard Singers directed by Stephen Carleston with Simon Mercer (organ). The programme comprises Britten's *Rejoice the Lamb* and Parry's *Blest pair of sirens*.

Paul Spicer

At Lichfield Cathedral on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7pm, LDOA honorary member Paul Spicer will be directing the Birmingham Bach Choir in a performance of J S Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, celebrating 30 years of his directorship of the choir.

### **Recitals In Local Area (To end of Nov 2022)**

Recital listings are provided in good faith. Please check directly with venue websites to confirm details before travelling to events.

### **October 2022**

Sat 1 October 2022 • 12.00 to 13.00 • Shrewsbury Abbey  
Darren Williams (Doncaster Minster)

Sat 1 October 2022 • 17.00 to 18.00 • Guild Chapel, Stratford-upon-Avon  
Paul Trepte (Formerly Ely Cathedral)

Sun 2 October 2022 • 15.00 to 15.45 • Holy Trinity Wordsley  
Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Sun 2 October 2022 • 16.00 • St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton  
Orchestral Concert performed by an invited orchestra, conducted by Peter Morris, with Callum Alger (organ). For details see flyer sent with this newsletter.

Tues 4 October 2022 • 19.30 to 20.45 • Lichfield Cathedral  
Martyn Rawles (Lichfield Cathedral)

Thurs 6 October 2022 • 13.15 to 13.55 • St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham  
Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Frid 7 October 2022 • 13.00 • Emmanuel Church Wylde Green  
Paul Hale

Frid 7 October 2022 • 13.15 to 14.00 • St Mary's Warwick  
Mark Swinton (St Mary's, Warwick)

Mon 10 October 2022 • 13.00 • Birmingham Town Hall  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Thurs 13 October 2022 • 13.10 • Kidderminster Town Hall  
Paul Trepte (Formerly Ely Cathedral)

Sat 15 October 2022 • 12.00 to 13.10 • Victoria Hall, Hanley  
Callum Alger (Wolverhampton)

Sat 15 October 2022 • 12.00 to 13.00 • Shrewsbury Abbey  
Michael Overbury (Newark)

Tues 18 October 2022 • 19.30 to 20.45 • Lichfield Cathedral  
Darius Battiwalla (Leeds City Organist)

Frid 21 October 2022 • 12.30 to 13.10 • St Chad's, Shrewsbury  
Harvey Stansfield (Royal Birmingham Conservatoire)

Sat 22 October 2022 • 11.00 • St Mary's, Stafford  
Margaret Outen & Tim Sagar (St Mary's, Stafford)

Mon 24 October 2022 • 13.00 • Birmingham Town Hall  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Frid 28 October 2022 • 13.10 to 13.50 • Birmingham Cathedral  
Thomas Howell (Birmingham Cathedral)

### **November 2022**

Thurs 3 November 2022 • 13.15 to 13.55 • St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham  
David Saint (St Chad's Cathedral Birmingham)

Frid 4 November 2022 • 13.00 • Emmanuel Church Wylde Green  
David Hardie (Birmingham Cathedral)

Frid 4 November 2022 • 13.15 to 14.00 • St Mary's Warwick  
Colin Millington (St Mary's, Warwick)

Sat 5 November 2022 • 12.00 to 12.45 • Stoke Minster  
Ian Tracey (Liverpool)

Sun 6 November 2022 • 15.00 to 15.45 • Holy Trinity Wordsley  
Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Mon 7 November 2022 • 13.00 • Birmingham Town Hall  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Frid 11 November 2022 • 13.10 to 13.50 • Birmingham Cathedral  
David Hardie (Birmingham Cathedral)

Sat 12 November 2022 • 12.00 to 13.00 • Shrewsbury Abbey  
John Wright (Cheltenham)

Thurs 17 November 2022 • 13.10 • Kidderminster Town Hall  
Piers Maxim (Great Malvern Priory)

Mon 21 November 2022 • 13.00 • Birmingham Town Hall  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Frid 25 November 2022 • 13.10 to 13.50 • Birmingham  
Cathedral  
Ashley Wagner (Birmingham Cathedral)

Sat 26 November 2022 • 12.00 to 13.00 • Shrewsbury  
Abbey  
John Hosking (Holy Trinity Southport)

### [LICHFIELD & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION CONTACTS](#)

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**Ed. – the next newsletter is planned for December 2022, with a deadline for submission of items for inclusion of 24/11/22, to Trevor Smedley by e-mail as above, or by mail to 8 The Parchments, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7NA**

### [APPENDIX](#)

#### **Address/locator map for our Annual Dinner at The School House, Weeford, Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

The School House Restaurant is at Church Hill, Weeford, Lichfield, WS14 0PW. Referring to the locator map below, from the direction of Lichfield, take the A38 South, then take the slip road on the left towards A5 East. At the roundabout, take the second exit signposted Hints/Weeford, and continue along the Roman Road (Watling Street), then take the 2<sup>nd</sup> road on the right down Church Hill to Weeford. The restaurant is just down the hill on the LH side, opposite the church.



Locator map for the School House Restaurant, Weeford

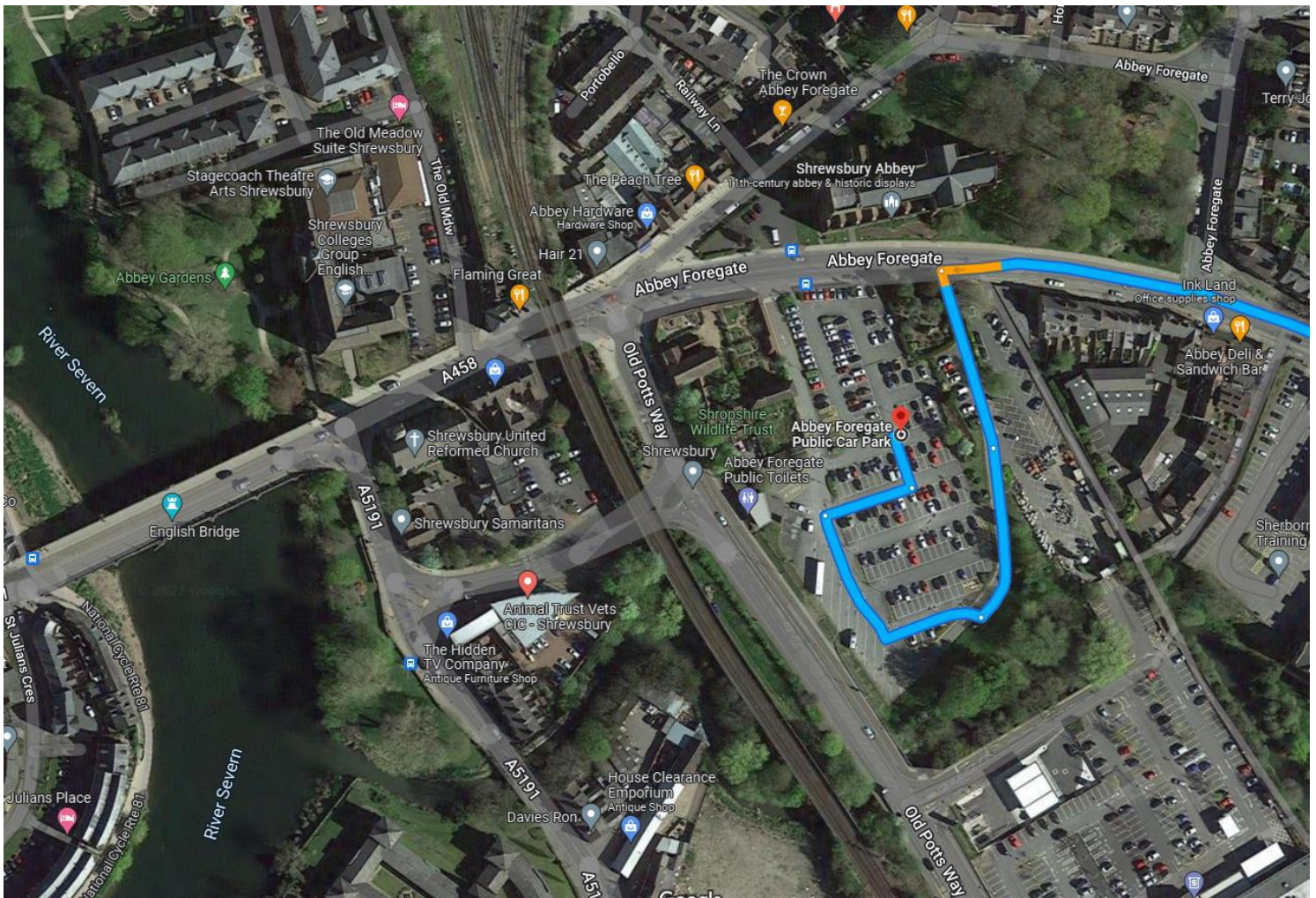
## Locator map, addresses and arrangements for our visit to Shrewsbury Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Shrewsbury is accessed from the Midlands via the M54/A5. On reaching the roundabout just-outside Shrewsbury, get into the LH lane to follow the A5 ring road round to the west. At the 1<sup>st</sup> roundabout, take the 4<sup>th</sup> exit sign-posted A5064 to Shrewsbury, then at the next roundabout take the 3<sup>rd</sup> exit sign-posted Shirehall, into Abbey Foregate. Continue to follow Abbey Foregate until you see Shrewsbury Abbey ahead on the right, with the Abbey Foregate Car park entrance (SatNav SY2 6AH) on the left immediately opposite the Abbey. Charges 50p/hour or £4 for the day, and looks to be a cashless/mobile phone app. payment system.

If you wish to have lunch prior to the visit, Peter Morris has recommended *The Peach Tree*, just opposite the Abbey, as a good lunchtime eatery.

Our visit to Shrewsbury URC commences at 1.15pm, and the church is within easy walking distance of the car park. From the car park. continue down Abbey Foregate, underneath the railway bridge and the church/spire will be seen a short distance along on the LH side.

Then our visit to Shrewsbury Abbey commences at 2.45pm. Retrace your steps back along Abbey Foregate to Shrewsbury Abbey at 25 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6BS.



Locator map for Abbey Foregate car park, The Peach Tree, Shrewsbury URC and Shrewsbury Abbey