

# Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

## Newsletter

### A Note from Our Chairman - John Maxwell-Jones

May I offer my New Year greetings to you all and thank you for the opportunity to be your chairman for the next year. Your committee is keen to involve more of you, the members, in our planning so please do let us know your thoughts on our programmes. Are the days of the week convenient? Or the time of day? Would you prefer more afternoon meetings? Are there places you would like to visit or topics for talks you would like to hear? Please contact us at [mail@derbyorganists.co.uk](mailto:mail@derbyorganists.co.uk), or write to me personally at 7 Lime Grove, Chaddesden, Derby, DE21 6WN.



### How times have changed!

One might be tempted to imagine in advance of the event that a talk on 'The Archives of the DDOA circa 1904 - 1930' might turn out to be a little dry. Had you been at St Werburgh's, Spondon on November 18<sup>th</sup> for the AGM you would have quickly changed your mind. James Muckle and Siann Hurt had done extensive research to reveal the activities of our forbears and, using a mixture of talk, display boards and PowerPoint projection, they brought everything into vivid focus. There was a real buzz of interest from the whole (sadly very small) gathering, and extensive discussion followed.

The founding members of the DDOA were extremely energetic and, by all accounts, one of the driving forces in Derby's musical life which flourished in the days before 'Strictly Come Whatever' and 'streamed' music.

Interestingly enough their meetings, held in the main in venues without an organ, consisted of piano solos, chamber music, songs etc. One has an image of them far removed from the rather limited world of organ playing sadly so often evident today. They were 'all round musicians' and their teaching activities were extensive. Mr Bennett, organist of All Saints (as it then was) presided over a whole Academy, and he was not alone.

The position of women was of some interest to us. Initially valued for the 'amiable' and 'decorative' qualities they brought to events, they

gradually established themselves as accomplished players. One in particular, Louie Smith, was one of the first five women in Britain to achieve the ARCO and the very first in Derby. However it seems women rarely penetrated the seats of power. It was ten or twelve years before they were admitted to membership or even allowed to attend the dinner. In 1916-17 Miss Smith was the first woman committee member of DDOA. One might reflect that, until about 20 years ago, not much had changed on the national organ scene, but now of course much of the driving force for organ education comes from the likes of Catherine Ennis, Anne-Elise Smoot and Anne Marsden-Thomas.

We were presented with many mini biographies which were fascinating and reminded us of how many churches in those days boasted accomplished organists as a matter of course. On a personal note I was very moved to see a photo of John Daulby Peake, one of Ed Stow's predecessors at the Queen's Hall. He retired to Teignmouth, South Devon and, as a small boy, it was his wonderful authoritative playing at the Methodist Church of which my father was Minister that first drew me to the organ.

Thank you, James and Siann and David Shooter (as ever the techno man), for a wonderful and very moving evening. Other Organists' Associations could do well to follow the same path.

Stephen Johns

### DDOA Events 2016

#### 1<sup>st</sup> February (Monday) 7.30pm

Talk on the art of arrangement for organ by Robert Gower. St Matthew's, Darley Abbey. (See page 4)

#### March

CATO event with Egginton Primary School

#### 18<sup>th</sup> May (Wednesday)

Annual Dinner at Horsley Lodge

#### June

Visit to organs in Birmingham University

#### September

A practical demonstration of *Hauptwerk* virtual organ software

#### October

Visit to local organ (Egginton)

#### 16<sup>th</sup> November (Wednesday) 7.15pm

AGM

### Concerts & Recitals

#### Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 6.00pm

Derby Cathedral

#### Messiaen's *La Nativité du Seigneur* performed by Hugh Morris

A meditative performance of Messiaen's cycle *La Nativité du Seigneur* for organ. This haunting, profound and deeply felt music will be performed by the Cathedral's Director of Music, Hugh Morris.

Projected images in an atmospherically darkened Cathedral will provide a focus and spoken reflections will guide the listener into each of the nine movements. Followed by refreshments.

Free entry; retiring collection.

#### Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February 12 noon

St. Andrew's Church, Swanwick DE55 1AN

#### Lunchtime Recital by Martyn Noble (Chapel Royal, St James's Palace.)

Martyn returns to Swanwick for another recital with an ever popular programme covering a wide range of music, from established popular works from the classical organ repertoire to toe-tapping easy-listening tunes from the worlds of films and shows.

Tickets £5 (including light buffet) available in advance (01773 605291 or 541458) or at the door.

## Recent Events

### Children and the Organ (CATO)

You will know that the DDOA has been running a very successful CATO scheme for primary schools for a number of years. In recent years we have "crossed the barrier" into secondary with our involvement in day events at both Derby and Leicester Cathedrals. This last November we went "solo" for the first time. At the invitation of Swanwick Parish Church and Swanwick Hall School we put on our first secondary school road show for a group of about 30 students (mainly Year 10 - 4th Year in old money, with some sixth form students). We maintained a lot of our regular format - play the organ, pedal power, what it looks like and the mini-organ - but were able to support various aspects of the GCSE Music syllabus as well as highlighting the physics of sound production. As style of performance features largely in the syllabus, the students responded enthusiastically to a masterly improvisation in various styles by Tony Westerman on the Mozartian theme of "Ah, vous dirai-je, maman" (perhaps better known as Twinkle, twinkle, little star)!

I think the success of the venture can be judged by that fact that we were immediately asked whether we would be able to repeat the workshop next year.

John Maxwell-Jones

## Food for thought

### The cost of music making - Did you know:

1. The King's College Chapel organ will be dismantled after the 2015 Nine Lessons service to be packed for shipping to Harrisons and Harrisons of Durham for a "thorough clean". No tonal changes are being made. The cost has been stated as 'north of £1 million'.

2. The large-print organ copy of the new Methodist hymn-book *Singing the Faith* costs £150. Be careful to shop around - at one time Amazon charged £299 for the organ copy.

3. Yet in contrast to those figures, Eminent's *Alpha 200* digital organ with a 32 note concave pedal-board now sells at £5,695 Yet eighteen years ago that model was advertised in a 1998 *Choir & Organ* for £5,995: the current price shows a drop of £300 despite inflation. See [cathedralorgans.com](http://cathedralorgans.com)

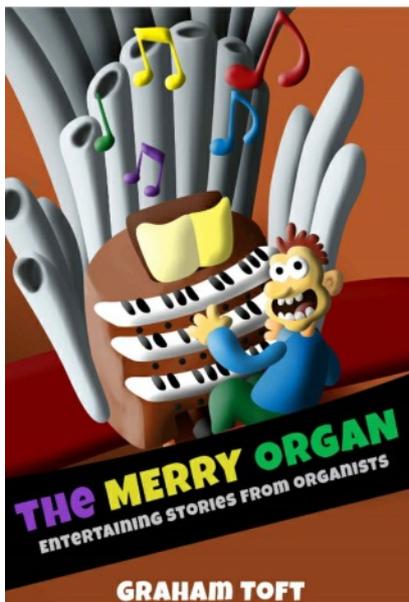
David Rogers

## DDOA - Your Association

### New Committee and Chairman

The AGM elected one new member, Andy Storer to the committee, replacing Tony Westerman who, due to personal commitments, had decided to stand down. Tony's many contributions to the activities of the Association were acknowledged with grateful thanks. The full line-up of officers and committee for 2016 is as follows:

Chairman: J Maxwell-Jones  
Vice-Chairman: Mrs M Eades  
Secretary: S Johns  
Treasurer: C Darrall  
Gift Aid Secretary: Mrs G Chatto  
Newsletter Editor: L Rogers  
Committee: T Bennett,  
G Howell,  
D Shooter,  
A Storer  
Past Chairman: D Littleton



## Shop Window

### The Merry Organ - Graham Toft

Early in 2015, Graham Toft, Organist of the Church of the Holy Ascension, Settle, appealed for humorous organ-loft stories, and was soon gratified to receive daily contributions from organists all over the country. As a result he has now published this eBook for the *Kindle*. If you have such a device you can download the book from Amazon for £6.61. For a link to the Amazon website, just click on the cover picture below.

### Daniel Bishop's Reflection now published

Members of our Association who went on the Summer outing to Liverpool will remember that Daniel concluded our Cathedral visit with a performance of his most recent composition, the intensely moving *Reflection*. This has now been published by ChurchOrganWorld as part of the album "Liverpool Lollipops". This contains pieces by many organists associated with Liverpool Cathedral, namely Ian Tracey, Ian Wells, Noel Rawsthorne, Daniel Bishop, Ernest Pratt, Lewis Rust and Sean Bowers). They are supposedly Grade 5/6 in order of difficulty, but listening to Sean Bowers' "Toccata", I wonder if this final piece might be best described as "Grade 6 with a lot of practice" !

The cost of the album is £20.00 + £1.50 postage. ChurchOrganWorld\* have a special offer of "Lollipops" + Ian Tracey's *Trinity Fanfare* and Daniel Bishop's *Trumpet Tune* for £27.50 including postage.

Alan Dronsfield

\*ChurchOrganWorld, Sovereign House, 30 Manchester Road, Shaw OL2 7DE

## Reflection

Sw: Strings & Fl 8'  
Gt: 8' Flute coupled to Sw  
Ch: Soft reed 8'  
Ped: Soft 16'  
Sw to Ped

Daniel Bishop  
b. 1981

Lento  $\text{♩} = 66$

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## Building your own virtual organ, on a shoe-string - Alan Dronsfield

In the last two issues of our Newsletter I explained how you can acquire "live" CDs of the *GrandOrgue* Linux disposition (a single modest organ) and the *jOrgan* Puppy Linux disposition (some 20+ different organs). Loading them into a computer with 2GB of memory, or more, and connected both to a MIDI keyboard and to decent headphones or computer speakers you should have been able to experience the sounds on offer without too much trouble. Members who have their own digital organs with MIDI connections can configure them to play the software. The computer output will need a good sound system connecting to it, however.

It is possible to construct a home virtual organ using second hand components purchased cheaply off Ebay. The problem is not usually its construction, but finding somewhere in today's smaller homes to house it! The basic unit is a two-manual "lounge-type" organ that was popular a couple of decades ago. Alas, they usually have only 13 pedal notes, which the more proficient players will probably find limiting. Typically you can find them on Ebay for less than £50. Seek out those for sale local to where you live to avoid heavy transport costs and only consider those which have the MIDI connections. You can always email the seller to check this.

The picture shows a Yamaha *Electone EL7* which I purchased from an Ilkeston (ARCO) Ebay seller for £11.00. He had handily disconnected the manuals from the speaker unit and pedal board for easy car transport. The MIDI cabling to the USB port of my laptop computer (which I possessed already) cost £3.00, from China. Finally, unless you intend to play only with headphones, you will need a reasonable amplifier/speaker system. Again, with today's preference for television "sound-bars", older packages are available on Ebay. Seek out those on offer close to where you live to permit collection from the seller's home. I successfully bid for a 100 watt rms amplifier + four speakers for £10.00 and then I spotted a Cambridge Audio 5.1 computer



Alan's "shoestring" organ. The silver speakers on the left are two of the four connected to the 100w amplifier (bottom right). The black box on the right is the main unit and subwoofer of the Cambridge 5.1 system.

amplifier system which I got for only 99p. This comprised a robust subwoofer and five satellite speakers. A "doubler plug" to convert the single headphone jack socket on the laptop into a double one (to feed both sound systems) cost another 99p, again from Ebay. Together they easily fill the bedroom where the virtual organ is housed. The two blank CDs (for the *GrandOrgue* and *jOrgan* software cost 25p each. A few angle brackets to support the manuals cost £4.00 so the grand total comes to about £30.00.

If readers succeed in building a modest virtual organ of the type I describe, they might be tempted to go on to something more ambitious. For instance, they might decide to load the virtual organ software directly on to their computer hard drives, rather than use the live CDs, thus saving on start-up time. Moreover, the file sizes for the individual organs are usually larger than can be accommodated on the CDs, so the sound output may have been more extensively sampled and thus of higher quality. You might wish to pay Milan Digital Audio a

lot of money and install its *Hauptwerk* software and some of its organs on offer. Finally an upgrade to a 30 note concave radiating pedal board will enable you to attempt the whole range of organ music, but these are not cheap, at £1,400+ for a new one. A solution might either be to seek out a MIDI equipped second hand church organ and get to work on this or find a redundant pedal board and MIDI-fy it yourself. This, however, is not a job for the faint-hearted.

Members who wish to pop round to Swanwick, ideally in groups of two or three, to have a play on the "shoe-string" organ featured in this article are welcome. Notice is required, if only for me to get the bedroom in an acceptable state of tidiness. Contact details are available from our Editor. Remember to bring along music that doesn't demand more than 13 pedal notes (or can be adapted on the spot to play on this limited pedal compass!)

Alan Dronsfield

## Other Organ News

### Peter Collins, Organ Builder

Sadly, last October, the organ world mourned the death of Peter Collins, one of the most innovative organ builders of our generation. In recent memory, Peter had twice graced DDOA meetings in 2011, when in February he gave a talk about his life, and later in September when he attended our visit to his organ in Oakham School chapel. Most recently I had the privilege of meeting him when the *Organ Club* visited his factory in Melton Mowbray last May (reported in Newsletter 43). My photo, taken then, captured his genial spirit and irrepressible enthusiasm.

Various noble tributes have appeared in the organ press, but having read the tribute by John Scott Whiteley, first published in the newsletter of the *Hull and East Riding Organists*, I thought it summed up perfectly all that we admired of Peter and his work. I am very grateful for John's permission to re-publish his words here.

- Editor



Peter Collins was one of the finest organ builders this country has ever produced; and a delightful person, always friendly, ready to impart his tremendous knowledge and share what he had learned about organ building. I was deeply touched when he turned up in the audience at the recital I gave on his organ at Ystym Colwyn Hall in Wales last year. As always, he was fascinating, good humoured, appreciative and charming.

Peter took organ building into a different dimension in this country. The Andreas Silbermann replica at St

Saviour, St Albans, is a work of art in itself. His historically informed instruments were always a delight to discover, from the recent organ after Gottfried Heinrich Trost to the more eclectic instruments such as those in the Turner Sims Concert Hall, Southampton University (sadly now mothballed), and in Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh. Whatever one thought of his more adventurous, even experimental organs, such as those at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, and St David's Hall, perhaps, there can be no denying that he was always committed to musical results that were at the forefront of the revolution in organ building in late twentieth-century Britain. In looking beyond this island's boundaries his work became groundbreaking and led to the production of world class instruments.

His educational organs were of no small significance, from those at Oakham School and Wells Cathedral School to the university practice organs at Nottingham, Manchester, Lancaster and East Anglia, and in various Oxbridge chapels. Chamber organs also featured strongly in his output.

In short, he was a craftsman of the very highest order, possessed of an integrity and artistic insight that one finds in combination very rarely. British Organ Building and Organists are so much the poorer for this tragic loss.

John Scott Whiteley

## Forthcoming DDOA Meeting

**1<sup>st</sup> February 7.30 pm  
at St Matthew's Church, Darley Abbey.**

**'The Art of Arrangement for Organ'**

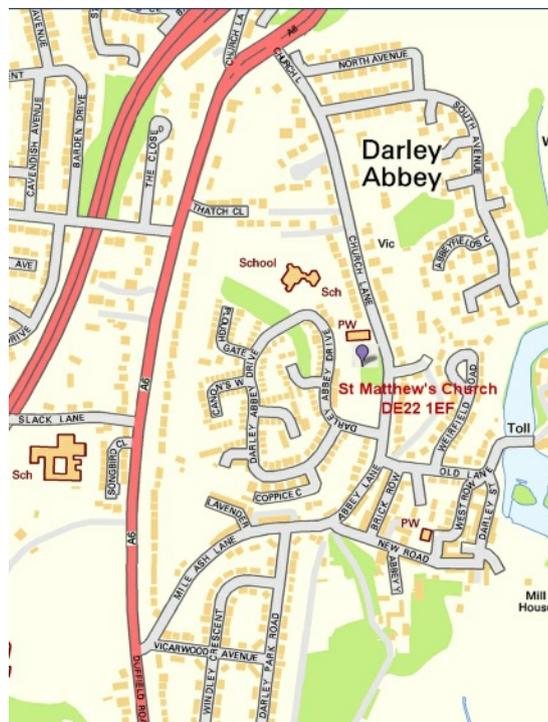
**Talk by Robert Gower**

After last year's fascinating talk by Robert Gower we have invited him to talk to us again, this time on the subject of arranging for organ. He has called his talk:

"Where do you start - and stop? Thoughts on arranging music for organ and hymns". This will not only include a bit of playing - and singing - but also discussion and distribution of exemplar material. I am excited by this talk and hope it will be well supported.

John Maxwell-Jones

North of the City of Derby, St Matthew's Church may be approached from the A6 via Mile Ash Lane or from the Duffield Road junction on the A38 and Church Lane. There is a car park adjacent to the church in Darley Abbey Drive.



Items of news or articles for the March/April edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February**, either via e-mail: [DDOAnews@gmail.com](mailto:DDOAnews@gmail.com) or by post: Dr Laurence Rogers, 24 St.David's Crescent, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4SS. The Secretary, Stephen Johns, may be reached via [mail@derbyorganists.co.uk](mailto:mail@derbyorganists.co.uk) Please visit the DDOA Website [www.derbyorganists.co.uk](http://www.derbyorganists.co.uk) for information about Association activities, past editions of the newsletter, photo gallery and many special features of local interest.