

# Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

## Newsletter



*Christmas Eve in Cambridge - Geoff Howell*

For millions of radio listeners worldwide Christmas begins with *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* broadcast live from King's College, Cambridge, on Radio 4 at 3.00pm on Christmas Eve. Most organists will know how the service tells the story of Christmas and the love of God through Bible readings and beautiful music. It invites us 'in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem'.

I had always wondered whether one day I might actually attend the service, and in 2013 the time seemed right to plan such a pilgrimage.

So it was that I found myself outside the gatehouse of King's at 4.50am on a wet Christmas Eve morning, twentieth in a good-natured queue. The strong gales

had lessened overnight, but it was still raining. The silhouette of the dark chapel towered above. First in the queue was Ian, who has spent three nights there each year since the seventies, apart from three years when he was a choral scholar himself; he said that he thinks of the waiting as a 'discomforted meditative discipline, my three-day Advent'. Next to me were Thomas and Marion, who had travelled from Switzerland for the eighteenth time to be there. There were also many Americans who had come over specially. Most of us, though, had probably come from various parts of this country and were there for the first time.

Soon after 7.00am the gates opened and the queue, now much longer, shuffled through to settle

### *DDOA Events 2014*

#### **12<sup>th</sup> March (Wednesday)**

'Organ Tourism' with guest speaker Anthony Burns Cox at St John's, Derby (see page 6)

#### **7<sup>th</sup> April (Monday)**

'J S Bach as teacher' (Peter Williams and Stephen Johns) at St Wystan's, Repton (See page 6)

#### **24<sup>th</sup> May (Saturday)**

Visit to organs in Sheffield, including St John's, Ranmoor

#### **17<sup>th</sup> June (Tuesday)**

Annual Dinner at the Black Boy at Heage

#### **12<sup>th</sup> July (Saturday)**

Educational event at the Cathedral, in association with RSCM

#### **15<sup>th</sup> July (Tuesday)**

Visit to local organs: Hoar Cross and Doveridge

#### **8<sup>th</sup> September (Monday)**

Visit to local organs: English Martyrs and restored instrument at Egginton

#### **8<sup>th</sup> October (Wednesday)**

'The Organ Pilgrimage' – Peter Gould's final visit of his marathon project with opportunity to play the recently restored organ at St Osmund's, Derby

**November:** AGM

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### *Concerts & Recitals*

#### **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2pm**

**Town Hall, Burton-upon-Trent**  
Arthur Tipper on the Wurlitzer

#### **Wednesday recitals at 8.00 pm**

**St John the Baptist, Staveley.**  
19<sup>th</sup> March Eric Singleton (Unstone)  
23<sup>rd</sup> April Ken Ellis (Chesterfield)

#### **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2pm**

**St Mary's Church, High Pavement, Nottingham**

Masterclass by John Keys:  
Bach & Baroque Organ Music

down again behind the Gibbs building. It was still dark, but the rain had stopped and the half moon and a few stars lit up the sky. Night turned to day, and soon an occasional punt glided past on the river.

During the morning, the Mayor and the Dean chatted to the queue, and the choral scholars entertained us with *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* and suchlike. I spoke to the senior organ scholar, Douglas Tang, who seemed remarkably relaxed considering that playing for this service is surely one of the most nerve-racking, yet enviable, achievements for a young organist; he did say, modestly, that he had just been 'stressing out'!

At 1.30pm we took our seats in the chapel. We could now relax, lean back and contemplate the astonishing fan-vaulted ceiling, the huge windows, still beautifully lit

by the afternoon sun, and the 1634 Rubens *The Adoration of the Magi* (pictured) behind the altar. Douglas provided organ music, to a background of whispered chatter.

And then, at 3.00pm the atmosphere changed at a stroke as the congregation of 1500 stood in absolute silence, in anticipation of the journey we were about to make. The organ improvisation tailed away as the red light flashed. I glanced to my right, through the magnificent 16<sup>th</sup> century screen, and could see the choir gathered by the west door. Stephen Cleobury had chosen one of the choristers and we would soon hear the first verse of *Once in Royal David's City* with perfect clarity.

Ninety minutes later, the final majestic chord of Messiaen's *Dieu parmi nous* (God among us) died away, the windows now dark and the chapel bathed in soft candle light. I made my way reluctantly down the long aisle, drawn briefly



'The Adoration of the Magi' by Rubens

up to the organ loft to congratulate Douglas on a superb job.

At the south door, the Dean and Chaplain bid everyone a warm farewell as we emerged into the Front Court. Christmas had begun.

Geoff Howell

## Recent Events

### Those Were the Days

The first meeting of 2014 was a retrospective on great organists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century presented by John Maxwell-Jones. John declared that this was his first ever presentation to the Association of his 39 years' membership. We sincerely hope we will not have to wait another 39 years before his next one!

He began by playing a classic recording of the Toccata and Fugue in D minor from a real live 12 inch 78 rpm disc. John Forster had kindly supplied the apparatus for this and David Shooter did the honours in operating the pick-up and inverting the disc half way through, skills which most of us have not had to exercise for many years! The organist was George Thalben-Ball on a recording made in 1924 on the Compton organ in the then BBC Concert Hall. Predictably, playback quality was demonstrably 'low-fi', but compensated for by the breathtaking speed of the playing, no doubt due partly to the time constraint of the disc.

All the subsequent recordings were rendered on digitally re-mastered CDs. John had carefully chosen them to illustrate many changes of fashion in styles of



John Maxwell-Jones

playing, and his interesting introductory comments highlighted salient features. Thus, in contrast with Thalben-Ball, Albert Schweizer's Bach tempi were not only generally slow but also quite erratic. Walter Alcock's Bach on the Salisbury Cathedral organ reminded us of the romantic Anglicisation of Bach registration which was fashionable in the early part of the century. Similarly, the heavily arranged Voluntary by Maurice Greene, complete with pedals, played by

Stanley Marchant at St Paul's Cathedral, recalled a stylistic tradition for 18<sup>th</sup> Century English music which has faded away. Further recordings of the 1920s featured Harold Darke, C.Charlton Palmer and E Stanley Roper.

After the refreshments interval we heard recordings from the 1920s of several French composers playing their own works: Widor (at the age of 88) playing his *Toccata in F* at the correct speed, the delicate playing of Vierne at Notre Dame, Paris, and a virtuoso performance of the fiendishly



David Shooter

difficult *Prelude & Fugue in G minor* by Dupré. A 1957 recording of two movements from *L'Ascension* by Olivier Messiaen on his organ at La Trinité, Paris, brought us back to the world of hi-fi; his performance of *Transports de joie* was stunning for its rhythmic clarity and bravura tempi. Finally we heard Bach's *Prelude in D major* played by Helmut Walcha in a 1970 recording from the Silbermann organ of Saint Pierre le Jeune, Strasbourg. The beautiful voicing of this organ together with Walcha's immaculate articulation made the performance full of vitality and clarity.

This was a splendidly entertaining evening. Our thanks go to John and his collaborators for compiling and presenting such an interesting selection of recordings.

*Laurence Rogers*

## *Members' News*

### **Ben Bloor for Westminster**

Congratulations to our member Ben Bloor who has secured the appointment as Organ Scholar at Westminster Cathedral starting in September. The post is for one year and he will be living in the clergy house with the resident priests. However, he has much serious business to do before then as he sits the final exams for a music degree in the forthcoming May and June. When such academic work is well out of the way, he is looking forward to recording his first solo CD. Plans are still in their infancy, but watch this space!

### **Peter Hearne**

We are sad to record the death of Peter Hearne who died on 28<sup>th</sup> December, aged 81. He held appointments in Methodist churches, including a spell as Assistant at Queen's Hall, where he was also a valued member of the choir. More recently he had been on the playing rota of several churches in the Allestree area. He was a participating member of our Association for many years, before illness curtailed his activities. Several years ago he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease and latterly had suffered also from prostate cancer.

*Ed Stow*

### **Bernard Hawley 1941- 2014**

It was with great sadness that members of the Derby and District Organists' Association heard of the death of long standing member, Bernard Hawley on 12th January. Several DDOA members joined a full congregation on February 3rd at St. Nicholas' Church, Allestree, where together with Mugginton and Quarndon Churches, Bernard had served as an organist for many years.

Bernard's life had been intensely active from beginning to end. As a child in Derby, he enjoyed playing one of two harmoniums acquired by his parents for himself and his sister, Judith, which the two of them played together in their front room! He attended St Luke's Church and took organ lessons with the then organist, Harold Oldfield, as well as piano lessons locally. He became a pupil at Bemrose School and excelled in his scientific and mathematical skills, and later studied at Durham University where he eventually obtained a doctorate in Chemistry. He was known to have cycled from Derby to Durham in a day whilst a student! After completing his studies at Durham, he returned to Derby and took up a teaching post at Bemrose, and later also taught at Woodlands School, Allestree and in Further Education Colleges in Derby.

Bernard's influence on his students was immense, both as a teacher and a friend, but he had many other interests besides, including cycling, skiing, diving and folk music. Many of the people present at his funeral represented his association with his wide range of friendships, including his life as a diving instructor, and the Ceilidh Band in Derby in which he participated played a piece in tribute to him. Bernard had a brilliant intellect and loved to discuss a wide range of topics with his friends. Some of us will remember relaxing with a drink, and enjoying his company at the Silk Mill after the Summer organ Recitals at the Cathedral. Bernard will be sorely missed by his many friends who have been so privileged to have known him, and remember him with affection.

*Margaret Eades*

## *DDOA - Your Association*

### **Willis Garrett**

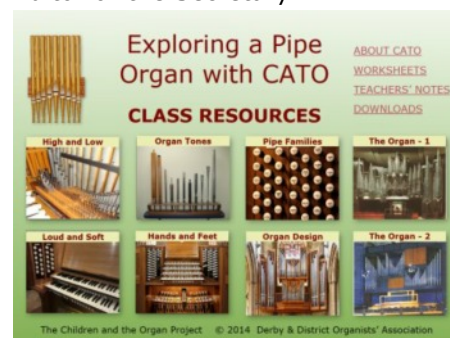
The committee is pleased to announce the award Life Membership of the Association to Willis Garrett, in recognition of his long standing and genial service as coach driver on numerous annual DDOA outings over many years.

### **Children and the Organ**

The CATO team have recently presented a Saturday afternoon workshop at St Peter's, Nottingham, at the invitation of the Director of Music, Dr Peter Siepman, and co-sponsored by the Nottingham and District Society of Organists. The format was slightly different from the usual one for a school visit, being open to a mixed age group in the wider community. Eleven children between the ages of 6 and 12 attended, along with parents and friends. The presence of families lent a very friendly atmosphere which was most enjoyable.

As well as the usual workshop activities, the children were given an opportunity to visit the inside of the organ chamber. The latter was particularly interesting as the organ uses a hybrid of pipe and digital technology. When listening in the nave, the subtle voicing of the ranks made it very difficult to distinguish between pipe sound and digitally recorded sound, as was demonstrated when Dr Siepman played several separate ranks and challenged us to spot the real pipe sound. Before his concluding piece, it was a great pleasure to hear several children play pieces that they had brought along to the event - quite a plucky thing to do in front of and all-age audience!

The classroom support resources developed by the CATO team are now available for viewing online. Members are invited to inspect them at [www.insightresources.co.uk/CATO](http://www.insightresources.co.uk/CATO). Feedback is always welcome, so please send your comments to the Editor or the Secretary.



## *For your diary*

Peter Gould has announced an impressive line-up of organists for this summer's recital series at Derby Cathedral:

July 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Nigel Ogden
9 <sup>th</sup>	Roy Massey
16 <sup>th</sup>	Robert Quinney
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Simon Hogan
30 <sup>th</sup>	Peter Gould/Tom Corfield/ Chris Johns/Sachin Gunga/ Ben Bloor
August 6 <sup>th</sup>	John Scott
13 <sup>th</sup>	John Hosking
20 <sup>th</sup>	Tom Corfield
27 <sup>th</sup>	Peter Gould

## *National Event*

### **IAO Annual Congress**

**Monday, 28 July – Saturday, 2 August 2014**

This year's Congress will be based in the city of Durham. Events start on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July with Evensong in the Cathedral followed by a reception in the cloisters. All venues on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> July are within walking distance, beginning with the AGM at the Courtyard, St Chad's College. The Radisson Blu Hotel will be the venue for the Annual Dinner on the evening of Thursday 31 July.

Recitals have been planned for Durham Cathedral; St George's, Gateshead; St Mary's RC Cathedral, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and others. Masterclasses at Hexham Abbey, with Dame Gillian Weir, and Francesca Massey at Elvet Methodist Church. Visits include the Bowes Museum so there is something for everyone.

Accommodation in the conference hotel must be booked and fully paid by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

## *Member's Note*

### **Cathedral Choir Auditions**

There are vacancies in Derby Cathedral Choir for 6 boys, 2 girls and 2 tenors. Auditions are being held in March. Please contact Canon Peter Gould for details.

## *Letter to the Editor*

*From Jim Heading:*

I do not watch much television, but I did recently sit and watch a most interesting series on the life and work of Westminster Abbey. Its 3-hour duration featured many aspects of the Abbey's life, including the choir, being trained very ably by the Organist and Sub-organist. Yet during the entire time, there was probably less than 20 seconds showing an organist actually playing. I also watched the service of Remembrance from one of the churches at Lockerbie for the victims of the air disaster there, and managed to get a glimpse for a few seconds of the organist playing. The same is also true at the Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance, Carols from Kings and most other similar programmes I've seen.

What has the BBC got against the organ? Does it assume, like most people seem to, that the organ just 'happens'? We know the organist's life can be somewhat solitary, but his or her contribution to the worship is absolutely central, and only comes about by many, many hours of dedicated study and practice. Wouldn't it make for more interesting viewing to show rather more of the organist's art than repeatedly showing us the singing(?) faces of countless people who have often been drafted in for the occasion, many of whom probably never darken a church doorway from one year's end to the next?

I am aware of the concerns over the difficulty in generating interest in our instrument, and have read a great deal about the Association's worthy CATO initiative; it seems to me that more exposure in the media (particularly TV), could just go a small way to helping these and similar causes - and also convey something of the pleasure and enjoyment to be gained through music-making with such a splendid array of sounds and effects at the organist's disposal.

## *Editorial*

I am most grateful to receive Jim's letter highlighting the very poor exposure of organs and organists in the media compared with most other musical genres. Sadly this is a problem which has

been rumbling along for several years. It is a problem with many aspects, but I would like to add my thoughts on two of them:

*Children:* For those of us in the Association who have worked on the CATO project, we know how much excitement can be generated amongst youngsters, given exposure to the organ and opportunity for a hands-on experience. However, facilitating that initial exposure is a worsening problem, with declining church attendance, especially amongst the young, and the demise of so many organs, where they have existed, in state schools. It seems to be a very different situation in independent schools; last year, for example, if you were a pupil at Cranleigh school, Surrey, you had the opportunity to hear all the organ works of Bach in a series of lunchtime recitals by Philip Scriven. This year he is taking pupils on a journey through the symphonic organ repertoire. What steps could be taken to counter the present inequality of organ opportunity between state and independent schools? (It is perhaps no surprise that the majority of cathedral organists were educated in the independent sector.)

*Television:* How may the profile of the organ in the media be boosted? Can the organ world find communicators who can popularise the organ and replicate what Brian Cox has done for science, Gareth Malone for choral singing, Michael Wood for history, and so on? There are sufficiently wonderful instruments in the UK and plenty of talented players around, but can some clever media person create a format that can capture the imagination of a television audience? Traditional organ recitals are not the answer, but the popular events that one hears of at Swanwick, Liverpool Cathedral and the Manchester Bridgewater Hall might point the way. This month there will be the Gala Opening of the renovated Royal Festival Hall organ; will it be televised? If not, why not? This returns to the point that Jim makes in his letter.

What do you think? Please do write in with your comments, views and suggestions. Our generation has a duty to pass on the heritage which we have enjoyed so much.

*Editor*

## Honoured Organist - Arthur Tipper B.E.M.

It was a great pleasure to discover a familiar local name in the New Year Honours list for 2014. Not only is it satisfying that the public service of a church organist has been recognised, but better still that one of our own members has been duly honoured. Our congratulations are to Arthur Tipper upon his award of the British Empire Medal. Officially the citation reads "for services to music in Burton-upon-Trent", but such brevity hides a lifetime of organ playing in diverse roles.

Arthur served as Organist and Choirmaster at Tutbury Parish Church for 35 years. It was just three years ago that, as an octogenarian, he decided to change his commitment to a part-time role at the church. He continues to enjoy the satisfaction of playing a splendid organ in an historic Romanesque church possessing a lively acoustic. In his changed role he has employed the freedom to deputise at other churches and has become very well known in the area as a sure pair of helping hands (and feet!) at the organ. Arthur declares his love of church music, and as a mature student he studied for a period at Addington Palace leading to the award of the Archbishop's Certificate in Church Music. The choir and organ have provided some of his most uplifting experiences as a musician, and he recalls with pride the celebrations for the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Tutbury Church when he gathered and conducted the combined choirs from several neighbouring churches for a festival service.

As impressive a record that this may be, there is so much more to the story of Arthur Tipper the organist. Like most of us, his early learning was as a pianist, but in his early teens, as well as taking organ lessons, he acquired an interest in playing jazz with a group of friends in the Youth Club at Hatton School. They used to play for dances in the village hall, a public role which provided strong motivation to practise and develop keyboard skill. Later, during his army service, he played with a squadron dance band, an experience which rapidly broadened his repertoire of dance music popular during the '50's.



Arthur's spell in the army Royal Engineers also laid the foundation for his training in the electrical industry. On leaving the army he first worked as an electrician for a Derby building firm before forming his own business as an electrical contractor. One of his early jobs in the 60's was to re-wire the system in Tutbury church, so one might say that he has been responsible for 'son et lumière' at Tutbury for over 50 years!

1973 was a landmark year for Arthur. The old pipe organ in Burton Town Hall became unusable and the Borough Council was persuaded to replace it with a second-hand Wurlitzer purchased from a Withenshaw cinema. It was decided to appoint a panel of five organists who would be called upon to play at the various functions in the hall and Arthur was one of those selected. Rodney Tomkins was similarly successful, and presently Arthur and Rodney are the sole surviving members of the original panel. Arthur recalls that organ concerts in the Town Hall were very well supported, with dance music forming the basis of the repertoire. Over the years he has played at Saturday night dances, civic functions, memorial services and a variety of events requiring background music. Through his music making he has raised money for several charities, including the local hospital and the air ambulance service. He is Director of Music for the Friends of the Burton Wurlitzer and is currently making a recording of music of the 40's. If that is not enough, he also runs a 'singing for pleasure' class in Burton and plays at the National Memorial Arboretum chapel at Alrewas.

Commenting on the arrival of the official letter commending his award of the B.E.M., Arthur at first thought the envelope contained a tax demand or a speeding ticket! Fortunately, closer inspection revealed it to be from the Cabinet Office and all was well.

Arthur, congratulations on your wonderful career as organist and the worthy honour you have received!

*Laurence Rogers*



## *Forthcoming DDOA Meetings*



**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30pm**

**St John's, Bridge Street, Derby**

### **'Organ Tourism'**

**Presented by Anthony Burns-Cox**

Anthony Burns-Cox studied with Dr Bernard Rose at Oxford. Subsequently he became Director of Music at St Albans School, before moving to Wales as Sub-Organist of Llandaff Cathedral and Director of Music in the Cathedral School. Between 1980 and 1990 he was Organist and Choirmaster of Romsey Abbey, Hampshire, after which he returned to teaching.

Some years ago Anthony started to organise holiday tours of organs in France. Destinations have included, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Rouen, and Provence, to name just a few. Our Chairman has participated in several of these tours and commends Anthony's wide knowledge of the French organ scene. Anthony's presentation will introduce us to some of his favourite organs and anecdotes from the tours.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30pm**

**St Wystan's Parish Church, Repton**

### **'J S Bach as Teacher'**

**Presented by Peter Williams and Stephen Johns**

All organists are well aware of Bach's massive output and his reputation as a formidable player, but Peter Williams and I thought it could be interesting to examine what is known about his teaching. This was sparked off by the realisation that 2014 marks the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Carl Philip Emmanuel Bach who was a valuable source of information about his father's methods. J S Bach's own musical education was patchy to say the least – he was largely self taught and never went to University – but his teaching of Harmony, Composition and Performance was very methodical, intensely practical and widely admired. He was regarded as a 'learned musician'. Thanks to the kindness of one of our members (John Rooks) we shall have the use of a harpsichord as well as the Repton organ and there will be plenty of music to listen to and explore.

*Stephen Johns*



Items of news or articles for the May/June edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April**, 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.