

# Derby & District Organists'

Registered Charity No. 510567

## Association



### *A Tour de France for Organ Gourmets*

This year the British media gave saturation coverage of the cycling event in France during July, but they completely overlooked a superb cultural Tour de France celebrating the bicentenary of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, the famous organ builder. I was privileged to join a party of organ-lovers who met in Bordeaux and then spent a week crawling around organ lofts on a southerly route finishing in Marseille. This was in fact the sequel to the previous one-week tour in northern France in July 2011. During the 2011 tour we visited seventeen Cavaillé-Coll organs, including famous instruments in Rouen, Caen, Bayeux, Orleans, Douai and St. Omer. This year we took twenty-four more organs in our stride in the space of seven days!

The tour was led by Dr Kurt Lueders, Professor of Organ at the

Paris Conservatoire, who has made a lifelong study of the work of Cavaillé-Coll. His encyclopædic musical and technical knowledge, and his limitless fund of anecdotes recounting the life and times of the Cavaillé-Coll family made altogether an absolutely fascinating week.

An especially interesting feature of the tour plan was to include visits to organs built by grandfather Jean-Pierre, father Dominique, elder brother Vincent and eldest son Gabriel. This was valuable for providing a context for the distinctive innovations of Aristide as well as charting changes of fashion and taste over a whole century, beginning with a clearly classical sound and ending with symphonic instruments which inspired the great organ composers Franck, Guilmant and Widor amongst others.

### *DDOA Events 2012*

#### **22<sup>nd</sup> September**

Annual full day outing, including Leeds Cathedral and Armley PC  
(See accompanying booking form.)

#### **13<sup>th</sup> October**

Members' Recital evening, Sudbury PC  
(See page 6 for details.)

#### **21<sup>st</sup> November**

Chairman's Event and AGM

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### *Concerts & Recitals*

#### **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September, 8.00 pm**

St John the Evangelist, Dronfield.  
Organ recital by David Rogers (Doncaster)  
Retiring collection.

#### **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 7.30 pm**

St Michael's Church, Holbrook DE56 0TE.  
Organ recital by Cathy Lamb (Lichfield Cathedral). £6.

#### **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September, 8.00 pm**

St John the Baptist, Church Street, Staveley, Chesterfield S43 3TN.  
Organ recital by Matthew Yeomans (Staveley)

#### **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> September, 7.30pm**

St Luke, Derby, DE22 3RL.  
Guest tenor, Gari Glaysher, the Eggington String Quartet, organ pieces by Tony Westerman. £10.  
Proceeds to the Organ Restoration Fund.

#### **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September, 10.30 am**

#### **11<sup>th</sup> MIDLANDS ORGAN DAY**

#### **Grantham, St Wulfram's**

See attached pdf flier for programme and application.

#### **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 8.00 pm**

St John the Evangelist, Dronfield.  
Organ recital by Dorothy Davis (Sheffield).  
Retiring collection.

#### **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October, 8.00 pm**

St John the Baptist, Church Street, Staveley, Chesterfield S43 3TN.  
Organ recital by Ian brackenbury (Chesterfield PC). Retiring collection.



St. Guilhem-le-Désert, Abbaye de Gallone  
Jean-Pierre Cavallé 1789



Bédarieux, Église Saint Louis  
Aristide Cavallé-Coll 1843



Toulouse, Basilique Saint Sernin  
Aristide Cavallé-Coll 1889

For each organ visited, Dr Lueders gave a comprehensive introduction, highlighting its significant features, and the local organist would usually improvise to give a tour of the tonal resources. Then group members would be invited to play pieces suited to the instrument. Registration assistants were a vital aid for these performances, a role willingly fulfilled by Dr Lueders and the local organist.

Toulouse was a special venue on the tour, being a city with many enormous churches possessing historic instruments. The city is a 'Mecca' for organ-lovers, hosting an organ festival annually in the Autumn. Our local guide here was Jean-Claude Guidarini whose knowledge of the Toulouse organs was second to none and whose inspired improvisations never ceased to amaze us.

Our most historic experience of the organ building dynasty was the organ at Saint Guilhem-le-Désert, built by Aristide's grandfather,

Jean-Pierre Cavallé. The instrument was distinctively baroque in sound with bright mixtures and mutations. Before completing the organ, Jean-Pierre fled the Revolution to Catalonia and there married Maria Francisca Coll. Following Spanish tradition, their children took both their father's and mother's name, so their first-born son became Dominique Cavallé-Coll. Dominique followed in the family trade working with his father in Catalonia. After the Revolution he moved to Montpellier and set up business building organs in the region. He married there and Aristide was born in 1811.

Aristide showed an early talent in mechanical invention and as his career developed his many innovations revolutionised the face of organ building. He modified pipemaking and voicing techniques to create a whole family of stops imitating orchestral instruments. During our tour we sampled the extensive range of 8' stops, so

voiced that they could be used in many different combinations as well as offering beautiful solo sounds.

The most mature instrument we visited was at St Sever (photo on Page 1), completed just a year before his death. For Dr Lueders this was the most perfect instrument, full of subtlety and expressiveness. It had three manuals and pedals, 36 stops, 11 of which were reeds. There was a Trompette 8' on each manual and pedals, but each had its own individual character.

So much more could be written but space prevents this. Many of the organs visited are featured on the Cavallé-Coll DVD from [www.fuguestatefilms.co.uk](http://www.fuguestatefilms.co.uk) due out before Christmas. Tour de France organisers Miriam Tressel and Michael Grüber organise a mini tour of Paris organs each Eastertide and I thoroughly recommend this. See [www.organpromotion.org](http://www.organpromotion.org) for info.

*Laurence Rogers*



Teamwork: The author is flanked by Dr Lueders and organist, Bernard de Saint Vulry, who masterminded registration changes.



Carcassonne, Église Saint Vincent  
Dominique Cavallé-Coll 1807

## Recent Events

### DDOA Annual Dinner

Set in the lush surroundings of Derbyshire's Derwent valley, Willersley Castle Hotel was the elegant venue of this year's Annual Dinner. The event was well supported by members and it was a special pleasure to welcome guests of honour, Cathy and Ben Lamb, Directors of Music at Lichfield Cathedral. There is a unique partnership in the cathedral world and it was fascinating to hear in their after-dinner talk about their pioneering work with young people and choirs.

Cathy directs the Cathedral School Girls Choir and Ben directs the Cathedral Boys Choir. The latter is regarded as the 'main' cathedral choir and they organise the service duties of each choir such that they sing separately, an arrangement which respects the different age composition and ethos of each group. Typically boys have a gruelling day, starting with a 7.45 am rehearsal, followed by a whole day at school and Evensong at 5.30 pm. They sing for six services a week and have Wednesdays off. Ben is unapologetic about driving them hard: "If you expect a little, you get a little". "I keep chucking things at them".

As a team, their duties divide 30% to Cathy and 70% to Ben and their skills are happily complementary: Ben admits that Cathy takes all the administration in her stride whilst he is much happier delving into the subtleties of a Victoria mass. An increasingly important aspect of their work is outreach to young people in the community. They organise a succession of events with limited commitment on participants. For example, they set up a series of



Cathy and Ben Lamb  
Joint Directors of Music, Lichfield Cathedral

rehearsals with 150 primary school pupils, culminating in a concert; They have a 'Young Voices' choir of 50 children which meets on Saturday mornings; They have run singing workshops for 100 schools since 2003. All these activities stimulate children's interest in the cathedral and its music and has helped to recruit into the main choir; "Children love the evensong service – it is quite different from anything else they have experienced."

Cathy and Ben's talk about their work with young people was enormously uplifting, members were full of admiration for their energy and enthusiasm and gave them rapturous applause for their 'double act'.

*Laurence Rogers*

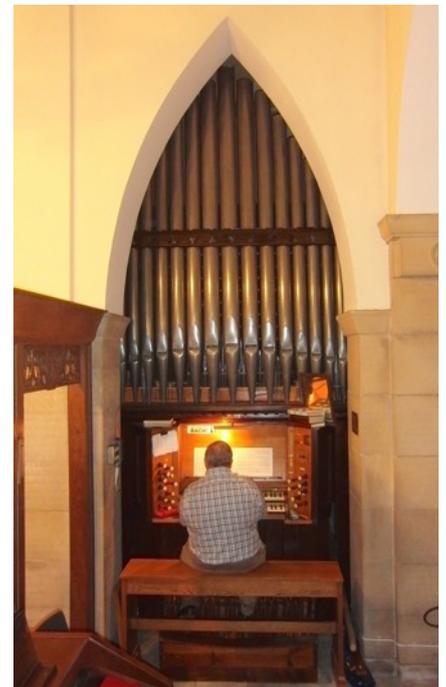
### Visit to Quarndon and Holbrook

The two instruments visited by members on an unusually warm and sunny evening in July demonstrated the debt that the local organ building scene owes to Edmund Stow. Each instrument possessed a chequered history of successive rebuilds, tonal changes



St Paul's Church, Quarndon  
Grunwell 1894 - Stow 2012

and imports of second-hand pipework, and it is to Ed's great credit that his recent work on the instruments has given them great integrity. The principal chorus at Quarndon was quite splendid, speaking clearly into the church but without being overbearing. The two-manual instrument offered pleasing variety, substantially fulfilling the original Grunwell's tonal scheme of 1874.



St Michael's Church, Holbrook  
Hill 1871 - Stow 2012

At Holbrook, the siting of the organ chamber in the south east corner was less promising, but the lively acoustic of the broad nave and open chancel seemed to compensate well for this with the result that the instrument had an excellent presence in the church. Offerings of Buxtehude by David Wells and Sweelinck by Tony Westerman made it quite clear that here was a resourceful instrument which could both excite and charm the listener.

At both venues Ed Stow not only introduced the organs with interesting technical summaries of their history and recent restoration, but also gave masterly performances of Baroque and Romantic style pieces which commended their distinctive qualities. His insights as an accomplished recitalist combine very successfully with his skills as an organ builder.

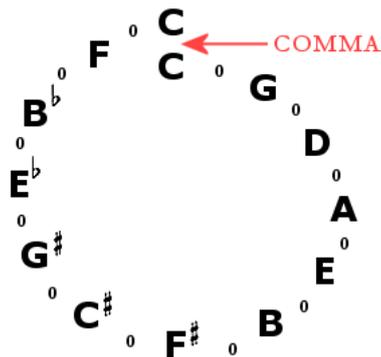
It was a pleasure to share the visits with members of the local congregations who expressed appreciation of our music-making and made us welcome. A special thanks to John Maxwell-Jones for organising the visits and to his helpers for providing most welcome refreshments at Holbrook.

A date for your diary: **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30 pm.** The inaugural recital of the restored organ at Holbrook will be given by Cathy Lamb of Lichfield Cathedral.

*Laurence Rogers*

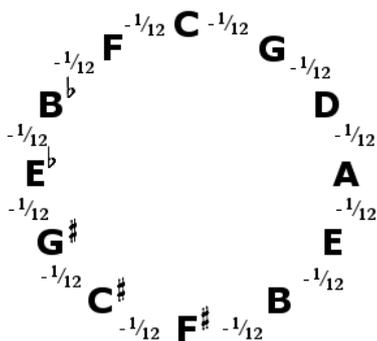
# The Comma and the Wolf - Laurence Rogers

In the previous article we saw how the Pythagorean scale of C major may be defined using a series of perfect fifths. Extending this cycle of fifths to define the black notes brings us back to C, but unfortunately the new C is out of tune with the original C. A series of 12 fifths is slightly larger than 7 octaves. The difference in pitch between the two Cs is called the *Pythagorean Comma*. This may be represented in a clock diagram thus:



The Pythagorean dilemma

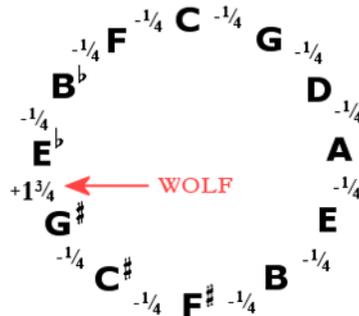
Clearly, to achieve acceptable tuning of all twelve notes, white and black, a compromise must be made. Modern *equal temperament* solves the problem by reducing all the fifths by the same amount so that no perfect fifths are used. The clock diagram for this indicates that each fifth is reduced by an amount equivalent to  $\frac{1}{12}$  of the comma interval.



Equal Temperament

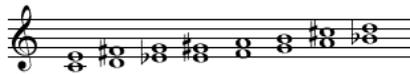
Historically, only white notes were used until late Medieval times so the Pythagorean scale with perfect fifths sufficed. However, as musicians moved on from plainsong and the like, the demand for harmony increased. In particular, the major third interval became more important. To satisfy this, *meantone* temperament was devised, providing eight pure major thirds, but at the sacrifice of the purity of

fifths. Since the third is a smaller interval, the ear is less tolerant with its lack of purity (frequency ratio  $\frac{5}{4}$ ) than with the larger interval of the fifth (frequency ratio  $\frac{3}{2}$ ). The success of meantone in creating pure major thirds was at the expense of squeezing the fifths by  $\frac{1}{4}$  comma, except for one – the *wolf*! The clock diagram helps to see how this comes about:



Meantone (Pietro Aaron 1523)

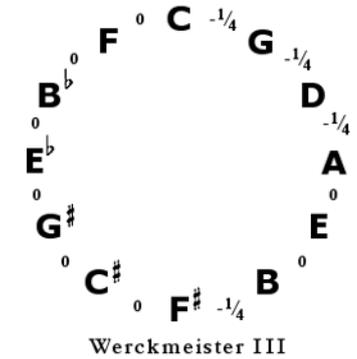
The interval between G# and E $\flat$  was grossly in excess of a perfect fifth, making a horrible sound. The prized pure thirds were as follows:



However, major thirds based on B, F#, C# and G# were awful, and if you examine music composed in Bach's time, these intervals were rarely used unless the composer wanted to shock his audience or express severe pain. On the positive side, each of the acceptable keys had a different musical personality, so a composer was able to express a particular mood by his choice of key. Bach famously composed his 48 preludes and fugues to exploit the distinctive personality of each of the 24 major and minor keys. Unhappy with the efforts of other people, he insisted on tuning harpsichords himself and devised his own 'well' temperament to achieve the 48. Despite much collaboration with the organ builder Silbermann, Bach was not entirely happy with the variant of meantone temperament that Silbermann used.

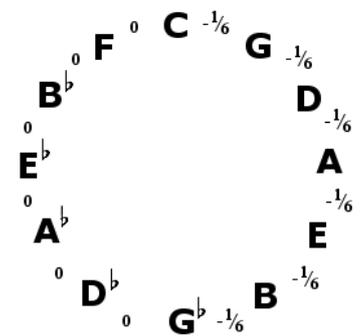
During Bach's time many musicians, theorists and organ builders experimented with 'well' temperaments, modifications of meantone to facilitate modulations between keys. The German organist Werckmeister came up with the easiest way of tuning to create the temperament Bach

needed and his scheme of 1791 is widely used in Germany today. He achieved this with eight pure fifths and four tempered fifths ( $\frac{1}{4}$  comma each). The major thirds are slightly larger than pure thirds by between 1 and 5%.



Werckmeister III

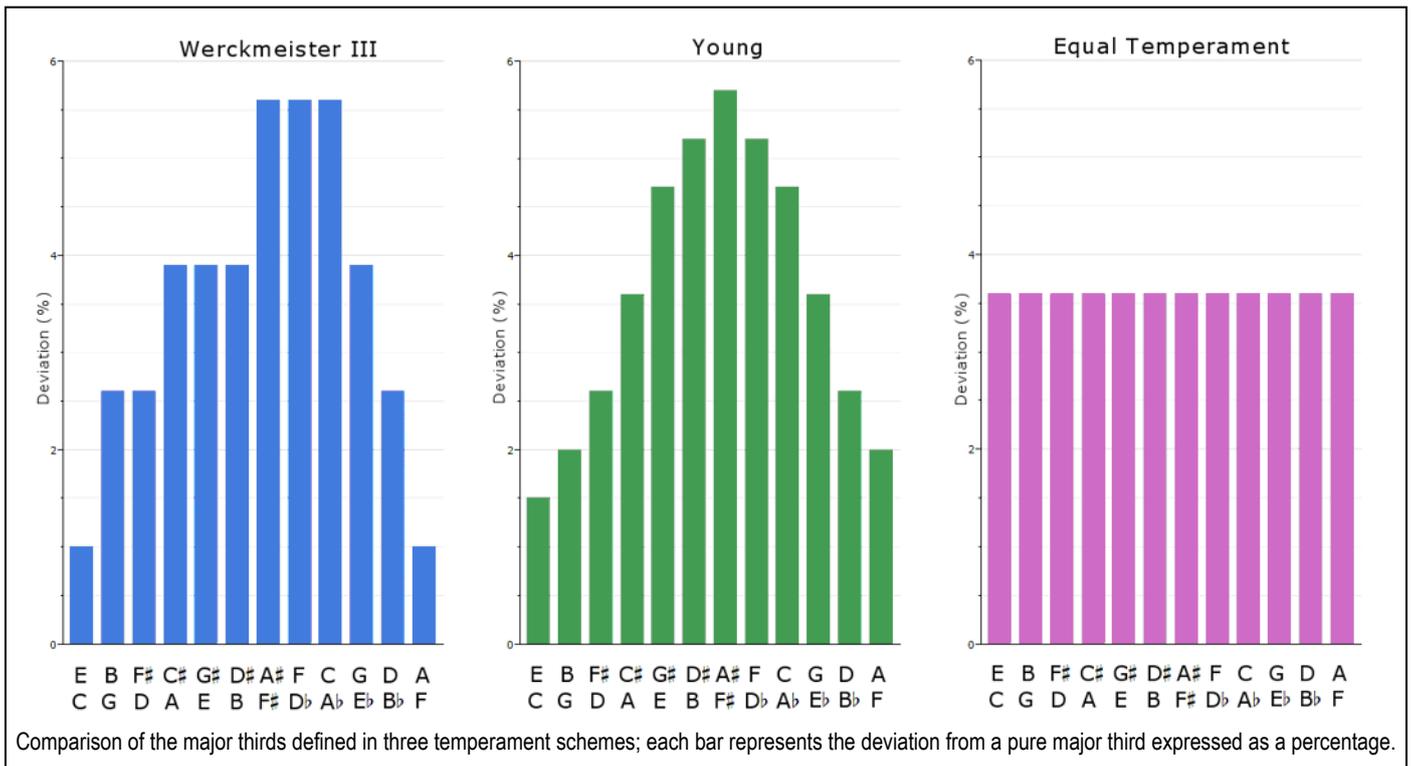
In England, a number of historic organs and modern recreations are tuned to Thomas Young's well temperament of 1799. This seems to be an elegant solution; it distributes the comma between half of the fifths and achieves a symmetrical distribution of minimally tempered thirds.



Young

The next page shows charts which compare the deviations from pure thirds achieved by Werckmeister III and Young. For reference, the third chart shows the magnitude of the deviation for equal temperament. We can see that Young achieves seven thirds which are purer or at least as pure as thirds in equal temperament, compared with five thirds with Werckmeister.

Since the flowering of harmony, decisions on how to tune thirds has always been a challenge to organ builders. Simple inspection of the keyboard shows that an octave can be divided into three consecutive major thirds, however, it is impossible to achieve this with pure thirds. Three pure thirds fall short of an octave by an amount equal to approximately twice the comma



(about half a semitone), so clearly a substantial compromise must be made to achieve full chromatic tuning. In equal temperament the octave is divided such that each tempered third is 'stretched' by 3.6% compared with pure thirds. The resulting aural effect of playing a major third chord is to produce a beating effect. For middle C to E this is about 15 vibrations per second. In the world of equal temperament we are so used to hearing this that it is perceived as normal and perfectly acceptable. However, it is a revelation to compare this with the sound of a pure third which can be produced by drawing a Fifteenth and Tierce rank together and playing a single note.

**Conclusion**

You may ask, 'why do meantone and well temperaments still deserve attention today?' For some

of us the short answer is simply their historical interest. However, a longer answer asks us to consider the lost character of different keys which is the price of versatility in modern equal temperament. Previous to equal temperament, the key for a composition provided part of the character of a piece; modulations to different keys would also make distinctive transitions. Therefore modern performance of much pre-19<sup>th</sup> century music does not convey the intended character of the music unless it is on an instrument tuned to the original temperament. Also, historically, the influence of temperament on composition has been a two-way process; composers had to work within the limitations of the technology and temperament of their time, but as their imagination developed, there was a demand for change in temperament. One could argue that the Pythagorean

temperament held up the development of harmony for more than a thousand years; Meantone made harmony possible, but with limitations; Well temperaments opened up the possibility of more variety in harmony, but only with Equal temperament did endless modulation become possible.

*I hope this essay has not been too baffling to readers, assuming you have not given up already! Having visited a good number of historic organs in recent years, and overheard mysterious conversations referring to 'temperament', I have felt the need to unravel some of the mysteries for myself. The research in preparing this pair of articles has been fascinating and I hope you have enjoyed reading the results.*

*Laurence Rogers*

*DDOJA - Your Association*

**Three Cheers for our Chairman**

We are delighted to hear that our Chairman, Prof. James Muckle, is recovering well at home after his recent operation in hospital. As restless as ever, James has been working hard on next year's programme with emails flying out in all directions.

**Children and the Organ News**

During June and July the CATO team has presented two very successful workshops with primary school children. The Pottery School in Belper bubbled over with enthusiasm with our activities, and the teacher in charge was very keen to arrange a repeat event with another class. Later, at Leicester Cathedral we entertained for the first time a mixed age

group of children ranging in age from 5 to 11. They turned out to be very imaginative and musically adept, making the session very stimulating for the team. Several parents were also in attendance and offered many complimentary comments on the activities, being particularly impressed with their interactive nature and the range of skills employed; musical, scientific, mathematical, tactile and aesthetic.

## Members' News

### Starting them young

The photo of the young organ trio here was captured during a recent event presented by Terry Bennett for youngsters at Repton Parish Church. Terry was thrilled with the enthusiasm of the children. Perhaps we can look forward to welcoming them to one of our CATO workshops when they begin to go to school!



### Richard Barnes R.I.P.

We are sad to receive the news of the sudden death of Richard Barnes, late Director of Music at Holy Trinity Church, Ashford in the Water. Richard was an outstanding church musician, well-known in Derbyshire, much-loved for his infectious enthusiasm and artistic insights.

The church has a strong choral tradition and seeks to appoint a new Director of Music to lead the SATB choir of adults and children. Please contact John Foster, Churchwarden 01298 871647 or e-mail [johnfoster07@btinternet.com](mailto:johnfoster07@btinternet.com).

### Your newsletter

Please help me maintain a good local focus in future issues by sending local news or stories, or by suggesting personalities whom I might interview. As the holiday season draws to a close, please send stories or just snippets of your encounters with organs or organists which would make interesting reading for members.

Editor

## Forthcoming DDOA Meetings

### Annual Outing - Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September - Visits to Organs in Leeds

Three splendid organs are on offer this year: The newly restored Grand Organ at Leeds RC Cathedral by Klais, the famous Schultz organ at Armley and the historic Binns organ at St Aidan's Roundhay. Local organists will introduce the instruments and then allow members to play. Specifications of the organs are available as a pdf file from the DDOA website. Details of the arrangements for the day and the booking form accompany this newsletter.

Closing date for booking places: 13<sup>th</sup> September.

### Members' Recital - Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012

The Church of All Saints at Sudbury will host our Members' Recital evening on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm. For Sudbury, from Derby, take the A516 south west then the A50 towards Stoke. The church is located adjacent to Sudbury Hall, and can be found by following the National Trust signs for Sudbury Hall and the Museum of Childhood from the A50.

The Church of All Saints is home to a fine 3-manual Nicholson & Lord organ, which was installed around 1880, enlarged around 1900, and restored by Peter Collins Ltd in 1995. Ed Stow, the resident organist, considers the organ to have a very real "old-fashioned" quality, and ascribes this to the fact that practically the whole of the chorus pipework, with the two stopped diapasons, dates from an earlier 1827 organ, and survives in the present Nicholson & Lord

instrument. It is thought to be the largest quantity of pre-Victorian pipework now existing in any one organ in the county.

Ed Stow will be joined on the night by John Forster, Andrew Storer, Ian Stapley, Gillian Chatto, and Stephen Johns to provide a diverse programme ranging from Buxtehude and JS Bach, through romantic works to an offering from the Millennium Organ Book.

We are grateful to All Saints Church for their warm welcome to the Association, and look forward to their legendary refreshments which will be provided after the concert. Parking is permitted in front of Sudbury Hall, which is only a short walk from the church.

Items of news or articles for the November/December edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October**, 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.