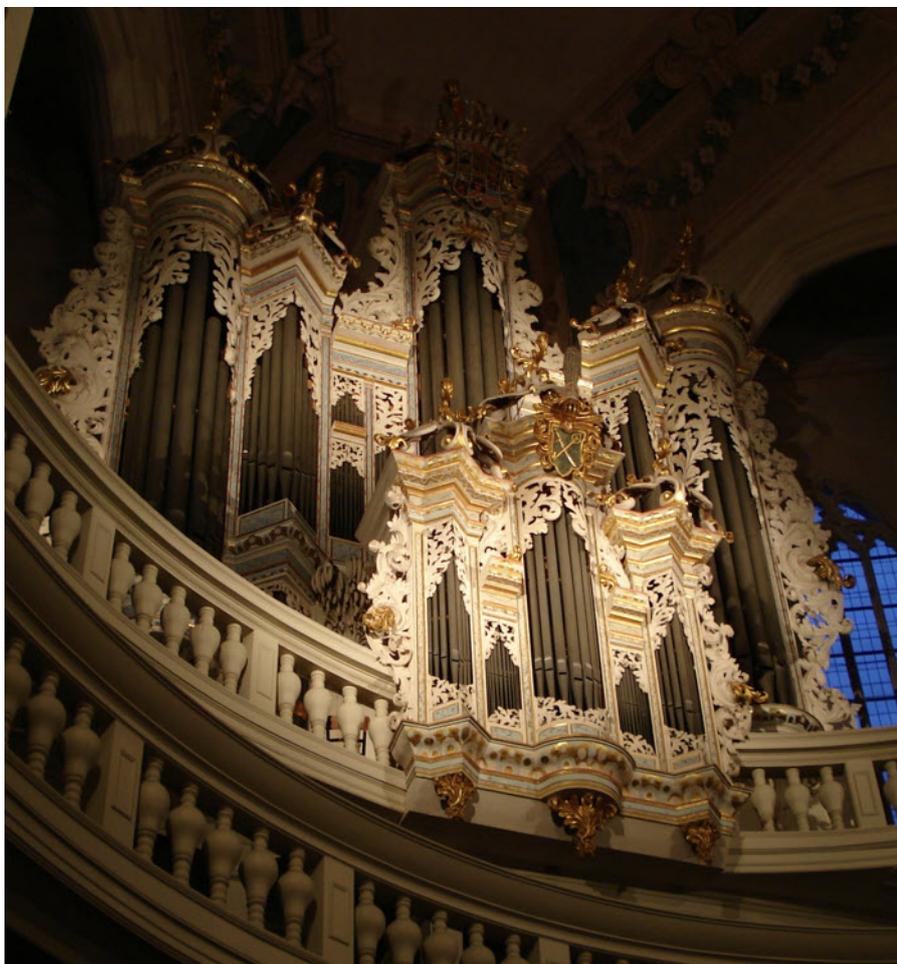


Derby & District Organists' *Registered Charity No. 510567* Association



In the footsteps of Johann Sebastian Bach by Laurence Rogers

'St Thomas's Church, Leipzig' has special resonance far beyond its wonderful acoustics, for this is the church which witnessed at first hand the full flowering of Bach's genius and presently houses his final resting place. St Thomas's has become a Mecca for organists and regularly draws organ pilgrims from all over the world. It was my privilege to be one of those pilgrims during August this year when I attended a masterclass given by the Thomaskirche Organist, Prof. Ullrich Böhme. This sense of privilege was shared by eleven other players from diverse countries in four continents. Many were professors of organ, but the group also included three

amateurs, like me, who by coincidence happened to be physicists by profession.

The first two days of the course were conducted on the Bachorgel on the north side-gallery in St Thomas'. Despite its title, this is not an instrument upon which Bach played; it was completed only in 2000, but more of this story later. The fact is that the inevitable historical forces of repairs, restoration, new technology and changing fashions have resulted in the disappearance of the organ that Bach knew long ago. However, about thirty miles from Leipzig is the less well known church of St. Wenzel in the town of Naumburg which possesses a

DDOA Events 2010

Wednesday 6th October

Chairman's Event – St James, Riddings. 7.30 pm

Tuesday 23rd November

AGM, Duffield Methodist Church

I.A.O. Event

Saturday 2nd October

Midlands Organ Day. 10 am - 6 pm
Derby Cathedral.

Concerts & Recitals

Saturday, 9th October

Harvest Festival Concert by Dr. David Wells
7.30 pm St. Andrew's, Radbourne
Admission free, retiring donations.

Saturday 23rd October St Peter's Singers directed by Simon Lindley
7.30 pm Bolsover Parish Church. £5 (accompanied under 16s free).

Lunchtime Organ Recitals at Chesterfield Parish Church

Thursdays 12.15 – 1.00 pm

7th October: Derek Gover
(St John's, Ranmoor, Sheffield)

14th October: Geoff Gratton
(Chesterfield)

21st October: Mark Rothham
(Assistant. Chesterfield PC)

28th October: David Butterworth
(Nottingham)

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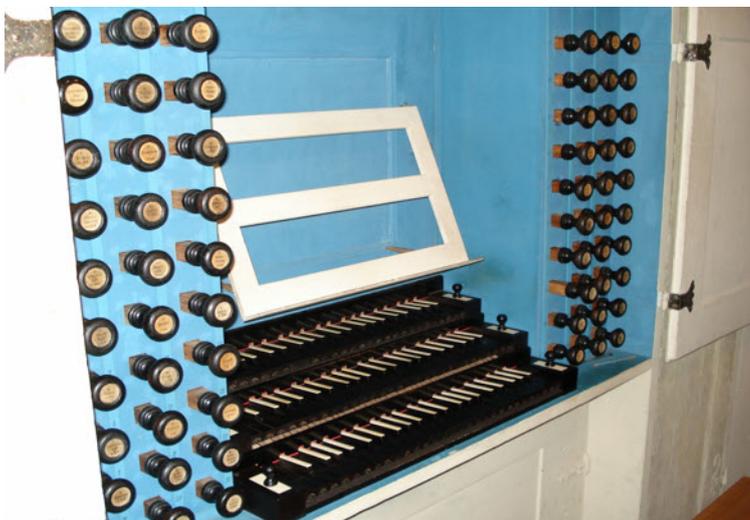
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Console of the Hildebrandt organ St. Wenzel, Naumburg. We were asked not to touch the name faces of the stops so as not to cause their further discolouration. The original paper faces have been preserved because these were formerly read and touched by Bach himself.

unique organ which Bach not only played, but had a major role in designing and testing. The photograph on the front page shows this historic organ, which looks splendid and sounds magnificent. On the third day of our course, we relocated to Naumburg to play this wonderful instrument. It was built by Zacharias Hildebrandt, the pupil and successor to Gottfried Silbermann whose works live on in many churches in Saxony today. The case actually belongs to an earlier instrument whose pipework and action were discarded by Hildebrandt. In recent years the instrument has undergone complete restoration and is in superb condition. About two million euros were lavished on this restoration which reflects the significance of the organ as the largest surviving one today which Bach played. (This is the organ featured in those late night Bach recitals by John Scott Whiteley broadcast on BBC television a few years ago.)

The organ is famous for the balance between the three manuals and pedal in terms of gravity, tone colour and homogeneous ensemble within the divisions. Gravity is provided in an exemplary way by the Posaune 32' in the Pedal; Principal and Quintadehn 16' in the Hauptwerk; Bordun 16' in the Oberwerk and Fagott 16' in the Rückpositiv. There is a rich selection of 8' stops. Amongst the stops so highly valued by Bach are the Viol da Gamba and Sesquialtera.

For my turn in the masterclass, I chose to play the

trio on 'Herr Jesu Christ' from the 'Leipzig Eighteen'. Having recently learnt this piece, it was quite an ambitious choice, but having successfully rehearsed it in Leipzig on the previous day, I felt confident about the challenge. Unfortunately the inaccuracy of my pedalling on the first page soon became an embarrassment. This was yet another example of how a Baroque parallel-flat pedalboard defied all my instincts cultivated on standard RCO radial-concave pedalboards back in England. Accordingly Prof. Böhme stopped me and suggested that he play the pedal part on the third manual. This we did quite successfully and in retrospect I feel it was quite an honour to play a duet with Prof. Böhme!

In the evening Prof. Böhme gave a public recital featuring the Dorian Toccata and Fugue and several choral preludes taken from the Leipzig Eighteen. The church filled with about 200 people, quite remarkable for such a small town, but considering the importance of the organ, and the reputation of Ullrich Böhme, it was fully justified. Prof. Böhme's playing was brilliant, however there was one slight technical hitch resulting from his choice of wind supply. This may seem a strange option, but he chose not to use the electric blower for the recital, but persuaded three participants of the masterclass to operate the foot bellows. His idea was partly to demonstrate how the foot-operated system was fully functional in supplying stable wind for the whole organ, but also how audiences in Bach's time would have experienced a

performance. The three volunteers duly took turns to operate the foot pump pedals. There were seven foot pumps in all, and before each piece could commence, the volunteer had to pump them so that all were maintained in a depressed position. Thus the prelude to each piece was a clunking sound whilst the bellows were reinflated. Unfortunately the Dorian fugue involved full organ for a sustained period and the need to keep all the pump pedals depressed temporarily defeated the pump operator at a certain point, causing an inevitable dying of the sound, shortly followed by a reawakening.

In contrast with the historic organ at Naumburg, the 'Bachorgel' in St Thomas, Leipzig dates from the year 2000. After the reunification of the two Germanys in 1990, a project for the complete restoration of the church was undertaken, and as



Photo: Katharina Hansen-Gluschitz

part of this a new organ was built by Gerald Woehl in time for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of Bach's death on 28th July 2000. The inspiration for the specification came from the historic instrument installed in the Georgenkirche in Eisenach where Bach was born. The tonal scheme was designed by Bach's uncle, Johann Christoph Bach (1642-1703) and it is thought that the young Johann Sebastian must have been strongly influenced by this organ, for he repeatedly demanded its tonal qualities when inspecting organs. For the case of the Woehl organ, the design was taken from the Scheibe organ in the University Church, Leipzig, (now destroyed) which Bach inspected in 1717. Thus the 20th Century instrument has a historical model which Bach would recognise.

At our masterclasses held at St Thomas's, participants took turns to play an own-choice piece followed by a critique by Prof. Böhme. The standard of playing was formidable, with several

players demonstrating complete recall from memory. I was impressed by the manner in which Prof. Böhme took interest in each player's ideas for interpretation. He would make many suggestions but would leave space for each player's personality.

On my first day I made the safe choice of the manuals-only *Partita - O Gott du frommer Gott*. This was a fulfilling experience. The touch of the mechanical keyboards was very responsive to different types of articulation. Prof. Böhme was very interested in phrasing, even within the lines of the opening chorale; the words of the chorale were his template for phrasing. Since my knowledge of the German words did not extend beyond the title, I felt at a disadvantage here. The registrations suggested by Prof. Böhme succeeded in giving each movement an individual character. His vast experience of playing the instrument since it was new, has given him an intimate knowledge of its tonal possibilities second to none. In



Photo: Katharina Hansen-Gluschitz
Prof. Ullrich Böhme casts a watchful eye on the author's playing.

my view this was verified at a public recital on the final evening, attended by over 1000 people, when an eminent player from overseas gave a competent recital of pieces from the *Clavierübung III* but, to my taste, with insufficient variety of registration.

The four day course in Leipzig was a very rewarding experience. Company was very congenial and for all of us it was thrilling to play Bach's music in authentic settings.

Laurence Rogers

Recent Events

18th Century English Organ Music - Rodney Tomkins and Stephen Johns

Speaking, as he modestly said, from notes researched by Rodney Tomkins, Stephen Johns, in his vigorous and engaging manner, presented to the audience of about forty a brief account of the historical context of church organ playing in the post-Restoration and Georgian period. Rodney illustrated hymn playing with inserts and decoration for the Old Hundredth, as it was done in the earlier part of that time. Commenting on the absence of any substantial contribution to church (as opposed to concerto) organ repertoire by our greatest (adopted) English composer, Handel, we were introduced to the 'genius' - a strong, but surely justified word - of John Stanley by seven short movements from his voluntaries, which gloriously illustrated the timbres on the St Peter's organ and, of course, on others of its type. Rodney elucidated Stanley's development from a Handelian style to something approaching the

Italianate spirit of Vivaldi, and later even perhaps Mozart.

Stephen drew our attention to the wealth of music-making for entertainment in secular contexts by a host of 'minor' (compared with the 'big' names of Handel and Purcell) composers of the period, who should not be underestimated, for collectively they were prolific and created a musical culture which was special to England. This point was well illustrated by the final section featuring of pieces by John Bennett, William Selby, Samuel Wesley and William Russell.

Our thanks go to Rodney and Stephen for a splendidly informative and enjoyable presentation.

JM & LR



Recital by Edmund Stow and David Wells, St John's, Derby

The recitalists in the third in the series on the newly rebuilt Willis organ at St John's had a very special affinity with the instrument which shone throughout their programme. Ed Stow, the organ builder, and David Wells, one of his collaborators on the project, clearly had an intimate knowledge of the character of all the ranks such that registrations were skilfully matched with the requirements of each piece. Offering six pieces each, plus a duet, their substantial programme gave us a comprehensive yet entertaining tour of the tonal possibilities of the organ.

Ed Stow began the recital with sparkling Bach and ended with dazzling Guilmant. The *March on a Theme of Handel* was decidedly a virtuoso performance, full of vigour and a fitting full organ end to the recital. David Wells described his contribution as the 'soft centre' of the programme, but his choice of arrangements of piano and harpsichord pieces succeeded in completely charming the audience.

Laurence Rogers

2010 Organ Recital Series – Derby Cathedral

Simon Lindley Stephen Disley
Francis Jackson Daniel Hyde
Peter Gould Tom Corfield
Christopher Herrick Ben Bloor

Those of us living in the Derby area are fortunate to have a series of accessible recitals each year that attracts a wide range of eminent recitalists. This year's performers drew large, appreciative audiences who were offered music ranging from Buxtehude to Hakim, each programme including one piece based on plainsong.

The Compton organ in the Cathedral affords players a huge palette of colours upon which to draw, with the most successful of the recitalists recognising and embracing that potential, rather than focussing on the high pressure reeds. Of course audiences like to hear the organ thunder – but not throughout every piece. I overheard one player comment after his recital, 'It's loud, isn't it!' What made the comment pertinent was that the speaker was one who had used the powerful reeds with discretion and, therefore, musically and with great effect.

In an age when audiences are used to listening to 'perfect' performances on CD, hearing 'perfect' live performances is a great joy and something of a rarity, and thus Stephen Disley and Daniel Hyde, whose precision, style and ability to communicate their musicianship, impressed the audience from their first notes. Quite what it is that makes an audience settle into an utter, collective stillness and listen as one with rapt attention I don't know, but these two players have it.

It was also a joy to hear Ben Bloor, the youngest performer of the series (now Organ Scholar at St George's, Windsor) play expressively and with such composure.

Congratulations to the cathedral music staff upon the 2010 series.

Tony Westerman

DDOA - Your Association

'Pray silence for the Committee.....'

Committees are generally regarded, by most people, as something to be avoided. We are often quite happy to attend the events that interest us but, perhaps, are less inclined to want to know how those events occur and even less inclined to want to have a hand in planning them.

This year, as a result of work done by the DDOA Committee *last* year, there have been a series of, I hope, interesting events beginning with an evening of CDs and DVDs followed by an extensive illustrated talk on Danish organs and organ music in the winter months of January and February. In April we were able to make a long anticipated visit to hear and play Ed Stow's masterly restoration of the former Father Willis organ in St. John's, Bridge St. The list continued with a delightful and fascinating trip to Nicholson's Organ Works in Malvern from where we moved on to a warm and generous welcome in Worcester Cathedral. The Annual Dinner proved to be a most pleasant occasion at Alison House, where our guest was Peter Chatfield who offered his congratulations for the work of the Association. This was followed in July by a more local visit to organs in Swarkestone and Stanton-by-Bridge and then in September a fairly extensive survey of Georgian organ music presented by Rodney Tomkins and Stephen Johns. By the time you read this I hope many of you will have had another opportunity to sample *Siann's Mum's Cakes* which will again have been a highlight of the Chairman's Evening at Riddings Church on October 6th.

The above list is only part of the work we do. This year we have dealt with changes to our excellent *Newsletter* placing it on a more manageable, bi-monthly footing, with an interim email events list sent out in the intervening months. As a result of changes in the make-up of the Committee we have also created four *Honorary Life Members* in *Edmund Stow*, *John and Gill Hunt*, together with *Rodney Tomkins*. This was for the distinguished long service given by these former committee members over many years. We have also finalised the arrangements for the

IAO Midlands Organ Day which the DDOA will have hosted in Derby Cathedral on 2nd October.

Of course any committee is not created out of thin air. As a charitable institution we have to abide by a legal constitution and hold an *Annual General Meeting*. It is at this occasion where the Officers and Committee Members are elected. This year's AGM will be on **Tuesday 23rd November at Duffield Methodist Church at 7.30pm**. There is ample parking and refreshments will be served. In addition the evening will include an illustrated presentation by Laurence Rogers of his recent travels in Germany and if that were not enough the Ed Stow rebuild in the Church will be available to members.

Very occasionally I hear of concerns by members about one thing or another. The AGM is an ideal opportunity to voice those matters or to put oneself forward for the committee so you can take action. We need active members who are willing to do things. There are several vacancies to be filled this time including the offices of Vice-Chairman and above all Secretary. After a long struggle we have managed to find two people who are willing to be proposed for election but there will still be at least three committee places to be filled. Come along and take part! Create a stir! Be pro-active and stop the Association dying from lack of interest!

Peter Williams

Your newsletter

The recent holiday season has generated two feature articles for this *Newsletter*; one from Prof. James Muckle and one from your Editor. James is much travelled and has an alert eye for interesting musical places and events so we are grateful for his contribution. Presently he is Vice-Chairman of the DDOA and will soon succeed Peter Williams in the hot seat as Chairman.

The next *Newsletter* will be published in **December** and will present the programme planned for 2011. The first newsletter for 2011 will be published in **January** and thereafter at two monthly intervals, namely March, May etc. DDOA Events alerts will be sent via email during the intervening months.

Editor

WANTED

News of events, places, people, stories, publications and so on. Also welcomed: photographs of interest to musicians and organ lovers. Please send your contribution to the Editor at DDOAnews@gmail.com.

When you are next in Kent..... An idea for an outing

by James Muckle

You have probably heard of Finchcocks. If not, it really is worthwhile noting the name and the location of this amazing museum of early keyboard instruments. Any keyboard player or music lover would have an absorbing afternoon in this eighteenth-century mansion which contains over a hundred early pianos, harpsichords, spinets, chamber organs, square pianos, and clavichords, about forty of which are in excellent playable condition. *And you are allowed - nay, encouraged - to play them.* Could you want more?

Finchcocks is near Goudhurst in Kent; Kentish lanes, with their high hedges, are far more disorienting than Derbyshire by-roads, but your satnav will get you there. I stayed at Lamberhurst, not far away. (Mrs Thatcher once had a house there: I wonder if she ever went to Finchcocks?) As I arrived at opening time, two o'clock, and paid my ten pounds (how can they do it for this price?) I announced my wish to 'have a go' on the historic pianos, was welcomed by Katrina, the wife of the man behind it all, Richard Burnett, sat down at an 1802 Broadwood¹ and tried some C. P. E. Bach. Mrs Burnett pursued me and said, 'Now try the Clementi - 1806 - you'll like that. And then go and try the Viennese pianos

upstairs'. I was turfed off the reproduction Mozart-period fortepiano when the first recital began at 14.45. It is policy *never* to open the house without the instruments being played in concert.

The house was open from 14.00 to 18.00; in that time two very informal recitals with talks, both lasting 75 minutes, took place. Mr Burnett and his young associate, Steven Devine - both of them superb professional musicians - played on a range of instruments. In the second, we heard some of the more sensational instruments: a 'travelling piano' perhaps 24 inches long used in people's coaches in the eighteenth century, and one with a percussion bang-bang, which proved entertaining when one of the audience played Mozart's Turkish rondo. Three of the staff (vocals, bongos and piano, not joking!) played and sang jazz on a French concert Erard of the 1860s of symphonic quality. I staggered away, bemused by the whole experience. Go, and enjoy it! But do check opening days and times before setting off.

Alas, it is just a bit too far for us to organize a Derby Organists' excursion. But if you are in the area - make a day of it!
James Muckle



Finchcocks Musical Museum

Goudhurst, Kent, TN17 1HH

tel: 01580 211702

www.finchcocks.co.uk

e-mail: info@finchcocks.co.uk

¹ The firm of Broadwood is not - as some think - defunct, but has moved to Finchcocks. It is splendid to know that the firm patronised by Haydn during his time in London - he had 'digs' opposite their premises and used to nip over to try out his compositions on their instruments - is still in operation.

Where is this organ?



Find out at the AGM on 23rd November!

He's a genuine organ builder!
What is he holding?



The Chairman's Evening: "A Family Affair"

Wednesday 6th October at
St James, Riddings. 7.30 pm

Our Chairman, Peter Williams, will gather together his talented family to present a varied programme which will include performances on flute, piano duet, 'cello, organ, soprano and countertenor with music by Fauré, Martin Dalby, Prokofiev, Bach, Alain, Flor Peeters, Monteverdi, Arthur Young and Dvorák. The performers will be:

Tom Williams - *Countertenor & 'Cello*

Beth Williams - *Flute & Soprano*

Margaret Williams - *Piano*

Peter Williams - *Organ & Piano*

The Grand Finale of the event will be refreshments, featuring the famous homemade cakes by Siann's mum.



Annual General Meeting

followed by an

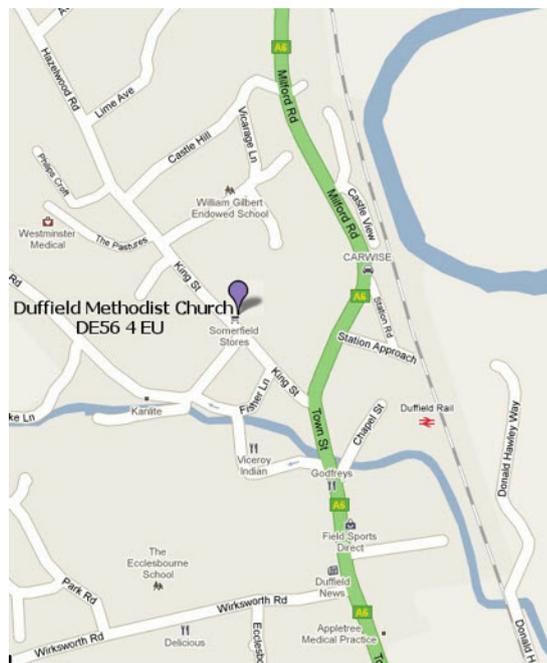
**Audio-visual Presentation:
"In the Footsteps of Bach and Handel"**

Tuesday 23rd November at
Duffield Methodist Church. 7.30 pm

Amongst the usual business, the AGM needs to appoint further members for the committee. Please see the Chairman's notes on page 4.

After the AGM, Laurence Rogers will show pictures and play recordings made during his visit to Leipzig and Halle, Germany, earlier this year. These include the organs of St Thomas, Leipzig, St Wenzel, Naumburg and the Handel organ in the Marktkirche, Halle. The article in this *Newsletter* gives a taste of what to expect, but the presentation will add sound, video and more photos.

Duffield Methodist Church is easily located in King Street, Duffield, just off the A6 road from Derby to Matlock.



E-MAIL

If you wish to receive the bi-monthly *Newsletter* as a pdf file via email, please forward your email address to DDOAnews@gmail.com.

Items of news or articles for the December edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 15th November**, either via e-mail: DDOAnews@gmail.com or by post: Dr. Laurence Rogers, 24 St. David's Crescent, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4SS. The Secretary, Mrs Siann Hurt may be reached via mail@derbyorganists.co.uk Please visit the DDOA Website www.derbyorganists.co.uk for information about Association activities, past editions of the newsletter, photo gallery and many special features of local interest.