

Derby & District Organists' Association

(Registered Charity No.510567)

Newsletter

Stops, Feet and Pipes



I have always thought that organists generally are a particularly intelligent lot: we read more staves than any other musician except a conductor; we multi-task with stop changes and pistons; we manage dynamic changes through a subtle and complex blending of stop colour and power, mechanical aids and keyboards; we use our feet to play bass notes, melodies and, for the very brave, chords or two melodies at the same time, and we watch the conductor through a driving mirror or camera – though I may be biased.

These abilities required of an organist are not likely to appeal to the faint-hearted, though they certainly appealed to David Pipe (above) who in September took up a new post at York Minster as Assistant to the Director of Music. David has, in many respects, followed a traditional path to his present appointment though the breadth of his experience so far is interesting.

Piano lessons began at the age of five as did his fascination with the organ at Redhill URC. He relates that each Sunday the Junior Church would file past the organ console where he was taken by the complexity of the instrument – stops, feet and pipes. When his parents asked if he could play something the organist encouraged him in a way that is

a model for all of us. The organist was a 'gifted amateur' who responded positively to the interest of a small boy: how many of us have asked to play an organ only to be rejected because of the possessive or over-protective attitude of the organist? As an introduction to public performance the organist arranged for David to play during the offertory, then to accompany a hymn, finally to accompany a whole service.

As a pupil at Reigate St. Mary's, David was fortunate to be surrounded by music. St Mary's is a choir school, one of the few in the country not attached to a cathedral, and whilst David was not a chorister there the choral and organ music were a significant influence. The choristers, under the direction of Charles Thompson, sang Matins twice a week and could claim an eclectic and sophisticated repertoire.

A move to Epsom College a year early brought a new breadth of experience and after a year David was awarded a Major Music Scholarship: "I became involved with everything – chapel choir, close harmony group, orchestra, organ and piano lessons, big band and the Scholar's Concert. I'm sure that there were expectations of the

scholars besides the annual Scholar's Concert, though I'm not really sure what they were because I wanted to take part in all of the activities.

The chapel organ was a three manual Makin on which I learned to accompany - though the pedals were so heavy you had to stamp on them! Pianists at the college were encouraged to try the organ."

Applications to Cambridge colleges were made a year early.

"I applied for several and was accepted at Downing College and awarded a scholarship but decided to defer going up for a year."

During my gap year I wanted to improve my playing and ability to interpret music so I applied to the Royal Academy and the Royal College of Music for a one year Organ Foundation Course. The audition at the Academy was with a panel of four judges, one of whom was James O'Donnell.

"My organ tutor for the year was David Titterington – having lessons with him was interesting! During my first lesson he told me that my pedal technique was shot - he had the ability to wither you in five well-chosen words, but if he said 'well done' you knew he meant it. Later, when I was studying for my FRCO at Cambridge, David helped me to prepare: I owe him a great deal. He is an incredibly well-rounded musician, not just an organist.

"The Academy students were encouraged to attend conducting lessons with Patrick Russill and we took it in turns to conduct – much more productive than conducting someone playing the piano!



Downing College, Cambridge

"During my year at the Academy I was Organ Scholar at All Saints, Margaret Street where I learned a great deal. They have an excellent, professional choir which I accompanied and also conducted. The liturgy at All Saints was rather different from that at Redhill URC – a bit of a surprise for someone with a non-conformist background but fascinating.

"Cambridge was fun. Although I had applied to other colleges I'm pleased to have been at Downing as I had the opportunity not only to do lot of playing but to run a choir – there are no music staff at Downing so the organ scholar is responsible for the chapel music.

"Downing has no choral scholars so you have to recruit people; because they're volunteers you can't be too harsh with them but they have to reach a certain standard. They were recognised as a good group by the end of my second year – it's nice to see a group begin to work together instinctively. You quickly learn to get the best out people by encouragement and example.

"My experience at the Academy and All Saints was invaluable and I learned just as much from my mistakes as the things that I did right. I also had the opportunity in my first year to help to organise an American tour for the choir to Woodstock; not *the* Woodstock - that would have produced some good headlines! We had a week in New York and then went up into the Adirondacks to give a series of concerts.

"Since then I've been back several times to do recitals in Vermont and most recently to Colorado where I gave a recital on the largest organ in the state, a huge Aeolian-Skinner in First Baptist Church, Denver. Not all of the organ was working and it was prone to cifer,

especially a large pedal mixture - I had to wedge the stop in with a pencil."

After Cambridge David went back to the Academy to do an M.Mus. and studied organ with Susan Landale. During that period he was Organ Scholar at Southwark Cathedral; he described the 61 stop Lewis organ there as particularly fine. This was followed by a short period at Guilford Cathedral as Temporary Assistant.

September 2008 saw a move to York Minster to a newly created post of Assistant to the Director of Music. The Director, Robert Sharpe, also started in September and so life is settling into a regular pattern which revolves around the daily practices of the two choirs and services.

"The day begins with two simultaneous rehearsals in the Camera Cantorum. There are two practice rooms, each with stalls; I takes the girls practice whilst Robert takes the boys. We can open screens to create one large room if necessary. John is now the organist and does most of the playing; my job is to fill in for either of them when necessary."

David has no preconceived ideas about the direction his career will take though conducting will have to be a significant part of his working life. Whilst he is modest about his organ playing his name is one to watch for.

I asked David what his thoughts were on encouraging people to take up the organ,

"The inherent difficulty is practice. Churches need to be more willing to open their doors to pupils and organists need to be less territorial. Grade V piano is a minimum requirement: in retrospect I might have waited until later before taking up the organ – the better pianist you are, the better organist you will make.

"Pianists do need an understanding that the organ has extra dimensions: extra co-ordination, stop management – the feet! Find a teacher and somewhere to practice. In some ways the organ can seem so much more complicated than the piano that some people will be put off, though once you're hooked the piano can seem very tame.

"There have been a number of initiatives: Learn the Organ Year with David Sanger; the St Giles International Organ School with Anne Marsden Thomas; Dan and the Magic Musician, a cartoon created by the Royal College of Organists; organ days at Oundle – I went to those and found them to be really good. They're all quite different in approach; St Giles is attracting a lot of retired people as well as younger ones. There's no quick fix, we have to keep working at it.

David and I concluded our day with a visit to the Minster organ. The chequered career of the instruments is colourful and interesting: the Dallam organ of 1634 is thought to have survived the depredations of Crowell's troops and may have formed part of the organs built by Green and Blyth and later by Ward in the first part of the nineteenth century.

After the fire of 1829 nothing survived of the organ and so a new instrument by Elliott and Hill was commissioned and installed by 1834; it was a tonal disaster. In order to fill the vast space of the minster they built an instrument which had heavy diapasons on the great and other ranks at 16 and 4 foot pitches with little upper work to develop the harmonics: one can only imagine that the sound was impenetrable and utterly useless; it was also, apparently, impossibly heavy to play.

(Continued on page 4.)

From the Treasurer

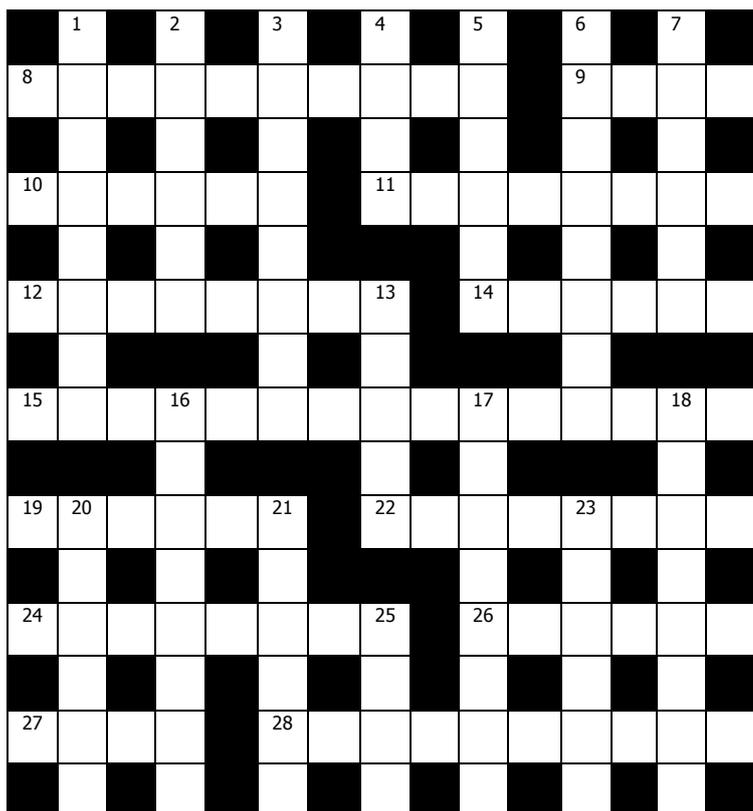
Following an increase in the cost of the Organists' Review, the subscription rates for 2009 which include the 'Review' are to be increased. The new rates are as follows:

Normal Rate:	£30.80 (incl. Organists' Review)	£10 (without Organists' Review – no change)
Senior Citizens:	£28.80 (incl. Organists' Review)	£ 8 (without Organists' Review – no change)
Students:	£17.20 (incl. Organists' Review)	Free (without Organists' Review – no change)

If you pay by Standing Order, please remember to increase it if necessary.

If you wish to change your subscription to the Organists' Review, please advise the treasurer by **1st January 2009**, otherwise your existing subscription will continue.

The treasurer would be grateful to receive payment as soon as possible, and certainly before the 31st March (so that we can claim back the maximum tax refund for any Gift-aided subscriptions).



Across

- 8 Maybe I shan't warm to 15's associate (6,4)
- 9 Way-out former partner takes the computers (4)
- 10 Set-to in which the Air Force attack (6)
- 11 27 Across. Please skewer sort of seasonal item (8,4)
- 12 Try one's joint of Lamb (8)
- 14 Ring the young bird, so to speak (6)
- 15 Composer in slum, having a wail (7,8)
- 19 Point Ebenezer to Brussels, perhaps (6)
- 22 Final collection at Remembrance service (4,4)
- 24 Too much talk about cake-making? (8)
- 26 1 Down. It's hardly believable – is blower model on the continent 15's work? (6,8)
- 27 See 11 Across
- 28 Key woman Pyne located gave birth to 15 (4,6)

Down

- 1 See 26 Across
- 2 Put up a tax to four-foot Italian (6)
- 3 Nice gala staged for Kauffmann (8)
- 4 See 17 Down
- 5 Cry of pain leads to old railway's proprietors (6)
- 6 For Ottorino the Latin thing gets an animal greeting (8)
- 7 Third level of the church (6)

- 13 Fibres the Spanish rub (5)
- 16 In the grey east it's not on to be 8's brother (8)
- 17 4 Down. At last she's thin – a smaller quantity anyway (4,4,4)
- 18 Composing semi-sane centenarian (8)
- 20 Close four-to-one behind, embraced by a friend (6)
- 21 Experiment, we hear, with publicity notes in 3's (6)
- 23 Excrescences from which to view cut-up (6)
- 25 Academics lost in Glasgow nave (4)

The solution will appear in the January *Newsletter*.

Queen Arrives at Ilkeston



I was passing through Ilkeston market place while the showmen were setting up for the Charter Fair on 18

October, when I heard a splendid performance of Handel's *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* on an organ. Stopping to listen carefully, it was clear that at least 98% of the notes were there, that the pipes were well in tune, the tempo very Handelian, and the overall effect thrilling. During the final bars (played Adagio) a glockenspiel was even brought into play.

The instrument in question was, of course, a fairground organ (made up primarily of flute pipes) with pride of place on a ride called the 'Brooklyn Cakewalk'. I complimented the

showman proprietor on the magnificent sound; he tried to tell me he had an organist banged up inside the thing with a keyboard, before admitting it was controlled by a computer - the notes, that is, not the sound - which was genuine pipe organ. The glockenspiel plates and hammers were prominently displayed above the pipes and could easily be seen joining in when wanted. It occurred to me to wonder: does any member of the Association have expert knowledge of the history of these fairground instruments?

James Muckle

Diary Dates

- 13th December *Messiah* Derby Cathedral Choir 7.30p.m.
- 17th December Carols by Candlelight – Derby Bach Choir at St John's, Bridge Street, Derby.
- 20th December Derby Choral Union Concert – Cathedral 7.30p.m.
- 17th January Annual DDOA Dinner – Grange Banqueting Suite, Littleover, 8.00 for 8.30p.m.
- 18th February Europe's Oldest Organs – Lecture given by Rodney Tomkins

Cont:

Elliott died in 1832 and we can only presume that he did not hear any of the new organ in situ. It is strange that Elliott, who learned his trade with the firm of organ builders created by Snetzler, should make such an error of judgement. Whilst there was a faction later in the nineteenth century who decried the inclusion of mixtures on a large instrument they were surely too late to have influenced Elliott?

William Hill was commissioned to build a new instrument in 1863 by EG Monk and it is that instrument which forms the basis of the current organ. Walker, and Harrison & Harrison, made various additions and alterations but the most recent rebuild in 1993 by Geoffrey Coffin looks back to the Hill instrument



of 1863 for the roots of its tonal integrity. There are now 84 speaking stops, two consoles and all of the modern playing aids recitalists have

come to expect. Several modifications were made to the upper work on the Great and Choir organs; seven new Pedal stops were added, and a Viole Celeste and 8' Bombarde (en chamade) were added to the Solo.

As we climbed through the case to the chancel console, David pointed out the pipes of the Tuba Mirabilis installed by Harrisons in 1916/1917; they are mounted horizontally behind the nave facade and speak directly down the nave . . . they have the appearance of a set of rocket launchers and are probably just as lethal at close quarters. I understand that they can part hair at half a mile.

The moveable console in the nave is an almost exact duplicate of the chancel console and is useful for big services in the nave. As the chancel console is tucked away under the chancel side of the case it is difficult to appreciate what sound actually is heard in the nave; the new Bombarde, for example, speaks into the chancel and does not have a great impact in the nave though to the player in the chancel it is a significant presence. The nave console clearly has its uses though it does not give the sense of intimate contact one experiences in the chancel and has been likened to a 'jelly on a string'.

David joins an illustrious list of assistants at the Minster: Jackson, Wicks, Perrin, Wilson Dixon, Coffin, Whiteley . . . I also spotted a certain PJ Williams.

My thanks to David for giving so generously of his time; we wish him well as he settles into his new post at York



and with his future career.

Further information about the history of the Minster organ can be found on the York Minster website, as can a specification of the present instrument: www.yorkminster.org

For any of you who visit York I can thoroughly recommend the Minster Refectory for lunch; it can be found adjacent to the east end, though it is not very well signed. The food is excellent. TW

Welcome to the new format *Newsletter* and, I believe, our first colour issue. Over the last four years readers will have become familiar with the style and dry wit of Ed Stowe, the retiring editor; Ed still intends to be active within the association and has been very helpful in passing on the baton. Our thanks go to Ed for the generous amount of time he devoted to the *Newsletter*.

Inevitably, with a new editor there will be changes to the content and presentation of the *Newsletter* though I hope that members will continue to find the content interesting and will continue to provide articles and reviews of our activities; those of you who have enjoyed Ed's crosswords in the past will not be disappointed.

A matter of concern to all of us is the number of people, particularly young people, taking up the organ. Members will be aware of the excellent project initiated by Stephen Johns to introduce the organ to young children; a report of their first two sessions at Repton appeared in the September *Newsletter* and also in *Organists' Review*.

One way in which this publication can help to encourage more players to take up the organ is through a broadening of the electronic circulation to schools, colleges, universities, and also the clergy. With that in mind I hope to introduce a series of interviews with young musicians who are in the early stages of their careers, the first of which appears in this edition.

If you know of someone who would like to receive a copy of the *Newsletter* electronically, or who would like to join the Association, please let the Secretary, Siann Hurt, know. Siann can be contacted at: hurt@one-name.org

Members who have articles for the *Newsletter* can contact me by e-mail: twes@fsmail.net

Alternatively, items can be posted to 44 Beeley Close, Allestree, Derby, DE22 2PX.

If you have not already visited the Association website, please have a look and recommend it to other organists you know who might not be members of the Association: www.derbyorganists.co.uk

A summary of the AGM will appear in the next issue.

Tony Westerman

Deadline for submission of articles or information for the next *Newsletter* will be Friday, 2nd January 2009.