

Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



The Spectacular Sight and Sounds of Weingarten

In Denis Littleton's presentation of the music of Justin Heinrich Knecht at St Werburgh's, Spondon, last November, he featured recordings made on the great organ of Weingarten Abbey, southern Germany. Among the many Baroque organs in Europe possessing flamboyant cases, this example is unique, with its separate divisions hanging like curtains around no less than six windows at the west end of the nave. This must be one of the most aesthetically pleasing harmonisations of windows with organ pipes. (See the photo on page 2.) The console, although hidden from the view of worshippers, is no less sumptuous in its ornamentation, ranging from the beautifully carved music rest, through the solid ivory stop knobs, to the richly patterned veneers on every available surface.

The mechanism of the organ is truly miraculous. Built long before the invention of Barker levers and tubular pneumatic actions, all the coupling between the console and the widely distributed divisions is entirely mechanical. Look at the facade photo on page two and

imagine the number of contorted lever mechanisms required, to say nothing of the conveyance of wind at suitable pressures to each soundboard.

The organ was built by Joseph Gabler (1700-1771). It took thirteen years to complete, having to face not only the obvious logistical challenges of its location, but also being beset by a succession of negotiations as a result of changes of abbot and shortages of money and skilled carpenters. By the time of its completion in 1750, Gabler had entered into four contracts and teetered on bankruptcy. It must have been a labour of love and irresistible challenge, which although bereft of financial reward,



DDOA Events 2015

2nd February (Monday) 7.30pm
Music for Lent and Easter presented by Robert Gower at St Helen's Church, Etwell. (See page 4.)

12th March (Thursday)
Visit to organs in Leicester: De Montfort Hall, and two other notable organs in the city. (Time to be confirmed)

16th April (Thursday) 2.00 pm
Visit organs in Burton-upon-Trent: Town Hall (hosted by Arthur Tipper BEM), St Paul's and St Modwen.

20th May (Wednesday) 7.30 pm
Annual Dinner at the Black Boy, Heage. Guest Speaker: Hugh Morris.

June Date to be confirmed
Outing to Liverpool; visit organs at Cathedral Lady Chapel, St James Mossley Hill and a local organ building works.

August
Date, time & venue to be confirmed.
Recital by young organists

16th September (Wednesday) 7.30pm
Celebrity Recital by David Liddle at Derby Cathedral.

October
Date, time & venue to be confirmed.
Educational Event

18th November (Wednesday) 7.15pm
AGM followed by a presentation arranged by James Muckle featuring stories from the DDOA Archives.

Concerts & Recitals

Saturday 14th February, 12 noon
St Andrew's Church, Swanwick
Lunchtime organ recital with Martyn Noble, formerly organ scholar at Liverpool and Southwark Cathedrals and now of HM Chapels Royal, St. James' Palace, London. Tickets are £4.50 including light buffet, available at the door or in advance by calling 01773 605291

Photos: The console of the 1750 Gabler organ at Weingarten Abbey, Germany



Carillon bells masquerading as grapes.

secured his lasting fame in the history of organ building.

Thought to be one of the very first detached consoles in Germany, it is interesting how this innovative raked design foreshadowed the fashion associated today with 19th century French organs. There are many fascinating details of this unique instrument, one of which is the design of carillon bells disguised as grapes hanging from carved vine foliage. The carillon is one of a number of idiosyncratic stops which include *Cuculus* (cuckoo), *Rossignol* (nightingale) and *Tympanum* (timpani). The four-manual organ has 63 stops and 6890 pipes. There is plenty of information about



Towers and bridges adorn the windows of the western gallery.

the instrument to be found on the Internet. DDOA readers reading the pdf version of this newsletter can explore these links: [Photos](#), [Gazetteer](#), [Restoration by Kuhn \(1983\)](#). I have a private video of Heinrich Hamm playing the

Tocatta in d minor (from memory) which I took during a personal visit to the console in 2009; I shall be happy to show it at a future DDOA meeting.

Laurence Rogers

Recent Event

Chairman's Evening

After the AGM in November, our immediate past Chairman, Denis Littleton, gave an audio-visual presentation on the music of two German composers, one from the north and the other from the south, who rarely feature in the repertoire of most English organists:

Johann Gottfried M \ddot{u} thel (1728-1788) was born in M \ddot{o} lln near L \ddot{u} beck in north Germany. As the son of an organist he took up studies at an early age and by the age of 19 was appointed as court organist to the local Duke in nearby Schwerin. In a curious reversal of Bach's youthful exploits, M \ddot{u} thel was given leave of absence in 1750 to travel to the deep south to study with Bach in Leipzig. Alas this was only for three months before the master died. M \ddot{u} thel is reputed to have been present at Bach's deathbed, and subsequently took over Bach's duties for nine weeks. Within a few years after returning to the Baltic region, he moved east to Riga where he soon enjoyed a reputation as a keyboard virtuoso, composer and conductor. He championed the fortepiano which

was rising in popularity at the time.

Denis gave us a taste of this virtuosity with *Fantasia in F*, recorded on the Ladegast organ of Schwerin Cathedral. The brilliant piece was heavily ornamented and bore witness to M \ddot{u} thel's undoubted virtuosity. A second recording, demonstrating a chorale prelude, was in trio form; a clever piece, worthy of his great teacher.

Justin Heinrich Knecht (1752-1817) belonged to the next generation and spent all his life in



Denis Littleton presiding over the AGM.

Biberach an der Riss, an important town in the state of Baden-W \ddot{u} rttemberg in the south of Germany. A prolific composer for theatre, church and concert hall, his organ music is well known among German organists of today. In contrast to Bach and M \ddot{u} thel, his compositional style might be described as generally 'populist'; the examples of a *Capriccio* and a *Rondo* chosen by Denis certainly demonstrated a lively, witty style probably borne of a great sense of humour. We heard recordings made on the spectacular Gabler organ at Weingarten Abbey, always a popular stop for organ tourism in southern Germany. Equipped with bells, birdsong and various other theatrical effects, this was just the right instrument to present Denis's last example of Knecht's legacy, a *Tone painting for Easter*, consisting of seven short movements depicting the events of Good Friday and Easter. Not his greatest work, but as a collection of sound effects, it was a good candidate for accompaniment to a silent movie rather than a religious service. Thus ended an informative and entertaining presentation for which we were very grateful to Denis.

Laurence Rogers

DDOA - Your Association

New Committee and Chairman

The AGM successfully elected the new chairman, John Maxwell-Jones and two new members to the committee, Geoff Howell and Tony Westerman. Retiring committee members, Peter Gould and James Muckle were thanked for their valuable and imaginative contributions to the DDOA in recent years. The full line-up of officers and committee for 2015 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 Westerman
Past Chairman: D Littleton

Our new Chairman writes:

At the AGM of our association in November I was elected your new Chair. Although a (very) familiar face to some of you, I am perhaps not well known to others so may I introduce myself? Originally from Plymouth, so brought up on excellent organs by Hele and Co., I moved to Derby in 1975 to begin a career as a Modern Languages teacher at Wilsthorpe School in Long Eaton. Intending only to stay three years, I managed to "escape" 37 years later when I retired. Within a few months of arriving in Derby I became Organist and Choirmaster at St Peter's Littleover where I stayed for 14 years. Feeling the need for a change, I deputed in other Derby churches before going on a rota at St Michael's Church, Holbrook. I soon became "the rota" and will celebrate my Silver Jubilee there next March. My connection with the DDOA also dates back to 1975; my step-father said he'd put me in touch with a young man in his office, Ed Stow! The rest, as they say, is history.

What am I hoping to achieve in my term of office? Recently our meetings have averaged an attendance of about 20 members. I would like to be meeting more of you there. Your committee has been widening the range and variety of meetings we have been organising and shall continue to do so in the next two seasons. Please,

please contact me if there's anything you feel we could organise that would be of particular interest.

John Maxwell-Jones



Members' News

Fond farewells

At the AGM we bade farewell to **Ed Stow** who retired earlier in 2014 and has now moved away to live in Stroud, Gloucestershire. Having contributed so much to the Derby musical scene through his playing and organ restoration activities, he leaves behind a wonderful legacy of accomplishment which will endure for years to come. His service to the DDOA will be greatly missed, supporting many events with practical help, expertise and wise counsel. However, being a life member of the Association, he will remain in touch through the *Newsletter* and we may also look forward to hearing from him from time to time. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

Canon Peter Gould has retired from the DDOA committee and will shortly retire as Director of Music at Derby Cathedral. Peter also leaves a great legacy which has been of great benefit to the Association and the cause of church music in the Derby Diocese. His final service at the Cathedral will be the celebration of the Epiphany on 6th January 2015.

And Congratulations to Ben Bloor

Peter's former organ pupil Ben Bloor graduated last summer from New College, Oxford with First Class Honours in Music. In November he was awarded the Silver Medal from the Worshipful Company of Musicians. He is now well settled in his new role as Organ Scholar at Westminster Cathedral.

Editor

Music and Worship – Some encouraging signs

In its magazine 'Church Music Quarterly', which I'm sure many members will have read, there is news of some initiatives to strengthen educational work, particularly with reference to clergy and their understanding of the role of music in worship. This is excellent news and we look forward to seeing how this might be worked out locally. We should be ready to get on board.

At the same time this welcome development highlights the need for Organists and Choir Leaders to gain more liturgical understanding. We have perhaps been far too willing to complain about developments in worship and reluctant to engage in dialogue. I recently had a very fruitful meeting with Canon Simon Taylor from the Cathedral. One of his responsibilities is Ordination and Post-ordination training in the Diocese of Derby. We are both concerned at the apparent lack of real engagement between many church musicians and their clergy when it comes to planning worship and he has generously offered to lead a session next year aimed at helping musicians better to understand liturgy and the framing of worship. I hope we can link with the local RSCM in this and that our membership will support.

And while we are on the subject – please do not forget that the Derbyshire RSCM offers training and support for the noble band of those, somewhat unfortunately, referred to as 'Reluctant Organists'. Many of our churches are struggling and this is a very worthwhile initiative aimed at helping the less confident. Please spread the word. In random conversations with clergy and church wardens I have become aware that far too few people seem to know about what is on offer. If you are interested let me know and I'll put you in touch.

Stephen Johns

Recruitment

Accompanying this issue, is a copy of our latest version of the recruitment leaflet. Please make use of it in persuading your friends to join the DDOA.



From the archives

Our thanks are to James Muckle, ever one with a keen eye on local music and musicians, past and present, for spotting this piece which appeared in the Ilkeston Herald last October. Thanks also to the author and Editor for permission to reproduce the article here.

James writes:

Hawley seems to have been an outstanding musician, and although he was mainly a composer and pianist (good enough to have impressed Grieg!) he was also an organist. I doubt if he was a member of our Association – he came back to Ilkeston only when ill, and our records don't show whether he belonged.

Stanley Hawley, FRAM (1867-1916)

MUSICIAN AND COMPOSER

Thanks to Ann Featherstone and to The Friends of Park Cemetery



Harry Stanley Hawley, known as "Stanley", was a pianist and composer, born on Gladstone Street in Ilkeston in 1867. His father was a butcher on South Street and died before Stanley's first birthday.

Stanley attended Derby Grammar School on a scholarship and at only 15 he became organist at the Independent Chapel in Pimlico, Ilkeston. A year later he won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music.

Two of his compositions, *The Bells* and *Riding through the broom* were performed at the "Proms" in 1895. When composer Edvard Grieg heard Hawley play his piano concerto at the Queen's Hall he is said to have declared that Hawley played it much better than him.

Stanley was elected Secretary of the Royal Philharmonic Society and did much to promote British Music, being later elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music. His portrait by Frank Mura hangs in the gallery there. In 1907 he played the organ at his mother's funeral service in St Mary's Church, Ilkeston.

While at the height of his powers in London, Stanley developed a blood clot on the brain. He was moved back

to Ilkeston where he died at his sister's house on Derby Road, aged only 49 on June 13th 1916.

He is buried in an unmarked grave at Ilkeston's Park Cemetery.

In the following month the Musical Review included an appreciation of Stanley:

As far as the musical profession, everyone in West London circles knew and loved him. Living in chambers close to West End concert halls, Mr. Stanley Hawley was able to put in appearances and to answer calls upon his time with all the willingness that so well became him.

He never spared himself to do a kind action. If he found a student or friend who specifically wanted to go to a concert, a ticket was at once produced. He never thought of himself when there was an opportunity open for his generosity. Nor was there any jealousy in his nature where fellow-musicians were concerned. Good humour and the desire to make life pleasant and to be of service were his ruling passions".

Forthcoming DDOA Meeting

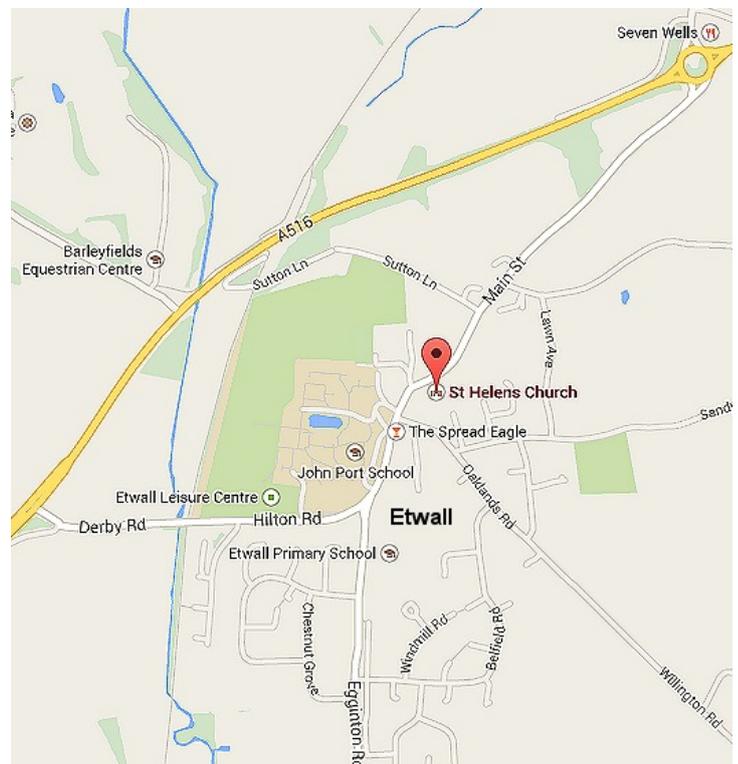
**2nd February 7.30 pm
at St Helen's Church, Etwall.**

**Music for Lent and Easter
- The Art of Arranging**

Presented by Robert Gower

We are very fortunate that Robert Gower, Organist of St Barnabas' Roman Catholic Cathedral in Nottingham has agreed to give us a presentation on the work of the arranger. Robert has had a varied career as writer, editor, arranger and performer. He is currently Chair of both the Gerald Finzi Trust and the Percy Whitlock Trust. He will feature most particularly his latest publication (by OUP) *An Album of Music for Lent and Easter*. He will have a stock of his publications, and possibly others, for sale at discounted prices so come armed with cash or a cheque book.

Located south west of Derby, Etwall is easily accessed via the A38 and A516 .



Items of news or articles for the March/April edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 16th February**, either via e-mail: 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 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.