

Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



Outing to Liverpool - A Great Day to Remember

This year's outing allowed us to hear and play three famous organs and visit an organ builder in Liverpool.

We began in the morning at the premises of David Wells Organ Builders Ltd where David gave us a comprehensive tour of the works, complete with a running commentary which excelled in fascinating detail. The firm has been based in an old church hall in Liverpool for the last 20 years, during which time it has built up a reputation for restoration and preservation rather than new instruments, though the firm does build new chamber organs, one of which was available to the twelve DDOA visitors to sample. Perhaps the most iconic product of the Wells company is the five-manual nave console in the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, which we were able to play after Evensong,

The thirteen staff working with David have an enviable range of skills which became clear to us as we viewed the current projects in the workshop, which included: the restoration of a water-damaged Choir chest from a large instrument; a two-manual Harrison & Harrison in medium term storage; a new chamber

organ under construction, and much of the pipework from Manchester Cathedral.

David's approach is traditional. Having trained with Willis in Liverpool before establishing his own firm, he is now passing on those skills to his grandson, Robbie, who has now been involved with the firm for fifteen years, having spent some of that time with H&H.

Perhaps the most engaging aspect of the tour was David's voicing demonstration, taking a 'raw' pipe from the metal shop and transforming it from a metal tube to a speaking pipe. The effects of wind pressure, adjustment of the foot and languid, 'nicking' to improve the speech of the pipe were all demonstrated with the care that one expects from a traditional craftsman. The 'feel' of the pipe as it sounded was David's guide as well as his innate sense of what was right in terms of sound.

Our thanks go to David and his staff for their warm welcome and hospitality and for giving up their precious free time to allow us to see behind the scenes and to appreciate what has to happen before we can sit and play.

DDOA Events 2015

16th September (Wednesday) 7.30pm
Celebrity Recital by David Aprahamian Liddle at Derby Cathedral. (See page 6.)

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

Friday 4th September, 7.30pm
Staunton Harold Church, LE65 1RW
Recital by Laurence Rogers on the historic 17th Century organ by Christian Smith. Free admission. Retiring collection and refreshments.

Sunday 6th September, 2.45pm
Albert Hall, Nottingham
Organ Recital by David Butterworth Bach, Jongen, Lemmens, Schütz & Cholley

Friday 18th - Sunday 20th September
OrganFest 2015, Birmingham

Friday: St Chad's Cathedral, 7.45pm
Concert by Birmingham Cathedral Choir

Saturday: Elgar Concert Hall, Birmingham University; RCO Forum 9.30am-5.00pm
Registration £39 including lunch.

Saturday: Recital by Daniel Bishop at Broadway United Reformed Church, Walsall, 7.45pm. Admission £5

Sunday: St Chad's Cathedral, 11.00am
Solemn Choral Mass

Sunday: Fentham Hall, Hampton-in-Arden, 3.30pm Cinema Organ Recital by Richard Hills. Admission £7, including tea.

See [OrganFest website](#) for full details.

IAO Event: 17th October, 10.00-5.15
Bristol Organ Day

Talks and recitals at St Mary Redcliffe, Lord Mayor's Chapel and Bristol Cathedral. Registration £18. Full details at website: www.Bristol-Organ-Day.com



David Wells transforms a metal tube into a speaking pipe.



Colin Porter introduces the organ at Mossley Hill.



The Willis organ at St Matthew & St James, Mossley Hill.

After lunch we assembled in the leafy suburb of Mossley Hill to see the 'Father' Willis organ at the church of St Matthew and St James, an impressive and grand edifice in dark red sandstone. We were greeted by the Organist and Director of Music, Colin Porter, who began by explaining that the surroundings were completely rural when the church was built in 1875. Sitting in a spacious loft and housed in a handsome case, the original 40-stop organ was installed when the church was first dedicated. It remained in service until 1937 when Henry Willis III rebuilt it in a raised position above the choir stalls, installed pneumatic action and provided it with a modern three-manual console. Although the church suffered bomb damage in 1940, mercifully the organ escaped unscathed. It was not restored until 1953 when the church was re-hallowed. The last major work was by Sid Reeves of Liverpool in 1981 when electro-pneumatic action was installed and a second detached console with two manuals and stop-tabs was added in the nave. During our visit the instrument was in good form. Colin demonstrated its comprehensive range of tones with *Exultemus* by Percy Whitlock, to be followed by playing members who explored its romantic potential, its profile for Bach and its voice for 20th Century repertoire. The fluework was bright, just as Father Willis intended. The mighty Tuba, playable from the Choir, Great and Pedal, was full-blooded and had tremendous presence. We are grateful to Colin for his warm welcome ("Come again any time you like!"). Although our next appointment at the cathedral

beckoned rather soon, some members took up his generous offer to linger on a little more to enjoy this beautiful instrument.

Leaving Mossley Hill it was somewhat of a dash to the Anglican Cathedral for Evensong. This occasion happened to coincide with a taster "Be a choirboy or choirgirl for a Day" event at the Cathedral, so following the choir in procession were two lines of about thirty children who appeared to be bemused by so many people staring at them. During the service they followed the music and joined in some of the items. After the service the Assistant organist, Daniel Bishop, descended from the loft, gave us a warm welcome and wasted no time in beckoning us to the nave console with the injunction "It's all yours until half-past four!". So volunteer players had plenty of

time to enjoy the thrill of playing the largest organ in England. Our Chairman led the field with *Elegy* by Thalben Ball with Daniel deftly assisting with registration. The grand crescendo on the penultimate page was a great moment to savour. Tony Westerman played *Toccata on 'Now the Green Blade Riseth'*, his own composition, which exploited a wide range of tone and dynamics. The final exposition of the cantus firmus with the mighty pedal reeds had all the glamour of a thoroughbred French toccata. Speaking of reeds, the choice of Laurence Rogers, *A Wedding Fanfare* by Arthur Bliss, used the unique *Trompette Militaire* stop, described by its builder David Wells as the 'loudest stop in Christendom' (on 50 inches pressure). Situated high in the Corona gallery half way down the nave, the aural delay for the player was frightening; the control of the tempo was like stirring treacle. Nevertheless the effect was stunning, particularly for people half-way down the nave. Gillian Chatto played *Prelude and Fugue in G minor* by Buxtehude; the mighty sound and acoustic was worthy of Buxtehude's Marienkirche in Lübeck. David Shooter gave us three verses of *Father in high heaven dwelling*; again the vast resources of the organ transformed a modest tune into an epic performance. Not neglecting Bach, another member played a chorale prelude *Liebster Jesu*, a gentler sound with some lovely quieter solo stops. During our performances the throng of visitors, fascinated by our console activity, insisted on



John Maxwell-Jones plays *Elegy* by Thalben-Ball.



David Shooter plays a hymn in truly grand style.



David Wells describes the background to the Lady Chapel console project.

photographing us and themselves ('selfies') but to our knowledge there were no requests for autographs! To round off the main organ experience, Daniel was persuaded to improvise on a hymn tune for us (*Wychbold*), chosen more or less at random from David Shooter's hymnbook. Daniel thrilled us with a varied tour of the organ's tonal resources, fully endorsing his formidable reputation as an improviser.

After exhilarating adventures on the main cathedral organ, we finally got round to the primary purpose of our visit, to see the newly restored and refurbished 1940 central space console, now installed in the Lady Chapel. David Wells rejoined us to give us some background explanation to the project which was funded by the Alan Dronsfield Trust. In 1974, during Noel Rawsthorne's time as Cathedral Organist, the Willis (1910) organ in the Lady

Chapel was augmented and altered tonally to offer a crisper sound, better suited to the Baroque repertoire compared with the main cathedral organ. In fact we discovered that this two-manual instrument with 29 speaking stops was extremely versatile, rendering French repertoire as effectively as Bach and serving well the cathedral choral tradition. Standing handsomely in its ornate case (by Giles Gilbert Scott) in the western gallery, the location is imposing but rather impractical for the accompaniment of choral services with the organist in the gallery and the choir in the eastern chancel. The addition of a second and mobile console solves this problem. Originally serving as the nave console, this console has been in storage since the installation of the new recital console for the main organ in 1989. Its refurbishment for use in the lady Chapel was completed by David Wells last year. A full account of the project by Professor Ian Tracey was published in Newsletter 44 (September 2014).

The day concluded with Daniel playing his latest composition *Reflections*, shortly to be published by *ChurchOrganWorld*. and described by one member as "achingly beautiful". We were greatly indebted to Daniel for being a genial and charming host at the Cathedral and sparing his time so generously.

Finally, many thanks to John Maxwell-Jones for organising a splendid outing and to Alan Dronsfield for facilitating valuable contacts. This was a great day out.

Tony Westerman & Laurence Rogers

Post Script - Alan Dronsfield adds:

Members of our Association who would like to hear Daniel Bishop in recital might like to know that he will be playing at Broadway United Reformed Church, Walsall, on Saturday, 19th September at 7.15pm

<http://www.organrecitals.com/1/recitals.php?organist=danbis>). This is part of Birmingham OrganFest 2015 and the admission charge is only £5.00. More details at <https://www.rco.org.uk/events.php?eventid=407>. I've asked Daniel if he'll play his piece *Reflections* again.



Daniel Bishop improvises on the tune *Wychbold*.



Gillian Chatto at the new console in the Lady Chapel



Visit to the basement blower room: The mighty organ needs a mighty wind supply.

Organ Pieces from which Children Might Find Inspiration - James Muckle

It is suggested that we should compile a list of ten works which might inspire children of primary and early secondary age to respond actively and emotionally to the music of the organ. Laurence Rogers has written a provocative article in *DDOA News* about this. The first proposal is that we might agree on some criteria for choosing these pieces.

As everyone will surely agree, we – not being children! – may not see it the way children do. This is so, even though we have all been children. However, we may not have had much experience of the organ in our childhood, and even if we did, we may not remember how we reacted in our early years. All children are different; not all respond in the same way, and often the response is surprising to parents and teachers, as the next story will illustrate.

Thirty years ago I was researching Soviet music education, at a time when the composer Dmitriy Kabalevsky had come out of retirement at 70 to go into schools and work out a fresh curriculum for class music - *class* music, note, not music for the gifted. Many members of a turgid profession which had been trained to drill children in the meaning of 'staccato' etc., and were rewarded if their pupils could parrot off approved answers to such questions, were suddenly faced with an aim for music education like this: 'Children should be inspired to seek musical experiences outside of school.' One might have expected criticism of such a radical departure, however, in the Kabalevsky period (he died in 1984), the columns of the educational press were full of letters from teachers who *did* approve of the new curriculum, and who were both delighted and astonished that the piece which Soviet children of late primary-early secondary age were greatly moved by was the *Lacrimosa* from Mozart's Requiem. Who would have thought it?

I tell this story simply to stress that we need to be open to such possibilities. Is there an *organ* piece as appealing and accessible to children as the *Lacrimosa*?

Criteria for inclusion and perhaps exclusion from our list.

LR asked us to consider such criteria. I offer a few possibilities, not necessarily in order of preference, but I have labelled them a,b,c, etc purely for convenience of cross referencing.

- a) The list should include some quiet, gentle, even tragic pieces. The temptation to go for exclusively shouty, thrilling blockbusters should be avoided. 'Wachet auf' by Bach has been suggested. Perhaps the *Marcietta* from Dubois's *Sept pieces* deserves consideration (tuneful, relaxed). As a possible equivalent to the *Lacrimosa*, what about the *Adagio* from Mendelssohn's first Sonata? It is popular, beautiful and well-known.
- b) The list should include some pieces that children might hear if they went to a parish or local church. The Mendelssohn under (a) meets this criterion too (as do others).
- c) We should set a strict limit on trumpet tunes. One is enough in a list of ten.
- d) We should not be too afraid of arrangements or borrowings from other repertoire; to have one in our list (but perhaps not more than one) would not be bad. True, it is *organ* music we are setting out to promote, but as LR says in his article, the Mendelssohn *Wedding March* is well known on the organ. So is the 'Entry of the Queen of Sheba', and the prelude *Wachet auf* is Bach's own arrangement of one of his own cantata movements. My recommendation here is Mozart K 356, the *Adagio* he wrote for glass harmonica. If we were to be truly pedantic and insist on nothing but authentic instrumentation we should never hear this delectable gem: how many glass harmonicas have you ever seen and heard?! I once heard Paul Badura Skoda, no slouch as a pianist, play it on a Steinway grand in a piano recital (in Hong Kong, of all places.) And it gives wonderful opportunities on the organ for adventurous quiet registration – and on a digital keyboard, wow! [Criteria a and b also]

- e) Of course, we must include virtuosic, blockbusting *ff* 'outgoing' voluntaries. I wonder if the Widor *Tocatta* is quite what children go for, but many *Finals* from organ symphonies by him and by Vierne and Gigout are catchy, rhythmic, tuneful and thrilling. Here we want something not too long drawn out. There is also Karg-Elert's *Nun danket alle Gott* which also meets criterion b. Bach's *Tocatta and Fugue in d minor* I heartily approve of. I cannot understand why the 'authorities' seem to prefer the Henry Wood (alias 'Klenovsky') or other orchestral arrangements. The lack of an organ also deprives this wonderful work of some of its punch and impact. The *Tocatta* on its own may well appeal to children without the fugue.

More actual works. LR has proposed several fine works in his article. Handel: *Organ concerto 'The cuckoo and the nightingale'*. His Opus 7 no 4, second movement is also very appealing, and there are others. Stanley – what a treasury! Wesley *Air and Gavotte* – yes, to be considered. Messaien *Transports de joie* – why not? [criterion e] If only *Dieu parmi nous* were shorter! Guillemant *Grand Choeur* op.18: Ed Stow's party piece, which he played so effectively at many a CATO day. As for living composers, what about Naji Hakim – can someone in DDOA make a recommendation? Dare I suggest Nigel Ogden, whose 'popular' pieces cross over into the 'classical' repertoire. We need good advice from DDOA members about choices here.

Consumer research. I wonder if DDOA members might be prepared to test the reaction of their own young children or grandchildren to some of these pieces? The musically-aware teachers who have accompanied children to our CATO days should also be approached for opinions; this too would be a way of keeping them 'on board' with the CATO project.

James Muckle

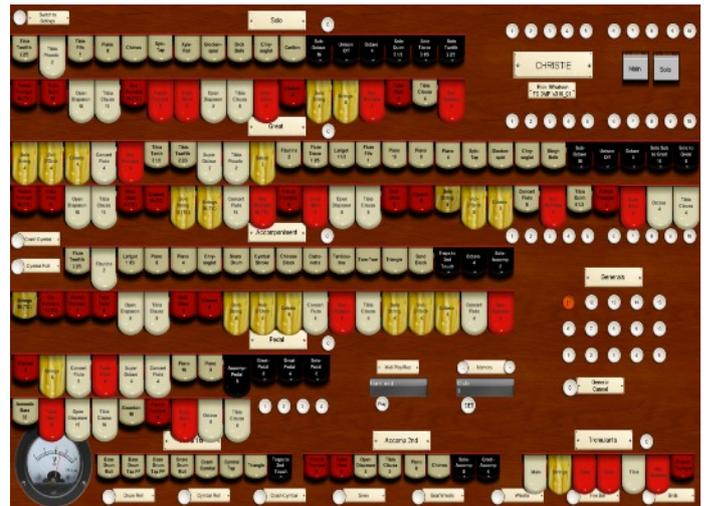
Postscript. It is not too late to send your own thoughts on this topic. Please see page 6. *Editor*

The jOrgan Virtual Organ - a Hauptwerk Alternative - Alan Dronsfield

In our last *Newsletter* I explained how you could convert a MIDI keyboard into a one manual desktop organ using the *GrandOrgue* live CD. I also explained how it was possible to convert a two or three manual (+ pedals) home organ with MIDI connections into a functioning virtual organ. It may be helpful to read again the previous article to reacquaint yourself with some of the technical issues introduced there.

A similar live CD produced by *jOrgan* gives you access to about 20 organs across the world and one harpsichord. Again they will be playable from a MIDI keyboard, but for maximum enjoyment you really want to connect the software to your home (MIDI) organ. Firstly download the relevant *jOrgan* file from <https://sites.google.com/site/savirtualorgans/jorgan-pup>¹ and save it to your desktop. It is named *jorganpup20116.rar* (a compressed file format) and is 617 MB in size. You will need to open it with a suitable program. "*RAR File Open Knife*"² is a free utility that will do the job for you, but see first if there's a program lurking within your version of Windows that will perform the extraction. Look for the *jorganpup20116.iso* file (622 MB) and burn it as a bootable disk image as you did for the *GrandOrgue* CD.

Open *Windows* and right click on an uncluttered portion of the desktop. Make a note of your screen resolution. Turn on your MIDI keyboard and connect it to a USB port on your computer. Insert the disk and boot from it using the F12 routine or whatever worked before. Switch on your computer speakers and wait the several minutes whilst your program loads into the computer's memory. The operating system will probe your video card resolution, if asked, and then show one or more possibilities. Choose the one closest to that you noted for Windows display. You will then be



The jOrgan Christie Theatre Organ Console (part)

Select some stops and attempt to play some notes from the virtual keyboard. If you don't hear any sound, proceed to *Customize Fluidsynth Sound* and increase the gain for all the manuals. To make your MIDI keyboard or organ manuals "talk" to the software, click on File (top left) → *Customise*. For a single manual⁵ scroll down the *Device* box and highlight the line with "USB" in it. To the right, choose "Channel 1". Keep clicking on Next, until you come to the screen labelled *Customize Fluidsynth Sound*. Here you can adjust the gain control for the manuals, if you need to. Too much gain will cause distortion on full/loud chords. Exit, draw a few stops and start playing !

You may have to tweak the system to minimise distortion, especially when playing big chords + associated pedal notes. You will have to alter the volume on your external amplifier, the program's volume control (reduce the number of yellow bars – see Note 3) and/or reduce the gain values in the *Customise* sequence.

Alan Dronsfield



The jOrgan/Puppy Linux Desktop

asked to select the "bit number". Usually it's best to choose the highest one on offer, typically 24 bit. The Puppy Linux desktop should appear and if all has gone well, you should be rewarded with a brief puppy-like bark from your speakers. If not, or if you later cannot get any sound from your system, please see Note 3.

Now left click on the puppy icon (bottom left) and choose *Multimedia* → *Media Tools* This will bring up a host of organ installations. Click to make your choice.⁴

Notes

1. This site gives many *jOrgan* additional tips and should be consulted if you need extra help
2. When downloading free programs, make sure you don't also download extra unwanted utilities. Given a choice, choose "custom" installation and create a restore point before starting work so that you can revert to the state your computer was in before attempting the downloading. It is also sensible to perform a full computer scan both for viruses and malware afterwards.
3. Right click on the speaker icon, bottom right and select *Full Window*. Make sure there are ticks in the Master, Headphone and Speaker boxes. Also ascertain that there are yellow bars filling about 70% of the rectangles associated with each. Then inspect the speaker icon again to check that an "x" is not superimposed, telling you it is muted. If the sound from an organ is still very quiet or non-existent, you may have to increase the gain associated with the instrument: see my earlier comment about *Customize Fluidsynth Sound*.

Continued on page 6.

4. About twenty virtual organs will be on offer, ranging from a tiny portable instrument to a huge cathedral-like one. Some have been sampled from actual installations and others, like the cathedral one, have been put together specially for *jOrgan*. The instruments also include a theatre and a Hammond organ, and a large two manual harpsichord.

5. For the several manuals on a home organ, repeat the process for each, and the pedals. Channel **1** for the Swell, **2** for the Great and **3** for the Pedals usually works. If not, the organ's handbook will have to be consulted.

John Scott

The organ world was shocked to hear the news of the sudden death of John Scott aged 59 on 12th August. Director of Music at St Thomas Church, New York, John was previously Organist at St Paul's Cathedral for 26 years. Last summer he gave a superb and memorable recital in the Derby Cathedral Summer Recital Series and will be greatly missed from the world recital scene.

Your Newsletter

Ten Pieces for Organ

I am grateful for James Muckle's thoughtful article on page 4, responding to my lead article in the *July Newsletter*. Thank you also to Margaret Eades and John Forster who have submitted full lists of suggestions. James has highlighted the challenge of seeking the likes and dislikes of children themselves, and, to this end, perhaps members with access to children or grandchildren could solicit authentic views on what is likely to appeal to youngsters? Please give the initiative some thought and send your suggestions; it is not too late – yet!

In the Autumn I shall convene a small working group to review all your suggestions, such that we could publish and promote a list before Christmas. Please send your ideas to DDOAnews@gmail.com or by post to the Editor's address at the bottom of this page.

Laurence Rogers, Editor

Photo: Demonstration sound board in the workshops of David Wells organ builders..

Members' News

Mrs Gillian Hunt

It is with sadness that we record the death of Gill Hunt on 1st August. With her late husband, John, Gill joined the Association in 1975. In recognition of their service over many years, both were made Life members in 2011. We offer condolences to their son and daughter and families.

Children and the Organ (CATO)

The CATO team is looking forward to two bookings in October: Bishop Lonsdale School at St Luke's, Derby and Egginton primary School.



Forthcoming DDOA Meeting

Celebrity Organ Recital by David Aprahamian Liddle Wednesday September 16th in Derby Cathedral at 7.30pm

David is an internationally known recitalist who also happens to be blind. His programme will include music by the great Victorian organists: Hollins, Lemare and Wolstenholme - whose 150th anniversaries all occur this year. He also includes some compositions of his own. **The bonus on this occasion** is that he has kindly agreed, as part of the programme, to explain how a blind musician operates with particular reference to managing unfamiliar organs and learning music; a unique opportunity for DDOA and friends.

Tickets £7 (£5 for DDOA members and members of other IAO affiliated Associations) Available in advance from FOULDS MUSIC SHOP, Irongate, Derby (01332 344842), the Cathedral Bookshop, the Hon Secretary Stephen Johns (01332 764792) and mail@derbyorganists.co.uk

PLEASE COME to this very special event and bring friends. It should be of interest well beyond the organ world.



Items of news or articles for the November/December edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 19th October**, 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.