

# Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

## Newsletter



*Crossing the Boundaries - Stephen Johns*

### Recent Event

#### February meeting - Mike Sole at Darley Abbey

In the 1920s that formidable champion of church musicians Harvey Grace wrote a guide for Parish Church Organists which many of you may know: the style suggests a somewhat 'peppery' retired army officer but it is full of wisdom. It was entitled, after Isaac Walton, 'The Compleat Organist'. In it Grace insisted on the necessity of 'getting out of the organ loft' and engaging in more varied musical activities. He had in mind, I seem to recall, playing string quartets as well as studying Greek history, but he would have been well pleased with Mike Sole and his voracious appetite for all kinds of music ranging from Hip Hop to Howells.

Mike is a larger than life enthusiast and a most engaging speaker. He improvised for us on his Roland Keyboard (hard driven Blues complete with grunts and Bill Evans's reflective 'Emily') and on the fine St Matthew's organ (2 extended pieces) exploring its different tone colours to great effect. His fluency and command of rhythm and harmony were awe inspiring and the ensuing music was

never aimless nor tepid, as is sadly sometimes the case with organ improvisers, but always vital, projected and expressive.

Equally absorbing was his amusing and very detailed account of his musical development which involved a range of teachers, some rigid and rule based, others flexible, humane and (to use that over-worked phrase) totally committed to the musical growth of their pupils. But that was not all: Mike clearly took charge of his own destiny, humming his own songs and trying them out on an primitive keyboard in the back of a car bound for the seaside. Not a minute to waste with this lad! And then there were the opportunities, eagerly grabbed, to work with other musicians in situations and styles that were challenging to say the least: and all the time learning and absorbing.

Listening to this, a young man by the name of Bach came to my mind, together with a tinge of regret that I and probably some others of us may not have been as brave as Mike. And, as if that were not enough, he starts learning to restore organs and becomes a regular church organist. A man of many talents and, behind the

### DDOA Events 2017

#### 11<sup>th</sup> March (Saturday) 2.00pm

Visit to the Nicholas Simons Collection of Mechanical Musical Instruments. Littleover, Derby. (see page 4)

#### April TBA

Educational event in Matlock

#### 16<sup>th</sup> May (Tuesday) 7.00 for 7.30pm

Annual Dinner, Horsley Lodge, Coxbench, Derby

#### 10<sup>th</sup> June (Saturday)

Visit to organs in Doncaster Minster and Selby Abbey.

#### 23<sup>rd</sup> September (Saturday afternoon)

Visit to organs in Newark and Halam (near Southwell)

#### 19<sup>th</sup> October (Thursday) 7.30pm

Manuals only seminar. Melbourne PC

#### 20<sup>th</sup> November (Monday) 7.15 pm

AGM

### Concerts & Recitals

#### Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April, 8.00pm

St John the Baptist Church, Staveley S43 3TN  
Nigel Gotteri (Dronfield Woodhouse)

#### Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 12.15pm

Freemason's Hall, Goldsmith St, Nottingham  
Lunchtime Recital by David Butterworth.  
Tickets: £3.50 07850 833890

#### Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 7.00pm

Derby Cathedral  
Silent Film - The Phantom of the Opera  
Accompanied by Donald MacKenzie (Organ)  
[www.derbylive.co.uk](http://www.derbylive.co.uk)

### Member's notice

The Vicar, Bishop Roger Jupp, and the Churchwardens of St Laurence's, Long Eaton, are looking for an organist to play for Sunday 9.30am Parish Mass and occasional evening services. Worship is modern Anglo-Catholic with traditional service music led by the organ. The congregation is steadily increasing and is willing to adopt new settings. Fees are negotiable. Ability to improvise and transpose an asset though not essential. Contact Bishop Roger either by email [rajuopp1@hotmail.com](mailto:rajuopp1@hotmail.com) or telephone 0115 973 5168. Commencement date by agreement, but hopefully after Easter or before if possible.

somewhat self-deprecating laid-back style, a determined hard worker who has no illusions about the real hard disciplines of music making, whatever the style.

A wonderful evening, something a bit different, and a very well supported one, not least by members of St Matthew's church. Our sincere thanks to Geoff and Vicky Howell and their helpers for welcoming us, doing the hard work of organ console and choir stall shifting as well as providing refreshments. And of course thanks to Mike. Other Organists' Associations should grab him – he's an inspiration.

*Stephen Johns*

## *Members' News*

### **Ed Stow - News from Stroud**

Our life member Ed Stow, since retiring from his Derby organ building business in 2014, has lived in Stroud, Gloucestershire. Many of us saw him back in Derby just before Christmas when he played for David Bott's funeral at Allestree. Unfortunately, more recently, Ed has reported that he is undergoing treatment for cancer. Conversations with Ed suggest that he is bearing this with fortitude, but the challenge must be great. We hope and pray that the treatment progresses successfully and that he returns to full health soon. As friends and admirers of his great contribution to the church music community in Derby, we send our best wishes.

### **Farewell to Derek Fisher**

*Derek writes:*

As I leave the Derby area to live in Beverley, East Yorkshire, I wish to thank the Association members for the joy I have experienced listening to the organ playing in so many places. When a coach was used for longer distance visits, I enjoyed navigating for the driver, Willis Garratt, using my geographical knowledge. My interest in organs stems from my brother David who is a qualified organist. This has been combined with my interest in church buildings which I have pursued while listening to your organ music.

## *Members' Letters*

*Since the report in the December Newsletter of the dismissal of our member Dr Tom Corfield as Assistant Organist at Derby Cathedral, the Editor has received many messages from members expressing their support for Tom. A selection is printed here.*

### **From Stephen Johns:**

*Tom's First Sunday*

In early March 1985 the Cathedral congregation eagerly awaited the arrival of their new Assistant Master of the Music. Peter Gould had deputed me to sit with Tom and guide him through the service. All went well on cue and towards the end I wondered what he would play as a final voluntary. On to the music desk went Bach's Great G minor Fugue, a tough proposition for anyone new to the Compton with its notorious delayed action. Needless to say it was just immaculate with a perfectly judged tempo that eliminated any chance of a mishap. I knew the Cathedral was in for a great time.

### **From Margaret Eades:**

I remember Tom when he first came to Derby over thirty years ago to be assistant to Peter Gould. He has served the Cathedral with the utmost dedication as a fine and musically sensitive organist and choir director throughout these years and his influence has spread to all the other activities he has participated in throughout the area.

I have appreciated his fine playing in organ recitals he has given in the summer cathedral series and his extraordinarily beautiful choral accompaniments to the cathedral choir's singing during services and concerts.

Tom is a true Christian gentleman, who not only believes the Christian faith, but practises what it teaches. I recently met someone connected with the Padley Centre in Derby, who told me that he spent his Saturdays at the centre helping the residents and washing dishes! Surely this sums up Tom's life - not only his giving of his fine talents to the service of the church, but his humility and compassion for the poor and underprivileged of society as well.

### **From Denis Littleton:**

I had some lessons with Tom a few years ago. I always found him able to find a positive comment, whatever imperfections I assailed his ears with.

When I was President of the Nottingham Society, Tom gave a superb recital of unusual music with his customary humorous introductions.

### **From Professor James Muckle:**

I first met Tom Corfield twelve years ago when he gave a more than excellent recital on the refurbished organ in the church where I play fairly regularly. We had a very brief conversation and established good (but inevitably) tenuous relations. More than three years later (we had had no contact since then) he came up to me and spontaneously greeted me by name. As a septuagenarian who has difficulty recalling the name and identity of people I met a week ago, I was highly impressed: Tom is a gentleman and relates sensitively to others.

As a 'rota' organist in a Nottingham suburban church, I make it only rarely to other churches, but I do revel in my odd visits to Derby Cathedral. Many a time I have gone up to Tom after the service and asked – or e-mailed him later – to discover what it was he played during his meticulously prepared and beautifully played voluntaries before the service. Sometimes they have been technically beyond me, but at other times they have helped me to extend my repertoire in ways I greatly value. For that, if for nothing else, I thank him.

### **From Peter Williams:**

From the outset one should say that Tom is one of the nicest people that one could hope to meet. Despite his prodigious gifts, his humility and generosity of spirit meant that he served two strong Directors of Music, firstly at Leeds Parish Church and then at Derby Cathedral, with uncomplaining support and excellent ability. I know also that Hugh Morris has felt his absence keenly.

As a musician he was a more than able accompanist and managed the ageing leviathan in the Cathedral with consummate ease. His interest in the Austrian composer Franz Schmidt was often reflected in his recital programmes which rarely had a note out of place.

I was fortunate to experience his generosity on a number of occasions. Whenever I was due to give a recital on the Compton and wished to work after hours in the Cathedral, Tom always made it possible, either by locking me in and then coming back to let me out, or by staying downstairs in the office. On several occasions he assisted me at the console and was always most encouraging.

I remember his humility – once when I was conducting and he was playing continuo he said to me: "Don't be afraid to tell me things. I am used to being shouted at!" As if one would ever want to shout at Tom.

He is a complete Christian, totally honest, always thinking the best of people, giving to those less fortunate and perhaps, dare I say it, a little unworldly. It is these qualities that have perhaps led to his present situation. The Church is not always the safest haven for such a soul.

### From Tony Westerman:

*Tony has regularly reported on recitals at Derby Cathedral and has sent these extracts from some of his past reviews:*

*August 2011*

"Tom Corfield's contribution to the evening was a delightful series of short sketches, newly-composed by himself for the evening, representing various members of the cathedral staff; musical clues hinted at the subjects and formed a delightful, stylish collection."

*August 2013*

"Tom Corfield's recitals always attract a large audience in Derby Cathedral and the recital on Wednesday was no exception. People are drawn each year by his meticulous attention to detail, always supported by superb musicianship, and by his ability to understand and present musical structures in an intelligent and appealing manner."

*August 2014*

"It is always a delight to hear a piece played well, most particularly if the mood of the piece is clearly established in the opening moments. ....The delicacy with which Dr Corfield registered the piece and his secure, fluid technique created a flawless performance, one which was much appreciated by the audience."

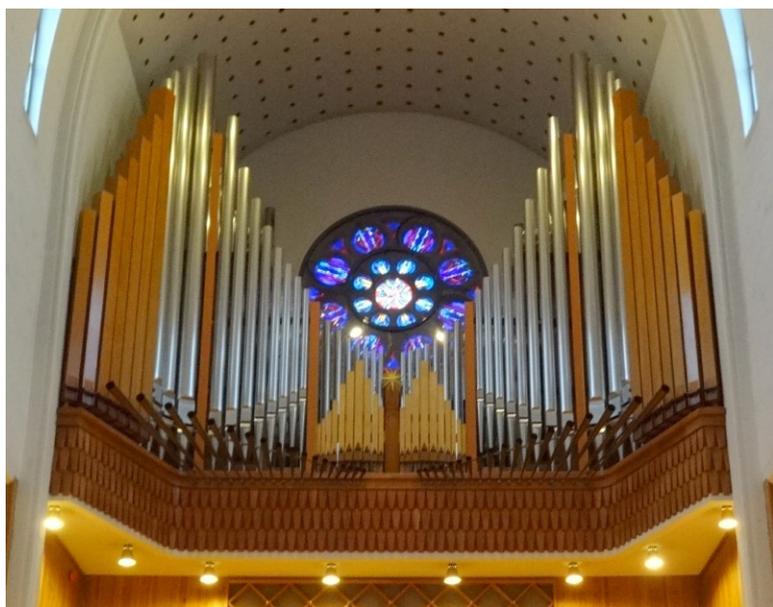
### Post script

At the time of writing, an explanation of the "breach of safeguarding procedures" which was so "serious" as to lead to Tom's dismissal has so far been unforthcoming from the Cathedral authorities. Neither has the Cathedral issued any public tribute or appreciation for the 31 years of his distinguished and loyal service to the Cathedral and the wider Derby community. Many messages from members harbour a sense of injustice and lack of fairness in this situation.

The Acting Dean, Revd Dr Sue Jones, has announced that an open meeting to explain the Cathedral's Safeguarding Policy in the light of the new Diocesan Policy will be held after the 10.45am Cathedral Eucharist on the 12<sup>th</sup> March. We might hope that this may shed light on the interface between the law and Christian love in action. But will it provide answers to allay fears that, in Tom's case, a legalistic process has been conducted in total disregard of his character, witnessed over many years by so many of our members and church musicians? Finally, can we hope for an expression of compassion for one of the Cathedral's most loyal servants?

*Laurence Rogers, Editor*

## *Arctic Harmony at Bodø Cathedral - Laurence Rogers*



The city of Bodø is just north of the Arctic Circle, and is the seat of the Bishop of Northern Norway. It was completely flattened during World War II and its cathedral along with the rest of the city, was rebuilt in the 1950s. In 2013 it acquired a new 4-manual 5600 pipe organ by Hermann Eule, incorporating earlier pipework from 1956. On a recent holiday I stumbled upon this amazing 'no-expenses-spared' instrument just at the moment the organist, Øyshin Joyer, turned

up to practise. What luck! He was delighted to demonstrate and gave my wife and me an impromptu performance of Mozart's *Fantasia in F minor K608*, completely from memory. This was a brilliant piece for showing both the full choruses and a range of soft flues. The state-of-the-art console in the gallery was duplicated by a second movable one in the chancel. The city has two other outstanding modern organs and sustains an annual [international organ festival](#).

## Have you met Jumble yet?

This is Jumble. She follows her master faithfully and enjoys attending organ recitals. She is fond of loud reeds and, like many of us, is impressed with a fine tuba stop, the sound of which necessitates standing up squarely and having a good wriggle. Being immaculately behaved she never barks when the music gets loud, even though it may say 'Bach' on the programme. Also, like all devoted organ fans, she likes a good sniff around the console after a recital and if she can get herself in a photograph with the organist, that's a real bonus. Pedalboards are a special source of curiosity. Being nearer to her eye level than manuals, they are ideally placed for close observation of pedal technique. She is a bit daunted when the organist uses heels to press the pedals, and feels that she has a greater affinity with a toes-only technique. Given half a chance she would love to try out a paws-only method, all four of course.



The other year when the blind organist David Liddle gave a recital at Derby Cathedral she was a bit disappointed that the

evening performance was after her bedtime and was slightly envious of 'Zak', David's companion, who was allowed to stay up for that one and many other evening recitals that he gives around the country.

Being a fan of the organist Paul Hale, attending his final recital before retirement at Southwell Minster last year was an absolute must. Unfortunately it was reported that Jumble fell asleep during the recital. It is difficult to pin down the precise reason for this; it may have been Healey Willan's *Passacaglia* that went on rather a lot, or perhaps she may have felt emotionally overcome by the affection shown by the soprano soloist earlier in the afternoon. Speaking of affection, she enjoys her personal popularity when she meets children and feels that it is sad that she encounters so few young people at organ recitals. If she could speak, she would love to tell them how great the music is. Especially Bach!

Laurence Rogers

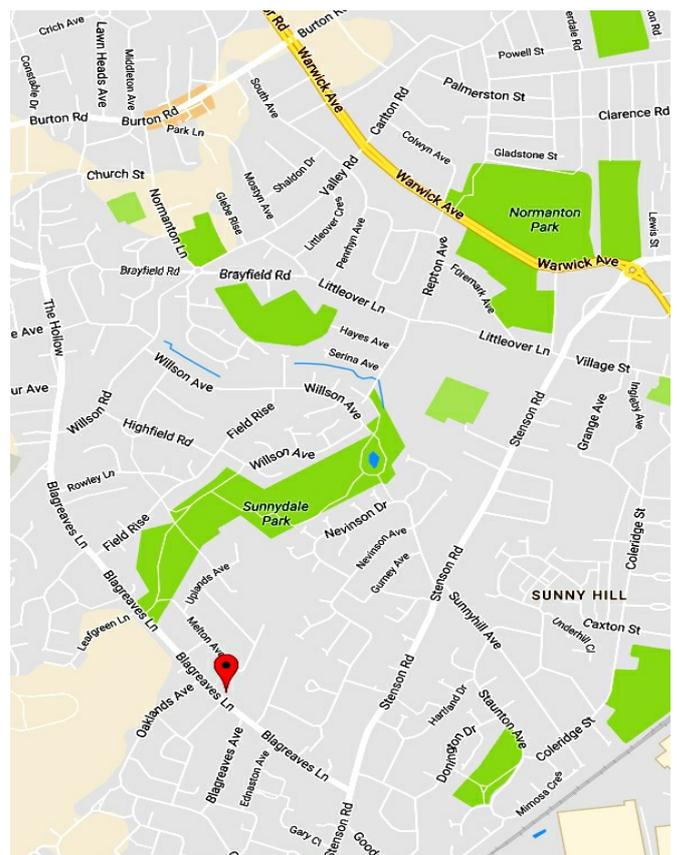
### *Forthcoming DDOA Meeting*

**11<sup>th</sup> March 2.00 pm**  
**at Blagreaves Hall, 173 Blagreaves Lane**  
**Littleover, Derby DE23 1PW**

#### **The Nicholas Simons Collection of Mechanical Musical Instruments**

We are invited to the house of Nicholas Simons to enjoy a tour of his amazing collection of musical instruments. As a mechanical engineer, Nicholas's interest in anything mechanical was never in doubt, and as an amateur musician, any mechanical device capable of making music was an added attraction. Over the years the result is that he has amassed a veritable collection of musical instruments: barrel organs, spinets, cafe dance organ, a Black Forest street organ, pianola, nickelodeon, violins, banjos etc. Just in case you might become weary of music, there are also some vintage cars to admire. We shall meet at 2 pm and will finish with a cup of tea and biscuits at tea-time.

Blagreaves Lane is near the south west section of Derby Ring Road - Warwick Avenue - south of Littleover town centre.



Items of news or articles for the May/June edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April**, 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, Andy Storer, 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.