

# Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

## Newsletter



### DDOA Outing to Church Organ World

I can remember a time when the mention of electronic organs was a taboo topic amongst organists! As a young man I was among many that rejected the synthetic sound and the idea that it could ever provide an acceptable alternative to that of real pipes fed with wind. Clearly much has changed during recent decades with the vast advances that have come with digital technology. I sense that attitudes amongst organists have changed also, many of us having discovered affordable machines for practising at home, although some have been embarrassed to admit to ownership. The Association visit to [Church Organ World](#) in Shaw, Lancashire, at the end of September, provided an ideal opportunity to appraise the current state of the art. Sadly only a small band of five of us took up the opportunity, but the visit turned

out to truly transform our understanding of the industry and to appreciate its potential which arguably includes the promotion of pipe organs.

We were warmly welcomed to the smart and spacious premises of Makin Organs by Dr Keith Harrington, Managing Director. He was soon joined by colleague Mark Johnson, and in the pair of them we soon discovered a passion, love and knowledge of *pipe* organs! From all our conversations it became abundantly clear that they admired the pipe organ sound and they could wax lyrical about distinctive qualities of Willis, Hill, Cavali -Coll, Schnitger and so on. Perhaps this shouldn't have come as a revelation, but part of the rationale for their business sought to promote and broaden access to

### DDOA Events 2018

**19th November (Monday) 7.30 pm**  
AGM followed at 8.15 pm by 'Where it all began' hosted by Margaret Eades. (See p.8)

### DDOA Events 2019

**4th February (Monday) 7.30 pm**  
St Matthew's Fellowship Room, Darley Abbey. 'Women and the Organ' a talk by Margaret Eades illustrated with video and sound recordings.

#### Other events planned for 2019

Improvisation by Nigel Allcoat  
Visit to a bell foundry  
Visits to organs in Melton Mowbray, Lincoln and Oxford.

### Concerts & Recitals

**Saturday 10th November, 7.30pm**

Derby Cathedral  
Derby Choral Union - Nelson Mass

**Saturday 24th November, 7.00pm**

Derby Cathedral  
Derby Bach Choir - Christmas Oratorio

**Saturday 8th December, 7.30pm**

Borrowash Methodist Church  
Derwent Singers - Carol concert

**Thurs 13th December, 7.30pm**

Christ Church, Belper DE56 1BA  
Derwent Singers - Carol concert

**Saturday 15th December, 7.30pm**

St John the Evangelist Church, Derby  
Derby Bach Choir - Christmas Brass & Voices

**Saturday 15th December, 7.30pm**

Derby Cathedral  
Derby Choral Union - Wassail! Carols

**Monday 17th December, 7.30pm**

St John the Evangelist Church, Derby  
Sitwell Singers - Carols, Songs and Readings



Denis Littleton shows how Pachelbel sounds on the Makin organ at Holy Trinity, Shaw

Main photo: Dr Keith Harrington demonstrates the Johannes 'LIVE' organ.



The Johannus ONE keyboard, demonstrated by Dr Keith Harrington.



pipe organs. This is less contradictory than it may sound. For all of their products, sound production is based on the digital sampling of the sound from real organ pipes, and they appear to be constantly refining their sampling techniques to be as faithful as possible to the original sound. Makins explain that their technique records samples for every single pipe in a given rank, unlike several other brands which only record one or two samples per octave and use interpolation for the remaining notes. Further, for each pipe, they obtain a 'near' sample and a 'rear' sample, the latter being recorded from a more remote position to capture some of the reverberation in the building. To a great extent this mirrors the *Hauptwerk* options of 'spacious' and 'dry' acoustic in sample sets for that computer-based system.

Church Organ World is a union between Makin, Copeman Hart, Johannus and Rodgers Organs and their Shaw premises contained examples of all four brands. After a brief presentation explaining the origins of the union and the specialities of the three brands, Keith Harrington conducted a tour of the 20 instruments in the

showroom beginning with one of the newest Johannus products, a small portable keyboard called ONE. At first sight it resembled the ubiquitous Yamaha keyboard but on closer inspection it had a 16, 8, 4, 2 specification cleverly organised to offer two manuals and pedals functionality, and a much more authentic sound than the single 'church organ' voice on a typical electronic keyboard. The stops could be programmed with a choice of voicing (English, French, German, American) and a choice of temperaments (Equal, Vallotti, Young, Werckmeister etc.). There were also optional piano and harpsichord voices. Although lacking a pedalboard, this was a serious instrument, useful for practice or as a continuo instrument. Its portability made it ideal for transporting to different venues. Costing £2000, it is reported to be a hot seller.

The market for home practice organs has created an important part of the digital organ business and our tour of the showroom indicated a wide choice of models to suit a range of pockets. With the exception of the simplest one-manual and pedals model, all models in this range were presented as tasteful pieces of furniture finished with oak veneer in

a choice of light or dark colours. To facilitate relocation, larger models were built in three sections, upper and lower console plus detachable pedalboard, each of manageable weight. The audio systems typically contained seven loudspeakers, presumably each specialising on a different part of the sound spectrum in order to make the sound as natural as possible. Top of the home range was the Johannus 'Live' model, notably different in shape, incorporating a more sophisticated audio system (see main photo on page 1). The specification of this instrument was selectable, emulating specific organs in Europe. Up to nine instruments were available, in each case the choice determined the sound set and the stop knob labels which consisted of liquid crystal displays. Thus you could choose to play a Silbermann from Dresden, a Schnitger from Groningen, a Willis from Liverpool, a Cavallé-Coll from Paris and so on. All this without travelling outside the comfort of your own sitting room! I may dare to compare this flexibility with the *Hauptwerk* system but here presented with the look and feel of a mechanical instrument.

Our tour of the showroom continued with a number of Makin instruments of various sizes designed for churches or school halls etc. Most models offered tab stop or draw stop options, the latter being a bit more expensive. The consoles lacked internal



The spacious showroom is frequently used for concerts.



'Electronic paper' stop labels.

speakers, being designed for public space amplifiers, but we were later able to try all of them out through headphones. The largest instrument on display, with four manuals, was regularly used for Saturday concerts in the showroom. Ian Tracey, the firm's Tonal Director, was due to give a recital a week after our visit. The final instruments on display were a compact continuo organ with an 8, 4, 2 spec and delightful intimate tone, and a three-manual American instrument by Rodgers. Personally, I found it difficult to identify a distinctive American character to the tone, compared with the other brands, but the specification, with for example strings on the Great and an array of couplers, exemplifies American traditions rather than those of Britain.

After being entertained to a buffet lunch we took a short walk

to the neighbouring Holy Trinity Church to hear and try for ourselves the two-manual Makin installation in a realistic context. (Photo, page 1) Within the spacious acoustic, the sound was impressive; full organ tone was convincing and solo stops, such as the clarinet, were very attractive.

On return to the Makin premises, some of us continued the sound odyssey on the available instruments, some perused the large collection of sheet organ music whilst two of us availed ourselves of the opportunity of fitting and purchasing *Organmaster* shoes. (Since returning home, my pair is a vast improvement on my previous favourite pair of organ shoes. I thoroughly recommend them!)

Finally a few words about the potential of digital organs to promote a broader awareness of organs and organ music in general, and, perhaps more importantly, amongst young

people: I think we must put aside snootiness that these instruments are not the 'real thing' and acknowledge that the technology has developed to give a very realistic taste of a pipe organ. Their low cost and compactness make them a realistic investment for home practice or school. After the demise of so many pipe organs in school halls, perhaps schools in particular should be encouraged to take this opportunity popularise the organ amongst youngsters and nurture a hunger for the 'real thing'. Can the RCO or IAO take a lead here? Staff at Church Organ World would love to host events to interest young people and school groups, but responses to such invitations have sadly been muted so far.

For participating Association members, this was another splendid day out; we are very grateful to our hosts for their warm hospitality and generous weekend time.

Laurence Rogers

## Recent Events

### Tom Corfield Recital at Derby Cathedral 29<sup>th</sup> August

In the last couple of years Tom has played at many concerts in the Derby area and has given recitals to capacity audiences in a variety of venues. It was therefore no surprise that, after his conspicuous absence from Derby Cathedral during the same period, his many supporters and friends flocked to the Cathedral to a hastily organised recital given by Tom at the end of August. Since so many DDOA members were in attendance, this report seems hardly necessary, however such is our esteem for Tom, it is essential that the event is recorded in this *Newsletter*. And what an event it was! The audience, approaching 400 people, greeted Tom with a standing ovation before he even started playing. What then followed was quintessential Corfield; a connoisseur's programme with self-effacing scholarly introductions and immaculate playing.

Tom introduced his programme as "a collection of some of his favourite pieces". Opening with *Psalm Prelude Op.32, No.1* by Herbert Howells made a poignant beginning; the soft entry, those evocative harmonies gradually leading to a turbulent emotional

outburst, but then subsiding to a peaceful ending, spoke so much. It was difficult to escape the feeling that this meditation on the verse of Psalm 34: '*Lo the poor crieth and the Lord heareth him: Yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles*', had very special meaning on this occasion.

Progressing to Messiaen's *Joie et clarté des Corps Glorieux*, Tom likened this piece to "dancing in heaven". Demanding much deft fingerwork, the repeating rhythmic chordal theme alternated with an array of other-worldly wandering motifs with sounds crafted from a tonal palette which Tom has developed and honed on the Cathedral organ over many years.

Coming back down to earth, we were then treated with one of the great treasures of organ literature, *Choral No.2 in B minor* by César Franck. Composed during the last months of his life, this mature work employed passacaglia and chorale themes, woven into a complex texture of contrasting moods. It called for a mastery of registration which Tom fulfilled amply.

For his Bach offering Tom chose the *Prelude and Fugue in A major*. This tuneful prelude followed by sublime counterpoint in the fugue was sheer delight. As a contrast to the great pleno style of many of Bach's works, Tom's sparkling registration gave this piece a delicate beauty, befitting his description of it as "taking you on a walk through a garden".

Again eschewing the grand gesture style, Tom's choice from the Vierne repertoire, *Scherzetto*, was a nimble frolic, skipping along effortlessly. Tom recalled how Vierne famously died whilst giving an organ recital; mercifully, history was not repeated on this occasion!

The joyful *Fanfare* by Percy Whitlock, excepting the quieter middle section, was perhaps the loudest piece in the programme. Whitlock's characteristically rich harmonies, interspersed with prominent declarative passages for the Tuba stop, evoked a strong spirit of valediction.

Finally we heard Francis Jackson's *Prelude on 'Repton'*, inspired by the famous hymn tune by Hubert Parry. This piece, one of three hymn preludes commissioned by David Johnson, was premiered by the composer in Derby Cathedral in 2005 and Tom reminisced how moving that occasion was. In Tom's own hands, this once again created a moving occasion of poignant humility, a quiet and fitting end to the programme. After a respectful pause, the emotionally charged atmosphere erupted in another standing ovation. To further applause, Tom was joined by his wife, Rosemary, who had turned the pages, but more importantly has stood steadfastly by Tom during his recent troubled months. (Editor's comment on page 5.)

Laurence Rogers

## Recent Events

### The 'Repton' Man - Sir Hubert Parry

Hubert Parry's most famous tune is *Jerusalem*, perhaps closely followed by *Repton*, but apart from those and *Laudate Dominum*, our hymnbooks contain very few of his tunes. It was fascinating to discover from Stephen Johns and Tom Corfield in their talk to the Association in October, how reluctant was Parry in composing music for organised religion. As a deeply thoughtful and principled man, he chose his commissions carefully, generally preferring ethical, rather than religious, subjects.

In Stephen and Tom, our event was blessed with two great story tellers, each inimitable in their distinctive styles. Interspersed with CD extracts, organ pieces and choral renderings by an ad hoc choir, we discovered the qualities that justified the description of Parry as a "towering figure in Victorian music making, who, together with Charles Stanford, was responsible for a new vitality in English music". Although in England church music flourished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the symphonic music scene was dominated by Austro-German composers. Parry, along with Stanford and later Elgar, studied in Europe, acquired a cultural affinity there, and an environment where their own music gained popularity. Parry was a great admirer of Bach, Mendelssohn and Brahms but he eschewed the 'licentious' tonality sometimes employed by Wagner and others. For Parry, diatonicism was wholesome and worthy of English tradition. We heard three examples of Parry's orchestral music, all of which measure up to the sophistication and quality of more famous continental composers of the period:

1. *5<sup>th</sup> Symphony 1<sup>st</sup> movt 'Stress'* – "one can smell Brahms, but Parry does it his way"
2. *5<sup>th</sup> Symphony 2<sup>nd</sup> movt 'Love'* "smells of Rachmaninov, how the melody slowly unwinds."
3. *English Suite 1<sup>st</sup> movt* "A bracing outdoor style - no nonsense English - lots of counterpoint"

(quotations from Stephen)

It is a shame that these days so much of the British concert scene and media have such a selective focus on 'famous' composers. (How many times does one hear Vivaldi on the radio every day of the week?) Stephen concluded:

"If you only listen to the 'famous' composers, you miss the background musical culture of Victorian times which was truly international in stature."

Turning to choral music, Tom introduced *Blest Pair of Sirens*, a setting of Milton's poem and an example of Parry's 'grand' style. Composed at the behest of Stanford and London Bach Choir, its immense success led to many commissions by festival committees up and down the country. Parry resisted popular requests for oratorio, but in the case of the 1888 Birmingham Festival he caved in and composed *Judith*. Parry wrote the libretto and in it emphasised philosophical aspects of the subject. The title character is the heroine in a story from the Apocrypha; Since their return from exile in Egypt, the Israelites have turned to idolatry and child sacrifice. Much of the oratorio has been forgotten\*, except for



Stephen Johns



Tom Corfield

one tune, rescued after Parry's death by the music master of Repton School who married it with Whittier's words 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind'. The original is a ballad 'Long since in Egypt's plenteous land' sung by the queen to her children destined for slaughter. This beautiful piece was then sung by a quartet led by Frankie Storer.

In his last decade, Parry was deeply troubled, tormented by the war against the country of his deepest cultural affinity, and the danger to some of his most gifted students. From this period came the six *Songs of Farewell*. Tom introduced the first of these *My soul there is a country*, explaining its subtlety; the startling tonality of its opening and its recurrent upbeat motif unifying the whole – clearly a work of maturity. Under Stephen's direction, the choir then sang this piece.

After an interval with refreshments, Tom introduced Parry's organ works which were mainly composed in his last decade and occupy only a small part of his total compositional output. The two sets of *Chorale Preludes*, totalling fourteen in number arose from a promise to Parry's sailing companion, Charles Harford Lloyd, then Precentor of Eton College. Tom described three main sources of Parry's inspiration:

1. His scholarship and knowledge of Bach
2. His editorship of Hymns A & M 1904 edition
3. His love of the rich harmonies of Brahms

Tom illustrated each of these influences by performing the preludes on *Rockingham*, *St Anne* and *Martyrdom*. These are all 'top drawer' works containing poetry and inwardness, blending techniques and rich Brahmsian harmony. Tom summed up:

"The Chorale Preludes were pioneering works which set a standard by which all subsequent hymn preludes should be judged. There is nothing routine or formulaic about them. Each is a carefully thought-out response to the melody and the words, and no two are alike."

The evening concluded with a performance by the choir of the final section of *Blest Pair of Sirens*. A thrilling end to a splendid event, with a full church, clearly the best attended of the season. Thanks to John Gratton, Geoff Howell and friends at St Matthew's for their arrangements and the smooth running of the evening.

Laurence Rogers

\* A rare performance of *Judith* is scheduled at the [Royal Festival Hall](#) on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019.

## Editorial Comment

Tom Corfield's recital at Derby Cathedral in August was remarkable in several ways. First, the fact that it happened at all, after twenty-one months of complete silence on the part of the Cathedral, about the circumstance of Tom's sudden dismissal as Assistant Organist in November 2016. During that period all the public manifestations of the Cathedral behaved as if he had never existed. Second, the hurried arrangement of the event tagged on to the end of the Summer recital series came as a total but welcome surprise to Tom's many friends and supporters. The fact that they turned out in such a large number at short notice was heart-warming indeed and a clear public affirmation of the strength of feeling that his predicament has generated. No more evidence of this was needed after two standing ovations, before and after the recital. This was in huge contrast with the total absence of any acknowledgement of his previous service to the Cathedral in the introduction or in the recital programme notes. Maybe this omission was part of an unresolved legal protocol over the case, but silence and secrecy have bedevilled the case from its inception.

Back in 2016, it was over three weeks after the dismissal before we learned from a single statement by the Cathedral Chapter that

dismissal was due to "a serious breach of safeguarding procedures". It was unfortunate that the appeal process created the intervening vacuum of explanation, but for the accused it must have been a cruel experience which one would not expect within a Christian institution. Then the discovery that thirty-one years of unblemished and exemplary service were apparently overturned by an alleged failure to observe procedures, was difficult to believe and seemed wholly disproportionate. Where was Christian charity? The fair response to such injustice was for Tom to initiate legal proceedings for unfair dismissal, but it is well known that the process became obfuscated by the accusers' lawyers and the months rolled on. With new leadership at the Cathedral this year an opportunity for a fresh approach has been negotiated and Tom, Christian gentleman that he is, withdrew from the legal employment tribunal process. Beginning with his recital, he now looks forward to a period of healing. Unfortunately we still wait for an indication of repentance by the safeguarding advisors and officers who must be aware that the affair has left a dreadful stain on the reputation of the Cathedral, putting into jeopardy the sincere efforts of its many servants and supporters. We also wait for a worthy celebration in the Cathedral of Tom's outstanding record of

faithful service to the Cathedral; the duration of his partnership as assistant to Peter Gould is unprecedented at any other cathedral.

With all the attention that the Tom Corfield case has drawn, the safeguarding procedures of the Diocese have begun to be questioned by many people. For Tom it appears that the accuser and judge are one of the same body. Where is the accountability here? Safeguarding policies are necessary and well-intentioned, but their application in some recent cases has appeared over zealous and unbelievably un-Christian in operation. There is the tragic case of a churchwarden suspended without explanation as a result of an anonymous accusation; although the accusation was later dismissed, such was the trauma and feeling of shame, the man felt it necessary to sell his house and move away from his village. An organist can be banned from playing in the Diocese on the premise of a single unspecified accusation, founded or otherwise, and the methods employed to prosecute and enforce a ban contain echoes of Inquisition. Safeguarding policies seem to have created a 'guilty before proven innocent' culture in a complete perversion of traditional British justice. A national debate on this issue surfaces from time to time, but change must come before too many innocent lives are stained or ruined by suspicion.



### Parry Event

The choir: Stephen Johns conducts 'Blest Pair of Sirens'

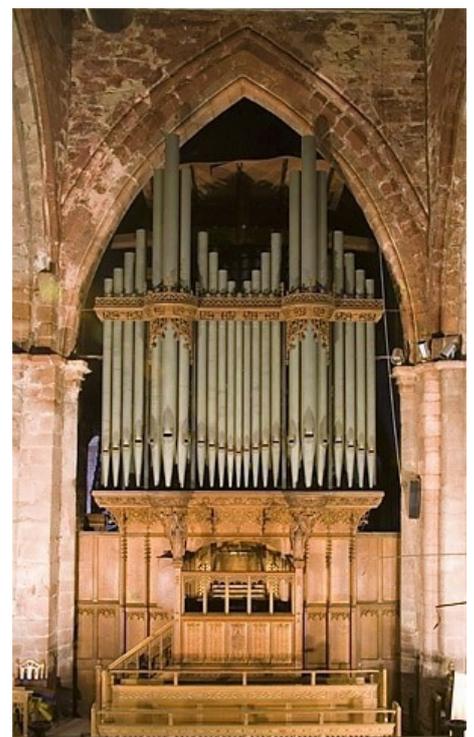
The quartet: Frankie Storer, Claire Pegg, Alison Gratton and Rosemary Corfield



### Cumbrian Organs

See article on pages 7 & 8

St Bees Priory. Organ by Father Willis, 1899



## Summer Discoveries - Andy Storer

During our travels this summer it was good to come across two contrasting organs, both of which have significant Birthdays this year.

Firstly in Northumberland it was good to be able to play the organ in Brinkburn Priory which was celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, having been built in 1868 by William Hill and Son. It remains to this day one of the least altered instruments from this period (save for the addition of an electric motor).

It sits in the South Transept of the wonderful Augustinian Priory Church which is managed by English Heritage and which was re-roofed and restored in the mid nineteenth century. The church is blessed with wonderful acoustics – no doubt helped by the absence of furnishings.

The instrument makes a glorious sound in the building, the Great chorus being particularly fine and with the Swell reeds coupled it certainly fills the building with sound. The console is situated on the right hand side of the instrument which leads to the slightly curious arrangement of the Great stops being on the left and the Swell on the right. This organ has been given an Historic Organ Certificate.

### Brinkburn Priory, Northumberland

Organ by Hill 1868

#### Great

Bourdon	16
Open Diapason	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Dulciana	8
Principal	4
Wald Flute	4
Twelfth	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
Fifteenth	2
Mixture	II

#### Swell

Open Diapason	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Principal	4
Trumpet	8
Oboe	8

#### Pedal

Open Diapason	16
Bourdon	16



The second instrument we came across was on a visit to Attingham Park and Manor at Atcham just outside Shrewsbury. The House is now a National trust property and was originally built in the early 1780's by Lord Berwick. In the Picture Gallery at one end stands a chamber organ which was installed in 1788 (though originally in a different room) and was built by Samuel Green. After inquiring about the instrument came an invitation to have a play on it. This proved to be a delightful little instrument with its handsome mahogany casework. The keyboard

pulls out from the case for use and it has been fitted with an electric blower. The organ, typical of Green's work, makes a beautifully sweet and gentle tone a character which is enhanced by the un-equal temperament tuning - how lovely to hear pure thirds!

All the pipework is enclosed in a swell box and the compass is from Low GGG.

It was good to come across these two historic organs and to be able to play them. It was also good to know that they are both well maintained.

Andy Storer

### Attingham Park, Shropshire

Organ by Samuel Green 1788

#### Left Side

Open Diapason	8
Stopped Diapason Bass	8
Principal Bass	4
Fifteenth Bass	2
Sesquialtera Bass (17.19.22)	

#### Right Side

Stopped Diapason Treble	8
Dulciana (from fiddle G)	8
Principal Treble	4
Fifteenth	2
Sesquialtera Treble (12.15.17)	



## A Trip to West Cumberland - Whitehaven and St Bees - Stanley Monkhouse

A serendipitous series of exchanges on a Harrison and Harrison enthusiasts' Facebook page led to my being invited to give one of the regular recitals at Whitehaven United Reformed Church in August 2018. The organ is a Harrison of 1906, two years after the famous instrument at St Nicholas Whitehaven, one year before the H&H rebuild of the Willis in Carlisle Cathedral, and two years before their *magnum opus* at Ely—just to put things in context. Like several other instruments in West Cumberland, George Dixon of St Bees had a hand in the design of the URC organ—and so, perhaps unusually, did Alfred Hollins, then at Edinburgh.

I was born in Carlisle in 1950 and brought up in east Cumberland. I was infected by the organ bug in about 1960, and I soon became aware of the extraordinary place of West Cumberland in general, and Whitehaven in particular, in 20th century organ design, thanks to George Dixon and Arthur Harrison. I grew up with the sound of Carlisle Cathedral organ in my ears, and it wasn't long before I experienced the joys of St John's Keswick and other small Harrisons nearby. When I had the opportunity in 1969/70 to become acquainted with the organ at St Nicholas Whitehaven I grabbed it—and good job I did, given its destruction in 1971.

That's a long time ago but some things stick in the memory. I was struck by the perfection of tonal finish and the quality of construction—the door to the chamber was open and the luxury was evident. The 1904 fluework was impeccable, particularly noteworthy being the Geigen chorus, and the fact that the large Open was by no means oppressive. As for the Harmonics with flat 21st, I liked it. It didn't offend my ears when used without the reeds. The Swell fluework was more restrained, characteristically beautifully finished, and the Solo Violes very similar to those I used as often as possible at Carlisle. The St Nicholas tutti, if memory is reliable, depended more on flues than reeds—unlike later Harrisons. Swell Trumpets were fairly close in tone—certainly not “orchestral oboes” as Cecil Clutton described those of subsequent years—and the Tubas 8



Whitehaven URC

and 4 were really Great reeds on a different keyboard, by no means unsociable or overwhelmingly loud.

Distant though they may be, these memories were curiously rekindled at Whitehaven where the instrument, two years younger than that at St Nicholas, is without doubt a Rolls Royce. The design on paper you might think unprepossessing but—take it from me—it's clever, its success depending more than a little on the quality and nature of voicing. There is no point in my giving a stop-by-stop analysis—you need to hear it and try it yourself—but here are some impressions that struck me.

I have never had much use for a Dulciana. This one has proved me wrong, for it's a lovely stop and a perfect accompaniment for the Swell Oboe. The Great flutes are delightful, especially the 4ft. Now the chorus. Small 8 and 4 make a satisfying organ sound, the principal giving some higher harmonics. Add the fifteenth, and you will look in vain for a mixture. This is not unusual for Father Willis fifteenths, and that on the Great at Carlisle, 40 miles away, is a case in point. Add the 16 Bordun to the chorus described above and you have a satisfying Bach pleno. Now exchange the small diapason for the large and there's a different sound: richer, fuller, louder, but still musical.

But for me the biggest surprise was the Swell “chorus”. Geigens 8 and 4 together are pretty much as strong as Great small 8 and 4. Add the Swell octave coupler, and the sound almost matches Great small 8, 4 and 2. This strikes me as unusual for Harrison. Is this down to the input of Alfred Hollins? I have played another of his designs, Caird Hall Dundee, but I've no recollection of the relative strengths of the Great and Swell flue choruses there. It would be characteristic of a concert organ,

rather than a accompanimental organ, to have a strong Swell chorus, and I suppose the Presbyterian service, with which Hollins was entirely familiar, had less need for the typically “melting” Harrison swell flue chorus, so handy in choral accompaniment.

The Swell Horn (the name a Hollins touch? see his organ at Edinburgh) is no such thing, but a perfectly fine trumpet. For several years I was organist at Sherwood's small 1907 Harrison designed for John Ireland, where the Swell Cornopean, like the Whitehaven Horn, is one of the most useful reeds a small organ can have: when combined with other stops it can serve in several guises. With the box open, the Whitehaven Horn contributes satisfactorily to full organ, and with one or both octave couplers the sound is magnificent. There's not a lot to say about the Pedal except that it's typical Harrison. I have yet to meet a Bourdon by any other builder that's better than a Harrison sub bass, and the Great Bass is exactly what you'd expect of a Harrison Open Wood.

How does this measure up to (in my memory) St Nicholas and St John's Keswick? The big drawback at St Nicholas was the keyboard layout: Great at the bottom, Swell in the middle, Solo on top. That made the organ difficult to handle, and I suspect it would take a few months to get used to it. St John's Keswick is in a warm acoustic, but the Whitehaven instrument is bigger and more resourceful. There's a later 20 stop Harrison at Wigton, not far away, where the second Swell reed is a typically Dixon 16ft Corno di Bassetto. I'm afraid I've not yet played that.

From Whitehaven I went the six miles to St Bees. The priory church houses the last Father Willis, finished personally by him in 1899, with (Dixon influence here) Harrison additions in 1906, 1931 and, in 1949, a 32 reed. I never got to play it in my youth, and it's difficult to know now how different it would sound if everything worked as it should, including presumably the winding. Ignoring the prepared-for ranks, it's essentially a large two manual spread over three, and the presence of the accompanimental ranks on the Solo (here the bottom keyboard, thankfully) means that accompanying, for example, the Solo Clarinet is difficult.

The St Bees choruses are wonderful and exciting, particularly the Swell reeds and mixture about which Cecil Clutton and others enthused no end in the pages of *The Organ*. The Great twelfth, mixture and reeds were modified by Harrisons in 1906, so the tutti, fine though it is, can hardly be said to be the original Willis sound. The reeds are trumpets, nothing like Harrison trombas of say 10 years later, and together they just about eclipse the Solo Tuba which is by no means gargantuan. All else is as you might expect of a late Willis in urgent need of major work. Coming to St Bees straight from the Whitehaven Harrison I was left thinking that St Bees is more gin and tonic, Whitehaven URC cream sherry.

Both these organs need money spending on them. They are both remarkable centenarians. It would be wonderful if their future could be guaranteed for the next century.

Make the trip to play them. You'll be welcomed.

*Stanley Monkhouse (Vicar of Burton upon Trent)*

### Whitehaven URC

- **Great:** Bordun 16. OD I 8. OD II 8. Dulciana 8. Hohl Flöte 8. Principal 4. Flauto Traverso 4. Fifteenth 2.
- **Swell:** Geigen 8. Lieblich Gedeckt 8. Salicional 8. Voix Celeste 8. Gemshorn 4. Horn 8. Oboe 8.
- **Pedal:** Great Bass 16. Sub Bass 16 (Gt). Bass Flute 8 (Gt).
- Usual couplers, Swell octave, suboctave.

### St Bees (without prepared for ranks) [Weblink](#)

- **Great:** Double Open 16. OD 8. Stopped Diap 8. Hohl Flute 8. Principal 4. Wald Flute 4. Twelfth 3. Fifteenth 2. Cornet 17-19-22. Tromba 8. Clarion 4
- **Swell:** OD 8. Gemshorn 4. Flageolet 2. Mixture 12-19-22. Oboe 8. Contra Posaune 16. Cornopean 8. Clarion 4.
- **Solo** Contra Salicional 16. Viole d'Amour 8. Voix Celeste 8. Claribel Flute 8. Concert Flute 4. Harmonic Piccolo 2. Orch Clarinet 8. Tuba Mirabilis 8
- **Pedal:** Double Open Diap (wood, to FFFF). Open Diap (wood) 16. Open Diap (metal Gt) 16. Octave (wood) 8, Bass Flute 8, Ophicleide 16, Double Ophicleide 32.
- Usual couplers, Solo octave, Solo suboctave to Gt.

*Photo on page 5*

## Forthcoming DDOA Meeting

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November 7.30 pm at St John's Methodist Church, Allestree DE22 2QL.**

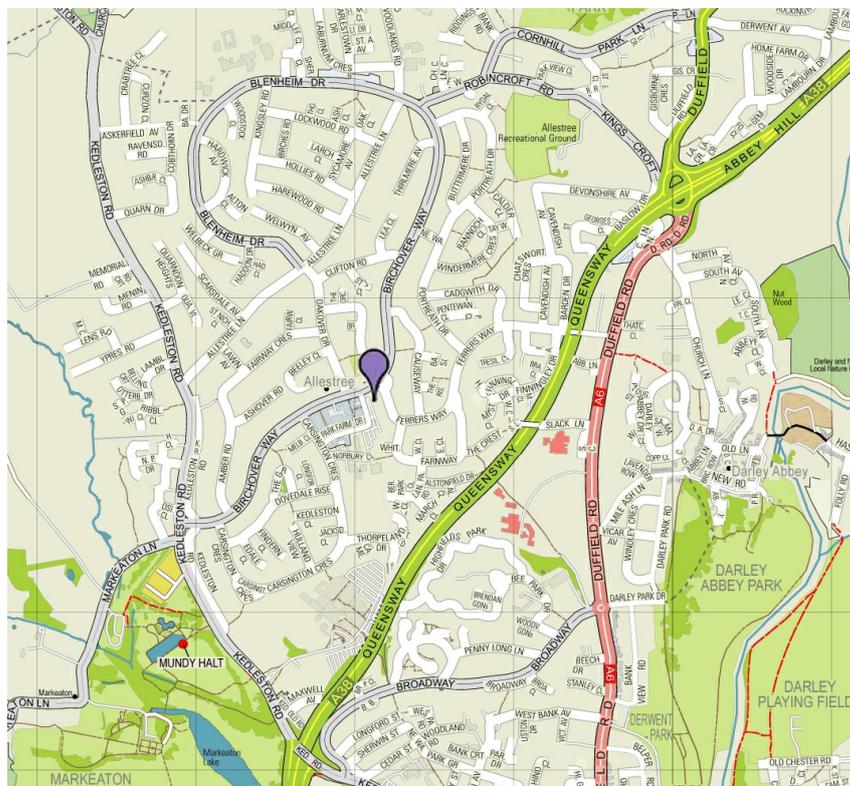
Please note the starting time for the AGM, slightly different from previous years.  
A novel session in a chat show format follows immediately at 8.15pm.

The Annual General Meeting of the DDOA will take place on Mon 19 November in the lounge and coffee bar at St John's Methodist Church, Birchover Way, Park Farm, Allestree, Derby DE22 2QL. The church has its own large car park and is well situated between Park Farm Drive and Ferrers Way (on the right as you approach from Kedleston Road). The meeting will start with the 'business' part of reports and elections at 7.30. A talk will follow after a short coffee break:

**19<sup>th</sup> November 8.15 pm at St John's Methodist Church, Birchover Way, Allestree**

### 'Where it All Began'

Recollections by members of organists that had a major influence on their early interest in the organ and its music. Chaired by Margaret Eades, the volunteers to sit on the interview couch are Gillian Chatto, Richard Brice, Geoff Howell and Ed Turner.



Items of news or articles for the January/February edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December**, 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.