

Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



Welcome

Welcome to the new DDOA Website

The DDOA website was founded by David Shooter in 2007 and since then David has filled it with news and photographs of Association events, articles by members and reports on local organs including audio recordings. Now that David has retired from the role of webmaster, sadly due to illness, the committee has commissioned a redesign of the web pages by James Barron in collaboration with a working group consisting of Margaret Eades, Geoff Howell and Laurence Rogers.

The new website went live in January and is available for viewing at www.derbyorganists.co.uk.

The site retains many of the features that David introduced, including the Photo Gallery and Featured Organs. In the redesign, pages have been optimised for viewing on several viewing platforms; desk-top computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones. The navigation menu is present at the head of every page and, as well as providing an overview of the contents of the site, gives easy access to all the pages, whatever device you are using for viewing. The headings of the pages are self-

explanatory. The 'Newsletters' page contains an archive of all the DDOA newsletters stretching back to 2007. In the near future we hope to include a subject index to the many articles published on specific topics during that time.

The bi-monthly *Newsletter* aims to keep members informed about DDOA events and the interests and activities of its members, so what is the special function of the website? We hope that it can welcome the interest not only of members, but also of non-members, potential members and anyone that can be tempted to be curious about organs and organ music in Derby and the district. It can be a shop window for the topics for which we share enthusiasm. In so doing, if it can help recruit new members, so much the better.

Please visit the site and tell members of the committee what you like about its contents. In the spirit of 'work in progress' we hope it will continue to develop with ideas submitted as well as enjoyed by members.

Laurence Rogers

DDOA Events 2019

16th March (Saturday) 3pm

Extemporisation - Talk and demonstration by Nigel Allcoat.
St Matthew's, Darley Abbey (See page 6)

10th April (Wednesday) 12.30pm TBC

Joint visit with Nottingham Association to Melton Mowbray Parish Church. (See p.6)

14th May (Tuesday) 7.00 for 7.30pm

Annual Dinner at Horsley Lodge.
Guest speaker: Colin Walsh

27th June (Thursday)

Visit to organs in London, to include London Oratory.

13th July (Saturday)

Visit to organs in Oxford (St Johns, Queens and Magdalen Colleges).

September (TBA)

Visit to organs in Lincolnshire.

Concerts & Recitals

Saturday 16th March, 7.00 pm

St. Matthew's Church, Darley Abbey.
Recital by Nigel Allcoat 'Bach and Baroque at Seven O'clock' (See page 6)

Wednesday Lunchtime Recitals

12.30 - 1.10pm

at St Modwen's, Burton-upon-Trent

3 rd April	Tony Westerman
10 th April	Stanley Monkhouse
17 th April	Tom Corfield

Vacancy

All Saints Church, Sudbury seeks to appoint an Organist & Choir-leader. Wonderful well maintained 3 manual pipe organ, and appreciative choir and congregation. Services on second, third and fourth Sunday mornings. Choir practices are held before services. Usually there are no evening services.

Vacancy due to present post holder moving to Stafford. Fees by negotiation with the PCC. For further information, please contact the present organist, Jeremy Dutton.

jezzdutton@gmail.com.

Profile - Chris Darrall

History can be made in a variety of ways, often by innovation or longevity. A year ago our Association made history by electing its first woman as Chairman. Perhaps history has been made again as we honour the retirement of Chris Darrall who has been our Treasurer for the past 21 years. Chris has held all the great offices of state in the Association, having previously served periods as Chairman and Secretary. In total he has served continuously on the committee for 34 years. Such stalwart service has been part of the backbone of leadership in our Association and a great debt of gratitude is due to Chris.

Chris owes his introduction to the Association to Denis Makin, Organist of St Peter's, Belper back in 1978. Chris had just moved to Belper having recently been appointed as Chief Instructor in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at the Railway Engineering School, Derby. He had chosen to live in Belper taking advantage of its convenient rail links with his work place in Derby. Chris describes Denis as one of those enthusiastic people who never lost an opportunity to draw people in to the world of organs and church music. Chris was intrigued to discover the project to restore the historic mechanical organ at St Peter's, after being out of use since before the Second World War. Denis had presided over a Hammond organ for many years and had long dreamt of returning the organ in the west gallery to its former role. As ever, money being short, this remained a dream until he hatched the idea of a DIY project with Edmund Stow, a professional railway engineer with a passion for organ playing and who had recently proved his competence at organ building in restoring the organ at Queen's Hall Methodist Church, Derby. Ed's spare-time organ building activity drew upon support from willing volunteers and Chris soon became one of these at St Peter's. Thus were sown the seeds of Ed's eventual full-time organ building business which has been of enormous value to the organ scene in the Derby area.



It wasn't long before Chris was further drawn in with requests to deputise playing the organ at services when Denis was unwell or unavailable. To achieve this, Chris drew upon his two years of piano lessons as a young boy, but with very little instruction since then. Essentially, as an organist, Chris is completely self-taught, and by dint of persistence and determination he has built a successful career as an assistant organist at St Peter's.



At a recent visit to Manchester Cathedral, dwarfed by the pedal Ophicleide

Reflecting on his boyhood in Birmingham, although both his parents sang in the choir of the local Methodist Church, there was no junior choir that might nurture his musical interest, and despite his attraction to the sound of the organ, he received little encouragement from the organist to take an active interest in the instrument. However, whilst an undergraduate at Oriol College, Oxford, (reading Engineering Science) he spent many happy hours exploring the possibilities of the chapel organ. Several years later, Belper had a vital role in re-awakening that interest and developing his organ career.

Needless to say, the Association has benefited enormously from the skills he has exercised as Treasurer. Completely confident with figures but with an ability to coax the payment of subscriptions, he has maintained a comfortable proportionate surplus throughout his tenure. His counsel in committee on many matters has always been respected and appreciated. Now for a well earned retirement! As one of our most loyal attenders of meetings, and a regular member of our CATO team, we continue to look forward to his company and enthusiasm for much time to come.

Laurence Rogers

Member's letter

A member of the congregation came up to the organ with a wicked smile on his face after a recent service and asked if I would be playing on 31 March. If so, might I consider playing a closing voluntary based on Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy'? As an unrepentant Remainer, I enjoyed the prospect of making such a political statement, only two days after Brexit - if Brexit ever happens. If you share this feeling, may I suggest you explore the Internet: www.freescore.com, where you will find organ and piano pieces based on Ludwig v. B.'s famous symphony, including Maurizio Machella's transcription. You can get it for nothing (he does ask for a 'sub' if you are feeling generous), you don't have to play it all, and the virtuoso pedal part in some of it can fairly easily be fudged by the left hand. Best of luck!

(Name supplied)

Recent Events

'Women and the Organ' February event presented by our Chairman, Margaret Eades

Dick Dewey and his love for Fancy Day, in Thomas Hardy's novel "Under the Greenwood Tree" is probably the first mention in fiction of a female organist. If you don't know the novel it tells of the suppression of the traditional village quire by the all-conquering voice of the organ.

On the 4th February, a larger than normal group were gathered in the Fellowship room at Darley Abbey Church to hear Margaret Eades, DDOA's first female Chairman, talking about the subject of "Women and the Organ". Starting off right at the beginning, we were reminded of St Cecilia. Although the talk was well supported by photos, videos and sound clips, understandably none of these were available to flesh out the picture that Margaret painted of St Cecilia, so we had to make do with a few stained-glass windows. As St Cecilia dates from the third century, even these were very anachronistic but she is invariably depicted playing an organ - think portative rather than Wanamaker - and as she is the Patron Saint of Music (celebrated on the 22nd of November), that puts women organists at the very pinnacle of *all* music!

Margaret then divided female organists into four categories: players, composers, educators and "reluctant organists". The last group being the one that many local organisations aim to assist, with varying degrees of success.

After a brief stopover in the 17th Century, noting the Benedictine nun Caterina Assandra, famous in Italy as composer and organist, Margaret's historical story leapt into the 19th Century with Swedish organist and composer Elfrida Andree who became Organist at Gothenburg Cathedral in 1867. Coming into the early twentieth century, familiar female names came thick and fast. I was soon reminded of the first organ recording I ever bought, a second-hand 78 of Jeanne Demessieux playing the Bach *D minor Toccata* (wearing, according to Margaret, high heeled shoes!). She was, of course part of the story, as was her compatriot, Nadia Boulanger. In Britain, the first female



Margaret Eades

President of the Royal College of Organists, Doris Wookey is commemorated in the FRCO prize named after her. Today the President is Catherine Ennis, and it is a sad reflection on progress in equality that the RCO's website fails to mention that Catherine is "the Second Female President."

Perhaps the 'glass ceiling' has been broken; Anglican Cathedrals now have several women in the roles of Director of Music. Times have changed since the early twentieth century when organisations like ours would not allow women to enter their hallowed portals. (In case you are wondering, it was not until the first world war that ladies were able to belong to DDOA.) Several video clips, which illustrated Margaret's talk, would surely convince anyone of the abilities of female organists - for me, Dame Gillian Weir playing *Tu as Petra* at an unbelievable tempo was astonishing.

Female Cathedral Organists in Britain

Katherine Diennes Williams	Guildford
Sarah Baldock	Chichester
Elizabeth Burgess	Oxford
Sarah MacDonald	Cambridge
Rachel Mahon	St Paul's
Cathy Lamb	Lichfield
Francesca Massey	Durham
Tansy Castledine	Peterborough

The composer category was less well represented. It seems that very little organ music has been written by women, although we were treated to some examples. I must admit that when I look at my library, aside from pieces in the Kevin Mayhew collections, the only music I possess by a female composer is a little folk song by Dame Ethel Smyth.

That said, it seems that in the Education/organ evangelism field, it is women who seem to be in the forefront. Anne Marsden Thomas and Anne Elise Smoot to name but two, and I was left with the impression that almost all female organists are not only passionate about their instrument but fabulously effective ambassadors for it, prepared to devote much time and energy to that end.

All in all, a very instructive and enjoyable evening at Darley Abbey - thank you, Margaret, not to forget her sound man, Laurence, and the Vicar, Rev Peter Barham for lending his HIFI kit, without which some of those bass pedal notes would have been left to our imagination.

Richard Brice

Female Organists in Margaret's presentation

St Cecilia: Patron Saint of Music	
Caterina Assandra	1590 - 1618
Elfrida Andree	1841 - 1929
Roberta Bitgood	1908 - 2007
Nadia Boulanger	1887 - 1979
Jeanne Demessieux	1921 - 1968
Marie-Claire Alain	1926 - 2013
Diane Bish	
Carol Williams	
Dame Gillian Weir	
Anne Marsden Thomas MBE	
Catherine Ennis	
Anne Elise Smoot	
Anne Page	
Jennifer Bate	
Margaret Phillips	
Janette Fishell	
Susan Landale	
Marilyn Harper	
Jane Watts	
Ghislane Reece-Trapp	
Anna Lapwood	
Isabelle Demers	
Judith Bingham	

Video Clips

Te Deum, Op.11 - Jeanne Demessieux
played by Renée Anne Louprette

Litanies - Jehan Alain
played by Marie-Claire Alain

Variations on "A mighty fortress" - Bish
played by Diane Bish

Tu Es Petra - Mulet
played by Gillian Weir

Canonic Variations - Bach
played by Anne Page

Sonata No.6 Variation 3 - Mendelssohn
played by Jennifer Bate

Prelude - Judith Bingham
played by Anne Laver

Étude Héroïque - Rachel Laurin
played by Isabelle Demers

Recent Events

Bloomsbury Organ Day, Saturday 26th January 2019

After a leisurely Saturday morning train ride to St Pancras and a stroll past the British Museum, I arrived at midday at what looked like Notre-Dame. In fact it was Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, which was holding its ninth annual organ day.

The church is 'inclusive, maintaining an openness to different points of view, searching together for a better understanding of life, and holding that no one has a monopoly on the 'right' way'. That sounded hopeful.

And the organ sounded encouraging too. It has had a chequered history. The original organ (1848) saw major work from Father Willis (1850), T.C. Lewis (1879), Brindley & Foster (1914), Hill, Norman and Beard (1964) and John Males (1989). In 1964 it was moved to its present position around the rose window at the east end of the gallery with a new detached console in the south gallery, and a third manual was added in 1969. From 2006, however, they started experimenting with pipes from a redundant Binns organ in Watford and later one from Bolton also. So the current organ, built by B.C. Shepherd and Sons (who were represented at this event, as they are at many organ events across the country), is largely Binns and represents one of the largest and most comprehensive Binns organs in South-East England. It attracts leading concert and cathedral organists and is well known for its monthly last-Saturday recitals, as well as the annual organ day.

I joined a queue outside the main door and chatted to Sarah Beedle from *Organists' Review*. It turned

out that she was just trying to get through the glass door in order to set up her stand. I reached the table in the foyer and bought a £7 ticket for the final celebrity recital at 6pm. Everything else was free, including a copy of the superbly prepared programme booklet; everything, that is, apart from the 'legendary' 5pm Bloomsbury buffet – I hadn't had the foresight to book it in advance as advised, and alas they had just sold out.

After a quick chat with Philip Luke, the organist at the church and co-organiser of the day, I looked round the church and then found the stairs to the gallery, where one could take a seat with a perfect view of the console and also experience the full power of organ.

By 12.30pm, downstairs was practically full and there was quite a good crowd upstairs. Simon Williams from the RCO introduced four players of all ages who were going through the RCO Certificate of Accredited Membership scheme. There are three levels – around Grades 2, 4 and 6 – and players must perform three pieces (by audio-visual submission if desired) and provide supporting notes. I was very impressed with the performances we heard at the various levels. All pieces, whether simple without pedals or more difficult, were played most professionally and musically.

This led straight into the first short recital at 1.00pm, sponsored by the Organ Club. Michael Stephens-Jones, Organ Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge launched into pieces by Buxtehude, Dupré and Franck, all competently played, with his boss Sarah MacDonald supporting from a distance.

Then there was a half-hour talk on 'The One-Man Band' by Philip

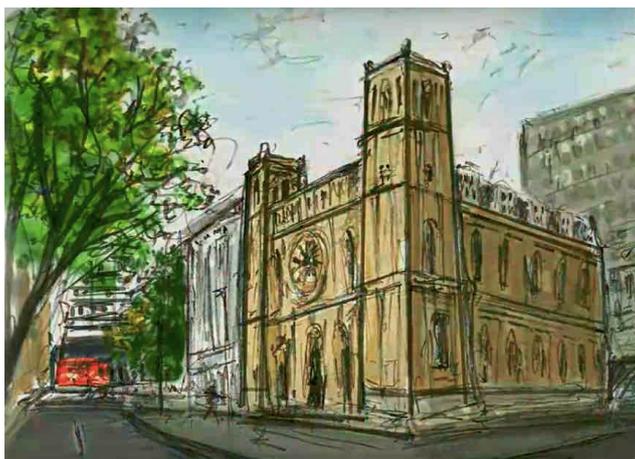
Norman, who was the other co-organiser of the day and who set up [Organists Online](#) in 2000. He traced the flow of ideas from choral and instrumental music to the organ across the centuries.

I felt things really warmed up when Callum Alger took to the bench at 2.30pm. His recital was sponsored by the Alan Dronsfield Trust, and he really breathed the music as he played a Mendelssohn Sonata and a Reger Fantasia. I could see why last year he won both the inaugural IAO/RCO Organ Playing Competition in Peterborough and the first Gillian Weir Messiaen Prize at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Maybe the bright green socks helped too.

At 3.30pm we were told that we were now in the presence of one of the world's greatest musicians. Laurence describes Gillian Weir's masterclass on the facing page. We had the privilege of speaking to her afterwards – luckily Laurence refrained from asking for a selfie.

We then had a break, one of several, in which we could browse through the sheet music, CDs and DVDs on sale, and look at the stands for organisations such as the Organ Club and Organists' Review, where Sarah gave me a book of Post-its suitable for registrations. There was also a small demonstration organ from *At the Sign of the Pipe*. I had to make do without the buffet, but tea, coffee and biscuits were on sale at a reasonable price throughout the afternoon.

And finally we had the long-awaited celebrity recital with Isabelle Demers. Like Gillian Weir, it was her third visit to Bloomsbury. She is so unassuming and certainly doesn't wear green socks, but her virtuosity at the organ is astonishing. She always





Isabelle Demers

plays from memory and from my ring-side seat she made even Thalben-Ball's *Variations on a theme of Paganini* look easy. A fitting climax to an excellent afternoon. Put 25th January 2020 in your diary for the tenth Bloomsbury organ day.

Geoff Howell

Masterclass with Dame Gillian Weir

Dame Gillian Weir is undoubtedly a consummate performer, but from all accounts is also an inspiring teacher. This was abundantly evident in the two-hour masterclass she conducted on the Bloomsbury organ. The test pieces were César Franck's Chorales Numbers 2 and 3. There were two volunteer players for each piece. Each played half of the piece, and in my opinion they were all brilliant, but when Dame Gillian dissected the performances, we discovered numerous insights and subtle layers of interpretation. This was absolutely exhilarating, always challenging one's own ideas and habits. Her passion for the music was unfettered; she could be quite hard on the players but none of them crumpled and the results were convincing.

With Chorale No.2, the first challenge focused on tempo, not in a metronomic sense but in the use of rhythm to give impetus to the music, always in empathy with the harmonic movement. Dame Gillian

devoted much attention to the nature of *rubato*, declaring that "it has nothing to do with chaos"! The discipline of the beat was paramount, retaining always a feeling of moving forward. Rather than moulding or modifying the music, "rubato is an intensification of what is there already."

In the course of the session, numerous gems emerged: "The up beat is the most important note in a bar." (quoting Nadia Boulanger). "Two chords cannot be the same – think how a string player would use up bows and down bows." "Without technique you don't have freedom – passion and drama are not possible without technique." "Practise slow music faster than it needs to be in performance."

Dame Gillian sustained a dynamic engagement with the music and the audience throughout the whole two-hour session. It was a great privilege to witness this event, and as Geoff has noted, it was a bonus pleasure to share an informal conversation with her afterwards, her enthusiasm undiminished.

Laurence Rogers

St Andrew's Church Swanwick Saturday 9th February 2019

Martyn Noble, Sub-Organist of H.M. Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace and a former Organ Scholar at both Liverpool and Southwark Cathedrals was giving his eighth recital at St Andrew's, sponsored, as always, by our member Dr Alan Dronsfield. Yet again, despite hurricane Eric doing its best, about eighty of us managed to brave the elements and were well rewarded for our efforts travelling from as far afield as Wolverhampton and Leicester.

Wendy Butt and her team have developed a winning formula of combining the recital with a light buffet, making it an event for all. Martyn's varied programme (not all of which, I would imagine, appears on his Sunday voluntary list) included something to cater for all tastes: The first half comprised the Bach *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor*; three pieces by composers who had associations with the Chapel Royal (Byrd, Handel and S.S.Wesley); four pieces in memory of people who have died in the last 12 months – Ken Dodd, Joe Jackson, Aretha Franklin and

Noel Rawsthorne (his delightful *Hornpipe Humoresque*); the lovely *Reflection* by Daniel Bishop, our host when the Association visited Liverpool Cathedral; two jazz pieces, and concluding with Sergei Slonimsky's *Toccata* – a fascinating piece which well displayed Martyn's virtuosity. Introducing the Bishop *Reflection* Martyn entertained us by commenting that, having heard it played by his good friend, the composer, he was using what the Liverpool organists describe as a "gunge" i.e. all the 8 foot stops!

The second half opens traditionally with an arrangement of the *Maestoso* from Saint-Saens' *Organ Symphony*. The next pieces, *The Lone Ar-ranger* by Philip Buttall, is an amazing tour through snatches of between 35 and 40 pieces – I certainly tallied 35 and I'm sure I missed some. The "serious" items were Howells' *Master Tallis's Testament*, Flor Peeters' *Aria* and Elgar's *Nimrod*. The "popular" pieces were three songs from shows: *Very Warm for May* from Jerome Kern's *All the Things You Are*, *The American Dream* from Schönberg's *Miss Saigon* and *Phantom of the Opera* theme by Andrew Lloyd Webber.

The programme was brought to a triumphant conclusion with the *Finale* of Vierne's *First Symphony*.

Martyn's knowledge of the organ – a 19 stop Nicholson and Lord – means that he certainly uses it to maximum effect and the range of voices was, as always, very well displayed.

John Maxwell-Jones

Forthcoming Event

Annual Dinner 14th May 2019

Please sign up for the Annual Dinner in good time. The venue, Horsley Lodge, has become a regular favourite for this event. Our guest of honour this year will be Colin Walsh, Organist Laureate of Lincoln Cathedral. Details of the menu are on the Booking Form accompanying this newsletter. Please return it with payment to John Maxwell-Jones, 7 Lime Grove, Chaddesden, Derby DE21 6WN by Saturday 27th April at the latest.

Forthcoming DDOA Meetings

Saturday 16th March at 3.00 pm
at St Matthew's Church, Darley Abbey

Extemporisation - Talk and Demonstration by Nigel Allcoat

Nigel Allcoat has held teaching posts at the Royal Northern College of Music, Oxford and Cambridge Universities, Dresden, the St Petersburg Conservatory and the Royal Academy of Music in London. He writes articles, especially on Improvisation and French Baroque organ music.

Nigel is keen on audience participation and welcomes ideas for improvisation themes but most importantly we need volunteers to have a go under his expert guidance. If this is you, please contact Margaret Eades.

Tea and refreshments will be available after Nigel's session. Later in the evening, at the invitation of St Matthew's, celebrating its 200th Anniversary, Nigel will give a public recital. Members are welcome to use the church's Fellowship Room to socialise with friends between the two events. A large park is adjacent to the church - look for Darley Abbey Drive.



Bach & Baroque at Seven o'Clock!

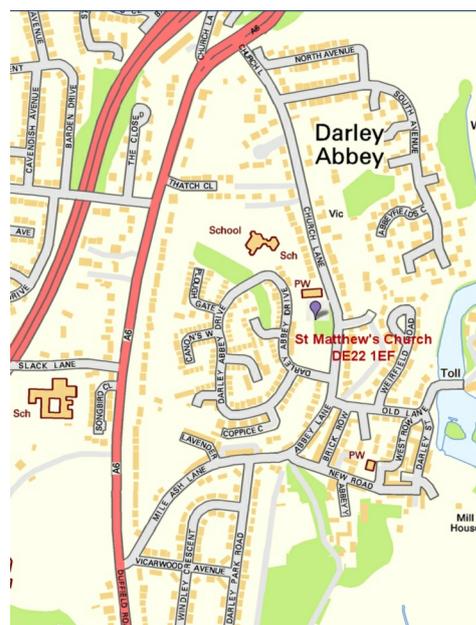
Saturday 16th March 2019 at 7pm
St Matthew's Church, Darley Abbey DE22 1EF

An entertaining evening with
NIGEL ALLCOAT to kick off the
St Matthew's bicentennial celebrations.

Nigel is one of the world's leading
authorities on organ music from the
Baroque period and a renowned
improviser.

There will be organ music, light-hearted
anecdotes and improvisation to illuminate this musical Golden Age,
and the organ console will be on view in the centre.

Free of charge – retiring collection – refreshments – all welcome!



Wednesday 10th April

Visit to Melton Mowbray Parish Church

This is a Joint visit with Nottingham Association. The organ at Melton dates from 1832 but has had successive alterations and renovations in the 20th Century. In 2010 the instrument was dedicated as the 'Sir Malcolm Sargent Memorial Organ' in memory of his time at St Mary's 1914-1924. In 2017 the organ was part of a massive reordering project in the church and a full refurbishment and extension of the organ was undertaken by the Nottingham firm of Henry Groves & Son. The organ now has 69 speaking stops, and a full modern complement of controls. Paul Hale, the consultant, will give us a talk.

Members are asked to make their own way. Meet at 12:30pm. Car parks are nearby, but the one-way system makes access tricky. The railway station is within easy walking distance.



Items of news or articles for the May/June edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 22nd April**, either via e-mail: 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. 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.