

Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



The Online World of 2020 - Laurence Rogers

As our Chairman remarked in his report at the 2020 Annual General Meeting, "Little did we know in the closing days of 2019 just how our lives would change and how the work of the Association would be affected by events that were yet to unfold."

For most of us, 2020 has been the most extraordinary year of our lives. Having had the good fortune of growing up and living during one of the longest periods of peacetime in the history of western Europe, the disruption of all the norms of social, cultural and economic life, has come as a profound shock. The fear of the invisible virus and Government rules to help us keep safe have dominated every aspect of our lives.

As time during lockdowns has worn on we realise more and more how we have come to thrive on human interaction that we experience with family, friends, colleagues and live gatherings. In its near absence, many of us have sought refuge in the online technology, filling our lives with screen-watching. As well as ordering groceries and shopping for basic needs, ingenuity has been unleashed allowing us to watch live streamed events, participate in Zoom meetings, church services, choir practices and so on. Many institutions, having seen their plans for events laid to ruin, have turned to online media as a substitute for outreach:

RSCM

The Royal School of Church music was quick off the mark in organising 'Big Sing' events at Easter, in June, and December. We discovered how a 'virtual' choir can be produced with singers in their own homes, all contributing to a massed singing event. The RSCM [website](#) now contains numerous resources supporting church musicians, in the form of videos, webinars (seminars via Internet) and lunchtime lectures.

Derby Cathedral Choir

With great enthusiasm Alex Binns, Director of Music at Derby Cathedral has embraced the methodology for conducting choir practices in the Virtual Song School. [More](#)



Alex Binns in a virtual rehearsal

Holy Trinity, Sloane Square

The virtual choir concept has achieved performances of an amazing quality. My early experience of this was to discover

DDOA Events 2021

Events deferred from 2020:

Evening visit to St Edmund's, Allestree.

Visit to Lincoln Cathedral and St Peter & St Paul Church, Lincoln.

Talk by Richard Brice. 'Music of René Becker' St Peter's Belper.

Dates will be confirmed as health restrictions become lifted.

Membership subscriptions for 2021 will be due on 1st January.

Please note that the Association has changed its bank account since last year, so if you pay by standing order, please note the new details:

The Co-operative Bank

(Community Directplus Account)

Account Name: Derby and District Organists Association

Sort code: 089299

Account Number: 65888610

Online Concerts & Recitals

Paul Carr & David Saint

St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham
Thursdays



Gert van Hoef

Netherlands, various venues
Thursdays



Scott Brothers

Various venues
Saturdays



Richard McVeigh

Hauptwerk Recitals
Various organs
Saturdays



What is it?
Can you spot
its links with
pages 1 & 5?



Click on any of the thumbnail images on this page to follow the Internet links.

YouTube videos of the choir of Holy Trinity, Sloane Square, London. Again, with singers recording individual performances in their own homes followed by technical wizardry to blend the voices into a choir performance. Try their [video](#) of *Tu es Petrus* by Robert Pearsall.

Aston Church Choir

Our friend in the Nottingham Organists' Society, Ian Watts, has sustained the choral tradition at All Saints, Aston, near Rotherham, combining his skills as a musician and sound engineer. He has perfected the technique of supplying backing tracks to his singers and collating their video recordings from mobile phones to create benchmark choir videos. During lockdown the recordings have been a valuable resource for Sunday services transmitted via *Zoom*. His choir [website](#) has a vast collection of downloadable resources for teaching his choir and aiding congregational singing.



Ian Watts

National Organ Day

The National Organ Day mooted for 18th April by the Royal College of Organists (RCO) was one of the first casualties of lockdown. It appears that the RCO is taking no chances for a similar event in 2021 which is now planned to be a totally online affair. Beginning on Sunday 18th April, a whole week of events is planned culminating in [interNational Organ Day](#) on Saturday 24th April. This week-long online festival will feature performances on organs from World Heritage sites across the world, a Choral Day, a Theatre and Cinema Organ Day, a Youth Focus Day, a Celebrity Recital and numerous other organ broadcasts from around the world.

Royal College of Organists

During the first lockdown the RCO made its 'iRCO Virtual Campus', an archive of videos, audio recordings and papers, available for study to guests free of charge. In my perusal there appeared to be lots of learned essays with a peppering of videos



B is for Bach, presented by Anna Lapwood

and recordings, but on the whole I found the site difficult to navigate. A more recent visit to the main RCO website shows a great improvement and a considerable amount of additional video material developed and added during lockdown. Non-members may register as guests. For totally open access, go to the [RCO YouTube Channel](#). Again this has acquired much new material during lockdown. In particular I have enjoyed the 'A-Z of the Organ' a series of cameo videos, usually less than 10 minutes. Each has a different presenter, which is great for variety. All are articulate and engaging and are well-known names in the organ world.

YouTube videos

It goes without saying that the *YouTube* website has become the *de facto* broadcasting platform not only for national bodies, but also for clubs, societies and private individuals. Basically, anyone can set up a 'channel' and their number is now mind-blowing.

Netherlands Bach Society

In previous newsletters our member Peter Williams sang the praises of performances by the Netherlands Bach Society. I am indeed grateful to Peter for this commendation as I have frequently dipped into their repertoire. Most recently I have been entranced by their vibrant rendering of [Cantata 140 Wachet auf](#).

The Scott Brothers Duo

Jonathan Scott and his brother Tom are prolific producers of live online organ concerts, each subsequently available as a standard video. Concerts are always accompanied by chatty introductions which are perhaps not

to everyone's taste, but they convey insight with buckets of enthusiasm which I think projects a much needed lively image for the organ. During 2020 he has succeeded in travelling the country and Europe to give recitals on a variety of spectacular organs. As a sample try this one from [Évreux Cathedral](#) in Normandy.

Jonathan's technique is quite dazzling. He has a reputation for arranging transcriptions of mainstream orchestral works. For my money none can surpass his arrangement and [performance](#) of Saint Saëns *Symphony No.3* on the mighty Victoria Hall organ, Hanley. If you want Beethoven, try the *Symphony No.5* from [Düsseldorf](#).

Gert van Hoef

This young Dutch organist gives live recitals every Thursday on a range of beautiful organs in the Netherlands. Invariably the instruments are mechanical and in churches with lovely acoustics. A sweetness of tone is a frequent joy. Gert is also an impressive improviser and composer. Try *God rest ye merry gentlemen* from St Laurenskerk, [Rotterdam](#). Live recitals are later available, but the 5 second ads at the beginning may annoy you, so be ready to click the 'Skip' button.

Richard McVeigh

Richard has his own proprietary video channel *Beauty in Sound*, but also has a prolific presence on *YouTube*. He gives excellent performances mainly on his Hauptwerk system using sounds from a variety of outstanding instruments, but he also makes real live visits to locations such as [Arundel Cathedral](#). Again, be ready to skip the ads.



Cathedral Music Trust

This promotional video is one of the most bizarre offerings that you will find. Bach's *Toccata & Fugue in D minor* has been dissected into short fragments shared out between 54 cathedral organists, each contributing a video clip, some of which are as short as one second! An amazing technical feat and [tremendous fun](#).

Laurence Rogers



Recent Events

The Trial of John Rutter

This Zoom event, hosted by Ian Watts, for the Nottingham & District Society of Organists, was attended by about 40 members of Aston Church Choir and the Nottingham and Derby organist associations. The title and 'charges' may sound rather controversial or even perhaps a bit distasteful, but in fact this was an evening of great wit, humour and fun. The trial was conducted with all court formalities with presentation by prosecution (Chris Ward) and defence (Elliott Walker) presided over by a judge (Peter Bradbury). The jury comprised all participants 'attending' the meeting, so everyone voted at the end. Interspersed between the proceedings were recordings of three John Rutter choral pieces beautifully sung by Aston Church Choir: *For the beauty of the Earth*, *Thy perfect love and I will sing with the spirit*.

Charges: "John Rutter is a heavily criticised and unpopular composer in community and church music due to his saccharine, fairylike writing style and sickly use of harmony"



Elliott Walker's selfie with his hero

Prosecution: Chris Ward (of Aston Choir) had a challenging task. His presentation came over with conviction and utter decorum, but one suspected that his tongue was firmly in his cheek! One could not fail to admire and enjoy his witty, imaginative denunciation of Rutter's music, admitting that there were some exceptions to its general awfulness but that "these pieces are like a couple of gemstones entrapped in an otherwise unremitting bleak musical coalface"! Chris conjured up many amusing images poking fun at Rutter's musical styles. My favourite was that of the Donkey Carol: "Donkeys have four legs. Let's write a piece in 5/8! Ride a stumbling donkey all the way to Bethlehem!".

Defence: Elliott Walker (of Rotherham Minster) later admitted that he enjoyed many of Chris's jokes, but his commitment to the genius of John Rutter was undaunted. He dismissed as inappropriate the prosecution comparisons with the great choral composers such as Bach and Handel. However he was prepared to compare Rutter with Tallis, a composer of rich experimental polyphony, whose works are still sung after five centuries. "John Rutter is the Tallis of today! His work will be here and sung long after his time." "So the case should rest upon the facts of the actual music itself." "Just imagine Christmas with no *Carols for Choirs*, no *Shepherd's Pipe Carol*, no *Sans Day Carol*, no *Donkey Carol* – it's like Christmas without the tree!"

After the summing-up statements, the jury voted. Apart from a small number of abstentions, the voting was overwhelmingly in favour of the defence resulting in verdicts of "Not guilty" on all three counts:

1. An unpopular composer
2. A saccharine, fairylike writing style
3. Sickly use of harmony

Before Judge Peter Bradbury finally acquitted the accused, he passed sentence on choirmasters and music directors!

Laurence Rogers

Summary of evidence for prosecution

in Chris Ward's own words:

"The music of John Rutter has been undeservedly popular because the public have been fed an unremitting diet of it, denying them the opportunity to explore and enjoy the works of other composers. Generally the music, especially the Christmas works, is crowned with so much saccharine and cloying sickness as to pose a serious threat to the health of diabetic singers, like me. Perhaps the sheer volume of his Christmas works makes repetition inevitable, but to me it smacks of a lack of ambition. The actual music itself is overly complex with excessive use of modulation, so many swooping vocal lines and a general 'muzak' quality, maybe OK as background music to one's Christmas shopping. Enjoy your Rutter if you must, but broaden your horizons to contextualise it, and I am sure you will be surprised. Rutter does have a place on every singers menu, but for me it's near the bottom of page 2 or 3, tucked away amongst those strange dessert options that no one really loves."

Summary of evidence for defence

John Rutter's popularity is a matter of fact: "Rutter sells!" His CDs, books, single choral copies, adaptations and edited editions all sell. "John Rutter is OUP's best selling choral composer." People enjoy listening to his music.

The music is accessible by both professional and local amateur choirs. It is rare to find a choir without its shelves stacked with copies of *Carols for Choirs* 2. "The music has the dynamic power to be used in sacred and secular contexts." The case for his popularity is unassailable.

The defence dismisses the accusation that Rutter's music is saccharine and fairy-like. It combines a variety of influences; early polyphony, romantic song and contemporary composers. Rutter can appropriate text in any style; contrast his joyful *Magnificat* with his deeply contemplative *Requiem*. Harmony is not sickly but fresh and experimental, creative, expressive.

Rutter is a composer whose works will be sung for many years to come. His harmony, texts, word painting and interesting rhythms are what make his music great.

Judgement and sentence

"The standard and quality of the defendant's music is high, therefore I sentence all choir and organists to make more than six performances per year of such works as a benchmark. Whilst rehearsing and performing such works, musical directors will use their skill for quality assurance against the following criteria:

Tempo: They shall ensure that all works are performed as marked, at the correct speed in order to enjoy and savour such details as pauses, modulations and key changes.

Musicality: They should shake their heads disapprovingly throughout the practice of such works, at rehearsal even if the performance is desirable, repeatedly asking for more and more perfection.

Frequency: They will rehearse such works so often as to annoy the choir despite any moans and groans from choristers, in fact, until the choir are on their knees.

The defendant John Milford Rutter is acquitted on all charges."

Recent Events

Friday lunchtime organ recitals at the Cathedral, October 2020

In these rather grim times live musical performances have been almost non-existent and it was lovely to be able to attend this series of lunchtime concerts on Fridays in the Cathedral. Alex Binns is to be congratulated on the initiative which has given pleasure to thirty or forty people each week. Sadly, the series had to be cut short but the five recitals we did hear were all splendid in different ways.

Alex himself inaugurated the series on 2 October with an unusual and attractive programme, flawlessly executed. He started with a *Trumpet Tune* by Philip Tordoff (the former organist of Halifax Parish Church) and ended with three pieces by Herbert Brewer. The last of these, the *Marche Heroïque*, is a 'pomp and circumstance' march in all but name, with a noble second subject that returns in triumph at the end. In between came two works of Frescobaldi and a superb account of the mighty 'Wedge' *Prelude and Fugue in E minor* (BWV 548) of Bach.

Thomas Hawkes (9 October) opened with the other *Prelude and Fugue in E minor* (BWV 533) by Bach, rarely heard and stylishly played. There were some old favourites here: the *Yon Toccatina*, the *Festival Toccata* of Percy Fletcher, C.S.Lang's *Tuba Tune* and a couple of Brahms chorale preludes, all well played. The recital ended with another rarity, *Cathédrales* of Vierne, which received a suitably imposing performance. Thomas was Organ



Alex Binns



Thomas Hawkes

Scholar at St Edmundsbury when Alex was Assistant Organist there.

Tuba tunes were the order of the day at the start of this series and Simon Russell (16 October) opened his programme with a delightful example by Reginald Porter-Brown. The *Fantasia in C minor* of Bach received an unexpectedly soft treatment which brought out the whimsical character of the work. Don Bedard's *Suite du premier ton* paid suitable tribute to the eighteenth century and, after a couple of soft pieces by Higginson and Flor Peeters, Franck's *First Choral* brought a most musical recital to a magnificent close.

In Laurence Caldecote's programme (23 October) there were some unusual items, including a delightful *Capriccietto* by Leonard Butler. It was good to hear Andriessen's *Thema met Variaties* and Howells's *Master Tallis's Testament*. A Handel organ concerto was played with wonderful verve and the recital ended with an organ arrangement of Sibelius's *Finlandia*. Whether or not one thinks this piece works on the

organ, it certainly demonstrated the dynamic range of the instrument.

Peter Siepmann's programme (30 October) comprised only three pieces. Bach's *Variations on 'Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig'* were splendidly phrased and played with plenty of contrast. The *Méditation* of Durufle was the perfect foil to this and the recital ended with Franck's *Third Choral*. Although he did not know it at the time, Peter Siepmann brought the series to a close. And what a fine close it was. This was playing of a very high order.

The unseen hero of the series was Stephen Alliss and his team of tuners from Harrison's who are now looking after the Compton organ, which is sounding superb. Terry Bennett, who has known it longer than almost anyone else, was delighted to be hearing it in such fine form.

Tom Corfield



Simon Russell



Laurence Caldecote



Peter Siepmann

Members' News

Introducing our Youngest Member - Alexander Johnston

Alexander Johnston is our youngest member so far. We hope he is the start of a trend for the age profile of our membership! Here he has written about how his interest in the organ came about.

My name is Alexander, I am 11 years old, and I'm home educated. I have been playing the organ since January this year, and I really enjoy it. I am taught by Alexander Binns at Derby Cathedral.

I was first inspired to play the organ when my family and I went on holiday to Scotland last winter. We were on a walk near a village called Pathhead, in Midlothian, and came across Crichton Collegiate Church, which is over 500 years old. By coincidence, the church warden was there, and we got chatting. He asked whether any of us played the piano, and my brother and I said yes. He then asked if we'd like him to open up the church, and whether we'd like to have a go on the organ.

It wasn't a particularly big organ, only two manuals, but was an amazing sound and an amazing space, and this was when I decided



that I wanted to learn to play the organ.

It's called the Brook Organ, and was built in 1899 by the J Brook Company in Glasgow. Apparently, Mr Brook was the official organ tuner for the organ at Crystal Palace! It was restored in 2012 by Henry Willis and Sons, and was the final part of the church's restoration, which began in 1996.

When we got back home, I was able to start having lessons in Derby Cathedral. During lockdown, I had lessons via Zoom, which worked quite well, but now I'm back to

having normal lessons – and I will soon be able to practise at my local church, St John's, which will be really useful, rather than doing all my practice on a piano.

As well as organ, I play piano, which I began when I was eight. I enjoy playing different types of music, including jazz and classical, but I don't play piano in any ensembles. I also play double bass, which I started when I was six. I have a lovely three-quarters acoustic bass which has come through several bassists in the jazz ensemble (Jon Eno's Hot House Music) that I'm in – but I am the first person to bow it! I also play it in two orchestras (Derby Music Partnership's senior strings, and East Midlands Youth String Orchestra, based in Nottingham), and Derby Youth Folk Ensemble (Sarah Matthews).

My brothers both play brass instruments (trumpet and trombone), and mainly jazz, so it is fun to play very different instruments, and different music. I have another piano exam coming up next month, so I'm practising hard at the moment. In the future, it would be amazing to have learnt to play the organ well enough to play in front of an audience in a church. Better get practising then!

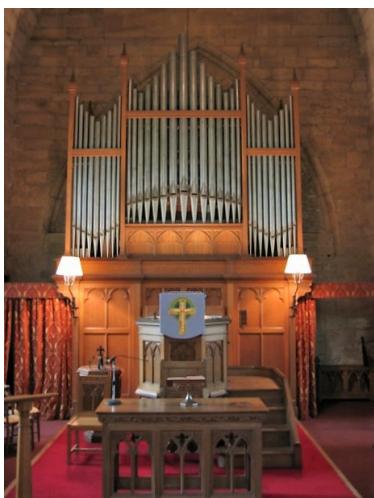
Alexander Johnston

Crichton Collegiate Church is so blessed with wonderful acoustics that it is a frequent venue for CD recordings and concerts. The trombonist John Kenny has made several recordings there and has waxed lyrical: "Crichton has one of the most beautiful acoustics for brass and voice in Scotland, and one of the finest in the UK." One can imagine how the sound of the organ impressed young Alexander.

The organ is preserved in its original condition, save for the electric blower, and enjoys a Grade II* Historic Organ Certificate. Although its resources are comparatively modest, I guess the Cornopean makes a glorious contribution in the fine acoustic. Less than 8 miles south of Edinburgh, it is on my list for a visit.

Laurence Rogers

Great	Open Diapason	8
	Lieblich Flute	8
	Dulciana	8
	Principal	4
Swell	Viola	8
	Salicional	8
	Vox Angelica	8
	Octave Viola	4
	Cornopean	8
Pedal	Bourdon	16
<i>Sw.to Gt. Sw.to Ped. Gt. To Ped.</i>		



Le Grand Orgue de la Cathédrale de Notre Dame, Paris - John Maxwell-Jones

You will be aware from previous articles of my love of France and things French. You can imagine therefore how shocked I was by the tragic destruction of the building by fire in April last year. I had promised our editor an article about the instrument when I read an excellent one by our good friend, Trevor Smedley, editor for the Lichfield Association's newsletter. I obtained his permission to plagiarise it but, in fact, I want to continue the story by using recent posts (in French) which I have read on social media.

A brief resumé

French Cathedrals typically have two instruments; one on a *buffet* at the west end of the building, the *Grand orgue*, used for music before, during and after the *Messe*, and an *Orgue de chœur* situated near the choir stalls and used to accompany the choir singing the *Messe*. Such is the situation in Notre Dame. Oliver Latry, one of the three *co-titulaires* at Notre Dame has described the preservation of the *Grand Orgue* correctly as miraculous. The fire raced through the wooden structure of the roof but stopped before reaching the west end. Two excellent documentaries on BBC4 tell the story of the [Night of the Fire](#) and the [Rebuilding of Notre Dame](#). That the brave firemen were prepared to risk their lives to stop the flames attacking the beams supporting the 10 bells was heroic and definitely saved not only the organ virtually intact, and, I believe, playable, but also the whole cathedral itself. The *orgue de chœur*, by virtue of its position, was not so fortunate.

The reconstruction – the story so far

The organ, as of April 2019, began life in 1733 as a 3-manual instrument by François Thierry, being rebuilt and expanded to 86 stops by Aristide Cavaillé-Coll in the 1860s before subsequent rebuilds and extensions to its present 5 manuals, 115 stops and some 8000 pipes. The first stage of salvage and reconstruction consisted of erecting an impressive 30-metre scaffold to remove the console and the windchests. (Those of us who laboured as Ed Stow minions, especially at Queen's Hall and St Osmund's, can well appreciate the task). Then, the majority of the 8000 pipes were removed. The second BBC documentary explains in detail the lead oxide contamination cause by the melting roof tiles so each pipe had to undergo a preliminary cleaning on site before being housed in made-to-measure chests supervised by the *organologue* and technical consultant **Christian Lutz**. 11 organ builders were employed. This work, scheduled to take 4 months, has just been completed two months ahead of schedule. However, the woodwork of the *buffet* and the display pipes are considered too fragile to be removed and will be restored on site. The different firms providing the workforce have each taken pipes to complete the decontamination and cleaning, in complete secrecy, in different regions of France. The goal is to have the Cathedral fully restored

in time for the 2024 Olympic Games. The aim is therefore to have the organ in place, voiced and tuned by 15th April, the fifth anniversary of the conflagration. Christian Lutz is planning to start the reinstallation in October 2023. The firm finally designated will be chosen in the first quarter of 2021 after the submission of tenders. My sources, alas, don't contain further updates on the *orgue de chœur* except to point out that it suffered much more serious damage from both the heat of the fire and the water cannons used to extinguish it.

A final word from Olivier Latry, who has found a source of comfort in the still vivid memory of the recording of his last disc (*Bach to the future, La Dolce Volta*). "I wanted to magnify the music of Bach with the Cavaillé-Coll and the organ of Cavaillé-Coll with the music of Bach." "It is the most transcendent organ that I know of, not only for its power, but for its refinement. Each stop is charged with emotion when you consider that most of them are historic, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries." "Each builder has put his soul into it; it is a collective work of art. This balance will not be lost since the pipes are not damaged. We will find this substance of the organ of Notre-Dame!"

John Maxwell-Jones

P.S. For speed in translating longer articles I use Google, remembering to change *facteur* back from postman to organ builder!



Dépose de l'orgue de Notre-Dame de Paris / © Christian Lutz / Etablissement public chargé de la restauration de Notre-Dame



L'orgue qui compte 8000 tuyaux a dû être quasi intégralement déposé
© Patrick Zachmann / Magnum Photos

Bach's Toccata, Adagio and Fugue, BWV 564 - Alan Dronsfield

Our Editor shared his thoughts with us in the [July/August 2019](#) edition of our Newsletter concerning Bach's music and how it fared over the years according to changing musical tastes. I would like to share with DDOA members my musings on a specific piece, the famous, if not to say monumental, *Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C*, BWV 564. Like so many of Bach's works, no copy of the score in his hand survives, so we have to make do with manuscript transcription copies made between 1719 and 1727. [Blair Johnstone](#), a musicologist working in Australia, describes the piece thus:

"After a substantial, seemingly improvised (but of course carefully constructed) opening, the *Toccata* blossoms into wonderfully rich counterpoint in a pseudo-Baroque concerto style; some have heard Vivaldi's influence here, which would indicate a date of about 1713 or shortly thereafter. The *Adagio* is more often than not performed as a freestanding piece, both by organists and in a famous arrangement for cello. It is at its essence a melody with steadily plodding accompaniment. The *Fugue* takes up a long, multi-limbed subject with patches of broken triads and the same kind of quick, upper-pedal-point oscillation that characterizes the subject of the famous *d minor Fugue* in BWV 565. Unlike that more famous work, however, this fugue has no grandiose cadenza at the end, instead running its course in pure contrapuntal fashion with just slight embellishment at the cadence, followed by a brief coda"

It is this last sentence about the conclusion of the fugue that provokes some speculation on my part. Listen to the Polish organist Maria Magdalena Kaczor playing it on [YouTube](#). This has been viewed almost 400,000 times, understandably receiving many plaudits. Her conclusion to the fugue reflects the final comment I have underlined.

What was Bach up to? It's almost as if he had lost interest in the piece and wished to round it off as quickly as possible. Given the exciting conclusions he gives us to his other major works, this is difficult to believe. Perhaps Bach scholars could investigate the possibility that the last page or two of the original manuscript had become lost and one of the transcribers has made up a conclusion, but sadly one that is lacking the inspiration of the Master.

What can be done about it, and indeed, should anything be done about it? Some might say it is nothing short of sacrilegious to mess around with a 'received' manuscript from so great a composer as Bach. However this view did not restrain the pianists and composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At least seven arrangers scored [piano versions](#) of the Fugue. Most prominent was Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924) who from 1888 began to arrange Bach's organ works for the piano. His version of BWV 564 dates from 1900. Listen to [Evgeny Kissin](#) playing it in 2002. Listen particularly to the conclusion of the fugue – breathtakingly stupendous! So, firstly, I'm going to suggest that one or two of my composer friends take the last page of the Busoni transcription and arrange it for organ performance to bring the fugue to the conclusion I think it really deserves.

My second suggestion is more radical. The Parisian organist David Cassan is noted for his improvisations. [Listen](#) to his *Prelude and double fugue in the style of Bach*, improvised on the organ of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, Paris, published in 2016. A player of such obvious talent could surely give us an ending to BWV 564 worthy of the piece as a whole and certainly of Bach.

It's my present intention to pursue my first suggestion and see what my composer friends can come up with. Indeed, one has already put pen to manuscript paper, so watch this space!

Alan Dronsfield

Edition Peters

8658

Your Association

Committee for 2021

The AGM was convened as a Zoom meeting on 7th December. The election of officers and committee was unopposed:

Chairman: Tony Westerman
Vice-Chairman: John Maxwell-Jones
Secretary: Andrew Storer
Treasurer: Gillian Chatto
Newsletter Editor: Laurence Rogers

Committee Members:
Alex Binns, Richard Brice, Tom Corfield, Margaret Eades and Denis Littleton.

Social media

The Derby and District Organists' Association now has social media. In an ever-increasing digital world, more and more people are using social media platforms as a way to communicate and it's important that we keep up with the times to ensure that we recruit new and younger members to the Association and that we attract youngsters to learn the organ. If you are on *Facebook*, *Twitter* or *Instagram* then you may wish to 'like' or 'follow' our pages:

www.facebook.com/derbyorganists
www.twitter.com/derbyorganists
www.instagram.com/derbyorganists

Social media is a great way of promoting events that the Association are holding - it's free to use and you can potentially communicate what the Association is doing with thousands of people worldwide. It's also an excellent way to support other associations like ourselves - both local music associations and other bodies like ours across the world. We can share their content and they may share our content, increasing the audience capacity of what we're sharing.

The success to social media is posting regular high-quality content and I endeavour to share photos, recordings (particularly videos) of local organs and organists alongside promoting Association events. In order to do that we need the content

and there is only a small amount of usable material presently online about Derby and Derbyshire's organs. Please do email me any videos, photos, recordings and organ-related news in Derby and Derbyshire to alexander@derbycathedral.org and I'll post these on our pages as we build up a following both locally and further afield. You may wish to record something yourself on your resident instrument or you may simply wish to send a photo of your instrument!

Alex Binns

Members' News

Dennis Felton 1950-2020

With sadness we record the death of Dennis Felton, a long-standing member of the Association. His funeral in November was at St Matthew's, Morley, where he was organist for many years. As might be expected of a career musician, he had carefully chosen the music, in particular his favourite Bach pieces played by Terry Bennett and Tom Corfield at the organ.

He grew up in the south of England, learning the clarinet, piano and organ. After school he joined the Army where he trained as a Musician at the Royal Military School of Music in London. He saw service in several different postings including Germany, where he lost no opportunity to visit many churches in pursuit of his love of organs. After the Army he made a career in teaching music and came to Derby as a peripatetic woodwind teacher. He held organist posts at Chaddesden, Little Eaton and then Morley. As well as his commitment to music, he had two serious hobbies; photography, particularly of church organs all over Germany, and his n-gauge model railway which fills a loft and is complete with landscaping. By all accounts Dennis was a very resourceful man, highly respected as a musician and much loved by his family. He is survived by his wife, Janice and daughters Ruth and Sue, to whom we offer our condolence.

James Muckle 1937-2020

Our dear friend and colleague Professor James Muckle died in his sleep just days before the publication of this Newsletter. James was a prolific writer for the Newsletter, but more importantly he has long been an energetic intellectual force in the Association, in the committee, in his period of office as Chairman and in the work of the Children and the Organ (CATO) project since its inception; he frequently surprised and excited us with his insights and ideas, often 'out of the box'. Until the onset of lockdowns, he collaborated with John Forster for many years in playing at Kingswood Methodist Church, Wollaton.

Son of a Methodist minister, on leaving school he served National Service in the RAF where he learnt Russian with a view to spying on Russian pilots over Germany. After graduating in Russian Language and Literature at Peterhouse, Cambridge, he began a teaching career, at first in schools and then at Nottingham University, but music and organ playing were never far away as a passionate hobby. A master of the English language, a musician and player with broad interests, a great human being, he will be much missed. God bless him. May he rest in peace.

An interview with James was published in [Newsletter 64](#), January 2018.



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