

Derby & District Organists' *Registered Charity No. 510567* Association



*The Wonders of the Victorian Organ
Reflections on the 2010 London Organ Day
by Denis Littleton*

This year's event was held at St. Anne's church in Limehouse, London E14, which is just past Wapping, in the Docklands not far from the towers of Canary Wharf. This is a part of London which I have never been to before, apart from passing it on a Greenwich bound boat. Access is by the Docklands Light Railway, whose little driverless trains pass behind the church every few minutes. St. Anne's is one of seven churches in the East End by Nicholas Hawksmoor and is an impressive structure in white limestone and boasts accommodation which puts most

of our churches to shame, having a crypt entered at ground level, now a meeting room/coffee room/playroom/office. The church proper is entered at first floor level and apart from the ornate ceiling is quite plain.

The theme of the day was "The wonders of the Victorian Organ". In a programme note Daniel Moul, the artistic director, suggested that the musical exploits of the Victorians have perhaps come to be regarded as unfashionable and somewhat maligned and the object of the day's event was to try to redress the balance.

DDOA Events 2010

Saturday 11th September

18th Century English Organ Music
Rodney Tomkins and Stephen Johns. St. Peter's Belper 7.30 pm

Wednesday 6th October

Chairman's Event – St. James, Riddings. 7.30 pm

Tuesday 23rd November

AGM, Duffield Methodist Church

Concerts & Recitals

Derby Cathedral:

Summer organ Recitals

Wednesdays 7.45 pm

Admission £5 (£10:18th August)

Peter Gould (4 August)

Tom Corfield (11 August)

Christopher Herrick (18 August)

Ben Bloor (25 August)

Saturday 4th September

Organ recital by Dr. Tom Corfield
7.30 pm Hazelwood Parish Church.

Wednesday 8th September

Organ recital by Edmund Stow and Dr. David Wells 7.30 pm St. John's.

Saturday 25th September

Organ recital by Andrew Storer.
7.30 pm St. John's, Derby.

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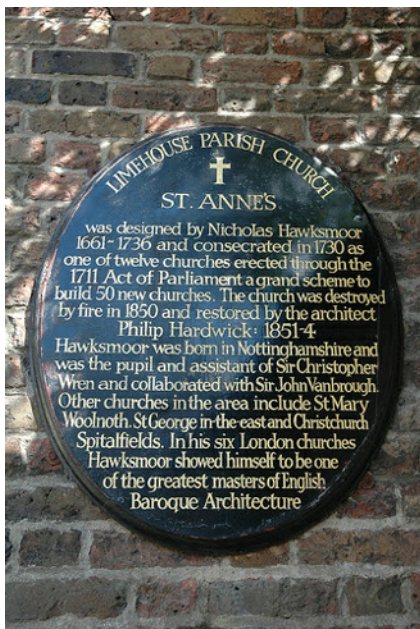
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St. Anne's was one of six churches built by Nicholas Hawksmoor, a brilliant pupil of Sir Christopher Wren.

The vicar welcomed us to St. Anne's and said that the organ was used at all of the services, in fact they were looking for an organist as the current one was moving away, but, unfortunately for me, E14 is a long way to travel from DE5.

The proceedings proper were opened by Gordon Stewart who described the parlous state of cathedral music in the early Victorian period. Even St. Paul's with S. S. Wesley in charge had its terrible moments. If some of the events described took place today, the church would be all over the tabloids; the choir boys were often left to their own devices and received little education; they were hired out to the music halls; discipline was maintained by what can only be described today as GBH, and personnel problems could result in the Hallelujah chorus being performed by just seven boys and two men. Things improved enormously under Stanford. Gordon also covered luminaries such as Ouseley who took holy orders and set up his own choir school, and some lesser known characters today only known as the composers of psalm chants.

A recital of Victorian songs followed, all of the music was new to me and included "Those evening bells" – H H Pierson, "The cold wave my love lies under" – Attwood, and works by S. Wesley, S. S. Wesley, Parry and Stanford. The performance

was excellent, but there was little humour in there.

The morning ended with a master class directed by Gordon Stewart, where three students played the Choral Song & Fugue (S. S. Wesley), Andante in G major (S. Wesley), and the opening movement of the Elgar Sonata. The performer of the latter may be known to some of our members; it was Sachin Gunga a former pupil of Tom Corfield. Gordon described the choice of that piece on that organ as being brave, or foolhardy. To cope with the registration changes it required both of the other students as registrants. Each of the performances was audibly better after Gordon's advice.

Lunch followed; we got away from the church to a riverside pub, the Grapes on Narrow Lane. This is an interesting old pub, a survivor of the Luftwaffe and developers. I would imagine that if a regular of 100 years ago turned up, he would still recognise it.



Near the churchyard gate is a curious stone pyramid. Mystery surrounds its intention. It might have been destined to be placed at the summit of the spire which has pyramids on top of its turrets. Hawksmoor was fascinated with Egyptian architecture and frequently used obelisks and pyramids in his buildings.

Back at St. Anne's the afternoon session opened with Nicholas Thistlethwaite, talking about "The Victorian Legacy", with particular reference to three organs designed by Dr. H. J. Gauntlett on which Mendelssohn performed.

The organ at St. Anne's dates from 1851 and is by Gray & Davison. It was exhibited at the Great Exhibition in the same year, I wonder if it is the same organ which W. T. Best was playing when he told Queen Victoria to go away. It was installed in St. Anne's following a fire in 1851. During its life it has had major attention on six occasions, the most recent being in 2006 by William Drake (with assistance from the Pilgrim Trust). The organ is unchanged from its original specification, and has 30 speaking stops across 3 manuals and 4 on the pedal.

The afternoon continued with the screening of a new film "The Elusive English Organ" in which Daniel Moulton sets out to perform works by Byrd, Purcell, Handel and Stanley on appropriate organs of the time. This is easier said than done and his odyssey took him to private chapels, country houses and to France. One organ featured (St. James Bermondsey) had an extra keyboard next to the great which duplicated the pedals, so a second organist can play the pedal part.

The day ended with a recital by Andrew Dewar who played pieces by Handel, Adams, Mendelssohn S. S. Wesley and Liszt. The Liszt piece gets in by way of an advert for next year's London Organ Day which will be at the Temple Church on Saturday 5th March.

Overall this was a thoroughly enjoyable event and well worth the journey to London.

Denis Littleton

Many thanks to Denis for describing a great day out in London. Having enjoyed the 'Day' myself in previous years, I strongly commend the 2011 London Organ Day on 5th March which will be based at the Temple Church. Some generations ago this church was made famous by its organists Walford Davies, George Thalben Ball and the boy treble Ernest Lough. The 2011 event will include a recital by the no less famous Thomas Trotter playing Liszt.

Editor

St. Anne's Church, Limehouse - Organ by Gray and Davison 1851

Great C - f, 54 notes

Double Open Diapason	16
Open Diapason	8
Open Diapason	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Octave	4
Flute	4
Twelfth	3
Fifteenth	2
Flageolet	2
Sesquialtra	III-II
Mixture	II
Posaune	8
Clarion	4

Choir C - f, 54 notes

Stopped Diapason Bass	8
Clarinet Flute, tenor c	8
Dulciana	8
Keraulophon, tenor c	8
Octave	4
Flute	4
Fifteenth	2
Clarionet	8

4 composition pedals to Gt.
2 composition pedals to Sw.

Swell c - f, 42 notes

Bourdon	16
Open Diapason	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Octave	4
Fifteenth	2
Sesquialtra	III-II
Cornopean	8
Oboe	8
Clarion	4

Lever Swell pedal

Pedal C - e, 29 notes

Grand Open Diapason	16
Grand Bourdon	16
Grand Octave	8
Grand Bombard	16

Couplers

Swell Manual to Great
Swell to Choir Manual
Swell Manual to Pedals*
Great Manual to Pedals
Choir Manual to Pedals
* Octave coupler



Recent Events

Recital by Peter Williams

St. John's, Derby

Peter Williams' recital at St John's, Bridge Street, was the second in the series celebrating the rebuilding of the Willis organ by Ed Stow. Peter's programme, selected to explore the rich potential of the instrument, opened dramatically with a well-chosen *pleno* for Bruhn's *Praeludium in e (Grosse)* with vigorous ornamentation complementing neat phrasing.

The six 'Schübler' Chorale Preludes were similarly characterised by registrations that show just how versatile the instrument is. Of particular note was the use of the manual Bourdon in *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten*; the gentle 'chiff' in the upper register of the rank I found to be charming. The reeds were also shown to good advantage, both as solo stops in the Bach and as an echo effect in Stanley's *Voluntary No. 1 Op. 5*.

Liszt's *Prelude and Fugue on BACH* ended the recital, using full organ for the first time during the evening. This *tour de force*, a challenge on any instrument, was carried off with convincing ease – and invaluable help from Terry Bennett as console assistant!

Sitting in the south gallery allows one to hear the St. John's organ at its best, though whilst I would recommend the experience to anyone, do take a cushion with you – the pews are the original 'free' pews and are a real challenge to the nether regions.

Tony Westerman

Annual Dinner, 16th June

Alison House Hotel, Cromford was a delightful rural setting for this year's DDOA Annual dinner. 26 members enjoyed a relaxed social evening with an excellent meal.

The guest of honour was Dr. Peter Chatfield, General Secretary, Incorporated Association of Organists who gave the traditional after-dinner speech. He congratulated the DDOA for its lively range of activities, commending in particular our Children and the Organ project, our website and newsletter. The themes of his main talk exemplified some of the outreach issues which preoccupy the IAO and many district associations throughout the country:

- engaging the interest of more youngsters in the organ
- building a larger listener base
- the potential of the digital organ for sowing the seeds of wider interest and for improving access for practice



Dr. Peter Chatfield

He reflected upon his own boyhood experience of an inspirational organist who lit the first spark of what became a lifelong enthusiasm for the organ. It prompted many of us to recall the organists who inspired our own enthusiasm; the story was a reminder of the importance of role models in influencing and shaping children's ambitions. The implicit challenge to all organists is how to communicate effectively our passion to the next generation.

Laurence Rogers

Visit to Stanton-by-Bridge and Swarkestone 19th July

Some 23 members gathered at Stanton by Bridge on a dull but pleasantly warm evening.

Edmund Stow overhauled the 1873 Brindley & foster single manual instrument in 2007. He introduced it to members with pieces by Bach and Karg-Elert, after which all were invited to play.

The sound of the organ is very typical of the period, despite the lack of a Fifteenth, the chorus is quite bold and just right for the size of building. With its restored casework and redecorated display pipes (David Room) the organ looks really well at the west end.

At Swarkestone we saw and heard the one manual C. Lloyd & Co, Nottingham, instrument. Although undated, this organ must be from the period after 1876, which is when Lloyd separated from his hitherto partner Mr. Dugden. Interestingly, it was with Lloyd that John Compton served as an apprentice. The organ is tonally of similar character to Stanton, save that it has the benefit of a proper Fifteenth and the luxury of a TC Oboe! Also, the Bell Gamba is an unusual but useful stop to find on an organ of this size. Edmund Stow, who has fairly recently rebuilt the organ, demonstrated with pieces by Brahms and Bach showing just how effective a simple well maintained 'village' organ can sound. Altogether, a very pleasant evening; a warm welcome at both churches; both organs a credit to their restorer.

Terry Bennett

DDOA - Your Association

WANTED - A NEW SECRETARY

The Association is enormously indebted to Mrs. Siann Hurt for fulfilling the office of Secretary with exemplary zeal and efficiency for the past eight years. At the recent Annual Dinner, Chairman Peter Williams presented Siann with flowers as a token of members' gratitude for her dedication.

It is now 12 months since Siann indicated that she wished to retire from her role at the end of 2010, but her successor has not been found yet. Here is an opportunity for someone new to fulfil their destiny and make a vital contribution to the smooth conduct of the Association's business. If you would like to nominate someone who enjoys administration and working with organ lovers, or volunteer yourself, please contact the Chairman at mail@derbyorganists.co.uk.

Children and the Organ project

Stephen Johns reports that his team will present three workshops to pupils from local primary schools during the Autumn term. These are to be hosted at St. John's, Bridge Street, Derby, taking advantage of the splendid Willis instrument recently renovated by Ed Stow.

The IAO have invited Stephen to describe the work of the project at the *Midlands Organ Day* in Derby on 2nd October. This will be an ideal opportunity for members to gain an insight into the activities offered to pupils.

Subscriptions – Have you paid?

Subscriptions for 2010 are still outstanding from some members. (£10 – full, £8 – seniors) If you still need to pay, please send a cheque to the Treasurer, Chris Darrall, 2 Gorse Close, Belper, DE56 2TT.

Your newsletter

It is a pleasure to welcome articles from Denis Littleton and John Poyser in this issue.

Denis is a stalwart on the DDOA committee and an intrepid tourist when organs and interesting organ events beckon.

John, although now retired since 2007, is a well known organ builder in Derbyshire. He was apprenticed to his grandfather's firm, J. Housley Adkins, which amalgamated with J.W.Walker & Sons Ltd in 1958. He became the Derbyshire Representative and later North Midlands Area Manager. When Walkers were taken over by Pennels & Sharpe in 1975, John started his own business.

I invite all members to use the *Newsletter* share their interests and enthusiasms as well as local news. So do send items from your experience of the organ world, no matter how small they might be; events, places, people, stories, publications and so on. At this time of year when many of us travel for holidays, there must also be some photographs which you could share with and give pleasure to others. Please send your contribution to DDOAnews@gmail.com.

Editor



10th MIDLANDS ORGAN DAY in Derby Saturday 2nd October 2010

- 10.00 **Welcome**, registration and tea/coffee and biscuits in Cathedral
- 10.30 **Talk** by *Ian Bell*, Independent organ consultant, on Compton organs
- 11.30 **Recital** on Cathedral's Compton Organ by *Peter Gould*, Master of the Music
- 12.20 **Children and the Organ** – an insight into the highly successful project for schoolchildren being run by the DDOA
- 2.15 **Discussion:** St John the Evangelist Church, Bridge Street, discussion on the restoration of the Church's noted Father Willis organ by *Paul Hale* (Rector Chori, Southwell Minster) and *Edmund Stow*, organ builder.
- 3.30 **Workshop** on pieces from the IAO Millennium Organ Book conducted by *Paul Hale* with students on the Cousins Organ in the Cathedral - a chance to renew acquaintance with this collection of original works
- 5.15 **Choral Evensong** in the Cathedral

The event is hosted by the DDOA. To make a booking, please contact the Secretary, Mrs. Siann Hurt, mail@derbyorganists.co.uk. (Members £18, Other adults £20, Students £10)

Admission includes morning and afternoon coffee/tea. There are many lunch venues close at hand.

Derby Organ Builders in the 19th Century

John Poyser

Although there were a number of nationally well known firms that worked on organs in and around Derby, the first recorded locally based organ builder of the period was **Joseph Gratian** (b. 1784 d. 1863). It is thought that he was involved in work on several organs, including some at Belper and at the old St. Alkmunds Church in Derby.

Already a widower, he married Sarah Warin when he was 66 and they produced a daughter, Rosa two years later, and then a son, Henry, two years after that. He is listed in 1835 as living at Chapel Street, Belper, and then in 1840 and 1853 at Upper Brook Street, Derby.

A gap then appears from 1853 – the last trade reference to Gratian until 1870, when **Alfred Noble** (b 1849 d 1905) was listed as working from 63, Melbourne Street, Derby. Noble was one of a large family of organ builders originating in Norwich. He came to Derby via Birmingham and had four daughters and six sons, of whom his eldest, Ernest (b 1875) was apprenticed to him.

Noble built or worked on a number of local organs, including Christ Church, Derby; Dale Road Methodist Church, Derby; Barrow on Trent Methodist Church; Middleton Wesleyan and St. Michael's Church, Shirley, where he added the swell manual. His last local directory entry was 1905, the year of his death.

Just four years after Noble started in business, **James Mitchell Grunwell** (b 1835 d 1888) started trading - his Derby directory advertisement in 1874 reading

"James Mitchell Grunwell, Victoria Street (congregational chapel), pedals fitted to piano fortes and harmoniums – res Beckett Well Lane".

In that year he built the small three manual organ for T.B. Mellor, organist of St. Peter's Church, Belper and shortly afterwards installed the two manual organ in St. Paul's Church, Quarndon, although the great organ of that instrument is quite a bit older. Other work included the organs at

Joseph Gratian	1784-1863
Alfred Noble	1849-1905
James Mitchell Grunwell	1835-1888
William Joseph Hall	1851-1886
Henry Adams Weston	1826-1907
William Walker	c.1891
John Stacey	c.1861
John Housley Adkins	1869-1947

Wirksworth Congregational Church, Nether Heage Methodist Church in its former home, Fritchley Congregational Church, and the original one for Kedleston Street Methodist Church, Derby.

By 1881 Grunwell was established at 59, Traffic Street and interestingly, also advertising in that year at 44 Traffic Street were the "*Midland Electric Blowing Co., prop J. & A. Page*". The firm, from which in 1932 **Arthur Fryer** came and started the British Organ Blowing Co. (B.O.B. Co.), were still trading after the Second World War.

In 1884, my grandfather, John Housley Adkins was indentured to Grunwell but in June 1887 he left to work for White (later White & Sentence) of Grantham. Grunwell died in 1888 so it is possible that he decided to retire for some reason and arranged for Adkins to continue his indentures with White.

In 1876 there is an entry in Kelly's Derbyshire directory showing **William Joseph Hall**, organ builder, with the address at 7, Wardwick and Bells Mill, Cheapside. Unfortunately I could find little more about him, although there was a William Joseph Hall (b 1851 d 1886) with a Frank Hall in business at Birkenhead in 1882 to 1886. Was this the same man or alternatively an ex-employee of Noble or Grunwell?

Recently I came across the business card of **Henry Adams Weston** (b 1826 d 1907) who in 1881 first advertised in the Derbyshire directory as "*Henry A. Weston, organ builder, 10a Jury*

Street, Derby". In 1884 and now resident at 125, Ashbourne Road, he advertised his business address as "*organ builder & joiner, 6½ St. Peters Street, Derby*" however this odd address is clarified in 1885 when his address was given as Oakes Yard, St. Peters Street, Derby. Actually it is shown on his business card as Cantrell's Yard but that may refer to one of the twelve businesses that were trading there. Oakes Yard was where the Yorkshire Bank and Co-op Travel are now situated in St. Peters Street and was opposite Nags Head Yard which eventually was bought by Marks & Spencer before being demolished in 1959.

By 1888 Weston, now listed as just "*organ builder*", had moved his residence to 35, Wilson Street but by 1891 there appears to be no further reference. I have no knowledge of his work on any particular organ but over the ten years or so that he was in business there may well be records in some of our churches old minutes books.

In the 1891 directory there appears a trade reference to "**William Walker**, (reed) organ builder, Oxford Street, Ripley". It may not now be appreciated, but



many churches and chapels as well as private residences owned reed organs and there was a healthy trade in them up until the cheaper electronic instruments became available in the 1950s.

In the 1895 Belper Trade directory we find **John Stacey** advertising as an organ builder of 24, Bedford Street, Derby, and again in the Town & Country Derbyshire directory of 1905.

There was a John Stacey who was in business in Sheffield from 1861 to 1869, having worked for Brindley & Foster. It is of course possible for this to have been the same person as, allowing him the age of 30 when he started his business in 1861, he would have been 65 when presumably he retired. It does seem strange that there is a gap of 26 years between the two businesses and there is also a suggestion that the Staceys were father and son, but then the son, who would have then been a relatively young man, would only have been in business for about ten years – and there is no trace of him afterwards. I personally prefer the former explanation; in any case there are only four organs which

can be traced as having been worked on by him – St. Michael & All Angels, West Felton, Shropshire, Holy Trinity, Tansley (swell added), the unusual two manual (great 3, swell 2, ped 1 coup 3) at Junction Street Baptist Church, and in 1887 the three manual organ in Greenlane Primitive Methodist Church, although I always felt that the latter was an unusually ambitious instrument to be accredited to him – it did have his nameplate on it however!

The last organ builder to start up in business in the 19th century was **John Housley Adkins** who, having moved from White to work for Denning of Stamford in 1893/94 started up on his own in 1898. His first home was at 69, Nottingham Road but he soon moved to 37, Queen Street, having his works at the 1765 Wesleyan chapel in St. Michael's Lane. At one time it was suggested that Adkins bought out Grunwell's business but, as seen earlier, that ended in 1888 so it was unlikely that there would have been anything left to buy ten years later. It should be remembered that in 1898 Noble was still trading and Stacey had established himself in 1885.

Adkins's son, Lewis, sadly died in 1897, so it would appear that he came back to Derby to start a new phase of his life, starting from scratch.

With the progress of the industrial revolution still in full swing, much wealth was generated and a side effect was that a considerable amount was directed to building and furnishing not only Anglican and Roman Catholic churches but also an array of chapels – Congregational, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist churches with sundry names such as Bethel, Ebenezer, and Mount Zion etc. Not only did the sponsors compete with each other in the splendour of their buildings but in their pipe organs as well and in the last half of the 19th century many were installed in this area. It is therefore rather surprising that during that period, of the eight builders mentioned here, only a very few instruments were produced by them, and a considerable proportion were either enlargements or rebuilds of older organs.

John Poyser

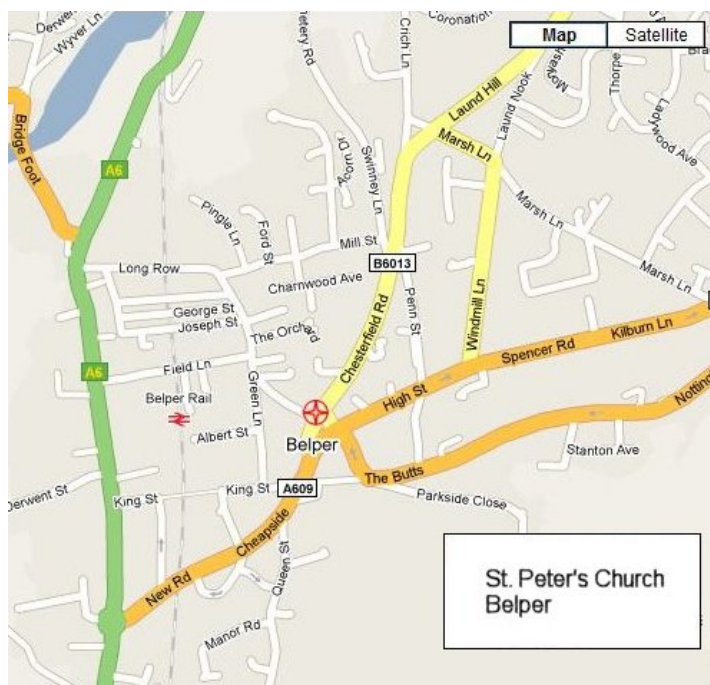
18th Century English Organ Music, Saturday 11th September 7.30 pm at St.Peter's, Belper

Rodney Tomkins and Stephen Johns will present an evening of English organ music composed in the Georgian era, 1710-1830. Familiar names such as Stanley, Russell and Samuel Wesley will be set in the context of the period through contemporary references and specially chosen pieces.

The location of this event at St.Peter's is ideal since the historic organ, although dating from about 1853, was built to a conservative design looking back to the late 18th Century. This was a period of low wind pressures and bright cornet and trumpet stops, contrasting with the later romantic developments of the 19th Century.

E-MAIL

If you wish to receive the bi-monthly *Newsletter* as a pdf file via email, please forward your email address to DDOAnews@gmail.com.



Items of news or articles for the October/November edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 20th September**, either via e-mail: DDOAnews@gmail.com or by post: Dr.Laurence Rogers, 24 St.David's Crescent, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4SS. The Secretary, Mrs Siann Hurt 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.