

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



Recital by Peter Gould

Reflections on the 2010 Midlands Organ Day by Denis Littleton and Laurence Rogers

After months of planning the Midlands Organ Day, hosted by the DDOA at Derby Cathedral and St. John's Church, proved to be a great success. Blessed with glorious sunshine throughout the day, there was a distinctive buzz of enthusiasm amongst the 65 participants visiting from the Midlands region and beyond. Since the event, we have received several letters and emails expressing gratitude and congratulations for the variety in the programme and its efficient management throughout the day.

Ian Bell (organ builder, consultant and Editor of the *Organbuilder*) talked about his experience at Compton's, which he joined as an apprentice in 1960. He thinks he is probably the last person living who actually worked for John Compton. This was a fascinating talk, painting a picture of Compton's constant drive for innovation which was viewed with some suspicion by the traditional and well-established firms of organ builders. His mass-production methods



Millenium Organ Book workshop with Paul Hale

DDOA Events 2011

- 24th January** DVDs and recordings of organs and their music.
- 23rd February** Talk by Peter Collins, Organ builder.
- 26th March** Visit to St John's, Carrington, Nottingham
- 18th May** Lecture recital by Simon Lindley.
- 14th June** Annual dinner.
- 18th July** Visit to local organs.
- 24th September** Outing to Oakham churches and Peterborough Cathedral.
- 24th October** Composers' workshop with Paul Fisher.
- November** Chairman's Event and AGM.

Concerts & Recitals

Saturday 11th December 7.30 pm
Christchurch Belper

Monday 13th December 7.30 pm
St. John's, Bridge Street, Derby
'Light of Light' Music for Christmas
Sitwell Singers conducted by Malcolm Goldring. £8

Saturday 18th December 7.30 pm
Britten – Ceremony of Carols, Vaughan Williams – Fantasia on Christmas Carols
Derby Choral Union conducted by Richard Dacey
Derby Cathedral. £10, £15

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Ian Bell Peter Gould



Paul Hale Edmund Stow



Denis Littleton Paul Hale Laurence Rogers

succeeded in lowering the cost of building new organs such that he captured entirely the emerging market for theatre and cinema organs during the 1920's and 1930's. The high point was to build organs for the BBC, which was highly symbolic of acceptance by the establishment. Compton's rebuild of the Derby Cathedral organ in 1939 was an unusual project in the context of the firm's main business.

Peter Gould's recital on the Cathedral organ was an impressive demonstration of the power, versatility and variety of the instrument. The carefully chosen programme of pieces by Elgar, Bach, Franck, Hakim, David Briggs and Percy Fletcher contained an excellent range of styles and ably showed off the resources of organ. Peter is to be congratulated on his immaculate performance.

Stephen Johns and James Muckle introduced the DDOA "Children and the Organ" workshop which has been successfully offered to several primary schools in Derbyshire. The demonstration equipment included the one-octave organ constructed by Ed Stow and the tracker action by Terry Bennett. The rationale for this project was clear: to sow the seeds for a future, organ-loving community; but the need to align the

programme to the National Curriculum demanded creative planning. Stephen described some of the pitfalls in setting up and organising the practical arrangements, but the reward at the end of the day was the unfettered enthusiasm of the participating pupils.

At St. John's, **Paul Hale** conducted a television-style interview with **Edmund Stow** about his recent restoration of the organ, which has been returned tonally to its Willis origins of 1875. This was an engaging and informative session in which numerous details of design decisions taken during the project were uncovered. To conclude, Ed. played two preludes on hymn tunes by Parry to demonstrate some of the distinctive tonal qualities of the instrument.



Stephen Johns

Back at the Cathedral, **Paul Hale** led a workshop session on the IAO Millennium Organ Book. Having previously recorded all the pieces, he had an intimate knowledge of them. His anecdotes about telephoning some of the composers to check if there were wrongly printed notes delighted some of the sceptics in the audience, however, his assured performances of selected pieces won new friends.

When this session was planned, volunteers were sought to learn a piece and play it in the workshop. Somehow Denis and Laurence had not been eliminated from the process and on the day they found themselves sitting on the hot bench. Denis played the *Triptych of the Holy Trinity* by John Harper, a slow mysterious piece with lots of tricky fingering to achieve legato. Laurence's piece, *Dithyramb* by Andrew Fletcher, also had tricky fingering, but the theme tune and harmonies of the middle and final sections were very rewarding to play. Paul was very kind to us in his evaluation and advice.

The day ended with Evensong, with the Cathedral Girls Choir, played out with a suitably rousing voluntary, the *Allegro risoluto* from Vierne's *Second Symphony*.

Denis Littleton & Laurence Rogers

Recent Events

'A Family affair' - Chairman's Evening

St. James Riddings was the setting for this year's Chairman's Event hosted by Peter Williams, who introduced his wife Margaret and son Tom with his wife, Beth, who joined forces to offer an eclectic programme for voice, piano, flute, cello and organ.

After a gentle piano duet by Fauré, our ears were charmed by Tom's assured and expressive

singing of 'Eight Songs from the Chinese' by Martin Dalby. This set the pattern for a programme which challenged listeners with unfamiliar compositions and varied instrumental combinations. We were treated to works by Prokofiev, Brahms, Alain, Peeters and Dvořák. For me a highlight was the setting for cello and piano of the Aria by Flor Peeters. The warm cello tone offered much more depth of expression than the familiar version for solo organ.

Laurence Rogers



Recital by Andrew Storer, St. John's Derby

The final recital in the series on the newly-restored organ in St John's, Bridge Street, was given by the resident organist, Andy Storer, whose eclectic programme played to the strengths and versatility of the Willis organ. *Fanfare*, by J.N. Lemmens explored the solid foundation stops of the organ and was played at a well-judged, stately tempo; too often, performers deliver pieces from that period at much faster tempi than intended by the composer.

Livre d'Orgue by N de Grigny was a brave choice for a recital on an instrument that is not ideally suited to the French tradition. However, if we restrict ourselves to music written specifically for English instruments we lose the rich traditions of the French, German and Spanish schools. The new tierce mixture added an appropriate *piquancy*, and the well-matched Swell and Great reeds and mixtures also helped to bring the music to life; I particularly liked Andy's well-controlled ornamentation.

Variations on Urbs Beata by Alan Spedding, afforded further opportunities to explore the tonal resources of the organ, though the final piece, *Choral in A Minor* by Franck, was perhaps the most successful piece of the evening. Franck is difficult to play because the sectional nature of his music makes the creation of a unified, coherent structure difficult to achieve, though Andy had a clear vision of what was required and gave a fine performance to end his recital and the series.

The recital series at St John's provided a welcome relief to those of us suffering from withdrawal symptoms after the end of the cathedral series, and it was pleasing to see the recitals so well supported. Let us hope that there will be a similar series next year.

Tony Westerman

Photo: Tonbridge School chapel.

The four manual tracker-action organ by Marcussen (1995) has 66 stops, including two 32' stops.

IAO Congress – A personal view

This year's Congress at the end of July was in Sussex. The hotel in Brighton chosen as the base for the week had some interesting neighbours; a gay club which operated until 8 a.m., a sauna which operated until 3.30 a.m. and the coach station. The organs selected for visits during the week were impressively large instruments, and I wondered how representative they were of Sussex as a whole.

Congress opened with an evening recital at Hove Parish Church (Hill 1894, 3 manuals 49 stops). The first full day started at St. Bartholomew, Brighton, (Morgan & Smith 1906, III, 39), a high church in more ways than one; the nave is about 150 feet tall. Then, for something completely different, we visited the East Sussex National Golf Resort, where the owner is a theatre organ enthusiast. Installed there is a 4 manual 32 rank Wurlitzer, complete with a console which rises through the stage. Some of the more esoteric stops are *door bell*, *train whistle* and *chrysoglott*, whatever that may be.

Following lunch in the county town of Lewes, we travelled to Lancing College chapel, which looks like a small French cathedral which has fallen to earth in rural Sussex. Here Daniel Hyde (Magdalen College, Oxford) gave a recital, which included Guilmant's 1st sonata, on the west end organ (Walker 1914, III, 54), and a masterclass on three Bach pieces with three students on the east end organ (Frobenius 1986, II, 20). Why, I wonder do young players play so fast? One of them really came unstuck with the speed at which he started, and the others both had some 'white-knuckle' moments.

Tuesday found us at Arundel, for a recital in the RC Cathedral (Hill 1873, III, 40) which included works by Tournemire, Vierne, Bach, Harwood and Frescobaldi. Later we were back on the A27 heading for Chichester Cathedral (Hill 1851, IV, 54) and a recital from Catherine Ennis. The next recital was more humorous, in the mould of some of the Derby cathedral recitals involving several organs and organists, where two chamber organs were pressed into service to supplement the cathedral organ in a programme including works by Lefebure-Wely and Balbastre.

On Wednesday our direction was north to Christ's Hospital public school, Horsham. A recital on the chapel organ (Rushworth & Dreaper 1931, IV, 70) included the whole of the Widor 5th Symphony. They are not short of organs at Christ's Hospital, with a ten stop Willis 1876 in the dining hall and a large Hill organ in 'Big school', although the Hill is currently silent, needing a lot of money to be spent on it.

The afternoon was spent at another public school, Tonbridge (Marcussen, 1995, IV, 67) for a recital by Simon Preston. I found the programme rather disappointing: He included six Fugues on BACH by Schuman; for my taste, one of them would have been quite sufficient.

For reasons best known to themselves the coach drivers set off back to Brighton (about 35 miles south west) by first going 10 miles north to the M25, only to join a mighty traffic jam, such that it took five hours to get back to the hotel. On arrival, sadly the kitchen had closed!



The last day was spent in Brighton, firstly at St Paul's near the sea-front. Although the church is undergoing restoration and part of the organ does not work, it is very interesting, and, if you are ever in Brighton, it is well worth a visit. Here the IAO AGM took place followed by an illustrated lecture by Kim Gilbert and Simon Williams from the RCO entitled 'Spreading the music - a fresh look at learning & teaching'.

The final musical event took place at St Peter's, the former Parish Church which was once threatened with closure due to a declining congregation, but has been taken over by Holy Trinity, Brompton who hope to revive the place. The regular music there does not involve much organ music, but the authorities have decided to retain the 1899 Willis (IV, 45). Neil Cockburn, who now works in Canada, gave a recital which included works by S.S. Wesley, Boely, and Saint-Saens.

The Congress ended with the annual dinner, the speaker was the Rt. Rev. Graham Knowles, Dean of St. Pauls, who gave an amusing speech mostly devoted to his time as vicar at Leeds Parish Church, where, in his phrase, he 'worked for' Simon Lindley.

Denis Littleton

Derbyshire RSCM: Organists' Support Scheme: A brief update.

We have successfully tutored 12 people this last year, ranging from some accomplished pianists to those with more modest skills. There have been many comments commending the skill, enthusiasm and above all, patience of our tutors (Ian Brackenbury, David Johnson, Tony Westerman and Chris Dixon) and we hope to carry on next year. We have had very good support from Canon David Truby (Wirksworth Deanery) who has encouraged participation. If members know of anyone who might be interested, please get in touch with me. I am convinced there are many people out there who would benefit from what we have to offer but may still be unaware of the scheme. Approaches to clergy may well be the best way. My contact details are on the website.

Stephen Johns

DDOA - Your Association

New Committee and officers

At the recent AGM the following officers were elected:

Professor James Muckle (Chairman), Denis Littleton (Vice-Chairman) and Stephen Johns (Secretary). Three members were newly elected to the committee: Peter Gould, David Shooter and David Wells. Terry Bennett was re-elected. More details of the AGM will be reported in the January Newsletter.

Subscriptions

New subscription rates for 2011 were agreed at the AGM:

Standard rate: £14

Senior rate: £12

Children and the Organ

The CATO team enjoyed a delightful visit to Heage Primary School in September. 'Fantastic, great, cool, wonderful' were included in the list of epithets overheard by John Forster as the party left the church, so we cannot have done too badly! Gillian Chatto, who was the main organist for the day, received a delightful letter from a girl pupil assuring her she was a very good organist (which we all know anyway) and that they had all had a wonderful day.

We are currently planning a new project aimed at older children, possibly in connection with a Music Centre. We also have a visit to St John's Derby planned next year with Ashgate School which has responded very positively to a personal approach. Meanwhile we still struggle to get schools interested, despite informative fliers, personal contacts etc. I once again urge members to help us make contact if they know of a junior school, situated fairly near a church with a reasonably good organ. The evidence from the schools we have visited convinces us that we have a good (free) 'product' on offer.

Stephen Johns

Members' news

We are sad to record the death of William Balderston of Ashbourne.

Maureen Capewell has moved to the Peak District: Sunnydale Cottage, Bankside, Youlgrave, Derbyshire DE45 1WD

People

Cathedral Appointment

We are very happy indeed to congratulate Chris Johns on his recent appointment to Leicester Cathedral as Director of Music.



Chris was educated at Littleover School and de Ferrers, Burton. He became a chorister at Derby Cathedral and studied piano with Peter Gould and organ with Tom Corfield; during this period he was a student member of our Association. After Derby he read Languages and was a Choral Exhibitioner at Jesus College Cambridge. Subsequently he has worked as Assistant Director of Music at Osnabrück Cathedral, as Organ Scholar at Durham Cathedral and presently as Choral Director in the RC Diocese of Leeds. He gained ARCO this year, winning the Limpus Prize. Chris takes up his duties at Leicester in January 2011.

Your newsletter

Warm memories of the Summer holidays still linger on for some members and it was a pleasure to receive John Hobb's account of visiting significant locations in Germany. Thanks also to Denis Littleton for his reporting of IAO events.

The next issue of the *Newsletter* will be in January. At the present, the events diary is looking very sparse, so please send notices of events which will interest members. Please send your contribution to DDOAnews@gmail.com.

Editor

More Travellers' Tales from Germany

John Hobbs

This summer Rachel and I visited Northern Germany for tour which included many places with strong musical associations, namely Leipzig, Eisenach and Lübeck, and prompted by the Editor's plea for articles I thought I would offer this contribution.

We flew to Berlin which proved to be a very thought-provoking place to spend 48 hours. On the musical front we visited the Musical Instrument Museum, where amongst the assorted decorated keyboard instruments, keyless clarinets and valveless trumpets, were two contrasting but distinctly foreign organs - a John and William Gray instrument of 1815, transplanted from Somerset, and a 1929 Wurlitzer, which was being put through its paces when we arrived. It was a shame not to be able to hear any other instruments either live or through recordings. How good to hear from James Muckle (October *Newsletter*) that one can play the instruments at Finchcocks.

Then we drove to Leipzig and arrived to the sound of a Brass Quintet playing outside the Nikolaikirche where we learned about the role of the church in the 'Peaceful Revolution' leading up to the fall of the Communist State in 1990. The next day after quickly paying homage at the



J. & W. Gray organ, 1815 - 1820



The 'Mighty Wurlitzer' in Berlin

Thomaskirche we began a long day trip to Eisenach, famous not only as Bach's birthplace, but also as the town where Luther was a student. Indeed it was at the Wartburg castle high above the town that Luther translated the Bible into German

We were given a genuine welcome at the Georgenkirche and I found the interior with its galleries stunning. It was in this church that Bach was baptised and Laurence tells me that Johann Christoph Bach was city organist and designed a 60-stop organ here which was used as the basis for the new 'Bach organ' in the Thomaskirche, Leipzig in 2000.

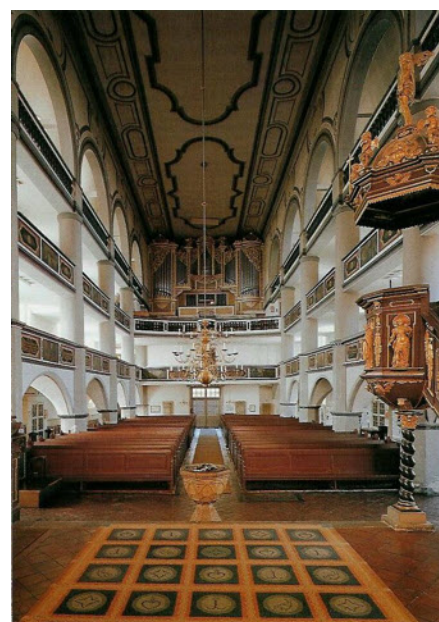
As a break from cities, churches and museums we then had two days in the Harz Mountains. The boundary between East and West Germany ran through the mountains and both sides had their listening posts. The highest mountain, the Brocken (1142m) lies in the East and some of the former military buildings are still there. Some four weeks after reunification thousands of people walked to the summit to demand its opening.

The other attraction in the Harz (for some) is the narrow gauge steam railway. Originally built for industrial reasons, a spur to the summit of the Brocken was constructed for the tourists.

Also in the Harz is the pretty town of Stolberg, the birthplace of Thomas Müntzer, theologian and revolutionary who in 1525 took over the town of Mühlhausen where Bach was organist in 1707. Although we found out very little about this period of church history

in Germany, it whetted my appetite to find out more.

Finally, ever since Professor Robert Pascall's evening of Buxtehude for the DDOA in March 2007, I had wanted to visit Lübeck. The city was heavily bombed on Palm Sunday 1942 and many of the churches were severely damaged. Since then all have been reconstructed and, although many original organs perished, it is still possible to visit the historic churches in the city.



Georgkirche with Baptismal Font in centre

We caught most of the morning service at the Aegidienkirche and felt very much at home with the style of worship. In the hymns the organist's phrasing was excellent, both allowing us to breathe and never losing the pulse and I particularly liked the nazard he used to solo the tune. I was hitherto unaware of the custom of prefacing the hymns with a short improvisation and of remaining



Wartburg Castle overlooking Eisenach



Lübeck Holstentor with city spires

seated throughout the concluding voluntary.

The city hosts a programme of concerts throughout the summer, but the only one available to us was a recital on the Marcussen organ at the Lübeck Dom. As I have heard both Nottingham Marcussens this would not have been my first choice. Sadly I felt the programme which included Schumann's sketches and a fugue on BACH plus Mendelssohn's A major sonata did not suit the instrument and rather too much of it was delivered with the Great

mixture. I was virtually unable to recognise Duruflé's *Fugue sur le Carillon de Soissons*, such was the reverberation.

One of the city tourist attractions is the Willy Brandt house. We had not planned on visiting this, but the information at the front door caught my interest. He was born in Lübeck, though not at the house which is the museum, and not with the name 'Willy Brandt'. This was the name he assumed after fleeing to Norway to escape the Nazis. The museum also covered his time as mayor of Berlin and chancellor of West Germany and I suppose I remember him being regularly on the news when I was growing up. It was a little ironic to see a tiny section of the Berlin wall here considering that in Berlin we saw no remains of it.

In conclusion I came away having found out a little about Germany in the Cold War and the role of the church in the 'Peaceful Revolution'. I am full of respect for their openness about the Second World



Aedigienkirche organ
(1624-26 by Hans Scherer the Younger)

War. It is clearly a country which values organs and has a culture of organ concerts and, if we were to go back, I would like to arrange some time at a console or two – who wouldn't!

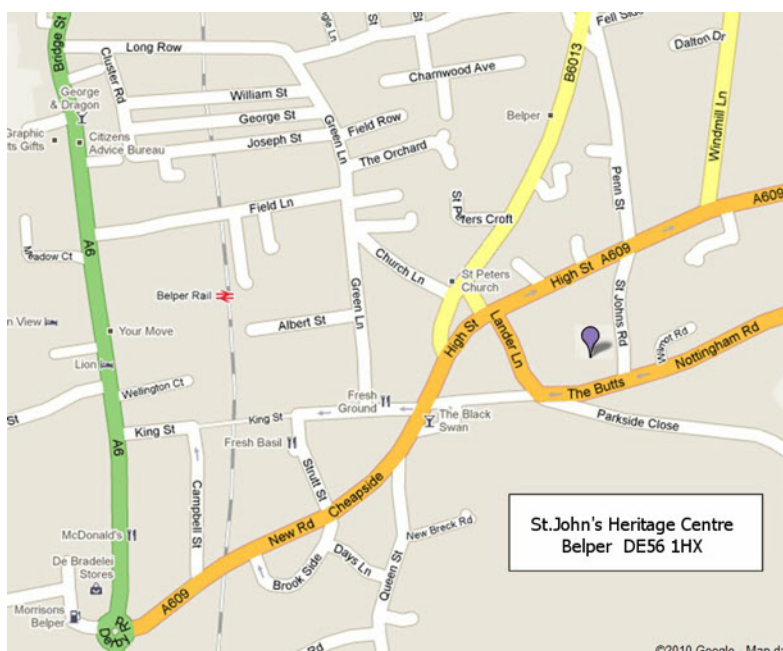
John Hobbs

An evening of music on DVDs and CDs Saturday 24th January 7.30 pm at St.John's Heritage Centre, Belper

Denis Littleton and Peter Williams will present a selection of videos and music featuring some famous organs and organists. Their final selection is still to be confirmed, but it is likely to include names such as, Daniel Moulton, Ian Tracey, Stephen Cleobury and Marie Claire Alain. Organs to be featured will include King's College Cambridge, Liverpool Cathedral and several historic English organs.

Our audio-visual expert David Shooter will once again provide technology ensuring that we can enjoy splendid picture quality and high fidelity sound.

The location of this event at St.John's Heritage Centre, Belper, has a good reputation for its warmth and comfort on cold January evenings. Access to the car park is from St.John's Road.



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 January/February edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 20th December**, either via e-mail: DDOAnews@gmail.com or by post: Dr.Laurence Rogers, 24 St.David's Crescent, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4SS. The Secretary, Mr Stephen Johns, 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.