

# Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

## Newsletter



### *The Challenge of Playing Abroad - Tales from Reims* David Warner-Howard

This year, in celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's 60<sup>th</sup> jubilee, some 50 – 60 members of the French Cathedral Singers (FCS), under the direction of Philip Baxter, arrived in Reims for their summer holiday to sing music from the 1953 Coronation Service, plus some other items, at various Cathedrals and Churches in the City where previous French Monarchs had been crowned.

Very soon after our arrival several organisational challenges emerged for the choir director and for me as organist to the FCS. We were scheduled to give a concert and to sing at the High Mass on Sunday at the Cathedral Church of Notre Dame, but the cathedral authorities were unable to offer us any rehearsal time.

An alternative venue for rehearsal was hastily arranged with the welcome assistance of the

Presbyterian Temple, they even laid on light drinks and refreshments at each rehearsal. Here we were made most welcome and the organist, George Herb, was on hand to help and explain matters concerning the organ of 53 stops built by Haerpfer in 1923. The first surprise was that this was a five-manual instrument with an interesting departure from the norm. The fifth manual was in fact a duplicate of the pedal organ, and the stops allocated to it allowed the pedal to be played by the hands instead of the feet. The organ had not been tuned for some three years so that ruled out most of the reed stops. However we managed our two rehearsal slots and as a thank you we gave a 30 minute recital to a large appreciative audience.

A full choral evensong was planned for the Basilique Saint-Rémy. Here the main organ, (3-manuals & pedals) built by Bertrand Cattiaux in 2000, was situated along the South side of

## DDOA Events 2013

### 13<sup>th</sup> November

Chairman's Event and AGM at St Werburgh's, Spondon 7.15pm (see page 6)

## First Event in 2014

### 10<sup>th</sup> February

'Those were the Days' Recordings of famous organists of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century St John's Heritage Centre, Belper at 7.30pm . (see page 6)

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## Concerts & Recitals

### Benjamin Britten 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

#### Friday 22 November, 7.45pm

Derby Cathedral *The Company of Heaven*  
Massed choirs conducted by Peter Gould  
Works by Britten, Purcell, Parry, Darke and Thiman (£15 & £10)

### An Afternoon of Britten

including *A Ceremony of Carols*

#### Sunday 17 November, 3.00pm

St Barnabas Cathedral, Nottingham  
Tom Williams with the Cathedral Choir  
(£7 at the door)

### Derwent Singers at Derby Cathedral

Saturday 9 November, 7.30 pm

Britten ~ *A Boy Was Born*

Frank Martin ~ *Mass for Double Choir*

Carl Rüttig ~ *O Magnum Mysterium*

Saturday 7 December, 7.30pm

St Mary's, Tutbury (£10)

Handel ~ *Messiah*

### Derby Choral Union at Derby Cathedral

Saturday 16 November 7.30pm

Vaughan Williams ~ *Five Mystical Songs*,

Britten ~ *Rejoice in the Lamb*,

Parry ~ *I Was Glad*,

Goodall ~ *Eternal Light*

Saturday 21 December 7.30pm

Handel ~ *Messiah*

### Derby Bach Choir at Derby Cathedral

Saturday 23 November, 7.30pm

Britten ~ *St Nicholas*

Finzi ~ *Dies Natalis*

Holst ~ *Hymn of Jesus*

Saturday 15 December, 7.30 pm

Calke Abbey, Ticknall

Handel ~ *Messiah*

### Sitwell Singers

Christmas concert: *Mighty Wonder!*

Saturday 14 December, 7.30pm

St Werburgh's, Spondon

Monday 16 December, 7.30pm

St John's, Bridge Street, Derby





Presbyterian Temple

the nave high up on a balcony. This organ of 46 stops was a fine instrument, albeit with very few foundation stops. The pedal section of 33 notes extended 3 notes below normal bottom C. The organiste titulaire, Benjamine-Joseph Steens, introduced me to the organ. Due to the large distance between organ and choir, verbal communication between organist and conductor proved to be a little difficult, but there was CCTV and good acoustics so that we completed a rehearsal followed by the choral evensong without any problems. Tragically later that same night, during a violent thunderstorm, the Basilique received a direct lightning strike that effectively burned out the entire electrical systems forcing the church to be closed for the foreseeable future.

On our arrival at the Cathedral for our concert there, we discovered that the officials did not have any written authorisation for us to use the Nave organ. Fortunately the organist from St Rémy happened to be present and, after some negotiations, we were able to perform a short concert with the instrument. This was a little gem by Cavaillé-Coll having two manuals and pedals. Its close proximity to the choir helped with obtaining a good balance. After a short debrief, I felt able to make some minor adjustments to tone and volume in preparation for our items for the Sunday Mass. However, we were later to discover that these arrangements had to change.

On Sunday we all arrived early, only to find that the Cathedral does not use the Nave for Mass and instead the congregation are located in the east end of the

chancel facing west towards the High Altar. Obviously using the nave organ was out of the question and the main Cathedral organ had to be used. The mighty Grand Organ (4-manual & pedals and 86 stops), built by Victor Gonzales in 1938, was located on the north wall of the crossing. As well as being high up, it was at least some 50m away from our singers who were to be positioned close to the altar. Fortunately CCTV was available again and the sound from the priest and cantor was relayed up to the organ loft. For the usual French services, which lack the use of a choir, this arrangement would normally be adequate, however, for our choir things proved a little different. In the sight line of the fixed camera were the horizontal rails of a metal screen that effectively meant that it was not possible to see the conductor's hands. As there was no possibility of repositioning the choir or camera



The Grand Organ of Reims Cathedral



Basilique St Rémy

it proved more than a little difficult to follow the conductor. However, we did manage to work with these problems and sang some parts of the Mozart Coronation Mass, albeit rather less satisfactorily than we would have wished. If only there been rehearsal time permitted in the Cathedral!

The organ console was fully electrified and I witnessed an interesting effect: The pedal board could be split-divided electrically. It is possible to play an accompaniment with both hands and the left foot, whilst the right foot picks out a solo line of its own. Most digital keyboards have this facility, but this is the first time I have seen it on a traditional pipe organ.

As a welcome distraction each evening there were two 'son et lumière' presentations covering the history of the Cathedral. Four static technology towers face the west façade. Each had a battery of light projectors all linked to a computer-generated display that was projected onto the entire western façade of the Cathedral. This is really worth seeing (it can be found on YouTube) and some of us visited this excellent presentation on two occasions.

From this you can gather that my position as organist to the FCS can at times be somewhat fraught. Learning and practising all the music at home is one thing, but having little or no practice time on strange instruments does make for an interesting week's music-making. Putting many difficulties and frustrations aside, I found the whole enterprise enjoyable and stimulating, particularly mixing with a group of musicians keen to sing their hearts out on a range of 'good' choral music.

*David Warner-Howard*



## Recent Events

### Annual Outing - Oxford

The annual outing proved to be another very successful event, and very grateful thanks are due to Stephen Johns for his excellent organisational and pastoral (shepherding) skills. About 28 people, of whom 12 were members, travelled to Oxford on Sat 14 September, so very many thanks to our guests who helped to make the visit viable – a good number of them provided an audience in the different chapels visited. The success of the event was also due to our coach driver Willis Garratt (member) with superb navigational aplomb provided by Derek Fisher (member) - Who needs a Satnav if you have Derek? We successfully avoided Traffic Wardens in Full Street at the start of the day and arrived at Oxford just about on time. We were welcomed at Keble with a nice cup of coffee in mugs decorated with the college crest. Simon Whalley (Director of Music) gave us brief introduction to the history of the instrument which has been a long time coming. After the old organ became defunct they relied on a Copeman Hart for a long time until the Tickell instrument was finally commissioned. There is a wonderful acoustic in the chapel which enabled the instrument to shine; a 4 manual instrument with mechanical action which is very easy to play. Essentially it is an 'all purpose' instrument. I personally



Above: Keble College Chapel

Below: The Victorian organ case at Keble

was sorry to miss this instrument as I was delayed by another commitment from arriving until lunchtime.

I did, however, enjoy the opportunity of hearing at New College Ben Bloor's excellent introduction and demonstration with a varied programme including Bach, Vierne and a delightful piece, Mozart Changes by Gardoni. The date of 1969 makes the Grant, Degens and Bradbeer 3 manual organ one of its builders' earlier instruments. With a very continental Positive case behind the console it is a very comfortable instrument to play and Ben was on hand to assist with registration. It speaks well into the chapel and Ben was honest about its good points as well as its limitations.



New College Chapel

On to Exeter College where the Walker 2-manual instrument was also a comfortable instrument to play if not to access. The major disappointment for me was that, although it is fully equipped with authentic Cavaillé-Coll style vents and "tirasses" operated by hitch-down pedals these have been disconnected and only a "traditional English" system of registering was available.

With Stephen's excellent timetabling, all who wished to play had enough time to sample at least two of the three instruments on offer. Many thanks to all involved.

*John Maxwell-Jones*



Exploring the stops at Exeter College

*Thanks to David Shooter who took the photographs.*

## DDOA - Your Association

### AGM 13<sup>th</sup> November

The Committee succeeds each year in generating a varied programme of events for the fulfilment of the wider membership, but to maintain this it is important to widen and develop the pool of ideas available to the Committee. This calls for **renewing the Committee with fresh volunteers** and the AGM provides the annual opportunity for doing this. So please consider nominating yourself for this valuable role. Equally, if you can offer feedback on what has been, or have ideas and comments which will benefit future events, please come along and have your say. In recent years we have succeeded in keeping the AGM brief, to be followed by the Chairman's event. This year our Chairman, Denis Littleton, will share his enthusiasm for the music of Johann Ludwig Krebs (see page 6).

### Subscriptions for 2014

The treasurer is happy to report that the subscription rates do not need to increase for 2014, in which case they will be (subject to ratification at the AGM):

Full Membership: £15  
Additional Member at same address: £5  
Students: £0

The *Organists' Review*, however, will be going up by 30p per issue, so will cost £25 per year from 2014, making the subscription for people who take the 'Review' £40.

### Gift Aid

If you have not already done so, you may wish to consider completing a *Gift Aid* declaration for the DDOA which then allows the Association to reclaim tax on any donations (including subscriptions) which you make to the DDOA. You are eligible to complete such a declaration if you are a UK taxpayer, paying at least as much tax as the amount which the DDOA (and any other charities to which you donate) will reclaim on your donations. A declaration need only be made once and will be ongoing thereafter, as long as you remain a taxpayer. (Should you cease to pay tax at any time, then you should inform the DDOA Gift Aid secretary that this is the case.) The form is attached with

this newsletter and should be completed and returned to the Gift Aid Secretary, Gillian Chatto, 22 Guide Post, Nether Heage, Derbyshire, DE56 2AQ, email: [dandgchatto@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:dandgchatto@tiscali.co.uk).

### Books & CDs Exchange

The idea has been mooted of including a 'Market Place' column in the *Newsletter*, in which members may exchange, search for, or sell music, CDs or books etc. Please let the Editor know if you have any items for such a column.

### Children and the Organ

The CATO team recently presented morning and afternoon workshops for two classes from Portway Primary School at St Nicholas' Church, Allestree. This was a lovely spacious setting for the workshops and children engaged with the activities with great enthusiasm. The team particularly appreciated the votes of thanks given by two pupil volunteers at the conclusion of each session.

If members know of or can recommend primary schools who might be interested in participating in a CATO workshop, please contact the Secretary.

### Provisional Programme for 2014

*February:* Recordings of 20<sup>th</sup> Century organists  
*March:* Organ Tourism – Anthony Burns-Cox  
*April:* J.S. Bach as a Teacher  
*May:* Visit to organs in Sheffield  
*June:* Annual Dinner  
*July:* Educational Event at Derby Cathedral  
*July:* Visit organs - Hoar Cross and Doveridge  
*September:* Visit local organs - Alvaston and Egginton  
*October:* The Organ Pilgrimage – Peter Gould at St Osmund's, Derby  
*November:* Chairman's Evening

### Members' News

We are happy to welcome David Beddow to our membership and hope he will enjoy our events and meeting other members. David is Organist and Choirmaster at St Clement's Church, Horsley. He was introduced to the DDOA by one of our members, which is a useful reminder that if you have friends who are organ-lovers or potentially interested in organs, please recommend membership of the DDOA.

### Ben Bloor FRCO

Congratulations to our member Ben Bloor, currently Organ Scholar at New College, Oxford, who recently succeeded in gaining his FRCO, and in so doing won three prizes: the *Limpus Prize* for highest marks in playing, the *Harding Prize* for highest marks in the paperwork and the *Samuel Baker Prize* for highest aggregate mark. Well done, Ben!

### Cavaillé-Coll at Warrington

John Bland writes:-

Whilst the future of the Cavaillé-Coll organ at Warrington is still very much in doubt, there is some good news. The Warrington Arts committee is sponsoring a recital to be given by Ian Tracey on 12<sup>th</sup> March next year. Further details nearer to the time.

### Bridgewater Hall organ

Alan Dronsfield writes:-

Jonathan Scott is a popular recitalist in the North-West. His last three lunchtime concerts at the Bridgewater Hall this summer attracted audiences of 800, 650 and 750! In this YouTube clip he gives a guided tour of the organ: <http://youtu.be/QkcUuAjhwyM>. His other YouTube clips are worth seeking out.

His younger brother, Tom, (recent PhD from Manchester) is on the "piano concerto circuit" and is also very talented. See <http://www.scottbrothersduo.com/>, and <http://www.jonathanscott.co.uk/>

### Your newsletter

I am grateful to our contributors to this edition of the *Newsletter*.

Especially at the end of the holiday season, I often publish a plea to send me stories or snippets of your encounters with organs or organists which would make interesting reading for members. Contributions don't have to be polished literary works; it is my role as Editor to apply the polish!

Also, please help me maintain a good local focus in future issues by sending local news or stories, or by suggesting personalities whom I might interview.

Editor



## 'Schnitgers and Schnitzels' in Northern Germany - Laurence Rogers

During August I was fortunate to participate in the North Germany Organ Course organised by Suffolk Organists' Association and the Organ Club. The four-day course, dubbed 'Schnitgers and Schnitzels' was based in Hamburg and included visits to Lubeck and Lüneburg. On the menu were amazing historic and modern organs, but the high point for me was the world famous Schnitger organ in the Jakobikirche, Hamburg. This is one of the finest surviving examples of the master's craft which had such a dominant influence on organ building in northern Europe for many generations from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century onwards; it certainly felt a great privilege to be there and to be allowed to play the masterpiece.

In 1689 Arp Schnitger was commissioned to build a new 60-stop four-manual organ for St Jakobi incorporating a substantial amount of older material from the previous instrument by Hans Scherer. The story of Schnitger's organ is remarkable for the way in which it survived the changes of taste through several generations and the calamitous events of two world wars. For two centuries the character of the instrument was untouched, whereas organs elsewhere were adapted to suit current tastes. It lost all its case-pipes when they were requisitioned by the military authorities during the First World War. During the Second World War, the destruction of other Hamburg churches prompted the St Jakobi church committee to dismantle the windchests, ornamental carvings and most of the pipes with the exception of the casework, and store them in the



The Schnitger Organ, St Jakobi, Hamburg

crypt. Thus the organ survived air raids and was able to be rebuilt after the war. However, by the 1980s significant errors in the post-war rebuild were sufficiently apparent that a committee of experts commissioned an authentic restoration of the original Schnitger organ by Jürgen Ahrend, completed in 1992. This is the organ we can see and hear today containing 85% of the original pipework.

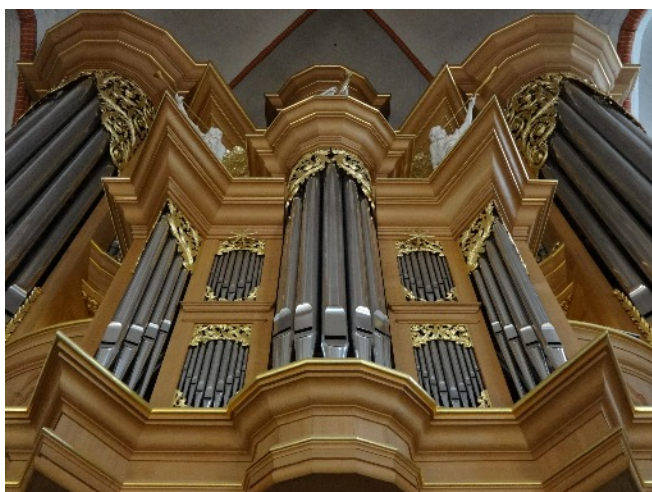
St Jakobi Organist Rudolf Kelber gave us an aural tour of individual ranks of pipes spanning 500 years; starting with the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Flutes of Hans Scherer, through the brilliant Principal choruses of Schnitger and finishing with Schnitger's mighty Pedal reeds. The pitch of the organ remains a whole tone sharp compared with modern pitch and

we had some informal debate of the effect of this on the overall brilliance in the sound of the organ. Michael Praetorius described in 1619 the pre-Schnitger organ and Herr Kelber played some of his pieces to demonstrate the full-blooded reeds, the brilliant mixtures and the gravitas of the Hauptwerk plenum chorus. In a *Prelude and Fugue* by Buxtehude, the individual sections of the piece were ideal for demonstrating the different tonal divisions including the two Zimbelsterns and concluding with the full organ for the fugue. Finally we heard Bach's *Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland*

in glorious Organo Pleno with the cantus firmus on the 32 foot Posaune in the pedal. This stop was 32 feet in name only, the longest pipe being only 27 feet long due to the elevated pitch of the organ.

For me the Schnitger organ at St Jakobi lived up to all my expectations; the mutations and mixtures were brilliant without shrieking, the gravitas of the Hauptwerk was full of majesty and the reeds packed plenty of punch without being raucous. What good fortune that it has been loved and cared for over three centuries and, in its present state, so sensitively restored. The instrument seemed to be perfectly matched to the acoustic space of the church, filling it admirably but without excess.

Laurence Rogers



Close-up view of the Positif Organ showing both Zimbelsterns



The beautifully rebuilt console with a vast array of door-handle style stops.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 7.15 pm at St Werburgh's Church, Spondon.**

Please note the starting time for the AGM. The Chairman's Evening follows immediately at 8.00pm

**CHAIRMAN'S EVENING**

**13<sup>th</sup> November 8.00 pm at St Werburgh's Church, Spondon.**

**'Johann Ludwig Krebs (1713-1780)'**

2013 has seen the anniversaries of three composers, Wagner and Verdi, which you could hardly have failed to notice at some point in the year, and Johan Ludwig Krebs (1713-1780). The 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Krebs seems to have passed almost unnoticed, with the honourable exception of the Derby Cathedral recital series this year which featured one of his compositions in each recital. Krebs was an outstanding pupil of J S Bach who wrote a glowing testimonial to his skills as a performer and composer. As a copyist to Bach, his manuscripts survive as important sources of Bach's organ compositions, of which so few autographs exist. Many scholars believe that the *Eight Short Preludes and Fugues* once attributed to Bach might well have been composed by Krebs. There is much of great quality in his oeuvre.

In a presentation following the AGM, our Chairman Denis Littleton (unless there is an unexpected coup) will introduce you to some of Krebs' music, much of which will be unfamiliar to many of us. Who knows, you may even feel inspired to learn some of it yourself!



**New Season 2014**

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February, 7.30pm**

**St John's Heritage Centre, Belper**

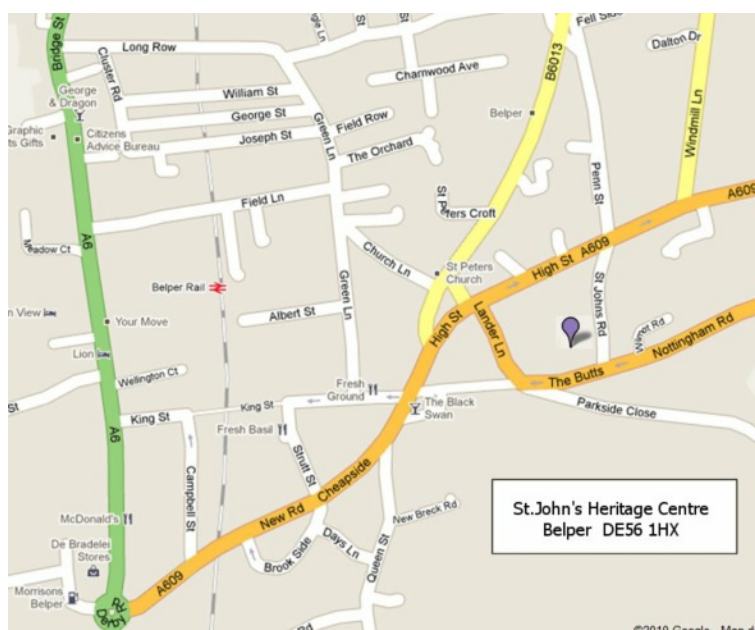
**'THOSE WERE THE DAYS'**

Recordings of Organists from early - mid 20<sup>th</sup> century presented by John Maxwell-Jones and Stephen Johns:

**Schweitzer ~ Dupré ~ Sumsion  
GD Cunningham ~ Reginald Goss-Custard  
Conrad Eden ~ Thalben Ball ~ et al**

Stephen and John welcome members' offers of recordings of these organists or any of their contemporaries. The evening should provide a fascinating comparison of styles of playing as fashions changed during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Access to the close-by car park is from St John's Road which is one-way from High Street.



Items of news or articles for the January/February edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December**, either via e-mail: [DDOAnews@gmail.com](mailto:DDOAnews@gmail.com) or by post: Dr Laurence Rogers, 24 St.David's Crescent, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4SS. The Secretary, Stephen Johns, may be reached via [mail@derbyorganists.co.uk](mailto:mail@derbyorganists.co.uk) Please visit the DDOA Website [www.derbyorganists.co.uk](http://www.derbyorganists.co.uk) for information about Association activities, past editions of the newsletter, photo gallery and many special features of local interest.