

# Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

## Newsletter



### Not Just Christmas Markets - Gillian Chatto

Towards the end of November 2015, I accompanied my husband, Derek, on a short business trip to Leipzig. This very conveniently coincided with the opening of the Christmas Market, which I was keen to visit. However, a conversation with Laurence Rogers encouraged me to extend the scope of the visit beyond just the Christmas market and visit some organs in the area.

Laurence kindly introduced me, by email, to a physics colleague of his, a fellow organist, in Leipzig-Gohlis, with strong connections to the local church, Versöhnungskirche. And so it came about that whilst Derek was at work inspecting cranes in Leipzig, I ventured out on the tram to meet Herr Dieter Michel at the Versöhnungskirche.

The church itself is quite a striking concrete structure, and the interior at first sight appears plain. However, it is in fact an interesting example of the 1920's/30's Bauhaus style in terms of its architecture, colour schemes, and artwork. Herr Michel gave me a fascinating tour of the church, explaining the lengths to which they had gone to restore the building to its original state after many years of neglect during the communist (DDR) era.

The specification of the organ was drawn up by Herbert Schulze,

Choirmaster and Organist at the Versöhnungskirche from 1925-34, and the instrument, completed in 1932, was built by Furtwängler & Hammer. Schulze's aim was to create an instrument which followed Baroque organ building traditions, but which was equally suited to the modern repertoire.

In the 1920s, when the building of the church was being considered, there was an overwhelming desire that the design of the organ should complement the architecture of the building. Furthermore, in accordance with the requirements of the Wiesbaden Church building programme, the architect, Hans Heinrich Grotjahn conceived the layout of the church so that the organ, chancel and altar were all prominent at the front of the church, with the organ situated



### DDOA Events 2016

#### 16<sup>th</sup> March (Wednesday) 6.00pm

Concert with organists Margaret Eades and Tony Westerman and members of Egginton Primary School (See page 6)

#### 18<sup>th</sup> May (Wednesday) 7.30pm

Annual Dinner at Horsley Lodge

#### 4<sup>th</sup> June (Saturday)

Visit to organs in the University and City of Birmingham

#### September

A practical demonstration of *Hauptwerk* virtual organ software

#### October

Visit to local organ (Egginton)

#### 16<sup>th</sup> November (Wednesday) 7.15pm

AGM

### Concerts & Recitals

#### Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm

##### St Osmund's Church, Wilmorton

Concert by the Derwent Singers conducted by Richard Roddis, with Tom Corfield at the organ. Programme includes Duruflé's *Requiem* and Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine*. Tickets £10 from Foulds, [tickets@derwentsingers.org.uk](mailto:tickets@derwentsingers.org.uk) or at the door.

#### Bank Holidays at Southwell Minster

**28<sup>th</sup> March 3.30pm:** Organ Recital by Simon Bell. Works by Tournemire, Vierne, Stanford and Walton.

**2<sup>nd</sup> May 3.30pm:** Organ Recital by Peter Holder. Includes Bach's *Toccata & Fugue in d minor* and Brahms's *Academic Festival Overture*

#### Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May 6.00pm

**St John's Church, Bridge Street**  
Derby Arts Festival Organ Class

#### Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 7.45

##### Repton School Chapel

Silent Movie: *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* with concert organist, David Briggs. Tickets £13.50 (£10.50) from [jarw@repton.org.uk](mailto:jarw@repton.org.uk)

Photos:

Main: Organ by Reichel (1664) in the Markt-kirche, Halle, Germany. "Handel was here."

Left: Versöhnungskirche, Leipzig-Gohlis

above the chancel and to the right of the altar. This ensured that it could be clearly heard and seen by the congregation.

Indeed the appearance of the organ's detached console, which to my eyes had rather an Art Deco style, did complement the architectural style of the building. The pipes were situated at a 90 degree angle to the console and stylishly concealed behind tasteful slotted panelling which ensured that none of the sound of the 2458 pipes was lost, but that the overall Bauhaus style was maintained throughout the building.



Console and organ (behind panelling)

Records show that from the 1950s the organ was becoming increasingly difficult to play, and it was only after the end of the DDR era that major restoration work became possible. It was in 2005 that the Furtwängler & Hammer organ was once again heard in all its glory when Denny Wilke performed on the newly restored organ in its inaugural concert. Denny Wilke returned again to the Versöhnungskirche in 2015 to give another concert to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organ's restoration.

The church and its community are clearly very proud of this unique instrument, which, following its sympathetic restoration, sounds splendid in its surroundings. So it was a great honour for me to be left to play on it for as long as I liked! I do not have such a varied repertoire to really put an organ through its paces, but I can say that my Baroque pieces sounded very satisfying, as did my Franck and Dubois. The console was really quite intriguing with various coloured preset options. However, what I found most unusual was the "roll-swell" pedal. At first I thought it was a normal swell pedal but constructed as a roller, however I discovered that rather more care was required, as it was a pedal to

increase the sound by increasing the actual number of stops drawn rather than just the volume of the existing stops. I did not detect any delay or distraction in having the pipes at right angles to where I was sitting, and the whole experience was most enjoyable.

The following day Derek and I were both free and travelled by train to Halle. At Laurence's suggestion I had contacted Herr Peyrot, the organist at the Marktkirche in Halle, and who was giving a lunchtime recital on the day of our visit. Halle is quite an attractive town, and the Christmas market, although somewhat smaller than that in Leipzig, was very pleasant to visit.

The Marktkirche is again quite an unusual building, as it has four towers, two at each end. Apparently there used to be two churches on the site, however these have now been "merged" into one. The church has two organs, the historic Reichel organ situated above the altar, which dates from 1664, and the Schuke organ in the west end. The front case of the Schuke organ dates from 1716, however the rest of the organ is much newer. Halle was the birthplace of Handel; he was baptised in the Marktkirche and had lessons on the Reichel organ.

Again, I was most fortunate to be left to play both organs to my heart's content, provided that I stop in time for the lunchtime recital! The Reichel organ is a single manual organ with six stops. The compass goes down as far as C but there is no bottom C sharp. The pitch is apparently a third higher than usual, and the organ is tuned in mean-tone. Playing this organ was a whole new experience since some pieces sounded fine whilst others did not. It didn't seem to suit chromatic pieces or pieces with too many sharps and flats, however other pieces sounded lovely – in fact it was only when I sat in the nave of the church and listened to the recital that I realised just how magical the sound could be.



Reichel organ (organist's view)



Where Handel once sat.

I allowed myself time to try out the Schuke organ as well. Whilst I must admit that there was far greater scope on this 3-manual organ, there somehow wasn't the same satisfaction as playing and hearing the tiny Reichel organ.

The lunchtime recital given by Herr Peyrot was solely on the Reichel organ and comprised pieces by Cirri, JS Bach, Sweelinck and Walther.

After a very tasty lunch, Derek and I ventured to the Haendel-Haus museum, located in the house where Handel was born. We were surprised to find a particularly interesting hands-on section of the museum dedicated to sound production which would be a superb addition to our CATO offerings. Derek and I fiddled with vibrating strings against coloured spinning backgrounds, grappled with different lengths of organ pipes, experienced surround sound and much more. Besides learning about various aspects of Handel's life, we also spent quite some time viewing the extensive collection of historical instruments. Being adequately equipped with organ music, I was delighted to find a 2-manual harpsichord which visitors were actually allowed to play! Needless to say, our visit to the Haendel-Haus museum took up most of the afternoon, and we only had time for a fleeting visit to the Christmas market before having to hurry back to catch our train.

I am very grateful to Laurence for his advice and assistance in seeking out organs to visit, and to Herr Michel who has provided me with a long list of other organs worth visiting in the area.

*Gillian Chatto*



## Recent Events

### 'La Nativité' at Derby Cathedral

The month of January is usually a barren time for organ concerts, but 2016 got off to a cracking start at Derby Cathedral with the complete cycle of *La Nativité du Seigneur* by Messiaen, played by the Director of Music, Hugh Morris.

The hushed atmosphere of the cathedral was a challenge to early arrivers, eager to swap festive stories, but the excellent programme notes containing Messiaen's scriptural quotations helped listeners tune in to the spiritual agenda which was so important to the composer. The translated titles of the nine pieces were:

*The Virgin and Child*

*The Shepherds*

*Eternal Designs*

*The Word*

*The Children of God*

*The Angels*

*Jesus accepts suffering*

*The Magi*

*God among us*

Complementing the programme notes, each piece was accompanied by a projected screen image of a different stained glass window depicting the theme of the piece. There were shepherds, angels, magi, and of course Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus, as portrayed in windows ranging from Chartres to Coventry.

Those who are familiar with the score will know how it is heavily annotated with very specific registration markings, some of which are often difficult to realise on a typical English organ. However Hugh created an amazing tonal palette (no mean feat on the Compton instrument with so many extension ranks) which gave his interpretation great authenticity. This was Messiaen's deeply spiritual music, and it must be said that Hugh had complete empathy with the composer's inspiration. His discriminating use of registration and expression was matched by carefully judged tempi which perfectly portrayed the different mood of each piece; for example, the serenity of meditation on God's grace, the jubilation of the angels, the persistence of the journeying magi and the outburst of joy in the final toccata, "God among us". Whether fast or slow, there was frequent suppleness in the tempi which always conveyed a purposeful rhythmic drive.

Considering the challenging demands of *La Nativité* on the organ, the player, and listeners, this was a special recital indeed. What a luxury it was to hear all the pieces as a complete cycle and to appreciate their variety and context to each other! Let's hope that Hugh has further imaginative recital ideas up his sleeve for the future.

*Laurence Rogers*



Hugh Morris at the Compton console, Derby Cathedral.

## DDOA - Your Association

### 2016 Committee and Chairman

Chairman:	J Maxwell-Jones
Vice-Chairman:	Mrs M Eades
Secretary:	S Johns
Treasurer:	C Darrall
Gift Aid Secretary:	Mrs G Chatto
Newsletter Editor:	L Rogers
Committee:	T Bennett, G Howell, D Shooter, A Storer
Past Chairman:	D Littleton

### Children and the Organ (CATO)

The next workshop is planned for 1<sup>st</sup> March in St Wilfrid's, Egginton and will involve pupils from the local primary school. DDOA members are welcome to observe, but are asked to inform Stephen Johns in advance (01332 764792). Pupils will demonstrate their follow-up work at the Concert sponsored by the DDOA on 16<sup>th</sup> March. (See page 6.)

### Derby Arts Festival 2016

For the first year there will be an organ class on 6<sup>th</sup> May in the evening at St John's, Bridge Street, Derby. Two DDOA members have volunteered to play. Please come along to support them.

### Annual Dinner 18<sup>th</sup> May

Details of the menu accompany this newsletter. Please return the booking form to Stephen Johns by 30<sup>th</sup> April.

## Members' News

### Sylvia Fox R.I.P.

With regret we report the recent death of DDOA member, Mrs Sylvia Fox of Burton-on-Trent.

## Notices

### Organ postcards etc.

Mrs Margaret Hersee of Chesterfield is offering, for the cost of postage only, a collection of postcards, photos and leaflets relating to church organs from England and Europe. If you are interested, please contact [margaret\\_hersee@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:margaret_hersee@yahoo.co.uk).

### Dr Eric Leigh R.I.P.

The death has been recorded of Dr Eric Leigh, former Assistant Organist at Derby Cathedral and an active figure in music education in Derby during the 1970s. He retired to Essex some years ago.

# Building a Four-manual virtual organ - Trevor Morris

## Learning to play the organ

We all know that practice is essential, but a freezing rural church is a mighty disincentive in the winter! I resolved to solve the problem by constructing a practice organ at home, in the warm.

## Creating a practice organ

My first attempt was to produce a one manual and a pedalboard instrument. I purchased a second-hand pedalboard and second-hand organ bench from Jonathan Wallace at Groves and Son. He also supplied the reed switches for the pedalboard which I fitted and wired to a midi output board. (My physics-teaching background came in useful here.)

I borrowed an electronic keyboard from my grandson and was lent a second keyboard by a friend. The keyboards had tone settings that were passable imitations of a church organ. The output of the first keyboard was passed through a Behringer mixer unit into the surround sound amplifier in my study. The midi output from the pedals was fed into the second keyboard which, in turn, was fed through the mixer into the amplifier. As the picture shows, a primitive, cheap practice organ had been achieved. Bearing in mind that I was a very rusty pianist with virtually no pedal experience whatsoever, this arrangement proved to be effective and helpful for a time. The two principal drawbacks of the system were that there were no stops to vary the sound and only one manual. Eventually these limitations became an irritation.



Trevor plays his Mark I organ.

So began the search for a better solution. In general, commercially built systems were ruled out by their cost. I would have to try to build a system myself.

## Building a system based on "Hauptwerk"

The breakthrough came when I read Alan Dronsfield's article "Building a desktop One-Manual 'virtual' Organ" in the July/August 2015 edition of the DDOA newsletter. After the initial irritation of trying to remember how to make a Linux Boot disk I managed to load the *GrandOrgue Live CD* organ as illustrated in Alan's article. I was immediately impressed by the quality of the sound from the small range of stops. This was clearly the basis of a very good idea. I did not try to load my keyboards on to this system as the Linux system felt too "clunky" for what I wanted.

In an earlier article Alan Dronsfield had described the *Hauptwerk* organ built by Dr David Pitches, in Birmingham. The illustration of the console and the description of the whole system led me to investigate this system further.

Firstly, I loaded the *Hauptwerk* free edition and the free St Anne's Moseley organ on to the more powerful of my two computers, the audio output of which was fed into the surround sound system in the study. I could only change stops and play notes, one at a time, using the computer's mouse. However, the quality and range of the sounds from this primitive system decided me to acquire a keyboard or keyboards to input the notes.

Commercially available key-stacks, as they called them, cost anything from £1,000 upwards, so I set out to make one. I found a very interesting article from Romsey Organ works, on the internet, which gave a step-by-step description of how to construct a two manual midi keyboard stack for less than £400. The company has generously published this article as they no longer manufacture keyboards based on re-skinned midi keyboards. I eventually



M-Audio Keystation 61 es

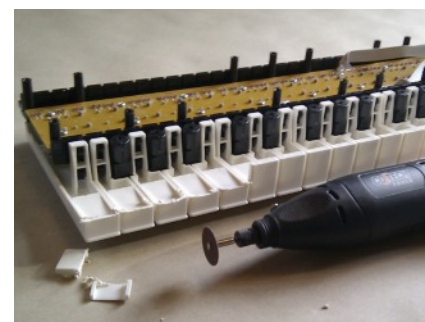
decided to construct a four manual organ so, on the recommendation in the article I eventually ordered four *M-Audio Keystation 61 es* keyboards. They cost just under £100 each. They were recommended because the "touch" of the keyboards was thought to be acceptable for an organ console. In a different internet article it was claimed that "the weight and touch of the keys are very close to a tracker organ, even though you won't get the little "edge of resistance" that exists in tracker organs."

The first step was to take the keybeds out of their plastic cases and to re-attach the midi decoders and the on-off switches to them. The cases and the remaining controls were surplus to requirements.



The keybed removed from the case

The keybeds had to be modified to allow for the later installation of pistons. The front vertical face of each key is cut back to allow finger access to the pistons. This is an incredibly tedious task as it involves removing each note in turn, cutting it, and replacing it. As can be seen below. I have so far only modified one of the four keybeds, the bottom one.



Cutting down the key fronts

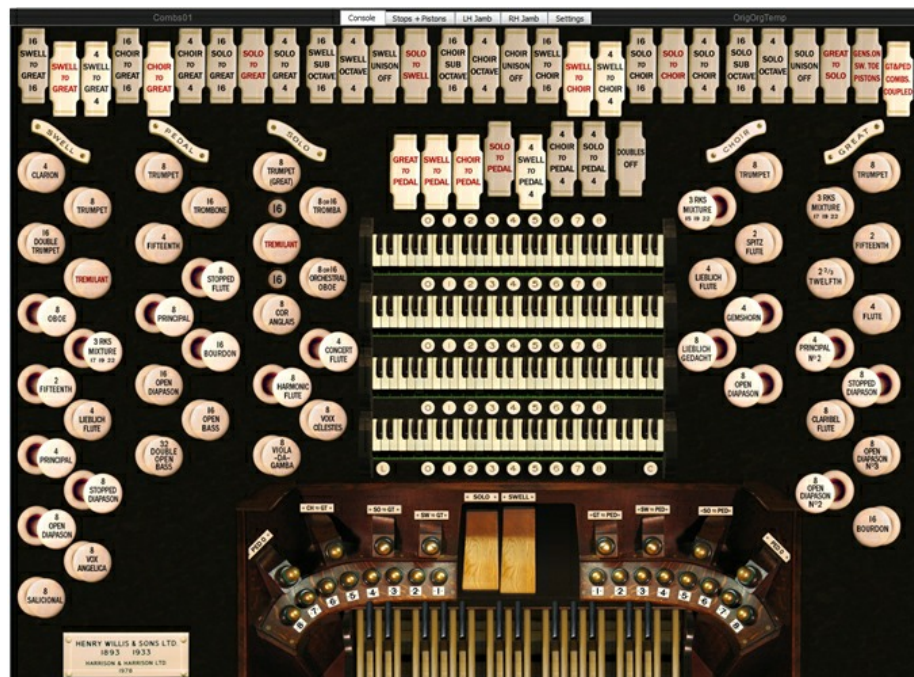


The article by Romsey Organ works also contained basic drawings and instructions on making the Keystack. I followed these instructions and looked up the 1967 recommendations for British Organ Console Dimensions which define the position of each keybed relative to the other keybeds and also the position of the Keystack to the pedal board. Using some surplus floor boarding from the loft, the finished Keystack is shown below. The music stand is an old IKEA shelf which was also lying around in the loft.

The different components, the keystack, the pedalboard, the computer and the audio amplifier, were connected together: The computer was a reasonably powerful one with 8 Gb of RAM and a 3.9 GHz AMD processor. The surround sound system, used principally for listening to CDs, has four speakers and a Phillips amplifier. Twenty years ago it was considered to be state of the art! Each keybed was connected to the computer by a USB cable through a six way unpowered hub. The pedal board was connected to the computer by a Roland UM1 USB MIDI interface which I have found to be totally reliable.

Finally, the surround sound was connected to the computer's audio output. I switched the system on and went through the initiation sequence of identifying which keybed was controlling which manual and connecting the pedals. To my great surprise and delight *Hauptwerk* responded to both keybeds and the pedals and I could play music! As I was only using the bottom two manuals I programmed the third manual on the keystack to control the pistons under each manual and the pedal pistons shown in the screen-shot. This worked quite well, but the only way I could activate individual stops was with the computer's mouse which was not very practicable. An obvious solution was the use of a touch screen monitor placed within easy reach of the organist which I added to the system in the shape of a 22" Iiyama LED monitor.

Immediately, three other problems occurred. Firstly, when the system was switched off and on the program did not always 'see' the pedals or the manuals and they had to be initiated again. Secondly, the first time I played a



The virtual console of Hereford Cathedral organ.

chord on either manual several of the notes stuck 'on'. Thirdly, there was often a delay in playing the first note on each manual. The problems were solved by increasing the memory on the computer from 8 GB to 24 Gb and connecting the manuals via a powered USB hub.

I now had a working two-manual practice organ that sounded perfectly fine to me. I started to explore what other *Hauptwerk* organs were available and downloaded the very simple free Hereford Evaluation mini set version of the Hereford Cathedral Willis organ which I took to immediately. It consists of three manuals and just 11 stops. However, it gave a lovely idea of the sound of this organ. It is available free for thirty days at the end of which the user must delete it, or make a donation to allow continued use or purchase one of the larger versions of the Hereford organ. Eventually, I bought Version 4.2 of the *Hauptwerk* software Advanced Edition and the 46 stop version of Hereford Cathedral Organ. The result is immensely pleasing to play. Set out below is the specification of this version of the Hereford Cathedral organ.

The *Hauptwerk* Hereford organ comes in three versions, 23 stops, 46 stops and the full version of 67 stops. I chose the 46 stop version, after discussion with Rodney Tomkins, largely because the 21 stops that have been left out are mostly not Willis

stops but later additions. Cost was also a consideration.

Below is the Main Console of the Hereford 46 stop virtual organ. All the stops and couplers shown can be accessed from a touch screen monitor screen.

I am pleased with the result of the project so far. The organ sounds very good, especially when Rodney plays it, but there is a lot of work still to do:

- Add Swell and Solo pedals
- Add pistons to manuals & pedals.
- Adjust loudness balance between the different manuals.
- Tweak the sound system to improve pedal tone.
- Add a second monitor.

No doubt each of these tasks will throw up their own time-consuming problems but in the meantime I can practise in the warm and put on the headphones if I want to just play for myself, which is what I set out to do.

*Trevor Morris*



The 4-manual organ takes shape.

## Recent Events

### Robert Gower on the art of arrangement

For our first meeting of the new season we welcomed back Robert Gower who has a fine reputation for his arrangements for organ. Last year he inspired us by introducing us to a selection of his arrangements of music for Lent and Easter. This year, at St Matthew's Darley Abbey, he unravelled some of the secrets of the art of arranging for organ, music from a variety of sources.

Beginning in grand style, he played the *Radetsky March* by Johann Strauss and the *Imperial March* by Elgar and invited us to speculate about a connection between the two arrangements. Clearly they were both marches, but Robert's point was that he only played a fraction of the notes in the original compositions. Being originally orchestral scores, there were many more notes than would be physically possible to play with two hands and feet. So the overriding principle of arranging is to know what to leave out, whilst essentially maintaining the spirit of the music. Robert encouraged us to view an arrangement as one interpretation of the composer's



intentions and "not to worry about all the notes"; "If in doubt, leave it out!". The arranged score should be regarded as a "skeleton upon which you can build your own interpretation of the original." The player should "make it his own". This equally applied to the choice of registration; "this should be left to the player".

Robert went on to exemplify some of the challenges that face the arranger: how to read the enormous number of staves in a full orchestral score (he showed us Walton's score for *Orb and Sceptre* - a real test of eyesight); how to reduce sometimes lush harmonisations of a vocal score,

how to make a richly textured score 'finger friendly', and so on. These were illustrated by Robert's deft performances and copious photocopies distributed to members. We were able to compare some original scores with Robert's own arrangements and began to appreciate the subtlety of the tasks, demanding careful judgement and all-prevailing musical taste.

As well as giving us technical insight into the art of arrangement, Robert introduced us to some less familiar but really beautiful compositions. For example, he illustrated a wealth of inspiration in several collections of preludes by Clement Palmer, one time organist at Canterbury Cathedral, based on hymn tunes. Also, he has published a whole volume of the music of Gerald Finzi, one of his favourite composers. Some of these pieces were composed for clarinet and piano, with clever interplay between the two instruments and posing the challenge of achieving a subtle balance between tune and accompaniment. The resulting arrangement was truly beautiful.

We are very grateful to Robert for a splendid evening; as well as being entertaining and enlightening, it was full of insights that were new to many of us. Our thanks also go to Geoff and Vicky Howell who hosted the meeting and provided excellent refreshments.

Laurence Rogers

## Forthcoming DDOA Meeting

**16th March 6.00 pm**  
**(Please note start time)**  
**at St Wilfrid's Church, Egginton, Derby.**

### Concert to Celebrate Organ Restoration

The organ will be re-dedicated by Rev Fiona Solman and the concert will include organ solos by Margaret Eades and Tony Westerman, items by the St Wilfrid's Singing Group and a chance to hear some of the children at Egginton Primary School report on the project they have done with the DDOA Children and the Organ team, exploring how the organ works and is played. Refreshments will be served and the evening will end at approximately 7.45pm.

Egginton is south west of Derby, just beyond the A50 trunk road and near the A38 Burton Road. Note that the dual carriageway does not allow right turns. St Wilfrid's is at the south end of the village on Church Road.



Items of news or articles for the May/June edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 18th April**, 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.