

Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



A New Summer Recital Series

It was the recent Sunday after Easter when Tony Westerman took up residence as Organist at St Modwen's, Burton-upon-Trent, and no sooner had he moved on to the organ bench than he had organised a series of ten lunchtime organ recitals for the summer months. Clearly he has been inspired by the qualities of the instrument and has already dedicated himself to presenting it to a wider audience, which it justly deserves. Members will recall our visit to Burton two years ago when many of us were introduced to this notable instrument in a setting of classical splendour of an equally notable, and certainly beautiful, church. As a visitor, it is truly striking when one enters the church to be greeted by a grand vista of elegance and grace. The experience is enhanced still further when, standing in the centre of the aisle, one turns to view the

organ in the western gallery. The handsome case provides a crowning glory to the church furnishings. All this is in stark contrast to the bland architecture of the neighbouring shops. One would hope that local people are proud of such beauty in the midst of their bustling town.

In its present form, the splendid case dates from the nineteenth century when James Wyatt elaborated the case of an earlier one, rumoured to have been built by Snetzler in 1774. The contents within the case have changed several times. In 1899, following his success up the road at St Paul's, Robert Hope-Jones built a four-manual organ. This was 'disposed of' in 1972 and parts of his instrument, including the console, are now in the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust's museum in Manchester.

DDOA Events 2017

23rd September (Saturday afternoon)
Visit to organs in Newark and Halam (near Southwell)

19th October (Thursday) 7.30pm
Manuals only seminar. Melbourne PC

20th November (Monday) 7.15 pm
AGM

Concerts & Recitals

Lunchtime Organ Recitals at St Modwen's, Burton-upon-Trent **Wednesdays 12.30 pm**

Free admission. Retiring collection.

28 th June	Arthur Tipper (Tutbury)
5 th July	Jeremy Hampton
12 th July	Tom Corfield (Derby)
19 th July	Andrew Storer (Derby)
26 th July	Stanley Monkhouse & Tony Westerman (Burton)
2 nd August	Laurence Rogers (Melbourne)
9 th August	Cathy Lamb (Lichfield)

Derby Cathedral Summer Recitals **Wednesdays 7.45pm** Admission £8.

19 th July	Hugh Morris (Derby)
26 th July	Rupert Jeffcoat (Chelsea)
2 nd August	Jennifer Bate
9 th August	David Davies (Exeter)
16 th August	Michael Overbury (Newark)
23 rd August	Gordon Stewart

Leicester Cathedral Summer Recitals **Tuesdays 7.30pm** Admission £7.50, Students £5, Under 16s free.

4 th July	Tom Bell & Richard Brasier
11 th July	David Cowan (Leicester)
18 th July	Carleton Etherington
25 th July	Hugh Morris (Derby)
1 st August	Richard Hills (London)
8 th August	Josef Laming (Oxford)
15 th August	Christopher Ouvry-Johns
22 nd August	Jonathan Hope (Gloucester)
29 th August	Simon Headley (Leicester)

Member's Notice

Mrs J. Willers wishes to dispose of her late husband's two-manual and pedal electronic organ. Further details may be obtained from her on 0793 0616 305.

Photo: St Modwen, Burton-upon Trent.
19th Century case thought to incorporate earlier work by Snetzler.



The present instrument was originally built for Holy Trinity, Burton-upon-Trent by Hill & Son in 1871 at a time when the firm was producing organs with bright bold choruses, somewhat along the lines of the German builder, Schulze. The instrument was built into a chancel chamber and voiced accordingly. When Holy Trinity closed in 1971, the organ was brought to St Modwen's in 1972 and installed within the old case by Hill, Norman and Beard. The original voicing was retained, but now that the pipe work is situated in the spacious gallery with the soundboards arranged laterally across the gallery, the egress of sound into the nave is unencumbered, and full organ can be quite overwhelming. The well-equipped drawstop console is positioned where the organist can hear everything, an unusual luxury

for most organists! Music of the Baroque period fairs very well indeed, but it is possible to play works from most periods successfully, such is the flexibility of the instrument.

For the first season of lunchtime recitals Tony invited several of our members to contribute. His brief was to "play pieces that are melodic, rhythmic, entertaining, or perhaps pieces which would not normally feature as final voluntaries; an opportunity to let our hair down a little." It will be interesting to see how each player interprets this! For starters, Tony gave the first recital, setting the bar very high with toccatas, trios and variations; needless to say, all played brilliantly. He teased out an impressive range of colours in his registrations. The specification shows a plentiful endowment of reeds and mixtures, but Tony used these with restraint and charmed our ears with many different

St Modwen's Church, Burton-upon-Trent

Great

Open Diapason	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Octave	4
Fifteenth	2
Mixture	III
Posaune	8

Swell to Great

Swell suboctave to Great

Swell octave to Great

Positiv to Great

Swell

Spitz Flute	8
Salicional	8
Principal	4
Fifteenth	2
Mixture	III
Shalmey	16
Trumpet	8

Swell Octave

Swell Suboctave

Swell Unison Off

Positiv

Gedeckt	8
Chimney Flute	4
Flute	2
Larigot	11/3
Sesquialtera	II
Cymbal	III
Cremona	8
Posaune	8
Tremulant	

Swell to Positiv

Pedal

Contra Bass	16
Bourdon	16
Octave	8
Gedeckt	8
Super octave	4
Mixture	II
Trombone	16

Swell to Pedal

Great to Pedal

Positiv to Pedal

Swell Octave to Pedal

Built 1871 by Hill & Son

Moved 1972 by Hill, Norman & Beard

In recent years Michael Thompson has maintained the instrument with great care.

solo stops, in particular some characterful flutes.

As the series progresses it will be interesting to see what unusual repertoire comes out of the woodwork. At the time of writing I can report that David Johnson's excellent recital, second in the series, included *Elizabethan Serenade* by Ronald Binge, a former cinema organist from Derby, who arranged many works for the Mantovani orchestra in the 1950's and was responsible for the characteristic sound of cascading strings in pieces such as *Charmaine*. I wonder if Arthur Tipper, of Wurlitzer fame, might be able to offer us cascading strings in his recital? Report to follow!

Laurence Rogers



Tony Westerman, Organist at St Modwen's

Recent Events

Annual Dinner

In beautiful rural Derbyshire, Horsley Lodge, near Coxbench, was once again the venue for the Annual Dinner. The friendly congenial atmosphere, combined with excellent food and service, made it a most enjoyable evening and a clear highlight in the Association calendar.



The Revd. Peter Barham with Chairman, John Maxwell-Jones.

Our guest of honour was the Reverend Peter Barham, Vicar of St Matthew's, Darley Abbey and St Edmund's, Allestree. Peter has wide interests and we discovered in his after dinner speech that he loves telling stories and does so with gusto. For our audience he focused mainly on organists and church musicians he has known through his travels and ministries in diverse parts of the country, Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lincoln, The Fens and Suffolk. His flamboyant style had some of us aching with laughter several times as he painted portraits of nameless, often quirky, characters (mainly organists), whose conservatism and musical tastes must have tested the reforming ambitions of many a less tolerant cleric than the humane Peter. Underpinning all the jollity, we could read a deep respect for organists and the difference they make to countless people's lives. "As partners in the ministry of the Church, what would we do without them?" Peter summed up the organists he has known and been influenced by as "a talented and hard-working bunch". We can hardly disagree with that!

Laurence Rogers

Belper Arts Festival

It is usually a special occasion when an organ recital attracts a packed house for an audience, and such was the case when Tom Corfield played at St. Peter's Church as part of the Belper Arts Festival in May. In addition to a strong local turn out, the audience was boosted by the presence of many DDOA members and Derbyshire musicians, a strong affirmation of the regard with which Tom is held in the community.

It is so good when the recitalist introduces the pieces, conveying personality to the music, composer and performance, and in this Tom did not disappoint. I always look forward to his pithy comments which are often coloured by a veiled but irrepressible quiet sense of humour.

The programme was an interesting, if slightly quirky, mix of pieces in a variety of styles, reflecting Tom's broad repertoire and musical interests. Bach was represented by the *Alle breve BWV 589*, perhaps less frequently heard in recitals these days, but a clear reminder of Bach's gift for effortlessly flowing counterpoint. It was no surprise to hear music by Franz Schmidt (1874-1939), a composer much studied and

admired by Tom. Here he offered *Four Chorale Preludes* in contrasting moods. Apart from the final *Nun danket*, the other chorale melodies were less familiar to an English audience than might be the case for a German congregation, however the variety of Tom's choices of registration secured our interest throughout. A particular favourite of mine was the *Introduction and Passacaglia* from Rheinberger's 8th Sonata. The dramatic introduction is an uncompromising wake-up call followed by a brooding passacaglia theme which becomes increasingly hypnotic in the following twenty four variations. Again, Tom proved to be the master of invention in his constantly evolving registration changes, but without any combination aids, his devoted assistant, Rosemary, rendered it all possible without destroying the flow. The recital concluded with the barnstorming *Final* from Vienne's 1st Symphony. As with all the previous pieces, the performance was immaculate; all the themes were clearly delineated, modulations glided assuredly from one key to the next, there was a constant bubbling of rhythmic energy, all in all, a fitting finale.

Laurence Rogers



Tom Corfield takes a bow after his recital at St Peter's Church, Belper.

DDOA Visit to Selby and Doncaster - Tony Westerman

The DDOA visit to Selby Abbey and Doncaster Minster proved to be a most interesting and rewarding day - our thanks to Terry Bennett for arranging access to two of the country's most significant instruments. Our thanks also go to Dr. Roger Tebbet and his wife who offered us a warm welcome to Selby, with only a caution about using the Pedal reeds whilst the shop was open, more of which, later.

Selby Abbey

The Hill organ in Selby Abbey (NPOR N07165), recently restored by Principal Pipe Organs of York, is usually associated with recordings made by Fernando Germani in the 1960s, recordings with which many of us grew up. Germani regarded the instrument as one of the finest of its kind in the country and spent ten days recording in the Abbey creating what were considered to be definitive recordings at that time.

The tonal structure of the organ has been preserved and speaks surprisingly well into the nave of the building despite being situated in two cases east of the crossing; the generous acoustic of the Abbey would be kind to most organs, but is unusually good at carrying the softer stops to both east and west whilst still retaining their characteristics. The Abbey itself is a beautiful, light, welcoming building with a strong sense of its past emanating from the pale cream stone - truly, a hidden gem that is well worth visiting.

At the south side of the crossing is the restored Manchester Cathedral console, which is used for concerts though not for nave services at the moment as it is not possible to see what is happening at the altar. When in Manchester the console was finished in a very dark oak stain, but is now the same light, warm oak as the chancel console, which we used.

Playing the chancel console is a comfortable experience with everything in reach, and is ideally placed to hear most things during chancel services, though hearing the choir during nave services must make accompaniment difficult. The Choir organ appeared to speak into the north transept, which would provide good support for the choir during nave services, though judging balance would require experience. Both consoles are well-equipped with registration aids - always helpful to the many international recitalists who perform at the Abbey.

When playing the organ, one has the impression of a rather grand Edwardian lady speaking in well-modulated, mellifluous tones. The Great Diapasons are beautifully graduated, providing a solid foundation for the chorus, though I did feel that the upper work was not as bright as one would expect



Selby: One of the matching Chancel cases.

from Hill (possibly a result of my deteriorating perception of higher frequencies) whilst the Great flutes pour down the nave like liquid honey. Graduated crescendos are easily managed until one reaches the reeds, which are devastating, and it is at this point that my analogy with the grand Edwardian lady fails - the reeds completely dominate the Great and Swell pleno rather than grace it with a glittering tiara.

The Swell flues had great charm. The Voix Celeste would blend happily with three other stops at 8' pitch allowing considerable subtlety in shading, whilst the Diapason chorus has the same smooth progression as that on the Great. However, the Swell box was surprisingly ineffective, certainly no match for the reeds, which like those on the Great, are very powerful - the Contra Fagotto was more like a Trombone, too powerful to use as a pedal reed in Bach, or, I would imagine, for choir accompaniment.

And now to return to the Pedal reeds which are most certainly not lady-like, with the 32' Contra Trombone sounding like a series of mortars going off and the Abbey acoustic picking up every explosion; not surprisingly, as the shop is just below these reeds, they are not popular with the staff working there. Whilst one does like to explore the whole dynamic range of an instrument, one has to consider those unable to



The ex-Manchester Cathedral console at Selby. It is virtually identical to the nave console.

escape to another part of the building, or in this case, outside.

As we see an increasing number of fine instruments fall into a state of disrepair, it is heartening to see the clergy team and organist, of what is essentially a large parish church, find the energy and drive to raise the very considerable sums necessary to match their vision - a truly stunning achievement.

Doncaster Minster

Darren Williams, Director of Music at Doncaster Minster, greeted us enthusiastically; Darren directs the four Minster choirs as well as playing for services. The Schulze organ of 1862 (NPOR K00629) contrasts sharply with the Selby instrument, though each is possessed of charm in abundance. The acoustic in both buildings is similar, with Doncaster perhaps having a slightly longer reverberation period, though the quieter stops don't find their way into the nave quite as easily as at Selby, perhaps due to the great height of both chancel and nave ceilings.

The five-manual Nicholson console (1999) is placed on a raised platform opposite the substantial north-aisle organ chamber, allowing the player to hear everything very clearly; it is a position that discourages registering too many stops for long periods!

This instrument had a transformative effect on English organ building during the late nineteenth century and it is easy to see why: the pipework is of spotted metal, affording good development of the upper harmonics; there are four mutations on the Pedal, as well as two mixtures; the Swell and Great have twenty five ranks of mixtures between them, and there is a 32' flue on the Great.

Wind was originally supplied by six pairs of foot-operated bellows - one imagines that considerable stamina was required to supply wind to over ninety stops. Abbott & Smith replaced the bellows in 1894 with a gas engine in an external, purpose-built chamber 120' from the organ, the wind being transmitted through two 30cm diameter glazed clay pipes which run underground. The effect on tuning of blowing cold air through organ pipes at a higher



Doncaster: The five manual Nicholson console of 1999.
The music desk has been lowered over the fifth manual, which is just visible.

temperature can be imagined. The remote blowing chamber is, surprisingly, still used, though one of the transfer pipes has now collapsed, so no Tuba at present and too many stops drawn will result in the organ running out of wind.

Wind supply is not the only problem as the Echo manual is unusable at present as access is very difficult (no H&S concerns in 1862!). A visit to the huge organ chamber left members gasping at the climb and also at the sheer scale of the instrument: the reservoirs are on the ground floor; the Great chests, at first-floor level, are enormous, allowing generous spacing of the pipework; the Swell box (second floor level) presents a positive wall of shutters, whilst the Solo and Echo are higher still. Apart from the Echo, accessibility is good, though this is a very expensive instrument to maintain.

So, what of the playing? It is quite simply a delight. Diapason choruses build gradually with the mixtures adding differing degrees of brilliance; mutations add piquancy without overpowering the foundation stops; the Pedal of twenty-seven stops can provide weight or clarity of line (the eight reeds have their own stop jamb); manual reeds add a tiara-like glitter to the full organ sound.

In the nave, full organ is magnificent and provides that sense of spine-tingling majesty that stays in the heart and mind. The flutes are magical, as are the Solo reeds, all of them of quite different character and charm.

Our thanks to Darren Williams for giving up so much of his time and for speaking to us about the organ, and his hopes for the future of the instrument, with such enthusiasm.

Tony Westerman

Photos: David Shooter

Your Association

Children and the Organ

May and June were busy months for the CATO team which presented workshops for local primary school classes at Holbrook Church, All Saints, Matlock and St Luke's, Derby (Bishop Lonsdale School). As ever, the enthusiastic response of pupils continued to energise presenters and the residual satisfaction of a valuable job 'well-done' was the undoubted reward. On these occasions we

were glad to be joined by David Johnson, whose spirited playing and engaging repartee added much to the lively atmosphere. The three part format, presentation - groupwork - plenary, has served well, but we have experimented with varied plenaries; At St Luke's, we revived the plastic tube orchestra (each pupil tapping a tube) for a duet with the organ - an excellent ensemble exercise for playing in rhythm.

Laurence Rogers

Forthcoming Events - from Alan Dronsfield

Prom Concerts at the Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke on Trent ST1 3AD

12 noon, 15th July & 12th August

Regular Newsletter readers will know that my Trust supports organ concerts, primarily with the purpose of seeing that they do not run at a loss. Each year it part-sponsors a couple of the noon-day concerts at the Victoria Hall.¹ The organ here is by Conacher (1888), enlarged and remodelled by Henry Willis III in 1922 and is in the curatorship of the Victoria Hall's Consultant Organist Michael Rhodes FRCO. With four manuals and 72 stops it is one of the finest in the Midlands. Thanks to the A50 road it is about 45 minutes of driving time from Derby and free parking (for up to three hours) is available if you shop at Tesco's superstore, a few minutes walk from the hall.²

The concerts that the Trust is sponsoring this year are at 12 noon on Saturday 15th July and Saturday 12th August.³ The first will be given by Nathan Laube (b. 1990), Assistant Professor at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York. When not teaching, Nathan tours extensively, predominantly in the USA and Europe, giving concerts that demonstrate his virtuosic ability and insights into the organ repertoire. For DDOA members uncertain as to attend his Hanley concert, have a look at his rendition of Healey Willan's *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue* recorded last year on the newly-restored organ in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, which he is going to play at Hanley: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIwVPafaWk0>. Breath-taking!

Gert van Hoef plays at the second of the concerts, like Nathan making a return visit to the hall. Born in 1994, Gert is presently studying at the Royal Conservatoire, The Hague, Holland. Gert has a huge presence on YouTube and a following to match. For those who have not so far encountered this talented organist, have a look at the complete recording of his last Victoria Hall concert (2015) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HowudzPGfc>. So far it's been viewed 150,000 times. What more needs to be said?

Notes

1. Regular admission £9.00, concessions £7.50. Tea, Coffee, hot and cold snacks are available from the hall cafe beforehand and light lunches afterwards.
2. Alternative parking is available at near-by John Street car-park, monitored by number-plate recognition cameras. Take care not to over-stay! (£3 for 3 hours).
3. Victoria Hall Organ website www.victoriahall-organproms.co.uk



Items of news or articles for the September/October edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 21st August**, either via e-mail: DDOAnews@gmail.com or by post: Dr Laurence Rogers, 24 St.David's Crescent, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4SS. The Secretary, Andy Storer, may be reached via mail@derbyorganists.co.uk. Please visit the DDOA Website www.derbyorganists.co.uk for information about Association activities, past editions of the newsletter, photo gallery and many special features of local interest.