

Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



IAO Summer Festival - Oxford & Eton

Denis Littleton writes:

This year's Festival (previously known as Congress) was held in Oxford between the 23rd and 27th of July. Proceedings got under way with an outstanding recital by outgoing IAO President Peter King, on the 2011 Tickell organ at Keble College; works played included the Franck *Grande Pièce Symphonique* and the Reubke *Sonata on the 94th Psalm*.

We then moved to New College, with its Grant Degens and Bradbeer organ dating from 1969, complete with transparent glass swell box shutters; fortunately they are still intact, without repetition of an incident where over-enthusiastic operation caused them to shatter. The organ was demonstrated and then it was off to the pub.

Monday started at Merton College, with a masterclass with Dame Gillian Weir, in which organ scholars from Exeter Cathedral, Blackburn Cathedral and Magdalen College presented Bach's *Prelude in B minor*, Franck's *Pièce Héroïque* and Messiaen's *L'Ascension*. Dame Gillian was very encouraging in her approach, amongst the tips I can remember were, try playing with your eyes closed and do not be too mathematical in your approach to Messiaen. This was followed by an interview with Dame Gillian conducted by David Saint (Birmingham Catholic Cathedral). This was quite amusing and gave her the opportunity to delve into her fund of stories about people she has known and organs she has played.

After lunch we went to Blenheim Palace, where, following a guided

DDOA Events 2017

23rd September (Saturday afternoon)

Visit to organs in Newark and Halam
(See page 6)

19th October (Thursday) 7.30pm

Seminar: 'Favourite Borrowings'.
Melbourne PC (See page 6)

20th November (Monday) 7.15 pm

AGM

Concerts & Recitals

Nottingham Albert Hall

Sundays 2.45 pm

10th Sept. Malcolm Riley (Staplehurst)

8th October Luke Bond (Windsor)

22nd October Ann-Caroline Prenat (Suisse)

Lichfield Cathedral

Fridays 7.30 pm

15th Sept. Philip Scriven (Cranleigh Sch.)

22nd Sept. Ashley Grote (Norwich)

29th Sept. William Whitehead (Oxford)

6th October Martin Rawles (Lichfield)

Vacancy Notice

Vacancy at St Laurence's, Long Eaton, Derbyshire

The Vicar, Bishop Roger Jupp, and the Churchwardens of St Laurence's, Long Eaton are looking for an Organist to play for Sunday 9.30am Parish Mass and occasional evening services. Worship is modern Anglo-Catholic with traditional service music led by the organ. The congregation is steadily increasing and is willing to adopt new settings. Fees are negotiable. Ability to improvise and transpose an asset though not essential. Contact Bishop Roger either by email rajupp1@hotmail.com or telephone 0115 973 5168. Commencement date by agreement, but hopefully as soon as possible!

Photo: Eton College Chapel. Organ by Hill 1885; Hill, Norman & Beard 1939, 1955, 1960; N.P.Mander 1987-8. 4 manuals and pedals; 55 stops

tour, we were entertained by William Fox (organ scholar of Magdalen College) playing the 1891 Willis in the Long Library.

Tuesday turned out to be a non-organ day, starting with a lecture by Dr. Geoffrey Tyack on *Architecture in Oxford: Wren, Vanburgh and Hawksmoor*. Here was a man who really knew his subject; I could have listened to him for much longer than the hour allocated. The day's musical events started with a piano recital given by John Reid of works by Bach, Janáček, Fauré and Ravel. After lunch was a chamber music recital by the Edington Ensemble playing 3 *Miniatures for Piano Trio* by Frank Bridge and the Brahms *Piano Quartet in G minor*.

Wednesday was spent at Eton College. Please see reflections by Laurence Rogers, below.

Back in Oxford, the final day started with a mainly Bach recital given by Robert Quinney on the 1965 Frobenius at Queen's College. A change of venue found us at St John's College for a recital on the 2008 Aubertin organ. The programme consisted of more Bach alternating with De Grigny.

We were then able to play an organ; the organs at Merton College, St. Michael at the Northgate (3 manual Willis 1954) and Harris Manchester College (3 manual Grey & Davidson 1923) were made available.

The last event was the annual dinner at Exeter College where the new IAO President Steven Grahll (Peterborough Cathedral) was installed.

Anyway, all in all it was an enjoyable few days. The 2018 IAO Music Festival will be based on Peterborough, dates to be confirmed.



David Saint, Gillian Weir and Peter King at Merton College.



Keble College chapel, with the Kenneth Tickell organ sitting in the high gallery.

Geoff Howell writes:

A feast for eyes and ears - Keble, New and Merton colleges

I was lucky enough to have an overnight stay at the IAO Music Festival in July. Oxford was the perfect setting, proving that there is more to organ music than just listening.

The opening recital was at Keble College late on a hot Sunday afternoon. My jaw dropped in amazement at Butterfield's vast polychromatic quad, but inside the dark chapel there is even more of a feast for the eyes, with the beautifully decorated tiles, mosaics and stained glass, not to mention the array of coloured organ pipes.

The evening sun illuminated the south choir stalls, and I almost reached for my dark glasses when Peter King, the IAO President and Festival Artistic Director, appeared in a white jacket with a dazzling blue pattern. Having welcomed us, he launched into a truly virtuosic programme of Karg-Elert, Franck, Vierne and Reubke. Kenneth Tickell's 2011 instrument, together with the generous acoustics, was well up to the demands, its pedal Quint allowing a good 32 foot effect.

At New College, after a reception in the cloisters, Robert Quinney invited us into the chapel and spoke about the 'unashamedly modernist' Grant, Degens and Bradbeer instrument. The case was probably a considerable shock to the college fellows in 1969: although designed to complement the chapel, it is certainly an architectural statement. Robert switched on the

organ's internal fluorescent tubes, and it did indeed look like a spaceship! The sound of the organ must have been even more surprising, so much so that its strident tones were eventually softened in the 1980s. More recently, in the 2014 restoration, Robert asked craftspeople from the Nottinghamshire firm Goetze & Gwynn to 'revive the original verve of its sound'. Robert demonstrated the various stops, with the build-up of harmonics on the Swell – including the unusual ninth harmonic (8/9') stop.

On Monday morning I stopped at Queen's Lane Coffee House on my way to Merton. The editor of Organists' Review was tucking into a full English at the next table, maybe just finishing her



New College chapel organ by Grant, Degens & Bradbeer, 1969.

September editorial, and I soon heard comments about cathedral organs from other tables in the shop.

The 2013 Dobson organ in Merton College was ideally situated for a master class, with seats set out in a semi-circle around the console. It was wonderful to look up at the beautifully decorated organ case. Peter King asked us to look up even further, into the tower, way above the ante-chapel. He said that it is the only tower in the country where the bells are rung from an open gallery around the inside of the tower, 60 feet up! Dame Gillian Weir was then set loose on three organ scholars – twenty minutes each – playing Bach, Franck and Messiaen. Her comments encouraged them to think musically about their phrasing, and about when and how to speed up or slow down. She was fond of metaphors, for example imagining a piece as a type of person walking towards you.

At ten o'clock we moved through to the chapel itself to listen to a recital by Benjamin Nicholas, who has done admirable work in establishing the superb mixed-voice choir at Merton. Peter King encouraged us to look around at the ancient chapel as we listened – the Quire, including the most impressive east window, was completed in the late thirteenth century. The acoustics, too, are enviable, attracting many choirs to sing there.

After a break, during which we could inspect the tiny Mob Quad and see Merton's gardeners at work, we had 'Desert Island Discs' in the chapel. Gillian Weir was in conversation with David Saint, a former pupil. We heard many interesting recordings – Gillian playing the piano (a Mozart Piano Concerto in 1960), the harpsichord (she loves Couperin), and the organ (the instrument she so loves built by her late husband at Hexham Abbey). She also spoke of her love for Messiaen's music ("a rainbow-coloured thread through her career – all about rhythmic freedom"), for the metaphysical poets, for the Royal Festival Hall organ, and for Bach's Cantatas.

Finally, I had lunch by the river at Magdalen, watching the punts and wondering how the

replacement for Magdalen's well intentioned but inadequate 1986 Mander might be as exciting in its own way as the organs of Keble, New College or Merton. I had hoped for a final feast for the eyes, but Modern Art Oxford is closed on Mondays. So I made my way home after a most stimulating visit to the festival.

Laurence Rogers writes:

A day at Eton College

On Wednesday the Festival decamped to Eton College. Entering through the main gate into the quadrangle, one might have imagined that we were at Hampton Court or a Cambridge college, such was the scale and magnificence of the buildings founded in 1440 by Henry VI. On offer for us were four organs of much later provenance in completely contrasting styles. We were hosted by David Goode, the College Organist, who demonstrated the instruments superbly, beginning with the grand organ in the main chapel. Despite such an architecturally splendid setting, the 1885 Hill organ had an imposing visual presence with its 32 feet towers and lavishly decorated pipes. Even the rear case in the antechapel flaunted gold leaf and bright colours. Essentially this was a romantic instrument, but various modifications occurred during the 20th Century aimed at increasing the power, brightness and clarity. In the 1987 rebuild by Mander, all the tonal modifications were reversed to restore Hill's original concept. Appropriately, David Goode chose to play the *Allegro maestoso* from Elgar's *Sonata in G* and two of Parry's chorale preludes to show off its romantic credentials. Whilst in the chapel we also heard the nine-stop chamber organ by Snetzler c.1740 in the choir, illustrated with a series of short sketches by Mozart.

The prelude to lunch was a visit to the main school hall, just across the road from the historic main chapel. Here David Goode introduced a Dutch instrument by Mittenreiter dating from 1773. Having been originally in a church in Rotterdam which was decommissioned in the 1920s, it was bought by a master from Eton who gave it to the College.



Eton College Chapel - view from the ante chapel



Eton College Chapel - organ by Snetzler

In 1973 the organ was restored by Flentrop to something like its original state. In a *Ciaccona* by Buxtehude, we heard how beautifully this instrument sparkled, in the best North European tradition.

After lunch we visited the Lower Chapel, a Victorian miniature replica of the main chapel, but without its fine acoustic. Here we heard the Tickell organ from 2001 (44 stops, 3 manuals and pedals). This is a versatile instrument, used for most of the teaching of the 25 organ pupils. It has a strong French flavour and David chose pieces by Marchand and Messiaen to demonstrate this.

Our visit to the College concluded with a fascinating tour of the historic buildings conducted by a retired master. Wednesday was a day packed with interest.

Recent Events

Organ music at the Victoria Hall, Hanley

Stoke-on-Trent is fortunate to have such a splendid town-hall organ in the Victoria Hall, Hanley. The Conacher instrument, installed for the hall's opening in 1888, enlarged by Henry Willis in 1922, and restored by Hill, Norman & Beard in 1988 has four manuals and 72 stops. In 2017 Charles James Organs of Loughborough have been doing a further major refurbishment with: a new transmission and piston system, including sequencer and generals; overhaul of the Great reed soundboard; revoicing of the Great 16', 8' and 4' reeds; replacement of the Swell and Solo box controls; and inclusion of swell pedal position indicators.

And the City is also blessed in having Michael Rhodes, a passionate promoter of organ prompts in which a broad range of music, played by organists of international repute, encourages attendance from a wide cross-section of the community.

The latest Prom, at noon on Saturday 12th August, fitted this vision well. Gert van Hoef, the 23-year old Dutch organist, played to a large and friendly crowd of all ages, and his infectious enthusiasm was very much in evidence. He is



Victoria Hall, Hanley

already well known, not least through YouTube, and this was his second family trip to Hanley. The concert, sponsored by the Dronsfeld Trust, featured music by Bach, Albinoni, Elgar, Handel, Vierne, Sousa and Guilmant, as well as improvisations. The whole concert is now available on [YouTube](#).

There was enthusiastic applause when Gert announced that his console assistant, Marjolein Speijer, who turned the pages and controlled the stops with perfect precision, had just become his fiancée and that they would be married in November. They chatted to the audience afterwards whilst selling CDs.

Still to come in 2017 are the Scott Brothers Duo (16 September),

Martin Baker (14 October) and Donald Mackenzie (18 November). The 2018 programme will include Ian Tracey (27 January), Darius Battiwalla (17 February), Jonathan Scott & the Hallé (23 March), Jonathan Scott (21 April), the Scott Brothers Duo (12 May), Michael Rhodes and Ashley Mellor (16 June) and Thomas Ospital (18 August), as well as organ events of an educational nature on 21 July and 15 September. And we hope Gert and Marjolein will be back in 2019. Well worth putting in your diary!

Geoff Howell



Marjolein Speijer and Gert van Hoef

Members' News

Tom Corfield

The January and March *Newsletters* carried news of Tom's dismissal from Derby Cathedral after 31 years of service as Assistant Organist. His case is going to the Employment Tribunal and slow progress is happening for this with the next stage due to take place in October. If it goes all the way, the Tribunal will not hear it until sometime next year. His supporters have been putting together information in his defence and the solicitor and barrister are preparing for the next stage. As you can guess this is very expensive. Should anyone wish to contribute to the costs there is an account set up to receive donations. If you wish to donate, please let Laurence Rogers,

Newsletter Editor, (DDOAnews@gmail.com) have your contact details to be passed on to the fund and they will be in touch with you to enable you to do this by cash, cheque or electronic bank transfer. This is going to be a long haul and please keep Tom and Rosemary in your prayers.

Peter Kefford

Lunchtime Recital Series

As reported in the May Newsletter, Tony Westerman organised a lunchtime recital series this summer at St Modwen's, Burton upon Trent, the first there for several years. Without exception all ten recitals were well supported and Tony is happy to report that £1266 was raised for local charity. Congratulations to Tony and the Vicar, Stanley Monkhouse, for their initiative in promoting the organ and the church in this way.



A swarm of organists muster around the Dutch organ after David Goode's demonstration in the school hall of Eton College during the IAO Festival. (See report on page 3.)

Unusual recruits to a cathedral choir - James Muckle

A few weeks ago I was in Winchester Cathedral for the first time since 1963, when I had heard the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra play Beethoven's Eroica. This time a duo were rehearsing Ludwig's great Kreutzer Sonata. But a different musical possibility struck me on this recent occasion. A congregation of tourists was preparing for a short service of remembrance for the victims of the latest terrorist atrocity in London, and as we sat there, I was surprised and delighted when a robin came hopping up the aisle, looking as if it owned the place.



After the short service I buttonholed a volunteer vergier and asked, 'Is the robin a regular worshipper here?' 'They are a pair,' he replied. 'They nested in the Cathedral, they

get fed, they have raised a family. I can't say whether the one we saw this morning was one of the parents, or a chick. They are quite one of the family. When the choir starts to sing evensong, they are apt to fly up and perch on the choir screen - and join in the singing!'

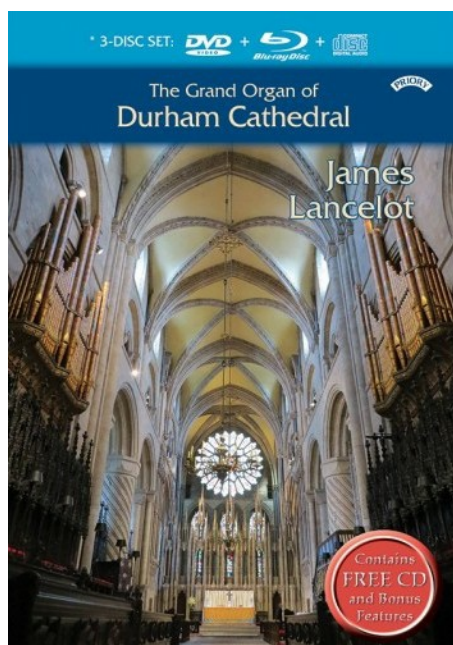
Wondering whether these musical birds had been auditioned, I staggered off, thinking that there must be many church choirs hoping for new singers; especially if there was a robin who could manage tenor.

James Muckle

DVD Review: The Grand Organ of Durham Cathedral - Margaret Eades

Members may already be acquainted with the excellent series of fourteen DVDs issued by Priory Records by having read reviews in the Organists' Review, or having become acquainted with them, as in my case, whilst browsing around various cathedral shops. Each comes with a beautifully illustrated covered box containing at least two discs, a DVD and CD of the same music, and sometimes an additional BLURAY DVD, as in the case of Durham Cathedral with James Lancelot. I have acquired three of the series so far, DURHAM CATHEDRAL, ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL and BATH ABBEY in the form of very acceptable birthday presents from family! I have spent three fascinating evenings enjoying the delights of viewing each one.

The Durham DVD with James Lancelot's excellent 90 minute recital demonstrates the organ admirably. It was originally built by Father Willis and extensively rebuilt and maintained up to the present day by the local Harrison & Harrison firm, who also built a two manual chamber organ for James in the organist's house which he uses as a practice and teaching instrument. He also demonstrated it later by playing the celebrated "*Mein junges leben hat ein End*" by Sweelinck.



On the main cathedral organ of four manuals, with the positive organ on choir keys and 100 speaking stops, James succeeds in demonstrating the versatility of this masterpiece in Romantic organ design; he plays music ranging from Bach, Stanley and Haydn to Stanford and the French school, Vierne, Alain, Dupré and Mulet. James later links his choice of music with historic themes connected with the cathedral, for example, to the tomb of the cathedral's famous Celtic Saint, Cuthbert with Stanford's *Preludes, op.101 no.5*, founded on an old Irish church melody, St Columba, so linking the Celtic theme.

Other fascinating features, (as with the other discs) are local views of the cathedral buildings, inside and out and a full description and demonstration of the organ by the organists, a virtual tour of the interior pipe work, a running commentary of the registration used while a piece is being played - in the Durham case the piece was: *Paeon (Five Short Pieces)* - Percy Whitlock, and mention of the distinctive cultural and historical facets of the the cathedral and surrounding area.

I loved this disc because, in my youth, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to play this instrument, thanks to the generous friendship of Leslie William Sumner, Physics lecturer at Nottingham University, where I was a music student. He was also author of '*THE ORGAN - it's Evolution, Principles of Construction and Use*'. I remember visiting Durham from my native Newcastle, meeting the then organist, Conrad Eden, who was kind enough to entertain me and introduce me to this famous organ.

I would strongly recommend anyone with an interest in famous organs to watch this (or any other of the series) in the comfort of their own home!

Margaret Eades

Forthcoming DDOA Meetings

Visit to Newark and Halam Saturday 23rd September 2017

1215 Organ recital – Stephen Bullamore –
Newark (about 45 minutes)

1330-1500 Play the organ

1530-1700 David Butterworth's house organ at
Halam Court NG22 8AG.

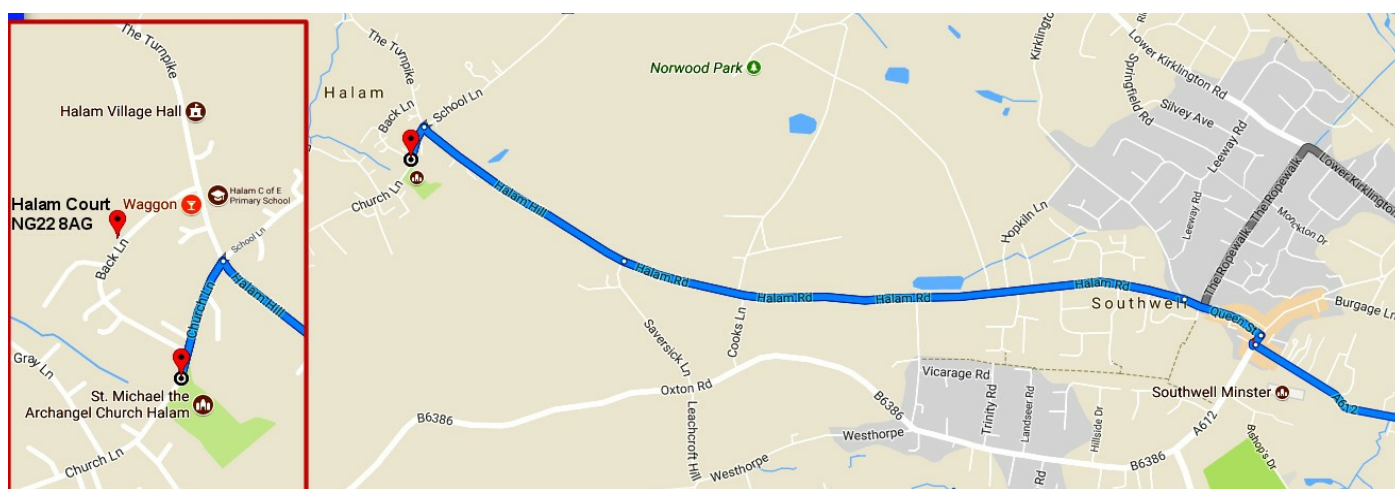
This event starts with an organ recital at Newark Parish Church, followed by the opportunity to play the 1964 Hill Norman & Beard organ (4 manuals and pedals, 60 stops). We then move to Halam, just the other side of Southwell to play the house organ of David Butterworth, built by Grant, Degens and Bradbeer.

The easiest way from Derby to Newark is A52 to Nottingham, then Bingham where you take the A46 to Newark. Street parking in Newark is limited but car parks are signposted.

When we leave Newark, cross the Trent on the bridge near the castle (B6326) at the A46 roundabout take the A617 towards Mansfield. Travel through Kelham and Averham until the traffic lights at the junction with the A612 (Southwell).

Follow the A612 through Upton into Southwell, just past the Minster turn right at the mini island in front of the Saracen's Head, follow the road round to the left and Halam is about 2 miles.

In Halam take the first road on the left and park by the parish church. Walk back to Back Lane (just below the lych gate on the opposite side) and follow the road round to Halam Court.

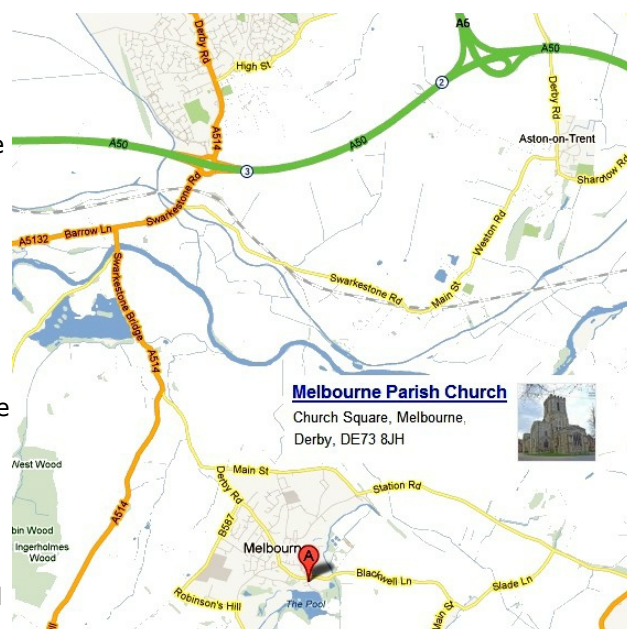


Seminar: 'Repertoire from Favourite Borrowings'

**7.30pm, Thursday 19th October 2017
at Melbourne Parish Church**

This is an opportunity to share ideas for repertoire drawn from pieces which were not originally written for organ. If you have a favourite example of such borrowing which succeeds well on the organ, please send Laurence Rogers your suggestions. Better still, please volunteer to play it at the meeting. As well as the main organ, a charming chamber organ will be available. We also have a harpsichord which will allow us to compare performances of keyboard music of the Baroque era, much of which was unspecific about instrumentation. Maybe you have a favourite piano piece which renders well on the organ. Perhaps you would just like to try a manuals-only piece on the chamber organ or harpsichord. Whether you wish to play or listen, do come along and join what we hope will be a lively discussion of less formal organ repertoire.

Melbourne lies just south of the River Trent. From Derby it is most conveniently reached by taking the A6 and A50 and crossing Swarkestone Bridge. The Parish Church is signposted from the market cross in the centre of the town. There is convenient parking adjacent to the church.



Melbourne Parish Church

Church Square, Melbourne,
Derby, DE73 8JH

Items of news or articles for the November/December edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 23rd October**, 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.