

Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

Newsletter



Ancient Survivor - Laurence Rogers

History books tell us that the origin of organs goes back to Greek and Roman times. Actual surviving instruments are extremely rare so most of the evidence of those ancient organs comes from contemporary literature, engravings and paintings. The earliest examples of organs that have survived date from late medieval times. Recently I fulfilled a long-held ambition to visit one of the most famous of these at the Basilica of Valère at Sion in Switzerland. It is claimed that this is the oldest working organ in the world.

One might imagine that it is housed in a remote monastery in the countryside where time forgot, but in fact the Basilica is just a few minutes walk from the historic centre of Sion, the largest city in the Valais canton in the south west of Switzerland. Sion, in the middle of the Rhône valley, is easily accessed by rail; the main line skirting the north side of Lake Geneva turns into the Rhône valley at the eastern end of the lake. However it is a challenging walk from the railway

station! The Basilica is fortified like a castle on a steep rocky mount and I lost count of the steps on the cobbled pathway up to the summit. The photo below says it all. The buildings date from the 12th and 13th centuries. On entering the church on the north side, you immediately find yourself in a lofty nave and there on the bare western wall is the swallow's nest gallery housing the organ.

The paintings on the shutters give a clue to the date of the instrument; there is a historical record of payment to the artist,



DDOA Meetings 2025

Saturday 29th November 10.00 am
AGM at St Matthew's, Darley Abbey
See page 8.

Other Events

Monday Lunchtime Music at St Anne's, Derby DE1 3NB. 1.00 pm

3rd Nov. Stephen Carleston (organ)
10th Nov. Elizabeth French (piano)
17th Nov. Bryan Gipps (organ) *French Fancies*
24th Nov. Benjamin Green (organ)

Thursday Lunchtime Recitals at Chesterfield Parish Church 12.15 - 1.00 pm

6th Nov. Timara Easter (organ)

Saturday 8th November, 7.30 pm

St John's Church, Mill Street, Derby
Music of triumph and Majesty, Sitwell Singers
Tickets £16 on door

Saturday 15th November, 7.30 pm

Derby Cathedral
Bach – Magnificat, Ascension Oratorio
Derby Bach Choir. Tickets £25 - £10

Saturday 22nd November, 7.30 pm

St John's Church, Mill Street, Derby
Perfect Palestrina, Derwent Singers
Tickets £15

Saturday 29th November, 10.30 am

St George's Church, Ticknall, DE73 7JU
Come and Sing Messiah (Performance 3 pm)
Derby Bach Choir. Tickets £5 - £15

Saturday 29th November, 7.30 pm

St Benedict School, Darley Abbey, DE22 1JD
Rossini – Petite Messe Solennelle
Derby Choral Union. Tickets £18

Thursday 11th December, 7.30 pm

St Matthew's, Darley Abbey, DE22 1EF
Christmas Concert, Derwent Singers
Tickets £10

Monday 15th December, 7.30 pm

St John's Church, Mill Street, Derby
Strike the Harp, Sitwell Singers
Tickets £16 on door

Thursday 18th December, 7.30 pm

Christ Church, Belper, DE56 1BA
Christmas Concert, Derwent Singers
Tickets £10

Photos: *Above*: The 1435 organ at Valère Basilica, Sion, Switzerland

Below: View of the fortified Valère Basilica on a hilltop in the Rhône valley, Switzerland.

The Valère Basilica Organ in Sion c.1435

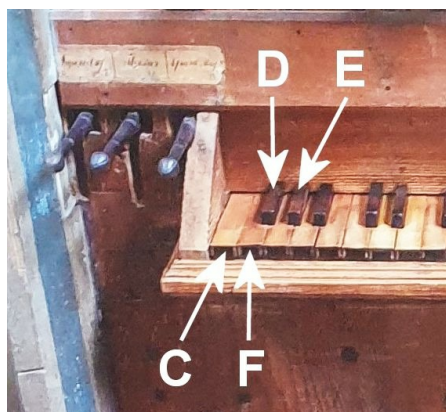
Manual: 45 notes C-c^{'''} short bottom octave

Major 8'	old
Oktav 4'	1687
Flute 4'	old (wooden)
Superoktav 2'	old
Quint Major 2 ² / ₃ '	1687
Quint Minor 1 ¹ / ₃ '	old
Mixtur II 1'	old rank, 1687 rank

Pedal: 9 notes C-c short bottom octave
Holzpfleifen 16' Coupled to manual
(10 ranks, 8 stops, 376 pipes)

Pierre Maggenberg, in 1435 and this date has been adopted as the date of construction of the organ by an unknown builder. Inevitably over its lifetime the organ has been modified several times, but at least half of the pipes are considered to be original. The 4' Flute pipes made of walnut wood, are believed to be a century older than the organ itself. At the beginning of its life the soundboard operated as a Blockwork by which all ranks sounded together all the time. The gallery was not constructed until 1628 so the organ's original position was most probably at ground level.

In 1687 the organ was 'modernised' by Christopher Aebi, a Valais organ builder. This involved replacing the soundboard with a new larger one to accommodate the addition of the 4' Octave, the Quint Major and the second rank of the Mixture. It was at this stage that the stop selection mechanism was added, replacing the former Blockwork configuration. As the photo shows, the player moves a vertical lever for each stop with a hitch to hold the upper position. At the time, the selection of ranks by stop controls was a leap forward in technical innovation! The single manual has a 'short' bottom octave



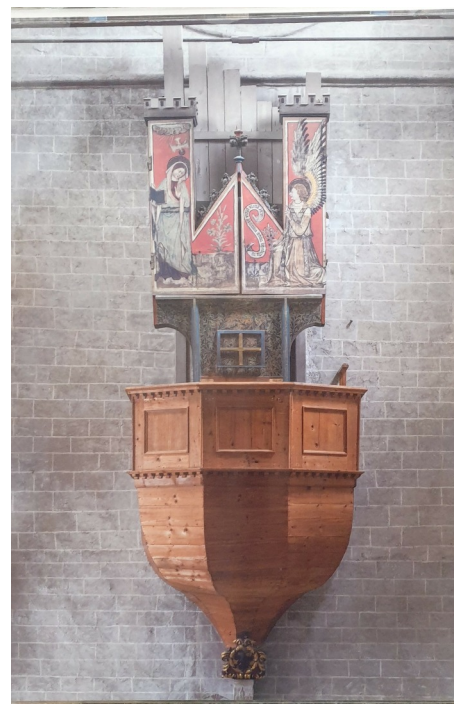
Stop levers and the manual short octave.



Console with short octave pedalboard

by which C# and D# are omitted and F# and G# sharp are replaced by D and E respectively. The 1687 renovation was the most extensive intervention undergone by the organ in its history. Apart from that, the bellows were repaired in 1786 and pedal pipes were added in 1812 together with the short-octave pedalboard.

During the 19th century the canons were no longer living in the fortified town and interest in the organ waned. The last mention of an organist dates from 1846, then at some stage the organ fell into a long silence. This was the case when Sir George Arthur Hill visited in the 1870s. (The Sion organ featured in his famous collection of European organs published in 1883.) Silence persisted until 1954 when a group of experts convened and stirred up interest in the historic organ. The first step was to install an electric blower system, the hand-operated bellows remaining unusable. It was not until 2003 that the organ was able to undergo a comprehensive restoration with complete disassembly, restoration of the windchests, and repair of the bellows. The pipework was treated very conservatively, however, to allow the pipes to be tuned without damaging the metal, moveable tuning slides were fitted to the top of each pipe. This also made it possible to lower the pitch slightly and get somewhat closer to A at 440 hertz, the modern standard. Tuning was to equal temperament; in 2019 this was readjusted to mean-tone temperament to regain the medieval sound spectrum. The main



The paintings on the closed shutters depict the Annunciation

characteristic of this temperament is to create as many pure thirds as possible, i.e. with no beats when played together. One of the limitations of this system is that favoured keys like C, G and F major possess beautifully sweet tuning, whereas other keys might contain quite a lot of dissonance. (Readers may be interested in my previous discussion of temperaments in the Newsletters for [July](#) and [September 2012](#), available on our website.)

In 1959 a festival was established, an event which has occurred every year since during summer months. The festival [website](#) contains a wealth of historical information.

For my recent visit as a tourist I was only able to admire the sight of the organ from a distance, but for sound, the CD that I purchased in the nearby museum fulfilled all my expectations. The tone is bright but never shrill. In particular, the 4' Flute sound absolutely delightful. The CD notes detail the registrations used in an essentially pre-19th century repertoire. Altogether the programme demonstrates how much variety can be obtained from eight stops, of which only one is at eight foot pitch. For readers, you may sample some of the sounds by checking out this [YouTube video](#) recorded at this year's festival.

Laurence Rogers

Recent Events

DDOA Members' Recital at Kirk Langley 5th September

I had not visited St Michael's prior to this evening and was very taken with the architecture of the place, the lack of clutter and the lovely organ case – quite unusual for many village churches. The programme assembled for the evening was nothing if not unusual. There was in fact only one piece I knew – Purcell's *Trumpet Tune and Air* played by April Darby – and perhaps that says something about my limited grasp of the repertoire. It demands some ingenuity to draw up a programme defined by the alphabet, in this case composers with surnames beginning O to S and the players introduced us to some very little known composers; for example, Denis Littleton gave us Charles Piroye (1668–1724) and Jean-René Quignard (1887–1978) and Alex Binns gave us Peter Prelleur (1705–1741). Nigel Ogden (b.1954) is a more familiar personality and Laurence Rogers offered us his version of the enchanting *Scherzo for the White*

Rabbit. More Germanically 'solid' pieces from Peter Shepherd (Schumann's *Fugue on BACH, No.4*) and Gillian Chatto (a *Praeludium* by Rheinberger) brought in the 19th century and Richard Brice added a dash of the 20th with Christopher Steel's *Intrada and Dance* to finish off the evening.

I was not altogether convinced by the organ, despite the best efforts of our soloists. There were two enchanting gentle Flutes which were well exploited and a fairly solid Diapason but the full ensemble seemed to me to be too shrill. I moved my seat twice to see if my impression was perhaps wrong.

I'm never quite sure what to think about some of what we used to call IHFs (interesting historical figures), for example, Prelleur and Piroye, who are bound to turn up in a programme like this one. Their music is accomplished enough, keeping well within the standard and sometime predictable techniques of their era, but there is a lack of 'personality' compared to say Parry or Pachelbel who did not feature. But I'm quibbling, for it was



The handsome organ case at St Michael's Church, Kirk Langley

an enjoyable evening and our thanks to all the performers and Alex for putting it all together. Now I guess we move on to T U V W X Y and Z ? A little bird has intimated that a certain Italian gent who 'flourished', as we say, in South American Catholic Churches might get a look in!

Stephen Johns

The 'Q' Quest - Laurence Rogers

As Stephen Johns has remarked in his reflection on the Members' Recital, choosing repertoire for a programme defined alphabetically demands some ingenuity, and nowhere has this been more so than finding composers with a name beginning with 'Q'.

John Henderson's *Directory of Composers for Organ* contains marginally more than a single page of entries for this letter. As a long shot I investigated the flute composer Johann Joachim Quantz, not listed by Henderson, and discovered a single work on [IMSLP](#), *Allegro* 'for cembalo or organ'. To my ears this seemed to work well on solo flute stops and thus offered this for our recital. These days Quantz (1697–1773) is mostly remembered for his flute compositions which include 200 sonatas and 300 concertos, so this little piece for cembalo is perhaps an oddity. His contemporary fame was as a performer and teacher of the flute, most notably at the court of Frederick the Great of Prussia, where he served as the king's flute teacher. He also wrote a widely regarded and influential treatise on flute performance.

In his quest for a 'Q' composer, Denis Littleton found in a book of collected pieces, *Sortie in F* by Jean-René Quignard (1887–1978). A pupil of Louis Vierne, he was at one time organist at Église Notre Dame in Versailles. He composed much choral music for the church and Henderson provides a substantial list of organ pieces, many based on liturgical themes.

Reflecting on an alphabetical carve-up of the organ composers, counting the number of pages in Henderson's *Directory* demonstrates how unevenly their names are distributed; most popular is 'B' with 72 pages, followed by 'S' with 64, 'H' with 48 and 'M' with 46. Most other letters are in double figures with the exception of I, O, Q, U, X and Y. The biggest challenge is still to come in next year's recital with X (three entries)!

Laurence Rogers



This famous 1852 portrait by Adolph Menzel shows Frederick the Great playing a flute concerto in the palace of Sanssouci with C.P.E. Bach at the harpsichord and Quantz leaning on the wall to the right.

Recent Event

Annual Lunch 18th October

The annual social event for the Association, a lunch at Makeney Hall, was well supported this year and, as ever, it was a convivial and friendly occasion. There was a great atmosphere in the spacious banqueting room; pre-lunch conversation was lively, then the food was good and the service excellent. It was lovely to be joined by some of our newer members. It was especially good to welcome our very newest member, Canon Peter Kefford as our guest speaker. In retirement, Peter moved to Derby in 2009 and has become well known in cathedral circles there. Born in Sussex and after a career in commerce, he was called to the ministry in the 1970s. He trained at Lincoln Theological College before serving curacies in Wimbledon and the City of London. He moved to Chichester Diocese where he served as Rector in two benefices before becoming a residentiary Canon Treasurer and Advisor for the Ordained Ministry, coupled with the post of Diocesan Director of Ordinands. With such a wealth of experience, he came to us with a rich supply of stories about organs, organists, choirboys and clergy.

As an organist himself, he had a perspective that all of us could identify with, and it was heartening to hear affirmation of the role that organists play in the service they bring to the life of the church. As a teenager he would play for school assemblies and when he went to Lincoln Theological College, he soon became college organist and had an opportunity to play the Lincoln Cathedral organ at a special service celebrating the centenary of the college. Then, in years of ministry his organ playing was less regular, reserved for special occasions or when an organist failed to turn up! Wearing 'two hats' as a priest and organist, he reflected on the two roles: "At the organ I had more influence over the feel and sense of atmosphere of the service than I ever had at the altar. An organist can destroy the whole atmosphere or enhance it. Most clergy don't realise the importance of this key relationship and so they don't nurture it. It can bring magic to each liturgy if all are in tune". "We try in liturgy to scoop up the people and take them to God – music can be truly the handmaid of liturgy."



Canon Peter Kefford

From a ministry of over 50 years, spanning several churches and a cathedral, Peter told numerous anecdotes of the variety of organist personalities he had worked with. Here is a taste with just two of them.

For example, there was the 'dictator' who ran the choir like a 'private army'. He chose the hymns and ruled the roost. Music had become the only purpose of the parish. It came to a head on Peter's first Christmas in the parish when the organist had chosen for the Midnight Mass Psalm 137 which included a verse about bashing babies' heads against stones. Peter apprehended this and changed it, much to the annoyance of the organist, who, upon being taken to task on the matter, instantly resigned, throwing an enormous bunch of keys at Peter before departing abruptly. It transpired that the wardens were delighted. "We've been hoping someone would stand up to him for years", they said.

In contrast, Peter spoke of having the huge privilege of working with Professor Gordon Phillips, organist at All Hallows by the Tower of London. Every Thursday lunchtime he would give two 45 minute recitals at 12 noon and one o'clock respectively. By the time he died, Gordon had given over 3,000 recitals. Every day he taught pupils and rehearsed endlessly. With Peter's office backing on to part of the organ, it was possible to hear what was going on. As Gordon went over and over phrases until he got them exactly right, the value of practice really impressed Peter. Peter spoke of further amazing experiences of working closely with Gordon. There was also a quirky one: During sermons Gordon would sit on a chair at the back of the gallery such that one could see only the top of his head. Before long wisps of smoke could be seen in the gallery. Each Sunday, as the sermon started, Gordon would light one of his cigars and he could time the sermon by how far it got down the cigar before he had to get back on the organ stool!

Peter reflected upon his good fortune to have worked with many wonderful colleagues. Indeed, the spirit of collaboration shone through the stories he recounted to us. Having been on his feet and held our riveted attention for a good half an hour he graciously decided it was time to draw a line and sat down. At the outset he had forgiven us in advance if post-lunch slumber might overcome any of us, but this was not necessary. After enthusiastic applause our Chairman moved the vote of thanks and we gave Peter a further round of applause.

As ever, we thank John Maxwell-Jones for his superb arrangements in securing the comfortable venue and organising the event.

Laurence Rogers



St Anne's and the 'Adopt a Pipe' Scheme - Tom Corfield

As many of you will know, St Anne's Church in Derby has been given a pipe organ. It comes from a redundant church in Rubislaw (part of Aberdeen), where the congregation was anxious that it should go somewhere where it was loved and appreciated, rather than being scrapped or plundered for pipes by an acquisitive organ builder, which would have otherwise been its likely fate. The people of Rubislaw have shown great kindness, not only in giving us the instrument, but also by helping us through the complicated process of acquiring and moving it. The move took place in October 2024, when the organ was dismantled, brought down to Derby and packed away in St Anne's in such a way as to cause minimal disruption to the life of the church. David Wells Organ Builders did us proud.

It is an instrument with an excellent pedigree. Initially built by 'Father' Willis in 1890, it was subsequently enlarged by Willis in the 1920s and then rebuilt in turn by Walker in the 1960s and Edmonstone in the 1990s. Most of the original Willis pipework remains, as does something of the Willis character, which it is our intention to enhance during the rebuild. Tony Westerman and I both had the opportunity to hear and play the organ in Rubislaw. We revelled in its strong tone, its brilliance and its softer colours too, and we are convinced that in the acoustic of St Anne's (which is rather more resonant than the heavily carpeted building in Rubislaw), it will sound even better than it did in its former home.

The reconstruction is going to cost around £300,000. We are applying for grants, of course, but we are also keen to raise some of the money ourselves locally: hence the 'adopt a pipe' scheme. It is hardly an original idea, but it is a good one, not least because it helps to embed the project in the community. We see the organ as a gift not only to the church, but also to the parish and (more widely) to the people of Derby.

We want to encourage generous giving, but it is important also to offer an opportunity for anybody to contribute, regardless of their financial circumstances. Hence



The Willis console awaiting installation in St Anne's Church

prices that range from £5,000 to £5. Some attempt has been made to relate the prices to the size and value of the pipes, though inevitably the correlation is only very approximate. In all there are around 2,000 pipes. Unsurprisingly, the most expensive ones are the twelve that form the bottom octave of the Pedal 32' reed, while the lowest prices are assigned to the Fifteenth and the Tierce on the Choir.

The purpose of this article is not to beg, especially as many members of the Association have organs of their own which are costly to maintain, but simply to inform colleagues of what is happening. Please spread the word. I would be delighted to hear from

anybody wanting to participate. There is a large file in the church, listing the various ranks and the pipes that are available for adoption (with prices); and in due course that file will show which pipes are spoken for and which remain to be adopted. Each donor will receive a certificate, and records will be kept of people who have contributed.

I have already booked the player for the opening recital. John Kitchen gave the very last concert on the organ in Rubislaw and he has kindly agreed to open it in its new home. I hope that opening recital will not be too far in the future. Any donation, large or small, will bring the day a little bit closer. On a personal note, I am looking forward to the first carol service with the new organ, and to piling on the stops in the last verse of 'Hark, the herald angels sing'. Doubtless, at that climactic moment the 32' reed will come into play. But earlier in the service the softer sounds on the Choir and Swell will be lending colour to the choir carols. In a good organ all the pipes are important and each has its own distinctive part to play. I love the thought that every one of them might have somebody's name on it (figuratively speaking), and I will be working hard to make that happen.

Tom Corfield



A Life of Music at Chesterfield Parish Church - Peter Shepherd

It is two years since Peter Shepherd was appointed Organist and Choirmaster at Chesterfield Parish Church. Peter was born into a musical family and, at an early age, joined the choir at Great Malvern Priory. At seven, he entered the choir at Worcester Cathedral under the direction of Adrian Lucas, who inspired his love of church music. He later took organ lessons there with Chris Allsop and has been playing and singing ever since. As a teenager he began conducting which he continued when he went off to Merton College, Oxford. As well as an accomplished organist, he is also a serious pianist but also likes to play jazz.

He declares that the Chesterfield job is the biggest job he has ever taken, centred on directing a busy choir and pioneering outreach activities. Here he reflects on his role, some of the challenges it brings and some of his vision for the future.



Peter Shepherd at the console of the Lewis organ in Chesterfield Parish Church.

Formative experiences

Everything I want to achieve here has been informed by my experiences at the parish church where I grew up. I would like to think that we can be a parish church that, while not trying to be a cathedral, aspires to a lot of the same standards and repertoire. A big aim is to have a choir that can sight read. That's something that was instilled in me (by Adrian Lucas) at Worcester Cathedral. I think that children who join parish church choirs should be given as broad a musical education as those who join cathedral choirs, even if they have a lesser workload.

A typical week

On Monday, it's mostly admin and I have treble choir practice in the afternoon. During the week, I go to a local school and lead their choir. That's interesting because it is a chance to work with kids who aren't particularly musically educated, and it helps me to figure out what expectations you should have – what do kids want to do, and how do we get them singing. It's very different from what I do in church. Thursday is busier: I host the organ and chamber music series. Then, in the afternoon, we have choir practice with the boys, girls, men and women. On Sunday, obviously it's Mass in the morning, Evensong in the evening. The first two terms of

the year we do a lot of outreach in primary schools. And we might have a school come in and sing evensong for a day. Outreach is hopefully increasing this term; I'm hoping that within the next six months we might be able to team up with the local music hub and start a Junior choir together, which would be on a Friday evening or Saturday morning. It's all in aid of making sure that we have some sort of musical structure for children from a younger age up to 18.

The Choir

We have choristers aged 11 upwards. Currently the top line is just trebles. We have mixed altos. We have tenors and basses, most of whom are voluntary, like so many other churches. Recently, we have done Darke in A minor and Alleluia, I heard a voice by Thomas Weelkes. We spent three weeks learning William Mathias's Jesus College Service, which was a lot harder than our usual repertoire. So, it's sort of parish church repertoire, but with an inflection towards music you might expect to hear in a cathedral – albeit not quite at that level. And it's obviously not the sort of music we do all the time.

We have a really good bunch here; a lot of them have been in

the choir for 30–40 years. In the past, there was a choir of 40 or 50 singers. We're much fewer than that now, as is the case with so many churches, but I'd like to get to the point where we've 20 to 25 singers every Sunday.

Recruitment and retention

It's no secret that if you start in a place where the choir numbers are falling, it's very difficult to keep things going. When I arrived here, we had four intrepid choristers. But we lost all the primary school members just as I turned up, and that was and is tricky. It's difficult to persuade young children to join when there's no one that they can relate to. That's one of the reasons why we are looking to start a junior choir. Getting people of a similar age to sing together seems to be a successful model that lots of cathedrals and churches are using.

Trying to get parents on board is the hardest thing – as it probably has been for a long time. At this church, we insist, as do a lot of places, that choristers turn up for two mid-week rehearsals and on a Sunday. That's a lot of time, so you have to try and get the parents onside from the get-go. That is easier when they're already plugged in to the church, but we don't have a huge number of families attending. That said, there are several initiatives going on to make the church more attractive to families and to young people.

Basically, it's making sure that we show ourselves to be a place that offers a musical education that you can't get elsewhere. Finding a way of reaching parents to whom that would appeal is just as important as going into the less well-off areas and trying to give an opportunity to sing to people who have never had a chance to sing. Like a lot of Derbyshire, this town is not particularly well-off; it's not the sort of place where we're going to attract people who want to send their children to a choir because of the prestige.

The vicar strongly agrees that the choir is essential to the worship. You're not going to expect that every child who comes through a parish choir comes out the other end being a Christian with strong faith. But what we're doing is giving them the basis to understand what church is about, and we're giving them an opportunity to spend time with people of different generations, to spend time in this special place, this building. I think that everybody who comes through the church choir has some sort of reverence for what we're doing, for what we're about.

The future

A long-term plan, if possible, is to increase the number of services: maybe have a monthly or fortnightly midweek evensong to add to the schedule. I would like to be able to do outreach projects with schools once a term. Last term, we put on *Joseph* with five local schools, which was really successful, and that's something that we want to keep going and to build on. The main hook, so far as I'm concerned, is the music. That, first and foremost, is what will make people stay.

We also have a good social calendar: we have chorister outings; we go on tour – we've just come back from a tour of Llandaff and Hereford Cathedrals. If a chorister tells their school friends where they have been, that can make their friend interested – more so than them saying, 'well, every Sunday we just go to church.'

I'd like to increase the social calendar. To fundraise, we're doing an events evening, making everybody in the choir turn up and sing or act to do something like that. Getting adults and children together is a nice dynamic – it has a familial aspect to it. But the best way to sell the choir to people is just to be honest. The ones who are going to



Chesterfield Parish Church Choir with Peter Shepherd

stick around for 2–3 years or more are the ones who like what we do.

PS One of the main ingredients is the camaraderie and the friendship that you get from other people in the choir. That's why it is difficult when you've got nobody from a particular age group in a choir. If we're able to use a junior choir as a springboard, then we can create a place where there are people a bit like you – or perhaps not like you at all. Church choirs can be a real mixture. But that's never a problem so long as everybody is there with common purpose – to sing music, enjoy themselves, and feel like it's an edifying experience.

Recent and upcoming outreach events

We held a Play the Organ encounter event earlier this year; it was really exciting. We've done a couple of open days here for the organ, one when I had just turned up. And this year we did it again. A lot of the organization was done by the local Derbyshire music hub. They managed to get eight or nine students, all pianists, with standards up to Grade 8 diploma, and they all loved it. Being good pianists, they were able to play some quite impressive stuff on the organ, and two or three of them got really into using the pedals. As always happens, they look at the cockpit and the controls and are scared. Then they start playing, and it's just an amazing feeling. Whether they are young or old doesn't make a difference. It's a great leveller. We've really good organists who come and play this instrument. It used to be in Glasgow's concert hall- it's a big romantic Lewis instrument. It makes you realize that, while you can join a choir anywhere, you have

to go to a church to play an organ – unless you've got a town hall nearby...

We also held a very successful collaborative schools' performance of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, involving singers and instrumentalists from local primary and secondary schools and are hoping to repeat the project with a different cantata next March. In December we are putting on a performance of *St Nicholas* in a bid to draw more children to the main church choir, possibly launch the Junior Choir, and grow the adult choir which is slowly taking off!

Encouraging interest in church music

Every now and then an article about Evensong will appear in *The Guardian* or *The Independent*, and will talk about how more young people are open to the idea of spending an evening going into a chapel or a cathedral to hear music. And that's something I think about a lot: about how evensong in particular can attract people to come to church for musical reasons.

On another front, it has been getting harder and harder for children to access music in primary schools. When you go into a school and say, who knows 'One more step along the world I go', the teachers put their hands up, but the kids don't know what you've just asked. That's probably something that churches and cathedrals around the country can and are capitalizing on. We have this wonderful opportunity to provide music education.

Peter Shepherd

Forthcoming DDOA Meeting

Saturday 29th November at 10.00 am Annual General Meeting at St Matthew's Church, Darley Abbey, , Derby DE22 1EF

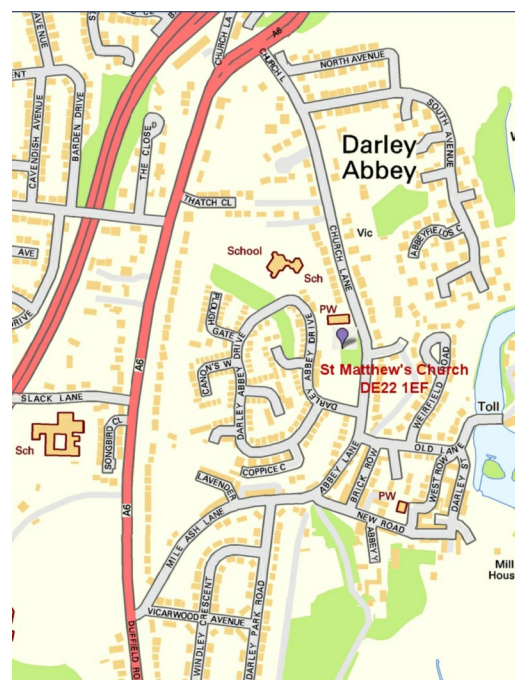
The minutes of the 2024 AGM are available via email attachment or by visiting the link:

<https://derbyorganists.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/agm2024.pdf>

As well as reports on the past year's activities, the meeting will elect new officers for Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary, together with committee members. The committee is always seeking new members, so **please consider volunteering** for this. The freshness of our programme benefits greatly from new members.

The AGM meeting will be followed by an audio-visual presentation by Laurence Rogers featuring the oldest playable organ in the world (See the leading article on page 1.)

And of course there will be time for social and refreshments, including John Maxwell-Jones' famous cakes!



Other Event

Saturday 22nd November 2.00 pm Hands on with Handel

The Director of the Royal School of Church Music, Hugh Morris, is marking *Play the Organ Year* by inviting as many organists as possible to join him in playing the same piece at the same time on Saturday 22nd November at 2pm. The idea is that locally it gives each organist a chance to share 'their' organ with their local community, and in line with the aims of *Play the Organ Year*, to get people to actually give it a try. Resources, including the music scores and publicity templates are available for download from:
[The Director's Challenge 2025 | RSCM](#)

If you have not yet held an event for *Play the Organ Year*, please consider taking part. As an extra, if you can film your contribution and share to social media – the RSCM will supply details of a social media 'wall' on their website so that different performances will all appear.

**PLAY THE
ORGAN
YEAR 2025**

A Poem by Anna Sabisky (Commended by Canon Peter Kefford)

Farewell, dear friend, farewell; eternal rest be thine, yet not rest of sloth or inactivity – (They rest not day nor night who stand around the throne) – but freedom from all happenings that fret the soul.

Sudden the call "Come quickly, I have need of thee to sing and play and help to train the heavenly choirs. Thy cheer and kindness amid the daily toil and willing service in my house have fitted thee for this. Delay not, e'en to say a last goodbye."

Swift the response! "O Lamb of God I come, the victim of Thy boundless love, to kneel before Thee humbly and in joyous reverence to proclaim Thy praise."

We dare not mourn such happiness, but pray for strength to emulate his readiness to meet his Lord.

Items of news or articles for the January / February edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 15th December**, either via e-mail: DDOAnews@gmail.com or by post: Dr Laurence Rogers, 24 St.David's Crescent, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4SS. The Secretary, 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.



www.derbyorganists.co.uk