

# Derby & District Organists' Association

Registered Charity No. 510567

## Newsletter



### Bach's Hidden Numbers

This year's programme got off to a lively start on the last day of February with a talk by the renowned organist, Gordon Stewart. Members turned out in strength to give a full house at St John's Church Hall, Mickleover. Gordon lived up to his reputation for animated presentation, taking advantage of the café-style arrangement of the chairs to communicate vigorously with all members of the audience.

We soon got a taste of his dedication to the music of Bach and passionate advocacy of the master's genius. He learnt Bach from a young age and still plays at least one piece of Bach's music every day. For his DDOA 'lecture', it would have been perverse to talk without hearing some music, and to fulfil this he invited performances by cellist Sarah Huson-Whyte, a musician from Nottinghamshire. For an audience of organists this may have seemed strange to organise the playing of an instrument other than the organ, but the less familiar timbres turned out to be a master stroke for heightening our appreciation of the beauty of Bach's music. At three points in his discourse Gordon took a rest

while we heard a movement from Bach's *First Cello Suite*, beginning with *Prelude*, then *Allemande* and *Gigue*. We were entranced by Sarah's superb performances whose expressiveness brought home how much is missing from the sound spectrum of the organ genre. Later on Gordon suggested that organ players could well take inspiration from the expressiveness afforded by the stringed instrument and eschew metronomic performances. After all, as a violinist as well as organist, Bach's compositional imagination was not constrained by one medium.

Why did numbers matter to Bach? Gordon began by reminding us that since ancient times mankind has attached symbolic significance to numbers. Although this might be less so in the present era, in Bach's



Gordon Stewart

### DDOA Meetings 2026

#### Saturday 11th April 1.00 pm

Play the organ at All Saints, Aston on Trent  
**3.00 pm** Recital at St James', Swarkestone  
By Alexander Binns. See page 8.

#### Saturday 9th May 2.00 pm

Visit organs in Radbourne and Ashbourne.

#### June Evening visit, date TBC

Visit the Roger Yates organ (1953) at St Andrew's, Kegworth.

#### July Day visit, date TBC

Visit organs in Selby and South Yorks.

#### Saturday 26th September 2.00 pm

Members' Recital at St Laurence's, Long Eaton.

#### Saturday 31st October 1.00 pm

Association Lunch. Venue TBC

#### Saturday 21st November venue TBC

AGM and Chairman's event.

### Other Events

#### Saturday Tea-time Recitals at Holy Trinity, Millhouses S7 2GY. 4.00 pm

Free Entry, Refreshments and 'Have a go' on the organ for young and old.

14<sup>th</sup> March Peter Shepherd (Chesterfield PC)

11<sup>th</sup> April Benjamin Green (Nottingham)

9<sup>th</sup> May Gillian Chatto (Nether Heage)

#### Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30 pm

Derby Cathedral. *Mendelssohn's Elijah*  
Derby Choral Union conducted by Paul Provost

#### Saturday 14th March. London Organ Day

<https://iao.org.uk/london-organ-day/>

#### Good Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 7.00 pm

Chesterfield Parish Church.  
Musical Meditations for Passiontide.  
Free with retiring collection.

#### Saturday 25th April. International Organ Day

<https://www.facebook.com/internationalorgan/day>

**See page 7 for more events.**

Main Photos: 1746 portrait of Bach by Elias Haussmann. Martin Luther's chorale 'Vom himmel hoch da kom ich herr', upon which Bach composed the Canon Variations.



time, people held cultural beliefs that associated numbers with aspects of creation. Number '1' was God that created everything; '2' was mankind with Adam and Eve; '3' for the Holy Trinity; '4' the corners of the Earth; '5' the number of planets (!); '6' perfection (see box). For organists, "Bach is God", but perhaps more correctly "next to God". Being a devout Christian he sought to praise God and offer the best his art could create. For us, his gift of the music is an aural experience, but his offering to God is hidden within the music. Gordon speculated that in the *Fantasia in G (Pièce d'Orgue)* the three movements are symbolic of the Trinity; Father (*Vitement*), Son (*Grave*), Holy Spirit (*Lentement*). Perhaps, in bar 66 of the *Grave*, the bottom B (not available on the pedalboard) symbolises 'He descended into Hell!' Of course this is speculation, but numerological studies have discovered definite patterns and proportions in Bach's music, invisible within the aural experience, but visible to the eye of God.

In 1747 Bach became a member of the Society of Musical Sciences in Leipzig. Its aim was to exchange ideas on musical theory. Entry to the society required submitting a canon. This contrapuntal form of music can only work when its tune harmonises with itself when repeated in several voices out of step with each other. Not an easy compositional task, but Bach was an expert and in the event submitted not one but five canons, *Variations on 'Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich herr'*. The famous portrait by Haussmann was commissioned for his entry and tellingly shows Bach holding a six part canon which he had composed earlier.

### Perfect Numbers

A perfect number is one which is equal to the sum of its divisors. Thus: **6** may be divided by 1, 2 and 3 whose sum is **6**.

**28** is divisible by 1,2,4,7 and 14 whose sum is **28**

Such numbers are comparatively rare. The only other one less than 1000 is 496.

Gordon went on to consider Bach's numerical signature '14' which stems from an aspect of numerology that sceptics might dismiss as coincidences, but in fact was a popular practice amongst composers in the Baroque era (including Buxtehude and Handel). Taking the alphabetical order of letters, '14' is the sum of the letters in 'BACH' = 2+1+3+8). After the addition of his initials, 'J' and 'S' the sum becomes 41\*, the reverse of 14 which makes perfect symmetry. Examples of hidden instances of these signatures: 14 canons in the *Goldberg Variations*, 14 fugues in *The Art of Fugue*, *Contrapunctus XIV* has 41 bars. (14 buttons on Bach's waistcoat in the Haussmann portrait!)

More profound perhaps, the 'perfect' number '6' was special in Bach's striving to offer perfection to God. So we observe: Six *Trio Sonatas*, Six *Schubler Chorales*, Six *Cello Suites*, Six *Solos for Violin* and so on.

### The 'Eighteen Chorales'

Bach's original manuscript only contained 15 chorales totalling 1077 bars. Such an imperfect number was unacceptable to offer God, so Bach revised them adding extra bars to several chorales to bring the total number of bars to 1200. Furthermore, this total may be subdivided between nine and six chorales to give the perfect Godly unity ratio of 600:600. When the chorales were engraved and published posthumously (first instigated by Mendelssohn), three further chorales were added by copyists making the familiar 18.

Analysis of the *Eighteen Chorales* for organ reveals another aspect of perfection; the total number of bars must be a perfect round number ending in '0'. Bach's original score of 15 chorales contains 1200 bars and perfect proportions may be identified within the set. Within Bach's works as a whole there are numerous examples of unity ratios and total bars ending in '0'. Notably, the six cello suites have a total of exactly 4000 bars!

Well that sums up the number crunching that Gordon steered us through. After the vote of thanks by Andy Storer, our Chairman, refreshments followed with tea and John Maxwell-Jones's famous cakes. A convivial atmosphere prevailed and it was lovely to chat with Gordon and Sarah.

Laurence Rogers

\* The numerical signatures were calculated using the classical Latin alphabet which treats 'i' and 'j' as a single letter, tenth in the order.



Sarah Huson-Whyte

## Recent Event

### Bloomsbury Organ Day 2026

The Bloomsbury Organ Day is well established as one of the 'must go' events in the organ calendar. Now in its fourteenth year, in February it attracted organ-lovers from all over the country to Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church in London. Despite lacking the resonance of a cathedral setting, the three-manual organ with 53 speaking stops has a magnificent sound worthy of any cathedral instrument. It comfortably rose to the challenge of the virtuoso recital programmes presented in the afternoon and evening. We were certainly treated to some superb playing. The format for the day usually concludes with a celebrity recital in the evening, and this year it was given by Loreto Aramendi, Professor of Organ at the F. Escudero Conservatoire in San Sebastian, Basque Country, Northern Spain. Unfortunately my travel schedule prevented me from attending the evening recital, but I am grateful to Dr Peter St John Stokes for penning an appreciation of the recital for this Newsletter.

Back to the afternoon, there were two recitals and four illustrated talks. Taken as a whole, they took us to the heights of inspiration, yet there were moments of concerning news in the talks. The recitals were given by young organ scholars, the first by Pascal Bachmann from St John's College, Cambridge and the second by Hamish Wagstaff from St Paul's Cathedral.

Pascal passed FRCO last year and won all the prizes (Limpus, Frederick Shinn and Durant). In the previous year he won First Prize in the London Organ Competition. Before that in 2023 he won the BBC Young Composer Competition. For his recital at Bloomsbury he began with the 'Great' *E minor Prelude and Fugue* by Nicolaus Bruhns. His performance superbly captured the spirit of 'stylus phantasticus'. One of the challenges of this genre is to weld the many short episodes and cadences into a coherent whole. He achieved this with wonderful articulation and perfectly measured changes of tempi and registration. Following the Bruhns, Pascal played the *Suite Op.5* by Maurice Durufle in three movements, *Prelude*, *Sicilienne* and *Toccata*, each of contrasting character. From a brooding soft beginning, the *Prélude* gradually gathered intensity up to



View from the balcony. The organ lineage traces back to Father Willis and TC Lewis. Currently maintained by B.C.Shepherd & Sons

full organ chords based on a steady and persistent crotchet theme. The drama of this slow crescendo was matched by an equally measured diminuendo. After the ominous mood of the first movement, the *Sicilienne* flowed along gently, exploring numerous contrasting textures and tonal colours. Finally, the *Toccata* gave us a bold, vigorous pedal theme accompanied by semiquaver fireworks on the manuals, but its complexity and interwoven second subject made it belong to a league of its own. Pascal's total command of this complex score made us witnesses of stunning virtuosity. His performance was deservedly rewarded with lengthy applause.

Hamish Wagstaff also has a brilliant prizewinning record with the Royal College of Organists and the Royal Academy of Music. He began his recital with *Paeon* by Kenneth Leighton, a modern classic, first performed in 1967 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Organ Club. Full of energy, rhythmic inventiveness and piquant dissonance, this was a joyous

opening piece giving vent to brilliant mixtures and fiery reeds. Hamish followed this with a beautifully articulated performance on softer stops of the Trio, *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Her, BWV 676*, a supremely fluid example of Bach's counterpoint. The final and main offering was the *Suite Brève* in four movements by Jean Langlais. The massive chords of the *Grand Jeux* with uncompromising dissonance once again tested the endurance of the reeds and mixtures. Full marks to Hamish for the rhythmic vitality of this movement. Then followed *Cantilène* with a repeating gently haunting melody in the pedals. Each exposition was accompanied by a variety of textures ranging from simple canonic counterpoint to complex flourishes on soft flutes; numerous registration changes were all tastefully crafted. *Plainte* was the antidote to the bluster of the first movement; its slow moving soft chords supported descending motif fragments within an experimental tonality. The final movement, *Dialogue sur les Mixtures*, began and ended with brusque staccato



Pascal Bachmann



Hamish Wagstaff

answering phrases with colourful harmonic changes. Hamish's nimble fingerwork and pinpoint precision with the rapid manual changes made this a triumphant finale.

The two fabulous afternoon recitals were flanked by four illustrated talks and student performances. The opening talk on behalf of the Royal College of Organists, (RCO) was given by Simon Williams. He interspersed his comments between performances by four teenage students who were signed up to the RCO Academy programme. Michelle Zhou, Beatrice Pulham Creagh and Chup Hei Wong gave confident performances of Bach, and Dominic Detre gave an accomplished performance of Dupré's *Prelude in B major*.

Simon Williams recalled that the RCO promoted 2025 as *Play the Organ Year* to stimulate local initiative events to introduce the organ to new audiences and provide hands-on playing experience to volunteers of any age. The RCO logged about 250 events held nationally and many will be repeated this year. To support future events the RCO has created a new online resource bank [firststoporgan.com](http://firststoporgan.com) for learners, would-be learners, teachers (especially schoolteachers), event organisers and the generally curious. There is much valuable material here in the form of [videos and downloadable pdf files](#). (You will find the CATO video made by the DDOA in the 'Outreach' section.) Of special interest is an innovative new digital tutor book for children *Fingers & Feet: A Journey to the Organ Bench*. This is free to [download](#) (122 pages) or you can buy the book from the [RSCM](#).

Simon went on to describe the 'Organ in Schools' project which aims to place 700 organs in state sector schools and match these with organ teachers. Clearly he was talking about digital organs, and Viscount Organs was a supporting partner with the RCO. The scheme is only made possible by individual donations and the RCO is always on the lookout for donors. So far 40 schools have participated in this scheme and there is a waiting list. Finally, Simon indicated that the RCO has introduced diplomas in choral directing at Colleague, Associateship and Fellowship levels. These offer a structured pathway for directors working across a wide

range of contexts, ranging from parish churches and schools to colleges, cathedrals and community choirs.

The second session was a talk entitled 'Welsh Church Music'. In a spirited and entertaining presentation by Philip Norman we heard about great music making at the cathedrals in Llandaff and Newport. Philip lives in Monmouthshire where he organises music for 17 parishes in the north of the county. In a predominantly rural part of the country we learnt about heroic efforts to keep church music alive in very small communities.

Between the two afternoon recitals, we had a presentation by George Allen entitled 'The Sleeping Beauty Project'. This alludes to the work of the 'Pipe Up for Pipe Organs' charity that has the mission to rescue organs that have survived destruction but have become moribund due to neglect or a lack of organists. As a prelude to describing some of the charity's recent successes, George explained the context of the state of organs on a national scale, and what a gloomy tale this turned out to be. Worst of all, we hear that every week nine organs fall out of use and nearly half of those go to landfill. If this trend continues, Britain's present stock of 15,000 organs would be so reduced in 50 years that organs would only be found in cathedrals, Oxbridge colleges, some concert halls and a few churches. Declining church attendance and church closures (presently 400 per year) are obvious factors, churches are skimping on routine and major repairs as grant funds dry up and the organ building workforce shrinks (20% of organ builders are aiming to retire within 10 years.). The Pipe Up [website](#) indicates several initiatives that the charity makes to address the dire situation of many organs. 'The Sleeping Beauty' [project](#), which has been running for a year, is a crowdfunded grant scheme to get unplayable pipe organs back into use. As such, it depends upon donations of organ-lovers like ourselves. Each grant is sufficient to pay for two days work by a professional organ builder. Once an organ can be heard again, the hope is that it motivates the church to find the funds for further work. Local to Derby, St Mary's Church, Chaddesden was one of the scheme's beneficiaries last year. (See [Newsletter 107, March 2025](#) page 6 for a report on Martin Renshaw's talk at Hazelwood about the work of Pipe Up.)

Laurence Rogers

## Bloomsbury Organ Day, Evening Recital by Loreto Aramendi

Loreto Aramendi is on an energetic and much appreciated journey around the organ world. You can follow her peregrinations through excellent social media posts. Her home is in the Basque country of northeastern Spain and southern France, where she presides over the Cavaillé-Coll organ of the Basilica of Santa Maria del Cor in San Sebastian. Members of The Organ Club on the Norfolk tour last June were extremely impressed by her recital on the wonderful Peter Collins organ of St Peter Mancroft in Norwich.

In the afternoon, Loreto had given a talk about Spanish organs of the 18th century and before. This was a fascinating and clear introduction to both the music and the organs, from the Renaissance to the classical, illustrated by photographs and music which sounded surprisingly effective on the very English Bloomsbury organ – a rapid and fascinating tour around the world of Cabanilles, the *batalha* and the *teinto*.

After all this I expected an exceptional concert. That I was not to be disappointed was immediately confirmed by her approach to the Buxtehude *Toccata* BuxWV 156. These pieces with their fragmented short sections are actually rather difficult to play successfully. There is something indefinable about the choice of tempi and registration which make the little bits bind together as a single concept rather than a seemingly tedious procession of disconnected miniatures.

'Why was this working so well for me?' I shut my eyes and listened really carefully to the phrasing of the individual parts and realised how subtle it was - not just clear articulation but carefully thought out and musically consistent phrasing, particularly in the contrapuntal passages, suggested by the varied silences between the notes. It was all so good that the end of this piece was the conclusion of a coherent musical journey.

The whole programme was dominated by four '*transcriptions*' by Louis Robillard, with whom Loreto studied at the Lyon Conservatoire.

The first of these, Liszt's *Funerailles*, immediately demanded a very different sort of virtuosity from that of the Buxtehude - as



Loreto Aramendi

though moving from harpsichord to piano. This very clever *transcription*, together with many carefully worked out registration changes, produced the dynamic range of the piano and, yet again, the accentuation suggested by the spaces between the notes created not just an imitation of the piano but an enhancement of its expressive power – an expansive and profound musical experience. Liszt enjoyed playing the organ and in keeping with his contemporaries would have improvised rather than play from scores. Is this perhaps how his unrecorded organ playing sounded?

The next two items offered some light relief. Robillard's arrangement of the *Danse macabre* by Saint-Saëns and Faure's famous *Sicilienne* were both immaculately played and imaginatively registered.

We were then brought back to earth, more or less literally, by two short piano pieces, *Magma* and *Wind* arranged for the organ by Loreto

from the Piano *Suite for Children* by Karen Tanaka, a Japanese composer, born in 1961, whose studies in Paris included working with electronics at IRCAM. These pieces work extremely well on the organ – the strength and vigour of nature in an attractive guise. The third Tanaka piece *Techno Etude no III* is one of a set of pieces originally conceived for piano and tape, but which turned into substantial solo pieces. This, the third, was very effective in Loreto's organ arrangement, expressing the composer's words 'techno, rhythm and speed'. How refreshing it was to have some really recent music of such quality.

The penultimate piece was the *Interlude Symphonique* from César Franck's *Rédemption* – another Robillard arrangement, this time a movement from an oratorio-like composition dating from the unstable period in Paris around 1870. There seems to be an unquiet disturbed atmosphere to this movement which

was portrayed most sympathetically in both the arrangement and the performance. As with the Liszt I was thinking of the possibility of an insight into the extempore playing of a great master.

Finishing a programme with a serious piece challenges an audience: in this case very correctly and well judged as it was a musically aware gathering of organists and organ enthusiasts. Tournemire's improvisatory *Victimae Paschali* is a very profound piece which concentrates on the aspect of the victim rather than the alleluiaic celebration of Easter. It was interesting to hear this music away from the rolling acoustic of a large Parisian building into an English Nonconformist church – what a delight to hear every note clearly and to be able to appreciate the invention surrounding the treatment of the eight-note phrase which is picked out from the plainchant.

The whole programme was well chosen and the Shepherd organ responded brilliantly to the considerable demands laid upon it. Here, as at Norwich, Loreto's playing was just so good. Thanks to a good monitor system, the active, even energetic but controlled finger movement was clear evidence of her piano study. The registration changes were well thought out and operated by an energetic and precise assistant.

In short, it was just an incredibly good concert by a fine musician.

*Peter St John Stokes*

## Video Corner

### How to build a pipe organ.

Click to view.



### How the Royal Festival Hall Organ Works - Explained by children

Click to view.



## Young Women Organists in Europe



If you enjoy the astonishment of young talent, you must visit this website and sample the video links there. First click on the image above.

## Recent Event

### Play the Organ Day at Melbourne

Last year was promoted by the Royal College of Organists as Play the Organ Year, inviting organists across the country to organise events which would bring the experience of the organ to wider audiences. For our part at Melbourne the idea became crowded out by a prolific programme of events throughout the year to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the founding of the church. However, come 2026, and in particular the half-term week in February, we succeeded in mounting a 'Come and Play' event. We made it part of a Pancake Activities Day aimed at primary school age children. Children would arrive informally throughout the day and engage in a variety of activities including one with Scotch pancakes and decorative edible sauces. The inevitable conclusion of this was a mini-feast! Within this mêlée we designated a one-hour organ session in the morning and a repeat in the afternoon. A single family group stayed for the morning session, but the afternoon session was attended by about 20 children plus their mothers and a few onlookers. Both sessions succeeded in creating great enthusiasm so our formula for the event is worth consideration by readers who may wish to mount similar events.

We are fortunate at Melbourne to have a detached console on a platform with castors, so it was possible move it to a position with maximum visibility. My plan took much inspiration from the DDOA Children and the Organ (CATO) workshops. To begin with we wanted to wow the audience with full organ sound, but I also wanted to illustrate how the range of organ tones can convey music with a variety of moods and purposes. So we first had a bold march with reeds and full chorus, then an expressive piece, changing stops and using the dynamic range of the Swell box. To introduce organ tones we had a cheerful song on the diapasons, a pretty dance on the flutes, a soft lullaby on strings and a scary toccata with mixtures and reeds. An explanation of the manuals, pedals and what the stops do naturally flowed from these pieces.

Then I showed sample flue pipes of metal and wood, and a reed pipe to indicate how the organ achieves so much variety of tone. We identified the sounds on the organ which matched the different pipes. Three of my sample metal pipes were pitched exactly an octave apart, conveniently demonstrating that halving the speaking length pitches at an octave higher whereas double length pitches an octave lower. We then predicted the length of pipes for notes on the manual starting on the bottom note and stepping up in octaves. We had some fun with the arithmetic here, especially as children had varying experiences of the old imperial units of feet and inches. This set the scene for explaining the numbers on the stops, 16, 8, 4, 2 etc. and how they transpose the sound in whole octaves. Lastly, I played three short pieces to demonstrate the mixing of stops,

# PLAY THE ORGAN YEAR 2025

## Play the Organ Event Outline

### Music in different styles

March: *Star wars* (Williams)  
Stirring song: *Jerusalem* (Parry)  
Cheerful song: *Give me joy*  
Dance: *Bourée* (Praetorius)  
Lullaby: *Berceuse* (Vierne)  
Scary piece: *Tu es Petra* (Mulet)

### Demonstrations

Different tones: diapasons, flutes, reeds  
Example pipes: metal, wood, reed  
Names of stops; organ as an orchestra  
Pipes and pitch: Octaves, numbers 16, 8, 4, 2 etc.

### Music for 2 manuals & pedals

Solo & accompaniment:  
*Scherzo for the White Rabbit* (Ogden)  
Contrasting manuals: *Grand Choeur Dialogue* (Gigout)  
Echo effects: *Noël* (Daquin)

### Open Console for audience members

### Conclusion

*Toccata & Fugue in D minor* BWV 565.

the swell box and the value of a second manual for creating solo, dialogue and echo effects.

The introductory music and demonstrations occupied about 30 minutes after which it was time for audience volunteers. There was no shortage of these. A few children had previous keyboard experience and were able to play short pieces from memory. However, for most children this was a first time experience and my suggestion was to improvise a tune just on the black notes. The pentatonic scale is ideal for minimising cacophony and we enjoyed several pleasing two-part inventions. One parent was happy to take to the stool and gave us an impressive rendition of the Star Wars March.

To end the hour-long session I volunteered to play a final piece. The afternoon group requested a 'gothic' piece, whatever that meant. I offered them the *Toccata and Fugue* of course and there was great enthusiasm for that. Was it gothic enough? A resounding "Yes"!

Laurence Rogers

Please send the Editor reports of other Play the Organ events.



## Members' News

Since my previous article last Autumn on Chesterfield Parish Church Choir, many developments have unfolded. The advent of a new academic year, and the RSCM "International Chorister Day", brought the opportunity to open the choir to new choristers for an informal afternoon and open rehearsal to Evensong on October 6th. Happily, off the back of this, seven new choristers auditioned and joined the choir that same month. This was a welcome change for a choir which had been reduced in number steadily since the covid years and whittled down to one (very loyal) chorister! The new recruits have sung very keenly, and for the most part have adapted well to the demands of the schedule and repertoire, although the recruitment led to a 6-year age gap between the head chorister and the oldest of the new additions.

In December, the choir performed Britten's *St Nicolas*, complete with orchestra and piano duet accompaniment. This was a great chance for the new choristers to

show off their abilities, and stand out from the rest of the choir as the 'gallery choir'. This upcoming term, the choristers will perform Chris Hazell's pop cantata *Holy Moses* alongside local school groups which will give them the opportunity to explore the fun side of church singing, as well as learning the wealth of music scheduled for Holy Week and Easter Day.

Recently, we have had the very good fortune to be offered subsidies by two local and the regional Derbyshire Masonic lodges to fund choral scholarships for teenagers wishing to develop their singing skills as well as take a leading role in the singing and learning of repertoire. The advertisement of paid choral scholarships seems to have piqued the interest of a number of older children, and now we have a number of secondary school and college student members of the choir, helpfully bridging the gap that existed before Christmas. The upcoming plans for the choir include a choir tour to Worcester Cathedral in July, and concerts in the Crooked Spire in June and November.

*Peter Shepherd*

## Michael Anthony 1946-2026

We are sad to report the death of Michael Anthony at the beginning of February. Michael was born in Bulwell, Nottingham. His father was an organist, so an interest in organs was, perhaps, inevitable. Following education at Carlton le Willows Grammar School he went to work for Boots where he remained until retirement. Michael had a keen interest in choral music, being a member of, or accompanist at various times to Carlton, Alfretton and Pye Hill Male Voice Choirs. He was organist at Park Hill Methodist Church Nottingham, Mansfield Road Baptist Church Nottingham, Heanor Methodist Church and most recently at St Mary's, Bulwell, Nottingham, until declining health caused his retirement. Michael's wife Christine, died some years ago. He is survived by his daughter, Rachel.

*Denis Littleton*

## Other Events

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

- Featuring students from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
- 9<sup>th</sup> March Richard Hodges (piano)
  - 16<sup>th</sup> March Mimi Raleigh (piano)
  - 23<sup>rd</sup> March Nikiforos Sgouraditis (tenor) with Tyler Davies (piano)
  - 30<sup>th</sup> March Natalie Windsor (mezzo soprano)
  - 20<sup>th</sup> April Jonathan Parapadakis (woodwind) and Alexander Miranda Zezula (piano)
  - 27<sup>th</sup> April Peter O'Connor (flute) and Paulo Lopes (piano)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> May Ella Cordon Vieito (piano)

### Thursday Lunchtime Concerts at Chesterfield Parish Church, 12.15 – 1.00 pm

- 9<sup>th</sup> April Samuel Beddard and Jo Marsh (Saxophone/Piano)
- 16<sup>th</sup> April Paulo Lopez
- 23<sup>rd</sup> April Peter Shepherd (Organ)
- 30<sup>th</sup> April Edward Whelan (Piano)
- 7<sup>th</sup> May Lin Xu-Zhang (Piano)
- 14<sup>th</sup> May Thady Cooney (Flute)

### Saturday 11th April, 3.30 pm

St Anne's, Derby  
*Music for Easter.* Richard Roddis Singers

### Saturday 18th April, 4.00 pm

St Anne's, Derby  
*Lo, the full final sacrifice.* Viva la Musica choir



New recruits to the fore.



The choir visits Llandaff Cathedral

## *A Much-Travelled Organ - Laurence Rogers*

Rodney Tomkins recently showed me a selection of his wonderful photo-archive of organs in Derbyshire. This particular photo shows Rodney playing the organ in Holy Trinity Parish Church, Milford. Sadly the church is now closed and the fate of the organ is uncertain. It was restored a number of years ago by Ed Stow who possibly chose the colour scheme to match the carpet! The organ certainly catches attention, but it also turns out to have a fascinating history. It was built by Grunwell of Derby in 1874 as a house organ for the then organist of St Peter's, Belper, Mr T. B. Mellor, a highly regarded professional musician with discerning tastes. For private use, the carefully designed specification had 13 stops, and, unusually for a small scheme, three manuals and two pedal stops.

Around 1901 the organ was transferred to Belper Baptist Church where it stood until 1987 when, due to refurbishment of the building, it was dismantled, taken into storage and replaced with an electronic instrument. During 1991-92, it was re-erected in St Peter's, Belper to serve temporarily while the main organ was being restored by Ed Stow. Following that, it served in a similar role at Queen's Hall Methodist Mission in Derby during the restoration of the organ there. It arrived at its final resting place at Milford in 1994. Ed Stow instituted a number of tonal changes to the Choir and Swell and Rodney described the instrument as "highly effective with a great range of registrational possibilities." Grunwell's Great chorus, voiced in the Hill tradition, remained intact. (In his early career, Grunwell worked with William Hill.)



A full description of the history and development of the instrument is to be found in *Historic Organs in Derbyshire* by Rodney Tomkins, (Scarthin Books, 1998)

*Laurence Rogers*

### *Forthcoming DDOA Meeting*

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April**

**1.00 pm at All Saints Church, Aston-on-Trent DE72 2DH**

**3.00 pm at St James' Church, Swarkestone DE73 7GT**

Two charming village churches with equally charming organs recently restored with support from the Edmund Stow Grant Scheme.

**All Saints, Aston-on-Trent:** 19 stops, 2 manuals and pedals. With pipework dating from 1850 the organ was transferred from Holy Trinity, Derby and rebuilt in 1974 by local builder H. Cantrell. [Details](#). Members are invited to play.



**St James' Church, Swarkestone:**

8 stops, one manual and pedals. Built in 1876 by Lloyd of Nottingham. [Details](#).

Alexander Binns, Director of Music at Derby Cathedral, will give a recital at 3 pm. He will be joined by other soloists.

After the recital, members will be invited to play.

**Getting there:** Aston may be approached from the old A6 at Thulston. For Swarkestone, on the A514, look out for Church Lane; it's very narrow and easily missed.

Items of news or articles for the May / June edition of the *Newsletter* should reach the Editor by **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> 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, John Maxwell-Jones, 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.



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