

OCTOBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

RECENT LDOA VISITS

Saturday 27th September 2014 - OrganFest 2014 in Birmingham

No visits to churches to play since the last newsletter, but as the OrganFest event was attended by a number of our members, a report on the day's activities hopefully will be of interest to members who were unable to attend.

The event was effectively a Midlands Organ Day, but was something of a 'first' in that it was jointly organised by the three major UK pipe organ organisations, BIOS, IAO and RCO, hosted by Birmingham Organists' Association. The event was based at St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, providing the opportunity to hear again its superb J W Walker organ.



The Walker organ of St Chad's Cathedral

The event was well support by some 120 delegates, from around the UK, including 6 LDOA members. IAO Vice President John Stormont gave the opening welcome, and introduced the three organisations presenting the event, representatives of which then gave the following overviews of their respective activities:

BIOS

Melvin Hughes of BIOS explained that the organisation exists to encourage the study of the organ, its history and design, and to increase the appreciation of its music by the general public. The resources it provides include:

- The Historic Organ Certification Scheme

- The National Pipe Organ Register, covering 35,000 organs and getting 45,000 hits per month by people accessing the register.
- The British Organ Archive, housed in the Cadbury Research Library in Birmingham with original documents, organ builders' shop-books, correspondence, technical drawings etc. from the 1820's onwards. The archive index is a major research tool and is available on-line.
- The Historic Organ Archive, which includes MP3 files of recordings currently covering instruments in East Anglia but it is hoped to next cover Yorkshire.

BIOS arranges meetings, conferences throughout the year and provides an annual journal and quarterly magazine to members.

RCO

Representing the RCO, David Wakefield explained that the RCO came into existence as the 'College of Organists' at an inaugural meeting convened by Richard Limpus in London on 12 March 1864, in order to establish a professional body for church organists. In 1886, Sir Frederick Ouseley became the first in a long line of distinguished musicians to be elected President. Over the last 150 years, the mission has been to advance the cause of organists and to nurture the highest standards in organ playing. The College is probably best-known as an examining body for organists and choral directors, awarding professional qualifications that are recognised worldwide. The first organ playing examinations took place in 1866 and the twice-yearly pattern is unbroken from June 1871. It has some 180 applicants per annum for admission to the College, of whom around 50 receive awards.

A recent initiative has been its education and outreach programme, under the banner 'RCO Academy', and also operates the RCO's Awards & Bursaries programme. The College's extensive library and archive of some 60,000 items is housed in Birmingham City University. The College has 2000 members but does not receive any state support, so is dependent upon member subscriptions, trusts and donations, and hence a plea from David Wakefield for people admitted to the College to continue their membership once they had received their awards.

For the future, the RCO was looking to participate in more events, link up with more associations like today, and pursue outreach projects to attract young organists.

IAO

The final presentation was by Malcolm Hawke, General Secretary of our own IAO, and he explained that the IAO

exists 'To educate the public in the art of music, particularly organ and liturgical music'. It has some 70 affiliated associations, ranging in size from 20 – 200 members, with around 4000 in total. It organises an annual congress, London and Regional Organ Days. Run by 'a group of enthusiastic amateurs', the services it provides to affiliated associations include, the quarterly *Organists' Review* magazine, Public Liability Insurance, grants and guarantees, including underwriting events, and 'a listening ear'.

The Organs and Music of Birmingham Town Hall

After a short break, the next presentations were entitled 'The Organs and Music of Birmingham Town Hall'. Firstly, Dr David Knight of BIOS, talked about the history of organ from its beginnings with an appeal leaflet in 1833. From 1834 to 1890 the Town Hall organ was the property of the Birmingham General Hospital and the organists were appointed by the trustees of the organ, who were drawn from the Birmingham Triennial Musical Festival and the Hospital committees. The organ and the organist were put under the jurisdiction of the municipality in 1890, with C W Perkins being the first Civic Organist in a line of 7 Town Hall organists stretching back from the present day Thomas Trotter to Thomas Munden in 1834.

David Knight summarised the history of the organ from its William Hill beginning, covering the issues of its heavy action, the ensuing movement of the console closer to the organ and the addition of pneumatic Barker lever action to the Great in 1849, the Willis rebuild of 1932/3, then the Mander rebuild of 1984 fashioned on the 1880's Hill rebuild, stripping out most of the Willis additions to decongest the organ. Excerpts from recordings of C W Cunningham playing at Alexandra Palace and Birmingham Town Hall followed.

Andrew McCrea, Director of Academic Development at the RCO, then continued the presentation, supplying a handout which covered musical scores of music played on the organ over the years, and a copy of a George Thalben-Ball lunchtime recital on 9th February 1949.

Thomas Trotter recital at Birmingham Town Hall

After a sumptuous cold buffet lunch, we embarked by bus to the Town Hall to hear Thomas Trotter's lunchtime public recital.

Thomas opened with a beautifully registered transcription of Mendelssohn's Overture, A Midsummers Night's Dream. Pieces by two of Thomas's predecessors at the Town Hall followed, with first James Stimpson's gentle Andante in G followed by the most well-known of George Thalben-Ball's compositions, Elegy.

Next a work commissioned by The Feeney Trust that was initially for Thomas to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Historic Snetzler organ in St Laurence, Ludlow, in June 2014. Dancing Pipes by Jonathan Dove is a type of scherzo with a cross rhythm effect between the hands, and culminating on full organ complete with trumpets and tuba.

Then to the major work of this recital with the lengthy virtuosic Elgar Organ Sonata in G, beautifully

registered/orchestrated by Thomas, and providing a frenetic full organ climax to the recital. Profuse applause for his customary immaculate performance ensured an encore, and having not managed to deploy his favourite Whitechapel Bells stop thus far, Thomas could avoid this temptation no longer, choosing Madeline Dring's composition Caribbean Dance as the vehicle.

Our Digital Future?

Then back on the bus for a return to St Chad's for the final presentation of the day by Jim Berrow, entitled 'Our Digital Future?' Jim Berrow was the 3rd honorary Secretary of BIOS, and he now chairs the Birmingham Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches, and advises the Diocese of Lichfield on historic pipe organ issues.

Having assumed from the title that the influence of Hauptwerk and the like on the future of organs may have been the essence of the presentation, this was not the case, and instead concentrated on issues with restoration of historic organs. This could have been an interesting debate on the thorny issue of restoration of historically important instruments to their original condition (warts and all!) v. improvements to make them more manageable for the performer, and to meet the present day demands placed on them. In the event, the presentation was somewhat haphazard, lacking structure and adding little of value to the day's event. Fortunately, we still had the prospect of hearing the Walker organ in St Chad's to look forward to.

Choral High Mass

Following a break for afternoon refreshments, we moved to St Chad's Cathedral to hear students from the Organ Department of Birmingham Conservatoire beautifully playing Vesper Voluntaries by Elgar as the organ voluntary. Choral High Mass followed, with the choir led by Organist & Director of Music, Professor David Saint, providing glorious singing in the service, accompanied by Nigel Morris, Assistant Director of Music. A slick change-over of roles towards the end of the service saw David Saint at the Walker organ for the final organ voluntary, Parry's glorious Fantasia & Fugue in G. David's superb performance of this work received, a well-deserved, and perhaps unexpected, ovation.

All in all a most interesting day, and providing also time to renew old acquaintances with members of sister associations. Smoothly and professionally organised by BOA, for which all concerned deserve great credit. TS

FORTHCOMING LDOA VISITS/EVENTS

Saturday 4th October 2014, President's Evening, Lichfield Cathedral

President's Evening at Lichfield Cathedral by kind invitation of Martyn Rawles. This coincides with the RSCM Festival Evensong at the Cathedral.

Members are invited to meet at 4.30 pm at the Cathedral, to attend the final choir rehearsal at 4.45 pm, followed by Evensong at 5.30 pm. Then an opportunity for members to

play the Cathedral's Hill organ, followed by drinks/nibbles. If any LDOA members are singers and wish to take part in the singing, Cathy Lamb has extended an invitation for them to attend two earlier rehearsals, the first at 1.30 pm and the second at 3 pm. See e-mail to LDOA members dated 8th September ref. how to book via Cathy to participate in these rehearsals.

Wednesday 26th November 2014, Sutton United Reformed Church

Visit commencing at 7.30 pm to Sutton United Reformed Church, at the kind invitation of our member Richard Syner, to play the fine 3 manual 41 stop Nicholson organ.

Sutton Coldfield United Reformed Church is at the northern end of the Gracechurch Shopping Centre at: 1 Brassington Avenue, Sutton Coldfield, B73 6AA. There is a limited amount of parking on the service road outside the church, with a public car park at the opposite side of Brassington Ave on Station St.

Wednesday 3rd December 2014, Annual Dinner

Joint Annual Dinner with the Birmingham Organists' Association and Worcester Organists' Association, at The School House, Weeford. 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm. The guest speaker is Adrian Lucas, who was Master of the Choristers & Organist at Worcester Cathedral from 1996 until 2011, when he left to pursue a freelance career and set up Acclaim Productions, his own recording company. He has also been Musical Director of the City of Birmingham Choir since 2002.

2015 EVENTS SO FAR BOOKED:

Saturday 17th January 2015, St Thomas of Canterbury, Walsall, and Central Methodist Hall, Walsall

Visit commencing at 12 noon to St Thomas of Canterbury, Walsall, to play the 2 manual Rieger organ in the superb acoustic of this church.

Then on for 2 pm to Central Hall Methodist Church, Walsall, to play the 3 manual 36 stop Nicholson & Lord organ. Having recently been rebuilt by Mike Thompson, Thomas Trotter gave a well-attended recital here on 5th October 2013 in aid of the organ fund. Cathy Lamb also gave a recital here at 7.30 pm on Sat 29th March 2014.

Saturday 18th April 2015, Derby Cathedral

Meet at 4 pm, and then attend Evensong at 5.15 pm, followed by an opportunity to play the 4 manual 98-stop Compton organ.

NEWS FROM THE LDOA COMMITTEE

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting is planned for 7.30 pm on Monday 27th October 2014 at Weeford Church

MEMBERS' NEWS

One of the regulars on our visits is Andrew McMillan, who is also a member of the Leicester & District Organists' Association. Chatting to Phillip Herbert at OrganFest 2014, I learned Andrew has been appointed as their President for 2014/5. Our congratulations to Andrew on his appointment.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL NEWS/EVENTS

Autumn 2014 Evening Recital Series

We were treated to a feast of talent in the 'Music for Reflection' summer lunchtime concerts, and whilst these have now finished, the 2014 Evening Organ Recitals Series commenced with two recitals in September, as reviewed in this newsletter. The series continues as follows:

- Tuesday 14th October – Malcolm Archer (Winchester College). Programme includes music by Bach, Archer, and Franck's Choral No 3
- Tuesday 11th November – Martyn Rawles (Lichfield Cathedral). Programme includes music by Bach, Elgar, and the Final from Vierne's Symphonie No 5
- Tuesday 2nd December – Cathy Lamb, Martyn Rawles and Nigel Argust (all of Lichfield Cathedral) This is a special concert in which members of the audience are invited to submit requests. Topped off with a selection of festive favourites, it promises to be a great event to get you in the mood for Christmas! Please note: all requests must be sent to martyn.rawles@lichfield-cathedral.org by 14th November.

All the recitals are 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm, admission £10, and include big-screen projection of the player at the console.

Christmas at Lichfield Cathedral

This brochure is not yet available, but the Cathedral website confirms it 'is on its way - details coming soon'.

IAO MATTERS

IAO 2015 Congress

The IAO 2015 Congress will take place on 27th – 31 July 2015 based in Norwich.

London Organ Day

The 2015 London Organ Day will take place at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, on Saturday 7th March 2015, with a theme of Transcriptions & Edwardiana.

East Yorkshire Organ Day

This will take place on 18th March 2015 at Hull.

West Yorkshire Organ Day

This will take place on 9th May 2015 at Bradford.

New President of the IAO

The successor to James Lancelot in September 2015 will be Peter King, Organist & Director of Music at Bath Abbey.
Midlands Organ Day 2016

Will be held on 24th September 2016 at Nottingham.

RECENT LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS REVIEWS

Concert at St Modwen's, Burton-on-Trent, Saturday 2nd August 2014

Entitled 'An Afternoon at The Last Night of the Proms', this well-attended concert was organised by one of our student members, Alex Goldsmith, Organist and Director of Music at St Modwin's. Alex was joined for the concert by Dr Stanley Monkhouse, recently appointed vicar at St Modwen's, Arthur Tipper and Roger Sharp, both organists at Tutbury Church, Singing for Pleasure Group choir, lead by Arthur Tipper and Helen Parker, St Modwen's lead soprano in the choir.

Following some lusty singing of the opening hymn, Alex Goldsmith played Elgar's Salut D'Amour as an organ solo, before handing over to Dr Stanley Monkhouse for John Ireland's Villanella. Dr Monkhouse is a man of many talents, as not only is he an FRCO, but has held posts of Professor of Anatomy at Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and Associate Professor of Anatomy at University of Nottingham, as well as author of medical books on anatomy!

Then it was Arthur Tipper's turn at the console with Walton's Spitfire Prelude, then Roger Sharp and New Era by Nigel Ogden, followed by Singing for Pleasure Group and an Oklahoma! Selection, by Rogers and Hammerstein. Alex then showed that as well as his talent as an organist, he has a fine singing voice, employed to good effect with Arthur Sullivan's Lost Chord, accompanied at the organ by Stanley Monkhouse.

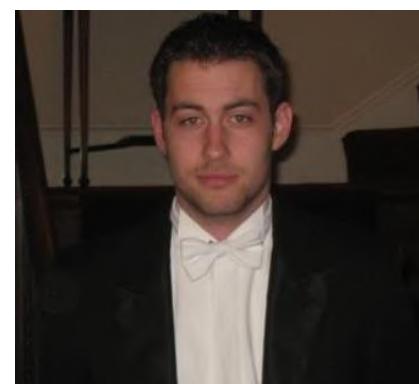
Following drinks and nibbles, the second half opened with first Alex playing the delightful Toccata for Flute by Pietro A Yon, then Stanley playing the jolly romp Sortie in E flat by Lefébure-Wely. Then it was the turn of Roger Sharp, with The Banks of Green Willow by George Butterworth, and Arthur Tipper with Ron Goodwin's Aces High March from the film Battle of Britain. Singing for Pleasure Group performed 1940's selection, including also a few 1914 songs, before Stanley played Noel Rawsthorne's Hornpipe Humoresque, a piece which we gathered got Alex into 'hot water' when he played it at the end of a communion service!

Then with Alex and Helen Parker singing solos, and joined by the congregation, it was Rule Britannia, Land of Hope & Glory, and Jerusalem complete with 'Last Night of the Proms' balloons, and Stanley accompanying, perhaps rather too robustly for the soloists!

All in all, a most enjoyable afternoon's feast of music by all performers, with Alex Goldsmith particularly deserving of great credit for not only organising the whole event, performing both vocally and on the organ, but also even selling the tickets at the entrance! TS

Jonathan Hope recital at Lichfield Cathedral Wednesday 6th August 2014

Jonathan Hope was today's organist in the Music for Reflection lunchtime recital series.



Jonathan Hope

Since March 2014, Jonathan Hope has been Assistant Director of Music at Gloucester, where of course Martyn Rawles was at one time Organ Scholar. He is also Accompanist to the Gloucester Choral Society, the Three Choirs Festival Youth Choir and Gloucester Three Choirs Festival Chorus, and Musical Director of the St Cecilia Singers.

Educated at George Abbott School in his hometown of Guildford, he studied with John Belcher and David Sanger, and then at the Royal College of Music with Margaret Phillips and Sophie-Véronique Caucherfer-Choplin. Prior to his current appointment, Jonathan was Organ Scholar of Winchester Cathedral, under Andrew Lumsden (who sends his greetings to all at Lichfield), and before that he was Organ Scholar of Southwark Cathedral, where he served as Acting Sub-Organist & Director of the Girls' Choir in his final term. He is increasingly in demand as a recitalist, both in the UK as well as in Europe, USA and Australia, as well as teaching.

Jonathan opened boldly with Elgar's Imperial March followed by Bairstow's Evening Song, with its quiet opening before getting louder and more animated, returning to end quietly. Hubert Parry's superb Fugue in G ('The Wanderer) was followed by 'a lyrical piece which everyone seems to like' – Guilmant's delicious Cantilène Pastorale.

The rousing finale was provided by Jonathan's own arrangement for organ of Glinka's Overture: Ruslan and Ludmilla, nicely displaying the considerable orchestral sounds at his disposal on the Hill organ, and necessitating the removal of his jacket for this lively performance!

Chatting to Jonathan after his recital, it was good to hear that Andrew Lumsden has now made a full recovery from his fall in Winchester at Christmas 2013, when he suffered a very nasty injury to his hand, which put him out of playing action for a number of weeks. TS

Hugh Morris recital at Lichfield Cathedral Wednesday 13th August 2014

Continuing the Music for Reflection lunchtime series, Hugh Morris was today's recitalist.

Hugh Morris has been Director of Music at Christchurch Priory since April 2009, a post he combines with teaching music part-time at Bournemouth School for Girls. Following Organ Scholarships at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and Salisbury Cathedral, he moved to Bristol to teach music at Colston's Collegiate School, as well as being Assistant Organist at St Stephen's, City of Bristol.



Hugh Morris

From 2001, Hugh spent 8 happy years as Assistant Organist at Hexham Abbey in Northumberland, where he combined his duties with teaching music part time at the Kings School Tynemouth, and working as a lecturer and tutor in harmony at Newcastle University. During his time at the abbey he recorded his first solo organ CD, *Organ Classics*. As an organist, he has given solo recitals at many venues across the UK. Under the tuition of David Sanger, he played the finals of the International Cesar Franck Organ Competition in Haarlem and as a finalist in the 2nd International Competition 'Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck' in Amsterdam. He holds both the Fellowship and Choral Direction diplomas of the RCO. 'Hot off the press' news was that Hugh Morris is to take over as Director of Music at Derby Cathedral when Peter Gould retires at the end of 2014.

Flourish for an Occasion by William Harris provided a lively and highly appropriate opening to the recital, given that the composer was Assistant Organist at Lichfield Cathedral from 1914 to 1919. J S Bach's Pièce d'Orgue BWV 572 continued the lively mood, before Prelude on 'Greensleeves' by Richard Purvis utilised the softer colours of the Hill organ for this very nice arrangement.

Hugh promised that we wouldn't previously have heard the next piece, A Little Suite for Organ by Anthony Baldwin, and that certainly proved to be the case. The suite comprises a stately Saraband, a gentle Cantilena, and finally a lively Gigue de Trompette. Next came two movements from the ever-popular Suite Gothique by Boëllmann, with the meditative Prière à Notre-Dame followed by the Toccata, the latter providing a grand climax to the recital. TS

Nathan Laube recital at Victoria Hall, Hanley, Saturday 16th August 2014

Nathan Laube performed here in 2011 and was today making a welcome return visit to Victoria Hall.



Nathan Laube

Nathan Laube is a star among young classical musicians who has quickly earned a place among the world's elite performers, despite still being only in his mid-20's. Born in Chicago, Nathan's early studies were at the Chicago Academy for the Arts. He received his Master's Degree in Organ Performance from the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart, and his Bachelor of Music Degree at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studied organ with Alan Morrison and piano with Susan Starr. During his time at the Curtis Institute, he also served as an Assistant Organist at the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ at Macey's Department Store in downtown Philadelphia. In addition to his busy performing schedule, he is dedicated to mentoring the next generation of young organists, and in 2013 he joined the faculty of The Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, as Assistant Professor of Organ, where he will teach with distinguished Professors David Briggs and Edoardo Bellotti.

As is customary with American organists, Nathan plays from memory, and opened his programme with Allegro Vivace, the first movement of Widor's Symphony No 5. As the organ of Victoria Hall is an orchestral instrument with lots of solo orchestral colours, Nathan substituted the planned Whitlock Scherzetto with a transcription of Prelude in G Minor by Rachmaninov, employing particularly delicious strings in the middle section.

Painting a symphonic tone poem, the work comprises many different styles melded into one work, with influences of Ravel, Debussy, Franck and J S Bach, and providing a further opportunity to explore the colours of this organ. Magnificently performed!

Nathan is famed for his superb transcriptions of orchestral works, and to end his programme, he chose his own transcription of Rossini's Overture to William Tell. Having opened with Widor, for his encore Nathan turned again to Widor and the sublime Andante Sostenuto from Symphony Gothique.

A stunningly performed programme from yet another prodigiously talented young American organist. TS

Paul Leddington Wright recital at Coventry Cathedral, Monday 18th August 2014

I like to attend at least one of the Monday lunchtime concerts at Coventry Cathedral each series, and my attendance at today's recital by Paul Leddington Wright was prompted by a desire to hear Liszt's masterpiece for

organ, Fantasia and Fugue on Ad Nos Ad Salutarem Undam, played on the superb Harrison & Harrison organ in the equally superb acoustic of Coventry Cathedral, played by an organist who, from his 11 years as Director of Music at Coventry Cathedral, could be expected to know how to get the best out of this organ.



Paul Leddington Wright

Paul Leddington Wright graduated from St Catherine's College, Cambridge University where he was the organ scholar. He studied with David Willcocks, Peter le Huray and Peter Hurford. From 1984-1995 he was Organist & Director of Music at Coventry Cathedral, during which time he toured extensively with the Cathedral Choir, including 5 trips to the USA, and a tour of Italy. Extensive broadcasting for radio and television was also a part of the busy Cathedral music programme. It was during this time that he became associated with the International Church Music Festival, of which he has been Artistic Director since 1991.

In 1995 he accepted a part-time position at Coventry Cathedral as Associate Director of Music in order to pursue a career with BBC television and radio, as well as an increasingly active life as a composer and arranger. He is currently Associate Conductor with the English Symphony Orchestra as well as Musical Director for the Saint Michael's Singers, of which our member Andrew McMillan is a member.

Paul had helpfully provided programme notes, which gave helpful guidance to this virtuosic work. Liszt wrote the piece in the winter of 1850 in Weimar. The chorale on which the Fantasy & Fugue is based is from Act I of Giacomo Meyerbeer's opera *Le Prophète*, and indeed Liszt dedicated the work to Meyerbeer.

The 'Ad Nos' theme has 27 notes, and the Fantasy opened with this theme before becoming quiet and contemplative. The theme returns and eventually reaches a climax. A second climactic passage follows. The adagio serves as a development section, beginning quietly, the theme moving from the minor keys of the preceding section to major keys. The piece brightens somewhat in the latter half of this section.

The Fugue then serves as the finale, but also, within the sonata-form, as the recapitulation and coda. The fugue is introduced on full organ with powerful chords and energetic pedal-writing. The dotted rhythmic energy of the fugue builds to a tensely chromatic section, which precedes the final treatment of the theme in a fast-moving section. As in the fantasy, the pedals are left to have the

final comment as they lead to the final statement of the theme in C Major. The piece ends with a triumphant coda on full organ.

A superb performance on an instrument ideally suited to this wonderful piece, this well-attended recital clearly much appreciated by all, including a very young grandchild in the arms of his proud grandad, Paul Leddington Wright, when taking his applause. TS

David Humphrys recital at Lichfield Cathedral Friday 22nd August 2014

David Humphreys is Assistant Director of Music at Peterborough Cathedral, where his duties include accompanying and directing the Cathedral Choir on a daily basis. He has held the post since moving from a similar role at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in October 2011, a time that has included two terms as Acting Director of Music, when he was responsible for the cathedral's entire music programme including all the provision for choral services.



David Humphreys

He studied at the RAM and the University of Cambridge, where he read music. He held organ scholarships at All Saints, Margaret Street, St Albans Abbey and Jesus College, Cambridge, during which time, whilst an undergraduate, he gained his FRCO. He has made numerous appearances on radio and TV, and is increasingly in demand as a recitalist and for teaching.

Parry's Fantasia & Fugue in G was the choice to open the recital, with the dramatic opening to the fantasia leading to the fugue, which commences quietly but builds progressively to a grand climax. John Stanley's Voluntary in D minor Op 5 No 8 provided a nice contrast with the opening and closing movements sandwiching the delicate central slow movement.

Philip Moore succeeded Francis Jackson at York Minster in 1983, a post he held until his retirement in 2008, and from his many compositions, Sonata for Organ was the choice for the next piece. This contemporary work is in 3 movements, well described by their titles, Allegro Agitato, Andante Tranquillo and Allegro Con Brio. Then a return to more traditional fare to close, with Elgar's Imperial March, arranged for organ by George Martin, providing a suitably rousing climax to David's recital. TS

Lee Dunleavy recital at Lichfield Cathedral Friday 29th August 2014

Today's recital was the last of this year's 'Music for Reflection' series of lunchtime recitals, and the organist was Lee Dunleavy.

Lee Dunleavy is a dynamic choral conductor, organ recitalist and composer. Born in 1979, Lee's life-long passion for choral music began at St Peter's Church in Harrogate, but he didn't begin organ lessons until his late teenage years, when he was offered the Organ Scholarship at St Peter's. He read music at Hertford College, Oxford, as Organ Scholar and later Director of Chapel Music. After working as Director of Music at Christ Church Southgate, London, he was awarded the prestigious Organ Scholarship at York Minster, combining this with teaching at the Minster and St Peter's Schools. At York he was privileged to work alongside Philip Moore and John Scott Whiteley, and worked with the fêted Dr Francis Jackson on performances of a number of choral and organ works. In 2006 he was appointed Director of Music at All Saints Northampton, and in 2007 he took on the position of Musical Director of the Northampton Bach Choir. He holds both the Choral Directing Diploma and the Fellowship of the RCO. On 1st May 2014 he left All Saints to pursue a freelance career



Lee Dunleavy

As an organist he is celebrated for the diversity of his programmes, which often encompass music from the 15th century right through traditional repertoire to Jazz and Blues-inspired works, but today's programme was themed Voyage à Paris, with selections from the music of the great organist-composers of the Église Saint-Sulpice, commencing with Angelus, Op34 No 2 by Dupré, a reverential, rather improvisational, opening piece.

Next followed Introduction et Aria by Jen-Jacques Grunenwald, continuing the quiet mood of the opening piece, but then building to a grand climax before subsiding to a quiet ending. Then Scene Pastorale (avec un orage) from L'organiste moderne by Lefébure-Wély, and given the composer, perhaps not surprisingly rather more lively than the usual Pastorale, and including a storm sequence, as might be deduced from the title.

Given the theme of the recital, Widor was likely to feature, and his delicious Andante Sostenuto from Symphonie Gothique was the most well-known work in today's programme. Offertoire 'Grand Chœur' from Le Musée de l'organiste by Georges Schmitt was the choice for the finale of today's recital, rather Lefébure-Wély style, with a rousing climax.

A very different programme on which to end the 'Music for Reflection' series, which has seen some superbly talented organists, many still in the early stages of their careers, performing for our enjoyment. Our gratitude to the Music Department of Lichfield Cathedral. TS

Alan Taylor recital at Broadway United Reformed Church, Walsall, Saturday 6th September 2014

Today's 24th Anniversary Organ Recital, sponsored by the Professor Alan Dronsfield Trust, was to have been given by an organ scholar of one of the Oxford Colleges, but work commitments resulted in him not being able to give this evening's recital and LDOA member and BOA Treasurer Alan Taylor was prevailed upon to give the recital himself, just 50 years since he first played the organ for a church service.

As the Organist and Choirmaster of Broadway URC, Alan knows this 4 manual Lloyd & Haynes organ better than anyone, and had chosen a programme to showcase the colours of this fine organ, with Buxtehude's Ciacone in E minor providing a gentle opening before a crescendo to a grand climax.

Showcasing the quiet colours and reeds of the organ, Theme & Variations on 'O Filii et Filiae' by Jean-François Dandrieu, from the Baroque period in France, was followed by John Stanley's Voluntary in D Op 6 No 6, employing the Gt Trumpet and the Solo five rank Cornet.

Next, to take us to the interval, came Prelude & 'St Anne' Fugue in E Flat BWV 552 by J S Bach, described by the Bach specialist Dr Peter Williams as 'having one of the greatest endings to a Fugue', with Alan's superb performance of this monument work drawing well-deserved and prolonged applause.

Guilmant's Sonata No 4 in D minor was written to be performed on Cavaillé-Coll organs, and provided a terrific opening to the second half. Next came Andantino in D flat by Lemare, which had words set to it without the composer's permission, but became top of the hit parade in the 1920's under its more well-known title Moonlight & Roses.

Three seasonal chorale preludes by Healey Willan followed, with Quem Pastores (based on a Christmas carol), Song 13 (Passiontide) and Gelobt sei Gott (often used by Alan on the Sunday after Ascension) the latter using the Tuba to good effect. A beautifully controlled crescendo/diminuendo of Harold Darke's Meditation on Brother James's Air followed.

Widor's Toccata from Symphony No 5 was Alan's choice for 'a noisy piece to end with', but the ensuing applause necessitated an encore, which needed no introduction as it took the unmistakable form of Elgar's Nimrod, played again with a nicely judged crescendo/diminuendo.

A terrific and well attended evening's programme of organ music. Same again next year Alan? TS

Cathy Lamb recital at Lichfield Cathedral Tuesday 9th September 2014

The first of this year's evening Celebrity Organ Recitals at Lichfield Cathedral was given by Cathy Lamb, Joint Director of Music at Lichfield Cathedral, but tonight returning to her roots playing the organ. Cathy introduced her programme, but as Martyn Rawles had provided his customary insightful programme notes, little needed adding.

Wedding Processional arranged for organ by Simon Couzens from the Richard Rodgers score of the film The Sound of Music, provided a nice short sharp introduction to tonight's recital. In total contrast, J S Bach's Prelude and Fugue in E flat Major ('St Anne') followed, as also chosen by Alan Taylor for his programme the previous Saturday, and providing another opportunity to enjoy the glorious climax to the fugue.

Following the death of the Russian artist and architect Vikto Hartmann, an exhibition of his works was mounted and a visit to this by Modest Mussorgsky inspired him to write his monumental suite for piano 'Pictures at an Exhibition'. Il vecchio castello (The Old Castle) from this suite, arranged here for organ by Bryan Hesford, provided the next work in tonight's programme.

The composer Petr Eben was described by Cathy as eliciting similar polarised views to Marmite! Moto Ostinato, a movement from his suite Sunday Music, is built on a relentless ostinato rhythm, growing from a quietly menacing opening to an overwhelming climax, with Cathy's hands darting between Great, Swell and Choir manuals.

Lang's Tuba Tune opened the second half of the recital, amply showcasing the superb Hill Tuba stop. Allegretto Grazioso from 'Six Organ Pieces' by Frank Bridge, followed, the gentle Edwardian rhapsody well-suited to now showing off the quieter colours of the organ. Then to Mendelssohn's Sonata No 3 in A, the first movement progressively building in volume and tempo, followed by the beautiful delicate, short, second final movement.

Le Bolero du Divin Mozart by Guy Bovet, a musical meeting between the musical ideas of Ravel and the style of Mozart, was followed by the Toccata (Douze Pièces) by Dubois, as featured by Gillian Weir in her acclaimed 1989 BBC Series 'The King of Instruments', and providing a thrilling climax to the recital.

As always with Cathy, a most varied and enjoyable programme, beautifully played as ever. TS

Ben Comeau OrganFest recital at St Chad's Birmingham, Wednesday 24th September 2014

The soloist, nominated by the RCO, for the first OrganFest lunchtime recital was Ben Comeau. Ben has just graduated from Girton College, Cambridge, where he was Senior Organ Scholar, and now begins a freelance career based in London. Ben, from Truro, comes from a musical family. His father, mother and brother are accomplished musicians. Ben gained his FRCO in the Winter 2014 exams, when he won all the prizes for which he was eligible.

Ben opened with Bach's Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor BWV 542. My initial reaction was that the Fantasia seemed slow but as the piece progressed I realised that this suited St. Chad's acoustic very well, and the colours of the organ were heard to good effect. The fugue was lively, well-articulated, and brought out the fine flutes of the Walker organ. To follow, Ben played 2 Bach Choral Preludes. *Ich ruf zu dir* BWV 639 has a gentle haunting melody and was sensitively registered. *In dulci jubilo* BWV 608, the well-known hymn tune, was played in the pedals.

Next we had an Improvisation in the form of a Scherzo. A search by Google reveals that Ben is no stranger to improvisation and he explored the organ to the full! Ben's penultimate piece was the Andante Sostenuto from the Symphonie Gothique by Widor.

The recital ended with Ben's arrangement for organ of Debussy's Orchestral Nocturne No. 2 – *Fêtes*. Debussy wrote of this piece – '*Fêtes* gives us the vibrating, dancing rhythm of the atmosphere with sudden flashes of light. There is also the episode of the procession (a dazzling fantastic vision), which passes through the festive scene and becomes merged in it. But the background remains resistantly the same: the festival with its blending of music and luminous dust participating in the cosmic rhythm. *'Sirènes'* depicts the sea and its countless rhythms and presently, amongst the waves silvered by the moonlight, is heard the mysterious song of the Sirens as they laugh and pass on.' The background hubbub was maintained as a ground bass, whilst the excitement and events of the Festival were depicted by clever and ever changing registration. A very impressive piece.

The great shame was that only 15 people heard this recital, and the appreciative audience included John Stormont, David Saint and Henry Fairs. If you see an opportunity to hear Ben at a future date, do not miss it. Another gifted organist with a bright future.

Finally Ben has 'Lichfield connections'. He was a chorister at Truro Cathedral under the direction of Robert Sharpe, now at York, but before Truro the Assistant at Lichfield Cathedral. To my surprise and delight, Ben's page turner, and girlfriend, is the granddaughter of close friends since our teens, but sadly no longer with us, and the daughter of the Librarian at Lichfield Cathedral – a small world indeed!

John Allen

Peter Morris recital at Walsall Town Hall, Thursday 18th September 2014

Today saw the opening of the 2014/15 lunchtime recitals at Walsall Town Hall by Walsall Borough Organist and LDOA honorary member Peter Morris.

Continuing his theme from last series of the A-Z of composers, today's programme delved in the I, J and K boxes, commencing with Fanfare by Francis Jackson, still very much alive and kicking at nearly 97 years of age.

Turning to the 'I' box, Susser Vater, Herre Gott by the Flemish composer Heinrich Isaac has the tune appearing in the pedals, rather unusual for the period c1450-1517. Voluntary in A Minor by the 18th century composer John James was followed by Processional by Grayston (Bill) Ives, the opening fanfares being followed by a rather discordant march.

Chant de Mai by Joseph Jongen is a beautiful, gentle piece, well suited to Walsall Town Hall's romantic organ, followed by John Ireland's Capriccio, an organ work which builds from a gentle opening to a grand climax.

In 1988, Tibia stops were added to the Choir department of the Walsall Town Hall organ as part of a rebuild, and

this next piece, Jerome Kern's 'Bill', is well suited to the theatre sounds of these tibias.

The final piece, and the most well-known of today's organ works, was Karg-Elert's Nun Dankett Alle Gott, providing a grand climax with full reeds to today's recital. TS

Pat Neville recital at Trinity Methodist Church, Shenstone, Monday 22nd September 2014

For this lunchtime Harvest organ recital, Pat Neville was again well supported by her loyal following at Shenstone, plus LDOA members. Her programme is always diverse, but generally includes some well-known works. On this occasion, I have to admit the 12 pieces by 11 different composers, including 6 voluntaries, were all new to me.

Pat's organ lessons with Karen Thompson are clearly bearing fruit, and she is to be congratulated on the time and effort she devotes to practising to put on these recitals, raising funds for the church. TS

Colin Walsh recital at Lichfield Cathedral, Tuesday 30th September 2014

Tonight's Celebrity Organ Recital was given by Colin Walsh, Organist Laureate of Lincoln Cathedral. Colin's association with cathedral music goes back over 40 years. He has served in various capacities, including at St George's Windsor Castle, Christ Church Cathedral Oxford, Salisbury Cathedral and St Albans Cathedral. He came to Lincoln in 1988.



Colin Walsh

His three years studies in France with Jean Langlais at St Clotilde inspired him to specialise in French symphonic and modern music, in particular the works of Franck, Vierne and Langlais. His other teachers include Simon Preston and Nicholas Danby. As a recitalist, he has played in all the major venues in the UK, most European countries, Russia, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the USA. He has many recordings to his name, including a DVD on the Priory Records label featuring the organ of Lincoln Cathedral.

Given his studies with Jean Langlais, it was to be expected that this composer would feature prominently in tonight's recital, and indeed two works by Langlais opened the programme. I confess to being no great admirer of the works of Langlais, but I must admit I quite enjoyed the Te Deum (No 3, Trois Paraphrases Gregoriennes), which provided a bold opening to the recital. In contrast,

Meditation (Suite Médiévale) is intended to be played during the Communion, and featured the distinctive sound of the Voix Humaine.

To take us to the interval, Colin turned to two major works of the organ repertoire, with first Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor BWV 542 by J S Bach, then Chorale No 3 in E by Franck.

Dithyramb by Basil Harwood opened the second half. This work was originally intended to be the first movement of a projected 2nd organ sonata, but Sir Walter Parratt advised him to publish the movements separately. The rather unusual title denotes music of a wild and passionate nature, which it proved to be. Scherzo in A flat by Bairstow followed, described by the composer as 'a light and a humorous piece'.

Fantaisie improvisation sur l'Ave Maris Stella by Tournemire was indeed originally an improvisation, but Tournemire was persuaded to record a number of examples of his skill as an improviser. Some two decades later, his pupil, Duruflé, transcribed these works from the recordings, including this one which sounded ferociously difficult, but provided Colin with an opportunity to show a great variety of tone colours, all beautifully registered.

For the climax to tonight's recital, Colin Walsh turned to Vierne with two movements from his Symphonie No 3 Op 28. 1911 had been a bad year for Vierne, including the breakdown of his marriage, and as composition of this symphony was against this background, the Adagio is deeply melancholic. The Final opens mysteriously, but soon builds into a stunning toccata, for which Martyn Rawles' services as regристant were called upon.

A programme providing a most impressive tour de force of some major organ works, and the masterly performance by Colin Walsh deserved a rather better attendance. TS

FORTHCOMING LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS

LDOA Members' Recitals/Events

Peter Morris - Walsall Town Hall

The 2014/15 recital series commenced on Thursday 18th September 2014, and will continue generally on the third Thursday of the month, with Peter working his way through the A-Z of composers. The next recital is on Thursday 9th October, but in fact Peter will be handing over playing duties for this recital to John Pryer, renowned for his skill at improvisation.

In addition to the recitals at Walsall Town Hall, Peter is also giving the following recitals:

- 1.00 pm to 1.30 pm on Monday June 15th 2015 at Coventry Cathedral
- 1.10 pm to 1.45 pm on Thursday 10th September 2015 at Chester Cathedral (where Peter was once a chorister)

Martyn Rawles

In addition to Lichfield Cathedral events, Martyn is also giving the following recitals:

- 4.45 pm to 5.15 pm on Sunday 16th November 2014 at Westminster Cathedral
- 12.30 pm to 1.15 pm on Thursday 29th January 2015 at Gloucester Cathedral
- 11.15 am on Bank Holiday Monday 4th May 2015 at Liverpool Cathedral

Cathy Lamb

In addition to her Lichfield Cathedral events, Cathy is also giving a recital at 12.30 pm on Thursday 27th November 2014 at Christchurch Priory.

Mervin Jones

Concert of popular theatre organ music on 2nd Thursday of every month at Darlaston Town Hall, with Mervin Jones at the 3 manual Binns Organ, 1.30 to 3.30 pm.

Phil Scriven

Well-respected LDOA ex-member, Phil Scriven (now of Cranleigh School) is making a welcome return visit to give a recital at 7.30 pm on Friday 17th October 2014 at St Editha's, Tamworth, the venue of our May 2014 visit.

Recitals In Local Area (to end December 2014)

October 2014

Thurs 2 October 2014 • 1:15 to 1:45 • St Paul's, Birmingham
Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham)

Frid 3 October 2014 • 1:00 to 1:45 • Emmanuel, Wylde Green
Andrew Fletcher (Birmingham University) – part 2 of the requests recital.

Frid 3 October 2014 • 12:40 to 1:20 • St Chad's Shrewsbury
Peter Morris (Walsall Borough Organist)

Sat 4 October 2014 • 3:30 • Ellesmere College (Chapel/Great Hall)
Catherine Ennis (St Lawrence, Jewry)

Sat 4 October 2014 • 6:45 • Worcester Cathedral
Olivier Latry (Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris)

Sun 5 October 2014 • 3:00 to 3:45 • Holy Trinity, Wordsley
Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham)

Thurs 9 October 2014 • 1:00 to 1:50 • Walsall Town Hall
John Pryer

Thurs 9 October 2014 • 11:30 • Kidderminster Town Hall
Tim Harper (Birmingham Cathedral)

Sat 11 October 2014 • 12:00 to 12:45 • Stoke Minster
Lee Dunleavy (Rushden, Northamptonshire)

Mon 13 October 2014 • 1:00 • Birmingham Town Hall
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Tues 14 October 2014 • 1:10 to 1:45 • Warwick Road URC
Laurence Caldecote (St Nicolas, Nuneaton)

Tues 14 October 2014 • 7:30 to 9:30 • Lichfield Cathedral
Malcolm Archer (Winchester College)

Frid 17 October 2014 • 7:30 to 8:45 • St Editha's, Tamworth

Philip Scriven (Cranleigh School)

Sun 19 October 2014 • 3:00 to 3:45 • St James' Methodist Church, Pensnett

Hannah Gibson (Birmingham Conservatoire)

Wed 22 October 2014 • 1:10 to 2:00 • St Alphege, Solihull
Nicholas Johnson (St Alphege, Solihull)

Frid 24 October 2014 • 1:10 to 1:50 • Birmingham Cathedral

Peter Dutton (Christ's Hospital, Horsham)

Mon 27 October 2014 • 1:00 • Birmingham Town Hall
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Tues 28 October 2014 • 1:10 to 1:45 • Warwick Road URC
Keith Hearnshaw (Concert Organist)

Wed 29 October 2014 • 7:30 • St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

Thomas Monnet (Église Saint-Maurice-de-Bécon, Courbevoie, France)

Frid 31 October 2014 • 7:30 • Birmingham Town Hall

Nigel Ogden – Halloween Silent Movie Special: The Cat & the Canary

November 2014

Sat 1 November 2014 • 12:00 to 1:00 • Malvern Priory
David Dewar (St Andrew's, Chippenham)

Sun 2 November 2014 • 3:00 to 3:45 • Holy Trinity, Wordsley

Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham)

Thurs 6 November 2014 • 1:15 to 1:45 • St Paul's, Birmingham

Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham)

Thurs 6 November 2014 • 2:00 to 4:15 • Burton-upon-Trent Town Hall

Nicholas Martin

Thurs 6 November 2014 • 11:30 • Kidderminster Town Hall

Timothy Morris (Kidderminster Town Hall)

Frid 7 November 2014 • 12:40 to 1:20 • St Chad's Shrewsbury

John Keys (St Mary the Virgin, Nottingham)

Frid 7 November 2014 • 1:00 to 1:45 • Emmanuel, Wylde Green

Andrew Fletcher (Birmingham University)

Sat 8 November 2014 • 12:00 to 12:45 • Stoke Minster

Jordan English (Royal Northern College of Music)

Mon 10 November 2014 • 1:00 • Birmingham Town Hall

Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Tues 11 November 2014 • 7:30 to 9:30 • Lichfield Cathedral

Martyn Rawles (Lichfield Cathedral)

Frid 14 November 2014 • 1:10 to 1:50 • Birmingham Cathedral

Organ students from Birmingham Conservatoire

Sun 16 November 2014 • 3:00 to 3:45 • St James' Methodist Church, Pensnett

Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham)

Thurs 20 November 2014 • 1:00 to 1:50 • Walsall Town Hall

Peter Morris (Walsall Borough Organist)

Mon 24 November 2014 • 1:00 • Symphony Hall

Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Wed 26 November 2014 • 1:10 to 2:00 • St Alphege, Solihull

Eleni Keventsidou (Rugby School)

Frid 28 November 2014 • 1:10 to 1:50 • Birmingham Cathedral

Nicholas Morris (Birmingham Cathedral)

Sat 29 November 2014 • 12:00 to 1:00 • Victoria Hall, Hanley

Donald MacKenzie (Odeon Cinema, Leicester Square)

December 2014

Tues 2 December 2014 • 7:30 to 9:30 • Lichfield Cathedral

Cathy Lamb, Martyn Rawles, Nigel Argust (all of Lichfield Cathedral)

Thurs 4 December 2014 • 1:15 to 1:45 • St Paul's, Birmingham

Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham)

Frid 5 December 2014 • 1:00 to 1:45 • Emmanuel, Wylde Green

Andrew Fletcher (Birmingham University)

Frid 5 December 2014 • 1:10 to 1:50 • Birmingham Cathedral

David Hardie (Birmingham Cathedral)

Sun 7 December 2014 • 3:00 to 3:45 • Holy Trinity, Wordsley

Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham)

Tues 9 December 2014 • 1:00 • Symphony Hall

Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist) with the Choristers of Winchester Cathedral

Sat 13 December 2014 • 12:00 to 12:45 • Stoke Minster

Elizabeth Bell (St George's, Altrincham)

Sun 14 December 2014 • 3:00 to 3:45 • St James' Methodist Church, Pensnett

Andrew Bagnall (St James' Methodist Church, Pensnett)

Mon 15 December 2014 • 1:00 • Birmingham Town Hall

Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist) – Sing Carols with the City Organist

Wed 17 December 2014 • 1:10 to 2:00 • St Alphege, Solihull

Judith Pendrous (St Mary's Priory, Abergavenny)

Sat 20 December 2014 • 6:00 • Coventry Cathedral

Kerry Beaumont (Coventry Cathedral)

For a complete listing of organ recitals in the UK and further details go to www.organrecitals.com

For details of recital organ specifications go to the National Pipe Organ Register at www.npor.org.uk

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Editorial Note - next newsletter is planned for December 2014, with deadline for submission of items for inclusion of 24/11/14, to Trevor Smedley by e-mail as above, or by mail to 8 The Parchments, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7NA