

## **FEBRUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER**

### RECENT LDOA VISITS

#### Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2012 visit to St Oswald's Parish Church Ashbourne

On a crisp sunny winter's day, our first visit of 2012 entailed a drive through the pleasant Derbyshire countryside to the market town of Ashbourne, and the parish church of St Oswald.



St Oswald's Parish Church, Ashbourne

The present church, replacing earlier Saxon and Norman work, was begun about 1160, and the church was consecrated in 1241. From 1300 to 1350 the south aisle and the magnificent 212 feet spire were completed, and in 1520 the nave clerestory was added. Built in the shape of a cross, the church has a full set of bells, and many wonderful stained glass windows. It houses the oldest brass consecration plate in the country, the second oldest in Europe.

Having run the gauntlet of the 'pirates' attending a children's party in the church hall, we were greeted at the church by our host for today's visit, Director of Music Michael Halls. Putting on the heating and providing hot drinks, Michael ensured a warm welcome for us, followed by a brief history of the organs of St Oswald's, supported by informative hand-outs and a photo display.

The first organ of which there is any record was set up in the church in 1710 by Henry Valentine of Leicester, and that organ seems to have lasted until 1858 when William Hill of London installed a tracker action three manuals and pedals instrument that formed the basis of the present organ. In 1882, it was raised to its present south chancel/south transept position and improved. The next major rebuild was undertaken in 1951 at the instigation of organist Chris Daly Atkinson, who served for a total of 48 years until his retirement in 1992. The old tracker action was replaced by a detached console with electro-pneumatic action and stop keys, with some new stops also

added. Then in 1982, a further restoration took place by Hill Norman & Beard, and a new action was fitted incorporating digital control so that the console could be moved to the tower crossing to provide for more effective use in concerts and recitals.

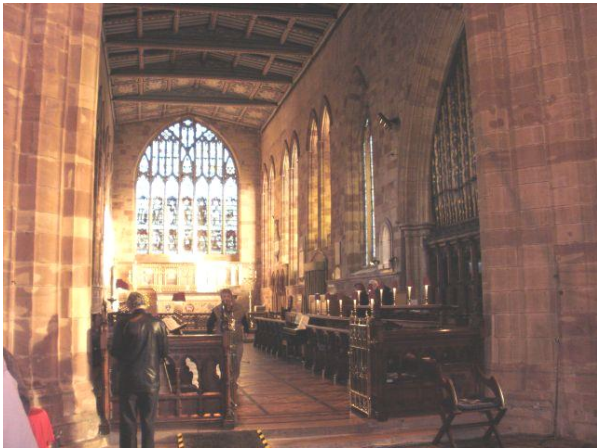
Despite the various rebuilds, the problem of lack of projection of the organ sound into the nave beyond the substantial stone pillars supporting the central spire had never been addressed, to the detriment of supporting the congregational singing in the nave. This became a major concern as the church holds lots of services, ordinations and at least one funeral per week, and has a thriving 50-strong mixed choir, which sings two services every Sunday and a full choral evensong once a month. Addressing the problem of getting the sound down the nave therefore became the catalyst for the 2011 work, which following consideration of three quotes, was awarded to Henry Groves & Son Ltd.

This work carried out in 2011 comprised:

- Shutters have been added to the west facing side of the swell box to direct sound towards the nave. The previous shutters hardly worked at all. The swell shutters to the west and north can be used independently or together.
- A Nave division of 8' Open diapason, 4' Principal, 2' Fifteenth and Mixture IV ranks has been added. It is not actually located in the nave, but behind the south transept organ pipe façade, facing and speaking down the nave.
- A sound board has been added above these pipes to make sure sound does not end up in the roof space.
- The Tromba pipes have been turned around to speak to the nave.
- The choir organ stops have been much changed to give a much better blend of sound. Behind the choir organ, an internal insulated façade has been created so that light and cold from the east facing transept window will no longer have an impact.
- The pedals now have the missing two notes added to complete the full range.
- Two new blowers have been installed to replace the exhausted and inadequate old blower. This was the only additional work that was required over and above the original quotation.

- One of the supporting legs of the organ had sunk through the floor of the organ loft! This has been corrected. Rewiring has been done and the interior layout changed to allow for proper access for the organ tuner.

Following the £80,000 rebuild, the 3 manual organ as it stands today has a very comprehensive specification of 47 speaking stops. The console is mobile, and for services is positioned between the choir stalls, but for recitals it can be moved out into a central position at the front of the chancel, as indeed it was for the inaugural recital. There remain some outstanding electrical power issues, which will require rewiring of the church to overcome. The organ was dedicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011, and the inaugural recital was given by consultant for the whole project and Rector Chori/Organist of Southwell Minster, Paul Hale, to a packed church on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2011.



View from the crossing down the chancel of St Oswald's Church, Ashbourne. Organ on the right.

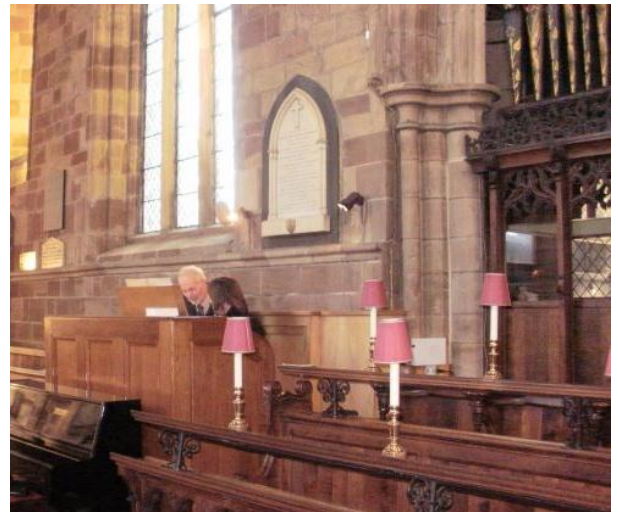


Pedal pipes viewed from the Lady Chapel of St Oswald's Church, Ashbourne

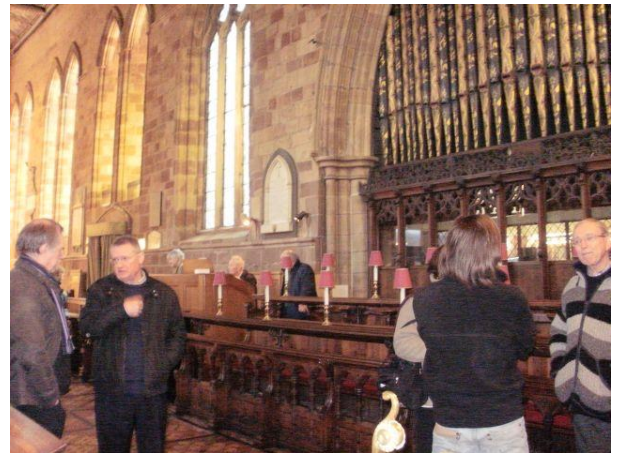
Michael then proceeded to demonstrate the various colours of the organ with an Organ Suite by Elgar, before handing over the console to members to play. After our customary reticence to be the 'first up', there was then no shortage of members wishing to play

With father John Stormont acting as registrant, there was the usual professional performance from Chris Stormont, playing Vierne's Carillon de Westminster, the piece he played as the finale to his 19<sup>th</sup> November 2011 recital celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Mary's Church,

Selly Oak. I never cease to be amazed at how quickly someone like Chris is able to familiarise themselves with an organ on which they have had no opportunity to practice, and yet still perform a piece like this to such a high standard. No doubt having a very experienced and able registrant helps!



Chris Stormont at the mobile console of St Oswald's, Ashbourne, with father John acting as registrant.



Members in the chancel of St Oswald's, Ashbourne

Undaunted by having to follow in Chris's footsteps, at least 9 other members 'had a go', including Tony Westerman, who used to play occasionally at this church some 40 years ago. He played a fine piece from memory, which had a number of people speculating as to the composer, until Tony disclosed it was actually a composition of his own that he was still working on, and as yet unnamed!



Tony Westerman at the console of St Oswald's

Whilst other members were engaged playing the organ, it was an opportunity for a visit with Michael Halls up to the organ loft, where the changed layout of the pipework and the new Nave Division behind the south transept organ pipe façade were able to be viewed.

I hadn't heard the organ before its latest rebuild, but one member who had thought the Mixtures now lacked some 'bite' compared to how they used to sound. Michael Halls clearly considers the latest rebuild a success, but the sound certainly still diminished noticeably when heard from the far end of the nave, so I can only surmise as to the severity of the problem before the rebuild. Having heard the organ played by Paul Hale at the inaugural recital, it seemed to have plenty of 'guts', but no doubt Paul was well able to extract the best from the organ, having been the consultant throughout the rebuild project.

This visit was very well attended by 21 members, and we are greatly indebted to Michael Halls for the time and trouble he took providing us with drinks, production of hand-outs, a photographic display, his demonstration of the organ, and the generous allowance of time for members to play the organ, all making for a splendid visit.

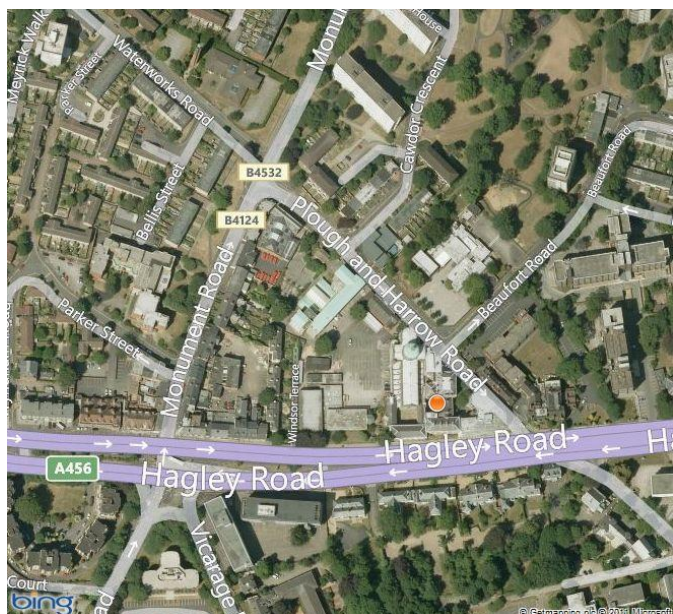
TS

### FORTHCOMING LDOA VISITS

#### Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012 visit to Birmingham Oratory

Despite the sudden death on Wed 18<sup>th</sup> January at the age of 89 of Fr Gregory Winterton, who had been at the Oratory for nearly 51 years, we are most grateful to the Oratory for still being willing to accommodate our visit.

Our visit to Birmingham Oratory commences at 7 pm. The main organ is a large Nicholson organ dating from 1909, with 4 manuals and 59 speaking stops. The address is: Birmingham Oratory, 141 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8UE.



Locator map for Birmingham Oratory

Travelling by road, from the city centre go along Hagley Road, following the signs for the Plough & Harrow Hotel, go beyond the Oratory and turn right at the second set of traffic lights into Monument Road, then right again into Plough & Harrow Road. The entrance to the large Oratory car park is to the right, immediately behind the church. We understand that we are to gain access to the Oratory via the Hagley Road entrance. See locator map below for details, the Oratory being marked with an orange dot.

#### Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012 visit to St Peter's Maney for Chairman's Afternoon and AGM

Hosted by our Chairman and Director of Music at St Peter's David Gumbley, the visit commences at 2 pm with the 2012 AGM, followed by a masterclass by David Gumbley on J S Bach, then an opportunity to play the fine 3 manual Nicholson organ. Volunteers to play Bach for the masterclass are invited to contact David if you are willing to participate.

#### Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012 visit to St James' Church, Mere Green, Sutton Coldfield (Note change of date)

Visit commences at 7.30 pm. The Nicholson organ dates from c1921, and was extended from 2 manuals to 3 manuals in 1985. The church has good and lively acoustics.

#### Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2012 visit to Broadway United Reformed Church, Walsall

Visit commences at 3.30 pm, hosted by our member and Broadway Organist/Choirmaster Alan Taylor. The organ is a large 4 manual Lloyd & Haynes 51 stop organ, comprising mainly Nicholson/Nicholson & Lord pipework. (See October 2011 newsletter for photos and description)

NB. You may like to make a note in your diary of a recital at Broadway URC by Daniel Bishop of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September, the week after our visit.

#### Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2012 President's Evening at Lichfield Cathedral

Visit hosted by our President Martyn Rawles. Open Choir rehearsal at 4.45 pm, followed by Evensong, then an opportunity for members to play the magnificent Hill organ, before finally adjourning for refreshments.

#### 2012 Annual Dinner

Pam proposed this should be on a Wednesday at the end Nov/early Dec rather than February.

### NEWS FROM THE LDOA COMMITTEE

#### Children and the Organ

To ensure the future playing of organs in our churches, a stated aim of our Constitution is 'To foster an interest in the organ and organ playing among young people'.

We approached a few members who we believed have some relevant expertise in this area, and we are most

grateful to Martyn Rawles, Cathy Lamb, Eric Lunt and Steve Mansfield for enthusiastically agreeing to assist us in developing an initiative to achieve this aim.

Trevor Smedley met with Martyn, Cathy, Eric and Steve on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November, and it was concluded that the best format was a pilot event to be held on a Saturday, based at Lichfield Cathedral, involving workshops for children invited to attend via local schools. This proposal was discussed at the January Committee Meeting, and endorsed by the Committee for progression to the planning stage. Trevor to arrange a further meeting with Martyn/Cathy/Eric/Steve.

### **2012 Subscriptions**

Please note that subscriptions for 2012 became due on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012, and as agreed at the AGM remain unchanged, as follows:

Individual membership - £11, Joint membership - £16.50, students in full time education – free.

A request for payment has been sent out by our Treasurer Pat Neville, and for anyone still to pay their subscription, your co-operation in paying ASAP would be greatly appreciated.

### **Finances**

A review of our expenditure v. income for last year will take place at the next meeting, once our audited 2011 Accounts are available.

### **IAO Advisory Committee**

David Gumbley advised us that his 3 year term of office on the IAO Advisory Committee ends in 2012.

### **Publicity Officer**

Clive Smith advised the meeting that he does not wish to continue to serve as a member of the Committee after the AGM, although he is happy to continue to distribute flyers to local venues.

### **Next Committee Meeting**

Next Committee Meeting is at 8 pm Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at Pam's house.

## **MEMBERS' NEWS**

### **New Members**

We are always very pleased to welcome 'new blood' to our Association, and we are particularly pleased when this includes youngsters, as is the case with two of the following three new members joining our Association since the last newsletter:

#### **Helen & Henry Metcalfe**

Helen is mum to 12 year old Henry. Helen is a cellist, and Henry has studied piano to Grade 4. He is currently

learning the organ with Martyn Rawles at Lichfield Cathedral, and whilst he has a piano and keyboard at home, Henry has his sights set on a Hauptwerk System virtual pipe organ! Helen and Henry live in Lichfield. Our thanks to Martyn for pointing Helen and Henry in our direction.

#### **Joe Sneddon**

Joe is 15 years old and a student at King Edward VI School, Lichfield. He plays the piano, and is currently having piano lessons. He is very keen to learn the organ, and has access to the organs both at St Michael's and St Mary's, Lichfield. He runs the girls' choir at St Michael's Church Lichfield, and also jointly runs the boys choir - very commendable for a young man of his age.

We look forward to seeing our new members at future visits.

### **Phil Scriven Workshop, Lyme Regis**

Not a current member, but as reported in the previous newsletter, some news of ex member and our former President Phil Scriven. The Lyme Regis Organ School is holding its second Winter Workshop from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2012, and its theme will be 'The Glories of French Organ Music'. Given his love of French organ music, it's very appropriate that the lead tutor will be Phil Scriven. There will be group workshops, individual teaching, demonstration and a full length organ recital. Full details can be found at [www.lymeregisorganschool.org](http://www.lymeregisorganschool.org)

## **LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL NEWS/EVENTS**

### **Organ Recitals – Evening Series**

As it stands, disappointingly it looks as though we will have to wait until September before the 2012 Evening Organ Recitals commence. The recitals as currently advised are:

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at 7.30 pm  
Stephen Farr (St Paul's Knightsbridge) and 2011 BBC Proms soloist

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012 at 7.30 pm  
Cathy Lamb, Lichfield Cathedral

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 7.30 pm  
Martyn Rawles, Lichfield Cathedral

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at 7.30 pm

A welcome return visit by Alex Mason, who was Assistant Organist at Lichfield from 2002-7, before moving to St David's Cathedral, and is now Director of Chapel Music at Shrewsbury School.

### **Organ Recitals – Lunchtime Series**

Martyn Rawles advises that lunchtime organ recitals are anticipated to start in July, but no details are as yet available. As soon as details do become available we will include them in a future newsletter.

## **Other Notable Lichfield Cathedral Musical Events**

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at 7.30 pm

'Winter Warmers Concert' by Darwin Ensemble Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Philip Scriven, with soloists George Caird (Oboe) and Jane Salmon (Cello)

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at 7.30 pm

Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra playing Mahler's epic Tenth Symphony

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012 at 7.30 pm

'Come & Sing the Messiah' with The Lichfield Cathedral Chorus. Afternoon rehearsal prior to the evening performance.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at 7.30 pm

A Jubilee Proms Concert, featuring the combined Darwin Ensemble Orchestra and City Concert Orchestra, soprano Elizabeth MacDonald, Lichfield Cathedral Chamber Choir and the Choristers of Lichfield Cathedral, conducted by Cathy Lamb, Ben Lamb and Adrian Jackson

## **RECENT LOCAL RECITALS REVIEWS**

### **Andrew Fletcher Recital, Emmanuel Church Wyldre Green, Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011**

The distinctive fanfares of Aaron Copeland's 'Fanfare for the Common Man' opened today's lunchtime recital. This short piece was written in response to the US entry into WW2, and Copeland later used the fanfare as the main theme of the fourth movement of his 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony.

Following Three Chorale Preludes by J G Walther, a contemporary of J S Bach, Andrew turned to 'a big work' in the form of C H H Parry's Fantasia & Fugue in G, with its dramatic opening and by no means an easy work.

In total contrast, Sicilienne by the blind Austrian singer/pianist and composer Maria Theresia von Paradis (1759 -1824) provided an altogether more gentle lilting melody. Next followed Toccata by Georgi Mushel, a piece discovered when visiting Russia by Noel Rawsthorne, who brought it back and presented it to Oxford University Press. A jolly, lively toccata worthy of greater popularity.

Passacaglia in D Minor by Buxtehude, with its haunting melody, saw a return to a more subdued mood, before Benedictus by Reger provided an opportunity to show the crescendo and diminuendo capabilities of the Willis organ.

Earlier in the newsletter, our January visit to St Oswald's Church Ashbourne was featured, and at the inaugural recital in October 2011 of their rebuilt Hill organ, Paul Hale played Cesar Franck's Chorale No 1 in E. To end today's programme Andrew also chose this expressive and dramatic work, with its final crescendo leading to a massive statement of the chorale followed by a flourish derived from the opening theme, and employing the full reeds of the fine Willis organ.

Andrew doesn't normally play an encore at his Friday lunchtime recitals, but on this occasion he chose to include a surprise item. Having being commissioned by his long-standing page turner Paul to compose a piece to celebrate

the birth of Paul's first granddaughter, Christmas Lullaby was the result. This was its first public airing, and with strains of Away in a Manger featured, a most appropriate piece to end this Advent season recital.

A splendid recital, with some very welcome seasonal mince pies and mulled wine to nicely round off proceedings, enjoyed by a number of our members!

TS

### **Pat Neville Recital, Trinity Methodist Church, Shenstone, Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

Our Treasurer Pat Neville is the resident organist at Shenstone, and today's lunchtime Advent recital was the fourth she's given here in 2011.

Pat had compiled her programme of 14 pieces around the telling of the Christmas story, and included such well-known pieces as Winter from Four Seasons by Vivaldi, Bach-Gounod's Ave Maria, Pastorale Symphony by Handel and Panis Angelicus by Franck, as well as lesser known ones such as Gloria in Excelsis Deo by the appropriately named H Claus!

To conclude her programme, Pat chose the stately March of the Magi by Charles Darton, a nice bright piece on which to finish this well attended Advent recital. A lot of hard work had gone into practising for the recital - well done Pat once again!

On a sunny but cold winter's day, the mince pies provided were most welcome, but tea and coffee were the liquid refreshment on offer - no mulled wine I'm afraid for this recital!

TS

### **Andrew Fletcher Recital, Emmanuel Church Wyldre Green, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

The 2011/2012 Lunchtime Recital Series at Emmanuel has as its theme 'The Olympics', and today's opening work was described with some justification by Andrew Fletcher as 'Olympian'.

Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue is widely acknowledged as Healey Willan's masterpiece for organ, and was the major work chosen by Paul Hale for his inaugural recital of the rebuilt Hill organ of St Oswald's Church Ashbourne, which was the first time I'd heard this virtuoso piece played live. Andrew Fletcher described it as 'life-changing', in that when he first heard this piece as a young boy on a recording made by Francis Jackson at York Minster, it was the catalyst for him deciding he wanted to learn the organ and this piece in particular, which he started to learn when he was 16 years old.

The prolific Anglo-Canadian composer and organist Healey Willan was born in London in 1880. An FRCO, he emigrated to Canada in 1913, and whilst he was Choirmaster and Organist at St Paul's, Toronto, he wrote this blockbuster piece, inspired by the opulent 107-stop Cassavant organ installed in St Paul's. Andrew commented that Willan was once requested to play this

piece and reputedly retorted that 'just because I wrote it doesn't mean I can play it', when declining the request!

The Introduction opens with five ethereal chords, before the loud dramatic middle passage bursts forth, eventually finishing by reprising the ethereal opening. The Passacaglia follows with its 18 variations covering a wide spectrum of moods and colours of the organ, the mood finally subsiding into the last chorale-like variation. The Fugue opens with the first five notes of the Passacaglia theme, developing as normal and getting progressively more animated, capped by a descending chromatic scale in octaves, begun on the tuba and completed in the pedals, with Full Organ for the final bars. A most impressive piece of almost 20 minutes duration, and a virtuoso performance by Andrew Fletcher.

A 'jazzy little piece' Tiento Del 1<sup>o</sup> Tono by the blind Spanish 17<sup>th</sup> century organist and composer P Bruna, played on manuals only, was followed by Fugue in G (Sonata No 3) by Rheinberger. This piece was requested for Andrew's June 2011 Requests Recital, but not played, and hence its inclusion today. By no means an easy piece, involving some tricky pedalling. Next followed Cantilena, a piece of Andrew's own composition, with its beautiful lilting melody.

To end his programme, after some of the earlier tricky works, something a little easier was called for in the form of Suite Gothique, the work for which Böellmann is best known, and a perennial mainstay of the organist's repertoire. All four movements were performed, finishing with Toccata building to a full organ climax.

As ever, a most enjoyable Emmanuel recital, but one which will live long in my memory for Andrew Fletcher's superb performance of the Healey Willan work on this fine Willis organ. I can certainly see why it made such an impression on him as a young boy!

TS

### **Thomas Trotter Recital, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

Thomas Trotter opened this first Monday lunchtime recital of 2012 in style with the Allegro from Widor's Symphony No 6. After the immediately recognisable opening theme, with its sonorous chords and double pedalling, the piece develops and finally drives to its dynamic climax.

Voluntary in D Op 6 No 6 was chosen to mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the blind organist and composer John Stanley. The piece calls for specific registrations for the four movements, and Thomas provided us with his selected registrations of Stopped Diapason on the Positive for the Adagio, alternating the French Horn and Cor Anglais housed in the acoustic chambers on either side of the main organ to produce the echo effect required for the Andante, the Swell for the second Adagio, and finally the Cornet on the Great for the Allegro Moderato.

By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bach's music had fallen from favour, but Mendelssohn and Schumann were admirers of Bach as was also Liszt, and this next piece Prelude and Fugue of BACH was a tribute to his most famous predecessor. With its distinctive opening four

pedal notes, this is effectively a dramatic fantasia, with a quiet little bit of fugue just before the final grandiose climax.

Ad Wammes is a Dutch keyboard player and composer, and his first 'classical' work, the organ piece Miroir, began to reach an international audience when it was discovered and widely performed by the late David Sanger. Having previously performed this piece, for today's recital Thomas instead chose Wammes biggest organ work Vallée Des Dances. Wammes workshop is full of electronic keyboards, and whereas normally keyboards strive to mimic the pipe organ sound, in this case Thomas was aiming to make the Klais organ sound like a keyboard in playing the third of this work's five movements, a lyrical scherzo.

In 2001, the RCO commissioned a collection of eight organ pieces from contemporary composers with no professional connection with the instrument. The title of the collection is Unbeaten Tracks, and this next piece – the jazz/pop singer/songwriter/composer Errollyn Wallen's 'Tiger' – is one of the most striking of the pieces. Incidentally, Thomas Trotter has commissioned Errollyn Wallen to write a piece for him to première at his recital on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012 to celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Symphony Hall.

A suite for organ arranged by Lemare of Bizet's Carmen was the choice for the finale of today's recital. The suite opens with the brilliant Entry of the Bullfighters, followed by a number of very distinctive refrains, before a final flourish of the Bullfighter's theme. The many different moods of this suite demanded many registration changes, all beautifully crafted and executed by Thomas Trotter from the formidable stops choice available on the Klais organ.

A superb recital providing a now all too rare opportunity to hear the Symphony Hall organ in the hands of its master.

TS

### **Peter Morris Recital, Walsall Town Hall, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

Today saw the resumption after the break for Advent of the Walsall Town Hall lunchtime recitals by our honorary member and Walsall Borough Organist Peter Morris.

In his introduction, Peter referred to everything being in 3's for this recital, in fact four sets of 3's, commencing with 3 Chorale Preludes by J S Bach. Christus, der uns selig macht, Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland, and finally the ever popular Wachet Auf.

The next set of 3 was cheating a little in that the 3 pieces are in fact unconnected. Toccata by Georgi Mushel, the 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian composer is a bright piece, with a repetitive theme and building to a majestic full organ climax. This was followed by Voluntary in G by the 18<sup>th</sup> century composer William Walond, with its gentle melodic opening movement leading to the lively cornet second movement. During this series Peter has played a Cèsar Franck work at each recital, and the third of the trio of unrelated pieces was Franck's Final, Op 21. Described by Peter as a 'troublesome piece' due to it going into peculiar keys in the middle, it opens with the striking theme

provided by a lengthy solo pedal passage, before the manuals take over, and this theme reappears in various guises throughout this lengthy piece, which builds to a majestic finale with four full organ chords.

The next trio of pieces was in an altogether lighter vein, as might be expected, the composer being Nigel Ogden, the organist and presenter of BBC Radio 2's programme 'The Organist Entertains'. The first piece was Leprechaun in London, a lively Irish jig, followed by England's Glory, a nice William Walton-style march, and finally Penguin's Playtime, a light/fun piece for which Peter chose a suitably theatre organ style of registration.

Trois Pieces by Gabriel Pierné, César Franck's successor at St Clotilde Basilica in Paris, are three separate pieces but form a very effective suite for organ. Commencing with the lively Prélude, the gentle Cantilène followed, before the last few bars of the Scherzando brought the recital to an end with a rousing full organ climax.

TS

### **Thomas Trotter Recital, Town Hall, Birmingham, Monday 23rd January 2012**

I'm indebted to John Allen for submitting a review of this event:

At precisely 1.00 pm, Thomas entered the Hall minus his Page Turner, the Whitlock Organ Scholar, and with no music on the organ desk, he selected his opening registration and then played Handel's Organ Concerto in B flat Opus 4 No. 2 entirely from memory! During the following prolonged applause, the Page Turner appeared complete with music. Thomas quickly pointed out that he, Thomas, had decided to set himself a challenge and play the Handel from memory, and that the Page Turner was not late! He apologised for the wind like noises emanating from the organ which sounded like air conditioning set to a high level. Work on the organ during the previous week required a return visit from the organ builders!

On Wednesday January 25 Thomas would play the opening recital on the new Crypt organ at St. Paul's Cathedral, London. This organ of 2 manuals + pedals and 20 stops had been made by William Drake of Devon. The organ is situated alongside the grave of William Boyce, a one-time chorister at St. Paul's. Interestingly the programme notes gave a birth year of 1710 yet most sources give only a baptism date of September 1711. (At that time baptism took place soon after birth.) This might explain why 2011 was not generally marked as the 300th anniversary of his birth. Thomas continued his program with Boyce's Voluntary in D, which he would play at St. Paul's.

Over the past years Thomas has played all the Bach Trio Sonatas, including one evening concert at Symphony Hall when he played all six. Today he played No. 3 in D minor BWV 527 - another piece to be played at St. Paul's.

I am not sure whether I have heard the name of Dudley Buck (1839-1909) He was one of the great pioneers of American music having studied in Leipzig, Dresden and Paris. He returned to the USA in 1862, but in 1871 he lost his home, library and manuscripts in the Great Fire of

Chicago. (My paternal grandfather's birth certificate was also lost in the same fire!) Thomas played Buck's variations on the Scotch Air 'Annie Laurie' to mark Burns' Night on the following Wednesday. To my surprise Thomas indicated that he had never heard this Air until he played Buck's piece for the first time!

Thomas' final programme piece was Stanford's Fantasia and Toccata in D minor. I had forgotten this brilliant outstanding organ piece, played with consummate skill by Thomas.

We were treated to an encore, the organ scholar having been dismissed, in the form of Schumann's Canon in A flat, which Thomas will also play at St. Paul's.

An interesting recital not spoiled by the noises off behind the organ case, but spoiled instead by audience members behind me who talked to each other during most of the recital.

JHA

### **IAO MATTERS**

#### **London Organ Day**

This year's London Organ Day will be on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, at Christ Church Chelsea, entitled J S Bach & the Lutheran Chorale. Guest soloist Ludger Lohmann.

#### **IAO 2012 Congress**

Following the very successful 2011 Congress in Northern Ireland and Dublin, the 2012 Congress will be held in Cheltenham from 29<sup>th</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August. This promises to be an outstanding event, with visits to Worcester Cathedral, Malvern Priory, St Swithun's Church (Worcester), Great Badminton Church of St Michael and All Angels, Westonbirt House, Cirencester Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Cheltenham College, Cheltenham Ladies College, St Mary Radcliffe (Bristol) and Llandaff Cathedral (Cardiff)

#### **Midlands Organ Day**

To be held on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September in Grantham, but as yet no other details are available.

### **ORGAN THEMED PUZZLE**

An organ themed puzzle compiled by one of our members was featured in our December 2011 Newsletter. Andrew McMillan, having been a joint winner of the puzzle appearing in the June 2011 newsletter, was this time the quickest to respond with a correct solution. He was therefore the outright winner of the December puzzle, and of the £10 W H Smith Gift Voucher donated by our puzzle compiler. Well done again, Andrew!

The puzzle entailed decoding the specification of an organ whose stops were based on the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral organ, and for the record the specification and the notes corresponding to the uncoded characters that stuck, is:

### Column 1

Open Bass 16, Bass Flute 8, Dolce 16, Resultant Bass 64, Contra Violone 32, Mixture V.

Notes: EFDECE

### Column 2

Clarion 4, Terz 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>5</sub>, Cymbel III, Viola 8, Unda Maris 8, Geigen 16.

Notes: ACCBAAG

### Column 3

Tenth 3, Quint 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>, Double Quint 10<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub>, Super Octave 2, Doppie Flute 8, Vox Humana 8.

Notes: EBECCEDA

We have a J C Bach themed puzzle already prepared for the April 2012 Newsletter, timed to coincide with the masterclass on J C Bach being given by David Gumbley at our April meeting. We'll see if anyone can defeat our puzzle champion next time!

## **VACANCY AT ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, LICHFIELD**

Before moving to take up his new appointment, Reverend David Kirk Beedon requested our assistance in advertising for a Music Department Leader at Saint Michael's Church, Lichfield. As yet this post remains unfilled, so the advert is being run again this month:

*'We are open minded to new ways of both leading our diverse Music Department and resourcing the central role music plays in our worship. We are looking for someone attracted to the exciting possibility of working with a talented and enthusiastic group of people to nurture and develop the choral and musical gifts within our congregations. Keyboard skills would be essential and organist skills would be very welcome. In 2010 the former post of Director of Music was paid £3,450 and additionally there has been an average of £2,500 in occasional office organist fees with the post. Are you the one God is calling to this pioneering post? If so please contact our Church Office on (01543) 262211 or stmichaellich@aol.com.'*

## **FORTHCOMING LOCAL ORGAN RECITALS**

### **LDOA Members' Recitals/Events**

#### Mervin Jones - Darlaston Town Hall

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

#### Peter Morris - Walsall Town Hall

The 2011/12 Walsall Town Hall organ recital series by our Honorary Member and Walsall Borough Organist Peter Morris continues after the break for Advent on the third Thursday of each month through to May 2012. The next recital is on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February at 1pm.

#### Martyn Rawles

In addition to the recitals listed for Lichfield Cathedral, Martyn Rawles is giving the following organ recitals:

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2012, 12.40 pm St Chads' Shrewsbury

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012, 1 pm St Mary's Collegiate Church Warwick.

#### Cathy Lamb

In addition to the recitals listed for Lichfield Cathedral, Cathy Lamb is giving the following organ recitals:

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2012, 4 pm, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, London

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at 1.10 pm, St Michael & All Angels, Croydon

#### Pat Neville - Trinity Methodist Church, Shenstone

Further free lunchtime organ recitals will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June, Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October and an Advent recital on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December by our Treasurer and Shenstone resident organist Pat Neville at 12.45 pm to 1.30 pm. Bring your sandwiches – drinks will be available. Come and go as you please.

#### Ian Tracey - All Saints Church, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

Not exactly a recital by one of our members, but a notable recital for your diary at a church where our member Angela Sones is Director of Music, and is also attended by at least two other members. As reported in the last newsletter, the organ at All Saints Four Oaks has recently been refurbished/enhanced, and the opening recital is being given by one of the most well-known UK organists – Ian Tracey, Organist Titulaire at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. The recital is on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> March at 7.30 pm.

### **Recitals In Local Area (to 30/04/2012)**

#### **February 2012**

Thurs 2 February 2012 • 1:15 to 1:45 • St Paul's Birmingham

Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham)

Frid 3 February 2012 • 1:00 to 1:45 • Emmanuel Wylde Green

Andrew Fletcher (Birmingham University)

Sun 5 February 2012 • 3:00 • Holy Trinity Wordsley

Paul Carr (St Paul's Birmingham)

Mon 6 February 2012 • 1:00 to 2.00 • Birmingham Town Hall

Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist) with The Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir

Thurs 16 February 2012 • 1:00 to 2:00 • Walsall Town Hall

Peter Morris (Walsall Borough Organist)

Mon 20 February 2012 • 1:00 to 2.00 • Birmingham Town Hall

Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Tues 21 February 2012 • 7:30 • St Andrew's, Netherton

Paul Carr (St Paul's Birmingham)

Thurs 23 February 2012 • 7:00 to 9:00 • Ellesmere College (Great Hall)

Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)

Sat 25 February 2012 • 12:00 to 1.00 • Malvern Priory  
Peter Shepherd (Malvern Priory)

Tues 28 February 2012 • 1:10 to 1:50 • Warwick Road  
United Reformed Church  
Laurence Caldecote (St Nicolas, Nuneaton)

### March 2012

Thurs 1 March 2012 • 1:15 to 1:45 • St Paul's Birmingham  
Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham)

Frid 2 March 2012 • 1:00 to 1:45 • Emmanuel Wyld  
Green  
Andrew Fletcher (Birmingham University)

Sat 3 March 2012 • 7.00 • St Mary Magdalene,  
Bridgenorth  
Laurence Caldecote (St Nicolas Nuneaton)

Sun 4 March 2012 • 3:00 • Holy Trinity Wordsley  
Paul Carr (St Paul's Birmingham)

Mon 5 March 2012 • 1:00 to 2.00 • Birmingham Town Hall  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Thurs 15 March 2012 • 1:00 to 2:00 • Walsall Town Hall  
Peter Morris (Walsall Borough Organist)

Mon 19 March 2012 • 1:00 to 2.00 • Birmingham Town  
Hall  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Sat 24 March 2012 • 12:00 to 1.00 • The Victoria Hall,  
Hanley  
Donald MacKenzie (The Odeon Cinema, Leicester Square)

Sat 24 March 2012 • 7:30 • St Mary's, Hobs Moat, Solihull  
Anne Page (Cambridge)

Frid 30 March 2012 • 1:00 to 1:45 • Emmanuel Wyld  
Green  
Andrew Fletcher (Birmingham University)

Sat 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 • 7:30 • All Saints, Four Oaks, Sutton  
Coldfield  
Opening Recital by Ian Tracey (Liverpool Anglican Cathedral)

### April 2012

Sun 1 April 2012 • 3:00 • Holy Trinity Wordsley  
Paul Carr (St Paul's Birmingham)

Mon 2 April 2012 • 1:00 to 2.00 • Birmingham Town Hall  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

Thurs 5 April 2012 • 1:00 to 2.00 • West Bromwich Town  
Hall  
Keith Hearnshaw (Concert Organist)

Thurs 5 April 2012 • 1:15 to 1:45 • St Paul's Birmingham  
Paul Carr (St Paul's, Birmingham), Paul Hayward (St Barnabas RC Cathedral, Nottingham)

Sat 7 April 2012 • 1:00 to 1:45 • St Thomas' Stourbridge  
Andrew Fletcher (Birmingham University)

Sat 14 April 2012 • 12:00 to 1:00 • Malvern Priory  
Roy Massey (Tewkesbury)

Thurs 19 April 2012 • 1:00 to 2:00 • Walsall Town Hall  
Peter Morris (Walsall Borough Organist)

Sat 21 April 2012 • 12:00 to 1.00 • The Victoria Hall,  
Hanley  
Paul Hale (Southwell Minster)

Frid 27 April 2012 • 1:00 to 1:45 • Emmanuel Wyld Green  
Andrew Fletcher (Birmingham University)

Mon 30 April 2012 • 1:00 to 2.00 • Birmingham Town Hall  
Thomas Trotter (Birmingham City Organist)

For a complete listing of organ recitals in the UK and further details go to [www.organrecitals.com](http://www.organrecitals.com)  
For details of recital organ specifications go to the National Pipe Organ Register at [www.npor.org.uk](http://www.npor.org.uk)

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**Editorial Note - next Newsletter is planned for April 2012, with deadline for submission of items for inclusion of 31/03/12, to Trevor Smedley by e-mail as above, or by mail to 8 The Parchments, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7NA**