

MAY 2025 NEWSLETTER

FORTHCOMING LDOA VISITS/EVENTS

We're coming to the end of the 'season' already and hope we can attract you to the events we still have on the list. A review of recent events follows.

On **Saturday 7th June at 2.00 pm** we have the pleasure of a Seminar given by our very active member **Stephen Carleston**. It is open to all and is free of charge to both Members and non-Members. St John's Hospital, Lichfield WS13 6PB HNB 2/18



The enticing title Stephen has gone for is ***How to breathe new life into traditional hymns*** and as a very experienced church organist at a number of important churches he is very well equipped to give us lots of welcome ideas.

As an added bonus (!) you can also stay or come along (please do) to this year's AGM on the same day. Start time around 4.00. A necessary, if not hugely vibrant, occasion where we can talk through and if necessary vote on the next bit of life

of our Organists' Association. It would be wonderful to have new members of the committee to spread our workload and responsibility a little wider! Please let me or Paul know if you have any ideas you would like to talk through and/or any help you would like to give. Perhaps some thoughts for our centenary year.

Our other event for the rest of the 'season' is:
Saturday July 5th at 4.00 Members' Recital
St Modwen's Burton-on-Trent DE14 1HA
Hill, Noman & Beard 3/27 1972

is again the venue for the Members' Recital. Please do come along and support this event either by playing or listening (and applauding heartily). It's a beautiful church and a very impressive instrument. And there will of course be cake!

The church will be open for performers from 1.30 for practice. Would anyone willing to participate in this recital, which will be open to the public, please contact Paul Hodgetts on paul@hodgetts.eu

Next year's programme is being formed now. The playing event at St Chad's RC Cathedral in Birmingham (which had to be missed because of the death of Pope Francis) will be included in the programme as well as adding another Birmingham organ, possibly that of St Mary's, Moseley, where the substantial rebuild of the organ is almost complete. There is also a suggestion of a day visiting two Oxford Colleges. Please let us have your thoughts and suggestions.

RECENT EVENTS

A good number of members came to St Michael's Church, Boldmere on March 29th to experience a very interesting session with Nigel de Gaunt-Allcoat, the Diocesan Organ Advisor. His experience as an educator was very evident and with the help of willing volunteers he gave us several useful ideas on how to grow our improvising skills. Since then, many of us will have heard the quiet voice of Nigel urging us on as we embark on those 'fill-in moments' in the liturgy.



Nigel de Gaunt-Allcoat

On April 26th the visit to Birmingham's St Chad's Cathedral had to be rearranged, so in addition to the promised impressive Hill, Norman & Beard neo-Baroque instrument at Carrs Lane Centre, equally impressive emergency moves by Paul Hodgetts and member Angela Sones secured a visit to St Alban's in Coneybere Street, where Angela has recently celebrated the completion of her first year as Director of Music.

A small group attended and enjoyed the contrast between these two instruments and their surroundings. The Carrs Lane Centre is about to undergo a huge transformation, most probably into office accommodation along with other parts of the area around Moor Street Station and the new HS2 infrastructure. Will the organ survive?



Carrs Lane

St Alban's Church organ is not under threat and is perfectly suited to its environment and acoustic. You can visit a recital on it by David Briggs on 26th July (see the last pages for details).

Here is DoM Angela at St Alban's



A worrying aspect of the day was the small (though enthusiastic) turn out. Two interesting places within easy reach of us, whose organists had gone to some trouble to welcome us at short notice (Just saying!.... I'm just as guilty, playing for a wedding elsewhere at the time!)

May 17th was our 'Play the Organ' day again. Both young and old this time visited St John's Hospice in Lichfield to work with Liam Condon and although there were no morning visitors at St Peter's Wolverhampton, 8 came in the afternoon to work with Louis Stockton (the new Director of Music at the church). Both venues were ideal for purpose and there was a considerable buzz at both of them.



Wolverhampton 2025

Our youngest LDOA member, Cathedral Chorister Laurie Hill, aged 12, was particularly impressive in Lichfield. Thanks go to Wolverhampton Music Service for their sponsorship of the event.



Lichfield 2024

ANY HELP PLEASE in discovering suitable practice venues!!!?

Liam Condon suggested in the last newsletter that we should try to arrange for places to allow occasions for budding organists who might use a church for organ practice. We are still working on this and St Chad's Lichfield has been suggested as a place where permission might be given for people to drop in and practise the organ.

Wolverhampton Music Service in Graiseley now has a 2-manual Makin organ in their keyboard rooms and is hoping to plan some organ tuition there on the same basis as tuition on other instruments.

Our relief organists list still only has two members. Could others sign up, please? We do get approached to suggest relief organists and were able to help out St Michael's Boldmere.

So far we have

Stephen Carleston at carleston108@gmail.com

Ian Boddington: 01543 268504.

Please would you let us know about church organ bench vacancies in your area.

Congratulations to Coventry Cathedral Deputy Director of Music Luke Fitzgerald, who welcomed us on our visit in January. He has been appointed Director of Music at Pembroke College, Cambridge.

Congratulations to Gary Cole, the head of Regent Records, who has not only recognised all the photos of organ consoles we have produced on these pages (the last one was Blackburn Cathedral) but was awarded the prestigious medal of the Royal College of Organists at a conferment ceremony at Southwark Cathedral on 8 March. This was '*in recognition of distinguished achievement in organ and choral recording*', the

first time the RCO Medal has been awarded to a recording producer.

Gary is one of the organists at St Bartholomew's, Penn and a former Director of Music at St Peter's Wolverhampton. He is renowned for the high standard of musicianship he brings to his recordings of choral and organ music, which are frequent award winners.

We wish to offer Gary an Honorary membership of LDOA and we are delighted that he is also willing to become a member of our committee.



The other 2025 medal honorands on the occasion were: Ms Sofi Jeannin 'in recognition of distinguished achievement in choral directing'; and Dr Cecilia McDowall 'in recognition of distinguished achievement in organ and choral composition'.

Three Celebrity Recitals

James Lancelot, for many years organist of Durham Cathedral, will be playing at Birmingham Cathedral on **Friday 20 June at 1:10 pm**

Ian Tracey of Liverpool Cathedral will be delivering the opening recital at St Michael's Tettenhall WV6 9AJ on **Sunday June 22nd at 4:00 pm**. Admission £10 at the door or via Peter on pmorrisorganist@gmail.com. The moveable console will be fully visible at the front of the nave.

David Briggs who is Artist-in-Residence at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City returns to his roots to give a recital on **Saturday July 26th at 7:30 pm**. He was organist at the Church of St Alban the Martyr Conybere Street B12 0YH from 1979 to 1981. Tickets £20, including refreshments. Unsold tickets will be available for purchase at the door on the night.

NEWS FROM NICHOLSON'S

Repair of rainwater damage at Belmont Abbey, Herefordshire is being carried out.

For the exciting new organ at Gloucester Cathedral the pipework is largely complete and the chests are well underway.

They are preparing for the second phase of installation in the historical reconstruction at Manchester Town Hall:

in June/July and waiting for definite dates for the next phase of work at Leeds Town Hall.

RECENT ORGAN RECITAL REVIEWS

Thanks to David Perry for another review

Monday 12 May 2025
Town Hall, Birmingham
Thomas Trotter 866th

As two weeks previously, the organ had an annoying, quiet cipher, which should have been fixed by this performance!

The recital began with the *Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C*, whose Toccata contains the dreaded pedal solo, which demonstrated some very nifty footwork, one foot going behind another unexpectedly, with impeccable and splash-free results – despite Thomas making it more difficult by introducing echo effects in the introductory manual passages and in the pedal solo. Holding on to the pedal coupler throughout probably helped his balance!

The gorgeous Adagio was made a lot more florid than in my Novello copy, with lots of tasteful, additional ornamentation, and a daring tremulant on the final link passage to the jolly Fugue.

The recital, he said, had a Summer theme, and when he had devised similar events in previous years, it was usually performed in a tropical rainstorm. “What a lovely day it is today” The recital’s final piece was enhanced by a flash of lightning!

The first summery piece was Holst’s *The Dargason*, from his suite written for the school orchestra at St Paul’s Girls’ School, Hammersmith. Holst was an organist, but he didn’t write any organ music, so this is an arrangement of the orchestral item. A clever and fiendish piece, superimposing the eponymous theme with Greensleeves, frequently swapping them between hands and feet.



Leroy Anderson wrote *The Last Rose of Summer* (from his Irish Suite), although his wistful and nostalgic setting of the tune and the Irish poem were not put together originally.

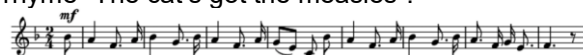


Slightly older contemporary, Eric Coates’ *At the Dance* (from his *Summer Days* suite) – a very fast waltz - completed the seasonal selection. He was the British equivalent of Anderson, and a very successful writer of light music from the 1920s onwards.

Czech composer Rudolf Friml (who studied under Dvorak, emigrated to America, and is better known for his operettas like *The Vagabond King* and *Rose-Marie*) had another slot in this year’s organ series, with his 1924 *Chinese Suite*. As Composer-in-Residence at a Chinese organ museum, Thomas is going to play this to the Chinese audience later this year! Originally for piano, the three movements are based on the pentatonic scale (ie the black notes on the keyboard).

The first movement, *Po-Ling & Ming-Toy*, is cheerful, depicting when the two characters first meet; the second is *A Chinese Love Song*, and the third, *Cometh as a Bride* turns the pentatonic scale into glorious fanfares.

A commission last year by Thaxted Parish Church from Iain Farrington, *Raggle Taggle Tunes*, concluded the recital. In the 1920-30s, Gustav Holst used to play the Thaxted organ, which has survived almost entirely in its 1820 condition. A tribute to Holst’s passion for collecting folk tunes, it has three movements: *Step-Up* (“Raggle Taggle Gypsies”), *Lazarus Blues* (“Dives and Lazarus” as also used by Vaughan Williams), and *Whirligig Jig* (“The Keel Row”). I recognised the latter as a nursery rhyme “The cat’s got the measles”!



The cat’s got the measles, the measles, the measles,
The cat’s got the measles, whatever shall we do?
We’ll send for the doctor, the doctor, the doctor,
We’ll send for the doctor, and he’ll know what to do!

LDOA member **Angela Sones** has been on an amazing recital tour of several of the finest instruments this year. Covering much of the country, including Newcastle, Bristol, Chester, Melton Mowbray, Bridlington, Derby, Sutton Coldfield, Worksop, Burton, King’s Lynn, Beverley, Chesterfield, Bangor, Leeds, Ludlow, Lichfield, London, Bradford, Tewkesbury, Birmingham, Warwick, Whitchurch and Wolverhampton

FORTHCOMING ORGAN RECITALS

Emmanuel Church, Wylde Green Fridays 1.00

6 June Angela Sones (LDOA)
4 July Tony Pinel (St Chad’s Shrewsbury)

St Chad’s Shrewsbury Fridays 12.30

30 May Richard Walker (St Chad’s)
4 July Godfrey Leung
22 August Allan Walker (Malvern)
5 September James Kellas (Whitchurch)
12 September Jonathan Hope (Gloucester Cathedral)

St Chad’s Cathedral Birmingham Thursdays 1.15

5 June Paolo Oreni (Italy)
3 July Paul Carr
7 August David Saint
14 August Paul Carr
21 August Edmund Aldhouse (Ely Cathedral)
28 August Victoria Ulriksen (Oslo / Leipzig)
4 September Nicholas Freestone (Worcester Cathedral)

Birmingham Town Hall Mondays 1.00

2 June (TH) Thomas Trotter
3 June (SH) CBSO Saint-Saens 3 6.00
16 June (TH) Thomas Trotter

Holy Trinity Wordsley Sundays 3.00

1 June Paul Carr
6 July Paul Carr
3 August Paul Carr

Shrewsbury Abbey Saturday 12.00

5 July Stefan Donner

2 August Alexander Flower (Southwark RC Cath)
6 September Tim Collins (Lillehammer, Norway)

Lichfield Cathedral Tuesdays 7.30

17 June (7.30) Andrew Lumsden (former Lichfield)
14 July (11.00) Stephen Disley (London)
12 August (11.30) Angela Sones (LDOA)
19 August (11.30) Charles Wooler (Newcastle)
26 August (11.30) Laurence Caldecote (Northampton)
23 September (7.30) Peter King

Birmingham Cathedral Friday 1.10

20 June James Lancelot

St Modwen's Burton on Trent Wednesdays 12.30

4 June John Keys (Nottingham)
11 June Martyn Rawles (Lichfield + LDOA President)
2 July Angela Sones (St Alban's B'ham +LDOA)
9 July Richard Syner (Burton)
16 July Karen Thompson (Burton & LDOA)
23 July Stephen Carleston (Rugeley (& LDOA)
30 July David Butterworth (Nottingham)

Broadway URC Church, Walsall Saturdays 11.15

7 June Timothy Stewart (RBC)
5 July Nicholas Miller (St John's Hyde Park)
2 August Godfrey Yeung (RBC)
6 September Keith Hearnshaw (Concert Organist)

Victoria Hall Hanley Saturdays 12.00

19 July Jan Liebermann (Frankfurt)
16 August Charles Francis (USA)

St Michael's Tettenhall, Wolverhampton Sunday 4.00

22 June Ian Tracey (Liverpool Cathedral)

Opening Recital on the Michael Farley rebuild

St Bartholomew's Penn, Wolverhampton Saturday 7.30

6th September Paul Carr

Opening Recital on the restored organ

St Michael's Collegiate Church Tettenhall

presents



**Opening recital on the newly
restored church organ by**

**Ian Tracey
(Liverpool Cathedral)**

Sunday June 22nd 4.00 pm

Admission £10 at the door

St Alban's Church
Conybere Street, Birmingham B12 OXB

GALA ORGAN CONCERT
and reception with
David Briggs



JULY | 26 | 7:30 PM

Tickets £20 available via Eventbrite,
domsaintalban@hotmail.com and at the door



WSTO
WOLVERHAMPTON
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

**Saturday
21st June 2025
7.30pm**
Conductor: Peter Morris
Leader: Ros Rayner

Arnold
Cornish Dances

Elgar
Introduction & Allegro
for Strings

Britten
The Young Person's Guide
to the Orchestra

Freckleton
Symphony No 2

Wolverhampton Grammar School
Compton Road, Wolverhampton, WV3 9RB

Tickets: £12 Available on the door or at
www.ticketsource.co.uk/wolverhamptonsymphonyorchestra
All students in full time education enter free

  @wolverhamptonsymphonyorchestra

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Isabel Corkley
Committee Member Gary Cole

The next newsletter is planned for September, with a deadline for submission of items for inclusion of 15/9/25, to Peter Morris by e-mail as above, or by mail to 8a Newbridge Crescent, Wolverhampton WV6 0LN.

Any news items, or reviews, posters and news of events would be gratefully received.