

NORTH HAMPSHIRE  
ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION  
[www.nhoa.org.uk](http://www.nhoa.org.uk)

Newsletter 202 December 2020



Proteas at Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens photographed by Mike Clift: see the article by him starting on page 7

## PROGRAMME

**Saturday, 30th January, 2021:**  
Annual General Meeting and presentation by the President of NHOA  
*see notice on page 6 below*  
**Online at 7pm.**

For further plans see page 2.

## Programme for 2021

Like every other arts organisation in the country, NHOA is finding it extremely difficult to plan its programme.

The idea is to move all the events that were originally planned for April – November 2020 to the equivalent dates in 2021. This would mean that we would hope to go to Woodford in March/April, the RCM later in April, the Crowthorne area in May, Maidenhead in June, and, of course, East Yorkshire in August\*.

It is also hoped to arrange an Organ Plus picnic visit in July, another visit in September and two more events of a social nature in October and November.

However, **nothing** can be guaranteed at present, and we shall need to wait until at least the New Year before we can hope to begin consolidating our plans. We have at least three possible online events in reserve, but it really is a question of **watch this space** (and the website, and your e-mail inbox) to find out what will be happening.

You can be assured that your Committee will do its best to put together an inspiring programme for you, and to let you know as soon as possible once dates are firmly in the diary.

\*Jeff Lloyd would be glad to know how many people would be interested in the East Yorkshire visit. Please contact him on [jeffreyllloyd@talktalk.net](mailto:jeffreyllloyd@talktalk.net).



Custom Organ console face mask  
was \$40.00 for Sept delivery  
while supplies last by Dr. Carol Williams

**Copy Date for next Newsletter** Please send any material for Newsletter 203 to the Secretary not later than **15th January 2021.**

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### North Hampshire Organists' Association

Registered charity, no. 275207

affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists

**President:** Malcolm Archer FRCO

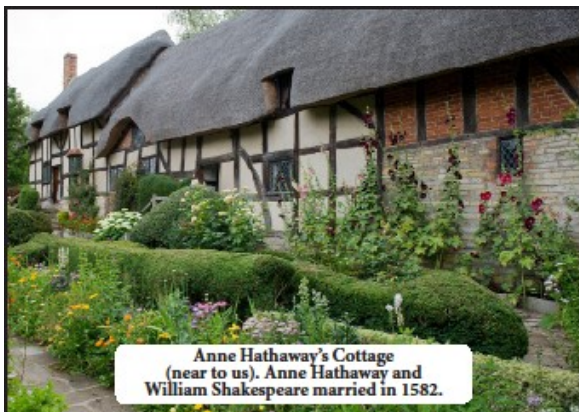
**Chairman:** Geoff Willis, 8 Kenmore Close, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hants GU52 6JJ; telephone 01252 815802  
email [geof.willis@btopenworld.com](mailto:geof.willis@btopenworld.com)

**Secretary:** Gillian Lloyd, 104 The Mount, Guildford GU2 4JB; telephone 01483 570586;  
email [nhoa.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:nhoa.secretary@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Jeff Lloyd, 104 The Mount, Guildford GU2 4JB; telephone 01483 570586;  
email [nhoa.treasurer2@gmail.com](mailto:nhoa.treasurer2@gmail.com)

## News of members and friends

John Morris has been in touch to let us know that he and Lisa will, from 30th November, be living at 16, Cottage Lane, Shotton, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9HH (other contact details unchanged). John and Lisa have strong connections with Stratford, and they've sent some pictures of their new surroundings:



Unfortunately James West's email address has been misspelt on the existing members' list. The correct address is [gojazzwest@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gojazzwest@yahoo.co.uk). Will you please alter your copies of the list.

Back at the beginning of October, Bob Batchelor sent news of the York and District OA's online concert to celebrate Francis Jackson's 103rd (!) birthday. Apologies to Bob from your Secretary, who neglected to pass this on in an e-mail: however, the YouTube link to the concert is still active, so here it is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4S-Rh8pYoE>. We send our congratulations to Dr. Jackson on reaching such an impressive milestone.

Members have not been idle during lockdown and subsequent restrictions. In addition to the church duties that many of us have managed to continue to fulfil, in one way or another, some have also been able to give concerts. Frances Whewell has written about one in which John Mansfield played a leading part: young member Jozef Gaszka has also given at least one recital. *See articles below.*



## The North Hampshire Organist



We are still looking for contributions to our annual publication, The North Hampshire Organist, copies of which are due to be available at the same time as our virtual Annual General Meeting on 30 January. So please get writing: all contributions welcome. Needn't be serious!

If you somehow didn't get your copy of the first issue (now a collector's piece!) please let me know by email at [j.mansfield@alumni.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:j.mansfield@alumni.manchester.ac.uk) and one will be coming your way as quickly as I can send it.

## News round-up

Astonishingly, we have managed two events since our last Newsletter. First, on 19th September, Gerald Marlow arranged for a small group to visit churches in Froxfield, Froxfield Green and Steep. The weather was kind, the churches were very welcoming, Gerald's arrangements flowed seamlessly and all in all this proved a very special and enjoyable occasion. The organ at High Cross, Froxfield (specification available at <https://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=N18669>) was originally by Holdich, with a rebuild by Osmond. Although rather limited in the pedal department (one Bourdon rank, just 25 pedals, flat and parallel), it made up for it with an excellent oboe and 8' and 4' flutes on the Great. Gerald 'opened' it for us with Stanley's Trumpet Voluntary: other members explored it with pieces by Whitlock, Reeger, Gárdonyi, Göttsche and Coleman.



*Gerald at High Cross*

Moving on to St. Peter, Froxfield Green, we encountered an original Osmond, ex Downton Methodist Church in Wiltshire, which had been rebuilt by Bishop and White in 1995 before being moved to its current location in 2017 by Andrew Cooper. One of Osmond's last tracker instruments (now with electric action), it has just one manual of 4 stops (8' Open Diapason, 8' Salicional, which shares its bass with the 8' Stopped Diapason, 4' Gemshorn) and no pedals, but it is clearly much appreciated in its new home, where it is used for the single monthly service.



*St. Peter, Froxfield Green*

Gerald, who plays for that service, introduced the organ to us with Stanley's Voluntary in E minor; others then explored it with an assortment of Stanley and Wesley voluntaries, and J.F.C. [not K.F.C.] Bach's variations on 'Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman', aka 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star', played by John Mansfield.

Repairing to All Saints, Steep, we enjoyed a leisurely picnic lunch in the churchyard, admiring the view over the South Downs, and met up with John Radford, who had taken part in a similar visit by the Portsmouth Association, also hosted by the indefatigable Gerald, earlier that day. The instrument at Steep had fallen into a bad state of repair, so Paul Hale was asked to report on it. He and the church concluded that the organ, a Thomas Jones of 1891 which had gone through many subsequent rebuilds, was so much part of church and community life in the village that there was no option but to restore it. The work was carried out by Andrew Cooper; the current specification is as follows:

Swell (enclosed): 8' Geigen, 8' Stopped Diapason, 4' Gemshorn, 2-rank Mixture (19, 22), 8' Trumpet:  
Great: 8' Open Diapason, 8' Dulciana, 8' Rohr Flute, 4' Principal, 2' Fifteenth:  
Pedal: 16' Bourdon, 8' Bass Flute (ext.)



*Ian at Steep*

Gerald gave us the Bridge 'Adagio', which perfectly demonstrated the colours of the organ. Frances Whewell took advantage of Gerald's registration suggestions and help to play the same piece, before Ian Wickens played for us the Te Deum from Bédard's '6 Paraphrases grégoriennes'. Jeff and Gillian Lloyd and John Mansfield explored a range of possibilities with music by Flor Peeters, JSB and Karg-Elert, and John Radford saw us on our way with a hymn. Our thanks again to Gerald for arranging such a special day. It's probably fair to say that we hadn't realised how much our visits mean to us until they were taken away; which meant that this one was all the more valued.



*'The troops' at Steep*

NHOA on Zoom? Well – yes! On the evening of Saturday, 24th October we were dragged screaming into the 21st century in the highly-entertaining company of Dr Barry Rose (also making his public début on this platform) who gave us a musically-illustrated account of his life as organist and choir-master. And what a life it has been (so far...)! A full transcript of the evening will appear in our annual publication ‘The North Hampshire Organist’, so no spoilers here; but it is worth recording that we would never have known that this was the first time that Barry had given a talk in this way. He managed his resources with consummate skill (it must be all those years of sorting out complicated regis-

trations on large organs!), and the evening was just slightly marred by a Zoom-related problem with sound quality due to the number of people listening in. Our Chairman Geoff has looked into this, and we hope that it will no longer be an issue at the AGM and subsequent online events (*of which there could be a number – see page 2 above*). Our thanks to Barry for a most enjoyable evening; and it should be noted that, in the spirit of musicians supporting other musicians at this difficult time, he generously made over his fee to Guildford Cathedral Choir Association, who have established a fund to support a girl chorister at the Cathedral (which is, of course, one of Barry’s old stamping-grounds).

## Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the North Hampshire Organists’ Association will be held **online** at **7pm** on Saturday, 30th January, 2021 (***please note unusual time and format!***). Items for the agenda should be notified to the Secretary not later than 23rd January. Jane Lacey, Gillian Lloyd and Ian Harrison all come to the end of their terms of office on 30th January. Jane feels that the time has come to stand down from the Committee, at least for a while. We are hugely grateful to her for her that she has contributed, on and off the Committee, over many years, and, once ‘normal service is resumed’, look forward to seeing her and Stephen at visits and other events. Gillian and Ian have expressed willingness to serve for a further term of two years if re-elected. Jane Jacobs, Frances Whewell, Jeff Lloyd, John Mansfield and Derek Stebbing all have a further year to serve. Members will find a form enclosed with this Newsletter to enable them to nominate any other member of the Association (including themselves!) who has agreed to serve if elected as a Committee member. This form also contains other necessary re-

turns, so, for everyone’s convenience, please could you all fill it in as required and post it (not forgetting to enclose your **subscription**, which remains **unchanged** for 2021) in time to reach Jeff Lloyd by 31st December. Please will you also note any changes to your Members’ List entry clearly on your return slip (i.e., changes to your address, including postcode and e-mail, telephone/fax/mobile number, membership status and availability to teach and/or deputise). The meeting will be followed by a presentation from our President, Malcolm Archer, who will take us on a virtual tour of his new home, a converted church, talking about and demonstrating a number of instruments with which he shares it, including a Vincent Woodstock organ, and one by Peter Collins which used to belong to Sir Charles Mackerras. **Please put the date in your new diary!** This promises to be a fascinating event: and you won’t have to travel miles on a chilly January day to take part in it. The Zoom link will be e-mailed to you nearer the time.

## From the archives

### Memories of Vienna

Visits abroad by organists' associations are now commonplace, but I believe that NHOA was one of the first organists' associations to hold regular visits overseas, starting with the Netherlands in 1981. Be that as it may, my own experience of these delightful trips was in 1995 when my wife Gwen and I joined eight other members of NHOA in the visit to Vienna. To say that the visit was memorable is an understatement. Something quite extraordinary occurred every day, but there is only space here to mention a few.

It was a very good time for an organ-related visit. The second Vatican Council had decreed that Mass should be celebrated round a central altar rather than at a high altar at the east end of a church. The effect, in Vienna at least, was to bring the congregation much closer to the central area of the church and away from the organ, which was traditionally at the west end. So many of the churches we visited had brand new organs in the middle of the church as well as the old organ at the west end.

A case in point was the Augustinerkirche, which had been adopted by the Imperial Royal Family as the Court Church. It had a splendid 1976 Rieger organ in the huge west gallery and a 24-stop "Bach" choir organ erected in an alcove in the nave in 1984 by the Reil brothers to mark the tercentenary of Bach's birth. Our plan was to attend Sunday Mass at this church. We had been advised to arrive early because it was likely to be full, so we got there a full hour beforehand. We were therefore in time for the rehearsal of the orchestra and the choir and soloists because Mass was to be celebrated to the music of Mozart – his Coronation Mass, I seem to remember. To experience that music in that setting was unforgettable. Oh, and the final voluntary was the Liszt Fantasia on B-A-C-H. (On the following day we had a chance to play both organs.)



*Augustinerkirche*

In the middle ages there were two major threats to Vienna: the plague and the Turks. Some of the stonework of the old Dominican Church (the Domenikanerkirche) was taken to build up the fortifications against the invading Turks. But that was a long while ago and the present church is fortunate in having fabulous acoustics and a splendid Rieger organ from 1895 in the west gallery.



*Domenikanerkirche*

The organist seemed to me to be a little strange. He kept his mackintosh on for our entire visit. He gave us a wonderful improvisation on a much smaller organ in the chancel before went into the gallery. Now I had been learning Max Reger's Benedictus, op. 59 no.9 and decided to play it; but the stop tabs were so confusing (and similar-looking) that I asked the organist if he

would be good enough to choose the stops for me. He readily agreed. When I had finished he picked up my copy and said "I think that this is my edition": it turned out that he was none other than Professor Hans Haselböck, the well-know international organist and adjudicator. So he signed my copy for me. When I told Anne Marsden Thomas this story she was amazed at my audacity! "You got Hans Haselböck to pull out the stops for you?" But I honestly didn't know who he was.

In every one of these visits there is something that goes slightly awry: in fact, if everything goes perfectly, I think that we have not tried hard enough. Unfortunately the organist at the Fransiskanerkirche did not show up (always a bad sign) but this was a very special organ, dating from 1642. We all went into the church but strange to say there was no sign of an organ anywhere. After a while a monk appeared and beckoned to me and took me into a chapel behind the high altar and there, in all its glory was the 1642 organ. One of the things we liked to do in those days was to make a recording of every organ (Jeff Lloyd bringing his recording gear with him as well as his camera) but when the monk saw him unpacking his gear he was horrified and said "No photographs!" I tried to explain in German that, first of all, we had come here with the express in-

tention of recording all the organs we played (and had permission to do so) and, in any event, Jeff's kit was to make a sound record, not a photograph. This seemed to mollify him, and he whispered to me, "This is a very holy place for us" and I tried to tell him that we respected that. Later he relented and said "One photo!" and John Dixon took out his ciné camera and carefully scanned every inch of the organ. Finally some of the others found us and started to enter the chapel. The monk nearly had a fit at seeing females in his chapel – I don't know what he thought they might do – and that was the end of the visit.

Much earlier, on our first full day, which was a Saturday in late April, we had decided to visit the Vienna woods and have supper at a local Heurige (or wine cellar) in that region. It was all worked out: we were to take a tram 38 to the (then) terminus and then a bus. Trams frequently had two coaches joined together like a train, and it so happened that Gwen and I were in one coach and the rest of the party in the other. When we all had alighted John Dixon (who was the leader of the group) came and told me that their part of the group had met a local who, hearing them speak English, asked if he could join in, as he was trying to improve his knowledge of the language. They of course agreed, and told him their business. He recommended a different bus from the one we had thought of catching and asked which Heurige they had planned to visit. Nothing had been



*The 1642 organ of the Fransiskanerkirche*

booked, and he told them that he could recommend one. He seemed quite respectable, and so John was inclined to follow his advice. When I met this man (who was with his wife and his sister) he was smartly dressed and seemed genuine. So we got on the bus he recommended. I sat next to his wife (to improve my German) and she commented on the clear air of the Vienna woods compared with that in the Viennese streets, and then said to me, "My husband is a judge. He is the President of the Court of Appeal." So we knew we were in good company!

When we arrived at his recommended Heurige it was unfortunately full, but they told us that they would have places for us in half an hour or so, so we ordered a few bottles of wine and sat around the tables outside in the dark. Then the band came out (so far as I remember there was a violin, clarinet, accordion and double bass) and the leader said to the judge's wife, "What shall we play for you, madam" and once they started she got up, put her arm round my shoulder and started singing a love song – it turned out that she was a well-known singing teacher, and what a voice! I seem to remember being told that the musicians were from Slovakia and came across to Vienna just for the tips. Eventually we were let in for our supper, with more music and chat. It was an evening to remember.

*John Mansfield*



Mike Clift writes:

As one of the more elderly members of NHOA, occasionally I look back over some of the incredible visits that have been organized over the years. My recollections are of both sights and sounds from these visits

On my first visit, when I sat at the console of the Lulworth Castle Chapel. It was not that it had not just one manual, but it was longer than any I had previously seen. It went down to GG, but then it was built by Richard Seede in 1785.



Perhaps the first sight of the organ in The Old Mutual Hall, Pretoria, S A is one to savour. That was built by Rieger in 1955, but for sheer sound that must go to the Cavaille-Coll organ at St Ouen at Rouen. We were standing at the far end of the nave, when Marie-Andree Morrissey-Balier certainly produced some brilliant sound.

I inevitably recall our Hamburg visit for more contrasts. We spent some days hearing and seeing the organs built by Arp Schnitger.

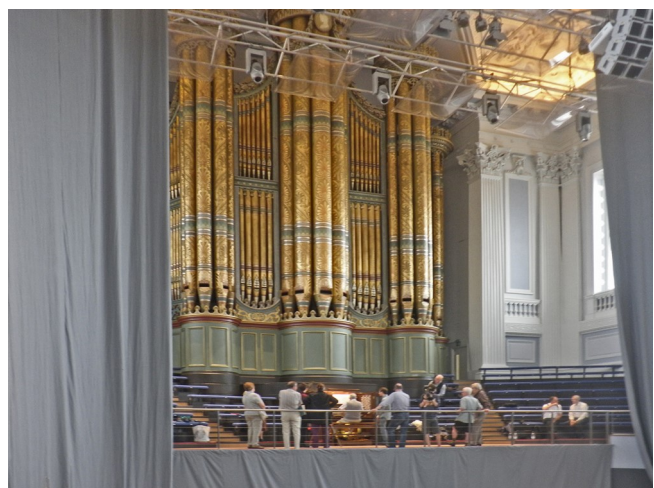


One that I recall was the organ of St Peter and Paul at Cappel, built in 1680. As a great contrast, our visit to St Michael's in Hamburg a few days later. It was the sound produced by Christoff

Schoener at the five manual Klais Console there. This linked together three separate organs in the body of that Church. The fine Bach organ there is not part of that sound.

One must not forget our South African visit. I was then able to visit the incredible Botanic Garden on Table Mountain and to see their collection of Proteas (*picture on the front cover*).

Another visit that J M arranged took us to St Paul's Cathedral. Here we met the late John Scott after Choral Evensong. Some of us were by the console in the gallery when he played Gigout's Grand Choeur Dialogué. Here he contrasted the reeds over the west door with the main organ. He knew how to make those distant reeds fit into that piece.



One must not forget our Birmingham visit especially when Bill Cartwright played some fiendish Karg-Elert.

Thanks to all who provided these memories.

## A real positive for the organ

One of the unexpected plus points of the Covid pandemic is the significant increase in organ recitals and concerts available on the internet - on Youtube in particular. You can listen at no cost although the players welcome donations of course. Three organists in particular have caught my attention and between them they have very different styles and produce something new nearly every week – a real positive in these difficult times!

First, back in March, I found a Youtube channel called “Beauty in Sound” set up by **Richard McVeigh** who was Assistant Organist at Winchester Cathedral some years ago.

He plays mostly on his 3 manual Viscount / Hauptwerk setup in his house and now has attracted a big online following. He uses some great playing aids: a “Launchpad” tablet for preset registrations, a handy foot switch to advance the stepper and he recently demonstrated a tablet screen displaying the score which ‘turned’ pages from a flick of his eyes!

Richard has also mastered the art of video presentation with a composite screen showing him at the console, his pedalling in the lower corner and often a still picture of the organ he is playing: you really are in the room with him. He talks enthusiastically about the programme items which are largely mainstream organ repertoire. He has some seriously big instruments that sound very impressive in his capable hands (and feet!). These include the Cavaille-Coll in St. Etienne Abbey, Caen; Marcussen in St Laurenskirk, Rotterdam and the Eisenbarth organ from Friesach, Austria which we have in our new schools portable organ!



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkdRXZZDmLJM6XBnUploog>

He has introduced a weekly live “Virtual Church” event on a Sunday afternoon where he plays hymn requests for two to three hours! It is very popular

(you get all the verses!) - there are frequently more than 250 people watching from all over the world, many from America.



My second choice is a young Dutch organist, **Gert van Hoef**. He plays some very interesting pipe organs in western parts of the Netherlands. The consoles are intriguing - many requiring the assistance of his wife as registrant to manage the stops well to the left and right and sometimes above the manuals! He also broadcasts on his house Hauptwerk instrument with a varied repertoire. His programmes usually include known works as well as Gert’s own improvisations and arrangements. <https://www.youtube.com/user/gertrw>

It seems Gert’s father is the cameraman and he understands what viewers want to see: you feel you are right next to the organist and can nearly read his score. He has built a large online following around the world - you can see this from the comments in the live text panel during his recitals.

To bring their audiences closer to them, both of these organists have broadcast a session with their respective wives, answering questions written in by viewers asking about their musical and domestic lives. They are all very charming and personable and I’m sure you would be happy to invite them round for tea!

Lastly, and I think my favourite of these discoveries, is **Jonathan Scott**. He has incredible technical skill making console management appear so simple and effortless. He has developed a brand with his just as skillful pianist brother Tom. Tom occasionally plays duets with his brother and also manages the videoing. Jonathan has broadcast on some great instru-

ments around his home area of Manchester including Chesterfield and Rochdale Parish Churches, the Albion URC as well as Bridgewater Hall and recently in France and Germany. You might have seen him play a spectacular programme on the Royal Albert Hall organ in this year's Covid-adapted Proms.



He has made a speciality of arranging well known orchestral works for the organ, both playing them and publishing the scores for sale on his website. I

have bought one or two but was disappointed they didn't come with the hands and feet to play like the videos! <https://www.youtube.com/user/scottbrothersduo>

These young players are really making the most of this opportunity to popularise the organ. I hope you enjoy dipping into their videos. If you have discovered other interesting players or performances, please let us know!

*Geoff Willis*

## ***Schools Project, November 2020***

By now, you will probably have read about our successful application to the IAO for a grant towards the cost of the portable digital organ. They have made a generous grant of £1000 toward the materials. We originally made the application in March but due to the uncertainties on the effect of COVID on schools, the decision was understandably deferred. However, we were put in touch with the Royal College of Organists who also have ambitions to put organs in state schools. Martin Barnes and I had a very engaging and productive video call with Sir Andrew Parmley, CEO and Chris Morris, Trustee of the RCO. They were very enthusiastic about our project and would like to attend our first school demonstration and workshop. All we need is Covid situation to allow that to happen!

Meantime ...

There is a school of thought that new things are likely to have a few gremlins or need a bit of adaptation when put into real use. As you know, we have not yet had a public outing with the portable digital organ but we have made preparations for an on-line demonstration for members (also postponed due to recent restrictions) and that highlighted some things that needed attention. The physical design of the organ was focused on portability and built to be modular. However, as it will be transported, assembled and taken apart on many occasions, everything must also be very robust.

We transported and assembled the organ in Rob Goldfinch's music room but for some reason the pedalboard refused to speak. While checking the connection and various settings, I inadvertently knelt on the cable which yanked off the connector in the pedalboard. Clearly, this was not robust enough! The connector was a 'micro USB' and with hindsight too flimsy for repeated use. Instead of just replacing it, a thought occurred: could we do without the cable? With a little research and development, the pedalboard now sends its note information over Bluetooth (the wireless system that's in our phones). The pedalboard still needs a 9 volt supply but that is just like a simple phone charger.



*The techy bits under the pedals*

Another uninvited discovery was that with rapid finger work on the manuals, cyphers could occur. Various possible causes came to mind (actually *minds* - it included my brother, Adrian, who helped me design the electronic keyboard scanner). We had already dealt with the risk of electrical noise which might interfere with low voltage signals in the keyboards. We thought the most likely cause was some short, rapid bouncing of the spongy material under each key. That is the 'switch' that detects when a key has been pressed. The computer program we wrote handles any bouncing but was it working as intended? Testing a computer program means checking it can handle unexpected situations and that is much harder than checking what you expect should happen! In a quiet room and many cups of tea later, the bit of naughtiness was discovered. It was nothing to do with bouncing keys! The keyboard scanner was rushing to send each note message to the computer without waiting for the previous one to finish. With fast playing, occasionally a "note off" message would be ignored and, as you can imagine, that means a cypher! A simple change to the timing of the note messages has silenced this gremlin!

But the last weeks haven't all been detective work. Rob G has downloaded four organs onto the computer. They are all very different in style,

in size and, in particular, in the acoustic of the building where they are located.

Hauptwerk has a very extensive set of playing aids so now for some fun setting up all the pistons and controls on those organs. We made sure to build in a "Full Flush" piston on the console (that's General Cancel to traditionalists) which is so useful if you are not familiar with the different stop jamb layouts of each organ.



*The organ has 36 thumb pistons – all programmable for anything an organist can imagine!*

*Geoff Willis*

## ***The NHOA Website***



Do visit our website at

[www.nhoa.org.uk/](http://www.nhoa.org.uk/)

it's still very much active despite the social distancing. But beware that a mouse has escaped from the organ loft and is taking refuge within the website somewhere. If you find the mouse please let Derek know where he is by emailing him on [d.stebbing@nhoa.org.uk](mailto:d.stebbing@nhoa.org.uk) so that he can set him free in the woods. There are no prizes but the first person to find him will be congratulated in the next edition of the Newsletter.

These days, while we are unable to visit organs, every month the page will include a new virtual event with performances involving the organ. You may have seen previous virtual recitals but keep watching the page for new virtual events. November's virtual recitals are great performances at the Town Hall. All previous month's virtual recitals can still be viewed on the Events page. We can't yet tell whether future planned visits can take place so please keep an eye on the Programme page for updates.

The Photo Gallery page has photos of recent visits and there is always room for more photographs of other NHOA events, recent and past. If you have any you would like to share on the site (any format but should be at least 640 pixels on the longest side), please email them to Derek at the address which appears on the foot of every page — just click on Derek's name to bring up an email page.

If they are too big to email please send a message to let him know so that an alternative means of sending can be arranged.

## Farnham Chamber Music Festival

The catastrophe of Covid 19 closed churches and concert halls in March this year. John Mansfield and Geoff Willis had had a shared organ recital in the Spire Church just before the lock down started. As public concerts resumed seven months later, John and Geoff met there again for another performance, but the dynamics were very different, as you will hear.



Elizabeth Cooney, the international violinist who lives in Farnham, conceived the idea of a four concert Chamber Music Festival in October to celebrate the return of live music. This one at the Spire Church was the last of the four.

Masked, and bearing garden chairs, the sizeable audience flocked into the foyer of the Spire church. All our names were on a seating plan. Behind us in the queue was David Bednall, the composer and organist. We were in good company.

In the pewless nave we were shown where to place our chairs, well spaced out. Paul and I were ushered to the front, and to our delight, very near the music stand set up for the solo violinist.

In her native Cork, Elizabeth learnt violin through the Suzuki method, where children are immersed in music from a very early age. They learn to play their instrument before they learn music notation, just as children talk before they can read. Perhaps this accounted for Elizabeth's total absorption in the music.

The Spire is John's home church, and he plays the Henry Jones organ from 1906 which is set at the back of a raised and spacious platform. Elizabeth performed right at the front. This was

carrying 'social distancing' to extremes, and made communication between the soloists very difficult.

As page turner, (to both musicians), Geoff soon realised that he must assume an extra role. Geoff became the go-between, counting out the beats very quietly beside John, and facing Elizabeth so that she could turn and see 'the conductor' at crucial moments. This subtle technique, honed over several rehearsals, and hidden from the audience on the day, was a great success. We only once overheard a murmured 'one, two, three'!

John began the concert with J S Bach's 'Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein' which means 'Rejoice, dear Christians', a very cheerful piece, chosen, John told us, to dispel the gloom of the pandemic. The whole concert had that aim.

Then Elizabeth, resplendent in long and glittering deep red gown, played J S Bach's Praeludium from Partita no 3 in E major, BWV 1006 no.1 for solo violin. (I didn't take notes for this concert, and couldn't obtain the notes Elizabeth used to introduce her pieces). But I remember this was very joyful, complementing John's opening Bach.

Elizabeth followed it with the famous Meditation from the opera *Thaïs* by Jules Massenet, here arranged for violin and organ, the first duet where Geoff was busily employed.

I think David Bednall, born in 1979, must have been very pleased with the interpretation of his 'Marian Suite' for violin and organ. The first movement, a lovely plain chant of the Ave Maria, is a musical picture of the Annunciation. The second movement is a beautiful and gentle folk-like lullaby, and then finally comes a more boisterous movement based on the plainchant 'Ave maris stella' - 'Hail, star of the sea' - an epithet often ascribed to the Virgin Mary.

Elizabeth then delighted us with a traditional air from her native Ireland for solo violin - An Chúilfhionn.

Now John introduced us to a near contemporary of J S Bach - Charles Piroye, composer of 'La Béatitude, dialogue à deux choeurs' for solo

organ. Piroye's sound world was very different to Bach's, because he lived in Paris under the reign of King Louis XIV, the Sun King. In the dialogue on the organ you hear the two choruses, one larger than the other, weaving around each other until they both 'sing' together at the end.

William Blake wrote that 'joy and woe are woven fine'. Confinement to home in compliance with Covid restrictions has in many cases allowed a flowering of creativity in the arts and enhanced practice time for musicians. Elizabeth told us that she used the locked down months to learn Bach's Chaconne from Partita no 2, BWV 1004 for solo violin. It had always been her ambition to play this great dance-like piece.

She described Bach's music being 'like the finest architecture in the world', and she poured her soul into the monumental structure of the work.

Two more duets concluded the concert - César Frank's Panis Angelicus for violin and piano, and Beethoven's Romance no. 2 in F major, Op 50, again for both instruments.

By way of farewell, Elizabeth said it had been a delight and joy to put on the four concerts, and thanked us all profusely for coming. We wouldn't have missed it. We felt uplifted, ready to withstand the next lockdown which came three weeks later.

*Frances Whewell*

## ***Two recitals by Jozef Gaszka***

After much careful planning, and not a little anxiety on the part of the organisers, Jozef was able to give his long awaited recital at Guildford URC on Friday, 9th October. The audience was restricted to thirty, but at least as many more were able to watch the live stream, and a substantial number have since accessed the YouTube link.

Jozef started with three pieces by J.S. Bach, the first of which was the Praeludium in E minor BWV 548. This provided a good steady and solid introduction, and was followed by the ever popular "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring", played at a nice pace and with an attractive lilt. The Prelude and Fugue in C major BWV 545 was succeeded by two pieces by Jehan Alain, representing more modern organ compositions. The first, "Choral Dorien", was very slow and sensitive in triple time, with the second, "Litanies," in lively rhythmic contrast with searing strident chords throughout.

Finally, two pieces from the compositions of famous French organists really brought Jozef into his own with Louis Vierne's Prelude and Allegro vivace from his first Symphony, and Maurice Duruflé's Fugue from the "Carillon des Heures de la Cathédrale de Soissons". Vierne's extracts were played with great sensitivity in the first movement and bewitching whimsicality either side of the tune in the fourth. The final fugue from Duruflé was a well chosen piece with which to finish and was played with great aplomb, giving a great "work out" for the organ and rewarding the young organist with well-earned lengthy applause for a fine concert.

*With thanks to Peter Burge for this extract from his review.*

Then, on 24th November, Jozef took part in a composite live-streamed recital at the Royal Academy of Music. Some of us were able to listen to the recital. Jozef's contribution was, once again, Bach's Prelude in E minor BWV 548, and Moto Ostinato from 'Sunday Music' by Petr Eben; and very fine they both sounded on the magnificent Kuhn organ, which some of us will remember from our visit in 2014. We are indebted to Geoff Willis for these screen shots from the occasion:

