



NORTH HAMPSHIRE
ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION
www.nhoa.org.uk

Newsletter 203 March 2021



PROGRAMME

See notes on page 6

Thursday 11th March, 7.30pm on Zoom :

Presentation by Michael Keays of Mander Organs (formerly F.H. Browne)

April (date to be confirmed):

It is hoped that Geoff Willis, Martin Barnes and Rob Goldfinch will be able to give an online presentation on the Schools Project.

Tuesday 18th May, 7.30pm on Zoom:

Online presentation by Geoffrey Coffin of Principal Pipe Organs on his life and work as an organ-builder (and organist).

NB: Zoom links for these events will be sent out in due course by e-mail.

The Newsletter

Well – you know only too well how it is! Your Committee is doing its best to arrange events. The March one is definitely happening, and Geoffrey Coffin is also firmly in the diary. The April presentation is dependent on Geoff, Martin and Rob being able to meet up in a suitable venue: they are working on it. (More information on page 6.)

By **June** we are hoping that it will be possible to hold a **real** event, probably social in nature, and then in **July** it *should* be possible to arrange an **organ visit**. Jeff Lloyd is still hoping that our **East Yorkshire visit** can go ahead towards the end of **August**, and that normal service may be resumed

thereafter. However: a new acronym has entered the language, alongside DV and ABW. It is ID: it depends. And, as you will know, it depends on an awful lot of things. So: carry on **watching this space** (and the website, and your e-mail inbox) to find out what will be happening. We will let you know as soon as we possibly can.

It is good to see that the concerts arranged by the Parish Church of St Lawrence Alton Organ Society are being resumed (under strict social-distancing rules) with a recital by Andrew Lumsden on 6 April. Things are getting back to normal, one by one...

Cover picture: The organ built by Geoff Willis and friends for the Schools Project (see page 6)

And don't forget **interNational Organ Day on 24 April**, with daily presentations focusing on aspects of musical life seen through the organist's lens — the culmination of a week of organ activities.

Online magazine-style programmes will be streamed every day from 18 April, exploring heritage instruments, choral music, organ construction, the organ at a local level, cinema organs, youth participation, organs in schools and masonic organs.

Daily improvisations will feature the UK's top exponents, including Carl Jackson and Martin Baker.

For the final, bumper presentation on Saturday 24 April, you are invited to share your own reminiscences, 'light-bulb' moments, inspirations and experiences.

All the activities will be live-streamed. For further information see the RCO website: rco.org.uk.

Copy Date for next Newsletter Please send any material for Newsletter 204 to the Secretary not later than **15 April**.

North Hampshire Organists' Association

Registered charity, no. 275207

affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists

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News of members and friends

We were sorry to learn that Rikki Willis has had to spend time in hospital recently for a non-Covid lung problem. Rikki is now home, where Geoff can look after her, and is making steady progress. We send her our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

We are delighted to welcome new member Stephen Davies, who has been 'persuaded' (no-one would ever say 'leaned on' - would they?) by Martin Barnes and Geoff Willis that it would be good for both him and us if he joined us. It's very good to have you with us, Stephen, and we look forward to meeting you online and in person very soon. Contact details: Mr Stephen Davies, 23 Goose Green, Hook, Hants RG27 9QY: tel: 01256 764574: mob: 07977591485: e-mail: stephendavies.53@gmail.com.

John Morris has been in touch recently: he writes: *As may well be the situation with you, all places of worship are locked and bolted here so nothing really happening. However, I have been offered and accepted the Organist/DOM post of St Mary-the-Virgin, Stoneleigh, just on the other side of Warwick (around 30 mins behind the wheel). Rather interesting Nicholson creation of the*

early 70s (<https://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=D03160>) - working pretty well, but getting to that time of life. Console is tucked away up in the gallery on the south side of the instrument, so well out of harm's way (apart, maybe, from the odd belligerent campanologist). Previous Organist/DOM has moved on to a place called Lapworth, where he's desperate to take on an amateur choir. No choir at Stoneleigh but possibility of putting on the odd recital here and there. They come across as an intelligent crowd and say that they appreciate decent music. We send our best wishes to John and Lisa, who are enjoying life in their new home. John's 4-manual Hauptwerk instrument is now residing in all its splendour in the garage!

Finally: our President, Malcolm Archer, has recently issued a CD of Bach's 'Goldberg' Variations (*see also 'News round-up' below*). It is available price £5.99 from Convivium Records (<https://conviviumrecords.co.uk/>) and was recorded in Malcolm's home in November using his Alan Gotto harpsichord. There is a publicity clip at <https://vimeo.com/512169801>.

News round-up

It has to be said that, given the current difficulties, we've made a pretty good start to 2021. Members will have received with this Newsletter the minutes of our AGM, which took place online on 28th January. Sadly it could not be followed by our customary excellent refreshments (unless you'd provided your own at home), but we were treated to an enthralling presentation by our President, Malcolm Archer, from his home in Wiltshire. And what a home it is! Formerly a daughter church of St. James, Trowbridge, whose Rector, the poet and naturalist Revd. George Crabbe, frequently preached there, the building became redundant in 2010, and, after a long and tortuous period of negotiation, was finally acquired by Malcolm as a suitable dwelling for himself and his enviable collection of keyboard instruments. Assisted by cameraman David Bednall (better known as a composer!), Malcolm took us on an illustrated virtual tour, beginning with a 1981 **chamber organ** by Peter Collins which originally belonged to Sir Charles Mackerras. It then passed to harp-



The Peter Collins chamber organ of 1981



Malcolm's Roundel

sichordist Leslie Pearson before coming to rest with Malcolm. Its three owners are commemorated in decorative roundels featuring their respective initials. Vincent Woodstock, who built the keyboard organ, is also represented by a

1995 **two-manual and pedal instrument** which had accompanied Malcolm to Wells, St. Paul's and Winchester. *Man. 1: 8' Chimney Flute, 4' Principal, 2' Blockflute. Man. 2: 8' Stopped Diapason, 4' Flute, Nazard. Pedal: 16' Bourdon, 8' Flute. Full range of couplers. Mechanical action.* Demonstrating with a section of 'Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend' by JSB, Malcolm commented on how effective the 8', 4' and 22/3' are for chorale preludes.

Malcolm also has a fine collection of **harpsichords** and **pianos**. First up was a 2000 copy by Alan Gotto of a 1728 Christian Zell instrument, on which Malcolm has recently completed his recording of Bach's 'Goldberg' Variations. He demonstrated it with the French Overture variation (no. 16), pointing out the difference in tone quality amongst the German, French and Flemish harpsichords. The inside of the lid has been beautifully illustrated with music relating to Malcolm and his wife Alison.



2000 Alan Gotto harpsichord (copy of 1728 Christian Zell)

Next we saw an English harpsichord of 1780, which Malcolm had found in Australia and shipped back to England: then one made by

Robert Deegan for Howard Beach, formerly harpsichordist for the group Red Priest.



1991 Robert Deegan harpsichord (copy of Goermans Taskin)

Copied from an original in the Russell Collection in Edinburgh, it has a notable resonance and brilliance, and is good for French music. Malcolm demonstrated with the Allemande from Bach's 5th French Suite. Another English instrument followed, this time a copy of a 1709 original, by Michael Thomas, who, along with Arnold Dolmetsch, was a leading pioneer of the English harpsichord revival. It is strung completely in brass, which gives it a particularly warm sound, and Malcolm uses it for continuo work.

Moving on to the **pianos**, we were introduced to a 1798 fortepiano by Stoddart, which is very similar to Beethoven's Broadwood piano, and is, accordingly, good for the music of Beethoven, as well as that of Haydn and Mozart. It has a sustaining pedal and the equivalent of an una corda mechanism, and despite its light action can produce a certain amount of power. The 1860 Erard piano (same year as Liszt's) needs restoring, but Malcolm gave us an impressive performance of Mozart's Fantasia in D minor on his Steinway Model B (*no, it's not*



1798 Stoddart fortepiano



1904 Steinway Model B grand piano

car!) of 1904. This instrument, which has been completely restored, spent many years at Tonbridge School.

And if that weren't enough, Malcolm also has a **harmonium** - currently in storage. It is the first time that he's been able to enjoy all the instruments in one place, and he hopes to extend that pleasure to other musicians by making his home available for recording sessions.

Thank you, Malcolm, for the photographs.

John Riley's Quiz:

If you have found some Zoom sessions rather flat and uninspiring then you wouldn't have recognised the imaginative and inventiveness of the quiz-night put together and run by our member, John Riley. Actually there was a little technical issue with echoes and strange lip-sync but this didn't affect the enjoyment in pondering the answers.

John is a musician of wide tastes and experiences and the questions he set certainly challenged us all but there was something for everyone.

We had eleven rounds and in the first one we were asked to identify organ stop names from

picture clues. You definitely needed to 'tune in' to this to come up with Larigot from a photo of Larry Grayson and a green traffic light!

Our knowledge of musical genres e.g opera and pop songs was tested in imagining their influence on some classical pieces and another quirky round had pictures of recycling and Prince Harry's family as clues to the names of organ builders (Binns and Harrison, by the way!).

A big thank you to John for digging into his "collection of random facts and information (more or less his words!) to entertain us.

Future activities

As already announced by email, the next meeting will be given by **Michael Keays**, formerly of **Brownes of Canterbury**, and now of newly re-created **Manders**, who is giving us an online talk on **Thursday, 11th March at 7.30pm on Zoom**. Michael will talk about some of the interesting work that F.H. Browne have had, including a current prestigious refurbishment job at Wimborne Minster. He will also tell us about their acquisition of Mander Organs and their expectations for the future of the new company. This should be a really interesting evening (it's always intriguing to 'get the goss' about the behind-the-scenes management of organ building firms), and we're grateful to Frances Whewell for setting it up for us.

The **May** event will be a similar presentation, this time by **Geoffrey Coffin**, of **Principal Pipe Organs**, who, you will remember, was responsible for the magnificent work at St. Andrew's, Farnham. As many of you will know, Geoffrey is also a very distinguished organist, having been Assistant at York Minster, so we're hoping that his talk will cover that area of his working life as well. The

date for your diary is **Tuesday, 18th May at 7.30pm**, and our thanks go to Geoff Willis for arranging the event. Zoom links are given by email.

Which leaves the **April** event, devoted to the very exciting **Schools Project**. After loads of discussions, pages and pages of sketches and countless hours in the garage workshop and not to mention a bunch of blogs... you still haven't heard the organ Geoff and friends have built for the Schools' Project! As you know, it's not for the want of trying but we have been thwarted by the dratted virus. The restrictions are currently showing community centres able to open from mid April. So as we approach that period we hope to arrange a venue where can tell you about our plans for demonstrations and workshops in schools, give you a bit of a close up of the instrument and of course let you hear the fantastic sounds that it makes. We will plan this as an online session but if a physical meeting is permitted at that time we will try to accommodate that.

From the archives

Taken from Newsletter 92, December, 1992, it provides a timely tribute to a much-loved organist.

On Saturday, 17th October, about 35 organists and friends met at Guildford United Reformed Church for an afternoon workshop led by Catherine Ennis, formerly Director of Music at St. Marylebone Parish Church, and well-known recitalist. Catherine began the afternoon with a dazzling performance (from memory!) of the Dubois toccata, to show us what could be achieved, then proceeded to take eight players, of different ages and stages of competence, through their paces. These performers, who were all either NHOA members or pupils-of-members, had prepared their work thoroughly, and the rest of us were grateful to them for their courage in taking part. They presented a variety of music, by Bach, Mendelssohn, Bridge, Rheinberger, Boëllmann and Pachelbel, but no matter whether the music was simple or more complicated, Catherine treated each player with the same warm encouragement and minute attention to detail. It was an inspiration in itself to see such a distinguished organist taking so much

trouble over an inexperienced player's problems with posture, feet and performance nerves, as well as questions of fingering, phrasing, articulation, ornaments and registration. She had several helpful hints on the best way to practise and on the necessity for a good manual technique. However, she never allowed us to lose sight of the prime importance of the *music* itself; technique, though essential, is only there to allow the music to sing more eloquently and to communicate more powerfully to the audience.

We are most grateful to Catherine for three hours of such illuminating teaching, which was of great benefit to students and teachers alike. The workshop was followed by tea and biscuits, ably dispensed by Jane and Stephen Lacey, during which we were able to enjoy that lively exchange of news and views which is such an important part of organists' meetings. Our thanks are due to the church authorities for allowing us to use their premises, and also to the IAO for their generous financial support of this educational venture. G.L.

Congenial Concerts and Reclining Recitals

It seems that the lockdown restrictions have had some pleasant side effects: the Internet, particularly Youtube, has exploded with organ concerts and recitals. Of course there is no concept of geography or location so performances in America and Australia are as accessible as one in Ashton-under-Lyne.

How do I know what's available? Most performances remain accessible for months and years after their first appearance so it's rare to miss something good.

A Youtube search of "Organ recitals 2021" yields a whole range of events, many from places I've never come across. I often click on one of those 'unknowns' but I have become more discerning about how long I will spend before looking for something else. Firstly, I always look for the programme listing so I can see if the pieces match my mood at the time or maybe I will click to save the link for later.

A few of the more professional presentations include time markers to show when a piece will start in the video. Perhaps this is pandering to the 'surfing' culture but with that information I can enjoy a particular piece even when I only have ten minutes to spare.



After quite a few months with the emphasis on 'virtual' I look for musicians I have liked before so Gert van Hoef, the young Dutch chap is always good value. This recent concert (try this in the Youtube search "gert van hoef lutheran kirke the hague") on 11th February had some great pieces by Guilmant and Walther. The sound was delightful and it's intriguing watching the player and the registrant manage the enormous stop jams.



I came across this New Year's Day concert by Raul Ramirez who plays a whole variety of well-known pieces transcribed for the organ. (Try "raul ramirez organ new years day 2021" in Youtube search). It's the Spreckels Organ in San Diego and when I glanced down the programme list, I knew it was an upbeat show and that was confirmed when I saw the player's white organ shoes!

Editorial note: Our member Carol Williams knows this organ well, having served as the San Diego Civic Organist and Artistic Director of the Spreckels Organ Society. She was the first woman to be appointed Civic Organist anywhere in the United States.

The Spreckels Organ is also special as being an outdoor organ. Only in California...

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Finally, how about a recital from Durham - that's nearly in foreign parts! A great programme from Joseph Beech the Assistant Organist who plays some Hollins, Wesley and York Bowen. (Try "durham cathedral joseph beech" in Youtube search). The whole thing made me think I'd really like to have a go on that instrument!

Geoff Willis



The NHOA website

In spite of the social distancing the Programme page on the website is still very much active. Do visit it at

www.nhoa.org.uk/

These days, while we are unable to visit organs, every month the Programme page will include a new virtual event such as a talk or a demonstration. We hope to be able to get back to more social events by June or July so watch this space!

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 of the website — 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.

P.S: Nobody has found the mouse on the website yet. If it finds a mate we'll be overrun before long.

The End

Georg Phillipp Telemann
was very much a Welly man,
whereas Handel's
choice was sandals.

"Oh Hell!"
cried Pachelbel;
but Buxtehude
was far, far ruder.

Gabriel Fauré
used to drive a lorry.
He parked it outside La Madelaine
again and again and again.

Jean Langlais
loved speaking Franglais.
"Vous desirez something to eat?"
Voici another suite!"