



NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

www.nhoa.org.uk

Newsletter 210 March 2023



*Our member Denny Hunter plays the new Skrabl organ at
Our Lady of Victories, Kensington, London*

Programme

Saturday, 18th March: Joint visit with the East Surrey and Surrey O.A.s to Uxbridge and Hayes. 11.00: St Andrew's Church, Hillingdon Road, Uxbridge UB10 0AE <https://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=D08345>
14.30: St Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Hayes UB3 2LR <https://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=D08242>

March/April: Date and details **TBC**. We are hoping to arrange a midweek Zoom event with Joshua Stephens (Sub-Organist, Winchester Cathedral).

Saturday, 15th April: Radley College and Dorchester-on-Thames.
10.30am: Radley College, Kennington Rd, Radley, Abingdon OX14 2HR <https://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=C01321> 2pm: St. Birinus, 1 Bridge End, Dorchester-on-Thames, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 7JR
4pm: Dorchester Abbey, High St, Dorchester, Wallingford OX10 7HH <https://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=N09544>

****FRIDAY, 19th May** (*please note day*): Joint visit with ESOA and SOA to Portsmouth. (TBC - e-mail to follow in due course): 10:45am: Holy Spirit, Southsea. 1.30pm: St Mark, North End. 3.15pm: St Mary, Portsea. 5.45pm: St. Thomas, Portsmouth (for Evensong).

Saturday, 1st July: Joint visit with ESAO and SOA to the home of Paul Griffiths and Joanna Marsh. Further details in Newsletter 211.

Monday 14th - Monday 28th August: Visit to Vienna and Graz. If you haven't already signed up and would like to, there's still space! Contact Jeff Lloyd jeffreyloyd@talktalk.net or 01483 570586. You don't have to come for the whole period if you don't want to - it'll be a great visit.

Copy Date for Next Newsletter Please send any material for Newsletter 211 to the Secretary not later than 15th May 2023

North Hampshire Organists' Association

Registered charity no. 275207

affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists

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News of members and friends

It's great to be able to start the new year by welcoming no less than **five** new members! Malcolm and Judith Hicks, who are long-time friends of John Mansfield, joined us for the Composers' Anniversary event (see report below) in November, then took the plunge and signed up shortly afterwards. We won't embarrass him by giving details, but Malcolm has had a very distinguished musical career, and we look forward to seeing more of him and Judith (a keen singer) at our meetings. David Markby came to our Crowthorne visit and, again, applied for membership soon afterwards. David is organist at High Cross, Camberley, and has written about his church's Organ Scholar scheme (see below). Denny Hunter and John Pritchard came to us via our website (please note how important this is becoming to our outreach) and are looking to enjoy the company of like-minded organ enthusiasts. It was a great pleasure to meet all five at our recent AGM (see report below) and we hope to see them again very soon.

Several members are unfortunately dealing with health concerns at the moment, amongst them John Mansfield, Bill Cartwright, Martin Barnes, Rob Goldfinch and Pete Currie. We send our best wishes to you all, and to anyone else in a similar position.

Encouraging the New Generation

In the 2023 issue of 'The North Hampshire Organist', you can read an account of the NHOA team's continuing efforts to introduce students to the joys of the organ.

High Cross Church Camberley Organ Scholarship Scheme

Many thanks to our new member David Markby for this encouraging account of what one church is doing to promote the organ to young musicians:

High Cross Church opened in 1990 when the URC and Methodist churches decided to unite. The three manual Allen organ was designed into the building and is still giving reliable service after 33 years. The two principal organists, John Wood and David Markby have been playing for services since the church opened. Now approaching their mid '80's it was time a few years ago to consider some succession planning. This coincided with the SOA embarking on its scheme to offer training to pianists aspiring to become organists.



Over the past few years we have started to train three or four mainly young people. However none have stayed the course through to accompanying church services. This was our main aim, whilst recognising that even if they didn't stay at High Cross, we could be adding to the pool of available church organists.

Last September we were presented with two interested and capable students through contacts with Farnborough 6th Form. They were already fine musicians with experience in various wind instruments to Grade 8 standard. Grade 5, preferably on keyboards, was considered the minimum standard to start organ tuition.

Organ Scholar Lucy Scott at the organ at High Cross

Both were worthy candidates. Thus one was awarded a scholarship with High Cross and the other with Fleet URC. Both are progressing well. The scholarship provides for 12 lessons per annum and a small bursary for music purchase. Tuition is given at High Cross by an experienced organ tutor. Funding training for the High Cross candidate is provided from donations received at our Summer Organ recitals, thus obviating the need to draw on church funds.

The High Organ recitals have been running for 14 years on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays during June July and August. All proceeds are divided

between the Scholarship scheme and two nominated Church charities. Recitals are given by four guest organists and the two resident organists, with all offering their services freely for charity. Recitals are normally attended by in excess of 50 people.

Will the two current scholars stay the course through to becoming church organists? That is our hope, if not at our local churches then somewhere else.

David Markby

Our Chairman, Geoff Willis, gives the lunchtime concert at St. Andrew's, Farnham, GU9 7DP on Tuesday 14th March at 1pm. Member David Oldfield has already chalked up two recitals this year: good for you, David!

Finally: best wishes also to Stephen and Jane Lacey, currently touring in New Zealand! Hope you've found one or two organs to play, Stephen?

Gillian Lloyd

News Roundup

Our last event of 2022 was a very enjoyable, if rather chilly, Composers' Anniversary afternoon, held at St. John, Hartley Wintney, through the good offices of Martin Barnes and the generosity of the church authorities. The chilliness was due to the fact that we were economising on heating, but there was no lack of warmth amongst the group, and in fact, due to a malfunction of the water boiler in the kitchen, we had a sauna situation in there too! We were celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of César Franck, the 30th anniversary of the death of Olivier Messiaen and, of course, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams. I think we did pretty well by them too.

Gerald Marlow opened with VW's Prelude 'The New Commonwealth' from the film 'The 49th Parallel' and 'A Wedding Tune for Ann', paired with the Prelude from Franck's 'Prélude, Fugue et Variation'.

Ian Wickens followed this with a performance of Franck's 'Invocation' and Offertoire from 'Messe de Minuit'. Chris Dew gave us some more 'Héroïque' Franck and Ben Constant followed this up with the same composer's Andantino in G minor.



Ian Wickens gives an insight to Franck's compositions

Ian Harrison, Frances Whewell and Gillian Lloyd went for VW the writer of hymn tunes and collector of folk songs with, respectively, Henry Ley's version of 'Down Ampney'.

'Rhosymedre', 'Bryn Calfaria' and two folk-song arrangements for 'cello, whilst James West topped off the first part of the afternoon with a section of Messiaen's 'Dieu Parmi nous'.

After a short break, Ian Harrison teased our brains with a quiz on VW's hymn-tunes, after which we were well ready for tea and cake!



Ian Harrison, Gerald Marlow, Ian Wickens, James West, Jeff Lloyd, David Oldfield and Charmian Harrison enjoying the refreshments

Members' List

You should find enclosed with this Newsletter the latest **Members' List**. Please check your entry carefully and let Geoff Willis (nhoa.chairman@gmail.com) or Gillian Lloyd (nhoa.secretary@gmail.com) know of any corrections.

Members will have received with this Newsletter the minutes of our **AGM**, which took place on Saturday, 4th February, at St. Mark's Church, Hale. Our thanks to the church authorities, and to Frances Whewell for making the arrangements.

The meeting was followed by a splendid buffet lunch provided by Jane Jacobs, Rikki Willis, Frances Whewell and others.

Malcolm and Judith Hicks chat to Geoff Willis



After lunch we had a fascinating talk from Michael Brough (Holy Trinity, Sloane Street) on 'Echo Organs'. Frances Whewell writes:

Are Echo Organs making a Comeback?

The colourfully dapper Michael Brough was the guest speaker at NHOA's AGM in February. Michael is the resident organist at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street in London. We'd met him there on a recent NHOA outing. Being impressed with his story-telling of organs and their restoration, we invited him to talk on 4th Feb.

Echo organs seemed a strange subject to me. Why have such a thing when organs have many soft stops to supply an echo effect? This talk gave the answer. The Echo organ originated in Germany, called the Fernwerk division, and is often positioned some way from the main console. It gives the distant effect required by certain composers, such as Reger, like having a small singing choir up in the gallery.

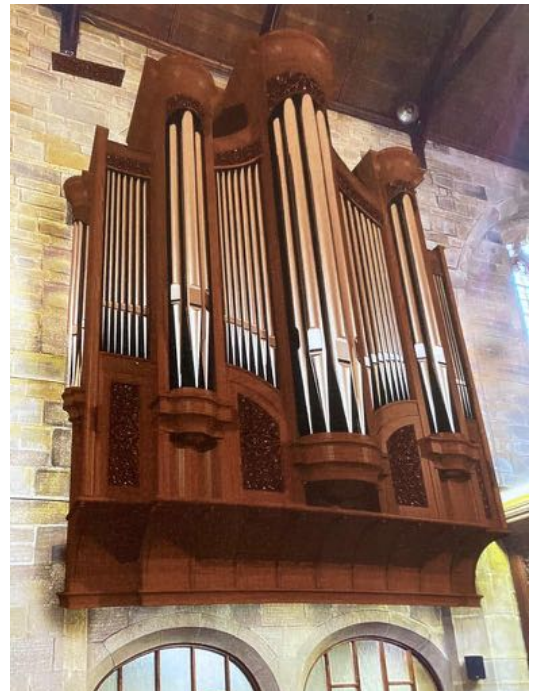
English organ builders were resistant to the concept of Echo organs until Prince Albert, the Prince Regent, had the idea of inviting German organ builders to his Great Exhibition in 1851. The largest organ to come over here was a Willis and now, in its restored state, it resides in Winchester cathedral. The Exhibition organ was moved to Northampton Town Hall, but has since vanished.

At that time orders for German organs were received by two brothers from the Schulze workshop – Eduard and Edmund, both in their 30's. Several of these organs survive today in the north of England. Michael gave details of the 'exquisite orchestral flutes', the sound produced with 'low pressure generously winded diapasons with bold harmonic development'. Many were made with wooden pipes, the production of which is a slow process. Some have an undetached Echo division. The wind pressure is very light, so reed pipes have to be made as flues, such as the Echo Oboe at Armley.

In 1868 the Schulze factory built a five manual organ for the church in Doncaster. This, one of the largest pipe organs in the UK, is still functioning well.

Michael handed us photos and information about St Paul's Church, King Cross, Halifax, his home city. The nineteenth century worsted spinner and weaver, Sir Edward Akroyd set his heart on a Schulze organ for All Soul's in the north of the town. Schulze were too busy so Sir Edward commissioned Forster & Andrew's in Hull to travel to Germany and learn the trade at the Schulze workshop. They returned with an entire Echo organ, and built the rest in Hull, from there transported to Halifax in 1868. It is no longer playable. That is the spur for the great rebuild being planned now.

Michael concluded by saying that 'the nineteenth century Echo organ was a north country phenomenon'. One will soon be installed in Liverpool cathedral, and also in the Town Hall in Leeds, where the 'Echo division will be playable from several different claviers.' We must go and experience them.



The proposed new chancel case for St Paul's

N.H.O.A.'s Website

Jane Jacobs has been learning the ins and outs of how to update the information on our new website and is doing a sterling job! More about her experiences next time.

We are considering some new ideas to add more to the site about the organ related world in our region and more widely. Watch this space!

Please keep your eye on the site to stay up-to-date with the latest information about our events and organ concerts in the area.

Several new members have joined from seeing the website so please mention it to any musical friends and relatives.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the North Hampshire Organists' Association website. At the top, there is a dark blue navigation bar with the following links: Home, About us, Upcoming events, Join us, Schools project, and More. The main heading reads "Welcome to North Hampshire Organists' Association". Below this, there is a yellow banner for the "Next Event". The event details are: "Uxbridge and Hayes", "Saturday 18th March 2023", and "Two venues starting at 11 am". The venues listed are "St Andrew's, Uxbridge" and "St Mary the Virgin, Hayes". The banner also features two images: on the left, a photograph of an organ console with various pipes and stops; on the right, a close-up photograph of hands playing an organ keyboard.

Going to back to school!

By now I am sure you will have read the latest issue of "The North Hampshire Organist" from cover to cover?! In that publication we included a diary to illustrate what we got up to in our first events at Calthorpe Park School in Fleet.

In summary, our preparations paid off, both in moving and assembling the organ and for the content of the demo. The music students were attentive (we took that as a good sign from teenagers!), with some showing a

deeper level of interest. For example, going to see and playing a pipe organ. We will follow that up with the school so not to lose momentum.

We have been asked to run another workshop at Calthorpe Park to give more music students a chance to run through pieces that they will play at the School's Spring Concert on 29th March. This means transporting the organ back to school for those two events which of course we are pleased to do... a request to repeat the sessions is certainly flattering and encouraging.



We hope to get an introduction to another school in our region and we look forward to more students experiencing the organ: “An orchestra at your fingertips”!

Geoff W, Martin B and Rob G.

My Lunchtime Menu

An email arrived - an invitation to play a lunchtime concert! My first reaction? Flattery! I'll accept before that seductive feeling subsides. It's six months away so feels like plenty of time to sort out a programme. This event will run for about forty minutes so I will need about thirty to thirty five minutes of music.

Now, I'm a firm believer that a lunchtime concert should be enjoyable for people who know little or nothing about organ music as well as having enough interest for organ “aficionados”.

Before choosing pieces, the programme needs a bit of structure: a robust opener followed by a mix of styles, some bold, some soft and an exciting finale. Each piece between three and five minutes. I like to talk to the

audience a couple of pieces at a time so adding all that up means I need to find seven or eight pieces.

The safe bet would be to use music I already know or could brush up but I like to have an excuse to learn something new, so where to find it? I have a few possible composers in mind for the first piece so I start searching for 'march type' pieces on that extensive online 'library' called YouTube. I surfed some Lefebure-Wely pieces, not paying too much attention to the quality of playing (which can be pretty variable). A "March in C" sounded good so I searched for the sheet music. If it's out of copyright, then it might be free but even if not, seeing just a preview of a page can usually be enough to gauge if I could play it. That one had far too many notes and a swift melody in the left hand - too risky for an opener. I found another march by L-W, this one in F major. That score passes the playability test so that's on the list.



A quieter piece next. Last year I was introduced to Malcolm Archer's Cantilene which has a beautiful smooth melody and soft chords to accompany. That will be a good contrast. The music doesn't look too difficult but I need to avoid a false sense of security - it will still need careful practice to work out the phrasing to sound good.

Practice makes ... for fewer mistakes!

A young German organ student called Paul Fey started a YouTube channel during the Covid lockdowns. He has become quite a prolific composer and sells his music for modest sums. I browse through the videos just listening to a few bars here and there. That's enough to know if a piece is attractive. I have to like anything I choose because I will have to be practicing it a lot to get to a performing standard. I found a "Trumpet Fanfare" which Paul plays at a trot and it has a middle section sounding like a mediaeval band so that's a good candidate.

I need another contrasting piece and I come across one of several Elegies on Paul's site. One has lovely warm chords and a simple tune. He adds bigger chords to the same tune as the piece builds, arriving at a full-blooded climax before a quiet, thoughtful close.

Something I heard played by a resident organist on our East Yorkshire tour caught my ear. It's one of a set of short pieces called "Miniatures" by Belgian composer Flor Peeters who is known for good harmony. A very experienced organist friend suggested swapping this with the L-W opener - that was an inspired idea!

Looking for a good tune but with a different style, a few years ago I discovered an arrangement of the traditional American folksong "Shenandoah". It has really lush chords that need to be 'milked' to get the most out of them. There is an evocative story that this piece really brings to life.

And so to find a spectacular finish. This can be a bit of a minefield. It's quite easy to find exciting stuff. That usually means fast and loud but playing such a piece at the end of performance when you're tired can be dodgy.

Recently I bought book of music arranged by Keith Chapman. He was the organist at the Wanamaker store in Philadelphia which has one of the biggest organs in the world. The piece in the book I really want to master is called "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella". It has all the hallmarks of a great finale... big, fast chords and a catchy tune. The hands are all over the manuals, the tune appears in the pedals and registration changes every few bars ... and it has a fascinating back story.

I sought opinions from my highly able and respected organist friends. They said "that's a difficult piece" and "I'll just call you brave!". That was not enough to put me off so I put in some serious practice. Memorising the difficult bars makes it possible to look at your fingers and discover more detail in the note patterns which are otherwise not obvious. Seeing what your hands or feet are supposed to be doing helps the learning process. Although I will still play using the music, the earlier memorising means it's more likely that those difficult bits will go well.

So that's how I put together my latest lunchtime programme. I'll leave it to others to say how it went!

P.S. When I timed all the pieces and 'the chat' where I would talk about them, I discovered the programme was a bit short! With one week to go, I needed to find a something I could learn quickly. Recently, I was given a book of "Miniatures" by Noel Rawsthorne and the one called "Minuet" from this collection fits the bill. Phew!!

Geoff Willis