



# NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

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

Newsletter 22 | December 2025



Martin Barnes plays the Johannes 2000 now redeployed in Ranelagh School, Bracknell. Read more about this story on page 5.

## *Programme*

**Saturday, 31st January 2026:** Annual General Meeting at 12 noon. See details below.

**Saturday, 28th March:** Visit to Cheam, Worcester Park and possibly Belmont. Times TBA: St. Andrew's United Reformed Church, Northey Avenue, Cheam, Sutton SM2 7BZ (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/N13435>). Christ Church, Ruskin Drive, Worcester Park KT4 8LG (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/N13989>). St. John, Northdown Road, Belmont, Sutton SM2 6DY (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/P00131>). NB: all three of these venues are within the ULEZ.

**Tuesday 23rd June: Visit to Birmingham Conservatoire with Head of Organ Studies, Daniel Moulton.** This is a prestigious visit where our student member, Tim Stewart, is studying. Other near venues are expected to be arranged around this event i.e. Monday 22nd and Wednesday 24th June.

**Other visits and events for 2026 are in the planning phase.**

### **COPY DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER:**

Please send any material for Newsletter 222 to the Editorial team at [nhoa.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:nhoa.chairman@gmail.com) no later than 15th February 2025.

## *Notice of Annual General Meeting*

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the North Hampshire Organists' Association will be held at 12 noon on Saturday, 31st January, 2025 at St. John's Church, Hook RG27 9EG. **Items for the agenda should be notified to the Secretary not later than 23rd January.** Jane Jacobs and Jeff Lloyd come to the end of their terms of office on 31st January. They have expressed willingness to serve for a further term of two years if re-elected. Martin Barnes, Ian Harrison, Gillian Lloyd and Geoff Willis have a further year to serve. Your Committee have co-opted David Markby to assist us with programme arrangements. He has played many exciting organs and has useful experience of arranging visits.

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 returns, so, for everyone's convenience, please could you all fill it in as required and email or post it (not forgetting to pay your **subscription** - see below) **in time to reach Jeff Lloyd, 104, the Mount, Guildford Surrey GU2 4JB 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/mobile number, membership status and availability to teach and/or deputise.

**Subscriptions** remain unchanged from last year:

**Individual: £15** with electronic Newsletter and other correspondence, **£20** if you require the printed version.

**Family: £20** (electronic), **£25** (printed).

**Country: £10** (electronic), **£15** (printed)

However, as in previous years, your Committee will be asking the AGM for a mandate to increase subscriptions for 2027 if they feel it to be necessary.

The main event at our AGM on 31st January will be a talk and short recital by Jozef Gaszka, recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music and currently Organ Scholar at Guildford Cathedral. Some of you will remember Jozef playing at our 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2017. Coming right up to date, in September of this year he gave a recital at Guildford URC featuring music by Bruhns, Buxtehude, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Vierne and Iain Farrington, amongst others. We may well hear some of these pieces on 31st January! Jozef will also speak to us about his experiences at the RAM and give us an insight into the life of a Cathedral organ scholar.



## *Financial Arrangements*

Arrangements for NHOA's charity bank account are changing. We are in effect being obliged to use online banking, whether we want to or not, as there will now be a charge for the use of cheques and for paying cheques into the account. Your Treasurer is not pleased about this, as he feels that the Association and its members should be able to make payments in the way that suits us, not the bank: but there seems to be nothing that we can do about it and in fact the charges are not huge. However, if, as most of you already do, you feel able to make payments to NHOA by bank transfer, please could you do so from now on. The details are: North Hampshire Organists Association 30-93-74, 55307260. If, for whatever reason, you don't use online banking, that's OK: the odd cheque here and there won't be a problem.

## *What do you want from NHOA?*

Your committee is very keen to arrange events that you will find interesting, entertaining, educational and fun. It's been ten years since we last asked you about what you want from NHOA so...

In January we will be contacting you with a short survey asking you what type of events you would like us to arrange. For example, visits at the weekend or weekday, day time or evening; local visits; bigger instruments further afield; social gatherings and performing in front of friends; talks given by notable musicians, etc.

## *News of Members and Friends*

We are sorry to report that Rikki Willis has had a spell in hospital recently. We wish her a speedy and full recovery. Jeff Lloyd continues to make progress at home and was able to take part in the Composers' Anniversary event.

We are very pleased to welcome into membership Alison Wren, currently Organ Scholar at High Cross, Camberley. We were delighted to meet her at the John Mansfield Composers' Anniversaries afternoon on 22nd November. Alison's contact details are: Alison Wren, 49 Oak Avenue, Owlsmoor, Sandhurst, Berkshire GU47 0SF: 07752 629168: [alison@alisongraphics.co.uk](mailto:alison@alisongraphics.co.uk).

Alison writes a bit of background about her musical life:

Music has always been a huge part of my life. I started learning the piano at the age of 4, after my older brother began lessons at home, and I kept running in afterwards trying to play his pieces! I went on to take Grade 8 in my late teens. Life then took over and I no longer seemed to have the time/reason to play but, when the opportunity presented itself in August last year, I jumped at the chance to be the newest Organ Scholar at High Cross Church in Camberley! By this point, I'd hardly played the piano for about 25 years, so to say it has been a challenge is rather an understatement, but I am gradually managing to persuade my brain, feet and hands to co-operate with each other every now and then. I am so grateful to have been given this opportunity, and am absolutely loving learning to play the organ.

It's good to report that young member Monty Nelson is settling well into his organ scholar duties at Cirencester Parish Church. He is working on improvisation and creative ways of playing hymns, and has accompanied the choir as well as playing voluntaries. Well done, Monty! Keep it up.

Congratulations to young member Boqing Wen, who has been awarded the organ scholarship at Exeter College, Oxford. Boqing has written a short piece for us about her participation in The Organ Scholar Experience during the summer and also the Oxbridge organ trials themselves.

We are always glad to hear news of other members, whether good or not-so-good, so if you have news of yourself or another member that you would like to share, please do let Gillian Lloyd or Geoff Willis know. Our contact details are in the Members' List and on the back of each Newsletter.

## *News Roundup*

### **NHOA finds an organ for Ranelagh School**

It was sad to hear that Easthampstead Crematorium have decided to remove their Johannus organ due to lack of use. They have about 10 funerals there a day and the organ has only been used twice this year.

The good news is that I was asked to find someone who could use it with no cost implication other than removal costs.

As we are focused on promoting organs in schools it seemed logical to find a school that would like it. The first school declined the offer due to lack of space.

I then decided to contact schools in the Bracknell area, where the crematorium is located. The first school that sprung to mind was Ranelagh so I sent an email to



them. They replied within five minutes. They are a Church of England school and have services and have been trying to find a second-hand organ at a price they can afford.

They are not only very excited about the find (and now have the organ in the school) but also want an organ workshop with our school organ which we will arrange in the New Year.

*Martin Barnes*

## **Advent Service at Old St Mary's, Hartley Wintney**

On Sunday 30th November, the rarely used church held its annual Advent Service. The packed congregation were well supported by the Winchfield Community Choir who sang from the West End gallery. Martin Barnes played our School Demo organ which gave a rich sound for the voluntaries and hymns. You might recall reading about the pedalboard misbehaving in a service there back in the summer. Geoff Willis, assisted by his brother and member, Adrian, have completely replaced the electronic system in the pedalboard with one that is more robust. Despite the near freezing temperature as is usual in this church (there is no heating), we are very pleased to report that it all worked as it should as did Martin's fingers!

## **"Toccatas and Tea Cakes" at High Cross, Camberley**

If you need a new roof, you will need to do some serious fundraising. In our last Newsletter you will have read about "Chords and Canapes" at St Mary's, Winchfield where David Markby and his colleague, John Wood, played an evening concert to support their roof fund. It is great to report that the work there is very nearly completed. Now, David and John have done it again for the roof fund at High Cross (HC), Camberley. On November 15th, a concert entitled "Toccatas and Tea Cakes" saw David and John play the 3 manual Allen and Bechstein grand piano to an audience of some 88 people. On this occasion the programme also included HC Organ Scholar Alison Wren playing the organ and flute and Geoff Willis on organ and trumpet. The audience were treated to tea cakes in the interval. Here's a view of the programme:

Toccatas by JSB, Dubois, Boellmann, Anon, Fletcher and a little one by Yon; Cavatina and Music of the Night for flute and organ. Arrangements of 'Silent Worship' and Fred Astaire songs for trumpet and organ. The event raised some £800 for the roof fund which makes all the preparation and the actual concert so worthwhile.

## **The John Mansfield Composers' Anniversary Members' Performance 2025**

Our popular composers' anniversaries members' performance afternoon was back at St John's Hartley Wintney this year, with many thanks to the church authorities and their organist and NHOA member, Martin Barnes.

Back in action after a protracted period of refurbishments, the organ was a great pleasure to play and hear once more. Having Martin on hand to handle the heating, the sound system, performers' page turns and any forgotten Swell to Greats or Pedals was a distinct luxury!

The programme burst with variety and aspects of entertainment covering around 400 years of musical styles and included a nod to the world of theatre organs (John Maclean) and a performance dedicated to grandparents (Denny Hunter).

The event began with a splash of musical sparkle from our chairman, Geoff Willis, who performed a Festival Toccata by Percy Fletcher, a composer and conductor who worked in London and lived in Geoff's native Farnborough.

Dialling back to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Steven Salmon played A Fancy for a Double Orgaine by Orlando Gibbons. This was not only an interesting piece from the period but was extremely well introduced and performed by Steven.

John Maclean fancied the sounds of the theatre organ in his rendition of an arrangement of Keisler's Liebesfreud, however, Martin is blown if he's having a tremulant added to the organ!

An extremely poignant performance of Arvo Part's Spiegel im Spiegel was given by our secretary, Gillian Lloyd, which she had prepared for the funeral of a friend. Being in the minimalist style it invoked calm reflection and was the centre piece of the afternoon.

Somewhere between the theatre organ style and the Victorian musical piece, was Easthope Martin's Evensong which turned out to be a duet played by Ben Constant and Geoff Willis. Ben, whose piece it was, suffered a fall in London a few days before, injuring his left arm, and cancelled playing. However, Geoff jokingly suggested a duet - which gained traction. Ben played the Right hand and pedal part and organ management, while Geoff played the Left hand part with his Right hand. The lengths members go to for our entertainment!

Moving on to an underrated musician and composer, Gerald Marlow presented two pieces by Eric Thiman: Improvisation on Crimond, and Gavotte in the style of Wesley, which he preceded with an informative talk on the composer.

In response to the Royal College of Organists appeal for organists to play Handel's Largo at 2:00 pm on this day, Ian Wickens obliged – although around two hours later! Ian informed us of the RCO's Play the Organ Year, and Steven chirped in that the piece is probably the only example of an Ode to a Tree!

Back in the modern era, Denny Hunter delivered an evocative rendition of Unchained Melody, a 1955 song by Alex North, which has particular significance to him as it was meaningful to his grandparents whose contribution to his own musical development was critical to him.

A bogus item on the programme was Boellmann's Menuet-Gothique from his Suite Gothique and played by Chris Dew. Clutching at straws, Chris noted Boellmann's teacher and promoter was Eugene Gigout who died in 1925, the Suite was written in 1895, and its Opus number is 25.

Our newest member, Alison Wren, dodged the anniversary requirement by playing a Toccata and Fugue by that most curious of composers, Anon.! A very welcome item.

Concluding the afternoon was David Markby, who sent us off in festive – or more particularly, Christmas mood, with another of Eric Thiman's pieces: his Postlude for Christmas on Adeste Fidelis. Although feeling his talk on Thiman had been somewhat pipped at the post by Gerald's earlier peroration, he had a few more points of interest up his sleeve!

Especially welcome on a cold, November afternoon was the provision of teas, coffees, sandwiches and cakes put together and presented by Jane Jacobs and Rikki Willis. It was wonderful to see Rikki present and correct after a recent op – even if she was frustrated with being told not to do things she wanted to do!

*Chris Dew*

# A Talented Young Organist

NHOA student member Boqing Wen writes about two events she participated in earlier in the year.

## The Organ Student Experience

Attending The Organ Student Experience (TOSE) this summer was an inspiring and invaluable opportunity to deepen both my practical and musical understanding of what it means to be an organ scholar. The week offered a packed schedule of lessons, rehearsals, and discussions, all designed to develop the skills required for university-level organ playing and choral accompanying.



I particularly enjoyed the keyboard musicianship sessions, which strengthened my harmonisation, transposition, and improvisation skills. Learning to anticipate harmonic progressions not only improved my sight-reading but also helped me respond more confidently to unexpected changes during accompaniment. These classes were immediately applicable in our choral rehearsals, where we were challenged to think musically and react sensitively to the choir's phrasing and tempo. The repertoire and technique sessions were equally rewarding.

Under the guidance of experienced tutors such as James Orford and Ulrich

Walther, I explored a wide range of repertoire and developed greater fluency in pedal technique and articulation. Each masterclass encouraged us to adapt our playing to suit the distinctive character of the organs we used across Oxford colleges, from the brightness of Merton to the warmth of Magdalen, broadening my understanding of how instrument design shapes interpretation.

One of the highlights of the week was the chance to play for choral evensong at Trinity College, an experience that gave a real sense of the responsibility and artistry involved in accompanying a choir. The sessions on choir training, led by Tansy Castledine, also offered invaluable insight into the communication and leadership skills essential for an organ scholar.

## Oxbridge Organ Trials

September was one of the most challenging yet rewarding musical experiences I have undertaken. The process tested not only technical skill but also stamina, adaptability, and clarity of musical communication.

The week began with practice sessions on a range of college instruments, each with its own character and quirks. Moving quickly between organs required constant adjustment as some demanded lighter articulation, others needed more assertive phrasing, and several had pedalboards that took a moment to settle into.

The formal assessments were equally varied. The solo performance allowed me to showcase my prepared repertoire, and I found that the interpretative flexibility I had developed at TOSE proved invaluable when balancing acoustics with articulation.

One of the most memorable aspects of the trials was the choral accompaniment and choir training component. Working with a live choir and directing a short rehearsal under observation was both intense and exhilarating. It pushed me to think clearly, communicate efficiently, and respond musically to the ensemble in real time. The experience gave a genuine insight into the daily responsibilities of an organ scholar.

*Boqing Wen*

## *The Organs I Played*

*Steven Salmon lives in Guildford and has recently joined NHOA.*

I am currently the organist at St Nicolas, Great Bookham but I spent twenty years at St Mary's, Quarry Street, Guildford. I do occasionally reappear at St Mary's so I will take this opportunity to compare and contrast the organs.

St Mary's organ was built for the space in the late 1980s by Saxon Aldred (who, as far as I know, is still with us). He was inspired by the Dutch tradition and the organ is built with the Great over the Swell so that it is tall, but not very deep. The pipes speak directly into the nave of the church and the two manuals can be used to build a very satisfying, unified chorus. There is a gorgeous, chuffy stopped diapason on the Great and a characterful Cremona on the Swell. The Pedal department was improved in the noughties by the addition of a 16' reed. You will look in vain for a string chorus.

When I started, an older (female) member of the congregation used to sit as far as possible from the organ on the grounds that it was too shrill. The wooden flooring and fixed pews were taken out around the turn of the millennium and replaced with polished stone and chairs. This has made the organ sound noticeably brighter, and sensitive players are sparing with the mixtures.

The organ has a pure mechanical action. I soon learned how to whip off the music desk to get at sticking trackers. There are no pistons. You get used to this, and it is



*The Saxon Aldred organ at St Mary's*

useful to have a “stop assistant” if frequent registration changes are needed. The couplers (Gt – Ped, Sw - Ped and Sw – Gt) are operated only by unmarked brass pedals. The builder assumed that the player would not need a light for his/her feet.

St Mary's is probably the most spacious console I have ever played. I am quite tall, so I appreciate this. The bench goes up and down but the mechanism tends to creak when you shift around. A member of the congregation once told me that I ought to lose some weight. Some work with the grease pot solved the problem.

The original vision for the organ required it to be tuned to the unequal temperament Werkmeister II system. I think the initial zeal has diminished over the years, which is probably a good thing for worship use. The effect of the tuning was that certain keys (notably those with small numbers of sharps in the key signature) sounded absolutely pure and beautiful but others (Jerusalem the Golden in D flat comes to mind) sounded downright awful. A final quirk of the organ that took some getting used to is that it takes about 50 seconds to reach full playing pressure after switching the blower on. You can press the button when you think the sermon is coming to an end but the preacher can hear what you are up to, and may not thank you if he has another five minutes to go.

The Bookham organ is a completely different kettle of fish. I have delved into the National Pipe Organ Register to help write this article and discovered that the organ was most definitely not built for the church. It came from a department store in Glasgow via a Catholic church in Camberwell. The console (1968) is much younger than the organ (1886) and various tweaks have been made over the years.

By happy circumstance, the size of the organ is well matched to the church, and the sound palette is flexible and practical. Unfortunately, however, the console is a very long way from the pipes – in the Lady chapel on the opposite side of the church. The



*St Nicholas, Great Bookham looking east, showing the pipe case on the left and console on the right*



*St Nicholas' pipe case*

organist can see almost half the sanctuary (good for guessing what is happening with the sacrament, offertory etc.) all the choir, and about a third of the nave, but the congregation can hear all your mistakes before you do and it is quite an art to guess whether you are too quiet / too loud / about right. Even the NPOR remarks that “The position of the Detached Console is not ideal for hearing the organ”.

The console has a useful range of pistons, and the ever-useful “Gt pistons to Ped” link. The fact that the trumpet (a relatively modern addition) is on the Great requires an occasional work-around.



One quirk that did catch me out is that there is an electric motor to open/close the Swell box shutters but it is actuated by movement of the Swell pedal on the console, not by its absolute position. I foolishly moved the pedal to the “shutters open” position while the blower was switched off. When I switched the blower on, the shutters remained in the closed position (of course).

I derive much pleasure from playing the organ, like most readers of this august publication. The idiosyncrasies of the instruments we know and love just make it more interesting.

*Steven Salmon*

## Hidden Gems

James West has been browsing his music cupboard and found two delightful contrasting pieces.

### **TELL ME LOVELY SHEPHERD Arr. by Richard Graves**

An aim of regular Sunday organists is not to repeat pre or post service voluntaries during a calendar year. To achieve this modest ambition it is necessary to build a repertoire of easier voluntaries. One such piece I play that does not seem to be commonly known is "Tell me, lovely Shepherd" by William Boyce arranged by Richard Graves.



Now before those of you who know my tastes say "I thought you are not keen on transcriptions" this is not a transcription: it's an arrangement or perhaps a rearrangement of a graceful melody. Radio listeners will know Wm Boyce through the regular broadcasting of his 2nd symphony. I heard "Tell me, lovely shepherd" sung by a soprano when I was organist at St George's Hanworth some 55 years ago. I haven't heard it since! Richard Graves's arrangement is published by O U P. It cost be 50p second hand from Blackwell's c.50 years ago but might be a little dearer now. [You can find it on [www.usedorganmusic.co.uk](http://www.usedorganmusic.co.uk) for £1.50 - Ed]. If it's not quite sight-readable it doesn't require practicing, once learnt. My main struggle is, as ever, with a strangely positioned turnover.

### **TOCCATA in F by Jules Grison**

If you are a little bored with hearing and playing the 4 most popular toccatas, (I am), it's worth Googling "Toccatas" to see what pops up. There are umpteen refreshingly different choices. One of my favourites that I've never heard during 15 years of O. A. crawls is Grison's.

There was a waspish review of this composition by Roger Fisher in Organists' Review c. 10 years ago. Don't be put off! This piece has an imposing start and finish although the middle section could be thinned out a bit, It's in a sort of A B A form. There are some excellent recordings. I particularly like the one by David Patrick. When I wanted to buy this music some 40 years ago it was out of print. To my shame I found it in an album entitled "Modern Organ Album" published by Breitkopf & Hartel that I was about to discard. It was given to me in 1958 when I started learning to play by a retired school teacher who herself bought it in 1920. A perfect reminder of a generous, lovely old lady whom I met just the once.

All.<sup>o</sup> imponente (108 = ♩)

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Played here by David Patrick. Click on the picture:

[Alternatively in YouTube search Jules Grison toccata in F patrick]



The score is downloadable here <https://www.scribd.com/document/497833633/Toccata-en-fa-jules-grison> [Alternatively in your internet search scribd jules grison toccata]

James West

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