

Chester & North-East Wales Organists' & Choirmasters' Association

Affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists



CNEWOCA

Newsletter – February 2018

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Next Month

Saturday 10th March from 1.30pm to 3.30pm sees us at Hamilton Street Methodist Church in Hoole, Chester for a singing workshop led by Enid Whittle.

This Month

Monday 12th February at 7.30pm sees us at Christ Church, Port Sunlight for an 'open console'. The instrument is a 4 manual Willis and is well worth the visit. For those not engaged in playing, the following may



help you when looking around the building.

The church was paid for by William Lever. It was opened on 8th June 1904, and in 1914 the Lever family vault was added as a

memorial to the memory of Lady Lever. The church is constructed in red sandstone from Helsby in Cheshire and has a stone-slate roof. The plan consists of a six-bay nave with a clerestory, north and south aisles with lean-to roofs, a southwest porch, a double north transept, a south transept, a canted chancel, a southeast tower and, at the west end, the Lady Lever Memorial. The windows along the sides of the aisles and clerestory have three lights containing Perpendicular-style tracery. At the corners of the west end are canted projections topped by parapets. The west window has a four-centred head and contains nine lights. The transepts have gabled buttresses surmounted by pinnacles; there is an entrance in the south transept. There are also buttresses on the tower, which has two-light louvred bell openings, a cornice, and a traceried, embattled parapet. The Lady Lever Memorial is in the form of a loggia at the west end of the church. It is in three bays, and is richly decorated, with buttresses, pinnacles, niches, and an embattled parapet. The church can seat 800 people. The arcades are simple, carried



on piers without capitals. The floor of the church is in black and white Italian marble, the pews, screens and reredos are in English oak, and the roof timbers in Canadian pitch pine. Most of the stained glass is by Heaton, Butler and Bayne. This includes the windows at the east end, which total 16 lights, the west window, and the windows in the south transept. There are also two aisle windows of 1950 by Ervin Bossányi. There is a ring of eight bells, all of which were cast in 1904 by Mears and Stainbank. In the Lady Lever Memorial is the chest tomb of Lady Lever, who died in 1913, and of William Lever, who died in 1925. On this are recumbent bronze effigies by Sir W Goscombe John.

The Chairman Writes

The New Year seems to have got off to a flying start and we are already in February! I made some decisions about the way I would try and organise my life in 2018; being determined to make the most of any opportunities that may occur but at the same time to discard the things I do, probably by routine, that aren't fruitful.

We all go through phases in our lives when we need a bit of encouragement and pointing in the right direction. Our January meeting certainly helped in that direction. It was wonderful that Graham Eccles was prepared to give us an afternoon of his valuable time in the beautiful setting of All Saints, Gresford, with its magnificent Hill organ. Graham gave us lots of advice about many things associated with being a church organist, including registration, hymn accompaniment and improvisation. I'm sure that we will all gain something from the afternoon; I know that I certainly did.

I'm sure that I'm not the only one who from time to time gets told that their playing is too fast or slow, too LOUD or soft. If you do get told, it can be quite demoralising, particularly if the only time people mention your playing is to complain. How we respond to such comments can not only reflect on us as individuals but also affect the quality of the music we choose to play. I feel it is important to listen - after all, that's often how we learn - but it is equally important that you do your job to the best of your abilities, playing a variety of music

appropriate to the occasion. As a guide, I like to begin with something upbeat and then slow the tempo and quieten the volume as the start of the service approaches. Regarding closing voluntaries, this certainly depends on the type of service; it's great to finish with a lively voluntary, but sometimes starting quietly and slowly with a piece such as Nimrod can be very effective. If you have any thoughts on music before and after the service (although I consider my playing to be part of the service by creating the mood for the congregation to prepare for worship and afterwards, sending them out feeling better than when they arrived), I'd love to hear from you.

We often forget that we are a 'Choirmasters' Association as well as an 'Organists', so to address the balance a little, our March event will focus on singing. I am really pleased that Enid Whittle, who gave us a splendid afternoon about singing and choir training a few years ago, has agreed to lead another event for us. This time, she will be using us as her choir (don't worry, we are encouraging some choir members to attend as well as organists!) and not just directing us but also explaining why she is asking for particular things and showing us ways to achieve them. Three pieces have been chosen - "God So Loved the World" (from Stainer's Crucifixion), "If Ye Love Me" (Thomas Tallis) and "I Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing" (Traditional Spiritual), all unaccompanied, so no need of an organist! I hope you will encourage any of your friends who sing to come along, as I'm sure it will be of benefit for all. The event is at my church, Hamilton Street Methodist Church, Hoole, Chester, and will start promptly at 1.30pm, with singing for about 1½ hours followed by refreshments and the opportunity to share fellowship.

There are many more singers than organists out there, so I do hope you will take the time to invite singers to this event. CNEWOCA needs more outreach (like many Churches) if it is to survive, and this is an ideal opportunity to tap that group of church musicians (and others) who sing.

I hope that we will meet up at future events but if you'd like to discuss anything to do with CNEWOCA, don't hesitate to contact me on 07939-645688 or by email angiejohnevs@uwclub.net

What's On?

Chester Cathedral

Thursdays at 1.10pm

- 15 Feb** James Parsons - Wales
22 Feb Roger Fisher - Organist Emeritus
1 Mar Hilary Punnett - Lincoln Cathedral
8 Mar Richard Walker - St Chad's Shrewsbury
15 Mar Rachel Mahon - Chester Cathedral
22 Mar Philip Rushforth - Chester Cathedral

St George's Hall, Liverpool

12.45pm to 1.30pm

- Tues 27 Feb** Ian Tracey (Liverpool Cathedral)
Tues 13 Mar Ian Tracey (Liverpool Cathedral)
Admission £2.50

St Chad's, Shrewsbury

12.40pm to 1.20pm

- Fri 16 Feb** Martin J Brown - Bangor Cathedral
Tue 6 Mar Anthony Pinel - St Chad's, Shrewsbury
Fri 16 Mar Samuel Hudson - Blackburn Cathedral
Admission Free - Retiring Collection

Music at Wesley

Tuesdays 12.45pm to 1.35pm

- 13 Feb** Selim Ungut (piano)
20 Feb Duncan Anderson (viola), Leanne Cody (piano)
27 Feb The Forum Piano Trio (violin, cello, piano)
6 Mar Heather Heighway (Soprano), Tim Kennedy (piano)
13 Mar The Dalbrion Clarinet Trio (clarinet, cello, piano)
20 Mar Chetham's School of Music Brass Ensembles
27 Mar Hayley Parkes (piano)
Admission Free - Retiring Collection

Organ Recitals at Wesley

12.45pm to 1.35pm

- Sat 24 Mar** Andrew Wyatt, Chester Cathedral
Admission Free - Retiring Collection

London Organ Day

Jim Treloar writes: I happened to be in London on 27th January on a day trip to meet family members for lunch, and after leaving them I still had some time before catching my train home. I already knew that it was the London Organ Day at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, and although I didn't think that I'd be able to attend, the time I had available meant that I could at least spend some time there. It's a full day from 12.30pm to 7.00pm with presentations, discussions and recitals. The organ in the chapel is a fine instrument put together by B.C. Shepherd & Sons using Binns pipework from churches in Watford and Bolton. I arrived just in time to hear a fine recital by Richard Gowers, former organ scholar at Kings College, Cambridge and now organist at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. He played Bach's BWV 550 and the Healey Willan Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue - a fine performance. After a short break, when I managed to meet

up with some organ friends from the London area, the next item was a discussion featuring Dame Gillian Weir and Huw Tregellis Williams about Dame Gillian's fondly-remembered TV series of 30 years ago on six well known organs. Mr Williams accompanied Dame Gillian in the making of that series, so they had much to discuss and reminisce about. The programmes are now available on a DVD by Priory and are still worth watching. Unfortunately, I couldn't stay for the complete session as I had to dash off, but I shall make sure that next year I attend for the whole day. When I have more details of the 2019 event I'll try to include it in our 'What's On' column.

Should you wish to hear this excellent organ soon, it is to be played by Thomas Trotter at the Annual General Meeting of The Organ Club on 17th March at 4.00pm. It will be preceded by a video presentation at 2.30pm. A tea, at a nominal charge, will be available after the recital. Visitors are welcome. Contact me if you require further details as I shall be there.

Jim Treloar

The Organist will stop Entertaining

I know that the theatre organ is not everyone's cup of tea, but this highly popular programme is being axed after almost 49 years. It started with Robin Richmond presenting, but for the last 38 years it has been Nigel Ogden at the helm. Nigel is well known in the area, having appeared at Chester Cathedral, St Asaph Cathedral, St Werburgh's and he still appears annually at Hamilton Street Methodist Church in Chester. I was at the Gaumont, Manchester when Nigel gave his first public performance on the Wurlitzer and it was that instrument that the Association visited when it was in the care of the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust and installed at the



Granada Studios in Manchester (I did in fact manage to play it for a few moments in the Gaumont when no one was looking). I must admit that I have not listened to the programme over recent years, so I don't suppose I can complain at it being axed, but when I was a regular listener there were occasional classical items - the programme is scheduled to finish when the Radio 2 "schedule re-shuffle" comes into effect on 18th May. The picture is of Nigel, Geoffrey Woollatt and Ben Chewter at the Cathedral.

Hilary Punnett

Hilary is our recitalist at the Cathedral on 1st March. It is a new name to me, so I did a

little research. She studied piano (Kathy Koch), clarinet (Lisa Gartrell-Yeo), voice (Karen Smith) and organ (Garth MacPhee) in her birthplace of Victoria, BC, before moving to Montreal in 2005 to pursue organ studies at McGill's Schulich School of Music under John Grew. She began organ studies at the age of 17 and was organ scholar at the Church of St John the Divine in Victoria from 2003 until coming to Montreal. In 2004 she was awarded the RCCO first prize at the Greater Victoria Performing Arts festival in organ performance and was a guest performer at the Victoria RCCO's autumn concert event in the same year.

She studied for both the Bachelor's and Master's Degree in performance at the prestigious McGill University and at McGill was awarded the W Douglas Clark Memorial and the Douglas Mackey prize for organ.



Following on from two years as organ scholar and director of the Girls' Choir at Southwell Minster, she was appointed as the inaugural Travis Organ fellow at

All Saints Northampton (the fellowship being named in memory of Miss Valerie Travis, a great supporter of the choral foundation at All Saints who died in October 2008). Hilary is now Assistant Organist at Lincoln Cathedral.

Lieblich Gedackt

The Lieblich Gedackt has been known since the mid-1500's and was popularized in the 19th century by Walcker and Schulze. Schulze introduced it to England in his 1851 Exhibition organ where, according to Wedgwood, it "caused a sensation" and was "quickly raised to perfection" by Willis and Lewis.

The Lieblich Gedackt has been made of both wood and metal. Even when of metal, the 16' and 8' octaves are often of wood. This stop is characterized by a very high cut-up, sometimes even greater than the width of the mouth. As introduced by Schulze it was of stopped metal, having upper lips unflatted and arched. Willis used pierced stoppers, a practice which was widely adopted. The tone of the Lieblich Gedackt is described as quieter, brighter and less thick than the Gedackt or Stopped Diapason.

Newsletter Contributions

Contributions for the March newsletter are required by the end of February. Please write to Bob Jones at 3 Appleton Road, Chester CH2 1JH or (preferred) e-mail at bob.jones25@btinternet.com or telephone 01244 315089 or 07701 052304.