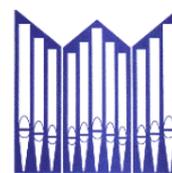


Chester & North-East Wales Organists' & Choirmasters' Association

Affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists



CNEWOCA

Newsletter – January 2018

On line at www.cnewoca.org.uk

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This Month

On 27 January we visit Gresford for an organ workshop to be led by Graham Eccles. The Association website describes it as a workshop on accompaniment, registration "tricks of the trade" and sight reading - last month's newsletter (available on the website) gave more information.

The bells of the parish church of All Saints is one of the Seven Wonders of Wales. Not only are the peal of bells of note, listed it is said for the purity of their tone, but the church itself is remarkable for its size, beauty, interior church monuments, and its churchyard yew trees.

Some of the stained glass windows in the church came from the dissolved abbey at Basingwerk on the banks of the River Dee below Holywell. The church was also richly endowed by Thomas Stanley, 1st Earl of Derby, whose intervention at the Battle of Bosworth helped Welsh-born Henry Tudor overcome Richard III in his successful quest for the throne of England.

The twelve misericords date from the late 15th or early 16th century. Some of these are very evocative, such as "A Devil, erect, driven by a man or woman in long kilted garment, facing left, and, pushing two women on a sledge or barrow into the jaws of Hell. Left Supporter an ape with a urine flask. Right Supporter a fox with a bucket of excrement".

The earliest record of the peal of Gresford bells dates back only to 1714. An apparatus was installed in the belfry in 1877 so that all eight bells could be chimed by one person. The bells are rung regularly for church services, and the old custom of ringing on 5 November is still continued, though it is unclear whether this is to commemorate the successful landing of William of Orange in 1688, or the Gunpowder Plot of Guy Fawkes to blow up Parliament in 1605.

Inside the impressive church, one of the most remarkable finds was discovered in 1907 by workmen, the Gresford Stone. This is a Roman period altar that was hidden for centuries, being used as a stone block in the rebuilding of the medieval church. The altar has four carved sides and a decorative depression at the top, used for the placement of offerings to the goddess Nemesis depicted on one side. The altar was probably part of a

Romano-Celtic shrine dating back to 100 to 350 A.D.

The church is surrounded by a grove of Yews, some of which are equal in size and age to those of Overton listed in the Seven Wonders of Wales. Twenty-five of these were planted in 1726, but one growing near the south gate is older. It was already an ancient tree at the time of Richard II's proclamation that ordered the general planting of yews to support the army and the use of yew in the Longbow.

Next Month

Monday 12 February sees us at Christ Church in Port Sunlight for an open console. The instrument is a 4 manual Willis and is well worth the visit.

The Chairman Writes

It's surprising how quickly things can change; Christmas will be a distant memory and we will be well into the New Year by the time you read this article.

A New Year is an ideal opportunity to have renewed enthusiasm in all we do, or perhaps it is the time to let go of things that you no longer enjoy. I hope you can actively promote CNEWOCA in ways that will both encourage others to listen and encourage some to play the organs in our churches or sing in the choirs. I have used the words of Mark Twain before but feel that we need reminding of them again if we are not to miss out: "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails, explore, dream and discover."

We are very fortunate to have an Organists' & Choirmasters' Association in our area and I hope that you will do your best to take up the opportunities that being a member of CNEWOCA provides. As well as the music associated with our organisation, we shouldn't under-estimate the value of the fellowship we are able to share. Can I encourage you all to try and invite someone to come along to one of our monthly meetings, or even just give me the name and address/e-mail address of someone you think might like to receive a copy of our monthly

Newsletter – it costs us nothing to send a copy of our Newsletter by e-mail but could be a great way of introducing CNEWOCA to prospective new members.

It seems a while since our last event when Alan Thurlow was our guest speaker at Christ Church, Chester. We are very fortunate that high profile and well-respected people like Alan will give their time to provide us with opportunities to improve our knowledge and enjoy ourselves. Our January event is another such occasion, when Graham Eccles will be giving us the chance to improve our playing skills, to learn a few 'tricks of the trade' and to have advice on any difficulties we may have. I do hope a good number of you will come along and support this educational and, I'm sure, enjoyable event, as we are never too old to learn 'new tricks'.

Looking ahead a little, our Association will reach its 20th birthday in 2018. The Committee thought that this was an ideal opportunity to do something special, and we feel we have done this by negotiating with some notable figures in the organ world and some of our own members to compose organ music to mark the occasion. We have subsequently approached several publishers about the project and the exciting news is that Banks of York have agreed to publish the pieces in a book celebrating our 20th Birthday. Please put 2.30pm on Saturday 19 May in your diaries, when we will be celebrating at St Andrew's URC, Handbridge, Chester. We are grateful to John Hosking for composing one of the pieces and for agreeing to perform the other pieces from the book for us, and then we can enjoy a buffet and the opportunity to share a few memories from the past 20 years and perhaps our hopes for the future of the Association. More details to follow, but again, please put this date in your diaries and support your Association.

May I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing you at some of the events that have been organised for the months ahead. In the meantime, if you'd like to discuss anything to do with CNEWOCA, don't hesitate to contact me on 01244 674878, 07939 645688 or by e-mail angiejohnevs@uwclub.net

John Evans

What's On?

Chester Cathedral

Thursdays at 1.10pm

- 25 Jan** Jeffrey Makinson - Lincoln Cathedral
1 Feb Philip Rushforth - Chester Cathedral
8 Feb Andrew J Wyatt - Chester Cathedral
15 Feb James Parsons - Wales
22 Feb Roger Fisher - Organist Emeritus

St George's Hall, Liverpool

Tues 27 Feb Ian Tracey (Liverpool Cathedral)
Admission £2.50

St Chad's, Shrewsbury

Fri 16 Feb Martin J Brown - Bangor Cathedral
Admission Free - Retiring Collection

Music at Wesley

Tuesdays, 12.45pm to 1.35pm

- 30 Jan** Jessica Zhu (Piano)
6 Feb Chetham's School of Music
Instrumentalists
13 Feb Selim Ungut (Piano)
20 Feb Duncan Anderson (Viola), Leanne
Cody (Piano)
27 Feb **The Forum Piano Trio** (Violin, Cello,
Piano)

Admission Free - Retiring Collection

Music at Wesley

Sunday 4 February, 7.30pm

St John's Festival Orchestra perform

Dido's Lament - Purcell

Piano Concerto No 23 A Major K.488 - Mozart

Concert Aria "Vado, ma Dove? O Dei" - Mozart

Symphony No.5 in B b Major - Schubert

Admission £10 (Under 18's £7)

Concerts at Trelogan

Following on from previous newsletters, the concert, which clashed with our meeting on 4 November, was full but is being repeated on Saturday 10 February at 3.00pm. To recap, this will be a duet recital with Graham Eccles. The programme consists of piano duets by Fauré & Schubert and the Piano Concerto in B flat (K450) by Mozart. No admission charge, but a suggested donation of £10 helps prepare the instruments.

At the time of writing the newsletter, seating for about 15 is available - Roger and Gill would appreciate a 'phone call (01745 561072) so please ring ASAP to ensure that your seat is reserved.

The Organ of Manchester Cathedral

Following on from the article in last month's newsletter, Robin Newby has written to me:

The (Sir Norman) Stoller Organ Console 'under construction' is for the Tribune (the Quire Organ Pipes have been coated in 23.5 carat Gold) was a very fascinating read and the "TubiGrip" well who knew?, but the mobile console and please note on a scissors lift platform dais is used for recitals

as Thomas Trotter so ably demonstrated, Chris Stokes also had difficulty to find some of the stops in the new layout before Thomas gave a thorough workout with the new Pipe and shades with a dazzling pedal action in the final part of 5 continuous movements of "La Chiesa del Sole" in Memoriam John Scott by Franics Pott b.1957 with the composer in the audience, with audience notes stating the Toccata and Chorale "*leads to a dramatic coda in which great virtuosity is demanded, particularly in the pedal department*". **Robin Newby**

Robin has kindly provided the following photographs:



James Parsons

English Organist James Parsons, for many years a familiar face in music and organ education, is one of the organ's most articulate advocates.

Recently Head of Student Development at the Royal College of Organists, he is recognised as one of the UK's foremost organ teachers, and as a distinguished international recitalist.

As Organist, then Director of Music, at Oundle School, he was for twenty-five years Founder-Director of Oundle for Organists, hosted by Oundle International Festival (which he launched in 1985). James has enjoyed the privilege of opening doors for hundreds of young organists through Oundle's and RCO's inspirational courses.

James is known too for his international career as a concert organist and recording artist. His recital engagements throughout the British Isles, and tours to France, Holland, Germany, Scandinavia, USA, Czech Republic, Iceland, Russia, Australia and South Africa have received enthusiastic critical acclaim. He has just returned from playing recitals and

teaching Conservatoire students in St Petersburg. Earlier this year he spent ten days in Lagos, Nigeria, to play a concert and front an organ-school at the Cathedral of Christ.

Pierre Pincemaille 1956 – 2018

Jim Treloar writes: I was very sad to read of the death of the Parisian organist Pierre Pincemaille on 12 January at the relatively young age of 61. In my view he was one of the great Parisian organists, his hero being Pierre Cochereau, after whom he hoped to be compared. It has been said that he would have liked to have been chosen for the post at Notre Dame following the death of Cochereau but it was not to be - maybe he was still too young at the time. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire under Rolande Fachenelli amongst others and carried off many prizes including the Grand Prix de Chartres in 1990. He was appointed to the post of titulaire at the great Cavaille-Coll organ at St Denis in 1987 and insisted on being the sole titulaire in contrast with other major Paris churches where the post is often shared. He would like to have made alterations to the organ as he felt the console was uncomfortable, but he was not allowed to as it was designated an historic monument, but he did manage to have a new bench installed. He was an amazing improviser, some of his improvisations being available on CD, and I would recommend them should you come across them. I was fortunate to hear him improvising at St Denis on a visit to various Paris organs in 2009 and in a 'tour de force' lasting about 20 minutes everyone was glued to their seats. He also recorded all 10 of Widor's symphonies on 10 different Cavaille-Coll instruments, a superb set although I don't think that it is available at present. He appeared on the recent Fugue Films DVD and CD set about Cavaille-Coll and his instruments, also well recommended if you haven't already purchased it. In that he infers that the console is uncomfortable when he says that he doesn't need to take any exercise, as playing the instrument every Sunday is exercise enough. He was a great character and organist and will be sadly missed. **Jim Treloar**

Newsletter Contributions

Thank you to those who have helped out with contributions to this month's newsletter. Credit will be given for those who provide articles unless they prefer to remain anonymous. I prefer to remain anonymous, but if an article is written in the first person without any credit being given, it is probably me.

Contributions for the February newsletter are required by the second week in 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.