

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

Affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists



CNEWOCA

Newsletter – March 2018

On line at www.cnewoca.org.uk

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This Month

We are at Hamilton St Methodist Church in Hoole, Chester on Saturday 10 March between 1.30pm and 3.30pm for a singing workshop led by Enid Whittle. More information in John's article as Chairman but this is an opportunity to explore the "choirmasters" part of our title.

Next Month

Tuesday 17 April, 7.30pm at Chester Cathedral. Exact details of the meeting are not known at present, but I am sure it will include an open console.

The Chairman Writes

Our visit to Port Sunlight proved to be very popular, with some of our fellow organists from the Liverpool Association joining us, as well as very enjoyable. We received a warm welcome from Jonathan Bowden, the organist and a senior member of Henry Willis & Sons. Jonathan demonstrated the organ before we were able to play it ourselves and enjoy the refreshments that had been kindly arranged for us. The organ sounded magnificent and was a joy to play. Is this the best organ located in a United Reformed Church?

I'm not sure if you will receive the Newsletter before our March event, however, it is important for us to remember that we are an Association for 'Choirmasters' as well as an 'Organists'. 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. 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.

I'm writing this article the day before I go on holiday. Angie and I will be heading up to Norway and the North Cape in search of the Northern Lights, as well as hoping to have a relaxing couple of weeks with no phone or internet! The Northern Lights are very much

a natural phenomenon, out of this world and beyond our control. When we hopefully do see them, the words and music that will come to mind are "The Heavens are telling the glory of God, the wonder of his work displays the firmament". Music can be so inspiring and a great aid to our memories. I am taking part in two performances of Stainer's Crucifixion before Easter and then a performance of Jerusalem Joy, an Easter Musical in popular style by Roger Jones, on Easter Sunday. The pieces are very different in style, with Crucifixion being traditional but requiring a reasonable four-part choir. Jerusalem Joy is far more flexible to accommodate the voices available and the notes are certainly not as difficult; however, there is a need for the choir to get more involved in the drama of the story if it is to be a success. Do we really get involved in the story behind the music that we sing or play? We need to sing with our hearts as well as our voices, and there's probably no greater time to do that than at Easter when we rejoice in the resurrection. May I take this opportunity to wish you every blessing for Easter, and may it be a time when you feel the new life of our risen Lord.

There are two other events coming soon which you need to be aware of, firstly Sunday 25th March when British Summer Time begins (clocks forward an hour if you don't want to be late for Church) and then April Fools' Day, this year put back a week to 8th April to avoid clashing with Easter.

April Fools' Day reminds me of the late great astronomer, Patrick Moore. Patrick announced on BBC Radio 2 that at 9:47am a once-in-a-lifetime astronomical event would occur. The planet Pluto would pass behind Jupiter, temporarily causing a gravitational alignment that would counteract and lessen the Earth's own gravity. Moore told his listeners that if they jumped in the air at the exact moment that this planetary alignment occurred, they would experience a floating sensation. When 9:47am arrived, BBC2 began to receive hundreds of phone calls from listeners claiming to have felt the sensation. One woman even reported that she and her eleven friends had risen from their chairs and floated around the room. My advice to CNEWOCA members is to reach for the stars, live the dream, but keep your feet firmly on the ground. The evenings are

getting lighter and the weather is improving, so I hope we will meet up in the next couple of months at the events that have been organised. In the meantime, 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.

Latest News from Down Under

Freemason Glenn Langford, 51, has been granted bail after being accused of damaging a pipe organ at Brisbane's Masonic Memorial Centre on Wednesday night. Authorities discovered him lying inside the sizable instrument, drunk and naked. He had with him a remote-controlled police car and toy gun, and was arrested at the scene.

Langford allegedly broke into and flooded the premises by turning on taps, which set off a fire alarm alerting the police to his presence. He stands accused of damaging the pipe organ and a decorative wall. Insured for over a million dollars and installed in 1930, the organ's damage is believed to be irreparable, according to the building's caretaker.

Langford's lawyer told the court yesterday that his client had drunk a bottle of Johnnie Walker and had entered the building with every intention of distributing food to the homeless. The court heard that Langford had recently lost his job and had been drinking heavily due to the breakdown of his 16-year relationship.

Langford was released on the condition that he not venture within 100 metres of the Centre. When queried as to why he was found naked in the organ, Langford told 7 News that he didn't have an explanation. "Things just got a little loose... I was out of it. I apologise to all the righteous Freemasons everywhere."

Linda Owens RIP

It is with great sadness that we have a lost another member - Linda, wife of Bob Owens, who died peacefully on 19 February at the Hospice of the Good Shepherd. Linda was organist at a number of local churches and, along with Bob, was an active member of the Association since its formation in 1998.

Our thoughts are with Bob, daughter Rhian and other family members at this time.

What's On?

Chester Cathedral

Thursdays at 1.10pm

- 8 Mar** Richard Walker - St Chad's Shrewsbury
15 Mar Rachel Mahon - Chester Cathedral
22 Mar Philip Rushforth - Chester Cathedral
29 Mar Andrew J Wyatt - Chester Cathedral
5 Apr Roger Fisher - Organist Emeritus
12 Apr Graham Eccles - St Asaph
19 Apr Philip Rushforth - Chester Cathedral

St George's Hall, Liverpool

12.45pm to 1.30pm

- Tues 13 Mar** Ian Tracey (Liverpool Cathedral)
Tues 17 Apr Ian Tracey (Liverpool Cathedral)
Admission £2.50

Liverpool Cathedral

11.15am

- Mon 2 Apr** Ian Tracey (Liverpool Cathedral)
Admission £5

St Chad's, Shrewsbury

12.40pm to 1.20pm

- Fri 16 Mar** Samuel Hudson – Blackburn Cathedral
Tues 3 Apr Richard Walker - St Chad's
Fri 20 Apr Andrew Kirk - St Mary Redcliffe
Admission Free - Retiring Collection

Music at Wesley

Tuesdays 12.45pm to 1.35pm

- 13 Mar** The Dalbrion Clarinet Trio (Clarinet, Cello, Piano)
20 Mar Chetham's School of Music Pianists
27 Mar Hayley Parkes (Piano)
3 Apr Ellis Thomas (Piano)
10 Apr Wilmslow Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet
17 Apr Deborah Catterall (Soprano), Hugh Cherry (Lute)
24 Apr Chetham's School of Music Brass Ensembles
Admission Free - Retiring Collection

Organ Recitals at Wesley

12.45pm to 1.35pm

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

St Peter's, Waverton

Palm Sunday 25 March at 6.30pm

Stainer's Crucifixion

Performed by the Waverton Singers
John Evans - Conductor
Graham Eccles - Organ
Admission Free - Retiring Collection

Saltney Methodist Church

Tuesday 27 March at 7.30pm

Stainer's Crucifixion

Performed by the Waverton Singers
John Evans - Conductor
Bob Jones - Organ
Admission Free - Retiring Collection

Hoole Methodist

Church, Chester

Easter Sunday 1 April at 3.00pm

"Jerusalem Joy" by Roger Jones

Performed by Hamilton Street Choir Fellowship

John Evans – Conductor

Dennis Jones - Piano

Admission Free - Retiring Collection

Organ Recitals Nationwide

details on www.organrecitals.com

John Hosking – Composer

Jim Treloar writes: "We all know that John Hosking has been Assistant Director of Music at St Asaph Cathedral for many years now and that we often have the pleasure of hearing him play at Chester Cathedral as well, sometimes standing in for the music staff at Chester if the full complement is unavailable. In recent years John has turned his hand to composing, not just for the organ but choral music as well, including Mass Settings, Canticle Settings, miscellaneous choral works and most recently a Sonata for clarinet and piano, a commission for the 2017 Conwy Music Festival. Since 2016 he has combined with Olivia Hunt, formerly head chorister at Chester, termed the HH Classical Duo performing at many venues and this coming year will be opening both the Beaumaris and Conwy festivals. Fortunately many of John's compositions are available on CD and I can thoroughly recommend them. The most recent one entitled 'Angels of Creation' includes his latest organ composition, the 14 Stations of the Cross, played by Sebastian Thomson on the splendid Kenneth Ticknell organ at Keble College Oxford. The CD includes works by other contemporary composers and was the editor's choice in Organists' Review. A fine choral disc is 'All Angels Cry Aloud' sung by the chapel choir from Selwyn College Cambridge which includes two canticle settings, the Chester Service and the Bangor Service. This CD had a favourable review in the Guardian. A particular favourite composition of mine is his major five movement suite, 'Hommage à Paris' which has been recorded on the organ of Gloucester Cathedral by Jonathan Hope, in which John pays homage to various Paris organists. It is a superb CD which I have already played many times.

John has his own web site: johnhosking.weebly.com where all the above details are available plus much more. Worth investigating."

Jim Treloar

Ray Harper RIP

As reported in recent e-mails, Ray died peacefully in the Countess of Chester Hospital on 11 February aged 88. On his retirement as a church organist, Ray decided to "sell" his sheet music and donate the proceeds to Charity - this is taken from a report in the newspaper at that time:-

"For 62 years Ray Harper placed his sheet music on the organ before sitting down to play at services in Chester's churches. Now he is donating his sheet music to raise funds for charity. The 85-year-old of Blacon retired in November and is offering his sheet music for donations to go to Macmillan Cancer Support pay for nurses – so far he has raised £255.

Ray said: "Having celebrated my 85th birthday I decided to call it a day as a church organist. I believe I was given a God-given gift and I thought it was only right I use it in his service. Now, I wish to pass on the organ music in my library to other organists."

Ray's first stint was at St Mary's Church, Handbridge, in September 1951 with his last at St. Werburgh's RC Church. In between he performed at St Chad's Church Blacon, Blacon Army Camp Chapel, St Bartholomew's Sealand, Holy Trinity Church Chester, Holy Trinity Without-the-Walls Blacon and St John the Evangelist Ashton Hayes. During his 14 years at St Werburgh's Ray played at Sunday evening services at St John the Baptist Aldford and St Mary's Bruera.

Playing provided humorous anecdotes. He said: "I arrived at St Werburgh's one Sunday morning to be told they thought the blower had gone on the organ. I switched the organ on and it made very loud raspberry noises." Ray realised the embarrassing fault was in fact a piece of loose leather inside. And he faced many late brides. Ray said: "One wedding was supposed to start at 1pm.



I'd been playing since 12.30pm but the bride didn't turn up until 3pm. I had to leave at five to three because I had another service that day." Another tardy bride promoted Ray to share a secret musical joke with the choir. He said: "As I played I slipped in a few notes from the song Why Are We Waiting?"

On another occasion a curate received similar treatment. Ray said: "The curate used a lot of incense. At the end of the gospel I played a fanfare and included a bit of Smoke Gets In Your Eyes." Music brought Ray and wife Brenda together after she joined St Chad's choir. When he retired from his day job in 1994 he was principal superannuation officer at Cheshire County Council." - taken from the Chester Chronicle Our thoughts are with Brenda at this very sad time - it would have been their Golden Wedding later this year.

Newsletter Contributions

Contributions for the April newsletter are required by the end of March. 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.