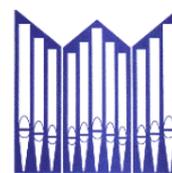


Chester & North-East Wales Organists' & Choirmasters' Association

Affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists



CNEWOCA

Newsletter – January 2017

On line at www.cnewoca.org.uk

Facebook - www.facebook.com/groups/CNEWOCA

This Month

Visit to Henry Willis Organ Works, Liverpool

Please note the change of date

Saturday 14 January, 10.30am

The full address is *Henry Willis & Sons Ltd, Rotunda Organ Works, 72 St Anne Street, Liverpool L3 3DY* – however . . .

A warning from Mersey Travel that from 3rd January for 6 weeks there will be NO trains to Liverpool; however, there will be an express bus service. The express buses will operate from Birkenhead North and Birkenhead Central. Travellers are advised not to use the Tunnels, particularly at peak times, and more Ferry Boats will operate across the river. Plus, for information, there will be further disruption on the Wirral Line - the six-week period referred to above is followed by around three months of trains terminating at James St.

The date of this month's event has been changed because on 14th January we will be able to see the organ case for Leiden Cathedral assembled in the works in Liverpool (the organ based on an instrument from Birkenhead with other additions). The following week it will be dismantled and taken to Leiden and it is likely that there would be no one in Liverpool on 21st January to host a visit. Sorry we have had to change the date but it is exciting to get a chance to be amongst the first people to see this new organ case. For more information - see later article.

Next Month

Saturday 18 February 2.00 pm
Ellesmere College

A chance to hear and play two pipe organs - the 1968 Hill Norman and Beard and, acquired in 1980, the 1864 Schulze organ which was rescued from St Mary's Parish Church, Tyne Dock.

The Chairman Writes

Most of us get used to our regular routine and feel some degree of comfort knowing what lies ahead. However, as we begin a new year, it's an ideal time to be brave and try something new: "You can't walk on

water unless you have the courage to step out of the boat!"

But first, let's look back on our December event. It wasn't far for many of us to go to Christ Church, a building that is somewhat hidden away, but one that is home to one of the finest quality organs for miles around. I hadn't been in the Church for over ten years and was pleasantly surprised how it has managed to open up its worship space by removing the choir pews and, in so doing, has greatly improved the visibility of their beautiful organ. The Brindley & Foster organ, now over 100 years old, is pretty much untouched apart from a thorough clean in the early 1990's, and was both a privilege and a joy to play. A big "Thank You" to the folk at Christ Church for giving us such a warm welcome, along with the seasonal refreshments, which went down very well.

It's Christmas Day as I am writing this article for you, and for the first time in about 35 years I haven't played for a Christmas service. On Christmas Eve, I went to a communion service but it was not in a church nor was it led by an ordained minister; the service took place in a Lounge/Bar which had been the venue for a show earlier in the evening. The words during the service were very familiar, being based on Corinthians 11: 23 – 26, and the bread and wine still symbolised the body and blood of Jesus, however, there was a feeling that the message had escaped from the confines of a church building and was reaching out to the world. As the service progressed I realised that the backdrop from the evening's show was still in place, in large letters there was one word filling the stage "ABBA"; a coincidence?

In the same way that many churches struggle to get the "Good News" outside their church building, CNEWOCA has a similar dilemma. If CNEWOCA keep doing the same things in familiar places, we may well feel comfortable but we will not be increasing the awareness of our organisation. We have a lot to offer, and with our enthusiastic committee, we have the ability to do even more, but we need your ideas and support to make our existence more widely known – your ideas please. January may be an ideal time to invite a friend along, when we are indeed

venturing outside the usual church venues and will be visiting the Willis Organ Factory. I'm sure this will be a fascinating tour, so an ideal opportunity to invite a friend.

Have any of you made any unusual resolutions for 2017? Often sharing your resolutions can help you achieve them, because you'll receive encouragement when we are generally surrounded by people who care. If you need some musical help, this Association will try and help, and if you enjoy fellowship, our monthly events and gatherings at Chester Cathedral Thursday Lunchtime Recitals may be just what you need.

As the New Year begins, perhaps you can try something new or even give something or someone another chance. Go forward in faith remembering the words of the song "*Abba, Father, let me be yours and yours alone. May my will forever be yours and yours alone. Never let my heart grow cold, never let me go*"

Wishing you every blessing for the year ahead, reminding you that I'm always glad to see you, or hear from you by e-mail angiejohnevans@uwclub.net or by phone (07939 645688).

Further information regarding our visit to the Willis factory (Saturday 14 January)

On 19 May 2006, in the presence of His Excellency the British Ambassador to the Netherlands Mr Lyn Parker, the Stichting (Foundation) Cathedral Leiden formally announced the intention that a large English organ was to be brought into use in the Hooglandse Kerk, Leiden, in mid-2015. The new organ would not only be the largest English organ in the Netherlands, it even promised to be one of the largest in Continental Europe.

The organ in question was built in 1892 by the world-famous organ builder Henry 'Father' Willis, and is in almost original condition. The quality, character and tonal colour of this organ guarantee that the cathedral organ in its completed state will meet the highest requirements and expectations of the Cathedral.

.....continued overleaf.....

What's On?

Chester Cathedral

Thursdays at 1.10pm

- 12 Jan** Anthony Gritten (London)
19 Jan Paul Bowen (Yorkshire)
26 Jan Philip Rushforth
2 Feb Andrew Cantrill (Suffolk)
9 Feb Rachel Mahon
16 Feb George de Voil (London)
23 Feb David Hardie (Birmingham)

Ellesmere College

Saturday 14 January at 3.30pm

Stuart Whillis

St John's, Hurst Green

Admission by donation:
suggested £5 - £10

Chester Cathedral

Sunday 22 January at 6.30pm

Andrew Wyatt

Oliver Messiaen:

La Nativité du Seigneur

Admission Free

Welsh Presbyterian Church

(Music at Wesley)

St John Street, Chester

Tuesdays at 12.45pm

- 17 Jan** Chatham's School of Music
(Instrumentalists)
24 Jan Hayley Parkes (Piano)
31 Jan Heather Heighway (Soprano),
Tim Kennedy (Piano)
7 Feb Chatham's School of Music
(Pianist)
14 Feb Alison Loram (Violin),
Christopher Symons (Piano)
21 Feb Leben String Quartet

Admission free - retiring collection

Bangor University,

Prichard-Jones Hall

Wednesday 18 January at 6.00pm

Robert Jones

Our Lady and St James, Bangor

Admission free

St Chad's, Shrewsbury

Tuesday 7 February at 12.40pm

Anthony Pinel

Admission free

Organ Recitals Nationwide

details on www.organrecitals.com

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The presence of two monumental organs in a single cathedral, the renowned baroque De Swart / Van Hagerbeer organ and the new English Romantic organ, will bring about the creation of a fantastic organ podium in Leiden. The city of Leiden can already boast a number of fine, and in many cases historic, baroque organs, such as the Van Hagerbeer organ in the Pieterskerk. Through the realisation of the English cathedral organ and with all the future concerts and events, together with their collaboration with other concert organisers and the Stichting Orgelstad Leiden, the Stichting Cathedral Organ Leiden will make a substantial contribution to the promotion of Leiden as the 'city of organs'. With the purchase of the 'Father' Willis organ, the contours of the English cathedral organ will be both visible and audible.

The Henry Willis organ was originally in St Mark's, Birkenhead. In 1991 the Church closed and the 1892 Father Willis organ was transferred to Holland as a house organ. This organ is now the basis of the new organ for Leiden Cathedral. This instrument is a fine example from the period during which Father Willis brought back much of the timbre of his earlier organs, which had been suppressed through the 1880's due to the fashions of the day. The reeds in particular are, tonally, extremely well-developed and exhibit the 'clang' for which this company's reeds became well known. The Father Willis organ is to be restored retaining all of the original pipework, soundboards and actions (Great & Swell actions being 'Willis Lever'). It is planned to add six registers to this instrument along standard Willis lines of the day. The original files detailing the



St Mark's Church in the process of demolition

history of this organ show that the specification was somewhat restricted in 1892 by financial constraints at the time, which explains the absence of a Voix Céleste and the *prepared for* Pedal Ophicleide.

Once restored, the Father Willis will occupy a position on the North side of the Cathedral Nave. In due course three new divisions are envisaged: Choir/Positive;

Solo and Pedal Organs. A new Four Manual Console will be constructed to play the new divisions and the Father Willis together. The Father Willis actions will be made playable electrically from the new console as well as being playable independently from their original console.

In Response

to the question about the B flat off the pedal board (November and December 2016 newsletters), Roger Fisher has kindly written to me as follows:

Robin Newby has added a new theory about the bottom B natural on the pedals. Like Elgar's Enigma Variations there have been many attempts to solve this problem and none of them are 100% convincing.

The most convincing that I've heard came from the late Cecil (Sam) Clutton. He refers to the proposed playing contest between Bach and Marchand. We know that Marchand chickened out of this and fled back to France, but it seems likely that Bach wrote a piece entitled "Pièce d'Orgue" with a view to a possible return visit to France. In Bach's time, many of the French pedalboards had a compass that went down to the A below our bottom C or even down to F!

This theory seems fine, but there are problems:-

1. Bach also took the pedal part up to Middle D, which meant that the pedal board would have needed more than 30 notes (i.e. very wide indeed).
2. It seems that on many organs, only the reeds went down to FFF.
3. The French pedal boards were designed so that one would need to put the whole foot on the note to get it down (very short keys) and the fluency possible even on 18th century German pedal boards could not easily be achieved.

So, it seems likely that Bach indulged in *wishful thinking* with the bottom B and wrote it in the hope that organ building would catch up with him eventually! This seems to be one of music's many mysteries - I'm sure we shall never know the answer!

Music at Wesley

Tuesday Lunchtime Concerts

Please note that as from 17 January and until further notice the concerts will take place in the Presbyterian Church on the opposite side of the road - this is due to the worship area reordering project. The Café will remain open as normal.

Newsletter Contributions

Contributions for the February newsletter are required before 10 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.