

Birmingham Organists' Association

affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists



<https://BhamOrgan.org.uk>



<https://iao.org.uk>

BOA newsletter volume 17 no 3, Christmas 2021

Just as we thought – indeed hoped – that, with the success of the UK's vaccination programme, our lives may start to return to something nearer normal, along comes the Omicron variant.

Nevertheless, your Council has started to plan a programme – for the first part of 2022, at least. So we hope that the details given here of proposed events, together with news of recent goings-on, will be of interest.

Meanwhile, your President Nigel Morris and the BOA Council take this opportunity to wish all members & friends a Happy Christmas – and do try to stay safe & well!

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PAST EVENTS

IAO Midlands Organ Day, Northampton: Sat 25th Sept.

The organising committee had worked extremely hard to put together an interesting programme and had engaged excellent tutors delivering sessions on hymn- and psalm-playing along with plainsong and general accompaniment. The grand finale was to have been a recital given by Callum Alger and Andrew Reid, both former Organ Scholars of St Matthew's Church, Northampton, the venue for the day. Unfortunately, at the eleventh hour Andrew had to withdraw due to a member of his family testing positive for Covid. However, Martin Baker stepped in to fill the gap admirably.

Sadly, despite the best efforts of the organisers with regard to publicity and promotion, numbers attending were well below those of previous similar events.

Nigel Morris



The console of St Matthew's, Northampton

A detailed article about this event appears in the December issue of *Organists' Review*.

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Recital by Paul Hale: Sat 2nd Oct.



BOA members were invited to this opening recital, given by Paul Hale, on the 1905 Norman and Beard organ of St Margaret's, Olton (presided over by BOA member Eddie Guard), which has been rebuilt by Jonathan Wallace of Henry Groves & Son Ltd. It was appropriate that Paul gave the opening recital because he was not only the consultant to the project but also had known and worked on the organ while at Solihull School, many years ago. At that time, he had tried to rectify some of the faults resulting from a poorly conceived rebuild in the 1960s.

The programme, which was designed to show off the various colours of the instrument, began with Mendelssohn's *War March of the Priests*, making use of the repositioned *Tromba*, now speaking effectively down the nave. This was followed by Bach's Fantasia in G (BWV 572) played in early 20th century style with an exciting *crescendo* in the middle section. Then came the Albinoni *Adagio* and Whitlock's *Fanfare*, again featuring the *Tromba*.

One of the main changes during the rebuild was to turn the organ around internally so that the sound from all departments now speaks clearly down the church, while the Choir Organ was moved from the rear of the chamber to speak into the chancel.

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The next piece, *Jongen's Chant de May*, featured the quieter voices and the central item was Franck's third *Chorale*. The last three pieces were Bédard's *Variations on Amazing Grace*, *Romance Sans Paroles* by Joseph Bonnet and *Knightsbridge March* by Eric Coates, the latter reminding some of us of the theme tune for the BBC radio (and later TV) programme 'In Town Tonight', broadcast from 1933 to 1960.

Eddie Guard

BOA Annual Meeting & Recital: Sat 13th Nov.

This was the first local, 'live' meeting of members since the Covid pandemic struck, and we were given a warm welcome by Eddie and Kath Guard to St Margaret's, Olton with its excellent facilities, including welcoming refreshments. The formalities of the AGM were efficiently and speedily dealt with by our President, Nigel Morris, who thanked Council members for their work.



After the formal proceedings, and a short break for additional drinks, we moved into the church for the recital, given by Callum Alger, Director of Music of the Collegiate Church of St Peter, Wolverhampton, and first-prize winner at the 2018 IAO-RCO organ competition.

Callum's first item was *Allegro maestoso* from Elgar's Sonata no.1 in G, giving an opportunity to explore many of the variety of colours which are available on the successfully rebuilt organ. He followed this with the *Fantasia in C minor* (BWV562) by J S Bach. Next was the atmospheric *Prelude & Fugue in B major* by Camille Saint-Saëns. Then, I think largely unknown to most of us, there was *Resignazione* by Franz Liszt. The recital ended with the *Allegro vivace* (from *Symphonie V*) by Charles-Marie Widor.

The Saint-Saëns and Liszt pieces were not helped by the church's somewhat dry acoustic; nevertheless, a most enjoyable and entertaining programme, which was well supported by members of St Margaret's congregation.

John Stormont

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday 24 January, 7.30pm

York revisited: an online meeting

(joining instructions to follow by email a few days before the event)

Some members will remember our outing to York in the summer of 2017 (and recall those sunny, carefree, pre-Covid days!), when we were able to hear and play six very different organs in city centre churches. On such occasions, the association normally makes a donation to each church visited as a small 'thank-you', but this time we were asked if all the money could go to one church in order to support the rebuilding of a 'Father' Willis organ. This online video presentation will tell the story of that organ, now completed and playable – as you will hear – in the church of St Denys, York.

Saturday 26 February, 11am

Visit to Wolverhampton

An opportunity for members to hear and play two large instruments: the newly restored organ in St Peter's, III/51, Willis/Michael Farley (a visit postponed form last year), together with a visit to BOA member Peter Morris's church, St Michael's Tettenhall, Compton III /46. Peter tells us that among the folk who learned the organ at St Michael's are Peter King (ex-Bath Abbey) and Francis O'Gorman (the new editor of *Organists' Review*).

Tuesday 8 March, 7.30pm

Organ competition for RBC students in Years 1 & 2

Advanced organ students at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire enter several prestigious international organ competitions – and win prizes. BOA Council, in consultation with Daniel Moulton, has decided to offer cash prizes from our Leonard Gibbons Fund for a competition involving Year 1 & 2 organ students to be held in St Chad's Cathedral.

Details, including the recital programmes, will be available later.

April (date to be arranged)

St Chad's Cathedral

An opportunity for members to play the magnificent Walker organ and – following the March event – make a donation to replenish the coffers of our Leonard Gibbons Fund.

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NEWS

Annual subscriptions

It's almost time for annual subscriptions to be paid.

Most of you continue to pay by Standing Order, which is collected at the start of January, so this was particularly helpful during the lockdown periods. A few members, who still pay in cash or by cheque at meetings, did not have the opportunity to do so earlier this year; so if that applies to you, please consider paying for *both* years now.

Cheques, payable to Birmingham Organists' Association, can be sent to BOA Treasurer, 'Sunny Bank', Mill Street, Penkridge, Staffs, ST19 5AY.

Annual subscription rates remain unchanged as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Standard membership | £14 |
| Retired/unwaged members | £10 |
| Student members | FREE |

Please add £3 if you require a paper copy of the newsletter to be posted to you.



Leonard Gibbons Fund

As announced a year ago when we anticipated (correctly) that there would be few 'live' meetings, 50% of the value of your 2021 subscriptions has been transferred to our Leonard Gibbons Fund, which exists to support (mainly young) student organists. As a result, the Fund has recently increased by over £200 in addition to over £500 from a maturing investment. Special thanks to those members who regularly contribute to the Fund via standing order when subscriptions are collected.

St Chad's on BBC-1 this Christmas

Christmas Eve Midnight Mass from Birmingham's Roman Catholic cathedral is being broadcast 'live' on national television at 11.45pm. Do watch it, or set a video-recording or use BBC iPlayer if you are playing for a service yourself at that time!

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NOTICES

The *Thursday LIVE* series from St Chad's Cathedral continues...

Thursday *LIVE*

40-minute Organ Recitals 2022

St Chad's Metropolitan Cathedral, Birmingham
First Thursday of each month 1.15pm - 1.55pm



6 January
Paul Carr
3 February
David Saint
3 March
John Cotterill
7 April
Paul Carr
5 May
Nigel Morris
9 June*
Paul Carr
7 July
Travis Baker
4 August
Paul Carr
11 August
Peter King
18 August
Stefan Klemm
25 August
David Saint
1 September
Daniel Cook
6 October
Paul Carr
3 November
David Saint
1 December
Paul Carr

*A week late to avoid the Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday

Admission free
Retiring collection

St Chad's Cathedral
St Chad's Queensway
Birmingham B4 6EU

thursdaylive.org

 youtube.com/thursdayliveorganrecitals

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Symphony Hall Organ Concert, Monday 31 January

At 1pm on Monday 31st January, City Organist and BOA honorary member Thomas Trotter will be launching his brand new CD, which was recorded during lockdown in 2021 in Symphony Hall.

He will be playing a selection of tracks from this CD, including the *Allegro vivace* from Widor's 5th Symphony, *Serenade* by Bourgeois, *Five Dances* by Gardner, *Mozart Changes* by Gardonyi, and his own stunning transcription of the *Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Dukas.

Copies of the CD will be available at the end of the concert.

IAO London Organ Day, Saturday 5 March

This takes place at St Peter's, Vauxhall, and features three instruments and four performers: Pam Hume, John Kitchen MBE, Jean Martyn and Anne Page.

More details and online booking at
<https://iao.org.uk/london-organ-day/>