Chester & North East Wales
Organists' & Choirmasters' Association

Newsletter - April 2023

Dear Member,

OUR VISIT TO BLACKBURN

John Evans writes:

After two days of wintery conditions, including snow for many of us, the journey to Blackburn on Saturday 11th March was relatively straightforward. We arrived soon after 10am and were able to use free parking only a few yards from the door into the Cathedral. We received a very warm welcome from our friend and the Organist in Residence at Blackburn Cathedral, John Hosking.

The site has been home to a church for over a thousand years, with the first stone church built there in Norman times. With the creation of the Diocese of Blackburn in 1926,the parish church was raised to cathedral status. The church, which was built in 1826 and designed by architect John Palmer, now forms the cathedral's nave.

In the early 1930s, fundraising began to enlarge the cathedral so that the building complemented its newfound importance. By 1938, enough money had been raised and work began on enlarging the new cathedral. Although work was interrupted by the war, it was resumed afterwards and continued into the early 1960s. After the death of architect W.A. Forsyth in 1950, architect Laurence King joined the project and designed the distinctive lantern tower. The lantern tower, which consists of 56 different panes of coloured glass, with a modernist slender aluminium spire, was completed in 1967.

The cathedral was finally completed in 1977 and what had been built over the past decades was finally consecrated as Blackburn Cathedral that year.

John gave us a brilliant demonstration of the world-class Organ, built by JW Walker and rebuilt by Wood of Huddersfield. Then members enjoyed a good time to play and explore it themselves before consuming a hearty lunch in the Cathedral's Café. There are many unusual features to the organ, including the swell reeds being controlled by a separate swell to the swell flues. The pipes are located in four separate locations, clearly on display and speaking freely into the building.

After lunch we drove a few miles to the church of St Silas, where we were warmly greeted by church members and the organist David Brindle. The church has a wonderful 3 manual Harrison organ, restored in recent times by David Wells. The organ was glorious in sound and to play. Look out for a series of Saturday morning recitals they are organising, including one to be given by John Hosking in May.

Blackburn might seem a long way from our Area, however, those who made the journey were glad they did, and that they took the opportunity to play two special organs in two fine churches.

OUR NEXT MEETING

On **Monday, 17 April at 7.30pm** we will visit **St Asaph Cathedral** 25 High St, Saint Asaph LL17 0RD by kind invitation of the Director of Music, Paul Booth. We will hear and play the organ originally built by William Hill in 1824 and most recently rebuilt by Wood of Huddersfield in 1998.

You may also wish to attend one of their 2023 organ recitals:

Wednesday 12th April	Christopher Enston, St Asaph Cathedral
Wednesday 3rd May	Graham Eccles, Freelance Organist
Wednesday 7th June	Ian Tracey, Organist Titulaire of Liverpool Cathedral
Wednesday 5th July	Jonathan Pilgrim, Brecon Cathedral
Wednesday 16th August	Ian Higginson, Gloucestershire
Wednesday 6th September	Jon Barton, Shrewsbury Cathedral

All recitals commence at 7.30pm.

For further information please contact: Cathedral Office - 01745 582245;
Cathedral Song School - 01745 584053 Director of Music - directorofmusic@stasaphcathedral.wales

FUTURE MEETINGS

On **Monday, 15th May at 7.30pm**, Mike Edwards has kindly offered to give an illustrated talk on how organs are designed. The venue has yet to be finalised.

On **Saturday, 10th June at 2pm** we meet at **All Saints, Gresford** for our AGM, and a chance to hear and play the fine Hill organ.

WHAT'S ON

Chester Cathedral recitals – Thursdays 1.10pm:

6 April	Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)
13 April	John Hosking (Blackburn)
20 April	Alexander Lanigan-Palotai (Chester Cathedral)
27 April	Richard Walker (Shrewsbury

(As we go to press, the programme for the April recitals is not available on the cathedral website.)

MUSIC @ WESLEY LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

Tuesdays at 12.45pm - no need to book. *Retiring Collection.*

4 April	Rufus Edwards (Piano)
11 April	Matthew Mc Lachlan (Piano)
18 April	Kell Wind Trio (Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon)
25 April	Chetham's School of Music Brass Ensembles

Saturday at 12.45pm - no need to book. *Retiring Collection.*

22 April	Graham Eccles (Organ)

22 April, 7.30pm: Organ recital, Prof. Ian Tracey at St James', Albion Street, New Brighton CH45 9LF.
Tickets: adults £10, students £5 available on 0151 630 6677 or 07990 535312.

22 April, 7.30pm: Farndon & District Brass Band with Entourage Ladies Choir at Upton URC, 44 Heath Road, Chester CH2 1HX
Tickets: £10 (children free) available on 01244 383174 or on the door.

Chester Male Voice Choir's Spring Festival Concert with Haydock Male Voice Choir
28 April30pm, St Columba's, Plas Newton Lane, Chester
Tickets: Adults £12, Under 18s £6 available from www.chestermalevoice.com/concerts, Visitor Information Centre, Town Hall Square or call John on 07894 509529.

If you have items for the Newsletter, please send them to: newsletter@cnewoca.org.uk