**Chester & North-East Wales**
**Organists' & Choirmasters' Association**
Affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists
www.cnewoca.org.uk

# Newsletter February 2025

Well, it's February already! You'll find details of all our meetings to the end of the season in this newsletter. We hope you will find them interesting and come along!

Our "Come and Sing Stainer's Crucifixion" is attracting a good number of singers – come and sing or just come and listen – bring your friends and choir!

We are always looking for items for the newsletter; perhaps you might like to write something for us.

## Our next meeting: All Saints Chester. Monday 24th February at 7:30pm

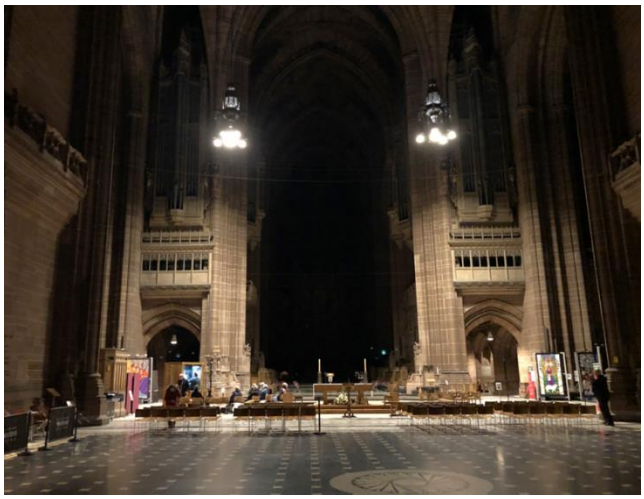
We are to visit All Saints, Hoole Road Chester where there is a three manual and pedal organ built by C.H. Whiteley. The specification may be found on the NPOR (N04300). The church was built in 1867 and C.H. Whiteley was working in Chester between 1869 and c1910. He also worked with Gray & Davison from c1861 and in 1875/76 rebuilt Chester Cathedral organ. He was the eldest of the brothers from whom the various Chester "Whiteley" organ building firms were established (C.H, C & J, H & H).



There is a car park at the church, and we are to enter via the parish hall/centre. Please tell the person controlling the door that you are coming to the organists' association meeting in the church. ***All Saints Chester, Hoole Road, Chester, CH2 3HZ***

## Our meeting at Liverpool Cathedral. Monday January 27th 6:30pm.

A good number of our members met on a rather damp and windy January night at the Constables Lodge at the Cathedral gates. At 6:30pm Professor Ian Tracey, organist at the Cathedral, arrived at the lodge and escorted us into the Cathedral. Inside the vast space was dimly lit except for the area in the north transept where the recital (mobile) organ console stood. Ian opened the console a suggested that we all draw up a chair and sit around the "flight deck".

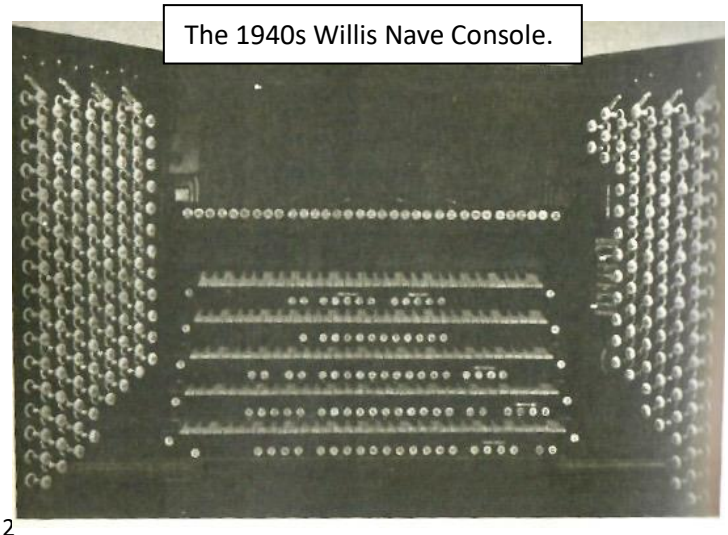


After welcoming us to the Cathedral, Prof Tracey spoke to us about the organ and its development over the last 99 years. The organ had always been planned to be distributed around the building.



There are two very large chambers in the choir. The north chamber was to house the Swell, Choir and some of the Pedal organs and the south chamber was to house the Great, Solo and Tuba Organs (Bombarde) and the remainder of the pedal organ. An Echo and Corona Organ were to be installed on a gallery high up in the central tower and a Central Space Section in the central space. One of the early designs of the cathedral even included a large west end organ (rather like you may find in some French Cathedrals). In 1926, the organ was dedicated without the Echo, Central Space, Corona and west end organs (the building was incomplete!). In the 1940s Willis installed a large second console (fixed in an oak enclosure on the north side of the





The 1940s Willis Nave Console.

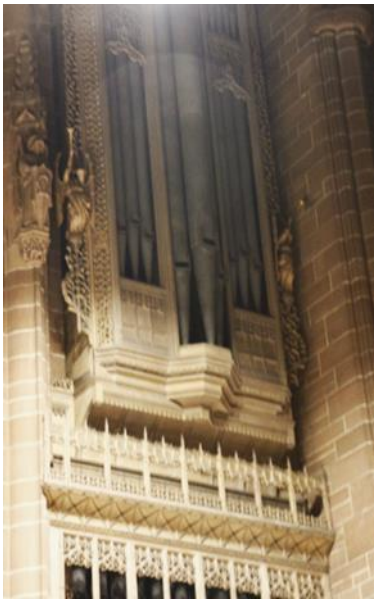
central space) which included the “prepared for” stops.

Over the years, with changes of plans for the cathedral, World War II, and evolving use of the building, plans for the organ changed. Noel Rawsthorne had the Choir organ recast into an enclosed Choir and Positif. The Trompette Militaire was installed on a gallery in the central tower (more than 100ft from the cathedral floor) in 1979 and the Central Space Organ in 2007. The Echo Division was installed in 2024.



The organ now has 11,000 pipes and 220 stops contained in nine divisions. The Great, Solo, and Bombarde organs occupy the South case; the Swell, Choir and Positif occupy the North case; the Corona Organ (Trompette Militaire) (installed in 1997) is situated in a gallery high up under the tower vaulting; and the Central Space Organ (installed in 2007) is located on the south gallery of the central space; the Pedal organ is distributed between both North and South cases. The Echo organ (installed in 2024) is located in the eastmost bay of the triforium on the south side of the choir.

Prof Tracey demonstrated some of the fine stops to be found on the instrument. The strings are lush and rich; the Great Tibia is very lovely, not really what you might expect from the name; the French Horn is very “orchestral” in quality; the five diapasons on the Great all have different tonal qualities, not just different volumes; the Tuba Magna is devastating (having been only recently been restored to play on 50” wind); the Trompette Militaire calls down with a piercing sound from it above (“God’s Trumpet ?”). The massive building has a huge effect on the sound, mixing it beautifully whilst bringing along its own challenges to the player. The Central Space Organ is powerful and in the nave is very direct and clear. Ian played Garth Edmundson’s Toccata on “Von himmel hoch” for us: it filled the whole building with the most glorious sound!



Our members were invited to try the Grand Organ for themselves. The first to play was our youngest member (aged 11) who played a Bach chorale prelude for us. It was wonderful and at the end there was what seemed like a huge silence

before we all expressed our thanks for a fine performance. There was just a little trepidation / hesitation as our older members thought about playing next. We did hear some fine playing, using both loud ensembles and some of the very fine quieter solo stops, including some use of the Echo division.

It was very special to be able to walk around this vast space in semi-darkness listening to this wonderful instrument. It was really awesome (perhaps in the true sense of the word “awe”).

Prof Ian Tracey rounded off our evening by playing a couple of pieces for us before we set off out into the dark night.

We are most grateful to Ian Tracey and the cathedral authorities for hosting this most memorable of meetings, and to John Evans for making the arrangements for us.






## The origin of hymns: "Take my life and let it be"

'Take My Life, and let it be consecrated, Lord to Thee' is very popular hymn written by Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879); amongst her many other hymns we have 'Who is on the Lord's side', and 'Master speak, thy servant heareth'.



Frances was born in December 1836 at Astley in Worcestershire to a strongly Anglican family; her father William Henry was a Clergyman, and a hymn writer (an example would be the tune 'Ratisbon' to which we sing Charles Wesley's 'Christ whose Glory fills the skies'). Her brother was also an Anglican priest.

In 1850 her family moved to Worcester where her father was Rector of St. Nicholas Church. There she was influenced by a Miss Teed whose school she attended. Soon after she is quoted as saying - 'I committed my soul to the Saviour, and earth and heaven seemed brighter from that moment'. She also studied in Duesseldorf and Oberkassel, learning Greek, Hebrew and other languages, and was confirmed on returning to Worcester in 1853.

It is not clear exactly when 'Take My Life' was published; her hymns were often published by Parlane & Co in groups as leaflets/collections, mostly between 1869 and 1883. Many were published posthumously by her sisters, who spent some time in Canada. Havergal College in Toronto was named after her.

It has been generally said that her hymns praised the love of God. Her religious views and theological bias are clearly visible in her writing, some have said somewhat Calvinistic. Her life was devoted to the proclamation of this truth by her personal labours and literary efforts. She also had a keen interest in Foreign Missions.



She remained unmarried, and for much of her life suffered poor health. Whilst visiting Caswell Bay on the Gower peninsula she succumbed to peritonitis and died at the age of 43.

She is interred in the graveyard of St Peters, Astley near her father and birthplace.

The hymn occurs in hymn books of most denominations. It is invariably set to the tune 'Nottingham' (though it is said she preferred one of the tunes written by her father). 'Nottingham' is clearly the opening of the Kyrie of Mozart's so-called 'Twelfth Mass'. But this Mass is only listed as an addendum

to the Mozart 'K' catalogue, and modern research has cast a doubt on whether it really is by Mozart.



It is now thought more likely to have been written by Wenzel Mueller. Mueller was born at Turnau in Moravia (now in Austria, south-west of Vienna) in 1767 and was primarily a theatre musician in his youth, but in 1786 became Kapellmeister at Leopoldstadt in Vienna. After a few years (1807-1813) at a theatre in Prague, he returned to Leopoldstadt which became one of the most important venues in Viennese life. He was a prolific composer producing 250 works, including many popular songs, one opera, and even provided the theme for a Beethoven piano trio (known as the Kakadu Variations Op 121a). As mentioned above Mozart's Twelfth Mass (also the Mass in G) is now ascribed to him, though still listed under Mozart's Kochel catalogue (addendum no. 232). He died in Baden near Vienna in 1835.

***Brian Moate***

## Come and sing "Stainer's Crucifixion"

Saturday 22nd March, 1:15pm– 4:45pm

Hamilton Street Methodist Church, Hamilton St, Chester. CH2 3JG

Everyone is invited to come and join us in singing (or listening to) Sir John Stainer's Passiontide cantata in Hamilton Street Methodist Church.

Singers can arrive from 1:15pm and there will be a rehearsal starting promptly at 1:45pm. There will be a break for refreshments and the performance will begin at 3:30pm. Some copies will be available to use on the day, but please bring along a copy if you own one.

This event is free. There will be a voluntary collection which will be given to Christian Aid.

We already have a good number of singers who have said they are coming to the event but more will be very welcome. We are delighted to have Philip Cartwright and David Whitley as our tenor and bass soloists; John Evans will be our organist and Iain Stinson our conductor.

Tell your friends, bring your choir members, join us in our "Come and Sing".

If you are coming, please let us know (email angiejohnevans@gmail.com), particularly if you need to borrow a copy of the score'.

## Help us awaken some Sleeping Beauties!



*Pipe Up* is constantly coming across simple pipe organs that are nearly playable, but have gone out of use because their owners lack the skill to recognise that some organ faults can be easily fixed by small amounts of expert attention. Sadly, these minor faults often trigger a spiral of decline. Moving parts that don't get moved become stuck. Dust accumulates where it shouldn't. And the magic of pipe organ music is lost, often forever.

**It's time to strike back!**

We are setting up a pilot scheme to give a small number of churches a 100% grant to pay for the visit of a professional organ builder, briefed to do enough work to get the organ playable again. Typically, this will take two days at most and cost less than £1,000, including labour and parts. We're just raising £6,000 to start with, funding six or possibly more organs. If the scheme works, we will fundraise to extend it.

We will ask for evidence of the church community's commitment to use the organ regularly and its willingness to make the organ accessible to local organ players. But there will be no complicated applications or red tape.

Can you help us to get this going, straight away?

There is no time to lose. With four pipe organs a week being destroyed, time is not on the side of nearly playable organs sitting disused. If you would like to help, please:

- donate to the Sleeping Beauty fundraiser on our JustGiving page (https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/sleepingbeautyscheme)
- tell us about an organ that might be a candidate for such a grant by email
- Volunteer as a helper

Every penny we raise will bring the joy of pipe organ music back to a church it once enriched. Please give as generously as you can!

**George Allan**
*Chair, Pipe Up for Pipe Organs*

You can make contact by using the details at https://www.pipe-up.org.uk/contact-us

*(Information from our member Greg Yates.)*

PIPE UP FOR PIPE ORGANS

https://www.pipe-up.org.uk/

## Future Meetings

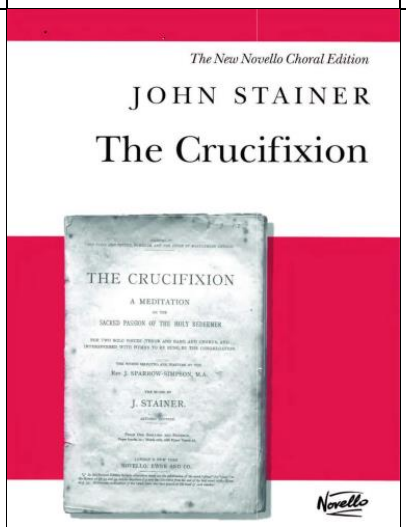
**Monday 24th February**
7:30pm – 9:00pm
All Saints Church Chester
Hoole Road,
Chester, CH2 3HZ
https://allsaints.church/
There is a car park at the church.



We are to visit All Saints Hoole Road Chester where there is a three manual and pedal organ by C.H. Whiteley. The specification may be found on the NPOR (N04300). The church was built in 1867 and C.H. Whitely was working in Chester between 1869 and c1910. He also worked with Gray & Davison from c1861. He was the eldest of the brothers from whom the various Chester "Whiteley" organ building firms were established (C.H, C & J, H & H).
We understand the organ is sometimes used for the 9am service on Sundays and for occasional weddings and funerals.

**Saturday 22nd March**
1:15pm – 4:45pm
All are invited to come along to our "Come and Sing Stainer's Crucifixion" event.
Hamilton Street Methodist Church,
Hoole, Chester CH2 3JG

*There will be no charge for this event but a collection will be taken in aid of Christian Aid.*




This event is open to all. Please encourage anyone who may enjoy singing or hearing this Passiontide cantata to come along. Invite members of any (and every) choir or group you know to join us!

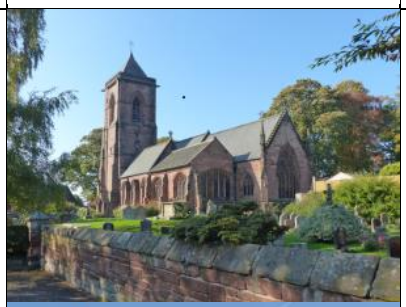
Singers may arrive from1:15pm ready for a rehearsal at 1:45pm prompt! Cold drinks will be available.
The performance begins at 3:30pm.

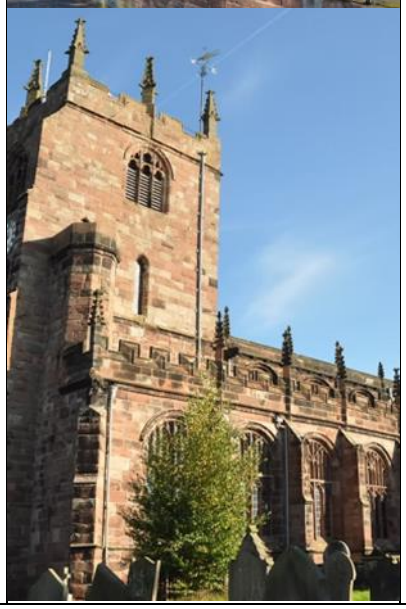
Some copies will be available to use on the day, but please bring along a copy if you own one!

**Saturday 26th April**
1:00pm – 4:30pm
St Helen's Tarporley and St Boniface Bunbury

St Helen's Church
High Street, Tarporley,
CW6 0AG

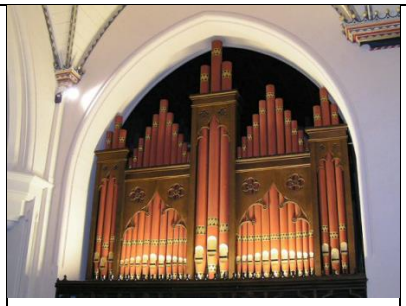
St Boniface Church
Wyche Road, Bunbury
Cheshire, CW6 9PN
St Boniface is situated in Higher Bunbury, approx. 400m from the village centre, next to the Dysart Arms. There is ample parking nearby.





We shall begin our visit at St Helen's Tarporley at 1:00pm where the organist will give us some details about the instrument and play for us before we have an opportunity to try the organ for ourselves. The 2/25 Willis / Jardine / Fletcher organ is described on the NPOR N04432.

We'll leave Tarporley for the short drive to Bunbury where we shall visit St Boniface church to see and play the three manual and pedal organ in St Boniface. This organ started life as a P. Conacher (Huddersfield) organ and was rebuilt by Willis (Willis IV) in 1968. The specification may be found on the NPOR: D01311. (There may have been some work carried out after the Willis rebuild.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Saturday May 17th,** 2:00pm<br>St Mary and Christ Church, Llanfairfechan<br><br>St Mary and Christ Church<br>Aber Road<br>Llanfairfechan<br>LL33 0HN |  | Our May meeting will be a visit to the Historic Grade I Hill organ in lovely St Mary and Christ Church, Llanfairfechan. This III/39 instrument is located on the north side of the chancel and speaks boldly into the church. It is regarded by many as the best organ in North Wales. NPOR: N11699<br>Before the meeting, some members are gathering for lunch at noon at The Beach Pavilion Café, Promenade, Llanfairfechan, LL33 0BY. Everyone is welcome to join us. |
| **Saturday June 14th,** 1:30pm<br>Christ Church Birkenhead AGM and visit to the Father Willis organ<br>Christ Church,<br>Bessborough Rd, Oxton,<br>Prenton, CH43 5RW<br>http://christchurchbirkenhead.net |  | Our June meeting will begin with our short Annual Meeting where we shall hear reports from our officers and elect the committee for 2025-2026.<br>We shall then see, hear and play the Historic Grade 1 Father Willis organ. The organ was installed in 1860 in the West Gallery (II/25) and in 1881 it was moved to its current location in the south east chamber. In 1888 the Choir Organ was added (all by Willis). In 1926 and again in 1948 the WIliis firm overhauled the organ and in 1977 Rushworth and Dreaper cleaned and overhauled the instrument. NPOR: R01983 |
| **July**<br>An organ crawl around some Chester Churches | There are many interesting organs in the city of Chester. We plan to visit some of them in this "organ crawl" around parts of the city centre. The details are presently being finalised. | |

**CNEWOCA Committee Members**

Chairman: Tony Warren
*ndtl3@yahoo.co.uk*

Vice-Chairman: John Evans
*angiejohnevans@gmail.com*

General Secretary: Katriona Moulton
*secretary@cnewoca.org.uk*

Membership Secretary: Angela Evans
*angiejohnevans@gmail.com*
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Treasurer: Raymond Moulton
*treasurer@cnewoca.org.uk*

Member: Nigel James
*organo3112@gmail.com*

Independent examiner: David Bird

Publications Officer: Iain Stinson
iain@stinson.org.uk.
6 St Stephen's Close, Heswall, Wirral.
CH60 3TA

# Live music!

## Chester Cathedral organ recitals

**Weekly Organ Recitals**

Organ Recitals are free with a retiring collection and no ticket is required. The suggested donation for the recital is £5. The recitals take place on Thursdays and start at 1:10pm.

| | |
|---|---|
| 13th February | Ben Bloor (London Oratory) |
| 20th February | Alexander Lanigan-Palotai (Chester Cathedral) |
| 27th February | Daniel Mathieson (Chester Cathedral) |
| 6th March | Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral) |
| 13th March | Alexander Lanigan-Palotai (Chester Cathedral) |
| 20th March | Daniel Mathieson (Chester Cathedral) |
| 27th March | Mark Shepherd (London) |

Details of Chester Cathedral Grand Organ NPOR: E01969

### Sponsor a Recitalist

If you would like to sponsor a recitalist, please get in touch with Philip Rushforth at philip.rushforth@chestercathedral.com (01244 500974)

## Liverpool St George's Hall

**Tuesdays from 12:45pm – 1:30pm.** Tickets (at the door) £5.

***Professor Ian Tracey, Organist to the City of Liverpool.***

18th March 15th April

Details of the Willis Organ in St George's Hall may be found on the NPOR N01921

## Music at Wesley

Wesley Church Centre, St John Street, Chester

**Tuesday Lunchtime Concerts**

**12.45pm – 1.35 pm**

*Retiring collection*

| | |
|---|---|
| 18th February | Roth Guitar Duo |
| 25th February | Aestus String Quartet with Jordi Bitlloch (Piano) |
| 4th March | Justine Gormley (Piano) |
| 11th March | Chetham's School of Music Brass Ensembles |
| 18th March | Heather Buckmaster (Soprano), Joseph Buckmaster (Tenor), Tim Kennedy (Piano) |
| Tuesday 25th March | Rachel Fillhart (Clarinet), John Gough (Piano) |

**Saturday Organ Recitals**

**12.45pm – 1.35 pm**

*Retiring Collection*

| | |
|---|---|
| 15th February | John Hosking (Blackburn Cathedral) |
| 15th March | Brian Heald (Wesley) |
| 26th April | Graham Eccles (St Asaph) |

Details of the Binns organ in the Wesley Centre are at the NPOR D04853.

## Music at Blackburn Cathedral

**Wednesday Concerts**

| | |
|---|---|
| 12th February | Benjy Bloor (Brompton Oratory) |
| 19th February | James Thomas |
| 26th February | Chrisopher Stokes (Manchester Cathedral) |
| 5th March | Abigail Birch-Price (Soprano) |
| 12th March | Tricola Concert<br>(a clarinet, saxophone and piano trio) |
| 19th March | Anthong Gritten |
| 26th March | John Hosking (Blackburn Cathedral) |

**The concerts begin at 12:15pm and are free to attend.** Suggested donation £5. Unless stated, all Wednesday concerts feature the iconic Wood/Walker organ.

**Lent Organ Meditations**

**These event starts at around 4.40pm and then at 5.10pm there is an opportunity to discuss the music with the organist.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Wednesday 12th March | Maria Gajraj (Canada) |
| Sunday 16th March | John Hosking (Blackburn Cathedral) |
| Sunday 23rd March | Tom Bell (Concert Organist) |

Details of the JW Walker / David Wood organ may be found on the NPOR**: E00533**

## Bangor Cathedral

**Thursday afternoon recital series at 1:15pm**

| | |
|---|---|
| 13th February | Jonny Matson tenor |
| 20th February | Jack Redman & Katie Taunton (Piano & Flute) |
| 27th February | Abhay Prabhakar (Bangor) (Organ)<br>Member of the CNEWOCA |

Details of the Bangor Cathedral organ may be found on the NPOR: R01575

**Organ recital in Neston Parish Church** on Sunday 23rd February at 2:00pm (lasting about an hour). The organist is Austin Philemon (from New York, USA). The recital is a part of the 125th celebration of the installation of the organ and a part of the 150th anniversary of the "new" church building. The event is free, with a retiring collection. {St Mary's & St Helen's Church, High Street Neston, CH64 9TZ}

Foster and Andrews organ 1900 (NPOR A00056)

**organrecitals.uk** lists recitals across the country. You can search for recitals in particular area and register your own recitals, and it's free.




**https://choiroftheearth.com/latest-news/tag/Haydn+Nelson+Mass+Tour**