

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

Affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists

www.cnewoca.org.uk



Newsletter June 2025

Our June meeting is on Saturday 14th June at Christ Church Birkenhead. We begin at 1:30pm with our Annual General Meeting and will then visit the Father Willis 3/40 organ in the church. Papers for the annual meeting have been sent by post to all members of the Association and are available on the Association's website. At the meeting the Association's management committee will be elected. If you would like to be a member of the committee and help with the running of CNEWOCA please consider volunteering to join the committee.

The newsletter includes a report from our meeting on the North Wales coast when we visited what some people regard as "the best organ in North Wales" at Llanfairfechan. It also includes some notes about an interesting little organ at St John's Burwardsley. If you visit a church with an interesting organ, or indeed know of one, please send us a photograph and a few notes about why the organ is of interest and we'll try to include this in a future edition of the newsletter.

The final meeting for the 2024/25 season is an "organ crawl" around the centre of Chester. The committee is finalising the 2025/26 program and we hope to publish this with the membership renewals in late July / early August.

Could you write something for the newsletter? Please send it to us, we'd love to hear from you.

**Our next meeting: Saturday June 14th 1:30pm Christ Church
Birkenhead**

AGM and visit to the Father Willis organ



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. 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 southeast chamber. In 1888 the Choir Organ was added (all by Willis). In 1926 and again in 1948 the Willis firm overhauled the organ and in 1977 Rushworth and Dreaper cleaned and overhauled the instrument. NPOR: [R01983](#)

Christ Church, Bessborough Rd, Oxton, Prenton,
CH43 5RW. <http://christchurchbirkenhead.net>

Llanfairfechan, Saturday May17th 2025

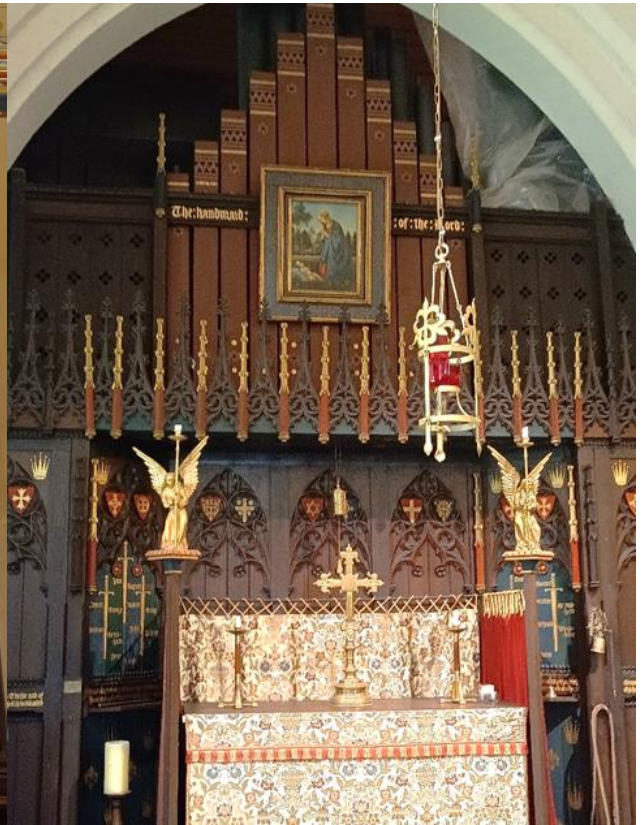
Around fourteen members met for lunch in the Beach Pavillion Café on the shore at Llanfairfechan. It was a glorious warm day (though there was a cooling breeze from the sea), more like the day we might hope for at the height of summer than in mid spring. The options for lunch were very good and everyone seemed pleased with what they chose to eat. (I suspect a few of us will be returning there on our next trip to that part of the north Wales coast.)



After lunch we made our way to St Mary and Christ Church in the town where we met with other members of the Association. Apparently “Llanfairfechan” means “little church of St Mary”. The old St Mary’s Parish Church was built on the site of an earlier church in 1849. This church closed in 1999 and the historic dedication to St Mary transfer to Christ Church. Christ Church is a Grade II listed building and was built in 1864, the construction being funded by landowner John Platt(1817-1872) of Bryn y Neuadd Hall.



The fine Hill organ dates in its present form from 1902. The NPOR (NPOR: [N116991](#)) records the genesis of the instrument as a two manual organ in 1876, with the choir organ added in 1892 and additional work in 1894 and 1902. Other than cleaning, maintenance and repairs, there has been no major work on the organ. The instrument was awarded a Historic Organ Certificate Grade 1 by BIOS in 2010. The organ is generally in good order, though some problems caused by water ingress from a leaking roof is now receiving some attention.



Our visit to the church began with Eric Newbound, the organist, welcoming us and telling us about the organ. Eric then played the Bach G major Vivaldi Concerto (BWV 592) and Alexandre Guilmant's "March on Handel's Lift up your heads". These pieces, beautifully played, showed off the varied sounds of the organ - quite outstanding from only 38 speaking stops.

Eric invited members to try the organ for themselves. We heard many different pieces played on this fine organ; it was wonderful to hear such a wide range of music on this great instrument. Everyone who played really enjoyed the experience – the instrument was very responsive (Hill's patented supply pneumatic action was still working well).





This was a wonderful meeting – a great welcome, a very fine organ, good weather, an enjoyable lunch and good conversation and fellowship with other members of the Association. Thanks to Eric for hosting us and to John and Katriona who put the day together.

(Thanks to Nigel James and Robin Newby for their photographs.)

Our July meeting: Saturday July 19th: An organ crawl around three city centre Chester Churches. We are going to visit three churches to see and play their interesting organs...

Wesley Methodist Church

St John Street
Chester CH1 1DA
3/29 J.J Binns [NPOR D04853](#)

St John the Baptist

Vicar's Lane
Little St. John Street
Chester CH1 1SN
3/27 Hill [NPOR N04296](#)

St Werburgh's

Grosvenor Park Rd
Chester, CH1 1QJ

3/36 J.J. Binns / George Sixsmith [NPOR E00905](#)

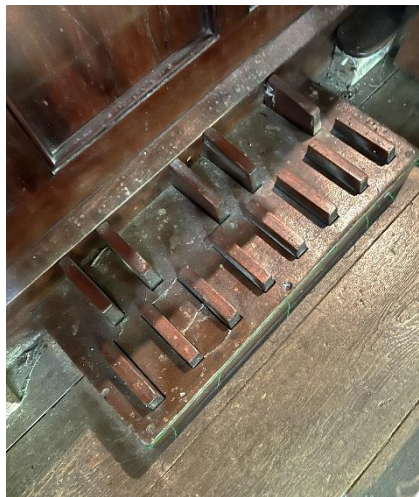
We shall start our meeting at Wesley Methodist Church at **1:00pm**.

St John's Church, Burwardsley



John Evans was the visiting organist at St John's for one of their "Songs of Praise" services. He has sent us some photographs of this little organ. The NPOR says this chamber organ was possibly built around 1840 by Richard Jackson (Bolton/Liverpool) and restored in 1984 by Whiteley of Chester. (NPOR: [H00008](#)).

The manual compass is 54 notes from low C and the 13 note pedal board begins at G. There are five stops: Stop (*sic*) Diapason 8; Keraulophon 8 (*replacing original Open Diapason*); Principal 4; Flute 4; Fifteenth 2.



These pedals might be a challenge to play!

Remember the bottom note is G not C.



St John's Church, School St, Burwardsley, Chester CH3 9NY

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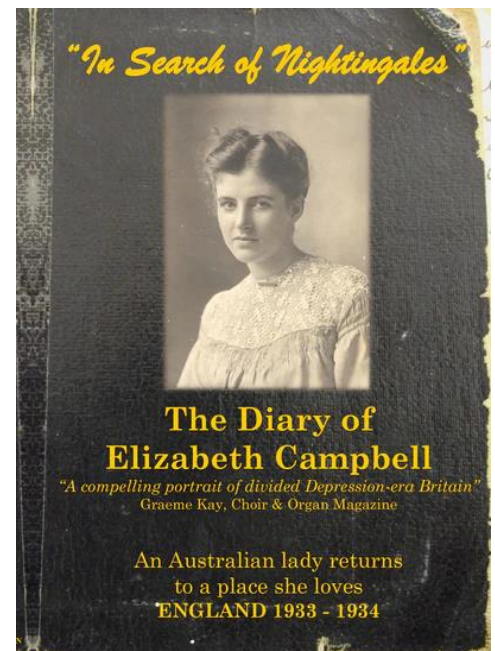
Book review: *In search of nightingales*

In 1927 Elizabeth Campbell returned home to Melbourne, Australia, broken-hearted at leaving England after attending the Royal College of Music in London under the expert guidance of Dr. Henry Ley, doyen of organ masters at both the RCM and Eton College. During her studies she made many friends and travelled extensively. In May 1933, by now a celebrated church organist and choir mistress, Elizabeth makes her long-awaited return as part of the RCM's Jubilee celebrations and records each day of her year's stay in four notebooks. In them she paints a unique portrait of London and England's people, towns and countryside between the wars and still in the grip of the Great Depression. Seen through the eyes of not just a visitor but a passionate observer wholly enamoured with their subject, she presents an intimate social history that leaves the reader feeling they've lived every moment. Her diary notebooks, all marked 'Strictly Private', were saved from Cyclone Tracy's destruction of Darwin (Christmas Eve 1974) by her great niece, Rosalind Hartshorn, who thankfully has decided to share her beloved Great Aunt Betha's fascinating observations before they remained hidden forever.

Curtis Rogers wrote in The Organ Magazine: "She writes with such an enthusiasm, and her descriptions are delightful. As a picture of life in another age it is perfect."

Julia Aries, Archivist, Glyndebourne Opera Festival wrote: "...The personal and sentimental value of such a diary is perfectly palpable as a record of London (and to some extent English) life in the 1930s. It is certainly a joy to read and Campbell's humanity and gentleness is evident on virtually every page."

Copies are available from various booksellers including The Great British Bookshop. An e-book version is available for the Kindle.



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.

22 nd May	Lyndon Hills (Nantwich)
29 th May	Alexander Lanigan-Palotai (Chester Cathedral)
5 th June	Alexander Lanigan-Palotai & Daniel Mathieson (Chester Cathedral)
12 th June	Stephen Pinnock (formerly Manchester Cathedral)
19 th June	Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)
26 th June	David Hill MBE (Rutland)

Details of other recitals from <https://chestercathedral.com/visit/organ-recitals>

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 Cathedral

Summer Organ Recitals Sundays 4:00pm – 4:45pm

Retiring collection

25 th May	Daniel Bishop (Liverpool Cathedral)
1 st June	Martyn Noble (Liverpool Cathedral)
8 th June	Ian Wells (Liverpool Parish Church)
15 th June	Edward Carew (Liverpool Cathedral)
22 nd June	Ian Tracey (Liverpool Cathedral)
6 th July	Daniel Bishop (Liverpool Cathedral)
13 th July	Edward Carew (Liverpool Cathedral)
20 th July	Ian Wells (Liverpool Parish Church)

*Details of the Willis Organ in Liverpool Cathedral may be found on the NPOR [E00301](#).
(This does not include the details of the Echo organ.)*

Music at Wesley

Wesley Church Centre, St John Street, Chester

Tuesday Lunchtime Concerts

12.45pm – 1.35 pm

Retiring collection

27 th May	Rebekah Yinuo Tan (Piano)
3 rd June	Laura Jellicoe (Flute), John Gough (Piano)
10 th June	Matthew Lau (Piano)
17 th June	Brian Heald (Piano)
24 th June	Lionel Clarke (Cello), Brian Heald (Piano)
1 st July	Melvin Chan (Piano)
8 th July	Daniel Goharriz (Clarinet), Lauren Turner (Piano)
15 th July	Amy Wakefield (Piano)

Saturday Organ Recitals 12.45pm – 1.35 pm

Retiring Collection

21 st June	Paul Carr (Birmingham)
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Details of the Binns organ in the Wesley Centre are at the NPOR [D04853](#).

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.

17th June 15th July 16th September

14th October 18th November

Details of the Willis Organ in St George's Hall may be found on the NPOR [N01921](#)

Music at Blackburn Cathedral

Wednesday Concerts

28 th May	Simon Bertram
4 th June	Ed Taylor
11 th June	Emmanuel Duperrey
18 th June	John Robinson
25 th June	Jonathan Clinch
2 nd July	Chris Totney
9 th July	John Hosking
16 th July	Eira Lynn Jones (Harp)
23 rd July	Gaudeamus Choir Concert

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.

Bank Holiday Celebrity Organ Concerts

Concerts start at 11:00am. Tickets £10 at the door

Monday 26th May John Hosking (Blackburn)

Monday 25th August David Hill

Details of the JW Walker / David Wood organ may be found on the NPOR: [E00533](#)

Bangor Cathedral

Details in the Cathedral's bilingual magazine to be found from

<https://bangorcathedral.churchinwales.org.uk/buchedd/>

Details of the Bangor Cathedral organ may be found on the NPOR: [R01575](#)

St Asaph Cathedral

Wednesdays at 7:30pm, retiring collection.

4th June Christopher Enston (St Asaph Cathedral)

2nd July Martin Brown (Bangor Cathedral)

6th August Ben Bloor (Brompton Oratory, London)

10th September Alessandro Bianchi (Italy)

Details of the cathedral organ may be found at

<https://stasaphcathedral.wales/en/music/the-organ>

Hamilton Street Methodist Church, Chester

Sunday 25th May 3:00pm: Magical Theatre Songs

Laura Edwards (accompanied by Diana Elliot)

Bangor Cathedral

Details in the Cathedral's bilingual magazine to be found at

<https://bangorcathedral.churchinwales.org.uk/buchedd/>

Details of the Bangor Cathedral organ may be found on the NPOR: [R01575](#)

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