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

Newsletter August 2025

This newsletter provides you with information about our future meetings and details of organ concerts and recitals in our area. There is also a report on our recent "organ crawl" in Chester.

This newsletter is being sent in printed form to all current members along with your membership renewal form. Please follow the simple instructions on renewing your membership of our Association and please renew now! [You can pay your membership fee directly from your bank account using your banking app and you can send a scanned / photographed copy of your membership renewal form by email to our membership secretary, Angela Evans. This saves you the cost of postage.]

The newsletter is also being sent as a link in an email message to all members for whom we have an email address. (You will probably receive the email link before the printed copy and membership renewal forms are delivered.) The online edition is easy to read on your web browser and the links to further information can be clicked directly. If you wish you can print a copy of the newsletter from your browser. We would encourage all members to receive their newsletters via email. It saves the Association printing and postage costs and helps keep our membership fee low (and unchanged for the last few years). In a small way it helps us to be more environmentally friendly. However, if you need to have a printed copy, then please select this option when you renew your membership.

The programme for the first part of the 2025-2026 season is included in this newsletter. The committee are continuing to confirm what looks like another very exciting season. If you have any suggestions about future events, please let any committee member know. If there are special organ or choral events in our area which you know about, then please let me know so I can include them in our future newsletters.

We are always looking for articles for the newsletter, so if you are able, please consider writing a short article for us. We'd love to include your review of a piece of music or a recording, a history of the organ you play or know well, some hints and tips you want to share about playing the organ, details of interesting instruments you have come across in your travels near and far, and anything else of "organic" or choral interest. We can cope with most formats of material (including handwritten material). Please send your contributions to the Publications Officer.

Iain Stinson

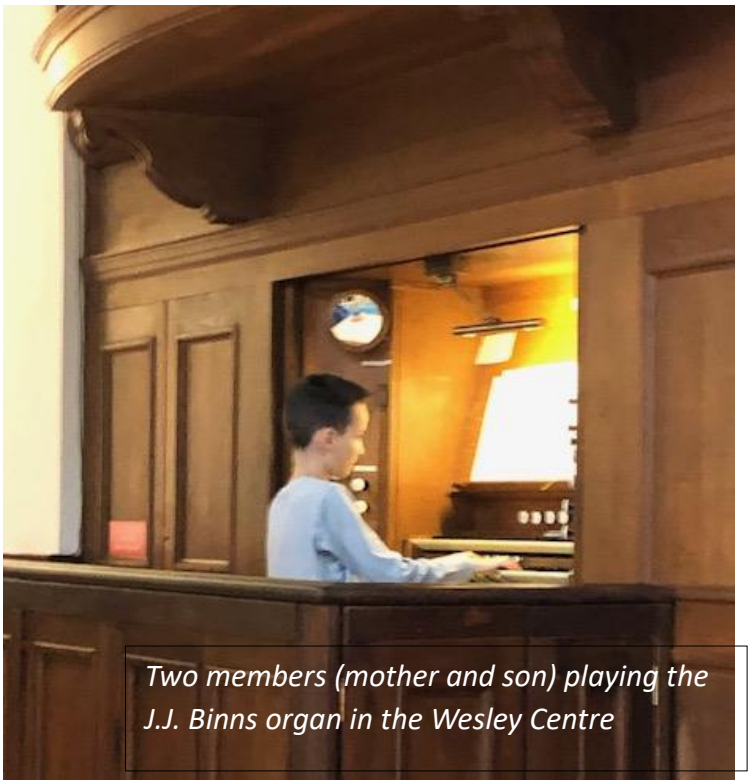
Our recent meeting

Fifteen members of the Association enjoyed our "organ crawl" in Chester city centre on Saturday 19th July.



Enjoying the Wesley Centre organ

We began at Wesley Methodist Church in St John Street where members we delighted to play the very fine 3/29 J.J Binns organ (NPOR D04853). John Evans explained that the organ had been installed in 1926 (as a part of a reordering of the church) with two manuals and that the third manual was added in 1948. The organ underwent a major renovation in 2000 by David Wells (Liverpool) and Binns's tubular pneumatic action was faithfully restored at that time. The action is very responsive and very nice to play. Members enjoyed playing and hearing this very fine organ.



Two members (mother and son) playing the J.J. Binns organ in the Wesley Centre



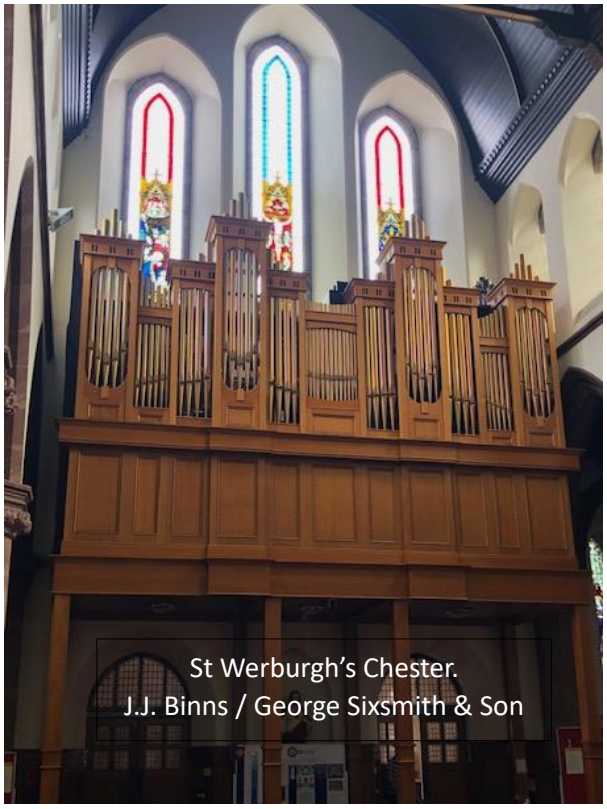
We transferred to St John the Baptist where were able to play the 3/27 organ (NPOR N04296). The organ was built during the brief partnership of William Hill and Fredrick Davison for the coronation of Queen Victoria in Westminster Abbey (in 1838). The organ was then sold to the church and transported to Chester (by barge, the normal way for moving large loads in 1838) and installed a gallery at the west end of St John's. Gray and Davison moved the organ to the south transept (1859-65) and then to the north transept (1895-6), making some additions. In the 1960s Charles Whiteley & Co (Chester) converted the action to electro-pneumatic action. A mixture was added in 1989. This much travelled

instrument gives a good account of itself, though would perhaps benefit from some "tlc". Many of our members climbed the staircase to try the organ.


St John the Baptist, Chester

It was interesting to compare the gentle flue tones of the St John Gray and Davison organ with the rather more robust Edwardian sound of the J.J. Binns organ at the Wesley Centre.

Our final stop was another Binns organ, in St Werburgh's Church (NPOR E00906). This organ was originally built in 1924, from Crosshill Queens Park Church, Glasgow (NPOR D04696). The church closed in 2000 and in 2004 the organ was moved to Chester and rebuilt with electro-pneumatic action (fitted to the original Binns windchests), detached console using digital transmission by George Sixsmith & Sons. The choir organ is located in a small chapel on the north side of the church and the rest of the organ (including the Tromba) is in a new case build at the west end of the building. Some of our members may remember that our former secretary, the late Ray Harper, taking a significant role this project. The organ makes a wonderful sound, enhanced by the very helpful acoustic. Our members who played and heard this instrument were delighted!

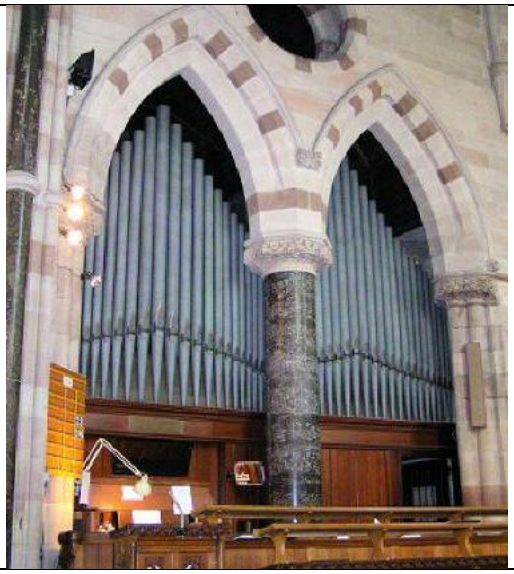

St Werburgh's Chester.
J.J. Binns / George Sixsmith & Son



Three different organs, each with its own characteristics: a really wonderful afternoon. Thanks to John Evans for making the arrangements and for the church authorities for so graciously allowing us to visit and play these instruments.

This was a great way to end our 2024-2025 season.

Programme for the 2025 season

Saturday 13th September **12 noon** St Chad's Church St Chad's Terrace Shrewsbury SY1 1JX		We are visiting Shrewsbury to see, play and hear this very fine three manual, 42 stop organ which is in the west gallery of the church. The organ started as a 1904 Norman & Beard organ was rebuilt by Nicholson in 1963 and by Harrison & Harrison in 1985, 1990 & 2011. (NPOR N01397)
Saturday 18th October **Llandudno**	We are visiting two churches in Llandudno. Ray Stythe-Jones will be our host for the visits to both of these instruments.	
1:00pm Holy Trinity Llandudno LL30 2RH		The organ in Holy Trinity is a large three manual Rushworth and Dreaper instrument completed in 1972. It is origin is a Hill organ from 1873 which was rebuilt by John Stringer in 1885c with new action. (NPOR R01578 and N11691)
3:00pm St Paul's Church Craig-y-don LL30 1TP		The organ in St Paul's has a *BIOS Historic Organ Certificate (grade II).* It is a three manual and pedal organ with 31 stops built by Wm Hill & Son in 1920, with a major overhaul in 1969 by Hill Norman and Beard. Some work was also carried out in 1938. (NPOR N11694)

Saturday 1st November Bangor	Joe Cooper from Bangor University and the Cathedral will be our host for our visit to Bangor. We shall be visiting two very different style instruments.	
1:00pm Bangor Cathedral	 	The origins of the organ may go back a Samuel Green instrument of 1779, but most certainly go back to work started by Wm Hill & Sons in 1871 and completed with a rebuild in 1896. Hill, Norman & Beard worked on the organ in 1929 and Rushworth & Dreaper cleaned it in 1935. The John Compton Organ Co. rebuilt the organ in 1953/4 and in 2007 David Wells (Liverpool) rebuilt the organ with new electric actions. The organ is now a substantial 78 stop cathedral organ! We are very fortunate to be able to hear and play this instrument. (NPOR: R01575)
3:00pm Bangor University Prichard-Jones Hall		The organ in the Prichard-Jones Hall is a 1973 Hill, Norman & Beard instrument with the pipework arranged on the Werkprinzip style. This dates from when some British builders were building neo-baroque style organs (albeit with electric action), often with rather high and somewhat shrill sounding mixtures. In 2010 David Wells (Liverpool) rebuilt the organ. (NPOR N11677)

2026 **Monday 19th** **January** 7:00pm Liverpool Philharmonic Hall		The organ in the Philharmonic Hall was built in 1939 by Rushworth and Dreaper, who carried out further work in 1983. David Wells (Liverpool) worked on the instrument in 2004 and in 2022 Henry Willis & Sons carried out a major restoration of the instrument. The specification of the organ may be found on the Liverpool Phil website. The organ has 66 speaking stops over four manuals and pedals. This is a very special opportunity for members of the association to visit this fine instrument.

"Organ Fest" St Michael's Shotwick

Work has been recently carried out on the organ at St Michael's and the parish wish to celebrate this with an "Organ Fest" on August 9th. Eight of our members will be playing. The festival begins at noon and ends around 4:00pm. Refreshments will be available throughout the festival. Do go along if you can and support the church and our members.

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Live music!

Chester Cathedral organ recitals

Summer Evening Organ Recitals

From 24th July until 28th August, organ recitals will begin at 6.45pm and last one hour.
The Summer series includes the return of the ***Battle of the Organs*** on Thursday 28th August. Tickets available from the cathedral admissions desk and chestercathedral.com . Please be advised the Summer Evening Organ Recital Series is £10 for Adults and £5 for Children. The Battle of the Organs will be £15 for Adults and £5 for Children

The recitals take place on Thursdays.

7th August at 6:45pm	Alexander Lanigan-Palotai (Chester Cathedral)
14th August at 6:45pm	Daniel Mathieson (Chester Cathedral)
21st August at 6:45pm	Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)
28th August at 6:45pm	***Battle of the organs (***with Philip Rushforth, Alexander Lanigan-Palotai, Daniel Mathieson and Graham Eccles)

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

18th October 3:00pm 99th Anniversary Recital, Ian Tracey.
Admission £15.
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

2nd September	Callum Mclachlan (Piano)
9th September	Hefin Flute And Harp Duo
16th September	Marie-Claire Taylor (Piano)
23rd September	Chetham's School of Music Instrumentalists
30th September	Jonathan Richards (Guitar)

Saturday Organ Recitals 12.45pm – 1.35 pm
Retiring Collection
20th September Daniel Mathieson (Chester Cathedral)
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) £10.
Professor Ian Tracey, Organist to the City of Liverpool.
16th September 14th October 18th November
16th December
Details of the Willis Organ in St George's Hall may be found on the NPOR N01921

Music at Blackburn Cathedral

Wednesday Concerts

10th September John Hosking
17th September Nigel Spooner
24th September John Robinson

***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 25th August David Hill

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

Music at St John's Chester

Wednesdays at 1:00pm

6th August William Smith (Tenor)
13th August Roger Stephens (Piano)
20th August Gema Lu (Piano)
27th August Stewart Smith (Organ)
3rd September Adam Parish (Piano)
10th September John Evans (Organ)
17th September Imogen Garner (vocal) with John Gough (Piano)
24th September Dunelm Duo (Piano/Sax)

A collection for Music at St Johns will be taken at door and it is appreciated if you are able to leave a donation via Gift Aid. Refreshments will be available.

Details of the Hill "Coronation" Organ may be found on the NPOR:N04296.

https://stjohnschester.uk/music-at-st-johns/

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.

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

St Laurence Church Frodsham, WA6 7DU

Sunday 10th August 3pm : Music for a Summer's Day – a relaxed afternoon of organ music from the past 400 years. ***Thomas Cameron*** (St Laurence Frodsham). Free, donations welcomed.

Hoole Methodist Church, Hamilton Street, Chester

Sunday 24th August 3:00pm-3:45pm Organ Concert, ***Philip Rushforth*** (Chester Cathedral). Music by Cochereau, Lemare and Widor. Suggested donation £5

Victoria Hall in Hanley

Victoria Hall in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent at noon on 16th August. Concert by the prizewinning organist ***Charles Francis*** (USA). More details at www.victoriahall-organproms.co.uk under Prom Dates. This site also gives the location of the Victoria Hall.