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

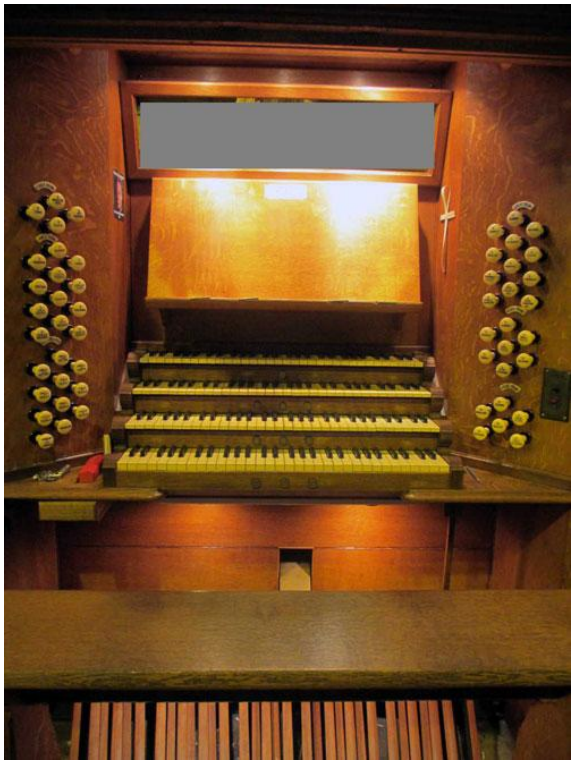
Newsletter March 2026

Our next meeting: Saturday 14th March 2:00pm at Christ Church, Port Sunlight



The organ in Christ Church Port Sunlight was built by Henry Willis II in 1904 and is thought to be the only unaltered Willis II organ.

A major programme of restoration was undertaken by Henry Willis & Sons in 2006. The work carried out included complete re-leathering of all 24 reservoirs, re-leathering of all Willis-lever key actions and piston combination actions. The instrument was cleaned and overhauled and the pipework and console were cleaned and restored. The organ has four manuals and 41 speaking stops. It uses Willis II's floating pneumatic lever action. The organ sounds magnificent in the large church.



Further details about the organ may be found on the NPOR (N04405) and on the Willis website.

The church's address is Church Drive, Port Sunlight, Wirral. CH62 5EF. There is usually ample on street parking in front of and opposite the church. Cars may be parked on both sides of The Causeway roads and Church Drive but please do not park on kerbs and do not block access to the various access ramps (dropped kerbs) for the disabled.

The church web site has more information about the church and the organ, http://www.ccpsurc.info/. *Please note this is not a secure website.*

Our meeting at West Kirby Methodist Church on Saturday 14th February.



We had a lovely meeting at West Kirby Methodist Church on Saturday February 14th. There was a reasonable attendance by our members, and the church made us most welcome.

Brian Moate, who had kindly made all the arrangements for our visit, welcomed us to the church and demonstrated the organ to us. After a "stop tour" where we heard the wide range of sounds available (from only 25 stops), Brian played for us. The organ has a fine selection of voices which enable the organ to give a good account of many styles of music. The console is very comfortable to play with all the controls where you would expect them to be. The Great and Pedal reeds are enclosed in the swell box making them more useful. Details of the specification are on the NPOR (N18328).



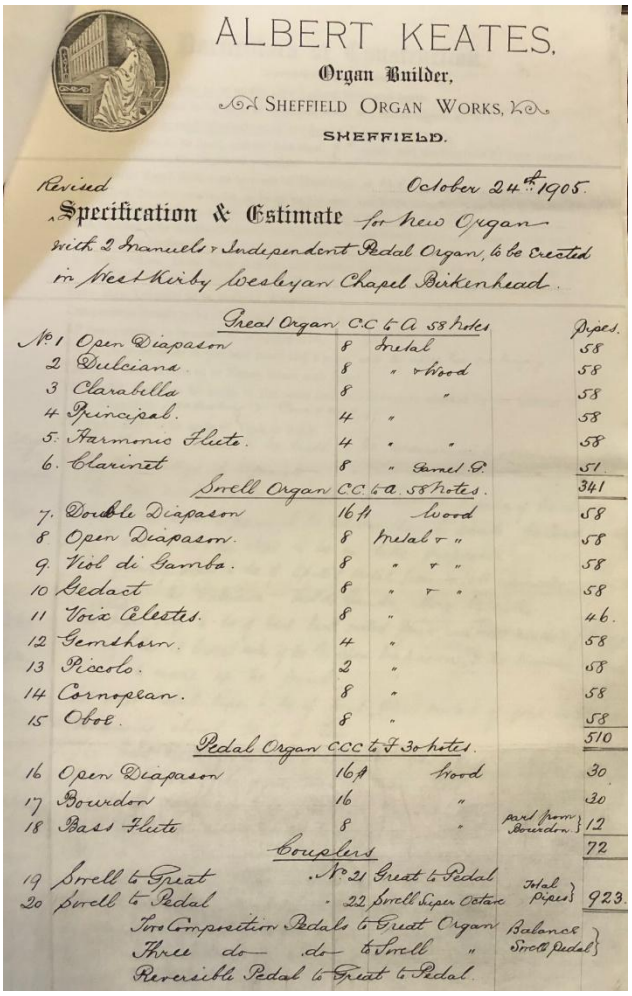


After Brian had played for us, members were able to try the organ out for themselves – we once again were lucky to hear a very wide variety of music played by our members.

Brian's colleague, Clive, had set out some of the details of the organ's history from the church's records. These included details of the

J.R Keats organ which was replaced by the present Willis. There was also some correspondence with Harry Goss-Custard (Liverpool Cathedral) who played the opening recital on the Willis organ and some more recent correspondence with Ian Tracey who played some of the same programme as Goss-Custard at a recital to mark the 75th anniversary of the installation of the instrument.

We are most grateful to Brian, Clive and West Kirby Methodist Church for arranging such a lovely afternoon for us. Thank you.



ALBERT KEATES,
Organ Builder,
SHEFFIELD ORGAN WORKS,
SHEFFIELD.

Revised October 24th 1905.

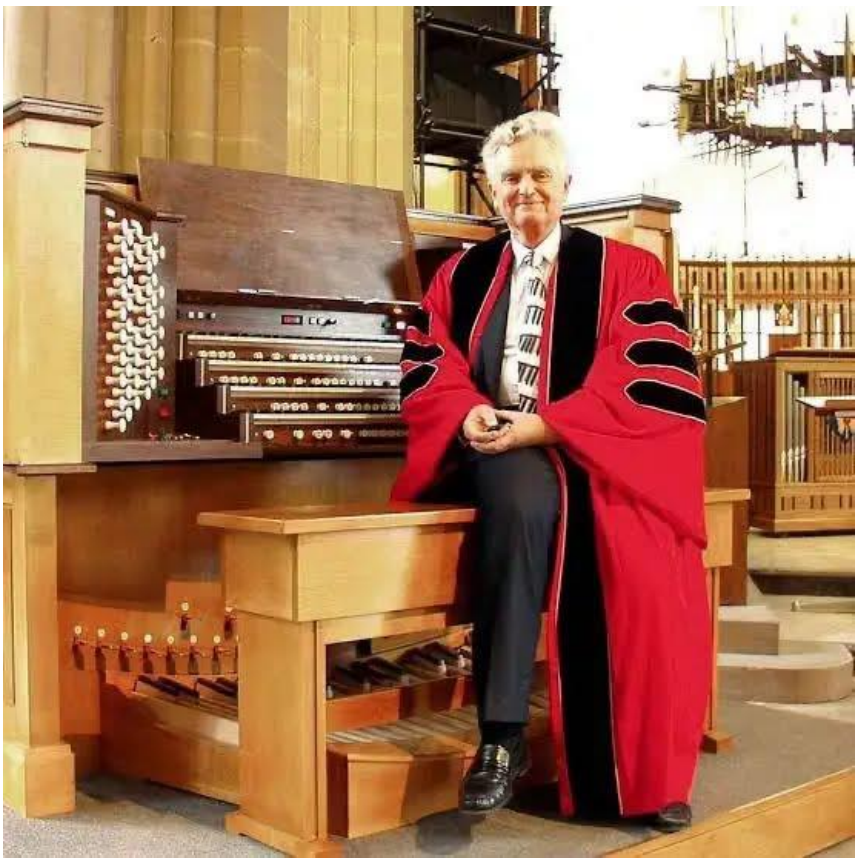
Specification & Estimate for new Organ with 2 Manuels & Independent Pedal Organ, to be erected in West Kirby Wesleyan Chapel Birkenhead.

					Pipes.
	Great Organ CC to A 58 Notes				
No 1	Open Diapason	8	Metal		58
2	Dulciana	8	" & Wood		58
3	Clarabella	8	"		58
4	Principal	4	"		58
5	Harmonic Flute	4	" "		58
6	Clarinet	8	" Zinc & S		51
	Swell Organ CC to A 58 Notes				341
7	Double Diapason	16	Wood		58
8	Open Diapason	8	Metal & "		58
9	Viol di Gamba	8	" & "		58
10	Gedact	8	" & "		58
11	Voix Celestes	8	"		46
12	Gemshorn	4	"		58
13	Piccolo	2	"		58
14	Cornopean	8	"		58
15	Oboe	8	"		58
					510
	Pedal Organ CCC to F 30 Notes				
16	Open Diapason	16	Wood		30
17	Bourdon	16	"		30
18	Bass Flute	8	"	part from Bourdon	12
					72
	Couplers				
19	Swell to Great	No 21 Great to Pedal		Total Pipes	923
20	Swell to Pedal	" 22 Swell Super Octave			
	Two Composition Pedals to Great Organ			Balance Swell Pedal	
	Three do do to Swell "				
	Reversible Pedal to Great to Pedal				

Dr John Bertalot (1931-2026)

Blackburn cathedral published this tribute.

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Dr John Bertalot, Organist Emeritus of Blackburn Cathedral, who passed away today, 21 February 2026.



John Bertalot served as Director of Music and Organist at Blackburn Cathedral (1964 - 1982), during which time he built the Cathedral Choir to national and international distinction.

He was appointed Organist Emeritus from 1998 when he returned from the States where he was Director of Music at Trinity Episcopal Church in Princeton, NJ.

A gifted musician, conductor, and teacher, he was widely respected throughout the world of church and choral music. He was also the author of several

influential books on choral conducting and sight-singing, which have guided generations of choirmasters and organists.

His role in the procurement, design and installation of the new organ in 1969 was pivotal and changed the landscape of Cathedral musical life.

His contribution to the life of Blackburn Cathedral, and to church music more broadly (not least through the RSCM), was immense and will not be forgotten.

He will be deeply missed by all who knew him and were inspired by him.

May he rest in peace.

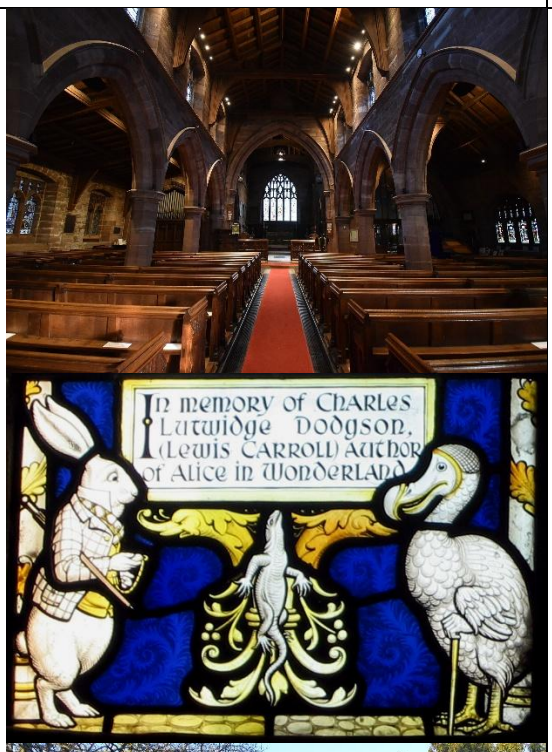
Dr Bertalot was a life member of the Association. He was very supportive and made an after-dinner speech at one of our annual dinners. His funeral will be held at Blackburn Cathedral on Saturday 14 March at 10.30 am, with his committal being at Pleasington Crematorium at 1.30 pm.

Have you seen this?

Watkins and Watson water engine, with original wooden frame, installed in the Ebenezer Chapel, Llandudno, over 100 years ago. The organ bellows were connected to either end of the crossbeam which was driven up and down by the 3 ½ inch bore engine. In the event of an engine failure the bellows could be pumped with the handle on the right. Similar but much larger water engines were installed in the Great Orme Mines to pump out water from the workings.



Future meetings

Monday 13th April 7:30pm Christ Church, Willaston		The organ in Christ Church is a two manual and pedal instrument. It was built by Nicholson (Worcester) in 1925/6 and rebuilt in 1999 by David Wells (Liverpool). Details may be found on the NPOR (N01136). The church has recently been reordered and the acoustic improved and the organ sounds better than ever.
Saturday 16th May, 2pm All Saints Church Daresbury		The Church is strongly associated with Lewis Carroll, who was born at All Saints' Vicarage in 1832. There was a church on the site from the 12th century, and the church was largely rebuilt in the 1870s. The Lewis Carroll Centre at the church has information about Charles Dodgson and Lewis Carroll. As a part of our visit to the church we will be given a special tour and short talk about Lewis Carroll's association with the church. The organ is a fine 2 manual and pedal instrument built by Jardine & Co (Manchester) and most recently rebuilt by Andrew Carter (in 2002). NPOR C01333 may not be up to date.

Saturday 13th June, 2pm All Saints' Gresford Annual Meeting and organ visit.		The organ in All Saints' is a fine three manual Wm Hill & Son instrument built in 1871, and rebuilt in 1912 by Hill and in 1995 by Roy Billingsley. Details on the NPOR N11754.
Saturday 25th July 2pm. Christchurch Chester		We are going to visit the Brindley & Foster two manual organ in Christchurch, Chester. The specification is given on the NPOR, N04295. The special Brindley & Foster registration aids (noted in the NPOR entry) are still working on this instrument.

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There is always space for your contributions – please send them to the Publications Officer in whatever format you prefer

Live music!

Chester Cathedral organ recitals

The recitals take place on Thursdays at 1:10pm. The suggested donation is £5.

5th March	Graham Eccles (St Asaph)
12th March	Daniel Mathieson (Chester Cathedral)
19th March	Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)
26th March	Alexander Lanigan-Palotai (Chester Cathedral)
2nd April	Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)
9th April	Alexander Lanigan-Palotai (Chester Cathedral)
16th April	Richard Lea (Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral
23rd April	Anthony Gritten (Royal Academy of Music)
30th April	Thomas Coxhead (Newport Cathedral)

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)

Music at Wesley

Wesley Church Centre, St John Street, Chester

Tuesday Lunchtime Concerts

12.45pm – 1.35 pm

Retiring collection

3rd March	Ben Holland (violin), John Gough (piano)
10th March	Chetham's School of Music Brass Ensembles
17th March	Yuki Kagajo (piano)
24th March	Jeremy & Brian Heald (piano duets)
31st March	Cristo Harijan (piano)
7th April	Edward Harris-Brown (piano)
14th April	The Vale Royal Singers
21st April	Brian Heald (piano)
28th April	Chetham's School of Music Instrumentalists

Saturday Organ Recitals 12.45pm – 1.35 pm

Retiring Collection

21st March	Brian Heald (Wesley Chester)
18th April	Graham Eccles (St Asaph)
16th May	Jeremy Heald (Wesley)
20th June	Paul Carr (Birmingham)

Organ Centenary Recital July 2026 marks the centenary of the opening of Wesley, Chester's Binns organ. The opening recital was on 10th July 1926). Philip Rushforth has very kindly agreed to give a one-hour Organ Recital at Wesley at 2pm on *Saturday July 11th 2026* to celebrate this anniversary and will conclude it by playing the whole of Widor's 5th Symphony. It will be a free concert with a retiring collection and tea and cake afterwards for the audience.

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

Liverpool Cathedral

The 2026 Centenary Recital Series celebrating the centenary of Liverpool Cathedral's magnificent Willis Organ continues.

Saturday 18th April 2026 – Jean-Baptiste Dupont (Bordeaux Cathedral, France)

Saturday 6th June 2026 – Nathan Laube (Rochester, U.S.A.)

Saturday 26th September 2026 – James Orford (St Paul's Cathedral, London)

Saturday 17th October 2026 – Professor Ian Tracey. 100th Anniversary Evensong & Recital.

Saturday 7th November 2026 – Isabelle Demers (Quebec, Canada)

Tickets £15.68 per recital. You can book online here. All recitals begin at 6pm except the recital on 17 October which follows evensong at 3:00pm. Booking is advised and aim to arrive early! More details in the January newsletter.

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.)

Liverpool St George's Hall

Usually Tuesdays from 12:45pm – 1:30pm. Tickets (at the door) £10.75
Professor Ian Tracey, Organist to the City of Liverpool.
10th March, 14th April, 12th May, 2nd June, 5th September, 20th October, 17th November, 8th December.
Please note the 10th March recital will start at 12:30pm.
Details of the Willis Organ in St George's Hall may be found on the NPOR N01921

Music at Blackburn Cathedral

Wednesday Concerts

4th March	Joshua Simoes
11th March	Nigel Spooner
18th March	Roger Judd
25th March	Tom Bell
1st April	Milkica Radovanovic
22nd April	Andrew Canning
29th April	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.

Saturday 14th March 7:30pm: David Briggs Live Improvisation Concert - The Phantom of the Opera. More details and ticket from https://blackburncathedral.com/event/david-briggs-live-improvisation-concert-the-phantom-of-the-opera/

World-renowned organist David Briggs improvises a live accompaniment to the 1925 silent film The Phantom of the Opera. There is a pre-concert talk at 6:30pm.

Bank Holiday Monday 6th April 11:00am: Dr Colin Walsh, Organist Emeritus at Lincoln Cathedral (Tickets £10 at the door).

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

Bangor Cathedral

Check the website https://bangorcathedral.churchinwales.org.uk

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

St Asaph Cathedral

Check the website https://stasaphcathedral.wales/en
Details of the cathedral organ may be found at
https://stasaphcathedral.wales/en/music/the-organ

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



Truro Cathedral



Exeter Cathedral