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

Newsletter May 2026

Our next meeting:
Saturday 16th May, 2pm
All Saints' Church, Daresbury



There was a church on the site from the 12th century, and the church was largely rebuilt in the 1870s. The Church is strongly associated with Lewis Carroll, who was born at All Saints' Vicarage in 1832.

The Lewis Carroll Centre at the church provides the context for a visit to All Saints, where Lewis Carroll was young Charlie Dodgson and his father was the vicar, in the early part of Queen Victoria's reign. We shall start our visit with a special tour and short talk about Lewis Carroll's association with the church.



According to the NPOR J00045, the organ is a 2 manual and pedal instrument built by Nicholson & Co (in 1963 and rebuilt in 2002). [Ped: 32, 16,16, 16, 8, 8: Grt: 8, 8, 8, 4, 4, 2 2/3, 2, II; Sw:8,8,8,8,4,2, II16, 8. Couplers.]

It replaced an instrument by Jardine & Co (Manchester) NPOR C01333.





There is a small charge of £5 per person for the Lewis Caroll talk and tour and *the committee would be grateful if you could come prepared to make a donation towards this.* Donations will be collected as you arrive.

After the talk/tour we'll see hear and play the Nicholson organ. There is parking near the church. ***Church address:*** *Daresbury Lane, Daresbury WA4 4AE*

Our Annual Meeting Saturday 13th June, 2pm

This will take place on Saturday 13th June at 2pm at All Saints' Church Gresford. Papers for the annual meeting will be circulated to all members by post in the middle of May. It is important that all members try to attend this meeting at which we shall elect the committee to take the Association forward into the next season (starting in September 2026). Please consider joining the committee and helping with the running of the organisation. There will be some vacancies that need to be filled as some of the present team are stepping down.



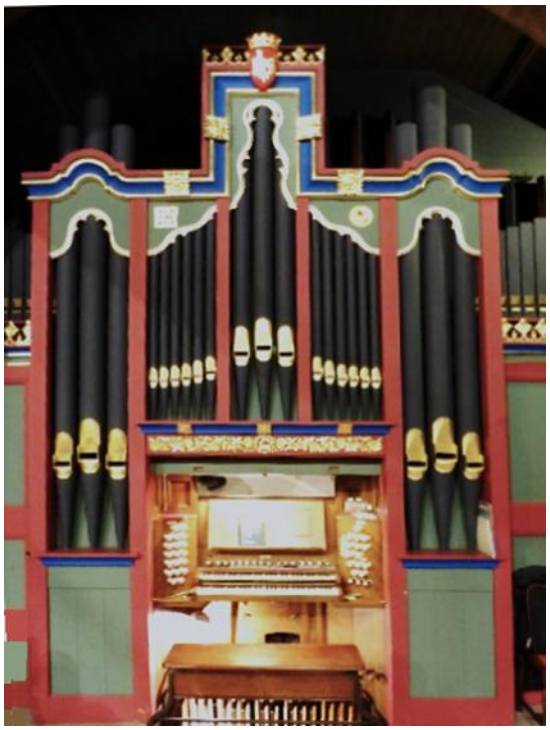
After the Annual Meeting we shall visit the church to hear and play the fine three manual Wm Hill & Son instrument built in 1871, rebuilt in 1912 by Hill and in 1995 by Roy Billingsley. Details on the NPOR N11754.





Church address: *School Hill, Gresford, Wrexham LL12 8RW*

Our final meeting of the season: Saturday 25th July at 2pm



Our final meeting for this season is on Saturday 25th July at 2pm when we shall visit Christchurch, Chester to see, hear and play the historic Brindley & Foster two manual organ.
The specification is given on at NPOR N04295.
The special Brindley & Foster registration aids (noted in the NPOR entry) are still in working order on this instrument. The *Brindgradus* is a type of general crescendo pedal similar to the German *Rollschweller*. The *Transformers* are pre-programmed combinations selecting a "solo" voice and accompaniment. These are complex pneumatic action devices!

Our visit to Christ Church Willaston

We had a lovely meeting at Christ Church Willaston on the evening of Monday 13th April. We were welcomed to the church by Nick Owen, who was kindly looking after us whilst Prof David Speechly (the church organist) attended a PCC meeting. The church has very recently been reordered and was looking very fine and pristine. David had kindly prepared some notes on the organ for us and joined us after the PCC meeting finished.



The current organ was installed in 1926 after the church had been extended. The new organ was dedicated to "Henry Garvie Johnston" according to the plaque on the console (though his middle name was "Garvey") and given by his widow Isabel Johnston: Henry lost his life in the First World War (1915). The Johnston family were wealthy family who owned a Liverpool based shipping company.

The organ remained unchanged until 1999 when it was rebuilt by David Wells (Organ Builders Liverpool) and the pneumatic action replaced with electro pneumatic action, a capture system was installed and some tonal changes were made.

The present specification is
Great: Open Diapason 8, Gedact 8 (previously Clarabel; Flute 8), Principal 4, Harmonic Flute 4, Fifteenth, Octave (coupler); *Swell:* Stopped Diapason 8, Salicional 8, Octave

Geigen 4 (previously Geigen Principal 8), Mixure II (previously Corno di Bassetto 8), Oboe 8, Trumpet 8, Tremulant; *Pedal:* Open Diapason 16, Bourdon 16, Bass Flute 8 (extn), Octave 8 (extn) Couplers; Swell Oct., Swell Sub., Swell Unison off, Swell to Great, Swell to Pedal, Great to Pedal.



We enjoyed playing and listening to the organ and enjoyed a warm drink in the church's refurbished north aisle. There are occasionally concerts at Christ Church and I would strongly commend them to you.

We are most grateful to David for arranging the visit for us and to Nick for looking after us. (It was a little disappointing that so few members came along to this evening.)

CNEWOCA Committee Members

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Meetings for the 2026-27 Season

Your committee is working on the programme for meetings for our next season, which begins in September 2026.

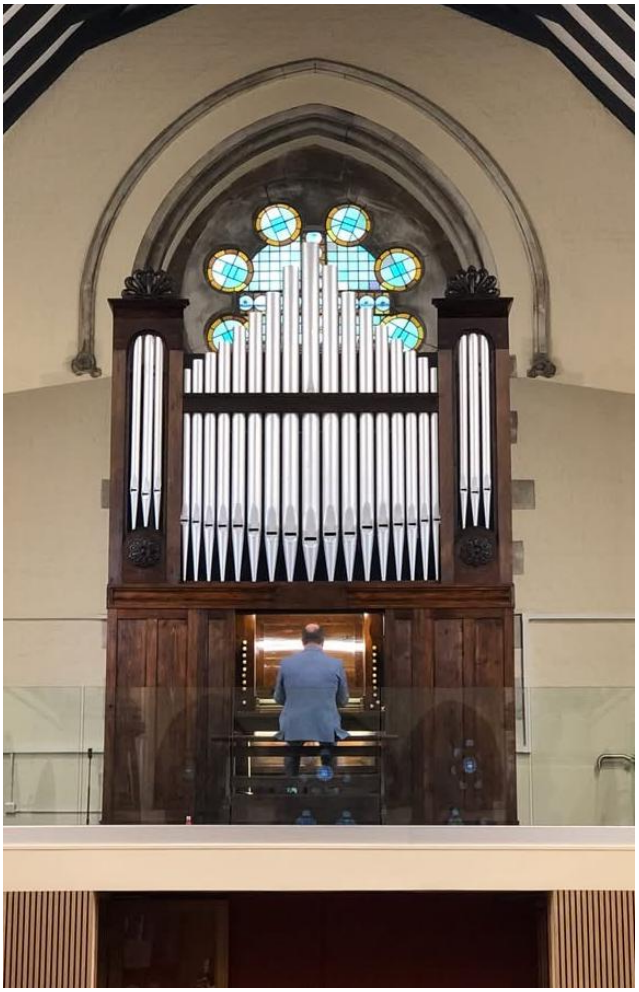
- Have you ideas for meetings that you would like to suggest?
- Are there some organs in the area (or not too far away) that you think we might find interesting to visit?
- Are there different types of events that you think would be of interest?
- Are you able to help arrange or host a meeting?

Your committee would love to hear from you. Please let any member of the committee have your ideas.

St. John's Church, Killingworth

Readers may remember that we featured an article written by Nigel Brown, the brother of our General Secretary Katriona, about his sponsored cycle ride to raise funds for the restoration of the Posthill organ at St. John's Killingworth (Co. Durham) where he is organist. (See our September 2025 Newsletter)

The work on the organ has now been successfully completed and it is very good to be able to share the outcome of the project at St. John's in these words and photographs from Facebook.





Paul Ritchie writes:

> "A Postill organ has stood at the west end of St John's Church in Killingworth since its consecration in 1869 although Bassett Keeling's plans included a north aisle and tower which were never built. The archway on the north side of the

chancel gives some indication of how small the organ chamber would have been. Although standing on the floor, the console, pedalboard and bench were raised up about 15 inches giving the organist a rather precarious playing position. In the 1960's the lower panelling was lost when storage areas were built either side of the organ making access for maintenance very difficult. A recent successful Lottery Heritage Fund application has resulted in the construction of a splendid mezzanine gallery with storage and kitchen facilities underneath, and the restoration of the organ by J.R. Lightbown and Sons. The Postill organ now sits high up on the west wall where it can be seen and heard to its advantage, and last night Daniel Cook from Durham Cathedral gave the opening recital. https://npor.org.uk/survey/N13280

Katriona attended the opening recital and writes:

"…work is now complete and I was fortunate to be able to attend a recital on 1st May at which Daniel Cook (Durham Cathedral) put the instrument through its paces.

The church has chairs, not pews, so we were able to face West with a clear view of organ and organist. Members of the congregation commented on how much clearer the sound was now that the instrument has been raised onto a mezzanine floor; also how good it looked with gleaming casework no longer obscured by sheets of plyboard.

Daniel had chosen a varied programme which displayed all the versatility of the organ. He opened with John Stanley's "Voluntary VIII" opus 5 followed by J S Bach's "Nun danket alle Gott" BWV 657. Next came Mendelssohn's "Sonata No. 4 in B flat" opus 65, in which Daniel felt that the movements complement each other particularly well. Then we heard Elgar's "Vesper Voluntaries" which had been chosen because they were written for an organ of similar size. I must confess to not having heard the following two items before – "Marche Opus 7, No. 1" by Augustin Barie and "Cantabile" from Symphonie VI by Widor – but I enjoyed them very much. The recital ended with Vierne's "Carillon de Westminster" which, as Daniel had hoped, proved popular with the audience.

Thanks were given to Daniel Cook for his playing, to John Lightbown & Sons, Organ Builders Ltd and to John Hamilton (a member of the congregation) who had done most of the fundraising.

The organ did sound a little harsh in some of the loudest passages, but my brother, Nigel Brown, excused it saying that the reeds were not yet fully bedded in. He also disappointed several members of the congregation by saying that, no, they would not be hearing the Vierne again on Sunday!

Elizabeth Brown, Nigel's wife, posted part of the recital on Facebook. Click here link to hear Daniel Cook playing Carillon de Westminster.







We offer our sincere congratulations to Nigel Brown and all at St John's on this tremendous achievement.



Live music!

Chester Cathedral organ recitals

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

7th May	Daniel Mathieson (Chester Cathedral)
14th May	Ben Chewter (London)
21st May	Alexander Lanigan-Palotai (Chester Cathedral)
28th May	Graham Eccles (St. Asaph)

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

5th May	Kathryn Mason (harp)
12th May	Yuxuan Zhao (piano)
19th May	Rachel Fillhart (clarinet), John Gough (piano)
26th May	Richard Haslam (Guitar)
2nd June	Leora Cohen (violin), Ariel Lanyi (piano)
9th June	Laura Jellicoe (flute), Harvey Davies (piano)
16th June	Juanjo Blazquez (piano)
23rd June	Imogen Garner (mezzo-soprano), John Gough (piano)
30th June	Lionel Clarke (cello), Brian Heald (piano)

Saturday Organ Recitals 12.45pm – 1.35 pm

Retiring Collection

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 all concerts from https://www.wesleychester.co.uk/whats-on/music-wesley/
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 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!

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.
12th May, 2nd June, 5th September, 20th October, 17th November, 8th December..
Details of the Willis Organ in St George's Hall may be found on the NPOR N01921

Liverpool Philharmonic Hall

Monday 18th May 1:00pm Springtide Organ Recital (Ian Tracey).

Music at Blackburn Cathedral

Wednesday Concerts

6th May	Michael Haynes
13th May	Tom Bell
20th May	Galina Vale (Guitar)
3rd June	Eira Lynn Jones (Harp)
10th June	Stonyhurst Stars (Pupils from Stonyhurst College)

***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 Monday 4th May 11:00am: Maria-Magdalena Kaczor (Tickets £10 at the door).
Bank Holiday Monday 25th May 11:00am: John Robinson (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

Wednesdays at 7:30pm. Retiring Collection.

3rd June	Gordon Stewart (Concert Organist)
1st July	Christopher Enston (St Asaph Cathedral)
5th August `	Paul Carr (Birmingham)

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

Hoole Methodist Church, Hamilton Street, Hoole, Chester

Sundays at 3pm. Suggested donation £5 (including refreshments)

17th May	*Victorian-Style Songs & Solos* Including songs for audience with John Evans & Dennis Jones (voice & piano)
21st June	Jeremy Heald (piano & organ)
19th July	*"Show Songs & Solos"* Kelsborrow Choir

Kelsborrow Choir

Sunday 10th May 2:30pm	*"Show Songs & Solos"* Norley Methodist Church Raising funds for OPAL (Older People Active Lives)

	Suggested donation: £10 (includes refreshments) Further details and tickets: 07788 134181 or info@norleymethodistchurch.org.uk
Wednesday 1st July 1:00pm	St John The Baptist's Church, Chester City Centre Free admission – donations welcome
Sunday 19th July 3pm	"Show Songs & Solos" Hoole Methodist Church Suggested donation £5 (including refreshments)
Saturday 22nd August 7:30pm	St John The Evangelist Parish Church, Ashton Hayes Raising funds for the Church Tickets: £10 including refreshments
Saturday 12th September 7:30pm	***Kelsborrow Choir 70th Anniversary Concert*** with Jonathan Scott (International Concert Organist) Raising funds for The Joshua Tree (children's cancer charity) Tickets: £20 including refreshments Further details and tickets: angiejohnevans@gmail.com
Friday 9th October 7:00pm	St Mary's Without The Walls, Handbridge, Chester Free admission – including refreshments Donations welcome - raising funds for Choral Scholarship Fund.

Upton URC

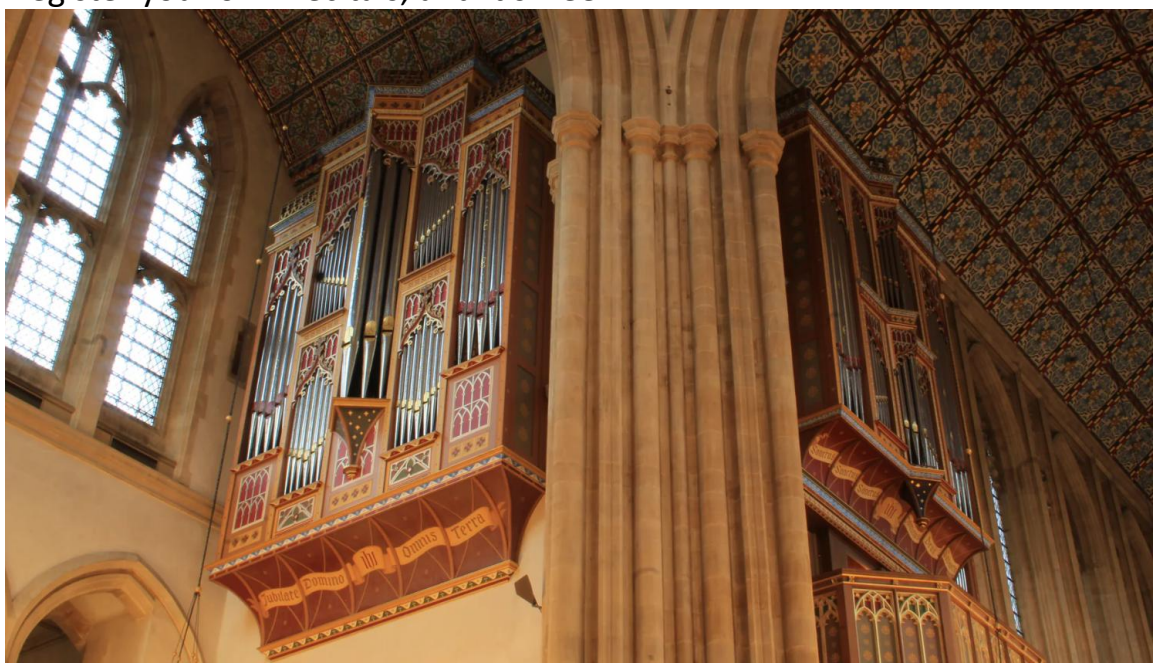
Saturday 9th May at 7.30pm
Farndon Brass Band with guests John Evans (organ) and Angie Evans (contralto)
Admission £10 including refreshments

St John's, Chester

Wednesday at One

Wednesday 27th May at 1.00pm – 1.45pm: Organ Concert by John Evans
Admission Free, Refreshments Available

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



St Edmundsbury Cathedral, NPOR E01697