



ULSTER SOCIETY OF ORGANISTS AND CHOIRMASTERS

President: Philip Stopford

NEWSLETTER ~ February 2008

~ FEBRUARY EVENT ~

Saturday 9th February

3:00 p.m.

St. Martin's Church of Ireland,
Ballymacarrett, Newtownards Road, Belfast

“PLAYING THOSE PEDALS”

Nigel McClintock

presents

An Introduction to the Organ for Pianists

This session will cover the following aspects

- What the average organ and the piano have in common
- How the organ and piano differ
- What the pedals actually do and what they add
- How to approach the pedals for the first time
- Some useful tips for those already playing the pedals

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NEWS

Following our A.G.M. on 12th January in St. Peter's, Antrim Road, the 48 members present elected the following office bearers:

President:	Philip Stopford	
Vice Presidents:	James Little, Alasdair MacLaughlin	
Honorary Secretaries:	Stephen & Carolyn Hamill	
Honorary Treasurer:	Philip Walden	
Honorary Auditor:	John Wright	
2008 Committee:		
Donald Davison	David McElderry	Jenny Heaney
Ian Mills	Dick Walker	Nigel McClintock
Stephen Timpany	Ivan Millen	Michael Tregenna

New Honorary Life Members	William Adair
	David McElderry

From the new committee:

There are several people that need to be thanked for their service to U.S.O.C. Firstly, Gareth Johnston and Tanja Tierney for their work as committee members, and especially to Gareth and the sub-committee for their work on the amendments to the Constitution of the Society. Copies of this are available from the Hon. Secretaries (see contact details on back page).

Also thanks to outgoing office bearers James Little (President 2006 and 2007) and Philip Stopford (Honorary Secretary 2006 and 2007) for their dedication and tireless work in promoting and organising this flourishing society. We hope to continue this good work!

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2007

The first important thing to say this year is that, just as in 2006, the membership has been well served, and the President supported by the committee. Most of its members have either taken entire charge of at least one event during the year or have played another key role such as being Secretary, Treasurer or, for example reviewing the Constitution. All these things take up a considerable amount of time and skill and we are in their debt. Again as last year, there have been two strands to what we have tried to do in our Programme - first of all our regular monthly events and secondly other activities that might be called 'outreach', for want of a better word.

February, when we held our first meeting after the A.G.M. brought both these elements together. In the afternoon, we had a talk by Very Rev Dr Hugh Kennedy, Administrator of St. Peter's Roman Catholic Cathedral, about a number of aspects relating to music in the Roman Catholic Church generally. Then that evening, many U.S.O.C. members attended the Sung Mass service in St. Peter's with the St. George's choir singing Palestrina and your President having the honour of reading the Epistle. That series, launched in January, was planned in conjunction with U.S.O.C. and we provided the contacts in a number of choirs to help ensure that all months apart from

July and August were covered. The incoming President, Philip Stopford, played a key role in conducting three different choirs on separate occasions.

In May, many of us had the pleasure of attending the blessing of the organ by Bishop Walsh and with Martin Baker from Westminster Cathedral playing stunning improvisations, through the good offices of our member Colm Carey, Belfast City Organist. I cannot leave the subject of St Peter's Cathedral without firstly congratulating our member Nigel McClintock on being appointed to the newly expanded Director of Music's position there-no better person. Secondly, I know you will all join me in sending best wishes to Dr Hugh Kennedy for a restoration to health and strength after most unfortunately suffering a heart attack in November.

Turning back to our normal programme, Philip Stopford led our March meeting which was designed to help organists improve their improvisation skills at a more basic level though, as in St. Peter's using a Kenneth Jones organ, this time in Dundrod Presbyterian church. April saw us heading off for the day to a far flung part of Ulster, Co. Monaghan for a fascinating day arranged very carefully by Dick Walker. A large number of our members took part in that trip so it seems to be the type of event that people enjoy.

In May, our annual three day trip was to Oxford, with a visit to Shakespeare's church in Stratford-upon-Avon on the way back to Birmingham airport. We had about 40 people on that trip which took in choral services at Christ Church, New College and Magdalen as well as the opportunity to hear and play a huge variety of organs at seven other Colleges and two churches. A feature of these trips is the chance to catch up with members based outside Northern Ireland and this year we had no fewer than six people in that category joining us for all or part of the time.

June was an excellent 'Day in Derry' organized by Ian Mills, and this was our Elgar and Buxtehude anniversaries event. The highlight was the playing of the entire Elgar Sonata played by international concert organist, David Briggs.

On the last Sunday in June, we marked the death in April after a long and painful illness, of one of our most distinguished past Presidents, Christopher Gordon-Wells M.B.E. A large number of members, along with many people who had travelled from Great Britain attended a Thanksgiving service in St. George's P.C., Belfast. Life member Professor Desmond Hunter played the organ before and after the service. A fitting obituary written by Dr Michael Callender was published in many periodicals including the Church Times and Organists' Review.

After the summer break we repeated the experiment of last year in extending an invitation to hundreds of organists who are not members to come to a choir training workshop, this year with Professor Paul Spicer, one of Britain's leading choir trainers. This session was held in Methodist College and attracted exactly 100 people. Committee member Stephen Timpany was a key player that day in that he supplied members of his own Banbridge choir for Paul to work with.

Only two months later Stephen was again to the fore as he organised everything to do with our liaison with Holywood Music Festival which led to U.S.O.C. being sponsors of an inaugural organ class, stemming from an idea from Dr Harry Grindle. This was disappointing in terms of numbers of candidates and audience, but not quality of playing. We were fortunate to have Peter Barley, Director of Music at St. Patrick's

Cathedral, Dublin, both to adjudicate and also give a very fine short recital in Holywood Methodist church. The organ there, as so often during the year had been tuned just a day or two before by David McElderry and it is important that we acknowledge this contribution from David - one that has been given time and time again.

In between those two events, we returned to St. George's P.C. in Belfast for our annual Members' Recital. We heard wonderful choral music sung by the parish choir and accompanied by their own organists, Richard Campbell and Liam Crangle, along with phenomenal organ playing by Charles Harrison and Nigel McClintock. £500 was raised for Christian Aid that evening in order to help with famine relief efforts in Africa.

That covers the various normal activities we arranged. I have already mentioned our involvement with the Sung Mass series in St. Peter's Cathedral. The second initiative with which we were involved was an attempt to forge closer relationships with the various church bodies themselves rather than just the individual members. Ivan Millen and I met Dr. Donald Watts, the Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in June. Out of that later came an invitation to meet members of one of their committees which we will be doing on 22nd January. We hope to explore ways in which we will be able to help each other in future and that could be the start of an exciting new development. We are also exploring ways of liaising with the Methodist Church and the Church of Ireland.

As you can judge from these comments, at this stage we cannot say what will come out of these developments, but you can see that we are trying to be outward looking and ensure that as many church musicians as possible know what we have to offer. That, I hope you will agree, is a great deal. As last year, I have often found myself being surprised at the number of our members who never attend a single event, despite the huge variety that we put on. However, we are grateful for everyone's subscriptions and their moral support!

I do know from what others say that we in U.S.O.C. consistently have one of the most interesting annual programmes of any association affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists. I hope we have maintained our high standards in 2007 and look forward to doing the same this year.

In mentioning the I.A.O., it is important that I acknowledge their decision to award us funding of £300 in respect of the Paul Spicer event, as it was designed to help us try to attract new members. This payment should appear in next year's accounts. Also, I represented U.S.O.C. at three I.A.O. meetings during 2007 and a number of our members attended the annual I.A.O. Congress in August, this year held in the Glasgow and Edinburgh areas.

Finally, I repeat my thanks to all office bearers and committee members for their sterling contributions during the year and would also like to thank our webmaster, Alistair McCartney for keeping our website up to date and adding to it from time to time, with such things as photographs from our trips. Thank you to all members who provided help in various ways, either by playing at or hosting events and, above all, by simply providing support by attending on one or more occasions in 2007.

James Little, 31st December 2007

2008 PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY, Saturday 9th



“Playing those Pedals”

An Introduction to the Organ for Pianists

by Nigel McClintock

3:00 p.m.

St. Martin's, Newtownards Road, Ballymacarrett, Belfast

MARCH, Saturday 1st



“Easier than it sounds!”

Approachable organ repertoire for Sunday to Sunday use

by Peter Wright, Director of Music, Southwark Cathedral

3:00 p.m.

Ravenhill Presbyterian Church, Ravenhill Road, Belfast

APRIL, Saturday 12th



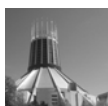
Choral Festival (Joint event with R.S.C.M.)

Rehearsal 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. and Service 5:00 p.m.

St. Anne's Cathedral, Donegall Street, Belfast

Details to be confirmed - see March Newsletter.

MAY, Saturday 3rd - Monday 5th



Annual Bank Holiday Weekend Trip:

Based in Chester, this year we will visit several key establishments in Manchester, North Wales, Liverpool and Chester itself.

JUNE

Date and details to be confirmed.

Members' Recital or out of town meeting

SEPTEMBER

Date and details to be confirmed.

Choral Event

OCTOBER, Saturday 18th



“Using the internet for musical resources”

by Dr. Donald Davison M.B.E.

3:00 p.m.

St. John's Malone, Malone Road, Belfast

NOVEMBER, Saturday 15th



Event to celebrate the centenary of Olivier Messiaen's birth (10th December, 1908).

Belfast City Council event.

Full details to be confirmed.

THURSDAY 31ST JANUARY**7:30 P.M.****TICKETS £10****PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT PATRICK, UPPER MALONE ROAD, DRUMBEG, BELFAST**

Stephen Hamill (Organ) with the choirs of Methodist College directed by



Ruth McCartney. Stephen, who designed and built the recently installed Phoenix digital organ, will use the instrument in both solo and accompanying rôles.

Tickets are available from members of the choir, from Music Matters, Railway Street, Lisburn and at the door. Proceeds are in aid of the organ fund.

SATURDAY 2ND FEBRUARY**11.00 A.M. & 2:30 P.M.****£4 / £6 / £8****COOKE CENTENARY CHURCH, JUNCTION OF PARK ROAD & ORMEAU ROAD, BELFAST**

Belfast Philharmonic "Come & Sing" Fauré's Requiem & Vivaldi's Gloria.

Rehearsal (11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.) Performance (2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.)

An opportunity to gather with hundreds of other singers, and after a small amount of rehearsal, sing one of the world's great choral masterpieces just for the sheer fun of it! Whether you have sung many times before or never at all, Christopher Bell, The Phil's Chorus Master has a witty and energetic style that always guarantees a stimulating and lively singing day.

Singers: £8 Audience: £6 Student: £4

Contact 07925 515584 or visit www.belfastphilharmonic.org.uk**SATURDAY 9TH FEBRUARY****7:30 P.M.****F.O.C.****ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL, ST. PETER'S SQUARE, BELFAST**

The sung Mass series continues with The Balligan Consort, directed by David McKnight.

SUNDAY 10TH FEBRUARY**7:30 P.M.****F.O.C.****CHURCH OF OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE, UPPER DUNMURRY LANE, BELFAST**

Concert by Cappella Caeciliana conducted by Donal McCricken.

WEDNESDAY 27TH FEBRUARY**7:00 P.M. ~ 9:30 P.M.****ST. ANNE'S CATHEDRAL, DONEGAL STREET, BELFAST**"Choral Rehearsal & Conducting Techniques" (R.S.C.M. Event)
Belfast Cathedral Choir directed by Philip Stopford

SATURDAY 8TH MARCH **7:30 P.M.** **TICKETS £8 (£5)**

PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT GEORGE, HIGH STREET, BELFAST

RENAISSANCE
and friends, directed by Ian Mills
HANDEL: DIXIT DOMINUS
and music for Passiontide

WEDNESDAY 19TH MARCH **7:30 P.M.** **£15**

CENTRAL HALL, CAMPBELL COLLEGE, BELMONT ROAD, BELFAST

Carlo Curley plays the Walker Wells-Kennedy organ

The College is delighted to present the charismatic Carlo Curley, one of the world's foremost concert organists. The ticket price includes a wine and canapé reception. Tickets are available from the College Front of House on return of a booking form. Visit www.campbellcollege.co.uk to download a booking form, or telephone 028 9076 3076.

SUNDAY 9TH MARCH **5:00 P.M.** **F.O.C.**

CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY, NEWINGTON AVENUE, BELFAST

Choral Vespers sung by Cappella Caeciliana, conducted by Donal McCricken.

..... *and an event not to be missed*

FRIDAY 20TH - SUNDAY 29TH JUNE

PIPEWORKS ORGAN FESTIVAL, DUBLIN

From its beginnings in 1980 as the Dublin International Organ & Choral Festival, Pipeworks has brought to Irish audiences a diverse programme of music-making with the organ at its centre, fully exploiting not only the wonderful range of instruments to be found in Dublin but the splendid cathedrals, churches and concert halls which house them.

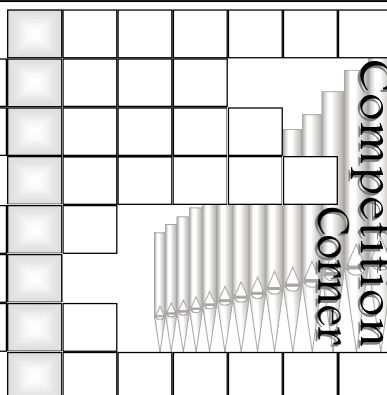
A feature of the triennial festival is the Dublin International Organ Competition in Christchurch Cathedral (classes are open to the public) which attracts young virtuosi from every corner of the world. The guest competition jurors this year are Thomas Trotter (UK), Hans Fagius (Sweden), David Higgs (USA), Margareta Hürholz (Germany), and Daniel Roth (France) who will give a recital on the Father Willis organ in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dundalk, on Wednesday 25th June.

Further information about the festival from www.pipeworksfestival.com

Any items for inclusion in the March Newsletter should be sent to the Hon. Secs. no later than Wednesday 20th February please. Contact details on back page.

The clues refer to **Names of Organbuilders** and are not in any particular order.

- *Installed a new 13 stop tracker 2 decker in 1987 for a fair city (7)*
- *Bobby, Paddington, Allen, George and David have a connection with his organs (7)*
- *The only real choice for First Knotty Ash (7)*
- *Builder of a loud & a bit red cathedral organ in the UK (6)*
- *His Trompeta de los angeles sticks out (6)*
- *The only known example of a Trompeta Argentea was put in by this firm (6)*
- *This newsletter tells you when and where you might hear one of these (6)*
- *Exported 191 ranks in 7 organs including one for a Cathedral to Japan (6)*



Fit the names into the frame and a well known organ stop should be revealed, and then send your solution to the Secretariat (by post, email or even telephone) to arrive no later than February 20th so that we can announce the winner in the March Newsletter. The first correct entry drawn out of the hat wins a bottle of bubbly, courtesy of PHOENIX ORGANS NI. *Another one coming next month...*

MESSAGE FROM THE HON. TREASURER

Thank you to all members who have already paid their subscriptions, by whatever means, for 2008. However, I would be delighted to receive subscriptions from those 83 members who have still to pay. The current annual subscriptions are:

Northern Ireland & Republic of Ireland	£20	Mainland Great Britain	£10
International Overseas Member	£7	Full-time Student	£10

Please consult the notes on the payment sheet enclosed with the December Bulletin. Do contact the Treasurer if you have any queries in this regard.

CONTACT

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