



**Bexley & District Organists' &
Choirmasters' Association**
NEWSLETTER
Website: <http://bdoca.org.uk>
Patron: Daniel Moulton

IAO
Affiliated to the
Incorporated
Association
Of Organists

Diary Dates 2025

Please do support these events - the more the merrier!

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 3rd September, 2025 at 6pm

All Saints' church, Rectory Lane, Foothill Cray, DA14 6BX

Members are warmly invited to attend our Annual General Meeting. The meeting will commence with a composite recital from some of our members and be followed by light refreshments.

Please contact Reg. if you wish to participate in the recital.

BDOCA Singers Choral Evensong

11th October at 5pm

St John's church, Sidcup

August 2025

Last issue February 2025

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Memories of BDOCA over the years.

2028 is the 70th Anniversary of the association and the committee would like to put together an exhibition of your memories of past events. Please contact Reg. or Linden with your contributions.

Organ Crawl report

On 23rd of February a murky morning turned into a very pleasant day on our South London Organ crawl arranged by Aeron.

We started off just down the road from the Elephant and Castle (drastically changed since I last saw it) off the Walworth Road at St John with Lady Margaret. Lady Margaret Beaufort was 13 when she gave birth to Henry VII. She was a generous benefactor and founded St. John's College, Cambridge. The church retains connections to the college through the 'St. John's Mission' work.



St John's church

The 2 manual Hele organ was installed in the north west corner of the church and is a 2 manual Victorian parish organ. We had a fantastic organ by the resident organist and a church warden with tea and biscuits. The stops list is not untypical of the time but the sound is powerful and the swell string stops ideal for choir accompaniment and supplying a wide range for all genres of music. After a play and a look at the various, candle laden altars of the high Anglo-Catholic church we made our way back to the Elephant and onto the Northern Line to Holy Spirit, Tooting.

(cont....)



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Holy Spirit church

The Hunter organ was not completed due to the war but the organist Robert Bowles took it upon himself to complete it as best he could. Despite a stroke 1 year ago he came to talk to us about it (the first time public speaking since his stroke - he did very well). He wanted to use Hunter pipework to complete it so had to play the waiting game picking up pipes from defunct organs mainly toward the south coast including Eastbourne. His work and dedication have paid off; the organ has a beautiful tone, especially the flutes. Although the pistons did not work and one note not sounding on the great, it was a lovely instrument to play. Robert Bowles has done a fantastic job to get the organ to where it is today.



console

Back to the Northern line (some taking the bus), we made our way to All Saints, Balham. This is a huge church and was in the running as the Southwark Diocese cathedral. Another warm welcome by the resident organist. The Harrison and Harrison organic is as expected for a virtual cathedral. The console is behind the ironwork grill where you can see the rare lesser spotted organist like a zoo exhibit. The 3 manual console hosts a variety of stops and the great Trumpet could be switched to the choir for soloing. We put the organ through its paces, Aeron playing the Guilmant *Grand Chouer* in D, Doug playing the Hallelujah Chorus, Bruce played a piece I did not know showing the softer side of the organ and I practised (!) the Bach C minor fantasia and fugue in c minor ready for Sunday then had fun with Renaud's *Toccata* in d minor just for the sake of it. Credit to our member John D'Souza who is really a fine violin player, who tried the organ and played a couple of hymns very well. One noted thing was the swell pedal which was so heavy it suggested the counterweights are probably not sufficient to balance the action.



All Saints' organ case



Console



St Augustin's

Following our fun on the All Saint's organ we walked about 15 minutes to St. Augustine's, Tooting to see the Lewis organ. Richard Decker met us in a church so warm it was unnatural. The Organ, in the chancel, is a 3 manual rare example of a Lewis. We Knew there were problems, but, in reality, only the Swell and the Choir were useable. The Swell and Choir are enclosed with an expression pedal for each that were fixed together (?).

After the obligatory group photograph, we wended our way to the pub for our booked dinner. However, the pub was absolutely crammed due to the England/Scotland 6 nations match (which England won by 1 point) t soon became clear that our booking was a work of fiction so we had to improvise. Standing outside a South Indian restaurant, the staff were keen to usher us in, so we had South Indian cuisine and a few Cobras to complete the day.

Our thanks to Aeron for this interesting Northern Line Organ Crawl.
Nik Kerwin





BDOCA Celebrity Organ Recital report – 20th June

It was a delight to be able to invite our Patron, the effervescent Daniel Moulton, to give our annual Celebrity Organ Recital, held, as ever, at St John's church, in Sidcup. Having sadly missed his talk that he gave to the Association recently, I was glad to make his acquaintance at last. His enthusiasm for the organ and its repertoire could hardly be contained. His introductions to the pieces showed his eagerness to connect with his audience, which he did so ably in his performance.

The first half started with two pieces of Bach: firstly, the *Prelude and Fugue in D major*, BWV 532, to which Daniel brought no small measure of flamboyance and *joie de vivre*; secondly, the more reflective *Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend*, BWV 709. The third and second of Schumann's *Studies in canonic form*, op.56, followed the Bach, and showed something of a nod towards Bach's contrapuntal rigour, though in a decidedly Romantic style. After that came the second of Elgar's *Vesper Voluntaries*: to my ears, the combination of the flute and string on the Swell division was redolent of a harmonium; such a timbre was apposite, since the composer wrote these to be playable on the harmonium as well as the organ. The *Fanfare* by Whitlock rounded off the first half with typical English grandeur.

The second half was devoted exclusively to one of the greatest organ works of the nineteenth-century, the *Fantasia and Fugue on the chorale 'Ad nos, ad salutarem undam'*, S.259, by Franz Liszt. The source of inspiration for this work, as for many of his other works, was derived from the world of opera, in this case Act I of *Le Prophète* by Giacomo Meyerbeer, based on the 1534 Anabaptist uprising in Münster. This is a full-blown symphonic work, with much of the chromatic writing and frequent modulations for which Liszt is known. Daniel brought it to life on the Willis organ at St John's church, bringing a great wealth of musical colour to the half-hour long, emotionally involved musical journey, leading to a triumphant finale.

Turnout for the recital was decent enough, though I wonder whether the very warm weather may have put some off. Those that were present enjoyed a very powerful testimony to the musical riches that the organ has to offer from a very influential and passionate advocate for the instrument. We look forward to welcoming Daniel to future events.

Aeron Preston

Denis Bédard Event

To mark the 75th birthday this year of composer and organist Denis Bédard, an event is being held on Tuesday 23rd September from 7 - 9 pm at St Mary's church, 63 College Road, Bromley, BR1 3QG. Music by Denis Bédard will be played and a short talk will be given on his life and compositions. This is a joint event between the Bexley, Bromley, and Southwark Associations, so do come and support it. Entrance is free, but you will be invited to give a donation.

Bruce Davis



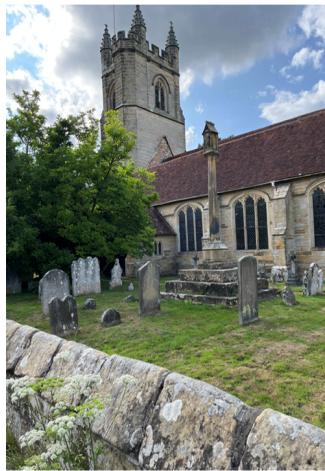
Treasure Hunt report – 26th July

Forecasts had not been in agreement and the dozen members who went to Chiddingstone had selected which weather forecast to believe, according to temperament. So the Tiggerish optimists in summer clothes got damp and the shower proofed Eyleses sweated in the sultry heat. This same debilitating damp heat might explain why some treasure hunters lost the will to live (so to speak) upon finding that half the clues were on the reverse of the question paper and remained to be solved. As happened last year at Shoreham, the treasure was won by the youngest person present. (Not the same one.)

Unlike at Shoreham, Chiddingstone's beauty (see the web for pictures, history, etc.) is not compromised by giant SUVs trying to murder pedestrians. (In contrast, the Porsche Owners' Club, who had occupied the castle grounds, seemed polite and perfectly benign.)

Aaron gave us a recital of Guilmant, Thuille, and Dubois on the (mostly) Thomas Lewis organ in St Mary's and we repaired to the Pheasant Plucker for supper where a good time was had by (almost) all.

Barrie Bishop



St Mary's church



Members discussion!



The Chidding Stone

BDOCA Singers Membership

The BDOCA Singers are keen to increase membership. The SATB choir was formed in 2018 and first sang Evensong in March 2019. The proposal at that time was to sing Choral Evensong 2-3 times a year at various churches in the area with 4-5 rehearsals in the preceding months. The pandemic interrupted this somewhat, but the choir resumed in 2022 and the Evensong at St Mary's, Welling, in October was the second such service given in 2023. A further 2 Evensongs were sung in 2024. In order to continue to enjoy a varied and interesting repertoire, the choir needs to grow. Rehearsals are held at All Saints' church, Foothill Cray. Singers do not have to be BDOCA members and there is no subscription fee other than a small donation for the church at each rehearsal, so please spread the word.



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BDOCA Singers Choral Evensong

5pm, Saturday 11th October, St John's church, Sidcup.

Introit: *Let us with a gladsome mind*

Preces and responses: Sheppard

Psalm 65 chant: Garrett

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis: Charles Wood in E flat (No. 2 version)

Anthem: *Thou visitest the earth* – Maurice Green

Office Hymn: *God that madest earth and heaven*

Rehearsals:

All at All Saints', Foothill 7:45 – 9pm

Thursday 28/8/25

Tuesday 23/9/25

Tuesday 2/9/25

Wednesday 1/10/25

Wednesday 10/9/25

Thursday 9/10/25

Thursday 18/9/25

11th October – rehearsal at 3pm followed by tea.

Bursary

BDOCA is keen to encourage youngsters to learn the organ and will give sympathetic consideration to requests for financial support. Please write to Linden with your request and supply supporting details.

Website

In conjunction with Alan Hunt (who has kindly run our website for many years), Aeron has updated it. Aeron now invites contributions and also needs to update the "available to deputise" information.

Your contributions will be very welcome.

Your Committee

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