



# ULSTER SOCIETY OF ORGANISTS AND CHOIRMASTERS

President: Philip Stopford

---

NEWSLETTER ~ April 2009

---

## APRIL EVENT ~ Saturday 18th April

Fisherwick Presbyterian Church,  
4 Chlorine Gardens, Belfast BT9 5DJ

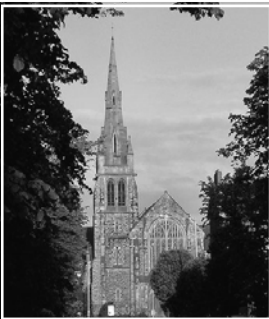
---

### HOW TO FILL YOUR CHOIR STALLS!

---



Renowned choral conductor John Bertalot, author of several books on the subject, will lead this event ~ drawing on over forty years experience of choir training as both English cathedral organist and American choral conductor.



Fisherwick Presbyterian Church is situated on the Malone Road, 500 metres on the country side of Queen's University of Belfast, on the LHS of the road going out of town, at the junction of Malone Road & Chlorine Gardens.

There is some limited car parking within the church grounds.

*Sat Nav is 54° 34' 48.5" N 5° 56' 19.0" W*

---

**APRIL** **Saturday 18th** **3:00 p.m.**



Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, 4 Chlorine Gardens, Belfast BT9 5DJ

**HOW TO FILL YOUR CHOIR STALLS!**

*Renowned choral conductor John Bertalot will lead this event - drawing on over forty years experience of choir training.*

**MAY** **Friday 1st - Monday 4th May**

**BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND TRIP: Bristol, Exeter and Truro**

**MAY** **Saturday 9th** **1:30 p.m./5:00 p.m.**



Down Cathedral, 35 English Street, Downpatrick BT30 6AB

**RSCM CHORAL FESTIVAL - A Pentecost Procession**

*The day will consist of an afternoon workshop led by Michael McCracken, followed by a Festival Service. There will be an evening organ recital in the cathedral by Stephen Hamill.*

**JUNE** **Saturday 13th** **3:00 p.m.**

**YOUNG ORGANISTS' RECITAL AND MASTERCLASS**  
at The Guildhall, Londonderry with Nigel McClintock



**St. Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry** **7:00 p.m.**

**NAJI HAKIM (La Trinité, Paris)**

Not strictly a USOC event, but certainly one not to be missed if at all possible.

**SEPTEMBER** **Saturday 12th** **3:00 p.m.**



**BACH/MENDELSSOHN EVENT**

Full details and venues TBC

**OCTOBER** **Saturday 3rd** **all day event**



**COME & SING DAY with MARTIN NEARY**

Carrickfergus Grammar School

**NOVEMBER** **Saturday 7th** **3:00 p.m.**



**MEMBERS' RECITAL**

St Anne's Cathedral Belfast

**DECEMBER** **Saturday 5th**



**President's Social Evening** at St. Anne's Cathedral

## JOHN BERTALOT



Born in 1931 in Kent, England, choral conductor John Bertalot won Organ scholarships to the Royal College of Music, London, and to Oxford and Cambridge.

After his studies, his first appointment was Director of Music for six years of Saint Matthew's Church, Northampton, (a successor of Alec Wyton), the church for which Britten wrote Rejoice in the Lamb. He then became Director of Music at Blackburn Cathedral (for eighteen years) where he founded the Blackburn Bach

Choir and was Associate Professor at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester.

After moving to the USA, John Bertalot was Director of Music for sixteen years of Trinity Church, Princeton, N.J., succeeding Dr James Litton. He led one of the most ambitious Episcopal Church music programmes in the USA, where he founded the acclaimed Princeton Singers. He was also Adjunct Associate Professor, Westminster Choir College, Rider University. In over forty years of professional music making he has led choral workshops all over the world. He has directed courses for the RSCM in UK, USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

In 1998 John Bertalot 'retired' to the UK where his time has been filled with leading choral workshops, adjudicating at music festivals and composing. He is also organist of a village church in the middle of the Lancashire countryside, where he still puts into practice all his choir-training techniques. John Bertalot has published four best-selling books on choir training: Five Wheels to Successful Sight-Singing (Augsburg Fortress), Immediately Practical Tips For Choral Directors (Augsburg Fortress), How to be a Successful Choir Director (Kevin Mayhew), Teaching Adults to Sight Sing (Kevin Mayhew).

*"Dr John Bertalot has made a significant and distinctive contribution to church music in Britain and America. After a period at St Matthew's Northampton, he shaped the music of Blackburn Cathedral in the 1960s and 1970s, and of Trinity Church, Princeton, in the 1980s and 1990s. Both churches have honoured him with emeritus appointments. But more widely he has inspired and instructed. He is particularly renowned for his training of children. Watching him in action is both inspiring and enormously entertaining. He is gently firm, wittily direct, totally engaging, and yet absolutely focused on his objectives. His books on Sight Reading and Choir Training skills are both winners. They are full of practical sense, and enable even the most modest to progress with confidence. His energy, vivacity, and sheer love of the church and its music are a great example. He has also been a splendid ambassador for the RSCM. Council is delighted to appoint John Bertalot as a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music." - text read by the Director General, Professor John Harper, at the presentation of honorary awards at the RSCM Celebration Day.*



## ORGANIC FRUITS OF THE ORCHARD COUNTY

On a mild and pleasant Saturday morning in March, through the good offices of Stephen Hamill and David McElderry, about twenty-five or so members of USOC made their way to the Orchard County to sample the delights of four quite different organs in various locations in and approaching the City of Armagh. The event was clearly signposted for us in considerable detail in the society's colourful Newsletter which arrived just a few days prior to the event.

Arriving in the spacious car park of the Parish Church of Kilmore, member Earl Moffitt, Organist of the church and Director of the Lowry Singers, greeted us and had prepared a most comfortable and welcoming venue for our first call. St. Aidan's church was pleasantly heated and tea, coffee and dainty comestibles awaited us at the rear of the church. Two very friendly golden retrievers also greeted us and listened intelligently and with interest to all that was said and played during the time of our visit. Bright and modern conveniences were open and ready to assure us of every comfort.

The Hill organ, installed there in 1919, is an impressive sight commanding the church from its west gallery position. Its range of stops was explained and illustrated by Stephen Hamill who also ventured into the difficult territory of 'temperament' and its Pythagorean connections. Following Stephen's detailed exposition of the organ's resources, opportunities to play were granted. While the instrument has a surprisingly light touch, the pedal board requires care in use as it is not a radiating board and straying feet are apt to make themselves heard, particularly at the extremes where the notes are farther away than one would expect. The organ showed itself to have a good range of sounds and balanced choruses and doubtless, under the skilful ministrations of Mr. Moffitt, lends much to the regular worship of the church.

Having passed within sight of the Stonebridge Restaurant on our left at the Battlehill Roundabout on our approach to Kilmore, we passed it again, this time on our right, heading towards Richill Parish Church. This church stands at the top of the hill in the town and inside reveals itself as a warm and bright L-shape. Evidence of the use of contemporary music in the worship of the church includes screens, drums and a neat, modern digital piano, and the organ in the west gallery represents the more traditional element. Small, about the size of a large chamber organ, the instrument, thought to have been built by Telford in 1830, showed itself capable of mustering a surprisingly bold sound, despite the three empty stop holes on the Bass jamb. Considered an important historical instrument, the organ has undergone many changes in its time. Again the pedal board is straight and "with an unusual key spacing" (SH). Stephen spoke about and demonstrated the individual stops on the organ and then played a number of pieces to illustrate its qualities, including four of Haydn's Pieces for Musical Clocks and an improvised Cornet Voluntary in English style.

Departing from the church, we once again headed towards the Battlehill Roundabout and the Stonebridge Restaurant, this time happily stopping there for lunch. The interior is most pleasant and welcoming and we enjoyed a very appetising meal and good company there. It proved a most enjoyable lunch stop; congratulations to our organisers on an excellent choice.

After lunch, we headed towards the ecclesiastical capital itself, entering at about 2.30 p.m. the Methodist Church car park in Dawson Street near the Cathedral. The church has an impressive frontage and our long-standing member, William Greenaway, has presided there as organist since 1960. This church houses a fairly rare and unaltered instrument built by Edward Wadsworth. The interior of the building is in a very traditional style with a high, wide central pulpit and a seating gallery round three sides, with the 'north' side shortened at the pulpit end to accommodate the tall organ case. The case has two wide flats on either side of a central tower, the pipes of the flats being remarkably slender, emphasising their height. This was the first of the angled stop jambs and balanced swell pedals on offer today. Again, Stephen gave a comprehensive demonstration of the organ's tonal range and played a number of pieces including Guilman's March on a theme of Handel to illustrate the organ's considerable capabilities.

And then it was time for our last venue. This was the Anglican cathedral where the recently rebuilt three-manual Walker/Wells-Kennedy Organ, with its reinstated twin cases and impressive console, nestling in a fairly deep pit, awaited our attention. This superb instrument was again demonstrated by Stephen, always at home and at ease at a console of whatever size or style. As usual, music flowed from his fingers and feet and the organ whispered, sang and thundered as he determined, and, as in all other venues on this trip, all proceeded from the vast music library that is Stephen's memory. The Cathedral Organist, Mr Theo Saunders was unable to be present, being involved in the Portadown Music Festival, but, nothing daunted, and he very graciously made it his business to join us later in the light spacious Choir Room where a most welcome provision of refreshments was set out and served by members of the cathedral. Theo welcomed us warmly, and most generously invited any who wished to spend further time on the organ to do so.

And thus concluded a most pleasant, successful, and for its members, effortless series of visits. Good weather, an excellent range of interesting instruments, a chance to meet and catch up on gossip with friends, welcome refreshments and fine meal and some beautiful countryside, made for a splendid event.

Details of the various instruments we visited are readily available in last month's Newsletter, and thanks are also due for meticulous organisation, thoughtful selection and excellent documentation, including navigation instructions, resulting in a great day out.

*Michael Tregenna*

What's on ...

**WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL**

**7:45 P.M.**

Ulster Hall, Bedford Street, Belfast

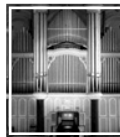


## OPENING ORGAN RECITAL

by

**Colm Carey**, Belfast City Organist

For more details contact the Box Office 9033 4455



**FRIDAY 24TH APRIL**

**7:30 P.M.**

**PORTAFERRY PRESBYTERAN CHURCH, STEEL DICKSON AVENUE,  
PORTAFERRY**

## WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL CHOIR



The boys and lay clerkes of Westminster Cathedral choir will travel to Portaferry to give a performance of choral works from the 16th-20th centuries. Under the direction of its Master of Music, Martin Baker, it is widely acknowledged to be one of the best Cathedral Choirs in the world. It is the only such choir to have won a Grammy Award in the last 30 years.



Tickets for the concert are £15 each and there are various reception options which can also be pre-booked. For further details, please visit [www.friendsppc.org](http://www.friendsppc.org) or contact Ann Wilson (028 4272 8377) or Ian McDonnell (028 4272 8264)



## SAINT GEORGE'S PARISH CHURCH HIGH STREET, BELFAST

**SATURDAY 9TH MAY**

**7:45 P.M.**

**MELISMA** presents **A HYMN TO ST. CECILIA**

A concert of a cappella music by Britten, Grieg, Poulenc, Tallis, Victoria, ABBA, The Beatles & Leonard Cohen

Tickets are £10 from Melisma 07796 555000 or [www.melisma.org](http://www.melisma.org)

**SATURDAY 16TH MAY**

**7:45 P.M.**

All Bach Organ Recital by **Emma Gibbins**



## SAINT GEORGE'S SINGERS

25TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR CELEBRATIONS

**SATURDAY 23RD MAY**

**7:45 P.M.**

Saint Thomas' Parish Church, Lisburn Road, Belfast

**THE SEASONS** by Joseph Haydn

For further information about this concert, please phone 028 9066 9431



# SAINT PETER'S CATHEDRAL

Saint Peter's Square South, Belfast

**SATURDAY 25TH APRIL**

**7:00 P.M.**

## CONCERT

by The Choristers of Westminster Cathedral Choir, London

**FRIDAY 22ND MAY**

**TIME TBC**

## ORGAN RECITAL

by Stephen Disley, Assistant Director of Music at Southwark Cathedral

**WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY**

**TIME TBC**

## ORGAN RECITAL

by Martin Ford, Organ Scholar at St. Martin-in-the-Fields

**MONDAY 3RD AUGUST**

**TIME TBC**

## CONCERT

by world famous "LIBERA" whose albums have topped both mainstream and classical charts in many countries.

**MONDAY 25TH MAY**

**8:00 P.M.**

ST. MARK'S CHURCH, DUNDELA, HOLYWOOD ROAD, BELFAST

# ORGAN RECITAL

by

## RICHARD HILLS

who will present a programme of light, popular music on the church's fine Compton organ.

ooOoo



Now an internationally acclaimed theatre organist, Richard Hills has been one of the most popular performers at the Bangor Tonic Organ. He is a graduate of Exeter College, Oxford, spent a year as organ scholar at Westminster Abbey and is now organist of St. Mary's, Bourne Street in Chelsea.



*Proceeds from this event will be donated to the Tonic Organ Trust for use in restoration of the Tonic organ. Tickets are £10 each, and will be available at the concert or in advance from: Rodney Bambrick, 1b Beverley Hills, Bangor BT20 4NA. Please enclose a S.A.E. and make cheques payable to "Tonic Organ Trust"*

What's on ...



---

---

## MESSAGE FROM THE HON. SECRETARIES

I I I I I THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED IN EARLY JUNE I I I I I

Items for inclusion to be with the Secretariat by **Friday 22nd May** at the latest please.

*If you are sending us information for Newsletters, please make absolutely sure that all the details are correct, as we will print exactly what we are given.*

---

---

### **FLIERS:**

We are happy to enclose fliers for events of interest along with the monthly newsletters. There is a nominal charge of £10 for this service, which should be included with the fliers - please send to us by the 20th of the month for the next issue - address below.

Size of flier: A6, A5 or ½ A4 as we use A5 envelopes.

Circulation: we print 200 newsletters at present.

The event will also be advertised in the usual way in the newsletter.

**Organists' Review**  
The magazine of the Incorporated Association of Organists

### **SUBSCRIPTION FEE INCREASE 2009**

UK IAO Members £22.10	UK non IAO Members £24.10
Europe £29.00	USA and rest of world £35.00
	Student £20.00

---

---

## MESSAGE FROM THE HON. TREASURER

Thank you to all members who have already paid their subscriptions for 2009. However, I should be delighted to receive payment from those members who still have to pay, including a few who have arrears from last year.

The current annual subscriptions are:

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

Please contact the Treasurer if you have any queries in this regard.

---

---

CONTACT

#### HONORARY SECRETARIES:

Stephen & Carolyn Hamill

Mobile xx714 023964

usoc at phoenix-organs dot co dot uk

---

#### HONORARY TREASURER:

Philip Walden

Bangor xx47 3643

philip dot walden at btinternet dot com

---

---

