



SCOTS WHA PLAY

The e-letter of the *Scottish Churches Organist Training Scheme (SCOTS)*

No. 29

Easter 2016

In this issue:

- ** News of a 'different' day in Dunblane
- ** Details of new wave of local organ workshops
- ** A new Membership Secretary and Treasurer
- ** Andrew Caskie on organ stop families
- ** and several other features

THE LOCAL ORGAN WORKSHOP IN DUNBLANE CATHEDRAL

The date is **Saturday May 14**

Registration at **10.30am**

Please bring an organ piece if you can
BYO lunch sandwiches or shop locally
Optional Evensong in Cathedral at 4pm

Guest tutor Kevin Duggan, Master of Music, Dunblane Cathedral

10.30am Gather at St Blane's C of S, near Cathedral: registration, coffee

11.00 **LAUNCHING THE NEXT HYMN**
Plenary. **Kevin Duggan**, Director of Music, Dunblane Cathedral. *Drawing on continental practice, Mr Duggan demonstrates ways of introducing a hymn, psalm or song in a way that is musically exciting and which motivates the congregation to sing.* 11.30 Short break

11.40 **HANDS, FEET AND IMAGINATION. A Master Class.** **Kevin Duggan** on accompanying hymns with sensitivity and flair.

12.30pm Lunch and 'After-Lunch Speech' from the **Revd Colin Renwick**, Minister of Dunblane Cathedral, on a church music related topic.

1.30 The group splits in two

Group One travels in cars to the Queen Victoria School, a few minutes away on the north of the town (organ by Ingram and Co.)

Group Two crosses the road to St Blane's Church (organ by Conacher)

In each location the tutorial is in two parts

A. The SCOTS 'host' at the location invites participants to play the organ piece that they have brought and offer advice about performance, which will include making the best use of the organ. Alternatively, participants may play a hymn or psalm tune of their choice, or one they will be playing the next day. **However, there is no pressure on participants to do this.**

B. With **Kevin Duggan**, those present will have an opportunity if they wish to try out some of the ideas shared in the Master Class earlier. (Mr Duggan will travel between the two locations.)

3.30 Return to St Blane's and the Cathedral

Participants may then disperse BUT

It is hoped that most may stay on for the public **Choral Evensong** with the combined RSCM **Scottish Voices** at 4pm

Cost for day is £25 (£15 concessions and students), payment on the day. Please register with Membership Secretary **Ruth Irons** at ruthirons@zoho.com.

FUTURE LOCAL ORGAN WORKSHOPS

Paisley Saturday September 24
Aberlour (Morayshire) Sat October 22
St Andrews Saturday February 25 2017

SPECIAL GUEST TUTOR PAISLEY
DR GEORGE McPHEE
Organist and Master of the Choristers
Paisley Abbey

WHO ARE OUR ADVISERS?

the sixth in a series of profiles

Christopher Nickols

Christopher Nickol was born in Cambridge and was a music scholar at Ampleforth College. He was also organ scholar at Royal Holloway College, University of London.

Later he became a postgraduate scholar at the



Christopher Nickol

Royal College of Music, and whilst at the RCM he participated in the Dunfermline Abbey Organ Festival and the Paisley International Organ Festival,

winning prizes at both.

Since 1993 Christopher has been Director of Music at New Kilpatrick Church, Bearsden, Glasgow where he directs 2 adult choirs, a children's choir and an instrumental group. He has performed as an accompanist and soloist with many of Scotland's major choirs and orchestras, including Bearsden Choir, the BBC SSO, Cappella Nova, the RSNO and RSNO Chorus.

He has given organ recitals throughout the UK, Europe and the USA; has broadcast on BBC radio and TV, and has recorded 4 CDs for Priory Records. Christopher is also a regular recitalist at Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery.

In January, following the death of David Bowie, a video of Chris playing 'Life on Mars' during one of these recitals was posted on youtube and immediately 'went viral'. Overnight, the pipe organ became one of the coolest of instruments (and New Kilpatrick Church, Bearsden, the place to be seen)!

STEVE GOES TO EDINBURGH



I went to the Local Organ Workshop that took place in Palmerston Place Church in Edinburgh on September 19, 2015. Although the original plan for the day had been quite extensive, a reduced number of available participants meant that a less ambitious programme had to be

put together at the last minute; nevertheless, the day was highly-instructive and enjoyable.

Andrew Caskie, the director of music at Palmerston Place gave a tutorial: **Families! Who needs them?** and explored firstly the reed family and then the mixtures and mutations, using the fine Peter Collins organ. This interesting session contained a lot of new information for me, as sadly the organ I use only has one swell reed and no mixtures at all!

[**Note** If anyone would like copies of the five page handout Andrew had prepared for this session, contact Douglas dgalbraith@hotmail.com, who will send it to you.]

Then we divided into two groups: Andrew, with Robin Bell's (our Administrator) assistance, gave a tutorial based round organ pieces people had been asked to bring with them, while the others explored the question **Are hymn tunes real music?** with Douglas Galbraith. This looked at the different idioms and historical periods that lay hidden within hymn tunes. The idea was that knowing this might help organists to play them with more understanding and style. Then the two groups swapped over.

Both sessions were very useful. I received some very useful tips from Andrew on my playing of Jehan Alain's *Choral Dorian*, and a particular highlight of Douglas's session was being able to hold a precious first edition psalm book from the year 1635.

This was my third SCOTS local organ workshop and, as usual, it was great to meet other folk and take away something which I could apply the following day at my own church.

OUR NEW MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Ruth Irons has been involved in church music since the age of about 9, playing the harmonium in her tiny village church down in Kent, where her mother had to spend the service standing behind the harmonium stool so Ruth wouldn't tip over backwards when she pedalled! She was organ bursar at Somerville College, Oxford in the early 1980s and then had a brief gap of about 30 years before playing the organ again! In the meantime she was active in various churches as a pianist and French horn player, and has also recently taken up the trombone. Ruth has been Director of Music at St Andrew's Parish Church, Dundee, since November 2014, where she is very much enjoying finding her feet again (literally) as an organist, and working with congregation members of all ages in vocal and instrumental groups. Ruth has

been a member of the SCOTS scheme since early 2015.

Ruth has set up a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SCOTSchurchorganiststraining/> and a Twitter feed @scotsorganists

NEW TREASURER

SCOTS Adviser Doug McBay ARCO is our new Treasurer. A profile of Doug appeared in the Summer 2013 issue of *Scots Wha Play* so if you hoard old copies you can read about him there. Doug's email is at the end of this e-letter, and we hope the transfer will take place later this month (April). Meantime, Meg Carroll still holds the purse strings.

I'M NOT REALLY AND ORGANIST .. !!

How many times have you or someone you know uttered these words?

You have probably been asked to take over the organ bench and play for services, from a piano background, learning as you go to come to terms with the strange beast in front of you, and you can feel somewhat inhibited by all the stops, pedals and manuals before you.

But you are an organist as soon as you sit on the bench! We all do things in life at our level: we cook – but not like Nigella, we cycle – but not like Chris Hoy, we sing – but not like Subo, we run – but not like Mo, play tennis – but not like Andy Murray and so the list goes on. However, we admire these people and can appreciate how much goes into their achievements. We usually thoroughly enjoy these pastimes and never think to say – well I am not a cyclist or whatever. So, why do we feel obliged to apologise and tell people we are not really organists?

I doubt there is a big queue of people waiting to take over from you – your clergy and congregation are eternally thankful that you step up to the mark every Sunday and do your very best. I also doubt that the congregation is aware of just what goes into preparing for a service, and how much time you spend in that preparation.

SCOTS is the ideal way of progressing your playing and you should make your church aware of the time, effort and money involved in your job as an organist – even if you do get some kind of remuneration. Try if you can to persuade your church to pay your SCOTS fees or help with

lessons or host workshop events, as at the end of the day they will benefit as much as you.

My granddaughter is an ice skater and she has a Mantra – Dream, Believe, Achieve. So let all of us, regardless of our ability, Dream about how good we can be, Believe in ourselves, and Achieve the very best we can, and be proud to say “I am an organist!”

Meg Carroll – one time pianist – now a church organist!

WHAT IS SCOTS?

SCOTS was founded in May 1997 by representatives from the Scottish Churches, the Scottish Federation of Organists, and the Royal School of Church Music in Scotland, to find and encourage emerging organists as well as to assist those already in post who wished to develop their skills. The focus is not so much on achieving technical brilliance as on the gifts, skills and understanding to contribute to a more satisfying experience of worship for the whole congregation. Underlying this is the aim to improve the quality of music in the churches of Scotland.

SCOTS is a flexible scheme, supported by the churches, in which participants ‘pace’ themselves through a three-stage syllabus, with an Adviser who will help them assess what progress is being made and what matters need more concentrated attention. The Adviser also shares his/her experience of the role of church musician. A participant may wish also to have a regular teacher (frequent or intermittent) who is different from the Adviser. There is no fixed time limit in which any one stage should be completed. Normally, it is hoped that a participant would attend one of the **SCOTS Local Organ Workshops** offered each year.

NEW STAGERS

Allan Ritchie, who has passed through Stage 2.



Allan retired from work in 2013, after teaching Mathematics for forty consecutive years, latterly as Principal Teacher. As a teenager he had piano lessons, and passed grades 1 to 8 of the Associated

Board of the Royal Schools of Music. He enrolled in SCOTS soon after its inception and passed

through Stage 1 quite quickly. It took him (due to other commitments) 16 years to get to Stage 2, but his target is 16 months to reach Stage 3! Allan is organist and choir master at Belhelvie Parish Church. As well as the regular church choir, eighteen months ago a male voice choir, the BBC (Belhelvie Boys Choir), was established comprising 13 members, and they contribute to morning worship on average once a month. At the same time a Worship Music Group was formed consisting of 2 guitarists, one violinist, one singer and a pianist (the organist). This group provides the music for church service about once every six weeks as well as additional community services. Allan says of SCOTS: "An excellent scheme for helping aspiring organists improve their expertise in all aspects of service playing." His Adviser is Kyle McCallum.

Linda McKay, who has passed through Stage 1.



Linda was a primary school teacher. From playing guitar in the praise band at her church at Kennoway, Fife, having learned the piano as a child, she was asked to be organist. She felt she knew very little and came to her first of several SCOTS workshops at Burntisland, and took regular lessons from Sheila Chisholm, participating in Sheila's Positif Organists. She found preparing for Stage 1 gave her something to aim for, and she is even now planning for Stage 2. Her Adviser is Douglas Galbraith.

GOOD IDEA!

What about this for an idea? Or of course an adaptation of it suitable for your situation.

Meg Carroll explains:

This lunch developed as a result of a problem someone had within a church and they wanted to talk about it and get advice. There's about 11 of us altogether and as many as can get together the first Sunday of the month at the Stables in Stenhousemuir and just pass on information, arrange deputising at holiday times etc. It's become a regular arrangement and is a good way to keep in touch.

SCOTS extends its warmest thanks to Meg for filling both the posts of Membership Secretary and Treasurer for the last wee while – and for contributing so much to *Scots Wha Play!*

DRAUGHTS, GAFFES AND LAUGHS

Susan Wilson, who died in 2015, was a member of the SCOTS committee, an organist, and a writer. This is one of her hilarious articles published in the former print version of the Scottish church music magazine, Different Voices – now continuing on the Church of Scotland website.

One of the most rewarding things about being a member of a choir is the sense of belonging, of being part of something big, a club of sorts, whose main requirement is one's ability to hold a tune. (Well, maybe.) Your radar is set to tune into any conversation involving music. I overheard an exchange between two enthusiastic devotees of all things choral as we were awaiting the arrival of the town bus recently, and it prompted me to recall my old college days when my friend and I attended the local choral society. The conversations we had about our experiences back then might have looked something like this:

'Are you going to Choral tonight?'

'Yes, but do you think they'll have fixed the heating yet?'

'Doubtful. I'd wrap up warm, if I were you.'

'You taking your newspaper to sit on?'

'Absolutely. Those plastic seats weren't built for warmth.'

'Or comfort.'

'Indeed. Did you manage to get your cushion cleaned after your vodka spill last week?'

'Yes, thanks. That was funny. I could feel the lid slipping from my hand, but just couldn't stop it. I didn't think it'd rattle all the way to the front of the hall, though. It's just physically impossible to juggle my music folder, my glasses case, and a little miniature of throat tincture.'

'Especially with big fluffy mitts on. Though I notice our accompanist kept his gloves on, too. Still, I hope you've mastered things by the time of the concert, or, at least, you don't choose the *Lachrymosa* to launch your percussion solo.'

'Quite. Much better in that rousing *Sanctus* bit, eh?'

'Yes, there's nothing like a long run of *fortissimo* semiquavers to muffle the clink of bottles. Talking of which, do you think anybody actually sings all those notes?'

'Shouldn't think so. I can only manage one note in every four.'

'I'm glad to hear it. I've been struggling myself. I can do it at home quite well, though of course, I only take it at a quarter of the speed there.'

'That's much more civilised. It sounds so

much more polished when you actually hit all the notes.'

'Well, I wouldn't go that far. I haven't hit that top F yet without dissolving into a coughing fit at the end.'

'Oh, that's you, is it? I just mime the last few notes. My cut-off point is top D, and I even have to work up to that. In fact, most of my row pulls out halfway up that section.'

'Doesn't Albert notice?'

'Oh yes. But we stopped reacting to his scowls and frowns a long time ago. About the same time as we tuned out to his stick-waving efforts. I wonder what percentage of notes his precious sopranos hit?'

'Well, I add a few extras in from time to time; you know, coming in early, that sort of thing. I'm never happy unless I can get a few solo spots in every piece.'

'It's especially effective after a long instrumental section. And I admire the way you manage to come in exactly one full beat before the rest of us. Do you rehearse that?'

'No, not exactly. I just lose count, that's all.'

'But there are rarely any more than four beats in each bar.'

'I know, but when you've got 28 bars of nothing, that's a lot of 4s to count.'

'You're the choir's treasurer, though. It's a bit worrying if you can't count up to four.'

'I'd usually follow the accompaniment, since I can at least see the shape of the music. The problem is, I can't see without my glasses.'

'You haven't managed to have them fixed yet, then?'

'No.'

'It was rather a giggle, though, when you turned round quickly to speak to your neighbour, and your specs flew off into the middle of the tenor section.'

'I suppose it was a bit ambitious expecting them to stay on with only one leg to anchor them.'

'You do seem to have your fair share of catastrophes, don't you?'

'Yes, but, on the other hand, people do get to know me fairly quickly.'

A POSTCARD FROM ELSA

Practising the other day, I realised how many bad habits I had adopted over the years when trying to provide an adequate accompaniment to weekly worship – “rescue” tactics like playing the pedal part with the left hand in case I didn't find a note on the pedal board! I am very glad of the words, spoken or written, which help me to aspire to better playing. Thanks to SCOTS! *Elsa lives and*

plays in the Fort William area. She has been through all the SCOTS Stages. Ed.

DEATH OF STEPHEN BROWN

Those who were at the Local Organ Workshop in Helensburgh last May will remember with pleasure the striking prayers led by Helensburgh United Reformed Church's minister. His sudden death earlier this year was mourned not just in his local church but throughout the URC as one of its most outstanding ministers and in other churches in Scotland as one who contributed to their life in his provision of worship material and song. We printed this prayer in our last issue, but readers might appreciate their attention being drawn again to it as brilliantly capturing what we understand as our vocation as church musicians.

Whistles, pipe organs, even bagpipes,
take breath and make of it melody:
releasing what is there already:
tunes to hear, harmonies to behold,
songs to sustain.
The breath, channelled and changed
to play in our ears
and on our hearts
and through our souls
till something of heaven is heard.
The breath of God is tuneful and harmonious
but silent except that we play,
and in the playing make it sound
glorious and graceful, the very love of God,
in cadence and chord, in harmony and hiatus.

REDUNDANT MUSIC

Advisers, please pay attention!

If you have organ music you no longer use, this could be sold at Local Organ Workshops for SCOTS funds.

GRANT FOR SCOTS

SCOTS has received a welcome grant of £1500 from the Church Hymnary Trust. The Trust is the body that has published all four editions of the *Church Hymnary*, which has not only been important in the Scottish presbyterian churches in Scotland but those also in the England, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Between the publication of the first of the title in 1898 and now, gradually churches in various countries have understandably produced their own books and the most recent of the title only incorporated the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church in its production. However, it is much more widely used, and not just in presbyterian denominations, both in Scotland (where it is recognised as a truly Scottish collection given its content and awareness of the needs of the Scottish churches)

and more widely in its other title *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise*.

The Trust is now seeking to use its funds to further the cause of church music and SCOTS has successfully applied for a grant to extend its reach in the areas where it provides local organ workshops.

The grant covers the three workshops which we are planning for this autumn and the spring of 2017, and we will be using the grant to set up a database of as many as possible of the local organists of all denominations around Paisley (September 24), Moray (Aberlour October 22) and St Andrews / Fife (February 25 – date to be confirmed after local consultations).

This will enable us to pay proper fees to the experts who are giving up their Saturdays for us as well as to the churches who give us the hospitality of their buildings and their organs, but also allow us to make no charge for the day (including our own members) so that we reach as many church musicians as possible, in pursuit of our goal of the continual renewal of the music in the worship and liturgies of the churches in Scotland.

'WE WILL NOW SING ...'

This was picked up from the website of Sherwood Greenlaw Church, Paisley

Immortal, impossible, God only knows
how tenors and basses, sopranos, altos
at service on Sunday are rarely the same
as those, who on Thursday, to choir practice came.

Unready, unable to sight-read the notes,
not counting, nor blending they tighten their throats.
The descant so piercing is soaring above,
the melody only a mother could love

They have a Director but no one knows why;
no one in the choir deigns to turn him an eye.
It's clear by his waving he wants them to look,
but each of them stands with their nose in a book.

Despite the offences, the music rings out;
the folks in the pews are enraptured no doubt.
Their faces are blissful, their thoughts are so deep -
but it is no wonder, for they are asleep.

ANDREW CASKIE AT EDINBURGH

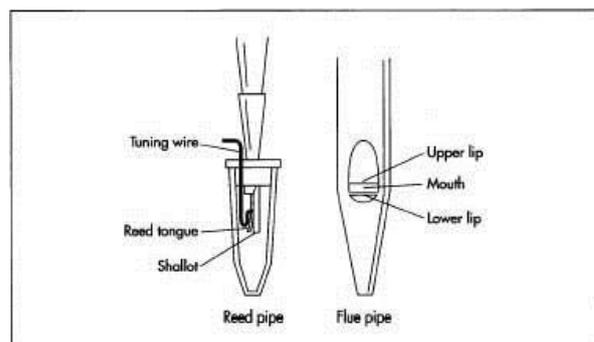
The following are excerpts from the handout for the session 'Families! Who needs them?!' The full paper can be had on application to Douglas Galbraith.

Most organ pipes are like giant penny whistles or recorders: they have no moving parts.

The sound is produced when the wind blown in at the toe is deflected at the mouth between an internal languid and the lower lip, to then strike the upper lip. These are called *flue* pipes.

Demo: flutes, diapasons and strings.

Note: 'Demo' refers to illustrations given at the time of the tutorial and would not be part of the handout, if requested.



Other pipes contain a vibrating metal tongue. Wind blown in at the toe causes the tongue to vibrate. The tongue's vibration uncovers / covers in rapid succession a hole behind the tongue, in a tube called the shallot. The sound of the vibrating tongue travels up the shallot and is then amplified in the pipe, called the resonator. These are called *reed* pipes.

Some reeds are designed to be played as solo colours and others are to be used in chorus (in chords).

Mutations The pitch of a flue pipe is derived from its speaking length (the portion from the mouth up): the longer the pipe the lower the pitch. At piano pitch (which we call unison) – where typically A above middle C sounds at 440Hz, the pipe for bottom C on an organ manual will be 8ft long. If you halve the length, the pitch will rise by an octave. So on an 8' Open Diapason stop, the length of the C pipes will from bottom to top be 8', 4', 2' (middle C), 1', 6" and 3". Some stops start an octave or more up (4' and 2' stops) or an octave or more below (16' and 32' stops), so drawing a combination of such stops and playing a C will give you pipes sounding the note C at different octave pitches.

All pipes (particularly reeds) produce what are called overtones. Thus our C pipe will be sounding, principally, the C we want, but an oscilloscope would show that the same pipe is also sounding (very gently) a variety of other notes above, mainly at octave, third and fifth pitches (e.g. C, E and G). What makes organ

stops at the same pitch sound different (e.g. a diapason vs flute vs string) is in fact a differing distribution of these overtones.

Since the earliest history of organ building, organ builders have built stops that artificially produce these overtones as their principal pitch. These are known as mutations. Mutation stops are thus those that do not start on the unison or octave but instead speak at a pitch in between. The most typical are those that speak at twelfth or seventeenth pitch i.e. either 12 (octave and a fifth) or 17 (two octaves and a third) notes above the unison of the note being played. If you play a C and draw a twelfth and seventeenth, you will thus hear the G two above the C, and the E above that. When combined with some unison/octave stops e.g. 8, 4 and 2, mutations therefore add a unique timbre, with – in effect – a major chord sounding for every note played.

Lengths and usages of the three most common mutations are given below

Twelfth (aka Nazard or Octave Quint)	$2^{2/3}$
Seventeenth (aka Tierce or Terzian)	$1^{3/5}$
Nineteenth (aka Larigot)	$1^{1/3}$

Other more exotic mutations exist, such as the Gross Nazard $5^{1/3}$ (octave below the Nazard), Gross Tierce $3^{1/5}$ (octave below the Tierce) and a Septième $1^{1/7}$ (sounding a flat 21st – i.e. a B flat when a C is played, giving a hint of a dominant seventh) but these are very rare.

A typical sound of the Baroque era is the *Cornet* registration, which comprises pipes speaking at the unison, an octave above the unison, a 12th, two octaves above the unison, and a 17th, which we can simplify by writing 1.8.12.15.17. Thus when a C is played you would hear a C, C, G, C and E in ascending order. Sometimes this is provided as one stop that draws five pipes per note; in other instruments only some of the ranks might be grouped (e.g. a Sesquialtera stop containing 12th and 17th ranks) or perhaps none at

all. If the constituent ranks have to be drawn separately, it is known as a *cornet décomposée*.

Usage of mutations:

As a solo voice

Britain - Cornet stops were sometimes provided in the treble half of the keyboard only. English Cornet voluntaries.

Demo: Walond – Cornet Voluntary
[excerpt]

France – French Baroque repertoire features a variety of uses for different mutations. French Baroque reeds are very powerful in the bass but tail off considerably in the treble: organ builders used mutations to counter this effect (demo later on!)

Typical is the Tierce en taille ‘Tierce in the tenor’ where a solo is played in the left hand with the cornet registration (8, 4, 2, $2^{2/3}$ $1^{3/5}$) – notice the Tierce is the uppermost pitch. The right hand accompanies on a gentle 8’ stop, sometimes with 16’ or 4’ if v gentle. Pedal is at 8’ pitch.

Demo: Corrette, G – Tierce en Taille
(from *Messe du 8e ton*) [excerpt]

Another typical registration is a right-hand solo featuring the Nazard ($2^{2/3}$) stop with an 8’ flute. Left hand on a gentle 8’ stop, with Pedal at 8’ as well.

Demo: Corrette, G – Récit de Nazard
(from *Messe du 8e ton*) [excerpt]

Sometimes composers would contrast mutations against each other: Cornet in right hand, and cornet -8^{ve} in left hand (this is where one needs the rarity of a Gross Tierce and Nazard...)

Demo: de Grigny, N – Duo (from *Veni Creator Spiritus*)

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THE SCOTS TEAM

The SCOTS Administrator is **Robin Bell** robinbell@scotsorgan.org.uk

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