The Cornopean

October 2026

EXETER & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION



Gloucester Cathedral Organ – from the nave – see page 9



EDOA Newsletter

October 2026



In this issue

Message from the President	2
Forthcoming events	2
EDOA Committee & website	2
Bristol trip May 2026	3
Annual Dinner November 2026	6
Drawstop organ for sale	7
President's Evening July 2026	8
Gloucestershire trip September 2026	9

Message from the President

Dear EDOA members,
I look forward to seeing many of you at the annual dinner, when the Bishop of Exeter is our speaker. Please book your place now, if you haven't already. Thanks to our committee, for making our events go smoothly this season. Special thanks to Andrew Millington for his excellent planning of our Gloucester trip. As always: many thanks to Paula for keeping everyone up-to-date, both with EDOA events and with what is happening nationally.
Best wishes - Tony Yates.

Forthcoming events

Note: The visit to St Andrew's Plymouth has regretfully been postponed until next year.
Thursday 12th November 2026: Annual Dinner at Devon Hotel, EX2 8XU.
Speaker: Right Rev. Dr. Mike Harrison (Bishop of Exeter). Meet and greet 7pm for sit down at 7:30pm
Booking form – see page 6 – **FINAL BOOKING DEADLINE EXTENDED TO WED 28TH OCTOBER!**
Monday 11th January 2027: Exeter Cathedral EX1 1HS at 7:30pm Come and Play.
Please let the Secretary know if you intend to play and what piece (~ 3-5min) by 2nd January.
Saturday 20th February 2027: The Bridge Inn EX3 0QQ at 12 Noon, EDOA Quiz compiled by Tony Yates
If there is sufficient interest, the staff at the bridge inn (01392 873862) can supply a hot pasty and soup at cost, BUT YOU WILL NEED to book it a week or more ahead, so that they can add it in with their normal weekly supply in time. Please mention that it is for the Organist's Quiz on the 20th. Otherwise please arrange a bring and share as before. Please let the Secretary know if you are coming and what food you have ordered!
Saturday 13th March 2027: Visit to East Devon churches, OR Visit to Plymouth. Details to follow.
Saturday 10th April 2027: Broadclyst Church EX5 3EL at 12 Noon, AGM followed by lunch at the Red Lion 1:00 pm. Preceded by come and play from 10:30am.

The EDOA Committee

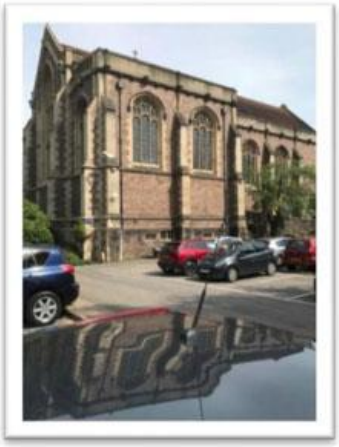
Tony Yates (President), Michael Farley (Vice-President), Paula Taylor (Secretary), Peter A Johnson (Treasurer), Nigel Guthrie (Past President), Peter Johnstone (Membership Secretary, corresponding member only), Penelope Cowman (Minute Secretary), Geoffrey Boult (Webmaster, corresponding member only), Kaye Van Der Wijngaard, Marco Bresolin

The EDOA Website: ***http://www.exeterorganists.net***

Administrator Geoffrey Boult. The website includes EDOA events, Find an Organist, Newsletters, Gallery, Links, Opportunities, Contact Us, Committee. Geoffrey is always looking for new content, including text and photos.

Stop Press!
Details may change! Follow bulletins closer to the time from our Secretary for more up-to-date information.

EDOA VISIT TO BRISTOL 9th May 2026



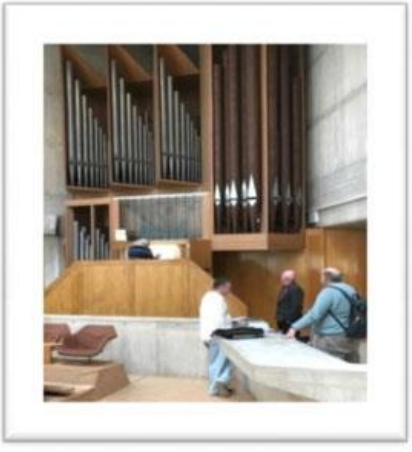
We had a most enjoyable return visit to Bristol, a city with many fine and varied instruments as this outing again demonstrated.
Our first venue was at St Monica's Rest Home, Westbury-on-Trym in the Clifton Downs area. We were greeted by Eric Tyson of the Bristol Organist association whose enthusiasm was infectious and who introduced the instrument with some of its history.



The organ III/28 is a fine late Father Willis sitting in a large lofty Victorian chapel with a resonant acoustic. Over the years various builders have been involved with it, notably Walkers, Percy Daniel and Harrison and Harrison in 1926 and 1960. In 2025 H&H carried out a thorough restoration, retaining the Willis scheme with some revoicing respecting the Willis tonal pallet.

We all thought it sounded very well and suited the building admirably. One comment was that it had no mixtures but really did not need them. It certainly had a full rounded sound considering its modest size and only containing 28 stops. The tubular pneumatic action has been retained and is very responsive.

We then moved to Clifton Roman Catholic Cathedral. A large concrete circular structure completed in 1973. We were met by Richard Jeffrey-Gray, their director of music who introduced and demonstrated the instrument to us.

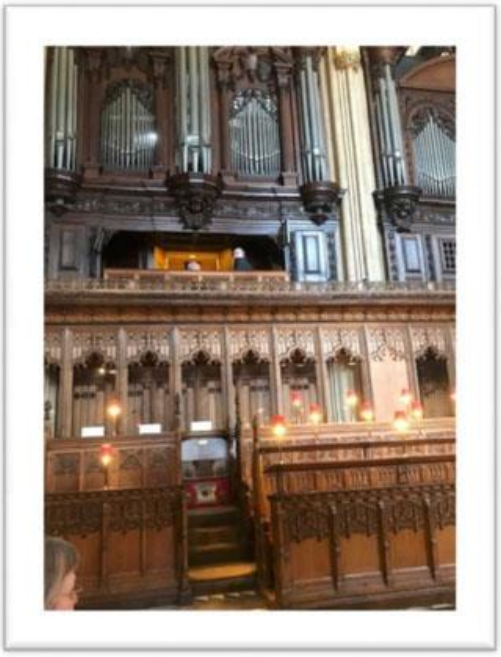




The new organ III/26 was built by Rieger Orgelbau of Austria. It is about the same size as St Monica's instrument but with a totally different sound quality and appearance and thus could not have been more different. I thought it sounded really well in its quieter mood. Two members played Bach Choral preludes which sounded lovely. I thought the Tutti ensemble was a bit shrill at the top end lacking cohesion. It was certainly kinder on the ear some way back from it. The key and stop action are mechanical with has no playing aids and no lettering on the stop jambs indicating which stops appertained to which manual. Richard indicated that the organ has been very reliable and is in good order after 53 years requiring only basic maintenance.

The Cathedral's resonant acoustic certainly suited and helped the instrument's sound and it really demonstrated just how organs can be so different from one another which makes the study of them so fascinating.

We then caught a bus down to the city centre for lunch at the Cathedral refectory. The food choice was limited but with very nice coffee.





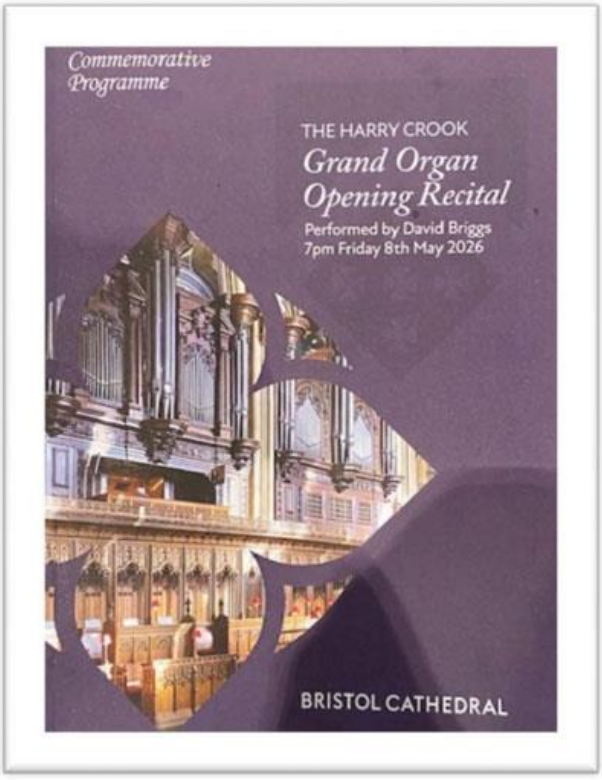
We then met Mark Lee, the cathedral organist and master of choristers. He spent some while telling us about the history of the organ. In essence it is a fine 1907 JW Walker instrument, IV/69 retaining two fine Renata Harris beautifully refurbished cases by Bainbridge Conservation. The case stops are all speaking and there is quite a lot of pipework from Vowles, organ builder of Bristol pre-dating 1907. In September 2025. Harrisons completed a major refurbishment faithfully retaining the Walker scheme with any additions being sympathetically reproduced in their tradition. Mark then demonstrated it all to us and it sounded fantastic. We were then invited to sample the instrument and what a pleasure it was too! The action was changed from tubular pneumatic to electro-pneumatic and it is extremly responsive. This is a Walker gem restored to its former glory with a wonderfully expressive and cohesive sound, demonstrating the best of the English tradition.

Whatever one thinks of Harrison and Harrison's own work, there is no doubt that they are masters in preserving the best of other builders, knowing what to leave alone and what to match up, if necessary. The cathedral is thrilled to have it back again, the rebuild having been so successful. Thanks go to Eric Tyson, Richard Jefferies- Gray and Mark Lee for their help and enthusiasm and time demonstrating these fine instruments. Although the cathedral instrument was only completed in September 2025 it had a grand opening on the 8th of May by David Briggs the evening before our visit. I conclude this write up by quoting Mark Lee's remarks from the souvenir programme written for the grand opening.

"The 1907 Walker organ in Bristol Cathedral was always , tonally, one of the most significant Romantic instruments in the UK. Following Harrison & Harrison's stunning 2025 refurbishment, it must now surely rate as one of the most musically exciting and wonderfully versatile in any cathedral"

Our thanks are also due to Andrew Millington who arranged the visits. We are indeed fortunate to have him in our association and as always, thanks to go to Paula for co-ordinating the arrangements, help with the buses and for keeping us up to speed. It is always a great joy for me to be able to have 'organ talk' with other organists and organ enthusiasts. I am really looking forward to the next venue!

Iain Morison



ANNUAL DINNER BOOKING FORM 2026

THURSDAY 12TH NOVEMBER, 7:00 FOR 7:30 pm

The EDOA Annual Dinner will once more take place, by popular request, at The Devon Hotel, Matford, EX2 8XU. The format for the event will be the same as last year. We have again opted to omit a starter course and restrict the meal to two courses. The ticket price will be held at £30.00 per person this year. This price includes a main course Carvery and Dessert then coffee or tea but excludes bar drinks. If you have allergies, please specify below on the return slip.

We look forward to welcoming our Guest Speaker Right Rev. Bishop Mike Harrison and wife, Rachel

Please complete the booking form below and send it to:
PETER JOHNSON, 98 BEER ROAD, SEATON, DEVON, EX12 2PU
Peter's telephone number is 01297 599086 and e-mail address is peteraj@talktalk.net

Please note that the deadline for bookings is WEDNESDAY 28th October 2026, as we need to give final numbers and pay the Hotel at least two weeks before the event.

……

To Mr Peter Johnson, 98 Beer Road, Seaton, EX12 2PU

ANNUAL DINNER Thursday 12th November 2026, 7.00pm for 7.30pm

Please reserve places for the following:

Name(s)

……

Address

……

E-mail address and/or telephone number

……

I have paid by BACS: Account name "Exeter and District Organists' Association";
Sort Code 30-93-15; Account Number 00759215 (TSB, Exmouth branch)

or I enclose a cheque for £…….. (made payable to "Exeter and District Organists' Association") @ £30.00 per person

My / Our food choices are as follows (please specify as appropriate for each person)

Name:…… Name:……

Main Course – specify for each person: Carvery (Meat) **OR** Bean Bake (Vegetarian)
Dessert - Selection – choice on the night

OFFICE USE ONLY
Received on Cleared by BACS/Cheque on

Eminent Cantata

Digital Computing Organ



Two 61-note manuals	30-note concave/radiating pedalboard	27 speaking stops
Motorised drawstops	16-memory capture system	5-channel internal audio

A substantial two-manual instrument with traditional drawstop control, full pedalboard and extensive registration facilities.

Price: To be confirmed

Eminent Cantata - Sale Specification

(Enquiries, in first instance, to the EDOA Secretary)

The President's Event, 2026
St Margaret's Church, Topsham: Sunday 12th July: Trinity 6

6.30 pm Choral Evensong, with Exeter & District Organists' Association
Music by Devon composers. The Church bells were rung from 5.30 – 6.15 p.m.

Before the service:
Organist: Matthew Wright, from A Devon Organ Book – pieces by Devon composers to mark the 2020 centenary of EDOA: "Across in Soay", a Scottish folksong: Nicholas Brown. "Evensong": on a chant long-remembered: Frank Chandler. "Elegy": Andrew Millington; in memoriam Malcolm Walker, former President & Secretary, EDOA: Hymn Improvisation on "Luckington": Peter King

Introit: I am the way the truth and the life. no man cometh unto the Father but by me. John 14.6
Music: Andrew Millington
Hymn 425 Let all the world in every corner sing: Luckington: Basil Harwood
Responses (2019): Timothy Noon
Organist: Andrew Millington:
Psalm 150: chant by Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)
Old Testament Lesson: Psalm 68: 24-35 read by Peter Johnson
Hymn 21 All people that on earth do dwell: arr. R. Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Magnificat: The Topsham service: Andrew Millington (2017) (solo: Pip Gascoigne-Pees)
New Testament Lesson: Colossians 3: 12-17 read by Paula Taylor
Nunc dimittis: The Topsham service (solo: Bob Millington)
Anthem: May I be equal to your hope of me. If I am weak, I ask that you send me only what I can bear. If I am strong, may I shrink from no testing that shall yield increase of strength, or win security for my spirit. I trust in Thee, O Lord. I say, "Thou art my God." My times are in thy hand. A Prayer of St Hilda,
Music: Andrew Wilson (2026) – conducted by the composer.
Sermon: Prebendary Nigel Guthrie, past president, EDOA
Organist: Timothy Noon:
Hymn: When in our music God is glorified: Engelberg: C. V. Stanford
Prayers, led by Louise Grace, Vicar of Topsham.
Hymn 40 Angel voices, ever singing: Edwin George Monk (1819-1900)
Descant to v. 5: Stephen Tanner
Final Amen: William Schofield Hampshire, (organist of St Margaret's 1966-72)
Final Responses (1975): Tony Yates

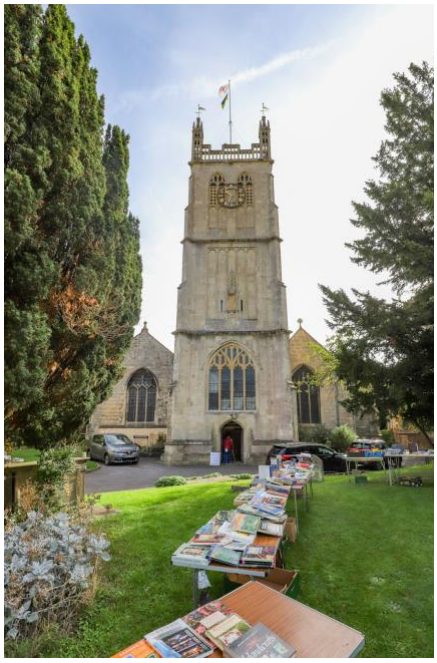
Final Voluntaries, played by Timothy Noon:
Postlude in D: Paul Morgan; Paean: Stephen Tanner.

From Piers Howell:
Thank you for organising the excellent President's Evening on Sunday. For me, this was the ideal choice for this event, involving EDOA members in various ways, playing, singing and reading, as well as your own church choir singing and organising the teas. Your long experience as a choirmaster kept the rehearsal on track. It was great to have Andrew Millington and Tim Noon involved, and your assistant at St Margaret's, Matthew Wright. I enjoyed the wide range of music for the service, much of it locally-composed, and the music from the Devon Organ Book. The traditional Choral Evensong, with the spirited singing from the choir and the congregation, not to mention the organ at full blast (somewhat affected by the weather), all made for a wonderful evening.

From Tony Yates:
Thank you, everyone who took part in the President's Event. There were over 30 in the choir, and over 50 in the congregation, including many members of our Association. This was one of the best-attended events of the year, equalled in numbers only by the Annual Dinner!

EDOA visit to Dursley and Gloucester 26th September 2026

By Piers Howell



St James the Great, Dursley
Saturday book sale in progress

On a sunny Saturday, a group of EDOA members "set sail" for Gloucestershire, on another of the wonderful organ outings arranged by Andrew Millington. I had the fortune to be given a lift by Robert Mitchell, and we were joined by Paula Taylor. As I had nothing more useful to do, I operated Google Maps which got us to our first stop at Dursley, a market town about 16 miles south of Gloucester.

There, we called in at the Church of St James the Great, which was buzzing with a large book sale that spilled out on to the grass outside the church. The welcome in the church was very warm, with a wonderful array of coffee and cakes. After refreshments, Andrew Millington gave a 40-minute organ recital, with music by Simon Preston, Buxtehude, JSB, 2 pieces from The Devon Organ Book, Serenade by Derek Bourgeois, and Vierne's Carillon de Westminster. Whilst EDOA members always want to "have a go" on the organs they visit, Andrew's carefully prepared recital showed off the instrument in a far better way.



Organ at St James, Dursley

Afterwards, members were allowed to have their go, if they felt able to navigate the perilous access to the console.



Organ console at St James, Dursley, looking west

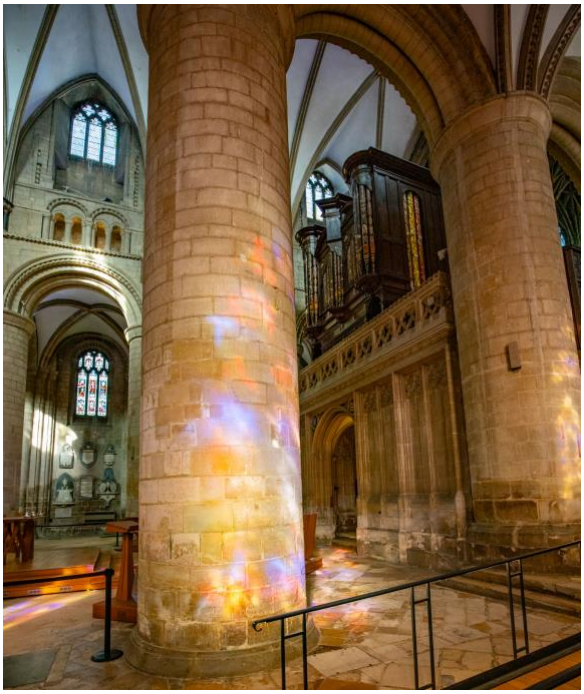
The organ was originally by William Hill in 1888, since when several alterations have been made, the last of which was the addition of a digital Solo Organ, playable from the 3rd manual, and a digital 32' Contra Trombone.



Gloucester Cathedral, in the afternoon sun

After lunch at the Bank Café, on our way to Gloucester, my navigation went astray, having entered a small "l" in the satnav postcode instead of a capital "L". Heading away from Gloucester towards Cheltenham, this was an indication that something might be wrong. Indeed, the GCHQ sign on the edge of Cheltenham confirmed this … the fact that a major national security alert on the other side of town erupted within a few hours … was nothing to do with a group of innocent organists getting lost ("… officer").

Finally, we parked in the Cathedral grounds, with the help of Paula's blue card. The Cathedral gleamed in the sunlight, in stark contrast with the less-than-gleaming rest of the city.



Sideways view of the organ, from the south



The 1666 Thomas Harris case, seen from the west



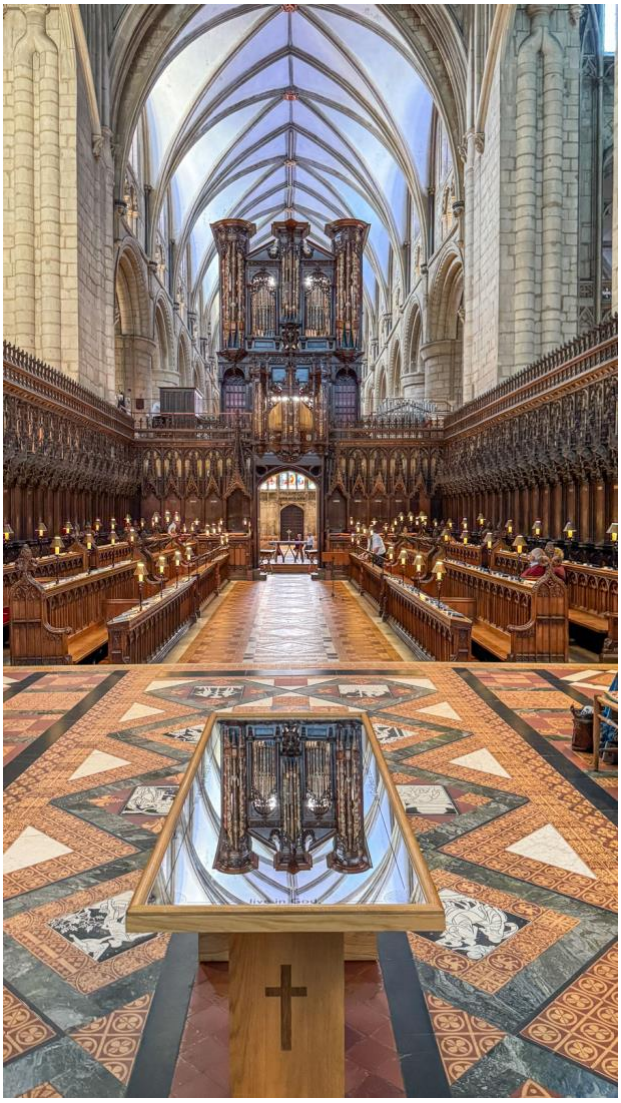
The remarkable cathedral east window

Having arrived with time to spare, we were able to have a good look around the cathedral, with the beautiful interior lit up by the afternoon sun. A relaxed afternoon tea at the Monks' Kitchen was followed at 4.30pm by Evensong, sung by the St Benedict Singers, accompanied by Assistant Director of Music and Cathedral Organist Jonathan Hope. What a wonderful introduction to the music of the Cathedral!

This was an early outing for the new organ, following its recent completion by Nicholsons. The concluding voluntary was Elgar's Imperial March, surely an appropriate piece for the organ, the location, and the occasion.

The new organ is extraordinary, and the paper specification doesn't prepare you for the impact that it makes. Organist Jonathan was very generous with his time and enthusiasm, when he had obviously had a long day. I bought the book by Paul Hale, which gives a very informative account of the history of the previous organs, and the debates that led to the new instrument.

Nicholsons have made a scrupulous job, and the quality of the work was very evident. As I was coming up the stairs to the console, the Solo Bombardes, about 12" from the stairs, went off and nearly blew me into the chancel. They sound quite strange close up, nothing like the intended sound after passing through the acoustic.

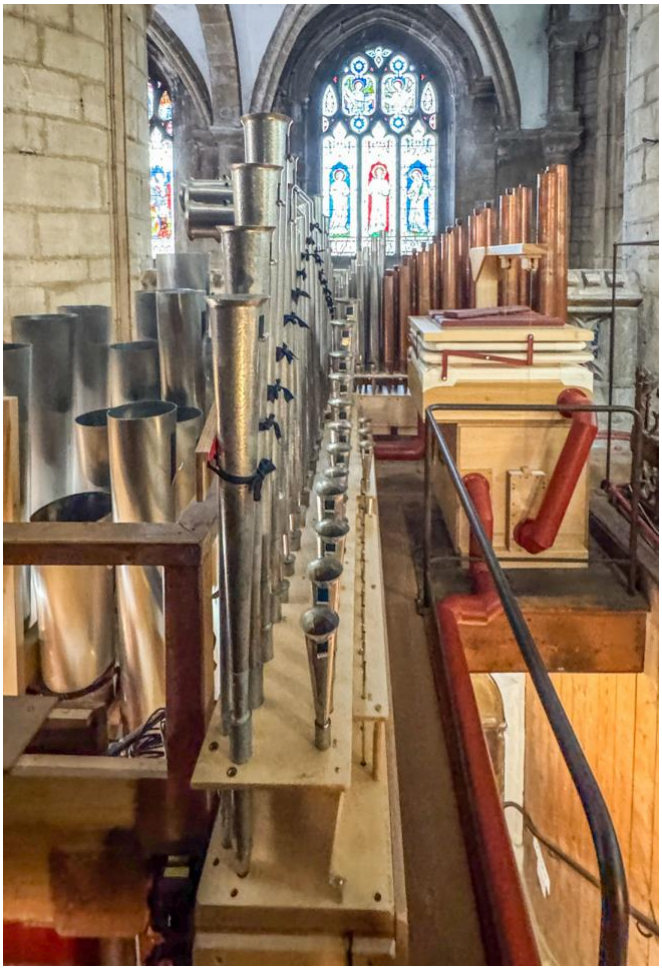


The organ case seen from the east, and in a mirror reflection



The choir and east case of the organ, console on south side, Solo Bombarde pipes rising above the screen on the north side. In due course, traditional red curtain hiding these will be re-erected.

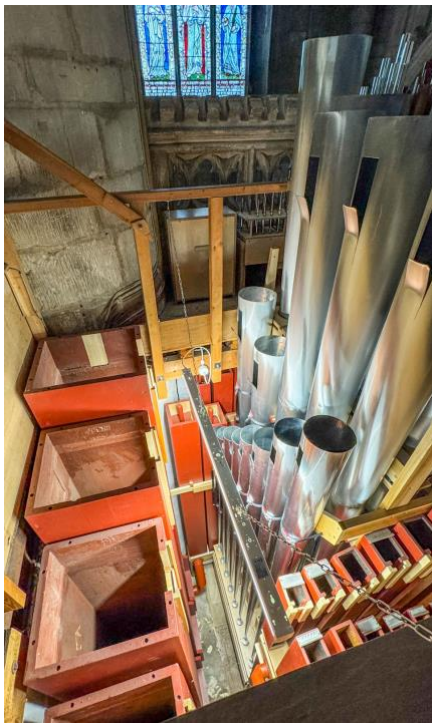
There is a long history of controversy about the Gloucester Organ, starting in the early 1970s when Ralph Downes was entrusted with re-designing the instrument. To the dissenters, and there were many, Downes abandoned the traditional English Cathedral organ tradition, in favour of a dogma of his own; remember this was in the height of the Organ Reform Movement, when high-pitched mixtures were being bolted on to organs in the belief that this might help them to become baroque organs for playing early music. High-pressure reeds, leather-lipped Diapasons etc, went on the scrapheap. The famed 32' Double Open Wood, was chopped up, for "the irrelevance that it was"; this enraged many people, possibly more than anything else. By 2024, the space that these pipes occupied in the north triforium had long-since been put to other use. My older brother, Richard, who some will recall was a member of EDOA (although living near Coventry) was outraged at what Downes had done to the organ.



Looking north at top of stairs approaching organ console, tops of 32' pedal Bombardons on left, Solo Bombardes in middle, mitred to face west, wind reservoir above stairs



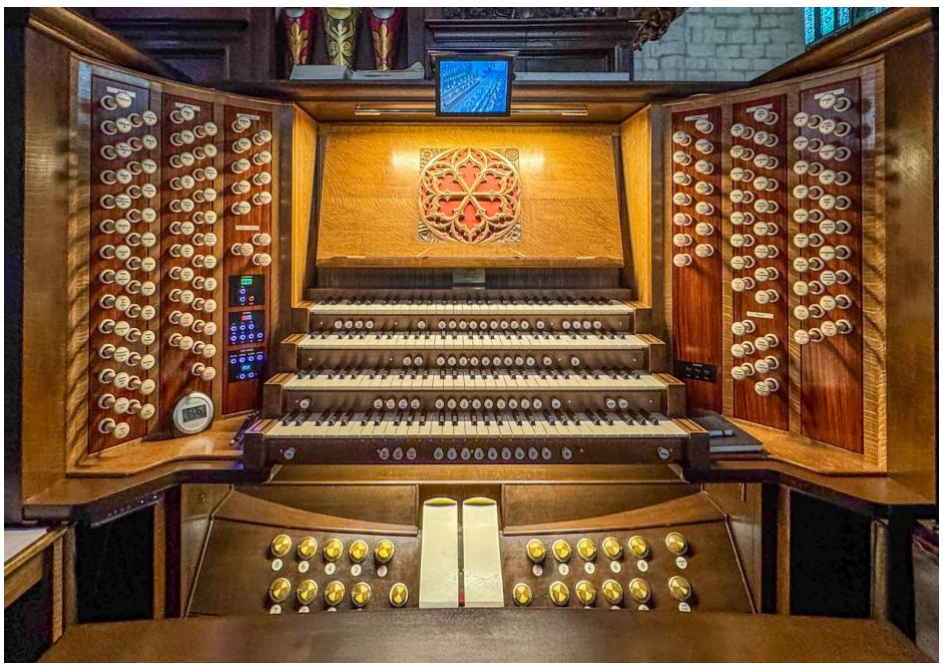
Looking eastwards inside organ screen,
tops of Pedal 32' Bombardons visible on left,
Solo Bombardes in the middle, mitred to face west.



Looking downwards inside organ screen, Pedal Open Wood pipes on left, Pedal 32' Bombardons on right, "full length down to 32' G, half-length with very generous scaling to 32' C".

I have, however, spoken to organists who remember the Downes instrument with affection, saying it was very exciting to play. Certainly, Andrew Millington said he enjoyed his time here as Assistant Organist in the 1980s, and I will be very interested, in due course, to hear what Andrew's thoughts are on the new organ.

Nicholsons' approach to solving problems, in the constricted screen area, is innovative. For the Pedal Open Wood pipes, the 32' bottom octave is provided by an "evolution of the Compton-style Polyphone, with 2 separate actions that will permit it to speak at both p and f". The Pedal 32' Bombardons are "full length down to 32' G, half-length with very generous scaling to 32' C".



Resplendent new 4-manual organ console, made by Nicholsons

A full specification, and explanation of the tonal scheme, is given in a pdf file available from the Nicholson & Co website. It repays close study, as the organ is a long way from what might be considered to be a typical English Cathedral Organ.



Luxuriously-appointed console details

There is a careful use of borrowing and extension. For example, the Solo Organ is based on 3 stops of its own, available at 16', 8', and 4' pitches; a Flute Harmonique, a Bombarde (very loud) and a Tuba Mirabilis (extremely loud). Plus borrowings from other departments. The Nave Organ is a department of the Great Organ, facing west, that includes Open Diapason, Grand Diapason and Grand Chorus.

It was, perhaps, ironic that Andrew only had a few minutes to play the new organ, bearing in mind his past association, and that he had organised the whole day. EDOA members also had their time on the console, patiently assisted by Jonathan, who explained many of the features of the organ, including a joystick control that moved the remote camera in any direction and zoomed right in …

My overall impression … astonishing.

Many thanks to Andrew for organising this wonderful outing. It will long remain in the memory of those who were there.

Piers Howell.

(all photos taken on the day)



Andrew Millington, former Assistant Organist at Gloucester Cathedral, playing, watched by EDOA members