

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

IAO

Affiliated to the
Incorporated
Association
Of Organists

Diary Dates 2026

Please do support these events - the more the merrier!

April 25 th 5pm	BDOCA Singers Choral Evensong at St John's church, Sidcup (see details below)
June 10 th 7:30pm	Canon Giles talk 'Hymns and AI'. St John's church, Welling.
June 20 th time TBA	Treasure Hunt – further details nearer the time
July 24 th 7:30pm	Celebrity Recital – Francesca Massey, St John's church, Sidcup
Aug 14 th 12 noon	Summer Lunch at the White Cross, North Cray Road.
Sept 9 th 7:30pm	AGM at All Saints', Footscray, preceded by members recital.

Note: Pipe voicing event previously suggested for May will now be at a later date.

April 2026

Last issue December 2025

Inside this issue:

Diary Dates	1
BDOCA Memories	1
2026 Events	
BDOCA Singers Evensong	1
Singers Membership	2
Hymns and AI	2
Reports of events	
Home-made Digital Organ	2
Organ Crawl	3
Welcome New Member	4
Bursary	4
Website	4
Your Committee	4

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.

2026 Events.

Please see the diary on page one for the events that are being planned for 2026. Attendance to events by the membership can, on occasion, be rather low. Events are planned for the whole membership, not just for the enjoyment of the committee members, so please make every effort to attend as much as possible.

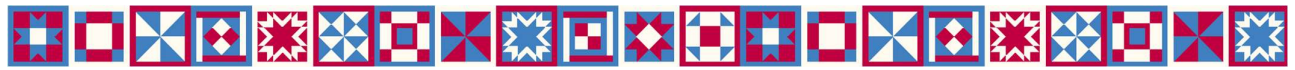
Please let the committee know if you have any ideas for events.

Members of other associations are also very welcome to attend events.

BDOCA Singers Evensong

This will be at St John's church, Sidcup on Saturday 25th April 2026 at 5pm. The service will mark the 150th anniversary of S S Wesley's death (18.4.26, but we're still within the octave!). All members and friends welcome to attend the service, and please advertise it to your respective congregations.

Introit: S. S. Wesley – O Lord my God
 Preces and responses: Ebdon
 Psalm 24 – S. S. Wesley chant
 Magnificat + Nunc dimittis in F – S. S. Wesley
 Anthem: S. S. Wesley – Blessed be the God
 Hymn – God that madest earth and heaven (S. S. Wesley's Bury)



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 and 2025. In order to continue to enjoy a varied and interesting repertoire, the choir needs to grow. Rehearsals are held at All Saints' church, Fooks 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.

Talk on Hymns and Artificial Intelligence

Wednesday 10th June at 7:30pm
St John's church, 57 Danson Lane, Welling, DA16 2BQ

Rev'd. Canon Dr. Gordon Giles, who is the Canon Chancellor at Rochester cathedral, will be giving a talk about hymns and Artificial Intelligence. If you have attended either of his previous talks about hymns and carols, you will be certain of expecting a very interesting and informative evening. This, of course, is open to BDOCA members and non-members. Refreshments will be available after the talk.

Reports of past events

Home-made digital organ

"and if a Welshman built a toaster..." (<https://www.stephenbicknell.org/3.6.52.php>)

Alas, unless you have ever tried to build something from scratch, you will not appreciate the challenge a project presents, or the pleasure of success.

Mr Aeron Preston invited us to St George's, Beckenham, to see him assemble and play his self-built organ. His object had been to have a versatile instrument capable of being carried in the back of his car, of sufficient integrity for public performance, and for teaching, and for private study, and not too expensive.

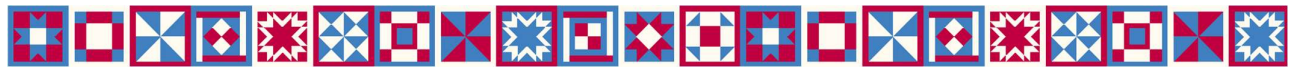
Pedals, keyboards, bench, and various electronic things had been found on eBay, etc. Cabinet work had been out-sourced to a woodworking friend. (Very high quality!) The sampled pipe sounds and software are stored in an ordinary lap-top, which is also used to display a touch-screen version of the stops and other controls.

Musicians will appreciate that, these days, the speaker system largely determines the effect of electronic instruments. It is to be hoped that any "away" venue would already possess something suitable.

An advantage of a project like Aeron's is that it need never be declared to be complete: Improvements and refinements can always be added! A delightful prospect! (At least from the male point of view.)

Barrie Bishop.



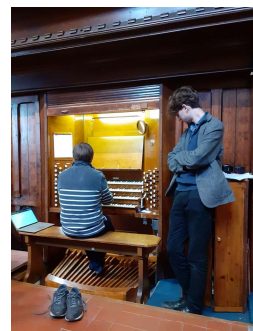


Organ crawl

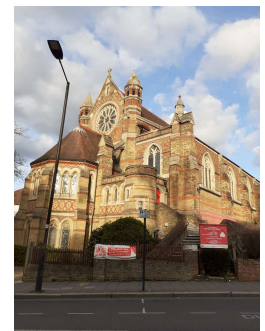


St Bartholomew's church

Saturday 14th February will be remembered by many as the first day without any rain in living memory. An excellent day for an organ crawl. Some settled for an easy life travelling by car while the hardier travelled by public transport to Sydenham station and then walked to the first church, St Bartholomew's, where we were met by the Assistant Priest, 'Mother Bea' (Rev Bethany Austin) who led us to the organ via some statues of fallen angels with strange names. The organ was built by Wm Hill and Son in 1874, 1898, 1914 and enlarged to its present size by Hill Norman and Beard in 1979. Aeron gave us a 'tour' of the instrument to demonstrate the sounds that were possible from the 36 stops.



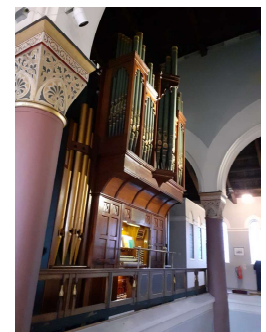
Next on the list was St Peter's church, Streatham. Bus to Crystal Palace and then another bus to Streatham – all very smooth. Those who went by car missed the very interesting information that Bruce gave us on the history of Crystal Palace Station while we were waiting for the second bus. The church was re-ordered in the late 1980s with the altar being moved to the back (now the front). This leaves the organ at what is now the back of the church, in a raised area next to the choir stalls which seems quite a convenient arrangement for the musicians. We were met by the Organist who introduced us to the organ, built by Wm Hill & Son in 1869, enlarged 1875,



St Peter's church

1903, 1913, reassembled by Hill Norman and Beard in 1947, manual electrification by Bishop in 1972, pedal electrification by David Wells 1994 and restoration and repairs by David wells in 2000 and 2003. This is a 4 manual instrument with 50 stops. Bruce and the church organist gave us a rendering of Nigel Ogden's 'England's Glory' – with Bruce playing while the organist ran backwards and forwards pulling out and pushing in stops so that by the end of the piece, he had exhausted all possibilities of registration, as well as himself.

Then back to the bus stop for the ride to the final church – Christ Church, Streatham Hill. This Grade 1 listed church is a landmark in the history of architecture with different coloured bricks, beautiful mosaics and a large star of David on the west front. The organ, also Grade 1 listed, was originally built by W Hill & Son for West Croydon Congregational Church in 1886 and installed in Christ Church by a team of amateurs working at weekends led by Michael Buttolph from 1981 to 1987. West Croydon URC (as it became in 1972) is now the Oshwal Mahajanwadi Jain Temple, so the organ had a lucky escape. During the installation of the organ in Christ Church the gallery had to be strengthened to take the weight. The church website says that the 3 manual organ, which has 37 stops, is a 'gentle giant of an instrument, in full working order'. Aeron managed to give a good demonstration of the organ's capabilities despite having to battle with numerous cyphers caused by the cold weather and the lack of a heating system in the church (donations toward a new one welcome). Despite this it was the opinion of those of us who made it to the end that overall, this organ was the best of the afternoon.



After this, we were off to Balham for a meal at Pizza Express. The meal was excellent, although the service was extremely slow (standards slipping since the Andrew formerly known as Prince used to frequent the chain?). The only thing missing was the Treasurer and his spreadsheet, but we managed to cope somehow. Thanks to Aeron for arranging everything.

Peter Mitchell



Welcome to Jonathan Hague

BDOCA extend a very warm welcome to our new member, Mr. Jonathan Hague.

Jonathan says: 'Although not an organist, I have enjoyed listening to organ and choral music for a long time now. I worked in The City for many years and was a regular at many of the City churches' weekly recitals. I enjoy most of all traditional liturgical music and attend St Mary's church in Chislehurst. Other interests include sailing and cricket. I look forward to attending BDOCA events.'

We look forward to getting to know you.

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		
Reg. Boulton, President 020 8658 7455 or 07889 172319 reg.boulton@btopenworld.com	Linden Toy, Secretary 07817 537945 lindenjoy49@gmail.com	Bruce Davis, Ordinary Member 01322 558129 bruce.davis11@yahoo.co.uk
Aeron Preston, Vice-president 07775 063987 aeron.glyn.preston@gmail.com	Lydia Gray, Asst. Secretary 01322 551286 or 07426 807758 lg35@lydiagrays.plus.com	Marilyn Downs, Ordinary Member 01322 294569 or 07979 611472 marilyn.downs1950@gmail.com
Doug Snow, Treasurer 020 8304 5229 dougsnow.organist@yahoo.co.uk	Barrie Bishop, Ordinary Member barriebishop2@gmail.com	Peter Mitchell, Ordinary Member 07770 931477 petermit@aol.com