

# *The Cornopean*

EXETER & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION



**Buckfast Abbey in moonlight**

On the evening of Thomas Trotter's organ recital



# EDOA Newsletter

January 2024



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### Editor's letter

At the EDOA Annual Dinner, it was announced that our President Ian Carson had stepped down from this position, and that Andrew Millington, as Vice-President, had stepped into the post as Acting President (with the full support of the committee), until his formal appointment as President at the 2024 AGM. Members who attended Thomas Trotter's recital at Buckfast Abbey experienced an unforgettable event. See Andrew Millington's account on page 3.

Another exciting event was the publication of A Devon Organ Book, the result of long planning and much detailed work. See page 5.

We, as organists, are very grateful to all the organ-builders who help to maintain organs and keep them speaking from one Sunday to the next. In November, members were able to visit Michael Farley's workshop to try out yet another of his organs for export, this time to Malta. Michael is one of some very busy, and talented, organ-builders in the south-west. See page 8.

Committee members have become concerned in the last year about "health and safety" at EDOA organ visits, and in particular about access to organ lofts using steep ladders and spiral staircases. A formal statement is being prepared, but meanwhile members attending these events are reminded that they should be able to ascend without assistance from event organisers, or maybe bring a friend who will provide this function. Piers Howell, Editor.

*With the exception of images on pages 2, 5, 7 & 10, all photographs are by the editor.*

### The EDOA Committee

Andrew Millington (Acting President), Paula Taylor (General Secretary), Peter Johnson (Treasurer), Peter Johnstone (Membership Secretary), Peter King, Tim Noon, Neil Page, Gerald Hird, Nigel Guthrie (co-opted), Piers Howell (co-opted, Newsletter Editor)

### **Stop Press!**

**Visit to Exeter Cathedral 23<sup>rd</sup> January (listeners welcome, playing list closed)**

**Quiz Night 21<sup>st</sup> February – see Forthcoming Events**

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

## THOMAS TROTTER AT BUCKFAST ABBEY 28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023



### **Andrew Millington writes:**

The long-awaited recital for the centenary of EDOA lived up to all expectations with Thomas Trotter giving a masterly performance to a packed Buckfast Abbey on Saturday, October 28th. We were privileged to hear one of the world's finest organists in a varied and demanding programme.

JS Bach's admiration for the music of his baroque contemporaries is demonstrated in his arrangements of Vivaldi violin concertos, and Thomas

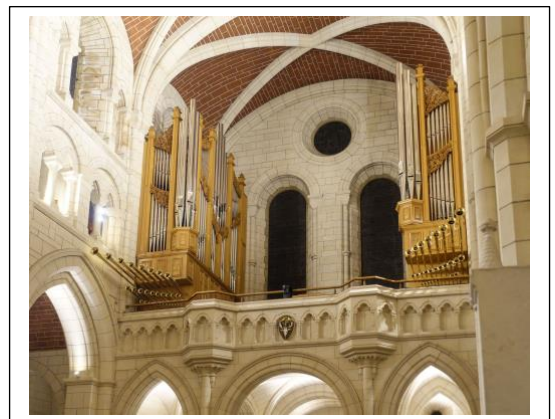
Trotter opened his recital with a sprightly and stylish performance of the A minor Concerto, BWV 593. Clarity of detail is difficult to achieve in the Buckfast bathroom acoustic, but one could hear every note in this highly polished and energetic account.

The next two pieces by Guilman and Judith Bingham respectively, were both on the theme of Angels, and prepared the ground for the first performance of the EDOA centenary commission 'Defeating Lucifer' by Thomas Hewitt Jones (b 1984). This is a programmatic piece about St Michael and the Dragon, and the defeat of good over evil. It is a highly-charged dialogue between the opposing forces, and as Thomas explained, he was able to highlight this spatially, with the snarling forces of evil from the west-end section and the angelic, heavenly music from the chancel organ. It was highly effective and Thomas has programmed it for a forthcoming recital in Birmingham.

After the interval, he gave a commanding performance of Healey Willan's Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue, a monumental work in the late-romantic idiom. It was full of colour, drama and a wonderful sense of architecture and progression. This was followed by a set of pieces by the Hungarian-Austrian 20th century composer, Gyorgy Ligeti, one of the most innovative musical figures of his era. We heard 6 movements from his 'Musica Ricercata', the first using a restricted number of notes in the scale, with more notes added in each subsequent movement. It was an interesting aural experience with intricate rhythmic shapes and a variety of musical influences, including the barrel organ and a homage to Frescobaldi.

Concert organists over the years have made a feature of including orchestral transcriptions and Thomas's final piece was an arrangement of Wagner's Overture to Rienzi, which he delivered with great panache, bringing the recital to a splendid conclusion. After a lovely, quiet miniature by Schumann as an encore, the audience dispersed in the sure knowledge that they had heard world-class playing of the highest order.

*[Editor: As for defeating Lucifer, after the barrage from the west end organ, I wonder whether Lucifer was actually defeated ...*



## ANNUAL DINNER 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023



Peter King and Andrew Millington, at the top table



Michael Farley, with his staff, above and right

Once again, the Association held their Annual Dinner at The Swan's Nest, Exminster, where members and their guests enjoyed the carvery. After we had eaten, the Acting President

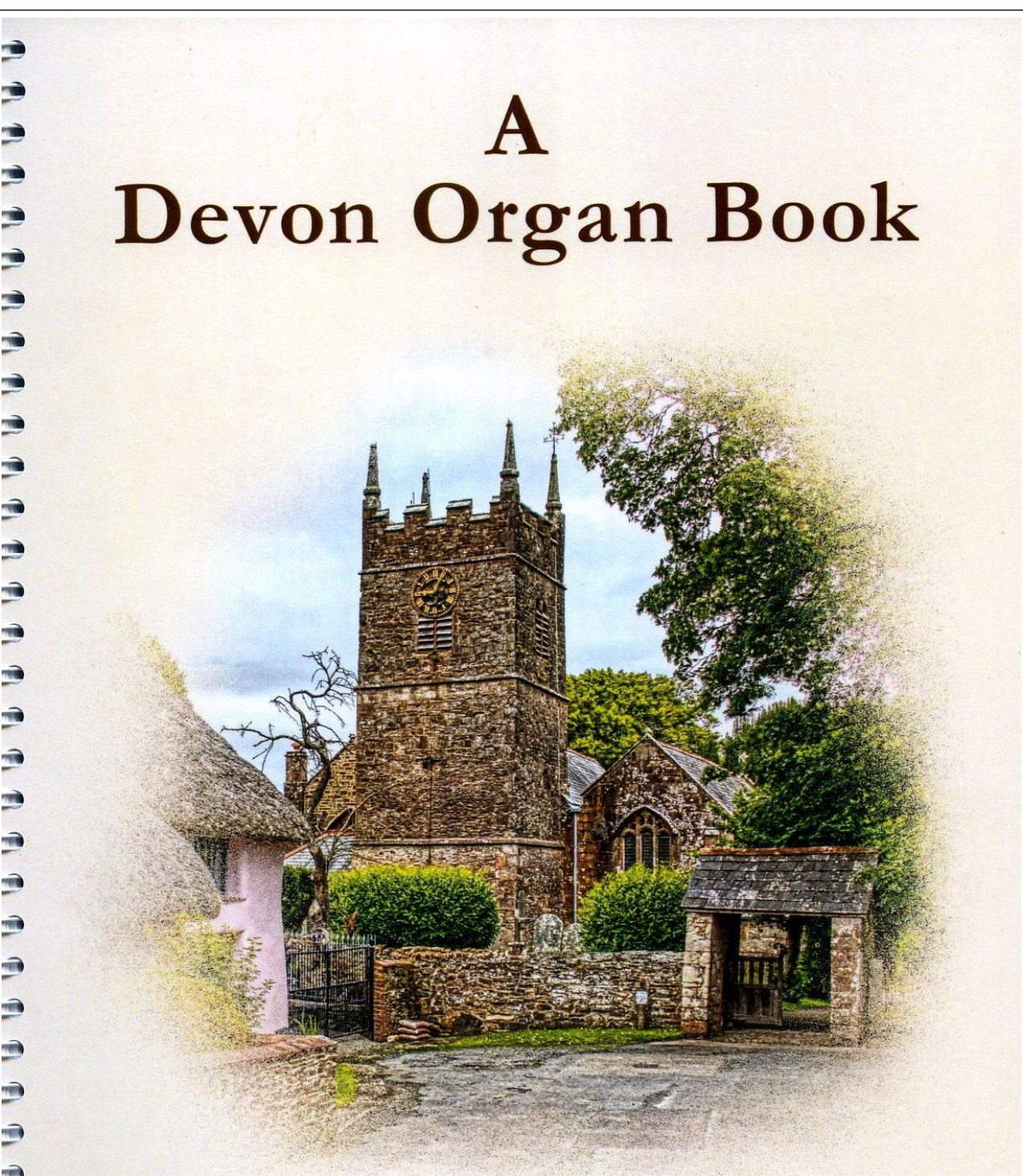


Andrew Millington and Past President Peter King provided a double-act of reminiscences from their lives as cathedral organists.



A DEVON ORGAN BOOK

# A Devon Organ Book

A photograph of a stone church with a tall tower and a thatched-roof building in the foreground. The church has a prominent square tower with a clock face and several spires. To the left, there is a building with a thatched roof and pink walls. In the foreground, there is a stone wall and a small stone gate. The scene is set in a rural area with trees and a clear sky.

**Short Pieces for Parish Organists**  
*by Devon composers*  
to mark the 2020 centenary of  
Exeter and District Organists' Association

## A DEVON ORGAN BOOK

The 2020 centenary of EDOA occurred during the presidency of Peter King. One of many special events devised by Peter to celebrate the centenary was the commissioning of a series of original compositions for organ, by composers with a connection to Devon and the Association. Whilst the pieces were being composed, the massive “spanner in the spokes for everything” that was the pandemic and resulting lockdown, caused a delay in the finalising of this project. During 2023, a sub-committee was formed to complete the task. Work carried out included getting all the music and text settings made consistent throughout the book, and concentrating on the overall design.

Unveiled at the Annual Dinner, the result was a beautifully-finished book, containing a wide-ranging collection of pieces, that are genuinely useful to organists. Some are straightforwardly sight-readable, and some will require careful preparation [*speaking for myself! – but I have already played several*

*pieces and look forward to playing more - editor].*

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024, there will be an EDOA evening event at which some (or all) of these pieces will be played. Further details to be provided in due course.

*Our treasurer, Peter Johnson writes:*

*Current selling price is £12.50 (plus postage and envelope if applicable, currently £2.80) and copies may be obtained from me. I currently have a stock of 28 copies remaining and will bring a few along to the cathedral next week.*

*Contact Peter at: [peteraj@talktalk.net](mailto:peteraj@talktalk.net)*

Nicholas Brown	<i>Prelude on 'Picardy'</i>	5
Nicholas Brown	<i>Across in Soay</i>	6
Ian Carson	<i>Postlude: Concertino for the Trumpet Stop</i>	8
Frank Chandler	<i>Evensong: On a Chant Long-remembered</i>	13
Ian Curror	<i>Gospel Fanfare 1</i>	18
Ian Curror	<i>Gospel Fanfare 2</i>	18
Ian Curror	<i>Gospel Fanfare 3</i>	19
Ian Curror	<i>Prelude on 'Down Ampney'</i>	20
Andrew Daldorph	<i>Processional</i>	22
David Davies	<i>Reflection on 'Gabriel's Message'</i>	27
Peter Lea-Cox	<i>Fantasia on 'Gelobt sei Gott'</i>	31
Peter King	<i>Two Hymn Improvisations: I 'Luckington'</i>	36
Peter King	<i>Two Hymn Improvisations: II 'St Columba'</i>	38
Robert Millington	<i>Intrada</i>	40
Andrew Millington	<i>Elegy</i>	44
Paul Morgan	<i>Postlude in D</i>	47
Timothy Noon	<i>Chorale Prelude on 'Breslau'</i>	52
Timothy Parsons	<i>Scherzo</i>	54
Stephen Tanner	<i>Paeon</i>	58

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## EDOA MEMBERSHIP

Our Membership Secretary Peter Johnstone writes:

In 2023, we welcomed the following new members: Paul Morris, Stephen Domleo, David Yates, Iain and Pip Morison, Ian Curror, Giles Longstaff and Preb. Nigel Guthrie. Sally Cole joined in 2024.

During the year, members David Lee and Michael Pagliero died.

The total membership in January 2024 was 103.

Many thanks to all members for continuing to support the EDOA with their subscriptions.

## BOOK REVIEW, BY ROBERT MANNING

### A History of J.W. Walker & Sons Ltd, Organbuilders, by Nicholas M. Plumley

BIOS [The British Institute of Organ Studies], 2023, ISBN 978-0-9955419-2-4  
Hardback, available via the BIOS, website <http://www.bios.org.uk>, Price £34.20, including p&p



The 1993 III/40 Walker organ  
at St Chad's RC Cathedral, Birmingham

Since the late 1820s, the firm of J.W. Walker & Sons Ltd has been building quality organs for use in cathedrals, churches, public halls and country houses both in the UK and abroad. By the beginning of the 20th century it was regarded as one of Britain's leading organ building firms. After the second world war it was at the forefront of what Plumley describes as 'the neo-classical explosion in organbuilding which hit this country in the late 1950s and 60s.' Today in what Plumley describes as 'this prevailing climate of indifference to organs of worth in England', their work in restoring old organs is arguably as important as their continuing activity as the builders of new ones.

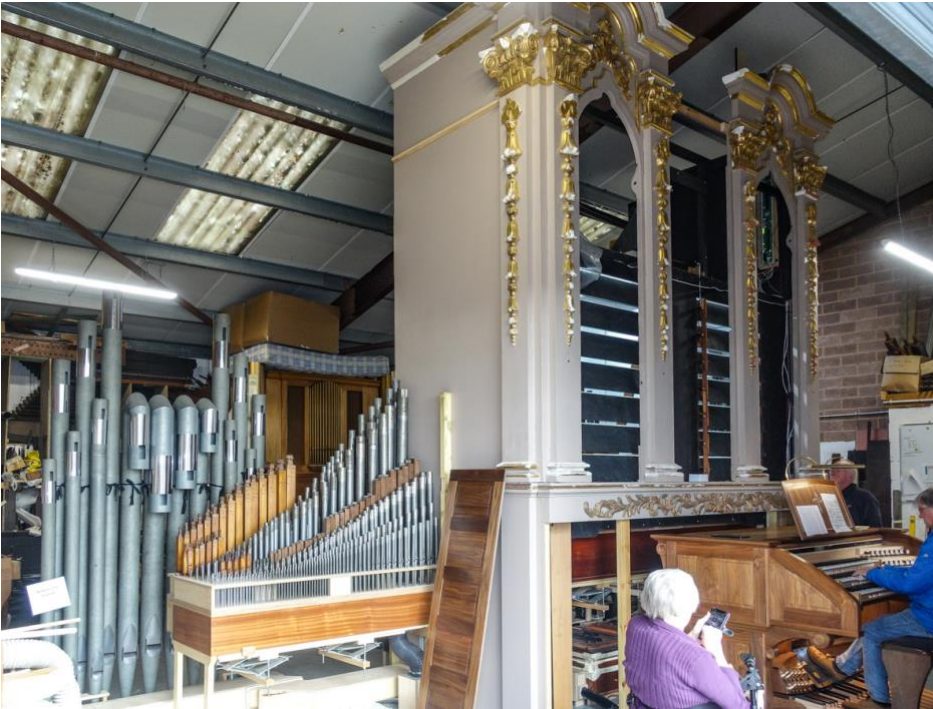
Plumley has been working on this book for decades; the Foreword, by Dr Francis Jackson (1917-2022), was written in 1998! Following a short preface and introduction, the book is divided into four sections. The first, short, section, comprising a single chapter, is entitled 'Family Matters', and charts the history of the family right up to recent years. Section II, 'Laying the Foundations', deals with the years 1800-1870; Section III, 'The Halcyon Years' with those of 1870-1918; and Section IV, 'A Second Century', with the years 1922-2021. The book includes a bibliography and index; readers are referred to the BIOS website for additional material.

The author's 'day job' was for many years that of a schoolmaster; his other activities have included writing several articles on historic organs and organ cases, while for over 40 years he was Organ Adviser in Chichester Diocese. He was a founder member of BIOS. Also a talented artist, Plumley has contributed many of his own line drawings of organ cases to this book, which is profusely illustrated with line drawings and photographs. His study incorporates a certain amount of church, social and musical history, though its principal aim is 'to analyse the form and nature of the firm's work, to consider its stylistic development and to make qualitative judgements based, as far as possible, upon comparisons between the work of contemporaneous builders and contemporary attitudes and criticism.'

This is a substantial hardback book about 400 pages long. While it contains a great deal of technical information, there is a fair amount of more general historical information too; specialists and non-specialists alike will find plenty of interesting content here. Plumley has made extensive use of the Walker archives, while family members and employees of the firm have contributed a great deal of information. Meticulously researched, his study is beautifully written in a very readable style, while the design and typesetting by Julian Littlewood makes the book simply a joy to look at and handle. Priced very reasonably given its size and weighty content, this study can be recommended very highly.

ROBERT MANNING

## AN ORGAN FOR MALTA



The organ for St Dominic's Valletta, Malta with the original 19<sup>th</sup> century casework

In early November 2023, EDOA members received the following message from Michael Farley Organ-Builders: "We have the Organ for St Dominic's Valletta nearing completion and some of it will be shipped next week. It's a new, 3 manual organ incorporating the original 19th c. casework and using pipework largely from the four manual Charles Martin Organ formerly in St Clement's Oxford. Members who visited Renatus in Bideford recently would have seen the console nearing completion there."

"We are opening the workshop, THIS Saturday 4th November from 10-30am until around noon or when the last person leaves. If anyone would like to pop in to see and play would be most welcome along with any friends. All welcome. There should be ample parking on a Saturday. "Sorry it's short notice but there's just a short window between when it's largely playable and dismantling for shipping. We'll find some basic workshop refreshment for those who would like a cuppa."



The console built by Renatus Ltd, seen at their works by EDOA members in September 2023.





Audrey Williams playing, with Bob Millington



*Editor's footnote:*

On 8<sup>th</sup> July 1913, 110 years ago, my grand-parents were married at St. Clement's Church, Oxford, where my grandfather was a young curate. It's nice to think that some of the pipes that sounded at their wedding have survived, for me to hear and play, and to be put to a new use in Malta.

It also shows what a sustainable business organ-building can be, where pipes can be recycled into new organs for a new life; or melted down for re-use. No correspondence, please, about the wanton destruction of organs!



Detail from reading desk, inlaid wooden veneers

## DIRECTOR OF MUSIC VACANCY

*The following has been received from the Rev'd Matt Selman, Team Vicar,  
St Giles and St Nicholas, Sidmouth, Sid Valley Mission Community, 01395-515076:*

### St Giles and St Nicholas, Sidmouth Director of Music

We seek a Director of Music with relevant experience, enthusiasm and vision to inspire and enrich our music. You will nurture our committed SATB choir and develop new and current choir members of all ages. The exact scale and scope of the role is negotiable.

You will help us explore and contribute to a wide range of traditional and contemporary worship with a warm and welcoming congregation and a friendly and dedicated group of singers in a musical area on the beautiful, East Devon coast.

We are keen to work collaboratively with a good communicator who supports our wider mission and ministry, in which music enriches our faith and witness. We offer the opportunity to play a leading role in a new chapter in our musical life, shaped by our values of inclusivity, hospitality, generosity and faithfulness.

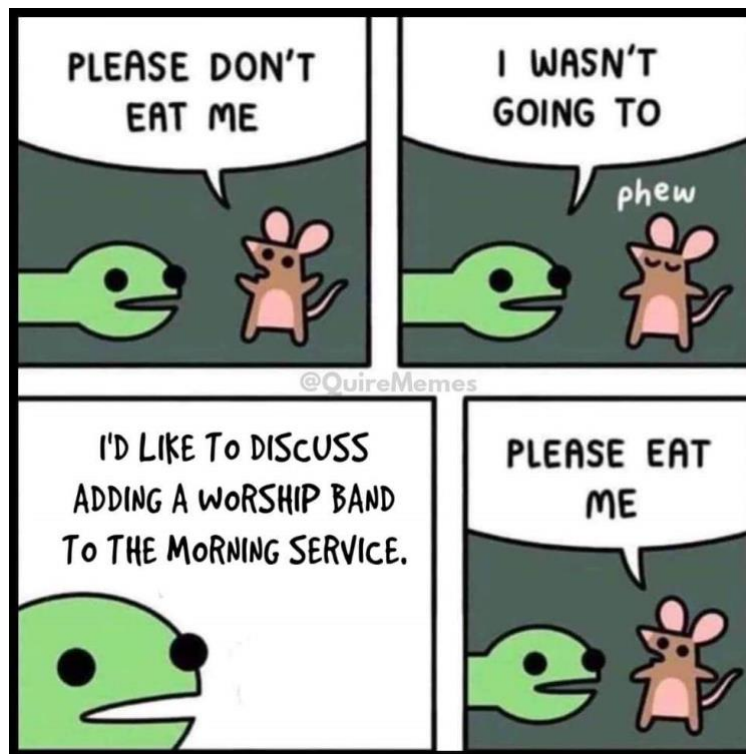
The church has a fine four-manual organ, access to two grand pianos and a good library of choral music. Salary range in line with RSCM guidelines, adjusted to scope of role, plus wedding and funeral fees.

For an Application pack:

see our website: [www.sidvalley.org.uk/directorofmusicjobopportunity.htm](http://www.sidvalley.org.uk/directorofmusicjobopportunity.htm)

or email: [sidmouth.admin@sidvalley.org.uk](mailto:sidmouth.admin@sidvalley.org.uk)

Applications close: Monday 29th January 2024.



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

*The latest edition of "Dates for your diary 2024", from our secretary, Paula Taylor*

### **Tuesday 23st January –Exeter Cathedral “Come and Play” Event 7:30pm**

With thanks to Timothy Noon we will once again be able to play on the Cathedral Organ. **Meeting promptly just before 7:30 pm at the North Door.** We have 12 players, some have provided a piece to play, can the others please submit details for a play order. The Cathedral Staff will be in charge of the evening and will have the final say on playing. Other Members and guests please be prompt as we will be “locked in”. Organiser: Paula Taylor/Timothy Noon

### **Wednesday 21st February-- Quiz Evening at the Bridge Inn, Topsham EX3 0QQ 7:30pm**

Paula has arranged yet another interesting quiz intended for everyone! It will be a “bring and share evening”. Please bring a clipboard or similar as we will all be sat in comfy chairs around a blazing heater in the “pink room”. The usual guest beers will be available too! Organiser: Paula Taylor

### **Saturday 16th March -- A trip around Exeter to visit local organs.**

10:00am St. David’s then 11:15am St. Michael’s, Lunch then 2:00pm St. James’s then 3:30 St. Leonard’s further details to come. Organiser: Neil Page

### **Saturday 27th April -- AGM at St.John the Baptist Church, Broadclyst EX5 3EL.**

12 Noon. Come and play the from 10:30, a recital at 11:30 followed by the AGM. Then lunch at the Red Lion nearby at 1:00 pm. Organiser: Paula Taylor/Gerald Hird

### **Wednesday 29th May – Evening TBA: Devon Organ Book event.**

Organiser Andrew Millington.

### **Saturday 15th June:-- trip to Plymouth area to play 3 organs there.**

Organiser Gerald Hird.

### **Sunday 7th July -- President’s Evening “An afternoon with Mendelssohn”**

Details TBC. Organiser Andrew Millington.

### **September --Away trip to Northampton/ Peterborough**

TBC. Feedback from members needed to make viable. Organiser Andrew Millington.

### **October -- Educational event TBC .**

### **November -- Annual Dinner**

Feedback from membership needed if a different venue is wanted.

*Latest information will always be posted to the [www.exeterorganists.net](http://www.exeterorganists.net) website. E&O.E*

### **The EDOA Website:**

**<http://www.exeterorganists.net>**

Administrator Graham Willson. The website includes EDOA events, Find an Organist, Newsletters, Gallery, Links, Opportunities, Contact Us, Committee.

Graham is always looking for new content, including text and photos. The post of Deputy Webmaster is also currently vacant, and Graham would be delighted to hear from any potential volunteers.