

Past Events

Visit to Friern Barnet and Southgate Saturday, 23rd September 2023 joint event with the SSLSO



*All Saints' Church
photo: Dr Peter St John Stokes*

On 23rd September a good number of EDOA members turned out for a visit to two lively North London churches. We joined a group from the Southwark and South London Society of Organists, and the opportunity to meet organists in both groups contributed a good deal to the success of the outing.

The first church we visited was All Saints' Oakleigh Road, Friern Barnet, a substantial Victorian Gothic structure built in 1882 with an attractive apsidal chancel. We were warmly welcomed by the Vicar. The organist Douglas Knight, who has been at All Saints' since 2019, gave a good introduction to the organ.

The present instrument is a two-manual tracker action organ standing at floor level at the West end of the church. The sound is very 'present' and clear. It was built by Church of Newcastle about forty years ago, and was cleaned and overhauled by Mander in 2021. The action is light and sensitive, and the specification includes a fine Great chorus and a bright Swell, with its Nineteenth and Sharp Mixture III. A special feature is the Heraldic Trumpet en chamade on the Swell, producing a robust but not overblown effect. The Nightingale and Cymbal Star stops on the Great, courtesy of Newcastle Breweries, we were told, were delightful.



*The console at All Saints' Church
photo: Dr Peter St John Stokes*

It was particularly good to listen to remarks made by David Patrick, organist at this church from 1976 to 1998, and the main inspiration behind the building of the organ. His contribution to the music of this church, and to others, has been enormous, and we were all moved by his address.

We heard a demonstration of the organ by Douglas Knight, who played the prelude to Duruflé's Suite, amply illustrating the dynamic range of this instrument. Members then played various pieces, including Joseph Bonnet's 'In Memoriam' played sensitively by Pavlos Triantaris.

In the afternoon we moved on to our second church, St Andrew's Southgate, stopping on the way for a convivial lunch at an Italian restaurant in Southgate. St Andrew's is a spacious, light early 20th century church broadly in the Gothic style, but with hints of Arts and Crafts in its appearance. We were greeted by the vicar Fr Ed Turner and the organ builder Vincent Coggin. The two-manual instrument here has a most unusual history. It was built by Willis in 1867 for the estate of the second Duke of Wellington in 1867 before it was moved to Christ Church Albany Street, then moved again to St Andrew's in 1990. It now is in the south choir aisle, with the console in a rather narrow loft above the choir. The pedal pipes are colourfully painted and speak directly into the nave, strengthening the bass support for the sound reaching the congregation.

The specification includes warm foundation stops from the original organ, amplified by Bishops in subsequent years. Upperwork was added in the 1990 rebuild by Vincent Coggin: a twelfth on the Great and a two-rank mixture on the Swell. The Corno di Bassetto is characterful.

A number of members played the organ, including Peter Stokes, who brought out some interesting sounds in the 'Kyrie Orbis Factor'.



*The organ at St Andrew's Church
photo: Dr Peter St John Stokes*

Altogether a most enjoyable day, featuring two very different organs, each with its own attractive character.

Stephen Jasper