

Help for the solo organist

IN many churches they are like gold dust. The best command big audiences.

The humble church organist aims to bring church worship to life, using one of the loudest and most versatile instruments ever created.

Yet some work in isolation, with few others in their congregation who understand how to play the organ. Some are in different churches every week, and lack regular fellowship. All appreciate the chance to meet others with similar problems and interests.

That's why the Portsmouth District Organists' Association (PDOA) has been in existence for more than 50 years, with a brief to educate others, encourage young-

sters to play, share information about organs in the south of England and consider their place in worship.

Its membership of just under 100 meets for social occasions, recitals by other members or visiting organists, seminars and the chance to play some fine instruments.

Its president, David Thorne, director of music at St John's RC Cathedral, said: "Like other aspects of music-making, the social side is very important. It's good to be able to talk about common interests and problems. Some people live in quite isolated areas and often don't get the chance to do so otherwise.

"We're an ecumenical organisation, although many of our members play in Anglican

churches. There is a dearth of young organists, and part of our remit is to encourage the younger generation."

The PDOA has a website - www.pdoa.org.uk - which parishes can use to find deputy organists. It was designed by Peter Newman, organist at St John's.

The association's annual recital this year will be at the RC cathedral. Andrew Lumsden, organist and director of music at Winchester Cathedral, will play pieces ranging from Debussy's melodic *Petite Suite* to a well-known Allegro by Widor. It begins at 7.30pm on September 23.

He was formerly sub-organist at Westminster Abbey and a regular broadcaster on the BBC's *Daily Service*. He was one of the youngest people ever to broadcast a solo recital on Radio 3.

Tickets, priced at £7 (£5 students and PDOA members) are available from David Cain on 023-9275 0442 or at the door. Anyone who would like to join the PDOA should also contact David on the same number.

Man behind the mass

DAVID Thorne is the man behind the Thorne mass - perhaps the sung Eucharistic setting most often used around our diocese.

He worked as assistant organist at Portsmouth's Anglican cathedral for 21 years before moving to the Roman Catholic cathedral in 2000.

"It was David Stancliffe, then the provost, who commissioned me to write a *Gloria* in 1986," he said. "We used it for a year before he suggested that I might consider completing the piece.

"It was written for the parish choir, but designed to be sung by the whole congregation. It was then used for a Eucharist in Guildhall Square in 1988 and has since become popular. It's now being used in America!"

David now has the privilege of playing the 2,750-pipe Lewis organ in the RC Cathedral, first used



David Thorne and the Lewis organ at Portsmouth's RC Cathedral

in May 2002 for a recording of the Jubilee edition of *Sunday Half-Hour* and dedicated by Bishop Crispian that July.

It was originally built by Thomas Lewis in 1883 for a church in Sunderland that closed several years ago. The pipes were rescued with three weeks to spare

in 2000 and the whole instrument restored by David Wells in his Liverpool workshop.

"I think it's fair to say that it's one of the loudest yet colourful organs in Portsmouth," said David. "It's ideal for this resonant building, especially for big services, but it needs to be played with some discretion."

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It's all change again!

THE changes in staffing at the cathedral this year have been exciting, even if rather unsettling for some.

Michael Tristram, our new Canon Pastor, arrived in February, and has quickly made his mark on the congregations.

Gavin Kirk left in July to become precentor at Lincoln Cathedral, and Nicholas Ash arrives as new precentor in Portsmouth in October.

Peter Lippiett and Nick Ralph, who both took on their diocesan responsibilities in February, live close to the cathedral and are both honorary cathedral chaplains and regular worshippers with us.

A new marketing

the last word

by the Very Rev David Brindley, dean of Portsmouth Cathedral



manager, new secretary for the canons, and our gap-year singers leaving in July to make way for a new group arriving in September all seem to have caused an endless stream of goodbyes and hellos.

All this raises for me the question of precisely what constitutes the cathedral community, and how that community develops and persists with so many changes.

The same question can be asked of any Christian group - changes in clergy, wardens, PCCs, and so on - all of them beg questions about continuity and change.

Perhaps even more important is the question of whose community this is. Who does the cathedral belong to? Who does your local parish church belong to?

It is, of course, a shared ownership,

and therefore a shared responsibility. Clergy come and go - we are only temporary custodians both of the building and of the life of the Christian community.

But the same is true of all - wardens, organists, scout leaders - each has a responsibility for an aspect of God's work in a place which eventually, sooner or later, must be handed on to others in faith and trust.



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