



## London Organs Day

Four fine instruments in the City and Westminster

**Thursday 18 July 2024 (LK 365)**

Our London Organs Days are an enthralling experience for both pipe-organ devotees and for the merely interested. London has an outstanding wealth of historic and modern instruments – no other city in the world comes close – and four very fine examples will be heard today.

At all four venues you hear music ideally suited to the instrument in that particular church and, by the end of the day, will have enjoyed a cross section of the repertoire which is the widest of any instrument, stretching back to the Middle Ages and continuously augmented to the present day.

Each recital is preceded by a discussion with the organist which will explain what is special about the instrument and say something about the music to be played. The interviewer throughout will be Simon Williams, Director for the Royal College of Organists' East, South and South West regions.

All the organs are in churches of great artistic and historical interest. The selection for this year's iteration is clustered around the District Line: the day involves two journeys by Underground, but otherwise progress between recitals and lunch will be on foot, a total distance of less than 1½ miles spread over six short walks.

### The recitals

#### **ST BOTOLPH WITHOUT ALDGATE**

**Organist: Shanna Hart**

St Botolph Aldgate escaped the Great Fire of 1666 but slumped into decrepitude and had to be demolished in 1739. The architect for the rebuilding was George Dance the Elder, the City Surveyor who also designed the Mansion House. The interior is a pleasing surprise, a rare instance of a sympathetic Victorian remodelling of a Georgian church, the architect being John Francis Bentley of Westminster Cathedral fame.

The Rhenus Harris organ, built c. 1700 for the earlier church, is arguably England's oldest surviving church organ defined by the collection of pipes in their original positions on their original wind chests. There have been changes of course, but it has been restored as far as possible to its original disposition.

Shanna Hart is Director of Music at St Botolph's and Assistant Organist at Homerton



*Photograph ©Ben Ealovega.*

and Selwyn Colleges, Cambridge. In 2019 she was awarded a Fellowship diploma of the Royal College of Organists. She is a frequent recitalist with a speciality in baroque and counterpoint.

#### **CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCULA**

**Organist: Colm Carey**

The Tower of London has for centuries been regarded as the most historic site in England. To attend a private concert here, home of the Crown Jewels and the most visited heritage site in Britain, is a rare privilege.

The current iteration of St Peter ad Vincula dates to 1520, and is like many another parish churches of that period such as can be seen throughout England. There is one feature which is far from standard, however: beneath the paving lie the earthly remains of many who were beheaded nearby, including Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell and three queens, Anne Boleyn, Catherine Howard and Lady Jane Grey.

The case is all that remains of the organ built by Bernhardt Schmidt ('Father Smith') in 1699 for the Banqueting House in Whitehall, which from that time until 1890 did duty as a Chapel Royal. It was then shoehorned into St Peter's. Modifications continued, but an entirely new instrument by Fernand Létourneau was installed in 1999.

Colm Carey is Master of Music of the Chapels Royal, HM Tower of London, where he directs the choir for the weekly services and for special events. He is also a distinguished concert organist and has performed across the world.

#### **ST MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER**

**Organist: Greg Morris**

Beginning life in the twelfth century as the parish church of Westminster, St Margaret's once lay within the precincts of Westminster Abbey; the formidable bulk of the abbey church rises a few yards to the south. One of the few pre-Reformation churches to survive in London, its current form dates largely to a rebuilding completed in 1523, though there have been intermittent interventions for restoration and embellishment. The stained glass is of particular interest.

The organ was another by Father Smith but it was rebuilt by John Avery in 1804 again by J.W. Walker & Sons Ltd, the historic and prolific London firm now based in Devizes, Wiltshire.

Greg Morris FRCO is Director of Music at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, having held similar posts at Temple Church, Blackburn Cathedral, St Martin-in-the-Fields and St George's Chapel Windsor. An established recitalist, he has performed on four continents.

London Organs Day  
continued

### **HOLY TRINITY, SLOANE STREET**

**Organist: David Goode**

John Betjemen dubbed the church of Holy Trinity 'the Cathedral of the Arts & Crafts movement'. Paid for by Earl Cadogan, the landlord of much of this part of Chelsea, building started in 1888. Embellishment continued well into the next century. The architect was John Dando Sedding, and William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones were among the many artists and craftsmen who contributed fittings and artworks. A Gesamtkunstwerk of architecture, sculpture, metalwork, painting and stained glass, it is a church of exceptional beauty, so it beggars belief that in the 1970s it was scheduled for demolition.

The original 1891 organ was another by J.W. Walker, but it was damaged in the war and largely replaced by Harrison and Harrison in 2012. One of the major organs of London, there are seventy-one speaking stops and approximately 4,200 pipes.

David Goode is one of Britain's outstanding organists and in demand as a recitalist around the world. He was organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge 1991-94 and posts have included Sub-Organist at Christ Church, Oxford, Organist-in-Residence at First Congregational Church in Los Angeles and Organist at Eton College.

### **Compère**

**Simon Williams** was Organist and Director of Music at St George's Hanover Square 2000-2022, where he was closely involved with the commissioning of the new organ installed in 2012, and Music Director for Harrow Choral Society 1990-2022. Currently he is Director for the Royal College of Organists' East, South and South West regions. He is also an RCO Accredited Teacher.

### **Practicalities**

**Start:** 10.45am at St Botolph without Aldgate, EC3N 1AB. Nearest station: Aldgate. Also Liverpool Street, Fenchurch Street, Tower Hill. Doors open at 10.15am.

**Finish:** before 5.30pm, Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, SW1X 9BZ. Nearest stations: Sloane Square, Knightsbridge.

**Fitness:** there are walks, at a leisurely pace, of at most 15 minutes (waiting at pedestrian crossings included).

**Price: £250 per person.** This includes lunch and afternoon refreshments as well as exclusive admission to the four recitals, programme booklet, and the services of a team of staff.

**Audience size:** maximum of 100 participants.

**Programmes** will be announced imminently.

**Booking:** you do not need to complete a booking form for this event. Please call us to book over the telephone, or book online at [www.martinrandall.com](http://www.martinrandall.com).