

Past Events

EDOA AGM 2025

The AGM took place on Saturday 15th February at 17:00 at St Michael's Church, South Grove, Highgate, N6 6BJ. Ruth Lewis was elected to the committee again after a year's gap.

The AGM Recital was given by Jonathan Gregory. After the recital members enjoyed a meal at The Flask public house opposite the church.

AGM Recital

It was a Saturday in February, and like most days in February, it was cold and gloomy. But we were in lovely Highgate—a place we usually only visit in warm sunshine. Arriving early for the AGM, we finally entered the vast space of St Michael's Church, which was still gloomy but less cold. Fortunately, the meeting was held in another, warmer room, though afterward we returned to the church. Now, with the space slightly warmer and some lights on, it looked rather lovely—appropriately mysterious in its dark corners.



The organ at St Michael's Highgate

Photo: Susan Dingle

Occupying a whole bay on the northern side of the church, towards the east end, is a considerable organ with the console underneath. This instrument has a long history, starting off—like so many of its kind—on a balcony at the west end. This Gray and Davison organ was later moved to its current, humbler position and successively rebuilt several times, reaching its present form with 44 speaking stops in a 1985 rebuild by Nicholson. The instrument is typical of its period, with a solid foundations complemented by brighter mixtures and choir mutations. In this case, the additions are very successful, blending together naturally. There is also a Tuba unit, available at 8' and 4' pitches on the Choir and 16' and 8' on the Pedals.

The organist giving the recital, Jonathan Gregory, has carved out a successful musical career, including tenures as organist of Great St Mary's, Cambridge, and Leicester Cathedral. He now shares his talents in several churches around Barnet. His programme was substantial, imaginative, and richly varied, spanning from Bach to Messiaen. It's too extensive to cover in detail here, so I'll summarize the pieces that lingered in my memory.

The recital opened with the dramatic, foot-tapping energy of Meyerbeer's *Marche du Sacré* from *Le Prophète*. This excellent opener also showcased the Tuba in full-throated glory.



Recitalist Jonathan Gregory at the console

Photo: Rosemary Knight

Next came Bach's *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor*—my favourite piece of the programme. Jonathan's musicality shone in an unashamedly Romantic interpretation, with beautiful legato phrasing and subtle timbre shifts to highlight the music's structure.

I also greatly enjoyed his stylish performance of de Grigny, despite the narrow-scaled mutations producing a sound quite different from what the composer might have expected. The Messiaen that followed was perhaps less successful: in *Les anges*, the angels felt too meticulously controlled in their movements, while in *Jésus accepte la souffrance*, the suffering came across as loud rather than weighty. That said, there's always a challenge in transferring Messiaen (like de Grigny) to English organs and acoustic contexts—yet it's far better to play this music than to deprive audiences of the chance to engage with it.

Vierne's *Carillon de Westminster*, however, was a triumph and a fitting close to a deeply satisfying recital. It's a privilege to have Jonathan among us, sharing his thoughtful playing—a testament to his vast experience and a vivid illumination of our gloomy February.

Peter St John Stokes

The recital programme can be seen on the Events page of our website. Ed.
