

FROM THE BETTS SCHOLAR

The Magic of a New Beginning

Every year around September and October, there is a unique atmosphere of hope and beauty in the air that comes with the start of each new academic year. This certainly also applies to the Betts Centre for Organ Studies!

It was particularly touching to welcome a cohort of fifteen new organ scholars who arrived in Oxford at the beginning of October with a truly infectious sense of anticipation; and it took them literally minutes to start bonding with one another. Facilitating opportunities for them to do so is one of the noblest missions of the Betts Centre. Thus, various Freshers' follow-up meetings are already being planned.

On a similar note, the Betts Reception at Balliol College last week not only served as a fitting occasion to mark the beginning of the new academic year, but also reminded everyone present (more than half of the c. 80 organists of Oxford University came!) of the unique opportunities for networking, mutual inspiration and camaraderie that are the hallmark of being part of arguably the largest academic community of organists in the world. Particular thanks go to the Chaplain of Balliol College, the Rev'd Dr Laura Biron-Scott, for hosting us.

Looking at the weeks ahead, plenty of Betts events and activities are scheduled, including a study day on the music of César Franck, several Organ Outings (NB attending organ recitals as a group is so much more fun than going alone!) and a speaker event with a celebrity organist around the end of term. Alongside these plenary offerings, it has become increasingly evident that there is a great need for individual support of colleges and organ scholars. Therefore, I am happy to announce that the latter will receive an increased focus going forward.

As always, this Bulletin contains announcements, a wide range of opportunities, as well as the access details to our newest offering: Organ Cinema!

Happy reading, and enjoy playing the organ jigsaw down below,

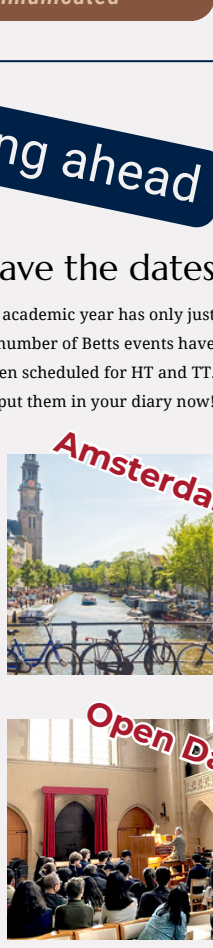
Michael



3rd Week: César Franck Study Day

The Royal College of Organists (RCO) is hosting a high-calibre **Study Day** on the music of **César Franck** at **Exeter College**, exploring Franck's works for organ, piano and the harmonium side by side.

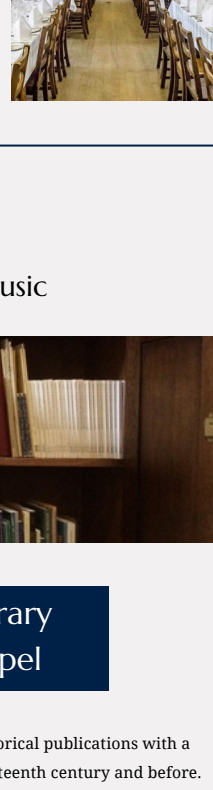
Thanks to the generosity of the RCO, the Betts Centre is able to sponsor **full participation** of up to **eight organ scholars**. - **Sign up [HERE](#) by 11.59 p.m. on Sunday, 26 Oct.**
Sat 1 Nov, 10.00am - 5.00pm, Exeter College



4th Week: Betts Organ Outing

Three world-class musicians, all associated with Royal occasions, will perform in this Betts Organ Outing: **Luke Bond**, Assistant Organist of St George's Chapel, soprano **Miriam Allan** and trumpeter **David Blackadder**. They were involved, respectively, in the Wedding of the Duke and **Duchess of Sussex** and the Funeral of the **late Duke of Edinburgh**.

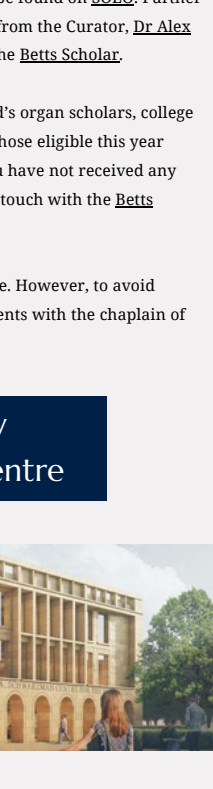
Sat 8 Nov, 7.00pm, Mansfield College Chapel



6th Week: Betts Organ Outing

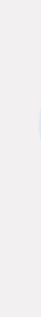
Listening to the playing of **Katherine Dienes-Williams** (the Director of Music at Guildford Cathedral) is always a pleasure, and so is hearing the colourful **Eule organ of Magdalen College** (2023). In this Betts Organ Outing, these two will come together!

As always at Magdalen, Monday recitals are followed by a generous **drinks reception** in the antechapel.
Mon 17 Nov, 5.30pm, Magdalen College Chapel



6th Week: Hands on with Handel

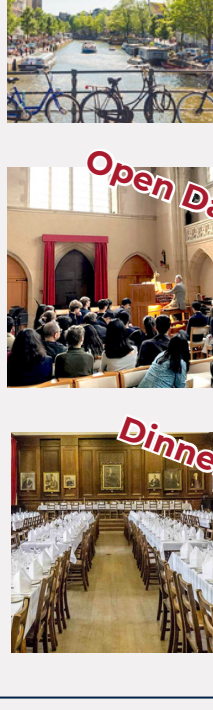
Our wonderful supporter **Hugh Morris**, the Director of the Royal School of Church Music, is inviting **organists from around the world** to join him in **playing the Largo from Handel's Xerxes – Ombra mai fui** – on Sat, 22 November at 2pm. This **INITIATIVE** is part of the **RCO's Play the Organ Year 2023** and offers a great opportunity to show your respective chapel organ to members of your college.
Sat 22 Nov, 2.00pm, College Chapels across Oxford



7th Week: Speaker event and Betts Oxmas

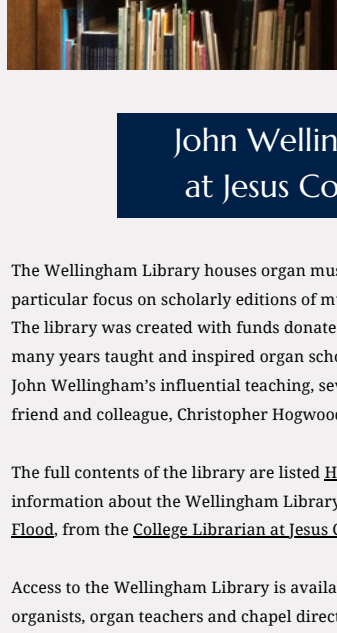
This term, the distinguished **American concert organist Professor Damin Spritzer** will be resident in Oxford as a visiting fellow at **Exeter College**. Prof. Spritzer has kindly agreed to **speak to the Betts community** in conversation with Michael Koenig about her work and about **organ playing in the 21st century** more generally.

The talk is followed by our traditional **Betts Oxmas party!**
Mon, 24 Nov, 7.45pm (till late), location TBC



Additional events for MT to be communicated

Looking ahead



Save the dates

The new academic year has only just begun, yet a number of Betts events have already been scheduled for HT and TT. Make sure to put them in your diary now!

Following our highly successful first **joint Organ Study Trip** with the organ scholars of **Cambridge University**, which took us to Paris this past March, planning is already well underway for our next joint trip. This time, we will visit **Amsterdam** to explore some of the remarkable organs of the Dutch capital and its surroundings.

Sun, 22 - Tue, 24 March 2026



The annual **Organ Scholars' Open Day** at the beginning of Trinity Term is not only an excellent way to show interested people what **life as an Oxford organ scholar** is like, but also a good date to **facilitate engaging organ workshops** for organ scholars.

This past April, **nearly eighty young organists** visited our university.
Sat, 2 May, 9.30am - 5.00pm (followed by Evensongs)



The **annual calendar highlight and most popular event** of the Betts centered is the annual **Organ Scholars' Dinner**, which takes place, traditionally, on **Monday of 2nd Wk of Trinity Term**.

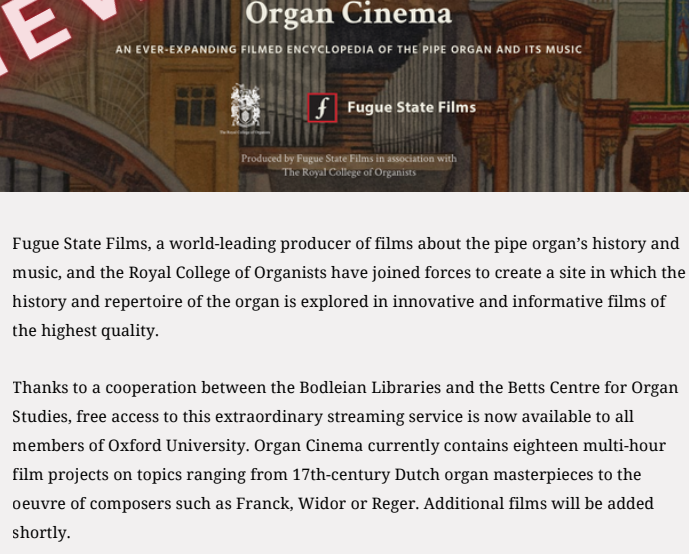
After last year's most enjoyable visit to Corpus Christi College, we will be hosted by **Somerville College** this year. Many thanks go to their Director of Music, Will Dawes!

Mon, 4 May, start time TBC



Where to find organ music?

A tour of Oxford's libraries with significant holdings of organ music



John Wellingham Library at Jesus College Chapel

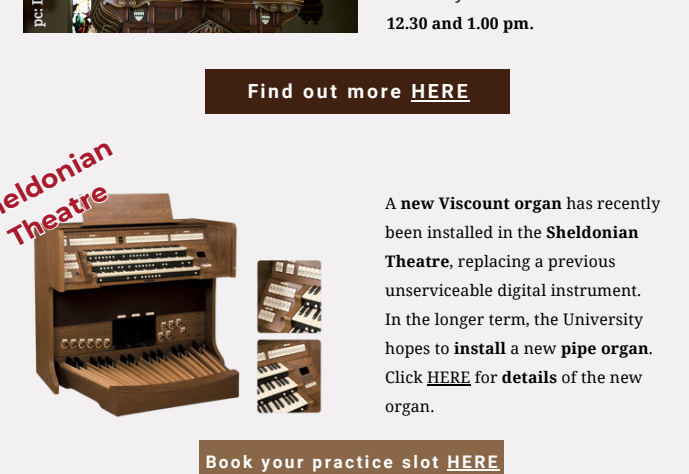
The Wellingham Library houses organ music and organ-historical publications with a particular focus on scholarly editions of music from the eighteenth century and before. The library was created with funds donated in tribute to John Wellingham, who for many years taught and inspired organ scholars at Oxford University. In recognition of John Wellingham's influential teaching, several volumes have been donated by his great friend and colleague, Christopher Hogwood.

The full contents of the library are listed [HERE](#) and can also be found on [SOLO](#). Further information about the Wellingham Library can be obtained from the Curator, [Dr Alex Flood](#), from the [College Librarian at Jesus College](#) and from the [Betts Scholar](#).

Access to the Wellingham Library is available to all of Oxford's organ scholars, college organists, organ teachers and chapel directors of music. All those eligible this year should already have been notified through email. In case you have not received any such communication but would like to use the Library, get in touch with the [Betts Scholar](#).

The library may be accessed whenever the chapel is available. However, to avoid disappointment, it is recommended to make prior arrangements with the chaplain of Jesus College, the [Rev'd Philip Harbridge](#).

Humanities Library at the Schwarzman Centre



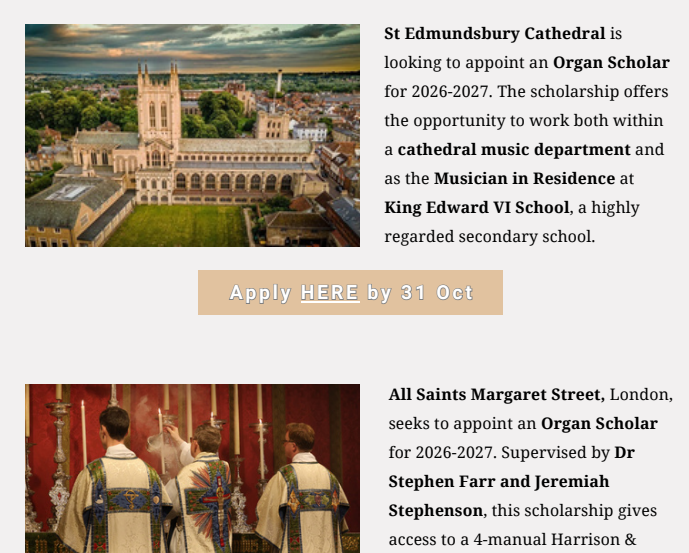
The new Humanities Library is part of the Schwarzman Centre and brings together seven previously separate libraries, including the library of the former Music Faculty building. A sizeable collection of organ music can be found on open shelves; a digital piano with headphones is also available.

Library opening hours: Mon - Fri, 9 am - 8 pm

Additional opening hours for Humanities students and staff

Enquiries can be sent to: humlib@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

Mackerras Reading Room at the Weston Library



The Sir Charles Mackerras Reading Room is the default space to consult the Bodleian's vast collection of music materials, including rare prints and manuscripts and a large collection of organ music. The reading room also holds a wide array of musical reference publications and journals on open shelves.

Reading room opening hours: Mon - Fri, 9 am - 7 pm

Saturdays: 10 am - 4 pm

Enquiries can be sent to the Alfred Brendel Curator of Music, [Martin Holmes](#).

Oxford Public Library at the Westgate



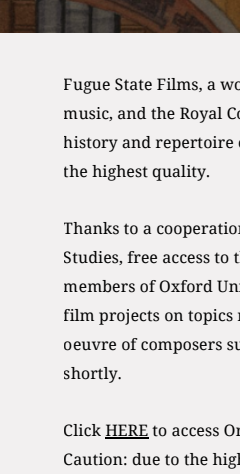
The Oxford Westgate Library is the central library of the Oxfordshire County Council. Whilst this library is not part of Oxford University, access is free to everybody, and registration takes as little as two minutes.

The library holds a considerable collection of loanable sheet music, including organ music with a specific focus on anthologies for special occasions, such as weddings and funerals.

Library opening hours: Mon - Thu, 9 am - 8 pm

Fridays and Saturdays: 9 am - 5.30 pm

Further information and a contact page can be found [HERE](#).



Organ Cinema

AN EVER-EXPANDING FILMED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE PIPE ORGAN AND ITS MUSIC



Produced by Fugue State Films in association with The Royal College of Organists

Fugue State Films, a world-leading producer of films about the pipe organ's history and music, and the Royal College of Organists have joined forces to create a site in which the history and repertoire of the organ is explored in innovative and informative films of the highest quality.

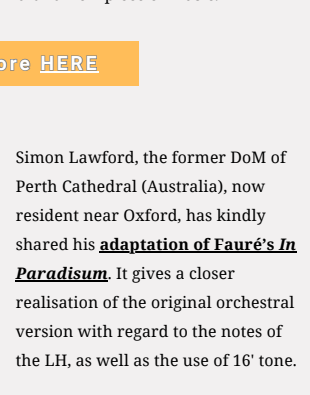
Thanks to a cooperation between the Bodleian Libraries and the Betts Centre for Organ Studies, free access to this extraordinary streaming service is now available to all members of Oxford University. Organ Cinema currently contains eighteen multi-hour film projects on topics ranging from 17th-century Dutch organ masterpieces to the oeuvre of composers such as Franck, Widor or Reger. Additional films will be added shortly.

Click [HERE](#) to access Organ Cinema through SOLO.

Caution: due to the high quality of Organ Cinema, watching can become "addictive"!

Betts Team Lunches

COMING SOON TO YOUR COLLEGE!



While the Faculty's admin team is working on enabling the Betts Scholar to book rooms in the Music Faculty Hub to resume the popular **Betts One-on-One Meetings**, he is currently visiting colleges one at a time for **informal "Team Lunches"** with their organ scholars.

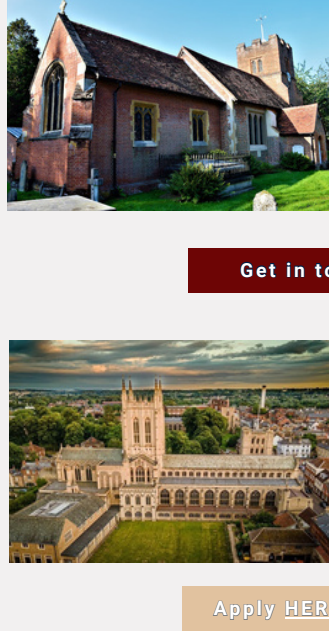
This format is intended not only to offer organ scholars an opportunity to specify any topics they would like to see covered in forthcoming Betts events, but also to identify areas of shared interests between organ scholars, as well as to highlight the distinctive potential of each college and chapel organ.

If you haven't been approached by the Betts Scholar yet, he will be in touch in due course.

Click [HERE](#) to expedite the process

Openings and Opportunities

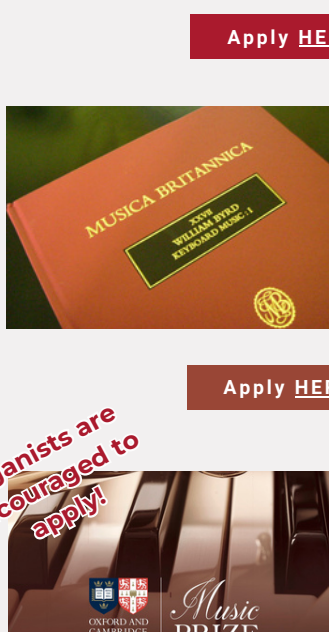
This Sunday



All organists are invited to an event this coming Sunday at Teddy Hall that explores how music can spark creativity and collaboration: a relaxed mix of discussion, hands-on music-making and inspiration. The event will finish by co-creating a brand-new piece of music.

Find out more [HERE](#)

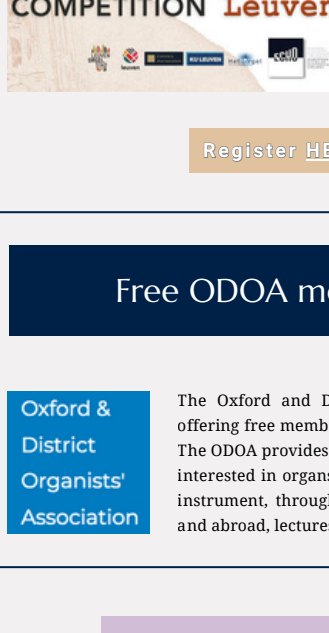
Fauré Requiem



Simon Lawford, the former DoM of Perth Cathedral (Australia), now resident near Oxford, has kindly shared his **adaptation of Fauré's In Paradisum**. It gives a closer realisation of the original orchestral version with regard to the notes of the LH, as well as the use of 16' tone.

Download [HERE](#)

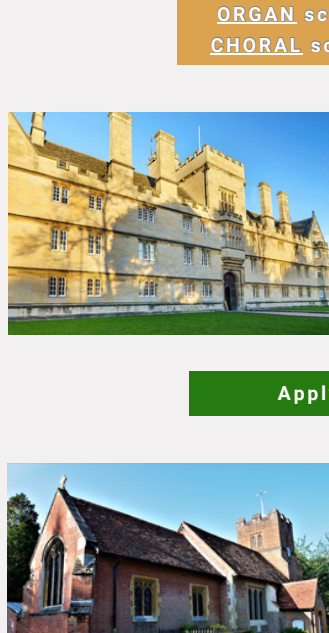
New series



Congratulations to **Brasenose College** on their new **organ recital series**, which seeks to celebrate the installation of the 2024 instrument by Orgues De Facto from Belgium. Recitals this term will take place on **Thursdays in even weeks between 12.30 and 1.00 pm**.

Find out more [HERE](#)

Sheldonian Theatre



A new **Viscount organ** has recently been installed in the **Sheldonian Theatre**, replacing a previous unserviceable digital instrument. In the longer term, the University hopes to **install a new pipe organ**. Click [HERE](#) for details of the new organ.

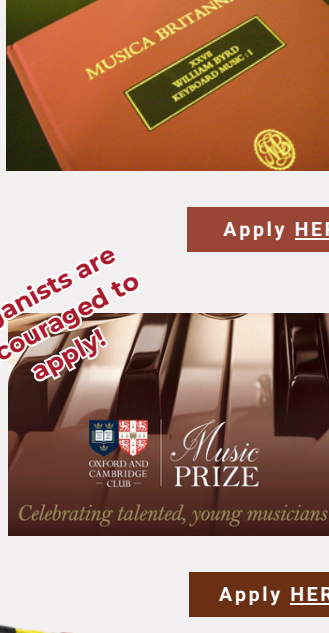
Book your practice slot [HERE](#)

College	Scholarship	Associated Institution
Christ Church, Oxford	Open to University students	Christ Church, Oxford
Exeter College, Oxford	Open to University students	Exeter College, Oxford
Magdalen College, Oxford	Open to University students	Magdalen College, Oxford
Trinity College, Oxford	Open to University students	Trinity College, Oxford

As a result of the vibrant partnership between the Betts Centre and the **Royal School of Church Music**, the RSCM has kindly agreed to share with us their **listings of organ and choral scholarships**. This is, in all likelihood, the most comprehensive listing currently available!

ORGAN scholarships

CHORAL scholarships



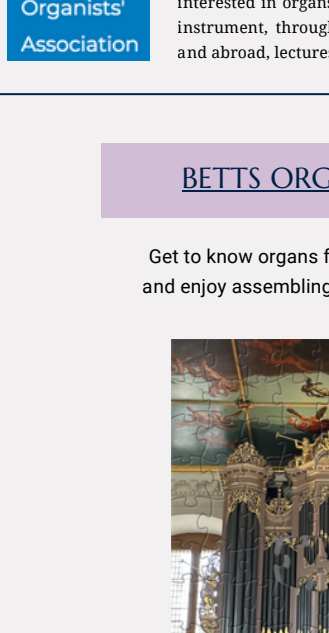
The **Choir of Wadham College** is seeking to recruit a **Keyboard Scholar** to enhance the chapel music programme and support the choir's musical development. This role mainly involves **accompaniment of Friday choir rehearsals**. It does NOT come with Sunday duties!

Apply [HERE](#)



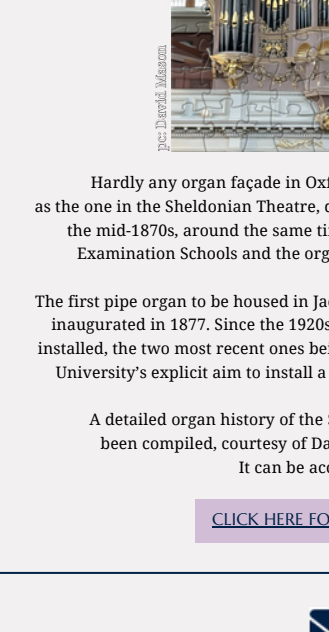
The **Church of St James, Fulmer** (South Buckinghamshire) is looking for organists who would like to be considered for occasional cover. Service are held on **Sundays at 10am** with **congregational hymns and voluntaries**. Fee: £80 and travel expenses

Get in touch [HERE](#)



St Edmundsbury Cathedral is looking to appoint an **Organ Scholar** for 2026-2027. The scholarship offers the opportunity to work both within a **cathedral music department** and as the **Musical in Residence** at **King Edward VI School**, a highly regarded secondary school.

Apply [HERE](#) by 31 Oct



All **Saints Margaret Street**, London, seeks to appoint an **Organ Scholar** for 2026-2027. Supervised by **Dr Stephen Farr** and **Jeremiah Stephenson**, this scholarship gives access to a 4-manual Harrison & Harrison organ and comes with a **remuneration of £3,780**.

Apply [HERE](#) by 1 Dec



Musica Britannica, an authoritative national collection of British music, is hosting a **competition** for at the Royal Academy of Music on 9 April 2026. The focus lies on performing in **historically appropriate style(s)** on either a **harpichord**, a **chamber organ** or a **piano**.

Apply [HERE](#) by 5 Dec

Organists are encouraged to apply



The **Oxford and Cambridge Club** offers an **Annual Bursary** to one leaver each from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge who excel in music performance (incl. organists). It comes with one year's **free access to the Club House** and a **credit of £2,500** to be spent within the Club.

Apply [HERE](#) by 31 Jan

The City of **Leuven** (Belgium) is hosting an **International Organ Competition** centered around **Leuven's Goltfuss (1692) and Continuo (2022)** organs (open to organists born after 30 June 1996). Further information can be obtained from **Prof. David Burn** at KU Leuven.

Register [HERE](#) by 31 Jan

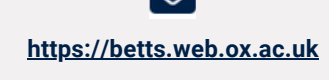
Free ODOA membership under 25



The Oxford and District Organists' Association (ODOA) is offering free membership to all organists under the age of 25. The ODOA provides an informal framework in which all those interested in organs can meet to enjoy various aspects of the instrument, through visits, workshops, study tours at home and abroad, lectures and social activities. Join [HERE](#)!

BETTS ORGAN JIGSAW

Get to know organs from around the world and enjoy assembling jigsaw puzzles online



Hardly any organ façade in Oxford is as instantly recognisable as the one in the Sheldonian Theatre, designed by Thomas Graham Jackson in the mid-1870s, around the same time when Jackson also designed the Examination Schools and the organ façade(s) of Brasenose College.

The first pipe organ to be housed in Jackson's case, built by Father Willis, was inaugurated in 1877. Since the 1920s, four further instruments have been installed, the two most recent ones being digital. Nevertheless, it remains the University's explicit aim to install a new pipe organ in the coming years.

A detailed organ history of the Sheldonian Theatre has recently been compiled, courtesy of David Mason of Viscount Organs. It can be accessed [HERE](#).

CLICK [HERE](#) FOR THE JIGSAW



<https://betts.web.ox.ac.uk>