



*Incorporated
Association
of Organists*

Tayside Organists' Society

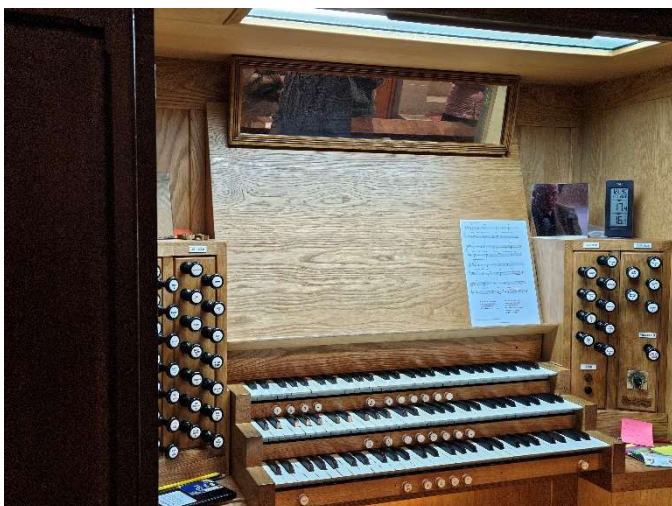


*Scottish
Federation
of Organists*

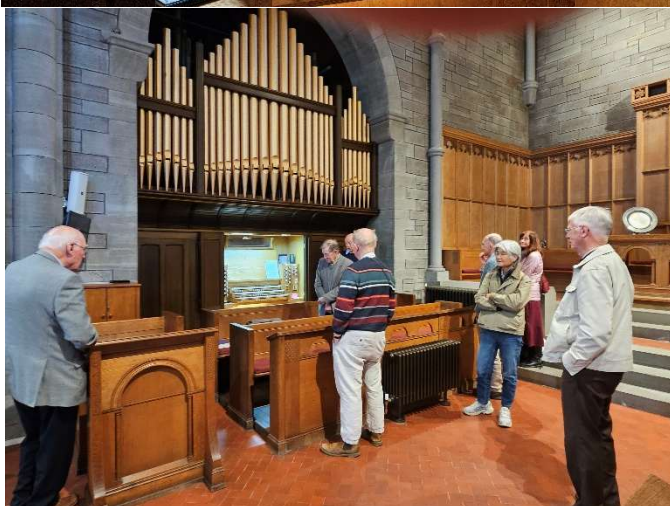
REVIEW OF VISIT TO CARNOUSTIE ON 10TH OCTOBER 2026

By Bryan Weir

On 10th October 2026 TOS held an outing to various churches in the Carnoustie area. The members attending first met at Carnoustie Church where we were welcomed to tea and refreshments by the resident joint organists and choir directors, Peter Thornton and Pauline Robertson. This was followed by a presentation by Peter on the history of the churches in Carnoustie and surrounding area which reflected the history of the Christianity in Scotland. The building we were in was built with a capacity of 1200 in 1902 and had a new parish created for it following the expansion of the town after the arrival of the railway in 1843.



The organ was originally hydraulically powered and the lighting in the church was by gas. An electric blower was installed in the 1950s. By the 1980s the organ was failing and a refurbishment was carried out with new pipework installed, a new console and extra stops added. In 1999, a new pedal section was added and the original pedal section went to Colliston Church. The church itself underwent extensive refurbishment recently and during this time John Lightbown & Sons fitted new slider solenoids.



After the presentation, Peter played a prelude written by Carlo Curley and transcribed by Ian Tracey based on the hymn tune Melita which amply demonstrated the range of sounds the organ could produce. The organ had a lovely sound and a number of the members present then took turns to illustrate this. Very impressive.

After a very tasty lunch in Carnoustie Church, we moved on to the Scottish Episcopal Church of the Holy Rood where we were welcomed by the organist of 50 plus years, John Cheyne, who stressed that he wasn't actually an organist but a violinist! Despite not being used every Sunday, the 1903 organ by John R Miller of Dundee sounded remarkably good. It had a real sweetness of sound and the members who played it managed to bring this out. This was a really delightful interlude and we were very grateful for the warm welcome we received.



Our next stop was St. Anne's RC Church, also in Carnoustie. This was a modern building whose frontage hid an impressive and unusual round church. The organ was a 1965 J W Walker extension organ which had been relocated from St Theresa's Church in Dundee. These extension organs had been designed to replace larger instruments with a much more compact design. Some stops were duplicated on each manual and pipes spoke for more than one stop leading to a surprisingly small instrument. Despite this, the organ had fuller sound than expected and filled the church with a lovely tone. Again, the members who played the organ managed to demonstrate this very well.



And so on to our final venue, Barry Church, originally Barry Free Church. This was used for worship during the recent refurbishment of Carnoustie Church but was no longer used and is presumably awaiting disposal. It was quite poignant to see various photos and memorabilia on display.

The organ is a 1902 Ernest Lawton instrument. It is still playable despite a lack of maintenance so long as it isn't pushed too hard. Ron Oliver demonstrated that it is perfectly capable of producing a really nice sound for a Cliff Richard song chosen for its appropriateness of the age range of those present.

Our President, Alison Malcolm, rounded off a really good day out with a vote of thanks to Peter and Pauline for their meticulous organisation and preparations which was vital for the success of the event.

