

Tayside Organists' Society
Morning Coffee at Perth Congregational Church
16 September 2023
Review by Ron Oliver

The first meeting of Tayside Organists' Society for session 2023/24 took place on the morning of Saturday 16th September 2023 and coincided with Perth "Open Doors Day".

This was a departure from our normal meeting format and took the form of a café set up at the front of the church, where members attending socialised and enjoyed coffee and a biscuit provided by the church, while being entertained with some background music played on the organ by members of the Society, who had been invited to 'bring some music'. The Society welcomed some members of the church who had come along to enjoy the occasion.

The relaxed atmosphere and setting provided a greater opportunity to socialise, and was enjoyed by all those present, although it must be said numbers attending could have been better.

Ten organists participated in providing music throughout the morning, and this resulted not only in a wide variety of sound from the organ but also an opportunity to play some music one might not expect to form part of a Sunday morning presentation.

The two manual and pedal organ was built originally in 1899 by Wadsworth of Manchester with tracker action. In 1963 it was converted to electropneumatic action, with a new stoptab console, tonal changes and nineteen speaking stops, by Henry Willis and Sons.

Much of the organisation of our meeting had been done by our member Mike Batho, the incumbent organist, who began the morning music. He was followed by Ian McLagan who played a selection of film scores. A performance of Bach's Schübler Chorale No 5 by Sally Carus preceded some skilful improvisation by Geoff Bolton, with George Bell next to play the well-known *Melody in F* by Rubinstein, followed by *Pick Yourself Up*.

There was no opportunity to "start all over again" as Kevin Veal sat down at the console to perform a Communion voluntary by Guilmant, and then a trip down memory lane with *Sanctuary of the Heart*. Peter Thornton played the tuneful Cantabile No. 2 by Enrico Pasini, followed by *Histoire* by Ian Seeley and an Adagio originally written for glass harmonium by Mozart. It is worth checking out the glass harmonium on Google and YouTube if you have not come across it before. Robert Balderston played the well-known improvisation on *Freu Dich Sehr* by Karg-Elert, before a voluntary by Boëllmann.

Another trip down memory lane as Pauline Robertson demonstrated her sight reading talents with *Count Your Blessings*, and Ron Oliver rounded off the morning with *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*.

The meeting concluded at noon, with a vote of thanks to our hosts, Perth Congregational Church, in particular the ladies who set up the 'café' and provided the coffee and biscuits.

Members adjourned for lunch with some taking the opportunity to enjoy the other delights on offer as part of Perth Open Doors Day.