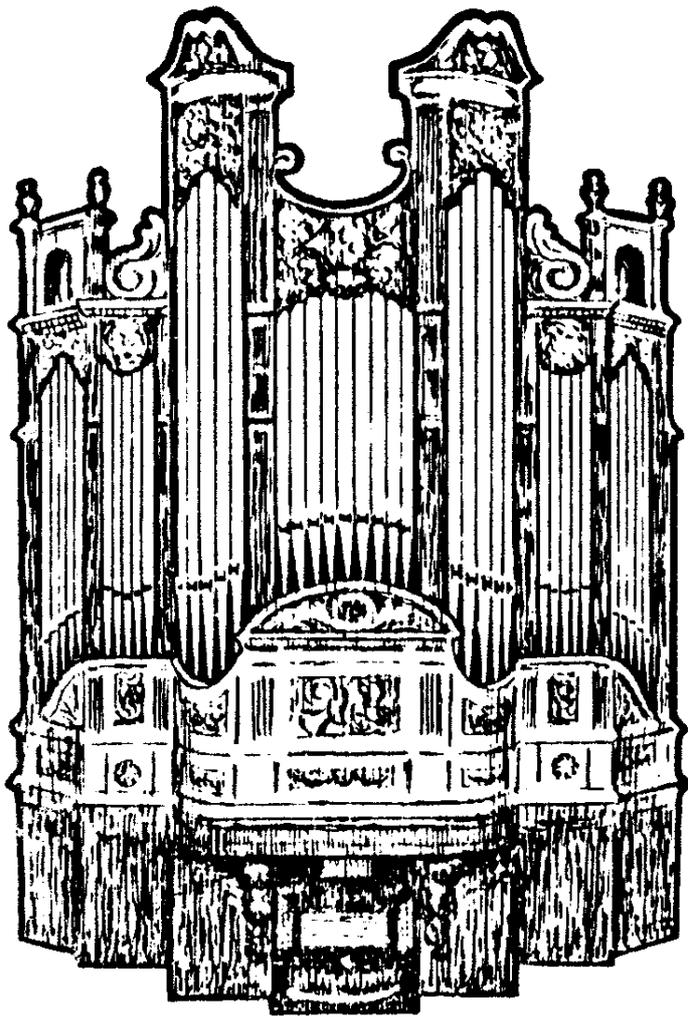


# The Berkshire Organist

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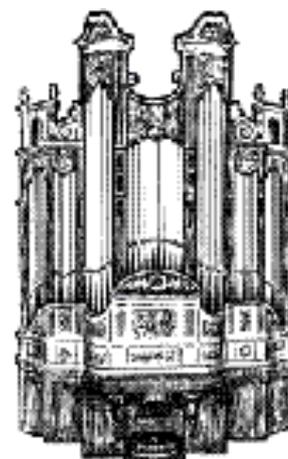
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## THE BERKSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity No 298088

The Berkshire Organists' Association was founded at a meeting held on 19 April 1921, arranged by Mr. Percy Scrivener (Founder President) and Mr. Archibald Lusty, who subsequently served as Secretary for 46 years. The Association was affiliated to the National Union of Organists Associations: which became the Incorporated Association of Organists in 1929, and to which we are still affiliated. In 1988 we became a registered charity.



Our aims as an Association are:

- to promote the art of playing the organ
- to encourage the public to appreciate organ music
- to provide help and advice to church musicians
- to enable organists to meet each other.

These aims are of equal importance, and we aim to achieve them in three ways.

(a) Organising events for members.

We endeavour to cater for as many tastes as possible by promoting organ recitals and concerts, master classes, talks on organs, discussions on church music, publishers evenings, choir workshops, social evenings and visits to interesting organs.

Starting in 1965 we arranged regular celebrity recitals on the historic Father Willis organ in the Reading Concert Hall until these were suspended when the Hall was closed prior to restoration.. They have been resumed under the auspices of the Borough Council since the restoration of the Concert Hall in 2000.

(b) Communication with members.

We issue a newsletter approximately every two months, and each year since 1948 we have published this magazine which has few equals amongst other organists' associations.

(c) Exercising an influence in the outside world.

We consider it important to be, and be seen to be, a source of help and advice to all organists and church musicians. We are striving to raise our profile in Berkshire, along with the Newbury and Windsor Associations, in order to involve as many people as possible in achieving the four aims listed above.

## CONTENTS

Our New President – Jonathan Holl	1
Our Outgoing President	2
The 84th Annual General Meeting and Recital	4
Don't Shoot the Messenger	7
Some thoughts on Authenticity	10
Two Years as Your Secretary	12
“Can you play for a funeral?”	14
One equal music: on the role of noise, silence, and the organ in worship today	17
Retirement.....What retirement?	19
...And now for something completely different!	21
A year in the life of the parents of a cathedral chorister	22
‘If you want any more’	24
The Annual Dinner – 8 November 2003	25
Memoirs of a Village Organist	26
Judy Martin in Dublin	29
Visits - High Wycombe	31
Christchurch and Southbourne, Dorset	33
Douai Abbey and Thatcham	37
Manchester and Liverpool	38
Windsor	40
Edith Hewett – an appreciation	41
Local Recitals	45
Crossword	46
Celebrity Recital - David Titterington	47
Lunch Time Recitals in Reading Concert Hall	49
Gordon Spriggs – Congratulations	52
Lunchtime Recitals at St Mary's	53
Adventures of a Church Organist	53
A personal selection of recent organ CDs	56
Crossword Solution	57
Honorary Fellow	58
Past Presidents	58
Past Secretaries of the Association	59
Past Honorary treasurers	59
Past Editors of <i>The Berkshire Organist</i>	59

## OUR NEW PRESIDENT – JONATHAN HOLL

Jonathan Holl spent his formative years in Malvern (learning the violin, piano and organ from an early age) while his father was Organist and Master of the Choristers at Malvern Priory. He was educated at Malvern College and during that time became leader of the college orchestra, sang and played the organ in the chapel. Having developed a keen interest in flying he spent a considerable amount of his free time as an air cadet, learning to glide and using his powers of persuasion(!) to be taken on RAF flights in aircraft such as Canberras and Shackletons. In the latter he even managed to go on an anti-submarine exercise in the Channel.



In deciding to pursue a career in civil aviation he was awarded a place at the College of Air Training, Hamble. During the two-year course he took organ lessons at Winchester Cathedral. On joining British European Airways (BEA) he was assigned to Vanguard aircraft (a 4-engined turboprop) as a junior co-pilot.. Like his father, 30 years before, he continued his organ studies with Dr. Harold Darke. Also he joined the choir and orchestra of the Ernest Read Music Association, taking part in concerts at the RAM, RFH and the Royal Albert Hall. It was there at a rehearsal and during a power cut that he was first introduced to Madeline (Mandy) by torchlight! They were married at Malvern Priory with Harold Darke at the organ. The next year saw the arrival of their daughter Susannah. In BEA he had progressed on to Trident aircraft and by this time was having organ lessons with Douglas Hawkrige (Senior Professor RAM). Jonathan was promoted to Captain but flew Vanguards again as freighters, mostly at night! After a couple of years he was back flying Tridents taking passengers to destinations all over Europe and as far as Israel. He began to find himself much in demand for organ deputizing and for recitals, an aspect he particularly enjoys.

In 1980 he was appointed Organist and Choirmaster at St. Anne's Church, Bagshot and before long had launched an appeal for £20,000 to restore and improve the 1899 three-manual Walker. During this time he was also busy with harpsichord playing and, as well as continuo work, gave two concerts with Ross Pople (Principal Cellist BBC SO, now Director, London Festival Orchestra). In 1986 when the Trident was retired, Jonathan elected to fly the Boeing 737 – remaining on shorthaul routes so that he could fulfil musical and other commitments more easily. He was not too disappointed to have missed a captaincy on Concorde by two places!

After ten years at St. Anne's, Bagshot he was appointed Organist of the Royal Memorial Chapel, RMA Sandhurst. Later he decided to play the organ on a freelance basis. He formed his own choir (the Verona Singers based in Sunningdale) which perform mainly at Christmas time for charity. He was Chorusmaster and accompanist to the Surrey Heath Festival Chorus.

Jonathan has frequently attended the International Summer Organ Conservatoire at St. Antoine L'Abbaye in France, directed by Nigel Allcoat. During these occasions he has had the privilege of playing in masterclasses directed by, amongst others, André Isoir, Ewald Kooiman and our Patron, Dame Gillian Weir. Playing French classical music on "the real thing" has nurtured his love of this repertoire and has resulted in recitals at St. Antoine and on a well-known classical organ built in 1746 in Normandy, not far from where he and Madeline have a holiday home. Now retired from British Airways, he looks back on nearly 16,000 flying hours which equate to almost two years continuously in the air! He has flown many well-known personalities including film stars, high-ranking politicians and members of the Royal Family. He and Madeline await the imminent arrival of their first grand-child, and Jonathan finds there is more time for gardening, beekeeping and trying to learn French(!) not to mention the Berkshire Organists' Association which he joined in 1966!

## **OUR OUTGOING PRESIDENT**

Jim Wooldridge

After handing over the Presidency to Jonathan, Philip asked me to put together a few words about my background, though there is nothing much exciting about my earlier years!

As far as my musical education was concerned, this was rather sparse, though in my childhood, I studied with the unforgettable Archie Lusty, who lived exactly opposite our house, and who kindly agreed to teach me, my twin brother, and my younger sister for an all-in reduced fee, provided we could fit in with vacant slots, often at the most inconvenient times. Many times we have



been called across to his studio at five minutes notice when a full-paying pupil hadn't turned up. He taught me the rudiments of music, and I sat for the piano examinations of the Trinity College of Music (of which he was the local secretary), though my knowledge of theory was – and still is – far short of what it should be. I never reached the dizzy heights of a diploma, and after I returned from a short spell in the RAF (not my choice but His Majesty's) I had a couple of terms at the Music School at Reading University with Belinda Heather who tried desperately to teach me to play a Schubert impromptu, the Shadow Dance by Macdowell, and a Beethoven bagatelle.

As far as the organ was concerned, Archie got me through some examinations of the Guildhall School of Music, chosen by him because the organ they used was the same one I practiced on – the magnificent Binns at Trinity Congregational Church in Reading, but again I never reached diploma level. At that time I was a member of that church, and, as I have mentioned before, it was because of this organ and the wonderful playing of Albert Barkus that I came to love the instrument. However, a growing family, together with the need to qualify as an accountant, (the costs of which in those days came entirely out of one's own pocket – even the examinations had to be taken in my meagre holiday allowance of two weeks) put paid to lessons, and I have never had another one since – and it shows!

My professional qualification did enable me to spend twenty years as an Accountant in the retail trade – a lot of it in the John Lewis Partnership, and the final twenty in the theatre industry, where for a time I was Chief Accountant for the London Palladium, the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and about twelve other theatres.

In 1956 I was asked if I could help out at St Andrews for a few weeks, and although I had to give this up temporarily when my work took me all over the country during my spell as an Internal Auditor for John Lewis, I'm still there!

I've enjoyed my two years as President and am very grateful for all the help I received during this time. My best wishes go to Jonathan Holl who I know will make an excellent President.

## THE 84TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND RECITAL

St. Giles-in-Reading  
8 May 2004  
Graham Ireland

Having always driven to St. Giles when I worshipped there a number of years ago, and experienced the traffic problems around the church, I decided to park my car close to the retiring president's house and make my way to the church on foot for the AGM. To paraphrase a line from *Rock of Ages*, I certainly "strode along tracks unknown", and emerged into Southampton Street to face a three lane queue of cars descending on the Oracle. Once over the road I entered St. Giles and was greeted by Joan Beer the courteous programme seller.

Shortly after four Ian May delivered some verbal programme notes on his pieces. Ian's choice of pieces gave us an 'overview' of the organ repertoire, and an opportunity to hear the varied tone colour combinations from this versatile organ. We were treated to some full organ sounds supported by the fine pedal reed, some exquisitely voiced flutes in the Mozart, and the foundation and mutation stops in the Bach Chorale Prelude. After the fifth piece Ian came down to ground level to give some information on the last three pieces one of which was a first performance. Robin Eaglen a local composer from Wokingham. had written *Pactum Fidelis* for his daughter's forthcoming wedding. It was a captivating piece with its unrelenting dissonances all carefully resolved in an undulating progression, admirably suited for the interlude when the wedding registers would be signed.

An appreciative audience applauded Ian's recital, and we adjourned to the north aisle for afternoon tea prepared by Eric and Jean Chapman. Home made scones and cake, what a treat, served with a smile and a hot cup of tea! It was then time for the AGM. We moved into the north transept where the organ originally stood, and the meeting got under way. Thanks were expressed to members of St Giles for their hospitality, and the meeting finished about six thirty.

### PROGRAMME

UInno Pontificio	Gounod
Prelude and Fugue in G Minor	Buxtehude
Chorale Prelude <i>Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier</i> BWV 731	LS.Bach
Andante in F KV. 616	Mozart
Choral Song and Fugue in C	S.S.Wesley
Introduction and Allegro from Sonata No 1	Guilmant
<i>Pacturn Fidelis</i>	Robin Eaglen
Final [ Triptyque Symphonique sur deux thèmes]	Cochereau

## **The Annual General Meeting**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

If one word stands out in my mind during the last year it is kindness. Everybody whom we have met during our various visits has made these doubly enjoyable because of their willing and cheerful help. And I am especially grateful for the help and advice that I received from my fellow officers. I mentioned this in my report last year and it has, fortunately, continued unabated, and I wish to thank them for their unstinting support. The diverse roles that they all play, quietly and efficiently, oil the wheels and enable the Association to function smoothly. Our Committee is indeed committed to serving the Association and our meetings have been well attended. Even the one in February which started in a blizzard kept only one member away, and that was because of impassable roads.

During the last year both Margaret and I have suffered various injuries and illnesses, and though none of these were serious or long-lasting my colleagues came to the rescue. When I had the misfortune to fall and dislocate my shoulder just a few yards away from St Mary's west door shortly before I was due to give one of Gordon Hands' lunchtime recitals there, it was Graham Ireland who kindly offered to play for me. However, on the due day, the Willis was playing up, and it wasn't until June that I managed to fulfill my promise to play! We must all be grateful to Gordon who arranges these recitals, for I know it involves a lot of planning, which isn't helped by the fact that the organ is more than a little temperamental and is sometimes unplayable.

One of the highlights of the year was the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Gordon Spriggs, when several of us were privileged to join with the good people at St Mary's, Castle Street to pay tribute to him.

Although all the hard work is really done by our Secretary, Alan Kent, especially when it comes to welcoming new members, I have made it my business to write to each one on joining, and it is gratifying to report that I have been able to do this on several occasions during the past year.

Our outings, organised by Christine Wells, have once again been most enjoyable, and have given some of us the opportunity to add several organs to the list of those we have played and, in listening to our fellow members trying the various instruments, has encouraged us to add yet more pieces to our repertoire.

In addition to the St Mary's Friday recitals, we have had the pleasure of hearing some of our own members giving concerts, and for me a highlight was David Pether's recital at the Town Hall, which included a fine rendering of Bach's Fantasia and Fugue in G minor.

The one thing that worries me more than a little is the fact that most of the congregations in our traditional churches are ageing, and that many of the younger churchgoers are turning towards the “happy clappy” type of services where the organ plays no part. While such services are anathema to me I don’t think that it will be too long before we will have to consider how we are to promote the classical organ repertoire. There is a huge amount of wonderful music for the “king of instruments” and I wonder whether or not our future lies more in concert venues than in churches. It is worth thinking about.

Jim Wooldridge

#### HON. TREASURER’S REPORT

2003 ended with a Current Account balance of £1224.08 and a Deposit account balance of £3076.39. Gift Aid by members produced £355.52.

Only eleven Town Hall organ books were sold which reflects the facts that most members now have at least one copy and there were fewer major organ concerts at the Town Hall.

Members contributed a total of £199.57 to the IAO Benevolent Fund, which is administered for the Association by Ann Bolam.

*The Berkshire Organist* costs £298.40. Apart from our own members, there are copies at the British Library, the OHS archive in the USA, New Zealand, Tasmania and Australia as well as across this country.

We usually give a donation to each location when members on an organised visit play organs. Some locations charge for this (e.g. Bridgewater Hall, Manchester). However, this can only be done if sufficient members take part in such visits, and membership levels are maintained.

I would like to conclude with my thanks to the rest of the Committee for their support, guidance and input over the last year.

Mark Jameson

#### ELECTIONS

The following were elected :

SECRETARY Alan Kent                      TREASURER Mark Jameson

COMMITTEE Peter Chester, Julian Greaves, Jill York

(Continuing members of the committee are Derek Guy and Graham Ireland (two years) and Philip Bowcock, Christopher Cipkin, Michael Thomas and Jim Wooldridge (one year).

PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE: Christine Wells (Secretary), Julian Greaves, Derek Guy. Ian May and Michael Thomas

PUBLICITY OFFICER : Don Hickson

BENEVOLENT FUND STEWARD : Anne Bolam

## DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER

Peter Marr

I first attended a meeting of the Berkshire Organists' Association just over fifty years ago. It was a talk by Dr Henry W. Richards, who then lived at Mortimer, and who had written a book published in 1911 entitled *Organ Accompaniment of the Church Services*. It must have helped many organists in their Sunday-by-Sunday duties nearly a century ago. Coming across my copy as we moved house last year I wondered "Where are we in 2004?" In what ways are problems today different from those in the heady days of generally large congregations and church choirs?

### Observed Standards

Musical standards at a minority of churches are very high but in spite of opportunities available today, those at many, if not most, are low.

Perhaps the following are some of the reasons for this:

We have all come across fear of excellence in church life, as if to do anything really well implies a lack of sincerity. I suggest that in many places people, singers as well as organists, who are doing a job "for the sake of what they have always done", feel what is termed "assumed usefulness" rather than producing a standard acceptable to most people today.

- Many church attendees are either unable or unwilling to commit themselves to Sunday-by-Sunday attendance.
- Often the repertoire is not suited to ability of organists and singers, for it has been based on an establishment (e.g. choirs) that cannot do justice to the composers' intentions.
- The musical content of many worship songs and song-collections does not marry up with the solemnity of what the worship of God is all about.
- The problem is exacerbated because capable organists (and singers) are not willing to put up with poor choirs (these sometimes the result of what has been indicated in the first point above) and/or destructive musical and liturgical initiatives.

The resulting poor standards dissuade people from attending places of worship. Good musical standards tend to encourage them. But does that identify the real cause of the problem?

### An underlying cause?

If we are considering Christian worship then our aesthetic relationship one with each other as typified by secular music is of a different kind than that set in the context of our relationship with God. The shorthand for this is, in part, contained in the word "worship". Whatever our denominational affiliation, the

importance of music is a means to lift the mind and soul to God. So is the underlying cause of low standards to do with the sense of the sacred being lost in worship?

Cardinal Ratzinger makes a pertinent comment, taking us a step further.

*“Glorification” is the central reason why Christian liturgy must be cosmic liturgy, why it must as it were orchestrate the mystery of Christ with all the voices of creation*<sup>1</sup>.

He speaks elsewhere<sup>2</sup> of the spiritual and liturgical disadvantages of the arrangement of people, and priests and people, facing each other, a common situation in both the Anglican and Roman Churches since Vatican II. Destroying a cosmic dimension to worship, this inevitably produces an “ego-centred” spirituality.

Such spirituality is no new thing. I well remember collaborating locally in the early 1960s with Bishop Eric Knell in promoting the work of the Church Light Music Group, whose hymn tunes incidentally, with perhaps a couple of exceptions, are rarely used today. It seemed the right thing to do at the time!

So it is a matter, as Monsignor Klaus Gamber has made very clear<sup>3</sup>, of a sense of “reclaiming the sense of mystery”, or what could be called the numinous. But James Hitchcock<sup>4</sup> makes the following interesting observation:

The decline of the sense of the sacred in worship was not...the inevitable effect of a secular age. If anything, advanced secular culture has shown itself more open to the sacred and the pseudo-sacred than at any time within memory.

I pointed out in *The Berkshire Organist* in a previous issue that the revival of plainsong after its post-Vatican II decline was in a secular context. The whole New Age Movement (hence Hitchcock’s wish to use the term “pseudo-sacred”) is a reaching out for something that cannot be experienced, encountered or even sought after within a purely secular context.

It was therefore of little use that the 1992 Archbishops’ Report,<sup>5</sup> although rightly commenting that music was an evangelistic tool, did not tackle the whole problem from its roots. Poor standards are not the result of low numbers, but a reluctance to see the reality of the situation that I have endeavoured to outline.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith* (1981/ET 1986).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. in *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (1999/ET 2000).

<sup>3</sup> *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy; Its Problems and Background* (Una Voce International, ET 1993)

<sup>4</sup> *Recovery of the Sacred* (1974/R 1995), p 167.

<sup>5</sup> *In Tune With Heaven* (1992), para 755, p 250.

## No neat solution, but...

We may relate an evaluation of religious music to that of architecture. In a recent book, *Ugly as Sin*<sup>6</sup>. Michael S Rose considers changes in church architecture since Vatican II and to an extent some dating from pre-war years. He identifies desirable principles in church architecture as verticality (leading us upwards, not horizontally), permanence (not ephemeral) and iconography (the sign of the whole building needs to be an icon).

All this is not unconnected with an appreciation of beauty, which as the present Bishop of Oxford has pointed out, has been often treated by theologians “at best as an optional extra to goodness and truth”. But he reminds us of the words of Hans Urs Von Balthazar in his great work, *The Glory of the Lord*, regarding beauty: “We can be sure that whoever sneers at her name as if she were the ornament of a bourgeoisie past – whether he admits it or not – can no longer pray and soon will no longer be able to love”. Strong words indeed.<sup>7</sup>

So for music, the now little-used term “Sacred Music” is a helpful one, encapsulating these principles. Here then is an incentive for musicians although not based on one solution or underlying aesthetic.

- The last generation has come to neglect that which David Torevell has termed “solemn repetitions”<sup>8</sup>. This not only must include liturgical action but also text and music, clearly having an impact upon repertoire. The Orthodox Churches generally grasp this principle firmly.
- The sense of the numinous must be a priority in both the aims and the methods within worship.
- It may be that recorded music can form part of the above in the absence of competent musicians and singers.
- Whilst the achievements of the past 150 years in terms of choral music in church must be acknowledged, it does not follow that trying weakly to emulate them is either appropriate or acceptable to the spiritual well-being of many in the twenty-first century.

Finally, few would doubt that many in our society have a sense of anxiety. That we should therefore be strengthened by our faith seems logical. It follows from what I have previously said that religious music should be different from that which is avowedly secular, however valuable the latter is. A recent article in a seemingly unrelated field makes the point:

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<sup>6</sup> Sophia Institute Press, New Hampshire 2001.

<sup>7</sup> See *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (1992), ed. Geoffrey Rowell, p 251.

<sup>8</sup> *Losing the Sacred: Ritual, Modernity and Liturgical Reform* (T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 2000), p 190.

*The usefulness of music has been measured by research on its commercial uses and its beneficial effects in the treatment of various medical problems, particularly those involving the alleviation of pain and anxiety..... Much of the research into music as a therapy has focussed upon the obvious emotional benefits and it is surely this aspect that will prove to be a unique part that music plays in our psychology.*<sup>9</sup>

We must not equate musical experience per se, whether as performer, participant or listener, with our own spirituality, but the strength of music should never be underestimated. Thus it is that standards and appropriate practical repertoire take precedence over what in many places is, sad-to-say all-to-often, an assumed usefulness on the part of the willing volunteer. No less than a radical re-appraisal of both the quantity and the quality of music in many of our churches and chapels is needed.

## **SOME THOUGHTS ON AUTHENTICITY**

Graham Ireland

When we buy a new piece of organ music or use one of our own cherished copies we always assume that the edition in question has been subjected to thorough scholarly scrutiny before its release to the general public.

Over the past few months I have been practising an organ concerto by an eighteenth century English composer, born in Newcastle. He published about fifty concertos amongst which was the one I have been working on. Having mastered the notes I began to look at the overall picture of the edition which I have owned for a number of years, as I was suspicious of several aspects of the edition. These concerned the texture of the tutti (ripieno) sections and the contrasting concertino ones, the suggested registration, and the distribution of the notes within the chords, none of which seemed to show any logical development from one beat to another. The texture of the tutti sections was thick and clumsy to play, the registration of the concertino sections suggested a futile attempt to imitate the woodwind instruments on the organ.

As if this were not enough, the editor had suggested that the Tuba be drawn at various places in the recapitulation! The particular edition was not published by an unknown publisher as one might have expected, but by one of our foremost music houses noted for its scholarly editions, and I was surprised that the edition had been let loose on us, the musical public.

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<sup>9</sup> Backhouse, G., Bishop-Liebler, P., Frith, U., and Stewart, L., "Music, Dyslexia and the Brain" in *Patoss Bulletin*, vol 16, no 2 (November 2003) [The Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties], pp 9-14. I am grateful to Jenny Pullig for drawing my attention to this article.

Another arrangement which intrigued me was the one of Bach's Sinfonia to Cantata No 29 *Wir Danken Dir, Gott*. One bar in the whole arrangement expertly crafted by an obvious scholar appeared to be totally out of context with the others. It was in fact the only unison bar in the whole work. I could not let the matter rest as it sounded so thin compared with the rest of the arrangement. With the helpful aid of the Music Departmental Librarian of The University of Reading, we tracked down the 'offending' bar, and found with a mixture of delight and wonder, in an Urtext edition, that the strings were indeed playing alone and in unison. What a successful outcome to my concern.

Have you noticed the profusion of volumes of organ pieces appearing on the shelves of music for special occasions? I have been reluctant to buy such volumes for two very valid reasons. The first is perhaps like you, that I already own many of the pieces contained in them, and do not wish to acquire duplicates of them just to be able to play one particular piece. The second and more important reason is that a number of the pieces have been doctored by the publishers perhaps to make them easier to play, or to take up less space in the volume. (I am not referring to simplified versions). Important instructions by the composer in his original edition have been omitted, and the proof reading of these new arrangements has been very casual. I am not suggesting for a moment that all of these new editions are suspect, but the bad arrangements do hit you in the eye, and offend the ear, that is unless you play what you hear rather than play what you see.

Do you remember any event connected with 1958? Well, in June, Watkins Shaw completed his newly edited version of Handel's *Messiah*. What an impact it had on future performances of the work. In barely ten years a reprint was undertaken, with several alterations to Shaw's original in the light of further scholarship. Out of the window went our well loved Prout and other editions, to be replaced by this new edition closest to the intentions of the composer. We have never looked back since that June and have experienced at first hand the delights of a new-look *Messiah*, seemingly as fresh as the day that the general public heard it for the first time. I have taken the liberty of copying the opening words of Watkins Shaw's 1958 preface, which states, '*For every movement included in this edition there exists Handel's autograph, and on that authoritative basis this edition rests*'. What do you think of Mozart's orchestration of the work? Why does it only see the light of day very infrequently? Perhaps the explanation lies in the fact that by orchestrating it Mozart lost touch with the Baroque idiom which so dominates the work. More importantly, why did Mozart go to such lengths to orchestrate it? The answer to this question is that he was asked to write a continuo part for the work and thought that he might as well go the whole hog, and orchestrate it.

A few years ago some of us ventured to Paris on a mini organ crawl. It was on this occasion that I heard for the first time French reeds in a César Franck

*Choral* and a *Sortie* by Lefébure-Wely played on a Cavaille-Coll organ. I was bowled over by this new exciting sound which gave these pieces a completely new character. How tame they sounded played on an English organ. One of our members was heard to say quite forcibly that he would not be playing any more French music at home because his reeds did not sound anything like the French ones. That would be a pity to deny our listeners an opportunity to hear these pieces just because we have no French reeds on our organs.

My last thoughts concern compositions written for a particular instrument. Frequently at the opening recital of a new organ we hear a piece commissioned especially for it. The composer might have been attracted to the mixtures or a particular combination unique to that organ and has given them prominence in the piece. To try to emulate these sonorities would be unnecessarily sycophantic, even if the church or concert hall had the same acoustic. If you refer to page thirteen of *A Little Organ Book*, published by Ascherberg, Hopwood and Crew, A Herbert Brewer has requested that an 8ft Quintaton be drawn on the pedal. You will recall that the sound of a Quintaton pipe emphasises the upper fifth in its makeup. I certainly would not reject the piece because of an absence of such a stop in my pedal department, but I might if there were no 8ft pedal stop available instead.

Drawing a conclusion from my random thoughts is not a difficult task, nor is it long. To sum up, just use your artistic sensibility in all matters mentioned in this article. Mistakes you can rectify yourself; concerning registrations you should use your common sense; and if you are suspicious of any part of an edition check it with another or visit the Music Library in the town or in the University. Happy playing!

## **TWO YEARS AS YOUR SECRETARY**

Alan Kent

Philip Bowcock suggested that after two years as your Hon Secretary perhaps I would provide a contribution to *The Berkshire Organist* on my experiences to date. Well, firstly I'm still alive and, secondly, neither have I suffered as yet physical injury from an infuriated Committee. Some of you, no doubt, may well wonder why you do not see me as often as you have my predecessors but before taking up the Secretaryship I explained that family circumstances would mean that apart from the committee meetings etc. I could not guarantee to attend all functions.

It would, however, probably be as well to commence by explaining how a new and unknown member became Secretary. Those who attended the AGM two years ago may recall that when Jim Wooldridge became President no-one came forward at the meeting to stand for Secretary that left Jim facing the prospect of combining the two roles, after having already completed a two year

stint anyway as Hon Sec. It was after the meeting that I felt that this was unfair and realising that many of the Committee themselves had completed their stint I volunteered, subject to the limitations on my time. Your Committee took a deep breath and accepted the offer. It was after the meeting that I came up against reality when I realised that I knew neither how the Association was organised nor how the Committee ran. And frankly, I wasn't too certain that I could name all of the Committee, somewhat of a handicap when having to record that Mr? said the following and Mr? then commented on it. It was at this point I began to breathe rather deeply! Fortunately Don Hickson had volunteered to take the committee meeting minutes for two meetings which gave me a run-in period.

Subsequently, I have offered to stand down both to the Committee and at AGM's but there seemed to be an uncanny silence at this point in proceedings. I think therefore that I am not considered a complete disaster, although I have certainly required advice and assistance on a number of occasions. After all I expect we have all known organisations that have come to the conclusion that no secretary is sometimes preferable to one well-meaning but. . . Mind you I think our Treasurer has had his doubts. Then there was the famous committee meeting at which I was asked if I was following procedures for new members by sending with the welcome letter a copy of the Constitution – I had to confess I did not have a copy. (Hence the reason for all members having a copy sent to them this year, at least it ensured that I had one.)

Once getting into the routine I suppose my main problems, shared no doubt with many of you, have been with my computer. Some of the problems are undoubtedly due to my typing style and hitting an unfortunate combination of keys that changes everything. Happens in milliseconds and seems to take hours to revert to what I want. Others are due, I am convinced, because the wretched programme decides 'it' knows what I want and it doesn't. I also probably share the same problems with many a secretary when minute taking. What seems obvious at the time appears much less so when producing the minutes in final form. I do try to cheat by asking anyone who is presenting factual information to give me a written note – writing down dates, locations etc at speed means on occasion that even if correct I can't read my writing. So various committee members have got used to panic calls requesting confirmation of what I think they said.

Following our recent AGM it appears that you are stuck with me for another year. This has meant another break with recent custom, whereby a two year stint as Hon. Sec. has been followed by becoming President. I made it clear that I felt I could not follow this custom. Your President, firstly, has to appear at a number of functions, which I cannot guarantee, secondly, I am a new Association/Committee member and finally I am not a player. I do think that a non-player is acceptable, just, as Secretary but that the President ought to be a

player. After all it would be very embarrassing in my view if your President when visiting somewhere officially was asked to play and had to call on the services of his/her official playing deputy. With Jonathan Holl at the helm this will certainly not happen! A secretary can be a non-playing administrator, one who hopefully ensures that the records are kept, provides an easy access point for communications and undertakes certain of the more mundane chores, thus not overloading the President who is the 'official' face of our Association.

So, ultimately, have I enjoyed or indeed am I enjoying my stint as your secretary? The answer has to be 'yes', organists are a very tolerant lot, at least as regards business affairs and, frankly, if I was not happy in the post, regardless of feelings of fairness or otherwise, your Association would now be seeking a replacement. The Association is of course very fortunate that it has those willing to organise the Diary, the News Letter, a Programme Secretary who not only has to think up ideas but make the arrangements, the Editor of this journal, a Benevolent Fund steward plus a Treasurer who is having to cope with an increasing number of legal requirements as well as ensuring our Association stays solvent. Come to think of it perhaps the secretary's position is straightforward by comparison.

### **“CAN YOU PLAY FOR A FUNERAL?”**

Philip Bowcock

It is Tuesday 31 July 2003 at 10.15 a.m. I am sitting at home in my study and, having a little difficulty with some thoughts I am trying to convey to my computer, am about to take a short break and make a cup of coffee – a little earlier than usual but not an uncommon event in our household at about this time of the day.

The telephone rings – again it does that fairly frequently, usually just at the moment when I am in the middle of a piece of work which requires a degree of concentration. “This is the Undertakers. Please can you play for a funeral?” (This of course was a little less usual as such requests usually come via clergy.) “Yes, let me look at my diary and see whether I will be available. Where will it be?” “The funeral is at Pishill” (an unfortunate name for a village if ever there was one). (Thinks – four miles the other side of Henley, not too far to go, so OK.) “Yes, and when?” “10.30 this morning!” (Thoughts of coffee and computers vanish.) Knowing that my 1972 tax-free Volkswagen camper can just about manage 70 downhill with the wind behind, “It's about eight miles and I'll have to come through Henley so I couldn't possibly get there in less than half an hour.” “Please can you come, because they've forgotten to arrange an organist, and you're our last hope.” (Was that a compliment?) “You

probably don't know where the church is, so I'll have one of my men out on the road to show you." "OK, I'm on my way".

I put on a jacket – the first one to hand – and pick up my music case. It feels reasonably heavy so there is something in it though I can't remember what. Shove in my shoes. Into the camper, wait to reverse out into the road until all those cars coming down St Anne's Road have gone, and I'm on the way. Through Church Street, Caversham, which has enough traffic lights, pedestrians and road junctions to keep the speedometer needle well below the point at which it indicates that I am moving at all. At last I am into Prospect Street and then Henley Road behind a white van which is sufficiently large to block out any view of the road ahead and at 25 mph sufficiently slow to show that the driver is intent upon avoiding a speeding fine at all costs.

On we go, along the section of the Henley road which used to have a speed limit of 40 but has just been reduced to 30, and the white van continues at the same gentle speed of 25 mph. Past the last traffic lights and at last the speed limit goes up to 50 – but not our driver in front. He still continues at 25 all the way to Henley, and those who know this road will know that it is practically impossible to overtake even with a souped-up Aston Martin when a queue of vehicles is coming the other way, and of course today there are lots.

As I go along at this leisurely pace I wonder what is in my case and what they will want me to play. *Crimond*, *Abide with me* and *The day Thou gavest* come to mind. I don't suppose there will be more than a couple of dozen in the congregation at such a little country church.

I arrive at Henley and, still behind the white van, join the queue. Traffic lights seem particularly slow and pedestrians, who cross wherever they feel inclined, at of course a pedestrian speed, are even slower. The white van disappears but whether it has gone to a destination, eternity or oblivion is of no great consequence at the moment. Finally I am clear, the time is 10.40, (has the congregation given up hope of having any music by now?) and I can put on a bit of speed for half a mile or so along the A4130 until I reach the turnoff for Pishill. Then along the country road at the maximum safe speed, i.e. not more than 40 (better to arrive than to have a discussion with a hedge) for another three miles, past Stonor Park which we visited a couple of years ago, a few cottages and farm buildings, sheep safely grazing, and not much else around.

At last, at 10.50, I see the Undertaker's "man" in the road. I pick him up and he directs me to the church which is about 100 yards up a narrow lane and not visible from the road. (Lucky he's there, otherwise I would soon be at Watlington.) On the way he informs me that the first hymn is *Jerusalem!* Surely he is winding me up, but then it isn't All Fools Day. (In the circumstances that name is likely to be added to my catalogue of expletives.)

Out of my van, pick up my case, have a few thoughts (there isn't time for many), and into the church where a congregation of over 100 are listening to the Vicar who is giving a detailed and very fitting account of the life of the deceased – one Ada Hunt – a lady of 78, who has obviously been very highly respected in the village. I take a look at the organ and find that it has a single manual, six drawstops, one of which is a pedal Bourdon and another is a stopped diapason bass octave which probably does duty for everything else, together with a very non-standard, two-octave (C–c') flat, straight, permanently coupled, pedal board. Pipes on the front of the case suggest that it is all unenclosed – a “Great Organ” – but further investigation reveals a swell pedal, so it is probably all enclosed (a “Swell Organ”?). “Small Organ” is probably a better description anyway.<sup>10</sup> There is no indication as to whether all of it / any of it works.

The first hymn is announced, and, as stated on the Order of Service, is definitely *Jerusalem*, so here goes. I press the appropriate keys, the chord of D major sounds, and we're off. Just to add to the problems there are three page turns in the A&M New Standard, but at least help is at hand here. One of the churchwardens sitting nearby appreciates the situation and turns the pages for me.

The next hymn is *Onward Christian soldiers* which by now is not much of a problem. And then the last hymn – *Great is Thy faithfulness*. Again not much of a problem at first sight, and there is a row of about a dozen hymnbooks on the nearby shelf. Surely one of those will have the tune. It turns out that none of them do, and since it must be nearly ten years since I last played it I opt out and decide that the best I can do is to give them the note which I think is G. (Checking later, at least I got that right.) The Vicar tells everyone that the deceased would have said “Let's just get on with it”, so they do.

Finally we come to the outgoing voluntary, and the best I can do here from the assortment in my case is the last variation on *Jesu Meine Freude* (Walther), which seems reasonably appropriate to the occasion. All is over, the congregation departs, and I have an opportunity to reflect on the occasion.

And the Encore? An invitation to join the congregation at the bun fight in the deceased's home. Actually a very good buffet lunch and an opportunity to chat to some of those who knew her. Sad that I never had the chance to meet her myself.

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<sup>10</sup> The instrument was described by Michael Humphries in *The Berkshire Organist* No 53 of 2000.

## **ONE EQUAL MUSIC: ON THE ROLE OF NOISE, SILENCE, AND THE ORGAN IN WORSHIP TODAY**

Christopher Cipkin

*Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate  
of heav'n to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there  
shall be ... no noise nor silence, but one equal music.*

*John Donne (1572-1631)*

These words, once so beautifully set to music by William Harris, encapsulate a metaphysical poet's vision of the sound of heaven and they also demonstrate that considerations of what constitutes noise, silence and music are not new. In more recent times, the composer John Cage famously played upon our preconceived notions of what they are and how they interact with his 4'33". The view that the organist could help to recreate something of Donne's heavenly vision for those entering church on Sundays has historically shaped the way our worship is conducted. Music, in the form of quiet meditative preludes, was seen as a fitting background to private prayer and meditation. There was no place for chatter and laughter.

In more recent times, the sounds that greet people entering church and the response to the music by those entering church, has radically altered. At Wesley Methodist Church, Reading, the issue of noise, silence and music before the service has been discussed recently as a matter of some concern. The church is a very welcoming place, with stewards greeting old and new faces alike as they enter the building and people moving about the building to exchange news. There is a buzz of life and activity, especially at the morning Sunday service when many children are present. The effect of this, however is that organ music in such a pre-service context is, in reality, organ musak, with as much meaning and importance as the aural-wallpaper experienced in many shops and supermarkets. Rather than creating a meditative atmosphere, organ music competes with the conversation, causing the noise level to rise even further. Wesley is not a quiet church, but, from conversations I have had with many other organists, it is not unique in this respect.

As a paid servant of the church, I feel it is my obligation to provide what the church requests, which has traditionally been about ten to fifteen minutes of music before the service, following a custom, which is widespread across most European churches. As a musician, however, I feel that music is a profoundly emotional act of communication – indeed, one might even say communion. One cannot, for example, play one of Bach's organ chorales without seeking to express the Lutheran devotion, which inspired it, the seasonal significance of the melody and the genius of Bach's compositional process. If the 'listener' ignores the performer's musical act of communication, one is left wondering what organ music is for and what function it serves?

Peter Williams comments that music had a very clear function in the early church, a function partly determined by the silence that followed: ‘What needs to be envisaged here is not today’s quiet organ-prelude before a service begins ... but a noisy, continuous, sustained sound rather like a siren’s ... . Sudden silence would be very striking’ (Williams, p. 73). I can sympathise, therefore, with the commentator Peter Slater who recently criticised the BBC for not allowing enough silence on the air waves after the closing bars of organ music featured on the late-night 21st Century Bach series (Slater, p. 28). The deeply spiritual composer John Tavener believes, however, that there should be an implicit silence in music, even when the notes are sounding, in order for it to speak most effectively of God’s eternity (Tavener, p. 157). Thus, the silent rests dictated by the composer and the gaps created by articulation all come to have extra significance. There has been and always will be an important interplay between music and silence in religious music.

It is also worth considering that the ‘function’ of music in society constantly changes. Until about two hundred years ago, music served a largely practical rather than aesthetic function within society – whether it was in church, royal court, workplace or political meeting. Some societies still have no word for music because it is so embedded in other aspects of their culture. In recent times, and in the Western classical tradition in particular, the ornamental (and, therefore, functionless) role of music has come to predominate. Musak is its worst manifestation. Clearly, if noise and chatter is now commonplace in churches before and after worship, the function of organ music is neither practical (as it was in the early church) nor truly aesthetic. It is my view that our congregations are sometimes best served by silence rather than by musak. At Wesley, I have found that it is only when I stop playing and people feel their conversation is exposed that silence eventually falls on those assembled. In a world where noise is ubiquitous it is silence rather than music that becomes the aid to prayer.

One argument in favour of musical silence before a service is that it is not part of the public act of worship, but of private devotion. As performers in the pay of the church, we need to appreciate modern attitudes of congregations to organ music and to consider the ways it can best serve both private and public acts of worship. We need to rethink what we are trying to communicate, how we communicate it, and how we encourage people to listen. The role quiet preludes once played in aiding devotion is now largely lost as many churches place more emphasis on a friendly welcome, developing a sense of community and appearing vibrant to newcomers. Even our louder postludes cannot always compete against the chatter and laughter of coffee time. I should stress that there is nothing morally wrong with this apparent public indifference to our music – the need to make newcomers feel welcome through warm greeting is essential if the church is to grow and for many people, especially those who live

alone, their visit to church is an essential and sometimes rare opportunity for conversation and socialising. We also need to recognise that many people who enter our churches (often in wedding and baptism parties) have no understanding of the traditional functions of organ music. They sit awaiting the ‘action’ in the same way as they would at the cinema or football ground.

There are local signs that rethinking is already happening. At a recent Berkshire Organists’ Association meeting, I learnt of one local church where the Sermon is occasionally replaced by a short programme of reflective organ music. At Wesley we are also investigating the use of organ music within public worship, such as reflective interludes after readings and whole services based around a musical theme (such as a Communion Service with extracts from a French organ Mass or a Service based around different settings of particular chorales). I am also considering writing ‘programme’ notes on my organ voluntaries to explain the religious motivation behind the music and how it reflects the church’s liturgy. Such innovations can only increase the meaning organ music has for our congregations.

In this postmodern, secular and, above all, noisy world we need to rediscover the value of silence both within the context of worship and within music itself. This will mean new ways of thinking and performing, but with some attempt at reconciling noise and silence, there might eventually be a place for heavenly ‘equal music’ of immense value to all who enter our churches. It might even be the organist who provides it.

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## **RETIREMENT.....WHAT RETIREMENT?**

Sybil Stephenson

“Write something about your retirement” they said – so here goes.

In November 2000 I retired from 68 years as organist of St.Mary’s, Twyford and Ruscombe, St.James – a very few Sundays were missed in all those years. There are still some members left who remember me – indeed, “retired” like me! Since that day in November 2000 I have actually had two Sundays off when I didn’t play the organ anywhere.

What a joy and privilege to be of “ancient vintage” and yet still be able and be wanted to play. Churches I had never heard of, away in the wilds somewhere – all denominations: high church, low church, free church, RCs – all seemed to know the welcoming phrase “Sybil, will you come and play for us?” etc. So it went on, making me realise how many people have no one to play at all.

How I miss (and I guess you do too) that wonderful lady *Corno Dolce* who used to write so truly of life of the organist to whom odd things were always happening! If the truth were known I guess many readers always turned to her page first when *Organists Review* came through the door. My organ life had always been a mirror of hers to the n<sup>th</sup> degree and, since retirement, even more so!

One never knows what one will be confronted with! A new young Minister at the URC says “Please, Sybil, come and play for us – I promise it won’t be ‘Happy, Clappy’” – my reputation gone before me! Another church, desperately needing someone to play occasionally – “a proper organist” the congregation wanted – but the verdict went like this “It is lovely to hear the organ at the beginning of the service – but we can’t hear ourselves talking”. Alas, changing times. I can remember when voluntaries before and after the service were listened to – in fact sometimes more than to the sermon! After Evensong, nothing less than the whole of “Finlandia” or of similar length was contemplated!

A little Victorian tin church at **Warren Row** is a gem – so lovely – Second Sunday in the month sees me there playing the good old Matins – no choir to assist in the Te Deum or lengthy Benedicite – Psalms galore. I seem to have been full circle, because 60 years ago that was the main service – best hats and social occasions for the congregation. **Stubbings Church**, right in the middle of Maidenhead Thicket, - a joy to play there. Then there is another church – no names – where the pedal board is slightly out of alignment with the rest of the one manual organ – a frightening moment did I have when I first went there – but it seems that even after all these years of experience there is always something new to learn!

Women’s World Day of Prayer in the RC Church was mine to play – their organist was a man! A funeral there, where the deceased was a jazz collector and football fan – I was asked to play any jazz music and, indeed, we also “Never walk alone!”

Of course, wherever one goes, the spectre of “Common Worship” rears its head – but on the whole the clergy etc. are quite tolerant and endeavour to tell me what is happening before the service – otherwise chaos!

And so it goes on, Sunday by Sunday. Somewhere there is an organ to be played, be it 1-, 2-, or 3-manual, all different, but all the same in that there is no

one to play except this retired lady. I do thank God for giving me this privilege, because it is good to still keep playing; to repay those who have given me a helping hand through my church life, and to do something for others who are not so fortunate.

I know some of my colleagues in the Association have retired and, like me, continue to play. I say “thank you” to them all for their help and encouragement.

To the younger members I say: “Keep playing the organ because one day you might retire, and get the call - ‘Can you come and play!’”

Kind Regards to you all.

Sybil

### **...AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!**

Sybil Stephenson

Some time ago I read in a magazine that someone was asked “If you were on a desert island with your Bible for company, what passages or texts would mean most to you and that you would keep re-reading?” I thought about this and no doubt, as organists, we have heard the Bible read many times over the years, so I know what my choices would be, and I share them with you here. Naturally, all must come from the King James Bible because there is music in that language.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> CHOICE

##### **ISAIAH 6, Isaiah’s Vision:**

I learnt this by heart at school, and his final words “Here am I, Lord, send me” have been my guiding text through life

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> CHOICE

##### **LUKE 2 verses 8 – 14:**

“And there were shepherds abiding in the fields...” Just ordinary men but, looking up, they saw the angels and heard that heavenly music It would remind me also of the wonderful music which has played so large a part in my life, and I, too, would look up and listen.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> CHOICE

##### **ECCLESIASTES 3 verses 1 – 15:**

A time for everything. I have always had a high regard for the Old Testament prophets – they were so wise, and this particular passage reminds me of many phases of my life.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> CHOICE

##### **RUTH, the entire book of four chapters:**

Love, in so many different forms, can be found in these chapters - all part of life, culminating in the beautiful romance which Boaz had for Ruth. No need for *Mills and Boon*, with such words as can be found in this choice.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> CHOICE

##### **JOHN 20 verses 1 – 16:**

The story of the Resurrection, but particularly verse 16 is always with me. In the garden, Mary was sad until suddenly the word “Mary” fell on her ears. What a wonderful moment to cherish, my name is Mary, too.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> CHOICE

##### **JOHN 1 verses 1 – 14:**

“In the beginning was the Word...” I must have heard those words thousands of times, so I would hear them again on my desert island, but I would still wait, almost with bated breath, for the last line “And we beheld His glory, full of grace and truth”. What a vision!

These are my first choices, but there are many more such treasures in the Bible. Maybe in the odd moment of time you can think of your choices, and recall again the times when they were read.

## **A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE PARENTS OF A CATHEDRAL CHORISTER**

Rachel & Christopher Walker

Becoming a cathedral chorister is a big step in the life of the boy (or girl) concerned, but it is also a big step for his parents! We decided to let Nicolas take part in the voice trials for a number of choirs about eighteen months ago. Narrowing down the list to Christ Church, New College and Madgalen College, all in Oxford, and Chichester Cathedral, the first shock was to find that, at eight, he was ‘too old’ for New College! However, the other choices were more accommodating, and Chichester’s voice trial and academic assessment were the first to take place, on a Saturday in January.

The first difficult decision was what piece to sing for the voice trial. Nicolas did not go for the conventional choice of 'Once in royal David's city' or even 'O for the wings of a dove', but having enjoyed being in 'Oliver' the previous year with the Wallingford Children's Choir chose Nancy's song 'Where is love' from that musical.

So, armed with the score of 'Oliver', we set off on a wet and cold Saturday morning to Chichester. The first stop was the Prebendal School where the choristers of Chichester cathedral have been educated for over five hundred years, and which has Horatio Nelson among its alumni. Nicolas undertook the academic assessments in the morning, while we were shown round the school by the Headmaster, and in the afternoon round the corner to the house of Alan Thurlow,



Nicolas Walker at Chichester  
(Photo Hugh Curtis)

Organist and Master of the Choristers for the voice trial, where we were greeted very courteously by two senior choristers, and who chatted enthusiastically about boarding school life and singing in the cathedral. The voice trial, consisting of various aural tests as well as the set piece, and an interview with the Organist, the Headmaster and the Priest Vicar, were soon over, and we returned home hopeful but pragmatic about the experience.

We were all delighted on the following Monday to receive a telephone call from the Headmaster offering Nicolas a place in the school and the choir, and even more delighted when the confirmatory letter came with news that he had been awarded a full scholarship (rather than just the 50% of fees that all choristers at Chichester receive). The next few months were spent planning and shopping for uniform and all the other essentials that life at a new school brings.

Nicolas was excited at beginning at a new school, although sad to be leaving the village school where he had spent four very happy years, and soon settled down into the new routine, the highlights of which seem to be cooked breakfast every morning, games every afternoon, and a film for the boarders on Friday evenings! Exeats come round with alarming regularity, and being a probationer at the moment means that Nicolas has been able to come home for Christmas and Easter this year.

Although living further away from Chichester than most of the other chorister parents, and Christopher's weekend duties meaning that we are not able to attend services and concerts as frequently as one would like, we are able to keep in touch with the choir and Nicolas's cathedral life – the music list for Evensong and other services is posted on the Cathedral website, and choral Evensong was broadcast from Chichester in October. Being a chorister parent gives one priority for tickets for very popular services such as the Advent Procession and the Christmas carol services, and good seats at other times! We are on a not-so-steep learning curve!

### **'IF YOU WANT ANY MORE'**

Jennifer Woodhams

On Friday October 10th 2003, Don Hickson gave a concert in Waltham St Lawrence Parish Church to mark the end of his tenure of the post of Organist and Choirmaster there. After twenty seven years training the choir and accompanying the weekly round of services, Don decided to step down in order to spend more time with his wife Sylvia, also a member of the choir, their family and friends at weekends, which have now become so precious to us all.

Precisely on the dot of eight Don introduced his programme to a large audience gathered in this beautifully decorated and sensitively lit church. As expected from Don, it was a well thought-out programme, for it not only gave us an opportunity to hear the choir, voice and instrumentalists, but also to realize the significant part some of the chosen items had played during Don's long tenure of this post. From the programme below, variety and unity are the hall marks of this concert which finished at nine pm. Choral items both accompanied and *a cappella* represented the church's liturgy in the anthems and the setting of *Magnificat* to music by C V Stanford. In contrast we heard some fine performances of more secular pieces, which were very effectively sung, in particular, *To stuff a turkey* and *Swing low sweet chariot*. Between the choral items Don Hickson and Robert Ingram played items on the Willis organ. What a delight it was to hear the variety of stops ringing out around the church from this organ – its tonal quality is quite superb. Fran Oates's sensitive performance of *Pie Jesu* from Fauré's *Requiem*, and Simon Shaw's long curving melodies in *Sicilienne* by Fauré made a lovely contrast to Jennifer Woodhams's interpretation of Betjeman's poem *Diary of a Church Mouse*.

As expected the choir had the last say (sing), breaking off with *If you want any more*. I write "as expected", for Don is a skilful choir trainer and his expertise was very evident in the way which the choir responded to his gestures and interpretations of the various styles. Immediately following the concert a reception was held in the small chapel giving the audience an opportunity to talk to Don, Sylvia and the performers, whilst drinking a glass of wine and

eating the delicious nibbles so attractively set out on the tables in the south transept. The choir presented Don and Sylvia with four beautiful cut glass wine goblets and the necessary wine to go in them.

Don's last service took place two days later. His unstinting devotion to his church and its music was marked by the grateful church and congregation with the gift of a one-off plate, locally designed and executed, covered with musical motifs, and two tickets on the Orient Express to complement Don and Sylvia's love of travel.

We wish Don and Sylvia much happiness in their new-found retirement, and are pleased to learn that they both will continue to worship at St Lawrence's which they have come to regard as their parish church.

Below is the full list of the items we heard in this Farewell Concert.

Choir	<i>O Come ye servants of the Lord</i>	Tye
	<i>Locus Iste</i>	Bruckner
	N6tre Pae	Duruflé
Organ (Don Hickson)	Priere [Suite for Organ]	Archer
	Folk Song	Whitlock
Solo (Fran Oates)	Pie Jesu [Requiem]	Fauré
Organ (Robert Ingram)	Chorale Prelude <i>Es ist das Heil uns kommen her</i>	Bach
Choir	<i>Magnificat</i>	Stanford
Organ (Don Hickson)	Chorale Prelude <i>Nun danket alle Gott</i>	Karg-Elert
Choir	To stuff a turkey	arr.
	Swing low sweet chariot	Wilkinson
Reading	Diary of a church mouse	Betjeman
Choir	Now is the month of Maying	Morley
Duet (Simon Shaw [Cello] and Don Hickson)	Sicilienne	Fauré
Choir	Early one morning	arr. Dunhill
	Little Jack Horner	Diack
	The Lonely Duck	

### THE ANNUAL DINNER – 8 NOVEMBER 2003

It now seems to be customary to arrive for the Berkshire Organists' Association to the accompaniment of fireworks. The sky around Pangbourne was lit up with a myriad of colours and spectacular lights as 22 members and guests arrived at the extremely convivial setting of the Copper Inn for the annual dinner, which this year was to be addressed by renowned organist, composer and improviser, Nigel Allcoat.

After a time of socialising in the bar, we went through to the Chiltern Suite, where a delicious three-course meal awaited us. The food was splendidly presented and most enjoyable, served by a team of attentive waiting staff. The buzz of conversation during the meal, tempered only by the appreciative sounds of eating, demonstrated the level of enjoyment by members and friends.

After the meal, we were entertained and stimulated in a thoughtful and thought-provoking address by our guest speaker, Nigel Allcoat. He began by saying how pleased and privileged he was to be addressing an association with such an illustrious Patron, Dame Gillian Weir. He recalled his first memory of seeing and hearing Dame Gillian play at the Royal Albert Hall, when, as a young boy, he attended the 'Organ In Sanity and Madness' event, where she was dressed as the Queen of Sheba, and made her entrance being carried aloft into the hall before playing with her customary skill and precision. He used this as the first of a number of examples of the many 'co-incidences' in his professional career, where seemingly insignificant events many years later, often lead to important or momentous connections.

Nigel Allcoat spoke about the importance of sound in playing, and that listening to a musician playing gave a window into their innermost thoughts and feelings. Thus it was important not to be overly constrained by technique and by the notes on the paper, but to concentrate on the sound that was being made. He also spoke briefly about his sadness at the lack of charity which is often seen between clergy and musicians, and how this had and could hinder appropriate music being written and played for new liturgical rites.

The whole occasion was most convivial, and thanks must go to Christine Wells who organised the event with her usual efficiency, leaving the rest of us to enjoy a very pleasant evening.

## **MEMOIRS OF A VILLAGE ORGANIST**

Don Hickson

(Some recollections of 27 years as Organist at Waltham St Lawrence)

It all began at 7.00 on an Autumn morning when the phone rang. "My name is Peter Radley, I am the Vicar of Waltham St Lawrence and I am looking for an organist and have been given your name by a mutual friend." Since moving to Berkshire from Lancashire some five years earlier I had been Deputy at Wargrave and filled in during two organist vacancies but was looking for a post of my own and was in fact on the short list for Hurley, but had some reservations. Anyway, I made an appointment to see the Vicar later in the week. I did not know anything about him then, but might have got a clue about his little eccentricities when he phoned again at midnight on the same day

saying that I was not to make a decision about the Hurley post until I had seen him.

So it was that, after an interview, a run over the handsome Father Willis, and a demonstration choir practice, a month later I found myself in post with the responsibility for three Matins and one BCP Communion a month, a monthly Choral Evensong and the requirement on the nearest Sunday to All Saints Day to take the choir to the Chapel-of-ease at All Saints, Shurlock Row for a Festive Evensong on a rather ghastly Lee organ of two manuals (choir and swell) and pedals which was, to say the least, temperamental. (They had someone else who could play for their ordinary services, but more of that anon.)

As most of my readers will know I have become responsible for a very fine, almost unaltered, two manual Father Willis dating from about 1860, which was a joy to play, and even after 27 years was still revealing new possibilities to me. I was also lucky to have *in situ* a reasonably sized four part choir who gave me a warm welcome (as did the rest of the congregation as they got to know me) and were very enthusiastic but had only been allowed to sing anthems occasionally by my predecessor. Once I had settled in and got the choir singing the way I wanted them to, (changing the way they chanted the psalm was quite a challenge) I set about extending the repertoire and in about six months we were singing an anthem at every service. As experience grew and we got more confident I was able to expand the repertoire from mainly late 19th/early 20th Century English to include anything from Tye and Tallis to Gordon Jacob, and include examples from German and Italian composers, sometimes in Latin (or as one of my choirmen insisted – “foreign muck”!).

At some stage during this early period the man who was holding the fort at All Saints left the village and was replaced by a young lady from Shurlock Row who also joined the Parish Church choir as an alto. It was a joy when she got married to be invited to take the choir and play for her wedding at Cookham Dean, the first of a few “away matches” that we had over the years. Like many new brides, after a decent interval she duly became with child and asked if I would mind covering for her at All Saints until after the baby was born. Although she continued in the choir until she moved to Wiltshire, she never came back to the organ! So there I was with the additional task of playing there (naturally with no increase in honorarium!) with a gradually reducing congregation – never more than eight, sometimes down to just the Vicar and me and occasionally just me! This continued for several years until the sensible decision was made to close the church, but before that I had declared the organ unfit for use.

Meanwhile, back at the Parish Church things kept going along smoothly and the adult numbers in the choir remained constant although the number of juniors fell, thanks in some respects to the formation of an independent Junior

Choir not under my control which was supposed to feed into the main choir but didn't seem to do so. During the first ten years of my time at Waltham, professionally I was working at Heathrow and played for the occasional wedding at the beautiful Chapel of St George under the Control Tower so I was very pleased when the Anglican Chaplain there invited me to take the choir there and give them a Nine Lessons and Carols. The acoustic in this stone cave is absolutely marvellous and it is a wonderful haven of peace and quiet in the tumult of the Airport. Anyone travelling through Heathrow with ten minutes to spare should make a point of visiting it.

About ten years ago Peter Radley suddenly announced his resignation and during a lengthy inter-regnum I had the challenging task of looking after, and coping with the varying styles of many visiting priests, most of whom were very complimentary about the standard of our music. It was during this period that I had the honour of being the Association's President and the two Presidential Services that I held there were, I venture to suggest, fine examples of how well a full Choral Evensong can be sung by a small village parish church. When David Cherry arrived as our Priest in Charge I soon discovered what a boon it was to have the complete support of one's Parish Priest. When he departed at the end of his contract, and after another (shorter) inter-regnum, Richard Nunn arrived and not only did the co-operation continue but I acquired in him another tenor who actually came to choir practice and sang.

Of course, any period in a post is bound to have its lighter moments. For some time one of the most regular attenders in the Parish Church was Hamble, the village cat, who regularly came to choir practice and was often in church during services including some weddings. One evening whilst sitting listening to the Vicar's sermon I saw the keys on the manual moving. Not believing in some form of Divine message about my need to practice more, I lifted the lid to find the cat walking along the tracker rods; kitten on the keys! Fortunately, I always switch the power off during the sermon. On another occasion I received a phone call on a Saturday evening saying that the cat was stuck in the organ. Going over to see what I could do we confirmed that she was stuck somewhere in the organ, but it was only by process of switching the wind on, then off again we managed to trace her INSIDE the bellows chamber. We think she had been there for at least two days and it was a very bedraggled beast that we finally managed to extricate.

On another occasion while playing over before a service at Shurlock Row I found that one of the notes on the diapason was not speaking. Having located the silent pipe and taking it out, found the remains of a starling stuck there. Carefully carrying the pipe down the aisle to empty the defunct starling in the churchyard, I was asked quite seriously if we were going to have a procession. Quite what sort of procession we would have had with the organist leading

carrying a far from cruciform organ pipe, followed by the Vicar, no choir, and presumably all of the six parishioners present I never did find out!

After 27 years of duty at Waltham I decided that time had come to retire and have the opportunity to have some Sundays off without having to think about deputies etc. I still help out on occasions and, as we have not yet found a replacement am covering most of the Weddings and Funerals this year. I gave a final concert in the church (a report of which appears elsewhere in this magazine) and in appreciation of my work at the church, the Parish gave me a very good send off and have bestowed on me the Honorary title of “Organist Emeritus”, which I think gives me the right to come into church with sword bared and drums beating, and to graze my sheep in the organ chamber! Joking aside, it is a title of which I feel very proud.

While I have been writing this article I have been very aware that all that I have done over the years is what I have been contracted to do, but would like to think that I have done it with dedication and a certain amount of success. I have certainly found it very rewarding and for the most part extremely enjoyable. I am also aware that most of my readers will be organists who have also been dedicating themselves to this service for many years. There are probably those among you who are saying “Yes, we all do that” or some who will say “I wish I could have done that”. This is, therefore, merely the experiences of an ordinary jobbing organist; nothing special in that but it has given me the opportunity to put on record what many of us do as a matter of course.

## **JUDY MARTIN IN DUBLIN**

Gwen Martin

Judy Martin, member of Berkshire Organists’ Association, and formerly of Mortimer Berkshire

Judy Martin, who in the 1970s and 80s sang with her sister and her father in St John’s Church Choir Mortimer, Berks, where her mother Gwen was organist and choirmaster, has been appointed Director of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin from September 2003, - the first female in the British Isles to gain such a prestigious position in a major Anglican Cathedral. There are already some female Assistant Organists in Cathedrals but so far no Directors of Music. Judy was selected from over 30 candidates, then from a shortlist of five, four of whom are already Cathedral organists.

It was Judy’s ambition from a very early age to one day become a director of music in a Cathedral. Many people tried to talk her out of this idea reminding her that it was ‘a man’s world’, but Judy remained completely focused and single-minded. Childhood holidays were always with her sister at RSCM (Royal School of Church Music) courses.

After many years in the Mortimer choir, singing, encouraging the other children in the choir and gaining her St Cecilia Medal at an early age, Judy won an organ scholarship to Cambridge University. Here she met many friends who were choral scholars at Cambridge and who are now professional singers. Many of these still sing for her in her professional choir, *Voces Sacrae*. *Voces Sacrae* is one of the three professional choirs employed by St Paul's Cathedral to sing the Sunday services when the resident choir is on holiday. This will continue since these Sundays will be holidays at Dublin Cathedral also.

After Cambridge, Judy moved to Oxford where she trained as a teacher and was, for several years, Head of Music at The Abbey School, Reading where she inaugurated a very enthusiastic girls' choir and an auditioned orchestra. During this time she became Assistant Director of the RSCM Southern Cathedral Singers, running residential Cathedral courses and directing Cathedral services once a month with them. Since 1997, she has been the Director of the Choir at the Church of St Mary Magdalen in Oxford, a paid choir of eight singers which she co-founded. For the past two years, she has also been Director of Chapel Music at Worcester College Oxford, working with a choir of boys from Christ Church Cathedral School and male students, and forming a new mixed student choir. By coincidence, Tristan Russcher the Senior Organ Scholar from Worcester College, who has now completed his degree and also gained his ARCO, has been appointed Organ Scholar of both Christ Church Cathedral and St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, so they will continue to work together.

Church Times, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2003  
**MARTIN.** Judy Martin, Director of Chapel Music of Worcester College, Oxford, and Director of Music of St Mary Magdalen's, Oxford (Oxford), to be Director of Music of Christ Church Cathedral (Dublin).

Many people in the BOA sent good wishes to Judy last year when she had her big operation at Harefields. We were very pleased when Judy went back for her check-up and was told it was all healing very well and that the tumour had not been malignant. She was not supposed to go back to work before

March but she was in the thick of it all again at the beginning of January, only a month later, working at Worcester College and recording a CD of pieces in the new *Weddings for Choirs* OUP book which she had edited with Peter.

In May Judy and Peter put on a big Choir and Organ festival at Mary Magdalen Church in Oxford where they had directed the music for many years. It was to celebrate the completion of the new pipe organ built by Matthew Copley. There were organ recitals and choir items from the Mary Mag's Choir, the Worcester College Choir and the Royal School of Church Music Cathedral Singers all of whom were normally conducted by Judy. There were over 80 singers altogether.

She has now been working in Dublin for four months and has three fantastic choirs. There is a mixed choir, a consort and a girls' choir, and since her assistant is on Sabbatical this term she has been so happy to be working again with Tristan. Normally she will have an assistant, a secretary, a singing coach and a librarian. There is also a four-bedroom house provided by the Cathedral.

During the week before Judy and Peter moved to Dublin Judy was taking a Royal School of Church Music selected singers course at Canterbury Cathedral. Straight after the course, Judy and Peter drove from Canterbury to Holyhead to ship the cars and themselves over to Dublin to start the new job!

Soon after their arrival the Cathedral organ was removed for refurbishment and extension and a temporary instrument installed. Once work on the organ is completed Judy is looking forward to the BOA members' visit to Dublin which is planned for the Autumn of 2004.



#### Ch Church Cathedral Website

##### Diary:

23/05/2003 The cathedral is delighted to announce the [appointment of Judy Martin as organist and director of music from 1 September 2003](#). Judy is currently director of chapel music at Worcester College, Oxford and director of music at the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Oxford.  
[The Church of Ireland Gazette \(Friday 23 May 2003\) referring to Canon Ricky Bountree as the indefatigable](#)

## VISIT TO HIGH WYCOMBE

Saturday, 3 April 2004

Jim Wooldridge

The fine weather, which we had been enjoying earlier in the week, did not stretch as far as Saturday, and we arrived in High Wycombe during a heavy shower. Hurrying in to All Saints Parish Church on the stroke of noon, I met just a handful of our members clustered round the console, as sadly, two who had hoped to attend were unwell on the day. The detached console of the Henry Willis was opened for us, and although it was a three-manual, it was nearly as big as its stable-mate in St Mary's, Reading, having almost 50 speaking stops. One of these was an open 32' on the Pedal, and we mused as to whether the lowest octave really consisted of open pipes, as we could see none as tall as that in the building.

The instrument is maintained by Manders, and seemed to be in very good condition, and to protect it from possible leaks, the pipework was shrouded in heavy plastic, which fortunately didn't seem to affect the sound. It was very well equipped, and possessed a veritable array of adjustable pistons, coupler reversers, and a sequencer. As there were few of us, we all had the opportunity to play it, but the volume at the console was noticeably lower than that at the back of the church.

By the time we had to leave to visit our next church the rain had stopped. Our original intention was to go to a Baptist Church in Easton Street, but their organ was out of action, so we visited Wesley Methodist Church instead which was but a footstep away. Here we were warmly welcomed, and by this time a few more had joined us. Our time here was limited, as their choir had a rehearsal at 2.00 pm for their evening performance of Faure's Requiem which I would have loved to have stayed for! This Victorian building had been completely remodelled some years ago, having been sliced in half horizontally, with the top half, still with plenty of height, forming the worship area, leaving lots of space on the ground floor for other purposes. The building was equipped with toilets and even a lift which was able to take a coffin (still horizontal!) up to the church. The refurbishment was of a very high standard, and the good people of Wesley must be very pleased with the result.

The original organ would have been sliced in half along with the building had it been kept, so in 1991, Peter Collins installed a two-manual instrument (Swell 8, Great 8, Pedal 5) which still looks brand new. It is completely tracker, and unlike the parish church organ, it has no registration aids at all. The stops are black and square shaped with square section shanks, so, (unlike one organ I know in Reading where one drawstop has got twiddled round 180 degrees, and has to be read upside-down), these are dead straight, and have a very long draw indeed. For a church seating no more than 200, the organ was plenty big enough, and had a very good tone.

We should have concluded the afternoon with a visit to Beaconsfield, where we were looking forward to trying the organ in the large parish church there, but, unfortunately, due to a double booking - not, I hasten to add, due to an error on our part - we had to forego this pleasure.

However, it was a most enjoyable day, and thanks are due to our hosts, and to Christine for organising it.

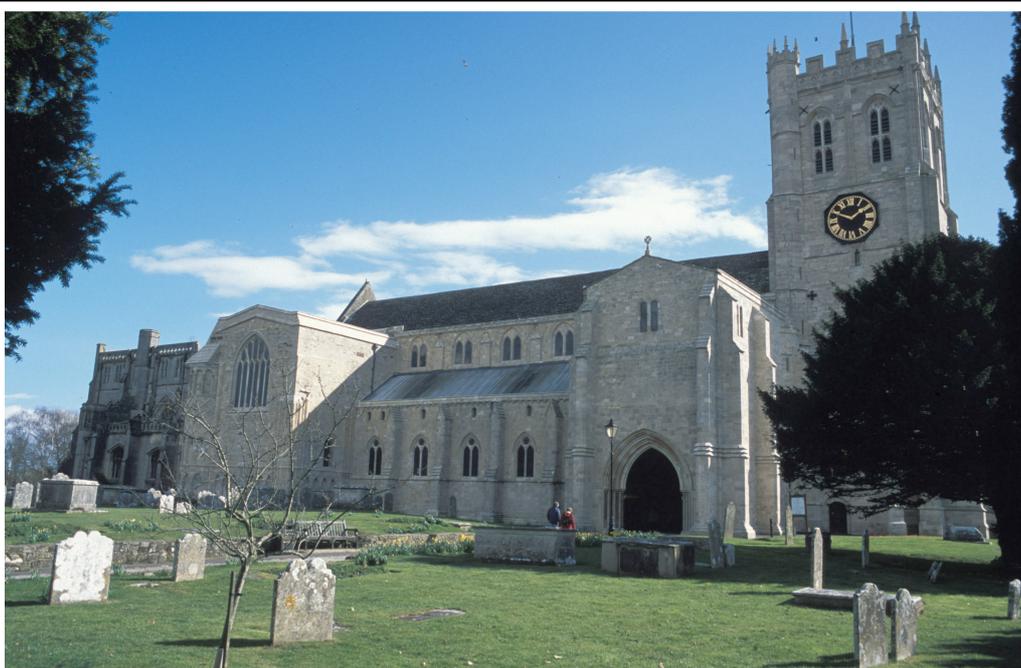
## VISIT TO CHRISTCHURCH AND SOUTHBOURNE, DORSET

March 2004

Alan Rowley

My wife Diana and I were guests of Christine Wells on an enjoyable visit, attended by some 12 members of the Association, to Christchurch Priory and All Saints Church, Southbourne. For us it was a kind of homecoming. We both spent our childhoods in Southbourne; we remember hearing the Priory's bells from our homes; I first learnt the organ at All Saints; we met at the church youth club (those were the days); and, I was reminded, one of our earliest dates was to an organ recital at the Priory!

Christchurch Priory stands on the narrow strip of land at the head of Christchurch Harbour where the rivers Avon and Stour meet about a mile from the sea. Simon Jenkins writes, in his book *England's Thousand Best Churches*, that "of all the great churches in England Christchurch is probably the least well known ... the church is sensational." Bemoaning the banality and monotony of suburban development which characterises so much of this part of the coast, he writes "Christchurch Priory is like a Gulliver awakening from a long sleep on the shore and is now struggling to escape the bonds of modern life."



Christchurch Priory

Today's Priory organ is not the instrument we heard in the 1960s. Then it was the 1951 rebuild by the John Compton Organ Company incorporating work by 'Father Willis' and others with a Nave section added by Degan and Rippin in 1964. Pieces like Dubois' Toccata and Fiat Lux, and Alain's Litanies, played by the organist Geoffrey Tristram, sounded wonderful. In 1973, however, a

four manual electronic Compton-Makin organ with electrostatic speakers replaced the pipe organ although, thankfully, the pipework and actions were retained.

In 1994, to mark the 900th anniversary celebrations of the church, an organ restoration fund was launched. In 1999, aided by a grant from the Capital Lottery Fund through the Arts Council of England, the present organ, using the majority of the original pipes, was inaugurated. The builders were Nicholson and Co. (Worcester) Ltd. Initial reactions were that the sound did not travel well throughout the church and in 2000 Nicholson made tonal and other changes notably to the Nave/Bombarde section of the instrument. The organ



The organ case



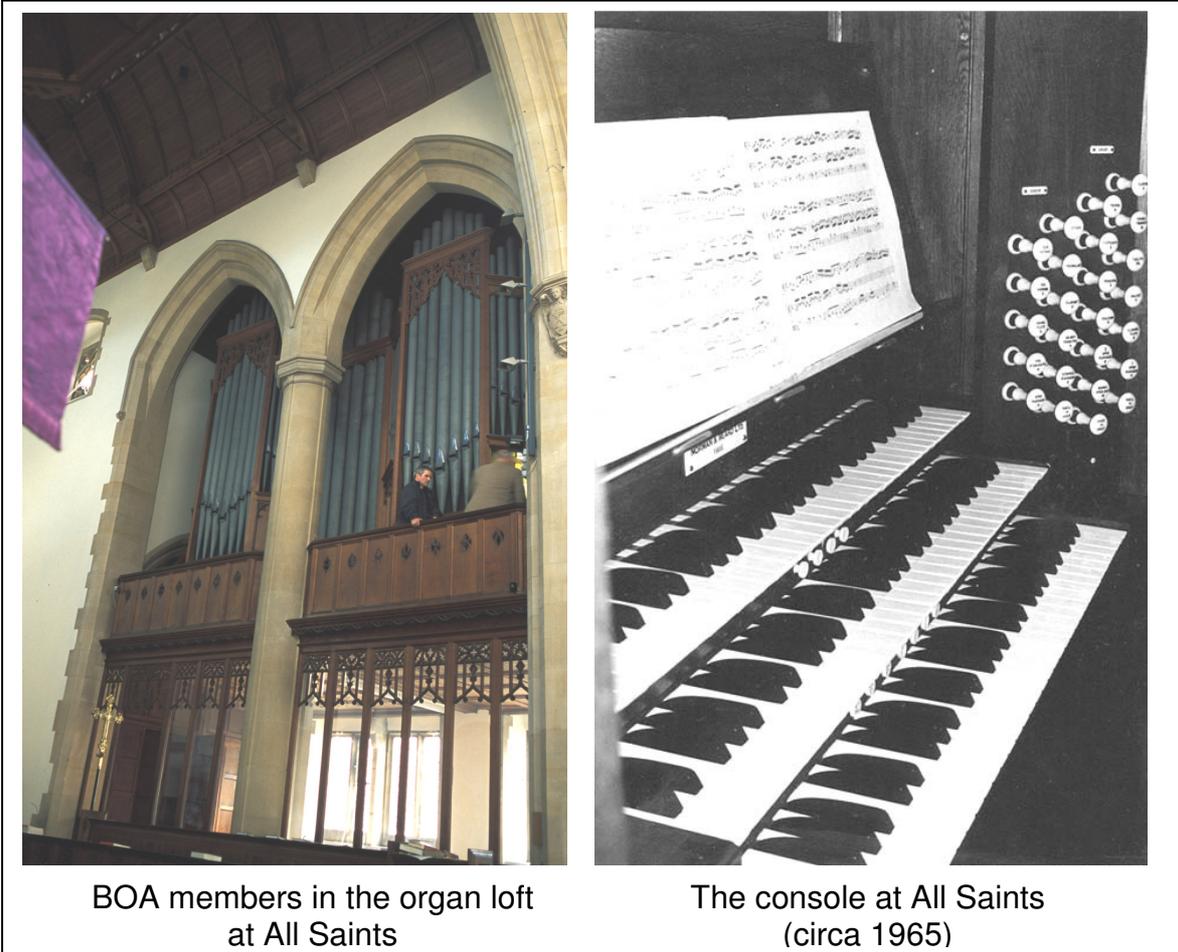
A BOA member playing from the Nave console

can be played from two new four-manual consoles. In practice the mobile nave console is used almost exclusively but, apparently as a requirement of the Lottery Grant, a second Gallery console using mainly tracker action is available and is used occasionally. The eye-catching cases were designed by David Graebe and are built of English Oak. Readers with access to the internet will find more information about the Priory and its organ at

<http://www.christchurchpriory.org/pipe.htm>.

Geoffrey Morgan, organist at the Priory and previously at Guildford Cathedral, outlined the history of the organ and highlighted some of the special

features and characteristics of the instrument. He then gave a short recital playing Healey Willan's *Urbs Hiernsalem Beata*; Elgar's *Serenade for Strings* (Larghetto); and concluding with Hollins' *Concert Overture in C minor*. The performance and musical effect were memorable. Afterwards, some members took turns to play whilst others wandered around the church absorbing the sights and sounds and went inside the organ hoping that Bombarde reeds would



BOA members in the organ loft at All Saints

The console at All Saints (circa 1965)

not sound whilst we were there!

Unfortunately there was no time to tour the Priory's attractive grounds and setting. After a short lunch break in Christchurch, members made their way to All Saints Church, set in the heart of suburban Southbourne. Here we were warmly received by Ian Carter, organist at the church since 1979 and only the fourth organist since Norman & Beard installed the three manual instrument in the 1920s: coincidentally Geoffrey Tristram had been one of these organists for three years before moving to the Priory in about 1950. In 1979 the organ was completely stripped down and rebuilt at a cost of £50,000 by Henry Willis who added electronic action and created a Bombarde division, playable from the swell and choir manuals and pedals, from pre-existing powerful 16-ft Double Trumpet, 8-ft Tromba and 4-ft Clarion reeds and an 8-ft Open Diapason. Otherwise the organ is the same instrument that I played in the 1960s. It is

capable of producing a full blooded sound which projects extremely well throughout the church.

<b>The organ of All Saints, West Southbourne</b>			
Specification provided by Ian Carter			
<b>Great</b>			<b>Swell</b>
Fifteenth	2	Oboe	8
Twelfth	$2\frac{2}{3}$	Cornopean	8
Principal	4	Contra Fagotto	16
Salicet	4	Mixture	III
Dulciana	8	Fifteenth	2
Claribel Flute	8	Quint	$2\frac{2}{3}$
Open Diapason	8	Principal	4
Double Open Diapason	16	Harmonic flute	4
		Rohl Flute	8
<b>Bombarde</b>		Echo Gamba	8
Clarion		Voix Celestes	8
Tromba		Open Diapason	8
Double Trumpet			
Open Diapason		<b>Choir</b>	
Accessories		Vox Humana	8
		Viol D'orchestre	8
<b>Pedal</b>		Clarinet	8
Trombone	16	Saube Flute	4
Double Trumpet	16	Geigen Principal	4
Super Octave	2	Stopped Diapason	8
Octave	4	Open Diapason (unenclosed)	8
Flute	8		
Principal	8	<b>Couplers</b>	
Bourdon	16	Choir to Great	
Open Diapason Metal	16	Choir to Great Octave	
Open Diapason Wood	16	Choir to Great sub-Octave	
Acoustic Bass	32	Swell to Great	
4 thumb & toe pistons to Great and Pedal		Swell to Great Octave	
6 thumb pistons to Swell		Swell to Great sub-Octave	
3 thumb pistons to Choir		Swell Octave	
Tremulant to light pressure (Swell)		Swell sub-Octave	
Tremulant to light pressure (Choir)		Swell to Choir	
Reversible toe piston to Tremulant		Choir Octave	
All pistons are fully adjustable		Choir Sub Octave	
		Bombarde to Choir	
		Swell to Pedal	
		Swell to Pedal Octave	
		Choir to Pedal	
		Choir to Pedal Octave	
		Bombarde to Pedal	
		Great to Pedal	

As Diana and I were due to assist at an evening concert at Douai Abbey – the programme included Gillian Weir playing Poulenc's Organ Concerto – we left members to experience the qualities of this fine parish church organ. In short, it was a very enjoyable and memorable day and our thanks to Christine Wells for her invitation to join Association members on this visit to our 'home ground'.

## VISIT TO DOUAI ABBEY AND THATCHAM

Saturday, June 14th, 2003.

Fortunately, the weather forecasters were wrong, and the afternoon was warm and sunny, as I made my way up the hill from the A4 at Woolhampton to Douai Abbey in the Presidential Skoda, with Jonathan and Mandy following in their open topped car. Twenty-one of us turned up, and were greeted by a casually dressed Father Oliver, who described the alterations to the buildings over the last few years. The organist Dr John Rowntree was playing for a wedding at the Parish Church when we arrived, but came along afterwards and many of us had the opportunity to have a chat with him. First on the console of the ten-year old Kenneth Tickell three-manual instrument was Chris Hood, who played some Bach, followed by Jonathan Holl, who gave us a rousing performance of Bach's Prelude and Fugue in G. Several other members then tried the organ, although some were caught out by the fact that the lowest manual was the Great Organ, the middle one the Swell, and the top one the Echo, the pipes of which were very high up in the air. (The Abbey is a very tall building!) This organ, with its beautifully carved case brought back memories of our recent visit to the Tickell works in Northampton.

Lurking in another corner of the Abbey was a single-manual Tamburini, which gave a good account of itself despite its size.

The organ in the Parish Church, which we were able to go to after the wedding was over, was also a single-manual instrument – this time by Freiburger, and it had quite a different tone from the one in the Abbey. It also had black natural keys, which I hate! Again several of us tried it although I had already played it in the Autumn of 2002 for a wedding.

On then to Thatcham, where we were met by Chris Watts, a Church Warden of the Parish Church of St. Mary's. In here was a three-manual by Gray and Davison, which was built for the church and was about 150 years old. I was surprised to see that the Pedal Bourdon pipes were placed in the same sort of pattern that we usually see for display metal pipes, and that they were decorated even though they were at the back of the instrument, out of public view in a corridor. For some reason the attached console was built in a hole in the ground, and the seat of the stool was almost at floor level. As there were no steps down some of us found it difficult to get to the playing position (and back again to floor level) but Leslie Davis put us to shame by his nimble climbing. This, like the Tickell organ was all tracker, but its vintage meant that the action was very heavy when coupled up. Another sign of its age was the way the stops were labelled, and it was difficult to read them at speed because they were all in Old English, and the pitches shown in Roman numbers. Have you ever tried reading "Lieblich Gedackt viii feet" quickly? The resident organist must have been made of stern stuff, for we learnt that the wedding just before we arrived

ended with the Widor. Some of us felt that this organ produced more noise than quality, but it is always interesting to see these old war-horses in action, and it was interesting to see how different the two three-manual organs were – much the same size, but separated by about 150 years.

All in all, a good day out, and our grateful thanks to those who looked after us at the two venues.

## **VISIT TO MANCHESTER AND LIVERPOOL, OCTOBER 2003**

Peter Chester

In early October four members of the Association gathered in Manchester. I joined the party on the Thursday morning at the Bridgewater Hall; the others had already visited an organ the previous afternoon at St Wilfrid's, Grappenhall near Warrington. Here the organ was shown to them by a choir member who had reluctantly been plunged into organ playing just last Christmas. Views of our group were mixed, however all said the church and village were worth seeing.

It was with a great sense of anticipation that we met at the Bridgewater Hall and were shown into an empty auditorium with the stage already set with the orchestra's instruments for that evening's concert. Here we met David Wood, the organ's technician and tuner who gave us a description of the Marcussen organ which had cost around £1.3 million. The Hall had opened in September 1996 and the organ's inaugural concert took place on 22 November of that year with Wayne Marshall and the Hallé orchestra. A detached console is available for use on the concert platform.

The facade and pipes look stunning in the Hall and the four-manual organ has 76 stops including *en chamade* trumpets on the Solo, two 32 ft pedal stops (Untersatz and Bombarde) and a general crescendo pedal which was a bit difficult to avoid when we played later. David took us on a guided tour of the inside and it was an object lesson in how to lay out the various sections neatly and with ease of access to all the pipes. We then had an hour of uninterrupted time to play which we all enjoyed, noting that the organ's effect is very different out in the hall as the sound goes over your head at the console.

After a light lunch in the foyer and purchase of a comprehensive booklet on the organ we crossed the city to Manchester Cathedral. Here we were met by the organ scholar Tom Bell. He talked to us in the Nave and described the organ and its layout which is a Harrison with elements of Hill. Before World War II the complete organ was mounted on the screen between nave and choir; now the console is on top of the screen with most pipes on either side of the choir behind carved wood. Part of the pedal division is enclosed and another part is separated in a side chapel behind the altar and a curtain.

Tom then played two pieces so we could appreciate the colours of the instrument, Howells' *Rhapsody No 3* and Peeters' *Lied to the Flowers*. The sound more than filled the space – Manchester Cathedral is not a large building. It was then our turn to play. We were invited back for evensong at 5.30pm but meanwhile we fitted in a visit to St Ann's in the city centre where we were met by Ronald Frost.

Dating from 1712 and with the same design as St Andrew's Holborn, this church has a fine interior. The original organ by Glyn & Parker was in the West Gallery and part of the case is still in use after its move to the north side above the choir. The console was also up in the north gallery beside the pipes but then moved down to the area beside the choir stalls in 1953, where it is now. Ronald has been organist since 1978. We took our turns to play and enjoyed a welcome cup of tea.

Dinner that evening was taken at a pub/restaurant beside the cathedral and close to our hotel. I believe we all enjoyed our meal in a busy place notable for its oak beams and lively atmosphere. Before leaving Manchester I visited Forsyths music shop the next morning which has to be one of the most comprehensively stocked in the country. The others had visited the previous day.

Our first port of call on the Friday was the parish church in St Helens; an hour's drive from Manchester and on our way to Liverpool. Lest you forgot, there were reminders all over the area of the main industry here – glass making. Indeed we parked at 'The World of Glass Exhibition' and walked through this busy market town to the church where we were met by Paul Melville. Harrison & Harrison installed the organ 75 years ago after a church fire and it was rebuilt by Rushworth & Dreaper in 1973. Paul has completed the specification by adding ten stops in recent years.

St Helens is a substantial church and the organ more than fulfilled its role giving a powerful big sound with a lovely reverberation in the building. The organ and console are mounted high above the choir. We all agreed this was a very expressive instrument to play and was quite a surprise.

After lunch at the exhibition building we then drove on to Liverpool passing signs on the outskirts for Huyton and Knotty Ash (memories of Harold Wilson and Ken Dodd respectively). We met at the Anglican Cathedral but unfortunately the refectory was just closing at 4pm so we found a cafe nearby and enjoyed tea and cakes. Also, the cathedral shop had run out of leaflets about the organ.

At Liverpool Anglican Cathedral the setting for Evensong was Jackson in G minor and the anthem by Tallis – *O nata lux de lumine*; the choir was directed by Professor Ian Tracey. Then we met Daniel Bishop, the organ scholar, who showed us the mobile console in the Nave which replicates the main console

above the choir. It has 5 manuals and was built by Henry Willis and installed in 1926; the last overhaul being by Harrison and Harrison in 1977. It is the largest organ in the UK having over 9,700 pipes and notably includes a 64 ft Resultant Bass on the pedals plus a Trompette Militaire mounted up in the Corona above the nave which sounds awesome. Daniel then played Widor's *Toccata* to show off the instrument – certainly a wonderful sound and reverberation in the empty building. Needless to say the four of us were then able to play; a great thrill and unforgettable.

We had all been impressed by Daniel's relaxed and pleasant manner with us and thanked him before setting off to the Catholic Cathedral. Gaining entry to Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral was to prove rather difficult. But after several attempts to find our way in – it was now about 7pm and the place was closed and dark – we were then helped by sounds of choir practice and somebody helped us find the doorway hidden just inside the underground car park. We entered to the strains of the lay clerks singing *Yesterday once more* (by the Carpenters) while rehearsing for a school event! Richard Lea was our host and currently acting Organist and Master of the Choristers as Mervyn Cousins had recently left for another post with the Eistedfodd. Richard led us up a long sloping passageway which comes up in the Cathedral behind the main altar and here we saw the choir stalls and organ.

It is a 4 manual Walker installed in 1967 and very little work has been done since then – the Swell reeds needed attention. The Cathedral was dark and rather eerie inside – just us and a few lights on; the pipes are mounted in an area of the main wall and as such some of the overall sound seems to be lost. Because of its shape the building is affectionately known locally as either 'The Met', 'Paddy's Wigwam' or the 'Mersey Funnel'! We all played and then went for an Italian meal.

In summary we had a busy and very enjoyable few days with unforgettable visits to some very well known buildings and organs – just such a pity that others could not have joined us to share the experience. Thanks to all our hosts and to Christine Wells for organising everything.

## VISIT TO WINDSOR

Jonathan Holl

Our first port of call was All Saints' Church, a little way from the town centre in a residential area. The organ is a two-manual Hunter, situated imposingly on the west-end gallery. Although the churchwarden was in attendance to look after us, the authorities had notified us too late that the organ was undergoing some restoration. Consequently, it was unplayable and all the Swell stop knobs were missing.

The day could only get better and our next visit was to Holy Trinity, the Garrison Church. Built in the early part of Queen Victoria's reign (she gave 200 Guineas towards its building), the church abounds with royal and military memorabilia. Adorning the church are many Standards and Regimental Colours including the White Ensign of the Royal Navy. Earl Mountbatten was a regular worshipper here. The present organ, situated on the gallery at the west end was built in 1882 by Eustace Ingram and later rebuilt by Conacher in 1922. It has three manuals and 30 stops – a fine romantic sound.

The Parish Church was our next venue. This was built in 1822. The organ is a three-manual Hunter with 46 stops, renovated and revoiced by Rushworth & Dreaper in 1936 – another good romantic sound.

After tea, we proceeded to St. George's Chapel for Evensong and heard the choir sing the canticles to Jackson in G and an anthem by Brahms. Roger Judd played respectively Fugues No. 3 and No. 2 on BACH by Schumann before and after the service. At the end of the concluding voluntary he welcomed us all before inviting us up to the organ loft, or if we wished, to stroll around the chapel while he gave us a short recital – Bach, 4 Schubler Chorale Preludes, Howells, Master Tallis's Testament and Widor, 1st movement of Symphonie V. The organ has recently had a complete clean and refurbishment and the console given "state of the art" aids to registration. At the console the sound is very clear and immediate, and with the substantial specification, it is the view of many that this must surely be one of the finest organs in the country.

## **EDITH HEWETT – AN APPRECIATION**

[compiled from several sources]

Edith was born on 26th October 1908 at 65 Grange Avenue Reading and lived in the family home until the day she died 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2003 age 94. She was the youngest child of John and Constance Hewett. She had four brothers Mick, Harry, Jim and Jack. Her father was a railway engine driver and three of her brothers followed in his footsteps and worked on the Railway all of their lives.

The other brother Jim did not work on the railway and was called to serve in the Wiltshire Regiment in the First World War. He was a machine gunner and was killed in action in France on 18th November 1917 at the age of 19. His grave is at Abbeville in Northern France. The military authorities at that time allowed his parents to visit him in hospital in France and were with him when he died. Edith was only 9 years of age when this occurred but it left its mark on her all her life. There are all sorts of memorabilia about Jim in the house and Edith would always end up in tears when she talked about him and showed these items.

Years later, working in her Dickensian office, the anguish of war was to return again, when she was caught in the Second World War air raid on Reading. During this raid, she suffered cuts and bruises as she dived under a table as her office was machine gunned, bullets hitting the window frame and shrapnel blown by the blast through the back of the chair where she had been sitting.

She had a tremendous respect for both her parents in the way they brought the family up in a Christian home endeavouring with very little money to educate them, attend Anderson Baptist Church and live a normal family life. There are records in her home dated 1900 that show her Father worked seven days a week, often 10 and 12 hour shifts all hours of the day or night. Similarly her Mother had records that showed she made each year 300lbs. of homemade jam to feed 7 mouths. Edith always spoke highly of them to others and at her 90<sup>th</sup>, birthday celebration at Park spoke about them in her after-party speech. She would often reminisce about her Brothers how they played and fought with each other and being the only girl was teased and how she would hold her own and stand up against them. This upbringing contributed to the natural happy cheerful and good-natured person that she always was, who even in her worst days of bad health would always greet you with a smile. It also taught her to be self reliant in life and make her own decisions on all things.

Edith went to Alfred Sutton School and left there in 1924 at the age of 16. She then worked in the office of a firm of Wholesale Tobacconists, Hughes & Co in Minster Street Reading. This was most surprising in view of Edith's strong views on smoking. She left there in the 1950s when she stayed at home to nurse her elderly mother until she died about the age of 94. She then worked as secretary and bookkeeper for the builders Robert Curtis and Co. and retired from there in 1973 aged 65. Edith cycled to work every day in sun or rain all her life and would often be seen with her old green coat and scarf round her head pedalling as hard as she could.

Edith never married. This was something she regretted and said so the week before she died. She always made light of this subject to others. On one occasion 2 years ago at Battle Hospital when she was being seen by the doctor who explained to her that what he was to do was just like having a baby, her comments to him were "I have never had a child since I have never been married. I know the theory but not the practice. I am an unclaimed jewel."

Edith had a very active social life and would be out every night of the week after work following her interests. These were mainly connected to the Church or to the musical societies that she belonged to. She was a life long member of the Berkshire Organists Association and at her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration at Park, members of the Society played various items of her favourite works on the organ and a member composed and played a piece in her honour. She also was

the conductor and organiser of a number of local choirs who would perform in public and often visited residential homes for the elderly. She was very disciplined in practicing on a daily basis either the piano or the church organ in order to keep her playing skills up. We all know her capabilities on this. She also had a detailed knowledge on all the major classical works of music and could talk about them in great detail.

She attended Anderson Baptist Church both as a Sunday School pupil and later as a member. During her time there she was the Organist and Choir Mistress and also taught in the Sunday school. She left there in 1956 and joined Park Church where she was a life long member. Again she was very involved with all the Church affairs both as Organist and Choir mistress and teaching in the Sunday school. Edith was a true practicing Christian in every way, strong in her beliefs and read her Bible daily with understanding.

Edith missed her vocation in life. She should have been the Chancellor of the Exchequer. She never earned and did not have a lot of money, but what she had she managed well, lived within her means, saved regularly and invested wisely for her retirement. Last April despite all her health problems she transferred money to give herself a better financial return. She was a great believer in various charities and sent donations to them every year. She also gave a regular percentage of her income to the Church. Her records of home accounts would be a credit to any accounting firm. She also prepared and calculated her own Income Tax returns up to last year. Any tax inspector would end up in a tirade of correspondence from Edith if he disagreed with her calculations. She never got it wrong.

Edith was always interested in international and political affairs both at Government level and at local level. She read the Guardian every day and both understood and absorbed what she read. She had very strong views on many subjects and would argue her case with anyone. She was in regular correspondence with her MP and local councillors on these matters. They will soon be wondering why their in trays are not so full now. Examples of this are her strong disapproval of labour exploitation in third world countries and Britain purchasing their goods. On principle she refused to purchase these commodities. She also disapproved of the rules applicable to the State Retirement Pension that used to be curtailed after 6 weeks in Hospital. Maybe her letters to the MP contributed to this being abolished. She wrote regularly to complain to the Local Authority about dirty roads, parking and dustbins left on the pavement.

Edith enjoyed life to the full. Her pleasures were gardening from which she won prizes at the local show, family gatherings, holidays, days out for walks in the country or visits to anything of interest and attending concerts and musical recitals. Whatever it was she was not only interested but often would have

some insight in the things she saw and talk about it with knowledge. She also enjoyed talking non-stop but she was also a good listener and ready to give advice and help if asked to do so.

Edith's mind and brain were totally 100% alert to the very end. This together with her determination and strength of character enabled her to live, as she always desired in her home till the end, despite suffering very bad health and physical disablement over the last few years. It was a credit to her how she coped, and even in her worst moments would say "Never mind I will feel better tomorrow".

It is hardly surprising that these factors combined to form the lady of such great strength of opinions that we all knew and loved – she was never reticent in her opinions. as her MP regularly found out through his mail, and in conversation with any of us, particularly should the subject be alcohol, cheese, pensions or modern music!

Edith had friends all over the country and overseas with whom she kept in touch, either at Christmas or on the phone. Two examples of this are an old work colleague about Edith's age who she worked with when she left School in 1924, and a family in South Wales who were originally friends of her parents.

A book could be written about Edith. She was one of life's characters whom one never forgot once they met her. She made a lasting impression on everyone.

Here are a few of many amusing anecdotes that the family remember Edith by.

One Christmas gathering at 32 Pitts Lane before the days of dishwashers, Edith was busy as usual washing dishes at the kitchen sink. Kathleen, Rodney and Graham who were in their late teens were drying the dishes. Rodney then placed the dried dishes on the dirty dishes side and Edith would then re-wash them. This went on for about 15 minutes till Edith suddenly realised what was happening. What she said to Rodney is not repeatable.

Edith always enjoyed her food and had an insatiable appetite. One thing she would always say at dinner "I do love my cabbage" and smack her lips together in anticipation.

If she had a disagreement with someone she would say "I will not be sat on, why should I? I said what I think. I was cool but polite".

Towards the end of her life, even though her health was failing, her mind, her sense of humour, and her appetite, all remained as robust as ever, and in one of her very last days, fighting for breath between every word, she struggled to give a clear and firm message – "and give my love to everyone at Park".

However, of all her convictions, opinions, attitudes and interests, two factors shaped her life more than any – her love of music and her deep Christian faith,

and it was these two that combined together in what was surely her greatest love of all – Church music.

There are permanent reminders of the Hewett family in Park Church. A brass vase was dedicated to Edith's brother, James William Hewett, who was killed in the first World War and whose cameo appears on the memorial tablet. Two stained glass windows were fitted in the gable ends of the church in 1931 in memory of Mr John Samuel Hewett (Edith's father)

## LOCAL RECITALS

David Pether

The Association's series of local organ recitals continues to be amongst the most visible of our activities within the community, encouraging music-making in a variety of locations.

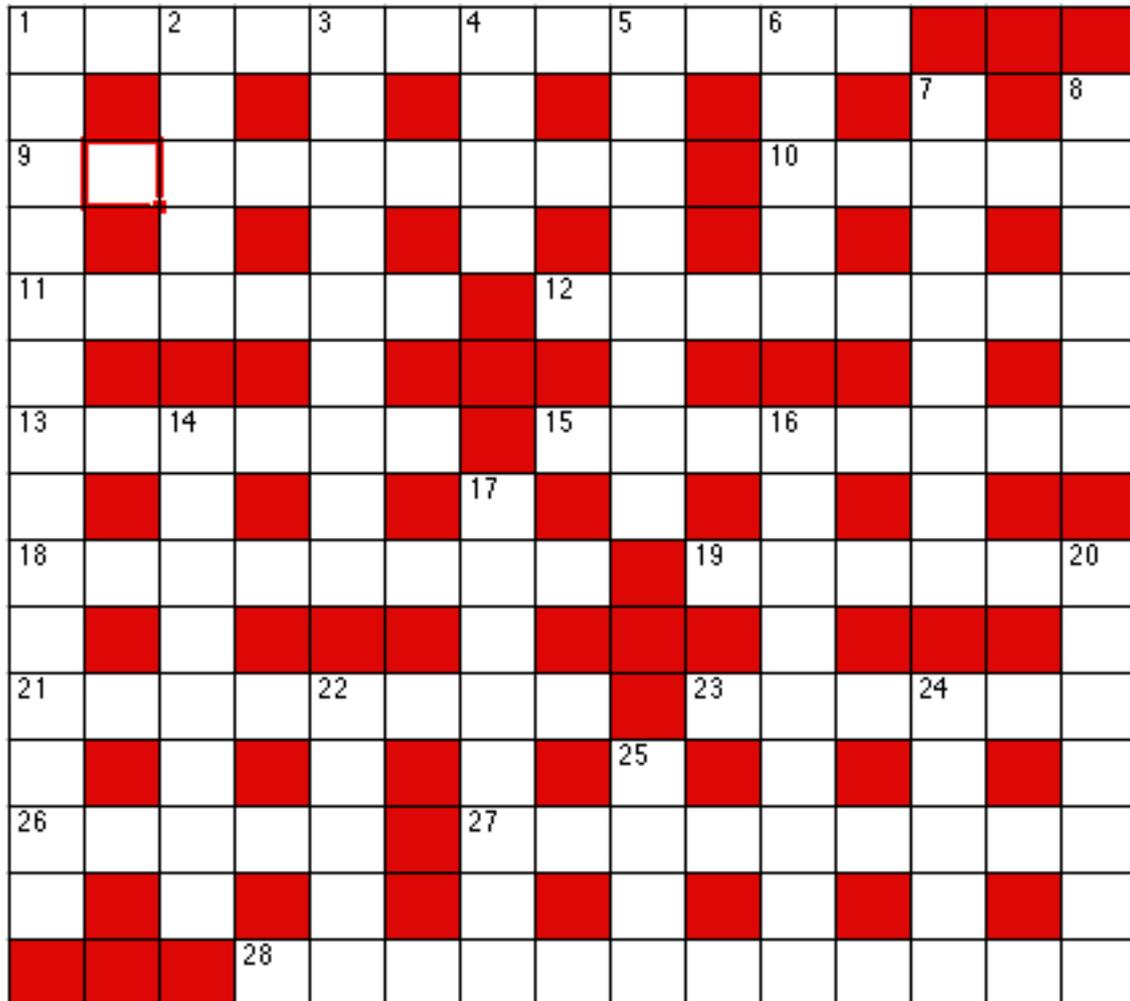
These events give members the opportunity to perform in public concert, freed from the restrictions of a church service, often on an organ which is not their regular instrument. In the process the profile of the Association is raised, and with accessible programming in venues across the area we hope to develop a wider audience for organ music. Profits from the retiring collections are divided between the host churches and the Association, providing a welcome boost to our funds.

Over the past year the following recitals have taken place:

1June	St.Luke's, Reading	Christopher Cipkin
6July	St.Peter's, Earley	Michael Thomas
26October	St. Mary-the-Virgin, Hambleton	Wilhelm Kemper with Thekla von Dombois (oboe)
23November	St.Andrew's, Caversham	Philip Aspden
25January	Caversham Heights Methodist Church	Graham Ireland
22February	Wesley Methodist Church	Christopher Cipkin and David Pether
22March	Bray Parish Church	Jonathan Holl

# CROSSWORD

Graham Ireland



## ACROSS

1. The inventor of the light bulb [6,6]
9. This city holds an annual tattoo [9]
10. Surname of a famous Drag Queen [2,3]
11. Another name for willow trees [6]
12. Chukkerbutty's Christian name [8]
13. A musical term for "play smoothly" [6]
15. Both Wesleys followed this calling [8]
18. A person who plays badly and noisily on a stringed instrument [8]
19. To cloud or soil [6]
21. An evergreen shrub of the genus Nerium [8]
23. Peculiarities of expression or phraseology [6]
26. Some people prefer this to tap water [5]
27. A British novelist or a building in Oxford [9]
28. One of England's finest madrigalists [6,6]

## DOWN

1. An ornament of three cusps in a circle [7]
2. A small South African grazing antelope [5]
3. Westonbirt boasts one of these [9]
4. A fashionable coin? [4]
5. Devices for inhaling vapours [8]
6. Common name for the plant *Primula elatior* [5]
7. We all take one of these during a period of exertion [8]
8. The part of a circle comprehended between two radii and the intercepted arc [6]
14. A tropical shrub cultivated for its beautiful flowers [8]
16. A South American edentate armed with hard bony plates [9]
17. The superior part of the brain [8]
18. Bram ----- Irish novelist [6]
20. A manufactory of stockings etc [7]
22. The number of Beethoven's Choral Symphony [5]
24. Parts of a carcass not cut into joints [5]
25. Purcell set several of these to Music [4]

## **CELEBRITY RECITAL - DAVID TITTERINGTON** **(with Bart Jabubczak, for the Wesley duet)** **2 November 2003**

Alan Kent

David Titterington is very well known as a recitalist amongst his other occupations and some may recall that he gave an interesting and very well supported organ-trumpet duo recital at Douai Abbey as part of a Newbury Festival programme a few years ago. In spite of an interesting programme for this recital the audience was not as numerous as might have been hoped. Those who came were treated to an excellent performance by a very musicianly player, a programme to which our Father Willis is well suited. The programme contained two items which were to me at least completely unknown. It was also good to hear the complete Widor Symphony No. 5 rather than just the opening or last movements.

The only Bach played by David Titterington was in fact an arrangement by Marcel Dupré which, although well played, I would have preferred one of the true organ works, but perhaps the recitalist considered that this arrangement is one that is suited to a more romantic type of instrument and Dupré almost certainly had such an instrument in mind. It did provide a good introduction to the evening. The Guilmant was well registered and played – it is good to hear more Guilmant as his compositions have tended to be somewhat neglected. (Perhaps the French School of his era is now coming back into favour!)

The Whitlock brings my only major regret of the evening. The performance we heard is the reason for my regret in that the recitalist did not play the complete work including the *Andante Tranquillo*. We were reminded that this is the Whitlock centenary and the performance was a true compliment to the composer. For many of us these works are very well known but David Titterington brought them up as new, hence my regret for the missing movement. Whitlock is another composer who has been somewhat neglected but this recital showed what we have been missing, admittedly in the hands of a master. David Titterington paid considerable tribute to the Whitlock organ sonata – perhaps on his next visit he could be persuaded to include it in his programme, even though it would be a considerable challenge without the registration aids that Whitlock himself had – on the evidence of this evening I would suggest these would be overcome!

The two items before the interval were both completely new to me. The Mendelssohn is not apparently a very well known work but the recitalist reminded all organists just how much is owed to him in this country, indeed this evening's instrument could be said to be a consequence of his endeavours in general. It was well played but perhaps is not amongst the greatest works of the composer. The Wesley is something of a rarity because there are not too many duets for the organ. It proved to be a well laid out work and worth hearing. The players were well matched and gave a very enjoyable performance. Perhaps then the first half of the evening was a recital of some rather neglected or hitherto un-appreciated works? If so this recital ought to put them back on the recital map!

The Widor needs very little introduction particularly as the outer movements have never gone completely out of favour, whereas the inner ones are not often heard except as here in a complete performance. One can perhaps see why, yet the inner movements provide a good contrast to the outward going dash of the first and last movements. Perhaps the problem is that whilst the outer two movements can stand alone in a recital programme the inner ones perhaps do not, although it is doubtful if Widor contemplated his Symphony as a selection of single movements to be played out of context. Yet again the recitalist brought to this work much insight, thoughtful registration and considerable dash and the performance was enthusiastically received.

As an encore the recitalist sent us home with C S Lang's Tuba Tune, not a work I would have associated with the recitalist but which, as expected, well played went down well.

This was an excellent recital, the pity being that the audience was not larger. Those present however were very appreciative of having had the opportunity of hearing such a well played and interpreted recital. I for one would hope that

Reading will have the opportunity of another visit from David Titterington in the not too distant future.

PROGRAMME	
Sinfonia to Cantata 29 Wir Danken dir, Gott	J S Bach(1685-1750) (arr Marcel Dupre)
March Funébre et Chant Seraphique, From Five Short Pieces; Allegretto -Folk Tune- Scherzo-Pacan	F. Alexandre Guilmant Percy Whitlock(1903-1946)
Theme and Variations in D	F Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)
Duet for Organ (with Bart Jabubczak) Allegro- Andante-Allegro	Samuel Wesley
Organ Symphony No 5; Allegro Vivace -Allegro cantabile - Andantino quasi Allegretto -Adagio - Toccata	Charles-Marie Widor(1844- 1937)

[The very well known recitalist Carlo Curley, gave a recital in the Concert Hall on the evening of 6 March 2004 but unfortunately no report is available.]

## LUNCH TIME RECITALS IN READING CONCERT HALL

### 1 Ian May (Organist, St Giles-in-Reading)

21 May 2003

Alan Kent

This was indeed a wide ranging recital displaying both the capability and musicianship of the recitalist as well as the versatility of the Father Willis organ. Ian May certainly displayed his mastery of an instrument that though sounding well has a reputation of not being the easiest to play; no member of the audience for this recital would have thought this. The programme certainly gave him the opportunity to demonstrate by his registrations that this quite moderately sized instrument is able to sound appropriately French particularly for the Lefebvre-Wely, much more austere for Buxtehude, English in the Howells and Whitlock, Odeon in the Ogden!

*Marche in F* Lefebvre-Wely got the recital off to a suitably rousing start, with very much a Cavallé-Coll sound. The Stanley Trumpet Voluntary in a modern arrangement enabled use of the reeds in a more Willis type fashion. The Buxtehude was much more soberly registered and came over well. The Bach Pastorale does not often appear on recital programmes, but is well worth hearing certainly played as here using the various flute stops. Howells Paean is suited to the instrument and was well interpreted. Whereas Howells has remained in favour, Percy Whitlock has been somewhat neglected but I have been pleased to see that he is coming back in at least in some programmes, something of importance as this year, 2003, is the centenary of his birth. Again

this work, Fidelis, was interpreted and played well and should encourage those unfamiliar with Whitlock to explore further.

The Tournemire Chorale is one of those incredible improvisations transcribed by Durufle and Ian May reminded us that this is a work composed and worked out at the console, displaying at times considerable complexity. He then demonstrated his mastery of both the work and the handling of the instrument in his performance. The tension then relaxed for Ogden's Penguins, hence the comments above about Odeons. The Carillon de Westminster by Vierne is a typical French romantic work, which came over well and brought the recital full circle to its close.

His introductions were most welcome and his handling of the hall acoustic for speech excellent. I very much enjoyed this recital, which was enthusiastically received by the audience. I hope that Ian can be persuaded to return to the Concert Hall in the not too distant future to give another recital.

Prgramme	
Marche in F	Lefebure-Wely
Trumpet Voluntary	John Stanley arr. Coleman
Prelude and Fugue in D	Buxtehude
Pastorale in F	J.S.Bach
Paeon (No 6 of Six Pieces for Organ)	Herbert Howells
Fidelis (from Four Extemporisations)	Percy Whitlock
Chorale - Improvisation sur le Victimae Paschali	Tournemire
Penguin's Playtime	Nigel Ogden
Carillon de Westminster	Vierne

## **2 and 3 David Pether (Organist, St Paul, Wokingham)**

**22 October 2003**

Philip Bowcock

Originally David was to give the first of these recitals, but then, as occasionally happens, the recitalist announced for the second was unable to appear and David stood in at quite short notice.

David's programme was well varied, starting and ending with well-known and impressive works for full organ, and with lighter works, both older and modern, and it was a pleasure to hear one of John Stanley's voluntaries – these could well be given an airing as service voluntaries on suitable occasions.

The fourth work in David's programme, the Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor (J S Bach) is a work of particular significance for me as it was while, as a young boy, standing by the console and watching someone play it that first gave

me the real desire to learn the organ. David's performance was impeccable, and, dare I say it, more enjoyable than of a certain well known professional recitalist.

Fanfare	Kenneth Leighton (1929 – 88)
Voluntary in G Minor Op.5 No.9 <i>Largo – Allegro</i>	John Stanley (1713 – 86)
Sicilienne	Maria-Theresia von Paradis (1759 – 1824)
Fantasia & Fugue in G Minor BWV542	J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)
Pastorale	Walter Haynes (1859 – 1900)
Flute-A-Peal	David Bruce-Payne (b.1945)
Sortie in Eb	L.J.A.Lefébure-Wély (1817 – 69)
Andante in A	Henry Smart (1813 – 79)
Grand Choeur in D “Alla Handel”	Alexandre Guilmant (1837 – 1911)

At the end David was heard to say “I enjoyed that!” So did we all.

### 5 May 2004

This was another excellent recital, given as noted above, at fairly short notice, with an equally interesting and varied programme. The major work, and one which I particularly enjoyed was César Franck's Chorale in A Minor which gives enormous scope for stop changes and dynamics.

Programme	
Sortie	Richard Lloyd (b. 1933)
Pastorale	Reginald Goss-Custard (1877-1956)
Chorale Prelude <i>Nun Komm' der Heiden Heiland</i> BWV659	J S Bach (1685-1750)
March	Nicholas Choveaux (1904-95)
Adagio in G Minor	Thomaso Albinoni (1671-1751) / Remo Giazotto (1910-98)
Prelude in D Major	Johann Albrechtserger (1736-1809)
Chorale No 3 in A Minor	César Franck (1822-90)
Andante <i>Choeur de Voix Humaines</i>	L J A Lefébure-Wély (1817-69)
Final from Symphony No 1	Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

## GORDON SPRIGGS – CONGRATULATIONS

On 30 July 2003 we were privileged to be invited to a surprise party at St Mary's Castle Street to congratulate Gordon on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. This was organised by the Church, and many members of both Church and Association were able to express appreciation of all the work he has done for church music over his lifetime, being Organist at Greyfriars for many years before moving to St Mary's.

Among other things, he was President of this Association in 1956/57 – nearly 50 years ago! He was a member of the Committee until 2000 and joint editor of this journal from 1974. Indeed, without his enthusiasm it would probably have ceased to exist many years ago.

Much more could be written about his contributions, but these are best summarised in the following Ode which was written by a member of the congregation and read out during the party.

### Ode to Gordon

Now everyone knows Gordon Spriggs	With both hands and feet on the go
Who's keen on church music – not	And stops being pulled to and fro
gigs!	From strong vox humana
He's ninety today	To sweet dulciana
His hair's silver grey	The angelic melodies flow.
But still he has no need of wigs.	His musical talent is rare
He worked for long years making signs	But something that others can share
With dextrous and elegant lines	The organ he plays
And such was his skill	Enhances God's praise
With eye, hand and quill	By helping us sing with more care.
That customers loved his designs.	When Kathleen he sought as his
This nonagenarian squire	bride
Whom all at St Mary's admire	'Most gladly I will' she replied
Is faithful and kind	He took her to wife
With a generous mind	For all of his life
Devoted to organ and choir.	And today she is still at his side.

To God who has governed your days  
And guarded and guided your ways  
We give all acclaim  
And through His great name  
We ask Him to bless you always.

## LUNCHTIME RECITALS AT ST MARY'S

Gordon Hands

During 2003 there were 21 lunchtime recitals given by the following organists :-

Frank Brookes(twice)	Ian May
Jonathan Holl	Malcolm Stowell
Wendy Watson(twice)	Graham Ireland with Stephen
Christine Wells (twice)	Nye (Oboe)
Michael Howell	James Williams
Ray Isaacson(twice)	Dennis Tutty
Gordon Hands	Ian Westley
Elizabeth Cooke	David Butler
Jim Wooldridge	Mary Harwood

It may be of interest to know that this series of recitals was started by Leslie Davis and myself back in 1991 and have continued ever since.. October 24<sup>th</sup> saw the 250th performance! The retiring collections have enabled us at St. Mary's to have the organ maintained in a reasonable condition, and great thanks are due to Robin Rance for his immense skills in keeping the old lady going. She was last rebuilt in 1936 and it is well past time for another complete overhaul.

Two recitals have recently had to be cancelled due to overenthusiastic use of the heating system which dried out the organ and caused various mechanical parts to seize up. The boiler has now been shut down and things are gradually returning to normal.

Many thanks to all those who have played and attended. We have a full programme for 2004 and will keep our fingers crossed that all will be well with the organ.

## ADVENTURES OF A CHURCH ORGANIST

Dennis Tutty

With the advent of digital electronics a fashion is developing where the console and organist are actually on view, e.g. at Gosbrook Rd and Wesley. The main advantage of this is that the organist can see the preacher without having to emerge from his or her lair, and certainly accompanying a choir or soloist is much easier. The disadvantage is that every movement is open to the gaze of the congregation so sorting through several hymn books and service music can sometimes distract the congregation, and draughts can cause loose pages to float away – even down between the pedals. Since these items can only be retrieved during the non-musical parts of the service or even during

prayers if these occur sandwiched between two hymns there is the obvious danger of distraction to the congregation in general and the preacher in particular. It is an unfortunate fact that the sight of a bottom wiggling about amongst the pedals can never be seen to be elegant!

Accompanying soloists brings its own hazards. I once played for a special service for a distinguished preacher when a few minutes before the service began a lady from warmer climes marched up whilst I was in mid flow and started to try to show me the music of a solo which she intended to sing. I managed to come to a fairly dignified stop by missing out beats, bars and chords and asked her whether she would like the accompaniment on the organ or the piano to which she replied “yes”! Taking a quick look at the manuscript in a non musical interlude (see above) I decided that the piano would probably be best because there were a number of broken chords and not many sustained notes. Unfortunately the lady paid only scant attention to time, rhythm or bar lines and in fact the second and third verses bore little relationship to the first in these respects so I simply trailed along trying to keep with her as close as possible and also in the same key. Clearly the dear lady felt that the words were all important and who am I to disagree?

**“It’s only a few hymn tunes and a bit of knob fiddling!”**

It may sound like that sometimes, but I am here to tell you .....

There are invariably several tunes to match any given set of words and woebetide any organist who chooses the “wrong” one. One is likely to have one’s ear bent after the service with remarks ranging from a polite “that tune was interesting” to a gruff “that’s not the tune we USUALLY have” Guest (or locum) organists come across this quite often but generally congregations realise that the poor stand-in covering whilst the regular player is on holiday/sick/having a nervous breakdown really cannot be expected to know which tunes are familiar or favourites. Speed and volume is another hazardous area. There are occasions when no matter how a hymn or song is introduced by the musician the congregation will have its way. I once played for a funeral where “Amazing Grace” was sung as a dirge. This would have been OK except that the congregation overflowed onto the pavement outside the church and everyone processed around the open coffin whilst we all went round and round musically for about 20 verses. Sometimes the place in the service can suggest how a hymn or song is to be sung and hopefully the introduction will give the congregation a clue as to how the musician feels the words should be sung.

Problems can sometimes arise when the words and tune come from different books e.g. many of the hymns and songs in “Born in Song”. Although it is probably acceptable for the organist to leave out the odd verse (especially if the preacher is aware enough to notice and tells the congregation to SIT when there is a marked “slowing down’ or longer than usual after a verse) but it gets quite

embarrassing to play an extra verse – or even worse two verses because the congregation is small and can't be heard! An even worse fate awaits the organist when someone in the communications chain suffers from dyslexia and gets the numbers mixed up. If the words fit the tune – fine, (but see above re congregation comments afterwards) but if not, one or other of us has bits left over! On the one occasion this happened to me - and it was a small evening congregation sitting at the back of a large church whilst the organ was on the right at the front, where I couldn't hear the singing – we soldiered on into the 3rd verse before the minister called a halt and we all got together. The remedy? Get the words of the first line when they phone you with the numbers – which leads me neatly into Part 3 - tricks and mechanics.

### **Appreciating the Music - or is it Appreciating the Musician?**

It is probably true that for most of the congregation the “before” and “after” organ (or instrumental) music is a sort of musical wallpaper – a cover for greetings/chatter/etc. either in the vestibule or the church itself. Once the service “proper” gets under way after the entrance of the minister/preacher, attention is focused on the purpose of the service – Worship, and most of the congregation will follow the lead of the organist/music group, although most of my colleagues will have come across congregations who will have their way, whatever lead they are given “from the front”. There are of course varying views on what accompaniment is appropriate in any given situation – is the organ the right lead, or should it be the piano or a music(al) group perhaps with a soloist or body of singers”. The answer is of course – it all depends. Sometimes for small congregations a piano lead is right but for larger numbers the “weight” of the organ can carry the congregation along, even though sometimes it might be the last verse of a lively but unfamiliar or new tune before everything comes together.

It is probably a truism to say that most congregations are not aware of the amount of preparation which a conscientious musician will undertake in preparing the music for a service. No-one wants a lively or skittish piece as a collection voluntary if the collection follows prayers of intercession especially after a tragic local or national event. A contemplative final hymn should not be followed by a loud Bach Toccata (even less ‘The Widor’) but on the other hand *Jesu Joy* is probably not appropriate after *Joy to the World*. Also is there any point in preparing a long Toccata and Fugue if, before you finish, one of the stewards is at your shoulder to tell you “everyone’s gone – please put the lights out before you go”! A nice touch at Wesley is that the evening congregation sits and listens to the outgoing voluntary before rising from their seats!

On a more serious note – let’s encourage the next generation of musicians, whether organists, pianists instrumentalists or singers. I can remember encouraging Peter Bernard to take part in an evening service. He played one of

the hymns (I purposely came out from behind the curtain and sat in a pew) and he received an ovation from “Squash” - quite right too. We recently had a young man play the piano at a “Youth” service who certainly has the makings of another Peter, but let’s remember that our services are not like television where virtually everyone is recorded so that it can be redone if there is a mistake. In a service once we have hit the key, that’s it and mistakes cannot be undone. We need to remember that and when someone is brave enough to put themselves forward to lead our music perhaps we should remember that forbearance comes before praise in the dictionary!

## **A PERSONAL SELECTION OF RECENT ORGAN COMPACT DISCS**

Mark Jameson

Every year the number of compact discs featuring organ music seems to grow, but now having some 1800 recordings of organs and their music, one is forced to be more selective; space to house the collection is running out. Another factor in my selections, I have to be more frugal – my Wife retired at the end of 2003, and quite simply, there is not so much unallocated cash to spend on CDs! So here are five discs, all released since our last handbook, which I consider worth buying.

Benchmarks is a series recorded, and produced by Paul Derrett. Paul played for the BOA when we visited Prinknash Abbey in 1998; quite apart from being a brilliant player he has the ability to produce well-documented recordings with music well suited to the instruments. His latest release, Benchmark Volume 7 [806807CD] covers the region of Ludlow and Leominster, in particular Ludlow Parish Church, Leominster Priory, Clungford and Monkland parish churches and the two organs in the old school at Orleton. Very highly commended!

Another location the BOA recently visited was All Souls, Langham Place. Gerard Brooks is organist here, and at St. James’, Clerkenwell. Priory have released a programme of lighter [but not easy to play] music from All Souls called Fantasia [PRCD817] featuring music associated with the area, not least, the BBC. This is a disc to relax to, and enjoy the sound of this well-known organ featured in BBC’s Radio 4’s daily service until 1994.

The new slim line Carlo Curley recently demonstrated his skills in Reading at the Town Hall, which I know he does try to support. A prolific producer of CDs under his own label, he has recently released a disc “A genesis in Harmony”. Carlo’s use of Allen organs is well known, but this disc features an organ where criticism has been levied at the UK pipe organ builder for working with Allen. Here Carlo plays the Peter Collins/Allen organ in Trönö, Sweden. The church was destroyed by fire, and the town wanted a modern replacement with limited funding. I find it hard to tell what are pipes and what is digital.

The list of pieces on the rear cover leaves out the Prelude in Classical Style by Young. I think the disc is interesting, and should be listened to. [SOCD001]

You probably do not know Gary Cole, but he is one of the BBC team involved in music production. As a hobby he started the Regent CD label producing both choral and organ CDs. He recorded the Organ Club CD, and in 2001 started a series recording English Cathedrals. His latest release, Volume 8 [REGCD189] features Newcastle Cathedral, which is the first recording I have of this organ. The information leaflets are well produced, the quality of music excellent, and details of each instrument carefully documented. This latest disc starts with Guilmant's Sonata 1, includes music by Saint-Saens, Tournemire, Messiaen and finishes with Vierne's Carillon de Westminster. The next in the series to be release will feature Bristol Cathedral.

Finally a brand new organ. I have been to Fisk's organ building works in Gloucester, Massachusetts, USA, and have played at least one in the USA. They have built new organs in Japan and their latest and first European one is in Lausanne Cathedral, Switzerland. This is the builder's Opus 120, a 5 manual 135 rank 7319-pipe instrument completed late last year. The German label, IFO, in collaboration with Schott's "Organ" journal, has distributed this new recording in April 2004. [ORG7210-2, ref www.schott-music.com] It sounds great! The recording organist is Jean-Christophe Geiser who is Titular organist for the cathedral. The music is by Vincent Lubeck, Pierre Du Mage, Lizst and Durufle. The "Organ" journal is good too – 4 times a year with CD for 89 Euros but you must be able to follow some German. Priory is the UK distributor for IFO, but not the journal.

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Gram Ireland

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## HONORARY FELLOW

Dr Francis Jackson

(Dates below are the year of election for the following year)

### PAST PRESIDENTS

1921 - 23	<i>Percy R Scrivener FRCO FTCL</i>
1924 - 26	<i>A C P Embling MusD FRCO</i>
1927 - 28	<i>Percy R Scrivener FRCO FTCL</i>
1929 - 30	<i>F G Goodenough FRCO</i>
1931 - 34	<i>B Probert-Jones MusB FRCO</i>
1935 - 37	<i>Albert Barkus FRCO</i>
1938 - 42	<i>A Yould FRCO ARCM LRAM</i>
1943 - 45	<i>Archibald H Lusty ARCO HonFTCL</i>
1946	<i>Percy R Scrivener FRCO FTCL</i>
1947 - 48	<i>W Hugh Rowe ARCO</i>
1949 - 50	<i>Albert E Rivers</i>
1951 - 52	<i>A Warren FRCO</i>
1953 - 55	<i>Prof H C Barnard MA DLitt</i>
1956 - 57	<i>F Gordon Spriggs</i>
1958 - 60	<i>Leslie Pratt FTCL</i>
1961 - 63	<i>Roy N Nash</i>
1964 - 65	<i>Miss E G Goodship ATCL</i>
1966 - 68	<i>H D Anthony MA BSc PhD FRAS</i>
1969 - 71	<i>Leslie F B Davis</i>
1972 - 74	<i>R P J Pepworth</i>
1975 - 76	<i>J C Lawes</i>
1977 - 78	<i>Donovan L Jones</i>
1979 - 80	<i>Mrs Evelyn A Fisher</i>
1981 - 82	<i>Harold H Hartley MA BSc FRAS MBCS</i>
1983 - 84	<i>Peter B Marr PhD GTCL FRSA ARCO</i>
1985 - 86	<i>Derek M Guy AFCM</i>
1987 - 88	<i>Christopher Hood BA</i>
1989	<i>Christopher J Kent MusB MMus PhD FRCO ARMCM</i>
1990 - 91	<i>David Duvall MA FCA</i>
1992 - 93	<i>Philip Bowcock BSc MRICS</i>
1994 - 95	<i>Graham Ireland BA BMus MMus FRCO</i>
1996 - 97	<i>Donald Hickson MCMi</i>
1998 - 99	<i>Christine Wells BMus FRCO LRAM</i>
2000 - 01	<i>Graham Ireland BA BMus MMus FRCO</i>
2002 - 03	<i>Jim Wooldridge FSCA</i>

## PAST SECRETARIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

<i>1921 – 1926</i>	<i>S T Chamberlain</i>
<i>1927 – 1931</i>	<i>Sidney Collins</i>
<i>1932 – 1976</i>	<i>Archibald Lusty</i>
<i>1977 – 1983</i>	<i>Ron Pepworth</i>
<i>1984 – 1986</i>	Christopher Hood
<i>1987 – 1991</i>	Norman Hutt
<i>1992 – 1993</i>	Graham Ireland
<i>1994 – 1996</i>	Donald Hickson
<i>1997 – 1998</i>	Christine Wells
<i>1999 – 2000</i>	Graham Ireland
<i>2000 – 2001</i>	Jim Wooldridge

## PAST HONORARY TREASURERS

<i>c1930 – c1954</i>	<i>A.L Warman</i>
<i>c1954 – 1958</i>	<i>Leslie Pratt</i>
<i>1959 – 1960</i>	<i>Mrs S Stephenson</i>
<i>1961 – 1976</i>	<i>Leslie Pratt</i>
<i>1977 – 1979</i>	J G Davies
<i>1980 – 1982</i>	Peter Marr
<i>1983 – 1989</i>	David Duvall

## PAST EDITORS OF *THE BERKSHIRE ORGANIST*

<i>1948 – 1973</i>	<i>Albert Rivers</i>
<i>1974 – 77</i>	Leslie Davis
<i>1978 – 83</i>	Gordon Spriggs
<i>1984 – 1997</i>	Gordon Spriggs and Philip Bowcock