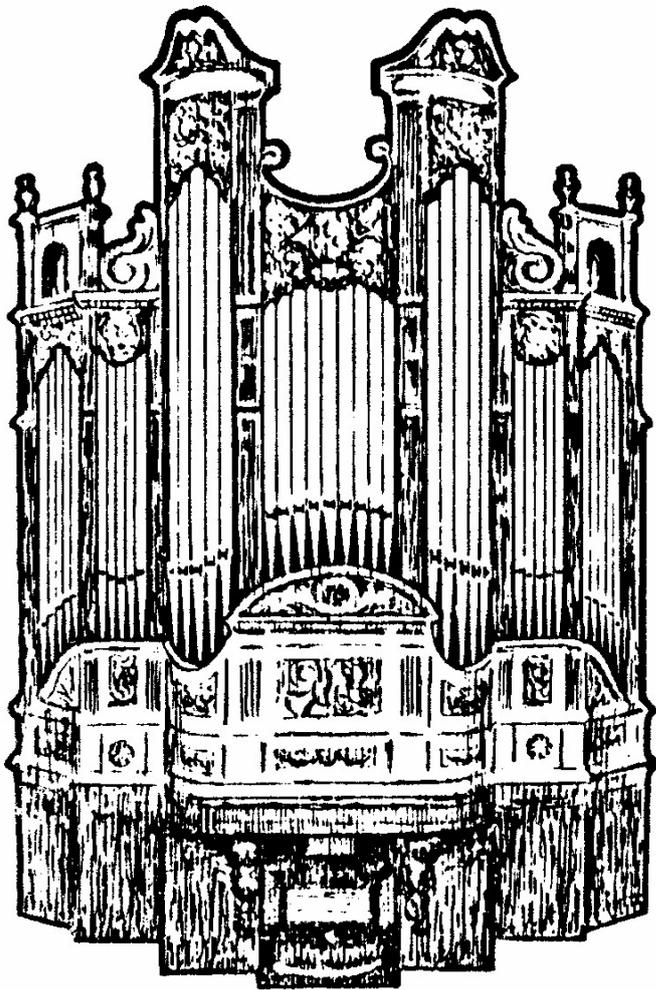


# The Berkshire Organist

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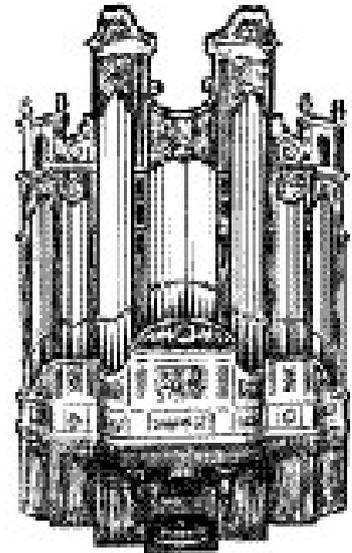
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# THE BERKSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

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.

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## EDITORIAL

Before I left for university, my parents, eager to make the best of the talents they had bestowed on their offspring, presented me with two dictionaries. One was the latest Concise Oxford Dictionary, the other, an old well-thumbed family one, cherished by all who needed to consult it. Their gift I know was a real sacrifice, but they were determined to see me fully prepared to embark upon tertiary education. I still use both volumes, usually consulting the family volume first, as its contents fulfil a dual role of providing me with answers, and conjuring up memories of my earlier life as I leaf through its pages.

During the preparation of this particular edition of *The Berkshire Organist*, I looked up the definition of the word “diamond”, as this issue is, incredibly, the sixtieth one. Many publications have come and gone, phoenixes have risen from ashes in a blaze of glory, only to disappear with the passing of time, and perhaps become collectors’ items. “The hardest and most valuable of all the precious stones”, was the definition in my dictionaries. From the Gemological Institute of America we read as follows, “a mineral composed of carbon crystallized at extremely high temperatures and pressures, refractive index of 2.417, has four directions of perfect octahedral cleavage, ... its lustre is adamantine”. Today we use the word in three contexts. On a personal level we call someone a rough diamond, meaning he or she is of intrinsic worth but roughly mannered, secondly the engineer uses a polycrystalline form of it for abrasive purposes, and thirdly, the acquisition of this highly valued gemstone for remembrance purposes shows the highest form of affection between two parties.

It is the glittering facets of the diamond which catch the eye of the admirer, ever changing kaleidoscopically with the changes of light and angle. So over the years our magazine has changed, growing from a few sheets of paper run off a Banda or a Gestetner, stapled roughly together, into a slick, eye-catching one, which uses the latest production techniques for its presentation and assembly. It continues to contain a multi-faceted collection of varied articles from a wide selection of members, whose interests and expertise are reflected in the enthusiasm which shines out of their articles. Content apart, their writing styles, both in grammar and choice of words, make a major contribution to the attraction of our magazine.

We must endeavour to preserve our *Berkshire Organist* at all costs, preventing it becoming a pile of ash, ever bearing in mind that it is a written record of the association’s activities. For many years now it has few equals amongst those of other organists’ associations. It is incumbent on all members to volunteer to put pen to paper, or “e” to “mail”, and record accurately an activity which they have attended, so that the wide variety of style and outlook will be maintained and demonstrated in future editions. Our gem is invaluable, beyond price, and as fragile as the changing light affects its appearance.

Congratulations and thanks to all who have in any way been associated with this “diamond” edition, and to those members who diligently support the aims of our association founded eighty-six years ago.

**Graham Ireland**

# THE 87<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND RECITAL

held at  
Wesley Methodist Church, Reading,  
on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2007

This year's AGM was based at Wesley Methodist Church, where our President elect, Christopher Cipkin presides at the console each Sunday. Luckily for us he is not averse to performing on a Saturday also, and had agreed to give the recital before the AGM proper.

Christopher's programme had been drawn up with a framework marking the season of spring moving towards summer, so it was unfortunate that the long spell of unseasonably warm and dry weather broke a couple of days beforehand (although those of us with gasping gardens were secretly quite relieved). The Jongen and Hollins pieces are in a light style which showed off the quieter stops on the instrument, and it was pleasing to hear all of the Whitlock 'Five Pieces' rather than just the well-known 'Folk Tune' which is often taken from the set. A well-judged and lively performance of the Bach work provided the meat of the recital, which was brought to an exuberant conclusion by the unfamiliar Bonnet 'Chant de Printemps' – a riot of fanfares and pedal pyrotechnics. The whole recital demonstrated Christopher's mastery of the Wesley organ, and I wonder how many of those present noticed that the sun came out during the final bars?

A full cream tea was provided in the welcome area of the church by the Wesley Catering Committee, whose scones were snapped up with relish. Once the tea had been consumed, members moved to the hall for the AGM. All the essential business was conducted swiftly, and included the unanimous decision to award Sybil Stephenson and Philip Bowcock honorary membership of the Association, and to make Dr. William McVicker an Honorary Fellow in recognition of his contribution to the raising of the profile of the Town Hall Father Willis. Perhaps the most important item though was the election, unopposed, of Christopher Cipkin as President for the coming year. Jonathan Holl passed on the badge of office and gave Christopher his best wishes for his tenure, as, indeed, did all the members present.

**David Pether**

## AGM ORGAN RECITAL PROGRAMME

Chant de Mai	Joseph Jongen
Prelude and Fugue in E Minor "Wedge" BWV 548	J.S. Bach
Five Short Pieces	Percy Whitlock
A Song of Sunshine	Alfred Hollins
Chant de Printemps	Joseph Bonnet

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been a pleasure and privilege to have been your President during the last three years. I believe that the Association thrives and is held in esteem by many. This can only be due to the loyalty and hard work put in by members of your committee. As I have stated before, I am most grateful for the support that I have received from our Secretary, Alan Kent and our Treasurer, Mark Jameson. They both have the knack of foreseeing potential problems and loopholes in the running of our affairs and steering us in the right direction. There is indeed the work of many to acknowledge. Christine Wells has put in an enormous amount of work in making all the arrangements for our meetings, visits and tours and I know that we are all grateful to her for continuing to arrange and oversee the programme, with the proviso that other members take a share in being responsible for making certain individual arrangements. Ian May continues to make all the arrangements for the local recitals.

*The Berkshire Organist* is a high quality magazine under the editorship of Graham Ireland. He is assisted by David Pether who also keeps our website very efficiently up to date. I believe the number of visits to our site is on the increase! Don Hickson looks after our publicity and Ruth Weatherly-Emberson oversees the Benevolent Fund. Last but not least, Michael Humphries produces our *Newsletter* every two months. To all these people we owe a debt of gratitude.

Graham Ireland and Jill York are retiring from the committee (if only for a period of time) as is Peter Chester who now lives in Beckenham. I would like to thank them for the time they have given and of course Graham has been a committee member for many years.

I am delighted that Philip Bowcock and Sybil Stevenson are being proposed as Hon. Members for their services to the Association over many years and also that Dr William McVicker is being proposed as an Hon. Fellow of the Association for his work in helping to promote the Town Hall *Father Willis* and nationally the organ as an instrument.

General interest in the organ is, I believe, on the increase. There are numerous courses around the country and abroad for organists of all ages and these are in general well attended. I notice increased numbers at recitals in various venues both near and far and organ music is played on the radio a little more often. We must strive to produce high quality concerts together with programmes which are not only of interest to organ aficionados. Of course, in stating this one must not overlook the dedication and loyalty of the majority of organists in their Sunday-by-Sunday work. The art of accompaniment is quite another matter from recital work and is highly important. Perhaps a masterclass on this topic could be something we could consider in the future.

I convey all good wishes to my successor.

**Jonathan Holl**

## INTRODUCING OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Christopher Cipkin has spent most of his life involved in church music. As a Yorkshireman by birth (or should that be nationality?), he began his musical career as a chorister of Leeds Parish Church under the direction of Dr. Simon Lindley. It was an experience he is immensely proud of and he still supports the Friends of the Music of Leeds Parish Church even though he rarely now gets an opportunity to hear one of the north's most famous church choirs. Simon Lindley's flair as a performer, combined with his meticulous attention to detail, was also an important early influence on Christopher's musical development.



**Christopher Cipkin**

After his voice broke, Christopher left 'LPC' and took up organ lessons with his father, a music teacher at a local comprehensive school in Bradford. During his teenage years, he served as organist at St Luke's Cleckheaton in his home town. The church possesses an unusual and finely voiced two manual Beale and Thynne instrument from 1901. He later went on to become Organ Scholar at the University of Keele (1992-1994), where he read English and History. During his time as Organ Scholar, he gave the inaugural recital of the refurbished Chapel Organ, an early British neo-Classical instrument designed by George Pratt and built in 1965 by Rushworth and Dreaper. He was also awarded the Wedgwood Prize for a dissertation on iconoclasm against organs during the English Civil War.

Following graduation, he decided to pursue a career in librarianship. In his first post at Canterbury Cathedral Library, he admitted to his musical interests and so was assigned the fascinating task of researching and cataloguing the eighteenth-century music of the Canterbury Catch Club. He also took organ lessons from Michael Harris, a BOA member who, at that time, was assistant organist at Canterbury. Interestingly, Michael had also been Assistant at Leeds Parish Church when Christopher was a chorister there. It's a small world! He recalls having two organ jobs while in Canterbury in churches at opposite ends of the town - a situation which involved running down the High Street to get from one service to the other in time! While in Newcastle working for his MA in Library and Information Management, he served as Organ Scholar at Newcastle Cathedral (1996-1997) and studied organ with James Lancelot in the historic setting of Durham Cathedral, gaining his ARCO in 1997.

The move to Berkshire came as a result of a job offer from the University of Reading. After a short time as Director of Music at St. James the Less, Pangbourne (1998-2000), he took up post as Organist and Choirmaster at Wesley Methodist Church, Reading, where he is still the resident organist. He is currently a Library Manager at the University of Reading, with responsibility for music collections, though this is now a very minor part of his role following the sad demise of the Music Department. From 1999 to 2004 he was the Music Librarian for the University, a role he took to so much, he ended up conducting two student choirs and playing for many degree congregations on top of his regular daytime duties. While Music Librarian, he also studied for an MA in Musicology with the University and was one of the last students to graduate in Music at Reading. He wrote a dissertation on pre-Reformation Tudor Polyphony, music of which he is particularly fond.

Christopher has become well known as a recitalist in the local area, contributing to the local recital series, the Reading Town Hall lunchtime series and the annual Heritage Open Day event. He has arranged the first organ recitals within living memory in the University's Great Hall and has also given two BOA AGM recitals in recent years. As a regular contributor to the Berkshire Organist, his thought-provoking articles have given something of an insight into his views: his belief that we must adapt our approach to promoting the organ repertoire to the culture in which we live, but that we must never demean our art by allowing our performances to become *muzak*. In addition to his BOA commitments, Christopher is a committee member of the Reading Bach Choir which he sings with and occasionally rehearses in the absence of its Director. He also chairs a national committee which provides training events for music librarians and those who work with music in libraries.

So, that's Christopher's life almost in a nutshell. He looks forward to his time in office and feels proud, if also somewhat humbled, to have been elected to serve the Association as its President at the relatively tender age of 33!

**David Pether**

## ELECTIONS

As a result of the elections at the AGM, the Association's key posts are filled as follows:

<b>President</b>	Christopher Cipkin
<b>Secretary</b>	Alan Kent
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mark Jameson
<b>Committee</b>	Julian Greaves (for 3 years) Derek Guy, Jim Wooldridge (for 2 years) Roger Bartlett, Ian May, David Pether (for 1 year)

<b>Past President</b>	Jonathan Holl
<b>Programme Secretary</b>	Christine Wells
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	Don Hickson
<b>Webmaster</b>	David Pether
<b>Benevolent Fund Steward</b>	Ruth Weatherley-Emberson
<b>Editors; <i>Berkshire Organist</i> <i>Newsletter</i></b>	Graham Ireland Michael Humphries
<b>Auditor</b>	Bill Potter

## MEMBERS' NEWS

Members' News is an up market gossip column, not in the sense that it contains breathless snatches of ephemeral information, but it refers to members of our association who have been contributing to its well being over the past year.

**Richard Mayers** helps out regularly at St. Mary Magdalen's, Tilehurst, and won a cup at the recent Woodley Festival. He recently gained a very high Merit for his Grade 4 Organ Exam conducted by the Associated Board. **Paul Manley** is one of the organists at St. Andrew's Caversham, where his expertise is greatly appreciated. He too won a cup at the recent Woodley Festival, and gained an excellent Distinction for his Grade 7 Organ Exam, again conducted by the Associated Board. We offer our congratulations to Richard and Paul, and we shall follow their careers with close interest. Climbing up the scale in September last, we were delighted to learn that **Huw Jones** had been appointed to the staff of Haileybury School, Hertfordshire, as Musician in Residence. He spends his entire day making music. What an enviable life Huw leads! This September, however, he will be moving on, and will take up his new full time appointment at Stowe School in Buckinghamshire, as Assistant Director of

Music and Director of Chapel Music. **Malcolm Walker** retired from work this year, and has left St. Thomas of Goring, to live in Dorset. His replacement is **Keith Allnatt** who takes up his appointment at the end of April of this year. We wish Keith many years of enjoyable music making at Goring, with a fine organ and an enthusiastic choir. **Gordon Hands** continues to run the Friday Lunch Time Concerts in the Minster Church in Reading, often having to apologize to the audience about the sorry state of the organ before the recital begins. He has introduced some variety to the recitals, by inviting non organists to play. We heard some fine piano playing by **Margaret Isaacson**, wife of our member, **Raymond**, and were treated to recitals by pupils from Reading Blue Coat School, organised by its Director, Jonathan Bowler. **Ruth Weatherley-Emberson** with her husband Bernie and their intrepid hound, Millie, who is featured in an article in this issue by **Christopher Hood**, have withdrawn to the Isle of Wight to establish a permanent home there. We do see them at all of our association meetings, and I am sure that, like me, you are reminded of the price of the ferry crossing, exorbitantly high even for residents of the island, when we see the three of them back in Reading. **Philip Bowcock** after undergoing a hip replacement, is making a speedy recovery, and has resumed his duties at Dunsden Church. You may not know that Philip is actively associated with choral courses run by the RSCM in Oxford. These are very popular. It is with considerable sadness, that we report the death of **Leonard Head**. His long membership of the association was characterised by loyal attendance and active support at concerts and social occasions. We shall miss his quiet unassuming presence at our events. A report of his life and funeral service will appear as a separate report in this issue.

**Graham Ireland**



**Woodley Festival Entrants Alistair McIntosh, Richard Mayers and Paul Manley, with sponsor Ann Manning (l) and adjudicator Brian Fawcett (r).**

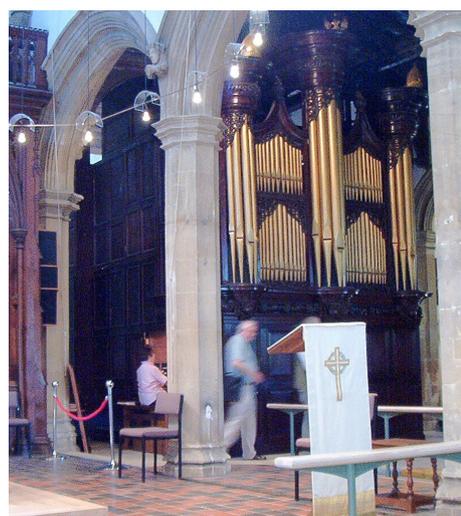
## ...AND MILLIE CAME TOO

On June 10<sup>th</sup> the weather was gloriously sunny when about 10 members and spouses [and 1 dog] travelled to Abingdon to visit the churches of St. Helen and St. Nicholas. The number given is approximate, because I was unable to find them all in the same place at one time to obtain an accurate count, and anyway, there were some comings and goings throughout the day.

The visit began at St.Helen's. On going to the church, having managed to find a parking space, what attracted us first was a row of beautifully restored MG sports cars, lined up outside the church. Abingdon was holding a civic celebration day, and, as the home of the MG marque, part of the celebration consisted of an exhibition of cars with pictures and other memorabilia inside. Of other interest were eleven bells on exhibition waiting for the completion of the renovation of the tower before they could be hung. They are I was surprised to hear, brand new. The lady who told me about them was obviously as keen on campanology as I am on organs, and explained that the previous set was too large to be hung on a single level in the tower. This makes control of the ringing difficult, and the new set will all be on the same level. All this cost a great deal of money, but the church was fortunate in having a rich sponsor who footed the bill. All in all there was plenty to see, before we arrived at the organ itself, the point of our visit.

As it possesses five aisles, the church is extremely wide, and the nave is essentially square in floor plan. I am sure that a study of the history of the building would be both fascinating and time consuming, as it was once used by two different congregations. A large square sanctuary has been created at the east end of the centre aisle, and the organ is situated at the east end of the inner south aisle, projecting slightly into the aisle.

David Wickens introduced us to the organ. The first known organ was built about 1725 by Abraham Jordan [junior], and placed on a west end screen. Its façade still forms part of the present case, comprising the west front of the present instrument. Work was done on this organ by Byfield about 1789. In 1849 it was moved by "person or persons unknown" to the nave in a position adjacent to the south door. In 1870 a faculty was granted "to move the organ". Details are not clear, but Hill's estimate book has entries in 1869 and 1871 for work at St. Helen's, and the 1871 shop book has an entry for work done there which was completed in 1873. In 1927 the organ



**St.Helen's Church, Abingdon**

was completely rebuilt by Harrison and Harrison in the then current tonal style, with 16-ft pitch flues on both Great and Choir, and a 16-ft Clarinet on the Swell. The Great Open Diapason and Geigen, and the Swell 8-ft Harmonic Flute and Gamba, were new. In 1971 the organ was extensively altered by Hill, Norman and Beard according to the well intentioned but totally catastrophic “neo-Baroque” principles which were in vogue at the time. This involved removing manual doubles, together with the Great Open Diapason, Geigen and Claribel Flute, and the Swell Harmonic Flute, Viola and Oboe, with various upper ranks being placed on the vacated slides. Alterations were also made to the voicing, and the wind pressure were reduced. If you are interested and have an internal connection the full details of this rebuild are on the National Pipe Organ Register, index number A00469. This instrument was regarded practically as a failure from the start, but nothing was done until 2005 when generous funding [similar to that provided for the bells] became available for the organ. The work was carried out by Harrison and Harrison, and comprised a complete restoration of the instrument to its 1927 state including tubular pneumatic action. Some of the pipework had to be re-made, and re-voicing was necessary, but thanks to the records kept by the firm, this work could be done accurately. Three stops were obtained from a redundant 1907 Harrison and Harrison organ in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in County Durham. The origins of the pipework are indicated in the specification. In addition, the organ was moved westwards about 6 feet so that it speaks more directly into the church, and is better aligned with the present sanctuary area.

<b>The Organ at St.Helen’s Church, Abingdon</b>					
<b>GREAT</b>		<b>SWELL</b>		<b>CHOIR</b>	
Bourdon	16 A	Harmonic Flute †	8	Double Salicional *	16
Open Diapason *	8	Viola da Gamba ‡	8	Open Diapason †	8
Geigen ‡	8	Voix Célestes †	8	Stopped Diapason †	8
Claribel Flute *	8	Gemshorn	4	Nason	4
Octave	4	Mixture †	III		
Octave Quint	2 2/3	Double Clarinet ‡	16		
Super Octave	2	Trumpet †	8		
Sesquialtera †	III	Oboe ‡	8		
		Clarion †	4		
				<b>PEDAL</b>	
				Open Wood	16 B
				Sub Bass	16 A
				Octave Wood	8 B
				Flute	8 A
‘En Fenêtre’ drawstop console				* from Sacriston organ	
Manual Compass				† restored to 1927 state	
C to A (58 notes)				‡ new 2005	
Pedal Compass					
C to F (30 notes)					
Radiating and Concave					

After the introduction, David Wickens played the Bach Chorale Prelude, “Jesus Christus Unser Heiland” from the Leipzig Chorales BWV 665. He was using the Novello edition with its suggested registration, which begins quietly and builds up to a full organ climax. Today this registration, with a legato style of playing, is regarded as completely infra-dig, but the edition of these chorales was produced at a time when many larger organs in the country had tonal qualities and action similar to St.Helen’s, and this style of Bach is suited to these instruments. Following David’s performance we visiting organists enjoyed ourselves until it was time to go to lunch.



### **Abingdon**

As the picture shows, Abingdon is a very pleasant riverside town, and several of us, including Ruth and Bernie adjourned to a suitable hostelry. Ruth and Bernie did not come alone however,, they were accompanied by their dog, Millie. Now, not only is Millie a Golden Labrador with all the good nature and charm of the breed, she is also a retired guide dog for the blind, and is quite irresistible when it comes to cadging titbits and being generally fussed over. She made an enjoyable lunch quite memorable.

Lunch having been taken, we set off for the church of St. Nicholas, which is only a couple of minutes stroll from St. Helen’s. It actually took longer than that as another part of the celebrations in Abingdon was a visit by a German brass band, with the ladies in traditional folk costume, and the gentlemen in Lederhosen and feathered hats, performing with wonderful “oompah”. This was the cause of our delay. However, we eventually crossed the road, and were met at St. Nicholas by Richard Jones, who let us in and turned us loose on the organ. This carries a Nicholson nameplate, but the earlier history of the instrument is not recorded in the NPOR. The specification suggests the 1930s to me, resembling that of the organ in St. Helen’s, though the case looks newer. The

survey date in the NPOR is 1963, so that puts a limit to the latest construction date. Further information would be welcome. [Anyone pestering Nicholson's for information?] Perhaps typical of the specifications of that period are the ample sets of couplers. Note in particular the presence of the Swell Sub Octave, and the Swell Sub Octave to Great. Also noteworthy is the thirty two note pedal board, which, according to the NPOR dated back to at least 1960. The sound is very good despite its position in the chancel, but the church is not over large, and does not make undue acoustic demands. It is certainly an instrument which should perform well for normal Sunday by Sunday use in accompanying congregational singing, and can give a good account of a fair chunk of the standard repertoire.

### St.Nicholas' Church, Abingdon

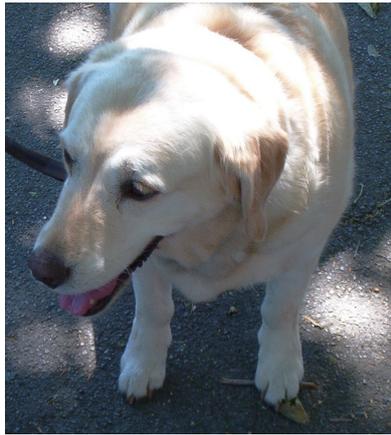


#### The Organ at St.Nicholas' Church, Abingdon

GREAT		SWELL		PEDAL	
Contra Dulciana	16 A	Open Diapason	8	Bourdon	16 B
Open Diapason	8	Stopped Diapason	8	Dulciana	16 A
Hohl Flute	8	Salicional	8	Bass Flute	8 B
Dulciana	8	Gemshorn	4	Dulcet	8 A
Principal	4	Contra Oboe	16 C		
Dulcet	4	Oboe	8 C		
Quartane II	12.15	Tremulant			
		Trumpet	8		
'En Fenêtre' drawstop console				<b>COUPLERS</b>	
Manual Compass				Swell to Pedal	
C to C (61 notes)				Swell to Great	
Pedal Compass				Swell octave to Great	
C to G (32 notes)				Swell sub octave to Great	
Radiating and Concave				Swell octave	
				Swell sub octave	
				Great to Pedal	
				Swell Octave to Pedal	

Both of these organs have tonal characteristics which have been regarded as undesirable for several decades during which the baroque organ has come to be the be all and end all of organ tone. I admire such instruments immensely, and think of the sound of the fabulous organ in St.Wenzel in Naumburg. Organs

built in England in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have their own special merit. To decry them is exceedingly insulting to the men who built them, and, indeed, to the people who enjoy listening to them. The two organs which we visited in Abingdon are excellent examples of organs of their time, which can give thoroughly musical performances of a wide range of music. Organists should be aware of judging an instrument by its paper specification and by a possible inappropriate set of aesthetic standards. This is a particularly fraught topic in respect of Bach which is so often affected by the desire to be “authentic”.



**Millie**

The fact that organs built by Arp Schnitger have tonal qualities totally unlike those we visited in Abingdon is no reason for not playing Bach’s music on the latter. After all, Silbermann’s organs are in many ways as different from those of Schnitger as either are from Harrison and Harrison and Nicholson.

All in all this was a most enjoyable day out. It gave us something to think about, and of course presented the dreadful temptation of “dognapping” Millie, and taking her home!

**Chris Hood**

## **THE PRESIDENT’S GARDEN PARTY**

This took place on July 8<sup>th</sup>, during a spell of unusually hot weather, which resulted in a high turnout of members. The afternoon started with a visit to St. Mary’s Winkfield, a most unusual building dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Its chancel was totally rebuilt in Victorian times by the Berkshire architect, Henry Woodyer. The tower, a red brick structure dating from 1629 at the time of our visit was totally covered in scaffolding and undergoing major restoration. This work was completed late in the year, and topped out with a visit by the Duke of York. What is most unusual in the nave is that it is impossible for a bridal pair to walk up or down the main aisle in procession. In 1592 the nave was redesigned with a width accommodating two bays. Oaks from Windsor Forest were used to form the central series of support columns. Carvings on these columns indicate that the timber was given by Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup>. The church also contains a monument to Thomas Wise, the builder of the dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral.

The organ, situated in the north side of the chancel, was built in 1820 by Gray & Davison, with further work by them in 1878 and 1889. Tony Foster-



## SEPTEMBER VISIT

The September meeting for our association now coincides with the Heritage Open Day nationally, apart from London, which is a week later. So, to add to the planned visit for the month, the day started for the writer with Jonathan Holl's concert at Christchurch, in the centre of Woking. The church promotes an extensive series of concerts, and is well equipped with facilities and an excellent café cum refreshment area, making it an ideal venue.

The Woking organ is a 1909 Hunter, cleaned and renovated in 1927, and overhauled in 1959. Manders took control of the tuning from 1977, and over the years have carried out a steady maintenance and restoration programme. Despite Mander's efforts, the organ can still be temperamental. Fortunately it was in fine fettle for Jonathan's recital. His programme consisted of works by Handel, Boyce, Wesley, Darke, Parry, Wills [Etheldreda Rag], finishing with Guilmant's *Fantasie sur deux Mélodies Anglaises*. Mandy, Jonathan's wife turned the pages over for her husband, performing a delicate balancing act on one corner of the raised console platform.

Then it was off to Royal Holloway College, near Egham, which since 1900 has been part of London University. Royal Holloway's Victorian buildings, designed to look like a French Chateau, were originally founded by Thomas Holloway for the further education of women. As with many educational establishments the chapel was the last to be completed. William Crossland, a Yorkshireman and a pupil of Sir Gilbert Scott, was the architect. He decorated the building with figures by the Italian sculptor Fucigna. In 2000 the building was restored following the appearance of cracks in the ceiling, but it was not redecorated. The project was overseen by Peter Riddington, who was directly involved in the restoration of Windsor Castle, following the disastrous fire. It is certainly a stunning building.

The present organ is by Harrison and Harrison of Durham, and was built to the design of Thomas Duncan of St. Andrew's University, and Lionel Pike, a member of the Music Department staff. On this day Robert Gough, Master of Music, a new comer to the music staff, made us very welcome. Further recent work on the action was outlined, most of it concerning the Pedal pipework, with four ranks elsewhere remaining from the original 1886 Walker organ.

Robert Gough had gone to a lot of trouble to prepare an excellent demonstration for us, but sadly very few members turned up. The specification of the organ in abbreviated format is:

Pedal: c/p, g/p, s/p, 16,16,10<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub>,8,8,4,4,III,16/8EC, 16/8/4/Swell

Choir: Trem, s/c, 8,4,4,2<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub>,2,1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>5</sub>,III,8,8/4EC

Great: c/g, s/g, soct/g, ssuboct/g, 16,8,8,4,4,2, IV-V, III,8/4EC

Swell: Trem, oct, subo, unoff: 8,8,8[tc],4,IV,16/8,8



## A VISIT TO EAST ANGLIA

In October 2006 six members of BOA assembled on a Wednesday afternoon in the nave of Ely Cathedral for the start of a three day tour of the area. Here we were met by Jonathan Lilley, the assistant organist, and the organ scholar, Edward Taylor, who demonstrated the organ to us. He played *Berceuse* by Vierne, Whitlock's *Pastorale*, and a *Postlude* by Stanford which demonstrated the Englishness of the instrument. Unfortunately we were unable to play the instrument as a rehearsal was due to take place almost immediately. Some outstanding features of this organ include a chorus of strings on the Swell and Solo, various fine solo stops, a 32ft flue on the Great, and an Orchestral Trumpet [made by Harrison and Harrison in 2001] which is louder than the Tuba. The Hill organ was moved in the 1830s from the choir screen when it was demolished, and Gilbert Scott designed a fine wooden case on the north side of the choir. This houses the Great and Choir sections, with the other sections close by. From 1906 Harrison and Harrison greatly enlarged the original Hill organ, and there have been other improvements since. Currently the organ is a four manual, with 80 stops.

After leaving Ely we made our way to Swaffham to the George Hotel, which was to be our comfortable base for the next few days.

Thursday morning began by crossing the road to Swaffham Parish Church, where Brian Lincoln demonstrated the Makin Westmoreland digital organ. Nearby stood a three manual Bishop pipe organ of 1876, sadly abandoned due to massive restoration costs quite beyond the reach of the church. A give-away that all was not that it seemed was the sound of a 32-ft Pedal reed coming from the case which was not large enough to accommodate the pipes! Our turn came to try out this digital organ, and our grateful thanks were expressed to Brian Lincoln for meeting us, as he was not at all well.

The afternoon saw us at St. Margaret's Kings Lynn, once we had mastered the one-way system in the pouring rain. Here we were warmly welcomed by Adrian Richards to a very fine church with its Snetzler Organ. This large church dates from 1100, and the organ from 1754. When Dr. Charles Burney was organist it stood on a gallery under the west window. During two centuries of work there have been many changes, and the organ is now mounted in the centre of the church by the north transept. We all agreed that this was a lovely instrument to play with its fine clear sound. Adrian's name was familiar to us as he writes some reviews of both CDs and sheet music for "Organists' Review" and "The Organ".

Our final stop of the day was at Peterborough Cathedral. After a quick break for tea we attended Evensong. We were met after it by the organ scholar Ben Hordern. Andrew Reid, the Director of Music, has since apologised for not

welcoming us, but he had been involved in discussions, which prevented him from getting away. Ben described to us the much publicised fire of November 2001, which had started in the aisle behind the choir stalls, damaging the whole organ with the exception of the console, which stands on a raised loft on the other side of the choir. The nave ceiling had only just been restored so that the work had to be redone, and the choir stalls needed extensive cleaning work to repair the smoke damage. The 4 manual organ by William Hill of 1868 has been in the care of Harrison and Harrison since 1981, and the firm undertook the rebuild after the fire. Details of the organ can be found on the cathedral's website; [www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk](http://www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk). My memory is of a rather limited space to stand in the loft, with the usual hazardous staircase just behind the organ bench. Ben demonstrated the organ with the following pieces:

Chorale Fantasia on <i>Darwell's 148<sup>th</sup></i>	Harold Darke
1 <sup>st</sup> Movement, Allegro, <i>Symphony No 2</i>	Louis Vierne
Toccata, from <i>Suite Modale</i>	Flor Peeters
Meditation, from <i>Suite Medievale</i>	Jean Langlais

I think that we all agreed that the instrument was comfortable to play, and that the time spent on it was very enjoyable. By this time we were the only people in the building. When Ben let us out he was very careful with the locks and the security system. Having made our farewells, we faced a longish drive across a flat East Anglia in the dark back to our hotel in Swaffham in time for dinner.

Our last full day allowed some time for looking around Swaffham before our visit to Wymondham Abbey [pronounced Wyndham]. This is a striking building with a tower at each end. One is ruined and the other unfinished. What remains standing today, the nave and its aisles, is only half of the great abbey church. Hardly anything remains of the monastic quire which lay beyond the taller tower. The abbey served a community of Benedictine monks who built their church with stone from Caen, in France. Its interior is very impressive with a dramatic 20<sup>th</sup> century altar screen, a high hammer-beam roof, and wide aisles. At the west end the organ case is framed by the tower arch. It was built by James Davis of Preston in 1793. It is a three manual instrument with pedals added later, and was restored in 1953 and 1973, with virtually all of the original Davis pipework retained. In 1953 the console was replaced, with the former one standing below the tower in a display case. George Thalben-Ball gave the opening recital after both rebuilds. We were met here by Howard Thomas, the Director of Music, who invited us to play. The organ sounded fine when you were at the console, but because it is set back in the tower the sound does not

carry as well into the nave as might be expected. There are 46 stops, with a Pedal Mixture and a 32-ft Sackbut. In the north aisle, also by James Davis, stands a chamber organ dating from 1810, but given to the abbey in 1977.

Lunch having been taken in an old wood beamed hostelry near the abbey, we drove on to Norwich with an opportunity to play the cathedral organ. At the cathedral we were met by David Dunnant, the Organist and Master of the Choristers who left us to our own devices. The current instrument was built in 1899 by Norman & Beard, followed by a rebuild by the same firm in 1939, incorporating William Hill, after some fire damage. The bulk of the instrument is mounted on the quire screen with some pipework on the north aisle. Here in the loft there is plenty of room with seats for the weary hearted. It is a substantial 4 manual instrument with 128 stops and its famous Cymbelstern on the west case. Notable on the Great is a 32-ft Double Gedacht. We enjoyed playing this large versatile instrument. The cathedral also owns a Snetzler chamber organ built in 1745, which can be found in a side chapel.

We then moved on to our final visit of the tour to St. Peter Mancroft. This church is more centrally located than the cathedral. Here there is a Peter Collins organ built in 1984. We were met by Jody Butler, the Director of Music, and Matthew Pitts, the organist who told us all about the organ. The case is very impressive, with shiny pipes on display in the Pedal towers on either side, and the Positive central sections. A spiral staircase leads up to the console with its three manuals, namely the Great, Echo [enclosed], and Positive. The 38 stops are located on each side and combination pedals serve as pistons normally found under the manuals. The sound carries well into the church. At the east end by the choir stalls is a small organ built by Hele & Co in 1912, which is used occasionally to accompany the services.

It takes some organising to arrange such a complex visit as this one, and we are grateful, as always, to Christine for an enjoyable and varied few days, with such interesting places to visit.

**Peter Chester**

## THE ANNUAL DINNER

On the evening of Saturday November 11<sup>th</sup>, thirty two members and their guests gathered at the Quality Hotel for the Annual Dinner. The venue and the company were quite delightful. Four circular tables had been attractively laid up in silver and red with glassware and candles. There was plenty of time for drinks and a chat before and during the meal. We noticed that the acoustics of the room allowed for many people to talk at once, without the need for anyone to raise their voice, even across the table. It was all very conducive to an intimate atmosphere in a crowded room.

Although the menu was somewhat restricted, the quality of the food was excellent, as indeed was the service. My husband, Tony, is not allowed to eat anything sugary, so when the desserts were served he was given a cheeseboard which seemed to come from nowhere. I suspect that Christine Wells had something to do with that. My seating partner, Don Hickson, behaved impeccably, and was even persuaded by his wife Sylvia, to exchange his chocolate gateau for her apple pie. Now that's a real gentleman for you. No one was having my chocolate gateau!

The meal was rounded off with coffee and chocolate mints, and naturally more chat. At this point Don would have liked to light his pipe, and I quite fancied a cigar, but in this Nanny State such excesses are not allowed, so we quietly abstained.

Our guest after-dinner speaker was Katherine Venning, the Administrator for Harrison and Harrison. She had valiantly made the long and daunting journey from Durham to Reading just to be with us, and we sincerely thank her for that. Tony and I know Katherine quite well. We were with her three weeks before the dinner when our Institute of British Organ Building, of which she is President, had an all-day meeting at Cheltenham Ladies College to see, hear, and climb into the new Kenneth Tickell organ. Kenneth's brilliant presentation was followed by a visit to Cheltenham College [Boys], to see, hear, and climb inside the 1930s Harrison and Harrison organ there - a truly wonderful beast. It proved to be an excellent day out.

Katherine's visit to the Quality Hotel did have a moment of panic, when she realised on the Friday evening that she had left all of her paperwork at the office. She telephoned our workshop, and luckily, our colleague Paul was working late, so he was able to inform her of the name of the hotel, and the expected time of her arrival. The tragedy had been averted.

Our guest speaker's talk was mainly about organ builders rather than organs. It included a brief history of Harrison and Harrison, and the enormous workload completed by Arthur Harrison in the early days. She admitted that even with all the modern technology at their fingertips now, the firm could never construct so

many vast organs in such a short period of time. She also read a poem by John Budgen, the organ builder, about tuning an organ. It concerned coffee and lunch breaks, incorrect temperatures for tuning, many faults arising from a rather dodgy pneumatic action, with the resultant decision for the tuner to tune the reeds and depart for home as soon as possible. It was highly amusing with a ring of truth. Harrison and Harrison's next job is to partly re-design and refurbish an enormous five manual organ. The organ is behind an iron bar cage, and the only way out is to dismantle it and to load it into containers on the roof. From there they will be lifted off and then shipped back to Durham. The Choir organ was totally inaccessible down a blocked corridor, but this has been cleared now so that section can be removed. Goodness knows how much space in the workshop is going to be taken up with this bulky instrument. The cost will be £1.2 million, which seems a real bargain given the work involved.

All in all Katherine's talk was very interesting, appealing to all present, and I am sure was enjoyed by them.



**Katherine Venning entertaining the President and your Editor**

After yet more friendly conversation and banter, we all began to wend our way home. Although the cold wind of the night was a shock to the system, we all took some warm happy memories of a pleasant meeting spent in extremely convivial company.

**Eileen Foster-Waite**

## THE JANUARY SOCIAL

It must have been with a sense of great pride and satisfaction that Derek and Jen hosted the Association's January Social in their New Emmanuel Methodist Church, on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>. I say "their", because in their quiet unassuming way Derek and Jen have for us all in the Association, been at the forefront of the planning, development and final handing over of the building to the congregation for its intended use. We have shared their concerns, and celebrated with them the completion of the building, and joined with them in the marriage of their daughter Lizzie to Paul.

Some twenty of us, including Ruth and Bernie Weatherly-Emberson's, dog, Millie who was on holiday from the Isle of Wight, were warmly greeted at the door, and handed a paper which contained the names of twenty organ stops to unscramble, all to be found on the new Makin organ in the church. We then sat in small groups for a quiz delivered by Jen. This was a well-researched quiz for it gave us all a chance to answer some of the questions, with high expectations realized by one group in particular.

After this, we moved into the church where Derek gave us a detailed account, which you will find in Number 59 of the *Berkshire Organist*, of the church, from its original inception to its completion. Derek demonstrated the stops on the Makin, which sounded quite excellent in the church, both for accompanying a lusty congregation and recital purposes.

Several members took advantage of Derek's offer to try the organ before we moved back into our original room where an excellent tea had been laid out for our delectation. There was something to suit the most varied of sweet teeth, and cups of refreshing tea, etc. to complement the food. We thank Jen, Joyce, Margaret and Stella for providing such a sumptuous repast, prepared with little fuss, as expected, and served with charming grace.

Too soon it was time to make our farewells. Our President thanked all of those whose hard work had made the social so enjoyable, and to our hosts from the church in particular, who had left no stone unturned to ensure a warm welcome on this unique occasion.

**Graham Ireland**

## VISIT TO ROMSEY AND SOUTHAMPTON

With the snow melted and the roads clear, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February saw members and friends make their way south to visit two very fine organs. The first was at Romsey Abbey, where we were met by the Assistant Organist,

David Coram. He gave a brief demonstration before members took their turn. The sound of the organ was something to marvel at. For its time the original specification was most imaginative, having for instance, a mixture and two reeds on the pedal and a Tierce on the Great. [The latter would have been commonplace 50 - 100 years before!] In 1888 Walkers carried out further work, making the Swell and Pedal actions pneumatic, and adding five more stops. Henry Willis in 1955 submitted a proposal for a rebuild, and further builders submitted proposals in the 1970s. It was not until 1982 that Mander's proposal was accepted and carried out. Further rebuilding proposals were made in 1989, but Walker's scheme was adopted in 1996. The actions now are Barker lever to the Great, pneumatic to the pedal, and mechanical to the Swell and Choir. The original stopknobs from 1858 are still in use, worked by electric action with ten general "pistons", and eight memory levels. The "pistons" are in fact composition pedals, for there are no thumb pistons as such. In 1998 a separate Nave Organ was built by Walkers, with the small console in the north aisle. Its stops have been duplicated on the main console and can be played from the Great manual. It was a real joy to play.

After dispersing for lunch, [the writer and his wife, on the advice of the organist, found a delightful French restaurant nearby] we made our way to Southampton to visit Pear Tree Church, just to the east of Itchen bridge. Formerly known as "Jesus Chapel St. Mary Extra", this is the oldest Anglican church in the world. Dated 1618, it was the first church to be built after the Reformation. Originally it was a barn-like structure, but subsequent enlargements took place, resulting in 1883 with the addition of a chancel. Here we were met by Anthony Burns-Cox, [one time Assistant Organist at Llandaff Cathedral and for many years at Romsey Abbey]. He gave us a very warm welcome, and played a number of short extracts from the repertoire ranging from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The organ was installed in 1900 by Gray & Davison as a two manual with a third manual prepared for. This was installed in 1905, not by the original builder, but by Burton of Winchester! Further work was carried out in the 1950s and 70s. It was not until 1998 that Manders undertook major work, restoring some of the actions and interior to match the work of Gray & Davison. Like Romsey Abbey, the organ produced a glorious sound, and was a pleasure to play.

It was good to have with us two or three local members of the Organ Club, who had been made aware of our itinerary. In all, a most enjoyable day with warm welcomes at both venues.

Specifications of both organs are available in the NPOR.

**Jonathan Holl**

## SOUTH BERKSHIRE VISIT

On Saturday 12 March, some dozen or so members and friends made the trip out to the rural pleasures of South Berkshire, on a fine day, to visit three local churches. First port of call was St. Bartholomew's Church, Arborfield. This delightful church was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to replace the wooden church which had been in existence for some 600 years, but was falling into a bad state of repair. The ruins of the original church can still be found a short distance away. After our welcome, we were first given a demonstration of an invention by our member Michael Humphries, of an attachment to the organ which counts the number of verses for hymns to prevent the organist from playing too few or too many. Judging from comments made by Jonathan Holl in the ensuing Newsletter, the writer of this report was not the only one who could have done with it on the following day! The organ here was an 1863 Walker, originally of one manual plus pedals situated at the east end of the church. At some stage or stages in the interim it was moved to its present site at the west end, when a second manual was added. This change probably explains the strange stop layout with Swell and Great stops on both sides of the console. The Swell stops were arranged horizontally and labelled in black, while those on the Great were arranged vertically and labelled in red. There was also a "Keys to Pedal" coupler which automatically coupled both manuals to the pedals. Several members tried this organ out before adjourning to the very well appointed hall next door for tea and cakes.



**St. Bartholomew's Church,  
Arborfield**



very enjoyable and interesting afternoon. Our thanks go to all in the association for the afternoon's smooth organisation, and to the authorities and organists at the three churches who made us so welcome.

**Mark Jameson**

<b>The Organ at St.John's Church, Farley Hill</b>			
Bourdon	16	Pedal	25 notes
Open Diapason	8		
Stopped Diapason	8	TC	
Dulciana	8		
Principal	4	TC	
Flute	4		
Pedal to Keys coupler			

### **“LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN”**

This memorable quotation from Ecclesiasticus formed the centrepiece of Father John Hudson's tribute to a devoted and much loved member of St. Matthew's, Southcote, Leonard Head, who died on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2007, in the RBH, aged 74. As befitted Len's preoccupation with detail, particularly in the drawing up of lists, his funeral arrangements had been finalised well before hand. The supportive congregation representing Len's friends from all walks of his life, including three members of the Berkshire Organists' Association, of which he was one of the longest serving members, sang four of his favourite hymns, Lord of All Hopefulness, Angel Voices Ever Singing, The King Of Love My Shepherd Is, and, O God Our Help In Ages Past.

Father John, in his tribute to Len, emphasised his ability to get on well with everybody who touched his life. He got on “famously” with them. From his early days as an only child living with his parents on the Basingstoke Road, and educated at the Blue Coat School on the Bath Road, Len joined British Railways, and remained with the company until he retired. Ruth Weatherley-Emberson added her personal tribute to Len, mentioning in particular his loyalty to the Berkshire Organists' Association, his love of maps, and overwhelming desire to navigate when being taken on BOA outings. Members and friends recalled incidents and vignettes from his long life in the church hall, after the funeral rite, and welcomed the funeral party's return from Henley Road Cemetery, where Len had been laid to rest in his parents' grave. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

**Graham Ireland**

## **ASSOCIATION LOCAL RECITALS**

There have been a good number of local recitals this year. The dates, organists and churches are listed below. The programmes have been nicely varied and each recital has brought in members of the church congregations as well as local people together with BOA members.

### **2006**

May 27th - Graham Ireland at St Thomas of Canterbury, Goring-on-Thames

June 17th - Jonathan Holl at Waltham St Lawrence

September 23rd - Andrew Boseley at St Andrew's, Sonning

October 28th - Ian May at Greyfriars, Reading.

November 25th - David Butler at Rotherfield Greys

### **2007**

January 27th - Raymond Isaacson at Emmanuel Methodist, Reading

February 24th - Christopher Cipkin at the University Great Hall

March 24th - David Old at SS Michael and Mary Magdalen, Easthampstead

Sincere thanks are due to all the organists concerned and to David Pether for dealing with the publicity.

**Ian May**

## **THE WOODLEY FESTIVAL**

The Organ Class of the Woodley Festival took place, this year in the Chapel of Reading School. It was a change of venue which coincided with a new look to the festival brochure, and the continued sponsorship of the festival itself, by a local firm of insurance brokers. A difference to the syllabus this year was that in each class players were obliged to prepare a set piece, as well as one of their own choice. This was a brave and successful move as it allowed the candidates to set their personal standards against those of their fellow competitors in the prescribed piece, and show their individual artistry in the piece of their own choice.

We heard some fine playing from all three competitors, all of whom enjoyed the vibrant sounds of the chapel organ, the console of which provided some challenges for them. In class 438 we heard the set piece which was Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in G major, No 5*, Novello Bk 1, *Prelude in Classic Style* by Gordon Young, and *Te Deum* by Charpentier. In class 439 the set piece was Bach's *Fugue in B minor* [the Corelli subject], with the first movement of Hindemith's *Second Sonata* as the personal choice.

Once again Brian Fawcett adjudicated with his customary expertise. He commented favourably, as was expected by such an experienced musician, offering both comments on the individual performances, and tips on recital preparation. The cup for class 439 was awarded to Paul Manley, and the cup for class 438, to Richard Mayers.

The afternoon's entertainment came to a happy conclusion when all of the competitors stood in the gallery of the chapel, and on the floor beneath, for photographs with the adjudicator and the friendly sponsors of the festival. Just look at the happy group in the photograph on page 7, kindly supplied by Mrs Jackie Baines.

**Graham Ireland**

## **LUNCHTIME INTERLUDES AT ST. MARY'S**

The end of the year saw the 288<sup>th</sup> recital since the series was instituted by the Vicar and Churchwardens of the Minster in 1991, in aid of the eventual restoration of the Father Willis organ. Despite its shortcomings which mainly revolve around non-functioning stops, etc., the following players have coped with these, and include: David Butler, David Corbett, Mary Harwood, Christopher Hood, Graham Ireland, Ray Isaacson, Margaret Isaacson, Natalie Jones, Ian May, James Moorcroft, Malcolm Stowell, Dennis Tutty, Wendy Watson, Christine Wells. Roy Woodhams, and Jim Wooldridge.

It was a great delight to welcome pupils from Reading Blue Coat School, at two of our recitals, who presented programmes featuring the cello, and on the second occasion, guitar, saxophone, trombone and trumpet. We at St. Mary's are most grateful to all of those, especially the students, who have given of their time and skills to further our cause.

**Gordon Hands**

## READING TOWN HALL LUNCHTIME ORGAN RECITALS

**Adrian Gunning**

**3<sup>rd</sup> May 2006**

Intrada from 'The Little Organ Suite'	Nigel Allcoat
Trumpet Tune in D	David Johnson
Choeur des Jeunes Filles *	Charles Tournemire
No.29 Alleluia No.1 from 'L'Orgue Mystique'	Charles Tournemire
Theme and Variations (Hommage à Frescobaldi)	Jean Langlais
Allegro Grazioso and Allegro Marziale in D	Frank Bridge
Popular Song from 'Façade'	William Walton Arr. Robert Gower
March 'Dignity and Impudence'	Percy Whitlock Arr. Malcolm Riley

*\* Transcription by Tournemire from his opera 'Les Dieux sont morts'.*

The highly appropriate opening work of the recital was a commission by the Organ Club to mark its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, when Adrian Gunning was President. It was followed by one of David Johnson's many *Trumpet Tunes*, written in homage to Purcell. Adrian Gunning is famed for his Tournemire and Langlais interpretations, and the pieces he played came over well on the Willis. The remaining British items were certainly suited to our instrument, with the final two works ensuring that the audience left the hall in a jaunty mood. All in all it was a thoroughly enjoyable recital of well and lesser known works, which we hope Adrian Gunning will encore in the future.

**Alan Kent**

**Ben Sheen**  
**5<sup>th</sup> July 2006**

Prelude and Fugue in C BWV 545	J.S.Bach
Jesus accept la souffrance from 'La Nativité du Seigneur'	Olivier Messiaen
Pastorale Op.59 No.2	Max Reger
Scherzo	Eugène Gigout
Symphony No.1 in D	Alexandre Guilmant

Here we were treated to a wide ranging recital, which was very welcome. Ben Sheen is only 17 and on his promising performance his future career will be worth following. He handled our Willis very competently and his registrations were imaginative, a real treat for us all. French composers have featured prominently in recital programmes over the past year, and Ben's programme showed a welcome mix of popular and lesser known works. I wonder if I could detect the David Goode influence here? Guilmant seems to have been out of favour recently, and it was a pleasure therefore to hear the complete symphony.

I very much enjoyed Ben's recital. It was well attended, and the audience showed their enjoyment and appreciation in their applause. We must keep Ben's name in mind.

**Alan Kent**

**Dr Christopher Kent**  
**6<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

Prelude and Fugue in E minor BWV 533	J.S.Bach
Sonata No.3 in F Wq 70/3	C.P.E.Bach
Rhapsodie No.1 Op.7	Camille Saint-Saëns
Andante in F KV 616	W.A.Mozart
Elegy Op.58	Edward Elgar
Fugue on BACH Op.60 No.2	Robert Schumann

Dr Kent is of course remembered by many for his years of service in the Music Department of Reading University, and the size of the audience reflected his influence in the department over the years. His recital, thoughtful, well planned and played, included a number of less familiar works by popular composers. Of course Dr Kent knows the instrument well, and his knowledge of it showed. Much of the recital was low in key, which was a refreshing change on the ear, and it allowed the softer stops on the organ to come into their own. In contrast, the concluding item, one of Schumann's popular fugues on BACH was given a rousing performance. These fugues in my opinion seem to be more prevalent on the concert programme recently, with good reason. This particular one brought the recital to a very satisfactory conclusion. I am sure that Dr. Kent will be invited back to give a return recital.

**Alan Kent**

**Dr William McVicker**  
**[with Ann Brown]**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> November 2006**

The Dam Busters	Eric Coates
By the Sleepy Lagoon	Eric Coates
Five Portraits	William Lloyd-Webber
Fantasia on Old Welsh Airs	William Faulkes
Marche des Rois Mages <i>With Ann Brown</i>	Theodore Dubois
Bolero de Concert	L.J.A.Lefébure-Wély

Firstly, this lunchtime recital must have broken attendance records as 105 tickets were sold. This is a number of attendees many organisers would die for. Secondly, such an attendance was a well deserved tribute to Ann Brown, the retiring Concert Hall Manager, who has done so much for the Hall in general, and for organ related activities in particular.

As to the recital it was indeed as was anticipated, the inclusion of several arrangements. Eric Coates to me is a very well remembered name, but I did not realise that he was a centenarian, having died as recently as 1986. The Lloyd-Webber piece had us guessing, the names belonged to cats! A Music Hall touch was introduced for the Faulkes, £5 being on offer for the side of the audience which could name all of the melodies featured in the piece. William's £5 was safe, for one of the airs was so obscure that no one has ever guessed it correctly!

It was no surprise that the handling of the organ and the registration were excellent. The programme was well interpreted too. In one item Ann joined William on the organ stool to take part in the piece as a token of William's gratitude for Ann's contribution to the musical life of the Concert Hall.

We all thoroughly enjoyed this recital, and left the hall with a smile on our faces.

**Alan Kent**

**Huw Jones**  
**17<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

Fantasia in G Minor BWV 542i	J.S.Bach
Erbarm' dich mein, O Herre Gott BWV 721	J.S.Bach
Prelude and Fugue in C Minor BWV 549	J.S.Bach
Chorale No.2 in B Minor	César Franck
To a Wild Rose	Edward MacDowell
Two Chorale-Improvisations 'Von Himmel Hoch' 'Nun Danket Alle Gott'	Sigfrid Karg-Elert

This was another well-attended (104) and interesting recital. The increasing audience numbers for these lunchtime recitals are a testimony to the hard work of William McVicker and the Town Hall staff, enabling effective communication of events well in advance. Our thanks should also go to the regular page turner, David Pether. [It's not widely known that David, on behalf of the Association, is also responsible for engaging the majority of players for these lunchtime events. Ed.]

As a Bach addict, I was pleased to see the three opening items. The high standard of performance at these concerts was maintained by Huw Jones' articulate and assured technique. Both the Bach and the Franck, works more familiar to me, were interpreted with some registration and speed variations, all sounding well on the Father Willis. The MacDowell and Karg-Elert items provided a less familiar but enjoyable ending to the recital.

This was a varied and well-played programme, much appreciated by the audience.

**Roger Bartlett**

**Keith Hearnshaw**  
**14<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

Londonderry Air	Trad. arr. J.Stuart-Archer
Toccatina and Fugue in D minor BWV 565	J.S.Bach
March on 'Lift Up Ye Heads'	Alexandre Guilmant
Love Theme "My Heart Will Go On" from 'Titanic'	James Horner
Pomp and Circumstance March No.4 in G	Edward Elgar
Salut d'Amour	Edward Elgar
Overture 'Orpheus in the Underworld'	Jacques Offenbach

This recital attracted an audience of 126, so the numbers attending do seem to be steadily increasing, as the average attendance for the earlier recitals was of the order of 40-50. On this occasion this audience certainly got its money's worth both for the programme which so suited the organ, and because Keith Hearnshaw brought his own video equipment and screen. This video equipment enabled us to see a masterly example of registration by hand of a taxing programme, and its successful achievement. In this recital too we had a Bach performance which used Victorian-Edwardian practices which fitted well with the rest of the programme. The versatility of this moderately sized organ never ceases to amaze, and how it responds to a player who has studied it well. It did respond well to this player. I am sure that Father Willis would have approved of both programme and performance, but wonder if he would have approved of the Offenbach? Never mind, we in the audience certainly did.

Perhaps Keith Hearnshaw could be persuaded to come again to give us another of his thoroughly enjoyable programmes. Did the promise of video large screen display bring in the additional listeners? If so perhaps the practice should be repeated.

Incidentally, an evening recital attendee was staggered to hear of the numbers attending our lunchtime recitals, because it would seem that London lunchtime attendances are apparently on the decline.

**Alan Kent**

**Peter Stevenson**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> May 2007**

Fantasia in G BWV 572	J.S.Bach
Benedictus Op.59 No.9	Max Reger
K'a Mura	Fela Sowande
Joshua fit de battle of Jericho	Fela Sowande
Grand Fantasia in E Minor 'The Storm'	Jacques Lemmens
Triumphal March in D	Jacques Lemmens

Another good audience (93) on a very fine day. I do wonder, however, on this occasion whether the programme was rather 'heavy'; a programme for the keen recital-goer rather than one for a lunchtime recital, with four of the items completely new to me and two of the composers little known – not necessarily a bad thing. I suspect the Bach would have been the only work, and perhaps composer, known to many of the audience.

The Bach Fantasia received a straight performance, an approach I have to say I prefer. The remaining works were, as mentioned above, new to me, and it was interesting to hear the pieces by 20<sup>th</sup> Century Nigerian composer Fela Sowande. I have to say, however, the Lemmens 'Storm' is overlong and could do with some editing. To me its inspiration is very variable. The concluding Triumphal March is more concise; a fore-runner of works by the French Romantic School which Lemmens did much to encourage.

**Alan Kent**

## READING TOWN HALL CELEBRITY ORGAN RECITALS

**Carol Williams**

**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2006**

Fanfare for the Common Man	Aaron Copland
Voluntary on the Old 100th	Henry Purcell
Morceau de Flûtes	Guillaume Lascoux
Ballet	Claude Debussy Arr. Leon Roques
Egmont Overture	Ludwig van Beethoven Arr. C Hylton Stewart
Toccata	Marcel Paponaud
Processional March	Humphrey Stewart
Spreckel's Fancy	Dan Locklair
The Entertainer	Scott Joplin Arr. Carol Williams
The Washington Post	John Philip Sousa Arr. Carol Williams
The Brothers Gershwin	Howard Cable

Carol Williams is not only Civic Organist of San Diego, but also Artistic Director of the Spreckel Organ Society in San Diego, California, which explains the Locklair item. There the organ is situated in an outdoor arena, pulling audiences of thousands per week! Carol Williams apparently spent two days prior to her recital accustoming herself to our Willis, and she certainly benefited from her exertions. [She did mention in her pre-recital talk that it was as well that she regularly attends weight training sessions].

This was a very well played and presented recital, one which was similar to those Father Willis would have expected, containing as it did, a high proportion of arrangements. As regards particular items, the Lascoux came off very well, making effective use of the various flute stops. He is as unknown to me as is Paponaud, whose *Toccata* certainly deserves another airing. I'm afraid the Purcell piece did nothing for me, perhaps because it was not the voluntary advertised in the programme. In contrast the Joplin and Sousa pieces were thoroughly enjoyable, as was the Debussy *Ballet*. Its arrangement in my opinion was very effective, and given a good performance by Carol Williams. The

Beethoven transcription had no effect on me, and I put it down to the arranger's failings or my inability to understand his thought processes. Curiously too, the Gershwin arrangement which I had heard previously at the Royal Albert Hall [not my favourite instrument] in no way came up to that of Carol Williams's on our Father Willis.

I expected a larger audience at this recital, particularly as the programme on offer could not be described as "difficult". Perhaps it was because Carol Williams is no longer as well known in the UK, since moving to California. My final comment concerns adaptability. Carol Williams by now is used to electric actions and playing aids. She gave us an excellent example of how to play and handle a very different type of instrument in, from a performer's point of view, a taxing programme. Didn't those practice sessions pay dividends?

**Alan Kent**

**Jeremy Filsell**

**29<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

Imperial March	Edward Elgar Arr. G.C.Martin
Fantasia and Fugue in C minor	J.S.Bach
Sonata No.2 in Bb Major	Elgar Arr. Ivor Atkins
Marche Heroïque	Herbert Brewer
Fantasia and Toccata	Charles Villiers Stanford
Chorale Prelude on St.Cross Chorale Prelude on Croft's 136 <sup>th</sup>	Hubert Parry
Pomp and Circumstance March No.4 in G	Elgar Arr. G.R.Sinclair

All of those present were most grateful to Jeremy Filsell for substituting at short notice for an indisposed Catherine Ennis, to whom we send all good wishes for a speedy recovery, and for playing an almost identical programme, which he said was one that he would normally not play, but more anon.

The pre-concert talk was given by Dr. Relf Clark, well known for his interest in Elgar, on Elgar and the organ. Interestingly Dr. Clark put forward the view that although Elgar played the organ, he was largely self-taught, and was not an organist first and foremost. He was on good terms with the Three Choirs

Cathedral Organists, who gave him much support and advice, arranging a number of his works for the organ. In so doing, according to Dr. Clark, we hear truly Elgarian compositions. He considers too that the early organ works such as the First Sonata, are not Elgar at his best, and that he, Dr. Clark, prefers the so-called Second Sonata. [Interestingly I recently heard Thomas Trotter's view on the First Sonata, and he considers it to be a wonderful work!] Dr Clark's view is that because the transcriptions are by experienced organists, they use the instrument to better advantage. The point was made, previously by Dr William McVicker in his lecture recital, that the transcription provided the sole means by which many people were able to hear works which would not have been available to them by any other means. For anyone who wishes to learn more of Elgar and his Cathedral Organist friends a monograph published by the Positif Press written by Dr Clark entitled "Elgar and the Three Cathedral Organists" is recommended. I found it of great interest.

Jeremy Filsell's recital consisted of works by Elgar and his friends/colleagues, not always both! Dr. Clark indicated that for reasons now obscure, Elgar and Stanford, although recognizing the worth of the other, were not on good terms for many years. The recital began with a rousing performance of Elgar's *Imperial March*, arr. by G C Martin of St. Paul's Cathedral. Jeremy Filsell informed us that he would not be offering an Elgar-influenced interpretation of the Fantasia and Fugue, which Elgar had arranged for orchestra. He gave us a beautifully rendered, absolutely straight performance, registered on quiet stops, which I thought a real joy. The *Second Sonata* and the *March Heroique* by Brewer did indeed receive the Elgarian performances which they require.

Works by two of Elgar's contemporaries formed the core of the second half of the recital. All of the works were suited to the Willis and came over successfully. Once again I wonder why we do not hear more of Stanford and Parry, surely the equal at least of some of the lesser known composers of the French school of a similar era? The concert concluded as it began with another rousing Elgar arrangement, this time by the organist of Hereford Cathedral.

Once again we heard a programme in a style which would have been familiar to audiences when our Willis was built. It was indeed most enjoyable. Jeremy Filsell is another recitalist who showed us how to cope with a difficult programme, on an organ with minimal aids. His use of the Swell pedal was excellent. It may not have been a programme he would normally have played, but you would never have known.

Audience numbers were good, and the appreciation rightly justified. Its composition was very mixed in many respects, and augers well for future recitals.

**Alan Kent**

## **PLAYING THE ORGAN AT ST.GILES, EDINBURGH**

On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of October, I was invited to St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh to play the organ there. My family and I were planning on going to Edinburgh over the October half term, and from reading various guide books I had seen St. Giles mentioned, although I knew nothing about the cathedral itself.

The Thursday before we left, I had my last organ lesson before half term. At the end of it I mentioned in passing that I was going on holiday to Edinburgh. My teacher, Graham Ireland, took immediate interest and asked me if I knew anything about St. Giles. I told him that I had heard of it, but knew nothing about the cathedral. He told me that the organist had attended Reading School and gone on to Oxford on an Organ Scholarship. As it turned out, the organist was Michael Harris, whose mother was once organist at St Mary Magdalen's Church, where he had learnt to play, and where I am currently playing. A few phone calls later, and I was told that I could have a half-hour session on the organ on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October.

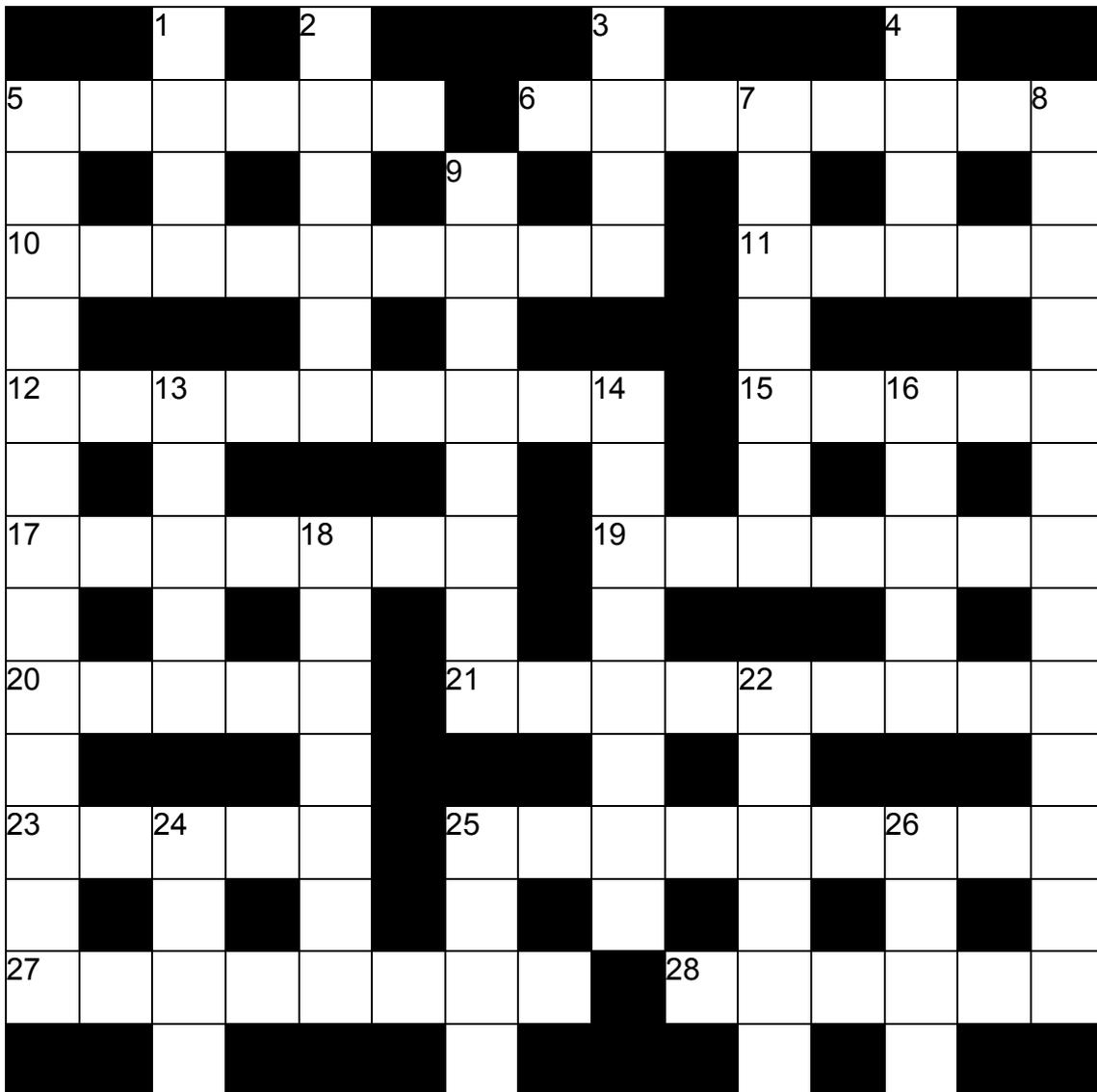
The organ itself is a very big impressive instrument. As you enter the cathedral, the first thing you see is the organ on either side of the aisle. Its looks are nothing compared with its sound. After I had played a couple of pieces Michael gave me a demonstration of the organ's capabilities. It is also quite something to play. I was fortunate to have Michael there who knew the organ really well, to make it sound as good as possible. As a result I enjoyed the experience very much.

Special thanks are due to Michael for allowing me to play it and Graham for suggesting it.

The specification of the organ can be found in the NPOR .

**Richard Mayers**

## CROSSWORD



### Across

- 5. A Romantic composer [6]
- 6. Pertaining to this BO issue [8]
- 10. A tunnel-shaped hut made of corrugated iron [9]
- 11. “Were the whole .....of nature mine”. Watts [5]
- 12. Springing up anew [9]
- 15. A cake coating [5]
- 17. Pertaining to this issue [7]

19. Pertaining to this issue [7]
20. Peaks [5]
21. An exotic Italian salad ingredient [9]
23. Below [5]
25. Once a famous one of these in Reading [9]
27. The practice of protecting one's property with no care for that of others [8]
28. "How .....hath thy speech come down". Johnson [6]

#### Down

1. "Our .....our prayers we now present". Doddridge [4]
2. Basic points in a video image [6]
3. Past participle of to know, archaic [4]
4. Large [4]
5. Refutation [13]
7. Paddington and Leipzig are examples of these [7]
8. Having a uniform composition [13]
9. A modern office necessity [8]
13. Animals of the ox kind [5]
14. Followers of fashion? [8]
16. Of Ireland [5]
18. An urn containing bones [7]
22. A beautiful or innocent child [6]
24. To be angry [4]
25. A corset stiffener [4]
26. The same [4]

The solution may be found on page 84.

**Graham Ireland**

## CD REVIEW

I start my review with another **Dame Gillian** recording, and this time it is a double CD entitled “On Stage”, at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, [Priory RCD867]. It is a programme mainly of Toccatas, starting with one of my favourites, the Bach Dorian Toccata BWV 538. There are seven pieces on the first disc and five on the second drawn from all periods of music. **William McVicker** features as a composer on the second disc with “Six variation über una tema di Vincent Youmans”. This piece was commissioned in 2000, giving us another example of his many talents.

The Diocese of Southwark asked its area organ advisors to record the most historic and important organs in south London. William McVicker co-ordinated the project with Harry Brama and David Titterington. The result of their efforts is a two CD set called “Grand Chorus”, with 27 tracks played by students of The Royal Academy of Music on 22 instruments, including the Royal Festival Hall, giving listeners a very varied programme of music. For example, the entire Elgar Sonata in G, Op.28, is played-four sections, 4 players and 4 different organs, all totally blending! This is very highly recommended, and can be obtained from Christopher Town, at 96 Ridgeway Drive, Bromley BR1 5DD, or through the RAM. [Ref RAM 032 [CTRS 1024]].

It is unfortunate that **Catherine Ennis** was unable to play at Reading Town Hall on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007. For in 1981, she recorded an LP on the Woodward label of the organ as it was then. Priory has bought the masters, and the series is being re-released on CD. At last Catherine’s recording is again available as PRCD6007. The recording is complete with all the original notes by Gordon Spriggs, showing how the Berkshire Organists’ Association led a successful fight to save the organ. Many members may still have Catherine’s recital on the original LP, but now there is an opportunity to listen with the aid of new CD technology to how it sounded before the organ’s restoration.

Our member, **Timothy Byram-Wigfield** has just released yet another most interesting disc. Played on the Caird Organ in Dundee, Tim skilfully uses the resources of the 1923/1992 Harrison and Harrison organ to bring alive the music of **Alfred Hollins**. Many of us know his “Trumpet Minuet”, and “Song of Sunshine”, but much of the rest of the repertoire is far less well known. The programme on the disc is very varied, not just the lighter infill where Hollins is placed on mixed composer recordings. It has been released on the Delphian Label [DCD34044], and is his fourth release with them. They are all first rate discs. Alfred Hollins himself blind as he was from birth, designed the organ in the Caird Hall, so the choice of instrument is highly appropriate. Delphin’s CDs are available direct, or via Coda Distribution, as the firm now handles many of the labels previously looked after by Chandos Direct. Coda’s marketing is reliable and informative.

Still with a composer whose music is also treated in a lighter vein, and from a slightly earlier era, are the works of **Lefébure-Wely**, which are in the process of being released by Priory [PRCD726 [1], PRCD785[2]. Volume 3 is due out in late 2007, played by **Richard Lea** on the organ of **Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral**. Again, many lesser known works are excellently recorded on this famous Walker organ. I enjoyed listening to the pieces as a collection, rather than as interludes between what could be called “establishment” composers.

For those of you who take an interest in European organs there are two particular CDs which I would like to recommend. First, is a programme played by **Joseph Kelemen** at the Schnitger organ at **St. Cosmae et Damiani zu Stade** of music by **Vincent Lübeck** [1654-1740]. Lübeck was 20 when appointed organist of this church, becoming an authority on Schnitger [1648-1719] instruments. Later in his life he was organist at St. Nicolai in Hamburg, where he remained until his death. The organ there was destroyed by fire in 1842. This is an excellent recording complete with copious notes and illustrations, with a very full description of this historic organ. The disc is a SACD quality, on the OEHMS Classics Label OC607 and released in February 2007. Coda is its distributor. The second CD is a Mozart programme with 9 tracks of well known pieces played by **Christian von Blohn** on the 1755 **Gottfried Silbermann** organ at the **Katholische Hofkirche in Dresden**. This organ was dismantled and stored in 1944 just prior to the destruction of the church. Partly restored between 1963 and 1971, and completed in 2002, it is the only Silbermann from Dresden to have survived the Second World War. Amongst several “Mozart” CDs issued in 2006, this is one of the best, and it is produced by IFO Records, number ORG7221-2, and was originally issued with Schott’s Organ Journal. It can however be obtained without the magazine. Priory are the agents in the UK for the CD, or look at the internet sites for Schott Music Publishers or IFO, the quarterly magazine is a good buy too.

Finally, I have resisted the temptation to review discs from the USA, however I must conclude my article by reviewing one which is quite exceptional. What do you do with a redundant grand central railway station? In **Cincinnati** they had a huge building that had become redundant, so it’s been converted into a **Museum Centre**, and yes, they have installed two E M Skinner organs dating from 1929 merged into one instrument. When the installation is complete [it waits completion of an Antiphonal section], there will be more than 4,000 pipes with a floating four manual console. The pipes are hidden behind grilles which look like ticket counters. So far three recordings have been made, by Rotunda Recordings, and these can be bought on-line from the OHS. My favourite is CD001 played by **Thomas Murray** of Yale University, with music by Sibelius, Jenkins, Bach, Saint-Saëns, Widor, and Wright finishing with Sonata Eroica by Jongen. All in all it’s very enjoyable.

**Mark Jameson**

## THE ORGAN IN ST-ANTOINE L'ABBAYE

St-Antoine l'Abbaye is a medieval walled village situated in the undulating countryside of the Isère region of south-east France. Dominating the skyline in the centre of the village is the great Abbey church dedicated to St. Anthony of Egypt, together with the surrounding buildings of the old Benedictine Monastery. The abbey was built in 1088, but the first mention of an organ is in 1491. A beautifully decorated organ case made of walnut was added in 1678. This the case in which the organ stands today. The next major event was in 1748, when



**St-Antoine l'Abbaye**

Samson Scherrer [well-known in south-east France and southern Germany] built a new organ for the existing case. There were 4 manuals and pedals with 40 stops. The pedal board was German, i.e. “long touch and full length”. In France at that time pedal boards were usually “short touch” resembling short blocks of wood!

In 1805, amidst great opposition, the organ was removed from the abbey, and erected in St.Louis, Grenoble. It remained there until 1981, having had a “Swell” division added outside the case and the action electrified. In that year the remains of the organ and the magnificent case were returned to St-Antoine. A new organ was built incorporating some pipework from the Scherrer. The builder was Bernard Aubertin, who today is the “Maitre” of organ builders in France, and has recently been made a Chevalier de la Legion d’honneur by the President of France. [Would the equivalent award be made to an organ builder here in the UK?]

Like the case, the stop knobs are all made of walnut with the names marked below in decorative writing. As is normal, the stops for each division are split each side of the console. The only distinguishing mark between the different manual divisions is the colour of the walnut, so the Positif stops at the bottom [each side] are in dark walnut, and the Grand-Orgue stops are in light walnut. There is a Grand-Orgue to Pedale coupler. With the reed stops drawn, bottom C sharp on the pedals plays A below bottom C to give a telling bass to the penultimate chord when playing in the oft-used key of D. This is generally

common on French organs of the classical period. The pedal board is German like that installed by Scherrer, being not easy to play as it is straight, and flat, and positioned somewhat underneath the player. The manual notes are of short compass, and therefore slightly closer than normal. There is no bottom C sharp.

Looking at the specification, you can see the immense range of colour available. As usual, the Récit is a solo manual with just two stops, and the keynotes below Middle C are dummies. The Echo organ goes to Tenor C and is of course quite soft in the abbey. Since the pipes are very close to the player and low down in the case the sound at the console is very much louder. You will notice only one 16ft pedal flue - Bourdon, which is boldly voiced. This is not unusual, but with the Grand Nazard 6, the pedal line is much reinforced for the playing of Bach for example. The soft flutes all have their own beautiful characteristic timbre, while the Plein Jeu [foundation stops and mixtures] gives out a very rich silvery sound. Absolutely majestic is the Grand Jeu [Trompettes, Cornet, Cromorne and the Jeu de Tierce], enhanced by the abbey's acoustic of 4-5 seconds.



**The organ case at  
St-Antoine l'Abbaye**



## CALLING ONESELF AN ORGANIST

### *A social picture of organists in Berkshire in 1881*

It is easy to visualise a golden age of churches and chapels equipped with organs, flush with choirs, and managed by people who were proud to be called an organist. The multiplicity of organs and the choir stalls full of choristers may well have a ring of truth about it in the early 1880s, but how did organists, or specifically, organists in Berkshire, describe themselves?

There is not a clear cut answer. The 1881 Census of Berkshire People lists some fifty-three people living in the county who describe themselves as “Organist”. [Neighbouring counties counted thus: Hampshire 67, Oxfordshire 31, Buckinghamshire 20, Surrey 62], but that is not the whole story. Let us first take a summary look at those fifty three. Forty-five of these are male; eight female. Most of the women were unmarried daughters. The oldest at the time of the Census, March 1881, was [male] 83, the youngest 17. Most areas had just one person described as an organist. Some had more and those districts with more than one in an enumeration district were as follows:

Clewer	2	Reading	9
Cookham	2	Sandhurst	4
Hungerford	2	Speen	6
Newbury	2	Winkfield	3

There were nine Italians living in Clewer who were Travelling Organists, that is street musicians who “played” street organs and who therefore do not concern us. Also at Clewer was the only organist, a woman born in Lancashire, who probably could be identified as a Roman Catholic. She may have been organist at the Chapel of St. John the Baptist at Clewer Green until it was closed in 1868, pending the new church of St. Edward in Alma Road, Windsor. Otherwise there is no specific mention of an organist at a non-Anglican church except - presumably - that of Ernest Hayne who was a “Clerk and Organist” at Hungerford and whose mother was a “Chapel Keeper” there.

Unexpectedly six of the fifty-three lived in Speen, near Newbury, whose population was just over 3,500. Nine lived in Reading, whose population was 43,000 or so, and only four of those had been born in Reading. What were these people? What was their social status and are there any clues as to what constituted a typical Berkshire organist in 1881, at least among those who described themselves as such?

We have of course, disguised the problem. Many who were organists did not describe themselves so, and those who were more qualified or talented did not mention their skills or activities as organists.

Firstly - using the useful table at the end of P.H.Ditchfield's *An Ecclesiastical History of Reading* [1883], with the help of some 1881 Census information and some other sources - let us look at the position in Reading among the Church of England Churches.

The main Church of England Churches in the town had organists in 1883 as follows with, as applicable, their occupations as in the 1881 Census:

St. MARY	William H Strickland, of 40 Russell Street, described as Organist Professor of Music.
St. LAWRENCE	Charles H H Sippell, Fellow of the College of Organists, lodging at Blakes Lodge, Forbury North. He was then unmarried, having been born in Cambridge. Described as Teacher of Music Organist St. Lawrence.
St. GILES	Frederick Davis, living at 107 Oxford Street, one of the Davis family who ran a music shop in the Kings Road and contributed to the musical life of the town, and in later years to Reading School. Frederick Davis was dismissed as organist of St. Giles's Church for going to the nearby ale house during the sermon. Described as Professor of Music.
CHRISTCHURCH	Frederick J. Read, then aged 23, born at Faversham and an Oxford graduate. Described as Organist Christchurch. Later, as Dr. Read, organist of Chichester Cathedral, he was the teacher of H.P [later Sir Hugh] Allen.
ALL SAINTS	John C.B. Tirbutt, described as Professor of Music Organist.
HOLY TRINITY	Alfred J. Walker living at 15 Oxford Street. He was a Pianoforte tuner.

- St. BARTHOLOMEW    George S. Brewer, Organist. His father was Chief Warden at Reading Prison.
- St. LUKE                John R. Hayward. He was a Banker's Clerk and lived at a lodging house at 6 The Grove, off Watlington Street.
- St. SAVIOUR            Arthur Thorn. He was aged 17, living as a musician at 48 George Street, and born in the Barbados. He described himself as a Musician. His father was a Drum Major in the Royal Berkshire Militia. At that time St. Saviour's, Coley [now no longer an Anglican Church], had a two-manual American Organ. The young Hugh P. Allen must have succeeded him.
- St.MARY  
CASTLE STREET        James Freeman, who lived at 15 Carey Street, described himself as Organist and Teacher of Music.
- St. JOHN                Richmond Lackly Reed, Banker's Clerk and Organist, Lived at 1 Gelong Villas in Earley.
- GREYFRIARS            Miss Frances Lyne, Professor of Music. She lived at 62 South Street with her sister, Fanny, Professor of Singing. Frances Lyne taught Hugh Allen the piano.
- St.STEPHEN            Harry Bartlett was organist at this church, a building beloved of Sir John Betjeman, but now demolished. Unmarried and aged 34, he was blind and described as Professor of Music. He lived with his widowed father who kept a lodging house in Russell Street.

The Binfield family, who had played such a large part in the musical life of the town and its churches, were fewer in number. Hannah Bilson Binfield lived

with her niece, Susannah Havell at 159 Friar Street, describing themselves as Musicians. Fanny J. Binfield, certainly an organist, and her sister Louisa, living at 21 Coley Hill, each described herself as Professor of Music.

Overall in the country, those who described themselves simply [only] as Organists were twenty-three in number. This included one [predictably at Speen!] who described himself as an “Unemployed Organist”. The two student organists included one Edwy Kearney who, commendably humble, described himself as “Preparing to be an Organist”. He was the twenty year-old son of the Vicar Of Bourton, near Shrivenham. It is only in one case do we find an organist in the county coming from a land-owning family, that at Waltham St. Lawrence. At the other end of the scale, Frederick Doe of Sandhurst, describing himself as an organist, was the son of a general labourer.

But it will be helpful to look at the probability of those who, other than actual lists of organists, do not otherwise describe themselves as Organists. Some examples in the Reading list above show this to be the case.

We now look again at the county as a whole, as far as the Census is concerned. This by no means tells the whole picture about appointments, which would require considerable investigation, town by town, village by village. But we can get a picture of how some organists described themselves, and what their background was. We have mentioned the male/female proportions and the fact that nearly all the women who described themselves as organists were unmarried.

Fifteen were Teachers of Music, or the more fashionable description, Professors of Music. Nine were schoolmasters, but only one a schoolmistress. Four were organists and clerks [banker’s. auction, ledger, etc.] two were also grocers. One described himself, just to make sure, “Organist [Music]”.

There may be various reasons why these, generally young, women were organists at this time, especially in small or rural churches. Their duties were simply to accompany hymns and perhaps to play simple voluntaries. They had no choir to manage, they cost little, were probably local, and were keen to display their “accomplishment”. And, as far as the clergy were concerned, they were less trouble - though often less able - than their older male counterparts, should any be available. The advent of larger organs in rural churches, often now situated in the chancel, of surpliced male choirs must have decreased the number of young women organists in such churches.

Organists at Convents are sometimes elsewhere listed as such, but not so in Berkshire. The same goes for institutions such as asylums. In 1901 at the Berkshire Asylum in Moulsoford, one Frederick Rikkets was the organist.

We have noticed that the term Professor of Music was generally indicative of a slightly higher social class, even if that was sometimes imagined. If we look at the country’s chosen distribution of chosen terms of “Teacher of

Music”, “Professor of Music” it comes out like this. The ratio of those calling themselves Teacher to Professor was 2:1. Of those calling themselves Professor, there were twice as many men as women. Of those calling themselves Teacher, there were over three times as many women as men. Three-quarters of those describing themselves as Teachers or Professors of Music were unmarried.

If we take the description Organist plus either Teacher or Professor, allotting two points if the occupations are combined, we obtain the following. The distribution of those claiming these occupations in districts of over 5,000 inhabitants [urban] averages at one per thousand inhabitants, with the lowest being Abingdon at 0.4 per thousand, but Windsor at two per thousand. The latter is explained by the musical establishment at Windsor and, because of nearby residence, that of Eton. Smaller communities, between 1,000 and 4,999 give an overall figure much the same, but with wider extremes. Tilehurst [two per ten thousand] and Farringdon [three per ten thousand] come out the worst served, Hungerford and Speen the best. Sometimes, as at Hungerford, Reading and Windsor, a single family, also connected with the retail music trade, dominated the profession locally at this level - the Hiddens, the Binfields and the Dysons in the case of those towns. Windsor also had a number of Army musicians and Lay Clerks, neither of which I have included in the above figures.

People who at this time stated their occupation as Teacher of Pianoforte were few and predominantly urban. There were many more piano tuners. Surprisingly, throughout the whole county there were only two [women] who specifically stated they were Teachers of Singing. We noticed the group of Italian street piano itinerants above. There were also two groups, of about half a dozen men each, of German musicians at Reading and Newbury, members of the then common German Street Bands. A number of “musicians”, almost exclusively men, lodged at public houses; these were street musicians of various kinds.

So, two things in particular come out clearly as regards the organists and the teachers of music in the county. One is the predominance, a strong predominance, of unmarried people. The other is that, with few exceptions, in the cases where one can see a family background, coming from the trades or office clerks, rather than from the professions. By and large, at this time, many of those who prided themselves as being an “Organist” or even “Professor of Music” in the county were probably, socially and professionally, in a *cul-de-sac*.

**Peter Marr**

## THE OHS 50<sup>TH</sup> CONVENTION, SARATOGA SPRINGS

The OHS founded in New York on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1956 now has more than 4000 members, including an ever-growing international membership. The 2006 Convention in Saratoga Springs marked its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary so it had to be special. Stephen Pinel, the OHS Archivist, and organ builder, Scot Huntington, both from this area, were tasked with the meticulous planning necessary; and their work started 7 years ago; the Convention was titled “Coming home”.

The OHS has the advantage of a good publicity department, so it was possible to see just what was on offer, venues and instruments, more than 6 months before the event. Publicity in international journals covered the most important venues to whet everyone’s appetite, and registration forms were comprehensive, even to menu selection with discounts for early booking and students.

We decided, as the climate forecast was very hot and humid, that we would fly out on the preceding Tuesday, and spend the first 4 days holidaying at Landmark USA’s Dutton Farmhouse of 1789 near Brattleboro to acclimatize, see friends and unwind. Brattleboro is an easy drive from Boston, and famous for the erstwhile home of Estey organs. It was not supposed to be an “organ” prelude, but we did spend an afternoon with a friend whose home and outbuildings are full of Estey reed and pipe organs. Thanks to this friend I did play Estey Pipe organ Number 1 of 1901 at **Brattleboro Methodist**. The 2m/p instrument has a strange 3<sup>rd</sup> keyboard with white notes for stops on, and black ones for stops off – I had not seen this arrangement before.



**Brattleboro Methodist**

### The Organ at Brattleboro Methodist Church

GREAT (61 notes)		SWELL (61 notes)		PEDAL (30 notes)	
Open Diapason	8	Stopped Diapason	8	Bourdon	16
Dulciana	8	Salicional [TC]	8		
Principal	4	Flute Harmonic	4		
		Tremolo			
				<b>COUPLERS</b>	
				Swell to Great	
				Swell Octave to Great	
				Swell to Pedal	
				Great to Pedal	

On Saturday we had an unhurried 2 hour drive on local roads through beautiful scenery to Saratoga Springs in New York State, where we were met at the hotel by Stephen who introduced us to key members of his team. The formal start was on Sunday afternoon. We each received a welcome pack containing a small handbook of scheduling arrangements and event programmes; a menu for all meals, a hand fan, name badge, a “who was taking part list” and, not least, a copy of the Organ Atlas, a weighty 250-page book about the venues and everything one needed to know about each organ, and the towns that form the Capital District Region. Of the 420 participating; only 7 were non-USA residents; two Canadians, Australians Andrew Davidson, Hugh Knight and Kelvin Hastie and us.

For activities, we were formed into four groups A & B [4 coaches], C & D [4 coaches] – we were in-group B. It was possible to mix and match freely within the groups as everyone was scheduled to hear and do everything. Start times varied from 0745 onward with lunches earlier than normal in the UK. A military precise operation was needed to move attendees, the coaches were very well organised. The OHS had a sales area – this did brisk trade each evening and was often still busy past midnight!

Each musical event had a full printed programme, and one major difference between UK groups and OHS is that the latter always has a hymn as part of the visit programme. This way one can experience the organ under service conditions and not just in concert use. The standard of singing was superb, many of the members being professional musicians and fine singers. To try to report every detail would fill an entire BOA handbook, so to summarise. There were 26 visits, concerts, and hymns during the week. We also had some sumptuous feasts! Selection of venues had been difficult because the area has many good organs and interesting buildings. [It was settled very early in American history].

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION

— of the —

ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK

JUNE 25-30, 2006

The opening address was given by Barbara Owen, a founder member, on what OHS had achieved in its 50 years. Then it was off to **Round Lake**, just north of Albany with a pre-concert barbeque. Before the concert at the **Round Lake Auditorium**, Edna Van Duzee invited players to play [I did!] the **United Methodist** organ, a 1907 Steere 2m/p organ with a third manual for the Carillion. The specification for this instrument is:

The Organ at United Methodist Church, Round Lake					
GREAT		SWELL		PEDAL	
Open Diapason	8	Stopped Diapason	8	Bourdon	16
Melodia	8	Salicional	8		
Dulciana	8	Flute d'amour	4		
Octave	4	Oboe and Gamba	8		
		Swell Tremolo			
				COUPLERS	
				Swell to Great	
				Swell to Pedal	
				Great to Pedal	

The whole of Round Lake is a heritage area, and the **Auditorium** houses the largest surviving pre-1850 3m/p pipe organ in the USA. It was built in 1847 by Richard Ferris, originally for a church in New York, and moved here in 1888. The Auditorium originally had canvas sides in a barn-like structure, walls and glazing came much later. The concert with organ and the New Brunswick Chamber Orchestra was entirely Rheinberger. The tone of this instrument, which originally had a low-G compass, was very gentle unlike so many modern instruments.



**United Methodist Church, Round Lake**

## The Organ at Round Lake Auditorium, New York State

<b>GREAT (C-A 58 notes)</b>		<b>CHOIR (C-A 58 notes)</b>	
First Open Diapason	8	Open Diapason Choir	8
Second Open Diapason	8	Stopped Diapason Choir	8
Stopped Diapason	8	Dulciana Choir	8
First Principal	4	Principal	4
Second Principal	4	Flute (harmonic)	4
Night Horn	4	Piccolo Choir	2
Twelfth	2 2/3	Furniture (12.15)	II
Fifteenth	2	Cremona Choir	8
Mixture (17.19.22)	III		
Sesquialtera (15.17.19)	III		
Trumpet	8		
Clarion	4		
<b>SWELL (C-A 46 notes)</b> <b>(Bottom octave from Choir)</b>		<b>PEDAL (C-C 25 notes)</b>	
Double St. Diapason Swell	16	Double Open Diapason (18 pipes G-C)	32
Open Diapason Swell	8	Open Diapason	16
St. Diapason Swell	8	Pedal Bourdon	16
Principal Swell	4	Violoncello	8
Cornet (12.15)	II		
Sesquialtera (17.19.22)	III		
Trumpet Swell	8	Usual 6 unison couplers	
Hautboy Swell	8	Great Forte	
Clarion Swell	4	Great Piano	
		Trigger Swell Pedal	
		Water motor crank	

We visited the **Cooperstown** area on Monday starting with two churches at **Richfield Springs** where the Tiffany [glassmakers] family had lived and worshipped. Both buildings were highly decorated with Tiffany glass and wood carving. Milk paints were used to decorate pipework and cases in the Victorian era – this has survived in excellent condition as the air in this area is free from pollutants. Lunch was at the Hotel Otesaga, a very grand Federal style building dating from 1908 at the end of a finger lake – the area is a bit like the Lake District. The afternoon was spent at the **Farmers Museum** – this included a church restored and moved here to represent the 1840’s style. The 1849 organ by local builder Giles Beach, whose instruments featured in many of this Convention’s venues had been unplayable from 1903 to 1964 before being moved to the museum and restored. We also saw a mechanical organ attached to merry-go-round horses. The evening was spent in Albany – first a Carillon concert at the City Hall followed by Joan Lippincott’s “star” concert in **The Cathedral of All Saints**. It was very hot in the building – the fans were put to good use, but the organ was not to my taste – all very high wind pressures and octave couplers, which I found hard on the ears. Ms Lippincott played music by Rorem, Bach [BWV582], Mozart [K608], Copland Fanfare, Alain, and finished with Liszt’s B.A.C.H – plus the Hymn to the tune “Albany”.



**Tuesday** was the actual 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary day and featured visits to Albany and Troy starting at **St. Paul's Episcopal** in **Albany** built in 1966 replacing an older building and site – it reminded me of a blend of St. Mary's Maidenhead and Coventry Cathedral in style. The Casavant Frères organ [opus 2819, 3m/p 49ss] was installed when the church was new, and is behind an ornate iron



**St.Paul's Episcopal Church, Albany**

reredos at the east end. This was the only modern building and organ of the week. Then it was on to the **Westminster Presbyterian in State Street**. The original church burned in 1928. A new Skinner was installed in 1930 but was replaced by an electronic in 1976 which in turn failed by 2002. The original Skinner was given back to the church, restored and added to, with a new west-end section housed in a Stephen Bicknell designed case in 2003. The artist here was Thomas Murray of Yale University playing Handel's Concerto in F, Op.4, No.4, and Durufé Prelude Adagio et Choral No.4. The hymn was "I Sing the

Almighty power of God” to the tune Ellacombe. Time was pressing so it was quickly off to the Peebles Island State Park for lunch where the Erie Canal starts from the Hudson River; it is 150 miles inland and still tidal from the Atlantic. The afternoon session started at the nearby **United Church of Cohoes** with the OHS AGM. Following this Peter Krasinski played the 1866 Giles Beach, 3m/p somewhat altered and in poor condition. Its case was interesting, with tops of dummy pipes opened out, reminiscent of the top case pipes at St. Michael’s Cornhill. We skipped the visit to the Casino in Congress Park for cocktails and Andrew, Hugh and I met to talk matters other than OHS before attending **Kelvin Hastie’s** most interesting lecture and slide show on **Australasia**.

**Wednesday** saw our foray into West Vermont, and the OHS called the day “Rural organs and Lake George”. Very heavy rain greeted the morning. Our “B” coach loaded at 8.30am and it was off to the **United Presbyterian at Shushan** in the foothills of the Green Mountains for a 9.45 start. The church was established in 1820 and the organ 2m/p 11ss dated 1891 is by the Boston firm of Woodberry & Harris. After the demonstration it was into Vermont, and to the **First Baptist in Manchester Centre**. This building dates back to 1781, the organ is an 1896 Johnson & Son instrument installed in 1926 that was restored in 1974 by Andover Organ Company of Lawrence [MA]. It has 2m/p and 14ss demonstrated by Grant Moss of Nebraska. A picnic buffet lunch was planned in a marquee at the famous **Equinox Hotel, Manchester**. Unfortunately, this was flooded out, so it was re-arranged into the main hotel. It’s rather a posh place. Quite clearly no one had ventured into the downpour to tell the unimpressed doorman what to do with 420 coach passengers! Once it was clear where we were meant to go, an excellent lunch was provided.

After lunch it was west through the hills with the rain easing to visit the picturesque **United Methodist at Rupert**, still in Vermont. The town was established in 1761 and the church built in 1883. The organ is another Johnson of 2m/p and 13ss. Robert Barney from Concord [MA] gave a brilliant demonstration with music by Wagner, Cutler, Woodman, then the hymn “Fairest Lord Jesus” [St. Elizabeth] and finishing with Bach Sinfonia to Cantata No.29. The church and its wooden furnishings were most interesting particularly the very decorative iron and wood seating.



**United Methodist Church,  
Rupert**

### The Organ at United Methodist Church, Rupert, Vermont

GREAT (C-A 58 notes)	8	SWELL (C-A 58 notes)	8	PEDALE (C-D 27 notes)	16
Open Diapason	8	Violin Diapason	8	Sub Bass	16
Melodia (TC)	8	Stopped Diapason (TC)	8		
Dulciana (TC)	8	Stopped Diap. Bass *	8		
Unison Bass *	8	Flute Harmonique	4		
Octave	4	Corno d'amour	8		
Flute	4				
Super Octave	2				
				<b>ACCESSORIES</b>	
				Swell to Great	
				Swell to Pedale	
				Great to Pedale	
				Pedal Check	
				Sliding Wind Gauge	
				Toe pedal – Forte Great	
				Toe pedal – Piano Great	
* 12 pipes					

The last church of the day just back into New York State was **St. Paul's Episcopal at Salem**. The organ is an 1855 E & GG Hook purchased in 1888. It was re-dedicated after restoration by David Moore from Vermont on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006, days before the convention! Here Paul Tegels provided the demonstration. Then it was back to the hotel to freshen up before setting off to **Lake George** for a thoroughly enjoyable dinner cruise. The lake is 42 miles long and several steamboats ply these waters. It was a very relaxing social evening and the clouds had gone.

**Thursday** was labelled "Schenectady Day" - Stephen Pinel's hometown. That morning the sun shone, we departed by coach at 0745 and it was off to **Gloversville** [due west of Saratoga Springs] for a 9am start. This church dated from 1838, and now known as **Kingsboro Assembly of God church**. Giles Beach worshipped here, first rebuilding the original instrument before building a new 2m/p 14ss instrument in 1856. The current congregation had Glück Orgelbau restore this organ in time for the convention and their artistic director Sebastian Glück gave a comprehensive demonstration. The building is beautifully finished in white with period pews, and a full gallery with the organ at the back. The second venue entailed a further cross country journey to **Duanesburg** to visit **Christ Church Episcopal** dating from 1793 that is one of those white-painted wooden churches often depicted in tourist publicity. It was also the smallest escaping any modernisation of any sort and the organ c1850 by Augustus Backus was also tiny with a Stopped Diapason Bass/Treble 56 pipes, Open Diapason of 39 pipes and Principal 56 pipes. Here Derek Nickels showed what one could do with a Stanley Voluntary, Fugue in G by Handel, a Pachelbel Partita and we all sang "Awake my Soul" to the tune Siroe. The "Boston Market" team provided an excellent box lunch in the church hall.

After lunch it was on to **Schenectady** to the dominating church of **St. John the Evangelist, RC**. Its brick structure dating from 1904 was roughly square



**St. John the Evangelist, Schenectady**

with enormous castle-like round towers on the corners dominated by a central dome 230 foot high. Inside it seated 2300 and was highly decorated. The organ is a 1904 Hutchings-Votey with a 1934 61/32 console of 3m/p 51ss, with many accessories. The humidity had affected the organ and the Swell shutters had jammed! Alfred Fedak, organist of the Westminster Presbyterian, gave the demonstration ending with a modern hymn “With pipes of Tin and Wood made known”, [words by Thomas Troeger [OUP1994], music by the player]. A must for anyone re-dedicating an organ!

A total change of mood was necessary for the next venue - **Schenectady’s Proctor’s Theatre**. Here members of the local theatre organ society joined us. The 1927 building had remained in use until 1978. It had been under threat of demolition, so a group was formed to care for it. The current organ, a Wurlitzer, opus 2157 of 1931 3m/p with 21ranks was installed in 1984. Damaged by water in 2004 it was restored by members of The American Theatre Organ Society. The organ is owned by Proctors, part of the PriceChopper supermarket chain. The artist here was R Jelani Eddington who was superb. After a selection of popular pieces we were treated to the organ’s real task, accompaniment to the movie “Liberty” [1928] starring Laurel and Hardy and Jean Harlow. All too soon it was back to the coaches and the Saratoga Hotel for dinner.

The “star” evening concert at 9pm was in **Albany**, at **St. James RC Church** which has a 1931 Casavant Frères organ [Op.1420] 4m/p 61/32 on the west gallery altered in 1983, and still in the care of the builder. Simon Couture of Casavant sponsored this concert, and the artist was Diane Meredith Belcher. What an outstanding concert! The programme featured:

Prelude and Fugue in A minor	Brahms
Concerto for two violins BWV1043	J.S.Bach <i>(trans. Belcher)</i>
Lullaby, from Suite No.2	Calvin Hampton
Prelude and Fugue Op.7 No.3	Dupré
Hymn: Pange Linga Glorioso	
Grande Pièce Symphonique	Franck
Pavane pour une infante défunte	Ravel <i>(trans. Belcher)</i>
Variations on a theme of Paganini for pedals	Thalben-Ball



**Diane Meredith Belcher**

**Friday** was labelled “closing day” but it was just as busy as the earlier days, and was the climax of the Convention. At 8am **James Wallmann**, a member of the Governing Board of the American Organ Archives had the task of lecturing on “The OHS is 50, so what?” At 8.45 we were on the move again, this time south to **Watervliet**, just north of Albany for a 10am start at **St. Patrick’s RC**, built in 1889, now under threat of redundancy. Jardine, who had emigrated from the UK, built the current 3m/p 33ss organ in 1890 when trading as Geo. Jardine and Son. It contains pipes from an 1867 instrument he had built for a New York City church. Randy Bourne from Minnesota gave the demonstration starting with Bach’s Prelude and Fugue in E [BWV533], 7 of the Op 51 Woodland Sketches by MacDowell, and Pachelbel Ciacona. Then we all sang, on that very hot and sunny end of June day “God rest ye Merry Gentlemen”. His concert finished with Myron Robert’s improvisation on the same tune. After this it was back to Saratoga, to the **Spa State Park** for a summer grill provided by Giffy’s.

After an excellent lunch, on schedule, our A&B group left for **Mechanicville**, and the **United Methodist**, dating from 1884. The organ, a 3m/p 27ss Skinner of 1930 with 61/32 compass that is unaltered, with the main part of the organ behind the table, except for the 2 stop Echo, that is placed in a chamber at the back of the church. Timothy Smith of Columbus, Ohio played. Next it was eastward to **Schaghticoke**, the town name is an Indian tribe name for “where waters mingle”. It is at the confluence of the Hoosic River and Tomhannock creek. It had become a township in 1788 and was industrial from very early times. The **United Presbyterian** Church dates from 1848. Giles Beach built the organ 1865 which was restored by Richard Hamar in 1968. It received an OHS citation in 1997 and is the best existing Beach instrument. The demonstration was by Christopher Marks of the University of Nebraska playing Yon’s Humoresque, Dudley Buck’s variations on a Scotch Air, we sang the hymn, “God’s whose giving” and he finished with a special work commissioned by Sebastian Glück, as a gift to the OHS for this concert written by Alfred Fedak titled “Variations on Beach Spring”. This comprised a Festive Prelude, Hymn, Chanty, Ostinato and Finale. Then it was back to the hotel.

The *Grande Finale* of the Convention began with the **Golden Anniversary Banquet** at the **Hall of Springs**. When we booked we were told to be “suitably attired the men wearing suits, white shirts and ties, and the ladies, ballgowns” It’s the first time I’ve ever a packed a formal suit for a holiday! Everyone turned up smartly dressed, for the rest of the Convention had been very comfortable casual. For this Dinner there was a beautifully produced menu illustrating either the Saratoga Hotel or the Hall of Springs. There were Anniversary cocktails, followed by a Formal Toast given by Barbara Owen and responded to by the President, Michael Friesen. We had to be finished by 8 in order to reach the most important concert of the Convention, which took place at the Troy Music Hall.

**Troy Music Hall** is one of only two surviving Victorian concert hall organs in the USA, the other being at the Mechanics Hall, at Worcester [MA]. The Music Hall is a grand 6-storey building built in 1875 and given to Troy residents by the Troy Savings Bank who occupied the ground floor. The organ is by Odell and built for a residence in New York City in 1882, whose first owner was notorious. He was banished from the US stock exchange when he went bankrupt, and the Troy Savings Bank gained the organ as debt repayment. The 1890 move to the Music Hall with minor enlargement provided the hall with an organ.



**Troy Music Hall**

In the years that followed it received scant attention. In 1924 the Ross water blowers were replaced with Kinetic electric blowers, but they were underpowered. By 1967 when the OHS visited the hall, it was only just usable. The pitch is also sharp and attempts had been made to change it. The Hall itself suffered with lack of use, overheating, changed safety regulations, and general neglect not helped by a poor local economy – Troy still is a poor region of New York State.

When Scot Huntington enquired about the Hall in 2000 it was discovered that the bank had been taken over by a large financial group who were trying to restore the building, and audiences were again growing. The organ however was thought too far gone to be played, let alone used for a concert. Scot and Stephen met the Hall and Bank directors to explain that they would like to include the venue in the 50<sup>th</sup> Convention, and the historical importance of the building and organ. A further visit with the directors managed to get sounds from the organ, so the Bank asked for a formal proposal of action. After much useful discussion, the Bank funded from a Charitable Foundation a replacement blower and restoration of the high-pressure winding system using volunteers to get it working. From what had started as a low-key approach with a local organ builder, the word spread leading to overwhelming offers of help from other organ building companies and many volunteers. With years of dust, plaster falls and smoker's dirt the organ was totally clogged. Everything was taken apart and cleaned over a six-week period with day and evening shifts of 22-volunteers! Totally cleaned with new blowers, including restoration to original sharp pitch it was made playable. Full restoration is still needed, and the hall still has to resolve its overheating problems, but for the concert it worked.

The Grand re-opening concert started at 8pm, tickets and programme were facsimile style to the original opening night. The organist was Dana Robinson of the University of Illinois and Ronald Feldman conducted the Franciscan Chamber Orchestra from Siena College, New York. The programme was:

Meditation	Lefébure-Wély
Prelude and Fugue in A minor BWV543	J.S.Bach
Pilgrims Chorus	Wagner <i>(trans. Karg-Elert)</i>
Scherzo	Jadasohn
Reverie du Soir	Saint-Saëns <i>(trans. Guilmant)</i>
Adoration Op.44	Guilmant
Marche Pontificale	Widor
Sinfonia Sacra Op.81	Widor



## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, LOWER CAVERSHAM

By 1886 Caversham was growing rapidly eastwards towards Henley, and the church authorities were considering the prospect of building a daughter church for the growing population there. On Friday 13 August 1886, [you might think it not a very auspicious date], a meeting of parishioners was held in the boys' school in Caversham, "to consider the desirability of creating a permanent church at Lower Caversham". The minutes of that meeting identify a number of male attendees, and concludes with the comment, "Several ladies were also present". The first thing they had to decide was whether or not to accept an offer of a piece of land offered by a Miss Lovegrove, which was situated near to the Henley Road. After much discussion it was decided, politely, to decline the offer and concentrate on an alternative site offered by a Mr. G. R. Butler [no relation] opposite Gosbrook Terrace, and forming part of Bryant's Farm. This offer was accepted, and a committee was set up to finalise the precise location and get matters moving. The vicar announced that he already had pledges of support totalling £1,300. Fund raising commenced, and by November 1886 the total had reached £1,680. By January 1888 this had risen to £3,212, and the estimated cost was £4,000. The main building work was completed by October 1888, and fitting out the interior began, without an organ being installed. The consecration took place on Thursday 8 November, 1888. In April 1889 it was announced that an organ fund was being started. It was proposed that an instrument, at a moderate cost of between £250 and £300, "which will satisfy present requirements, and at the same time be capable of enlargement at some future period", be erected in the North Aisle. An order must have been placed very quickly as the organ was dedicated on St. John's Day, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1889. Following the service a recital was given by J.B Lott, Mus Bac., Organist of Lichfield Cathedral. His programme, typical of the period, was:

Slow Air in D	S. Wesley
Overture	Handel
Andante in A	Smart
Adagio in E flat	Mozart
Fugue in D Minor	Bach
Barcarolle	Bennett
Festal March	Calkin
Largo Cantabile	Haydn
Offertoire	Grison
Adagio in D	Smart

Lower Caversham Ch. Reading Rector

1889	11026			
June 18	To building for and erecting in Church an Organ of 2 Manuals, and Pedal Organ as per Specifications - in painted Deal and Whitewood Case - made to Architect's design - Great Organ - cc to 8.			
	1 Open Diapason	8ft	56 pipes	
	2 Dulciana	8"	44 "	
	3 Stopped Diapason	8"	56 "	
	4. Semitone	4"	56 "	
	5 Harmonic Flute	4"	56 "	
	Swell Organ cc to 8 "			
	1 Violin Bourdon	16ft	56 "	
	2 Violon	8"	56 "	
	3 Horn Voix	8"	56 "	
	4 Voix Celeste	8"	56 "	
	5 Principal	4"	56 "	
	6 Soften	2"	56 "	
	7 Cornopean	8"	56 "	
	8 Oboe	8"	56 "	
	Pedal Organ cc to 8 "			
	1 Bourdon	16ft	56 "	
	Couplers			
	1 Swell to Great	3 Swell to Pedal		
	2 Great to Pedal	4 Swell Octave		
	4 Corn. - - - - - Pedals.			
	Pedals Concave & Radiating Sharps.			
	Tremulant - - - - - net			370 0 0
	Pitch Pine Organ Seat.			2 2 0
				<u>372 2 0</u>
July 1				
" "	By Cheque in exp.	£200-0-0		
Sep 26	" " "	100-0-0		
Nov 28	" " "	72-2-0		
		<u>372-2-0</u>		
1890				
Mar 25	Organ to be tuned four times per year pro rata at £5/0/0			
June 24	To tuning & repair Organ (Special form? Charge Reeds & Mellow) 1 7 0			
Xmas 1891	as rendered Organ Jan 2. 1891 1 7 0			

Page from F.H.Browne's order book for the Caversham organ

It is unclear how F.H. Browne [Organ Builders] came to be involved, there being no records in the parish archive, nor any correspondence on the subject. However, the then Vicar of St. Peter's had served as curate at Bishopsbourne, Kent, between 1871 and 1874, and as Vicar of Riverhead, Kent between 1874 and 1877. Both churches have organs by F. H. Browne, so it would not be surprising that when it came to providing the new organ at St. John's he might have put their name forward. F. H. Browne started his business in 1871, and, according to the report of the recital in *The Parish Magazine*, was, "now coming into prominence as an organ builder having at his back such patrons and judges of instruments as Dr. Longhurst, Organist of Canterbury Cathedral, Dr. Jekyll, Organist and Composer to Her Majesty at the Chapels Royal, the Revd. Albert Sitwell, Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, all of whom have tried our Organ and given it unqualified praise". The organ's casework, however, was not well received being undecorated. An article in *The Parish Magazine* of October 1889 refers to, "the bare and unsightly appearance of the organ case, which can scarcely be regarded as other than an eyesore in a church which is in other respects universally admired". The article goes on to say that Browne's were, "in no way responsible having been tied to the plans of the architect of the Church". A sum of £30 was required to decorate the case, and this being raised, the architect, a Mr. E. P. Warren contracted Messrs. Powell [Lincoln] to carry out the work to his design. W. O. Powell of Lincoln was a stained glass painter and decorator, who two years earlier in 1888 had decorated the reredos in York Minster. His work in a number of churches in Lincolnshire is mentioned in the Lincolnshire edition of Pevsner. As can be seen from the photograph, the decoration is elaborate.



**St. John the Baptist Church,  
Lower Caversham**

**The Organ at St. John the Baptist Church,  
Lower Caversham**

<b>GREAT</b>		Pipes	
Open Diapason	8ft	56	
Dulciana	8ft	44	Lowest octave grooved to Stopped Diapason
Stopped Diapason	8ft	56	
Gemshorn	4ft	56	
Harmonic Flute	4ft	56	
<b>SWELL</b>			
Lieblich Bourdon	16ft	56	<b>COUPLERS</b> Swell to Great Swell to Pedal Great to Pedal Swell Octave
Salicional	8ft	56	
Hohl Flute	8ft	56	
Voix Celeste	8ft	56	
Principal	4ft	56	
Fifteenth	2ft	56	
Cornopean	8ft	56	
Oboe	8ft	56	
Tremulant			
<b>PEDAL</b>			
Bourdon	16ft	30	

An unusual feature of the instrument is the Hohl Flute, which is constructed of triangular pipes. This type of pipe work was rare at the time, being referred to in Hopkins and Rimbault's history of the organ as being, "the invention of Mr. Edmund Schultze".



**Swell Pipework, including the triangular Hohl Flute rank**

Browne's provided an estimate in 1912 to dismantle the organ in order to clean and renovate it, for a price of £37. In the event the work was not undertaken until May of 1920, at which time the cost has risen to £53.

The organ survives intact and unaltered. The only work undertaken since the work in 1920 was a complete clean and overhaul, undertaken by Nicholson's in 1975, at a cost of £1,800 plus VAT. All of the key ivories and tuning slides were replaced at this time.

### **Acknowledgements**

The information contained in this document was obtained from the following sources:

- 1 Church Archive in the Royal Berkshire County Archive
- 2 Church Archives in the Oxford County Archive
- 3 Caversham Parish Magazines [1885-1907]
- 4 The Berkshire Organists' Association Archive
- 5 J.W.Walker & Son, Company Archives
- 6 Hull City Archives, the Forster & Andrews Archive
- 7 F.W. Browne & Sons, Company Archive
- 8 Surveys of the St. John's Organ.

My grateful thanks are due firstly to the church authorities for allowing me free access to the organ and the church, and secondly to Ralph Beddoes, for helping with pipe measurements, and retuning the organ thereafter.

**David Butler**

### **A SWEDISH EXPERIENCE IN 2006**

The Organ Club trip to Sweden in late August 2006 was an ideal opportunity to visit the country to hear some different organs and the music written for them. It was a 12 day tour, four days based in Gothenburg, and eight days in Stockholm. The itinerary covered 33 churches, cathedrals and chapels, three palaces, one town hall, one private residence [no organ!], one museum, one university, and one organ builder's workshop, plus a completely unscheduled

visit. [See the concluding paragraphs]. In total the number of organs we heard was 40. The churches and cathedrals were stylish and well maintained, as were the organs, both benefiting from state funding. In general even medium sized churches possessed a reasonably sized choir/chamber organ. Church acoustics were generally excellent, with the position of the organ an integral part of the of the layout of the church, and therefore not hidden in a corner. It was usually placed on a west gallery. Highlights are covered in three categories, which are rural instruments, city organs and other buildings.

Visits were made by coach to three provinces, Halland outside Gothenburg and two from Stockholm, to Uppland and around Lake Malaren. The sun shone on these visits, with the villages looking like picture postcards, immaculately kept, especially the churches and the surrounding areas. One of the organs visited was that in Leufstabruk, Uppland, a two manual built in 1728 by Johan



**The Johan Niclas Cahman Organ at Leufstabruk**

Niclas Cahman, and is one of the few important Swedish organs surviving from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It has recently been lovingly restored. It produced a fine, clear resonant sound despite being a semitone sharp according to modern pitch standards. An example of a later organ was found in Arboga, Lake Malaren, built by E A Setterquistin 1862, which showed transitional changes affecting

Swedish organs of that particular time. It too had been recently restored, including the return of the original console discovered in a private house. The country tour from Gothenburg took in two churches, at Arstad and Vinberg, both with substantial two manual boldly voiced instruments from a similar era by two less well known builders. Vinberg has a two manual Erikson of 1904, considered by many to be typical of the smaller instruments installed in country churches, and recently restored under the direction of Jan Borjesson, who is both organist and consultant. He subsequently made recordings of the instrument. Jan accompanied us on the complete tour, and it is thanks to him that we were able to listen to these smaller instruments, all characterized by their clarity and brightness from a small to medium sized instrument. During these country tours two cathedrals were visited, one at Vistera, the other much renowned one at Uppsala, where the acoustics adversely affected the sound.

The majority of the organs were of course within the city boundaries of both Gothenburg and Stockholm, and space only permits the mention of a favourite few. In Gothenburg two churches stood out. The first is the Vasa Church, which possesses a large four manual, built in 1909 by a local firm, Eskil Lunden and subsequently rebuilt and altered with the addition of the fourth manual. The parish however, decided in 2002, that it wished to have the instrument returned to its original state, but retaining the fourth manual. The consultant for this restoration was once again Jan Borjesson, who is rightly proud of his rebuild, with its consequent bold and vibrant sound.

Two other organs provided an interesting contrast and are situated in the Orgryte Nya Kyrkan. The first is the new baroque instrument installed from 1999, and work is still in progress. [Readers of *The Organists' Review* may recall the article on this instrument in the May 2001 issue. It is also worth noting that the installation included not merely restoring the Nya Kyrkan, but considerably modifying the acoustic to approach that of a North German Gothic Church.] It is an organ based on the work of Arp Schnitger, and, whilst not being a copy, was built by modern craftsmen in Gothenburg using the tools, methods and tonal techniques decided upon after considerable and continuing research into the methods employed by Schnitger, his pupils, and his North German predecessors. The main research was shared between the University and the nearby Chalmers Technical University, with collaborators from many countries. [Old techniques of a Japanese organ builder were used in the fashioning of the pipe work!] In the available literature it stated that this instrument is now regarded as one of the greatest Baroque style instruments in the world. It does indeed sound impressive. To our modern ears, the  $\frac{1}{4}$  comma meantone tuning does produce some peculiarities, but the overall sound is remarkably clear at all dynamic levels. The second instrument in this church is a three manual Father Willis of the 1870s from St. Stephen's Church, Rosslyn Hill, which was declared redundant in the 1970s. It came to Gothenburg via

Holland for temporary installation in the university's new organ hall. However, it became surplus to requirements there in 1997-8, and was re-erected with additional casework in the north transept of the church by a local builder by the name of Tostard. [It is he whom the party visited earlier in this article.] The general comment about it was that it undoubtedly sounded far better in its new home than in its former one where it had been crammed into a small organ chamber in the chancel. Comparisons of the two were made by club members playing the instruments alternately. We were pleased to note how well the Willis came out of this very searching comparison. Another instrument worth a mention can be found in the Gothenburg University Organ Hall in the Artisten Performing Arts complex. This is the 1998 replacement for the temporary Willis installation, and is a three manual Dutch organ by Verschueren on French romantic lines. Here we were treated to a recital of Sambahs by a lady organist from the university.

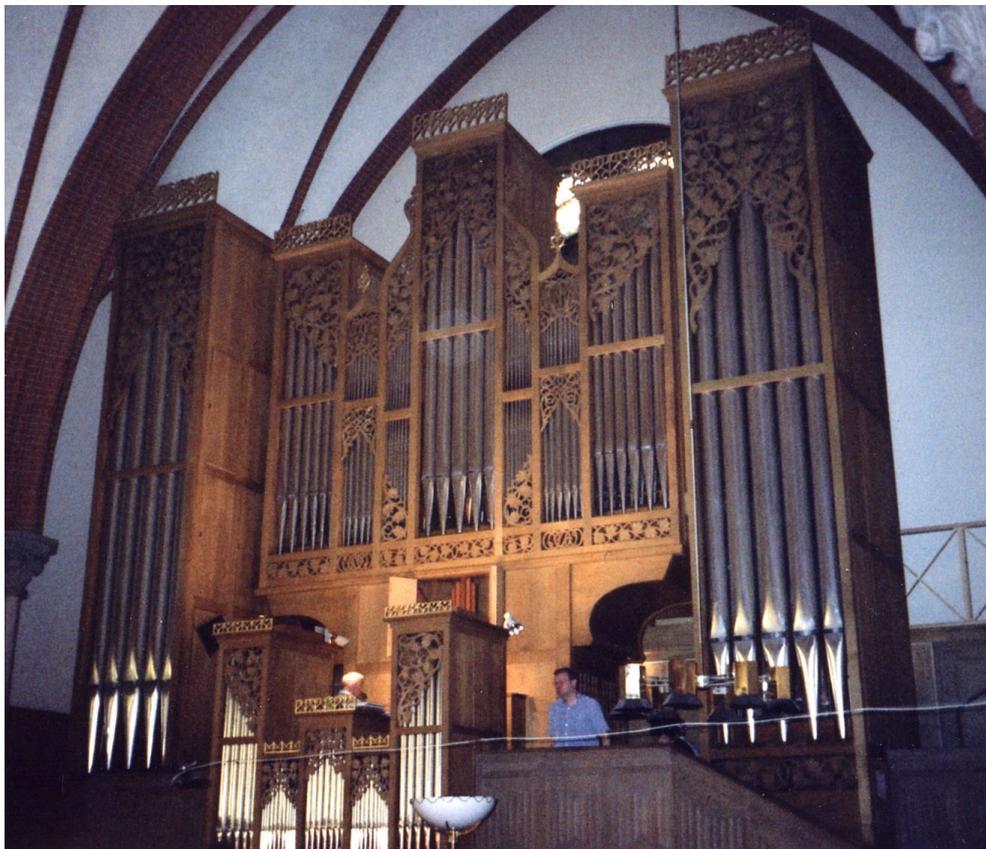
In Stockholm we visited four organs including ones by the two most prolific builders in Sweden over the last 150 years, Ackerman and Lund of Stockholm, and Marcusson of Denmark. We start at the German Church dedicated to St. Gertrude which has one of the finest mainly 17<sup>th</sup> century interiors in Sweden,



**St. Gertrude's Church  
Stockholm**

built by influential and wealthy German traders of the time. It is worth noting that it is a two nave church, similar in layout to, but obviously much larger, than Winkfield Church visited by our Association in the Summer of 2006. The impressive three manual mid-nave organ placed over the nave door is a replica, built in 2004, of the original 1609 instrument by Paul Muller. It was transferred in 1778 to North Sweden, where most of it still exists. Today's congregation apparently regretted its predecessor's action, and made attempts to have the original returned. Its failure so to do prompted the new build. This was built by the north Swedish firm of Gronland after close investigation of, and work on the original. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the congregation may replace the newish west end organ with its predecessor, all of which still exists.

St. Maria Magdalena is a good example of a number of churches having two sizeable instruments, with very different characteristics, both sounding well in the church. The large west gallery organ is a three manual 1878 Ackerman and Lund maintained in its original form, and is regarded as one of the most important surviving instruments of the Swedish romantic style. It retains its tubular pneumatic action and Roosevelt chests. The other organ is a two manual built in 1986 by the well known Swedish firm of Magnusson in the French classical tradition of Clicquot. Both of these organs sounded glorious.



**The Marcussen Organ at the Oscar Church, Stockholm**

Our final church is the Oscar Church, an 1897 Gothic style building. It housed a west gallery four manual instrument built by the Danish firm of Marcussen in 1949. Its effect on the Musical world of Stockholm was considerable, and it proved to be the forerunner of many instruments in the Organ Reform Movement style, built by some Swedish firms, but often imported from Denmark.

Other instruments which we visited included those in the chapels of the three royal palaces. The National Historical Museum yielded action parts of two medieval organs and a demonstration of an 1810 organ. Stockholm City Hall is of course well famed as a building influenced by a variety of styles, including Arabian and Arts and Crafts! Inside it is a huge E F Walcker 1925 organ with five manuals. Unfortunately it is placed high up in galleries at ceiling level, and is at present only partly usable, as its action never proved to be entirely satisfactory. Harrison and Harrison of Durham will begin a large scale renovation project early in 2007, with a contract worth over one million pounds.

All of the 40 participants on this tour agreed that it was a great success, and, highly enjoyable. This was undoubtedly due to the planning and organization by the Club organiser and leader Colin Menzies, together with the liaison and skills provided by his Swedish counterpart, Jan Borjesson. Jan is well known in Sweden, providing us with local information, and skilfully demonstrating many of the instruments we visited. We were made most welcome wherever we went, with the host organist providing special demonstrations, and the people seemed genuinely pleased to see us. The unscheduled highlight came on our last day during our planned visit to the English Church in Stockholm. Opposite the English Church was the Residence of the UK Ambassador, who invited us for tea and light refreshments. Afterwards the group discussed possible reasons for his invitation to us, and wondered perhaps that as only few cultural groups visit Sweden, he was keen to discover our views on our visit, and our welcome by the Swedish people. We were able to offer some very positive opinions.

Swedish organs and the organ repertoire are well worth investigating, as they are both different and invigorating. Colin Menzies visits Sweden quite often, and was keen to introduce us to the music of Otto Olsson. Jan Borjesson played the Olsson Organ Sonata at the Vasa Church in Gothenburg, and we realised why Colin is so keen on his music. The sonata is available as part of a complete Olsson set, available in the UK on the Swedish Society label, in the double set SCD 1125-6, recorded on the St. Maria Magdalena instrument. In our view it is worthwhile looking out for music and/or CDs of his compositions and give them a try. Yes, we came back laden with CDs, and completed our Olsson collection on our return. This was an expensive venture. Having heard these organs, our summary opinion is that the organs are bolder and coarser in timbre than their English counterparts, with lusty but clear pedals, stunningly quiet orchestral stops, and, no Tubas. All of the romantic instruments that we heard

seemed to have the ability to retain clarity at all dynamic levels, with no woolly 16ft Open Woods! The upper registers were well maintained, but without the shriek of some UK instruments or the dull foundational smooth quality of others.

**Roger Bartlett and Alan Kent**

## MUSICAL FASHIONS

*random musings of an ancient organist*

The recent reissue of recordings made by Geraint Jones in the 1950s set me thinking about the extraordinary changes of fashion in the musical world during the last 60 or so years. So, as a peg on which to hang these jottings, may I be permitted a personal reminiscence from those years? One of the set pieces when I took my ARCO in 1955, was the Prelude from Bach's shorter *Prelude and Fugue in C* BWV 545. This is the one which opens with three bold flourishes on the pedals. In the middle of this little work the left foot sits for four and a half bars on low G while the upper parts develop an imitative sequence based on one of the opening motifs. During this pedal G my teacher had suggested a slow but thrilling crescendo by gradually opening the Swell box with the free right foot to bring into play stops that I had prepared on the Swell. In the actual exam all went according to plan until I realised that, despite my opening the Swell box, no crescendo was happening. In my exam nerves I had forgotten to draw the Swell to Great coupler when preparing my registration. Realising this, I decided to remedy the matter by adding the now open Swell at the end of the pedal point on the low G. Quite an effect, when instead of the planned gradual crescendo, a fairly hefty Swell organ suddenly came on, half way through the piece! To my surprise this did not seem to faze the examiners. Their written comment was: "...the registration showed imagination".

Oh dear! In slightly later days of quest for an ever-elusive and unattainable authenticity, I felt guilty about any stop change during the course of a Bach prelude or fugue, and the use of the anachronistic Swell box was absolutely taboo. As for the very idea of trying to play Bach on one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century English organs on which I was brought up during and immediately after the war - forget it!

So to Geraint Jones, who in my youth was one of the pioneers of the more authentic approach to playing Bach. His recording on the Schnitger organ at

Steinkirchen of Bach's great *Prelude and Fugue in B minor* BWV 544<sup>1</sup> is a fine and very interesting example of the transition from the then traditional to a contemporary interpretation of this work. In the prelude he flouts the once academically fashionable no-change-of-registration-during-a-movement approach by changing manuals for each of the three episodes in the prelude, and for much of the middle, manuals-only, section of the fugue. Then, as he approaches the end of the fugue, he makes a suitably grand *rallentando* to emphasize the final cadence. It is interesting to compare this 1950s recording with that of Peter Hurford<sup>2</sup> in his complete Bach series, recorded between 1977 and 1981. While embracing much of the current wisdom as to performance practice in Bach's day, Hurford is not afraid of changing manuals to provide contrast or of adding stops to achieve a thrilling build-up to the end of the fugue.

In the late 1950s, when I was having lessons with Dr. Sidney Campbell, then Organist and Master of the Choristers at Canterbury Cathedral, the skill and artistry of the older tradition were brought home to me by a remark he made about the playing of the aged but still revered Harold Darke. He stated, "He achieves a wonderful climax, but so subtly, that you can never hear when he adds a stop". On another occasion, having heard a brilliant teenage pupil of a colleague give a note-perfect, prestissimo performance of Bach's *Fugue à la Gigue* BWV 577 which left him completely unmoved, I recall him comparing it with Darke's performance of the same work at almost half the speed, which captured the dancing rhythms of the work and left him feeling elated. Of Campbell's own playing the then infamous "red" dean of the cathedral said about his first service on Easter morning, "I have never heard a more strepitous player. It was as if he had the organ in his arms and was dancing down the nave!"

A more recent fashion which I have noticed over the past forty years is the trend towards faster, and to my mind, excessive tempi adopted by many players. This, and the technical perfection only consistently attainable on a cleverly engineered CD, is something which intrigues me. While I have often been dazzled by the technical virtuosity of players in note-perfect, breakneck speed performances of some of the most difficult works in the repertoire, I have far less often been moved by them. Is it a feature of modern life, this passion for speed and technical perfection, which all too often leaves behind the subtle nuances of expression and feeling that distinguish mere technique from genuine artistry?

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<sup>1</sup> Organists of the 1950s Volume Three. Amphion PHI CD 202

<sup>2</sup> J S Bach The Organ Works Vol. 5. Decca 435 631-2

We can never know exactly how Bach and his contemporaries played their own works, and even if we could hear them today, we could only listen with 21<sup>st</sup> century ears and judge them through the medium of our 21<sup>st</sup> century world view. So it may be worth reminding ourselves that, as performers and interpreters of earlier works to today's audiences, we have a two-fold duty. First, we must, of course, take on board as much as we are able of the latest modern scholarship, and the light it can shed on the composers' intentions, and on the performance practices of their time. Then, as we seek to interpret and make accessible to today's public the music which we are playing, we must consider not only the strengths and limitations of an individual instrument, but also the acoustics of the building concerned. These may indeed vary widely, depending on where one sits in a particular building and on the size of the audience.

Looked at in this light, I can see that the late romantic style of organ playing of my first teachers, which I regarded as hopelessly dated and unauthentic, was at the very least a sincere and genuine reinterpretation in their own day of the music of earlier ages. Contemporary thinking has provided us with new insights and new knowledge, but presents us with the same challenge, that is, how to bring to today's listeners in today's very different world our own reinterpretation of the masterworks of an even wider potential repertoire than was available to our predecessors.

So much for fashions in styles of organ playing. What of composers and their works and the fate which fashion decrees them? By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century practically everything "Victorian" was considered unutterably passé, and such works as Stainer's *Crucifixion* were regarded as music with which no respectable choirmaster/mistress would wish to be associated. Now, thank goodness, such views are equally outmoded. We can look at the music of 19<sup>th</sup> century England in a less prejudiced manner, and recover much that is worthy of revival, assigning it to the latest accepted repertoire available to today's organist and choirmaster/mistress.

Of course, from a purely practical point of view, just what we choose to play, *and* how we play it to make it intelligible, are both determined by the particular instrument which we are playing at the time. During my younger years, the late Victorian organs on which I practised were looked on as aberrations by everyone involved in the organ reform movement, and whenever funds were available were replaced by smaller instruments built on the "Werk-prinzip" ideal. While this sometimes produced instruments which were an inspiration and a revelation to those of us brought up on lesser products of the late Victorian school of builders, equally it was not an unmixed blessing.

Locally, for instance, the charming small Italian two manual in St. James' Catholic Church in the Forbury, Reading, has been constructed so as to make

life difficult for the player. In this case, the builder, probably against his own preferences, has added a Swell Box, but has done his best to limit its use by providing for its operation a hand lever, situated some distance from the player's left hand! Nearer to today with its problems we have to face the challenge posed by electronic instruments, which cash-strapped parochial church councils tend to view as the only alternative to guitars...

So, to sum up these rather disjointed musings, I have learnt from the experience of my own progress through the mists of prejudice and prejudgement that the fashion in matters musical, as in other walks of life, is very fickle. As we increase in age we become increasingly conscious of the way in which each generation's perceived wisdom is overturned by the insights of the next one, and that yesterday's norms, now out of fashion, may yet have something to teach the student of tomorrow.

**David Hill**

### **JOHANN WALTER – JESU, MEINE FREUDE**

I suppose that most organists, glancing along the shelf of organ music in a music shop and seeing a title such as *The Church Organist's Golden Treasury* would move on hastily to another title. However I was pointed in this direction some years ago when looking for a particular chorale prelude, and found the collection of three volumes worth examining. It is in fact a compilation of German chorale preludes of the 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, including, of course, a good many by JSB. Some of them are not complete, but as far as I am concerned they form a very useful source of service voluntaries.

One of these, *Jesu, Meine Freude* by Johann Walther, puzzled me for a long time. This is a set of variations on the well-known chorale, and in the volume there were eight variations following the statement of the chorale, the first of which is a relatively simple variation on the chorale melody. The second seemed to be much more lively, but the reason why was not apparent since the next three were very meditative in character. The next two expressed much more confidence and the final variation comprised a manual three parts in fugal style with the pedal appearing for the first time with the chorale melody at bar 11.

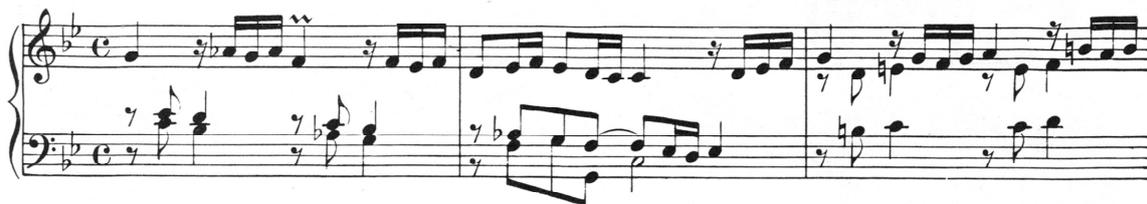
It seemed to me that there was something missing. Why did the second variation seem to be out of place? I searched the full works of Walther in Reading University Library, and found what I believe to be the missing link. The second variation had been omitted from the *Church Organist's Golden Treasury* volume, and this was again very different in character from the others as it consists of only two parts and ends somewhat inconclusively.

The whole work now appears as follows and seems to reflect a narrative. I can visualise someone of no faith passing by a church and, hearing the choir singing this chorale, he starts to consider his lifestyle, and goes through a period of repentance and meditation, concluding with a new confidence. Thus we have:

**The Chorale statement**, suitably played on full organ, which raises his interest.



**Partita 1** He is puzzled by this, expressed by a wavering solo melody and an unsupportive bass accompaniment. What does it mean?



**Partita 2** [The missing one] Two parts only, wandering about with no clear objective, the treble line in semiquavers, ending with just a single note. I usually play this on flute and stopped diapason.



**Partita 3** Far from being a lively happy variation, this now becomes an expression of remorse with tears of repentance falling. A soft flute at 8ft and 2ft may convey something of this.



**Partita 4** The melody appears clearly in the upper parts but the bass line is unsettled, running up and down in semiquavers. He is perhaps starting to recognize a new faith, but has not yet found the stability he is seeking.



**Partita 5** Very meditative with chromatic passages, still ending with much uncertainty.



**Partita 6** Still meditative, but with a rather more confident character. It ends with much greater confidence and an expectation of something more to come.



**Partita 7** A very noticeable change of character. The upper parts are a decorated statement of the melody while the bass is jumping up and down with exuberance.



**Partita 8** Even more joyful. There are now four parts with octave jumps later in the upper parts. Is he expressing his new faith?



**Partita 9** Finally, the three manual parts in fugal style run joyfully for ten bars before the pedal states the chorale melody as if to declare that this is the foundation of a new life. One surely needs a 16ft Ophicleide to do justice to this, with the last note on a bottom C continuing for four bars while the manuals draw the whole to a conclusion.



Readers may of course come to a different interpretation of this work, but the final question might be, was this an expression of Walther's own experience?

**Philip Bowcock**

## WHO, AND WHERE AM I?

I am obviously a musician, an organist, certainly playing it during my lifetime. Where am I refers to a place in which I composed one of my pieces of music, which certainly has passed, with distinction, the test of time. Certain clues as to my identity will become obvious in the first main paragraph, and the particular place can be found, in the second paragraph. You should not require too much resource material to arrive at your conclusions. So, here goes.

As soon as I was able to hold a pen I began composing, and became proficient on many of the existing standard orchestral instruments. My total output despite this early experience in handling varied sonorities is not prolific, but one or two of my compositions are very popular. In common with other contemporary composers I developed an interest in my own country's musical heritage instead of slavishly following basic German influences. In fact I refer to many of my earlier works as "Good old Wagnerian Bawling". My later works definitely show the influence of English unaccompanied vocal monody, and other writings on early Christian beliefs from other continents, which you can see from the titles of two works in particular. On the technical side, my harmony is deprived of a sense of progression, from tension and release, and I rely on rhythm to provide the motivic force in my compositions. One device in particular is the use of the obstinato patterns. These vary in length, so that they do not conflict too strongly with my monodic melodies. They do however lead to a state where the time sense becomes irrelevant. Listen to this time sense in one of my most popular compositions. To conclude I much admire the music of Igor Stravinsky.

If you are still bewildered as to my name, a brief mention of some biographical details. I studied composition with Stanford, at the Royal College of Music. To earn a living I played the trombone in the Scottish Orchestra, then became a teacher, landing a prime job as Director of Music in a London public school.

Now where am I? You may find this section easier to work out.

A few miles from the village aptly named "The Queen of the Cotswolds", lies our village in question. It is situated in a westerly fold in the Cotswold Hills, close to the Benedictine Abbey of Prinknash. It boasts one of the largest iron age forts in Europe. There are several long barrows too. The village, lying on the old road from Gloucester to London, offered much hunting opportunities for the rich, including Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. On one side of this village can be found a very popular pub called the Black Horse Inn, serving excellent food cooked on the premises. It was a favourite haunt of the parents of the author of this article, and has been visited twice by him in the past few years. Opposite the inn "Midwinter Cottage" can be found. It was in this cottage that

our mystery composer set a poem of Christina Rossetti to music. He drew on all of his past experience to produce a melody of unpretentious simplicity in accordance with the spirit and the expression of the poem.

The composer's name and that of the village can be found on page 84.

**Graham Ireland**

### **A "C" SIDE INVASION OF READING?**

Those members of the congregation who subscribe to *Saints Alive* will have read my article in the May edition, entitled "I do like to be beside the C Side". Since the appearance of this edition the next issue of *The Organists' Review* has fallen through my letterbox, and it contains a letter from me inviting organ buffs to come down to Reading to try our Willis organ when the favourable weather ensures that the organ will respond to the desires of the player. Most organs of the same vintage as ours, which includes the larger one in St Mary, Butts, function less well when the weather turns cooler, and often give up the ghost when the central heating is switched on. It is extremely expensive to call an organ builder out to rectify faults during a cold spell, or at any time for that matter unless it is a contract visit, as a sudden change in temperature results in new faults emerging perhaps a day after the original faults were attended to. Now who wants to sit in a freezing cold church just to keep the organ jogging along? At All Saints we effect a compromise by keeping the air sucked in by the organ as moist and at a steady temperature as we can. In this way we keep the number of faults arising to the minimum.

In *The Organists' Review* I did extend an invitation to lovers of Willis organs to visit Reading [without their children!] and try ours. Since its original installation it has suffered several rebuilds and alterations, but much of the original Willis work remains. One of the most obvious results of successive rebuilds is that the organ has been extended into the chancel. If you look at pictures of this area in those produced for the Parish Profile, you will clearly see the stained glass window in the tunnel leading to the sacristy. Today this is now obscured by the organ and the security door.

Will All Saints take any bookings for a day at the "C" side? Who knows?

**Graham Ireland**

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

	V		P				W			M					
C	H	O	P	I	N		S	I	X	T	I	E	T	H	
O		W		X		S		S		E		G		O	
N	I	S	S	E	N	H	U	T		R	E	A	L	M	
T				L		R				M				O	
R	E	N	A	S	C	E	N	T		I	C	I	N	G	
A		E				D		R		N		R		E	
D	I	A	M	O	N	D		E	D	I	T	I	O	N	
I		T		S		E		N				S		E	
C	U	S	P	S			R	A	D	I	C	C	H	I	O
T				U				I		H				U	
I	N	F	R	A			B	R	E	W	E	R	I	E	S
O		U		R		U		S		R		D		L	
N	I	M	B	Y	I	S	H			P	U	R	E	L	Y
		E				K				B		M			

**Answer to “Who, and where am I?”**

WHO

Gustav Holst

WHERE

Cranham, Glos

## OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

### PATRON

Gillian Weir DBE

### HONORARY FELLOWS

Dr Francis Jackson

Dr William McVicker

### 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	Graham Ireland BA BMus MMus FRCO
1996 - 97	Donald Hickson MCMI
1998 - 99	Christine Wells BMus FRCO LRAM
2000 - 01	Graham Ireland BA BMus MMus FRCO
2002 - 03	Jim Wooldridge FSCA
2004 - 06	Jonathan Holl ARCO LRAM ARCM
2007 -	Christopher Cipkin BA MA ARCO

### SECRETARIES

<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>
1984 – 1986	Christopher Hood
1987 – 1991	Norman Hutt
1992 – 1993	Graham Ireland
1994 – 1996	Donald Hickson
1997 – 1998	Christine Wells
1999 – 2000	Graham Ireland
2000 – 2001	Jim Wooldridge
2002 –	Alan Kent

### HONORARY TREASURERS

<i>c1930 – c1954</i>	<i>A.L Warman</i>
<i>c1954 – 1958</i>	<i>Leslie Pratt</i>
1959 – 1960	Mrs S Stephenson
<i>1961 – 1976</i>	<i>Leslie Pratt</i>
1977 – 1979	J G Davies
1980 – 1982	Peter Marr
1983 – 1989	David Duvall
1990 –	Mark Jameson

All dates given above are the year of election.

## EDITORS OF THE BERKSHIRE ORGANIST

*1948 – 1973*

*Albert Rivers*

1974 – 1977

Leslie Davis

1978 – 1983

Gordon Spriggs

1984 – 1997

Gordon Spriggs and Philip Bowcock

1998 – 2004

Philip Bowcock

2005 –

Graham Ireland

