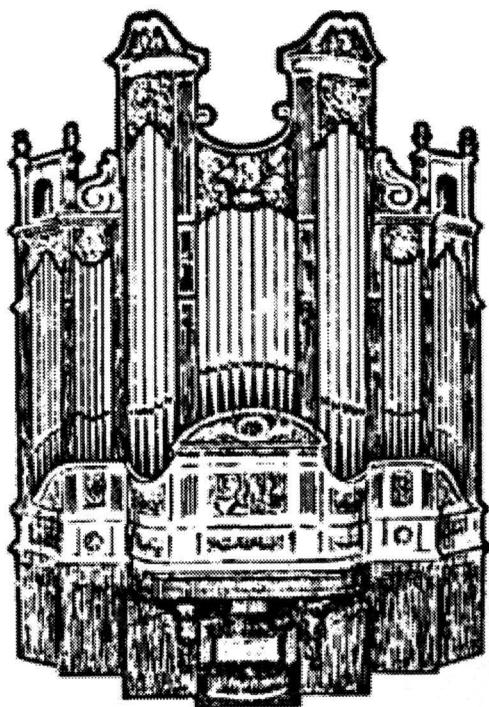


The Berkshire Organist

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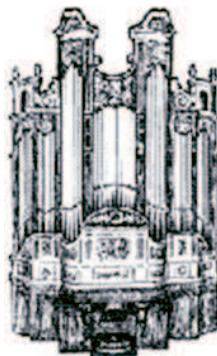
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Neither the Editors nor the Association accept any responsibility for opinions expressed in this Journal

1. 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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2. Introduction from the President

I have great pleasure in introducing the 2012 issue of The Berkshire Organist to all members of the Association and to others who may read it.

This year we welcome a new Editor, Chris Hood, a past President and an experienced member of the Association. We very much appreciate the expertise and effort he has put into obtaining, checking and preparing all the articles for this edition. Malcolm Rigg has continued handling the final layout of material for the printer and the editorial subcommittee has also given assistance.

We are grateful to Pat Rigg for successfully editing our last two journals. The role of Editor is a demanding and time-consuming one and we are very appreciative of everyone who has undertaken it, or shared in it, over the years. Our annual journal is quite distinctive (many associations do not have one) and is something of which we can be proud.

I hope you will enjoy reading The Berkshire Organist which I think reflects the variety of organ-related activities in the county and the enthusiasms of our members. Any feedback would be really appreciated and if you have ideas for any future articles do please get in touch with the Editor. It's never too soon to start writing for the next edition!

Enjoy the read.

Jill York.

3. President's Report to the AGM

The AGM was held on the 12th May 2012. I would like to begin by thanking the church authorities at St. Michael's, Tilehurst, for permitting us to use the church and facilities today, and Jonathan Holl who made all the arrangements. A big thank you is also due to John Halsey for giving the AGM recital and to Margaret Wooldridge and Jen Guy for organising the tea.

In the last year we have enjoyed the following events:

- In June 2010 – a visit to St Peter's Church, Cranbourne, followed by tea with Jonathan and Mandy Holl and the opportunity to play their 3-manual Eminent organ.
- In September the Isle of Wight Association visited organs in the Reading area and met with BOA members.
- The annual Study Tour took place in October, visiting Bristol and South Wales.
- In November the Annual Dinner was held at the Six Bells, Beenham, where the guest speaker was Dr Richard Godfrey.
- The President's Afternoon was held at Emmanuel Church in January and included a recital of music by women composers, a quiz, a music sale and tea.
- In February Martin Goetze gave a talk at Caversham Heights Methodist Church on "Building a Tudor organ".
- In March there was a visit to three churches in Guildford.
- We are very grateful to everyone involved in organising and leading these events.
- There have been two concerts in the Local Recitals Series: one in October by Jill York at St James the Less, Pangbourne, and the other in November by Graham Ireland at St Mark's Reading.

BOA members have supported many events at Reading Town Hall. There have been two evening Celebrity Organ Recitals. In November Tim Byram-Wigfield played 'Music for Royal Occasions' and in April Jane Parker-Smith played 'Toccata' – both were memorable

performances. In the Wednesday lunchtime organ recitals series the players were Paul Derrett (who in June launched his CD of Reading organs); John Clark-Maxwell (Eton College); the Syvati Duo (organ and `cello); Timothy Wakerell (St Paul's Cathedral); Douglas Tang (Hereford Cathedral) and Daniel Cook (St. David's Cathedral).

Events in the Reading Summer Proms 2011 programme included Paul Derrett's recital (above), the June 'Animal Parade' concert for children featuring Iain Farrington playing his music on the organ with William McVicker narrating, and the September Heritage Open Day featuring the Father Willis organ.

I would like to thank Jim Wooldridge for organising the Friday lunchtime recitals at The Minster for some years. These are now being organised by the Director of Music.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who has served on our committees and supported the Association in any way for their valued contribution. I must give a personal thank you to Christopher Cipkin, our outgoing Hon Secretary who has been a tower of strength to me and so very well-organised in everything he has done for the Association. I wish the new officers, committee members, sub-committee members and all supporters another good year for the Berkshire Organists' Association. Do please come along to our events whenever you can and if you have any suggestions for future events please let us know.

With best wishes,

Jill York.

3.1 Elections 2012

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

President	Jill York
President Elect	Harry Russell
Secretary	Sylvia Collins
Treasurer	Derek Guy
Committee (for 3 years)	Mark Jameson Ian May Don Hickson
Committee (for 2 years)	Julian Greaves Peter West
Committee (for 1 year)	Jonathan Holl Chris Hood
Programme Secretary	Christine Wells
Publicity Officer	Harry Russell
Webmaster	David Pether
Benevolent Fund Steward	Ruth Weatherly-Emberson
Editor: The Berkshire Organist:	Chris Hood
Editor: The Newsletter	Don Hickson
Independent Examiner	David Duvall

3.2 BOA AGM Recital

This recital was given by JOHN HALSEY, organ and cello at St. Michael's Church, Tilehurst on Saturday 12th May 2012 at 4pm.
"What the Swedish bride requested and other wedding music"

Stag night lament

Mein Junges Leben
hat ein End

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck
(1562 - 1621)

Swedish Bride

Allegro from
Drottningholmsmusiken

J.H. Roman (1694 - 1758)
arr. Thomas Ahren du Quercy

The Dean of Salisbury and Archdeacon of Canterbury

Prelude and Fugue
in B major

Marcel Dupré (1886 - 1971)

Australian wine heiress

Prelude from Suite
No.1 in G

Johann Sebastian Bach(1685 - 1750)

Yours Truly

Est-ce Mars le grand
Dieu d'alarmes

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck

Recessional

Adagio and Andante Largo
from Voluntary No. 5 in D

John Stanley (1712 - 1786)

John Halsey's programme inspired by musical requests at weddings was as rich and as varied as his career, which has taken in playing the cello in the National Youth Orchestra, singing in the Choir of King's College Cambridge, teaching music and mathematics, being Organist and Choirmaster at St. Luke's Chelsea, the Anglican Chaplaincy in Strasbourg, Wangaratta Cathedral, Australia, and Windsor Parish Church which is his current appointment. Apart from this, he spent 20 years working for Mars in Slough.

Each item of the programme was introduced with a humorous anecdote, so it began with the Sweelinck Variations whose title roughly translates as "My bachelor days are done". Here the variations were very well defined with neat staccato passage work on the St. Michael's Makin organ. The next piece was requested by two blonde Swedish brides for whom John played at St. Luke's Chelsea. It is performed at Swedish Royal weddings and at Nobel Prize ceremonies. Used as we are to Handel's ceremonial music, this piece by Roman was lightweight in comparison but attractively played by the recitalist.

The programme continued with Dupre's Prelude and Fugue in B major inspired by the marriage of two clerics, now Mr. and Mrs. Watson. This ingenious work, described by Harold Darke as "fiendish", held no fears for John who played with great panache; but he asked "Was it music?" Then we moved to Australia and John to his fine 1974 Hill cello. A bottle of Brown Brothers wine was passed round, for one of the Brown family had asked for Bach's Prelude from Cello Suite No. 1 at her wedding. Was this music written by Bach's wife Anna Magdalena I wonder? Anyway it sounded beautifully resonant in the church with perfect intonation and an awareness of the architectural structure. Finally, to John's own wedding and more Sweelinck, bringing in a reference to Mars, the god whose real love was Venus and whose offspring was Cupid. The recital was rounded off with some satisfying John Stanley whose tercentenary is celebrated this year. This was a very entertaining, unusual and well performed recital.

Christine Wells

3.3 President's Afternoon

Our January meeting is always arranged by the President in their own inimitable style, and with Jill York holding that office we were sure that we would not be disappointed. Through the kindness of the Emmanuel Methodist Church authorities, particularly Derek and Jen Guy, some 24 or so of us gathered there for a very pleasant afternoon on Saturday 14th January 2012.

Jill started off a short recital on their fairly new Makin organ with a piece by Cecile Chaminade. Jonathan and Christopher also contributed items, as did Christine on her unaccompanied 'cello. All of the pieces played were composed by women composers, and it was obvious that we do not hear enough music from the fairer sex!

A large collection of used music (mostly organ) was available for sale, and Jill had thoughtfully arranged these in alphabetical order by composer, which enabled many of us to augment our own libraries, and perhaps replace some well loved pieces which had worn out through constant use. Cash raised from this went to the Benevolent Fund.

We then had a quiz - some rounds were purely organ based, one of which was on our own "Berkshire Organist" and "Newsletter." Our answers showed that we need to study these publications much more carefully in future. The final round was a list of jumbled up letters which, if solved, revealed the name of an organ stop - not as easy as it looked.

The final event of the afternoon was the tea, which is fast becoming a legend at BOA events. Thanks are due to Jen and Margaret who laid on a magnificent spread, and there was very little left at the end!

Thank you President Jill for a very pleasant afternoon.

Jim Wooldridge

3.4 Annual Dinner

In contrast to recent years, the weather this year was kind so that we did not have the hazards of fog, storms or ice to contend with. The venue (on Saturday 19th November 2011) was, as it has been for a few years now, the delightful Six Bells at Beenham so that the clever people with Satnav, or those still relying on good old fashioned maps and signposts, were by now sufficiently familiar with the location to be able to find it without difficulty. The Six Bells is a delightful hostelry run by friendly and efficient management and our dedicated room is just the right size for our numbers. As always the meal had enough choice to satisfy most tastes and was well prepared and served without undue fuss.

Having eaten well and feeling replete we then settled down to listen to our speaker for the evening. Dr Richard Godfrey is the Diocesan Organ Consultant for Salisbury and is closely associated with the newly created Lyme Regis Organ School. It was these two aspects that formed the basis but by no means all of his talk. Reference to his Medical background provided some interesting parallels to his more musical allusions and his whole talk was delivered with the ideal blend of serious message and light hearted humour. In complimenting our Association for the work that it does, he expressed his pride in the work done towards the preservation of the pipe organ and emphasised the importance of teaching and continued learning. In referring to the Lyme Regis School, he mentioned a scheme for subsidising the tuition for young students in association with Salisbury Diocese, and encouraged all to explore the syllabus of the School and consider enrolling for some of the classes there. His main message was that, no matter how difficult it may seem to promote the use of the pipe organ, we should all continue to do this and to encourage others to take up the challenge - obviously including attendances at Lyme Regis.

All in all, gastronomically and intellectually, it was a very enjoyable evening and it was with a feeling of enjoyment and well being that we all found our way home afterwards.

Don Hickson

4. Reading Town Hall Lunchtime Recitals

4.1 Recital on 15th June 2011

The Lunchtime Organ Recital at Reading Town Hall was given by Paul Derrett.

Programme

Overture to 'St Paul' Mendelssohn arr. W T Best

i) Go down Moses! Fela Sowande

Traditional Spiritual

ii) K'a Mura - a Yoruba Melody

Introduction and Fugue Samuel Sebastian Wesley
in C sharp minor

Intermezzo in D flat Alfred Hollins

Toccata: 'Festa Buccolico' Zsiross

This recital by Paul Derrett marked the launch of his new recording of Reading Organs and before beginning to play he marked the occasion by singing the praises of our famous Reading Willis. This praise was further enhanced by the performance throughout which the assembled audience was treated to a wonderful demonstration of what can be achieved on this instrument.

We got off to a fine start with the Mendelssohn where we heard the Tuba in all its glory and an overall registration selected to give wonderful clarity. He also demonstrated some stupendous pedal work. New to most of us were the two short pieces by the Nigerian Fela Sowande. The first was an ethereal impression leading to a fine scherzo and culminating in a Chorale-like finale. The Yoruba melody was equally entrancing but in a more contemplative tone.

The Wesley once again was excellently played with a sensitive stop selection which, unlike many performances, revealed a wonderful clarity in the fugue. Relaxation was found in the frivolous but entertaining Intermezzo by Alfred Hollins before we were treated to another wonderful display of pyrotechnics in the aptly named Toccata by the twentieth century Hungarian.

Don Hickson

4.2 Recital on 6th July 2011

The Lunchtime Organ Recital at Reading Town Hall was given by John Clark-Maxwell (Eton College).
Programme

Introduction and Passacaglia Max Reger
in D minor

Chorale Preludes:

Herzlich thut mich erfreuen Johannes Brahms
Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele
O wie selig seid ihr doch

Trio Sonata No 4 in E minor Johann Sebastian Bach

Sketches for Pedalpiano No. 1 Robert Schumann
Nicht schnell und sehr markiert

Introduction, Passacaglia and Healey Willan
Fugue in E flat minor

Of all the lunchtime recitals in the Town Hall probably the one most eagerly anticipated is the Annual Recital by one of the organ scholars from Eton college. This year it was the turn of John Clark-Maxwell to take up this challenge. With a growing history of recitals already completed it was a challenge that he passed, as expected, with flying colours. With Reger and J S Bach as two of his “special interests” it was right that these two composers featured in this programme and the Reger got the programme off to a rumbustious start with a remarkable degree of control in the Passacaglia.

The Brahms Chorale Preludes were delightfully played with sympathetic use of the many colours available on the Father Willis. As expected the Bach Trio revealed the recitalist's technical skills and once again was well registered. After the delightful little Schumann piece for Pedal Piano the recital was rounded off with a fine performance of the work by Healey Willan.

All in all this was a fine recital which was enjoyed by all present. From the experience of this recital and those by Eton College Scholars in recent years it is safe to say that the future of organ performance in Britain is in good hands.

Don Hickson

4.3 Recital on 22nd November 2011

The Lunchtime Organ Recital at Reading Town Hall was given by Timothy Wakerell.

Programme

Overture to 'St Paul'	Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) Arr. W.T. Best (1826-1897)
Sonata in C major Allegro – Minuetto & Trio – Intermezzo – Presto	Franz Xaver Schnizer (1740-1785)
Prelude and Fugue in D major BWV 532	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Fantasie in E flat	Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)
Final from Sonata No.1 in D minor Op.42	Félix-Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

Over the last few years, the lunchtime recitals in the Town Hall have attracted audience numbers which have become the envy of many venues including London churches. Of course, the Father Willis organ is known internationally but the calibre of the recitalists, some very well known, is consistently of a very high standard. The recital given by Timothy Wakerell, Sub-Organist of St Paul's Cathedral, reached the highest of levels. What a pleasure it was to hear and see such exceptional playing, with perfect technique and all projected in a very relaxed manner.

The recital began with the Overture to St Paul by Mendelssohn. This was arranged for the organ by the inimitable W.T. Best. (He is remembered for the very many arrangements he made in the 19th century of orchestral and choral works). The theme of this work is the chorale melody "Sleepers wake" which is given out at the beginning on the foundation stops. This is followed by a fugal theme which develops to a great intensity and climax with much movement in the pedals. Tim followed this with the Sonata in C by Franz Xaver Schnizer, who was a monk and organist of the beautiful, ornate Abbey at Ottobeuren in Southern Germany. There are two 18th century organs in the chancel both built by the renowned builder Karl Joseph Riepp. The four movements of this sonata (one of six) gave us the chance to hear the flute stops, not only alone but also with soft reeds, to give a characteristic classical sound.

J S Bach's Prelude and Fugue in D followed. The fugue was registered lightly and with much colour, displaying again complete technical mastery. The well known Fantasie in E flat by Saint-Saëns came next. Tim used registration which expertly brought to light the echo effects of the first section. The second section showed us that the organ can sound very French! The 'Final' from the Sonata no.1 by Guilmant brought the recital to a resounding close, resulting in enthusiastic applause.

Jonathan Holl

4.4 Recital on 14th March 2012

The Lunchtime Organ Recital at Reading Town Hall was given by Daniel Cook.

Programme

Sinfonia from Cantata No.29	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750) arr. Marcel Dupré
Impromptu for Sir Edward Bairstow on his 70th Birthday	Francis Jackson (b.1917)
Toccata and Fugue “The Wanderer”	C.H.H. Parry (1848 – 1918)
Fantasie-Impromptu	Walter Alcock (1861 – 1947)
Canzona from Sonata in C minor (1936)	Percy Whitlock (1903 – 1946)
Fantasia and Toccata Op. 57	C.V. Stanford (1852 – 1924)

Daniel Cook was Assistant Director of Music (and Principal Organist) at Salisbury Cathedral before moving to the post of Organist and Master of the Choristers at St. David’s Cathedral in November 2011. Well-known on the “recital circuit”, one anticipated an outstanding recital and indeed we were not disappointed.

Except for the first piece, the programme consisted of music composed very much in the “romantic era” at the time when the British Empire was at its height. That the majority of the programme was of the same genre could have made for a recital somewhat lacking in variety; not so with Daniel Cook whose superb playing, both musically and technically – a lesson in organ management – held the undivided attention of all for nearly an hour.

Daniel's performance of Bach's tuneful Sinfonia from Cantata No. 29 made an excellent start with one noticing immediately his clear articulation and finger work. This arrangement by Marcel Dupré has thicker textures than some other arrangements of this work, but played by Daniel was none the worse for that!

Francis Jackson wrote the Impromptu for Sir Edward Bairstow on his 70th Birthday whilst in Italy during the war. He was known to have commented that he found the music flowed out of him while working on this piece. It has a charming melody with "modernesque" harmonies; there is a climax in the middle with splashes of Tuba.

Parry's Toccata and Fugue "The Wanderer" is a tremendous *tour de force*. Not often played now, it was a particular pleasure to hear this piece. Parry owned a yacht named "The Wanderer" and much of this music is based on his sea-faring times. At the time of Parry's death this Toccata and Fugue had not been prepared for publication and we are indebted to George Thalben-Ball for his work on this.

Walter Alcock was Organist of Salisbury Cathedral for many years. The Fantasie-Impromptu is typical of his fine craftsmanship and was first performed at the Three Choirs Festival in Hereford Cathedral.

The Canzona from the Sonata in C minor by Whitlock is a charming piece and Daniel made a point of utilising the beautiful Orchestral Oboe stop on the Solo Organ.

Another *tour de force* ended the recital in the form of Stanford's Fantasia and Toccata. This is a piece of several sections with some delightful tunes leading into an energetic toccata where at times both hands and feet are fully occupied in negotiating torrents of semiquavers.

There was enthusiastic applause from an audience of around 100.

Jonathan Holl.

4.5 Recital on 16th May 2012



The Lunchtime Organ Recital at Reading Town Hall was given by Jill York, seen above at the Town Hall Organ.

Programme

Grand Dialogue in C	Louis Marchand
Voluntary in D minor Op.6 No.1 Siciliano - Andante	John Stanley
Prelude and Fugue in B minor BWV 544	Johann Sebastian Bach
Larghetto in C minor	Elfrida Andrée
O Filii - Variations	Jeanne Demessieux

Pastorale from Sonata No.1	Alexandre Guilmant
Tuba Tune	Christopher Tambling
Toccata	Théodore Dubois

This recital was given by Jill York, the current President of the Association, and fulfilled all the promise of the occasion. Cobwebs in the organ and amongst the audience were soon blown away by the exuberant fanfare of the Marchand which got the recital off to a lively start. We then calmed down to the beautiful Stanley Voluntary which gave the organ an opportunity to let the oboe shine.

The familiar Bach was played with confidence and was a commanding performance which led to an interlude of less familiar pieces. Those of us who have heard Jill York play elsewhere will know that one of her entirely justifiable hobby horses is the promotion of female composers and the next piece on her programme was the short Larghetto by Elfrida André. This Swedish composer achieved the remarkable feat of getting Swedish law changed which hitherto had banned women from Cathedral organist's posts in the country, and she subsequently became organist at Gothenburg Cathedral. This was followed by the variations on "O Filii", largely based on the plainsong chant but which enabled the recitalist to demonstrate the many varied colours of our Father Willis.

The sight of "Tuba Tune" on the programme automatically switches many listeners' minds to "Cocker" (including this reviewer) but this one was by Christopher Tambling. Yes! the Cocker obviously influenced this piece but it was well worth including if only to show off the resounding tuba stop. Lunchtime finished, as it had begun, with fireworks in the shape of Dubois' Toccata played with great panache and bringing a memorable recital to a lively conclusion.

This was a fine recital containing, as all recitals should, a mix of the familiar and the comparatively unknown, and the ovation given by the audience in a fairly full hall was well deserved.

Don Hickson, photo by Mark Jameson.

5. Celebrity Organ Recitals

5.1 Town Hall Classics

This event on 9th June 2012 was part of the Reading Summer Proms 2012 programme – with a free hour of music led by our Honorary Fellow, Dr William McVicker. Jonathan Holl and William shared the playing. Fifty adults and two very young children gathered on the stage seated near the console. From a show of hands, the majority gathered were non-organists.

We enjoyed a well thought out history of how music developed from the early Victorian era to the current time, the rivalry between town halls with grander and grander buildings and organs, and what has survived to modern times leading to survival of our precious historic instrument in Reading. William also had many anecdotes about various composers and organists to illustrate the subject in a way that non-organ experts could easily understand.

The event opened with Jonathan playing Handel's Overture to Athalia, a very typical piece for Victorian audiences. Part of the talk was how tone colours developed during Victoria times coupled with the progression of technology and power. This led naturally to the Tuba with Jonathan playing Lang's Tuba Tune. To contrast, and bring out the quieter tones William played Louis Lefebure-Wely's Andante, known as the Nuns Chorus because of the use of the Vox Humana. William also explained how the French composer organists had to cope with changing directives and illustrated this by playing an extract from Balbastre's Cannonade in D Major a very different style of music. He also demonstrated the Thunder effect with pedal notes. To lighten the music Jonathan then played Yon's Humoresque or Toccatino for Flute (from L'Organo Primitivo) showing how Italian organ music differed from north European ideas.

At this point William invited one of the little lads to come to the bench and find the highest and lowest notes. It was a picture to see the expression on the little lad's face. It also highlighted the difficulties faced by youngsters wanting to learn the organ. William finished by playing a Victorian arrangement of Mendelssohn's War March of the Priests. It was a very enjoyable morning, and the allotted hour went far too quickly.

Mark Jameson

6. Heritage Days

6.1 Open Day on September 11th 2011

Heritage Open Day for 2011 fell on a day when many people's thoughts were turning to the momentous events ten years earlier on a day universally known as 9/11. In the calm and Victorian atmosphere of Reading Town Hall David Pether gave his now regular address to visitors during the Sunday afternoon.

Sadly the organ was not available to us for the first day of Heritage weekend as the Hall was booked to host a wedding. Such a pity, especially as the restoration of this historic organ was funded largely by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Also, as the Hall shop was closed, souvenirs and the CD of the organ could not be purchased. However, marketing in the Reading Heritage activity booklet, the free Reading Midweek Chronicle newspaper and elsewhere seemed to bring in almost as many to the hall as last year, so Roger and I were kept busy.

David outlined the history of the building and organ. This was followed by three pieces, all English music and highly appropriate to the instrument with all the tone colours being well displayed, and the applause at the end was a testament to his skills. Following the three pieces, the group were invited to the console where David showed the basics of how an organ worked, and showed off some of its colours. There seemed to be few teenagers this year, but many quite young children. Several visitors tried their skills including two non-member organists from Lower Earley. We had some theatre organ music and part of Bach's Toccata [BWV565] as well some improvisations. Visitors came from London, Derby, and other parts of the Thames Valley apart from Reading area residents. The totals of visitors for each session was 1pm (27), 2pm (36) 3pm (28) – a total of 91.

Well done David!

Mark Jameson

7. Visits

7.1 Tour of Bristol & South Wales

On the last day of the Indian Summer, members of the Association, with wives and husbands, met in Bristol at the start of the 2011 organ tour; this was in fact the 13th tour; the first in 1999 was to Paris.

We gathered at St Mary, Redcliffe where we were met by the organist, Andrew Kirk. He spoke to us about the recent restoration. Built by Harrison's in 1912, the organ has 71 speaking stops on 4 manuals. The sound is very rounded and grand, but also very loud, especially at the console. The Swell has two expression pedals and is extremely powerful. The whole organ is on relatively high wind pressures. Andrew Kirk played the Elgar 'Imperial March' to us before we were all invited to play.

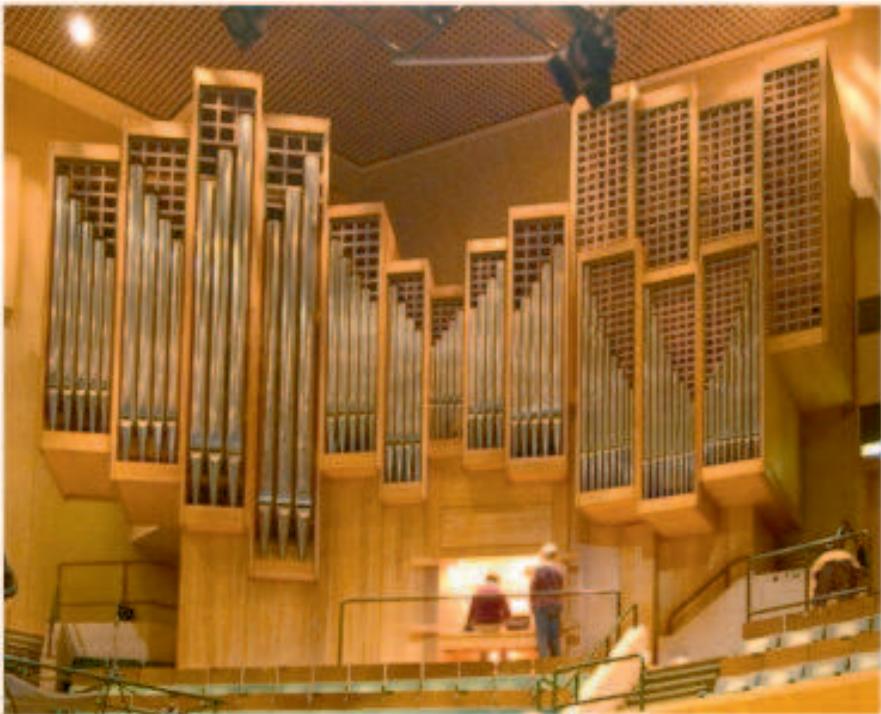
In the afternoon, we met at the cathedral where we were warmly hosted by the organist Mark Lee. Some of us, including the writer, were not aware that Bristol Cathedral was such a beautiful building and the organ such a gem. The first organ in the cathedral was by Renatus Harris in 1685. There were various additions and changes until in 1907 Walkers rebuilt the organ. It still has tubular pneumatic action with 4 manuals and 65 speaking stops and there have been no alterations at all to the tonal scheme since 1907. Although it takes a little time to become familiar with the touch, the sound of the organ is magnificent in the excellent acoustic.

We continued our journey to Cardiff where we stayed at the New House Country Hotel. This is situated in the hills just to the north of the city with excellent views down the valley to Cardiff in the distance. However, as soon as we crossed the Severn Bridge into Wales the weather 'turned' and summer seemed to end! Hence the aforementioned view was not always available! The hotel was very comfortable in elegant surroundings and delicious food was served in the restaurant.

The next day saw us at Llandaff Cathedral where we were met by the organist Richard Moorhouse. The new organ by Nicholson's, installed in 2010, covered a wide area on both sides of the chancel and one could admire the beautiful casework. The organ has 4 manuals

with 61 stops. A further 16 stops will be added when funds become available – 5 will be on the Pedal and 11 on the Solo. The organ was very comfortable to play and the sound magnificent, but it was thought by some including some cathedral regulars that it is too loud for the building.

We were due to meet at St David's Hall at 3.30pm. With over 4 hours to fill, we decided to drive to Caerphilly for lunch. At St David's Hall, we were met by Philip Thomas, a concert organiser, who talked to us and demonstrated the organ before we all gave it a try.



St David's Hall, Cardiff

The organ is by Peter Collins and has 3 manuals and 55 speaking stops. It was exciting to play with a very direct response. Mr Thomas explained that the passageways in the hall behind the organ are very complicated and related to us one occasion when a visiting recitalist appeared several times at different locations near the organ before

finding the correct door for the console!! We proceeded to the Parish Church of St John, a mere 200 yards from St David's Hall. Philip Thomas is the Curator and Organist here and he demonstrated the 1894 3 manual Willis organ which was in splendid condition. It was restored to its original condition by David Wells in 2005, the opening recital being given by Thomas Trotter. The console, specification and sound had many similarities with the Father Willis in Reading Town Hall.

The next morning we checked out of our very comfortable hotel and made our way to Swansea where we assembled at the Brangwyn Hall. We were met by Paul Richard, the Curator of the organ. While being led to the hall, one was able to admire the great interior of the Art Deco building which comprises the Brangwyn Hall and the Guildhall.

The Brangwyn Hall itself is large and rectangular and holds about 1000 people. The organ console is situated on the stage with the organ being visible behind bars. In the early part of the 20th century, this Willis organ was at the Nottingham Elite Picture Theatre, but was installed at the Brangwyn Hall in 1934. Various restorations and improvements were made under the direction of the well-known and highly regarded curator John Fussell. The organ has 4 manuals and 70 stops. Visually, the console is very similar to that of St Mary's Minster, Reading, with tilting tablets for the couplers arranged across the top of the console above the Solo organ. The specification also has many similarities. This organ was a pleasure to play with very direct clear sounds and lots of colour.

After taking lunch in a nearby Thai restaurant, we met at the Collegiate and Parish Church of St Mary. We were warmly greeted by the organist Dr William Reynolds, who played a short recital for us. The church was badly damaged in the war, but has been beautifully restored. The organ was built by Hill Norman & Beard in 1959 and further tonal changes and improvements have been made since. There are 48 stops over 3 manuals. The organ was comfortable to play and sounded excellent in the good acoustic.

We drove on to St David's. After enduring two days of rather grey, autumnal and windy weather, we awoke to bright sunshine, if still a little windy. We made our way to Picton Castle just to the south-east of Haverfordwest. Closed to the public at the end of September, we

were granted a special viewing which included, of course, playing the 1750 Snetzler organ (restored by Mander in 1962). The Castle was built around 1300 and from the 17th century until recently, it was owned by the well-known Philipps family. The inside projected a warm comfortable atmosphere. The organ is situated on a large gallery at the end of the main reception room. There are 7 stops on the one manual, all voiced with a gentle and beautiful tone. The Cornet stop comes down to middle C, while the Sesquialtera takes over and completes the cornet sound on the whole manual. This split, which is standard, enables one to play a cornet voluntary with a suitable accompaniment in the left hand. The drawstops were most elegant, but were tiny. The stop heads being about ½ inch in diameter making the writing difficult to read. This visit was a real bonus!



Jonathan Holl at Picton Castle

In the afternoon we were at St David's Cathedral, a beautiful building with the ruins of the Bishop's Palace just beyond the west end. A number of organ builders have had a hand in restoration and additions etc., but Harrisons were responsible for the major rebuild in 2000. It is a 4 manual instrument; the "West Choir organ" being effectively a Positive organ and the "East Choir organ" a Solo. Although the organ has lots of colour and a fine specification on paper, we found that we were not excited by it either at the console or in the Nave. We felt it

could have had greater power, but also there seemed to be a complete lack of resonance due mainly to the most beautiful wood-carved roof in the Nave. We were warmly hosted by the acting organist, Simon Pearce who took great trouble to explain everything. Later, some of our party attended Evensong, where (on this occasion) the top line was sung by the girls' choir. There was a very good blend of sound. The choir girls were very much young ladies and after the Service some were observed getting into their cars and driving home!

The next day, on our way home, we visited Brecon Cathedral. The organist, Mark Duthie showed us the organ and played to us. Originally built in 1886 by Hill & Son, the 4 manual organ was rebuilt by Percy Daniel in 1973 and 1995. Great care was taken to preserve the unique Hill tone quality. The organ sounded magnificent and was exciting to play.

So ended the 13th Association Tour, which took in some very prestigious instruments. Grateful thanks are due once again to Christine Wells for making all the complicated arrangements.



The party at Llandaff Cathedral.

Jonathan Holl

7.2 Visit by IOW Association

To meet up with members of the Berkshire Organists' Association, the Isle of Wight Organists' Association came to Reading on Saturday 10th September 2011.

On Saturday the 10th September a happy group of fourteen members of the Isle of Wight Organists' Association met on a bright sunny September morning at 8.15 a.m., at Fishbourne, near Ryde, to board the 8.30 a.m. ferry to the mainland (as we islanders call it!). We were on a rather cramped minibus, supposedly for sixteen people, but we all reckoned it was for sixteen children or very thin adults! Everyone was in good spirits; we had a jovial driver called Andy, and we shared snacks and sweets and drinks around. Two members had decided to come in their own car, and bring a third gentleman, who lived near them, so when we all arrived at Waltham St. Lawrence Church at 11.15 a.m. we were seventeen in number. Christine and other members were there to welcome us, and Don and Malcolm Harding gave us a very interesting talk about the beautiful Church, and the two organs; the historic Father Willis, dating from the 1860's, and refurbished by Tony Foster-Waite a few years ago, and the beautiful single manual Tickell chamber organ. The organs were put through their paces, and then members were invited to try them, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. At 12.45 p.m. we retired to "The Bell", a short walk away, to order our lunch, and have a chat whilst we ate. We were given the use of our own room which was good.

Our next visit was to be St. Giles' in Reading. The organ was built by J.C. Bishop in 1829, then re-built by J.W. Walker in 1867 and 1888, and, after further work between 1920 and 1961, it was restored by Harrison & Harrison in 1996 as closely as possible to its 1888 condition. We were to be met here by Ian. Unfortunately, the minibus decided to have a puncture as we came round the corner by the "Red Cow" into Southampton Street which caused traffic chaos and annoyed a traffic warden very much! We walked down the road to St. Giles, where Ian gave us a brilliant talk and demonstration of the organ. Many members then tried it out for themselves, and our two young members George and Luke would have stayed all day playing and enjoying the greatness of the sound!

The minibus was still not in action, so we walked to our final visit of the day, The Minster Church of St. Mary the Virgin, a Father Willis four manual organ built in 1862 and re-built in 1936. Fund raising is on-going for the restoration of this fine organ with 2,886 pipes. We were met by the Reverend Canon Brian Shenton and Peter West. We had a very interesting talk about the Church and organ, and members were invited to try the organ for themselves. We were then very kindly served tea and cakes and biscuits, which we all really enjoyed, and set us up for our journey back to Isle of Wight, on the “newly-tired” minibus!

We arrived back on the island at 8.30p.m and all decided what a great day it had been. Thank you so much to Christine for arranging it for us, and to all the Berkshire Organists' members who kindly gave up their time to support and welcome us.

Ruth Weatherly-Emberson

7.3 Visit to Guildford

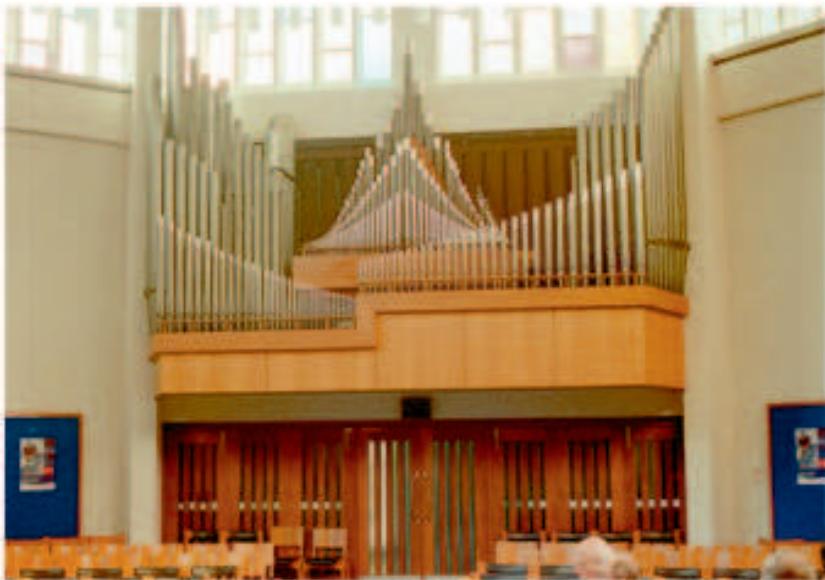
For our visit to Guildford on Saturday, March 10th 2012, our original plan was to make Guildford Cathedral the central point of our visit but this proved impossible, so, with considerable help given to us by Gillian Lloyd, organist of the Guildford URC, we arranged that our first visit should be to Holy Trinity at the top of the very steep High Street.

We started at the United Reformed Church where Gillian had very kindly allowed us to use their car park for the day, and where she also provided us with coffee and biscuits before we set off to Holy Trinity with her leading the way. This church, a grade 1 listed building in the Palladian style, is the largest Georgian church in Surrey. We entered via a door at the eastern end and found ourselves in the nave, but there seemed to be no sign of an organ anywhere until we realised that we had walked underneath it as we came in. Despite the fact that it couldn't be seen from the main body of the church, it could certainly fill the church with sound and this was demonstrated by their deputy organist Anthony Gritton with, among other pieces, the E flat Sortie by Lefébure-Wely. As there were only seven players in our group at

this stage (fifteen of us in total) we were all able to try the organ out for ourselves. Suffice it to say that Mark Jameson had kindly provided all of us with a detailed description of all three instruments (and travel instructions as to how to get to Guildford!). This was a very large three-manual organ which had had several modifications during its life, the last one by Nicholson's of Worcester. Personally I found it rather strident and lacking sweetness, and the console was not easy to get on to, but then most of us are getting on a bit!

We all went our separate ways for lunch, and being in the middle of the town there were plenty of restaurants from which to choose.

Our second visit was to St. Mary's at the bottom of the hill - a very ancient church, but with a fairly new organ which replaced one destroyed by fire. Again, Gillian was there to guide us in at the appointed hour, where she introduced us to their organist Steven Salmon who demonstrated the instrument which was built by Saxon Aldred in 1988. A small, completely tracker action organ, it belied its size, and was very enjoyable to play.



The Organ at Guildford URC

Our third and final visit was back to Guildford URC where we were pleasantly surprised to find a large three-manual organ with a console in full view of the congregation. This instrument, which started life as a “Binns” still contained much of the original pipe work, and was housed on its own large gallery, very much open to view as there was no case. Gillian told us something of the history of this circular building, which is about fifty years old, as well as the organ itself before demonstrating it with a snippet of Bach’s Trio Sonata - we would love to have heard more of her playing, but she kindly left the remaining time for all of us to have a go. Tea and biscuits miraculously appeared again, and some of the players among us were then invited to go into the organ chamber itself to see the “works”.

This was a most successful day, fine weather, with all the details to make the visit more enjoyable, thanks to the maps and specifications provided by Mark, and especially for the very warm welcome we received from Gillian.

Jim Wooldridge, photo Chris Hood

7.4 Lyme Regis Organ School

The Lyme Regis Organ School Winter Workshop 2012

The February Winter Workshop in was a three day event on ‘The Glories of French Organ Music’. I was inspired to go on this after hearing Richard Godfrey give his speech at our BOA Annual Dinner last November. Richard set up the Organ School in St. Michael’s Church, Lyme Regis, where a three-manual tracker action organ by Anton Skrabl of Slovenia has recently been installed. The course was tightly organised and offered participants a wide range of experiences in a short space of time. The lead tutor was Philip Scriven and the rest of the team were Richard Godfrey, David Bruce-Payne, Robert Fielding and Timothy Hone.

Over the three days we received lectures and demonstrations on French Classical organs and the Baroque, the Transition from Classical to Romantic, Famous French organs and Contemporary French music. There were two Master Classes, one on French Baroque, tutored by Tim Hone, and the other on French Romantic music, tutored by Philip Scriven. I must say it was a slightly surreal experience to step up to play on a new, unfamiliar organ, clutching the piece of Marchand you've been learning and knowing the camera is on you (well, two actually as another was trained on the pedals) and that everybody else is watching you down in the body of the church! Fortunately you do forget all that when the tutor gets to work on the piece and starts to sort you out! The second Master Class was a little less daunting and as two of us had brought the Dubois Toccata, I got to play the middle section. It's interesting how something you've struggled with can become much more manageable and musical with the right guidance – and in a matter of minutes!

The course included two Study Sessions where we worked in small groups on prepared pieces. For this we spread out to other local organs as well: a Skrabl house organ nearby, a Hauptwerk set up in the church hall, the Roman Catholic Church organ and the organ at St Andrew's, Charmouth. The one thing on the programme that I decided wasn't for me was the Improvisation class on the final morning. On hearing me say that 'I don't do improvising' (well, not in public anyway), David seized on it and said I was exactly the sort of person for the class! After an enjoyable study session on this where his approach got me improvising quite happily, I actually took part in the 'Alternatim on the Magnificat' class where sung verses alternated with different players leaping on to the organ stool to perform 'their' interpretation of the verse. And it was all on camera too! And it was fun!

On the first evening tutors and friends gave a recital, which was followed by the course dinner at a local restaurant, and on the second evening Philip gave a stunning Celebrity Recital of French Romantic and Contemporary music, including Guilmant's Sonata no. 1 and a Cochereau Bolero for percussion and organ. This was a public recital and was very well attended.

All the participants were kept going by excellent home cooking and plentiful tea, coffee and cakes in the adjacent church hall and the whole atmosphere was friendly and welcoming. It was a very worthwhile course and details of the School can be found at www.lymeregisorganschool.org . Lyme Regis is a lovely town to visit and even in February the weather was good enough for my husband to spend a whole day fossil hunting on the beach. We both look forward to returning there soon.

Jill York

8. General Articles

8.1 How to make a Tudor organ

On Saturday 11th February 2012 Caversham Heights Methodist Church hosted our BOA afternoon meeting. The speaker was Martin Goetze, co-founder of the organ-builders Goetze and Gwynn which was set up in 1980 to help revive the interest in the classical tradition in British organ-building.

Martin's topic was the reconstruction of two Tudor-style organs and his story started with an unusual Suffolk barn door from Wetheringsett, found when a partition wall was removed in 1977. Part of the inner strengthening of this was done with a large piece of wood pierced with rows of holes with the biggest holes in the middle. It was kept and eventually recognised as an oak organ soundboard. There are said to be no pre-1600 organs in Britain but dendrochronology (tree ring dating) puts it at around 1525 – and from Eastern Europe! It had 46 notes and seven stops, with an eighth never completed. Also visible on the back were grooves connecting the slider points. It would have had transposed pitch and 5 foot and 10 foot pipes. In 1995 the Gwynns discovered the Wingfield soundboard which was smaller and is probably of walnut. This would have had 5 foot pipes and a range from F to treble A. Soundboards indicate the specification and layout of the organ, the overall size, the shape of the pipe front and give other clues. As a result the Early English Organ project was set up. Thorough research was done, many other craftspeople were involved and the two organs were constructed in 2000 and 2001, one being vividly painted as the original would have been. As finished instruments they have had several 'residencies' at different churches and cathedrals, lately at Durham Cathedral. Further details, including photographs, can be seen on their website www.goetzegwynn.co.uk

Throughout his talk, Martin included a wealth of detail about other early organs. 'Stops' stop the pipes from speaking, but before they were invented the sound was continuous. Some organs had all wood pipes, including mixtures. 16th Century organs in northern and southern Europe produced quite different sounds, Italian organs being 'breathy' and having mean tone tuning. One fascinating slide showed early Spanish organ pipes with the pattern beaten into them before

they were rounded into pipe shape. After the Black Death there was apparently more money for churches, for priests, choirs and organs, and in services the organ alternated verses with the choir but never played with the singers. Choirs and organs increased together and by the Reformation there were probably 10,000 organs in the country.

Martin's talk was illustrated with PowerPoint slides and recordings, the only amusing hitch occurring when the sun crept round to the screen, so members sprang to the rescue and moved the equipment. Afterwards we enjoyed an excellent tea, thanks to BOA members and members of the church.

Jill York.

Editor's note: if you want to hear a pre-Cromwell English instrument go to Brittany where there are several organs by the Dallam family which have been very well restored.

8.2 Prejudice against lady organists

The prejudice against lady organists, and the education of womankind.

Sometimes finding a new piece in a book leads to the discovery of an organist with a story. In this case a Largo in A flat introduced me to Elizabeth Stirling (1819-1895), an organist born in Greenwich who became a well-known composer and an outstanding player. She studied organ and piano as a girl and at 18 gave an organ recital at St Katherine's Church, Regent's Park which was reviewed in The Musical World as follows:

“This young lady was the unceasing object of general astonishment, and performed for nearly three hours in continuation the most difficult pedal fugues and preludes of Bach, with a degree of precision and mastery, which may almost be said to be unrivalled. We hope to see justice done to Miss Stirling. The prejudice against lady organists cannot remain, with such an example opposed to it.”

Elizabeth Stirling was elected organist of All Saints Church Poplar at the age of 20, staying there for 19 years. In 1858 she went to St Andrew's Church in Undershaft (in the City of London) for 22 years, a post gained by competition. She studied organ, piano and harmony privately and in 1856 submitted a setting of Psalm 130 (for five-part chorus and orchestra) for the Oxford B.Mus. degree. This was accepted and passed by the examiners but she could not be awarded a degree as she was a woman and the work was not performed! It took another 65 years for women to be able to receive music degrees from Oxford.

Stirling published organ works, arrangements of Bach, Handel and Mozart for the organ, songs and part-songs, with the greater part of her output for church use probably unpublished. She made her mark as a player, a professional church organist and a composer, but was way ahead of her time in terms of academic recognition.

Another organist who made a difference for women was Elfrida Andréa (1841-1929) from Sweden, whose *Larghetto I* discovered. The Swedish Royal Academy of Music did not admit women, so she studied and entered the examination as an external candidate, qualifying in 1857 as the first woman organist in Sweden. Swedish law did not allow women to become organists so she used her influence to get the law changed, became an organist in Stockholm and in 1867 became organist at Göteborg Cathedral. Not only was she the first Swedish woman organist, she was the first Swedish woman to compose chamber and orchestral music, the first to conduct a symphony orchestra and the first woman telegraphist! Her motto was, unsurprisingly, 'the education of womankind'.

Jill York.

8.3 Ralph Downes and the Town Hall Organ

It is thirty years since *The Organ in Reading Town Hall: a Symposium*[1] was published. This was part of the attempt to persuade Reading Town Council to preserve and restore the fine Father Willis instrument. The local pressure—indeed public pressure—was spear-headed by Gordon Spriggs, Martyn Reason,

Freddie Ruddle and Leslie Davies, narrowly avoiding the destruction of this magnificent piece of the heritage of Reading. Sadly, there had indeed been members of the Council who wished to have it destroyed. Yes, destroyed. The Association's Town Hall Organ committee met many times. In the end, and the story has yet to be told, this instrument was saved, and was restored in 1999 with the splendid and masterly skills of Harrison & Harrison.

It was during the 1980s that I corresponded with Ralph Downes[2] about this organ and I trust that a sufficient period of time has passed to share the contents of his letters. The first is dated December 14th 1984 and reads as follows:

R.T.H.organ

Dear Peter Marr,

*About our telephone talk last night. I would personally have little confidence in *** and *** among the builders (especially if cheapest)[3]*

This morning I had a very favourable report on the way H. & H. are striving to retain all the W[illis] characteristics at Westminster (Cathedral). I think there is little doubt that if a firm hand is kept on the voicers, they will do the most careful job over the cleaning of pipes, and subsequent re-instalment. Walkers could also do very well, under the same strict control – their voicer is a very clever and careful man (but don't have any of their "supersonic" method of pipe-cleaning: just dusting, and only washing (in mild warm detergent) if actually greasy and soot-coated (as we have in London)). They are about to clean the [Brompton] Oratory [organ] for us, to finish in June, with some organ playable throughout. The Willis firm should of course be the choice but I appreciate the "personel" [sic] difficulty. A pity!

Perhaps, as I helped give him his PhD. you could persuade the Revd. N. Thistlethwaite to bear in mind my feelings as stated above.[4]

All the best for Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

Ralph Downes.

P.S. Walkers' did the Queen's Private Chapel/St.George's Hall excellently: nothing altered from the original and some things disconnected were restored.

The second, also from his home at Ealing, is dated February 10th 1985 and reads as follows:

Dear Peter Marr,

I was glad of another chance to talk to you about Reading Town Hall.

As you know, my main object was to say that Harrison's' (i.e. Mark Vening and Peter Hopps – the voicer) had leaned over backwards to maintain Willis III's voicing at Westminster Cathedral and had succeeded in preserving its character intact (as I remembered it, over 60 years), the change from one kind of electro-pneumatic key-action to another was of no practical consequence and the substitution of new slider-chests in some cases was entirely justified. (the same would not be so, in switching from Barker-lever – Willis type – to electric or e.-p: at Reading, retention and simple restoration, of the key actions would be de rigueur).

As I said, it is very important to have this sort of thing written into any contract supervised by the Consultant – I speak from experience!

Another type of thing should be watched: Willis I used steel springs for his reeds – these should be retained (not replaced by phosphor-bronze!): they would need cleaning and lubricating, that's all. Likewise the brass weights on the tongues should be retained. It is important to note that H[enry]W[illis] I used the springs for tonal regulation only: once that was done to his satisfaction that was a fixture, tuning being done entirely from the top of the resonator, thus preserving the character intact.

Lastly, Cecil Clutton made what I consider a mischievous suggestion that an 8-ft stop on the Choir should be un-tuned to make an undulant. This, in the case of an intact Father Willis – which is what all the fuss is about, after all – should NOT be allowed – should it?

I presume to pen all this because all Father Willis organs are in great peril once another builder takes them over. (H.W.III was no exception!). His organs were mass-produced, it is true: but his genius lay in his tonal finishing, producing organs full of character with wonderful ensemble-synthesis: it was all in his ear (as with Edmund Schulze). Watch the mixtures too – no alteration ! (Stipulated.)*

Your consultant-overseer therefore cannot afford to let any detail be overlooked or altered, whether by the “organ builder” or the voicer(s).

With best wishes

Yours

Ralph Downes

**and, incidentally Cavaillé-Coll, through his voicers, the two Reinburgs.*

[Editor’s note: - the text of the original letters is shown in italics, and the footnotes are by Peter Marr.]

[1] The Organ in Reading Town Hall: a Symposium (1982) edited by Peter Marr, published by Berkshire Organists’ Association; second edition, The Organ in Reading Town Hall (2000) edited by Philip Bowcock and Peter Marr.

[2] Ralph Downes (1904-1993) was an influential English organ teacher, performer and organ designer who designed the organ in the Royal Festival Hall. His book, Baroque Tricks (Oxford 1983, 2/1999) gives a detailed view of his principles and working patterns.

[3] I have not transcribed the initials referring to these two firms.

[4] In 1980, Ralph Downes and Peter Williams acted as examiners for Thistlethwaite’s Cambridge Ph.D. on nineteenth-century organ-building in England

8.4 Reading Minster Organ Restoration

Reading Minster Organ Restoration Project – update

As the majority of you will be aware, the historic 1862 instrument by Henry Willis in Reading Minster is in now need of a thorough restoration since no major work has been carried out since it was last rebuilt in 1936.

In January 2012 a ‘Sponsor a Pipe’ appeal was launched and this, together with a legacy from the late Trevor Stroud (Minster Organist for forty years and who sadly passed away in 2011), has raised around £230,000.

Every part of the organ now needs urgent attention and, in particular, changes to the internal layout of the instrument are needed to improve the egress of sound into the nave. This work will cost around £650,000 (including VAT, which we are now no longer able to claim back)!

The proposed scheme would reinstate the stencilled pipework (moved into the instrument in the thirties) at the front of the case. It would also reinstate a West facing division of pipework (again moved in the thirties) to boost hymn singing and recitals and would include a complete reordering of the inside of the instrument to improve the egress of sound into the nave. The console, whilst carrying the same outward appearance as it does now, would include a new computerised memory to capture player settings, a digital recorder and be situated on a mobile platform with three plugin points in the Minster. This work will provide an exceptionally versatile instrument not only for accompanying the weekly liturgy, but also for the use of local music groups in concerts and by students.

For this work to be made remotely possible, additional fundraising will be necessary to find the shortfall of around £400,000 and an application is currently being made to the Heritage Lottery Fund, as well as to other grant-giving bodies. There will also be a push at a local level, including contacting local businesses and other fundraising events such as concerts.

If you would like to make a donation to the Organ Restoration Project then please send a cheque made payable to “St. Mary’s PCC” to:

Organ Restoration Project,
Minster Office,
St. Mary’s Gate,
Chain Street,
Reading,
RG1 2HX.

Peter West (Director of Music, Reading Minster)

Appointment of Organist at Reading Minster

Reading Minster is pleased to be able to announce the appointment of Christopher Cipkin (BOA Secretary) as Organist at Reading Minster. Christopher took up his post on 8 April this year, having been Organist at Wesley Methodist Church for twelve years.

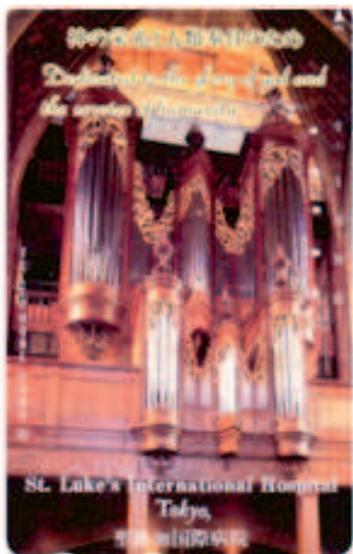


Reading Minster chancel and organ.

8.5 The organ in miniature works of art

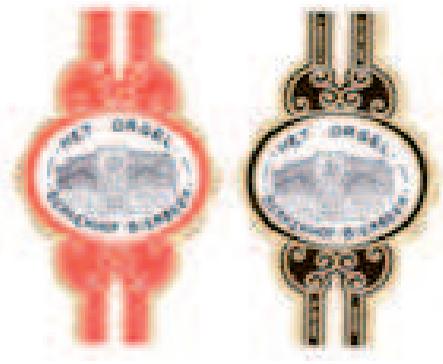
In this selection I am going to slightly expand the memorabilia aspects of organs. We are used to seeing organs given publicity on pens, tea towels, mugs, and not least books, leaflets, and CD/DVDs.

The Japanese use phone cards extensively; many feature photographs of famous organs from across the Globe. I have not tried to collect phone cards but did obtain this one as it featured an organ in Japan.



This supports St Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo. The hospital has a fine stone chapel dating from 1902 and worship is in the Catholic tradition complete with choir. The 3m/p organ was built in 1988 by Garnier of France. I have the specification in a book published by the Japanese Association of Organists.

Another oddity I have found comes from Belgium. The makers of cigar bands there offer specialist bands as shown. Apparently there is quite a market in cigar bands.



Banknotes and coinage often feature famous people, and over the years 34 composers have featured internationally [such as Elgar on the recently withdrawn UK £20 note] but only four I have traced show organ pipes.



The above is a German note of 1921 featuring Bach with pipes from the Arnstadt organ, face value 25pf - the originals are much larger. This was quite hard to obtain, Hans Gerd Klais alerted me to this note.

Whilst researching Austrian stamps I found this note celebrating Anton Bruckner and the St Florin organ – one has recently changed hands at £950 – so I am unlikely to buy it:



In 1994 Estonia celebrated the life of Rudolf Tobias [1873-1918] - a professional organist and composer much involved with Saint Petersburg Conservatory:



Slovenia issued this note in 1997, withdrawn in 2007, valued at 200 Tolarjev. The composer is Jacobus Gallus Carniolus [1550-1591] born in Carinola. The organ case is not defined, but supposed to be local and 17th century, it features their Philharmonic Hall and some music scores on the reverse side.



I am not a coin collector – however I have bought three coins as part of stamp collecting. As some members will be aware, my “hero” is Dr Schweitzer and as far as I am aware he is the only organist to have appeared on coinage.



The German Federal Republic issued this silver 5 mark coin in 1975 to mark 100 years since his birth.

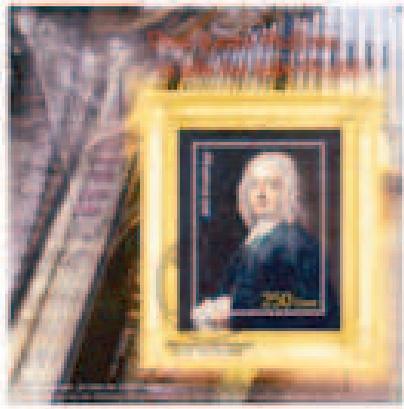


The German DDR issued this 10 mark coin in the same year – it is now very rare, expensive at around 70, which is beyond my purchasing power!

The only current organ coin is for the Austrian Golden Hall of the Vienna Music Academy. In 2011 that organ was totally reconstructed by Reiger-Orgelbau. This world famous case dates back to 1870, and has gone through many changes over the years. A comprehensive review of this instrument appeared in THE DIAPASON in September 2011. Below are the two coins that are currently available from the Austrian dealers. Below left is a 2011 SILVER 1.5Euro that cost around £26, the bronze 5 2012 coin cost 8. Both are in sealed packs to keep them in pristine condition, hence the surround to the illustration. There are a number of special issue gold & silver coins issued in the past in Austria, Netherlands, Andorra, Germany and Italy with organ cases, none of which are affordable now in the marketplace.



There is a lot of talk in the UK press about privatisation of our Postal service. In Germany this has already taken place and there are several carriers that issue postage stamps – including Ostlab, Biber Post, and MZZ. The last two issued one stamp each some time ago that featured organs. They are “rare” outside Germany, but not valuable:



MZZ Briefdienst is a local carrier from Halle, started in 2006; the Handel minisheet is their sole Musical organ stamp.

Biber post (Biber is the German word for beaver), is a regional carrier from Magdeburg. The stamp had been issued for the inauguration of the new organ of Magdeburg Cathedral in 2008. This is also very hard to obtain. The print run was 1000 only, so I am lucky to have found this one.

Finally, I thought a good word for the Greek nation may be in order. On the 15th December 1975 a series of definitive stamps was issued all depicting various musical instruments found in Greece. The 10d value featured this barrel organ, sadly the make was unstated. The only other Greek stamp featuring an organ is that in the Athens Concert Hall issued as one of a series of four Athens buildings in 1993 – the year the concert hall opened with its new Klais 4m/76ss instrument. The Specification can easily be found on the organ builder's web site and there is a good recording by Priory [Great European Organs 63] with Nicholas Kynaston playing. The Organ is the largest pipe organ in Greece.



Mark Jameson

8.6 Tuning Tales

On (very) early retirement from Local Government service I responded to an advertisement for a part-time “Organ Tuner’s Assistant” with a long established firm of Organ Builders about a mile from my home in the Midlands. Realising this was seasonal work rather than regular part-time work and having a great interest in organs, it suited me well. In those days most of the tunings, (even long distance) were covered from the factory from which the tuners would sally forth with their assistants (key-holders) to a variety of organs in churches, chapels, cathedrals, colleges and concert halls over most of Britain. Over more than twenty years I worked with some ten different tuners. Latterly some of these were agents or representatives (usually former employees of the firm) who had struck out on their own but could still be called on in busy times. During this happy period of my life I learned a lot more about organ construction particularly when asked to assist with repairs. Additionally I met many interesting people - organists, vergers, cleaners, volunteers etc. My great disappointment is that, although I have shaken hands with many well known organists and recitalists, I still can’t play properly. In this selection of anecdotes based on true incidents; locations and individuals are usually disguised to spare any possible embarrassment.

In the days before mobile phones were in general use, a tuner returned to the factory to find an urgent message awaiting his return. The organ he had just tuned and given extra attention to was “leaking badly”. Although it was well past tea-time, knowing the organ was required for the new Vicar’s induction the following day and mystified as to what had gone wrong, he motored back the 50 or so miles to investigate. The Vicar who fancied himself as a musician unlocked the church and went up to the small but rather nice organ which, he explained, he had tried out. He switched on the blower and said, “If you press this note here and place your other hand there (over the mouth of a front pipe) you can hear where it is leaking and if you press the next note and move your other hand to the next pipe the same thing happens, I hope you can put it right!” The tuner interrupted this tale of woe, gave the Vicar a one minute crash course in the workings of an organ and acquainted him with a few colourful expressions not found in the Book of Common Prayer. The hapless man apologised profusely and invited the tuner in for a cup of tea and something to eat. In view of the time, this invitation was accepted. As invariably

happens, the two men soon found they had mutual acquaintances over a wide area and an hour or so later parted, if not the best of friends, with a mutual understanding of their respective roles. Having fulfilled an unexpected customer relations exercise the tuner made his weary way back to a long suffering but understanding and devoted wife for his long delayed evening meal.

The last of three jobs on a bright summer day was in a North Oxfordshire village. Knowing there were no “mod-cons” at this particular church and the churchyard was completely surrounded by houses, we called at a supermarket to avail ourselves of its only genuinely free facilities. We knew what to expect when we reached the church - the volunteer verger, a fussy little individual, would have been waiting for us since an hour before the estimated time of arrival. The organ was once a rather good Bevington but had been “got at” some years ago by a cowboy. However the verger was very enthusiastic about the instrument. He knew nothing about its history and even less about organ technology though he always and distractingly stood around during the tuning. Half way through the tuning, the tuner feeling the need of a cigarette (or possibly just relief from the verger’s chatter), went outside for a short break. This left me to be the sole recipient of Busy Bertie’s observations and wisdom. “I understand,” he said, “There are sounds on this organ that only a dog can hear.” Mischievously, I replied, “Oh no, not on this organ, that’s only found on the more expensive models, you’re thinking of the Canine Flute.” “Canine Flute, Canine Flute,” he muttered, “I must remember that.” An hour or so later he was dutifully but unnecessarily directing us while reversing out of the car park behind the church. He tapped the window, “What now,” exclaimed the tuner as he wound down the window. “Canine Flute,” said the verger, “I must tell the organist. She’ll be interested.” The tuner had a good chuckle when I later explained what that was all about. I, though, felt a slight pang of conscience at having teased this hard working volunteer, because without such many small churches would be in an even more parlous state.

There is a prevalent myth that if something is old then it must be good. This notion seems particularly strong regarding organs, large and small. True, many old organs are a delight and deserve acclaim and attention. Some though have suffered the ravages of time, neglect or ill-advised and inappropriate alterations. Others appear to have been

very poorly built in the first place and no amount of repair and alteration will make “a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.” At one such the tuner was asked by an anxious church warden, “What is the best thing to do with this organ?” “Fetch me a can of paraffin and a box of matches and I’ll show you,” was the unexpected reply by the tuner who was not one to spare anyone’s feelings. His bluntness was however appreciated and may well have been just the sort of reply the warden was hoping for, so there was no ill feeling. Few churches can afford a new organ but that verdict concentrated the minds of the Church Council and within a couple of years it had located a second-hand organ in a redundant church. Wisely they had it inspected and assessed before committing themselves to its purchase and relocation. Consequently this off the cuff appraisal had brought the firm some business instead of losing a customer.

We were tuning one November day in a delightful Cotswold village church. The Norman and Beard organ, evidently not originally built for the church, was crammed into a west gallery and the tuner with some difficulty had managed to climb into it. Just as we started tuning a large “tweedy” lady entered. Looking up to the gallery she boomed, “Eh say, are you the orrganist?” “No, we are just here to tune the organ,” I replied. “Wait till I see the orrganist, I’ll sort him out,” she continued. “He played the tune “Awwstria” on Sunday, Awwstria on Remembrance Sunday indeed!” The tuner poked his head through a gap in the front pipes and said, “You had better see the Vicar, it’s nothing to do with us.” “The vicar,” she exclaimed, “That’s no good, judging by his sermon he’s a bit of a red. I usually only manage to come on Remembrance Sunday but if he wants me here next year he’ll have buck his ideas up. Awwstria indeed!” “What is the best way to get hold of the Vicar?” she asked. “By the throat I should think,” was the tuner’s swift reply as she mercifully strode off. This incident reminds me of being told how my Grandfather, Superintendent of the Farnborough Gospel Mission, was visited by the local Police Superintendent during the First World War. He wanted to discuss a sensitive issue with my grandfather whom he held in high regard. The Mission held an open air service every Sunday evening on the main street which bordered the Military Camp. The Mission band sometimes played “Austria”, a great favourite, quite unmindful that it was used for the German National Anthem. Not wishing to be the cause of any offence and to the relief of the Police Superintendent, my Grandfather ordered that the tune would not be

used inside or outside the Mission for the duration of hostilities.

We never knew what sort of greeting to expect from the jovial verger on arrival at a busy medium size town church north of Birmingham. Typical would be, "You've come the right week; we've got a special offer on - funerals at half price!" The organ, a large 3 manual, had originally been built by our firm for another church now closed. It had been moved some years previously (by someone unknown) to this new location and situated on the north side of the church. As an instrument it was still quite good but possibly too large for the building. We were there one day when Carlo Curley came in to try it out for a recital and he certainly demonstrated its potential. However, it was usually presided over by a young and very keen organist who has since moved on in the organ world. It appears that the congregation used to complain that he played too loudly and would almost deafen them as he blasted out the closing voluntary. The verger said to us one day, "Do you see those brown marks on the south wall? The local Doctor's surgeries no longer syringe their patients' ears; they are sent here instead. The noise goes right through and blows the wax on to the wall; the trouble is if they want both ears done they have to turn round". Sadly, a few years ago both the organ and the church were destroyed by fire. One hopes this was not revenge by a long suffering worshipper.

A potential order for a new Cathedral organ in America caused a flurry of activity when its organist and a couple of aides paid a two day visit to the factory and to some of our prestige instruments. We were assigned to tune up one of these - a very large organ in a historic County town. The church is very much on the tourist trail and tuning is always difficult when competing with chatter and tour guides. However all was satisfactory before the delegation arrived and the tuner (no mean organist himself) decided to play some pieces while I was posted as look-out. I duly signalled their arrival and heard the American organist exclaim, "That's my sound, that's what I'm looking for". The tuner then played, full organ, "God save the Queen". The whole building seemed to shake, the tourists were open-mouthed in amazement and three people actually sprang to attention and saluted -they were the Americans of course!

Although I have enjoyed helping with the tuning of many really large organs in churches, cathedrals and concert halls, I am always

fascinated with and feel closer to the smaller instruments and particularly the very small ones with perhaps only six or less ranks. Some of these are quite new but mostly they seem to date from the mid nineteenth century. Some were chamber organs discarded by local gentry or a stately home; others were possibly built as small affordable church organs. They are mostly cherished by their guardians. Not only are they to be found in small churches but a surprising number are in large churches where they have usually been gifted rather than purchased. Although it has two 4 manual organs, Tewkesbury Abbey also has a charming little Elliott built in 1818 and recently restored by David Gallichan. In one rural church there is a small early 19th Century organ which, although fitted with an electric blower, still retains its pumping handle and a treadle pump. In Worcester Cathedral there is a chamber organ once claimed to have been played by Handel. This claim is made for so many such organs it is a wonder that he found time to compose anything. Likewise, the number of organs claimed to have been exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851 or subsequent Exhibitions far exceeds the number actually displayed. The confusion seems to arise from the habit of many Victorian builders who displayed facsimile medals on their instruments. None-the-less, a lot of these organs with all their limitations and sometimes costly maintenance are still valued and used. Long may this continue!

We were on a two day tuning at a large church in a Yorkshire resort. The really big organ which the firm has since rebuilt was quite a challenge to the tuner who, on this occasion, was one of the company's directors and its chief voicer. I was at the console waiting to start and after a few minutes I heard my name called. Looking up I saw him standing on a narrow ledge some 30 or 40 feet up with a sheer drop if he missed his footing. I think he had decided to correct a small fault with the swell box mechanism before getting on with the tuning. I could hardly bear to look at him in his precarious position. This reminds me of what a field day Health and Safety inspectors would have with many organs extant in this country. I have sometimes had to climb up inside organs to take some tool or other to the tuner and have been amazed at the narrowness of some passage boards and the absence of hand rails etc. At another organ in Oxford the tuner has to step from a ledge across a void 20 feet high to enter the organ via a door on the side of the case which projects a little over the nave. There is an organ in Hertfordshire where the passage board ends

abruptly leaving the tuner to reach over a deep void to reach the furthest pipes. Most modern organs are, theoretically, better to work in but even some of these present certain hazards. The en chamade trumpets on the Klais organ in the Birmingham Symphony Hall have to be tuned from outside the case. The floor is too slippery for a ladder so a huge pair of steps (the biggest I have ever seen) is used. I had to steady this while the tuner ascended, then once he got his balance and was satisfied he could reach the spring with his reed knife I would return to the console. After two or three notes the steps would have to be moved along!! Although I miss visiting such instruments I am thankful I am now spared such heart-stopping experiences.

I never did get round to founding a “National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Organs” though I still think one is called for. It is amazing what mistreatment is inflicted on some instruments by thoughtless, perhaps ignorant, tradesmen, cleaners and others. For some reason organ cases seem to be particularly targeted by electricians who are tempted by a convenient run of timber on which to fasten cables, even where the rewiring has nothing to do with the organ. We have lost count of the number of times access panels have been wired over. Sometimes of course this is the work of a well meaning volunteer and tact is called for to have the situation corrected. All manner of junk is often stored in organs. In one large organ case we found a kitchen sink had been installed for the benefit of the flower ladies and the bellows were then utilised for the storage of flower vases, buckets, mops and a vacuum cleaner. In another we found vases full of water riding up and down on the bellows! Often when redecoration is called for the organ suffers. For the want of a few pounds to have the instrument properly sheeted up reliance is placed on the decorators throwing a tarpaulin over it or perhaps not covering it at all. It has been known for the gathered dust and debris to be tipped into the organ during the removal of makeshift covering. A historic organ in Herefordshire was once the victim of well meaning cost-cutting when Royal Engineer trainees rewired a church as an exercise. No attempt was made to cover the organ and it became unplayable with plaster and brick dust fouling the action and entering most of the pipes, some of which were broken. The remedial cost must have far exceeded any savings made on the electrical work. An organ in Warwickshire had been tuned ready for Harvest Festival and just before that week-end an urgent message was received that the

keys were sticking. We called in to investigate and suspected that some mice had left “visiting cards”. However it soon became obvious that the problem was due someone’s not so bright idea to drape millet all over the front of the case. The seeds had got between the keys and had even got into the mouths of some of the pipes.

For vandalism rather than “cruelty” the prize should go to a Shropshire organist. He had decided to convert a rather good early 20th Century 2 manual Nicholson into a 3 manual instrument creating what he described as Nicholson/Yamaha. To achieve this he removed the music desk and supported the electronic keyboard on two pieces of rough wood with the over-size screws projecting (evidently no match for the oak framing). The music desk from which a small but naked light bulb dangled was supported by two hymn books over the 61 note keyboard which, of course, didn’t line up with the 56 note manuals. One speaker was placed on the passage board and another elsewhere in the church. Everything was incredibly untidy but mercifully this messy set-up could not be seen by the congregation. The Yamaha may have been alright alone and the organ was perfectly adequate for the church but what the hybrid sounded like I will never know as this proved to be my last visit there. We, in a slight state of shock, just got on with the tuning and returned to base.

There are many more tales I could tell but these must wait for another occasion.

Kenneth Gaines

9. REVIEWS

9.1 Book Reviews

The Great Organ at Methuen – by Barbara Owen

Published by OHS Press, ISBN 978-0-913499-40-5, Price \$39.99 [Approx £25] + P&P www.ohscatalog.org

Barbara Owen is well known for her expertise in producing readable, accurate and authoritative volumes. Starting in 1979 with “The Organs of New England” she has gone on to produce books on many interesting subjects. As a founder member of the Organ Historical Society in 1956, her depth of knowledge and attention to detail shows through clearly in this latest volume. Methuen is on her doorstep in Massachusetts at the north-western edge of Essex County, an easy drive north from Boston. Off Highway 93 North, the Hall is located at 192 Broadway on route 28. Concert details can be found at www.mmmh.org

The austere exterior of this building gives no clue to the superb interior. From personal experience, it is like walking into the chancel end of St Paul’s Cathedral. The hall is a venue for weddings and concerts with or without the organ and it is regularly used as a recording studio, theatre etc. However, it needs support to keep it going!

This scholarly volume is the story of what may be more familiar as the Walcker organ in the Boston Music Hall. In this context think Town or City Hall or even Royal Albert Hall, with their large organs, not the Edwardian light entertainment in the UK known as music hall. In this book Barbara shows how the music hall developed from early beginnings as with the Holywell Music Room in Oxford (UK), through the different groups supporting various aspects of musical entertainment. It is also a history of organ development in the Boston area. Boston had been founded in 1630, made famous for the tea incident, a tax avoidance dispute in 1773, and was a growing city by the early 1800s. She also describes the number of musicians who came to Boston, particularly from Germany many of whom were familiar with technical developments in the organ not found at the time in instruments being built in the USA, or those that had been

imported in earlier years from the UK. Political upheavals in Europe were also causing mass migration to the USA, and bringing changing skills to the area. By 1850, Boston had become a centre for music and important enough for one piano-maker to send an exhibit to the London 1851 Great Exhibition.

Public concerts gained in popularity through the nineteenth century and by 1801 a venue called Conservatory Hall had opened. In 1819 a multi-purpose brick built hall had opened, called Boylston Hall, over the Market Place, and Kings Chapel was used for concerts. Originally built of wood, then stone from 1729, it had its first organ in 1723, and even with box pews could accommodate large numbers, but popularity meant that venue capacity was regularly exceeded. This also coincided with the growth of Town Halls in the UK for similar reasons. By the 1850s other halls had become available, some serving a dual role with church activity. In 1852 the new Boston Music Hall opened but without an organ. Ideas for a suitable organ flowed and the local company of E. and G.G. Hook was asked for ideas. However, two men, Dr Upham and Mr Dwight, had more far-reaching ideas. The moving force behind it all was Dr J. B. Upham and his extensive journeys to select the builder are all chronicled. A whole chapter is devoted to the 'Grand Opening' in October 1863 and the ensuing months with commentaries from the local and NY newspapers on the pieces played and the players. Dr Upham had travelled and seen the Birmingham Town Hall Hill, before going onto view European ideas. Finally, the choice went to Walcker, with the organ opening in 1863. Changes in fashion meant by the 1880's the organ was out of favour and stored! A local philanthropist, Edward Searles, came to the rescue. Barbara gives his history. The family had a home with a music room and a three manual organ. Sadly his wife died of influenza in 1890. Her will made him a millionaire. In 1897 he purchased the Walcker for \$1,500 – it had originally cost \$60,000. Being too large for his music room, he went on develop the Serlo Organ Hall, Methuen, with the Music Hall organ. The whole history is a fascinating social as well as musical history. There are 15 chapters taking in all the history in two sections;

Part 1

- 1 Boston gets its music hall
- 2 The Genesis of an Organ
- 3 Grand Opening
- 4 First Impressions
- 5 the First Year
- 6 Into the Gilded Age
- 7 Change and Decay
- 8 Twilight and Darkness

Part 2 Methuen

- 9 The Searles Era
- 10 The Skinner Interval
- 11 The Harrison transformation
- 12 The Institute Years
- 13 Beginning a Second Century
- 14 Into the 21st Century
- 15 Coda.

This is followed by appendix containing specifications from 1863, 1909, 1946, 1947 and 2009, and a good selection of colour and black and white photographs. This book cannot be easily summarised. It really is a good book, as grand as the organ.

A book of this quality published in the UK would easily be retailed at around £90, so for \$39.99 (£25 approx) even allowing for postage to the UK, it is outstanding value.

A Provincial Organ Builder in Victorian England

William Sweetland of Bath

Written & researched by Gordon D W Curtis

Published by Ashgate Publishing, ISBN 9 781409 417521, Price £65 retail or £58.50 (\$112.46) from their website, www.ashgate.com

After the death in 1995 of Laurence Elvin, we lost one of the greatest writers of organ books setting out the histories of organ builders. Having seen the advance publicity for this new book (see note in OCJ 2010-1), I was very pleased to receive a copy.

I have come across quite a few organs that were originally built by Sweetland. Mr Curtis's preface claims that writers have so far concentrated their efforts on London builders and this book is intended to alter that balance. Clearly Mr Curtis has not seen the Elvin books, or the many others covering other regions of the country. Sweetland comes from Bath; however his work was spread over a far wider area. The book is issued in a series by the publisher on Victorian or 19th Century subjects and has two main sections:

- Section 1. Sweetland's life and work
- Section 2. Gazetteer. All photos are black and white. Sweetland's own records were destroyed in a fire many years ago.

Section 1 takes the first 160 pages of 307 with nine chapters.

Chapter 1 Introduction: here there is a series of prefaces, and notes about the text before Curtis sets out the musical scene of the Victorian era.

Chapter 2 Biography: a short section of eleven pages setting out family history, where he lived etc. The organ builder lived from 1820 to 1910 - a long life. There are so many cross-references to sources it is not a straightforward read.

Chapter 3 Bath organ builders and Sweetland's acquaintances. This is really interesting. Again, almost every source Curtis used through the 19 pages of this section has 250 sets of source notes.

Chapter 4 Business History A short section, mainly of statistics and costs.

Chapter 5 Inventions. Just nine interesting pages, one showing a wrist opening Swell mechanism!

Chapter 6 Organs. Sweetland built or rebuilt around 300 organs. Here the author describes some of the surviving instruments, along with photographs. Some could be better as the flash used shows in the pictures. Lots of detail, some useful comparison charts between organs and pipe scales. For example, one table shows how his lettering on stop knobs changed over the years; most unusual to see this sort of information.

Chapter 7 Seven notable instruments are examined, giving the specifications and the date of examination. There are illustrations, lots of detail, and far fewer cross-reference notes.

Chapter 8 covers “repertoire”, and provides a list of works known to have been used to open Sweetland built instruments. I think these lists could help performers today find repertoire to play on instruments of this period.

Finally in Section 1, Chapter discusses Sweetland’s place within the organ building scene and compares him with work by William Hill. If you are a “stats person” there is a really interesting table taken from the 1861, 1881 and 1901 census returns showing for each county its population and the number of organ builders. I wonder what that table based on the most recent census would reveal?

Section 2 is the Gazetteer. Strangely, given the amount of detail in the earlier chapters, not all the organs listed have specifications and one is referred to the NPOR. The volume of source notes is back again with this section. I looked through this section for two organs that I have played. First, locally to me, the organ in Caversham Heights Methodist Church which still carries the name Sweetland although it has been rebuilt and altered. However, until reading this book, I was not aware that it had been moved there from another Reading location. Secondly, I was interested to see Curtis’s report on the organ at Chavenage House discounts the organ as Sweetland. I played that organ with Mrs Johanna Lowsley-Williams pumping on 28th September 1989; the first time since WW2 that anyone had tried to play it. At that time it had a Sweetland plate, and when I worked my way through the stops, puffs of dust came out of the pipes! I suggest that sometime between then and 1995 when it was rebuilt the plate had been removed. The house is worth a visit if you are in Gloucestershire. Sweetland’s organs are found in the south west

region with isolated examples further afield. Following the main gazetteer is a listing of doubtful attributions to buildings. Finally, an appendix in date order of the conjectural work list for this builder showing the order in which he is believed to have worked, followed by indices to the book.

This is one of those books every organ builder and library should have. It is not an easy book to read, and some of the photographs could be better. However I would recommend its purchase.

Mark Jameson

Note from Ed. The Caversham Heights organ was the original instrument in Trinity Congregational Church in Reading, a much larger building (now sadly demolished and replaced with offices) where the fine three manual Binns beloved of Albert Barkus was subsequently installed.

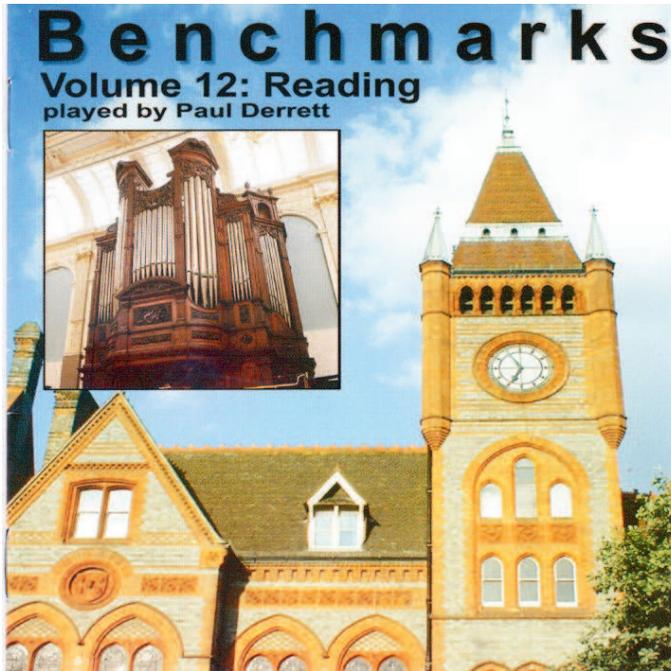
9.2 CD Review

It is a pleasure to see the long planned BENCHMARKS recording of Reading organs completed. With the exception of the Reading Town Hall, this is the first public recording of five central Reading instruments. Paul Derrett's talent as both a player and organ builder shows and he has selected music to suit each organ. Reading is No. 12 in the series and there are 16 tracks lasting 75.41 minutes featuring 6 organs. Each has a photograph of both the console and case, and the stop list. The programme is:

1. St James RC Church - music by Bernardo Storace and Albinoni
2. St Mary Episcopal Church, Castle Street - Henry Smart - a Trio and an Andante
3. St Giles – S S Wesley Introduction and Fugue, and Hollins Intermezzo in D Flat
4. University Great Hall – a Toccata by Zsiross and Revelation by Noel Bonavia-Hunt

5. St Mary Minster Church – 2 pieces by Sowande the famous Nigerian composer.

6. Town Hall – Mendelssohn Overture to St Paul, Guilman Marché Funèbre, and O'Regan Colimacon.



Paul obviously struggled to get a good recording at the Minster, but has achieved it. He played the Town Hall programme live on June 15th 2011 to launch the recording. I believe this disc is a “must” for all members and if you buy it from me it benefits our Association. I will take stock to Town Hall recitals, cost is £10. However if you wish me to post to a UK address, the cost is currently £11 which covers the stamp and a contribution towards packing. If you are interested in more of Paul’s discs, I suggest you look at www.paulderrett.piczo.com where all available recordings can be purchased.

Our long term member Michael Harris (Organist and Master of the Music at St Giles Cathedral Edinburgh) has recorded for Priory (PRCD1047) a complete disc of the works of William Wolstenholme on the organ of Christ Church, Port Sunlight. This is the only complete disc of works by this composer that I am aware of; most have just one pair of pieces – “The Question” and “The Answer”. He wrote over 100 pieces for the organ, plus other works of church music, military band music, song cycles etc. Michael has expertly taken 12 pieces giving just over 78 minutes of enjoyable listening. He starts with Wolstenholme’s Concert Overture No.2 Op. 61, following with Serenata, a Scherzo in B Flat, the Romanza and Allegretto Op. 17 numbers 1 and 2, and the Fantasia in E Op. 33 number 1 – a major work lasting for 12 minutes. Allegretto scherzando, Epilogue, Cantilene in A Flat, and the well known “Question” and “Answer” then follow, with the Finale in B Flat to finish.

Also of interest is the organ, a Willis II 4 manual of 1904 that was restored by Willis between 2005 and 2008. A full description, with illustrations and its history can be found in BOA Handbook 54 (2001) in an article by Philip Bowcock. It is believed to be the only surviving 4 manual Willis II. Thank you, Michael. The cost direct from Priory is £9.99 plus P and P.

The third disc, with a direct connection to our area, is Herald HAVPCD368; Catholic Collection III – music through the Church’s year from Douai Abbey. Douai is in our “patch”, has fine organs, and concerts are held there regularly, so it is good to see this disc, issued just before Christmas but with both choral and organ music for the part of the year from Advent through to Easter. The disc was issued in support of the Catholic international charity “*Aid to the church in need*”. The booklet gives a background to the Abbey, its buildings and activity. Dr John Rowntree is Director of Music and on this disc he is conducting the choir while Terence Charlston is playing the organ. There are histories for each of the soloists and it is almost a Rowntree family disc, with Edward (Baritone), Howard (trumpet), next generation Richard (tenor) and Rachael (Violin1). Multi-talented Jevan Johnson Booth, who is also involved with the Berkshire Youth Choir, a pianist, violinist and French horn player, is here as a Mezzo-Soprano. Adrienne Black provides organ continuo; John Kane is Violin 2, and Rosalind Witcombe plays cello. The choirs are Monks’ Schola and Douai Abbey Singers.

In a packed booklet text of all vocal items is provided, and finally there is a history of the organs, complete with specification and superb photo of the Tickell organ.

Over 26 tracks lasting nearly 75 minutes, of which 4 tracks are organ solo. All eras of music feature with extracts from several mass settings. It is excellent!

For more information see <http://www.heraldav.co.uk/> . It can be ordered locally or on line and costs £10.95 post free from Record Corner in Godalming. I have not listed the music because it would take far too much space – a scan of the listing is available from me.

Mark Jameson

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1946	<i>Percy R Scrivener</i> FRCO FTCL
1947 - 48	<i>W Hugh Rowe</i> ARCO
1949 - 50	<i>Albert E Rivers</i>
1951 - 52	<i>A Warren</i> FRCO
1953 - 55	<i>Prof H C Barnard</i> MA Dlitt
1956 - 57	<i>F Gordon Spriggs</i>
1958 - 60	<i>Leslie Pratt</i> FTCL
1961 - 63	<i>Roy N Nash</i>
1964 - 65	<i>Miss E G Goodship</i> ATCL
1966 - 68	<i>H D Anthony</i> MA BSc PhD FRAS
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</i> MA BSc FRAS MBCS
1983 - 84	<i>Peter B Marr</i> PhD GTCL FRSA ARCO
1985 - 86	<i>Derek M Guy</i> AFCM
1987 - 88	<i>Christopher Hood</i> BA
1989	<i>Christopher J Kent</i> MusB MMus PhD FRCO ARMCM
1990-91	<i>David Duvall</i> MA FCA
1992-93	<i>Philip Bowcock</i> Bsc MRICS

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 - 08	Christopher Cipkin BA MA ARCO
2009 - 10	Ian May
2011-	Jill York BA MA LRAM

SECRETARIES

1921 – 1926	<i>S T Chamerlain</i>
1927 – 1931	<i>Sidney Collins</i>
1932 – 1976	<i>Archibald Lusty</i>
1977 – 1983	<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 – 2007	<i>Alan Kent</i>
2008	Donald Hickson
2009 – 2012	Christopher Cipkin

TREASURERS

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

1990 – 2010
2011-

Mark Jameson
Derek Guy

All dates given above are the year of election.

EDITORS OF THE BERKSHIRE ORGANIST

1948 – 1973	Albert Rivers
1974 – 1977	Leslie Davis
1978 – 1983	<i>Gordon Spriggs</i>
1984 – 1997	<i>Gordon Spriggs</i> and Philip Bowcock
1998 – 2004	Philip Bowcock
2005 – 2009	Graham Ireland
2010 – 2011	Patricia Rigg
2011	Chris Hood

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