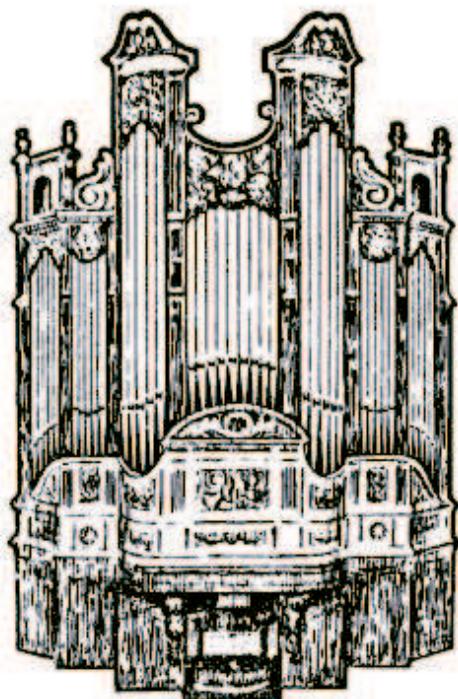


# The Berkshire Organist

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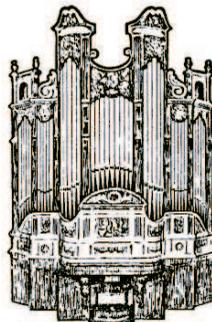
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Neither the Editors nor the Association accept any responsibility for opinions expressed in this Journal

# 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. Editorial



This is the fourth Journal for which I have provided the layout after the Editor had perused submitted articles, agreed corrections with the authors and passed the results to me. This year is different in that an Editorial Committee has actively and successfully encouraged contributions and initially vetted the articles. Any errors subsequently noticed by us or the proof-readers have been corrected in this final version; I apologise as Editor for any errors still

remaining.

The last three Journals have been printed using a font-size of 12 which I feel is much easier to read. A senior manager at IBM - where I used to work - was the inspiration for the change from the previous font-size of 10. He had a policy of refusing to read any memo arriving on his desk with a font-size smaller than 12. The content of page 3 of this Journal only differs from the 2009 Journal in the font-size, and I hope you agree that the Journal is more readable with a larger font.

As an example of what a smaller font looks like, this sentence is printed in font-size 10, as is the footnote to this and every page.



I must give a big thank-you to all the contributors to this issue, the sub-committee and all those who proof-read the material. I have

found the submitted articles fascinating, and interesting, and they cover a wide range of topics relevant to this journal. I have sometimes wondered whether other organs (eg: Cinema) might feature one day, and also whether the aesthetics of the organ appearance might be another topic. I include here a picture of a rather pretty organ that I saw at St Margherita Sciacca in Sicily; I am sure someone can better it or even write an article on the changing appearance of organs through the period of their existence.

I hope you enjoy this issue. It certainly has been a good read for me!

Malcolm Rigg

## 2.1 Introduction from the President

I have great pleasure in introducing the 2013 issue of the Berkshire Organist to all Association members and to anyone else who may find themselves reading it.

This year Malcolm Rigg has taken over fully as Editor, after several years handling the technical aspects of the journal, and he has been well-supported by a BO sub-committee co-ordinated, as it happens, by the President. This system has worked well and has resulted in a large number of varied articles being submitted in very good time, enabling Malcolm to process material at a comfortable pace. It is to be hoped this will continue next year!

This edition carries a wide range of articles about organ-related events in Berkshire and about topics that interest particular members. What shines through is the enthusiasm of the writers and the sheer range of the subjects covered.

Do let us know what you think of this edition and please start thinking about writing an article for the next one. Malcolm and the sub-committee would be delighted to hear from you. So, enjoy reading the 2013 issue and perhaps writing for the 2014 one!

Jill York.

### 3. Annual General Meeting

#### 3.1 BOA AGM Recital

The Recital was given by Frances Brewitt-Taylor at St John the Baptist, Kidmore End on Saturday May 11, 2013 at 4pm.



The programme was:

A Ground in Gamut	Henry Purcell
Passacaglia in D minor	Dietrich Buxtehude
Kommst du nun, Jesu, vom Himmel herunter	J S Bach
Chorale variations on Sei gegrusset, Jesu gutig	J S Bach
Gavotte	Samuel Wesley
Tuba Tune in D major	C S Lang
Blue Promenade	Alan Ridout
In Memoriam	Flor Peeters
Finale Jubilante	J Healey Willan

Frances Brewitt-Taylor has been Director of Music at Queen Anne's School, Caversham, and has conducted the Goring Chamber Choir for more than twenty years. Her programme reflected her enthusiasm for the baroque and for the 'sweet-toned two-manual instrument with 678 pipes and 12 speaking stops' by Bevington at this church where she is Director of Music.

The first four pieces showed Frances' love of the baroque. Purcell's Ground, a neat attractive piece, led into the Buxtehude Passacaglia which was played with clarity, control and such enjoyment. Then followed Bach's 'Kommst du nun, vom Himmel herunter' an aria transcription with the chorale in the pedals: a delicate, sprightly piece that really bounced along. The more sombre chorale with six variations offered contrasting treatments of the melody with the pedal only used in the last two: ingenious writing coupled here with rhythmic playing.

As the recital progressed, we were amused to hear about the stops the organ has 'not got' (two foot, tuba or balanced swell), and were then delighted with the variety of sounds Frances produced from the organ.

Next came the well-known Wesley Gavotte, which sounded light and crisp on the organ, followed by the Lang Tuba Tune - which should never have worked on a reed-free instrument but it romped along happily, sounding very at home! Ridout's Blue Promenade was a revelation - a piece constructed in blues style around a middle C 'pedal' held by the left hand throughout. Despite such an anchor the music skittered about beautifully and with humour. In Memoriam by Peeters was written for a huge organ, not a modest instrument with a kick box swell, but thanks to Frances's skill it came over as solemn and impressive. The recital ended with Healey Willan's Finale Jubilante, another piece that demonstrated the power this small organ can deliver in the hands of an expert.

This was a very well-planned recital, enhanced with insights into the organ and the music chosen and all delivered with such enthusiasm. The large, appreciative audience clearly enjoyed their afternoon's entertainment.

Jill York.

## 3.2 President's Report to the AGM

I would like to begin by thanking the church authorities at St John the Baptist for allowing us to use the church and Parish Room today for our Recital, Tea and AGM. A particular thank you is due to Frances Brewitt-Taylor for giving the recital and also for making the arrangements for today. Margaret, Jen and friends are warmly thanked for organising the tea.

BOA events and visits:

In the last year we have enjoyed the following visits: in July 2011 a visit to St Stephen's, Upper Basildon, St James the Less, Pangbourne followed by tea at the President's house and a chance to play her 2-manual Eminent organ. The annual Study Tour took place in October visiting the Lincoln area and in November the Annual Dinner was held at the Quality Hotel, Reading, where the guest speaker was the Revd. Roy Woodhams.

The 2013 President's Afternoon was held at St Andrew's URC church, Reading, where Malcolm Harding demonstrated and performed French Classical music on his harpsichord and clavichords, assisted by Graham Ireland, followed by a quiz and tea. In February there was a visit to Dorney Parish Church and Eton College and in March a visit to the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft in the Palace of Westminster and St Stephen's, Rochester Row.

There have been two concerts in the BOA Local Recitals series: one in May by Ian May at Holy Trinity, Reading, and the other in October by Christopher Cipkin at St Peter's, Earley. David Pether's recital at St Paul's Wokingham was postponed (no heating) from November and will now take place on June 29th

There has been a wealth of organ recitals in the area for members and the public to attend. There have been two evening Celebrity Recitals at Reading Town Hall: in November Crispian Steele-Perkins (trumpets) and David Goode (organ) gave 'The Trumpet Shall Sound' and in May Robert Quinney played 'Town Hall Classics' and both evenings were stunning. The Wednesday lunchtime recitals were given by Jill York (Reading), Max James (Eton College), Jonathan Hope (Winchester Cathedral), Graham Ireland (Reading), Peter Holder (London) and William McVicker (Reading Town Hall Organ

Curator). William also gave a Saturday morning 'Town Hall Classics' entertainment in June, assisted by Jonathan Holl, at which the public were able to try out the 'Father Willis' organ. The Reading Town Hall Heritage Day in September, when David Pether introduced and demonstrated the organ, was another opportunity for people to play the instrument.

Lunchtime recitals continue at Reading Minster and in June the Minster Festival featured a joint BOA/Minster Pipes Aloud 2 youth event, funded by the BOA and the IAO.

Our election of officers and committee members is yet to come, but I would like to thank everyone who has served on our committees, or helped in so many other ways, for keeping our Association going! I would particularly like to thank Derek Guy, our Hon. Treasurer for the past two years, and Sylvia Collins, our Hon. Secretary for the past year, for the valuable work they have contributed to the Association.

Jill York. May 2013.

### 3.3 Elections 2013

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

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

## 4. Obituary

### 4.1 Frank Gordon Spriggs (1913-2012)



Gordon at St Mary Castle Street.

It is with deep regret we record that our honorary member Gordon Spriggs passed away on Saturday evening, 30th June 2012, at the age of 98.

The funeral of Gordon Spriggs was held on Wednesday 25th July at St Mary's Church, Castle Street, Reading.

A personal recollection of Gordon follows - contributed by Philip Bowcock.

I remember that when I joined the Association in 1983 Gordon was the first person to come and welcome me at my first meeting. Even then he struck me as a most gentle, modest and polite person and this characteristic has remained with me ever since. Never a harsh word or marked criticism of anyone or anything.

At that time he had been organist of Greyfriars and knew that extension organ with its idiosyncrasies very well. He was very traditional in his tastes and not keen on the modern forms of music and he eventually moved to St Mary's Castle Street where by its constitution the Service is based on the Prayer Book. He was a

member of the Prayer Book Society and the Hymn Society whose aims he fully supported.

Gordon joined the Association in its early days and attended meetings regularly whenever he could. He was a member of the Committee for very many years and was elected President in 1956 – over 50 years ago – and remained a member until 2000. He was Editor of this Magazine from 1978 to 1983 but, in fact, was associated with its production from its inception in 1948 until 1997.

By profession he was an engraver and there are many examples of his work all over Reading. In his workshop he produced the Presidential Badge of Office which has been worn by our presidents ever since. He also engraved the Town Hall logo which appears on this magazine and many other documents.

Apart from his interest in the organ as a musical instrument, Gordon also had an eye for the design of the case and had collected many examples of outstanding organ cases.

Following the proposal to make major alterations to the Town Hall, he was heavily involved with the opposition to that project. In 1982 he contributed a paper on the Town Hall Organ to the Symposium which the Association published, now reproduced in “The Organ in Reading Town Hall” which the Association published following the restoration of the Town Hall and the organ.

Towards the end of his life after the passing of his wife, he said to me on several occasions that he was “waiting to be called home”. There can be no doubt that he has been welcomed there.

Philip Bowcock

## 4.2 Norman Hutt (1924-2012)



Norman's untimely death in November 2012 robbed The Berkshire Organists' Association of an *eminence gris* from its wide age-range membership. Several of these sages occupied important positions in the community as organists, head teachers and business men, yet found time in their busy lives to support the association in all of its activities, in particular the weekend ones. They always sat together at meetings, ensuring that all items on its agenda were given a thorough airing before a decision was reached. Before such a decision Norman would add his comments which were as one expected of him, models of common sense, accompanied with his customary smile.

Norman was born in 1924, at Whitchurch Hill, near Pangbourne and attended Goring Heath Endowed School until 1938. He joined the Royal Navy mid way through the second world war. After the war he had various jobs working as a toolmaker and engineer; working for Pressed Steel Refrigeration; the AEI at Aldermaston Court and The Medical Research Council at Harwell. The longest period of his working life was spent in the Physics Department of Reading University. He worked there until his retirement in 1989.

He loved classical music, organ music in particular. Over the years he played regularly at Ashampstead, Aldworth, Compton, Englefield, Whitchurch, and even Reading Jail!

I took over from Norman as secretary to the Association in a ceremony outside Englefield Church when he handed over to me all of the documentation he had kept there. From then on our friendship blossomed until events overtook me and I was unable to attend meetings. Norman remained a member of the Association, coming into Reading from Ashampstead, where from 1958 he was able to become fully occupied in village life. We still kept in touch, often by a short sentence in the annual Christmas card.

A service in celebration of his life took place at West Berkshire Crematorium on Friday 7th December 2012 at 12.00pm, attended by members and friends of Norman's family and several members of the association. Elgar's "Nimrod" was played at the beginning of the service and Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" at the end. The Rev Anne Kiggell read the family tribute drawn up by Norman's son, David Hutt. After the blessing we gathered outside the chapel in the bitter wind to express our love and sympathy to Mary and her two sons David and Graham. It was Norman's wish that his organ music be given to deserving young players and, in accordance with his wishes, it has been given to William Lewington, who is one of Graham's pupils at Reading Blue Coat School and is the first recipient of the Jubilee Organ Scholarship at St Andrew's Church, Sonning.

Graham Ireland

## 5. Reading Town Hall Lunchtime Recitals

### 5.1 Max James on 4th July 2012

The recital given by Max James from Eton College had the following programme:

Fantasia and Fugue in G minor BWV 542	Bach
The Angel's Song, Prelude on a theme of Orlando Gibbons (Song 34) Op 105 No 1	Stanford
Postlude on a theme of Orlando Gibbons Op 105 No 2	Stanford
Prelude, Fugue et Variation	Franck
<i>Méditation</i>	Durufié
<i>Litanies</i>	Alain

For many of the supporters of the lunchtime organ concerts in the Town Hall the highlight of the year is the Annual Recital by one of the students of Eton College. These young men are very talented organists destined to go a long way in the organ world and whose performances are always refreshing, full of confidence and well worth hearing.

This year was no exception and it was the turn of Max James who, at the time of giving this performance, was the youngest person to hold the ARCO Diploma. Like many students at colleges with a strong musical heritage, Max is not single skilled. He also plays the violin in the College Symphony Orchestra.

The opening Bach soon revealed him as a confident player and both sections were played at a steady and well measured pace. In the first of the Stanford arrangements of Orlando Gibbons the flutes exhibited a very calm effect while in the second piece the wider harmonies were brought to the fore by a more detached playing

Of the French items, the Franck was very atmospheric with sensitive registration and the Durufié, apparently a posthumous discovery,

displayed harmonies very reminiscent of his Requiem. The concluding Jehan Alain Litanies demand considerable prowess by the player not only in keyboard, and pedal board skill but also in selection and changing of registration to reflect the very great changes of mood. Not only did Max James demonstrate his skills in these aspects excellently but it also revealed how easily the Victorian era “English” Willis can produce a realistic twentieth century French style.

Once again, we had a marvellous recital emanating from the College and it is clear that there are still education institutions that can produce good musicians and that there are good musicians out there to be harnessed. Long may the Reading Town Hall and Eton College Association continue.

Don Hickson

## 5.2 Jonathan Hope on 19th September 2012

The recital had the following programme:

Coronation March from <i>Le Prophète</i>	Giacomo Meyerbeer arr W. T. Best
Sonata No 4 in B flat, Op 65 No 4	Felix Mendelssohn
<i>Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele</i> , Op122 No 5	Johannes Brahms
Prelude and Fugue in G major BWV 541 Bach	Johann Sebastian
Allegro vivace from <i>1er Symphonie</i>	Louis Vierne
Finale from <i>6me Symphonie</i>	Charles-Marie Widor

This recital was given by Jonathan Hope, Organ Scholar at Winchester Cathedral who is gaining an increasing reputation not only with his duties there but also as a recording artist and recitalist at home and abroad. The opening Meyerbeer was in a W. T. Best arrangement that was so typical of the practice at Municipal organs when this instrument was built and we were treated with a quick demonstration of the varied tone colours of the Willis. Staying with

the nineteenth century “Town Hall Organ” theme we moved on to the fourth Sonata by Mendelssohn, as is commonly suspected, a format used by the composer because he did not understand the English term “Voluntary”. Here the recitalist was fully in control in the first movement and the two centre movements, by contrast, gently revealed the use of the flutes and accompaniment. In the final movement perhaps, at the beginning, the pedal was a little too intrusive, but the whole Sonata was brought to a well controlled and wonderful climax.

Brahms’s limited number of compositions for the organ do, to a certain extent, rely on his expertise as a very demanding piano composer but these Chorale Preludes are certainly worth the occasional airing. Once again, Jonathan Hope demonstrated with commendable skill his ability to use the colours of the organ to bring this piece to life. Coming back to standard repertory the Bach was played at a reasonable speed and clarity that is not always evident in performances nowadays.

In conclusion we heard two Symphonic excerpts from the standard French school. The Vierne was delightfully played and here we heard the solo reed for the first time. The Finale from Widor’s Sixth Symphony was a pleasure to hear rather than the overdone 5th and brought the recital to an ebullient flourishing conclusion.

Don Hickson

### 5.3 Graham Ireland on 21st November 2012

The recital had the following programme:

*Thema met Variaties voor Orgel* Hendrik Andriessen

Voluntary Op. 5 No. 9 in G minor John Stanley  
Largo, Allegro

Three Chorale Preludes:

<i>Was Gott tu, das ist wohl getan</i>	J G Walter
<i>Nun komm’, der Heiden Heiland</i>	J S Bach
BWV 659 <i>Allein Gott in der Höh</i>	Timothy Albrecht

Sonata No. 2 in C minor Grave - Adagio, Allegro maestoso - Fugue	Felix Mendelssohn
Andantino for the Organ	Frank Bridge
Prelude and Fugue in G major	Camille Saint-Saëns
Pastoral	Herbert Sumsion
Sortie in G minor	L J A Lefébure-Wély

For the final lunchtime Town Hall Recital of 2012 it again fell to one of our own BOA members to occupy the hot seat and it was a goodly number that turned up on a wet and breezy day to hear what Graham Ireland had to offer. In his introduction Graham said that he had devised this programme mainly around pieces or people that had particular memories for him during his long and distinguished career. Beginning with a full-blooded set of Variations by Hendrik Andriessen we soon heard the Willis in its full blown majesty. In contrast the John Stanley was lightly registered and very delicate and here, for a change, Graham Ireland chose not to use the trumpet so often heard in the Allegro section of these works.

The three Chorale Preludes were very contrasting examples of the genre. The Walther was well played with a glorious running accompaniment that was always in evidence but never overpowering; the Bach was played in a steady manner and the modern Albrecht was a complete contrast with its challenging harmonic structure.

Back to the familiar for a performance of the Mendelssohn Sonata wherein the soloist delivered all we expected with a particularly strong registration of the final fugue. In another fugue, this time with the accompanying Prelude by Saint-Saëns, we saw how different this form can sound when played with a light registration. This work was sandwiched between pieces by Frank Bridge and Herbert Sumsion (one of Graham's organ tutors). The rolling hills of the Malverns and the Cotswolds are purported to have been influential in the works of many composers, most notably Elgar and Vaughan Williams and these wonderful hills are said to have been the influence behind these two works, both performed with a sympathetic approach.

We went home with one of the irreverent Sorties by Lefébure-Wély. If these pieces were really composed to be played during a solemn recession after mass at La Madeline or St Sulpice one can only imagine how the assembled clerics tried to retain their dignity while leaving the church. Be that as it may, they are good crowd pleasers and we all went out into the rain with a spring in our steps.

Don Hickson

## 5.4 Peter Holder on 23rd January 2013

The Recital had the following programme:

<i>Marche Héroïque</i>	Herbert Brewer
<i>Chanson de Matin</i>	Edward Elgar Arr. Herbert Brewer
Concerto No.13 in F major HWV 295 'The Cuckoo and the Nightingale' <i>Larghetto, Allegro, Larghetto, Allegro</i>	George F Handel <i>Arr. Marcel Dupré</i>
Larghetto in F# minor	Samuel S Wesley
Carmen Suite	Georges Bizet <i>Arr. Edwin Lemare</i>

Peter Holder is the Organ Scholar at Westminster Abbey. He is also a final-year undergraduate at the Royal Academy of Music and has held the posts of Organ Scholar at Southwell Minster, The Royal Hospital, Chelsea and St. Albans Cathedral.

The recital began in dramatic fashion, beginning as soon as the recitalist had seated himself, the stops having been prepared beforehand – always a good start! *Marche Héroïque* by Herbert Brewer, one-time organist of Gloucester Cathedral, is a stately piece with splashes of 'Tuba'. It was played with great panache whilst giving us all a wonderful demonstration of superb organ management, coupled with excellent articulation.

A quiet piece followed in the form of Edward Elgar's *Chanson de Matin*, arranged for organ by Herbert Brewer. Here, Peter Holder was

able to demonstrate the sensitive side of his musicianship in a most beautiful rendering.

Handel's Organ Concertos are always welcome in recitals. Peter chose a very popular one entitled 'The Cuckoo and the Nightingale', taken from the theme of the second movement. Most beautifully played and with great charm, Peter used many of the flute combinations to great effect emphasising the echo passages. This arrangement was by Marcel Dupré and one wondered whether some of the textures would be a little heavy, but in the event this was not the case.

Following on was Samuel Sebastian Wesley's Larghetto in F# minor. It was good to hear the initial melody given out on the Orchestral Oboe, (a particularly colourful stop) on the Solo Organ and repeated slightly more quietly using the Oboe on the Swell Organ. This piece demonstrated once again the recitalist's most sensitive playing.

The recital was brought to a close with Bizet's Carmen Suite, arranged by Edwin Lemare. This was a *tour de force* using lots of colour and the full resources of the organ. The recital was of the highest calibre and the audience was amazed at Peter's technical prowess, musicianship and presentation of the programme. It is rare that we hear such superb playing, especially on an organ that is not the easiest to manage. It is likely that many will remember this occasion for a long time to come.

Jonathan Holl

## 5.5 William McVicker on 13 March 2013

William McVicker is the Organ Curator, Reading Town Hall and Royal Festival Hall. The Recital Programme included:

Cannonade

Claude Balbastre

The Hyacinth Waltz

Herman Koenig

Three pieces from Messe des convents François Couperin

- (i) Dialogue sur la trompette du Grand clavier,  
et sur la montre, le bourdon,  
et le nazard du Positif (last Kyrie)
- (ii) Dialogue sur la Voix Humaine  
(6e Couplet of the Gloria)
- (iii) Dialogue sur les grands jeux (Agnus Dei)

Sonata No 8 in E minor Op. 132 Josef Rheinberger

- (i) Introduction
- (ii) Fugue
- (iii) Intermezzo
- (iv) Scherzoso
- (v) Passacaglia

For the regular audience at the lunch time recitals at the Town Hall the sight of William McVicker appearing on the platform is a signal that the introduction to the day's performer is about to take place but on this occasion it was William himself who was to appear at the console of the organ of which he is the curator. In his introduction he expressed his desire to avoid the standard pieces of the organ recital repertoire and this was, to a greater or lesser degree, achieved in all four pieces of his programme, particularly in the first two pieces.

In post-revolutionary France at the end of the 18th Century, rather like the activities of the Cromwell era in England, there was much destruction of the "trappings" in churches and many organs were destroyed. Some, however, survived by dint of being moved to secular buildings where they were used in a purely entertainment environment. This was very evident in the Cannonade by Claude Balbastre which got the programme off to a very boisterous start and was tremendous fun.

The Hyacinth Waltz by Koenig was played by special request and arose from William McVicker being given a beautifully illustrated book containing, amongst others, this piece and acceptance of the gift was conditional on it being included in the recital! It was, in all honesty, a rather inconsequential piece typical of the period and, while pleasant easy listening, did not engender a great desire to hear it again!

We then came to music written for the organ but not often performed in recitals in movements from one of Couperin's Organ Masses. The question was asked whether the Victorian splendour of the Father Willis could handle the French music of an earlier century and the answer was a resounding "Yes!", particularly as the Voix Humaine was (as suggested) slightly out of tune. In each of the movements William McVicker demonstrated just how well he knew the organ with an admirable selection of registration throughout.

The tiny Alpine state of Liechtenstein is probably best known for the frequent production of colourful postage stamps, a tax haven for companies of a comparatively dubious nature and perhaps the odd ski-jumper. However, it also produced Josef Rheinberger. In what is euphemistically described as "proper" music circles he is best known for the Overture to his opera Schwanda the Bagpiper but he was a prolific composer of Sonatas for the organ. These Sonatas used to be regular items in recitals but, over the years, seem to have fallen out of favour and it was good to hear one resurrected today. This was played with commendable authority and was sensitively registered throughout. The fugue was a wonderful example of the form. Is it a coincidence that Op132 was also the number of the Beethoven String Quartet containing the Grosse Fugue? The hauntingly beautiful Intermezzo had a lovely melody oft repeated with a slightly different registration and was a joy to hear and the tremendous climax of the final Passacaglia brought a rewarding experience to a close.

All in all, this was an excellent recital giving most of us a hearing of new pieces or those that have not been heard for some time. We look forward to further recitals of this nature by our "Curator"

Don Hickson

## 6. Celebrity Recitals

### 6.1 Timothy Byram-Wigfield on 10th November 2011

The recital had the following programme:

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Coronation March  | P. I. Tchaikovsky  |
| 2. Concerto in F Op.4 No.4<br>Allegro-Andante-Adagio-Allegro | G. F. Handel       |
| 3. Jesu, joy of man's desiring                               | J. S. Bach         |
| 4. Fantasia and Fugue in G                                   | C. H. H. Parry     |
| 5. Sinfonia to Ein' feste Burg                               | J. S. Bach         |
| 6. Processional March  | Sir William Harris |
| 7. Bridal March from The Birds                               | C. H. H. Parry     |
| 8. Flourish for an Occasion                                  | Sir William Harris |
| 9. Radetzky March  | J. Strauss         |

Timothy Byram-Wigfield is the Director of Music at St. George's Chapel, Windsor and who better to present a recital entitled "Music for Royal Occasions"? The evening was full of glorious and exciting music, not to mention the impeccable handling and management of the 1882 Father Willis with its limited aids to registration.

The recital began with an arrangement of Tchaikovsky's 'Coronation March', written for the coronation of Tsar Alexander III. With fanfares and swaggering march themes, this set the scene for the rest of the evening.

Handel is well-known for his contribution to Royal musical occasions but this popular Concerto in F (Op 4, No 4) would have been played in the intervals during performances of his oratorios. This showed off some of the light, colourful stops of the organ.

This was followed by an arrangement of the popular 'Jesu, joy of man's desiring' from Bach's Cantata 147 (*Herz und Mund and Tat und Leben*).

Hubert Parry is of course well-known for his coronation anthem 'I was glad'. His Fantasia and Fugue in G is probably his most substantial organ work. Considerably revised from his first working, it was published much later during his life in 1913. The dedicatee was Sir Walter Parratt, Organist of St. George's Chapel, Windsor. A technically challenging piece, calling for much work in 'stop management', Timothy gave a very fluent performance bringing the somewhat complicated fugue to an exciting climax.

An arrangement of the Sinfonia to Bach's Cantata No. 80, *Ein' feste Burg* followed -- a noble theme with the chorale melody being given out on the magnificent Tuba stop.

The Processional March by Sir William Harris followed. He was Organist of St. George's Chapel, Windsor and had studied under Sir Walter Parratt at the Royal College of Music. Harris wrote the Processional March in 1960 to accompany the entry of Queen Elizabeth II into Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the marriage of Princess Margaret.

Two further pieces followed, the first by Parry, 'Bridal March' from *The Birds* by Aristophanes. This piece was popular at weddings around the end of the nineteenth century. It was arranged by Sir Walter Alcock who was Assistant Organist at Westminster Abbey and played for three coronations. This was followed by another piece by Harris, 'Flourish for an Occasion'.

The recital ended with an arrangement by Timothy Byram-Wigfield of Strauss' *Radetzky March*. A popular and tuneful piece, this brought the evening to a magnificent close. We had been entertained, not only with joyful music, but with organ playing of great panache.

Jonathan Holl

## 6.2 Jane Parker-Smith on 26th April 2012

The recital had the following programme:

Toccatà and Fugue in D minor BWV 565	Bach
Cantabile Op 37 No 1	Jongen
Fantasia on ' <i>Een Vaste Burg is onze God</i> '	Zwart
Miroir	Wammes
Toccatà de la Libération	Saint-Martin
Toccatà in D	Becke
Prière Op 20	Franck
Introduction and Theme	Sumsion
Toccatà (Symphonie No 5)	Widor

Jane Parker-Smith is one of the world's leading concert organists and it was a pleasure to welcome her to Reading for this Celebrity Recital. Giving her programme the title "Toccatà" immediately gave the impression that here there would be plenty of oomph and that the Father Willis would be well and truly tested. This was, of course true but if the whole evening was full-blooded it would have lost much of its impact and there were some delightful quieter pieces to relieve the tension.

The evening began with the all-too-familiar Bach played with consummate ease and with the Fugue taken at a pretty good rate. This certainly got the concert off to a good start but it was time to calm down with a beautiful Cantabile by the Belgian, Joseph Jongen. This charming piece was typical of the period and, though very pleasant, did not present any great demands on the listener. For the second of these three pieces by Low Country composers we moved over the border to The Netherlands for Jan Zwart's Fantasia on the famous Lutheran Chorale. This piece, in the form of variations, allowed the performer to demonstrate the versatility of the Willis with movements varying from full-blown fanfares to begin and end and changing

styles and registrations in the intervening movements. Staying in the Netherlands Ad Wammes's Miroir was, again, a quiet interval after the manner of Phillip Glass or John Adam.

To end the first half the Saint-Martin Toccata was written to commemorate the liberation of Paris in 1944 so it is, of course, a dazzling piece of celebration and demands much technical skill which Jane Parker-Smith dealt with excellently. However, the piece itself, although obviously written for a specific purpose, is not in itself of great merit other than as a curiosity.

After the interval we began with another Toccata. This was by René Becker, a native Frenchman now living in the USA. This work was similar in style to the many Toccatas by French composers of the late nineteenth early twentieth century but gives the performer the opportunity to show off pedal technique by concluding with an abrupt rapid scale down the pedal board. The Franck and Sumsion pieces were, once more, a relaxing interlude, exquisitely played before returning to the over-familiar with the resounding Widor.

Inevitably we had an encore. Were we to be treated with more fireworks before releasing a horde of adrenaline-fuelled organists out to create mayhem in the centre or Reading. No! We were brought back down to earth with a beautiful calm Cantabile which was new to nearly everyone present.

Don Hickson

### 6.3 David Goode & Crispian Steele-Perkins on 8th November 2012

The recital by Crispian Steele-Perkins (Trumpets) and David Goode (Organ) had the following programme:

Sinfonia in D	Handel
Suite from The Water Music	Handel (arr Steele Perkins)
Fantasia and Fugue in G minor BWV 542	J S Bach

Prelude No. 2	Gershwin (arr Steele-Perkins)
'Posthorn' Sonata	Mozart (arr Steele-Perkins)
Trumpet Concerto	L Mozart
Processional	Mathias (arr Steele-Perkins)
Variations sur un vieux Noël	Dupré
Shackleton's Cross	Goodall
Voluntary in D	Stanley

From the very first note played it was very obvious that this was going to be an excellent concert and the first two Handel pieces quickly confirmed that, not only were we in the presence of two excellent artists but that they were two artists who combined to be almost as one. What was also very evident in these two baroque pieces was that "our" Father Willis, built at the time of Victorian grandiose opulence, could also produce a truly genuine baroque tone. These pieces were delightfully played and the organ registration was changed so subtly that one could easily have thought that David Goode had been playing this instrument for all of his life. Crispian Steele-Perkins began with a piccolo trumpet and during the course of the evening produced a variety of instruments ranging from this one, a conventional modern valve instrument and an assortment of valveless trumpets of various shapes and sizes including a large posthorn that resembled a "yard-of-ale"

During the trumpeter's first break to draw breath, David Goode gave us the G minor Fantasia and Fugue played at a fairly rapid pace, once again registered masterfully and demonstrating some amazing pedal work. Back to the trumpet for a delightful George Gershwin blues number where the use of the mutes added to the changes of tone, and changing instruments again the Posthorn Sonata, using the long posthorn, resonated through the entire building.

After the interval the Leopold Mozart concerto was very well played and delightfully controlled, followed by a complete contrast by the trumpeter's own arrangement of the Processional by William Mathias, originally for organ solo but arranged with the composer's permission. Another organ solo followed. The Dupré Variations were played from memory, an extraordinary feat in itself, and were played with fluency that enabled us to experience not only the work itself but the amazing versatility of the Willis in the hands and feet of such a player.

Howard Goodall is perhaps better known to most of us as a presenter of music programmes, including a series on Bach, or as the composer of the introductory music to the TV series *QI* but here was something completely different. Shackleton's Cross is a wonderful evocative piece of music composed with the vision of the explorer's grave in South Georgia in mind and in this arrangement of the original piano solo worked extremely well. Having heard this it is difficult to imagine that the original could possibly be so effective.

Back to the Baroque for a final glorious performance of the Stanley Voluntary. Not quite the final though. My French Dictionary gives one definition of "encore" as "again" and that is exactly what we got. The Stanley again with a few flourishes.

This was a marvellous evening by two performers who are both experts in their own fields but, in the way that they combined so well, produced something better than the sum of their parts. Judging by the look on their faces throughout the evening the audience were not the only people in the Town Hall who thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Don Hickson

## 6.4 Robert Quinney on 2nd May 2013

The recital programme was:

Prelude and Fugue in E minor WoO13 (arr W T Best)	Mendelssohn
Allein Gott in der Hoh' sei Her BWV662	J S Bach
Lavolta, Lament and Jig from <i>Five Dances for organ</i>	Gardner
Toccatà and Fugue in F major BWV540	J S Bach
Prelude and Fugue in B flat Op 35 No 6	Mendelssohn (arr Quinney)
Naiades Op 55 No 4; Clair de Lune Op 53 No 5 and Carillon de Westminster Op 54 No 6 from <i>Pièces de Fantasia</i>	Vierne

This celebrity recital was given by Robert Quinney barely a month after his new appointment at Peterborough Cathedral and he presented a programme of "Town Hall Classics" typical of those that were probably given in this venue when the Father Willis was a new asset. Unfortunately the start was delayed for a short time while the venerable Willis was cured of a few wheezes but while this was being sorted Mr Quinney gave us an insight into the first half of his programme. Each half of the programme began with a Prelude and Fugue originally written for the piano by Mendelssohn and we began with an arrangement by W T Best, truly an expert in this art. It is remarkable how these works translate easily into the wider instrumental scope of the organ and, as David Pether says in his excellent programme notes, are possibly enhanced where the sustainability of notes, as opposed to the fading of the piano, made the melodic elements of the fugue appear with greater clarity.

The Bach Chorale Prelude was beautifully played with masterly control of the registration and very sensitive ornamentation.

The pieces by John Gardner displayed the composer's various leads, ranging from the invigorating rhythms of Lavolta, the lovely bagpipe

drone and the sheer excitement of the final jig with its complex time signatures and jazz influence. All in all, great fun!

After the interval we returned to Mendelssohn this time in an arrangement by Robert Quinney himself. Bearing in mind that Mendelssohn lived at a time when the "German" pedal boards was only just, and reluctantly, being introduced to this country and that Mendelssohn himself, whilst a competent organist, on his own admission, was not a master of the pedal board, the pedal solo at the beginning in this arrangement was remarkable and, not for the first time this evening, we were treated to an amazing display of pedalling technique.

A change of style brought the recital to an end with three pieces by Louis Vierne. The running semi-quavers in Naiades were precisely played and did not override the thematic material. Clair de Lune was an evocation and one even managed during this to disconnect from the automatic memory of the Debussy. The evening was brought to a close with a well controlled crescendo in the Carillon de Westminster.

As always at the Town Hall this was a thoroughly enjoyable recital but there were two disappointing aspects. The first was the size of the audience. We have had more at the Lunchtime recitals and surely performers of this standard deserve a bigger attendance. Warnings have been given of the view of some members of Reading Civic Body, that unless they prove to be viable organ recitals could well be one of the inevitable cuts and this would result in the neglect of a national treasure. The second aspect is the printed programme produced by Reading Arts. Unfortunately, there was no information in the programme of dates for future organ events, either celebrity or lunchtime, particularly when there was a lunchtime recital less than a fortnight away. Surely this is the place to have an advance notice in addition to the publicity put out elsewhere by Reading Arts and BOA? If people attending an event are not advised of forthcoming recitals there is no opportunity for them to note the date and return. There seems to be a link between these two themes.

Don Hickson

## 7. Other Local Recitals

### 7.1 Organ Recitals at Reading Minster

There is a Friday lunchtime organ recital held once a month at Reading Minster, usually on the second Friday between 12:15 and 13:00, to raise funds for the Organ Restoration Project. The series includes local and visiting players from further afield, some of whom are BOA members. Recent performers have included Jill York, President of the BOA and John Belcher, the Organist of Godalming Parish Church. Entry is free, although a suggested donation of £2 or more is most welcome! You can find out more about forthcoming organ recitals and other concerts at the Minster on the website – [www.readingminster.org.uk](http://www.readingminster.org.uk)

Peter West

### 7.2 Progress of the Organ Restoration Project

The Organ Restoration appeal currently stands at just under £250,000 and we have a target of £600,000 to enable the organ to be rebuilt by the firm of Mander. Currently, the instrument is extremely unreliable as it suffers from mechanical faults and it is rare for the whole organ to be functioning at any one time! This project is important since it will restore this unique instrument to its former glory and protect it for the use of current and future generations, including amateur and professional organists, organ students, instrumental musicians and singers, as well as for audiences and congregations who will experience listening to it within concerts, services and, during daytime practice, by casual visitors to the Minster.

As well as some minor alterations to the specification, which will reinstate some of the features from 1862, the key components of the work will comprise:

#### **Changes to the layout of the instrument to improve the egress of sound**

- the Choir will be repositioned at ground level underneath the main chancel case and decorative piercings created to enable it to speak more directly into the church

- the swell box will be moved forward to occupy the space currently taken up by the Choir pipework, which will improve the egress of sound into the church
- the Pedal pipework will all be regrouped at the back of the instrument, instead of being distributed around the organ as it is now

**Restoration of West facing division** – before the 1936 rebuild there was a West-facing division of pipework in an archway opening into the main body of the Minster. However, this archway was closed up during the 1936 rebuild and the sound directed into the chancel rather than the nave as was the tradition at the time.

- a new case and pipework will be put back into this space to lead congregational singing for large civic services

**Willis console** – The console will be completely rewired and a computerised memory system fitted. The outward appearance of the console will remain unchanged with original Willis fittings retained.

**Mobile platform** – The construction of a mobile platform to match the console will enable it to be moved around the building for ease of access and suitability depending on the type of event This will greatly enhance the enjoyment and appreciation of organ recitals.

**Pipework** – All 3,361 pipes to be removed, cleaned and repaired. Following reinstallation all pipes will be regulated to ensure that the original tone and balance created by Henry Willis in 1862 is retained.

**Internal workings/mechanisms of organ** –All perished leatherwork will be replaced, new slider sound-boards for pipework installed and a new winding system designed along traditional lines.

If you would like to make a donation to the Reading Minster Organ Restoration appeal, then please send a cheque, made payable to St. Mary's PCC, to Peter West, Director of Music, Minster Office, St. Mary's Gate, Chain Street, Reading, RG1 2HX. As a UK taxpayer, you can increase your donation through Gift Aid. Please contact the Minster Office on (0118) 957 1057 to obtain the correct form.

Peter West

## 7.3 Other BOA Recitals

The following recitals took place during 2012;

### 7.3.1 Ian May at Holy Trinity, Reading on May 26th 2012

The programme was:

Sonata No. 3 in A	Mendelssohn
1. Con Moto Maestoso	
2. Andante Tranquillo	

Chorale Prelude: Kiebster Jesu, wir sind Hier J.S.Bach

Praeludium in G minor	Buxtehude
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Voluntary in G minor	John Stanley
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Improvisation sur le Victimae Paschali	Tournemire
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Partita: Veni Creatur Spiritus	Flor Peeters
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Largo (from concerto in D minor)	Bach/ Vivaldi
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Toccata (Symphonie V)	Widor
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### 7.3.2 Christopher Cipkin at St Peter's Earley on October 27th 2012

The programme was:

Coronation March from <i>Le Prophete</i>	Giacomo Meyerbeer arr W. T. Best
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Voluntary in D minor (op. 5 no. 8)	John Stanley
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Trois Pieces (op. 29)	Gabriel Pierne
1. <i>Prelude</i> - 2. <i>Cantilene</i>	
3. <i>Scherzando de Concert</i>	

Variations on Ave Maris Stella

Alan Spedding

*Theme - 1. Allegro marcato - 2. Danza*

*3. Andante rubato - 4. Allegro - 5. Vivace*

*6. Andante moderato - 7. Allegro con brio*

*8. Piacevole*

Prelude and Fugue on the  
theme of B-A-C-H

Franz Liszt

### **7.3.3 David Pether at St Paul's ,Wokingham on 24th November 2012**

Unfortunately, for various reasons this recital had to be postponed and is now scheduled for June 29th 2013.

## **8. Heritage Day**

The Heritage Open Day was held on Sunday 9th September 2012.

Heritage day this year occurred on one of the few sunny weekends we have had, which impacted on the number of people attending. Sessions were at 1pm, 2pm and 3pm, and 51 visitors attended, including two children.

David Pether's presentation was, as always, well received. As people left we were thanked for our efforts and told how interesting and enjoyable the experience had been.

The Town Hall Organ is of national importance and continued BOA support for its regular usage is essential. Dr William McVicker (Curator of this organ and that at the Royal Festival Hall) and David Pether put in considerable effort, including working with Reading Council, to this end. The lunchtime and celebrity recitals ensure regular activity of the organ. BOA members' support and encouragement of others to attend will assist in their continuance. The organ is also available for BOA members to play: why not give it a try! A local organist (not a BOA member), with some encouragement, had a go and enjoyed the experience. Contact David Pether on (0118) 9663565 for information.

David provided his usual excellent and informative presentation, and his effort on the day, and in organising the event, was appreciated by all of the visitors.

Roger Bartlett

## 9. Events

### 9.1 Visit to Upper Basildon & Pangbourne on 14th July 2012

Ancient & Modern could well have been the theme of these visits which were attended by about twenty members and guests. We were to view, hear and try an old organ in a modern church and a 'modern' organ in an old church.

St. Stephen's Church, Upper Basildon, was built in 1964 and is a most unusual structure constructed with a steel frame and supposed to resemble the shape of a fish. (A fish rather than a cross was a symbol used by early Christians). Its lantern-topped roof makes for a light building and the abundance of concrete and steel give ample resonance to the organ. The organ is quite a delight and was acquired from the redundant St. Bartholomew's Church, Lower Basildon in 1977. It was cleaned and overhauled in 1995 by Tony Foster-Waite. Built by Bishop and Son in 1885 the organ is a rather plain but none-the-less impressive and apparently unaltered instrument with five stops on the Great, four stops on the Swell and the 16ft Bourdon on the pedal. Except for the Bourdon, the Great Principal (4ft) and the Swell Harmonic Flute (4ft) all the stops are 8ft. The Dulciana and Clarabella on the Great are grooved in together as are the Viol de Gamba and Lieblich Gedact on the Swell. The tonal arrangement is typical for its time when its role would have been mainly to lead congregational singing. Interestingly, the Clarabella stop was invented by J. C. Bishop in 1840 and the organ has two combination levers which were introduced (if not invented) by Bishop in 1829.

After a welcome and introduction by our President, Jill York, she gave a brief demonstration of the organ's scope and then invited members to try it out for themselves. Several did so and we were amazed at how effective such an organ could be despite the awkward kick stick swell pedal with only one notch. Whatever the choice of music each player seemed to bring out something unexpected from the instrument. If ever evidence was needed for the old adage that the most important "stop" for an organ is the building - here it was. The quiet ranks could be fully appreciated and the louder ranks given their full potential. It was a real treat for me to hear the rich robust 'English' Open Diapason sound.

The next organ to be visited was at St. James the Less Church, Pangbourne. Here there is a 'modern' organ in an 'old' church (if 1865 is old in church building terms). Not much is known of the organ's origins although a 12-stop instrument appears to have been installed in 1882 and replaced or enlarged from the beginning of the 20th Century. However, it is modern in that it was rebuilt by George Sixsmith in 1983 who made provision for a further 3 stops. These were added by Daniels in 2002. The neat but unimaginative casework in light wood matches some of the nearby furnishings but still seems to me to be somewhat unsympathetic to its setting. It is a very different organ from the one at Upper Basildon being a largish 2 manual instrument with 30 stops and has electric key and stop action. Jill, who was at one time Director of Music at this church and still plays there occasionally, talked about and demonstrated the instrument before inviting members to play it. A good variety of music was played ranging from good old hymn tunes to much more ambitious pieces. The organ, like that at Reading Minster, is rather "bottled up" by its location and the heavily carpeted floor absorbs a lot of sound. It is best heard in the North aisle where some of the sound is deflected by the large rear-facing vertical swell shutters. Some of the Great can also be appreciated from that vantage point. At times though, one fancied that if St. Cecilia could have come to life and stepped out of that lovely North aisle window with her portative organ, the sound may have been enriched. However it is still a good-sounding instrument with an ample specification for its use in aiding worship.

Following our church visits we made our way to Jill's home at Theale for tea and yet another organ. Jill has an Eminent DCS331 2 manual and pedal board digital organ with some 37 stops. Again our host introduced us to and demonstrated the organ before serving tea. Some members had to be prised away from listening to or playing the organ to partake of refreshments and what a spread we had! The instrument has many refinements made possible by modern technology such as transposition, the facility to change temperament, alter speech, simulate wind noise etc. Just how useful these features are to the average organist is a matter for debate. However it is a splendid instrument and it is sometimes difficult to realise it is not a pipe organ. When there were fewer people left to hear my mistakes I timidly tried a few simple hymn tunes on it to compare it with my one manual Viscount. I found it quite delightful and particularly liked the subtle

"chiff" on the Great Stopped Diapason.

So a well worthwhile and pleasant afternoon came to an end. Thanks to Jill and Roger for their welcome and the splendid tea, also apologies to Jake (the cat) for our intrusion. Thanks to our Programme Secretary, Christine Wells and also to Mark Jameson for his research and providing the specifications

Ken Gaines

## 9.2 Organ Tour in the North East

This year the annual organ tour was based in Lincoln. Our Programme Secretary, Christine Wells, has a talent for discovering excellent organs to visit, some in quite small towns. The party of nine enjoyed four days of not only seeing and playing organs but also appreciating the attractive scenery found in a less well-known part of the country.

We visited a total of nine organs, the first two being at Stamford on our way to Lincoln. Stamford has five medieval churches and we headed for the parish church of All Saints, a fine-looking church in the centre of the town. Unfortunately the Director of Music, Jeremy Jepson (a former lay-clerk at St. George's Chapel, Windsor) was not able to be present, but he left us instructions to find various keys. We never succeeded in finding the console light switch which fortunately was not a big problem! The organ is a 2-manual Binns and made a fine sound. Unusually the Swell Organ had both a Celeste and an Angelica. Across the square was the church of St. John - a semi-redundant church. Here was a 3-manual Hill Norman & Beard which needed restoration. This was the church where Sir Malcolm Sargent, whose father was organist, sang in the choir and learnt the organ.

We arrived in Lincoln and resided at the White Hart Hotel situated next to the cathedral. In general it was a good hotel, but a several meetings with the Manager were required as the deal "Dinner, Bed and Breakfast" was strangely not fully understood!

The next morning, we met at the church of St. Botolph at Boston - the church with the high circular tower (known as "the Stump"). Having only seen photographs of the outside of the church, we were amazed at its size - one of the largest parish churches in the country. It was certainly a very beautiful church too and we were given a warm

welcome by the Director of Music, Marc Murray and the organist, David Shepherd. He gave us a short talk on the history of the organs then played to us before we were invited to play. The present organ, a 3-manual Harrison, was installed in 1939. Though slightly buried, it has all the power needed for a full congregation and, with three Open Diapason stops on the Great Organ, is most suitable for the English romantic repertoire and all the grand occasions. It sounded very fine in a reverberation of 3 seconds.

Our afternoon visit was to Kirton-in-Holland, a small town just outside Boston. Here we experienced a 3-manual Conacher. The 'stop-tab' console was situated in the Nave just outside the Chancel. Except for the Choir Organ, the pipes were in a gallery at the west end; the Choir Organ pipes were in the Chancel. The action to the former was somewhat ponderous and sluggish and the playing of music by Bach, for instance, was not satisfactory. The Choir Organ on the other hand was light in touch and very clear and precise. There were no mixture stops on the organ but the Choir Organ had the only mutation stop, a Larigot.

We arrived back at Lincoln in good time to attend Evensong in the cathedral. The choir sang the canticles to Watson in E, the responses were by Byrd and the anthem by Simon Lole. The choir was conducted by the organ scholar, Claire Innes-Hopkins, with the organist, Charles Harrison, accompanying. At the end of the Service he played 'Cantabile' - Franck. He met us after Evensong and spoke briefly about the organ which was the last organ to be voiced by 'Father' Willis. As expected the organ sounded magnificent. We were all invited to the organ loft and it was a privilege to play such a fine organ in a very beautiful cathedral, all the more so with the most atmospheric lighting. Charles Harrison finished the evening by playing to us the Fanfare by Whitlock.

The next day, we drove eastwards from Lincoln to the market-town of Louth. Here was a large parish church with a spire 295 feet high, the highest parish church spire in the country. Indeed, many churches in these parts seemed to be sizeable! We were warmly greeted by the organist, Lisa Taylor. The organ was a good-sized 3 manual by Norman and Beard with excellent tone. We all had ample time to play. Our next visit was to Grimsby Minster but not until late afternoon. This gave time for some non-organ activity! We went our

different ways for lunch and some of us ended up at a splendid fish and chip restaurant (The Captain's Table) on the sea-front at Cleethorpes. After an excellent lunch we donned our wellington boots and walked along the sandy beach in glorious sunshine, the tide being 'out!' Later we were welcomed at Grimby Minster by the organist, Anthony Pinel, whose nephew is the Assistant Organist at St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The organ is a 3 manual by Walker and has all the resources for large-scale romantic works. Situated on the gallery at the west end, it sounded most fine. To our surprise, there was another organ, this in the chancel. It was a 5 rank, 2 manual Walker somewhat hidden and all enclosed. The sound of this organ was very good and, in spite of its position, displayed considerable power. The specification was such that one was able to play satisfactorily music by such composers as Bach, Buxtehude and those of the French classical repertoire.

The last day of the tour took us to Bridlington Priory but, on the way, we visited St. Mary's Barton-on-Humber, close to the spectacular Humber Bridge. Here was a 3-manual Forster & Andrews which made an impressive sound. We were hosted by the Organist, Geoff Brown, who was also a Churchwarden; his wife was the Assistant Curate! The organ(s) in Bridlington Priory have a very complicated past. The present organ was built by the Belgian firm Anneessens in 1888, but was rebuilt by Abbott & Smith in 1909, enlarged by Compton in 1949, restored and further enlarged by Laycock & Bannister in 1968 and finally restored by Nicholsons in 2006. The 1889 Anneessens was a 3-manual with 41 stops. The organ now has 4 manuals with 75 stops. The Priory was originally twice the size but destruction during the middle ages effectively left what now remains - still a large church! The Assistant Organist, John Hughes, spoke to us about the different stages of development and also showed us inside the organ. We were able to see (and hear) the enormous pipes of the 32 foot Pedal Contra Tuba! There is not a great deal of resonance in the building, but the voicing and volume are excellent for the acoustic. We all had ample time to play.

So ended the 14th organ tour of this Association, and we all went our various ways with a lot to savour and think about! Grateful thanks are due to Christine for yet again making all the complicated arrangements.

Jonathan Holl

### 9.3 Annual Dinner 17th November 2012

The venue for the Annual Dinner this year was at the Quality Hotel in the centre of Reading. It was quite confusing because the hotel seems to have changed its name on a regular basis. This seemed a little ominous. However the hotel was very pleasant. It was tastefully furnished and decorated and the staff were very friendly and helpful. Food is a very subjective field but everything that I had was tasty and I did not hear any complaints from the thirty or so members who attended.

The Reverend Roy Woodhams was our after dinner speaker this year and was accompanied by his wife Kate. As Organ Builders, Tony and I have been lucky enough to know Roy for many years, he being our local Diocesan Organ Adviser. The first half of Roy's talk was to explain how and where he became an organist and then a Vicar and then an Adviser. He is an extremely well-accomplished organist and any recital that he gives deserves to be well attended.

The second half of his talk was a light-hearted resumé of the relationship between organists and the clergy. This touched a lot of chords with his audience and there was much laughter.

Jill brought the event to a close in her usual relaxed but eloquent way. All in all it was a very enjoyable evening.

Eileen Foster-Waite

### 9.4 President's Afternoon on 12th January 2013

A Harpsichord and Clavichord demonstration of music by François Couperin [1626-1661].

The Berkshire Organists' Association was very privileged to be addressed by Malcolm Harding when it met at St Andrew's Church, Reading. Malcolm, a valued member of the Association, is an informed and accomplished exponent of the harpsichord and clavichord. He is also an Associated Board examiner. Having previously been Director of Music at Bradfield College, he is now organist at Waltham St Lawrence church.

Malcolm had gone to a great deal of trouble in transporting his two clavichords and his magnificent harpsichord to the church and we

were treated to a splendid programme of music by François Couperin.

It was a great pleasure, also, to welcome Graham Ireland, a talented performer on the clavichord and a fine organist, who has contributed greatly to the Berkshire Organists' Association, having been President and Secretary twice.

The few amongst us not too familiar with clavichords were invited to draw close to the instruments and were familiarised with how the sound is produced. Some of us were surprised at how quiet the

dynamics were - too quiet for the aged!



Malcolm's second clavichord was built by Michael Thomas, an expert in soundboard construction and renowned for the authentic and beautiful sound which his instruments evidence. Michael Thomas was

thought to be a former teacher at the Blue Coat School, Sonning.

The first item on the programme, presented by Malcolm and Graham, was the joyful Allemande for two clavichords from the *9e Ordre*, a series of pieces exhibiting the rampant decoration, slides, trills, etc. so redolent of this type of French music. It was explained that it is difficult to tell, at times, whether the composition is in a major or minor key!

There followed a clavichord solo by Graham, *Les Languers Tendres*, in a typical dotted rhythm which included bevels, and where both hands moved in similar motion, sometimes in a triplet rhythm to which we were alerted beforehand. Graham coped, apparently effortlessly, with the rhythm of the much decorated nature of the music and the applause reflected audience appreciation.

Malcolm next introduced the Harpsichord, explaining that the Spinnet and Virginals were domestic versions of it. Impressively ornate, with its 17th century Pascalian type gold leaf decoration, the uninitiated amongst us could see that there were two keyboards which could be coupled in much the same way as an organ. Malcolm demonstrated, in detail, how the different sounds could be achieved, one example being that the 4 foot stop could be engaged with the knee. This particular harpsichord was made by Andrew Garlick, an esteemed harpsichord builder, who specialises in French and Flemish harpsichords which are to be found in many countries of the world. It was he who designed a keyboard which could be pushed up, allowing for the creation of entirely different tones, including that said to resemble the harp. All this makes for a challenging instrument for the student.

The music chosen by Malcolm to demonstrate the harpsichord, commenced with Couperin's well-known *Les Moissonneurs* (the harvesters) and this was followed by *La Bersan*, a jolly composition reminding one of a mischievous little girl chasing the phrases as they frolic onwards. Couperin's *Passacaille* in C major, a sort of dance, thought by some to have a similar theme to the Brahms 4th Symphony, was by degrees grand and passionate and this was followed by the final item *Les Barracades mystérieuse*. Here the harmonies change and, although all the parts are independent, they make for glorious harmony.

We are deeply indebted to Malcolm for an instructive insight into the harpsichord, a delightful instrument, and for his apparently effortless recital of François Couperin's music, performed with such mastery. We also thank Graham for his impressive contribution.

One of Jill York's by now famous quizzes followed and the afternoon concluded with tea, appetising sandwiches (thank you for all that effort Margaret) and delicious home-made cakes contributed by Jen (Guy) Margaret (Wooldridge), Joyce (Hills) and Brenda (Jameson). Your efforts are very much appreciated.

Margaret Bensley

## 9.5 Dorney and Eton

The visit to Dorney & Eton took place on Saturday 9th February 2013

On this wet and cold day, 11 members took part visiting Dorney and Eton. After last summer's Olympic publicity, Dorney has now returned to its rural village setting. Its church, St James, is tucked away next to Dorney Court. Originally Dorney was an island surrounded by marshes leading to the Thames where bees were kept - the meaning of the word Dorney. We were greeted on arrival at the Court gardens by a carpet of Snowdrops. Most of Dorney church is 12thC, altered in the 14thC and with a 17th Century chapel on the north side of the chancel with some fine memorials. The font is c12. Muriel Pepler, Churchwarden and team organist, welcomed us.

The organ was installed by Bishops in 1953 to celebrate the Coronation. It dates from around 1900 and was moved here from Worcester Park Methodist Church and was reduced in size to fit the space; the original builder has not yet been traced. It is tucked under the tower with a gallery in front of it. During the 1990s it was restored and the 4ft ranks swapped between departments. The action is tracker to the manuals and pneumatic for the pedals. The specification is as follows:

### **GREAT** 56 notes, right jamb

Open Diapason	8ft
Stopped Diapason	8ft
Dulciana	8ft*
Principal	4ft†
Piccolo	2ft

\* Lowest octave Stopped Bass

† Originally in Swell

### **SWELL** 56 notes, left jamb

Open Diapason	8ft
Lieblich Gedacht	8ft
Flauto Traverso	4ft‡
Oboe	8ft

‡ Originally in Great

### **PEDAL** 30 notes, Stop Right jamb

Bourdon	16ft
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**COUPLERS**, left jamb  
Swell to Pedal  
Great to Pedal  
Swell to Great  
RHS Trigger Swell Pedal  
R&C Pedalboard  
Discus blower

The writer led the playing with some Mendelssohn followed by Don Hickson who played 'This Endrys Night' by George Oldroyd. Margaret Bensley was next with the hymn tune 'Billing' and a Sarabande arranged by A Henderson. Well done Margaret - it's nice to have someone play a hymn tune. Jill York played a work by Kate Westrop 'Moderato Maestoso' continuing her support of female composers, following it with Bach Choral Prelude BWV625 'Christ Lag in Todesbanden'. Jonathan Holl rounded off the playing with Harris' 'Prelude' written when he was in St Thomas church Leipzig finishing with the Bach Jig Fugue, BWV577.

All too soon, we left for Eton; time there was short as our host, David Goode had to squeeze our visit between other commitments. Members did not play, but we heard three superb organs. We started in the main chapel, where William Briant, student from Lower 6, played the 'Menuet Gothique' from Boëllman Suite Gothique followed by David Goode playing the 1st movement from Elgar Sonata number 1 in G, Op 28. Those pieces superbly demonstrated the west end organ of the Chapel. Being able to wander during the playing also offered the opportunity to enjoy a really good look at the superb building. Several members were able to see the console.

We then crossed over to School Hall on the opposite side of the road where David had to negotiate a break in the preparations for a pop concert that was taking place that evening. Members were then led back stage and directly round to the Dutch organ. This had been built in 1773 for the Rotterdam St Mary English Episcopal church. The organ had a chequered history arriving in The School Hall in 1924 where it became part of a much larger Willis/Lewis organ. Restored by Flentrop in 1972, they again restored the organ in November 2011. William played Bach BWV639 'Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu' whilst David demonstrated Buxtehude's Toccata in F.



William Bryant

aged 14 and having been learning the organ for 9



David Goode

Finally, we moved across to Lower Chapel. This building now has its 5th organ, by Kenneth Tickell, his Op.44 completed in 2000. Sadly, they have had a bat problem and resources are now awaited to clean off the case pipes. However this did not spoil the demonstration. Here Issac Stables, from Bach's BWV565. David concluded the playing with extracts from Guilian's Second Suite. (N.B. I have three different recorded spellings for this composer's name.)

For anyone wanting more information on the **Organs at Eton**,

the College publishes a booklet, ISBN 0-902154-08-7, it is not expensive. Priory's CD PRCD809 is the most recent of the organ recordings.

A most enjoyable day. Thank you, Jonathan and David.

Mark D Jameson

## 9.6 Visit to Westminster

Saturday, 9th March dawned relatively fair (following the previous miserable, rainy day) and we gathered by 11 o'clock at the Cromwell Green entrance to the Palace of Westminster for our special organ visit. No small thanks are due to Mark Jameson for making the day's arrangements and no-one could possibly have gone astray along the way having received Mark's meticulous travel instructions!

The security scan and bag search area at the Palace proved painless and we gained access to Westminster Hall with time to spare and for a cup of coffee in the Jubilee Café for those who so wished.

Westminster Hall is the oldest remaining part of the original Palace of Westminster, commissioned in 1097 and completed two years later. The magnificent hammer-beam roof is the largest timber roof in Northern Europe, dating from the late 14th Century. It was very interesting to view the beautiful stained-glass window presented to HM the Queen on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee by the two Houses. Still in its temporary case, it will finally replace plain panels in the North Window of the Hall.

Just before 11.30, all 18 members and guests were warmly greeted by Mr. Tom Mohan, Keeper of the Organ, and escorted down a narrow stairway to the Chapel of St. Mary Undercroft. Although sometimes mistakenly known as the "Crypt Chapel", the Chapel stands at ground level, immediately beneath what was previously an upper chapel and is now, since rebuilding after the fire in 1834, St. Stephen's Hall. Although fire had harmed much of its stonework at this date, the Chapel was sufficiently undamaged to be retained and restored. The exterior stonework was refaced and repaired by Sir Charles Barry, the architect of the New Palace. The internal restoration, however, was the work of his son, E.M. Barry, between 1860 and 1870. The Chapel now stands as a fine example of High Victorian decoration. The Chapel is used for regular celebrations of Holy Communion, for baptism, weddings and other services held for Peers, Members of the House of Commons as well as officers of both Houses. (There is an excellent and well-illustrated leaflet available for further details of the Chapel's history).

Tom Mohan gave a short talk on the history of the organs in the building. The original Grant Degens & Bradbeer instrument was

crammed out of sight into an alcove at the west end and almost enclosed. In 1999 this was replaced by a new organ built by William Drake of Buckfastleigh, Devon, the design of which is based upon a woodcut illustration made by Pugin. The case, which houses two manuals and pedals with 12 stops is 6ft wide and 3ft 9ins deep at floor level. There are 696 pipes, of which 640 are “flue” pipes and 56 are “reed” pipes. The console was made to be moveable for access to the west end door but, in fact, it has never been moved!

Tom most ably demonstrated all aspects of the organ with a short programme of early music; Concerto in A minor (1st movement) Vivaldi, arr. J.S. Bach; Voluntary in D Minor, Op.5 No.2, John Stanley and Partita on ‘Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan’, Johann Pachelbel. The sound was very fine and colourful. There was ample time for players to explore the instrument.



Richard Sedding      Margaret Bensley      Tom Mohan  
each playing on the Palace Organ

Lunchtime now beckoned! Some of us again took advantage of the Jubilee Café whilst others ventured further afield. It was a good opportunity to catch up with old friends and to chat to new ones.

At 3p.m. we were to meet at the Anglican Church of St. Stephen, Rochester Row, so this gave an opportunity for a short walk in the fresh (if slightly chilly) air, passing the lovely blossom trees in front of Greycoat School. Rosemary Field, the Director of Music, was waiting to greet us with a warming cup of tea!

The church was built between 1847 and 1850 by Benjamin Ferrey - a pupil of Pugin - of Bargate rag and sandstone shipped from Blyth in Northumberland. It is one of the first serious attempts in London of Gothic Revival in decorated style. The spire was damaged by lightning in the 19th century and again in WW2, so was shortened in the 1960s for safety reasons. In 1994, however, it was restored to its original height with lightweight carbon-fibre!

Here, after a short introductory talk on the history of the organs, Rosemary demonstrated the present Binns instrument, which had been moved from North Berwick to London in 2010. She played the Trumpet Minuet by Hollins and a Prelude by Jongen. After this, members were free to play.



Anthony Hodson and Rosemary Field playing at  
St. Stephen's Rochester Row

All in all, a highly successful and enjoyable day. A huge thank-you, again, to Mark for his excellent arrangements.

Madeline Holl

## 10. General Articles

### 10.1 Recital by Dame Gillian Weir

The 5th of December 2012 saw the final public performance at Westminster Cathedral by one of the finest organists in the world. A light has gone out and never again will one see at [organrecitals.com](http://organrecitals.com),



amongst a full schedule of events yet to be enjoyed, that jewel in the crown - a concert by Gillian Weir. For me, Dame Gillian Weir is to the organ what Dame Janet Baker is to the voice. Each in her field is as good as it gets. Both are consummate musicians who had the integrity to bow out at the very height of their powers. And, as with Dame Janet, we have in Dame Gillian an artist who was always at the pinnacle, consistently outstanding - so much so that I could easily have prepared this review before the concert, peppered it with superlatives, and been able, reliably and accurately, subsequently to submit it for

publication in this journal without even having run to the inconvenience of a trip into town, actually to witness the performance. But I didn't do that. I was there (who would want to have missed it?) and in the event, nothing I could have written in advance would have been adequate, unless I had had the foresight simply to write, "Absolutely wonderful!".

There are 78 speaking stops on the Westminster Cathedral organ and I'll bet they were all pulled out that night. Of course, anyone can do that but we're talking about GW, so forget the stops, the manuals, the couplers, the entire exciting specification of this of gorgeous Henry Willis III instrument and even the blinding technique of the player and her masterly control of registration, which perhaps we as enthusiasts can appreciate more than most, and this modest woman's true genius emerges - when she plays, it's not about the organ or the organist, it's about the music.

The music on this occasion was a marvellously-chosen retrospective; a collection of pieces that Dame Gillian has played before in her career - no premieres or cutting-edge commissions for this triumphant farewell. Demessieux's Te Deum, op 11, JS Bach's Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot, BWV 678 and Franck's Grand Pièce Symphonique, op 17 in the first half, followed by Martin's Passacaille, Healey Willan's Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue, Duruflé's Scherzo, op 2, and to end (there was no encore), Tu es Petra from Esquisses Byzantines by Henri Mulet. All of these works are so entirely appropriate to the vast acoustic of Westminster Cathedral. But despite the cavernous reverberation, such was the articulation of the performer and her intimate knowledge of the organ and its setting, there was no muddle. Every note sounded with splendid clarity and an audience that filled this venue to capacity, which included not a few heavy-weights from the organ world, was treated to a delicious spectacle of virtuosity, craftsmanship and musicality.

From the very first note of her performance at St Alban's whilst still a student at the Royal College of Music that led her to first prize in that competition in 1964, through a glittering (literally - didn't we just love all those sparkly outfits?) global career, to the very last note of the Mulet, we have been privileged to have had amongst us a giant who has given of herself for our pleasure. We cannot thank her enough for her gift of music to us. All we can do is stand and applaud which is exactly what I and 2000 other people did for ten minutes as Dame Gillian Weir walked the entire length of the Cathedral to take her final bow. London was a bitterly cold and gloomy that night but who cared about that when we were all warmed and illuminated by the presence of a star? Absolutely wonderful!

Tim Chapman

Editors note: This article by Tim Chapman has already appeared in a sister journal - THE NEW ZEALAND ORGANISTS' - "ORGANZ NEWS"

## 10.2 Guild of Church Musicians

The Guild of Church Musicians President's Recruitment Evening was held on a wet and windy evening in September. I made my way along the Albert Embankment to the London apartment of Lord and Lady (Jeffrey and Mary) Archer. I and my companion were guests of the

Incorporated Guild of Church Musicians, the oldest established society promoting church music, which was founded in 1888 under the patronage of Archbishop Frederick Temple and Sir George Elvey, then organist of St George's Windsor. The Guild is a fellowship of those who sincerely desire to offer the best in music to the service of the church, both amateur and professional musicians being unified in a common ideal. Among other activities, the guild administers the Archbishops' Certificate in Church Music (ACertCM) which is a written and practical examination for church musicians of all kinds, and which I took in 1994.

Dame Mary Archer has been the President of the Guild for over twenty years and is very much a 'hands-on' president. Each autumn she very generously hosts a reception, at which members are encouraged to bring along one (or more) prospective members. The hospitality was extremely lavish, with generous amounts of both food and drink served by very attentive waiting staff. Lord and Lady Archer were both charming hosts making sure that everyone was looked after. Part way through the evening John Ewington, the General Secretary of the Guild, spoke briefly about its history and work and then Lady Archer gave a most interesting and informative guide to the view from their apartment window, which looks out over the Thames towards the Shard on the one side past the Houses of Parliament to Battersea Power Station on the other.

Some of the guests were eminent church musicians and some were 'reluctant organists'; all had a common interest in church music and many anecdotes were shared. All in all it was a most enjoyable evening and my 'prospective member' companion and I arrived back at Didcot Station well-fed and watered, and well entertained.

Details of the work of the Guild and how to join can be found at <http://www.churchmusicians.org>

Alexandra Green

### 10.3 Why build a single rank pipe organ?

It started sadly. One of our organist friends died suddenly. We sang every week with his wife and one day, as she was clearing out her loft, she said, "Would you like to have a set of old organ pipes?" She brought me one. It was a wooden stopped diapason. You could guess at its age from the nice cursive script that graced some of the pipes. I had a blow on it. It started with a good 'chuff' and carried on with the soft woody sound of old chamber organs. Several of the pipes did not sound so good; dismantling them, one often came across fluffy webs in the wind-ways suggesting that creatures had long been living there.



**Figure 2. On our patio with the pipes spread out into the three and one half octaves**

The 54 pipes had the traditional organ range from C, two octaves below middle C, to f3, two and a half octaves above. Stopped pipes have one open end where the air vibrates with maximum amplitude and one closed end where there is no vibration. Their length is therefore just one quarter of the corresponding wavelength. So bottom C is about 4' long, middle (c1) is about 1' long and top C (c3) is pretty tiny at about 3" long.

*Editor's note for metric readers: a single quote denotes the measurement of one foot (30cms) and a double quote signifies one inch (25mms).*

In the loft I had a keyboard from the old Binns organ at Streatley Church. It was saved along with many other useful bits, like old

palettes and springs, when our church bought a new pipe organ. Many of these turned into my electronic organ which has two manuals and a pedal-board and which works just fine. It was home made according to the design of Colin Pykett of the Electronic Organ Constructors Society ([www.eocs.co.uk](http://www.eocs.co.uk)). So why should I want to make a single manual one stop organ? I was not all sure when I started the project but I was when it was finished!

The keyboard was a work of art in itself. Although over 100 years old there were no signs of wear. The keyboard structure was just 800 mm across and 740 mm deep and this determined the size of the organ frame.



**Figure 3. The oak frame from Belleme forest.**

So often organs are wrapped up in beautiful cases. Until you unlock a door and have a look inside, you have no idea what is going on when you press a key. Even if you can get inside the organ case, you at last see all the pipes but they sit above a closed wind chest. The very place where the action operates is opaquely screwed up

tight! I determined to make an organ without any case where all the pipes and all the action would be visible. It did need a frame and one evening a good friend who lived near our French house came round with a whole load of lengths of rectangular section oak. They were rejects from the local wood-yard and were really for firewood but there were enough good lengths for me to plan the frame of the organ. The large flat surfaces of 1" oak used for the base of the treadle board, the reservoir chest, the top and music stand also have a history. They were from the doors of the wardrobe I had used as a 10-year old. After 60 years of use it was touching to use them again.

The heart of an organ is the wind chest and I decided to make one with four perspex sides so that you could see exactly what was happening when you pressed a key. Having only one set of pipes, it was necessarily a single rank organ, and that makes for a very simple

‘action’ or method of transferring the key movement to an air-flow.



**Figure 4: Palettes**

My keys were pivoted on an upturned nail near the centre, so that as a key is pressed (by about 5 mm) the back rises about the same amount. A short piece of 0.6 mm diameter enamelled copper wire transfers this motion to a ‘palette’ which rises to let air out of holes drilled in the bottom of the wind chest. My palettes were a rectangular section piece of softwood pivoted at the back by a horizontal nail and centred by a vertical nail. On to these were glued leather-faced pieces from old bigger palettes from the Binns organ. The spacing of keys on a keyboard is about 13.5 mm, which is too narrow for a palette, so I separated them into front and back sets, each 27 mm apart, above two corresponding sets of holes in the soundboard. The picture shows how you can look into the wind chest and see the palettes rising and falling under the pressure from the large metal springs also recovered from the Binns organ.



**Figure 5: Hoses**

The base of the wind-chest is a lovely old piece of oak 32mm thick also saved from the old organ. There was room for two sizes of drilled holes. Inside the wind-chest, below each palette, are drilled holes of variable sizes ranging from 15 mm for the base notes to 8 mm at the treble end. Drilled from the outside are a uniform set of holes of 19 mm outside diameter. It was easy to push a soft rubber pipe into these to supply air to the pipes. I bought 25 metres of

this very flexible tubing and nearly all was used up. It could easily fit over the ends of the smaller pipes and into holes drilled into the base of larger pipes. The 34 shorter treble pipes simply hung upside down on their tubes below their holes in the wind chest via a short rubber tube. Four intermediate tubes were attached horizontally in spare space below the keyboard. The 17 largest bass pipes were connected by longer rubber tubes to pipes standing conventionally upwards around the left and back sides. This made the right side free for observation of the works!

My organist wife, Mo, was always keen on a non-electric, human-powered organ. This had been the common situation on small pipe organs for centuries. So some bellows were constructed which could be operated directly by the feet (quite hard work!) or more easily by means of a hand-operated lever, which moved the same bellows (needing an assistant!). They have worked fine! The top was a perspex cover that enabled you to watch the leather valves flapping. They feed into a reservoir with a pressure regulator (set to 2" water). An indicator above the console top shows the level of the top of the air reservoir so that you can easily see the degree of pumping required.

I was not so sure about human air power. I actually worked quite hard to build an electric blower from an old fan motor and a wooden rotor. It blew the bass notes well but it had insufficient pressure for the higher notes. In the end I bought a proper reconditioned blower at a good price, although at several times the rest of the budget, and it has worked nicely.



**Figure 6. Mo testing the hand-pumped bellows**

As soon as the organ worked, I found that I enjoyed playing it much more than fiddling with improvements. Its chuffy transients, and the inevitable unevenness of pitch and voicing between notes and, depending on how many and which keys were being pressed, made it quite delightfully non-electronic. Its very direct action and lack of

any reverberation made it responsive and true to your touch, even if it does reveal any dodgy fingering. Rather to my surprise, I found that it gave organ music a sharp bite lacking in its electronic big brother which towers above it on the other side of the same room. Of course pedal work needs practice so the electronic organ still gets used. But the pipe organ sound is better coupled to your brain. The bass notes may be soft but they are clear to your ears. The treble notes are right in your face! The music is touching you on all sides.

**Figure 1. Colin at the organ while Mo pumps the bellows.**

You can hear a snippet of the organ playing and read more details at



<http://www.colin.windsor.talktalk.net/organ/porgan/porgan.htm>

Colin Windsor

## 10.4 Pipes Aloud 2

On Thursday 28 June Reading Minster and the Berkshire Organists' Association teamed up to present a children's workshop entitled Pipes Aloud 2, a sequel to a workshop held last year in Reading Town Hall.

Reading Minster, like Reading Town Hall, is home to a unique and historic Henry Willis organ. The Minster organ was originally built in 1862. Henry Willis was the Rolls Royce of organ builders, having also built organs for St. Paul's Cathedral, the Royal Albert Hall, Salisbury and Truro Cathedrals, to name just a few.

The organ at Reading Minster was initially built for an International Exhibition held on the site of what is now London's Natural History Museum and was installed in Reading Minster in 1864. Unfortunately, the organ was last restored nearly 80 years ago, in

1936 and is now in need of a complete rebuild. An Organ Restoration Fund was launched in 2010 and its aim is to restore this instrument to its former glory when it will be at the heart of the worship at Reading Minster, used for concerts and recitals and as a teaching instrument. To date around £235,000 has been raised. Details of how individuals and companies can support the restoration can be found at [www.readingminster.org.uk](http://www.readingminster.org.uk)

When the instrument was built it contained a front of ornately painted pipework which was the height of fashion at the time. However, these pipes were removed from the front of the organ case during the 1936 rebuild and a new front of plain zinc pipes replaced them. Luckily, the painted pipes were re-used inside the organ and so they were not lost. It is hoped to restore and reinstate the painted pipework at the front of the organ case when it is restored in the near future.



Peter West, Director of Music at Reading Minster, says: 'The organ restoration appeal is an ideal opportunity for children and adults to learn about the history of this instrument, how pipe organs work and to encourage people to start taking organ lessons. During the restoration there will be an accompanying education project. This will include screens showing the progress of the work, talks from the organ builder demonstrating the work being carried out and visits by local schools. There is no better way to learn about the organ and how it works than to see it taken apart and then gradually reassembled. Once the organ is restored we plan set up an Organ Academy to establish the organ as a first-rate learning instrument for Berkshire.'

Children from a Year 3 and Year 6 class from St. Edward's School in Tilehurst visited Reading Minster for a two-hour session which provided them with the opportunity to learn about the pipe organ through a mixture of discussions, demonstrations, hands-on experience using the WOOFYT - 'Wooden One-octave Organ for Young Technologists' and artwork.



Simon Williams, Director of the Royal College of Organists, played the organ to the children, talked about the workings of a pipe organ

and demonstrated from the console. The experience was enhanced through the use of a large screen and live camera feed from inside the organ provided by Keith Hearnshaw, concert organist. Two short workshops took place during the session- one half of each group worked with Jeremy Sampson and his WOOFYF - a working model of a pipe organ comprising a pump, an airbag, flexible hoses, pipes and wooden valve boxes, basically, a 'music machine' which can be operated by children to teach them how pumped air can be used to make music. The other half of the group worked with Peter West and Gary Owens, Director of GO Organs Limited, who showed the children some of the original stencilled pipework from the Reading Minster organ and helped them to stencil full-sized wooden organ pipes to create a freestanding art installation in the Minster. The



groups then swapped over. Towards the end of the session, there was an opportunity for some children to play the organ. Oliver, a Year 3 student remarked, "I liked painting the pipes. I also liked playing the

wooden organ. Basically I enjoyed everything, so thank you!” whilst his classmate, Yusuf said, “Thank you for showing us the organ and organ pipes. My favourite part was finding out how organs work. I liked the air reservoir pumping air and making noises. I also liked the organ when it was playing scary music.”

A scaled-down version of the workshop was run on Saturday 30 June as part of the first annual Reading Minster Festival when twelve children stencilled the remaining organ pipes, had a tour of the inside of the organ, looked at and blew into organ pipes and listened to familiar pieces, such as the Harry Potter theme tune and Darth Veda March played by the Minster Organist, Christopher Cipkin. Both of these events were funded by the Berkshire Organists' Association and a grant from the Incorporated Association of Organists. The painted pipes will be on display in Reading Minster for the next few months, together with a display on the organ restoration project.

Peter West

## 10.5 Organs on stamps and coins

With our President being involved in archaeology I thought it appropriate to start with three Roman coins: strictly speaking they are medals but the size of a coin and made of brass. These three were produced (circa 360-420 AD). Nero is on the opposite side and they can be found in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, France. The reference numbers are the official recognition numbers.



BAL 211856

XJL 211857

BAL 211858

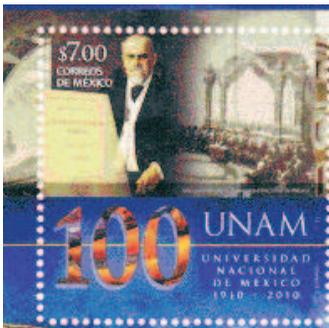


Stamps were traditionally engraved: however it is now rare to have a new issue as an engraved stamp. Monaco Cathedral had a new organ dedicated at the end of 2012, built by Thomas Organ Builders of Belgium. The stamp was issued on 12th September. Gordon Spriggs, whose life business was as an engraver, and also a keen stamp and cigarette card collector would have very much appreciated this stamp.

The stamp design is by Fabrice Monaci and the engraving is by Pierre Bara. The size of the stamp: 40.85 x 30 mm formed into horizontal sheets of 10 stamps. If you wish to hear this organ, there is a new CD

with full information about the organ distributed by Harmonia Mundi, on the Czech label LIGIA, reference number 0104245-12. The player is the Cathedral organist, Olivier Vernet. Please contact me if you would like more information on either the organ or recording.

Organs in France regularly feature in this handbook and the French postal service latest issue was released on 12th November 2012, featuring the organ at St Jacques in Luneville, Lorraine. This is one of a few organs that are hidden completely from view. However on a photograph the console can just be seen on the gallery behind the crown. The organ dates back to 1746 and at the time was considered to be unique in not displaying pipework. It was last rebuilt in 2003 by Bertrand Cattiaux of Liourdres and is 4/56. A Friends group has been set up to look after the organ and they hold an annual organ festival.



Mexico has many early Spanish organs, but the organ shown below looks late c19. The University National celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2010 and later the Mexican authorities issued a mini sheet of six stamps, the top left of the sheet showing the foundation ceremony in Mexico City - with an organ behind. As the university was founded in old buildings in the

city centre and now has migrated to new buildings, I suspect it is going to be very hard to obtain data.

Germany has continued to produce local stamps in addition to those issued centrally. Most use a white frame with a photograph inserted, either in portrait or landscape format, with the Deutsche Post wording, posthorns and value, but not all. The white border does not show clearly on scans.



In 2011, the town church of Pellworm - on the northern coast of Germany started an appeal in support of its Schnitger organ and restoration of the church tower, both appeared on stamps with a funding surcharge to the postal rate - this is the organ stamp:



An exception to the rule was a minisheet with various stamps and subjects issued by the municipality of Worbis in central Germany. The church of St Anthony has an organ dating back to 1697 that was restored in 2012 by Waltershausen in Thuringia and is 3m/35ss. Hans-Gerd Klais kindly supplied me with the full organ specification.



Hans-Gerd has his own bespoke stamp that appears on postage from the organ builder. The organ shown was completed in 1966 at Karlsruhe, Christ Lutheran church: the specification is found on the builder's web site. This and the following stamps use the standard

white frame. The postage increased at the start of 2012 and again for 2013.



In 2012, another organ builder, Jäger & Brommer based at Waldkirch in the Black Forest, issued the stamp below. They have also produced other stamps in previous years. This company apart from making pipe organs still builds

barrel organs and produces rolls for them - if you fancy one prices start at around 7000. The organ shown on the stamp is at Ebringen, completed in 1989, 1m8ss.

The final two bespoke stamps in this selection have been issued by Stiftung Orgelklang - a group founded to restore historic organs and record their sound. I have two of their CDs purchased via a Dutch dealer. Now to boost their funds for the past 3 years they have

produced a postage stamp featuring an organ that they have contributed to restoration and recording. The one problem with this group is that they will not sell to UK stamp collectors nor will they respond even if one takes the trouble to translate letters into German. So with the aid of some good stamp friends I have been able to get their 2nd and 3rd issues. It is quite clear they are striving to do a good



job saving old German organs but I wish it was easier to speak with them! The Bayern stamp was issued at the start of 2012 whilst the Lemgo stamp was issued on 7 January 2013.

The Swallows-nest organ at Lemgo is quite famous, the case dates from 1587 but the organ was replaced in 2010 with a new organ by Rowan West. The new organ is Hauptwerk 8ss, Oberwerk 7ss Pedal 5ss; most of the 1613 pipe work has been restored/remade but the action is completely new. I gather this was the best option in the restoration. Note the increase in German postal rates from this year!

Each of these bespoke stamps is produced in sheets of 10, and totally valid for normal postage from Germany or internationally as part of the full postal rate.



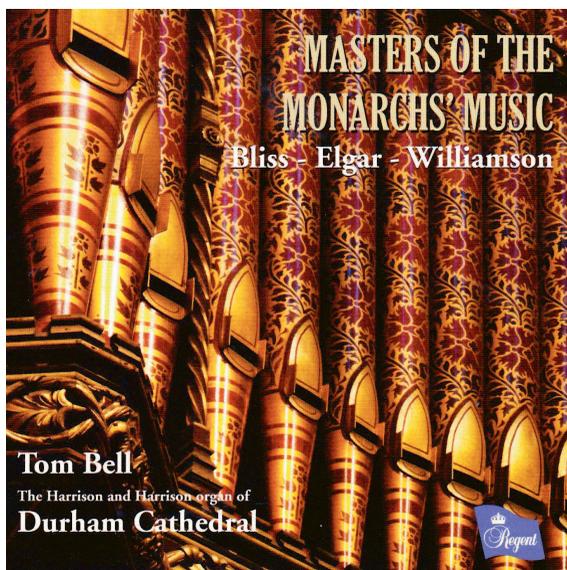
Part of the enjoyment of seeking these stamps is that it leads one to look at organs away from home: I have found websites overflowing with information and trying to read and understand German, Dutch,

Spanish etc., helps keep the mind active. I hope you have enjoyed this selection.

Mark D Jameson

## 10.6 CD Review

Berkshire Organists' members who enjoyed their tour to Durham in October 2010 may wish to be reminded of the lovely colours of the Durham Cathedral organ.



Regent Recordings will release on 11th April a new CD - REGCD409 recorded in Durham Cathedral in October 2012 called "Masters of the Monarchs' Music" played by Tom Bell who was introduced to BOA members at the recital in Reading Town Hall in January 2011.

The programme features composers who were Masters of the King's/Queen's Music - Sir Edward Elgar, Sir Arthur Bliss and Malcolm Williamson.

The **Bliss** compositions are all Robert Gower arrangements:  
Overture from Caesar & Cleopatra;  
March & Ballet for Children from Things to Come;\*  
Intermezzo from Miracle in the Gorbals;  
Bridal Ceremony from Adam Zero;  
Fanfare for the Lord Mayor of London;  
Severn Waves Away;  
The Rout Tout [the finishing item].

**Elgar's** works are:

From the Vesper Voluntaries: III Andantino, V Poco Lento & VI Moderato;

The Tame Bear from Wand of Youth, Suite 2, arranged by Bernard Walker\*

The main work is **Williamson's** Symphony for Organ - 40 minutes and 6 movements.

Tom Bell played extracts of this at the Festival Hall on 23rd February - rather exciting!

\* these pieces featured at the Reading recital.

With 18 tracks and 74 minutes listening time this is an outstanding CD. I expect the cost to be £12.77 if bought directly from Regent's web site <http://www.regent-records.co.uk/> - alternatively your local dealer will be able to get it for you. A few copies in advance were available at The London Organ Day on 23rd February.

Mark Jameson

## 10.7 More Tuning Tales

As related in the last issue I spent more than 20 years as an organ tuner's assistant (key holder) for a long established Midlands firm of Organ Builders. My article Tuners Tales received some favourable comment so here is another selection of anecdotes and observations. Again locations and identities are mostly imprecise to avoid any possible embarrassment.

We often said that we sometimes spent almost as much time getting into churches or the organ as we did tuning. This was a particular problem with the smaller churches but not unknown in larger ones also. In spite of sending out notification some two or three weeks beforehand, the caretaker or other person responsible, when tracked down, invariably expressed surprise at our arrival. Once inside the church a hunt for the key to the organ began. Sometimes this was in its usual "hidey-hole" which we had memorised but as often as not had been moved. A search of likely locations then commenced which involved feeling along ledges, under benches, mats and hassocks, along pew or chair book boxes and even rifling the organist's music cupboard. Very rarely did we give up. One tuner even carried two large bunches of small keys and boasted there wasn't an organ in the country he couldn't open. This may have been an exaggeration but I cannot remember his ever failing. Success at last! Not always. Press the starter button and we could find the power had been switched off at the mains, usually located in a locked vestry or tower. Give up? Not if we could help it but of course all this delay was eating into costly tuning time. Happily most churches ensured we had ready access.

At one church in the Birmingham area the key was usually left in a subtle hiding place behind the church so that we could let ourselves in. This was possibly an unofficial arrangement by the organist since we knew his address about half a mile from the church. On one visit the key was not where we expected it to be so we called at the organist's address only to find he was out. We returned to the church and started a search of other likely hiding places about the building. Having no success we returned to the car and decided to wait a while expecting he might turn up. After a few minutes a car drew up behind us - a police car! The police officer came up to us and asked the tuner what we were doing as they had had a report of two men acting suspiciously - a youth and an older man (me). My mate explained that

we had come to tune the organ and couldn't get in. He showed him the job sheet which did not satisfy the officer who asked for the firm's name and telephone number. After checking with our office he returned to say that all was well but that they were duty bound to follow up such reports. I suppose that it is reassuring that Neighbourhood Watch was alert. However once the officer had gone the tuner indignantly exclaimed, "A youth, a youth, I'm 28, fancy calling me a youth!" He certainly looked a lot younger even than 28 but he was a very talented organ builder and a loss to the firm when, a few years later, he went to work for an Organ Builder in America. Again much tuning time was lost but none the less this fine Forster & Andrews organ, rebuilt by our firm, got the tuning it merited.

One of our prestige organs which, over several decades, had earned the company a number of orders, some from abroad, was a large organ in a University Chapel. Whenever we called to tune it we knew we could expect a list of faults mostly very minor and some quite unnoticeable. The list, written in a very poor hand listed the notes concerned in staff notation often including several ledger lines which was a difficulty for some tuners. We discerned from the list that top D sharp on the Choir Fifteenth was ciphering during the sermon when the organ was switched off. Although this was impossible once the bellows had settled, knowing how petty and pedantic the organist was, we none-the-less tried it out and could find no fault. Unusually the organist, a strange but very clever academic and brilliant musician blessed (or cursed) with perfect pitch, came in while we were tuning. We pointed out that there was no way a cipher could persist after the bellows had settled. However, being somewhat deficient in his knowledge of organ construction, he insisted that it did cipher and that he could identify the stop and the note. There was now something of an impasse. "How many in the congregation use hearing aids?" I asked. "One or two I should think but I can't see that has anything to do with it," he replied. "That may be the problem," I said, "Possibly someone over-adjusts their hearing aid thereby setting up a high pitched squeal." That settled the matter as far as we were concerned but I am not sure the organist was convinced.

We were tuning a fine large organ at a Town Hall in the Midlands. Usually we were left undisturbed and it was one of those jobs which was a delight both to work on and listen to after tuning (depending on the tuner's ability to play). There were seldom any faults except

occasionally, during a reception or similar function, the instrument had become a target and receptacle for drink cans and paper plates etc. During our lunch break an official who worked in one of the adjacent offices, would bring us some coffee and stay for a chat. Mr. R-----, who always ensured the hall was kept free for our visits was certainly an organ enthusiast although he did not play. He bemoaned the fact that although the Council had spent a vast sum of money having the organ restored, it was seldom used. His offers to organise a series of lunch-time recitals always fell on deaf ears. He had a number of reputable organist friends who would have leapt at the chance to play this grand instrument even without a fee. Sadly this is possibly not a unique scenario. One day our friend did not appear at the usual time so we carried on tuning. A couple of other officials did appear and started clattering around putting tables and chairs on the stage in front of the console. The tuner called down, "Is there something on?" "Not until tomorrow but we've got to get ready, just carry on," was their reply. "I'm trying to tune this organ but its impossible with that racket going on, how long are you going to be?" the tuner said. "As long as it takes," one of them retorted. "Does Mr. R----- know you're here?" the tuner asked. "Oh he's not here now, he's been transferred to the new offices," was the disappointing reply. We carried on as best we could until they decided to try out the sound for their slide presentation. This was too much for the tuner, who came down, moved me from the console and opened everything up. The organ at full volume was too much for the intruders who quickly retreated. They had a job to do of course and but for their hostile attitude we may have been able to come to some arrangement. Our visits to that splendid organ never felt quite the same afterwards.

There was a University chapel organ that we did not look forward to tuning. Access to the console was via a short flight of stairs and a trap door under the organ bench! The access to the pipes was equally difficult. The organ, a Willis, had a very elaborate case but was in my humble opinion quite unremarkable tonally. We could only tune it at certain times to avoid the wrath of a professor trying to lecture in an adjacent room. One day we arrived to find all the power was off but were assured it would be restored in the afternoon. We decided to have an early lunch and return in the afternoon -resigning ourselves to a late finish, although that was nothing unusual with this tuner who happened to also be one of the firm's directors. After our return the power was still off and we were eventually told there was no prospect

of it being restored. "That's it!" the tuner exclaimed, "There's no point in hanging around, we'll go home". "Good", I replied, "I thought you might get me to pump it." "Now that's a good idea, I forgot it still has its pump handle." What was meant to be a joke tuned out to be any thing but. Up another short flight of stairs there was a huge handle with which I had to pump. Having no assistant at the console there was no way the tuner would be able to tune the reeds in octaves and double octaves. He therefore had to find notes, reeds and flues, which quite definitely needed tuning, wedge the key down with a pencil, clamber up into the organ, tune the pipe, clamber back down and repeat that process until he was satisfied that at least the worst notes had been tuned. This took about three hours and I think my back took as many weeks to recover. At least I learnt not to mention the retention of a blowing handle in future.

In a delightful little Cotswold village the church and its little organ had fallen on hard times. Although it was the type of place where only the very wealthy could afford to buy a house, very little lucre found its way into the sparse church coffers. Those inhabitants who did feel the need to serve other than Mammon drove in their 4 x 4s to the large fashionable church in the market town 3 miles away. We felt sorry for the faithful few remaining locals, the run-down building and the organ on which we invariably spent much more than our allocated time. The organ, an early Nicholson c. 1855 was in a sad state. It appeared that nothing major had been done to it except the bellows had evidently been patched some years ago, possibly when its electric blower was fitted. Amazingly it was still playable thanks to its typically solid construction and the attention received each visit. Although having only one manual and six stops, it was a delight to listen to with its rich yet mellow tones just right for its setting. It was crying out for restoration but there was very little chance of that ever happening. One day the tuner trying it out, pulled a couple of stops and nothing happened. I looked through the side of the case and noticed the trundles had slipped and the frame had become slightly distorted. The cause was obvious - a rotten floorboard had given way under a rear corner post. Immediate action was called for to avoid stress to the soundboard. Behind it was a long disused and unplayable American organ the lid of which was just the right length and thickness to bridge the joists. Just at the right moment a man came in and willingly helped me hold up the frame while my mate manoeuvred the plank into place. The visitor, who had a Canadian

accent stayed around while we tuned and attended to other mechanical needs. He seemed quite impressed and asked if he could play it for a few minutes. It was amazing what music came from that seemingly decrepit instrument. He told us he was organist of a small church in Canada and he had an organ of similar age and condition, much loved but always giving trouble. "Where is that?" I asked, "A little place on Vancouver Island you won't have heard of," he replied and told me the name of the small township which, as I told him, I happened to have passed by a few times just off Highway 1. A couple of years later I was en route to revisit Christchurch Cathedral, Victoria, some 80 miles from where my wife and I were staying and out of curiosity called at the small town. I found the church but it was not open, of course, and I bitterly regretted not having exchanged names and addresses. However that Canadian's visit to that Cotswold church is still a pleasant memory.

The foregoing brings into focus the matter of how or whether to replace a well worn pipe organ in a small or even medium sized church. Can one say, hand on heart, that a small church with an elderly congregation and a service perhaps once a fortnight must have a pipe organ? Obviously if a pipe organ can be economically restored or replaced that would be the ideal. However, digital sampled sound electronic organs have improved so much in the past 20 years that, if properly installed, few would be able to tell the difference. I recall an incident when opinions were more sharply divided; a new young Vicar told us the projected new organ may have to be electronic. "Electronic!" exclaimed the tuner, "Go and wash your mouth out with soapy water, young man, using bad language in church, and you a man of the cloth!" The astonished vicar saw the funny side of this tirade and there was no ill feeling. Incidentally this church did eventually acquire a new pipe organ from our firm built to a lesser specification than the old instrument but very effective none the less.

It was Christmas Eve and our last job for the season was at a Roman Catholic Church which had a day school and small convent attached. We couldn't get in when we arrived because the nuns were being "confessed". Once given the all-clear the nuns started to decorate the church and we commenced tuning the organ, an interesting 2 manual Walker rebuilt by Nicholson. Sitting on the bench and concentrating on the tuner's instructions I became aware of an arm, gently at first, but then, more firmly, round my waist. I was astonished to find there

was a nun beside me trying to attract my attention. "Can you pass me that candle?" she whispered. I readily complied but was somewhat amused and surprised at having been squeezed by a nun.

I very much enjoyed the time spent and the great variety of experiences over those 20 years and still miss the work.

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## 10.8 Wedding Music from Australia & UK

Following a recital of wedding music I gave before last year's BOA Annual General Meeting, the Committee asked me to contribute to the *Journal* on the same theme. This article is based on experiences in planning and performing music for wedding services and receptions, in and around Wodonga, Victoria, Australia where we lived 1993-2001 and here in Berkshire where I have been Director of Music for the New Windsor Team Ministry since 2007.

"Diversity" is the first word that comes to mind, which might be surprising if one was thinking of an unceasing round of Wagner's Bridal Chorus from *Lohengrin* and Mendelssohn's Wedding March from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, although those BOA members who attended my recital heard a wide range of music from Sweelinck to Dupré via Stanley, JS Bach (a 'cello piece) and JH Roman. The smorgasbord of music I have played at weddings has been a consequence of meeting couples with diverse musical tastes whose weddings have taken place in a great variety of locations.

### **Windsor**

There is more diversity in Windsor than might at first meet the eye, including the Parish and Garrison Church of Holy Trinity, where in recent years grooms have often been soldiers very recently returned from Afghanistan. The Parish Church of St John the Baptist, All Saints' Church, Frances Road and St Stephen's Church each attract a mix of couples born and bred in the Windsor area, as well as couples recently moved from London, from other parts of the country and from overseas. The personal journeys of bride and groom often provide opportunities to make significant musical choices. So I was delighted to play Sweelinck in his anniversary year to an Anglo-Dutch couple, JH Roman's *Drottningholmsmusiken* for a Swedish

bride and *I'm forever blowing bubbles* at the wedding of an army couple who are West Ham United fans. At St Edward's Roman Catholic Church, Windsor, I have played excerpts from *Superman*, *Jurassic Park*, and the *James Bond* theme tune for a bride who fancied herself as a Bond girl, complemented by some nationalistic hymns selected by her Royal Navy groom. Pachelbel's *Cannon* was replaced by Pachelbel's *Canon* in the order of service thanks to last-minute proofreading. And if the couple do request Wagner's *Bridal Chorus* then this can still retain the power to surprise: a Windsor couple has just requested a version with ten-voice professional choir, trumpet and organ!

Orchestral organs may sometimes be derided by members of the organ playing fraternity but wedding couples have more than once restored my faith in the power of orchestral organs to move the emotions by power of association and imitation. What to the organist may seem an inadequate representation of an orchestral original can make a powerful connection; Gabriel's Oboe was a recent case in point for one Windsor family.

It is fair to say that weddings are for me one of the more stimulating aspects of my role as Director of Music for the New Windsor Team Ministry. If music be the food of love, play on.

### **Wodonga and Wangaratta**

When we lived in Australia, I played at many outdoor weddings, favoured by the climate and enabled by the fact that civic wedding celebrants there are licensed but wedding locations are not. My wife and I formed a chamber music group to play for such weddings, including one under a gum tree down a track (aisle?) so long that Pachelbel's *Canon* had to be played in entirety twice before the bride completed the trek. The 'cello piece in my AGM recital, the Prelude from J.S. Bach's *Suite No. 1 in G*, recalled the wedding of a daughter of the Brown Brothers winery family, who herself played the 'cello. I was required to move swiftly from the console at Wangaratta Cathedral to play the 'cello for the signing of the registers, before driving to the reception at the family winery where we put on sunscreen to play Mozart flute quartets as guests were quaffing the local produce.

So, with these varied experiences, what is my approach to wedding music today?

A principle in New Windsor Team Ministry is that working with couples to select words and music for their wedding service is part of the ministry of the church. Accordingly, an allowance for a prior meeting between Director of Music and the couple is included in the fee structure. When I am not available to play for the service itself, I nevertheless meet the couple in advance, assist them in selecting music and then pass on the choice of music to the deputising organist.

When a couple first approach the Parish, they receive a letter from the Director of Music setting out some of the options for wedding music. This letter includes lists of music recently played and sung at Windsor weddings, together with information on options to engage Organist, Parish Choir, Professional Choir, vocal and instrumental soloists. We are fortunate that there are many professional musicians in the area so that if the couple like to choose a piece of music that is beyond the reach of the Parish Choir or if they are looking for a professional quality of singing or an extra frisson of excitement or extravagance with a violinist or a trumpeter, then this can readily be arranged. However, the emphasis I give at the outset of my meeting with the couple is to listen to their ideas and understand their preferences, rather than stressing particular things which the Parish might like to provide. It is then rewarding to be able to find or make an arrangement of a couple's favourite piece of music and perform it during the service. I openly discourage use of recorded music but in cases where the selected music does not adapt well to forces that are easy to assemble or when the couple want to hear the performance of a particular recorded artist, then we will play recordings.

### **A few practical points**

When a couple mention a piece of music that I don't know, I request that they bring a recording to play at our prior meeting, often on mp3, or I ask them to send me a You-tube or other link to the piece. Listening to the recording helps determine whether it is adaptable to play on the organ or piano, whether it would be improved by fixing one or two extra musicians or whether it would be better to use a recording. In the case of a pop song that is essentially melody and harmonic accompaniment, it is very often satisfactory to play live; I

find that digital sheet music versions are often available free of charge or for a modest fee that may be recharged or absorbed as expenses within the wedding fee. On the other hand, when a song is dependent on percussion or special effects, then it may be better to use a recording or to choose a different piece of music. If I feel that the subject matter is of questionable appropriateness, then I might open up a conversation with the couple or involve the clergy.

In order to ensure that versions of hymns appearing in wedding orders of service correspond to those in the church's hymn book, I warn couples against downloading words and copying and pasting. Neither do I recommend [www.oremus.org](http://www.oremus.org). Instead, I ask couples to borrow one of the church's hymn books (yes, we have purchased a few spares to cover 'shrinkage') to copy out the words or, increasingly, to photograph the words from the hymn book on their camera or phone during our meeting. This can help avoid finding ourselves singing "the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate", something that seems particularly unconscionable in Windsor. At our meeting, I try to determine how confident the guests' singing is likely to be. I won't put pressure on a couple to incur the cost of a choir unless it is clear that their chosen hymns are really going to need a choir to lead them. However, I do point out that having a robed choir may give an aesthetic benefit as well as a musical benefit and may be appreciated to fill a chancel which without a choir might look rather bare to the couple as they stand in front of the congregation, facing eastwards into the future.

If any reader would like to see a copy of the wedding music document that I send to couples in Windsor, please contact me on [jphalsey@btinternet.com](mailto:jphalsey@btinternet.com) and I will be pleased to forward it to you.

J P Halsey

## 10.9 “Ladies not eligible”: more on women organists

I have been reading Judith Barger's 'Elizabeth Stirling and the Musical Life of Female Organists in Nineteenth Century England' and am bemused by what she relates about attitudes to female organists. Many men and churches championed the appointment of women organists and praised their published compositions but others were dead set against both. In 1865, an advertisement for an organist at St John's, Southwark, stated: 'Ladies and persons afflicted with blindness will not be eligible' and such advertisements were not uncommon then. A correspondent writing in the *Musical World* in 1857 argued that the positions necessary to play the pedals were extremely indelicate, if not indecent. 'No female but a Bloomer should be an organist', he wrote, and any woman who would wear bloomers was sufficiently masculine to be an organist but as her femininity was then suspect she therefore lost her respectability! The idea of masculine versus feminine music pops up quite a bit, too. In 1839 a magazine commented: 'We may get pretty composers who commence their careers with airs, waltzes, and sonatas; but from no other school than that of strict and solid counterpoint may we expect great men'. It was expected that composing divided along gender lines and the fugue was considered a prerogative of male composers!

At the moment I'm practising a *Fantasia and Fugue* by Johanna Senfter (1879-1961) on 'How brightly shines the morning star'. The more I play it, the more I admire its structure and depth: it really swirls along! Senfter studied with Max Reger and writes in a sweeping late-Romantic style, her output including symphonies, concertos, chamber music, vocal works and organ and piano music. She has written several volumes of chorale preludes, some variations and other organ pieces but whether they are all in print I have yet to find out. What isn't in doubt is that she can write a splendid fugue and conclude it by incorporating the chorale from the *Fantasia* at the end.

I discovered Jeanne Demessieux (1921-1968) by learning several of her *Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes*, neat, carefully constructed pieces that demand attention to detail and plenty of varied registration. Demessieux was a pupil of Marcel Dupré, eventually becoming organist at the Madeleine in Paris. She was a gifted player, improviser and composer and her first London recital in 1947 ended with an improvised four-movement organ symphony on themes submitted by four London music critics! She was the first

woman to give recitals at both Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral as well as playing at the inaugural ceremony at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral the year before she died. I never heard her play, but I did hear her teacher Marcel Dupré (I think at Leeds Town Hall) improvise a five-part fugue on a twelve-note theme handed to him moments before: it was absolutely stunning!

I'm always on the lookout for music composed by women and several BOA members have recommended pieces to me. If you come across any interesting pieces, do please let me know.

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Jill York

## 10.10 Organ Academy in Poitiers

In *The Berkshire Organist* of 2011, I wrote about my attendance at an Organ Academy in France, held at the Basilica of the Royal Convent of St. Maximin la Sainte-Baume in Provence. This was on the famous 1772 organ by Isnard, an organ that I had always wanted to play.

Well, here is another!!..... I have always had my eye on the world-famous organ in Poitiers Cathedral, built in 1787 by François-Henri Cliquot. On discovering that an Academy was to be held there, I submitted my application, and what better way to experience such a unique and historic instrument than to have the guidance of a most eminent French organist - in fact not one but three!

The Academy was organised by the Titulaire Organist of the cathedral, Olivier Houette, who is also the organist of Notre-Dame des Blancs-Manteaux in Paris and a Professor of organ and harpsichord at the Conservatoire National Supérieur. We also had Dominique Ferran, organist of the central church in Poitiers, Notre-Dame-la-Grande. He is a Professor of organ and harpsichord and travels widely as a recitalist all over Europe and South America. Our third professor was Jean-Baptiste Robin, who is the Titulaire Organist of the *Chapelle Royale, Palais de Versailles*. He is also the Co-titulaire of Poitiers Cathedral, a composer and a world-wide recitalist. Including the cathedral, we had the use of seven organs, of which three were used for master-classes and all were available for practice.

The cathedral organ has 4 manuals and 44 stops (specification below). Notre-Dame-la-Grande has a modern 3 manual with 33 stops and is particularly suitable for the North German repertoire.

I. Positif [ut 1-mi 5]	II. Grand orgue [ut 1-mi 5]	III. Récit [sol 2-mi 5]	Pédale [Flûtes ut 1-ut 3] [Anches la 0-ut 3]
Montre 8 [fa1]	Montre 16	Flûte 8	
Bourdon 8	Bourdon 16	Cornet V	Flûte 16
Dessus de flûte [la2]	Montre 8	Trompette	Flûte 8
Prestant 4	Second 8 pieds [fa1]	Hautbois	Flûte 4
Nazard 2 2/3	Bourdon 8		Bombarde 16
Doublette 2	Prestant 4	IV. Echo [sol 2-mi 5]	Trompette 8
Tierce 1 3/5	Grande tierce 3 1/5		Clairon 4
Plein jeu VII	Nazard 2 2/3		
Cornet V [ut2]	Doublette 2	Bourdon 8	Accouplement I/II à tiroir
Trompette 8	Quarte de nazard 2	Flûte 8	2 tremblants à vent perdu
Clairon 4	Tierce 1 3/5	Trompette 8	
Cromorne 8	Fourniture V		
	Cymbale IV		
	Grand Cornet V [ut3]		
	1 <sup>ère</sup> Trompette 8		
	2 <sup>ème</sup> Trompette 8		
	1 <sup>ère</sup> Clairon 4		
	2 <sup>ème</sup> Clairon 4		
	Voix humaine 8		

### Cathedral Organ Pipe Specification.

The third teaching organ was in St. Radegonde, a large church, not five minutes walk from the cathedral. Here was another modern organ of 4 manuals and 56 stops, suitable for any music but especially that of the romantic repertoire. This organ has full aids to registration. The Academy was limited to twelve players and there were also two non-players. We were divided into three groups of four and I found myself in a group with three young Japanese ladies. We had master-classes in all the three churches and the professors did their rounds with all the groups in all the churches. Some weeks before, we were asked to submit what music we would wish to play and, for myself, I submitted four pieces for each of the three organs, though there was not enough time to play everything! Everyone's repertoire was notified to all members about a fortnight before the start. The standard of playing was very high.

What about practice? Well, in addition to the master-classes in the morning and afternoon, we were all allocated two hours of practice each day on one of the seven organs.



Console of St Radegonde, Poitiers

I was amazed to find that on the first evening, I had Poitiers Cathedral organ all to myself for two and a half hours! The seven organs were all in the centre of the city, in effect the Old Town, and none was more than twenty minutes away on foot. Most of the churches are large, built in white stone in a somewhat 'Byzantine' style. The acoustics are large also. It was a delight to stay in this part of town and I resided in a very comfortable hotel with parking facilities. There were many good restaurants within a short walk.

Generally, the Academy was conducted in French but all the professors spoke good English if asked. One morning was devoted to a lecture/demonstration on the music of Jehan Alain given by Jean-Baptiste Robin; very interesting but some of the finer points were lost when my 'expertise' (?) of the French language did not always reach the required level!! During the week, there was an evening organ concert given by the three professors at Notre-Dame-la-Grande, at which there was not a spare seat. Members of the Academy gave two concerts on the last evening. The first, at St. Radegonde, was mostly romantic music. Then everyone including the audience took the five minute walk to the cathedral for the second concert where, of course, we played music from the French Classical repertoire. With a resonance of about 7 seconds, the audience was well disciplined in that no applause started until the sound had completely disappeared

So ended a very enjoyable and worthwhile week - a very well organised Academy with lots of playing, in good company and good food!

Jonathan Holl

## 10.11 The Royal Festival Hall - Children's Event

The Royal Festival Hall's "Pull Out All The Stops" campaign: a Primary School's involvement with the organ.

One of my grandsons, Lukas, has become very interested in the organ through a remarkable link his school has with the Royal Festival Hall. As the story involves Dr William McVicker (BOA Honorary Fellow, Curator of the RFH organ and the Reading Town Hall organ) and Harrison and Harrison (the builders involved with both organs) I think the story is worth telling here.

Denise York, deputy head at Telferscot Primary School writes:

The Royal Festival Hall launched a £2.3 million project in September 2010 to return the Royal Festival Hall's magnificent 7,866-pipe organ to its former glory. The restoration work has been undertaken by Harrison & Harrison of Durham, who designed and built the organ in 1954. The central section of the instrument is now restored and reinstalled in the auditorium and the entire organ will be fully playable once more in 2014, 60 years after it was first installed.

Lukas' school, Telferscot Primary School in Balham, is an associate school with The Southbank Centre. His class is now involved in a two-year long project involving The Southbank Centre where the



Children at Organ Workshop

children will follow the progress of the 'Pull Out All The Stops' campaign that is funding the renovation of the Organ in the Royal Festival Hall.

This is a very special learning experience and follows on from many other incredible Southbank projects with which the school has been involved. The children have already visited The

Royal Festival Hall where they learnt about what an organ is made of and how it works. There they met Dr William McVicker who is the organ curator for the RFH Organ. He asked the children where they might have seen an organ before to which Lukas replied, "In my Granny Jill's house!". (He wasn't wrong!) Lukas' favourite part of the day was being allowed into the organ itself. Dr McVicker played some of the very low notes whilst he was standing inside!

The children's experience didn't stop there. The organ is being restored by Harrison & Harrison in Durham, the same family-owned workshop that made it. (We love this fact!)



Very recently, The Southbank Centre made it possible for the class to go on a trip to visit Durham and see the organ whilst it is being restored.

The journey from London to Durham, by train, took 5 hours to get there and 5 hours back! This was no ordinary school trip but for many of the children the excitement of the journey was on a par with the rest of the fantastic day!

excitement of the journey was on a par with the rest of the fantastic day!

Lukas writes: "When we got there, we were welcomed by Tabby, who works for The Southbank Centre, and we walked through the town to Durham Cathedral, where we saw another Harrison & Harrison organ and heard it played. Its pipes are on both sides of the church so the experience was quite different to The Royal Festival Hall. We then went by coach to the Harrison and Harrison organ workshop where they make everything by hand. We looked at lots of models to learn how an organ works and got to handle loads of pieces and materials. We also saw the final section of the Royal Festival Hall organ. It is huge! I can't imagine how it will be transported back to London but I'm sure we will find out during the project!"

Jill York

## 10.12 Anglican Chant Yattendon

Chanting the Psalms: a late nineteenth-century publication  
by Peter Marr

Members of the Berkshire Organists' Association will know of the *Yattendon Hymnal*, a masterly but idealistic collection of hymns compiled by Robert Bridges for the choir at the church of St Peter and St Paul, Yattendon, in Berkshire. It was first published in 1895 and doubtless influenced Vaughan Williams in his editorship of the *English Hymnal* a few years later. Less well known is *Chants for the Psalter: Yattendon 4-part Chants* completed in 1896 with an informative Preface by Bridges and published at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1897.

This should be seen in its historical perspective. The Oxford Movement brought major changes in the way congregations joined in the singing in parish churches. As well as hymns, this was encouraged by pointed Psalters.

That parish music should emulate in some respects that of the cathedrals was no new thing but here was something different. Singing psalms to Anglican chants had, during the eighteenth century, been limited generally to cathedral choirs and that on a daily basis. Fitting in the words was largely according to unwritten conventions. To allow a congregation to do this required simple but rhythmic assistance.

Attempts were made to mark up, in various ways, the change from the reciting note to the rhythmic part of the chant. A psalter that did this, first published in 1856, was by Dr Stephen Elvey but it was the publication of the *Cathedral Psalter* in 1878 that clarified the issue for parish churches.

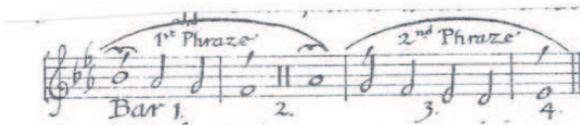
Its Preface explained the method. In each half of a single chant, the recited syllables, necessarily of varying length, moved towards a bar lasting a semibreve. This contained an accented word or syllable and established the tempo for the remaining half verse. The method enabled large choirs - for instance in 1883 there were two churches in Reading with choirs of 40 members and three with thirty or so - to keep more or less together. In due course congregations were able, by means of this partly-rhythmic scheme of things, to play some part in

singing prose psalms. Within living memory, psalms had rarely come to be sung exactly like that but merely with a strongly accented, but not necessarily with a thus long-prolonged, word or syllable. That later style acquired the nickname of the Anglican Thump and was different from the semi-metrical style that was advocated, with the best of intentions, in the Preface to the *Cathedral Psalter*.

The bottom line in Anglican chant is that there is a constant tension between word accents and musical accents. The method advocated in the *Cathedral Psalter* made the latter dominate over the words.

The poet Robert Bridges (1844-1930), a friend of Parry, of Gerard Manley Hopkins, of the Anglo-Catholic priest Vincent Stuckey Stratton Coles (later Principal of Pusey House, Oxford), and himself labelled a Puseyite, saw the problem. He was one of the first to tackle it and does so in the Preface to *Yattendon Chants*. Why Yattendon, the village in Berkshire? Bridges had married one of the daughters of Alfred Waterhouse, the architect of Reading Town Hall and Reading School, who lived at Yattendon Court, a house that he himself had designed.

Here is the example Bridges gives, taken from chant no.2 in the collection and the first half of a double chant by Samuel Wesley. He uses allabreve time, saying that he does so "in order to set the right rhythm before the eye".



He states (and I have modernised the spelling in a few cases and expanded abbreviated words):

*...the second reciting note has no main accent on it. The popular psalters, which do not distinguish here, and have their accompanying music barred in common time - i.e. with equal accents on the alternate minims, are largely to blame for the bad style of chants in our parish churches.*

And he continues:

*The way to obtain the right rhythm is to keep the movement lively and enforce the 1st and 3rd accents, and slightly to quicken the third bar - generally a 4-minim phrase, the penultimate note of which is preparing a cadence, and apt to obtrude itself: - this hurrying to the next accent may also be agreeable as anticipating the restoration of the rhythm after the delay of the recitation: it should be the rule of practice. Though there has been a good tradition of chanting in some cathedrals, yet most double chants were probably composed in common time, and they need care to sing them out of it: they gain by such treatment, and the worst will undergo incredible transformation.*

He adds the useful advice:

*Minor chants to sad psalms should not as a rule be sung slow.*

And makes the following observations:

*Writers on chanting have been unfair to the double chant, and easily condemn it by praising as a type of excellence a chant by Dr Crotch - not in this book [!!] - admirable, so they say because the second half is the first sung backwards, a device in itself of no worth; and backwards and forwards motion became the chief fault of double chants written mostly when modulation into and out of the dominant was a first duty and delight of the composer. There is room for this, as well as for freer and severer style, the characteristic advantage of the double chant (which arose naturally from the obligation to sing the whole psalter straight through every month) lying in the varieties of mood and feeling and possibilities of romantic effect, which enable it to meet the different lyrical emotion of the psalms, and individualise the unity of each. Thus it can combine speedy execution with poetic effect; and the effect being mainly accumulative, it is better to continue a chant too long than to change it before its monotony is established.*

He concludes the Preface with a significant comment:

*The alterations [i.e. from whatever sources he has culled the chants] were made in the interest of unaccompanied chanting and chiefly in the direction of simplicity and avoidance of effects unsuitable for repetition.*

So Bridges' theory and practice, not unconnected to the ascetic movement then in vogue, was aimed at unaccompanied psalm performance by choirs alone. His attempt to achieve this involved the

boys in his choir rehearsing five evenings a week. This is a far-cry from the aims of the *Cathedral Psalter*.

It was some years later before any widely-used application to what became known as speech-rhythm was used. The leader in this was *The Parish Psalter*, first published in 1928 and edited by Sydney Nicholson. There was a resistance by congregations to change to this sort of thing, especially in the larger churches where well-heeled members of the congregations, who may well have sung a relatively small repertoire of psalms as well as the morning and evening canticles, doubtless felt at home with the predictable method of psalm singing with which they had been brought up using the *Cathedral Psalter*. Certainly the subtleties of speech-rhythm as advocated by Bridges - laudable though his intention certainly was - could only really be achieved by a well-trained and competent choir.

## 10.13 The Early Days

### A LOOK AT THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS

#### **Introduction**

The inspiration for this article originated with a request from a member of the Windsor Association for some background on their history from its formation as a subsidiary of our own Association until it achieved independence in 1936. My research into this revealed much of our own history and I resolved to look further. This is not intended as an academic paper but rather an insight into our early years, some rather quirky sidelines and a comparison between the early days and how BOA has changed in the intervening years as we approach our centenary.

#### **The early years**

After the obviously informal soundings amongst local organists a meeting was held on Saturday 9 April 1921 at Messrs Hickies, 10 Queen Victoria Street, Reading which led to the formation of the Association. Election of officers took place and although the first President was Percy Scrivener, J S Liddle of Newbury was initially nominated for this post but died before the meeting took place. The original objectives of the Association were:

1. To bring the organists of Berkshire into closer communion and to deepen the feeling of brotherhood among them;
2. To hear lectures and papers, to give recitals and to discuss matters affecting organists and their work;
3. To further means of co-operation with organists of kindred Associations and to safeguard the interests of organists generally;
4. To further whatever tends to the improvement and development of music used in Divine Worship.

It can be seen that while the broad outline of our objectives remains very similar there are subtle changes between these and the current objectives listed at the beginning of this document.

With an eye to further development Bye Law 8 states that With the consent of the Council branches of the Association may be formed at approved centres. The Chairman and Officials of such branches shall be elected by the members of such branch and the Chairman of such branch shall be a member of the BOA Council. All branches of the Association shall be self supporting.

In 1922 there were 53 members.

### **Affiliation**

At a General Meeting on 1 October 1921 approval was given for affiliation to the National Union of Organists' Associations. This organisation was founded in 1913 and was the precursor of the Incorporated Association of Organists. The original certificate of affiliation to the now IAO is still in the possession of BOA.

At the AGM on 18 April 1931 an amendment to Bye Law 1A was made noting that the Association should be known as The Incorporated Association of Organists' Berkshire Branch. Although there is nothing in our documentation giving the reason for this it may be assumed that there was a slight shift in the purpose of the IAO from a merely "umbrella" federation to one where the IAO had a more structured control over affiliated Associations. In the time scale covered by this article there is no record of our returning to the title that was originally decided and which we now use.

## **Broadening the horizons**

In the early years of the Association firm attempts were made to hold meetings at various centres in Berkshire and feelers were put out, initially without much success, to try to form branches in Newbury, Maidenhead, Windsor, Abingdon, Wallingford and Farringdon/Wantage. At this time, until the Maude Report after the war, the Vale of White Horse district formed part of Berkshire. Eventually success was achieved with the formation in April 1931 of a Newbury Branch followed two months later by one at Windsor, the Chairman of which was Sir H Walford Davies CVO. A further branch was formed in November of that year at Abingdon. Technically described as sub branches of the parent Berkshire branch, the four Associations continued to function in close harmony and each one maintained a full programme of events through the years until the outbreak of the war.

With maturity and gradual strengthening the three sub branches expressed desires to be independent and it was decided that from July 1936 the Windsor Association should be a separate branch of IAO. Similar independence was shortly granted to Newbury but apparently not Abingdon but, strangely, although the Windsor programmes were no longer reported in BOA Annual Reports, those for the other two Associations continued to be reported. Sadly, at Abingdon, things were not going well and at one stage the Secretary of Abingdon reported problems in that their Treasurer had moved to France and was not replying to letters. No mention of the specific problem was made so we must draw our own conclusions. Unfortunately the advent of the war had a serious effect on both Newbury and Abingdon but apparently not here in Reading which led to a severe dilution in the events they could arrange and in 1942 led to the closure of the Abingdon Association.

## **Other ephemera**

In 1927 the Annual Congress of the IAO was held in Reading but the local minutes do not reveal any details of our involvement other than as the host Association. At the AGM in 1933 it was resolved that travelling and reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred by the delegates to the Annual Congress of the IAO should be borne by the Branch. When did that stop? Or indeed when did we stop nominating delegates to Congress?

Examination of the annual programmes for the Association reveals some similarities to our current scheme but there was more emphasis on lectures rather than visits; the social side was well catered for with an Annual Dinner, a Garden Party and a Ladies Afternoon. There was always a President's Service. That so many visits to outside Reading, sometime quite remote areas, is remarkable when you consider that although public transport was better in the countryside than now, car ownership was far less and getting to some of these locations could not have been easy.

In 1932 the Royal College of Organists introduced a Choir Training Examination and the Council resolved to set up a course of lectures to help training for this. This was to consist of 3 terms of twelve lectures each at a fee of 2 guineas per term provided that at least five members subscribed. Sadly, this did not go ahead presumably because of lack of takers.

Another suggestion, while looking interesting but also fell on stony ground, was for the occasional exchange of organ lofts which would be interesting and possibly beneficial to those concerned. Now there's a thought!

In 1932 the application for membership from Mrs Passmore was deferred pending enquiries regarding her transfer of membership from the Exeter branch. At the following meeting all had been resolved and she was admitted. On a personal note, when I moved to Berkshire in 1968 and asked for my membership of the Lancaster Association to be transferred I was told in no uncertain terms that each Association was independent and would I please pay 2 guineas!

The Official Crest for notepaper and publicity was approved in 1938 but the minutes do not record whether this was our now familiar "Town Hall Willis" or the then current logo of the IAO.

Although, as stated above, the membership at start up was 57 this number gradually grew until in 1934 there were 177 members but this may have been an inclusive number covering all the branches.

## **Conclusion**

As I said in my introduction, this is not intended to be an academic paper but one of general interest and I hope that I have fulfilled that

aim. Most of the information has been gleaned from the minute books deposited in the Berkshire Record Office and I am grateful to them for their help in researching this. If anyone wants to continue this research beyond 1940 they will find the BRO very helpful but I must warn that the depositing of minutes etc. from then to about 1960 appears to have been very negligent. This is a reminder that if the true history of our Association is to be maintained it is imperative that important information is retained and deposited with the Record Office at appropriate intervals.

Don Hickson - February 2013

## 10.14 Tremulants

A few years ago I undertook the study of organ historiography via the BIOS sponsored course at Reading University which is sadly no longer available. In the course of that study I undertook to look at the history and development of the Tremulant - I can already feel the shudders. This is not a well loved attachment to the organ - more so in this country than elsewhere, for which I suspect we have the good old Victorians to blame. Sentimental overuse of badly regulated tremulants trying, maybe, to emulate the harmonium left many older serious performers scarred for life. The history of the device proved interesting however and I thought it might be considered so by others so here is the beginnings of what I found - the rest can be saved for another day if there is enough interest. As a sop to perhaps read on, in the course of my studies I accidentally came across a most bizarre patent for operating the swell from, of all people, Henry Willis and I give details at the end of the piece.

References to tremulants in organs appear in Europe during the Fifteenth Century - albeit little is known of how they were constructed. Some organs built during this period seem to have been constructed with a view to providing visual as much as musical entertainment or the ability to perform at services, and to this end contained a variety of devices such as drum, nightingale, bells and moving statuary. Susi Jeans suggested that performances of music held in churches in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries used organs as much with a view to 'keeping the people from inns and mischief' as for the music loving population.<sup>[1]</sup> As such, the more entertaining the organ could be the better. She likens the prospect with that of people today who wait to see famous old clocks chime and revolve their

statuary. The tremulant seems to have been yet another entertaining device - indeed so much so that some organs included more than one - in one case at Barcelona Cathedral it is suggested there were seven. At Magdeburg Cathedral, Heinrich Compenius the younger from Halle, built a substantial organ of three manuals and forty two stops (including a 32 foot principal) during 1605 to 1606 in which he included two tremulants, birdsong imitation, drum effects and forty two richly decorated figures, twelve of them moving and with the case crowned by a cock which could flap its wings.<sup>[2]</sup> The specification is also recorded by Michael Praetorius in his book *Syntagma Musiclen*.

In his book *Organ Music of Sweelinck*, Dr Robert Tusler <sup>[3]</sup> quotes Arnolt Schlick writing in 1511 that 'the organ must be an ornament to the church and a help to Godly singers'. Schlick goes on to say that the instrument must contain 'suitable figures'. Even as late as 1768 Adlung, writing in his book *Musica Mechanica Organoedi* <sup>[4]</sup> refers to organs which contain 'flying angels who move trumpets to their lips in course of flight and there are a number of other such mechanical contrivances'.

The organ was developing rapidly, certainly on the Continent, during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and a number of directives and rules for the best use of stops have survived which refer to, amongst other things, the tremulant. These documents were produced by builders and organists to help others get the best sounds out of the instrument. In Worms in 1510 such a document suggests that 'hohlfloten 8' + 4' + Quinte 1 1/3' - the best combination for the Tremulant'.<sup>[5]</sup> In Munster in 1572 a guide suggested that the tremulant should not be used alone with Trumpet, Nightingale or Drum and in 1597,<sup>[6]</sup> whilst Compenius recommended 'Gedackt 8', Flachflote 2', Tremulant and in the pedal only Subbass'. <sup>[7]</sup> Some directions suggested that the Tremulant should only be used in penitential seasons as it sounds like the sobbing and sighing of men. In Italy, Constanzo Antegnati, in his *L'Arte Organica* published in 1608,<sup>[8]</sup> suggests that the tremulant is used to harmonise motets 'with the principal played delicately'. The French, on the other hand, seem to have had much different ideas as to its use. Mersenne suggested that it was acceptable to use the device with the Plein Jeu. Conversely the Halberstadt Convocation in 1693 stated that the Tremulant must not be used with the full organ as its beating will shake up the instrument and send it out of tune. This seems to underline the fact

that early tremulants may have been poorly regulated. In his treatise on the organ, *L'Art du Facteur d'Orgues*,<sup>[9]</sup> Dom Bédos makes an interesting comment relating to the use of a tremulant. He suggests that if the reeds are out of tune or badly regulated, a strong tremulant may serve to distract attention from the trouble. He does, however, go on to say that such a tremulant 'shows poor taste and needs utmost discretion'. A similar comment runs through many references to the device - that to be effective it needs to be used with caution and be properly regulated - something which no less a person than J S Bach said when the organ at Mulhausen was rebuilt.

Dom Bédos does not, like Mersenne, suggest the use of the tremulant with the Plein Jeu and makes a point of discouraging its use with the Grand Jeu. He distinguishes between the *tremblant doux* which he says 'is rarely effective' and the *tremblant-fort* 'which is more reliable but not often artistic'. Here again a suggestion that the early devices were poorly regulated and very noisy when in action.

In England the device seems to have been referred to as a 'Shaking Stopp' - such a device was included by Dallam in an organ built for King's College Chapel, Cambridge in 1606. The surviving records refer to '4s for brasse for the shaking stoppe'.<sup>[10]</sup> Some eight years earlier Dallam had constructed an extremely elaborate organ for Queen Elizabeth I which was to be a present for the Sultan of Turkey. This instrument could be played on a keyboard in the normal fashion or as a mechanical organ. There were numerous entertaining devices included such as 'a holly bushe full of blacke birds and thrushis, which at the end of the musick did sing and shake their winges' <sup>[11]</sup> and a shaking stop. Dallam also built, in 1613/14 an organ for the college chapel at Eton. In 1626 the college accounts refer to an amount paid to 'one that mended the shakeinge stop'.<sup>[12]</sup> The shaking stop seems to have survived the wholesale destruction of organs during the period of The Commonwealth as in 1665 John Loosemore included one in an organ built for a private residence - Nettlecombe Court, Somerset albeit the device seemingly only affected 'the lowest octave of a reed stop which met the trumpett'. <sup>[13]</sup> In 1665 Christopher Simpson, in a work written for string players entitled *The Division - Violist or The Art of Playing Extempore to a Ground*,<sup>[14]</sup> refers to a shake saying 'Some also affect a Shake or Tremble with the Bow, like the Shaking Stop of an organ'. This is the only written evidence the writer has come across which confirms the action of the stop as shaking the wind

supply and causing the sound to fluctuate. He then makes a comment which has echoed down the years since, in England in particular 'the frequent use thereof is not (in my opinion) much commendable'.

There seems little doubt that the development of the organ in England was severely disrupted by the events of the Reformation and The Commonwealth. During these periods organs were removed from cathedrals and churches - some were fortunately hidden from the authorities to be restored as and when the situation improved. Many were unfortunately destroyed, their pipes being melted down for other use. The culmination of this ongoing period of disruption came with two ordinances produced in 1644 the title of which is *Two Ordinances of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, for the speedy demolishing of all organs, images, and all matters of superstitious monuments in all Cathedrals and Collegiate or Parish Churches and Chapels throughout the Kingdom of England and the dominion of Wales; the better to accomplish the blessed reformation so happily begun, and to remove all offences and the things illegal in the worship of God. Dated May 9th 1644.*

The restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 saw the return of some of the removed organs. Pepys in his diary entry for 17 June 1660 says 'This day the organ did begin to play at White Hall before the King'. He further underlines the novelty of hearing organs in church in his entry for 8 July 1660 when he says of his visit to White Hall chapel 'Here I heard very good music, the first time that I ever remember to have heard the organs and singing men in surplices in my life'.<sup>[15]</sup> The delight in the return of the organs to some churches is again referred to in his entry for 30 December 1660 when he writes of walking to Westminster Abbey and 'seeing the great confusion of people come there to hear the organs'.

So, the organs returned to the establishments which had had them prior to the Restoration but seemingly something had changed either in the tastes of those building them or playing them or maybe in the manner in which they would be used as from this time (apart from the Loosemore instrument at Nettlecombe) the tremulant disappears from organs in England whilst it continues to be included in organ specifications on the Continent. In addition, developments in organ building which had taken place in Europe had by-passed England. By that time the development of organs in Europe had moved on

considerably. Bach's organ at Leipzig had three manuals, forty five ranks and a complete pedal-board with independent ranks of pipes. Indeed Bach seems to have had respect for the tremulant, as, when he oversaw the rebuilding of the organ at the church of St Blasius in Mulhausen, to which he had recently been appointed organist, he commented that 'the tremulant must be regulated so that it flutters at the proper rate'.<sup>[16]</sup> As Bach has not left us any idea of the registrations used by him, or recommendations for use in his manuscripts, we do not know whether he actually used the tremulant or, if he did, in what circumstances. In insisting on its proper regulation however one has to assume he attached some importance to it and wanted it available for use. In fact W L Sumner, in an article written for *The Organ* in 1950, suggests that Bach insisted that the device be made playable in all organs for which he acted as advisor.

[17]

Organs in the new church order in England were there to accompany the congregation in the singing of hymns and psalms - in many monastic buildings they were previously used sparingly to bring colour to the service. In their new role, simplicity seems to have been the order of the day and entertaining organological gadgets were not included. Whilst builders on the continent were building ever larger instruments including full pedal boards, in England the trend was for small instruments without pedals, indeed many organs still had just a single manual and no pedals. The Puritan influence of the Seventeenth Century effectively consigned the organ in England to a long period in the wilderness such that, while European builders were pushing the boundaries of development ever wider - many organs on the continent had by this time a fully independent pedal organ and two or three manuals, in England there was simply no call for such instruments. Some Puritans considered organs to be works of the devil and as such they were used sparingly in those places which had them. During the next Century organ music in England was somewhat parochial both in terms of where it was performed and in its style. The English Voluntary was a product of the Eighteenth Century and suited the type of organ prevalent in England at the time - one or maybe one and a half keyboards with, very occasionally pull-down pedals but rarely if ever an independent pedal organ. The single manual instruments would invariably have divided stops enabling the organist to have one sound in the right hand and another in the left. These voluntaries, in the main, called for a solo stop in the right hand

with accompaniment in the left. The divided stops enabled such pieces to be performed.

Through all this period the tremulant or shaking stop seems to have disappeared. Many writers agree that the early devices were noisy and badly regulated. In Europe, Marin Mersenne, writing in 1636 (*Harmonie Universelle*) talks of the *Tremblant à vent clos* being more agreeable than the *Tremblant à vent ouvert* which was 'used formerly' and which caused 'rude fluctuations of air'.<sup>[18]</sup> The tremulants described by Mersenne are similar to those referred to by Dom Bédos. Mersenne states that the *tremblant à vent ouvert* was the type used in older organs but whilst he decries the noise it makes, he nevertheless recommends that it should be included in organs 'since pleasure in music consists especially in variety, which allows for dissonance as well as consonance'.<sup>[19]</sup> Almost a century and a half later Dom Bedos was putting on paper details of his ideal tremulant. He refers to two types, one loud and one soft. A further seventy years would elapse before Cavaillé-Coll started to contemplate making a variable speed tremulant, the speed of fluctuation being controlled by a lever at the console. This was in 1842 and at the suggestion of Mr Hamel - secretary of a commission set up to examine and approve an organ for the church of La Madeleine in Paris.<sup>[20]</sup> It is interesting that soon after this (1848-9)<sup>[21]</sup> Henry Willis visited Cavaillé-Coll and brought back several ideas for his own organs, including the tremulant.<sup>[22]</sup> Interestingly - in 1853 he applied for a patent for a variable speed tremulant.

Organ specifications quoted in various sources of organs in England between 1660 and 1840 give only three tremulant devices - one in the organ provided for St Mary-at-Hill, London by Bernard Smith in 1693. It was noted as a Trimeloe. Another was the Shaking Stop included in the Nettlecombe organ and finally, one was included in the organ built by Snetzler c1757 for the Lutheran Church in the Strand. One maybe gets a glimpse of the condition of that tremulant from a comment made by Sir John Hawkins in his *History of the Science and Practice of Music*. In it he refers to the tremblant being 'a contrivance by means of a valve in the Port Vent or passage from the windchest, to check the wind and admit it only by starts; so that the notes seem to stammer, and the whole instrument to sob, in a manner very offensive to the ear'.<sup>[23]</sup> He refers to one being 'in the Savoy'. At what date the next Tremulant was included in an English organ is not

easily established. Whilst the organ built by Gray & Davison for St Luke's, Old Street in 1844 has been credited with having the device, it is possible that this was not included until the time of Henry Smart's appointment as organist in 1852.<sup>[24]</sup> Interestingly, Smart had visited Paris in 1852, bringing back ideas and improvements being used there - amongst which was the tremulant. At the time he was working with Gray & Davison on an organ for Glasgow City Hall in which the device was eventually installed.

[1] Jeans, Susi, 'In Praise of Tremulants' *Musical Times March* (1950), 102-105, 102.

[2] [www.geocities.com/vienna/choir/1586/history](http://www.geocities.com/vienna/choir/1586/history)

[3] Tusler, Robert, *The Organ Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck* (Bilthoven 1958), 16.

[4] Adlung, Jakob, *Musica Mechanica Organoedi* (Berlin 1768).

[5] Williams, Peter, *The European Organ 1450-1850* (London 1966), 62.

[6] Williams, Peter, *The European Organ 1450-1850* (London 1966), 103.

[7] Jeans, Susi, 'In Praise of Tremulants' *Musical Times March* (1950), 102. [8] Artegnati, di Constanzo, *L'Arte Organica* (Brescia 1608).

[9] Bedos de Celles, F. *L'Art du Facteur d'Orgues*, (Paris 1766-88).

[10] Boeringer, James, *Organa Britannica* (based on Sperling's Notebooks). [11] Mayes, Stanley. *An Organ for the Sultan* (London 1956), 76.

[12] Sumner, William, *The Organ. Its Evolution, Principles of Construction and Use*, (London 1952).

[13] Edwards, C.A. *Organs and Organ Building* (London 1881), 119.

[14] Simpson, Christopher *The Division-Violist* (London 1659).

[15] Pepys, Samuel, *The Diary* - entry for 8th July 1660.

[16] David, H.T. *The Bach Reader* (New York), 60.

[17] Sumner, W.L. 'The Organ of Bach' *The Organ* Volume XXX number 117 July 1950.

[18] Mersenne, M. *L'Harmonie Universelle* (Paris 1635).

[19] Douglass, F. *The Language of the Classical French Organ* (Yale 1969), 193.

[20] Douglass, F. *Cavaillé-Coll and the French Romantic Tradition* (Yale 1999), 67.

[21] Thistlethwaite, N. *The Making of the Victorian Organ* (Cambridge 1990), 416.

[22] Thistlethwaite, N. The Making of the Victorian Organ (Cambridge 1990), 416.

[23] Hawkins, J.A. A General History of the Science and Practice of Music (London 1875 book X111), 614.

[24] Thistlethwaite, N. The Making of the Victorian Organ (Cambridge 1990), 278.

Maybe the rest needs to be kept for another day but what, I hear you say, was the strange Willis patent mentioned earlier. Well, out of curiosity I obtained a copy of Willis' patent for his take on the Barker Lever (1861) in which he includes details of his new invention for "facilitating the opening of the shutters of the swell box - in order to enable the performer to operate the swell, when his feet are fully employed on the pedals" So, how was he going to do this? The answer? "by providing a mouth-piece attached to a flexible tube leading to a pneumatic apparatus". The player would operate the shutters by blowing into the mouthpiece which would open one or more valves thereby admitting air from the bellows which would activate the shutters. Blow hard and get them fully open or gently for partial opening and then - this is the best bit - to maintain them in that position you had to keep your tongue pressed against the mouthpiece opening to stop the air escaping - once you took your tongue away and stopped blowing the shutters closed. How bizarre is that?

David Butler

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