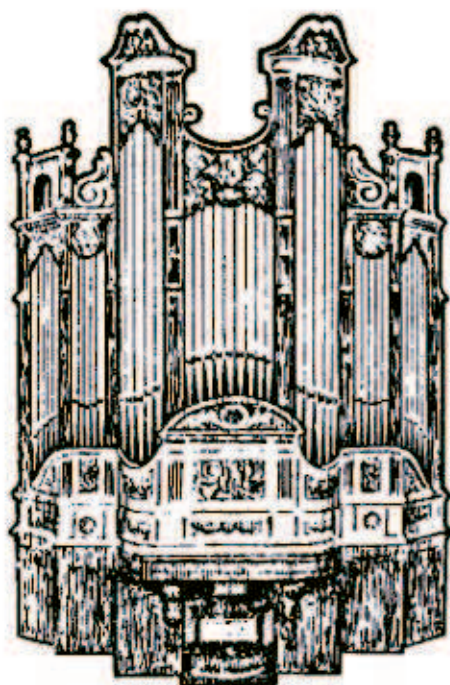


# The Berkshire Organist

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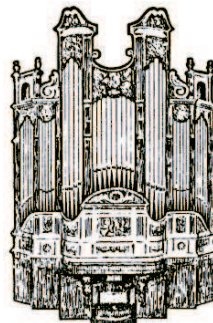
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Neither the Editors nor the Association accept any responsibility for opinions expressed in this Journal

# 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.

## Table of Contents

<b>1. THE BERKSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Editorial</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Annual General Meeting</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 BOA AGM Recital	
- Mark Jameson	8
3.2 President's Report to the AGM	10
3.3 Elections 2014	12
<b>4. Obituary</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Salamis Sylvia Pauline Collins MA(1941-2014)	
- Don Hickson & Mark Jameson	13
<b>5. Reading Town Hall Recitals</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1. Christopher Nickol on 15th May 2013	
- Don Hickson	15
5.2 Michael Harris on 20th November 2013	
- Don Hickson	16
5.3 Cameron Luke on 18th September 2013	
- Don Hickson	17
5.4 Eleni Keventsidou on 22nd January 2014	
- Don Hickson	19
5.5 Chris Bragg on 5th March 2014	
- Don Hickson	20
5.6 Richard Brasier on 30th April 2013	
- Jonathan Holl	21
<b>6. Celebrity Recitals</b>	<b>24</b>
6.1 Stephen Farr on 17th October 2013	
- Don Hickson	24



<b>7. Other Local Recitals</b>	26
7.1 Organ Improvisation by Alexander Mason	
- Malcolm Rigg	26
7.2 David Pether on 29th June 2013	
- Malcolm Rigg	27
7.3 Reading School on 5th April 2014	
- Mark Jameson	28
<b>8. Heritage Day</b>	
- Mark Jameson	30
<b>9. Events</b>	31
9.1 Organ Tour in Herefordshire and North Wales	
- Jonathan Holl	31
9.2 Joint Organists' Association Meeting	
- Sylvia Collins	34
9.3 BOA Annual Dinner on November 16th 2013	
- Jill York	36
9.4 Visit to All Saints and St Georges	
- Anthony Hodson	38
9.5 RCO 150th anniversary of founding	
- John Jebb	40
<b>10. General Articles</b>	43
10.1 Teachers have influence: a thank-you concert	
- Peter Marr	43
10.2 Lost Organs of Reading	
- Mark Jameson	46
10.3 Yet another Hymnal	
- Ken Gaines	50
10.4 St Mary's Church, Shinfield	
- Peter Marr	51
10.5 The Organ on stamps and luxury items	
- Mark Jameson	56

10.6 Tremulants	
- David Butler	64
10.7 The Morningside Braid Church	
- Malcolm Rigg	73
10.8 Member News - Edward Reeve	
- Mark Jameson	76
10.9 An Appreciation	
- Ken Gaines	77
10.10 Harry Russell presents the Harmonium	
- John Jebb	78
10.11 Tuning Tales <i>Behind the organ</i>	
- Ken Gaines	80
10.12 CD Review	
- Mark Jameson	84
10.13 The new Ancient & Modern - a review	
- David Duvall	86
10.14 Women organists - the hunt continues	
- Jill York	92
11. Officers of the Association	95

## 2. Editorial



Please note the date of October 4th 2014 because Reading Arts are co-ordinating events to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Father Willis organ in Reading Town Hall.

They propose that there will be a 150th Anniversary Gala Concert for the organ on the evening of Saturday 4th October and other participatory events for the Public and Organophiles. Dates and details of these activities will be made clearer nearer the time.

The Berkshire Organist Association is going to support these events, so please mark the date in your diaries and await further news.

Another year, another Journal and once again filled with a wide range of contributions from Members whose efforts are greatly appreciated and for which I would like to express my appreciation and thanks. I would like to encourage Members to share their wide experiences however loosely associated with Organs and Organ Music. Your ideas and submissions sustain this Journal and, I am sure, give pleasure to Members who look forward to the annual publication.

The Committee briefly discussed whether an A4 rather than A5 publication would be cheaper to print, but I am pleased to report that we found this not to be true and thus you can rest assured that the series of Berkshire Organist Journals will continue the same size (A5) and thus still fit nicely on a bookshelf. There are some editorial standardisation changes in article layout and recording the authorship. I hope you enjoy the read.  
Malcolm Rigg

### **3. Annual General Meeting**

#### **3.1 BOA AGM Recital**

- Mark Jameson

The Recital was given by David Butler at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road, RG4 7BG at 4pm. David is the Organist and Director of Music at All Saints, Rotherfield Peppard in Oxfordshire.

His programme was:

Alla Fanfare by J A Meale [1880-1932]

J A Meale was born in Huddersfield and famous for designing the 1911 Hull City Hall Forster & Andrew's organ. In 1912 he moved to become organist at Central Hall Westminster. Alla Fanfare was written in 1917 and is probably his most well known organ work - and a good choice to start the recital.

Wonderous Love by Daniel Pinkham [1923-2006]

This is a set of 5 shape note variations based on an American Hymn Tune "Southern Comfort" published in 1993. I have not heard his music live in England before, so this was a nice surprise.

Trumpet Tune by Andrew Carter [1939- ]

Andrew has long been closely associated with Choral activity in York and in particular, with the Choir at York Minster. This piece gave David the opportunity to use the fine Trumpet on this organ.

Four Quiet Interludes by William Lloyd Webber [1914-1982]

2014 sees the centenary of William Lloyd Webber's birth. He was a prolific composer and well known recitalist, as well as the organist chosen to play the reopening concert of this organ in this church. His music is always enjoyed.

Elegy by Harrison Oxley [1933-2009]

Harrison pioneered recruiting girls into St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Choir and later was much involved with female choirs on the BBC. This Elegy was composed in 1964.

A Trumpet Gavotte by Christopher Tambling [1964- ]

Christopher started at Christ's Hospital near Horsham later studying at Canterbury and St Peter's College Oxford - he is currently Director of Music at Downside College near Bath. A prolific composer with around 135 works, many published through Kevin Mayhew, so good to hear one of his works.

Introduction and Fugue in E Flat by Adolph Hesse [1809-1863]

Hesse spent his life in German Breslau. This particular piece does not appear to have an Opus number. But this was as near as one got to Bach today. Very enjoyable; this composer's works seem to be featured on a number of recent European CDs.

Variations on Gibbons' Song 13 by June Nixon [1942- ]

Australian June was Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne until her retirement in February 2013 after 40 years; her music is published through Kevin Mayhew. Gibbons Song 13 was written by Orlando Gibbons in 1623, and June has set a series of variations to this tune.

Marche aux Flambeaux by Rev F Scotson Clark [1840-1883]

This piece is one of those equally at home on the church organ, as the town hall or barrel organ. The work was originally published as No.2 of Op.32 in a book of 15 Marches. A great Victorian work and superb choice to end this concert, suiting the resources of this organ very well. [Anyone wanting to hear more works by this composer is recommended to obtain "Victorian Virtuosity", a disc recorded on the 1873 Willis at St Michael's Tenbury by Thomas Heywood, this is on Pro-Organo CD7258]

David - this concert was most enjoyable - thank you.

After food for the mind, the members then moved to the church hall for a grand tea and social interlude. Margaret Bensley, organist here, plus tea stalwarts Margaret & Jim Woodridge and Jen & Derek Guy

helped by Kathleen Barren who came from Gosbrook Road Methodist, and Lichuan a friend of Margaret organised food and drink - with far more than the turnout could consume!

The afternoon concluded with the AGM. This year there were a number of changes to Committee. Very long serving Don Hickson has decided to retire - Don joined in 1970 and has always taken a very proactive role, we will miss him on committee. Julian Greaves, another long serving member of the committee has also retired. However we do have 3 new committee members - David Butler, Anthony Hodson and David Price to bring new ideas, they are very much welcomed. The AGM closed at 18.10.

A good afternoon.

### 3.2 President's Report to the AGM

I would like to begin by thanking the church authorities at Caversham Heights Methodist church for allowing us to use the church and parish rooms today for our recital, tea and AGM. Particular thanks are due to David Butler for giving the recital today. Margaret and friends are warmly thanked for organising the tea.

In the last year we have enjoyed visits to Odiham and Farnham, then Windsor Parish Church followed by Evensong at Windsor Castle. The annual study tour was to Hereford, Chester and North Wales. In November the speaker at the annual dinner was David Goode.

In 2014 for the President's afternoon I gave a talk on the Harmonium and its repertoire and there was, of course, a quiz and tea. In February we visited All Saints', Margaret Street and St George's, Hanover Square. In March we revived the idea of a lecture programme with a talk on the history of the Royal College of Organists from Dr Christopher Kent.

Our 2013 volume of the Berkshire Organist was a bumper issue of just over a hundred pages featuring the usual reports on local recitals and the activities of this association as well as nearly fifty pages of articles on general topics written by members. Past editions of the journal are now being made available to the public on our website.

In our own members' recital series we have had recitals by David Pether and Simon Dinsdale. Other local recital series continue to expand. The lunchtime and celebrity recitals at the Reading Town Hall continue and there are also recitals at Reading Minster, St Giles and at All Saints', Downshire Square with St Mark's, Cranbury Road.

The association continues to reach out into the wider community in many ways such as advertising organist vacancies in our news letter and on our web site and providing a contact list for deputies and teachers. We also advise on a host of other matters such as helping visiting organists find somewhere to practice and homes for redundant organs.

Finally, I would like to thank members of our committee for their service over the year. Particularly, I would like to thank Don Hickson who is standing down as secretary, and Julian Greaves and Peter West who are standing down from the committee for their contributions.



### 3.3 Elections 2014

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

President:	Harry Russell
President Elect:	Jonathan Holl
Secretary:	vacant
Treasurer:	Ronald Byer
Committee (for 3 years):	David Butler, Anthony Hodson, David Price
Committee (for 2 years):	Derek Guy, Jill York
Committee (for 1 year):	Mark Jameson, Ian May
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:	David Pether
Independent Examiner:	David Duvall

## 4. Obituary

### 4.1 Salamis Sylvia Pauline Collins MA(1941-2014)

- Don Hickson & Mark Jameson



It was a great shock to many of us to hear of Sylvia Collins' sudden death particularly as several of us had been happily chatting to her at the President's Afternoon the previous day. Sylvia joined the Association in April 2006 and it became obvious from the outset that here was no passenger. She attended almost every meeting, particularly those where playing was involved and she quickly became a committee member, becoming Secretary for the year 2012-13. At committee meetings she didn't normally have a lot to say but when she did offer an opinion it was always well considered and worth hearing. She was not afraid to criticise or chastise if she thought it necessary (as she did with one of the co-writers of this obituary) but it was always done without malice and accompanied by her ever present little smile that seemed to say "But don't worry, I still like you!"

Sylvia Collins was born in Wales and apart from a 2 year spell at a boarding school in Sussex spent her first eighteen years in that country. Moving to Surrey she married Anthony in 1960 and gave birth to two sons, at the same time teaching music in and around the home counties and continuing her own studies. While working with the Woking Operatic Society she met and, in 1978, married Len, inheriting his two children. Moving to the Twyford area in 1989 she quickly became involved in the musical life of the village and with the organ. To improve her skills she had some lessons with Anne Marsden Thomas at The St Giles Organ School. This extended her

passion and she played regularly at St James's Ruscombe and at St Mary's Twyford also helping out when she could at other churches in the area, including Twyford URC, St Andrew's URC, Reading and St Peter's, Knowl Hill. She had also given recitals at Reading Minster and was involved in various events in Dorchester Abbey. Her wanting to complete records led to the discovery that Noel Mander installed the Vowles organ in Twyford URC in 1947.

Like many organists, Sylvia liked to get her hands and feet on as many organs as possible, which led to her membership for a short time of the Organ Club. This ambition was brought to the fore when a former member of the clergy at Twyford was appointed Bishop of Winchester. Her immediate reaction was "this will give me an entry to try the organ there." Sadly she didn't get round to doing this.

Being a very private person Sylvia had the attribute of keeping her various activities separate so, apart from her immediate family, most people only knew about the things they were connected with and not Sylvia's many faceted activities outside their own parameters. We do know that she was very heavily involved in all activities at Twyford and Ruscombe churches and put on several musical events in Ruscombe Church which were well supported by an audience not confined to the Twyford / Ruscombe area. In this respect she was carrying on the mantle begun by that other stalwart of Twyford music and the Berkshire Organists' Association, Sybil Stephenson. The legacy that these two indomitable ladies leave us is one that should not be allowed to lapse and we owe it to her memory that good music events in the two parishes continue to flourish.

## 5. Reading Town Hall Recitals

### 5.1. Christopher Nickol on 15th May 2013

- Don Hickson

Music for the Royal Fireworks G F Handel  
*Overture, La Rejouissance, Minuets I & II*

Jesu, joy of man's desiring J S Bach

Sonata in B flat major, Op. 65 No. 4 Felix Mendelssohn  
Allegro con brio, Andante religioso,  
Allegretto, Allegro maestoso e vivace

Larghetto from Serenade for strings Edward Elgar  
*Arr C Nickol*

Elizabethan Serenade Ronald Binge  
*Arr W Lloyd-Webber*

The Swan, from Carnival of the Animals Camille Saint-Saëns  
*Arr C Nickol*

Prelude and Fugue in E flat major, Op. 99 No. 3 Camille Saint-Saëns

Christopher Nickol, who gave this lunchtime recital is the Director of Music at the New Kilpatrick Church, Bearsden in Glasgow, a post which he holds in conjunction with other appointments in that city including membership of the team of regular deputies at the Cathedral there. He had chosen for this occasion a programme of mainly well known music which was a reminder of a typical Town Hall recital in earlier days. However, the familiarity of most of the pieces did not mean that they were treated in a casual manner and from the ebullience of the Fireworks music to the relaxed joy of the "Arrangements" the entire programme revealed the care that had been given in preparation and registration. The two "meatiest" works, the Mendelssohn and the less well known Saint-Saëns were both played with masterly control and the whole recital was a joy to listen to, not only for the organists among the audience but also for the general music lovers who had popped in for a lunchtime break.

## 5.2 Michael Harris on 20th November 2013

- Don Hickson

March on theme of Handel

Felix-Alexandre Guilmant

Organ Concerto Op 4 No 6 in B flat

G F Handel

Andante - Allegro

Larghetto

Allegro moderato

Sonata IV in A

August Gottfried Ritter

Scherzo

William Wolstenholme

Finale in B flat

William Wolstenholme

It may have seemed that the apparent tradition that at least one of each season's lunchtime recitals in the Town Hall was given by a member of our Association had lapsed this year but, happily, this was not the case. Michael Harris joined the Association many years ago when resident in the area and despite his many moves before settling in Scotland has assiduously kept up his membership of BOA. During a career which has involved several posts around the country and having established a good reputation as an international recitalist and recording artist he now holds the posts of Organist and Master of Music at St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh and a Lecturer at Edinburgh Napier University, so he was doubly welcome for this occasion.

The programme began in fine style with the Guilmant augmentation of the well known Handel work played with great panache and with clarity of registration. Similar control was demonstrated in the Handel concerto particularly in the very expressive Larghetto. The recital continued with less familiar, but nonetheless enjoyable, pieces by Ritter and Wolstenholme. The Ritter Sonata was an interesting work once again sensitively played and the two pieces by the blind organist William Wolstenholme brought the concert to a very satisfactory close, especially in the exuberant Finale.

All in all, this recital was excellent in many respects. The blend of the familiar and less well known was ideal, the playing was masterly and the registration and control of the Willis was of the first order. This

was, in my opinion, the most enjoyable of all the recitals so far in the present season.

### 5.3 Cameron Luke on 18th September 2013

- Don Hickson

Andante and Allegro	F E Bache
Two inventions (in G and C)	H N Gerber
Fantasia à gusto italiano	J L Krebs
Quatre Pièces en forme de Messe	D Bédard
i Entrée	
ii Prière	
iii Cantilène	
iv Postlude	
Promenade (Walking the Dog)	G Gershwin
	<i>arr. C Luke</i>
Pomp and Circumstance March No 5 in G Op. 39	E Elgar
	<i>arr. I Farrington</i>

Cameron Luke, Cornish by birth, spent part of his early career at various posts in Norway before returning to Britain and eventually to his present post as Director of Music at All Saints' Church, Cheltenham. His well planned, if to a large extent, rather unfamiliar, programme opened well with a lively start in the music of F E Bache, albeit rather a non-descript piece that would have formed an excellent backing for a film scene. The two inventions by H N Gerber were a delight to hear and were executed with well controlled registration to emphasise the contrast in these twins.

J L Krebs Fantasia was well played but the piece itself was not impressive and didn't seem to go anywhere. The main item on the programme was the suite by the French Canadian D Bédard. The first movement is based on plainchant supported by cluster chords which lead into the delightful Prière, a beautifully atmospheric section that seemed to be a little too short. The Cantilène had a lovely solo

melody which went along very sweetly but I could not have whistled it afterwards. The final Postlude was much firmer but rather repetitious.

Now it was time to relax with a lovely piece of sentimental Gershwin before the final rousing Elgar March.

All in all, this was as enjoyable recital, played skilfully and with a good selection of the familiar and less well known items.



## 5.4 Eleni Keventsidou on 22nd January 2014

- Don Hickson

Prelude & Fugue in A Minor BWV543 J.S.Bach(1685-1750)

Scherzo from Suite JA70 Jehain Alain(1911-1940)

Fantasy in F Minor KV608 W.A.Mozart(1756-1791)

Greek Dance number 8 G.Konstantinidis(1903-1984)

Fantasy and Fugue on BACH Op.46 Max Reger(1878-1916)



Eleni Keventsidou  
(Athens & London)

We were delighted to welcome the Greek organist Eleni Keventsidou now domiciled in London to this lunchtime recital at the Town Hall. With a widespread international reputation she now holds several posts in England and is becoming increasingly known in a solo and chamber music capacity.

She began with the very familiar Bach played in a full blooded manner and at a reasonable pace but at times some of the pedal work

seemed a little suspect. Continuing with the Alain this began with a gentle flute solo leading into a rhythmic scherzo and dynamic climax.

The Mozart was in the main well played but on occasions the runs seemed to lack some precision. The Greek Dance was a wonderful interlude and "smashing" would seem to be the most appropriate description; one could easily imagine plates being smashed in a Greek Taverna.

The pièce-de-resistance in this recital was the enormous Reger work. Here the contrast between the ethereal quieter sections and the dramatic intensity of the Fugue and its resounding climax was a marvellous demonstration of the performer's technical ability if, as in the earlier Bach, there were suggestions of a lack of balance in the registration.

*It must be said here, in fairness to Miss Keventsidou, that after the recital we learned that there had been a mechanical problem with the organ during the morning which did not appear to have been completely resolved. It is not for us to assess how much this might have affected her playing, particularly the registration/balance problems referred to above. She is obviously capable of presenting a very high standard of recital and it would be nice to have the opportunity to hear her battle with the Willis again when the organ does not have one of its very rare off days.*

## **5.5 Chris Bragg on 5th March 2014**

- Don Hickson

Stunde der Freude Op 132 No 5

Marco Enrico Bossi

From 'Promenades en Provence':

Eugène Reuchsel

- i) La Chartreuse de Montrieux au crepuscule  
(The Carthusian monastery of Montrieux at twilight)
- ii) Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille  
(Alphonse Daudet's windmill at Fontvieille)

Etoile du Soir Op 54 No 3

Louise Vierne

Pilgerchor aus Tannhäuser

Richard Wagner  
*transc: Franz Liszt*

Deuxième Suite Op 27

Léon Boëllman

- i) Prélude pastoral
- ii) Allegretto con moto
- iii) Andantino
- iv) Final - Marche

Another recitalist from north of the border Chris Bragg (Glasgow) having begun his studies at Dunblane is now heavily involved in various musical organisations in Scotland in addition to his much wider recital career. He began in triumphant style with a Bossi piece that provided a dynamic beginning even though the piece itself appeared to be rather pedestrian.

The two movements from Provence were contrasting from the very atmospheric eventide piece to the more striking depiction of a windmill with its incessant 6/8 rhythm and building to a luscious crescendo. and the same picturesque registration was evident in the Vierne. Turning to the more familiar the Liszt transcription of Wagner's Pilgrim's Chorus gave us a chance to hear the recitalist's control of the Willis with well judged dynamic changes and sensitive use of the tuba.

As a change from the usual Suite Gothique we ended with Boëllman's Second Suite. The jaunty rhythm of the Allegretto and use of the trumpet in the left hand made a good impression but it must be said that the Andantino Prayer and Final March, although very well played were very reminiscent of the familiar "Gothique".

## 5.6 Richard Brasier on 30th April 2013

- Jonathan Holl

Fantasia in G minor BWV 542i

J.S. Bach(1685-1750)  
*Arr.. Paul Homeyer*

Fantasia in F minor KV594

W.A. Mozart(1756-1791)  
*Arr. W.T.Best*

It is good that from time to time talented younger players are among those invited to perform at Reading Town Hall. In respect of that, Richard Brasier (at the age of 26) clearly has a long and fruitful career ahead of him in the organ and more generally the music world. Having studied with David Titterington and Nicolas Kynaston at the Royal Academy of Music, he was aided by the prestigious Nicholas Danby Scholarship to study in Cologne, where he became very active in various musical spheres. He has future playing engagements throughout Europe and has become involved in music publishing and also worked for a time with Flentrop Orgelbouw, one of the world's leading organ builders in Holland.



Not surprising therefore to note that his recital projected great maturity and musicality. He presented a programme thoroughly suited to the Father Willis. The Fantasia in G Minor is of course very

well known and one wondered what to expect from the arrangement by Paul Homeyer. In fact notewise, it seemed that there was little if any difference, but the style was very much that of the Edwardian era --- both registration and tempo, and the use of the organ. To many organists, this must have been a look back to the manner in which it was performed in their younger days! There was no attempt to try to make the Willis sound like a North German baroque instrument; the music sounded well on it and I think people wished that he had played the Fugue as well.

The Fantasia in F Minor KV 594 is the smaller of the two Fantasias by Mozart for a mechanical clock. This is in three sections, the first and third being quiet, gentle movements on the same theme. The second and longest section is an Allegro in F Major, very tuneful and sprightly. There are many editions of this work, but Richard played one by W.T. Best which indicates that it is probably the most difficult! The textures of W.T. Best's arrangements are generally fuller than most, and this one sounded very well on the Willis. Richard played this most beautifully, gliding over all the many difficult passages including those of fast runs of thirds, and used most suitable "flutish" registrations, (as in the 1st and 3rd sections), not forgetting the substantial crescendo just before the 3rd section. In all, a delightful performance.

The Thema mit Variationen (In D) by Mendelssohn gave us a chance to hear the quieter foundation stops on the organ --- a gentle, melodious piece.

The recital finished with the monumental Prelude and Fugue on 'BACH' by Liszt. Here again Richard used an older style edition, (though I do not know which) where the textures were full, and which gave the performance the gravitas it needs. His playing was always carefully controlled and measured in pace, giving time for all the required registration changes. As in all the pieces, it was a pleasure to hear such clean and clear articulation and to observe expert organ management!

## 6. Celebrity Recitals

### 6.1 Stephen Farr on 17th October 2013

- Don Hickson

Concerto in A major Op.7 No.2

G F Handel  
*arr. Dupré / Duruflé*

Prélude in E flat minor Op.66

d'Indy

Suite for organ

Stanley  
*arr H Coleman*

Handel in the Strand

Grainger  
*arr W. Stockmeier*

Carillon de Westminster Op.54 No.6

Vierne

Fantaisie in B flat major Op.12 No.6

Boëly

Westminster from 'London Suite'

Coates  
*arr S. Farr*

Variations on a theme of Machaut Op.65

'A Portrait of his Age, 1300-1377'

Steel

This evening's celebrity recital was given by the very experienced organist Stephen Farr who now, apart from his independent work as soloist, continuo player and accompanist holds the posts of Director of Music at St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

Beginning with an arrangement by two French composers of the German/adopted English Handel's Concerto, Stephen Farr demonstrated an immediate association with the Willis organ with some very well selected registrations and it was quite an interesting exercise trying to decide which particular sections had been arranged by which Frenchman. Turning to authentic French the d'Indy, originally for the harmonium but re-set "*pour Grande Orgue*" this Prélude was the perfect peaceful foil to the preceding Handel.

John Stanley's collections of voluntaries for organ formed the basis from which the four pieces played this evening were drawn. These contrasting movements were well presented with, once again, well selected registration and concluding with a particularly rumbustuous Trumpet Voluntary.

Staying in "easy-on-the-ear" mode the first half continued with an arrangement for organ of Percy Grainger's ever popular and slightly irreverent tilt at Handel before once again placing feet on each side of the channel with the Frenchman Louise Vierne's impression of the Carillon de Westminster.

The second half was dominated by two rather obscure pieces between which another reference to Westminster - from Eric Coates' London Suite - provided a welcome relief. The Fantasia by Boëly was very cleverly played and had a complex structure of toccatas, fugues and general tuttis that, despite the skill of the performer all seemed to dissolve into an indeterminate mass. Much could be said of the final Variations by Christopher Steel, a former Director of Music at Bradfield College. One of the basic principles of writing Variations on a Theme is that the theme should be easily memorable and be recognised throughout the work as the successive variations unfold. Unfortunately, the theme was so convoluted and disjointed that it was impossible to follow through the subsequent variations which seemed to be nothing more than meanderings that went nowhere. The programme notes gave titles to each set of variations but, to my mind, they merely served as a bench mark as to how far we were through the piece. Regrettably, this was not a good choice to end a programme for a "Celebrity" recital where part of the objective must surely be to try to tempt any "normal" music lover who had booked for this concert to feel like returning. Unfortunately, despite the few "pot-boilers" I cannot see many first time organ recital attendees coming back for a second go.



## 7. Other Local Recitals

### 7.1 Organ Improvisation by Alexander Mason

- Malcolm Rigg



On Wednesday, 26 June 2013, the incredible improviser, Alexander Mason, improvised to the silent film *Phantom of the Opera* (1925). The event took place in Wellington College Chapel from 9:30-11:00pm.



Alexander is holder of a number of prestigious improvisation prizes, including being runner up at the world-renowned St Albans Improvisation Competition in 1997.

Earlier in the day, at 2:30, there was a chance to hear Alexander Mason give a master class to four organ students of Wellington

College who were performing works by Bach, Vierne and Franck.

The melodrama of the ancient black and white film was at times a bit trying but one could follow the story easily. Alexander played for 90 minutes without a break and managed to squeeze or hide several well known tunes into his performance. He received sustained applause at the end of the performance.

*Editor's Note: Wellington College Organ has two Tremulants; see article on Tremulants by David Butler in the 2013 Berkshire Organist.*

## **7.2 David Pether on 29th June 2013**

- Malcolm Rigg



David Pether's at St Paul's, Wokingham

His recital had the following programme

Paean	Philip Moore
Voluntary in G Minor Op.5 No.7	John Stanley
Andante Grazioso	Henry Smart
Toccata , Adagio & Fugue BWV 564	J.S.Bach
Allegretto in E flat Op.17 No.2	William Wolstenholme
Prelude & fugue on a theme of Vittoria	Benjamin Britten
Communion in D	William Faulkes
Chorale No.3 in A Minor	César Franck

There was good attendance and I thoroughly enjoyed the concert.

### **7.3 Reading School on 5th April 2014**

- Mark Jameson

Almost a year ago Graham Ireland alerted me to keep the above date free for a concert at Reading School. As the date approached I looked for more information and found it was to be a concert in the RCO 150th series. The organisers were the Old Redingensians Association [ORA] led by David Cox, their President, and Graham Ireland, Organ Emeritus of Reading School. The players, both Graham's pupils, were Huw Jones [1993 to 2000] now Director of Music at Merchant Taylors School, Northwood & Organist at St George's, Headstone Lane, Harrow and Ben Morris [2003-2010], currently Senior Organ Scholar & Foundation Scholar at Jesus College, Cambridge. Apart from Reading ORA members, special guests were Catherine Ennis who had driven from her home near Shrewsbury, and Councillor Marian Livingston, the Right Worshipful Mayor of Reading.

Huw played the first half of the programme with Flor Peeters Koraal & Scherzo from Suite Modale, Frank Bridge Adagio, Jeremiah Clarke's Prince of Denmark March, Vaughan Williams Rhosymedre, Bach BWV572, finishing with Mendelssohn's War March of the Priest to a setting by Stuart Archer. Ben started the second half with

Walton's Spitfire March, two pieces of Bach [BWV655 & 547], Eben Lied from Faust, Mendelssohn Sonata No.2, Buxtehude Passacaglia BUXwv 161, finishing with the Dubois Toccata in G. An excellent way to spend an afternoon.



L to R (above): *Catherine Ennis (for the RCO), Graham Ireland, Reading Mayor, Ben and Hugh outside Reading School Chapel.*

The organ is a transplant of an 1871 Hill built for St Philips' Battersea and installed here by Richard Bower in 1992 who still looks after the instrument and was in attendance.

At the end of the concert it was clear that The Mayor had enjoyed the afternoon and in speaking with her, she said she was keen to see more use made of the Reading Town Hall organ - which celebrates its 150th Anniversary in October.

## **8. Heritage Day**

- Mark Jameson

2013's Heritage presentations on the Reading Town Hall Father Willis this year took place on Saturday afternoon September 14 2013 - last year it was held on a Sunday afternoon.

Three sessions were given, Jonathan Holl played for the 1pm and 2pm demonstrations whilst David Pether played the 3pm session.

85 people in total attended; there were 31 in the first group including several children, the second had 23 which included a past-President of the Kent Organists' Association and the third, 31, including two young ladies, one from Didcot, the other from Brighton who entertained us with various hymns, extracts of Beethoven's Turkish March and other recognisable pieces - David & I were impressed with the ladies playing - we presented them each with a copy of the Town Hall organ book as a reward for their efforts.

A Reading newspaper reporter recorded the first session and advised it was to be included in the Heritage Day write up - however I do not know which paper.

Roger Bartlett & I manned the information table, and many leaflets were taken; we also sold 8 Town Hall Organ books and 2 Reading Benchmarks CDs.

It was a most enjoyable afternoon.

## 9. Events

### 9.1 Organ Tour in Herefordshire and North Wales

- Jonathan Holl

This took place from 30th September to 4th October, beginning in Herefordshire and progressing through Shrewsbury to North Wales and Chester.

Our first port of call was the Parish Church of Lugwardine, just to the east of Hereford. Here there is a small rural community, with an attractive church, but which has a particularly fine organ. We were warmly welcomed by the organist, Richard Popple who has over the years held the posts of Treasurer, General Secretary and Vice-President of the IAO. The organ was built by Nicholsons in 2009 at a cost of £210,000. There are two manuals and pedals and a total of 10 stops, 2 being on the Pedal. Consisting of 2 ranks of pipes (flutes and Principals), the specification is imaginative with both manuals containing stops of 8 4 2 Mixture, the latter being a Sesquialtera on the Swell organ. This organ was designed by Roy Massey and was found to be very versatile. The stop knobs are square which fitted in well with the design of the case. The touch is very sensitive and does not allow for any fingerwork deficiencies! We later checked in to our hotel, the Hedley Lodge in the grounds of Belmont Abbey to the west of Hereford.

The next day we visited the delightful market town of Ludlow. The Parish Church is of cathedral proportions and we were welcomed by the Director of Music, Shaun Ward. He is also the Clerk of the Works and spoke to us not only about the organ but also about plans to renovate and upgrade the church. The organ has 4 manuals and 53 stops of which some remain from the Snetzler organ built in 1764 at a cost of £1000. During the 19th century, Gray and Davidson increased the number of stops and in 1901 William Hill & Son renewed the action. A thorough overhaul was carried out by Nicholsons in 2007. The organ has lots of colour and the sound is very full but not overwhelming. We had a little time to explore the characterful food shops and eating places(!) and after lunch made our way back to Belmont Abbey.

The beautiful Abbey Church at Belmont is in effect a "hidden gem". Not seen from the main Hereford to Abergavenny road, it is the home



of a community of Benedictine monks, and also a Parish Church. Designed by Pugin, it was built between 1854 and 1884. In 1856 an organ by Bishop and Starr was installed. It was restored and enlarged by Nicholsons in 2009. Whilst fine in many ways, it was thought to be unnecessarily loud for the church.

Later, we gathered at Hereford Cathedral for Evensong. This was to be a special Service on two counts; the first was the Acclamation of an Ecumenical Companion and the second was the Commemoration of St Thomas de Cantiloupe who became Bishop of Hereford in 1275. He was born in Hambleton, Buckinghamshire. As is well-known, our Programme Secretary, Christine Wells, (who was with us) is organist at Hambleton and she brought with her a letter of greetings from her vicar to the Dean of the cathedral. There was an extra large congregation for these two events and the Dean in his welcome made mention of the Association and of Christine and her letter. The Choir sang beautifully and the canticles were Watson in E and the anthem 'How beauteous are their feet' by Stanford. After the service we were warmly greeted by the organist Geraint Bowen and his assistant, Peter Dyke. We had ample time to play the very fine Willis/Harrison organ with the Organ Scholar assisting at the console. The style of the console is very similar to that of Reading Minster with the coupling tabs being in exactly the same position!!

The next day, we ventured northwards stopping at Shrewsbury. Here we visited St Chad's church, a unique 18th century circular building with a superb 19th century stained glass window. The organ is a 3 manual Norman & Beard built in 1904, recently restored and slightly enlarged by Harrisons, making 40 stops. We were hosted by the Director of Music, Richard Walker, who was formally Director of Music at Harrow School. He played a short recital for us which included music by Bridge, Bach, Reger and Cocker. His school master skills were still evident when (quite rightly) he put a stop to the imminent use of the church vacuum cleaner during our visit. It was with amusement that we noticed a little later the cleaner sweeping the floor with a dustpan and brush! We found Shrewsbury to be a rather congested town and were advised not to exceed our parking time by even a minute! We continued on a very picturesque route through Oswestry and Denbigh to our second hotel, the Oriel, at St Asaph. Late afternoon, we made our way to St Asaph Cathedral, some on foot, about a 15 minute walk. We were most warmly greeted by the organist, Alan McGuinness. The cathedral has the proportions



of a largish parish church, and the diocese is the largest in the UK. The present organ was built in 1897 by William Hill and was rebuilt in 1998 by Wood of Huddersfield. There are 4 manuals with 54 stops. Alan McGuinness demonstrated the organ by playing Franck's Chorale No 3 in A minor., after which we were free to play. We were all struck by how beautifully the cathedral was maintained and noticed a very warm and welcoming atmosphere.

The following morning we had a leisurely start and arrived at Llandudno after a 40 minute drive. Here we were treated to a 3 manual Rushworth & Dreaper of 1926 - a fine sound but the action was not as slick as one would have liked. After a lunch break in one of the many seaside cafés, we made our way to Bangor. The drive along the North Wales coast from St Asaph through Llandudno to Bangor is very dramatic with the sea on one side and countryside rising towards Snowdon on the other side, although unfortunately mist and rain somewhat reduced the visibility. The road itself goes through various tunnels in one direction and round the cliffs in the opposite direction. With some difficulty we found Bangor Cathedral and were made very welcome by the organist Graham Eccles. The organ is huge, being a 4 manual with 85 speaking stops. Originally built by Hill in 1897, work was done by Compton in 1954 and David Wells in 2008. After we left the cathedral, we took the opportunity to drive over the Menai Bridge on to the Isle of Anglesey. We found ourselves in Beaumaris where there is a medieval castle, but with not enough time to make a visit we treated ourselves to a cup of tea and a portion of Baru Brith, the Welsh bread. Although we saw only a little of Anglesey, we were most impressed with the views and scenery.

The next morning we made our way homewards, but not before a visit to Chester Cathedral. Philip Rushforth, the Organist made us very welcome. He explained that the organ of 4 manuals and 71 stops was originally built by the local firm of Whiteley Bros. who included some reeds by Cavaillé-Coll. These were removed in the 1910 rebuild by Hill. Rushworth & Dreaper rebuilt the organ in 1969. Philip Rushforth demonstrated the organ by playing the Introduction and Passacaglia by Sir Walter Alcock. We found the organ a great pleasure to play.

## Chester Cathedral



So ended another action-packed organ tour, where we played some very prestigious instruments. Our thanks go once again to our Programme Secretary, Christine Wells for making all the complicated arrangements.

### **9.2 Joint Organists' Association Meeting**

- Sylvia Collins

On Saturday 13th July, members of the three Organists' Associations (viz Berkshire, Windsor & District and Newbury & District) made their way to Windsor to meet in Windsor Parish Church at 2.30pm.

The afternoon began with a brief introduction from John Halsey, who summarised the plan for the event before he handed over to Ian Hillier, who gave a very interesting Talk on the history of the Parish Church Organ. Leaflets were available about the Hunter Organ that was dedicated on Easter Day 1906 and we were whisked through an outline Guide to the history of organ playing to the present day. The speaker explained the current need for raising funds towards a restoration of the instrument and the constant search for more information from the past.

At 3.20pm, Relf Clark began his interesting and varied Recital, that included

Ein feste Burg Op 79b No.2	Max Reger
Voluntary	Thomas Tomkins
Praeludium from Parthenia	Orlando Gibbons
Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist BWV 671	J S Bach
Adagio	Frank Bridge
Cortege, Op 31 No 2	Louis Vierne

The programme was introduced and played to a fine standard by the soloist - it was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by the attentive audience.

The Restoration Plan was described by John Halsey, including details of a Fundraising target.

Tea was served at the back of the church whilst several visitors took the opportunity to play the fine organ.

By 5pm several of the gathering were walking round to St George's Chapel to hear the Evensong Service, followed at 6pm by Richard Pinel's Recital that included:-

Prelude & Fugue in C BWV547	J S Bach
Canon in A flat, Op 56 No 4	Schumann

Many thanks to John Halsey for organising this interesting event

Editor's Note: Sylvia Collins died in January 2014 and will be sorely missed by the Berkshire Organist Committee, her fellow members, and friends from many other Organist Organisations. Her Obituary appears earlier in this Journal.

### **9.3 BOA Annual Dinner on November 16th 2013**

- Jill York

The Annual Dinner was held this year at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Reading, a venue offering easy access and parking. A good number of members and guests attended and we thank Anne Bolam for organising the event and ensuring we all received our chosen meals. The food proved most enjoyable.

Our speaker and guest of honour for the evening was David Goode of Eton College, the world-class organist and renowned teacher. His speech was both illuminating and entertaining and he told many tales

of his life as a professional organist.

As a boy he lived in Dominica, later returning to Somerset and then gaining a scholarship to Eton College. From there he went up as organ scholar to Kings College, Cambridge, which he loved and where he was inspired to work hard. He



related an amusing tale of his interview for the sub-organist post at Christ Church, Oxford. He was asked to imagine he was practising a Messaien piece when a visitor to the chapel asked him to stop, as they didn't like it. The question was: how would you handle it? His answer was that he would explain it was a sacred piece and perfectly suitable for playing in a chapel, an answer that passed muster. However, sometime later he actually was practising a piece of Messaien when a visitor did stop him saying it was 'horrible music' - but he was so gobsmacked that he said nothing at all. The theory and the practice didn't coincide!

A later move took him to the First Congregational Church, Los Angeles, for two years to an instrument of c.23,000 pipes, the world's largest church organ, where he found himself adjusting to a completely new culture. 30 years after leaving Dominica he returned for a visit, taking shorts and T-shirts and no organ music. However his reputation had preceded him and he was pressed to give a recital in front of the local television cameras. This he duly did, clad in shorts and T-shirt and relying on his memory for well-known pieces such as Bach's 'Jesu joy of man's desiring' and Jeremiah Clarke's 'The Trumpet Voluntary'. As a concert organist he learned to adapt to night work, fitting practice into the only available slots at busy venues - for example at 4.45am when he could only practise until the next organist came in for their turn. Once, playing in Finland, he struck up the first chord of the Reger, only to precipitate a power cut that blacked out half of the city. The life of an organist can be full of surprises!

As Organist and Head of Keyboard at Eton College, David is responsible for several outstanding organs and for an active programme of organ teaching. He encourages the boys to go out on Sundays to play at local churches, as organists are scarce, and says it's good for them to come out of the Eton 'bubble' and help in local communities. He concluded his speech by encouraging us all to go out and play the organ and to support all the organ recitals that we possibly can! We all enjoyed David's lively and amusing speech and appreciated his coming along during a busy term to support the Berkshire Organists' Association. He was warmly thanked by the President, Harry Russell. A gift of wine was presented to him after the event.

## 9.4 Visit to All Saints and St Georges

- Anthony Hodson

Visit to All Saints' Margaret Street and St George's Hanover Square  
on 8th February 2014

On a wet, chilly and windy February day, five members of the Berkshire Organists Association set out to learn about (and try out) two magnificent London organs. Located short distances to NE and to SW of Oxford Circus station, these were the organs of All Saints' Church, Margaret Street and of St George's, Hanover Square (where the author of this report had been Christened, longer ago than he would care to admit). We were blessed indeed to have two talented organists to tell us about these organs, and to demonstrate what they were capable of. Thank you very much, Tim Byram-Wigfield, organist and choir director of All Saints, and Richard Hobson, organist of the Grosvenor Chapel, who looked after us at St George's – you came a long way and put yourselves out magnificently on our behalf!

All Saints Church is a sizeable church in the Anglo Catholic tradition, completed in 1859. It is tall in the gothic-revival style, although not huge in size, and is a very ornate Grade 1 listed building. It has always had a strong musical tradition – and until 1968 had its own boys choir-school. It still has a very capable adult choir, to cathedral standard, and it has an organ and organist (Tim) to match its musical standards.

The instrument has been renovated at various points in its life, and now reflects much of its original design intentions, with a number of additions. The organ is physically in two parts, with a Choir Organ on the South side of the Choir, and the main organ to the north side, with the console itself looking towards the Choir, enabling the organist to see directly what is going on in the chancel. It has four manuals (Choir, Great, Swell and Solo) with a fanned pedal board. The action is electro-pneumatic, and very responsive, supporting 65 stops. There are four swell pedals, including one for the Great Reeds. A full specification can be found on:

<http://www.harrisonorgans.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Margaret-Street-Full-Spec.pdf>

Tim started off proceedings by giving us a recital that ranged from Bach to a charming 'Aria' by William Lloyd Webber (father of Andrew and Julian), who had been Organist of All Saints from 1939-1948. His Rinck 'Variations on a Theme by Corelli' (Op 56) were a tour-de-force, and a real showcase for the range of timbres available from the organ, from delicate flute sounds to a powerful 16ft ophicleide pedal. He demonstrated the amazing footwork demanded by Rinck, with fast dotted rhythms, tremolos and trills. Afterwards the BOA organists had the opportunity to play the instrument, with the help of Tim in selecting registration. We were urged to be delicate in our handling of stops, even if more used to the ruggedness of village organs!

After a break to recover and have lunch, the BOA organists reassembled at St George's Hanover Square, to be greeted by Richard Hobson, organist of the Grosvenor Chapel, who was very kindly standing in for St George's own organist, Simon Williams.

St George's is well known as a venue for christenings, weddings and memorial services, and the four huge columns are a memorable feature. The church dates back to Hanoverian times, when City of London people were seeking accommodation in a new suburb west of the City; it is an airy church with broad nave, in the late 17th Century tradition, and was designed by John James, one of Wren's assistants. Handel was perhaps the most distinguished parishioner of the church, and was involved with it before its completion, particularly as a consultant in the design of the organ; he even wrote test pieces for potential organists!

The centre part of the organ case (which is situated on the gallery facing the altar) is original. The original organ itself underwent many transformations; the original design by Gerard Smith (builder of the original St Paul's organ in today's cathedral), and was rebuilt by John Snetzler in 1761; a more modern electro-pneumatic organ was built into an extended case by Robert Hope Jones in 1894. Eventually the Victorian electrics became unreliable, and it was decided just a few years ago to acquire a brand-new organ, within the case as it then existed, but with a console in the centre of the case, back to the chancel. The Choir Organ of the 1894 organ had perched on the gallery rail, but now had to be incorporated with the case (and required a door in the case to be opened to release the sound).



It was decided to give the contract to a US organ builder, Richards, Fowkes & Co of Ooltewah, Tennessee, and the result is a magnificent and handsome instrument – with mechanical key action and electrical stop action.

It is a three-manual organ, with a parallel pedal board, and two swell-boxes. There are 43 stops: 11 Great; 12 Swell, 10 Choir and 10 Pedal. These include a charming 4ft Spitzflöte on the Swell and a fiery Cornet on Great. The resonant but not overbearing Pedal 32ft Subbaß is piped down to G, and quinted below.

After a useful explanation of the instrument, Richard demonstrated its versatility by playing us a Buxtehude prelude. This clearly showed its capability for baroque sounds - and also filled us with further admiration for the composer as well as the performer. Then came a lyrical Frank Bridge piece, with clear flute tones, fleeting harmonies, and contrasting string tones.

After this, we were permitted to try the organ ourselves – and I was not alone in enjoying the beautiful feel and sensitivity of the mechanical action.

Despite the weather, it was an enjoyable and informative day, from which each of us derived great pleasure both in hearing the instruments demonstrated in their beautiful surroundings, and in trying them out for ourselves. Many thanks to Tim and Richard our hosts, and to Jonathan Holl and Harry Russell who were the organisers for the All Saints and St George's section of the day.

## **9.5 RCO 150th anniversary of founding**

- John Jebb

Once again we gathered at St. Andrews URC in Reading on Saturday 22nd March 2014 to listen to a presentation by Dr. Christopher Kent on the 150th year anniversary of the founding of the Royal College of Organists and its legacy. Concern over the absence of the afternoon's guest speaker was temporarily relieved when Harry Russell welcomed us all and called for announcements of future events, while we anxiously awaited our guest speaker. President Russell also asked for thanks to Jen and Margaret for doing the "Tea" over the last 10



years. There was much applause. As if on cue Christopher Kent MMus, PhD, FSA, FRCO arrived with humble apologies, his delay caused by a traffic accident on the M4.

Dr. Kent explained that since Andrew McCrea, Librarian and Archivist of the RCO was unable to attend, he had agreed to step in and began by painting a picture of Society in general in the early 19th century. There were sweeping changes in the Church of England; by 1833 hymn singing and unparalleled Church building were underway and by 1858, 9000 new churches had been built over the course of 50 years with a doubling of the population. For example on Sunday 30th March, 1851 7,261,032 people out of a total population of 17,927,609 attended a church. As one can see there was a need for organs and much construction.

So an institution was envisaged to set standards. It all started when Richard Limpus organist of St Michael's, Cornhill in the City of London held a meeting in a hostelry (Mullins Hotel in Ironmonger Lane) on 23rd November, 1863 to consider the creation of a College of Organists. Limpus' goal was to elevate and advance the status of Organists - *'It must be noted we do not hold the same position as medical and legal professions but the people prefer music. Music is not just an art but also a science. We will aim to secure a Royal Charter'*. One attendee at the first AGM was Sir George Smart who had met Haydn and Beethoven.

How did they spread the word? Through the Musical Standard Periodical which gave ongoing accounts of organists efforts. Charles W Pearce observed the importance of examinations, outreach and education which are still aspirations of the College to this day - Choral training was in progress by 1909. There were 150 members by the end of first year, now around 3000 internationally. Founders attracted musicians of the day including Sir Frederick Ouseley first president and patron not to be Archbishop of Canterbury, and established a Library and prizes for Organ compositions.

In 1866, 7 candidates presented for examinations only 2 were satisfactory and thus began the tradition of high standards. Today, the College has broadened its outreach especially to pick up where schools and universities have fallen off.

After Limpus, came Edmund Hart Turpin who built up the College and devoted his whole life to the cause, as new Honorary Secretary. To begin with Turpin trod carefully. Firstly, he separated Associate examination from the Fellowship. Through 1880's things blossomed. A Royal Charter was secured, an ambition achieved in 1893. 1904 saw a peak in Candidates for both examinations. A beautiful building in Kensington Gore became the home of the College in the first decade of the twentieth century until 1991. Unfortunately the College never owned the property and there came a very difficult period with an abortive move to Birmingham, the necessary introduction of harsh business like footings and streamlining under Kim Gilbert. However the trustees are honouring commitments. Andrew McCrea says the College remains committed to its original ideals. Since the Archbishop of Canterbury no longer holds the position of Patron the RCO has spread its wings across all denominations.

The RCO has gone "virtual" since leaving its long time home, although the Library is physically located within Birmingham City University. It is interesting to note that in this its 150th year anniversary it is on course to celebrate with 150 nation-wide recitals. Dr. Kent noted Berkshire connections - three organists are playing on the 5th April at Reading School Chapel and another organist on 28th June at St Peter, Cranbourne. There is still time to add to the target of 150 recitals, which currently stand at 130.

During questions the 150th year anniversary was noted of Reading Town Hall organ. Evidently this organ being one of the finest in the South of England could perhaps be involved in the celebrations. Harry Russell brought the afternoon's talk to a close with many thanks to Christopher Kent.

As always we mingled and chatted - energised by what we had heard and enjoyed tea, sandwiches and cakes, thus concluding the afternoon's gathering.

## 10. General Articles

### 10.1 Teachers have influence: a thank-you concert

- Peter Marr

May 31st 2012 was the centenary of Alfred Deller's birth in Margate. Many of us might recall that years ago the male alto was a creature of strangeness found in cathedral choirs and in a greater strangeness in some parish churches. That I may say the latter, and justify it, is borne out by the two male altos in an ancient parish church on the southern part of Reading when one of the two male altos was good at singing the notes (but no distinctive words), the other was good at consonants (but little tone). Messrs Lyster and Shoesmith (the latter with *pince-nez*, I recall) were, nevertheless, the salt of the earth. As far as male altos go - and you may now like to be respectable and say counter-tenors - Deller changed all that. But who changed it for Deller?

The person who did that subsequently came to live in Reading, and later in Caversham.

Deller's initial and youthful claim to local acclaim was his singing at his school in Margate of the popular song *Felix keeps on walking*<sup>[1]</sup>. Roy Monkcom (born 1906 in Portsmouth, died 1987 in Reading), then the young music teacher at Deller's school, Margate Boys' Central School, told me of Deller's *obsession* with this popular song, (and Roy conveyed the meaning of this word advisedly, for he himself told me the story). Deller's performance of it had captivated his school fellows. However, Roy realised that Deller had an ability that could understand, sing, and be moved by other things. It was in the mid-1920s that Roy - who, in later years, perhaps himself never realised his own musical potential - introduced Alfred Deller to the music of Purcell. Little perhaps did he realise what the long-term result would be.

Readers of Deller's biography<sup>[2]</sup> will notice that the initial musical transformation by Roy Monkcom at his school - it was a performance of Purcell's *I attempt from love's sickness to fly* - did not in the least endear Alfred Deller to his school contemporaries, who were more used to responding with vigorous applause to his engaging performance of that popular and indeed catchy song, *Felix kept on walking*.<sup>[3]</sup>

Roy Monkcom and his wife, Edna, subsequently moved to Reading, to Northcourt Avenue near Whiteknights, and later lived in Caversham. Roy and Deller had meanwhile lost contact with each other. But it was a chance encounter, when Deller came to Reading to sing in Handel's *Solomon*, that he re-met Roy Monkcom, who was then leader of the Reading Symphony Orchestra.

In 1969 Roy indicated to me that Deller had wished to do a concert with him, "before I (i.e. Roy) got too old". I was delighted to be asked to accompany Deller at this event which took place at St Patrick's Hall in the University of Reading on the evening of Saturday 31st January 1970, by kind permission of the then Warden, Mr David Large. Deller had planned the programme, part of which I set out below. He wrote to me earlier that month:

*I'm famous for under-timing, so, with the necessary time allowed for tuning, throat clearing etc. - even applause! - I would estimate 50 minutes, with the lute solos, and interval, the concert would be in the region of 90 minutes, - about right?*

So it was, and a youthful Christopher Wilson, whose playing is now heard on Radio 3, was the solo lutenist. However, as far as this concert was concerned, Deller would only sing with a harpsichord accompaniment.

I have no record of the lute solos but Deller's songs were as follows:

**Elizabethan songs:**

What then is love, but mourning?	Rosseter
Shall I come, sweet love, to thee?	Campion
It fell on a summer's day	Campion
Have you seen the white lily grow?	Anon
Care-charming sleep	Robert Johnson

## Songs by Purcell:

Here let my life (Ode: *If ever I more riches did desire*)

I attempt from love's sickness to fly (*Indian Queen*) [4]

O lead me to some peaceful gloom (*Bonduca*)

Fairest Isle (*King Arthur*)

Music for a while (*Oedipus*)

So that Roy could share in this, there was a Cantata by Scarlatti, accompanied by two violins played by Roy and a friend - plus harpsichord. Perhaps it was too late. Roy was clearly apprehensive about the occasion, liked his drink and, shall we say, miscalculated how much to have beforehand to give of his best. But it was a good evening and Deller, who of course sang magnificently, wrote to me two days later:

*I enjoyed saturday's [sic] concert very much; thank you for your sensitive accompaniment, and of all the work involved in making the concert possible.....*

That was kind of him to say so. Afterwards Roy expressed delight that we had done the concert. And recently I was glad to have word from his daughter, Dr Wendy Monkcom, who for many years has been a doctor in New York:

*My family believed my father determined Deller's musical career. I think my father secretly believed that was true.*

Deller died in Italy in 1979 and is buried in the churchyard of All Saints', Boughton Aluph, near Ashford, Kent, a church beloved of Deller and his wife, Kathleen, known as Peggy, who died in 2006. James Bowman, the noted counter-tenor, planted a tree there in 2012 on the centenary of Deller's birth.

[1] Thus quoted by Roy Monkcom to me, and also quoted as such in the Hardwicks' book, below; but the title is *Felix kept on walking* although the first time the phrase occurs in the song it is indeed

"keeps".

[2] Michael and Mollie Hardwick, *A Singularity of Voice*, 1980. But those interested should also read his entry by Peter Phillips in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

[3] Why not listen to the song at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnJtAwUl6cs>, accessed 20th November 2013.

[4] An apt choice, as we have seen, for it was the first Purcell song that Deller performed as a schoolboy, many years before.

## **10.2 Lost Organs of Reading**

- Mark Jameson

### **Three Organs exported from Reading**

At Reading Town Hall 2013 Heritage Open Day two members of the public approached me about pipe organs no longer in Reading - both giving and seeking information which I promised to investigate. Surprisingly hours later, I came across a third organ to have moved from Reading, whilst researching on a German organbuilder's web site for details of an organ featured on a medallion that one side showed a pipe organ new in 1985 in a German church.

In all three instances, the Reading locations have not been, as far as I can see, the subject of either a visit or article in our Annual Handbook. So, I thought I would like to share my findings. NPOR has been advised of what has been learned.

### **The Pavilion Cinema, Oxford Road/Russell Street, Reading**

The organ here was a Compton, installed in 1928 [NPOR reference E01323] a 2 manual 6 rank instrument that was opened by organist Norman Tilley. I have been told that after the Gaumont in Broad Street Reading [originally the Vaudeville, Reading's first cinema] closed in 1957, the building in Oxford Road was briefly known as the Gaumont. By 1979 the cinema had closed and became a Bingo Hall and Snooker Centre. Purchased in April 2012, the building opened in July 2013 as a Lifespring Church - see

<http://www.lifespringchurch.org.uk> - there are many photographs of the building. Interestingly the organ chambers and swell shutters remain.

John Missenden of Warwick Road Reading is directly involved with the Lifespring church and started this enquiry.

The organ moved in 1960 to Rayleigh, Holy Trinity Parish church where it became playable with the existing organ, [see NPOR N01787]. It is next recorded at the Cygnet Restaurant in Worcester [E01322] from 1978 to 1980 after which it moved to a residence in Ventnor on the Isle of Wight. In 1990 it was imported into Australia having been bought by Doug Gregory. It was sold to John Parker [Sydney organbuilder] who used the two string ranks to add to the 1933 10-rank Compton [Op.212] that originated in the Plaza Theatre, Worthing that moved in 1971 to Australia and from 1988 to the John Leckie Music Centre, Nedlands [6km sw of Perth]. The Muted Trumpet was bought by Ron West who added it to a hybrid theatre organ located at the Majestic Theatre, Pomona [north of Brisbane] which uses a Compton console that originated in the Regal in South Shields. The console is with Alan Tranter who also retains the other three ranks; he also has 2 Wurlitzers and a Christie organ. I have to thank Graham Hornsey of The Theatre Organ Club and Rod Blackmore of the Australian Theatre Organ Society who helped sort this history.

### **Southcote - Grange United Reformed Church**

This church was built 60 years ago and a Henry Jones organ was moved to it. In 1982 Keith Scudamore took over its tuning; in 1987 it was cleaned and overhauled [Organists' Review, October 1987 issue] by him, his son Michael tuned it until its recent disposal. The specification at the time of removal from Reading was: 1 manual 56 notes with pedal, 30 notes. The stops left to right above the keys: Swell to Pedal, Open Diapason Bass, Open Diapason [treble], Geigen Principal 4, Viole de Gambe 8, Rohr Flöte 8, and [pedal] Bourdon 16. The brackets indicate information not on the stop heads. The Swell to Pedal coupler is a straightforward manual to pedal coupler - however, with the Bourdon and Open Diapason being unenclosed one wonders if at some time a second manual had been planned or if it had been larger earlier in its life. The Rohr Flöte is a wooden flute with a stopped wood base for the lowest octave shared with the Gambe.

It is clear from looking at the instrument that it dated from the late Victorian era. Southcote had the instrument as c1905 and that it had

been moved from the Congregational, now URC, in Armour Road Reading. That building dates from 1888, and neither buildings are recorded in the NPOR database. Now the instrument is in Denmark at the home of Peter Gawol who has reconstructed it in his garage - it is not possible to get any dating from the instrument. However, Peter found during re-assembling this instrument a written note on the woodwork "moved from Shattermill to Tilehurst, Reading, November 1920" and signed by T. S. Walker. Thomas S. Walker was born in 1884 and worked in Reading from 1900 to 1949.

There is no place in the UK called Shattermill. However, Shottermill is just north of Haslemere in Surrey - with the parish church of St Stephen. In the 1870's that church was expanded and in Musical Opinion for October 1889 [page 24] Henry Jones organ builders advertised a number of newly built organs they had supplied - including Shottermill. [Sadly, without specification]. In 1921 Shottermill had a new organ by Noterman - this is recorded in the same journal [8/1921p935], so this ties in with the 1920 removal of the organ by T. S. Walker. The NPOR record of the 1921 instrument was dated 1943, and comparing the two, it is clear changes had taken place in that period.

Clearly Peter and his family are going to enjoy their purchase. I have to thank Elspeth Jenkins of Southcote who advised about its removal from Reading and Peter for his subsequent help, both have sent many photographs.

### **Caversham - Methodist - Gosbrook Road**

In 1926 the church replaced its original pipe organ with a secondhand instrument from an unrecorded church in Oswestry, Shropshire. The builder of the acquired organ was Mr J B Hamilton of Hammersmith [London W6]. In 1860 when new it had 1 manual and pedal, in 1900 a Swell was added - believed to be by the same builder. I have not found any changes were made during its time in Caversham. According to NPOR, Dennis Tutty reported its sale to a private individual in Holland; Caversham went electronic. After Holland, the organ went through a dealership and was purchased by the Kath. Herz-Jesu Kirche at Wiechs A Randen in Germany. This town is in a finger of southern Germany surrounded by Switzerland with Schaffhausen being due south and the nearest large town. There has been a church on this site since 1275 and the current building was



built in 1922/3 in classical style. The Hamilton organ was totally overhauled, restored and installed here in 2010 by Vleugels of Hardheim - [about an hour's journey south east of Frankfurt airport.].

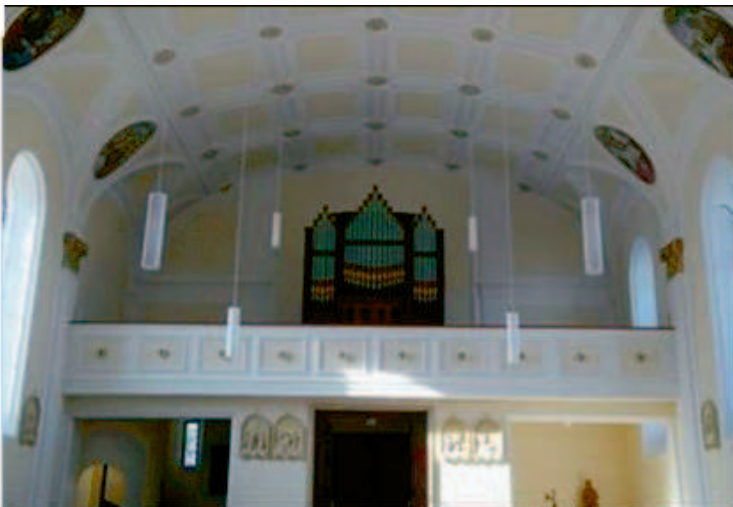
Whilst in Holland, a tremulant was added and a second-hand old English Oboe to the Swell. Double Wedge bellows are fitted and original. The front case pipes do not speak, there are 553 speaking pipes. The current specification is as follows:

**GREAT:** Open Diapason 8, Dulciana 8, Chimney Flute 8, Octave 4, and Fifteenth 2.

**SWELL:** Violin Diapason 8, Viol di Gamba 8, Principal 4, Nazard 2 2/3 and Orchestral Oboe 8. The Nazard replaced a short compass Voix Celeste.

**PEDAL:** Bourdon 16ft

It has the standard three unison couplers and the wind pressure is 60mm. The compass remains as 54/30 and has hand as well as electric blowing. Now the instrument is placed centrally on the rear gallery and looks superb!



Hans-George Vieugels, Orgelbaumeister helped me sort this history and I am very grateful. More information can be found on the organbuilders web site - [www.vleugels.de](http://www.vleugels.de) and also on a superb private site [www.orgelbase.nl](http://www.orgelbase.nl) which is a real goldmine for specifications.

I would like to thank the many people who have supplied the information needed to complete these history trails.

### **10.3 Yet another Hymnal**

- Ken Gaines

After Mission Praise, Junior Praise and Psalm Praise can there be any demand for yet another title? With an optimistic launch date of 1st April a new Motorist Praise Hymnal should enable motorists to express themselves in song. A preview shows some old favourites plus some lesser known hymns from the Victorian pre motoring era. Here is a random selection:-

35 MPH	Open My Eyes That I May See
45 MPH	Give To the Winds Thy Fears
55 MPH	Go Quickly For The Fading Day
65 MPH	Why Should I Charge My Soul With Care?
75 MPH	There Is A Happy Land
85 MPH	Nearer, My God To Thee
95 MPH	This World Is Not My Home
100 MPH	Farewell, Friends Beloved

As with any hymnal there are many omissions. The children's section is rather 'thin' as is the section on 'holiness'. However the section on the 'afterlife' (in older hymnals called 'Heaven anticipated') is somewhat full. It remains to be seen whether or not there is much mileage for such a publication in so congested a market.

## 10.4 St Mary's Church, Shinfield

- Peter Marr

### The "nearly new" organ at St Mary's Church, Shinfield

The dedication and opening recital of the "nearly new" organ at St Mary's Church Shinfield, took place on 19th September 1964, fifty years ago. The instrument was dedicated by the Bishop of Reading, the Rt Revd Eric Knell, who was much involved in attempts to "modernise" the music in local Anglican churches.

First, here is a stop list and a few other details about this extension instrument built largely from pipework from the previous Walker organ there dating from 1864.

#### RANKS:

##### Enclosed

			<b>pipes</b>
<b>A</b>	Gedackt	8-4-2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> -2	80
<b>B</b>	Dulciana 8ft (to bass A)	4-2	68
<b>C</b>	Celeste/Tierce (repeats top 7)	8-1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub>	61
<b>D</b>	Principal (to bass A)	8	56
<b>E</b>	Contra Fagotto (tenor C)	16-8-4	68

##### Unenclosed

<b>F</b>	Open Diapason	8	56
<b>G</b>	Principal	4-2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> -2	68
<b>H</b>	Chimney Flute	8-4	68
<b>J</b>	Krummhorn (tenor C)	8	44

#### GREAT

		<b>from rank</b>
1.	Open Diapason	<b>F</b>
2.	Stopped Diapason	<b>H</b>
3.	Principal	<b>G</b>
4.	Octave Flute	<b>H</b>
5.	Twelfth	<b>G</b>
6.	Fifteenth	<b>G</b>
7.	Krummhorn (tenor C)	<b>E</b>

*(changed to 8ft with complete compass in 2009)*

**POSITIV** (enclosed)

1. Gedackt	8	<b>B</b>
2. Lieblich Flute	4	<b>A</b>
3. Piccolo	2	<b>A</b>
4. Sifflöte	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	<b>B</b>
5. Octavin	1	<b>B</b>
6. Cymbal 2 rks	1- <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	<b>B</b>
7. Contra Fagotto (tenor C)	16	<b>E</b>
8. Fagotto	8	<b>E</b>
9. Octave Fagotto	4	<b>E</b>

**SWELL** (enclosed)

1. Principal	8	<b>D</b>
2. Gedackt	8	<b>B</b>
3. Dulciana	8	<b>B</b>
4. Celeste (tenor C)	8	<b>C</b>
5. Octave	4	<b>D</b>
6. Lieblich Flute	4	<b>A</b>
7. Nazard	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	<b>A</b>
8. Fifteenth	2	<b>B</b>
9. Tierce	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub>	<b>C</b>
10. Contra Fagotto (tenor C)	16	<b>E</b>
11. Fagotto	8	<b>E</b>

**PEDAL**

1. Contra Bass	16**	<b>B</b>
2. Echo Bass	16**	<b>A</b>
3. Octave	8	<b>F</b>
4. Bass Flute	8	<b>H</b>
5. Quint	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>	<b>H</b>
6. Choral Bass	4	<b>F</b>
7. Super Octave	4	<b>H</b>
8. Contra Fagotto	16**	<b>E</b>
9. Fagotto	8	<b>J</b>
10. Krummhorn	4	<b>J</b>

\*\* bottom octave electronic

**Couplers:**

Swell to Great; Swell to Pedal; Great to Pedal

## **Compass:**

Manuals: CC-g'''  
Pedals: CCC-F

## **Stop Control:**

Rocker tablets in a single row above Swell keyboard  
0.1.2. combination thumb pistons Swell  
0.1.2. combination thumb pistons Great/Pedals  
These are on the free-continental pattern with light indicators above the stops with selector switches for setting combinations. The rocker tablets do not move.

## **Electronic Bass Unit**

16 ft octave individually tuned notes; Acoustical Quad II  
15 watt amplifier; Goodman Audiom 61; 12 in bass speaker; 8 ft Resonator column.[1]

This 1964 organ was built by Alfred Davies & Sons, then of Northampton but designed by Michael Thomas who, I learnt subsequently, financed it.

Michael Thomas (1922-97), then living at Hurley Manor, was a talented harpsichordist and clavichord player although he was more widely known as a harpsichord maker and collector. His interest in music of the baroque period doubtless gave him the impetus to have this instrument built. It is important to realise that in 1963-64 there were almost no English organ builders building classical, mechanical action, organs.[2] Doubtless consideration of cost led Michael to choose Alfred Davies & Son to build what, at that time and in England, might have been considered the next best thing.[3]

Jack Davies (1886-1968) built two similar organs in Iceland[4] in the early 1960s, both with extension and free-combination stop-control. I found the latter an excellent system once one was used to it. However, although I do not know personally how time has dealt with the Shinfield instrument Harry Russell has kindly updated me.[5] As for the lower notes of the 16' being electronic, I found that - at least then - this was by far the most unsatisfactory sound on the instrument, although Jack Davies had been involved many years before with electronic organs, marketing his "Gregorian" two-manual electronic instrument. The Shinfield Organ Console is shown below.



Preparing for this recital was beset by frequent abandonment of practice sessions on it because the main action fuse failed many times! The programme was as follows:

Prelude and Fugue in G (BWV 541)                      J.S.Bach (1685-1750)

Partitas on *Jesu meine Freude*                      J.G.Walther (1684-1748)

Fantasia (Op.60)                      Arnold Cooke (1906-2005)

Voluntary in G mi                      John Alcock (1715-1806)

Introduction and Fugue (c1951)                      Walter Pach (1904-77)

I had intended to play Liszt's *Prelude and Fugue on the name BACH* but at the last moment - I think it was when there was a rehearsal with the choir - it became obvious that the dry acoustic of the church would be even more so with a congregation. The substituted work by Walter Pach, a pupil of Franz Schmidt and friend of Susi Jeans, proved ideally suited to the organ and the situation. The Walther variations were excellent for displaying the different mutation stops. My former

teacher, the composer Arnold Cooke, who had been a pupil of Hindemith in Berlin from 1929 until 1932, wrote the *Fantasia* for me for the occasion and came to the event.<sup>[6]</sup>

The first time the organ was heard on that occasion was to accompany Malcolm Williamson's jaunty *Te Deum*, then quite in vogue and a favourite of Bishop Knell. After the recital there were prayers and two hymns.

The tune ANGEL-VOICES to *Angel voices ever singing* was one that, for a long time before, I had found rather insipid - until about 1961 when I heard Dr A.C.P. (Nimbo) Embling (c1874-1963) accompany it. Dr Embling, from about 1900 and for many years, had been organist of St Laurence Reading. He knew well the "language" of Victorian hymn tunes. It all then made sense. Finally, *Now thank we all our God* was sung to Geoffrey Beaumont's *hymnody-lite* tune which, after the service, brought an acerbic comment from Dr Cooke, "Luther wrote a very fine tune to that hymn".

It may well be that such an instrument as at Shinfield is considered *passé* these days but, for the time, it was a welcome addition to the assemblage of local organs.

[1] About ten years ago the electronic bottom octave of the 16 ft pedal stops were renewed with like-for-like parts and the amplifier converted to solid state instead of valves. My thanks are due to Harry Russell for this information.

[2] See John Rowntree and John Brennan, *The Classical Organ in Britain*, vol.1, 1955-1974 (2/1987).

[3] Compare John Webster's imaginative and similar extension Swell department in the organ at the Chapel of University College Oxford (by J.W.Walker Ltd), using extension - but less pushed-to-the-limit-and classically voiced, dating from 1955.

[4] At Stokkseyri and at Kopavogskirkja, Reykjavik. There may have been others in England.

[5] All the direct pallet magnets were replaced by Tarquin Wiggins in 2009 and the Great Organ 16 ft (TC) Krummhorn was converted to

eight foot with the necessary additional pipes. I understand that the reeds that had previously been in the 1864 instrument were restored to closer to their pre-1964 state. Perhaps others may judge the rightness of that! Otherwise all was well at the time.

[6] This was later published by Hinrichsen in *Anthology of Organ Music* (Second Series) vol.11 (1971), pp 20-30 plus a commentary by Gordon Philips. Francis Routh in [www.musicweb-international.com/routh/Establishment.htm](http://www.musicweb-international.com/routh/Establishment.htm) gives another account of the work (accessed 29 November 2013).

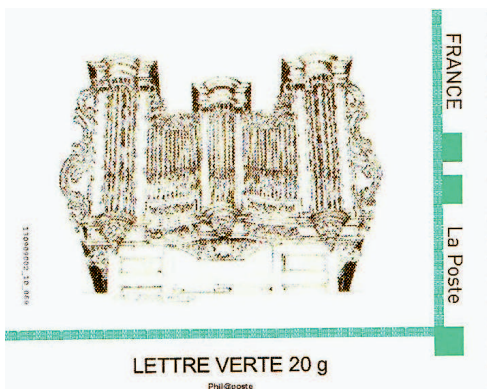
## 10.5 The Organ on stamps and luxury items

- Mark Jameson

I start this selection with a stamp from France - styled in the bespoke collectors frame showing the organ in the church of St Martin, Sierentz, France - the original item is very pale. Sierentz is a commune in the Haut-Rhin department of Alsace. The organ is by Jaque Besancon and dates from 1773, originally located in the Hochkirch before St Martins. During WW2 the case was seriously damaged by soldiers and a replacement front case was built in 1977. For more details of the organ please see

<http://decouverte.orgue.free.fr/orgues/sierentz.htm>

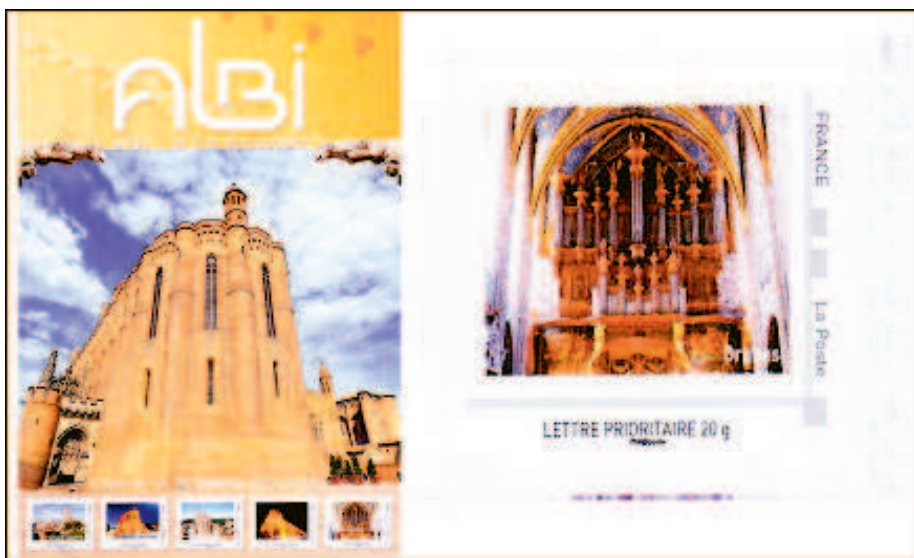
- there is currently a restoration appeal for this instrument.





In 2012 the French collector series issued 12 stamps in one of their descriptive folders for Albi - and the organ features on one stamp, see below. The illustration is much reduced as it is an A5 size folded which opens to A4, information inside on the left and 12 stamps on the right side. The pipe organ is Albi Cathedral, well documented. Dating from 1734-1736 it is considered to be a very fine case and organ. The most recent restoration was in 1996.

For more information on this organ, a good web site is <http://mypipeorganhobby.blogspot.co.uk/2009/01/albi-cathedral-france.html>



Rafael Perfumes of Paris - perfume stick advertised as ORGAN Perfumes! [very hard to scan] A real oddity! The white background is ribbed and has tiny white on white pipe openings whilst the gold 5 centre "pipes" are artistic pipes.



From the Cellars of Samsons comes Burgandy Wine - and this label appeared on one of their wines in 2012:



This website tells you more about the wine. <http://www.wine-searcher.com/wine-129459-0001-cellier-des-samsons-beaujolais-nouveau-beaujolais-france> The telephone number if one wants to visit is 0033 474690920, they are part of the Boisset group.

In 2013, the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris celebrated its 850th Anniversary. France and several nations have marked this in their stamp issues - the French issue is about the building and glass but no organ. Prolific producers of stamps, Guinée-Bissau have produced two mini sheets featuring the Cathedral & various Popes; one of the stamps has pipes as a back ground.

Pipes behind Pope.



## The complete mini-sheet



Stamps featuring Dr Schweitzer continue to appear, though very few now show him seated at the organ. This Republic of Niger set that appeared in October 2013 has him seated at the organ - the same photograph has appeared many times before. Several versions of the mini-sheets have been issued but only one actual stamp design with the organ.



Niue Island in the South Pacific is administered by New Zealand, but it issues its own coins and stamps. Their coins are minted in Germany, and like many nations, makes a healthy income from producing more coins and stamps than the local market really needs.

Niue in 2010 produced a small series of stamps and coins featuring famous churches. These are legal currency and have the face value of one New Zealand dollar. Westminster Abbey featured, but no organ. This one has the Queen's head over part of the organ case of St Stephen's Dom in Vienna, it is in silver and 5000 were minted.



Japan is a major importer of pipe organs. In Tokyo, back in 1991 three new pipe organs built by M Garnier of France were installed in the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre. The complex includes a main concert hall, playhouse, and west and east theatres. The sheet below appeared in 2012 and the two main organs can be seen. The organ with the rounded cases has 5 manuals 58/32, 63 stops with French names, 8286 pipes and mechanical action. The organ with the classic style case has 37 stops, 3 manuals 54/30 and German stop names, mechanical action voiced in Baroque style, the number of pipes is not shown. I have the full stop list in "Organs of Japan, Volume 2" but much text is in Japanese!





In both 2012 and 2013 Portugal has issued as series of tiny stamps featuring their historic cathedrals. The stamps have split views - exterior and interior. In 2012, 10 stamps were issued, and one featured Faro Cathedral. Using a magnifying glass one can see the

horizontal reeds that were added by a Portuguese organ builder. The organ dates from 1701 and was installed by Schnitger pupil Johann Heinrich Ulenhampf, it is not clear whether Ulenhampf or Schnitger built it. This is the stamp and the organ:



In 2013 a different layout was used - and the pictures became smaller featuring 8 more cathedrals. All the pictures used for both sets have been taken from the west end of the buildings. Here is the stamp, and photograph of the old Cathedral of Se Nova in Coimbra, and photograph from the Cathedral's web site.

The town of Coimbra has a number of churches with organs and they are well documented in the book "Baroque Organ-Cases of Portugal"



by Carlos de Azevedo dating from 1970 published by Uitgeverij Frits Knuf of Amsterdam - but misses this one.

Finally, to Romania, and the capital Bucharest, where there is a large concert hall known as The Athenaeum which in 2013 celebrated 150 years. The hall is the home of "George Enescu" Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Festival. In 2011 a minisheet was issued showing the 20th anniversary of the music competition and for the 150th anniversary two stamps were issued late in 2013, one featuring the outside and the other, the organ. Below is the mini-sheet, and then the individual stamp, slightly reduced:



The organ is a Walcker, and the link below takes you to a superb site - and the specification of this organ.

[http://www.walcker.com/opus/2000\\_2999/2654-bukarest-athenaeum.html](http://www.walcker.com/opus/2000_2999/2654-bukarest-athenaeum.html)

## 10.6 Tremulants

- David Butler

The development of the device in Europe was evidently known about by English organ builders, including Henry Willis, but it made no appearance in new organs until the middle of the nineteenth century. It is interesting to note that Hill, in his proposal for a rebuilding of the Birmingham Town Hall organ in 1842, included a 'Tremblant' but this was not included in the specification until much later. By 1853, however, the device was beginning to appear in most organ specifications --not least that for the organ in The Panopticon which included two tremulants. Whilst S S Wesley knew the organ in the Lutheran Church of the Savoy<sup>[i]</sup> and must have at least heard the device, he did not feel inclined to include one in his specification for a new organ for The St George's Hall, Liverpool, which he drew up in 1846. Interestingly, neither did Cavaillé Coll in the specification he drew up in 1847 for the same instrument. Hill, however, seems to have been an early convert to the inclusion of the Tremulant in his specifications (although he seems not to have been able to convince those responsible for ordering new organs), as he included two devices in the specification he proposed for The St George's Hall organ put forward in 1851 - a proposal which Willis carried through in the organ he built for that building in 1855.

Given that Cavaillé Coll did not include the device in his specification was he maybe pandering to the tastes of the English, who, at that time, do not seem to have been attracted to the effect the use of the device produced. Interestingly of the nineteen organs exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851 not one boasts a tremulant. In the Exhibition catalogue, Willis refers to his version of the Barker lever, Holdich to his Dioceticon, Forster & Andrews to a transposing device and Hill to his newly invented Tuba Mirabilis. There are no references to a tremulant which would, at this time, have been a novelty device for most Exhibition visitors. From around 1852, however, the device was included in most new instruments and indeed, in some concert hall organs more than one was installed.

Given the widespread use of the device in European organs and visits to Europe by a number of English organ builders during the preceding decade, to France in particular, it is bemusing as to why none of the organs exhibited at The Great Exhibition of 1851 contained a Tremulant.<sup>[iii]</sup> Willis in particular must have been developing his own



tremulant device, as he submitted a patent in 1853 for 'An Improved Tremulant'. Even Cavaillé-Coll who had been developing his own variable speed tremulant did not include one in the organ he exhibited. Willis' patent was not for an improvement in the action of the tremulant *per se* but for a tremulant in which the rate of pulsation could be changed by the organist by means of a pedal on the console in the French style. So, what had changed since 1851 that encouraged organ builders to provide specifications including the device? More to the point, for organs to be built which included it - indeed, sometimes more than one?

It is a fact that the tremulant became a very popular device on the organ from the middle of the nineteenth century with very few new organs being built without one, whether they needed one or not. Even the smallest of country church organs contained one as evidenced by the specifications of two small organs built during the 1860s by a country builder John Laycock in Lancashire. These were one of ten stops (16' 8' and 4'), the other of twelve stops (16' 8' 4'), both in small village Methodist Chapels and each containing a tremulant.<sup>[iii]</sup> Can we connect this interest in the device perhaps with the harmonium? This instrument which has its origins in antiquity came to prominence in Europe during the Eighteenth Century and became an addition to many home parlours, churches and chapels. The sound they produce from wind blown against free reeds is tremulous, similar to the sound produced when a tremulant is used to disturb the air in organ pipes. The harmonium, and its close cousin the American Organ were very popular in Victorian times and it is tempting to conclude that in many churches and chapels as organs began to appear to take the place of the harmonium or American Organ that the congregation wanted to retain, in some form, the tones of the reed organ.

One of the early builders of American Organs in America was the Estey Organ Company which, in 1867 created a fan tremulant to disturb the air round their new invention, the Vox Humana Tremelo. The fan was made from cardboard and maybe was the catalyst for the fan tremulant favoured by American organ builders such as Austin: 'fan tremulants were standard equipment in Austin organs'.<sup>[iv]</sup> The picture<sup>[v]</sup> is of the type of tremulant they use - the fan blades are placed above the pipes and rotated by means of an electric motor activated by a stop on the console.



Organs in England also began to be used increasingly in secular buildings, as concert instruments, in the early Nineteenth Century - as technology began to take hold in the new industrialised world. One of the earliest, and very substantial, of these new instruments, built purely with concert performances in mind was that built by Flight & Robson in 1817 which they named The Apollonicon. This vast instrument (for its day and even by today's standards) incorporated no less than five consoles and was capable of being played as a barrel organ or from each console in the conventional fashion. It was designed to provide a broad range of music to entertain the populace and the specification included a pair of timpani and a variety of stops imitating orchestral instruments - but no tremulant. The instrument made its mark as in a publication of 1849 entitled *Sketches of London Life*, a writer, referring to the packed auditorium of a theatre as seen from above, says 'there is every variety of organ present. A phrenologist doubtless would play a voluntary on them as easily as Mr Adams does on the Apollonicon'.

This organ, with its ranks of pipes imitating orchestral instruments, opened the way for the concert instruments which would appear later in the century in municipal halls up and down the country. Organs that would be used to accompany huge choruses in large-scale oratorios would also be used to provide entertainment in their own right. In the latter capacity a great many organ transcriptions of orchestral and operatic works were produced by people such as W. T. Best. Every effort would have been made to ensure the instrument was versatile and provided with sufficient playing aids to ensure the organist could produce the great variation of tone and dynamic which

an orchestra produces. Audsley suggested that the English school of organ building reached its high point in the development and implementation of the concert room organ.<sup>[vi]</sup> He cites Henry Willis as being the builder most linked with this development in organ design. Certainly the instrument Willis built for The St George's Hall in Liverpool was in sharp contrast to those he built for ecclesiastical buildings in sheer size if nothing else. The gestation period for this organ was some nine years - Dr S. S. Wesley produced a comprehensive proposal (see appendix) for an organ of four manuals, eighty-six stops and 7,680 pipes in 1846. Over the next nine years, further proposals were submitted by Cavaillé-Coll and Hill until finally Henry Willis was given the contract and built the instrument in 1855. A comparison of the Wesley and Willis specifications (see appendices) shows that whilst many of Wesley's proposed stops were included, Willis substantially increased the size of the instrument, providing 110 stops, many of which were placed on a Solo manual (the fourth manual in Wesley's design was for coupling the other three manuals). Many of the additional stops were orchestral such as piccolo, clarinet, bassoon, oboe and orchestral flute. The concert room organ was to be further developed by Robert Hope-Jones whose work was not appreciated by all but who was instrumental in the design of the organs produced in the early part of the twentieth century for cinemas. These electrically controlled instruments relied on solid foundation stops and large tremulants.

Within this period of development (1850 onwards) the tremulant appears with increasing regularity as a device not just in ecclesiastical organs but also in the organs produced for cinemas. The sound produced by these instruments relied heavily on tremulants and to many purists was considered vulgar.

In his book *Organs and Organ Building* C. A. Edwards comments that the tremulant had been 'revived and improved by the French' and was to be found in most modern organs.<sup>[vii]</sup> He qualifies the usefulness of the device in like manner to many others by saying 'when judiciously and not too frequently brought into play, it is of great use to the organist'. It seems that even by this time, given that the device had only been in common usage in England for some twenty five years, the abuse of it was well established. He comments that 'unfortunately many performers get into the habit of using this (tremulant) as well as the voix celeste and such exceptional registers,

more than is either justifiable or pleasant'. This abhorrence at the misuse of the device was still prevalent in the early part of the next century.

John Matthews, writing of *The Restoration of Organs*, suggests that the device is best omitted from a specification for a small country church where its use can be 'particularly objectionable'.<sup>[viii]</sup> He likens the sound to 'our friend Mr La T. Soll of the music halls, who never opens his lips without bleating like a goat'. He does say that, under favourable conditions, presumably a building with good resonant acoustic properties, a quiet refined beat is 'a perfectly legitimate addition'. Maybe this is a clue as to why the device created such hostility in England, as many of our parish churches do not possess the large resonant acoustic characteristic of the European churches.

Noël Bonavia-Hunt, writing in 1947, suggests that a well designed tremulant is a boon to the performance of modern organ music.<sup>[ix]</sup> He comments on the state of devices he has come across suggesting that many were poorly regulated and badly put together. Given that he was writing just after the Second World War, one cannot be totally surprised that many instruments were probably not at the top of churches' priority lists when it came to spending money. He suggests that 228 beats a minute is the optimum speed at which the device should beat to get the best result and going on to suggest that the best way to get a tremulant to perform properly is by supplying its wind supply via a long fixed trunk.

Two surveys of organs - undertaken almost a century apart - highlight the difference in acceptability (and probably availability) of the device between continental Europe and England. The first was undertaken in The Netherlands in 1774 by Joachim Hess, Organist and Campanologist of Gouda. In his survey of church organs in Holland he lists 169 instruments providing stop lists. Of these, sixty seven include tremulants - indeed nineteen have more than one.<sup>[x]</sup> In 1840 Hamilton's *Catechism of the Organ* appeared providing similar details of organs in England.<sup>[xi]</sup> This was updated in 1865 in a third edition. At this time the Tremulant was beginning to appear in English organs however, of the 121 organs detailed only seventeen include tremulants and only three have more than one. A further interesting document is that produced by Alexander Buckingham, an artisan who travelled the country maintaining and improving organs. He noted down details of the organs he visited between 1823 and

1844 and of the 179 organs referred to, not one includes a Tremulant.<sup>[xii]</sup> A later document suggests that whilst the device was beginning to flourish, it may not have been well known. The document in question was produced by John Hiles in 1876 and called *A Catechism of the Organ*. In it he provides a thorough description of the various parts and actions of an organ, its constructions and the nature of the stops generally to be found in such instruments. In all this he makes absolutely no reference to a tremulant.<sup>[xiii]</sup>

The first edition of *The Organ; Its History and Construction* by Hopkins and Rimbault in 1855 reflects the rapid growth in popularity of the device in that, of the organs listed in England, forty one include at least one tremulant, whilst some have more. Indeed, the list also reflects the development of the concert hall organ as ten of those listed and including tremulants are in civic buildings - these include The Royal Albert Hall (1871), The Crystal Palace (1857), The Alexandra Palace (1868) and The Free Trade Hall in Manchester (1857).

From the earliest records of tremulants to the present day there have been supporters and detractors of the device. There have been those who advocate its use and others who have felt that its demise is long overdue. In England it is interesting to note the comments made in Grove's *Dictionary of Music* and organ tutors. Grove in 1889 compares the tremulant to the tremolando in the singing voice. Having made this comparison the article goes on to comment that the device 'is happily much less in vogue in this country than on the continent where its abuse is simply offensive'. As if that was not bad enough, the writer goes on to say that 'it is difficult to conceive how good taste can tolerate these rhythmical pulsations of a purely mechanical pathos'.<sup>[xiv]</sup> These comments remain in the appropriate entries in the 1910 and 1928 editions, but by 1954 there is a very slight acceptance that maybe the device is here to stay and provides a recommendation as to its use being that it should be used sparingly, particularly in 'genuine organ music'.

Almost without exception, English authors of books and articles concerning organs, their history, construction and use, make a point of saying that tremulants should be used sparingly, if used at all. Given the proliferation of devices installed in late Victorian instruments and the fact that, according to most writers, many were inferior or badly adjusted, one can possibly understand the reticence

of serious musicians to defend the device. It has been suggested that the rise of the cinema organ, where tremulant usage was mandatory, is perhaps to blame for the abuse of the device by some church organists.

Further afield, Audsley, writing in 1910,<sup>[xv]</sup> said that 'when judiciously and artistically used, the tremulant imparts a pleasing effect to the voices of certain stops'. He went on to say that 'too liberal and tasteless employment of the tremelo is essentially vulgar and distressing to the educated ear'. In commenting on the use of the device in the concert hall organ he said that 'much of the beauty of the tremolant depends upon the character and speed of the tremelo it generates'. Tremulants are, he said, too powerful and rapid generally and it is this lack of control which seems to be at the root of people's prejudice against the device. Alan Howarth of Harrison & Harrison Limited has written that he has 'seen tremulants beating so fast and violently that they not only rattled the reservoir weights but sometimes shook the organ frame, and parts of the church too'.

After the second World War there was something of a renaissance of the classical organ and tremulants properly adjusted. Peter Hurford, writing in his book *Making Music on the Organ* (1990) makes the comment that 'the tremulant can be a bane or a blessing'.<sup>[xvi]</sup> He does however go on to say that the device is 'the most neglected of the organ's artistic devices and one of the most important'. Here at last is someone in England writing more positively about the device and its value to artistic organ playing.

The first source of information and advice for most organists is the teaching primer they use when learning the instrument which imparts information about the instrument they are learning to play as well as technical help on how to play it. Three early versions of such books were produced by Walter Alcock, Frederic Archer and John Stainer and all were very wary of the tremulant.

Walter Alcock says in his book that 'the true artist will use this appliance (the tremulant) with the greatest reserve and for a very short time only'.<sup>[xvii]</sup> A comment echoed by Frederic Archer who, in his 1875 book, who goes a little further in doubting its relevance to the instrument. He says that the device 'should be used with great discretion as it soon becomes wearisome and can scarcely be considered a strictly legitimate adjunct of organ playing'.<sup>[xviii]</sup> Finally,

John Stainer goes even further, in advocating that the early student should avoid the device altogether.<sup>[xix]</sup> He echoes the comments made by Alcock and Archer, that great judgement be used in selecting 'those rare and brief occasions on which it may effectively be called into play' considering at the same time that it is a 'matter of regret that many players make far too much use of the somewhat artificial and as captandum device'.

The foremost exponent of organ playing in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century was W. T. Best and in the book *Impressions of W. T. Best*, by John Mewburn Levien<sup>[xx]</sup> there are comments on Best's approach to using the tremulant. He says that Best's rule was that 'it should only be used in those phrases which abound in musical expression and not continued in a senseless manner for a length of time'. He goes on to say that Best 'would draw the tremulant, for instance, for the last Ave Maria in Schubert's immortal song, using the Swell in that moving way that was one of the characteristics of his playing, and the effect was one to linger in the memory, as a moment of exquisite beauty. That might be his only use of the tremulant in an hour's recital'.

The tremulant is now an accepted device included on most organs in England; indeed more than one being included on some larger instruments. It could be interesting to speculate whether the demise of theatre organs in our cinemas has made the experience of hearing the effect more acceptable to the ear or has our exposure over the last 50 years to French organ music had an affect. Who can tell. I started off my exploration of the device by looking at organs of the 15th and 16th centuries which included numerous extraneous entertaining devices and as I conclude, John Mander has just built an organ to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in which he has included a nightingale stop which activates a carved bird that rises above the casework. *Déjà vu?*

[i] Barnes, A. and Renshaw, M. *The Life and Work of John Snetzler* (Cambridge 1994), 221.

[ii] The Great Exhibition of 1851 Catalogue.

[iii] Hughes, B. *John Laycock Weaver & Organbuilder* (London 2002), 31.

[iv] Ochse, O. *Austin Organs* (USA 2001), 103.



- [v] [www.panther.bsc.edu/~jhcook/OrgHist](http://www.panther.bsc.edu/~jhcook/OrgHist).
- [vi] Audsley, G.A. *The Art of Organ Building volume 1* (New York 1905), 245.
- [vii] Edwards, C.A. *Organs and Organ Building* (London 1881), 119.
- [viii] Matthews, J.A. *The Restoration of Organs* (London 1918), 108.
- [ix] Bonavia-Hunt, N. *The Modern British Organ* (London 1948), 228
- [x] Hess, J. *Dispositien der merkwaardigste Kerk-Orgelen* (Utrecht 1774 reprinted 1945).
- [xi] Hamilton, J.A *Catechism of the Organ* (London 1838 - reprinted 1992).
- [xii] Buckingham, A. 'Buckingham's Travels' (Buckingham's Journal, ed. L S Barnard), *The Organ* Volume LII 6-14, 50-57, 99-106, 175-183, Volume LIII 17-24, 30-37, 78-85, 119-126 Volume LIV 41-48.
- [xiii] Hiles, J. *Catechism of the Organ* (London 1876).
- [xiv] Grove, G. *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London 1889).
- [xv] Audesley, G.A. *The Organ of the Twentieth Century* (New York 1919).
- [xvi] Hurford, P *Making Music on the Organ* (London 1990), 9.
- [xvii] Alcock, W.
- [xviii] Archer, F. *The Organ - a Theoretical and Practical Treatise* (London 1875).
- [xix] Stainer, J. *The Organ* (London ).
- [xx] Levien, J.M. *Impressions of W T Best* (London 1942), 27.

Editor's Note: An illustrated 26 page A4 appendix to this article can be made available to those wanting further detail but was too large to be included in this Journal. It is possible that it will be made available on the Berkshire Organist web-site at a later date.



## 10.7 The Morningside Braid Church

- Malcolm Rigg



The Braid Church (later Morningside Braid) in Edinburgh was designed by George Washington Browne as a two storey Classical octagon and opened in 1887. It is now a listed building and no longer a functioning church. The organ was built in 1898 by Brindley & Foster, 2 manuals and pedals, 24 speaking stops and rebuilt in 1951 by Compton to a pipe specification:

### **Swell**

Lieblich Gedeckt	16'
Open Diapason	8'
Rohr Flöte	8'
Echo Gamba	8'
Voix Celeste	8'
Octave Diapason	4'
Harmonic Flute	4'

### **Great**

Bourdon	16'
Open Diapason I	8'
Open Diapason II	8'
Salicional	8'
Dolce	8'
Stopped Diapason	8'
Clarinet Flute	8'

Flageolet	2'	Principal	4'
Mixture III Ranks		Flute	4'
Double Oboe	16'	Twelfth	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
Cornopean	8'	Fifteenth	2'
		Trumpet	8'

### **Pedal(32 notes)**

Open Diapason	16'
Sub Bass	16'
Bourdon	16'
Octave	8'
Bass Flute	8'
Flute	4'
Trombone	16'
Harmonic Bass	32'

However with a reducing congregation and another church 100 metres away, the congregations united and the church was closed in 2003 at which time the organ remained but was in an unsafe state and beyond repair.



Subsequently in 2004 the organ console was removed but the organ itself remained. Later on, what was left of the organ pipes was given to Forth Organs so they would have them for spares and repairs to other organs.

The building was converted to a Pizza Express restaurant in 2012 but has kept the organ case façade and church wall inscriptions as part of the decor. Thus we can only imagine enjoying live organ music while sipping coffee unless a hifi system is introduced by the management of Pizza Express to play classical Bach.



Information about the organ was kindly supplied by David Stewart the Organist at Corstorphine St Anne's in Edinburgh and the Revd Dr Derek Browning Minister at Morningside Parish Church Edinburgh, which I gratefully acknowledge. Interior photos by Trevor Rigg and gratefully acknowledged.

## 10.8 Member News - Edward Reeve

- Mark Jameson



Here is an update on one of our younger members - Edward Reeve - from the web site at Salisbury Cathedral. Edward is a pupil of Graham Ireland.

"Salisbury Cathedral appoints one organ scholar annually. The scholarship is an ideal opportunity for a gap-year or postgraduate student to experience all aspects of cathedral music in a unique setting.

This year's Organ Scholar is Edward Reeve, who came to Salisbury having been Organ Scholar of Reading Bluecoat School, and Organist at St Andrew's Church in Caversham Heights. Next year Edward moves to Cambridge, to take up an organ scholarship at Queen's College.

Next year's Organ Scholar (2014-15) will be Kris Thomsett, who is currently Organ Scholar of Norwich Cathedral. "

Edward has also been busy elsewhere. On 26th January 2014 he played the Sunday afternoon recital at St Paul's Cathedral in London, his programme there was:

Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor J. S. Bach

Solemn Prelude, arranged by Harvey Grace Edward Elgar

Fantasia and Fugue on B-A-C-H Franz Liszt

Edward also attended the Organ Club Masterclass held on 15th February 2014 at St Saviour's church St Albans - this organ is the St Albans Festival Organ built in 1989 by Peter Collins to the design of Peter Hurford designed in the style of a Silbermann organ. Players soon know this instrument has many challenges. For the masterclass, given by David Titterington, Edward played the J S Bach Passacaglia BWV582 very expertly. The photograph below shows him getting

used to the instrument just prior to the masterclass after a weather-delayed 6 hour journey from Salisbury.



## 10.9 An Appreciation

- Ken Gaines

Having joined the Berkshire Organists Association as a "non-playing" member in 2011 I would like to place on record my appreciation of the friendly welcome and acceptance by other members. This includes those from whom I am far apart in terms of ability, accomplishment and qualification. Their courtesy has also been extended to my wife who sometimes joins me as my guest at BOA events. My lack of ability stems from several factors some of which may be termed as "excuses". I never learned to play the piano (as I was one of twins my parents could not afford lessons and we did not have a piano anyhow). However, I did try to teach myself on my mother's little American organ. Sadly she was not much help as she could only play using tonic sol-fa, (those who claim this is not possible had never witnessed her playing). Eventually, I did have a few lessons at a nearby Garrison Church with a family friend who was



organist there. Inevitably, business and church commitments meant less time could be devoted to this but above all, my long-suffering tutor must have despaired over my lack of concentration - a lack that has served me ill since schooldays. Now, when asked if I play the organ I usually reply that I play at the organ - there is a subtle difference. I am sometimes dragooned into playing for a service on the 2 manual Allen at our little church, Binfield Heath Congregational, and the folk pretend to not notice any mistakes. I have previously written about my early retirement job as an "organ tuner's assistant" and my passion for organs. However, an organ is nothing without someone to play it as many churches, large and small, are now realising

I have therefore a great admiration for those who faithfully serve as organists -and perhaps have to train a choir also, week by week, for little or no financial reward. How many people stop to consider that these dedicated souls did not just drop from the sky (though many were no doubt inspired from "above"). Their dedication stems from the discipline over years of constant practise, exercises, studying for grades and qualifications. I have sometimes gone into a church where a student is laboriously practising scales or an organist is repeatedly going over a few bars of a piece to bring it to as near perfection as possible. Sometimes when we were tuning an organ for a recital the recitalist would come in to try the organ and courteously ask if there were any technical problems that he or she should take into account. I remember one well known recitalist still in his travelling garb showing amazing dexterity on the pedals whilst wearing huge trainers!!! Again such skill doesn't just happen; it is honed with the same patient persistence found in most organists. It is good to note that more youngsters are being encouraged to learn the organ now - may this long continue. May I again say a big THANKYOU to all organists and others that seek to promote organs and organ music who, all too often, are taken for granted.

## **10.10 Harry Russell presents the Harmonium**

- John Jebb

Very sadly Sylvia Collins, who often wrote the reviews of talks presented to the Berkshire Organists Association passed away unexpectedly after the last gathering. Christine Wells (who invited

me to attend as her guest) asked me if I would step in and write a short review.

We gathered at St. Andrews URC, in Reading on a damp Saturday 11th January in the New Year 2014 to hear about a musical device known by various names most often the harmonium. Probably everyone has heard of one often in connection with a Church and for my part, an episode of "Dad's Army". Intrigued we mingled and chatted before finding our seats to listen to the President of the Berkshire Organists Association, Harry Russell.



Harmonium photo from Harry Russell

We are looking at a table with a sound system on it when Harry Russell hands us each a printed piece of paper. On either side of it are images relating to the harmonium. Our curiosity is piqued. Harry begins with his personal introduction to "a wheezy, hideous old thing" and plays a recording of the opening movement of Rossini's *Petite*

*Messe Solennelle 'Kyrie eleison'*. He continued with a history of early manufacture in Europe of a quality instrument based on pushing air through, as opposed to its American cousin the reed organ which sucked air through, and was produced in large quantities in the United States. Essentially, the European market catered to churches and serious musicians, whereas the American strategy aimed at the amateur and popular markets. He explained the intriguing manipulation of the self contained instrument pumping air with the feet and controlling the flow with the knees creating drone sounds underlaying notes played on the keyboard with further control of types of sound through the 'stops'.

Harry carefully elucidated the mechanics of the European instrument with references to the illustrations provided and spoke about its evolution right up to a brief resurgence of its use at the turn of this century led in part by such figures as Ann Gates, Professor of the Harmonium at the Royal Academy of Music, who still teaches its use.

He mentioned its relationship to the accordion, harmonica and later during the quiz to my surprise the bagpipes! However, we were played extracts of compositions for the harmonium over the stereo that demonstrated the intricacies of various sound patterns replicated with this ingenious instrument, almost a forerunner of the contemporary electronic keyboard. These 12 tracks in total also included pieces by Franck, Hakim, Vierne and Karg-Elert.

As Harry's presentation wound down we learned of the rather sad state of affairs in our own country whereby a harmonium museum in Saltaire, West Yorkshire and two workshops specialising in harmonium repair have all closed their doors. And so too, our afternoon's overview of this fascinating instrument and its place in the musical landscape of Western culture came to an end. Many thanks to Harry Russell.

As mentioned, we rounded off the afternoon with a quiz presented by Harry Russell for which our little grey cells were admirably put to work, whilst indulging our appetites courtesy the lovely ladies who prepared tea, sandwiches and cakes.



## 10.11 Tuning Tales *Behind the organ*

- Ken Gaines

Last year I related how the lid of a discarded American organ was used for an emergency floor repair to support the sinking corner post of an organ. This is the only case I can recall where the junk behind an organ actually came in useful. We had long ceased to be amazed at what we would find behind some organs. Stacked or broken chairs were somewhat standard fare as were piles of books and other discarded artefacts. Access to the back of the organ is often impeded by trestle tables leant against the rear panels. The blower box often forms a useful surface on which to deposit stacks of music books. Sometimes these fouled the blind cord resulting in either under blowing or over blowing with consequent SOS calls to the factory. In one church where the small but historic organ backed on to the front end of an aisle the, admittedly, useful space had been utilised to form a prayer chapel. The work had been expertly and beautifully done with a newly carved oak screen and reredos. Unfortunately the latter was attached to the back of the organ where access for tuning was required!

In a small church on the far side of Herefordshire there was an infestation of mice who must have thought they were in Heaven let alone being in church. Behind the Walker organ there were piles of old discarded hassocks which had evidently been stuffed with wood shavings. A family of mice had moved into one of these desirable residences and had evidently invited their relatives and friends to occupy some of the other tenements. There was plenty of work available for them much of which seemed to consist of "modifying" the organ by perforating the bellows, chewing numerous wooden components and inserting tiny black wedges between the keys etc. While we were there a church warden came in complaining that the organ wasn't working properly. We explained to her what was happening and suggested that they should get rid of the mice and burn the old hassocks. She retorted that they couldn't dispose of the old hassocks as the now ancient lady who had donated them 50 plus years ago was still alive and as for the mice, as God's creatures, they were as much entitled to be in church as anyone else. Before this latter-day St. Francis returned to whatever planet she seemed to inhabit she made it clear neither she nor her sister (who played the organ) would agree to trapping, poisoning or otherwise getting rid of the mice. "All you've got to do is get that organ working properly," she ended. There

seemed to be no point in reminding her that this was a tuning visit and not a rebuild contract. Although the firm's policy is to give the tuner discretion to do minor repairs on a tuning visit, no way could this damage be described as minor. Needless to say no tuning or repairs were done that day and a letter was sent from our office disclaiming responsibility until the infestation had been dealt with.

A village church in Shropshire possessed a small but rather nice 2 manual Binns organ donated as a war memorial in the 1920s. Because of a very narrow passage board tuning was always difficult but well worthwhile. On one visit we needed to repair a Bourdon motor situated at the rear. By removing a panel at the side we were able to access the space behind the organ which we had never needed to visit before. It would seem that this space had never been visited since the organ builders left it 60 or 70 years previously and was consequently uncluttered. However we did find an old pen knife, a couple of mugs and an old newspaper all well covered in dust. It seems space for the organ had been made by opening up an old vestry because, astonishingly, very close to the organ there was a fire place with ashes still in the grate! No doubt the organ builders had used the grate to brew up or even keep themselves warm. There were occasions when we could have done with such a facility in some of the very cold churches we had to work in.

Many organs have been built into a transept or part of a transept making use of available space without too much building work. Inevitably, sometimes, doorways have been blocked, windows obscured and memorials hidden from view. I have always found it interesting to read some of the memorial tablets which often, if the attributes are to be believed, are for some worthy who was evidently too good for this world. Some though are somewhat sad like one to a mid 19th century incumbent who buried 10 of his 11 children and his wife before joining them at what would now be regarded as a very tender age. There is a rarely seen memorial in the parish church at St. Briavals in the Forest of Dean. At first sight it would appear to be unremarkable. However, closer examination and careful reading suggests there may have been an engraving error when the tablet was made. It reads:-

Near this place lies interred  
 WILLIAM JAMES  
 of Soilwell in the Parish of Lydney  
 died 6th February 1741 aged 46  
 Also Frances  
 daughter of the above W. James by Ann his wife  
 died 28th February 1766 aged 23  
 This monument was erected by the above Mrs. Ann James  
 Also ANN wife of the above William James  
 died 20th November 1784 aged 73

How could Francis be only 23 when she died almost 25 years after her father? Even supposing Francis was nearly 24 when she died, these dates suggest that she would have been conceived at least 3 months after her father's death! Was she a biological freak? The answer is rather more prosaic but still quite interesting. In 1752 Great Britain and the American Colonies belatedly adopted the Gregorian calendar whereby that year, the 2nd of September was immediately followed by the 14th of September and importantly, the years would, thenceforth, commence on the 1st of January instead of Lady Day (March 25th). Since the 6th of February when William died was before Lady Day, it was reckoned to be 1741 whereas we would call it 1742. Even so it is most unlikely that William ever saw his infant daughter. An interesting survival from the calendar changes is that, because of the lost days, the end of the fiscal year was moved from the 25th of March to the 5th of April. Thus the Tax Year still commences on the 6th April. The memorial tablet is situated behind the interesting 1920s Nicholson organ in an area not normally open to the public and can only be viewed with the permission of a church official.

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## 10.12 CD Review

- Mark Jameson

Some recent CD releases

January 2014 release *The Organ of St Chad Shrewsbury* is a private recording made for the Church by Regent to celebrate the restoration of the organ in 2011 by Harrison & Harrison. Some members of BOA were able to visit this church as part of the 2013 tour.

There has been a 3 manual organ at St Chad's since 1790 - originally by Robert & William Gray that cost 400 guineas. After a number of later alterations it was made into a new instrument in 1904 by Norman and Beard - the date of most pipework. It had continuous minor changes up to 1963 when Nicholson's changed the action from Tubular pneumatic to Electro-pneumatic with other minor tonal changes. Since the 1980's it has been in Harrison's care and the organ was fully rebuilt by them in 2011 costing over £300,000.



David Leeke is Director of Music whilst the Assistant Director of Music is **Richard Walker** who made this recording and is widely known as a recitalist.

This disc, reference **SCSCD001**, has a varied programme, starting with *March in D* by John Stainer. *Song* is a new work written in 2011 by Richard White, the County Music Advisor and part of a trilogy written for organ, here making its debut recording. Richard Walker studies Karg-Elert, and two works are included - *The Mirrored Moon* from Op.96 and *Ein Feste Burg*, Op 65, No.47. A favourite of mine, and a difficult work follows - the Lemare arrangement of Brahms *Academic Festival Overture*. Then two lighter works *The Cascades-A Rag* -Scot Joplin and *Zöe* by Australian composer Jeffery Fraser. The final and longest work is - *Peter and the Wolf* transcribed for organ by Heinrich Grimm; the narrator is Gay Walker.

An interesting recording, it shows more of the organ than can be obtained in any brief visit. The cost is £10 plus postage and only available from the Church - see [www.stchadschurchshrewsbury.com](http://www.stchadschurchshrewsbury.com) or phone 01743 365478.

**Organ Party, Volume 2** released in February 2014 by Priory [PRCD1094] features Kevin Bowyer playing the 2012 organ installations at Lancaster Priory. Much has been written in various publications but here is the opportunity to enjoy some superb playing of 21 very varied styles of music from the Victorian period to very modern though 79 minutes. These two organs - a 3 manual Willis of 1915 from Great Harwood Church now on the west gallery and a 2 manual 1904 Harrison from Blackburn Girls School in the North chancel have been blended into one instrument by David Wells topped by new horizontal fanfare trumpet. There is a long history of pipe organs here that came to an end when a Makin arrived in 1982. Kevin's playing is superb! **Illustration is below left:**



In 2012 I had the opportunity to get my hands on the keys at Roskilde Dom [Denmark] and hear the organ first hand. **Fugue State Films** are also CD producers and in a series to be launched in 2014 this disc was first made public at the Bloomsbury event in January. Others in the series will include the Martinkirk in Groningen. The Roskilde disc is **FSRCD005** and played by **Wim Van Beek** from The Hague. A brilliant all **JS Bach** recording it features nine works starting with Concerto in D BWV596; then smaller works BWV530 & BWV539, Chorale Preludes BWV653, 664, 659, 655, 657 finishing with the Praeludium et Fuga in C BWV547. Very high quality as usual. **(Illustration above middle)**

*A festival of English Organ Music, Volume 1* (Illustration above right) played by **Ben van Oosten** on the **Willis** organ in **Salisbury Cathedral** is superb! Ben regularly records for MDG and their recordings are always well documented, the text being in English, French and German, full information on each piece and specification of the organ. This disc is **MDG316 1836-2** and has 8 works lasting 72 minutes. The programme is 1/Hollins Concert Overture, 2/ Thalben-Ball Elegy in B Flat Major. 3/ Stanford's Op57 Fantasia & Toccata; 4/ Divertimento in B Minor by Whitlock; 5/ W. T. Best Scherzo in A Minor. 6/ is Lemare Rondo Capriccio, 7 Elgar's Nimrod and 8/the complete Elgar Sonata Op28 in G Major. Due for release in the UK in March 2014, it will be available through local retailers. Highly recommended!

### 10.13 The new Ancient & Modern - a review

- David Duvall

*'If I were a cassowary  
In the plains of Timbuctoo,  
I would eat a missionary:  
Cassock, bands and hymn-book too.'*

If the 19th century bishop Samuel Wilberforce (reputed to have been challenged to find a rhyme for 'Timbuctoo', and needing some ornithological poetic licence to do so, as cassowaries are to be found in Australasia) wrote these words after 1861, we can be fairly sure which hymn-book he would have had in mind. There were hymn collections before Ancient and Modern, first published in that year, but none that were as widely adopted across England and the English-speaking world.

#### Background

'Ancient and Modern' went through several enlargements between 1861 and 1924, with the wholly new Revised edition (complete with ampersand) arriving in 1950. A&M Revised (AMR) has been much loved, and until now never truly replaced. A&M New Standard (1983) was a rather lazily cobbled together stopgap with about half the contents of AMR deleted and the 200 supplementary Hymns for Today items bolted on at the back; Common Praise (2000) called itself 'a new edition of Hymns Ancient & Modern' but its title,



intended to connect with Common Worship, went against it. More crucially for sales, neither of these books made enough of an attempt to meet the demand in many churches for a selection of the best of modern worship songs – this need being met in the opinion of many by Hymns Old & New, first published in 1986 and regularly updated since.

So – does the new (2013) edition, simply called ‘Ancient & Modern’ and subtitled quite cleverly ‘Hymns and Songs for refreshing worship’, achieve the holy grail of the ideal compromise between traditional hymns and worship songs? Indeed do we need to make that distinction any more? (and if we do, on which side of the divide would, for example, *Be still, for the presence of the Lord* or *In Christ alone* fall?)

The editors of the new A&M have set out to meet the challenge. ‘While some churches have a preferred style, others seek to broaden their worship experience with material from other countries, traditions and periods of history in an open and enthusiastic way’. They then admit that it is not easy to cater for such breadth and openness in a single book. With one end of the worship spectrum catered for by Hymns Old and New, Songs of Fellowship and others, and the other by the New English Hymnal, is there even a need for this challenge?

Personally I think there is. Assuming that a church, or other place of worship, wants a proper hymn-book (as opposed to printing the hymns out for every service or, worse, resorting to a projector and a screen which is askew, out of focus, hidden by pillars or all three) – one book is going to be preferable to two or more. So let us look at A&M on the reasonable premise that its existence is fulfilling a genuine need – a need for the present and for the future, that future being at least as long as copies bought now will last, i.e. upwards of 20 years.

### **Layout**

A&M, like its predecessors but unlike most other contemporary hymn-books, makes a real effort to group hymns and songs into themes, although 264 of the 847 items – just under a third – defy classification and are grouped as ‘General’. Within each section, hymns and songs are in alphabetical order of first line. The book

starts with some hymns for morning and evening, although it might have been better to kick off with the seasons of the Church's year, which then follow, from Advent all the way through to Trinity Sunday, Harvest and Saints' Days.

As Holy Communion / Mass is the main sung service in most churches, there is a greatly expanded section for this service, with subsection for Gathering, Penitence, The Word of God, Canticles, Prayer & Intercession, Holy Communion and Sending Out. There are several new sections under headings such as The Church's Ministry, Wholeness & Healing, Creation and Justice which will be useful if any of these is the theme for the day. The general hymns finish the book, with the exception of the last 18 items which are called 'Short Chants' – a little strange as there are quite a few short chants, by the Taizé community and others, in the body of the book.

A&M has broken the habit of previous A&Ms and has the indexes at the end rather than the beginning: just about every index you could want is there, including a thematic index, hymns to suit the Common Worship lectionary for each Sunday, and a Biblical index which is particularly useful if you want to find metrical versions of the Psalms.

## **Words**

What distinguishes A&M from its predecessors – and to my mind is its best feature – is the wealth of new material, at least in terms of the words. A great many of those of us who choose hymns long for a greater choice of new, original thoughts expressed in traditional metres, which can be sung either to an existing well-known tune or a good new one.

As well as the extensive section for Communion (129 items) which includes plenty of new hymns well worth trying out, there are welcome new ideas for Epiphany, Lent, and Pentecost which have hitherto been short of good material. The Christmas section contains most of what congregations normally sing at this season. Easter, on the other hand, seldom seems to bring out the best in hymn-writers, and there is little of interest here beyond the usual war-horses – a pity, given that Eastertide lasts for six Sundays (or as I prefer to think of it, five Sundays plus Rogation Sunday, for which sadly there is no special section, and William Walsham How's glorious *To thee, O God, we fly* is missing altogether).



The compilers have, I think, made a good effort in deciding what to include and exclude in terms of non-traditional songs. The best-loved and most commonly sung of them are all here – Graham Kendrick, for example, has 14 – and much use has been made of the Catholic music from Bernadette Farrell, Stephen Dean and Paul Inwood. There are 12 items from Stuart Townend and his collaborators, although personally I wonder how many of these apart from *In Christ alone* and possibly *How deep* will survive the test of time. There are also a fair number of traditional songs from outside the Western world which could work well in informal family services.

Of modern hymns in traditional metres, the strong, elegant poetry of Timothy Dudley-Smith (41 hymns) and Fred Pratt Green (14) is well represented. There are 33 items by John Bell of the Iona Community – a few too many perhaps, although these, together with hymns by such writers as Michael Forster (4), Marty Haugen (6) and Martin Leckebusch (11), are part of a deliberate encouragement to us to sing hymns and songs which make us sit up and think rather than taking Christianity for granted.

It's impossible to predict accurately what will and won't still be sung by the next generation – but I would join the compilers in estimating that, for example, *Be still*, *The Servant King*, and *Come and join the celebration* will survive and that (again for example) *Bind us together*, *Be bold, be strong* and *My God is so big* won't. The first three of these are in the book, the second three aren't.

They have also steered a middle ground in another areas where it's impossible to satisfy everyone – inclusive language. A&M has made alterations where a word or two changed doesn't upset the metre (e.g. *Good Christians all, rejoice*) but avoided the wholesale butchery inflicted by some other hymn-books. One of the finest hymns that we sing – *I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship* by William Fullerton – is mercifully left unaltered despite referring to 'the sons of men'.

## **Music**

I wish I could say that the same originality and inspiration present in the choice of words was equally evident in the music which accompanies these new words: I'm thinking particularly of those in

traditional metres. Bright, brave new words deserve bright, brave – but above all singable – new music.

In fairness, there are some good new tunes by John Barnard, who is one of the compilers, and by a few others such as Peter Nardone, Richard Shephard and Malcolm Archer. But I think they have found themselves short of good contemporary composers who are willing to write hymn-tunes – and so have either relied on a few such as the above or resorted to an existing tune in the appropriate metre. And some of those tunes are less than inspiring: look, for example, at *Nikolaus* (no. 413), *Everton* (445 – set quite rightly to *Blaenwern* in Hymns for Today) and *Laws' Psalm 47* (543). There are a great many metrical psalm-tunes in the book, some well-known and well-loved, others which might have been better unresurrected. Someone has discovered a vein of American folk-tunes, whose lines 1, 2 and 4 are identical with a slight variation in line 3 – suggesting that someone had rather too good a lunch in the middle of writing them and lost all inspiration thereafter.

Otherwise there are few surprises in the choice of tunes, and those looking for old favourites will normally find them – vital if the book is to sell well. It's good to see, for example, both fine tunes available for *Glorious things of thee are spoken* and for *The King of love my Shepherd is*: but again things could have been improved with a little more imagination. I find the wonder and glory of Easter morning so beautifully encapsulated when I'm playing – and singing – *The strife is o'er* to Melchior Vulpius's glorious *Gelobt sei Gott* as the recessional, with Healey Willan's fine prelude to follow as a voluntary. AMR had this as well as *Victory*, so why not also in the new A&M?

Purely personally – agree or disagree as you will – I would have liked to see *O Waly Waly* set to *Take up thy cross* as an alternative to the plodding *Breslau*; Gordon Slater's *St. Botolph* to *Let saints on earth in concert sing* as well as *Dundee*; and (I challenge you to try this one) *Rhuddlan* to *Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us* as a lively, inspiring occasional change from *Mannheim* (it could have been written especially for the rhyme in line 5 of each verse).

For the admirable collection of new words, rather than rely on a few trusted composers and on tunes from the past, the compilers could have published some of these words in advance and opened the gates

to amateurs and professionals alike. The Royal School of Church Music has run two such competitions recently to set texts, and the resulting winners are excellent (and both, in fairness, are in A&M, at 561 and 614).

### **General points**

This a big, heavy book: how can it be otherwise if it is to accommodate 847 items? I have seen reviews critical of the size and binding, but in fact there seems to be a good compromise in terms of paper thickness and flexibility of the binding. The font is pleasing to the eye, although I personally find the absence of capital letters at the beginning of each line unnecessarily ‘trendy’. But they all do it now, apart from the New English Hymnal, which no-one could accuse of trendiness.

Surprisingly in view of the calibre of the compilers, there are a few inaccuracies. Samuel Sebastian Wesley’s tunes are ascribed to his father Samuel; William Walsham How is shown as dying before he wrote many of his hymns, let alone become the much-loved ‘People’s Bishop’; *We three kings* is credited to the wrong Hopkins, and *Saffron Walden* to the wrong Brown.

### **Should you buy A&M?**

As individuals, certainly, as there is plenty of interest. But churches, schools and other ‘quires and places where they sing’? I think this depends on what sort of worshipping community you are.

If you use Hymns Old & New, Songs of Fellowship, or other similar sources, and are happy with what they offer, I don’t think that you’ll find enough here to tempt you to change. But if you have a more traditional hymnal, A&M makes a strong case for itself, adding as it does the best-loved of modern ‘worship songs’ as well as retaining the favourite traditional hymns. And it’s also a book that can be used by all denominations.

Although I have been critical of (what I perceive as) a lack of imagination in the choosing of the music, it is of course open to churches to find alternative tunes to the new words. And, in fairness, many of the tunes one might like to couple with the new words can be found elsewhere in the book. That’s presumably what the metrical index is there for.

So if you are not satisfied with your current hymn-book, or the copies are falling to bits (or both), buy a copy of A&M and look through it. If your worship tends towards traditional metres (or you would like it to....), you should find in A&M most if not all of what you are looking for. If you find some compelling new words, but don't like the tune they're set to, find another tune.... and sing with joy to the Lord.

## **10.14 Women organists - the hunt continues**

- Jill York

As an organist on the lookout for new repertoire I occasionally find pieces composed by women but it's often a frustrating search. I have music by at least twenty women composers but I've just skimmed the Wikipedia list of organ composers and am disappointed. It's long and covers 26 countries but includes only four women: Jeanne Demessieux, Elfrida Andrée (both of whom I've written about before), Emma Lou Diemer and Carol Williams. Carol is a British-born international concert organist now living in the USA but as I'm actually practising a piece by Diemer I'll write about her.

Emma Lou Diemer



Emma Lou Diemer was born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1927. She played the piano and composed from an early age and became organist at her church aged 13, the age at which she also wrote her first piano concertos! She studied at Yale then did a PhD at the Eastman School of Music, followed by study in Brussels. She has taught at colleges and universities in the USA and has been organist at several churches as well as writing many commissioned works for

schools, churches and professional organisations, including orchestral works, chamber music, choral and electronic music. However, most of her compositions are for organ and piano. Most of her works are published and she has received many awards. She gives concerts of her own music on the piano, organ, harpsichord and synthesiser and lives in Santa Barbara, California. The piece I'm learning is 'Fiesta', composed in 1996 for a summer festival in Santa Barbara which celebrates the Spanish, Mexican and American influences on the area. It's a fiery, syncopated piece, exuberant and rhythmically demanding but I think it'll be worth the effort, and I look forward to discovering more pieces by her in the future.



In contrast, Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944) isn't someone you would think of as an organist but she certainly did play the organ. She was born in Sidcup, Kent, and learned piano with her German governess who had studied at the Leipzig Conservatoire. At the age of twelve she decided she would study music and against her father's will took composition lessons with Alexander Ewing, an army officer and amateur musician. Her father forbade the lessons but Ethel was undeterred in her ambition and went on hunger strike until he relented. She did indeed go on to study in Leipzig at the age of 19,

then on elsewhere, meeting Clara Schumann, Grieg, Tchaikovsky and Brahms.

Smyth composed several pieces for the organ including five Chorale Preludes of 1887, written in homage to Bach and in the tradition of his Little Organ Book (yes, I know this may not be by Bach at all but by a contemporary, but to me the style rings true). The fifth of her pieces, a Prelude and Fugue on 'O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid' , is eminently playable, flows well and feels like Bach with a Romantic twist. She dedicated these Chorale Preludes to Sir Walter Parratt, her organ teacher. Smyth went on to write operas, the most successful being 'The Boatswain's Mate', an impressive Mass in D and she also composed 'The March of the Women' which became the battle song of the suffragette movement. As a suffragette herself Smyth spent time in prison. She went on to receive honorary doctorates from Durham and Oxford Universities and was awarded the DBE in 1922.

The photo of Emma Lou Diemer is taken from her web-site at [www.emmaloudiemermusic.com](http://www.emmaloudiemermusic.com)

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