

er r
rg

ISSN 0265-1971

Patron: Gillian Weir DBE

President 2015-2017 Jonathan Holl ARCO LRAM ARCM,
The Old Dairy Farm, Winkfield Lane, Winkfield, Windsor SL4 4RU
tel: (01344) 886700 jwholl@btinternet.com

President Elect -vacant

Secretary -Harry Russell,
131 Recreation Road, Burghfield Common, Reading RG7 3EN
tel: (0118) 983 3547 harryrussell@btinternet.com

Treasurer -Ronald Byer, FCIS FCMI
17 Chrysanthemum Drive, Shinfield, RG2 9QD
tel: (0118) 988 2342 ronaldbyer@btintemet.com

Programme Secretary -Christine Wells BMus FRCO LRAM
Lynton Villa, Pheasants Hill, Hambleden, Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire, RG9 6SD tel: (01491) 571588

Editor: The Berkshire Organist -vacant

Editor: The Newsletter -David Pether

Publicity Officer -Harry Russell,
131 Recreation Road, Burghfield Common, Reading RG7 3EN
tel: (0118) 983 3547 harryrussell@btintemet.com

Webmaster -David Pether -www.berkshireorganists.org.uk

Other Trustees: Andy Baldwin, David Butler, Anthony Hodson,
Derek Guy, Jill York, Mark Jameson, Ian May

Independent Examiner -David Duvall

Honorary Fellows -Dr. Francis Jackson, Dr William McVicker

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

The Berkshire Organists Association

Table of Contents			Page
Constitution			4
The Annual General Meeting		<i>Philip Bowcock</i>	10
President's Report to the AGM		<i>Jonathan Holl</i>	12
Reading Town Hall Recitals			
Celebrity Recital			
Martin Baker	15th October 2015	<i>Jonathan Holl</i>	14
Lunchtime Recitals			
David Pether	20th May 2015	<i>Jonathan Holl</i>	16
Alexander Tucker	1st July 2015	<i>Jill York</i>	18
David Newsholme	16th September 2015	<i>Don Hickson</i>	20
Rosemary Evans	4th November 2015	<i>Jill York</i>	22
Jonathan Holl	20th January 2016	<i>Don Hickson</i>	24
Alexander Binns	16th March 2016	<i>Don Hickson</i>	26
Benjamin Cunningham	4th May 2016	<i>Jill York</i>	28
Local Recitals			29
Events			
President's afternoon St Michael's Church, Bray	13th June 2015	<i>Harry Killender</i>	30

Visit to Steeple Ashton and Edington	10th October 2015	<i>Mark Jameson</i>	31
Annual Dinner	14th November 2015	<i>John Jebb</i>	36
Bach the Eclectic -Christopher Burrows	16th January 2016	<i>Harry Russell</i>	38
Visit to the Berkshire Records Office	13th February 2016	<i>Keith Atkinson</i>	39
Visit to The Royal Chapel, Windsor Great Park	12th March 2016	<i>Mark Jameson</i>	41
General Articles			
A few more Tuning Tales		<i>Ken Gaines</i>	45
Eighteenth century Flute Voluntaries for the organ		<i>Peter Marr</i>	50
Some London Concert Halls -- some experiences		<i>Jonathan Holl</i>	56
Flogging it		<i>David Pether</i>	60
The organ on stamps		<i>Mark Jameson</i>	64
Writing for church choirs		<i>Anthony Hodson</i>	70
Reviews of books and CDs		<i>Mark Jameson</i>	73
Officers of the Association			78

CONSTITUTION OF
THE BERKSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION
Founded 1921 Registered Charity No.298088



Revised 2015

1 NAME

The charity's name is The Berkshire Organists' Association
(hereafter The Association)

2 THE PURPOSES OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE:-

To advance the education of the public in the study of church and organ music

3 OFFICES AND TRUSTEES

- (1) The Association shall be managed by a committee of trustees who are appointed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association.
- (2) A trustee must be a member of the Association.
- (3) The Association shall have the three offices of President, Secretary and Treasurer. Each office holder is a trustee and shall be elected for one year and shall be eligible for re-election to the same office. The President shall only be eligible for re-election for a second consecutive year.
- (4) There shall be a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve trustees, which shall include the offices.
- (5) The trustees may appoint any person who is willing to act as a trustee and may also appoint trustees to act as office holders. A person appointed by the trustees will stand down at the next Annual General Meeting, but will be eligible for re-election.
- (6) Individual trustees shall be elected to the offices of Editor of the Berkshire Organist, Programme Secretary, Newsletter editor and Webmaster as required and as described in 7(1).

4 CARRYING OUT THE PURPOSES

The Association shall be affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists.

In order to carry out the charitable purposes, the trustees have the power to:

- (1) raise funds, receive grants and donations
- (2) apply funds to carry out the work of the Association
- (3) co-operate with and support other charities with similar purposes
- (4) do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve the purposes

In particular, the trustees may arrange and present:

- (5) public lectures, discussions and debates;
- (6) public demonstrations of instruments, choral and organ music;
- (7) open competitions for playing, singing and composition of such music;
- (8) meetings to advise churchmen and other members of the public on any matter concerned with the improvement of standards of composition or performance of such music.

5 MEMBERSHIP

- (1) The Association shall have a membership. People who support the work of the Association and are aged 18 or over, can apply to the trustees to become a member. The trustees will accept all bona fide applications. The trustees will keep an up-to-date membership list.
- (2) Persons under the age of 18 can apply to the trustees to become a junior member. A junior member may not vote at General Meetings of the Association.
- (3) New honorary members shall be proposed at the Annual General Meeting by the trustees for approval by a majority of the membership attending.

- (4) Each member shall pay an annual subscription which shall be due on the first day of January each year. The trustees shall review each year the amount of the annual subscription and may, as they think fit, fix lower rates for:
 - a. persons under the age of 18;
 - b. full time students;
 - c. retired members;
 - d. persons joining during the year;
 - e. persons in circumstances of hardship;
 - f. members who have made an exceptional contribution to the work of the Association during their membership;
 - g. Honorary members.
- (5) Any member whose subscription remains unpaid three months after it became due shall cease to be a member.
- (6) Honorary fellows elected in General Meeting as a token of appreciation of their work for the Association shall automatically become honorary members.
- (6) The trustees may remove a person's membership if they believe it is in the best interests of the Association. The member has the right to be heard by the trustees before the decision is made and can be accompanied by a friend.

6 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGM

- (1) The AGM must be held every year, with 14 days notice given to all members telling them what is on the agenda. Minutes must be kept of the AGM.
- (2) There must be at least 15 members present at the AGM. If this quorum is not met, the meeting will be adjourned for 14 days at which point it will be considered quorate regardless of numbers.
- (3) Every member has one vote. The President has a casting vote to be used in the event of a tied vote.
- (4) The trustees shall present the annual report and accounts.
- (5) Any member may stand for election as a trustee.
- (6) Members shall elect three trustees to hold the three offices and a minimum of three and a maximum of nine further trustees to serve for the next year. They will retire at the next AGM but may stand for re-election, save for the President who may only stand once for re-election as President. However, the President may stand for re-election as a trustee or other officer

7 TRUSTEE MEETINGS

- (1) Trustees must hold at least 4 meetings each year. At least 14 days notice of meetings will be given to trustees telling them what is on the agenda. At their first meeting after the AGM they will elect an Editor of the Berkshire Organist, Programme Secretary, Newsletter editor and Webmaster as required. Trustees may act by majority decision. The president has a casting vote to be used in the vent of a tied vote.

- (2) At least 3 trustees must be present at the meeting to be able to take decisions. Minutes shall be kept for every meeting.
- (3) Any trustees having a conflict of interest must declare it and leave the meeting while this matter is being discussed or decided.
- (4) The trustees may appoint sub-committees to assist in their work.
- (5) The trustees may make reasonable additional rules to help run the Association. These rules must not conflict with this constitution or the law.

8 MONEY AND PROPERTY

- (1) Money and property must only be used for the Association's purposes.
- (2) Trustees must keep accounts. The most recent annual accounts can be seen by anybody on request.
- (3) Trustees cannot receive any money or property from the Association, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- (4) Money must be held in the Association's bank account. All payments must be approved by two trustees.

9 GENERAL MEETINGS

If the trustees consider it is necessary to change the constitution, or wind up the Association, they must call a General Meeting so that the membership can make the decision. Trustees must also call a General Meeting if they receive a written request from the majority of members. All members must be given 14 days notice and told the reason for the meeting. All decisions require a two thirds majority. Minutes must be kept.

- (1) Winding up – If on the winding-up or dissolution of the Association, there remains, after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, this shall not be paid to nor distributed among the members of the Association, but shall be given or transferred to some other charitable institution having objects similar to the objects of this Association.
- (2) Changes to the Constitution – This Constitution shall not be altered or added to except by resolution at a General Meeting, and no alteration shall be made which would cause the Association to cease to be a charity at law. No amendment shall be made to this Article 9 (2), Article 2 or Article 9 (1) without the prior consent in writing of the Charity Commissioners
- (3) **General Meeting** – shall be called on written request from a majority of members.
- (4) Trustees may also call a General Meeting to consult the membership

10 ADOPTION OF THIS CONSTITUTION

This constitution was adopted on 14th May 2016 by a majority of the members of the Association attending a General Meeting on that date.

J Holl
President

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Philip Bowcock

On 14th May around twenty members gathered at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Hurley, to celebrate the occasion of the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

Hurley is a linear village running from the A4130 to the banks of the River Thames in Berkshire. Among other things it claims that its hotel and pub, The Bell, is one of the oldest licenced pubs in the world.

The church has a lengthy history dating from Saxon times and it was later rebuilt as a Benedictine Priory until the dissolution. Most of the monastic buildings have been demolished leaving just the church plus the more recently built Priory Room. The church itself is a relatively long and narrow building with a high arched roof and windows rather high up resulting in a rather dark building internally. The resulting acoustic, with little reverberation time, enables every note on the organ to be clearly heard. The two-manual organ is on the gallery at the west end and comprises fourteen ranks on the two manuals and pedals.

Pedal		Swell	
Bourdon	16	Open Diapason	8
Bass Flute	8	Stop Diapason*	8
		Principal	4
Great		Flute	8
Open Diapason	8	Hautboy	8
Diapason Bass	8		
Dulciana*	8	Couplers	
Claribella Flute*	8	Swell to Pedal	
Principal	4	Swell to Great	
Fifteenth	2	Swell Octave to Great	
Mixture	III	Great to Pedal	

(* These stops share the Diapason Bass)

Prior to the AGM we had the pleasure of a brilliant recital by Simon Dinsdale (Royal Military Academy Chapel) who gave the following :

Sonata No 4 in B flat, OP 65 Mendelssohn

Prelude on *Rhosymedre* Vaughan Williams

Fantasia and Fugue in C minor J S Bach

And then in a lighter vein :

Sortie in E flat Lefebure-Wely

“An Everyday Story . . .” A Wood

Following the recital we adjourned to the Priory Room for very welcome tea and refreshments.

And finally the AGM itself which lasted all of 20 minutes. Details of the appointed Officers and Trustees appear on page 1. The revised Constitution was also approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

AGM 14th May 2016

A warm welcome to you all and grateful thanks to David Butler in making the arrangements for us to be here today. Also, of course, on behalf of us all, I would like to thank Simon Dinsdale for playing today's AGM Recital. The organ here is one which probably many of us have not heard before.

The Association has, as usual, been very active during the last year. In June we visited the newly restored and enlarged organ at Bray Parish Church, followed by tea at Winkfield. In September on Heritage Day, two members of the Association each hosted an hour session in demonstrating the Town Hall organ to the general public. We visited Wiltshire in October sampling the organs at Steeple Ashton and the new Harrison organ at Edington Priory. Our Annual Dinner was held at Stirrups Country House Hotel at Maidens Green, with Andrew Millington our Guest Speaker. This was an interesting and enjoyable occasion and the same venue has been booked for this year with Peter King, the new Director of the IAO as our Guest Speaker. There is plenty of space for more people and members of the Newbury and Windsor Associations have been invited to join us.

In the New Year, there was a social afternoon with a talk on the life and music of J.S. Bach. This was given by Christopher Burrows. February saw us at the Berkshire Record Office, where Dr. Peter Durrant MBE spoke to us and showed us archive documents and other material relating to organs. On 12th March (President's Day) we visited The Royal Chapel in Windsor Great Park. This was a special "one off" visit when we were hosted by the organist Richard Furstenheim and were honoured to have the Chaplin, The Venerable Martin Poll come to talk to us. Tea followed at Winkfield.

Lunchtime recitals have taken place at the Town Hall, arranged by David

Pether in liaison with William McVicker; also there have been two celebrity evening recitals. Two Local Recitals (arranged by Ian May) took place in the autumn – David Old played at St Nicholas, Rotherfield Greys and Nathaniel Keiller played at St Peter's Earley. Recitals at Reading Minster have re started and are held over lunchtime on the third Friday of the month. With changes in Charity Law, it was found necessary to revise our Constitution. Our Secretary, Harry Russell together with Anthony Hodson have, with some outside advice, given a considerable amount of their time in the re drafting. We are due to vote on this shortly.

During the year we have lost a few members and also gained a few members and it is pleasing to see some new young members. We are a smaller Association compared to times past, but it is good that we are much in evidence at such events as Town Hall recitals and I believe our website is used considerably by both individuals and churches. Let us continue to keep our presence felt!

Jonathan Holl

READING TOWN HALL RECITALS
Celebrity Recital
Martin Baker on 15th October 2015
Jonathan Holl

Ricercar à 6 from 'The Musical Offering' BWV 1079 J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Variations on 'God save the King' Samuel Wesley (1766-1837)

Chorale No.1 in E major César Franck (1822-1890)

Sonata No.1 in D minor (Introduction & Allegro – Pastorale – Final)
Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

Improvisation on a given theme

Martin Baker has been the Director of Music at Westminster Cathedral since 2000. He is recognised as a dynamic choral conductor and the cathedral choir has a very high reputation, not only in leading the singing at the Cathedral, but in carrying out numerous tours and making many acclaimed recordings.

Martin began his recital with Bach's Ricercar à 6 from The Musical Offering. This is a collection of movements resulting from improvisations played while demonstrating the new pianos in the palace of Frederick the Great. This Ricercar (effectively a fugue in 6 parts) was arranged for the organ by Jean Guillou, the distinguished organist of St Eustache in Paris. A very impressive composition, beginning with slow long notes, it gradually became more and more intense and thick in texture as each voice entered. Martin built up the sound towards full organ (even with a part played on the Tuba) resulting in a very profound performance.

Samuel Wesley was the father of Samuel Sebastian Wesley. The organs in England at this time had no pedals, consequently this piece is for manuals only. The eight variations call for many light colourful sounds which showed off the delightful flutes and other soft stops on the Father Willis. Played beautifully, one felt that this piece deserves to be more widely known.

The first part of the concert ended with César Franck's Chorale No.1 in E. The Three Chorales of Franck taken together form a very important part of the organ repertoire. Father Willis visited France on several occasions and met Aristide Cavallé-Coll, the famous 19th century organ builder. These meetings had a great influence on Willis' work, both tonally and mechanically, so it is no surprise that the Town Hall organ has always been considered an excellent instrument for the music of Franck and his contemporaries. Martin gave a sensitive and expressive performance using lots of hand registration. He gave a thrilling build up to the last page which was played with great majesty.

After the interval we continued with French music with a very exciting and uplifting performance of Guilman's Sonata No.1 in D minor. Martin's playing was very rhythmic and energetic, producing (as in the Franck) all the right tone colours. This was especially so in the middle movement, the Pastorale – a very beautiful and calm movement using flutes, oboes, clarinet and the very French Vox Humana with the Tremulant. The last movement was played with great aplomb bringing the piece to a triumphal conclusion.

In 1997, Martin was the winner of the St. Albans' International Improvisation Competition. How good it was, therefore, to hear him demonstrate his improvisational skills to finish the concert. William McVicker presented him with a theme on which to improvise. What an imaginative theme! It was from S.S. Wesley's anthem 'Blessed be the God and Father'. The theme was the grand dominant 7th chord, towards the end, followed by the choral entry 'But the word of the Lord endureth for ever'. Martin's improvisation showed us once again what was possible on the Father Willis, displaying musical imagination and amazing technical skills. Intensity and volume built up to an exhilarating and spectacular ending of the concert.

Lunchtime Recitals

David Pether on 20th May 2015

Jonathan Holl

Paean	Philip Moore (b. 1943)
Andante Grazioso in G major	Henry Smart (1813 – 1879)
Finlandia	Jean Sibelius (1865 – 1957) <i>Arr. H.A. Fricker</i>
Fantaisie No.3 in C major, Op.157	Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1931)
Introduction and Allegro Risoluto from Sonata No.8 in A major	Alexandre Guilmant (1837 – 1911)

For some years, David Pether has, in conjunction with Reading Arts, taken a leading part in promoting the use of the historic Father Willis organ in the Town Hall. It is therefore entirely appropriate that he has given a recital as part of the season celebrating the organ's 150th anniversary.

David chose an interesting programme of music composed during that time span. Not all the pieces were well-known, but all were very worthy to be heard. He opened with Paëan by Philip Moore, who was organist at York Minster for a time. A rhythmic, 'spiky' piece thoroughly engaging with the quieter passages played using a somewhat piquant registration-- an excellent starter.

He continued with Andante Grazioso by Henry Smart. This had a gentle flowing and tuneful melody and gave David a chance to show off some of the beautiful solo stops on the organ.

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sibelius, David played an arrangement (by H.A. Fricker) of Finlandia. This was a most dramatic performance containing ‘splashes of Tuba’ and pedal trills played with one foot! Not only was this a splendid arrangement, but it showed David’s skill in the management of the organ --- a sure ‘tour de force’.

There then followed the Fantaisie No. 3 by Saint-Saëns, composed in 1919. This is not a well-known piece and is improvisatory in style, with several sections. Beginning quietly on flute stops with a somewhat meandering theme, the music moves into the next section with an attractive oboe solo. Gradually the piece crescendos and suddenly becomes fast moving and somewhat spectacular. Later, the first theme appears again bringing the piece to a quiet close.

The recital ended with the Introduction and Allegro Risoluto from Guilmant’s 8th Sonata. This sonata is not often played but deserves to be in the main repertoire. The Introduction is quiet but builds up to the Allegro which is a busy and somewhat restless movement. Played with great aplomb, drama and excitement emerged, bringing the recital to a triumphant close. (This sonata was transcribed by Guilmant to become his Symphonie No.2 for organ and orchestra).

David’s interpretations and musicianship were exemplary, and the large audience dispersed amidst some very animated chatter!

assured and confident. The Howells is a tribute to Thomas Tallis and really suited the organ. It began quietly using flute then corno di bassetto stops, moved into stronger sounds with a modal feel and a central chordal section using full organ, then returned to a quieter melodic ending. The work had a clear English texture and blend of sounds.

The final piece, Reger's Introduction and Passacaglia in D minor, started with a majestic, arresting opening moving on to the gentler start of the Passacaglia. Alexander's playing was dazzling. He was thoroughly in control and his technique and registration choices were exemplary.

This was a superb recital by a young player who is clearly well on the way to becoming a star in the organ world.

David Newsholme on 16th September 2015

Don Hickson

Prelude and Fugue in E flat BWV 552 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

Five Pieces Percy Whitlock (1903 – 1946)

Allegretto - Folk Tune - Andante tranquillo - Scherzo - Paean

Salut d'amour Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934)

Imperial March Op.32 Edward Elgar (arr. G. Martin)

We were pleased to welcome David Newsholme to open the 2015/6 season of Town Hall Lunchtime Recitals. After serving in posts at Worcester, Salisbury and Winchester, he now holds the post of Assistant Organist of Canterbury Cathedral where, apart from his duties at the Cathedral, he is also involved in the wider musical life of the city.

Beginning with the “St Anne” Prelude and Fugue, this was played in a free flowing manner, well phrased and with subtle registration. The fugue was firmly announced and the transitions between the three sections were well managed both in changes of registration and tempi.

It is always a refreshing pleasure to see the name of Percy Whitlock on a programme. Whitlock produced a vast amount of good organ music but, presumably because he was a ‘Concert Organist’ rather than a member of the ‘closed circle’ of Cathedral Organists, he does not get the attention he deserves. Although Five Pieces were advertised on the programme, David Newsholme only played the Allegretto, Folk Tune and Paean. The first two were beautifully played and in these the wonderful variety of colours available from the Willis was very evident. The rousing Paean also enabled the Tuba to be released from its cage. (On a personal note, I always get a few extra twinges in the back of my neck at the appearance of the Folk Tune as this was the one piece I specifically asked the organist to play before my own wedding all those years ago!)

The Elgar pieces to close the programme rounded off the recital in good style. Salut d'amour once again demonstrating the colours available on the organ and the Imperial March providing a rousing conclusion.

In the past, when I was regularly reviewing Town Hall organ events, I welcomed the occasional adventurous programming. Sometimes a piece was included that was less familiar and provided some extra interest for the specialist, although, to be fair, some of these pieces were best put back in the cupboard. However, all of this programme comprised music that would have been familiar to many of the audience. This was fine. If by designing such a programme it encourages someone who was new to organ concerts to come again then that can only be a good thing. All in all, this was a well-



David Newsholme. Photo by Mark Jameson

conceived programme, well played and a delight to hear.

Rosemary Evans on 4th November 2015

Jill York

Festal Prelude op. 38, No. 2 Thomas F. Dunhill (1877-1946)

Cantilène from Organ Sonata No. 11 in D minor Op.148
Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901)

Allegro maestoso e vivace & Fuga from Sonata No. 2 in C minor Op.65
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Menuets I & II from Music for the Royal Fireworks
George Frederick Händel (1685-1759)
Arr. Harrison Oxley

The Sweet Rivelet Francis Jackson (b. 1917)

Bridal March from The Birds of Aristophanes
C. Hubert H. Parry (1848-1918)
Arr. W.G.Alcock

Cantilène Malcolm Archer (b.1952)

Sortie in E flat major Louis Lefébure-Wély (1817-1870)

Rosemary Evans played an enjoyable, varied programme with great expertise, mixing well-known pieces with lesser-known music. Dunhill's Festal Prelude was an ideal opener: assertive, Romantic and full of contrasts and it demonstrated Rosemary's confident organ management right from the start. The Rheinberger Cantilène (possibly inspired by Bach's famous Air) was in peaceful contrast, neatly phrased and featuring the distinctive Swell Vox Humana and Tremulant against a flute accompaniment.

The two movements from the Mendelssohn Sonata brought us to more familiar territory and used the power and reeds of the organ to the full. The Handel Minuets were a deft choice to follow: majestic, steady and so comfortable on this organ.

For me the Jackson *The Sweet Rivelet* was a revelation. It describes a beck in Yorkshire and the water flows all over the keyboards – the right hand using 8' and 2' choir flutes and trickling about happily, almost sparkling in the sunshine, the left hand moving differently and sometimes joining the flow. An inspired choice for the instrument. With the Parry, a *Bridal March* from the end of a play, we returned to the bold and commanding manner that is so effective on this organ, with wide-ranging, colourful registration and lots of variety. In the second *Cantilène*, by Archer, Rosemary made good use of the stick swell and shaped the phrasing beautifully. The familiar *Lefébvre-Wély Sortie*, played with enthusiasm, rounded off the programme nicely.

Overall this was a broadly Romantic recital, with contrasts in the selection of pieces and everything chosen to show the majesty and delicacy of the Willis to full advantage.

Jill York

Jonathan Holl on 20th January 2016

Don Hickson

Trumpet Voluntary

John Stanley (1717-1786)
Arr. Henry Coleman

Concerto in G

Johann Ernst (1696-1715)
Allegro – Grave – Presto
Arr. J. S. Bach (BWV592)

Fantasia and Fugue on ‘Ad nos, ad salutarem undam’

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

It has been customary for at least one of each season’s Town Hall Lunchtime Recitals to be given by a member of the Berkshire Organists’ Association and on this occasion we were delighted to welcome Jonathan Holl, the Association’s current President. Jonathan is an experienced recitalist and has delighted the Town Hall audiences on many occasions and his command of the Father Willis was evident from the first notes. The popular Stanley Trumpet Voluntary was played in a spirited manner with carefully selected registrations enhancing the vibrancy of this piece.

Prince Johann Ernst of Saxe-Weimar’s concerto was typical of many of the early Baroque era; well structured and easy on the ear. To this listener it seemed that many of the melodies were going somewhere familiar only to find that they went off in a different direction. Johann Ernst was at Weimar at the same time as J S Bach and was a great influence on his more famous colleague. Bach was not averse to using other composers’ works to re-arrange as he did with this concerto. What was particularly beautiful was the slow central section which enabled the performer to demonstrate the varied colours of this instrument.

The tour-de-force which concluded this recital was the Liszt Fantasia and Fugue on Ad nos ad salutarem undam. Like Bach, Liszt was not shy in using other composers’ work as a basis for his own pieces. He arranged and embellished many of Schubert’s lieder and paraphrased themes from

operas – Rigoletto being probably the best known. This tremendous piece stems from a simple theme from Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète* and is truly symphonic in style. Indeed had Liszt been French rather than Hungarian it would probably have been titled an Organ Symphony as did the likes of Widor and Vierne. In three distinct but linked movements the first section was wild and turbulent with occasional lulls from the storm and once again the drama available from this remarkable instrument was well managed. In his introduction to this piece Jonathan Holl said that we would be forgiven for going to sleep during the central slow section because he would make sure he woke us up later. Sleep was out of the question during this exquisite movement with, once again, the contrasting colours of the various solo stops adding to the interest. If anyone had nodded off, the power of the last section certainly brought them out of their slumber as the piece steadily and gradually built to a resounding final climax.

All in all, this was a tremendous recital of sterling music played with consummate professionalism and was thoroughly enjoyed by a fairly full hall. We look forward to hearing Jonathan again doing battle with this marvellous organ and bringing another well thought out selection of pieces.

Alexander Binns on 16th March 2016

Don Hickson

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| March in G | Henry Smart (1813-1879) |
| Suite in G “Water Music” | George Frederick Handel (1685-1759) |
| Allegro | <i>Arr. Alexander Binns (b.1990)</i> |
| Rigaudon | |
| Allegro | |
| Minuet | |
| Allegro | |
| Suite from “Henry V” | William Walton (1902-1983) |
| March | <i>Arr. Robert Gower & Henry G Ley</i> |
| Passacaglia “Death of Falstaff” | |
| Touch her soft lips and part | |
| March | |
| Cantique | Edward Elgar (1857-1934) |
| Sonata No. 2 in C minor | Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) |
| Grave – Adagio | |
| Allegro maestoso e vivace | |
| Fugue: Allegro moderato | |

Today’s Town Hall Recital was given by Alexander Binns currently Organ Scholar at Southwark Cathedral, also acting as accompanist for two London Choral Societies. Before this he held various posts including a spell at St George’s Chapel , Windsor and is in increasing demand as a recitalist in the UK and Europe.

His programme began with a March by Henry Smart, a piece tailor made for the Father Willis and which was performed with a dependable full toned registration with good use of the reed chorus in the trio section.

Alexander Binns' own arrangement of movements from Handel's Water Music was similar to many of the other arrangements that exist and once again the registration was appropriate for the period. The opening Allegro made good use of the flute stops and the Rigaudon was lively and clean.

William Walton's music from the famous film of Henry V was again competently played and at times very atmospheric but seemed to lack the intensity of colour that is so familiar from the original orchestral scoring.

Elgar's Cantique is one of the very few "original" organ pieces by this composer and is not often performed. It is an interesting piece, mainly quiet but ending with a sudden climax which was well handled.

Finishing with the well-known Mendelssohn sonata I found the beginning of the first movement rather fuzzy and unclear but after that it settled to a good performance with the final Fugue section ending the recital on a high note.

Although I have said during this review that there was, at times, stop selection that was very suited to the pieces being played my overall view is that, although typical, the selections were a little on the conservative side and a little more adventurous spirit to demonstrate the wonderfully varied colours of "our" Father Willis could have improved the overall impression. Having said that, it was an enjoyable recital performed before an audience that was reasonably large if a little down on some of the other lunchtime recitals this season.

Benjamin Cunningham on 4th May 2016

Jill York

Prelude and Fugue in B minor BWV 544 J.S.Bach (1685-1750)

Hymn Prelude on Rhosymedre Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

A Fancie [in D minor] William Byrd (c.1539-1623)

Christ ist erstanden BWV 627 J.S.Bach

Adagio in E major Frank Bridge (1859-1941)

Allegro from Symphony No.2 in E minor Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Benjamin Cunningham, of Worcester College, Oxford, began with one of Bach's most mature and famous organ works. He gave a measured, clear performance of the Prelude, using the occasional dramatic *ritenuto* to emphasise Bach's figuration. In the Fugue, each entry was presented carefully and the movement showed a real understanding of the form and structure.

The well-known Rhosymedre was beautifully phrased, negotiating the overall crescendo and diminuendo with real care and giving an engaging and relaxed performance. Benjamin admitted the Byrd is one of his favourite pieces and fun to play, and it showed. Written for manuals, it has three sections and a great deal of bright, nimble fingerwork which he dashed off to great effect.

The Bach chorale prelude comes from the Orgelbüchlein and was written for Easter. It is in three sections, quite dense texturally and was delivered with plenty of reeds and energy. In contrast, the Bridge echoed the Vaughan Williams in its dynamic rise and fall and really explored the organ's range. Beginning with a single 8' stop on a closed swell, it built up through diapasons to strong reeds then receded effortlessly to a single chord on the swell. It was a beautiful performance, using the Willis' colours most effectively. The final Vierne Allegro delivered drama with swirling hands over striding pedals. Benjamin maintained the excitement in a competent and musically-shaped performance.

This was a well-balanced, albeit conservative, programme which used the organ's resources well. It was played with confidence and understanding.

Local Recitals

There were two Local Recitals. David Old played at St Nicholas Rotherfield Greys on 19th September 2015. He played music by Vivaldi/Bach, Bach, Pescetti, Peeters, Karg-Elert, Vierne and Widor.

Nathaniel Keiller played at St Peter Earley on 28th November 2015. He played music by Boëllmann, Bach Stanley, Howells, Alain, and Mushel.

EVENTS

President's afternoon – a visit to St Michael's Church, Bray

13th June 2015

Henry Killender

Our visit to Bray Parish Church, courtesy of the vicar, organist and PCC, augmented by a talk on the organ by Ian Murray, a former churchwarden, was a great success and we thank them all very much. The Peter Collins instrument was delightfully showed off in a short recital by Jonathan Holl, after which several members also played.

This was followed by a most enjoyable tea at Jonathan's residence at Winkfield when we were also invited to play the 3 manual 'Eminent' organ. To all who organised the afternoon we say a huge 'THANKYOU'.

The new Peter Collins organ at Bray is a 3 manual built around a 2 manual Henry Willis III organ, complimented with a digital Choir Organ. The most striking of the sounds on the Choir is the 'Jubilee Trumpet' – a truly splendid rank great in sympathy and contrast with both the Swell and the Great.

In his recital, Jonathan demonstrated the versatility with music from the 20th century. He played Vierne's Carillon, Harris's romantic E flat Prelude and he showed the Jubilee Trumpet in full fair voice, contrasting classic organo pleno in a 'Tuba Tune' by Christopher Tambling.

As most of us know, we spot the individual sound of pipes and their makers; Peter Collins has proven his mastery by making the product of several pipe makers into one superb machine of 25 ranks of pipes in the Great, Swell and Pedal organs and 12 digital stops on the Choir organ.

Visit to Steeple Ashton and Edington on 10th October 2015

Mark Jameson

Jonathan Holl arranged this visit to Wiltshire, one of those counties one tends to pass through on the way further west. It was an easy drive from Reading via M4 to Junction 17, then A350 south, passing Melksham then about a mile to Steeple Ashton – all well signed.

We started at the **Parish Church of St Mary, Steeple Ashton** – this is a cathedral in miniature dating mainly from the 15th Century. The original 13th century chancel was replaced in the 1850s matching the perpendicular 15th century Nave and 90ft west tower originally capped with an 186ft steeple, not quite as tall as Salisbury Cathedral. The steeple fell during a storm in 1670 and was not replaced – however the village name remained Steeple Ashton. Some of the glass is pre-1485. The village is exceptionally interesting with many ancient buildings.

We were welcomed by the Organist, Michael Winstock. Churchwarden accounts here include records of organs back to the early 1600s, a barrel organ of 1835 preceded the current instrument built in 1875 by Bryceston Bros and Ellis given by Charlotte Long – the Long family is also remembered in the local pub name. This organ gained an electric blower in 1945 and renovations were carried out by Percy Daniel in 1956, with a number of specification alterations and painting the decorated case pipes silver. In 2011 local builder Stephen Cook of Westbury restored tracker action to the pedal and carried out an overhaul. It is currently maintained by Gary Cook of Melksham who joined us for the visit. Gary trades as Liberty Organs and has recently been given IBO Accreditation.

The instrument is placed on the north side of the chancel with a raised console. The three manual divisions do not have department labels, and there are few playing aids. The cases are impressive, particularly the west facing pedal case. The abbreviated specification is:

Great: 8, 8, 8, 8, 4, 4, III, 8	Swell: 16, 8, 8, 8, 8, 4, 4, 2, III, 8, 8
Choir: 8, 8, 8, 4, 4, 8	Pedal: 16,16

I felt it was heavy to play, but most enjoyable.



Steeple Ashton organ console
Photo by Mark Jameson

Our group then dispersed for lunch, gathering at the **Priory Church of St Mary, St Katherine and All Saints, Edington** at 2.30pm. My first knowledge of the Priory came from photographs taken by our late member Gordon Spriggs. According to his son, this was one of his favourite buildings, and his picture taken sometime in the 1950s shows the building better than one can see today – hedges now block this view.

The Priory dates from the Norman era but the current building was constructed between 1352 and 1361 and is largely unaltered in a mixture of Decorated and Perpendicular styles. The pond to the north and the adjacent Manor House date back to the monastic period.

We were welcomed here by Mr Robin Wilson to talk to us about the organ and background to the purchase of the new Harrison organ. John Swain, the Organist/Director of Music demonstrated the organ and had on his lap top work in progress pictures of the new organ.

The Priory has a well documented organ history. In 1860 a Scudamore Upton 4A model was purchased, this moved to St Thomas Tilshead in 1906 where it is still in use. In 1905 a new Henry Jones two manual organ was installed, partly funded by Andrew Carnegie with a gift of £500.

A summer music festival commenced in 1956, this continues with great success - 2016 dates are 21st to 28th August. It was soon found that the 1905 organ was inadequate, but funds did not exist to improve it. By the 1970s it was nearly unplayable and in 1976 John Coulson of Bristol did some essential work but it was a patching up situation. Most of the problems related to the action. At the start of the 21st Century, again the organ was in a sad way. However, by then the Edington Festival Society were able to help, and gifted the Parish with a new pipe organ. As the new organ was gifted to them, the parish was able to gift the old instrument to the Gustav Adolf School in Tallinn, Estonia where the members of the school with professional assistance rebuilt the Jones organ – it reopened there in June 2014.



Gordon Spriggs 1950's view of the Priory

The 2014 Edington organ built by Harrison & Harrison is 2/26 and designed for both parish use and dealing with the large choirs during the Festival. This has been placed on the north side of the nave and is free standing. The compass is 58/30. The outline specification is:

Swell: 8, 8, 8, 8, 4, 4, $2\frac{2}{3}$, 2, $1\frac{3}{5}$, III, 8, 8

Great: 16, 8, 8, 8, 4, 4, 2, III, 8, 8

Pedal: 16, 8, 8, 16



Jill York playing the Edington Harrison organ. Photos by Mark Jameson

A second organ of considerable international interest has been in the chancel since 1981. A chamber organ of c1850 came from the Christian Science Church in Bristol gifted by a former priest. It was built by Alex Mills of New York, a rarity even in the USA, with the two stops placed at each end of the keyboard. The stops [as on the heads] are Open Dia [TF], St Bass [Bottom C to TE], Dulciana [TF] and Flute. Mills was a Scot [1824-1900] and active in New York c1850 to 1890. A gem to play.

It really was a most splendid day, with good playing on each instrument.

If any reader wishes to have the full specifications of the two main organs, please contact Mark Jameson for a copy of the day visit notes.

Annual Dinner on 14th November 2015

John Jebb

At Stirrups Country House Hotel, Maidens Green, Winkfield, the BOA met for a convivial evening of conversation and fine dining, topped off with lighthearted anecdotes and jokes presented by speaker Andrew Millington, recently retired organist at Exeter Cathedral.

Introduced by President Jonathan Holl, who recalled Andrew Millington's connection with the BOA, when they once visited Exeter Cathedral - Andrew was heard to play Happy Birthday woven into his organ demonstration, having discovered one member's birthday was that day.

Andrew began his talk, declaring a first, in that two Madeleines were seated either side of him (one, his wife). He took us on a journey beginning age 9, when his family moved to Malvern and attended the Priory Church where he was given lessons, by none other than Jonathan's father, the Organist and Master of the Choristers. The organ was a fine four manual Rushworth & Dreaper.

He moved on to King's School Worcester, played an eccentric 'Hope Jones inspired' instrument, with guidance from Christopher Robinson and Harry Bramma. A fellow chorister then, was Henry Sandon (Antiques Roadshow). Once, in a difficult discordant piece, Christopher Robinson, who had a remarkable ear, observed, "tenors, it's E flat, not E natural." Henry was heard to say, "it makes all the difference." Typical of Andrew's delivery, this was followed by another tidbit from the Worcester Evening News, where a line of text about a visiting choir was missing and read, 'Anthem: O God the Choir of St Mary's Warwick,' which brought much laughter.

Andrew's education continued with a scholarship to Cambridge, where he came under the influence of David Willcocks of Kings College and George Guest of St Johns College. His first cathedral job was as assistant organist at Gloucester Cathedral, whose organ had undergone a controversial rebuild

in 1971. Originally a Willis organ, rebuilt by Harrison, when Herbert Sumsion, playing in the cold with cutoff gloves, recorded in a single take the Elgar Sonata in 1967.

In 1983, he moved to Guildford Cathedral. Having retired now, he really misses the daily singing of the Psalms, with richness of language and references to contemporary daily life. In illustration, he recalled a procession halted by a jammed hinged door, chiselled free by a DIY chorister; the Psalm sung later included the words, “they break down all the carved work thereof with axes and hammers!” When the laughter subsided, he recalled completing a survey on a Guildford street. The questioner asked him what he did? He replied, “Cathedral organist.” She said, “Oh how lovely, are you a musician as well?”

He conducted the Bracknell Choral Society for many years, while at Guildford, but in 1999 moved to Exeter. There, the organ sits magnificently in its 1665 organ case and has undergone a one million pound restoration. He noted the relationship between organ and choral work.

He concluded with a choral analogy to the parable of the Prodigal Son. The sopranos, who faithfully attended all rehearsals and performances, versus the wayward tenor who showed up occasionally, but was wholly embraced by the Master of the Choristers.

Having wished us well over the busy Christmas period, he recommended spell-checking the Service sheets, to avoid such as: “is this the proof sent from above”, “the shepherds go to the manager” and “lullay my viking”, to much applause

Jonathan invited those who were able, to stay on and chat informally to Andrew and Madeleine. A lively evening wound down.

John Jebb

Bach the Eclectic – Christopher Burrows, 16th January 2016

Harry Russell

The music of J. S Bach is the foundation of much of the organ repertoire and the playing of his music is key to establishment of good technique. However difficult his music may be to learn, we reap great rewards for our efforts. It is surprising that we know so little of the personality of so great a composer. It is also surprising that a composer whose work is so very varied should have spent almost his entire life in an area 100km square.

Christopher Burrows introduced us to the notion of Bach as an eclectic composer to gain a deeper understanding of the man and his music. The use of dissonance is a prominent feature in Bach's organ music and is found in the music of Italy and S. Germany. Bach, however takes what is there an occasional compositional feature and uses it extensively and intensively as, for example, in the final bars of the Adagio from the Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C (BWV 564) with its multiple suspensions.

Bach's Christian faith was central to his life and work. We looked at a number of his works which employ a rich numerological symbolism and word painting. The Trinity appears frequently as may be expected; but if you know where to look, references to the Creed and even the spelling of Bach's own name in numbers (the number 14) can be found.

Turning to Bach and fugue, although we are very conscious that Bach composed fugues in every key and used all the complexities of inversion, augmentation and diminution, we were asked to consider that the purpose was not mechanical complexity but rather emotional complexity. Again and again we find Bach apparently surpassing his rivals in technical brilliance, but always for an expressive purpose.

Finally, Christopher Burrows gave us some of his own views on how Bach's organ music should be played. The organ should have clarity in every voice. Finger-work should be legato, not détaché and the heels may be used to play the pedals.

Visit to Berkshire Record Office, 13th February 2016

Keith Atkinson

Saturday afternoon, 13 February 2016 saw a group of Association members congregate at the Berkshire Record Office (BRO) in Coley Avenue, Reading. We were the guests of Dr. Peter Durrant, former County Archivist and himself an organist at Earley St. Nicholas.

Dr. Durrant began by talking of the role of a county record office. The Berkshire office began in 1948 when, following the Second World War, there was a general fear of the loss of records. Its first home was in the old Shire Hall in the Forbury (now a hotel), followed by moves to the “new” Shire Hall at Shinfield and then to Yeomanry House, its current location. Court and local authority records must be retained by law as must those of the Church of England. In BRO, these include some “spectacular” churchwardens’ accounts from the 16th century. Records from other sources result from good housekeeping by organisations and individuals and by persuasion on the part of BRO. They include family records which can take in distant parts far beyond the county bounds. BRO now has 5½ miles of shelving (with the oldest record dating from 1154 – 1158 and the most recent from 2016) housed in six air conditioned strong rooms. When asked about records held on electronic media, Dr. Durrant was adamant that print on paper is the most secure medium. Conservation of records on their acquisition is yet another skilled provision which is needed. The largest document held by BRO is a map covering an area of 120 sq ft. We also saw the impressive array of Berkshire weights and measures of 1857.

Turning to the organ world in which members were particularly interested, Dr. Durrant explained that most relevant records would depend on organ ownership unless a major organ builder was based in a county. Acquisition of an organ was often recorded. Potential sources of information included diocesan faculties, churchwardens' accounts, parish magazines and the local press. Mentions of organs at BRO range from 1519 to the 20th century and include specifications, agreements, music programme details, maintenance records and, in the case of Wallingford St. Mary le More, a dispute! An entry in the Archdeacon's Court Book for 1809 records the case of "The Rector and others of the parish of St. Mary in Wallingford, Berkshire against The Churchwardens and others and inhabitants of same parish" who were in opposition because it was proposed to site an organ in a gallery and as a result to remove some pews from the gallery which were the property of certain individuals. What an unholy row!

We were able to inspect a very interesting selection of material related to organs and church music which Dr. Durrant had displayed. The Reading churches of St. Giles and St. Laurence are well represented at BRO with churchwardens' accounts for St. Laurence dating from 1498 – 1570. Among items from St. Giles are a faculty of 1819 and a choir register of 1901 – 1902 which gives details of all music sung at each service. Other churches represented included an appeal at Stanford in the Vale; a faculty for Chaddleworth; a barrel organ at Tilehurst; a maintenance letter book at Windsor All Saints; while, for Windsor St. John, a newspaper cutting of the list of donors to the "new organ fund" which include the eye-catching 15s 6½d from "inmates of the almshouses" [sic] and 6d from Mrs Pike. This may really have been the widow's mite.

One aspect of this extremely interesting visit was the realisation that we all have a responsibility to ensure that interesting records are deposited and, we hope, saved for future generations who may wish to study the social scene at a given time. It certainly gave this reporter pause for thought. We saw many programmes of celebrity organ recitals given at Reading Town Hall but the collection is incomplete. Officers of the Association were already discussing solutions to the problem.

Visit to The Royal Chapel, Windsor Great Park

Mark Jameson

President's Day 12th March 2016

This visit was put on my events schedule as soon as our President announced it. All Saints, Windsor Great Park is where the Queen worships in private. A connection with the Royal estate is required to be able to visit so this was a rare and special visit. Our BOA visit was blessed with a fine dry spring day hosted by Richard Furstenheim Organist & Director of Music, Chapel Royal, Windsor Great Park.

We were delighted during the visit that The Venerable Martin Poll was able to join our group. Martin is the Domestic Chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen, Chaplain of Windsor Great Park and Canon of Windsor. He is kept very busy!

The building one sees today dates from 1867, and had a major refurbishment in 1937 designed by Sir Edward Maufe under the direction of King George VI. Martin addressed members with an excellent guide to the chapel, in particular pointing out how one can identify who made the stained glass. The west window and one north window are by C E Kempe [c1902] – his trademark was the use of a wheatsheaf in a battlemented tower. Kempe's ceased to trade early in the 1930s. Other windows are by Sir Ninian Comper who made windows from about 1890 until his death in 1960, his windows here dating from 1918 and 1928. His trademark is a strawberry – introduced by a sad event, his Father died of a heart attack whilst picking strawberries. The very colourful east window was given by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in memory of Queen Victoria's mother in 1861 and made by the then Windsor Glass Company – not the current company of that name. More glass is being planned in the form of a set of glass doors inside the west door to replace tired curtains. The Berkshire Organists' donation is being put towards the cost of this development.

Visit to The Royal Chapel, Windsor Great Park 12th March 2016



Visit to The Royal Chapel, Windsor Great Park. Photo by Anthony Hodson



The stained glass
east window
Photo Mark Jameson



Michael Humphries playing.
Photo by Mark Jameson

Since my visit in 1997 with the Organ Club [led by the late Colin Goulden, at the time the Queen's Personal Stationer] a very plain and simple memorial by the Queen to her Mother has been added to the south wall. We were allowed to take photographs except of the Queen's pews.

Until very early in 2016, getting an accurate record of this organ was difficult. A leaflet issued by Walkers gave comprehensive information about the organ following the 1937 rebuild that used some of the Lewis pipework. The NPOR record had queries and my 1997 day notes were not complete. The organ history starts in 1871 when T C Lewis installed an eleven stop 2 manual organ – no details of this instrument have been traced. It has been in the care of Walkers since 1873, and altered over the years. In 1991/2 the internal layout of the organ was altered along with several stop changes. Around Christmas 2015 Roger Judd issued a book about the organs of Windsor Castle published by Positif Press – which includes this instrument. The organ specification is:

GREAT 61 notes

Open Diapason	8
Suabe Flute	8
Principal	4
Stopped Flute	4 [Ex Swell 1992]
Fifteenth	2 [1992]

SWELL 61 notes

Salicional	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Voix Celeste [TC]	8
Gemshorn	4
Flageolet	2
Mixture 15 19 22	III [1992]
Trumpet	8 [1992]

PEDAL 30 notes

Bourdon	16
Principal	8
Bass Flute	8 [Extension Bourdon]
Swell Octave	

Swell Suboctave
Swell Octave to Great
Swell Suboctave to Great
Swell to Great
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal
3 adjustable thumb and toe pistons to Great & Pedal
3 adjustable thumb and toe pistons to Swell
3 adjustable thumb pistons for the whole organ
Reversible thumb pistons to Swell to Great and to Swell to Pedal
Reversible thumb & toe pistons Great to Pedal
Thumb pistons for setter and general cancel
Pitch A = 440

Twenty- three persons attended, eight played and we all enjoyed the wide variety of music.

Members then went to Winkfield to enjoy a splendid tea. Thank you Jonathan & Mandy Holl for a super day!

GENERAL ARTICLES

A Few More Tuning Tales

Ken Gaines

As I have stated before, my early-retirement job as a seasonal organ tuner's assistant for a well known Midland firm of organ builders took me to many locations in England and Wales and even Scotland. The bonus for me in travel was that normally I did not have to drive and could admire the scenery or just doze! However, very occasionally I was asked to drive for one or other of two tuners who did not drive. One, an interesting knowledgeable semi-retired old-timer and very much his "own man" was a delight to work with and entertaining to say the least. Having given up driving he was usually driven by someone else when required for tuning or other work. He had been asked to sort out a problem in a large Wiltshire church. The choir section had failed completely and had been wrongly diagnosed over the phone as having an electrical problem since it was known the system was overdue for replacement. We had no leadlight with us and there was no fixed light in the dark recesses at the back where the wiring panels were located. He groped around for a long time with the feeble aid of a flickering and failing torch and enough matches being struck to send the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company into meltdown had they known. Every possibility had been checked, defeat admitted and we returned to base. The following day the Managing Director went down with him and quickly found the fault - a broken blind cord shutting off all the wind to that section! Moral; don't trust a telephone diagnosis.

On another occasion I had to drive for a much younger tuner who was at that time without a driving licence. As we were to be in the area we were asked to call at a church in a Worcestershire market town. A fault had been reported on the pedal board of the large 3 manual Nicholson organ. We decided to make this the first call and arrived about 9 a.m. The church was open and apparently empty. We found the verger who opened the organ, switched on the mains and showed us the fault. The tuner selected a pedal stop and wriggled the key until it sounded - obviously a faulty contact. Before we could do any more a loud voice boomed from the depth of the dark chancel, "Do you mind, I'm trying to say the office!" the vicar shouted.

Why the verger hadn't the wit to tell us what was happening we shall never know. I am often reminded of this incident because this church is regularly featured on "Songs of Praise" as are others I know. It is particularly nostalgic to sometimes see close-ups of consoles at which I have worked.

Blindness is an affliction I have always dreaded and I thank God that after five operations over the past three years my sight is now near perfect. We all know of organists who have little or no sight and it is interesting that from the 18th Century some blind people were actually trained to be organists. One day after tuning the organ in the chapel of a college for the Blind the tuner had some repairs to make inside the organ and instructed me (I was the "boy", remember) to clean the keys which had become very grimy. After some time using rag, tissues, an old tooth brush and methylated spirit that the tuner, who detested dirty keyboards, carried for this purpose, the keys were gleaming. On our next visit we were met by the blind director of music and robustly told off. He claimed we had ruined the patina built up over the years and disorientated some of his students who had become used to the tactile feel of the keys.

The build up of grease and grime on the keys used and the accumulation of dust and debris on those not used, gave a fair indication of the extent and type of music the instrument was used for. We often spent time conscientiously tuning top notes knowing that they would possibly not sound again until our next visit. The question has sometimes been posed as to whether five octaves are really necessary for those organs that are only ever going to be used to accompany hymns (known in the trade as "hymn machines").

The achievements of blind musicians are deservedly admired. Many sighted organists, though, have suffered with hearing loss as they advance in years but are helped to some extent by the use of hearing aids (although I've been told these are never entirely satisfactory). At a large city church where a daily lunch time service was held we met a relief organist who was very deaf indeed but eschewed hearing aids. We had to really shout at him to advise him that two of the ranks on the swell were out of use and resorted to writing this information. The large organ was situated in the north transept

and the console about 40 ft away south of the chancel. The distance and intervening pillars made it difficult for me to hear the tuner's instructions so we wondered how this organist would manage to hear the organ and we stayed on during our lunch break. The result was truly amazing. The playing was by no means "mechanical" as one might expect but really responsive and sensitive using the swell and changing stops at just the right time. Obviously he had absorbed much over the past 60 years including the 10 years since the onset of deafness which we were told about later by the vergier. It appears he could "hear" or rather "feel" what he played because of the vibrations in the air and through the floor - the wooden platform on which the console stood acted as a sort of "sound box". Amazingly he served as relief organist at other churches also. No doubt it was helpful if the organs had attached consoles.

"Magnificent organ!" boomed a voice from across the chancel of a large Cotswold town church, "Magnificent, magnificent!" We knew the owner of the voice (now deceased) was usually awaiting our arrival but on this occasion we thought and hoped we had escaped his attention. He was gazing up at the very ornate casework and still muttering "Magnificent, magnificent." It was certainly a fine organ, originally built by William Hill and rebuilt and enlarged by our firm, though it was suffering somewhat from water damage due to a leaky roof. Polythene sheeting thrown over the top of the swell box and draped to the sides muffled the usually splendid tonal qualities of this instrument. This man had worked in our office some years previously and would regale us with tales of former contracts and employees most of whom had died or retired. He was no duffer musically or academically and sang in the choir at this church. However, he didn't get on with Vicar and criticised him mercilessly sometimes face to face - he was no coward. The problem was the Vicar's churchmanship was not "high" enough for him. Matters came to a head when he was sacked from the choir for being disruptive. We imagined our future visits would be uninterrupted by "Magnificent" as we unkindly nick-named him and so they were as far as that church was concerned. However we hadn't reckoned on his turning up at another church in the town to which he had switched his allegiance and where we also tuned. The church was more to his taste but without the same rich musical tradition. The Norman and Beard organ though smaller,

was adequate but by no means “magnificent” and consequently took less time to tune. We therefore did not have to endure his chatter for so long but perhaps “endure” is too strong a word. Although we found his presence and talking distracting, even annoying at times, he could be very interesting and was a mine of information on the local organ scene generally which our firm was sometimes able to follow up.

Flower ladies and church cleaners were frequently the source amusing stories and gossip relating to the life of the church and some were even prepared to share their personal predilections. One such in a South Wales church where we tuned an interesting though troublesome rebuilt Bryceson organ she could be relied on to serve us tea during a short break. However we paid the price by having to listen to what in retrospect was trivia. One day she announced that although she still attended the church she no longer took communion there. “You see,” she explained, “I was kneeling to receive communion one day and noticed that this new Vicar hadn’t cleaned his shoes and they were quite scruffy. I made up my mind that I didn’t want to receive communion from a Vicar who didn’t clean his shoes so I now go across town for communion.” As a Non-conformist I was rather staggered by this shallow attitude but feel non-the-less that many ministers ought perhaps to smarten up a bit.

Organ tuners sometimes have some unpleasant tasks to perform when dead animals or birds have to be removed. We arrived at a Midlands town church to tune the rather nice Nicholson organ there and noticed the head of a dead starling projecting from the mouth of one of the front pipes. The tuner who could make light of any situation exclaimed, “What a wonderful way to die, choosing to die in such a splendid organ!” He removed the pipe, took it outside and disposed of the corpse which mercifully was still quite fresh. It is a very different matter when deterioration and even purification has set in and very unpleasant indeed.

It was always a joy to arrive at a church and find the organ being played

usually but not always by the organist. If we could creep in undetected we would spend a few minutes just listening. A skilled tuner could assess what sections, ranks or individual notes may need particular attention even before he made his own appraisal at the console. The organist's notes in the tuning book often confirmed the tuner's diagnosis but sometimes there was quite a diversity of opinion if the organist hadn't detected something amiss. Usually though a pre-tuning exchange was the basis of a satisfactory tuning visit and made for good customer relations.

TOPICAL or DATED?

“The ideal voluntary is one which will prepare the mind of the listener for the service which is to follow; or if outgoing, it shall not distract the thoughts of the worshippers. Most of the elaborate and difficult pieces to which we have to listen are unsuitable for use in Divine Service. Each devotional voluntary with solemn harmonies and a natural flow of melody (not secular in character) are what are really wanted”

Dr. E. H. Bickersteth Bishop of Exeter *Hymn writer and composer* c. 1908

Eighteenth-century Flute Voluntaries for the organ

Peter Marr

In mid-18th century England, the organ “voluntary” provided entertainment for listeners, opportunities for organists to exercise their skills, and possibilities for composers to write and publish music for organists in town and country. There was nothing quite like it elsewhere.

Often of two movements (the slow/fast form probably owned its origin to Maurice Greene), the second, if not a fugue, usually has registration specified such as trumpet, cornet, voix humaine, corno [horn] or flute, each usually in an appropriate style and key. Jonas Blewitt’s *A Complete treatise on the organ...* (c.1790) reflects the conservative usage of the previous fifty or so years when he writes:

Every stop is in some degree the representation of some single instrument [of which] the style, or manner, should be correspondingly adopted.

The Flute Voluntary¹ in this respect is of particular interest. The word “Flute” referred to the recorder, not the German (i.e. transverse) flute. The distinction is made, for example, in the stop list of the 1726 organ by John Harris and John Byfield at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. Here on the Choir organ a Flute Almain and Flute are listed as separate stops on the same manual. The Flute or Recorder stop is usually specified as being at the same pitch as the Principal, i.e. 4 ft and sometimes of short compass.

Blewitt makes the additional point:

Let the each performer, when he sits down to the Organ, draw out the Diapasons on set of keys, by which means he is sure of a foundation: and indeed this is absolutely necessary, because no Stop whatever ought to be used without one or both of these Stops, except the Flute.

¹ There are many examples, for instance by Edward Kendall (of Falmouth), Henry Heron, John Alcock (senr. of Reading, and Lichfield), John Stanley, Thomas Thorley, William Hine and so on.

It may be helpful to recall that this applies to what was normal practice up to about the end of the third quarter of the century. John Marsh (1752-1828) of this slightly later generation writes:

The Flute [stop] may be played in much the same style as the Cornet [and implies that a Flute stop is of full compass]. ...I think entire Flute pieces should be avoided, and the Flute only used as an echo, or by way of relief to the noble parts of the Organ.

He also throws doubt on the suitability in church of Flute and Cornet voluntaries in major keys. To him, tastes had changed by the time he writes, for he says, and conveniently confirms for us, what happened before:

[The Flute stop] is... frequently used alone, (as an imitation of the common Flute or Flageolet) but is more properly joined with the Diapason...

So let us return to that earlier period.

The Flute stop sounds an octave above its written pitch. As recorder music of that period involves both added ornaments and passage work the question arises as to what extent this should influence the performance of Flute voluntaries for the organ.

Generally speaking, for the best part of the last two centuries musical performance has marked fairly clear boundaries between composition and improvisation. In the middle of the eighteenth century this did not exist either in England or in many places elsewhere and this is reflected in the interaction of musical taste with other art forms. There is common ground – common taste – between craft (and therefore trade), fashions, architecture, poetry, calligraphy, porcelain, printing (title pages in particular), and, for example, interior decoration of the period.

But was there a secret? I am reminded of an extract on p 4 of *The Musical Entertainer* delightfully engraved by George Bickham, junr. (1737):

Musick resembles Poetry, in each

Are nameless Graces which no Methods teach,

And which a Master-hand alone can reach.

So we might ask, what were the norms?

As regards ornaments, it was easier to insert such signs in a manuscript version (i.e. written) and cheaper than in a printed/published version (i.e. punch-engraved). So within mid-eighteenth-century published voluntaries, printed ornaments are in some way or other more or less mandatory, their omission is up to the performer. The addition of ornaments, likewise, is entirely up to the performer's skill, taste and ability. A recent writer observes, regarding the recorder:

The use of... ornaments transforms the recorder music of this period, which can look dull on paper.²

A publication earlier in the century, *The Bird Fancier's Delight* (1717, R/ed. Stanley Goodman, Schott & Co.) gives copious instructions. Here are two simple examples following them.

Three notes of the same pitch graced



Three descending notes likewise



² David Lasocki, *New Grove Dictionary of Music* (2002 ed.) vol. 21, p 43. This can occur in organ music. For instance, bars 31-35 in Bach's *Fantasia in G mi* (BWV 542) lack ornaments; Carl Dolmetsch provides rich ornamentation, quoted in Walter Emery, *Bach's Ornaments* (1953), pp 114-5.

This can be the case with a number of Flute voluntaries and some slow movements that precede them, and indeed those in other voluntaries.

Alongside that comes “ornamentation” – the addition of notes to otherwise “plain” notes and phrases. A useful resource as far as recorder performance is concerned is János Bali, *A Baroque Ornamentation Tutor for Recorder* (Editio Musica, Budapest, 2005), especially pp 6-9.³

Other than the contemporary evidence on barrel organs, there are a limited number of written-out examples of organ performance although some composers of voluntaries, John Bennett (c.1725-1784) for example, wrote out ornamentation/figuration more elaborately and fully than many others of the same period.

An example of what actually happened is that of Handel’s own organ playing in the Menuet in Esther (mid-1730s). Here are three examples.⁴ In each case, the printed version is on the lower staff; what Handel reputedly played is on the upper staff.

Ex.1



Ex.1 shows two staves of music in 3/8 time. The lower staff contains the printed version of the music. The upper staff shows the ornamented version, which includes triplets and slurs over the notes.

Ex.2



Ex.2 shows two staves of music in 3/8 time. The lower staff contains the printed version of the music. The upper staff shows the ornamented version, which includes a triplet and slurs over the notes.

³ This is readily available in England.

⁴ Kings College, Cambridge, MS Rowe 251; quoted in Niels Karl Nielsen, “Handel’s Organ Concertos Reconsidered”. See http://www.dym.dk/dym_pdf_files/volume_03/volume_03_003_026.pdf (accessed 4 May 2014).

Ex.3



John Alcock (erstwhile Reading organist in the 1740s) speaks on the difference in accompanying a singer, when it is prudent to play a plain version, as opposed to an ornamented solo/symphony before appearances of the singer. In other words, he is saying that a solo organist, as a matter of course, adds ornamentation.

He writes [spelling and capitalisation modernised]:

It may be that the organist played too well, especially in the Solo Anthems, which sometimes is the case, by which means the attention of the auditors is attracted from the singer; when, if a fumbling fellow plays on the plain notes to the symphonies in the downright advantage hum-drum style, it will not have that effect. But I see no reason why a person, who can play elegantly, should perform like a bungler, in order to shew the singer to, except while he accompanies the voice.⁵

Such decoration when played solo often took precedence, it seems, over the overall rhythm. A freedom in rhythm was of course not only normal in preludes or “extempore touches” but was also a far more constituent part of performance than is generally found today. A useful and systematic study of this is Colin Booth’s study, *Did Bach really mean that? Deceptive notation in Baroque keyboard music*.⁶ Alcock praises playing in regular time but for such playing he was criticised for playing “like clockwork”.⁷

⁵ John Piper [i.e. John Alcock], *The Life of Miss Fanny Brown* (1760), p 292.

⁶ Wells, Somerset, 2010.

⁷ Fanny Brown, p 245.

So what does this involve for us as we play an 18th-century voluntary of the type I have described? The Handel example quoted above is a convenient model. Here are some other suggestions.

- Each time a similar passage comes round (either in a formal repeat or as part of a ritornellos movement) it can be ornamented differently; ⁸
- Any figuration of any shape or length, formalised or not, that fits with the harmony implied by the bass notes; ⁹
- Pairs of notes written in equal values are not mandatorily played equal; ¹⁰
- Intervals of a third may conveniently be filled with passing notes;
- Intervals greater than a third may be ornamented with any number of notes not necessarily starting or finishing with either written note;
- In the bars approaching a cadence, there is usually an opportunity to elaborate the written notes;
- Avoid, particularly in a slow movement, any hint of notes “lingering”; the organist has not the same control over a held note as does a recorder player.

Perhaps the secret is a right balance between showing off your skill, your good taste and your knowledge of how you think it should be, and was, played!

⁸ Thurston Dart in *The Interpretation of Music*, (1960 ed., p 60) referred to anyone who played the same formula on a repeat as a “sad dog”.

⁹ Walter Emery, quoted above, notwithstanding his scholarship, took the additional view over Bach’s ornaments that “You can do anything as long as it is musical.”

¹⁰ A matter discussed in detail in Booth, above.

Some London Concert Halls

-----Some Experiences-----

Jonathan Holl

Many years ago, on moving to the London area, I thought I would attend an audition for the London Symphony Orchestra Chorus, with their Chorus Master, the well-known John Alldis. I failed because he considered my voice not to be strong enough for a large choir. This turned out to be a life-changing event!

THE DUKE'S HALL, Royal Academy of Music

I subsequently became a tenor in the Ernest Read Music Association (ERMA) choir, which gave an annual Christmas concert in the Royal Albert Hall and occasionally a spring concert in the Royal Festival Hall. Our rehearsals took place in the Duke's Hall. Not long after, I became a member of the ERMA orchestra as a 2nd violin. The violin had long been my main instrument but the organ was about to take that place. Orchestra rehearsals were also in the Duke's Hall, and we gave concerts there as well as at the Royal Festival Hall.

On my second orchestral rehearsal, I arrived slightly late due to traffic, though in those days one could park outside the Academy inside the gates! On entering the Hall at the back, the orchestra were well into their practice and I thought they sounded good. I approached the stage and walked up the stairs at the side with a feeling that something was wrong. The playing had stopped and the Conductor was looking the other way talking to the cellos. Someone asked me '1sts or 2nds'. I said 2nds and was directed to a player without a partner. A chair appeared over the heads of other players. On sitting down, I said to my new partner 'This is the Ernest Read orchestra isn't it?' He said 'Oh no, this is the London Symphony Orchestra, but do stay and play with us'. Unfortunately, being such a fool, I declined and clambered out to whispers of 'wrong orchestra.....' to find my orchestra elsewhere in the building. I still regret to this day not having played with the LSO!

Another occasion was a concert in the Duke's Hall when we were playing music by Sir Arthur Bliss in the presence of the composer. Not long before the start, a call went out that our Conductor, Bernard Keffe, had forgotten to pack his Evening Dress shoes. I went to his dressing room where he found that my shoes fitted him perfectly. I then found myself walking on to the stage with Evening Dress and violin but no shoes, and being careful not to slip over on the polished floor. On taking my place, though not near the edge of the stage, I found that there was a clear path through the players directly to Sir Arthur (typical!) I very much hoped that he had not noticed the violinist without shoes! Also during that concert, there was the Elgar Cello Concerto. The soloist was a young student from the Academy, giving his first public performance of this work. His name was Julian Lloyd Webber. Many years later, when I was piloting a BA Boeing 737 from Stockholm to London, I noticed that Julian was one of my passengers. I invited him to the Flight Deck for a chat. I remember his expression of disbelief when I told him that I was in the orchestra for his first performance of this work. There was another occasion when we had a singing student perform with us. She was Felicity Lott. (now a Dame).

At an end-of-season orchestral rehearsal, I had requested a Handel Organ Concerto. I chose Op 4 No 2 in B flat. The organ at that time was a 3 man. Norman and Beard. This was to be the first time that I would play a concerto with an orchestra and was feeling excited as I rose up from the violins to take my seat at the organ. Having been immersed in the recordings of these works played by Karl Richter, I had to quickly adjust my registration to suit a very much larger orchestra than that on the recordings - something I had not considered. It was great fun!

Some years later I attended a masterclass given by Daniel Roth, Titulaire Organist, St Sulpice, Paris. Five Academy students had been chosen to play. By this time the organ was a 2 man. van den Heuvel, very much in the French romantic style. I remember proudly showing M. Roth my very old copy of Guilman's Sonata No.1, one of the first to be printed and which I still use.

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

The ERMA choral concerts were generally held at the Royal Albert Hall. Just before the start of a rehearsal the members of the orchestra were waiting for a tuning note from the organ. I was seated near to the console and as the organist was not there, I slipped back and gave them the note. That was the one and only time I have 'played' that organ. Being so close to the console, at another rehearsal, I noticed to my surprise that our organist, Dr Eric Thiman, was smoking a small cigarette butt with a large ash, drooping at a precarious angle. He seemed unconcerned that the ash might drop on to the keys at any time!

The choral concert in December 1970 was particularly memorable. During this time, there was considerable industrial unrest and the country was suffering from scheduled power cuts. Consequently we had been advised to bring torches. The afternoon rehearsal was cut short because it became more and more dark. We knew the lights would be on later so we had a meal break and reassembled earlier before the concert. I had introduced a friend to the choir and his fiancée who sang in the altos. While meeting up (in the dark) to go out for a meal, I was introduced to another alto who was going to join us. I had to shine my torch into her face to say 'hello'. Her name was Madeline (often known as Mandy). We were married just over 2 years later!

THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

Our main orchestral concerts were held at the Royal Festival Hall and we had the privilege of having soloists such as Peter Katin, Moura Lympany, Clifford Curzen and the violinist Ralph Holmes.

During one of the rehearsals, the organ part was played by the 'man himself' - Ralph Downes. There was a 'slight stir' when our conductor had to ask him not to play so loudly!

During one of our concerts (I had been promoted to the 1st violins by then), I was aware of something dropping down on me from above and landing under the music stand. On glancing down I saw the conductor's baton on the floor. I looked up and all was normal and he obviously just picked up a second baton. I was initially slightly concerned that he might have thrown it at me purposely, but could not think of any reason . I returned it to him after the concert – it had just slipped out of his hand!

A little time later, my organ teacher, Dr Harold Darke was due to give a recital at the RFH to celebrate his 85th birthday. It was a great privilege to be asked to turn the pages for him on such an occasion. A most memorable occasion it was, a well filled Festival Hall on a Sunday afternoon. I wasn't really needed for the first piece, Mozart's Fantasia in F minor K608 – he always played it from memory. There followed some Bach Chorale Preludes, works by Buxtehude, Harwood and one of his own compositions. He ended with the very taxing Reubke Sonata. The playing of course was impeccable.

Flogging It!

David Pether

I was startled at a family gathering a few years ago when a somewhat reserved maiden aunt suddenly declared, at the age of 95 and with unexpected force, that her favourite television programme was called Flog It. I had to confess that I had no idea what she was talking about at the time, being uninitiated in the delights of daytime viewing, but it was certainly not the sort of vocabulary with which I associated this very prim retired schoolteacher.

That random event immediately came to mind in January when William McVicker and I were sent an email, warning us that the BBC were to hold a Flog It recording at Reading Town Hall and might ask to have someone on hand to demonstrate the organ. At this point, I decided to undertake some online research to find out a little more about the format of the programme. It didn't take long to discover that it is similar to the long-running BBC series Antiques Roadshow, but with the added feature that items brought in by the public for evaluation can proceed to an auction stage. To add variety to the format, items of specific historic or artistic interest close to the recording venue are visited by the show's host and feature in brief interludes during the course of each programme. I would soon learn that these inserts are known to the production team as 'moments'.

Sure enough, a week or two later a BBC researcher made contact and requested that someone would be available to present the organ for a 'moment' in the programme. William already had an important business meeting to attend on the date set, 24 February, so I volunteered to step in.

There then followed some not inconsiderable discussion by email as to what music would be both suitable and permissible. From my point of view, the choice also had to be playable under pressure. I have no idea on what grounds these things were judged, but in the process I was told that, amongst others, Lefébure-Wély would not get clearance (Why? On grounds of taste?! Copyright was clearly not an issue for a composer who died five years after the Father Willis was first installed at the Town Hall).

The decisions seemed rather arbitrary. Fortunately one of my early choices, Finlandia by Sibelius, did get approval, despite being firmly covered by copyright.

Apart from being expected to answer three of ‘the usual’ questions about the instrument’s history and how it works, I was also asked to be prepared to play the Flog It theme tune, for which the music was finally sent to me two days before the event... in an arrangement for jazz group and drum kit! Most of it is in unison with little supporting harmony apart from the bass line, so making a transcription for organ fortunately didn’t take very long.

The day of the recording dawned and I turned up at the Town Hall, as requested, over an hour before the doors were due to open to the public. There was already a significant queue of hopeful people braving the frosty conditions and clutching an intriguing assortment of objects and strangely bulging bags. This was when I was reminded just how recording sessions can simultaneously be both intensely busy and frustratingly slow. There was a good deal of waiting around for what turned out to be my two turns in the schedule to be recorded, whilst the Concert Hall was a hive of apparently chaotic activity. During the extensive breaks I enjoyed having the opportunity to chat to a few members of technical staff, some of whom had trained at the former BBC Engineering Training Department near Evesham where I had been stationed in my first job following graduation. I also had an encounter with an administrator who ensured she had my signature on a form assigning all my rights to whatever I said or did that day to the BBC. That put me firmly in my place.

My first encounter with the Flog It presenter, Paul Martin, didn’t augur well, as he strode up to me, hand outstretched and said “Hello William”. Clearly communication between the researchers and presenter had gone awry, as I would find out again later. However, we soon got down to recording the first item, which was for me to play the theme tune as part of the opening sequence to a programme. We had a couple of trial runs (my first opportunity to test out and register my arrangement on the Father Willis) and then the real ‘take’ seemed to please everyone. I was next asked to repeat the exercise a couple of times in dummy runs so that they could take close-up shots of hands and feet to edit in for variety.

Just as the recording team packed up to move onto their next assignment, a lady rushed up to the console and asked breathlessly whether I would mind playing the theme tune once more for BBC Radio Berkshire. She'd been in the foyer, interviewing members of the public, and had heard the organ playing. I agreed, to which she responded, "That's brilliant. We go live on air in one minute, after the traffic news". No pressure there, then! When my cue came, I concentrated as if my life depended on it and was very relieved that there were no mishaps. I even managed not to be distracted by the radio microphone pointed at my hands while the glorious sounds of the instrument sailed past above our heads. To be fair, the BBC Berks presenter did an excellent job of talking up the Father Willis and was very appreciative of the contribution, so it was a worthwhile, if unscheduled, diversion.



Photo of David Pether at the console with Presenter Paul Martin. Photo by getReading

After a wait of a further hour, the Flog It team returned to the stage to record an interview and an excerpt of the Sibelius. At this point I found out that the BBC were actually recording a total of four programmes simultaneously, with five cameras working at different points around the Concert Hall. As I would be making quite a lot of noise, everyone else in the building had to stop work for the duration, which meant I was limited to a grand total of five minutes for the interview and sound recording.

The cameras started to roll and Paul gave an introduction to the history of the Father Willis, after which he turned to me and said “David, Reading is well known for its festival. Can you play us some rock music?”. I think my response was broadcastable, but it certainly wasn’t one of the questions I’d been asked to prepare for, and Finlandia wasn’t going to fit the bill! After that shaky start, we did get onto rather more agreeable territory, and I was given the opportunity to play the Sibelius, repeated a couple of times, as before, to allow a confection of miscellaneous shots to be prepared.

And suddenly it was over. All that was said and done is now in the hands of the editors, and I have no control over what will make it into the final programme, if at all. Will the instrument come across well? (At least the TV crew knew where the organ sound was coming from.) Will they pick the best take, or will it be utterly embarrassing and the end of my career as an organist?! All will be revealed when the programme is broadcast, later this year or in early 2017.

As I made my way out of the Town Hall and across the Market Place, I wondered what my aunt, now sadly departed, would have made of it all.

The Organ on Stamps

Mark Jameson

2015 saw the issue of quite a few stamps that feature the organ. I am starting this review with four stamps issued in the UK by Universal Mail who have started marketing under licence from the Royal Mail bespoke smilers [as Royal Mail calls privately issued stamps]. These are designed to gain revenue for famous places – e.g. Tower of London, York Minster etc., where a gift shop customer can buy stamps for postcards, either post them at the venue or in any Royal Mail box to any address of the customers' choice. The cost of these stamps is in excess of the basic charge of 1st class, the venue pays for bulk quantity and they seem to sell at about £5 per strip. £5 for 5 stamps is expensive when the standard base rate for 1st class [in April 2016] is 64p, 2nd 55p & 10gm overseas £1.05. The seller gets a discount for bulk purchase, Universal gets their cut and Royal Mail a third portion. Many have been issued, several with musical features but at the time of writing I am only aware of four featuring the organs at York Minster, Norwich Cathedral and two at Kelvingrove Hall, Glasgow.



Kelvingrove Hall, Glasgow



Kelvingrove Hall, Glasgow



Norwich Cathedral



York Minster

York Minster book shop has on line purchasing, the others needed a phone call to purchase.

In the press you may have noticed that the Chapel of King's College Cambridge is currently undergoing some considerable restoration work, including spending £1.45m on the organ. At the time of writing in February 2016, Harrison & Harrison have emptied the case and the work is well under way. Much more information can easily be found on the Chapel website. To aid the work, a CD was produced [see Handbook 68 for 2015] and 500 special sheets of smiler stamps have been issued in conjunction with one of the stamp dealers. They were not cheap, and three stamps include parts of the organ. The stamps are – top right – one of the trumpeters from the top of the case, bottom right the case and end window, case pipes, 4th down left side. The case pipes have been removed as many have sagged badly. To buy this set, use the links on the Chapel web site.

Henry VI – The dearest King was only 19 when he laid the first stone of the 'College of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas' in Cambridge on Passion Sunday, 1441. The King laid the foundation stone for the Chapel in 1446, and the fabric was completed in 1515. Henry V, Edward IV, Richard III, Henry VIII and Henry VII all contributed to the work necessary to complete the Chapel as it stands today.

Simon Clark, who had been master mason of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds and at Eton College, took over the masonry in 1477. It was perhaps at about this time that a decision was made to change the ground level to simpler lines (just changes in the fabric of the masonry which obscures the stone-order). This is the largest free-standing fan vaulted ceiling in the world.

The majority of the magnificent glass windows were designed and installed between 1515 and 1537. The Chapel windows make up the most complete collection of early 16th-century glass in England. The side chapels also contain wonderful examples of stained glass.

The Archangel Gabriel blowing a trumpet is here.

In 1605–6 Thomas Dollan built an organ in the Chapel. The accounts for his work have survived, showing in detail the materials and hospitality provided by the College while the work was done. In 2016 the organ will undergo major restoration. This work is being undertaken by Harrison & Harrison of Durham, United Kingdom.

The Chapel's many notable features include six early 16th-century windows, intricate fan vaulting, a Renaissance wooden screen, and a painting of the Adoration of the Magi by Robert. It is also the venue for the Christmas Eve service, a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, which is broadcast to millions around the world. The College will celebrate the centenary of this service in 2018.

© Designed by Adrian Beadbury. www.kcc25.co.uk Stamp Design © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2015



Our Queen's very long reign is attracting the issue of many stamps world wide but so far only one with an organ included – issued as a £3 mini-sheet by Jersey on September 9th 2015. The sheet is large, in curious textured material, based on a painting. The scan below is an extract – and in the dim background the south case of Westminster Abbey can just be seen:

The following have been issued by nations that issue stamps simply for collectors, and re-use material that has already appeared elsewhere. I have scans for anyone who may be interested.

Central African Republic 2015 – two mini-sheets celebrating Beethoven's 245th anniversary, 1000 of each mini-sheet issued, Beethoven appears at a console of an organ in the stamp surround.

Republic of Togo 2015 also 245th anniversary of Beethoven, here the same design, but reversed. One of four stamps with different instruments, 1000 mini-sheets issued.

Republic of Niger 2015 – 330th anniversary of Handel, mini-sheets of 4 stamps, one same drawing used for a Bach issue many years ago

Republic of Chad 2015 – two mini-sheets, one featuring Dr Schweitzer – the famous picture of Schweitzer sitting at the console in Gunsbach, but here depicted with West African birds and a picture of the hospital at Lambarene.



On 14th October 2015 they marked the 200th Anniversary of the death of Jakub Jan Ryba [1765-1815]. He was born in Prestice and played piano, violin and organ. He studied in Prague – particularly philosophy, spoke several languages and was a teacher for his life. He wrote around 1300 pieces, mostly spiritual music. His Christmas Mass is the most famous and appears on a number of CDs. The organ on the stamp is St Salvator, Prague. The case dates from 1780, however the instrument was replaced in 1928 and completely replaced by a new Eule organ in 2010.

France has produced quite a number of stamps featuring organs - on 6th November 2015 a most unusual mini-sheet of antique musical boxes was released. The entire sheet is shown below – the top left design shows an organ pipe music box dating from the mid eighteenth century. The pipes are mounted on a porcelain bases and in front are figures playing other instruments complete with conductor. The whole piece is decorated with porcelain flowers. The box is in the collection in Petit Palais Museè of Fine Arts at Avenue Winston Churchill, 75008, Paris.

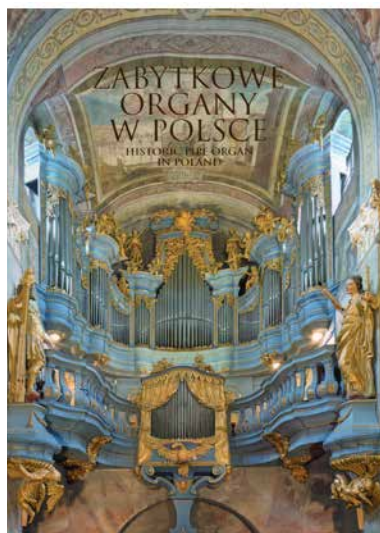


Finally, on 30th July 2015, the Polish post office released a stamp entitled “Historic Organ of Poland”

As the information is not easily found in English, I am giving more details of this four manual organ that was built between 1745 and 1754 by Jozef Sitariski [who became a Cistercian in later life] to replace the previous instrument destroyed by fire in 1723. The organ is located in the Cistercian Abbey of Jedrzejow. Of the four manuals the lowest is a transposing manual that allows music one whole tone lower. The stop handles are cast in bronze; the instrument still has intact its original mechanism. Repairs were carried out in the 1920s by Maurycy Saganowski from Kielce. A major conservation was commenced in 1978 by Jacek Kulig from Krakow – this work took 21 years to complete. The highly decorated case was inspired by the Book of Psalms, showing King David with harp at the left foot of the case and St Cecilia holding a portative organ and scroll at the right foot. Other instrumentalist cherubs are further decorations to this case. I have the current specification in Polish for anyone who would like that information. The current organist is Michal Markuszewski and during 2015 he entertained a group of about 30 from mainly the USA including Kevin Grose whose help in sorting out the background to this organ is much appreciated.



Zabytkowe organy w Polsce



The cover of the leaflet that came with this stamp is displayed on the right.

Writing for Church Choirs

Anthony Hodson

Many a local musician who, like me, is an occasional composer will turn to their church choir as a resource for which to write music, and this provides a challenge as well as a source of inspiration.

A challenge, because of the need to understand the capability, and to be disciplined enough to write within that capability. An inspiration, because there is a wealth of poetry and religious texts in the English language that are not only suitable for church choirs, but seem to want music written for them – and our great English composers have thrived on this.

The festivals of Easter and Christmas are good examples of occasions well supported by such texts, and such festivals may be associated with enhanced choral resources in local churches such as mine at St Mary's, Winkfield.

I wrote an Easter anthem in 2014 that was inspired by George Herbert's Easter poem that starts 'I got me flowers to straw thy way ...', and our choir performed it – and liked it. Our baritone pointed out that it would also fit the medieval text for Christmas 'There is no rose ...'. So the anthem resurfaced with those words, and was sung again in our 2014 Christmas concert, and was enjoyed again (despite any comparison with Benjamin Britten's gorgeous setting for female voices in 'A Ceremony of Carols').

Looking for new words to set the choir for Easter 2015, I thought of the Book of Common Prayer's Easter Anthem. The more I looked at it, though, the more it defied codification into regular – or irregular – rhythmic notation. So I decided to make what I could of a chant setting that would set the inspirational words from St Paul in a through-composed way. The multi-chant setting that follows is the result – and our choir liked it.

With that done, for Christmas 2015, I wrote an anthem using the lovely words of Christina Rossetti: 'Before the paling of the stars', and this turned out well, although it has not yet been sung by our church choir for various

reasons. I also wrote a lively Christmas song for our Junior Choir, 'The Gift' (using part of a poem by Marion Caragounis, by kind permission), that they enjoyed singing (and said so!), and they performed it twice.

Composition is a lonely process, and (although I am musically experienced and nominally literate in the elements of harmony, stemming from tuition by Dr Sydney Watson as a boy, and augmented by further study, though not at the College level), getting it right is still difficult. Musical instinct leads to traps and in creating the harmonic details, it is easy enough to fall into them, or to miss tricks. Instantly spotting and removing inappropriate parallel fifths and octaves is an elementary example – but help is to hand in the Sibelius 6 software that I use. Optimising progressions and using harmony that is interesting but not too much so is a harder challenge, and it is consoling to note that even great professional composers like Vaughan Williams often turned to other composers for expert help.

A resource that is available here is the Composition Review Service offered by the RSCM. This service provides, for a fee, 'a detailed commentary on a composition' by an expert; they take compositions submitted to them that are of a kind that could appropriately be sung in church. This is an anonymous service – neither composer nor commentator is permitted to know the other's name.

So I sent both the Easter Anthem multi-chant and the Rosetti anthem to them. There was some delay when one commentator was unable to find the time, and a second had to be found by RSCM. That achieved, though, the adjudication came back to me within a few weeks. It was obviously the result of consideration and time well worth the fee.

This result was better and more useful than I had dared hope for: encouraging remarks and some really helpful comments and excellent advice on details. The commentator liked both pieces, and so they both survived essentially intact. I have taken every comment and suggestion seriously, and the two pieces certainly benefited from the series of small improvements that resulted.

I intend to use the RSCM service again (in the first instance, perhaps, for the other two pieces I mentioned earlier), and despite the possibility of slower service than expected, I would heartily recommend composers in my position to try it out.

Music for the Easter Anthem setting follows in this journal. There was not enough space in this journal for 'Before the paling of the stars ...' but the music for that can (for now) be found on my website at:

<http://www.xdotd.com/music/choral/BTPOTS/BTPOTS.html>

You are welcome freely to try these pieces out – and to perform them if you want. I would be delighted to know how you have got on with them.

Anthony Hodson

Anthony Hodson
aeh@xdotd.com
Spring Lanes House,
Holly Spring Lane,
Bracknell, Berks
RG12 2JL
Tel: 01344 310665
Mob: 0771 360 7086
Web: www.xdotd.com/music/choral

For the choir of St Mary's Winkfield

Easter Anthem

Text from St Paul's epistles
as in BCP Easter Anthem

Anthony Hodson 2015

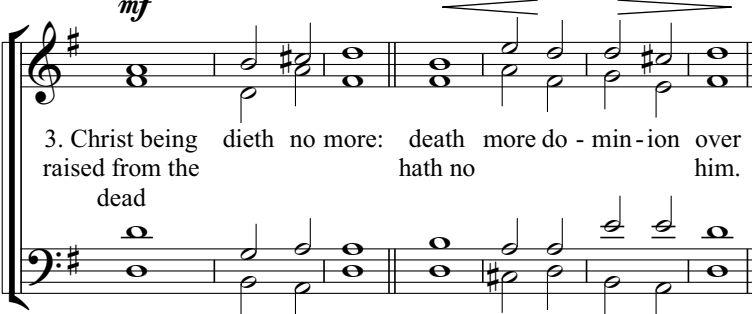
1. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast;

2. not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness

but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth

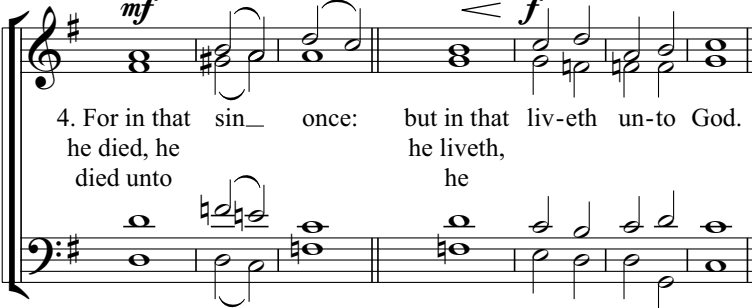
Copyright © Anthony Hodson 2015

mf



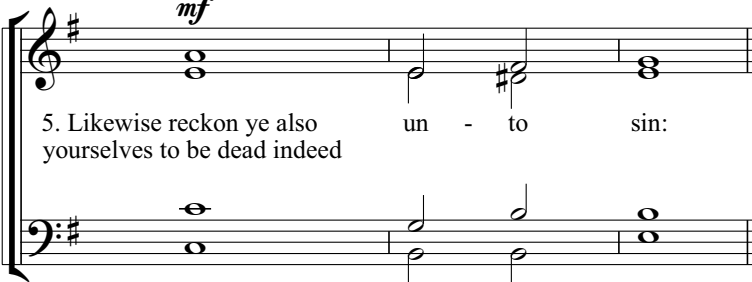
3. Christ being dieth no more: death more do - min - ion over
raised from the dead hath no him.

mf *f*



4. For in that sin_ once: but in that liv-eth un-to God.
he died, he died unto he he liveth,

mf



5. Likewise reckon ye also un - to sin:
yourselves to be dead indeed

Christ our Lord 3

but alive through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6. Christ is risen from the dead:

and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

7. For since by man came death:

by man came also the res - ur - rec - tion of the dead.

8. For as in Adam all die: even so shall all be made a - live.
in Christ

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Ho-lyGhost;

As it was in the ev er shall beworld without end_ A - men.
beginning is now
and

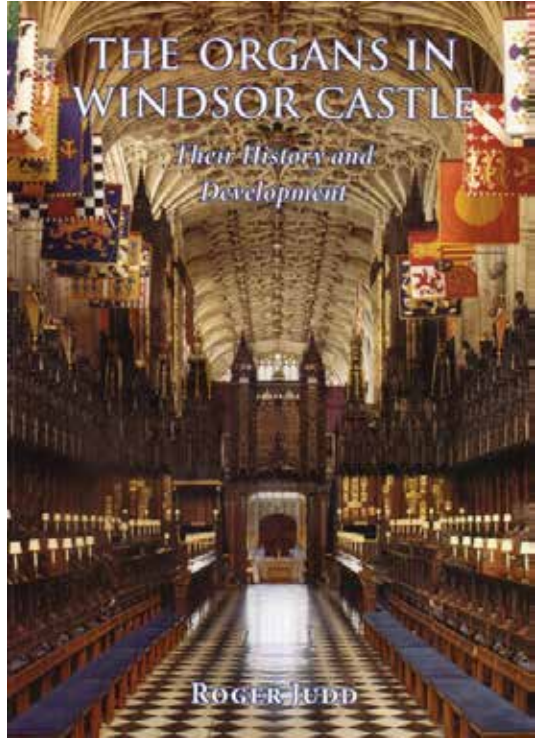
REVIEWS: BOOKS & CDs

Mark Jameson

The Organs in Windsor Castle

The full title of this book is “The Organs in Windsor Castle, their History and Development”.

Written by Roger Judd, Assistant Organist St George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle from 1985 to 2008. Roger has now reached retirement and currently serves as Sub Organist at Ludlow Parish Church. His new book, issued in November 2015 has been published by Positif Press, and easily ordered from St George’s Chapel bookshop Windsor Castle, <http://www.stgeorges-windsor.org/chapel-shop.html> The cost is £20 plus £5 postage – they were very quick with my order. The ISBN number is 978 0 906894 59 0.



The book is divided into fourteen chapters. He reports the confusion that historical documentation has not always made it clear which organ was being referred to, for example, Chapel of St. George may be the present St George’s Chapel in the Lower Ward of Windsor Castle, or the Private or Royal Chapel in the State Apartments with the same dedication.

The earliest reference to a Chapel in Windsor Castle is 1121, with references to music from 1240. There is only sketchy information about the first organ identified in 1397. The first chapter deals with the Queen’s Free Chapel of St George history up to 1644. The history of the St George’s Chapel and organs is traced in chapters two to six. The period from the restoration

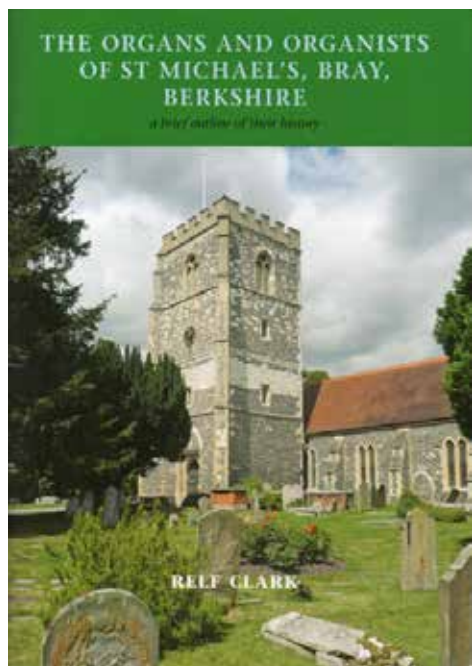
of the Monarchy in 1660; Dallam organs, restorations between 1780 and 1790. Then a new organ by Samuel Green, and finally Walter Parratt's appointment in 1882. In the early 1920's the Chapel walls were found to be bowing; this led to major work on the structure and removal of the organ. A temporary Forster & Andrews organ was placed on the north side of the Nave. Following the building work, Rothwell of Harrow built a new organ with two consoles of his patent stop tab design. By the 1960's Walkers reported the organ was beyond repair. Dr Sydney Campbell was appointed Organist in 1961, and following quotes from Walkers and Harrison & Harrison - H&H replaced the instrument completing the work in 1965 and they still look after it today.

Chapter seven covers the Choristers' School organ, at least from 1775, again lots of history, with the most recent work by William Drake in 1977. A three stop box organ supplied in 1988 by Peter Collins – forms the 8th Chapter. Chapter nine covers the Private Chapel and St George's Hall. This part dates back to 1257, organs being recorded from 1633. Lots of historic records here up to 1888 when the organ was replaced by a new Willis, [Chapter ten] with two consoles, one in the Private Chapel and the other in St George's Hall. In September 1991 shortly after Jonathan Rees-Williams was appointed as Organist and Master of the Choristers of St George's Chapel he recorded this instrument [Heritage Recordings HRCD921] before a planned restoration was to be undertaken. Sadly, both buildings were gutted in the Castle fire in November 1992 [I can remember seeing it from the train on my way home from work]. At least the recording outlasts this instrument.

Chapter 11 deals with the post fire Harrison organ in the Queen's Private Chapel, a much smaller one manual and pedal instrument. Chapter 12 covers the rare Clock Organ in the State Apartments. The history of the Royal Chapel of All Saints in Windsor Great Park and the Lewis/Walker organ is covered in chapter 13. The final chapter is a summary of all the organs that claim to have a connection with Windsor Castle.

This is a fascinating book; it is a masterpiece. Trying to cram 270 pages into a review is difficult.

The Organs & Organists of St Michael's, Bray, Berkshire



Members of Berkshire Organists visited Bray Parish Church on 13th June 2015. Members who attended were given day visit notes which included part of the draft of a leaflet being prepared by Relf Clark. Now that booklet [leaflet] has been published by Positif Press – it is most interesting. Our late member Wendy Watson also served there – there is an extensive history of the organists as well as the organ.

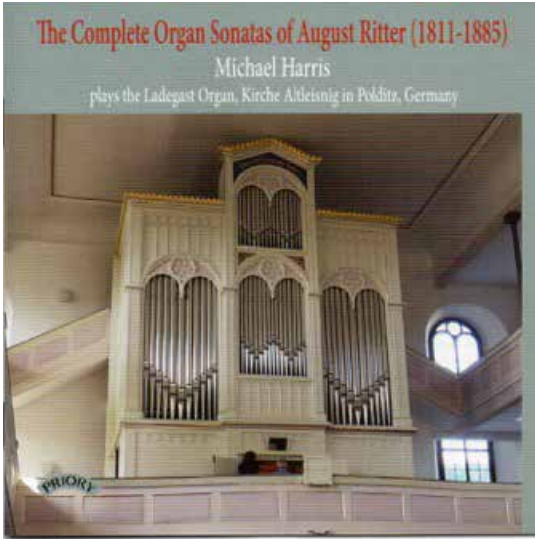
The book stock is at St Michael's Bray [High Street, Bray, Berkshire SL6 2AB] and the cost is £5. It would help if when sending payment to send a C5 envelope [Handbook size],

with your own address and with 2 first class stamps. The Publisher is Positif Press. ISBN 978 0 906894 57 6

The Organs of New College, Oxford written by Paul Hale

Positif Press have recently released this book on the full history of the organs in New College. The book is obtainable from the College or direct from the Publisher [130 Southfield Road, Oxford OX4 1PA]. Cost is £19.95. ISBN 978 0 906894 54 5. Here is the opportunity to read the full history of the organs from 1449 to the recent work by Goetze & Gwynn.

CD REVIEWS



The Organ of Rochdale Town Hall [Delphian DCD34143]. This disc played by former Windsor organist Timothy Byram-Wigfield who demonstrates this organ doing exactly what Town Hall organs were intended to do – bring transcriptions of major works to the masses in an era before recorded music and media. On this disc there are seven overtures – including *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Ptolemy*, *Oberon*, *Romeo and Juliet*. A superb recording,

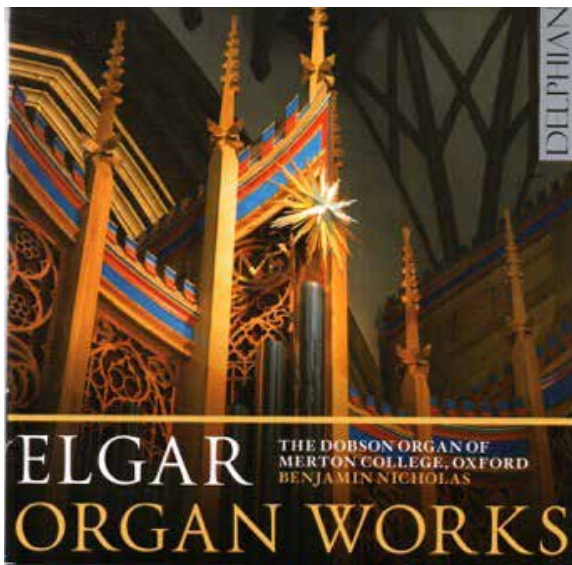
The Complete Organ Sonatas of August Ritter [Priory PRCD1162] Our member Michael Harris plays the works of August Ritter [1811-1885]. Ritter wrote just four Sonatas – Number 1 Op.11 in D Minor, No.2 Op.19 E Minor, No. 3 Op.23 A Minor and No.4 Op.31 in A Major, all between 1845 and 1856. These are refreshingly different to some other works written in this period. Michael has chosen to use the 1868 Friedrich Ladegast 3/33 organ restored in 1997 situated in the tiny Saxony village of Polditz. This instrument is one of the largest built by Ladegast [1818-1905] and was nearly lost due to the state of the church before restoration. The tin front pipes were melted down during World War one and replaced in 1928 with zinc pipes. The organ was restored by Christian Scheffler. Polditz has about 160 residents, it is near Alteisnig, south east of Leipzig – the village web site is mostly about the church and its organ and makes interesting read. See <http://www.kirche-zschoppach.de/polditz.html>. I very much enjoyed this disc.

Merton College Oxford was visited by BOA in June 2014 to see and play the superb new Dobson organ. Benjamin Nicholas is the College's first full time Reed Rubin Organist and Director of Music. April 2016 saw the release of two super Delphian CDs.

Viri Galilaei, Favourite Anthems from Merton [Delphian DCD34174]. The Choir has joint directors Benjamin Nicholas and Peter Philips [Reed Rubin Director of of Music]. The Organ Scholars are Charles Warren and Peter Shepherd. There are 28 mixed voice members of the choir. The Choir has sung in support of the rebuilding of the organ in St Thomas' Hanwell. At Easter 2016 they were in Toulouse and early in April touring around New York, and Washington. On this new Choral disc there are 13 pieces starting with Jonathan Dove's new work Te Deum commissioned by the College for its Merton Choirbook. Other works included are by Tallis, Elgar, Rutter, Parry, Quilter, William Harris, Byrd. The longest piece is by Finzi Lo, the full final sacrifice at 15 minutes and the disc ends with the disc title piece Viri Galilaei composed by Patrick Gowers.

Edward Elgar Organ Works [Delphian DCD34162]

is superbly played by Benjamin Nicholas. His 68-minute programme features the complete Sonata in G Major, Op.28, Vesper Voluntaries, Op.14 and three arrangements Nimrod transcribed by Sir William Harris, Prelude to The Kingdom, Op.51 by Herbert Brewer and Gavotte, by Edward Lemare.



OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

HONORARY FELLOWS

Dr Francis Jackson

Dr William Mc Vicker

PRESIDENTS (*Italics indicate deceased members*)

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

2002 - 03	Jim Wooldridge FSCA
2004- 06	Jonathan Holl ARCO LRAM ARCM
2007 -08	Christopher Cipkin BA MA ARCO
2009 - 10	Ian May
2011 - 12	Jill York BA MA LRAM
2013 -14	Harry Russell
2015	Jonathan Holl ARCO LRAM ARCM

SECRETARIES

1921 - 26	<i>S T Chamerlain</i>
1927-31	<i>Sidney Collins</i>
1932 -76	<i>Archibald Lusty</i>
1977 - 83	<i>Ron Pepworth</i>
1984 - 86	Christopher Hood
1987 - 91	<i>Norman Hutt</i>
1992 - 93	Graham Ireland
1994 - 96	Donald Hickson
1997-98	Christine Wells
1999 -00	Graham Ireland
2000 - 01	Jim Wooldridge
2002 - 07	<i>Alan Kent</i>
2008	Donald Hickson
2009 - 12	Christopher Cipkin
2012 - 13	<i>Sylvia Collins</i>
2013	Don Hickson
2014	Anthony Hodson (acting)
2015	Harry Russell

TREASURERS

c1930 - c54	<i>A.L Warman</i>
c1954 - c58	<i>Leslie Pratt</i>
1959 -60	<i>Mrs S Stephenson</i>
1961 -76	<i>Leslie Pratt</i>
1977 - 79	J G Davies
1980 -82	Peter Marr
1983 -89	David Duvall
1990 -10	Mark Jameson
2011-12	DerekGuy
2013 -16	Ronald Byer

EDITORS OF THE BERKSHIRE ORGANIST

1948 -73	<i>Albert Rivers</i>
1974-77	<i>Leslie Davis</i>
1978 -83	<i>Gordon Spriggs</i>
1984 - 97	<i>Gordon Spriggs</i> and Philip Bowcock
1998 -04	Philip Bowcock
2005 - 09	Graham Ireland
2010-11	Patricia Rigg
2011	Chris Hood
2012 - 15	Malcolm Rigg

All dates given above are the year of election.