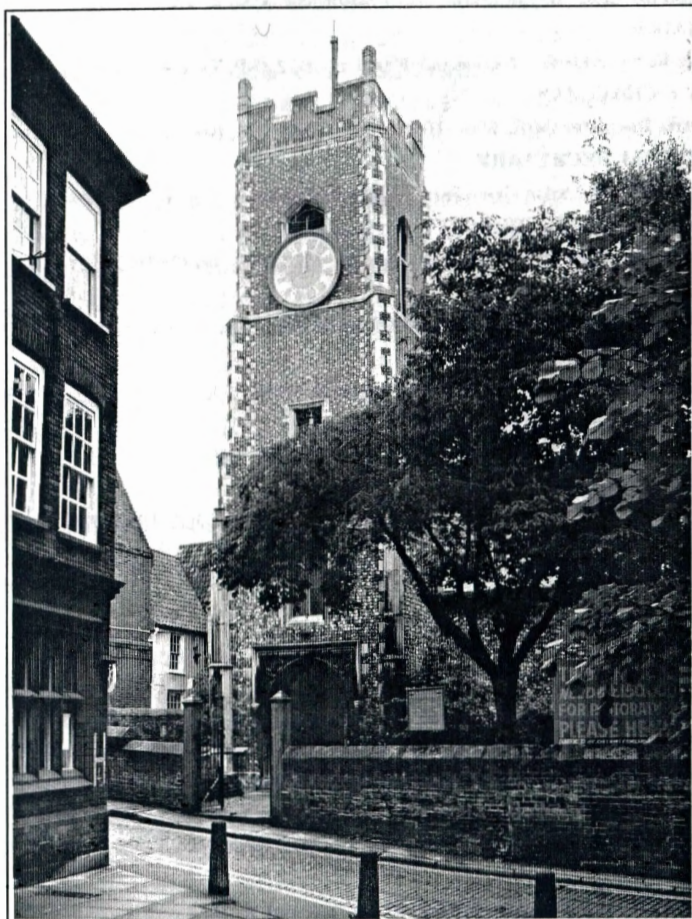


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February 1994.

Dear Members,

With the Guild AGM. comes the dawning of a new year. I look forward, with you, to another enjoyable, entertaining and enlightening year, combined with good fellowship.

One cannot let the past year go without some very sincere expression of thanks on behalf of us all, to those who, by their commitment and enthusiasm, have given us such a very varied and enjoyable programme.

To Chairman, Jane, who has completed her second two year term in office, thank you for the dedication, patience, efficiency and charm with which you have conducted our affairs.

To our Committee members, thank you for all you have done in so many ways to keep the Guild 'ticking' so smoothly. Please carry on the good work.

To you, fellow members near and far, may I solicit your continued support, and wish you full enjoyment in our future programme of events, the Journal, correspondence and, last, not least, friendship.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Robbins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Hon. President.

The editor writes

The article about Douglas Fox stimulated more correspondence than anything else has of late. I was discussing my search for information about Dr. Fox over lunch with Douglas Carrington and his wife at the luncheon which followed the service to mark the 100th anniversary of the granting of the Royal Charter to the Royal College of Organists in London in December last year.

This prompted one of the kindest gestures I have ever experienced. Douglas Carrington whom I had not met until that occasion, obtained for me a copy of a book written about Douglas Fox by his sister Winifred and sent it to me. This is particularly significant as there were only 500 copies of the book printed and they are exceedingly difficult to seek out and so you can imagine how touched and excited I was to receive a copy.

I recommend it to anyone who can trace a copy. It contains a fascinating insight into the remarkable achievements of Dr. Fox. Mr. Carrington also sent me programmes of recitals he attended given by Fox and I reproduce one of them here for you. It is difficult to imagine how the performance of these pieces was achieved by anyone with Dr. Fox's disability. He had a system which his sister refers to in her book saying that the system would probably be the subject of

a further book and giving no details of it. I would love to know what Dr. Fox's system was. It is known that he could play on two manuals with one hand, the thumb and first finger on one manual and the other three fingers on the other. He also arranged to make up for the missing hand by deft use of his two feet.

The week of one-armed playing of Evensong by Hugh Allen is confirmed by the book which makes it clear that this was achieved by the player keeping his right hand in a pocket, (not tied behind his back as some stories would have it).

At Easter Michael Nicholas leaves for his new post at the R.C.O. Dr. Peter Aston has kindly written an appreciation of Michael which appears in this issue. Once you have read that there will be little anyone else could add. Since I left St. Giles I have been a regular worshipper at the Cathedral and can testify to the beauty of the music there. I have also noticed that Michael has been generous to aspiring composers and has often used pieces written by choirboys and other, as yet, unsung composers (like me!) which is a tremendous encouragement. I had hoped to publish something from him in this issue but no doubt when his bustling between Norwich and London has calmed down a bit he will find time to write something for us. Good luck Michael.



Recital by Douglas Fox

St. Mary Redcliffe

3rd February 1953

Suite 'Bonduca'	Purcell
Prelude 'In Dulci Jubilo'	Bach
Prelude & Fugue in G minor	Bach
Bourree from Concerto No. 7	Handel
Benedictus	Reger
Fugue 'The Wanderer'	Parry
Chorale Preludes	
Arnstadt	Reger
Gibbons 'Song 13'	Vaughan Williams
Scherzo in E	Gigout
Romance in G minor	William McKie
March 'Crown Imperial'	Walton

Diocesan Organ Scholarships

Three scholarships are awarded annually to committed Christian people of ANY DENOMINATION to encourage organ playing within the context of Christian Worship. Successful candidates will receive a regular course of professional instruction for a period of three years, during which time all tuition fees will be paid. The candidates will be responsible for the cost of music, travelling and other expenses.

Details: Kenneth Ryder, 56A The Close, Norwich NR1 4EH

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Closing date for 1994 is 14th May.

The Norwich born composer Diana Burrell has very kindly written the following article for the Journal

One of my earliest memories is of myself standing against the piano stool gazing upwards at the upright piano which seemed at the time to be as big as a tower block! On the music desk there was often a piece of music with four symbols on the front. They could have been Chinese characters for all I knew - it was before I went to school and learned to read, but I associated this music with beautiful sounds and would be very happy to hear my father, Bernard, play it. When I learned letters I found the four characters spelt BACH.

So began my interest in music and a lifetime love of this wonderful composer. My father was a great inspiration and it wasn't long before I began to follow him about to various organ lofts. He was organist for a time at St. Nicholas' Church, East Dereham which then (and possibly still does) seemed to have weddings every Saturday afternoon. My responsibilities grew. From sitting beside Dad on the bench, he first got me to turn the pages for him, then it was: 'find the Trumpet stop, top of far left column to my right - pull it out when I tell you'.

Once he wrote out a G major chord and told me to play it when the priest stopped chanting, and then disappeared down into the choir, leaving me to give them their notes for the ensuing anthem. I was about 8 at the time.

Later on I learnt the violin and then the viola and became at that time more

interested in the orchestra than the church. A real turning point came, when, aged about 15, I went to hear a visiting Swedish orchestra play in St. Peter Mancroft. I had never heard of the Danish composer Carl Nielsen at the time, but I shall never forget the impact his first symphony made on me. It was as if all doors and windows everywhere blew open, I had never heard such strong clear colours. 'I want to do that', I thought, and so, I am convinced, began my interest in composition. Nielsen remains among my favourite composers still - I even speak a modicum of Danish! I was so keen, I wanted to learn his language.

In my last two years at school I had a job as a church organist, but I am ashamed to say that I never learnt it properly. My father gave me a couple of lessons and I just about managed to put the pedals in on some of the easier hymn tunes, but that was all. However, the church was desperate for a musician and I did have another skill of sorts. St. George's, Tombland is an Anglo-Catholic church and during morning Mass or evening Benediction there were countless little processions, all of which required music. I enjoyed improvising this, taking great pleasure in leaving behind a hymn tune in one key and arriving smoothly (sometimes not so smoothly!) and at the right moment in another. And many was the A-level essay written behind the pillar which shielded the organ loft from the view of the pulpit where the vicar was preaching his sermon.

Brian Runnett became a good friend about this time, introducing me to music I had never heard before. I owe to him an interest in Reger - not just the organ works - and all the French composers - Messiaen and particularly Jehan Alain, who, like Brian, died tragically young and never fulfilled his real potential.

Having studied music at Cambridge I became, for a time, a teacher, then a professional viola player, but I had, by now, started composing, and around the age of 30 (I wasn't exactly a child prodigy!) I got my chance. Richard Hickox, an old friend from university days, was just beginning to get known as a conductor and he suggested I write a piece for the St. Endellion Festival which he ran in Cornwall. 'The bigger the better' were his words, and so the *Missa Sancte Endeliente* was born - for five soloists, chorus and orchestra and lasting fifty minutes. I certainly cut my teeth as a composer on that one! I was lucky - the BBC broadcast the London performance two years later giving me, at the same time, the first of several commissions I've had from them.

I have published one organ work so far, 'Arched Forms with Bells'. This was also a BBC commission - for the Proms in 1990, and I can't say that the first performance was an unqualified success. This was in no way due to the excellent performer, David Titterton, who played wonderfully as always. Rather it was on account of it being an extremely hot evening and the Albert Hall organ simply could not cope. The tuning was already going on certain stops and in my piece, just before the first big climax, all the wind pressure cut out,

leaving a gaping hole in the music of about one and a half bars. I sat there as calmly as I could - I'd already been warned what an unpredictable animal the Albert Hall organ was - but never was the sound of the full organ such a welcome noise to my ears as it was when it eventually reappeared.

I've written many pieces now - all published (by United Music Publishers) and for all sorts of forces. Last year saw three church music commissions: 'Come Holy Ghost' for the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester; 'Heil'ger Geist in's Himmels Throne' for that bold church, St. Matthew's, Northampton; and 'Christo paremus cantica' for the service of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge on Christmas Eve. I'm particularly pleased to be working on the two commissions I have at the moment and which are taking up every bit of room on my desk. One is for a big symphony for the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Composers don't get enough opportunities to write for really large orchestras and I'm very lucky to have this. It's for the 1995-96 season so I've got time to get my thoughts together. The other commission is also very pleasing. It is a viola concerto for the opening concert of this year's Norwich and Norfolk Festival for the exciting young viola player Jane Atkins and the orchestra of St. John's, Smith Square.

Norwich has been very good to me. I've had several of my works performed there, and for my part, well - I'm just glad of every opportunity to go back and visit what I still think of as my home town, even though I haven't lived there for twenty-five years.

Church Unity

George Marley

The River Nile flows four thousand miles across the desert through Sudan and Egypt. When it reaches Cairo it divides into several streams, and each makes its own way to the sea. This is the Nile Delta; it is a natural process, and the same phenomenon can be seen in the Mississippi, the Rhine and other rivers.

The Church in Europe flowed, like the river, through the centuries. In its second millenium it divided. In 1054 the Western See of Christendom centred on Rome and the Eastern See centred on Constantinople, separated from each other because they disagreed over one word in the Nicene Creed, 'Filioque', 'and from the Son'. In 1563, Henry VIII broke from Rome and instituted the Church of England. The Baptist Church came to this country in 1609 and Presbyterians and Congregationalists arose after the Refor. Luther and Calvin pushed ahead their reforms in Germany and Switzerland and the Wesleys instituted

Methodism, and Booth the Salvation Army.

What was the Holy Spirit's reaction to all this activity? I am quite sure he smiled on these labours and endorsed them with his blessing.

But now, late in the twentieth century, there is a clamour for a reunion and rejoining into one stream, of all the different denominations. This is called Ecumenism. Its supporters castigate the differences as a disgrace and a scandal. They affirm that the outside world looks with scorn on churches that can't agree among themselves, whereas the outside world couldn't care less. They drag in Christ's words to his Father, 'that they may be one', and distort their meaning to apply to the present day.

Surely God must delight in the endless variety of worship rising daily to the Throne of Grace. The Church thrives on schism and heresy, on separatism and dissent. Let it be!

New Release

The latest C.D. by the choir of Norwich Cathedral is made up of various settings of the Te Deum and Jubilate. Composers represented are Elgar, Statham, Howells, Moeran, Wesley, Britten and Francis Gladstone.

It almost goes without saying that this will be of great interest to Norfolk folk given the regional connections of three of the composers. The music is all very fine and the Statham pieces remind us what a craftsman this former organist at Norwich Cathedral was. The choir is magnificent as is the organ accompaniment by Neil Taylor.

Membership

It has for some time concerned the Committee that there were organists about who were not Guild members. Despite a healthy membership of 125 it was decided to seek out these organists and enquire why they were not in the Guild and at the same time offer a year's honorary membership. Each honorary member will receive a copy of the Journal and notice of events, some, if not all of which we sincerely hope they will attend.

Each person circulated was asked if they would complete a questionnaire which would help the committee to understand what organists' needs are as regards membership of an organists' association, and what sort of events would attract them.

In all except one case, the answers received were constructive and helpful and several of those approached have taken up the offer of a year's honorary membership.

We are delighted to welcome as honorary members, in alphabetical order;

Anne Duarte, BA, St. George's Music Shop, Norwich

John Farmer, BA, ARCO, Gt. Yarmouth

Rupert Gough, BA Hons, ARCO, Organ School, Norwich Cathedral

*Anthony Gowing, Horsham St. Faiths
Julia Grover, St. Nicholas', Dereham
John Jordan MA MusB F.R.C.O., Kings Lynn*

Dennis Long, Wreningham

Carey Moore, Gt. Ellingham

Peter Notley, LLCM, LTCL, St. Thomas', Heigham, Norwich

Timothy Patient, Norwich

Roger Rayner, assistant, St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich

Christine Stanley, BA, ARCO, ALCM, St. Andrew's, Norwich

Neil Taylor, assistant, Norwich Cathedral.

A warm welcome also to the following new ordinary members:

Eveline Craddock, Pulham Market

Rita Piesse, Costessey

It was agreed at the committee held on 12th February, that as the list of members changes fairly regularly, supplying each member with an up-to-date list is somewhat impractical. However, there is a list, and if you would like one then please contact the Membership Secretary and she will run you off the latest version and send it to you on receipt of a small sum to cover reproduction and postage.

NGO Subscriptions

Guild Subscriptions of £12 (or £6 for students or members under 18 years of age), were due on 1st January 1994.

If you have not yet paid, please send your cheque to the Membership Secretary as soon as possible. Thankyou.

Ralph Bootman

In the last issue I wrote of the work being carried out in Lowestoft by Terry Hepworth, a first-class amateur organ builder and a fine player and it is good to be able to report that another amateur builder has 'made the headlines' in the Eastern Daily Press - this time, Mr John Plunkett of Frettenham who is restoring and rebuilding in his local Parish Church, the old organ from Plumstead Road Methodist Church. This is an instrument of unknown parentage which was last worked on in the early 1950's by Storr Bros. It is, so Mr Plunkett tells me, a hotch-potch within and he is restoring the whole of the action, putting in new electric action for the pedals which will have an 8ft and 4ft extension to the Bourdon 16ft. The tonal scheme will be re-cast to give a Principal chorus on the Great and a Flute chorus on the Swell, where provision is being made for an 8ft reed. This work is being carried out in the garage of Mr Plunkett's home and in his spare time and, when sufficient work has been completed to make the instrument playable, interested persons will be invited to see and hear for themselves what Mr Plunkett has done.

The mention of the first E.W. Norman organ in the last issue brought forth a flood of telephone calls and letters from far and wide - almost wholly expressing the hope that this little instrument might be restored and found a good home. Two of the callers actually suggested that - and I quote, ...'a couple of evenings spent on it might get it back to playing order?' and did I think that it might be suitable for what I know to be a fairly large Parish church whose organ, so the caller thought, was 'too big for the Church.'

It is of interest to note that the late Charles Drane, whose copious note-books on Norfolk organs were passed to me, stated that on his visit to it in 1935 it was almost unplayable and on his subsequent visit after the second World War in the late 1960's, he noted that ...'internally, the organ is a complete wreck and totally unplayable.'

The current issue of *The Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies* pictures on its front cover the organ which used to stand in Shadwell Court, near Thetford. This instrument, originally of 3 manual and pedals, was featured in The Newsletter many years ago and readers may remember that it was taken away by Kingsgate Davidson and rebuilt in a church near King's Cross only to be ousted some years later by an electronic instrument. Not far away from Shadwell is Rushford and, thanks to the researches of Dr. Robert Pacey of Burgh le Marsh, Lincs. further details of the organ in the church here have come to light. It was not new when installed in 1880, but had been built for Cawthorne Parish Church, near Barnsley, Yorks. in 1872 by Gray and Davison the gift of a Mr and Mrs Stanhope. The church at Cawthorne was restored under the direction of G. F. Bodley and a new organ by Wordsworth and Maskell of Leeds was provided. How the small Gray and Davison organ came to be rebuilt in a remote Norfolk church we do not know - but certainly Wordsworth and Maskell were quite busy in Norfolk round about this time and provided instruments for the parish churches at Hepworth, Hopton, Market Weston and Stanton - all in Suffolk, just over the border from Rushford and may well have been that these new instruments prompted the Rushford folk to look for an instrument for their church.

The cleaning and overhaul of the organ by Henry Jones in St. Julian's, Norwich, has been completed by Holmes and Swift and the organ by Bishop and Starr in Shelfanger Parish Church is being advertised for sale. This is a chamber-organ which previously stood in the Chapel of St. Felix School, Southwold, having been moved there from St. Paul's, Woldingham, Surrey, by Rest, Cartwright way back in 1934 - at a cost then of £79.0.0.! It came to Shelfanger in about 1960 and has not been used for several years. It has fallen into a quite shameful condition and is completely unplayable. A small one-manual electronic keyboard by Viscount has been used for some time and an elaborate amplifying system for it resides on the western tower arch screen. I was given to understand by one Churchwarden that the condition of sale prohibits the organ being 'cannibalised' for any 'spare parts' and, indeed, this would be a pity as there is good pipework within, much of it spotted metal; just how such a clause can restrain a would-be purchaser, I know not, and it does seem strange that 'The Church' can impose such conditions. If one buys something, one would expect to do with it that which one wished, surely.

Certainly, whoever does buy it has a very large restoration job ahead - very well into the four-figure bracket. Unusually in some ways the reservoir for this organ is placed on the floor at the back of the instrument and not within the casework as one might expect. If nothing else, I wish it a good home - in its present (restored) state - or even if it is used for 'transplant' ! Of course, had it been properly maintained in the past, it would still be giving good service today. It is false economy, I feel, not to spend money on routine organ maintenance, and why is it that so many churches refuse to do so ? Yet their church members regularly spend their own money on such things as car maintenance - surely a rip-off in so many cases - and such

household items as washing machines, dishwashers, deep freezers and the like - and yet they begrudge spending money on the most expensive item of church furnishings ! From *The Times Educational Supplement* for 4th February, we learn that the five-manual Compton-Christie cinema organ from the Palace, Gorleston-on-Sea is to be added to the exhibits at Bygone Village, the 42 acre re-creation of a late 19th century village at Burgh St. Margaret, near Great Yarmouth. Is this in addition to the existing Compton there?

Messrs. W. and A. Boggis of Diss continue to be very busy - they have completely restored the organ and made some additions at Halesworth U.R.C. restored the large two-manual in Pulham Market Methodist Church and have restored the organ in Old Lakenham Parish Church after water-damage. Further afield, they are moving a large three-manual from a church in Harrow to a non-conformist church in Surrey.

Another organ seeking a new home is the instrument visited by the Guild some years ago in the Chapel of Ease to Ditchingham Parish Church - All Hallows, Pirnough, near Bungay. This was built c.1840, possibly by Bishop, for Worstead Parish Church and was moved here in 1865 by Mark Noble who added the pedal Bourdon. It is contained within a decent case and has the following stops;

Open Diapason TC 8ft
Stopped Diapason Bass 8ft
Stopped Diapason Treble 8ft
Keraulophon TC 8ft
Principal 4ft
Fifteenth 2ft
Pedal Bourdon 16ft
Manual to Pedal.

It was visited by vandals some time ago but, fortunately, not too much damage was done. The Church has been sold - for conversion to a private dwelling - and it is to be hoped that the organ will be transferred to another church.

Olivier Latry to play in Norwich

What an occasion this will be! How familiar we all are with the great masterpieces of the famous organists of Paris and what a rare treat it will be to be present to hear this young man who is following in such revered footsteps. This will not just be a recital but an historic occasion. That peculiar skill which the French organists seem naturally to inherit is improvisation; some may have heard improvisations by Dupré. M. Latry will include in his recital a large scale improvisation on themes submitted immediately prior to the recital.

Olivier Latry began his musical studies at the conservatoire in Boulogne, where he was born in 1962, graduating in 1978 with a first prize in piano. A pupil of Gaston Litaize, he held the post of organist at the cathedral in Meaux, whilst continuing his musical education at the conservatoire in Paris, where he won first

prize for harmony studies. At the age of 23 he was appointed Titulaire des Grandes Orgues de Notre-Dame de Paris.

Olivier Latry has given recitals in many of France's most prestigious venues in Paris and the cathedrals of Boulogne, Arras, Orléans and Strasbourg, as well as giving concerts for Radio France. He has performed in many European countries, including Germany, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Italy, as well as in Canada, the U.S.A. and Central America.

He has made recordings of the music of Vierne and Duruflé which have attracted critical acclaim. He is also Professor of Organ at the conservatoire in Rheims and at the Catholic Institute in Paris.

Don't miss it!



NORWICH CATHEDRAL

Organ Recitals 1994

May 3 at 7.30 Olivier Latry (Notre Dame de Paris)

Tickets £5 (concessions £4) at the door

Summer Series Wednesdays at 8.00

July 20

July 27

August 3

August 10

August 17

August 24

Colin Walsh

Andreas Meisner

Francis Jackson

Martin Baker

David Liddle

Neil Taylor

Tickets £3.50 (concessions £2.50) at the door

Telephone enquiries 0603 764383

Olivier Latry

Titulaire des Grandes Orgues

de Notre Dame de Paris

will play in Norwich Cathedral

on Tuesday 3rd May 1994

at 7.30 p.m.

Programme:

Aléxandre Boely

Fantaisie & fugue in B flat

Andante con moto in E flat

Andante con moto in G minor

Toccata in B minor

César Franck

Prière

Charles-Marie Widor

Allegro (1st movement) from 6th Symphony

Olivier Messiaen

L'apparition du Christ ressucité à Marie-Madeleine

(from Livre du Saint-Sacrement)

Marcel Dupré

Prelude & fugue in G minor

Olivier Latry

Improvisation on themes submitted immediately

prior to the recital

Tickets:£5 (concessions £4)

available from the Cathedral Shop (Tel:619920) or

Prelude Records (Tel:628319)

Michael Nicholas - an appreciation

Peter Aston

Since the early 18th century, it has been customary for the Organist of Norwich Cathedral to be involved in the musical life of the city. Some have made significant contributions, among them Thomas Garland, Zechariah Buck, Frank Bates and, in more recent times, Heathcote Statham. It is doubtful, however, that any Norwich Cathedral Organist has made a more significant contribution to musical activities in East Anglia than Michael Nicholas. During the 23 years he has been in charge of the Cathedral's music, there is hardly an aspect of the region's musical life in which he has not played a major part.

Michael Nicholas was appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers at Norwich Cathedral in April 1971, following studies at Jesus College, Oxford, where he was organ scholar, and ten years as a parish church organist, the last six at St. Matthew's Church, Northampton. During the past two decades, he has been active as a recitalist, choral conductor and examiner in the UK and overseas, has been a member of the Councils of the Royal School of Church Music and the Royal College of Organists, and has undertaken advisory work for numerous other organisations. His reputation as a choir-trainer and organ recitalist is an international one; but as he leaves Norwich to take up the post of Chief Executive of the Royal College of Organists it is appropriate to reflect on his work within and for the East Anglian region.

Many who do not attend services in the Cathedral will know him best as conductor of the Norwich Philharmonic Chorus. Since his public debut with the Society in May 1972, he has conducted a wide range of music from the time of Bach and Handel onwards, giving memorable performances of works from the standard choral repertoire and introducing audiences to less familiar works. In particular, he has championed the music of contemporary composers, introducing to the Philharmonic Society's repertoire such works as Gordon Crosse's *Changes* and Paul Patterson's *Mass of the Sea and Te Deum*. Among many highlights over the years have been performances he has given of the Elgar oratorios, the Britten *War Requiem*, and, on the occasion of the Society's 150th anniversary concert in March 1991, excerpts from Act III of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*.

Like Heathcote Statham, Michael Nicholas has been a key figure in the Norfolk & Norwich Festival. He served as chorus-master for two Festivals in the 1970s and again for the 1988 Festival, and a member of the Management and Executive Committees from the time of his arrival in Norwich until the Festival moved from a triennial to an annual event. Some have doubted the wisdom of this change. I myself have had considerable misgivings about its effect on local music-making, but it is entirely characteristic of Michael Nicholas that he has recognised the need

for the Festival to adapt to the changing cultural and economic climates, and has argued the case persuasively. As a member of the new Board of Management, and as Chairman of the Music and Education Panel, he has done much to influence the developments which have taken place since 1989.

Both in his work for the Norfolk & Norwich Festival and through his chairmanship of the Eastern Orchestral Board, whose New Music Committee and Artistic Policy Committee he has also chaired, Michael Nicholas has been instrumental in encouraging professional orchestral concerts in the county. He has also done much for amateur music-making through his work for the Norfolk Association for the Advancement of Music.

Having sat with him on numerous committees and music advisory panels, I have frequently observed (and been grateful for!) the way in which he is able to steer a protracted discussion towards a conclusion, identifying the main points at issue and suggesting an appropriate course of action. His counsel is invariably wise, and his arguments are always clearly and succinctly expressed. He is an eloquent, witty and an engaging public speaker and a most stimulating lecturer, able to illuminate musical points to specialist and non-specialist audiences alike.

The University has benefited greatly from the outstanding contribution he has made to the work of the Music School over more than two decades. As a part-time member of the Music

Faculty, he has taught undergraduate and post-graduate students, giving them the care and attention they would normally expect to receive only from full-time members of the School's teaching staff. The success of the scheme of organ and choral scholarships has been entirely due to Michael Nicholas's close involvement in the academic life of the University and his willingness to involve the University in the musical life of the Cathedral. Few have done more than he to bring town and gown together.

I have left to last that which should have come first - his work within the Cathedral. There he has established and maintained high musical standards, introducing into the repertoire anthems and service settings by leading contemporary composers, many of them written especially for the Choir. His commitment to new music, and his belief that the church can keep alive its great musical tradition only if it comes to terms with the music of today, led him to establish the Norwich Festival of Contemporary Church Music. The first festival in 1981 was a modest affair held over one weekend and attended mainly by local people. Subsequent festivals have grown in size and scope, and have attracted visitors from many parts of the world. The Norwich Festival of Contemporary Church Music is now a major international event, known by church musicians world-wide.

As an artistic director of the Festival, I have been privileged to have been involved in this venture, collaborating with Michael Nicholas in devising programmes and rehearsing and performing with the

Cathedral Chamber Choir. I have also been able to see the way in which, with limited rehearsal time, he has managed to secure from the Cathedral Choir fine performances of challenging new works. The Choir is widely admired, not only because of the key role it plays in the Festival, but also as a result of its many distinguished broadcasts, recordings and overseas tours.

Those who have worked with Michael Nicholas will have developed, as I have, the highest admiration for his musicianship, his tremendous energy, and his ability to

communicate the enthusiasm he feels for a wide range of music from the early Renaissance to the present day. Underlying all this is his keen sense of intellectual curiosity which is by no means confined to musical matters. He has many interests outside music, and has formed strong bonds of friendship with people from many walks of life. Few who know him can fail to respond to his great warmth and engaging sense of humour. It is impossible to be in his company for long without feeling refreshed.

Vale, dear friend. We shall miss you. 

Norfolk & Norwich Area Choral Festival Service

Sunday 26th June 1994

Conductor: Malcolm Archer

Organist: Neil Taylor


All choirs in the County of Norfolk are most welcome to attend this great Festival of Praise based on the psalms.

The music for the Festival is included in a specially printed book with the title 'Praying & Praising through the Psalms' which costs £1.95 per copy - good value these days!

The music includes 'How lovely are Thy dwellings' Brahms

'The Heavens are telling' Haydn

'The Lord has been mindful' Wesley

Jubilate Deo in C Stanford 

Rehearsals will be held at Aylsham on 23rd April and at St Alban's Norwich on 14th May

Details: John R. Hudson, 139 Cotman Fields, Bishopgate, Norwich NR1 4EP

Dear Ronald,

May I comment on one or two points in the Winter Journal, hoping they may be found of interest.

In your article on that remarkable musician, Douglas Fox, you mention the encouragement he received from Sir Hugh Allen who played for a week using his left hand only. As I heard the story from the late Harry Blakeney, who was in charge of the music in Norwich School Chapel for many years, and himself faced a similar problem to Fox following the wartime loss of his right leg, Fox returned to Oxford very despondent about his future. Sir Hugh said: 'Come to Evensong tonight, and come up to the organ afterwards'. Fox did so, noticing nothing unusual about the accompaniment of the service. When he went into the organloft he found Sir Hugh with his right arm tied behind his back. 'If I can do it, so can you' he said, and possibly it was then that he mentioned his intention of continuing in the same manner for the following week.

I watched Fox play on a number of occasions and it was hard to reconcile what one heard with what one saw. His thumb was often on a different manual from his fingers, and both feet in frequent use in different areas of the pedalboard. At Clifton he had a stop which disconnected the 16' stops from the upper part of the pedals.

My second point concerns the case from the organ of St. George's, Gt. Yarmouth, now happily in use again housing the new Klais instrument in St. John's, Smith Square. Ralph rightly takes the press to task for stating that when the organ left Yarmouth it was a one-manual instrument with no pedals. You state equally correctly that the case was made for such an instrument.

Like many organs of its date, it grew over the years. According to my information it was built by Byfield, Jordan and Bridge and opened in December 1733. Subsequent repairs, alterations and additions were made by Crotch of Norwich in 1793, Gray of London in 1844, Charles Cotton added the pedals in 1871, Mack of Yarmouth did work in 1874, and finally Bishop carried out a comprehensive rebuild at a cost of £485 in 1880.

Fortunately the case survived these attentions relatively unscathed, and it is nice to know that it is again in use, though it would have been good to keep it in Norfolk. This was, at one time, a possibility, as Gilbert Thurlow had plans for using it to house a west-end section of the present organ in St. Nicholas, though these, never came to fruition.

I was glad to read the contribution from the Round Tower Churches Society, an admirable body who gave my former church generous financial assistance when we were faced with a hefty repair bill. (Now they mention it, I do see that the South Pickenham case *IS* rather like a large cuckoo clock!).

And finally I must commend John Betjeman's moving poem, quoted by Andrew Anderson, which should, I think, be reprinted in the magazines of all those struggling churches where are to be found the 'two or three who keep the church for you and me'.

Many thanks for such a readable and varied issue, and all good wishes for the coming year.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Wilson

Dear Mr Watson,

Congratulations on the latest number of the Journal in which I found several items of great interest.

I am very interested in what you say about Douglas Fox. I met him at the International Congress of Organists in London in 1957, for which I was Treasurer. I think it was the same year that I heard him give a short recital before the opening service of the Three Choirs Festival, which was an incredible feat. I think he must have had an assistant when he played the Frank Bridge 'Prelude in E'. On the last page there is a right hand solo high up on the keyboard, while the left hand has an accompaniment in sixths; I listened carefully and not a note was missing.

I see that, like myself, he won the Sawyer Prize. I expect he won his prize at the first attempt; I won mine after a failure. I believe that now prizes are only given at a first attempt, so I was lucky! I remember receiving a cheque for £1. 18s with which I bought several books recommended by my mentor, Dr. Harold Darke.

I'm pleased to see that George Marley is very much alive. I met him when I had a weekend at Lowestoft (my home from 1920 to 1928) in 1975. I went to Evensong at Kirkley and he invited me to play the concluding voluntary, the St. Anne fugue, one of the few pieces I can play from memory.

Finally, I admire the layout of the list of organists from Taverner to Tavener!

With all good wishes to you and the Guild

Yours sincerely,

A. H. Morriss

Dear Mr. Watson,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the NGO Journal containing your article on Douglas Fox. It is good that you have made more people aware of his remarkable courage.

I shall always remember him with gratitude, as he was a fine teacher, demanding the best from all his pupils, and capable of judging what 'best' was at each stage of development.

Yours sincerely,

David Willcocks



Dear Mr Watson,

On reading the article in the Winter 1993 issue entitled 'How to raise money for your new organ', I was most disappointed to learn that yet another major contract had been awarded to a foreign builder. I am convinced that British companies are equally capable of carrying out the work and I would dearly love to know the reasons for this obsession and the boycotting of household names. Perhaps those builders who have missed out on this highly remunerative work could supply the answers.

I was interested to see that The Albion Edition reproduced on page 14 contained 'The Volunteer Organist'. About seventy years ago my father told me about this song, and although I cannot remember all the text I have never forgotten the verse in which the Vicar announced that 'Our organist is ill today; will someone play instead!'.

Yours sincerely,



Viv Denbigh

Last date for submission for next issue 31st May 1994

New Year's Day at 11 a.m.

Barbara Knowles

The last Popular Bank Holiday Recital to be given in Norwich with Michael Nicholas as Cathedral Organist was something of a family affair as on this occasion Michael was joined by his twin sons Mark and Ben.

I usually attend these recitals, partly I suspect out of loyalty to the Recitals Society of which I used to be the secretary. I was 'spotted' this time by Pauline Stratton and soon received a 'phone call from the Editor - 'Would I care to do a write-up for the Journal?'

Well here it is, written by a non-organist who doesn't know the difference between a Sesquialtera and an Open Diapason! (I love organ music but find the terminology horrendous!)

The programme started in good style with Smart's Postlude in D. This was followed by a musical 'weepie' - the Prelude to Lohengrin by Wagner. Now I happen to know that MBN is a great fan of Wagner and this piece was beautifully played with great depth of feeling.

For item 3 enter Mark Nicholas to play his French Horn in a Handel piece which I personally had never heard before - the Aria 'I see a Huntsman' from Julius Caesar. This was a very pleasing and competent

performance.

There followed three very contrasting pieces, all played in a manner which I found most enjoyable. They were clear, beautifully registered and they all went down very well with the audience. They were Bach's Prelude & Fugue in D Major/532; Variations & Fugue on 'God Save the King' by Reger, (one of my favourite composers) and as a complete contrast, a very lovely arrangement of Saint-Saens 'The Swan'. I suddenly remembered in the middle of it that my Dad had actually seen Pavlova dance that piece!

We were now treated to the playing of Ben Nicholas in Messiaen's 'Joie et Clarté' (from 'Les Corps Glorieux'). I do not know this piece too well, but as far as I could judge it was very well played and certainly well received, and young Nicholas seems indeed to have benefited from his attendance at the Oundle Summer Course where I met him last July.

The recital ended on a triumphant note with some fine playing in the Final (from Symphony No. 1) by Vierne.

A happy and enjoyable recital and a nice way, I feel, for the Nicholas family to 'play themselves out'.

Last date for submission for next issue 31st May 1994

The late Lady Susan Jeans, the celebrated organist and musicologist left estate in excess of £3/4 million.

She left one of her organs selected by her trustees, to the Royal College of Organists, the Royal College of Music or the Royal School of Church Music whichever they might choose. Manuscripts of contemporary composers of music written for her have been left to the British Museum.

Ernest Thompson 1901 - 1993

With the death of Ernest early in December, the Guild has lost its oldest member. Ernest was a fine organist and all-round musician and in his early days was, I believe, organist at a Baptist church in Guildford, Surrey, later becoming organist the Metropolitan Tabernacle, a prominent Baptist church in London, where he played for several years.

He retired, with his wife, several years ago, to Ringsfield near Beccles, and associated himself with Beccles Baptist Church and was, whilst there, the prime mover in obtaining an organ to replace the small chamber organ which the church possessed. The writer accompanied Ernest on many trips to see redundant organs which might be reconstructed in the church, finally finding a fine two-manual instrument by Abbott and Smith in Killinghall Methodist Church near Harrogate. This was purchased by the church and Ernest led a working party which carried out most of the structural alterations which had to be made to accommodate it in its new home where it was rebuilt by Wood, Wordsworth. He was also responsible for financing an additional stop - a 4' Gemshorn added to the Great.

Ernest was much in demand as a relief organist in and around Beccles and beyond, and was frequently to be found helping out at churches of other denominations. He was a fine accompanist and his skills here were shown in accompanying choirs and soloists, vocalists and instrumentalists. Ernest had a remarkable gift of improvisation at the organ and could 'show off' an instrument which was new to him as if he had been presiding at it for a very long time.

We mourn his passing and give thanks for his life; he was a very gentle man and a dear friend.

His funeral took place on 20th December at St. Michael's Parish Church, Beccles, at which the Guild was well represented.

Our sympathy is extended to his relatives.

R.F.B.

Chairman's Evening

On Saturday 15th January 1994 Jane Berry presented her Chairman's Evening at Princes Street U.R.C. in Norwich.

What a memorable evening it was! Those assembled were treated to delightful music expertly played by Andrew and Muriel Dyson (clarinet and piano), Brian Lincoln and Bryan Ellum and in a piano trio, Jane herself. There were songs entertainingly sung by David Ward, a reading from Joyce Grenfell by Patricia Lincoln, and Brian Lincoln baffled the audience with some conjuring tricks of which Paul Daniels could have been justly proud.

In the interval there was food and wine aplenty thanks to the help of more of Jane's friends.

They do say 'it's not what you know but who you know' and Jane certainly can summon up some very talented people, not only in the musical field but also in the realm of culinary skills.

This was a delightful way for Jane to say 'au revoir' to us as she vacates the chair and for her many friends to say 'thank you' to her by rallying round and providing an evening which will not be quickly forgotten.

R.W.

Your slip is showing!

At Evensong on one occasion the Precentor got ahead of himself and sang 'O Lord make haste to help us'. There was a strange half silence as the choir hesitated over whether or not to repeat the same words. The Precentor saved the situation by announcing 'There is no answer to that!'

On another occasion on the first Sunday after the installation of an amplification system, the celebrant tapped the microphone on the altar and wasn't quite sure that it was working. He mumbled 'I think there must be something wrong with this', to which the congregation responded 'and also with you'.

Organist wanted.....

All Saints Narborough MUST find an

Organist/Choirleader by April 5th

or be without

RSCM Choir (12 adults/12 Juniors)

Deputy organist

Strong Choral Tradition

Salary

Further details: 0760 338552
(Vicarage, Narborough)

Guild Events

APRIL Spring Organ Crawl in North Norfolk. Saturday 16th starting at 2.30 pm.
Venues Overstrand and Cromer.

MAY Saturday 14th. Gillian Ward Russell (A.I.O.). Starting at 7 pm.
Venue: St Thomas' Heigham, Earlham Road, Norwich. Note start time.

JUNE Saturday 25th. Annual Outing starting at 11 am.
Venue: Castle Hedingham / Haverhill.

Please contact our Events Co-ordinator Ken Smith on 0508-30301 if you require more detailed information of the events.
Ken would always welcome early notification that you are indeed intending to partake in events arranged.

Hunt the Fugue

How many did you spot?

Her hands, tanned from.....

Either Richard or Ian could have demonstrated.....

Gryffidd let someone else.....

based on the Phrygian tone row,

Clavier Cembalisticum by Sorabji. 'Goodness,

she showed Geraldine.

Anagram answers

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Saint Thomas's</i> | 2. <i>Clairon</i> |
| 3. <i>Hautboy</i> | 4. <i>Sifflute</i> |
| 5. <i>Trombone</i> | 6. <i>Larigot</i> |
| 7. <i>Schalmey</i> | 8. <i>Stopped Diapason</i> |
| 9. <i>Koppel Flute</i> | 10. <i>Gerald Gifford</i> |

What's On...

Olivet to Calvary by J. H. Maunder

performed by

The Choir of St. Gregory the Great

Conductor: Mario Rizzardi

Organist: Ronald Watson

at

St Alban's, Lakenham

20th March 1994 (Passion Sunday)

at 4 p.m.

and at

Ludham Parish Church

27th March 1994 (Palm Sunday)

at 6 p.m.

Open House

On Sunday 19th December 1993 the programme "Open House", which follows the local news, featured the redundant church of All Hallows at Pirnough. It is currently for sale for conversion into a private dwelling. How derelict it has become since the Guild made a visit there in April 1986 which was just prior to its closure.

On the day of our visit the organ crawl notes described the Mark Noble organ and said how it was hoped that it would be saved and a good home found for it. Alas, there it still stands after eight years of neglect and looking in a very sorry state.

Are there any plans for its future?

Pauline Stratton

The organ - an all consuming passion - for mice!

Several interesting letters recently appeared in The Times on the subject of mice eating organs. It all started when Bevis Brock wondered why the mice had eaten away at the black keys leaving the ivories untouched. Given that the nutritional value is almost nil, could this be simply mindless vandalism on the part of the mouse?

A John Clayton explained that mice gnaw simply to keep their teeth from becoming too long. He went on to explain that had it not been for mice attacking the bellows of the organ in Oberndorf in Austria, Franz Gruber would not have composed 'Silent Night'. (No wonder we set mousetraps!).

Robert Shaftoe, an organ builder, asserts that mouse damage to organs is very common as they gnaw away at maple

stoppers, lead pipes, ebony sharps and the sheepskin in bellows.

Another correspondent cited two instances of mice nesting among the pipes; the nesting material consisted entirely of pages torn from Hymns Ancient & Modern (standard version). Bibles (authorised version) were equally available but remained untouched. Not such mindless vandalism!

A lady organist once encountered a harmonium which sported a metal plate announcing that the instrument had 'mouse proof pedals'.

One final suggestion was that the mice might simply be homeless and looking for a suitable 'flat'.

Tony Blyth, who for some years sang in the choir of Norwich Cathedral, has become Choral Director at St. Nicholas', Gt. Yarmouth. His intention is to consolidate the choral tradition there and he is looking for singers in all registers.

How refreshing it is to hear that somewhere a Parish Church is standing firm against the tide of abandoning 'real' church music as, it appears, they are doing at Cromer Parish Church. This is a very emotive issue and there are those who would argue that, if 'pop' music fills the pews, then it is no bad thing.

As for me, I believe that music used in worship should be 'different' from what can be heard in the concert hall and at rock festivals.

Good luck Tony Blyth!

How long is your Venightie?

Alan Thorne

There is nothing 'steamy' in this article - the word came up on my computer screen when I was checking the spelling of 'Venite' as we know it and which comprises eleven verses and the Gloria - these sung to a single chant amount to ninety-one bars. That famous pile of 'music for disposal' yielded a setting by Mendelssohn Op. 46, published by Novello in 1876 and included an additional chorus dated by the author 11.4.1839 (some weeks after the first performance given in the preceding February). This 'in extenso' version was given as a first performance at the Crystal Palace in 1876 under the famous Arthur Mann. There are sixty-six pages of it ; at an average fifteen bars per page this equals nine hundred and ninety bars!

I have no particular affection for Mendelssohn's music.

I may have done too much page turning for his organ sonatas; they were staple fare for organists in my youth. I have plodded through the Songs Without Words with their somewhat fanciful titles. Odd that Book V No. 27 was orchestrated by Moscheles and played at Mendelssohn's funeral. It has the pseudo dramatic quality of the incidental music to a Mid Summer Night's Dream, although the two best items of this are the Nocturne - orchestrated for french horns - and a delightful Scherzo which, played by an artist of the calibre of Solomon on the piano, acquires a gossamer like texture and fairy lightness.

I always feel Mendelssohn traded on and has been written up because of his Royal connections, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and through them, no doubt, the ability to get his major choral works performed by musicians and choral societies up and down the country at a time when this kind of music making was working up to a boom..

'St. Paul' and 'Elijah' had something of the then modern idiom that must have tickled the singers and audiences alike. It is all very dated now and, for me, very lacklustre.. Mendelssohn tried his hand at all the Handel devices but was never half as successful as was G. F. H. himself. I instance 'Is not his word like a fire?' from Elijah. What a poor emaciated thing compared with 'For he is like a Refiner's fire'; you can almost feel the heat in the latter!

Mendelssohn had a great liking for the chord of the first inversion of the dominant seventh - it comes in the Wedding March, The War March of the Priests, the Overture to Ruy Blas etc. etc.

I hope someone will write and challenge my views.

There are a few gauntlets thrown down here! Ed.