

# The Journal

Autumn  
2002

Number  
41



Published by the  
Norfolk Organists Association

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***Last date for copy for the next Journal is 27th November 2002  
Why not send your contribution by email to  
ron\_watson@onetel.net.uk***

### *The editor writes....*

During my visit to Canada this summer I discovered that, in the opinion of the average North American, the greatest living organist is someone called Diane Bish. You've got to hand it to Diana Bish; she is a household name and not many lady concert organists can claim that. She has her own TV show and is in every sense a star. An attractive blonde, she wears glamorous outfits and jewels and enjoys all the material trappings of success.

But can she play? I am told she is a very fine player who has chosen the path of popularity by, as it used to be termed, 'playing to the gallery'. She can hold an audience spellbound with, as she describes it, Bach's best known organ piece *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* played in a somewhat simplified version which omits the triplets when the chorale melody comes in.

On two occasions whilst touring Canada I found myself in conversation over dinner when the name of Diana Bish came up. The second occasion was on 'The Canadian', a blue and silver train which glides across the prairies and through the Rockies. On this occasion we found ourselves sharing the dinner table with a perfectly normal respectable and personable middle aged Canadian couple. When it came up that I was an organist the lady said 'have you heard of Diana Bish?' and when I answered in the affirmative was asked 'isn't she *wornderrfull!*?'. Fortunately I was able to answer quite truthfully that I had not heard her play nor

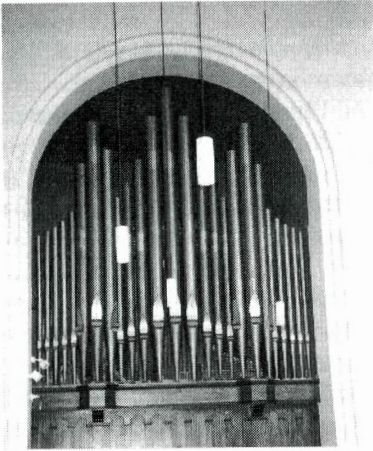
had I seen her TV show. (Had I wanted to I could have tuned into *The Joy of Music*. *Diane Bish plays music on the theme 'holy'* on one of the Sunday evenings during our trip).

The first occasion, when I learned of the existence of Ms. Bish, had been about a week earlier when I shared a dinner table with Dr. Patricia Phillips Wright, organist at the Metropolitan United Church, referred to as The Methodist Cathedral, in Toronto (where, incidentally, Melville Cooke presided for many years) and her equally gifted husband. Their assessment of what Ms. Bish is doing for organ music did not entirely coincide with that of the lady on the train.

Be that as it may, if you were an organist in North America wanting to put on an organ recital to raise funds then you'd engage Diane Bish; her concerts are a sell out months in advance.

At the other end of the spectrum I was delighted to discover that one genuinely great (Balham born) church musician in Canada has been feted to a degree that is very unusual for any church musician. Healey Willan, for many years organist at St. Mary Magdalene in Toronto (which I visited and where I tried the Healey Willan Memorial Organ) has a children's playground named after him, in addition to two bronze plaques near the west door of the church, one of which, designated a National Historic Plaque, was unveiled by The Queen Mother in 1989, a brass plate on the organ case and another metal plaque mounted on a stone on the pavement (sidewalk) close by. Willan had come to Canada in 1913 as Head of the Theory Department at the Toronto

Conservatory of Music. He had a facetious brand of wit and was heard to say that the organ was dull, organ recitals bored him and that he was unable to play his own major compositions. On being elected President of the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto he set about setting its constitution to music.



The parish of St. Mary Magdalene, Toronto, was founded in 1888 and was named in honour of the parish in Paddington, where its founder, Rev'd Charles Darling had served as assistant. Healey Willan came to the parish as organist and choirmaster in 1921 and introduced the Anglo-Catholic style of service. He remained there, with one short interruption, until his death in 1968. The Catholic liturgy and understanding of the faith and Willan's music and style of performance have made this materially poor parish a rich influence throughout the Anglican Communion. Willan composed a great deal of music, much of it for use at Mass, and specifically for use in this church.

The three manual organ by Breckels & Matthews of Toronto dates from 1906 and is located to the north side of the chancel behind the seating for the Ritual Choir which sings the Minor Propers, Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, Offertory and Post-communion Sentences to plainsong. Rebuilt in 1980 it has 51 stops and is described in the church's brochure as 'an English sounding eclectic instrument'. The console could hardly be further away, located as it is at the west end on a first floor gallery which it shares with more choir seating. Under the direction of the present organist, Dr. Willis Noble, Willan's choral settings are frequently heard in the services at this church.

Another wry organ tale from Canada stems from one Sir Henry M. Pellatt, financier, industrialist and military man, who built himself Casa Loma, a 'medieval' castle on the brow of a hill overlooking Toronto, (not to be missed if you ever go there).

In the Great Hall with its 60' high ceiling he installed a Wurlitzer which must have registered the sharpest depreciation of any organ in history. Pellatt reportedly paid \$75,000 for the instrument which arrived just in time to be auctioned off with the rest of his possessions in 1924 for only \$40, Pellatt's fortunes having taken a dramatic turn for the worse. The organ had originally been in Shea's Theatre in Toronto. It is occasionally played and is today maintained by the Toronto Organ Society.

The most prominent builder over there is Casavant (or Casavant Frères to give them their proper title), though there are a few organs by other builders, HNB, being represented, and Vancouver

Cathedral is on the point of replacing its Casavant with a 3 manual instrument from Jones of Ireland.

The world is a small place: following my encounter last year in Sydney with someone who knew Miles Quick I met an organist from Melbourne on the Maid of the Mist at Niagara Falls and was later asked by the organist of St. Luke's Winnipeg if I knew David Dunnett. I was happy to be able to reply in the affirmative!

### *Association matters*

It was agreed at a recent committee meeting that members should be kept informed through the Journal of matters of moment which are currently exercising your committee. Thus far this year, apart from the usual administrative business which ensures that events are organised and that finances are in good shape, a discussion was held about the Association's constitution. Several quite minor, but the committee believes, appropriate changes will be put before the membership at the next AGM and one thing which will take effect immediately is that all new members will receive a copy of the constitution on joining the Association, and that any existing member who desires a copy will be given one on request.

### *Stop Press!! Late Extra!!*

Anne Page will be coming to Norwich on 19th October to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the organ at St. George's Colegate, Norwich, and the PCC of St George's are very pleased that the Norfolk Association of Organists is involved in the event. The afternoon will begin with a recital, followed by tea, and then there will be an opportunity for people to play and Anne will comment and advise.

Please make a note of the date in your diary. Anne is a delightful person, quite apart from being a hugely knowledgeable and talented keyboard player.

I have no details of time or repertoire at the moment, but will broadcast the information widely as soon as it becomes available.

Please contact me at home: 01603 433901 or at work: 01603 626414 if I can be of any assistance.

Anne Duarte, Organist St. George's Colegate.

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*Thanks* from John Farmer to all who supported his Soiree Musicale which was a great success financially and, perhaps more important, artistically. Caroline Buddery wrote a rave review of the music and performances, not least John's own compositions.

## **GRAINGER in the Corn Hall**

*Pauline Stratton*

King's Lynn railway station teemed with choristers on the morning of Monday 8th May 1905. All were members of the North West Norfolk Association of Village Choirs and had come to take part in a festival of 'distinctly moral character'.

The Association had been formed seven years earlier by their chairman William Henry Leslie, son of the composer/choir trainer Henry Leslie. At that time the musical training in elementary schools was felt to be ineffective for, although children had a desire to sing, most lacked the ability to sight-read. Leslie wanted to improve the situation and gained the hearty co-operation of many prominent ladies and gentlemen in North West Norfolk. Mr. Ernest Watson energetically took on the duties of the Association's Secretary and the organist of Sandringham church, Mr. A. H. Cross, was among those who volunteered their services. Leslie threw himself wholeheartedly into this venture and also provided a considerable amount of financial support. Soon 40 villages from West Winch to Burnham Market could boast of a junior, senior or a combined choir. The choirs brought each community together, uplifting the social side of village life and cultivating its musical taste.

Mr. Cross conducted the senior choirs of Dersingham, Kings Lynn, and Sandringham with Newton; Ernest Watson conducted the choir of Hunstanton Village, Mr. B. Roden Hilder, the choir of Hunstanton St Edmunds and Mr. Webster, the combined children's choirs of

Thornham. Other local conductors included the Rev. E. J. Alvis, Miss Pearman and Mr. A. Shirley. An annual competition was held but in 1905 the Association decided to celebrate their success by holding a music festival on a most ambitious scale.

The vast vocal army of some 800 choristers, each proudly displaying a badge of recognition, made their way from the railway station to the Corn Hall where a rehearsal was scheduled for 10.30 a.m. As Leslie and Cross were piloting the choirs through some of the more demanding pieces, the arrival of a contingent of bandsmen from the Coldstream Guards, who were to supply the accompaniment, brought the rehearsal to a halt and a spontaneous burst of applause filled the hall. By 3 p.m the huge gallery was packed from floor to ceiling with excited vocalists, the varied coloured dresses of the ladies and the rich uniforms of the bandsmen making a brilliant sight. The festival had attracted the patronage of many leading people of the district and the supportive audience of 1200 caused the capacity of the Corn Hall to become severely taxed.

The proceedings commenced with the first verse of the National Anthem sung with heart and voice, the choirs' bright, rich tone giving excellent promise for a splendid festival. The full chorus, accompanied by the band and under the compelling beat of Leslie, then gave a fine rendering of *Sleepers Awake* from Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*. Motets, madrigals and glees followed with schoolmaster Mallett of Hunstanton conducting the senior choirs and Arthur H. Cross, the juniors. The principal work of the afternoon was Percy Grainger's *Sir*

*Eglamore* for small male voice chorus, large mixed voice chorus, children's chorus and military band. A note on the programme read as follows : 'The work will speak for itself and it forms a very useful object lesson in demonstrating from what small germs can spring a magnificent musical structure when its architecture is in the hands of a master of composition.' The young Mr. Grainger was present to hear what was to be the first performance of this new work. The executants clearly enjoyed their task but a critic felt that 'shouting rather than singing resulted from their energy. The tenors gaining unenviable attention by reason of harsh grating and faulty tone.' However, at its conclusion, hearty applause filled the hall. Percy Grainger made his way to the platform and bowed in acknowledgement.



Grainger's *Two Welsh Fighting Songs* were also included in the programme, *The March of the Men of Harlech*, although skilfully arranged did little to impress for the 'banging of drums and blare of the brass proved overwhelmingly noisy.' To

add variety to the afternoon's programme Mr. Plunkett Greene sang two groups of ballads and Percy Grainger played pieces by Schumann and Grieg followed by Liszt's transcription of the *March* from Berlioz's *Faust*. This unique festival concluded in the evening with a concert by the band of the Coldstream Guards, conducted by Lieut. J. Mackenzie Rogan in the New Royal Theatre. There was a large attendance and the whole occasion had been a tremendous success.

*Acknowledgements.*

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### *Two organs for Sale*

Norwich Classical Organ, 2 manuals and pedals with drawstops. Custom built specification with wooden keyboards in a dark oak case with external speaker. £1500 ono.

More details from James Lilwall, Church View, The Street, Bawdeswell, Dereham on 01362 688499.

Yamaha FS.30 Organ with twin keyboards and a wide range of instruments and custom voices. Finished in American walnut with matching stool. Valued at £650 will accept £450 o.n.o.

M. J. Newson, Hellesdon. Tel: 01603 406369

## *Evensong in a Day*

*Chris Maule Oatway*

Saturday 6th July was the day set aside for the NOA choral workshop, the purpose of which this year was to learn an introit, a psalm, canticle settings, an anthem and hymns and then sing them at a service of Evensong in East Harling Parish Church. On the previous evening Mathew Martin had asked at the end of our St. Thomas's choir practice who was interested in attending. I asked what the music was to be and was told *The Lord is my Shepherd* by Archer, and a setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis by Noble'. I had sung Noble in B Minor about twenty years ago, so thought that this would be helpful.

Arriving at East Harling at around 10 o'clock the next morning we found Barry Newman, who would teach us the music and conduct it in the service, waiting for us ... and nobody else! All but one of the other participants arrived during the next half hour or so having been delayed by missed turnings, closed level crossings and a car breakdown. The remaining member could not arrive until after lunch, and his presence brought the grand total of singers to nine: three sopranos, one alto, two tenors and three basses. Of these one soprano and one tenor had by their own admission little singing experience.

The morning rehearsal began a little after 11 o'clock. First Barry put us through our paces with the hymn *Angel-voices ever Singing*, and we learnt that he wanted long open vowel sounds, clear consonants and no stress on weak syllables

- and quite right, too! We then tackled the Malcolm Archer setting of the 23rd psalm.

The psalm chosen for the Evensong was Psalm 67, very familiar words and a familiar chant, but most unfamiliar pointing. This was the Oxford system and it came as a big culture shock to me, having only ever sung Nicholson's pointing in the Parish Psalter. The Oxford pointing certainly fits the rhythm of the words much better than Nicholson's, but, curiously, it seemed somehow to hold up the flow of the music (or perhaps I need more time to get used to it). The introit was *Teach me O Lord the Way of thy Statutes*, a setting by Brian Lincoln of some verses from Psalm 119. Barry told us that he is always keen on including music by local composers where possible.

Most of the rehearsal time was spent of learning the canticle settings. I was somewhat taken aback to find that we were not to sing Noble in B Minor but Noble in A Minor - ah well, it is all grist to the mill. The Magnificat begins with sopranos on their own, but after several attempts they seemed to be struggling a little, so I asked if the men could join in to help them out. This was accepted, and I must admit that I did enjoy having their tune to sing! For me the most interesting music of the day was Noble's setting of the Nunc Dimittis. The music for St. Luke's words, sung by tenors and basses only, has a very creepy feel about it, with chromatic phrases and the melodic line taking some unexpected turns. We broke for lunch at around a quarter to one.

Back at the church at just after two o'clock, we completed the rehearsal by learning the Nunc Dimittis and the Responses. The music for the latter was



written by Peter Smith, who was Barry's first organ teacher in Hertfordshire. We could not spend as much time on the responses as we might have liked, so in the service they were discreetly accompanied.

The service went perhaps better than some of us might have expected. It was led by the Rector, Rev. John Handley, who also preached a short sermon. Tim's outgoing voluntary was J. S. Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C Major*, which Mathew and I decided to call 'Hickory, Dickory Dock' - just play the beginning of the Prelude to find out why!

The most disappointing aspect of the day was the extremely poor attendance with a mere nine singers, of whom five were from St. Thomas's, though for some it certainly was a struggle. At the service there were only four in the congregation, three NOA members and a local person. During the rehearsal a few of us were wondering what on earth we were doing there and whether it was all worth it. Barry worked hard, both in preparing the music, then in rehearsing us and conducting. He remained patient throughout, never losing his cool and Tim Patient's skills as repetiteur and accompanist were exemplary.

The day ended happily, with Graham Watt taking photographs of us all at the end of the service. He then kindly drove Lynda back to her car, which had not been clamped or towed away, and waited with her until the A.A. man arrived at around 7.30 p.m.. Well done Graham - you must be living proof that there are still Good Samaritans around!

*I think you'll find that Hickory, dickory dickory dock fits the 9/8 Prelude better!*  
Ed.

## *Last things*

I seemed to do nothing in the last two weeks of August but attend 'last in the series' organ recitals. At St. Andrew's Hall there was the recital by Gillian Ward-Russell which had the rare distinction of being reviewed in the local press - and a glowing review it was too! At the Cathedral it was Clive Driskill-Smith who brought this excellent series to a breathtaking conclusion. At Dereham Tim Patient concluded matters in splendid fashion having been preceded only on the Tuesday by Philip Underwood. Edward Whiting, a former chorister, played the last in the Bank Holiday recitals at the Cathedral to a huge turnout. This series contained the ill fated recital by yours truly which is now scheduled for New Year's Day.

What a wonderful variety of organ music has been put before us this summer and congratulations to all those who have arranged these concerts and recitals. I was particularly moved by the vote of thanks at St. Andrew's Hall to Barry Newman and the applause which followed which said so much more than 'thank you for organising the series (with welcome help from Dick le Grice)' but 'good to see you on your feet and back in action and we're willing you on to a full recovery'.  
Amen to that! RW.

## ***Memories of a cathedral chorister 1915-1918***

*This article was written by Arthur Lionel Collins, an old chorister of Winchester, and it first appeared in 'The Hampshire Chronicle' Jan 8th 1980 and more recently in 'Once a Chorister' 2001, the annual publication of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations. It is republished here, with permission of Arthur Collins' son, David.*

'Pop, pop, pop. pop' went the flickering lights over the choir stalls as Evensong was being sung in the Choir of the darkened Cathedral. The only form of lighting was by gas. The nave of the Cathedral would be in darkness except for a faint glimmer of light by the South door and above the steps of the nave dais leading to the South Aisle. Mr. Prendergast would no doubt be playing one of his own chants to the psalms set for the day, and possibly the anthem would include a solo to be sung by either Eric Greene or James Burchell.

That would be a picture in any weekday Evensong during the years of World War I, when the choristers were in residence at Colebrook House, Winchester, presided over by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hone. One of the lessons might be read by Canon Braithwaite, having been led to the lectern by either Mr. Adams or Mr. Elkins; he would stand there, his flowing white beard reflected in the light of the two candles in their glass holders, grasping his mortarboard under his arm. The second lesson might be read by the Dean, Dr. Furneaux or perhaps by Canon Vaughan, a great scholar.

How I ever got into the Cathedral choir was one of the mysteries of my early life. My father brought me to Winchester from Bournemouth on a cold February day in 1915. We travelled by motor cycle and sidecar - the latter an open wickerwork affair guaranteed to keep one awake at all times, and the former a belt-driven 'de Dion Bouton' of ancient vintage.

With other boys, I took my turn at being called into the practice room and facing Mr. Prendergast for the first time (he was a man, who was to influence my life so much: he taught me to appreciate good music; he taught me to read music, to sing in tune. to be one of a team). I was dismissed from the room, and my father called in. After what seemed like hours, I was told that I had been accepted as a probationer, and I was to join the choir school the following May.

Our day seemed incredibly long compared to what I understand the present day choristers have to do. At 7 a.m. a clanging bell chased us from our beds, winter and summer. There was no hot water, so we washed in cold. This was followed by exercises, and breakfast at 8 o'clock. Then followed choir practice in the Cathedral from 9 till 9.45 a.m., Mattins 10 till 10.45 a.m. and school from 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. The afternoon was usually spent on the playing field adjoining Wolvesey: cricket and rounders in the summer, football in the winter. If it was wet (which was pretty often) we had school from 2 till 3.45 p.m. Evensong, sung every day except Wednesday, was at 4pm and this was followed by choir practice from 5pm till 6pm. On Saturday there was a full choir practice in the Cathedral Choir with the Lay Vicars, some of whose names I

can remember: Messrs. Major, Whitwam, Tiark and Hone among others. Then there was tea from 6.15 till 6.45 p.m. and lessons from 7 till 9 p.m., unless we had them in the afternoon; bed at 9.30 p.m. after a supper of bread and dripping with cocoa.

Wednesday was a day off when, apart from morning school, we were free to go for walks, usually accompanied by the Assistant Master, Mr. Spillett. In the evening we could read G. A. Henty, Harrison Ainsworth, Mrs. Henry Wood, or the current issue of *The Boy's Own Paper* or *The Captain*.

Sundays witnessed a Choral Mattins at 11 a.m. This must have been the principal service of the week, judging from the numbers who attended it, although this service, too, was held in the Choir. There was full Choral Evensong at 3.30 when we always sang an anthem of some length. Occasionally, on a Sunday after Mattins, there was a sung Eucharist (I do not think it was called that), and the celebrant would be garbed in surplice, hood and scarf. I seem to remember two assistants similarly attired, but I cannot remember what they did with their mortar boards. Probably they were handed to one of the attendant vergers.

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*Soldiers' Services* Some time, possibly in the spring of 1916, the *Soldiers' Service* was introduced. This was held in the nave at 6.30 p.m. and I believe it was the first time when the choir was seated on the nave dais. There were special occasions when, while we might sing the service in the Choir, the sermon was preached from the nave pulpit. This happened when there

was an especially large congregation, at the major festivals or at a memorial service, of which there were many.

I think we took turns at singing the *Soldiers' Service*, six of us at a time, so it meant our turn for the additional services came round once every three weeks, or five times a term (the terms were much longer than they are now; we never had Christmas, Epiphany or Easter at home). As the only singing to be done was the hymns, the duties were not onerous. I shall never forget the sight of the nave full of khaki figures, often the aisles as well, although most of the aisles were full of recumbent figures asleep either on the benches or on the stone floor lying in their greatcoats. Nor shall I forget the smell of stale sweat and the peculiar smell of khaki uniforms, which pervaded the Cathedral at those times. Strangely enough, I can only remember those services in the Spring and Summer months. If they were held in late autumn or Winter I've no idea what form of illumination was used. The sound of soldiers singing their favourite hymns, such as *Onward Christian Soldiers* and *O God Our Help in Ages Past* was really memorable. The whole nave seemed full of the sound of men's voices, and even when Mr. Prendergast used the Open Diapason stops, even those could not drown the noise of the singing. I do not think that these services were in any sense compulsory, and the men and women attended of their own free will. After all, it was a change from Camp and the pub.

Often I would lie awake at night listening to those same troops singing the famous songs of World War I as they marched to Southampton docks accompanied by the horse-drawn gun

carriages and other heavy equipment. I believe the wooden cross erected on the Compton Down is in memory of those brave warriors.

One of my most vivid memories is the distant rumble of sound on a June morning in 1917, and feeling the ground shake under us as our Engineers blew up the Messines Ridge in the Ypres salient. Many years later, when visiting that part of the battle front, and gazing into the Pool of Peace, these memories of my boyhood came flooding back to me.....

### ***Organ crawl in North Norfolk***

*Brent Palmer*

At the beginning of August, several members had a delightful day out visiting organs in North Norfolk. The day began with a visit to St. Peter and St. Paul, Cromer. We were due to meet the organist, David Shippey, for a talk about the organ which has been in the church for approximately 100 years and was rebuilt by Richard Bower in 1986, but he was apparently otherwise engaged so Tim Patient began the visit by showing off the organ to great effect in a movement from a Sonata by Mendelssohn. Members were then encouraged to play it.

After a break for lunch, we then moved on to the parish church in North Walsham where our member Peter Stevenson, who is one of the two organists there, played the first movement of Widor's *Sixth Symphony* to demonstrate the full power of the organ. There again, members were invited to play the instrument, which several of us did.

Our third stop was at Oxnead Mill, where we were able to see, hear and try the three manual John Compton theatre organ in the converted mill. This is the instrument which the owners spent some twenty years restoring. We were also able to hear the player piano which is there. I had never played a theatre organ before and found it a fascinating experience. Needless to say, our President, Dick le Grice, was in his element and showed it off to great effect.

Our final stop was at the home of Mathew and Sylvia Martin where we were not only treated to some lovely refreshments but were also able to play the three manual Wyvern organ which Matthew bought from Gerald Gifford.

Our thanks must go to Dick for arranging the day, to Peter and Tim for demonstrating the instruments so nicely and to Mathew and Sylvia for welcoming us into their lovely home.



### ***A request***

In his capacity as Project Manager for the BIOS, Andrew Hayden has asked me to ask any members if they know the history of the organ in Terrington St. Clement Methodist Church. He believes it is quite an important instrument. If any members have any knowledge of it, would they please contact me. Brent Palmer.

## Organ news

Ralph Bootman

The summer months have not produced any startling news on the organ front - all our local builders are working away at what I like to call 'bread and butter' organ building tunings, minor work and so on. However, I can report that the Water Organ built by Rodney Briscoe for the Villa d'Este gardens in Rome's Tivoli Gardens has been installed and an official Grand Public Opening is planned for September, and that another instrument powered by water, a Bird and Owl, has been installed. This plays louder and louder until an owl appears and then it stops - ready to start all over again!

Norwich Organs, now relocated at Bure Valley Business Centre at Lamas, are installing one of their instruments in Brooke Parish Church. I understand that Kenneth Ryder was involved with the drawing up of the specification. It is hoped to give full details of this in the next Journal. The old W. C. Mack one manual organ, rebuilt by Williamson & Hyatt, is remaining in situ in the west gallery. Other news picked up from the grape vine includes possible intended work in the Cley-next-the-Sea area and that over £20,000.00 has been raised towards the restoration of the organ in the Octagon Chapel, Norwich.

## The piano music of John Farmer

Gordon Barker

John Farmer has produced a very pleasant, easy listening CD which evokes memories of happy, salad days spent in the East Anglia of the mid-twentieth century. Several of his pieces derive from local scenes, while *Dans l'esperance de la paix* stands out as a substantial reflection on the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. John Farmer's portrayal of a 'longing for peace' certainly conveys the yearning simply and effectively.



The concert waltz *Broadlands* has a lilting hint of yachting caps and the scent of varnish. A How Hill scene is easily imagined as the music flows along.

However, I enjoyed *Tipsy Rondo* and *Seaside Rag* most of all. Both movements possess gentle syncopation and cheery tunefulness in abundance with just enough harmonic bite to keep the ear engaged.

This interesting disc would make a worthy gift for any friend or relative with Norfolk or Suffolk connections.

## **Norwich Cathedral Choir in Rome**

*Thomas Leech*

The last day of May saw the Cathedral Choir flee Norwich to join an already large cathedral contingent in the Eternal City. Miraculously we reached our hotel with a full complement of choristers, robes, music and, most impressively, lay clerks and choral scholars.

Our principal engagements were singing at the opening of the Anglicanism exhibition (*Continuity and change – Anglicanism and the Western Catholic tradition*), in a packed gallery in the heart of the Vatican museum, and the associated Colloquium in the rather different setting of the Gregorian University lecture theatre. We sang Vespers in the Monastery of St. Gregory, a Eucharist at All Saints Anglican church (in the presence of the Nigerian ambassador to Rome) and performed a concert at St. Paul's within the walls, the American Episcopal church in Rome.

Our repertoire encompassed some of the finest examples of English church music, from Robert Parsons to Benjamin Britten, together with a selection of European works including Bach's *Lobet den Herrn* and pieces by Mozart, Brahms and Messiaen. The choristers coped admirably with the combination of demanding music and the often oppressive heat in the venues to produce an excellent standard of performance.

In the pages of an organ journal some mention of the instruments should creep in. Sadly the churches we performed in had no instruments of note, so much so that even the names of the builders

(identical in the Anglican and American churches) escape me!

It wasn't all hard work – the obligatory sight-seeing was one of the more exhausting fixtures, requiring an afternoon at a wonderful beach side pool to recover, and we provided brisk business for the local hosteleries.

Much credit should be given to the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, in particular the Archdeacon, for organising such an ambitious event in the centre of European Christianity, and of course to those who arranged the considerable logistics involved in transporting a cathedral choir across the continent.

### **Congratulations**

I am sure all Association members would wish to join me in sending very best wishes to Julian Thomas and his new bride, Ellen, who were married in the cathedral on 24<sup>th</sup> August to the most splendid music, as one might expect.



.....also to Organ Scholar Tom Leech who has been awarded the Klais scholarship. As the result of a donation from Johannes Klais Orgelbau, the Eric Thompson Trust has established a scholarship to enable a young organist to visit Bonn for two weeks which includes an introductory training course in organ building and tuning as well as a series of lessons on a number of instruments in the area with the leading German organist Johannes Geffert. This is the inaugural scholarship.

## *The organ in Brasenose College Oxford*

*Richard Bower*

In August 2000 I was invited to quote for a major rebuilding and redesign of the organ at Brasenose College, Oxford. The organ was new in 1972, having been built by Peter Collins in Neo-Classical style. The case was and still is that of the older organ - a fantasy baroque case designed by that famous architect Thomas Jackson who also remodelled much of the college; built circa 1892 it originally housed a Hill organ of that date which had just 12 stops.

The Collins organ had 21 stops (actually 20 plus a transmission); it had three manuals, the third housing just a Regal 8ft positioned close to the organist. The action was light but the layout within the case was so restricted that many pipes were overcrowded with little or no room to speak. Access for tuning and maintenance was virtually non-existent and as problems occurred there was little success in repairing them. Care of the organ had passed to Harrison & Harrison and their non Neo-Classic approach did little to help the organ. We were surprised at how much they had done to attempt to improve things but there was an underlying failure of the soundboards that caused the necessity for the present work.

Our brief was to start again reusing only the pipework and case (plus parts of the wind system). We were required to increase the manual compass by two notes to A and to add three new stops, on the Swell Gamba 8ft and Mixture IV ranks, on the great a new Trumpet 8ft. With the removal of the Swell Sifflute 1ft, the Regal and, to the slight dismay of the advisor, the

Pedal Principal 8ft (which was actually a transmission of the Great 8ft) the final tally is again one of 21 speaking stops.

The narrowness of the gallery (ie the width of the case) made this a difficult organ. This represented itself at the end when we found that the new adjustable stool was too long to fit between the gallery sides! I wanted to alter the console position to the conventional position under the middle case pipe, and to properly modify the gallery to suit, but was told that it had to remain in the Oxbridge style (as is Norwich Cathedral) with the console at the side.

Collins had placed his Great in the far case tower, the Pedal in the middle and the Swell in the tower close to the console with its back to the organist (with the Regal between the back and the case side above the console); the Great was distant, removing the advantages of mechanical action. We reversed this so that the Great is over the console, the Pedal in the middle and the Swell in the far tower facing the organist.

The fantasy of the case is such that, whilst gorgeous trumpeting angels serenade elegant peacocks, no facade pipe has a speaking length over 5ft! So all are dummies. (Hill's 8ft bass in the equally ornate west facing case is now also dummy). It is this that dictates that the Pedal has to go in the middle, forcing the manuals into the case towers. The layout in fact turns into that of a fairly conventional two manual but with all turned 90° within the case and the Pedal between Swell and Great. This gives a long run of trackers to the Swell but with careful engineering we have produced a fine responsive result. The new console now uses electric

drawstop action and is equipped with a modern piston system with 10 generals as well as divisional pistons.

The organ tone is varied and full. I was pleased to retain and develop the articulate Collins voicing even though the modern generation doesn't like "chiff". Such is now regulated and controllable but not removed. Hours were spent restoring the badly damaged pipework and many pipes had to be lengthened to make up the effects of the previous overcrowding. It sadly became impossible to restore the cone tuning because to many treble pipes had been trimmed and fitted with slides, but the new 70% tin IV rank Mixture is cone tuned so that it does not get knocked out of tune whilst tuning the reeds. Even the new Gamba is 70% tin, as is the new Trumpet from Giesecke, to match with Collins use of the same, but the trumpet has open English shallots to retain our own nationality. The pedal Fagot and Trumpet, unaltered from the Collins organ, complete a superb bass line and the great plenum is indeed full, very much under the fingers to play and richly colourful in the chapel.

The opening recital will be this Autumn on a date yet to be announced. The College is normally open daily and is certainly worth a visit - a mini King's but still free. Hopefully the organ scholar will be practising when you are there. The organ consultant was Ian Bell.

## *Specification*

### *Swell*

Tremulant	
Oboe	8
Mixture	IV
Tierce	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub>
Gemshorn	2
Nazard	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
Rohrflute	4
Principal	4
Wood Gedackt	8
Gamba (t.c.)	8

### *Great*

Tremulant	
Trumpet	8
Mixture	IV
Octave	2
Spitzflute	4
Octave	4
Rohrflute	8
Principal	8

### *Pedal*

Trumpet	8
Fagot	16
Spitzoctave	4
Gedackt	8
Subbass	16

### *Couplers*

Swell to Great	
Swell to Pedal	
Great to Pedal	



*International Summer Organ  
Conservatoire, St. Antoine l'Abbaye,  
Isère, July 14<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> 2002*

*Thomas Leech*

The International Summer Organ Conservatoire returned to St. Antoine after a one year absence (last year's course took place in Bitche, Alsace) and was centred around the teaching of Nigel Allcoat, André Isoir, and the sensational Bernard Aubertin organ in the medieval abbey church of St. Anthony of Egypt. The 12th century church dominates the ancient village, which clings to one side of a precipitous valley, surrounded by lush rolling countryside, and in the shadow of the foothills of the Alps.

After assembling over Saturday and Sunday the conservatoire members, from the UK, France, and Canada, were introduced (or reacquainted in most cases) to the organ on Monday morning. The instrument, originally built in 1992 by Aubertin and completed in Autumn of 2001, stands as a supreme example of the French Classical Organ. Housed within the case built for the Abbey in the mid seventeenth century (which survived many 'restorations' and 150 years sojourn in Saint-Louis, Grenoble) the organ stands in the west end tribune, complementing the vast monastic choir stalls to the east. We were treated to both revelations and refreshment of the many facets of organ playing that are sadly lost when playing so many of our desperately unmusical instruments (*pace* some rather large local HN&Bs!). We heard the glorious sound of the Grands Jeux, with the *ravalement* of the pedal reeds (bottom C# of the pedals

plays the A below) adding an astonishing depth to the sound; the clarity of the pleins-jeu with the pedal Trompette and Clairon cutting through the counterpoint; the ravishing Tierce en taille (which could be further heightened using the Grosse tierce of the Grand Orgue); the poignant Cromorne of the Positif, and sublime Concert de Flûtes with the Tremblant doux, to name but a few of the best known registrations (incidentally the original Tremblant doux, which imparts real life into the sound, had been stolen two years previously, such was its quality).

The organ brought the music, much of which can sound frivolous or even banal on our instruments, into brilliant focus, imparting gravitas and humour in equal measure. Much of the French repertoire (outside of Couperin and Gringy) was new to me – particular highlights were a wonderful *Tierce en taille (Suite de 5e ton)* and *Dialogue (Suite de 2e ton)* by Boyvin, and works by Jullien (including an extraordinary *Quatuor*, played on three manuals and pedals simultaneously!), Du Mage, and selections from the Montreal *Livre d'Orgue*.

The repertoire classes encompassed both the fundamentals – for instance, reducing a tierce en taille to its essential harmonic backbone in order to understand fully its structure, normally obscured in a welter of runs and ornaments – and the more advanced techniques that such a sensitive instrument demands. Much time was spent on the attack and release of notes – having spent a year practising only on electric action I found myself before the jury after comprehensively 'garotting' the cantus firmus in the *Von Himmel hoch* variations! We were shown the

importance of flamboyant – baroque – gesture in music of the period, matching the extravagant elegance of the times (exemplified in the organ case towering above us). We argued about *inégaies* and all agreed that in this case less is more, and that *inégalité* is not a ‘just add water’ recipe for good performance of French music. Both teachers combined their technical and musical mastery with powerful imaginations – at one point I was asked by Isoir to play a Clerambault *Dialogue* as an intractable argument between an exasperated husband and wife!

Most of the classes gave as much time to improvisation (for which Allcoat and Isoir are internationally renowned exponents) as repertoire, and often combined the two. We were reminded that making music is the essential requirement, and that form and rhythm (and often simplicity) are the bywords for competent improvisation. We explored forms with clear structures (using a cantus firmus or ground bass for example) and moved on to French Classical styles and contemporary language – an instructive (and initially terrifying) experience for the English organists so used to the sub-Howells ‘amoeba’-like mush that always seems so useful before Evensong!

We were allocated generous practice time to revel in the instrument’s glorious sounds and last, but not least, the time away from the organ allowed for much lively conversation with both old and new friends – including former Norwich scholar Noel Charles – and the enjoyment of the superb food and wine provided by the local hostellerie. Sadly I had to leave (with some reluctance!) before the teachers’ concert and trips to Valence

Cathedral and the Vercors. I certainly took a great deal from spending a week on the course – a wealth of new repertoire and a real sense of musical reinvigoration alone making the extensive journey worthwhile. I would wholeheartedly recommend it to all organists, whether young or old, amateur or professional.

I am very grateful to the Eric Thompson Trust for providing generous financial assistance which enabled me to attend the course.

To see beautiful photographs of the Abbey and its organ visit [www.isoc.demon.co.uk](http://www.isoc.demon.co.uk)



## Specification of the Organ in St. Antoine-l'Abbaye (Isère)

I POSITIF C-D-d <sup>III</sup>	II GRAND-ORGUE C-D- d <sup>III</sup>	IV ECHO C <sup>o</sup> - d <sup>III</sup>
Flûte Allemande 8	Bourdon-Montre 16	Bourdon 8
Bourdon 8	Montre 8	Prestant 4
Montre 4	Dessus de flûte	Cornet III
Nazard 3	Bourdon à chem. 8	Plein-Jeu III
Doublette 2	Prestant 4	Cromorne 8
Tierce 1 <sup>3/5</sup>	Flûte à chem. 4	
Larigot 1 <sup>1/3</sup>	Double Tierce 3 <sup>1/5</sup>	
Fourniture III	Quint 3	<b>PEDALE</b>
Cymbale II	Doublette 2	<b>C-A<sub>0</sub>-D-f</b>
Trompette 8	Quarte 2	
Cromorne 8	Tierce 1 <sup>3/5</sup>	Bourdon 16
	Flageolet 1	Flûte 8
	Fourniture IV	Grand-Nazard 6
	Cymbale IV	Flûte 4
	Cornet V	Bombarde 16
Cornet V	1 <sup>er</sup> Trompette 8	Trompette 8
Trompette 8	2 <sup>eme</sup> Trompette 8	Clairon 4
	Voix humaine 8	
	Clairon 4	

Accouplement à tiroir GO/Pos Tire-Main Grand Orgue

Tremblant doux

Tremblant fort

A<sub>0</sub> pour les anches de Pédale

Accord de l'orgue: A=415

Tempérament: Schlick (1511) & Rameau (1726)

## ***From the mailbag***

Dear Ron,

My recent annual trip to visit friends on the North Norfolk coast coincided with the Association's annual car outing to organs in North Norfolk so I telephoned Mathew Martin and obtained details of where and when folk were meeting up. I was delighted to be able (and allowed by the rest of my family!) to spend the day with those members present and I was greatly impressed by the friendliness with which I was welcomed. I greatly enjoyed seeing the organs at Cromer Parish Church (which I had previously heard on several occasions and played once during Brian Lincoln's tenure there) and North Walsham Parish Church but especially the Compton at Oxnead Mill as I have been involved in building and currently maintaining two cinema organs in the Glasgow area and thanks are due to John and Ginny Plunkett for showing me round the chambers. I was also able to attend David Baker's concert at the St. Andrew's Hall the organ of which I had not previously heard and of course the unmissable Wednesday recitals at Norwich Cathedral where I heard both Thomas Leech and Julian Thomas give superb recitals.

It was nice meeting those of you on the car outing and to talk with some over the cup of tea back at Mathew and Sylvia's house afterwards and the NAO is clearly in great shape with a very healthy attendance at the meeting. I hope to be visiting Norfolk again next summer and I hope that it may, once again, coincide with a NAO meeting but at least I shall probably recognise a few more faces at the Cathedral recitals this time!

With very best wishes,

Rod Paton

Kirkintilloch Glasgow

Glasgow Society of Organists Scottish Cinema Organ Trust

Email: [rod.paton@scotnet.co.uk](mailto:rod.paton@scotnet.co.uk)

Dear Ron, *(page 17 The Journal Summer 2002)*

I would also like to know about the Minns family as I believe there is a connection with the Hingham Organ. Here is a quotation from the first copy of "**Hingham Parish Magazine**" dated Jan 1878.

*The new organ, which has been erected in the chancel, was built by Messrs. Forster and Andrews, of Hull, and cost £ 550. Of this, £ 208 12s 0d. was raised by the subscriptions of parishioners and their friends, the Rector (Revd. Maynard Wodehouse Currie) and his friends making up the remainder. The organ was played for the first time during Divine Service on Sunday, Nov 25 th, by Mr. Frederick Minns, a pupil of Dr. Buck, who has been appointed organist and choirmaster, and has come to reside in the parish. Two 'organ recitals' were given in the afternoon and evening of November 29th by Mr. Arthur Bunnnett, enabling the inhabitants of Hingham and its neighbourhood to judge and appreciate the sweet tones of this powerful instrument.*

I would like to be in touch with Gordon Barker/Mrs Minns to learn more of the connection, and perhaps add to Mrs Minns' investigations.

I would also be interested to know if there is any more information about Mr. Arthur Bunnett. Was he related in some way to Dr. Edward Bunnett FRCO who was Assistant Organist at Norwich Cathedral, and later became Organist at St. Peter Mancroft (1877 - 1908) and City Organist from 1880?

I am always interested in any snippets of information which relate to organs and organists of Hingham. I do not know how long Mr. Minns remained organist at Hingham, I wonder if Mrs Minns has any knowledge of this. Interestingly, the chancel was closed from early in 1878 until Easter of that year for major works to be carried out to the floor, installation of choir stalls etc. So presumably the new organ could not be used during this time. Not a very encouraging situation for a new organist, also, in the June issue of the same magazine it states "There is no provision at all for the organist's salary, for the organ-blower, for the choir, for the bell for daily service, for tuning the organ, and other charges". I find no further references to Mr. Frederick Minns after the Jan 1878 magazine.

Best wishes and thank you.

Carey Moore Organist St. Andrew's Parish Church. Hingham.



*Evensongsters at East Harling*

*For your diary*

***Midday music***

*12.45 - 1.45 at Princes Street URC on the first Thursday of the month*  
played by Peter Stevenson one-time Organist of Portsmouth Cathedral and University  
Lecturer and Organist in Hong Kong, and occasional guest organists

*Come when you can - leave when you must*

***St. Thomas's Church Earlam Road Norwich***

*Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September at 7. 30 p.m.*

**Richard Bower** - organ recital

Adults £4 Concessions £3

***On the Lighter Side***

*Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October at 7. 30 p.m. at St. Nicholas Parish Church, Bradwell, Gt. Yarmouth*  
*presented by Jane Berry (electronic organ) and Bryan Ellum (piano and organ)*

*Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30 p.m. at Lowestoft United Reformed Church presented by Jane*  
*Berry and Bryan Ellum with David Ward (bass).*

*Admission at the door for both concerts which includes refreshments*

***The Church of St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich***  
**MANCROFT MUSIC 2002**

Lunchtime organ recitals on Fridays at 1. 10 p.m. Admission at door £4.00 (£3.00)

13<sup>th</sup> September **Robert Houssart** Assistant Gloucester Cathedral

27<sup>th</sup> September **Lewis Brito-Babapulle** Oundle Festival winner 2001

11<sup>th</sup> October **Ian Roberts** Assistant Chichester Cathedral

25<sup>th</sup> October **Timothy Patient** Assistant St. Peter Mancroft

16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> century music will be played on the organ by **Kenneth Ryder** at 12 noon for  
twenty minutes every **Wednesday** and **Saturday** throughout September

## **RSCM Norfolk & Norwich Area AUTUMN PROGRAMME 2002**

*Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2 p.m. till 4 p.m.*

St. Thomas's Church, Earlham Road, Norwich

A Course in the accompaniment of modern hymns and worship songs in which David Dunnett offers a helping hand in the accompaniment of the modern styles of music.

*Saturday 28th September 2 p.m. till 5 p.m.*

Norwich School Chapel, The Close, Norwich

A Great Opportunity!!

Geoffrey Weaver, (formerly Director of Studies of the RSCM) conducts a Training Day for choirs and choir directors, making use of repertoire and training methods suggested by the RSCM's comprehensive and widely-acclaimed new training programme for singers *A Voice for Life*.

There will be opportunities for both singers and choir trainers to explore new ways of improving their skills.

*Thursday 10th October 7. 30 p.m. at All Saints Church, Narborough*

*Monday 14th October 7. 30 p.m. at St. Mary's Church, Attleborough*

Come along to a 'Meet, eat and sing' event with Miles Quick (Assistant Director of Music Norwich School) and explore a range of newer and more traditional music over a light buffet supper with wine or fruit juice available. Learn through singing together, how different music in services can inspire and uplift imaginatively.

*Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October from 10. 30 p.m. till 5 p.m.*

Norwich School Music Centre, The Close, Norwich.

Carole Tims and David Price conduct a one day course for Choral Conductors and Singers, with emphasis on voice production and some individual attention.

*Saturday 19th October 2 p.m. till 4 p.m. at 56A The Close, Norwich.*

Kenneth Ryder (Organist of St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich) offers a helping hand to any who have been asked to play the organ for services in church, because they can play the piano

*Full details of all the above events are available from the Area Secretary:*

*John R. Hudson, 139 Cotman Fields, Bishopgate, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 4EP. Please enclose a S.A.E.*

## *Events update*

### **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September St. Mary's Duke Street 2.30 p.m.**

David Watson will give us a talk about the history of Nicholson's Organ Builders which will be liberally spiced with musical illustrations. Do come and support this event as we near the end of the NOA Year.

### **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October St Thomas's Church Heigham Norwich 2.30 p.m.**

#### **Lecture Recital of the music of Duruflé**

Tim Patient will present the music of Maurice Duruflé using the organ and recordings. As we celebrate the centenary of Duruflé's birth this year it is appropriate to reflect on his small but significant organ output.

### **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November St Mary's Duke Street 2.30 p.m.**

#### **Desert Island Discs**

To finish the Association's year Ron Watson will be cast away on his desert island. Ron will surely have many tales to tell and Ken Smith who will once again be hosting what is becoming a regular event in our calendar. Be sure not to miss this.



*Further details of events can be obtained from*

*Mathew R Martin – 01603 754731 or any committee member.*

*Sally Butcher will be pleased to co-ordinate transport requests where possible but please ensure that you give sufficient notice.*

*Please note that there is a fee of £4 charged to non-members of the Association for some of our events.*



## Crossword solution

T	R	O	M	P	E	T	T	E	M	I	X
E	N	N	E	L	L	I	O	T	O	G	T
D	E	C	C	A	E	O	R	M	O	L	U
I	L	E	L	I	V	I	S	I	T	O	R
E	L	E	A	D	E	R	E	C	H	O	E
L	Y	D	I	A	N	A	L	T	A	R	S
C	L	E	R	G	Y	B	R	E	N	D	A
I	P	R	O	A	T	U	R	N	E	R	L
H	I	R	P	L	E	S	A	U	C	U	I
P	A	E	L	L	A	O	S	T	O	I	C
O	N	M	B	O	R	N	E	O	D	D	I
N	O	S	A	P	A	I	D	L	A	N	O

First letters of extra words spelt 'organ stops'

### *Membership note*

We are pleased to welcome Philip Luke Peter Stearn and Simon Willoughby to our number but are saddened to learn from Ann Brown that member George T. Wyer died from lung cancer on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2002 aged 86.

Membership Sept 2002			
Dr David Baldwin	John Hilton	Dr Richard G May	Howard Thomas
Laurie Bannister	Charles Hines	Brian Milward	Julian Thomas
Gordon Barker	John Hudson	Carey Moore	Katharine Thompson
David Barnard	Margaret Hunter	Alan Morris	Peter Walder
Margaret Barrell	Robert Ince	Peter Moss	David Watson
Nora Barwood	Alice Ingrey	Ian Murphy	Isabel Watson
Jean Bedwell	Arthur Ingrey	Barry Newman	J S Graham Watt
Jane Berry	Mark Jameson	Raymond Newman	Rosemary West
Basil Blackburn	Celia Joice	Valerie Notley	Simon Willoughby
Matthew Bond	John Jordan	Timothy Osborne	Elizabeth Wilson
Richard Bower	Raymond Kent	Brent Palmer	Robert Woodcock
Rodney Briscoe	Steven Kirk	Sohyun Park	Brian Woodcroft
David Bunkell	Michael Kisby	Timothy Patient	Marcus Wortley
F Percy Burrows	Dr Barbara Knowles	James Pewton	Paul Wraith
Ruth Burrows	James Laird	Rita Piesse	Matthew Wright
Sally Butcher	Thomas Leech	Ginny Plunkett	Joan Wylie
Patricia Buttolph	Paul Leeder	John Plunkett	
Ronald Buxton	Anthony Leeson	Derek Podd	<u>Life Members</u>
Andrew Campbell	Dick le Grice	Gary Rant	Ann Brown
Basil Cooper	James Lilwall	Nellie Reeder	John Burton
John Crisp	Charles Lintel	Richard Rout	Penny Cooke
Ivy Day	Michael Liversidge	Kenneth Ryder	<u>Honorary Life Members</u>
Anne Duarte	Dr Allan Lloyd	Geoff Sankey	Ralph Bootman
Lynda Edwards	Cyril Lockwood	Keith Shaw	Bryan Ellum
John Farmer	Dennis Long	Nigel Singleterry	John Robbins
Colin Fenn	Philip Luke	Kenneth Smith	Jessie Steadman
Clarence Gibbins	Claire MacArthur	Patricia Smith	Ron Watson
Dr Gerald Gifford	George Marley	Peter Stearn	<u>Honorary Members</u>
Prue Goldsmith	Mathew R Martin	Peter Stevenson	David Dunnett
William Ham	Sylvia Martin	Pauline Stratton	Dr Francis Jackson
Rodney Head	Chris Maule-Oatway	Brian Taylor	