

# The Journal

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## **Contents**

<b>Regular features</b>		<b>Page</b>
The Editor writes		2
Organ news	<i>Geoff Sankey</i>	4
From the mailbag		14
For your diary		18
Association events		20
 <b>Articles</b>		
The story of the Somerleyton organ	<i>John Robbins</i>	6
A holiday arranged while selling a car	<i>Tim Patient</i>	12
 <b>Reports</b>		
Organ workshop at Somerleyton	<i>Gordon Barker</i>	4
President's day	<i>Ronald Watson</i>	10
 <b>Sundries</b>		
A programme of improvisation	<i>Ronald Watson</i>	5
Mancroft's new organist	<i>Himself</i>	7
David Dunnett and John Coulton at Carlisle	<i>Rod Paton</i>	8
A peep into the archives		9
The WOOFYFYT	<i>Graham Watt</i>	10

***Last date for copy for the next Journal is Saturday 18th November 2006  
Why not send your contribution by email to  
watron@tiscali.co.uk***

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

We've been on our travels again - this time to Finland. Before setting off we invested in the *Insight Guide* for that country and it is from this that I wish to begin by quoting the following passage.

*It cannot be easy for a man to find himself a figurehead in his country's search for an identity, yet it was this label rather than the simple genius of his music that many Finns tied on their most famous composer, Jean Sibelius (1865 - 1957), during the years before Finnish independence. His tone poem Finlandia in particular became an emblem of everything Finnish.*

I have always loved the music of Sibelius, particularly the 5th and 2nd symphonies, (the first few notes of which I hear every time I open the computer programme which bears his name), but it wasn't until I was in Finland that I realised that he was not only the first Finnish composer to gain international recognition, but also a national hero. His 50th birthday was declared a national holiday and on his 60th he received the highest honour Finland can afford and a state pension which was far in excess of anything hitherto awarded.

Most national heroes are either politicians or military figures and I know of no other non-military or non-political figure who became a national hero. In fact the name of Sibelius is probably the first (or only) thing that comes to most people's minds when Finland is mentioned.

To be a national hero one must have played a significant part in the development or survival of a nation and one can easily see how the oratory of Churchill during the second world war

was what kept up the nation's morale and stiffened its resolve. At a time in Finnish history when Finland, then an Arch-Duchy of Russia, with the Tsar as Arch-Duke, was struggling against attempts to Russify its culture, the music of Sibelius is what gave the Finns their sense of identity and the resolve to preserve their own culture. Imagine Elgar writing what became '*Land of Hope and Glory*' in 1941!

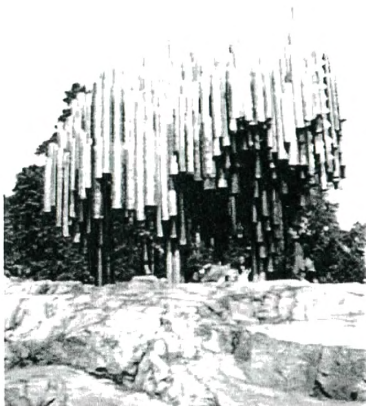
In 1900 Sibelius moved with his family from Helsinki to a house he had had built at Järvenpää about 30 miles north east of Helsinki and where he lived for the remaining 57 years of his life and where he died aged 92. He named the house Ainola after his wife Aino. The grounds of the house are forest and Sibelius would wander and sit in this beautiful and tranquil setting when composing.

Life there was not always tranquil however, for at one period after the fall of the Tsar and during the struggle for Finnish independence his life was actually in danger. His house was searched for arms twice in two days by Red Guards who were murdering intellectual people at will. This led Sibelius and his family to seek refuge at the Lappviken Asylum in Helsinki where his brother was a senior doctor. On 12th April 1918 Helsinki was relieved by the Germans and southern Finland could breathe freely once more.

This episode aside, a tranquil ambience was always maintained in the house, as Sibelius required silence in which to compose. His children, who were learning the piano, had to go to neighbours' houses to practise so as not to distract their father.

In Helsinki (or Helsingfors as it is known in Swedish), there is a music

academy named after him and a park in which stands a monument to him. It seems that people wrongly interpret the monument as representing organ pipes whereas the intention was that it should represent the forest, as it was from this that Sibelius drew much of his inspiration.



There is something eerie about standing in a room where great music was imagined by a genius and seeing his piano, his desk and pens, his hat, cane and jacket still, as one imagines, just where he had left them. The grave of Sibelius and his wife is only a few hundred yards from the house in a clearing within the forested grounds.

There are certain things we always do on our trips one of which is to visit churches in which we always seek out the organ and the hymn books. Wherever we have been we have looked in hymn books for hymns by Fred Pratt Green and have always found at least one. Finland was no exception. In their hymn book we found a Finnish translation of 'Christ is the world's light' and pointed this out to our Finnish friend. What we did *not* find in their hymn book was the tune Finlandia and when we told our friend that the tune featured in several English hymn books she was most surprised and somewhat alarmed at the words 'Be still my soul' which are about as far from the sentiments of the Finnish words as it is possible to imagine.

In the whole of Sibelius's output there is nothing that could be described as church music. There may be a clue to the reason for this in something Sibelius himself once said. 'Yesterday I heard Bruckner's B major symphony and it moved me to tears. For a long time afterwards I was completely enraptured. What a strangely profound spirit, formed by religiousness, a profound religiousness we have abolished in our own country as something no longer in harmony with our time'.

Another of his utterances speaks for itself; 'The final form of one's work is, indeed, dependent on powers that are stronger than oneself. Later one can substantiate this or that, but on the whole one is merely a tool. This wonderful logic - let us call it God - that governs a work of art is the forcing power'.

## **Organ Workshop at Somerleyton**

*Gordon Barker*

A sweltering early June Saturday saw an encouraging number of members and friends attending the lovely church of St Mary's, Somerleyton for the Organ Workshop led by Peter Stevenson. England's opening match in the World Cup ensured tranquil travelling conditions and this added greatly to the pleasure of driving into the Norfolk-Suffolk borderland.

After a warm welcome from John Robbins, Peter introduced everyone to the very fine Norman & Beard three manual instrument. The organ's spacious west end gallery position enabled several members to assemble around the console very comfortably - the ideal situation for the purpose of the afternoon.

Peter was very careful to point out that the event was a fine opportunity for players to perform in front of other organists, and that he did not intend the session to be in a threatening mode. Five members came prepared for scrutiny performing works by J S Bach, Buxtehude and Louis Vierne, while Peter's comments covered registration, articulation and phrasing as well as suitable tempi, use of rubato and fingering. All the performers felt that the session had been extremely worthwhile.

Members also had the opportunity to avail themselves of free second-hand organ music brought along by Jean Bedwell who also supported John behind the tea table.

All present were impressed and enjoyed what they saw and heard and expressed a wish to return to St Mary's.

## **Organ News**

*Geoff Sankey*

Richard Bower thanks his many friends for their support and good wishes following his nasty fall from Blakeney organ in late May (whilst wrapping it in polythene); he was transferred to the N&N by the air ambulance and amazingly escaped without breaking bones. He is now back to normal and has since tuned many organs and continued with the job in hand of rejuvenating the organ at St Mary Le Tower Ipswich. He has also cleaned (the great organ) at Wroxham parish church and has also recently taken out the 25 stop Gray & Davison organ from St George's, Bloomsbury, London, which may possibly be seeking a new home.

Holmes & Swift have overhauled the instrument at St Mary's church, East Walton. This is a wholly unenclosed single manual instrument with a 13 note pedal board, built by James Scott from West Tofts near Brandon. It was originally built for Gayton Thorpe church and transplanted to East Walton in 1946. Edmund believes that this builder, who supplied organs to a number of local churches between 1863 and 1865, was a local carpenter who modelled his instruments on continental organs he had seen (either directly or in pictures). Holmes & Swift are planning to start work on the instrument at All Saints, Hethel in the near future.

Johnson & Son are well into their project at Attleborough: the Choir and Swell are now back *in situ*; the Great is still out pending the addition of chests for the new trombone and cornet stops. There is still more work to be done on the action to improve its responsiveness.

## *A programme of improvisation*

Saltburn Methodist Church in North Yorkshire recently invited back, by popular demand, the German organist Otto Maria Krämer who goes around giving recitals which are totally improvised. He says that there is no difference between ordinary composition and improvisation except the absence in the latter of pen and paper. Indeed, the improviser has ideas that would not occur whilst he is poring over a score.

Otto invites his audience to submit themes just prior to the performance. He will then spend a short while assessing their suitability for recognised forms and styles—variations, partitas, preludes, fantasias, symphonies and then he will play. Each and every recital is unique.

In his promotion literature he writes *'The art of improvisation lies on the fringe of present-day music-making, practised mostly by organists and jazz-players. Whilst most church organists are routinely called upon to provide musical interludes during services, good improvisation entails much more than musical meandering: the player must have a profound knowledge of musical structure and form, to provide a coherent direction for his creative impulse, energy and imagination. In a liturgical context, his music should inspire the worshipper 'to meditate' on the symbolic content of texts, hymns and psalms.*

*This can be demanding enough on a familiar instrument played almost daily. A greater task challenges a touring professional organist unlike the flautist who carries his own chosen instrument everywhere, an organist is required to perform at short notice on a series of assorted instruments that will vary*

*greatly in size, tonal design and playing technique. He must therefore have an intuitive ear that can anticipate the effect of adding a particular stop and at the same time integrate its voice into the ongoing composition.'*

People frequently complain about organ recitals that there was nothing familiar in the programme. How would you like an entire evening which included no published works at all? My very good friend 'oop North', who is a very discerning musician, told me he was absolutely spellbound throughout the whole performance.

RW

We recently attended evensong in French in Rochester cathedral. The main organ was out of action and Roger Sayer accompanied the service on an electronic substitute for which the console was just east of the choir and in close proximity to where the congregation sat.

Evensong over, he launched into the *Toccata from the Suite Op. 5* by Duruflé so I sidled over to watch. Amazing! However, not two yards from the console stood a group of folk who just chattered in a loud voice paying no attention to this miraculous music and some bluff retired colonel type tapped the assistant, who was page turning, on the shoulder and bellowed 'tell the organist to pull out all the stops'. How crass some people can be.

Some of us applauded at the end of the voluntary at which a 'Mrs Thing' sought Roger Sayer's advice regarding what to wear on her feet for a RSCM Reluctant Organists course for which she had enrolled and enquired 'do you play in bare feet?' A good job organists are usually tucked away in lofts! RW

## *The story of the Somerleyton Organ*

*John Robbins*

"In our view, this is the finest instrument of its kind in Norwich, outside the cathedral. We are really proud of it, and we're going to do our best to see that it is not mishandled or allowed to fall into decay.

With this bellows blast, members of the Norwich and District Organists' Association have drawn shoulder to shoulder to defend the fine Norman and Beard organ still sitting in lonely baroque state in the former Chapelfield Congregational Church. There it has remained since the place was sold lock, stock and organ to the City Council a couple of years ago for £17,000.

To keep the organ in working order the Organists' Association are currently giving a series of weekly organ recitals which are open to the public, encouraging members to use it for practice, and generally keeping an eye on its welfare - all this with the blessing of the City Fathers.

What concerns the organists however, is that as the old chapel is in a development area, and therefore in danger of demolition, what happens to the organ? Apart from the fact that it is a very fine instrument, they point out that it has local interest also in that it was built literally a matter of yards away."

So reads the report found in Eastern Evening News of 9th August 1969. It is interesting to know that when the organ was built and installed in Chapelfield Church in 1912, Mr E W Norman, the founder of Norman & Beard, was a worshipper at the church. It is not unreasonable to assume that the project

benefited from his personal attention. The instrument incorporated some parts of the old organ from Colston Hall in Bristol, and the workmanship was superb.

In 1971 the City Council offered the organ for sale at a price of £100. By coincidence, the PCC at St Mary, Somerleyton, were looking for a replacement for their old Miller electronic, and contacted the Council with a view to purchasing it. The PCC were told they were too late and that the organ had already been sold. However, the sale fell through and so the instrument was offered to Somerleyton, who immediately commenced negotiations for the purchase. The PCC did meet with opposition to the proposed removal to Somerleyton, but the late Brian Runnett, Cathedral Organist at the time, was duly consulted and he 'gave his blessing' to the move.

Hill, Norman & Beard dismantled the organ and it was transported to Somerleyton by Percy Wigg, local removal contractors. A platform was constructed at the West end of the church using local labour and the organ rebuilt on the platform. Due to the height of the instrument, there was some modification to the casework, and a rank of diapasons was omitted to give clearance under the church roof. The opening recital took place in 1971 and the organ hasn't missed a beat since.

I am very proud to have been associated with the installation and am privileged to have been the custodian ever since. The total cost of the installation, including the purchase price was £1,350. Quite a few of our 'older' members will remember the organ and it was a great pleasure recently to welcome a party at the workshop conducted by Peter Stevenson.

*Mancroft's new organist.....*

.....is Matthew Pitts who originally had lessons with John Marsden at St Mary's Parish Church, Tickhill before going to Durham University where he was organ scholar at the College of St Hild and St Bede for four years. He graduated with First Class Honours in Russian and German in 2003 and then became Assistant Organist at High Wycombe Parish Church until 2004, when he returned to Yorkshire to do an MA in Translation Studies at Sheffield University.



During this year he studied with Neil Taylor at Sheffield Cathedral after which he took up a one-year post as Organ Scholar at Chichester Cathedral until earlier this week where he remained until the end of July this year.

His main interests outside of organ playing are languages (obviously!) and travelling.

We wish Matthew a long and successful tenure of the post at St Peter's and look forward to encountering him.

*Another new arrival*



*Julian and Ellen Thomas are celebrating the arrival of Dominic (7lbs 6oz) on 4th August. We offer them our heartiest congratulations.*

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**Some of our members have moved house:**

*Bryan Ellum and Jane Berry to 'Millfield', Billingford Road, North Elmham, East Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5HW and their telephone number is 01362 668156*

*Laurie Bannister to Swancot, Horsebridge Road Broughton SO20 8BG*

*Mathew and Sylvia Martin to Aylsham (see inside cover).*

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**Peter Collins will shortly be moving the instrument he built for Kenneth Ryder to the Royal Academy of Music, to whom Kenneth willed it.**



**David Dunnett and John Coulton at  
Carlisle Cathedral**

Rod Paton

'Cathedral resounds to cool duo's lively mix' was the somewhat enigmatic headline of the local newspaper's review of a concert as part of the annual Carlisle Summer Festival in which David Dunnett at the 1859 Father Willis accompanied John Coulton on trumpet. As your 'northern correspondent' (now living back in Carlisle from Glasgow), I had the great pleasure of being at the concert and in fact the 'cool duo' referred to the coolness inside the cathedral compared with the searing heat outside rather than the character of the performers who, nonetheless, came over as undoubtedly 'cool' characters themselves in the modern sense of the word!

The concert opened without introduction with Jean Joseph Mouret's *Rondo* with John Coulter positioned adjacent to the organ console which sits high up at Carlisle in a small 'crow's nest' below the organ case. This lively start set the scene for the rest of the concert with David's familiar voice coming over the PA system to introduce Jeremiah Clarke's *Suite in D* which showed off the excellent baroque voices on the organ. Following this, David played Nevin's '*Will O' The Wisp*' with tremendous dexterity and speed and the piece was over all too quickly! John then introduced Vincent Persichetti's *The Hollow Men* based on a poem by T S Eliot, some lines of which he read out to link with the music. This was a very haunting piece with occasional louder outbursts from the organ reeds with a very dreamy overall sound ending *pppp*

on the organ with the open metal 32ft diapasons rumbling in the distance.

This was followed by Greensleeves to a Ground with some wonderfully clear and ringing tones from the trumpet with the organ keeping well in the background. David then announced that he was going to take us back to the "Town Hall organ series" by playing Eric Coates' *Dambusters March* to which there was a murmur of approval and there followed a simply stunning performance of the piece with an attempt to 'dam bust' the Cathedral itself with the big tubas at the end of the piece. Fortunately nothing gave way! The next piece was Biber's *Sonata per Clarino B-dur* using a piccolo trumpet, and Alan Hovhaness' *Sonata for trumpet and organ* in which the trumpeter left the organ loft to play 'off-stage' to utilise the building acoustics! The very short Biber Sonata was over all too soon and the much longer Hovhaness Sonata commenced which was very atmospheric and rather reminded me of some of Messiaen's more 'remote' pieces.

The final tour de force was C S Lang's *Tuba Tune* with the tune alternating between John on his trumpet and David on the big Willis tubas. Although the volume was remarkably similar, the much keener sound of the trumpet contrasted well with the rather tubby sound of the Carlisle tubas. The final chord had both playing and I have to say that the organ tubas won by a short head (or should I say hood?) in volume. A marvellous and very uplifting end to a superb lunchtime hour in the cool of the Cathedral. Do come back again soon, cool duo!

## *A Peep into the Archives*

2007 sees the Diamond Jubilee of the Association. With that in mind, the committee decided that some extracts from previous issues of 'The Journal' and its predecessor 'The Newsletter' should be reprinted in forthcoming Journals. Ralph Bootman produced the first one hundred editions and what better place to start than with the first newsletter published by the Norwich and District Organists' Association in April 1967. The following extracts are reproduced from it.

"This is the first of what is hoped may become a regular issue of a newsletter for members of the Association, which will be issued quarterly with the journal of the IAO. In it will be notes and news which we hope will be of interest to all members, and it would be appreciated if any member of the Association who would like to bring items of 'organic' interest to others would send them to Mr R F Bootman.

William Hill & Son and Norman & Beard Ltd. Have recently restored and carried out certain tonal alterations to the organ in Christ Church, Eaton and an inaugural recital was given on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April by Dr Arthur Wills, Organist of Ely Cathedral. The same firm is to carry out the complete restoration of the large organ in Cromer Parish Church – the work is timed to begin in September.

Messrs E & W Storr have provided a new organ for Swardeston Parish Church. The organ is elevated above the north side of the Nave, above the entrance to the north porch and the console, detached and with stop-key control, is placed in the North Choir stalls, the organist facing South.

The 'positive' organ formerly in Crownthorpe Parish Church recently had all its metal pipework stolen. This has been replaced and the organ moved to the neighbouring Church of Wicklewood.

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May, the Organ Club is making an all-day visit to Norwich, and among the Churches to be visited are St Peter Mancroft, where Mr. Kenneth Ryder will give a short recital. The visit will end with a recital at the Cathedral at 5.00 pm by Mr Brian Runnett and any member of the Association will be very welcome to join in some or all of the day's activities.

It was a great pleasure to hear the Organ Recital from the Cathedral given by Mr Brian Runnett on the BBC Home service recently and to see the television broadcast of 'Songs of Praise' from St. Mary's Baptist Church on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April, where our member Mr Cyril Pearce is organist".

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**David Dunnett will give a recital on the 'Chapelfield Organ' at Somerleyton Church on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> August, at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome. There will be a retiring collection for Church Funds.**

## The WOOFYT

Graham Watt

An article in a parish magazine sent me to Bergh Apton church on 8th June. Curious as to what a WOOFYT is, I joined some 50 to 60 others for an evening of education and entertainment.

Jeremy Sampson started with a whistle-stop description of pipe organ construction, with demonstrations of the differing sounds made by various pipes. Richard Bower demonstrated the colours of the instrument, entertaining us with Josef Rheinberger's *Abendlied*, Vierne's *Berceuse*, Mozart's *Andante in F* and Gigout's *Scherzo*.

Under the auspices of the British Institute of Organ Studies, assisted by a grant from the National Pipe Organ Register (NPOR), Jeremy Sampson had constructed his **Wooden One Octave Organ For Young Technicians**. He uses this to stage demonstrations for schools, and had that afternoon visited Alington School with his lively presentation.

The WOOFYT is a machine (instrument?) comprising 13 wooden pipes, each with a hinged flap, connected to a pump and air reservoir by a collection of plastic pipes and other washing machine parts. With a volunteer on each pipe, two on the pump, and copies of the 'music', Jeremy conducted us in a spirited rendition of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, to great hilarity and by the end of the evening we all came away enlightened. Some said they had never before known, or even wondered, how an organ works. Bergh Apton's organ is one of the 42 instruments of historic note in the eastern region selected for an archive recording.

## President's day

There is no guarantee that saying 'white rabbits' on the first of the month gets things off on the right foot but it certainly worked for us in July, for what better way to get the month off to a good start could there have been than to attend Alan Morris's inspired President's day.

Starting with a visit to two organs at West Runton, where Richard May provided a warm welcome and refreshments, and at the Roman Catholic Church in Sheringham, the happy band moved on to the splendid new hall at St Peter's for a truly magnificent spread, topped off with strawberries.

'Enough' went up the cries from those for whom the ecstasy was already too much, yet spurred on by Alan who crocodyled us to the station, off we went to revel in the delights of steam train travel and a stiff dose of nostalgia.

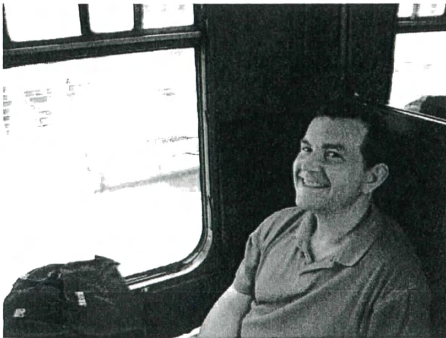
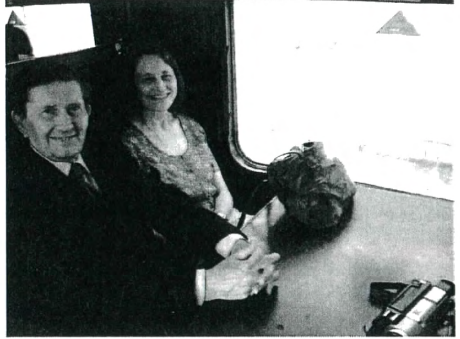


At Holt the engine driver put the locomotive through its paces as it hurtled past the uncoupled carriages to couple up at the other end for the return journey; (Red Arrows eat your heart out!).

Back in Sheringham members tried the organ in St Peter's before we all assembled for evensong sung by the choir of St Peter's with Alan at the console and lessons read by members.

It was a novel idea and every aspect of the day was enjoyable in its own way. Many thanks indeed to our President. RW.

*Happy travellers*



## *A Holiday Arranged while Selling a Car*

*Tim Patient*

In 2004, friends from Old Catton who have lived for part of the last five years in the south of France, were visiting Norfolk and this visit coincided with my having just bought a car. They also wanted to buy a car and as I had not yet sold my previous one, they asked if they could buy it. A few days later whilst sorting out the sale they invited me to visit them at their home in Perpignan and offered to try and arrange for me to play some of the organs in the surrounding area. This was a part of France that I knew very little about. Perpignan is part of the Languedoc-Roussillon Région and the capital of the Pyrénées-Orientales Département, being situated just over twenty miles from the Spanish border and with a strong Catalan community. I was very keen to visit and so it was that on 5<sup>th</sup> August this year I travelled to France.

The visit was quite an undertaking on my part as it was the first time I had been away for more than a couple of nights since the Association's trip to Paris in 2000. I decided to travel by train and amongst the highlights of the journey was being able to reserve a seat in the upper floor of the TGV for the 6½ hour journey from Lille to Perpignan. The journey was timetabled as taking almost 13 hours from Norwich but in the end, delays caused by a lineside fire in France meant that the journey took almost 14 hours. My hosts met me at the railway station and after a short bus ride to their apartment in the city centre I was immediately taken out to see the tail end of the twice weekly Sardane performance. This is a traditional Catalan circle dance performed by any number of

people and accompanied by a cobla, which is usually an eleven-piece windband.

The holiday was not purely organ playing and I was able to enjoy being driven through the mountainous scenery of the Corbières and Pyrénées as well as paddling in the surprisingly cold Mediterranean Sea at Collioure and sampling some of the local food.

The main attractions of the visit were the organs and I was very fortunate in being able to play three different instruments. The first organ I played was in the town of Céret, where many artists including Picasso have lived. The Church of Saint-Pierre has a three-manual instrument built by Baptiste Puget of Toulouse in 1880. The organist, M. Bosch, has been at the Church for many years and has seen the organ have three renovations, the most recent of which was completed in October 2003. He spoke very highly of the instrument and explained that Puget was second only to Cavallé-Coll as far as organ building in nineteenth century France was concerned. He was very enthusiastic about the instrument and offered to show me inside it. This was the first instrument I had been in where the pneumatic Barker levers were visible. I am not sure what British Health and Safety regulations would have made of my scrambling up the ladder inside! The three-manual instrument is situated in the west gallery, with the typical French arrangement of a reversed console so that the altar is visible without the use of mirrors. The stops are also traditionally arranged in tiers either side of the manuals. This was a very powerful organ although the warm temperature inside the Church meant that the reeds were not particularly in tune.



Back in Perpignan the second instrument I was able to play was the four manual Cavaillé-Coll in Perpignan Cathedral. A hastily arranged funeral meant that my start time there had to be postponed for an hour, but eventually I was able to play the instrument. I had some idea of what to expect from this instrument as Martin Cottam had lent me a recording of it. The assistant organist, M. Serret, was very helpful and registered all the pieces I played. However he was somewhat taken aback when he found out that I was unable to improvise! It is clear that this is an historic instrument – helped no doubt by the noisy pneumatic-assisted action and the need for two hands to be used to draw some of the weighty stops. It was a real pleasure to play such a fine-sounding instrument in such a wonderful acoustic.

The following day saw the final organ of my trip at the Abbey Church of Sainte-Marie in the town of Arles-sur-Tech. This instrument was certainly a contrast with the other two. It was built in the last part of the 18th century by the German organ builder Goedfroy Schmidt and used some 16th century pipes. Soon after it was built it was almost destroyed as records show that in May 1793, M. Serradeil, the local pharmacist, stopped the French revolutionary troops from

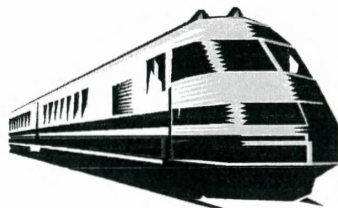
destroying it by promising to play celebratory and patriotic music on it. It has three manuals – the lowest two being the Great and Positif respectively, with the third manual being the cornet and having a full compass of keys although only playing from middle C upwards. The Positif can be coupled to the Grand by shifting the keyboard towards the player. The pedals were unlike any pedal board I had seen before – being only one octave and looking more like buttons than conventional pedals, but this arrangement suits the repertoire for which the organ was built.

Many aspects of the holiday will stand out, not least of which were the three organs. The scenery of the mountains; seeing darkness fall over the Mediterranean Sea; driving along narrow and winding coastal lanes with nothing to protect the road user from a very long drop down the hillside; climbing to the top of the Cathar castle at Queribus; the aftermath of forest fires; but perhaps the strangest was my visit to the local Catalan shop to see whether a piano score of the Sardane dance music was available. One was, although it is obviously not the most popular item in the shop as the price label was still marked in Francs. I noticed a map of the area but this did not have a marked price. The shop assistant could not find the price on the computer so telephoned the manager. He or she did not know the price either so told me that I could have the map for free!

I was away from Norwich for only five days but thanks to the local knowledge of my hosts and their willingness to arrange for me to play the organs, the few days were very full. For anyone thinking of visiting the area, there is much to recommend.

## LETTER FROM FRANCE

It hasn't happened in England for quite a while and I cannot see any of the British train operators of today putting on special trains for a Music festival. Trains were put on last century for the opening of the Forster & Andrews organ in Cottingham, near Hull, to and from that city for the opening recitals on the new organ there. However, over here the SNCF, the French nationalised railway system, is doing just that today and is running trains between Paris and Auvers sur Oise for the inauguration of the new organ in the church there, with its subsequent recitals by prominent organists on Sundays, Saints' days, and Public holidays until 24th September. For those not interested in organ music, there is also an art exhibition on impressionism to browse round, the area having been made famous by Van Gogh and his paintings.



For those whose sport is football, SNCF put on special trains for matches played by the local team, Sedan, from such places as Reims, Givet and as far as Valenciennes with very low return fares. Away matches are similarly catered for!

Nearer 'home' the summer series of recitals and concerts is in full swing with bands playing out of doors and with organ recitals in many churches. An interesting one was given recently in the Basilica of Notre Dame de France in nearby Charleville-Mezieres featuring the organ and saxophone which attracted almost a full house to hear music both ancient and modern and which had many members of the audience foot-tapping and obviously enjoying the lighter side of the entertainment. Other types of concerts featured groups which seem to be as noisy this side of the channel as they are back in England. However, the audiences are of all age groups, the older members seemingly as smitten by the 'music' as the younger ones!

In my last letter I mentioned the possibility of work on organs being handicapped, if not banned on both old and new instruments by order of the EU with regard to the lead content. You will, no doubt, be as pleased as I am to learn that common sense has prevailed, so far, and that the head of the European Commission in London has stated that he had no wish to jeopardise the ancient tradition [of organ building] and that British organ builders need have no worry for the future of their craft. Now it seems possible and probable that the EU will accept these proposals for which we must be grateful and for those of you who wish to learn more or voice your own opinions on this matter, then you can visit [www.pipes4organs.org](http://www.pipes4organs.org) and it will keep you up to date on what is being done. How the French will react, I have no idea!

There is also a change in the payment of VAT on organs in Britain and churches who have had to pay this on work done to their instruments may claim this back so long as the instrument is in a listed building and is a fixture. Included are works to the casework, the blower and the action and the church concerned has to apply to the VAT authorities for the refund - a minimum of £175.00 [10% the VAT on £1,000.00 of work] - and not to the

organ builder concerned. This does not apply to electronic instruments, American organs or harmoniums, pipe organs that are designed to be moveable, fitted on castors, mounted on a free standing platform or simply plugged in to an electric socket! Still, it does mean that final bills for organ work will become lower, even if more work for the parish treasurer is required.

The Tour de France is over and those who think that the local amenities and scenery are not to their liking have crowded the roads leading south to experience the canicule elsewhere leaving places here in the north strangely quiet until September. Wherever you may go for your holidays, may you have a happy and restful time - and France is only just across the Channel!

Ralph Bootman.



Dear Ron,

Robin and I have now been living in Lavendon, Buckinghamshire, for 20 months. We are fortunate to have found a very large bungalow with one third of an acre of garden, overlooking a meadow. We would love to see anyone who happens to be in our area, perhaps going to or returning from holidays (especially if they are gardeners!!) You would be most welcome.

The first few months passed in a haze of 125 packing cases from two homes and a very long, dark winter. Suddenly in March 2005 there were a few bright sunny days, and we realised we needed to get out and about and find the joys of three counties. We are the last village as you go north, leaving Buckinghamshire for Northampton, and the last village but one as you go east into Bedfordshire, so we are really on the cusp of the three counties. Our first port of call was Olney, where we quickly discovered a small supermarket and a lot of lovely specialist shops, especially for cards, gardening requirements, deli, furniture and a most obliging chemists. For weekly shopping we need to head for Wellingborough, Northampton or Bedford, all 9 – 12 miles away.

The first church we visited was St Peter and St Paul's, Olney, where we arrived for morning service. It is visually a lovely church with beautiful stained glass windows and is well adapted for children, recitals, local orchestra concerts, coffee etc. The organ is a century-old Binns, which has recently been cleaned. There is a very small choir, consisting of 2-3 ladies and 2-3 gentlemen. However, the choir stalls are magnificent and could



accommodate most visiting church choirs! Of course, as in any move, the service is never the same format as what one is used to, but it didn't veer too far from what was recognisable. However, after several Sunday visits, we did tire of the 25 – 30 minute sermons (which have even been introduced to the early morning communion service!). So we decided we had to look further afield!

We spread into Northamptonshire and I quickly decided to contact the Northampton & District Organists' Association, (NDOA). They were most welcoming and to my horror, having befriended a most capable lady organist and committee member, I found myself voted on to the committee last December! (I was going to have a rest from committees, but that is not what retirement is about I've discovered!!) However, I have to say committee meetings have been almost as enjoyable as those in Norwich and it is interesting to 'match' certain individuals to those in NOA! – i.e. for determination, knowledge, playing skills, secretarial and admin capabilities and sense of humour!!! It is a smaller association, about 75 members, of whom up to 15 - 20 regularly turn up for events which are usually held monthly. This enabled me to plan visits to churches where we might feel at home. We have still failed to find a 'parish' church for Sunday worship.

Lavendon church is beautiful and has an interesting history and a wonderful peal of bells (practice Wednesday evenings!) which we can hear from home, but the format of the service and the frequent lack of organ is difficult to accept.

To date we have visited and mostly enjoyed several other churches within a 20-mile radius. St Matthew's Northampton is currently using the parish hall and much work is being done to both church and organ. We did attend a wonderful Christmas service at All Saints' Church, Northampton, which I am sure is well known to many of you. The powerful Gallery Organ (1983) is a mechanical action Walker with 3020 pipes. The 1981 Walker Chancel organ is being removed and replaced by a three manual 1938 Hill, Norman & Beard instrument. The work is being done by Ken Tickell & Co. of Northampton. Ken is on the NODA committee and we spent a happy afternoon at his workshops early in 2006 inspecting a new organ for Cheltenham Ladies' College.

I have also joined the Wellingborough Orpheus Choir and we recently performed Verdi's Requiem at the Castle Theatre in Wellingborough. We do smaller concerts in various churches around the area and this has introduced me to more churches, including St Mary's and St Barnabas in Wellingborough, Finedon and Rushden and various Baptist churches with delightful little organs. Sadly two much loved and hard-working members of NODA died earlier this year and asked for their extensive collections of sheet music to be offered for sale, proceeds going to the Organists' Benevolent Fund. I was fortunate to add considerably to my already overflowing music cabinet, which has now spread into the garden room chest of drawers! It is now vying for space with Robin's house and garden tools and golf clubs!

It is always a pleasure to return to Norwich and we particularly enjoyed Ron's birthday celebrations at the Cathedral and several trips to St Thomas' this year. I always look forward to receiving the Journal and am hoping that NOA and NODA can perhaps meet for a day of "organs" somewhere – do please ring me if you have any ideas. Greetings to all friends in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Sally Desbois

## KENNETH RYDER

It was only a matter of days after the issue of the last Journal that we heard that Kenneth had died and only just over two weeks since he had written inviting members to visit him in his new home in Aylsham to play his two organs.

Kenneth was one of the most long standing and distinguished members of this Association, or Guild, as it formerly was, and had served it in various capacities but most significantly when he acted as host at St Peter's on an almost regular basis to inform us about the Collins organ and on matters musical.

We know much about him from his several articles, his after dinner speech in 2004 when he was guest of honour, and from the revelations he treated us to when he was cast away on our desert island. Several of our members have numbered among his many pupils.

In fact, because of our close association with him, there is little new that can be said concerning all his many achievements which are well known to us all.

He set us a shining example of integrity, both as a person and as a musician, and he enriched the musical life of the city and countless individuals who came into contact with him in his work at St Peter's and in connection with the Norfolk and Norwich Festival. The attendance at his funeral in the cathedral of over 700 people was testament to this. We have lost one of our most distinguished members and will miss him.

## ST. MARY'S CHURCH ATTLEBOROUGH HERITAGE APPEAL JULY 2006

Have you been to a Dragon Guards Concert in St Mary's or to one of the many other concerts given here in recent years? Did you hear clarinettist Emma Johnson at Malcolm Arnold's birthday concert? Did you ever sing in the choir? If so, you will have heard our organ.

The organ at St Mary's is now undergoing cleaning, overhaul and tonal modification, for the first time in 44 years. This work will cost £40,000.

To help us raise this large sum, we invite all who have a connection with St. Mary's, present or past parishioners, those who give or attend concerts, all friends and well wishers, to **adopt a pipe**.

Would **you** like to **adopt a pipe** in memory of a friend or loved one? Or as a family? Pipes may be adopted for **£100, £75, £50 or £25**. If you wish, you may engrave a name on your pipe, or this can be done for you free of charge. We are asking that the pipes are adopted/engraved by 31<sup>st</sup> August, but of course we are willing to accept money after that for the Appeal. St Mary's has done quite well on the pipe adoption and expect to raise £7,000.

*If you would like to adopt a pipe please contact Mrs. S. Negus, Church Farm, Low Road, Shropham, Attleborough NR17 2EH.*

## *For your diary*

### **St Thomas's Church Earlham Road Norwich concert series 2006**

*All concerts begin at 7.30 pm Admission £4.50 or £3.50 Concessions*

*Tea and Coffee are usually served during the interval*

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September** Organ Recital **David Dunnett**

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October** Organ Recital **Charles Wooler** Organist, Gosforth Parish Church

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### **Wymondham Abbey**

*Saturday 16th September at 11. 30 am*

Coffee time recital with **Martin Thomas** - saxophones, **Jane Berry** and **Bryan Ellum** - organ duets. Music by Susato, Bach, Mozart, Rachmaninoff, Ketelby and Bedard.

Retiring collection

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### **St Nicholas North Walsham**

*Thursday 21st September at 1 pm*

Lunchtime recital with **Bryan Ellum** and **Jane Berry** - organ solos and duets.

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### **St Nicholas Dereham**

*Friday 15th September 7.30 pm*

**Celebrity recital**

*to mark the 11th anniversary of the rebuilding of the organ by*

### **James Parsons**

*(director of the Oundle Festival and Oundle for Organists).*

*Tickets £7 concessions £5 including  
a glass of wine.*

**Norwich Cathedral**

*August 28th*

*Bank Holiday Recital at 11 am - Admission free*

**David Dunnett with John Coulton - trumpet**

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**Holy Trinity Church West Runton**

**Wednesday Lunchtime Organ Concerts**

**12.30 - 1. 30 pm**

*Admission free - retiring collection*

*30th August Alan Morris*

*6th September Dr Gerald Gifford*

*Friday 25th August at 7. 30 pm*

**Just Jazz in concert**

*Admission £7. 50 including cheese and wine - car park at rectory adjoining*

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**St Peter's Sheringham**

**Summer Serenade 2006 Thursdays at 8 pm**

*Admission free with a retiring collection. Tea and coffee are available after each Thursday concert. Parking at North Norfolk Railway and Morris Street close by.*

*August*

24th **Michael White** - Baritone - **Emily Steventon** - Soprano. Michael and Emily have recently graduated from the Guildhall and play Quilter, Vaughan Williams, Finzi, Kern and Gershwin.

31st **Matthew Bond** - Organ - **Chad Henderson** - Tenor. Matthew is one of the youngest members of the NOA. Solo items will include The Holy City and extracts from The Messiah.

*September*

7th **Alan Morris** - Organ plays Guilmant, Vierne and Howells

**Midday music at Princes Street URC**

from 12.45 - 1. 45 pm on the first Thursday of the month played by

**Peter Stevenson and occasional guest organists**

## *Events Diary - Autumn 2006*

### **Saturday 16th September Organs of the Wensum Valley.**

A car-outing starting at 11.15 at Whissonsett Church. Richard Bower recently restored the Richard Nicholson organ in Whissonsett Church which dates circa 1840 (see RB's article in The Journal No 52 p 17.).



We then drive to Weston Longville for lunch at 'The Parson Woodforde' and enjoy console time on the excellent Walker at Weston Church.

The tour concludes with the drive to Swanton Morley, a glorious 14thC church where the lovely Norman & Beard instrument, which was previously at St Michael at Plea in Norwich, will be introduced to us by Dougal Smith.

Please contact Gordon by phone/email [ceegebarker@waitrose.com](mailto:ceegebarker@waitrose.com) by Wednesday 13th September if you intend coming. It would be very helpful to have an early indication of pub lunch numbers as the Parson W. gets very busy on Saturdays.

### **Saturday 14th October Repertoire for small organs. Mattishall Church at 2 pm.**

Do you fancy some fresh ideas to perk up your repertoire? Gordon Barker will be introducing some recently published music together with examples of 'small organ' pieces by international giants of the organ world which are more off the beaten track. Members will have the opportunity to try pieces out on the 2 manual and pedal organ at All Saints as well as a 19thC one manual instrument at the nearby URC church.

Please contact Gordon by the 11th October if you intend to come.

### **Saturday 9th December Desert Island Discs 2.30 pm at Brooke Church Rooms**

Anne Page is our distinguished castaway this year.

