

The Journal

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Last date for copy for the next Journal is Saturday 17th November 2007
Why not send your contribution by email to
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The editor writes.....

It is well nigh impossible to plan any evening event in Norwich that doesn't clash with at least one other similar and equally attractive event, particularly on a Saturday evening. Anne Page's excellent recital in Wymondham Abbey clashed with an organ recital by David Dunnett in Attleborough church - an agonising choice for Association members if ever there was one, and Robert Houssart's recital in Norwich Cathedral clashed with the Lord Mayor's procession no less! This was not only a clash of interests but created the added difficulty of actually gaining access to the cathedral.

It was an uncanny coincidence that the Association's 50th anniversary celebrations also took place on the same day as the Lord Mayor's Procession.

Then, after evensong sung by Sine Nomine, there was an organ recital given by Dr Francis Jackson after which one took one's life in one's hands to cross the road for a celebratory dinner in the Maid's Head. On what was a warm and balmy evening, diners wanted as many windows as possible open in the dining room, but once the procession got underway the noise from outside drowned out all attempts at conversation. In order to hear a single word of Dr Jackson's after dinner address all the windows had to be closed.

Despite the difficulties facing would-be attenders on 14th July this year, a respectable number made it and enjoyed an exhilarating recital by this one time Norwich Cathedral chorister and pupil of Kenneth Ryder. Each piece was of considerable interest and the audience were struck by the colours Robert Houssart managed to tease out of the

cathedral organ. The second half of the programme was devoted entirely to Liszt's monumental *Fantasia & Fugue on Ad Nos ad Salutarem Undam* which was given a gripping reading. This was indeed a recital worthy of our 60th anniversary celebrations. Robert Houssart's biographical notes left us in no doubt that he is carving out for himself a most impressive musical career.



Another former cathedral chorister who is also carving out for herself a prestigious musical career is Elizabeth Watts. If you are the proud owner of the CD *Glory be to God on High* featuring Norwich Cathedral Girls' Choir recorded in Norwich Cathedral in 1997 with Neil Taylor conducting and with Simon Johnson at the organ, then you will have a recording of Elizabeth Watts who sang four solos on the disc. Elizabeth, as you will know, was a finalist in this year's Cardiff Singer of the World and won the

Lieder Prize in that prestigious competition. Many a fine career for both men and women has had its foundations in singing in a cathedral choir and Elizabeth, from Hethersett, is already well established as one of the country's up and coming singers.

Somewhat further afield, 2007 is proving an auspicious year for Dr Francis Jackson who, (if you didn't already know), received the CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list and later this year will celebrate his 90th birthday. We offer Dr Jackson our heartiest congratulations and wish him a very happy birthday and many happy returns. It is difficult to write anything about Dr Jackson that isn't already common knowledge but two facts about him which might come in handy in a general knowledge quiz are that he is the only British organist to have recorded on 78s, LPs and CDs. Another is that his connection with the music at York Minster must surely be as long an association with a particular cathedral church as any in the history of English church music. He joined the choir there under Bairstow in 1929, and apart from his absence for a period of military service during the second world war, succeeding Sir Edward Bairstow, remained at the Minster until his retirement.



Book review

Everything else an organist should know by Robert Leach and Barry Williams. Published by Organist Publications Ltd. ISBN 0-95507-49-0-8

Now here is a book that every holder of an organist/choirmaster post should have. Dealing with all the issues which currently affect organists and choir trainers it is an indispensable reference on matters such as working with clergy, child protection, health & safety, copyright, fees, tax, licensing and much else. The authors are both church musicians, one a chartered accountant and the other a lawyer in the professional civil service.



What commends this book is its clarity and simplicity, making for an easy and informative read, even for those of us who never get into scrapes. RW.

Surfers of the web looking for references to 'pipe' might well stumble across the website of PipeDown, an organisation dedicated to getting rid of unwanted piped music in public places. Several eminent people including Andrew Lloyd Webber and our own Stephen Fry are members and hence campaigners against this most irritating invasion into our privacy. Give them a look or even join if you feel strongly enough!

JESSIE MAY STEADMAN
1914 - 2007



The funeral of Jessie Steadman took place on 21st June 2007 in the Parish Church of St Helen, Bishopgate, Norwich within the grounds of The Great Hospital where Jessie lived during the latter part of her life and where she died.

Jessie had chosen the hymns and their tunes herself *Angel Voices* to the tune *Angel Voices*, *O Jesus I have promised* to the tune *Thornbury* and *Blessed City, Heavenly Salem* to the tune *Westminster Abbey*. The organ was played by Richard Bower who had known Jessie since she was in Holt and he was at Gresham's.

The music before the service was *Pastorale* by JS Bach and as the cortège entered the church the chorale prelude *Liebster Jesu wir sind hier*. The coffin was taken out at the end to the *Andante Tranquillo* from Mendelssohn's 3rd Sonata - all music Jessie would have been familiar with and enjoyed.

Jessie, who was a Vice-President of the Norwich and District Organists' Association, was made a life member of the NGO when the former post was

discontinued. Her contribution to local music was considerable.

Family members and many friends were present at her funeral to give thanks for her life and her ministry of music through her organ playing over many years.

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A few snippets about a former Norwich Cathedral organist submitted by Colin Fenn from a letter he had read in the magazine of the Friends of Cathedral Music

It appears that Dr Statham had made careful notes on regular preachers at the cathedral and had made arrangements with a local publican to slip out for a quick half or so at sermon time. One Sunday, unknown to him, the preacher had been switched at the last moment and on his return from refreshment he was horrified to hear the last hymn being sung unaccompanied. Fortunately he had perfect pitch and he waited for the last verse, came crashing in with a wonderful variation on the harmonies and left the impression that it had been planned that way.

Three other strands might amuse. Dr Statham always played wearing his trilby hat*, he had bribed one of the vergers to let him have a look at the console of what was considered a tricky organ the night before the auditions, and finally, he frequently brewed a pot of tea during quiet moments of services and one could see the steam from his boiling kettle if one knew where to look!

**Conrad Eden told me that Dr Statham could be seen looking over the organ screen with a mortarboard at a rakish tilt on his head. Could this have been mistaken for a trilby? Ed.*

Double Diamond

Pauline Stratton

Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt

When the news of Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt's death, on 2nd November 1887, reached Norwich its citizens were deeply saddened for she had enriched the lives of so many of them. The following, written by Mr C. E. Noverre, is from the EDP dated 4th November 1887.

Reminiscences of Jenny Lind.



In the autumn of 1847 Jenny Lind made her first visit to Norwich, and the arrangements for the two concerts then to be given were on a large scale. An orchestra had been expressly engaged, with Balfe, the popular composer, as conductor. With Jenny Lind were associated the names of Gardoni and Lablache, as vocalists. The excitement in the city was intense, and this was somewhat heightened by the temporary indisposition of Jenny Lind, which led to

the postponement of the first concert from September 20th to the 23rd. Bishop Stanley invited her to stay at the Palace. Her reception on arrival was more than Royal. The train was in charge of one of the directors of the Railway Company, and a feu de joie was rung on St Peter's bells to welcome her. The enthusiasm generally aroused was described in the editorial style then peculiar to the "Norwich Mercury". The earnestness of Jenny Lind's character was reflected in her singing, which appeared to mesmerise her audiences and force, as it were, their sympathy from them. Such talent was of the "Veni, vidi, vici" sort, and carried away her hearers captive. Her Swedish melodies fairly electrified everybody by their brilliancy of vocalisation and the quaint naturalness of their delivery. These she accompanied herself on the piano. Some of the distances were very curious, and the way she gave the echo was very extraordinary. The transition from forte to piano was so quick that it seemed almost impossible to have been done by one of the same person. Another piece was an air written expressly for Jenny Lind by Balfe, in which that composer appeared to have exerted all his powers in the most intricate passages which no singer, save Lind herself, could have surmounted. She did so with all the imaginable ease, making three forte shakes successively, rushing up the scale to the top of her voice at the end of each shake in a manner that excited the wonder of her hearers. It was known that the six o'clock train would bear her off and a large party assembled to bid her farewell. Indeed such was the anxiety, that many persons who had no other means of access, bought tickets as if they were going by the train, in order to obtain a place on the platform. Mr H Bolingbroke,

the resident director, had caused the carriage appropriated to her use to be ornamented with roses, and on being seated, presented her with a bouquet of the rarest flowers. The parting between the bishop's family and Jenny Lind exhibited a deep regard on both sides. A little girl, the daughter of the Rev. Bath Power, who had come to present her rose, was lifted up to the window and then shone out the warm affectionate nature of the woman. Everyone tried, not in vain, to shake her hand at parting, and as the train moved slowly from the station a long, loud and hearty cheering was continued until the carriage had passed out of view.

In January 1849, Jenny Lind made another visit to Norwich, and this time on a purely charitable mission, for she had offered her great services on behalf of the poor of the city. It can be imagined that on such a mission the old Jenny Lind fever raged with increased intensity. She was again entertained at the Palace and her reception was as regal as before. She arrived at the station on Saturday, January 20th, where she was met by the Mayor (Mr Samuel Bignold), by whom, she was escorted, amid tremendous cheering, to the bishop's palace. Her carriage was pursued along its course by a throng of boys, who also shared in the general enthusiasm aroused. Two, more venturesome than the rest, followed into the palace grounds anxious to get a sight of the great singer, but to their complete dismay they heard the palace gates close after them. The boys then resolved to continue their course to the Palace porch and see the lady alight. There they were discovered by the bishop himself, who drew them (trembling for the consequences) from their hiding place, and presented them to Jenny Lind, who

smiled at their boyish ardour. One of these boys tells me this tale, and he - Mr Bryon Foreman - is now Bishop Pelham's apparitor, whose ancient and honourable office is, I believe, to keep order in the diocese and in the Cathedral precincts in particular. On Sunday she attended the Cathedral, both in the morning and afternoon, the building being crowded to suffocation, hundreds having to go away, not being able to find even standing room. On the Monday the merchants of Norwich generously marked their appreciation of the occasion by the presentation of various articles of their own manufacture. From Mr Sultzer, a brilliant and superb violet satin dress, made up for the occasion, which she wore at the Tuesday morning's concert; Mr Bolingbroke, two dresses of rich watered poplin, one for the evening the other for morning wear; Messrs Clabburn, a morning dress of a new material, richly embroidered; Messrs Willett, a dress of new material in vert d'Isly, which, (by permission) they named Lindiana Crape, Mr George Middleton, a handsome figured dress; and Mr Blakey, a beautiful cashmere fillover shawl dress with gold cord girdle, a rich Norwich long shawl, and a printed Lama scarf shawl of the then fashionable green colour.

During her visit she went over the factory of Mr Sultzer where she was introduced to the weaver who had made her satin dress, and with whom, after wishing him prosperity, she shook hands very heartily.

The programmes of the concerts (January 22nd and 23rd) were miscellaneous, Mr (after Sir Julius) Benedict gave his services gratuitously, and with the Lind were associated Miss Dolby, Signor Marras, Signor Belletti, Signor Piatti, and Master (now Dr)

Bunnett, who sang with the great songstress and Miss Dolby the trio *Lift Thine eyes* from the *Elijah*, which work was written expressly for Jenny Lind by Mendelssohn. The financial result was thus; receipts £1859/11s; expenses, £606/7s; leaving a net profit of £1253/4s, which was invested at Jenny Lind's request towards the foundation of a children's hospital, and which became subsequently a living reality as the Jenny Lind Infirmary for Sick Children.

Jenny Lind again visited Norwich in 1856 and, in conjunction with her husband, assisted at two concerts. The proceeds of these concerts were handed over to the Jenny Lind Infirmary

On this occasion Mr and Mde Goldschmidt took the opportunity to visit her hospital. Her husband went first, for the weather was very inclement, and Madame dared not venture out until the concerts were over, and she followed two days later, and each on leaving gave a cheque for £50.

Jenny Lind paid her last visit to Norwich in 1862. Two concerts were given. One comprised of Haydn's oratorio of the Creation, and in addition to the great songstress, Sims Reeves, was to take part in the performance. This gentleman duly arrived in the city; but did not put in an appearance at the concert, being, too "indisposed to sing". Sims Reeves had known Norwich in the very early days of his career, and indeed got his first start in life from some money collected at a performance given for his benefit at the Norwich Theatre, which enabled him to go to Italy to study. Hitherto he had had to be content to sing in various places in the city gaining his livelihood from the "cap" that was afterwards made. He never liked these early remembrances and always

avoided Norwich when he reasonably could. He, it is supposed, was not too eager to meet his former friends and patrons, who would naturally dilate upon the old days and his early professional assays.

During her stay of four days with Mrs Barwell Jenny Lind would remain in bed of a morning, but the whole while prior to rising would be spent in singing and chiefly in practising the shake in which she had secured so unique a reputation. It was indescribably delicious and led to her name of the *Swedish Nightingale*. It may be interesting to know that her organ was of such a delicate character that when in the house she would beg Mrs Barwell not to knit, for the infinitesimal particles of wool that escaped in the process affected her voice most distressingly. Before leaving the city both Mde and Mr Goldschmidt sent a cheque to the Jenny Lind Infirmary".

The funeral of Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt took place at Gt. Malvern. A choral service at the Priory church (organist Mr W Haynes) preceded the interment at Malvern cemetery. Among the many floral tributes was one in the shape of a lyre from the Jenny Lind Infirmary. A Jenny Lind hospital for sick children survived in the city until 1975. It was originally in Pottergate and then moved to the corner of Colman Road and Unthank Road Part of the site is now occupied by Priscilla Bacon Lodge.

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A Short Message From Your New Events Secretary

Most of you will know by now that I have taken over from the august Gordon Barker as your new events secretary and it remains to be seen whether I come to regret this; he's an exceptionally hard act to follow!

Plans are already in hand for next year's events, but I would appreciate your own suggestions or advice for anything you would especially like to see on the programme. Do please contact me!

The subject of attendance numbers crops up from time to time at meetings of your committee. Although we have a large number of members in the Association it's usually a small core of regulars that make it to events. It's very hard to determine exactly why this is so. We know many of you are busy on Saturdays with family commitments or because you're playing for a wedding or whatever. Some would love to attend but are getting perhaps a little too old or infirm to get out quite so much.

I personally don't think numbers are too important. If a particular event is enjoyed by those who attend, however few in number, that's what counts. What I really want to know is whether we are getting the right mix of events. I've noticed in my time with the association that talks and visits by guest speakers are generally much better attended than the more traditional 'organ crawl' type of event. Significant or simply coincidence? Do you think weekday visits to organs rather than on a Saturday would be a good idea from time to time? They'd certainly be easier to organize - much less likelihood of last minute clashes with weddings and the like!

Please do let me know your thoughts and I'd love to hear from you if there's an event you'd like to lead or help with. I'm now on email (yes, miracles do happen!) so feel free to contact me that way if you prefer: martin@cottam.eclipse.co.uk



Book review

Dr Edward Bunnett: 80 years of making music in Norwich by Tom Roast published by Gateway Music Norwich. £6

Gillian Ward Russell's Lunchstop recital in St Andrew's Hall on 20th August turned out to be something of a book launch. The recital itself was fascinating as the programme was in the style of the Victorian City Organist Edward Bunnett and included three of Bunnett's own pieces. Reference was made intermittently to a newly published book about Bunnett which was on sale at the recital, a copy of which I purchased, and very glad I am that I did!

I cannot imagine anyone from this region who is remotely interested in organs, organ music and organists, not wanting to own this excellent account of Bunnett's life and work in Norwich, his close association with the Cathedral, St Peter Mancroft and St Andrew's Hall, where he is thought to have given over a thousand recitals.

What more can I say - get yours now! RW.

A Peep into the Archives 5

Tim Patient

From Issue No.15, January 1971:

As most members will know, the successor to the late Brian Runnett as Organist and Master of the Music at the Cathedral will be Mr Michael Nicholas, MA. FRCO, who is, at present, the Organist and Choirmaster of St Matthew's, Northampton, a Church which has a most enviable reputation for its music and what many consider to be one of the finest Walker organs ever built. To Mr David Pritchard, we offer our congratulations upon his appointment as Organist and Choirmaster at Christ Church, Eaton, and to Mr. David Salter who has taken up a similar position at Cringleford Parish Church*.

The Inaugural Recital on the recently restored Organ at Cringleford Parish Church was given on Friday 11th December 1970 by Graham Barber. As members will know, our late President, Brian Runnett was to have given this recital – an event to which he was eagerly looking forward before his tragic death.

The small Chamber Organ by William Gray, c.1800, which originally stood in Costessey Hall until the hall was demolished in the first World War and was then placed in St Walstan's Catholic Church, Costessey, has been replaced by a Miller electronic organ.

News that the Methodist Church, Magdalen Road, has now closed for public worship means that yet another organ has become redundant. It was hoped that a new home might be found for this fine Abbott & Smith organ, but the lowest tender received to rebuild it elsewhere was £5,800.

From Issue No.16, April 1971:

How quickly time passes – it seems but yesterday that it was the January issue that was being prepared – and here we must apologise to all those members who, because of the postal strike, did not receive their copies of *The Organists' Review* and the Newsletter until after the strike was over and the Post Office was again willing to take, for the sum of five new pence, these periodicals to you. Yes, postage charges have risen considerably: decimalisation has come and with Easter and Spring, we may look forward to the renewed activities of the Association.

The organ in All Saints' Scottow is of unusual interest having originally been built, possibly out of pipes and parts, including the ornate Renaissance case, by the one-time Squire, Sir Henry Durrant, who left his initials and the date 'S.H.D.B. May 4th 1859' inscribed upon one of the bellows-weights where it still remains. Sir Henry not only built the organ but also played it and the story goes that, one day, he caused a notice to be put up to the effect that 'Next Sunday Sir Henry Durrant will use the big pedal stop' – which evidently brought the whole village population to listen. This 'pedal stop' was, in reality, a Bourdon of enormous scale with the bottom C pipe standing outside the case and painted white to look like stone and with an embattled cornice on top, imitating the castellated columns of the nave.

It is understood that the vintage Walker organ, rebuilt by H. F. Betts in 1934, is to undergo extensive rebuilding. The contract has been awarded to Messrs. Nicholson's, who, as it now well-known, were responsible for the rebuilding of the organ in St Edmundsbury Cathedral. This surely must be one of the ugliest organs in

the county. Dare one hope that it may be made more attractive to the eye as well as to the ear.

The fate of the Chapel in the Field Congregational Church organ is now well-known and it has been installed in the small parish Church at Somerleyton, near Lowestoft. A new west gallery has been provided and the instrument, which the Church was able to secure from the City Council for £100 has been rebuilt on this as it was in the chapel except for the front, which has lost the unique 'wheel' formation and the large Open Diapason on the Great has been omitted.

Swannington Parish Church contains one of the Organ Oddities of East Anglia – a two-manual organ by Norman Bros. and Beard, with but one stop on each manual. The Great contained a Claribel Flute and the Swell a Gamba TC. There was no separate pedal stop and a straight and concave pedal board acted as pull-downs.

**David Pritchard is now Precentor at Ely Cathedral. Newer members may not know that these extracts from The Newsletter, which preceded The Journal, were written by Ralph Bootman.Ed.*

A surprise visit to another gem

John Plunkett

As the last of the crowd dispersed from the grand opening of the restored Limehouse organ, I was asked if Ginny and I and Martin Cottam, our guest, would like to hear the new instrument in St. Paul's Church Deptford, a recent creation by William Drake. We didn't need asking! "Follow us" was the command, and a swift chase ensued, via the Blackwall tunnel under the river, and in a matter of minutes we took a left turn up a footpath between a Chinese restaurant and the undertakers off the High Street. There it stood, glowing white in the afternoon sun, the 1730 creation of Thomas Archer, architect also of St. John's Smith Square. An outstanding building yet hidden in its own oasis and like St. Anne's over the river, an offspring of the "Fifty New Churches Act" of 1711.

Welcomed by the caretaker, we entered on the south side into the crypt from where we were led to a small staircase. At the top we emerged into the body of the church and a new and glorious vista. A fully restored classical interior, dark yet warm finely crafted joinery, wedding cake plasterwork, sparkling brass chandeliers, everything complementing the whole, and there on the gallery a new organ, its mostly original case in sharply carved Cuban mahogany with gilded pipes, all lit by reflected sunlight. It could easily have been 1745, the year from which the case and its original contents dated, procured by Thomas Griffin from the Bridge, Byfield and Jordan "school".

By 1935, following the usual mischief of fashion, the original contents had disappeared leaving a 27 stop two manual

and pedal with detached console in the chancel, furnished with luminous rocking tablets and a bare swell box in the adjacent gallery arch. By the 1980s this hotchpotch box of whistles was breathing its last. Eventually, schemes were considered for a replacement, but this was overshadowed by a big lottery fund grant for refurbishment of the building itself, and the major project was begun. During this, a fire in the chancel effectively destroyed the organ, bathing it in soot, grease and dirt. Insurance covered half the cost of a new replacement, the rest being raised by the enthusiastic Father Peter and his congregation, with the demand that it be ready for re-dedication of the building itself.

As it happened, William Drake, (at the mercy of the politics of three other schemes) had time to take the job on, and rightly in effect on his own terms, working with advisers who had already trusted his wisdom. They were not disappointed and neither were we.

Bill had arranged a fine player for the small company of his staff and friends in the person of John Wellingham, who arrived with a large quantity of sheet music stuffed into a shopping bag, and quietly appeared at the console. We sat variously about the church, trying different spots for listening to this aural treat, hardly daring to speak.

Although essentially an English organ, inspired in part by the "Griffin" in St. Helen's Bishopsgate, it performed 18th century French repertoire most convincingly. It was not long before Martin had ascended to the organ loft and was clearly invited to suggest registrations and music he would like to hear. We liked them also. This three manual and pedal multum in parvo instrument has that

"anything goes with anything else" feel about it. And it sings freely and effortlessly. (The metal flue work is the last major opus of Derek Jones.) The colours available in the spacious acoustic are wonderful, enhanced to some degree by the temperament chosen, "Hamburg" used for the restored Schnitger in St. Jakobi there.

After an hour or so of sheer delight, our thanks were offered to our generous host and his staff for the icing on the day's cake, and feeling replete we made our way home talking of our good fortune.

The specification is as follows:-

Great GG/AA/C-g3, 58 notes

Open Stopt Principal Twelfth Fifteenth Tierce Mixture II-III Cornet V from mid. c to d3 Trumpet Clarion

Swell C-g3

Open Stopt Principal Fifteenth Cornet II Hautboy

Choir GG/AA/C-g3, 58 notes

Open (from Gt.) Stopt (from Gt.) Principal (bass from Gt.) Flute 8 Vox Humane 8

Pedal C-e1, 29notes

Stopt 16 Principal 8 Bassoon 16 Trumpet 8

Couplers

Sw.- Gt. Gt.- Ped. Sw.-Ped.

For further details go to www.williamdrake.co.uk

For a C.D. (No. PLE 2002) of John Wellingham playing this organ, contact Plenum records at The Positif Press, 130 Southfield Road, Oxford OX4 1PA.

The 21st London Organ Day, 10th March, 2007

Martin J Cottam

This year a most illuminating and entertaining day was played out under sunny skies at St Botolph's, Aldgate in the City of London where the galleried interior houses a west end organ newly restored by Goetze and Gwynne. Dominic Gwynne himself opened proceedings with a fascinating talk about the restoration project, delivered in his distinctively gentle and lugubrious tones. Originally built in 1704 by Renatus Harris, the instrument suffered the usual history of alterations and accretions, firstly in 1744 by John Byfield (a relative of Harris) when the organ was reinstalled in the newly rebuilt church, and then, more drastically at the hands of Hill (1867), Bishop and Son (1898), and Mander (1966). For all that, much of the original organ survived notably the windchests (very rare), and considerable amounts of pipework including, most remarkably, two of the reed stops. It was decided to restore the organ as near to its 1744 condition as possible, with the concession of a detachable modern pedalboard.

Gwynne was quite candid in saying that the work could not be considered as top drawer Harris. In all probability he was engaged on a more important project at the time the St. Botolph's organ was commissioned and accordingly much of the work would have been farmed out to local (albeit skillful) craftsmen. That said, and 300 years on, Gwynne asserted this is now the closest we shall ever get to knowing what a Renatus Harris organ actually sounded like. It stands today as

arguably the oldest church organ in the U.K.

Further sessions included "What to do with the Diva in your choir" (no, not how to get rid of her but a demonstration recital by soprano Dorothy Maddison and her accompanist, Larry Taylor of the sort of music she could usefully be called upon to sing!) and a talk by David Knight on "The contemporaries of J S Bach". But alongside the organ itself, the undoubted star of the day was Oslo born Professor Jon Laukvic. Articulate, witty, and intelligent he proved a most engaging and enlightening speaker and performer. His first session on "expression in the organ music of J.S.Bach" proffered all manner of intriguing and helpful nuggets of knowledge built round an absorbing analysis of the "great" E flat prelude and fugue. In answer to one question as to whether one should employ "rubato" when playing Bach, Laukvik insisted that virtually all music needed to be shaped to some degree or other by such means. He suggested we had much to learn, for example, from listening to recordings of the great pianists of the early years of the 20th century where we might be quite surprised by the degree of flexibility and freedom of tempo they habitually employed (as, indeed, Cesar Franck is known to have done). Laukvik felt it was probably the cataclysm of the second world war that seemed to result in the more austere and metronomic performances most of us are all too familiar with today. Discuss!

After lunch, Laukvic guided three brave students through a fascinating organ masterclass --so much insight into giving shape and expression to musical line by use of careful attention to articulation as well as demonstrating how to give a touch

of telling variety in emphasis and ornamentation during repeated passages. His advice was admirably displayed in practice during his closing recital which was in itself a masterclass in how to make the organ come alive and the music dance off the page. Rarely have I heard playing of such consistent delight and subtlety of nuance, ably assisted, of course, by the beautifully responsive mechanical action of the restored organ. A marvellous and fitting end to a very fine day.

So we are appreciated after all!!

Brent Palmer

The following is from a letter printed in the Eaton Parish Magazine in May by the retiring Vicar, Rev Alan Beardsmore and handed to me by Barbara Knowles.

"I am deeply indebted to so many people. But of all those people, I want to say the hugest "Thank you" to Neil Ricketts at St Andrew's. I have often said the organist can have a greater impact on worship than even the officiating minister. It has just been one of the privileges of my ministry to have been blessed with superb organists (and I include both those of Christ Church during my time here.) Neil beats them all. There have been times here when, for one reason or another, I have felt that I am running on empty. So many times, Neil has lifted me and others in the congregation and there has been a tangible rise in spiritual energy, a "frisson" of worshipful response. For this and so much more from so many, Maggie and I owe so much."
What a nice tribute.

That was the week that was

John Robbins

On the 14th. July, I visited the Cathedral and had great pleasure in hearing young Mr Houssart giving a brilliant display of the organ in all its many colours. On the following Monday, I was at St Andrew's Hall and heard Julian Thomas giving one of his parting recitals. It was superb and I join with many others in wishing him all happiness and success as he exercises his talents in 'new fields'. On Friday 20th July it was the Swingle Singers doing 'Battle of the Fugues' and Dominic de Cogan on the organ. St John's Cathedral was packed for the occasion and a very enthusiastic audience made the Singers make a twofold encore; Need I say more?!

On Sunday 21st I went to Salle 'Cathedral' and heard the inaugural concert of *Iceni* recently founded and directed by James Lilwall with soprano, Hannah Francis and Roger Rayner at the piano. There were over two hundred people in the audience who enjoyed an excellent programme presented by a competent and enthusiastic choir.

The week ended with a recital at St. Andrew's Hall by our President Timothy Patient which gave an appropriate finishing touch to an unforgettable 'week'.

David Briggs at Norwich Cathedral

Brent Palmer

Any who did not attend David Briggs' recital at Norwich Cathedral in June missed an absolute treat! It was a wonderful opportunity to hear one of the finest organists around today doing what he so obviously does best which is to improvise a complete score to a silent film.

Reading the programme notes, one could study his impressive CV. He studied organ with Jean Langlais in Paris, his international career has taken him to more than 20 countries and he has built a reputation as an innovative organist with a particular reputation for his organ transcriptions and his improvisational skills. He has transcribed some of the improvisations of Pierre Cochereau. His improvisations have won him prizes at the competitions in Paisley and St. Albans where he was the first British winner of the Tournemire prize. He was organ scholar at Kings College, Cambridge and organist at Truro, Hereford and Gloucester where he is Organist Emeritus. His time at Gloucester included overseeing the complete rebuild of the organ by Messrs Nicholson. He is a prolific composer and as well as transcribing the Cochereau improvisations he also transcribed Tchaikovsky's Fourth and Bruckner's Seventh Symphonies and Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* ballet. He has recorded 24 solo CDs and now lives in New York.

He started the programme with that old warhorse Bach's *Toccatina and Fugue in D minor*. But it was no routine performance. Instead of just playing the music straight, he put in some

embellishments and improvised his own cadenza towards the end of the fugue. It was the sort of cadenza that one could have imagined Liszt would have played as it was very much in that vein.

Of course, we were not only able to hear but also to see him playing as there was a camera up in the organ loft sending pictures down to the big screen in the nave below. Then came the main item in the programme, his improvisation of a score for the 1925 silent film version of the *Phantom of the Opera*. He explained beforehand that it was entirely improvised and that he did not use any music and one could see from the camera in the organ loft that this was the case. He did, however, state that he would be quoting from various composers including, naturally, Andrew Lloyd Webber and this he did. What was most impressive was the huge range of tonal colours that he used, soft when they needed to be soft and loud when they needed to be loud.

The film itself was quite impressive too. It stars Lon Chaney and is justly famous for his intentionally horrific, self-applied makeup which was kept a studio secret until the film's premiere. The acting style is understandably now very dated and sometimes over the top but it was fascinating to see how the cameramen could achieve some quite extraordinary camera angles with the very primitive equipment they had at the time. With the film being in black and white, one missed the extra dimension that colour brings, but the whole evening was a most enjoyable experience and David Dunnnett is to be congratulated for inviting David Briggs to come to Norwich. It also turned out that he and David had had the same piano teacher when they were children in Birmingham. Small world, isn't it!!

Organ News

Geoff Sankey

W & A Boggis have been working at St Mary Magdalene Church in Warboys, Cambridgeshire, (the last place in England to have burned a witch at the stake), where they moved the organ to the west end of the church, cleaned and overhauled it and made a new side case for the new location. The instrument is a two manual Harrison and the inside of the church is being substantially re-ordered. They have also carried out minor works in several churches: Laxfield and Bungay Emmanuel both in Suffolk, Upper Sheringham, Ringland and Aylmerton where they restored the organ casework.

William Johnson & Co have been working in Cambridge.

Richard Bower and Company have completed the addition of pistons and tremulants to the instrument they built at St Thomas Heigham. At St Helen's Bishopgate, having finished the internal restoration of this Mark Noble instrument, they have now completed the restoration of the casework, which involved repairing missing and broken off pieces in the carved pipe shades, completing the "crotchetting" around the top of the case, rewaxing the woodwork, and cleaning the original gold leaf of the facade.

The organ by W C Mack at All Saints Catfield, having been restored by Richard's company, had its first recital (by Patrick Hawes) on August 10th. The rededication will be on October 14th, followed by an official re-opening recital by Richard Bower at 18.30.

St Mary's Tansor Northamptonshire was restored by Bower and Company in 2004 but suffered from a leaking roof this

Spring; it has again been dismantled, the damaged part of the great soundboard repalleted, and all reset as it should be.

St Nicholas Dereham, restored and re-constructed by Bower and Company in 1996, has also been afflicted by a leaking roof which occurred during its re-leading. The great soundboard has been removed and is in the process of being repalleted. Richard tells me that the re-instatement is going to take a lot of work, not least because the wooden pipes (including some by Father Smith) have fallen apart as a result of the water damage. This work is ongoing and will be completed in time for the celebrity recital to be given by Malcolm Archer on September 22nd at 19.30.

St Nicholas Dereham

22nd September 7.30 pm

Malcolm Archer

Midday Music at Princes Street URC

First Thursday of the month

from 12.45 until 1.45

*come when you can - leave when you
must*

HANDEL'S 12 ORGAN
CONCERTOS are being played by Peter
Stevenson at these monthly recitals.

Baroque and Bizarre in Northamptonshire

Geoff Sankey

I have long misunderstood the Oundle Festival as being a platform for precocious prodigies, but this year since I was working in the area I thought I would test my preconceptions. In reality it is a true festival of music making, both in Oundle, in some beautiful nearby country churches, and in the not too distant Peterborough cathedral. This area is blessed with a number of superb instruments, and the Festival attracts top international performers so that these organs can be heard at their best.

The first recital I attended was by James Parsons, the driving force behind the creation of the festival in 1985, and still one of its key driving forces. He was playing the instrument that Richard Bower built in the Church of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, in the centre of Oundle. The recital gave prominence to works by Buxtehude, marking the tercentenary of the composer's death. The organ is situated on a gallery on the west side of this octagonal church, so had there not been a screen to show the organist's hands and feet we would have been detached from the player. Both player and instrument contributed to a superb evening, making one proud to think that the organ had been built in Norfolk.

The second recital I attended was given by Tom Bell in Fotheringhay, which is the proud owner of a baroque style organ built by Vincent Woodstock in 2000. Again Buxtehude featured prominently, both in his own works and in the *Homage à Diderik Buxtehude* by Petr Eben. This takes some of the well known

themes from Buxtehude's works and turns them through a number of gripping contortions, all played by Tom Bell with considerable panache. This instrument is in the nave of the church, so no screens were necessary to keep in contact with the player.

And the bizarre? There was an interval whilst Vincent Woodstock removed the weights from the bellows of this instrument which normally excels itself in the clarity of its voicing. The recitalist enthusiastically explained that the piece he was about to play, *Harmonies* by György Ligeti, should be compared to the sound of bells with all their overtones and harmonics. He also likened it to the colours breaking out from a prism. What followed was a long wash of sound, completely legato - to the extent that there was no perceivable beat. With a lack of adequate pressure, the pipes gave out a strange mix of sighs, groans and wheezes. It was an interesting experience, but probably too long. Its completion was greeted by more "phews" than "bravos". There was much relief when Vincent Woodstock came back to restore the instrument to its designed condition.

Oundle is not far from Norfolk, and the quality of what is on offer would be well worth an expedition even if not working in the area. The precocious prodigies obviously have a wonderful opportunity to develop during the festival, but there is much on offer for everyone else.

PULL OUT

Diamond Jubilee Celebrations 2007

ORGAN DAY September 8th 2007

Several members have contacted me to say that as they do not have email they have been unable to access the information about the organ day which appears on the Association web site. We have, therefore, enclosed with this issue of the Journal a copy of the two 'record sheets' for the Organ Day which appear on the website, which I hope are self explanatory.

September 8th is, of course, the day of the annual Norfolk Historic Churches Sponsored cycle ride, and we chose this particular day as Organ Day because it is the one day in the year when the greatest number of Norfolk Churches can guarantee to be open and manned.

Our hope is that every member of the Association who has an instrument at which they normally preside will be able to spend some time during the day playing it to serenade the hordes of visitors that we confidently expect. There are also many churches without a regular organist, and if you know of one and can arrange to play there to help out, that would be a splendid help in achieving our target.

As for the two record sheets: the church 'pro forma' can either be kept by the organists, or – if they are prepared and able to help – left with the people actually manning the church for the cyclists. The participants' 'pro forma' is for those actually taking part to take with them and have signed at each church where they hear the organ. At the conclusion of the proceedings I would be delighted to receive completed forms at the address on the bottom of each form.

Finally, we wondered if it might be possible to discover a) the longest serving organist in the Diocese and b) the youngest regular player. If you think you might qualify, or would like to nominate someone you know, then I would be delighted to hear from you.

David Watson (Association publicity officer)

email at: hdwatson@btinternet.com

tel 01508 550284

Members are invited to play the Fr. Willis Organ at Princes Street URC at an arranged time for a one hour or half-hour session on the celebratory Organ Day. Please 'phone your choice of time and duration to Peter Stevenson 01263. 721838 before 6th September.

Norfolk Organists' Association

(affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists)

DIAMOND JUBILEE ORGAN DAY

September 8th 2007

Record sheet of churches visited

As the final event in our Diamond Jubilee celebrations, we have set ourselves the target of attempting to have every organ in the county playing at some time during the day. September 8th is also the day of the annual Norfolk Historic Churches Bicycle ride, and our hope is that as many riders as possible will take one of these record sheets and fill it in each time they hear an organ played in one of the churches they visit. Association members who wish to take part but are unable to cycle are most welcome to join in but are asked to confirm means of transport as follows :

I travelled by bike/ by car (delete as appropriate)

Name..... Address Tel

Time of visit	Name of Church	Countersignature

A prize is offered for the greatest number of 'hits'. If you wish to be considered for the prize please return this form by September 16th to: **NOA, 2 Brecon Road, Brooke, Norwich NR15 1HS**

Norfolk Organists' Association

(affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists)

DIAMOND JUBILEE ORGAN DAY

September 8th 2007

Church Record Sheet

As the final event in our Diamond Jubilee celebrations, we have set ourselves the target of attempting to have every organ in the county playing at some time during the day. September 8th is also the day of the annual Norfolk Historic Churches Bicycle ride, and our hope is that as many churches as possible will be able to mobilize one or more organists to play during the day, and that the cyclists and other visitors will sign the form below when they hear the organ in your church being played.

Name of church **Contact name & address**

Time of visit	Name of Cyclist(s)/Visitor	Countersignature

A prize is offered for the church with the greatest number of ‘hits’. If you wish your church to be considered for the prize please return this form by September 16th to:
NOA, 2 Brecon Road, Brooke, Norwich NR15 1HS

2: NOA Organ Day: Church pro-forma

OCTOBER in OXNEAD or MEMBERS MARDLE at MILL

Information and timetable for our social.

Friday 5th October

The Oxnead Mill concert room needs to be prepared, so volunteers will be welcome from 10 am to lay the carpets, wash and dry glasses, get the tables in position and the chairs set out, hoover etc. WHEN the work is done, then the volunteers will be welcome to play the Compton theatre organ . You may need to bring a packed lunch if you want to stay.

Saturday 6th October

4.30–5.00 pm. Arrive at the mill – NR10 5HP (for Sat. Navs.), near Buxton/Brampton/Aylsham for maps. Those who've not visited Oxnead before, go down the long drive from the road, beyond the mill and mill house and park on the grass in front of you. A cup of tea will be available. Time to talk.

5-ish pm. Tea. Please will all the members attending bring a plate of savoury finger food e.g. vol-au-vents, quiches, curried eggs, sausage rolls, sausages/cheese/grapes/pineapple etc on sticks, chicken legs, small sandwiches (as opposed to doorsteps, men) labelled, and anything else you think nobody will bring. Sweets will



be provided on condition that each and everyone who thinks they are coming lets me know by Saturday 29th September - phone - **01603 737768**. This is not because I'm nosey, it is to make sure I order enough delicious desserts for everyone to indulge in. Some of you wouldn't want to miss out on chocolate gateau or pavlova, would you!!

Wine and fruit juices will be available, with the first glass free. Donations will be gratefully received for subsequent glasses.

6 - ish pm. After the food, we hope that there will be entertainment provided by members. The aim is for this to be light-hearted and is your opportunity to perform a party piece. This does not necessarily need to be on the organ – perhaps you would like to perform on another instrument. Would you like to recite a monologue? Are there any magicians among our members? If you play the recorder, perhaps you know of like-minded members who would like to perform as a group – descant, treble and tenor recorders can be provided. Obviously performing will not be a condition of attending the event but if you would like to take part, please will you let me know what your act will be by Monday 1st October. Please don't be shy about this! Afterwards, you're welcome to stay as long as you like. Ginny Plunkett.