

# The Journal

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*Last date for copy for the next Journal is Saturday 22nd August 2009*  
*Why not send your contribution by email*  
*watron@tiscali.co.uk*

*The editor writes.....*

My last editorial was about the questionable worth of critiques over the centuries and in the present day. I try not to repeat myself but cannot let the EDP's arts correspondent (cum theatre critic cum music critic) off with what must be one of the most fatuous observations of all time. In the excellent concert in St Peter Mancroft on 5<sup>th</sup> May by the outstandingly talented Florilegium and renowned soprano Lorna Anderson there was one item, *Six arrangements of Scottish Airs* by Francesco Barsanti, which was one of several items on the programme which featured instrumentalists alone. Despite this, the inventive reviewer pronounced that Ms Anderson was the ideal interpreter of these pieces.

I am reminded of a hilarious film in which Peter Sellers, a librarian, also acts as theatre critic and is designated for the review of a performance in the local theatre. Eager to be away for an assignation with someone else's wife he makes a quick departure and sends in his plausible sounding review which appears in the next day's paper. Over breakfast his wife observes that he omitted to mention that the theatre burned down during the interval. Oops!

Having attended very many concerts and knowing several reviewers by sight, I have on several occasions noticed that they were significant by their absence after the interval. However, an ability to write plausibly from programme notes can often cover up the fact that for half of the performance which they purport to be reviewing, they are not actually there! Given that the Scottish Airs referred to were in the first half of the

programme one can only speculate as to how he could be so effusive about something which didn't happen at all.

It is such commentators who lead the masses to believe what is simply not true. Lovely and talented though she is, Katherine Jenkins is not, despite being hailed as such, an opera singer. She doesn't sing in operas which is what opera singers do! Katherine Jenkins sings music from operas but if this makes her an opera singer then I am a snooker player, a long-distance cyclist (having cycled some quite long distances in my time), a concert pianist (having played the piano in several concerts), a hill climber (not difficult in Yorkshire) and countless other things which could easily sound as my claim to fame. I could even claim that a former acquaintance of mine was a leading light in the theatre - quite a nice way of describing an usherette don't you think?

A university city like Norwich inevitably has amongst its citizens people who are extremely well informed about a whole range of things, the arts in particular, and one would imagine that any newspaper serving this area would have as its arts correspondents people who are at least equally informed, if not more so than the readership - in short, know what they are talking about. Not so, I'm afraid.

For those of you who, last week, were watching the letterbox with eager anticipation followed by acute disappointment I must confess that the reason this Journal was late was due to the Bank Holiday and a few hiccoughs with my computer.

## *Our new President writes.....*

I am delighted and honoured to have become the most recent President of the Norfolk Organists' Association. My involvement dates back to 1975 when I came to Norwich to embark on a degree course in music at UEA, and soon after joined the Norfolk Guild of Organists. I attended an AGM, and had thought that I might be willing to join the committee. In my youthful naivety I hadn't realised the implications of actually volunteering for anything at an AGM and left the meeting as Secretary!

At that time the Secretary performed all the secretarial tasks and in addition to taking minutes and writing letters I organised a programme of monthly events and dealt with all membership matters. Very soon I realised the extent of the workload that I had taken on and devised a scheme to split the secretariat into three distinct roles and people – the format we still have today.

I was no stranger to Norwich. My father was an old boy of Norwich School, as an exact contemporary and friend of Bernard Burrell, who went on to be Director of Music at the school and Assistant Organist at the Cathedral. My paternal grandparents lived in Norwich all their lives and I still have many cousins scattered throughout Norfolk. The family can be traced back several centuries in Norwich and north Norfolk.

My first appointment as a church organist was at the age of 13, when as a grade 5 pianist somebody suggested me for a church that had been without an organist for some time. A year later I was appointed organist and choirmaster at our local church and my first head chorister was just a year younger than me.

Once resident in Norwich, I became organist at Horsham St Faith Church, where we had a full choir of men and boys. I had lessons on the cathedral organ, and as part of my degree studies gave assessed performance recitals there. I practised in various Norwich churches, including Princes Street URC.

Having graduated in 1978, I remained in Norfolk for a teacher training year at Keswick Hall College and my first teaching post was at Horsford Middle School – coincidentally the school where Tim Patient teaches now.

In 1986 I moved to my present home near Southwold and also to a flat at a London prep school, where I taught for 17 years. My active participation in the Guild and then the Association was inevitably somewhat limited during that period.

Having taught music for 24 years, I made a decision in 2003 to try to have more variety to life and I now have a portfolio career where one aim is never to be in the same place doing the same thing in two consecutive weeks. I am a reporting inspector, leading school inspections around the country and I work in various capacities with schools in Norfolk and Suffolk, including training school governors. Musical pursuits include being assistant organist at Southwold Parish Church and directing the Blythburgh Singers, a chamber choir who sing a full choral evensong on the first Sunday of each month in Blythburgh Parish Church and tour abroad occasionally, most recently to Vienna. I also work for the Arts Council to validate Artsmark awards for schools, as a mentor for music teachers on Open University courses and as an assessor for applications for lottery funding for music education

projects. I write regularly for various publications, including work as a music and drama critic for the Eastern Daily Press.

Tim Patient served the association magnificently as your president from 2007 to 2009 and is a difficult act to follow. I look forward to meeting more of you at our various events during my time as your president.

*David Bunkell*

*.....and from the retiring President....*

At the Annual General Meeting held in March, the Presidency passed from me to David Bunkell, who had been President Elect for the past two years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Association members for the support and encouragement I was given during the two years of my presidency. I enjoyed being President very much and the two years seem to have passed by very quickly indeed. I am sure that the Association will prosper with David Bunkell as President.

Those members who were able to attend the AGM will know that the new President Elect is Harry Macey who will become President in two years' time. The Annual General Meeting also saw Gordon Pollard retire from the committee and we send our thanks to him for his time as a committee member. Finally, we are pleased that Alan Morris has become a full member of the committee. He was co-opted onto the committee last year following his time as President

## **BIOS and the RCM form new Partnership**

The National Pipe Organ Register (NPOR) now attracts over one thousand queries a day over and members of the Norfolk Organists' Association will know its usefulness with its lists of organ specifications and sound files of historic organs. This service is available for free over the internet. The NPOR was started in 1987 by BIOS (the British Institute of Organ Studies) and run out of Cambridge University by Mike Sayers. Like all large databases (Wikipedia, for example), the NPOR has some errors and omissions and BIOS has a team of skilled volunteers updating the records in response to corrections sent in by interested organists.

Following the retirement of Mike Sayers, BIOS has formed a partnership with the Royal College of Music and the NPOR is now run on the RCM's computers in London. BIOS and the RCM will be planning improvements to the NPOR, to expand its scope and to make it even easier to use. The new website address is [www.npor.org.uk](http://www.npor.org.uk). Update information should be sent to [manager@npor.bcu.ac.uk](mailto:manager@npor.bcu.ac.uk). BIOS membership details are available from [BIOS-membership@phmusic.co.uk](mailto:BIOS-membership@phmusic.co.uk).

*John Norman*



*E J Moeran*

## *Norfolk in his music*

### *Ronald Watson*

The two great wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century deprived us of many highly gifted musicians and poets. Thankfully many gifted musicians survived the wars and afterwards gave us much memorable music. However, there was one composer with strong East Anglian connections and who was influenced by our local landscape who, whilst not killed in the action, sustained a severe injury which would be at the root of his later depressive moods and dependence on alcohol which, in turn, diminished his musical output

He was E J Moeran, the son of an Irish clergyman and an East Anglian mother. He was born in Middlesex but soon found himself in Bacton where his father was Rector. Having taught himself to read music by studying hymn and psalm tunes in the Rectory, he attended Suffield Park school near Cromer where he learned the violin. After attending Uppingham School he moved on to the Royal College of Music when he was 19. With the outbreak of the First World War he enlisted in the 6<sup>th</sup> Battallion of the Norfolk Regiment and soon found himself on the Western Front. For a short time he was stationed back in Norfolk when he discovered the wealth of local folk music. But sadly he had to return to France where he suffered a severe head wound and as a result had a metal plate fitted into his skull.

After the war he returned to the Royal College where he studied with John Ireland and then to Stalham in 1921. He spent much time with local folk singers, furiously noting down the tunes as they were sung.

There followed a very productive period in which he wrote a wide range of music including songs, music for orchestra and for the piano.

In 1925 he moved to Kent where he lived with Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock). One of their several common interests was beer which meant that before long the pub was the centre of their life and for several years Moeran wrote no music at all.

Emerging from this inertia in the 1930s he wrote his 1<sup>st</sup> Symphony, attributing the inspiration for the music of the second movement to the sand dunes and marshes of east Norfolk. The symphony was well received which bolstered his confidence and which was closely followed by a violin concerto.

At this stage in his life he was spending some of his time in Southern Ireland and in 1945 married a 'cellist Peers Coetmore for whom, as a wedding present he wrote his 'cello concerto. For all his new found happiness he was still an alcoholic and was so drunk at a performance of the 'cello concerto at the Proms in 1946 that he was incapable of taking a bow, almost fell off the stage and was ignominiously led off the platform.

Later that year he returned to Norfolk and stayed at the New Inn at Rockland St Mary but from this time on he would not be able to find the inner resources to complete anything. In 1948 his wife placed him in care in Cheltenham.

He ended his days in Ireland, at one point going to Dublin where he was severely mugged and on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1950 during a violent storm Moeran fell off the pier at Kenmare and drowned in the river.

## *Well met*

*Ronald Watson*

One feature of my very happy life has been the frequency of beneficial coincidences.

On holiday in Budapest two years ago we went to the main Basilica there to hear a concert of Christmas music which turned out to be quite remarkable, even uncanny. Here, in the middle of Budapest, was a choir specialising in English choral music by virtue of the fact that its founder and director, Richard Solyom, was (is) half English and half Hungarian and lived as a young man in the Lake District, singing in the choir of Carlisle Cathedral as a lay clerk. The programme of Christmas pieces would not have sounded out of place in King's College Cambridge not only because all the well known English pieces were there, but because of the excellence of the singing and the acoustic of the building. Needless to say that at the end of the concert I sought a word with Richard Solyom and very pleased he was to talk to some English folk who knew the choral repertoire.

Not surprisingly, as fellow composers will understand, on my return home I sent some of my choral pieces to him. A further coincidence was that one of these pieces was a setting of words by Norman Nicholson, the Westmorland poet. When setting these words I knew nothing of the background of the poet but thanks to the happy coincidence that Nicholson is particularly well known in the Lake District, this particular piece caught Richard's eye. As he later told me, he gets lots of manuscripts sent him but the name Norman Nicholson caught his attention and subsequently singled my

piece out for consideration. It had its first performance last Christmas in the Basilica in Budapest and was repeated in a concert during Holy Week in Keswick which gave us a happy excuse to go to this beautiful part of England. The Keswick audience were particularly interested in the Nicholson connection and the choir's superb rendition of it meant that it went down very well.

All of this reinforced my belief that composers have to give music away. You'd be surprised what fruit it bears and in what unlikely places it pops up its head.

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*Ian Tracey in Beccles*

*John Robbins*

Hungate Church at Beccles was 'all seats taken' on 6th May when Ian Tracey, Organist at Liverpool Cathedral gave a recital on the recently installed digital organ. It is a Makin Westmorland Jubilee 11, supplied and installed by Cookes of Norwich.

Ian Tracey was at pains to extol the virtues of the instrument, commenting on the variety of stops and the three separate voicings available; English, Continental and Baroque. He played a varied programme which adequately illustrated the colours of the instrument and one has to say it was a most enjoyable and interesting experience.

From 'pp' to a 'hymn book rattling fortissimo', it was all good. It was not surprising that he elected to close his programme with the Widor *Toccata* which received long and enthusiastic applause and an encore!

## **Review**

Double disc DVD and CD: James Lancelot, Durham Cathedral, Elgar Organ Sonata Opus 28.

*Ronald Watson*

Do reviews help sales? Well one certainly prompted me to buy probably the finest DVD currently available. The review overflowed with superlatives and quite rightly so. The DVD which includes a performance of Elgar's Organ Sonata Op. 28 will thrill you no matter what your interest in the organ or its music.

For players there is a riveting section in which James Lancelot explores the difficulties of performing the piece at the console of Durham's stunning Harrison organ and demonstrates how the piece, and its demands, are managed. Then there is the actual performance (which also features on the CD), which is a masterclass in itself, described, justifiably, as one of the finest performances ever.

For those more interested in the organ as a piece of engineering, Mark Venning invites the viewer into Harrison's workshops and explains how an organ works, how it is voiced, and talks about the particular instrument in Durham Cathedral.

In another track, discussions about the Sonata itself give a peculiar insight of the work, considered generally to be Elgar's Symphony No. 0, for a symphony it really is.

For Elgar enthusiasts there is a visit to the composer's birthplace and a rare look at archive material as well as an exploration of the life and other interests of Elgar the man.

The DVD, described as an innovative new concept, is produced by

Durham University in collaboration with the Elgar Birthplace Museum.

If you know me at all well you will know that Durham Cathedral and its organ hold a very special place in my heart as it was there that I was first smitten and resolved to learn to play the organ, subsequently having lessons on this instrument with the then organist Conrad Eden. Nonetheless, whilst I may be accused of being biased with regard to this DVD there is plenty of evidence in other publications that I am not alone in my assertion that this is a 'must have' for any organ enthusiast.

## **WILLIAM BOGGIS**

**1907 - 2009**

While the last issue of this Journal was in preparation, the news was received of the death of 'Bill' Boggis, surely the doyen of British organ builders, at the wonderful age of 102. Bill was resident in a sheltered home near Bury St Edmunds and it was here that he passed away peacefully on February 15th. His funeral took place at St Remigius' church, Roydon where he had built the organ in 1952.

I know that he was proud of the work carried on by his one-time apprentice which still carries the nameplate 'W & A Boggis Diss' and that the firm he founded was able to produce new instruments which are now held in high esteem. I doubt if we shall see his like again. Bill Boggis – Vale.

RF Bootman

*A fuller appreciation of Bill Boggis by Ralph Bootman appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of The Journal to mark Bill's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.*



## *A Peep into the Archives 12*

*Submitted by Tim Patient*

*From Issue No.31, January 1975:*

The Annual General Meeting was held at Centre 71 on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January and attracted 23 members – almost a quarter of the Guild's membership. The meeting was chaired by our President, Michael Nicholas, who guided us purposefully through the agenda.

The business over, some three dozen members and their guests made their way to the Hotel Norwich for the last meeting of the Guild for 1974 – the Dinner – and it turned out to be a very happy gathering although fewer attended than in previous years.

The Loyal Toast was proposed by our Chairman, Donald Spinks, and our Guests, Lady Susi Jeans and the Lord Bishop of Norwich, together with Mrs Wood, our Vice-Chairman, Patrick King and our Secretary, Ivor Hosgood, occupied the 'Top Table'. Lady Jeans spoke to us of a previous visit she had made to Norfolk before the War when she came by road and told us how she had asked the driver whether or not she would be in time. He replied that he hoped so, but could not say but no matter, as the last time he had made the journey he was but two days late! However, she said that she was present on time on this evening and wondered what she should talk about – health problem or organists – health, because she had an idea that organists suffered from bad teeth – but decided after all to speak about organs. Lady Jeans described her early student days in Vienna where there was a tendency towards a form of Baroque arising, so she said, from a crazy German with ideas based on

Keppler. When, in 1934, she came to Britain, she found the beginnings of the Baroque tendency and, at a recital she gave in Kings College Chapel, Cambridge, she used a fair measure of Baroque registration. Afterwards, Boris Ord remarked to her that she could get away with it, but that he dare not!

Lady Jeans went on to say that she has strong feelings against the 'conversion' of British organs to Baroque and that she was nearly involved in a law suit in this fight. She strongly advocated the most careful preservation of British organs of historical importance and concluded her talk by stating that old English organs are equally good as anything Continental.

Lady Jeans was thanked for her talk in a most interesting and witty way by Patrick King and then the Lord Bishop of Norwich, the Rt. Revd. Maurice Wood, the Patron of the Guild, addressed the gathering.

He spoke of his great appreciation of the Guild's hospitality and said that he was very glad to have found himself at the correct dinner, recalling that, when he was at St. Paul's Portman Square, he was asked to an organists' dinner but instead found himself with the Institute of Plumbers but as they were both concerned with pipes he stayed with them! He recalled D-day in 1945 when, as a Padre, he insisted on an organ for the beach-head services and told of the consternation when the equipment was being checked for transport – 1 tank, 1 tank, etc. etc. until '1 organ' and the complete and utter surprise of those engaged upon this work...

## 200 YEARS AGO

*From the Norfolk Chronicle dated 10th  
June 1809*

DIED Saturday last, aged 49, John Christmas Beckwith, Mus Doc, organist of the Cathedral and St Peter's Mancroft. On Wednesday, the remains of this eminent musician and composer were interred in St Peter's church, under the organ, agreeably to his own desire. A funeral peal was afterwards rung on the mournful occasion.

Few men have commanded or deserved more universal admiration and respect than Dr Beckwith, and to the lovers of music in this city in particular his loss may be pronounced irreparable. He displayed very early in his life strong musical talents, and received his education under Dr Philip Hayes, then professor of music at Oxford: he was there distinguished no less for his uncommon and close application to the study of Music as a science, than for his extraordinary powers as an organist. Here indeed, for the bold and striking genius with which he conceived, the correct and brilliant manner in which he executed and the uncommonly rich, classical, original and truly scientific style in which he performed his inimitable Voluntaries, he may be pronounced to be without a rival.

His style of organ playing might be said to be peculiarly and thoroughly his own and the delight which his performances on that instrument gave will long be remembered by those who have heard them. His compositions were not numerous. The principal of them were a collection of Voluntaries and a set of Anthems' both written when he was young. His last work was a collection of Chants in which he had been long

engaged, and which appeared this year. The same strong and masterly hand appeared in his written compositions as in his voluntaries. His style was formed upon the best models and many of his writings would have done honour to Purcell or Croft. It must ever be a subject of regret to the lovers of sacred music, that Dr Beckwith did not enjoy more leisure from the duties of a laborious profession to devote to composition. We have just enough to know what his mind was capable of. Great as were Dr Beckwith's powers as musician, and much as his time was occupied in his profession, he never neglected or forgot his duties as a man, and a member of society; on the contrary he discharged them with an unusual degree of correctness and diligence.

Several of the most useful charities in this city were partly indebted to him for their origin and they never ceased to receive from him the most steady and active assistance. We might go on to enumerate his many and great qualities, but we feel it to be needless. Few men were better known than Dr Beckwith - few were more sincerely beloved and admired - few will be more deeply lamented.

*Reproduced with the kind permission of  
the EDP.*

*The above item submitted by Pauline  
Stratton*

## *Visit to Holland 2008 - day two*

*John Plunkett*

A full day of organ visits was on the printed schedule that Gerard had prepared for us. Three churches were listed, so we picked Nely and Gerard up at ten o'clock sharp, as instructed, and made our way to Spanbroek Hervormde Kerk.

Here we received an enthusiastic welcome, and were taken up to the west gallery by means of stairs leading to an upstairs office rented to an architects practice. They had direct access to the organ! Here we found a 1m+p (53notes, 25 pedals permanently coupled) instrument built by Johannes Strumphler of Amsterdam in 1799. The original specification was Boerdon 16, Prestant 8, Holpijp 8 Octaaf 4 Quint 3 Octaaf 2 Cornet IV Mixtuur IV-V. In 1855-1857 Lodewik Ypma rebuilt it, replacing the "naughty" Cornet with a more modest Viool de Gamba 8, much as we did in Victorian England. Following the more recent restoration the Cornet IV is back with a vengeance! The case in the North German style is original and beautifully refinished- tin metal pipework with gilded mouths and white woodwork with gilded pipe shades. This was yet another bright, singing and flexible instrument, which would do more than you would expect from the stop labels.

The next call was at Edam, famous for its cheese market, sadly now just a tourist entertainment. Our appointment at one o'clock almost meant forgoing lunch, but this we refused to do. The restaurant gave us speedy service and we arrived at the Grote Kerk in time to avoid embarrassment. Gerard took his "washing machine" from his pocket and rang the organist, Jan van Ginkel, who arrived

swiftly by bicycle. The magic words were spoken. "I will show you the organ, then lock you in for as long as you like. When you wish to leave, please phone me. Enjoy yourselves!"

The church is vast and uncluttered with a wonderful but manageable acoustic. The organ is high on the west end gallery, with the Rugwerk projecting dangerously into space. Built in 1663 by Barend Smit before his arrival in England as Father Smith, it has a Hoofdwerk of ten stops including Mixture IV, Sesqui' III, Cornet IV and Trumpet. The Rugwerk also has ten, including Scherp III, Sesqui' II and Trumpet. The pedals are permanently coupled, although when heard in the body of the church you would hardly know it. The Rugwerk has draw stops in its own case behind the player, so a sympathetic registrant is required unless you are a skilful contortionist. It affords endless opportunities to fall out with your wife! All in all 346 years of musical magic and spiritual inspiration.

Last visit was to the Kooger Kerk in Zuid-Scharwoude. Once again we saw an organ in pride of place on the west Gallery, with the console on the south side of the case, affording a view of proceedings before the advent of CCTV. The instrument here is a 2m + p by Van Dam with 11 stops to Hoofdwerk, 8 stops to Bovenwerk, and to please Ginny a complete (in the Victorian sense) independent pedal organ comprising Subbas 16, Fluitbas 8 Fagot 16 & Trombone 8. Draw stops are arranged on both jambs and above, where we usually place the driving mirror.

Left - Couplers, Right - Pedal, Top row - Swell, Lower row - Great. The organist gave a short demo., searched enthusiastically through Ginny's music

for something new and asked if he might borrow it, and then disappeared for a time while she played her current favourites. He returned it somewhat warmed! He and Gerard then proceeded to investigate a cipher on the 1851 Pilcher chamber organ used downstairs with the choir. Things got worse as the action became dislodged, but I managed to return all the manual stickers to their registers, and silence the cypher, which needed a time consuming repair by professionals. It is due to return to England for restoration.



*Ginny Plunkett at Zuid-Scharwoude*

It was good to return in part a most generous favour given by our hosts who arranged a wonderful insight into the world of the organ in North Holland. The Dutch people have always been most kind and welcoming over the years. Do go if you have the chance.

*From the Norwich Mercury dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 1802 (submitted by Pauline Stratton)*

St George's Colgate Church  
THE NEW ORGAN,  
ERECTED BY  
THE CELEBRATED MR ENGLAND,  
OF LONDON,  
WILL be OPENED on TUESDAY, April  
27<sup>th</sup> being Sessions' Week, with the sacred  
Oratorio of the MESSIAH, composed by  
Handel.

The performance will be under the  
patronage of the following Stewards;  
Right Worshipful JEREMIAH IVES, Esq.

Mayor

ROBERT PARTRIDGE, Esq.

JOHN PATTESON, Esq.

THOMAS WATSON, Esq.

JAMES HUDSON, Esq.

JOHN HERRING, Esq.

W.C. PILLANS, Esq.

WALTER WORTH, Esq.

JOHN DAW, Esq.

The band under the direction of Mr  
Beckwith, accompanied with double  
drums, trumpets etc will be very  
numerous.

Mrs Phillips of the Theatre Royal,  
Norwich, has obligingly consented to  
take, "Comfort ye my people," and "I  
know that my Redeemer liveth,"

The Organ by Mr. BECKWITH.  
Leader of the Band, Mr. SHARP.

Doors will be open at half-past Six to  
begin precisely at Seven in the evening.  
Tickets 3s each, to be had of Mr. Bacon,  
Cockey-lane, of Messrs Stevenson and  
Matchett, and Mr. Booth, Market-place.

Books will be delivered gratis at the  
Church, which will be elegantly lighted  
and properly matted.

Tickets issued for Easter Sunday will be  
taken, also money at the door.

## NOA AGM, Saturday 28 March 2009

Martin J Cottam

The United Reformed Church in Princes Street, Norwich provided the well appointed accommodation for the forty or so Association members who gathered from far corners of Norfolk to attend this year's AGM. For the second year running it took just 35 minutes for reports to be read, accounts agreed, and officers elected leaving us free to get on with the real business of the day starting, naturally, with the buffet lunch.

The Britons Arms of Elm Hill provided a goodly array of tasty and filling fare that gave particular pleasure to lovers of man-size sausage rolls and soups residing on the spicier side of life! Appetites duly satisfied and conversations enjoyed it was time to file back into the main body of the church for an organ recital given by the Association's new President Elect, Harry Macey.

The Princes Street URC is blessed by the presence of an organ built in 1875 by no less a luminary than Father Willis. Of relatively modest size it nonetheless boasts a fine array of colours enhanced in 2001 by the addition of a 16ft Ophicleide stop on the pedals. Harry's recital was impressively unaffected by post-lunch torpor and proved a magnificent vehicle for displaying the full potential of this versatile instrument. The opening Bach *Tocatta, Adagio, & Fugue in C major* was followed by the stirring *Winchelsea Carillon* by Charles Proctor (1906-96), a composer with whom Harry enjoyed close connections.

Three movements from Louis Vierne's *Pièces de Fantaisie* provided the perfect conclusion to the recital, the Willis

organ and Harry's playing each having the measure of these marvellous compositions. The scurrying *Intermezzo* was followed by the haunting *Clair de Lune*, the long held high notes on the Claribel Flute with Dulciana evoking vivid memories for me of the same piece played on Vierne's own instrument on a golden evening in Notre Dame during the 2002 IAO Congress in Paris. Very moving. The fabulous *Tocatta in b minor* brought a fine meeting to a suitably rousing and reedy conclusion.

As well as Harry, our thanks go to Peter Stevenson and all at the URC for allowing us to enjoy the facilities that so enhanced our time together.



Henry Macey

## *Letter from France*

*Ralph Bootman*

I have previously written of the Cistercian Abbey of Maredsous, Belgium, well known for its production of strong beers, its home-made bread and for its home-made cheeses. The Abbey, standing in its own grounds amidst beautiful scenery, attracts many thousands of visitors annually who come to enjoy the tranquility and to sample the delights of the food and drink produced there.

On our last visit to Maredsous I was told that they had a new organ installed and that I should go to the Abbey Church to see it. Entering the vast building we heard the organ being played and I was pleased to make the acquaintance of Fr Stéphane, the organist, who was playing a small Orgue du Choeur situated within the chancel on the south side. This was installed in the summer of last year and is a most cleverly constructed instrument and presents a facade of wood pipes forming the basses of manual I standing above the enclosed pipework of manual II.- similar to the little pipe organ installed many years ago at the UEA. The console is behind the organ, the player facing into the chancel and the pipework of the pedal Soubasse 16 is placed behind the player who thus sits between the manual pipework and the Pedal Soubasse. It has two manuals and pedals, has tracker action throughout and an electric blower. Ebony drawstops are located at the treble end of keys which are reversed colour. Quietly voiced, it nevertheless speaks well into the whole of this large building, which has a reverberation period of about 6 seconds, and is extremely versatile.

On our last visit there had been a large three-manual instrument at the extreme east end of the chancel, almost unnoticeable, as all the pipework was hidden by pierced panelling. The console stood in the NW corner. All this had disappeared and a deal had been done with the organ builder that he would take the instrument away, to do with what he would, in exchange for building the new one! This he did and the work was finished last summer. It is intended to rebuild the old organ in another monastery.

The three manual and pedal west gallery organ had just been rebuilt by the firm of Westenfelder of Lintgen, Luxembourg and opened just three days earlier. The console is completely new as is the action, and minor changes have been made to the specification. The console, detached and standing a short distance in front of the organ and facing east, is kept low so that the player may see almost all the nave and chancel and the music desk is of toughened glass. Angle jambs slope down from the music desk and on these, laid out in horizontal rows, are the tilting tablets, all coloured black, for the stop control reminiscent of some electronic organs, these have a small red light contained in them which operates when the stop is 'on'.

What a fine and versatile instrument this is! My thanks to Fr. Stéphane for his kindness and congratulations to the Abbey on now having two superb instruments in their magnificent building – I shall be back !

## *Desert Island Discs – Dr Roy Massey*

Ronald Watson

What greater misfortune could befall Dr Roy Massey than to be shipwrecked in his 75<sup>th</sup> year! Yet, on a sunny Saturday afternoon he willingly spared some of his holiday to accept this fate, much to our delight.

What would have become of him had his father's wish that he should become a cricketer prevailed, who can tell, but fortunately for the world of music, and church music in particular, his prowess as a budding musician was allowed to flourish and he was to begin piano lessons at the age of 7 at the same time joining a church choir at the suggestion of the primary school headmistress. Here he fell in love with the sound of the organ and was encouraged to have a go by the vicar and organist. At 10 he played for his first service and earned the princely sum of 10/- (paid to his mother!). Visits to hear the CBSO at Birmingham Town Hall brought him into contact with the organ there with its 32ft front which took his breath away then as it still does to this day. Here he heard his first Messiah and by the time he was 20 he was playing in it and continued to do so for fifty years. As a reminder of this the first record was the chorus *For unto us*.

At 15 he came under the wing of David Willcocks then at Worcester Cathedral and conductor of the City of Birmingham Choir, from whom he received free lessons. Willcocks was a demanding master whose approbation was somewhat cloaked. He required the young Massey to learn Bach's *Fantasia & Fugue in G minor* in a week and in a further week to memorise it. Improvisations at the keyboard were also required with

modulations to be managed to keys stipulated by DW.

Willcocks appointed the 17 year-old Roy Massey as accompanist for the City Choir rehearsals during which he learned the necessity of always being properly prepared. Praise from his master would take the form of '...well that was better than last week'.

At this time Dr Massey, while still at school, passed his ARCO and was awarded the Limpus prize despite having missed the boat for practising on the College organ. To overcome this he made a mock-up of the console at he which he prepared his pieces.

While studying at Birmingham University he gained his BMus, FRCO (CHM) and by the time he was 20 was playing a lot at Birmingham Town Hall. Here he was strongly influenced by George Thalben-Ball, who was at that time City Organist and who gave great encouragement to the young player and passed on several jobs which he (GTB) didn't want to do himself. On his desert island Dr Massey chose to have a recording of Thomas Trotter playing the demanding *Scherzo* from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* on that organ.

There had been a stage when Dr Massey had wanted to be a concert pianist and to satisfy his love for the piano and its music chose to take Grieg's Piano Concerto with him to his island.

His career as a church organist began in 1952 at St Alban's Church Birmingham, a church in a poor area and with local boys. Then came St Augustine's Birmingham which was a better endowed church where there was a fine choir and where he was well paid. From 1965 for three years Dr Massey was at Croydon

Parish Church with its 26 boys and 22 men, and was Warden of the RSCM.

His first cathedral post was Birmingham Cathedral from which there were many broadcasts, and whilst there he taught at King Edward's School where he taught both David Dunnett and David Lowe. At the same time he became Organ Advisor to the Diocese of Birmingham.



*Dr Roy Massey*

And then, aged 40, Dr Massey moved to Hereford Cathedral where he would remain for 27 years until his retirement. In addition to his work at the cathedral there was also the Three Choirs Festival and the Hereford Choral Society. He was also Hereford Diocesan Advisor on organs from 1974. Here, finally, after two earlier opportunities to conduct it which been frustrated, Dr Massey conducted the *St Matthew Passion*, which would be his next choice for his island exile. The next three records would serve to remind of his time at Hereford; the

Hereford choir singing Psalm 118 from evensong for Easter Day which marked the culmination of an extremely heavy Holy Week with 14 fully choral services from Palm Sunday onward. Dr Massey has wonderful memories of the great Christmas Carol Service for which there were queues to get in. We heard the choir singing *The Holly and the Ivy* and as a memento of the wonderful Willis organ and its fine Tuba Dr Massey chose himself playing Hollins' *Trumpet Minuet*.

As a recitalist Dr Massey has played in all the main recital series in this country, in an Albert Hall Prom and abroad.

The Three Choirs Festival provided the opportunity to conduct major professional orchestras, initially terrifying, and Dr Massey has fond memories of the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when his Three Choir colleagues were Dr Donald Hunt and Dr John Sanders. What better to call to mind the great orchestral and choral works than *Belshazzar's Feast*.

Dr Massey was on the Council of the RCO from 1970 and was President from 2003 – 2005 and for many years was an examiner. He was also President of the IAO and the Cathedral Organists' Association. Dr Massey declared himself pleasantly surprised by his DMus degree from the Archbishop of Canterbury and his MBE from HM the Queen.

Dr Massey confessed to being a totally impracticable man who would probably be despatched by a falling coconut. He would miss his many hobbies, which include dogs, motoring, organ crawling, organ cases, old houses, pubs, the countryside, book collecting and theatre going. His choice of book and fellow desert island survivor (should there



be one) indicated a strong interest in architecture of which Dr Massey is now very much a part, as his image is cast in stone as a gargoyle on Hereford Cathedral, an honour he shares with former dog-loving organist Hugh Sinclair of Enigma Variation fame.

How lucky we were to have Dr Massey in the county (as he often is) and willing to share all this with us. Many thanks to him and to David Watson and his team at Brooke.

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### *Organ news*

#### *Geoff Sankey*

Holmes & Swift are currently undertaking a major renovation of the three manual Walker organ in Sandringham Parish Church, converting it to electro-pneumatic action due to the impossibility of maintaining the original pneumatics which had reached the end of their useful life. Edmund says that the existing console and tonal scheme are being retained in order to preserve the character of the instrument.

They are also putting the two manual Norman & Beard at St Mark's Church Lakenham (Norwich) into storage for approximately six months whilst the church is restored, after which they will be undertaking a full renovation and reassembly.

W & A Boggis have been working on a restoration of the single manual Bevington organ in All Saints, Rede, in Suffolk. They have re-leathered the

bellows, and restored the soundboard, actions, keys and pipes. This work has included the cleaning and re-polishing of the casework. Finally, they have put the whole organ on a new platform to keep it off the floor and so that it can be moved away from the wall for maintenance.

Richard Bower has been reworking the swell organ action and tonal scheme in the Norman and Beard in St John the Baptist, Coltishall, as well as carrying out what he describes as a "mini overhaul and resetting" of the one manual Storr organ at St Andrew's Attlebridge.

Richard has described the work he carried out at St Agnes, Cawston. He first became involved with this organ in 1969, nominally by G P England and built originally for St Stephen's Norwich in 1813. The instrument was in poor condition, and in 1983 a partial restoration took place, omitting the swell and pedal departments which were disconnected. This was seen as a temporary arrangement. Last year, some 25 years later, the funds were finally available to allow the work to be completed. In the course of this work, it became clear that G P England had in fact reused pipework and other components from a much older instrument, now identified from the pipe markings as being from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Richard has completed a sympathetic restoration of the pipework, filling gaps, completing the pedal bourdon, and adding a swell to pedal coupler.

The casework also has a fascinating history, with a fine Victorian Gothic oak façade, that has been planted onto a pine case behind with a much more Georgian character.

# For your diary

## *Norwich Cathedral recitals and concerts 2009*

*Wednesday Big Screen Organ Recitals 7. 30 pm*

£6 with concessions

June 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Thomas Primrose</b>	Organ Scholar Norwich Cathedral
July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Jean-Baptiste Dupont</b>	Basilica of St Sernin, Toulouse
August 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Dr Peter King</b>	Bath Abbey
September 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>David Dunnett</b>	Norwich Cathedral
October 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Thomas Leech</b>	Leeds

## *Bank Holiday Monday Recitals 11 am*

Free admission – retiring collection

August 31<sup>st</sup> **Andrew Parnell** formerly St Albans Abbey

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## *St Andrew's Hall Lunchstop recitals*

All Mondays except 18th August which is a Tuesday.

Tickets are £2.50 and start time is 1.10 pm.

### *June*

1st David Dunnett

15th Henry Macey

### *July*

6th Adrian Richards - St Margaret's Kings Lynn

20th Roger Rayner

27th Tim Patient

### *August*

3<sup>rd</sup> Maureen MacAllister & Robin Jackson

10th David Ivory

18th Anne Page

24th Matthew Pitts - St Peter Mancroft

***Holy Trinity Church West Runton***

Wednesday Lunchtime Organ Concerts 12:30 – 1:30pm

Admission Free Retiring Collection

Bring your lunch and enjoy a coffee or tea with us

Car Park at Rectory Adjoining

15th July	Matthew Bond	University of East Anglia
22rd July	Jonathan Hill	Stoke Minster
29th July	Bryan Ellum & Jane Berry	North Elmham
5th Aug	Alan Morris & Ann Allen Organ & Piano	Sheringham
12th Aug	John Farmer Organ & Piano	Great Yarmouth
19th Aug	Peter Stevenson	Norwich
26th Aug.	Richard Walker	St. Chad's Shrewsbury
2nd Sept	Tim Patient	Norwich
9th Sept.	David Ballard	University of East Anglia

***Diss Parish Church***

*Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June at 12 30 pm*

Lunchtime concert with duets and solos for organ and piano presented by Bryan Ellum and Jane Berry

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***Swaffham Parish Church Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June at 7. 30 pm and***

***Cromer Parish Church on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July at 8 pm***

Concerts featuring Martin Thomas – saxophones and Bryan Ellum – organ and piano

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***Carlo Curley***

*in Concert at St John's RC Cathedral, Unthank Road, Norwich.*

*Friday 24 July 2009, 7.30 pm*

Tickets £6.00-£12.00 (accompanied children £2.00) from Prelude Records  
(01603 628319) or the Cathedral Shop (01603 765034).

He will be playing the new Viscount Physis Digital Organ

## *Forthcoming Association Events*

**June:** For a variety of reasons it has not proved possible to finalize arrangements for an event this month. Sincere apologies.

### **Saturday 11th July:**

**President's Day:** David Bunkell, our new President, outlines the day's events:

It is many years since we last ventured over the border into north-east Suffolk, but at a distance of just over 30 miles from Norwich, Southwold is much nearer than much of Norfolk.

I hope that members and their guests will enjoy a varied day in this beautiful area.

### **Provisional programme**

#### **11.00 am Holy Trinity Parish Church, Blythburgh**

There are two organs here for members to play: The two-manual pipe organ built by NOA member Rodney Briscoe of W & A Boggis in 2002-2003, which some members will remember viewing while it was under construction at his workshops in Diss.

A baroque-voiced Copeman Hart organ which was built as a practice organ for the late Keith Bond, formerly sub-organist at Blackburn Cathedral. It is now owned by the Blythburgh Singers, a chamber choir which I conduct. It is the only electronic organ I have ever met with a straight pedal-board.

#### **12.00 noon St Felix School, Southwold**

The chapel organ here is a large three-manual Copeman Hart, which again members will be able to play, and also to compare with the smaller Copeman Hart at Blythburgh. This is the only organ I know with two different harpsichord stops – a strange experience with the console at floor level at the east end and speakers in the west-end gallery.

#### **Lunch**

This will be arranged individually. You may wish to picnic or eat fish and chips on the beach, or I can recommend restaurants and Adnams pubs in Southwold to suit every palate or budget!

#### **2.30 pm Electric Picture Palace**

A private visit to Southwold's unique 66-seat cinema. We will watch extracts of films with an organ interest, and experience the intermission (and refreshments) with an organ that rises through the stage.

#### **4.00 pm St Edmund's Parish Church, Southwold**

Director of Music Victor Scott will briefly demonstrate the fine three-manual pipe organ (Walker 1887, rebuilt Arnold, Williamson & Hyatt 1966), after which members will be welcome to play it.

If you are able to join us, please let me know ( [HYPERLINK](#)

"mailto:bunkell@btinternet.com" bunkell@btinternet.com or 01502 675577) by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June, after which I will send you final details of the day, together with maps and confirmation of timings.

**Saturday 22 August, St. Thomas's Church, Earlham Road, Norwich at 7.30pm:**

***Young Organist's Recital:*** We are delighted to announce our 'young' recitalist this year will be David Ballard, currently a student at the UEA. He is planning a programme that will feature both the familiar and the more obscure, probably including items from the English Romantic period.

**Saturday 19th September, St. Thomas's Church, Earlham Road, Norwich at 11am:**

***J.S. Bach's 'Orgelbuchlein':*** Tim Patient presents a Lecture Recital on this most enduringly popular collection of Bach's Chorale Preludes. There will also be opportunity for members to perform the chorales for themselves, both on the fine neo-classical organ at St. Thomas's and with their voices! *Please note the new starting time.*

**October:**

Event, time and venue to be confirmed.

**Saturday 14 November, Brooke Church at 2.30pm:**

***Henry Purcell;*** David Watson presents a talk illustrated with recordings in celebration of the genius of Henry Purcell, born 350 years ago this year.



*Please don't hesitate to contact Martin Cottam (01603 703921 or martin@cottam.eclipse.co.uk) if you have any queries or require further details of any of our events.*