

The Journal

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The editor writes.....

Are you impressed by virtuosity? I imagine you are, I certainly am, but not by virtuosity for its own sake. I recently discovered Cameron Carpenter, a young American organist who does amazing things with his hands and feet at the organ console. His official website www.cameroncarpenter.com shows him playing Chopin's *Revolutionary Study* with the pedals playing the running semiquavers given to the left hand in the original piano version. What he achieves is truly amazing, the sort of feat that has to be seen to be believed. I did send this link to a few folk and two to date have floated the idea that it was not genuine. Why not have a look and see what you think?

Not far away on YouTube you can also find Eric Fan playing *The Flight of the Bumblebee* on the pedals alone. Clever stuff! But for me these are not musical experiences and I marvel at them in much the same way as I marvel at exceptionally clever acrobats in a circus or a funambulist cooking himself breakfast high above the Niagara Falls.

Chopin's virtuosity served his music, for he was, first and foremost, a musician; there is emotion in every note he ever wrote. His *Grandes Etudes* not only stretch the greatest pianists with their technical demands but are also very beautiful music. Should you click on to YouTube and watch these organ acrobatics you will be amazed; but will you be moved emotionally by a musical experience? I doubt it.

From what I glean from feedback, the Association membership value and enjoy the Journal and for me that is

reward enough. As the house magazine of the Association it is primarily for and about the doings of members. Ergo articles from the membership about their activities and interests are (or should be) the fodder of the magazine.

The Autumn issue was very thin indeed and the reason for this must be obvious. It has never been my intention to write the whole thing myself and usually there is sufficient copy from others to make up a reasonably sized booklet. The Autumn issue was a perfect illustration of what happens when virtually nothing is received from the membership. If you would care to scan back issues going back quite a long time you will see, give or take the odd exception, the same names appearing as contributors, and their numbers barely reach double figures.

The time has come to put your appreciation of The Journal to the test for if, like your pet budgie, you fail to feed it it will die. As an appreciative reader you might consider helping to keep the Journal alive by writing something for it. And of course to all who do contribute from time to time, very many thanks.



Leaving the West End

The articles below, all from the Norfolk Chronicle, refer to the organ which was situated at the west end of St Andrew's Hall and probably built by Gray in the 1820s.

Submitted by Pauline Stratton

14th April 1860

"... It is impossible to use the organ in its present state for accompaniments, and even for choruses the absence of a swell has been felt to be a great drawback. An application was made to the City Committee, the instrument belonging to the Corporation, to know whether they were willing to co-operate with the Festival Committee in carrying out a proposition to effect this most desirable alteration, and on Monday last Mr Noble, organ builder attended a conference on the subject. The estimated cost is £120..... We believe the proposition was favourably received. A Swell organ with seven stops is to be introduced; the Clarion is to be changed for an open wood Flute, and various other minor improvements made...."

The organ remained at the west end until 1863 when major repairs and extensive alterations were made to the hall. All of which had to be completed before the Music Festival in September, ".....the wall at the east end where Nelson's portrait used to hang has been entirely removed and the tower between the hall and the Dutch Church (i.e. Blackfriars' Hall) is thrown open. A grand arch in keeping with the rest of the structure will be built there and in the space beyond, the organ will be built....."

The following report, published on 25th April 1863, is of a meeting where it

was discussed who should be employed to move the organ from its west end position to the space created at the east end.

"The SHERIFF said the committee, after a full discussion, and by a considerable majority, had come to the conclusion that it would be better to accept Mr Noble's tender, although a higher price than that of Messrs Forster & Andrews, for the repair of the organ. It was thought that, although out of the usual course to accept the higher tender, especially against such eminent makers as Messrs Forster & Andrews, it was desirable to accept Mr Noble's tender because he had done a good deal to the organ and would have to do a good deal to it for the Festival, and because also, he resided on the spot and his services were available at any time when they might be required. He moved that the report of the committee be received and adopted. The question of time was an important one, and to refer it back again to the committee would only be to lose more time .

- Mr CALEY asked what was the amount of the extra sum.

-The MAYOR said it would be between £3 and £4 if the committee carried out the whole plan.

-Mr S F MORGAN said he had heard tell of a patient dying while the doctors were quarrelling at his bed-side and the condition of the organ at the present moment reminded him of that story, for he had been told by a practical man that he feared the organ had already sustained injury by remaining so long in the clouds of dust that were flying about St Andrew's Hall. He would therefore second the motion of the Sheriff.

-Mr GORELL said Messrs Forster & Andrews' estimate was £10, not £3 lower than that of Mr Noble. He wished to know

if any communication had been made to them, as well as Mr Noble, as to what they intended to include in their contract.

-The MAYOR said that there was not.

-Mr GORELL said he thought the committee ought to have consulted the other parties as well as Mr Noble. He wished to know whether some further expense was not likewise contemplated with regard to the organ.

-Mr YOUNGS -Yes, £90 odd.

-Mr GORELL said Mr Noble would thus, having got his foot in for the £35, receive all the other work as well. If it had been stated that the two things would have been combined, the other parties tendering might have offered to do the work for considerably less than Mr Noble.

-Mr BACON said an explanation was due as to what took place on Friday.

-Mr MORGAN said he had got the secretary to call a meeting of the Festival Committee, and that they had met this morning and resolved - "That this committee consider it would be more advantageous that an organ builder resident in Norwich should be employed in the works relating to the organ in St Andrew's Hall."

-Mr BACON; Were the whole committee present?

-Mr MORGAN said they were not, but there were eight present; and the chairman and two others who were absent had expressed the same opinion as was stated in the resolution. The committee left it to him (Mr Morgan) to say that, in their opinion there would be great advantage in employing Mr Noble, who was resident here, and had generally done the work for the Festival and also at the Cathedral.

-Mr BACON explained what had occurred on Friday. A tender was sent in by Mr Noble recommending - on the suggestion

of Mr Harcourt - that the old bellows should be replaced by the new ones, and that other alterations should be made, for which he stated a certain sum.

The meeting adjourned till Monday, that Mr Noble might be present and state whether he included the hydraulic engine in that sum. Mr Noble attended on the Monday and stated that he did not include the hydraulic engine, which would cost another certain sum; and taking credit to himself for a deduction of £2 from his former estimate, he put the total to £96. If Messrs Forster's tender had been taken, it would have amounted, without the bellows, to £25 for moving, putting up, and tuning the organ and there would have been £45 for putting up an hydraulic engine, making a total of £70. He thought the committee had been too hasty; they had omitted from their advertisement what they afterwards wished to include in the contract.

Tenders came in, but the committee did not take the lowest as they did not know the party; but if Mr Noble's tender were to be accepted on the plea that he was on the spot, the same argument would apply to Mr Corps, who had also tendered, who resided in Norwich, and who had formerly been the employer of Mr Noble, when the latter was his joiner. If the corporation wished to hold a character for doing what was right and just, they ought to send to the other parties and put them in the same position as they had put Mr Noble in. The committee had not sent for Mr Corps and asked him what he would do certain things for; but they did send for Mr Noble; and now the Council were to take the ipse dixit of Mr Noble as to what was best for the city and for the organ.

The council could not say they had acted with good faith towards the other

parties, unless they put them in the same position as Mr Noble, and how could they tell, if they did so, that the tenders of those parties would not be lower than Mr Noble? Having stated that when employed to put fresh pipes to the organ requiring a good deal of power, Mr Noble had done so without increasing the original blowing power. Mr Bacon proceeded to Messrs Forster & Andrews as among the first constructors of organs in the kingdom, adding that they had had experience in putting hydraulic power to organs. But, even if they were put aside, justice demanded that Mr Corps should not be overlooked, as his tender was from £25 - £30, and Mr Noble's was £35. Mr Bacon concluded by moving that Messrs Forster & Andrews' tender be accepted. Mr GORELL seconded the motion.

- Mr J B MORGAN said they had the opinion of Mr Harcourt, who said that were the organ his own he should put the alterations in the hands of Mr Noble.

-Mr TILLET urged the necessity of expedition, in order that the alterations at St Andrew's Hall might be completed by the time of the Festival, remarking that whatever might be the opinions of the Council with regard to the order and regularity of the proceedings with regard to the organ, it seemed advisable under all the circumstances to employ Mr Noble, who had been recommended by the Festival committee.

- The MAYOR hoped the Council would give the committee credit for knowing something about the matter as well as Mr Bacon. The course they recommended was what they believed, under all the circumstances, to be the best.

After some further discussion Mr Bacon withdrew his amendment, and the original motion was agreed to.

The MAYOR read over the names of the gentlemen who had promised to subscribe to the fund for the renovation of St Andrew's Hall, and the Sheriff suggested that such members of the Council as would volunteer, should go round for the subscriptions."

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Rare broadcast of Choral Evensong

Radio 3's weekly broadcast of Choral Evensong on Wednesday 16th December, repeated on Sunday 20th, will come from All Saints, Swanton Morley, something of a rare event for a village church! It will be sung by the mixed choir of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

Recitals at Princes Street, URC

The regular recitals (no. 100 in January) on the First Thursdays at 12.45 have taken on a new pattern recently, Music for organ by a named composer is followed by several of his pieces for piano. Besides the famous Father Willis Organ, the church also has a fine grand piano. Already we have had Haydn, Mozart and Brahms; Mendelssohn will be featured in January. The organ recital on 3rd December will be by David Ballard (MEA).
Peter Stevenson

"And now for something completely different."

Peter Stevenson

It was our own much-travelled editor who said that "everybody should go on a Safari" after I'd told him about my recent experience in Kenya. Ever since my first Safari twelve years ago in Zimbabwe, I had longed for a return visit to the wonderful world of wild animals. So after settling into my new home in the peace and beauty of Norwich Cathedral Close, I set out on the eight hour journey to Nairobi from whence the Safari embarked. Early next morning the noise and hubbub of Kenya's crowded capital eventually gave way to the savannah grasslands of East Africa and the spectacular great Rift Valley. A luncheon stop at a Trout Restaurant where the fish are farmed in large reservoirs, satisfying the inner-man and photographers alike, prefaced our arrival some hours later at the first Game Ranch. Several tour companies (mine was Voyages Jules Verne) offer such opportunities in Africa, with excellent standard of accommodation and first class cuisine in well-equipped Travel Lodges. Together with a few others I bravely accepted the offer of "crocodile" as one of the courses at one particular evening meal; "fishy-chicken" might best describe the flavour and texture, and we were told that only the tail is edible, the rest of the croc being poisonous. We were each rewarded with a certificate congratulating us on "getting the crocodile before it got you!"

The game-drives themselves were held at different times of the day, including as early as 5 am which gave the best chance of seeing a leopard. The jeep-

like vehicles held five passengers, each having a "window seat"; though well-sprung, the going was hardly smooth, and my octogenarian bones didn't take kindly to the ride at times. However, I included a bottle of Radox in my luggage and had a hot Radox bath each evening on return to the Lodge; be prepared to request, therefore, a bath instead of a shower on checking-in!

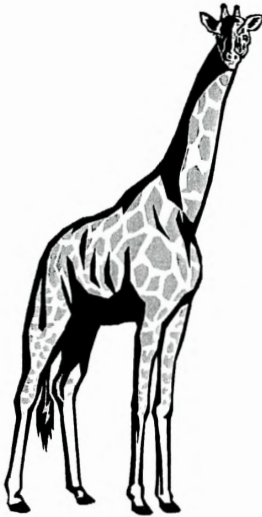
Words can hardly describe adequately the keen anticipation that prefaced each approach to the animals, big or small; the driver, being in radio-contact with other game vehicles in the area, informed us of what might be expected en route and the rest was up to us: with cameras and binoculars at the ready, and concentration at 100%.



Sometimes we were rewarded with only a brief but magical glimpse of our target, but at other times the animals seemed almost to be posing for us. Our skilled driver cleverly manoeuvred his vehicle into the most favourable position

for both viewing and photography; and we trusted him regarding safe distances from the predators with his special knowledge for our (and his)safety. Special mention must be made of the famous "Treetops", where an abundance of animals, particularly elephants, water buffalo, and warthogs occupied the water holes which we observed from the lodge itself.

Floodlighting throughout the hours of darkness ensured maximum viewing conditions at this memorable venue. Whilst on this particular Safari no actual "kills" were witnessed, plenty of evidence of recent such events reminded us of the law of the jungle. Millions of pink flamingos at Lake Navaro was another very special sight, both in full flight and in rest. Home to thousands of animals and species, the Masai Mara and the Serengeti are really one great reserve and the game drives advanced deep into the heart of the reserve. What a privilege it was to share this vast area with these marvellous creatures, all part of the Creator's world.



NOA young organist's recital

Brent Palmer

In August members gathered in St Thomas's Church, Earlham Road for a recital by David Ballard, Assistant Organist and Choirmaster at St Nicholas, North Walsham. David is a former pupil of Kenneth Ryder, Julian Thomas, David Dunnett and Peter Stevenson and is now studying with Anne Page. He is at present in his third year of study for a BA (hins) in Music at the UEA.

The recital began with two pieces which demonstrated the brighter stops on the organ, *Carillon* by Herbert Murrill and *Prelude in D* by Buxtehude, the tempi for both pieces being well chosen. There then followed the *Prelude on Rhosymedre* by Vaughan Williams and *Evening Song* by Edward Bairstow which provided the chance to show off the organ's lovely solo stops whereas in a transcription of Elgar's *Imperial March* we experienced the full power of the organ.

In Bach's first *Trio Sonata* the voices were well contrasted and the pace was well measured After Whitlock's *Folk Tune* and Hollins' *Trumpet Minuet* there came a set of variations on the chimes of Gloucester Cathedral by Charles Lee-Williams, a piece new to me but which I found very pleasant. After Two Pieces on Traditional Irish Melodies by Stanford and Vierné's well known *Berceuse* the recital concluded with Duruflé's *Fugue on the Carillon of the Hours of Soissons Cathedral* which demonstrated David's mastery of French music.

The recital showed off to perfection David's musicality and his excellent technique. Our thanks to him for a lovely evening.

Talk on Henry Purcell St Peter Brooke Church: 14th November 2009

Barry Gordon

On Saturday 14th November 2009, around 20 intrepid members of Norfolk Organists Association braved very wet and windy conditions (and probably a Met Office severe weather warning) to attend David Watson's talk celebrating the 350th anniversary of the birth of Henry Purcell.

The end result was well worth the discomfort; as for well over an hour David gave us a fascinating and sometimes light-hearted and irreverent insight into Purcell, his life and times and his musical works. The talk was illustrated by several selections from appropriate compact discs and also by David demonstrating musical fragments on the Yamaha keyboard that he brought in for the purpose (perhaps on reflection it should be called a *Yamaharpsichord!*).

We learnt that, in reality, very little is known about Purcell despite him being a first team player. Here we were celebrating his 350th birthday when actually we were not even sure when he was born or could confirm his parentage. To quote David: *Purcell would be a strong favourite for the title of Great Composer whose music is least performed and about whose life we know practically nothing.* Luckily it was known when Purcell died and this had provided incentive for the production of various books and thereby had provided some context for the talk. Even one of the better books by Robert King of the King's Consort was mainly a social history of Restoration England with only occasional references to Purcell.

None of this, however, stopped David from delving into the world of the composer using his music as the guiding light and the results were both intriguing and most enjoyable. Indeed at one point, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed one member of the audience actually miming happily to one of the vocal works.

Far too much was covered by David to mention in this short summary but it is worth repeating his story illustrating Purcell's sense of humour. In the famous duet *Sound the Trumpet* it would have been reasonable to assume that when the words of Nahum Tate were set to music that Purcell would sensibly enhance the piece by making use of the brothers Matthias and William Shore as they were the two best trumpeters in the country at the time. Purcell, however, decided that this was not how it was going to be. So while two counter-tenors warbled at the front he made the two Shore brothers sit at the back clutching their redundant instruments. It would have been nice to know their reaction.

Finally, one last surprise for many was a slightly irreverent and totally unexpected interpretation of Purcell's music that turned out to be quite a "hit". David introduced a very laid-back jazzy version of a Purcell song performed by pianist David Rees-Williams. He said Rees-Williams started where Jacques Lousier left off – and went where the latter would never consider. The result was just sublime!

As David Bunkell said so aptly during his final summary and vote of thanks: "What a great way to spend a miserable afternoon".

Annual Congress in the North West

Barbara Knowles

As a non-organist, but one who enjoys listening to and learning about the organ, I have enjoyed attending Congresses and this year was no exception. Attending a particular Congress depends on two things - the locality and the kind of music and musicians I am going to hear. Of course, as a Northerner, the location this year had instant appeal. We were visiting Liverpool with its two cathedrals and the iconic St Georges Hall. We were also due to visit Southport and Port Sunlight on the Wirral. In short, I was coming home!

The train journey to Warrington was easy - direct from Norwich. But there was a downside. What the Congress brochure did not tell you was that the location of our hotel was at Daresbury Park, which is about as far from the centre of Warrington as Hethersett is from Norwich. The resulting double taxi fare cost almost as much as the rail fare!

We arrived in the afternoon of Thursday July 30th and our first meal was a very early dinner at 5pm - then it was into three coaches to go to Liverpool Anglican Cathedral to hear Ian Tracey give the Brereton Memorial Recital. The Breretons were Congress Administrators, working unsparingly right up to their death, and were greatly appreciated. The Memorial Fund was set up to assist with the careers of young organists.

Ian Tracey's recital featured music by Tournemire arr. Duruflé, Bach arr. Goss-Custard, Schumann, César Franck, Bossi, Mendelssohn and ending with a piece I have not heard in an arrangement for organ, namely a suite from Respighi's

Pines of Rome. As for the Anglican Cathedral organ, now the largest in the UK, the sound is too big and too loud for some, but for me it was a wonderful sound in a beloved Cathedral.

On the following day, July 31st. the coaches left promptly at 9am for Liverpool again. This time the venue was St George's Hall with Ian Tracey wearing City Organist hat, introducing and playing the massive organ there, which has been fully restored by Nicholson in 2006 and we were treated to the full 'Father' Henry Willis sound - wow! The organ is a great 'orchestral' instrument designed to play those popular transcriptions of orchestral music, to be enjoyed by the general public who could not afford to go to expensive concerts. We were treated to tales of previous City Organists who would sneak up to the Philharmonic Hall to see which pieces were to be played, then transcribe them for the audience to hear at much lower cost on the same evening. Ian Tracey played suitable examples of such music, by composers such as W T Best, Pierné, Tchaikovsky *Nutcracker Suite* Lemmens *The Storm*, and ending with part of the *Boston Symphony* by Pierre Cochereau. A previous City Organist was Dr Caleb Jarvis and I was delighted to hear Ian play his *Meditation on a Welsh Lullaby*. My mother and I got to know Dr Jarvis very well as we attended his music appreciation classes. I was able to have a chat with Ian later and he was delighted to meet someone who knew Caleb Jarvis personally.

This recital was followed by a discussion session in the lovely small theatre in part of St George's Hall, given by David Wells, an organ builder who was due to talk about Liverpool churches, organs and organists. This should have

been interesting, but, alas, David is no public speaker and the whole session was taken over by Ian Tracey and others - and, with the poor acoustic, much that was going on was inaudible anyway!

After lunch we headed north for Southport, that very elegant coastal resort with the reputation of having the sea almost always out of sight. My home from the 1920s to the 50s was in those northern suburbs and it was quite an emotional drive through those areas familiar to me some 60 years ago. We passed my old school and the roads where I used to live and as we got near Southport we could see the distant sand dunes and marshes where I did my research in the 1950s.

The venue was Emmanuel Church and the organ there is by Harrison & Harrison (1944) later modified by Rushworth & Dreaper in 2000. Refreshments were provided in the church hall then we went into the church to hear a recital by Cathy Lamb. Cathy is a vivacious young woman, an accomplished organist with an impressive CV and she gave us music by Walton, Dowland/Sweelinck, J S Bach *The Wedge* Vierne from Symphony No.1, Gardiner, Rheinberger, Gounod arr. Best and ending with *Fête* by Langlais.

The AGM followed, not too long, but some folk did 'chicken out' only to find, after a while, that it started to pour with rain!

Saturday, saw us setting off for Mossley Hill Church which stands on a prominent hill overlooking the city of Liverpool. Here we were treated to a recital by our own David Dunnett, preceded by an interesting talk about the organ and the music to be played. The organ was by Father Willis (1874) and rebuilt by Reeves in 1980, following

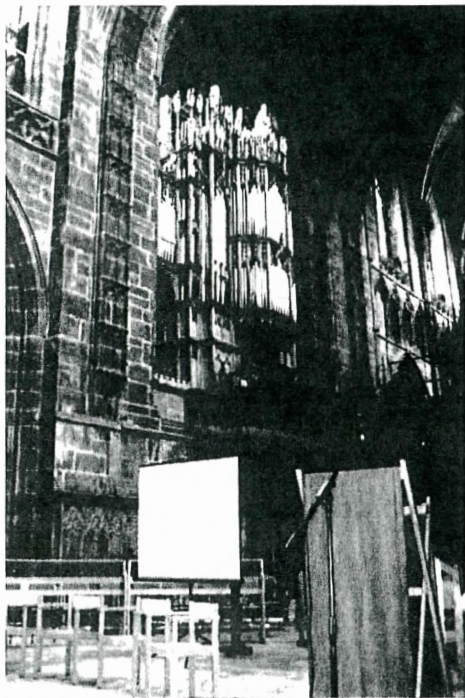
damage in the war when the church was extensively damaged, but the organ less so. Speaking to David later he told me how much he enjoyed playing the instrument. We heard music by William Harris, J S Bach, Max Reger, Judith Bingham, Gaston Litaize, Hoffmann arr. E Lemare and the recital ended with Widor's *Symphony No.6 in G minor*.

Then we were off to Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral where we had lunch in the new café, and then joined the audience for one of the Summer Organ Recitals given by Organ Scholar Sam Austin. In Sam's programme we heard music by Dukas, J S Bach, Alain, Debussy, Mozart (mechanical organ K 608) and ending with one of my favourite pieces, *Variations sur un Noel* by Dupré. Unfortunately it is rarely heard because, I gather from my organist friends, it is very difficult to play.

After the recital we all trailed down to rooms below the main building to hear the RCO Lecture, 'A Year in York Minster' given by the present Director of Music Robert Sharpe.

The Gibberd Room was a long, thin room and there were not enough chairs for the 150 or so delegates. As a result much time was wasted while extra chairs were scrounged from various parts of the Cathedral. Robert Sharpe played some recordings of the Minster choir, past and present. The acoustic was not good and those folk at the back of the room could hear very little of what was going on. What should have been a memorable occasion was not. On Sunday we set off at 10am to travel to Chester Cathedral for Choral Matins. We had a long wait until Eucharist was ended, but not long enough to slip off for a coffee. The service, sung by the RSCM Millennium Youth Choir,

included the *Te Deum* by Rutter and a rather weird anthem by Macmillan. The service was followed by a recital by Philip Rushforth, the present Cathedral Organist. He chose a single work, *Sonata in C minor* by Percy Whitlock which, as far as I was concerned, went on for a very long time!



Chester Cathedral

Following a hasty lunch (MacDonalds and quite good) we set off for Liverpool and our second recital in the RC Cathedral, given by the Cathedral Organist, Timothy Noon. His was a very extensive programme with works by Dupré, J S Bach, Hindemith Sonata 1 (strange, but no two organists play it in the same way!) There was a piece by Dan Locklair called *Rubrics*, the organ

produced some very odd sounds, but it was quite exciting. The final piece was that mighty work by Liszt, his *Prelude & Fugue on BACH*. Then it was back to the hotel for Dinner. Even I had had quite enough organ music for one day!

The events of our final day certainly made up for any boredom we may have suffered on the Sunday. For me there was more nostalgia as we drove off into the Wirral to Port Sunlight. This was a very favourite childhood destination where we always had a tour of the soap factory where 'Sunlight Soap' was produced. It never occurred to us to ask where was the 'Port' of Port Sunlight? The answer came recently in one of the 'Coast' series on TV. To import the massive amounts of ingredients for the soap, the port that was built was the largest in the world. Bits of it still remain. The morning recital was given in Christ Church by Philip Scriven. The special thing about the organ, and why this venue was chosen, was explained in our programme, to quote *Believed to be the only surviving 4-manual instrument by Henry Willis II which is still in its original form, with the exception of a modern blower, there having been no alterations to the specification, voicing, or action, other than restoration and repair. The action is Willis floating lever.* The music played on this historic instrument included works by Elgar, Debussy arr. Cellier, Stravinsky arr. Besly (from the *Firebird*) and the recital ended with another major work by Liszt, his *Ad nos ad salutarem undam*.

After lunch we set off for the Cathedral of St Asaph and, of course, being Wales, it was raining! This last event was for me, the non-organist, the most enjoyable, given by our President David Hill and the legendary trumpeter

Crispian Steele-Perkins. A fascinating performance - not one trumpet but four appeared, from very long ones to very short ones. We were told about each one and appropriate music was played – John Stanley, G F Handel, a *Posthorn* sonata by Mozart compiled from various K numbers, There was Purcell and F J Haydn and we ended, appropriately, with *Processional* by William Mathias whose grave we passed as we arrived at the Cathedral. I bought a CD of trumpet music, and Crispian Steele-Perkins signed it for me. A very special event indeed.

The day ended with Congress Dinner with guest speaker Gordon Stewart. In his welcome words at the beginning of our Congress Handbook, David Hill said that Gordon Stewart will 'no doubt have us rolling in the aisles' and how right he was. But in addition to the funny stories, there was a serious side to his address some 'home truths' like noting that far more older folk came to recitals at lunch time and in the afternoons and how we ought to tailor our events to suit these changing times.

Organists Review

It seems that subscriptions to the OR are down so alarmingly that John Balding has been asked to find out why. I for one stopped taking the magazine two years ago for reasons I hinted at in my editorial of a year ago. If you have discontinued your subscription to OR or are thinking about it or even if you have a view regarding why its subscriptions are plummeting then John Balding would welcome your observations. Email him at john.balding@virgin.net

RW

St George's organ on radio 4

Anne Duarte

I am a big fan of Eddie Mair and have listened to the PM programme on Radio 4 since he started presenting it. When the credit crunch started, Eddie suggested that, to lighten the mood, the financial news should be introduced with some music and there was correspondence over some days about which music would be most suitable. 'Upshares Downshares' (sic) was the winner and, for quite a while, they used the TV version. Then there was that fuss about post-people dropping their red elastic bands all over the place. Eddie wanted to know what one could do with the retrieved elastic bands and a listener sent in a recording of themselves playing the 'Upstairs Downstairs' theme on a shoe box 'strung' with red elastic bands. It was good, but I thought that the organ at St George Colegate could do it better and, with the help of my fellow churchwarden (who put the mini-disc recording on to a memory stick) and my dear husband, the job was done. Shortly afterwards the helpful churchwarden recorded the piece again on a hurdy-gurdy in the apiary at Easton College and that too was broadcast.

I am completely thrilled on so many levels. I've always enjoyed Eddie's broadcasting, and his comments after the first airing were fantastic. So many friends have emailed me and taken pleasure in the broadcast; and best of all, St George Colegate has beaten every other church organ to get on to Radio 4. They can broadcast Liverpool Cathedral (or Norwich, for that matter), but they cannot be first - because that was us!

*Ancient and Modern: Saturday 10th
October 2009*

Martin J Cottam

The medieval church of St Agnes, Cawston is huge. If situated in a large metropolis it would no doubt be saddled by now with an all too typically inflated mish-mash of an organ, all leathered diapasons, fat flutes, and high pressure trombas. A 16ft extension of the Tuba might be available on the pedals and there would, almost certainly, have been the addition of an uncased Positive division sometime in the 1960s or 70s. All would be frustratingly crushed into a chamber apparently designed to suppress rather than aid full tonal egress. Fortunately Cawston is a small village in rural Norfolk and therefore its church possesses something of much greater interest for devotees of English organ history.

And so it was that a most impressive number of NOA members gathered under the silvery grey oak beams of one of England's most impressive medieval hammerbeam roofs to hear Richard Bower introduce us to the Cawston organ, its history, its recent restoration and the exciting discoveries that restoration has revealed.

Tradition has always maintained that the organ was supplied by George Pike England to the church of St. Stephen's, Norwich in 1813. In 1870 the organ was transferred to Cawston by WC Mack of Yarmouth. At some point (possibly in the 1850s) it was cloaked in a most impressively carved Victorian Gothic casefront in oak. By the late 1960s the organ was in a poor state and from 1984 only the Great was playable. Buried deep in the north part of the chancel the already

diminished organ made little impression in the nave. Mercifully the church community was bold enough to agree to a thorough restoration and Richard duly knuckled down to the work in 2008.

Once in the workshop the organ began to reveal its long hidden secrets. Most intriguingly Richard discovered the oak soundboard originally housed over 100 pallets, almost twice as many as the 54 now in use. From this evidence Richard was able to deduce the instrument was "at heart a two manual organ: great organ, and choir by communication (borrowing); a style used by Renatus Harris." Careful inspection revealed both the soundboard and a considerable amount of the Great chorus pipework to be of seventeenth century origin, maybe even pre-Restoration. Such discoveries immediately catapult the Cawston organ towards the forefront of the list of historic English organs of national importance.

The restored organ now sits proudly at the east end of the south aisle from where its tonal qualities can be properly appreciated throughout the church. Richard rightly considered the instrument to be far too interesting to be saddled with equal temperament tuning and Young's Temperament was duly chosen thus giving proper character to each of the keys, a goodly sprinkling of perfect thirds and fifths, and an extra tang to the already spicy Sesquialtera.

Richard very kindly demonstrated the organ's various colours, both individually and in ensemble before removing various side panels of the case to allow visual inspection of the inner workings as members took their turn to play this remarkable instrument. We duly marvelled at G P England's 'Nag's Head Swell' mechanism and noted its uncanny

resemblance to a Newcomen beam engine. And humour was provided by Richard's inadvertent touch of the blower plug switch with his foot as Harry Macey's fingers tickled the ivories. From Bach to Ligeti at the flick of a switch!

Our heartfelt thanks go to Richard not only for completing such a magnificent work of restoration on this very special organ but also for so generously giving us his time and commitment for a morning before having to rush off to play for a wedding in Dereham. And organ lovers everywhere owe a debt of gratitude to the PCC and congregation at St Agnes for committing themselves to the rescue of this national treasure. It remains to be seen whether this organ, sitting as it does in its Victorian clothing in deepest Norfolk, will ever be mentioned in the same breath as those at Adlington Hall, Framlingham, Finedon, or St Botolph's Aldgate. But we know it's there, and the vicar's wife (herself a 'reluctant organist') has given us an open invitation to go and enjoy it.

From medieval Gothic grandeur to post-war American colonial classicism. The afternoon saw many of us, and several additions, regather in the intimate surroundings of All Saints, Bawdeswell, a church controversially rebuilt in a neo-classical style following the destruction of the former building by a wayward Mosquito fighter bomber that failed to make it back to base after a mission in 1944! There is a west gallery on which sits an organ case now housing a recently installed Makin/Johannus digital organ. Resident organist James Lilwall gave us a warm welcome and a brief introduction to the history both of the building and the organ project before demonstrating the

instrument's capabilities with a short and varied recital programme.

The essentially 'baroque' specification is spread over two manuals and pedals and comprises 42 speaking stops. I was intrigued to hear how this pipeless organ compared to others I've heard in the past. Listening to James and then other members playing I have to be honest and say that, to my ears at any rate, pieces using single stops or combinations of just 2 or 3 colours worked best. The sound is more 'neo-baroque' than baroque and the plenum sounded rather harsh at times. I would have preferred a greater feeling of warmth and 'gravitas' such as can be heard on many of the surviving instruments of the baroque era to be found in Holland or Germany. This lack of 'depth' is a common problem with most of the pipeless organs I've heard and is probably rooted in the speaker systems used (and I confess here I am no expert in these matters!). The large 'touring' organs used by Carlo Curley and some of the organs built by Copeman-Hart remain the most successful pipeless examples I've so far heard in situ. The pipe v. pipeless debate is one that will rumble on and on! Digital organs are getting better and better by the year but... ?

Beyond all argument is the warmth and generosity of James Lilwall's hospitality. With the sun now shining, members revelled in the invitation to partake of refreshments in the beautifully restored and maintained surrounds of James's house and garden next to the churchyard. It was a most fitting way to bring a richly rewarding day to a close.

A Peep into the Archives 14

Compiled by Tim Patient

From Issue No.35, Winter 1976:

1976 sees the Annual Conference of the IAO coming to Norwich in August.

It is a pity that Norwich, 'A Fine City', cannot offer the congress visitors a fine organ in a public building. Our only 'Public' organ is that in St Andrew's Hall and the least said about that and the condition into which it has been allowed to deteriorate, the better. Much could be done to this instrument to bring it into line with modern thought without having to rebuild it in any drastic way as was proposed some years ago but one wonders now whether the state of the instrument warrants the necessary money being spent on it to put it into decent playing order – and it can be done – is now worth it in the eyes of the City Fathers and those who have the task to advise them.

Following the support given to 'Music at Cawston' in September 1975, another event in the series has been planned for 1976 – this time to be held at Oxnead Mill on Saturday 12 June at 8.00p.m. (by kind permission of Mr and Mrs James Crampton). Once again, it is hoped that the members of 'Rentachoir' (under the direction of member Peter Clifford) will provide the choral element of the evening's music, plus a guest theatre organist whose name will be announced later.

Considerable time was spent on the Guild's financial position at the annual general meeting following the announcement of a loss on 1975 activities, and most similar organisations have had similar problems. Whilst it is probable that subscription rates could be so devised

as to avoid any financial problems, sharp increases could be self-defeating in the long term and would certainly undo the efforts made since 1972 in increasing membership, the only long-term solution to a viable organisation.

The closed church of S Philip, Heigham, Norwich, contained an organ by WC Mack of Great Yarmouth, built in 1870. Originally installed in the north of the chancel it was moved to the opposite side by Norman and Beard. It was what might have been described as a good 'bread and butter' instrument and well up to its maker's high standard of good, solid craftsmanship. Alas, this organ is no more. Over the course of time vandals who have broken into the Church have destroyed almost every part of the instrument upon which they could lay their hands and what was left has been 'rescued' by a gentleman from Lowestoft.

On 17th January about 100 organists from all over England made their way to Brandon at the invitation of Messrs JW Walker & Sons Ltd., to tour their new works and to listen to a recital on a new organ which is shortly to be shipped to Nigeria and installed in Trinity Methodist Church, Tinubu, a suburb of Lagos. Their factory is set in an acre of delightful woodland on the town's industrial estate and, undoubtedly, the peace and quiet must be a great asset to the Organ Builder.

From Issue No. 36, Spring 1976

The committee hopes that all members will turn out on Wednesday 16th June at Norwich Cathedral at 8pm for member Tom Corfield when he gives a recital at the end of his three-year sojourn as both Cathedral Organ Scholar and student at the UEA. This will be the Guild's best way of saying 'Thank You!'

to Tom for his interest in, and help to the Guild in the last three years and at the same time wishing him 'All the best' for his future career.

Our first meeting of the year was held on 28th February at Centre '71 in conjunction with the local members of the RSCM when Mr Basil Ramsey, well known to us as the most capable Editor of 'The Organists' Review' and who has now established his own music publishing business (in which we wish him every success) after being with the firm of Novello for many years, gave us some good food for thought in 'A Repertoire for the Village Organist and Choirmaster'. It was good to see so many members present so many, in fact, that extra seating had to be brought into the Conference Room.

The first part of his talk to us was illustrated by tape-recordings of music – firstly for the Communion Service, Series Three, by Peter Hurford, and which we were able to follow from the musical scores kindly provided by Mr Ramsey. After an interval for tea, we proceeded to the Chapel of King Edward VI School, where Mr Ramsey played for us some music suitable for many different occasions in the Church's year. It was good to see the CH Trevor organ books were still available and the two books from which Mr Ramsey played his selections, were well worth obtaining as they contained some organ music of all types, relatively simple, by past and present composers and represented excellent value for money in these days.

Migrations of organs from redundant churches make interesting news and two City organs have found new homes. The 1860 Mark Noble organ which stood in St Margaret de Westwick has been moved to Barningham Parish

Church, near Saxthorpe and the organ, originally by Corps and rebuilt as a two-manual by Middleton of Norwich in 1925/6 for All Saints' Church, Timberhill, Norwich, has been installed in Holy Trinity Church, Rackheath. Both these moves were carried out by Messrs. E. and W Storr.

Mr Richard Bower informs me that the Mark Noble organ mentioned in the last issue of this Newsletter at West Bradenham Parish Church, had the whole of the Swell organ removed when the organ was last restored in 1973, leaving it as a one-manual with 7 speaking stops and a pedal Bourdon with a manual to Pedal coupler. He also informs me that Messrs E & W Storr have recently carried out restoration work to the organs in Watton Parish Church, a major rebuild of a Norman & Beard organ: at Hethersett Methodist Church, organ by Middleton and at West Winch Parish Church, organ by Peter Conacher.

Morningthorpe Parish Church, near Long Stratton, has recently lost its old American organ and an electronic instrument has taken its place. This is a 'Bird' Church Model with two 44-note manuals and an indescribable pedal board.

The Forster & Andrews Organ which formerly stood in Christ Church, Lowestoft, has been moved to the Hall of Kirkley School, where it sounds well in its new surroundings. Christ Church has received the Norman & Beard organ from the now closed St Peter's, Lowestoft, installed by Bishop and Son.

The fine little 1837 Russell Chamber organ which stood in Field Dalling Parish Church and which was replaced by a second hand Conacher organ of two manuals and pedals installed by Messrs Boggis & Briscoe, of Diss, has

been 'standing-in' at Wilby Parish Church, near Stradbroke, Suffolk, whilst the organ there which bore the nameplate of Norman & Beard but which was a hotch-potch organ added to by a previous and over-enthusiastic organ-loving Incumbent, has been completely rebuilt by Messrs Boggis & Briscoe.

Saxlingham Nethergate Parish Church organ, yet another Norman & Beard, is to be completely restored and fitted with a new electric action by Messrs E & W Storr.

Intwood Parish Church has now taken possession of a new Electronic Organ, the 'Sprowston Organ' made by Norwich Organ Manufacturers of Cromwell Road, Norwich. This has allowed the 'Hammond' which had been on loan to the Church for some long time to be returned to its owner's home...

Mr Graham Dickerson has been appointed Organist and Choirmaster at Dereham Parish Church in succession to Mr John Ince. Mr Dickerson, a one-time pupil of Mr Kenneth Ryder, has previously held positions at St Mary Magdalene, Norwich and at Shotesham Parish Church.

Organ News

Geoff Sankey

Holmes & Swift have completed their renovation of the three manual Walker organ in Sandringham parish church. It was re-dedicated in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh on Nov 1st, leading to Edmund Holmes being introduced to the Queen.

Installed in 1909 at a cost of £1,498, the instrument was donated by Edward VII. Tonally, the instrument has not been changed during the recent work, although behind the scenes an action incorporating compound magnets has been installed. Edmund tells me that this gives a very fast and responsive action, and replaces the original Walker pneumatic action which had become unreliable and difficult to maintain. Visually, the only significant result of their labours has been the cleaning and polishing of the spotted metal front pipes.

In addition to work outside East Anglia, they are working at Heckington in Lincolnshire repairing water damage to the substantial three manual Brindley and Forster instrument, and preparing to restore and reinstate the instrument from Lakenham which they took into storage a while back prior to other works in the church.

W & A Boggis have been working at Shotesham St Mary, south of Norwich, on the instrument built by R C Nicholson of Newcastle upon Tyne. They have restored the action which had been giving trouble for many years. Still in Norfolk, at Swardeston, they have worked on the swell action to make it more reliable.

At Westhall, in Suffolk, they worked on the keys and action of the six stop, two manual and pedal Walker instrument. Out of East Anglia they have carried out a complete restoration of a previously untouched two manual and pedal Vowles 1880 organ at Winford near Bristol. They have also rebuilt and installed a house organ at the home of Dr David Baker, the former Norwich Diocesan Organ Advisor who has now retired to his native Yorkshire.

For your diary

Forthcoming Association Events

Saturday 16th January 2010, Holy Trinity Church, Essex St, Norwich at 7pm:

Quiz & Chips: We welcome in a new year of events in the traditional manner by eating fried food and wrestling with a new selection of Martin Cottam's brain teasers. Please let Martin know by **Saturday 9th January at the latest** if you are coming and require Fish & Chips. £5 per head. Mouth watering!

Saturday 20th February, Brooke Church at 2.30pm:

Tritones and other musical sins: Ron Watson, NOA's very own *compositeur célèbre*, takes an inquisitive and light-hearted look at some of the rules of music, past and present.

Saturday 27th March, St Thomas's Church, Earlham Road, Norwich at 11.30am:

Annual General Meeting: Once again our AGM will follow the format that has become so appreciated in recent years, namely the **business meeting** (will we complete it within 35 minutes for the 3rd year running?!) followed by a **buffet lunch** and a concluding **organ recital**.

Sadly, having enjoyed free lunches for the last 3 years, Association Members will be required to pay £5 each for the buffet (£7 per head for non-members). Both charges are subsidized amounts and so represent good value for money without putting undue strain on the Association's accounts!

Once again we hope a good number of you will be able to attend what has become such an enjoyable point of contact with other members.

For catering purposes please let Martin Cottam know by Wednesday 17th March at the latest if you wish to have the buffet lunch.

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.

Last date for copy for the next Journal is Saturday 20th February 2010

Why not send your contribution by email

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