

# The Journal

Number 72

Summer 2010



Published by the  
Norfolk Organists Association

*The editor writes.....*

Sir Ernest Gowers was an Hon. D.Litt of Manchester University, an Hon. Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, an Hon. ARIBA and one time President of the English Association and was educated at Rugby. Sir Bruce Fraser was educated at Bedford School and Trinity College, Cambridge where he took a 'Double First' in Classics and English. Riveting – but what has this got to do with the Norfolk Organists Association? - Well, the lack of an apostrophe after the S in organists.

After the last issue I was challenged, (very nicely), as to whether or not there should be an apostrophe after the S in 'organists'. I thought not. There is no apostrophe in Bowls Club, or Darts Club or Citizens Advice Bureau. However, because these things matter to me I consulted *The Complete Plain Words* by Sir Ernest Gowers revised by Sir Bruce Fraser. (It is published by Penguin and if you care about the correct use of English then this is an essential for your bookshelf).

The reason why there is no apostrophe necessary after 'organists' in Organists Association, (or Organists Review for that matter!), is because the word 'organists' in this context is adjectival, it describes the nature of the association. Organists do not own the association any more than the darts own the darts club – how could they?

Apologies for the lateness of this issue. Isabel and I have been in Australia and Singapore. Had our original plan come about I would have been back in time to get the Journal out on time but we were delayed for 2 weeks by the volcanic ash crisis and only got back on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

The trip had been booked for some time and was scheduled to begin in Melbourne with a visit to our dear friends June Nixon and her husband Neville and another chance to play probably the best example of TC Lewis on earth. There were no other visits to organs anticipated but as it turned out I was to encounter two others by pure chance. In Adelaide it turned out that the lady in the cathedral shop was the sister of the lady organist, Shirley Gale, who was due to arrive any minute, and indeed she did. Before many minutes had elapsed I was seated at the console of the four manual Hill, Norman & Beard, and what a delightful instrument it is. It is due for some attention and it seems that Harrisons are in line for the work.



*Shirley Gale and yours truly - Adelaide*

At another stage in our peregrinations we found ourselves in Newcastle (NSW) Cathedral and another chance encounter with their youngest ever organist who was most insistent that I try the cathedral's 3 manual Norman & Beard built here in Norwich.

The only other cathedral we were in was in Singapore which looks like an English parish church which has been whitewashed. The only incentive for entry

was the hope of finding some respite from the heat and humidity but that was denied us. This must be the only building in Singapore without air-conditioning and they badly need it. The organ here was perched up above the west door and in my hot and sweaty state I was not remotely interested in finding out anything about it. But I did notice that Martin Setchell was due to give recital there in aid of the organ fund and noticed that his programme included Sousa. I can think of nothing worse than sitting dripping in perspiration listening to Sousa on the organ!

### **Organists wanted**

#### *St Mary's Church North Tuddenham*

Usually 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of each month at 9.20 am 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday - Morning Prayer (BCP) Fees by negotiation  
Bevington organ 2 manuals (13 stops)  
Contact *Geoffrey Dann* 01362 637225

*Princes Street URC Norwich* will be requiring an organist from the beginning of September. The church has a fine 2 manual Willis organ. Services are held on Sunday morning at 10. 30 am and very occasionally there is an afternoon or evening service. Payment and conditions of service will generally be in accordance with the recommendations of the RSCM.

If you find this position of interest please contact Miss J Helen Read either in writing to Princes St URC Norwich NR3 1AZ or by telephone to 01603 454253

### ***Visit to the Near East – Organ Crawl 17th April 2010***

*John Plunkett*

We awoke to the sound of the father blackbird calling at the window for breakfast. It was already clear, and the sun shone out of the blue. After our breakfast we trickled over to Blofield parish church and met up with other members totalling around eighteen of the usual suspects.

Blofield Church is of generous proportions and has a sizeable congregation. I was delighted to find the heating on for a wedding We received a very warm welcome from the Rev Paul Cubitt who also stayed with us for some time showing a real interest in our activities and organ matters in general. In addition a lady who arrived for some other purpose kindly took the trouble to provide us with tea.

The Organ is by Hill and dates from 1880, by which time Thomas Hill was in charge and only six years later started building the Sydney Town Hall monster. It did not arrive in Blofield until installed by Boggis in 1999. It was originally built for St Peter's, Highgate Hill, Upper Holloway, North London, for £315. By 1888 N&B had made small additions and repairs were carried out in 1895.

The transplant has been most successful. The bold and vigorous sound fills its new home admirably although only a 19 stop 2m + p. This includes trumpet on the great, three reeds for the swell, and the addition of a new II rank mixture for the great. Two minor disappointments were the balanced swell pedal which dangerously overhangs C sharp & D sharp pedals, and the rather blatant break in the II rank mixture at g



above middle c. And I do miss a Stopped Diapason for the great, but Hohl Flutes and Clarabellas were once all the rage.

Tim Patient opened with Bach, the greatest organ prover, making most of the above irrelevant. Others enjoyed the colours and the dB output!! Well done Blofield.

A short journey took us to South Walsham parish church where we encountered an open church but a locked organ. A quick phone call to our contact elicited a fairly complex set of instructions which I must not reveal. The key was discovered and playing commenced, but only when Tim slid the single manual forward to engage the action. Here stands, at the West End, the rebuilt remains of a G P England chamber organ provided in 1795 for what is now the Assembly Rooms in Norwich. It was moved to St Andrew, Norwich, and later to St Laurence, getting larger and sillier. Eventually it was returned bravely to something like its original form by Wood Wordsworth & Co. in 1972, through the generosity of Lord Fairhaven. In a Georgian classical case with speaking front pipes it looked at home in the building. For me it sounded rather clean and lacked the "zizz" and life of the England of St George's Colegate. Players enjoyed it but realised its limitations.

Time for lunch, and members made their way to places of their choice to eat and drink. By now it was really hot. A few of us ate at the Fairhaven Trust which was only round the corner and quite good. Arriving early at St Edmund's, Acle, Ginny had a look round while I had a premature lie down in the churchyard in the sun.

We reassembled at two o'clock and were welcomed, again warmly, by Rev

Martin Greenland and his wife, telling us briefly about Acle Parish Church and handing over the key for the console. Mrs. Greenland stayed to the end! Before the playing began I read the obituary for Derek Jones as it appeared in the IBO newsletter. Derek was a revered organ pipe maker. His last work was the mixture for St Thomas's Earlham Rd., but his first work was the Gt. Principal for Acle. I was pressed to play, and so a three-fold Amen at 8ft pitch was sounded on the lone Principal. There followed this first opus, at least 70,455 pipes, over the next 35years.

The organ started life in 1904 as a "Bedwell & Sons", followed by Bishop, 1934 Cedric Arnold, Williamson & Hyatt 1965, and Boggis, 1997. The appearance and voicing remain firmly that of 1965. It is situated in the northwest corner, and "built-in" avoiding the need for a bass side and a back. It stands on a 4ft plinth, giving the organist a good view to the east end. The front pipes are housed in simple rectangular frames and egress of sound is enhanced by grills formed from interwoven wood strips, beloved of Cedric Arnold for his plain cases. Clifford Hyatt's re-use of available pipe work is imaginative and his voicing remains bold, meticulous, and points to his Willis apprenticeship. The plain but finely crafted oak console is sturdy and timeless. Ginny described the sound as "not for the faint hearted" and "able to wake the most somnolent congregation". Players gave it a good outing and I agree with my wife.

Thanks are due to Martin Cottam for the excellent arrangements, we had an enjoyable day.



## *Tritones and other musical sins*

Harry Macey

(\*\* *Comments in italics are mine, not Ron's!*)

For February's meeting some twenty-five members gathered in Brooke Church Hall to hear our own Ronald Watson discuss some of the applications of harmonic idioms and 'rules'. Ron is a well-established craftsman of a composer and, of course, the editor of NOA's excellent Journal. Ron began by explaining that the 'rules' in musical harmonisation are analogous to a language. In German we may say "Ich habe meinen Schlüssel verloren"; but, in English, we would not say "I have my keys lost." Ron gave several further amusing examples of the use of harmonic idioms in assorted contexts.

'Rules' and 'good practice' change with the passing of time. We were given a chronological account of accepted musical behaviour through the centuries accompanied by CD tracks and demonstrations at the piano. Ron began with late mediæval *organum* and the beginnings of polyphony as we know it. On to '*Diabolus in Musica*', the tritone, which was an anathema to the Church. Ron's clear explanation concluded with more recent examples from Saint-Saëns' *Danse Macabre* and Holst's *Uranus* illustrating the way this naughty interval may instil mystery and eeriness.

Ron then moved on to the bogie of consecutive fifths and octaves, placing before us an interesting selection of Anglican chants, and pointing out accepted practice within a tonal, largely nineteenth century context. The fine G minor chant by Samuel Wesley (Parish

Psalter 64) exemplified a well-written example - good tonal shape and part-writing, logical modulation and of a mood appropriate for a meditative psalm. With the breakdown of tonality in the late nineteenth century, composers risked more adventurous harmonies, even in Anglican chants! We were shown examples by Prof Lionel Pike and Paul Trepte deliberately containing consecutive fifths. A particularly dreadful chant by Michael Nicholas gave us a rare example of a largely atonal chant which is totally unsingable and would distract from Coverdale's glorious words. One of Ron's own chants showed conservative harmony and grammar in chant-writing, whilst being original and well-crafted. (\*\* *After all, it is the words that are paramount. There are many fine chants written in recent decades; there are also, alas, too many from the "look how clever I can be" school of composition! My Grammar School music master would say, "Write me a double-chant for tomorrow, Macey!" The next lesson was always a real education in musical discipline!*).

To conclude this section of his talk, Ron invited us to study Stainer's *All for Jesus*, the hymn tune which concludes his *Crucifixion*. (\*\**probably the best item in this perennial favourite*). A further example of a superb hymn-tune with a more modern feel, with good part-writing and well-crafted, grammatical harmony, is Francis Jackson's *East Acklam* (AMNS 457, CP 254, New Methodist 342(i)). Dr Jackson intended this tune for *God that madest earth and heaven* as an uplifting vehicle for those reassuring words, (\*\**surely a more preferable alternative to the dreariness of Ar hyd a nos*).

Ron illustrated the effect of inappropriate harmonic idioms in the

'wrong' context. Good examples were exemplified by the parallel Sop/Bass octaves at the end of Vaughan Williams' *O Taste and See* and the parallel fifth fanfares which open William Mathias' *Processional for Organ* (OUP)

Concluding his splendid talk, and reflecting his introductory comments, Ron underlined the point that you should 'stay in the language you're in'.

After some interesting questions a welcome cup of tea was waiting for us kindly provided by David Watson and friends.

### *Noises off*

*Tony Leake*

Over the past three years at every opportunity I have been visiting Norfolk Churches and have managed to play the organ in 250 of them so far. All these I have photographed and recorded and incidentally helped to amend and correct the National Pipe Organ Register. Thank you to all the clergy, organists and churchwardens who have so kindly helped me in this.

Although I have sat down at a few of the grander instruments it has really given me the greater pleasure to discover a dusty and unsurveyed specimen in a dark corner of a remote church and bring it to life for a brief moment. Norfolk's organ heritage is truly rich and sadly little appreciated.

The organist of course is not always in the best position to appreciate the sound of the instrument he is playing. Listening to my recordings in the quiet of my own home it is amazing to see how my assessment of an instrument changes, and

what an extraordinary assortment of noises off I have captured.

My recordings compete with vacuum cleaners busy in the aisles, stiff brushes on the chancel steps, flower arrangers clanking buckets and unwrapping tissue paper, high heels on flagstones and at Heydon a downpour on the roof. (Some folk may think it does no harm for my playing to be drowned out!) A sudden door slam preceded a gust of wind blowing my music off the rest at Bacton and a loud clunk preceding my playing at Knapton was my head banging on the pulpit as I straightened up from setting my recorder. At non-conformist churches playing a hymn has more than once been the signal for whoever is in the building to break into song.

At Hempstead during a village open day I expressed an interest in the little Bevington (see picture) and was invited to play. I did have a go but was competing with Mr Cushing's raucous mechanical organ outside on the green and with only two stops at my disposal it was no contest. I met Mr Cushing at a later village event and mentioned that I had been playing the church organ. He said "I bet you couldn't play this on a church organ!" and from his stack of music books selected a fast and furious piece called 'Dizzy Fingers'. Well I have tracked this down, it is a novelty piano piece by Zez Confrey and I have been hammering it out on the piano at ever increasing speed. I hope soon to be able to accept the challenge.





## ***Dr Bexfield 1824 - 1853***

*Submitted by Pauline Stratton*

*From the Norwich Mercury dated 5th November 1853*

It is the lot of the few to reach the highest aim of their ambition, but it is the lot of many to be struck down at the moment, when they have arrived at the threshold of the temple of fame having attained the respect and esteem which awaits on enthusiasm, on genius, on ability, and industry. The last position has been unhappily the fate of Dr Bexfield, whose death we this have week recorded and whose early taking off, many, and particularly his musical fellow citizens, will sincerely regret.

Born in this city Norwich of humble, but industrious parents, and having a good voice he entered the choir of the Cathedral under the present organist, early exhibiting considerable natural talent, and a strong feeling for the art, and that desire to excel, which continued through his brief career. Amateurs will be able to recall the energy and feeling with which the then dark, bright eyed, little boy entered into every part he undertook; the quickness with which he appreciated, and the enthusiasm with which he sang his part. His voice was a contralto, of power and richness; and in the early part of his musical life he often sang at the private concerts, given by Bishop Stanley, at the Palace, where he was a deserved favourite

On his voice breaking, he became an apprentice to Doctor, then Mr Buck, and continued with that Professor, as an assistant, for many years. During his apprenticeship, he let slip no opportunity to improve himself, particularly on the

organ, which was his favourite instrument and it is but just to the deceased to say that it is mainly to his own determined perseverance and indomitable energy and enthusiasm for his profession, and laudable desire of eminence that he was indebted for the proficiency and power he undoubtedly possessed on the instrument.

On the organist's situation at Boston, Lincolnshire, becoming vacant, he became a candidate and was successful, after a trial of skill over several competitors. Dr, then Mr Bexfield gave lessons on the piano-forte and singing in that city and obtained speedily a most respectable support. Having determined to take a degree of Musical Bachelor, at Oxford, he became a member of New College, and offered himself for examination. The then Professor of Music at the University was Dr Crotch, himself a son of a Norwich citizen, and like the young professor, who then appeared before him, had commenced life possessing but little beyond his own genius and industry. The exercise Mr Bexfield wrote was considered highly creditable and the general knowledge of the theory as well as the practical he displayed was highly complimented by the veteran composer. While in Boston, Dr Bexfield became attached to the daughter of a solicitor of high repute, to whom he was ultimately engaged but before he married he proceeded to Cambridge at which University he entered himself as a candidate for a Doctor's degree. Whether at his age this was a prudent step, it is not for us to decide, but it forms another proof of a not unworthy ambition, although tinged perhaps with too stronger feeling of self- esteem. But what great deed is accomplished without this quality?

Dr Bexfield then married. An organist being required for the Church of St Helen, Bishopsgate Dr Bexfield entered the field against about thirty antagonists. After a trial, five were selected for judgement, which was decided in Dr Bexfield's favour, after having played one of Sebastian Bach's pedal fugues in so masterly a style as to distance all competitors, Dr Bexfield then took up his residence in London, practised his profession, and composed a variety of works both for the pianoforte and the organ, indicating considerable talent, and that indomitable industry and energy, which were his leading characteristics. His studies had been principally directed to the works of Handel, and his whole mind had evidently been absorbed with the worthy desire to compose an oratorio for the Festival of his native city and it is but too probable that to this strain upon the mental and bodily powers such a work and its performance, and its subsequent preparation for publication caused, may be attributed the more rapid progress of the disease which originally rose out of laborious industry, without the power to obtain a corresponding generous diet in early life. On his *Israel Restored* it is needless to offer any observations, having so recently, at the Festival, and at its preceding performance by the Choral Society, expressed our opinions of its merits. Dr Bexfield, among other vocal music, was the composer of two glees which won, in two successive years, the prize offered by the Halifax Harmonic Society, and contended for by highly accomplished composers. Dr Bexfield's instrument was the organ - his playing was full of fire and feeling, with great execution, and exhibited the same characteristics as his singing did as a boy.

Some time since, the disease which killed him made itself manifest, but we understand it was long before he could be impressed with the danger it threatened. At length, however, he became sensible of the consequences and we are told by one who was with him, that he bore the knowledge with a strength of mind and an obedient humility which still further elevated his character in the estimation of those near him. Had it pleased Providence to have permitted Dr Bexfield to have run a longer course, there was that in the composition of his mind and character which, as years gave experience, as his judgement ripened by increased intercourse with high art and artists, and the enthusiastic energy of youth became matured, softened and regulated, promised to lead to a high position in his profession for, with his other attributes, Dr Bexfield possessed a desire for fame, which enabled him to combat and overcome difficulties, before which, probably, many would have shrunk appalled. We doubt if Dr Bexfield ever admitted the idea of an impossibility; on the contrary, such was the enthusiastic energy of his character and his perseverance, that to him all things seemed possible. His last hours were not passed, perhaps, in so much suffering to himself as to those around him, for his death was occasioned by an ulceration of the bowels; and, when the last stage in this disease arrived on Thursday, the 26th he became unconscious, and so remained until Saturday, when death closed the career of one whose short existence has neither been useless nor his example unprofitable, and who deserves a place among the records of the citizens of Norwich who in their degrees have been held worthy a remembrance of regard. But if in his



public career Dr Bexfield deserved respect, one fact speaks more strongly still for his private virtues. To his aged father and mother, whose life has been one of laborious industry, he has been an admirable son. Amid the attractions of fame he never forgot for a moment the position of his parents, and it was among his greatest pleasures to add to their happiness and comforts. Dr Bexfield leaves a widow, who is not far from her confinement, and two little boys. The former unhappily is in a most dangerous state, arising from fatigue of the body, excitement and distress of mind, and from breathing the fearful atmosphere to which her attentive affection to her husband subjected her during the latter part of his existence. On Thursday she fell into a state of stupor, from which, on Tuesday last, she had not then been able to be roused, and still both unconscious and in danger. Poor Bexfield's remains were, of necessity, interred on Monday, at Paddington Church; his attached friend, the Rev John E Cox, (son of Mr Cox of this city). Rector of St Helen's, Bishopsgate, who had been with him during the last fortnight of his sufferings, paying his last tribute by the performance of the service.

In St Helen's, Bishopgate, we are told, there has been but one feeling, that of deep regret at his loss; for he had won from all, the warmest respect. But, in the words of a composition he loved and studied - *Bright scenes he seeks above,  
In the realm of peace and love.*

We regret to understand, that in addition to the deep affliction his widow and fatherless children suffer in the loss of a husband and parent, they are left without any means of support. A musical friend writing to us on the subject, says "There

never was a time when Old Norwich did not respond to the call of the afflicted and distressed in mind, body or estate and I am quite sure that those who have the means and those who have the will, under such peculiar circumstances as these (musical and unmusical) will not be backward in taking such steps as they may think best to aid the children and wife of a native, whose career, though brief, has done Norwich Honour."

Bexfield died aged 29. A concert to raise money for his widow and family took place on Christmas Eve 1853 in St Andrew's Hall. Snow made the roads extremely difficult for travelling so the start of the concert was delayed. Having paid 10/6d for a reserved seat many battled through, determined not to miss the chance to hear Her Majesty's private band and Her Majesty's private organist, Mr Cusins, aged 19, perform works by Spohr, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Weber. Three of Bexfield's songs - two from *Israel Restored* and the third from an unfinished manuscript of an oratorio - were also performed. The generosity of the railway company in allowing performers and instruments to travel to and from Norwich without charge and that of the gas company, who did not charge for lighting the hall, helped in raising a total of 500 guineas for the bereaved.

*Reproduced with the permission of the EDP.*

## *A Peep into the Archives 16*

*Compiled by Tim Patient*

*From Issue 39, Winter 1977:*

The IAO Congress at Norwich, August 1976 – John Jordan, President of the IAO:

The sun shone down on the members of the 1976 IAO Congress as they made their way through the gentle Norfolk countryside to the College of Education at Keswick, a couple of miles from the County Town of Norwich. I cannot remember Congress being more comfortable accommodated, or more amply fed than it was at Keswick, and this friendly note of hospitality was struck again at the Civic Reception which took place in the City Hall, Norwich, presided over by Mrs Valerie Guttman, the deputy Lord Mayor. From this, members passed to the Cathedral where Michael Nicholas welcomed us and illustrated the many facets of the Cathedral Organ, culminating in an organ recital.

After the first rehearsal of the Congress Choir, which quickly mastered Bruckner's *Locus Iste* and two short anthems by SS Wesley and David Lord, the AGM moved through without event. This was followed by an illuminating account of some aspects of Church music across the Atlantic, given by Gregory Colson, one of Congress' most colourful characters. Coaches then took us through the rolling Norfolk countryside for a visit to Walsingham, where David Sanger gave a recital in the Parish Church, so delightfully restored. Music of a different order delighted us in the evening when we visited Blackfriars Hall in Norwich for a most entertaining and varied concert given by the Baccholian Singers.

Two fascinating and completely contrasting lectures filled the Wednesday morning. Allan Darby traced the development of music printing and Felix Apprahamian, giving the RCO lecture, spoke of the changes in fashion in organ recital programmes over the past fifty years. During the free afternoon, members of the Hymn Society arrived at Keswick and we joined forces for an illuminating talk given by the Dean of Norwich on the contemporary significance of Cathedrals, and in the evening we met for a recital given by Nicholas Kynaston on the lovely organ in Wymondham Abbey.

With the Hymn Society, we also heard Arthur Hutchings, in typically discursive vein, range over the subject of JB Dykes, and then to the coaches this time, southwards towards Suffolk. Harrison Oxley gave a delightful recital at Framlingham and the company then split, some to look at railway engines at Bressingham and others to breathe in the stately atmosphere of Heveningham Hall. In the evening, we once again combined with the Hymn Society in an Act of Praise in Norwich Cathedral under the direction of Canon Cyril Taylor, their President. The three Congress Choir anthems were slotted in to a collection of ten hymns – in all, an interesting experiment.

Michael Nicholas spoke on problems besetting Cathedral musicians today, and, all too soon, Congress reached its close with a formal lunch. Various informal entertainments were then arranged for those who wished to remain through to Saturday, but the writer had left the scene by then.

It was a great pleasure and an honour for the Guild to have Dr. Arthur Wills, Organist and Master of the Music at Ely Cathedral come to hold an Organ



Masterclass on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November 1976. Some fifty or so members and guests attended this event which was held at Christ Church, Eaton. Dr Wills was no stranger to the instrument which was originally built by Norman & Beard in 1890, rebuilt by H F Betts, of Norwich in 1933 and again rebuilt by Hill, Norman & Beard in 1967, as it was he who re-opened the instrument, which is of two manuals and pedals containing 18 speaking stops.

Seven 'guinea pigs' selected their own music for Dr Wills' comments which were relayed to those present by a suitable public-address system and thus the audience was able to listen attentively to the well-chosen and constructive criticism that Dr Wills gave to each performer. These were Richard Bower, John Burton, Gordon Busbridge, Timothy Collins, Bertram Purchase, Roger Rayner and John Ross. (Why no ladies, I wonder?) and all acquitted themselves well and benefited from the helpful advice and comments made.

It was good to hear such a high standard of playing from all who submitted themselves to this 'ordeal' and we thank them for doing so.

It would not have been possible to hold this popular event without the help and assistance so kindly given by the Revd. Geoffery Phillips, Vicar of Eaton: Neville Willis, Organists and Choirmaster at the Church, and to the Eastern Arts Association and our thanks are extended to them as well as to Dr. Wills for making such an enjoyable and instructive afternoon possible.

This event was followed in the Evening by the Annual Dinner, held at the Hotel Norwich, when our guests were our Patron, the Rt Revd Maurice Wood and

Mrs Wood, and Dr Arthur Wills and Mrs Wills.

Our President, Mr Michael Nicholas (and we were extremely pleased to welcome Mrs Nicholas as well,) ably guided the proceedings after a most enjoyable meal, and proposed the Loyal Toast. Our Patron, the Lord Bishop of Norwich proposed the health of the guests and spoke appreciatively of the work which organists rendered to the Church and Dr Wills proposed the health of the Guild.

We were told by our President that the Organ in St Andrew's Hall had breathed its last solitary note at a function held in the hall in October and that it was now completely unplayable.

It was good to see such a goodly number of members present on this happy occasion and although I did hear folk mention that this may have well been the last Annual Dinner, I am certain that there are many who would be more than upset if this were to be the case. After the tumult and the shouting had died, there was ample time for members to talk – mainly about organs, I expect – to each other and all would agree that this had been a most memorable and happy day.

About 200 people attended the funeral of Jack Burns. Gerald Gifford played the introductory voluntary with James Lilwall playing for the remainder of the Mass. A fitting send off for a well-respected organist.

## *A Cancellation Redeemed*

*Martin J Cottam*

It was with great regret and a decidedly croaky voice that Anne Page informed me via telephone on the morning of Saturday 22nd May that the flu-like affliction that had laid her low earlier in the week had not subsided. There was no alternative but to cancel her eagerly awaited Harmonium presentation at St. George's Colegate later that afternoon. No problem. Emails were sent and phone calls made. For those who did not get the message of cancellation there was always the possibility of enjoying a session on the historic George Pike England organ at St George's instead.

In the end there were 9 of us who turned up for what proved to be a most enjoyable time together due entirely to Anne Duarte's graciousness in allowing us access to the organ gallery for as long as we needed. After a brief spoken introduction to fill us in on the history and defining features of this rare Georgian organ survival, Anne treated us to a short voluntary while we remained in the body of the nave to properly gauge the instrument's presence in the church.

With what effortless ease the warm but clear Diapasons of 1798 spoke into all corners of the building, how bright but easy on the ear the full chorus which Anne employed for the lively second movement. I've heard this organ on several occasions now but this was the first time I'd had opportunity to hear how it sounded from just in front of the altar rail: the full length of the spacious medieval church and the intervening chancel arch did nothing to diminish the sound. Indeed you could almost believe Mr England voiced the

organ specifically for the benefit of any clergyman presiding at the altar so perfectly did volume, clarity of chorus, and warm bass resonance coalesce at that part of the church. As Anne had pointed out, St George's is a rare venue in that we can hear a 200 year old English church organ in its original position and sounding much as it must have been heard by its original congregation.

All who had a desire to play had plenty enough time to explore their talents at the console while others listened or engaged in unhurried conversations. The indisposition of Anne Page was a great misfortune (not least to Anne herself!) but for those who gathered unsuspectingly at St George's our time together proved a most adequate and engaging compensation. Our sincere thanks go to Anne Duarte and if all goes according to plan, Anne Page's Harmonium presentation will now take place sometime in the spring of 2011.





## *Organ News*

*Geoff Sankey*

Bower & Company are continuing their rebuild of the three manual instrument at St. Nicolas's in North Walsham where there are still tonal enhancements to complete. The 1964 electrics are wearing out and the pistons have become unreliable. For this reason there is not a full programme of recitals this summer, but there is a series of summer concerts in the church from May – August. (See details elsewhere in this Journal). Richard has commented on the particular challenges presented by Norman & Beard's ability to pack a lot of organ into a minimum of floor space. In particular, installing a tuba rank recycled from the old Haileybury College organ 30 feet above floor level has required special skills. As well as the work carried out above the four legs that support the case, a new "PureNet" transmission system has been incorporated. Richard writes enthusiastically that this system causes zero delay in the action and thus is faster than a hardwired system.

W & A Boggis are working on the completion of the Casson at Redgrave, Suffolk. This has stood on a west end platform since its construction in 1889 but without a case. Rodney is in the process of adding a new oak case, and will add some further stops in line with the scheme originally planned. This instrument is curious in that it contains Great, Swell and Choir divisions (as well as pedals) but only two manuals at the console. The choir stops are played from the Great (or pedal) by using a piston. They have also cleaned and reinvigorated the one manual Nicholson at Deopham.

Holmes & Swift have been working on the Bishop organ at the London Road Methodist church in Kings Lynn. This instrument was awarded a BIOS Historic Organ Certificate in 2009, and is now being fully restored. This work includes the re-leathering of the windchests and reinstating the clarinet replaced in the past by a nineteenth.

At West Bradenham, they are working on another historic instrument, this time by Mark Noble. This is a single manual organ with a pedal division which was added at a later date. This project will include the re-gilding of the wooden display pipes in the gothic style case.

At St Mark's Oulton Broad they have dismantled the Norman & Beard organ whilst building works are in progress. Although installed by N&B in the 1950s, Edmund believes that the Walker instrument within was originally a house organ, which would account for the fine rosewood case.

They have completed their repair of water damage to the Brindley & Forster organ in Heckington Parish Church, near Sleaford in Lincolnshire. The Cedric Arnold, Williamson & Hyatt organ at St Mary's, Walsingham is to have its electrics completely renewed this summer, including the installation of a new piston memory capture system. The work will be carried out by Holmes & Swift, who maintain the organ.

# For your diary

## Forthcoming Association Events

### **Saturday 19th June, The Electric Picture Palace, Blackmill Road, Southwold, Suffolk at 11am:**

**'Martinikerk Rondeau':** For many members an undoubted highlight of last year's President's Day was the visit to the utterly delightful Electric Picture Palace in Southwold. We are most fortunate then to be making a return visit to this elegant and intimate recreation of a very early cinema where we shall be watching a film entitled 'Martinikerk Rondeau'. 10 minutes short of 2 hours long this fascinating and beautiful documentary by Fugue State Films investigates the spectacular organ heritage of the Dutch city of Groningen and its surrounding province, arguably home to the greatest concentration of historic organs in the world.

At the heart of the film lies the great Arp Schnitger organ of 1692 in the Martinikerk, Groningen and the history and restoration of this sublime instrument is further illuminated by an associated exploration of numerous of the other equally beautiful organs in the area dating from the 16th, 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries.

The main narrative of the film is provided by a series of entertaining and informative interviews with one Cor Eskdes, a 'sprightly' 85 year old expert and enthusiast whose life has been devoted to the study and restoration of the historic organs of Northern Europe. There are also interviews with the renowned organ builder and restorer, Jürgen Ahrend, and musical accompaniment is provided throughout by the immensely gifted organist, Sietze de Vries.

Unless you can understand both Dutch and German you will have to read subtitles throughout but light relief will come in the form of an interval complete with suitably entertaining accompaniment provided by our President on the cinema's own organ as we relax and nibble on our ice creams.

There will be an admission charge of £5 to cover cinema staff costs. Why not make this event part of a whole summer's day out in lovely Southwold?

### **Saturday 17th July, The Ellingham Suite, Park Farm Hotel, Hethersett at 7.30pm:**

**President's Dinner:** This year's President's event will be a sit-down evening meal with guest speaker. Cost: £27 per head. Booking and menu details will be supplied by the President himself in due course.

### **August:**

**Young Organist's Recital:** Details of this year's recitalist, venue and date have yet to be confirmed but when known will be posted on the Association's smart new website. The information will also be posted by email to those members who have given permission to be so contacted.

### **Saturday 18th September, St. Thomas's Church, Earlham Road, Norwich at 11am:**

**J.S. Bach's 'Clavierübung' Part 3:** Harry Macey (our President Elect) presents a lecture recital on this monumental collection "consisting of various preludes on the Catechism and other hymns for the organ... [dedicated to] music lovers and particularly for connoisseurs of such work for the recreation of the spirit".

### **Saturday 9th October, The Old Meeting House, Colegate, Norwich at 2.30pm:**

**A Treasure Chest Unlocked?:** For many years the organ inside the Old Meeting House has presented something of an enigma. The casework certainly dates from the 17th century, but who built it and for where? When did it find its way into this venue and just what manner of pipework lurks within? Is treasure to be found there?

For some time John Plunkett, as a labour of love and employing the lightest and most sensitive of touches, has been returning the organ to playable condition, carefully



recording and documenting his findings each step of the way. He now shares what he has so far unearthed and members will have opportunity to play the instrument and judge for themselves whether treasure has indeed been unearthed in what John is happy to subtitle 'a Restoration Comedy'.

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

**Desert Island Discs:** The date of this year's edition of this popular event and the identity of Ron Watson's castaway 'victim' have yet to be finalised but we are hopeful that Dr Francis Jackson will be able to grace us with his eminent presence and favoured choice of recordings.

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.

**St Andrew's Hall Lunchstop recitals**

All Mondays except \*Tuesdays 17th August and 7th September  
Tickets £2.50 on the door. Concerts start at 1.10pm

July

5th **Peter Crompton** Royal Hospital School, Holbrook  
12th **John Herring** St Mary's, Diss.  
19th **Andrew Parnell** St Albans  
26th **Tim Patient**

AUG

2nd **Robin Jackson & Maureen MacAllister** Duetists  
9th **David Ivory** Cotton Organ Museum  
17th\* **Roger Rayner**  
23th **Shean Bowers** Liverpool

SEPT

7th\* **Matthew Pitts** Yorkshire  
13th **Roger Green** Sudbury  
20th **Adrian Richards** St Margaret's Kings Lynn  
27th **Henry Macey** Aylsham

**St Nicholas North Walsham**

Tuesday 6th July 7.30pm

Celebration Recital by **Thomas Trotter** Birmingham City Organist.

Lunchtime recitals at 1pm Lunch available from 12.20pm

July 15<sup>th</sup> **John Stevens**  
August 5<sup>th</sup> **Richard Bower**  
August 15<sup>th</sup> **Tim Patient**  
September 16<sup>th</sup> **Henry Macey**

**St John's RC Cathedral**

*Saturday 24 July* A concert by **Escorial Choir & Norwich Baroque**. The programme will include music by Monteverdi, Pergolesi, A. Scarlatti, Vivaldi, Lauridsen and the world première of the *St John's Motets* by the Swiss composer Carl Rütli.

**Mancroft Music**

*Summer Recitals 2010 Saturdays at 1 pm - admission free*

- 12<sup>th</sup> June **The Choristers & Choral Scholars of St Peter Mancroft**  
with **Julian Haggett** organ and **Jody Butler** director
- 19<sup>th</sup> June **Convivium** vocal quartet
- 3<sup>rd</sup> July **Julian Haggett** Organist St Peter Mancroft

**Holy Trinity Church West Runton**

*Wednesday lunchtime concerts 12.30 – 1. 30*

- |                           |                                     |                          |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> July      | <b>Matthew Bond</b>                 | UEA                      |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> July     | <b>Alan Morris</b>                  | Sheringham               |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> July     | <b>David Ballard</b>                | UEA                      |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> July     | <b>Gerald Gifford</b>               | International recitalist |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> August   | <b>John Stevens</b>                 | Great Yarmouth           |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> August   | <b>Tim Patient</b>                  | Norwich                  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> September | <b>Richard Walker</b>               | St Chad's Shrewsbury     |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> September | <b>Bryan Ellum &amp; Jane Berry</b> | North Elmham             |
- Admission free – retiring collection*  
*Bring your own lunch and enjoy a coffee or tea with us*  
*Car park at Rectory adjoining*

**St Thomas' Church Earlham Rd**

*Saturday 12th June 2010 7.30pm*

**David Dunnett**

Organist Norwich Cathedral

Tickets £6 adults £4 Concessions

Interval Refreshments

Proceeds will go towards the organ fund.

We have had the organ recorded on the Priority Label.

Look out for the launch of the new CD

***Last date for copy for the next Journal is Saturday 21st August 2010***

***Why not send your contribution by email***

***watron@fiscali.co.uk***