

The Journal

Number 73

Autumn 2010



Published by the
Norfolk Organists Association

The editor writes.....

Sitting in on evensong in Melbourne cathedral and hearing Howells's *Collegium Regale* superbly sung by the cathedral choir there, I could not help but reflect on the lines from John Ellerton's hymn *The sun that bids us rest is waking our brethren 'neath the western sky*. There we were at the end of a very short day, because their autumn was well advanced, realising that worship back home had barely got started and most folk going to Sunday services back in England were probably still in the middle of breakfast.

One thing I brought away with me from Melbourne was the March edition of *The American Organist* which contains an article about Andrew Carnegie's generosity in providing organs all over the world. In fact he provided 7,689 organs; 4092 in the USA, 2,119 in England, 1005 in Scotland and many more in other English speaking nations and colonies.

Andrew Carnegie was born in 1836 and was twelve when his parents emigrated from his birthplace, Dunfermline, to the United States. Young Andrew went to work immediately as a bobbin boy in a local textile factory and then as a telegram boy. By the age of 24 he was superintendent of all the operations of the Pennsylvania Railroad in western Pennsylvania. He invested his savings in the growing railroad and telegraph companies and as his fortune grew concentrated on the steel industry. He bought up steel mills around Pittsburgh, the mines that provided the iron ore and the railroad that transported the ore and the finished steel. By the age

of 60 he was so wealthy that he decided to give his money away.

Carnegie had been attracted to the organ in his childhood when he attended church with his parents. On being approached, he donated money towards a church in Swedenborg and also donated an organ to go in it. News of this travelled quickly and before long he was inundated with requests for organs, as many as 2,250 a year. He introduced a policy whereby a congregation had to put up half of the cost of any organ themselves.

He lived mainly in New York but in 1897 purchased a Gothic mansion, which contained an organ, near Dornoch in the north of Scotland called Skibo. He transformed Skibo into a 200 room castle with battlements and towers and electric lighting and modern plumbing and had a piper in full tartan doing the rounds of the grounds at dawn.



For 17 years he had a private organist, Walter C Gale, who arrived at the Carnegie home at 7 am every weekday morning and played hymns and metrical psalms whilst Carnegie awakened, bathed, dressed and had breakfast. Gale was also taken to Skibo when the Carnegies were resident there.

I wonder if any of you know of an organ which was endowed by Carnegie? I once played a beauty when visiting my late brother in Largs. It seems that many rich men gave organs to churches and important buildings. Would anyone like to take up this theme?

The AGM

Ronald Watson

The recently established format for this most important business meeting was followed once again this year at St Thomas's Church, Earlham Road.

The business was dealt with efficiently and slickly with under the adept chairmanship of our President, David Bunkell, and the reports of the other officers in vital roles presented a very healthy picture of the state of the Association and its activities.

It is difficult to find a venue for this event which combines convenient parking, a comfortable environment for the meeting, the eating of lunch and an organ worth hearing.

St Thomas's certainly proved ideal for the latter and the church's fine organ could not have been in better hands than those of David Dunnett. He concluded by lifting our spirits onto another plane with Bach's monumental *Passacaglia & Fugue in c minor* thus compensating for the less congenial aspects of the church for the first parts of the proceedings.

Martinikerk Rondeau

Ronald Watson

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. For the June event we made a return visit to watch the film entitled *Martinikerk Rondeau*. Just short of 2 hours long this fascinating and beautiful documentary by Fugue State Films investigated 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 was the great Arp Schnitger organ of 1692 in the Martinikerk, Groningen and the history and restoration of this instrument was 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 was provided by a series of entertaining and informative interviews with 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 were also interviews with the renowned organ builder and restorer, Jürgen Ahrend, and musical accompaniment was provided throughout by the gifted organist, Sietze de Vries.

All of the dialogue was in Dutch and German but the subtitles enabled us to keep track of what was being said. Light relief came in the form of an interval complete with suitably entertaining accompaniment provided by our President on the cinema's own organ as we relaxed and nibbled on our ice creams. The sound reproduction was first class and one felt that one was hearing the beautiful sounds of these wonderful instruments in situ.

Any hopes of a dip in the briny were dispelled by the wet weather which made going to the pictures a totally suitable thing to be doing on a wet English summer's day by the seaside.

Thanks are due to Martin Cottam for the excellent arrangements.

Man the pumps

Tony Leake

There are still a number of churches in Norfolk without mains electricity and naturally I have come across these on my travels while searching for organs unsurveyed on the NPOR. Occasionally these have taken me by surprise and there has been no-one around to assist. If the feeder and reservoir are in good order I have sometimes found it possible to pump the organ myself till the bellows are full, take my seat and play a line of music, return to the handle to pump again, return to the keyboard and so on. This makes for an extremely disjointed recording of course, but with the benefit of modern music editing software all can be smoothed out.

My wife refuses to be roped in as blower, but the grandchildren are more amenable, and they have often accompanied me. Ashleigh (12 years old at the time) came with me to Felbrigg where I had arranged to play after the morning service.



Although there is a functioning electric blower I decided for the sake of authenticity to have the organ hand blown. I told the churchwarden that we would not be needing the electricity left on. 'In that case you won't need the light on the music stand,' she said and proceeded to unscrew the bulb. 'If we don't lock away the bulbs

people steal them,' she explained rather sadly.

Stories of the vagaries of those roped in to man the pump are legion of course. My father told us the story of the visiting organist who found the wind dying before the last verse of the hymn was out. 'Our Mrs Ellis only ever needs 52 strokes for that hymn, missus', explained her assistant. 'The worry and expense of the bellows blower are known only to those who know him' is a fact acknowledged by Casson in the literature promoting their Positive Organ where treadles are provided for the organist specifically to obviate this nuisance.

Smoke coming from behind the organ during a service was less likely to be the sign of an organ on fire than the choirboy on the pump handle enjoying a quiet cigarette. The names of that choirboy and his associates can often be seen scratched in a rash of graffiti behind our Norfolk organs, see the Holdich at Great Massingham for instance where most of the organ pumpers gave their age as fifteen. Perhaps at this age they were temporarily of no value to the choir!

At the anniversary of the installation of the organ at Aylmerton a recital was given during part of which the organ was to be pumped by hand. I was not the recitalist, but as I gave a talk on the history of Mark Noble and their organs it was deemed that I was the appropriate person to perform this duty.

Discussing my tour of Norfolk organs and the hand blowing problem with my cousin he expressed an interest in accompanying me where I needed a hand behind the scenes. The joke is that though my cousin may or may not have ever been a choirboy, he certainly has been a bishop

The Organ at St Andrew's Church Hingham



Carey Moore has written and published a very fine booklet on this subject. It is full of fascinating information and the illustrations are superb. The booklet is available in the church for a suggested donation of £3. 50 or by contacting Carey on 01953 452682.

Correction The notice regarding the funeral of Jack Burns on page 10 of the last Journal should have read:

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

A Peep into the Archives 17

Compiled by Tim Patient

From Issue 40, Spring 1977:

As we begin to celebrate the Silver Jubilee, it has been interesting to see what was happening in 'The Organ World' way back in 1952.

Amongst those who were advertising then were names which are now no more in the world of organ-building, and, in particular, the John Compton Organ Company, then making both pipe and the 'new' Electrone. R Spurden Rutt & Co. were hard at work on major rebuilds and restorations and providing new pipe organs to many parts of the country, KK Binns, Fitton & Haley, (Proprietor, Ronald Moses) were also doing much work, not only in the Leeds area, but in South Wales, Wilkinson of Kendal were advertising, too, as were Kingsgate Davidson Ltd., Charles Smethurst of Manchester and Jardine & Co. Ltd., of the same city. SJ Wright & Sons, who had the contracts for the care and maintenance of all Wurlitzer theatre and cinema organs in the country, were advertising their own small four-unit, three manual organ for just over £1,000.00.

One of the great names of organ-building, that of Gray & Davison (Incorporating Holdich and Eustace Ingram) were telling readers that they had been established for just over 200 years, having been founded in 1750. Where are they now? Alas, all have gone, although their craftsmanship still lives on. Many of them were taken over by other firms; some 'went to the wall.'

Rockingham blowers were being advertised. That firm folded on the death of the owner, but 'British' (B.O.B.) and

'Discus' (Watkins & Watson) were both then and now going strong.

The Davies-Walker Gregorian electronic organ was being widely proclaimed. The only other electronic advertisements were for the Martinette organ, built here in Timberhill, Norwich, the Compton Electrone and the small additional manual for any organ being sold under the name of the Clavioline.

Locally, Messrs. Hill, Norman & Beard Ltd. were advertising their two new organs in the temporary St Mary's Baptist Church, Norwich and at Pakefield Parish Church: the former was later moved and added to, including parts of the old Echo Organ from the Cathedral, to the new Church, whilst that at Pakefield, itself incorporating much material salvaged from war-damaged instrument, is still functioning well.

No doubt, there were many other things happening in the organ world twenty-five years ago which were not recorded in the pages of *The Organ or Musical Opinion*. Some firms have never advertised but we know that they still have full order-books for a long time to come. Other firms have come and gone.

Saturday 26th March saw a pleasing number of our members arrive at Norwich City College where, in the Audio-Visual Room, we were to enjoy a two-part afternoon.

Firstly, our member, Mr Peter Onslow, gave a most interesting talk and demonstration on the harpsichord. He had very kindly brought along with him two instruments, one which he had constructed himself about three years ago mainly from scrap material, and the other belonging to Keswick Hall College of Education, which had been built from a commercially available kit.

Mr Onslow's harpsichord was of the Italian type and that from Keswick Hall was based on a Flemish model and it was interesting to note the subtle differences between the two models.

We are extremely grateful to Mr Onslow for giving such an enlightening talk and demonstration and more than one member present expressed the wish that either model would fit into his or her car so that it might be taken home! We are also very grateful to Miss Penny Hoare who so nobly transported the two instruments from their respective homes and back again.

After Mr Onslow's talk, and during the interval for light refreshments which followed, many present took the opportunity of trying these delightful instruments for themselves.

Following the interval, the room was darkened for a screening of the film 'Architects of Music' which had been flown specially over from Ottawa for this meeting, and we do, indeed, thank the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and their London Representative, Miss Daphne Probyn, for arranging this film to be made freely available to us.

Lasting for almost an hour, the film told the story of the building of the new (1965) organ in Dominion-Chalmers United Church, Ottawa, Ontario, from drawing-board to completion and it was interesting to see the wisdom of the provision of a completely new organ built by Casavant Frères of St. Hyacinthe, Quebec rather than the attempt to rebuild an instrument, badly damaged by fire and water, and built by the same makers in 1928. It was good to see and hear, on film, Mr Raymond Barnes, who once was with Messrs Hill, Norman & Beard and based

here in Norwich, and who is now with the Casavant firm.

The film, too, had more than a passing interest for our stalwart member, George Hawkins, who recalled that he had spent many happy hours playing this new organ on his last visit to his family in Canada and he was able to speak highly of the fine qualities possessed by this large and comprehensive four-manual organ.

The firm of Casavant Frères makes every part of an organ themselves and we were shown their enormous stocks of timber, the casting and making of metal pipes, the construction of the soundboards, the extremely fine cabinet-making and we marvelled at the complexity of the 'electrics', remembering that this organ was built before the advent of 'Solid State' systems. Casavant must be one of the few firms who still erect the completed instrument in their factory before it is packed into suitable crates and taken to the Church for re-erection, but, of course, one must remember that with such a large firm and with such superb premises, specially designed for the construction of organs, what is possible one side of the Atlantic, may not be possible over here except with some of the larger firms of organ builders.

Our thanks are due to all who made the afternoon such a delightful one – and many remarked upon the great comfort and of the suitability of meeting at the City College.

Organ News

Geoff Sankey

Holmes & Swift have just completed restoration of the gothic style Mark Noble organ in West Bradenham church. The casework required extensive work; all the mouldings were missing down the right hand side and have been replaced by exact replicas. It has now been repainted in wood grain finish as original, and the dummy front pipes have been re-gilded. The finished result, Edmund tells us, is spectacular.

They are also working on the restoration of the Bishop organ at London Road Methodist church in Kings Lynn, which will be completed in September. This is a 15 stop instrument from 1892, awarded a BIOS historic organ certificate in 2009.

W & A Boggis have restored the Great soundboard on the Walker/Norman & Beard instrument at Brome, Suffolk as the next stage in the on-going restoration of this organ.

At Shotesham All Saints they have restored the action of the 1846 Holdich, rebuilt by Norman and Beard in 1908. Further afield, they installed a Compton Miniatura III at St Levan Church, Cornwall; a new detached drawstop console was made for the organ.

Richard has been working away recently and has not been able to supply us with news from Bower & Company.

William Webster Pearson

Submitted by Pauline Stratton

Taken from the EDP of 17th October 1904
and 12th December 1913, with the kind
permission of the EDP.

When William Webster Pearson passed away at his quiet home at the Old Vicarage, South Walsham, on Friday 5th December 1913, aged 75, Norfolk lost one of its most talented residents. He was a highly gifted musician and painter and his compositions, which included part songs, hymn tunes, cantatas and anthems, gained a very wide popularity. His works were considered remarkably fresh and melodious, characterised by smooth flowing harmonies. His part writing, very graceful and interesting, a feature which helped to make his compositions so acceptable to small choral societies. Of his part writing the most well known pieces were *The Ironfounders*, *The Iron Horse* and *Sweet to live amid the Mountains*, the latter reaching its 22nd thousand publication. His humorous songs also proved very popular with *Three Doughtie Men* reaching a record of 26 thousand issues.

Popular Part-Songs for S.A.T.B.

By W. W. PEARSON.

The Skaters	jd.	Evening	jd.
Blow, Western Wind! .. .	jd.	The Oyster Dredgers .. .	jd.
Stars of the Night	jd.	*Sweet to live (2nd thou.) ..	jd.
The Lake	jd.	*Welcome, young Spring! ..	jd.
*'Tis Morn'	jd.	*The Anglers (12th thou.) ..	jd.
Sweet Spring (Madrigal) ..	jd.	The Dream of Home	jd.
The River	jd.	Summer and Winter	jd.
Over the mountain side ..	jd.	*Departed Joys	jd.
Seal of living music .. .	jd.	There's beauty in the deep ..	jd.
The Stormy Petrel	jd.	Soldier, rest!	jd.
The Coral Grove	jd.	Woods in Winter	jd.
Pibroch of Donald Dhu ..	jd.	Autumn	jd.

HUMOROUS PART-SONGS.

*Three Doughtie Men. (5th thousand) ..	..	..	..	jd.
Three Children sliding. (8th thousand) ..	..	..	..	jd.
A Rhyhme Merric Geste .. .. .	..	..	..	jd.
The Snow-white Doe .. .. .	..	..	..	jd.
*Ben Bowlegs (ERNAWEN GREENWOOD) ..	..	..	..	jd.
The Carrion Crow .. .. .	..	..	..	jd.
Call John! .. .. .	..	..	..	jd.

DESCRIPTIVE CHORUSES FOR S.A.T.B.

Orchestral Parts on application to the COMPOSER, Elmham, Dereham.				
The Iron Horse (6th thou.) .. .	jd.	*The Ironfounders (32nd thou.) ..	jd.	
Off to sea	jd.	The Jager Chorus (6th thou.) ..	jd.	
The Lifeboat	jd.	The Cyclists	jd.	
The Ocean (6th thou.)	jd.			

Tonic Sol-fa Editions at half the above prices of those marked *.

London and New York: NOVELLO, EWEN and Co.

Pearson was the schoolmaster at North Elmham National school for 35 years, and also choirmaster/organist at the parish church. To mark his retirement in October 1904 friends and former pupils presented him and his wife with a pair of suitably engraved candlesticks and an inkstand. The couple left North Elmham to reside in Drayton.

As well as being a highly gifted musician and talented composer Pearson was the author of *The National Method of Vocal Music for Elementary Schools* which did much to improve the singing of children.



William Webster Pearson is buried
in South Walsham churchyard.

President's Dinner

Richard May

There is a terrible tendency when one lives on the North Norfolk Coast to rather vegetate and not venture south especially in the evenings. However the prospect of a good meal and the chance to hear Michael Nicholas reminisce made our minds up to book places.

On the day, having spent several hours cooking 'bacon butties' at our Fete, (one of the duties of an Organist at Holy Trinity), there was a great temptation to collapse in a heap. How glad I was, that after a quick shower, we were on our way to the Park Farm Hotel.



Chair vacated by the photographer, Harry Macey



On arrival we were greeted by the sight of many young men and ladies in rather exotic attire. Have we come to the right place? Any fears were soon resolved when we were greeted by a sea of smiling faces of friends old and new in the Bar.



After a leisurely aperitif, it was a bit difficult to find our way to the Ellingham Suite down several corridors, probably due to the fact that chatting away we hadn't listened to the instructions.

Tim gave us a somewhat wry Grace before we enjoyed a superb meal, very well presented and served and washed down with some excellent wine. Our president elect Harry Macey proposed the Loyal Toast and our president proposed the toast to our guests, Michael and Heather Nicholas, during which reference was made to drinking of Adnams Ale and also 'barley wine'; my immediate thoughts went back to being a student when one was warned never to be persuaded to drink barley wine through a straw because of the dire consequences on your sobriety.

In his reply, Michael spoke about his life and the people he met in his career, but commented on the lack of young people applying to be organ scholars at the Cambridge Colleges. On the whole however he delivered a very upbeat message about the quality of church choral and organ music. We all, I

am sure, enjoyed his often amusing and informative talk. He then proposed the toast to the Association.

Following this it was time for quiet chats among ourselves, and for me to be reminded that I hadn't written anything for the journal and be persuaded by the Editor very gently to do so. For the twenty-four of us present it was a very enjoyable and relaxing evening and thanks are due to David for arranging it.

All too soon it was time to head for home with the realisation that in less than 12 hours there were services to play for.

Young Organist's Recital

Martin J Cottam

There were only eight NOA members' names written in the Events Attendance book by the end of Will Warns' recital at the Octagon Chapel, Colegate on Saturday 7th August. Several others had given apologies for absence, the need to accompany a summer wedding or two being the most common reason.

No matter; a most impressive audience of sixty five people filled out the pews to enjoy a varied programme of organ music and transcriptions that ranged from Bach to a selection of French goodies via the ever delightful 'Trumpet Minuet' by Alfred Hollins. The recently added Trumpet on the Octagon organ really is a peach of a stop, wonderfully bright and clear. The other reeds are full of colour and character too, and all four were given their opportunity to shine (blaze?) at some point or other.

Will Warns has just completed his first year as Organ Scholar at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. He is no stranger to

the Octagon organ having first played it at the age of fourteen I believe. His knowledge of the instrument's possibilities was ably demonstrated by his excellent choice of registration with which to illuminate each piece. The combination of Rohr Flute, Voix Celestes, and Tremulant on the Swell accompanied by the Dulciana on the Great made a most affecting ensemble for 'The Swan' by Saint-Saëns, for example (though the Cuckoo that followed sounded suspiciously, but delightfully, like a Clarinet!).

Will's playing was neat and assured though there were some occasions when the rhythmic pulse became a touch obscured from time to time. That said the whole recital proved to be a very enjoyable occasion and Will himself a most charming young man. I'm pleased to report he is keen to help out with future Association events if required.

The recital was added to the Octagon Concert Series and thanks must be given to the Series Organiser, Mary Rae who did such a splendid job overseeing all the publicity material and much else besides. Admission fees for the Concert Series are always donated to charity and an impressive £226 has been duly forwarded to the Norwich & District Branch of Parkinson's UK, several of whose membership were in the audience.

LPs

Is anyone interested in LPs of organ music? I have about 25 which, having disposed of my turntable, I can no longer play. There is quite an interesting, dare I say fascinating selection. I'd be happy to send a list to anyone interested. RW

For your diary



Forthcoming Association Events

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'.

Saturday 13th November (afternoon):

Desert Island Discs: We are privileged indeed! Dr. Francis Jackson has very graciously agreed to be Ron Watson's latest castaway on the mythical island. An event not to be missed!

He surely needs no introduction but for those who've been visiting other planets over the last 60 years or so it is sufficient to say that Dr Jackson commands immense respect around the world for his achievements as long time Master of Music at York Minster and as a composer, recitalist, and teacher (film score composer John Barry of 'James Bond' theme fame acknowledges a considerable debt to Dr. Jackson's personal tuition in the realm of composition and orchestration for example).

Dr Jackson is now in his 90s and your NOA Committee feels it appropriate to open this event to a wider audience if possible. At the time of going to press we are still investigating potential venues. Full details of location and start time will be passed on via email and posted on the Association's website as soon as they have been finalised.

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 7th September
Tickets £2.50 on the door. Concerts start at 1.10pm

September

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

St Nicholas Church Dereham

Wednesday 15th September at 7.30 pm

Tickets £5

Anniversary Celebrity Recital by **Michael Nicholas**

with big screen

As Organist and Master of the Choristers of Norwich Cathedral Michael Nicholas gave the opening recital on this organ fifteen years ago

Norwich Cathedral

Wednesday 15th September at 7.30 admission £6 with concessions

David Hill

with big screen

St Nicholas North Walsham

September 16th at 1pm **Henry Macey**

Lunch available from 12.20 pm

Holy Trinity Church West Runton

Wednesday lunchtime concerts 12.30 – 1.30

1st September **Richard Walker** St Chad's Shrewsbury
8th September **Bryan Ellum & Jane Berry** North Elmham
Admission free – retiring collection
Bring your own lunch and enjoy a coffee or tea with us
Car park at Rectory adjoining

Last date for copy for the next Journal is Saturday 20th November 2010
Why not send your contribution by email
watron@tiscali.co.uk

There will be those who remember Bill Westwood from his time at St Peter Mancroft and will remember him becoming Bishop of Peterborough.

I recently stumbled across him carved in stone. Can anyone guess where it might be?

