

The Journal

Number 81

Autumn 2012



Published by the
Norfolk Organists'
Association

The editor writes.....

A purist's lot is not a happy one. Perhaps they take things too literally. Expecting television coverage of a river pageant to be about the amazing collection of boats was courting disappointment. Much more satisfied were those who wanted to know how many babies were being born at a nearby hospital or those who wanted to see the Union Jack socks of a barely known actor.

Is going along to an organ recital expecting to hear music written for the organ too much to ask? I know that transcriptions were and are written for the organ but there is a great deal more music written specifically for the organ which simply sits on shelves.

A recent recitalist at the cathedral almost apologised for including one of the organ's 20th century masterpieces in his programme – 'something for the organ buffs!' (meaning those weirdos who like real organ music – like me!).

As a purist I see the role of organ recitalists as that of bringing before audiences music written for the organ. There is a wealth of it waiting to be heard.

We are all familiar with the history of transcriptions, bringing to people great orchestral works at a time when very few would attend concerts or operas, when there were no broadcasts or recordings. I must admit to believing that the necessity for transcriptions is past. I'm not sure the orchestral transcriptions of organ works by Bach are an improvement on the original versions. Stokowsky and Elgar transcriptions are almost too clever by half and bring nothing other than a few superficial fireworks to what were already perfect conceptions - a bit like painting a moustache on the Mona Lisa.

News from St John's Cathedral

Chris Duarte

We are very pleased to be able to announce that Mr John McGreal has been appointed to be the new Cathedral Organist.

John read music while organ scholar at Peterhouse, Cambridge where he studied organ with David Rowland and Peter Hurford. He continued his studies on the Performers' Course at the Royal College of Music in organ with Nicholas Danby and harpsichord with Ruth Dyson winning prizes, in particular, for the performance of the organ music of JS Bach. Further study continued with Dame Gillian Weir, Jill Severs and Gustav Leonhardt. He enjoyed a year in Northern Germany while based in Lübeck researching the North German Baroque keyboard repertoire and discovering the rich organ landscape.

From 1999-2011 he was Organist at the Brompton Oratory, London, where he maintained and developed the role of the organ in the liturgy. He played for regular broadcasts of Choral Vespers on BBC Radio 3 and recorded with the senior choir for the charity "Aid to the Church in Need." His performance of Bach on the Organ Club 75th Anniversary CD was praised in Organists' Review for its "great power, compelling utter absorption from the listener."

We are also in the process of starting to think about installing a pipe organ in the Cathedral. More news on that anon!

As it is in Norway

Ralph Cupper

I have four churches to look after. The main church in Nordfjordeid (2m organ by Jørgensøn, 35 stops), Stårheim (2m Olsen and Jørgensøn, 15 stops), Kjølisdalen (2m organ RAJ Bower, 12 stops) and Heggjabygda (1m organ Olsen, 7 stops). We have two Services on Sundays, sometimes three, 11 am, 3 pm and 8 pm. Monday is a free day for the staff. We have a staff meeting on Tuesday at 9 am. There are also midweek services at the two Institutions – Sjukeheimen, Eldretunet (the two old peoples homes) in the parish, on Wednesday. There is an extended choir practice on Thursday evening with the Youth Choir. The rest of the time is used for preparation, organ practice, composition, meetings and practices with other visiting musicians or groups who take part in the Sunday services or the midweek funerals.

In England most organists would have a regular church choir to support them in their work. We Norwegian organists in the outback have saxophone players, or to be perfectly honest, any enthusiastic people we can find. Most of my work would not be possible without the help and support of Inge Haugen and his trusty saxophone. There is nothing like Inge jazzing up the hymns in the funeral to put a smile on not only my face but the grieving mourners. I do believe Inge's music has a therapeutic effect upon the parishioners in Eid, so much so that I have done 2 CDs with him.

In the summer we have a considerable number of weddings in our four churches. Therefore there are the

customary meetings with the aforesaid 'happy couples to be'. In addition to that there is the regular planning and financing of the yearly music festival – Aftenmusikk – which takes place in February every year.

In recent years I have been extremely fortunate to have Richard Bower to come over to look after the organs on my patch. Richard's assistance has been invaluable, especially before the commencement of the annual music festival 'Aftenmusikk'. It is good to know that all the instruments function. I will not forget how relieved Paul Trepte was when he heard that Richard Bower, had just come two weeks before the music festival to tune and maintain the Jørgensøn organ in the main parish church in Nordfjordeid.

Richard has also installed one of his organs in Kjølisdalen church. The locals adore this little extension organ which has been cleverly placed within the old Eton College Chapel organ case and mounted on the gallery in the church. Richard is indeed an extremely gifted organ builder and organist.

With regard to the music festival we have had concerts in our church by several English Cathedral Choirs, namely: Exeter, Norwich and Ely. We have also had choirs from Bremen and Göttingen in Germany; Szczecin University choir from Poland; choirs from the USA as well as many other gifted musicians from all over the world.

The planning and financing of the music festival does take a considerable amount of my time. In addition to this I am also involved in a liturgical committee which has responsibility for introducing the new liturgical reform which came into affect from the first Sunday in Advent last

year. We are also sent on regular conferences within Norway or abroad so that we church musicians can update our competence.

In addition to this, because of my theological training, I frequently take the Services at the Institutions as well as the occasional Sunday service when I do not have to play the organ. This is not the job of the church musician, but I do this additional work to assist the clergy here.

There are about seventy English speaking organists in Norway. In addition there are also many German organists here who cannot find suitable appointments in their own country. I have been informed that there are also about fifteen Russian and many Dutch organists in Norway. On this note, I must not forget my Scottish colleague in the neighbouring Parish of Stryn, Alistair Pow (former Cathedral Organist in Scotland). He has been a constant source of amusement, with his witty jokes and good humour during the past few years.

Generally speaking I feel that Karin and I have been extremely privileged to live and work here in Norway. We have through the years met many interesting people. Norwegian culture has also inspired my wife Karin with her literary work. She is a successful writer and has written two children's books, the 'Eidland series'.

Ashley Grote comes as Director of Music at Norwich Cathedral from Gloucester Cathedral where he has been Assistant Director of Music. More about him in the next issue

From Hedgeland to Hele

Pauline Stratton

From the Norwich Mercury dated 2nd July 1910.

St Peter Mancroft organ

On Tuesday at Norwich Consistory Court before Chancellor North, Mr F R Eaton applied on behalf of the vicar and the churchwardens of St Peter Mancroft for a faculty to carry out the following; to remove and sell the present old organ, to erect a new organ, to provide a new vestry, to remove the present heating apparatus to a room under the sacristy, to erect screen of carved oak, to reglaze the east window in the south aisle and to restore and furnish the chapel in the south aisle. The total cost of the said works was estimated at £3000 whereof £1200 was already provided, but the work would only be proceeded with with as funds permitted. Mr Eaton explained that two offers had been made for the old organ, one by a local firm for £45 and the other for £200 by Messrs Hele, whom it was proposed to commission to erect the new organ. The new instrument was to cost £1200, which sum was already in hand. An additional £450 was also in hand with which to restore and furnish the chapel. Mr C J Brown, the architect for the work, was present and described the plans. The Chancellor allowed the faculty so far as the organ is concerned and adjourned the other matters to the next court.

From the EDP dated 5th July 1912

The organ at St Peter Mancroft dedication service, recital by Frederick Bridge

The parishioners of St Peter Mancroft and the citizens of Norwich

generally rejoiced today with one accord that the finest parish church in the city now possesses what it has long needed, a thoroughly up-to-date organ, one worthy of the beautiful building in which it has been erected. For many years the utter inadequacy of the antiquated instrument with its noisy and unreliable action, has been only too apparent. The magnificent instrument placed in the cathedral by Messrs Norman & Beard, and the enterprise shown some years later by the church authorities of St Andrew in commissioning the same firm to supply them with an organ equipped with all the modern improvements alike with regard to tone, quality and mechanism, emphasised the necessity for acquiring a better instrument for the principal city church. Before Dr Bunnett resigned his position as organist at St Peter's, the organ had reached an almost unplayable state. When Mr Maddern-Williams became organist and choirmaster, efforts were at once set afoot to raise funds for the purchase of a new instrument and, sufficient money having been raised to warrant an order being placed, the tender of Messrs Hele & Co was accepted and the work of construction was commenced. How and why the order was given to our celebrated city firm need not here be discussed. Great difficulty was experienced in finding a site suitable for the instrument without obscuring any of the beauties of the building. Many experts were consulted and diversity of opinion existed as to the best position. Eventually the advice of Mr W Temple Moore was sought and his suggestion was acted upon and as now disposed the organ fulfils all architectural and musical requirements. The floor of the south transept has been lowered 4' feet and in this transept are

placed the Swell, Great and a portion of the Pedal organs, the whole being hidden by a beautiful oak screen of Queen Anne's time which originally formed a porch over the south door. The Choir organ, Violone, Ophicleide, Tuba and large pipes of open Diapasons are in the south chancel aisle occupying a depth of only 3' 6", and around them is built the exquisite case that once formed the front of the west gallery. The case is of fine oak, three hundred years old, and is solid and dignified in appearance. A feature is the painting of some cherubs and it is worthy of mention that Mr William Richmond RA has filled in the space, formerly occupied by a clock, with an angel's face of great beauty.

The console is placed at the back of the choir stalls on the south side in such a position that the organist can hear both the choir and organ well. JC Hele's patent key stops are used. These are small levers placed between the keyboards and as the usual drawstop knobs are dispensed with this enables the console to be much smaller than would otherwise be the case.

The levers are activated by the ordinary downward action of the fingers and a stop can be put 'on' or 'off' by one finger of the hand which can go on playing during the change of registration. The wind is supplied by a rotary blower driven by an electric motor fixed in a chamber at the west end of the vestry and through this chamber all pneumatic tubes and trunks are carried. The soft stops of the Solo organ are not yet inserted; these will be placed in the south transept eventually.

Yesterday afternoon a special service was held at the church when the service of dedication was performed by Archdeacon Pelham. The choir showed

training in their singing of Stanford's *Te Deum* which was accompanied with musicianly skill and taste by Mr Hele.

After the service a short recital was given by Sir Frederick Bridge. The first item was Handel's Concerto No. 2 of the second set. This was played from the orchestral score and the many interesting points both in the solo part and the instrumentation were brought out with clear and happy effect. The cadenza in the first movement gave an opportunity for displaying the full power of the instrument, and in the last section, a sprightly movement in the style of a minuet, the Westminster organist gave examples of some of the delicate effects obtainable.

(Frederick Bridge gave another recital in the evening to a large congregation, playing works by Merkel, JS Bach, Galuppi, Schumann and Dvorak. During the evening Sir Frederick Bridge's anthem *Rejoice in the Lord*, composed for the coronation of King George V was efficiently rendered by the choir.)



Sir Frederick Bridge

At the conclusion of the recital Sir Frederick expressed himself well pleased with the quality of the stops of the organ, its power, the smooth workings of the mechanism and the great beauty of the oak casing. Altogether the work of Messrs Hele & Company seems to have given great satisfaction but it was generally admitted that something must be done to prevent the obtrusive drone note caused by the blowing apparatus. It should be mentioned that the handsome oak case, so much admired, was made and fitted up on the works of Wallace King Ltd.

This afternoon at 3 o'clock Dr William Prentagast, organist of Winchester Cathedral, will give a recital and on Saturday Dr Bates will give a recital. Reproduced with the permission of the EDP.

Members were horrified a couple of months ago to learn that Pauline and her husband had been involved in a serious car accident which resulted in Pauline spending some time in hospital in Cambridge. Happily Pauline is now back home and on the mend.

For Sale

Wyvern - Minuet
2 + 61 note manuals
30 note radiating pedalboard
20 speaking stops, 2 + expression pedals
One Owner - location - Norwich. Offers negotiable to:- 01603 452781 or colin450forbes@btinternet.com

Playing organs by Schnitger, Hinsz, et al

Martin J Cottam

No amount of prior reading on the subject can properly prepare you for the physical reality of playing these old organs. Flat, straight pedalboards, though relatively unfamiliar to many a British organist, are not an issue in themselves but the placement and dimensions of those by Schnitger and his followers most certainly are! If you are in the habit of feeling for the notes (as Sietze has reassuringly noticed most English organists in particular are) you will invariably find the 'gaps' are nowhere near where you expect to find them and the notes towards either end of the pedalboard rather further away than you might anticipate or desire! That said, the pedals themselves are quite widely spaced apart which makes it much easier to avoid striking two notes at once... assuming you've first actually managed to find the ones you require!



A particularly problematic feature is the way the pedalboard is placed so much further underneath you than any you might expect to find in Britain. You will find your feet resting on the sharps and flats, not the white notes. To play the latter you have to make a conscious decision to hold your lower legs at a backwards leaning angle to the vertical. Meanwhile, the organ stools are, without exception, higher than most you will encounter in Britain, some even being set in blocks so they can't be moved forwards or backwards! If, like Sietze de Vries, you have long legs and a thorough awareness of where the notes are (and he's been playing the Schnitger at Uithuizen since he was eight years old!) it is actually possible to play these pedals using heels as well as toes. But as Sietze said, it's not necessary. By keeping your feet close to the keys and confining yourself to small movements it's perfectly possible to maintain an even line of music (including scales) by using the toes only, even at speed.

Having found your feet tucked somewhere underneath you vainly searching for notes that aren't where they are supposed to be, your knees brushing the edge of the lowest manual, you will now discover (if, like me, you are of average height and build) that your arms aren't quite as long as you used to think they were when reaching for the keys, the manuals now being rather lower down and further away than usual!

The only solution to these problems is practice, familiarity, and more practice (where, oh where are the necessary 'replica' organs back home?). Learned techniques have to be laid aside to some extent. As Sietze pointed out, every single one of these organs is different from the

others and you have to be prepared to let each instrument itself dictate the best way of playing it.

All the organs we played are, of course, tracker action instruments. The actions that have been restored in more recent years are particularly responsive, those at Uithuizen and the Martinikerk being 'stand out' in quality. It is on such actions that the whole art of 'attack and release' can be properly and usefully explored, the ways a player can directly influence the beginning and ending of notes to give shape to a musical line to a degree of expressive finesse that is just not possible with electric or pneumatic actions. I feel such an abject novice in this whole realm!

Much has been written and discussed over the years about how frequently players during the Baroque era might have changed registration during the course of a piece. With stopknobs on old organs being cumbersome, sometimes out of reach and even, in the case of 'Rugpositief' stops, behind the player, many have concluded that registration changes were unlikely and probably confined to changes of manual at most. It was instructive therefore, to hear how easily Sietze de Vries effected changes of registration during the course of his improvised variations, sometimes even managing to change stops on one manual whilst continuing to play on the other. This was even the case on the Martinikerk organ where many of the stops are quite some reach away for the player. My own conclusion is that Buxtehude and his ilk probably made rather more changes of registration during the course of some pieces than many current commentators give them credit for, and not necessarily with the help of assistants either.

The Sound of Organs by Schnitger and his Followers

Contrary to the expectations engendered by the neo-baroque organs of the modern era, the words 'warmth' and 'weight' spring readily to mind when trying to describe the sound of these old organs. How could so many modern builders have got it so wrong?! Yes, there is brilliance in the Mixtures, but not the brittleness, shriek, or top-heavy bias of the post-war instruments. Mutation stops such as the Sesquialtera do not pierce but shine and sing, either as a solo voice or when crowning the Principal chorus. By the way, Sietze de Vries was quite insistent that when used as a solo voice the Sesquialtera should always be combined with a 4ft stop as well as an 8ft one.

The pedal reeds are surprisingly round and full in tone, but never dull and always with a distinctive, characterful edge. The 'consort' reeds such as the 'Dulciaan' or 'Vox Humana' can be splendidly raucous by comparison, but never thin or vulgar. Combined with a 4 ft Flute and maybe a Quint 3ft they sing with exquisite expressiveness and beauty, with or without the enhancement of a Tremulant.

The Flutes are a wonder, each having its own distinctive voice, invariably beautiful, some with a touch of 'chiff' but never to the point of mannerism. The Principals are lighter and more complex in tone than our Diapasons yet possessed of an unforced and unclinging 'gravitas'.

Sietze was keen to emphasise just how well the various families of stops combine with each other; Principals with Flutes, Flutes with Reeds, Reeds with Principals, Principals and Reeds with Flutes. Singly each stop seemed possessed of a beauty and complexity of sound that

frequently bordered on the magical. Together they effected a blend that was rich, multi-layered, and warm yet always (and crucially) transparent.

Most of the organs we played are fairly small with just two manuals and twenty to twenty five or so stops. Yet how easily they filled their often huge churches with glorious, clear, unforced sound, every single stop playing its individual part in the whole ensemble. Clarity, beauty, balance, warmth, variety. Organs that sing. Sigh...

Sietze de Vries

Born in 1973, Sietze de Vries began his organ studies in Gouda before moving to the Stedelijk Conservatorium in Groningen where his teachers included Johan Beeftink, Wim van Beek, and Jan Jongepier (improvisation). Further studies were undertaken in The Hague and Haarlem. Sietze is a master of the art of improvisation, winning numerous awards including first prize at the prestigious International Improvisation Competition in Haarlem in 2002.

Sietze does not indulge in the familiar French fireworks style of organ improvisation preferring to base his wonderfully structured creations on meticulously researched historical models. For all his prestige as a recitalist, teacher, and composer, Sietze is an extraordinarily approachable man keen to share his passion for the historic organs of Groningen. He was the instigator and driving force behind the Fugue State Films 'Pronkjuwelen in Stad en Ommeland' project, and his evangelistic role as guide and organist on tours like ours is one particularly close to his heart, an activity he undertakes with joyful enthusiasm and humility.

Sietze and his wife, Sonja (also an organist), both harbour a deep passion for the Anglican choral tradition. To that end, they have involved themselves in choirs specifically established to perform that repertoire. Sietze is organist with the Roden Boys Choir, and Sonja is the director of the Roden Girl Choristers.

They live in a small converted church where Sietze is the proud owner of a small 2 manual organ of 1874 by Hill.

Acknowledgements

It would be impossible to overstate my gratitude to Sietze de Vries for all he gave us as a player, kindred spirit enthusiast, man and friend. The assistance of Bert Veening of Groningen Orgelland was essential. Without him the itinerary would not have been finalised or the churches booked. And last, but by no means least, my heartfelt thanks to the tour members themselves for supporting (and thereby funding!) the enterprise and for the humour and enthusiasm they maintained throughout. Especial thanks to those who volunteered to drive.

Remembering the Holland trip

Pamela Flatman writes:

My first ferry crossing at night, surprisingly comfortable and managed to get a few hours sleep, then enjoyed a hearty breakfast before setting off for Groningen.

Although not an organist myself, I enjoyed visiting all the beautiful churches and hearing the magnificent organs. I shall always treasure witnessing the joy of the group listening to Sietze de Vries playing the organs.

It was great, at the end of a busy day, to enjoy a lovely meal at the hotel

and a chance to get to know everyone. Looking forward to the next one!

Michael Flatman writes:

As one of the non-playing members of the party, the whole visit was a unique experience of a lifetime that will live in my memory for ever.

Tim Patient writes:

I can barely add to Martin's very comprehensive article about the trip, written much more eloquently than I could have done. Apart from a brief day trip to the south of The Netherlands a couple of years ago while staying in France (!), this was my first visit to the country. I am certain it will not be my last. Having previously only heard recordings of the instruments, hearing them 'live' added another dimension to the music. It was a privilege to have someone with such an intimate knowledge of the instruments as Sietze de Vries as our guide.

I am sure that I speak for all who travelled when I say that we owe Martin Cottam a huge debt of gratitude. Without his germ of an idea and determination, we would have missed out on the opportunity to see, hear and play the instruments. From a personal point of view the trip has certainly given me renewed enthusiasm to try to develop my very limited improvisation skills and to explore more of the instruments. So thank you, Martin. We look forward to the next trip!

The National Pipe Organ Registry

It was recently announced that the Royal College of Organists has taken over the day-to-day maintenance of *The National Pipe Organ Registry* (NPOR). The NPOR is an internet-based database holding details of over 30,000 pipe organs nationwide. Many entries include pictures and recordings plus information on the renowned Historic Organ Certificate Scheme (HOCS). There are facts and figures on organ builders, past and present, in the Directory of British Organ Builders (DBOB) plus many recordings in The Historic Organ Sound Archive Project (HOSA). The HOSA includes over twenty Norfolk organs.

Organists will be grateful to Dr Peter le Huray and Dr Mike Sayers who established the familiar NPOR format in 1991. *The British Institute of Organ Studies* (BIOS) has guided the site to its present state. Since 2003, Birmingham City University has carried out maintenance with limited resources; however, staffing cuts have led to the present rescue by the RCO of this valuable resource. Data for England is fairly reliable but information on Scottish instruments is somewhat out-of-date.

Do use the site and help to keep it accurate. The fact that people such as Andrew McCrea, Paul Houghton, David Greening, Alan Thurlow, Mike Sayers, Frances Pond, Andrew Macintosh and John Norman have been, or are, involved in the enterprise is testimony to its quality.

The National Pipe Organ Registry may be found at www.npor.org.uk, and the British Institute of Organ Studies is at www.bios.org.uk.

Henry Macey

Roger Buck (1948 - 2012)

As many of you will now know, Roger Buck died suddenly whilst on holiday with his family in Georgia on the morning of Thursday 14th June. This was Roger's first trip away from the United Kingdom.

Roger was organist of St Nicholas, North Walsham, for 40 years, as well as involving himself in the liturgical developments of the church and making of its vestments. He also ran Express Printing for nearly 30 years, prior to selling the company on his retirement at the end of 2011. He was also a keen collector of literature related to churches, much of which will be made available as a lending library in due course.

Roger's enthusiasm and commitment resulted in the training of generations of both choirboys and organists, and ex choristers of his can be found singing in cathedrals around the country. Perhaps though, his greatest legacy will be the restoration of III/P instrument in St Nicholas, completed two years before his death.

Organist required

At St. John the Baptist Coltishall
For weekly Sunday Services,
Weddings and funerals.

Fine organ-recently renovated-
annual honorarium

Please contact Revd.

Christopher Engelsen 01603-
737255

Or engelsen@btinternet.com

President's dinner

James Lilwall

The President's day has, over the years, become an established part of our events calendar and as we know it comes in many formats to fit our wide ranging tastes and interests or those of our president.

For his second president's day Harry had arranged a dinner with special guest speaker Carl Jackson, Organist of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace.

The 'black tie' dinner, for those that wanted to dress up a little, was held in the delightful setting of Park Farm hotel, Hethersett, a venue we have used before and this made for an ideal setting with excellent facilities, good food, wine and most importantly good company!



After dinner and the various toasts Carl gave a most enlightening speech about the history of the Chapel Royal and the role it plays today.

Carl has been Director of the Music Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace since 1996. After teaching at a number of schools including St. Paul's Girls' School, he now teaches at Kingston Grammar and is Master of Music Scholars. Carl studied at the Royal Academy of Music and held organ scholarships at the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace and at Downing College, Cambridge, where he was a pupil of Peter Hurford.

Carl was awarded the MVO in the 2012 New Years Honours list, admission remains the personal gift of the monarch.

Carl started by explaining that the Chapel Royal is a department of the ecclesiastical household of the monarch formally known as the royal *Free Chapel of the Household*. The household is further divided into two parts: an ecclesiastical household each for England and Scotland, belonging to the Church of Scotland and the Church of England respectively. The Chapel Royal is the body of clergy, singers and vestry officers appointed to serve the spiritual needs of the Sovereign.

Emerging as a distinct body in the late 13th century dating from 1483 as presently constituted and first establishing the office of Dean of The Chapel Royal in 1312— the Chapel Royal formerly had no official base, but travelled, like the rest of the court, with the monarch and held services wherever he or she was residing at the time. In the 17th century the chapel had its own building in Whitehall, which burned down in 1698; since 1702 it has been based at St James's Palace.

The Chapel Royal refers not to a building but to an establishment in the Royal Household, a body of priests and singers to explicitly serve the spiritual needs of the sovereign. The term is also, however, applied to those buildings used as chapels by the priests and singers of the Chapel Royal for the performance of their duties. The two currently regularly used British Chapels Royal are located in St James Palace in London, the Chapel Royal and the Queen's Chapel. Since such establishments are outside the usual diocesan structure, they are classified as Royal Peculiars. Both Scotland and England have distinct Deans of The Chapel Royal that of England being held since 1748 by the sitting Bishop of London, while daily control is vested in the Sub-Dean.

The Chapel Royal conducts the Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in Whitehall and combines with the choir of the host abbey or cathedral on Royal Maundy.

Carl went on to explain in some detail the musical life at the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace. He told us about the choral foundation which was registered as a charity in 2011 with an appeal for funds 'to preserve its historic tradition of sacred music from Tudor times to the twenty-first century at the present high standard of excellence.' The aim is to raise £1 million to provide bursaries for Choristers to help them with the cost of instrumental or vocal tuition; to encourage schools near Hampton Court Palace to promote choral music and organ music with the help of the Chapel Royal; and to make the musical establishment of the Chapel Royal financially independent of the Privy Purse Charitable Trust and of

the income from collections at services in the Chapel Royal.

Attracting and retaining professional gentlemen continues to be a problem at the chapel. There are 10 gentlemen in the choir, they are professional singers and the proximity to London means that the chapel has to pay competitive rates, which it is currently unable to do.

The organ needs a major refurbishment costing over £200,000. The beautiful and historic three-manual Schrider organ, which was built in 1712, was last refurbished twenty years ago.



The evening was most interesting and successful, thank you Sylvia for 'persuading' us to come and to Harry, who through his friendship brought Carl to Norwich for us.

Young Organists Recital

Matthew Bond

St Nicholas Church, North Walsham was the venue for the Annual young organist's recital. Around 30 people including NOA members and visitors gathered on Saturday 11th August to hear Ben Miller give this year's recital. Ben is the senior organ scholar at St Peter Mancroft Church in Norwich and is also in the final stages of completing a PhD at the John Innes Centre.

Ben opened his recital with one of Bach's later Preludes and fugues, BWV 547 in C Major. He chose a clear great principal chorus for both prelude and fugue, with the pedal (particularly in the prelude) being firm and supportive but well balanced. The tempi chosen for both movements were well judged and it was helpful to hear this mature work without any additional ornamentation or over fussy registration.

We then heard two pieces by Humphrey Clucas (famed for his responses). His Suite, which was composed in 1993 and written for Martin Baker contains five movements based on plainsong themes. The first movement though called *Prelude* was really a set of five variations on the theme *Christe, Qui, Lux Es*. This began very simply with the Cantus Firmus heard on the swell oboe, a flowing counter-melody on the great Rohr Flute and a solitary drone like pedal note. This gave a very early, almost medieval sound. However, by the fourth variation the harmony left us in no doubt that this work was written in the twentieth century. The final movement of the suite was ten variations on the well known *Veni Creator Spiritus*. This movement began with the start of the theme being heard plainly on

the pedals immediately followed by some colourful use of mixtures and mutations for the manual writing. Clucas cleverly does not introduce the complete theme until the fourth variation. In this variation we heard the swell strings accompanied by a delicate cello-like bass in the pedal. The variations continued until there finally features a short pedal cadenza followed by an equally busy pedal line with the tune above, this was followed by a few climactic chords which brought the piece to a somewhat sudden conclusion. Also, by the same composer, we heard *Toccata* dating from 2000.

The Romantic work in this recital was *Chorale number 3 in A minor* by César Franck, probably the best known of the three chorales. Ben chose a brisk tempo for this. Throughout there was some effective subtle use of rubato, which gave the piece shape and style without distorting the listener's awareness of pulse or metre. For me the highlight of this performance was the middle adagio section in the tonic major. During this whole section Ben captured the mood, by his good legato playing, controlled use of the swell pedal and his carefully chosen registration which featured the beautiful melody played on the swell oboe.

The final item was Percy Fletcher's *Festival Toccata*. This work featured good contrasting use of registration, including displaying the Trumpet stop. Lively and rhythmical playing was heard throughout, and the piece built to a triumphal conclusion on the full organ.

Harry Macey thanked Ben on behalf of the association for a meticulously prepared and planned programme. Following this many people stayed to enjoy tea and homemade cakes provided by Melanie Macey.

Visit to Kings Lynn, 23rd May 2012

John Plunkett

Our first port of call was the St Nicholas chapel, in the old town amongst restored buildings of considerable antiquity. The chapel is in fact a large 'hall' church from the 1300s with very wide nave and chancel of grand proportions and a very large west window which incorporates the upper part of the framing of the west door in its lower sill. At the east end of the north aisle by the chancel stands the Henry Willis & Sons organ of 1900.



Willis was not particularly interested in clothing organs, and would sooner offer you two more stops than a fine case! This one is different because the church requested John Oldrid Scott to design a suitable case to go with the re-ordering of the interior for which he was also responsible. Case features are a spotted metal front, a fine cornice, linen-fold panels to either side, with diamond pattern wrought iron grills above, bearing

gilded flowerets at the intersections. Curiously the same grill design is evident at the Minster. Another surprise was the intricately designed fretted carving forming "ears" to either side of the case front at impost level, just as we had seen in Friesland in April; a Hanseatic influence, I wonder?

The specification of this 21 stop instrument (Gt. 10stops, Sw. 9 stops, Pedal 2stops) contains four 16 ft. flues, which include Open and Bourdon on the Pedal, which at one time were commonly called "big boom" and "little boom" These certainly are! No need for a pedal trombone. If the Willis designer knew that large areas of leaded lights soak up the bass registers, he made certain this would not happen here. At the top end, the manuals have one 2ft. each and not a mixture in sight. Reeds comprise Trumpet on Gt and Cornopean & Hautboy on Swell. The rest you could guess. This was in its day an expensive organ from a top builder, and remains tonally untouched. It is therefore very powerful but unbelievably bright, belied by its stop list. The pipe work has space enough, but not too much, and grills for the egress of sound either side of the stop jambs, a cunning attempt to get the organist to play less loudly methinks. A full house of non-conformist choirs would be unable to drown it. Obviously at home with the Victorian and Edwardian repertoire and lusty congregational singing, it was capable of other genres, (including Mike Flatman's debut playing Greensleeves). Not always easy to attain inter manual balance, or a fully independent pedal line, but a fine example of the workmanship and musical needs of a century ago.

The next venue was the recently Minsterated (*Fred Dibnah*) Church of St

Margaret Kings Lynn. Unlike other Minsters which found their upgrading a good enough reason for considerable expenditure on organs, here the converse is true with a grand organ coming first! The original organ here was famously built by John Snetzler in 1754 encouraged by his friend Charles Burney, organist and historian. The organ originally stood on a dividing screen gallery at the west end of the chancel. In the 1873 photo it appears to speak only to the east, being single fronted. This was Snetzler's first major contract and made his name, which remains emblazoned on the present instrument on a name plate more reminiscent of a village shop sign. The original front still exists on the organ in the north choir position as seen today. It was likely made by his brother Leonard, a fine cabinet maker.

An excellent account of how the organ grew to its current specification is given in the Minster booklet "King's Lynn Minster The Organs" by Canon Christopher Ivory. The history is complex, ten or more organ builders are involved, it has been in at least five positions, yet twelve Snetzler stops remain, four to the Gt. and eight to the swell, both on 3 in. w.g. but the action is necessarily electromechanical. This ultimate 2012 rationalisation by Paul Hale and executed by Holmes & Swift provides an all purpose 3m & p instrument of 47 stops from 32ft open to IV rank mixture with plenty of colour and considerable excitement from the pedal department. Adrian Richards, the organist gave a fine demonstration recital following the introductory welcome by Canon Ivory, after which members enjoyed themselves for some considerable time being reluctant to leave.

For your diary

Why not remove this sheet and keep it somewhere for easy reference

Forthcoming Association Events

Saturday 29th September, the Church Room, Brooke Church at 2pm

Louis Vierne; A Celebration of his Life and Works: 2012 marks the 75th anniversary of Vierne's untimely death in the organ loft at Notre Dame, Paris. Martin Cottam presents a talk on the life and work of this important musician. He will play a rich selection of recordings to illustrate Vierne's highly individual compositional voice, giving as much weight to the unjustly neglected works for instruments other than the organ as to those for the organ itself.

Tuesday 23rd October, Norwich Cathedral at 5.30pm

Choral Evensong: NOA Members are invited to attend evensong as a group. The Cathedral choir will be singing prior to their half term break. Tea/coffee and biscuits will be served in the Refectory afterwards, and a suggested donation of £2 per head would be appreciated to defray the costs.

November, the Church Room, Brooke Church at 2pm

Desert Island Discs: Following his unavoidable need to cancel his spell on the island back in April, Rev. Canon Jeremy Haselock, Precentor of Norwich Cathedral, has kindly agreed to return to face Ron Watson's questions and share his personal choice of discs. Date to be confirmed.

Saturday 12th January 2013, Holy Trinity Church, Essex St, Norwich at 7pm

Quiz & Chips: Harry Macey has kindly agreed to be our quizmaster once again as we enjoy our traditional curtain-raiser to a new year of events. Cost: £6 per head. Please let Martin Cottam know by **Saturday 5th January at the latest** if you require fish & chips.

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 series 2012
Mondays at 1.10pm – Admission £5

September Tues 4th Philip Luke,
 Mon 10th David Dunnett

Holy Trinity Church West Runton
Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts 12.30pm – 1.30pm
Admission Free – retiring collection
Bring your lunch and enjoy a tea or coffee with us
Car park at Rectory adjoining

5th September Bryan Ellum - organ
12th September Matthew Bond (Diocesan Organ Scholar) - organ

As part of the GREAT YARMOUTH ARTS FESTIVAL
Gt Yarmouth Minster (Minster Church of St Nicholas)
tickets £5 at the door

Wednesday 5th September at 7.30pm
David Dunnett

St Nicholas North Walsham
Saturday 29th September

A concert of popular organ and choral music
The church choir of St Nicholas North Walsham, and associated organists, perform
a selection of popular choral works, including items by Handel, Bach and Vivaldi, as
well as more recent compositions.

Cromer Parish Church
127th season of summer organ recitals
Tuesdays at 8pm - free admission/collection

4th Sept Henry Macey (Aylsham)
11th Sept Richard Bower (East Dereham)
18th Sept John Dillistone (Godmanchester)
25th Sept David Shippey (organ & piano)