

The Journal

Number 87

Spring 2014



Published by the Norfolk
Organists' Association

The editor writes.....

This editorial has to be about the Journal. The previous issue was one of the thinnest ever. The winter edition is always thin because there are hardly any concerts and recitals to flag up but as you will all realise the magnitude of the magazine is entirely dependent on the input from members.

Other organist associations communicate with their members in a much simpler way, in a lot of cases with a single sheet of A4 which is a whole lot cheaper than a booklet, and if we ever get to the stage where the content of the booklet is so minimal, then the expense of producing it would not be justifiable.

What prompted these comments was the remark on a membership renewal form from someone who was opting not to renew his membership. He wrote 'the magazine is getting thinner'.

I wrote to him expressing my regret that he was leaving us but drawing his attention to the screamingly obvious fact that if only a very few members send articles for the Journal, it will be very thin. As this was someone who had never contributed anything to the magazine this may hopefully have hit home.

I urge you to consider the Journal as your pet budgie; if you don't feed it it will get very thin and might even die. If the demise of the Journal then leads you to drop out of the Association then this will be as neat an example of you shooting yourself in the foot as one could hope to come across. Surely among the membership of this Association there are people with interesting things to impart, interesting views to express. The ball is in your court. This is your Journal not mine – take ownership of it and feed it.

Organ News

Geoff Sankey

Richard Bower is voicing and installing the final four ranks for the Soham instrument. In their workshop is a single manual and pedal organ by Flight from a church in Lincolnshire built in the 1840s which is being completely restored. Once again showing the versatility of our local organ builders, they have also just completed a pedal piano based on a Blüthner; this is heading for an Oxford professor.

Carey Moore and Jonathan White are working on the organ at Great Ellingham Methodist church. This is a one manual and pedal instrument constructed by Boggis in 1945 for Old Buckenham Methodist church from older instruments. It was moved to Great Ellingham in 1994; the current work is to clean the instrument and sort out some problematic pipes.

W&A Boggis completed the restoration of the soundboard and re-leathering of the bellows on the Davies chamber organ in Wymondham Abbey. The work was completed just in time for Christmas. They have shown their versatility by making the wind system, barrel and pipes for a singing bird mechanism incorporated into a giant cuckoo clock at Westonbury Mill Water Gardens.

If any members are aware of work that I've missed which is being carried out on Norfolk organs, please let me know on GPSankey@aol.com.

**Messiaen and the Organ – A study day
led by Jennifer Bate O. B. E.**

*(Presented by the Cambridge Academy of
Organ studies and the Organ Scholars
Forum)*

John Plunkett

Informed by Martin Cottam's email and reminded by Anne Page, Ginny and I decided to brave the elements and drive to Cambridge on January 25th using the Newmarket Road park and ride and our bus passes to make the trip to the town centre free and easy. At the co-incidentally named Trinity Hall we received a warm welcome, tea and biscuits, and met up with Tim Patient and Pru Goldsmith alongside others present whom we knew. We even received name badges which serve as a memento of the day.

The morning consisted of an hour and a half lecture given by Jennifer Bate on Messiaen's organ works. This quickly proved to be wide ranging, intriguing and laced with humour and anecdote. The audio-visual presentation of performance extracts, together with the complex music notation on the printed page were given by Andrew Roberts to order.

Oliver Messiaen was born at Avignon in 1908, his father a professor of literature who translated the complete works of Shakespeare; his mother, Cécile Sauvage a poet. He began composing when he was seven. In 1919 he entered the Paris Conservatoire, where his teachers included Marcel Dupré (organ) Dukas (composition) and Maurice Emmanuel (history of music). Following the eleven years at the Conservatoire, he became organist of La Trinité, Paris where he remained for over 60 years.

Jennifer Bate's association with Messiaen was not as a pupil organist, but as an advanced student of his music, seeking better to understand the source and meaning of his works and the means of its expression through informed performance. Particularly she sought to interpret the complexity of the notation he had to devise, in order to convey the demands of his unique musical forms to the printed page.

The notation was explained to us in considerable detail, particularly the rhythmic mysteries. If you don't learn the language how can you speak The Word? As far as the organ works are concerned, that word came from God through Messiaen's deep Catholic faith and his ability to create a new musical structure; calming, warming, joyful, ecstatic, terrifying, melancholic, forgiving, atoning. In fact, these qualities are just what one might expect from the eccentricities of the composer in the organ loft, and Messiaen was no exception as we heard, but a small price to pay for great art, and essential in managing some of the hierarchy of the church! The beret and colourful florid open necked shirts were something else.

As well as the rhythmic innovation, the tonal adventure was based on plainsong form, and developments from it; new scale forms, which Messiaen called modes of limited transposition. That the strictures he imposed on himself in composition were so great came as quite a surprise. The use of birdsong transcription was another element. He could do this even before the portable tape recorder, which reveals a remarkable musical ear. Added to all this, he possessed synaesthesia, which is the phenomenon of perceiving sound as

colour, another clue as to his compositional drives.

For the afternoon masterclass we moved to St John's College Chapel and its four manual and pedal tracker of 67 stops Norman & Beard rebuilt by Mander in 1994. This proved most suitable for the six volunteers playing six different Messiaen pieces for Jennifer Bate who proved a gifted teacher. Ginny and I were kindly lent music, but I of course relied on a pedal part to find the place! Occasionally what I heard did not coincide with recordings I knew, and I was puzzled until the victim was directed to his error. Rhythm was diligently corrected, and registration was of paramount importance. Several times rather bland registrations were selected by the pupils, JB would then expertly demonstrate the way to do it. The piece came to life. The student would then be asked to have a second attempt and offered JB's registration. No one refused!

Console management was highlighted as particularly important. Players should set their registration on a piston close to where their hand will be at the point they want it. Crescendo and diminuendo are achieved by graded stop selections, adding divisions, and opening the box in considered stages if necessary, and at the right time. And lastly, a photocopy of the music, cut and pasted in the old way helps to avoid risky turn-overs that interfere with the flow.

The building was cold, the seats were hard, but the music and teaching were excellent, three hours of magic passed all too soon. The afternoon ended with thunder and lightning, hail and rain.

Desert Island Discs

Ginny Plunkett

Although we had been expecting Ashley Grote, our Master of Music at Norwich Cathedral to be the unlucky lost mariner on the imaginary island, his duties took him elsewhere and Harry Macey, our Immediate Past President volunteered to be marooned, complete with familiar accoutrements.

Harry was born in Windsor and brought up in nearby Sunninghill, not far from Ascot, to a good amateur violinist and pianist Mum, and a Dad who was a tenor in the church choir, a good foundation for the musical years ahead. Harry joined the choir with Dad at the age of 8 years where the organists were Edward Duckett (Eton College) and a blind Ipswichian Tom Reed. (See journal no. 82 for more). Harry would come home from infant school and pick out on the piano tunes that he had heard that day, causing his parents to decide that proper lessons from the village piano teacher were the order of the day. (YOU can make up your own minds as to the reason!) After his primary schools, Harry then attended Windsor Grammar school where he had organ lessons with Dr Leslie Smith on Windsor Parish Church organ, as well as experiencing lots of music and taking his O and A levels.

In September 1965, Harry went to Trinity College of Music where his musical experiences expanded immensely through the guidance of lecturers (and the name in brackets was where THEY had gained their expertise from) such as Dr Harry Gabb, pupil of Walter Alcock, organ study, John Simons (Ravel), piano and

Charles Proctor, (Sargent/Wood) conducting. A composer from the USA, Elliot Schwartz, was in residence during this period and Harry was involved with the first performance of his *Ascension* – an example of early aleatoric music.

Whilst studying with Dr Gabb, Harry used to join him in the organ loft at St Paul's Cathedral and of course, played there. At one of his harmony lessons, Harry, along with the rest of the students in that class, had to sit at the piano and harmonize a folk song. His given melody was *Greensleeves* and the resulting chromatic arrangement ensured that he became the College main choir accompanist. He also accompanied vocal ensembles. This experience enabled him to accompany other London choirs and he played in concerts in the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and to sing under Barbirolli in the Royal Albert Hall for four college concerts. He became immersed in London musical life; Royal Choral Society, Sadler's Wells Ballet (and here the mind boggles, but he played for rehearsals,) and St Sepulchre's. As well as gaining a degree at Trinity, he also took diplomas in orchestral and choral conducting, piano and organ.

Another little job that he and some friends had, was to write out the instrumental parts of Vernon Elliott's music for the TV children's programme 'The Clangers'. Vernon Elliot was the principal bassoon for the Philharmonia Orchestra and a professor at Trinity. He also wrote the music for Ivor the Engine and The Pingwings.

After further study at London University Harry became a music teacher and taught firstly at Chobham and then at Horsell county secondary schools 1968-74 (both near Woking) and then as Director

of Music at Langley Grammar (Slough) from 1974 – 2001, teaching year 7 to A level. (that's 11 yr olds to 18 yr olds for those of you not au fait with school age groups).

He also had an orchestra, three choirs, lots of extra-curricular work, plus shows and productions – e.g. Calamity Jane, Wizard of Oz, Bugsey Malone, My Fair Lady and Oliver, where the school borrowed the costumes and props from Pinewood Studios. The Messiah was performed in the Royal Albert Hall and all these involved hundreds of children. Harry played the organ on each occasion. Outside of school, he was in charge of the 30 strong choir and organ at Sunningdale Parish Church from 1967 – 87, which overlapped the earlier years of teaching. Here he founded the Sunningdale Music Festival, at which the numerous concerts, conducted by Harry included Bach Cantatas, (with the active support of Paul Steinitz), the complete cycle of Beethoven's piano concertos and Mendelssohn symphonies. At the same time, he took the Egham Choral Society from 1968-81, then again from 2001- 06. This was a choir with a membership of 60, where Harry had to prepare everything, from obtaining the orchestras, the rehearsing, even writing in the bowing for the strings in the Messiah! They achieved Bruckner, Dyson's *Canterbury Pilgrims*, Haydn's *Creation* and *Nelson Mass*, Elgar's *Kingdom* and Britten's *St Nicolas* - to name but a few.

Just for a rest, Harry took them on twinning visits to Bensberg (near Cologne). He conducted and played for many regional church choir festivals including Royal Holloway College and Guildford Cathedral. Several summers were spent in Austria and Germany

attending summer schools on accompanying. Most importantly of all in this period, January 1st 1972 saw him married to Melanie.

He joined the ISM and became the Secretary of the Guildford Centre, continuing this job for six more years when he and Melanie moved to Norfolk in 2006. Harry is now a Fellow of ISM. You now all know a FISM!

His eight discs were, he explained, to remind him of the various parts of his life. The Tchaikowsky *Piano Concerto no.1* played by Julius Katchen, was not only the first LP that he had bought, but he had had the pleasure of conducting it in the 1980s. At Trinity, he had sung Elgar's *Kingdom* with Charles Proctor as the conductor, just one of the great choral traditions that TCM was renowned for in those days, and we heard the Elliot Schwartz *Crystal* – a cycle of names and memories for piano and percussion.

For his school memories, we listened to the Kyrie from Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, and *Secret Love*, sung by Doris Day, from Calamity Jane. To cover church memories, Harry chose a setting of Psalm 78, sung by Wells Cathedral choir, and this was followed by a chorus from the Bach's *Easter Oratorio BWV 249*. The final disc was Peter Hurford playing the *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor BWV 582*, on the organ of the Church of our Lady of Sorrows in Toronto.

We were told of little anecdotes from organ loft tales, and for those of us of a mature age, a little aside, Harry played for Diana Dors funeral and the wedding of Sir Rex Hunt's daughter. (Falklands Governor General).

As for his survival on the island he thought he might be able to cope with DIY, but didn't think he would build a

boat because he had limited swimming ability. Yes, he could cook, but not to Melanie's standard and gardening would be a disaster. The book he selected would be reference rather than narrative, Encyclopaedia of London. Ron asked, of course, for the choice of a luxury item, something not useful, he added. Harry, with tongue in cheek first of all suggested G Kendrick and a noose, followed by, pictures by Breugel and Constable.

The answer to the NOA extra question of a selected companion came as no surprise. Harry would like to chat to JS Bach, observe his musical processes and discuss his philosophy of life.

What a lot we got! Many thanks to Ron for chairing the proceedings and a huge vote of appreciation to David, Gwyneth and Colin, for their work in the kitchen, providing those super choc chip biscuits and the tea.

St Peter's Church, Sheringham

**Lunchtime Recitals Tuesdays 12.30
to 1.30 Refreshments available.**

5th August

**Phillip Adams (St Peter's,
Sheringham)**

12th August

**Phillip Adams and Michael Finnissy
(Organ and Piano) Mostly French
Frivolity**

19th August

**David Ballard (St Nicholas, North
Walsham)**

Mr Alfred Pettet

Submitted by Pauline Stratton

A grand concert took place in St Stephen's church, Norwich on 29th April 1814 to mark the opening of the new England organ. A detailed report of the occasion was printed in the Norfolk Chronicle dated 7th May 1814.

Yesterday Se'night the organ lately erected by Mr England in St Stephen's church was opened. The performance on this occasion was on a scale more liberal and extensive than any other former, similar occasion and the band comprised not only the musical strength of the city but was supported by the powerful talents of Mrs Solomon and Mr C Smith.....The morning performance commenced with the opening of the organ by Mr Pettet in which he called forth all the varied powers and combinations of which that noble organ is capable.....Mr Pettet presided at the organ with his accustomed ability...." The concert featured the "most popular choruses and songs by Handel as well as the choicest productions of the best foreign masters...

Alfred Pettet had been an articled pupil at Norwich Cathedral. Following the death of Mr John Charles Beckwith, both Pettet and Zechariah Buck were candidates for the vacant post. The Norfolk Chronicle dated 16th October 1819 reported Buck's appointment by the Dean to the situation of organist. The same newspaper also carried the following letter from Mr Pettet.

To the Parishioners of St Peter's, Mancroft, Ladies and Gentlemen I beg to return you my sincere thanks for the honour you gave this day unanimously conferred upon me. It is particularly

gratifying to my feelings to be appointed to a situation which was formerly held by Dr Beckwith of whom I am proud to say that I received my professional education and I am anxious to assure the Parish in general that it will be my earnest endeavour to merit their kindness and favour.

To those personal friends to whose exertions I am so much indebted I feel any expression of gratitude which I could use would be very inadequate to convey my sense of what I owe to their kind and valued assistance.

I have the honour to subscribe myself Ladies and Gentlemen, your obliged and obedient servant, ALFRED PETTET, Castle Meadow, October 13th 1819." (Previously the organist of the cathedral was also organist of St Peter's.)

In January 1825, through the local newspaper, Mr Pettet respectfully informs his friends and the public, that he resumes giving lessons at his residence on Monday next, and that attendance will be given on the usual days at Norwich schools, at Thetford, Diss and Blofield. Castle Meadow 15th Jan 1825.

Later that year, during Sessions Week, Mr A & E Pettet most respectfully announce their intentions of giving two grand miscellaneous concerts at the theatre on Thursday and Friday evenings 20th and 21st October and a morning performance on Friday 21st October in the Hall Concert Room in St George's Bridge St. To conclude the first Act of Friday morning's concert the Overture to Saul by Handel was performed with the organ movement played by Mr E Pettet. However, it was reported the following week that unfavourable weather led to a lower attendance than expected, with 159 persons enjoying a superior performance.

A large advertisement in the Norwich Mercury dated 3rd May 1828 states *Vocal music published this day by Mr A Pettet, 154 Oxford St, opposite Bond St, London.* It is followed by a list of the compositions. The same month another advertisement appears for a concert, on 6th June 1828, again in the Hall Concert Room in St George's Bridge St. where *performances of a selection of Mr Pettet's collection of Sacred music would take place with Master Gunton, a pupil of Mr A Pettet, one of the principal vocalists.* The organ on this occasion was played by Mr Westrop.

In July of that year Mr Pettet advertised that *Four trebles with good voices are required to fill up vacancies in St Peter's and St Stephen's choirs, salaries are given.*

A volume of original sacred music and poetry by the most celebrated living composers, ... compiled and arranged by Mr Alfred Pettet, composer extraordinary to His Majesty, was advertised in August 1828.

Moving forward to January 1837, Alfred and his daughter Helen are in business together; *Mr and Miss H Pettet beg to announce they resume giving music lessons on Monday 23rd instant. Mr Pettet has a vacancy for an articled pupil of decided musical talents and respectfully connected ... Mr Pettet's system of musical education in the department of Piano Forte and Organ playing, the study of harmony and vocal science may be judged by his acquirements and appointments of professional pupils:- Mr E J Westrop organist of Fitzroy chapel London; Mr H Westrop, organist of St Edward the Martyr, London; and Mr F Gunton, organist and rector chori, of the collegiate church, Southwell, Notts.*

Alfred Pettet died two months later, on 16th March 1837 at his home in Chapel Field, aged 48 years. It is stated in the deaths column of Norfolk Chronicle that he was organist both of St Peter's and St Stephens in the city. A tribute to him in the Norfolk Chronicle reads:-*...The merits of our late friend, whether viewed in a professional light or regarded simply on personal grounds are, in our opinion, such as fairly demand to be the subject of a biographical memoir rather than the theme of an incidental notice. We have ourselves neither the science which would warrant us to undertake, nor the leisure to complete, the task, however satisfactory, of rendering justice as well to the high musical attainments as to the superior qualities both of head and heart, which distinguished him in life ; and which will be longest remembered with admiration and respect by those who knew him best, now that he is no more....When we consider the many years of bodily affliction to which Mr Pettet was subjected - when we consider the sufferings from disease to which he prematurely fell a victim - suffering supported to the last with a manly fortitude and a truly Christian submission to the will of heaven, when we reflect upon these unfortunate and insuperable impediments to that worldly advancement for which his ingenuity, taste, and industry - his elegant mind, his amiable disposition, and engaging manners appeared to have marked him out as it were from the crowd....*

Helen M Pettet was a candidate for the vacant organist's position at St Peter's. She received a lot of support and Mr Hill declined to stand against her. The only other candidate was Mr Critchfield, who was appointed, Helen wrote a letter to the

Parishioners of St Peter's Mancroft through the press:- *To the many kind individuals I am indebted for their unexpected and arduous exertions, the memory of which I can never pass from my mind, and in the recollection of those generous efforts, I shall find ample compensation for my failure in the present instance...*

A performance of *Messiah* was given on 26th May 1837 for the benefit of Mrs Pettet, widow. The concert surpassed all expectations and a sum in excess of £150 was raised. A memorial to Alfred Pettet can be found on the wall of the south aisle in St Peter's Mancroft.

Information used with the kind consent of the EDP

Brain workout

Isabel and Ron Watson



Having taken the trouble to devise questions for the Quiz & Chips evening we felt that they might amuse members who weren't there. And so I am reproducing them below.

The Quiz & Chips evening is always most enjoyable and great fun and

is commended to you all as a very pleasant way to start the year.

Who am I? 2 points each

(a) I was born in Florence and died in Paris. I was a skilled player of the guitar and violin, on the strength of which I was employed, aged 22, by one of the crowned heads of Europe to write dance music. I died as a result of a self-inflicted injury to my foot.

(b) I was born in Marylebone, son of an English cabinet maker of Polish descent. I obtained a BMus at Oxford and was organist at St Mary's, Charing Cross Road. I was also organist at St Bartholomew's New York City. I appeared in motion pictures and once shook hands with Mickey Mouse. There is no truth in the rumour that my real name was Leonard Stokes. I am buried in East Finchley.

(c) I was born in Naples and am described as an Italian nobleman, lutenist, composer and murderer having murdered my wife and her lover for which I was not punished.

(d) I am the son of an English architect and was a friend of Grieg and Delius and champion of Nordic music. I served as a bandsman in the US Army Band during the first world war. I was married in 1928 in the Hollywood Bowl and I appeared at the Proms in 1948 as a concert pianist. I was an aficionado of sadomasochism.

(e) I was born in Spain and died in Puerto Rico aged 96. My father was a parish organist and choirmaster. I performed at the Crystal Palace and later for Queen Victoria at Osborne House. I was a supporter of the Spanish Republican Government and vowed not to return to Spain until democracy was restored. I refused to play in countries that

recognised the authoritarian Spanish Government.

What have the following in common? 1 point each

Beethoven - Smetana
Franz Xaver Sussmeyer - Anthony Payne
Earth - Pluto
JS Bach - Michael Tippett
Mercury - Philosopher
Edward Bairstow - Percy Whitlock
Jupiter - Paris
Eric Fenby - John Christopher Smith
Sea - Antarctica
Chopin - Oscar Wilde

Numbers - 1 point each

How many children had Bach?
How many symphonies did Elgar complete?
How many faces has a triangular prism?
The First Lord of the Treasury resides at which number in Downing Street?
Which of Bach's organ works is BWV 582?
How many grooves were there on one side of a 78 rpm record to nearest 100?
How many husbands had Elizabeth Taylor?
How many humps has a Bactrian camel?
How high is Mount Everest to the nearest 100 ft?
How many demisemiquavers in a dotted minim?

Where is it? - 1 point each

In which city is the Golden Gate Bridge?
In which city is the Taj Mahal?
In which city is the CN Tower?
In which English county is Pity Me?
In which Scottish county is the Electric Brae?
In which city is the Liberty Bell?
In which country are the Angel Falls?

What is the most northerly capital city on earth?

In which county is the Giant's Causeway?

In which city is the Burj Khalifa?

Can you complete the following? 1 point each

Johann ----- Hummel
----- Willibald Gluck
Domenico ----- Maria Donizetti
Edward ----- Bairstow
----- Petrovich Mussorsky
Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus
Theophilus -----
Charles Hubert ----- Parry
Percy ----- Grainger
----- Smetana
----- Corelli

How are/were the following better known? 1 point each

Reginald Kenneth Dwight
Frederick Austerlitz
Helen Porter Mitchell
Solomon Cutner
Priscilla Maria Veronica White
Marion Mitchell Morrison
Claire Mary Teresa Rawstron
Harry Roger Webb
Virginia Katherine McMath
Norma Jean Mortenson

Well, how did you do?

Could it be that you would have been the winner of a chocolate orange?

Why not come along next year and enjoy an evening of fun and company?

Answers in the next Journal.

Glory and Splendour on our doorstep.

Harry Macey

It is good that NOA visits the Cathedral from time to time in order to maintain a most valued link. Our visit on November 27 coincided with a BBC Radio 3 broadcast of Choral Evensong. The quire transepts were full. The standard of music was exemplary – the choir was as polished as ever supported by David Dunnett's beautiful accompanying.

The introit was Britten's rarely heard *Hymn to St Columba* followed by the Preces and Responses by the late Professor Peter Aston, a Lay Canon of Norwich. The Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis by Richard Allain, Director of Music at Norwich School, were commissioned by the Dean and Chapter for the Britten Centenary Festival during the summer. This splendid and difficult music bore signs of the influence of Britten – the wonderful joy of the Gloria to the Magnificat resonated through the cathedral complete with cymbelstern! These canticles deserve wider use in the future.

At this Evensong within the octave of The Solemnity of Christ the King, joy was central as the anthem, *Let all the world* from Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*, echoed round the building. After the Grace, the choir and organ excelled in Howells' magnificent *Te Deum* (*Collegium Regale, 1944*).

The service ended with a fine performance by David of Howells' *Psalm Prelude Set 2 No.3* (*Sing unto the Lord a new Song*) composed in the summer of 1939.



Quite rightly, the congregation was asked to remain seated for the voluntary. (An organist's closing voluntary is very much an integral part of the service; it is a pity that in many places it becomes a cover for chatter and tea-cups.) One must pay tribute the splendid singing of the six psalms for the 27th evening. Psalms are the kernel of evensong and Ashley's attention to detail was most evident. Ashley had written a most effective chant for Ps. 128.

We must all actively cherish and support into the future such excellence in church music.



After Evensong, a few NOA members enjoyed playing the organ whilst David went for a well-deserved pint! The Norfolk Organists' Association is most grateful to Ashley Grote and David Dunnett for showing us hospitality on a particularly busy and stressful day.



The value of letters

Communication is easier and faster than ever before. We correspond by email, texting and tweeting. We bare our souls on Facebook – and once we have, it disappears into the ether.

I have wondered for some time what future researchers will do to find out about people, given that very little is committed to writing.

I have several books of published letters and they are certainly very revealing. I often dip into Elgar's letters to Nimrod, and most recently (as a Christmas present) I acquired a book of letters written by, and some written to, Leonard Bernstein. In addition to learning what they were engaged in at particular stages in their lives one learns about their moods, opinions, attitudes and can conjure up a very clear idea of their personalities.

One very interesting episode of Bernstein's life is the business surrounding *The Chichester Psalms*. In December 1963 Walter Hussey, Dean of Chichester, wrote to Leonard Bernstein requesting a new work for the festival planned for 1965 in Chichester involving the choirs of Chichester, Salisbury and Winchester Cathedrals. The Dean suggested a setting of Psalm 2 suitable for the massed choirs of the three cathedrals to be either unaccompanied or accompanied with organ or orchestra. The Dean made the point that he thought it was valuable to commission great works of art having already commissioned Benjamin Britten and Henry Moore.

By 10th February Hussey had obviously heard from Bernstein that he was willing to write something for the 1965 festival. In a letter to Bernstein the

Dean expresses himself happy for the composer to use a different psalm, (Bernstein had presumably had some doubts about Psalm 2). The Dean also indicated that his strong desire was for the piece to receive its premiere at the Chichester festival and nowhere else.

In August 1964 Hussey sent Bernstein the programmes from the festival held that year in Salisbury so that the composer had some idea of the nature of the festival. The organist at the time, John Birch, also sent details of the other musical forces which would be available for the Chichester event.

By December 1964 the Dean is clearly become anxious that they will have the piece in time to prepare it adequately and requests from the composer at least a description of the form of the work for their advance publicity.

By 5th February 1965 the Dean is becoming clearly very anxious indeed and points out that Birch needs to know some details about the nature of the piece and, at least, a title for inclusion in programmes and other publicity.

On 24th February Bernstein wrote to Hussey indicating that he had been on the point of refusing the commission because he could find nothing within himself which would be suitable as a basis for the piece, when he suddenly latched on the idea of setting what he refers to as a suite of psalms using various verses from the psalms. He had thought of the title as *Psalms of Youth*. However, he felt that he could not find any inspiration for setting them in English. If he were to proceed then he would wish to set them in Hebrew. If there were no objection to this then he would proceed with all haste and have a score ready for early April and orchestration soon after.

In a response dated 2nd March Dean Hussey said he could find no reason for objection to the Hebrew. From the tone of the letter he seems, (understandably), mightily relieved.

In a letter dated 14th April Hussey gives the composer the line-up of voices and instrumentalists; 46 boys, 8 male altos, 9 tenors and 12 basses. The orchestra was to be the Philomusica of London with a promise of whatever additional instruments he wished for.



'The psalms are finished' wrote Bernstein on 11th May and stated that the title of the piece would be *Chichester Psalms* as the word 'Youth' was, as he put it, 'the wrong steer'.

In the same letter the composer outlines the nature of the music in each of the three sections of the work and the psalms on which they are based. His score also contains notes intended to help with pronunciation. He also mentions that he has been asked to include the psalms in a concert in New York prior to the Chichester event and that he intended to do so.

(Throughout these exchanges the Dean addressed the composer as Dr Bernstein who referred to the Dean as Dean Hussey.)

In a letter date June 1965 Hussey reported that he had been absent due to

thrombosis and that the psalms had arrived the previous day.

On 8th July the Dean wrote to the composer expressing his mounting excitement at the psalms having their first performance in Chichester and dealing with the matter of accommodation for the Bernstein family during their visit. Because of the Goodwood races there was no reasonable accommodation to be had anywhere near at hand and so the Dean offered Bernstein and his wife to stay with them in the deanery and for the Bernstein children to stay with Mr & Mrs Robert Elwes who had a large house with swimming pool and two children of a similar age, two miles from the cathedral.

Bernstein wrote to Hussey on 17th July accepting the offer of hospitality and reporting the first performance of the psalms on 16th July. He reassures the Dean that he (the latter) was given due credit for the commission in the review of the concert and the programme notes.

By 1st August it was clearly all over. In a letter of that date which starts, 'Dear Lenny', Hussey expresses his boundless delight at the piece and at having entertained the Bernsteins in their home. They all seem to have got along very well. Felicia Bernstein wrote to 'Walter' on 3rd August recalling very happy memories of their stay in Chichester as did LB in a letter of 6th August from the Savoy just as they were on the point of leaving for home. The two men corresponded further for a short time and the Dean sent LB a pen which the composer writes to thank him for and express his delight in.

So there we have it. The story of the Chichester Psalms from letters. How will historians function once people have stopped writing to each other? RW

The Restoration of Treasure in London's East End

Martin J. Cottam

There was a deal of sometimes acrimonious discussion towards the end of last year about the impact of the government's 'green levies' on our ever increasing household fuel bills. What then if the government were to impose a further levy to fund the building of new churches in London in response to fears that the growth of dissent and irreligion was putting the Church of England under threat? Just imagine the outcry! But that's essentially what happened in 1711 when an Act of Parliament decreed the imposition of a Coal Tax specifically to fund the building of fifty new churches in London, Westminster, and the rapidly growing suburbs. In the event the new tax raised funds sufficient for only a dozen churches. Fortuitously a number of these were designed by that darkly individual genius of the English Baroque, Nicholas Hawksmoor and they are churches of such quality and monumental distinctiveness that even the most grudging of those early 18th century taxpayers would probably have conceded the money was well spent in the end.

Christ Church, Spitalfields (built 1714-29) is the most impressive of Hawksmoor's London churches. Standing a stone's throw to the east of Liverpool St Station it's a belter of a building, and all the better for still being surrounded by some of the capital's most evocatively intact streets of early 18th century terrace houses. The west tower is a most remarkable fusion of Roman triumphal arches topped with a medieval broach spire.

In 1735 an organ by Richard Bridge was installed on the church's upper west gallery. Housed in a beautifully carved case of three towers separated by sensuous serpentine flats it was an instrument designed to complement the grandeur of the building. With 33 stops spread over three manuals (plus a two pipe Drum pedal stop) it was matched in number of ranks only by the Renatus Harris organ of 1710 in Salisbury Cathedral (an organ which has long since gone).

I first saw Christ Church whilst at Art College in London in the mid 1970s. It was a forlorn sight; grimy, decaying, locked, unloved. I can even recall barbed wire looped around the front railings and up the great west door. Since then, mercifully, a comprehensive restoration programme lasting longer than the church's original construction has brought this fabulous edifice gleaming triumphantly into the 21st century. It is home to a flourishing congregation and, cleared of incongruous Victorian pews, doubles as a magnificent concert hall and venue for all manner of special events.

But what of the historic Richard Bridge organ?

Predictably it suffered many of the usual tonal and structural alterations that befell most of our Georgian organs during the 19th century. By the end of the final rebuild in 1926 by Bishop & Son the mutation stops and Cornet ranks had all gone (with the exception of the Great Twelfth) as had the original keyboards. Other stops were replaced as the total number swelled to 47 including a high pressure Tuba on the Choir. Despite all this work it would seem the organ was never completely dismantled and remarkably both the Great and Choir

manuals retained their low GG compass. Much original material remained notably the (apparently) little altered foundation work and pipework from the two 8ft Trumpets on the Great. The organ fell silent in the 1950s. There can be few people still alive today who can recall what it sounded like and its restoration has been long and eagerly awaited. The pipework was eventually removed during 2002 for storage in the Devon workshop of master organ builder, William Drake.

William Drake was virtually without peer as a restorer and reconstructor of historic English Classical organs. There could be no better choice for bringing the Bridge organ back to something like its former glory, but it was 2011 before sufficient funds enabled work to begin. By a cruel twist of fate the onset of serious illness curtailed Drake's ability to play any further 'hands on' practical role in the project himself. Tragically he passed away in January of this year, an incalculable loss to British organ building. Fortunately he employed assistants who are more than capable of carrying the work at Christ Church through to a successful conclusion: Geert Noppers and Joost de Boer are two Dutch born organ builders who have been working with Drake since 1981 and 1989 respectively.

NOA Member John Plunkett knew Bill Drake for a number of years and this friendship (along with a haul of now largely unattainable historic screws of all sizes inherited from the workshop of the late Robert Shaftoe) was the key that opened the door for John to pay a visit to Christ Church on November 14th 2013 to inspect progress on the organ's restoration at close quarters. I and John's old friend and colleague, Rod were privileged to go along for the ride.

I knew that work on the meticulously restored organ case had been completed some months earlier so I was a little disappointed to see the case still devoid of any pipework. Disappointment was soon dispelled however as I found myself climbing a heftily but elegantly balustraded broad wooden staircase in the north west corner of the building. Passing the entrance to the side galleries we ascended further to parts usually unseen by members of the public, namely a large, vaulted and wood panelled room that stretches across almost the full width of the tower.

This rather splendid room has become, for the time being, an organ builders' workshop and it was here we found Geert patiently and deftly fitting bent brass pins to the ends of the new tracker rods. Together with Joost he kindly led us through a large, fanlighted central door into the interior of the organ where we were shown the first of the new wedge bellows to be fitted. No windchests or soundboards had yet been installed but the rollerboards were in place and a profusion of wires and tracker rods had begun to sprout.

Moving round to the organ gallery itself we saw the reconstructed console. The dark wood naturals and distinctive 'skunk tail' sharps on the new keyboards are based on the surviving Bridge originals on his 1756 organ at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, yet another historic gem currently unplayable and languishing in silence awaiting the love and funds necessary for its resurrection. The reconstructed drawstops had yet to be fitted but Joost told us the stop labels would be hand-written on paper, their guide being a filthy, torn scrap of paper rescued from the general detritus found in

the bottom of the organ when it was dismantled. It turned out to be the only surviving fragment of the original stop labels, the letters "ture" being all that was left of "Mixture". This sort of scrupulous attention to detail and research is typical of the work that has characterised the restoration thus far. It is no wonder that the meticulous analysis of this instrument's secrets and the subsequent restoration and reconstruction of its constituent parts is agonisingly slow.

No pipework will return until March, and then only the front case pipes which will be voiced in the church before being sent away for gilding. Meanwhile, John's friend David Frostick, arguably the country's leading exponent of historic reed pipe voicing has been charged with task of bringing the all important Bridge Trumpet and Clarion pipes back to life. Of the Choir Cremona only two original pipes survive and so much about their composition and scaling, etc will have to be informed conjecture. Joost said he favours giving the stop a more 'open', French style of sound. Music to my Francophile ears certainly, but a logical decision too given that Bridge is known to have been trained by Renatus Harris (or possibly his son, John Harris). The weight of evidence points to Harris's father, Thomas being the son-in-law of Robert Dallam, a key member of the Dallam dynasty who spent their years of exile during Cromwell's commonwealth building organs in the French style in Brittany. The new proliferation of reed, mutation, and Cornet stops on English organs after the Restoration of 1666 is evidence of the French influence on English organ building from that date. Glance at the original specification of the Christ Church organ and one might be

forgiven for thinking it was actually a French instrument (apart from the presence of Diapasons)!

No pipes from the original Choir French Horn stop survive, indeed no original French Horn pipes from any eighteenth century English organ have come down to us at all. Their replacements will be based on those still to be found in the J.C.Bishop organ of 1829 at St. James' Bermondsey. In a concession to modern needs there will be a pedalboard on the restored Christ Church organ but given that HC Lincoln added pedal pipes to the Bridge organ as early as 1837 this is not such an anachronism as it might first appear. Indeed the surviving Lincoln pedal pipes will be reused.

Writing back in 1996 the late Stephen Bicknell wrote, "one assumes that the reeds would have been the the glory of this organ, and there is enough material surviving at Spitalfields to hope that the English version of the Grand Jeu might one day be heard again." There is still some way to go before the sound of this extraordinarily important survivor from the first half of the eighteenth century will be heard once more, but the fact it will sound again is no longer a hope but a certainty. There can be no doubt it will be a glorious sound as befits the beauty and grandeur of its casework and the church it graces. A veritable jewel in a crown. It will now also serve as a fitting memorial to the craftsmanship and genius of the great William Drake who waited so long and so eagerly to hear this organ roar and sing.

Forthcoming Association Events

Saturday 15th March 2014, St. Nicholas, Dereham at 11.30am:

AGM, Buffet Lunch, and Recital: Proceedings begin with our business meeting in the Church Hall followed by a buffet lunch (£6 per head). Our meeting will conclude in the church itself where Tim Patient will regale us with a recital on the organ there (III/P 30). Originally rebuilt in 1874 by Hill & Son and restored in 1964 by Hill, Norman & Beard the current instrument was extensively rebuilt by Richard Bower in 1995 with a new 'Chaire' organ containing pipework by Father Smith.

Please let Harry Macey know by **Saturday 8th March** if you require the Buffet Lunch.

Saturday 26th April 2014, Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, Suffolk at 11am:

Organ Visit: William Saunders, the current President of the Suffolk Organists' Association is the Director of Music at the Royal Hospital School and he has very kindly invited us to hear and play the mammoth 1933 Hill, Norman & Beard organ (IV/P 64) in the enormously resonant chapel there.

Please report to Reception in the main entrance building on arrival.

Saturday 17th May 2014, St. Peter Mancroft Church, Norwich at 4.30pm:

The French Classical Organ and its Repertoire: Following his recent attendance at a summer school centred on the unaltered François Henri Clicquot organ of 1783 at Souvigny, France, Julian Haggett (organist at St. Peter Mancroft) is keen to share his passion for this music in a presentation/demonstration/masterclass utilising the 1984 Peter Collins organ at St. Peter's. This is one of the very few organs in East Anglia that can do proper justice to this distinctive and rewarding repertoire.

Please let Martin Cottam (01603 703921, martin@cottam.eclipse.co.uk) know by Saturday May 10th if you wish to take part in the masterclass, along with details of which piece you would like to perform.

Saturday 28th June 2014, Church Farmhouse, Church Road, Deopham at 11.30am:

A Barn Full of Organs: Some NOA Members may recall a most pleasant visit to the home of fellow member, Geoff Sankey some years ago. A recent addition to his organ collection housed in his adjoining barn is a German pipe organ now reconstructed within a historic English organ case. Geoff has very kindly agreed to welcome us once more to his abode and enjoy his collection. We plan to include a food element and a visit to Deopham church next door which houses a rather delightful little Nicholson organ of c.1870 (I/P 9).

27th-31st July 2014:

Return Tour to Groningen: Bookings are now closed for our tour with Sietze de Vries to hear and play historic organs (including four by Arp Schnitger) in Groningen, Oostwold, Godlinze, Eenum, Krewerd, Appingedam, and Leeuwarden.

Saturday 9th August 2014, St. Peter Mancroft Church, Norwich at 2pm:

Young Organists' Platform Concert: Our annual Young Organist's Recital will this year feature three young organ students of Julian Haggett and David Dunnett. Tea & cakes will be available afterwards.

Saturday 27th September 2014, St. Peter's Church, Westleton, Suffolk:

Organ Visit; NOA member, Andrew Campbell is the organist at St. Peter's and is keen for us to come and enjoy the new west gallery organ there (III/P 26) currently being completed

by Peter Burnstead in the English Classical style incorporating mid-19th century pipework by James Corps of Norwich from the organ at Little St. Mary's Church, Cambridge. Time to be confirmed.

Saturday 25th October 2014. St. Thomas's Church, Earham Road, Norwich at 2pm:
The Development of the Organ and its Music; We are privileged indeed to have Richard Townend, long time organist at the Wren church of St. Margaret Lothbury in the City of London come and give us this talk on a fascinating and wide-ranging topic. Refreshments will be available afterwards.

November 2014, Norwich Cathedral:
Choral Evensong followed by the opportunity to visit the organ loft. Date to be confirmed.

Saturday 10th January 2015. Holy Trinity Church, Essex Street, Norwich at 7pm:
Quiz & Chips; Ron and Isabel Watson have very kindly agreed to be our quiz-masters once again for our traditional curtain-raiser to the New Year. £6 per head.

Saturday 7th February 2015. The Song School, Norwich Cathedral Cloisters at 2pm:
Desert Island Discs; Having avoided his planned shipwreck in February 2014 due to unforeseen professional commitments Ashley Grote, Master of the Music at the Cathedral has graciously agreed once again to be our castaway on the mythical island.

March 2015:
AGM, Buffet Lunch, Recital; Date and venue to be confirmed.

Saturday 25th April 2015. St. Thomas's Church, Earham Road, Norwich at 2pm:
The Preludes & Fugues of J.S.Bach; Following his previous presentations on the Clavierübung Part III and the 'Eighteen' Chorales, Harry Macey turns his attention to Bach's preludes and fugues in this lecture/recital.

N.B. All events are free for NOA members (unless stated otherwise). There is an admission charge of £5 per head per event for non-members.

Please don't hesitate to contact Harry Macey (01692 501023 or events@norfolkorganists.org.uk) if you have any queries or require further details of any of our events.