

The Journal

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The editor writes.....

I have undergone a conversion. For years I wouldn't have contemplated going to the Christmas Spectacular at Thursford. With there being a Wurlitzer there I imagined a show pandering to a low level of taste, with soupy crooned versions of Christmas carols and an overemphasis on the secular side of Christmas. However, as a result of an introduction to it by way of a strange set of circumstances I now know my pre-judgement was wrong.

I have now sat through two shows and have been held spellbound on each occasion by the sheer professionalism of everything, the costumes, the dancing and the music, all of which are of the very highest order. Imaginative and very clever arrangements of well known carols are performed by a most accomplished orchestra and band of singers, every bit as good as the best one gets to hear in our cathedrals. The nativity story features prominently in music and readings and the whole experience is totally wholesome. The Wurlitzer does feature but not overly and there are screens by which one can watch Phil Kelsall doing his Cameron Carpenter tricks, a source of amazement for the uninitiated.

Last year we were given a tour behind the scenes after the show and were quite staggered by the complexity and efficiency which are part of staging these amazing shows. It is a wonderful experience right here on our doorstep, well worth doing.

As the nights get darker there are things to be looked forward to which engender some optimism. I always start to cheer up when on the 22nd December the days start to pull out and I allow myself a stifled 'Whoopee!'.

I can look forward to the Christmas music which never fails to lift my spirits. At some time during the festival I always listen to Hely-Hutchinson's *Carol Symphony*, Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* and a CD I acquired some years ago by the Theatre of Voices which has on it some quite exquisite carols. There is, when I listen to wonderful Christmas music, magic in the air which is not conjured up or enhanced by anything else, and certainly not by Santas going 'Ho, Ho, Ho' or reindeer with red noses.

I find myself moved close to tears every year at the Special Schools Carol Service in the Cathedral and by the dedication and effort invested by carers for that section of society who cannot care for themselves. They come along armed with drums to bang, whistles to blow, wearing antlers and other paraphernalia which makes them feel festive, to be assured of God's love for them. The Bishop and Dean and some of the Cathedral Canons are there dressed up in their finery as is the Lord Mayor.

It is not difficult to be cynical about the way Christmas is enjoyed by some, (endured by others), and I have to stop myself being too pedantic about some of the nonsense which attaches itself to this festival. It did nobody any good last year when, having spotted a label which read 'Xmas walnuts' I asked a supermarket employee what Xmas walnuts were and how they differed from ordinary walnuts. Not surprisingly she didn't know and gave me a funny look.

For all that I wish you all health wealth and happiness at this festive season, (as, incidentally, I do all the year round!) and will remind you of that again next year.

Young Organists' Platform Concert 2015

Harry Macey

St Nicholas', North Walsham presents a successful series of organ recitals each Thursday during the summer. August 27th saw NOA's Young Organists' Platform Concert conclude the 2015 series. An audience of 55 enjoyed some truly sparkling playing in which two organists displayed a range of musical styles, colours and interpretations.



The recital began with NOA member Harry Sullivan, who is about to join Year 13 at Wymondham College. Harry studies organ with Julian Haggett. Harry played JS Bach's *Fantasia in G BWV 572* followed by the *Berceuse* and *Carillon de Longpont* from *24 Pièces en style libre Op.31* by Vierne, the latter including a chance to show off the new Cymbelstern!

Harry was followed by Sam Aldersey-Williams, who is about to join Year 11 at Gresham's School, Holt. Sam studies organ with Lawrence Tao. Sam played the first movement of *Trio Sonata No.1 in E flat major BWV 525*, the *Chorale-Improvisation Nun danket alle Gott Op.65/69* by Karg-Elert and the concert concluded with Langlais' *Te Deum Op.5/3*.

Both lads performed for the Association in 2014; they have clearly worked hard during the past academic year and made significant progress in their playing. Our thanks are due to the organists, their parents, their organ teachers and to David Ballard (organist) and the authorities at St Nicholas', North Walsham for their co-operation during the planning of this recital.

It is important that the Association promote such events as part of our educational initiatives and essential that we do all we can to encourage promising talent. If you hear of youngsters who are at the stage when a modest public platform experience would be valuable, please let me know.

We are not alone!!

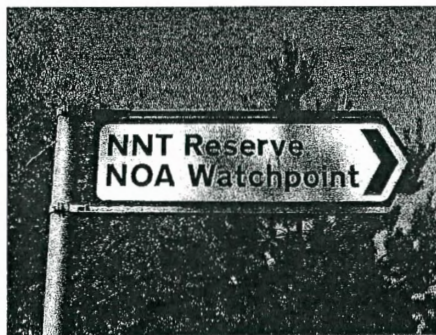


Photo taken at Holme next the Sea by Ginny Plunkett

Visit to Wymondham Abbey

Michael Flatman

On Saturday 19th September at 6 pm. nine members were warmly welcomed by Mike Webb, the Sub Organist of Wymondham Abbey, for our monthly meeting. The doors were locked and we were told that we could stay until 5.30 am. if we wished!! In fact we stayed until nearly 9 pm., which gave all present ample opportunity to play.

Pam and I had not visited the Abbey for a long time and were immediately impressed with the fine restoration work that has been carried out to the interior, in particular the great gilded altar screen, tester and rood screen, completed in 1934, which looked resplendent under the Abbey's spotlights. Turning 180 degrees and looking west down the nave, one sees the main organ, framed in the arch of the tower standing on a stone bridge.

The Abbey has two organs, both built by James Davis of Preston and we began by exploring the characterful smaller chamber organ dating from 1810, which is situated in the north aisle. The instrument has seven stops and a compass of 58 notes GG (no GG#) to F3 and to my ears sounded wonderful.

We then turned our attention to the main organ at the west end of the Nave but not before pausing under the tower to view the original keyboard in a glass case on the ground floor. Built in 1793, the organ has undergone two major restorations, but the major part of the original eighteenth century instrument, including the case and pipe work survive thus making it of significant historical interest being one of the larger late eighteenth century organs to survive The

present instrument has three manuals and pedal board.

Members present had plenty of time to explore and enjoy this instrument with a variety of pieces from across the centuries. One highlight was a performance of Bach's *Fantasia & Fugue in C minor BWV 537* by William Moss.

Our host concluded our visit to Wymondham Abbey with a glorious performance of Maurice Duruflé's *Choral Varié sur le Veni Creator*, building to a climax on full organ with reeds resounding!

Mike has extended a very heartfelt invitation to any players who would like the opportunity to try the abbey organs for themselves. He is very keen for the organs to be played. If you contact Martin Cottam he will put you in touch with Mike.

June's latest

Here's something you will definitely want to have, *Hymns Amazing* by June Nixon published by Mayhew. This attractive book contains, (as it says on the cover), 'Fifty of the finest hymns like they never sounded before, plus a prelude on every one'.

The spiral binding makes this volume easy to use as it will sit comfortably on the organ's music desk and will throw up no challenges in page turning. As for the contents, they are typically attractive, imaginative and totally useful, like all of June's output and will add a fresh dimension to hymn accompaniment.

The IBO

Ginny Plunkett

Nothing much has been written in our journal about the IBO, (Institute of British Organ building). That's possibly because Richard Bower is busy being one and John always has other things to do! I do apologise to any readers who are members of both NOA and IBO for the omission of your names. This article will definitely not be technical, but pertain to the female onlooker point of view.

I have attended both long weekends and day long meetings, from Cornwall to Yorkshire, Malvern to Thaxted to mention a few, usually labelled as a 'subscriber's guest', (it makes a change from other names I'm given!). We usually organise a few days away around these events when situated at a distance and sometimes, *He who must be obeyed* allows me nearly a week on one side or the other of the IBO days. In 2014, wonder of wonders, we had days BOTH sides of the Lancaster weekend.

The first one I attended was the Cornish weekend, arranged by Lance Foy in 2002. They usually start on the Friday at 4pm- ish in a local Church,(after a day's work) but this time, because of the distance, the official start day was the Saturday.

All Saints Church Falmouth was the first with a Hele/Speechley/Yates instrument to be visited. We were welcomed with a talk on 'Our Cornwall' by Julie Foy. The organ and its stops was then demonstrated, followed by Lance Foy telling us about West Country organ builders. A change of venue made us climb quite a few steps up to the Parish Hall for coffee, this being the lure for a

talk on blowers and humidifiers, from which, most of the wives surprisingly disappeared to shop or take some photographs round the harbour. The men and a few ladies (about three) made their way at 11.45 am to the Parish Church for the next demonstration and scrutiny of the second Hele organ. However, only 1 builder actually played it when they were investigating, so I had a quick go, but was rushed off, back to the Parish Hall for a buffet lunch. Finally, in the afternoon, a coach ride to Truro Cathedral where the late Ken Tickell had produced a recently built chamber organ. This instrument was again demonstrated and then we were let loose on all three of the Cathedral organs, the Willis, the Byfield and the Chamber organ. At last, Eric Shepherd of the Shepherd Bros. firm took to the Willis, the console being up in the triforium. While he was playing, I glanced across the Chancel only to see little doors in the screen on the opposite side kept opening and a face would pop out. The Willis innards were over there and the organ builders were having a fine old time playing at cuckoo clocks! (and sounding some of the notes, which was a bit disconcerting because there was a keyboard and duplicate stops in the organ chamber for tuning purposes). That began to give me an idea of what they were really like, - not as serious as I had expected. So, ignoring the sound testing, I had a play.

The hotel we were staying in was near Redruth and the coach that had brought us to Falmouth, took us back so that we could get our best bib and tuckers on for the formal dinner, with guest speaker.

On the Sunday, we went to the Eden project. There were only two triple biomes

in 2002 but many ideas of how to fit in 32' open woods, plus lots of other design features that would work acoustically could be heard as I wandered round, enjoying the plants and the bird song from a few feathered interlopers. After lunch, most of the IBO went to their respective homes, but John and I went on to Mevagissey where the sea walls, the harbour light and a few parked cars were getting very wet in the rough sea and strong wind.

One of these 'long weekends' stands out in my memory, mainly for the hotel where we had been booked into, with its modern approach to life. 2013 saw us at Newcastle and Gateshead. The hotel had recently been converted from an office block belonging to a brewery. The rest of the brewery buildings were being demolished round three sides of the hotel, with St James Park, the football ground, being the 4th side, across a very busy dual carriage way. The first problem as soon as we reached our room was that the kettle lid was broken and after a hair-raising ride round the demolition sites, avoiding closed roads because of the former, I needed tea. A quick phone call to reception soon brought a working appliance by a very pleasant young girl.

Then, with a good look round the room to discover if all you need is present, as you do, I saw that the en-suite door, not only was made of slightly frosted glass but was a sliding door, about an inch away from the wall when closed. 'Don't you invite any one to this room John' was my immediate reaction, because as usual, the en-suite was no where near a window, and Blackpool illuminations had nothing on the brilliance of the lights, superbly revealing all and sundry. The third little test of our nosey selves was that I opened

the wardrobe door to hang my coat up. A light automatically went on. It was good, as I could actually see what I was doing. Problem? The light didn't go off when I shut the door. Yes, I could see with the door closed, it wasn't a good fit. Ten minutes later, it still hadn't gone off and as we were then due at the first Church, we mentioned it to reception as we went out and were told that it was automatic, but stayed on for about 15 minutes. Why? We asked ourselves, I wasn't likely to shut John in the wardrobe - - or was I?

On our return, later in the evening, I spotted two buttons by the door, which illuminated signs in the corridor. One was a blue lady and the other looked like a red baby in a nappy!! Good old reception translated the meanings for us poor, ignorant, elderlies. The blue lady was *Please clean the room*, (unlike ideas that some might have), and the red baby was *Do not disturb*. Of course, we had to hang our coats up so on came the wardrobe light. It did go out but without thinking, just before I got into bed, I hung something else up and through the gap, a thin pencil of light shone onto the wall opposite, from floor to ceiling, which also happened to be nearly opposite the bed.

Now, what could go wrong with breakfast? Well nothing went wrong with the food, once we'd sussed out the system BUT the hotel was on a steep hill, so one side was much lower than the other and the breakfast tables which were level, had one bench seat at a normal height, whilst the other side seat, was the correct height too, but the legs of the bench were about one to two feet longer, therefore mountaineering was the order of the day!

There was no restaurant, only a snack type area, so for the formal Saturday evening meal, we were in the

Gallowgate Club of the St James Park football ground across the dual carriage way. Thank goodness the company and the after dinner speaker were humorous, enough to say that Delia need have no worries. The amazing thing was that there were two big, beefy bouncers present. That was a first for the organ building fraternity! Perhaps the club thought that they might be wrecked by reed tuning knives.

Whilst on the long week-end meetings, we visit three or four instruments, there is always a good outing on a coach or an organised sight-seeing walk, or you can just visit the shops. I have to say that by the time the coach picks us up to take us back to the hotel for the Saturday formal meal, many of the builders who bring their wives, appear laden down with shopping, (but never John!)

On the Sunday morning, there have sometimes been trade stands, for all to examine the goods. In 2014, we had members trade stands, and Terry Shires, pipe maker, had a good selection, including some imaginative ones which did sound. A square pipe with two mouths, each one on alternate sides, a triangular pipe, a normal at first sight pipe except the top of the mouth band was multi-arched and a joker's hat had been engraved above it. There were two 4' apprentice pipes-those with diamond patterns cut into the inside, which then stand out when the metal is rolled and soldered, always wonderful to admire.

Each year, there are usually three or four one day meetings, one of which is the AGM for the business members. That doesn't mean the other members are banned, they just have to amuse themselves for a couple of hours. All are

at interesting places: Harrison & Harrison's Durham workshop was opened to celebrate their 150th anniversary, followed by training sessions, (I absconded firstly to the botanical gardens, then to the Cathedral and town); Malvern Priory and then to Nicholsons works for a barbecue; AC Pilmer automated music Ltd in Yorkshire, so the builders experienced a different type of instrument building.

Usk, Monmouthshire to see and hear Nicholson's restoration of St Mary's Gray & Davison with Dr Roy Massey playing; Arnley near Leeds for the Harrison & Harrison restoration of the Schulze, short recital by Graham Barber followed by a Schulze pipe making demonstration by Terry Shires; Thaxted, where Martin Goetze and Dominic Gwynn explained about their restoration of the Lincoln (or Holst's) organ and Gillian Ward Russell and pupil gave a recital of solos and duets, while John and friend hand-pumped the instrument, having been challenged to, by Martin Goetze. We had a super buffet lunch there, supplied by the pub opposite the church.

Other places include many different London locations, Odiham in Hampshire, Oxford, Cambridge, York, and the latest one, Edington Priory in Wiltshire, where Harrison & Harrison Ltd have built a new instrument, as a gift from the Edington Festival Society.

I thoroughly enjoy these days, sometimes being able to play, always appreciating the food provided (and the fact of no washing and clearing up to be done), and the chance to catch up with other wives for a natter, surprisingly, not about organs!

Dereham's new organ
(from the Norfolk Chronicle dated 22nd
December 1827)

Submitted by Pauline Stratton

The inhabitants of Dereham have made a delightful addition to their deservedly admired church by enlarging in the most judicious manner, the small organ mentioned by Dr Burney, in his History of Music, as a curiosity. It was built by the famous Schmidt, in the year 1666 for the Hon, Roger North esq. of Rougham Hall. This best workmanship of the best Master; the old favourite of Dr Burney, was bought by the parish in 1786, for the small sum of £36. *(NB. The year 1666 is clearly printed, could this be a printing error?)*

Although of extraordinary sweetness and brilliancy of tone, as a chamber organ, it was much too feeble for the beautiful building in which it is placed. The parishioners, well aware of the value of the Schmidt pipes, which are as sound as the day they were finished, last year made a subscription to repair and enlarge the organ under the direction of the Rev. R F Elwin, of this city who very handsomely offered his judgement on the occasion. The work has been most skilfully executed by Mr Joseph Hart, of Redgrave and the organ was opened on Sunday the 16th inst in the finest style, before a congregation of at least 1600 persons, by Mr Last of Orford in Suffolk. Mr Hart, the builder, has shewn great judgement in putting the Schmidt pipes into a large case, with a venetian swell for the Choir, and by placing a new Great organ in front, to correspond with the original instrument, with the eight stops and an octave of pedal pipes, has

produced an instrument, which for quality and sweetness of tone, does him definite credit, and must command the admiration of those who know what is really good.

The following is taken from the Norfolk Chronicle dated 11 June 1864.

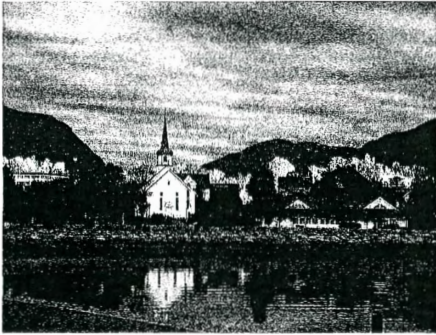
Dereham - the church organ:
The chairman of the above meeting called attention to the repair of the church organ, and its removal to another part of the church. He said Mr Corps had inspected the instrument, and his estimate for new bellows and necessary repairs was £20; for rebuilding it in the South Transept £10, for making a platform on which to place it and the rearrangement of the seats consequent upon this alteration £10, making it all £40. Under those circumstances he did not think it necessary to ask the parishioners for any subscription towards it. In reply to Mr Gidney, the chairman said repairs to the extent of £25 were absolutely necessary, so that in effect only £15 extra was required for the alterations; he added that some gentlemen who suggested that the organ should be improved had offered subscriptions for the purpose.

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Expedition Norway

Richard Bower



Eid Kyrkje is an eight hour drive north and east from Oslo, a dreamlike location set at the end of the fjord and with snow capped mountains rising either side of the town which is quieter but of similar size to our smaller markets towns such as Holt. The church is the town church and also the main area church with an area Rural Dean as the main Pastor; he is Rolf Schancke Eikum, a lovely grey-bearded man who is very outgoing (and can also speak some English).

The organ, then a two manual 28 stop Jorgensen of 1960 date has needed TLC for some time. I first saw it 10 years ago when I tuned the mixture stops for Ralph (whilst installing a two manual extension organ in nearby Kjølisdalen rebuilding the chests and console from Eaton Mormon church placing them behind a Gray & Davidson casefront ex Reading School Chapel). Over the ensuing years Ralph had been keen to have the organ rebuilt and I always said no, but finally, after a plan failed with another noted English firm, I was persuaded to quote. A year ago we went out and dismantled the job and brought

parts home, lending them our 2 manual two and pedal rebuilt Chester organ until the job was complete.

I have known Ralph Cupper ever since the days of building St Thomas Heigham organ; he would regularly visit (and be a nuisance!) but he was always full of ideas; he had been to music college (RAM) and I had similar education (RCM) so we had certain understandings and many disagreements. Ralph became organist and played at many local churches, the Sprowstons of course and he was at Christchurch New Catton where he met his wife Karin. He would tread fearlessly where others wouldn't go and for awhile was at Wymondham Abbey after the breakup of the previous musical set-up. His hobby is dental equipment and in his house is his collection of those horror machines, some with pulleys, and all sorts of drills, mouth pumps and water equipment.

Returning to the organ, it was a factory organ; one of Jorgensen's last it contains superb materials from the best supply houses; gleaming pipework immaculately made and straight out of the Laukhuff or similar firms catalogues; multi rank mixtures, Koppel flutes, doppel flutes, Kwint flutes Gedact flutes (sorry fløytes) all with pretty felt lined canisters; principal choruses immaculately made, choice reeds as well; the old detached console out of Heuss catalogue etc.. What was missing was a sense of integrity and balanced finishing. Another church nearby had scrapped its organ a few years back and Ralph, along with their local organ builder who is now well into his 90's, had started on a plan to add loads to the swell organ in a space behind the organ. Inevitably their scheme failed to complete. I tendered two schemes two

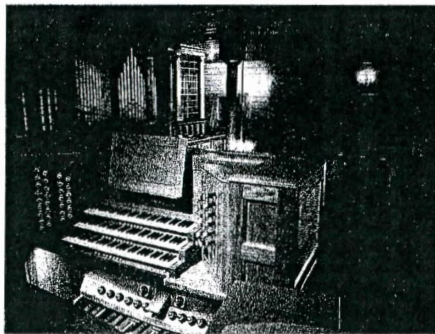
manual ,and three manual. They could only afford the two manual and that was accepted whilst incorporating their additional material. The agreement also includes a simple overhaul of the organ in the nearest village (which has a pneumatic actioned Jorgensen from 1915).

Ralph wanted, and the agreement was for, an English Drawstop Console with square pistons – Ralph was insistent on that (influenced by HNB consoles such as North Walsham and the RCO organ of that period).

The more I thought about the job the more I thought that it was stupid to replace a two manual detached console with another. I enquired into the console of the other organ, after all it was by the same maker. They had it in store in a local depot. As Eid console had ivory keys the odds were that the other console was similar so, because it is Ralph, I came up with a three manual scheme (for the two manual price) but reusing these keyboards and adjusting the scheme to a good 3 manuthreel spec. Par for the course in Norway a year ago this console was lifted down by fork-lift truck and placed in our van but nobody had a console key: days later Ralph broke into it and lo and behold g compass keys with plastic covers (his organ c compass. Ralph pushed me harder though, 'Couldn't you give him a Tubmehe said excitedly 'I must have something second-hand in my barn that would liven the organ up'. 'No way' the reply of course, but many of you have met this guy and know he is persistent. Eventually worn down and knowing that I did have a loud reed stop tucked away, I began to cave in. Ever since the St Giles fiasco (when they got rid of their Hill organ and bought the big organ from Archway Central Hall for rebuilding on a

West gallery, a scheme that never happened) I have had that organ in my workshop hoping for a good home which never happened. Its Posaune was a cracker and it was extended to 16ft on the pedal. Our job in Stevenage needed a second-hand Trombone and its bass is doing good service there, leaving the Posaune from tenor F#; this I gave to Eid, completing the stop by borrowing their pedal Posaune for the bass. But for the new console it had to be new keyboards.

And so at the end of September it was off to Norway in a van as heavily laden as when we came back last year; three days later Reuben and I reached Eid. (I took snow chains in case but thankfully didn't use them). Our Bower & Company workshop made three manual drawstop console 'with square pistons' is a heavy affair and it had to get up onto the gallery. Like most Norwegian structures it is a wooden church but they arranged a 300Kg hoist in the ceiling. As the console and its packing was assessed to be 500Kg they brought a forklift truck into church; amazingly the hoist and the truck did the trick aided by several local helpers. Reuben stayed for a fortnight and I stayed on another month to finish the job which had to be done for its opening on All Saints day.



Once I had finished wiring the new Musicom transmission system I was able to start, and complete, voicing and rebalancing the organ as a musical instrument; wind pressures changed from before and my planned alterations began to make sense. Previously the great had a rather slow 16ft trumpet as well as the Jubileums Trumpet 8ft added in that year; at the back of the swell it had a Gemshorn rank extended 16,8,4,2 & 1 and some quints in between; but it couldn't be heard as it was so distant. We replaced it with the Trumpet 16, extended to 8 & 4 and placed on 5" wind so it can be heard! On the same new chest is also a Principal 8ft and Salicional 8ft, the Unda Maris having previously needed the Gemshorn 8; on the great we added 4ft flute.

The Choir Organ, called Positiv, uses the bits of their taken-in organ; again lovely pipework, gentle stuff, but of scales we rarely see. Its soundboard, also from that organ and which has been in our workshop for the year being remodelled, is nine feet long to accommodate. Years ago, 1973 to be precise, when with the Storr Brothers I built the organ at Wroxham, Dennis Thurlow did the scaling and he came up with flute scales that were enormous; I had never seen the like until this job. The Nachthorn 4ft is nigh on four inches in diameter and makes a gentle flute sound; the Nazard akin to the Wroxham one, a tapered torpedo scale of enormous scale, the tierce similar. On revoicing them I found them to be gorgeous. The choir also has a tight II-III rank mixture which just fell into place when I worked on it, and a Krummhorn 8ft with copper pipe resonators. I was fearful of this and it was quite late in proceedings that I started work on it; after giving it lots of time it began to cease to

be a quack stop and gained an almost clarinet lustre of beautiful tone. It wasn't a cheap stop and the resonators have far more diameters than central heating pipes decreasing by a millimetre every few notes.

The final specification:

<i>Svellverk</i>	
Clarion	4
Trompet	8
Obo	8
Trompet	16
Mixtur	V FAG
Larigot	1 1/3
Super Oktav	2
Kvintaton	4
Oktav	4
Gedakt	8
Principal	8
Salicional	8
Unda Maris	8
Super Oktav	
Sub Oktav	
Normal Spill AV	
Tremolo	

<i>Pedal</i>	
Posaune	16
Tompset (sv)	16
Mixtur	IV FAG
Bordun Fløyte	4
Oktav	4
Fløyte	8
Oktavbass	8
Bordun	16
Untersatz	16
Akustik	32
Svellwerk Til Pedal	
Positiv Til Pedal	
Hovedverk Til Pedal	

<i>Positiv</i>	
Posaune Magna	8
Krumhorn	8
Mixtur	IV FAG
Ters	1 ³ / ₅
Blokfløyte	4
Nasat	2 ² / ₃
Nachthorn	4
Rórfløyte	8
Super Oktav	
Sub Oktav	
Normal Spill AV	
Svellwerk Til Positiv	

Hovedverk

Jubileums-Trompet	8
Mixtur	IV FAG
Oktav	2
Rórkvint	2 ² / ₃
Bordun Fløyte	4
Oktav	4
Doppel Fløyte	8
Principal	8
Bordun	16

Svellwerk Til Hovedverk
 Positiv Til Hovedverk
 Hovedverk Og Ped Komb Koblet

Ralph loved having our Chester organ over the year and didn't want to part with it; he even came to like the idea of being in front of the people and of having his choir with him. In the last week he announced he was having a 'Pipedown' concert for the Chester on the Friday night before the opening of the main organ. I wasn't keen and said I had to work – but his persistence won the day. The audience was small in number but very appreciative and I have never heard our little organ with only two ranks sound so good. He started with *Pièce Héroïque* and then introduced his brilliant saxophone playing

friend and showed us both how good an accompanist he was and how appropriate the organ is in that medium. The unprogrammed concert continued far too long with jazzy pieces such as *Dizzy Fingers* and finished with the whole of the Bach A minor. (I then had to go back to work on the voicing).

So the opening of the organ was upon me. All Saints Day 11 o'clock morning service in a market town type church. They flocked in, well over 100 folk, and the choir built up by the local opera chorus who were doing *The Sound of Music* (in Norwegian) down the road. The organ is loud (when you want it to be) and I had urged restraint but Cupper's improvisation before the service reached full organ at one point – and then the Introit *I was Glad* Parry. Those first three notes sounded forth on the Posaune Magna with aplomb and the choir worked hard to match it. Ralph is a fine player and he accompanied brilliantly, and all the more so later in the service when the anthem was Matthias *Let the People Praise Thee O God*. But we had nuns from the opera beautifully costumed and they sang the Sanctus as in the Musical. The final voluntary was, you would never guess!! *Climb Every Mountain* sung from the front of the church accompanied by Ralph up in the gallery, and followed by loud improvisation on the same. The service had baptism with families in National Costume and communion and all the trimmings and it finished at about 1pm.

But five minutes later it was into the opening recital of three pieces. Some folks left but a great number still remained. Ralph launched in *the d minor* on full organ but made it to the end with interesting episodes and contrasts; and

then a Trompeta Real piece by Lidón: apparently Bernard Burrell used to play it on the Cathedral Tuba, so Ralph had to have his Posaune Magna out; fun though. Finally the *Final* of Vierne I.

Ralph remained in the organ loft and took a bow from there. I was listening at the front of the church and was moved to rise to my feet and speak to the people – in English, that’s all I could do. I thanked him for showing the organ off so well and told the people how lucky they were to have such a good player. Then the Mayor of Eid stepped forward and spoke in English to them all. ‘This wasn’t part of the brief’ he said but he thanked me for the work done and for making such a wonderful musical instrument for his Town to enjoy. He presented me with a lapel badge symbolising the region.

Then it was coffee, cakes and more thank you speeches in the Kyrketun (church hall) followed by a party for his friends in Cupper’s house up the mountain overlooking the town and church. Karin had made cakes with liquorice organ pipes on them! I escaped back to church to pack up the Chester organ for its long road home; out for a meal in the evening and on Monday load up and hit the road, finally arriving at Harwich 1250 miles later at 6.30am on Thursday.

So my crazy adventure is over for a while; Ralph is still exploring his 40 speaking stops and playing it virtually non-stop. I do have to go back next year to clean and sort the little pneumatic organ in the next village, and to check how the magnum opus is faring. The climate is so different there, the organ at 24° and 30% humidity at the end of the service and yet still working; just maybe the phone won’t ring too much from Norway in the meantime.

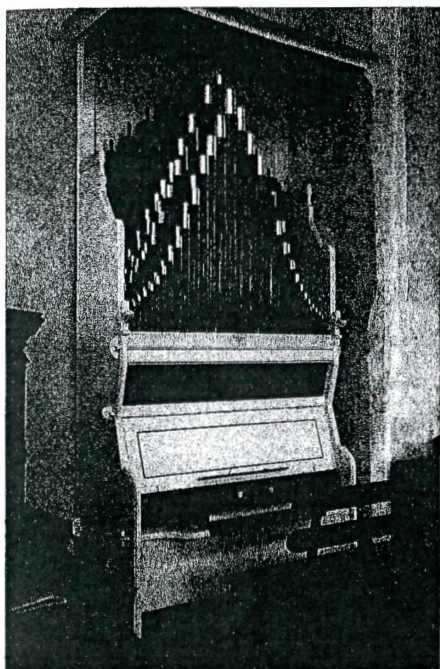
Scudamore organs

Keith Shaw

It was in the summer of 1994 that Rev. Keith James, rector of Hanworth at that time, asked if I would go along to re-open the recently restored ‘Father Willis’ organ in his parish church with a short recital.

My organist’s equivalent of the gourmet’s ‘digestive juices’ began to flow at the thought of such a prospect since, at that time, my knowledge of Willis I organs was fairly focused upon the Master’s creations of the latter half of the 19th century and domiciled in so many of England’s great cathedrals, the prestigious instruments of Gloucester, Lincoln, Hereford, Salisbury, St. Paul’s, and of the Town Halls of Oxford, Reading and Huddersfield, and St George’s Hall, Liverpool, and not least, of course, the beautifully crafted four manual instrument at Blenheim Palace, upon which I had had the privilege to spend a morning a few months previously. Intrigued, therefore by Keith’s claim of a Father Willis but a few miles north of Aylsham along the A140, I headed for Hanworth to inspect Willis’s legacy to this tiny parish church. There I set eyes for the first time on a ‘Scudamore’ organ.

It was whilst Willis was in the process of rebuilding the fine three-manual organ of Wiltshire’s Warminster Parish Church in 1867 that the Revd Dr John Baron, rector of the nearby village of Upton Scudamore (1850-86), approached the master organ-builder with the intent of arousing his interest in the manufacture of affordable organs suitable for the liturgical needs of small parish churches.



Baron was a competent musician with an informed knowledge of church acoustics and the place of music in the liturgy. At a refurbishment of his own parish church in 1855 he found himself unable to afford a 'conventional' organ (i.e. usually a small two-manual with pedal-board of at least twelve notes), so he set about designing his own instrument. It was built by his friend Nelson Hall, a skilled cabinet maker and organ-builder who also lived in the village. The result of these combined endeavours was a small single manual instrument. It had no pedals but was found to be more than adequate to fulfill its prime purpose of supporting and leading the congregation in all musical aspects of the liturgy, which would mainly be the simple singing of hymns and psalms, of course. In the event, it also proved well

sued to the accompaniment of small choirs and soloists as well as the performance of carefully-chosen organ voluntaries.

Revd Baron committed his knowledge to a book entitled *Practical Hints Respecting Organs for Village Churches and Small Chancels, on Improved Principles* – a title thankfully reduced to *Scudamore Organs!* It was published in 1858.

It was with these experiences behind him that Baron approached Henry Willis as he worked on the Warminster organ. Perhaps rather unexpectedly, the great man took an interest in the village rector's project, to such an extent that an instrument with a similar specification to the Upton Scudamore organ was produced in Willis's London works. So successful was this instrument, and such was the interest of village churches throughout the land, that Willis set up an assembly line to produce these tiny organs from his Regent's Park factory. It is reckoned that Willis built some 200 of these Scudamore organs, as they became known, though today the whereabouts of only about 30 are known. Though Nelson Hall continued to build his own 'Scudamore' organs from his village workshop (of which there is a fine example at the church of St. Lawrence in Warminster), it is reasonable to assume that the Hanworth organ came from the Willis factory in London, since it bears that maker's name on a small plate above the console - and produces a familiar Willis tone.

From a recent article for Hanworth Parish Church magazine.

A short History of Norman & Beard Ltd.
(The essence of the talk given by John Norman, great-grandson of William Norman, the founder, Saturday 17th October 2015 at Aylsham Parish Church.)

John Plunkett

Although the Norman family is indirectly related to the John Norman who was Mayor of Norwich in 1714, the story starts with William Norman (1830-1877) working in London as a cabinet maker for the London organ builder J. W. Walker. Becoming interested in organs, William built a chamber organ for his own use, and then his eldest son, Ernest W Norman (1851-1927) took up an apprenticeship with J W Walker. Ernest fell out with Walkers and moved back to Norfolk with his father, now ill with tuberculosis. The company was initially based in Diss, and it is interesting to note that there is an 1870 W Norman & Son organ in the Baptist Church there.

William Norman died in 1877 and Ernest moved to Norwich, already advertising as 'Ernest W Norman, Tunist to the Cathedral'. Ernest's younger brother Herbert J Norman (1861-1936) became interested in the work and studied for a while with TC Lewis in London. By 1883 the business had moved to a larger workshop and took the name 'Norman Bros.', building its first three manual organ for the church of St Michael at Coslany, Norwich, in 1885. This was followed by their first four manual instrument, for the chapel of Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1887.

By this time the firm had become Norman Bros. & Beard, following the arrival of GA Wales Beard in 1885. By all accounts Wales Beard was no craftsman,

but was a talented publicist and salesman. By 1886 they were advertising as 'By special appointment to the Prince of Wales'. Thenceforth the firm was run by a triumvirate. Ernest specialised in action, Herbert specialised in voicing, and became a great friend of Alfred Hollins, the famous blind concert organist and composer, with Wales Beard as principal salesman. In later years Beard ran a separate sales office in Berner's Street, London, and styled himself as 'Managing Director'.

The business expanded rapidly, becoming Norman & Beard Ltd. in 1896, and outgrowing the workshop again, moved to a purpose-built factory in St. Stephen's Road, Norwich, reputed at the time to be the largest organ factory in Europe. The three-storey pipe-making workshop still exists, now converted to luxury apartments. A second factory in Ferdinand Street, Camden Town, London was opened in 1902, initially managed by TC Lewis and later by Llewellyn Simon, who after 1916 went on to manage the Liverpool based organ builders Rushworth & Draper. By 1908 the firm had a staff of 300 and were building around 70 new organs a year, more than one instrument per week.

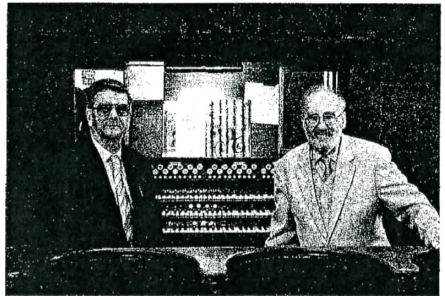
Some of the instruments made at this time were the 1899 five manual organ for Norwich Cathedral, the three manual for Colchester Town Hall, and the four manual organs for Wellington and Auckland Town Halls, New Zealand, and Cape town Town Hall, South Africa. What were the reasons for this success? Firstly the entrepreneurial (if not always very scrupulous) salesmanship of Wales Beard, and secondly, the efficiency of the Norwich factory, plus the advantage of Ernest Norman's tubular exhaust

pneumatic key action, which was simpler, easier to make and quicker to install on site than the charge pneumatic actions of their rivals. Herbert J Norman exploited a voicing technique that yielded new tone qualities by enabling narrow scale pipes to speak properly and bass pipes to speak more promptly than before. This voicing technique came to the firm with some key members of staff inherited from the debris of the Hope-Jones Electric Organ Company when it went bust in 1899 (the owner later fleeing to America, allegedly to escape his creditors). Hope-Jones had developed a low voltage electric action for organs, allowing the console to be some considerable distance away from the pipes. Herbert Norman having visited the pioneer 1887 Hope-Jones organ in Birkenhead, Wales Beard became a director of the Hope-Jones Company and Norman & Beard became major suppliers of organ parts to the firm. Norman & Beard later used his electric action when a console needed to be detached, most notably in the 63 stop, four manual 1914 instrument in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh.

Although Wales Beard was a clever salesman, his principal weapon was price; the three Town Hall organs for the southern hemisphere, made in the London factory are rumoured not to have been profitable. The London factory was closed in 1910 and the loss of much of the relatively young workforce to fight in the 1914-18 War led to a much reduced turnover. It is likely the Norwich factory had a large mortgage on it. The last organ to be built in Norwich was the 97 stop four manual for Johannesburg Town Hall in 1916. In that year the firm merged with the long-established firm of Hill & Son of London. Norman & Beard had the sales but not the staff, whereas the reverse was

true of Hill's, the Hill workforce being older and less depleted by the war. The Norwich works closed and the combined firm operated from the Hill factory in London.

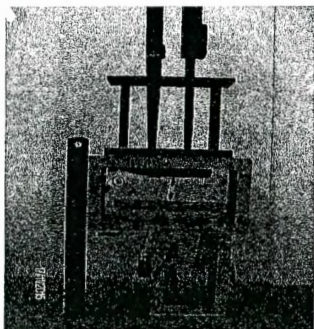
Wm Hill & Son and Norman & Beard Ltd, generally known as Hill Norman & Beard, had an early client in a wealthy amateur who, in 1920, commissioned a 45 stop four manual instrument for his specially built music room. The client, John Christie of Glyndebourne, liked the organ so much he bought the company. He put the company into the new market for organs to accompany silent films. The instruments were known as Christie Unit Organs. They were based on American Wurlitzer technology, which, in turn, had been based on patents granted to Robert Hope-Jones. Thus one of the facets of the Norman & Beard company had come full circle.



John Norman's talk was given skilfully, using a computer aided presentation, which enabled the inclusion of photographs, diagrams, stop lists, advertising material etc. to bring the story to life. I particularly enjoyed the anecdotes and humour essential to a good entertaining yarn. I never knew EW was, behind his back, known as 'Ickey'!

The event was arranged for NOA by Henry Macey, and a vote of thanks given to John by Mathew Martin. Refreshments were provided by Melanie Macey for the 78 members and guests concluding a most successful do.

The John Norman talk formed part of the requirement attached to The Heritage Lottery Fund award of £74,800 to interest the wider public in the restoration of Aylsham Parish Church organ. As it utilises the exhaust pneumatic action devised by E. W. Norman, I decided to make a transparent full size working model of just one note of one division to explain the inexplicable. This attracted some interest on the day, not least from J. N. and will be part of a travelling exhibition in due course.



Organ News

Geoff Sankey

W & A Boggis have restored the keys and soundboards on the two manual organ at All Saints Rockland. According to the NPOR this is a 1943 Rayson although apparently there is nothing on the organ to confirm this. It is now moved

from the west end to the chancel and on a platform.

In Swansea, they have brought a two manual pneumatic organ back to life! It was abandoned 15 years ago when the church bought a new electronic and now this has failed they are returning to the pipe organ. Seeing the real organ outlive the electronic instrument has given Rodney great satisfaction! They have also completed the restoration of the reservoirs for a private customer currently rebuilding a Mander organ in a Norfolk barn.

Holmes & Swift are currently doing major repairs on the organ at St John's Timberhill in Norwich. They rebuilt the organ in 1994, but prolific use of incense during Sunday services has gradually gummed up the valves in the electro-pneumatic action, leading to many missing notes. They are renewing several hundred valves, and have fitted a special filter to the blower intake which is designed to remove contaminants from the organ's air supply. It makes one wonder what this atmosphere has been doing to the worshippers!

Aylsham parish church has gained much publicity after being awarded a £74,800 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in addition to the £50,000 already raised by the parish to enable them to instruct Henry Willis and Sons Ltd. To carry out a restoration of their Norman & Beard instrument.

John Plunkett is continuing to work on the E W Norman instrument for Oxnead church.

If any members have any information on any other work that I've missed which is being carried out on Norfolk organs, please let me know on Norfolk organs, please let me know on GPSankey@btconnect.com

Forthcoming Association Events

Saturday 16th January 2016, Holy Trinity Church, Essex St, Norwich at 7pm:

Quiz & Chips; Ron and Isabel Watson have gamely agreed to be our quizmasters once again for our traditional curtain raiser to a new year of events. £7 per head for fish & chips/condiments/drinks. There will be a raffle and sale of goods to raise funds for the Association.

NB: Please let Mathew Martin (01263 731075 or president@norfolkorganists.org.uk) know by the end of Saturday 9th January at the latest if you wish to order fish & chips.

Saturday 20th February 2016, Priors Hall, Norwich Cathedral Close at 2pm:

Desert Island Discs; We are delighted to announce that The Very Revd Dr Jane Hedges, Dean of Norwich has agreed to be our next castaway and that she has allowed us the use of the beautiful Priors Hall for the event.

Saturday 19th March 2016, Cromer Parish Church at 11.30am:

AGM, Buffet Lunch, Recital; Our AGM follows the successful format of recent years. Melanie Macey will once again be providing the buffet lunch (£6 per head) and John Stephens, NOA member and Organist at Great Yarmouth Minster has been booked to give the concluding recital.

NB: Please let Harry Macey (01692 501023 or events@norfolkorganists.org.uk) know by Saturday 12th March if you wish to order lunch.

Saturday 16th April 2016, Redenhall Parish Church at 11am:

Organ Visit; The beautiful medieval church at Redenhall on the Norfolk/Suffolk border houses one of our county's most important and unaltered historic organs. Built by G.M Holdich in 1843 this intriguing west gallery instrument (I/P 24) is an early example of a C-compass organ by this builder but with features that place it firmly in the transition period between the Georgian organ and those of the later Victorian era. It retains its fine array of reeds and upperwork.

Following lunch (own arrangements) we shall regather at 2pm at chapel of All Hallows Convent, Ditchingham. After a short talk by Dr. Nick Groves about the Convent and its history we shall be free to play the organ there by Hill, Norman & Beard (1955) and Richard Bower (2004).

Please feel free to come for all or part of the day.

Saturday 14th May 2016, Bower & Co Factory, Weston Longville at 11.30am:

Organ Factory Visit; Richard Bower has very kindly invited us to come and explore his organ building works. There will be a barbecue after the site tour.

Saturday 18th June 2016, Park Farm Hotel, Hethersett at 7pm for 7.30pm:

President's Dinner; Full details of prices, guest speaker etc to follow.

Saturday 16th July 2016:

Coach Outing to Hampton Court Palace; Our day will include an afternoon visit to the Chapel and organ with Carl Jackson, the Palace Organist. Full details to follow.

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.