

The Journal

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Organists' Association

The editor writes.....

If ever there was a city of music it is Prague and that is where we went in December. There are concerts going on all the time, at lunchtimes and in the evenings. We had already booked to see Rossini's *La Cenerentola* before leaving home and that was scheduled for our last evening. However, just around the corner from our hotel was The Municipal House, part of which is the Smetana Hall which was the venue for our first dose of music given by a group of string players from the Dvorak Symphony Orchestra. It was billed as a Christmas programme and included pieces by Corelli, *Christmas Pastorale*, Pachelbel *Canon*, Mozart *Eine Kleine Nachtmusic* and Vivaldi *Four Seasons*, all superbly performed.

The hall was filled with what seemed to be locals, all very enthusiastic and appreciative which, to me became a source of irritation as applause broke out between every section leaving the musicians patiently waiting for it to die down before continuing. The audience never seemed to twig that the lack of acknowledgement by the players to these outbursts was an indication that they should have waited until the piece was ended.

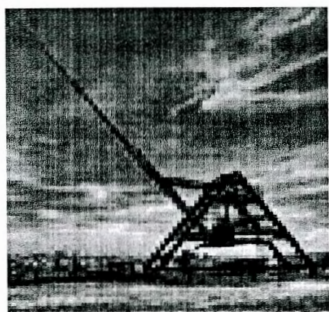
This was particularly irksome in the Vivaldi which offers not a mere four opportunities for premature applause but several more as each movement is in more than one section and the little Czech darlings could not let any break in the music pass without clapping. All of this also served to prolong the concert somewhat.

The following morning was Sunday and not being sure what would be open we consulted both the internet and our guide book. It seemed that the Dvorak Museum would be open but the Smetana Museum would not be. Using the Metro we found our way to the Dvorak Museum only to discover that, whilst under normal circumstances it would be open, it was undergoing renovations and would be closed until the Spring. We retraced our steps via Wenceslas Square having a peep into the Rudolfinum, home of the Czech Philharmonic, then onward towards the famous Charles Bridge near to which is the Smetana Museum which we decided to reconnoitre expecting it to be closed. Surprisingly it was open which was doubly fortunate as the weather had, within the last few minutes, turned quite nasty.

This was a most fascinating exhibition relating to the life and work of Bedrich Smetana with the river Vltava lapping at the walls just outside the window. In one area stood half a dozen very attractive music stands each beautifully carved and different from the rest. Facing these was a conductor's rostrum with a 'magic wand' on the music desk. Visitors can pick up this baton shaped wand and point it at any one of the music stands and this activates a recording of one of Smetana's works, the score of which is on the particular music stand; a brilliant idea.

It has to be said here that all of the buildings mentioned are architecturally very beautiful and that is no less true for the Estates Theatre in which we were to see *La Cenerentola*.

In fact I declare that this is probably the most beautiful theatre I have ever been in and was where Mozart's *Don Giovanni* had its first performance. This was a bit of an extravaganza with a stretch-limo on stage at one point (which, of course, was how Cinderella got to the ball!).



One final last musical touch was revealed on a river cruise. From the boat there was a very good view of a 75ft metronome on a high point on the west bank. This was once the site of the largest monument to Stalin in the world which was destroyed by dynamite in 1962. The metronome sways gently from side to side at a stately ♩ = 3, a metronome marking which I suspect doesn't appear on any score anywhere!

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Platinum Anniversary

Ronald Watson

Seventy years ago on the 12th of July at a meeting in 38 St Giles it was agreed that a Norfolk & Norwich branch of the Incorporated Association of Organists should be formed. The meeting had been convened by Arthur J Bussey and was chaired by W H Perry. Dr Heathcote Statham was unable to attend. The list of those organists in attendance is as follows:

Mrs VH Alborough Hetherset
Miss CA Bartle Deputy Reepham
WJ Basher St Thomas
Miss EM Bushell North Elmham
AJ Bussey Mulbarton
RJ Butteries (no position)
Miss DA Chipperfield Twyford
E Daynes St James
LE Gobbett St Stephen
T Goss St Alban Lakenham
WGrimble St Peter's Cringleford
Mrs A Hall Mulbarton
DG Hawkins Keswick
CW Hollidge Ss Laurence & Gregory
HG Hurn St Michael at Plea
Miss EG Jewell St Mary Reepham
WR Lowne Rosebery Road Methodist
CM Lane St Augustine's
LC Leamon St John Timberhill
Mrs R McCombie St Peter Scarning
L Mead Magdalen Rd Congregational
EW Payne Chapel Field Methodist
WH Perry Christchurch Eaton
SH Rush St Saviour
CE Wood St John Maddermarket
LC Roberts St Mary Bungay
Mrs D Rogers St Peter Scarning
D Spinks St George Tombland
PAA Stevenson St George Tombland

Miss G Taylor St Peter Yaxham
RW Shorten Carleton Rode
CD Thornton St Mary's Long Stratton
E Tite Gt & Little Plumstead
Miss M Wade Aylsham
Mrs D Wisken Holy Trinity
Miss M Wyman St Edmund Acle

It is worth remarking that of all the organists listed as being at the inaugural meeting only Peter Stevenson is still a member. It is also a sobering thought that several of the churches listed are no longer functioning as churches.

Present members may have heard mention of the Bussey Bowl which is occasionally brought along to meetings. The bowl was made in memory of Arthur Bussey whose initiative got the Guild/Association going.

At the first meeting it was set down who was eligible to belong to the association: i) any organist holding an appointment, honorary or salaried or holding appointment as recognised deputy in the city or in the county. ii) any person capable of taking these appointments iii) honorary members.

The following officers were elected:

President Dr Heathcote Statham
Chairman CJR Coleman
Vice-chairman Norman Cutting
Hon Secretary and Treasurer AJ Bussey

Committee Members: Messrs & Mmes Mitchell, Griffiths, Leamon, Allen, Naylor, Hall and Wisken. Revd Gordon Paget and D Adcock were invited to draw up constitution and rules to be presented to the next committee meeting.

A further meeting was held on

30th August at which there were 35 people present. A sub-committee was formed to draw up a programme for Autumn and Winter. It was agreed that a panel of relief organists should be compiled and that in addition to organists, choirmasters should be eligible for membership. It was also agreed that there should be regional representation on the committee which was to be made up of one representative for Kings Lynn, Fakenham, Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Thetford, Diss, Dereham and Swaffham with Cromer and Sheringham, and six for Norwich and district.

The first event, a talk and recital by Dr Statham, took place in the cathedral on 18th October. Members, fifty in number, were welcomed by the Dean who wished the Association every success and after the recital members were invited to inspect the console.

And so the Association got underway. I have in my possession the minutes and reports of meetings and events from 1948 until 1982 and I propose to print extracts from these in forthcoming issues of the Journal. If anyone can shed any light on what was at the address of 38 St Giles, or who lived there, it would be interesting to know. Several other committee meetings were held there.

Quiz and chips

Ronald Watson

Once again the Association's year got off to a lively start with the Quiz & Chips event. Indeed the food arrived somewhat ahead of schedule and some members arrived to the unusual sight of others already tucking in. For the amusement of those who did not attend here are the questions, this year set and presented by Michael and Pamela Flatman, who made the fatal mistake of doing a great job and hence being pressed to do next year's quiz.

Round 1

Identify the currencies of the following countries:

Turkey Brazil Bulgaria Hungary
Iceland Israel Kenya Malaysia
United Arab Emirates Vietnam

Round 2 Identify the Beatles number one hits (in chronological order)

4,2,2,3
3,5,3
1,4,2,4,4,4
1,4,4
6,2,4
3, 7
9,6
3,3,4,2,4
4,7
3,4

Round 3 involved the identification of Radio & TV Themes

Round 4 Name the London underground stations from the following cryptic clues:
Trumpeting New York thoroughfare

Maidstone for example
Where blackboard materials are grown
Oriental pigmeat
Monks with dirty hands
A road with a betting shop
What the sea does to some people
Which station might be an ideal road for rabbits?
Sindy can't but *****?
Which station could be a very tall cockney hair-do?

Round 5 – Name the following beverages;

A Taiwanese drink made from milk, tea and tapioca balls.
A coffee flavoured with chocolate which shares its name with a port in Yemen.
A black china tea with a strong distinctive smoky flavour.
A herbal infusion which whose name is derived from the Afrikaans word for red bush.
An Italian coffee whose name is the Italian word for milk.
A very strong concentrated coffee whose name means limited in Italian.
An Indian beverage made by boiling tea leaves with milk, sugar and spices.
A cold sweetened coffee that originated in Algeria, named after a village there.
A bitter highly caffeinated South American herbal tea sometimes known as Yerba.
A coffee made with steamed milk popularised in Australia and New Zealand in the 1980s

Round Six – Identification of organ pieces after hearing only the first few seconds.

Round 6 – Identification of people who died in 2016

Born on the 22nd June 1974 this Member of Parliament for Batley and Spen died tragically on the 16th June 2016 aged just 41.

Born in Glasgow on the 28th July 1938 this BBC weather presenter gave the forecasts from 1978 to 1998 and died on the 10th December 2016 aged 78.

Born on the 21st September, 1934 in Canada this singer songwriter and poet, mainly exploring religion, politics and personal relationships rose to fame in the late '60s died on the 7th November 2016 aged 82.

This famous actor was born in London on the 21st February 1946 who's films included *Die Hard* and *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves* died of cancer on 14 January 2016 at the age of 69

Born on the 4th April 1923 in Shropshire, this actor was best known for the role of Grouty in the BBC comedy *Porridge* and later in *Game of Thrones* died on the 6th December 2016 (aged 93).

Born on 9th June 1932 this presenter made his or her television debut as the presenter of the *Junior Advice* Line segment of the BBC's *Breakfast Time* programme in 1985 and went on to work on ITV's *This Morning* programme. He or she died of pancreatic cancer on 31st March 2016 (aged 83)

Born Jerome Silberman on the 11th June 1933 in Milwaukee this person appeared in many film roles

including *Bonnie and Clyde* in 1967 and most famously in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in 1971. He died on the 29th August 2016

This golfing legend, who, more than any other, was largely responsible for the explosion of interest in the game in the 1960s was born on September 10th 1929. In a career that spanned more than six decades, won 62 PGA Tour titles from 1955 to 1973 and died on the 25th September 2016.

Born in Ealing, west London, on 24 December 1963, the daughter of Irish immigrants, she was extremely bright, achieving nine Grade A O-Levels at a local convent school before going on to study drama at Liverpool Polytechnic. Appearing regularly on *The Fast Show*, notably as the Channel 9 weather presenter whose forecasts were always *scorchio* and as Mrs Merton in her own series. She died on the 2nd July 2016.

Born on 11 December 1919 in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, with a calm and unflappable style and trademark spectacles, this person was one of the best-known presenters on British television, particularly during the decade when fronting the BBC TV current affairs programme, *Tonight*. Passed away on the 17th March 2016

Round 8 – Literature

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen – What is the first name of the main character?

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott – What is the name of the oldest sister?

Middlemarch by George Eliot – George Eliot was a pen name, so what was the author's actual name?

David Copperfield by Charles Dickens – David's Great Aunt renames him what?

Dracula by Bram Stoker – What is the name of the ship Dracula travels on?

Ulysses by James Joyce – On which date does the novel take place? (Looking for a number and a month)

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë – Heathcliff was found in which city?

Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov – What is Lolita's real name?

Tom Jones by Henry Fielding – Who is Tom's first lover?

The Picture of Dorian Grey by Oscar Wilde – How does Dorian destroy the portrait?

Round 9 – Identification of famous organ pieces played backwards

Round 10 – History

Who was the longest serving Prime Minister in British History?

Which boffin broke the German codes at Bletchley Park in World War II?

In what year did Winston Churchill leave office as a result of an electoral defeat?

Who was Henry VIII's fifth wife?
Which British Prime Minister was the only one to have been assassinated?

Who was the shortest reigning English monarch?

Who was the longest serving British Prime Minister of the 20th Century?

Which British Prime Minister oversaw the introduction of the National Health Service?

Name the last British king born outside the UK and in which country was he born?

King Stephen's younger brother, Henry, was a powerful churchman in the 12th Century and carried a lot of influence. What was office did he hold?

St Andrew's Church Eaton

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3 pm on Second Sunday of the month

12th March

The Academy of Arcadia

Nathaniel Mander – Harpsichord

Olwen Foulkes – Recorder

Handel Scarlatti Corelli and

Bononcini inter alia

9th April

Cellophony with guest violinist Adrian

Adlam

CD Thornton St Mary's Long Stratton

Vivaldi – Four Seasons

and pieces by JS Bach Samuel Barber

and Richard Birchall

*Treasure Sought and Found: The
2016 NOA Tour to Groningen &
Ostfriesland – part two.*

Martin J Cottam

*Wednesday 26 October: Norden,
Ludgerikirche*

A huge Marktplatz (one of the largest in Germany) studded with tall trees lies at the centre of Norden and here stands the Ludgerikirche, a magnet for organ enthusiasts the world over and justifiably so. The high, gothic choir and tall, detached bell tower are the church's most prominent external features. The interior is quite singular in appearance. The long, barrel-vaulted nave is relatively low in height and lined along both sides by painted box pews, a similarly painted gallery running the entire length down the north side. The ensemble almost has the feel of being a village church. The crossing and transepts are quite different being taller and with gothic vaults. Everywhere there are clusters of painted box pews overlooked by yet more galleries. Curious boxes, enclosed and windowed and once the preserve of the rich teeter high up against the tall brick columns supporting the crossing. A screen of more such boxes guards the entrance to the elegant, soaring gothic chancel beyond. The organ built by Edo Evers in 1618 was located just beyond the chancel arch on the south wall of the choir. Between 1686 and 1688 Arp Schnitger (1648-1719) transformed this state of affairs by constructing a new instrument on a purpose-built gallery extending some way forward from the wall and placing the main case and Rückpositiv at a

slight angle the better to project the sound into the main body of the church. With insufficient room for conventional pedal towers, Schnitger hit upon the bold solution of placing all the pedal pipes in a single tower round the corner under the crossing itself. It shouldn't work but it does, the pedal stops somehow balancing perfectly with the rest of the organ. Visually this Schnitger organ is highly individual.

Above and behind the main case and flush with the south wall under the first bay arch Schnitger added an Oberpositiv in 1692. With its own plenum chorus and reeds it acts almost as an echo division from its more recessed position. Activated by a ventill stop it is played from the same manual as the Brustpositiv. With remarkable skill and no little mechanical ingenuity Schnitger managed to create an instrument (IV/P 46) that sounds well in every part of a church full of acoustic challenges. As you walk round the building different parts of the organ come to the fore yet seemingly never in a way that unbalances the whole ensemble. As such, it is something of an aural miracle!

Schnitger reused a substantial amount of the earlier Evers pipework and it's quite ironic that it was so much of Schnitger's own pipework that was lost during the following centuries, not that of Evers. The fact we can still hear what the Schnitger organ must have sounded like is due in no small part to the superlative, historically impeccable reconstruction/restoration work undertaken by that master magician, Jürgen Ahrend between 1981 and 1985.

Sietze de Vries, our organist/guide, could not help but improvise like a man inspired on this extraordinary instrument; an opening 'Stylus Phantasticus' flourish on full organ led into a Buxtehude-like Chorale Fantasia on *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* (complete with fugal episodes) for the next 18 minutes during which the full range of this organ's colourful resources (including the Nightingale stop and 'Cimbelstern') were demonstrated in masterly fashion. Seamless, unassisted hand registration throughout, of course! We followed with our own efforts and there was plenty of time for us all to revel in playing this exceptional organ. For many in our party, Norden proved to be the highlight of our tour and for Michael and Pamela Flatman there was the added bonus of hearing Sietze improvise a most delightful little fanfare based on Jeremiah Clarke's famous trumpet tune in celebration of their 42nd wedding anniversary that day.

Thursday 27th October: Uithuizen, Jacobikerk

Bright sunshine illuminated our drive across the farmhouse-studded, pancake-flat landscape to Uithuizen, a sizeable village lying some sixteen miles north of Groningen. The lavish provision of richly carved fittings in the Jacobikerk is testament to the prosperity of this community in the late seventeenth century. The organ (II/P 28) built by Arp Schnitger in 1700 was the largest the North German master made for a village church in the former Dutch Republic and it survives

relatively unaltered. Despite invasive alterations made in the nineteenth century (rectified in reconstructive restorations by Bernhardt H Edskes in 1987/2001) all but three of the stops contain Schnitger pipework, eighteen of the ranks being original in their entirety. A true jewel on every level.

We encountered this organ on our first tour in 2012 and reacquaintance was nothing less than wholly pleasurable. A bonus for me was the opportunity to meet Bert Veening for the first time. Bert is the man responsible for booking our slots at all the various churches we request to visit and sorting out the resulting costs etc. His contribution to the success and smooth running of these tours cannot be overstated. He was here now to oversee the sale of Sietze de Vries's CDs and the superlative Fugue State Films DVD/CD/Hardback book boxed set, *Pronkjuwelen in Stad en Ommeland*, the production that first inspired me to set about organising these tours.

Back in 2012 our visit to Uithuizen came hard on the heels of our encounter with the sublime organ at Noordbroek, an instrument especially close to my heart since my first hearing of it on CD. Consequently my head and heart were elsewhere when Sietze first revealed the glories of the Uithuizen Schnitger to us. No such barrier this time round; as soon as Sietze embarked upon another remarkable improvised chorale fantasia I immediately understood why this instrument had been a particular favourite of so many on that first tour. Presenting a chorale

melody on the 2ft 'Cornet' pedal reed accompanied by one of the manual consort reeds, Sietze embarked on another amazing partita-style improvisation to give us a full tour of the instrument's resources. Such beguiling colours, clarity, and blend; such remarkable music; a journey that had my heart pounding by the end! Our own efforts could not match this but as Sietze frequently insists, "it's about having fun!"

Groningen, Martinikerk

This was our third visit to the Martinikerk but surely no-one could ever tire of hearing or playing the truly wondrous organ there. It is the instrument Sietze himself most enjoys coming back to. The pipework spans six centuries and the façade pipes of 32ft 'Praestant' of 1692 are the only original such examples by Arp Schnitger to have survived anywhere. But as at Norden it the genius of Jürgen Ahrend that has brought the instrument's 'old' voice back to the fore, rectifying inappropriate nineteenth and twentieth century disruptions whilst melding the sounds of so many centuries into one cohesive, harmonious, and stunningly beautiful whole. Ahrend's own contributions are exceptional: I know of no other 'Sesquialtera' stop so penetrating and pure, so possessed of an almost bell-like clarity.

Employing the same chorale melody as at Uithuizen Sietze's majestic chorale partita-cum-fantasia improvisation demonstrated beyond question that the Martinikerk organ is the finest jewel in Groningen's gem-

encrusted crown. Our booked two hours was nowhere near sufficient!

Friday 28th October: Niezijl

Our final morning was spent at Sietze's own home, a former chapel in the village of Niezijl whose main auditorium has been stylishly converted into a music room that is the stuff of dreams. At one end, on a gallery, stands the casework of the former organ; a dull, early twentieth century affair apparently, but with a fine case in the baroque style the local builder preferred! Rank by rank, and with the assistance of Bernhardt H Edskes, Sietze is gradually filling the case with what promises to be a fine neo-classical instrument. This will perfectly complement the organ that stands on a shallow dais at the other end of the room, a two manual and pedal Thomas Hill instrument of 1874 originally built for a private residence in Liverpool and now also furnished with an 8ft Oboe stop of appropriate style.

Following a comprehensive tour of the house we were treated to a marvellous and affecting improvisation in English romantic style on the Hill before Sietze absorbingly shared something of his philosophy on music making and the art of improvisation in particular. Having introduced his particular system he invited those brave enough to have a go at putting the first basics into practice. All in all a thoroughly engaging morning for player and non-player alike and a cementing of the sense of friendship that has developed with Sietze across our three tours.

A Few Final Thoughts

For the devotee of the North German organ school there is nothing that can quite match the experience of playing the very organs those great masters and their peers would have known especially now that many of the surviving instruments have been so meticulously reconstructed/restored in recent years using more historically informed and appropriate techniques than once was the case.

These instruments throw up new challenges, raise many questions, but also provide significant answers. For example, the wonderfully responsive actions ruthlessly expose lazy or uncertain articulation but positively encourage the pursuit of more nuanced playing. All the organs we encountered in Ostfriesland have the 'short' bottom octave which immediately limits what repertoire you can play on them, and the meantone temperaments bring further restrictions -but oh, what radiant perfect thirds and fifths! Who needs to play in G sharp anyway?!

In Buxtehude's time it was only the larger organs in Groningen province and Ostfriesland that had independent pedal stops, most of the others having pedals permanently coupled to the main manual. That seriously challenges our almost habitual practice here in Britain of employing 16ft pedal tone for this repertoire! A rethink is clearly necessary. Meanwhile, Sietze's handling of these organs surely dispels once and for all the oft-repeated dictum that registration changes during pieces were not possible without the use of

assistants. If Sietze can do it, even on organs where the stop knobs are seemingly out of reach or even behind the player I'm pretty sure the likes of Buxtehude and Bruhns, not to say Bach could too!

Of course, these marvellous historic organs can't do everything; they are quite unsuited for accompanying the Anglican choral repertoire, for example. As Sietze himself pointed out, 'even the flutes are far too loud!' An ever growing appetite for performing this repertoire has led in recent years to a steady stream of redundant British romantic organs crossing the North Sea to find new homes at the east end of many a Dutch church. On the drive back to our overnight ferry several of our tour members were able to spend a most pleasurable couple of hours in the huge Hooglandse Kerk in Leiden listening to and playing both the early 17th century De Swart/Van Hagerbeer west end organ and the 1891 Father Willis formerly in Birkenhead and recently installed (complete with new 32ft Double Open Wood) at the junction of the north transept and the choir. Alas, the car in which I was travelling did not arrive in time to participate but we were assured by the others that both organs, in their very different ways, sounded utterly glorious in the vast acoustic. It would seem the Dutch, with their trademark pragmatism, are busily creating the best.

Desert Island Discs *Rosebery Road*
Methodist Church *Saturday 18th*
February

Isabel Watson

At this year's annual event, Michael Nicholas, well-known to most of the assembled gathering as Organist and Master of Choristers at Norwich Cathedral during the 70s and 80s, was cast away to the mythical desert island equipped with only his eight records.

His guide was our own Roy Plomley, Ron Watson, who led him through his life in music from childhood in Middlesex to the retirement he now enjoys in Reedham. Early encouragement from home and school brought experiences of music making and exposure to fine performances. A lifelong love of the music of J S Bach was exemplified by his first record choice, Angela Hewitt playing *Variation 20 of the Goldberg Variations* in all its exhilarating intricacy. As a Junior Exhibitioner at Trinity College of Music, Michael was studying the piano but at age 14 added organ lessons at St Matthew's Ashford, going on to become Organ Scholar at Jesus College, Oxford. In his later years at City of London School, and subsequently at Oxford, English church music of the 'golden age' of the 16th century would become another enthusiasm, revealed by his second disc, the *Magnificat* from Thomas Morley's First Service, sung by the Choir of Norwich Cathedral, many of whose members had gone on to distinguished musical careers.

From early years, one of Michael's passions has been the music of Richard Wagner. He spoke with great enthusiasm about visits to Bayreuth and outstanding productions of the operas at home in England. (He had, we were assured, resisted the temptation to select Wagner for all eight of his chosen tracks!) He chose two, the encounter of Tristan with Isolde from the second act of that opera conducted by Herbert von Karayan and Walther's Prize Song from *The Mastersingers* in what he deemed an exemplary production from ENO under the baton of Reginald Goodall.

Michael's career has had many facets: Parish Churches in both Louth and Northampton with outstanding musical traditions, Choral Societies, teaching and choral training, politics and administration, adjudicating and examining. He spoke about all of these with vigour and knowledge, giving his audience much to think about. His other musical choices included two tracks from Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* and Arnold Schoenberg's *Friede auf Erden*, featuring the Norwich Cathedral Choir, Elgar's *Symphony No 1 in A flat* (3rd movement Adagio) and the *Gloria* from Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, the latter sung by the Schola Cantorum of Tewkesbury Abbey under the direction of his son Ben Nicholas.

Now retired from full-time occupation, he remains very busy with examining for Edexcel Examination Board for A-level music and ABRSM setting harmony papers. He still finds time to play the organ and enjoys the opportunity to use the organ in

Reedham Parish Church for practice.

Asked about his survival skills on the island, Michael admitted to few practical attributes but would happily pick fruit to survive. His book choice, (no great surprise), is a full score of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. A continually replenished supply of claret would provide his luxury. Of the eight discs, the one to be saved from the waves would be Bach's *Goldberg Variations* to offer constant challenge and delight. When asked the question unique to the NOA desert island experience, to name a companion on the beach, Michael weighed up the merits of J S Bach (a towering genius and potentially intimidating) and Richard Wagner (wonderful music but would the man be a pleasant companion?) and his choice fell upon Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart that most human of composers with whom to enjoy hours of conversation.

Ronald Buxton

Many of our longer standing members will remember Ronald Buxton, larger than life character who lived in Kimberley Hall where he once entertained the Association and put his three manual theatre organ at our disposal. He was a great champion of music in the region.

I remember arriving for the event to be met by his wife who said 'He's either in the west wing or Kenya'. A structural engineer by profession he owned large tracts of land in Kenya where, in his younger days he would pilot himself in a small plane. He died in January aged 93.

More about Bernard Johnson

Pauline Stratton

The death has occurred at Horning, to which he retired last July, of Mr Bernard Johnson, the well known organist. Mr. Johnson who was 68 years of age, had been working at considerable pressure for at least two years before his retirement and it is feared that this was largely accountable for his breakdown in health.

While attending the annual conference of the Incorporated Society of Musicians at Buxton in January last he had a seizure, and was brought home in a car by his friend Mr Topliss Green, the singer. He had since been laid up for some months at the new house he had built, The Loke, adjoining the public recreation ground, under the care of Dr Shields and Dr Starling of Norwich, in consultation. The condition of the patient gradually showed some improvement and only last week he went for a short stay at Scratby for change of air. During this change, however, there was a relapse, and he had to return home, where he passed away on Thursday. The funeral is to be at Thetford on Monday.

Mr Johnson had for a number of years been a well-known figure in music and his name was widely known in the country, not only as that of an accomplished organist, but as a concert promoter, composer, public speaker and writer on musical topics.

He belonged to a musical family and was born at North Pickenham, Norfolk. As a boy he was somewhat of a musical prodigy, and played the organ

at several Thetford churches before he was tall enough to reach the pedals. He was educated at Selwyn College, Cambridge, where he graduated B. A. and was a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

The appointment with which his name is most closely identified was that of City Organist of Nottingham. There his recitals at the Albert Hall brought him considerable reputation and the instrument upon which he played was one of his own designing, Lord Trent, the donor, having given him an absolutely free hand.

He lived entirely in the atmosphere of music and made a considerable name for himself outside his recitals by popular lectures in the Midlands and the North on various aspects of music. He was a ready speaker with a popular style of handling his subject, and probably nobody enjoyed these addresses more than the Nottinghamshire miners. As a concert promoter he was a frequent visitor to Leeds and Bradford. And not only were his recitals heard on the wireless, he was often brought into close consultation by the BBC officials on matters relating to music and musicians. He had been a prominent member of the Nottinghamshire Rotary Club, and since his retirement he had addressed the Norwich Rotary Club. Chief among his compositions is his cantata *Ecce Homo* which had been broadcast and it had frequently been performed in Nottingham and the county in Holy Week. He had also written an organ sonata and several songs. Throughout he was a sturdy advocate of English music. Three years

ago he filled the office of President of the Incorporated Society of Musicians.

His recreations were yachting, fishing and gardening. He had been regular visitor to the Broads for over thirty years and before settling at Horning he jointly owned, with his sister, Mrs Cronshey, a quaint old Trent barge, which was moored in the Bure there. He was a practical yachtsman. Mr Johnson had already become a popular figure in the little waterside village and the news of his death when he was believed to have been on the high road to recovery has been received with deep regret.

From Eastern Evening News 18th May 1935. Reproduced with permission.

St Andrew's Hall Lunchstop Recitals 2017

All recitals are on Mondays at
1.10 pm unless otherwise stated.
Tickets £5 on
the door.

June 26th	Ashley Grote
July 10th	Adrian Richards
July 17th	Andrew Parnell
July 24th	Henry Macey
July 31st	Tim Patient
*August 3 rd	Michael Nicholas
August 7th	Peter O'Connor
Aug 14th	David Ivory
Aug 21st	Paul Dewhurst

*(Thursday)

Recitals in Trinity College Cambridge

Steven Kirk

Back in September last year an email was circulated to members advertising organ recitals at Trinity College Cambridge. It is 40 years since the chapel's Metzler organ was installed and the college is celebrating this with a series of recitals on the instrument featuring the complete works of JS Bach. All of the recitals are on a Saturday, most of them starting at 12 noon and are in the main given by young organists with a Cambridge connection.

I have attended two of these recitals; one back in October given by Jack Spencer (Queen's College) and one at the end of January given by Richard Gowers (Kings College). Their 45 minute programmes were delivered with style and precision. If only I had a fraction of their talent.

I had never heard the Metzler before and was intrigued by the controversy (according to the programme notes) that this organ apparently created when it was planned and installed. The organ sounded fine to me and it certainly suited Bach, but then I am happy playing either the Collins at St Peter Mancroft, (a long time ago) or the HN&B (and others) at St Margaret's, Lowestoft (not so long ago).

I can thoroughly recommend the recitals (which are free) and continue until early June; I certainly plan to attend another one or two.

For further details see the Trinity College website.

Organ News

Geoff Sankey

Work at Aylsham is progressing steadily and methodically with the soundboards and winding now reinstalled after being taken away to the Willis workshops. The uneven work of previous generations is being tidied up, but since this is a Heritage Lottery funded restoration, the larger idiosyncracies have to be preserved. It will be fascinating to hear how it sounds (not least at the Aylsham Organ Day on June 17th) after all this work.

Bower & Co have enhanced the winding at St Nicholas North Walsham. Richard tells me that whilst the original Norman & Beard design was a triumph in taking up so little floor space, this was at the expense of a decent wind supply. The original N&B reservoirs remain imbedded in the depths of the instrument, but the wind is now supplied from units built by Bower & Co which has apparently given a far more satisfactory solution. They have fitted a new blower at St Nicholas, Blakeney; the greatest challenge of this job was taking the new blower up the long spiral staircase of the tower to the room housing the bellows which is above the brick vaulted chancel ceiling. The restoration of Upton's Holdich instrument has progressed into the workshop; re-erection on site will start shortly.

If 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 GPSankey@btconnect.com.

Forthcoming Association Events

Saturday 18th March 2017, St. George's Colegate, Norwich 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 (£7 per head) and we are delighted that Anne Page (BMus, Hon ARAM, and Professor of Harmonium Studies at the Royal Academy of Music) has agreed to give the concluding recital. Immediately following the Business part of our meeting there will be opportunity for an 'Open Forum' session for which topics for discussion are invited. Please let Harry Macey (01692 501023 or events@norfolkorganists.org.uk) know by 11th March 2017 if you wish to partake of the lunch.

Tuesday 11th April 2017, St. Botolph's, Aldgate, London, EC3N 1AB at 10.45am:

Organ Visit; The organ at St Botolph's (III/P 21) was built by Renatus Harris in 1704 and superbly restored/reconstructed to near original condition by Goetze & Gwynn in 2006. As such it is arguably the oldest playable church organ in Britain. After lunch (own arrangements) we regather at Christ Church, Spitalfields (E1 6LY) at 2pm to hear and play the wonderful Richard Bridge organ of 1735 (III/P 37). The largest organ in Britain when built this hugely important instrument was unplayable for almost 60 years until the recent, meticulous restoration/reconstruction by William Drake Ltd. The well known recitalist, Gerard Brooks has been appointed as the organ's curator and he will be on hand to give us a short demonstration recital before overseeing our own playing efforts. These are the two most important surviving early 18th century organs in England. They are within 10 minutes walk of each other and Liverpool Street Station. We have booked a two hour session at each instrument. Not to be missed! There will be a charge of £10 per head to cover costs. Please make your own travel arrangements.

Saturday 13th May 2017, Church Farmhouse, Church Road, Deopham, NR18 9DT from 11am:

Organ Visit: Another welcome opportunity to explore and play Geoff Sankey's remarkable collection of organs including an important new addition since our last, highly enjoyable visit in 2014.

Saturday 17th June 2017, Aylsham Parish Church at 11am:

Aylsham Organ Day; A day of events open to all in celebration of the restoration of the 1911 Norman & Beard organ (III/P 27). The opening welcome and 'fanfare' will be followed by a demonstration of the organ. At 11.45am Dr. Nicholas Groves will deliver a talk on the Organs and Organists of Aylsham. Lunch (own arrangements) follows at 12.30pm during which anyone can play the organ. From 1.30pm to 2.30pm there will be a composite recital given by invited NOA members. Tea and cake (donations welcome) from 3.30pm and the day concludes at 4pm.

Saturday 22nd July 2017, Wroxham Parish Church at 10.30am:

President's Day; After coffee on arrival at the church, Richard Bower will give a talk about the organ (II/P 17) and a recital after which members are invited to play too. At 1pm there will be an informal 'President's Lunch' at Salhouse Lodge (NR12 6HD). Please feel free to come for all or part of the day.

Please let Matthew Bond (01692 409957 or president@norfolkorganists.org.uk) know by Saturday 8th July if you wish to have the lunch).

Saturday 29th July 2017, Wymondham Abbey at 11am:

Young Organist's Recital; Our young organist this year is Ollie Neale, a sixth former at Langley School and one of the current Organ Scholars at St Peter Mancroft. His recital forms part of the regular Saturday morning series at the Abbey.

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. A full list of events can also be found on the NOA website: www.norfolkorganists.org.uk

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.

Mancroft Organ Club

Saturdays in March at St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich 12.30pm - 1.30pm

Watch, listen, learn, and discuss in colloquium with the next generation of exciting young organists and keyboard players. An opportunity to see and play the renowned Collins organ. Each meeting commences in the Octagon room.

Saturday 4th March - Oliver Neale, Organ Scholar, St Peter Mancroft

JS Bach: Fantasia in g, BWV 542

Saturday 11th March - Mahima Jacob, Organ Scholar, St Peter Mancroft

JS Bach: Prelude, BWV 566

Saturday 18th March - Harry Sullivan

The French Classical School

Saturday 25th March - Omar Eloakley, Organ Scholar, St Peter Mancroft

Olivier Messiaen: Music, Ritual, and Rhythm