



The Journal

Summer 2019

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Norfolk Organists' Association

Norfolk Organists' Association

The art of music as related to the organ

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President's day ad

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The Editor writes...



How pleased I was to get some responses about how some of you first came across the organ. My memory of the organ is probably typical of many, in that I don't remember life before the organ. My father was a talented musician, reasonable organist and a gifted choirmaster and before I was born filled the house with recordings of choirs and organs, many recordings of his own making – lots of reel-to-reels for young boys to roll about the house and my poor mother to chase after rolling them up and not breathing a word about such terrible behaviour to my father! So, I grew up not knowing life without the organ. By the age of ten I was sitting at the organ of St Agatha, Sparkbrook in Birmingham (the cathedral of the Stratford Road!) among others, learning how to make a very loud noise – nothing much has changed, apart from the venue! I'm sure you will agree it is

fascinating to see how others met the organ. More please!

Awelcome to our new President, in which I am sure you would like to join, and I am delighted to publish his introductory article.

On the 15th April I watched in horrified astonishment as Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris burned, and partly collapsed, fearing the worst for both building and organ. It seems that the organ has survived better than anyone could have hoped, although won't be heard in the flesh for years to come. For your fix of Notre Dame organ, I have to recommend Olivier Latry's latest and quite remarkable CD *Bach to the Future*.

Sorry for the slightly late arrival of this issue, the pressure of modern life is unrelentless – and I regard myself as a Luddite. When I was young, I seem to remember Edward Heath talking about how we could all work a three-day week in a most productive way! Oh, I wish...

Deadline for contributions for issue 109 is 27 August.

The new President writes...



Michael Flatman

I felt very honoured to be invited to stand for President-Elect in 2017 and thus to become your new President at the AGM in 2019. Pam and I have been members of the Association for a relatively short time since moving to Norwich in 2009, since when, we have made many new friends, which I think reflects on how well the existing members go out of their way to welcome newcomers and I hope we will continue to do so. I have served on both the main committee and events committee for a number of years now and I wish to thank all those who serve for the important work they all do individually and collectively to keep the wheels of the Association turning smoothly

from day to day. I would like to thank personally Matthew Bond for his excellent past two years as our President and Henry Macey who is stepping down as our Events Committee Secretary. I do not consider myself to be an organist although I have had a passion for the instrument since my teenage years listening to its repertoire through the ages. Over the years I have built up a substantial collection of organ music on LPs and CDs and a very good audio system to play them on.

My first exposure to the thrilling sound of a large instrument was thanks to the 'Wednesdays at 5:55' series of recitals given at the Royal Festival Hall which I used to attend regularly with my father in the 1960's and 70's. It was at these recitals I was able to hear artists such as Ralph Downes, George Thalben Ball, Suzi Jeans, Gillian Weir, Simon Preston, Peter Hurford, Nicholas Kynaston and Jean Guillou plus many more internationally acclaimed organists playing a wide range of organ music from throughout the centuries. One very notable recital was given by Xavier Darasse from Toulouse in March 1971, when the first British performance of Ligeti's *Volumina* was to be

given. The opening of the work requires the organist to pull out all the stops with the blower switched off and the organist and assistant to depress as many manual and pedal keys as they can and then switch the blower on! With four arms and four feet placed across as many notes as possible this was duly carried out. The resulting *crescendo* was building but after about three seconds there was silence!! I could see that Ralph Downes, the then curator and main designer of the organ was looking rather ill at ease in the audience as stops were pushed and pulled and switches turned on and off. Mr. Downes then mounted the stage and looking most embarrassed declared that all the fuses had blown and that the recital would have to end prematurely. Fortunately, *Volumina* was the final piece in the recital. It is therefore amusing to me that the current recitals since the refurbishment of the organ, which I try to attend as many as I can, fall under the umbrella of the title 'Pull Out All The Stops!'

I studied French at college while training to be a school teacher and it was no coincidence that my love of the French language, literature and music would meld with my

love of the organ and the French repertoire that I heard at the Royal Festival Hall soon became my favourite along with that of the works of Bach and Buxtehude. The Royal Festival Organ does a pretty good job when French music is played, indeed Ralph Downes designed it to do so, at least so I thought until my first visit to Paris back in the 1960's when I heard the Grand Orgue de Notre-Dame de Paris for the first time and it sent shivers down my spine! Pam and I have visited Paris many times over the last ten years and have heard the magnificent organs in Saint Sulpice, Saint Clotilde, Saint Eustache, La Madeleine as well as those in Rouen and Chartres cathedrals and many others.

Our love of the organ has also taken us to Germany and Holland to hear some of the wonderful historic instruments of the north German school as well as some modern ones such as the imposing Rieger organ in Regensburg Cathedral upon which I have never heard the music of Max Reger sounding more splendid. We also attend the Liverpool Organ day regularly where you can hear three organs in one day in the Anglican Cathedral, the Metropolitan Catholic Cathedral

and St. George's Hall, three very different sounding instruments as well as numerous recitals all around the country.

I said near the beginning that I was not an organist; well that is not strictly the case as I have had various home electronic organs for many years playing popular music but only using chord symbols as a guide to accompaniment. I have been playing the guitar since the 1960s when like many of my peers I played in groups inspired by the likes of The Shadows. A few years ago, Barry Newman asked if I would like to have some organ lessons with him so I could play a few pieces when we visit organs during our events. With some trepidation I agreed realising that nearing the age of 70 this was going to be a tall order! I had no problem with the treble clef, having taught music in schools for over forty years but the bass clef was totally alien to me. However, Barry said he liked a challenge! Well I have struggled with pieces for manuals only and have a few pieces under my belt now and can only watch in awe as I stand behind our members who romp through Preludes and Fugues and Trio Sonatas. If only I had started to learn the organ when I was a

child! Never mind I enjoy trying and that is the important thing. So that is a little of my background and how I became interested in the organ. I look forward to serving you as your President over the coming two years and I thank you in advance for your support without which the Association would not exist.

Michael Flatman

AGM AND RECITAL 2019

Is it really a year since we gathered for the AGM? These occasions seem to come around with increasing frequency! Twenty-seven members met this year at Christ Church, Eaton, and were welcomed by the organist, Matt Wright. A minute of silence was observed for three departed members (Colin Fenn, Joyce Jones and Peter Stevenson); apologies for absence were noted from nineteen members and last year's Minutes were agreed. Tim regretted that no paper copies of the reports were available, due to two photocopier breakdowns, but reports were given by the President, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and Events Secretary. They, as well as the members of the events sub-committee, were

complimented on and thanked for all their work for the Association.

The President regretted low attendance at some events, and – putting on his ‘Membership secretary’ hat – reported membership at the end of 2017 at eighty-five, and a year later at eighty; with joint memberships this represented eighty-eight people. The Treasurer presented her 20th report and the Events Secretary ran through another year’s worth of forthcoming events. In future there will be no events secretary; events will be planned by a sub-committee. After the elections, the new president, Michael Flatman, took over, and closed the meeting.

After a break for lunch, during which a few members tried the organ, Matt Wright explained some of the changes to the organ two years ago, when a major overhaul costing £75,000 and lasting some nine months (original estimate – c. five months!) took place. This culminated in a well-attended opening recital by David Dunnett in September 2017.

Unfortunately, back trouble prevented Harry Macey from giving his planned recital, but Tim Patient and Matthew Bond

stepped in and gave excellent performances – at three days’ notice! The programme included: Bach: Prelude and fugue in G (541); Wachet auf; O Mensch bewein; Christ ist erstanden; Prelude and fugue in C (547). Vierne: Pastoral; Parry: chorale prelude on Croft’s 136th.

Claire MacArthur

IN SEARCH OF AN IMAGE

Part 1

The past has always been a place of great fascination for me, and being someone very heavily orientated towards the visual, I possess a passion almost amounting to necessity for knowing exactly what the past looked like. An impossible passion to fulfil of course, but one of the supreme benefits of the internet is the availability it offers of an ever-expanding visual resource arising from the ongoing digitisation of the world’s huge archive of images and movie footage. What once could only be painstakingly sought out in books and museums can now be accessed with ease at home with a simple click of a mouse. Even so, some images still take quite a deal of persistence

and ingenuity to find. Over the course of three articles I intend to share some of the images I've unearthed. A number may be new to you; I hope all will be of interest. They pertain to, arguably, the most significant trio of men in the German organ world of the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century. I begin, naturally enough, with the greatest of them...

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

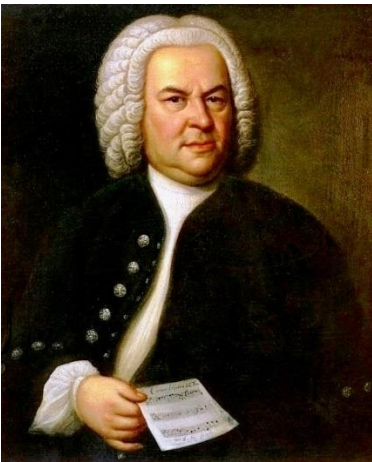


Fig. a

Our image of the man himself has been indelibly shaped by the two well-known portraits painted by Elias Gottlob Haußmann, the first of 1746 (subsequently badly damaged and a victim of several poor restoration attempts), and its very much finer copy of 1748 (*Fig.*

a). Haußmann had been commissioned to paint the official portraits of the Leipzig town council and Bach takes his place amongst them as the town's Cantor and Music Director. He looks somewhat forbidding in his wig and black coat, stern and beetle-browed and holding a sheet of paper bearing the notes of a short canon. This is Bach, the 'learned musician', not the family man or convivial host to a succession of visitors.

Sadly, the Haußmann portraits are now the only ones that can definitively be declared to be of Bach. Others are known to have been made during his life but these have either been lost (as has, alas, the portrait known to have been painted of his second wife, Anna Magdalena) or those that survive can no longer be proved conclusively as authentic. For those interested in Bach portraits I can do no better than recommend you scrutinise "The Face of Bach" pages on [www. bach-cantatas.com](http://www.bach-cantatas.com) where one Teri Noel Towe assesses all the reputed portraits of Bach and their possible authenticity in exhaustive (and occasionally exhausting!) analytical detail. *Fig b* shows the portrait Towe believes may be (or at least a copy of) the "beautiful original pastel, a good likeness"

known to have been in the possession of Bach's son, Carl Philipp Emanuel in the 1770s but which was subsequently lost. If *Fig b* really is a "good likeness" of CPE's father it reveals a more overtly human, even vulnerable face of the composer, the man who was orphaned by the age of 10 and who lost his first wife, two of his brothers, and eight of his children (he lost eleven in all) in the space of just twelve years!



Fig.b

Of the dwellings Bach inhabited during his 65 years only two can be identified with any degree of certainty. The house in Weimar where he lived between 1708 and 1717 and in which his sons, Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl

Philipp Emanuel were born lay on a street connecting the market square with the 'Red Palace' where Bach had his first, brief job (as a 'lackey and musician') in 1703. By the 19th century the house had been incorporated with the building next door to become a hotel behind a new façade. No known image of Bach's original house exists but its remodelled form can just be seen in a pre-war postcard (*Fig c*): Bach's 'house' is the part just beyond the entrance canopy jutting out of the hotel frontage (on the right) half way up the road leading away from the square. The 'Red Palace' is the imposing building at the far end of the street. The hotel was badly damaged in the Second World War and since 1989 has been an unsightly car park. Apparently, the Renaissance vaults of the wine cellar under Bach's original house survive and plans are in hand to reconstruct the buildings as they might have appeared in Bach's time.



Fig. c

From 1723 until his death in 1750 Bach and his family lived in an apartment in the Thomasschule adjacent to the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, a building that survived until its demolition in 1902 (a loss Leipzig's city council must have come to regret many times since!). Images of the Thomasschule are quite plentiful and one of my favourites is a delightful watercolour (*Fig d*) by none other than Felix Mendelssohn (is there no end to the man's talents?!).



Fig. d

Painted in 1838 it shows a scene little changed from Bach's own time. The Thomasschule is the imposing building just to the right of the church and abutted by one of the city's gates (the Thomas-Pförtchen, or 'Little Gate').

Curiously, despite the Thomasschule's survival well into the age of photography the only

images of it I ever saw in books on Bach were artistic depictions (engravings, etc). Surely photographs must exist too? Bizarrely I only thought to search the internet for them a couple of years ago. The best and clearest photograph I've so far found showing the school and its relationship to the Thomaskirche can be seen in *Fig e*.



Fig. e

Unfortunately, whoever uploaded it onto the internet must have scanned it from a book. That 'kink' in the façade just to the right never existed; it's obviously the centre-fold of an open book! Despite that the sheer scale of the building is apparent. Bach's apartment was at the south end of the building occupying all the floors behind the first three windows from the left (i.e. that part of the building to the left of the central pediment).

Fig f shows the whole of Bach's

apartment as seen from the rear (i.e. from the west, the same direction as in Mendelssohn's painting). The 'Little Gate' has long since disappeared but the windows of Bach's composing study are clearly visible; it was the corner room on the first floor with one window facing south and another facing west (the 'bright' looking one in the photo, just behind the top branches of the tree).



Fig. f

We have quite a lot of information about the layout of Bach's apartment thanks to annotated

floor plans that were drawn up of the school before and after the major renovations of 1732 when the building was given two further storeys. Fig g shows the floor plan of the ground and first floors of the school following the renovation and is highly illuminating when studied in conjunction with the photos in Figs e and f...

Bach's apartment was entered by the front door on the left of Fig e (No. 1 on Fig g). Various service rooms occupied the tiled ground floor (and for a more detailed description of these and other rooms please refer to Christoph Wolff's indispensable biography, *Johann Sebastian Bach, The Learned Musician*, Oxford, 2000). Up the stairs Room 2 was the main living room leading to Room 3, the master bedroom where (presumably) Bach and Anna Magdalena slept. Room 4 was Bach's study leading to additional work space in Room 5. I can't help wondering if Room 5 is where Bach gave many of his private pupils their keyboard and composition lessons. Room 6 (approached via a lockable door from Bach's apartment) was the 'auditorium' for the school's 'Secunda' class and must have served as one of Bach's main teaching and rehearsal spaces.

The unlabelled room between 5 and 6 was a newly created room lined with shelves on all four walls on which was stored the extensive St. Thomas's library of books and music. It is presumed that much of the weekly copying of parts for Bach's cantatas, etc, went on here. The upper storeys of the apartment provided accommodation for the remainder of Bach's family, occasional guests, and probably a succession of 'live-in' private pupils too.

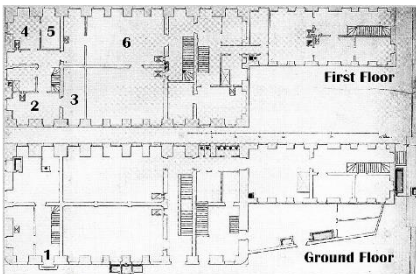


Fig. g

Quite a variety of photographs of the school's exterior can be found on the web but I couldn't help wondering if anything of the interior had ever been photographed, let alone uploaded on to the internet. After a number of intensive and at times quite ingenious search attempts, I did finally come up trumps; on the website of the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig I discovered eight precious

photographs taken inside the school on the eve of its destruction in 1902. The image files on the website are dark and tiny but far too important and fascinating not to attempt reproducing here.



Fig. h

Fig h apparently shows the interior of Room 5 on the floor plan in *Fig g*, i.e. the workroom adjoining Bach's actual study. It's hardly the most arresting image in the world but is quite possibly the only one in existence of part of Bach's private work space and therefore priceless!



Fig. i

Fig i is labelled 'Auditorium'. If not actually Room 6 it must be a room that looked very much like it. *Fig j* shows a room labelled as 'Workroom 1'. Who can say where that room was located precisely but I include it because it would seem to show examples of the built-in and apparently lockable shelves situated in many of the school's rooms including some in Bach's own apartment.



Fig. j

It would, of course, be wonderful if one day some previously undocumented portfolio of drawings or paintings of Bach's furnished, private rooms suddenly came to light. Safe to assume that just isn't going to happen! But aided by the sort of images I've shared here I can at least shape my imagination a little more accurately as I stroll with Bach from the Thomaskirche to his front door and up the stairs to his study perchance to watch him settle down at his desk with his pipe and

some brandy to enjoy a bit of peace and quiet and the space to devise another canon or two.

But did his desk face one of the windows or away from them...?

Martin J. Cottam

UNDER THREAT



ORGAN RECITALS AT ST. ANDREW'S HALL, NORWICH

Why? Since 1984 lunchtime organ recitals have been held at the Hall during the summer months, organised by The Friends of St. Andrew's Hall Organ who are a like-minded group of volunteers, lead by the Curator Barry Newman, dedicated to keeping the organ in use for the enjoyment of the people of Norwich. Their only source of income is the sale

of tickets at the door on the day of the recital.

In recent years the cost of hiring the Hall and organ has escalated to a level where ticket sales have failed to meet the cost of each recital. This situation cannot be allowed to continue because in the foreseeable future the Friends will not be able to meet the costs and Lunchstop will be unsustainable, thus bringing to an end and unbroken 34 years of recitals.

This would be a great pity because the organ is an historic one, the only one in Norwich in a concert Hall and where the player is in full view of the audience.

The organ is maintained to the highest standard and players are all top flight bringing a wide range of music both classical and light, something for everyone. The recitals are supported with a grant from the Norwich City Council who are very supportive of organ music in Norwich.

How can you help?

By coming to the recitals which are held on Mondays in June, July and August each year from 1.10pm to 2.00pm (see events list). We need 45 people to be viable which is about 10-15 more people

than we have at present for each recital.

Why not become a Friend ? Application forms are available on the door at recitals where the curator will be happy to advise you. Be assured of a warm welcome, see you there.

Barry Newman

RETIRED(?) ORGANIST

I haven't held an organist post since I left St Giles' what seems like an awful long time ago, but until last year kept my hand in using my home electronic organ to prepare whatever I needed for general deputising, weddings, funerals and recitals.

Recitals were the first to go as I began to feel them too nerve racking; my swansong, I suppose was in Norwich Cathedral when I clocked up my 75th birthday.

My home organ was kept pretty busy as I worked on compositions but that too is now possibly history; I may well have written my last piece, (but you never know!). The organ now graces the home of two very fine organists near Ely.

He, the retired Precentor of Ely Cathedral who studied for his FRCO under Brian Runnett and was for a time organist at Christ Church Eaton.

Now without a home organ I have dug out lots of piano music I want to learn and am getting much enjoyment from that, particularly getting stuck into Bach which, until recently stood unopened on my shelves.

I am still on some people's books as a deputiser and still get asked from time to time but take along as voluntaries pieces I can play at the drop of a hat. I need to concentrate on what I give them so that I don't hear the unwelcome aside 'he played that last time he was here'.

And one of the hazards of composing in one's latter years, is the sudden realisation that you are repeating yourself.

Quite surprisingly, my creative juices are finding an outlet in writing poetry which may be largely as a result of having stopped editing the Journal, finding there's something I want to say but no longer having a platform.

I have pleasure, therefore in including one of my efforts in this august publication just to see if there is any reaction – enjoy!

Where there's a will...

Learning to play the organ
In the days of yore
Was much more of a chore
Than it is today.

First you had to find out
Where there was one,
Because one
Needs to practise.

Gaining access to the instrument
Was only half the battle
Before one got to rattle
The trackers.

Asking the local vicar
For entry to the church
Meant you often had to search
Somewhere for a key.

A further search for another key
Somewhere around the console
Perhaps under the insole
Of the organist's shoe.

And where is the electric switch
Supplying light, and power
To the blower?
All this before you start!

I learned the Bach D minor
Far from home, alas,

At a place where I had to pass
Through a graveyard.

In the eerie moonlight
What I feared most
Was encountering a ghost;
Glad to reach the porch!

However, was it worth it,
Stumbling in the dark
Just to practise Bach?
Well of course it was!

My electronic home organ
Cut the need for such excursion;
Swallowing my aversion
For what's not wind and pipe.

Ronald Watson

VISIT TO SOUTHWOLD



Southwold Choir

On an unseasonably cold
Saturday 11th May, five
members met at St.

Edmund's Church, Southwold. We were very warmly welcomed by the organist and Director of Music, Victor Scott and his assistant organist, Jonathan Palman. St. Edmund's Church is a large, beautiful Grade One listed 15th century Suffolk flint church set in the centre of the town in peaceful surroundings on Bartholomew Green. Inside, there is an ornate roof with carved and decorated angels. There is a spectacular font cover and a great medieval rood screen with fine paintings.

It has a three manual pipe organ, originally built by J.W. Walker and Sons Ltd in 1887 and later rebuilt by a Thaxted firm, Arnold, Williamson and Hyatt in 1966 with an addition of a Flute 4' added to the Swell by Bishop & Sons in 2004. It has forty-two stops controlled by tabs, three manuals and pedals.

After we had all introduced ourselves, Jonathan played a few pieces to demonstrate the organ. Afterwards, the members who wished to had ample time to play. The highlight for me was a very fine performance by Tim Patient of *Grand Pièce Symphonique* by César Franck which showed off the organ to its fullest extent after which Martin Cottam and Michael

Flatman took their turns at the console.



The console

At the end of the visit we thanked Victor and Jonathan for their hospitality. We then went our separate ways to explore the town and its seafront and have a bite to eat and a drink before returning home to Norfolk.

Pamela Flatman

HOW I CAME TO LOVE THE ORGAN

At about the same time I came across the wonderful Archiv recordings of Helmut Walcha, Kenneth Ryder arrived at St Peter Mancroft where my family attended. I had not been able to learn the piano as a child and felt that making music was never to be for me, but was enthralled by the

lovely Bach pieces that Kenneth played most weeks. I was turning his music for him when he gave a recital at Cromer once, and he made a glaring mistake in a Stanley cadence. He turned to me and grinned broadly, saying "I didn't get that right, Stephen!". It was a damascene moment: you didn't have to be perfect all the time to be a musician.

I went off to university and medical school and had little time to try to teach myself on an old American organ but was never very good. Once settled into my general practice post here in Cambridgeshire I played for occasional services when needed, on manuals only, managing the hymns and simple voluntaries. I eventually purchased an electronic and started using the pedals, then once I had retired, I had lessons for the very first time – visiting Kenneth at his home in The Close and later at Aylsham. Kenneth was an enthusiastic and encouraging teacher. I play regularly now and love it. I am so glad that I wrote when he was at the end of his life in hospital, to thank him for his impact on my life.

Stephen Taylor

HOW I CAME TO LOVE NOT JUST THE ORGAN

I first became interested in the organ, aged about seven, because Silver Road Baptist Church Sunday school, always sat facing the congregation but with their backs to the pulpit and organ/console. When lucky, my seat was immediately beside the organist's stool and I nearly always tried to see how he was playing the instrument (an N&B, 11P with hitch down swell pedal.)

Later, after a change to Rosebery Road Methodist and when hormones kicked in (!), I fancied John Plunkett and the rest, as they say, is history.

Ginny Plunket

CATCHING THE DISEASE

“However did you get interested in organs?” they always ask. One of our sons was once asked, when very small, how long he had been going to church. “Since I were a seed” he replied. I could truthfully say the same. Brought up as a city chapel Methodist in Norwich, I knew what an organ was by the time I could speak a sentence. The

organ was “up at the front, behind the choir, behind the pulpit, and played by very old people born in the nineteenth century.

Two hymns and a story in church began Sunday school each week. If the story wasn't up to much, pipe counting was quite absorbing for a minute or two.

It soon became obvious that there were not enough pipes to be one per key, so were they like a recorder or flute with some mechanism to change the pitch? How did the stops change the sound, how did it get loud and soft, why an extra set of keys, and why pedals? A clue was to be seen between the pipe feet. Eventually I climbed on the stool and had a good look. What I saw was unbelievable. It was far too complicated, no one could ever make all those pipes; it would take years and years. The mechanism was also impossible; how could you cut wood that thin and long, and put threads on wire, and make flat leather fit three dimensions? But seeing was believing, hearing was intriguing.

Joining the cubs, it was not long before I went to the St. George's day parade which ended at that great ecumenical building in

Norwich, --- the Carleton Cinema!
Here was something else. A new kind of organ was played by a blind man. Three rows of keys and hundreds of switches with writing on, and in many colours, and all lit up. The sound was quite disturbing, and curiously embarrassing, especially when it went wobbly, although it could sound like the one at church. I couldn't fathom out how pipes could make these sounds, and anyhow, where were they, and how could they be worked by the keys. I supposed it must be done with long strings, or electrically with wires. I went home and told my mother that if we had enough wire we could play it from our house.

A year or two later, one Sunday morning in 1958, the blower was left running and eventually caught fire. It was housed in a huge cupboard under the choir and organ platform. The coke for the tortoise stoves in the Sunday school hall was cunningly stored in this cupboard. By the evening, pipe metal flowed down the aisles, the night sky visible through the roof. We were in tears. The Mason and Hamlin harmonium in the Sunday

school was soon resurrected and I fitted a vacuum cleaner motor in a crude box to blow it.

The insurers paid out, the building was repaired and improved, and a new 15-stop 2m+p pipe organ ordered from a small local firm of ex N&B men. There is no doubt we got value for our £1,500, only the pipe work being second hand. Many minor problems occurred which were not resolved. However, I had seen this new machine arrive. The longer pipes arrived projecting through the sunshine roof of a pre-war Austin. Each Sunday it had grown a bit more, and best of all, it had as yet, no clothes on. I was hooked. "Keep that boy out of our new organ!" they all said.

John Plunkett
27/07/2007

(originally for the IBO Newsletter)

ORGAN NEWS

The organ in St Mary's Happisburgh has been fully renovated by Bower & Company and received a grand opening recital Wednesday 22nd May 2019 by David Dunnett. It is a fine organ in a wonderful church that is ever getting closer to the sea.



The organ

The origins of the organ have been obscured by history – the only known fact being that it was RE-CONSTRUCTED BY NORMAN & BEARD Ltd NORWICH and LONDON. Thanks to national pipe organ records (www.npor.co.uk) we find that the organ was built by Alfred Hunter for St James Emsworth, Hampshire, in 1877.

The organ was removed to Happisburgh Lady Chapel in 1900 by Norman & Beard, who added the pedal bourdon with pneumatic action and also converted the open pedal pipes to pneumatic action.

This is now confirmed by the fact that "Emsworth" is marked on Middle c of the swell fifteenth.

It is interesting that in 1998 I questioned whether the organ was built by George Holdich, whose work I continue to research. Certain features are Holdich like but others are not. I have now discovered that Hunter was apprenticed to Holdich.

Notes from elsewhere say that the organ was moved to the present position by Hill Norman & Beard in 1924 and that it was cleaned in Jan 1969. Bower & Company transformed the organ tone in 1991 by adding the missing stops with new Cornopean and the two Mixtures. You can imagine what a difference this made! The recent work completely dismantled the organ enabling the re-leathering of the bellows, the restoration of the soundboards and the placing of all parts in first-class order. The creation of a new Trumpet stop (in place of the non-original Norman & Beard Gamba) has completed

the chorus of this vibrant tonal scheme.

It became apparent that the earlier "reconstruction" of the organ included moving the bellows backwards to allow room for the Norman & Beard straight and concave pedalboard with the addition of a pneumatic action touch box and mechanical combination action. Above the back of the bellows now protruding from the original caseline is the Norman & Beard Bourdon stop; The Hunter organ originally only had one pedal stop, on tracker action, the big wooden open diapason; it also had a pedal compass of only 29 notes (when at the console you can notice how the RH jamb besides the pedal board is cut away to make room for the 30th note).

David Dunnett's recital showed the organ at its best. The playing was immaculate and the organ well behaved and in fine tune. Starting with Wesley's Choral Song and Fugue his programme was well chosen to suit the organ colours. The fugue was brisk and vibrant building to a fine climax. He asked if we had heard the Cuckoo yet and assured us we soon would as he played all 4 movements of 'The cuckoo &

Nightingale' Handel concerto after explaining, and in playing clearly defining that the swell was 'the organ' and the great 'the orchestra'. after Sweelinck's *My young life hath an end* we were introduced to John Reading's Trumpet Air No 1 to show off the new Trumpet which was perfect for this early piece.

For me *The Swan* (Saint-Saëns) was just perfect – the accompaniment really perky on the Swell Lieblich Gedact. We had *War March of the Priests* showing off the full body of the organ and then a lovely tribute to Noel Rawshorne with his *Celtic Lament* and here we heard the lovely Oboe stop). Yon's Toccata for a flute stop flew by immaculately at great speed (using the Lieblich Gedact which just ravishing!). He concluded with Widor V Toccata, a stylish unrelenting performance, the audience blissfully unaware of the discomforts of the original trigger pedal and limited combination pedals.

As the organ builder I was delighted that both organ and organist made it to the end in fine form. Thank you, David, for this, and thank-you Habbisburgh PCC and organists for making all the right decisions in restoring the

organ. North Sea permitting may it now survive as a delight for another 100 years or more.

Richard Bower

MORE ORGAN NEWS

Holmes and Swift have been renovating the pedal soundboards for the Norman Bros organ at Gayton parish church. These were electrified by an amateur organ builder back in the 1980s, and contain what Edmund describes as “some interesting work” which is requiring extensive improvements. They have also been engaged on a major restoration of a Wurlitzer theatre organ outside the county. Richard Bower has seen the completion of his complete rebuild of the organ at St Mary the Virgin church in Happisburgh. The opening recital has taken place, with further recitals planned for June through to August.

Boggis and Co have been at St Andrew’s Field Dalling where there is a two manual Conacher. They have restored the two soundboards and bourdon pipe chest following water damage which occurred when the lead was stolen from the church roof.

At St Mary’s, Holme-next-the-Sea, the two manual Walker organ (originally built for a nearby residence) has been taken back to the workshop for restoration. A couple of years ago, when Matishall United Reformed Church was closed, Boggis and Co took out the one manual organ by Bullen of Pulham. Late last year, Dr David Baker (who many will remember as a previous Diocesan Organ Adviser) approached them looking for a small instrument for teaching purposes. The Bullen organ fitted the bill exactly so they made a few essential repairs and delivered it to the St Just Miners’ Chapel in Cornwall. It is now being used by a very enthusiastic group as a teaching instrument for young people for both playing and understanding the workings of an organ.

If members have information on any other work that I’ve missed which is being carried out, or recently completed, on Norfolk organs, please let me know: SankeyGP@gmail.com.

Geoff Sankey

MISSION TO PLAY ALL OF THE ORGANS IN NORFOLK

Sixteen-year-old Ollie Welling from Dereham aims to raise £1,000 to pay for two new church bells for his local church in Swanton Morley. Ollie is a self-taught pianist who has autism and has given himself a challenge to raise the money through crowd funding, and to play all of the organs in Norfolk. Ollie says “I have been very lucky to be able to play a few organs in Norfolk churches, but what I would really love to do is play every organ in Norfolk.” If you would like to help him succeed in his quest, please contact his family direct via email chris@chriswellingelectrical.co.uk

ROSEMARY WEST

Barry Newman writes:
I have learnt of the death of ex-member Rosemary West, organist and music teacher (piano). She was a staunch supporter of the Association until failing health forced her retirement. Many members fondly remember her and often ask after her. Her

funeral was on 11th April at Old Buckenham Parish Church.

CLASSIFIED

Organ for sale property of the late Rosemary West. Viscount Grand Opera 3 manuals, drawstop with 32 note RCO pedal board. Analogue with comprehensive stop list English voicing. £1,250.



Contact Barry Newman
barry.newman@mypostoffice.co.uk

President's Day 2019

A fun day out for all!

Saturday July 20th

White House Farm, Tibenham, NR16 1PE

Please join me at the home of Grant Pilcher secretary of the Theatre Organ Club where we will find a Wurlitzer 2 manual and a Compton 3-manual theatre organ, plus a Christie under renovation in the barn. These two organs have a fascinating history which you will learn about!

After lunch it is open console, David will be on hand to help those unfamiliar with these instruments, so dig out those show tunes and marches to play! Grant is more than happy for those interested in the mechanics for you to visit the organ chambers and answer all your questions.



At 11:30 David Ivory will give a presentation on the theatre organ and its differences and similarities to a church/classical organ and then play a programme of music to entertain us.

At 12:30 we will break giving you time to enjoy your picnic lunch in the grounds, let's hope for lovely weather. If it is wet there is ample room in the barn to eat and drink.

There will be a tea urn available to make a hot drink and there are toilet facilities in the house. There is plenty of parking in the adjacent paddock. I do hope as many of you as possible will support this event and I look forward to seeing you on the day.