



The Journal

Winter 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 – Michael Flatman | 01603 452485 |
| President Elect – Vacant | |
| Membership Secretary – Matthew Bond | 01692 409957 |
| Secretary – Timothy Patient | 01603 402944 or 07913 801999 |
| Treasurer – Sylvia Martin | 01263 731075 |
| Publicity Officer – Vacant | |
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| Journal Editor – Adrian Richards | 07768 582208 gravissima64@outlook.com |

Committee Members
Jo Richards, Henry Macey

Honorary Life Members
Ralph Bootman, Bryan Ellum, Ronald Watson

Front cover:
Little Walsingham with Elinor Hanton at the console © Martin J. Cottam

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The Editor writes...



It's Advent again and it all starts getting busy, exciting (and expensive). I'm sure many of you choirmasters have finished your Advent preparations as I type. We do a carol service based around the Great Advent 'O's, it makes for a very calm and beautiful service based around the plainsong, but interspersed with congregational hymns and choir carols. I'm also sure that you are thinking of, or already rehearsing, Christmas carols. Many of us as we plan a (now) traditional Nine Lessons and Carols, will think of the untimely and sad death of Stephen Cleobury – a shock and a great loss to English church music.

Choirs induce a lot of stress to those of us who have such a remit within our job. I am having terrible trouble getting in new members. I'm lucky at the moment, I have a dedicated core of singers who can turn up and sing full Choral Evensong with little rehearsal (1 hr/wk). There are many more demands on people these days and to claim two evenings a week,

rehearsal and performance, puts a big strain on enticing people to give up that time – sometimes one can be lucky and a couple might be interested, or a single person looking to fill time might appear on the chancel steps. I am having to consider changing our pattern to a long Sunday afternoon of 'rehearse and sing' and abandon the Friday evening practice altogether. It may work though. Most important to me is to keep the tradition of sung Evensong alive in this part of the world.

That said, our vicar is leaving at the end of May 2020, the worry is what happens in the mid- to long-term if the new vicar sees only a handful of people sitting there on a cold winter's night? Is it worth continuing? As a choirmaster and church-goer, and the choir agrees, we would continue to do it for the glory of God and the angels. (On the other hand, it would free up valuable Maserati time...)

May I wish you all a Happy Christmas. It should start as that final chord of the Widor thunders down the church after the service on Christmas Day, and you realise you have nothing more to do for a few days other than remember where your family lives!

Deadline for contributions for issue 111 is 23rd February 2020. (Please supply copy in one column, particularly specifications, it really saves lots of work as it is input into The Journal as one column – thanks)

IN SEARCH OF AN IMAGE

Part 3

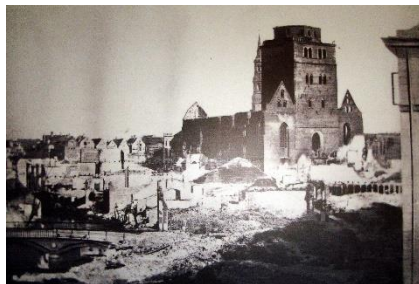
Arp Schnitger (1648-1719) 2019 marked the tercentenary of the death of Arp Schnitger, by general consent the greatest and most influential organ builder of his era. By a combination of superb craftsmanship, astute business practices, and the establishment of a widespread network of workshops and highly skilled journeymen, Schnitger was able to provide more organs, and of a superior quality and at lower cost, than any of his rivals. His instruments were installed as far afield as Portugal in the west, and Russia in the east. His tonal concepts and working methods remained influential into the 19th century and became so again following the establishment of the 'Orgelbewegung' movement in the 1920s and through to the present day.

The son of a carpenter, Schnitger was apprenticed to his organ builder uncle, Berendt Huß from 1671 until the latter's death in 1676 by which time Schnitger's work as a journeyman on the new Huß organ at St. Cosmae in Stade had already been singled out for special financial reward by the town and church authorities. As an independent organ builder Schnitger's reputation grew rapidly but was fully secured by the monumental instrument he built for the Nicolaikirche in Hamburg (*Fig. a*) between 1682 and 1687.



Fig. a

With four manuals and sixty-seven stops (including two 32ft pedal stops) the St. Nicolai organ was not only the largest instrument Schnitger ever built but also, for a while, the largest organ in the world. Tragically it was totally destroyed in the devastating fire that laid waste to much of Hamburg's city centre in 1842. *Fig. b* (below) is a remarkable Daguerreotype of the



ruined church made within days of

the conflagration. The loss of the celebrated Schnitger organ is compounded by the fact we don't even know what it looked like. Images of the church's interior do exist (*Fig. c*) but no known depiction of the organ has yet been found.



Fig. c

That said, informed guesses as to its likely appearance can be made. Though there were exceptions, the overall design and structure of Schnitger's organ cases was remarkably consistent throughout his career. A comparison of two of his other 32ft instruments confirms this; *Fig. d* shows the 1693 organ at the Hamburg Jacobikirche and *Fig. e* the organ of 1699 in the Lübeck Dom. In general appearance they differ only in their decorative detailing. My own belief is that the St. Nicolai organ probably looked very much like one of these other two. The Lübeck Dom organ was rebuilt by E.F. Walcker in 1892-93. The magnificent Schnitger case was retained but then totally destroyed in the same allied bombing raid on Lübeck in March 1942 that obliterated Buxtehude's Marienkirche organs (see Part 2). A similar fate



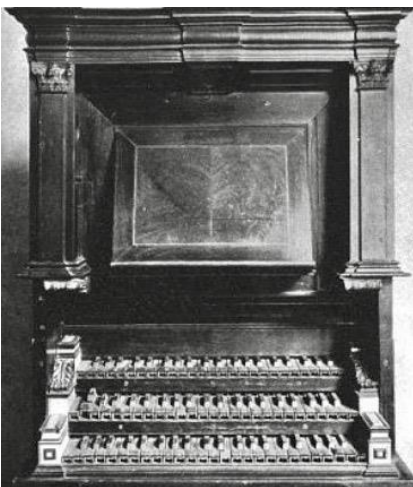
Fig. d



Fig. e

befell the St. Jacobi organ in the terrible firestorm wreaked upon Hamburg by allied bombers in June 1943 but mercifully the historic pipework had been removed to a bunker under the church tower in 1942 and was thereby saved (unlike upwards of 40,000 civilians!). Between 1989 and 1993 the organ was scrupulously restored by Jürgen Ahrend in a new, Schnitger style case. It is the largest Schnitger instrument to have survived and contains more pre-1700 pipework than any other organ in the world.

Another survivor is the Schnitger console from the Lübeck Dom organ (*Fig. f* below). Presumably it was removed during the Walcker rebuild but eventually transferred to Lübeck's St. Annen-Museum where thankfully it remains to this day. It was an invaluable source of reference during Ahrend's reconstruction of the Hamburg Jacobikirche organ.



Following his move from Stade to Hamburg Schnitger established his workshop in a farm owned by a Hamburg merchant in Neuenfelde, a village just to the south west of the metropolis and in whose church, St Pankratius, Schnitger later completed a new organ in 1688. In 1684 Schnitger married the merchant's daughter, Gertrude Otte and he acquired the farm in 1693 on the death of his father-in-law. Known as the 'Organ-builder's Farm' ('Orgelbauhof') the building survives today though with a much-remodelled frontage. *Fig. g* is an evocative 19th century photograph showing it before the alterations. What treasures were conceived and fashioned in that place!



Fig. g

Schnitger was buried on 28th July 1719 in Neuenfelde church where his grave and the family pew sporting his coat of arms can still be seen. The organ, which still contains much Schnitger pipework, was immaculately restored in 2017 by Kristian Wegsheider.

Unsurprisingly Schnitger came into contact with a number of notable North German organists during the course of his forty-eight-year long career including Dieterich Buxtehude. In May 1687 Buxtehude made a four-day trip (at his own church's expense) to test the magnificent new Hamburg Nicolaikirche organ and "found good contentment" with it, but his subsequent efforts to have Schnitger carry out a "major renovation" of his own organ in the Lübeck Marienkirche proved unsuccessful. In 1689, at Buxtehude's invitation, Schnitger spent four weeks in Lübeck inspecting the Marienkirche's organs (Buxtehude even paying for Schnitger's meals out of his own pocket) but his written offer to repair them was turned down by the church directors, a similar offer also being rejected after another visit in 1702. Buxtehude was, however, the official examiner of the new Schnitger organ in Lübeck Dom (*Fig. e*) after its completion in 1699, and in other circumstances was able to recommend "no more capable and fully suited man for this work than Arp Schnitger in Hamburg."

Undoubtedly Schnitger's closest professional and personal association with a player of repute was with the organist/composer, Vincent Lübeck (1656-1740) of whom a rather fine portrait has survived (*Fig. h*). At the age of twenty Lübeck was appointed organist of the newly completed Huß/Schnitger organ in the St. Cosmae church, Stade. He instigated

the additional work Schnitger did there in 1688 and stayed till 1702 when he was appointed organist of Schnitger's magnum opus at the Hamburg Nicolaikirche, an instrument for which he'd been one of the three examiners in 1687. He remained there for the rest of his long life during which time he also examined a significant number of other newly completed Schnitger organs. One could certainly say Lübeck had his Schnitger cake and ate it!



Fig. h

"But what did Schnitger look like?", I hear you cry. Unfortunately, we just don't know and until some previously undocumented portrait painting or engraving turns up in a dusty archive or someone's loft we probably never will. That said, in 1697-98 Schnitger installed a partially new organ (II/P

20) on the west gallery in the village church at Golzwarden and at net cost to himself (i.e. without profit) this being the church in which he'd been baptised fifty years earlier. Apparently, the local community responded by promising that a portrait of the organ builder should be installed in the church. The organ gallery also extends down the north side of the church and the whole balcony frontage was adorned in 1701 by a series of paintings executed by one Christoph Walzell. One of the panels just in front of the Schnitger organ case (nowadays housing a new instrument) shows a figure playing a small Schnitger-style instrument (*Fig.i* below)



Is the organist meant to be Schnitger? An almost adjacent panel depicts a small group of musicians and in 2017 a “theologian and art scientist” called Dr. Dietrich Diederichs-Gottschalk

declared he'd identified Schnitger as the man in the centre of the panel wearing black and holding aloft a roll of paper (*Fig. j*). As far as I can ascertain there is no unequivocal documentary evidence to suggest this is indeed the great Arp Schnitger. And even if that crudely painted, rather blobby portrait was finally proved to be our man it hardly ranks as a definitive likeness, does it? But it's a start of sorts, I suppose.



Fig j

Even this doubtful image was almost lost when, on the afternoon of Thursday 3rd July this year fire broke out in the roof over the east end of Golzwarden church! Fortunately, the fire service was quickly on the scene and the flames extinguished within an

hour and a half. Much of the church's roof was badly damaged but mercifully the interior fittings including the gallery paintings, the Schnitger organ case, and the font in which the baby Schnitger was baptised survived intact. A special service planned for the following Saturday to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Schnitger's death had to be cancelled, however.

Martin J. Cottam

Addendum: In my review of the book *Arp Schnitger and his Work* (Autumn 2017 edition of the Journal, page 12) I mentioned that a small Arp Schnitger organ was sent to England in 1690. I have subsequently found evidence that may point to where it ended up. In 1983 James Boeringer published his three volume *Organa Britannica: Organs in Great Britain 1660-1860: a complete Edition of the Sperling Notebooks and Drawings in the Library of the Royal College of Organists*. He quotes the Sperling notebook entry for St. Mary's church, Calne, in Wiltshire thus:

"Calne: The first organ is a very curious German one of the 17th century. In 1770 it had a new case and other additions by Handcock and in 1842 was removed to Christ Church, Derry Hill." [Derry Hill is a neighbouring parish]

Boeringer comments, "Sperling is the only source that has anything to say

about this instrument. His mention is the only antiquarian citation of a 17th century German organ in England. The Edskes citation [i.e. information supplied by Cor Edskes via correspondence between Boeringer and one Geoffrey Cox], similarly, is the only one I have encountered indicating that a German organ was sent to England in the 1660s: it was a small organ built in 1690 by Arp Schnitger. Until other evidence is forthcoming, the citations must remain coincidental rather than concordant, but it would seem to be possible that Calne Organ 1 was a small instrument by Schnitger."

Tantalising!

[A better view of the photographs can be found by looking at the PDF online on the NOA website which can be enlarged to observe greater detail – Ed]



Keyboards of the Michaelkirche Vienna
(see next page)

FURTHER AFIELD



Organ at 8 is the title of a series of organ recitals in Michaelkirche Vienna, a poster for which caught our eye on our first evening in that wonderful city at the end of September.

The main attraction is the instrument itself, built by Sieber in 1714 and claimed to be the oldest original baroque instrument in Vienna and known to have been played by Haydn. Admission is free but donations are welcome. The half hour programme is always followed by a visit to the organ loft and a talk and demonstration of the instrument by the organist Manuel Schuen.

My eye scanned the programme we were given on entering the church and I muttered 'no Bach'. There were pieces by Aldrovandini (1671 – 1707), Gabrieli (1557 – 1612), Handel (1685 – 1759), Valentini (1582 – 1649), Franceschini (1651 – 1680), Erbach (1570 – 1635) and Manfredini (1680 – 1748). I only recognised two of the

names and the pieces by Gabrieli and Handel were unknown to me. The recital we attended included music for two baroque trumpets.

The ensuing sounds were beautifully clear, and enhanced, as is often the case, by the resonance of this fine church.

I have to admit to being bored after a very short time due to the sameness of the music and lack of variety and was glad it only lasted half an hour.

After the final piece *Jubilate Deo a 8 voci* by Gabrieli, the twenty-five or so of us climbed the stone spiral staircase near the west door onto a spacious organ gallery in the centre of which was the original console. A cursory glance clarified why there had been no Bach; a very short pedal board with nothing like the range required for any of the standard Bach or Buxtehude repertoire.

Organ buffs would have been in seventh heaven as the organist demonstrated the capabilities of this ancient instrument and the quality of the voicing was indisputable. Have a look at it on line.

www.michaelerkerche.at/musik/orgel/disposition/

Ronald Watson

ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, PENANG, MALAYSIA

London organ builders Mander's completed in 2018 a new organ in Penang, this information comes from their web site. The compiler of this document is in contact with Michael Blighton who is now Mander's Managing Director, John Mander having retired. Dr William McVicker was the consultant.

The building of St George's Church, George Town, Penang was started in 1816 and completed in 1818 under auspices of the East India Company, their charter having been extended for 20 years in 1813. Initial designs were proposed by Major Thomas Anbury, but built to plans by the then governor of Prince of Wales Island, William Pertie, which were modified by Lieutenant Robert N. Smith of the Madras Engineers. Smith was a colleague of Colonel James Lillyman Caldwell, who was the chief architect of St George's Cathedral in Madras and St George's Church bears similarities to the cathedral in Madras. It was consecrated on the 11th of May 1819 by the Bishop of Calcutta, Thomas Fanshaw Middleton. The design is a combination of Neo-Classical, Georgian and English Palladian styles and was built of brick on a solid plastered stone base. It was built entirely by Indian convict labour. It is the oldest Anglican church in south-east Asia.

The church was hit in a Japanese bombing raid in December 1941, which damaged the building badly. The church became derelict and much of its furnishings were looted the following year, including the pews, monuments, the organ and font, the last of these being returned to the church somewhat later. The church was re-opened for services in 1948 after its restoration. The inner city of George Town was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008 and the church underwent a major restoration in 2009.

The new organ is not the first to grace St George's Church. The first pipe organ was a second-hand instrument by Bryceson, which had been the choir organ at St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore. It was a one manual instrument of seven stops and was installed in 1888.

In 1899, the firm of Forster and Andrews was commissioned to build a new organ of 16 stops, incorporating material from the Bryceson instrument. It was installed in the liturgical south-east corner of the church and appears to have had two simple pipe-array fronts, one facing down the church and the other facing the chancel, a typical arrangement for organs in Anglican churches at the time. In 1939, this instrument was rebuilt by an unknown builder and what has been described as magnificent casework was added,

which was paid for by a private donation.



St. George's Penang

This organ is just visible in a photograph taken some time between 1934 and 1941. There being no funds available for a new pipe organ after the war, the church was served by a succession of electronic instruments until the arrival of the new organ in 2017.

Mander's were first approached about a new organ by Andrew Yong, in 2012. He was representing the Tan family which had expressed an interest in sponsoring a new organ for St George's Church in time for the church's bicentenary. A contract was signed in 2016 and work was started later that year.

Various suggestions for the placement of the organ were discussed. The last organ was sited in the liturgical south-east corner of the church and the new organ is in a similar position on the opposite side of the church.

Up until it was bombed in 1941, the church sported a west end gallery,

and there were obvious advantages to such a position, both acoustically and due to a shortage of space in the church. Ultimately it was decided that a new gallery was a project for the future, but as that option has not been ruled out for the future, the height of the organ was set so that this might be realised at some point.

For now, it was initially proposed that the organ be placed against the south wall of the church, in the south aisle, and design proceeded along that position. However, as the design progressed, the option of placing it between two columns, making it free-standing seemed to be preferred, so the design was changed to allow access from the rear, access from the sides not being possible if the organ stood between columns. But discussions as to where the organ should be placed continued almost up to the point where the organ was to be shipped and the final decision was that the organ should go against the wall at the east end of the north aisle.

This presented a problem as by now the design had progressed too far to be changed and access had to be possible from behind the organ to assemble it. Some resourceful members of the congregation had the solution. A moveable platform would be constructed so that the organ could be assembled, after which it would be moved to the wall and a platform would be constructed around the moveable platform once

the organ was complete. The large inward-opening windows behind the organ were made to open outwards, so that routine maintenance could be carried out. A short video was made of the organ being moved in this way for the first time, which was done whilst the organ was being worked on!

The case was designed to complement the architecture of the church and the timber selected and stained to be similar to the local timbers which were used at the time the church was built. It was decided that in the interests of easy maintenance, the organ should be entirely mechanical, both key and stop actions. Only the blower, tremulant operation and lighting employs electricity. The specification was conceived to ensure an instrument which would lead the congregation well and also to enable the development of a music programme and the performance of organ recitals once organists had been trained. It needed to be sufficiently versatile to encourage organists and choirs from other establishments in the far east to be attracted to it to bring a new cultural element to Penang and the surrounding area. The organ was consecrated by Archbishop Ng Moon Hing on the 23rd of July, 2017.

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| GREAT | |
| Open Diapason | 8 |
| Stopped Diapason | 8 |
| Principal | 4 |
| Fifteenth | 2 |
| Mixture | IV 1½ |
| Trumpet | 8 |
| Swell to Great | |

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| SWELL | |
| Gedackt | 8 |
| Salicional | 8 |
| Voix Celeste TC | 8 |
| Principal | 4 |
| Chimney Flute | 4 |
| Recorder | 2 |
| Sesquialtera II | [12.17] 2½ |
| Oboe | 8 |
| Tremulant | |

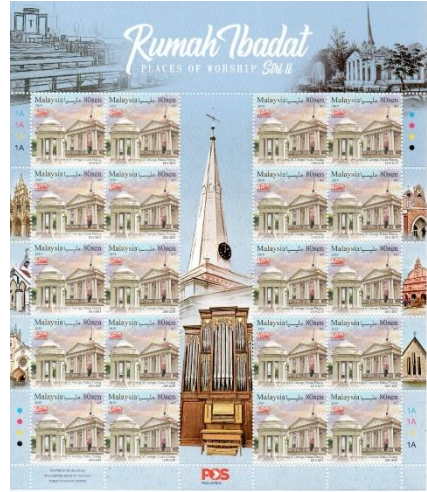
| | |
|---------------------|----|
| PEDAL | |
| Bourdon | 16 |
| Principal [from Gt] | 8 |
| Trumpet [from Gt] | 8 |

[Gt Mixture 1½. 1¾. ½]
Great to Pedal
Swell to Pedal

Pitch A440 at 27C
Wind pressure 80mm



Penang's capital George Town has a rare distinction of the capital being a UNESCO World Heritage Site, featuring many cultural and religious aspects from both Western and Eastern influences, and retaining values from its Colonial past. Malaysian postage stamps frequently have included musical items, older building and transport. On 18 May 2019 a set of stamps featuring places of worship was issued, as a second series. Only when the writer looked and saw that the church of St George Penang was one of the subjects I took greater interest, and when my purchased set arrived, discovered the side tab included the console of the Mander organ. Wow! That information had not been included in the stamp publicity, so I purchased the complete sheet [Approx. £9 through a dealer]. This is the first sheet I have seen where the organ is the central feature on a sheet:



For those interested in stamps, there are also a series of stamps being issued by Poland featuring historic organs, however to do justice to those involves a much longer article.

Mark Jameson

A TALE OF TWO RECITALS

This summer I attended two recitals in the space of three weeks which couldn't have been more different. The first by a virtuoso organist in Norwich Cathedral recently retired from his own cathedral post, Peter Wright, the second by the 21-year-old pianist Eric Lu, the most recent winner of the Leeds Piano Competition.

In each of these I was held spellbound by the beauty of the music and the skill of the performer. I had a perfect

view of the pianist and wondered at the seemingly effortless playing of the fiendishly difficult Chopin Preludes. I was able to watch the organist's hands too displaying flawless technique, not only of the playing of the notes but also the management of the registration. What was not in view was the pedalboard where there were passages of virtuosic pedalling. In both recitals I heard pieces I had not previously been aware of and came away enlightened and uplifted.

Then there were the differences; the organist played from scores, the pianist from memory. Here was a young man who had in his head and fingers goodness knows how many major works, concertos by Beethoven and Mozart and so much else – amazing.

Another difference was that I had paid in advance to hear the pianist and was lucky to get a ticket; I didn't pay in advance to hear the organ recital but was invited to contribute to costs in a retiring collection. I could have wandered in and listened for nothing. It seems that expecting people to pay in advance to hear a virtuosic organ performance is no longer realistic.

For the piano recital I knew before I booked what pieces I was paying to hear, at the organ recital I didn't discover this until I got there. What if there had been nothing on the programme I wanted to hear? Would I still have put something on the plate?

At the John Innes Centre I had a comfortable seat with unimpeded view and there were no extraneous distractions; in the cathedral there were visitors wandering about.

Listening to the various piano pieces I was able to refer to comprehensive programme notes, at the organ recital I was expected to remember what the recitalist had said about the pieces before he played them. Did I want to hear Eric Lu talk about his programme? Not really – his playing spoke for itself. He never uttered a word all evening and I didn't feel short-changed.

The format of the piano recital followed the format of any virtuoso recital on any instrument; it would have been the same for Nicola Benedetti on the violin or Alison Balsam on the trumpet.

In all my years of association with the organ I have never been able to put my finger on why organ recitals are so different and seem to be the Cinderellas of the music performance scene.

Our cathedral organists are virtuosos, they travel widely to give recitals; just read about where in the world they have played. Why do organ recitals attract such small audiences who are reluctant to pay overmuch to hear the finest music played by the finest players?

Ronald Watson

NORTH NORFOLK CONTRASTS

It was a pity our planned visit to play the organ at Fakenham parish church was scuppered by a double booking but the other two organs encountered on our excursion to North Norfolk on Saturday 12th October served up a fascinating contrast of styles in the history of British organ building.

The parish church of Saint Mary & All Saints, Little Walsingham was our first port of call. The spacious interior, as remodelled by Laurence King after the catastrophic fire of 1961, is clean and neat if just shy of clinical. Commendably uncarpeted, it harbours the sort of acoustic most British organists can only dream of.



Little Walsingham nave

Resident organist Peter Macken was on hand to welcome us and explain how the destruction of the old chancel organ in the fire but the survival of the west tower gave opportunity for a change of direction

when (thankfully) a replacement pipe organ, not an electronic substitute, was eventually decided upon. Cedric Arnold, Williamson & Hyatt were duly contracted to supply a new instrument in a west end gallery. The Essex based firm were then among a number of British organ builders at the forefront of applying the theories of the organ reform movement, a development gaining real momentum in this country following the completion of the ground-breaking, not to say controversial organ at the Royal Festival Hall in 1953. Thus, the resulting organ at Little Walsingham (II/P 26 and completed in 1964) has an unashamedly neo-classical specification and pipework voiced in a “bold” neo-classical style.



Peter Macken describes the organ

Peter was quite candid in declaring the organ unsuitable for the accompaniment of choirs. “Too loud!” For the performance of the organ repertoire, however, it was a joy and surprisingly versatile. NOA member and Mancroft organ scholar, Elinor Hanton then proved as much with her short demonstration of two pieces

and two contrastingly registered hymn verses.

Employing very few stops her performance of Bach's 'Little' g minor fugue sounded wonderfully clear in the warm acoustic with no tailing off in volume whichever part of the church I moved to. Elinor then played the fugue from Mendelssohn's 2nd Organ Sonata to demonstrate the tutti. It's an impressive and cohesive sound but did, alas, betray a failing common to all too many of these neo-classical instruments in my experience, namely a curious lack of real depth and gravitas in the bass registers... a failing that is rarely found in the historic baroque organs that actually inspired the organ reform movement.



Tim Patient at Little Walsingham console

Those who wished to then took their own turns. I found the organ, with its tracker action for the manuals and electro-pneumatic for the pedals, very comfortable to play. The Great and Swell departments match each other effectively and there is a pleasing variety of colour at one's disposal (including the always welcome mutation stops). The principal 8ft stop on the Swell, the 'Spotted Metal' possesses an almost Quintadena-like quality which was both a surprise and rather lovely.

The organ sounds well defined and balanced at the console but there is quite a difference as you move downstairs into the body of the church where things become louder and more integrated. Any slight loss of detail is more than made up for by the sheer presence of the instrument in the building. I had the pleasure of moving between the organ gallery and the nave to compare and contrast the effect during both of Tim Patient's highly impressive performances: Bach's 'Dorian' Toccata revealed just how well balanced but subtly different the main choruses are on each manual, and the fabulous Toccata in b flat minor from Vierne's *Pièces de Fantaisie* vividly demonstrated how exciting this instrument can sound. If only that greater underpinning in the bass were there though!

If the Little Walsingham instrument is something of a transition between the

romantic era and the more scrupulously informed examples of neo-Baroque organs being crafted nowadays then so too is the case. At first glance it is quite an arresting example of a contemporary *werkprinzip* case of the early 1960s, the pipes of each department being contained within their own clearly defined tone-cabinet, the whole almost taking the form (to my eyes at least!) of an abstract angel with outstretched wings. The casework itself is pared down to the minimum but the angled shapes and the employment of both polished zinc and copper in the façade pipes provide necessary colour and contrast. Look more closely, however, and you realise that most of the pipework actually resides in a chamber behind a grill on which the ‘casework’ is superimposed. Those cabinets contain only the visible façade pipes and so could perhaps be more accurately described as something of a transition between a Victorian pipe-rack and the return to properly realised and decorative casework that has (praise be!) become increasingly the norm in our own time.

On then to Wells-next-the-sea and the parish church of St. Nicholas where the organ of 1888 by Forster & Andrews of Hull (II/P 17) is exactly the sort of instrument the likes of Cedric Arnold, Williamson & Hyatt were trying to move away from.



Wells organ from the chancel

Though unconstrained by the confines of a chamber, the organ at Wells still looks somewhat boxed in by its position at the eastern end of the south aisle. Like thousands of similar church organs in Britain this instrument’s priority was always the accompaniment of a chancel-based choir, a role I should imagine it fulfils well. Matthew Bond’s demonstration pieces soon revealed how swiftly the volume of the organ falls away as you move back down the nave. And it is those seated in the chancel who benefit from the sight of the painted and stencilled pipes (or “rolls of linoleum” as one wag described such things in the dim distant past). Plain wooden pedal pipes rising above a dark blue curtain are deemed sufficient for those seated in the aisle.

Matthew's demonstration also revealed though how much more presence and weight the 16ft stops have here compared to those at Little Walsingham. And I was particularly drawn to the sound of the 8ft Clarinet on the Great heard to such good effect in Matthew's rendering of the *Adagio* from Mendelssohn's 2nd Organ Sonata. At the console itself I was struck by the rather unusual absence of an 8ft Flute stop on the Swell. The only options are the 8ft Open Diapason or the almost inaudible 8ft Salicional. Fortunately, the Open Diapason is just about soft enough to substitute as an 8ft Flute equivalent even if the actual tone colour is wrong.

Tim Patient reprised his remarkable rendition of the Vierne *Toccata* but even with the addition of all three reed stops the *tutti* was found to incline rather more towards 'weedy' than 'exhilarating'. More effective tonally was his performance of the same composer's highly atmospheric *Clair de Lune* in which the foundation and string stops gave good account of themselves. Such a shame there is not more differentiation in volume when the swell shutters are opened or closed though. The Wells organ is far from being the first English organ I've encountered with that particular trait!

Altogether then a most enjoyable and instructive (if grey) afternoon was had by the small band of NOA members



Wells organ viewed from the nave

who took the opportunity to avail themselves of the pleasures and limitations of these two contrasting instruments. Each organ had something good to give; neither could provide all that one might wish for. I guess that's why we organists continue to journey to so many different, and often very beautiful locations in search of what we hope for and to be delighted by the charming surprises and unexpected glories we often find along the way. Thanks to all who made this particular exploration possible.

Martin J. Cottam
(words and photos)

VISIT TO NORWICH



Matthew Bond at the Cathedral console

On the evening of Wednesday 20th November eight members attended Evensong at the Cathedral. It was good to welcome new member Colin Jobson who came along. After the service we were invited by David Dunnnett to climb the stairs to the organ loft and those wishing to play had ample time to enjoy exploring the instrument. David kindly stayed with us throughout and guided us through registration and managing the huge array of stops and colours available on the organ making for a very enjoyable and enlightening visit. Pictured is Matthew Bond giving a fine rendition of *Bach's Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV541*, which was followed by Elinor Hanton playing the first movement from *Bach's Trio Sonata No. 1 in E Flat*.

Michael Flatman
(words and photos)

CD REVIEWS



It is that time of year again when we are wondering what to give someone for Christmas and perhaps looking for some particularly worthy cause to support.

There has landed on my doormat a brand-new CD of Christmas Music sung by the choir Felicitas which could satisfy both of these criteria. This accomplished choir has built up a very impressive reputation since they were founded in 1992 under the direction of Simon Winters.

The standard of singing is exemplary and the programme is most attractive with pieces by Bob Chilcott, Herbert Howells, June Nixon, John Rutter and Jonathan Dove alongside some earlier works by Victoria and Schutz and that most prolific of composers, Anon.

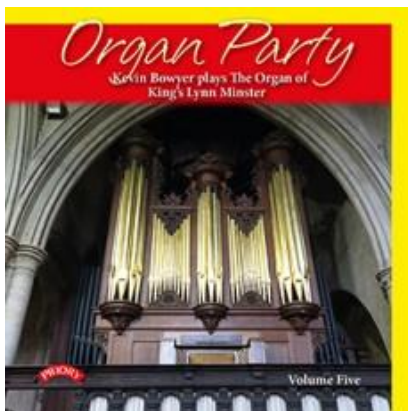
As for the good cause, all proceeds from the sale of this CD go to

Bloodwise, a charitable organisation researching cancers of the blood.

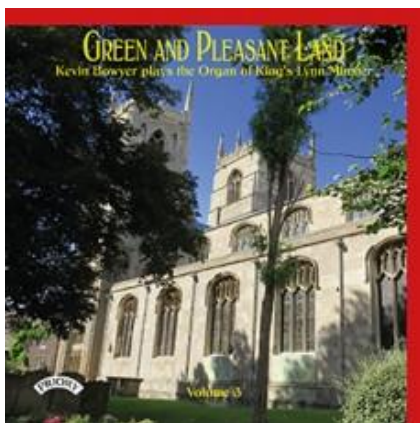
Available by visiting
www.sales@felicitas.org.uk

Ronald Watson

TWO CDS FROM KING'S LYNN MINSTER ON PRIORY



PRCD 1201



PRCD 1202

There is a quick review here: two new CDs featuring the organ of King's Lynn Minster – you must buy them both. Done! Read no more and off to the online shops you go.

Yes of course I am biased, but I am delighted that the organ is now being represented on disc and becoming – deservedly – better known. *Organ Party 4* is the continuation of Kevin Bowyer's successful and enjoyable series and *Green and Pleasant Land* is his new series which is to be a (complete?) recording of an organist's subscription journal called *The Organ Loft*, published from 1901-1915. The repertoire is inevitably uneven, as any publication is that commissions pieces on a market driven basis.

The reason why you need to buy both though is a little more complex. Yes, the recoding on both is excellent (see below) and the playing the usual high standard one expects from Bowyer – his technique is phenomenal, how he learns so much music so quickly is amazing. It's the uneven repertoire that is the issue for me. The 'party' music seems to be a little late in the evening now and the party is wearing down and the witty ones have mostly gone home or are too drunk to be amusing anymore. Don't get me wrong, there's plenty to enjoy on the disc and the execution in all aspects is virtually faultless, but it's not all like the first or second discs in the series.

Green and Pleasant Land is full of surprises, there are many pieces that are more than worthy and enjoyable to listen to, and a lot of well-known composers too, but there is some 'padding' in the midst of it. A combination of both of these CDs would be ideal! Thus, you have to have both. The organ really sounds splendid on both and suits the *G&PL* disc really well and in some ways, I prefer this disc as it tries not to be something that it isn't.

These were both recorded in January this year during inclement weather, so there is from time to time the roar of rain bouncing off the copper roofs. To mitigate the noise, the mic was placed a whole lot closer to the organ than in the previous *Forgotten Gem* disc, it sounds a little more immediate and the balance is slightly different favouring the 32' reed a little more as well as the (mostly) Snetzler Choir. Available from the Priory Records website, also from the Minster should you find yourself there next organ recital season.

Adrian Richards

CAPTION COMPETITION



Captions sought for the above picture. Please send any contributions to the Editor.

It has been suggested that we put a little humour and joy into the Journal. We would welcome amusing anecdotes, jokes, limericks or observations. Many of us have reached a good age and must have some funny moments that we would like to relate or perpetuate, as often happens the names may be forgotten, but the fun remains the same.

The moment the nylon surplice of the vicar caught fire in the middle of a service because he got too close to the candles should never be forgotten perhaps? (Nylon surplices should though – thanks 1970s!)

Also, do you have anything to say, anything that bothers you, or fills you with joy, from the point of view of the art of music as related to the organ – or choirs – of all kinds?

Again, please write or email them to the Editor.



Norfolk Organists' Association

The art of music as related to the organ



Saturday January 11th 2020

Quiz and Chips Venue: Holy Trinity, Essex Street, Norwich, NR2 2BJ Time: 19:00 sharp. (£8) Closing date for food orders to Mathew Martin: Sat Jan 4th.
Quizmasters: Pamela and Jeremy Worth. Raffle for NOA funds.

Saturday February 15th 2020

Desert Island Discs Venue: St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Wroxham Rd., Sprowston, NR7 8TZ (Bus 11/12). Time: 14:00 Castaway: Prue Goldsmith, host: Ron Watson
Followed by Melanie's Tea and Home-made Cake (£2)

Saturday March 14th 2020

Annual General Meeting 1130-1230 AGM Chairman: President – Michael Flatman
Aylsham Parish Church, Market Place, Aylsham NR11 6EL
1230-1330 Lunch (Packed lunch or cafes in town. Drinks provided in church.)
1330-1400 Recital of Organ music, recitalist: Harry Macey (J.S. Bach)

No Event in APRIL 2020

Saturday 23 MAY 2020

Event: Lecture by Philip Norman : “Bach and Handel : A Fair Match”

Venue: Princes St URC Church, Princes St., Norwich, NR3 1AZ

14:00 Illustrated Lecture, Tea and cake (£2)

Saturday 13 JUNE 2020

Event: Visit to Salle followed by Evensong Venue: St Peter and St Paul, Salle (nr Reepham) NR10 4SE (or near!) (*“The finest mediæval church in Norfolk”*)

13:30 Evensong rehearsal

14:00 Talk on history of church (Jolyon Booth, churchwarden)

Trips up the tower (Roger Fry)

15:30 Evensong (please invite your choristers and sing yourself)

Saturday 18 JULY 2020

Event: Members and friends' barbecue

Venue: 25 Belmore Rd, Thorpe St Andrew, NR7 OPT

Chef: Matthew Bond

Members and friends to bring their own food.

Saturday 01 AUGUST 2020

Event: Young Organists' Platform Concert

Venue: Aylsham Parish Church, Market Place, Aylsham, NR11 6EL

11:00-12:15 Coffee Morning organised by Aylsham choir

12:15-12:45 Young Organists' platform concert

No Event in SEPTEMBER 2020

Saturday 24 OCTOBER 2020

Event: Lecture-recital by Ashley Grote – Buxtehude and J.S. Bach

By invitation of Suffolk Organists Association

Venue: URC church, Lion Walk Precinct, Colchester CO1 1LX

Non-members are warmly invited to attend most events for £5.

For full details of events see the NOA website and our Facebook page. Where an event has a closing date for orders or reservations, please do not leave it to the last minute! Please let the sub-committee have feedback and ideas for future events. Enquiries: ask any member of the Events sub-committee.

Please let Harry Macey know if you would like to do a write-up of an event. New writers are welcome. Reports and good quality digital photographs should be emailed to our Journal editor, Adrian Richards gravissima64@outlook.com.

SUFFOLK ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION EVENTS

Norfolk members are welcomed to events arranged by Suffolk Organists' Association, but should contact President Martin Ellis (mjohn@talktalk.net), 01473 805071, prior to attending. See www.suffolkorganists.org.uk for more information

RECITALS, CONCERTS & EVENTS

NORWICH CATHEDRAL

| | | |
|------------|--------|--|
| January 1 | 11am | George Inscoc, Assistant Organist at Norwich Cathedral |
| January 12 | 6.30pm | David Dunnett, Organist at Norwich Cathedral |
| February 6 | 1.10pm | Philip White-Jones, Chapel Organist, Lancing College |
| March 5 | 1.10pm | Alexander Woodrow, Organist at St Alphege, Solihull |
| April 13 | 11am | David Dunnett, Organist at Norwich Cathedral |

KING'S LYNN MINSTER

Restart Tuesday 5th May, 2020 at 12:30 until 26th September. (Café)

ST ANDREW'S HALL, NORWICH

Restart on 8th June and then 15th June and after, all Mondays in July and August

