



The Journal

Winter 2020

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Norfolk Organists' Association

Norfolk Organists' Association

The art of music as related to the organ

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Back cover:

St Mary the Virgin, Whissonset, rebuilt by Bower & Co.

Photo © Adrian Richards

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The Editor writes...



As I write at the beginning of December, it is with great comfort and joy that I can report that the Minster organ is now up and working (although it still requires a new inverter power switch) and is about to have its first tuning for nearly a year. This will also be another first as we have had to find a new tuner now that Robert Holmes has retired. Robert has been a marvel in the way he has looked after the organ for many, many years, ensuring that it is fault-free and tuned magnificently – including the difficult task of making our Tierce-heavy upperwork sound bright and clean. I will miss him, especially once the recital season starts again – possibly/hopefully?

It was nice to read David Secker's article on the Dulciana as I prepare to reacquaint myself with those originals which first appeared in Snetzler's Kings Linn organ. They are very quiet and in the modern world it only takes a loud car outside to destroy their sweetness of tone. Anyone who would like to hear them or try them is welcome – once the perishing virus has been banished by the vaccines.

Another thing about to get back to normal is the joy of the robed choir and the sound of Anglican chant (see Letters at the end), although this will have to be without the customary pint at the Ouse Booze afterwards. In September and October, we enjoyed singing the services again but it all too quickly stopped. We missed Advent, the greatest sing of all at the Minster, but it looks like we won't miss Nine Lessons and Carols; and it's without *O come all ye faithful* ponders the Ed. wistfully!

A great source of organ music, largely free, is YouTube and I will happily start including favourite YouTube channels or videos if you forward them to me. Sorry the links are so long, careful typing from the Journal link is required or you can use a search engine to find them. I especially enjoyed the 54 cathedral organists playing BWV565 on the Cathedral Music Trust website. Listening to and watching YouTube on a computer or handheld device is horrible, but you may be able to get it through a reasonably modern television or perhaps a DVD/Bluray player connected to the WiFi and television; check the apps that you might have available, it's much more interesting and rewarding.

I wish all of our members and families a quiet, safe and happy Christmas

Deadline for contributions for Spring issue is 28th February 2021 – please contribute, it's your Journal.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members of our Association, as 2020 draws to an end and Christmas is fast approaching, I would like to take this opportunity to write to you all. We have never lived through such a year in all our lifetimes and I know what a challenging time it has been for us all. Two national lockdowns and periods of sustained restrictions on the normality of life have prevailed. There is now as I write, a very strong ray of hope on the horizon that vaccines have been found and we might at last be able to get this global pandemic under control thanks to the painstaking work of scientists around the world.

Our world of the organ has been very badly hit with the cancellation of so many events nationally and I am sure that like me, you are all missing sitting at a console or just listening to a live recital. There have been a few recitals locally between the lock-downs at the Cathedral and St. Peter Mancroft, albeit with the strange experience of having to sit apart from other members of the audience and wearing a face covering.

Our Association events sadly have not been able to take place, but we do intend to move them forward into 2021 or 2022 when the situation allows. Your committee and events sub-committee have been holding meetings on-line via Zoom so the work

of the Association continues apace planning ahead for the months to come. I would like to thank all the members of these committees for all their hard work during this difficult time.

Although there has been a lack of live organ music that we have been able to hear there have been many recitals streamed on YouTube to enjoy at home. If you have not taken a look at Richard McVeigh's excellent *Beauty in Sound* YouTube channel I can thoroughly recommend it. Richard has a vast array of organs from the UK and Europe installed on his Hauptwerk system at home which he uses to the full and his videos are always interesting to listen to and watch. In addition, there are many other excellent YouTube channels dedicated to the organ and details of upcoming live streams are now listed on www.organrecitals.com.

We look forward to better days in 2021 and I do hope that we will be able to resume our meetings at some point next year. The AGM. will be postponed until later in the year and we will keep you informed about other events by all the usual channels.

In the meantime, I would like to wish each and every one of you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas.

Michael Flatman

CHRISTMAS 2020 – the stamps, featured churches and their organs



The November Organ Club Newsletter displayed the Collectors sheet in colour on the back page, and below is the mini-sheet showing all the values. This article is designed to give basic information about each of the churches and their organs.



From the more affordable mini-sheet: 1st Class large letter stamp – top right and 1st Class standard Letter – second from left on the lower line: Stained glass from **St Andrew's, Coln Rogers, Gloucestershire.**

The church has an almost intact late Saxon nave and chancel with c15 west tower. It retains a c12 round stone font and some c15 glass remains. The stamp depicts St Margaret which can be found in a north east window. The

Royal Mail stamp does not give much in the way of detail. Major restoration of the building took place in 1844/5 and between 1888 and 1892.

In 1910-1912 a west gallery was built for the organ by W. H. Laycock and dedicated on 28 September 1912. The organ cost £180. Compass 56/30 mechanical action to the manuals, pneumatic to the Pedal, lever swell pedal:

GREAT: Open Diapason 8, Clarabella 8, Dulciana 8 [TC], grooved to Clarabella. SWELL: Violin Diapason 8 TC, Stop Diapason 8, Viol di Gamba 8 TC, Principal 4, TC stops grooved to Stop Diapason. Swell octave coupler Swell to Great coupler
PEDAL: Bourdon 16. Great to Pedal, Swell to Pedal, 2 Great and 2 Swell combination pedals. (Information from Roy Williamson 2008 – Organs of Gloucestershire).

2nd Class large letter stamp, top left, and 2nd Class standard letter stamp – left side, lower row, **St Andrew's Church, East Lexham, Norfolk.**

The church located close to the B1145 east of King's Lynn has a west end Anglo-Saxon round tower, simple square c12 church heavily restored in 1837 altering the roof line. Most of the glass is by Clayton & Bell dating from the 1860s and the panel used for the stamp is taken from the bottom left of six panels in the east window. The organ does not appear in any church photographs I can find;

however, its installation was reported as work in progress by Holmes & Swift in the Winter 2006 edition of The Norfolk Organists' Association Journal.

The organ was built in 1873 by W. Sweetland of Bath for the Baptist Church in Mill Lane, Twerton, Bath (The Baptist church of 1808, still exists but is no longer a church):

Manual: 56 notes: Open Diapason 8, Lieblich 8, Stop'd Bass 8, Dulciana 8, Principal 4, Fifteenth (2006 replacing a Gamba; presume Dulciana TC?). Manual Octave. Pedal: 18 notes, no couplers, presume permanently coupled.

£1.45 stamp – third from left, lower row, **St James', Hollowell, Northants**

Hollowell is north of Northampton just west of the A5199, the church dates from 1840 designed by Sampson Kempthorne, all the glass is by J. Pownall & Sons. It was originally built as a Chapel-of-Ease to neighbouring Guilsborough and is currently in the Uplands group of churches. The windows are lancet style Gothic.

The local history site gives a history of organs here. It reports that for many years the church had to make do with a hand turned barrel organ, how long that lasted is not stated. In 1915 a second-hand pipe organ was purchased, and the organ chamber enlarged to accommodate it. Electric blowing came around 1950. A complete restoration was completed

c.2003 following a grant from Hollowell Steam Rally. NPOR gives this instrument as a reconditioned undated instrument by Henry Speechley & Sons, located at the north east end of the Nave. Specification: PEDAL: 30 notes, Bourdon 16. Lever Swell pedal, two composition pedals to Great.

GREAT: 56 notes: Open Diapason 8, Stop Bafs 8, Stop Treble 8, Principal 4, Flute 4

SWELL: 56 notes: Lieblich 8, Gamba 8, Principal 4, Oboe 8

The couplers are not listed on NPOR [D00351]

£1.70 stamp – fourth stamp from left, lower row, **All Saints, Otley, W Yorks**

Otley is just to the north of Leeds/Bradford airport at an historic bridging point over the River Wharfe. The church dates back to the c11 on an older foundation. It appears from the excellent church web site that the building was much altered in the Victorian era – the organ chamber and vestry are shown to date from 1865. Thomas Chippendale – the furniture maker was baptised here. There is a comprehensive booklet on the church web site <http://otleyparishchurch.org> describing all the church glass.

In 1793 an organ was placed in a gallery over the Chancel, then moved in 1851 to a gallery over what is now the Parish Room. The present organ was installed in 1903 by Abbot and Smith of Leeds, the organ console was

refurbished and extended in 2015. (The NPOR specification [N02699] is clearly prior to 2015.) Their Organist, Jamie Hudson, responded to my request for clarification about the specification of this instrument providing the following information:

Rebuilt to the current scheme by Woods Wordsworth (Leeds) in 1970. It was at that point reduced from the 3-manual A&S to a 2-manual, electric action. We made the 1970's console mobile. We added a third manual in 2015. Top manual is solo. Usual selection of couplers. 32-note pedal board.

The Trumpet / Trombone / Clarion is based on the old A&S Great Trumpet, with 12 note extensions at each end. Harmonic trebles – 5" pressure – sounds fantastic.

The 8' Fanfare Trumpet is an old Dennis Thurlow rank – from a Nicholson somewhere... original a Swell Cornocean – very French. Doesn't really work here at OPC. I had it put on for use over full organ, however the results were disappointing. Wind pressure is around 3". Really it should have gone to Booths or Terry Shires to be rebuilt. New swell engine has been added

It all works, however it's desperate for a full rebuild. All recent work done by Peter Wood (Harrogate).

The current specification:

PEDAL	
Bourdon	16
Violone	16
Echo Bourdon (Gt)	16
Flute	8
Principal	8
Fifteenth	4
Fagotto (Sw)	16
Trombone (ext)	16
Trumpet (Gt)	8
Clarion (ext)	4
GREAT	
Bourdon	16
Open Diapason	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Dulciana	8
Principal	4
Flute	4
Twelfth	2 ^{2/3}
Fifteenth	2
Larigot	1 ^{1/3}
Mixture (1970)	III
Trumpet	8
Clarion (ext)	4
SWELL	
Geigen Diapason	8
Flute	8
Celeste	8
Salicional	8
Gemshorn	4
Fifteenth	2
Sesquialtera	II
Mixture	III
Contrafagotto	16
Oboe	8
Horn	8
Solo	
Fanfare Trumpet	8

£2.50 stamp – fifth stamp from left, lower row – **St Columba’s Church, Topcliffe, North Yorkshire**

Topcliffe is south-west of Thirsk, and the church dates back to before 1067. A major rebuild took place in 1362, but was at the point of collapse by 1855 when the entire structure including the tower was demolished except for the south and east walls of the chancel. Some previous material has been used in this Victorian building, Pevsner gives the designer as G. T. Andrews and attributes one window glass to Burne-Jones (1857) and one on the south side of the nave to Kempe (1893). I cannot identify which, or another, is used for the stamp.

In c.1890 G. M. Holdich installed an organ, but there is a query whether Denman of York built it. It was moved in the church around 1908, recorded in 1996 as being 2/13, dismantled by 2000 and shipped to Sri Lanka in 2001. Its replacement was built in 1870 by Willis as a 2m costing £750 for St Andrew’s church, Sharrow, Sheffield. Willis carried out work in 1904, possibly in 1914, cleaned it in 1946. In 1955 Wood of Huddersfield renovated it with further work in 1973 removing and storing within the organ the Choir Dulciana and Gamba replacing with a Tierce and Larigot. By 1999 the church had closed, and the organ was donated to Topcliffe. Between 2001 and 2004 Vincent Organs of Sunderland and volunteers assembled it at Topcliffe retaining all original

pipework and some new work. The action and jambs were new. The most recent report dates from 2015. This is the specification:

PEDAL		
Open Diapason		16
Bourdon		16
Violoncello	1	6
Bass Flute		8
Viol		4
Hohl Flute		4
Ophicleide		16
Clarion		8
CHOIR		
Hohl Flute		8
Viola da Gamba		8
Dulciana		8
Concert Flute		4
Nazard		2 ^{2/3}
Spitz Flute		2
Tierce		1 ^{3/5}
Clarinet		8
Orchestra Oboe		8
Tuba		8
Tremulant		
GREAT		
Contra Gamba		16
Open Diapason 1		8
Open Diapason 2		8
Claribel Flute		8
Salicional		8
Principal		4
Harmonic Flute		4
Fifteenth		2
Mixture		III
Trumpet		8
Clarion		4

SWELL	
Open Diapason	8
Lieblich Gedackt	8
Gamba	8
Vox Angelica	8
Gemshorn	4
Flageolet	2
Mixture	II
Hautboy	8
Cornocean	8
Tremulant	

£2.55 stamp, right edge, lower row –
Christ Church, Coalville, Leicester

Coalville is 12 miles from Leicester, a town originally based on coal mining and much developed with the arrival of railways. The town grew rapidly in the 1830s and Christ Church was built between 1836-1838, and was enlarged in 1936. Memorials to an 1898 mining disaster feature on the nave wall. The east window dates from 1865 and is by C. A. Gibbs, however the stamp is taken from a section of a north chancel lancet window which is modern – created by stained glass artist Harry Harvey who died in 2011.

NPOR shows that J. W. Walker supplied a new organ that was opened on 5 February 1868, with cases of the same date, this was a 56-note manual with Bourdon bass 8, Open Diapason 8, Dulciana 8 from C, Stop Diapason bass, Claribel Flute treble 8, Principal 4, Fifteenth 2 and Mixture III. Pedal 25-notes, without independent stops. The record also shows that there had been or was a barrel organ. NPOR then

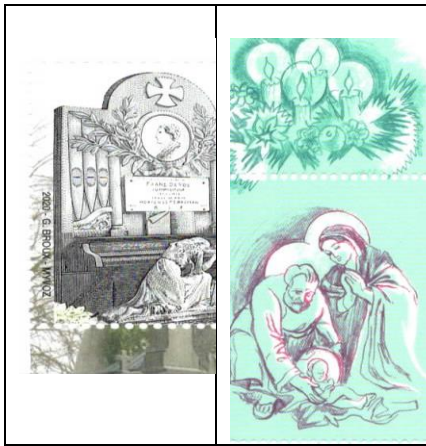
shows that the Walker instrument was no longer present, but this did not match with internet photographs of the church clearly showing currently a pipe organ. After an extensive search, I discovered that Henry Groves & Sons had restored it in 2007. Jonathan Wallace of Groves advises that the instrument is by Porritt of Leicester. He also advises that he believes the Great soundboard is old Walker, TC compass, extended. They also added a BOB blower. This is the specification:

PEDAL	
Open Diapason	16
Bourdon	16
Violoncello	8

GREAT	
Open Diapason	8
Gamba	8
Dulciana	8
Stop Diap & Claribel	8
Flute	4
Principal	4
Fifteenth	2
Mixture	III
Trumpet	8

SWELL	
Lieblich Bourdon	16
Open Diapason	8
Vox Celeste	8
Vox Angelica	8
Lieblich Gedackt	8
Gemshorn	4
Piccolo	2
Mixture	III
Cornocean	8
Oboe	8

Finally, two stamps that have been issued at a time of major lockdowns across Europe. Belgium issued a mini-sheet of five stamps celebrating grave monuments. The one illustrated below is the top left from that sheet, a monument in Ghent celebrating the life of a composer/pianist/organist, Franz de Vos. Other than he died in Ghent, and lived from 1856 to 1910, I have not been able to trace any compositions or any other detail about him or any connection to the organ. The other, issued in the Ukraine, covers the interests of minorities who reside in that land. Clearly the hand of an artist, rather than an actual instrument.



I am not aware of any other Christmas stamps that are organ related

Mark Jameson

MAKING THEIR MARK



Fig.1, Odile Pierre

Earlier this year, on February 29th to be precise, the much-respected French organist, Odile Pierre died aged 87. She was Marcel Dupré's last living student, and could include Maurice Duruflé and Fernando Germani in her list of equally distinguished teachers. I first became aware of her when, as a teenager eager to add to my growing collection of LPs featuring organs beyond our home shores, I bought her recording of the Saint-Saëns Préludes & Fugues recorded at the Madeleine in Paris where, in 1969, she had succeeded the revered Jeanne Demessieux as *organiste titulaire*. In 1974, the year after my purchase, I attended a Saturday evening mass at the Madeleine on the second day of my month-long, post-A levels 'Inter Rail'

European tour. To my delight the organ was played, César Franck's Choral No. 3 in A minor resounding gorgeously in the truly vast acoustic, the glorious final chord dying away at the exact moment the clergy had finished filing in and taking their stations around the high altar. Bach's Toccata in C major, BWV564 was the closing voluntary; not quite what I'd have preferred to hear on this, my first 'physically present' encounter with a Cavallé-Coll organ, but hey...!

My school friend travelling companion and I hovered near the great flight of steps outside the west door afterwards. Eventually I saw Odile Pierre emerge alone from a smaller door that obviously led to the organ loft. I recognised her from a photo on my LP (*Fig. 1*) and desperately wished I could summon the courage to go and speak to her and get her autograph. Alas, teenage insecurities and a lack of confidence in my schoolboy French held me back and all too swiftly she disappeared into the late summer evening. I deeply regretted my lack of nerve... and still do.

Four years later, on an October evening in 1978, I found myself in St. Paul's Cathedral for a recital given by the renowned blind French organist and composer, Jean Langlais which formed part of a series celebrating the recently completed rebuilding of the organ by Noel Mander. It proved to be a decidedly memorable occasion but all the way through I couldn't help but

be intrigued by the presence of two young women seated directly in front of me whose attire and hairstyles betrayed at least a passing allegiance to the then flourishing punk rock movement. Were they unsuspecting tourists who'd happened to wander in, sit down, and find themselves trapped in a concert they'd had no intention of attending? Well, not only did they stay the course but at the end, as Langlais (a tiny man in dark glasses) took his bow far away by the wrought iron gate guarding the south choir aisle, they made a beeline straight for him and secured his autograph on a copy of his music they'd clearly brought with them for that very purpose! With what envy I watched them pursue and succeed in their quest! I wonder what happened to those unlikely Langlais fans and their autographed treasure? Would I have liked my own signed copy of one of Langlais' compositions? Another unique opportunity missed!

I honestly can't recall when I first summoned sufficient courage to ask for an autograph, or which organist was the first to oblige my request. I certainly would not consider myself an avid autograph hunter but over the years, having taken that first tentative but successful step into the unknown, I've found myself in possession of a growing, half decent, if somewhat random collection of signatures of the great, the good, and the unremarked in the organ world, secured as chance occasioned.

One of the first remains one of my most treasured. In October 1990, having just about survived an overnight ferry crossing from Newhaven to Dieppe, I found myself in the city of Rouen for the first time. My travelling companion and I arrived very early in the morning on a cloudless day and I was able to observe the richly encrusted west front of the Cathedral in the same light Monet sought to capture in his remarkable series of paintings as the rising sun caught the top half of the north west tower. Let's just say Monet's interpretation of the colours was a little 'economical with the actualité' (as the late Alan Clark MP might have said), but beautifully so!

Anyway, having secured accommodation in a cheap hotel my friend and I embarked on the enormously agreeable task of exploring Rouen's rich heritage of streets lined with ancient timber-framed houses. The street that runs north from the 'flamboyant' gothic church of St. Maclou is particularly notable and has the distinction of being terminated by the mighty abbey church of St. Ouen. It's a truly immense building as famous for the organ it contains as for the architecture itself. That 1890 instrument was the last to be built by the great Aristide Cavallé-Coll whose construction he personally supervised. Many (myself included) consider it to be his very finest. The church is deconsecrated but remains, as one

commentator memorably quipped, 'as a shrine for the organ.' Well, just imagine my delight when I found a poster on the south transept door advertising not just a recital to be given that very evening but one played by none other than Marie-Claire Alain! Win, win!

The recital was not a disappointment. 1990 marked both the centenary of César Franck's death and the half-centenary of the death of Jehan Alain, Marie-Claire's older brother and an exceptional composer whose life was cut so tragically short by German bullets. Marie-Claire's programme was thus a celebratory one, consisting of all three of the Franck Chorals and his *Prélude, Fugue, et Variation*, followed by a selection of her brother's works concluding, naturellement, with *Litanies* which she then, to my great delight, repeated as her encore! Wonderful playing; tremendous sounds! Is there another 32ft Contra Bombarde anywhere in the world to compare?! Only the Cavallé-Coll examples at St. Sulpice and Notre Dame in Paris come close... in my humble opinion.

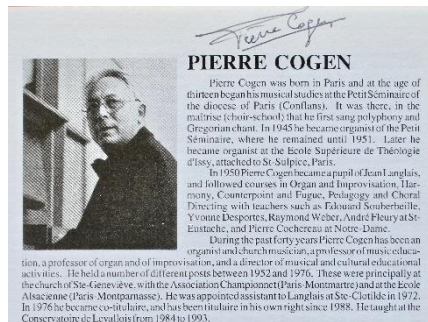
Somewhat to my amazement I made my way towards her diminutive figure as she descended triumphant from the organ loft. Somehow I broke through the *mêlée* of admirers and secured her autograph as she proclaimed the glories of the organ she'd just played. I was one very happy man as I strolled back to my hotel, met up with my

friend and went for an evening meal in an old but very fine restaurant with a heavily beamed ceiling and the most powerfully vanilla-tasting vanilla ice cream I've ever eaten!



Marie-Claire Alain was the first of quite a number of notable French organists whose autographs I've since been able to accrue. Among them the name Pierre Cogen is not very well known, I suspect, but he succeeded Jean Langlais as titular organist at Ste. Clotilde. I heard him play at York Minster in 1995 during my time living in that city and a very fine recital of French music it was too, Cogen coaxing some remarkably convincing French sounds from the Minster organ in a way that will not, alas, be possible to the same degree when Harrison & Harrison have completed their current transformation of the organ back to

something like its 1920s/30s character (as instructed, though not without dissenting voices, I understand!).



Cogen closed his recital with a most impressive improvisation. Some months later I chanced to find myself in Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral at the same time as the Master of Music there. He very kindly, if all too briefly, demonstrated the organ's Chamade Trumpets for me and chatting afterwards I discovered he too had been at Cogen's recital! He said he'd been particularly struck by the quality of the improvisation, one of the best he'd yet heard.

Another organist possessed of notable powers of improvisation is Olivier Latry, one of the titular organists at Notre Dame in Paris. It was my great good fortune to discover, while holidaying at my sister's house in Cornwall in May 2001 that Latry was to give a recital on the much-admired Willis organ in Truro Cathedral. An occasion not to be missed! This turned out to be the first recital I attended that had a 'live' camera link to the console, the images conveyed

not onto a big screen but a whole procession of TV monitors placed at intervals down both sides of the nave. The pictures revealed not only that Latry plays entirely from memory but that he can execute notoriously difficult pieces such as Dupré's ecstatic Prélude & Fugue in B major with barely any discernible movement of his hands or fingers; the seemingly effortless relaxation and total absence of extraneous movement that characterises a true master at work. Quite, quite remarkable!



I was one of the first to encounter him on his exit from the organ loft. He was not as tall as I'd always assumed him to be but just about my own height. He looked incontrovertibly French somehow in his lightweight jacket and dapper little bow-tie. He smiled as I apologised and told him, "the groupies are gathering!" and he duly signed the cover of one of his CDs I'd fortuitously taken down to Cornwall with me.

The following year I indulged myself and went on the IAO Congress to Paris,

my first such Congress. Over the course of three days we were treated to nine wondrous demonstration recitals on many of the finest organs in Paris, those built by Cavallé-Coll being especially notable for their quality and beauty of tone and sheer emotional impact!

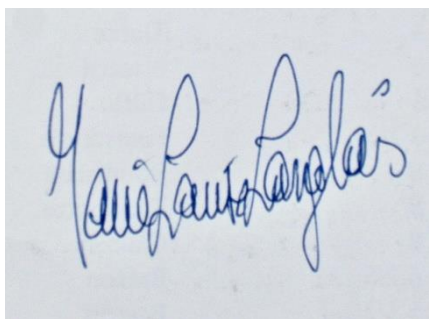
2. SAINT ÉTIENNE DU MONT		
Grand Orgue		Positif
Monnaie	16	Principal
Bourdon	16	Bourdon
Monnaie	8	Flûte creuse
Principal	8	Prestant
Bourdon	8	Flûte
Flûte harmonique	8	Nasard
Prestant	4	Doublette
Flûte à cheminée	4	Tierce
Doublette	2	Larigot
Grand Cornet	V rgs	Sépième
Miscure	II rgs	Piccolo
Fourniture	IV rgs	Plein jeu
Cymbale	III rgs	Trompette
Bombarde	16	Cromorne
Trompette	8	Châsseau
Claron	4	Claron
Récit		Echo
Quintant	16	Dulciane
Principal Italien	8	Principal
Cor de nuit	8	Bourdon
Gambe	8	Saïcional
Voix céleste	8	Voix maris
Figural	4	Principal
Flûte	4	Flûte cônica
Nasard	2 2/3	Doublette
Ocavin	2	Sesquialtera
Tierce	I 3/5	Plein jeu
Fourniture	IV rgs	Trompette
Cymbale	III rgs	Hautbois
Bombarde	16	Regale
Trompette	8	Trompette en chamade
Basson-hautbois	8	Claron
Voix humaine	8	
Claron	4	
Pédale		
Bourdon	32	Flûte
Principal	16	Tierce
Principal	16	Nasard
Flûte	16	Flûte

Fig.2

I managed to secure the autographs of such luminaries of the French organ scene as François Henri Houbart (at La Madeleine), Sophie Véronique Caucheffier Choplin (St. Sulpice), Yves Castagnet (Notre Dame), Didier Matry (St Augustin), Frédéric Blanc (Madame Madeleine Duruflé's last pupil, Notre Dame d'Auteil), and Gabriel Marghieri (Sacré Coeur). At St. Étienne du Mont (Maurice Duruflé's church) the recital was given by an up and coming twenty-two-year-old named Vincent Dubois (Fig. 2). His playing made such

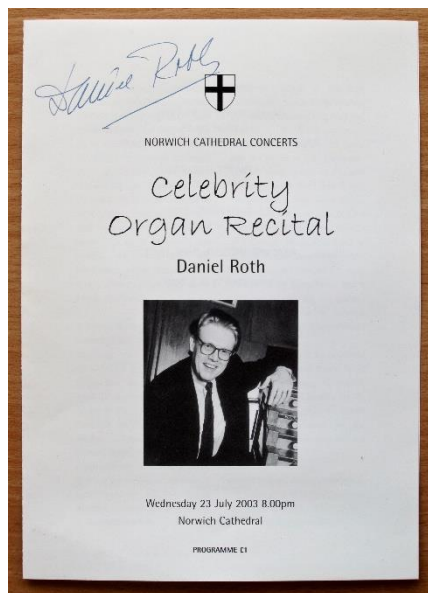
an impression that Ian Tracey, the IAO President and organiser of the Congress, was forced to declare he'd clearly been wrong in describing that particular organ beforehand as being rather less than exciting! Dubois has subsequently developed into a truly great musician possessed of a technique even our own virtuoso, David Dunnett marvels at.

Of all the signatures I gathered in Paris that weekend the one that meant most to me was that of Marie Louise Langlais, the widow of Jean Langlais no less.



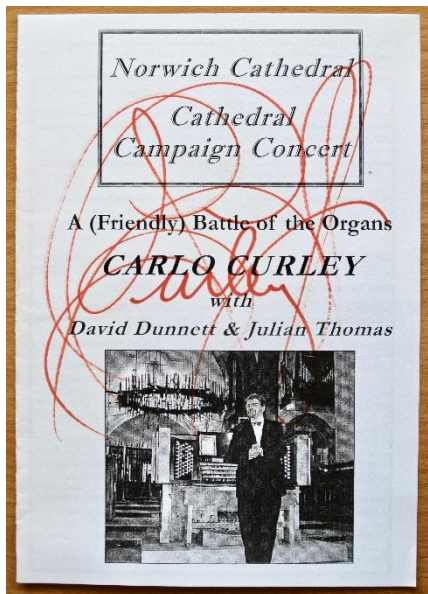
It somehow made up for my failure to even consider getting, let alone securing her esteemed husband's autograph all those years before! Her recital was the first of that memorable weekend. It was held at Ste. Clotilde, home of the 1859 Cavaillé-Coll organ that so inspired the likes of César Franck, Charles Tournemire, and Jean Langlais – the 'Sainte. Clotilde Tradition'. I found myself sitting next to a Welsh heart surgeon who had lessons with Roger Fisher (ex-Chester Cathedral). I asked him before the

start of the recital if he'd ever heard a Cavaillé-Coll organ before. He hadn't. Madame Langlais began by regaling us with a majestic performance of the Franck *Fantaisie* in A. At the piece's conclusion I turned to my new friend whose face betrayed something of a look of shock and disbelief. "I've never heard sounds in my life like that before!". Another convert to the glories of Cavaillé-Coll!



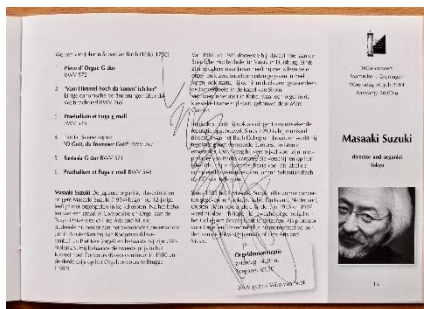
I secured yet another notable French signature the following year just after my move to Norwich. Daniel Roth, long time successor to the likes of Widor and Dupré at St Sulpice performed at the Cathedral to a packed nave. A big screen was provided which enabled us to observe him play impressive sounding passages during his final improvisation on Ye

Holy Angels Bright that were actually time stalling moments while he surveyed what stops to employ next! You would never have guessed had you not seen what he was doing. By the way, Roth also turned out to be a player who was good deal shorter than I'd anticipated!

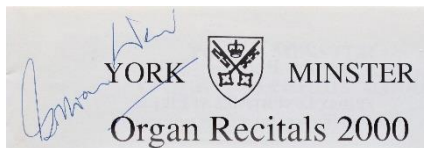


Another signature I secured at Norwich was that of the American virtuoso, Carlo Curley. Like the man himself his autograph was somewhat larger than life. I'd already got it a few years before at one of the York Minster recitals. Indeed, I suspect there may be more Carlo Curley autographs around the world than those of any other organist, past or present. He positively encouraged people to come and get one. How could we resist?

Undoubtedly the strangest looking signature in my collection is that of Masaaki Suzuki, the highly respected Bach conductor. He just happened to be giving an all Bach recital on the marvellous historic organ in the Groninger Martinikerk during the Association's tour there in 2014. Again, an occasion... and an autograph... not to be missed!



Another famed, indeed revered musician from that far side of the world has to be the New Zealand born Dame Gillian Weir. I claimed her signature at the end of her recital in York Minster in September 2000.



I encountered her again a little later outside the Minster this time as she walked past the south west tower accompanied by a man carrying her baggage. "No post-recital drinks with the Minster organist?" I enquired. "No, I would normally but I've got a

long drive back to London now.” A week later in Bank’s, York’s celebrated music store, an assistant told me she’d heard that Weir, having changed into her concert dress, found herself locked in the Minster Sacristy! A passing verger only noticed her plaintive cries for release moments before the recital was due to begin! A less than ideal evening in more ways than one it would seem for Dame Gillian! But then if you will choose to put the Reubke on your programme... (sorry, Editor, only joking! I couldn’t resist!) [😞 Ed.]

But what of our native British organists? I hear you cry! Rest assured I have a whole selection of their autographs including those of Francis Jackson, John Scott Whiteley, David Briggs, Paul Hale, Simon Lindley, and a whole host more I’ve misplaced or forgotten, including several Cathedral Organ Scholars and quite a number of far less well-known but more than capable local organists. Perhaps the most poignant though is that of the late, great John Scott. I obtained it after his marvellous recital on the world-famous Christian Müller organ of 1738 at St. Bavo, Haarlem at the end of our 2014 NOA Groningen tour. He was more than happy to chat to a small group of us and was utterly charming. I heard him again the following summer when he gave the inaugural recital on the newly restored 1735 Richard Bridge organ at Christ Church Spitalfields. As ever his playing was immaculate and thoroughly

musical. Less than two months later he was dead having suffered a ‘cardiac episode’ the day after his return home to New York at the end of his European recital tour. He was just 59. Sadly, I’m unable to put my hands on the autograph now, despite hunting high and low for it. No doubt it will resurface one day, just as my Marie-Claire Alain autograph did only the other week after several years of hiding! You have that autograph’s re-emergence to blame for this article!

Martin J. Cottam

A SWEET LITTLE THING



Since Snetzler's eureka moment for his organ at Lynn, the Dulciana has been both loved and disparaged. *The Oxford Companion to Music* calls it ‘the most generally useful soft stop on the organ’, while Sumner points out that the best have a ‘sweet, silvery and cantabile’ quality. Indeed, they do! Voiced well, it’s a stop fit for a king, as apparently it was. On taking a keen interest in the building of the organ for Brighton’s Royal Pavilion, George IV reputedly told the builder (Lincoln) he wanted a devotional tone, and a Dulciana in the Swell in the place of the Open Diapason.

Perhaps our preferences for stops and things are to an extent formed from an early age, and have a tendency to stick. For me, a 'through' Double Dulciana on Great and Pedal is a luxury. Evidently it was Gordon Slater's soft 16ft of choice for medium to large organs, despite the expense. His input into the scheme for the Cousans organ at Gedney (Lincs) gave it this rank, the (all metal) pipes forming the impressive display. Dr Slater eventually procured one for Lincoln Cathedral's organ, but his insistence on the stop's costly inclusion in at least one new instrument is thought to have deprived it of a Mixture. Compton would likely not have had this dilemma, which brings to mind one of his enclosed Dulciana units (six pitches including Mixture) where the effect was quite ethereal.

I recall an organist who found the stop too quiet and of little use except for funerals, and as an occasional accompaniment to a Swell solo. 'Of little use' and 'little used' are not the same. Long ago a tuner discovered twelve Dulciana pipes missing from the organ at Ninfield church in Sussex. They were reported as 'not frequently used' although I imagine that elsewhere they soon were. That's what happens when you neglect your Dulcianas! Concerning funerals, there are only so many times that even this stop can endure *O Rest in the Lord*. As for 'too quiet', how often do we only hear full, or nearly full organ; the

voicer's painstaking work should not have been in vain. In 1871 when they put in the new organ at St Margaret's, Lowestoft, it was said that this delicate stop could be heard distinctly in every part of the church. It was eyes as well as ears, for folk back then could read the tiny print of Hymns A&M in a dimly lit building. Try doing that today.



Dulcianas at Gedney

Since the 1970s – not an especially good decade for organs, or much else for that matter – a number of Dulcianas have (understandably) been replaced in favour of Fifteenths or whatever, the downside being that on many organs the only soft accompaniment on the Great disappears. Conversely, those sensitive souls, the

Victorians, shunned the 'old fashioned Twelfths' and were not averse to replacing them with Dulcianas. Not infrequently do we see those out of sequence drawstops. Mind you, the spare slide designated for this register at Denford (Northants) was still there when the instrument went some eighty years later. As noted by a wag in the 1850s, reeds did not escape the cull: 'The Dulciana is a gift of the squire, he having generously paid the expense of exchanging the donkey or Trumpet stop for Dulciana pipes.'

At Lostwithiel church in Cornwall a small plate is, or was, attached to the shank of the Dulciana to commemorate the donor's late husband, in whose memory the rank was added in 1894 – a touching gesture in an era of great sentiment. Commenting on a new organ elsewhere, a music correspondent wrote: 'It is a matter for regret that such delightful words as Dulciana and Keraulophon find no place in this organ.' Such was the power of delightful words over tonal quality. Possibly the romantic dimension of the Dulciana accounted for some of its popularity; there are instances of 19th century usage of the word as a synonym for sweetheart. As for Keraulophon, I pass.

Alexandre's *Dulciana Harmonium* of 1874 supposedly resembled 'the soft Dulciana of the best organs'. That claim was dubious but clever: those on the best organs are not always good.

Not to be outdone, Messrs Dicks & Co. came up with their *Dulciana Pianoforte* model 'of dulcet tone but firm and powerful'. In Christmas-cracker style, a satirist compared the Whigs to the Dulciana, because the party had little power. And so, the bandwagon rolled on as the name was adopted for hand bells; houses; male voice quartets; racehorses; a ship; songs; waltzes; and wind bands. Today, the Emerald Isle boasts the successful Dulciana Vocal Ensemble. As a forename it has not been as popular as Dolce which, as an alternative stop on the Great, was often preferred by Binns of course. But I digress.

Walford Davies, speaking at the Bedford Festival in 1927, beseeched his listeners: 'Be merciful and appreciate the church organist. Do not drop umbrellas when he is using the Echo Dulciana... make him feel you are interested when he is trying to do justice to a little Chorale of Bach. There is nothing more appalling than the complete apathy of well-dressed people when an organist is playing for the love of God something lovely on a beautiful instrument.' Who would argue with that?

David Secker



RUMINATIONS ON BEETHOVEN AT 250



Maybe as there is nothing else to celebrate this year, you may be celebrating the 250th anniversary of this great composer's birth (1770). I can't raise much enthusiasm for him I'm afraid, as he has never made it into the top ten of my favourite composers! When a student at university in Glasgow, I attended the RSAMD as an 'outpatient' for lessons with an excellent piano teacher, who raised my game to diploma level, but was an avid Beethoven fan. Consequently, I had to learn quite a number of his sonatas, despite my preference for those of Haydn and Mozart. Also, at this time, under the baton of Alexander Gibson, its then conductor, the Scottish National Orchestra (now the RSNO) seemed unable to have a concert without a Beethoven symphony in the programme. When the SNO Chorus joined them, there were too many airings of the 9th for my liking, with its ghastly *Ode to Joy* finale. Having

endured several of these over the years, I now avoid any concert in which it rears its ugly head, and have consigned it to Frank Skinner's *Room 101*, as one of my 'these you have loathed'!

More recently when I was still working at Gresham's School, we welcomed John Lill to perform at a subscription concert in the Auden Theatre. He wouldn't reveal his 'surprise' programme until he arrived on the day. No prizes for guessing what it was – yes, a whole evening of Beethoven sonatas, much to my disappointment! Beethoven was his speciality of course and he played brilliantly, but by the end of the evening we were all longing for a piece by somebody else!

When the latest *Organists' Review* dropped through the letterbox recently and I saw Mr B's cartoon like image on the front cover I thought 'what's he doing here?' The article *Beethoven and the organ* made faintly interesting reading, but having never encountered any of his minimal output for the organ, I assume it's of little significance.

Also, in the *OR* I was amazed to read about the Australian organist, Thomas Heywood's 'labour of love' venture, as he plans to devote some of the rest of his life to transcribing Beethoven's nine symphonies for the organ! I hear you say, 'is life not too short for this?!' Presumably on completion of his *magnum opus*, Mr Heywood plans to

embark on worldwide recital tours, in the hope of converting his audiences to a love of Beethoven! I wonder how many of us will be fired with enough enthusiasm to play these transcriptions? I can't imagine much worse than hearing the *Ode to Joy* finale in an organ recital! The only Beethoven transcription I have played was a piano duet version of the 5th Symphony in a concert many years ago, when a discerning Edinburgh audience didn't consider it the best item on the programme that day!

The birthday boy however undoubtedly did produce some fine music, but perhaps a surfeit of it at times has clouded my appreciation of him, and his music has maybe fallen on my deaf ears, if not on his! Sorry if these ramblings are rather negative, so I shall conclude by hoping that they have not offended any Beethoven fans out there!

Jim Laird

FATHER WILLIS IN NORWICH

It was with great sadness that Princes Street URC has closed after 200 years of ministry. Costs of refurbishing the roof and decline in congregation has brought about this decision and at the time of writing (Nov 2020) the fate of both the building and the organ are unknown.

Henry Willis (Father Willis, 1821-1901)

was arguably one of the greatest 19th century British organ builders whose two sons and grandson saw the firm through until well into 20th century.



Princes Street URC

Willis was renowned for his ingenuity in adopting revolutionary ideas. At the Great Exhibition, S.S. Wesley drew his attention to the concave pedal board by Schutz, commenting what a pity the pedals didn't 'spread out'. Thus, was born the radiating concave pedal board. In 1886 Canterbury Cathedral was to install permanent electric action, another Willis invention. Electricity 'flashed' through 120ft of cable to the instrument in the triforium above. I also note he invented mechanical organ bellows driven by a boiler and two oscillating engines for the St Georges Hall, Liverpool.

At 14 Willis was apprenticed to John Gray, later to become Gray and Davidson. He then moved to

Cheltenham working for William Evans through whom he met S.S. Wesley. This led to his rebuilding of Gloucester Cathedral organ in 1847 establishing Willis as an independent organ builder.

The instrument Willis built for the Great Exhibition in 1851 won him the contract for St George's Hall, Liverpool, and revealed his qualities not only as a maker and voicer of organ pipes but as an engineer and inventor. His organ now provided the ability to perform Preludes and Fugues by Bach and the Mendelssohn Organ Sonatas. Commissions to build organs for the Royal Albert Hall and Alexandra Palace followed. Willis and Co. continue to be active and recently completed the refurbishment of Aylsham Parish Church organ.

Turning to Princes Street, from 1860-1875 a harmonium was used but before that just a tuning fork! In 1870 Father Willis built a 2-manual and pedal tracker action organ and placed it in the organ loft at the front of the chapel. In 1930 Walker's rebuilt the organ with electro-pneumatic action and detached stop tab console which was placed beneath the pulpit. The console was moved in 1950 to a sunken well in the floor at the front of the congregation seating.

In 1985 the leather motors in the console were beyond repair and the Norwich firm of Hill, Norman and Beard replaced all the action between the console and organ with a Christie

Music Transmission System driving an electronic link with a digital memory playback.

In 2001 Bishop & Son of Ipswich restored the organ, including re-leathering the main reservoir and general repairs to the pedals and trunking. In addition, thanks to Mr Bob Bunting, an Ophicleide (16ft pitch on pedals) was installed.

In reordering the church some six years ago the organ console was moved to the side beneath the balcony with the detrimental effect of inhibiting the sound for the organist. Suggestions for wheels on the console making it movable were rejected.



Prue Goldsmith at the console

GREAT	
Lieblich Bordun	16
Open Diapason 1	8
Open Diapason 2	8

Claribel Flute	8
Dulciana	8
Principal	4
Flute Converts	4
Twelfth	2 ^{2/3}
Fifteenth	2
Tierce	1 ^{3/5}
Trumpet	8
Clarinet	8
Oboe (by piston)	8

Swell

Open Diapason	8
Lieblich Gedackt	8
Salicional	8
Vox Angelica	8
Gemshorn	4
Piccolo	2
Mixture	III
Contra Oboe	16
Cornopean	8
Tremolo	
Sub Octave	
Octave	
Unison Off	

Pedal

Open Bass	16
Bourdon	16
Quint	10 ^{2/3}
Principal	8
Flute	8
Octave Flute	4
Contra Oboe	16
Ophicleide	16

Swell to Pedal; Swell to Pedal 4; Great to Pedal; Swell to Great 16; Swell to Great; Swell to Great 4

ORGAN REPERTOIRE – REMATCH

Jim Laird

Sorry Ron, But I've always enjoyed playing Mendelssohn's first four sonatas, not so much 5 and 6 though, and I like Prelude and Fugue No.1 in C minor – played the fugue in my FRCO exam in 1975!

PIECE I THINK IS OVERRATED

Alain – *Litanies*; never been excited by this – just think it's not really a very good piece.

PIECE I THINK IS UNDERRATED

York Bowen – Fantasia in G minor; a splendid and interesting piece, full of contrasting sections and textures. Deserves to be better known.

PIECE I HATE

Widor – *Marche Pontificale*; having been organist in the Catholic Church for some years, this detestable piece was requested as the recessional for a diocesan ordination Mass. A long and difficult middle section, which goes nowhere, is very tedious. Not worth the effort to learn!

PIECES I LOVE

Dupré – Prelude & Fugue in B major
 Vierne – *Final* from Symphonie No.3
 Having mastered these, after some concentrated lockdown practice on my home organ, I enjoy playing these, especially when nobody else is listening!

Prue Goldsmith

PIECES I CHERISH

Frank Bridge – *Allegretto grazioso* (No.1 of Six Organ Pieces); a lovely little piece.

Whitlock – *Scherzetto* from Sonata in C minor; rhythmically interesting and quirky!

PIECE I COULD LISTEN TO ON REPEAT

Elgar – Sonata in G, especially first and last movements; majestic and very British!

PIECE I STILL WANT TO PLAY

Healey Willan – Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue in E flat minor; hope to learn this properly someday.

PIECES THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Howells – *Paeon* and Rhapsody No.3; discovered these as a student, having the privilege of practising them on the Father Willis in Glasgow Cathedral. Have enjoyed playing them ever since.

GUILTY PLEASURE

Eric Coates – *Knightsbridge March* (In Town Tonight); like playing my own arrangement of this (busked from a piano copy), so it's slightly different every time! A bit of fun for a recital encore.

PIECE I SHOULD HAVE PLAYED BY NOW BUT HAVEN'T (and probably don't intend to!!)

Reubke – Sonata on the 94th Psalm

Please send yours to

gravissima64@outlook.com

YOUTUBE CHANNELS TO INVESTIGATE

My favourite YouTube organ channels, in no particular order, are: -

Fraser Gartshore

Beauty in Sound

Loreto Aramendi (with whom I am friends... she is a reed-a-holic!!!)

Michael Flatman

Anne Page

Some of you may be interested to know that Anne Page has recently uploaded two videos of her playing Messiaen's *Livre du Saint Sacrement*. This was recorded in Norwich Cathedral by John Whitehouse in 2000, with photos taken in and around the cathedral.

Part one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PncEiBKydIM&t=33s>

Part two

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-l8rFe ru4&t=126s>

If you are not a fan of Messiaen, it is still well worth taking a look at Anne's YouTube channel, as there are also many videos of Bach, Karg-Elert, and the unjustly neglected Henry Smart.

<https://m.youtube.com/user/AnnePageCambridge/videos>

Cathedral Music Trust

Below is a link to the Cathedral Music Trust website, here you will find a cause which some of you may wish to support. Also, on the same page just below it, is a link to a video of 54 UK Cathedral Organists playing the celebrated Bach Toccata and Fugue in D Minor – fun and most interesting!

<https://cathedralmusictrust.org.uk/news>

RIP DICK LE GRICE

I have received sad news that Dick le Grice has died, aged 88. Dick was a former president of our association, and while he has not been a member since 2014, many of you will remember him.

Matthew Bond
(Membership Secretary)

LETTERS

Dear Adrian,

Richard Cockaday's letter about the Chapel in the Field took me back. When the building was still standing Ralph Bootman got me a key and I used to practise in there when I first arrived in Norwich (1968) before I had a post. It was pretty bleak; the interior had been pulled about and there was no heating. Despite that they had lunchtime recitals in there and I gave

one. I even remember what I played which included the D major (Bach) and Messiaen's *Apparition de L'Eglise Eternelle*.

It was good that the organ was rescued even though it is far too big for the church at Somerleyton.

Ron Watson

Dear Adrian,

I was pleased to be able to send copies of my old postcards of the Chapel in the Field Congregational Church and Organ, and thought they reproduced very well.

I have just completed 50 years as Organist of Holy Trinity Church, Norwich. As you can imagine, I have seen many different changes to the Music in Worship styles during those years! I particularly regret the loss of chanted Psalms and Canticles and our robed Choir!

With Best Wishes,
Richard Cockaday

THE ORGANIST'S COMPLAINT

(With apologies to Sir Arthur Sullivan and
Adelaide Proctor)

Seated one day at the Organ
I was weary and ill at ease
As Covid symptoms followed -
First a cough and then a sneeze!

I sanitised the Manuals
First the black notes, then the white,
I even sprayed the Pedals
Ditto the Pedal Light!

The mist then calmly settled
Like an angel's gentle breath
And I knew I had attempted
To stop a Covid death!

Each pipe with masked 'Mouth' covered
The strings stretched round each 'Ear'
The 'Tongue' and 'Reeds' now silenced
For close upon a year!

The 'Bellows' made redundant
The 'Couplers' unused too
The 'Bench' a spider's haven
The 'Tuner's' nowt to do!

I have sought, but I seek it vainly
To bring it back to life
It may be that only in next year
We'll end this Covid's strife?

A vaccine for the Organ
Is needed without doubt
Until then, heaven protect it
And keep the virus out!

It may be that same bright angel
Will breathe in its lungs again -
The masks come off, the ears
unstopped
And we shall SING Amen!

Richard Cockaday





Norfolk Organists' Association

The art of music as related to the organ



Following a meeting of the Events Committee, we have taken the decision to cancel all in person events until at least May 2021 by which time hopefully the vaccine will have done its work and life will be getting back to some sort of normality.

We plan to hold our annual quiz in January on-line and details of this will follow when it has been finalised.

As we will not be able to hold our A.G.M. at its usual time next year, all committee members and officers will continue in their roles until such time as we can hold the meeting.

We are hoping to reschedule all or most of the events that were planned for this year and the beginning of next year in the 2021/22 calendar and we will keep members updated on our Facebook page, our website and via e-mail.

In the meantime, please stay safe and we look forward to a time when we can resume doing what we all love and meeting up with all our friends once again.

Michael Flatman (President)

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 Elinor Hanton 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 them via the website. See www.suffolkorganists.org.uk for more information

