

The Journal

Autumn 2021

Number 117

Norfolk Organists' Association

Norfolk Organists' Association

The art of music as related to the organ

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The 1894 console at the Minster

The Editor writes...

Nice to be out of lockdown, playing in church(es) and taking choir practices. The Minster choir start back tomorrow, as I write, after the summer break. Pesky virus cases are going up in King's Lynn and the county, and for the first time in months we have people (double-figures) in hospital in ITU after months of having none. That's a long way of going about asking when do we start singing hymns whilst not making people seem unsafe? Do choir members stand next to each other yet?

Mindful of risk, the Minster authorities have taken the decision to move Baptisms out of the morning Eucharist into their own slot – we get quite a full church of strangers for these. They will now be said services, but even though we used to choose 'friendly' hymns they never sung anyway. So, I have been choosing hymns and filling-out my music lists with what I call 'nice sings' to make it worthwhile to come

along and sing. We usually inhabit our club after a rehearsal (which overlooks and overhangs the Ouse and is quaintly known as the Ouse booze), although this socialising part of choir practice is viewed at the moment by most members as a little risky. How I look forward to the time when we can all feel confident about what we do and how we do it. This of course also applies to our diminished congregation!

I would be interested to hear how other churches are handling this. Hopefully it will be too late to say much in the next edition of *The Journal*, but we may be unlucky and still have this as a major topic of discussion.

There seems to be a flurry of instruments for sale, and probably more to come, so if you are looking for something keep an eye out, or even contact me directly for inside information, it's in all of our interests to ensure instruments have a further life. Speaking of which, I didn't get any interesting photos or reports on practice instruments *in I'll show you mine if...*

Any events you would like circulated or included in the journal, please send to me and not Matthew Bond who is no longer handling this aspect of committee work.

Please send anything for inclusion into the next edition by 30th November.

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S, ORFORD – NOA VISIT



Blessed with glorious deep blue skies and warm June sunshine, Pam and I met up with James Lally at Orford Quay where we enjoyed our packed lunches watching small boats passing by and dogs enjoying a dip in the River Alde at high tide and exchanging organ related experiences from the past. We then walked through one of Suffolk's most picturesque coastal villages and up the driveway leading to the 900-year-old St. Bartholomew's Church.

As this visit had been over two years in the organising due to the pandemic and the fact that we had not been able to meet face to face, let alone play a pipe organ, I was particularly heartened that nine members from our Association were in attendance plus one member of the Suffolk Association, namely Andrew Garfath-Cox. I appreciate that it was also a long drive from parts of Norfolk to the event so this made it all the more worthwhile.

My first acquaintance with Orford Church was back in 1967 when I purchased a copy of Britten's *Noye's Fludde* on an Argo LP ZNF1 which was the premiere recording of this work. I was a student teacher at Gipsy Hill College in Kingston Upon Thames and the college put on a performance of the work in Kingston Parish Church with local schools and it befell upon me to play the treble recorder part in the orchestra. Indeed, there are strong links between Orford Church and Britten and many of his works were premiered there and there is a roundel in the floor in front of the organ commemorating this.

On entering the church and slightly to one's left directly facing you stood what we had all come to see and play with its red oak, silver and copper colour scheme contrasting sharply again the stonework behind it. There stands the recently relocated Collins Organ originally from the Turner Sims Concert Hall at Southampton University and lovingly restored by Cousans Organs Ltd. Built in 1977 it predates the organ of St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich built in 1984 with which we are all very familiar.

We were greeted by Graeme Kay, well known as a producer and presenter on BBC Radio Three and a contributor to many journals including *Choir and Organ* who has been the leading light behind the Orford Organ Project and also by the current organist Adrian Nicholson. Graeme gave us a very

entertaining talk on the trials and tribulations of bringing this instrument to Orford which are very well documented online so I will not go into too much detail here, suffice it to say that there were obstacles and hiccups along the way.



The organ was put into long term storage in 2011 following a flood to the concert hall. When the container was shipped to Suffolk and unloaded in 2017 it was discovered that the blower was not there and had been left behind in Southampton and much of the pipework had collapsed due to not being packed properly to protect it. Thankfully the blower was still *in situ* in a narrow passage and was duly rescued! There were also discussions on the position of the organ to overcome and whether it was appropriate for such an historic building, happily all of these issues were resolved eventually and permission was granted for the installation to go ahead. The inaugural recital was given by Paul Hale in May 2019 and by all accounts it seems that the organ sounds much better now than it ever did in Southampton aided

by the gentle reverberation in the church.

After Graeme’s talk, Adrian Nicholson talked us through the stops on the organ before he and Graeme left the church and left us to our own devices to enjoy the instrument at our leisure.

The organ itself is made based on the North German Werkprizip being only one department deep. It has three tracker action manuals and pedals. The divisions Brustwerk, Hauptwerk and Oberwerk sit one above the other with the pedal pipes either side of the Hauptwerk. There are small swell shutters in front of the Brustwerk directly operated by a foot lever high up on the right above the pedalboard. A Zimbelstern was gifted to the organ by Graeme Kay and added more recently.



James at the console

James Lally began by playing *Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne* by Buxtehude a perfect piece to show of the clarity and timbre of this organ.

Tim Patient followed this by playing the *St Anne* Fugue by Bach, BWV552b, again showcasing the instrument to its full.



Our Suffolk guest Andrew Garfath-Cox then played followed by Martin Cottam and yours truly. Jane Van Tilborg and Andrew Campbell were also in attendance but did not choose to play on this occasion. We were booked to be at the church until 4:00p.m. but Graeme said that we were welcome to stay as long as we liked which was fortuitous because Elinor Hanton was very keen to play the organ being well acquainted with the Mancroft organ. Unfortunately she had a clash of events as she had a choral rehearsal in Norwich at lunchtime after which she and dad John made the 54 mile journey down to Orford arriving about 4:20 p.m. when, due to Graeme's kind

generosity of time, she was able to play the organ, starting with Percy Fletcher's *Festival Toccata* followed by pieces by Buxtehude and Howells.

There is a superb recording of the organ on Priory Records PRCD 1235 by the late Catherine Ennis which was recorded in February 2020. Sadly, she passed away the following Christmas Eve so I feel it is a very fitting memorial to her and I highly recommend it.

So, a splendid visit to one of the finest organs in the area made all the more pleasant by the good weather and hospitality of our host Graeme Kay to whom we extend our grateful thanks. We left with an open invitation for any members who would like to play the organ in the future to get in touch with Graeme.

Words and photos
Michael Flatman

Collins Organ, St. Bartholomew's Church, Orford, Specification:

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Pedal | |
| Subbass | 16 |
| Octave | 8 |
| Gedact Pommer | 8 |
| Wide Octave | 4 |
| Mixture | III |
| Faggot | 16 |

AN ORGANIST IN DENMARK

Hauptwerk (Manual II)

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| Quintaton | 16 |
| Principal | 8 |
| Rohr Flute | 8 |
| Octave | 4 |
| Spitz Flute | 4 |
| Octave | 2 |
| Mixture | III-V |
| Trumpet | 8 |
| Tremulant | I / II |

Oberwerk (Manual I)

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Metal Gedact | 8 |
| Gamba (tapered) | 8 |
| Principal | 4 |
| Quint | 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| Gemshorn | 2 |
| Tierce | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| Scharf | IV |
| Schalmey | 8 |
| Tremulant | |

Brustwerk (Manual III, enclosed)

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Wood Gedact | 8 |
| Koppel Flute | 4 |
| Principal | 2 |
| Spitz Quint | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Sesquialtera (middle C) | II |
| Vox Humana | 8 |
| Tremulant | |

I / P; I Oct / P; II / P; III / P

Zimbelstern (2019)



A tired James at the end of a long day at the console of Odense Cathedral

Many years ago, I was the organist of Christ church, Albany Street, London NW1. The organ was a fabulous 14 stop 2 manual Father Willis built originally for the Chapel at Stratfield Saye for the second Duke of Wellington. Just a very short walk away is the Danish Church in London, we had a joint service once or twice a year. The organ is a 1778 Samuel Greene built originally in St Katharine's by the Tower. The organ was subsequently and, IMHO, unsympathetically rebuilt by Gray and Davidson. More about these organs some other time. The Danish priest said to me that their organist was over 80 and would be retiring, did I know anyone that might like the job, and the services did not clash with mine! I suggested my relief organist. Between the two of us, we managed both Churches for several years. This gave me the opportunity

to learn about the Danish liturgy and hymnology. I was encouraged to investigate the possibility of moving to Denmark and working as an organist, which I did after a fair bit of study!

The Danish Church is a State Church, that means that there is a government minister for the Church, which is paid for by a very small local income tax. It is possible to opt out of this tax but by doing so, certain benefits are no longer available *i.e.* no church fees for weddings and funerals. With this funding, the buildings are well kept, the staff has good salaries and there are a lot of activities available.

Organists and qualifications

Organists' salaries are on a quota system. The number of hours and the agreed functions taken are measured on a scale agreed between the Church ministry and the organist unions. The qualifications required for the small village churches with very little work for the organist is just a short course to ensure that the organist understands the instrument and can play hymns and simple organ pieces. Larger villages and small towns may well have a lot more for the organist to do and they require organists trained to a higher level and have the 'Preliminary organist exam'. Quite a few of these churches require a full-time organist but not necessarily organists of the highest level. The training normally takes three years of training with a Church music school instructor. The examination will be

approximately Grade 8 for organ playing, the candidate should be a competent pianist, able to be the choir leader, be able to tune the organs reeds stops. There are theory, keyboard harmony, liturgy tests etc. Now we come to the larger town parishes. The organists will be expected to have a Church music diploma. This involves an additional 4 years study at a music conservatory. At the end of this, the organist will play to at least Licentiate and more often to ARCO or above standard. With very few exceptions, the town jobs will be full time and I really do mean, full time! Cathedral organists will be FRCO standard or above.



The Marcussen in St Nicholas, Aabenraa

The work involved is as follows: -
The Sunday high mass with occasional separate baptisms after the main service should the parents not want the baptism to be part of the mass. Weddings and funerals. Any service the parish priest holds within the parish boundary, *i.e.* nursing home services; evening functions; etc. Recruiting and training choir members. Concert arranging with world class to local musicians. There are normally at

least seven concerts a year included in a full-time job. (I used to arrange about ten *p.a.*)



The Marcussen in St Nicholas, Aabenraa

Budgets

Everything costs money, concerts can be eye watering expensive, a well-known duo cost roughly £1800 for a one-hour concert! An organ recital £350 - £850+ depending on how famous the recitalist is. Choir payment depends on the type of choir, children's or adult. The annual budget is presented to the organist in good time by the parish council. If the organist has a project they would like to fulfil such as *Messiah*, the council will consider this and supplement the budget if possible. The organist is responsible for tuning the reed stops

and making minor adjustments to the organ as and when required.

The organist is expected to play an introduction to every hymn in the form of a short chorale prelude lasting about the length of one verse. There are many books of these but most the organists I knew took pride in writing their own, sometimes improvising.

I have only scratched the surface regarding the work of a Danish organist. It is a fascinating job if you can adapt to the Danish way of life, having organs of the highest quality making playing an absolute dream. Experiencing what the Danes call 'Hygge' is delightful and they do it in their own inimitable way which is why Hygge cannot be directly translated to English.



Before you start looking for jobs over there, you will need to be able to speak Danish to a reasonable level and have qualifications that are acceptable to the Kirkeministeriet (Church ministry). You would need to be able to withstand a culture shock, in other words, learn to be a Dane.

James Lally

HANDEL AND THE THRUSH



They say that Handel had a good sense of humour. A vocalist, who accused Handel of accompanying him badly, threatened to jump on the harpsichord and smash it if Handel refused to change his style. “Let me know when you will do that”, said Handel, “and I will advertise it. I am sure that more people will come to see you jump, than will come to hear you sing!”

Way back in 1837, for many gathered in Norwich Cathedral on the occasion of the thanksgiving for the life of the late Bishop, there was a surprising omission: Handel's *Dead March* – and that was no joke! The *Norfolk Chronicle*, reminding readers of 'that splendid combination of mournful harmony', observed: 'From the numbers who remained in the nave at the conclusion of the service, such an expectation appeared also to have been entertained by others. We know

not why it was omitted; we have heard it introduced upon much less appropriate occasions.' A reference, no doubt, to when it had been played (tongue-in-cheek) two years previously at a civic service to mark the passing of the old Corporation.

The popularity of the *Dead March* from *Saul*, especially during Victorian times to the 1930s, was quite extraordinary. As a favoured piece for funerals, it had no equal. From cathedrals to the humblest places of worship, and on everything from brass bands to mighty organs and mission-room harmoniums, it was very much alive. Even words (from a poem by John Hughes) were adapted for the music, but were they ever sung? Some folk, immersed in the sentiment of the age, found in the music a 'moral philosophy'. Truly a work for the quick and the dead!

But not everyone was pleased to hear it. Returning home defeated from the 1882 FA Cup Final, Blackburn Rovers were greeted by the bandsmen playing it. A few years later, while sounding its doleful melody, unemployed musicians mobbed Government ministers leaving Downing Street. There was a vicar in a Worcestershire parish who refused to sanction its use during a service commemorating the life of Lord Kitchener: because Handel was German. And on a priest announcing the demise of a neighbouring clergyman in Glamorgan, the congregation stood as the organist played the march. But this had been a

'regrettable error', for at the time the 'deceased' was busy pruning his roses.



Handel, not averse to 'borrowing', was the subject of a curious article I came across in a late-19th century edition of the Royal Cornwall Gazette. It reported that (unnamed) musicians had attributed *Dead March* to Steibelt who, they said, wrote it on his death bed. That Handel died six years before Steibelt was born happened to be a tad inconvenient, but never mind. If that was another attempt at beating Handel's reputation with the stick of plagiarism, it failed.

Anecdotes abound. My favourite is the one that throughout the music's rendition during a memorial for Edward VII, 'a thrush outside the church piped a song of spring thanksgiving'. Unborrowed? Of course!

David Secker

THAT'S THE 'HISTORICAL' WONDER OF: -



In the previous edition of the Journal I mused in my piece, *That's the Wonder of YouTube*, that the rare historic footage and recordings which can be found there could form the basis of a further article. This is it.

Given my reputation for singing the praises of most things continental I've decided to redress the balance a little by commencing this potpourri of 'historical' recommendations in England, the Temple Church to be precise. It was here that one of the towering figures of the British organ scene, George Thalben-Ball plied his trade for almost sixty years as that church's organist and choir director. This first video recommendation comes via a YouTube channel entitled *Archive of Recorded Church Music* and contains footage filmed by the BBC in 1958 of Thalben-Ball rehearsing the Temple Church choir before accompanying them on the organ. The YouTube description reveals the footage was rescued from a skip(!)

during the refurbishment of Broadcasting House and is the only known footage of Thalben-Ball and the Temple Church choir. Priceless then, as well as a fascinating document of the way Thalben-Ball went about his work:



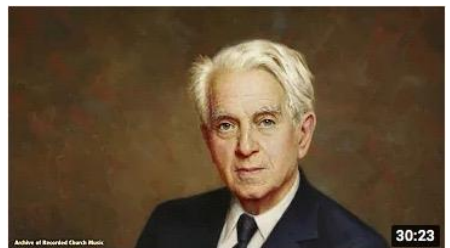
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcF5O1M1jfU>

Back in the mid-1970s I chanced to walk into the Temple Church while Thalben-Ball was up in the organ loft practising scales. I could see him quite clearly in the organ's mirror, sporting his trademark moustache and slick 'black' hair. I saw him again one evening as I was walking back along Fleet Street after, I think, attending evensong at St. Paul's Cathedral. He walked past me in the direction of the Cathedral looking very smart. I watched him as he continued on his way and was rather impressed and gratified when he paused for a few moments at the very spot along Fleet Street where he could savour the sight of the spire of St. Martin's Ludgate precisely intersecting the centre of the dome of St. Paul's. Good on him, I thought!

My first experience of Thalben-Ball

had come three or four years earlier when a master at my school took me and a small group of other pupils up to London one weekday evening to hear GT-B give a recital at St. Paul's. It was the first time I'd heard that organ in the flesh. The Cathedral was packed and we ended up sitting about half way down the nave. My main memory of Thalben-Ball's playing was that most, if not all of the detail was somewhat lost in the vast, swirling acoustic. Mush, but what glorious mush! Another clear memory was of our schoolmaster pointing out a man with a very full head of silver-grey hair seated in the nave as we walked past trying to find our own places to sit. "That's Herbert Howells" he told us. And it was.

Talking of Herbert Howells, here's another treasure of an offering (amongst many) from the *Archive of Recorded Church Music* YouTube channel:



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fi7_Z5W3uNU&t=606s

There's no footage this time it being a BBC radio programme entitled *Composer's Portrait* that was broadcast in February 1966 featuring

Herbert Howells talking about his work and introducing several performances of his music. A sound document to be prized by all those with an interest in Howells and his compositions.

And so, inevitably, to the continent! I've mentioned in previous articles the apparently unique surviving recording of the historic organ in the Totentanz Chapel in Lübeck's Marienkirche. Despite some interventions this organ was a direct and irreplaceable link to the physical and sound world of Dieterich Buxtehude and his pupil, Nicolaus Bruhns. Tragically the organ was totally destroyed in the allied bombing raid of March 1942 but not before Walter Kraft had made this precious recording on it in 1941 of pieces by Bruhns and Buxtehude. The sound quality is, well, 'historic' but the video, with its accompanying archive imagery of Lübeck and the Marienkirche before, during, and after the war is one not to be missed by devotees of Buxtehude and the North German organ school:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7YokKt0ZdA>

Kraft, who had been organist at the Marienkirche since 1926, survived the Lübeck bombing only to die, with

tragic irony, in the terrible inferno that engulfed the Hotel Polen in Amsterdam where he was staying on May 9th 1977, exactly a month short of his 72nd birthday.

Fifty years earlier in January 1927 Louis Vierne, the revered, near-blind organist at Notre Dame in Paris, set sail from Le Havre for a three month trans-continental recital tour of the USA and Canada. With him was a young singer by the name of Madeleine Richepin who proved indispensable as his assistant, guide, and travelling companion. Devoted to Vierne even after her marriage to one Dr. Mallet she became his amanuensis and, after his death, the sole executrix of his estate. The accompanying photo shows them at the console of the New York Wanamaker auditorium where the first three recitals of the tour took place... to rather mixed reviews.



At the end of the tour the pair returned for a *Farewell New York Recital* on the same organ given on Good Friday, April 15th 1927. At some point around this date, they visited the

Aeolian Company's new quarters in the city where an organ for recording Duo-Art organ rolls had been installed only days before. These rolls were the organ equivalent of the piano-player rolls that could accurately capture virtually every nuance of a player's performance. Apparently Vierne recorded five rolls on the Aeolian organ of which only two were issued; the *Légende* and *Berceuse* from his *24 Pièces en style libre*.

I was first made aware of the existence of these potentially illuminating recordings some twenty years ago but it was only at the very end of 2019 that one of them finally surfaced on YouTube: -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oweliz-vIKw>

The video shows the precious roll being loaded onto a newly restored Aeolian organ in New Orleans and set in motion. It has to be said the tone of the organ is decidedly disappointing, and for some reason the video's soundtrack is confined to the right-hand stereo channel. In addition, Vierne's performance is intriguing rather than moving. There is a noticeable slip at one point and he certainly takes some interesting liberties with the printed tempi and registrations. These rolls were normally subjected to a certain amount of editing before being issued but Vierne would have had no opportunity to oversee such a process

or to re-record any of the pieces. But hey, this is the only chance any of us will ever have of hearing Vierne himself playing his perennially popular *Berceuse*!

The following year, on a cold December night in 1928, Vierne made several (more conventional!) recordings on the organ at Notre Dame. The instrument was in pretty awful condition at this time, a much-needed restoration still some three years away. But the resulting discs, issued in 1929, are a moving and vital record of both the then unaltered Cavallé-Coll organ and Vierne's playing style. He recorded six works by Bach, playing them rather more slowly than we're used to hearing today, but with tremendous grandeur and no little feeling. Albert Schweitzer's recordings of Bach made around the same time display similar traits. Vierne also recorded the *Andantino* from his *Pièces de Fantaisie*. Aside from the aforementioned Duo-Art organ rolls this is the only one of his own composed works he committed thus to posterity, alas. Three improvisations were also released (and later transcribed by Maurice Duruflé).

All of these precious aural documents can now be sought out on YouTube (the *IHORC [The International Historical Organ Recording Collection]* channel has them in cleaned up, remastered form along with equally important historic recordings by the

likes of Tournemire, Messiaen, Walcha, G.D.Cunningham, etc).



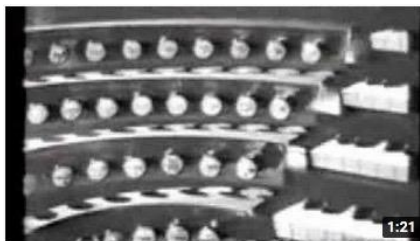
www.youtube.com/channel/UC1bZ_OnIAyawsCQUtojVTIg/featured

It seems Vierne himself was not entirely proud of his efforts but to my admittedly biased ears they all possess a certain magic. I think the improvised *Méditation* in particular is very special. By turns serene, yearning, soaring, imploring, but ultimately reaching a state of calm repose this recording, for me, encapsulates the hyper-sensitive, soulful, melancholic but indomitable, beauty-loving spirit of Vierne:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hj_NhEDx1k

A few bars of his recording of Bach's *In Dir Ist Freude* form part of the soundtrack to the only known footage of Vierne performing. The sleeve notes to Olivier Latry's 1988 CD recordings of Vierne for BNL Productions had alerted me to the existence of this footage, Latry explaining it was contained in a 1934 film entitled *Les Mains de Paris* which was at that time in too poor a condition to be viewed. Imagine my joy then when the relevant footage suddenly appeared on YouTube back in 2008! Battered and all too brief it

may be but watching it for the first time, almost in a state of disbelief, I found those tantalisingly few seconds of the living, breathing Vierne in action at the Notre Dame console profoundly affecting:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJKCaGha7nE>

Staying at Notre Dame but in complete contrast to the haunting serenity of Vierne's *Méditation* improvisation we come to a *Toccata* improvised by the late, great Pierre Cochereau for French TV some time around 1980. The sight and sound of Cochereau in action could be regarded as the very epitome of a *mad organist*, though he is in such complete command of what he's doing he even has time in mid-frenzy to whip off his spectacles about two minutes in without discernible disruption to the flow:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9bGjHQI5a8>

The organ at Notre Dame possesses a potential for aural terror quite unlike any other I've ever heard. Aided and abetted by Cochereau's fearless harmonies and the distorted sound track the cataclysmic final moments of this improvisation will either rank amongst the ugliest organ sounds you've ever heard, or the most demonically thrilling and ultimately ecstatic! It's no wonder Cochereau had to mop his face as the reverberation rolled away. Definitely one to watch!

Pietro Yon's evergreen *Toccatina for Flutes* could hardly be further removed in scale and mood from Cochereau's uninhibited excesses! This next historic video recommendation is not of a performance of that delightful little lollipop however, but some fascinating footage from a 1930 newsreel of the Italian-born composer himself playing the newly installed Kilgen organ in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York where he was appointed Music Director in 1928 having first served as the Assistant Organist for the previous two years. He remained in that post until he suffered a massive stroke in April 1943 from which he never fully recovered, dying in November of that same year aged 57. The soundtrack (and the singing!) on the video is pretty dire in quality but the sight of Yon enjoying his own touch of *mad organist* frenzy towards the end of the clip is worth waiting for:



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvD_Qw4-LkI

One of the most remarkable 'historic' offerings I've found on YouTube is also something of a technical marvel. Silent film shot in 1914 of Camille Saint-Saëns playing his *Valse Mignonne* has been so convincingly synchronised with the audio recording the composer made of the same piece in 1919 it's hard to believe footage and soundtrack were made five years apart. To see and hear a renowned composer born in 1835 (*i.e.* just eight years after the death of Beethoven and fourteen before that of Chopin!) playing one of his own piano works is truly a thing of wonder:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MA1ffxiCOU8>

The YouTube provider of this particular treasure, *Jack Gibbons* has quite a number of similarly priceless

historical gems on his channel including this next, equally successful marriage of silent film synchronised with an audio recording of a different date. Thus, we can now watch and hear Percy Grainger playing with breath-taking virtuosic ease his own piano arrangements of *Maguire's Kick* and *Shepherd's Hey*. Marvellous!



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA8vjC5v_o0

Staying with virtuosic piano playing and the *Jack Gibbons* channel I can't resist recommending this spellbinding footage of George Gershwin showing the world how to play his own *I Got Rhythm* with all the rhythmic panache you could wish for. It's all over far too quickly but *Jack Gibbons* graciously supplies an immediate reprise courtesy of two further camera angles of the same performance. If you're anything like me though, this is a performance you'll come back to more than once:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQdeTbUDCiw>

I do hope you will take the time to follow up some, if not all of these recommendations and find a deal of enjoyment in them. There is so much more precious historical musical fare to be unearthed out there on YouTube and I'd be intrigued to learn of your own discoveries. In the meantime, I'll leave you with one last irresistible but very different example of virtuoso piano playing. I was introduced to the art of Charlie Kunz many years ago when I heard Richard Ingrams on the radio declaring his forlorn dream of one day being able to play like Kunz. It all sounds so effortless, elegant, exquisitely nuanced, and blissfully easy on the ear. But such gifted, unerring artistry is bestowed on so few. Thank goodness for the recordings. Sit back and let sweet contentment slide over you...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCDEsK9opQk>

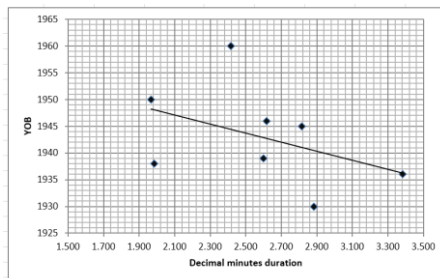
Martin J. Cottam

HOW FAST?

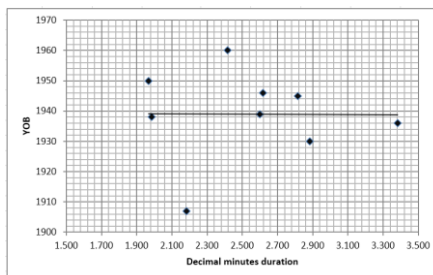


Eleven years ago I attended, as an observer, a Masterclass in Cambridge on the *Orgelbuchlein*, led by Margaret Philips who stood in for Lionel Rogg at short notice as he was advised not to travel. I was particularly interested in *Ich ruf zu dir* which was one of the first pieces I ever played on the organ with pedals, as the pedal line looked straightforward. I was quite shocked at the fast tempo which all the young students took it. I had always regarded it as a prayerful and contemplative piece and that the tempo should reflect both this and allow the subtleties of the inner parts to show through (and of course to make it easier for me to play). I thought it must be me getting old and perhaps the fast tempo was a trend being set by younger performers. I found as many duration indications as I could from my CD's and from iTunes.

I drew a graph (fig 1) which seemed to bear this out – there was a clear best fit tendency to faster performance with more recent year of birth of the performer. I was quite pleased to see that my personal duration coincided with that of Anne Page, although later discussing it with her she told me I had underestimated her age!



Then I remembered Helmut Walcha, well known for his speedy renditions. It had been his recordings of the Trio Sonatas on the *Archiv* label back in the early sixties that first drew me to discover how wonderful the organ could be. I put his timing on my Excel sheet and the result was figure 2. A horizontal line. My theory was quite undermined!



Stephen Taylor

THE COBBE COLLECTION

Our first real outing since lockdown found us not far from Guildford at Hatchlands Park which is home to an amazing collection of keyboard instruments; virginals, harpsichords, spinets, clavichords, pianos and organs.

Most of the instruments have an enviable history having been owned by members of royal families and great musicians, Mozart, Chopin, Liszt, Elgar, Mahler, JC Bach, Haydn, Bizet.

The oldest instrument in the collection is a 1622 harpsichord by Girolamo Zenti (below) who made harpsichords for the Medici in Florence also producing instruments for Louis XIV and Charles II.



The earliest organ in the collection is a 1759 Snetzler made for John Webb from Warwickshire (see image over the page). Snetzler was Swiss by origin but emigrated to London where his work was patronised by Handel.



The only other organ in the collection is a three manual and pedals 1903 JW Walker which was commissioned by Lord Rendel (1834-1913) for the music room at Hatchlands. This instrument is played daily for the entertainment of visitors who either sit and listen in the music room or just wander about; a bit like Norwich Cathedral!! A competent lady organist was putting it through its paces when we were there, playing the sort of music Lord Rendel might have enjoyed. There is currently an appeal underway for a complete restoration of this instrument the specification of which can be seen by visiting the Hatchlands Park website – www.cobbecollection.co.uk

The most recent and only upright instrument in the collection is an 1886 Italian Piano which had once been on loan to Liszt. One curiosity is the extremely rare combination of a piano and composing table made by Roller of Paris in 1855 for the French composer Fromental Halévy whose daughter married Bizet who composed major

works including *Carmen* on it.

There are three pianos which were used by Chopin; and 1843 Erard owned by Jane Stirling, a pupil of Chopin, an 1847 Broadwood used by Chopin for his English recitals and Chopin's own piano an 1848 Pleyel, that composer's preferred maker. Owned by both Schubert and Beethoven is an 1818/20 Conrad Graf Quadruple Strung grand piano. Graf pianos were also owned by Schumann, Liszt and Mahler.

Elgar, whose father ran a piano business in Worcester with his uncle, is represented by an 1844 Broadwood square piano, the soundboard of which is inscribed by Elgar with the names of some of the works he composed on it. There are six other square pianos in the collection, one of which, a 1787 Erard, once owned by Marie Antoinette.

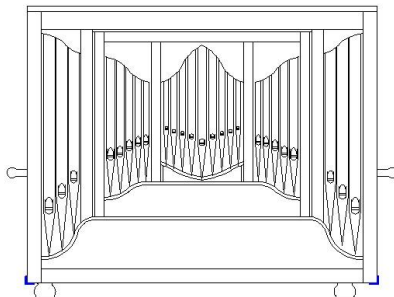
If you were to spend half a day looking through this unique instrument collection then you could easily spend the other half looking at the seventy or so portraits and prints of musicians, many familiar names and some (at least to me) unheard of. Did you know, for example, that there was a Moravian composer by the name of Gottfried Finger c. 1660-1730?

This place is certainly somewhere for any keyboard player to visit, or dare I suggest, a must!

Ronald Watson

THE 2021 HANDEL II CONTINUO ORGAN

by **Bower & Company**



The six stops

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Stopped Diapason</i> | 8 |
| <i>Rohrflute</i> | 4 |
| <i>Principal</i> | 2 |
| <i>Cornet II</i> (from mid C) | 2 2/3, 1 3/5 |
| <i>Octave</i> (conical) | 1 |
| <i>Regal</i> | 8 |

(divided at mid C bass/treble)

Shifting Movement pedal when depressed cancels 2, II, 1 & Regal to allow echo effects in such as cornet and similar voluntaries.

Keyboard can transpose down a semitone to give A = 415 pitch.

Way back in 1985 Richard Bower & Philip Carriage built the 'Handel' Continuo Box organ; that of course to mark the Tercentenary of Handel (and Bach's) birth.

It was our showpiece and our loan/hire organ and did service in

churches including Cromer whilst we rebuilt their organ. Eventually following a lead from Canon Colin Beswick we sold it to Overbury Parish Church near Pershore. Its best hiring came alas after I had agreed its sale – with the BBC who had it at Maida Vale studios for recording/broadcasts, the most notable of which was *A Short Walk to Venice* played by Michael Steer and which went out on Radio 3 in 1988 (and he kindly agreed for the recordings to be on www.bowerorgans.co.uk where they can still be heard).



Handel I in 1985

Filing Overbury in our system became slightly confused for in the same period we also built a house organ for Michael Overbury, one which he still plays every day and which recently featured on the Nottinghamshire Organists Association on line recital; if you look on line at their November 2020 recital part 2 at 23½ minutes in you will hear Mr Overbury immaculately playing the first

movement of the Bach Eb Trio Sonata on it.

For years I lamented the sale of the Handel organ and in the 1990s I began to plan another. Derek Jones made the internal pipework and Philip Carriage the stopped diapason. In the same period Laukhuff, Europe's largest supplier of parts to the trade (and tragically recently no more), had a clearance sale of speciality stops they had made and I purchased a Regal 8ft with resonators made of Olivewood, a timber which was our house style for our keyboard natural key covers.

Time and money didn't come on hand to fulfil the project at that time and it wasn't until lockdown that I revived and redrew the project and offered to exhibit it at the IBO (Institute of British Organ Building) exhibition at the recent Three Choirs Festival in Worcester.

Handel II has a more exquisite case than Handel I (which was cast in the open plain box format). It is formally cased with a facade that is inspired by the 'ancient' seventeenth century organ that I acquired from Finchcocks when the collection was sold. Philip used the lockdown to hone his cabinet making skills and hand craft the linenfold panels that grace the sides of the organ. The keyboard natural covers are not of Olivewood (as 30+ years on it had worn quite badly on some of the organs). Rather we used Pearwood and cut and fitted the

covers from the timber of a tree that grew on the premises and fell down a few years back.



Handel II

Tonally Handel II is as versatile as its predecessor but the specification is slightly less forceful. Instead of a Mixture there is a 1ft and instead of a Principal 4ft (from tenor C) there is the Regal. There is a cornet 12/17 from middle C and the Regal is divided treble and bass (the stop knobs divided in half so either part or both can be drawn). Finally there is the shifting movement – whilst the pedal is depressed the 2', 1', 12th & 17th and Regal cease to sound even if drawn. This makes 'echo' passages simple and delightful and makes 18th century music in particular a delight to play (and verse anthems easy to accompany). For the serious minded the keyboard will transpose to Baroque pitch A 415 (though unlike Handel I which had a low B pipe on

each rank for this occasion; here the CC key will become defunct).

There is an internal wind control presently set to 58mm W G. and wind comes from the separately cased (Discus Wren) blower at the treble end. The present temperament is the Handel Temperament as presented in Choir & Organ Magazine last year by Colin Pykett.

The organ can be available for hire.

Richard Bower

IS THIS IT?



A Norwich-based friend of mine would love to know the identity and location of the organ in the accompanying photograph. He thinks it was taken some time around the late 1950s/early 1960s. It shows his mother, Audrey Cooper who was a pupil of Heathcote Statham and, though never a professional organist, used to accompany services for the WI in the cathedral amongst other playing duties and activities. My friend thinks the organ in the photograph was

almost certainly situated somewhere in Norfolk. With its stop tabs the console is of a fairly distinctive design so may just be easily recognisable to some of you. The lancet window in the background may also give a clue to the location.

Does the photograph spark any memories? If any of you can identify the organ with a reasonable degree of certainty do, please let me know (martin@cottam.eclipse.co.uk) and I'll pass the information on to my friend.

Martin J. Cottam

COULD BE!

I think the organ Martin is asking about is St. Mary's Baptist Church in Norwich (now Norwich Central Baptist Church). The Church was destroyed in WW2 and the organ in the new building (still *in situ*) was put in when the Church was rebuilt in about 1954.

Tim Patient

OBITUARY REV. JONATHAN BOSTON (1940-2021)

Many of you will have heard of the sad death of Jonathan Boston on 13th June. He was diagnosed with lung cancer shortly before he died of complications. It was a diagnosis that shocked him, never having smoked in his life, he was one of the 5% who get the disease without lighting up he told

me. He was apprehensive about the Chemo, but after his first dose he said he had no bad effects and was quite chipper.

Jonathan was known to many in the NOA after serving for many years as one of the Norwich Diocese Organ Advisers. I knew him as the vicar of Litcham, and he was the first person I met when we moved to Norfolk in January 2003. It was on the day that we arrived and were walking around boxes and looking at the wreck of a house we had bought called The Old Rectory – you might say we were living in his Living – that he knocked on the door and said “I gather you are an organist”. From there a firm friendship developed and we found that we had many friends in common. I wasn't playing anywhere after the move with so much work to be done on the house, but he did persuade me to play the organ occasionally at Litcham PC for choral Evensong for his boys' choir. He loved his Psalms and I was given strange chants and pointing from his Ely days to play; all of the Psalms for the Evening of course.

He was often to be found at our house, or the house of friends, he always had time for people, and of course, accompanied visits with his favourite tippie – whisky, gin or wine!!

He became a regular at the King's Lynn lunchtime organ recitals, occasionally sang for the Minster choir, but always joined us to sing on our cathedral

visits. I remember long journeys travelling the country with him in the front seat regaling the passengers with various stories of organs, organists and choirmasters we have loved. Not to mention his love of Land Rovers and things mechanical.

He was very much one-of-a-kind, something many people have said to me since his death. He will be sorely missed by many and the CofE has one fewer to hold it accountable.

Adrian Richards



In the gardens of the Old Rectory, Litcham

MORE THAN AN ACQUAINTANCE

Rev Jonathan Boston has always been on the fringe of my organ building life. When I first visited

Drayton Railway station and met the brothers E & W Storr, they had a little organ in there being repaired which belonged to one Rev Boston; that was a strange little organ the like of which I hadn't seen before. It must have been 1969 and it was a meeting that led to my joining the firm and becoming an organ builder. Soon after then, when I was the boy on the job we met this parson again for he was Vicar of Horsham St Faith and was employing us to take the organ out of St Martin of Palace (near the Norwich law courts) and install it in St Faith's. This involved also the taking of the old St Faith's organ to his other parish, Horsford, where much of the installation, on the floor in the North Aisle, was done by their churchwarden and parishioners. (The old Horsford organ by Hill went to Itteringham.)

Jonathan Boston was brought up in Dereham; his father Canon Noel Boston, Precentor of Norwich Cathedral and then Rector of Dereham. His bedroom window overlooked the churchyard. After, I believe, Norwich School [and an Ely Cathedral choirboy Ed.] he went to Ely Theological College and his inspiration was the Cathedral; he was founded in the Book of Common Prayer and the Cathedral Choral tradition; he believed in the old rigorous way of training boys' voices which he must have learned first-hand with Michael Howard before he was succeeded by Arthur Wills at Ely.



Rev JB in signature red waistcoat
© Litcham and All Saints' PCC

Following Curacy at Eaton he became Vicar of Horsham St Faith's and it soon became his *quasi*-Cathedral with full choral services; at least two of his young organists 'lived in' at the Rectory and became involved with every aspect of church life growing the choir alongside the scouts and later the 'singing commandos' – and the organ also grew (home-made style) to meet the choral demand. The room above the porch became the choir room full of choral scores and where Jonathan was to be found at the piano, training the boys before each service. (Such was repeated in the Tower at Litcham)

St Faith's was saddened by the loss of his wife Vivian but the reign continued for many more years. He became the last incumbent with the freehold of the (Horsford) Rectory and held on to that until he really had to leave as it had all the facilities he needed (including for scouts and Land Rovers). The house was sold of course.

Then came Litcham about which others will write, I am sure. Here he bought his own house where he created a music room; centre stage in it, surrounded by barrel organs and his collection of brass and woodwind [not to mention Racketts and a Serpent! Ed.] he placed the little three-stop organ. We again had it in the workshop for a while – without a pedalboard, later added – which was the pedalboard his father had acquired from the 1899 Norwich Cathedral Norman & Beard(!) and which was connected, and again when we returned the organ it was operated with string pull-downs from pedal end to key.

He was of course then Priest-in-charge of Litcham and rented the Rectory back to the diocese. Following his retirement, he continued living in Litcham; this despite unwritten traditions as he had his own house. He was for a long time Chaplain to various organisations including the Police and the Light Dragoon Guards and he was a true Norfolkman, sometimes found in the Norfolk Club

in Norwich or at the Royal Norfolk Show and sometimes in his local.

In case you can't remember meeting him, Jonathan invariably wore a red waistcoat.

I append an extract of a report I wrote on the St Faith's organ for the parish in 2016, one which led to the organ being sorted and put back into working order. Jonathan was of course also a Diocesan Organ Adviser!

HORSHAM St FAITH - Parish Church of St Mary

The Organ was built for St Martin at Palace Church in Norwich. Rev Gordon Paget, in *The church organs of the Diocese of Norwich*, puts that it was built by Corps in 1863; James Corps came from Reading but lived and worked in Norwich around 1844-1864 before moving to London. It is listed that Norman of Norman & Beard renovated it {and somewhere it says enlarged} in 1887. It is likely that the original Corps organ specification was **Great:** Open Diapason Stopped Diapason Bass, Clarabella, Keraulophon, Principal, Fifteenth. **Swell:** Open Diapason, Stopt Diapason, Principal. (Of tenor c compass) **Pedal:** Bourdon.

E W Norman is likely to have added the Swell Hautboy and the Great Flute, both of which are on 'Clamps', extension pieces added to the front of each sound board. It is likely that he

either completed the Bourdon from 12 notes to full compass or else made the whole stop. He may have also added/completed the Swell to full compass and added the swell stopped bass outside of the swellbox.

My connection starts in 1970s when I helped E & W Storr, whom I had joined, move the organ into Horsham St Faith's. We then added the Pedal Principal 8 to complete the side casing, and extended it to 5 1/3 and 4ft Pedal Fifteenth. At the same time, we added the Terzian, I now deduce in place of the Swell Diapason. The latter I believe was paid for and the scheme masterminded by the Vicar, Rev J.B. Boston, who was also the Diocesan Organ Adviser; he was actively 'growing' the church choir of boys and men and needing a better organ to support the singing. Later on he, and his organist carried out more alterations themselves adding the various desirable extras in home spun manner; these are: the addition of a second clamp to the back of the swell carrying the re-sited Hautboy, and additional second-hand stops, Piccolo 2ft and Salicional 8ft. A Celestina 4ft was added where the Hautboy formerly was. As all of these only had wind from tenor C the completions to bottom C were made using direct electric action and simple hardwired electrical switching. The churches 'hometeam' then crowned the organ with a higher-pressure Trumpet rank, using a stop which I think we sold to them which we had taken from an

interesting organ made redundant by Hempnall church. The Trumpet they made available on Swell, Great and Pedal, and also as a clarion 4ft on the Great and extended to a Trombone (with half-length bass) on the pedal.

The 'hometeam's' final additions were both the Resultant 32ft, derived solely with electrical wiring from the bourdon [but effective] and the 'upperwork', extreme, but clever to say the least. The Harmonics V ranks of the swell is on a small electric actioned box screwed above the other pipes in the swellbox with a battery of second-hand small pipes of various pitches wired to recur at every octave. It is actually amazingly effective. The Mixture on the Great is less successful and replaces the flute (which I suggest may have been placed on the clamp by E W Norman). The flute was an obstruction to the tuner as the clamp impinges onto the narrow access board between Swell and Great. The Mixture is so small that it is perhaps less of an obstruction, but its smallness and lack of any quality renders it as a high-pitched screech.

The organ is an abnormal instrument, one which makes an impressive mark and enhances worship and leads singing in a way which the original Corps organ would not have been heard.

Richard Bower

RECITALS

**NORWICH CATHEDRAL
SUMMER EVENING RECITAL SERIES
THURSDAYS at 7.30pm**
(no ticket required)

Members wishing to be kept updated about organ concerts at Norwich Cathedral can join the organ recitals e-mail list by contacting Tracy Bigwood: music@cathedral.org.uk

September 16 George Inscoe
October 21 Ashley Grote
November 18 David Dunnett

KING'S LYNN MINSTER
Tuesday Lunchtime 12:30pm
Free admission, retiring collection
BIG screen: no Café until further notice

7 September David Shepherd
14 September Peter Godden
21 September David Hill
28 September Adrian Richards
5 October Norfolk Organists' Association

ST ANDREW'S HALL, NORWICH
1.10 to 2pm
All tickets £5 on the door

6 September Peter O'Connor
13 September Daniel Justin

FOR SALE

Large collection of organ and choral sheet music for sale, over 1,000 pieces, probably nearer 2,000! Vintage and modern scores, including many 19th-Century French copies, mostly in good or very good condition (even the worst items all readable and usable). A whole Bach collection, and something from just about every well-known composer, as well as many albums with a mixture of pieces. Choral music includes albums such as Carols for Choirs, Flexible Anthems, Oxford New Easy Anthems, Tudor Anthems etc. Many 'last verse' books.

Available for collection from Harleston on the Norfolk/Suffolk border. £200, but open to offers. This really is a lifetime music collection, so is a great deal compared to the sum of each item individually!

Jonathan Palman
07790 189263

FOR SALE



A nearly new, very little used, KAWAI PIANO. 7 octaves and 3 pedals, black case. Piano stool included. £3000.
Bryan Ellum - 01362 668156

FOR SALE



WYVERN C3, c.20years old, early digital. In excellent condition and good working order. £Offers
Bryan Ellum - 01362 668156

FOR SALE



Desmond Swinburn's pipe organ.

If anyone is interested, contact me and I can arrange for them to see it.

Ros Walland
01603-393919



Norfolk Organists' Association

The art of music as related to the organ



EVENTS

Saturday 18th September, 2.00pm

Talk by Phillip Norman

Bach and Handel: a Fair Match at St Cuthbert's, Norwich

Tuesday 5th October, 12:30pm

NOA recital at King's Lynn Minster, played by James Lally and Henry Macey

Saturday 23rd October, 2pm

Desert Island Discs at St Andrew's Church, Eaton (moved from May)

Castaway: Margaret Smith

Wednesday 24th November, 5:30pm

Opportunity to **Play Norwich Cathedral organ** after Evensong

Saturday 8th January, 7pm

Quiz 'n' Chips at 19.00 at Holy Trinity Church, Essex Street, Norwich NR2 2BJ

Hosts: Pam and Jeremy Worth

Charge for the meal £8

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.

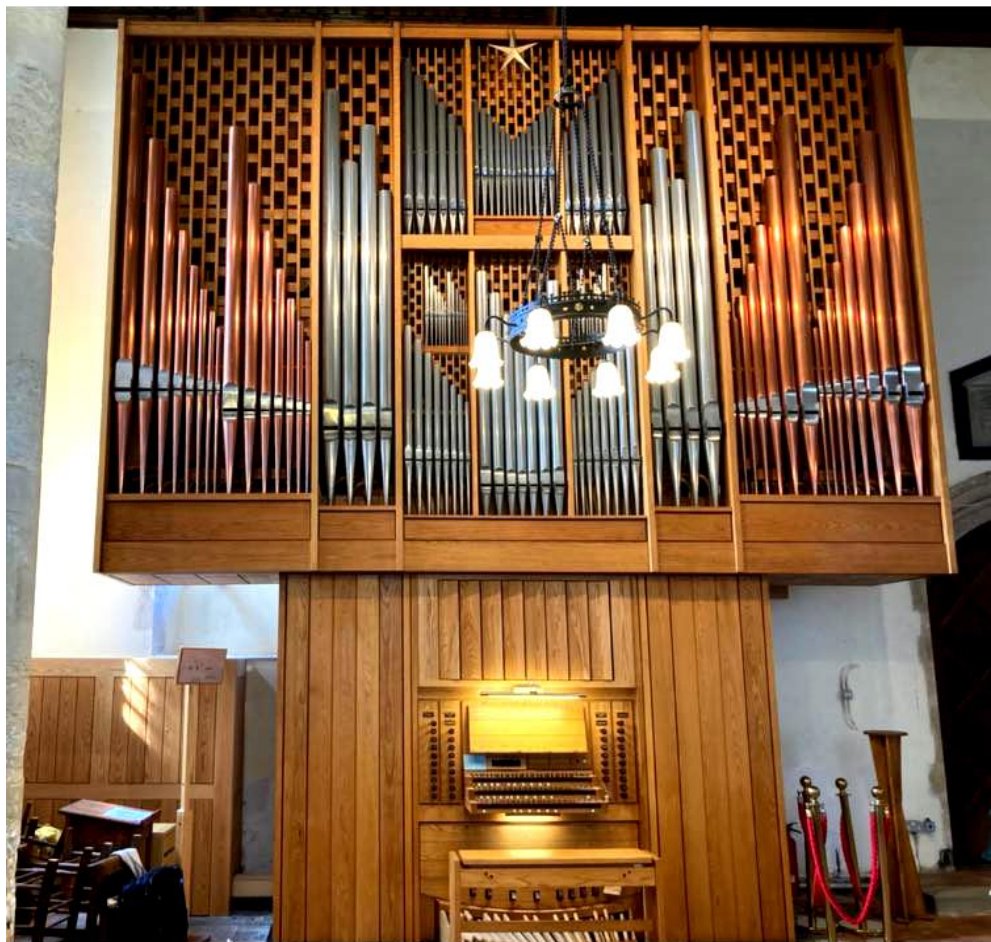
Please let Elinor Hanton know if you would like to do a write-up of an event.

elinor.hanton@btinternet.com. 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



Collins Organ, St. Bartholomew's Church, Orford, Suffolk
(photo: Michael Flatman)

