

Norfolk Organists' Association The art of music as related to the organ

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Front Cover
Alfred Hunter/Richard Bower organ at St Mary Happisburgh

Back Cover St Mary Snettisham

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Notes from the Editor

A late New Year's resolution for me was to get to more organ recitals - there are plenty in our county on very fine instruments. However, life intervened and I have only managed to get to handful so far this year. It was particularly interesting to hear the same recitalist (Robbie Carroll) on two quite different organs (St Mary Happisburgh and Thorpe St Andrew). Pieces from the baroque repertoire, which made up more than half the recital, worked very well on the Happisburgh organ (see p. 8 for the specification) whereas the Thorpe St Andrew was much more effective with a largely post-1850 selection requiring a fuller sound.

I hope that a move to May from the usual August slot for the

Thorpe St Andrew series proved successful - their secret seems to be a group of excellent recitalists and a good lunch!

The well-attended International Organ Day event in North Norfolk in April (see pp. 13-15) owes much to the efforts of Adrian Flower and his colleagues at Heacham. It is only to be hoped that one or two players will be tempted to come forward and fill empty organ benches. I was able to contribute a couple of Orgelkids workshops for Heacham junior schools on the preceding Friday - again, one never knows if seeds are planted for the future.

The Young Organists' Platform at Aylsham is coming up shortly (p. 18) - please support these talented youngsters.

This issue of the Journal has been somewhat late in production with rather a full content so news of the President's Day at Gressenhall will appear in the next issue. Lately arrived in my mailbox is the latest Fugue State Films offering - The Great Toccata - which will be reviewed in the Autumn issue.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND EVENT

HAPPISIBURGH

SATURDAY 6 APRIL 2024

Our 2024 A.G.M was held on Saturday 6th April at 11.00 in St. Mary the Virgin Church, in the coastal village of Happisburgh. We were welcomed by the Revd Coryn Stanforth who is the rector of the Norfolk Coastal Group of Villages.

After the business of the meeting was concluded, David Berwick gave us a comprehensive talk on the history of the church (see pages 3-4).

This was followed by a talk by Richard Bower on the history and restoration the organ (see pages 5-8).

After lunch we were entertained by a short recital given by Matthew Bond, David Berwick and Tim Patient.

Pieces we heard were:-

Johann Gottfried Walther -Concerto del Signor Meck in B Minor

- i. Allegro
- ii. Adagio
- iii. Allegro

Played by Matthew Bond

David Berwick - 'Courant and 'Galliard' from 'Four Tudor Dances for Organ'

Henry Purcell - Trumpet Tunes from 'King Arthur'

- i. Consort of Trumpets
- ii. Warlike Consort

Played by David Berwick

George Guest – Voluntary in C, Op.3 No.6

J.S.Bach – Christ ist erstanden (Christ is risen) BWV 627

Emma Lou Diemer – Fiesta

Played by Tim Patient.

After the recital members were invited to play the organ at an open console.

Michael Flatman

Brief History of St. Mary the Virgin Church, Happisburgh.

The presence of a church in Happisburgh is not recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086 but it is very likely that a church stood on or very near to the site of the present church during the Anglo- Saxon period. The first church would have been constructed of wood, only later being rebuilt in stone during the aftermath of the Norman Conquest. Today's church stands on a very prominent ridge and the 15th century 110-foot tower can be seen for miles around – in fact, on a clear day the top of Norwich Cathedral spire some 18 miles distant. can be seen from the top of St. Mary's tower which contains eight bells for change ringing and one extra for tolling before services. The current ringing chamber was installed in 2010 above a new kitchenette facility.

The nave and aisles are built of pebble flint, with knapped flint only present on the south wall demonstrating the effect was to make the south approach look more important than the north (back) of the building. The church overall is a delightful mixture of 14th and 15th century workmanship.

The font is a marvel of the stonecutters' art and dates from the early 15th century. The fact that the carved figures around the stem, (including wild men and lions) are placed under canopies



The imposing tower of St Mary Happisburgh from the West (Photo - Richard Bower)

probably makes this font unique. The font was almost certainly made in Norwich and at the time it would have cost a princely £12-15.

There is compelling architectural evidence that a building of some sort originally stood at the west end of south aisle, and it has been suggested that this could have been an anchorites' cell. A fine painting by Ladbrooke dating to 1824 shows both the east window of the southern aisle and the easternmost window in the southern wall in their present Perpendicular style with the other three windows having wooden tracery. In the northern wall of the chancel is a blocked clerestory of two windows of double lancet style. A walk around the exterior of the building shows signs of many windows and doors having been blocked off at some stage.

In 1821 a large wooden cross on top of the tower was struck by lightning which set it ablaze before it fell onto the nave roof causing it to also burn. The tower was repaired but the nave and south aisle were left open to the weather until they were

repaired in 1865. Services at this time were held in the chancel.

The Revd. Thomas Lloyd (1781-1814) has a special place in the history of the church for, after realising that the low number of baptismal services was due to the fact that the parents couldn't afford a party after the ceremony – organised a grand one-off party for the parish at his own expense. So it was on Whit Sunday 1793 that he baptised 170 people at the 15th century font. An amazing statistic.

On 27th October 1940 a German bomber dropped three bombs on the path in front of the south porch smashing all the windows on the south façade and wrecking a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in a niche over the door.

John Betjeman visited St. Mary's in the 1950s and couldn't stifle a great chuckle when he noticed the hilarious misalignment of the west window, the nave west arch and the nave roof – a rather special Norfolk curiosity!

David Berwick

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGAN AND ITS RESTORATION AT ST MARY, HAPPISBURGH

I first looked at the organ in 1975 and began to tune it regularly in 1985. In 1984 I wrote:

"I was impressed to find such a splendid and well made instrument but saddened by its indifferent nature and out of tune Oboe. It is a great shame that the prepared for stops were never added for these would give the organ the life it longs to have."

The then organist David Armstrong was successful in persuading Happisburgh PCC to complete the organ by adding the 'prepared for' stops and we added the Swell and Great mixtures and Swell Cornopean in 1990. The three stops were all new pipework (a total of 392 pipes) made by F Booth & Sons of Leeds. At the time it was the biggest transformation of an organ that I had undertaken. The completed organ had a lot of use from numerous recitalists and it began to show its age. The couplers and pedalboard were restored in 1992. The original pedalboard was probably replaced by Norman & Beard in 1900, when the organ was moved to Happisburgh.

Although the organ was attributed to Walker my suspicion was that this was incorrect and I initially opted for a late-period Holdich, based on several aspects of the internal layout and details of its construction. Knowing that Norman & Beard had worked on the organ at the beginning of the last century, I turned to the British Organ Achive (BOA) and received the following reply from David Wickens:

"The N&B job number for Happisburgh is 377. The N&B Order book indicates that the Happisburgh organ came from Emsworth [Hants] and was originally built by Hunter. Hunter did a lot of early work in the Portsmouth area."

The attribution of the organ to Walker came from Gordon Paget's book *Church organs in the Diocese of Norwich* in which he also notes that the organ was moved by Hill, Norman & Beard from the chancel to its present position in 1925.



The Happisburgh organ prior to the 2019 restoration.

An agreement was made with Happisburgh PCC in October 2018 to completely restore the organ and the project featured an article in the *Eastern Daily Press* of 18 May 2019.

Things come to light when an organ is completely dismantled and various inscriptions

confirmed the information from the BOA. For example, on the inside bass end of the Swell box:

"The organ cleaned and tuned by M Hunter and H Hirsh, February 10th to 15th 1890"

and, on the Swell box paper used by Norman & Beard:

"Cleaned and repalletted by Norman & Beard 1911"

and, perhaps the clincher, on the tenor c pipe of the Swell 15th we found *Emsworth*.

The Hunter organ as installed at Emsworth had one pedal stop - an 16' open diapason (wood) - see NPOR R01550. N&B added a bourdon later.

The 2019 restoration involved complete dismantling of the organ and removal of major components to our workshop at Weston Longville. Most of the pipework - particularly the larger pipes remained in the church during the restoration work. One of the most important parts to extract for repair was the reservoir, which lies at the



The building frame - bereft of all pipes, chests and action.

bottom of the organ. It could only be removed for releathering by removing all the pipes, both Great and Swell windchests and action, and then tilting the building frame backwards to allow the reservoir to be extricated. Once in the workshop the ageing leather was removed and replaced by new leather. Similarly the pallets of both Great and Swell windchests were releathered, as were the pedal chests. The mechanical key action was completely overhauled. One new addition to the specification - not even prepared for in the original 1877 scheme - was a new Great Trumpet, a gift of the estate of the late Miss Winifred Deane



The reservoir, Great and Swell windchests in the Weston Longville workshop after restoration.

whose father was vicar at Happisburgh in 1929. The longest resonators of the Trumpet pass through the Swell passage board.

The current specification of the Happisburgh organ is:

Pedal Key action TP Stop action Me C - fl Keys 30

I Open Diapason 16

2 Bourdon 16 (later addition)

Great Key action Tr Stop action Me Compass C - a3 Keys 58

3 Open Diapason 8 (stopped bass octave)

4 Stop Diapason 8 (shared bass)

5 Dulciana 8 (shared bass)

6 Gamba 8 (TC, probably replaced Clarinet)

7 Principal 4

8 Flute 4 (was 'Hohl Flute')

9 Twelfth 2 2/3

10 Fifteenth 2

II Mixture III (Bower)

12 Trumpet 8 (added 2019)

Swell Key action Tr Stop action Me Compass C - a3 Keys 58 Enclosed

13 Swell Double Diapason 16 TC

14 Swell Open Diapason 8



Great Trumpet resonators peeking through the Swell passage board.

15 Swell Lieblich Gedact 8

16 Swell Principal 4

17 Swell Fifteenth 2

18 Swell Mixture III (Bower)

19 Swell Cornopean 8 (Bower)

20 Swell Oboe 8 TC

Pedalboard: Parallel Concave

Couplers: Sw/Gt, Sw/Ped,

Gt/Ped

Lever Swell Pedal,

3 composition pedals to Gt,

2 composition pedals to Sw.

Richard Bower

DESERT ISLAND DISCS

SATURDAY, 18 MAY 2024

The Lecture Room, Rosebery Road Methodist Church, Norwich

Our annual Desert Island Discs proved, again, to be popular event. Our guest for 2024 was **Dr David Flood.** He joins a distinguished line-up of castaways despatched by NOA to the desert island; these have included David Dunnett, Ashley Grote, Arthur Wills, Francis Jackson, Canon Jeremy Haselock, Michael Nicholas and the previous Dean, The Very Revd. Dr Jane Hedges.

David Flood was Director of Music at Canterbury Cathedral from 1988 to 2020 and is now retired to Norfolk. Once cast away by Ron Watson, David outlined his life and career to date. He was born in Guildford and attended the Royal Grammar School. His first organist's post was at St Mary's Farnborough, thence to the RSCM College of St Nicholas studying under Lionel Dakers and Michael Fleming. Thence to St John's College Oxford as an Exhibitioner. Having achieved his PGCE at Clare

College Cambridge, David taught for a term at Eton. In 1978 he became assistant to Alan Wicks at Canterbury, and in 1986 became Organist and Master of the Choristers at Lincoln cathedral for two years.

Thereafter, David's music and narrative focussed on his considerable achievements at Canterbury over thirty years.

David pointed out that the Canterbury musical establishment was always "on show" be it to large congregations, Lambeth Conferences, Enthronements of Archbishops or throngs of visitors and pilgrims. He commissioned many new works from such as Sir James Macmillan and Alan Ridout, Ridout, a Canterbury composer, has rather receded from public attention in recent years but David spoke fondly of a fine setting of the Ash Wednesday Litany (in Common Worship text), which was sung beautifully in procession. He also spoke of successes in the BBC Radio 2 Chorister of the Year competitions.

It was always his intention to maintain a happy atmosphere in

running the cathedral's music. I recall from occasions when I played for visiting choirs at Canterbury, that at the bottom of the stairs up to the song-room stood a liberated road sign, reading, "Flood Warning". This David mentioned to much amusement!

David was responsible for the music at more Enthronements of Archbishops than any other Director of Music. He spoke of his conductorship of the Canterbury Choral Society with special mention of performances of St Matthew Passion.

The daily round of Choral Evensongs was the centre of his working life and this pervaded his comments during the afternoon. Like many, I was brought up to consider the Psalms as the kernel of Evensong and this he pleasingly endorsed.

With much justification, he spoke proudly of his achievements over his 32 year tenure at Canterbury. Boys were able to achieve things they never imagined. In order to extend opportunity to any boy with singing and musical ability to access the choir regardless of family background or financial

constraints, David established the "Cantoris Charitable Trust" in 1997, the 1400th anniversary of St Augustine's arrival in Canterbury.

The consultant for the splendid 'new' Henry Willis/ Mander/ Harrison organ was William McVicker and it was ready to be inaugurated in March 2020 when lockdown descended upon us all and the launch had to be postponed since nothing took place in the cathedral - or, indeed, anywhere else!

For full details of the organ, see NPOR N14638.

The usual 'Roy Plomley' questions followed. Should he be able to take only one disc, it would be the 'Evensong' recording. David reckons he is a practical man, able to fend for himself. (He has maintained his house in France for several years.) Apart from the Bible and Shakespeare, his choice of book would be Mozart's Letters.

His luxury would be a piano.

At the NOA Desert Island Discs, our castaway is asked an additional question, viz; "Another person, current or from history, has been washed up at the other end of the island and with whom you would be able to chat at length. Whom would you like to meet?" David chose Louis Vierne.

With the exception of the St Matthew Passion, all Dr Flood's choices were taken from his own commercial recordings made at Canterbury.

Anthem: Salvator Mundi ... Thomas Tallis (I)

Choir of Canterbury Cathedral

Final chorus of St Matthew Passion BWV 244 (2)

(Wir setzen uns mit Tränen nieder) ... J.S.Bach

St Thomas, Leipzig.

"Evensong" (selection)
Canterbury Cathedral Choir
(3)



Adrian Richards, Ron Watson and Dr David Flood

Introit: Call to Wisdom .. Will Todd; Responses ... Anthony Piccolo: Psalm 84

Miserere mei (Ps.51) ... Gregorio Allegri. Canterbury Cathedral Choir (4)

From David's first commercial recording upon returning to Canterbury in 1988,

Litany ... Alan Ridout Canterbury Cathedral Choir (5)

"Oh! Holy Night" ... Adolphe Adam Canterbury Cathedral Choir (6)

Kyrie (Messe solennelle Op. 16) ... Louis Vierne

Canterbury Cathedral Choir (7)

Magnificat (1982) ... Giles Swayne Canterbury Cathedral Choir (8)

The Association's thanks are due to this year's castaway for a most enjoyable event, and to Ron Watson for hosting yet again and preparing the interview. Thanks also to Tim Patient who always operates the sound system.

After the meeting, the assembled company of 24 members and friends were able to enjoy tea and home-made cakes provided and served by Melanie Macey and Ginny Plunkett.

Harry Macey

Dr Flood's Discs

Canterbury Cathedral CDs/downloads.

- (I) Canterbury CD entitled "Passion".
- (2) Canterbury CD entitled "Evensong".
- (3) Canterbury CD entitled "Sounds of Canterbury".
- (4) Canterbury CD entitled "Inspiration".
- (5) Canterbury CD entitled "Christmas Night".
- (6) Canterbury CD entitled "Gloria".

All the Canterbury CDs are available on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon Music etc. Otherwise perhaps via Cathedral Enterprises, Canterbury (the Cathedral Shop website).

INTERNATIONAL ORGAN DAY IN NORTH NORFOLK

SATURDAY, 20TH APRIL

International Organ Day 2024 was marked in Norfolk by a series of events in Heacham and the surrounding area. Due to the efforts of Adrian Flower, organist at Heacham Parish Church, and fellow organists Peter Murray and Andrew Pearson, six organs were opened up to allow anyone who wanted to 'have a go'. As noted in the

programme for the day, visiting six varied organs and fitting in a lunchtime recital (see below) between I I am and 4pm made it more of canter than a crawl. Nonetheless, twenty or more people showed up at each venue making the day a very successful outreach event.

The first venue was **St Nicholas**

The first venue was **St Nicholas Dersingham** which has a onemanual and pedal Forster &
Andrews organ dating from 1888
(NPOR N06217). This is a bold
sounding instrument for it's size
with its ten stops going up to a

two-rank mixture and a reed.

The next organ was at St Mary Snettisham and is located under an arch on the south side of the chancel with room to speak into a large sanctuary chapel at the rear as well. The 15-stop twomanual and pedal organ is by Alfred Kirkland (of London and Wakefield) dates from 1885 (NPOR N12560).



Dersingham



Snettisham

With lunchtime beckoning we all headed to **Heacham Parish Church** for an introduction to the organ that included a crowd-pleasing version of 'O Lord my God' which amply demonstrated how how an apparently staid church organ can sound like a schmalzy cinema organ (and, of course, the mightiest Wurlitzer can be made to sound like grand church organ).

The centrepiece of the day was a recital by Adrian Richards on the 1914 Spurden Rutt three-manual organ with later addition by Holmes and Swift in 1992 (NPOR D07946). The organ was originally built for

East Finchley Congregational Church in 1914 and transferred to Heacham in 1968.

Adrian offered a wonderfully diverse programme topped and tailed with substantial works by Karg-Elert (Nun Danket alle Gott) and Theodore Dubois (Toccata in G). One of J S Bach's arrangements of a Vivaldi Concerto (BWV 593) provided a centre of gravity, with lyrical John Ireland (Cavatina) and whimsical Gordon Nevin (Will O' the Wisp) alongside the stately William Wolstenhome (Allegratto) providing very accessible counterweights.



Heacham

The nave of the church was almost full, which is always a good sign for an organ recital.

The second part of the day started at **St Edmund Hunstanton** where Fr John
Bloomfield demonstrated a very nice Allen electronic organ. The church also has a 21-stop IIIP
Norman & Beard organ dating from 1890 (NPOR D01756) which lies unused and unplayable. Fr Bloomfield explained that it would be too expensive to restore.

At **St Mary Old Hunstanton,** in contrast, a 1936 Walker IIIP (NPOR P00506) harked back to a golden age with its horseshoeshaped console and imposing case by Sir Walter Tapper. The addition of a Rushworth &



Holme next the Sea



Old Hunstanton

Dreaper Tromba (ex St Peter Mancroft) to the original specification is something to be used in moderation as the effect was rather alarming to those of us standing nearby on the opposite side of the chancel.

Our last stop was at **Holme** next the **Sea** just in time for tea and cake. The 1895 IIP Walker of just six stops which had been a house organ prior to coming to the church in 1937 was an altogether more sedate instrument to round off the day.

David Shuker

TRANSCRIPTIONS

One has to tread very carefully when expressing an opinion about transcriptions. The arch-transcriber of Bach at the moment is the Icelandic pianist Vikingur Olafsson, probably the most prominent since Busoni. One could hardly get sniffy about any transcriptions of Bach be they orchestrations by Elgar and Leopold Stokowsky or The Swingle singers, given that Bach was quite a transcriber himself, most notably of Vivaldi.

I suppose we were all brought up with the idea that transcriptions for the organ by the likes of W T Best served the main purpose of bringing the great orchestral works to those who had no chance of hearing them by going to concerts or hearing decent recordings. Indeed recordings on 80 rpm then 78 rpm were only partially successful. I remember having a recording of Bach's E minor Prelude and Fugue (The Wedge) played by Fernando Germani, on two 78s, one for the prelude and one for the fugue, both of which had a pause built in to accommodate the turning over of the record. What a boon the LP turned out to be! It was something of a watershed moment to hear this prominent organist play the work live in Norwich Cathedral soon after I moved here.

Today the cost of attending live orchestral concerts is still a disincentive and hence the

opportunity to hear a full scale live orchestral is out of the reach of many. On the other hand the BBC broadcast fine recordings and live concerts of orchestral concerts both on radio and television and so the argument that people don't have the opportunity of hearing major orchestral works is no longer tenable.

I personally would rather hear a substantial orchestral work played by an orchestra than an albeit very clever and skilful transcription on an organ. Rather than bring familiar orchestral works into organ recitals why don't these organ virtuosi, (and you've got to be one to play these transcriptions), introduce the organ repertoire. There are so many neglected composers and neglected fine organ works out there. Will anyone be playing Stanford's Fantasia and Toccata in this year of his centenary?

But again, who am I to talk, having played no end of transcriptions for weddings and funerals, (haven't we all?), and why did I bother to write a transcription of Mendelssohn's War March of the Priests and Tchaikowsky's Andante Cantabile? Presumably because I thought they'd make effective organ pieces. However, I did refuse to transcribe a movement from Mozart's Clarinet Concerto for a dear friend's funeral and suggested they use a recording of the real thing which they duly did.

This was also partly due the fact that the organ in the church wasn't up to it. I am in no doubt that Anna Lapwood could have brought it off on a cathedral organ with lots of aids and appropriate stops and save the cost of hiring a professional clarinetist and

symphony orchestra for a ten minute slot.

But my bottom line remains. When I go to an organ recital I want to hear music written for the instrument and, goodness knows, there no shortage of it! Ron Watson



Organ Recitals 2024

Tuesday Lunchtime, 12:30pm
Free admission with retiring collection

6 August Simon Kirk Cambridge

13 August Mervyn Williams Organist and DoM, All Saints, Marlow.

20 August Prof David Baker Mytholmroyd

27 August Tim Patient Norwich

3 September David Flood Formerly organist, Canterbury Cathedral

10 September James Mooney-Dutton Norfolk

17 September Jonathan Chaddock King's Lynn

24 September Kayol Lam Leipzig

I October Adrian Richards King's Lynn Minster

Most recitals will be accompanied by a big screen

For more information see www.kingslynnminster.org our Facebook page and on www.organrecitals.uk





All the recitals will include something light hearted so come and enjoy our lovely church

RETIRING COLLECTION Proceeds after costs to St Nicholas "Room With A Loo" fund:

Cromer Parish Church Organ Recitals 2024

Tuesdays 8.00-9.00pm

The recitals are free - retiring collection

Tuesday 30th July - **Adam Chillingworth.** (Lincoln Cathedral)

Tuesday 6th August - **Tim Patient.** (Norwich)

Tuesday 13th August - **Elinor Hanton.** (organ scholar Lincoln College, Oxford)

Tuesday 20th August Cromer Carnival Concert (no organ recital)

Tuesday 27th August - **Richard Walker.** (Shrewsbury)

Tuesday 3rd September - Martin Holford. (Wells-next-the-sea)

Tuesday 10th September - **Miriam Reveley.** (organ scholar Jesus College, Cambridge)

VISIT TO SAN SEBASTIÁN AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY, SPAIN, OCTOBER 2024

Thank you to all of you who have signed up for the visit to San Sebastian, (for details please see the Spring 2024 edition of *The Journal*, page 19). I have only a very limited number of spaces left. If you would like to join us please contact me as soon as possible. I will accept bookings on a first come first served basis.

Many thanks.

Michael Flatman

Events Secretary



Norfolk Organists' Association

The art of music as related to the organ



Events

Saturday 3rd August 2024

Young Organists' Platform Concert

(A joint venture between Aylsham Church and the N.O.A.) at Aylsham Parish Church, Market Place Aylsham, NRII 6EH.

11 a.m. to 12 noon - Coffee Morning, followed by

12:15 p.m. to 1 p.m. Young Organists' Recital.

Saturday 21st September 2024

Fred Pratt Green: Methodist Hymn Writer

Talk by Ron Watson 2:00 p.m.

Lecture Room, Rosebery Road Methodist Church, Norwich, NR3 3AB

Saturday 12th October 2024

Masterclass On 18th Century English Organ Music

Anne Page (International recitalist and Professor at the Royal Academy of Music)

2:00 p.m.

St George's Church, Colgate, Norwich, NR3 IDA

