



Soundboard

The newsletter of the Nottingham & District Society of Organists

Est. 1932

January 2019

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Paul R Hale MA FRCO ARCM FGCM FRSCM FRSA

In this and the next issue of *Soundboard* I'm going to write about a method of organ construction which over the past century has had both its advocates and detractors at all levels of the organ world – players, designers and makers. This is 'the extension principle'.

Although most organbuilders from around 1900 used extended ranks on their Pedal organs – i.e. ranks of pipes drawing at more than one pitch, such as a Bourdon / Bass Flute / Octave Flute – applying the



extension system to manual ranks was first employed with enthusiasm in the United Kingdom by John Compton. Compton (1876-1957) had trained with Halmshaw in Birmingham before briefly working for Brindley & Foster of Sheffield in 1898. He then joined our old friend Charles Lloyd in Nottingham, equally briefly, before setting up in business in 1902 as 'Musson & Compton'. Two years later the partnership was dissolved and Compton traded in Nottingham under his own name before taking over August Gern's factory in Chiswick, London, in 1919.

In his Nottingham years Compton was busy in several counties, mainly with electric action rebuilds. The NPOR lists several Nottingham area contracts for new Comptons during this early period: St Mary Magdalene Hucknall, Watnall Road Church Hucknall, All Saints Huthwaite, All Souls Radford, Stapleford Baptist Church and Emmanuel Woodborough Road. John Compton pioneered reliable electric actions, switchgear and consoles, inspired by the work of Robert Hope-Jones. Most of these organs showed the Hope-Jones influence in stops names (plenty of Tibias, Violes and the occasional Tuba) but as they all used slider soundboards, the era of full extension was yet to come.

It arrived during the 1920s and flourished most after the famous Compton factory at Chase Road, North Acton was built in 1930 at the height of the cinema organ boom. This boom was led in the UK by Compton, whose high prices were possible because imported American Wurlitzers cost even more! Compton began making a range of small model organs on the extension principle, called 'Miniatura'. At the same time, several of his largest organs were built on the same principle, a leading example being in Downside Abbey. To understand the system and have a close look at one of the 'Miniatura' models, please look up an article of mine, on the internet <https://paulhale.org/articles/ph17-09.pdf> or in the September 2017 edition of *Organists' Review*.

Next time we will look at what the Walker firm was doing along similar lines, how that changed following the 'classical revival' of the 1950s, and how extension can be applied judiciously today.

NEXT MEETING

Saturday 16th February, 12.30pm for 1pm – Annual Lunch

Details overleaf



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Put them in your diary now!

Saturday 16th February, 12.30 for 1pm – Annual Lunch

Corinthian Restaurant, 25 Goldsmith Street, Nottingham.

Guest speaker: Mr. Andrew Reid, Managing Director of Messrs. Harrison & Harrison.

Cost per person £24, for three-course meal with coffee. Guests encouraged.

Saturday 16th March, 2.30pm – “Editor’s Choice”

St Barnabas’ Cathedral, Derby Road.

A presentation and demonstration by Robert Gower of some of his favourite editions.

Wednesday 10th April, 12.00pm – Visit to St Mary’s Parish Church, Melton Mowbray

View the large Walker organ recently rebuilt by Groves of Nottingham. Members’ cars.

Monday 20th May – Leeds

Visit to Terry Shires, organ pipe makers, in Leeds, in the company also of David Wood, organ builder, who will demonstrate various voicing tricks of the trade. Later, visit Leeds Roman Catholic Cathedral to attend Mass sung by the boys’ choir, and view and play organ rebuilt by Klais of Bonn.

This event is subject to final confirmation.

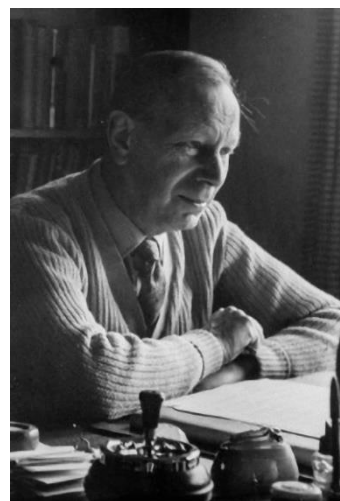
RECENT EVENTS

President’s Evening – 27th September

“From Temples to Synagogues and Cathedrals”

This is perhaps a curious title for a review of the President’s evening, held on a fine night at Halam Court – the context will unfold. For the first part of the evening Paul introduced his erstwhile choral colleague Guy Turner, who is the Archivist for the Eric Thiman Collection.

Eric Thiman was born in 1900; his father was a Jewish/Polish Congregational minister, so the young Eric would have been surrounded by an atmosphere of church life from birth. As he grew up he was a largely self-taught musician, although, for a time, he was also a pupil of Harold Darke. He served as Organist at Caterham Congregational Church, Elm Road Baptist Church in Beckenham, Park Chapel in Crouch End and finally, in 1957, he became Director of Music at the City Temple (Congregational) on Holborn Viaduct in central London. Along with Dr William McKie he quickly set about designing a new organ for the Temple Church, and this large three manual instrument was delivered in 1958 by J.W. Walker (<http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=A00747>). The later dedication label is shown:



Hymnody and choral singing were very important to Eric and, with his associate Dr. Eric Routley, they edited the Congregational Praise hymnbook of 1951 which generally survived until 1991 (following the mid-1970s merger between the Congregational Church of England and Wales with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland), when the URC produced “Rejoice and Sing”.

Eric composed over 120 shorter organ pieces and much choral music which is still used, mainly in Non-Conformist churches. His anthems are tuneful, accessible and, at times, demanding, and are frequently found in the Festival programmes of the FCCU (Free Church Choral Union, of which David Gabe is a committee member). Guy told us that, following Eric’s death, his niece donated much music found in the loft of his house to enable a national collection to be set up in his memory. This is now housed at Southwell, and is open for research and loans to perpetuate Eric’s legacy. The collection is not complete, and the Patrons/Archivist would be interested to hear of other copies/sets which may not be represented already.

Guy provided music copies to study and complement his demonstration tracks of both organ and choral pieces (we were reminded that recordings of Eric’s music are available on a CD from the Collection, and it also appears on other commercially available recordings). We heard a recovered recording of Eric playing his own *March for a Pageant* on the Temple organ, and live music was provided by Guy singing the song *Madonna and child* accompanied by Paul. Eric died in 1975. This part of the evening reminded us of the wealth of music which is available for us to explore – watch out for the harmonic twists!

At this point we had an interval and were treated to an excellent buffet by Paul, brought up from the neighbouring pub, The Waggon.

Suitably refreshed, we reconvened to hear and watch Paul’s presentation on the development and installation of the new organ in Manchester Cathedral.

We were told of the history of the previous instruments, both on and off the screen, and of the preparatory fund raising towards the £2million target. Having raised about £500,000, the Dean was approached by a gentleman expressing an interest in the new organ, and after some discussion (and dining) he agreed to fund the project. When asked by the Dean if he worshipped at the Cathedral, the gentleman replied “No, but at the nearby Synagogue”. From that point the instrument became a reality, funded by the Stoller Charitable Trust.

We were shown many photos of the components being built in the Tickell workshop, and of their later installation on the screen. The nave has its own main case facade with a Positive case below, whilst the chancel has a different facade design with the Choir division in a “chair” case. The pipe shades are cut with ecclesiastical texts. The Solo reeds and large Pedal pipes from the previous organ have been retained, the latter being opened up in the Jesus Chapel on the north side. The photos showed how much gleaming pipework was fitted into the screen cases, and also how tight is the access for maintenance and tuning.

The pipework and blowers came from several different sources across Europe; the whole was united in the striking casework starting in late 2016, being handed over in April 2017 with a private recital by Christopher Stokes. There are 81 speaking stops with a multiplicity of couplers and playing aids.

The organ is played from a tracker action console on the screen, and a mobile, terraced console has been provided for Nave use. More details of the instrument can be found in an article by William McVicker (a former chorister at the Cathedral) in OR (June 2017) or in Choir and Organ (Sept/Oct 2017).

As has been reported elsewhere, Ken Tickell himself died suddenly in 2014 and the project was carried on by his widow and remaining staff, with Paul as Consultant. The firm has now closed so this instrument has proved to be a very worthy swansong for them and a triumph for the whole team.

Thank you, Paul and Guy, for a very informative evening covering a range of subjects, and David, for your hospitality.

Michael Anthony

Outing to Cheltenham and Tewkesbury – 3rd October

The first NDSO outing of the 2018/19 season was an excursion to the fringe of Three Choirs territory: Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. A comfortable ride on our spacious coach took us first of all to Dean Close School, Cheltenham, where we were warmly welcomed by Simon Bell (Director of Choral Music & Organist) and Jack Stone (who needs no introduction) and taken to the Chapel to make the acquaintance of the school's 3 manual organ, newly built by Nicholson of nearby Malvern in 2014. Dean Close - founded in the C of E's Evangelical tradition - is evidently very proud of its ongoing tradition of corporate hymn singing (sadly, not always so nowadays in comparable schools), which would have been a major consideration in drawing up the specification, featuring a Solo rather than a Choir as the third manual, including a very impressive Bombarde. The organ's expressive capabilities and dynamic range were clearly revealed in Simon's impeccable performance of Howells' *Master Tallis's Testament*, after which members were invited to sample the possibilities afforded by this fine instrument for themselves.



Onward to Tewkesbury...free time for lunch in the characterful town centre before assembling in the glorious Abbey church to be introduced to its two very famous organs. Elevated above the south side of the quire stands the Milton organ (so called on account of having been played by the poet John Milton) which has a long, fascinating and well-documented history. It was built by Robert Dallam for Magdalen College Oxford in 1631 and found its way (via Hampton Court Palace) to Tewkesbury in 1736. Subsequent enlargements and tonal alterations (notably by Father Willis quite early in his career) over the centuries culminated in the 5 manual organ by

J.W. Walker in 1948. Its current manifestation is substantially the work of Kenneth Jones (1997) though quite substantial and largely remedial work was carried out last year by Nicholson. In addition to explaining the mechanical complexities involved in fitting 68 stops (now spread over 4 manuals, three of which have mechanical action) in quite a confined space (excepting the pipes placed in the lofty and remote Apse), Simon treated us to a spell-binding improvisation, enabling us to appreciate this superb instrument in its outstanding acoustic, before allowing us to ascend the somewhat intimidating staircase to try it for ourselves.

The "Grove" organ tucked away in the north transept is another remarkable instrument. Built by Michell and Thynne for the London Inventions Exhibition of 1886 and presented to the Abbey the following year by Revd C. W. Grove, it set out to demonstrate many tonal and mechanical features of late 19th century organ building (not all of which have stood the test of time!) and has no casework of any description; presumably so that the entrails are laid bare for the edification of patrons of the exhibition. Three types of action are employed; the movements of the Barker lever action on the Great are intriguingly visible as the organ is played, as it was so beautifully for us by David Butterworth in Parry's *G major Fantasia*, thereby fulfilling David's long-held desire to play this organ. Visually, not a thing of beauty - unlike the Milton - but fascinating in so many ways. (It is said that, in 1948, J. W. Walker would have liked to make both instruments - eight manual divisions in all! - playable from the same console...an extraordinary insight into the mindset of pre-Festival Hall organ builders, maybe?)

Thanks are due to Paul Hale, to Denis Littleton and particularly to Simon Bell - generously making time for us in an inevitably busy schedule at both school and Abbey - for such an enjoyable and instructive day.

Roger Harrison

Malcolm Riley – The Life and Work of Percy Whitlock – 10th November



A small but appreciative audience welcomed Malcolm Riley to St John's, Carrington to present a fascinating review of the life and work of Percy Whitlock (1903-1946). Malcolm has dedicated some 40 years to the research and promotion of Percy Whitlock, an eclectic musician who might otherwise have fallen into obscurity. His colleagues in The Percy Whitlock Trust (including local members Robert Gower and our President Paul Hale) have also played their part. Malcolm brought items from the Whitlock archive – diaries, programmes, recordings, music and photographs – and acknowledged the support of his wife, Melanie.

Whitlock started his musical life as a chorister at Rochester Cathedral, progressing to the GSM at 14 and the RCM at 16, studying under Stanford and RVW, subsequently returning to Rochester (1921-30) as Assistant to Hylton Stewart. He composed choral works during this period – some reflecting on the losses of The Great War - and Malcolm played extracts from archive recordings. In 1928 he was diagnosed with TB. He recovered and subsequently became organist at St Stephen's, Bournemouth (3/41 Hill) and the Bournemouth Pavilion (large 4m Compton), during which time he composed some of his best organ music. Perhaps this 'light music style' – popular at the time – was responsible for him going somewhat 'out of fashion' in the 60's and 70's. Whitlock's more popular works – the *Five Short Pieces*, *Four Extemporisations* and the *Plymouth Suite* – have probably always been in our music libraries, and more recently the *Sonata* has enjoyed a renaissance. In my collection I have an original 1937 OUP edition of the *Sonata* from the library of the organist Harold Rhodes – coincidentally another RCM pupil of Stanford. Becoming out-of-print in 1955, the *Sonata* was re-published with corrections under the scholarship of Malcolm Riley by Basil Ramsey and The Percy Whitlock Trust. Without hesitation the *Sonata* would be on my 'Desert Island' list.

Why has Whitlock come back into favour? Certainly the work of the Trust – re-issuing out-of-print editions – and Malcolm's three books have provided the driving force for this. However, listening to Malcolm, we heard how Whitlock embraced musical friendships across many genres. Quite apart from the mainstays of English music - remarkably he worked with the diversity of Igor Stravinsky and Billy Mayerl during the Bournemouth years - he even transcribed Mayerl's popular '*Marigold*' for the Compton. He worked with the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra and featured in BBC broadcasts.

Whitlock's health issues precluded war service but his premature death in 1946 left many of us wondering what other organ and choral works might have flowed from the pen of this performer / composer. Whitlock's widow, Edna, survived him by 47 years. She lived in comparative poverty, partially due to the period when Percy's works became 'out of print'. The re-publishing of Percy's works helped her – copyright for the *Sonata* being transferred from OUP to Edna in 1980. The Trust closed in 2017, 70 years after Percy's death, on the expiry of copyright on his compositions, its work to re-establish Whitlock largely complete.

Nigel Day

Wicked Words

"The basic test of a police force is that it should arrest more criminals than it employs"

Sir Robert Mark

"Somebody's boring me. I think it's me."

Dylan Thomas

Memories of the Denmark Tour 2016 by David Towers – 19th January

On Saturday afternoon, January 19th about twenty-five members and friends from two other associations gathered at David Butterworth's house initially to be greeted by Maurice the British Bulldog before settling down to hear David Towers' illustrated account of our visit to Denmark almost three years ago. We had all brought different impressions home from that country and David (T) gave us his own personal reminiscences of the trip and took us through the visit methodically – well, he is an accountant!

We were reminded not only of all those marvellous organs but of the generous welcome we received. The congregation of the Trinity Church in Esbjerg were especially hospitable, giving us coffee and cake twice and then on top of that a “high tea” as we would call it in England. This had followed a concert which included a joint item – their fifty-strong choir of men and boys and all our group joining forces to sing C.S. Lang's Te Deum with its special part for ‘congregation’ (us) - good co-operation and feelings all round. That afternoon concluded with a presentation to David B. from the choir to mark his impending seventieth birthday, concluding with a performance of the Danish equivalent of ‘Happy Birthday’ in canon!

The budget hotels and youth hostels were all clean and comfortable and, in an expensive land, very reasonably priced. David reminded us that the days were long but packed with interesting organs and buildings, from the Esbjerg Academy of Music main hall, once the generator room of the power station which had previously occupied the building, to the new Musikhuset at Aalborg. I loved the Aalborg building but I couldn't warm to the architect-designed organ case – then or now. The instrument itself sounded magnificent of course. So many of the churches, too, were amazing and the Royal Chapel at Frederiksborg was quite breath-taking. The (1610, recently restored) Compenius organ in here was wonderful and the workmanship exquisite – a pity perhaps that we didn't hear the expected video demonstration of it on Saturday.



Alas, on the Thursday, Elizabeth and I had had to return home, so it was particularly good to see pictures of the rest of the trip and what we had had to miss. The pattern of the first four days clearly extended through the remaining three. We got a real flavour of those later days. Thanks also to our President, Paul Hale and David B. for adding some knowledgeable words on the subject of pipe metal, which we watched being cast at Marcussens.



For those present at David T's talk but not on the tour it must have been quite an eye opener and an interesting afternoon. For those of us who were in Denmark it brought back many super memories. Finally, it reminded me, and I hope everyone else, just how much time effort and expertise David (B) put into the trip. Thank you Davids both, one for presenting and one for hosting, and thank you, Reg., for bringing the tin of shortbread to add to the refreshments at the interval!

Richard Eaton

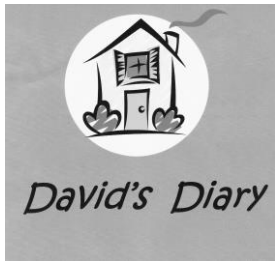
Oops! Extracts from recent editions of News Quiz:

“This toilet is a display model. Please ask a member of staff if you would like to watch a demonstration.”

(Sign at London Boat Show)

“Would-be apprentices at Sizewell B are invited to come to an information event on Saturday morning. Roger Barge, apprentice-training co-ordinator, said: ‘Apprentices at the nuclear power station enjoy great training and a glowing future.’”

(East Anglian Daily Times)



As I write in the latter days of the Christmas season (i.e. not before Christmas Eve!), I cannot help but reflect on the sheer joy that music brings to this

most challenging time of the year. One 'must' that probably singles out more than any other the power of music, and especially music in worship, is undeniably the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols from King's College, Cambridge, listened to, live, by upwards of 100 million folk worldwide. Obviously, several distinct factors contribute to the overall magic, and not least the opening solo of 'Once in royal David's city,' sung unaccompanied by a lone boy of only 12 or 13. How do they do it? How does it always work out virtually without blemish, year after year? Elementary psychology. I think it was in December 1966 that, after an organ lesson, David Willcocks invited me to stay on to listen with him to four or so boys each singing 'the' solo in turn, from the west end of the empty chapel. He had his opinions and he asked me for mine. I could only narrow the field down to two, for I thought they were all good. Whether or not my 'advice' was heeded I shall never know, but I am aware that the ultimate choice that year was none other than the young Bob Chilcott! What is not universally known, albeit it is not a secret, is that those boys were – and their successors still are – left in the dark from that early point onwards until 3.05 p.m. on Christmas Eve. So the nerves, the anticipation, the anxiety, even any misplaced optimism are dissipated amongst those several candidates. Generally, they all want to be the chosen one, but they each understand that, statistically, the odds are against them. Only when the BBC's flashing red light switches to 'full on' will the Director of Music point to the chosen boy, who thus has no time to build up his nerves or have second thoughts. He must step forward and just has to get on with it. What psychology; what genius!

But music doesn't just bind and embrace us. It can repair. Hardly less remarkable than the Festival itself was the moving programme 'Heart and Soul' on the indefatigable World Service on Sunday 30th December. Here it is: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3csy4wz>



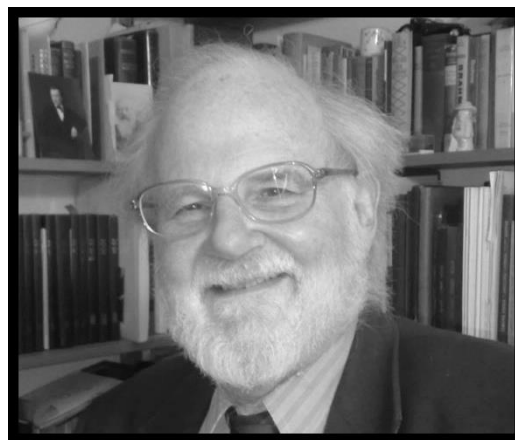
This fascinating assembly of past soloists, including Bob Chilcott btw, features, at around 15:00, Rupert Johnston, one of three talented brothers who were all in the King's choir. In his later teens, Rupert was to have a terrible road accident, apparently having nodded off in the early hours and crashed into the back of an articulated lorry. At first, he was pronounced dead at the scene. He revived, but lost the sight of his left eye, was to be paralyzed down his right side and had to have most of his face, apart from his (precious) lips, rebuilt. He will be for ever damaged; nevertheless there has been remarkable progress. The first signs of coming out of his two-month coma must have been a joy to behold; his father took in Rupert's French Horn to the hospital, along with a recording of the Mozart concertos. The instrument was placed in Rupert's hands. Although he obviously could not play anything, his fingers apparently ran along the valves in perfect time with the music. Rupert has now made such progress, that he has been able to join the Aylesbury Concert Orchestra. We learn from the radio programme just how much the King's experience has meant both to Rupert personally, to his brothers Magnus and Guy and to all the family. It means everything to them. I think it has to be said that, remarkable though all this is, it is probably not a unique situation. I am sure several readers will be able to relate not dissimilar situations whereby music has helped folk to recover from the most traumatic of experiences in a way which possibly just could not otherwise have happened. There certainly is something wonderful, magical, mysterious about music. We are lucky indeed to be able to enjoy it, and equally to enjoy listening to others making it for our benefit. So let us cast our nets far and wide in the New Year, to give of ourselves in supporting all those around us who strive to bring music to the many ...

Robert John Pascall

Our 'This is Your Life' style of article takes a slightly different turn this month in the form of an obituary of one of Nottingham's most outstanding musicians ever, our member and dear colleague, Robert Pascall.

Cambridge's Faculty of Music wrote on 15th June 2018:

"It is with great sadness that the Faculty has learned of the death of Honorary Professor Robert Pascall. Robert studied music with John Caldwell, Egon Wellesz and Sir Jack Westrup at Oxford, where he was organ scholar of Keble College (1962-5). He took his DPhil with the thesis *Formal Principles in the Music of Brahms* (1973), and this composer formed the central focus of his research activities thereafter. 1968-98 he taught at the University of Nottingham, for the last ten of those years as Professor and Head of Music, taking up the same position at Bangor University in 1998 and retiring in 2005. He was Emeritus Professor at Nottingham and at Bangor. In 2005-7 he held a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship.



"As analyst he contributed to the literature on genre, influence and perceptual pertinence, and published analyses of works by Beethoven, Brahms, Schoenberg and Franz Schmidt, among others. He was a member of the founding committee of the *Journal Music Analysis* and acted as Chair of its Editorial Board 1989-2002. He taught Schenkerian, Schoenbergian and semiotic analysis, the first of these in collaboration with Ian Bent at Nottingham.

"In the 1980s his text-critical work on Brahms's music emphasized the need for a new complete edition, founded in 1991 as the *Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe*, on which he worked as vice-chair and as editor. His editions of the symphonies, including Brahms's own arrangements of them for one or two pianos, four hands, appeared in seven volumes between 1996 and 2013.

"At the instigation of Sir Roger Norrington in 1989, he pioneered musicological research into historically-informed performance practice of the music of Brahms, since when he has published studies and advised conductors and soloists. In 1978 he founded the International Conference on 19th-century Music; in 1983 he was appointed Corresponding Director of the American Brahms Society; 1986-91 he served on the Council of the Royal Musical Association, of which he was made an Honorary Member in 2009. He believed in useful and joined-up musicology."

This is the international side of Robert's achievements. His contribution to music locally was equally outstanding, playing the Marcussen regularly at Clifton almost to the end, and supporting his friends and colleagues in many, many, ways - musically, academically and spiritually. He is irreplaceable.

Sadly, we must now also record the death of Robert's close friend and associate, Philip Weller, aged only 60, on 1st. December. In a press release from the university, he is described as "a cherished colleague and friend for over 25 years in the Department of Music. He was a constant source of inspiration for students; his energy, enthusiasm and warmth were far-reaching." [I last spent time with Philip a couple of years ago over lunch at Robert's house. He was, as always, everything you have just read. – Ed.]

A 'Beatle' Tours Germany

As a recent Past President, I thought that members might be interested in a less orthodox side to my background, which is probably about as different to your own as one can get! Germany was at one time a regular haunt for me when touring with the top German tribute band The Silver Beatles, the equivalent of The Bootleg Beatles over here. The band consisted of three Germans and myself... a Welshman. I joined this German band by sheer chance; the John Lennon of the band was over at the Beatle convention held annually in Liverpool where bands from all over the world play in one long weekend across many venues, and I was performing with my UK band 'The Beattalls' (all plays on the original name of course). I kept noticing this chap from a well-known and brilliant Beatle band from Germany in the audience, and after one particular show I was approached by him and asked if I'd like to tour with them. Well what could one say... mmm.... probably... I'll need to see if I can get some time off work... err... thanks!



Well, I did manage to arrange a long sabbatical, with thanks to my employer at the time - Imperial Tobacco - and set off to Lemgo in North Germany, armed with little other than a 'Hofner Violin Bass' (I played Paul McCartney) and a few Beatle costumes. The show I would tour with was a proper 'full on' managed production called 'Beatlemania!' which featured The Silver Beatles acting as the four Beatles along with a number of professional actors covering other main roles in the story such as Brian Epstein (manager), George Martin (Producer) and Yoko Ono, plus a bevy of 'fan actors', twenty or so girls hired from local drama colleges in each region who would come on and scream, wave banners and generally look... well... fab.

I arrived in my hotel in Lemgo, close to the first venue, unaware of what I'd find, checked into my room and was asked to be ready for 5pm when I'd be collected to go to the venue for a sound check. 5p.m. came and there was the tour bus, which I can only describe as something very posh and space age, with blacked out windows, a lounge, bar, kitchen, beds and everything else one could want. The bus was empty and the driver took me to the venue alone. We pulled up outside an arena...no joke...an arena! I took my bass and headed in the entrance indicated by the driver. Waiting for me was a German chap who shook my hand, introduced himself as 'the tech guy' and asked if this was my bass guitar. He took my bass from me and led me to the massive stage with a large set on it, a full sized cinema screen, more stage lighting than I'd seen in my life and a gigantic p.a. set up. He asked me to show him how I wanted to configure my amp and cables and exactly how I'd like them placing on the stage. I was issued a professional set of in-ear monitors – like a hearing aid through which I could hear my voice and bass perfectly, and was taken through a sound check on my own by Tom, the front of house Sound Engineer. I'd never heard a sound like it and my voice and bass echoed around the gigantic, but currently empty, arena in front of me. Sometime later, the other three 'Beatles' arrived. We said "hello", meeting two of them for the very first time, and we cracked straight into the first number *I Saw Her Standing There*. 'Depping', as it's called in Beatle bands, is the strangest thing ... You play the part of Paul (in my case), playing bass, singing the vocal line and harmony that he sang on the record; the others do the same and – wow - it doesn't matter who the other three are, it just immediately works like magic! After a few more songs getting used to each other and sorting out one or two finer details like who counts in, etc., etc., I put down my bass and was taken backstage to lay out my suits, of which there were six variants for each period of 'The Beatles' career, from mop top to hippie. There was a lady on the tour who took care of all my costumes, washing and ironing shirts and even replacing a lost button! We were taken for a slap up meal even though there was back stage food available, and within two hours returned to the venue, which was now teeming with an audience filled to its capacity of something like seven thousand – no exaggeration. My bass guitar had been re-tuned and cleaned by the tech guy that had taken it off me earlier, and was on its stand ready and waiting. I was pretty nervous, I may say; I dressed up in the first costume and got ready to enter the stage as the lights went down and the Narrator actor entered the stage.

“Just follow me” said the George Harrison character, Mike Doering, and on we went to a rapturous applause – the band was already ‘big’ in Germany and of course the original Beatles were just as massively popular there as everywhere else. I had learnt my spoken lines and of course I knew the music. After three songs as young Beatles from the Hamburg days, we were offstage again, undressing and redressing frantically in the 4 mins 35 seconds of time we had during an actor’s monologue or a bit of film footage; and then back on stage, still tucking in the shirt in total panic, in time to play the next songs. And so on it went, through an interval when my bass guitar was again re-tuned and cleaned by the tech guy, into the second half, through *Hey Jude* and finally *Let It Be*, telling the entire story of The Beatles from Hamburg up to the 1970 split. Sweating and full of adrenalin, I came off stage not quite believing what I’d just done, got changed back into my ‘civvies’ and had to do the ‘meet and greet’ in the foyer with a line of audience as long as the building, waiting to have their programme signed by the four of us and to say a brief “hello.” Many favourable comments were exchanged as to how great it was to hear a proper British accent! The lads led me back to the bus. “What about my bass?”, I asked. “Don’t worry,” they said, “it’s in safe hands”. Then it was back on the bus, back to the hotel, and into the bar to drink some German beers and get to know the lads a little better; a few of the ‘fan’ actor girls also soon joined us for a drink, as did some of the other actors. So to bed, buzzing. Then it was up the next day, on the bus, arrival at the next hotel, sound check at 5pm in a totally new venue. The entire set and all the equipment would be set up and the tech guy with sound engineer Tom sitting, waiting. My bass was on its stand, tuned and cleaned and ready for the sound check, my costumes were waiting, pristine and clean in the case, and off we would go again! The crew all travelled overnight on a separate ‘bed bus’, leaving the previous venue after packing down at around 1 a.m. They would sleep on the bus, while travelling straight to the next venue and then set up all ready for us; no nice hotels for these poor chaps. The equipment all travelled on two artic lorries.

This was the routine nearly every day, at different towns ranging across the whole country, with different hotels, different sets of ‘fan actors’ and obviously different audiences. Apart from the odd TV appearance (which I really enjoyed), radio interview or photograph with a local dignitary, everything soon became very regular over the six months I was there. Even that 4 mins 35 seconds became relaxed once you knew you could make that change of clothes easily and be ready, with all panic gone. I could now enjoy just being part of an amazing Beatle show. To ice the cake (just the first layer!), I received the equivalent of £750 per show, plus expenses, which enabled me to purchase several more vintage guitars. But to ice the icing, so to speak, many of the concert venues we performed in had gorgeous organs hidden behind the black Beatle stage curtaining, which the authorities were only too happy to let me play whilst off-duty. I particularly enjoyed playing the brand new Klais organ in the Handel Hall in Halle – truly awesome! We also got to perform live with many good quality German orchestras and I had to produce all the orchestral scores! But, what an experience. It feels like a lifetime ago, but I picked up so much about top-level professional performance, presentation and stagecraft which remains with me to this day, and from which hopefully my choirs can now benefit. Eventually, I was to perform with that band from 1999 to 2006, including a full yearlong UK theatre tour in a show that George, Guy, Mike and I wrote, produced and managed. But that’s perhaps a story for another time ...

Ian Watts



Handel Hall, Halle

Engineering Unleashed ...

During a spell in hospital just before Christmas, I had my blood pressure and pulse taken on the hour, every hour (they were always fine), and I was asked repeatedly whether I had any allergies, whether I was on any medication and, not infrequently, what I 'did'! There is no doubt that we still have a long way to go in this country; upon informing one doctor that I was a musician, he asked me what I played. "I'm an organist." "What's that?" he enquired! What **is** always encouraging is that occasional instance when an individual or group goes out of its way to look beyond their own speciality, with the outright intention of enjoying someone else's discipline. Broad-minded and welcome, and methinks it does not happen enough. Such was an invitation I received a while ago to give a talk to the Nottingham Society of Engineers. Clearly, their members have an inbred interest in how things work, but I had the distinct impression that the history of the genre, too, caught the attention of the sizeable audience. One of their number subsequently wrote a report for their journal, and sent me a copy for proof-reading and for any necessary adjustments. Can you find anything here on which you could improve?? Full marks to the engineers for their interest in our (niche?) passion! Read on and enjoy ...

David Butterworth

Engineering a Mighty Pipe Organ

David Butterworth

President of Nottingham & District Society of Organists 2015-16

David Butterworth introduced his subject of pipe organs as instruments that provided a great variation in musical sounds but required many elements of engineering to build them. His talk would cover their history (since their early known existence), development and usage, with outstanding examples through the ages including Nottingham's own Binns Organ in the Nottingham Albert Hall.

History

The existence of organs started many centuries ago with the historical knowledge that the Roman Emperor Nero from AD37 to AD48 had hydraulic organs built for important entertainment occasions.

Subsequent records have also shown that in the 9th Cent. a Portative Organ was built by George At Aix den Chappel . In the UK records show that organs would be heard in the Cathedrals of Winchester 1172, Rochester 1182 and Cantabury 1174.

A cartoon from 1100s shows an organ controlled by Sliders which provided the musical note but did not provide any other control. To operate such constructed instrument required four people to pump the air through the pipes with a further two to play the instrument.

Design and Construction Development

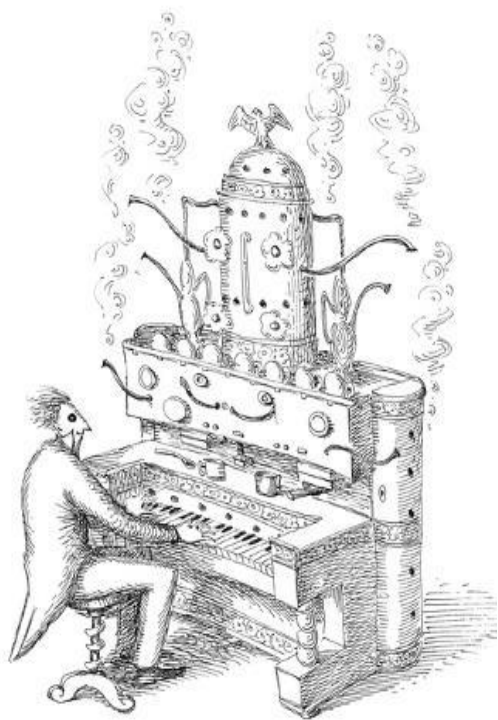
From the Sliders approach which produced a single note to the use of Keys developed the 'pairs of organs'. These organs had very long top keys and shorter lower keys, 'crabbed'.

By the 15thC Table organs appeared using two bellows, but not 'water blown'. One such organ still working can be found in Zion ? Austria.

The deemed oldest organs in the world with wonderful loud productions and still working are found in Denmark and Holland. Unfortunately the UK falls well behind mainland Europe in the number and grandour of major organs, although there are some exceptions.

These include a 16thC instrument by Walker & Co in Old Radnor Wales , also in the 16thC an eloquent designed Choir Organ by Lancelot Pease can be seen in Cambridge? and the 19thC organ of Kings College Cambridge also built by Walker & Co .

Organ enthusiast Albert Svytershen ? in the ealy twentieth century undertook a major assessment of organs in Holland by touring round churches measuring over 1000 pipes , logging their age and sound production. Then with a Danish organist , Zackerson they revolutionised organ building in the 20thC with*open hanger pipes*.....? for tuning and austere case door designs .



Of local interest the nearest organ designer/builder to Nottingham is Gertsent & Gwynn of Welbeck, Nottinghamshire. They have been responsible for a new organ at Eaton School and Sydney Town Hall Australia.

With the popularity of cinemas in the early 20thC a further development of organs took place initially to be played in support of the Silent Movies. Powered by electric and known as Barrel Organs but were short lived and by the end of the 20th C few were in existence. They were all handmade usually of wood and a good example can still be seen in the Troxy London.

In terms of construction the common theme through the ages was that all organs are handmade. To demonstrate in particularly the making of pipes, David ran a video made in a *German establishment* [Ahrend Orgelbau - Ed.]

The pipes were usually made of Tin, usually cast on sand to the desired size and length. It is then cut at a 45% angle to provide a firm solder edge and to the required specified length to achieve the approximate required tune. Further refinement to the tuning is made by fine cutting

Key European Examples

To highlight such examples a video taken during a tour of [Denmark] showed a 1610 Instrument to be found in [Frederiksborg] and located at the west end of the Chapel. The 400 year old instrument had wooden pipes, ivory keys and foot stops with original wedge bellows. It played pure chords.

In reinforcing the point that the most wonderful designed Instrument cases are found in Northern Europe further examples were referred to including that found in the main building of Arch Steinkircher in Norden, North Germany. This was a large Heindbourge pedal organ with stereo effect. Also a Silvermann instrument, with a reduced number of treble pipes but magnificent case is located in Dresden.

These special examples have also attracted support when threatened with 21st C developments. In Neuenfele Germany, Airbus wished to extend their runway which would have caused the local church a major problem since it housed their Str [...] organ. However, a campaign to move the runway location was successful and saved the church from external interference.

Modern examples to match these ornate instruments include that in St Marys Helsinger Sweden. Also a Muller instrument in Amsterdam Holland prides itself in achieving the biggest stop assistance organ which requires three people to operate.

In the UK there are some european style organ cases to be found, such as that in Stratford on Avon. This is a pre commonwealth instrument that had a major restoration carried out in the European style. Similarly in Branston the church organ designed by Hugh Russell 1784 was beautifully restored which also only had a 1½ key board of 30 notes.

Both in Mainland Europe the UK and further afield there are noteworthy examples of outstanding individual instruments including:-

- A 19thC Germany there is a 61 Pipe, 5 Keyboard for two hands
- The Royal Albert Hall organ, designed and built by Willis has 32 foot pipes (98% Tin) with a 4No Keyboard Console. Manders Organ Builders are shortly to restore the instrument with a 5th Keyboard plus adding 5No pipes to each note plus 300.....with electric supported extension.
- Liverpool Cathedral is currently the largest organ in the UK. It has Brass Trumpets and to tune requires ear defenders.

- The Binns Organ Nottingham was rebuilt following a time when major city Town Halls were building simple organs for civic pride. The Binns was sponsored by Jessy Boot to be re-built in the Albert Hall Nottingham in the late 19thC. The front Venetian Shutters designed only for show with tower pipes to the side. The organ has since been restored by Harrisons of Durham with no additional electrical support.
- The Willis Organ built in Sydney Town Hall Australia in 19thC with 64foot Pipes has a glass fronted case to see all movements.
- In Atlanta City, New Jersey their city organ has 7No Keyboards and 6No Pedal which needs continual maintenance, (a “Forth Road Bridge” equivalent).

In UK Raith Downs of Harrisons of Durham was commissioned in 1954 to ...*re-build* ... in Baroque style the organ of West Minster Abbey. Further consultations included Festival Hall, The Brompton Oratory , St Albans and St Clement Danes.

Morris Foresight of *Gent M/C* in 1955 founded a new organ form and in 1957 built a demonstration model in Red Formica with 450 Pipes. It was finally located in New College after St Albans and temporarily in Nottingham .

Similarly Sir George Pace created a ‘standard measurement ‘ design to sell organs . An example can be found in Wellingborough School.

To conclude David emphasised the fact that the organ as a musical instrument had played a major part in the development and maintenance of music particularly in the singing tradition found in Europe . Most instruments were unique to their location and hoped that his talk had provided wider knowledge of these wonderful major musical instruments.

BOOK REVIEW

Andrew Gant: Christmas Carols, from Village Green to Church Choir.

Profile Books, 2014. ISBN 978 1 78125 352 6, £9.99

Andrew Gant: O Sing unto the Lord – A History of English Church Music.

Profile Books, 2016. ISBN 978 1 78125 248 2, £9.99

Andrew Gant is a Fellow of St. Peter’s College, Oxford, having been a Choral Exhibitioner at St. John’s College, Cambridge, a student at the Royal Academy of Music and taken a PhD at Goldsmith’s College, London in composition and 20th century music. He was Organist at the Chapel Royal from 2000 to 2013 when he moved to his present post in Oxford. He has written three books, two of which are reviewed here. They are notable for filling a gap which has existed for some years, being a good, informative and critical source in the field of church choral music. Furthermore, he approaches his subject with a light touch such that almost every page has a gem of humour or gossip concerning the music or composer being covered. He provides the answer to such vital questions as to who was the most drunken organist, who cancelled Christmas and who peed on his Dean from the organ gallery.

The first book on Christmas carols is perhaps the less satisfactory, because it deals with a selected number of carols in 22 short chapters, many of which couple several carols together. Strangely, the one carol missing is the one that is generally regarded as the most popular in the world and which lends itself very well to the story of its origin – *Silent Night*. The book offers a CD inside the back cover and a written edition of each carol. For choirmasters who like to lighten rehearsals with anecdotal information this an excellent book to have at hand.

By contrast, the second book ‘O sing unto the Lord’ is a serious scholarly history of English Church Music, from pre-Reformation times through the Reformation itself and Puritanism to the Victorian

development of an English tradition as we know it today, with a short diversion into Welsh and Non-Conformist music. There is no specific treatment of organ music, nor of hymns but, as composers are discussed, the role of organ accompaniment is included. Although a serious study, the light touch is still there and the anecdotes are worth collecting for use in lectures or workshops, not to mention choir rehearsals.

The book has extensive reference lists to chapters and a good bibliography, and the general index is excellent. At £9.99, it must be one of the best buys for choirmasters for many years.

David Gabe

BRIEF NOTES AND NEWS

We congratulate Samuel Hudson on his appointment as Director of Music of Worcester Cathedral, surely one of the most coveted of cathedral organist positions in the country, what with the added bonuses of the Three Choirs Festival and a fine new organ by Tickell. Samuel comes from Blackburn Cathedral, where apparently he has made a great impression with his ability and energy. Congratulations also to Edmund Aldhouse at Ely who takes over as D of M, having already been Assistant there for a while. And, not least, more locally, to Alexander Binns who moves from St Edmundsbury Cathedral as Assistant, to Derby Cathedral. We wish them all the best of good fortune. These are not easy times; certainly at Worcester the choir is in need of some rebuilding, and at Derby there are those organs ... oh, those organs!

Congratulations, too, to Harry Christophers and The Sixteen. This year sees their 40th. Anniversary. The speed of time is truly terrifying!

A new choral festival is being launched this year, called 'Voices Yorkshire'. We are told that the new festival will celebrate the diversity and excellence of choirs across Yorkshire, and states that its aim is 'to boost local communities through the power of music and through a culture of inclusion, support and pride.' It is to be hoped that they will apply some of their energy to supporting Leeds Parish Church, where the existing choir of nigh on two centuries of excellence and fame has completely collapsed. After all, it does start with the kids ...

One's attention has also been drawn to the formation of 'The Society of Women Organists'. Is this a long overdue necessity in this world of gender equality, or just another manifestation of a feminist church? Don't worry ... apparently a number of men have already joined!

We congratulate member Dr Donald Henry's grandson, Laurence Henry, on being outright winner of MasterChef: The Professionals 2018. You can view it here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0bw9f94/masterchef-the-professionals-series-11-episode-21>. What a talented family!

We recently visited Trinity College, Cambridge, to see and play the wondrous Metzler organ (one of the editor's all-time favourites.) Since then, it has been thoroughly cleaned, re-winded with a larger blower, and provided with a discreet combination system, chiefly to assist in the accompaniment of the diverse repertoire sung by the college's outstanding choir. To preserve the 'iconic' ethos of the original organ, the system can be switched off and the controls hidden. Surely this is a most gracious way in which simultaneously to have one's cake and eat it! The work was overseen by Andreas Metzler, son of the original builder, and everyone is delighted with the result.

The Editor is always pleased to receive contributions to *Soundboard*, so don't be shy if you think you've got something to say of interest to others.

Stop Press

Denmark tour members will recall Lone Gislinge, the conductor of the choir at Treenighedskirken, Esbjerg (featured in David Towers' talk on 19th January.) Lone has just 'phoned to tell me that the choir has gained top prize in a wide-ranging cultural competition called the 'Yske Vestkystens kulturpris', which has just taken place in the state-of-the-art Musikhuset in Esbjerg. It is an annual event which celebrates a person or cultural institution which has made a special contribution to culture in Southern Denmark. The finalists were whittled down to just three, and they would have been happy enough with that. But then to win overall must have meant so much to the men, the boys and not least the boys' parents. On top of that, the choir's bank balance is now better off to the tune of DKr. 50,000. Well done, all of you! [I wonder whether they will ever come back here?? – Ed.]



Parliament Street – A Postscript

Following an article in last September's *Soundboard*, it so happens that our member, Paul Stringfellow, subsequently bumped into the gentleman who had taken away all the pipework. He was able to advise Paul of the destinations of much of the material as follows:

- Thomas Adelberger in Germany had the Trumpet, Cornopean, Oboe, Dulciana, Swell Viola and Celeste
- Mario (my contact whose brother-in-law is an organ builder in Poland) had the 3-phase blower and the Swell Gedackt (a metal chimney flute)
- Fabio Amigoni, organ builder in Italy had the Great Gamba
- Andrew Cooper, organ builder on the Isle of Wight (former employee of Willis, and interested in the "new" choir organ Willis installed in the 1960s) had the Koppelflote
- Alistair McCartney (Organ Builder in Belfast) had the 3-rank mixture, and the choir Block Flute and Tierce.
- Stephen Shaw (Organ Builder in Belfast) had the Great Fifteenth
- Steven Benson (enthusiastic organist in Cheshire, who is building his own house organ) had the (tapered) Swell Piccolo, and the Choir Nazard
- David Morris (Nottingham organist) had the stops and keyboards (Sentimental value as he occasionally played it)
- Jeremy Kopacz (France) had the 4ft Chimney flute
- The Great 8,4,2 diapason chorus is earmarked for an Oldham church that has fat, fluffy diapasons with no presence.
- The final rank I had left (Swell Principal) has just gone to an enthusiastic young student, who is building his own house organ.
- ... and a few others

Thanks to Paul Hale, Michael Anthony, Simon Fricker, Samantha Stone,
Ian Watts and Lasse Toft Eriksen for the pictures in this issue.

Editor: David S. Butterworth
32 Zulla Road, Nottingham, NG3 5DB
david@luna23.dk / 0115 9625400 / 07850 833890

Typeset by Peter Siepmann. Printed by Temple Printing, Ltd



"I didn't think much of your Oficle"

Walter Esswood