



# Soundboard

*The newsletter of the Nottingham & District Society of Organists*

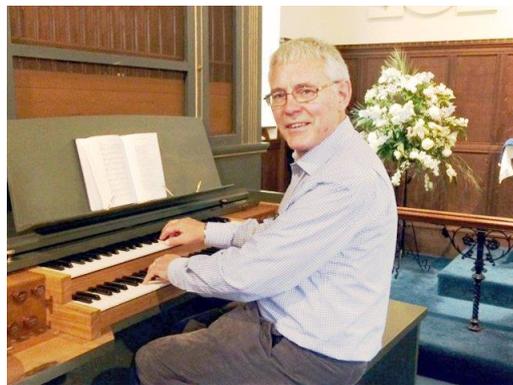
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September 2020

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Roger Harrison MA, ARCO, CHM, LTCL

Virtually nothing was happening and our instruments were inaccessible when I wrote this column (which I have just re-read) in May, and it was gently pointed out to me by a very old friend that my words of encouragement read rather like a sermon! It may seem, with some justification, that we're not much further on in September. But some of us have been lucky enough to play regularly for worship again, though not of course to accompany the still-proscribed congregational singing. At Ashbourne, we've started displaying the titles of pieces to be played before, during and after the Sunday Eucharist which has been well-received; some folk arriving early in order to hear 15 minutes real live playing before the service starts – so I hope we'll muster the self-discipline to continue.



I love Wales and have just returned from an invigorating week's walking based in Beddgelert, though on reading the following puzzling extract from the Welsh government's most recent (and hardly encouraging) guidance on re-opening places of worship, must admit to being delighted *not* to hold a position there:

*“Wind instruments should not be played indoors. The decision whether to play an organ that requires air to be pushed through the mechanism should be based on a risk assessment and adherence with hand hygiene and [cleaning guidance](#) and physical distancing, for example from the remainder of the congregation and avoiding use of a registrant. It is advised that you use alternative instruments such as a piano, electronic instruments or recordings...”*

Moving swiftly on... it's been great to hear of choirs starting to function again and to see some lovely photographs in the press of cathedral choirs rehearsing *in situ*, albeit in their bubbles and the singers maintaining the statutory distance from each other. But these are uncertain times, and it may be that the “rule of six” will cause considerable heartache to those who have been labouring to work out and properly document how to make amateur instrumental and choral groups work safely and in accordance with the regulations in force, which can change with bewildering frequency and with little notice. While on holiday, I was moved by footage on BBC Wales of a male voice choir rehearsing in what looked like a very draughty and structurally insecure stadium on the touchline of a village rugby pitch – not a venue for the faint-hearted.

Our Society's last meeting was that wonderful luncheon in February, and it has been dispiriting to witness the inevitable cancellation of the remainder of last season's programme, and indeed the start of this. Your committee stays the same, pending a delayed AGM, about which the Hon. Secretary will be in touch in due course. Let's hope at least that *“in dulci jubilo”* will somehow happen, and that there may be *“...a very wilful and strict observation of the day commonly called Christmas Day”* (Sir Henry Mildmay's report to Parliament, 1650).

## SUBSCRIPTIONS 2020/21

The Society's activities have been severely curtailed in 2020. Indeed it seems likely that we will have a year without face to face meetings. It is therefore perhaps inappropriate to ask for full subscriptions. However, the society does have ongoing commitments that cost money – *Soundboard* for example. It may also add to a feeling of detachment if members don't pay a subscription. The committee has agreed that the sub. for 20/21 should be a voluntary contribution of an amount up to £20. This will bring in the funds necessary to keep the society running and keep everyone "on board".

Please pay your contribution electronically:  
The Nottingham and District Society of Organists  
Account No: 08442808      Sort Code: 09-01-54

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The Gables, Burden Lane, Shelford, Notts. NG12 1EF  
Cheques payable to NDSO.

Thank you.

*Richard Eaton (Hon Treasurer)*

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## NOTRE DAME ORGAN

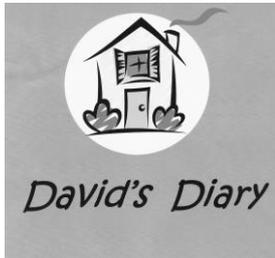
*It's always good to hear from our long-distance member, Juliette; herewith her current thoughts - Ed.*

Having visited Notre Dame in Paris several times in the past, I was deeply saddened to see it being engulfed by the massive fire in April 2019. Worship has taken place at this cathedral since 1260. Notre Dame is regarded as the textbook example of French Gothic architecture with its flying buttresses and colourful rose windows. It took around 15 hours for the fire crews to get the fire under control. Those of us who are organists were relieved to hear that the main organ had not been damaged. That was the initial assessment; but further investigation revealed that layers of lead dust had fallen from the roof and penetrated the organ pipes. This meant that the organ was not playable.

A retired general, Jean-Louis Georglin, is overseeing the restoration of Notre Dame. At the present time the structure of the building is being stabilized against possible collapse. This crucial first phase is due to be completed by the end of 2020. In 2021 restoration work will start in earnest, including the removal of dust from the organ pipes. There are 8000 pipes and 109 stops on this 5-manual organ. It is expected to take about three years to complete this task alone. The plan is that Notre Dame will open its doors again to worshippers and the public in April 2024. Officials are eager for this to happen in view of the fact that Paris will be hosting the Olympics in the summer of 2024. Tourism needs a boost in France just as in the UK.

Unlike many church organs in France, the Notre Dame organ was not tampered with during the French Revolution. Many church organs were completely destroyed during that period. Rebels wanted to get their hands on the organ pipes in order to make bullets! The Notre Dame organ was spared this fate largely because 'La Marseillaise' was frequently played on it. Apparently, this kept the rebels happy!

*Juliette Adams*



Silver linings can be a blessing and – goodness knows – we have needed them of late. Only since I last wrote in *Soundboard*, have we witnessed a second French cathedral

fire, at Nantes (this time with the total destruction of the organs) and the sudden death of the legendary Jane Parker-Smith; not to mention the persistently rising death toll worldwide from Covid-19, barely under control in the west and still rife in many less developed countries such as Yemen and the Congo (as if those poor people hadn't had enough to contend with already.) The latest biff on the nose for the international organ world came on 27<sup>th</sup>. July with the announcement that Mander Organs were closing their doors with immediate effect, due to cash flow difficulties and their “inability to attract sufficient work.” All enquiries were to be made of Insolve Plus, Ltd., and there would be a public auction of the entire contents of the works as soon as possible.



Noel Mander was born in the village of Crouch in Kent, on 19<sup>th</sup>. May, 1912. Following his school years and a short apprenticeship in the book publishing firm of A. & C. Black - neither of which gave him much joy - he joined the little-known London organ builder Ivor R. Davies, where he immediately felt more at home. Having at last found his feet, he set up on his own in a small way in 1936, first in part of a church in the East End, then in a small place in North London. From 1940, he served in both Italy and North Africa. Following the cessation of hostilities, he returned to his civilian life, immediately launching into rescuing a number

of historically important organs, many in the City itself, either because they had been damaged or were considered to be at risk. So it was in 1947, after working in those two small workshops (the first having been bombed out) that he managed to expand his facilities by renting from the Church of England the old school next door to St Peter's Church, Bethnal Green – a peaceful and relatively idyllic spot so close to the City. From thereon, the firm steadily grew, and in 1975, he managed to purchase the property outright. There was plenty of room, so the upper two floors became his house, whilst the ground floor was the organ works – a classic case of ‘living over the shop’. A typical early ‘rescue’ project was his 1947 work on the fine 1882 Lewis organ at St John's, Upper Norwood, a severely damaged organ which others had written off. A very similar story could be told of the Gray & Davison in St Pancras Parish Church, which turned out to be a real success in those early days. But Noel had always had a penchant for the historic, especially for the English tradition, and indeed his own family lineage can be traced back to the late eighteenth – early nineteenth century organ builder George Pike England (1765 – 1815?) His sympathetic and intelligent approach to historic material was especially manifest in two ground-breaking restorations, namely of the 17<sup>th</sup> century organ at Adlington Hall near Macclesfield and of the 1765 Byfield organ in St Mary's, Rotherhithe. This early exposure to what was left of our heritage (i.e. after the ravages of time embracing everything from Oliver Cromwell's efforts to those of the early 20<sup>th</sup>. century ‘improvers’) suited his own tastes and was to inform him deeply in the following years, as he set to develop his style, which was to differ markedly from the main players in the trade. His advertisements even espoused a new work ethos, somewhat challenging for the times, informing us that ‘we are a non-Federation firm’! Nonetheless, in those earlier years, he had also been obliged to bend his principles to suit the British market, often using electric action for example, either right through or at least for the Pedal Organ (just as the Victorians had used pneumatics). He used extension on occasion, where money or space – or both – were tight, and this even in a number of small, moveable organs which were hired out as temporary

substitutes, continuos, etc. One of these – his ‘Hoxne Organ’ – resided in the nave of Jesus College for a while, for concert purposes (the chapel organ was hopelessly tucked away in the chancel). As I was playing a concluding voluntary after one particular service, our long-retired and rather characterful former Dean, the Revd. Percy Gardner-Smith, duly robed with long flowing surplice, chose to stick his head over the copper front to see where the sound was coming from. He got more than he bargained for when his surplice became firmly caught in some of the front pipes, only eventually to be released from captivity by the Chapel Clerk.

I cannot recall how long I had known Noel, but definitely longer than I care to admit. Oddly enough, I now know that the first Mander ‘job’ that I had played as a teenager, in the little village church at Wivelsfield in Mid-Sussex, was apparently the very first tracker action that he made from scratch; that had been in 1947. At the time, this was a brave, unorthodox, approach. The organ was a rebuild and relocation of a small pneumatic organ from a Scottish house. The pneumatic stop action I recall being extremely slow and possessed of a variety of wonderful popping and sucking sounds; I’ve always had something of a penchant for noises off-stage. But it all worked, and apparently is still going strong to this day. Small beginnings ...

I mentioned Cambridge above. This was to become something of a Mander hot spot. Peterhouse was the first (1964) with electrics to the Pedal – I recall largely extension – and stop action. Then followed Corpus Christi with a choice of pedalboards (straight or radiating) and the restoration of a (possibly) Snetzler chamber organ in the music school; Jesus College – both the restoration (but with modern Mander console) of the 1847 Sutton organ, side by side with a brand-new three manual in a space in which Flentrop had refused to build a two-manual; then Pembroke (1980) and, rather later, the huge instrument at St John’s College (1994.)

Now at Nottingham, I was charged with the restoration of the little organ in Wollaton Hall. The choice here was obvious – Manders – and a very good job they made of this extraordinary

puzzle. Meantime, Noel had taken me to see the organ he had built in Cecil Clutton’s basement in 1965. Cecil Clutton (‘Sam’ by nickname) was a collector – of everything, it seemed. I recall the row of garages behind his house in Blackheath, all with doors open and a gleaming array of vintage cars. The organ, in true vein, was surrounded by his clock collection. The problem was that, on the hour, and in some cases the quarter-hour, the clocks would let rip, which took a bit of getting used to. I recall later hearing a recording of this organ. Evidently, it was considered impossible to stop the chimes of many of the clocks without causing damage, so – notwithstanding valiant efforts to avoid the quarter-hours, a few extra effects came with the printed music! I wonder if any member has that recording? The trouble with the organ, so Noel told me, was that Clutton would insist on interfering with the voicing by way of experimentation; the problem was, he couldn’t always get the pipes back to their original state, hence periodic ‘phone calls with cries for help! (That organ also now resides in the Cambridge music school – in a room devoted to historic/curious instruments.)

Coming on now to Philip Mason’s year of presidency (1978-79), I arranged a visit to Mander’s organ works on 19<sup>th</sup>. May, 1979, as well as a visit to his restoration of the George Pike England organ of 1792 at St James’s, Clerkenwell, with its enormous wooden Pedal Trombone by Gray & Davidson, and - to cap it all - St Paul’s Cathedral. This had to take place on a Saturday, as at that time Noel would not entertain visits to Bethnal Green during the week, for fear they would interfere with the progress of work. So Saturday it was. I also happened to know that it was Noel’s birthday, so I turned up duly armed with a bottle of Scotch, which I understand went down very well. Little did I know then that, in 1993, I was to be appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers of St Peter’s Parish Church, Mansfield, under the *aegis* of the Vicar the Revd Canon Robert Warburton – a poisoned chalice if ever there was. By the end of 1995, I couldn’t wait to get out; albeit I had made some wonderful friends meantime, and also had the almost daily pleasure of residing over the typical middle-period Mander – a removal and quality rebuild of the former Gray & Davidson – cum

– Harrison organ from Clare College, Cambridge; extraordinarily the very organ on which I had taken my organ scholarship trials in 1962!

I first bumped into John in Hamburg, in Rudolf von Beckerath's organ works. I was visiting with a dear friend, Pastor Hans-Heinrich Seger, of the German Lutheran Church here in Bobbers Mill. In perfect synchrony, we spotted a little organ in the corner diametrically opposite where they were frying some enormous German sausages on the gas ring, looking somewhat forlorn and with wooden pipes stacked on top of it. We said to each other in the same breath – "I want that." Hans should have it – his need was greater! Before Hans went back to collect it in his VW camper van (the rear doors tied as nearly close together as possible with rope), von Beckerath kindly had the instrument overhauled for us – by John. He did a perfect job. The organ arrived, I installed it on the little 'west' gallery, and it has sung sweetly ever since. I have always regarded it as 'John's baby'. On one occasion I got Lionel Rogg to come and spend some time on it, and he kindly wrote a nice greeting on one of the doors which ends up, somewhat cynically – "... after several glasses of wine."

John was with von Beckerath for more than five years, from October 1968 to November 1973, during which time he was put through every department of the works including metal pipe-making – and that including casting and planing the sheets; that really was quite something, for the pipemaking door is often where many trainees stop (unless they are going to specialize in it.). He also spent invaluable time in von Beckerath's drawing office, notably producing all the technical plans for the choir organ in Petrikerche, Hamburg. Then in 1980, John went back for a further intensive six-month Master's course at the renowned musical instrument school at Ludwigsburg. At the end of this, in 1981 (I happen to know from a little birdie) he came out top of the class and was awarded his *Meisterbrief*. It was a master-stroke of Noel, and indeed a veritable act of humility, to have sent his son to a major German firm for his training, where he could learn so much that was, by and large, foreign to the British organ trade at that time. Of course, things are far better now, but

that was then ...

In 1978, Noel was awarded the O.B.E. for his services to the British organ trade, and in 1983 he retired from the business, handing over the reins to John. Noel could look back with enormous pride on the legacy he had bestowed on the country, with many really significant instruments, arguably capped by the comprehensive rebuild of the Father Willis-cum-Willis III organ of St Paul's Cathedral, extending in manageable stages over the five years 1972 - 1977. This almost impossible task brought together a number of disparate agendas into as nearly a cohesive whole as was humanly possible and, although it is understood Her Majesty does not like the West End high-pressure Trumpets, it succeeds in pleasing most of the people most of the time. In a letter to me from Noel, he sums up the ethos of this enormous project as follows: "Yesterday I had a letter from Flentrop who spent three or four hours at St Paul's recently, both inside and outside the organ and he sent a splendid letter congratulating me on the craftsmanship and on the artistic result produced. His verbal comment was "*Given that no-one has to accept the principle of the organ, no-one could have done it so well.*" Noel continues: "I wanted to put the organ on a screen and have tracker action with four manuals, that was not acceptable and so I did the best I could with the situation as I found it. After all said and done one could hardly reject the appointment as organ builders to St Paul's." Indeed not. In retirement, Noel naturally continued to take an interest in the firm, and what he saw must have given him a huge sense of pride. In 1996, at John's instigation, a superb little book "Fanfare for an Organ Builder" was published to considerable acclaim. Finally, on 18 September, 2005, he passed away – but his name and fame have not. In the forecourt of the organ works is a red rose, donated by the firm's workforce in his memory, and a strong and sturdy bush it is, undoubtedly



deriving succour from Noel's ashes buried beneath.

Moving on now beyond 1983, and under John's re-invigorated leadership, the firm continued not only to blossom, but to expand significantly, especially in that much prized field of new organs. For a while, they were even able to confine their new work to entirely mechanical key action instruments, retaining electrics only for stop and combination action. Those of us privileged to participate in the recent N.D.S.O. trip to St Albans will recall the extraordinarily satisfying action of the large new Mander at St Peter's Church. They also became particularly successful in the field of export, to the U.S.A., Japan, the Middle East and a number of other countries. Such was their success that in 2002 the firm – that is to say the total workforce *en pièce* – was awarded the coveted Queen's Award for Enterprise, the only British organ builder ever to have been so honoured. Other notable contracts on these shores were for Winchester College and Magdalen College, Oxford (both new), Chichester Cathedral (major rebuild replacing pneumatics with mechanical action) and, famously, the Royal Albert Hall with its sixty-three page contract! Many of the overseas projects were for sizeable instruments in prestigious settings, and possibly none more so than the superlative and very large organ in the church of St Ignatius Loyola, New York, which I have featured on the back cover of this issue. Back on these shores once more, for sheer beauty and playing satisfaction, one may well look no further than to an organ so highly prized that it appeared on the front covers of both *Organists' Review* and *The Organ* almost simultaneously – that of St Andrew's, Holborn. If I were 'stuck' with this organ and no other for the rest of my days, I would be content. Indeed Cecil Clutton, writing in *The Organ* of January 1990, states: "As a personal judgement I rate the resulting instrument as the finest organ of thirty speaking stops or less that has ever been made, and for sheer grandeur of tone I do not know of anything finer."

But by 2018, it was time for John to retire, and this he achieved on 1<sup>st</sup> November, ostensibly seamlessly, by passing on the business – by gifting it indeed – to the workforce in the form of an Employee Ownership Trust, complete

with a decent workload and a very significant and enabling bank balance. The workforce by now was slightly reduced in number from its heyday – maybe a dozen or so, but it was ostensibly a good team and promised well. Two major rebuilds – at Waltham Abbey and King's College, Strand – were already on the books, and these were seen through to completion, to considerable public acclaim; but the good fortune was not to last. At the last moment, Bristol Cathedral, due for a major rebuild, pulled out; and, again at the eleventh hour, the firm lost another first-rate contract much nearer to home. The co-operative had come to a point of no return.

Between closure and the auction, I met up with John on site (for he and his family still own the property), and we were able to have an extensive discussion about the whole situation. He showed me around the works again, and I was particularly pleased to have the opportunity to play two of the several small organs on show, these being the Raspberry Ripple organ, the last that John designed himself, which has gone to a German enthusiast; and the 'Bento' organ, a black and red continuo-size instrument of which John was particularly fond and which, in fact, he has managed to secure for his new home. Incidentally, a Bento is a form of Japanese lunchbox coloured black and red, would you believe it! At around £20,000, it's a lot of money to spend on something you created and once owned. *Mais c'est la vie*; it was a realizable asset. John has been putting on a very brave face through all this, but it must have been a real agony to witness the demise of this truly family firm.



Looking round the workshop was a daunting and actually uncomfortable experience. All the equipment, all the history, everything there that would be needed for another large new organ or a major rebuild or whatever, all silent. Everything from a casting bench and the only full-size metal planing machine in the country; a complete 32 ft. Bombarde; Ken Tickell's recently acquired CNC routing machine; through a formidable display of superb mandrels, down to the tiniest little voicing tools, all overseen by a fleet of 'Henrys' keeping an eye on everything. In the event, there was enormous interest in the sale. Incredibly I believe every single lot was spoken for, and prices paid were extremely high – in certain cases I would say frenetically so. Timber was being sold at full market price (before the implications of VAT and commission on the hammer price along with transport costs); four wire threading machines, all in need of restoration, majored around and above £1,000 each if you include the 'extras'; and so on.

What John doesn't know about organ building could be fitted on the back of the proverbial postage stamp. He had earned his retirement (he is now 71), and he is well settled in his new home, with his new wife Annett, in Kehl, just the other side of the Rhine from Strasbourg. John's balanced fondness of the present and the past is perfectly summed up in the German vehicle registration mark on his natty little

Mazda sports car: KEL A415. Work it out for yourself! A silver lining? Yes, I am pleased to say! For nearly 150 years, the firm of F.H. Browne has flourished in Kent, with premises in Canterbury and thereabouts. In the South East, you will find Browne organs almost everywhere you look. With a workforce of similar size to Manders, they have just opened a brand new custom-designed workshop at the village of West Stourmouth. Stephen Bayley is now owner and managing director of the firm. Steve learned the trade from, and worked with, John Mander for fifteen years before taking over Brownes. There is already a second Mander employee with the firm, and a third is soon to follow, so the Mander connection is already far from insignificant. Happily, Brownes are now taking over the Mander name and intellectual property. The name of F.H. Browne as such is to be consigned to history (I think that bit's rather sad, actually), but the Mander name will reign supreme, and – to cap that – John Mander has agreed to take on the role of Chairman of the new company. I am sure we all wish them *bon voyage* in this new, major, development on the British organ scene, whilst at the same time we must for ever acknowledge the inestimable legacy left for us to enjoy through the good works and inspiration of father-and-son Noel and John Mander.

*David Buttermorth*

## **NEWS FROM ORGAN BUILDERS**

The tragic demise of Mander Organs is covered elsewhere. The fact that F.H. Browne have taken on board the name and intellectual property of the former business is commendable, and in this context, I personally believe that John Mander's appointment as Chairman of the Board will give them a significant boost. Whether all this, combined not least with their brand new workshop in rural surroundings, will sway the buying public in their direction remains to be seen. It's a big 'If', so let's keep our fingers crossed for them.

There have been some slight changes at Goetze & Gwynn, albeit they continue to number a team of seven. Edward Bennett has retired as a Director, and has dropped his working week to four days. Rob Balfour Rowley has taken his place as a Director, along with – of course – Dominic Gwynn. Of relatively recent vintage (for them), they have just about completed the restoration of the Lewis for St Peter's Vauxhall, having been delayed by the pandemic. Of similar vintage, the 22-stop Conacher of the Theatr Soir, a cultural centre in Merthyr Tydfil, is about to undergo a similar operation. And, back on what is for them particularly familiar territory, Dominic at his intellectual best is leading a reconstruction of Thomas

Mace's organ. He writes: "Our third project this year is a reconstruction of the chamber organ which Thomas Mace intended for his Musick Room. Mace was a singing man at Trinity College Cambridge who produced a lavish book, published in 1676, divided between a promotion of church and cathedral music, the lute, and the viol, as part of which he suggested a musick room, so that the players could produce their best music, and the listeners could hear it in optimum conditions. There was to be a horizontal 6 stop organ at the centre of it, as 'a Holding, Uniting-Constant Friend' (he wrote like that) with the viols round it. The Musick Room is being reconstructed by Francois Muracciole, we are making the organ and a young French harpsichord builder is making the pedal harpsichord (the pedals for combinations of stop, not a pedal keyboard)." It is well worth the effort to click on a description of this absorbing project: [en.theflyingmusickroom.org/musique](http://en.theflyingmusickroom.org/musique)

Goetze & Gwynn most commendably make their own metal pipes, including the reeds, the metal being bought in from Laukhuff. However, Joe (the younger pipemaker) has recently made a casting table, and it seems that all they need now is a furnace! Watch that space...

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## EDINBURGH TO ROME VIA CANTERBURY

My father, a South London baker, was organist at St James's Church of Scotland in East Dulwich, my mother having come from a staunchly Presbyterian family. From an early age, I would accompany him at the console, pumping the ratchet Swell pedal up and down when not pinching his Polo mints. The instrument, a two-manual Hunter, sat proudly behind 'The Lord's Table', its voice much enriched by a generous acoustic. Following the closure of the church in the 1970's, the organ was removed to the lower hall of St Columba's Pont Street, where I like to think it remains as a memorial to my dear old Dad. Music at Dulwich College Prep was vigorously provided under the volatile personality (some might say "battle axe") Elsie Smith. In addition to teaching me piano, she also drilled me in a 30-strong violin group. Apparently, I once asked my parents "Why does Miss Smith smell of Christmas Pudding?"; a history of the school describing her "habits as not always musical or professional." Nonetheless I adored Elsie who, incidentally, disapproved strongly of music exams, regarding them the work of the Devil – her language some 20 years later, when she heard I had been recruited by the ABRSM, was robustly Anglo-Saxon to say the least! Sutton Valence School may not have the academic clout of Winchester but its position overlooking the Weald of Kent is magical. On reflection, it was my good fortune that the Director of Music, though a fine pianist, was no organist, and so from the age of 13 I found myself playing for most of the Chapel services and assisting with the training of the choir. As a sixth former, I decided to be confirmed into the C of E. Consequently my 'gap' year, in addition to delivering lorry-loads of Page's cakes around South London, was spent as Organist of St Bartholomew's Church Sydenham, giving me invaluable experience recruiting choristers from local primary schools and attempting to control an entrenched and temperamental back row.

Durham's music department under the idiosyncratic Professor Arthur Hutchings was a richly invigorating environment with a strong sense of 'family' as only 12 undergraduates were admitted each year. Organ lessons with Conrad Eden allowed me access to the Cathedral's magnificent Harrison and, before long, I had been recruited as their first-ever choral scholar. On arrival into the stalls my sight-singing was modest, but after a month of ten sung services a week (Choral Matins on Tuesdays and Thursdays) with only one "full" choir rehearsal a week (the elderly lay clerks had been there for years and knew the stuff inside out) it had improved considerably. By and large, we sang on automatic pilot as Conrad would remain aloft during services; though there were times when a conductor would have been invaluable, not least as we

periodically sang from the venerable leather-bound 18<sup>th</sup> century Durham part-books; these provided merely your own cue-less vocal line, the tenor part being printed in a combination of treble, alto and tenor clefs. While Conrad's recital playing displayed facility and flamboyance (listen to his Schoenberg on the 'Great Cathedral Organ' series) sadly this was rarely heard during cathedral services, his accompanying being curiously "edgy" and unsympathetic to voices and not a little unpredictable. The octogenarian assistant organist Cyril "Pippy" Maude, previously assistant organist to "Daddy" Mann at King's Cambridge, on the other hand employed a natural sense of choral flow and ability to breathe with the ensemble. Pippy's Bach playing would hardly be accepted as correct in these "enlightened" times; he approached fugues as exercises in crescendo-building, starting with a gentle choir flute, gradually increasing the excitement and culminating in the inevitable final



pedal entry with the full-throated 32ft Double Ophicleide duly unleashed. Thrilling stuff! As my Durham days progressed, the organ took a back seat as singing and conducting took over. In addition to appearing as a solo tenor with local choral societies, I was also conductor of the University Opera Group, Chamber Choir and Orchestra. Arthur Hutchings insisted on the highest standards (no dumbing down in those days) and during his 25 years as Professor awarded only two firsts. Needless to say I was not one of them; nonetheless I progressed on to Trinity College Cambridge for further study. Following the unexpected withdrawal of a tenor choral scholar from the university and although I was not a Cambridge graduate, Raymond Leppard offered me the vacant award. Leppard ran a choir of tenors and basses (no altos) with much of the SATB repertoire duly rearranged – I recall in particular his adroit reheating of the Stanford Three Motets (originally composed for Trinity of course) with a light-headed 'Beati quorum via' tripping along gaily at a jovial one-in-a-bar like a Venetian waltz! With an eye to future employment, I decided to revive my organ playing and after much sweat, toil and tears, Messrs Wills, Grant and Dexter - no doubt after a good lunch - generously allowed me to slither (just) through the ARCO examination. So, I became Assistant Director of Music and Organist at Epsom College where, before long, I had founded the Epsom Chamber Choir which is still going strong, celebrating its half-century last year. By then, I was a member of the Louis Halsey Singers and Roger Norrington's Schütz Choir, travelling each week to the RAM to study with Professor Roy Henderson, a Nottingham lad and former chorus master to the Harmonic Society; one of RVW's "16"; and mentor to the wondrous Kathleen Ferrier. 'Prof' it was who "uncorked" my voice, transforming the instrument from an insipid English tenor much given to squeaking verse anthems, into something more operatic – i.e. louder! Before long I discovered that several choral societies would only book Henderson-trained singers; when I questioned a choir secretary, he replied "We like our soloists to be heard above the orchestra!" (Incidentally, on his being auditioned in 1934 for the first ever season at Glyndebourne, John Christie wrote to the RAM "Henderson can clearly sing, but can he act?", to which the Principal responded "Act? Of course he can act. He plays cricket!")

In February 1971, there was a national postal strike and it seems I was only one of a small band intrepid enough to drive down the A23 to deliver my application to be Director of Music at Hurstpierpoint College. Two of us were invited for interview but the other chap failed to turn up – I was in! As soon as I entered the buildings, I was entranced. Founded in 1849 by Rev. Nathaniel Woodard as one of a series of Anglo-Catholic boarding schools, 'Hurst', nestling in the South Downs, was designed along the lines of an Oxbridge college with the dining hall and chapel in the inner-quadrangle; and, though lacking the French Gothic exuberance of Lancing's 'Cathedral on the Downs', the chapel, designed by R.C.Carpenter, has an understated elegance and dignity to which I was immediately drawn. The fine 3-manual organ, containing bits of Hill, Walker and Hele was totally rebuilt in 1961 by Degens and Rippin, their op.3, with a Bombarde division playable on the choir and a fine Stephen Dykes Bower case on the South Wall.



*A perky Director of Music, to the right of the School Chaplain*

Choral singing held a central position in the life of the school with a brief evening service every weekday at 6pm and two choral services on Sundays. Psalms were sung to plainsong ('Briggs and Frere'); Sunday services would include Merbecke (unaccompanied) and canticles were sung by the whole school – Stanford, Ireland, Walmisley, Noble, C.S.Lang, Parry, etc. As the school had its own prep department on site, I had a ready supply of some 24 trebles who rehearsed every weekday for 40 minutes after lunch and for 30 minutes before each Sunday service.

Needless to say, several distinguished church musicians have been associated with the school over the years: Sabine Baring-Gould was on the teaching staff when he wrote the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers"; two organists moved on to Cathedral posts, Horace Hawkins to Chichester and Meredith Davies to Hereford; and during my tenure John Birch became a member of the College Council proving an invaluable friend and guide. Incidentally our very own David Butterworth is a distinguished "Old Johnian" (the school's original title being 'St John's College Hurstpierpoint') holding the place in just as high a regard as do I. [*Indeed, E. Power Biggs was also a pupil at Hurst – Ed.*] During my reign, the music department consisted of myself running the Senior School; Nick Searls, an Old Lancing boy and former Head of Cricket at the RAM in charge of Junior School Music; and my wife Jane (who was also teaching at Wells Cathedral School) in charge of Strings together with the distinguished 'cellist Jean Carrington whose son David became musical director of The Kings Singers. In addition, the Head of Chemistry who had studied with the one-armed Douglas Fox at Cambridge was College Organist. We were an harmonious and happy ship, aided no doubt by our weekly Friday evening departmental meetings playing bar billiards in the White Hart at Cuckfield... the only pub from which I have been banned. So far.



*The Degens & Rippin rebuild*

I was intensely happy at Hurst, feeling totally comfortable with its collegiate ethos and churchmanship and seemingly limitless scope for experiment and expansion. For example, Leon Goossens, Jack Brymer and Barry Tuckwell were among those that played concerti with the augmented school orchestra. In my

third year I was invited to apply to become an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. At the interview in Bedford Square, I was faced with the formidable trio of Philip Cranmer, Herbert Howells and John Stainer (no, not THAT one!) and, following training with Noel Cox, another Harmonic Society chorus-master, I was soon launched on my maiden voyage to Joan Last's bungalow in Littlehampton. I have described my ABRSM experiences before in this august organ so won't re-tread old paths; suffice it to say that it has been a privilege to have been with them for 46 years and to have visited 41 countries. Incidentally, I believe I am so far the only examiner to have fallen off a horse inside a volcano.

After five happy years on the Sussex Downs, I was lured away to Malvern College by the promise of better departmental facilities (a former Victorian hotel that once housed 'Dr Grindrod's Water Cure'), a larger instrumental team and, I must admit as we were starting a family, filthy lucre. But from the outset I found the choral/chapel situation challenging, the absence of a junior department making the running of an all-male choir onerous - and there were only 2 services a week. I was missing Hurst dreadfully. The 1899 west-end Willis was in need of open-heart surgery and eventually Daniels of Clevedon did a thoroughly workman-like job, the opening recital being given by Francis Jackson. Now, some 43 years later, a brand new instrument is called for and I believe thoughts are looking towards Northern Europe. Meanwhile, like my predecessor the distinguished counter-tenor Charles Brett, I became conductor of the 150-strong Malvern Festival Chorus allowing me to work with orchestras such as the CBSO, Halle, and RLPO. During 10 years on the Malvern Hills, I directed all of Elgar's major choral and orchestral works with my final Festival marking the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Sir Michael Tippett. In addition to conducting works by Elgar and Tippett the latter - no less - played croquet with the Lindsay String Quartet, judged a marmalade-making competition, taught A level music classes and attended my final rehearsals of *A Child of our Time*. One morning, when he joined us in the Common Room for coffee and biscuits, one star-struck housemaster commented "Crikey! It's like having elevenses with Beethoven!" This all made for a heady conclusion to ten years in that idyllic part of the country.

Needless to say, following Ralph Allwood at Uppingham School, I inherited one of the country's finest school choirs, the challenge being to maintain the standard while developing orchestral work to a similar level. Over the years, the number of ex-cathedral choristers entering the school rose steadily and regular visits from distinguished consultants such as Robert Tear, Chris Hiron and Nicholas Kynaston ensured our most able musicians were fully challenged. Standards continued to rise, as witnessed by a memorial concert in King's Chapel for Douglas Guest (Uppingham DoM 1945-50) when the choir sang *Spem in Alium*, the strings performed RVW's *Tallis Fantasia* and the senior orchestra Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. Perhaps the most thrilling occasion took place in my final years when the Nottingham Harmonic Society Chorus, of which I had been conductor since 1986, combined with the Uppingham Concert Choir - roughly half the school - in performing Britten's *War Requiem* in Lincoln Cathedral. We were sending a regular clutch of singers and organists to Oxbridge, and at one point five of the King's choral scholars and the organ scholar (Ashley Grote) were OUs. However, matters were in danger of getting out of hand when a choral CD we recorded for Decca featuring one of our young trebles, Anthony Way, became alarmingly popular, beating "The Three Tenors" on the Classic FM charts; this resulted in Christmas appearances for BBCTV at the RAH with Cliff Richard, and singing Lionel Bart's "Oom-pah-pah" with Barbara Windsor on the 'Michael Barrymore Show'. Eventually, after 33 years as a school Director of Music - 16 at Uppingham - the strain was beginning to tell and I realised I was in danger of sending not only myself but others doolally. It was time for a complete change of direction; although I continued with the Harmonic for several more years, and the ABRSM kept me busy at home and abroad. Over a drink in 'The Pitcher and Piano', John Keys alerted me to the vacancy at St Barnabas Cathedral, putting me in touch with Peter Smedley and Monsignor Thomas McGovern.

I had come a long way from the Scottish Kirk.

Neil Page

# GEMS FROM THE PRESS:

From *Church Times*:

## LAY APPOINTMENTS

ARNOLD. Matthew Arnold to be Fresh Expressions Lay Pioneer of St Augustine's Mansfield, and St Barnabas's, Pleasley Hill, and Mansfield Deanery Growing Disciples Adviser in Evangelism (Southwell and Nottingham)

and from *The Times*:

The Radio 5 film review (of all places) is debating whether new students are going "up" to university. One listener warned that this causes awkward confusions. While he was a student, James Pooley's neighbour asked his mother what he was doing. She meant to say that he was at his Cambridge college, but caused distress by saying "Well James has recently gone up to Jesus".

From the Tuner's Book at St Paul's Church, Carlton:  
(they don't make them like this any more...)

Sunday 2ND DEC 1990

Reeds need tuning on both Swell and Great

3 PISTONS STICK AT TIMES THEY ARE NO 3 SWELL, NO 1 GREAT, NO 1 CHOIR

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF STOPS THAT DO NOT FUNCTION CORRECTLY ON THE PISTONS EITHER THEY WILL NOT COME ON, OR IN SOME CASES THEY WILL NOT GO OFF. FOR EXAMPLE PEDAL OCTAVE 8<sup>th</sup> COMES ON, ON NO 4. GT, BUT WILL NOT GO OFF WHEN SAY 3-2 OR 1 IS PRESSED THIS IS ONLY ONE EXAMPLE. SEVERAL STOPS DO APPEAR TO BE RATHER STIFF; FOR EXAMPLE TRY MOVING THE FOLLOWING STOPS PEDAL OCTAVE, GREAT BOURDON

CHOIR GEDACT. WHILST THE PEDAL BASS FLUTE IS THE OPPOSITE, HARDLY ANY SPRING IN THE STOP. AT ALL

~~I did have trouble with the foot organ (Reed) Piston in rather unexpected and functions when it feels like it. one has to hold several~~

Put down in error

I'm not by nature what is called a piston pusher. I usually change stops by hand but there are times when pistons are very useful for either a full, loud or soft organ immediately, and then I do expect the pistons to function correctly. *R Bassett*

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STOPS PRINTED

Is it possible to clean the stops, ie these are the following which needs cleaning up.  
Swell Super 4" Swell Sub to Great and Swell to Pedal 4"

I don't want to interfere by doing it myself in case I remove the print off the stops

Organ Attended. April 17<sup>th</sup> 1991.

Tuning and regulation of Reed stops in particular. etc. will call in to look at the piston situation tomorrow.

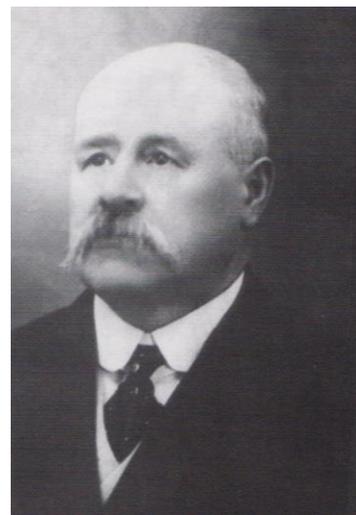
*R. Bassett*

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NO PEDAL STOPS OPERATE ON PISTON NO 4. ALTHOUGH THEY WORK ON ALL THE OTHER 3 PISTONS. ALL 5 STOPS ARE SET TO COME ON NO 4 BUT IT HAS RECENTLY BROKEN DOWN CHOIR NO 1 PISTON SHOULD OPERATE GEDACT 8<sup>th</sup> BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO BRING IT ON

## THE CASTLE GATE STORY – PART ONE

As work progresses slowly but surely on the rehabilitation of the Castle Gate organ, it is perhaps inevitable that one should have become ever more curious about its precise origins. On the face of it, it is generally quite well known that it was initially built in 1897 for G.E. Franklin (not G.T. Franklin, incidentally) for his house in Derby, being moved to Castle Gate, and re-opened in 1909 “upon the owner’s death.” And that has been just about where it has stopped, until I started digging. And I must say immediately in this respect, that I have had enormous help from the two authors Brian Seddon (Melbourne, VA) and David L. Bean (Hull) of the book entitled “*Well-Heeled – The Remarkable Story of the Public Benefit Boot Company.*”



So, who was this G. E. Franklin? Why was his organ passed on to Castle Gate after a mere eleven years? Had he died? There are many holes remaining in the story, though I would like to think fewer now than of yore. Even so, this is going to have to come in instalments! Suffice it to say – and here’s a clue – this is not so much a case of your archetypical ‘rags to riches’; more accurately, rags to riches to rags.

George Edward Franklin was born in Elton (then Huntingdonshire) on 4<sup>th</sup>. June, 1849, to Richard Franklin, grocer and draper, and his wife Eunice *née* Harker, one of fifteen children of whom ten were to survive into adulthood. [Remember Harker for later...] As far as I can ascertain, there was a family home in the village as well as the shop, the address of this being 23, Overend, later to be re-numbered no. 7. Incredibly, it is almost unchanged to this day:



*Then ...*



*... and now*

The shop was next door to the local pub, the Black Horse Inn, and next to that was the rather fine church of All Saints. George was educated at Elton School under Bishop Piers Calvey Cloughton, D.D., M.A., [oh, those wonderful Victorian names], and would almost certainly have been a member of the church choir. As such, he would have been ‘noticed’, and at the ripe old age of 12, he was appointed Organist. The earliest record of an organ here dates only from 1886, a super little Lewis still going strong, so George’s role may actually have been that of ‘harmoniumist.’

George had one sibling older than him by a couple of years, William Henry, and I mention him here as he was to become a significant factor in George’s later ascension on the ladder of wealth and success. Following the death of George’s paternal grandfather, the family moved to Grimsby, this move having been narrowed down to somewhere between May 1866 and March 1888. The address was 21 and 23, Freeman Street (now a very shabby area), and here George’s father, Richard, is described in the 1871 census for Grimsby as ‘Baker, Grocer and Employer.’ By now, whilst George is included, he is no longer as ‘Son’, but as one of three ‘Servants’ with a profession given as ‘Grocer.’ So he may still have been living with the family, but he was definitely an adult, and expected to earn his keep as one of the assistants in Richard’s shop.

In the following year, George married Elizabeth Hunn in the (Methodist) Victoria Chapel, Cleethorpes Road. (Sadly, this chapel was to be closed as early as 1917; there are still seven Methodist places of worship in Grimsby to this day.) By 1873, father Richard had moved his family to Hull, and in the Hull Packet of 22 August, 1873, we find an application by “George Ed. Franklin” for a beer-off licence at the family’s shop at 91, Trinity Street. This suggests that, by now, father and son were at least in partnership, if indeed they had not reversed their original roles.



By now, George and wife Elizabeth were beginning to settle down to the prospect of having a family, and this is where we enter murky waters. From a later census of Turnditch appropriate to the then-estranged Elizabeth, we know they had a total of 10 children, and we seem to have located nine of them – the tenth most likely to have been an infant death; such occurrences were common throughout the century and contemporary records tend to be scant. So it is that we think the first child might have been one of the infant deaths, as both the birth and death of a ‘Male Franklin’ were registered in Hull in the second quarter (April, May, June) of 1875. Current investigations are focussing on the General Cemetery on Spring Bank West, formerly in a dreadful state but now happily the subject of renewed interest and activity from a properly formed Preservation Trust. In November of the following year, 1876, their second child, George Harold, was born. We find him, aged 4, in the 1881 census; then as a boarder along with his younger brother Horace, at King’s School, Peterborough (choir, perhaps?) in 1891. Sadly, he was to die of TB, in Malta, on 10 August, 1895, aged only 18.

Still in 1876, this is the year in which older brother William set up his embryo boot business, at 93, Prospect Street, Hull. (By an extraordinary coincidence, this building – still extant as the Silver Cross pram shop – was directly opposite the Royal Infirmary where this writer was later to be born.) William clearly hit the jackpot with his new venture for, in fairly rapid succession, the business expanded to nos, 16 and 96; then 90, then 94!

Back to George, we know that he was appointed ‘Organist’ at Elton at the age of 12, and we can assume this continued until the family went to Grimsby when he was perhaps 17. But you can’t keep a musician down – least of all an organist. I wouldn’t be surprised if he got involved in the music at Holy Trinity Church, the largest parish church in the country. For many years, it was this church that vied with St Mary’s, Nottingham, each boasting respectively to have the largest parish church choir in the country! Notwithstanding business and family commitments, we can be sure that music would have continued to rumble along in that busy mind of his. The Hull Packet of 5 October, 1878, has an interesting article on what was presumably some kind of forthcoming trade fayre in Hull. I cannot help but smile at some of the extracts: “Messrs. Young & Akrigg devote a stand to the exhibition of bicycles and chimney-pieces”; Mr J. Walker, of Peter Street, favours the public with specimens of what the cordwainer can do in the difficult branches of his profession”; and – to the point - “Immediately under the platform in the large hall is an harmonium which is constructed on a new and improved principle. It is for sale, and is the property of Mr. Franklin, Trinity Street.” I reckon there is no way that George would be selling his ‘new and improved’ harmonium, unless a move were in the offing ... In fact, they were around for a little longer, as their next child, Horace, was born on 15 July, 1879, allegedly at no. 104, Trinity Street. This would have been across the road from the shop; it may have housed the whole family if, for example, the entire premises of 91 were needed for stock, etc. Or, perhaps more likely, George had bought or rented this himself, for his young family *pro tem*.

And *pro tem* it was indeed for, in the following year, 1880, George joined his already successful older brother in the now-burgeoning Public Benefit Boot Company, a major event in his life which was to bring him much nearer to us! And so the story will continue, with its ups and downs, but next time mainly the ‘ups’ ...

*David Butterworth*

## FURTHER NOTES AND NEWS

We are sorry to announce the death of our long-time member John Whybrow, who for many years was the Organist of Barlborough Parish Church. Such was John’s enthusiasm that, in 2000, he personally paid for the installation of a Pedal Trombone at Barlborough by our former President Richard Scothon; apparently, the Trombone pipes are free-standing in the vestry. Interestingly, the organ was also later worked on by our current member Christopher Gray.

Our ex-President and in-house technical whizz-kid, Ian Watts, is compiling a ‘virtual’ composite organ recital by N.D.S.O. members to take place towards the end of October, and is inviting contributions. You have until 15<sup>th</sup>. October to submit your party-piece, but please don’t leave it until the last minute! Ian can be contacted on 9637647; 07950 753429; [ianctms@gmail.com](mailto:ianctms@gmail.com)

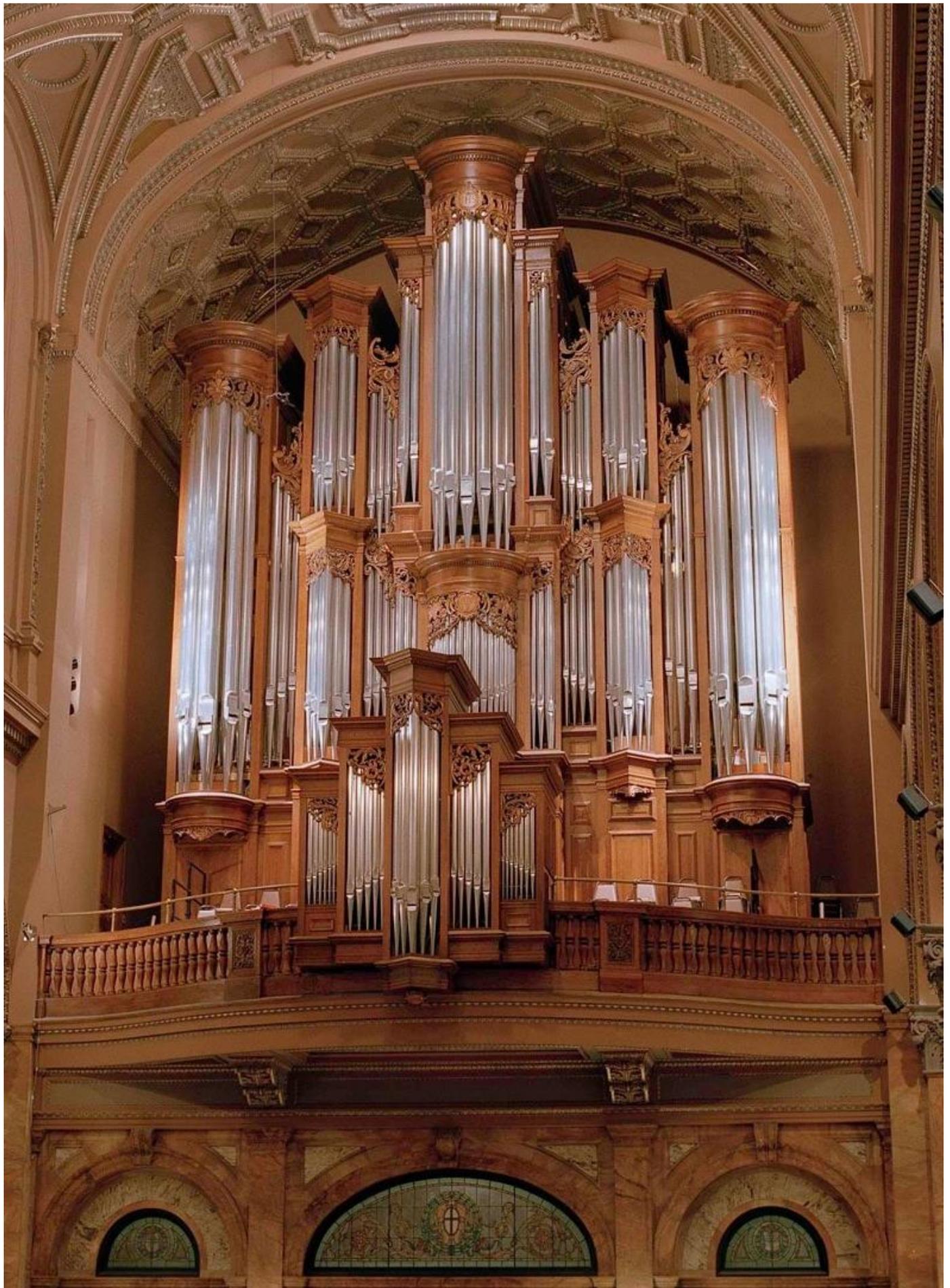


Can you suggest an appropriate title? Email answers to the Editor for future publication

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*The Mander Organ of the Church of St Ignatius Loyola, New York*  
"A masterpiece in our time"