



Soundboard

The newsletter of the Nottingham & District Society of Organists

Est. 1932

May 2023

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Richard Marsden MA (Cantab.)

It was with great sadness that we had to postpone our visit to organs in Burton Joyce and Lowdham. Our sympathies went out to David and Jan. We send them our best wishes for David's full recovery and look forward to being able to reorganise this visit before too long.

Our programme has also been knocked for six by the impossibility of getting a date from Lincoln Cathedral for our visit there. Although permission has been given through the kindness of Colin Walsh, Organist Emeritus, the 'powers that be' have dragged their feet and to date we have still not been able to fix a date. Our tenacious Hon. Sec. has not given up though! Watch this space.

I do hope many of you will be able to join us for 'The Organs of the Derwent Valley' on 3rd June. This is home territory for me and I am looking forward to showing you the fine instrument in Belper St Peter's, where I play. We will also be taking in a couple of smaller instruments in nearby villages and enjoying lunch at the 'community pub' in Holbrook. It should be a pleasant day out and we are hoping a good many of you will be able to come. Be warned though – the Belper organ has a flat, straight pedalboard and the world's most uncomfortable swell pedal!

Speaking of good turn-outs, one of the things which your Committee is concerned about is the small numbers which many of our events attract. Obviously, many of us lead busy lives and, with the best will in the world, can't make it to every NDSO gathering. As a Committee, we ask ourselves whether there is anything we can do to attract a larger proportion of our members to our meetings. We have decided to poll members to see if there is anything we can do to increase participation. Look out for your copy of the questionnaire arriving from Denis very soon. Please don't hold back in giving your forthright views!

On a different note, I wonder how many of you have heard of Paul Fey? He is an up-and-coming German organist and composer, currently assisting at St Thomas' Leipzig (J S Bach's church). At 23, he is already a prolific composer and if, like me, you are obliged to come up with a weekly post-service voluntary, you may find his web site very useful. He has many 'Tuba Tunes' and 'Trumpet Tunes'; all very tuneful and jolly, and useful as concluding voluntaries. He also has a wealth of material based on hymn tunes which are well known in the UK, including *fff* toccatas as well as meditative stuff. It's all available to listen to – and/or purchase – from his web site (<https://feypaul.sellfy.store>). The beauty of it is that almost all his material is fairly easy but sounds much harder and more complicated than it actually is – and what organist does not love pieces like that!



Next Event

Saturday 3 June: Organs in the Derwent Valley – see overleaf



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 3rd June, 10.30am – c.3.45pm

‘Organs in the Derwent Valley’. A visit to St Peter’s Church, Belper (where our President now resides as Organist); St Michael’s, Holbrook; and All Saints’ Church, Alderwasley. Lunch options in Holbrook are included in the programme, at either the Spotted Cow or the Spotted Calf (I kid you not.) Comprehensive details regarding timings, etc., are available on our Honorary Secretary’s latest Update, sent out on 13 May, although in this instance remarkably bereft of information on bus routes!



Hatching the plot

Saturday 17th June, 3pm

A concert of music for violin and piano at Halam Court, given by the Apollon Duo, Alexander Binns and Dora Chatzigeorgiu. This event will also be open to the public.

Tuesday 18th July, 5.20pm

The Annual General Meeting, to be held again at St Michael’s, Bramcote. A members’ recital may or may not be incorporated into this meeting; more anon.

We are looking forward to the re-instatement of Dave Machell’s carefully planned visit to Lowdham and Burton Joyce in the not-too-distant future. Dave is getting much better now, 95%, he says!

PERSONALIA

It is heartening to have received several enquiries regarding our Chaplain’s state of health. I am delighted to say that Fr Stephen has completed his seven-and-a-half-weeks of radiotherapy at Leicester, and the results are excellent. As he recovers from the ordeal of these daily visits, he is steadily resuming full duties at St Joseph’s Church, Oakham. Members who recently visited him will; appreciate how delighted he has been to get back home, not only to serve his parish but also to enjoy some of his wonderful musical accoutrements. In July, he will celebrate 25 years as an ordained priest, upon which we send him our congratulations.

Quite an event for the East Midlands has come about with the appointment of Peter Shepherd as Organist and Director of Music at Chesterfield Parish Church. At the same time, a half-time Assistant to Peter has been appointed, in the form of Christopher Black. Peter was Organ Scholar of Merton College, during the time of the installation of the amazing Dobson organ. No doubt we shall be paying him a visit at some stage, to hear about his plans and aspirations for the church and its music. The Vicar, too, (Rev. Patrick Coleman) is an enthusiastic and capable organist. Indeed, he is intending having a small pipe organ built in his garage at home, but it is unclear as to whether this has got off the drawing board as yet. Best of luck to all at Chesterfield; these are not easy days.

RECENT EVENTS

Zoom meeting with Dr John Kitchen – My Life with the Organ



For our January meeting this year we were treated to the reminiscences of John Kitchen, City Organist of Edinburgh and Director of Music at Old St Paul's Episcopal Church in Edinburgh. He is a retired academic at Edinburgh University, has made many recordings on organs and historic keyboard instruments and has been involved with the Russell Collection of Early Keyboard Instruments for many years. In early life, he sang in a church choir, and thereby became fascinated with the organ.

John was in the unfortunate position of having been IAO President during the pandemic and having to effectively organise the Edinburgh IAO Music Festival three times, which, after several iterations due to lockdowns and artist availability, almost ended up as originally planned.

John has a collection of musical instruments at home, including a square piano, a harpsichord, a clavichord and a four stop organ built by Lammermuir Pipe Organs. He expressed the opinion that every home should have a harpsichord; perhaps this is not surprising, considering his doctoral thesis was entitled “Harpsichord Music of Seventeenth Century France: the forms, their origins and developments, with particular emphasis on the work of Louis Couperin (1626–1661)”.

The organ music of Johann Ludwig Krebs features among his many recordings. These were made for Priory about twenty years ago. The instruments used were all British, three being in Scotland and the other two in England, as the budget for the project would not stretch to visiting the likes of Altenberg and Waltershausen. When John first agreed to make these recordings he knew little of Krebs's organ music, so it was a major learning experience. He strongly recommends it to anyone interested. Indeed, there is much good music to be found in his *oeuvre* which hardly ever makes its way into recital programmes; this includes a number of chorale preludes based on chorales not used by JSB, such as *O Ewigkeit du Donnerwort* (*O eternity thou word of thunder*).

John has had a long association with Delphian Records. His recordings encompass a variety of musical styles, including Byrd and Russell at one end of the spectrum and Celia McDowell at the other. He has also made recordings of harpsichord music on some of the historic instruments in the Russell Collection.

Part of John's role as City Organist is to give recitals on the Usher Hall organ. The instrument was originally installed by Norman and Beard in 1914. By the 1980's it had fallen into disuse until its restoration by Harrisons in 2002-03. These recitals attract large audiences for very varied programmes. The Edinburgh Organists' Association produced a book and recordings “Organs of Edinburgh” in which John was heavily involved.

John enjoys his position as Director of Music at Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh which, incidentally, has a good view of Waverley station. The Episcopal Church is probably as near to the traditional Anglican style as can be found in Scotland, and in fact at St Paul's John directs a fully choral service each week.

We were well entertained by John's anecdotes and the musical examples he used which included Krebs's afore-mentioned *O Ewigkeit du Donnerwort*; Hollins's *Evening rest*, Sullivan's *Cachucha* from *The Gondoliers*; an extract from the Couperin *Messe pour les Paroisses* complete with the vocal part; and an extract from a service at Old St Paul's.

Denis Littleton

Annual Luncheon at the Corinthian

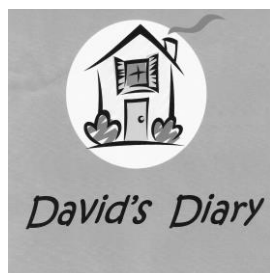
In its most literal sense, companionship involves sharing bread (from the Latin *companiones* “bread fellows”), and this is exactly what we are about each year in February. The annual luncheon is our chance to catch up with like-minded friends, renew old acquaintances, meet new members and to enjoy first-rate food and drink in the august surroundings of the Corinthian restaurant.

Not only was the 3-course meal excellent - but the service was also superb, and attention to detail was evident at every stage of the proceedings, due in no small measure to Hon. Secretary Denis Littleton’s meticulous planning and preparation. When it was all over, and after our tactfully provided comfort break, it fell to our current president, Richard Marsden, to propose the loyal toast. (It goes without saying that he was completely “up to speed”; there was none of the “O Lord save the Qu...oops...K. K. King” which I have heard more than once when those presiding have been on autopilot!)

Professor David Baker, our guest of honour, needed little introduction for those of us who remember his spell as David Butterworth’s assistant at St Mary’s in the mid-70s. He spoke entertainingly and with a refreshingly light touch, largely informed by his extraordinarily varied career: *inter alia* recitalist, teacher, musicologist, librarian, university administrator, West Yorkshire local historian, and even author of murder mysteries – “The Organ Loft Murders” (obtainable on Amazon if you failed to purchase one of the copies David brought with him) is probably irresistible! David is currently best known for his distinguished work with the Halifax Organ Academy – and a visit to its website for those unfamiliar with its brand of outreach and advocacy is warmly recommended.

As always, a lovely and stimulating occasion; food for body, mind, and soul. Sincere thanks to all who contributed to its success

Roger Harrison



As I write this, hard on the heels of the Coronation of King Charles III, I cannot help but continue to reflect on what must count as one of this year’s great highlights – and I know I speak for many members. The programme of music chosen – new compositions included – was outstanding for its taste and seamless relevance, the more remarkable when we know that it was all driven under the watchful and firm eye of the Sovereign himself. He is of course, an excellent musician in his own right, and a great lover of classical music, being quite a decent ‘cellist (though undoubtedly somewhat neglectful of his regular dose of arpeggios these days.)



But to stick to the ‘event’ ... One can only wonder at the organization that went into the whole day – and not just the wondrous service itself; everything apparently superbly co-ordinated so far as the public were concerned (though I think I detected a couple of minor timing ‘blips’ around the 11.00 mark?) The standard of musical performance was, of course, immaculate throughout and – not least – it was good to

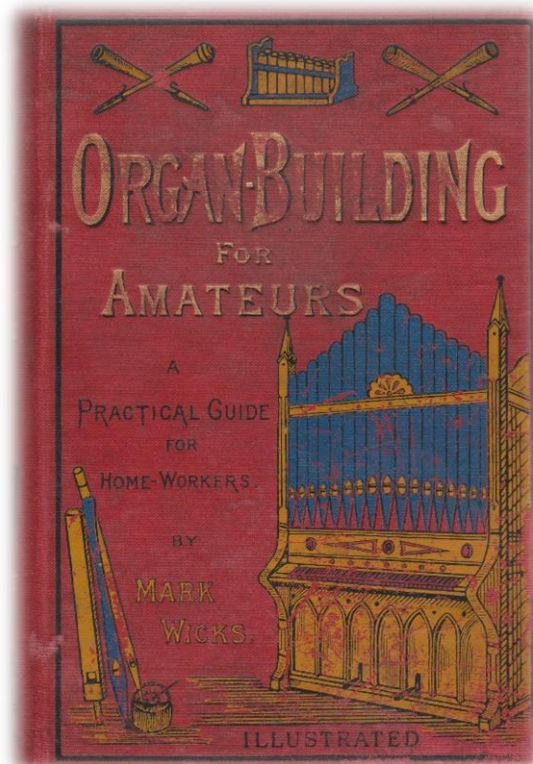
see our friend Andrew Nethsingha, who had so recently hosted us at St John's College, Cambridge, now at the helm in the Abbey.

As to the form of the service, I personally experienced profound comfort in the traditional incorporation of Holy Communion into the ceremony, and especially in the adoption of the timeless language of the Book of Common Prayer. Thank you for that, Charles. Not everyone will agree with me. But if you don't – or for that matter if you do – please write a Letter to the Editor, and I'll publish it in our September issue.

Whilst touching on the subject of tradition, I wonder how many of us have recently read a book? ... a real book, I mean? Admittedly, maybe more of us than the national average? Our late member, Dr Donald Henry, routinely had six books on the go at any one time; he would pick up whichever one he fancied at any particular moment. These days, it is all too easy to default 'on line', to all those wonderful websites, youtube performances, whatever; enjoyable, instructive, but maybe a tad too easy? How much do you know about organ books? The first such I ever possessed was a first edition of *The Organ, Its Evolution, Principles of Construction and Use*, by our local aficionado, Professor William Leslie Sumner. I read this from cover to cover more times than I can remember, often in bed under the covers when I was supposed to be asleep! Since then, my little library gradually extended to some of the well-known classics as well as to some more abstruse – though not less important – tomes, great and small.

More recently, I was donated a near-complete library of considerable substance, which had been about to be skipped by an auctioneer handling a house clearance. This involved some duplication, inevitably, but it also opened my eyes to new delights of which I had previously been unaware. Somewhat earlier, I had also been given about a dozen books, all in beautiful

condition, by our late member and mega-enthusiast, Fred T. Hodgkinson. Most recently, our member Sylvia Cutts has most kindly donated a pristine copy of *The Percy Whitlock Companion* acquired by her late husband Ron, for the benefit of Society members. I am sure that Fred's earlier donation was made with similar intentions.



The point is that these books are not just for sitting around on someone's private shelving. They are there for sharing with all like-minded folk. So, if you fancy dragging yourself away from your computer, and have an urge to handle the real thing(s), just ask and ye shall receive. Stars of the show include *Hopkins & Rimbault* in various editions, Audsley's magnificent "*The Art of Organ Building*", Poul-Gerhard Andersen's *Organ Building and Design* and – most precious – Mark Wicks's *Organ Building for Amateurs*, which includes a chapter on making organ pipes out of paper. More on that topic anon ... There is also in the library a pile of organ builders' leaflets, which have yet to be sorted – so he says!

David

THE FRANKLIN STORY, PT. 8

How, indeed, did George's massive Binns organ end up in Castle Gate? There have always existed two burning questions unanswered in any writings hitherto. First, had the Castle Gate folk actively been seeking a replacement organ, or did they simply take advantage of an unrepeatable opportunity to 'bag' a one-off masterpiece while the going was good? Secondly, however this may have come about, did any money change hands and, if so, how much, and how was it calculated?

Let us first look at what was already there. Our starting point is the organ built in 1865 by Forster & Andrews for the sum of £499, (albeit we know that it had a predecessor, from a church circular notice of May 15th, 1861, mentioning "annual cost of organ tuning and blowing: £8 – 10 – 00"):

1863 Estimate book

Great CC to G

1. Open Diapason	56
2. Hohlflöte	44
3. Dulciana	44
4. Stopt Diap – Bass	12
5. Rohrflöte	44
6. Principal	56
7. Harmonic Flute 4 ft.	56
8. Twelfth	56
9. Fifteenth	56
10. Sesquialtra	168
11. Cornopean	56
12. Clarinet	39

687

Swell CC to G

1. Lieblich Bourdon	56
2. Open Diapason	56
3. Stopt Bass	12
4. Stopt Treble	44
5. Principal	56
6. Piccolo	56
7. Mixture	224
8. Horn	56
9. Oboe	44
10. []	

604

"Prepare for Choir Organ"

Pedal CCC to F

1. Double Open	30
2. Bourdon	30
	60

1865 Order book

Great CC

1. Open Diap	56
2. Stopt Bass	12
3. Rohrflöte	44
4. Hohlflöte	44
5. Dulciana	44
6. Principal	56
7. Har. Flute 4'	56
8. Twelfth	56
9. Fifteenth	56
10. Ses.	168
11. Cornopean	56
12. [Clarinet slide]	

Swell CC

1. Lieb. Bdn	56
2. Open	56
3. Stopt Bass	12
4. Stopt Treb	44
5. Fl. Amabile	44 (probably 8 ft) .
6. Principal	56
7. Piccolo	56
8. Mixture	224
9. Horn	56
10. Oboe	44

Choir

1. Fl. d'. Am	44
2. Lieb. Ged.	56
3. Celestina	56 [prob. 4 ft.]
4. [Lieb Flöte]	
5. Clarinet	39

Pedal

1. Open	30
2. Bdn	30
	60

- Couplers
1. Swell to Great
 2. Swell to Pedals
 3. Great to Pedals
 4. [Sw. to Gt. in Octaves]

Six Composition Pedals

Deal Case [?] - Gilded front pipes -

Sw. Box. 3in. thick

Complete by 18 March 1864

Rec. £315 nett

Old Organ 60

£375

Couplers

1. Sw to Great
2. Sw to Pedals
3. Gt to Pedals
4. Ch. to Pedals
5. Sw. to Gt. in Octaves

Four Comp Peds Gt

Five “ to Swell

Rec 22 July 1865

£360

Rec old Organ as

60

Rec. 29 Jan. 1866

29

£449

Items in blue indicate pencil in original

What has seemingly not been appreciated previously is how the two-manual Forster & Andrews (as quoted in the npor) ended up as a three-manual by the time of its displacement. It is now clear that the ‘enlargement’ took place between enquiry and firm order back in 1865, albeit the addition of the Choir must appear in modern-day terms to be quite inconsequential! We do know that the instrument remained in the builders’ care for some years, a receipt being extant from the firm, dated as early as June 10, 1876, stating “Received of Mr Royce Twenty Pounds for cleaning and repairing the organ for Castle Gate Church £20 – 00 – 00.” Then by 1894, a mere 18 years hence, the vestry Minute Book records at a meeting on 24th April: “Resolved. That the same committee be further authorized to obtain estimates, & take such other steps as may be necessary, to put the organ in a satisfactory state of repair.” Then at the meeting of 24th July: “It was reported that the cleaning committee had resolved to ... clean the organ ...” (plus a whole lot of other work in the church.) So the organ was duly cleaned and “restored” by Messrs Cousans of Lincoln, further ‘minor’ work undertaken at this time being the addition of a Swell to Choir coupler and the removal of the Great Sesquialtera and Cornopean (!) Cousans were subsequently awarded the contract for annual tuning and maintenance at six guineas a time, This seems only to have lasted for a couple of visits, however, before the church turned to local new boy John Compton for just one visit, at a lower price. After that, of course, it was all-change.

Notwithstanding this work, as early as 30 January, 1907 there is reference to: “Proposed New Organ. Mr Henderson read a letter he had received from Mr Harris. It was resolved on the proposition of Mr Goddard seconded by Mr Gayton that the matter be postponed for a few months.” So, clearly, discussion had already been in hand by 1906 at the latest. The postponement was impressively brief. At the Church Meeting dated so soon as April 10th, 1907, it was minuted first that “the question of a new organ was discussed after which it was decided to recommend that the following be appointed a committee to consider the matter, Messrs Alliott, Williams, Harlow Humphrey, Christall [organist], Harris [Treasurer], Marks & Abbott.” Then at a following meeting, “there is urgent need for immediate steps to be taken” and “[it] recommends that a modern instrument should be provided ... It is estimated that a sum of £1,200 would be required ... Mr Henderson [the Minister] suggested that the meeting should receive the report ... and re-appoint the committee ... and authorize them to take estimates as soon as the promised contributions amount to £700.”

So the first ‘burning’ question is firmly resolved. The church were already planning to acquire

a completely new organ to replace the Forster & Andrews. One may concede that city-centre air in the nineteenth-century might have been quite smoky and dirty. Nevertheless, the timeline, such as we know it, is not very impressive, significant dates in its life being: 1865 – 1876 – 1894 – 1906, a total span of only 41 years before it was ousted. One has the distinct impression both that the organ had been troublesome, and that it might have been considered inadequate. On this latter point, the church was, after all, 1) large; 2) fully carpeted; 3) routinely full of sound-absorbing people. Furthermore, early F&A organs were relatively mildly scaled and voiced, and it is only around the (1865) time of this build that the firm was beginning to take on board a significantly ‘new’ style, inspired by the writings of one Töpfer; he being more nearly akin to the ‘Schulze’ school involving bigger, broader, Diapason tone, and a generally more forthright musical message. Set against that notion, it must be said that there is quite an old-world look to the Castle Gate specifications, embracing as they do separated ‘Stopt Basses’ to both Swell and Great; and a miserable Pedal department. On top of that, the unexplained / inexplicable 1894 removal of the Great reed and Mixture will have deprived the instrument of much of its ‘guts’.

At the Meeting of October 2nd, 1907: “The committee after careful enquiry unanimously recommended that the work be entrusted to Messrs. William Hill & Son, the builders of the organ at Westminster Abbey, at the sums received in their tender, viz. £1,260.” This was to be for a three-manual instrument. Needless to say, there would be some loose ends to tie up with things moving at such a pace. So at the Meeting of **January 29th, 1908**, considerable reference was made to the greater size of the new instrument, such as possibly to require “the keyboards to be separate”, in other words a detached console, and that there may be some structural alterations required to house it. This would involve extra expense, so additional prices would be sought and the whole brought before the next meeting for ratification. Nevertheless, confidence was such that “it was moved that the **order for the new organ be proceeded forthwith.**”

*

Hill was duly informed, and the details of this organ, having been first set out in the firm’s estimate book (which is lost), were transferred to the job book (which has survived.)

However, an unexpected turn of events came to pass only four weeks hence, as we see from minutes of 26th February, 1908. Details survive of the minutes of both a Vestry Meeting and a Church Meeting on that day. First, at the Vestry Meeting: “Mr Harlow and Mr Humphreys attended on behalf of the Organ Committee and explained that they had received and considered the offer of an organ the property of Mr Franklin, Derby. After discussion, it was resolved that Mr Alliott should bring the matter before the church and obtain the sanction of the Members to purchase Mr Franklin’s organ if the Deacons and Organ Committee thought it advisable.” “Resolved that the Deacons and Organ Committee meet on Friday [two days hence] at 7.00” Then, at the Church Meeting it is recorded: “New Organ. Moved by Mr Alliott seconded by Mr J.N. Harrison and Resolved That the Deacons be empowered in consultation with the Organ Committee to vary the decision arrived at by the last Church Meeting with regard to the purchase of an Organ if in their opinion it should be desirable to do so.”

Matters proceeded with remarkable speed. From that Friday meeting: “it was resolved that a letter be sent by Mr Harris to Mr Franklin pointing out to him that owing to the estimated heavy expenses in removing and repairing the organ and also the structural alterations required in the chapel he should state the lowest he could accept for the organ.”

From the Vestry Minutes of Sunday, 1st March, we already have George's reply, suggesting that he may come over to meet some of the Committee. It was also recorded that those members: "have power to purchase the organ at a sum not exceeding £900 – 00 – 00." Then, at the meeting of 1st April, "Mr Harlow reported that on behalf of the Deacons and Organ Committee he had purchased Mr Franklin's organ for £900 ... [and paid a deposit of £90], the purchase to be completed on or before 1st May." And, at a concurrent Church Meeting: "Mr Harlow, as Chairman of the Organ Committee, reported that their attention had been directed to an organ of great power and excellence belonging to Mr G.E. Franklin of Derby which had cost between £3,000 and £4,000 but which he was willing to dispose of at a greatly reduced price. After careful consideration and enquiry the Committee had come to terms with Mr Franklin for the purchase of the Organ and a deposit had been paid. The agreed price was £900, and the purchase was to be completed not later than the end of May. The expense of removal and re-erection would form a further charge, against which however would be set the sum realised by the sale of the present instrument which the Committee was endeavouring to negotiate.

By July 29th 1908: "the estimate of £100 for alterations to the Choir [and organ] gallery was accepted." And: "Mr Harlow proposed Mr Alliott seconded and it was carried unanimously that the estimate of Mr Binns £ [686.15] for the removal and re-erection of the New Organ be accepted."

So, the burning mysteries are revealed! The church **had** been seeking a new organ as a matter of "urgency". Secondly, it was not an outright gift, but was purchased in the sum of £900.

5

New Organ.

Mr F. D. Harris, as Treasurer of the Organ Fund, announced the completion of its task and presented the following financial statement:-

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Payments</u>
Subscriptions actually received. 854. 0. 0	Purchase of Organ 900. 0. 0
Bank Interest 13. 5. 2	Erection of do: 686. 15. 0
Proceeds of Concerts 44. 2. 10	Gallery Alterations 195. 7. 2
Collections 168. 16. 1	Electric lighting of gallery & work for Motor 37. 19. 1
Sale of Souvenir programmes 24. 4. 4	Brass rods poles & curtains 20. 13. 2
193. 0. 5	Memorial tablet 2. 16. 0
Less printing advertising & Organists fee 45. 7. 3	Hire of American Organ 1. 12. 0
147. 13. 2	Fire Insurance 5. 4. 0
Subscriptions promised, not yet paid 113. 7. 0	Bank Interest and Commission 23. 12. 0
1172. 8. 2	Sub-committees expenses 4. 7. 6
Balance yet to be provided. 716. 7. 9	Organ builders do. out of pocket 7. 7. 0
	Postages &c 3. 3. 0
	<u>£1888. 15. 11</u>

It was thereupon moved by Mr Abbott seconded by Mr Cullen and Resolved That the report

One can only speculate on the reasons for the organ committee's decision favouring Binns over Hill. This organ was, after all, second-hand, yet with the cost of the removal and re-instatement work (which, remember, included a new case front) it well exceeded the Hill quote – which was obviously inclusive of instalment and finishing. Reasons? There seems to have been haste, and Binns could probably have beaten Hill on delivery. The organ committee would inevitably have visited George's organ and probably been mightily impressed, both by the sound and by the 'information' that it had cost £3-4,000,. It had four manuals (instead of Hill's three) and a beautiful burred walnut console. Of any other factors common to the sordid world of business we know not, nor perhaps should we speculate!

Quite properly, a big fuss was made of this major project in the monthly Parish Magazine, this having wide circulation as it also covered Old Radford (Ilkeston Road), Thorneywood and Bloomsgrove (Norton Street) – Castle Gate apparently being in some way the 'Mother Church'. The April 1909 issue relates: "The New Organ. By the time this magazine is in the hands of our readers, the new Organ will be completed and ready for opening. The date is fixed for 6th April. In the afternoon, a short Dedication Service will be held at 3.30, followed by an organ recital in the evening at 8 o'clock. On Good Friday evening, at 7.30, Stainer's *Crucifixion* will be rendered [*as you do* – *Ed*] by the church choir. On Easter Sunday, special services will be held at the normal times ... The evening service will be preceded by an organ recital at 6 o'clock by Mr F.W. Christall."

There followed regular recitals for a considerable length of time, by such artistes as Herbert Walker of Glasgow Cathedral, C.W. Perkins, Reginald Goss-Custard, E.H. Lemare, T. Tertius Noble and others. Press appreciations could be quite comprehensive and effusive, such as: "Guilmant's favourite *Marche funèbre et Chant Séraphique* was played with great skill, the contrasting tone of the final melody on the pedals, coupled to the Vox Humana, and the arpeggio accompaniment on the carillons, being very striking" and: "... the voices of the birds were charmingly represented by the liquid flute tones of the organ."

The tragedy in all this is that, with little doubt, our George seems entirely to have missed out on this remarkably positive outcome to what was perilously close to being a disaster – the scrap heap and the melting pot. Nowhere in the minutes, nor in the church's magazines, post-sale, is there any reference to George. Admittedly he was on the point of leaving the area; maybe he already had.

Next time, we'll discover the ultimate fate of the Forster & Andrews organ, before tracking down George in the twilight of his career and life, post-Derby.

David Butterworth

ORGAN RECITALS

Traditional venues in the region now seem to have become well rooted, and we have indeed a plethora of interesting events to tickle our fancies. Here is a selection of just a few of them, focusing on the near future and/or our own members ...

Burton-upon-Trent, St Modwen's - Wednesdays at 12:30

7 June	Ewan Murray (Birmingham R.B.C.)
14 June	John Keys (Nottingham)
21 June	Angela Sones (Lichfield)
28 June	Peter Morris – with flautist (Wolverhampton)
5 July	David Butterworth (Nottingham)

Chesterfield Parish Church - Thursdays at 12.15

25 May Eric Singleton (Unstone)
1 June Nigel Gotteri (Dronsfield Woodhouse)
8 June Alexander Binns (Derby)
15 June David Butterworth (Nottingham)

Daybrook, St Paul's - Saturday at 19:30

20 May Colin Walsh (Lincoln)

Derby, St Anne's - Mondays at 13:00

22 May David Butterworth (Nottingham)

Halam Court - Saturday at 15:00

1 July David Butterworth (Nottingham)

Retford, St Swithun's - Thursdays at 13:00.

17 August Michael Overbury (Newark)

Southwell Minster - Various days and times

Monday 29 May, 15:30	Alexander Hamilton (Wells)
Wednesday 21 June, 19:30	Peter Dyke (Hereford)
Wednesday 12 July, 19:30	George Balfour (Southwell)

THE HALAM SERIES

After a depressing period of rain for over a week, the sun came out on the afternoon of Saturday 15 April to welcome a good audience to David Butterworth's marvellous music room in Halam, all eager to hear the organist and pianist **Peter Shepherd** make his second appearance in David's enterprising series of afternoon recitals.

The recital was built round a request by the concert Sponsor, Dr Alan Dronsfield, to hear Schubert's *Sonata in B flat D.960*. As this is over 40 minutes long, the challenge was to balance this massive work with appropriate counterweights.

Schubert's last three piano sonatas, D 958, 959 and 960, were his last major compositions for solo piano. They were written during the last months of his life, between the spring and autumn of 1828, but were not published until about ten years after his death. There is an interesting footnote in the dedication and publication of the works: Schubert had intended the sonatas to be dedicated to the leading pianist and Mozart pupil, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, whom he greatly admired. Alas, by the time the sonatas were published in 1839, Hummel was also dead, and Diabelli, the new publisher, decided to dedicate them instead to Robert Schumann, who had praised many of Schubert's works in his critical writings.

Peter gave a steady account of the work and conveyed well the structure of the masterpiece; I suspect from the applause that the rest of the audience was as delighted with the performance as I was. He then treated us to a work I had never previously encountered, Carl Nielsen's knotty but intriguing *Chaconne*, clearly a work Peter has had at his fingertips for many years. He finished with a splendid rendition of *Three Pieces* by Rachmaninov, whose technical difficulties he managed with ease.



In accepting David's invitation to perform, Peter had originally agreed to travel down from his previous Caledonian fastness of Paisley Abbey about 7 miles from Glasgow. We learnt on the day, however, that he had very recently gained the position of Director of Music at Chesterfield Parish Church so we can look forward to hearing a great deal more of his virtuosity in the next few years.

As the donations made were for Shelter Ugolyok, a Ukraine charity devoted to displaced pets and animals, it was appropriate that three music-loving hounds attended with manners as impeccable as the humans there.

Steven Halls

The next concert at Halam Court will be at 3.00 on Saturday, 27 May. It will be given by the Bramley House Trio, and features a wonderfully conceived programme for all tastes. Constituent members are Katharine Dryden (mezzo-soprano), Andrew Chadwick (violin and viola) and our member Dave Machell (piano, organ, baritone.) Admission is free and, once again, there will be a collection in aid of the Ukrainian charity for pets and animals, Shelter Ugolyok..

The final concert in this early summer series at Halam will again be on a Saturday at 3.00, being an organ recital by David Butterworth on 1 July.

ORGAN BUILDERS' NEWS

All seems to be re-assuringly healthy on the local front. Goetze and Gwynn have a lot to keep them busy, embracing work right from one end of the spectrum to the other. They are now getting to grips with the intricate Chichester project previously noted. Robert Rowley has provided me with the specification to be achieved after having had to make quite a lot of replacement pipework for it. He has written:

“Well, we are busy getting our Casson Positive assembled for Castle Drogo at the moment which is going well. At the same time, we are motoring on with our reconstruction of George Pike England's organ for St John's Chapel Chichester. The project is based on the Great soundboard and almost all of the flue work which is surviving. The organ is of 2 manuals but no pedals, and disposed as follows

Great - GG compass to e
Open Diapason
Stopped Diapason
Dulciana
Principal
Fifteenth
Sesquialtera Bass
Cornet Treble
Trumpet Bass
Trumpet Treble

Swell - Tenor G to e
Open Diapason
Stopped Diapason
Principal
Hautboy

Other work undertaken this year has included the winter maintenance of the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool, 1935 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ, and pre-season maintenance of the Wurlitzer of the Thursford collection in Norfolk

Also a light restoration of a circa 1800 anonymous organ for a church in Llanelly Wales.”

Goetze & Gwynn are about to take on a further co-director, a very experienced organ builder who will further enhance the firm's capabilities and reputation.

Henry Groves are as busy as ever. They have just finished the installation of the 52 stop 3 manual organ at Lower Broughton, Manchester which was recorded the day after completion by Jonathan Scott and is on his YouTube channel along with a travel vlog of the organ chamber etc. Details are on Groves's website. They are also currently rebuilding and re-ordering the 3 manual Walker organ at Holywood Parish Church, Northern Ireland. Also their rebuild at Alveston PC near Stratford upon Avon will be completed this year, following a frustrating delay by the Diocese. Thereafter, they have another rebuild of a Walker organ, in Kent.

Our largest builders continue to attract some very wholesome contracts. Harrisons have made amazingly quick progress (or is it just me??) in building what is being described as a new organ for Norwich Cathedral. The existing Hill, Norman & Beard ranked as one of the country's largest cathedral instruments, and in its new guise it will be hardly less so at 101 speaking stops! Much existing pipework will be re-used (a good old Arthur Harrison practice, did you but know?) but the whole of the Great Principal/Diapason chorus as also essentially the Choir Principal chorus will be entirely new, along with a smattering of other new voices here and there. A spot your editor has been watching for a while is the Guards' Chapel on Birdcage Walk. Aware that this contract nearly went to the Mander firm, their demise caused a bit of a hiccup in proceedings. We now know that Harrisons are to oblige with quite a large three-manual organ of 40 speaking stops. The lowest manual will control an "Orchestral Organ", and the whole will be voiced to blend with a brass band, whatever that means. What is noticeable is that there are many traditional Harrison-isms in the stop list! Beyond these very exciting ventures, a healthy portfolio of smaller "C and O" jobs – the bread and butter of many firms, continues to flow through the books.

Nicholsons, too, have a couple of very special jobs in hand. The first of these is the complete reconstruction of the organ in Leeds Town Hall which, when completed in November of this year, will just trump the Norwich organ at 103 speaking stops – plus, of course, a set of chimes! The other is the fantastic historic restoration of the Cavaillé-Coll in Manchester Town Hall, best described by Nicholsons themselves:

"We are delighted to have been commissioned to undertake the historical reconstruction of the organ in Manchester Town Hall. The organ was built by the Parisian organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll in 1877, enlarged by him in 1893, and then rebuilt by the English firms Lewis & Co. in 1912 and Jardine & Co. in 1970.



Cavaillé-Coll 1877

"We are undertaking the work in an equal collaboration with our friends and esteemed colleagues from the Dutch firm of Flentrop Orgelbouw. The organ will be returned in almost every way to its 1893 condition, including the re-establishment of the original pitch, the manufacture of new actions (with three new Barker Lever machines), new console, chests, and aspects of the wind system, all in a strict replica of the Cavaillé-Coll style. The casework will be returned to its original 1877 appearance with the recreation of the wooden staircases built into either side of the facade.

"The reconstruction of the organ, the most significant surviving instrument of the few built in the UK by arguably the world's finest organ builder of the nineteenth century, forms part of a much wider Our Town Hall project to safeguard and repair the whole of the Grade 1-listed building. The organ was wholly dismantled in the late summer of

2020, with completion planned to coincide with the re-opening of Waterhouse's much-loved building. The consultant for the work will be Dr William McVicker."

Members who enjoyed our recent trip to Malvern will recall seeing some of the large wooden pedal pipes in Nicholsons' workshop (waiting to be stripped of some horrid paint!), along with substantial new soundboards under construction.

They are also expected back in our locality ere long, to provide a cleaning and overhaul of the screen organ in Southwell Minster, along with an enhanced memory system for the combination action. There is a fund open for the purpose, with a target of £250,000.

And a big surprise – at least to your editor ... A brand new organ by Eule has been completed at Magdalen College, Oxford. Eule's only previous representation on these shores was their supply of the pipework for Lady Susi Jeans's organ at Cleveland Lodge in 1936, for her 'Baroque' organ constructed by Hill, Norman & Beard. Your editor played this organ as a teenager, and it certainly came as a real eye-opener at the time. The Magdalen organ is famous for its stone (!) Chair Organ case with which the Chapel had been saddled (some might say) in 1832 as an integral part of the chapel's restoration at that time by the architect Lewis Nockalls Cottingham. In 1986, Manders had built a very nice two manual and pedal instrument, which has now been sent to Hungary. Eule's replacement is more comprehensive, being an ingeniously designed four-manual which, compact though it may be, has been designed with an eye to easy access for maintenance amongst its other attributes. This is surely a must for a future visit. Interestingly, this organ has been conceived under the direction of Magdalen's current *Informator Choristarum*, Mark Williams. Mark hosted us at Jesus College, Cambridge not so long ago, and it was during his tenure there that he had the beautiful Kuhn instrument installed. He seems to have a knack!

MORE NEWS AND NOTES

Readers may recall a previous article about the removal of (most of) the pipework – all the juicy bits – from the excellent Conacher organ in Parliament Street Methodist Church. All the less 'desirable' bits were left behind, such as the soundboards and Swell box; also, however, the (doubled) front pipes of spotted metal utilising the lower regions of both the Great Open and the wide-scaled Great Gamba. These had been left temporarily by request of the elders in order to screen off all the ugly innards during the few remaining months of the church's use as a Methodist place of worship. The plans were to make the crypt into a smaller church/chapel, and to convert all the rest of the building into flats (though goodness knows where the occupants would have been able to park their cars!) A visit at the end of March has revealed a very different outcome. The rest of the organ, both guts and front pipes, has been removed, and the upper, main, church has indeed been refurbished as an 'auditorium'. This is used on Sundays for worship, while smaller services with a focus on particular needs within the community are held daily in the smaller church below. All this under the *aegis* of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God.

At the other end of the spectrum, it is sad to have to report that the United Reformed Church of Sutton-in-Ashfield will close permanently for worship at the end of July, and will be put up for sale. The church is a listed building, inside and outside, so one hopes for a bright future at least for the building. Present thoughts are that it will most likely be purchased by an alternative denomination. However, it would also make a superb little concert hall, with very little adaptation other than the re-invigoration of existing ancillary facilities. Of course, the fate of the surprisingly fine-sounding Keates organ rests in the balance. We have visited this instrument, and one can only hope that it will live on, either at Sutton or elsewhere.

James O'Donnell left his post of Organist and Master of the Choristers of Westminster Abbey at Christmas, to take up a new position as Professor in the Yale School of Music and also Professor at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. His twenty-three years at the Abbey have been nothing short of glamorous, consistently maintaining the highest standards of choral and organ music throughout that time which, of course, has included several royal occasions of national significance. As has become supremely obvious from recent events, his place has been assumed by Andrew Nethsingha. It is indeed difficult to imagine a better appointment than this. The vacancy thereby caused at St John's College, Cambridge, has been filled by Christopher Gray, who also has an excellent track record in his work at Truro Cathedral. Given that the Father Willis organs respectively at Truro and that destined for the forthcoming project at St John's (ex St Peter's, Brighton), the appointment seems fortuitous, to say the least!



Benjamin Sheen

Richard Pinel has also been appointed away from Jesus College, Cambridge (round the corner and down the Lane) to take up the post of Director of Music of St Mary's, Bourne Street, where, incidentally, our younger member Jack Stone was Organ Scholar for a year. Richard's place has been filled by Benjamin Sheen, previously Sub-Organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, as from this January.

Going anywhere interesting this summer?

Whether you plan to do a world cruise or spend a weekend in Skeggy, how about expanding your knowledge of the organ scene in the process? Our President filled us in some while ago on a fascinating organ encounter he had enjoyed in the U.S.A. Our Secretary, too, has shared a fund of experiences on his various organ tours, We could do with more such memoirs. But it shouldn't be just down to Presidents, Secretaries and the Editor to contribute! Whether you consider your encounters to be important or not, you can be assured that someone – maybe a lot of us – will find them interesting. Let's hear about them, please!

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