



Soundboard

The newsletter of the Nottingham & District Society of Organists

Est. 1932

September 2023

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Reg Aitken

First of all, let me thank you for electing me as your President for 2023/24. The last time I held this office was for the year 1999/2000, 23 years ago. How time flies; where does it go? Walter Esswood was the Hon. Secretary then with Freda as his support. I cannot recall many of the events that year but I do specially remember the annual dinner which was at the Albert Hall with the speaker being the Bishop of Southwark.

The President's Evening was at St Barnabas at Lenton Abbey, a church I attended regularly, and we had the Radcliffe Male Voice Choir as the evening's entertainment. I invited the congregation to join us; otherwise we would have been outnumbered by the choir! Hilary, my wife, did the catering and put on a good buffet; she was good at that sort of thing. Of other events that year, Walter and the committee assembled a good array of outings and meetings.

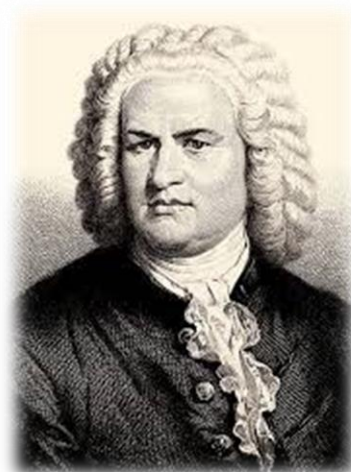
The following year was Walter Esswood's as President and what stands out in my mind was a Civic Reception at the Council House for the Society, given by the City Council. We presented them with a set of four gold-plated organ pipes on a wooden base to commemorate the event. These can still be seen in the Council House along with the city's other treasures.

Obviously, the year I was involved with sticks in my memory but there have been many notable meetings at other times, too. Probably the top one for me was the visit to Buckingham Palace where we went in through the staff entrance, up the back stairs and past the kitchens, to get to the ballroom which housed a fine organ which had been played by many notable composers. On another occasion we visited Blenheim Palace with its three organs, one of which was housed under a staircase.

We have visited many other fine organs over the years at such places as Bristol, Liverpool, Durham, Lincoln and Norwich as well as many in London - Westminster Abbey, St Pauls (where we got locked in and had to escape via the crypt), and the Temple Church - the domain of George Thalben-Ball, to mention but a few.

Those are just a few of the memorable events that have stuck in my mind, but I am sure that you will have your own highlights.

So, onto 2023/24. The Secretary and the committee have got together a goodly selection of trips and events for your enjoyment. Do come along.



Next Event

Saturday 29 October: Pershore Abbey – see overleaf



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 29 October

A visit to Pershore Abbey to see, hear and play the new Ruffatti organ. This will be a coach trip, and the day will be enhanced by a couple of other visits to this beautiful part of the country. The trip should also appeal to non-members and to non-organists, so please make this known amongst your friends, congregations, and the like.

Saturday 18 November, 11.00am

‘At Home’ with Colin Walsh, our local organist of international repute, who will regale us at Halam Court with his reminiscences and opinions, and also hopefully some music.

December

Plans are afoot for a ‘Meet the organ builder’ event. More anon.

...and more events...

Wednesday 20 September, 7.30pm - Southwell Minster: Jonathan Allsopp	£10
Thursday 21 September, lunchtime - St Swithun's, Retford: Justyna Poluszn	Collection
Wednesday 11 October, 7.30pm - Southwell Minster: Jeffrey Makinson	£10
Saturday 14 October, 3.00pm - Halam Court: Piano Trio	£10 in adv./ £12 at door * †
Thursday 19 October, lunchtime - St Swithun's, Retford: John Keys	Collection
Sunday 22 October, 2.45pm - Albert Hall: Colin Walsh	£15 / conc. £10
Tuesday 24 October, 1.00pm - St Mary's, Melton Mowbray: Michael Overbury	
Saturday 11 November, 2.30pm - Chesterfield Parish Church: David Smith (<i>Lecture-recital on the keyboard works of William Byrd</i>)	£10 / NDSO £5 †
Sunday 17 December, 6.30pm - Southwell Minster: Jonathan Allsopp	Collection

* For advance bookings, please ring Steven Halls on 07900 162170.

† Refreshments included at these events

RECENT EVENTS

Organs in the Derwent Valley – 3 June

On a gloriously sunny Saturday in early summer, sixteen members and guests made the pleasant trip into Derbyshire to visit three churches in the Derwent Valley, to sample the varied delights of their tracker instruments.

At **St Peter's, Belper**, we were greeted by our President and resident Organist, Richard Marsden, who introduced the visit with a brief history of the church and the organ.

The church, with its cavernous interior and balconies to three sides, was built in 1822 to accommodate the burgeoning population of the mill town during its rapid expansion as a significant centre for the cotton industry.

Nothing is known about the small organ installed originally, but its two manual successor, built in 1853 on the west gallery by Holt of Bradford and enlarged in 1873 by the addition of the third manual, forms the basis of the current instrument.

Falling into disuse in the 1930s, it was replaced by a then “new-fangled” Hammond electronic organ, which was in use for over forty years until, in 1978, Edmund Stowe of Derby and a team of volunteers renovated the pipe organ, bringing it back into use.

In 1991, tonal changes and additions were made by Wood of Huddersfield, including a second mixture on the Great and the Pedal Trombone.

A summary of the current specification of 27 speaking stops is as follows:

Gt: 16, 8, 8, 8, 4, 4, 2 2/3, 2, II-III, III, 8

Sw. (enc.): 16, 8, 8, 4, 2, 1, 8, 8

Ch. (unenc): 8, 8, 4, 2, 8

Ped: 16, 16, 16

Richard demonstrated the tonal range to good effect, with some fine flute stops in the final movement of John Stanley's *Voluntary No. 1*, contrasting with a robust *pleno* in Mendelssohn's *War March of the Priests*, which comfortably filled the building, aided by its sympathetic acoustic but without being overpowering. Richard commented that forthright, rather than refined, voicing had been essential to lead the singing of large congregations in the heyday of the local mills.

Members then had the opportunity to play for themselves, with contributions ranging from Bach to Guilmant. All seemed to negotiate the straight pedal board and, where appropriate, the oddly positioned balanced swell pedal (presumably originally a ratcheted mechanism), without mishap.

Next up was a visit to **All Saints', Alderwasley**, set deep in a beautiful wooded valley close to Alderwasley Hall school. The church was built in 1849 by A.F. Hurt of Alderwasley Hall for the convenience of the family, replacing a smaller chapel within the village. On entering the building, one noted a number of pews/stalls covered in plastic sheeting owing to a colony of bats roosting in the roof space near the chancel arch. Further evidence of their presence was to be found on the floor leading to the console (though fortunately no “direct hits” were recorded during our visit!)

We were greeted by organist Christopher Dixon who introduced us to the unaltered two manual 1880 Brindley and Foster, located in the north transept; with a piece by Stanford, he demonstrated the fine range of romantic tones within its surprisingly comprehensive stop-list.

The specification of 17 speaking stops is summarised as follows:

Gt: 8, 8, 8, 4, 4, II, 8

Sw: 16, 8, 8, 8, 4, III, 8, 8

Ped: 16, 8

Members then played a number of pieces, particularly demonstrating the variety of softer stops and the range of Swell string tones contrasting with the Great flutes. Given the number of stops, I was surprised that there were no 8ft or 4ft flutes on the Swell; (indeed, the only Swell 4ft is a Salicet.) On the Baroque front, a movement from one of the Bach “Vivaldi” concertos came over well and with good clarity.

The overall impression was of an instrument with a responsive tracker action, Romantic in voicing and specification, but well able to cope with music of a variety of periods to good musical effect. The church in this small community is to be congratulated for the continuing use and upkeep of this instrument.

Fortified by a convivial lunch at “The Spotted Cow”, the community-run pub in **Holbrook**, we visited the final organ of the day in **St Michael’s church** in the village.

Built in 1761 as a private chapel to Holbrook Hall, it became a parish church in 1835, though it required at that time some restoration work due to a period of neglect. It nearly burnt down twice, once in 1891 and again in 1907, when flues from the heating system became too hot and set fire to the woodwork. Extensive damage was caused on both occasions.

Fortunately, much of the one manual and pedal instrument by Hill & Son of London survived these, and in 1908 the majority of the pipework was incorporated into a two manual instrument by J.H Adkins of Derby, located in an organ chamber to the south side of the chancel.

Tonal alterations and additions to Great upperwork were undertaken in 1990 by John Poyser, and in 1994 the Swell Oboe was replaced by a Cornopean rank, formerly in Darwin school. An extensive renovation of both windchests and tonal scheme was completed in 2012 by Edmund Stowe, including the introduction of pipework from the much-altered Forster & Andrews organ formerly in Rocester Parish Church. The majority of the current pipework is therefore from the 1871 Hill organ or the 1867 F. & A.

A summary of the current specification of 15 speaking stops is as follows:

Gt: 8, 8, 8, 4, 4, 2

Sw: 8, 8, 8, 4, 2, II, 8

Ped: 16, 8

Members’ eclectic choices included Bach, Frank Bridge, Smart, Leighton and Mendelssohn as well as a pleasing Trumpet Tune by the contemporary German composer Paul Fey, mentioned by the President in *Soundboard*, May 2023. (I am somewhat wary of any stop labelled “Cornopean”, having too often been disappointed by a strangled apology for a trumpet, but this example proved to be a very effective solo voice.)

The relatively recent restoration has resulted in a versatile instrument which, though still of the Romantic period at heart, has the upperwork and reliable mechanical action to cope well with the Classical repertoire.

Thanks go to our President and Hon. Secretary for organising a very enjoyable day out, visiting three varied and interesting tracker instruments in the Derwent Valley.

David Hanford

ORGANIST VACANCY

The Parish of St George in the Meadows, Nottingham, seeks a proficient organist to play for our traditional Anglo-Catholic Sunday worship.

Potential applicants are asked to contact the Vicar, Fr Ian McCormack (preferably via email on fatherianmccormack@hotmail.co.uk in the first instance) for an initial, informal, conversation.

Salary/fees to be discussed.

Closing date for applications: Tuesday 3rd October 2023

The Apollon Duo - Saturday 17th June

Alex Binns (organ) and Dora Chatzigeorgiu (violin) at Halam



How often do you go to a violin and organ recital? How often do you have the *opportunity* to go to a violin and organ recital? I last heard the combination in the 1960s when my teacher and a Royal Academy post-graduate violin student played in a north London church. (OK, I've not kept my eyes open but I don't think I've missed too many.) Saturday afternoon in Halam was thus all the more welcome, interesting and enjoyable. The sound suited David Butterworth's fine music room so well, as did also the excellent playing which made the unfamiliar repertoire (to me anyway) even more of an eye-opener. Eighteen members were present, and the many who were not missed a treat!

The programme began with a Handel *Sonata* (HWV373), full of light sparkling sound followed by a "big" E minor Bruhns *Praeludium* – with the difference that the middle *arpeggiando* section was played on the violin. How right Alex is – the rapid broken chord passage suits that instrument so well whilst calling for considerable string crossing technique. The Vitali Chaconne in G minor brought some lovely mellow sounds as did, in a totally different style, the Lloyd Webber *Benedictus*.

More variety was conjured in David Bednall's *Marian Suite* and the *Sonata* by Carson Cooman which closed the programme. The last name was new to me but I shall certainly keep my eyes and ears open for more music by this American composer. Harmony and tone colour were fascinating, and this last aspect was skilfully brought out.

A tribute to both players was the fine balance between the instruments which showed all the lines of the music. Clear firm violin tone matched the great variety of organ sounds. All this made for a splendid and, one could say, revelatory afternoon.

I'm glad I was there!

Richard Eaton

Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason recipient of the ISM Distinguished Musician Award



We are delighted to note that Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason is the latest recipient of the Distinguished Musician Award (DMA).

She is an author, lecturer, champion for music and mother of seven children, all of whom are acclaimed classical musicians. Sheku has just featured in this year's Last Night of the Proms.

Kadiatu joins such esteemed recipients as Nicola Benedetti CBE, Errollyn Wallen CBE, Dame Sarah Connolly, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir David Willcocks, Sir Michael Tippett, Jacqueline du Pré OBE and Sir Charles Groves.

'Kadie' and her family have contributed enormously to the appreciation of classical music in Nottinghamshire, not to mention nationally and internationally. They have repeatedly performed in our locality at such venues as Southwell Minster, St Mary's Nottingham, and Halam Court and at Nottingham's grand Masonic Hall.

Annual General Meeting – 18 July 2023

Once again, our AGM was held at the gorgeous St Michael and All Angels Church in Bramcote. Our thanks must go to the team there and to member David Hanford for the use of the church with its Cousans/Groves 2 manual organ and for the lovely refreshments. Prior to the meeting we were given the chance to informally chat, and it was a particular pleasure for me finally to meet Mr August Guan, a new member who had moved into the Nottinghamshire area and had quickly joined the Society. It was encouraging to know that the Society had done their bit to help August fill the position of Organist at St George's Church, a happy arrangement which unfortunately has already come to an abrupt end with August's professional re-appointment elsewhere. However, we are re-advertising the post in these pages, and we wish them every success thereby.

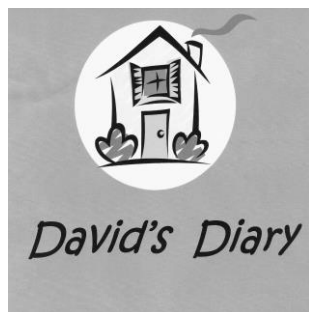


Our AGMs are considered events in their own right, often enhanced with something additional to just the meeting. For 2023, this enhancement took the form of a short run of organ pieces presented on Bramcote's fine organ prior to the meeting. It was given by young organists all of whom are receiving bursaries from the Society towards their progression in organ studies. Not all of our students were available to perform but we heard from three, all at different waypoints on their individual journeys. Isabelle Lawes performed first with *Wir danken dir, Herr Jesu Christ*, S.623 by J.S. Bach, followed by Christine Jiang who played *Vesper Voluntary no.3* by Edward Elgar and finally Ascend Jiang played the fabulous *In dir ist Freude*, S.615, again by J.S. Bach. All three students performed absolutely beautifully and it was a wonderful opportunity for us to meet them and hear their progress in person. All three are currently receiving the benefit of David Butterworth's tuition and mentorship and seem to be excelling and enjoying the instrument as they learn.

The AGM itself was a typical look at our Society's business over the past year with its main Officers: President Richard Marsden, Secretary Dennis Littleton and Treasurer Richard Eaton presenting reports. Two of these roles were passed on to others with our new President being Reg Aitken and our new Treasurer, David Hanford. All other business will no doubt be seen in the minutes of the meeting delivered by our continuing Secretary Denis. Our outgoing officers received applause as a show of appreciation for the great work they have done. We of course look forward to the events planned by Reg for 2023/24.

Following the meeting, members were invited to informally play to round off the evening, and we were treated to performances by Derek Wileman, Denis Littleton, David Butterworth and Shaun Hooper.

Ian Watts



From Hull to St Pancras...

No, don't worry, Denis, I know the Hull train pulls in to King's Cross. I am sticking to churches this time around!

Long gone now are my days of regular commitments to church and school, albeit I am hugely thankful for them and feel much the richer as a result of those experiences. But there is one real disadvantage to that weekly grind to which fewer and fewer folk are willing to commit. You

don't get to see life 'on the other side'; your opportunities to learn from others are limited and you can miss out on really good ideas, on being inspired by one's colleagues and their successes. It is thus that, when first I had left St Mary's, High Pavement, I managed to attend Sunday morning services elsewhere, at no less than twelve different churches in the locality, before once again getting 'hooked'. I have vivid memories of them, as much as anything else for the incredibly warm welcome I found everywhere. There were high points indeed. One recalls, for example, the magnificent singing voice of Rev. Philip Humphreys (referred to by the then-organist as "Umfriz") at St Giles, West Bridgford; and the superb hymn accompaniments of the understated Francis Phoenix at St Christopher's, Sneinton.

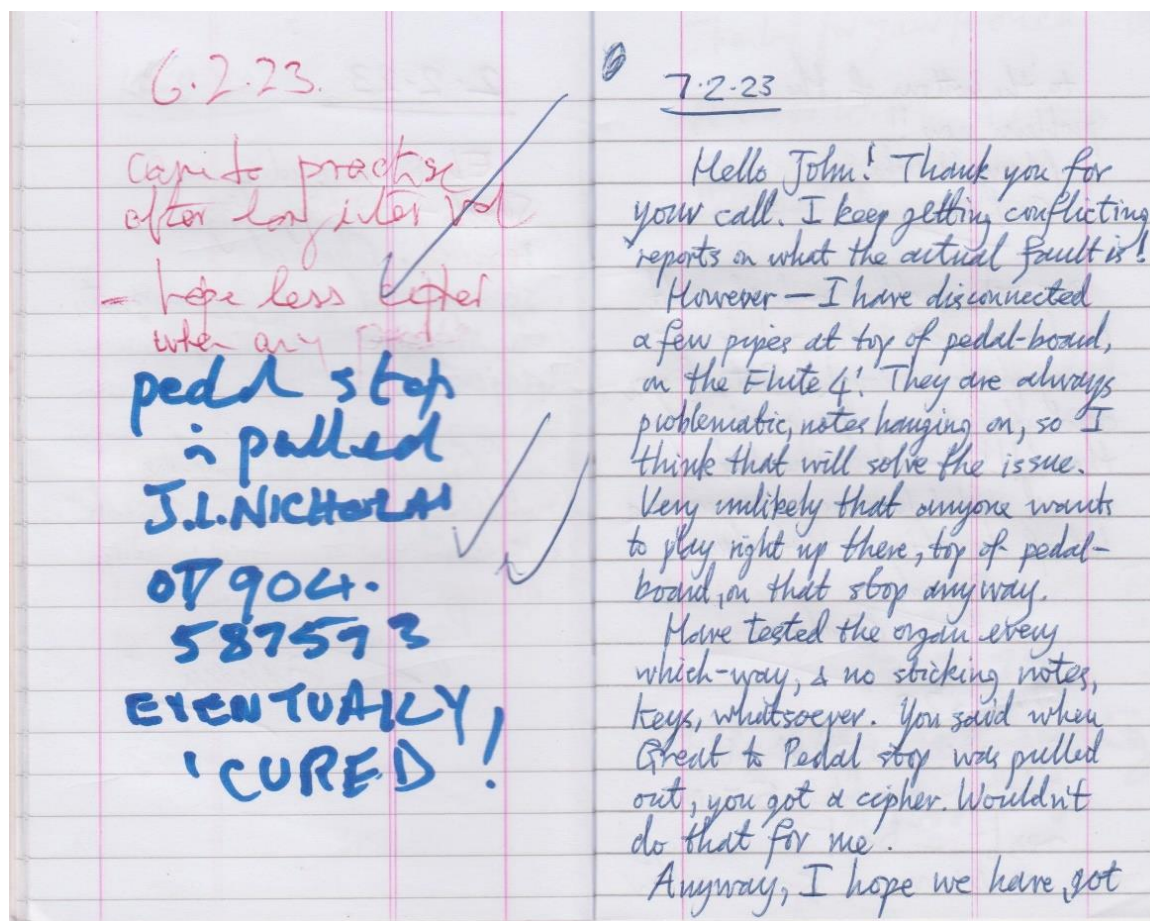
I don't recall any 'low' points, though it was somewhat wearing to endure one service in which every verse of every hymn was played with reeds – no let up at all! What I cannot help recalling is the number of bizarre incidents which coloured this unique twelve-week experience. They still make me smile, and why not? There was the church, for example, with separate organist and choirmaster/conductor. At one point during the setting of the Mass, the latter completely lost his cool at the somewhat retiring tempo of the organist, marched across to the rather exposed console and proceeded to beat the tempo in the player's face, in full view of the congregation.

Then – and this is my favourite – there was the church with – again – a separate organist and 'choirmaster' (the latter also doubling as the entire men's choir with a voice somewhat akin to a loud circular saw); complemented by a clutch of choirboys, the like of whom I have never encountered before nor since, outside the pages of a humorous novel. The organ console in this particular church is, for whatever reason, of minimalist dimensions, the smallest I have ever seen, actually – reminding me of an organ Marcussen were detailed to build some years ago for a Ladies' College in Tokyo, with a specially designed mini-console to accommodate the petite Japanese ladies! Unfortunately, back here, the organist happened to be a somewhat gangly six-footer (plus). The sight of this elongated gentleman at the tiny console, once again in full view, with arms and legs flailing about, provided ample explanation for the strange results, especially in the pedal department. But the best bit was the boys' "choir", which seemingly aped their stentorian choirmaster, producing a fantastic sound more appropriate to the Vatican than anything else I have ever heard on these shores, with the possible exception of George Malcolm's wonderful choir at Westminster Cathedral. Their behaviour, on the other hand, was 'something else' in a different sense. Unaccountably unchecked by any adults in the vicinity, this giggly 'gang', for want of a better word, resorted periodically to throwing things at each other across the chancel; they never stopped talking (except when they were singing); and whenever the rest of the church sat down, they stood up – and vice-versa. You couldn't make it up. I had been told about their amazing singing by the late Roger Bassett, local organ builder who had sometimes served at this church. Later, the next incumbent, the late and lovely Rev. Derek Hailes (Fr Hailes has just passed away at the time of writing) told me that he had tried to tackle the issue of the boys' behaviour when he took over, but was firmly told by the Head Chorister/Reprobate that "That's how we are; take it or leave it"!

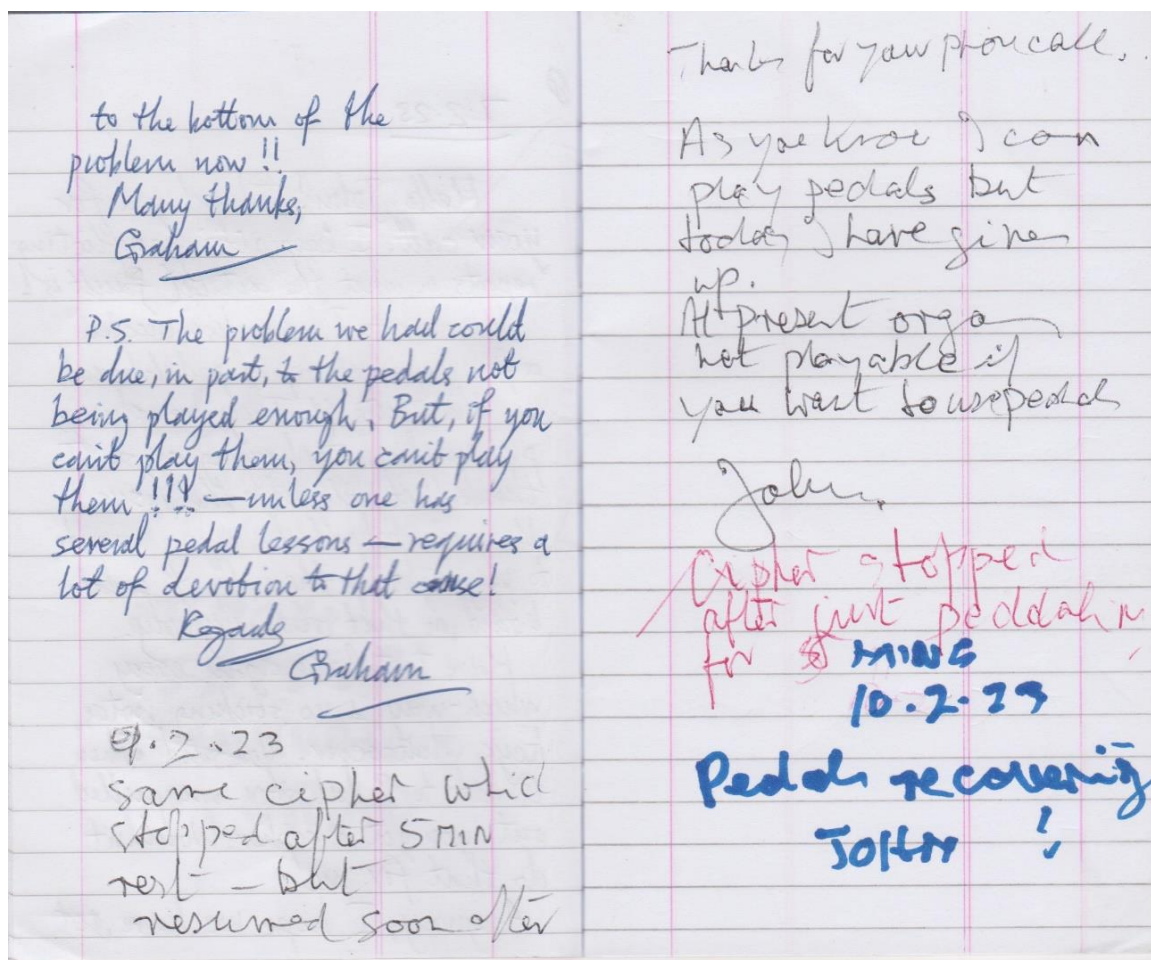
The priest added to the fun (am I allowed to use that word in church?) Fortunately, he enjoyed the services of a very efficient acolyte. Wherever the good Father moved around the church, from altar to pulpit to lectern, etc. he forgot something, whereupon the acolyte would be detailed to scuttle off and retrieve it, be it his biretta, his notes, or whatever. By now, we were in mid-December; his coup-de-theatre came at the end of the service, when he wished everyone – in all seriousness – a Happy Easter.

All that's going back a long way now. But, as one slinks warily into yet another decade, hoping for a quieter life – No! Personally, I seem to have been busier than ever this year, recitals, teaching, accompanying and standing in over a wide area. And I gather it is the same for some other colleagues. This huge variety brings with it – as ever – an exciting medley of new experiences and memories, and not a little humour at times. Of course, not everything is good. One of our long-standing members has just decided to hang up his shoes after a Sunday morning with a vicar who obtusely sang everything either ahead or behind the organ, or with an uncanny mix of the two, rather like a DAF Variomatic gearbox (do you remember those?) Another member is in the process of resignation because he can no longer cope with the incessant 'dumbing down' which upsets him. And, let's face it, we are talking about good Christian folk who have spent much of their lives faithfully serving the Church, brickbats and all. For many of us, pick'n'mix now seems the better option.

So, Hull? Yep, the funeral of a much-loved cousin – and what a nice way to say thank you and cheerio to one who meant so much. This was actually at Willerby, where there is a rather nice Forster & Andrews (surprise, surprise), rebuilt by Rushworth & Dreaper just at the time when Alistair Rushworth was making valiant attempts to pull his firm into a more contemporary *mores*. Three people in the church independently enquired as to whether the organ was "working properly" Actually, it was on that occasion, but apparently it "isn't used very much these days."



Unfortunately, at some stage someone with more money than foresight had decided to have the whole building equipped with a fitted carpet. Enter, therefore, one sound system, so that folk could once again hear what the Victorians could hear perfectly easily without it. Either the system was 'selective', or the chancel had not been switched on, so that I – firmly ensconced in the *en fenêtre* console – could hear practically nothing. Come the (dreaded) address, what to do? Search the pockets. Shucks, emergency crossword already completed. Ah! ... the tuner's book.



Of course I play the pedals! ...

They can be well worth a read in dull moments.

Admittedly, nothing I have ever seen can quite match up to the diatribes that graced those memo books wherever the late Walter Esswood had resided. One of my favourites of his, at St Paul's, Carlton, commences "I am not exactly what some people call a piston pusher, but ..." etc., etc. Willerby's book has its moments, too. Apparently, the tuner there still attends, albeit periodically bemoaning the organ's lack of use – and hence, faults. He certainly isn't afraid to speak his mind, whilst the (organist?) seems to have ongoing problems with his writing equipment; his fading red biro pen, having had to be rescued – twice – by an indelible laundry marker of all things, its contributions purposefully bleeding through to other pages – in reverse, of course!

Down at St Pancras, St Pancras (if you see what I mean), the amazing Dr Christopher Batchelor – whom I have known since he was a small boy – is the incumbent Director of Music, famed amongst other things for having created the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, and also as Managing Director for a while of Messrs. Harrison & Harrison.

In this instance, a big Ordination service beckoned – packed church, ten candidates and the choir being a superb professional quintet singing ambitious music – required separate organist and conductor. It was an exhilarating occasion, with one of those big early Mander organs (1954) with lots of guts and colour and very few (non-adjustable) pistons. (Since then, btw, two of our protégés, Ascend and Christine, have visited the church and been able to play both the Mander and the lovely East end Peter Collins II/P.) Anyway, at this Ordination, I didn't detect any problem with audibility, though nevertheless at any and every opportunity, the singers seemed to have other things on their minds!



Then there was the fine church in a beautiful setting near Southwell, where I was down to play for what turned out to be a lovely choral evensong on a one-manual instrument. I think this one's going to stick with me for a while, too. For a start, the stops were ranged in one row immediately above the keyboard. I mean: immediately. Many organist-readers will have played one-manual organs, and will recall that, in such a scenario, there will be a flat board, say about 4" deep, beyond the keys, over which the stops are drawn. Alas, no 4" board here. When you pulled out a stop, it drew straight over the keys. Questions: 1) Where do you put your fingers; 2) what price one's knuckles? That wasn't the end of it, and I know Jonathan will remember this bit. I had arrived very early to have a good practice. Unfortunately, there was no way I could get the thing started. I could see the blower, and various cables strewn about, but there had to be a mains switch somewhere. I went all around the church, investigating every nook and cranny – including the pulpit – and found lots of switches of all shapes and sizes, but to no avail. A did spot a couple of ancient-looking fuse-less fuse boxes screwed face-up to the floor, but they were clearly(?) dead; I even stuck my fingers in them (incredibly unwisely!); don't ask me why! Anyway, having eventually lost all my private practice time, a more knowledgeable gentleman appeared, lifted up the long kneeler running along the altar rail, and produced two fuses which he inserted into the aforesaid boxes! Well, I thought, H&S. eat your heart out ...



Prince Albert's successor

My latest foray into the unknown was to play for another funeral, this time of a wonderful choir mum and friend from Cambridge days. She had had two boys in the Jesus choir, and each ended up working and living in Chichester, purely by coincidence. One became a solicitor and the other a headmaster, and both remain passionately devoted to, and knowledgeable of, music. It's certainly the first time I have been asked to play two parts of the Art of Fugue before a funeral, not to mention the Jig Fugue for the Recessional! Apparently, I had played the latter at Jesus College, and they had remembered it from all those years ago.

The setting was the small village church of Apuldram, just outside Chichester. It's wonderful what a small community of just over 100 people can do to keep a church alive and well, and nicely kept. It is replete, too, with a "sweet little organ", once owned, we are told, by Prince Albert and housed at Windsor. It was a bit out of tune but very playable, and had the following spec: Gt 8' 8"; Sw. 8' 4' 2'; Pedal 16'. Nothing bizarre here, apart from needing three different switches to turn it on, but just a lovely little instrument in a beautiful church at the end of a long footpath. Ah, bliss!

David

From the Exchequer:

Subscriptions are now due for 2023/4. Despite the cost of living increases in the past year, which affect many of our overheads, the Committee have decided to hold the annual subscription for 2023/4 at the previous year's figure of **£25**.

I'm sure that you will agree that this represents tremendous value for money. **Prompt payment is requested**, so that we can budget with the greater assurance of available funds and save time and money in chasing overdue subscriptions.

If paying by standing order, please ensure that this is adjusted to the current rate or, if already processed by the bank at a lower amount, remit the balance.

Please pay either by bank transfer to:

The Nottingham & Dist Society of Organists

Sort Code 09-01-54 (Santander)

Account number 08442808

or by cheque payable to: "Nottingham & District Society of Organists" and send to me at Six Limes, 6 Beeston Fields Drive, Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 3DB.

Many thanks.

David Hanford (Hon Treasurer NDSO)

(New members should find the date for their subscription on their welcome e-mail)

Oxford children's choir helps Ukrainian refugees 'not feel alone'



(From left to right) Choir members Abigeile Prenga, Katrin Diachenko, Alisa Klauning, Oleksandra Zverieva, and Nicole Ananchenko practise

Ukrainian refugee children have said the creation of a choir group in Oxford has helped them feel less alone

Musician and fellow refugee Yevheniia Diachenko set up the group in January to bring Ukrainian children together.

Cherwell College Oxford hosts the one-hour weekly sessions for those who fled their home country during the Russian invasion.

Mrs Diachenko said it had helped the children to “forget about the bad things and relax”.

“When they sing, they show their emotions and sometimes they even cry, but in a good way,” said the 41-year-old, who now lives in Oxford.

“They miss their families, they miss their dads who stay in Ukraine, but they feel support from each other, and music helps to heal their souls.”

Choir tutor and Ukrainian refugee Yevheniia Diachenko set up the choir in January.

Mrs Diachenko had her own private vocal school in Kyiv, and said she wanted to continue teaching singing lessons when she arrived in Oxford in July last year with her nine-year-old daughter Katrin.

“We wanted the children to feel more at home, to speak with each other and play together,” she said.





Nine-year-old Katrin joined the choir because her mum runs the class. She says it's been good to make new friends.

Her daughter Katrin said the singing classes had helped her adjust to life in the UK after initially feeling “really sad”. She said: “I think art helped me when I came here and I thought that because my mummy is a singing teacher, I can do some singing too to help her. The choir is really nice, I have really good friends here and I like singing.”



The choir group was formed in January and has performed at local events for the college

Katrin's friend, 10-year-old Alisa Klauning, said the choir has helped her feel she is “not alone”. “I feel quite safe in this community and I feel that I can talk with anybody about what's happened in Ukraine,” she said.

The Reverend Dr Stanley Monkhouse

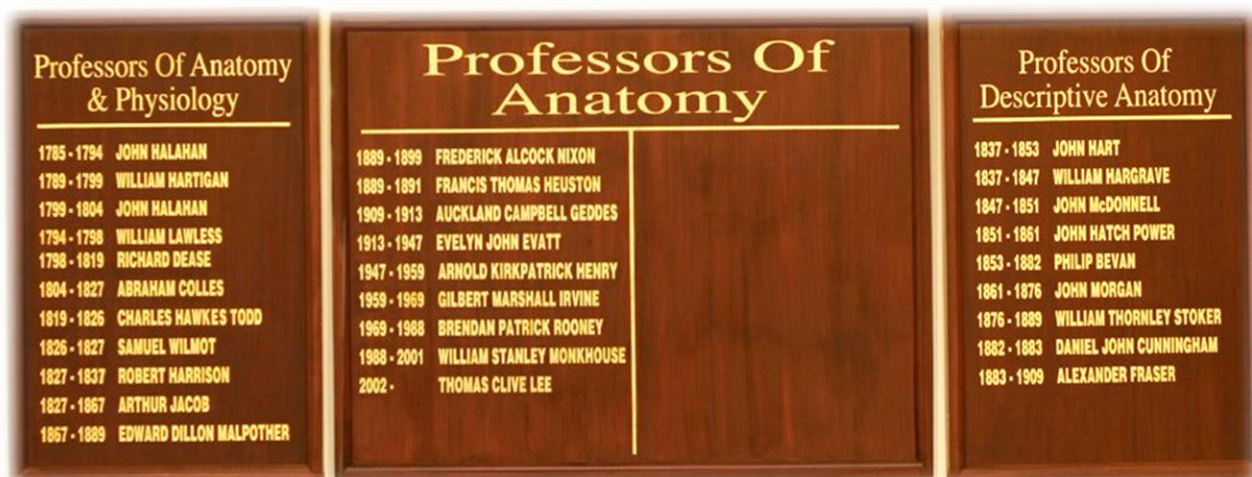
Our friend and (twice) guest speaker, Stanley, passed away suddenly on 11 August, aged 73. He is survived by his wife Susan, daughter Victoria, son Edward and granddaughter Abigail, and pre-deceased by his eldest child Hugh. The funeral took place on 7 September, at one of Stanley's churches, St Paul's, Burton-upon-Trent. The organists were David Butterworth and Tony Westerman. Plans are in hand for a subsequent memorial service, to be held in Ireland.

Stanley's contributions to medicine, to the church and to music (he was a superb organist and fine counter-tenor) were outstanding. He will be missed by many in all those spheres.

Amongst his other more recent activities, he became famed for his sometimes-controversial blogs, under the title *Rambling Rector*. Your editor had Stanley's ongoing permission to publish them on an as-and-when basis so, as a mark of respect, his very last, dated 28 June 2023, is reproduced here, with affection.



Why do I bother?



The Bible tells us not to eat pig or seafood, not to mate different kinds of animals, not to plant a field with two kinds of seed, and not to wear clothing woven of two kinds of material, so polycotton is out. It tells us that women should be silent in church, dress modestly and avoid jewellery. Most of us ignore all this. It says that wives should be subservient to their husbands. Good luck with that.

It condemns most strongly of all the taking of interest on a loan and the financial exploitation of the poor by the rich. Our economic system is built on these sins. Our pensions depend on them.

Yes, I know, these things should be taken in context, and they reflect the culture and mindset of the authors, some of whom, Paul for example, were hardly well-adjusted specimens of *Homo sapiens*.

I was brought up in a farming village. Cattle from the five working farms were herded between byre and field along the roads holding up traffic that had to pick its way through the steaming residue the cows generously left behind. I came to savour the fragrance. My short-trousered self could see that we were upright cows—head, body with holes at both ends, four limbs. At school I became interested in zoology and the way the animal kingdom could be classified into various groups, single celled amoeba to complex multicellular organism like us, and I began to see evidence for evolution. At Cambridge studying embryology as part of the medical course, my mind was further opened by the fact that in the first few weeks of our intrauterine development each one of us undergoes a kind of speeded-up evolution, and that we still carry things that other creatures have but that we don't need any more.

So I've always understood that humans are animals like all the rest: we are in fact modified reptiles—not modified enough in some cases.

One of the biggest problems with theology for me, then, is interpreting scripture in the light of this.

Do I actually believe that Jesus was born to what we call a virgin? Or is that simply a reworking of far more ancient myths about the birth of gods and goddesses, used by Matthew and Luke to “big up” Jesus? Such birth stories are still in use, notably in North Korea, where propaganda has elements of the Christian Nativity story to “big-up” the births of Kim family members.

Does my zoological mind really accept that humans are more special than any other creature of the earth?

Does my scientific mind really believe in the miracles that Jesus is claimed to have performed? Or are they simply fairy stories expressing profound truths using idioms familiar to the writers and readers of two thousand years ago? Middle Eastern people used—and use—language and imagery much more colourfully than we do.

Why should we pay heed to the writings of people of long ago who had a different worldview, who thought the earth was flat, who thought that water covered the sky, who thought that natural phenomena were manifestations of an irascible sky pixie's temper?

I find it exhausting trying to marry these two world views together, that is modern and ancient, and I wonder why I bother. What has kept me hanging on to the Christian story for so long, if only by the skin of my teeth?

The answer is quite simply the psychological authenticity of the gospel. By that I mean Jesus's teaching displays authentic human psychology and is without doubt the best way to live life. It's a pity it's never been tried.

I don't care about the virgin birth. I don't care what adults do with their genitals for mutual pleasure. I don't care whether the miracles are factual or not. I don't care whether the events recorded in the life of Jesus are historical or not. I don't care if they were all invented by his followers simply to “big-up” a remarkable man so that his teachings might take root. I don't care about much Christian doctrine. Some of it is of great poetic beauty, but much of it is pernicious nonsense invented by clergy to keep us proles in our place with the promise of jam tomorrow—when we're dead. Sod that for a game of soldiers.

I see the message of the gospel as the triumph of selflessness over ego-self, the agony in the garden leading to the death of self so that selflessness can rise. The equilibrium between looking after oneself—which is essential—and being selfless for the common good. With such selflessness we are no longer weighed down by guilt and shame and we can metaphorically rise to become like Him. *Made like him, like him we rise.* The mass is the cosmic drama of self-sacrifice.

Does this mean I'm not fit to be a priest? Does it mean I'm not a Christian?

Many might say so. I think the opposite. I think we need more like me. I think many people today are at best ambivalent about the supernatural, but are interested in the validity of gospel teaching when the penny drops.

I would go so far as to say that Christianity in the west has no future unless it grasps this. Deserves no future, even.

There are so many apparently brain-dead people in today's increasingly narrow-minded C of E, so it's hard work swimming against the tide. Maybe I need to stop thinking. But I shall KBO as long as I can.

The Rambling Rector



Did You Know? ...

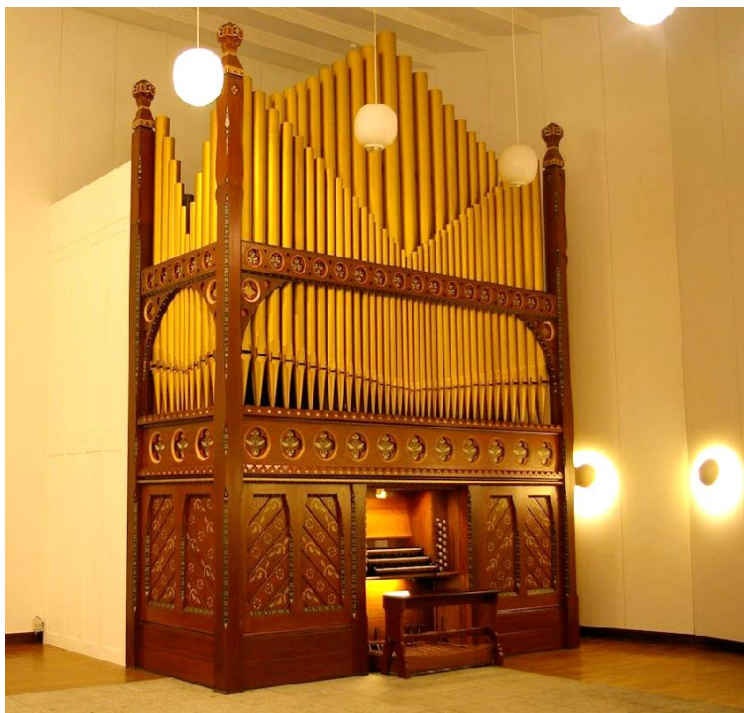
A new book entitled *Einstein: The Man and his Mind* by Berger and DiRuggiero, reveals how the famous scientist hid from the Nazis in a remote Norfolk cabin in 1933 – where he was guarded by armed men, sculpted by Jacob Epstein and waited on by a butler, with a herd of goats for milk and a gramophone, piano and violin for entertainment.

The Franklin Story pt. 9

... And a note of the fate of the Forster & Andrews organ; it would be wrong to ignore it. Castle Gate had offered it to the Albion Congregational Church, Sneinton, for £100. This, however, did not materialize for whatever reason and, time being of the essence, it was therefore gifted to the Boulevard Church (later known as Hyson Green Congregational Church, and now once again 'Boulevard.') It is thought that little work was carried out subsequently; it is known only that at some stage Henry Groves cleaned it, replaced the Choir Clarinet with a Piccolo and re-sprayed the case pipes. Its eventual demise at this ostensibly safe refuge came in about 2000-1. Indeed, your writer happened along Hyson Green one day and was obliged to wait a while in very thick traffic behind a large pantechnicon lorry parked outside. When, who should appear, balancing some Open Woods over his shoulder, but none other than our member Chris Gray. Apparently, the Minister had decided to get rid of the organ and it was being taken to the Redundant Organ Warehouse (a curiously secret location!) for safe-keeping and – hopefully – onward use. Delightfully, it does survive, albeit organ and organ case separated.



Harelbeke



Royal Danish Academy of Music

The organ itself has been restored and installed in St Salvatorkerk, Harelbeke (Belgium) in 2012 by the Dutch organ builders Feenstra, who specialize in rescuing good old organs. They also gave it an attractive new case. The Forster & Andrews case was used to house a redundant organ by Bishop which had come from Cricklewood Baptist Church via Tokyo, the whole being purchased by, and installed in, the Royal Danish Academy of Music – also by Feenstra.. On the occasion of our Danish tour in 2016, members visited this organ and played it. A chance meeting indeed!

As to that Minister, by another stroke of (mis)fortune, your writer met her a couple of years ago. Apparently still in office, she boasted at her pleasure of having rid the church of the organ. "Horrible things. They should all be destroyed." Ah, well ...

So, back to 1909, we have the Binns in place at Castle Gate, clearly to the delight of all concerned. Many recitals ensued over several years, both home-made, courtesy the organist Mr Cristall, and by those of national and international repute, such as George D. Cunningham and Charles W. Perkins, Thomas Trotter's predecessor as Birmingham City Organist; and others.

Sadly, no longer any sign of our George Franklin, and it must be around now that he left the area altogether for Clacton-on-Sea, of all places. Brian Seddon, the co-author of the firm's definitive history *Well-Healed*, received in 1991 a remarkable letter from Bernard Eric Franklin, living in Duffield, George's last child as we shall see ... He wrote: "Although I never learnt the organ I was a chorister at Derby Cathedral and have a great love of organ and church music. My mother (this is the afore-mentioned Mrs Gertrude Brown) passed away 27 Dec 1963 and took her secrets to the grave. She lived her last years with my sister [Eugenie Gertrude]. Evidently she [i.e. Mother] was his housekeeper and eloped with him when he left Derby." Bernard went on to write: "My wife and I went down to Hadleigh before the last war to find his grave and see the old home. The man in charge at the cemetery was very helpful and we managed to find [the grave] and place flowers, but there was no stone, not even a mound." "When we came home, I mentioned this to Mother, but she was most annoyed and did not want us to sort anything out." "[My sister] told me that Mother had destroyed everything connected with Dad." This is frustrating beyond measure, but of course it does explain why assembling all the little bits and pieces of information into any kind of cohesive whole has proven so problematic.



Charles W Perkins

From Derby to Clacton-on-Sea may seem a mysterious choice. But it had one thing going for it, much prized in those days when medical advances were a pale shadow of what we are privileged to know in these times – namely, sea air. Of course, whether Gertrude had any reasons of her own for this choice, we shall never know. Enter the next census, of April 1911, and we are able to fix the family at "The Glen", Branston Road, Clacton-on-Sea. There is also the rates listing of the same time. 1911 is the first census to have been self-declared by residents, and it is interesting to see that George had to have at least two shots at it! Also note that he describes himself on this and the rates return respectively as 'George Brown' and 'Mr Brown' – no Franklin at all. I suspect the domineering wife..

It's a little difficult to fit the census on a page of this journal, but I hope you can pick out the gist of it. Let's take a quick look at a few points. George first describes himself as George Brown / married for 10 years / 3 living children / Retired bootmaker / born Elton. 10/3/3 is then struck out in red and transferred to Gertrude. So 'Gertrude Brown' is the one that has been married for 10 years, evidently to the original Mr Brown, her two older children being aged 9 and 8 and born in Coventry (we know from documentation that these were to a George Thomas Brown and Eugenie Gertrude Brown, formerly Walker, of 21, Wren Street.) But that strongly suggests that the original Mr Brown is still alive, and that Gertrude and our George never bothered to get married, or couldn't. We see that the first child is named after Gertrude's employer – George Edward – surprise, surprise! The second child is Bernard's sister (above). The third child, two months old, is of course our Bernard Eric Brown, also as above, and definitely born in Clacton-on-Sea. As to Bernard's name, we may glance back to 1885 when a Richard Bernard was born, sadly then to die but a few months later. The Clacton baby may have come as a surprise, albeit a great joy, to George. Infant Bernard's name was resurrected...

A Trip to the Proms

Our protégés, Ascend and Christine, recently had a day out in London, and these are some of their recollections ...

Tuesday 15th August

Our trip to London first began with a visit to St Pancras' Church on Euston Road, where Mr Butterworth played for an Ordination service quite recently. This church had quite an unique architecture, in a Greek revival style similar to the likes of the British Museum. We tried both the main 3 manual 1856 Gray and Davison / Mander organ and the 2 manual Peter Collins chamber organ. The Gray and Davison organ used to be for the New Music Hall in Birmingham. Interestingly, the hymn composer Henry Smart was the organist at this church until 1879, and had the organ rebuilt to his specifications.

After a light meal at Mabel's Tavern, we had a brisk walk down to Russell Square, to catch the no. 14 bus to Kensington. Fortunately, we were the first on, so we had the best seats, upstairs at the front, and saw many memorable London sights including Piccadilly Circus, the British Museum and Harrods' world-famous department store. We could also marvel at the bus driver's skill weaving in and out of tiny spaces to get us to our destination.

Once at Kensington, we explored the Science Museum. All sorts of machinery, from steam engines to medical equipment, could be found here. The top floor was dedicated to entire aeroplanes. It must be an amazing feat of engineering to design and build these machines, as well as managing to fit them inside the fourth floor of the museum.

After an early dinner, we had a brief visit to St Mary Abbots

Church. Apparently it has the tallest spire in the entirety of London. The churches we visited had a completely different atmosphere of peace and quiet, which couldn't be more different to the noisy and busy streets outside.

When we finally arrived at the Albert Hall, Mr Butterworth brought our attention to a building opposite to the hall, ornate with gold decorations. We learned that this used to be the old headquarters for the Royal College of Organists. Directly next to it was the Royal College of Art. The RCA was under construction when he was sitting his F.R.C.O. aural tests on a hot summer's day on the top floor with all the windows open. The tunes whistled by the construction workers would invade the aural examinations - It must have been quite difficult to pick the right notes!

The programme for the Proms concert included *Lontano* by Ligeti, Beethoven's *4th Piano Concerto* and Shostakovich's *10th Symphony*. Additionally, the pianist Alexandre Kantorow performed an encore, a transcription of the finale to Stravinsky's *The Firebird*.

The first piece, *Lontano* by Ligeti was a very modern work. The music was quite abstract, with orchestral textures weaving in and out gently, and constantly evolving. This took quite a bit of concentration to listen to, since it was incredibly quiet. However it was still an enjoyable contrast to the more tonal pieces yet to come.



Grade 1, here I come

There was a short pause, where some of the orchestra had to get up and move their seats for the Steinway to make its way to the front of the stage. The opening of the piano lid was greeted by a “Heave-ho!” by the audience. This was one of the things that made the Proms a special experience for us.

Beethoven's *Piano Concerto 4* was an amazing experience. It started with a gentle piano solo, then a sparkling and colourful conversation between the piano and the orchestra. The second movement was short yet dramatic and tragic, where the conversation became a dark and sinister dialogue. This was then contrasted by the bright, almost humorous, finale. The piano part was joyful and full of moments of virtuosity (and plenty of trills). This was also where the long-anticipated trumpets and timpani came in.

The encore was one of the evening's highlights. It was a quite brilliant performance.

Ascend Jiang

The Shostakovich Symphony was our personal favourite, as the fiercely energetic music made the orchestra come alive. The first movement was slow and haunting as it gradually built up into the passionate climax. The second movement was a march where the loud military drum and syncopated rhythms intensified the terror and violence. The third and fourth movements were closely linked together and the third movement used a recurring motif which helped create the grim atmosphere. In the last movement, the music builds up in to the final climax where the triumphant horns and trumpets erupted in a finishing blaze of jubilation.

Christine Jiang

I got to play the organ in Tours Cathedral!

We were on a stained glass tour through northern France. It was something which had been on my wife's bucket list for ages, and now we were actually there. If you've never experienced France's northern cathedrals, do go! The one in Chartres is one of the most awe-inspiring places I have ever visited.

But cathedrals mean organs as well as stained glass so I was hoping to 'have a go' or two during the course of this visit. Sadly, the instruments at Chartres and Amiens were both encased in scaffolding and plastic sheeting, renovations continuing until next year. But at Tours I was in luck!

There must be some perks to being President of the prestigious NDSO, I thought, as I came to the end of my year in office, but, although I'd enjoyed the year immensely, I couldn't think of any.....until I was in Tours!

As we wandered around the stunning cathedral with its acres of medieval glass, I spotted an official-looking chap tidying some chairs. '*Excusez-moi monsieur. Je suis le Président de la Société des amis de l'orgue de Nottingham et ses environs en Angleterre*', I began, and, warmed by his smile, I boldly asked if he could direct me to someone who might give me permission to play the organ. He took me down a long, dusty corridor into a small room, where he took out an equally dusty tome from which he scribbled down the phone number of the *organiste titulaire*, no less, Monsieur Gérard Proust.

I went outside and phoned immediately. A lady answered and I recited my opening lines: *Je suis le Président...etc.* ‘You need my husband’, came the reply, so for the third time I began my recitation: *Je suis le Président... etc.* It worked!! He agreed to meet me by the door to the organ loft in one hour’s time.



Up and up we went, till we emerged at the *tribune* looking down into the cavernous space below and the gleaming monster by our side. Monsieur Proust demonstrated a few things and then invited me to play. What an immense privilege and pleasure! Those French *bombardes* don’t hold anything back, and neither did I!! But the beautiful, shimmering swell strings melting away into nothing, the fabulously spiky flutes on the *positif de dos*, the eerily realistic *Vox humana*, the fine balance between *Grand-orgue* and *Récit*, the six-second reverb - I could have spent the whole week there!

It was really helpful that Monsieur Proust pushed and pulled the stops for me. As we know, it can take an age to find your way around a large unfamiliar organ, especially if, as here, there is nothing to indicate which manual the stop heads refer to! But having someone who knew the instrument inside out, to create the best combinations for me, was simply wonderful. Do go to Tours if you get the chance!

Richard Marsden

Holiday Organs, 2023 – a Few Reminiscences

We have just returned from a week’s river cruising on the Main, the Rhine and the Moselle, land of historic towns, fine churches and interesting organs.

The combination of a church tax and a continuing interest in organs and their music means that in many places in Germany there are fine instruments to see (the cases are so often really worth seeing in their own right) and, if one is lucky, hear. Unfortunately, I didn’t hear any of the several fine instruments I saw, but I did buy a disc of one of them.

The old Prince-Bishop’s Palace in Würzburg, colossal in size and monumental in design, is an internationally famous building. The chapel is similarly grand and a riot of baroque colour and ornamentation; so much ornamentation that I couldn’t see an organ. If there is one and it is built in proportion to the rest of the palace, it will have a hundred stops at least! In Heidelberg’s Heiliggeistkirche, a fine case houses a Steinmeyer organ of 1981. A concert programme left on a pew gave me the stop list and programme details - but in German! Only one build date is given so presumably it was all new in 1981, and clearly “Classical” in concept, with its nine mixture stops including a two rank Septnone 1+ 1/7 on the Swell. The organ is in the choir, situated on the north wall.

In Mainz the amazing church of St Stephan is notable for its wonderful stained-glass windows designed by Marc Chagall and Charles Marq. The church was bombed and burned out in the Second World War. The Chagall windows are especially fine, justly famous and attract large numbers of visitors. The predominant colour of these windows is blue. This gives a blue light to the interior of the building and a lovely hue to the polished tin case pipes of the Klais organ. This is built on the east wall of the south aisle and has three manuals and a Classical stop list including a 32 foot flue stop on the Pedal extended from the 16 foot Major Bass. This organ dates from 2013.

Trier yielded two instruments of note. In the cathedral, there is a Klais of 67 stops on four manuals. In the case there are no flats. All the towers of pipes are rounded, situated on substantial bases with similar caps, and all highly decorated. I didn't find the instrument particularly attractive to look at but no doubt it sounds exciting. The specification is clearly Classical with, again, many mixtures and mutations.

Trier has many Roman remains – it was a major city of the empire - including the Porta Nigra and what is now the Konstantinbasilika, a functioning Lutheran church with, apparently, a large congregation. This vast building is much restored but has lost its original stone covering, so, inside and out, it is of Roman brick. It resembles an aircraft hangar in size and shape but with a flat ceiling and this gives it an interesting acoustic – a reverberation time of something around 10 seconds, a clap told me. There are no balconies or galleries – the whole is an open space.

The organ, built in 2014 by Eule, sits on the west wall and has a simple case of three giant pipe flats. It is a romantic/orchestral instrument and the demonstration disc I bought features music by Walton (*Crown Imperial*), Lemare, Dupré, Langlais, Widor and Karg Elert. There are 87 stops on four manuals with a fifth floating Solo division and 26 couplers – very much a concert hall organ. The sound on the disc is very fine - big, full and round. The player, Martin Bambauer, demonstrates a wide variety of textures and volume.

We also visited some castles...



Stephankirche, Mainz

Richard Eaton

How it all started

We all came to a love of music through our own individual stories, all of which – I am sure – would make fascinating reading for the rest of us. We already have an uptake for the next issue of January 2024. Who will fill the May slot next year? Come on, don't be shy! – *Ed.*

Three-minute Tripos

Beethoven's genius extended from the tips of his toes to the top of his head. Discuss.

DA DA DA DUUUH!

What?

DA DA DA DUUUUUH!

Seriously. I get it. You're Beethoven's Fifth. But why?

Well, we've got a lot in common, me and Van B.

You're a legendary composer whose *oeuvre* spans the transition from the Classical to Romantic period?

Well, no. But we both like a drink, and that's bad news. A team led by Tristan Begg, until recently a Biological Anthropology PhD researcher, has sequenced Beethoven's genome for the first time, using a lock of his hair. We know he drank, and now we may have a link to a genetic risk that could explain why it was harmful to him.

Some sort of message in a bottle?

Not quite. According to some of his contemporaries, his consumption was moderate – by 19th-century Viennese standards, anyway. But it may have been enough to trigger a harmful reaction in his liver.

But surely this breakthrough will have given us insights into so much more than Beethoven's drinking habits! What about his progressive hearing loss – making his later compositions an even more extraordinary achievement?

They didn't identify a single genetic cause for this hearing loss – though they didn't rule out finding one in the future as this field advances.

What about his tragic death at the tender age of 56?

That's one puzzle which could have been solved: there is evidence of a hepatitis B infection and a significant genetic risk factor for liver disease.

I don't suppose they found any genetic markers for his genius?

Ah, that remains a beautiful mystery.



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Chalk & Cheese?



Following an 18-month renovation, Handel Hendrix House in London's Mayfair is once again open to the public. Never heard of it? If you fancy a day out in London, and doing something different, why not pay it a visit? Situated at 23-25, Brook Street, it comprises the former dwellings of two outstanding geniuses in their respective fields, separated only by a brick wall and a couple of hundred years. Most of us know more about one than the other. *Zadok the priest*, written for the coronation of King George II in 1727, bears the accolade of having been performed at every coronation since, and his *Messiah* hardly needs any introduction.

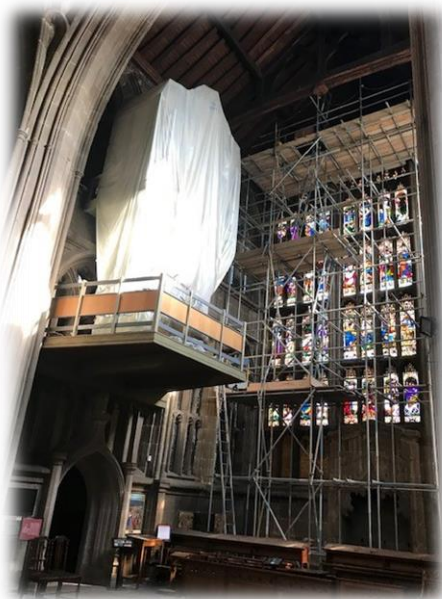
Hendrix was an American blues and funk-loving electric guitarist who, in the 1960s, used sound-distortion techniques to astonish his audiences, simultaneously outraging the wider public with his rock'n'roll antics, and setting his instruments alight on stage (one is aware of one or two organists with similar aspirations.)

The museum's director, Simon Daniel, says: "The house is now fully restored, with the elegant frontage returned to its original appearance, a fully-equipped Georgian kitchen recreated in the basement, and the interiors presented as they might have been in Handel's time." If you like to mix your chalk and your cheese, this could be for you!



NEWS AND NOTES

Splendid initiatives have already been reported here, by both St Barnabas Cathedral and St Mary's, High Pavement, to introduce and encourage choral church music amongst the young. Information is hard to come by, but both seem to be doing well. May they continue to flourish. A third fairly local such initiative comes in the appointment of Elin Heron, to create a Youth Choir (as it is being called) at St Anne's Church, Derby. This is breaking news just now, so nothing to report yet in the way of results. Elin, however, has an enviable local reputation as an enabler of the young in many fields of music, so we must hope that she will achieve similar successes in downtown Derby.



Oh no, not again

In a recent interview with David Hill, John Eliot Gardiner comments: "Draconian cuts which are currently being applied not only affect us musicians and performers directly; beyond that, it's the impact on young people which is so concerning. So it's not simply an art form which is under threat, but a mental, spiritual and social activity that's in peril."

•

September 23rd will see the Golden Jubilee of St Mary's Marcussen Organ. Sadly, it is currently in wraps (see above), due to building work in the south transept, so any celebration will have to be delayed until all is clear. It is gratifying indeed to know that the organ (normally) flourishes as ever, under the capable watch of Director of Music John Keys and organ builder David Wood.

•

The amazing *Toulouse les Orgues* takes place this year from 30 September to 15 October. If you haven't been yet, it's time to think about it before it's too late! Toulouse is remarkable. The festival has now been established for many years; the town boasts an extraordinary number of interesting organs, including one classically conceived instrument built especially for the job. If you want to know more, speak to Denis; he's been there and done it!

•

Thomas Trotter celebrates his 40th anniversary as Birmingham City Organist with a recital at 7.30 p.m. on 6 October, in Symphony Hall. He writes: "The brief of a city organist has always been to entertain and to educate, to provide affordable culture for everybody. As organists, we all have to evangelize a bit." Tom's programme will include Bach's *Fantasia & Fugue in G minor*, S.542, and Liszt's *Fantasia & Fugue on Ad nos, ad salutarem undam*.

•

On the afternoon of Saturday, 24 October, there will be a special concert at Halam Court, commencing 3.00... a Piano Trio with a difference this time, i.e. without your Editor and our usual lead Jayne Walker. Steven Halls, Daphne Moody and David Halls (the well-known Director of Music of Salisbury Cathedral) will present a programme including Mendelssohn's Trio no. 2 in C minor, and Shostakovich no. 1 also in C minor, along with works by Frank Bridge, Arcangelo Corelli and David Halls himself.

•

Our member Peter Shepherd writes from Chesterfield Parish Church: “An event we’re holding in Chesterfield on Saturday, 11 November, 2.30 – 4.30, will, I think, be of interest to a number of N.D.S.O. members and will be well worth coming to. (Note the discounted rate for the DDOA also applies to N.D.S.O. members.)

“In celebration of William Byrd’s anniversary, this lecture-recital will introduce the world of Byrd’s keyboard music. In particular, we will explore which pieces are best suited to the organ, what the fingerings in the manuscript sources of this repertoire tell us about how to play early English keyboard music, and how we can go about interpreting the mysterious single- and double-stroke ornament signs. Byrd composed music for players of all levels of ability, so come along to find out more!

“The lecture will be illustrated both by images and by live performance of extracts from Byrd’s magnificent *oeuvre*.

“David J. Smith was Head of Music and Master of Chapel and Ceremonial Music at the University of Aberdeen before becoming the Founding Head of Music at Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne. He specialises in early English keyboard music and improvisation, and his edition of the complete keyboard music of Peter Philips (one of Byrd’s students) appears in the scholarly series, *Musica Britannica*.”

•

Peter Dickinson, the well-known avant-garde composer, died on 16 June this year, aged 88. Peter, a former Cambridge organ scholar, had spent some of his early career in the States, before returning for a year as Assistant Director of Music at Hurstpierpoint College where, amongst other duties, he had the dubious pleasure of teaching your Editor both academically and for piano and organ. Daily chapel became notable for its closing voluntaries on the Degens & Rippin (their op.3) organ, invariably being an improvisation in the style of one composer or another. We, of course, had to guess the composer! He was also a fund of funny stories, often imparted in the middle of choir rehearsals, such as the time in the States when, in the middle of a piano recital he was giving in a wooden colonial-style church on a hot summer’s day, a horse suddenly appeared and stuck its head through the window to see what was going on; or the time when – he claimed – his Cambridge supervisor got up in the middle of the night and threw all his Rheinberger out of the window ...

•

Sir David Lumsden, one time Director of Music at New College, Oxford, died on 25 February this year, aged 94, after a long and distinguished career in cathedral music and academia. For a short while he was Organist & Master of the Choristers respectively of St Mary’s, Nottingham and Southwell Minster, but really came into his own at Oxford, where no less than three of his organ scholars were to become Presidents of our Society, namely Prof. John Morehen, Paul Hale and John Keys. Not least of his achievements was the acquisition of the iconic Grant, Degens & Bradbeer organ in the college chapel, this being their magnum opus, recently visited by the Society. There is an appreciation of Sir David in the June edition of OR, by Paul Hale and Patrick Russell.

•

The long-awaited Ruffatti organ for Pershore Abbey is now in place, having suffered delays due to the pandemic. Presently, it lacks the planned solo Trumpet, which it is hoped a generous donor might facilitate in the near future. Surprisingly little fuss has been made of this exciting addition to our organscape, but it is hoped that the Society will visit it soon.



Fifty Years Young

Many thanks to Ian Watts, David Butterworth, Christopher Taunt, the late Revd Stanley Monkhouse, John Lester, John Keys, Richard Marsden, Simon Still and the Cambridge Alumni Magazine for help with the pics and other content in this edition.

Editor: David S. Butterworth. 32 Zulla Road, Nottingham, NG3 5DB
dsbutterworth@halam.myzen.co.uk / 0115 9625400 / 07850 833890

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