

BIOS REPORTER

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THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ORGAN STUDIES

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BIOS REPORTER

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Material for review should be sent to the Review Editor, Dr David S Knight [REDACTED]

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BIOS SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription is £37 (£32 concessionary, £12 student). Full details of membership and subscriptions can be obtained from the Membership Secretary.

Cover photos. *St Mary's, Bleasby, Notts*. Front: *John Marsh's organ* (Photo: Francis Knights) see also p. 81. Back: *Detail of the 'Magnificat' window by Christopher Whall c.1910* (Photo: Richard Hird)

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BIOS COUNCIL

Council met on 30 September after this issue of the *Reporter* had gone to press. A report of their deliberations will appear in the January 2018 issue.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

I'm delighted to welcome four new members who have joined us since the publication of the July *Reporter*:

Mr Keith Winnard: [REDACTED]

Mr Justin Berg: [REDACTED]

Mr Rob Shorland-Ball BA PGCE FMA: [REDACTED]

Mr Clive Roberts: [REDACTED]

I also regret to advise the death of three BIOS members in the persons of Mr Colin Maude, a member since 2004, Mr Tony Edwards, a member since 2008, and Mr Eric Holmes, a long-standing member since 1989.

My last appeal and letter to those who still owed this year's subscription achieved some success, with over 100 overdue subs being paid, and less than twenty still outstanding. It really would help if those with Standing Orders set up could make sure the payments reached me in January each year, and those paying by BACS, cheque or PayPal made a note in their next year's diary (now available in the shops), or on their 'device' to settle their BIOS subscription in January 2018. Most of my work as Membership Secretary is not logging subscriptions paid, but chasing defaulters! Surely, as professionals, this shouldn't be the case? My thanks, as always, to those who do settle their subscriptions promptly, and whose organised life-style makes my job easier.

David Shepherd.

COMMITTEE FOR THE LISTING OF HISTORIC ORGANS

Following a request from Council to review the grading, the Committee has listed the 1875 J W Walker organ at St Joseph's, Southampton [D04055] as Grade II*. They observed that it was '[a] J W Walker organ in a conservative style that is complete

from 1875, including the short-compass Swell and tonally unaltered.'

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Andrew Hayden is once more producing the *Star Organs of Britain Calendar* for 2018. Most members will be familiar with the format but details can be found at www.starorgansofbritain.co.uk Copies, priced at £19.75 (incl. P+P), will be available from early November and can be ordered either on-line or cheque/postal order to Andrew Hayden, 79, The Common, Freethorpe, Norwich, Norfolk NR13 3LX, tel. 01493 700258. He regrets card payments can only be accepted on-line.

Gordon Curtis's book *A Provincial Organ Builder in Victorian England. William Sweetland of Bath* is now available in paperback (ISBN 9781138278806; £37.99) and eBook (ISBN 9781315565101; £27.99) versions from Routledge. www.routledge.com/A-Provincial-Organ-Builder-in-Victorian-England-William-Sweetland-of-Bath/Curtis/p/book/9781409417521
For a review of this book see JBIOS (2011) 35, 164.

Andrew Freeman photographs (British Organ Archive)

Members might be interested to see the information below, resulting from a question recently posed by **Mike Sayers** and the detailed reply kindly provided by Chris Kearl as a response from the Archive. BIOS is indebted to Chris for all the work that he has done for the Archive.

Q [MS]: I've been trying to fill in some gaps in the BOA references to the Freeman plates and have found quite a few instances where we have references in the BOA index to Freeman plates but the Cadbury catalogue doesn't have anything for the same place. It is particularly the case for what we refer to as Album 06.5nn. Did not all the plates get digitised?

A [CK]: The Andrew Freeman glass-plate negatives were eventually copied onto disc because we were very concerned about the deterioration of the increasingly fragile plates discovered when they were prepared for the move from the Central Library to Birmingham University Special Collections. Also the glass plates were impossible for the public to access on the rare occasion that a print was not available to view in the albums as they were too fragile and had no viewer readily available. In addition, prior to their being deposited in the BOA by the Rev. Bernard Edmonds, a significant number of the original glass plates had been either lost or broken. Some of the images from those missing negatives still exist as photographs [without negative] within the two collections of albums that Andrew Freeman compiled during his own lifetime. The larger albums [Albums 1-6] contain selected larger images at half or even full plate size, the albums listed by letters of the Greek alphabet contain just small quarter plate sized images rather in the way that thumbnails are used online these days! I

would also point out that Andrew Freeman often took two or more images of the same organ case on one visit and then only retained a photograph of the best image in his collection of Albums. So some of the glass plate negatives do not have a corresponding 'developed photograph' in the Albums and in addition a significant number of images in the Albums do not have a corresponding glass plate negative still available and so were not included in the Freeman images available via the CRL link.

At no time was there ever any suggestion that the images which are only available in the Albums should also be copied onto disc as they are not in any danger at all and are perfectly accessible at the CRL for people to view should they wish. All of the images that still exist either on disc or in the Albums are included on the BOA Main Index as illustrations under the relevant BOA number for that organ.

OTHER NEWS

County Archives

Members who frequent County Archives may have noted with alarm a news item in the *Sunday Telegraph* of 27 August reporting that councils are reducing the hours and days where the public can see records for free. The announcement in July by Northamptonshire County Council that it would cut free access to its archives to three mornings and twelve hours per week and charge £31.50 per hour otherwise provoked outcry which forced the council to back down. However, it is likely that financial necessity will result in further attempts to raise money by charges and/or cuts to opening hours or both. The Archives and Records Association (ARA) has responded to the situation by a well-reasoned letter from its CEO, John Chambers, to the leader of the Council. It can be found at

http://www.archives.org.uk/images/ARA_Board/20160803_Advocacy_-_Northamptonshire_Council_letter_-_final_original.pdf

and is well worth reading as it provides much information on the obligations and funding of archives. The Telegraph article quotes Jon Elliott, head of public affairs at the ARA, as saying: 'We are not aware of any council that hasn't looked at restricting some form of access to its public records'.

Music for one-manual organs - All Saints, Southill, Beds. SG18 9JA

A Recital of organ music performed on the church organ (Walker; N09427) and chamber organ (David Leach) will include works specifically written for such organs from 18th century, 20th century and contemporary composers with a first performance of a newly commissioned work by Alan Gibbs.

Peter Twitchin (organ) will explore the repertoire for one manual organs with tenor Simon Berridge on 11 November at 3 pm. Further details may be had from

peter.twitchin@hertfordshire.gov.uk

OBITUARY - BARRIE CLARK (1936 - 2017)



Photo: Richard Millard

Barrie joined BIOS in 1978 and served for a long time as a Council Member and HOCS inspector and, from 2006 to 2014, as Heritage Adviser.

He trained as an architect and spent most of his career as an historic buildings architect with the Ancient Monuments Branch of the Department of the Environment, which later became English Heritage. He began to advise them on matters relating to organs from about 1970 and from 1988 represented them on the Council for the Care of Churches Organs Committee (this was largely he said because he knew a little about organs and no one else was at all interested). Advising English Heritage on organs continued for a while as a consultancy after his retirement, in particular the Government Historic Buildings Advisory Unit. His RIBA thesis was *The organ in churches*, in which a lifelong interest in church architecture and organs blended happily and very conveniently. For many years he was one of the Organ Advisers for the Diocese of Southwark. I remain much in his debt for the support he provided during the project which led to the installation of a

new Kenneth Tickell organ in my own church at Betchworth in 2014.

Barrie had a particular interest in organ cases and often opined that some architects have not understood, and still do not understand, organs and occasionally organ builders have not shown interest in case design. Nor was his interest merely theoretical since he was responsible for formalising the case design for the historic organ transplant of a J C Bishop organ to All Saints, Haslingfield undertaken by Peter Bumstead. As has been pointed out to me by an expert on organ cases, the design of the case is so true to the spirit and age of the Haslingfield organ that few are likely to believe that it is in fact newly constructed.

In his role as BIOS Heritage Adviser, Barrie undertook a study of European and British listed buildings legislation, as it affects organs, with the aspiration and hope that this might achieve practical results. This was channelled into the campaign to improve the position with regard to legislation for the protection of organs in the UK. Barrie lobbied MPs and others to get organs classed as 'fixtures' rather than 'fittings' in the ill-fated Heritage Bill planned by the last Labour government. Currently there is no statutory scheme for the protection of the contents of a listed building, no matter how important those contents are in heritage terms, unless they are actually fixed to the building. By 2014, when Barrie stood down as Heritage Adviser a meeting with a top team at English Heritage (now Historic England) established that in England there was no likely change in the law on fixtures and fittings in the foreseeable future. But a direct result of that meeting was the suggestion now implemented that BIOS should set up an Organs at Risk Register similar to the buildings at risk register operated by English Heritage.

Barrie, not surprisingly, possessed an encyclopaedic knowledge of architecture supplemented by a similar knowledge of pipe organs. He possessed practical organ skills having built his own house organ using as the core pipes from the URC church he attended in Reigate when they moved site to a new building and discarded the organ. I think I shall remember two things about Barrie most particularly. First, and I was initially reminded about this quality by another BIOS Member, his willingness to discuss architectural and organ matters and always share his knowledge with others. Secondly, his questioning mind which in discussions could lead to flurries of questions most of which were incapable of direct answer. I visited him shortly before his passing intending a short visit so not to tire him. After two hours of wide ranging and probing discussion about the organ world it was I who seemed the more exhausted. I shall miss these discussions and the differences of opinion they provoked. Barrie and I particularly disagreed about organ transcriptions and, in future, whenever I play one I shall hear his disapproving 'Tut! Tut!' over my shoulder.

Melvin Hughes

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Before his death, our then President, Professor Peter Williams, asked me to deposit on his behalf some material (itemised below) in the British Organ Archive (BOA), now housed in the Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham (CRL). The documents relate to the proposal to move the headquarters of the Royal College of Organists (RCO) to the old Curzon Street Station building in Birmingham, where it was hoped to create a base for a national centre for the organ. They were given to me for contemporary analysis and comment requested by Professor Williams because, as a then BIOS Council member, I had expressed some concerns following my reading of the financial situation surrounding the proposals. We had several conversations about this matter at the time and more recently.

I presume that copies of these documents will be held in the RCO's own archive, however I understand that the collection is to move away from Birmingham and, therefore, this material may be the only regional source relating to the project that will be readily available for researchers. Certainly it made sense for it to be available with the Institute's other papers. Given that the material covers the background that led to the establishment of the BOA in the excellent CRL, it may well be of some use and convenience to anyone working on the history of the Institute and surely a fiftieth anniversary will generate such a demand.

Unfortunately, I cannot continue to hold these documents and the Archive's acquisitions group do not think the papers fall within the remit of the Archive. Therefore I ask whether there is any member who might wish to use or hold them for future reference or research, as requested by our past President. The material is as follows:

1. Business Plan For Stage 2 HLF Application, HLF Reference: HF-02-00994/1, 2nd June 2004 'Prepared by Hetherington'. A4 typescript contained in a ring binder, but without continuous pagination, with covering letter signed by Alan Dear, then chief executive of the RCO, addressed from temporary offices in Millennium Point, Birmingham.
2. Malcolm Hislop, for the Royal College of Organists, Refurbishment of Curzon Street Station, Stage II HLF Submission Ref: HF-02-00994/1, Conservation Management Plan, Birmingham Archaeology, project no. 1181, no continuous pagination, no date but contemporary with 1 above. A4 with plastic comb binder.
3. Professor Derek G. Law (Librarian and Head of Information Resources Directorate University of Strathclyde), The Curzon Street Library: A Development Plan, A4 stapled, 54 pages. Relates to the consolidation of the RCO library with the NPOR and BOA. A key document in the proposal to create a 'national library and

archive for all aspects relating to the organ', with links to the British Library and international bodies. The RCO would have emerged as the dominant partner.

4. As above but unbound loose pages in a card folder.

5. Dr David Baker and Judith Andrews (signatories of the Foreword), no title, A4 unbound, 94 pages, starts with contents page. Develops the plan in 3 and 4 above, following a successful phase 1 HLF bid and provides requirements and a timetable to implement 'the vision'. The BOA would become a junior partner.

I can be contacted through my email address.

Dr Jim Berrow ([REDACTED])

This letter was shown to the Chairman of the BOA who has sent the following comment.

In considering the offer of this material, the Archive Committee took account of the following points:

- the British Organ Archive (BOA) exists to address the second of BIOS' stated aims, namely 'To conserve the sources and materials for the history of the organ in Britain, and to make them accessible to scholars.'
- the material on offer was exclusively about the mechanics of organisation, not about organs and organ history, and did not relate to the purpose of the Archive.
- the material concerned a particular stage in the history of the Royal College of Organists. Although BIOS and other bodies took part in the discussions, this was an RCO initiative: the Committee was of the view that resultant documentation should be preserved centrally by the RCO.
- In the event that the RCO already holds duplicates of what was on offer to the BOA, the policy of the Cadbury Research Library also is not to house duplicates of material which is already available to researchers in other libraries or collections.

Notwithstanding the above, the concerns expressed by Jim Berrow have a direct bearing on the associated question of the housing of the records and archives of BIOS itself, a matter to which no solution has as yet been identified. If any members have suggestions or ideas, we will be pleased to hear from them.

Alan Thurlow

MEETING REPORTS

John Marsh's house organ

The house organ (*see* front cover) belonging to diarist and amateur musician John Marsh (1752-1828), built by John Hancock in 1783 for Marsh's home at Nethersole House in Kent then moved to his Chichester house in 1787, is well known from his



Fig. 1 St Mary's, Bleasby, Notts.
Photo: Francis Knights

journals. However, its whereabouts after his death seemed mysterious until recently, when it transpired that the eighteenth century organ now in St Mary's Church in Bleasby, Notts. (Fig. 1), was the very same instrument. This had been known locally for more than a century, but not among the wider organ fraternity until 2015 - more a case of an organ being mislaid, than lost. A BIOS one-day conference at the church on 8 July

offered a valuable opportunity to see, hear and hear about the organ, in the hands of the most expert possible guides. This was also the moment for the launch of Martin Renshaw's new 248-page book on the Marsh organ, as well as a chance to acquire editions of Marsh's numerous organ works.

John Marsh was trained as a lawyer, but devoted most of his time to music, composing some 350 works, including more than three dozen symphonies. His interests were wide, and he published on astronomy, religion and geometry as well as on music. His activities as a concert organizer in Salisbury, Canterbury and finally in Chichester show him to have been a key figure in late eighteenth-century provincial music-making, and we know a vast amount about these activities thanks to his 37 volumes of unpublished journals. Marsh's second son was the clergyman and poet Edward Garrard Marsh (1783-1862), who plays a part in the story of Marsh's organ, inheriting it on his father's death and taking it around the country to his various incumbencies.

The NPOR (H00984) gives a current summary of information about the organ, which was built by Hancock in 1783, rebuilt by Gray & Davison in 1869 and

restored by Cousans in 1988. It arrived at Bleasby Vicarage in 1863 with the incumbent (John Marsh's grandson), and was moved to the church next door in 1869. The current (Gray & Davison) specification is: Great - Open Diapason 8', Clarinet Flute 8', Clarabella 8', Keraulophon 8', Stopped Diapason Bass 8', Principal 4', Fifteenth 2', Sesquialtra (II); Swell - Open Diapason 8', Lieblich Gedact 8', Principal 4', Oboe 8', Tremulant; Pedal - Grand Bourdon 16'. The two manuals (Fig. 2) were originally separate and on opposite sides of the case.



Fig. 2 Bleasby console Photo: Francis Knights

John Hancock was part of a London keyboard-making family, which includes Thomas Hancock (his surviving instruments include a 1720 harpsichord and at least one spinet, dated 1732; the later Hancocks have been assumed as descendants, although there is no certainty of this); John [Crang] Hancock (organ and spinet builder, c.1746-d.1792 or later); and his

brother James [Crang] Hancock (harpsichord, piano and organ builder, c.1747-1820). James is described on a surviving Crang & Hancock organ in New York as 'nephew and successor' to John Crang (1710-c.1775, London organ, harpsichord, spinet and claviorgana maker). Despite the recent discovery of John Crang's will of 1770 there remains some confusion about the identity of the family members (there were two John Crangs and two John Crang Hancocks, for example, and a piano maker called just Crang Hancock, who was actually the older John Crang Hancock), although individual nameplates on surviving organs, harpsichords, spinets and pianos seem authentic enough. All of this leaves us with disappointingly little information about John Hancock and his instruments after the death of Crang in about 1775, although the Bleasby organ shows him to have worked solidly within the Georgian organ tradition, and to have been a craftsman capable of imaginative solutions to the unusual design problems that Marsh appears to have set him.

Brian Robins, who must know more about John Marsh than anyone, began the proceedings with a detailed and engaging biographical and personal description, which gave us an excellent sense of the man and his musical interests in 'An encounter with John Marsh, gentleman composer'. This was followed by Martin Renshaw who took the listeners through 'The history and archaeology of John

Marsh's house organ', speaking without notes for more than an hour yet covering a fascinating amount of detail about the organ, its design and context, and some recent restoration activities. The opened case was available for inspection, enabling a view of some of the ingenious mechanisms hidden within. David Shuker then took up the story, with the help of a map showing 'The Perambulations of John Marsh's house organ' as it travelled around the Midlands and Southern England in tow with John and Edward Garrard Marsh, finding seven different homes during its life.

Given BIOS's fundamental interest in the care and restoration of historic organs, the open discussion section that followed, led by Dr Alan Thurlow, formed a very appropriate conclusion. Issues around restoration ethics, funding and the liturgical use of the instrument were discussed, with input from members of the church community in whose care it remains. The conclusion seemed to be that maintaining the instrument in its current Gray & Davison form was desirable, at present. As a grand finale, the organ was put through its paces by Richard Hobson and Martin Renshaw (Fig. 3) in some of Marsh's music for two players at one organ, including his arrangement of Handel's Hallelujah chorus.

A 'new' discovery like this is very rare, and the opportunity to see and hear a significant historic organ under such expert guidance was a chance not to be missed. The conference was a model of how such things should be done, so warmest congratulations to all of the speakers and organizers.

Francis Knights



Fig. 3 Martin Renshaw and Richard Hobson at the console
Photo: Francis Knights

BIOS 40th Anniversary Conference, Magdalene College, Cambridge, 8th-10th September 2016

Photo: Paul Hale



The 2017 OrganFest - Hull City Hall

This year saw the second round of this venture, jointly founded in 2014 by the IAO, the RCO and BIOS. Rather like a 'three choirs' festival, each organisation takes turn in arranging the event, though all are involved every year in aspects of the planning of the programme and selection of venue. The IAO organised the first OrganFest in Birmingham and the RCO followed in 2015, similarly using Birmingham as the venue. Last year BIOS made the case for moving OrganFest around the country, and Richard Hobson - with great onsite help from John Kitchen - arranged a memorable programme for us in Edinburgh. This year, with the IAO back in the driving seat, Hull was appropriately chosen as the location, having been selected as UK City of Culture for 2017. Thanks to the cooperation of Hull Culture & Leisure, plus very generous financial support from the Liz & Terry Bramall Foundation, it was possible for the entire programme to take place in Hull City Hall, with its impressive Forster and Andrews organ of 1911 (rebuilt John Compton, 1951 and Rushworth & Dreaper, 1991).

The City Hall is a big venue to fill. While the supporting audiences were not capacity, there was a very good and worthwhile turnout, with the largest attendance occasioned by the programme for the Friday evening. This began at 6.30 pm with a Desert Island Discs style interview, though with the choices of music restricted to organ pieces, live performances of which were then played on the City Hall organ by John Scott Whiteley. As in the radio programme, most pieces featured were of necessity extracts rather than the full work. The 'subject' interviewee was none less than the BBC's distinguished news presenter Huw Edwards, with the inimitable Gordon Stewart as interviewer. Huw is a noted supporter and fan of the world of pipe organs and it was a brilliant idea, and very good PR, to have such a well-known personality waxing lyrical (he is Welsh, after all!) about the King of Instruments. The works he chose were all popular classics (Handel Occasional Oratorio, Elgar Imperial March, Walton Crown Imperial, Walford Davies Solemn Melody, Vaughan Williams Rhosymedre) but perhaps Lemmens' The Storm was the choice which aroused most interest. At the end we were treated to a complete performance of 'the' Widor Toccata (which had been played at Huw's wedding). BIOS members present were particularly pleased to hear Huw's strongly expressed concern for the future of historic organs and the threat posed to both instruments and buildings as a result of the closure of churches.

Next came a series of short five-minute slots in which each of the organising bodies, together with the local Hull and East Riding Organ Group, gave presentations to 'sell our wares'. The evening concluded with a splendid organ recital given by Colin Walsh, Organist Laureate of Lincoln Cathedral, showing the City Hall organ off to great effect in music by Guilment (Grand Choeur in D), Saint-Saëns (D flat Fantasie), Ropartz (Prélude funèbre), Tournemire transc. Duruflé (Petite rapsodie

improvisée) and Vierne (Symphonie 3). The Ropartz was new to me and came off well, with judicious use of the wide tonal resources offered by the organ.

Saturday morning opened with a recital by Darius Battiwalla, who has recently succeeded Simon Lindley as Curator of Leeds Town Hall organ. His programme was mostly of music by the well-known Alfred Hollins, a composer we are used to associating with Edinburgh but who was in fact born in Hull. We heard Hollins' Concert Overture in C minor, A Song of Sunshine, the Morceau de concert en forme de valse, and the Concert Toccata in B flat. Also performed, as quite a poignant touch, were two pieces that Hollins had played on this organ in recitals he gave in the City Hall in 1918: these were the Saint-Saëns Fantasia in E flat, and the second movement of Bach's fourth Trio Sonata. In an event largely featuring concert repertoire, it was a delight to hear versatility of the organ demonstrated in the slow movement of the Bach, so beautifully played, at a suitably relaxed tempo, and with a delicate and exquisite choice of registration.

Before the lunch break we had two talks. First, Dr John Pemberton (Curator and Organist, Hull City Hall) gave an interesting account of the Hull organ builders Forster and Andrews, filling us in on their background in the 1930s, as apprentices to J C Bishop in London, their friendship with Edmund Schulze occasioned by the organ he exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and the subsequent influence which Schulze exerted on the work of the F&A firm following the installation of the Schulze organ at Doncaster Parish Church in 1862. Next, Andrew McCrea (Deputy Director of the RCO) gave a fascinating account of Dr Jackson at 100 in celebration of FJ's forthcoming anniversary. It was a good occasion to recall how Dr Jackson's life and career (he was born in Malton, less than forty miles from Hull) has been entirely centred on and devoted to the county of Yorkshire. Fittingly, special emphasis was given to his organ compositions, with examples performed for us by Colin Wright and John Scott Whiteley. The unexpected icing on the cake was to have Dr Jackson present in the Hall for the occasion (and indeed throughout the day). At the conclusion, it was no surprise that after due thanks had been expressed to Andrew, John and Colin, all present gave a standing ovation to Dr Jackson!

After lunch, the concluding session started with an interesting presentation by John Scott Whiteley on the project, inspired by William Whitehead, to complete Bach's Orgelbüchlein. We were reminded that Bach started to write the collection during his period at Weimar, and that this year marks the three hundredth anniversary of the year in which he left his post there, having completed just 45 of an intended series of 164 chorale preludes. Perhaps John can be encouraged to write up his interesting theory as to why Bach abandoned the project? The talk included the performance by Robert Poyser of some of the first contributions that have been accepted to complete the collection. As well as a beautiful contribution from Dr Jackson, we heard a concise and exuberant prelude by Franz Josef Stoiber (Organist

of Regensburg Cathedral) brilliantly combining a typically Bachian form with the toccata style of Dupré. We look forward to seeing the new and complete collection when the project comes to fruition and the works are published.

Next came a Young Organists' Forum, which I was invited to chair. The title 'young organists' might have suggested that these were teenage students in their early years of learning the instrument. Not so. Those selected to take part were all graduates on the first steps of what will undoubtedly be distinguished careers. They were Maximillian Elliott (Assistant Director of Music at the churches of St Olave's and All Saints, York); Jeremy Lloyd (Assistant Organist, York Minster); and Hilary Punnett (Assistant Organist, Lincoln Cathedral). A fourth panellist, Hannah Gibson, was unfortunately ill on the day and unable to be with us. They were a lively and interesting panel. Topics touched on included: their views on the state of parish church music and its future; opinions on the way young organists are taught; how can we make the organ appeal to children and young people?; also (particularly relevant to BIOS), what is the future role of organs in academic research? At the end of the Forum, Maximillian played Francis Jackson's Procession, and Jeremy played the first movement of Mendelssohn's Sonata IV.

The 2017 OrganFest concluded with a Grand Finale Recital given by Kevin Bowyer (University Organist, Glasgow). This, as we have come to anticipate eagerly from Kevin, was a 'fun' programme, selected 'to illustrate some of the "theatre organ" stops of the City Hall instrument'. As always Kevin's performance demonstrated both his phenomenal technique and artistry plus his ability to entertain. The opening and closing pieces (Bach, Prelude and Fugue in D and Tomlinson Triumphant Overture) were more standard repertoire, but for sheer originality the remainder of the programme deserves to be printed here in full: Daguerrotype of an Old Mother (Harvey Gaul); A Song of Rejoicing (William Ross); The Grasshopper's Dance (Ernest Bucalossi); Bohemesque (William Wolstenholme); I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts ("Fred Heatherton"); Fête de Chambard from Rumpus Festival (Anthony Whittaker); The Whistler and his Dog (Arthur Pryor); and A Little Suite (Anthony Baldwin). In the appropriate pieces Kevin made full use of the cinema organ stops on the Solo and Choir divisions of the organ. Great fun was had by all, especially in The Whistler and his dog which included (at a given moment and on a signal given by the page-turner) an opportunity for audience participation.

John Scott Whiteley is to be congratulated, and of course thanked, for producing such an excellent and successful programme for this year's event and, with Dr John Pemberton, bearing the enormous brunt of planning and organisation. To secure the use of such a major and prominent City Hall venue for two days was in itself no mean feat! Our thanks, too, to all the organists and others who so willingly took part and who, between them, provided us with two excellent days of organ extravaganza.

Alan Thurlow

ALL SAINTS, LLANELLI, CARMS: THE 1874 HILL & SON ORGAN

ANDREW HAYDEN

All Saints Church, Llanelli, in Wales, was a new church built to the designs of G E Street in 1874. The parish was a large one with a population of some 15,000, an increase of over 400 per cent since 1800. Church accommodation had been meagre hitherto partly because the population was poor consisting mainly of colliers and tinplate workers. The latter gave the nickname 'Tinopolis' to the town.

All Saints which seated 600 people, was part of the response to the need for more church buildings and while conventional in plan had one unusual feature, a baptistry. This was the result, apparently, of a wish on the part of parishioners to continue the

practice of total immersion at baptism, something which until then had been carried out in the river Lliedi which flows through the town.



All SS, Llanelli. General view.

Photo: Andrew Hayden

The organ was built by William Hill & Son but was never completed. Hill's records in the British Organ Archive show that space was left for a number of stops of which several were added just as the organ was almost ready, presumably as funds came in; Hill's estimate book shows additions being made barely a month before the organ was completed. A report in the *South Wales Daily News* 23 September 1874 gives the specification at the time of construction indicating that several stops were prepared for especially in the Swell and Choir divisions. What should have been an organ of three manuals and pedals with 26 stops ended up as one of 20 of which four on the Choir were only prepared for at the console and one stop, a Bourdon, for which

there is a vacant slide on the Great. A third Pedal stop, a Violoncello, also had space left for it, though no chest was provided. The Choir organ now has a two-stop soundboard but space exists on the building frame for one of six. Of interest is that a Mr H Radcliffe received commission of 2½ per cent presumably for having 'facilitated' the contract; money which might have been used to provide the extra registers.

This instrument has received excellent attention throughout its life so far and despite the need for cleaning and overhaul, still presents an eminently satisfying portrait of itself. Overhaul appears to have taken place on a fairly regular basis. The date 1911 is pencilled in on the roof of the swell box together with the names of the men who

worked on it: Hilton, Bishop, Flood – presumably a cleaning though given that Hill's estimate books are not preserved after 1893, nothing is recorded. In 1921, an electric blower was fitted, the remains of which are evidenced by a trunk running up from the side of the organ into the ringing chamber above. This has since been disconnected and replaced by a more modern unit at the back of the instrument. In 1932, in addition to cleaning and overhaul, a tremulant was added and the Swell Octave to Great coupler made to act on the Swell manual as well so adding some flexibility. Very little otherwise has been altered: both Swell and Great Chorus reeds have had their top octaves replaced with harmonic trebles and a Voix Celestes added on the Swell in place of the Piccolo (holes in the rackboard indicate the compass of the stop), by whom is not known though the pipework is of good quality. However, it does mean the only 8' flute is the Great Stopped Diapason. The Mixture work, perhaps unusually, is



All Saints, Llanelli console
Photo: Andrew Hayden

still cone-tuned and in excellent condition - evidence of Pat Burns's exemplary care taken when tuning. At some stage, it is probable the Pedal organ was put on pneumatic action and then subsequently electrified. It remains as such today and despite having not been played regularly for over five years, a recent visit by the author, with the help of a portable generator, confirmed its excellent state of preservation and superb tonal qualities.

Despite not having been completed, this is an outstanding example of Hill's work. The chorus work is brilliant and full with wonderful balance and scrupulous attention to voicing and cohesion. The full Swell organ belies the fact there is only a double flue, 8' reed and a mixture, giving the impression of something far more expansive – an English Full Swell in miniature; with the octave coupler, nothing is left to the imagination.

It is not often that I write about redundant organs since to do so would risk setting a precedent and make it very difficult to determine what were deserving cases. However, this is an exception. All Saints was declared redundant on account of the need to completely rewire the electrical circuits, funding for which was unlikely to be found. Despite hopes the whole building and its contents would be vested in the Redundant Churches Mechanism, it was sold and most of the contents dispersed. The present owner is anxious to find a home for the organ before the building is put up for sale again since he is fully aware of the instrument's significance. Enquiries may be made through me, Andrew Hayden, in the first instance.

ELECTRIC HISTORY

JOHN NORMAN

In 1903 Norman & Beard took over the debris of the Hope-Jones Electric Organ Company after it went bankrupt and occasionally used Hope-Jones electric action in their own work (e.g. Fyvie Castle 1905 - NPOR N18148). The occasional use of this technology survived the amalgamation with Hill in 1916. However, when John Christie bought the company in 1923, following the making of the Glyndebourne organ, he decided to get into the cinema organ business. Christie opened an office in Wardour Street, London, and hired a salesman who promptly sold two Wurlitzer look-alikes.

Hill Norman & Beard had previously built a large organ for the Regent Cinema, Brighton (1921 - NPOR N15535) but it was of conventional construction and the firm had little idea how to make a Wurlitzer look-alike. Herbert Norman (then aged 22) examined an American-made house organ to see up-to-date key-contact design and then wangled 30 minutes inside the first Wurlitzer in London (New Gallery Cinema, Regent Street 1925 - NPOR P00159). Within three years he had designed the largest cinema organ in Europe (Regal, Marble Arch - NPOR N18257).

A unit organ of any size necessarily requires a repeater relay in the key action. The Wurlitzer relay, as might be expected, is very rapid. The contacts are closed by small and light pneumatic motors, exhausted by hairpin-shaped 'chest magnets' (based on the Hope-Jones original). As the contacts are 'in the wind', a glass faceboard is provided for visual checks.

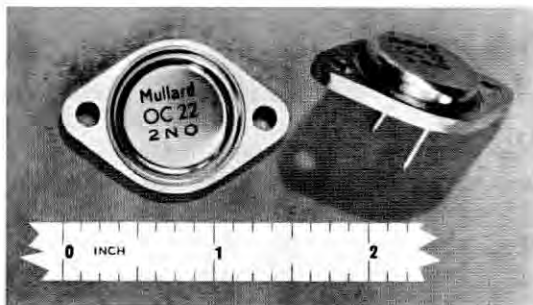
Christie/Hill Norman & Beard used similar electro-pneumatic relays. By contrast, after the invention of the lever magnet by Louis Wick in 1929, John Compton used direct magnet operation of his beautifully-engineered combined relay and switching system - but the heavy magnets of the Compton mechanism added delay to the response. Later, Walker just used smaller lever magnets and key-type contacts.

Because of the multiplicity of couplers on large organs and Pedal organ 'borrows', repeater relays were still needed on otherwise 'straight' instruments. However, electro-pneumatic relays were quite expensive to make and required their own high-pressure wind supply. Hill Norman & Beard stopped making them in 1960. Initially replaced by a revised and complex key-contact system devised by Walter Wolsey, it was realised that the simplest way forward was to switch multiple circuits with each key contact, using small selenium rectifiers as one-way valves.

The use of thin silver key contacts to switch more than one magnet (and often 70 ohm lever magnets instead of 120 ohm 'chest magnets') raised the spectre of contact

wear. The use of a test rig, running 3,600 times an hour 24/7, proved that up to four magnets could be controlled from one contact without compromising the life of the contacts if the small selenium rectifiers already mentioned were also used as spark suppressors.

The four-magnet limit was a problem when designing organs of any size with individual electrically-operated pallets. As a result I patented, in 1963, in the name of Hill Norman & Beard, the use of transistors in organ actions. This enabled us to



The 'Mini relay' Photo: John Norman

control up to about nine magnets from one circuit (more in the treble, with smaller magnets). The patent circuit avoided the need for separate spark-suppressing rectifiers or diodes. The so-called 'Mini Relays' were used in some 20 new organs between 1964 and 1971 as well as many rebuilds. Most of the equipment is still in service after around 50 years.

Although the design was very simple (a spare transistor was provided with each instrument and could be installed with a screwdriver) one tuner sent a message back to the works asking if the top of the transistor could be made to unscrew 'so that he could adjust the contacts'.

St Peter & St Paul, Hambledon,
Hampshire, 1968. Case by Stephen
Dykes-Bower. The action incorporates
transistor 'Mini Relays'.
Photo: John Norman



CD REVIEW

Multum in Parvo Margaret Phillips playing instruments at the English Organ School and Museum, Milborne Port, Somerset. EOSCD21 (2017).

Only available from: EOS, The Manse, Chapel Lane, Milborne Port, Sherborne DT9 5DL, UK *or order from:* mp@margaretphillips.org.uk Price £10 UK pp. £1.50

Since 1992 when they purchased the former Congregational Chapel in Milborne Port to house their various keyboard instruments, Margaret Phillips and her husband David Hunt have built up a splendid and historically illuminating collection of organs, harpsichords and harmoniums. This new CD, well-recorded by Gary Cole, offers an opportunity to hear twelve instruments on which Margaret plays a wide selection of appropriate music, all of it stylishly and compellingly. If one listens to the CD throughout at a sitting, there are inevitable jolts from one track to the other, as timbre, pitch and temperament vary considerably; it's best to listen selectively.

We can compare three late eighteenth century English organs - by Snetzler (1769), James Davis (c.1795) and Samuel Green (1796). Margaret plays a four-movement suite by Keeble (his 'Select Piece no. 1 in G') on the Green, which has a delightfully pungent sesquialtra; the shifting mechanism comes into its own for the echoes. The four-stop Davis instrument sounds attractively refined in pieces by Sam Wesley. On the beautiful Snetzler - the most historically significant organ in the collection - we hear two seventeenth century Spanish pieces, one a dramatic *tiento* by Pablo Bruna featuring the brilliant treble cornet. This is an unexpected and highly effective alliance of music and instrument.

We hear Dubois and Elgar on the 1882 James Conacher, a sizeable organ which Margaret and David saved from certain destruction from a



Margaret Phillips at the 1882 James Conacher organ Photo: David Hunt

house in Glasgow; and *Salomé* on a three-manual nineteenth century instrument originally by Telford (1865), rebuilt by Peter Conacher (1903) and augmented in the pedal department by the present owners. It sounds authoritative in *Salomé's* Grand Choeur in G despite its only manual reed being an oboe; the swell 16' bourdon gives gravitas and the added pedal bassoon plays an important part. On the third nineteenth century organ, by the Bath-based builder John Clark (1853), Margaret plays the monumental six-part *Ricercar* from Bach's *Musical Offering*. Beginning with the beautiful stopped diapason, she effectively builds up the registration; the performance is rather serious and austere, but then so is the music. The Clark organ is another which Margaret and David saved from the scrap-heap.

The collection houses two Peter Collins instruments, of 1984 and 2000. The former is a fine vehicle for the clean lines of Andriessen's well-known *Theme and Variations*, while the more recent and quite substantial organ shows off Lübeck's E major *Praeludium* (although I found the manual trumpet a little harsh on the recording). We are used to hearing both these works on large organs but they work extremely well here, and there is no lack of colour on Peter's versatile instruments.

Two modern harpsichords are featured: first, a sixteenth century Baffo copy (2011) by Peter Taylor on which we hear Byrd crisply and stylishly played. Then a 1972 David Rubio copy of the world-famous 1769 Taskin: I cannot forbear to remind readers that the original is in the Russell Collection here in Edinburgh! Rubio's copy sounds appropriately sonorous in music by Boismortier, which Margaret plays neatly and engagingly, full of nuance, as one can on a highly expressive French harpsichord. (They will give you anything you want in terms of expression).

More unusually for most of us, perhaps, we hear two fine harmoniums, one by the famous Alexandre firm (1861) and the other by Mustel. On the Alexandre we have the jolly, if hardly profound *Plaisanterie* Op. 31 no. 4 by Karg-Elert which Margaret describes as 'a gently light-hearted view of the French'. (One is reminded that a former highly distinguished BIOS member once asserted that 'all French music is middle-brow'). On the two-manual Mustel we hear a *Menuet* by Jules Mouquet (a pupil of Dubois) specifically written for a Mustel harmonium.

In her exemplary notes, giving full details of every instrument, Margaret pays appropriate tribute to John Budgen who has been closely involved in the rescue, restoration and maintenance of all the organs. What has been achieved at Milborne Port is of incalculable value to the world of keyboard music, and Margaret Phillips's splendid performances will convey the immense variety of the collection to many (myself included) who have not yet visited the English Organ School and Museum. May they grow and prosper!

John Kitchen

CALL FOR PAPERS - RECENT RESEARCH IN ORGAN STUDIES

BERNARD EDMONDS RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2018

Proposals for papers are invited for the British Institute of Organ Studies Bernard Edmonds Recent Research Conference to take place on 17th February 2018 at the Barber Institute, Birmingham University.

Proposals should present some recent research into aspects of organ history, including music and performance. A broad range of subjects are encouraged and papers on organs and organ builders, including British organ-builders working overseas and organs built in Britain by foreign organ-builders, will be welcomed alongside papers more broadly based.

Papers should be around twenty-five minutes in length, and the use of musical and pictorial illustrations is encouraged. Students are encouraged to apply for short slots if they wish to present initial research findings.

Proposals will be reviewed by members of BIOS Council and the authors of successful proposals will be notified as soon as possible.

A summary proposal of 200 words, along with a brief biographical note, should be sent by 30th October 2017 if possible, but enquiries are welcome any time.

Richard Hobson, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
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The Snetzler organ in the concert room of the Barber Institute,
Birmingham (see previous page)
Photo: Philip Wells

FORTHCOMING BIOS MEETINGS

Saturday December 2nd 2017 12.30 for 1.00

Please note change of date due to unforeseen circumstances.

Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street, London W1

The BIOS Lunch

A three course lunch including wine and drinks. Cost £35.

A social occasion for members, wives, partners and guests; all are welcome.

Numbers limited to about 25. A menu and request for payment will be sent to those who reserve places with the meetings officer by Monday 6th November.

Contact the Meetings Officer directly - hbsrnh@aol.com

Saturday February 17th 2018

Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

Bernard Edmonds Research Conference

See page 95 for Call for Papers.

Saturday April 28th 2018 (date and venue to be confirmed)

BIOS Annual General Meeting

The Meetings Officer welcomes proposals for day events at any time.



AIMS OF BIOS

To promote objective, scholarly research into the history of the organ and its music in all its aspects, and, in particular, into the organ and its music in Britain.

To conserve the sources and materials for the history of the organ in Britain, and to make them accessible to scholars.

To work for the preservation, and where necessary, the faithful restoration of historic organs in Britain.

To encourage an exchange of scholarship with similar bodies and individuals abroad, and to promote, in Britain, a greater appreciation of historical overseas schools of organ-building.