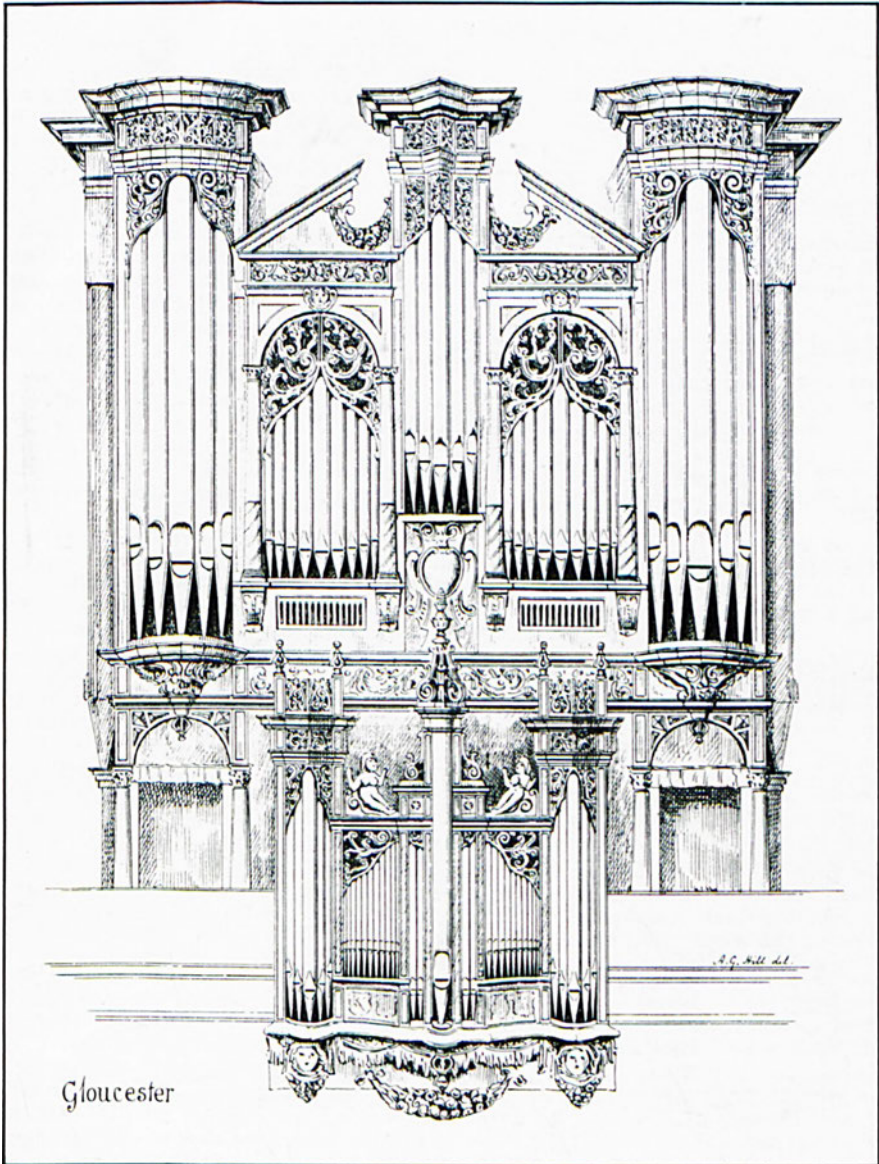


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BIOS REPORTER



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The British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS)

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The BIOS Reporter is edited by Nicholas Thistlethwaite who will be pleased to receive suitable material for inclusion and suggestions concerning the form of the publication; correspondence arising from Notes and Queries column should be sent to the Revd. B.B.Edmonds, at:
[REDACTED]

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It is always encouraging for an editor to know that something he has written has evoked (or even provoked) a response among his readership. Consequently, when a little flood of material descended on me following an appeal last year for contributions to the **Reporter** I was delighted. (Please don't recline on your laurels, though: we have used up most of the articles 'in hand', and would again be glad to receive further contributions for consideration.) One of these contributions took the form of a letter from Mr Geoffrey Morgan, of London. It seemed to be a response to one particular article in an earlier issue of the **Reporter**, but in fact it deals with an aspect of conservation which has frequently been discussed on this page, and elsewhere in the **Reporter**. For that reason, I felt it appropriate to publish it here, and then to make certain points in reply. I hope, though, that the discussion will not end over the page, but that other readers will wish to make their contribution in the form of 'Letters to the Editor'. Here is Mr Morgan's original letter:

Dear Dr Thistlethwaite,

Your article "A Problem of Preservation" [**Reporter V.2.**] was most interesting and thought-provoking. I should like, however, to discuss a few points on the question of tracker action.

You imply that a Victorian organ should, if possible, have its original (tracker) action restored. Is it wise to generalise? If an organ of any size, and horizontally disposed as most Victorian instruments are, the touch of coupled manuals is almost bound to be heavy. The only advantage that I can see for tracker action is that it will usually continue to function even when worn out, whilst other forms of mechanism can become increasingly unreliable.

Some claim another advantage of tracker action; namely that it is possible to control the attack of pipe speech, but surely this is out of the question anyway with typical Victorian voicing?

Neither can "authenticity" be claimed as a reason for retaining this form of mechanism unless, for example, one also retains the hand blowing equipment! After all, we don't think twice before fitting an electric blower to an instrument which was originally hand-blown, and, by dispensing with feeders, the steadiness of the wind supply is altered - most of us would say improved. Is this authenticity?

Many years ago we gladly accepted improved console lighting by substituting electricity for candles. Is **this** authenticity? By the same logic why should the key touch not be made more pleasant by the substitution of electricity for trackers? The organs with which we are concerned are not to be museum pieces, but are to be used as musical instruments of the "1980's".

It may well be advantageous for a small instrument to retain tracker action, but I have met even small organs with which one "fights" rather than plays. There is one advantage of electric action in small instruments and that is the easier availability of octave couplers. No doubt the purists will raise their hands in horror, but for **Service accompaniment** octave couplers can greatly increase the effectiveness of a small number of stops. (Sometimes the main use of these organs is to accompany the singing of the very congregations who raise the money for the organ-building work concerned....). I can think of three small Walker organs with tracker sub and super swell couplers which add a great deal to the general effect, but are unpleasantly heavy to manage. (All Saints, Hillingdon; East Brent Church, Somerset; Sunnyside Methodist, Weston-Super-Mare ... now closed).

If a tracker action is responsive and light, by all means retain it. If not, why bother - if electric action can be afforded? A heavy touch can be the most serious impediment, and I have played on many. I recall, at random, playing the old Walker at Dorchester Abbey, Oxon. soon after it was restored, and finding the tracker action very unwieldy; and surely, anyone who has played on the swell at Reading Town Hall, even without its octave couplers, must long for a lighter touch. In the latter case, were the great not Barker lever, it would be impossible to play on the great at all with couplers drawn.

If I understand you correctly, you advocate replacing a worn-out electric mechanism with new tracker action, where the organ was tracker originally. I have yet to be convinced that modern tracker actions are always better than their ancestors. _____

I remember broadcasting Dupre's B major Prelude and Fugue from New College Oxford a few years ago and being nearly crippled when playing rapid chordal figuration with all manuals coupled. I also had to change some fingering in another piece because my hand could not manage the stretches demanded by a deeper-than-average great touch. I could cite another example - the modern two manual, vertically disposed instrument in St Mary's Nottingham. I tried out the Messiaen "Dieu Parmi Nous" toccata with Swell to Great drawn, and was affected by wrist fatigue very quickly. Music of this style does seem to show up the worst characteristics of a heavy touch. The life of a good tracker action is doubtless longer than electric, but a *good* electric action should last fifty years or more. Many actions built in the 30s are still giving satisfactory service today. The organ which I play regularly is a large four manual Harrison of 1937, and is basically untouched apart from some renovation in the fifties. Though we know that future restoration will be necessary, after forty-three years of hard *daily* use this action is still utterly reliable, silent and responsive. With solid state and consequent reduction of certain modern electric actions to only one basic moving part, it would seem that the life of electric mechanism could soon become a serious rival to the longevity of trackers. Given the best modern electric action and, if you like it, top-resistant key touch, what more could one ask? Am I alone in my views? v Yours sincerely,"Geoffrey D Morgan.

Dear Mr Morgan,

Thank you for your letter.

You raise many points connected with the central topic of conservation, and I can't do justice to them in a fairly brief reply. As a start, though, may I simply jot down a few points which occur to me on re-reading your letter?

(1) Although Victorian organs (especially the larger ones) frequently have a 'heavy' touch, this can sometimes (often?) be lightened considerably, either by a thorough restoration of an elderly tracker action, or by quite minor adjustment at the hands of an experienced organ builder. This has certainly proved to be true in one of the instances you cite - Dorchester Abbey - in the most recent restoration.

(2) With early to mid-Victorian organs a modest degree of control over the pipe speech is often possible, and always desirable. From what we know of performance techniques up to c.1850, many players both understood and desired this.

(3) A relatively 'heavy' touch makes it difficult to affect the pipe speech very much, but (for at least one player) it still preserves a direct, physical contact between player and pipe which is more salutary to the player's well-being than any electrically-based mechanism (including one with artificially created "top-resistance").

(4) Hand-blowing in an old organ should always be retained, because it is part of the original design and was employed when the builder voiced and finished the instrument. Of course, convenience leads us to provide the alternative of electric-blowing, but what evidence have we that our forebears (before c.1900) would have regarded our modern steady wind as an ideal?

(5) The substitution of electric for mechanical action does not only mean that the action is going to have to be replaced every 50 years, it also means that every 50 years, the builder and organist are going to be tempted to do a little more than just replace the action

(6) I am alarmed by your sentence about "museum pieces". There are very, very few organs around which would be best confined to museums, but with any surviving historic organ, limitations must be accepted: this is not to create a "museum piece" - it is simply to respect a fine work of art. Having said that, this need present no real problems to the competent and imaginative organist; after all, most of his repertoire consists of "museum pieces" **1**

(7) To elaborate on that last point: you must choose your pieces according to the scope of the instrument - and as well as stops available, this means that you must consider the action. It maⁿ **not** be wise to play that relatively small part of the organ repertoire conceived with non-mechanical actions in mind, on a tracker organ; similarly, you will not get the best performance of an early piece on an instrument with electric action which lacks the flexibility of key-touch expected by the composer.

Yours sincerely, Nicholas Thistlethwaite.

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English Organ Archive

Michael Sayer

The Archive collection has received on deposit the ledgers of Osmond of Taunton from 1890 to **193k**. The Osmond company, founded in 1829 as J E Minns & Co, is now a branch of Hill Norman & Beard and has recently restored the 1-manual Elliot organ of 1804 in West Wellow Methodist Church, Hampshire. Frank Fowler of HN&B has produced a cassette recording of this instrument.

The British Library has made a generous grant to the English Organ Archive to permit the microfilming of all the early records in its care. These include all the Gray 8« Davison ledgers and shop-books from 1820, all of Norman & Beard (1879-T916) and all the Hill books from 1829 to **1916**.

The microfilming of these books will practically eliminate handling these very fragile volumes. We already have, on microfilm, the Sperling notebooks of c1850 in the RCO Library, and Shapley's index of organs in Britain compiled from published sources and personal explorations over about **50** years from the **1920s**.

It is hoped that a microfilm machine will be available to members at the conference at Keele in **1982**.

Under Threat: Postscript

Newcastle upon Tyne, Roman Catholic Cathedral.

Attempts to find a home for the pipework and chests of T C Lewis' organ (**1869**: see **Reporter**, January & April **1981**) were unsuccessful; having been stored in various parts of the building for **8** months or so, the pipework was finally gathered up, and consigned to the melting pot earlier this year. Though the organ in its latter, rebuilt state was (to the listener) a parody of Lewis' original, this destruction of Lewis' surviving materials can only be a matter of deep regret to all concerned with the preservation of the British organ. Two points emerge from this particular case:

- (1) the earliest possible notice of availability should be given, especially where the instrument concerned is large and/or 'difficult' in some sense - **8** months is not adequate (normally) to find a new home for a large organ requiring major expenditure on the part of the purchaser;
- (2) the only certain way to ensure the preservation of such a dismembered instrument (i.e. where a potential purchaser would not be buying an intact organ but a collection - albeit, a **valuable** collection - of bits and pieces) is for someone to provide a secure place for storage, and to provide funds for acquiring and transporting the remains; in the long-term, BIOS must bear this in mind as a future development.

Liverpool, St Francis Xavier.

The possible redundancy of this Gray & Davison - Hill instrument was raised in the previous issue; the immediate threat to the building has now been withdrawn, and it appears that the organ is safe.

Redundant

St Philip, Sydenham, London.

This organ is reputed to be by T C Lewis, although there could be earlier pipework. The church is to be demolished in early 1982

Specification Great 16,8,8,8,4,2\$,2,8.
Swell 16,8,8,ζ+,4,111,8,8.
Pedal 32,16,16,8,8,5\$,4,8.(from Great Trumpet).

Action Tracker (to manual only?)

Casework No details.

Dimensions 16' x 10' x 12'

Contact Revd Caldicott [REDACTED]

Conferences

1. Derby We shall be holding a day conference in Derbyshire on Saturday, March 27th 1982, with Yorkshire Organ Builders as its theme. This may seem a little strange, but in fact we shall visit organs worked on by 3 Yorkshire builders - Holt, Radcliffe & Sagar, and Isaac Abbott. The Reverend B B Edmonds will be talking about Yorkshire organ builders to set the scene, and the day is being organised by Rodney Tomkins. Further details and a booking form will be found on an enclosed pink sheet. We hope to meet some of our Midlands members who may not have been able to get to conferences in other parts of the country.

2. Keele Residential Conference 1982 The last **Reporter (.vk)** included a preliminary notice of this year's residential conference at Keele University, from July 27th to 29th; the intended programme accompanies this issue of **Reporter**, along with your application form to send now with your deposit. Keele Park is a beautiful campus and you may wish to stay for an extra day to explore the locality: bring the family. Conference meetings will be in Keele Hall, a splendid Victorian country house, and the University Library houses the English Organ Archive, much of which will be available to search on microfilm. The conference is about musical instrument research and will include live music: some BIOS members who are instrumentmakers will be bringing small instruments to be played and demonstrated by Sheila Lawrence, and there will be a contrasting programme in Lichfield Cathedral. The cost will be between £10 and £15 per person: University Conference prices are not yet finally fixed for 1982. So just cut off the yellow form and send it, with your £5.00 deposit (payable to University of Keele), to Dr Michael Sayer, Department of Education, University of Keele, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG. (Extradays will cost £10 for bed and breakfast.)

Cramping the Style

A critical report about a growing trend in organ-building.

In this age of computerised stop-control systems and the foolproof slider-chests, which modern technology and ingenuity have undoubtedly influenced, as well as the ever smaller and more compact case designs, it seems, in many instances, that one very important factor is becoming more and more neglected at the expense of all this so called advancement

'Overcrowding', which is the subject of this article, is becoming more and more widespread as the external dimensions of the organs of this era become smaller and smaller. And unfortunately, this is a fact, which upon some reflection, can only be regarded as contradictory to the true art of organ building. An organ is still a musical instrument and as such, is subject to certain physical and acoustical laws in order to fulfil its proper function.

On the face of it, it may seem commendable that a new organ with thirty-two speaking stops, for example, can be accommodated in a case less than half the size of an older one which, perhaps, only possessed twenty-two. But if this 'shrinkage' is at the expense of impairing the true, free speech of the pipework, then one is forced to conclude that the designers' priorities seem to be drastically wrong.

What good is the best mechanical action, the slender lines of a beautifully made solid case or the thousands of new expressive possibilities, laid open by sophisticated computerised combination systems, if the instrument is tonally impaired? Surely the pipes, as the tone-producing part of the instrument, are the most important factor and hence, should be given the utmost consideration? And if the tone production of a musical instrument is not the prime factor, then what on earth is?

The differences of today's constructional methods are surely not so great as to justify such large differences in overall size. Obviously the use of modern materials has, to a certain degree, enabled a general reduction of size, but this alone is not really significant enough to bring about the apparent difference.

Even an electric stop action can, under certain conditions, require more space than an average mechanical one.

An initial cause of the present shrinkage phase was undoubtedly the come-back of the slider chest. Then it automatically brought with it a reduction of size, in comparison with the cone-and-membrane chests which it superseded, owing to its far less clumsy and, moreover, less complicated mode of construction. In turn, this reduction of chest size - but not necessarily also of the pipe scales-compelled a closer grouping together of the pipes. It must be mentioned though, that the term 'clumsy' is only a relative comparison by today's standards, and that the organ builders of the past certainly didn't design their chests larger than they thought (and knew) necessary. This doesn't only relate to the more recent cone-and-membrane chests, but also, of course, to the older slider chests, which were generally of larger dimensions than those of today. This point, however, is explained further on.

Another important point must now be considered, and one which has always caused severe problems, namely, the space allocated for a new instrument being sometimes totally inadequate or unsuitable - especially where newer buildings are concerned. In such cases it is quite evident that the architect responsible has blundered, and that if a qualified expert had been consulted in the first place, such gross mistakes would probably never have occurred. In such a situation, (which is by no means so uncommon) the problem of overcrowding can be illustrated by the following example:

An area of certain size has been allocated for a new instrument. After discussions between organ builder, organ consultant, organist, architect and other members of the planning and financing committees, the outcome is a vast array of diverging facts, figures and wishes. It is the organ builder who must work with the consequences of this, and he is sometimes not left with much free scope, if any at all.

For reasons of his own, the organist may have suggested, for example, that he requires an instrument of no less than thirty stops. However, the size of the church and, more important, the musical function that the organ has to fulfil, demand no more than twenty. The financial resources too can, at a maximum be stretched to pay for an instrument of the latter dimensions. But the proposed space, planned by the architect, can only accommodate an instrument (suitably proportioned) of twelve stops. How does one arrive at a solution to such a problem?

Well, on the one hand, it is quite obvious that the organ cannot be (and in this example, need not be) larger than the financial resources available. On the other hand, a properly constructed instrument, designed for the allocated space, would be inadequate for the office it was to fulfil. So there has to be a compromise and this compromise can be justifiably termed 'overcrowding'. Theoretically, the organ builder should have refused such a contract under these negative conditions, but from the practical point of view, he very likely cannot afford to do so. Hence the organ is made, but it certainly cannot be classed as an instrument in any musical sense of the word, bearing in mind the simple fact that pipes need space in order to render true and free musical tones.

Andrew D Hypher - journeyman in the art of Organ Building.

To be concluded in the next issue.

The Earliest English Organ Builders

Very little has ever been written about early English Organs, and what we have are largely 'hand-me-downs' copied from printed sources of the last century or so, thus perpetrating a great many errors.

Modern research has shed much light on the so called 'Dark Ages' and a picture emerges of a period of travelling and trading between this country and the Continent, but there was certainly a time of dreadful warring and destruction by pagan invaders from Northern Europe; English monasteries were almost wiped out c870 by the Danes. **The reconstruction and reformation of the Church in the mid 10th century was achieved by the efforts of three men, Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald. The first two were said**

to be the earliest organ builders in this country.

But to go back to the beginning. I have not been able to find the reference to organs said to have been made by Bede (except for a rather suspect quotation in 'The Musical World' of 18 March 1836) and Perrot has deleted this in the second edition of his fascinating 'L'Orgue de ses Origines...'. It seems unlikely that Bede who probably never left his base in Jarrowinthe wild north had any connection with the instrument, if indeed it existed at that time, between 673 and 735 A.D.

St Aldhelm, born c639 became a pupil at Malmesbury of the Irish monk Maildulf, not in the Abbey as is generally imagined, but in the sort of humble cell-like building in which Irish monks tended to live. At the age of 3¹ Aldhelm went to Canterbury and apparently studied music, (although this probably meant mathematics) and became in later life a scholar and a writer in a particularly Irish form of Latin.

Owing to ill health, he returned to Malmesbury which had evolved into a monastery and became the first Abbott, founding other monasteries including Frome and Bradford-on-Avon. When he was about 50, (0689) he went to Rome, and after this time there are many allusions in his Riddles and other writings to organs, which, in my opinion cannot be imaginary. This is a debatable point and one must ask where he heard these instruments which were unknown in Europe at that date. It is of course possible that he went to Byzantium and that he travelled to places east of Rome.

Aldhelm was not an organ builder, but certainly seems to have heard organs. He did though play some sort of stringed instrument and he is said to have disguised himself and sung in the open air to his own accompaniment, songs into which he gradually introduced religious subjects in order to attract his hearers into the church. ('Why should the devil have all the good tunes?'). At the age of 66 he became, in 705, the first Bishop of Sherborne, and died at Doulting in Somerset in 709-

We pass from Aldhelm over two and a half *centuries*, to an England at peace under Alfred (872-901). At this period southwestern England (not Devon and Cornwall, but Somerset and Wiltshire) was visited by large numbers of Irish monks skilled in music and metalwork. They proliferated at Glastonbury, the oldest Christian sanctuary in England. To this school was brought Dunstan, said to have been born at Baltonsborough, Somerset c92^-.

We know a good deal about Dunstan, for there are no less than six early biographies of him - see, Bishop Stubbs's 'Memorials of Dunstan'. Rolls Series No. 63. 1875- Scholars have cast doubts on their veracity; however, we can recognize all the well known facts about Dunstan and his musical abilities.

It is interesting to read of Dunstan's building himself a cell, 5 x 2-J feet and using as a forge where he made metal objects, organs and bells. (I know the word 'organa' can also mean musical instruments, but I doubt if they would have been made in a forge). We do not know to what design these organs were made, but by 757 the organ had come to Europe and Dunstan certainly travelled on the Continent (he was exiled for two years to Flanders).

What is more important, to my mind, is the Irish metal working connection. We have all seen the wonderful Celtic ornaments made of various metals and the fact that Dunstan is the patron saint of metal workers strongly underlines his skills in this direction. According to Butler's 'Lives of the Saints' he is also Patron Saint of goldsmiths, jewellers and locksmiths.

William of Malmesbury, who was brought up in the Abbey of Malmesbury where he became the Librarian and who wrote one of the six 'Lives', gives us much information about Dunstan, but he lived a very long time afterwards (about 180 years) and his history was of necessity largely composed of hearsay. He does however give the impression that Dunstan was a key figure in spreading all over England 'that instrument which the ancients called the barbiton' [Aldhelm uses this word] 'and we call an organ'. He also tells us that Dunstan so revered Aldhelm that he restored and decorated the Abbey of Malmesbury, and either gave or built an organ on which a plaque was placed to his memory. Dunstan became Abbot of Glastonbury, Bishop of Worcester, and died as Archbishop of Canterbury in 988.

Ethelwold was also a student at Glastonbury at the same time as Dunstan and learned the same skills. He is said to have asked for the ruined Abbey of Abingdon, and, around 95¹ set about rebuilding it. It was he - and not Dunstan - who 'with his own hands' made an organ and bells, amongst other things for the Abbey.

Before he was made Bishop of Winchester (963)¹ Ethelwold sent to Cluny for monks to help improve the singing at Abingdon. He began to build a new cathedral at Winchester but died before it was finished. We have a highly coloured account by the writer Wulfstan, who was present at the dedication service and who describes the great new organ in 'S. Swithini vita et miracula'. He also says that it replaced an earlier instrument which must surely have been built by Ethelwold who died in 98[^]. The 'great organ' can therefore not be dated earlier than 985.

It seems reasonable to suppose that Dunstan and Ethelwold would have built organs for all the monasteries they founded which included Thorney (972), Medehamstede (Peterborough) where Ethelwold found nothing but 'old walls and wild woods' in 966, and Ely (970). Monasteries were also restored at Worcester, Bath, Cerne, Westbury, Winchcombe, Eynsham as well as Abingdon. Arthur Bryant in 'Makers of the Realm' says that in the latter part of the 10th century, Ely became famous for music and metal-work, bell casting and organ building. He does not give his source.

There was certainly an organ at Ramsey, an isolated fenland town where an Abbey had been founded by Oswald. The organ was given by the Earl of East Anglia, whose name is variously spelt as Ailwin, Aethelwine or Ethelwine, and is described in 'Chronicon Abbatiae Rameseiensis'. Rolls Series 83.

I hope I will not be thought presumptuous for writing the above account as I am not a Latin scholar nor a church historian. I have however read a great deal about this period and have learnt to admire the enormous courage of these early workers for the Christian church in England.

There are many pitfalls in trying to insert the word 'organ' into texts where it does not belong. Unfortunately 'organa' often means musical instruments where it looks as if it should mean 'organ'. I have therefore not presumed to quote from the many Latin sources I have checked, such as the Winchester Troper where 'laudibus organi pneuma' sounds so hopeful. I have been through the whole of Wulfstan's

'Life of St Swithun' and the page containing the description of the great Winchester organ is reproduced in my 'The Music of Winchester Cathedral' Stainer & Bell: Galaxy. 197[^] page 5. I have looked out relevant passages in the Chronicles of Abington, Croylund and Ramsey, and have been through all of Dunstan's biographies, including Osbern's in the original manuscript.

I hope it will be felt that this account goes some way to putting the records straight.

Betty Matthews

Wimborne Dorset

Notes and Queries

'My dear sir, I never in my life played on a gridiron!' This famous riposte to an invitation to try an organ with a pedal-board, was made by Sir George Smart; he who (to borrow a tactful phrase from the Musical World) had 'contrived to have himself appointed' as organist for the Coronation of Queen Victoria.

His father, George, was a music dealer, double bass player, and organiser of concerts. His name appears inlaid on a chamber organ in the possession of the Revd Bruce Naylor, of Hawthorn, South Australia, who would like to hear if any other Smart organs are known. 'George Smart, Music Warehouse, [redacted] The case, beautifully inlaid mahogany, is of Georgian style, and the stop-letting 18th cent. In those days, and even in modern times, organ builders constructed instruments which bore, not their own name, but that of the agent who sold them, and this is probably what happened here. I know of no other Smart organs at present. Henry Smart the organist was his grandson. *

At the beginning of the war, the BBC enlivened us with a programme about the preparations made by a small village, Nether Backwash. The village band played a special composition by their conductor, 'Nether Backwash, United', a lively and catchy tune with a vague air of familiarity, which has remained in my memory and bathroom repertoire. It was not until I was listening recently to Francis Jackson that the penny at last dropped. Smart's Postlude! There's glory for you.'

Grosvenor Chapel (1) - Eduard Robbins tells me he played it in 192*+, 'the two-manual keyboards were of reverse colour and were set behind the case (i.e., facing East)... the maker's name was sign-written in gold roman letters on the lower architrave of the case, and the latter was in line with the gallery'. (2). Abraham Jordan, but not unaltered, the last work previously (3) having been by Ingram. Mr Robbins enquires about the organ builder Joseph Marnell, fl. 1900.

Other enquiries include 'Hadaway, Builder, Bury St Edmunds' said to have made an organ at Westleton; Smith of Peterborough and London appeared on an organ at Yarwell, removed many years ago in favour of a small Trustam obtained from a baker's house; T Smith, from J W Walker, London, 1832 appeared on an organ in th mahogany case at Hickey's Almshouse Chapel, Richmond, but on my last visit in 1961 I found the inside had been removed in favour of a Walker 'Model'. I do not know whether he links with the previous Smith.

Others who noted their pedigree on their plates were:

J W Cranch, ... High Street, Camberwell, ... From Gray & Davidson (sic), 1859 at Culworth; and,

W Hamlin ... From Hills 8^ Brook Street New Road London at Maxstoke;

both are subjects of enquiry, as are J Rarmcent (?) London cl820; Richard Webber of London; Reginald Dalby Welch of Oxford fl. 1867; and T Worboys of Putney, Holtzhammer & Sons of London, Klitz of Hanway Street, all three late last century. Enquiry is also made about Keates of Sheffield; Moses Sagar of Leeds and Denman of York; as to where they respectively received their training. Numerous others, but we have a quorum by now. Let us turn to instruments.

In 1836, the Revd. Gervas Harvey Woodhouse, Rector of Finningley and my great-grandfather-in-law, gave a second hand organ to the church. It has been attributed to G.P.England, though Green has also been mentioned. It was installed by Brown of York, overhauled by Meacock in 1885 and superseded in 1906, and there seems to be no information available. It being a gift, the usual sources are dumb. I am asked about Aldborough Hatch, St Peter, and the design of the case. This rings an irritating bell, but I cannot trace anything.

Christ Chapel, Mai da Hill, was built as an Episcopalian Proprietary Chapel (*+). Sperling (5) tells us that Hill supplied an organ in 183*+, and remarks that the Cornopean was 'the first made by Hill', with what authority, one knows not. Charles Steggall as a young man was organist from 18*+8 to 1855, and his description of the organ as having a tenor c swell and no pedal stop agrees with Sperling (6). Mackeson (7)1876 says Hill; when the chapel was consecrated as Emmanuel, Northwick Terrace. Mackeson again says Hill in 1889. However, when in 1937 the then organ was rebuilt by Smith and Foskett with some tonal work by Bonavia Hunt, it was a larger instrument, said to have been acquired second-hand in 1859» and attributed to Gray and Davison (8).

(When the church was closed, the organ went to St George, Bloomsbury Way). 183*+ would hardly have been worn out by 1859; perhaps Hill exchanged it for a larger one which G & D later rebuilt? Not of earth-shattering import, perhaps; but any help in ministering to cornopean pilgrims would be welcome.

In the Registers of St Albans Abbey, Sunday 26 November 1820 ; "The organ which was originally built for the church of St Dunstan in the East, London, and by that celebrated artist Father Smydth (sic), and has now undergone many improvements including the addition of some pedal pipes by John Gray, Organ Builder, of 9 Quickset Row, New Road, London, was opened. The Musical part of the Service was chaunted by the Boys of the Blue-coat School under the superintendence of Mr Thomas Fowler - organist of the Abbey, in a style which would have done honour to any of our cathedrals. Mr John Gray (the Organ Builder) presided at the organ." It would be interesting to find out how many organ builders were competent organists.

One John Harris, who sang in St Albans Choir up till about 1861, as well as playing the organ on many occasions, waxed very indignant about the statements made by J E West (9) that the services were of a very primitive character, that only 'Tate and Brady' was in use, and that the organ blower in a dirty surplice announced the hymns 'in broad Hertfordshire brogue'. He pointed out (10) that the Abbey had had since 1820 its own hymn-book, compiled by Thomas Fowler, aforementioned, 'Printed and sold by W Langley, High Street'; that the hymns were announced by the central boy of the row of choristers sitting in front of the organ; and that services and anthems were used on any special occasion. West seems to have got hold of 'a real bit of Tonypandy'.

While at St Albans, let us consider John Godman, 1826-1908. Born at 'the Noke', now a pub with an old coach in the front, he became Parish Clerk of St Stephen's, kept the Post Office, was Assistant Overseer for nearly 50 years, and erected or rebuilt a number of public clocks. These included the Cathedral, where he rebuilt the tune chimes and added quarter chimes in 1880; St Peter's, where the 22ft 6in. pendulum was said to be the 'largest in the world'; and the City Clock Tower. He was also an organ builder. His first organ was for St^ Stephen's in 1860, which went to Redbourn Wesleyan in 1881 when a larger instrument had been obtained. In 1870 he rebuilt and enlarged Aylesbury Congregational, said to have come from Merton College, adding an 8-stop swell in 1c7*+; a small organ for Sarratt Baptist; and a large one for the United Free Church of Baptists and Congregationalists at High Wycombe, where he also rebuilt the organ in the schoolroom; and additions to the historic instrument at St Peter's. He was considered to be 'especially good with his pedal pipes'. In his spare time he was a good surveyor. He was buried at St Stephen's, with several generations of his ancestors. I do not know whether any of his organs survive unaltered.

B.B.Edmonds

- (1) Reporter V **.
- (2) also M.O. 9/6*+ 735.
- (3) M.O., O. & C., 6/08.
- (*+) Explained in Reporter I 2.
- (5) I 8*+.
- (6) M.T. /05.
- (7) Guide to London Churches.
- (8) M.O. 3/38 538.
- (9) Cathedral Organists.
- (10) MS notes 1909.

What they were saying

B.B.E.

The urge for electric movements in organs is the result of a fundamental error, viz., the wish of the organist to sit at a considerable distance from his instrument. We shall next hear of a beautiful electric device whereby Herr Joachim can play at a distance of 70 feet from his fiddle.

(Musical News 27/5/1892)

(Arthur G Hill, 1892)

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I confess myself in agreement with those who consider that the 8ft. instrument, commonly called an orchestra, possesses sufficient brilliancy, and in disagreement with those who would fain add "chorus work" in the form of a few hundred piccolos playing consecutive fifths, thirds, and octaves with each and all of the individual instruments comprising it. We all agree, however, in our admiration of the "fancy effects" obtainable from a soft mixture enclosed in a swell box. It is easy to voice an organ consisting entirely of 8ft. stops in such a manner that it shall sound as bright or even brighter than an orchestra.

(Musical Opinion 11/1896

95)

(Rober t Hope_Jones

AIMS OF BIOS

1. To promote objective scholarly research into the history of the Organ and its music in all its aspects, and, in particular, into the history of the Organ and its music in Britain.
2. To conserve the sources and materials for the history of the Organ in Britain, and to make them accessible to scholars.
3. To work for the preservation, and, where necessary, the faithful restoration of historic organs in Britain.
4. To encourage an exchange of scholarship with similar bodies and individuals abroad, and to promote a greater appreciation of historical overseas and continental schools of organ building in Britain.

