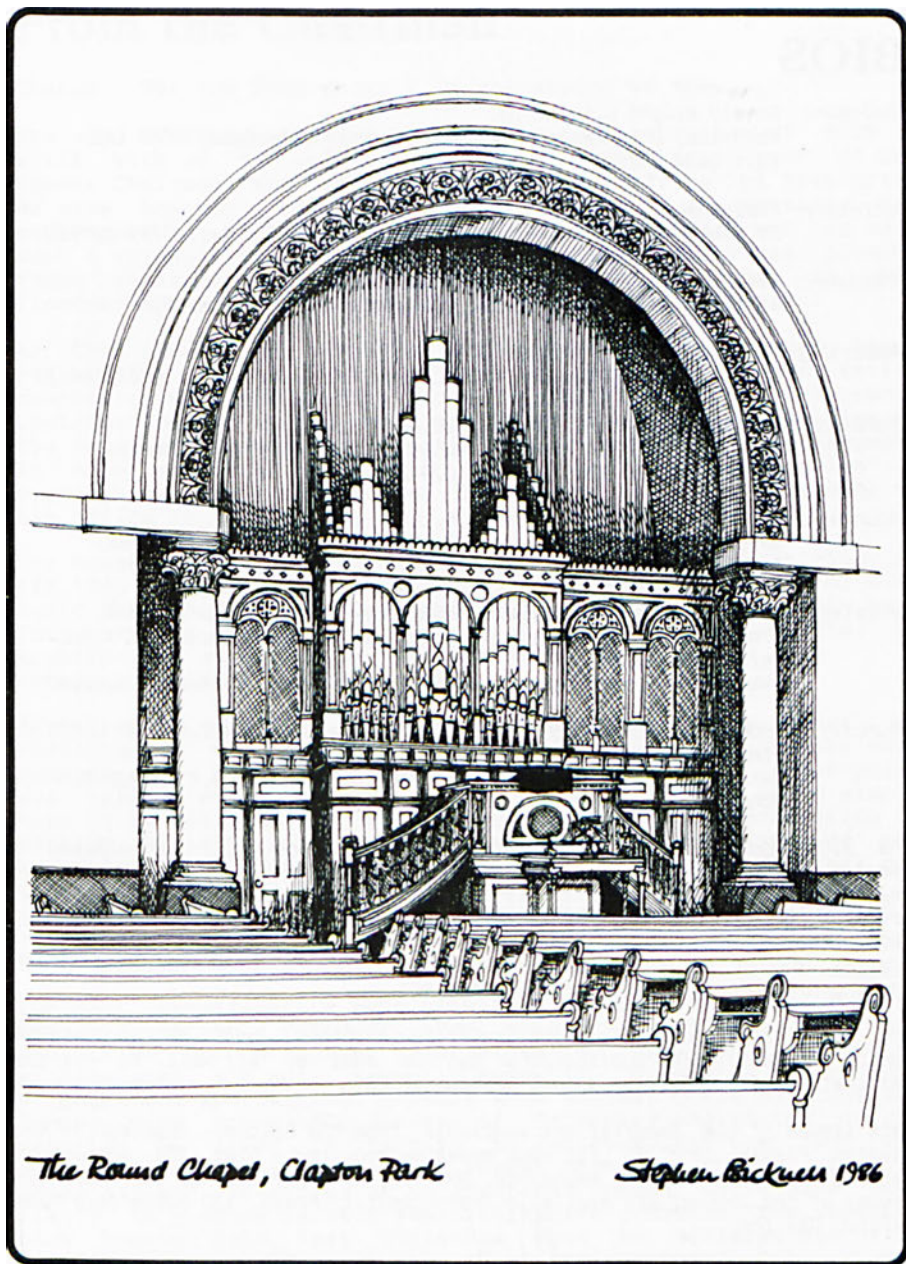


BIOS REPORTER



The Round Chapel, Clapton Park

Stephen Bicknell 1986

BIOS

Chairman: Donald Wright B.Sc. Ph.D.

[REDACTED]

Secretary: Christopher Kent M.Mus P.R.C.O. Ph.D.

[REDACTED]

Treasurer: Richard Hird M.A. M.R.T.P.I. L.T.C.L.

[REDACTED]

Membership Secretary: John Whittle B.Sc. Ph.D.

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Archivist: Malcolm Jones 3.A. Dip.Th. A.L.A.

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Redundancies Officer: David Wickens A.R.C.O. L.R.A.M.

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Secretary of the National Pipe Organs Register: Nicholas Plumley M.A.

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Gerald Sumner B.Sc. Ph.D. Richard Hobson B.A. A.R.C.O.
John Brennan (co-opted)

The BIOS Reporter is Edited by Stephen Bicknell, who will be pleased to receive suitable material for inclusion at: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The Reporter is printed by Parchment (Oxford) Ltd., and prepared by John Brennan. It is distributed by Wilbur Wright. To all these people the council extends its thanks. Correspondence arising from Notes & Queries should be sent to the Revd. 8.6.Edmonds at: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
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The Annual Subscription to BIOS is £12.50 (ordinary) or £7.50 (students and senior citizens). BIOS publications can be sent by Air Mail to overseas destinations for a further annual premium of £6.

Back issues of the Reporter are available from the Editor, from Vol.3 No.2 onwards. Please send 25p for each magazine required, plus 20p postage and packing for the first two magazines, and 10p for every further two (UK). Back issues of the Journal are available from: Positif Press, 130 Southfield Road, Oxford, OX4 1PA.

From the Chairman

Change - but far from decay - in all around we see....

The wind of change blowing through the administration of BIOS is still with us. It originally arose on the retirement of our former Chairman and last year reached the office of Treasurer. We were however fortunate then in obtaining the services and experience of Richard Hird in place of John Bowles who had made such a valuable contribution ever since the society was formed. These retirements though represented just a wedge in the floodgates - which seem recently to have opened very wide!

As the result of pressure of business, Dr. Michael Sayer regretfully felt he simply had to relinquish his active connection with the Archive and an appreciation of his enormous contribution has already been published in an earlier edition of the Reporter. We were very lucky indeed in finding a replacement in none other than Malcolm Jones, the Music Librarian at Birmingham - with the Archive now housed literally next door to his office in the Library.

Our Membership Secretary, Stephen Bicknell, had made it clear at the time of his last election to office that this term of duty would have to be the last and once more we have been very fortunate in being able to persuade Dr. John Whittle, an architect an expertise in that necessary ogy, to accept nomination for this office.

Furthermore, we had been aware for some time that our Redundancies Officer was hard pressed by increased professional commitments - and in the Spring of this year the crunch point was reached when she told us that regretfully she would simply have to be relieved of the duties involved. An appreciation of Marilyn Wilson's work appears elsewhere in this issue of the Reporter. In response to an appeal put out by the Chairman and other Officers, an offer was received from David Wickens to undertake this responsibility. This was gratefully accepted - and who more experienced in this field could we have been fortunate enough to find?

The most significant - even dramatic - change has been left to the end of this account. For quite a long time now our Secretary, Dr. Nicholas Thistlethwaite, has, on account of professional, and more recently domestic, pressures - felt that a point was approaching rapidly when he just could not cope any longer with the double duties of Secretary and Editor of the Reporter. He asked in fact to be relieved last year but was persuaded to continue a bit longer because a change of both Secretary and Treasurer at an identical moment would have been likely to produce serious administrative problems. The expected blow however fell last Christmas when he declared his firm intention to stand down at the end of the session.

Just What can one say? It is difficult to imagine a situation without N.J.T.'s hand on the helm of BIOS! The basic idea of the Society, the conception and the birth 10 years ago all arose as a result of his vision and energies - and throughout the intervening years his initiative, wisdom, hard work and dedication to the aims and objectives of the Society has been an inspiration to all intimately concerned with the maintenance of standards and scholarly research. Adequate expressions of gratitude for his contribution are difficult to put into words, so great is our debt. Perhaps it is best just to express our heartfelt thanks and hope that by doing so in this simple way, the warmth of our genuine appreciation will be conveyed. It is of great comfort to know that he will remain in the wings from where he can still give much needed support and counsel to those of us left on centre stage.

The most immediate problem created by Dr. Thistlethwaite's retirement from two offices was clearly that of finding replacements. It seems however that the star of good fortune still shone for BIOS. Dr. Christopher Kent, Lecturer in Music at Reading University and University Organist, who had been actively involved in archival research on behalf of the BIOS Working Party set up to advise on the restoration of the organ by Seede at Lulworth Chapel, was tentatively approached, and to the enormous relief of Council, he agreed to allow his name to go forward for election as Secretary. Stephen Bicknell, whose artistry and writings are known to us all seemed an obvious choice for succession as the Editor of the Reporter. Again to our delight, he found himself able to accept the invitation of Council to undertake this task.

I am quite sure that all members of the Society will join in offering good wishes to all these new Officers in their tasks - and we certainly have all been made conscious of this wind of change. I am confident however that it is blowing from the right direction and that it will fill the sails of the good ship BIOS, keeping her on course and ever increasing her sphere of influence. Enthusiasm is the source of both energy and success in our work - and there seems to be plenty around!

D.E.W.

GOTTFRIED SILBERMANN STUDY TOUR - EAST GERMANY 1988

Preliminary outline investigations are being considered for the feasibility in terms of schedules and costings for an academic study of the life and work of Gottfried Silbermann. The suggestion is that a three day conference (plus two days for travel) will be planned for the autumn of 1988. It would be based on Dresden, with lectures and seminars in the mornings and visits in the afternoons to the Dresden Hofkirche, Grosshartsmannsdorf, Rheinhartsgrimma, Rotha - and of course Freiburg. It is hoped also that time will be available for a visit to the Zwinger Art Galleries in Dresden.

Would any member who might - at this stage in principle only - be interested in joining such a conference please contact the Chairman or Secretary. More detailed information on the progress of enquiries - and costs - will follow in due course.

Marilyn Wilson - an appreciation

It is a well-known paradox that busy people are often those best able to create more time to take on extra jobs. This strange principle could be demonstrated with reference to a number of those who have occupied BIOS officerships, among them, Marilyn Wilson, who has served as Redundancies Officer since 1979. Miss Wilson has now, with regrets on both sides, found it necessary to resign the post on account of the relentless increase of pressure arising from her work as a teacher in Newcastle upon Tyne.

BIOS is indebted to her for establishing the work of the Redundancies Officer on a firm footing following the more ad hoc arrangements of our earliest years. Perhaps her most valuable contribution has been to establish lines of communication with the various central and diocesan authorities concerned with redundant church buildings; with their cooperation, an 'early warning'¹ system now effectively operates, and it is hoped that this will, in the future, do much to assist the saving of important historic instruments.

The post of Redundancies Officer must be one of the more frustrating charges which BIOS has to offer. There are successes to record: but all too often the Redundancies Officer is faced with worthy redundant organs which, either because of their size or decrepitude, or because the authorities concerned have failed to notify us of their existence in good time, cannot possibly hope to be saved. The Redundancies Officer is therefore more aware than any of us of how real the threat is to the future of our heritage of historic organs.

We thank Marilyn Wilson for her work over the last seven years, and express the hope that we shall continue to meet her at future gatherings of the society.

Nicholas Thistlethwaite

Reports

Glasgow - 16th June 1986

Three Glasgow members of BIOS arranged a recital on Monday 16 June with the aim of raising the BIOS flag in the city.

Some 70 people gathered in the Concert Hall of Glasgow University to listen to an Anthology of English Organ Music played by John Wellingham. The programme ranged from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book to John Stanley, taking in two eighteenth-century transcriptions for solo keyboard of works by Handel. It showed what can be accomplished when an informed musician matches sympathetic instruments with the appropriate repertory, and how pieces which might appear dull on paper may be brought convincingly to musical life.

Two instruments were used: the organ of two manuals and pedals from the former Unitarian Church, whose history starts with Stetzler in 1747 and continues with Donaldson and Bevington

until restoration by J.A.MacKenzie in 1975, and a single-manual instrument built by Robert Mirlees about 1840. Mr. Wellingham had compiled his anthoogy ingeniously to exploit the rich, strong colours of the larger organ and the sweeter sounds of a Victorian domestic instrument. He played the game of snakes and ladders offered by varying manual compasses in masterly fashion. The contrasting temperaments (Young and Kirnberger II) made their point too. As Kenneth Walton wrote in the Glasgow Herald the next day, the whole recital was "a joy to listen to".

After this recreation for the spirit, the body was lightly but deliciously refreshed. Dr. Donald Wright then addressed the company briefly on the aims and activities of BIOS. His words, their effect reinforced by a display of BIOS publications, won a number of new recruits and helped to spread awareness of the need for a society such as ours. We are grateful to Dr. Wright for travelling north to put his Chairman's imprimatur on the evening.

A number of members of the Glasgow Society of Organists kindly helped in a practical way. This event was not their first encounter with BIOS, for Nicholas Thistlethwaite, albeit in a personal capacity, gave a most interesting address to the GSO a few years ago. Following this summer's venture, the total in the BIOS Endowment Fund was modestly increased.

Stuart Campbell

10th Anniversary Celebrations St. James' Church, Clerkenwell - June 21st 1986

All who attended this meeting would surely agree that it was a quite splendid occasion. A small group of Council members had helped with the planning but the whole affair was masterminded and organised by our former Chairman, Michael Gillingham. It could well be described as his day and, as so frequently in the past, the Society has cause to be grateful to him for all the spade work involved.

The splendid programme sheet which resulted from his own artistic skills told all. The recital by "Mr. John Birch, organist of ye Temple Church..." was memorable as was his collaboration with "Dr. Fra. Jackson, late of ye Minster Church of York, in ye celebrated Duetto for Organe by Mr. Sami. Wesley".

The collation which followed - consisting of game pie and other delicacies - was accompanied by plentiful libation and cheerful discourse. This put us in splendid form for the ensuing Colloquium at which the Endowment Fund was formally launched. It was announced that over £5000 had already been subscribed by our own membership - a creditable effort indeed. The activity of the society over the past 10 years was reviewed and considered in the context of developments hopefully envisaged for those to come.

The day of June 21st certainly proved to be one to be remembered. D.E.W.

Durham residential conference - 28th to 31st July 1986

It was most encouraging that the Annual Conference of our tenth anniversary year should have been one of the most stimulating and best attended. A total of sixty-one members came to Durham including overseas visitors from the German Federal Republic and the U.S.A. The event was organised with ultra-efficiency by Richard Hird whose encyclopedic knowledge of the environs and organs of County Durham (amply demonstrated in his opening talk: 'County Durham and its Organs before 1873') ensured a programme of considerable diversity and interest. Nicholas Thistlethwaite's lecture: 'BIOS and the British Organ 1976-86' concluded the first half-day and brought into clear focus and perspective the achievements and aspirations of the first decade of our existence. This was a paper that stimulated wide-ranging and fruitful discussions.

The theme of Tuesday was mainly Father Smith, concentrating on his work at the Cathedral, the Castle Chapel and at Auckland Castle. Contributors included Michael Gillingham ('Father Smith and his work in the North') and Ian Curry ('Smith's Durham Organ Cases'), followed by Richard Hird who introduced an exhibition of archival material about the Cathedral organs specially mounted in the Monks' Dormitory. After a mainly visual appraisal of Smith's cases in Durham we looked forward to hearing pipework at Auckland. Richard Hobson's sensitive demonstration of this instrument was especially memorable. The day concluded with visits to two organs of more 'brash' tonal character: Gainford Parish Church (Brindley 1865), demonstrated with customary panache by Alfred Chamniss, and Kirk Merrington Parish Church (Wadsworth 1866).

Michael Sayer's lecture: 'The Factory System in Organbuilding' supported by fascinating historical background to industrial society in late 18th and early 19th century Northern England led logically to the main subject of Wednesday: Harrison and Harrison. This was covered by Laurence Elvin ('Tom Harrison, organbuilder of Rochdale and Durham') and visits to Hawthorn Terrace and to County Hall where some of the firm's records are deposited. Two instruments by Harrisons were heard: West Pelton Parish Church (T.H.Harrison 1885) demonstrated by Linda Carrington with examples from the repertoire of the time, and Durham Cathedral, where James Lancelot's wide-ranging programme was a scintillating prelude to the excellent Conference Dinner in the Castle Great Hall.

The two concluding sessions of Thursday morning concentrated on the future: first a panel discussion, chaired by Nicholas Thistlethwaite, arrived at the consensus that BIOS should redouble its efforts in the sphere of communications, and the importance of a friendly image in our dealings with the public, clergy, organbuilders and the wider musical world was stressed. Many of the points raised were taken up by our Chairman in the final session who described activity in the fields of listing and redundancies and outlined plans for publicity.

After the formal proceedings there were the traditional 'self-propelled' excursions, while some, courtesy of the

Cathedral Architect were able to take a crash course in vertigo elimination in a tour of normally inaccessible parts of the Cathedral. The second assistant organist of Westminster Abbey mysteriously vanished, only to reappear back at St. Mary's College ahead of the rest of the party. His means of tropospheric translation have yet to be established.

Christopher Kent

Conferences

Saturday 25th October 1986

EDINBURGH

Organised by Philip Sawyer

Details of this conference were circulated with the last issue of the Reporter. By the time this edition appears the event itself will almost be upon us, if not already passed. Please check with the conference organiser for last minute bookings.

Spring 1987

OXFORD

Organised by Stephen Bicknell

Full details of this conference are given on a sheet accompanying this issue of the Reporter. We hope to see and hear the delightful John Donaldson organ of 1790 in the Holywell Music Room (the oldest such building in Europe), and also the new organ by N.P.Mander in Magdalen College Chapel.

Annual residential conference - Late August 1987

KIDDERMINSTER

Organised by Jim Berrow

Plans for next year's residential conference are well under way, with promise of several little known organic and architectural delights. Details will follow.

During the course of 1987 we also anticipate day conferences to be held at Mill Hill, London and at Eton College, where the reconstruction of the 4-manual pneumatic action Hill organ will recently have been completed.

Dear Sir...

Betty Matthews' article, on alternative sources of research, lists a considerable number of organs opened in the late 1860s but includes the Binns organ in St. Aidan's, Leeds. J.J. Binns did not commence in business until 1881 and the instrument for this large new church was not built until 1894. It remains virtually unaltered behind its elaborate case and is about the best surviving large instrument from this comparatively early stage of Binns' career.

It seems odd that the unknown compiler of this collection of 1860s Leaflets should have included one organ which is twenty-five years out of his chosen decade.

Colin Menzies
[REDACTED]

Redundant organs

Christian Science Church, Charlotte Street, Bath.

This church is moving elsewhere, and is unable to make use of the organ in its new home. The organ is thought to be by John Smith of Bristol and dates from about 1825-45. It is an instrument of some historical significance, retaining its very long manual compass (FF - f'¹¹) and an unusual swell box with a double set of shutters, one behind the other. It is housed in a plain, understated classical case of three flats of pipes. The organ is in fair condition, having been overhauled a few years ago.

Specification:

Great Organ:

Open Diapason (Bass & Treble)
Stop Diapason
Principal
Flute
Twelfth
Fifteenth
Tertian (replaces Dulciana)
Swell to Great
Great to Pedal

Swell Organ:

Stop Diapason (Bass & Treble)
Gamba (Treble)
Principal (Bass and Treble)
Fifteenth (Treble)
Oboe (Treble)

Pedal Organ:

Two octaves of pedals from C,
with some pedal pipes.

Action: Mechanical throughout
Dimensions: h 17', w 11', d 12' (plus pedals and bench)
Contact: BIOS Secretary (address inside front cover)

Bethlehem Welsh Congregational Chapel, Eyre St., Splott, Cardiff.

Organ by Conacher 1924, chapel to be demolished very early 1987.

Specification: Gt 8.8.8.8.4.4.8. Sw 8.8.8.8.4.2.8.8. Ped 16.8.

Action: Reliable pneumatic

Casework: Pipe-racks on three sides, quite good, pine.

Dimensions: h c.17', w 12'6", d 6'6"

Contact: J. Elvet David [REDACTED]

Redundant Organs - continued

The Lighthouse, Devons Road, London E3.

A one manual organ of 1881 by Maley, Young & Oldknow. In need of complete restoration.

Specification: Man 8.8.8.8.A.2. Red 16. (25notes)

Action: Mechanical

Casework: Gothic pipe-rack

Dimensions: h 11'6", w 6'3", d 5'9" (including pedals)

Contact: Pastor Erik Pattison; [REDACTED]

Acton, London W3.

Two organs, originally destined for shipment overseas, dismantled and in store. Now for sale owing to unpaid storage debts, Can be viewed by appointment. Details of one instrument only are given.

Organ of 1902 by Sweetland of Bath:

Specification: Gt 8.8.8.4. Sw 8.8.4.8. Ped 16.

Action: Thought to be mechanical

Casework: Pipe-rack

Dimensions: h 14'6", w 7'6", d about 7'

Contact: James A Son; [REDACTED]

Great Houghton Methodist Church, near Barnsley, S. Yorkshire.

Organ by unknown builder, c.1840. C compass and full swell in 1862 together with other alteration; installed here from Bolton upon Dearne P.C. in 1956. Good original condition but pipes need extensive restoration.

Specification: Gt 8.8.8.4.3.2. Sw 8.8.4.8. Ped Pulldowns

Action: Mechanical

Casework: Handsome oak grained pine in Gothic style

Dimensions: h 15'2", w 7'8", d 4'10"

Contact: Redundancies Officer (address inside front cover)

Twickenham Methodist Church.

Organ by Abbott A Smith c.1900.

Specification: Gt 16.8.8.8.4.4.2.8. Sw 8.8.8.8.4.2.8.8. Ped 16.16.

Action: Mechanical (pneumatic Pedal)

Casework: Simple pitch pine

Dimensions: Approx. 18' high, 11' deep, 14' wide

Contact: Rev. A.W.Hunt, [REDACTED]

Middleton Cheney P.C., near Banbury.

Organ by Denman of York 1875.

Specification: Gt 8.8.8.4.4. Sw 16.8.8.4.2.III.8.

Ped 16.16.8.

Action: Mechanical

Casework: Pipe-racks to front and sides

Dimensions: h 18', w 10', d 10'

Contact: Revd. Dr. M.B.Moreton, [REDACTED]

St Marylebone P.C., London.

One of two organ chambers to be emptied in the very near future, consisting of Swell organ with much pipework by Schulze of Paulinzelle, Solo by Gray and Davison, also Pedal Bourdon 32' and Trombone 16'.

Contact: Catherine Ennis, [REDACTED]

St. Mark's, Openwoodgate, Belper, Derbyshire.

Organ allegedly with strong G.P.England connections - the case is beautifully carved in mahogany in the style of St. Margaret's Lothbury. Some pipes and the Great soundboard thought to be by Snetzler. Rebuilt in present form by Adkins.

Specification: Gt 8.8.8.A.spare. Sw 8.8.A.8. Red 16.

Action: Mechanical

Casework: Of considerable aesthetic value - see above

Dimensions: h 11'2", w 5'10", d 3'6"

Contact: Revd. John Drackley, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Belle Vue U.R.C., Hartlepool.

Organ by Harrison & Harrison C.1870, moved from Tower Street Cong, in 1930 with little change. In good voice and condition.

Specification: Gt 16.8.8.8.A.A.2. Stv 8.8.8.8.A.A.III.8.8. Ped 16.16.8.

Action: Mechanical, pneumatic Pedal.

Casework: Modest pipe-rack - visually quite acceptable

Dimensions: h 16', w 11', d 10'

Contact: Mr. John Ross, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Wealdstone Baptist Church, Harrow.

Organ by Bishop and Starr C.185A. Disused for some time. Thought to have come from Beechen Grove Baptist in 1905. Some recent sympathetic work by Bishops.

Specification: Gt 8.8.8.8.A.A.3.2. Sw 16.8.8.A.8. Ped 16.

Action: Mechanical

Casework: Simple with pipe array

Dimensions: h 12', w 10', d 7'

Contact: Rev. David Poley, [REDACTED]

Tabernacle Chapel, Aberdovey.

Organ by Conacher, 1912, reported to be unaltered.

Specification: Gt 16.8.8.8.A.A.2.8. Sw 8.8.8.8.A.2.8.8. Ped 16.16.8.

Action: Pneumatic

Casework: Pipe-racks on three sides, 3 towers & 2 flats to front

Dimensions: h 20', w 16', d 10'

Contact: E.Williams, [REDACTED]

Exeter.

An organ from the late 18th century. Some later changes. Keys from C, but soundboard to GG.

Specification: Gt 8.8.8.A.A.2. 5* 6 stops Ped 16. (open)

Action: Mechanical?

Casework: Mahogany

Dimensions: h 14'5", w 8'3", d 5'0"

Contact: Stephen Emanuel [REDACTED]

Notes and Queries will resume in a subsequent issue.

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.

