



VOLUME ELEVEN, No. 1 (JANUARY 1987)

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Editorial

Most of us have mixed feelings about the arrival of new organs in this country from abroad; the best are instruments of outstanding quality, and their influence, both musical and on our own organ-building industry, is often beneficial. The less good examples - and there certainly are some - make a negative contribution. Interest in our native organ-building traditions is growing overseas, and it is now common for friends in France, Holland and the United States to cajoll and criticise us for neglecting our own heritage. For someone supporting the aims of BIOS, there remains the feeling that new organs in this country should be doing more to stimulate British schools of design and voicing.

It is surely not unreasonable to hope that examples of the revived British organ will also be found in Anglican churches abroad, and one can only praise the imagination and enterpraise of the authorities at St. John and St. Philip, The Hague, who have commissioned, from an English builder, a new instrument based directly on the organs of Byfield and Bridge. Equally, one can reasonably be a little disappointed to hear (In The American Organist, October 1986) that the British Embassy Chapel in Vienna is buying an organ from Orgues Letourneau, of St. Hyacinthe, Quebec; it may prove to be a fine instrument, but an opportunity will have been lost.

It would be a great help if one could be sure that the government department responsible for providing organs in, for example, garrison chapels in Europe, sought to ensure that they represented the best of British organ-building. Unfortunately, the department concerned, the Crown Suppliers, is not so minded. A recent invitation to tender for a new organ in an army church in West Germany specified that the instrument should be divided in two sections, with a detached console and some extension. No indication was given as to what architectural contribution the casework might be expected to make, and the contractor could choose between electro-pneumatic and direct electric key action.

This is not the occasion to discuss the merits or otherwise of the electric action organ. However, it is not out of place to observe that most of the expertise and experience of building new organs in this country rests in the hands of a small group of firms who will only build with mechanical action. As with all government contracts, the tenderers are allowed to suggest their own preferred scheme, although they must estimate to the Crown Suppliers' specification if their tender is to be considered at all, and major deviations from the original scheme are rarely preferred.

This is no way to buy an organ. The design and construction of a new instrument must be a collaboration between those who are to use it and those who are chosen to build it, and they must reach their decisions on the basis of musical and artistic criteria, though of course within the restrictions of a budget. To have the basis of the project dictated in advance by bureaucrats is folly. In this instance the Crown Suppliers' shallow understanding is amply demonstrated by their comment to one builder who suggested that a tracker organ might be better; - he was coolly informed that climatic conditions in West Germany were not suitable for mechanical action instruments!)

Report

Barnes & Putney - 20th September 1986

After welcoming about sixty members of BIOS to St. Mary's Barnes, Sheila Lawrence explained the details of the excellent Peter Collins organ there, and the reasons for its make up. Christopher Mabley, the organist, then gave a very good demonstration on the organ of the various points Sheila Lawrence had made.

The lecture by Peter Collins on the Challenge to the Organ Builder and the Organist was well thought out and informative. Exhibits of trackers, pallets and materials were very helpful, and it was cheering to note that many of the problems met by the organ designer in handling the mass, stiffness and resonance of action components are now rapidly being resolved, to give us the organs we want.

An informative talk on Rheinberger was given by Philip Norman with his customary humour and depth of musicology, and it was interesting to learn the relationships between chamber and orchestral works, and those for the organ, illustrated by Philip Norman on the organ.

At St. Mary's Putney the proceedings opened with an interesting talk by Sheila Lawrence on the Marcussen organ there, and its difference to the organ at Barnes. She followed this with a most enjoyable recital in her own inimitable style, so strongly related to what had been explained before about the use of modern tracker actions.

Musical and liturgical needs of the modern organ were discussed by John Rowntree, which must be useful to all wishing to improve their aesthetic understanding of the modern liturgy.

In the short discussion which followed covering the day's previous activities the point was made that rapid development of modern tracker actions ensures that pallets can now be opened and closed at will with considerable accuracy if the necessary skill is available from the player. What is needed now is for the organist to rise to the challenge of the organ builder, and to develop that skill to use the pallets correctly and acceptably for the type of music being played, hitherto not possible on unresponsive instruments. This was an enjoyable and worthwhile Conference.

Robert Crawford

Correspondence on matters arising from this or other conferences would be warmly welcomed - Ed.

Apology

On Page three of the last Reporter (October 1986), Dr. John Whittle, our new Membership Secretary, should have been described as "an architect with expertise in that necessary computer technology". Ironically it was a computer fault in the editorial office that reduced this sentence to gibberish!

Conferences

Saturday 7th March 1987

Oxford

Organised by Stephen Bicknell

We will see 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. Speakers and players will include Andrew Benson-Wilson, John Harper, Christopher Kent and John Mander. For those able to extend their stay later into the day, the opening of the new Metzler organ in St. Mary the Virgin will take place the same evening. Preliminary details of this conference were given on a sheet accompanying the October 1986 Reporter. Anyone wishing to attend should contact Stephen Bicknell at the address given inside the front cover.

Saturday 16th May 1987

Northampton

Organised by Dominic Gwynn

This is the third day conference in the popular series 'Examining the Historic English Organ'; this year Tuning and Temperaments, and the musical implications of different temperaments, will be the main subjects of discussion. Speakers will include Christopher Kent, Alexander Mackenzie, and Charles Padgham. Details of this event are given on a sheet accompanying this issue of the Reporter.

Annual residential conference
Tuesday 1st - Friday 4th September 1987

Birmingham

Organised by Jim Berrow

It has proved impossible to use Kidderminster as a base for this year's residential conference, as was originally hoped, but we have found ourselves a home for the week in the attractive campus of Birmingham University. We hope that the conference will be a pleasant alternative to other events during the summer, and it will certainly have that unique flavour that has made our annual conferences so enjoyable in the past. We will visit organs by William Drake, Tamburini, and Hill (Kidderminster Town Hall), and also the anonymous organ in the fabulous baroque chapel at Great Witley. An eighteenth century day at the Barber Institute of Music and Fine Arts will take in the Snetzler chamber organ housed there and music from the Shaw-Hellier Collection. Details of this conference are given on a sheet accompanying this issue of the Reporter.

Conferences - continued

Forthcoming BIOS conferences:

During the course of 1987 we also anticipate a day conference at Mill Hill School, London. Plans are beginning to be formulated for our 1988 residential conference to be held in Reading.

Other events:

July 1987

The International Congress of Organists

Members may know that BIOS is jointly hosting the International Congress of Organists in Cambridge next July. Most of the acknowledged leaders of the organ world - players, builders, composers and scholars from every continent - are to be present, either amongst the advertised 'guest artists' or amongst the paying delegates. The results of the latest research in various fields will be presented and discussed, and much unfamiliar musical literature will be introduced and performed.

At the time of going to press, there were still a few delegates' places available. If you have not yet applied, but would like to be a part of this historic gathering, you are advised to write at once to Jonathan Rennert, Administrator, ICO 1987, The Royal College of Organists, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

Saturday 25th April 1987

Organs designed by George Dixon

Organised by Colin Menzies for the Edinburgh Society of Organists.

This trip to Cumbria will take in three of the organs designed by George Dixon at the turn of the century - St. Bees (Willis 1899), Whitehaven (Norman & Beard 1909) and Wigton (Harrison & Harrison 1912). These instruments had considerable influence on organ building throughout the first half of this century but are comparatively little heard because they are somewhat isolated. We shall also hear an untouched large 2-manual in Workington of the kind against which Dixon reacted (Eustance Ingram 1891) and the new Richard Bower instrument at Wetheral.

Any BIOS members who would care to join us will be most welcome and should write as soon as possible for details to: Colin Menzies, [REDACTED].

Briefly...

Jonathan Rennert wonders whether any BIOS member might be interested in researching and preparing a detailed historical monograph on the organ of St. Michael's, Cornhill, in the City of London. Nine Renatus Harris ranks from 1684 are said to be preserved within the present instrument, alongside pipework by Green (1790), Robson (1849), Bryceson (1868), Hill (1886 & 1901) and Rushworth & Dreaper (1925 & 1975). The Parish Registers provide only sketchy information, and no detailed research has been undertaken. Of passing interest is the oft-repeated suggestion that the 1684 organ may have been the instrument which, in 1683, lost the 'Battle of the Organs' at The Temple Church.

St. Michael's Church would hope to be in a position to publish a shortened version of such a monograph, and to make the complete work available to specialists.

Any BIOS member who is interested should please write in the first instance to the Secretary, Dr. Christopher Kent.

An item in Volume 28, Number 2 of The Tracker, the Journal of The Organ Historical Society (BIOS's American equivalent), may be of interest to readers:

A plea for aid in raising funds for the "restoration" of the 1892 Forster i Andrews organ at St. Giles' Church, Wrexham, Wales, has been made by the New Haven Colony Historical Society and workers in the development office at Yale University. Elihu Yale, first benefactor of the university, is buried at St. Giles. ALL observers have remarked on the excellent quality of Forster i Andrews' work, and the presumed uniqueness of the example at St. Giles is that it is completely original. The Yale Glee Club gave a benefit concert on February 24th 1984, with donations being made through Trinity Church on the Green in New Haven so that they could be tax deductible. OHS members have been invited to contribute as well. In seeking further information about the "restoration", we learn that the wind system of the organ will be entirely replaced, and that the stop specification will be substantially altered by E.J. Johnson & Son of Cambridge, in addition to other changes. By no means do these changes fall within the provisions of the OHS Guidelines for Restoration and Preservation. The Society has sent copies of the Guidelines to parish and New Haven officials, seeking reconsideration of plans.

Does anyone have more recent information on this project?

Maurice Eglinton of Hele & Co. Ltd has recently acquired a three stop chamber organ; pencilled on a soundboard bearer is the name 'J. Keeler, Bristol, 1854'. This is presumably the John Keeler who built the organ in Chepstow Parish Church in 1831. Are there any other known examples of his work?

The illustration on the cover of this volume of the Reporter, kindly provided by Nicholas Plumley, shows an organ by Flight & Robson from his own collection.

New Recording

Richard Lester plays English Organ Music on the Historic organ of **All Hallows Twickenham**

Stanley: Voluntaries Op.7 No.9, Op.5 Nos. 5, 6, 8 & 9.

Stanford: Postludes 5, 1, 6 & 2.

Handel: Aylesford pieces.

Wealden Studios WSC 232 (cassette)

It is good to see a recording of this organ available. Removed from All Hallows, Lombard Street, in 1940, it made a pleasant and informative contrast with the more common radical and unsympathetic rebuilds that were the order of the day. Cecil Glutton directed the work carried out then by Kingsgate Davidson. In 1981-2 further work was undertaken by B.C.Shepherd and Son, and in recitals since then the organ has emerged from relative obscurity.

In the flesh this instrument makes very pleasant listening; the surviving Renatus Harris stops, though probably not in their original state, are very attractive, and the various later ranks combine to give an overall impression of good blend and balance. In common with many rejuvenations of old organs before 1970 or so, it has mixed mechanical and non-mechanical action with some unified ranks. These latter have remained in the recent overhaul, though now electro-pneumatic rather than plain pneumatic. The rather unassuming, even bland quality of this organ is typical of many nineteenth century English organs, and in many musical contexts this is a virtue, though the best features of such an instrument are very difficult to capture in a recording.

Richard Lester writes in the accompanying notes that "it was rather an exciting project for me to record the Stanley Voluntaries on an instrument that he undoubtedly played himself". By no stretch of the imagination is this the organ built by Harris in 1700. The present instrument is essentially a Gray & Davison of 1870, with later additions, and blessed with five Harris stops and the splendid original case. Hardly an authentic Stanley organ: anyway, did he in fact ever set foot in All Hallows Lombard Street?

The Stanford Postludes are convincing and attractive, the organ sounding throughout like a small-scale version of one of our better-mannered Cathedral organs, not at all a bad thing in the circumstances. Richard Lester's registration is suitably flexible, and the playing genuinely sympathetic.

The Handel pieces were new to me. Played entirely on the Great Organ, they are full of life and interest. Tempi and phrasing are carefully thought out, and the simple registration is effective.

Curiously the Stanley Voluntaries are less happy. I felt that Richard Lester could have used the same articulation here that he shows off so well in the Handel. For my taste the Allegro movements are rather fast, with insufficient punctuation in both left and right hands. Stanley's voluntaries are deceptive; as in the poetry of Alexander Pope a delicate and sophisticated structure is hidden behind a veneer of wit and apparent insouciance - a trap for the unwary. In the fast movements precision and articulation must take precedence over speed. With all three manuals in use for many of the Voluntaries

there are some slightly anachronistic sounds; in particular Choir Flutes plus Swell Sesquiáltera makes a peculiar solo Cornet.

The recording quality is acceptable, but not as good as some cassettes I have heard. All in all, this is a welcome addition to the few available recordings of interesting British organs.

The cassette is available from John Shepherd, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], for £5.99 inc. post and packing.

S.B.

Dear Sir...

I am sorry to have misled readers of the Reporter about the Binns Organ in St. Aidan's, Leeds. On consulting my original notes I see that they say 'picture only'. The date therefore should not have been inserted. The collection of programmes left my hands some years ago, so unfortunately I can no longer check this. I'm sure Colin Menzies is right.

With regard to the proposed visit to Dresden. Having spent two happy pre-war years there as a music student may I offer some advice with regard to German pronunciation. In England we tend to regard 'burg' and 'berg' as the same word. This is incorrect. The place you hope to visit is 'Freiberg' (Fry-bairg) in Saxony; 'Freiburg (Fry-bourg) im Breisgau' is in the Black Forest region. The Cathedral is called the 'Dorn' (pronounced 'Dome').

I revisited Dresden in 1980 after its almost total destruction by bombing in 1943. It was a bitter-sweet experience.

Betty Matthews
[REDACTED]

It is indeed Frieberg that was intended in our announcement of an East German study tour in the last issue of the Reporter - Ed.

Focus

Few people know that one of the largest surviving long-compass organs in Britain stands in the Ballroom at Buckingham Palace. It was built by John Lincoln and/or Henry Cephas Lincoln in 1812 or 1818 (can someone provide a more accurate attribution?) for the Brighton Pavilion. However, it now bears a Gray and Davison label and the date 1855. The G&D shop books (18th Febuary 1856) describe the following work:

*Repallet Sound Boards, new Springs & pulldown wires,
Lengthen pipes - supply the Pipes for the extension of Swell to CC
New Bellows, inverted folds - new action, new wind trunk from
Bellows to Swell, new wind trunks to Pedal Open Diapason with
valves and Draw Stop action.*

New Pedals from CCC to F. 4 octaves & a 4th. quiet action.

*Two Coupling actions - Bass of Swell & Bass of Choir to Pedals
Double pallets to Lower Octave of Great.*

Six Composition Pedals. 4 to Great 2 to Swell

Extend Double Diapason in Great to CC with Stop'd Wood Pipes.

9 Large Metal Pipes of Open Diapason & Pedal Principal.

*Key fittings according to plan - Desk, Key Jambs i Drawstop Rods
as far as seen & Drawstop Jambs to be of Maple, the rest Deal
painted, new D Stop Knobs engraved.*

*Suitable Organ Stool of Deal with Turned Legs, painted, stuffed in
Horsehair <E covered in Morocco.*

18 Feb 1856

Sadly this instrument is completely derelict. No work has been done on it since the nineteenth century, and it probably remains very much as it was at the time of the death of Prince Albert. The organ gallery is used by bandsmen who play at important ceremonial occasions, and over the years the organ has sustained some damage. The pipework of Great and Choir organs is now in very poor condition, though there is quite enough to form the basis of a restoration. The handsome maple console is still intact, with the original ivory key coverings scarcely worn.

The casework (see BIOS Journal 1, p.13) is painted, with gold front pipes. The organ has been seen lurking in the background in recent television programmes about the Royal Family.

While one can be thankful that the organ was not "restored" in less enlightened times - with the inevitable modernisation that fashion once dictated - one can only hope that there is the prospect of this fabulous instrument being brought back to life again in a sympathetic way. About ten years ago there was a suggestion that the interior parts of the organ should be removed and the case made into a band room; fortunately more sane counsel prevailed.

The Buckingham Palace organ must surely rank amongst the most important of our historic instruments, albeit one of the least accessible.

The present specification appears to be as follows:

Manuals GG (no#) - f¹ ; Pedals C - f

Great Organ		Swell Organ	
Double Diapason Bass	16	Bourdon	16
Double Diapason Treble	16	Open Diapason	8
Open Diapason	8	Stop'd Diapason	8
Open Diapason	8	Principal	4
Stop'd Diapason	8	Mixture	III
Principal	4	Cornopean	8
Twelfth 2	2/3	Oboe	8
Fifteenth	2		
Tierce 1	3/5	Choir Organ	
Sesquialtra Bass		Dulciana	8
Sesquialtra Treble		Stop'd Diapason	8
Mixture		Principal	4
Trumpet	8	Flute	4
Clarion	4	Fifteenth	2
Swell to Great		Bassoon	8

Swell to Choir

Pedal Organ

Grand Open Diapason 16
 Great to Pedal
 Swell to Pedal
 Choir to Pedal

These notes have been compiled largely from material collected by Noel Mander and Bernard Edmonds.

S.B.

Redundant Organs

St. Michael and All Angels, Stoke Newington, London.

Organ by Hill, 1896, with original early electric action and console with mercury-cup contacts, etc.

Disposition: Gt 16.8.8.8.4.4.II.8.

Sw 16.8.8.8.4.III.8.8.

Ch 8.8.4.8.8.

Ped 32(Acoustic).16.16.8.

Action: Electro-pneumatic

Casework: Good oak case-front added by Hill in 1908

Dimensions: h 20', w 13', d 10'

Contact: D. Watkins, [REDACTED]

St. James, Blendon, Bexley

Organ by Telford, 1869, originally for a convent in Tipperary, Eire; moved to the Church of Our Lady, Stowmarket in 1916, and to St. James, Blendon in 1970.

Disposition: Manual: unenclosed 8; enclosed 8.8.4.2.8.

Pedal: Ped 16.

Action: Mechanical

Casework: Pitch pine pipe racks to front and sides

Dimensions: h 15', w 8'6", d 3'6"

Contact: A.W.Allen, [REDACTED]

Manchester

A little-altered organ by Jardine, 1870. Original drawings (J.44) are in the English Organ Archive.

Disposition: Gt 8.8.8.8.4.4.2.III.8 (Clarinet).

Sw 16.8.8.4.2.8.8.

Ped 16 (Open)

Action: Mechanical, pedals pneumatic

Casework & Dimensions:

To be advised

Contact: Redundancies Officer (address inside front cover)

Other organs available (contact redundancies officer for further details):

3 manual Binns rebuild (c.1923) of Gray & Davison organ (c.1875);
pneumatic.

3 manual Jardine (1958), using older material; electro-pneumatic.

3 manual Young (1910); mechanical action.

2 manual Compton rebuild (1951) of Norman & Beard organ (c.1880);
electro-pneumatic.

Notes and Queries will resume in the April 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.

