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BIOS

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Editorial

Fortuitously this issue contains references to the preservation and restoration of historic English organs, some of them in Australia. This is a happy chance, for it already seemed that it would be a good idea to devote the Editorial to the same subject.

It was clear from the response at this year's annual general meeting in Reading that some members thought that BIOS could do more for the preservation of old organs - surely one of the prime objects for which it was founded - and perhaps react more strongly to the alteration, loss or destruction of fine instruments. It was by no means the first time that this call had been heard at an AGM; let us all hope that the same cry will be heard again in the future to keep our minds on this vital part of the society's activity.

We could certainly have stronger views on these matters, and Editorials in Vol.12 No.1 and this issue (amongst others over the years) reflect concern and activity. At the time of writing Council is working on a policy on restoration, and it is hoped that recent work at Lulworth Chapel will have brought valuable practical knowledge. We hope to bring more news in due course of what form or forms further activity may take.

The messages that might have been part of this Editorial have been made very clear in the pages that follow; rather than labour them here, I refer you to Christopher Kent's account of the OHTA bicentennial conference in New South Wales, and to Kelvin Hastie's letter, which illustrates so strongly the constructive attitudes that prevail in Australia.

Consider for a moment: to see the finest English Victorian town hall organ we must travel to Sydney, for nothing of comparable scale and importance has survived in this country. Reading, West Bromwich and Kidderminster hardly make up for the loss (or partial loss), in various phases of improvement or natural disaster, of the great organs of Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and Leeds.

Just because we still have the fractured remains of organs by Smith, Harris and many builders from the seventeenth century onwards does not mean that our organ heritage is in any way richer. Until we can address the problems of the restoration of these and derelict instruments such as Spitalfields, Thaxted, Buckingham Palace and Preston, and revive their use as working musical instruments, we can hardly stand by the cultural value of our surviving old organs; until we cast off the last remnants of the ill-considered desire to 'improve' the artistic efforts of our forebears we can hardly claim to be sympathetic to their work.

Kelvin Hastie rightly states that the Victorian era was a 'golden age' in English organ building; even this is a concept that many English people choose not to grasp. He also makes it clear that quite ordinary instruments from this period are respected in Australia in a way that is still difficult to imagine here, rightly realising that what seems 'ordinary' is therefore by definition the most important part of that heritage. The concentration of restored and cherished organs in and around Sydney is something that cannot be matched anywhere in the British Isles.

May I take this opportunity simply to rub salt in the wounds: I regret to say that we still regard Australia as a nation of Les Pattersons and Crocodile Dundees, despite the obviously farcical stereotypes that these two characters are supposed to represent. But what are the respective roles of England and Australia over the preservation of national heritage? Where are organs better understood and protected? How galling it will be for those who still believe in the superiority of the mother country to realise that, on this score at least, we are now Australia's cultural inferiors!

Reports

Reading - 1st-4th August 1988 Annual Residential Conference

Every conference organiser likes to make good use of local contacts, resources and opportunities and Chris Kent, fresh from his antipodean peregrinations, was no exception on his home ground in bustling Reading. Conference this year centred on the University Music Department mansion in the town's leafy southern suburbs, with accomodation in adjoining St. George's Hall.

Participants were immediately plunged into the town's unfathomable one-way system at the rush hour, to reach the opening evening's events in the town centre. Appropriately enough Peter Marr's talk on the survivals of the music of Reading Abbey was given in the old Abbey Gatehouse, one of the remarkably few built relics of this formerly prestigious foundation. Then, after a civic reception and buffet in the modern Civic Centre (including a "few choice words" from Mrs. Mayor), we repaired to the somewhat run-down glories of Reading Town Hall to be treated to a splendid recital by Nicholas Kynaston. Those of us who had not previously heard this Father Willis organ were impressed by its clear flue choruses, startling reeds and curiosities, thoroughly explored in a "serious Town Hall programme" by the hard working recitalist. It is to be hoped that the obvious message that the organ world cares about the future of the Hall and its famous instrument was driven home to the authorities by BIOS' presence, comments and enthusiasm that evening.

The first full length day, Tuesday, was rather occupied with talks, some inevitably better presented and of more interest than others. The morning was heavy with aspects of the 18th century organ concerto (Timothy Rishton, Mark Argent and - in absentia - Ralph Schureck) with Donald Burrows homing in on Handel. The afternoon concentrated on a series of 19th century personalities: Canon Hilary Davidson spoke of Sir John Sutton's remarkable biography, Barbara Owen of an organist emigrant Dr. Edward Hodges, Gillian Ward-Russell on William Russell the organist/composer, and Peter Horton at length on "Steamship" Wesley. The highlight of the day for most, I feel, was the evening's chamber concert (of concertos!) in the plain but dignified surroundings of another Benedictine remnant, Pamber Priory, deep in the sylvan countryside of north Hampshire. Tuning was not all equally tempered, but the string ensemble and organ playing (did it really need all those players to pull out such a few stops?) contrived a delightful occasion, though mediaeval pews are not too comfortable. The only regret perhaps was an inadequate opportunity to explore the building.

Wednesday morning was taken up with more talks, the first by David G. Hill on a re-emergent Henry Smart (a "wow"?), followed by two on the 'Evolution of Registration' given in-house by Chris Kent and Philip Sawyer. As a pre-lunch appetiser David Wickens put to us his short thesis on the origins of the Hautboy.

The splendours of Eton downriver were however reached via the Motorway in the afternoon. Nicholas Thistlethwaite took us carefully through the history of organs in the Chapel and the thinking behind the recent rebuild. Alfred Champniss then played a suitably demonstrative programme, nothing written before 1895, with apparent ease and many memorable moments (including 32' rattle). Again however we were whisked away with little time to look round.

Our Conference Dinner was graced by Canon Brian Brindley who spoke extempore, eventually reminding us in a somewhat serious vein that there are other interests than those of organists! Those who visited his "nest" at Holy Trinity, Reading, among the optional visits at the close of the Conference, could only wonder at his acquisitive powers and taste. After dinner we were privileged to meet Mr. John Stanley in the unlikely surroundings of the Bar, when Glyn William presented an unusual dramatic (auto-)biographical account.

The final morning provided a bizarre contrast of subjects: Dominic Gwynn helped us explore the organs of Richard Bridge, whilst Relf Clark in a suitably robust style examined the excesses of Hope-Jones as organ builder and self-publicist, which certainly drew discussion. The AGM brought us to earth, with formal reports and elections, but some lively discussion on aspects of BIOS activities and priorities. Those who were in no hurry after the final lunch were able to visit and get their hands on several local organs, including that at the Town Hall, before cheerfully dispersing to distant parts.

Reflecting the efforts of our Secretary and "volunteered" helpers, Reading '88 offered something for nearly everyone, striking a reasonable balance between learning, amusement and social contact. Several familiar faces were missing, and others chose to drop in part only of the Conference, reducing the community of those in residence. Nevertheless an interesting and useful time was had by all and the Reading Conference fully maintained our tradition of worthwhile and enjoyable annual Conferences.

Richard Hird

OHTA Bicentennial Conference 1988

(Report written for the OHTA News)

It is now well over a decade since the formation of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia (OHTA) and its United Kingdom opposite number the British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS). Soon after their inceptions both bodies established an exchange of literature and agreed to offer mutual assistance in areas of common interest: 'the faithful restoration, where necessary, of historic organs', listings of historic organs and in the conservation of archival and bibliographical materials. Articles on Australian subjects have appeared in the BIOS Journal, and material from The British Organ Archive has been made available to support Australian historiographical and restoration activities. Several visits to BIOS events by John Maidment and other OHTA members continued to advance the mutual understanding of the two societies. So it was with considerable professional and personal pleasure that I accepted the invitation of the OHTA to read a paper at their Bicentennial Conference in Sydney and to join a study tour through an area of New South Wales which must now figure as the richest in the world for its concentration of nineteenth century English organs whose integrity has been preserved for posterity.

This enviable situation has arisen largely through the work of the OHTA and the wisdom of the 1977 Heritage Protection Act. In the United Kingdom the situation is very different where it is necessary to travel considerable distance to find the few nineteenth and early twentieth century organs which have escaped alteration and have retained their physical and tonal integrities. The latter are all too often violated through the adding of incongruous quasi-Baroque appendages, electrification of pneumatic and tracker actions, and wholesale revoicings which attempt to bring the distinctive timbres of say Hill, Lewis or Forster & Andrews into line with the crystalline sterility that is a feature of many modern instruments. Indeed, as I write, the tonal revision proposed for the 1898 Hill organ (already once electrified in 1963) of Holy Trinity Stratford-upon-Avon under the cover of 'restoration' suggest that our inability to 'leave well alone' shows some English organists and consultants in a poor light compared to the reverence shown by many of our Australian colleagues whose fastidiousness must stand as an international object lesson. Although by no means a factor of mitigadon in the above case, it should be borne in mind that the decisions that have to be made over the futures of many historic organs in the United Kingdom are made considerably more difficult when the instrument concerned presents a degree of plurality in which materials and styles of three centuries have to be reconciled.

Although this problem may be comparatively rare to Australia and the physical and philosophical matters of restoration less complex the temptation to declare the end product an

'authentic restoration' may be unwise. Given invariably the *de facto* changes in pitch, tonal regulation and winding even the most fastidious execution may well attain no more than a characteristic reflection of the original concept. An analogy with the restoration of the masonry of the great cathedrals of Europe is not inappropriate: even though the same variety of stone may be fashioned with the same traditional tools, the finished surface will represent the face of the present.

Viewed as a whole I found the standards of restoration on the organs visited on the tour most impressive, to the extent that the citing of specific examples may seem invidious. Nevertheless, I am tempted to single out the 1910 instrument by Hill & Son in the Pitt Street Uniting Church Sydney as an example of a precious survival secured through an effective 'Green Ban' of the early 1970s. On a more modest scale, the pioneering work that has culminated in the renaissance of the 1883 organ by the same builder at St. Luke's Anglican Church, Concord which has been achieved with the support of the N.S.W. Bicentennial and and Heritage Councils. This example of a reversion to tracker action following an unsuccessful attempt at electrification, in spite of which, the integrity of the soundboards and voicing remained unscathed, is truly remarkable. From the purely visual viewpoint the stable climate of N.S.W. may have helped towards a remarkable survival rate of front pipe diaperings; particularly impressive are those on the restored Walker organ of St. Philip's Anglican Church, York Street, Sydney. Then, as an example of restoration in progress the restored Barker lever machines of the 1882 Forster & Andrews organ at All Saints' Anglican Church Woollahra were a joy to behold. It is sad to relate that within the last decade the destruction of such actions in the United Kingdom has not yet ceased.

While the outcomes relating to restorations of instruments of the second half of the nineteenth century were, among those visited, of an exemplary standard, I found it hard to be entirely at ease with the recent restoration of the 1840 organ by Johnson & Kinloch at St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Windsor. The action and the casework have emerged commendably, but tonally the prominent chiffs to the Stop Diapason (pipe examination suggested that these may not be indigenous), the lack of accord between this and the Open Diapason (itself of uncharacteristically fluty timbre) together with the sounds from the new pipework reminded me more of mid-twentieth century European voicing than of the reticent tones of the pre-Hill-Gauntlett era.

There were many fine demonstrations of organs during this conference, a number of which must stand as object lessons to those British organists who still desire the rebuilding and modification of historic consoles. Several young players were clearly at home within the parameters of these instruments, managing hand registration changes, hitch-down swell levers and composition pedals with remarkable deftness. However, it was in the settings of some composition pedals on several organs that I was somewhat less convinced historically and interpretatively. It is arguable that once the repertoire appropriate to many of these organs is also rediscovered such matters will be seen to require correction. The present writer will shortly contribute an article on this subject to the Sydney Organ Journal.

The present state and future of organ restoration and preservation in N.S.W. is clearly one of considerable achievement and promise. It is not unreasonable to assume that the current criteria and standards will prevail into the future, whilst the publication of Graeme Rushworth's comprehensive survey of historic instruments has also served to underline the success of the OHTA listing exercise. It now seems particularly pertinent that the valuable work of OHTA should be more widely recognised amongst the musical profession as a whole. To conclude, I am pleased to renew my thanks to the Councils and Members of OHTA and the Organ Society of Sydney for their invitation, hospitality and many memorable kindnesses during my all too brief stay.

Christopher Kent

Conferences

East Germany - 3rd to 9th April 1989 (provisional) **Gottfried Silbermann Study Tour**

The East German expedition will now take place on the dates given. Flights and accommodation have been planned, and final details of the programme are being settled. The cost of the trip - including air fare, luxury hotel accommodation, and trips to visit organs - is expected to be in the order of £350 per person. Final details will be sent to those who have expressed interest before Christmas. BIOS member Anthony Cooke, who has had previous experience of organising trips to the DDR, has kindly agreed to act as our Herr Reiseobergruppenfiihrer, no doubt aided and abetted by other persons knowledgeable in the field. There are still vacancies, and any other BIOS members - guests will be welcome - who feel attracted by such a splendid opportunity are invited to contact the Chairman **without delay**.

Northampton - Saturday 13th May 1989 Organised by Dominic Gwynn

Examining the Historic English Organ

This, the fifth conference in this series, will examine questions surrounding the design of windchests and wind supply. Full details will be given in due course.

East London - postponed to Spring or Autumn 1989 **Before & After the Crystal Palace**

Our plans to visit this forgotten corner of the metropolis have been thwarted -for this year at least. Our apologies for the change of plan. However, it seems likely that we will be able to move the event to next year. A number of historic organs, paradoxically preserved through neglect and lack of funds, clamour for attention. We hope to see the instruments at St. Anne Limehouse (Gray and Davison 1851, ex Great Exhibition) and St. Paul Shadwell, (Elliott, possibly with earlier material) and perhaps one other nineteenth century instrument. The theme will cover the effect the Great Exhibition of 1851 had on contemporary attitudes to design and manufacture, illustrated through changes in the world of organ-building.

Further details will be given nearer the time.

Annual Residential Conference 1989 Eire

Plans are afoot to hold the 1989 residential conference at Maynooth in Eire. Full details will appear in due course.

Other BIOS Conferences in 1989

In addition to the events described above, we hope to arrange a celebration of the Bicentenary of the birth of William Hill, which will take place in London, combined with the A.G.M.

We also hope to visit Portsmouth in either spring or autumn of next year.

Further details will be given in the next issue of the Reporter.

Other Events

The **John Loosemore Centre** in Buckfastleigh, Devon, continues to offer courses, classes and concerts relating to the organ and the wider field of early music. Events in the first half of 1989 include:

10-12 March: 'Mendelssohn in an historical perspective' - Keyboard weekend directed by Jacques van Oortmerssen.

28-30 April: 'Early Spanish Organ Music' - Keyboard weekend directed by Jose L. Gonzales Uriol.

A full programme giving details of these and many other events is available from the John Loosemore Centre for Organ and Early Music, Chapel Street, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 OAB. Tel: (0364) 42568.

In this issue ...

...there are again 16 pages. I hope that this extra material will make up in part for its lateness; contributions were delayed by the postal strike in September, and the 'slot' prepared in the Editor's timetable for preparing copy for the printer disappeared. It has taken a few weeks to get back to normal.

S.B.

Treasurer's Travails

Richard Hird

From time to time people tell me they'd like to know a little more about BIOS' finances; it is all too easy for 'management' to think everything anyone wants to know has been explained to those able to be present at the AGM, and forget to keep the rest of the membership informed. Here, therefore, for those interested, is a year-end briefing.

BIOS has two special funds:

The **Endowment Fund** comprises monies given by the membership held in trust, with the accruing interest (paid gross as we're a charity) available for special one-off expenses. In the financial year just ended we purchased from this fund some display boards for mounting exhibitions at conferences and events. The remaining investment, after the balance of accumulated interest and a few additional donations were added, totalled £6427. I should say that Council would welcome further individual or regular payments to invest in the Endowment Fund, which, as you will read, has already proved its worth, acting as a useful pump-primer in attracting grants from other sources.

The **Archive Account** (also held in a high interest paying account) is paying for work organising and conserving the British Organ Archive in Birmingham. Grants amounting to £7400 from a number of trusts have been gratefully accepted into this account for these

purposes in the past year. Money from it has been spent specifically on some microfilming of records, purchase of storage chests to accommodate plans and drawings, and the assistance of someone to sort out and list the contents of some of the many records deposited in the Archive. The year-end balance in the Archive Account of £9000 continues to be earmarked for such on-going tasks. Moreover, Council is ever hopeful for further success in attracting new grants for this essential 'backroom' work - or indeed for special projects related to the Archive and associated National Pipe Organ Register, possibly even for the acquisition of important new source materials, if particular sponsors can be found.

For everyday transactions I operate two related bank accounts - one earning a little interest on 'temporary reserves', to offset charges! The increase in subscription rates this year allowed these **general funds** to fare comfortably and make a modest surplus in the year of nearly £1200. A large portion of the end-of-year balance of £7100 is earmarked in reserve however for forthcoming expenditure on the 1988 Journal.

A balance sheet for the financial year ended 30 June 1988 was presented at the AGM in Reading, and is available on request; I would be pleased to attempt to answer any queries which may occur.

I would like to use this opportunity to comment upon some problems and misconceptions which seem sometimes to arise in the methods of paying **subscriptions** - though I apologise for occupying precious space for those familiar with these details.

Most members pay **by cheque** within a reasonable time of being asked to renew membership each year. Inevitably however some do not respond and have to be reminded. Indeed as the year progresses, it can be difficult to know whether some people wish to continue or not, and ultimately whether or when to remove individuals from the membership list. BIOS, you should know, is relatively generous in this matter, but clearly there are limits and officers cannot easily find the time to pursue defaulters and resolve problems.

An alternative method of payment is by **standing (or banker's) order** - the subscriber instructs his Bank (or Building Society) to pay the subscription on the first working day of January each year. It is preferable you should tell BIOS you have done this; there is a form sent annually with the renewal letter by which to arrange to pay this way. Roughly a quarter of the membership has so far taken up the suggestion of paying by standing order, which (apart from Bank failings) generally operates satisfactorily unless or until circumstances change - e.g. BIOS changes the subscription rate, or a subscriber changes address and/or bank - when difficulties must be discovered and resolved.

A standing order is not to be confused with **direct debit**. A number of people have suggested that BIOS should introduce the latter arrangement, whereby, with the prior mandate of the subscriber, BIOS would directly debit the subscriber's bank account without intermediate paperwork. Outwardly this seems an attractive proposition and may well be convenient for organisations receiving substantial numbers of regular payments. The bank's requirements for operating such an alternative method of payment seem onerous however, involving automated input of data and giving of financial indemnities. This makes it complicated and unjustified to think of setting up such a scheme for the relatively few BIOS members likely to want to use it.

Covenants are not a method of subscription payment. If you are a taxpayer however you ought also to covenant your subscription to BIOS, yet continue to pay in cash, by cheque or standing order as you choose. The covenant agreement is a means whereby BIOS, as a charity, can recover extra money (£5.00 for each £15.00 subscription) from the taxman, at no cost to you. A quarter of members already covenant their subscription. If you have not already arranged to covenant your subscription (or other regular payment, say to the Endowment Fund) then do please ask me for a covenant form. If you remain unclear about the arrangement or purpose of covenants, ask for a more detailed explanation than is possible here.

Remembrancer

Continuing our reprints of articles from the **Christian Remembrancer 1833-36**

No. VI. - The Organ at Christ Church, Spitalfields.

This instrument was erected in **1730**, by *Richard Bridge*, an artist of no mean celebrity; and in point of number of stops and pipes, it is the largest in London. He appears to have been as celebrated in his day as either Schmidt or Harris were before him. The majority of his organs are of the first class; yet the one under consideration has been esteemed his best; though from its locality its fame has not been sufficiently known to be appreciated. Its case is of beautiful mahogany and its height about **36** feet. Six hundred pounds, - not half its value, - was the original cost.

In consequence of the many new churches that were erected, at the commencement of the last century, an equal number of organs were required, which induced many persons, who were totally unskilled in the art and mystery of voicing organ pipes, to become builders. To prevent, therefore, the sad consequences which must naturally follow, a coalition was formed between the three eminent artists of that day, - *Byfield, Bridge and Jordan*, - who undertook to build organs at a very moderate charge, and to apply their united talent to each. The result of which was a fair though moderate compensation to themselves, and superior instruments to our churches. The magnificent organ at *Yarmouth* is their joint workmanship, and is even superior to the one under our present notice. But the one which we are now describing was built by *Bridge* alone.

In 1822 it underwent a partial repair by Mr. Bishop, who put a dulciana in the choir organ, in the place of a three-rank mixture, and tuned the organ throughout

It contains the following stops:-

GREAT ORGAN		5	Ditto to fiddle G.	
		6	Fifteenth.	
1	Stop Diapason.	7	Horn.	
2	Open ditto.	8	Cremona.	
3	Ditto ditto.	9	Vox Humana.	449 pipes.
4	Principal.			
5	Ditto.			
6	Twelfth.			
7	Fifteenth.			
8	Larigot.			
9	Tierce.			
10	Sexquialtra	5 ranks.		
11	Mixture	3 ditto.		
12	Trumpet.			
13	Ditto.			
14	Clarion.			
15	Bassoon.			
16	Comet.	5 ranks.		
		1323 pipes.		
CHOIR ORGAN				
1	Stop Diapason.			
2	Dulciana.			
3	Principal.			
4	Flute.			
		1	Stop Diapason.	
		2	Open ditto.	
		3	Principal.	
		4	Flute.	
		5	Comet.	4 ranks.
		6	Trumpet.	
		7	Hautboy.	
		8	Clarion.	
			Choir	352 pipes.
			Great organ	449 ditto.
			Drum.	1323 ditto.
				2
			Total number of pipes	2126

From the above summary the reader will perceive that this instrument contains more pipes than the organ at St. Paul's Cathedral. (See our July Number.) [BIOS Reporter Vol.7 No.1]

The compass of the great and choir organs is from GG to D in alt, 56 notes; that of the swell, from fiddle G to D in alt 32 notes. The octave and a half of pedals, were put to it by England about twenty years ago. It has become harsh in quality; and unless timely skill be applied, it will be past redemption.

If the quality of this instrument was equal to its quantity, it would be truly magnificent; but, we are sorry to say, it is at this time in a very dilapidated state, owing to a deficiency in funds for the necessary repairs. It has three pairs of bellows, but the wind is remarkably unsteady. The few stops that still retain their pristine purity are the three-stop diapasons, one open diapason in the great organ, and a flute in the choir. With the exception of the horn in the choir organ the reed stops have suffered very much.

As a necessary and important improvement, we venture to recommend entire remodelling, extension of the swell in compass, and a Venetian front; also a set of pedal pipes on a large scale. These additions, together with coupling stops and composition pedals, would render the instrument equal in rank to any we have in London.

Dear Sir...

Dear Sir,

It is almost a year since your Editorial of October 1987 (BIOS Reporter Vol.11 No.4) and as a result of a heavy schedule I have so far been unable to write in support of your comments. In this Editorial you made some despairing remarks about the rebuilding of old organs which continues as a custom in the British Isles.

Robert Lightband, of Dundee Cathedral, wrote a letter to the subsequent issue of the Reporter and I write now to oppose his views. Mr. Lightband uses the notion of 'musicality' to advance the cause of the eclectic organ filled with miscellaneous additions and tonal revisions.

In Australia we have largely abandoned the sort of philosophy espoused by Mr. Lightband. The restoration of old English organs in Sydney has shown that they are capable of marvellous music without any of the additions and changes suggested by Mr. Lightband. The fact that we have a vibrant organ scene with growing participation by young organists suggests that pure restoration is indeed viable.

The problem with Mr. Lightband's argument lies with his concept of 'musicality'. Each generation has had its own ideas. In the 1920s tracker action was unfit to play upon and organists believed it to be a hindrance to effective music making. Thus pneumatic and electric actions were installed. At the same time organs were made more 'musical' through the addition of more strings, solo flutes and heavy pressure reeds. In the 1950s these were replaced by the more 'musical' Larigot, Siffloite, Scharf and Cymbel, designed to make organs more versatile.

I would far sooner play and listen to a vintage Hill or Willis than one of the violated apparatuses extolled by Mr. Lightband. Much of the effectiveness of such organs is due to their favourable acoustical environments, rather than to any skill of organ builders in the blending of pipes from different eras.

It would appear from my observations that, as the result of the rebuild philosophy in England, there are now few intact examples of the work of the major nineteenth century builders surviving. It is sad that many British organists and consultants have failed to realise that this was the 'Golden Age' of British organbuilding.

To Australians, who exist in the distant parts of the world, it seems incredible that the sensible policies of the Continent - observable only a few hours out of London - have not had a great deal of influence in Britain. Whilst the heritage is different, Europeans have retained and restored old organs complete with all their limitations. I can imagine the response Mr. Lightband would receive if he went to Klostemeuburg in Austria and suggested that the famous organ there be tonally modified to accommodate a wider range of music! I only hope that British organists wake up to themselves before there is nothing from the nineteenth century left.

Kelvin Hastie

Dear Sir,

Mr. Fry's letter in the January Reporter, recounting the last minute rescue of an untouched Vowles from Clifton Congregational Church, was indeed thrilling reading, and great credit is due to him and to Dr. Kent for their concern and swift action, also to Mr. Roger Taylor for his splendid restoration of this lovely old organ.

The Reading church into which it is now so happily settled is itself of much interest. For the record it is **not** St. Mary's Reading (which is the nearby historic Minster church, containing a fine 4 manual Willis) but the proprietary chapel of St. Mary's Castle Street, Reading, founded in Georgian times by a breakaway congregation, completely Anglican, but quite independent of diocesan authority, with a minister instead of a vicar, and no parish; yet in its heyday filled to capacity with some 1,000 worshippers. Bound by Trust Deed to use The Book of Common Prayer at all services, it is proving a haven nowadays for those who still love to sing Mattins (yes!) and Evensong and value the old familiar form of Holy Communion. Standing on the site of an old prison, it fronts the street with a lofty Corinthian portico; its aisled and galleried interior, quaint with horse box pews, has a plaster vault to nave and chancel, resulting in excellent acoustics. The great Dr. Henry Gauntlett was born in the year that his father became Minister there (1803).

Also for the record, the exact date on the console is 1870. One cannot help loving this old organ - but is it **really** heresy to long for less cumbersome action and greater flexibility for the sake of getting out of it, in the accompaniment of worship, the great wealth of beautiful sounds locked up in it?? Some of us lesser players find a genuine dilemma here!

F. Gordon Spriggs
Acting Organist, St. Mary Castle Street, Reading

Dear Sir,

Since it left my hands a couple of significant errors seem to have crept into my Note printed in Reporter Vol.12 No.3 about the old keyboards exhibit at Durham Cathedral. In case these puzzled your readers:

- reference number (5) should have been inserted after "GG, A A - gl (24 notes) pedalboard" towards the end of the fourth paragraph.
- the end of the piece has been telescoped and confused. For the record, 100 or so speaking pipes survive inside the Castle instrument in addition to the Chaire case with its painted (now non-speaking) pipes.

In the meantime also I have undertaken further investigation in the Chapter muniments and additional related information has emerged:

- the England/Nicholls alterations and improvements of 1815-16 cost the Chapter £343 15s 4d plus carriage of £5 1s 3d (equivalent to say £15,000 at today's prices, or roughly 15% of the

organ's original cost at comparable values).

- the short-lived Postill alterations and improvements of 1866 were very poor value. The Minute of Chapter of the 16th June 1866 authorises repairs and additions by Mr. Postell (sic) in the manner and at the cost as set forth in the statement submitted to the Chapter. Hardly surprising, the statement has disappeared, as has a record of initial payment(s). Robert Postill was paid £465 10s for "Balance of work at the Cathedral organs" on the 26th January 1867 according to a Day Book of payments.

- it is clear from a close examination of an old photograph of the interior of the Cathedral that the Chaire organ remained in the same position relative to the main case when in 1847 the organ was moved from the screen to a position on the north side of the Cathedral Choir, where it remained until 1873. The front main case however was mutilated by having the side towers removed in order to fit the case into the Norman arcade.

Richard Hird

Redundant Organs

Ex London

T.Russell, early 19th C; available for restoration.

Original disposition: Compass GG, AA - f3; Swell c (now C) - f3

Gt 8.8.8.4.2²3.2.1³5.II.II.8.4.

Sw 16.8.8.4.8.8.4.

Ch 8.8.8.4.4.2.8.

Ped GG to c, Open; altered to C to el, Bourdon.

Action: Mechanical

Casework: Grecian style; oak with gilded plaster work.

Dimensions: h 18', w 15' 6", d 9' approx.

In store over 20 years.

London

Samuel Twyford, no date.

Disposition: Gt 8.8.8.4.4.2. Sw 8.8.8.4.2.8.8. Ped 16.8.

Action: Mechanical

Casework: no information (but chapel location)

Dimensions: h 12', w 8', d 10' (all approx)

Other organs currently available:

Devon: 2m Bryceson/Hele, Gt 7, Sw 7, Ped 2; pneumatic action.

Sussex: 2m builder unspecified; some possibly early 19th C pipework; 27 speaking stops; divided.

For further information and contact addresses, please write to the Redundancies Officer (address inside front cover).

For Sale

Colour slides of church and chapel organs - 985 slides in all - at very reasonable prices. The collection may be sold entire or split into groups. Anyone interested should contact Michael J. Watcham, [REDACTED].

Notes & Queries

Bernard Edmonds

A surprising and unfortunate quirk in the Faculty system explains a couple of recent queries, and I asked an expert for a statement, which he kindly gave.

The position is that a new church does not come under the Diocesan Advisory Committee until it is consecrated, strictly speaking, though as you know certain unconsecrated (dedicated) buildings have been brought under the Faculty Jurisdiction by order of the Bishop, for which there is special provision in the Faculty Jurisdiction Measure. It follows that the contents of new buildings are not subject to the Jurisdiction but normally, when a church is proposed for consecration, this is not allowed to proceed if there is something illegal in the church! However, there will inevitably be items which have not been seen by the DAC and which the Committee would probably not have approved had it been consulted at the outset. That is the legal position, but we do try to ensure that the DAC is consulted informally for advice about the furnishings of new churches, including the organ if there is one.'

Such informal consultation, though valuable, has of course no 'teeth' at all. And it should be realised that, in spite of what some believe, the dental equipment of the Diocesan Organs Adviser is not all that fierce. His is a purely advisory capacity; he is not in any sense an organ *consultant* - indeed, his terms of reference exclude that unless he has a separate professional engagement so to act. His primary duty is to advise the DAC, and through that the Chancellor; and in that context he can give advice to parishes. In many dioceses his advice is taken as seriously as that of the other advisers, and he is invited to the DAC meetings, if not made full member; in some it seems to be treated as a troublesome irrelevance - which indeed ... (blue pencilled).

A basic difficulty, which another enquiry raises, is that of securing suitable persons to fill the positions. As ever, there are the able and the willing, not all that often coinciding. Then there are the trapped. A cathedral organist complained to me that he found that the job automatically carried the post of DOA 'for which I have neither the desire nor any qualifications'. It is of course an honorary position (not always realised in the parishes), very time-consuming (if done as it should be), and has its frustrations as well as its satisfactions. Criticism is sometimes merited, but I hope the above will help you to make it with some knowledge of the set-up.

Some answers to hand about the last **Notes and Queries**. Canon Hunter writes that the **Sweffling** organ suffered badly from extreme dampness, worm, and settlement of the floor, not to mention some poor material, and had to be written off in the late sixties; he sends a description. Barbara Owen tells me that **Thomas Appleton of Boston** (Massachusetts) was working for **William Goodrich** in **1812** and started for himself in **1821**. He compiled **1835-40** an interesting notebook in which, inter alia, he describes '**Flight & Robson's Temperament of the Organ**'. She also suggests that the 'Lowe' of the **ex-Wiggenhall St. Mary** chamber organ might have been **John Lowe**, said to have been with **Gray**, who emigrated to Philadelphia about **1900**, where he built a number of organs, some quite sizeable. Little is known of him over the water, and she would welcome any information from this side, especially as to any organs he may have built. 'He was obviously well-trained in England'.

In the 1790-1810 period there were a number of immigrant English builders, mostly round New York and Philadelphia, about which she would be pleased to have information. **Charles Tawse** (Taws), **William & Thomas Redstone**, **Thomas Hall**, are recorded as building substantial instruments; and there were also **James Buchan** (Buckin), **James Stewart**, **Joseph Knapp**, and **Robert Sprawl** (Sproul), some of whom may well have built organs over here. Others are much better documented, such as the **Geibs**, as are later ones such as **Crabb**, **Pilcher**, and **Jardine**. Had **J.R.C.Crabb**, reputedly Welsh, any connection with the Exeter firm?

In **1900** or so **Yorston** built an organ for a **music room at Northwood**. It had **3** manuals,

with 45 speaking stops including a 32' reed, and an extra top octave of pipes to the Swell for the octave coupler. Some of the stops came from France and some from Germany. The Swell was in a brick chamber in which some Pedal stops were also placed, the Choir being apparently in a normal box. There was a Carillon on the Choir and a 16' Saxophone on the Pedal. Great, Choir and stop action all by vacuum pneumatic; the Swell and Pedal were vacuum-and-pressure tubular pneumatic. In spite of having lived a few miles of for 14 years, I never heard of it so cannot say where it was and what happened to it Some music room!

Several people refer to **Flight & Barr** as organ builders. They were not organ builders, but a historic china firm - they provided a breakfast set for Windsor Castle. Dr. Flight, then headmaster of Hugh Myddelton School and a descendant of the organ builder, told me some 40 years ago about them, and other Flight connections too; Flight the tailor of Winchester and Woolwich, and Daniel Flight, eighteenth century stay maker of Stroud.

How their name became linked with organ building can only be surmised. The only reference I am aware of is in the **Sydney Morning Herald** 22 January 1859, where on page 8 is reference to the sale of 'a fine toned organ, by Flight & Barr'.(1) Flight and Barr could have been a fairly familiar name, whereas Flight and Robson was not; especially as the two partners had parted 27 years previously and were running their own separate businesses. Boeringer (2) mentions them as possible alternative to Flight and Robson at Gloucester Cathedral in 1826, probably following Freeman (3) who notes F.&R. as custodians 1826, followed by F.&B. 1829. But Freeman did not know of the china business, judging by some Flight research papers he gave me;(4) so possibly seeing the name in the Cathedral books he jumped to an obvious conclusion. He never listed them in either of his Indexes of Builders. If anyone knows of any primary evidence, please let us know. Otherwise I defer to the expert knowledge of Dr. Flight.

Yet again an enquiry crops up showing confusion between **Bates** and **Bate**. This seems to have originated with the **Clevedon** chamber organ of **Percy Daniel**.(5) The late 18th century case bore the inscription '**Gulielmus Bate Londini fecit**', in spite of which it was attributed, by a singular misreading, to **Theodore C. Bates** of Ludgate Hill, and it was still so described at the time of my own visit in 1970. It was in fact probably originally by **Gray**, and had been rebuilt, or perhaps 'put together', by **William Bate** who put his name on in a style which was considered to be consonant with the age of the instrument.

Bate, formerly with **Hill & Son**, established his business in 1866.(6) **E. Carder** of Bow was by 1876 at East London Organ Works, 9 Burdett Road, Stepney, and on his death about 1880 Bate took over both business and premises, and as **W. Bate & Co.** the firm continued there until at least 1915. Bate himself died in 1905.

T.C.Bates (& Son from 1847) advertised in the Daily Telegraph 15 October 1863 - 'SELLING OFF - A BARREL ORGAN 5 stops 20 sacred tunes £5. A self-acting organ £5, and a number of others. Premises coming down for the railway. Must be cleared immediately. Bates, 6 Ludgate Hill'. Other advertisements followed in 1864. Their business and staff were taken over by Bevington.(7) According to **Langwill & Boston**(8) they became Bates & Son in 1859 with an address somewhere in Burdett Road, and in 1863 went to 2 Little Bridge Street until 1864. The latter might well be, owing to railway encroachment; but what is the evidence for Burdett Road? I fear confusion again! Can you help?

1) Graeme D. Rushworth **Historic Organs of New South Wales** (Sydney 1988) p.239

2) **Organa Britannica** I p.346 (Associated University Presses 1983)

3) **The Organ** IV p.5

4) **Organ Club Handbook** No.6 (1961) p.49

5) **The Organ XIII** p. 164

6) **Organist & Choirmaster** October 1915, advertisement; **Reporter** Vol.5 No.2 p.10

7) Ex inf. Charlie Smith in 1952; he had gone to Bevingtons in the eighties and spent most of his working life there.

8) **Church and Chapel Barrel Organs** p.44 (Edinburgh 1970); Rushworth op. cit. p.218

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 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.

The drawing on the cover is by Stephen Bicknell, and shows a tentative reconstruction of the Lancelot Pease organ of 1662 in Canterbury Cathedral, based on George Woodruffe's original design for the organ, the dimensions given in the contract, and a painting by Vandelan of about 1700.