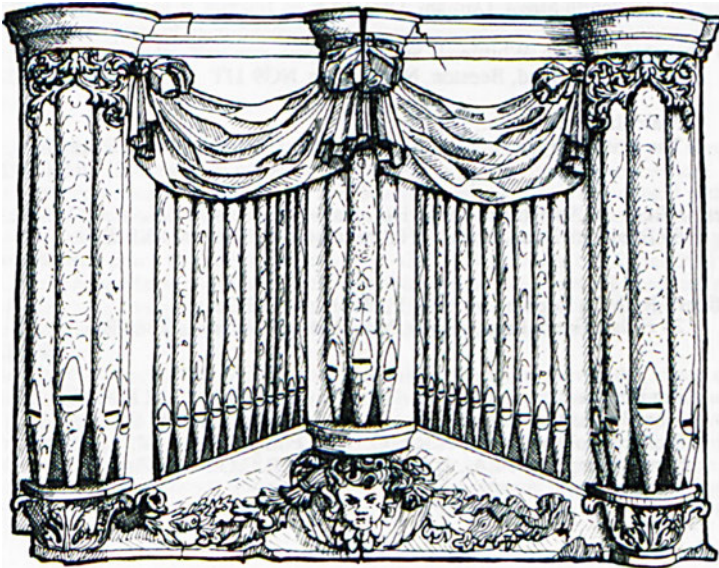


BIOS REPORTER



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Volume Fourteen, No. 3 (July 1990)

BIOS

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Opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors, not necessarily those of BIOS.

Editorial

The most recent issue of the *Organists Review* has various things to say about electronic organs. There are letters on the subject, and they are mentioned in the Editorial column as well. As yet, there are no advertisements from their makers in the pages of the *Review*, as the Incorporated Association of Organists maintains a policy of promoting the pipe organ alone through choice of advertising. A few remarks in just one issue are hardly enough to suggest that this policy may be under review, but even a passing mention of the enemy will have caused principals of pipe organ building companies up and down the country to choke on their corn flakes and start composing apologetic letters.

There is no reason why the Reporter should not join the fray. Before we start, readers should be reminded that their Editor is himself an organ builder - pipes only. Though he usually tries to maintain some semblance of even-handedness in these columns, this is an occasion when impartiality will be thrown to the winds. You may reach your own conclusions.

The enemy?

There are plenty of fields in which electronic music is perfectly valid. A flurry of inventive activity in the 1920s and 1930s happily coincided with new experiments in composition. Some of the instruments that appeared have faded back into obscurity; who today is acquainted with the music of the *Spherophone*, the *Thereminovox*, the *Trautonium*, the *Emicon*, the *Croix Sonore*, the *Mellertion*, the *Dynaphone*, the *Electronde*, the *Hellertion* or the *Partiturophonel*? One instrument gained a much more distinguished place in musical history. The *Ondes Musicales* of Martenot (1932), usually known as the *Ondes Martenot*, has an unforgettable part in Messiaen's *Turangalila* symphony. Frankly it sounds as though a Martian has joined the orchestra, and the contrast of conventional instruments with science-fiction sound effects is startling, to say the least.

The *Ondes* may not actually have had any technical superiority over the many contemporary instruments listed above. Its survival today is entirely due to the fact that great music was written for it, and it moved from the sphere of mere technical interest into the world of artistic creation. Here is a lesson for all musical instrument makers today: long term success is only to be achieved through close contact with the performers and composers. Another lesson, which may be more comforting to us pipe organ fans, is the thought that the many brands of electronic organ will eventually die for the same reason. The electronic imitates another instrument and therefore has no repertoire and no life blood of its own.

It has been left to other electronic instruments to take on the challenge of opening our ears to new sounds and new music. The electric guitar has been the most profoundly successful, and though the music in which it features may not be the favourite listening pleasure of many readers of the Reporter (although there may yet be some heavy metal fans among you), we live in an age where popular music is stronger than any other form. There is nothing debased or decadent about this; the situation is one that Josquin and Dowland would have understood, even if they might have found the technology and sounds baffling. Today the supremacy of the guitar is in turn challenged by many new forms of synthesised sound. Few of these can be fully exploited in live performance; much new music relies on studio techniques, and some only exists in a recorded form.

Against these kind of developments the electronic organ will soon seem very crude and antiquated, its preset sounds and non-touch-sensitive keyboard inadequate in comparison with a good synthesiser. In today's competitive commercial climate the electronic organ can make only a certain amount of headway.

Organ builders regularly involved in the construction of new instruments have another pleasant surprise to report. Some of them find that the majority of their new instruments replace electronics. Though the overall numbers produced on each side paint a less promising picture, we can at least show that the electronic is not found to be a permanent solution.

But none of these facts, nor the reservations all of us have about the musical quality or longevity of electronics, will do much in the face of a well trained and commercially run sales force. The larger electronic builders pressure potential customers mercilessly, telling half truths about pipe organs, giving glib demonstrations of glitzy showroom models, and offering spurious discounts for an immediate sale. All too many sensible organists and committees crumble, especially as the initial capital cost of a new pipe organ is so much greater. Apart from maintaining quality in new organs, and ensuring that the instruments live up to their reputation for beauty and reliability, this is the area that needs most attention from organ builders. We all need to be acquainted with how this salesmanship works, and though it may be distasteful, only by attacking like with like can we hope to challenge the deceit of the electronic organ.

Backfalls and Shortfalls

Reflections on the BIOS Conference on Organ Actions

Held in association with the International Society of Organbuilders
London, Saturday & Sunday 12th & 13th May 1990

The gates of St Peter's Organ Works were opened for the latest of Dominic Gwynn's annual BIOS conferences on aspects of the historic English organ. The eight speakers represented, in various combinations, the worlds of the organ builder, the organ player and the organ historian and academic. It is the strength of such conferences that all sides of the organ world meet and debate on matters which can so easily be seen as the sole preserve of one of the factions.

Stephen Bicknell's talk traced two aspects of the recent interest and awareness of historic actions. The first was the early re-introduction of mechanical actions and the need to prove that mechanical action could be as 'comfortable' as electric action. This led, for example, to the widespread use of often unsuitable modern materials in an attempt to reduce the mass of the action. The second aspect was the more recent interest in historic instruments and techniques of playing. This has led to a greater understanding of the inherent attributes of mechanical actions based on historic models and even to an acceptance that historic actions can often be felt to be better than modern ones. The complex questions of pluck and the player's control of the opening and closing of the pallet were raised, and were to be a point for discussion throughout the two days.

John Mander took up the scientific challenge in a discussion of the relative importance of mass and inertia in organ actions. To assume that reducing the mass would lighten the action was too simplistic an approach. It is not mass, but inertia that causes the problems. A roller board, for example, if made of very light materials, could well be subject to twisting, giving a very spongy and imprecise action. The mass of the rollers is insignificant, and they 'could be made out of tree trunks'; it is not possible to play two or three notes and tell which has the longest roller. The length of the roller arm, however, is important - the shorter the better. On the question of pluck, John pointed out that it was not the pressure of the air on the pallet before it was opened that caused the pluck. Pluck occurs when the pallet has already started to open and is a result of the low air pressure caused by the air flow through the partly opened pallet trying to suck the pallet shut again.

Dominic Gwynn looked at the development of English actions up to the end of the 18th century. The Adlington Hall organ, dating from about 1690, has the only surviving 17th century suspended action (Great organ) and this was possibly a turning point from a hybrid suspended action to the uniform 18th century balanced action (as found on the Choir at Adlington). The complex Talbot manuscript - perhaps notes of discussions with Father Smith - gives a number of clues to the English organ of the time and could well mean that the Adlington organ is not as unusual as it has seemed. The suspended all-oak action on the Great is certainly wonderfully fast and responsive, as I discovered for myself when I fortuitously gave a recital there just a few days after the conference. Why are different actions found in different organ types - was the action type more related to the structure of the organ than to any musical or performing considerations? The pin actions and other details of smaller chamber organs were discussed, with mention of Canons Ashby, Compton Wynyates and inspection of the

Sutton-Father Smith chamber organ at Mander's organ works. Are these organs, and others, examples of an indigenous English tradition? They seem to be unlike any Continental models, with narrow pipes with no initial speech characteristics, low cut ups and very low wind pressure. The keyboards of many of these little organs are similar, with very short naturals, and potentially bouncy actions. The question of the music that suits these organs best was discussed, along with the playing style that they demand.

David Wickens spoke of the 'improvements' of the 19th and 20th centuries, including the introduction of a variety of coupler mechanisms in England and various attempts to lighten the action with pneumatics. Why were couplers introduced to the English organ? Perhaps the answer is in the repertoire and the increasingly orchestral nature of organ music at the time. Were the 19th century organ builders trying to solve problems that might never have arisen had the organ retained the pre-19th century ability to express a performer's musical thought and expression?

Martin Souter and Stephen Taylor batted for the organists. Martin, whose suggestion that organists are often not that knowledgeable about the mechanics of the organs that they play provided me with the tide of this review, spoke about the organ as an expressive musical instrument. Stephen spoke of the approach to the performance of the historic repertoire in Holland over the past 20 years or so including the question of what is it that makes a performance on the organ musical. Surprisingly neither chose to demonstrate their points on the chamber organ standing tantalizingly and sadly silent beside them.

Martin stressed the need for an organist to have and to want intimate control over his instrument and the real contact with the source of the sound that a mechanical action organ can bring about. Many organists will make assumptions about the sound and qualities of an organ before they play it. They do not attempt to find out how a particular organ needs to be played - or what needs to be played on it. A good organ should, and will, present a challenge to the player; it will demand that time be spent in getting to know it; it will tell you what to play on it, and also how to play it. The 16th and 17th century organist took his style from the vocal and instrumental music that he knew - there was no separate organ tradition. The sound that he produced through the organ had to be as expressive as that produced by his own voice or instrument

Stephen noted that the influence of a non-legato articulation allows the initial speech of a pipe to be exploited to the full, although he rather surprisingly went on to argue for a strong pluck. Surely any control of the opening of the pallet will be prevented by an over-strong pluck? A strong pluck will mean that the finger pressure needed to pass through the pluck at the beginning of a note will automatically carry the finger straight down to the key bed, losing any control over the opening of the pallet. To be able to achieve this important expressive device when needed, the action needs to provide the player with the ability to open the pallet slowly by requiring only a fairly gentle finger pressure to pass through the pluck. However, there is still a need to retain sufficient pluck to ensure that the player can achieve security of attack and control of the timing of the note. The importance of all aspects of timing from rubato to articulation was again stressed.

The effect of console dimensions on non-legato playing was discussed. In pre-19th century consoles, the player sat in a more upright position with his toes touching the pedalboard below his knees. This position is a more naturally balanced position than that required to play the 19th and 20th century English console, with its pedalboard set deep into the case. The latter relies on the fact that in legato playing, one part of the foot is generally always touching the pedalboard and can therefore give the aid to balance needed because of the unnatural dimensions of the console. It was suggested that many organists playing on such a console use the pressure of their fingers on the keys to help to balance themselves - clearly negating any attempt at subtlety of touch. Whoever fitted the seat belt to the seat of the Cavaille-Coll organ at St. Denis could have been helping to improve his articulation - to articulate, or to topple over: that is the question!

Stephen Taylor finished with a plea for organs to be built uncompromisingly for a particular repertoire with few concessions to the eclectic organ. There is a lack of organs in England suitable for pre-19th century music. Perhaps England does need to develop its own historic style of organ for us to be able to rediscover our own musical heritage.

The academic world was represented by a brace of Doctors. Peter le Huray spoke on the references in late 17th and early 18th century England to fingering and discussed the relation of that to articulation, phrasing and performance practice. Examples looked at showed the change from the paired system of fingering as indicated by Purcell in 1696 to a more 'modem' system hinted at by Prellieur in 1731 and seemingly arrived at in Miller's Easy Instructions for the Harpsichord of 1771. After this time, there seemed to be less stress put on articulation in music, and a greater concern was felt for dynamic nuances. Organists needed, and still need, to have a greater sense of musical timing than pianists in order to create a musical performance without the possibility of stressing dynamics.

Christopher Kent continued the discussion into the late 17th and early 18th century. Phrase marks became more common, and it seems that a more flowing and smooth style of playing was expected. Short extracts from the organ music of Keeble and Adams were demonstrated. The changing sonorities of the pre-Hill/Gauntlet English organ included a range of quieter 8' stops. A table of relative key dimensions and movements was discussed and the suggestion was that the shallow touch of, for example the Viennese Piano, was ideal for the new classical style with its fast trills and more coloratura style of ornamentation and phrasing.

Thanks are due to Dominic Gwynn for arranging the two day conference; to John Mander for facilitating our passage through St Peter's gates and making us welcome within; and to John Wellingham for finding an extremely good Indian restaurant for Sunday lunch.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Conferences

London - Saturday 10th November 1990

The Nineteenth Century English Organ and its Music

This conference will be held at Latimer Upper School, Hammersmith, and is organised by Christopher Kent and Richard Hobson. Details are given on a sheet accompanying this issue of the Reporter.

Annual residential conference 1991 - Eire

Plans are being made for a conference at Maynooth. This will provide an ideal base for visits to many interesting Irish organs.

AGM

The 1990 Annual General Meeting of the British Institute of Organ Studies will be held in the common room of Dalrymple Hall, University of Glasgow, 22-26 Belhaven Terrace, Glasgow G12 0VW on Tuesday 31st July 1990 at 2.15 p.m.

Christopher Kent, Hon. Secretary
12th June 1990

Other events

Recitals by Andrew Benson-Wilson

Pamber Priory - Friday 7th September

On Friday 7th September at 8.00, Andrew Benson-Wilson will give a recital on the 1783 Richard Seede organ in Pamber Priory. This small chamber organ was recently restored and installed by Martin Renshaw and was reviewed in the 1987 BIOS Journal. Pamber Priory is in Hampshire, about 5 miles north of Basingstoke, and just to the west of the A340. Andrew will be joined by the cellist, Fiona Murphy.

Finchcocks - Sunday 12th August

During the afternoon of Sunday 12 August, Andrew Benson-Wilson will be giving a series of short and informal recitals on the John Byfield organ at Finchcocks. This forms part of the Finchcocks Open Day which will last from 2pm until about 6pm and will include demonstrations of other keyboard instruments from the famous collection. Finchcocks is off the A262 to the west of Goudhurst in Kent.

Recitals at St. Martin's, Scarborough on Tuesday evenings at 7.30 p.m.

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|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 26th June | Francis Jackson and Gordon Stewart |
| 3rd July | Michael Smith |
| 10th July | Peter Goodman |
| 17th July | Simon Lindley |
| 24th July | David Saint |
| 31st July | Simon Wright |
| 7th August | Peter Morrison |
| 14th August | Adrian Gunnin |
| (21st August to be announced) | |
| 28th August | Kieran Cooper |
| 4th September | Alan Spedding |

St. Martin's Scarborough was dedicated in 1863; It was designed by Bodley, with contributions from William Morris, Rosetti and Burne-Jones. The present organ was built by Father Willis in 1890, and has received only minor alterations since then.

The Dursley Saga

Reflections on BIOS and the role of an organ adviser

Philip L. Carter

Considerable publicity has been given in the Reporter, the BIOS columns of the Organists' Review and some of the Gloucestershire press about the case of the Sweetland organ in Dursley Methodist Church. Dr. Christopher Kent has even suggested that the Methodist Church ought to examine its policy regarding historic organs! As training officer for the Methodist Organ Advisory Service and as the local district adviser involved with the Dursley organ perhaps I may be permitted to set the situation into context?

I am a member of BIOS and an enthusiast for the preservation and restoration of historic organs, an enthusiasm which can be attested to by the many who have joined the organ tours which my wife and I organise. However the hat which one wears as a preservation enthusiast is not necessarily the one which one wears as an adviser. I firmly believe that an organ is the most suitable "primary" instrument for use in Christian churches in the Western world; I am also convinced that a pipe organ is the best long-term investment. However, apart from its possible appearance, an organ contributes nothing to worship unless it is satisfactory for the services of the church in which it is placed and unless it is played in a manner which enhances the worship. (I often tell my pupils that there is no place for music in worship unless it contributes something extra to the worship.)

Having, as it were, set the scene, let us now look at the Dursley situation. I visited the church in November 1987. The electronic organ, which had superseded the Sweetland some twenty years previously, was giving trouble, and the church was considering a replacement. I asked to try the Sweetland but found that the electricity supply had long ago been diverted for another purpose! However a search amongst the many items stored in the organ alcove revealed a blowing handle which together with a willing volunteer enabled the trial to commence. I really liked the sounds of the instrument despite years of neglect and no tuning. "Could we not restore this nice 19th century organ in place of an electronic?" and "Why had it been discarded in favour of an electronic so long ago?"

It quickly became evident that the reasons considered important in the 1960s were even stronger now. Let us look at them:-

1. The Sweetland organ was in an alcove at the rear of the gallery, a gallery which extended round three sides of the church.
2. Congregations, although quite substantial, were adequately housed on the ground floor from where the organ sounded distant and inadequate, and the organist felt cut off from the congregation.
3. The restricted compass at the treble end of the keyboards and pedal board, and the tenor C swell, was inadequate for performance of much of the organ repertoire.
4. The organ's tonal complement was insufficient

One might, and one ought, to put up a real defence over No. 4, but Nos. 1 to 3 deserved real examination. I am aware that Dr. Kent tried to persuade the organist that much of the early repertoire could be authentically performed on this organ, and as the player of a one-manual 1761 Snetzler instrument (in one of my two churches) I fully identify myself with his arguments: iml organists are difficult to find, and good ones are worth their weight in gold anil Dursley Methodist has a good one!

Hence the strong feeling amongst the church officers that the only affordable solution was a new 'full compass' two manual electronic organ, unless of course the adviser could find a pipe solution which would cost no more than a good electronic one!

The adviser suggested the possibility of a second-hand instrument, suitably overhauled, or a new organ with reconditioned second-hand pipe-work. This provoked the immediate question: "Why can we not use the pipes of our organ as the core of an enhanced instrument: it is our organ, many of us have fond memories, and it would be nice for it to form part of a new 'better' organ". And so the adviser is on the horns of a dilemma - what is the next move? You may not agree with my proposals, but please remember that the needs of the worshipping congregation should be number one for an adviser. I suggested that the Sweetland organ should be brought downstairs and that, although the mechanical action must be maintained, it might be possible to extend the manual compasses to 56 notes and the pedal to 30. Certain tonal alterations had been made, years before, to the original specification, so it would not be wrong to consider one or two additional 'clipped on' ranks.

In principle my ideas were accepted as a starting point and I left the church feeling that they were at least reverting to a pipe organ and seriously contemplating re-using their rather nice Sweetland organ, in albeit a slightly extended form.

It was some weeks later that I received telephone calls from two reputable builders to the effect that 'they felt sure that the scheme which they had been asked to quote for could not have been one of mine!' These calls were followed by one of real concern from Mr. Williamson of Cheltenham (a very useful BIOS 'watchdog' in Gloucestershire): "Was I aware what was being proposed for the Dursley organ?"

Investigations revealed that measurements had quickly shown that the organ could not be re-located on the ground floor. The gallery (on three sides) was too low, it was too expensive to remove part of it and it would, in any case, have spoilt the church. The sanctuary area was of course taboo. The organ builders had therefore been asked to quote for moving the organ forward from its alcove to the front of the gallery, to provide a detached, downstairs console with electric action and 'normal' manual and pedal compasses. This was not all, for the advent of electrical action meant that a wider tonal pallet became quite possible!

The plot thickened, for I then discovered that two of the suggested builders had in fact happily submitted schemes and estimates (not, I hasten to add, those who had telephoned me) AND that the scheme had been sent for approval to the Property Division in Manchester who, being assured that I was involved, had approved it! You can be sure that there were long and intense phone calls and letters, not least those between myself and the General Secretary of the Property Division. "Yes, I

had been involved: yes, I had suggested a compromise: yes I appreciated that a ground floor location was out". "Was I still insisting that permission be withdrawn: was a late 19th century Sweetland organ so unique and so precious?" What would you have said? Had it been my 1761 Snetzler there would have been no question, but Sweetland was not a 'top drawer' builder so was I prepared to stake everything on the preservation of the Dursley organ? The answer had to be No! I regretfully told Mr. Williamson that the only possible 'salvation' was to find another suitable organ which already had a detached console and electric action, to find a sympathetic buyer for the Sweetland and to ensure that the church was not financially worse off!

To Mr. Williamson's credit he eventually found a suitable organ, but it was too late. The work was about to start, and the groundswell:- "Our old organ has been given a new life and we will again have the instrument which, years ago, enhanced our family celebrations", carried all before it.

What is the final situation? Well, Dursley church now has a pipe organ. It is in a much better location for the leading of congregational singing and tonally is more adequate for that purpose, and for the performance of the repertoire. I have played it - I do not like the detached console or its position, BUT the organist and the majority of the congregation are thrilled and convinced that worship has been enhanced.

So has the adviser fulfilled his role? My personal preferences and convictions have been made plain, but my role as an adviser is to help the church to reach the best possible solution with the resources that are available (and this may be restoration, replacement, second-hand solutions or an electronic organ!). Enhancing the music in the worship of a particular church must be the adviser's 'bottom line': if the preservation and restoration of a worthwhile organ can be achieved at the same time - wonderful.

The Usher Hall, Edinburgh

Some members of the society are already aware of our interest in the fate of the 1912 organ by Norman & Beard in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh. This substantially-built 63 stop instrument has been at least partly in use until recent years, though decay is evident. It has never been rebuilt or significantly altered, and retains its original key action, electro pneumatic but with pneumatic coupling and derivations - a favourite Norman & Beard recipe. It also has a characteristically complex tonal scheme, perhaps suggesting some of the links between Hope-Jones 15 years before and the new ascendancy of Dixon and the organs of Arthur Harrison. There is a detailed description in the appropriate N&B Order Book (job no. 1276) in the British Organ Archive.

Our attention has been drawn by rumours that the organ may be replaced or broken up. In consequence of this the Chairman and our local council member, Philip Sawyer, paid a visit to the Hall in December 1988 to have a preliminary look at the instrument. It is in a sad state and at the time of the visit was completely unplayable. The result of that study was reported to our Council - which recommended to the Edinburgh authorities that a full technical survey should be carried out. The Edinburgh Society of Organists had also been active in the matter and largely as the result of the efforts of some of their members, we have been mentioned in splendid local and even national press reports on the subject.

As a result, we have now received from the Edinburgh Recreation Committee an invitation to carry out such a technical survey and arrangements are in hand to do this during the course of this month. We look forward to publishing the findings of the working party in due course.

The NPOR

The continuing activity of the National Pipe Organ Register has been the subject of much discussion in Council, and on the 5th of May a small group of Council members met to talk further.

The overall aim of the register - to record all the organs existing in Great Britain - is an extremely ambitious one, and the problems of putting it into practice are immense. However, only by tackling the grand scheme can we be sure of catching all historic organs, both well-known and undiscovered, in our net. The Register's first secretary, Nicholas Plumley, spent much valued time and effort in starting the scheme. During his tenure a considerable amount of information was collected and the decision was made in principle to incorporate the material as part of the research facility offered by the Archive. More recently appeals to a wider public through the IAO-sponsored **Organists Review** have drawn in more data, and the Chairman and Mrs. Wright have further investigated some of the problems of collecting information in a local pilot study.

In the shorter term we are again looking at the basic structure of the NPOR and its administration - much of this still being planning for the future. We are especially keen to involve people with data-handling skills - storage on computer file being the obvious answer. We are also keen to build links with the many organ builders and tuners up and down the country. If we can succeed in gaining their enthusiasm and goodwill, the fact that they visit the great majority of instruments in the country on a regular basis could be invaluable to us. A further possibility is that of establishing a National Pipe Organ Register Year, similar in principle to the National Play the Organ Year of 1990, perhaps in 1992. More details will be published as plans develop.

From the Archive

David C. Wickens

Amongst a number of interesting pieces deposited in the Archive by Dr. Barbara Owen of Newburyport, Massachusetts, is a photocopy of a letter written by Thomas Pendlebury, organ builder, to Rev. John Henry Bum. Bum was a Schulze scholar who contributed several articles to organ journals - *The Organist & Choirmaster*, *Musical Opinion*, *The Organ*, *The Rotunda*, etc. The letter was presented to William King Coveil in about 1933, and so found its way to the U.S.A. It concerns the Schulze organ at St. Peter's Hindley, which Pendlebury reconstructed in 1906. There arose much controversy over what Pendlebury did, with agonised complaint from such Schulze disciples as Rev. Noel Bonavia-Hunt (see, for instance, *The Modern British Organ*, p.35). The letter has this to say (in part):

" ... originally the action to Swell, Choir and Pedal was ordinary tracker with Barker lever and tracker to Great. I cleared all this out in 1906, Keyboards, Pedals and everything to the soundboards, but owing to lack of funds the old drawstop action had to be retained ... I had my voicing machine in the Church some weeks and every stop was gone through. The wood stops remain as Schultze [sic] voiced them, I merely corrected them according to his methods. But the metal I altered considerably, especially in the tenor octaves, where they were terribly overblown. The attack on each note being very bad, but afterwards they settled down to a steady note, but too strong. For instance the Major Bass, tenor C had a rather low mouth (about 5/8" at most) but the hole in the foot was a clear 3/4" with 1" round hole through the slide and table. It came on with a shriek. But I cut them up and reduced the wind in most of the flues. The swell Stopped Diapason I cut up and gave more wind to give a more clear and fluty tone of a liquid character ... "

Dear Sir ...

Dear Sir,

While I agree with Mr. Walmsley (Reporter Vol.14 No.2; April 1990) that the parish situation is "at present hopeless", I cannot agree that being parasitic on the culture of the past by clinging to the 1662 Prayer Book is likely to lead to any more satisfactory solution - any more than I would advocate building all new organs in the style of Robert Hope-Jones. It seems to me that at most periods there has been good liturgy and bad liturgy. There is no reason why this has to be the case. Historical and literary studies of Cranmer's liturgical style have shown that Cranmer made extensive use of a number of simple mediaeval rules for his rhythms and cadences (see, for example, W.K.Lowther Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, London 1932, pp. 806-12). There is no reason why this should not be done to produce good liturgical prose in modern English. Some of the prose in the ASB scans like the tail half of a bad limerick:

For ASB's metre when read,
There is not very much to be said:
"Though we are many,
We are one body,
Because we all share in one bread." -Oy!

I am afraid that much modern liturgical practice is not just banal, but actually silly.

Dr. John L. Speller


Dear Sir,

I read your Editorial in the October 1989 Reporter, and Mr. Walmsley's letter in the April 1990 issue commenting on it, with interest and sympathy. I wonder however whether it is perhaps time to start considering an alternative view of the future of the existing core of sacred music in the British Isles, to which you refer.

As a consequence of the Church of England's long history and the central place it has occupied in the cultural as well as the religious life of the nation it has brought into existence numerous gems of our national heritage: the parish churches of England, the cathedrals, much religious art, and, of particular importance to us, the Book of Common Prayer and the golden age of Victorian and Edwardian church music. It is clear that the fate of the latter is closely bound up with the former.

However, the Church of England quite rightly has the spreading of the Christian gospel and the support and instruction of its members as its primary concern. It is not in the first instance a preservation society. It has a message to communicate, and it is reasonable to accept that this is best done in a language akin to that used everyday. For the vast majority of people today the language of the Book of Common Prayer is obscure and difficult. How many people, offered an entirely free choice between seeing first rate productions of one or other of *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story* would opt for *Romeo and Juliet*? Members of BIOS are probably not typical! The Roman Catholic Church stayed with the vulgar tongue, Latin, for a remarkably long time; this ultimately was at the expense of marginalising the intellectual content of the liturgy for most people. I doubt, though, if many people today would advocate a similar fate for Elizabethan English.

I think that we have to accept alternative liturgies in a more contemporary idiom for most purposes.

There are several consequences.

I share your unease that there is apparently no avant-garde in church music circles exploring electronic music, synthesisers, and the use of computers in music - though I feel that your description of them

as arcane is a sad reflection of exactly that absence. Some of this technology is no more difficult for a musician to use than a word-processor is for an author, and every bit as useful. It is an area of immense vitality in the field of popular music from which musicians in other areas, particularly church music, could learn much, and to which I believe they could also contribute much. You will find many magazines on the shelves in newsagents partly or wholly devoted to electronic music, but how many to church music? The fact that we are faced with the need for new music to new words is surely an opportunity, and a challenge for the future, not a sign that we should seek to preserve the past unselectively when it no longer speaks to most people.

So far as our heritage of church music is concerned this means that we must face the fact that it is dying as an integral part of normal worship, and cannot be restored to the central position it used to hold. It is time to preserve it as a musical art form, of equal value to baroque church cantatas, Italian motets, sacred oratorios, or the great settings of the Mass. It is time to start collecting and collating complete recorded services, and the memories of church musicians. I for one would regard it as an incomplete exercise to neglect the spoken parts of the service, or the singing of the psalms to Anglican chant. I am sure it is true that standards in Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches are as high as they have ever been, but it may well turn out that this is an Indian Summer, and we should take steps to ensure that our descendants will have all the information they need for an authentic concert performance of Choral Evensong.

Dr. J.M.Dowden

Redundant Organs

Gloucestershire

Anon. 1840s; later enlarged to 2 manuals
Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4.4.3.2. Sw 8.8.8.4.8. Ped 16.
Action Mechanical
Casework by Woodyer
Dimensions h 12' 6" (swell + T), w 8', d 9' (+console)

Surrey

Anon, no date; to present location by Willis, 1936
Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4.4.2. Sw 8.8.4.2.II.8. Ped 16.8.
Action Mechanical, pedal pneumatic
Dimensions h 13' 2", w 10', d 10'

Kent

Anon, no date; pedals added later
Disposition Man 8.4.2. Ped 16.

Norfolk

Norman & Beard 'Norvic' organ
Disposition Man 8.8.8.4. Ped 16.
Action Mechanical; enclosed except Pedal and Open Diapason

Cambridgeshire

Anon, no date.
Disposition Man 8.8.4.4.2².1.2.1'J. no pedals
Dimensions h 14', w 7', d 6'

ex Arundel

Hill 1914; available again owing to scheme having fallen through
Disposition Gt 8.8.4. Sw 8.8.8.4.8. Ped 16.8.
Action Mechanical, pedal pneumatic
Dimensions h 14', w 8' 6", d 6' 6"

Other organs currently available:

London SE: 3m Compton; in a theatre; no details

Grampian: 2m Rothwell; electro pneumatic?; Gt 3, Sw 3, Ped 1; 14' x 8' x 8'.

S. Wales: 3m Peter Conacher; tubular pneumatic; Gt 8, Sw 8, Ch 6, Ped 7.

London SE: 2m Brindley & Foster cl880/1901; tubular pneumatic; Gt 9, Sw 9, Ped 2.

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

Redundancies - Savings and Losses

David C. Wickens

A number of notable organs have passed through the redundancies register in recent years. Among those successfully re-located in Britain are the following:

Willis 1887, Accrington, St. John (Reporter Vol.12 No.2 p.9) to Shere P.C., Surrey.

Holdich 1845, Ponders bridge, pipework to Selwyn College, Cambridge.

Hill 1871, Battersea, St. Philip (Reporter Vol.13 No.3 p. 12) to Reading School

Walker 1869, St. Hugh's School, Faringdon (Reporter Vol.14 No.1 p.9) to Clent P.C.

The following have found homes overseas:

Bishop & Starr c 1854, Wealdstone Baptist (Reporter Vol.10 No.4 p.1 1) to Australia

Jackson 1856, Chorlton-cum-Hardy Unitarian (Reporter Vol.1 1 No.2 p.9) to Holland

Nicholson cl888, Reading, St. Saviour (Reporter Vol.13 No.2 p.9) to Holland

Willis 1882, Brentford, St. Paul (Reporter Vol.13 No.2 p.8)

There are one or two others pending finalisation of contracts. There are, of course, several organs which have been saved but which have not been through the BIOS redundancies machinery - for example, the 1883 Hill organ at St. John's, Brownswood Park, visited during the joint BIOS/DOA Conference in London, 1989, has gone to Holland. It was rescued by Gerard Verloop almost literally from the jaws of death: the organ was taken down in apocalyptic conditions during one of the tempests of the last winter; in a constant rain of plaster and stone dust, a large chunk of masonry fell onto the place where the console had been situated; mercifully the console had been removed only a quarter of an hour earlier!

Lamentable losses include the following:

Walker 1872, Greenwich, Christ Church: stored for relocation and then destroyed by vandals

Jardine 1870, Gorse Hill Methodist, Stretford (Reporter Vol.11 No.1 p.1 1): bought by a Dutch

antiques dealer for the casework, the remainder broken up.

Gray & Davison 1878, Rochdale, St. Peter, Newbold (Reporter Vol.13 No.4 p. 13): seriously vandalised in situ.

The Redundancies Register 'Fates' list, revised up to the end of 1988, is now available. Last year's subscribers will automatically receive the revisions. New subscribers should send five second class postage stamps to the Redundancies Officer (address inside front cover); one stamp will be used for return postage, the others are to cover costs.

Notes and Queries

Bernard Edmonds

Some loose sheets have come my way from an old magazine (1) telling about Much Wenlock in Shropshire and its Priory. In it there are extracts from transcriptions made from the now-destroyed Registers of Sir Thomas Butler, who had been the last Abbot of Shrewsbury before its dissolution, when he became the parish priest of Much Wenlock in 1539. On his staff there was one of the

former Cluniac monks from Wenlock Priory, of whom Butler wrote that he "was excellently and singularly expert in divers of the seven liberal sciences, and especially in geometry, not greatly by speculation, but by experience; and few or none of handicraft but that he had a very good insight in them, as the making of organs, or a clock and chimes, and in carving, in masonry and weaving of silk, and in painting: and no instrument of music being but that he could mend it, and many good gifts the man had, and a very patient man, and full honest in his conversation and living. All this country hath a loss of the death of Sir William Corvehill, for he was a good bell-founder, and a maker of the frame for bells". He had also been responsible for "the rearing and building" of the new chancel roof and the "framing and new repairing of the altar and chancel".

There are fascinating glimpses of history as seen from the people's viewpoint, but we must not linger. The author of the article does not tell us where the transcriptions are to be found; but as he was E. Hermitage Day, the British Library seems indicated. Any organ work by Sir **William Corvehill** must remain among history's mysteries.

'Sir', by the way, indicated a priest, the English version of 'Dom(inus)'. Another clerical organ-builder was the anonymous **Parson of Burgay**, recorded in the churchwardens accounts of St. Mary's Conventual Church there. (2)

1523 'Itm. paid to Cp'son for a key and mendyng of the Orgons iiij
1539 'It spent on ye p'son of Seynt Peters when he came to set organs ij d.
It to ye p'son of Seynt peter's for mendyng te orgons in ye quer x a. ij ċ.'
1550 'It paid to ye p'son of Saynct Petres for mending ye organs ij a.
It. paid for his borde, for glewe, & wyer xij ċ.'

From the same source we learn that in 1526 'ye Organmaker' was 'Amendyng of ye Olde Organs', and we find an example of the provision of organs in those days. (3) In 1535 there was both 'mendyng the organs in the quere' and 'Makeyng of the organs in the chapell'; several small organs for specific jobs in strategic positions, rather than one large one trying to be all things to all men.

As a rest from parsons, consider '**the Clarke of hadenh'm**' who in 1530 received vjd.. 'for mendyng of the bewlys of the organs' at **Thame**. (4) Anonymous again is **The Priest of Middlesmore** working at **Kirby Malzeard** in 1555 To the Prest of Mydlsmore for mendyng the organ, iij *. i d.' (5)

For this last reference I am indebted once again to John Ince, an organ friend of long standing, an interested and ready provider of information. I wish certain other researchers were as careful! He would never pass a statement unless the evidence satisfied him. Recently he told me that he had found the date of Father Smith's first marriage, and would let me know when he had verified the sources. Not now, I'm afraid, for soon afterwards I attended his funeral. His wide activities and influence were shown by the inclusion in the large gathering there of many organ friends and organ-builders, Top Brass among them. He was not a member of BIOS, so a lengthy notice would be out of place here - from choir-boy under Dr. Alcock to Director of Music at Public School, and a good organist and church musician - but a tribute must be paid to his activities in finding homes for redundant organs, such as the **Father Willis** at **Groton** in Suffolk, and to his archival studies, which have certainly benefitted BIOS, even if indirectly.

In the last round of his very lengthy telephone conversations (on his bill, not mine!) and distinctive letter, typed on a variety of papers with added comments round the edges, he was concerned with the first BIOS Journal in 1977, in which I wrote of the old ex-a-Cambridge-College organ at **Kings Lynn**, quoting a description by one 'B.Mackerell, Gent'. (6)

"It was adorned with proper figures, as King David with his Harp at the Top, a little lower two Angels on either side, one playing upon a Comet, the with a Musick-Book lying before him, his Hand elevated as Keeping Time in that Science." There was also a reproduction of an etching from 'a scarce' showing the organ **in situ** facing west on the screen. I was a little sceptical about this, as a print exists showing no organ at all (7) and it was not beyond the bounds of possibility that someone had copied it and inserted the organ from Mackerell's 1738 description for the 1844 book! (8) Be that as it may, John was investigating the figures, especially the one alleged to be 'Keeping Time'.

He maintained, I think rightly, that this was unknown, and that pairs of figures such as this would both be equipped with instruments. He suggested that the instrument had been broken off, and Mackerell had thus been deceived.

He went further. In the church at **Trowse**, Norwich, there are figures which Pevsner describes - "Seated most inappropriately around the pulpit three Baroque life-size figures, David with his harp and two angels blowing trumpets. They came from an organ-case most probably." John found that one of these had been repaired from just such damage as described above. He was looking for evidence, before jumping to the obvious conclusion. If the figures went to Trowse, where did the rest of the organ go? Spreling (9) says Great Bowden in Leicestershire. But I am not convinced altogether. The case - if the 'scarce print' is not too wildly imaginative - is the wrong shape. The Bowden case is of the original size, and before 1887 had one manual with 8 stops. It would scarcely have contained the Lynn organ with 10 stop Great (10) and 3 stop Choir. Case not proven. We had wondered whether Trowse might give a clue; and if the figures are original - some confusing statements might mean they were put up in 1689 - they might give some clue to the Cambridge College. Hope springs eternal...

Some queries: **William Parvin**, Bradshawgate, **Bolton (Pebmarsh, Essex)**; **F. Smith, Derby**, fl. 1827; **John Winch, Bristol**, **John Shuckford** and **John Frost of London**, all late 18th century; and **Mr. Carter**, of **Norwich**, who appears in a statement made by the Vicar of **St. Stephen, Norwich**, in 1903 - (11)

'By the Will of Catherine Burgh ... made in 1496 ... she ordered that there be bought a pair of organs for St. Stephen's, the price to be £20 ... On 12th April 1569 the Churchwardens paid Mr. Carter 2d. for mending the organs.'

R. Tubb & Son, Liverpool, moved in 1895 to 24 Clifford Street, where they exhibited an organ 'Built upon a somewhat new principle'. (12) What was it?

George Dawson of Cambridge has been denied the fame intended, so I reproduce the offending paragraph in full. (I regret that I made the same typing mistake in Notes & Queries Reporter Vol. 14 No. 1 and also in Reporter Vol 14. No. 2; my apologies to Fr. Edmonds - Ed.]

Slater's Directory 1850 lists **James Last** 25 Abbeygate Street, **Bury St. Edmunds**, as organ builder. He restored and added to the organ in St. James, now the Cathedral, and his grandson was **G.C. Bedwell**, who appears (Post Office Directory) in 1875 at 15 Hills Road, Cambridge. **Bradbury Last**, musical instrument seller, 111 King Street, **Cambridge**, (1850) surely fits into the pattern.

'Slater' tells us that **George Dawson**, organ builder, was at 94 Castle Street, **Cambridge**, in 1850, and 'Kelly' 1858 puts him at 39 Manor Place in Jesus Lane. He would repay research, for his place in organ history is probably more important than has yet been discovered.

From a Church Register of the 1890s - 'Sept. 5th, Mr. & Mrs. J.W. Wilson came to church to return thanks for their accident".

- (1) **The Treasury** August 1912
- (2) G.B. Baker in **Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeology** vol 2.
- (3) vide **BIOS Journal** 4 p.27, 5 p. 130
- (4) F.G. Lee **History of Thame** (1883) p. 36
- (5) Edmund Bogg **From Edene Vale to the Plain of York** (Sampson 1890) p. 182
- (6) **BIOS Journal** 1 p.21
- (7) **The Organ** lv p. 120
- (8) **W. Taylor Antiquities of Kings Lynn (1844)**
- (9) ii 173, 188
- (10) **BIOS Journal** 1 p.20. The advertisement omits the Fifteenth
- (11) Account of a presentation to the organist.
- (12) **Musical Opinion** March 1895 p.396

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 dummy organ-case or screen, carved in solid wood with painted decoration; the style is typical of the second half of the seventeenth century. The history of this object is unknown; it is now the property of J.W. Walker & Sons Ltd.