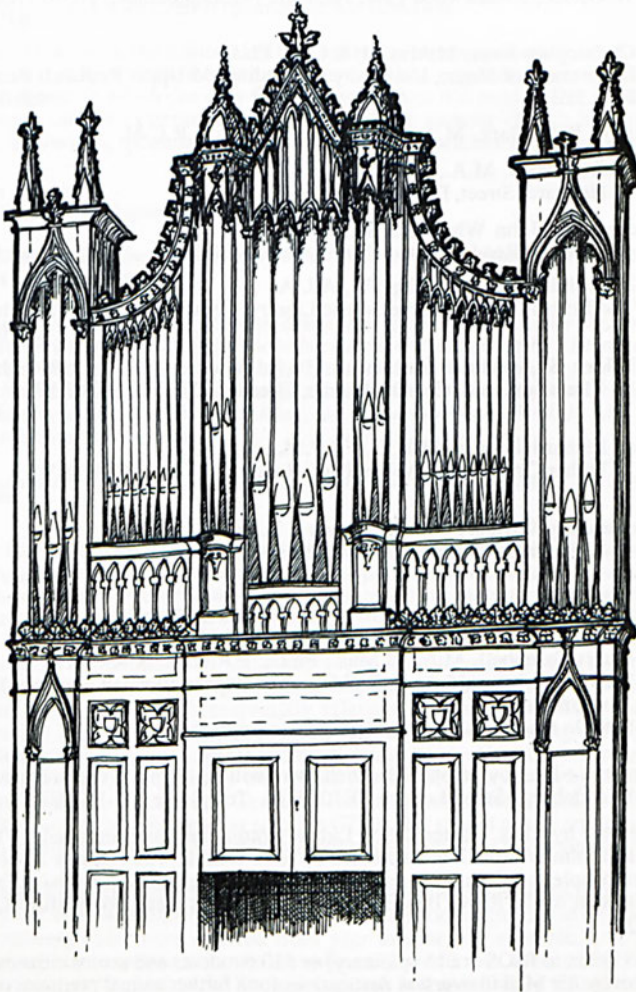


BIOS REPORTER



Blackheath

Stephen Schemm 1991

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BIOS

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The BIOS Reporter is edited by Stephen Bicknell, who will be happy to receive suitable material for inclusion at:

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Certain back issues of the Reporter are available from the Editor, from Volume 4 Number 1 onwards, with some interruptions. These are available at a cost of 25p each plus postage and packing. Please enquire at the address given above for further details. Back issues of the BIOS Journal are available from: The Positif Press, 130 Southfield Road, Oxford OX4 1PA.

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

Editorial

Historical Organ Notes is published and edited by the organ builder Martin Renshaw. It is a simply but neatly produced A5 typescript magazine covering subjects broadly similar to those that concern BIOS. I know it is read with interest by many of our members.

In the October 1990 issue the Editorial ('Here today - gone tomorrow') laments with considerable feeling and a wide ranging view the dismal state of historic organ conservation and preservation in this country, sentiments which can only find sympathy from this publication. Criticism is levelled at the Government and its systems and assignees, at the various church bodies concerned with preservation, furnishings, redundancies and so-on, at organ builders and at the 'organ Establishment' in general.

BIOS is also mentioned. I quote the relevant passage:

'...What has happened in the last ten years or so, and how do we stand, now almost on the brink of the 1992 open European Market?

'BIOS has identified a number of problem areas, but of its four aims only the two concerned with scholarly research into the British organ have been explored in any depth. The more practical matters of archive preservation and restoration of organs, and the interchange of scholarship with other bodies, have been less pursued. Indeed, any activity which costs money has been eschewed, despite the society's having about £20,000 in the bank, the interest from which might have helped to start up some practical action by its members.

'Clearly, if we wait for the government or 'someone else' to do something, we are going to wait for ever ...'

First, BIOS's four aims (printed as usual on the back cover of this Reporter). Scholarly research (1) and conservation of sources and materials (2) are amply demonstrated in the Journal and Archive, as Martin Renshaw admits. Preservation and restoration (3) are both pursued consistently as subjects for deliberation and correspondence by Council, in working parties related to particular instruments (Lulworth, Leigh Park, Scone, Usher Hall Edinburgh, Preston Public Hall etc.) and through the educational work of our publications and conferences. Yes, there is more to do here, and Council is currently deliberating two sets of guidelines: one for Conservation and Restoration based on American and Australian models (especially relevant to an organ heritage that includes many nineteenth century organs), and another covering techniques for surveying old organs. The task of listing has recently received new impetus and there should be significant news emerging over the next few months. Exchange of scholarship and views (4) has been furthered by contacts in Australia, America, New Zealand, France and Germany (see Journals *passim*) and in conferences held in France and Germany or in collaboration with the GDO. We should not be complacent - the tasks we face are on an enormous scale - but broadly speaking we are faithful to our objectives.

Secondly, Martin Renshaw's comment about the financial capabilities of BIOS is a little unfair. Until recently the BIOS bank accounts represented only a) the good husbandry of an organisation making sure that its running costs were covered from year to year (for example, a large sum has to be accumulated from subscriptions to cover the substantial production costs of the Journal later in the year) and b) certain sums given to the Society as grants and specifically set aside for the funding of identified projects - such as the microfiling of archival material. More recently, thanks to the special efforts of Donald Wright and Michael Gillingham in particular, the Endowment Fund has been set up, currently at about £9,000, and, yes, the interest from this will be used to help 'start up some practical action' by our members.

In brief, Council has always been aware of and to an extent hampered by the inevitable restrictions of running on an amateur basis. Relying on goodwill and the spare time of volunteers certainly means



that many projects take a long time to come to fruition and that publications do not always appear as regularly as they should (a problem with which Martin Renshaw must feel some sympathy). I think I can speak for the Council of BIOS in saying that we have always been concerned that any project that we undertake is planned with care and executed to the highest standards of which we are capable. Our work must stand both criticism and the test of time.

Martin Renshaw need not wait for ever for progress - there has been much over the fifteen years of BIOS's life - and I hope that he will continue to share our concerns and promote improved standards in all aspects of the historic organs scene.

From the Chairman

For some time now I have taken the view that the moment was approaching - perhaps had indeed already arrived - when it would be to advantage if the Society gave serious consideration to a change of Chairman. By the time of the next Annual General Meeting, it will have been my privilege to hold this seat for eight years, it is an office which I have always regarded as one of the most prestigious and I have to confess that I have continually occupied it with a sense of considerable pride - a sin for which I hope I may be forgiven.

Members may remember that at the start of my service, I set myself a series of specific objectives. These principally concerned work on the Archive, on the N.P.O.R., on efforts to raise by various means our image and credibility - and perhaps most importantly of all, on increasing our financial stability. Any extent of success or otherwise which has been achieved during this period is for the membership to judge - but if there has in fact been some degree of success, there is little doubt that it arises as the result of the enormous amount of hard work which has been put in by all my colleagues in the various spheres of our activity. I therefore welcome this opportunity of expressing to them my personal gratitude for the loyalty and support I have received throughout the whole of my time of office - an appreciation which surely will be echoed by the whole of the membership of the Society.

I think we are in fact justified in saying that some good progress has been made during these years - but as always is the case in a growing organisation, this represents only a start. If the Society is to prosper, this growth must continue and there certainly remains much to be done. I readily admit that during my Chairmanship, I have enjoyed my own share of the work - indeed I regard myself as having been very fortunate to have had such an opportunity of taking a full and active part in the business of the Society.

Nonetheless all things come to an end - and I am convinced that a change of face in high office, indeed a change of style, is needed. Both would be salutary and refreshing. I therefore propose formally to tender my resignation to Council at its next meeting. This process is constitutionally necessary because I was re-elected at the last A.G.M. for the statutory period of two years. My intention to take this step has of course been known for some time and members of Council have in consequence been exercising their minds to find a successor. Opinion from a wide spectrum of the membership has also been sought.

It is as the result of many discussion and deliberations that I am now in the happy position of telling you that we have had good fortune in this matter. Dr. Peter le Huray - a well known and active supporter of BIOS since its inception, indeed a founder member - retired from office at St. Catherine's College Cambridge at the end of the last academic year and it was this very fact which raised the hopes of Council members and many others that, now released from onerous College duties, he might be able to find time to take on the responsibilities of the Chairman of the Society. On being informally approached, he graciously applied considerable thought to the suggestion - and much to the delight of all concerned, he informed us that he would be prepared for his name to go forward at the next Annual General Meeting, which will be held on September 28th 1991.

In what terms can one possibly summarise the attributes of Dr. Le Huray in an account of this nature? His C.V. covers four sides of A4 paper! Musician, scholar, teacher, researcher, examiner, visiting

professor at many overseas universities, composer, conductor, author of numerous articles and books, organ recitalist of international standing, recording artist, broadcaster on radio and television, editor of numerous works (including co-editor of the new Grove Dictionary), past President of the I.A.O., President of St. Catherine's College, Honorary Member of the R.A.M..... I hesitate in case I have missed something of importance - and almost certainly I have, for the list is almost inexhaustible! And what else for good measure? An interest in photography and French impressionist painting, gardening including the growth of exotic seeds - and, to use his own phraseology, developing aches and pains on rural perambulations. In addition to all this, he has actually been known to find time to write the occasional article for that well-known journal published by the British Institute of Organ Studies. Moreover it was indeed accepted by the Editor of that Journal! What other accolade could possibly be offered? Vraiment, nous avons un homme formidable!

We look forward to welcoming him - and he comes with all good wishes for a successful and happy period of office from the one who will shortly become his immediate predecessor.

Donald Wright

Reports

Portsea & Romsey - Saturday 9th March 1991

The purpose of this conference was to examine the work of J.W. Walker & Sons, and in particular two of their organs which have not been substantially altered, the mid 19th century instrument in Romsey Abbey and the late 19th century organ at St. Mary Portsea.

St. Mary's is the original parish church of Portsea Island and, until the establishment of St. Thomas's as a parish in the 14th century served the whole island. The present church is the third on the site and was designed by Sir Arthur Bloomfield in 1887. The result is a loose interpretation of the Perpendicular style with a prominent west tower, perhaps a little too slim for its height. The aisled nave is very wide but the two bay sanctuary is narrower. The organ is placed at the extreme eastern end of the choir on the north side and is contained within a chamber fronted by a Bloomfield designed case. Although this is impressive it is not an orthodox design but rather an assemblage of separate units. Some pipe tops protrude above the cornices.

A specification and estimate for the new organ were produced in 1888. This is one of a group of very fine late 19th century Walker organs designed by Sir George Martin of St. Paul's Cathedral, others being Holy Trinity Sloane Street and St. Matthew's Northampton. The original intention was to have four manuals but two were at first installed and the rest prepared for. Eventually in 1892 17 new stops including the unenclosed Choir Organ were added, but the Solo was never installed although the frame of the fourth keyboard remained until the organ was rebuilt in 1965. One of the new stops in 1892 the Great Clarion Mixture, a brilliant but not particularly high pitched second mixture at 22.26 29., but which adds considerably to the total ensemble. Other stops of this type existed at Holy Trinity Sloane Street (1891) an St. John the Divine Kennington (1893), but Portsea is now the only survivor.

The organ is not very large for the size of the building and is not in a particularly advantageous position in the church, but the sound fills the building well. The overall effect is quite full with a well developed bass, and although the reverberation time is not exceptional the building seems to hold the sound, and it is necessary to use carefully judged tempi so that the effect does not become confused.

In 1920 a radical reconstruction, including a west end section and the suppression of the Clarion Mixture was proposed, but a lack of funds prevented this. The organ was cleaned in 1981, but no tonal changes were made. It now stands as a fine example of a late 19th century instrument, but not yet devoid of sufficient chorus structure to reduce its versatility. The organist designate, Adrian Bawtree, presented an effective programme of Romantic Music by Mendelssohn, Howells, Hollins and Franck. The style of the voicing perhaps suited the Howells best, the chorus reeds being on the

thick side for French music.

The second visit was to Romsey Abbey, a splendid late Norman church, whose completion was delayed for so long that by the time the nave was finished the Early English style had been adopted. Two unusual features of the earlier part of the building are the recessing of the tribune gallery behind the line of the arcade and the open tympana of the tribune arches.

We were first given a talk by Nicholas Plumley on the well documented family and background of Joseph Walker. Among other things we learned that Walker organ cases never had a central tower, and that there is a high concentration of their work in Kent, Devon, Shropshire, London, Ireland, Australia and the Carriibbean, no doubt reflecting business connections and recommendations from satisfied churches. Although the quality of Walker's work remained high his instruments were very competitive in price. The substance of the talk was from the forthcoming book on the Walker dynasty.

The Romsey organ dates from 1858, when it stood on the north transept gallery. This was demolished in 1888 and the organ was moved east of the crossing. The Great and Choir stand on the floor, the Swell is above in the tribune gallery and the Pedal is alongside it to the east. This was a poor layout and resulted in a mixed action. Great and Choir are tracker, the former assisted by Barker levers; the Swell and Pedal are pneumatic, the latter incorporating some tracker runs between machines. The organ was overhauled by Walkers in the 1970s and in 1982 Manders carried out some work, restoring the original composition of the Great two rank mixture, returning the Great Harmonic Flute as a Twelfth, and adding a new Tuba. The action is now in urgent need of restoration.

Jeffrey Williams demonstrated the wide capabilities of the organ in a programme of Bach, Couperin, Walmisley and Reger. For the earlier pieces the fuller tone of a Walker is perhaps not so suitable as a Hill chorus, but in general the versatility of the mid 19th century British organ was well illustrated. As one would expect, the reeds were less smooth than those of the Portsea instrument.

Our thanks are due to Nicholas Plumley and John Radford for planning and presenting such a worthwhile and instructive day.

Barrie Clark

Conferences

Northampton - Saturday 11th May 1991

Examining the Historic English Organ - Foreign Influences

The latest in this extremely successful series of events, organised by Dominic Gwynn, will examine the history of foreign influences on the British organ - a subject that could be extended from the dawn of time to the present day! Details are given on a sheet accompanying this issue of the Reporter and those who wish to attend are asked to book as soon as possible.

Eire - Annual Residential Conference - 29th July to 1st August 1991

With its base at Maynooth, and in the capable hands of Gerard Gillen, we will explore what the Emerald Isle has to offer the BIOS delegates. Throw all preconceptions, prejudices and Irish jokes to one side; this is not only a fascinating and lovely country where we are sure of a warm welcome, but also a mine of treasures, both old and new, for anyone interested in organs and organ building. Details appear on a sheet accompanying this issue of the Reporter and those who wish to attend are asked to book as soon as possible.

Grosvenor Chapel, London - Day Conference and AGM - 28th September 1991

This eighteenth century chapel of ease - built to relieve the parish church of St. George's Hanover Square - will soon house a new organ by William Drake in the original case by Jordan. This instrument will be the object of the day, with the AGM taking place at 2.00 p.m. Full details will appear in the July Reporter.

Huddersfield - the Workshop of Peter Conacher - Spring 1992

In the spring we hope to visit the workshop of Peter Conacher, a remarkable and now very rare example of a nineteenth century organ factory surviving in a recognisable state. Full details will appear in due course.

Other Events

The Organ in Worship - Westminster Cathedral, Saturday 8th June 1991

Organised by the Organ Advisory Group of the Society of St. Gregory, this day conference will consider the nature and role of the organ in contemporary worship and the practical issues of commissioning new organs and the maintenance, restoration or refurbishment of existing ones. As well as contributions from many distinguished speakers there will be an open forum including organists, organ builders, architects and clergy. The cost for the day will be £19.50. Application forms from Dr. John P. Rowntree, [REDACTED]

16th International Organ Festival, St. Albans - 4th-13th July 1991

St. Alban's is back - with as full and varied a programme of events as ever. Judges/Recitalists include Naji Hakim, Ullrich Böhme, Bernard Lagace, Thomas Trotter and Hans Fagius. The exhibition of small organs will be supplemented this year by live demonstrations of organ builders at work. The various organ events and the playing competitions are arranged round the backbone of the festival programme, with its characteristic mixture of fine music and the arts. Details from the International Organ Festival Society, [REDACTED]

Oundle Summer School for Young Organists and Organ Festival

14th -21st July 1991

This very successful event has become of vital interest to aspiring young organists, especially those on their way to scholarships at Oxford or Cambridge or facing competitions or examinations. This year the tutors at the Summer School will be Peter Hurford, Donald Sutherland, Roger Fisher, Anne Page, Ludger Lohmann, Thierry Mechler, Anne Marsden Thomas and Simon Lawford. Festival events add to the mix of scholarship, study and entertainment. Details from the Oundle Summer School for Young Organists, the Music School, West Street, Oundle PE8 4EJ.

AGM

The 1991 Annual General Meeting of the British Institute of Organ Studies will be held at the Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street, London W1 on Saturday 28th September 1991 at 2.00 p.m.

Christopher Kent, Hon. Secretary
March 1991

Cecil Clutton 1909-1991

As many readers will know by now, Sam Clutton died on 8th February. Anyone who met him will have personal memories of him; members who went on the Dallam conference in Brittany in 1983 will remember his trenchant contributions to that event - and his ability to read Mersenne attentively on a heaving car ferry in weather that had reduced every other human on board to a near-invalid state. On the evening before his death my friend and colleague Didier Grassin and I met him at his London club and were honoured to be the last of his friends to dine with him. Sam was in good health and spirits; the great organs of France figured largely in the conversation, and he seemed no less likely to pursue his interests as actively in the future as he always had done. He died the following morning at St.-Martin-in-the-Fields, where he had gone to see the new Walker organ. A formal tribute to him and to his work with organs will appear in a forthcoming BIOS Journal.

Stephen Bicknell

Archives and Artefacts

Relf Clark

At the beginning of February, in a two-day operation planned and directed by David Wickens, ten boxes of archival material were moved from Shrewsbury to the British Organ Archive, and two consoles, an a substantial amount of Hope-Jones pipework from St. Paul's Burton upon Trent, were moved to premises at Reading University.

By early evening on the first day, 5 February, the removal of the archival material had been accomplished, and with help from Christopher Kent and Relf Clark, the Whinfield from St. Peter's, Stockport and the Renn console from St. Saviour's Manchester had joined the Jordan console from Malmesbury Abbey. The three are now housed in somewhat cramped accommodation within the grounds of the Music Department of Reading University; the likely prospect of their being joined by further material renders the search for long-term accommodation even more urgent.

The following morning, in bitterly cold, snowy conditions, Messrs. Wickens and Clark arrived at Burton, where the removal of the Hope-Jones pipes from the cellar of St. Paul's to the Transit van hired for the occasion was supervised by Michael Thompson, the local organ builder. We are indebted to him and to his team of helpers for demonstrating that many hands can indeed make light work, and for ensuring that the Burton part of the operation was conducted in a most efficient and orderly manner. The return journey was uneventful, but delay caused by heavy traffic on the outskirts of Reading meant that the unloading of the pipes had to take place in darkness. With the assistance of Christopher Kent, however, they were secure in their new, temporary home - a laboratory and storeroom on the London Road - by 8.30 p.m. Moving the remaining pipes will involve at least one further journey.

We are grateful to the authorities at St. Paul's for kindly agreeing the loan of this material, and to Reading University for allowing us to store it on their premises. Particular thanks are due to the Vicar of St. Paul's, the Revd. David Morris, and Dr. Gary Alder of Reading University for their help with and interest in this project. The fate of the Burton instrument remains a matter for conjecture, but until an offer is made to re-house and restore it, the loan of the pipes presents a rare opportunity of obtaining, in warmth and relative comfort, precise information about Hope-Jones's "fearsome tonalities"

BIOS Research Papers

David C. Wickens

Council has approved the establishing of a series of publications under the title 'BIOS Research Papers'. The series will cover a variety of topics which, it is hoped, will be of use to those engaged in research, and perhaps will not be without interest to other connoisseurs. The format is simple: A4 photocopy, typescript and/or drawings, semi-stiff cover with appropriate illustration, slide binding - the object being to produce something practical and not too expensive. The First publication is a collection of pipe markings - over thirty pages illustrating scripts found on pipework by Father Smith, Snetzler, George England, G.P.England, Green, Flight & Robson, Ohrmann & Nutt, Elliot, Renn etc., assembled by David Wickens from the work of several researchers. A second collection will include the markings of several other builders, notably of the Harris-Byfield connection. Other publications planned include opus lists of organ builders, based on material in the Archive. Suggestions and offers from members will be gratefully received.

Copies of Pipe Markings may be obtained from David Wickens (address inside front cover). Please send a cheque for £5 (which includes postage, etc.) made out to BIOS.

From the Archive

David C. Wickens

The firm of Henry Bevington & Sons was a distinguished one, though it is perhaps fair to say that they were never more than second division organ builders. Their most celebrated work, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, 1854, (in the Allom case currently saved but homeless) lasted a mere fifteen years before being rebuilt by Hill.(1) Their small organs were more successful, and today command interest and respect when they appear as redundancies - as many have in recent months.

The elusive origins of the firm are presently being sought, and when some basic dates can be offered information will appear in the pages of the Reporter.

The only surviving part of the Bevington records is a Work Book covering the years 1905 to 1931 - surely the least interesting period in the firm's existence. It includes jobs numbered 1569 to 1657, with prestigious work at Gibraltar Cathedral (no. 1581) - the addition of a Choir Organ in 1906 to the 1880 Bryceson & Ellis instrument; Dunkeld Cathedral (no. 1596) - a small 2-manual organ opened on 16th October 1908; the Scottish National Church, Crown Court, Westminster - a (by now) rare 3-manual instrument, in 1909; St. Laurence, Winslow - the last new 3-manual organ, in 1911; alterations at St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, to the organ (no. 1563) built in 1903. There are several jobs in Ireland and the West Indies, with occasional excursions to other overseas locations - India, South Africa, Egypt, Singapore, Canada, New Zealand, Nigeria, etc.

The firm's connection with Ireland goes back at least to 1846 when Bevington built an organ for Cashel R.C. Cathedral. The Work Book details contracts on a clutch of Bevington organs in Kilkenny during 1906 and 1907: St. Canice's Cathedral, the organ built for the Industrial Exhibition, Dublin, in 1853,(2) extensively altered, modernised, re-scaled, revoiced, etc.; St. Mary's Cathedral (old no.696, dating from c.1865), with similar treatment; St. Canice's R.C. Church (old no.945, dating from 1871), cleaning and some alterations; the Presentation Convent, the addition of an R.C.O. pedalboard.

It is the occasional references to earlier work which help to make the Work Book more interesting than might be expected. Bishopsgate Chapel, for instance, was provided with an organ by Bevington in 1855, rebuilt by the firm in 1898; the Work Book shows that it was cleaned in 1906, and a further reference in 1914 is followed by a note that war was declared after the order for another cleaning was received.

There is a pre-occupation with wind supply discernable in the pages, including, even, a neat drawing of the blowing apparatus for Port Said Church. There are also one or two critical comments, such as that for Battersea Trinity Presbyterian Mission Church: "Swell shutters were fitted and regulated in error. Note the bellows were wholly stripped and re-leathered the leather being found all soddened and soft owing to the action of the steam from the coppers in the cellars".

There is evidence of some tonal peculiarities: a Bell Principal (altered in pencil to Geigen), and some flue Cor Anglais registers, of metal (sometimes 'spotted'). Wind pressures are usually given, and sometimes information (minimal) about scaling.

The handwriting becomes shaky and some entries seem to be retrospective, until a fresh young hand takes over. The final entry, job no. 1653, is for Sayers Common Church, Hassocks, Sussex: to complete a 2-manual organ with pedals (no.4; i.e. a standard type), erected 22nd August, 1931.

(1) See Nicholas Thistlethwaite *The Making of the Victorian Organ* pp.257-8 for comment.

(2) Hopkins & Rimbault *The Organ* (1877) p.617.

Note: the British Organ Archive has moved within the Birmingham Central Library to a new home on the fifth floor of the building; it is now open only by appointment with the Archivist (address and telephone number inside the front cover of this Reporter)

Quiz

I'm told that the quiz caused sleepless nights and matrimonial upsets. Three replies were particularly good, scoring over 40 out of 52 questions. These were from D. A. O'Connor, T. M. N. Whitehall, and (surprise, surprise) B. B. Edmonds. One entrant was even able to offer some corrections to the questions, as indicated below. Prizes will shortly be dispatched to all three. In the meantime here are the answers:-

1. Who said, or is reputed to have said ...

"It may look like the devil, but it will speak like an angel"? - **Father Smith**; "I said your Diapasons, Willis, not your damned Gambas!"? - **W. T. Best** (at the Albert Hall); "I'll have thee down tonight: thou shalt buzz no more."? - **Jonathan Martin** (at York Minster); "You may put them there, but I shall never play on them"? - **Samuel Spofforth** (at Lichfield Cathedral); "My dear sir; I have never in my life played upon a grid-iron"? - **Sir George Smart**; "If I thought Willis was right I would shut up shop immediately"? - **T. C. Lewis**; "He run over te key like one cat, he vil not give my piphes room for to shpeak"? - **Snetzler** (at Halifax).

2. Where might you have found ...

A Time Stop and Echo Stop? - **St. Patrick's Cathedral Dublin** in 1697 (H&R 1877 p.612); Dermogloste, Conoclyte, Euphone and Terpom&le? - **Beauvais Cathedral** (by Hamel); An Omphiangelon? - **St. Martin's Scarborough** (by Harrison); A pianissimo that was "simply astounding"? - **Gloucester Cathedral** (by Willis).

3. Whose house organ ...

Is now in The Parr Hall, Warrington? - **John T. Hopwood** (by Cavaille-Coll); Had a divided Pedal Organ allowing different registrations bass and treble (which features in compositions associated with it)? - **Jehan Alain's father Albert**; Was winded by a (live) donkey engine? - **Dr. L. G. Hayne**; Occupied a wooden 'chalet' in the garden of a house in Leeds? - **T. S. Kennedy** (the Schulze now at Armlay); Was rebuilt in Fort William? - **Nathaniel Holmes** (by Bryceson); Was built to a stop-list prepared by Handel? - **Jennens** (the librettist of The Messiah).

4. Where did these organs go to ...

The Willis from the 1851 Exhibition? - **Winchester Cathedral**; The Schulze from the 1851 Exhibition? - **Northampton Corn Exchange** then to the **Town Hall**; The Gray & Davison from the 1851 Exhibition? - **St. Anne's Limehouse**; The Walker from the 1862 Exhibition? - **The Crystal Palace, Oporto, Portugal** (No-one got this one; I have seen this stated in print somewhere, though I don't know where. The move is substantiated in the Walker records, but is not indexed as such); The Bevington from the 1862 Exhibition? - **Isenhurst Manor** then the **Victoria Hall, Ealing**; The Mitchell & Thynne from the 1885 Exhibition? - **Tewkesbury Abbey**.

5. Which organist ...

Had a staircase built through a mediaeval chapel so that he could come and go from the organ loft unobserved? - **Samuel Sebastian Wesley** (at Winchester Cathedral); Died in the middle of an improvisation leaving a pedal note sounding? (In fact I should have said 'in the middle of a recital - he collapsed just before starting the improvisation) - **Louis Vierne** (at Notre Dame de Paris); Secured a new appointment by placing lead weights on the keys? - **Herschel** (at Halifax) Adopted a simplification system? - **Vogler**; Prepared working drawings for the organ in Leeds Town Hall? - **Henry Smart** (Sparks's contribution was limited to the tonal side).

6. Who composed ...

A piece called Bombardeo-Carillon for four feet on one pedalboard - of which an American organist reported that he had started to play it with a lady pupil but had had to abandon it because he didn't know her well enough? - **Charles-Valentin Alkan** (there is a copy in the Central Music Library, Westminster, and I hope that someone might play it at a future BIOS conference!); A piece that blew all the fuses at the Festival Hall? - **Ligeti** (Volumina); In a "harsh and disgusting" manner? - **Roseingrave** (according to Burney); "As Strephon the young with Aurelia the fair" and other songs, but is better known as an organ builder? - **Renatus Harris**

7. Which organ burnt ...

Because a famous inventor dropped a candle? - **St.Eustache, Paris** (the inventor being C.S.Barker of the eponymous lever); Once on completion in 1873 and again in 1981? - I should have said 1980, not 1981, the instrument meant being the **Alexandra Palace**; In England in 1937, though a near identical twin survives in a church in Paris? - **The Albert Hall, Sheffield** (the twin being in the basilica of Sacré-Cœur in Paris; built for a house in Biarritz, it had a near identical specification and appears to have been built from the same working drawings, a very unusual feat for a large four manual organ!).

8. Where would you now find ...

An organ from Lichfield Cathedral? - **Armitage** (but I would have accepted Tamworth); An organ from Llandaff Cathedral? - **Usk**; An organ from Salisbury Cathedral? - **St. Thomas', Salisbury**; An organ from York Minster? - **St. Thomas Radcliffe, Manchester**; An organ from the Chapel Royal, St. James's? - **Crick** or **St. Dunstan's Bellingham**; An organ from Preston Public Hall? - **All Souls, Haley Hill, Halifax**; An organ from Hunstanton Hall? - **Smithfield, Virginia, USA**.

9. Who invented ...

The Keraulophon? - **Gray & Davison**; The Courcellina? - **John Courcelle**; The Excelsior d'Amour? **Gildersleeve**; The Po'ikilorgue? - **Cavaillé-Coll** (not Grenié, who invented the Orgue Expressif); The Vocation? - **J. Baillie Hamilton**; The Pyramidon? - **Ousley**; The pneumatic puff? - **Joseph Booth**.

10. Who ...

... So loved the organ at St. Sepulchre's Holborn that he forbade anyone else to tune it, could not bear to tune another organ the same day (as he could not bear "to hear any reed work after it"), hoped to be buried as near to it as possible, and indeed was interred in the south-western part of the churchyard? - **John Byfield the Elder** (according to the Christian Remembrancer); ... Wrote: 'meanwhile, my brother, who was a clever quick tuner, again went over the trebles of the reeds, and everything was as trim as trim could be.' - **Henry Willis** (of the success of his own instrument at the Great Exhibition, 1851); ... Felt so excited on first hearing an organ by Schulze that he "had two or three times to leave the church in the most urgent state"? - **EJ.Hopkins** (by his own account).

Dear Sir...

Dear Sir,

Having read the recent account of events at Northleach in Reporter Vol.14 No.1, certain matters require clarification. Where writers of paragraphs such as these where angels fear to tread, fact should first be established from fiction and the organ in question visited - hearsay is not sufficient evidence to judge organ work of any sort. In fact, this instrument retains the same number of manual mechanical drawstops as it always had together with the associated composition action. Certainly a reed unit has been added but not at the expense of any existing pipework. Furthermore, my experience of similar situations show that this type of addition carried out today is likely to be more compatible with the remainder of the instrument than a vulgar-fraction register added in the 1960s. In any case, the terms of reference (no doubt approved by the D.A.C.) would have been carefully followed and had the organ builders refused to carry out the work, undoubtedly others more willing would have been found.

Obviously there are instruments around where scrupulous preservation is important and desirable, however there are many instances where improvements can quite legitimately be made and cannot be wrong providing the end result is musical, otherwise there is a danger of the organ trade stagnating and not progressing at all. I hold posts at two Churches both of which have organs and cases originating in the 18th century and have been much altered since, both are outstanding musical instruments in their present form and any attempt at reversing the passage of time would without

doubt be regression of the worst possible type, bearing in mind the job they have to do. If the Society now has an aim of preventing alteration to any organ in the land, I fear that it will lose the ability to assist in the preservation of significant historic instruments through crying wolf too often.

L. E. Paul
[REDACTED]

The Editor replies:

I am grateful to Mr. Paul for pointing out that only some, not all, of the drawstop action at Northleach is now electric, and I greatly regret this factual error. I should also point out that Northleach is in Gloucestershire, not in Oxfordshire as I stated.

I have also received two personal letters about Northleach, and if I may paraphrase them in a few words, one agreed with my views and the other did not.

The remarks that follow are personal and do not necessarily reflect BIOS policy. I agree with Mr. Paul that there are occasions when improvements can be made to an organ, but at the same time one must be conscious that 'improvements' have destroyed more historic organs than any other single cause, and the almost total loss of the work of Father Smith and Renuus Harris - the two most cherished figures in British Organ History - is due almost entirely to well-meaning 'improvements'. The musical result of any change is an important factor - but it can only be judged subjectively; there is no right and wrong here. Also important is the technical viability of any proposed change. My own opinion is that to add electric action to an existing all-mechanical organ, however conscientiously done, is misguided. In the case of the Northleach organ, which I knew quite well before the recent work on account of family connections with the church, I firmly believe that the changes actually made were not necessary, for there were several other routes of possible change that would have answered supposed musical shortcomings while showing better respect to a perfectly good and adequate organ that was in good condition. Mr. Paul fears that organ building is in danger of stagnation if too many organs are preserved; my fear is that it is now stagnant because of lack of respect towards organs in general, especially historic ones, both inside and outside the craft. I fear that work of the kind carried out at Northleach (though I know that the company involved will have done the work requested of them to a good standard) leaves many consultants an opportunity to add to their armoury of criticisms of the British organ scene, and to continue to buy organs from overseas. I share Mr. Paul's belief that reversionary restoration is not always the best course of action: see, for example, the effects of work at Haarlem in 1960 to bear this out. I believe that BIOS, as a group aiming to preserve historic organs, must by its nature take a strong line on any given question of conservation or restoration, and I believe that if anything the society ought to err on the side of caution - in other words preserving in preference to altering.

Stephen Bicknell

Redundant Organs

Hertfordshire

Gray & Davison no date; to present location c 1890
Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4. + 2 spares Sw 8.8.4.8.(Cpn) Ped 16.
Action Mechanical
Dimensions Not received

Hampshire

Anon, late 18th century
Disposition Man 8.8.4.2.II. No Pedals Compass GG short to e3
Action Mechanical
Casework Mahogany, 3-tower, withinlaid woods; giltdummy display
Dimensions h 9' 5", w 4' 11", d 2' 11"

Suffolk

Forster & Andrews 1878

Disposition Man 8.8.8.4.8. (Gamba replacing reed?) Ped 16.

Action Mechanical

Casework Piperack

Dimensions h 14', w 10', d 4'

Greater London

Brindley 1873

Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4.4.3.2.spare

Sw 16.8.8.4.III.8.8.spare

Ch keyboard only

Ped 16.16.

Action Mechanical

Casework No information

Dimensions Not given

Other organs currently available:

Worcestershire 2m Compton extension: 2 units, diapason and stopped flute

Merseyside 1m Rushworth & Dreaper, tubular pneumatic, 5 stops, oak case

h 14' 6", w 10' 3", d 6' 10"

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

Notes and Queries

Bernard Edmonds

"I'm sorry that the organ kicked up such a row" said the organist. "I ought to have warned you. There are so many notes off on the various stops that I have to have them all out, to avoid gaps". I had just officiated at Mattins in one of a group of Wiltshire parishes, getting our 1957 summer holiday by doing a locum.

The vicar had warned me that I would have to give everything out, even the creed and Lord's prayer. I expressed mild surprise, feeling that after 300 years the service ought to be familiar. "Well" he said, "if you don't, nobody will join in!". I wondered afterwards if this was anything to do with the fact that around those parts there had been riots and bloodshed when the first English prayer book had been introduced in 1549. "We will have the Mass in Latin, as before!"

I was at a Rural Deanery Chapter in the eastern counties, when the 'Series' revised services were being introduced, and a questionnaire from the Bishop asked who was doing which. The incumbent of a very feudal parish (upholstered armchairs in the side chapel for the Manor party) said "good gracious, my lot hasn't got used to 1662 yet!". However, revenons á nos orgues.

The instrument with so many gaps turned out to be an 1886 Anneessens, and amongst its handful of stops was a Swell reed labelled 'Storm 8ft.' (Yes, honest Injun!) The organ was in a very poor state owing to an extremely damp situation, and a few years later was put to death. Anyway, the congregation, including a sprinkling of retired Services top-brass, competed very successfully with the organ.

Concerning the Argents of Colchester.(1) I surmised that the cessation of tuning entries in 1829 perhaps indicated the death of Humphrey junior. David Wickens tells me that there is an entry for him as organ tuner, Green Lane, Cambridge, in Pigot's 1840 Directory. The organ mentioned as in Rochester Cathedral is now in the possession of Richard Bibby. With some excitement I recently found an organ bearing the painted inscription 'Argent Colchester fecit' in the church at Tilbury-juxta-Clare.(2) However I doubt whether there is very much Argent in it now beyond the section of the case bearing the label. It was made up from various parts by one Dan de Quincy, I understand, and it has suffered attacks by vandals.

Mention of organ builder Jehu in the last N.& Q. reminds me of an organ bearing his name which I met years ago in Reading. The fourth manual controlled two extended ranks concealed on the rood-screen, tuba 16-8-4 and harmonic flute 8-4. The pipes of the top octave of the flute were inserted into the ends of the action tubes. In another job (not his) the 15th had been replaced by a harmonic flute, for which there was no room, so the whole lot was tubed away to the bass end of the case. The worst botch I ever encountered, on which I had to report - once I had made my way in through an absolute spider's web of action wiring going hither and thither - contained a quantity of the larger pipes laid flat, several even on the passage boards, connected to the soundboard by ordinary garden hosepipe. I gather that this gentleman, who traded under his own name as well as under another, had done the same elsewhere, and created havoc around the home counties. His stops were not always what they were labelled, and some were not even complete. Churches and chapels should always have jobs inspected before they settle the account, for there are still some pretty awful cowboys around, and sometimes no-one is consulted until too late.

Mrs. Clement is seeking for information about her great-grandfather, Julian Moses Gillingham, who was an organ builder. He is thought to have been with Gray & Davison, and is known to have worked on the Portsmouth Guildhall organ, which would fit in, as they built it in 1887-90. If you can give any information, please get in touch with her.(3)

Other enquiries include E.J.Trendell of Abingdon, fl. 1876; Russell & Cranston of Ringwood (Wareham c. 1830); Edwin Toft, York Road, Brighton (Ditchling 1890); R.Kerman of Bridgewater (Ebenezer, Bristol, 1850); Thomas Warboys of Putney. The last is the only one I have come across, at Guilden Morden in 1952, before it was superceded. The flowers in church that week were being done by a Mrs. Worboys, so perhaps there had been a local connection to explain Putney's outing to the wilds of rural Cambridgeshire. The organ was of uncertain age, seeming to have characteristics of different dates in the last century, so I suspect it was a rebuild by T.W.; I do not know his date.

Henry Wedlake, bom in 1826, having started working as a clerk to a solicitor, gave that up and apprenticed himself to John Gray. Henry Willis was a fellow apprentice, and Wedlake tells us that the two of them, still apprentices, erected a small 3-stop organ, which Willis had made, in Crosby Hall.(4) Gray's nephew was Mitchell, of Groves and Mitchell, and to them Wedlake went, becoming in due course their foreman. He then went to Gray & Davison, and after a short period with Boosey & Evans in their reed organ business he set up for himself in 1859 (5) at 8 Berkeley Road, Regents Park - an address which later housed Casson's Positive Organ Company.

His first job was St. Nicholas, Strood, which incorporated his device for several combinations from each combination pedal. The last record I have of him is renovation at St. Swithun, London Stone, in 1906. He died in 1909.(6) His premises suffered a serious fire in 1890. His assistant was his daughter Polly, this fact apparently causing occasional embarrassing moments with the clergy! (7) He collaborated with Kitsell, the pipemaker, whose zinc pipes were so widely used, in research into improvements in metal pipework, leading to Patent 2493 of 1864. He worked out a number of mechanisms, including his "Eclipse" pneumatic action, which gained him a silver medal at the 185 Inventions Exhibition. This organ, by the way, went to Dr. Bamardo's Edinburgh Castle Mission in Limehouse,(8) and was ultimately destroyed in the Blitz, though some pipework was a rescued and used in various organs. Its large pedal pipes were supplied by a 'double-seated self adjusting valve' of ingenious simplicity.(9) Other inventions included a sliderless soundboard, a double touch action, and a Stringendo coupler, which was a Swell to Great coupler which 'plucked' the Swell action. Surely a misnomer! A stringendo coupler would need to act on the organist, not the organ. The

blurb said that it was intended to imitate the pizzicato of strings, so evidently someone hastened to a conclusion (more stringendo?).

In 1863 he constructed a pneumatic house organ for H. Alers Hankey of Queen Anne Mansions. This had four 61-note manuals, 32-note pedals, 24 couplers, and 65 speaking stops including 12 on the pedals with 32ft open wood and contra bombarde. Double touch was applied; the 'stringendo' coupler; a carillon, down to tenor c; a coupler bringing the pedal organ on to the choir manual from tenor c up; and two melody couplers - swell to pedals octave, and swell to pedals superoctave. Much of the scaling and voicing was done by George Willis,⁽¹⁰⁾ and Cavaille-Coll seems to have given the instrument his approval.

In 1896 Wedlake constructed a large barrel-and-finger Orchestration, popularly called a miniature Apollonicon. The barrel mechanism was designed by Leopold Mukle, and the barrels were turned by his 'Atmospheric Propeller', a kind of windmill looking like an anemometer, driven by the organ wind, which was raised hydraulically from the street mains. This was made for J.H.van Ryn, a mining executive from South Africa.⁽¹¹⁾ Wedlake's advertisement in the 1902 edition of Hinton quotes Mukle's testimonial to the musical side - "In all my long and varied experience of orchestration work I can safely say it is the most wonderful instrument I have seen or heard". No-one seems to know what happened to it after the death of van Ryn, nor has the Hankey organ been traced.

A number of his organs survive in rebuilt form. I discovered one some years ago at Bovey Tracey. This was a reduced form of his 4-manual with pneumatic lever and extra top octave to the Swell, built for Prof. Russell Lockner in Lancaster Road, London. Hele installed it here in 1890 as a 3-manual, though the announcement in Musical Opinion ⁽¹²⁾ says nothing of its origin. It has since shrunk again. Another 4-manual was built in St. Jude Kensington.

A variation of the coupler manual theme was seen at Butterton in Staffordshire. It had originally been built by 'Hill & Co, London, Builders to Her Majesty, 1846' and came here in 1898 as a Diamond Jubilee memorial. Feminism was apparently present even then, for the inscription includes the name of the 'Chairman of Committee'. The upper manual controls the seemingly original handful of stops, 8.8.4.4.2, plus the usual gamba and dulciana substitutions, and is permanently coupled to the pedals. The lower manual plays the upper in unison and octave pitch by a permanent coupler; a useful adaptation of what seems to have been enlarged at one time into a two manual. Time to have explored it fully might have elucidated some of its history. It has a period case.

An unusual organ is to be found at Boughton in Norfolk. Within a pleasing coloured case is a sliding keyboard controlling 3 octaves from gamut G up, with a complete chorus 16.8.8.4.3.2. Their organ builder attributed it to Walker, but no date is apparent. It is excellent within its obvious limitations, and a most unexpected approach to the small organ problem.

I wandered into a church which had some putative Fr. Smith pipes. A local inhabitant said that the organ was very old and had been "played on by Bach, I believe". It makes a change, anyway!

- (1) BIOS Reporter Vol.6 No.3, p.10; No.4, p.10
- (2) Said to be relics of the Shelland Organ
- (3) 29 Kings Road, Benfleet, Essex S7 1JP. Tel: 0268 752016
- (4) Organist & Choirmaster 1/1903 p.227
- (5) Musical Opinion 6/1885; Organist & Choirmaster 6/1894; advertisements.
- (6) Obituary, Musical Opinion 4/1909
- (7) Musical Opinion 8/1941 p.501
- (8) Musical Opinion 5/1886 p.383
- (9) Hinton Organ Construction 3rd edition p. 122. Also other editions.
- (10) Organist & Choirmaster 1/1903 p.277. Also more about George Willis.
- (11) The Engineer 25/12.1896. Ord Hume Barrel Organs p. 156
- (12) 3/1890 p.267

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 the organ in St. Michael's Blackheath Park. The history of this instrument is discussed in BIOS Reporter Vol.13 No.2 p.10.