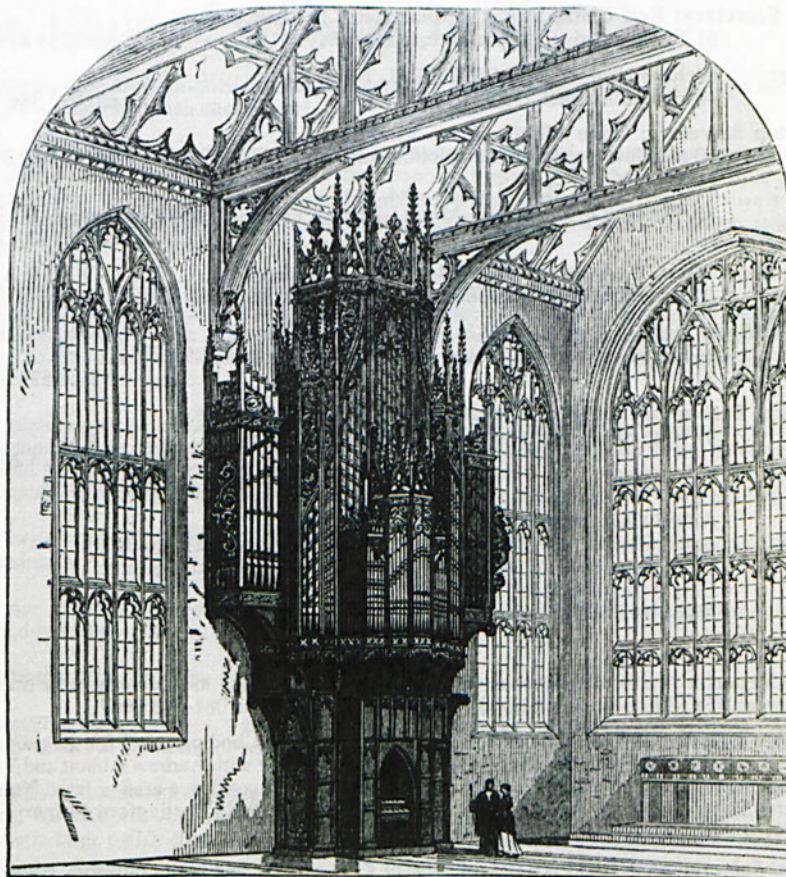


BIOS REPORTER



NEW ORGAN FOR ST. MARY'S CHURCH, NOTTINGHAM.

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BIOS

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



Our opening item is reprinted from **Reframing the Questions - A guide to the reordering of existing churches and the building of new**, prepared by Derek L.S. Phillips RIBA FASI and Commissioned by The Bishop's Council of the Diocese of Rochester. It is reprinted here by kind permission of the Diocesan Secretary.

Is the Pipe Organ the Right Instrument for Church Worship today?

For too long we have assumed that the pipe organ - a Victorian innovation - is the right instrument for today's worship in parish church [sic].

In the past very little thought has been given to placing the pipe organ in the best acoustic position. It was usually stuck away in a corner of the chancel, drowning the choir and of little help to the congregation. Often the pipework ruins the architecture, as it does at Wrotham, a lovely old church where the organ case dominates the chancel, or as at Istead Rise, a modern church, it looks like a huge box.

Pipe organs are increasingly expensive to maintain, needing a major overhaul every 20 years. They take up much needed space and as most churches are only heated for Sunday worship extreme variations of temperature seriously affect the tuning, particularly of reed stops. The very few good organ builders are inordinately expensive and most small firms produce poor work which rarely lasts for more than a few years.

New pipe organs of any size are very expensive - beyond the finances of most churches. In most cases there is little variety in the tone, a small registration of stops and usually the borrowed principle of pipes is adopted, as at Collier Street, where the organ is also positioned in the wrong place acoustically and is considered hopelessly inadequate by organist, clergy and congregation.

Pipe organs can be bought from redundant churches, but they are often restricted and poorly maintained.

The pipe organ is non-rhythmic - fine for smooth, flowing tunes but unsuitable for much modern music demanding more interesting rhythms.

Alternatives to the Pipe Organ

In smaller ancient churches, a good piano would be far more useful than a pipe organ. A piano can also be subject to variations of heat and cold, but a small heater can help.

Advances in the modern computer organ (or electronic organ is often perjoratively called) [sic] make it ideal for modern worship. Reliability and tone make these modern instruments increasingly popular in large parish churches and Cathedrals, including our own Cathedral here in Rochester.

Speakers can be positioned for the best acoustics, and the organs take up very little space.

Maintenance of these instruments is virtually nil. They do not need tuning and, owing to modern computer technology, they are reliable. There is a difference in tone between a pipe organ and a computer organ, though with good acoustics it is often difficult to spot.

The computer organ stands alone as an instrument well suited for worship today, offering a very wide variety of tone and colour at a price most churches can afford.

Amongst those that have proved their worth are: Copeman Hart, Allen, Ahlborn, Wyvem, Makin. Most firms will demonstrate an instrument in situ and supply models to suit any church.

The Electric Piano is growing in popularity. Some, notably Rowlands, Yamaha, Korg, are very fine sounding, take up little space, have no maintenance problems and are not subject to variations of temperature. As a bonus most models now have a convincing harpsichord.

The use of other instruments - flute, violin, trumpet - is also growing. A small church orchestra can lead the combination of instruments by: Music in Worship Trust, [REDACTED].

Some instruments are effective when preparing for worship and at moments within worship. A solo trumpet can steadily enhance a hymn tune.

Music is one of God's great gifts to us. Careful thought, preparation and imagination greatly enhance its use in worship.

Norman Warren, Archdeacon of Rochester

Editorial

You will have read through the article printed above with a growing sense of dismay. The reasons for reproducing it here are obvious enough. This Editorial will provide some additional comment.

There is indeed an argument to be pursued about what instrument or instruments are right for church worship - and this was as much true yesterday as it is today. All of us understand that there are things to be said against the pipe organ, as well as things to be said for it. All of us connected with church music - whether we are organists, organ historians, consultants, builders or enthusiasts, must encourage and welcome any serious and objective examination of these matters.

The Archdeacon of Rochester has not contributed in an objective way to this argument. Indeed, so far is his piece from being objective and so lacking is it in factual analysis that it will do the cause he espouses a great deal of harm.

On matters of fact:- The pipe organ is not "a Victorian innovation". Pipe organs are not "increasingly expensive to maintain". Pipe organs do not necessarily need "major overhaul every 20 years". Good organ builders are not "inordinately expensive", charging less per hour for their work than garage mechanics and plumbers. Most small firms do not "produce poor work which rarely lasts more than a few years." New organs are no longer usually unit organs. The pipe organ is not "non-rhythmic" (and if this criticism is valid it applies equally to electronics).

There follows an uncritical eulogy of the computer organ, including the names of several manufacturers. If it was not for the fact that one has no doubts regarding the probity of gentlemen of the cloth, such as Archdeacon Warren, one would assume that this was a paid advertisement.

It is especially disappointing to note that by mentioning that "most firms will demonstrate an instrument in situ" the Archdeacon is opening the door to the high-pressure sales techniques employed by some companies.

Perhaps one should quote the Archdeacon's own words to him: "Music is one of God's great gifts to us. Careful thought, preparation and imagination greatly enhance its use in worship." Does what he has written bear this out? Or does it rather show us, both in its content and its writing, that there are those in the Church of England today who are quite happy to encourage not just the second best, but fifth best, sixth best, seventh best...

BIOS, along with other bodies associated with the Organ, will be pressing for this publication to be withdrawn from sale.

Conferences

Northampton 16th May 1992

Examining the Historic English Organ - Scaling, voicing, pipe forms and registration.

The latest in this extremely successful series of events, organised by Dominic Gwynn will look at organ pipes and their functions in the English organ. Full details accompany this issue of the Reporter.

Huddersfield - Annual Residential Conference - 27th July - 31st July 1992

Schulze and the Yorkshire Organ Builders

The 1992 residential conference, organised by David Wickens will look at an important regional school of organ building, examining the craftsmen and musicians associated with it. Visits will include Doncaster Parish Church and the workshops of the Conacher firm - a rare surviving 19th century organ factory. Accommodation at will be at Huddersfield Polytechnic. Full details will appear in due course.

Combined AGM and London Meeting - 17th October 1992

Full details will appear in due course.

Current Research

Dr. D.M.Ottaway is working on 20th century organ sonatas by British composers for a dissertation at Southampton University. He would be grateful for any information on such works, their performance and composition to be sent to him at [REDACTED].

From the Archive

David C. Wickens

Work on the comprehensive directory of British organ builders continues - as no doubt it will for many a year yet. There are myriads of uncertainties in the received chronicle of organ building history, not least in what, where and when particular organ builders flourished. A small fraction of these uncertainties can be solved with reference to contemporary records such as trade directories, census returns, baptismal, wedding and funeral records, rates books, etc.

Take Young, for example, - if only because the firm of Maley, Young and Oldknow and Alex. Young & Son have occasioned columns of correspondence in Musical Opinion in years past. A compilation of the M.Y.&O. correspondence and a list of organs by Bernard Edmonds has been deposited in the Archive. A different source has suggested that Maley, Young and Oldknow were one-time Bevington apprentices who in later years formed the partnership which flourished in the late 1870s and 1880s. The partners split up in the late 1880s, Maley moving to South Wales, Oldknow to Southampton and Jersey, and Young to Manchester - the latter being Alexander Young. This scenario does not stand up to scrutiny, Alex. Young having established himself in Manchester before even the establishment of Maley, Young and Oldknow.

The trade directories and census returns have helped to unravel this problem to some extent. For instance, the London directories for 1864 to 1879 show Edward B. Maley, organ builder, at 5 Werrington Street, Oakley Square, Somers Town; and Maley, Young & Oldknow, organ builders, at Kings Road from 1877 to 1887. Young appears in (e.g.) the 1882 directory: "Young, Robert - see Maley, Young & Oldknow". Edward B. Maley appears in the 1871 census living at 5a Werrington Street: organ builder, 37 years old, born in St. Pancras; with a wife, Mary A., one year older, born in Limehouse, a son, Edward W., aged 2, and a cousin, James, of no stated occupation, aged 41.

(Was this latter the J.Maley associated with South Wales?). Neither Robert Young nor Alfred Oldknow have known residential addresses, so they have not yet been found in the census.

Turning to Alexander Young, the Census has turned up a wealth of information. Here is a summary: Alexander Young, bom c.1809, Glamis, Forfarshire, Scotland; in 1841 he was living at 52 Caweil Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester, described as an organ builder (i.e. employed as such, probably by Samuel Renn); he had a daughter, Emma, bom c.1839, and a son, David, bom 1840, by Emma née Johnson, who was about ten years younger than Alexander and came from Bumage (now a suburb in South Manchester). Much of the 1851 census for Manchester has been lost, so that we have to move forward to subsequent censuses for further information. In 1861 we find the son, David F., now 20 years old, is a letterpress printer. There is no mention of the daughter, Emma, but there are younger children, including William, aged 10, who by 1871 is described as William A., organ tuner. By this time Alexander is an organ builder foreman. As William A. is reported as having worked for Edward Wadsworth before starting the family firm (see the obituary in Musical Opinion, Dec. 1917) it is reasonable to assume that this was for whom Alexander was foreman. William A. established the family firm in 1872, in Vine Street, Manchester. He was joined by his father the following year, and a move was made to Eldon Street in 1875. The firm is always referred to as Alex. Young & Son. There is clearly no connection with Maley, Young & Oldknow. The evidence of the instruments confirms this: the work of Alex. Young & Son is firmly rooted in the Renn-Jardine-Wadsworth line, with not the slightest hint of a Bevington background.

Dear Sir ...

Dear Sir,

May I, in the spirit of constructive argument, make a few observations about some of the remarks in the current BIOS Reporter? The Willis III rebuild of the organ in Southwark Cathedral took place in the early 50s, not 60s. I should not have regarded the addition of Nazard and Tierce to the Choir Organ as a "short-term gain in versatility", since they provided rather important tone colours not there previously. However, I have not heard or played the restored instrument so remain open to conviction. It is rather sad that the console could not be put into a better position - the present site was not Henry III's choice but was ordained by the powers that were.

I would take serious issue with the contention that modern capture systems necessarily mean that an old organ is never played in the way its builder intended. The problem lies with players who do not know the thinking behind older styles of instruments and who apply the same pseudo-classical registrational methods regardless. As a student in Bristol, I well remember Clifford Harker's superb psalm accompaniments, in which he illustrated the texts with the utmost subtlety and a seemingly inexhaustible range of tone colours. Most of this, of course, would have been done with hand registration. Sir John Sutton may have regretted the continual stop changes in 1847, but to quote him now fails to take account of the vastly different instruments and of the fact that cathedral choirs today have brought the art of Anglican chanting to a state of perfection which he could not possibly have envisaged. Nevertheless, the tendency in some places seems to be for the organist to restrict himself to neutral tone colours while the choir floats on top - capture systems notwithstanding! On a small point, Bristol Cathedral organ is Edwardian, not Victorian - there was a quite considerable change of sound in Walker's work around the turn of the century.

With regard to the Irish conference, the Snetzler at Hillsborough had been "sadly swamped" long before the last rebuild. Wells-Kennedy did a fine job for the period, although they would now do things differently. To say that Down Cathedral organ has been "perhaps excessively augmented" is hardly fair. Arthur Harrison reduced the number of speaking stops and the subsequent additions were carried out in a most economical fashion, allowing the instrument to fulfil the requirements made of it, which are probably more varied now than at any time since it was originally installed. It is a very fine and musical organ indeed, and rightly cherished by those who have it in their charge.

David Drinkell BA FRCO(CHM) ADCM ARCM
Organist and Master Of the Choristers, Belfast Cathedral

Dear Sir,

The 1889 Walker Organ at St. Mary Portsea

I was interested to read the comments of the writer from London in Reporter Vol.15 Nos. 3&4 (October 1991). The writer only refers to the key action being changed in the 1965 Walker rebuild. He does not mention that the fact that the action was changed from Barker pneumatic lever to the Great, Swell, Pedal and drawstops, and tracker to the Choir to electro-pneumatic, and that a balanced swell pedal was added. However, he does seem to criticise the use of the pistons, as a "modern playing aid". Surely the addition of the electro-pneumatic must therefore also be perceived as a modern playing aid too. The pistons were in fact added in 1965 not 1981. In 1981 three extra (making seven in all) were added to the Great, Swell, Pedals etc. not the Choir. Eight generals were added. Two channels were also introduced.

The organ was not designed to be a museum piece, and neither has it been treated as such. It is an absolute work horse, and it has to support as many as five hundred services and concerts each year, as well as many different organists. It would not be at all practical to expect organists of all standards to manage on an organ with no pistons, uneven action and a difficult swell pedal.

A measure of common sense must be employed, remembering that the instrument above all is there to accompany services and to be appreciated by the listener.

There is no suggestion that the builder would have intended for the Great Clarion Mixture to be used after the build up of reeds, and not before. This is up to the player, but the organ shows off well either way.

Before the BIOS visit to St. Marys there was an inspection of the organ during which time the inspecting persons dislodged many of the pipes, particularly the mixtures leaving a number out of their holes, though in position. Some pipes were even bent over.

After the BIOS visit there was damage to the Great Number 5 piston, which was actually pushed so hard that its internal collar had shattered.

If BIOS is to fulfil its aims and objectives, then surely it should start by being objective and realistic.

I felt the visit was enjoyable and well worth the time.

A.P.Yeates
[REDACTED]

New Publication

The Organs of Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Cirencester, from the XVth Century by [REDACTED] Roy Williamson. 143pp., published by the author and available from him at [REDACTED] at £11.00 plus £1.00 postage and packing in the UK (£18.00 or \$40.00 USA/Canada)

There are never lacking those who accuse an author who publishes his own work of vanity or self advertisement, but they would be completely wide of the mark in this instance. Here we have a modestly-produced companion to Mr. Williamson's previous work on the organs of Cheltenham, one that is again packed with information, the ease with which it is presented belying the considerable accomplishment of discovering and collating it. Some idea of the scale of the work involved can be gained from scrutiny of the impeccable lists of references given for each of the sixty-plus organs, most of which are to previously unexplored local journals and records. In addition, although the present book is of the same length as its predecessor, a rearranged style of page layout allows for greater information as well as improving its legibility.

The histories of the major organs - at Gloucester Cathedral, Tewkesbury Abbey and Cirencester Parish Church - have been discussed elsewhere in some detail, but in each instance Mr. Williamson has been able to find additional information from his local sources which clarify the development of the organs. Cirencester in particular epitomises the changes wrought by musical and ecclesiastical fashions: having started with (very probably) a Smith organ, this was changed by Green into a Harris one (tonally), by Gray & Davison into an incompleted 'Grand' German one, by Willis into a cathedral/concert one, and by 20th century builders into an eclectic one. All of this in at least five different locations in the church, and with a logarithmically-decreasing lapse of time between each intervention.

One of the great values of this book is that it puts such goings-on into perspective. To one's dismay, it also documents all too clearly how fiddling around affects every organ, howsoever small. It has been particularly disturbing for me to read in both books how the excellent earlier organs by John Nicholson have been destroyed or tonally subverted time and again. The loss in 1910 of the 1849/50 Shire Hall (Gloucester) organ, which Mr. Williamson rightly describes as "very complete and outstanding", was undoubtedly due to changing tastes at that time, but are we, with all our knowledge, actually any more discriminating? Even the smaller Nicholson organ (?c1841 and 1849) that escaped to Leicestershire recently is still continually threatened by organists unwilling to learn how to take advantage of a fine organ with a GG Great and a tenor C Swell ... Were these organs too subtle for their own good, like Green's? What has happened to our ears?

The neat line-drawings - one would have liked more, if more good cases could be found - also might provoke us to ask what happened to our eyes last century. Was the photograph of the Southgate Congregational Church, Gloucester, organ 'case' by Speechly (spelt thus - one of the very few slips to be found in the book) included as an awful warning? There is also a question over the dates of Roger Yates's organ building activities - a pity, for he was an excellent craftsman who always produced organs of musical integrity, and who played an important part in keeping a classical spirit alive in the darkest days. The 'New Grove' Organ off-print supplies the remarkable answer: he formed his own business in 1927 and died (still working) in 1975.

An enterprise such as this book fulfils all the aims of BIOS at once, particularly when it is accompanied by Mr. Williamson's restless activity in preserving and restoring worthwhile instruments. Let us encourage him to continue by buying what he has so ably produced and then by collectively following his example!

Martin Renshaw

Redundant Organs

Wiltshire

J. Clark (Bath) 1856; Sweetland 1888

Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4.4.3.2.8. Sw 16.8.8.4.2.III.8.8.
Ch 8.8.4.2.8.8. Ped 16.16.8. and extensions

Action Electro-pneumatic (to original chests); Choir tubular pneumatic.

Casework 1856; described as 'gracious'.

Dimensions h 16', w 12' 6", d 18'

West Yorkshire

Forster & Andrews 1871

Disposition Man 8.8.8.8A4.2. Ped 16.

Action Mechanical (unplayable at present)

Casework Not described. Pipework enclosed, except Open and Pedal stop.

Dimensions h ? 14', w 8' 9", d 4' 7" (+2' 6" console)

Leicestershire

J.W.Walker 1874 (unaltered)

Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4.4.2. Sw 8.8.4.8. Ped 16.

Action Mechanical (unplayable at present)

Casework Not described. Console at side.

Dimensions h 13' 7", w 13' 6", (+ 11" console), d 6' 1"

Dorset

Oldknow (London) 1891; alterations Osmond 1970

Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4.Naz.2. Sw 8.8.4.2.8. Ped 16.

Action Mechanical

Casework Front only

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

Oxfordshire

Anon. 1892 (incorporating earlier material)

Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4.4.2. Sw 8.8.8.4.2.8. Ped 16.

Action Mechanical (described as 'crudely reconstructed')

Casework No information

Dimensions h 16-17', w 8', d 7' 6" (including console)

Cleveland

Harrison & Harrison 1899; F.D.Ward (Middlesborough) 1922

Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4.4.8. Sw 16.8.8.8.4.8. Ped 16.

Action Mechanical

Casework Pipe-rack

Dimensions h 22' 6", w 10' 10", d 10' 2"

Worcestershire

J. Nicholson 1907

2 manual - no details yet, but said to be unaltered and of good quality.

Nottinghamshire St. Mary Magdalene, Hucknall

Church & Co., 1976

Disposition Gt 8.8.4.2.IV-V.8. Sw 8.8.4.4.2.Lari.III.16.8. Ped 16.8.8.4.III.16

Action Mechanical key action, electric stop action

Casework Free-standing case - illustrated in Rowntree & Brennan, The Classical Organ in Britain, Vol.2, pp.76 & 147.

Dimensions h 20' 3", w 12' 2", d 7' 3" (including console)

Redundant because of re-ordering of church.

Derbyshire

Atkins 1907

Disposition Gt 8.8.8.4.4. Sw 8.8.8.8.4.2.8.8. Ped 16.8.

Action Mechanical (pedals pneumatic)

Casework Pine piperack, half height panelled sides

Dimensions h 13' 10", w 11', d 8' 7" (+1' 0" for console)

For further information and contact addresses, please write to the Redundancies Officer, c/o The Secretary (address inside front cover)

Notes and Queries

Bernard Edmonds

Alas for enlightenment! I referred to Wedlake's organ for Alers Hankey as having two melody couplers, swell to pedals octave and superoctave.(1) Now it turns out, from the complete specification and description just discovered,(2) that these were inserted at the request of Augustus Tamplin (who 'suggested and named' the stringendo coupler!) in order to play the tenor c carillon at two pitches on the pedals 'thus making a very beautiful combination with the pipe stops'. There were also 'Concert Grand' and 'Octave Grand' pedal stops on the pedals controlling 44 notes of piano-style strings, but these were not completed when the organ was destroyed by fire in 1875. Much of the instrument was specified by Tamplin with an eye on orchestral effects, including a 16ft 'contra bass clarinet' especially for his selection from Meyerbeer's 'Robert the Devil'. There is interesting matter about the construction and operation; and more still in a letter which Wedlake wrote about his double touch, suggested by Tamplin and first carried out on an Evans harmonium.(3)

An old friend has sent me this reference from the Bodleian which I pass on to anyone who can use it. One Henry Crosswell between 1872 and 1886 made 500 visits to churches and chapels in the London area, recording his impressions of hymn-singing and other music, and details of all the organs. His 2-volume diary has been reproduced in typescript, the reference being MSS Eng. Mise. C/402/1-2.

I recently visited Yaxley (the Suffolk one) enticed by the Building News for 1872,(4) where one is told that the organ was 'designed on the same principles as, and is in some respects a reproduction of the organ, believed to be unique, at Old Radnor'. Psalm 135 v.16 B.

We hear a lot about the electronic organ. Now it appears that there once was a gas organ. This appeared at the Inventions Exhibition of 1885, and the blurb tells us that it was invented by the late Frederic Kastner, 'known to the scientific world as the originator of the "theory of vibrations"'. (Pause for a fruitless run through the Kastners in Britannica, but I ran him to ground in Grove.) It was described as a series of 37 glass tubes 'some of which are nearly eleven feet high'. In each of them is a quantity of gas burners, varying from five to sixteen or more, placed so that they nearly reach one third of the height of the tube, the gas supply to each tube's quota being controlled from the keyboard. When the fingers of flame from the burners splay outwards, the sound is produced; when they close 'the sound ceases, and the numerous blue jets become a silent white flame. 'Le Pyrophone; Flammes Chantantes' was yet another of the many attempts to find a substitute for pipes. It seems to have made its début with 'the great orchestra' at Baden Baden, where it 'played a part (amongst other morceaux) in the "Danse des Sylphes" of Berlioz.' And after that?

Freeman's notebook, August 1902, contains an entry for Felday Church in Surrey. This I cannot locate; Pevsner is silent, Crockford is mute. The specification is surely T.C.Lewis; Great 6, Swell 5 (all 8s!), spotted metal front, typical Lewis stops. AF must have miscopied his rough notes. Any clues?

In the one-manual part-enclosed organ at Appleton Roebuck appears the name of the soundboard hand, F.C.Sinken. The organ is 'vaguely Conacher', says the enquirer, seeking information. What organ-builder was awarded 'The only Medal for English Harmonium at the Paris and Dublin Exhibitions? And can anyone give information about a (North London?) family of organ-builders named Harper? Descendants enquire. (There were Brighton and Newmarket firms, connection unknown).

A mixed bag of snippet answers. The last Pilcher of whom I have any note was Charles E. who died aged in 72 in 1944. He had premises in Montem Street, Finsbury Park, and was a maker of organ builders' supplies, as well as doing some organ building. The business then ceased. T.C.Lewis was also a bell-founder at one time, and bells by him were installed at St; Andrew, Wells Street; Fen Ditton near Cambridge; and a peal of six at Shipboume, near Rochester. More, probably, but I have no note. The Willis nameplate with the latin motto "Per aures ad animam" (Through the ears to the soul) was introduced in 1902, and indicates Henry the second. Originally Willis used a brass plate; in 1865 he ceased to use it, on the grounds that anyone ought to recognise a Willis; from about 1890

an ivory plate was used.

In 1926 a tremulant was added to the organ at Emmanuel, West Hampstead. The plate recording the gift is inscribed fittingly "And they sang as it were a new song before the Lamb"! A startling inscription recorded work on the organ in 1939 at Earls Barton - someone must have been very quick off the mark - as a memorial to "The peace of 1938. Peace in our time". Munich! It was not on view when I last went there. Elliston (p678) reports an experiment by Church Saxby with Swell Mixture and Tremulant coupled to full Great, who suggests placing mixtures over their own tremulant. 'One immediately obtains that sparkle and feeling of buoyancy that the orchestra has and the organ lacks'. This would have been in the 'twenties. Well, well.

Corrections, with apologies.(5) Fr. Twisaday's Ley organ went to St. Silas, Kentish Town - not Pentonville. T.W. & W.Lewis were correctly W(alter) & T(homas) Lewis, pace Reporter Vol.1 No.2 p.4.(6) The small Gray was for not from Framlingham Unitarian. Note 9 should be numbered 8; ? was M.O. 7/1893 p.608. The Walberswick Gray is at Great Bradley. I had visited both churches and failed to notice that the organ had migrated during the decade between. The 'bran-tub' about which I am asked, is the unsorted remnant of squirrelling activities by numerous organ buffs, including Freeman, which have descended on me in the form mostly of bits of paper.

A correspondent consulting that invaluable 19th century periodical, Mackeson's 'Guide to London Churches', is puzzled by some of the entries. 'Incense' he understands as a warning to those unfamiliar with Ousley's anthem 'From the rising of the sun'(7) and ignorant of the B.C.P. Ornaments Rubric; but whyever 'Surplice in Pulpit'?

In the course of the variegated and sometimes turbulent history of the English Church a number of phobias crept in, hard for us now to understand, and in the remoter comers of the church some of them lingered on for an unconscionable time. As a small boy on a visit, I was taken to harvest festival in the Village Institute. Afterwards I caused amusement by declaring that the choir had sung 'Bringing home the cheese', and some embarrassment by demanding why it had not been in their church, and why hadn't Mr.S., the vicar, come. It turned out that they had had a 'split' and set up a rival show, because the vicar had started wearing a surplice in the pulpit instead of a Geneva Gown, and so was 'well on the way to Rome'.

When my father was a Wesleyan chorister, around the turn of the century, adding 'Amen' at the end of every hymn was denounced as 'going to Rome'. When I became one some 25 years later, cutting them out was denounced as setting our feet on the same primrose pathway!

These things are now mostly in the dustbin of history, but there are still folk who get steamed up about peripheral matters, often at the expense of the church's real work. Once in a moment of discouragement I asked my Director, a wise and experienced priest, why there seemed to be so many awkward people in the Church. He replied 'Well, my dear, the devil knows where his greatest enemies are to be found, so he infiltrates. His easiest routes are the Parish Magazine and the music!' Selah.

Postscript from an examination answer: An accidental is a very small sharp or flat which only afflicts a note for a short time and then passes off.

- 1) BIOS Reporter Voi. 15 No.2 p. 14
- 2) Musical Opinion 8/1897 p.752
- 3) Musical Opinion 7/1897 p.600
- 4) 18 October p.315
- 5) BIOS Reporter Voi. 13 No.4 p. 18
- 6) BIOS Reporter Voi. 15 No.3-4 p. 18
- 7) Malachi Ch.1 v.11

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 illustration on the cover is of the organ in St. Mary's Nottingham, and is taken from the Illustrated London News for Saturday 2nd December 1871. The organ, by Bishop & Starr, in its case by Scott, was opened in October of that year..