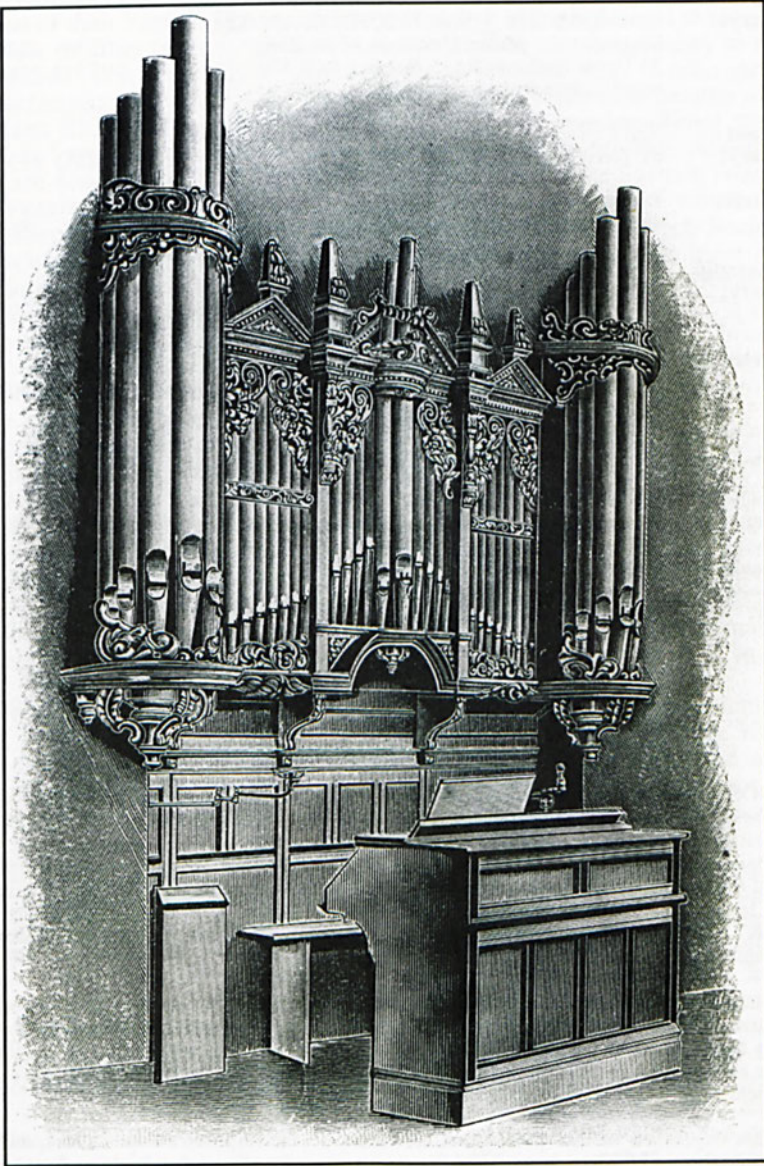


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BIOS REPORTER



Vol. 19, No. 3 (July 1995)

BIOS

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The **BIOS Reporter** is edited by Relf Clark and John Whittle. Suitable material must be sent to Relf Clark, c/o Department of Music, University of Reading (see above).

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The annual subscription to BIOS is £20 (ordinary) or £15 (students and senior citizens). BIOS publications can be sent by Air Mail to non-EU destinations for a further annual payment of £8. Certain back issues of the Reporter are available from the Secretary, at £1 each, including postage and packing. Back issues of the BIOS Journal are available from The Positif Press, 130 Southfield Road, Oxford OX4 1PA.

Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the respective contributors, and not necessarily those of BIOS.

Editorial

Nescit vox missa reverti

The Scottish Federation of Organists have kindly sent us a copy of this year's edition of their journal, *The Scottish Organist*. It is always pleasant to receive the journals of other organological bodies, and we take this opportunity to record our thanks. It is especially pleasant when such journals seem to echo our own characteristic sentiments. Of course, there is quite often considerable overlap between BIOS and these other bodies, many of our members being theirs as well, and we should not therefore be too surprised by such echos. Nonetheless, they are good to read. Dr. John Kitchen, the President of the Scottish Federation of Organists, opens the journal with a Presidential "prologue" which makes extensive reference to last October's meeting of the Edinburgh Society of Organists, an event arranged by Alan Buchan. It appears that most of the instruments examined on that occasion were from the turn of the century or shortly before. "Until about 25 years ago", writes Dr. Kitchen, "a rebuilt instrument, invariably electrified, and incorporating the latest tonal modifications and console gadgetry, was what people wanted to see and hear. When ... grafted-on larigots and electric actions began to be discredited, we moved through a stage when new organs commanded most attention. Now we have, I hope, reached a stage where many (if not all) recognise that a well designed organ from any period has its own integrity". He goes on to point out that the apparent limitations of small Victorian organs of the kind examined - the paucity of aids to registration, for example - may cause one "to concentrate on really important things like phrasing, articulation and good rhythm"; and he makes an interesting observation about an instrument in which a fifteenth had been substituted for a four-foot flute. "Significantly, those involved now agree that this has been unsuccessful, and there are plans to reinstate the flute, which is fortunately in storage. Lesson: leave well alone".

Leave well alone. It is an echo of our January editorial, in which we attempted a brief summary of certain aspects of the Society's philosophy; but Dr. Kitchen does not go with us all the way, contending that "carefully considered musical reasons might justify" tonal alterations. Well, perhaps he has a point: not every organ is a masterpiece, and even the greatest builders occasionally miscalculated. But how does one distinguish between the "whims of fashion", which Dr. Kitchen rightly regards as a deplorable basis for interfering with an instrument's integrity, and those "carefully considered musical reasons"? The line is not easy to draw. The tonal alterations of a generation ago were largely to facilitate authentic performances of Baroque and pre-Baroque music - "musical reasons", surely - and were usually effected with care and after due consideration. It is not wrong to want such things as a second principal chorus, an independent pedal organ, and solo mutations; nor is it whimsical or merely fashionable to want to play the 'Dorian' Toccata, the A minor Concerto, *tierce en taille* movements, comet voluntaries, and the like in something approximating to the way in which they were intended to be played. Where do "whims" begin and "musical reasons" end? The question is not rhetorical, but we think that it can only be answered with the benefit of many years' hindsight - and that, surely, is a compelling argument in favour of a stricter view

We invite correspondence on this difficult and important subject.

*

Accompanying *The Scottish Organist* was a questionnaire from the Scottish Historic Organs Trust, and we note that SHOT is “preparing proposals to purchase a property suitable for storing, conserving and repairing Scottish organs in anticipation of their relocation”. The proposed building is intended to function additionally as “an archive for materials relating to any aspect of Scottish organs, a museum and a centre for education”. It is another echo, this time of the reflections offered in the April editorial, on the subject of a national pipe organ museum. We await further developments with great interest and hope that we may learn from our colleagues’ example. In the meantime, we draw readers’ attention to Dr. Godfrey’s letter on this subject, on page 10 and 11.

*

John Kitchen’s reflections on small Victorian organs are a cue for mention of the two-manual Hill organ now at St. Luke’s, Duston, Northampton. Originally built for Bolney Church, in 1883 - job number 1808 - it was subsequently moved to Trinity Baptist Church, Bexleyheath and has now been completely restored and moved to Duston (in spite of interest from builders on the continent). The stop-list is Great 8.8A4.2, Swell 8.8.4.8 and Pedal 16, and the work of restoration, carried out by Michael Latham, has involved the reinstatement of a lever swell pedal and the Great 2 foot (discarded at some stage in favour of a Dulciana).

The opening recital will be given by David Sanger on Saturday, 9 September next, beginning at 7.30 p.m., and tickets - £5/£3 - are available from Graham Shaw - [REDACTED] - or Julia Pearson - [REDACTED].

*

Considerable interest has been shown in the chamber organs belonging to the late Sheila Lawrence. Any member still requiring details is welcome to send in a stamped, addressed envelope.

RC

MEETINGS

St. Lawrence, Whitchurch, 20 May 1995

The day-conference focused on the Gerard Smith chamber organ recently rebuilt by Martin Goetze and Dominic Gwynn. Known as the ‘Handel organ’, it is the instrument that Handel played whilst employed by James Brydges, the Duke of Chandos (for whom he wrote the Chandos anthems). The church, in a flamboyant Baroque style and first used for worship in 1716, was introduced by the Friends of St. Lawrence. The organ was then introduced by Dominic Gwynn

(see *Choir and Organ*, February 1995) and the morning was rounded off with a forty-minute recital of eighteenth-century English organ music given by Andrew McCrea and ending with Chilcot's arrangement of Handel's Organ Concerto, Op.4, No.1.

Donald Burrows and Graydon Beeks presented material from their research into the Chandos anthems and the musical establishment at Canons in Handel's time there, extracts from manuscript scores demonstrating some of the musicological problems relating to both, and Dominic Gwynn brought the meeting to a close with a paper which placed the Gerard Smith organ in its context by relating it to the work of other builders of the period.

The day concluded with a concert given by Alistair Dixon and the Chapelle du Roy with Carl Jackson (organ); it comprised two Chandos anthems and two of Handel's Organ Concertos.

David Knight

Exeter, 29 August to 1 September 1995

Details continue to be available from Dr. Kent, who reports a good response.

Annual General Meeting, 1995

Notice is hereby given that the 1995 Annual General Meeting of the British Institute of Organ Studies will take place on Wednesday, 30 August, at St. Luke's College, Exeter University, at 11.30 a.m.

All members whose subscriptions have been duly paid are entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.

The following elections will have to be made:

Officers

Chairman
Information Technology Officer
Secretary

Ordinary Members of Council

Two ordinary members will have to be elected. Dr. Rowntree, elected at the 1993 Annual General Meeting, retires but is eligible for immediate re-election for a further two-year term. Dr. Sumner, elected at the 1991 Annual General Meeting, retires and is ineligible for immediate re-election, having served for a continuous period of four years.

There is no constitutional requirement that officers or council members be formally nominated prior to the meeting, but the Secretary will nonetheless appreciate some form of advance notification.

Annual lunch

We confirm that the date will be Saturday, 2 December next and that further details will appear in the October issue.

London, 11 November 1995

This meeting, arranged by Dominic Gwynn and entitled *Windchests and Organ Layout*, will be at the works of N.P. Mander Ltd. and will include papers by Stephen Bicknell, on two early sixteenth-century Suffolk chests, Martin Goetze, on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century windchests, Dominic Gwynn, on the way chests and actions were laid out in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century, and John Norman, on types of windchest of the last hundred years. A booking form is enclosed.

St. Mary's, Finedon, Northamptonshire, 18 May 1996

The arrangements are not yet confirmed but the aim is to have a conference and concert. So far, the idea is to introduce the Dolben family, the connection with Croft and the Chapel Royal, and the Smith connection, with a concert in the evening.

PUBLICATIONS

Reporter

The present editors, John Whittle and Relf Clark, assumed their respective roles on what was intended to be a temporary basis only. That was some three years ago, and - as so often happens - what was intended to be an interim arrangement has turned in practice into something slightly different. The editors feel that the time has come for a change, and they would like to be relieved of their duties once the October 1995 issue has appeared.

Anyone wishing to assume the role of editor or co-editor, or having suggestions with regard to the future of this publication, is warmly invited to contact the Chairman.

The cut-off date for the October issue will be Friday, 1 September, and material must be submitted in the usual way pending further announcements.

Journal 19 (1995)

We confirm that the editors are Jim Berrow and Dominic Gwynn, to whom enquiries should be addressed. Work is now in hand.

Journal 20 (1996)

The editor will be John Brennan, to whom queries should be addressed.

Indices

Indices continue to be available from the Society's Treasurer, Richard Hird, on the same terms as those previously advertised.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

John B. Dalby, OBE, BMus, FRCO, FEIS (1910-1987) had a distinguished musical career, becoming Superintendent of Music in Aberdeen and organist at St. Machar's Cathedral. He was closely associated with the National Youth Orchestra.

The Archive has received from his son, Martin Dalby, various papers of interest, including a monumental collection of essays under the title 'Memoirs about Organs', some of Lt. Col. George Dixon's papers, and a copy (in John Dalby's handwriting) of the original version of Herbert Howells's *Toccata* for organ without pedals.

Howells wrote the two pieces for organ without pedals, a *Fancy* and a *Toccata*, in 1959. They were written for John Dalby to play in a broadcast recital given on the Samuel Green chamber organ in St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Aberdeen. This was a chamber organ built in 1778, formerly at Westhall Oyne. It was presented to St. Mary's, which had suffered bomb damage in the war, by a Miss Leith of Westhall, in 1946. It consists of a single manual: C/D-f3, with Op, St, Pr, 15 and Swelling Htby. The original version of the *Toccata* differs little from the final published version except for the ending, which was in E minor and nine bars shorter.

The 'Memoirs about Organs' is contained in four lever-arch files and consists of typescript essays on 341 organs Dalby had encountered. Each instrument is assessed subjectively (is there really any other way to assess an organ?) and there is an abundance of anecdotal interest. Dalby's viewpoint is contained in these words in the Preface: "Of course the primary purpose of the organ in church is to help to promote worship, rather than to give an authentic account of a Bach Prelude and Fugue or a brilliant one of Reubke's Sonata. Nonetheless I come to the conclusion that the instrument which copes well with Bach, or, by contrast, with Reubke, is the more likely to prove its worth in worship".

The organs are treated chronologically as to when Dalby first encountered them. The first is Saltaire Wesleyan Methodist Church, which has a three-manual Ratcliffe (sic) & Sagar organ. Access to its soundboards and action was infuriatingly awkward: "it is said that the two partners of the firm were at daggers drawn. Legend has it that the one of slim build designed the organ so that his partner of stouter proportions might never get into it".

Organ no. 40 is the 1923 Harrison & Harrison instrument at St. Hilda, Whitby,

which Dalby visited on 2 August 1926. "Never before had I played an organ of such matchless quality ... the refinement of tonal 'finish' Arthur Harrison managed to produce hit me between the eyes. The exquisite delicacy of the quieter registers; the transparent but rich brilliance of the true English full swell; the firm clearness of the Great flue chorus, and the ultimate Stentorian but smooth voice of the Pedal Ophicleide convinced me that here, at last, was an organ worthy of the name. Despite more radical thinking about organ-sound and my own inclinations towards present-day trends, I still think that those impressions are worthy of consideration ... Given a touch of imagination and a flair for resourcefulness, a Harrison organ of this kind can fulfil most needs ... Give me this instrument, and I am prepared to make music upon it all my days".

Dalby became an assistant at Leeds Parish Church when he was 17 and had lessons from Dr. Albert Tysoe (who later went to St. Alban's Abbey). "Tysoe taught me to play with scrupulous accuracy and always with a sense of rhythm. Above all else, he taught me how to teach myself ... ". His time there was not without incident; having been given the responsibility of training the probationer choristers he "hit upon the idea of likening the semibreve to a new and unsullied rugby football. When the lace hangs out (as represented by the minim) its value is halved". Tysoe was not amused when seeking the name of a crotchet from a probationer and having it described as "a dirty rugby football with the lace hanging out"! There was one of those incidents concerning piston settings such as abound up and down the country. Dalby set an alternative Full Swell on the one departmental adjustable piston on which Tysoe always put the Celestes. Dalby forgot to reset it - with a resulting calamity at the end of Tysoe's quiet play-in of the choir the following day.

At the age of 18 he was appointed organist of St. Columba, Horton, Bradford, where there was a three-manual Harrison organ built in 1903. During his six and a half years there he obtained the ARCO, FRCO and CHM diplomas. "At my first attempt for ARCO I passed in playing but just failed to make the grade in paperwork. Dr. Albert C. Tysoe said, "That will teach you." It did. I worked hard to improve the mental hearing of the notes I wrote, and gained a pass at a further attempt. Not long afterwards I submitted myself to the Fellowship exam. To my joy, I passed first time. But to my utter astonishment, I was awarded the Harding Prize, the token for gaining the highest number of marks in the paperwork section".

After two years at St. Stephen, Kirkstall, Leeds, he was appointed to St. Bartholomew, Armley. He was there only a very short time, a matter that later seems to have troubled his conscience. He quotes Col. Dixon as having said, in his presence, concerning the Schulze Great flue chorus: "We, in Great Britain, have missed the way."

The remainder of his career was centred on Aberdeen - with an interruption for war service in the RAF. He was organist of St. Machar's Cathedral from 1938 to 1955. The organ he knew there was the 1928 Rushworth & Dreaper reconstruction of the Father Willis - installed as a two-manual instrument in 1891, and completed with a third manual in 1897.

Amongst many notable organs that he played is that at the Royal Festival Hall, London (no. 247). "It was, in fact, at Sir Malcolm Sargent's request that I tried

out this instrument. Round about Easter 1957 the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, conducted by Sir Malcolm (then the President), was due to give a concert at the Royal Festival Hall in the presence of its Royal Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. Sir Arthur Bliss had written a fanfare for brass and organ to herald her presence. A member of the NYO was chosen to play the organ part, and, as usual, I was the instructor. 'Don't let the young organist use the Pedal reeds,' said Sir Malcolm, 'they make a filthy sound.' So I went to explore the organ and to prepare the ground. I stood alongside the young organist at rehearsal, and when Sir Malcolm complained of want of pedal sound, I myself drew the stops of the Pedal reeds. He was completely satisfied!"

DCW

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Members are again reminded that the increase in the level of subscription took effect on 1 January 1995. Anyone who pays by standing order who has still not dealt with the form enclosed with the April 1994 issue is asked to deal with it, please, as soon as possible.

A final 'overdue' reminder will be enclosed for those members who have still not paid this year's subscription.

JKW

NEWS

St. George's, Doncaster

Those who attended the Huddersfield residential conference (1992) will remember - how could they not? - Magnus Black's demonstration of the organ here (Schulze, 1862). We are sorry to report that a heart attack on Easter Day 1994 forced Mr. Black to retire. We send him our best wishes for his continuing recovery - and our congratulations on a tenure of office that commenced in 1957. We hope that his new-found leisure will enable him to commit to paper some of his masterly hymn-tune improvisations.

The Schulze organ remains under the careful eye of The Revd. John Bird.

OBITUARIES

During recent months we have learned with regret of the death of two of our members.

Arthur Armstrong, from Uppingham, who had written about the organs of Rutland, Uppingham PC and of his own three-manual house organ, passed away in April, and on 23 May, Hugh Ross, a trustee and founder member of the Scottish Historical Organs Trust, died at the early age of 45. Kerr Jamieson writes, following the funeral on Monday, 29 May:

I was able to attend Hugh's funeral yesterday, as I was on leave for

the public holiday. It was a splendid occasion, if one can use such terms in the context of the departure of a dear friend of so many people. The magnificent fifteenth-century Rosslyn Chapel was packed to capacity, with fellow BIOS member and SHOT trustee Alan Buchan doing a marvellous job on the fine mid-nineteenth century Hamilton organ. After the burial there was a reception at Hugh's magnificent home, Leithen Lodge, where several historic pipe and reed organs are housed. A sad day, but one which will be remembered for a long time to come.

JKW

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Your well reasoned editorial on the subject of a possible national pipe organ museum (*BIOSRep*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1995) contains several compelling arguments against the idea - at least if it were to take the form of a huge depository for unwanted dinosaurs of the pre-electronic age. Such a museum would indeed be a step towards giving the pipe organ a final burial. This is why some of us who feel that something needs to be done to save some of the remaining masterpieces of Victorian organ building are currently wrestling with a rather different concept, namely that of an organ study/enterprise/heritage centre. Here the emphasis would be on activity, sound, experiment, and a future for the pipe organ in every way as grand as its past.

May I conjure up a building, let us say in the heart of a large city? On entering, the first impression would be of a medium-sized concert hall, with a well-lit auditorium and comfortable seating. The main platform would naturally give pride of place to a splendidly restored large organ. But there would be perhaps four or five others, ranged on secondary platforms at different heights and various points of the compass around the central space. Each complete organ would be in perfect playing order. One would be uncased, with its inner mechanisms displayed. In other parts of the building would be exhibits of every part of the pipe organ, plus historical items relating to the development of different actions, methods of winding and so forth. One section might be devoted to present and future trends in organ design. Many of the exhibits would be working models. An extensive range of pipework would stand on working wind-chests, and be capable of being played by visitors (preferably in sound-proofed booths).

Regular recitals would include pieces especially suitable for the different musical accents of the instruments in the centre, and there might even be new works and arrangements for two or more sizeable pipe organs playing together in concert. Every hour the organs would be demonstrated, perhaps by electronic means if no player were available. Out of visiting hours, the centre would be used for teaching and practice late into the night.

Your editorial mentions the steam locomotive, definitely (although regrettably) a thing of the past. Yet people flock to see steam engines and models wherever and whenever they *work*, whether in the Science Museum, or at York, or in any convenient field. A national pipe organ enterprise centre could be equally

attractive. Not only would its exhibits work, but the whole atmosphere of the place could hardly fail to generate enthusiasm for the future of our instrument. Young people would realise that the organ is not always to be found locked away in inaccessible churches. Parties of schoolchildren would come to learn (and be thrilled) as part of the national curriculum. The creation of this centre would surely be an appropriate call on the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and an enterprise in which BIOS should play a leading role.

Richard Godfrey, MD, FRCP, ARCO,



REVIEW

Colin Norvall has written an attractively produced little booklet covering the history of the organs and organists of Frome Parish Church. The introduction, which traces the development of organ-building from the earliest times, will be helpful to general readers who may not be aware of the antiquity of the instrument.

John Speller has published two accounts of the organ in the parish church in *The Organ* LII (1972-3), 1-5 and LVIII (1979), 24-8, so the ground has been well covered previously. However, much has been added about the later period of the organs' history from the rebuild in 1861 by Vowles, and several interesting illustrations, bills and photographs are reproduced.

The early history of the organ has never been fully explained, but it is correct to say that Renatus Harris 'senior' and Byfield built the organ of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol in 1726 as Harris had been dead for two years, and the Harris concerned was his son John.

The organists of this church are remarkably interesting and several went on to greater things which are unfortunately not mentioned. Stephen Jeffries had been a highly controversial organist of Gloucester Cathedral and left under a cloud in 1710. Reference books give his date of death as 1712. Dr. John Stephens married a girl from Frome, Mary Bull, and spent two years at St. James's, Bristol, before passing the rest of his life as an influential and much liked organist of Salisbury Cathedral, dying in 1780. The name Orphin is well-known in the musical circles of Bath.

If I have one large quibble with this book it is the question of inaccurate copying. The agreement on p. 9 has 'Parrish' instead of 'Parish'; the word 'farther' has been inserted between 'it was agreed' - spelt 'agreed'; 'the' instead of 'ye'; 'Parish' where 'Parrish' is written; 'that the church be sealled' instead of 'that ye Church Shall be Seallead'.

This may seem like nit-picking, but such mis-writings may come back to haunt one, and remember that what is put into print today may be wrongly copied by generations to come. 'Seede' incidentally, must consistently be spelt with a final 'e'.

Nevertheless, a lot of work has gone into this booklet and for 48 pages with illustrations, £2.50 seems an extremely reasonable price.

Betty Matthews

BOOKS

BIOS welcomes notice of books and similar publications produced by members and others. Preferably, a review copy with full details provided on a flyer, sent to the editors, will help us to include mention in a future issue. Two volumes by members have recently come to our notice.

Pipe Organs in the Churches & Chapels of the Derbyshire Derwent & Ecclesbourne Valleys

Rodney Tomkins (Derby Diocesan Organ Adviser) has completed this book and it is being offered to members, by the publisher Scarthin Books, at a subscription rate of £5.50 (plus 50p postage) when ordered before the end of July in advance of the August publication date. We are informed that a little leniency of a few weeks may be allowed should this edition appear close to the end of July. A full description of the forthcoming title is given in the enclosed leaflet.

The Life and Work of John Snetzler

Dr. Alan Barnes and Martin Renshaw, Scolar Press, 1994. ISBN 0 85967 932 2

One of the editors found the PhD thesis of Alan Barnes a useful source of information to confirm certain facts about a Snetzler organ whilst conducting research into another book (see *The Organs and Organists of St. Mary's Church, Nottingham*, Rylands Press, 1993). The detail of that thesis has become the heart of this newer book on Snetzler's life and work. The volume covers his life, designs, work and organ-building techniques. It charts his career begun as a builder of small instruments to a major organ builder working throughout Britain and elsewhere. The book is fully illustrated with photographs, engravings, diagrams and tables and with full indexes and a bibliography.

Unfortunately, to date, no special offer nor reduction on the full price of £55 has been made to BIOS members.

JKW

REDUNDANCIES

E. ENGLAND (95/19) X

Trustam (Bedford)
ca.1870

Action	mechanical
Specification	Man 16b/t.8b/t.8.8.4.22/3.2 Pd pulldowns (20)
Casework	architectural
Dimensions	h 14' w 6'd 4' 9" plus pedalboard

LONDON (95/15)

R Cope (Camberwell)
ca.1870

Action	mechanical
Specification	Gt 8.8.4 Sw 8.8.4.2 Pd 16
Casework	pipe-rack
Dimensions	hi 1'4" w7'2" d9'3"

LONDON (95/18)

Bishop
or. 1886

Action	mechanical
Specification	Gt 8.8.8.4.4.(missing) Sw 8.8.4.8 Pd 16 oct cplr with extra pipes
Casework	pitch pine; stencilled front pipes
Dimensions	h11'3" w7'8" d8'

MIDLANDS (95/21)

Osmond
1971

Action	electro-pneumatic
Specification	Man 8.8.4.4.2.2 (two extended ranks) Pd 16
Casework	details awaited
Dimensions	h10'8" w5'6" d4'8"

N. ENGLAND (95/20) X

anon/C. Wood
early 19c/1958

Action	pneumatic
Specification	Gt 16.8.8.8.4.4.22/3.2.111.8 Sw 16.8.8.8.4.2.II. 16.8.4

Casework Ch 8.8.8.4.2
Dimensions(approx) Pd 16.16.8.8
details awaited
h20' w12'd 12'

SCOTLAND (95/14)

Wadsworth
1883

Action pneumatic
Specification Gt 16.8.8.8.4.4.II.8
Sw 16.8.8.8.4.4.III.8.8.8
Ch 8.8.4.2.8.8
Pd 16.16.8.8

Casework panelled sides, grille to front
Dimensions h 17' approx w15' d15'

S.E. ENGLAND (95/16) X

?Murray (Edinburgh)

ca. 1840

Action mechanical
Specification Gt 8.8.8.4.22/3.2
Sw 8.8.4.S
Pd 16

Casework architectural
Dimensions(approx) hi2' w1T d8*

W. ENGLAND (95/17)

erected by Ebrall using secondhand material
19c

Action mechanical
Specification Gt 8.8b /t.4
Sw 8.8.4
Pd 16

Casework pipe-rack
Dimensions hi3' w9' d7'5"

Back on the books is a two-manual Hill of ca.1865 with additions/tonal alterations by Daniel 1971. Synoptic specification is: Gt 8.8.8.4.4.2, Sw 8.8.8.4.2.8, Pd 16.8.8.4. Dimensions are h14'4" w9T' d8'10" plus pedalboard. This instrument is dismantled and in store. Further information can be obtained from the Redundancies Officer.

The Redundancies Register "Fates" list, covering the period 1985 to 1994 inclusive, is now available. Any member wanting a copy should send the Redundancies Officer five second-class stamps, to cover postage and production charges.

Loss of an Important Instrument

It has not been possible to save the 1898 three-manual Conacher (95/9) advertised as redundant in the April edition. Situated in the former Brunswick Methodist Church, Macclesfield, this was a fine example of Conacher's work in an attractive case and had suffered little tonal alteration. The original pneumatic action had given way to electro-pneumatic in the 1960s; at the same time the organ had gained extra couplers and pistons. The pipes individually bear the instrument's opus number (1060) and spotted metal was widely used in their construction.

As is so often the case, the deadline for the organ's removal allowed too little time to find a buyer. However, our member Ian Hankinson was able, practically singlehandedly, to retrieve the pipework, keyboards, pedalboard, the Choir soundboard and much of the casework.

Following my plea for volunteer dismantlers in the April edition, I received just three offers of help - a discouraging response from a membership of more than 650. Had a team of volunteers been available during April, the Conacher could have been saved for eventual relocation.

RW

A BRIG, ROCKETS AND BRISTOL

The connection between the 'Liberty', a coastguard rocket and a Bristol organ-builder might seem unlikely. The combination came to light following a chance remark that there was a 'Handel organ' at a chapel in Pembrokeshire - where historical organs are at a premium. A visit to Bethlehem English Baptist Church at Spittal, near Haverfordwest, soon dispelled that fanciful claim.

The chamber organ was removed from the Moravian Church in Haverfordwest when that church closed, in 1957. The Moravian Chapel (the only such congregation in Wales) had been founded *circa* 1760, and had been in the same premises since 1772. It had boasted musical ambitions from the outset: a member, John Gambold, from Puncteston, Pembrokeshire, became a Moravian bishop, and published a set of thirty-seven Welsh hymns and tunes, *Ychydig Hymnau allan o Lyfr Hymnau Cynulleidfaoedd y Brodyr*, which were described as being severe in character. There was an organ at the church in the late eighteenth century and it was sold to Kings wood Moravian church in 1828, being described as a poor instrument.

A new organ was purchased from John Smith of Bristol in 1828, through the generosity of two church members, David and John Jardine, for £100. The church was renovated and repainted at the same time. Unusually the organ was delivered by boat from Bristol, on a locally registered brig, the 'Liberty', Captain Bayley being the master. The organ arrived in January 1829, the brig sailing up Milford Haven and up the tidal reaches of the River Cleddau into Haverfordwest.

John Smith (probably senior), the organ-builder, no doubt appreciated this mode

of transport as he is credited with inventing a rocket apparatus for use by coastguards (Thistlethwaite: *The Making of the Victorian Organ*). He would not have been so pleased to learn that two years later the Liberty foundered on the notorious semi-hidden Crow Rock outside Milford Haven.

Surprisingly there is only one reference to Smith actually working in Haverfordwest, although the church account noted that he was to be paid his usual fees for board and lodging:

1829 January 26th.

1. The organ, which has been procured by Brs. William Evans of Bath has arrived by the Brig, Liberty, Captain Bayley, for which Messrs. Jardine have paid 100. Mr. Smith of Bristol is to be requested to come + set it up. His charges are half a guinea a day, besides his journey expenses & board &c while here.

Unfortunately, there is a gap in the church records and there is only reference to Smith receiving 6s 7d for setting up the organ. However, here is no doubt that Smith was actually working in Haverfordwest in the Spring of 1829.

The organ he installed appears to be almost intact in its new home at Bethlehem Chapel. Its specification is basic:

Open Diapason	8
Stopt Diapason Treble	8
Stopt Diapason Bass	8
Flute Bass	4
Flute Treble	4
Gamba	8
Principal	4
Twelfth	22/3
Fifteenth	2

The compass is C - g³; there is an additional low A key, but this has been rendered inoperative, and the compass runs chromatically in modern fashion. A few original ornate stop-labels survive, along with some later tolerable imitations. Some of the larger pipes are still cone-tuned, but the Flute Treble seems to have attracted the attention of the knife, having been recut.

A pedal provides a shifting mechanism, which reduces the organ to the Stopt Diapason only. The whole is enclosed in a simple and rather flimsy swell box, operated by a cast iron pedal and a length of sash cord. Not surprisingly, removing the Swell shutters improved the sound of the organ enormously. However, the outer case of the organ is handsomely worked, in a large oval containing gilded metal dummy pipes, surrounded by a neat marquetry.

The panels of the case bear the original shipping labels in ink, with the letters "I & D J with care" and "I & DJ HW". The bellows, re-leathered by Vowles in 1913, carry a similar paper label. Curiously, Smith appears not to have added his name to the oval window above the keys - it remains blank.

One modern addition has been a set of pull-downs, totally misaligned with the

manual - the present organist has sensibly covered them with a board. Playing the organ is a pleasure, provided one ignores the pedalboard and the mental gymnastics necessary to play it. The pipework is bright and most responsive - rapid passagework remains clean and delightful to execute, and the tonal variety afforded by this small instrument is remarkable.

As for Handel having played the organ - ignoring the inconvenience of his having been dead for some seventy years when the organ was built, I tracked the claim down to a newspaper cutting in the Haverfordwest Record Office. The cutting bore neither date nor origin of publication - whoever first made the claim is, to use the Welsh, *wedi mynd*.

The main documentation regarding the Moravian Church in Haverfordwest is in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, and the Haverfordwest Record Office; the patience of the staff at the latter office in guiding me around shipping registers when I claimed to be researching organs was exemplary.

John H. Hughes

[This is an article abridged from John Hughes's attractively produced, desk-top published 11-page booklet entitled *A John Smith Chamber Organ - a Study of the Chamber Organ at Bethlehem English Baptist Church, Spittal, Haverfordwest*. Further details of the book may be obtained from John Hughes, Glandy, Dinas Cross, Newport, Pembrokeshire, SA 42 OXP.]

NOTES & QUERIES

Who said this?

1. *While the majestic organ rolled
Contribution from its mouths of gold.*
2. *While organ clanged with blare and din
Discomfort from its mouths of tin.*
3. *The tendencies of certain [English] builders in recent times
have been more egocentric than permanently valuable.*

Some replies to hand. John Bailey tells me that the pneumatic coupler device which I mentioned last time, of a bar preventing motors from operating, was used by Norman & Beard; not for inter-manual couplers, but for extensions in the Pedal department. Betty Matthews writes that there were two Blounts at Wimborne Minster. John Wright Blount became organist in 1808. He undertook organ repairs, but towards the end of his long tenure he ceased to give satisfaction as organist and was dismissed for neglect of duty. He was succeeded by Frederick Stanley Blount, surely a relative, who held the post for thirty years and also undertook organ repairs. Betty's book on *The Organs and Organists of Wimborne Minster* will tell you more. F.S. Blount wrote a pleasant chant in F to Psalm 17.

Jim Inglis sends information about Letts, enquired about last time concerning a chamber organ now at Forest Green. Samuel Letts, a native of Ireland, worked in Edinburgh with Muir, Wood in the early nineteenth century. Jim has found no records of birth, marriage or death, and little seems to be known about him. He appears (only) in Directories for 1810 "Samuel Letts, organ-builder, Hamilton's land, Canongate"; and for 1811 at 44 Canongate. The only reference to his work so far found is at the Qualified Episcopal Chapel at Dundee "Samuel Letts repairing Organ ... £7.7s." and no organs have been recorded so far. J.G. Dalryell in 1849 (1) says that Letts survived only a few years, and records a remark of his that "a conspicuous difference might be observed in the national taste - that by the Scottish and Irish ladies a noted predilection was shown for softer and deeper toned organs, while the English ladies preferred louder and shriller instruments".

From the bran tub I extract some quotations at third hand (at least) from "a country newspaper of 1805", from internal evidence probably the *Salopian Journal*. One Sunday in May 1805 "Mr. Weston" of whom we would like to have been told more, played at S.Chad, Shrewsbury and "introduced his thunder in the voluntary at both morning and evening services", as previously advertised. So great was this attraction that the congregation was largely augmented and "twenty four pound was collected".

Other churches seem to have sought for such a valuable incentive to fund-raising, and the *Journal* announced "with peculiar pleasure" that Mr. Weston would repeat his "astonishing performances" the next Sunday at S.Mary's Church. When the time came, however, Mr. Churchwarden Parkes stepped forward and forbade the thunder! Mr. Weston was very indignant and wrote a letter to the paper, of some length, from which follow some passages.

Not my *Imitations of Thunder*, no - not even the thunderbolt of HEAVEN (I sincerely believe), could produce a greater SHOCK than that which I felt, when the worthy and ingenious Mr. PARKES (one of the churchwardens) informed me that I was not permitted to perform on the organ at St. Mary's: I was absolutely *petrified*. That a thousand of the most respectable inhabitants of Shropshire were disappointed of a promised and consequently expected gratification (for St. Mary's Church on Sunday morning was crammed almost to suffocation, numbers having come, in spite of the very unfortunate weather, from remote distances), I deeply lament; but you Sir, and many others know that I was not to blame. And that the Sunday Schools of four parishes in this respectable town were deprived, in all probability, of two hundred pounds, at least, I still more deeply lament; but the fault was not mine. It was, in truth, a combination of unfortunate circumstances, which human wisdom could not foresee, nor human power control.

If Mr. Weston expected to extract £200 from a thousand people - four shillings [20p] each - in those days, he must have had, as the saying went, 'a bob on himself. Today's equivalent?

At S.Mary's Methodist church in Bedford - long gone - there was a 32-foot pedal stop given by a local family; it consisted of one pipe, the bottom G, "for the last Amen". I hope they felt it was worth the expense! At Benhall in Suffolk an old organ had been installed, in the gallery but with the console behind it. On one of the upper steps of the access a brick was perched with a cord down the stairs. When the officiant was ready to leave the vestry and enter the church, the cord was pulled and the brick clattered to the floor. Not applicable to present organ!

There was a divided Compton in the west gallery of a church reminiscent of an outsized railway tunnel, but with a much-ribbed roof which made havoc of the sound-waves. The console was some 100 feet away in a nook beside the choir stalls. In a cupboard near the organist's right ear was a rank of open diapason pipes intended to give him some idea of what was going on in the outside world. It passes belief!

Organists could well take steps to find out what things sound like from the body of the church. Some tape recordings of the playing and of the service accompaniment might be revealing. Comments from the congregation are either unreasonable, or not made at all -

*They grumbled at the anthems and the chants they couldn't sing,
They moaned about the settings that the festivals would bring,
But they left the poor old organist to find out everything
By instinct - or possibly by radar. (2)*

A church I knew had a serviceable small two-manual in a chancel chamber, with an opening to the nave filled with pedal pipes, behind which the powers-that-were had placed a thick curtain. The organist used the pedals all the time. At anything less than *forte* the pedal pipes ruined the music from the nearer parts of the nave. No-one had ever thought to tell the organist. Suggestions that the pedals, or at any rate the pedal stop, might be used more sparingly and appropriately, fell on deaf ears ("It doesn't sound like an organ without the pedals") and I doubt whether anything has come of a following suggestion of turning the mouths to face inwards and removing the curtain and sundry other tone-barriers there and in the main opening.

Elsewhere at a flower festival with organ music all afternoon, the first player I heard sensibly took a broad-brush approach to the small but excellent tracker 5-5-1 of about 1877, including some Bach and Handel. The second explored the quieter stops and lighter combinations and kept the pedal stop on all the time. I could not disentangle the 'tune' from the confused sound, and when she embarked on music of a more 'modem' flavour I went home. Obviously a very good player, but why didn't she *listen!* Matthew 11, verse 15.

"In the Methodist church at Wellesbourne [Warwickshire] stands an old pipe organ now to be superseded by one of the new electronic instruments preferred today by many modem organists. The more conservative of us, the old-fashioned folk, clinging to our conception of a church organ ... may feel the modern instrument belongs more to engineering than music-making".

Thus, under a headline - "A 'Father Smith' organ redundant" speaks the *Evesham Journal* of 9 January 1969. It goes on to say that the Smith connection

is only "reputed", and proceeds to tell us something of its history. In 1916, it was bought for £60 by the Bettridge brothers and given to this new chapel, to replace the harmonium in the previous building. It came from the ballroom at Barford Hill House, the home of the Smith-Ryland family. The Rylands were wire-drawing magnates in Birmingham. In 1844 the family financed a new Hussey church at Barford, incorporating the old tower, and in 1864 at nearby Sherbourne a new G.G. Scott church of some magnificence, complete with Ryland Chapel. So far as the Wellesbourne organ is concerned, it had a mahogany case, black naturals and white sharps, and it had been "reconditioned and enlarged"; but no further information is given.

An intriguing advertisement emerges from the bran tub, cut from *Musical Opinion* of November 1900. The Vicar and Churchwardens of Burton-on-Trent Parish Church offer a reward for information leading to recovery of pipes stolen from the new Hope-Jones organ there, or to the conviction of the thief. A little investigation led to the *Organist and Choirmaster* of the same date, where we are told "The particular significance of this theft lies not so much in the temporary crippling of the instrument, as in the fact that in every case, the pipes stolen have been representatives of new stops of special tonal character".

Intriguing *graffiti* crop up in organs. Work on a Northamptonshire organ has just revealed: "The sweetest and best girl in the whole world is Miss K ... H ... of W.F ... This is the fervent opinion of the undersigned, H.W.S.S ... 26.2.1935." "She still is, though she is now Mrs.H.W.S.S ... and the mother of two lovely daughters, Patricia aged 6½ and Elizabeth nearly two. 1st May 1947." In a music shop in the Home Counties some years ago was a poster with a picture of J.S. Bach and his not inconsiderable family, a reproduction of the cover of a book 'Bach's Organ Works'. Underneath someone had written "Obviously".

In the Northamptonshire organ just referred to is also the Ainsworth Improved Patent Action Organ Pedals installation mentioned last time. A lengthy and boastful advertisement is to be found in several issues of *Musical Opinion* in 1886. From this it emerges that the Organ Pedals were designed for attachment to pianos, which explains the idiosyncratic nature commented on.

The tone of the pedals, we are told, can be instantly adjusted by the performer between *p* and *ff* by stop or pedal. The price varied from four to sixteen guineas, and there was a ten years' warranty. For an extra five shillings, a very useful drawstop could be added, which locked the pedals, allowing the non-peddaller to rest his feet on the keys. A similar kind thought is exemplified in the Abbott & Smith organ at Oakley, near Diss. Two wooden pivoted strips are provided, each with a slot, and the strips can be moved to hold the combination pedals from moving.

The Ainsworth advertisement for the attachment claimed as "used by the most cultured Organists and Musicians [subtle difference?] all over the world" came to my notice as I was seeking a builder named Edward Specht. "Drechsler & Specht from ED. SCHULZE" advertised in *Musical Opinion* in June that year, and several times in following months we find Drechsler *solus*, but no mention of Specht or Schulze. They worked from Askew Crescent, Uxbridge Road. Drechsler is said to have 'finished' the Anneessens organ in the Italian Church, Hatton Garden, and he claimed the invention of a new pneumatic soundboard

(Patent No. 6996); while Specht is said to have built an organ for "Spitalfields Church" and for Lord Hastings at Frome. It is thought by the family who are enquiring that Edward may have been born in the City Road, Holborn district of London and had a wife Sophia. However (unless a second generation is involved) "from E.Schulze" would imply a German origin. Any information is eagerly awaited and will be gratefully received - I will pass it on to the enquirers.

PLEASE - I know I have complicated matters with two moves in ten years - but my current address, as always, is on the inside of the front cover.

Tailpiece

Who said this?

1. Longfellow (*The Singers*)
2. Denis Batigan Verne (*Hope-Jones in England*, a sympathetic study in *Musical Opinion* 1922-3)
3. J.H. Bum in 1932

The Carol Service will be followed by mince pies and mulled wine.
(Sussex Church notice)

Christmas Refreshments were laid on by the Committee, who were duly thanked.
(*Biggleswade Observer*)

Politicians are worried because populations everywhere are getting older.
(*The Economist*)

Jim and Beryl will be with us again to explore the themes of Dying and Bereavement. We look forward to these events.
(*Towards Wholeness* magazine)

The guest preacher will be ... on 'What happens when I die?' (Refreshments served afterwards)
(Southwold Church notice)

Rotherham ... Temporary Crematorium Assistant required. (The Council operates a no smoking policy)
(*Sheffield Star*)

Smoke-free zone. Guide dogs excepted. (A Doncaster supermarket)

Victory is a symbol of Nelson's greatest triumph - the defeat of French and Spanish fleets at Waterloo.
(*Military & Aviation Book Society Bulletin*)

Nelson, of course, died at Trafalgar Square in 1805.
(*Chelsea and District Standard*)

May 8. Commemoration of VD Day.
(*Petworth Magazine*)

Speak well into the microphone. The agnostics here are terrible.
(*Toastmaster's aside to Lord Coggan*)

Notes

1. *Musical Memories of Scotland*, p. 134.
2. *What's the Us el* S.J. Forrest (Mowbray) One of Fr. Forrest's inimitable volumes of clerical verse.

B.B. Edmonds

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|--|--|
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Wordstar 3.0, 6.0 (DOS only) |
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The illustration on the cover: An ordern with separate console, erected by A. Gem, in Douglas Castle Chapel, Lanark, for the Earl of Home. Illustrated in J.W. Hinton's Organ Construction, The Composers' and Authors' Press Ltd, London (1900).