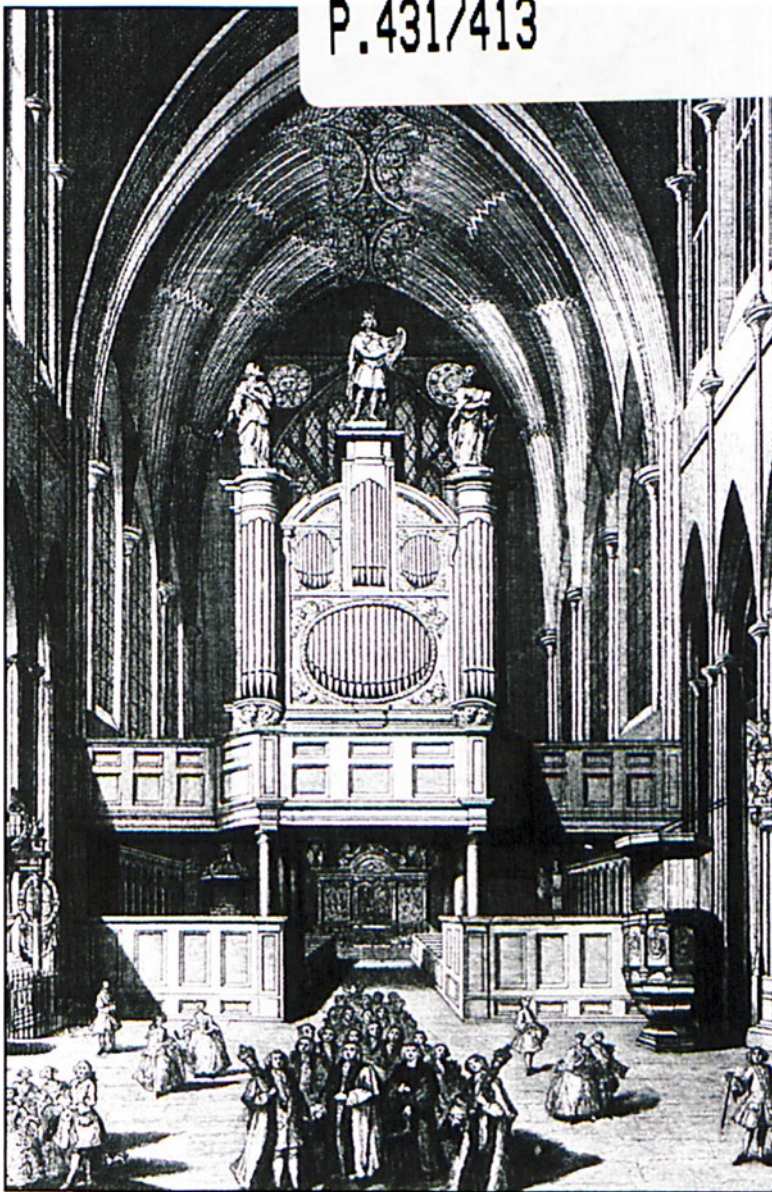


# BIOS REPORTER

P.431/413



Vol. 20, No. 4 (October 1996)

## BIOS

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<b>Acting Secretary:</b>	Jim Berrow, PhD [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<b>Assistant Secretary:</b>	Relf Clark, MA, MMus, PhD, FRCO, ARCM, LRAM [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
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*Front cover illustration: Bath Abbey: the Choir in 1750, showing the organ set up by Abraham Jordan in 1708; from a print by George Vertue.*

## EDITORIAL

*“Digital Hymnals take the place of vanishing church organists”  
(The Times, 6th September 1996)*

Most of us would assume that the path taken by youngsters aspiring to be organists includes some kind of association with the Church. Young people may well have been worshippers at a local church and have been exposed to the organ as a musical instrument in the course of a service and possibly at recitals in the same building.

Is this a correct assumption? BIOS is essentially an adult organisation with many members owing to some kind of religious affiliation. The organ remains a basically liturgical instrument yet it is a sad fact that only some twenty per cent of organists are under the age of 40 and that churches are desperate to find players willing to be committed on even a part time basis; one Sunday service in four in some cases.

At the other end of the spectrum it is clear that interest in the organ is growing, though not necessarily in a liturgical context. The availability of monies from the National Heritage Memorial Fund has prompted an interest in the restoration of historic instruments, most within churches, yet players willing to put them to use as church instruments remain a rare breed.

Indeed, rumour has it that one of our leading music colleges has received a recommendation that the examination syllabus for its organists' diplomas be amended to favour a perceived secularisation of the use of the organ - in other words performance should take precedence over those skills necessary for a thorough going church organist's training. Add to this the instilling of a belief that the 'right' instrument with the right noises must be available in order that the time and effort put into learning the repertoire should receive its 'just' reward and the British Organ would receive short shrift.

Music was only just included in the National Curriculum in schools and for a while it had to share time with Art. Even now it can often disappear into a mysterious mélange called “Creative Arts”. Although Music has a portion of the National Curriculum devoted to it, it is the subject of a National Curriculum Order. This latter is capable of wide interpretation - but it does not necessarily include that thorough grounding and exposure to good quality music which many older BIOS members experienced in school.

The potential for danger lies in the possibility of a knowledge of the organ in any context, let alone its traditional one, becoming the sole preserve of the independent sector in education. Public schools with their chapels and choral traditions, not needing to adhere to the National Curriculum, may become almost the only

breeding ground for future organists. If this should prove to be the case, and the warning signs are not far to seek, BIOS may well find itself needing to address the situation.

Activity aimed at researching the history of the organ in the British Isles: effort, often substantial, devoted to rescuing instruments and ensuring their preservation: all of this becomes of little consequence if a solid foundation is not in place to ensure that future generations will show the same concern for the instrument shared by members of BIOS.

**AH/JH**

## **A Northern Feast**

### **The Penrith Conference 27th - 30th August 1996.**

*Paul Joslin*

The 1996 Residential Conference was held in Penrith and based at Cumbria College of Agriculture and Forestry, Newton Rigg, 2 miles to the north west of the town. The establishment had extensive accommodation recently erected and was opened by Viscount Whitelaw in 1994; together with older ancillary buildings, it made a congenial base for three days of diligent investigation into a most interesting and diverse area of organ building.

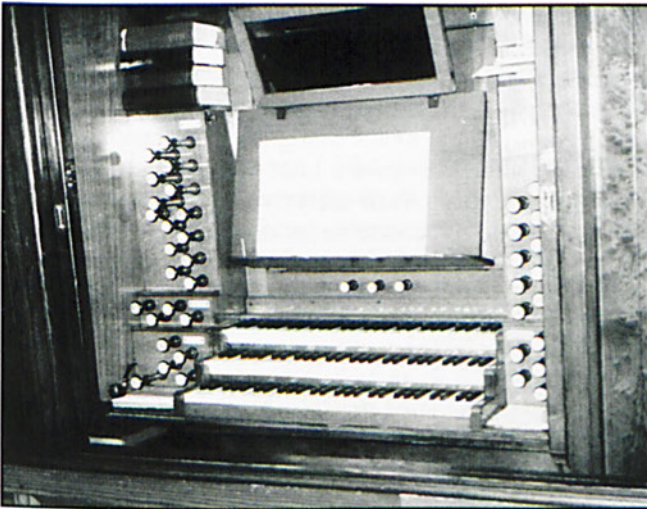
Again, only thirty-two members of BIOS were resident. After a welcome and brief introduction given by the Chairman, Revd. Dr. Nicholas Thistlethwaite, the twin themes of the conference “Nonhem Organ-Builders of the late-nineteenth century and the influence of Lt. Col. Dixon on the design of the English organ in the first half of the twentieth century,” were outlined. The opening illustrated lecture, given jointly by The Ven. L. Peat and former archivist Mr. J. Robinson gave an overall picture of the size, location and richness of the architectural features of Cumbrian churches: the ensuing dialogue included contemporary problems, arising in the maintenance of notable large churches, built during the Victorian development of Barrow-in-Furness. The talk provided an excellent background to the architectural diversity of the buildings we were to visit during the next three days, ranging from Norman to Mid-Victorian Gothic.

The second paper on the Kendal firm of Wilkinson was given by Dr. Gerald Sumner. In his extensive research into the fascinating history of this largely overlooked northern organbuilder, Gerald summarised the early connections with the Greenwood family and early attempts by William Wilkinson at organ building

in Halifax. He went on to relate how, under his son, Thomas Wilkinson, the company produced its finest organs from large premises at Stramongate, Kendal, from 1880 for the next two decades.

Considerable prominence was given not only in this lecture but in subsequent references during the conference to the firm's largest work, at Preston Com Exchange (4/54) of 1882, presently languishing in All Souls Church, Haley Hill, Halifax. Dr. Sumner related the plausible tradition that the 32ft pipes were floated on a barge from Kendal on the Lancashire Canal to the location in Preston.

The first day of visits (Wednesday 28th) under the heading "Westmorland Organs of the 1880's and 1890's" was planned by Richard Hird. Dr. Sumner's excellent



**St. George's Church, Kendal:  
Wilkinson & Sons 1883**

*Photograph: Paul Joslin* Adrian Self of Cartmel Priory, of music by

lecture had prepared us for our first location at St. George's Church, Kendal, a building of 1841, where the Wilkinson organ (3/31) of 1883 remains in largely original condition: minor changes were made by the builders when it was moved in 1911 from the original south gallery position into a spacious purpose-built north transept organ chamber. Dr. Sumner briefly introduced the organ, after which a recital was given by

Stanley, Russell, S. Wesley, Self, Whitlock and Coleridge-Taylor. Despite a serious shortage of wind for the larger choruses, the historical importance, both tonally and architecturally, of this organ was appreciated, being a rare example of unspoilt work by Wilkinson. The work of conservative restoration should be a prime consideration for this instrument. Ample sustenance was offered by church members (and accepted!) at 11am.

At St Oswald's Church, Ravenstonedale, the remarkable box-pewed interior with original three-decker pulpit created almost as much interest and discussion as the Harrison organ (2/14) of 1891. During a comprehensive talk on Harrison & Harrison of the 1880s and 1890s with particular reference to the St. Oswald organ, Richard Hird produced copious documentation, notes, and principal scalings relating to the history of the Ravenstonedale organ. His personal research had alerted the parish to

the important position of the instrument in the chronology of the Durham firm. Andrew Hayden played a recital of works by Bach, Schroeder, Buxtehude, Howells, and Rheinberger. The first of the generous daily packed lunches provided by Newton Rigg College was then consumed in the church hall!

In the afternoon, Keith Wright, sub-organist at Durham Cathedral, played a comprehensive programme of works by Dyson, Bach, Stanley, Mendelssohn, Lemare and Harwood, on the 1888 Isaac Abbott organ (3/34) at Kirkby Stephen. The case of this instrument had been installed by R. Norman Shaw in 1890. Here was a classic example of a substantial late-Victorian instrument in a cruciform church, placed into a cramped chamber site. Due to minimal tonal egress into a narrow medieval building and dry acoustics, the organ had little impact for the congregation/audience in the main body of the structure. Despite these and other major shortcomings caused by the condition of the organ, the sound of colourful registers, including a complete string chorus from 16ft-4ft on the Swell division, in Lemare's "sugary" *Andantino in D flat* was a pleasant surprise.

At St. Lawrence Appleby, Michael Gillingham gave a brief talk giving insight into the 1976 restoration of the organ (ex Carlisle Cathedral) by Laycock & Bannister. The opportunity had been taken to restore the case to its original dimensions and locate it at the west end of the church. Conversely this relatively modest two manual organ seemed to speak well into every corner of this church: a lesson in successful location and layout. Generous sustenance was provided at tea-time by the ladies of the church during this informal visit!

The second conference lecture given by Dr. Relf Clark entitled "George Dixon - a Reappraisal", introduced the second conference topic. Relf delivered a typically stimulating and thought provoking talk in which brief biographical details of Dixon's life (1870-1950) at St. Bees, personal wealth, minor military activities, evaluation of correspondence with Arthur Harrison, together with the implications of only minor influence at Norwich Cathedral, combined to create one of the finer papers of the conference. Brief reminiscences by Andrew Service of Glasgow from personal encounters in 1936 added to our understanding of this extraordinary man.

The next day (Thursday 29th) saw BIOS members at Keswick Parish Church for a short visit to see the Harrison organ (2/15) of 1912. The instrument, which contained a considerable amount of material from the previous organ of 1889 by August Gem (3/23), was demonstrated by Paul Joslin in a short programme of music by Elgar, Guilmant and Parry. If the problems of location and an over-large organ were evident the previous day, here again was an example of what appeared a small organ on paper, speaking effectively from a completely open position, enhanced by a generous acoustic: a remarkable example of voicing and tonal finish throughout.

This Harrison organ was not the only instrument with a surprisingly successful tonal concept encountered that day. At St James, Whitehaven, the Norman & Beard organ

(3/26) of 1909 was demonstrated by Geoffrey Morgan. George Dixon was consultant for this organ, a fact recorded on a brass plate on the case. Although the interior of this once glorious Georgian church had been radically altered in a re-ordering including thick green carpeting on almost every conceivable surface, the tonal finish and bright voicing of this largely orchestral organ was an unexpected delight.

Geoffrey gave a characteristically brilliant impromptu demonstration, using orchestral transcription material. It included excerpts from "*Casse - Noisette*" (Tschaikovsky), in which the remarkable Swell 16ft Corno di Bassetto in the "*Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*" and orchestral flutes were heard; two short extracts of Bach: "*Arioso*" (*F Minor Klavier Concerto*) and "*Badinerie*" (*B minor Suite*), and the theme from the slow movement of "*The New World Symphony*" (Dvorak) using the Organ's *Viole d' Orchestre*. The bright colourful registers produced enthusiastic comment. Sadly, this remarkable organ was not in the best of condition; deficiency of wind for the heavy pressure ranks was evident. A short recital of appropriate works by Elgar, Bridge and Hollins concluded what was one of the more illuminating and representative demonstrations of the whole conference.

After a further short journey to the coast we arrived at the village of St. Bees. As a result of preliminary enquiries, some members were able to locate the awesome house formerly owned by Lt. George Dixon until his death in 1950. On returning to The Priory Church of St. Mary and St. Bega we were welcomed by the Vicar, Canon Philip Bryan and an assistant organist. Ian Hare then gave a short lecture in which the history of the Livesey-Dixon partnership was explored, and the conception of the famous Willis organ of 1899 (3/36+4 prepared). Ian then played a recital of works by Handel, Rootham, Ouseley and Cameron. Permission was kindly granted afterwards to explore the magnificent internal layout of this late work of "Father Willis". The construction, engineering, layout and



**St. Bees Priory Church  
(Henry Willis 1899)**

*Photograph: Paul Joslin*

quality of workmanship of the original Willis work which included the unique pneumatic balanced swell pedals and adjustable pneumatic pistons were admired. Fortuitously, Willis had been given a substantial transept site where this large organ could be properly constructed; it even allowed room for the later addition of two full length 32ft ranks by Harrison. Whilst much admiration was forthcoming for this organ, some members of BIOS voiced minor reservations about the instrument, in relation to some revoicing, particularly of the reeds, as a result of the Dixon influence.

After an excellent conference meal later the same evening, Michael Gillingham made a characteristically engaging speech recollecting the past twenty years. Fond memories of Susi Jeans, ‘Sam’ Clutton, Ralph Downes, John Dykes-Bower and Wilfred de Peters were recalled, together with the aims and achievements of BIOS. Further reference was made by Michael at the end of his speech, in the spirit and aims of BIOS, to see the Wilkinson Preston Concert Organ restored to full working order.

The lecture on the final morning (Friday 30th) was given by Dr. Michael Sayers with the title “Samuel Renn and his Successors”. This fascinating talk which traced the development of Renn’s work early in the nineteenth century, proceeding through the work of Jardine, was further enlivened by personal reminiscences of Harold Davies, last Managing Director of Jardine & Co. and still actively “holding on” for tuners.

The talk prepared us for our last visit to see a rebuild by Jardine & Co. (1896) of unattributed earlier work at Christ Church, Penrith ( 3/23 + 2 added Hall: 1983). An effective and brightly voiced instrument that despite removal from a west end ground floor location in 1896, spoke relatively well from a chancel position - the choir division speaking through a side arch was particularly successful.

After lunch back at Newton Rigg members returned home, bringing to an end a conference which was well organised, highly instructive but providing plenty of time for important interaction between members: highly recommended to those who didn’t attend !

## **Music, Wit and Scholarship.**

Some 30 members attended the one day conference at the English Organ School and Museum at Milbome Port. The theme for the day was “Chamber Organs Old and New”. In the morning Michael Wilson gave us “A Social History of the Chamber Organ” followed by Andrew Macrea presenting “The Chamber Organ Repertoire”, which was illustrated by Margaret Phillips playing the 1769 Snetzler organ.

After an excellent lunch, prepared by Janet Budgen, William Drake shared with us



his thoughts on the provenance and possible restoration of the 1796 Samuel Green(?) organ. In contrast to the morning sessions, Richard Hobson explored “The Design of Modern Chamber Organs” which was followed by Margaret Phillips demonstrating the versatility of the 1984 Peter Collins organ.

After tea Michael Sayer spoke about “The Work of James Davis”, and then John Budgen introduced us to “Ryan’s Daughter” - the latest acquisition of the school (a three manual chamber organ originating from Ireland).

The day ended with a splendid recital by Margaret Phillips on three of the instruments of the school in succession.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable day and despite the full programme kept largely to timetable. There also seemed to be plenty of time for conversation and inspection of the several instruments. Our thanks are due to all mentioned above, to Richard Hobson for the organisation, to Margaret Phillips and David Hunt our hosts, and again to Margaret Phillips for her musicianship so freely given throughout the day. It is to be hoped that the papers given will be printed at a future date in a BIOS publication.

*D.C.*

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **From Dr. John L. Speller**

In BIOS Reporter Vol 20. No.3 there is mention of retaining “William Hill’s magnificent wrought iron band” in the new Exeter College, Oxford organ by Walker. This wrought ironwork was not originally on the old Exeter Hill but on the old New College Willis — it came from Sir Gilbert Scott’s beautiful case at New College which was destroyed when the present Grant, Degens & Bradbeer organ was built in the 1960s. It has only been at Exeter College for around thirty years. It may also be of interest that the woodwork from the old New College case was milled down and made into the new case of the Grant, Degens and Bradbeer organ at Faringdon Parish Church in Berkshire.

### **From Alastair Johnson**

The Editorial in the most recent BIOS Reporter (Vol. 20, No 3.) was both thought provoking and appropriate to a recent situation involving a small historical instrument. I had better point out from the start that my involvement was solely one of having alerted the authorities at the church in question to the fact that the instrument was of historical value and that it would be in their interest to seek

advice from an authority on this type of instrument before embarking on restoration work. As a result of correspondence between the church officers and our Chairman, two well known organ builders with sympathy for and knowledge of the sort of work needed visited and wrote detailed reports on what they felt should be done in the circumstances. It was with some surprise therefore that I read the report from the local DOA who had visited as part of the official procedure. After noting the involvement of BIOS (as a 'club' for those interested in the British organ ... a few members of which possess a great deal of knowledge but many know only a little ... he then goes on to discuss the organ in question and its various points of interest. Phrases very much in the vein of "suitable only for manuals only music from Tallis to Wesley", "cannot cope with the music of Stanley as there are no Trumpet or Comet stops" then occur (remember the organ is 1847 Gray and Davison - 2 manuals, 14 stops) along with sweeping generalisations about the state of organ building in Britain compared to that on the continent at the time. As I read it, the general tone suggested that although the organ was of historic value the authorities should be aware of those who suggest a sympathetic restoration in that the result would be of little practical use in the context apart from as a museum piece. The inference also being that the advice of BIOS should be treated with caution.

Mercifully, the parish authorities are both well informed and well aware of the fact that their mid 1860s church and organ are of tremendous importance. Moreover they, perhaps more than the DOA, know the instrument in its context and what it is able to do. Certainly, when I played it a few weeks ago it coped superbly with a full congregation and visiting Bishop at the main Communion service and my voluntaries by Wesley and Mendelssohn. I for one did not miss the Comet or Trumpet nor the 2 rank Mixture which is missing at present but which would hopefully be restored if and when work is done. As well as this the somewhat non-standard pedalboard, stop layout and almost crippling Swell pedal became familiar (almost) after time on the instrument.

I do not want to appear as a DOA basher but all the same, the following questions should be asked in this situation as, I expect, in other similar cases:

1. Does it necessarily follow that an accomplished recitalist/director of music at a large parish church or cathedral is competent to advise on the vast array of instruments in any one diocese ?
2. To whom are DOAs ultimately responsible and what happens if the advice they give is not appropriate ?
3. Is there something that we in BIOS can do to change situations such as the one discussed above - do we come over as being rather insular in our views and advice? Obviously this particular DOA does not seem to completely value our principles.

If there are any DOAs reading this please do not take what I write as blanket criticism - many dioceses have proven records of sympathetic work with the

instruments in their churches but quite obviously there is a number whose wisdom on the matter is at least questionable. Had the church officers in question at the establishment in question not been at least willing to ask advice from those “in the know” (and even the DOA in question acknowledges the scholarship of our Chairman in the field of the Victorian organ) then something of great value could be heading for disaster.

The organ under discussion will undoubtedly yield up further points of historical value and restored sympathetically will give further light on the instruments of the period but first and foremost it will serve the purpose for which it was built and for the music that was intended to be played on it. Surely the fact that it has been and continues to be able to do this effectively should be the point of departure for any advice as to what should be done in the future.

## **What Do They Talk About?**

*Jim Berrow*

A reasonable question asked as a result of the questionnaire included in the last issue of the *Reporter*. (*Have you returned yours? Results in the next edition*). Some members would like to have more information on Council meetings and others have asked whether Council minutes could be published in the *Reporter*.

Before taking over as Acting Secretary, I was conscious of the need for transparency in running a national amenity society. Unfortunately, like past Secretaries, I am not sure I have a solution. After much editing, the minutes of the June meeting ran to 2,710 words on seven closely-typed pages (The September minutes have yet to be drafted). The length is the result of producing a clear accurate record, which is acceptable to all parties. Reproduction in full would destroy more forests and ensure serious objections from the Treasurer - our postage costs are already too high.

You should also know that, with boring regularity, the Council agendas tend to repeat themselves. After the usual introductory details, the matters arising from previous meetings take considerable time, as they cover progress reports on previous topics not otherwise on the agenda. Unusually, the September meeting included arrangements of the preparation of an Annual Report (we need to comply with the Charity Commissioners’ new regulations); a report on progress (or lack of it!) towards changes in the constitution; a similar report on a proposal (your Secretary’s) to establish a Development Plan and formal Annual Budget. Officers’ business follows, either as verbal or written reports; some items are brief, others are intermittently extended. For instance, in September we spent some time on a commercial initiative to set up a store for redundant organs (not a BIOS activity).

Publications are then discussed, starting with the *Reporter* and the *Journal* in production, followed by the allocation of responsibilities for future issues and contributors for the *Bios Column* in *Organists' Review*. There is a similar procedure for conferences - reports back, arrangements for the immediate future, topics and individuals who might take on future meetings and will it make a profit? Of special interest is a forthcoming date with the IBO.

Our meetings end with general matters; exceptionally, in September, we discussed the award of honorary life membership to three distinguished members (details at the AGM). "Organs under threat" followed: the most painful part of the proceedings. Problematically, the resolution of many of these cases can be damaged by the wrong publicity and diplomacy is the preferred option. We welcome accurate information for this item but please make sure that it is accurate and well supported.

All minutes eventually find their way to the Archive and are open for your inspection. I know it is not entirely satisfactory, but if you have a special concern, please write and I will attempt to extract the information. Perhaps, when I have the necessary kit, it will be possible to make a summary of minutes available via the *Internet* (a virtual Council meeting?) but be aware that our negotiating strength on some issues might be diluted by inadvertent indiscretion.

Meanwhile if there is something you wish to have discussed, please let us know. Not surprisingly we would prefer solutions rather than problems but, where appropriate, members do attend to help us with some topics and we welcome your views and assistance. If you think you can shake and move things as a future member of the Council, please let me know. There is one snag - you will then have to read the Minutes!

## Tickling the Surface

### FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Archive has an odd assortment of published books on its shelves. It was never intended to have a library to equal that of, say, the Royal College of Organists: the books we have are those that came incidentally with collections of archival material or have been specifically donated. Amongst the former is a copy of *Arp Schnitger, Organ Builder*, by P. K. Rheinberg, published in the U.S.A. in 1982. It is not a profound work but it tickles the surface of the subject quite effectively. I became excited by an apparent similarity of scales used by Schnitger and Father Smith: the measurements of the 4' Praestant at Nieuw Scheema [Schnitger 1695] given by Rheinburg are close to those of the Choir 4' Principal at St. Mary the Great, Cambridge [Smith 1697-98] given by Nicholas Thistlethwaite in *BIOSJ2*. The

following table illustrates this:

	<b>Schnitger N Scheema Praestant 4'</b>	<b>Smith Cambridge Principal 4'</b>
<b>4'C</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>82.0 est</b>
<b>2'C</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>48.0</b>
<b>1'C</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>27.5</b>
<b>W C</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>17.5</b>
<b>W C</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>11.0</b>

: came the opportunity to do a more detailed survey of the Smith pipework at Cambridge when the organ was taken down for reconstruction by N. P. Mander Ltd. A team led by Dominic Gwynn undertook this work. Whereas Nicholas Thistlethwaite had been able to measure only the C pipes of each rank - dependent on accessibility - it was possible for Dominic Gwynn's team to measure every pipe. This brought into greater focus the scaling of the pipework; detailed graphs could be drawn upon which interpretations could be attempted. There is a superficial disparity between the measurements, but this is simply because the earlier set consisted of internal diameters and the later set external circumferences: they are in fact complementary (1).

A graphical display of the complete measurements shows a scale line with one or two kinks where adjacent pipes have the same measure. This can happen accidentally in the marking out of the pipe - in which case the original scale line resumes after the kink. It can also occur where the pipe maker deliberately adjusts the progression of the scale: adjacent notes given the same measure, with subsequent displacement of measurements, will increase the scale by one semitone. The reverse of this procedure - the omission of a measurement from the series will decrease the scale by one semitone. This is a not uncommon procedure discernible certainly in later 18th century and 19th century organ building. It would seem that Smith deliberately modified his basic scale in this fashion. If the kinks are ironed out a basic scale emerges. It shows an affinity to the measurements given in the Talbot MS - though not quite as close as those shown by the measurements of the surviving Smith pipes from St. Paul's Cathedral (2). It means that the basic scale Smith used was not, after all, similar to the scale Schnitger used at Nieuw Scheema. It is reasonable to suggest that the two scales emanate from the same broad school of organ building but too much cannot be laid on this evidence alone. Scale lines may be likened to the several courses taken by aircraft flying the Atlantic: they all go from Europe to America along the same broad route but with slightly different

alignment; Principal scales all must lie within the parameters giving Principal tone. It is inevitable that there are occasional coincidences and near similarities that are not dependent on each other.

It means that measurements of C pipes alone may not give a true picture of the original scale used. Even a consistent run of pipe markings does not preclude the possibility that deliberate displacement has taken place in the initial marking out stage of pipe making. It is necessary, therefore, to measure every pipe in the rank. In practice this may not be as daunting as it looks: the complete measurement of one rank - usually the Great Principal - may reveal a basic scale to which all the other principal scaled ranks in the organ relate; these latter can then be convincingly demonstrated with sample measurements only (e.g. of C pipes).

It all illustrates what most wise people already know: the interpretation of scaling is a minefield; it requires the angelic tread: I suppose I have always enjoyed fooling around ...!

1. I will resist being sidetracked into the merits and demerits of different ways of measuring pipes. I have dealt with the matter in the work on English pipe scaling that is now complete. It will become available in some form to those who are interested.

2. These pipes, the property of of BIOS, are preserved at Reading University. The measurements closely conform to those of the Talbot MS, thus lending support to the suggestion that its author received them from Smith and that they relate to the organ Smith was making for St. Paul's Cathedral.

*DCW*

*Book Review'*

## **The Vicar's Gift**

**John L. M. Bolton**

Organotes Publishers, Kettering 1996, £9  
(ISBN 0 9522367 0 2).

Thorough studies of historic British organs, or organs containing historic material, are to be encouraged. This book is a desktop publication of 94 pages stapled in card covers. Its subtitle defines its purposes as a study of the organ, attributed to Christopher Shrider, in the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Finedon, Northamptonshire. The attribution to Shrider is assumed rather than discussed, and there is no conclusion about the organ's origins.

The organ, built, it is said, in 1717, was rebuilt and enlarged by Holdich in 1872 and has narrowly avoided several attempts to "modernise" it in more recent times.

A happy absence of funds ensured its survival, albeit in modified form today. The book claims to describe “the people who built it, contributed to it, and played it.”

Mr. Bolton’s skill as a draughtsman is immediately apparent, and the book’s great virtue is the fold-out measured drawings, showing the organ’s original, conjectural layout and its internal disposition. An appendix contains detailed pipe descriptions and markings, supplied by Messrs. Goetze and Gwynn. but their interesting findings are not analysed in the text.

The major criticism of this volume, especially given its high price for such basic presentation, is that it tries to cover too much ground, firstly, by attempting to provide a complete resumé of the development of the seventeenth century *European* organ and secondly, by including much that is not relevant or only peripherally so, to the subject in hand. It can be of little interest to the serious reader to have pictures of the present Vicar, various North-European organ cases (often poorly reproduced), a nineteenth-century organ in Toronto, Canada, and, bizarrely, an illustrated chapter on the organ in Finedon’s French twin town; yet the photograph of the Trinity College case, the most important comparative illustration, is a poor thing.

The footnotes could surely have been presented in an acceptable short form; as it is they frequently and unnecessarily occupy more than half the space of some pages. Sloppy errors occur; for instance, citations which are omitted from the bibliography, the date of Gerard Smith’s Whitchurch organ, the repeated misspelling of our Chairman’s name, and did Father Smith come from Germany?

Although irritating, such faults do not detract from the implicit good intentions of this project. However, the text is devalued by a conclusion which has some very suspect (electrical) suggestions for future work, which would increase the organ’s “tonal resource to suit the current liturgy and literature requirements”.

*Jim Berrow*

## **Apology**

A sincere apology to Barrie Clark for the misspelling of his name in the July 1996 issue of the *Reporter*.

**ADVANCE NOTICE  
THE 1997 BIOS  
RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE  
will be held in Scotland  
at a venue between Aberdeen and Inverness  
Further details to follow**

# Redundancies and Fates

W.ENGLAND 96/26 X

anon

part early 19c

Action	mechanical
Specification	Man 8 8 8 4 4 Pd. 16 (12 pipes)
Casework	Gothic front of dummies:panelling to one side
Dimensions	hi2' w5' 2" d5' 10" plus pedalboard

N.ENGLAND (96/22)

Nelson

ca 1910

Action	mechanical
specification	Gt. 8 8 4 Sw. 8 8 2 Pd. 16
Casework	piperack front, Bourdons to sides over panelling
Dimensions	h 13' w7' 6" d4' 6"

WALES (96/25)

1907/1979

Hill/Balch

Action	electro-pneumatic: detached console
Specification	Gt. 8 8 4 4 2 II (space for Trumpet) Sw. 8 8 8 8 4 2 8 8 (space for Nazard) Pd. 16 16 8
Casework	attractive front, pipes arranged 6-5-15-5-6
Dimensions	h 18' 6" w15' 9" d6' 6"

N.ENGLAND

(96/27)

?Nicholson (Newcastle)

ca 1900

Action	mechanical (manuals), pneumatic (pedals)
Specification	Gt. 8 8 8 4 4 8 Sw. 8 8 8 4 2 8 Pd. 16 16
Casework	silvered front pipes arranged 5-13-5
Dimensions	h 17'2" w10' 6" d 7' plus pedalboard



W.ENGLAND  
(96/23) X

Willis

1888

Action mechanical

Specification Gt. 8 8 4 2

Sw. 8 4 8

Pd. 16

Casework piperack

Dimensions hi6' 6" w8' 4" d9' plus pedalboard

*X denotes an organ BIOS wishes to see retained in the United Kingdom*

## Fates

The instruments identified below have one feature in common - they were all discarded by Baptist congregations as surplus to requirements.

**Ref. 94/22.** The small Father Willis organ, until recently in Cheriton Baptist Church near Folkestone, has a specification similar to that of the famous organ on wheels built for St Paul's Cathedral in 1881. The layout is however unusual; the side console faces the back of the Swell beyond which is the Great. This instrument was made in 1890 and came, it is claimed, from a working men's club in North Kent. It now stands in the specially constructed room of a private residence near Salisbury.

**Ref. 94/33.** Travelling west from Folkestone as far as Hastings, one is close to Battle where, in 1903, the Baptists are said to have acquired a one manual Holdich organ of about 1850 from Ceylon Place Baptist Church in Eastbourne. The six stops include a chorus to Fifteenth and an Oboe. Cased on all sides, the organ presents a front of two outer three pipe towers with substantial cornices and, in between, a nine pipe flat above which is a fleur de lys. Peter Collins has restored this organ without alteration and erected it in Reach Parish Church, Cambs.

**Ref. 96/8.** Organs by Hunter & Webb are rare in Gloucestershire (and probably elsewhere). The charming one manual instrument in Minchinhampton Baptist had a previous home, possibly in Newcastle. It has not yet proved possible to identify exactly where it came from or the year it arrived in Gloucestershire. The eight manual stops and one Pedal stop are all enclosed and the original 27 note Pedal compass remains unchanged. The Hunter & Webb has been sold to Norton Parish Church near Daventry and will be installed there by Michael Latham.

**FOR SALE:** Wooden Stopped Flute 4' by Bevington ca. 1890, complete with upper board and rack. Also pedalboard 30 notes and bench. All ex St. Mary's, Chessington. Enquiries /offers to Brian Lamble, [REDACTED]

# Notes and Queries

*Who said this?*

1. 1943 - *The baroque organ as revived in Germany was essentially a 'stunt' revival.... it would be of great value if every college which teaches the art of organ playing had a small but correct type of baroque instrument. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that all first study should be on the baroque type of instrument; low pressure, no enclosure, tracker action, no combination system.... This would assist students by impressing upon them the pure austerities and beauties of true organ design, to be followed by acquaintance with modern innovations, which would then be appreciated as supplementary and not basic.... Organ builders, also, would be required to become acquainted with the underlying principles of their craft....*

2. *"The Lord be with you' chanted Minor Canon T on Bflat, unaccompanied and perfectly pitched. He allowed the last vowel to linger, then to dissolve in a refined diminuendo. The effect was nearly as pleasing to his hearers - and possibly even to God - as it was to Minor Canon T himself. "Aa-wey-wa-spey-wi-T" responded the choir of L. Cathedral in mellifluous Donald Duck.*

Organs were perhaps not common in parish churches in the 14th century but Orpington possessed one as early as 1340. The Rector, Geoffrey de Hakenesse, purchased a pair of organs in London and presented them (so the parishioners claimed) to the church. The instrument had however, been removed to the rectory - "pro solacione ipsius rectoris et parochianorum suorum ac aliorum ad eum venientum" (*Canterbury ms A 36*) - to amuse the rector and his friends. It was still there when he died and his executors refused to give it up. The vicar and churchwardens sued the executors in the Canterbury Consistory Court which ultimately restored the organ to the church.

In times past when travel was much more difficult, organ repairs could sometimes be carried out by persons such as the parish clerk. Kendal's new organ of 1702 by Bernard Smith, described as "Organist of Collegiate Church, Manchester" (*Annals of Kendal 1832, C. Nicholson*) is said to have had an Open Diapason "one of the sweetest and richest in England". Its pipes were damaged as a result of church repairs and in 1714 Bryan Mackreth, the Clerk, was requested to make repairs. This comprised "taking down and repairing ye Large Front pipes....making 6 new pipes.....as many as were broken viz - 1 for ye Principal, 2 for ye Fifteenth, one for ye Twelfth, one for ye Cornett and one for ye Sesquialtera.... securing and repairing ye Bases of ye Trumpet wch being very much crushed and broken in several places were useless: and making six tongues for ye trebles.... fixing and tuning the whole organ."

Not bad for a parish clerk! More was to follow in 1722 (various repairs in the interim) when Bryan Mackreth "in consequence of the sum of forty three pounds, payable unto the said Bryan Mackreth upon finishing his work that he.... shall re-

cast all the front pipes of the organ anew of good and sufficient mettle, as also the tops of the Trumpet pipes, and that he shall repair and tune all the pipes in the organ and what else he shall think proper for him to do to make ye organ compleat and effectual". I wonder how many Father Smith pipes have had the 'treatment'?

Bryan was followed in 1745 by Mark Burn, clerk and former organist. In 1748, "several pipes ... are much out of repair .. the bellows broke in several places ... and whereas the Trumpet stop requires to be now tun'd, it being a stop which gives most satisfaction to the Congregation, it is ordered that ye pipes and Bellows be immediately repaired by Mr. Bum and that he be allowd the expense thereof and also a constant additional allowance of twenty shillings to keep the Trumpet stop in right tune". By 1762 the professionals had taken over.

A few years after WWII, I was visiting my old home in Harbome and found that John Holt's old workshop in Clarence Road then bore the name "Walter James Bird & Son". That firm had been acquired by L. R. Fleming and moved from its former Selly Park locality. The rebuilding of the blitzed organ of St. Agatha, Sparkbrook (soon to be destroyed again by a 13 year old arsonist) was in progress and the restoration of Harbome Methodist organ in prospect. Both instruments were well known to me and I soon got to know Mr. Fleming who had been area representative for Hill, Norman & Beard. Some bits from his correspondence follow.

"Bossward I know a little about because Mr. Bird commenced his apprenticeship with them. Old Mr. Bossward died shortly after Bird's advent. The two sons were drunkards - strange how in the old days, beer and organs went together - and in a very short time the business had broken up and Bird started off with the remnants of the tuning connection before he was 21.

"It is nice to know that I am remembered in connection with the first Wembley Exhibition (1924). I was on the H N & B stand for five months and would then be about 19. I remember the Willis contingent, who had been putting the organ in at Liverpool Cathedral, visiting the stand one Saturday afternoon headed by Thompson-Alien (with whom I had a long and somewhat heated argument) and I met quite a number of notabilities from at home and abroad including one shining light amongst organ experts and critics, who so monopolised the stand that I had to remove him courteously but firmly therefrom!" (Any guesses?)

"I once visited the home of a lorry driver in Rookery Road, Handsworth, who had built a theatre organ in his 'front room', having removed the wall of the other room to make space. There was a cocktail cabinet in the back of the console and a recital was being given by a theatre organist of some eminence. A result of this, presumably, was that his wife left him. Fleming writes, '...he drove a van for Jamesons the timber people who were all organists. This organ found its way, I believe, to the Methodist Church at Chadsmoor, near Cannock, being Harris's first job'. Harris Organs of Birmingham was basically what remained of Conacher, Sheffield, when Jardines creamed off that business." (*Any relation to Stanley*

*Harris, late head of Robert Slater & Son, Forest Gate, London. E. ? Editor)*

When St. Mary, Primrose Hill was being planned, seven trustees were appointed to establish and develop it, one being Thomas Hill. The church was completed in 1871. At the time Bishop Jackson refused to consecrate it, but by 1885 the more tolerant attitude of Temple had prevailed. In later years it became known for the work of Percy Dearmer and Martin Shaw. Thomas' son, Arthur George, (later Dr.) Hill joined the choir as a boy and remained in it for some forty years; he became a trustee and was a churchwarden for some years. In his later life, his temperament and personal problems made him increasingly 'difficult' and, for reasons not recorded, he transferred his allegiance to St. Mark, Marylebone Road. However, I have come to believe that a remark in a Conrad Noel book may hold the clue. Noel, the noted "Red" Vicar of Thaxted, had been curate at Primrose Hill and mentions a quarrel with a 'rich organ builder' - some may have called this a contradiction in terms! The incumbent in his time was Dearmer, hardly likely to have proved a soothing influence. In fact two other master organ builders attended St. Mary's, Casson and Walker. The story survives that they were all present on the occasion the organ misbehaved. An appeal to Hill fell on stony ground - he was not dressed for organ repair work. Neither of the others would interfere - it was Hill's organ. That was that.

The Congregationalists at Clare obtained ca1927, an organ, possibly not new, by Timothy Wadsworth of Huddersfield (*B/OSJ 8 p7*). This replaced a small instrument by John Irvine of Little Hadham, which is said to have gone to Lavenham. Organs attributed to him are at Lindsell in Essex (1762) and possibly Horley, Oxfordshire (1761). Information about him, or any other organs by him, and indeed any by Timothy Wadsworth, would be welcome.

### **Answers to "Who said this"**

1. Henry Willis III in "The Organ" vol XXII pi84
2. David Williams in "Murder in Advent" - a good thriller.

### **Tailpiece**

God will judge the earth tomorrow (God willing). (*South Wales Echo*)

Agnus Dei was famous for church music. (*A Tiverton pupil*.)

"Mozart in the Morning" includes "Eine kleine Nachtmusik" and other lively wake-up calls. (*Britannia Music Club Catalogue*.)

Have you got Bach's Terracotta & Fugue? (*Customer at St. George's Music Shop, Norwich*.)

The Water Gala is looking for handsome men to enter a Mr. Mussels contest. (*Thanet Gazette*.)

Conscious person required for various duties. (*Southern Cross*.)

I do think people have to look seriously at what they sitting on. (*ML of Intercraft*.)

Honey Roast Whale is not on the menu. It should have read quail. (*Scotland on Sunday*.)

Thursday - Pot Luck Supper. Prayer and Medication afterwards. (*Salisbury Church Notice*.)

**BBE**

# BIOS LUNCHEON SATURDAY 7th DECEMBER 1996

Following last year's successful BIOS Buffet Lunch, we are planning another for December 7th, 1996. The Guest Speaker at the luncheon will be IAN BELL, formerly a director of N. P. Mander Ltd., and now an independent Consultant, and first Administrator of the new Institute of British Organ Building. His talk is entitled:

## **"But who's in the front half of the horse? A blinkered look at Organ-building's busy year for 1996".**

In view of the staggering miscellany of the special events that have followed one another during the year (with more to come?) - including the new IBO, The ISOB Cambridge meeting etc., this promises to be most stimulating.

The cost will be £18.50 including wine and coffee: **Mrs. Pauline Tuft** will again undertake her excellent catering. Members are warmly invited to bring family and guests.

- LOCATION:** Latymer Upper School,  
King Street, Hammersmith, London W6  
Parking available. Nearest Tube Station: Ravenscourt Park.
- TIME:** 12.30 for 1pm
- COST:** Cheques for £18.50 (per person) made payable to Alfred Champniss.

**CONTACT:** Send remittance to Alfred Champniss, [REDACTED]

**TELEPHONE**

**ENQUIRIES:** [REDACTED]

## BIOS LUNCHEON SATURDAY DECEMBER 7th 1996

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The British Institute of Organ Studies  
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**DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC**

**SATURDAY 15th February 1997**  
**10.30am - 6pm**

The conference will focus on research activities in the following areas:

- ◆ **The Barrel Organ**
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i I wish to attend the One Day  
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• February 1997 and I enclose full  
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: (please delete as applicable).



**to arrive not later than**

**dfo Friday 17th January 1997.**

: Signed..... i

Date

199

# Editorial Information

Co-Editors:

Andrew Hayden, B.Mus., MPhil., FTCL.,  
[REDACTED]

John Hughes, B.Mus.,  
[REDACTED]

The Editors welcome articles, news, information, letters, etc. and can accept them in these ways:

**Typewritten copy** by post to Andrew Hayden.

**3.5" computer disc**, along with a draft version of the text, sent to John Hughes. The following formats are readable:

- DOS 360K, 720K, 1.44M. Preferably export your text in ASCII format; RTF files; most Windows and DTP files can be read.
- Acorn: [Impression Publisher, [Ovation, [Edit files
- Atari: 360K, 720K; ASCII text
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**Illustrations and photographs** accompanying articles are welcome; they should be good quality originals or quality copies. Ordinary photocopies will not reprint satisfactorily. Computer generated images on disc along with hardcopy may be acceptable. Illustrations will not be returned unless a suitable s.a.e. is enclosed.

**Correspondence arising from Notes & Queries** must be sent direct to The Revd. B.B.Edmonds, [REDACTED]

## Copy deadline:

The deadline for submitting copy for the January 1997 issue of the *Reporter* is **December 1st 1996**.

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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.

To conserve the sources and materials for the history of the organ in Britain, and to make them accessible to scholars.

To work for the preservation, and, where necessary, the faithful restoration of historic organs in Britain.

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.

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