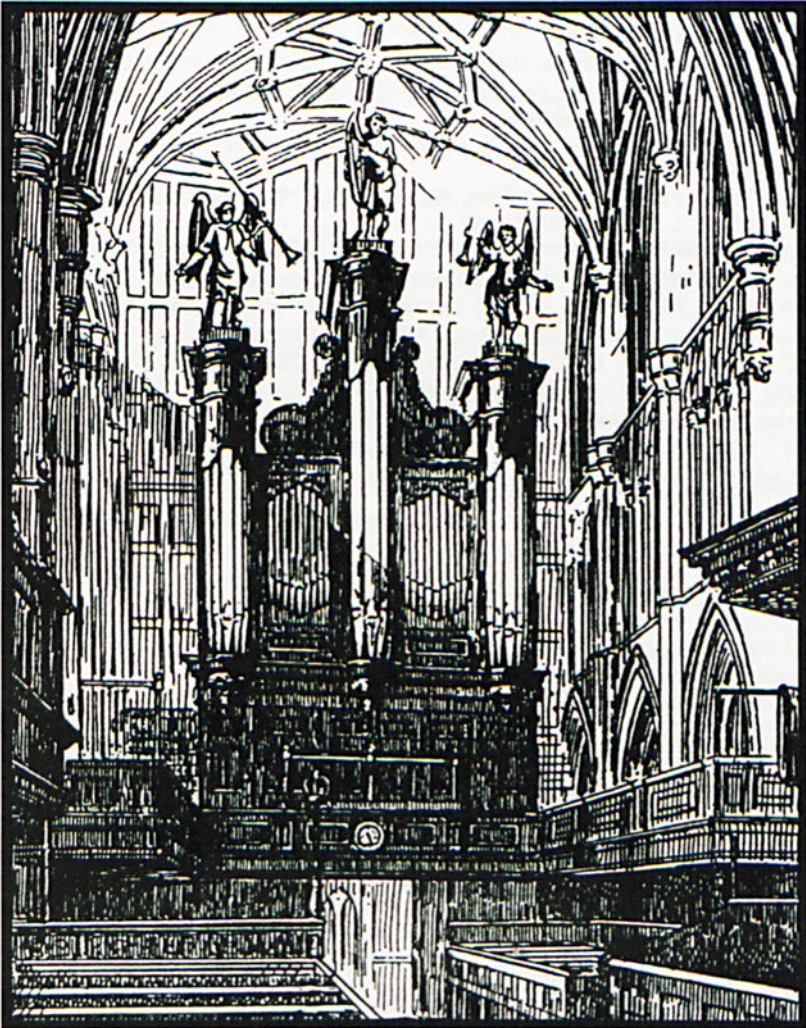


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# BIOS

# REPORTER

April 1997, Vol.XXI, No.2



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The Editors welcome articles, news, information, letters, etc. as typewritten copy and, where possible, on 3.5 inch computer disc: most filetypes can be read. Illustrations and photographs must be good quality originals, and be sent with a suitable s.a.e. for return. Correspondence arising from "Notes & Queries" must be sent direct to The Revd. B.B. Edmonds. [REDACTED]

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# Honorary Membership

## Nicholas Thistlethwaite

It was noted in the last *Reporter* that the Council had offered Honorary Membership to a third person in addition to the Rev. Bernard Edmonds and Mr. Frank Fowler.

We can now announce that Mr. Henry' Willis has accepted Council's offer of Honorary Membership. Mr. Willis has retired recently as Managing Director of Henry Willis & Sons Ltd. after more than 30 years at the helm of the firm founded by his great-grandfather in 1845. With his permission and generous co-operation, BIOS has arranged the microfilming of material from the Willis archives, and this will eventually be made available for consultation at Birmingham. The Council extends a warm welcome to Mr. Willis as a new' member of BIOS.

## Editorial

*“Having selected your builder as the one to execute the contract, give him carte blanche and your complete confidence*

We make no apology for returning to the perennial controversy over the responsibilities of organ design and building. Elsewhere in this *Reporter* we reprint an article written in 1928 by Aubrey Allen, which coincidentally but providentially illuminates the recent creation of the Institute of British Organbuilding. This new venture recognises that British organ building needs an organisation devoted to the exposition and maintenance of the highest standards in design and construction, allied to a recognition that organ building and, importantly, restoration, are much more serious undertakings today than they have ever been. Vitally, the new Institute is aware that the organ as a musical instrument is worthy of far more serious consideration both from its builders and from those who study and use it.

Aubrey Allen drew attention to the ludicrous demands of some organists, based on no more authority or experience other than being “the organist”. Some performers have had various stops added to perfectly good instruments in the name of providing “authentic” sounds for their repertoire - a Tierce for Couperin, a Tuba for Cocker. Sadly, organ builders have not always been able to resist such pressures, whether from fear of losing valuable work, or just misjudgement.

The skill and judgement of J.S. Bach, composer, performer, organ designer and inspector, in these matters, have failed to incite humility in those who have viewed the instrument as a kind of glorified musical Meccano set, to be dismantled and

modified according to the organist's whim. The authority of Bach's testing routines must have been a powerful incentive for organ builders to give of nothing but their best, a discipline which might have minimised some of the more dubious design features of the recent past. Organbuilders have nothing to fear from the true expert, who will recognise the results of experience, judgement, and Bair.

The Aims of BIOS and those of the IBO are directed to the same end - the continued improvement of the status of the organ as a musical instrument. The promise of the new IBO in terms of standards in design and execution can only be for the good of the instrument.

## READING CONFERENCE

Christopher Kent was unable to be present at this conference because of serious family illness; Jim Berrow completed the organisation and presentation of this highly successful day event. David Knight gave an illuminating paper entitled "*The emergence of Swelling Organs*" Christopher Gray followed with "The Highest Style of Art" - The Life and Work of T.C.Lewis 1833-1915". Jim Berrow replaced Christopher Kent's intended paper with a study, accompanied by slides, of social and industrial conditions relating to organ building in Worcester during the nineteenth century. The day concluded with an organ recital in Reading School Chapel by Relf Clark, which explored some relatively unfamiliar repertoire. Elsewhere in this issue we reprint the other four papers **given** at the Conference.

## Obituary

# Austin Niland (1922-1997)

### Nicholas Thistlethwaite

The death of Austin Niland on 20th January 1997 has deprived organ scholarship in this country of one of its senior figures.

He was by profession a civil servant, but it is as a scrupulous and well-informed writer on musical matters in general, and the organ in particular, that he will be remembered. He was a careful author, unwilling to commit himself to print until he had thoroughly researched his subject; this is perhaps why he was so effective a foil to the inspired impetuosity of Sam Clutton in their classic study "*The British Organ*"(1963). For a generation, that book provided inspiration and information, and suggested lines of enquiry to be further explored. On his own account. Austin was author of "*An Introduction to the Organ*"(1968), various articles over the years in *Musical Opinion*, *The Organ*, and *The American Organist*, and a monograph, "*The Organ at St. Mary's, Rotherhithe*"(1982). He had for many years been working on a comprehensive study of the organs at St. Paul's Cathedral; sadly, he did

not live to see the publication of a short extract from this potentially greater work in "*Fanfare for an Organ Builder*" - a volume of essays presented to Noel Mander. Mander and Niland knew each other well. Mander had restored the Rotherhithe organ in 1959; Clutton had been adviser and Niland was briefly Organist. Mander was also of great assistance to the two authors during the writing of "*The British Organ*". The collaboration with Clutton had another side: he and Niland were for some years Joint Secretaries of the Organs Advisory Committee of the Council for the Care of Churches. This was in the late-50s and early-60s when the work of that Committee was only just beginning, and they provided an invaluable sense of purpose to that infant body.

Anxiety and ill-health overshadowed Niland's last years, but he was always glad to see old (and not-so-old) friends and chat about matters of common interest. He was also unfailingly helpful to those who wrote with enquiries, and would reply promptly with a neatly-typed letter, subscribed in familiar brown ink. Niland was a devout churchman and his Requiem was held at the Church of the Annunciation, Washington Street, Brighton, on 30th January. Representatives of the Council for the Care of Churches, and members of BIOS and the Organ Club attended, and the service ended on an appropriately joyous and triumphant note with the *Siciliano for a high ceremony*, by Herbert Howells. May he rest in peace.

# Miserable Dumbledores

## A Paper on Barrel Organs

READING  
CONFERENCE  
PAPER

**Christopher Turner**

In Thomas Hardy's novel. *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1873), William Dewy, violoncellist and bass to the church band, was moved to say:

*"And harmonious," William continued in a louder voice, and getting excited by these signs of approval, "harmonious and barrel-organs" ("Ah!" and groans from Spinks) "be miserable - what shall I call 'em? - miserable -" ..... "Miserable dumbledores!"*

Hardy portrays sympathetically the feelings of players facing the demise of the choirs and instrumental bands which had accompanied the metrical psalms in many of our churches and dissenting chapels since the Restoration until the mid-19th century. Notwithstanding, the organ was considered to be the most desirable instrument for use in worship during this period - a view supported by Thomas Mace in his book "*Musick's Monument*", suggesting that the Parish "Clark" should be

taught to play the common psalm tunes at minimal cost to the parish and that, when that dignitary was:

*“well accomplish’d, he will be so doated upon by all the pretty ingenuous Children, and Young men in the Parish, that scarcely any of them, but will be begging now and then a shilling or two of their Parents to give the Clark, that he may teach them to pulse a Psalm-Tune; the which any such Child or Youth will be able to do in a week or fortnights time very well.”* 1

However, many parishes, especially those in rural areas, failed to provide an organ due in all probability to the initial cost of purchase, the cost of upkeep and repair, the uncertainty of obtaining the services of an organist, the need to provide some form of remuneration, and the limited use to which an organ could be put. So it was that small bands of instrumentalists prevailed, giving rise to many colourful anecdotes such as this one from Heanton Punchardon Church, Devon:

*“The band ... comprised a fiddle, cornet and trombone. On special occasions a clarionet player came over from Braunton, and now and then there was also a flute. The band sat in the Western gallery of the Church, so did the choir of about twelve boys and a girl with an adult leader named Richard Clarke. During the early part of the service band and choir sat in mystic seclusion behind two red curtains running on rods. When the time came for the ... (metrical psalm) these curtains were noisily drawn back, and the congregation turned in the pews, and, with their backs to the Altar, faced the performers.\* From his box below the pulpit William Clogg, the parish clerk, gave out the ... (psalm) with the usual preface: “Let us zeng to the praase and glary of Goad.” Then might be heard from the gallery the word “Pitch!” and the sound of the tuning-fork struck by the choir leader, with the remark, “Doant ee zeng till I do zeng”! He marked the time of the ... (psalm) by stumping all through with his wooden leg.”*2.

(\*hence the term ‘to face the music’.)

However, there was an alternative form of support at hand: The Barrel Organ. Although the barrel mechanism as applied to the organ was known long before the Restoration, the earliest claim for the installation of such an instrument is at the church of King Charles the Martyr, Peak Forest, Derbyshire c.1700. Unfortunately this is unsubstantiated<sup>3</sup> and the manufacture of church barrel organs was at its height from c.1760 until 1840 which, interestingly, coincides with the main period of band activity. In many churches the barrel organ caused the demise of the band as the quotation from Hardy suggests and there is certainly evidence to show that this was often the case as for example, at Masham, Yorkshire, where the band:

*“was followed by the introduction of a Barrel Organ - an instrument of at least very restricted powers. This probably held a position of*

*importance for about a quarter of a century, when, Sunday after Sunday, its monotonous drone echoed through the church, and when no doubt the fiddles, clarinets, and bassoons, were often wished back again. Here it may be added that the reign of the barrel organ was almost despotic throughout Mashamshire during the early years of the Nineteenth century.” 4.*

A relative of the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould recorded in her diary of 1813 that she:

*Walked over this Sunday to South Mimms Church to hear a barrel-organ that has just been erected. It made very beautiful and appropriate music, and admirably sustained the voices of the quire, but I do not myself admire these innovations in the conduct of Divine worship.5.*

Not everyone agreed. In his “*Essays, Historical and Critical, on English Church Music*” of 1795, the poet William Mason professed his preference for “*the mechanical assistance of the Cylindrical or Barrel Organ to the fingers of the best parochial organists*” - a view which probably reflected his preference for music free from elaborate decoration so prevalent in the eighteenth century. This apart, the use of mechanical musical accompaniment offered other considerable advantages. Barrel organs were cheaper than a conventional organ having fewer pipes which, although limiting the keys available, made them compact. They could be operated by a person of no technical ability and were musically reliable - factors which the builders Bryceson were not slow to point out in material they published c.1815 where they claimed that barrel organs were “*equal in performance to a finger organ, and will entirely supersede the use of other instruments.*” 6.

The problem with the barrel organ was its limited repertoire. Few instruments had more than three barrels of ten tunes each, and when in 1874 the rector of Bulwick Church, Northamptonshire, complained of their barrel organ that “*it has 30 tunes of which we are all tired*”, his brother George Maydwell Holdich designed and built a new 2-manual and pedal organ for his parish.<sup>7</sup> The limitations of the barrel organ were far less apparent if it were used to supplement the musical accompaniment, and there is evidence it co-existed with a gallery band in many parishes. At St. Andrew’s Church, Fingringhoe, Essex, a choir and band were active in 1801 when a local farmer, Joseph Page, recorded in his diary on the 21st June that:

*“A great concourse of people assembled at Fingringhoe church this day to hear psalm singing, there being upwards of twenty vocal and instrumental performers. The church was completely crowded the aisles as well as the chancell and porch were completely filled.” 8*

The band survived until 1860 when a harmonium was introduced, but a barrel organ was installed during this period, and the churchwardens’ accounts record

payments to an “organist”. Similarly at Parson Woodforde’s church at Castle Cary, Somerset, in 1768 the barrel organ was removed by a group of men from the gallery into the body of the church for use when the gallery musicians were not in attendance. 9

In order to make the barrel organs more attractive some were built with a conventional keyboard. A further interesting development was the invention of the “dumb organist” c.1800. An independent barrel mechanism was positioned over the keyboard, keys being depressed by means of wooden “fingers” (trackers). Despite these improvements, the barrel organ was gradually replaced with the harmonium and “finger organ” especially in the wake of the 1851 Great Exhibition. From then on advertisements offer barrel organs at lower and lower prices; by the end of the century we find:

*For Sale - Church Barrel-Organ, by Walker, London. 3 barrels, 30 tunes, 5 stops. Out of repair. What offers? Apply W.C.L., 201, Boxley Road, Maidstone.” 10*

Inevitably, some churches retained their barrel organs long after they ceased to be in general use; the church of King Charles the Martyr, Shelland, Suffolk, has an unbroken tradition since the instrument was purchased c. 1815.

Apart from their historical value, barrel organs can shed light on performance practices relevant to their time. These include:

*Repertoire:* As with the manuscript books laboriously copied by the gallery musicians, the barrel organ’s repertoire reflects the music in regular use, rather than the theoretical repertoire of printed collections; it may show some regional variations, although three considerations need to be borne in mind: the limited number of barrels available, certainty of the location for which they were first designed, and alterations made to original repertoire as barrels were re-pinned.

*Ornamentation:* Although the barrels were probably pinned in a conservative style, they would be unlikely to present the music in an unfamiliar style. Most pinned tunes contain some embellishment reflecting contemporary practice. Little has been transcribed often because of the poor condition of the extant organs and barrels.

*Interludes:* Some barrels are pinned with interludes between verses of a hymn or psalm, reflecting eighteenth century practice to be found in printed collections.

*Tempo:* The speed of rotation of a barrel depends directly on the speed with which the handle is turned and is therefore variable. However, where the speed of rotation of the barrel and the air supply are linked, a minimum speed must be maintained, while too fast a speed will cause undue exertion on the part of the grinder. Six line tunes were probably sung faster than four line tunes unless, (as was often the case) the four line tunes were pinned twice for each rotation of the barrel.



The number of barrel organs available for study has declined still further since Boston and Langwill undertook their seminal work over thirty years ago. Continued neglect of these valuable sources will eventually lead to the near extinction of barrel organs.

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3. Williams.P.& Owen.B.(1988) *The Organ*. London: Macmillan, p.229
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9. For the background to the removal of the organ at Castle Cary see: Baddeley, K. "Trouble in the Gallery, *The Gallery Tradition - Aspects of Georgian Psalmody*" ed. C. Turner, Ketton: S. G. Publishing with A.P.U. (available early 1997)
10. *Musical Times*. May 1900.

## BIOS Journal

The editor of *Journal XXI* (1991) is Dominic Gwynn, and it is expected to be published on time. The editor of *Journal XX* (1998), Jim Berrow, invites papers for inclusion. All suggestions, material and correspondence, should be addressed to him as soon as possible at [REDACTED],

[REDACTED]. Material for review should be sent to the Reviews Editor, Andrew McCrea, Royal College of Organists, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]).

The *Journal* Editorial Review Board comprises: Jim Berrow, PhD (University of Birmingham), Relf Clark, MA, MMus. PhD, FRCO, ARCM (Maidenhead), Dominic Gwynn, MA (Welbeck), John Harper MA, PhD, FRCO(CHM), (University of Wales), Christopher Kent, MMus, FRCO, PhD (University of Reading), Robert Pacey, DPhil, BMus (Burgh le March), Gerald Sumner, BSc, PhD, (Freckleton), Nicholas Thistlethwaite, MA, PhD (University of Cambridge), and members of Council, as required by specialist content.

## BIOS Journal Index

Please note that Richard Hird, BIOS Treasurer, has the "Index to Journals 1 - 15" for sale at £2.50, post free, from [REDACTED], (not Journals 1-10 as we stated in the last *Reporter* - our apologies).

# Impossible to describe

READING  
CONFERENCE  
PAPER

## THE CHARLES CLAY ORGAN CLOCK IN THE ROYAL COLLECTION (WINDSOR CASTLE) AND ITS CONNECTION WITH G.F. HANDEL

**Dominic Gwynn**

### THE MAKER

Charles Clay was born in Flockton near Huddersfield. The first that is known of him is a struggle with the Clockmakers Company in 1716 over a patent on a repeating and musical watch or clock of his invention. In 1720 he took a shop in the Strand, and in 1723 he was given the position of clockmaker in His Majesty's Board of Works, a post he probably held till his death in 1740. In 1731 he made the clock over the gateway at St James's Palace.

This notice appeared in *The Weekly Join rial* of May 8th 1736:

*“On Monday Mr. Clay, the inventor of the machine watches in the Strand, had the honour of exhibiting to his Majesty at Kensington his surprising musical clock, which gave uncommon satisfaction to all the Royal family present, at which time her Majesty, to encourage so great an artist, was pleased to order fifty guineas to be expended for numbers in the intended raffle, by which we hear Mr Clay intends to dispose of the said beautiful and complicated machinery.”*

The whereabouts of this clock appear to be unknown, though it may have been one illustrated in Britten's 1891 edition of his *“Old Clocks and Watches and their Makers”*. which is supposed to have had a list of tunes, viz.: *“Mr Arcangelo Corelli's Uvelfth Concerto, 1st, Adagio; 2nd, Allegro; 3rd, Saraband; 4th, Jigg. The Fugue is the overture of ‘Ariadne’.* (Handel's 1734 opera).

In 1739 Hickford's Room, an early 18th century concert venue, moved to Brewer Street, near Piccadilly, One of the first events in the new location was a public raffle for a Clay musical clock with music by Handel. A newspaper cutting of 31.12.1743, describes a clock evidently bought for Augusta, wife of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and now in Kensington Place, unfortunately with most of its movements and all its musical parts now missing:

*A DESCRIPTION of a most magnificent and curious MUSICAL MACHINE, CALL'D The Temple of the four Grand Monarchies of the World (viz. The Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman) which were founded by Ninus, Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great and Augustus Caesar.*

*Begun by the late ingenious Mr CHARLES CLAY, and finish'd by Mr PYKE, Clock and Watchmaker, in Bedford-Row, London.*

*The whole having cost upwards of 4500l, and is to be seen every day at the Corner of Brownlow Street facing Bedford-Row, near Gray's Inn, London, from ten o'Clock in the Morning till Seven in the Evening...*

*(after an extended description of the case with statues and painted friezes) The Musick consists of an agreeable Variety of Pieces, composed by the three great Masters Geminiani, Handel and Corelli; and properly adapted to the Machine by Mr Geminiani. It performs not only in Concert, but alternately on several Instruments, in a most surprising manner, exceeding the Performance of the best Hands. Note. The Inside Work may be seen by those who desire it."*

The work was completed by John Pyke, who was the father of George Pyke, prolific manufacturer of musical clocks, and master of Samuel Green. The fact that this machine was so elaborate and expensive, and that it was not finished by Clay himself, suggests it is the instrument mentioned in Clay's obituary, which is the best remembered fact about him (published in the *Gentleman's Magazine Vol.X 1740*):

*"Feb 25. The ingenious Mr Clay, Maker of several Musical Clocks. Three Days before he dy'd he order'd a Musical machine, which had cost him about 20 Years Time, and upwards of 2000l to bring to Perfection, to be beat to Pieces, and entirely destroy'd, to prevent further Expence of the Time and Money of any one who should attempt to finish it after his Death."*

## THE ORGAN CLOCK

Another newspaper cutting of 27.8.1743 gives the following advertisement, evidently for the organ clock now at Windsor:

*"The WIDOW of the late ingenious Mr. CHARLES CLAY, begs Leave to acquaint the Publick,*

*THAT she hath reserv'd the most curious and valuable of all the Pieces of Clock-Work which her late Husband left behind him, and which with his own Hands he had brought to near Perfection, that he call'd it, from the Figure of that Deity Standing within the Fabrick, The TEMPLE and ORACLE of APOLLO.*

*This Machine, for the Perfection of the Musick, the Elegancy of the Structure, and the richness of the materials, far surpasses any Thing of the Kind exhibited either by Mr Clay in his Life-Time, or any other; and which the Widow believes the Curious, who shall do her the Honour to see and consider it, will readily allow.*

*It is impossible to describe this beautiful Piece of Mechanism in the Compass of an Advertisement, the solid Parts of the Fabrick are of Silver gilt, the Pillars, as also the Doors and other Lights into it. are made of Rock-Crystal, curiously engrav'd and adorn'd with Silver Mouldings, Capitals and Bases. It is embellish'd with a great Number of solid Silver Figures both within and without, most of which are gilt; and the whole is cover'd with a*

*most curious Foliage of embellish'd Work pierced and emboss'd in so beautiful a Style and Manner, as renders it exceeding difficult to convey to the apprehension any Just Idea of it, nor is it to be had otherwise than by viewing the Piece of Work itself.*

*Mrs Clay therefore therefore humbly hopes that Gentlemen and Ladies, Encouragers of Art and exquisite Workmanship, will not think a Shilling ill bestow'd for the Sight of so Extraordinary a Performance, and the Hearing of such excellent Musick, the whole exceeding, by many Degrees, any thing ever exhibited to publick View in any Nation, or by any Artist whatsoever.*

*Remov'd over-against Cecil-Street in the Strand, where it is to be seen at One Shilling each."*

The case is made in three stages;

- a marbled pedestal, containing the organ
- a plinth decorated with mouldings and silver gilt rococo strapwork, containing the clock
- and on these a rock crystal casket, decorated with elaborate silver-gilt, filigree enamel and crystal columns, surmounted by a gilt bronze statue of St George and the Dragon.

The parts were evidently put together by Clay, using a rock crystal casket, for which he must have paid a great deal, and employing a musician, an organbuilder, a cabinet maker, and other decorative craftsmen. The casket is signed (in pencil, in German): "*I, Master Melchior Baumgartner, have made this casket in Augsburg, and covered it with silver in the year 1664.*" The quality of the enamel filigree work on the flat areas, and the engraved scenes on the crystal, on both surfaces, is beyond belief. St. George was added during George IV's rebuilding of Windsor Castle, and in Victoria's time, the casket became a reliquary for the Bible of Gordon of Khartoum. The organ was repaired (bellows repaired by A. Milhouse October 25 1904) just after Victoria's death. Since then, the bits have been dispersed around the place, and were only collected together recently by the clock repairer at Windsor Castle, Peter Ashworth. He repaired the clock and barrel mechanism, the Royal Collection furniture restoration workshop repaired the case, and Stuart Dobbs, who works for Goetze & Gwynn, repaired the organ. It is now on public display in the State Apartments at Windsor. Whether Mrs. Clay sold the clock, we do not know. Croft Murray(1950) mentions a bill of sale from George Pyke to Augusta, Princess of Wales, in 8.6.1759, for "*an Organ Clock in a Black Case with Glass Columns*", priced £94 10s, though that does not seem enough for this piece of furniture. There are pictures of the organ at Kensington Palace in the early 19th century, in the Green Drawing Room at Windsor Castle in *circa* 1830, and in the Grand Corridor at Windsor Castle cal 900.

## THE ORGAN

The style of the workmanship does not help with attribution much but the original pipe marks show a builder trained in the Father Smith school, or in Holland or Germany.

There are three stops, Open Diapason, Stop Diapason and Flute. They are all made of pine in the usual English manner. There are twenty pipes in two octaves from c1 to c3; apart from the white notes. f#1 bbl c#2 f#2 bb2. The pitch is a major third above a1=421Hz (the usual C18 concert pitch) at 18°C. The tuning is likely to have been  $\frac{1}{4}$  comma meantone. The open pipes are tuned with lead flaps, but they may originally have been cut to length, as the inside top edges of some have been whittled away with a knife.

Apart from the pipes the organ is made of quartered oak. The upperboards are held with brass bolts. The key action is made from meticulously worked steel and brass, in the same style as the brass barrel and movements. The barrel and its carriage are made of brass. The bellows is a single fold reservoir with two parallel feeders beneath and a waste pallet between them. When there is more wind produced than needed, the movement of the waste pallet often produces a dithering effect on the music, which is unavoidable without altering the mechanism. This in spite of a rack and pinion for regulating the speed of the feeders in relation to the barrel speed.

## THE MUSIC

The music on the dial in the clock, which changes with the choice of tune; these give the following titles:

Allegro, Presto, Gigue, Allegro, Sonata. Allegro, Air, Air, Air, Air.

These tunes have been identified by Anthony Hick:

1 and 3 are in another set of musical clock songs now in the British Library. They are in the writing of Handel's amanuensis, John Christopher Smith, and were part of the collection given by Charles Jennens to Lord Aylesford. There are two sets, this one of eleven tunes, inscribed "*Tunes for Clay's Musical Clock*", the second of seven tunes, first identified by Barclay Squire in 1919. 2 in the first set is "*A Voluntary or A Flight of Angels*", evidently specially written for clock. These two tunes, 1 and 3, also 1 and 3 in the BL set, may also be specially composed for musical clock. 7 and 8 are also from BL set one, 7 an arrangement of the air "*In Mar Tempestoso*" from Handel's opera. *Arianna* (1733), 8 an arrangement of "*Dell'onda ai fieri moti*" from *Ottone* (1723).

5. 9 and 10 are from a set of ten tunes on a Clay clock sold at Christie's in 1972, now in Paris; none identified further. 6 is '*Va godendo*' from *Serse* (1738), not otherwise known as a clock piece. 2 and 4 were unidentified in 1983.

(At Reading, we listened to 1 3 5 6 10, following the music from transcriptions made by Dr. J.J. Haspels of the Dutch National Museum for Mechanical Musical Instruments, Van Speeldoos tot Pierement.)

**Sources:**

Barclay Squire, *The Musical Quarterly*, vol V, 1919

Croft Hurray, *Country Life*, 31.12.1948 and 21.4.1950

Hugh Roberts in *Country Life*, 23.11.1995

READING  
CONFERENCE  
PAPER

# Experiences with Barrel Organs

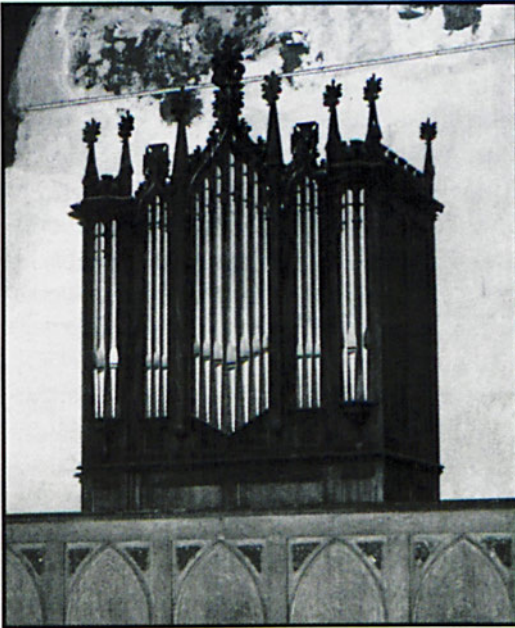
## John Budgen

Rather over forty years ago. Canon Algernon Wintle was to be found playing street pianos for charity in Bury St. Edmunds. A radio broadcast led to a succession of small barrel organs being sent to him for repair - he in turn consulted us for the organ parts.

Our experiences with successive barrel organs repairs were varied. The smallest, cigar-box size, had spaces for eleven (missing) pipes; we manufactured eleven overlong pipes of suitable scale, and deduced the actual compass as rhythm and melody emerged. The “Serinettes” were little table models, said to have been popular for encouraging the efforts of song-birds: there were larger drawing-room organs set on a stand with two barrels, one stored while the other was in place. They usually had nineteen notes, most tunes were in G or D major; I cannot recall ever seeing an F or an A#, and DD and GG were included sparingly; minor tunes were rare. A few hymn tunes, were included, *Adeste Fideles* being the most frequent.

The Reading Music Department barrel-organ is a “chapel-sized” instrument, some way short of a full church instrument. On a low plinth, its barrels in a box held with a slide for security, it has twenty three notes from Tenor D to Treble G, with an inevitably light bass line. It is a church instrument, including one chant (*Mornington*) and this raises an interesting problem. Up to this size, such organs are blown by the turning handle and two pairs of “cuckoo feeders”; pausing on a reciting note stops the wind supply with lamentable results; “psalmodic” barrel organs had a separate blower to overcome this.

The first barrel organ I dealt with was at Wood Rising Church. Norfolk, (population 43), where the ruinous organ was by Flight & Robson, the latter name being scratched out in token of the dispute between these partners, or their meanness in



**The Barrel Organ by Flight & Robson at St. Nicholas, Woodrising, Norfolk. (1827)**  
**Photograph: Andrew Hayden**

getting new labels printed for the barrels. Lord Verulam commissioned the repairs, and I played it for a confirmation in June 1958. The original barrel had one or two tunes changed, the other was later, veneered in mahogany, and played some interesting Victorian tunes. A third barrel was found in the woods in the Rectory gardens, a few slats held by a few strands of pinning; it is preserved in the organ case. A new barrel was ordered in 1960 for £120, and I pinned it to the parishioners' wishes - "*Crimond*" for the impending wedding of the daughter at the Hall, and some Christmas and Easter Hymns. I did have a problem with the *A* in "*Praise my soul*", but the harmony moves swiftly on.....

The Bryceson barrel organ at Shelland. Suffolk, has been in continuous use since installation; unusually it has a tierce. When I attended service, I stood up at the front of the congregation for the first line of "*Shirland*" and was "left standing" while the rest of the tune played its majestic course! Currently, the parishioners at Shelland are preparing an order for a new barrel, perhaps demanding tunes which are not harmonically available.

Many organ builders produced barrel organs on commission. J.C. Bishop produced such miniature organs while becoming established; music houses such as Keith Prowse, the Longman partnerships and others put their own names on organs without any trace of the actual makers. In the church field. Flight & Robson were prolific, as was Bryceson, closely followed by Bevington. Walker, Bates, Gray and Forster and Andrews. Most came from London, although there were provincial examples.

Some important distinctions arise between makers' uses and the types of organ. Walker and Gray mounted their three barrels in iron hoops (a form of Carousel, as pointed out by Christopher Turner), and this meant no more could be added without great difficulty. Bryceson and most of the others set the barrel in a cradle which could be slid into position. Barrels are not usually interchangeable between organs, and care is needed when changing a barrel to ensure correct alignment. The "barrel

and finger” organ had the virtue of providing an invaluable live deputy organist to the one barrel, and a full chromatic compass - its size usually permitted twelve tunes to be pinned rather than ten. Two examples by Bishop survive in working order, apart from his huge barrel at Churchill, with its interesting “local” tune, “*Sarsden*” I promised the Vicar in 1958 that I would transcribe it.

The other device, mentioned by Christopher Turner, is the “dumb organist”. This is a barrel attachment with “fingers” (stickers) which press on the keys. Lamentably, a dumb organist was put on a bonfire at, above all places. Little Comard, only twelve years ago. Bates provided dumb organists and several of his are still playable e.g. Tadlow, and, soon, Lillington in Somerset.

The rapid rise in keyboard playing led to an almost vindictive sidelining of the barrel organs (many parishes might wish they had them back now) and to their destruction. Their incomplete scale militated against conversion to finger organs; others saw their pipes incorporated into new instruments (e.g. at Church Knowle, within living memory).

Some we have rescued from ruinous condition and kept them up year by year; this was discontinued at Hutton after much fundraising had seen the organ back in use as the Vicar “*was not paid to keep a museum*”. Museums have little better to say for themselves - at Leicester, Cardiff and Bradford they have set about ruining their restored organs by placing them up against radiators. The Bradford organ by Lincoln was particularly interesting with a spiral barrel playing a lengthy and manually exhausting concerto by James Hook.

Some remain in good order and much appreciated; the Steeple organ is used at every service, whether for singing or voluntary. (We had nothing to do with the design of the protective cage around the organ; funds are being raised for a proper case.)  
*(This is an abridged version of John Budget:’s paper.)*

## “Benchmark” organs on CD

### Roy Williamson

Six Cheltenham organs have been recorded by BIOS member. Paul Derret, as the first in a series of recordings designed to create an historical record of worthy instruments, which should surely be added to material in the British Organ Archive. The 3 manual Willis in St. Matthew's Church, and the 2 manual in St. Gregory's Priory are two of the instruments. A wide variety of works from Buxtehude to Sumsion is very ably performed. A second disc is planned of organs in the Newcastle-under-Lyme area. Paul Derrett invites members to identify other towns and locations where historical / worthy organs should be recorded for posterity.



# Samuel Sebastian Wesley

and the Organ in  
St George's Hall, Liverpool

READING  
CONFERENCE  
PAPER

Peter Horton

Completed in 1855, the organ in St George's Hall, Liverpool, looms large over the history of mid-nineteenth century British organ building. While the association of S.S.Wesley with the instrument's design has been well known, neither the full extent of his involvement nor its long duration has been well documented. His initial approach to the town council offering his "professional services" was in December 1843 while he finally agreed to accept his (disputed) commission in January 1860!

Among the information to be found in the City Archives and elsewhere is evidence of H.J. Gauntlett's attempt to involve himself, Mendelssohn and T.A. Walmisley in the scheme, and it was doubtless his characteristic denunciation of the specification (which owed little to current 'German' thinking) which subsequently led the Liverpool authorities to insist that it be subjected to independent scrutiny. That the four referees, Vincent Novello, James Turle, Walmisley and E.J. Hopkins, were of not dissimilar mind to Wesley was something for which he had probably not bargained!

The long debate about the siting of the organ within the hall (in which Hill made a remarkable *volte face*) and the committee's sheer indecisiveness, which initially awarded the contract to Gray & Davison, put it out to tender again and awarded it for a second time to Gray & Davison, all explain why the instrument was so long in gestation. With the death of the architect, Harvey Elmes, in November 1847, all work came to a halt and was only resumed in 1851: the contract went finally to Henry Willis, whose Great Exhibition instrument had so impressed the committee.

Although further modifications were made to the specification, the completed instrument nonetheless retained many features of Wesley's original scheme, most notably the use of extensive duplication, very large pipe scales for some of the pedal stops and 'G' compass for the manuals (in combination with a 'C' compass pedal board). These, combined with Wesley's insistence on unequal temperament and the anti-Wesley (and Willis) bias of several critics, led to considerable adverse criticism in the press. Indeed, the whole question of whether Wesley, in particular, received a fair press is one that needs to be addressed, with contemporary evidence suggesting that his own (conservative) views were rather more widely held than we are generally led to believe. (*This is an abridged version of Peter Horton's paper.*)

# Organ Builder versus Organist

Aubrey Allen

(This article is reprinted from *The Organ*, No.28, Vol. III, April 1928, by kind permission of The Editor, *Musical Opinion*)

There are few trades in which progress in artistic production is more retarded by its patrons than that of organ building. A great many organists - whose job it is to play the organ and not design it - are under the impression that they know all that is necessary to formulate a scheme for a new organ, having read certain elementary treatises on the subject and thus derived a "sound" (really an unsound) conception of its outstanding features.

Of course one is quite aware that it is the customer who buys the goods and not the manufacturer. The difficulties arise in the buying of standard and special types of an article. For example, a person purchasing a piano will not be in the slightest degree better off by having it "specially constructed?" Each firm has its own specialty, and whichever firm the buyer decides upon he must accept the firm's mode of construction. Fifty per cent, of the organists appointed to preside at a proposed new organ expect to pick and choose according to their fancy. They have little or no consideration for the difficulties which may be involved in its design. They know nothing of the intricate problems associated with the construction of the machine they so light-heartedly plan out on a sheet of paper. Would that these good people could realise that a firm of organ builders of many years standing can build an organ without receiving instruction in the most elementary principles of tonal design, at grave risk of disastrous results when the scheme is completed.

To be absolutely clear on this subject, let us allude to the work of Father Willis. There are not many who are fortunate enough to possess an old "Willis" who do not feel grateful to the fate which so guided their decision. If Father Willis had given in to the fads of the average organist, his reputation would never have been gained. If in his time an organist did not agree with the arrangements (which were always sane and reasonable), then he (the organist) would have to look elsewhere - for his instrument. Likewise, today. In this country we have firms that will build an organ exactly as the organist desires, and others which prefer to stand by the old tradition. With which of the two - if you want a good complete instrument - is it safer to deal? One that never builds two organs alike, or the firm that adopts a careful progressive policy, shouldering a great reputation from the past which it must maintain? Unfortunately no two organists uphold the same ideas as to what the ideal organ is supposed to incorporate. While one organ continues unimpaired, three generations may pass and a dozen of its organists be dead and buried. How many of them agree with the ideas adopted by the first player of that instrument?

In this country it is not possible, as things are at present, to adopt a definite standard of organ design. It does not matter how perfect the particular scheme may be, you can always find an organist to disagree with it. He will seize upon some vital point and demand the substitution of an irrelevant link in the chain that was perfect before he came to lay interfering hands upon it. Let such a man, if he is married, approach his wife at the tea table, with the suggestion that all the cups of the “set” should be exchanged for another of a different pattern or colour. Would he be so stupid? Yet the organ builder is treated to this kind of criticism again and again. One could easily cite examples of such ridiculous suggestions.

Whilst drawing up the specification, &c., of a new organ (especially a small organ) there are numerous obstacles thrust in the builder's way by the idiosyncrasies of the organist. In the case of a large organ, the organist is generally a man of distinction, and being one of the more mature of his class he does not beset the builder with so many unnecessary difficulties. But unfortunately there are others who, having made a purely theoretical study of the *modus operandi* of the organ, consider their “knowledge” equal to the task of drawing up a specification in which their imagination plays a very conspicuous part.

Here is an example. The specification of a three manual, forty stop instrument, having been drawn up according to the usual plan for an organ of that size, was sent forthwith to the organist (not for his approval) with other particulars of the proposed new organ. The Great organ consisted of nine stops (including a tromba) with no mixture. Of course there was a twelfth and fifteenth. But the organist would not think of having a twelfth: he already had a mixture on the Swell! He did not believe in such a waste of good material. A twelfth, to his mind, was totally unnecessary. No! Instead, he preferred a small scaled 8ft. flute, as well as the existing claribel. How can one deal with these people? He did not get what he wanted; and a good thing too. What of the organist who is to succeed him? Who in these days wants a nine stop Great organ with a double, two diapasons, &c., and no off-unison ranks ? Now had he asked for a quint.....

A certain number of large organs which have been rebuilt in accordance with a tonal scheme which seems to be rather popular with those who have got a mania for something new (oily reeds and cors anglais for the Swell chorus) favours the fundamental side far beyond the margin. We do not want the old style of organ (sparkling and bright) substituted for such as has been mentioned, but we do want an organ which is impressive and not oppressive. When a new instrument is placed in a church, the congregation usually has to pay for it. The persons who are buying it ought to consider it their duty to see that a standard instrument is provided, and not one which has been chopped and changed to suit the whims of its performer. It is a lucky thing that all organists have not these eccentricities. Not for a moment

would I contend that the organist who wants his own ideas carried out should be entirely ignored; but the organ that is planned by his imagination cannot possibly possess such virtues as it would acquire from the creative skill of an experienced and reliable builder.

It cannot be too clearly emphasized that a mere list of stops forms no guarantee whatever of a successful design, so that even if the organist's specification does happen to be beyond criticism on paper, the real task still lies before the builder. How absurd it is, then, for the outsider to dictate his personal fads and fancies without the slightest knowledge of or consideration for the practical problems involved. I have even heard of a well-known cathedral organist who asked a certain builder to substitute a tuba on the fifteenth slide of a great soundboard! The said builder kept himself in commendable control when pointing out the difficulty of carrying out such an ingenious idea. But this is an extreme case. Many an organist will, however, require "improvements" from a builder which the latter can only carry out at a sacrifice to the organ scheme as a whole, the result being (if the instructions are obeyed) an instrument badly balanced and no credit to anyone. The remedy is obvious. Having selected your builder as the one to execute the contract, give him *carte blanche* and your complete confidence.

## **Membership**

**Kerr Jamieson**

Many thanks to those members who have responded promptly to the subscription renewal reminder sent-out with the January Reporter. Those members who have not taken any appropriate action by the time this issue is distributed should find an "overdue" reminder enclosed.

Some members who pay by Bankers Order are in arrears because their Orders are for the wrong amount. At the January Council meeting it was decided that such members will continue to receive publications only while the amount they have paid covers the cost of supplying those publications; they will receive an appropriately annotated renewal form, the Bankers Order section of which should be filled in with the correct current subscription amount. Full membership privileges will be restored on return of the completed form.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:-

Brooks, Mr. Gerard; Camill, Mrs. Yvonne, Farmer, Mr. Christopher B.; Frostick, Mr. David. ARCO ARCM LRAM RSHom MCH LCH; Galbraith, Iain B., MA MPhil PhD DipMusEdRSAM LRAM (rejoined); Gilfillan, Mr. F. Allen; Hoad, Mr.

Victor; Hopkins, Revd. Christopher F., BA; Jones, Mr. John D.; Martin, Mr. Steven; Mentem, Mr. Richard J.; Olleson, Mr. Philip J. MA.; Riding, Mr. Jon D., MBCS MIDPM; Walker. Mr. Richard J.G.; Williams, Mr. Adrian.

Please note that the following entries have been deleted from the Membership List:- Fox, Norman; Haynes, Stephen; James, R.D.; Machesney, R.J.; Niland, W. Austin; Tinniswood, Martin C.; Trott, Simon T.

## **Christmas Lunch**

**Colin Menzies**

Three years ago, Alfred Champniss held the first informal lunch for BIOS members in the run-up to Christmas at Latymer Upper School, Hammersmith, a venue kindly arranged by Richard Hobson. A guest speaker and professional caterer have proved increasingly popular each year, with numbers rising to almost 40 in 1996. This year's speaker was Ian Bell, who dealt with the new professional grouping of British organ builders, of which he is Organising Secretary. Ian's easy and fluent manner of speaking produced a talk which was both witty and thought-provoking. He sketched the background to the formation of the new body, explaining the shortcomings of the previous professional bodies.

This enjoyable occasion proved that what is bad for the waistline can be food for the soul, and maintained the high standard set by speakers on previous occasions.

## **Research Fellowship**

The University of Birmingham has granted the title of Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Music to our Secretary, Jim Berrow.

## **Walcker Restored**

To mark the restoration by Harrison & Harrison of the 1890 Walcker organ at St. Felix, FelixKirk, N. Yorkshire, an inaugural recital will be given by Dr. Francis Jackson on Sunday, 4th May 1997 at 16.30. Visitors will be able to see the original hydraulic blowing plant which supplied the organ from 1890 to 1962. Funding for the £33,150 restoration includes £26,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and grants from the ON Organ Fund, the Jack Brunton Fund and the John & Ruth Howard Trust .Further details from: Mrs. Barbara Cheney, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], enclosing s.a.e.

# Which England?

**David C. Wickens**

There is a much quoted paragraph in Hopkins & Rimbault about George England's Mixtures:

*"In a Compound stop of 4 ranks, comprising seventeenth, nineteenth, twenty-second, and twenty-sixth, he (i.e. George England) would make the seventeenth a small scale, the nineteenth rather larger, the twenty-second large scale and powerfully voiced, and the twenty-sixth small again, and voiced almost as a Dulciana. This last rank, nevertheless, made itself heard, and gave to the Mixture a sound as of bells. England's Mixtures were of a very silvery and sparkling quality, though not so bold as Smith's, nor so full as Harris's, on account of their different composition and smaller scale. His larger organs commonly had the advantage of four 8-foot stops and three 4-foot stops ..."*

I have doubts about this paragraph:

1. The procedure described - varied scaling within a compound stop - is more typical of the end of the 18th century than of the middle when all ranks, except perhaps the Open Diapason, were made to the same scale. Compare St. George's, Gravesend (George England 1765) with Blandford Forum (G. P. England 1794).
2. Voicing pipes "almost as a Dulciana" smacks of late 18th century predilections.
3. Which George England Great organs had four 8-foot stops and three 4-foot stops (including, presumably, reeds)? I can think of Sheffield Parish Church (in Sperling's version of the stop-list), but that was by G. P. England in 1805.
4. The 4 rank Sesquialtera of "England" given in the chapter "*The Composition of Mixtures*" has the composition Hopkins described - 17-19-22-26 at CC. The whereabouts of this mixture was Lancaster Church. This organ was built by G. P. England in 1811, not by George England. Where did Hopkins obtain this technical information? Did he analyse the mixtures himself sitting at the keys picking out the notes? Or did he go inside the organs and examine the pipework first-hand? Or did he rely on information of others?

In the Preface of the first edition, Hopkins writes:

*"... he feels his acknowledgements to be particularly due to Mr. Hill and Mr. Walker, Mr. Robson and Mr. Jardine, for their exposition of certain technical matters ..."*

Did much of the factual information on scaling, voicing, mixture compositions, etc., come from these sources? It seems to me that with England's Mixtures, Hopkins, or one of his sources, confused the work of George and his nephew, G. P.; the 4 rank Mixture with the "sound as of bells" was the latter's not the former's.

# Redundant Organs

## Roy Williamson

Since its inception, BIOS has kept a register of redundant organs to identify instruments of integrity and worth which are available for disposal. Through the energetic work of successive redundancies officers, the custodians of these instruments have been discouraged from simply destroying them or selling them off piecemeal; consequently a significant number of historic organs has been saved and re-housed. There has been concern that BIOS cannot offer storage (as a last resort) for threatened instruments. The example of the Organ Clearing House in the USA has shown what can be accomplished when ample storage facilities and voluntary labour are available.

Roy Williamson has therefore taken the initiative, and, with Derrick Carrington and Richard Godfrey, formed a company (The Redundant Organ Re-housing Co. Ltd.) (RORCL) which has premises suitable for storage purposes. The company's aim is to rescue worthwhile organs and store them until a new home can be found. It is intended to recover storage and transport costs when the instruments are sold. BIOS wishes this venture well and will co-operate closely with RORCL. The *Reporter* will continue to publish redundant organs from Roy Williamson's list which we believe to be of heritage value. A "case officer" will deal with owners and custodians of potentially redundant historic organs to establish, in the first instance, if there is any way in which an organ can be kept, rather than discarded. If there is no alternative to redundancy, the officer will contact RORCL to try to save the instrument. Roy Williamson will continue to administer the redundancy service but under the RORCL, umbrella.

**Please contact Roy Williamson with any redundancy query at:**

MIDLANDS (94/60) ?Hill/reb lies, cl800/1906

Action: mechanical (manuals), pneumatic (pedals)

Specification: Gt 8 8 8 4 Casework: pitch pine, piperack  
Sw 8 8 8 4 8 Dimensions: hi3'w9'd8'  
Ped 16

MIDLANDS (95/42) Harrison & Harrison 1938

Action: pneumatic

Specification: Gt 8 8 8 4 2 Casework: architectural front,  
Sw 8 884 168 no side casing  
Pd 16 16 8 Dimensions: h25'3" (probably  
reducible), w!4'd 12'

N. ENGLAND (97/1) Harrison & Harrison 1887

Action mechanical

Specification: Gt 8 8 8 8 4 4 2  
Sw 16 8 8 8 8 4 Mixt 8 8  
Pd 16 16

Casework: gold painted pipes in  
3 fields, no side casing  
Dimensions: h 17' w13' d9 10"

N. ENGLAND (93/94) Wadsworth, 1898

Action mechanical (manuals), pneumatic (pedal)

Specification Gt 16 8 8 8 4 4 2 III 8 Casework: no details supplied  
Sw 8 8 8 8 4 2 1118 Dimensions: no details supplied  
Ch 8 8 4 4 8 8  
So 8 8 8  
Pd 16 16 8 8 16

N. ENGLAND (94/56) Binns (op 334) 1904

Action electro-pneumatic

Specification: Gt 1 6 8 8 8 4 4 2 8 Casework: architectural  
Sw 8 8 8 8 4 4 III 8 8 Dimensions: h24'w21'd12'  
Ch 8 8 8 4 8  
Ped 32ac 16 16 8 8

SCOTLAND (96/4) Conacher (op 891) 1893/4

Action mechanical

Specification: Gt 8 8 8 4 Casework: no details supplied  
Sw 8 8 8 4 8 8 oct cplr Dimensions: h2L w1 1' d4' plus  
Pd 16 console

S.E. ENGLAND (97/3) Hill, c1860

Action: mechanical

Specification: Man 8 8 8 4 Casework: details awaited  
Pd pulldowns Dimensions: h14'6 w7' d3'2"  
plus 22" for pedalboard

S.W. ENGLAND (97/2) unknown builder, late 19c

Action: mechanical

Specification: Gt 8 8 8 4 Casework: details awaited  
Sw 8 4 Dimensions: hi 1 '9" w8'3" d8'3"

## New Hope for a Willis?

Betty Matthews has sent a cutting from the "Bournemouth Evening News" reporting the intention to restore the Father Willis organ at Christchurch Priory, Hampshire. Some may remember some of the events at Christchurch which led to the installation of a Comptone-Makin Electrone in the 1970s whilst Geoffrey Tristram was organist; however, the Willis remained, if silent. An appeal for £350,000 has been launched together with a CD reissue of some recordings of the Willis made by Geoffrey Tristram.



# January Council Meeting

## Jim Berrow

A meeting of Council took place on January 25th. Thirteen members were present, with Roy Williamson in attendance to discuss redundancy issues, and we welcomed new Council members, Mrs. Hopkins, Mr. Browne and Mr. Lawford. Mr. John Brennan, Barrie Clark, Andrew Hayden and Dr. Christopher Kent were co-opted.

The usual procedural matters concluded with matters arising. It was reported that the Forster & Andrews records were now in the Local Studies Department, Hull Central Library and we are seeking access for microfilming. The time allowed for public response to the Secretary of State regarding ecclesiastical exemption (that is, the delegation of many planning matters, including work on organs, to church authorities) is not now due for another two months, or so, and members of Council (and any others with a view) are encouraged to add their comments in a private capacity.

Officers' reports followed. The Chairman announced that, because of other pressing commitments, he did not wish to stand for election as Chairman at the next AGM. After discussion, it was felt that a successor with high standing in the academic field should be sought and Dr. Thistlethwaite agreed to make an initial approach to a suitable candidate. The Secretary circulated a list of volunteers willing to offer assistance and skills, along with suggested conference topics. It was requested that we consider this list whenever assistance was required, especially on a regional basis. A progress report was given concerning a future *National Organ Heritage Centre*, following a meeting at the R.C.O. (5 October 1996), arranged by Dr. Richard Godfrey. Support for further progress was indicated. (Unfortunately, since the meeting, Dr. Godfrey has re-considered the project and, for the time being, will concentrate on encouraging a number of small centres and activities, mostly directed towards teaching the organ.) The Treasurer noted that despite reminders, nine members were still paying subscriptions at the old rate. It was decided to send them only issues of the *Reporter* appropriate to their payment, with a note explaining that any surplus income would be treated as a donation to the society. The Membership Secretary and Treasurer were authorised to decide when such delivery of copies of the *Reporter* should cease. The Archivist announced that the Organ Historical Society, USA, had offered 50% towards the cost of micro-filming the Bishop and Conacher records and we are grateful to Mr. John Sinclair Willis for allowing us access to the Conacher material. Mr. Wicken's hoped that the Gray and Davison *opus* list would be available by the summer as *BIOS research paper 3* and printed on demand, look out for the announcement. He has been computerising the index records with about 20% of the 20,000 or so entries processed. The Lewis and

Willis micro-films had been received and indexing is under way. The Harrison and Harrison fiches are now labelled. Drawings by Walter Wolscy, a draughtsman who was employed by Hill, Norman and Beard, had been accessed. About half of the Archivist's time in Birmingham (approximately two days a fortnight) is now spent answering queries. However, it is hoped that the permanent Birmingham Archive staff would gradually take over some of this obligation.

A note from Dr. Mike Sayers (he was on holiday) reported that because of a shortage of funds NPOR staff were not being paid; however, work was continuing. We are grateful for their support; please consider the work of the NPOR and Archive when you make your will, or make an additional voluntary contribution when you pay your subscriptions. Dr. Kent had submitted a report about progress towards the establishment of a European organ database (along the lines of our NPOR). There was agreement in principle, with our European colleagues, to make a bid for EC funding under the terms of the Bangemann Report (University and Research Networks); a further meeting would be held at the University of Reading on 28 February, when representatives from Austria and Germany would be present. It was agreed that BIOS would contribute up to £250 towards the cost of that meeting. Dr. Kent also reported that the University of Reading had lent support to a bid for a three-year research studentship (at the Lady Susi Jeans Centre), from the University of Reading Research Endowment Trust, to complete the NPOR for the counties of Berkshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire and the integration of corresponding materials for these areas into the BOA. A draft application for support from the Arts Council Lottery Fund is to be discussed with the Arts Council's Music Department. The Membership Secretary reported that membership now stood at c.650 and a new edition of *BIOS Membership* would be issued this year. It would, additionally, incorporate members' names listed by county or national regions. The Publicity Officer outlined his plans, and members with thoughts about future conferences are encouraged to contact him or the Secretary.

Discussion on publications followed. By the time you read this, *BIOS Journal XX* (1996) should have been distributed. Dominic Gwynn, editor of *BIOS Journal XXI* (1997), reported that this edition was almost complete and would be ready for the printers by March. There was discussion about future editors, but no firm decisions were made. The results of recent conferences and arrangements for future meetings were discussed and details appear elsewhere in the *Reporter*.

Discussion on constitutional and business matters did not have as much time as desired. The Secretary thought that despite its evident successes, the society was now facing some difficulties. Examples of concern were the shortage of funds for the NPOR and Archive, the absence of younger, suitably qualified members coming forward as future Councillors and a heavy work load falling on a few

Officers. Options (some very radical), and a suggested organisational chart were discussed. It suggested the consolidation of the Officers duties into four sections - Administration, Information, meetings and Publications and the formation of a modest executive committee to handle urgent business between Council meetings. Any of the new posts could be held by more than one person and that such an arrangement could be accommodated within the present constitution, stressing the need to maintain transparency in our operations and access to all Officers. Some members suggested the addition of another section devoted to preservation and casework. Within that area, the question of organ redundancy should always be subservient to casework and not an alternative to it. There was a suggestion that we add our desire to become a statutory body to our list of published Aims. In conclusion, the adoption of such a structure might also increase our membership, generate more income, produce more and better conferences and publications and enable us to fulfil our obligations, influence and effectiveness in pursuit of our Aims. Following general endorsement of the plan, the Secretary offered to re-draft the proposal and present it to the next Council meeting. Meanwhile, the new structure would be introduced, as far as the existing constitution allowed, prior to revision at the next AGM and nominees for new posts would be sought.

At this point, Mr. Williamson joined the discussion and noted that the title of his company was now the "Redundant Organ Rc-housing Company Limited". Close contact would be kept with its development. Organs under threat always take up a substantial amount of the meeting's time; some of the issues in negotiation can be sensitive and your Secretary has used some discretion in this report. It was noted that surviving components of the Beale and Thynne organ from Folkestone, St. Peter, were now in the workshop of F.H.Browne. A letter had been sent to the Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke Chair of the Churches Conservation Trust, expressing our concern about extensive damage to the organ from Preston Public Hall, now stored in All Souls', Haley Hill, Halifax. Satisfactory discussions had been held between the Chairman and Secretary and the planning team responsible for the alterations in Birmingham Town Hall (the interior is being refurbished and extensive alterations are planned for the audience seating area). The organ is to remain *in situ* (we believe that there was a plan to take it down) and would be suitably protected during the extensive building work. Dr. Thistlethwaite will act as consultant and the authorities have agreed to keep us informed. The Secretary is in correspondence with those responsible for promoting the move of the organ within the Dome Concert Hall, Brighton. The Twentieth-Century Society was already involved in consultations and had indicated general acceptance of the refurbishment plans. However, the move of the organ, from either side of the proscenium to the rear of a new stage was still a matter for concern. Relatively good news came from St. Oswald, Hartlepool, where the loudspeakers of an electronic instrument planned to be placed within the handsome case would now go, as requested, into a separate

structure. This ensures that the instrument remains intact for future restoration. It is understood that there is a satisfactory outcome for the Parr Hall. Warrington organ, following accidental damage and the need for expert attention.

Future Council meetings are arranged for May 10th and September 6th. If there are any issues you wish to have discussed, let the Secretary know in good time. If it involves casework, details in writing of location, (accurate dedication, etc.), builder, date (if known), brief description of instrument, nature of the threat and an accurate contact address for action are essential. It also helps if you offer suggestions for resolving the issue. At the moment, I am wasting a lot of time trying to find out what the problems really are and what action should be taken.

## Notes and Queries

### Bernard Edmonds

Who said this?

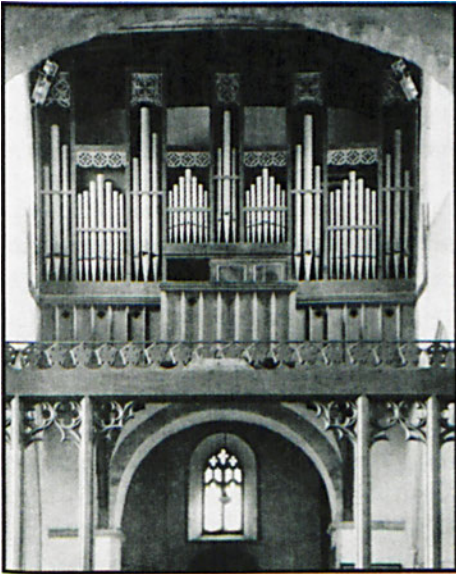
- 1. Speaking generally, I should say that an organ placed behind a congregation gives more support to their voices than when in front; but I also think that there are other reasons beside musical reasons for this. There can be no doubt that when a congregation can see a choir (whether surplice or not) there is a natural tendency to listen rather than to take part. When, however, a choir and organ are behind a congregation this temptation ceases to exist and the congregation feels compelled I might almost say driven to exert itself in the music. (1887)*
- 2. Polyphony is democratic; the organ is an autocrat.*

I was fortunate to hear the Hope-Jones organ at McEwan Hall, Edinburgh, before it was rebuilt by Willis. It was being serviced by its custodian from Scovell of Edinburgh, then recently taken over by Willis. Scovell had been H-J's foreman and supervised the erection of this organ, deciding to set up for himself in Edinburgh. The firm had tended the organ ever since, giving it such restoration as it required from time to time (*a drop of McEwan's, perhaps? Ed.*).

Scovell's man told me that the organ kept in good order and gave him little trouble - in spite of the cascade of sparks from the key contacts, the snag being that that the cable was deteriorating and so the console was no longer movable, but firmly fastened down. He said that servicing the console was easily managed if you knew the secret of removing the appropriate panel. Amusingly, he had a little difficulty in showing me for, he said, he had not had to remove it for such a long time (this reminded me of the old Rothwell console at Barnet which had an even simpler system. However the man from one of our best known firms impatiently butchered his way in, to the disgust of Mr. Rothwell).

I was agreeably surprised by this organ. The Tutti was pretty powerful but far from

dull; with Tuba and octave couplers it was shatteringly brilliant. It was the wrong kind of brilliance, however, more startling than useful. Of course, the Tuba had double tongues and an open position but even without the Tuba, the organ still had brightness. One had to be very selective in one's registration. The Quintadena was a bit of a disaster in ensemble, sounding not a bit like a mixture but an unwanted cipher; the Double English Horn was powerfully unpleasant. I don't remember the Diaphone. Of course, the organ was being serviced and not everything was playable. Characteristic individual stops, some pleasing, some not, were better, I found in many cases, on their own than in blending; but it's rather a long time to remember much other than broad impressions. It was not what we normally understand as an "organ", but it ought to have been preserved as a memorial of his best work.



**Kempston Church, nr. Bedford**  
**Photograph: Bernard Edmonds**

A letter from Bonavia-Hunt concerning the organ at Kempston, near Bedford, expressed the opinion that the organ in its west gallery was a blot on the church both from its position and ugliness. It had a Temple-Moore case and you may make your own assessment from the photograph (you should also note where not to fix church light fittings). Some 35 years ago, the organ was in poor trim partly owing to heating problems. The parish officers decided to replace it with an electronic instrument and in spite of advice from the diocesan advisor's committee, this was pushed through. The pipe organ, installed by Henry Jones in 1863, and apparently originally by Hill, was thrown out, case, gallery, and all. Seven years later, a new incumbent managed to secure a pipe organ from a non-conformist source. This now functions at the west end at Boor level.

Ref. Fressingfield (BIOSR 21/1/28). I omitted to say that their 1865 Bevington is still functioning at Bedford in its simple case, and w'as in fair trim when I last saw' it. Also the reputed 5 manual built by R.S. Phillips of Preston for Mr. B.J. Farnw'orth at West Cliff. I am informed that this was a 4 manual with 5 manual departments, the Echo being played from the Solo keys. Julian Rhodes has sent me the specification from *Musical Opinion* (August 1915) w'hich shows that it had 50 speaking stops and 20 couplers. The pistons included some adjustable; the action W'as pneumatic. What is its subsequent history?

The organ built in 1691 for Augsburg Chapel, Basinghall Street, and moved to "Bramhall Hants.", which does not exist. (BIOSR 12/2/11) must be the 17th

century organ which was “purchased in London” in 1805 by the vicar of **Bremhill** in Wiltshire. This is dealt with in “*Father Smith*” by Freeman & Rowntree on page 184, with picture; but more fully in Davidson's “*Sir John Sutton*”, pp99-100, as “Osmund Fisher’s organ”. Fisher, Chaplain of Jesus College, Cambridge, bought it from Bremhill about 1850 and had it restored by George Dawson of Cambridge under the supervision of Sir John Sutton. I have not found the source of the AF information. I know that his collection included a book on the old (vanished) chapels of London. Perhaps it was that. I know nothing about the chapel, or any references to it, nor does it appear in any of the Freeman indexes in my possession.

*Clevedon, 10th March 1977*

*(When I was a child) Darke’s family and my parents all went to Highbury Baptist Church and were friendly. Arthur Berridge, the organist, was a fine musician and had Harold Darke in hand as a piano and organ pupil. Through him, H D was put in for the scholarship which in turn led him to be articled to Parratt. All the Darke family played the organ - Ernest, Sidney, Frank, and Lilian - Harold was the youngest. The organ was an old tracker Thos. Jones though it carried Eustace Ingram s nameplate.*  
*Stanley Chappell.*

(The church was demolished years ago. Stanley recalled Darke playing there at the age of 12.)

*Hurstpierspoint, 11th May 1974.*

*(searching for some redundant pipes), having to watch demolition workers gaily bending metal pipes across their knees and tossing them into a skip whilst a chap with a crane directed his heavy ball-and-chain at a fine row of 16 and 32 foot basses, smashing them to smithereens. This on a 4 manual Hill of 1880’s vintage, with the console and keyboards still in good condition. Enough to make one weep. The vicar was “not interested”. (Central London) Brian Tram*

Kingston-Upon-Thames Parish Church.

1539: “paid ij planks for the Organys xi d. for yelow Oker for the Organs ii d. Thomas Sexton for mendyng of the orgens vj s. viijd d. Paid for careying of the Or gens to the barge x d. Mr. Passhe of London for over syght of ye orgens xx d. Careying of the orgens xi d. Makyng of a sete for ye said same orgens vj d. for nay lls for the same orgens vj d. a locke for ye same orgens vjd. Makyng of the same orgens vij li.”

1563: “for newe lethering of ye bellowes for ye orgens iiij s. for a case to ye organes wt a locke nt key iij s. iij d. Swethyn woodhouse for helpynge ye said workemen yt mendydye said bellowes... for glcwe vj d”

We have made the acquaintance of the flame organ or Pyrophone (BIOSR 16/1/10, 16/3/14) and the steam organ (BIOSR 17/Covers, 18/3/21); amongst other oddities is the bottle organ. Any child knows that a note can be produced by careful blowing

across the top of a bottle and one would expect someone sooner or later to use this principle for an instrument. A very sophisticated example in the Liverpool Museum by Johann Samuel Kuelewein of Eisleben (1798) is said to have been installed on the island of Heligoland. It is combined with a piano controlled by a stop. The organ section is controlled by two stops, one for the bass octave and the other for the remainder. The organ compass is c - g" the piano FF - g" There are two "ranks" of bottles, 8 and 4 foot pitch, controlled by two stops. The lowest 6 notes of the 8 foot are stopped wooden pipes. All the bottles were especially blown; tuning adjustment was by partially filling the bottles with red wax, fine tuning and voicing by grinding the mouth apertures. If you visit, remember that the Hope-Jones console from Stourport is in the museum - and much besides.

A very odd organ was that designed by Hinton and built by B & C. Robson as a practise instrument for Trinity College, London, in 1877:

*Great:* Bourdon 16' "by coupler"

*Swell:* Fl. Travcrsierc\*, St. Dp. bass, Viole de Gambe\*, Fl. Octaviane, Hautbois\*,

*Choir:* Salicional, Fl. Harmonique\*. Piccolo Harmonique\*

*Pedal:* Contrebasse

Couplers: Great to Choir, Great to Swell. Great to Pedals, Swell to Pedals (the last two with reversing pedals), 2 combination pedals. (\* = Tin by Zimmerman of Paris)

(*Musical Standard* xiii p.681).

Now try your Bach on it!

### Answers to *Who said this?*:

1. Sir John Stainer in "*United Praise*" (edited F. G. Edwards.)
2. Rutland Boughton in "*Bach*" (1907). In this book, for him, "Organ" means the heavy-toned instrument of the day.

## TAILPIECES

Beethoven Mass in C and Brueckner Tedium. (*A Hoylake newsletter*)

Mark Lee on the frugal hom received a standing ovation. (*The Cornishman*)

Errol Flynn bom in Tasmania of absentee parents. (*The Daily Telegraph*)

He was opposed to a fence round Japan and letting her stew in her own juice, as it would create a festering sore with permanent explosive tendencies. (*Speaker quoted in The Times*)

(The couple) exchanged wedding vowels. (*News of the World*). *U and I?*

'94 Renault Espace, floorless condition. (*Jersey Evening Post*)

The cost is £1.50 per child, or part thereof. (*Otley KU Football Club*)

Checkout 13 has been detonated for cash-only customers. (*IKBA Walsall*)

The repertoire will include Walton's The Three Gibbons. (*RSCM*)

Life membership no longer available. (*Voluntary Euthanasia Society*)



# **BIOS CONFERENCES**

## **NORFOLK MEETING**

**Saturday June 21st 1997**

This meeting takes in three instruments. Richard Bower will give a talk and demonstration commencing at 10.30am. on the 1843 Holdich at Redenhall St. Mary's near Harleston. Lunch will follow at St. Andrew's, Hingham, some 7 miles east of Watton on the B1108, within easy reach of Norwich and Thetford. Here the particularly fine 1877 Forster & Andrews organ will be the subject of a talk and demonstration by Andrew Hayden. The third instrument, the 1827 Flight & Robson barrel organ at Woodrising Church, 2 miles from Hingham will be available for inspection after tea at St. Andrew's Church.

Please send your name and address with a cheque, payable to BIOS, for £ 15 (or £ 10 without refreshments) to:

ANDREW HAYDEN, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], along with a s.a.c. (essential) for maps and other documentation.  
[REDACTED]

## **MERCHANT TAYLOR'S SCHOOL, NORTHWOOD**

**Saturday July 5th, 1997.**

Full details and a booking form are enclosed with this issue.

## **RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE NORTH EAST SCOTLAND**

**21st-25th July 1997.**

Full details and a booking form are enclosed with this issue.

## **AIMS OF BIOS**

**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 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.**