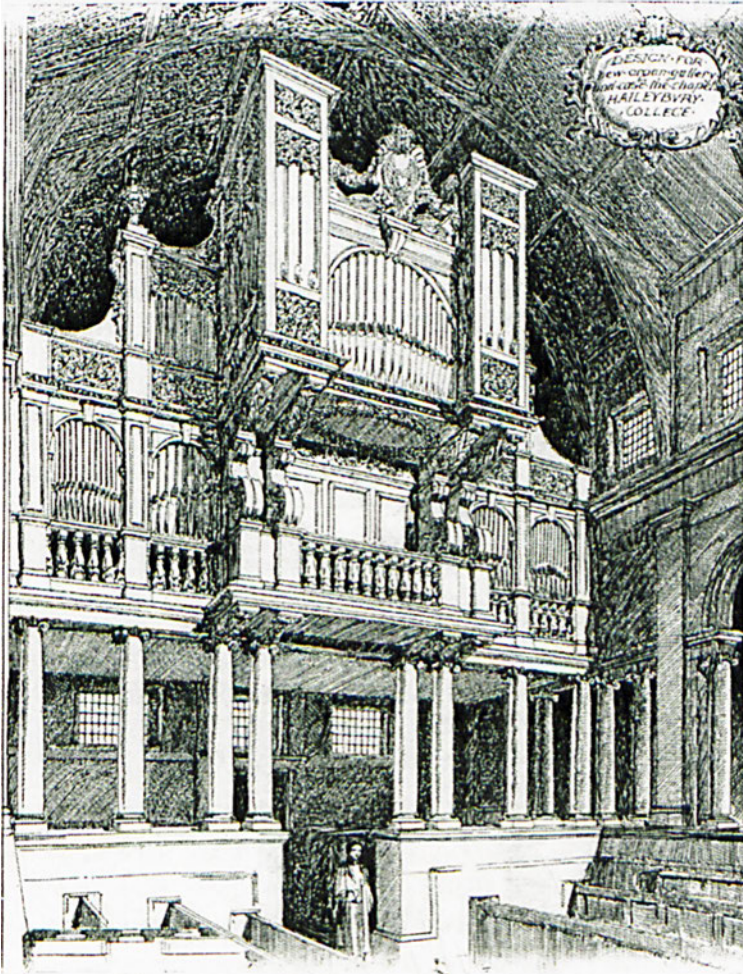


P.431/413

BIOS

REPORTER

APRIL 2000 VOL. XXIV, NO.2



THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ORGAN STUDIES



THE BRITISH INSTITUTE
of ORGAN STUDIES

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BIOS REPORTER

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Opinions expressed in the *BIOS Reporter* are those of the respective contributors, and not necessarily those of BIOS. Material submitted for the *Reporter* should be sent to the editors, as typewritten copy, or on computer 3.5" disk or by e-mail; most filetypes can be read. Certain back issues of the *Reporter* are available from the Membership Secretary at the address given above. An internet version (abbreviated) of the *Reporter* (with archived editions and index) is on the BIOS *Website*, or from www.argonet.co.uk/users!glandy

The cover illustration is 'New Organ Gallery and Case, the Chapel, Haileybury College' drawn by Reginald Blomfield, Architect, 1890. (*Academy Architecture*, 1902, p.6, courtesy of the Architecture & Planning Library, University of Melbourne, Australia, and John Maidment).

EDITORIAL

Elsewhere in this issue we report on the conference recently held at Reading and which gave pride of place to the recently restored Town Hall organ. The restoration is a milestone in that, apparently unfettered by financial considerations, a serious attempt has been made to evaluate the significance of this instrument and to do justice to the findings. The result reflects great credit on the town authorities at Reading, the Berkshire Organists' Association and the restorers, Messrs Harrison & Harrison, led by Mark Venning who was responsible for many of the detailed decisions on how the work should be tackled. What we now have is a Victorian concert organ functioning as such.

The impression was made all the more vivid by the manner in which the organ was demonstrated by Harry Brama and Geoffrey Morgan, both of whom, with far less than what might normally be considered the minimum of customary playing aids, brought forth a remarkably rich exposé of the instrument. Geoffrey Morgan's recital produced a kaleidoscopic variety of sound from the organ, so much so that Relf Clark, in thanking him for his fine playing, remarked on what could be achieved on seven combination pedals and adroit hand registration. Modern playing aids, sequencers, electric stop actions, and their like, seemed to melt away into irrelevancy here - this organ possessed what really matters, plenty of quality pipework well distributed over the manuals and pedals.

We make no apology for referring to the trigger swell pedal, simply because its characteristics were recognised and used in such a musical manner. In 1997 David Knight raised two aspects in a paper read at a BIOS conference at Reading : (1) 'The fact that the swell organ is so named suggests that the interest was in making the sound gradually louder and then to decay away.....' and (2) Peter Williams's remark that the swell was not a fitting invention because it was a mechanical device adapted to an instrument already perfectly self-contained and capable of its own music. Geoffrey Morgan showed us how the Victorians used a device which, on an organ of the period, provided the necessary swelling effect but was not a 'volume control' for one particular part of the organ. The addition and subtraction of unison stops and the dipping-down across three manuals all suitably stocked provided subtle terracing of intensity and tone quality in keeping with the nature of the instrument. This is another reason why the removal of many unison registers from organs in the past forty years or so, and the conversion of Choir organs into pseudo-positives was so misguided. Had Schulze's Doncaster organ been so restored, then it is quite likely that the same system of operation could have been seen at work on a most impressive scale. Regrettably, the current situation may well prove too distracting for players to be bothered to explore the implications of Schulze's original intentions. If we are to continue successfully down the road of historic restoration then this must be one area where the interaction of the organ and the music played on it requires further study.

The semiquaver in J.S. Bach's organ music deserves greater attention than it frequently receives. In the legato style of playing which characterised so much of this century, semiquavers contributed to a texture which was, perhaps, analogous to that of lukewarm oil, flowing, attractively smooth, yet sticky. The reaction in the 1960s was to adopt vigorous tempi, so that the semiquavers sounded suspiciously as though they had migrated from a sidedrum score. The remarkable vocal gymnastics of the Swingle Singers had more influence on organists than many care to admit even today; it only took the addition of a drum kit to such performances and Bach became an adept jazz composer, apparently demonstrating how much he missed by writing for the unrhythmical organ in the wrong century. The fast tempi are still with us but we would urge reconsideration if only to save the semiquaver.

The example illustrates some aspects of our considerations:

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the Prelude in e minor, BWV 548. The first system shows the first four measures, featuring a treble clef with a melodic line of semiquavers, a middle staff with a complex semiquaver texture, and a bass clef with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system shows measures 5 and 6, with a similar three-part texture. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

Prelude in e minor, 102-106, BWV 548

The passage demonstrates a three-part texture common in Bach's music, along with dovetailed sequences. A closer examination of each semiquaver reveals each one's peculiar function - completion of the harmony, passing note, the repetition and hence emphasis of a dissonance, and the repetition of a harmony while colliding conspicuously with the bass. The first four semiquavers of the example are subtly ambiguous in hinting at a secondary dominant harmony with the bass line.

Now all this careful organisation by Bach should not be left to the eye alone; he seems to have taken care with his semiquavers, and we should show them respect when we are playing, not a simple non-legato delivery in the style of a machine-gun. The listener deserves time to hear Bach's harmonic subtleties. Imagine visiting a

magnificent Baroque church at such speed that one can only observe its walls and ceiling without time to consider the richness and style of the paintings, the decorative plasterwork and the magnificent organ case; we should not take listeners through a Bach organ work in a similar manner. This must mean careful consideration of the tempo, finding a balance between the structure and detail. Contemporary fashion with its quest for virtuosity must not stultify careful and thoughtful performance.

NIGEL BROWNE _____

MEETINGS

BIOS ANNUAL RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE

Monday 21 August - Thursday 24 August 2000

Denbigh

The Annual Residential Conference will be held in North Wales; it will study organs by Bellamy, Casson, Hill and other organ-builders, and the music played on them. Accommodation will be at the Howell's School, Denbigh. Full details and a booking form appear on page 14 of this issue.

BIOS and THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS

The events organised jointly by BIOS and the RCO to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the death of J.S. Bach are

Friday 5 May and Saturday 6 May 2000

Edinburgh

J.S. BACH'S KEYBOARD MUSIC 250 YEARS ON

Details of this conference and a booking form appeared in the January *Reporter*.

English Organ School, Milborne Port, Dorset

Saturday 7 October 2000

ORGELBUCHLEIN: 'THE LITTLE ORGAN BOOK' EXAMINED

Booking arrangements will be published in the July issue of the *Reporter*.

(with the International Organ Festival Society)

A TWO-DAY FESTIVAL TO CONCLUDE

THE BACH YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Friday 1 December

Saturday 2 December

St Andrew's, Holborn

St Saviour's and the Cathedral, St Albans

Programme to be announced Peter Collins, Stephen Bicknell, Thomas Trotter,

Peter Hurford, Jos van der Kooy, Cathedral Choir

Full details and booking arrangements for the two days will be published in due course.

BIOS DAY CONFERENCE REPORT

Saturday 19 February 2000

CURRENT RESEARCH AND

THE WILLIS ORGAN IN READING TOWN HALL

If last year's conference at Reading were described as a mixed bunch of flowers, this year's offering can only be called a cornucopia of surprises. Some 50 delegates attended the meeting which was spread between two venues, the University Department of Music and Reading Town Hall. Though billed as a conference on current research, the meeting provided an excellent opportunity to see and hear the recently restored Willis organ in the Town Hall and it was this that provided the highlight of a most successful conference, both in terms of numbers attending and content.

The day began with a talk by Joan Jeffrey on 'Some early London organ-builders'. The sheer volume of discoveries which Joan Jeffrey had made, reaching back before the Commonwealth, testified to the range of activity carried on in the metropolis, principally in two areas centred on Fleet Street and Southwark. There was material enough for at least two sessions here and it was much to be regretted that time did not allow a more leisurely and expansive treatment of the subject matter.

Stephen Bicknell followed on with a paper entitled 'The Testament of Tessie Willis'. Correspondence obtained by Stephen Bicknell showed up the relationship between Henry ('Father') Willis and his son, Vincent, in a new and potentially controversial light. Tessie (Teresa) Willis was the eldest of Vincent Willis's six children, as clever as her father, and one who had considerable insight into organ-building and the nature of the Willis firm's operations.

Vincent Willis was born in 1848 and was taken into his father's firm at a comparatively early age such that he soon acquired a thorough grasp of the craft. Initially this meant copying his father's working practices but Vincent soon wanted to branch out on his own which Henry Willis was reluctant to see him do. There were fascinating insights into Vincent's inventiveness which included squirting jets of water through organ pipes to assess the effect of the mouth forms. Vincent's ideas eventually resulted in a quarrel with his father and Vincent's departure to set up on his own in Liverpool. The Rotunda Works was placed under the management of Harry Willis, Vincent's brother, who proved a poor choice. Vincent returned and it was said he saved the firm from going under. The initial impression gained from Stephen's paper was that much which was credited as being by Henry Willis in his later years was designed and built by Vincent. We can only look forward to a more detailed exposition by Stephen in the future.

Following lunch at the Town Hall, the afternoon's proceedings were opened with an enthusiastic improvisation on the organ by Harry Brama; he displayed an evident air of satisfaction on finally quitting the organ stool. This was followed by a detailed exposé by Mark Venning of the thinking behind the decision to restore the

organ to its 1882 condition, when it was enlarged and re-ordered by the Willis firm for the new Reading Town Hall. Such decisions included the restoration of the original pitch C 540Hz and the trigger swell lever. European standards of restoration and conservation were applied and there is no doubt that Mark Venning and his team have succeeded in their endeavour. The organ is a unique survival from the Henry - Vincent Willis period (as we may have to call it from now on) and this restoration is a faithful demonstration of a real Victorian concert organ. This conviction was greatly strengthened by Geoffrey Morgan's admirable closing recital in which the apparent controversy about restoration issues such as pitch, lever swell pedals, playing aids and the viability of the pneumatic lever action was completely dispelled. His recital included a first performance of a short and intriguing *Passacaglia* by Relf Clark.

There arose the question of what it was used for after its installation. Christopher Kent's trawl through the *Musical Times* revealed that much of the repertoire involved choral accompaniment: Coleridge-Taylor's 'Hiawatha' was a favourite, along with Parry's *De Profundis* and Wesley's *Exult ate Deo*.

Ian Bell in his paper 'Perspectives of Henry Willis' produced an unpublished document by Frederick Rothwell which offered an adverse opinion of the Willis firm, (an opinion shared in 1879 by Dr Monk who criticised Willis organs for being 'obstreperous, blatant, noisy, coarse'):

This constant repetition of the name of Willis I, Willis II & III becomes rather sickening to those who know the truth about their work. The organs by Henry Willis senior were as hard in tone as it was possible to make them, everything sacrificed (to) get power. The Diapasons were with few exceptions almost loud Gambas. The Mixtures, for scream, surpassed everything produced by other builders.....There is scarcely an original Henry Willis in existence that has not been improved in some way by subsequent builders. Many of them are not now as the Old Man left them yet they are praised as his work alone....

Ian provided an insight to the early work of Willis in the form of the 1851 Exhibition organ which received most comment about its new mechanical accessories though little was said about the tone. The specification for the 1855 St George's Hall scheme was deemed repetitive and conservative though much of this was due to Dr Wesley's influence.

Sour grapes seemed to have been involved in these opinions. Willis was highly successful, able to handle the largest schemes and did much to advance the application of well-engineered mechanical devices to help the playing of large instruments. Given the technological understanding of the time, to go down this path seemed entirely legitimate, as was the creation of an instrument entirely suited to orchestral repertoire and choral accompaniment. The Reading organ is a fitting testimony to both.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Many thanks to those members who have responded promptly to the subscription renewal reminder distributed with the January issue, and especially to those who have decided to change to our preferred method of automatic annual payment by credit / debit card or to a Banker's Order. Those whose renewals are still currently outstanding should receive a further reminder form with the present issue, as also should those with Banker's Orders which are paying less than the correct amount. Please note that no further publications will be sent to those who are still in arrears when the next *Reporter* is issued.

The total number of members now stands at 680, which may well be the highest membership figure in the Institute's history.

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:-

Richard C.A. Andrews FCA: [REDACTED]

George M. Bichard BA: [REDACTED]

Edward Dove : [REDACTED]

Michael A. Freeland MA: [REDACTED]

H. Gordon Hands : [REDACTED]

Michael N. Hankinson LTCL FTCL: [REDACTED]

Barry R. Jackson : [REDACTED]

Michael Johnston MA: [REDACTED]

Manningham Parish : [REDACTED]

Dr. Colin E. Pykett PhD FInstP: [REDACTED]

Paul A. Rosoman : [REDACTED]

Please note the following additions / deletions / corrections / changes of address, etc.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PUBLICATIONS

Journal 24 (2000)

The editor is Alan Buchan to whom enquiries should be addressed.

Journal 25 (2001)

The editor is William McVicker to whom enquiries should be addressed.

Journal 26 (2002)

The editors are Nigel Browne and Alastair Johnston to whom enquiries should be addressed.

BIOS Reporter July 2000

The cut-off date for copy receipt for the July 2000 issue is 30 June 2000.

ROY WILLIAMSON

REDUNDANT ORGANS

Midlands (0/3)

Action

Specification

unk 1845/Bevington 1873

mechanical to man, pneumatic to ped

Gt 8 8b/t 8 4 2 2/3 2

Sw 8 4 2

Pd 16

Casework piperack front, further pipes to sides / rear over panelling

Dimensions: h 14'9" w 8' 6" d 6' + 4' for console

Midlands (0/11)

Action

Specification

mid 19c/Martin & Coate 1934

mechanical to man, pneumatic to ped

Gt 8 8b/t 8

Sw 8 8 4

Pd 16

Casework architectural, dummy front pipes. Dimensions unavailable organ dismantled

N. England (0/5)

Action

Specification

A E Pease c1900

mechanical to man, pneumatic to ped

Gt 8 8 8 8 8 4 2

Sw 8 8 8 4 2 8

Pd 16

Casework post and rail

Dimensions: h 15' w 8' 7" d 6' 7" plus pedal board

N. England (0/15) Pendlebury c1975

Action electro-pneumatic, detached console
 Specification Gt 8 4 2 II Casework: nil
 SW8 4 2 1 V3 II8 Dimensions: unknown
 Ped 16 8 4 16

N. England (0/13) G P England c1800*

Action Mechanical
 Specification Man 8 8 b/t 8 4 4b/t 2 oct cplr Casework architectural,
 Pd pulldowns Dimensions not yet available

S.E. England (0/9) ?Bishop with later alterations

Action mechanical to man, pneumatic to ped
 Specification Gt 8 8 4 4 2 Casework: neoclassical casefront
 Sw 8 4 D/3 II Dimensions: hi6' w 17' 4"
 Pd 16 4

S.E. England (0/10) unknown c1880 / Kingsgate Davidson 1956

Action electro-pneumatic, detached console
 Specification Gt 16tc 8 8 8 4 4 II Casework piperack fronting chamber
 Sw 8 8 8 8 4 III 1 6 8 8 Dimensions (awaited)
 Ch 8 8 4 2 8
 Pd 16 16 8 8 4 16(Sw)

S.E.England (93/03) Bevington 1912

Action mechanical
 Specification Gt 8 8 8 4 4 Casework: details awaited
 Sw 16 8 4 8 8 oct cplr Dimensions: h 14' w 12'd 5'
 Pd 16

S.W.England (0/7) unknown c1890

Action mechanical
 Specification Man 8 8 8 4 4 2 oct cplr Casework post and rail
 Pd 16 Dimensions awaited

S.W.England (0/8) Vowles 1884

Action mechanical to man, pneumatic to ped
 Specification Gt 8 8 8 4 4 2 8 Casework: decorated three-field
 Sw 16 8 8 4 II 8 8 case front. Dimensions: h 17'
 Pd 16 16 (approx) w 10' 10" d 8' 8"

S.W.England (0/12) Keeler (Bristol) 1854*

Action mechanical
 Specification Man 8 b/t 8 4 Casework; architectural
 Pd 20 pulldowns Dimensions: h 8' 7" w 4' 4"

BIOS
ANNUAL RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE
BOOKING FORM
OVERLEAF

THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ORGAN STUDIES
Registered Charity no. 283936

ANNUAL RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE

AT

HOWELL'S SCHOOL, DENBIGH

Monday 21 August - Thursday 24 August 2000

THE ORGANS OF NORTH WALES

An opportunity to explore church and chapel organs in North Wales. ;
Builders include Bellamy, Collins, Hill, Whiteley, Willis, and Wood. j
Cathedral visits to Bangor, Chester, and St Asaph. I
Lectures in a modern theatre and at venues. l

Places are limited, early booking is advised. ;

Cost £145 j

Please send the booking form with a cheque for £20 deposit by 1 July 2000 to: ;

Paul Joslin, [REDACTED]. Please enclose a s.a.e. ■
for a map and directions. !

-£€.....i

BOOKING FORM FOR BIOS RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE 2000 j

Please reserve.....place/s . I enclose a cheque (payable to BIOS) for £..... !

Name (printed) _____ ;

Address _____ !

Telephone

W. England (0/1) Phipps 1906

Action	mechanical to man, pneumatic	
Specification	Gt 8 8 8 4 4 2	Casework (not known)
	Sw 8 8 8 ? 4 8	Dimensions (all approx) h 12' w 5'
	Pd 16	d 4' plus pedalboard

S. Wales (0/13) Peter Conacher (c.1890)*

Action	mechanical, pneumatic to ped 8	
Specification	Gt 8 8 8 4 4 2	Casework: architectural, stencilled
	Sw 8 8 8 4 2 8 oct cplr and	varnished pipes, two towers
	Pd 16 8	Dimensions (approx) h 20' w 11' d 11'

* denotes an organ which should be retained in the British Isles.

Please contact Roy Williamson with any redundancy or placement query at:



LETTER TO THE EDITORS

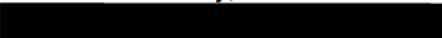
Sirs,

This year marks the centenary of one of the last great Victorian concert organs to be built - the Brindley & Foster at the Town Hall (now City Hall), Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa. The organ was opened in the presence of the Prince and Princess of Wales in April 1901.

This four-manual instrument of sixty-one speaking stops replaced the earlier 1893 instrument by the same firm, destroyed by fire in 1898. The story of the 1900 instrument is something of a saga in itself. The organ's action was electrified and tonal modifications made in 1974 by Colin Hele under sub-contract to Cooper, Gill & Tompkins. Colin Hele altered the pitch from the less versatile French Philharmonic and he still maintains the instrument which at the time of writing is in excellent playing order; recent recitalists have included Simon Preston and Carlo Curley.

Sadly there are no official plans to mark the centenary of this fine organ; the future of the instrument looks to be less than certain in the economic and social structures in South Africa where emphasis is now on African rather European priorities. The interest of all is recommended as a matter of urgency.

Macdonald Coventry,



(This Victorian export from Sheffield hears interesting comparison to the Willis organ at Reading Town Hall where the old pitch has now been restored to restore the correct scaling to the organ - perhaps this organ could be considered for a similar restoration to its original state. Editors).

FUNDING THE NATIONAL PIPE ORGAN REGISTER

The NPOR is a going concern and needs recurrent funding. Now that it is established, it has built up a national network of correspondents from all branches of the organ world. The momentum thus generated, resulted in something of the order of 3,500 entries being improved or added during the past year. In addition, very substantial collections of material and photographs were offered to the NPOR. If this momentum can be kept up, the NPOR succeeds; if it can't, then the NPOR dies.

Unfortunately, there is a mismatch between the needs of the NPOR for recurrent annual funding and the desire of grant-awarding bodies only to support projects with defined time-scales and deliverables. Even the National Heritage Lottery Fund recurrent grants only last for five years maximum and the application form contains the killer question: how will your project remain viable after the duration of this grant?

Efforts are being made to obtain funding for specific projects which need to be done within the NPOR umbrella, including the input of major collections and certain significant improvements to the user interface of the web server and to the database structure. BIOS Council is aware that funding for any specific project is of little long-term benefit unless the core of the NPOR is intact. To run the NPOR properly costs about £28,000 a year excluding accommodation. We have found that modestly paid professional staff are essential in order to get the commitment and attention to detail that are required to maintain the standards which have now been achieved.

If project funding is not the answer to the long-term maintenance requirement of the NPOR, can other ways be found to raise the funds needed? Industry sponsorship (in exchange for some marketing exposure), a friends or patrons of the NPOR scheme which individuals and organisations could join, and possibly an annual subscription for access to the data in the NPOR have been suggested. There is also the possibility of producing some subset of the NPOR on CD.

BIOS Council will be most grateful for any offers of financial support for the NPOR and for any constructive suggestions on how annual funding could be raised. Please send your communications to: The NPOR, Computer Laboratory, New Museums Site, [REDACTED]

CORRECTION

Some important zeros were left out of the Annual Report from the NPOR in the January 2000 issue (p. 17). The text should have read: "We are most grateful to the Pilgrim Trust for providing 50% of the money needed to run the NPOR for the past two years but we hope to be able to achieve 100% funding during the next two years." Our apologies to Michael Sayers for the error.

ORGANS AT RISK(I)

THE 1865 FORSTER & ANDREWS ORGAN IN HYSON GREEN URC, GREGORY BOULEVARD, NOTTINGHAM

This article is the first in an occasional series on organs listed as under threat or already redundant and in need of a new home. The supply of instruments often exceeds the number of new homes available for various reasons including lack of awareness that worthy instruments exist and could be put to good use.

The organ was built in 1865 at a cost of £449 for Castlegate Congregational Chapel, Nottingham. Work was carried out in 1894 by Cousans of Lincoln which possibly resulted in minor alterations to the Choir organ specification and the addition of a Swell to Choir coupler. It remained there until 1908 when following the purchase of a new instrument it was given to Hyson Green United Reformed Church where it has been ever since. The Great Sesquialtera and Cornopean were removed, perhaps by Lloyd of Nottingham, when the organ was moved from Castlegate. According to the Forster & Andrews records it was originally planned as a sizeable two-manual but funds enabled the addition of a third manual prior to installation.

The original specification was:

Builder: Forster & Andrews

Wind pressure throughout = 70 mm wg; mechanical action

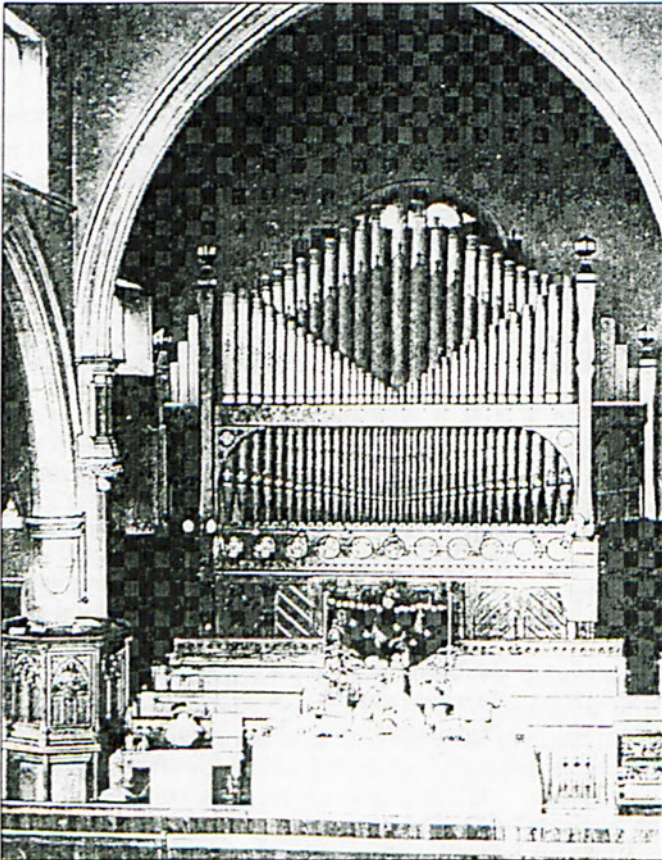
GREAT (C-g ³)		CHOIR (C-g ³)		SWELL (C-g ³)	
Open Diapason	8	Lieblich Gedeckt	8	Lieblich Bourdon	16
Stopt Bass	8	Flüte d'Amour	8	Open Diapason	8
Rohr Flöte (tc)	8	Celestina	(4)	Stopt Bass	8
Hohl Flöte (tc)	8	Lieblich Flöte*	4	Stopt Treble	8
Dulciana (tc)	8	Clarinet (tenor f)	8	Flauto amabile (tc)	8
Principal	4	* (prepared)		Principal	4
Harmonic Flute	4			Piccolo	2
Twelfth	2 ^{2/3}			Mixture IV rks	
Fifteenth	2	COUPLERS		Horn	8
Sesquialtera III rks		Swell to Great		Oboe (tenor c)	8
Cornopean	8	Swell to Great in Octaves			
Spare slide		Swell to Pedals		ACCESSORIES	
		Great to Pedals		Four Great composition pedals	
PEDALS (C-f)		Choir to Pedals		Two Swell composition pedals	
Open Diapason	16	Pedal Octave			
Bourdon	16				

The organ was overhauled in the 1950s when the stencilling on the front pipes was painted over. At some point, the Pedal Octave coupler was dismantled though the parts remain preserved inside the organ.

The current specification is broadly original with four alterations:

GREAT	CHOIR	SWELL	
Piccolo 2 (from Swell?)	Gamba 8 (new)	Voix Celestes (on Piccolo slide)	8

Additional Swell to Choir coupler



The organ as installed in Hyson Green Chapel prior to 1950.

The Choir Clarinet may not be original though it is a well-made stop of spotted metal marked 'Crem'. The organ survives in good condition, although through maladjustment and dirt only the Great is just about playable; some idea of the Swell organ can be gained by pulling down pallet wires. The Swell reeds, marked in French, were probably made by Courcel'e who is said to have supplied much of Forster's reed work. The Oboe has long bells and an attractive un-English quality. The Great Open Diapason has Schulze style mouths to the trebles.

The church authorities know they possess an instrument of historic significance and wish to find it a good home. Space taken up by the organ will be needed towards the end of this year; it is urgent that this instrument should not be allowed to go the way of so many others. The organ has been notified to RORCL as redundant though enquiries may be made to me concerning specific details.

INTERNATIONAL INTERPRETATION COMPETITION BORDEAUX 18-22 SEPTEMBER 2000

The city of Bordeaux is organizing a competition to be held on the Dom Bedos organ in the Abbey of Ste-Croix. The organ was restored in 1997 and is a remarkably complete example of an instrument by the famous Benedictine monk. There is a first prize of FFr 20000 and the jury will include Michel Chapuis and Jon Laukvik. Pieces to be played are drawn mostly from French classical repertoire.

Further details from: RENAISSANCE DE L'ORGUE A BORDEAUX, [REDACTED]

THE EAST ANGLIAN ACADEMY OF ORGAN AND EARLY KEYBOARD MUSIC

Malcolm Russell will be performing the 'Clavierübung' part III at St Mary's, Walsingham, Norfolk on 28 June (organ by Cedric Arnold, Williamson & Hyatt), at St Michael's, Framlingham, Suffolk on 1 September as part of the Academy's Bach Festival and at the Grote Kerk, Almelo, Holland on 5 November. For further details [REDACTED]

BERNARD EDMONDS _____

NOTES & QUERIES

Who said this?

1. The unhappy result is ... to obscure rather than clarify the texture. This occurs, in part, because the mixture has been scaled and voiced as a colour aid rather than to fulfil the functional intent to reinforce the fundamental pitch. Music is basically intended to be heard at unison pitch, after all, and the harmonic series which is mimicked by the mixture strengthens that unison.
2. Matters relating to both performance and design seem to be discussed in the language of moral argument rather than musical debate. Rationality then flies out of the window and music, the Muse we should be maintaining, is crushed between the words.
3. At what point does historical sensibility become conservation fundamentalism?
4. Idealism increases in direct proportion to one's distance from the problem.

Edgbaston began to develop towards the end of the eighteenth century, and the end of the Napoleonic Wars triggered a rapid expansion. The Gough family, Lords of the Manor, managed to exclude commercial and dense residential development, and the area was laid out spaciouly with wide roads, large houses, and open spaces. There, leading Birmingham industrialists made their homes. At the 'country end', way out by Edgbaston Park, was the medieval parish church, St Bartholomew's, later to be considerably enlarged. Its 1857 organ we have already considered. But the Sperling notebooks, now on loan from the RCO to the British Library Manuscripts Department (79 9 1/5), have the following (3.27):

Edgebaston (sic) Parish Church

A small second hand organ presented to the church in 1837 by Lord

Calthorp. One row of keys GG to F

Open Diapason

Stopt Diapason in halves

Principal

Fifteenth

Cremona to tenor C in small swell box

German pedals one octave. A good organ for its size.

Hill records show 14 August 1849, estimates addressed to 'Fiddian esq', but these were not taken up. To serve the 'city end' of the area, a Building Committee was set up to arrange for a church, and St George's was the result. The then landowner and Lord of the Manor of Edgbaston was George Gough-Calthorpe, third Baron Calthorpe, and he defrayed most of the cost of the original 1836-38 building; hence the dedication, St George. Here also magnates were interested in supplying an organ, and there are several letters in Hill's books 1838-39. There is nothing specific about the organ, and so far as the Hill records are concerned, St George's organ disappears into thin air until the enlargement of the church in 1890, when an estimate for a three-manual appears, not taken up. One letter is of more general interest:

J.F. Ledsam Esq. Sir, ... I have had an interview with Lord Calthorpe ... he came to no decision, but put several questions to me respecting Mr. Hollins' judgment on organs - whether he was a competent judge or not? to which I observed I could not allow him to judge between Bamfield (sic) and me - a man whom he had employed for the additions at St. Paul's. My organs must be tried by men higher in Profession before they leave my premises. ... I have no desire to enter competition with Mr. Bamfield, as my experience and the expenses of London workmanship cannot bear any proportion. ... William Hill.

George Hollins, though lame, was an excellent organist; a pupil of Thomas Munden, he succeeded his master as Town Hall organist - there was no 'City Organist' then - functioning in two of the Triennial Festivals in company with the Visitor, Mendelssohn. Organist at the Town Hall from 1837 until his death in 1841, he had also succeeded Munden at St Paul's, Ludgate Hill, Hockley, in Birmingham. This

was evidently the family church, for there are memorials to several Hollins worthies, including the noted architect and his sculptor son.

C.J.B. Meacham, Mus.B. Cambridge, trained at Ely Cathedral; appointed organist of St Philip's, Birmingham, in 1871, he moved to St George's in 1888, staying until his death in 1900. In the *Musical Times*, May 1890, we find

'CHURCH ORGAN for SALE, by HILL and SON, containing 2 manuals, full compass of pedals, and 16 stops, now in St. George's Church, Edgbaston, where it may be seen by applying to Mr. Meacham, 9, Calthorpe Road, Birmingham.

At the moment, that is all we have of the elusive organ. It is not as informative as we could wish, and apart from the note about pedal compass, could easily be a twin of the 1857 Parish Church organ. It is a Hill, and the explanation of the lacuna in Hill's records is likely to be that it was made for another building, and transferred to St George's. That need not mean a 'throw-out', for such transfers have been made for several reasons. I have a recollection of seeing, many years ago, a note to that effect tucked away obscurely in Hill's books, but this has eluded re-discovery.

It was replaced in 1890 by a three-manual Brindley & Foster when the old church was enlarged to its present form. It has a fine case designed by W.A. Chatwin, architect for the church extension, and executed probably by Bridgeman of Lichfield who did most of the carving then. Some of the stops in Meacham's very complete specification were not executed until later, and there have been several enlargements and rebuilds up to the present time - but that is another story.

L.R. Fleming I got to know when he took over W.J. Bird of Birmingham and moved into John Holt's reed organ factory near my home. He had been local representative for Hill Norman & Beard and was a store of knowledge of organs in the area. Unfortunately he later burnt his fingers by taking over what was left of Nicholson & Lord of Walsall, and Mr. Lambert of Nicholson's came to the rescue. My later letters from Fleming have as sub-heading 'S.E. Lambert & Co. Ltd', so it was in effect a subsidiary of Nicholson's but did various organs and rebuilds under its own entity. In 1956 he wrote to me:

We re-open the organ at St George's this evening after fitting a new console and action. ... the organist when it was built was a Dr (sic) Meacham. His son, a retired ship's engineer and something of an eccentric, lives at Wootton Wawen and has his father's little old Hill organ in a large wooden shed at the back of his cottage. He is a nocturnal customer and sleeps during the day and is very much awake at night, practising the organ, say from 2 to 5 a.m.

I am indebted for help to David Bruce-Payne, organist, and Justin Pinkess, historian, of St George's; and Roland Keen, organist of St Bartholomew's. Now, as always, if anyone has any information which may be relevant, please send it along and I will forward it. Don't leave it to someone else, there may not be anyone.

Mr. PURKIS

Be m o > i respectfully xo inform the Nobility and Gentry, who do him the honour to frequent hi» Performances on

THE APOLLONICON,

That having Arranged and Adapted to the Wonderful Power» of the Insirumem, the OVERTURE AND SELECT PIECES from AUBER's» favourite Opera of

GUSTAVUS THE THIRD,

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THEN WILL BL IVTRODI C'LD IV HIS PLRIORMASCLS

ON SATURDAV. DECEMBER 25th. 1833.

And on several following Saturdays.

Com me nei nc at 2 o*c kvk

Ad in nt ance 1 A .

Tix: Mechanical Power- of the APPOLLONICON ate exhibiled Dailt fioni 1 1 ill 4. perform me MOZART' S ON LRTI RE lo EIC'ARO anJ WEBER S O'. ERR RE la DER FREISCHI TZ-m .JJilon la which.on Satur-J J' - ^»nl>. Mr. Purki, will perform a tnounle SELECTION of MI SIC". Jurms the Seal'll.

As to 1864 we fear we cannot help you... (the writer) regrets to have to say that he took but little interest in musical matters at that time, but was more interested in steam engines as small boys often are, and probably made the very first model of a 'streamlined' locomotive in that year. It was made of sheet zinc and had an inverted boat's bow in front of the smoke box to cut through the air. 'Grown ups' were rather discouraging to children in those far off Victorian days, and when in answer to a question as to what use it was, he replied 'the train would go faster' he was told trains already went fast enough, this was countered by the assertion that coal would be saved. "Run away and play" was the next damper on the budding inventiveness of the little upstart!

(Letter from E.H. Suggate of Bishop & Son, to Bernard Edmonds, 5 March 1937)

Answers to Who said this?

1. & 2. Gillian Weir, *The Organbuilder*, vol 10 no. 2.
3. Hugh Dickinson, formerly Dean of Salisbury.
4. John Galsworthy.



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