

BIOS REPORTER

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THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ORGAN STUDIES

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BIOS REPORTER

Opinions expressed in the *BIOS Reporter* are those of the respective contributors.

The Editor reserves the right to refuse or amend material.

Editor: Gordon Curtis

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BIOS SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription is £37 (£32 concessionary, £12 student). Full details of membership and subscriptions can be obtained from the Membership Secretary.

Front cover: *St James, Kinnersley. Organ by Wordsworth & Maskell, case by G F Bodley.* (Photo: Andrew Hayden) See p.13. Back cover: *Sweetland organ at St Edmund's, Crickhowell.* (Photo: Eric Gower) See p.16.

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As we get underway in this New Year it is still hard to plan ahead with any degree of certainty. We had hoped that, for the first time in two years, it would be possible to hold a 'real' Council meeting in January, but an enquiry recently sent out to those involved has just resulted in a decision to meet together once more by Zoom. In February or March each year we usually hold the Bernard Edmonds Research Conference as our first event, but although the Barber Institute of Fine Arts hope to be able to offer us a date before too long, they are as yet not at the stage where they are again open for bookings. How we all long for life to get back to normal!

Despite the absence of meetings (whether of Members, Council or administrative Committees) the past year has still been a good one for us, as reflected in the draft accounts for our financial year ended 31 December 2021. I can't let the mention of the finances pass without once again expressing thanks and admiration to our Treasurer, Adrian Mumford, for his ever efficient and prompt handling of our accounts and transactions. With the financial year ending at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, at 10.16 am on New Year's Day the Secretary and I received in our inboxes the copy of the draft BIOS Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2021. Not many organisations can equal that! At a time like this there are of course swings and roundabouts, but a bonus in last year's accounts has arisen from the bumper year enjoyed by the BIOS Webstore - largely the result of the excellent sales figures resulting from orders for John Norman's book *Organ Works* and Jim Berrow's new book on the history of the Nicholson firm. Although it is rewarding to see the Webstore taking off in this way, there will be challenges ahead as the range of products increases: this will in turn require a review of the arrangements for storage of products and the mechanics of dealing with packing and dispatch as orders come in. Though that is something for the future, Council is already beginning to consider what options may be available to us, and at what cost.

A more imminent concern, however, will be the future arrangements for the production, printing and dispatch of our flagship enterprise, the annual *Journal*. Towards the end of last year John Brennan announced his intention to retire at the end of this year, once he has seen through the 2022 *Journal*. We thank him for giving us such good notice. John has been in charge of the production and printing of every issue of the *Journal* since the foundation of BIOS, so when he retires he will have completed his 46th volume - what a record! Quite apart from its academic content (for which we have numerous contributors to thank as well as the BIOS Publications Committee), the *Journal* has established an enviable reputation for its high-class quality, from editing and formatting through to printing and production. Behind the scenes John has been the constant factor in the excellence of the finished result that comes through our letter box each year. His presence will be sorely missed, of that there can be no doubt. There will be time at the end of the year to say

a more formal 'thank you' to John, but in the meantime our Publications Officer Dr Katharine Pardee, and her Committee, are busy giving thought to their proposals for the future. There is a lot for us to live up to, of that we are all aware.

An area in which much progress has been made during the past year, though going on quietly and unsung in the background, has been Paul Graham's work on updating the Directory of British Organ Builders (DBOB). Until a year or so ago this was a sealed archive which finished at the year 1950. As with the NPOR, no signal is emitted to alert us every time a new entry is made or an existing one updated, so we only become aware of what is (or is not) there once we engage in the process of searching for particular pieces of information. Members will therefore be interested to learn that they can now find entries on DBOB for firms that have 'been and gone' since 1950 (as examples, try a search on Peter Collins, Nigel Church, Grant, Degens & Bradbeer or Kenneth Tickell); and firms founded since 1950 and still in existence (Richard Bower, William Drake Ltd, Goetze & Gwynn). Changes of existence are now recorded (the sad closure of Manders and the new existence of Mander Organ Builders), and though the concentration in these early stages is on updating entries of firms, in some cases personal details of individual organ builders have been added or updated (John Budgen and Maurice Forsyth-Grant for example). The gradual transformation of DBOB in this way is a development of great significance for BIOS and we are deeply grateful to Paul for his enthusiasm for the work and devotion to the task. We also express our appreciation to the Institute of British Organ Building, who have agreed in future to start furnishing BIOS annually with updated details of firms, using information from the returns that come in from the annual survey they conduct of British organ builders. The survey is sent to all known organ builders in the country, not just those who are members of the IBO, so the cooperation of the IBO will be key to keeping the content of DBOB up to date year by year in the future.

It is always sad when we have to take note of the death of any of our members, especially those who have been of key significance either within BIOS or the organ world in general. In the recent past we have lost Dr Mike Sayers (founder of the NPOR) and John Budgen (distinguished organ builder), and since the last edition of the *Reporter* we have lost Dr Francis Jackson (who was already Organist of York Minster by the year in which I was born!) and also that delightful character, Alfred Champriss (a Founder Member of BIOS). As such valued members pass on, and others melt away silently, it is vital that we do all we can to recruit new members to replace them, especially from those of a younger age who will be our hope for the future of BIOS. Please do all you can, and use any opportunity that comes your way to make anyone with an interest in historic organs aware of our existence and the important work that we do, and please encourage them to join.

Alan Thurlow

FROM THE SECRETARY

BIOS Annual General Meeting

Saturday 25 June 2022 at The Grosvenor Chapel, 24 South Audley Street, Mayfair, London W1K 2PA

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the British Institute of Organ Studies will take place on Saturday 25 June 2022 at The Grosvenor Chapel, 24 South Audley Street, Mayfair, London W1K 2PA at 11.00 hours.

The AGM forms part of the programme for the Day Conference at The Grosvenor Chapel. All members whose subscriptions have been paid are entitled to attend the AGM (free of charge) and to vote, but the Council hope that many members will wish to include their attendance at the meeting as part of their support for the whole day event.

Elections

The following election of officers and ordinary members of Council will be held:

Treasurer

Secretary

Membership Secretary

Meetings Officer

Casework Officer

Four Ordinary Members of Council

Clause 7.4 of the Constitution states: 'Any two fully paid-up members of the Society shall be at liberty to nominate a member to serve on the Council'. Clause 7.5 states: 'the name of each member nominated under clause 7.4 shall be given to the Secretary not less than seven days before the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting, accompanied by the candidate's consent to serve, if elected.' Nomination forms for officers and ordinary members of Council are obtainable from the Secretary, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] e-mail: secretary@bios.crg.uk

BIOS Council (February 2022)

BIOS Council met on Saturday 22 January 2022 using Zoom Video Conferencing. Twelve members of Council participated. Nicholas Thistlethwaite (President) and John Norman (Webmaster) were also in attendance. Council received reports and agreed or noted the following:

A Governance Review would be undertaken by a small Group to check that BIOS met legal requirements and recommendations for small charities as set out in the Charity Acts and by the Charity Commission. The Group would comprise the President as Chair, the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. The aim would be to have also an independent member.

The President was invited to bring to the next Council Meeting a proposal for a BIOS 50th Anniversary Publication (2026).

Proposals from a Member for the amendment of the Aims of the Society were noted but Council confirmed that it did not wish to propose any further amendments to the Aims at this time.

A draft 'Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021' was accepted (the Independent Examiner had completed his examination of the Accounts and the version considered by the meeting had been signed off by him). About 400 Membership subscriptions for this year had been paid already.

During 2021 Jim Berrow's *John Nicholson of Worcester* book, John Norman's *Organ Works* and back copies of *JB IOS* had sold particularly well from the Webstore. Advertisements promoting the Nicholson book had been placed in organ journals.

Arrangements were being pursued for a Day Conference (Friday 30.09.22) 'The celestial Harmonists: Music and the Herschels' to be part of the activities to mark the bicentenary of William Herschel's death in 1822. The venue would be the Museum of Bath Architecture.

The digitisation of the first 31 years of the *BIOS Reporter* had been completed and the aim now would be to upload the complete run, apart from the last two years of *Reporters*, on a rolling basis to the Website.

Discussions were underway on the future of *JB IOS* in the light of John Brennan's forthcoming retirement.

Material continued to flow in quantities sufficient to fill approximately 100 pages of *BIOS Reporter* annually.

On the recommendations of the Listing Committee, Council approved the listing of six historic organs and two applications were refused. There were currently eight organs on the Historic Organs at Risk Register and it was agreed that one should be added.

Six organs featured in the discussion of recent casework.

The number of individual donations via the Website towards the costs of the NPOR had fallen sharply since the start of the pandemic. On the other hand, the number of individuals making regular payments by standing order has remained stable.

A formal response to the consultation of the Church of England Review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure had been submitted.

In line with the policy of keeping collections unified, it was agreed that the existing Nicholson papers held in the British Organ Archive (both the Nicholson and Nicholson & Lord collections) should be transferred to the Worcestershire County Archive.

The magazine 'Orgues Nouvelles' devoted the Autumn 2021 issue to the English organ, including information about HOSA. Four tracks recorded on the restored Lincoln organ in Thaxted Church by Anne Page in 2016 had been added to the HOSA Youtube channel.

Council meets next on Saturday 9 April 2022.

Melvin Hughes

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

I am delighted to welcome the following new members to BIOS:

Mr Callum McLeod, [REDACTED]

Mr David Pinnegar, [REDACTED]

We very much regret the loss of both Dr Francis Jackson, a BIOS member since 1981, and Alfred Champniss, another valued member since 1976.

As a result of the new Membership List 2021 being sent out, I have been inundated with changes for the database, for which I thank members. Those referring to title or to additional qualifications have been transferred to the database, but those indicating a change of address, telephone number or email are detailed below:

Simon Williams' new email address is: [REDACTED]

Nigel Browne has moved to: [REDACTED]

James Litton has moved to: [REDACTED]

Jonathan Hagger has moved to: [REDACTED]

Rev. Stephen J. Williams has moved to: [REDACTED]

Robert Rees has moved to: [REDACTED]

Michael Koenig, MA, FRCO has moved to: [REDACTED]

Eric Shepherd's new telephone number is: [REDACTED]

A reminder about this year's subscription to those members who pay by BACS transfer, PayPal or cheque was sent out, as promised, at the beginning of December last. I thank the many members who have paid as a result of that reminder. To date (11 Jan.) there are nearly 70 in these categories who still owe their 2022 subscription, which was due by January 1st this year. Those members with Standing Orders need take no further action, other than checking that the amount is correct for their subscription category. From the many Standing Orders that have already come in, there are still a few who are paying at an old rate (very old in some cases!) of £25 or £30. I shall attempt to contact these members at some stage, as their arrears in membership fees over a number of years are accumulating alarmingly in some instances.

Subscription amounts will remain the same for 2022: £37 (£32 concessionary, £12 student under 30). For those outside the UK, rates are £10 higher respectively, to reflect the additional postage costs of publications. As always, you can pay in one of four ways: i) by Standing Order (as many hundreds of members do), ii) by direct transfer into the BIOS bank account, whose details are: NatWest; sort code: 52-30-44 account number: 05097169 account name: The British Institute of Organ Studies – Registered Charity, iii) via the BIOS website: <http://www.bios.org.uk> using PayPal and iv) by sending me a cheque to my address given on the inside front cover. Please 'Gift Aid' your subscription if you are able, and are not already doing so.

David Shepherd

OBITUARIES

DR MICHAEL SAYERS (1943-2021)

The death of Michael ('Mike') Sayers on 4 October 2021 has deprived BIOS of a popular and wise elder statesman who had contributed enormously to the society's work over the last thirty years. Appointed initially in 1991 as Information Technology Officer, Michael became the first Director of the National Pipe Organ Register in 1997. He retained the post until 2005, when his own imminent retirement from the Directorship of the Computing Service at Cambridge led to the NPOR moving to the University of Central England in Birmingham. Thereafter, Michael continued to give generously of his time and expertise as a consultant, and it is no exaggeration to say that his contribution over many years was fundamental to the original vision, and subsequent development and success, of the NPOR.

Michael was born in Burgess Hill on 13 December 1943. His scientific curiosity, and fascination with 'how things worked', manifested themselves at an early age, accompanied by similar passions for rugby and especially cricket. (In later life, Michael was a member of the MCC, and his 70th birthday celebrations took place at Lord's). Unsurprisingly, this embryonic scientist and musician was intrigued by 'the king of instruments', and spent many years building a large electronic organ from scratch.

His first degree was in Physics, at Sussex University, but he then moved across to computing, excited by the rapid developments that were taking place in that field. He started work at International Computers Ltd (ICL) in 1969, but the call of academia was insistent, and Michael moved to Hatfield Polytechnic in 1973. In 1985 he moved to Cambridge to join the University Computing Service of which he was eventually appointed Director in 1994. Michael enjoyed the technical challenges, and particularly relished working with the highly skilled team that he led, and the friendships that developed out of these professional collaborations. He also greatly enjoyed the more traditional aspects of Cambridge, being elected to a Fellowship at Emmanuel College, where he soon immersed himself in the history, rituals and High Table camaraderie of the society and was popular with both the academic and the domestic staff.

Outside the University, Michael settled happily into life in the village of Harlton. As his colleague Tom Corder said in the tribute he delivered at Michael's funeral, in Harlton 'he found everything that he was looking for: a church, a house with a good-sized garden, and the promise of a traditional and welcoming village community – with a cricket club, a post office, a garage, and a local pub.' He also found a wife, Jean, and two step-daughters, Claire and Alyson. Michael served as churchwarden for some years, overseeing roof and masonry repairs to the fine

mediaeval church. He also led a successful project to build a new west gallery to house the 1849 Bishop & Sons organ, which was then sensitively enlarged by Peter Bumsted (2009) retaining the handsome Gothic case by Osmond Fisher, one of Sir John Sutton's ecclesiological circle. Appropriately enough, it was awarded a distinctive numbering in the National Pipe Organ Register [NPOR M00001]. Was this a tongue-in-cheek tribute to or by the Director?

One of the early objectives of BIOS had been the creation of a comprehensive national list of organs. Nicholas Plumley was the first Listing Officer, and in April 1978, an article in the *Reporter* set out an ambitious programme for the collection of information using a standardised form, to be sent to a central repository. This work proceeded steadily throughout the 1980s. During the chairmanship of Donald Wright (1983-91) a new initiative led to 16,000 copies of the form being sent out with an issue of the *Organists' Review* (1987), accompanying an article which included a plea for assistance from someone who had the expertise in data processing that would be required to handle the potential mass of information that it was hoped would accrue. Michael read this article, and 'despite being rather naïve about the long term implications' (his words), he arranged to meet Donald Wright and Dr John Whittle of the University of Nottingham to discuss possible involvement in the project. From that meeting came the NPOR database project which grew into the comprehensive internet-based facility of today.

On 6 October 1990, Michael submitted an outline proposal to the Council for the establishment of a computer-based register incorporating both the material gleaned from current surveys and from earlier collections of stop-lists (Andrew Freeman, Bernard Edmonds, Charles Drane, Colin Fothergill and David Shepherd) deposited in the British Organ Archive. This was followed by a more developed proposal on 26 January 1991. At that meeting, Mike was appointed Information Technology Officer and co-opted to the Council, and a working group was established to develop the proposals further. By October 1992, the database included details of 3,000 organs.

It was clear that additional funding would be required if the project was to advance. Dr Peter le Huray had succeeded Donald Wright as Chairman, and he was instrumental in collaborating with Michael to secure a grant from the British Academy in 1992, a grant that was renewed for two further years. This facilitated the appointment of Paul Houghton as NPOR manager who then worked closely with Michael in expanding the project and recruiting editors. By 1993, details of 9,200 organs were recorded. Initially, the database ran on the Cambridge University Central Unix System, but in 1995 the Thriplow Charitable Trust provided funds for a new dedicated Unix server for the exclusive use of the NPOR. In due course, further financial support came from the Pilgrim Trust and a number of generous organ-building firms. In 1997, Michael was appointed Director of the NPOR, and he

was able to report that the database included 24,000 organ surveys, 16,000 entries from material in the Archive, and 3,100 entries from the DBOB.

The huge success of the NPOR project would not have been possible without the dedicated team that Mike built up around him, but much of the credit for initiating, designing and steering the project forward was his. Funding remained a preoccupation, despite the generosity of many team members in giving their time when the well ran dry, and the quest for funding must have been a constant diversion for the Director from what he doubtless saw as his main task. Hence it must have been with mixed feelings that he relinquished the Directorship in 2005. But the transfer to Birmingham proved an unqualified success; Michael's advice continued to be sought and welcomed, and it gave him great satisfaction to see the NPOR continuing to thrive in its new home.

Si monumentum requires, circumspice. The NPOR stands alongside BIOS's publications as an outward-facing educational resource which communicates to the wider world the objectives of the society. It is a resource for organ-builders, organ historians and conservationists, and is increasingly valuable as a source of reference for the various statutory bodies and amenity societies which act as guardians of our national heritage. For the development of the NPOR in its mature form we and they owe a huge debt to the genial, generous and wise man who is the subject of this obituary.

Nicholas Thistlethwaite

ALFRED CHAMPNISS 1933 - 2022

Although he was absent from the famous photograph taken on the bridge at Queen's College Cambridge in 1976, Alfred was present at the inaugural meeting of BIOS and was thus a founder member. He much enjoyed the early residential and day conferences, often playing demonstrations on organs visited, and he organised a second conference in Brittany to visit and hear many of the Dallam organs after their restoration. He was educated at Harrow and Oxford (organ scholar at Oriel College), and studied the organ with Ralph Downes and composition with Howells at the RCM before joining the music staff at Rugby School. Here he was responsible with J.W.Walker and Sons for the 1960 rebuilding of the large Norman and Beard organ in the Butterfield Chapel (since removed, along with its then new Stephen Dykes Bower case), and was acting sub organist to David Lepine at Coventry Cathedral at the time of the consecration of Basil Spence's new building in 1961, playing for many of the opening services and broadcasts, including the premier of Francis Jackson's *Daniel in Babylon*. He was Director of Music at Sedbergh and Mill Hill Schools (where he oversaw the installation of the new Mander organ), and

in retirement was hon. assistant organist of the William Drake organ at the Grosvenor Chapel.

Alfred will be remembered by his many friends, colleagues and pupils for his generosity, his wide ranging musical enthusiasms, his performances of the Bach Passacaglia (often from memory), his fund of anecdotes about musicians, clergy and schoolmasters, his love of architecture, good food, wine, suburbia and 'doing things properly'.

Richard Hobson

CAN YOU HELP?

The Cadbury Research Library has several gaps in its holding of the *BIOS Reporter*. Have you copies of any of the numbers shown below which you would be prepared to donate to the Archive? If so, please contact the Librarian, Special Collections, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT; e-mail: special-collections@bham.ac.uk Tel: 01214 145839

1977, nos 1-3

1984, no 4

1985, no 4

2012, nos 1 and 3

2013, nos 1 and 2

2015, no 2

2017, vol 41, no 1

2019, vol 43, no 2

JOURNAL WATCH

An occasional listing of articles of interest in the wider musical press.

Frühauf, Tina (2021) The organ in Jewish culture during the long Renaissance. *Early Music*, caab069, <https://doi.org/10.1093/em/caab069>

Pepe, E.C. (2021) The Pérez de Lara Family, Mexican Organ and Piano Builders. *J. Amer. Musical Instrument Soc.*

GC

HISTORIC ORGANS AT RISK REGISTER

The inclusion of the following organ on the Register was approved by the Council at its meeting in January 2022:

Location	Post code	Building	NPOR	Listing	Comment
Cornholme	OL14 8LH	St Michael and all Angels	N10885	II	The church has been closed and is for sale.

There are currently nine organs on the Register:

Margate, Royal Sea Bathing Hospital	September 2016
Cambridge, St Andrew	April 2017
Devizes St Mary	May 2018
Tollington Park, St Mark	June 2019
Ipswich, St Clement's Congregational	October 2019
Edge Hill, St Mary/All Saints	September 2020
Alexandria, St Mungo's Episcopal Church	January 2021
Parkstone, St Dunstan	June 2021
Cornholme, St Michael and all Angels	January 2022

Edge Hill St Dunstan was removed from the list in November 2021, following the granting of a faculty for its disposal.

In relation to Parkstone, St Dunstan, it appears that the church does not wish to dispose of the organ as was suggested in the original HOARR application. However, the console has been moved and the cable connecting it with the organ disconnected. The citation on the Register has therefore been amended to 'The console has been disconnected from the instrument, which can no longer be played. No constructive plans are in place to address the situation'.

Jonathan Goodchild

COMMITTEE FOR THE LISTING OF HISTORIC ORGANS

Grade I organs are of exceptional interest

Grade II* organs are particularly important and of more than special interest

Grade II organs are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them

The following organs were awarded Historic Organ Certificates at the BIOS Council meeting on 22 January 2022.

Location	Builder(s) and Date	Comments	Grade
Rock, Northumberland SS Phillip & James NE66 3SD	Gray & Davison 1881	A very significant instrument both historically and musically and of importance to the national heritage.	I
Devoran Methodist Church, Cornwall TR3 6PN	Hele 1902	An unaltered example from 1902 incorporating material from the earlier 1865 organ, the first instrument from Hele's Truro factory.	II*
Kinnersley, Herefordshire St James HR3 6QF	Wordsworth & Maskell 1885	An unaltered example from 1865 in collaboration with G F Bodley who designed the fine case.	II*
Llanfair-ar-y-bryn, Carmarthenshire SA20 0YF	Bevington 1888	An unaltered example from 1888 constructed with an unusual internal layout, housed in a handsome case.	II
Newton St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0PL	J J Binns 1896	Tonally and mechanically unaltered and originally for Holy Trinity, Hough End, but relocated in 1958.	II
Cornholme, Lancashire St Michael & All Angels OL14 8LH	Conacher & Co 1904	A surviving example of an early pneumatic Conacher organ that is tonally unaltered.	II

Future Submission Date:

Friday 09:00 30 May for Listing Meeting on 30 June.

Jeffrey Williams

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Another puzzle

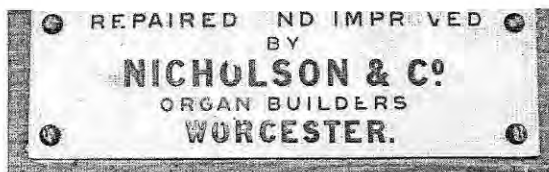
Sir,

In the early 1980s I acquired a small organ from the redundant church of St John, Aston Magna in Gloucestershire. The church was built in 1846 and closed for worship sometime after 1979. When I bought it the specification was Open Diapason TC 8'; Stopped Diapason TC; Stopped Diapason Bass; Dulciana TC; Principal 4'. It can be seen from the soundboard that the original organ had a 2' stop, this having subsequently been replaced by the Dulciana, the pipes of which are of plain metal and unremarkable. The metal pipes of the OD and Principal are of zinc up to 1' and unplanned metal thereafter. Some of the larger zinc pipes seem to have acquired a spot of 'zinc-pest'. Perhaps this organ suffered a calamity at some stage, such as a fall of ceiling plaster, and the zinc and unplanned pipes were economic replacements. Above the console is Nicholson's plate (see below) stating that they had 'repaired and improved' the instrument but without date. It seems unlikely that Nicholson's would ever have utilized such pipework, in which case we are looking at no less than three incarnations, the original builder, Nicholson's and a later, unknown, hand. Can anyone provide any further information please?

David Butterworth,
Nottingham



Organ formerly in Aston Magna church and (below) Nicholson's plate. (Photos: David Butterworth)



A case of dates?

Sir,

Paul Tindall's research into an organ made for what was then Wakefield Parish Church strongly piques my interest. But what a pity that the photograph of the old case was taken at so oblique an angle and is so small on the page, which means that one can glean too little from it. As far as can be made out, the mouldings and carved-work are indeed rich and fine, and the broad, flattish, central 'flat tower' does, with other details, suggest a Georgian mid-century date. On the other hand, the arch-topped panelling beneath the outer towers is indicative of a much older time. Could some more-revealing photos of this handsome organ case be published?

The Wragby organ case illustrated (five times more bigly) in the same article is a different kettle of fish: small in scale and, although including some finely ornamental, pierced, carved panels and pipe-shades, looking as a whole more like a confection of the nineteenth century, going by the mainly quite two-dimensional quality of the frontage, the flattened V shape at the base of the central flat and the Gallic-looking corbels of a style starkly different from the carved work higher up. The mouldings along the top, also forming the faceted tower cornices (called segmental caps by Mr Tindall), to me look somewhat debased in character — another hint that this is mid-nineteenth-century work.

Alec Dingwall
Isleworth, Middlesex

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Mark Venning writes of a Memorial Concert for John Budgen. It will take place on Thursday 21st April at 1 pm, when John will be commemorated in a concert at St Margaret Lothbury, near the Bank of England in the City of London. The organists will be Margaret Phillips and Richard Townend. The organ, originally built by George Pike England in 1801, was reconstructed in 1984 (II/22) by Bishop & Son under John Budgen's leadership.

SURPASSING ALL EXPECTATIONS - A NEW ORGAN IN VICTORIAN WALES

ERIC GOWER

In 1874 the Revd Boscawen G.H. Somerset took up his post as Rector of Crickhowell, St Edmund serving the small market town on the edge of the Black Mountains in Wales. He found the church building large enough for the needs of a parish of 1,300 or so residents, but one that had a serious acoustic problem. Since 1836 when two wide side aisles had been added to the building, those sitting in these areas had difficulty hearing anything that was said or sung in the chancel. This also applied to the sound from the single manual organ tucked away, as it was, in the north transept.

The Revd Somerset was by nature a mild and gentle man. An anonymous biographical monograph, privately printed and circulated soon after his death in 1893, said of him 'He carefully abstained from everything sensational, and allowed improvements to develop themselves by silent rather than by startling changes.'¹

However the two resolutions passed at a vestry meeting in March 1881 were radical if not sensational:

1. That it is desirable to have a new organ for the church.
2. That the Transepts and Aisles be connected by arches, if the plan be approved by a competent architect as architecturally correct and if it be feasible.²

There is no record of the debate that surely took place at the meeting. The desirability of a new organ has to be understood in terms of improving the overall power of the organ, since the Flight & Robson instrument in place was in perfectly good working order and continues to give good service today in the neighbouring parish church of St Michael and All Angels, Cwmdru.³ The Arches and Organ Fund was set up to pay for the building work and the new organ. A working party of twelve men was established to oversee the project and its financing. The comprehensive accounts for this fund were published in January 1884.⁴

The arches resolution did cause some consternation amongst the more cautious members of the congregation, but they were reassured by the advice of the appointed architect from the neighbouring diocese of Llandaff, John Prichard. The work was undertaken by a local builder from Abergavenny and was completed in under six weeks without mishap to the building or workers.

The choice of the builder of the new organ was not so clear cut. The committee of the Arches and Organ Fund could be forgiven for not having any specialist knowledge in this area. There is no published explanation of how or why they chose to ask William Sweetland of Bath to be the builder. After all, prior to 1885 when the rail tunnel under the Severn was opened, Bath was some 90 miles away by road, not exactly a local

place to look for someone to build an organ for Crickhowell. Sweetland does not appear to have spent money on conventional advertising in, say, trade journals and, as Gordon Curtis remarks 'Neither was Sweetland obsessive in publishing details of the openings of his organs ... He seems to have relied on word-of-mouth recommendation to gain new business as is evidenced by clusters of organs located in relatively remote areas.'⁵

Writing in 1983, the late David Gedge, former organist at Brecon Cathedral, posed the question 'Could it be that one hundred years ago the authorities of St. Edmund's Church, Crickhowell, had been attracted to this Bath Organ Builder after hearing a smaller instrument that he had built four years earlier for the church at nearby Tretower?'⁶

This is a reasonable conjecture but it begs the question of how a Sweetland organ came to be commissioned for Tretower. This is a small village - population about 300 in 1881 - lying about three miles northwest of Crickhowell. It is dominated by its castle and a large intact medieval manor house, Tretower Court, close to Glanusk Park, home of Sir Joseph Russell Bailey, Bart, MP for Herefordshire. Sir Joseph himself paid to have the small church completely rebuilt in 1876-7. It then became a parish church and was dedicated to St John the Evangelist.⁷ In his parliamentary capacity Sir Joseph clearly had contacts with many national figures and it was natural he should turn to one of these, the Revd Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley, Bart, M.A., Mus.D. to advise on the specification and building of the organ for Tretower.⁸ At the time Ouseley was Heather Professor of Music at Oxford, Precentor and Organist at Hereford Cathedral. In 1856 Ouseley had both founded and endowed with his own funds the St Michael's Church and College on the outskirts of Tenbury Wells intending them to serve as a model for Anglican church music.⁹

From today's perspective, Sir Frederick appears to be somewhat over-qualified to design such a small organ as the one in Tretower. However, this was in keeping with his practice. In 1999 Roy Massey, as organs adviser to the Diocese of Hereford, wrote 'I have, over the years, discovered several instruments designed by Ouseley for village churches, organs distinguished by their enterprising specifications and built to a quality which has enabled them to survive to the present day.'¹⁰

Ouseley appears to have had a high opinion of Sweetland. *The Gentleman's Journal* of September 1896 asserted 'his organs have been pronounced by Sir F. Ouseley, Doctor of Music, to be the best in England of their size.' It looks as if Sir Joseph Bailey was fully persuaded that Sweetland should build the organ for St John's, Tretower and by 1878 the organ was opened.¹¹

Sir Joseph had no official connection with Crickhowell since his residence was in the neighbouring parish. The Arches and Organ Fund accounts show he made a very substantial financial contribution greater than that of the Duke of Beaufort, the patron

of the church. If, as seems likely, the list of direct subscribers is in chronological order he was very early in making his contribution. His donation was exceptional also as one of only three earmarked for the organ part of the project. This donation alone was testimony to the esteem in which Sir Joseph held Sweetland and who was chosen by the Crickhowell committee to be the organ builder.¹²

Sweetland's name and presumably his reputation for high quality workmanship may well have come to the attention of the Revd Somerset through another source as well. Two of his contemporaries while a student at Marlborough College were the brothers Frederick and Montague Yeats Brown, sons of the Consul to Genoa. They each made donations to the Arches and Organ Fund, listed in a section of gifts made directly to the Rector. In 1881 Sweetland had built an organ for the English Church of the Holy Ghost in Genoa. This was paid for by Princess Victoria, the Princess Royal, and shipped via Cardiff in boxes on a coal carrier to be rebuilt locally.¹³ It is known that the Yeats Brown family were prominent in the Genoa church. It is likely that the Revd Somerset and his wife had spent part of a sabbatical with them prior to coming to Crickhowell. Sadly further evidence of the organ was lost when it was destroyed by Allied bombing in the Second World War.¹⁴

It is perhaps surprising that Ouseley's own endorsement of Sweetland and his obvious experience in drawing up organ specifications did not lead to his being given that responsibility at Crickhowell. One can only speculate about the reasons for this. Instead it looks as if Ouseley recommended that the committee should approach the Revd Leighton George Hayne for the design. The biographical monograph of the Revd Somerset states 'The Rev. J. C. Hayne (*sic*), Doctor of Music, the Rector of Mistley in Essex, carefully drew up a specification for an organ to suit the requirements of the Church, entirely out of a wish to help on a good work for the glory of God.'¹⁵

It is difficult to find any reason for Hayne to have been chosen except a presumed recommendation from the trusted Ouseley. Hayne had been a junior colleague of Ouseley at Oxford when holding the short-lived position of University Coryphaeus. There is at least one record of them examining together when Hayne was organist at Queen's College.¹⁶ Plenty has been written elsewhere to reinforce the assertion that 'Rev Leighton George Hayne was, to say the least, a colourful character and rather eccentric.'¹⁷ Had the Crickhowell committee had access to some of the more extraordinary stories of his organ-building,¹⁸ the careful Rector of Crickhowell might well have sought other recommendations for the designer.

Hayne was not one to do things by halves, though. He produced a specification that resulted in Sweetland building an organ that physically fills the north transept of the church (see photo on back cover), totally obscuring the stained glass window in the North Wall.¹⁹ As the masonry work on the arch was being completed it was noticed that there were signs of decay in the floor itself. Given that Hayne's specification

would result in an instrument weighing seven tons some urgent work was carried out to strengthen the floor prior to the organ being erected.²⁰ Although this work was sufficient for the first 100 years of the organ's life, Gedge reported in 1983 'Unfortunately the wooden floor on which it stands, has collapsed partially, leaving the swell shutters operating inefficiently.'²¹ At about the time when this was published, the organ was completely dismantled and a concrete floor put in place before the organ was rebuilt and rendered completely playable again.

Hayne never got to see the fruits of his labour. At some time, through contact with either pet or agricultural animals, he had contracted a fatal cystic hydatid disease in his liver.²² Typically this may have shown little or no symptoms for a long time without modern diagnostic tests. He was apparently too ill to be present in Crickhowell at the opening of the organ on Wednesday 31 January 1883 and in fact, he died a few weeks later on 3 March. The Arches and Organ Fund records no payment for drawing up the specification, but it does show that a gift was given to his widow as a contribution to his memorial - a large stained glass window in St Lawrence Church, Bradford.²³

The new arch in the west wall of the transept at Crickhowell framed the pedal Open Diapason pipes that had been painted maroon giving those sitting in the north aisle something other than a stone wall to look at and exposing them directly to the new organ's sound. At some time after 1916 this was slightly compromised by the installation of an oak screen in memory of one of the original committee members. This partially obscures the painted pipes.²⁴

The organ's opening was met with great approval and the service of dedication was reported on at length.²⁵ At the start of the service the Arches and Organ Fund was about £40 short of the sum needed to break even. The offering at the service resulted in the fund being closed with a surplus of £10. As well as the donations from individual wealthy benefactors, many others were moved to give during the building phase. Just under £350 was needed for the arches and about £550 for the organ, Sweetland receiving £500 for his work. A total of 735 people subscribed to the Fund. In his annual letter to parishioners in 1883, the Revd Boscawen Somerset wrote 'The improvement not only equalled but surpassed all expectations. Not only do those who sit in the aisles hear much better, but those also who sit in the nave. Music sounds sweeter, and the voice travels more easily. It is hardly like the same Church as to appearance, so much are its proportions improved.'²⁶

Eric Gower's professional background was in education, first as a secondary school mathematics teacher and eventually as a senior schools inspector. Since retirement his involvement in his local church has given opportunities for several historical studies. He is new to the world of organs, but claims he is learning fast!

(For references please see over)

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- ²¹ Gedge, op.cit. 11.
- ²² GRO Death Registers, Tendring, 1883, March Quarter, Vol 4a, 236.
- ²³ The Friends of St Lawrence Church Bradfield, op. cit.42.
- ²⁴ The oak screen was given in memory of Robert Townley Woodman (1826-1897) and his wife, Mary (1836-1916).
- ²⁵ 'Dedication of the new organ at Saint Edmund the Martyr's Church', Abergavenny Chronicle, 2 February 1883, 5
- ²⁶ Gower, op. cit.15.

REVIEWS

Roy Massey: An Organist Remembers

RSCM 2021 ISBN 978-0-85402-330 178pp 18.95 GBP

Available from rscmshop.com

Roy Massey's career in church music spanned the second half of the twentieth century and culminated in 27 eventful years as Organist and Master of the Choristers at Hereford Cathedral. This memoir, produced during lockdown, is a rare benefit to emerge from the pandemic.

Growing up in suburban Birmingham, the young Roy's musical gifts were recognised and encouraged from an early age by stalwart local musicians and then by David Willcocks, to whom he was introduced while still at school. After consecutive appointments to organist's positions at two notable local churches, his horizons broadened when Gerald Knight, the 'benign, all-seeing presence' at Addington Palace, appointed him as Warden of the Royal School of Church Music; its quaint ambience and eccentric denizens are observed with quiet relish. His connection with the RSCM was to last a lifetime, and he went on to lead choral courses in many parts of the world.

From Croydon, he moved in 1968 to be Organist at Birmingham Cathedral, where he rebuilt the cathedral choir. Appointment to Hereford Cathedral at the age of 40 brought larger responsibilities, not least the Three Choirs Festival with its strenuous demands.

Roy Massey's 'love affair' with organs of all kinds, first kindled by the Harrison organ at St Martin's Birmingham where he started out as a chorister, led him to a busy career as recitalist and consultant, characterised by a sympathetic interest in the instruments he encountered. I vividly remember our first meeting in 1974, when Harrison & Harrison were invited to inspect the splendid Willis organ at Hereford. Emerging from the gloomy but exciting depths of the organ, I asked the newly-appointed titulaire for a demonstration and was rewarded with a spectacular musical tour, accompanied by a witty and perceptive running commentary that brimmed with enthusiasm for the ailing instrument. Moreover, *he didn't want to change it*. In those iconoclastic days it was quite a revelation to meet an organist who engaged so wholeheartedly with a historic organ.

In the early chapters the author conjures up a vanished era which some of us remember, when choirs still sang in town and country churches throughout the land and church musicians were offered full-time training in a palace. Moving on to Birmingham and Hereford we note the sometimes tortuous process of bringing a cathedral and its music into the modern age; despite the pressures one senses that

the music department could be a stabilising presence in turbulent times. The atmosphere of sleepy Hereford and its cathedral in the 1970s is affectionately conveyed, and Massey makes light of the intense professional workload behind the scenes as the choir's reputation grew. With the passing years we are given lively pen-portraits of the ripe characters who inhabited the Close, along with succinct accounts of notable musical occasions and encounters.

The book is well produced and profusely illustrated; an index would have been welcome.

In a Coda, the author writes: 'I enjoyed every new appointment as it came along and relished the larger canvas being revealed each time I moved on'. That enjoyment is evident on every page of this engaging book. Dr Massey's journey from a parish choir-stall to the higher reaches of the Anglican establishment will be of interest to anyone who values this special corner of the British musical scene.

Mark Venning

Henry Burgess jnr: 6 Concertos edited by David Patrick

Fitzjohn Music £13.00 + p&p

<https://www.impulse-music.co.uk/fitzjohnmusic/>

Little is known of this composer, whose set of six concertos for harpsichord or organ was published in c.1740. Keys used are G, Bb A, F, G minor and C minor. Apart from number two, which is in four movements, each is in three main movements opening with a through composed Allegro in C time, followed by a through composed slow movement in numbers one to four, including a Largo in 3/4 in the relative minor in number one, an Andante in the relative minor with the first half repeated in number two, ending with a Phrygian Cadence leading into a robust fugue in C time of some 100 bars before the closing movement, a Largo in 3/4 in the relative minor, again finishing with a Phrygian cadence in number three, a Siciliana in 6/8 which includes a sharply dotted Lombardic rhythm in number four. In number five there is a Largo in 3/4 in the relative major in binary form and in number six there is a short Largo of 16 bars in 3/4, also in binary form, introduced by a two-bar link after the opening movement.

Each concerto finishes with a fast movement in binary form including two dances: a Giga in 6/8 marked Presto in number one and a Minuet and Trio (in the relative major) in number six. In number two we find an Allegro in 3/8 which includes some demisemiquaver flourishes, in number three an Allegro in 3/8 mainly in quavers, in number four a Vivace in C time in quavers and in number five an Allegro in 3/8 of

some 140 bars with semiquaver over quaver writing. The opening Allegro of numbers five and six is introduced by an Andante finishing with a Phrygian cadence, in dotted rhythm in number five and with repeated minim chord echo effects in number six indicated in the first bar by Tutti-organo-piano (the only time this latter indication appears). It is unclear if this effect is intended to be applied to only the repeated chords in this movement. This may possibly reflect the resources of the organ for which these concertos were conceived, including a long compass, a shifting mechanism to add and subtract stops and also a swell pedal to effect a crescendo/diminuendo.

In the opening movement of the first concerto the bass descends to low G, so 16' pedal tone will be needed. Indications of Tutti and Soli appear throughout each Concerto, as does Senza organo, which can be rendered satisfactorily using echo effects. The second movement of the first Concerto, a Largo, is headed Tutti senza organ. The only specific registration given is Hautboy solo in the second movement of the fifth Concerto, and the only dynamic given is Piano, found in the introductory Andante to the much shorter sixth concerto.

All movements are predominantly in two voices with occasionally thicker texture and rarely left hand octaves, some judicious filling in of harmonies would benefit the slow movements. The outer movements call for a high degree of digital dexterity with semiquaver passage work, sometimes in each hand simultaneously, but are well worth the time spent in practising. These well-crafted pieces will surely make welcome additions to recitals. The printing is clear and the introduction gives a short biography and suggestions for some of the ornaments encountered.

John Collins

Claudio Merulo: Il primo libro de Ricercare da cantare a quattro voci edited by Francesco Tasini.

Ut Orpheus HS306 available through Universal Edition 48.50 Euros

Claudio Merulo (1533-1604) was probably the pre-eminent keyboard virtuoso of sixteenth century Italy, with two volumes of Toccatas, three of Canzonas and one of Ricercars destined specifically for keyboard instruments being printed during his lifetime or shortly after his death. In these pieces the art of imaginative and precisely written-out ornaments – including demisemiquavers and even hemidemisemiquavers – was taken to its height, especially in Venetian keyboard publications, prior to Frescobaldi, and his playing achieved legendary fame in his lifetime. His style of playing and ornamenting formed the basis of the instructions in Diruta's treatise *Il Transilvano* of 1593 and 1609. In addition to the keyboard set of

eight Ricercars that appeared in 1567, three sets 'da cantare a quattro voci' were published, the first in 1574, the second and third sets after his death. Unlike many sets of Ricercars, Fantasias and Canzonas which appeared in part books with the option for instruments, voices or keyboard, players being expected to make their own arrangements for the latter, Merulos's three volumes do not mention this possibility.

This volume contains the 19 Ricercars (although numbered up to 20, number four is missing in the original part books) published in the first book of 1574, here intabulated by Tasini according to contemporary practice. Unlike the 1567 set for keyboard they are not described as being in a specific Tone. Keys used do not exceed one flat, with 11 being in minor keys (D, E, G and A) and only eight in major (C, F and G). All are in cut C time, with length varying from 67 to 193 double bars. Most being well over 100 bars, raises the question as to where in the services they might have been played.

Once again, as with his workings of Alessandro Scarlatti's Fugues, Tasini has produced attractive pieces in their own right that generally lie beneath the hands but some players will find that using the pedals will make it more comfortable to execute the highly ornamented tenor and sometimes alto cleanly. Comparison of Tasini's intabulations with Merulo's set of original keyboard Ricercars (available in modern editions from Edition Walhall and AR Editions) is both interesting and rewarding; Merulo's are generally much shorter (from 79-139 double bars) and contain sometimes lengthy passages of unornamented crotchets and minims as a relief, whereas Tasini's contain a more relentless flow of diminutions, mainly in quavers and semiquavers but with occasional demisemiquavers forming part of an ornament rather than in scale passages. Comparing the short excerpt of the first nine bars from the printed version of Ricercar Vigesimo with Tasini's intabulation will also be instructive. These intabulations provide very good models for tackling contrapuntal pieces from other part books, perhaps more relevant to those from the Venetian school than to the Roman or Neapolitan. The introduction gives valuable information about the pieces, placing them in a context stretching back to 1540.

The edition is well printed and Tasini is to be highly commended for his work, but the pieces will perhaps appeal more to those with a special interest in Italian Renaissance keyboard music.

John Collins

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Day Conference and AGM

Saturday, 25 June 2022 at The Grosvenor Chapel, 24 South Audley Street,
London W1K 2PA

Details to follow (see also the Notice of the AGM on page 4)

Study Day

Friday, 30 September 2022 at Bath.

Celestial Harmonists – Music and the Herschels

Further details in the May *Reporter*

The Meetings Officer is always interested to hear from members who would like to arrange, or who have ideas for a day conference. Please get in touch with him at:

Richard Hobson, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



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 preservation and, where necessary, the faithful restoration of historic organs in Britain and to encourage their use and appreciation.

To encourage an exchange of scholarship with similar bodies and individuals abroad, and to promote, in Britain, a greater appreciation of historical overseas schools of organ-building.