

BIOS REPORTER

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May 2023



THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ORGAN STUDIES

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BIOS REPORTER

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The Editor reserves the right to refuse or amend material.

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Front cover: *Holy Trinity, Littlebury, Essex*. (Photo: Philip Wells). See letter p. 39.

Back Cover: *Adlington Hall. Organ of 1693 ascribed to Bernard Smith now under threat due to proposed sale of property*. (Photo: NPOR)

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Members will find the Secretary's report of the BIOS Annual General Meeting held on 22 April at Chelsea, Old Church below (page 34). There, the circumstances in which your Hon. President has also assumed office as Hon. Chairman will be explained. Rest assured that this is not a coup d'état, as our Secretary explains. Council members have a prospective Chairman in their sights but that person will not be able to confirm their availability until next year. I was therefore asked to become acting chairman for twelve months, even though constitutionally BIOS has no such office or title. Despite a slight sense of déjà vu (I served previously as Chairman between 1992 and 1997) I am happy to assume the responsibility, especially as I hope it will serve as a prelude to an excellent appointment next year.

As a caretaker I have no programme to unfold to members. BIOS's work will continue in the able hands of our various officers to whom thanks were very properly expressed at the AGM. I will perhaps venture in the next issue of this publication to say a little about our increasingly urgent need for members to step forward to replace certain officers who have been in post for a good many years and now deserve an honourable retirement. We are in danger of taking their commitment to BIOS for granted. We would particularly like to encourage younger members to consider engaging more actively with the society, and I would be delighted to hear from any who would be willing to discuss informally the possibility of taking on a role without any commitment on either side.

That is not in any way to disparage the contributions of our older members (among whom I can now count myself) over the years. At the AGM we expressed our profound thanks to two who have given exceptional service: our retiring Chairman, Dr Alan Thurlow and our indefatigable publisher, John Brennan. I had the honour of reading tributes to both of them, complementing Katie Pardee's words in the case of John, and these are reproduced below.

Nicholas Thistlethwaite
Hon. Chairman

Tribute to Alan Thurlow (AGM, 22 April 2023)

Dr Alan Thurlow was elected as Chairman of BIOS at the AGM held on 19 November 2011 in the Central Hall, Westminster. Despite being a quintessentially Anglican figure, he was unfazed by the Wesleyan context and warmly accepted both the nomination and his unopposed election.

Alan was the seventh Chairman of BIOS. Each of his predecessors brought their particular gifts and experience to the role. Michael Gillingham, our first Chairman,

was a hugely knowledgeable antiquarian with a particular eye for organ cases, church architecture and furnishings. He was also deeply experienced in the complexities of church politics, and knew all the 'right' people in that world, which was a help. Donald Wright, his immediate successor, introduced us to the modern world and the possibilities for an organisation such as ours of computers as a means of storing and analysing information, historic records and recordings as well as performing administrative tasks. Later, Professor Peter Williams was a scholar of international reputation, who encouraged us to see the British organ in its European context. Following Peter Williams, John Norman brought his encyclopaedic first-hand knowledge of British organ building in the twentieth century to our discussions and study days, and helped us not to be too absorbed by the past.

But what of Alan?

The first thing to say is that BIOS was extremely fortunate to be able to recruit him to the post of Chairman in 2011. For alongside his distinguished record as a cathedral musician, initially at Durham as Sub-Organist, and then for twenty-eight years as Organist of Chichester Cathedral, Alan has an outstanding record as an active member and (often) chairman of committees. The list is too long to record here but it includes the chairmanship of the Organs Advisory Committee of what is now the Church Buildings Council, the Friends of Cathedral Music, the Chichester Diocesan Advisory Committee (of which he is also organs adviser) and the On Organ Fund. He has also been involved with charities and trusts in Chichester, with the Guild of Church Musicians and the Organists' Charitable Trust. And there are many more.

In Alan, therefore, we have enjoyed a wise and experienced chairman to whom steering a committee with sometimes diverse views comes as second nature, knowing when to be tolerant and when to be firm, how to encourage the diffident whilst silencing the verbose. And also knowing when the committee is ready to break for lunch.

But Alan has done much more than chair meetings. As the citation accompanying his Honorary membership says, he has overseen and guided many significant improvements in BIOS's public presence and service. These include the development and enhancement of the National Pipe Organ Register, the strengthening of the procedures for listing historic organs and the introduction of the Heritage at Risk Register. Our publications operation has expanded with the issuing of the first volumes in an occasional series of BIOS monographs, Jim Berrow's book on the Nicholson firm being the first, now followed by Nick Plumley's long-awaited volume on Walker. We have continued to make representations in the appropriate quarters when heritage issues generally, and individual cases of heritage loss specifically, arise. Meanwhile, Alan has been very active on the British Organ Archive Committee, supporting the staff at the Cadbury Research Library in

Birmingham and initiating a discussion about the future development of the Archive given the limited space now available to us. He has also encouraged us to think about ways of increasing the number of recordings available from the Historic Organs Sound Archive.

Behind all these specifics lies Alan's determination to ensure that BIOS has been well-run and that suitable candidates are recruited for key posts. Having worked with all the previous Chairmen, I have a sense that the time Alan has devoted to the role (and I don't use the word 'devoted' lightly) has been exceptional. His efficient and conscientious work on behalf of our society has ensured that it continues in robust health. His cultivation of good relationships with other organisations sharing our concerns has helped BIOS's voice to be heard. There are issues (there always will be) for his eventual successor to address, but Alan will be a hard act to follow, and we owe him an incalculable debt for his work over the last eleven years.

Alan, you will be greatly missed for your friendship, for your wisdom, and for your good humour; and for your commitment to the Aims of BIOS. Thank you.

Nicholas Thistlethwaite

Following this tribute Dr Thurlow was presented with a framed Ackermann print (1814) of the interior of the chapel at Emmanuel College, Cambridge showing the organ installed there in the west gallery c.1676, possibly by Charles Quarles.

Tribute to John Brennan (AGM, 22 April 2023)

Following a short introduction by Katharine Pardee as chair of the Publications Committee, the President paid tribute to John Brennan in the following words.

The Inaugural Meeting of BIOS took place on 31 July 1976 in the Erasmus Room at Queens' College, Cambridge. It brought together a group of around 35 people, many of whom became closely involved with the promotion, development and administration of the Society in the coming years. Outstanding for his lengthy service was John Brennan who published the first edition of the *BIOS Journal* in 1977 and all subsequent editions until finally relinquishing his (still) unofficial role as publisher to BIOS after completing the 46th issue in 2022. A handful of others who attended that Inaugural Meeting are still with us (there's a group photograph recording the 1976 event reproduced in volume 10 of the *Journal*), and some have been officers of the society, or contributed to conferences and publications from time to time, but none can approach John Brennan's record.

From the start, John set the highest standards for the design and layout of the *Journal*. It is a sign of his sure touch that volume 1 and volume 46 are instantly recognisable as belonging to the same series. There have been some changes: guidelines for authors have become more rigorous over the years, attractive coloured covers were introduced in 2007, and the last edition (2022) was the first to have full-colour illustrations apart from a few historic black-and-white prints. Early features such as reviews of new organs and occasional reviews of recordings disappeared early on, but most of the *Journals* and their editors have succeeded in presenting bumper crops of fascinating descriptions of (mainly) British organs alongside articles on performance, repertoire, the design of organ cases and various abstruse technical issues. The result is more than 9000 pages recording and discussing aspects of organology, and truly fulfilling BIOS's first aim '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'.

It is largely due to the enthusiasm, commitment and skill of John Brennan that this has been possible. BIOS owes John an enormous debt. By willingly placing his talents and expertise at our disposal, by coping patiently with the idiosyncrasies of editors and the recurrent failures of some contributors to deliver copy on time, and by embracing mundane tasks such as distribution and mailing, John has enabled BIOS to place in the public domain a remarkable and unique resource casting light on an all-too-often neglected aspect of our musical heritage.

In addition to his publications for BIOS, John has maintained a steady stream of books, monographs and music through Positif Press. Publications include the memoirs of Ralph Downes and Maurice Forsyth Grant, the three volumes of *The Classical Organ in Britain* co-authored with John Rowntree, historical studies of 'Father' Smith and Sir John Sutton, celebratory collaborative volumes for Susi Jeans and Noel Mander, gazetteers of organs in London, Oxford and Cambridge, technical studies of pipe scales, pipe markings and temperament, and several monographs about particular organs including those in York Minster, St Paul's Cathedral and Windsor Castle. All told, it amounts to an unparalleled contribution to the literature of the organ in Britain for which we and our successors must all be deeply grateful.

We thank John deeply for his personal contribution which has enabled BIOS to disseminate the research amassed by scholars and performance specialists over almost half a century, and whilst we hope we continue to see him at BIOS events, we wish him a long (and active) retirement.

Katie Pardee and Nicholas Thistlethwaite

Katie Pardee concluded the Tribute by presenting John with a signed copy of Nicholas Plumley's A History of J.W. Walker & Sons Ltd, Organ Builders as a small token of thanks.

FROM THE SECRETARY

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at Chelsea Old Church, 64 Cheyne Walk, London SW3 5LT at 14.00 hours on Saturday 22 April 2023.

The Chairman, in reviewing the year, noted the following:

- so far 2023 was proving to be the year when life has finally returned to normal (the AGM in 2022 had been scuppered not by Covid but by the rail strikes).
- BIOS could take pride in the way that everything was kept going during this difficult period. It affected our ability to meet together, but far from being a period of stagnation we had seen important new initiatives, of which the successful redesigning of the NPOR, the opening up and updating of the Directory of British Organ Builders, and the launch of our new enterprise as the publisher of historical books have been at the forefront.
- Dr James Berrow's new book has sold so well that the order for a reprint had been placed and that very week, thanks to the efforts of the Publications Team, had seen the launch of Nicholas Plumley's long awaited book on the history of the Walker firm.
- BIOS owed to John Brennan an enormous debt of gratitude in that since our foundation in 1976 John has personally designed, printed and produced every volume - a total of 46 - in our series of annual *Journals*. Quite apart from the academic standard, the attention to the consistency of presentation and the quality of the printing and binding has resulted in a product which has been an important factor in establishing our reputation in the academic world.
- As Members already knew, he had made a very difficult decision: that he would not stand for re-election at this meeting. Being the Chair of BIOS had been an honour and a real privilege but he considered it was better to bow out when feeling generally on top of things rather than when a peak has been passed.
- The continuing success of BIOS relied as much as ever on the hard work and dedication of a very committed team, where around thirty of our members carry the burden of responsibility for our administration. During the year we had been pleased to welcome Nigel Stark to the team as our new Casework Officer, but we have still to locate a successor to Tim Gray, our NPOR Fund Co-ordinator, who steps down this year, as well as a successor for our outstanding Membership Secretary, David Shepherd, when he retires in a year's time.

The Secretary in his Report to the Meeting included a summary of the current position on recommendations that arose from the 2022 Review of Governance carried out 'internally' but with an external assessor. While slightly tangential to the Review, it was recognised that various sections of the Constitution should be reviewed (this is covered below).

The Treasurer in his Report to the Meeting presented accounts for the period ended 31 December 2022 and drew attention to the strongly positive position on net incoming resources. Income from unrestricted funds very comfortably covered day to day expenses. The most significant costs were the *Journal* and the *Reporter* both of which had increased during the year reflecting higher rates for postage and printing. The Endowment Fund promoted projects in line with the Aims of BIOS. The most active Restricted Fund was in respect of the NPOR which had received welcome extra support not just from individual donors but through two grants from the GMC Trust. The Endowment Fund remained available to support significant projects e.g. the just published Walker book and other publications in preparation. No changes were proposed for Subscription rates.

From the remaining Reports from Officers and other portfolio holders the Meeting noted the following:

- A considerable number of early subscription payments had been secured for 2023.
- *JBIOS* 46 (2022) was John Brennan's last *Journal* and profound thanks were due to him for giving BIOS such an impressive, professional face.
- Work was continuing on bringing the Archive of back issues of the *Reporter* up to date.
- Meetings had recommenced in 2023 with the Herschel Conference in Bath, the Nicholson Conference in Worcester and the BIOS Lunch at Grosvenor Chapel.
- Advertisements continued to be placed in 'Choir and Organ' and 'Organists' Review'.
- The NPOR remained in good shape and valuable work continued to be carried out by the manager and volunteer editors.
- The Cadbury Research Library had now almost returned to the level of service it was previously able to provide. Pressure on space remained an issue but possibilities for freeing up space were being pursued.
- No new HOSA activity had taken place during 2022 but plans for new recordings on an ad hoc basis were in the pipeline.
- On Social Media both the Facebook page and Twitter feeds continued to grow often being followed by people who seemed not yet to be BIOS members.
- Details of the Casework responses made to 24 controversial schemes and other approaches or information were described.
- There were currently eight organs on the Historic Organs at Risk Register.
- Consultation on the revision of the Mission and Pastoral Measure (2011) which governs the closure and disposal of Anglican churches no longer required for worship had closed. Draft proposals for consideration by General Synod of a revised measure had been deferred until July 2023.

Changes to BIOS Constitution

The Meeting agreed a number of amendments to the Constitution. These included

achieving gender neutral language, allowing business to be transacted electronically, modernising the finance sections and achieving transparency for sub-committees. Changes include an increase in the elected term for Officers and Ordinary Members of Council to three years but did not propose to impose a limit on successive terms given the difficulties there have been in recruiting Officers and Ordinary Members. It also covered other minor tidying up. Following discussion and subject to minor improvements to the drafting of two Articles the revised Constitution was approved by the Meeting.

Elections

Some context was provided concerning the nomination for Chairman. Council recognised that it was important to secure the right candidate and discussions had taken place with someone who might be available next year but is not able to commit at this stage. Meanwhile, the President had agreed to be nominated as de facto acting Chairman but in the expectation that he will stand down after 12 months to permit a further nomination next year.

In accordance with the Constitution, the following Elections were made:

- Chairman: Nicholas Thistlethwaite
- Casework Officer: Nigel Stark
- Publications Officer: Katie Pardee
- Ordinary Members of Council: Paul Tindall, Mark Venning and Jeffrey West

Honorary Life Membership

Council had resolved to present to the AGM a proposal to grant Honorary Life Membership to John Brennan and Dr Alan Thurlow. Citations in support of the proposal were set out in the AGM Booklet. Further tributes were paid during the Meeting: to John Brennan by Katie Pardee and Nicholas Thistlethwaite and to Alan Thurlow by Nicholas Thistlethwaite. Katie Pardee concluded the Tribute by presenting John with a signed copy of Nicholas Plumley's newly published 'A History of J.W. Walker & Sons Ltd, Organ Builders' as a small token of thanks. Following the tribute by Nicholas Thistlethwaite, Alan Thurlow was presented with a framed Ackermann print (1814) of the interior of the chapel at Emmanuel College, Cambridge (which he attended in the late 1960s) showing the organ installed there in the west gallery c.1676, possibly by Charles Quarles.

The Meeting agreed unanimously that John Brennan and Dr Alan Thurlow should be elected to the list of Honorary Life Members.

Melvin Hughes

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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

James Coupe (Worcestershire Organists' Association Secretary), 3 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Bebhinn Ní Mheara, MMus, ARCO, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and; tel.: +35 321 463 4023, +35 387 228 5965;
email: bebhinnmuire@gmail.com
Stephen Crookes (student member), [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

We welcome back Alastair Johnston, BA (Hons), CertEd, DipEd, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

We regret to note the recent deaths of Peter C. W. Taylor, of Redhill, Surrey, a BIOS member since 2015, and Gordon A. Viney, MBE, of Stockport, a BIOS member since 1996.

Please note the following changes to the 2021 Membership List:

Philip J. Wells of Berkeley, Gloucestershire, has a new email:
[REDACTED]

Ruaraidh Sutherland has returned to the USA, and his new address is:
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

It is anticipated that a new Membership List will be issued later this year.

My grateful thanks to those members who have already paid their 2023 Subscription on time, or who have amended their Standing Order amount. A reminder to those members whose subscription was still owing by the end of March, and who pay by cheque, BACS or PayPal, was sent out. At present [11/04/23], 26 subscriptions remain unpaid, nearly all from the usual suspects unfortunately. Here's the reminder information, in the hope that it might actually bring forth a few more:

Subscription amounts are: £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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BIOS foundations

Sir,

It is unquestioned that Nicholas Thistlethwaite was a founder of the institution we subscribe to. Though meant to show recognition of the part he played in its origins, I just wonder how accurate our longstanding Chairman's statement in his address to the membership (*Reporter*, 47-1) is, and whether it shows a sufficient recognition.

My memory of those days is that, if not the onlie begetter of BIOS, Dr Thistlethwaite was both its initial conceiver and the prime mover in its formation. Over toasted teacakes by the fire in his Selwyn rooms, and when walking Cambridge pavements together, I heard straight from the horse's mouth the ideas he had and would go on to develop. That was early in the seventies, after Nicholas had come to the Ruislip offices of J. W. Walker & Sons, where I then worked, to gain access to historic Walker records.

BIOS's birth was of course not a case of conception's duly and simply leading to delivery of the baby as if by a stork after term's end. It naturally took time, and in that time several others interested in the idea and the prospect were drawn in, sooner or later to play their parts too. My understanding is that Nick Plumley and Michael Sayer (keen especially to see formed a national organ archive) had substantial involvement from very early days, along with the Revd B. B. Edmonds. The pool of interest and involvement widened further to include Peter LeHuray, John Bowles, Peter Williams, and Michael Gillingham. These are not the only names listed as office-holders and Council members in the first edition of BIOS's *Journal*, so the tally of individual responsibility for quite what and quite when is inevitably a thing of some intricacy.

Since early cooperators able to contribute their own memories have dwindled with the decades, it may be up to Dr Thistlethwaite himself to make the record plain, as he has made admirably plain so much else in the course of his distinguished career as organ historian and scribe. In the meantime, perhaps this can stand as a mildly corrective footnote to Dr Thurlow's salute. Wherever credit really lies, the facts themselves should not be scanted or allowed to lurk in history's shadowy margins unclarified, obscurity being as much the enemy of history as what is partisan or vagariously or wilfully inaccurate. BIOS's own history must surely be important to it, rather than something merely (in that odd but useful sense of the word) academic.

Alec Dingwall
Isleworth, Middlesex

Nicholas Thistlethwaite writes:

I am grateful to the Editor for allowing me to contribute a brief footnote to Alec Dingwell's letter. Historians are familiar with the concept of what might be termed 'simultaneous invention', i.e. several people coming up independently with a similar idea at around the same time. This was certainly a factor in the gestation of BIOS. When Nick Plumley and I got to know each other around 1974 we discovered that we had both conceived the idea of creating a society to promote the study and preservation of historic British organs. We then got to know Michael Sayer who had rescued the Kirtland & Jardine records and was wondering how to create an archive for organ-related materials of the same type. As Alec says, others were then drawn in to form the Foundation Committee, as it was rather grandly named, and the rest, as they say, is history. I was in the fortunate position of being a post-graduate student while all this was going on and so had more spare time (!) to devote to the practical organisation of the inaugural conference and launch of BIOS in 1976, but although the contributions that others made were perhaps less visible, they were none-the-less absolutely vital, and Nick and Michael in particular, together with Bernard Edmonds, must receive due credit.

Nicholas Thistlethwaite

Littlebury

Sir,

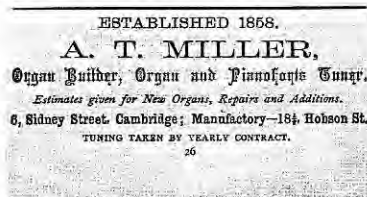
In the October 2012 *Reporter* (pages 91-95 and subsequent volume for errata) I attempted to set down what was known about the organ in Holy Trinity, Littlebury, Essex, referencing Freeman, Hopkins, and Clutton & Niland who thought this was probably Gilbert Scott's most successful small case. Dr Berrow noted it did not appear in the catalogue of Scott's drawings when reviewing my booklet on the Revd John Gibson (*BIOS Journal* 42, 2018). I had also referenced an article on the opening of this organ (*Essex Standard* - Friday 28 January 1853). I suspected muddled newspaper reporting, so have been delighted to find a more detailed report in the *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal*, Saturday, 12 February 1853:

Littlebury - On Tuesday, the 25th ult., the organ recently built by Mr. Dawson, of Cambridge, for the church of Littlebury, was opened in the presence of a very numerous congregation. The sermon was preached by the Rev. J. Gibson, Fellow of Jesus College, from Eph. 5, 19 "Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and Hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Mr. Sutton, of Jesus College, presided at the organ. The effect of this instrument, which may be considered as one of the first attempts at the revival of the ancient style of church organ, was, in every respect most successful, and seems to prove the superiority of

the old method of construction in forming an instrument really adapted to ecclesiastical music. We understand that the Bourdon stop is a facsimile of one brought over from Germany by Mr Sutton, with express reference to the improvement of organ building. The beautiful Gothic case was designed by Mr. Gibson, of Jesus College, and made by Mr. Rattee, of Cambridge. We subjoin a list of the contents of the Instrument: -

Compass from CC to F in alt.

- 1 Bourdon - wood, 8 feet stopt (German scale.)
 - 2 Open Diapason - metal to Tenor C, 8 feet, lowest octave in wood.
 - 3 Principal - metal, 4 feet.
 - 4 Open Flute - wood, 4 feet.
 - 5 Twelfth metal, 3 feet.
 - 6 Fifteenth - metal, 2 feet.
 - 7 Sesquialtra - metal, 2 ranks.
- Each stop containing 54 notes.



The organ was gifted by the Revd Joseph Wix, (vicar of Littlebury and chaplain to Lord Braybrooke of nearby Audley End House) who was Gibson's brother-in-law. He was still vicar during the major church restoration of 1870-1874. This included sending the organ 'to Mr Miller's factory at Cambridge to be renovated and improved by the addition of new pipes and stops, the necessary appointments for a new pedal organ' (*Chelmsford Chronicle*, 12 June 1874) so it is probable that Gibson advised or was consulted about the changes.

Dawson's instruments seem not to survive unaltered for very long, but comparing the specification above with the current instrument (NPOR N05453) suggests the later alterations were reflecting musical trends for extra 8ft stops, pedals and pedal pipes. Indeed, the 'Viola da Gamba', added here in 1874, also appears in Gibson's 1876 organ at Kings Stanley.

The German scale Bourdon may survive in the added 16ft stop but it would be interesting to know in which organ Sutton's stop was installed and when? Can his earlier 1849 Jesus College organ be ruled out? Was it Gibson's 1856 organ in St Andrew the Less, Barnwell, in which he re-introduced embossed pipes to Britain, (which I suspect was also built by Dawson as the Miller firm was only established in 1858; see their advertisement) or did it await inclusion in Sutton's 1857 West Tofts instrument with pipework by Bishop's, casework from the Bethune workshops and voicing by Zimmerman of Hooghuy's? This may explain 'the improvement of organ building' phrase above, but who wrote the newspaper article? Clearly someone with a knowledge of music and organ building here and abroad; Gibson or Sutton or ... ?

Philip J. Wells
Berkeley, Gloucestershire

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Dating of instruments made by the Positive Organ Company

In my article on the Positive Organ Company, which appeared in the February issue of the *Reporter*, I said that the opus number of the organ at Laggan was more likely to match a date around 1900 than its recorded date of 1911. Subsequently I was advised by Alan Buchan that new evidence has been found that the Laggan organ was not donated in 1911 by Andrew Carnegie but was installed in January 1901. Andrew Carnegie did make a donation to the church in 1911 but that was not used for buying an organ. I apologise for not finding the press cuttings myself but that might have been because it is a while since I did the newspaper search for Positive Organ Co. references and new material is being added all the time. I mention this because it does confirm that the graph is a useful way of dating Positive Organ Co. instruments when the opus number is known. In so far as Laggan is concerned, the NPOR entry has now been corrected.

J.S. Wheeler

Further to the article in the February *Reporter* in which John Wheeler stated that the opus number of the organ at Laggan was more likely to match a date around 1900 than its recorded date of 1911, **Alan Buchan** reports that new evidence has been found that the Laggan organ was not donated in 1911 by Andrew Carnegie but was installed in January 1901. Andrew Carnegie made a donation to the church in 1895 but this was before the purchase of the organ and would not have been enough to pay for even part of the instrument. Most of Carnegie's organ grants were for 50% and they range quite widely depending on the size and type of the instrument. Anything between £50 for a small country church organ (including reed organs) up to £320 for city churches is quite normal. The revised dating of this organ confirms that the graph is a useful way of dating Positive Organ Co. instruments when the opus number is known.

Roger Yates

Alastair Johnston is about to consolidate quite a few years' worth of research on the organ builder Roger Yates (1905-1975) into a Masters degree. If any BIOS member has anything that they think might be of interest by way of pamphlets, photos, memories etc. he would be very glad to hear from them. He can be contacted at johnston.aj@gmail.com

The last gasp?

Following questioning by a colleague, **Dr David Knight** wonders if any Member can identify the last organ built with hand blowing as the sole means of raising wind (and excluding modern reconstructions). Can anyone provide an answer?

MEETING REPORTS

Bernard Edmonds Research Conference, held at The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Saturday 25 February 2023

The newly-installed Flentrop organ furnished the day's musical bookends. The Conservatoire's Head of Organ Studies, Daniel Moulton, introduced the instrument and his pupil, Godfrey Leung, played the Bruhns 'Great' E minor Praeludium with enormous flair, demonstrating many of the instrument's colours. The restricted space for the instrument entailed a special design feature of having the bellows mounted above the door, and visible in their action. On this occasion electric wind-supply was used, though bell-ropes can be used for hand pumping. Much excitement was generated in hearing about the design and model of the organ, based on the 1698 Schnitger in Dedesdorf. The metal from which the pipes were cast came from the very same mine that Schnitger had used. Pipes were arranged on a single chest, and several divided stops were provided. The instrument will no doubt furnish crucial experience to students learning the North German repertory.

The first presentation was given by Martin Renshaw ('The Pugins, Father and Son, and the Organ'), who provided a wealth of detail about the relationship between the Bevington organ dynasty, and the buildings of the Pugins. Many fascinating slides were shown of wonderfully-decorated Bevington organs in various locations. Next followed David Shuker who talked from his ongoing work on the employment of female organists in the early Victorian period ('This unpleasant business is now settled: the trials and tribulations of women organists in early Victorian England'). His analysis of vestry minutes begins to reveal a picture of the relatively wide employment of women at this period. A particular case study was given over to Martha Pontyfix and her disputes with her incumbent, the Rev. Patten, at All Saints, High Wycombe. It was particularly interesting to hear of the intervention of the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, otherwise known as Soapy Sam. David Shuker's research reveals a context of interaction between Patten and Wilberforce, which lends a new light to the immediate concerns of the dispute. John Norman concluded the morning's papers ('The Voicer's Secret Weapon'), talking about voicing and the effect thereon of pipe cut-ups. In his genial and aphoristic style many pearls of wisdom were conveyed. We learned that Henry Willis set the cut-up for middle C personally, leaving the rest to his voicer(s). The relationship between scaling, nicking, pipe speech and cut-up were discussed with reference to the organs of Schulze. Much amusement was had from his description of a too-narrowly scaled pedal Gedeckt, which merely produced a cough and then silence. The conclusion reached was that a low cut-up gives a 'sweet' but non-aggressive sound, suitable for intimate and non-reverberant venues, whereas a higher cut-up gives a harder sound which seems better able to cut through in a larger and more reverberant environment.

After a very convivial lunch in the spacious upper lobby of the RBC we heard from Italian member of BIOS, Matteo Malagoli ('Venice sounds British: The main organ in St Mark Basilica and its original British ranks of pipes'). He described the organ built by William George Trice (1848-1920) which remains in situ in the Basilica of Saint Mark, Venice. He was able to show us documents only now released from the archive of the Saint Mark's Procuratorie. This organ included earlier pipes from the Callido organ and pictures were shown of much of the pipework and the original console of 1893, now kept in the auxiliary buildings of Saint Mark's. Leonard Sanderman presented, coolly off-script, a fascinating insight into Joseph Barnby and his influence or lack of influence in organ design. His early life working at Saint Andrew's, Wells St, Leeds was described and his broad interests in choral music and orchestral music, both in concert-oratorio form and in a liturgical setting. His relationship with John Stainer and the revitalisation of music at St Paul's Cathedral were described, and then his appointment as organist at St Anne's Soho. It was of great interest to note that Barnby insisted on discretion in an organ specification, reflecting his desire to use the organ together with singers and orchestras. The final presentation was given by Melvin Hughes ('Organs and Organists in 20th-century English Literature, 1900-1960'), who drew out a number of fascinating references to organs and organ music in literature dating from the 19th and 20th Centuries. The manner in which organ music might perform a metaphorical or atmospheric function in literature was drawn together in a very persuasive way with extracts read out by Jim Berrow.

Margaret Phillips rounded off the day's delightfully varied programme and showed yet more of the colours of the Flentrop organ by playing J.G. Walther's Partita on *Machs mit mir, Gott*.

William Whitehead

BIOS Day Conference and AGM, Chelsea Old Church Saturday 22 April 2023

The focus of the conference proceedings was the new three-manual 33 stop organ completed in 2019 by William Drake Ltd.

The first session of the day was presented by Andrew Macmillan, Organist of Chelsea Old Church, who spoke about the long history of the church and its organs.

While the earliest evidence of an organ at Chelsea Old Church is an entry for 'a pair of organs' in an inventory dated 1549, the next reference to an organ is in 1712 when a new organ was installed by Renatus Harris. This organ was in Chelsea Old Church for a relatively short time. It was transferred to Bideford, Devon in 1723, was then bought by the organ builder Richard Bridge in 1746 and was subsequently erected in St Peter & St Paul's Church, Holsworthy, Devon, where the casework remains to this day. Had

this instrument remained in Chelsea Old Church, it would have certainly been destroyed when the church became a casualty of the Blitz of April 1941.

Andrew Macmillan described that after the church had suffered severe bomb damage, the parishioners salvaged as much as they could from the ruins, placing them in storage until the church was completely rebuilt during the 1950s as closely as possible to how it was pre-War. The Frederick Rothwell organ installed in 1957 was intended to follow the design of that built for the church by the same company in 1931. However, the 1957 organ was not built to the same standard as its predecessor, and its shortcomings soon recognised. This instrument was rebuilt by N. P. Mander in the mid-1960s and remained in use until its increasing unreliability become such that the organ consultant Dr William McVicker concluded that the organ had reached the end of its useful life. A decision was then made by the Church that a new instrument should be commissioned from William Drake Ltd.

The casework of the 1712 Renatus Harris organ not only informed the design of the casework of the 2019 William Drake organ, but also inspired the overarching tonal scheme which was based on that of an eighteenth-century English style. There was also the influence of John Nicholson and William Hill who straddled the development of the organ across the Georgian and Victorian period. Continental influences also contribute to its versatility in meeting the demands of choral and congregational accompaniment and repertoire. The organ commands a central position in the west gallery, oak casework matching the high quality of the church's existing woodwork, the choir case behind the player as a Chair organ, and the pipework finely gilded.

Andrew Macmillan then demonstrated the range of stops and their combinations to great effect. He played a crescendo and diminuendo to demonstrate the tonal range and later played snippets of pieces from Bach to Mendelssohn showing characteristic registrations and particular tonal colours, and comment made on the discretely tapered Gamba and the magisterial William Hill-style Pedal Trombone. While William Drake Ltd deservedly carries a reputation for high quality mechanical action organs, this was the company's first foray into electric stop action and combination settings.

Dr William McVicker's presentation was titled 'What does a consultant do?' A considerable amount of detail was packed into this, during which he referenced his involvement as consultant for the Chelsea Old Church organ. The breadth of his expertise and specialism of knowledge was evident in how he described his interaction with clients. A consultant should be prepared to answer questions authoritatively regarding procedures, faculties, and tendering; be confident in dealing PCCs, organ committees, clergy and organists; able to explain VAT, inflation according to the RPI, and funding possibilities; and specialist matters of acoustics, choice of pitch and temperament. A consultant should recognise the differing approaches between firms of organ builders who should be allowed a certain amount of creativity within the constraints of the tendering process, without being too rigid or prescriptive in the brief. A consultant should raise awareness of practical considerations on the part of the

church and liaise between the church and the organ builder so that the result is of worthy artistic merit, consistent with the design brief and compliant with any building or planning regulations.

The first half of the day finished with Christopher Herrick's presentation, 'Carl Nielsen and Commotio'. Presiding from a grand piano centrally positioned in the chancel overlooking the nave, Christopher Herrick enthused about his almost lifetime fascination with Carl Nielsen's *Commotio*, Op.58, which was to be the central piece to the day's recital. *Commotio* is considered a major contribution to the organ literature of the twentieth-century. It combines drama with textural and melodic interest set alongside strict procedures and compositional techniques of counterpoint and fugue. It is highly sectionalised, and comparisons can be made with the sectionalised *praeludia* and *stylus fantasticus* of another Danish composer, Dietrich Buxtehude.

After lunch the BIOS AGM took place and included the conferment of Honorary Life membership to Dr Alan Thurlow on his retirement as Chairman, and to John Brennan in recognition of the 46 volumes of *BIOS Journal* and his contribution to the publication of a range of organ literature with Positif Press. John had also been responsible for gilding the pipes of Chelsea Old Church's William Drake organ.

The final session of the day was a recital by Christopher Herrick. His first piece was Felix Mendelssohn's Sonata in D, op, 65 No. 5. This was followed by the now much anticipated *Commotio*, Op.58, by Carl Nielsen, performed with much demonstration of virtuosity and authority. How does one conclude a recital after such a monumental work? Herrick called down from the gallery, 'And now for something completely different!' Hans-André Stamm's *Rapsodia alla Latina* - a Mexican celebration. After an engaging fanfare opening, rhythmic passages ensued and flamenco bravado was expressed in the pedal work featuring the 16' Trombone. A dance-like fugal section followed - celebratory, syncopated, tuneful and rhythmic, a compelling drive and momentum maintained to the end. The clarity of delivery by Herrick was obvious in this acoustic. A spirited, ebullient, and uplifting conclusion to the day.

William Reynolds

Adlington Hall

The BIOS Council has recently learned that Adlington Hall, Cheshire, with its historic organ (c.1693) attributed tentatively to Bernard ('Father') Smith has been advertised for sale. This is one of the earliest surviving pipe organs in the country, and a unique and irreplaceable part of the national heritage.

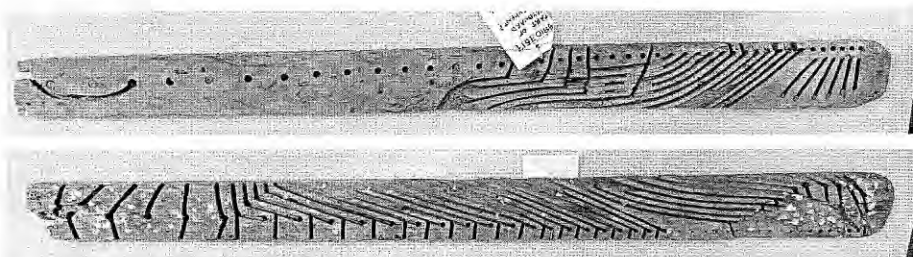
The Council is urgently seeking clarification that potential owners of the property will be informed of its significance, and will also alert Historic England to the situation and seek their advice. The organ was described by John Mander in *BIOS Journal*, vol. 10 (1985), pp. 62-75.

KIRBY HALL, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

DOMINIC GWYNN

There is in the store at Kirby Hall a fragment of an upperboard from an early English organ. I first saw it in 1982 and was relieved to discover a few years ago that it has been kept and labelled, though it had not been recognised as part of an organ. Quite how it survived is a mystery, but it may always have lived at Kirby. The Hattons were a musical family.¹ The house now belongs to English Heritage and I am grateful to Dickon Whitewood, Curator of Collections and Interiors in the East region for the photos, permission to publish them, and to discuss this relic.

It measures 1125mm x 80mm x 25mm, and is made of oak. Anyone who has seen an upperboard from a seventeenth-century English chamber organ, with the leather removed, will recognise this fragment, mainly for the elaborate and neatly-cut grooving. It would have been attached to a small wind chest with sliders on the top surface and at the back edge, with the wind transferred in grooving from the slider holes to the rows of pipe holes. In the smaller organs with wooden pipes, the pipes are in single rows, adjacent to each other (as far as possible), as in this fragment.



Kirby upperboard top surface (upper picture) and underneath (lower)

So this upperboard is from a domestic organ - a larger version of the organs at Canterbury Cathedral (1629) and Hunstanton Hall (1630; now at St Luke's Smithfield Virginia). The Kirby Hall upperboard (or rather half-upperboard, as at least half is missing) is most likely for a Fifteenth. A straight row could mean they were in an ornamental pipe front (either metal or wood), and the fact that they stretch from one end of the upperboard to the other suggests as much. On the other hand, the alterations to the grooving shows they were then in the middle of the upperboard. If they were not in front, they were definitely wooden pipes; inside metal pipes always had staggered holes.

There are 42 holes, which seems too few for a likely key compass, unless it survives from a sixteenth-century organ. The Canterbury Cathedral organ, probably made by

John Burward in 1629, bought for Dean Isaac Bargrave for the Deanery, had 46 keys, C to a². The Smithfield organ had 49 keys, C AAD to c³. The organ at Knole in Kent, had 45 keys C, D to a². The Kirby Hall fragment had 42 keys, perhaps C to f², or perhaps a longer compass with missing accidentals. The surviving musical evidence suggests that early English keyboard instruments had long octaves with all the accidentals. The early sixteenth-century fragments suggest there were occasional missing accidentals, but not short octaves in the Continental way.

The original organ was at least 4ft wide (the upperboard is 1125mm or 45ins long), wider than the Hunstanton hall organ which is 1066mm or 42ins wide, but narrower than the one at Staunton Harold (also c.1630) which was 1450mm or 57ins wide, though the windchest was only 912mm wide (bass to treble), 200mm less than the Kirby Hall one. (In 1686 the Staunton Harold case acquired a dummy upper case which stops it looking like a domestic consort organ).

If this Kirby Hall organ was similar to these early seventeenth-century consort organs then the Fifteenth would have been the highest stop in the chorus. There would have been a Stop Diapason, quite likely an Open Diapason treble (both unison), a Principal (an octave above), perhaps a Twelfth and then the Fifteenth.

The fragment was quite radically altered at some stage, with extra grooving. These alterations are puzzling, at the moment, except to show that the alterations seem to have included rows of pipes on either side of this rank. The history of other domestic organs suggests periods of use, storage and re-use, as a family's musical interests and talent appeared and re-appeared. These alterations would have been associated with a change in repertoire.

For Staunton Harold and Hunstanton Hall see reports:

<https://www.goetzegwynn.co.uk/reports/ no. 36 and no. 43, also available at>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9o75b9b2thculzo/36%20Staunton%20Harold.pdf?dl=0>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/io0lq4d0aihch05/43%20Smithfield%20organ%20report%202014.pdf?dl=0>

A report about the Dean Bargrave organ is not available yet. It only has a case carcase (i.e. no pipe front) and a wind chest. James Collier has measured and drawn it, and has made a reconstruction.²

A report on the archival history and pipework at Knole is also available at

<https://www.goetzegwynn.co.uk/reports/ no.41, or at>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/41sriylrgu85a1/41%20KnoleReport.pdf?dl=0>

References

¹ Wainwright, Jonathan P., *Musical Patronage in Seventeenth-Century England: Christopher, First Baron Hatton (1605–70)* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997).

² Collier, James, 'Dean Bargrave's Organ at Canterbury' *JB IOS* 21 (1997), 56ff.

EQUAL TEMPERAMENT AND THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SECULAR ENGLISH ORGAN

DAVID FORCE

Richard Overill's article on temperament in the *Reporter*¹ included consideration of the possibility of the use of equal temperament in seventeenth-century English organs. We may note that the works he cited in connection with this, (Bull's *Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La* fantasia, before 1612, found in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book) and Nicholas Carleton the younger's *A Verse of Four Parts* (preserved in GB-Lbl. Add. MS 29,996, mid-sixteenth century, the manuscript having been owned and annotated by the organist Thomas Tomkins in the seventeenth) are both associated primarily with the secular consort organ rather than its church cousin. As I have discussed elsewhere,² there are many differences relating to the organology and performance practice of the two types, many of which are a result of the consort organ's frequent use with other instruments in the seventeenth century. Examining both through the same lens is not always productive, and Overill's claim that there is 'no compelling evidence that Equal Temperament was employed in English organs before about 1700' is a case in point. With regard to the liturgical instrument, he may be correct; in the case of the consort organ, I beg to disagree.

It has been suggested that the solution to playing works such as the Bull fantasia whilst employing a meantone temperament was to use an instrument with alternative strings or pipes for some or all of the sharps: Overill mentions Nicolo Vincentino's archicembalo of 1555, with 31 notes to the octave.³ The difficulty is that instruments on the lines of the archicembalo were very rare and their availability in England at this period has yet to be demonstrated. Similarly, although the concept of split keys is well known from some late seventeenth-century church organs, especially those of Bernard Smith, primary evidence that proves this idea was being used in English organs of either liturgical or secular type nearer the beginning of the century or during the previous one is also lacking (readers will, I hope, correct me if I am wrong). There is, by contrast, good evidence to suggest that experimentation with equal temperament was being essayed at the Jacobean court in music in which consort organs were demonstrably employed.

The works cited above by Bull and Carleton were not the only ones of this period to employ excursions into remote keys. Bull's contemporary, Alfonso Ferrabosco I, wrote his own *Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La* fantasia for viol consort: although the exact dates of these works are uncertain, Bull's work is probably the later one and may even have been a direct response to Ferrabosco's. I have argued that Ferrabosco I's work, like much other string consort music of the late Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, would often have been played with the consort organ, at least in the mode of performance practice employed at the court and possibly elsewhere in professional contexts in London, if not indeed more widely in England at this time.⁴

Playing such harmonically-adventurous works in a meantone temperament on either viols or organ is challenging to the modern ear, and whilst we must be cautious about making similar assumptions about the response of an Elizabethan or Jacobean listener, it still seems an unlikely practice. A promising glimpse of a possible solution, however, appears in an observation by the French engineer Salomon de Caus who was working for Prince Henry at St James's Palace in 1610 at the same time that Bull was employed at the court at Whitehall. De Caus described the viol frets at the court being '*eslongues par intervalles de semytons exgaus*' (set out in intervals of equal semitones).⁵ This implies that something close to equal temperament was being essayed in the early 1610s for the secular viol music at court, and any organ being used in conjunction with the viols would, of necessity, have been tuned in the same way. Occam's Razor would suggest that this simple, quick and cheap expedient of tuning existing instruments in an equal, or near-equal, temperament is a more plausible approach (particularly to what was, at this date at least, an infrequent demand of the repertoire) than the expense and complexity of making or acquiring rare and complicated keyboard instruments with extra keys, strings or pipes to the octave.

The ongoing evolution of the viol consort repertoire involving the organ in subsequent decades suggests the continued use of very mild, and possibly nearly-equal, temperaments. As an example, the fantasia suites for violin, bass viol and organ by Coprario, written for the court in the 1620s, employ wide-ranging tonal centres in which the modulation and transition keys include Eb and B majors, and F# and c# minors. Christopher Kent's analysis of Jenkins's use of key signatures in his works written for the L'Estrange family of Hunstanton Hall in Norfolk in the 1640s established that Jenkins's use of shifting tonal centres within movements was particularly daring: as an example, his eight Fancies, Aires and Corants for two trebles, two basses and organ employ, *en passant*, 21 of the 24 possible major and minor keys.⁶ Kent's conclusion was that, at the very least, 'irregular systems of meantone temperament of considerable versatility' were employed in this repertoire, and that 'equal temperament might have also been used for the present organ [i.e. the 1630 consort organ now at Historic St Luke's, Smithfield, Virginia], when played ... at Hunstanton Hall'.⁷ Obtaining evidence for temperament from extant organs is often made difficult by later alterations to the pipework, but empirical experimentation in conjunction with attention to contemporary tuning instructions, such as those described by Roger North,⁸ usually leads us today towards a mildly unequal temperament such as the 1/5 or 1/6 comma meantone tunings that Dominic Gwynn and others have used in their restorations and reconstructions.⁹ These tunings, though, are severely challenged by the most harmonically adventurous consort works: for such repertoire, the 'Scale which divideth an Eighth into twelve equall Semiton's, which division all our Violls, Lutes, Gitaires and the like instruments doe follow' as described in c.1635 would seem to be a better fit for the secular organ too.¹⁰

Before leaving the subject, we might look briefly at another work from GB-Lbl. Add. MS 29,996, Thomas Tomkin's organ book, which appears to raise a temperamental puzzle that can be solved by considering a particular demand made on the consort organ through its use with other instruments. It is another fantasia of Carleton's, entitled *Upon the sharpe*. There are a number of indications in the book that some of the works within it are not stand-alone organ works (as they might first appear), but are in effect organ parts for use in string consort playing.¹¹ In this case, the piece is written in the key of c# minor, but with the sharps prefixed to every individual note rather than notated via a key signature. Closer inspection of the manuscript shows that the accidentals are additions: they are in the same hand as the rest of the music, but in many places, they are squashed in awkwardly and appear to be afterthoughts. There are several errors in their execution, and in some instances letter names have been added instead of sharps: for example, in some places the enharmonic equivalent letter 'f' is written instead of a sharp sign beside the note e. The most obvious explanation for these untidily added sharps is that they were a hasty expedient to facilitate an upwards semitone transposition required for playing the work on the organ in conjunction with a consort of strings that were tuned a semitone sharper in pitch. Seventeenth-century organists did not transpose as we do today by mentally moving the notes on the stave; instead they mentally substituted clefs at the beginning of the staves to effect a variety of commonly-required transpositions, most notably those of a fourth or fifth. There was, however, no clef substitution that could effect a semitone transposition, hence the need for the hastily-added sharps here. There are other instances from after the Restoration, and even from professional contexts such as the Oxford Music School, where organ parts were re-written a tone higher to accommodate similar differences in organ and string pitch.¹² Another look at the manuscript of *Upon the sharpe* shows that the given title is also a later addition, reinforcing the idea that the piece was probably not intended as an experiment in using an obscure key but was originally a straightforward work in c minor that was later adapted as an ad hoc expedient to a practical problem. This work would certainly sound troubling to the ear in a meantone temperament if transposed to c# minor, but it would be readily usable, I suggest, if the organ was tuned in something very close to equal temperament.

Perhaps the most useful outcome of these musings is to underline the point that I began with: in considering the history and development of the English organ during this period, a more accurate picture may be obtained if we consider seventeenth-century church and consort organs as discrete instruments, sharing a basic technology but, in terms of their organology and performance practice, being distinct in significant ways.

References

¹ Overill, Richard E. 'English Restoration Organ Compositions', *BIOS Reporter*, 47.1 (2023), 12-15.

² Force, David, 'A Holding, Uniting-Constant Friend': The Organ in Seventeenth-Century Domestic Music (PhD Thesis, Open University, 2019)

³ The New Grove article cited by Overill suggests that Bull's work was 'probably' written for the archicembalo, but without offering any evidence for the supposition or sources proving the presence of such an instrument in England at the time (the fantasia is from Bull's English period: it has been dated to before 1612, and before Bull emigrated to the continent in 1613).

⁴ Force, op. cit., 126-35

⁵ De Caus, Saloman, *Institution Harmonique*... (Heidelberg, 1615)

⁶ Kent, Christopher, "'... Softly, and Sweetly According to All", The Historic St Luke's Organ and its Contemporaneous Repertoire' in Watson, John, *Organ Restoration Considered: Proceeds of a Symposium* (Warren, Michigan, Harmonie Park Press, 2005)

⁷ Ibid. 102-3

⁸ Wilson, John, *Roger North on Music* (London, Novello, 1959), 203-12

⁹ The account of the restoration of the former consort organ in Wollaton Hall includes a useful rationale for this approach: Bicknell, Stephen, 'The Organ in Wollaton Hall', *JBIOS* 6 (1982), 43-57

¹⁰ Pell, John, *Portions of Treatises &c Relating to Music* (GB-Lbl Add. MS 4388), c.1635-6

¹¹ A particularly useful indicator in this work is the fact that the source includes some incomplete tenor voice entries in a smaller script that are very similar to other such 'cues' in contemporary organ consort sources that had the function of preserving the openings of thereafter-improvised independent polyphonic lines.

¹² Peter Holman discusses one such example in Holman, Peter, 'Thomas Baltzar (?1631-1663), The "Incomperable Luciber on the Violin"' *Chelys* 13 (1984), 18

HYPERORGANS: WHAT'S THE HYPE?

JOHN HENRY FORSTER

In 2011, the American organist Randall Harlow published a study of several innovative organs as part of his doctoral research, coining the term 'hyperorgans' to refer to such instruments. His use of the 'hyper' prefix was inspired by the work of Tod Machover, whose Hyperinstrument Group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab has been designing and building augmented musical instruments since 1986. Loosely defined, a hyperorgan is any organ that incorporates atypical elements in order to enhance its performative capabilities. Some employ existing technology in novel ways (e.g. the inclusion of both a tracker keydesk and detached electric console for the same instrument, MIDI integration, permanent internal microphones, and permanent loudspeakers), while others showcase new inventions and designs (e.g. the ability to remotely retune pipes,

reprogramme which valves are actuated by which stops or keys, change the manner in which individual pipes speak, and manipulate wind flow and pressure). Essentially, hyperorgans permit attributes that were previously immutable without the intervention of an organ builder to be modified by an organist at the console.

Over the past decade, the hyperorgan movement has gained traction. New instruments have either been built or are in the planning stages, and new works specifically for hyperorgan have been created. A notable project is the Utopa Baroque Organ at Het Orgelpark in Amsterdam, the gestation of which was thoroughly documented in successive research reports. The June 2022 International Symposium at Het Orgelpark entitled 'New Music Ecologies' centred on hyperorgans, and, in addition to diverse contributions from academics, composers, and performers, gave organ builders the opportunity to present on pertinent technological matters. Three topic areas stood out, as together they hint at how organ building might be revolutionised in this century:

1. Valves

Digital valves are a core feature of hyperorgans, increasing the agency of the organist over the instrument. Unlike conventional organs where stops and keys are associated with specific pallets, sliders, valves, or solenoids, digital valves can be reprogrammed at the console so as to be actuated however the player wishes. Depressing a single key could, in theory, cause every pipe of the organ to sound at once. Digital valves also offer a greater degree of sensitivity than the binary open/closed positions of a standard solenoid, so that the manner in which pipes speak may be adjusted as required.

As an alternative to solenoids, Belgian organ-builder Tony Decap has advocated using repurposed loudspeaker drivers known as individual pressure units, one per pipe. Because loudspeaker drivers can oscillate thousands of times per second, this enables wind-flow to be precisely controlled in real-time for each separate pipe, meaning that attack, decay, sustain, and release (the ADSR envelope) is variable. When combined with a suitable keyboard, the result is a high level of touch-sensitivity. A modular organ (named l'Explorateur) utilising these valves is currently under construction and due to be completed over the summer, having being commissioned by Yves Rechsteiner, Director of Toulouse-les-Orgues in France.

2. Software

Developing alongside the hyperorgan hardware has been the Sinua software created by Benedikt Aufterbeck and Thomas Stöckl. Based in Düsseldorf, Germany, Sinua has existed since 2007 and provides the critical link between physical hyperorgan components and organist. Given the vast number of permutations available with digital valves, devising an intuitive user interface that optimises functionality without being overwhelming is a challenge, not least because organists tend to be

more used to dealing with tangible pre-defined inputs like stop knobs and setter pistons than they are computer screens.

Beyond managing the mechanical aspects of the organ, live audio processing via microphones and loudspeakers adds another dimension to the interface issue, as does connecting multiple instruments that may be hundreds of miles apart. Anyone who has used Milan Digital Audio's Hauptwerk software will know that being faced with the option to calibrate anything with a mouse-click can be as daunting as it is interesting, and hyperorgans are not dissimilar. Given how complicated interacting with hyperorgan technology can be, its general uptake might well come to pivot on how steep the learning curve is for the average organist to master all that is on offer.

3. *Keyboards*

In order to properly capitalise on the sonic range of a hyperorgan, a keyboard that can adequately mediate between player and instrument is necessary. One solution is to appropriate the types of 3D keyboards favoured by electronic musicians, which allow many parameters to be manipulated at once, placing the performer in closer proximity to the sound being produced - more akin to a clavichord than an organ or piano. Rather than just responding to the velocity at which a key is depressed and released, 3D keyboards react to the ongoing changes in horizontal, lateral, and vertical movement of fingers in contact with their keys.

Austrian organist and composer Franz Danksagmüller has experimented with Haken Audio's Continuum Keyboard and Roger Linn's LinnStrument, although only in conjunction with electronic sound and not to directly play the organ itself, while the l'Explorateur instrument mentioned above is to use the Osmose keyboard manufactured by Expressive E. Moving forward, it is reasonable to suppose that subsequent hyperorgans will be fitted with a minimum of one 3D keyboard, or even an entire 'hyperconsole' with ports for swapping in different keyboards, laptops, and anything else that is MIDI-capable.

What does this mean for the trajectory of modern organs? As well as being overused, the observation that the organ is like an acoustic synthesiser has, until now, also been misleading. The rudimentary additive synthesis demonstrated by conventional organs simply involves stops with pre-determined timbral characteristics being layered on top of one another, with limited scope for changing the basic stop sounds themselves. The use of live audio processing has expanded this, but only insofar as the sound produced by an organ may be digitally altered. With hyperorgans, however, constructing complex timbres from the bottom up is viable. In this way, the pipes of a hyperorgan do indeed serve a similar function to the oscillators of an analogue synthesiser, with their initial sound able to be customised and combined into unique composite 'stops', then sounded with a delicacy and control approaching that of a wind player. The promise of hyperorgans is therefore one of unparalleled expressivity and flexibility—at least for an

acoustically anchored keyboard instrument—of an order previously out of reach. The heightened touch sensitivity, the ability to freely blend timbral colours, and the enhanced interconnectivity with live electronics all come together to yield a dynamic instrument, and one that furthers the concept of the organ as a device for maximising agency over sound.

It seems probable that the emergence of hyperorgans will stoke the same well-rehearsed debates about progress versus tradition that have surrounded organs for centuries, though this is not to say that hyperorgans need be at odds with historical attitudes to organ building, and the Utopia Baroque Organ already mentioned is testament to this. On the one hand, there is a strong historical precedent for organs being drivers of radical innovation – after all, they were the most elaborate machines prior to the industrial revolution; on the other hand, hyperorgans are open to accusations of extravagance and superfluity, especially from those occupied with the organ's functional role within liturgy as opposed to its sound potential as a cutting-edge musical instrument. It is worth commenting that the organ is somewhat in vogue with experimental composers and sound artists at the moment, and events like Aggergate in Berlin, FutureStops in Toronto, Organ Reframed in London, Toulouse-les-Orgues in Toulouse, and the itinerant Spire are testament to this popularity. The possibilities afforded by recent hyperorgan developments look set to make it an increasingly attractive prospect for the avant-garde, while simultaneously revealing new ways to interpret established repertoire. In turn, this can only raise the organ's profile and widen its audience, particularly among younger people.

Taking a step back, other questions beckon: is the current hyperorgan movement the twenty-first century's Orgelbewegung? Are hyperorgans a fad that will soon fade away? This feels unlikely. Thus far, the hyperorgan movement has been concerned with asking open questions rather than prescribing dogmatic answers, and on fostering positive discussion among a cross-section of international actors as to what form the organ of the future could take instead of promoting some sort of hyper-orthodoxy. If nothing else, the existence of this discourse and the enthusiasm of participants is a rebuttal to those who have suggested that organ-building is an irrevocably anachronistic industry, and one doomed to be superseded by the more 'technologically advanced and versatile' digital organ. Compared to hyperorgans, digital organs do not appear conspicuously advanced or versatile at all. Ultimately, it will be the task of BIOS contributors in decades to come to make a final judgement as to the merits of hyperorgans, but for now, it is exciting to witness the genesis of the next stage in the organ's evolution.

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REVIEWS

G.F. Handel (misattributed): *Twelve Voluntaries and Fugues for Organ or Harpsichord together with rules for tuning by the celebrated Mr. Handel* Editor: Maurizio Machella
Publisher: Edizioni Armelin Musica, Padua, CM93 available through the publisher
www.armelin.it 28 Euros

The 12 Voluntaries included in this edition are widely considered not to be by Handel, although the Rules for Tuning the harpsichord, here reproduced in facsimile, are by him. The rules commence with a triad of C-E-G, tuning the fifth pretty flat and the third considerably too sharp. There follow triads commencing on G, D, A, E then descending from C, F and B flat, with instructions for each fifth and third before repeating in octaves. No convincing attributions for the Voluntaries have been made, as far as I am aware. The collection was published as volume two of a series of four anthologies of organ voluntaries (harpsichord is also included on the title page although most of the pieces have specific registration requirements) published by Longman and Broderip from around 1775 onwards, i.e. long enough after Handel's death for there to be no complaints of piracy from the great man.

The Voluntaries are in two movements apart from number three, which has four, comprising a Diapason movement in 3/4 in A minor marked slow, an allegro for the Cornet, also in 3/4 and in A minor, a Largo for Diapason or Swell in C time in C major followed by a Fugue in cut C also in C major, marked Full Organ, and number seven, which is a single movement Andante in C major in 3/4 with alternating passages for Full Organ and Horn or Diapason.

The other Voluntaries in the first seven in the collection open with a Diapason movement followed by a second movement designated for a solo stop. Number one has a rare movement in C time for Principal, number two is an Andante in 3/4 for Trumpet and Echo, number four is a perky Allegro in cut C in G minor for the Cornet and Echo, number five is in 6/8 for Trumpet and Echo without a tempo indication but presumably Allegro and number six is in cut C, also presumably Allegro, for Trumpet and Echo (sic) with interludes on the Flute.

Voluntaries eight to twelve are each in two movements, concluding with a robust, lively fugue in the major, marked Allegro in numbers eight to ten and also presumably Allegro in numbers 11 and 12 although no tempo is indicated; time signatures are 4/2, cut C, 3/4, cut C and C respectively. Each opening movement is for full organ in numbers eight in 4/2, and number ten (in C time), for full organ with interludes marked p in numbers nine (which is in C minor) and eleven, both in cut C, and a Largo for Swell and f – i.e. Great – in number twelve in 3/4.

The edition is clearly printed with either six or seven staves to the page, slightly larger than A4, although it is fortunate that a facsimile of the opening movement of number eleven has been included to enable the player to untangle the misaligned notes in some bars here. There are a few small-scale facsimiles scattered through the volume, but there is no general introduction or advice on performance practice. The few editorial interventions are mentioned in the actual score. The pieces retain an air of freshness and are not generally too demanding, although nimble fingers will be required in some of the Fugues and the Cornet movements. They would add to recitals and some are suitable as voluntaries.

John Collins

Parrott, Andrew, *The pursuit of musick: musical life in original writings & art c1200-1770* (taverner.org, 2023), xvii + 544, ISBN 9781915229533 (Hbk, 65.00 GBP), ISBN 9781915229540 (Pbk £35.00). Available from www.taverner.org.
Substantial online supporting material, full bibliography, and original language texts at <https://www.taverner.org/pursuit-of-musick>

Access to contemporary accounts of music making and details that can bring to life an earlier performance situation or practice is valued in many aspects of musical study. Some readers of this review will be familiar with volumes like Strunk's *Source Readings in Music History* that provides a collection of writing about music from the Greeks to the twentieth century.

Parrott's *Pursuite of Musick* takes a new turn which has brought together written and iconographic material in a beautifully presented full-colour volume. The additional online resources help to keep the size of the book manageable. The bibliographic details and texts in their original languages (the text is in English) would have added a substantial number of pages to this weighty volume.

The material presented is the product of a life working in and with music, seeking to produce performances and finding material for the lively intelligent mind to work with to understand the situation in which music was composed and performed and what was said about it at the time. There is material here that is already familiar, but the breadth of material such that every reader will surely find something new and a fresh chain of thought. Unlike Strunk, Parrott gives no critical commentary to the selected quotations.

The organ and organ music are given generous coverage. Strunk has 14 references indexed in over 1,500 pages, Parrott over twice that number in a third the number of pages. These cover organs, organ building, organists, performance, and transposition. These are alongside writing about other instruments and domestic and public music making. This gives a full picture of the organ at different times in the period covered by this book.

How to understand what is presented? How much of what was written has survived and of that how much is typical? For example, at various times complaints are recorded about unsuitable music used in the church service. Is this a sign that the practice was commonplace or was the exception being recorded? When we are told something is 'good & fit for the use of a good master' or with 'due solemnity', how do we imagine what was meant at the time? Subjective words are abundant in source documents. If reading the same vocabulary used by multiple authors over a similar time frame aids understanding, this book will provide all that is needed.

One factual error caught my eye. There are few annotations to the texts. However, the famous Duddington contract for All Hallows, Barking [sic], is well known to be for the church of All Hallows Barking-by-the-Tower [of London]. A note is added to explain that Barking is 10 miles east of the City of London. This is correct, but quite irrelevant to the context. This rare slip does not make the quote from the contract any less well-chosen.

This book is an outstanding achievement. It will stimulate the fresh thoughts about music and its performance.

David S. Knight

Nicholas M.
Plumley



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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.