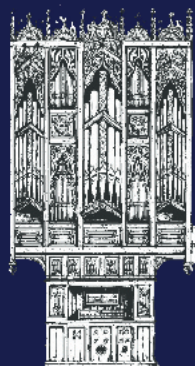


BIOS REPORTER

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THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ORGAN STUDIES

50 YEARS: 1976-2026

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BIOS REPORTER

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Front cover: An undated and unsigned watercolour of a concert organ...
...but, where is it? Was it an unrealised project? Answers to the Editor

Back cover: Mr Kershaw's Snetzler organ (case) at Cardinal Vaughan's School
(Photo: © Cardinal Vaughan's School Music Department)

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EDITORIAL

The post of Editor of the *BIOS Reporter* is one of the more notable in British journalism. More fashionable than Italian *Vogue*, more outraged than the *Daily Mail*, more densely argued than the *London Review of Books*, the *Reporter* attempts to announce the activities of BIOS and to report on them, and also to publish shorter articles of greater urgency or scholarship which cannot wait until the annual Journal to be launched on an unsuspecting public.

Each editor has the weight of history upon their shoulders, attempting to build on the work of such luminaries as our President Nicholas Thistlethwaite, Relf Clark and the late Stephen Bicknell. David Shuker has now decided, after two separate and highly effective stints, that it is time for someone else to shoulder the burden, and we are immensely grateful for the hard work he has devoted to the task, not least in attempting to bring me up to speed on the technical challenges of the job, a Herculean labour indeed.

I am a professional musician, but an amateur organist, and inclined to describe myself as an Organ Unenthusiast. Considering the number of obscure subjects about which I have written for the *Reporter* over many years, becoming the Editor could be seen as an opportunity to mark my own homework, but I am eager to encourage contributions from many different quarters, including scholarship, reviews and opinion. Come across a little-known historic organ recently? Please write about it! Colour photos are now easy to reproduce.

Paul Tindall

A recent enquiry from the BIOS in-tray concerns the identity of an organ depicted an unsigned/undated watercolour on the front cover. Where is it? Was it ever realised? UK or abroad? Answers to the Editor - no prizes.

FROM THE CHAIR

The Golden Jubilee Conference in Oxford was a tremendous success, and I would like to thank everyone who devoted so much time and energy to organising it. In particular, thanks are due to Dr. Katie Pardee, Richard Hobson, Adrian Mumford, Melvin Hughes, Melanie Plumley, and Dr. David Shuker. Preparing for the conference was a long and demanding process, but the success of the event showed that the effort was well worthwhile.

The conference concluded with a panel discussion featuring Dr Alan Thurlow, John Brennan, Jonathan Rennert, Dr Nicholas Thistlethwaite, Jonathan Ambrosino, Katelyn Emerson, Dr John Rowntree, and John Maidment. During the discussion, I asked the panel to reflect on BIOS's greatest achievements over the past fifty years.

A number of important accomplishments were highlighted. The publication of the *Journal* was recognised as one of BIOS's central achievements, alongside the organisation's role in encouraging interest in historic English organs. The development of the National Pipe Organ Register (NPOR) was praised for reaching a wide audience and making information more accessible. Other major achievements included the Historic Organ Listing Scheme, the Historic Sound Archive, and the Historic Organs at Risk Register, which helps identify instruments under threat.

The panel also emphasised the importance of making documentation widely available through the *Reporter*, the *Journal*, and the British Organ Archive. Particular tribute was paid to David Wickens for his work as archivist. BIOS's growing standing as a body consulted on heritage matters was also noted, as was its contribution to high-quality research and publication, especially in comparison with similar organisations overseas. The range of resources now available through the BIOS website was another point of pride.

The panel then turned its attention to the future and considered what BIOS should focus on over the next fifty years. One important issue raised was the ageing membership of the organisation and the need to attract younger organists, musicians, and enthusiasts. Greater collaboration with other groups was seen as essential if this is to be achieved.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of maintaining a balance between the study of historic organs and the music written for them. There was enthusiasm for expanding the Historic Sound Archive alongside the continued development of the NPOR. Some suggested that BIOS could take on a stronger advocacy role within the Faculty process and perhaps contribute to the training of diocesan organ advisers.

Public engagement emerged as another key theme. The panel felt that BIOS should strengthen its educational and outreach work, while also promoting the performance traditions connected with historic organs. It was noted that English organ culture is highly respected abroad, creating

opportunities for collaboration with international organisations and for sharing the English organ tradition with wider audiences.

The historical importance of organ consoles was also discussed. Panel members observed that appreciation of historic consoles appears particularly strong in the UK and that understanding their design and construction can deepen knowledge of historical performance practice, especially for early twentieth-century instruments.

Digitisation was seen as one of the most important future priorities. Building on the success of the NPOR, the panel supported the digitisation of the British Organ Archive's holdings. There was even discussion of a possible museum of organs, where visitors could explore different instruments, learn about their construction and tonal qualities, and engage with interactive displays designed for younger audiences.

Several themes ran throughout the discussion: education, outreach, and collaboration were all identified as important ways of strengthening BIOS's role in celebrating and preserving the rich tradition of the English organ.

I would encourage readers of the *Reporter* to contribute their own ideas about what BIOS might achieve over the next fifty years, especially practical suggestions for how these ambitions could be realised.

Recent developments at the British Organ Archive connect closely with many of these themes. Elliot Fountain has recently been appointed Archivist at the Archive in Birmingham. Elliot brings considerable professional experience to the role and has already begun reviewing the collection and assessing the hand list. We are delighted to welcome him to the BIOS community.

Current priorities include exploring the digitisation of the archive and preparing funding applications to support this work. Before applications can proceed, it will be necessary to assess the likely costs and identify any conservation work required before digitisation takes place.

A pilot project is under discussion to convert the existing Hill microfiche collection into digital images that can be accessed through clickable links within NPOR entries. This will take some time to come to fruition, but we are currently exploring the cost implications and how the project might be resourced.

William McVicker

BIOS Chair

NEW BIOS ARCHIVIST - ELLIOT FOUNTAIN

I am a qualified and experienced archivist with a career of over twenty years in archives, museums, and libraries. My career has focused on cataloguing modern institutional and personal archives, in addition to related activities including answering enquiries, supervising search rooms, and records management. My cataloguing experience has encompassed a wide range of subject matter and archival material, including church history, political history, the history of science, early modern and modern literature, business history, and universities. My hobbies and interests include astronomy, going to church, and a diversity of academic subjects.



Elliot Fountain

I graduated from my BA (Honours) degree in Medieval and Modern History at the University of Birmingham in 1999 and from my MA in Archives and Records Management at University College London in 2004. Following this academic and vocational training, I have developed a wealth of experience cataloguing archives in a range of different institutions and contexts, including the Royal Society, the Wellcome Trust, Lambeth Palace Library, the British Library, the University of Roehampton, Seven Stories The National Centre for Children's Books, the Library of Birmingham, Loughborough University, and the University of Birmingham. This cataloguing work has included the physical rearrangement, repackaging, weeding, GDPR/Data Protection checks, and description of a variety of archive material, including official, personal, and family papers.

Key achievements have included:

- Cataloguing a rich collection of printed and archive material relating to William Shakespeare at the Library of Birmingham as part of the 'Everything to Everybody' project.
- Assessing the complex preservation needs of the archive of Southlands College, University of Roehampton and ordering relevant preservation

materials from the companies Preservation Equipment Ltd and Conservation By Design Ltd.

- Contributing to the cataloguing of the archives of Loughborough University and the Loughborough Students' Union, in addition to the digitisation of an early 20th century journal relating to Loughborough University.
- Cataloguing a broad range of institutional and personal archives at the British Library, including relating to the British East India Company, the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, the geneticist Anne McLaren, and the activist and writer Sylvia Pankhurst.
- Responsibility for the British Library's Corporate Archive while the Records Manager was on secondment.
- Answering an extensive list of written enquiries including relating to some of archives I have catalogued.

Il very much look forward to cataloguing and developing the British Organ Archive at the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, which represents an interesting and challenging opportunity.



The Heslop Reading Room of the Cadbury Research Library, where items from the British Organ Archive may be consulted.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

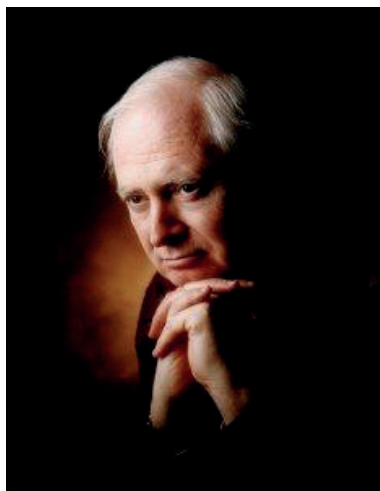
All BIOS subscriptions become due on 1st January each year and the Membership Secretary is most grateful to the majority of members who have already made their payments. At the start of April reminders went to those whose subscriptions had not arrived and we are pleased to have received several payments. Sadly, there are still a couple of dozen BIOS members who have not yet responded to the reminder. Under our constitution, subscriptions that remain unpaid after the end of July have to result in the termination of memberships and that is something we never like to do.

The Membership Secretary will be pleased to receive payments, by posted cheques, card payments or direct bank transfer. If you are not sure of the status of your subscription, a message by post, email, social media, WhatsApp, or phone will get a prompt response.

Melanie Plumley

NICHOLAS PLUMLEY (1938-2026)

It is with sadness that I inform BIOS that Nicholas Plumley died on Sunday 10th May at the age of 86. A talented musician, teacher, artist and writer, many will know that he was one of the founding members of BIOS in 1976. His books *Organs of the City of London* and *A History of J.W Walker & Sons Ltd* were significant contributions to the catalogue of historical research and he prepared many smaller volumes on particular instruments, including those of Arundel and Chichester Cathedrals. He was delighted to be able to speak to the local Association when a visit to Arundel formed part of the Spring Conference in Chichester some years ago. The funeral will be held at 2pm on Tuesday 9th June at St Nicholas, Arundel.



Sarah Plumley

DAVID PATRICK (1935-2026)

It was with much sadness that I learned that the organist and editor David Patrick died on May 1st, 2026 at the age of 91. David was a pupil of and assistant to Dr Harold Darke at St. Michael's, Cornhill. London from 1959 to 1966 during which time he gave many recitals and was awarded a Fellowship of Trinity College. London. He performed throughout Europe on many occasions as a soloist and appeared on television and also made recordings of organ music for the Swedish Company, Opus 3. In the United Kingdom he recorded for the Priory label and was an examiner and moderator for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. In recent years major music publishers have issued many of his editions and arrangements of piano and organ music, including the 4-volume "18th Century English Organ Music - A Graded Anthology", commissioned by Oxford University Press, Christmas carols and sacred choral music (including the 5 Volume Series "Harmonia Sacra" commissioned by Kevin Mayhew Ltd.), song collections and recorder pieces. In 1998, he founded Fitzjohn Music Publications, which became the largest publisher of 18th and early 19th century English organ music, and also published many organ pieces by less well known English and European composers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A glance at <https://www.impulsemusic.co.uk/fitzjohnmusic/> will show the wide range of titles available across various genres including piano solos and duets, and choral and vocal music.

In 2024 David decided to hand over the stages after typesetting to Banks Music but continued to produce a number of new titles, particularly including keyboard versions of concerti, right up to earlier this year, several of which have been reviewed for The Reporter. It has been my privilege to have worked with David for several years in producing clear, easy to read and accurate editions of many of the 18th and early 19th century English Organ Voluntaries, Pieces and Fugues, the majority being published in an integral edition for the first time since their original publication. The volumes reproduce the original text, with my brief notes on performance practice and comments on some individual pieces within the limitations of space available. His sterling work in this area will be very much missed.

John Collins

MEETING REPORT

The Bernard Edmonds Research Conference 2026

ALASTAIR JOHNSTON

Around 50 of the 'great and good' assembled in the Organ Studio of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire on 21st February, in this, our 50th year, for a real feast of research presentations. We were also treated to some first-rate playing on



the three organs by student **Thomas Howell**, surely a name to watch.

Paul Tindall opened proceedings with a presentation on the Reverend Andrew Freeman, marking the 150th anniversary of his birth. One of the most important historian-chroniclers of the organ in the early 20th century, Freeman also represented the breed of 'amateur experts' without whom our knowledge of organology would be much diminished. The fact that many of us have been able to build upon his writings and archived material speaks for itself.

David Shuker then spoke about Lewis Conway-Gordon and Frederick Ewart Robertson, who combined railway and organ interests in Victorian India. His talk highlighted the importance of placing organ research within a broader social and historical context, and of considering the instrument as 'light relief' from one's professional life.

Joseph Thornber followed with research into what does (and does not) attract young people to the organ today. It was refreshing to hear a measured and evidence-based approach to the subject, rather than the usual anecdotal claims. Various forms of media were discussed, along with

attitudes to performance venues and programming. Pertinent comments from Daniel Moulton of the Conservatoire added further depth, particularly regarding repertoire.

After lunch, **Christopher Stenbridge** explored the question of appropriate organ pitch for the Fantasies of Orlando Gibbons. This richly illustrated presentation, using the smaller of the William Drake organs, was interspersed with musical examples from composers such as Sweelinck, and brought back happy memories of long-past undergraduate lectures.

I then spoke about aspects of the work of organ builder Roger Yates, examining how, in the mid-20th century, this aural empiricist and polymath craftsman, working largely single-handed, offered an alternative, repertoire-based perspective on 'reform' to that of more prominent contemporaries.

Andrew Benson-Wilson followed with an engaging travelogue through 18th-century London in the company of John Stanley, illustrated with recordings of his music played on the remarkable Spitalfields organ. By placing both composer and music within their social, historical, and geographical contexts, the presentation greatly enhanced understanding.

Melanie Plumley, Andrea Testa, and Martin Reshaw then brought us up to date with recent interventions aimed at keeping organs functioning, the work of the 'Pipe Up' organisation, and new approaches to securing initial funding. The issue of organs falling out of use is one that should concern us all and, coincidentally, one that has recently attracted media attention.

This was my first Bernard Edmonds Conference, but it will certainly not be my last. Whether intentional or not, common threads emerged across seemingly disparate presentations, and for me it made a welcome change from topics such as 32-foot stops and tuba wind pressures that dominate some organ-related media forums.

Thanks of course are due to Dan Moulton and the Conservatoire for their hospitality, to Tom Howell for playing, to Richard Hobson for his expert organisation, and to whoever provided the rather splendid lunch!

ALFRED NOBLE AND MISQUITH & CO. IN INDIA

PAUL TINDALL

Alfred Matthew Noble was born 1st quarter 1850 in Norwich, son of Mark Noble (1820-1895), who probably worked for James Corps of Reading, then Norwich, and was a master organ builder from at least 1854. In 1864 Mark Noble went bankrupt (*London Daily News* 21 December 1864): his eldest son Mark junior (1844-99) took over the Norwich business in 1866, while Mark senior moved to London, presumably as a journeyman: he and his wife, daughter and son William (1847-73) are living in Eton Street, St Pancras in 1871. Alfred Noble presumably was apprenticed in the family firm: he was lodging in Camden Town as an organ builder in 1871. He may have worked for Hill at this time: see the advert from 1903 below.

Alfred Noble married in Birmingham in 1874 and set up on his own, but didn't last there long. The last Directory entry is in 1881, but in the census of that year Mark senior and Alfred are living at different addresses in Hargwyne Street, Stockwell, so presumably working for Lewis nearby: DBOB records a 'Noble senior' in the shop book for 1884.

Alfred Noble had at least 11 children, so by their birthplaces recorded in the 1891 census, one can see that he was in Birmingham until 1880, but in Blaby near Leicester late in 1881 where son William was born, then in Birmingham again c.1884-1887. There are no directory listings here, but 'Alfred Noble of Birmingham' built an organ at Melbourne Congregational church in 1885 (*Derby Daily Telegraph*, 12 June 1885).

Son Thomas was born in Derby in 1888, and Alfred Noble is listed in directories there 1891-1905 [sic]. His first advertisement appears to be in the *Derby Daily Telegraph* of 13 May 1889: 'Derby and Birmingham,' 'established Birmingham 1874' and 'from the Principal Firms in London'.

However, he became bankrupt in 1903, and there was a sale of assets (DDT, 17 October). He decided to try his luck in the colonies, so we can now turn to the *Madras Weekly Mail*. He had already exported a three manual organ of 19 stops, which Misquith & Co set up in their showroom in Mount Road in 1898 (MWM, 2 June), and a certain 'Vincent Noble', was organist of All Saints, Coonoor, moving to St Stephen, Ootacamund in 1901. (MWM, 22 August 1901 and 26 June 1902.) However, see under Misquith below.

MWM 5 November 1903. In the circumstances, a somewhat mendacious little article, entitled 'An Organ Builder in Madras'. Noble arrived on the *Manora* on the 3rd. 'by invitation', and 'excellent plant has been laid down at Messrs Misquith & Co.'s,' where he may be interviewed about building organs. He is said to have worked 'as a youth' for the 'renowned firm of Hill & Son': this can only have been sometime around c.1868-73. The article implies that Noble is still based in Derby and that his presence in India is an extension of the existing business: obviously this wasn't true. It also says that his sons assisted him in the firm. I think this is unlikely, and that they left at the bankruptcy. Ernest (1875-1961?), William (1881-1960) and Sydney (1885-1966) were all organ builders with Alfred in Derby in 1901, but Ernest was an organ builder in Ponders End, Middlesex in 1911, and Millwright's Joiner there in 1939. William was a machine hand in 1911 (Rivetter's Holder Up in 1939) and Sydney a Minton Tile Fixer in 1939, both in Derby. There is no hint that any of the sons or other family spent time in India.

The arrangement with Misquith & Co, the local music and piano dealer, is discussed in a court case which W.M. Misquith brought against Noble in 1905 (MWM 10 August). This alleges that Noble was to pay commission to Misquith for organ contracts, in return for workshop space in the Mount Road showroom. Misquith said it was 20% for organ work in India, and 10% in Burma, according to an agreement of November 1904. Noble (and the judge) said that there was no agreement. There had evidently been a falling-out, but nothing more is heard of Alfred Noble ever again, so far as I have discovered. During the court case he was said to be staying at the Bristol Hotel in Colombo 'about to proceed to England', but no trace of his death can be found. When his son Thomas, a coach painter, married at St James, Derby on 23 December 1918 the father is recorded as 'Alfred Noble, organ builder deceased'.

The work recorded in the MWM by Noble in India is as follows.

17 December 1903. St Matthias, Vepery. To be overhauled after Christmas.

19 May 1904. All Saints, Trimulgherry. 1 manual, five stops, general swell

4 August 1904. Christ Church, Madras. Hill, 1 manual, enlarged to 2 manuals, 13ss by Noble, who has trained some 'adaptable indigenous workmen'.

11 August 1904. Note from Noble that he is independent of Misquith & Co, not an employee as implied on the 4 August.

15 September 1904. Holy Emmanuel, Madras. Overhauled. An organ brought 'some years ago' from St Mary, Fort St George.

10 November 1904. St Peter, Negapatam. 1 manual, 9ss.

In addition, the 3 manual organ by Noble which Misquith had in his show-room from 1898 was set up in St Joseph RC, Wellington in 1902. (MWM, 7 August 1902).

MISQUITH

Wallace Misquith senior founded Misquith & Co. in Ootmacund (Ooty) in 1842. He is said to have been of Portuguese origin, so both his names are probably transliterations. Wallace Misquith junior appears to have been born c.1858 (age 42 when arriving from Calcutta on 8 November 1900 on the 'Golconda'). First mentioned in the *Indian Statesman* of 26 June 1875 when he was assaulted by a client when presenting his bill. He is recorded as a pianist from 1880 (MWM 27 May) and as a piano and music dealer and tuner in Madras, with a branch at 1 South Parade, Bangalore in 1883 (13 July). In 1887 he was re-appointed to St Stephen, Ootmacund, having been the first organist there in 1876, his brother Willie replacing him when Wallace moved to Madras. (26 May 1887). In 1887 (11 June) he is recorded playing the cello, with Mrs Misquith violin, and Miss E. Misquith, piano, and in 1892 (28 April), he became organist of All Saints, Coonoor, 'many years organist of St Mathias, Vepery'.

William ('Willie') Arthur Misquith died in 1888, leaving the Madras branch in the hands of Walter Franklin Misquith, until 1893 with his brothers Roland and Oscar (MWM, 10 May 1894).

Thacker's Indian Directory of 1895 records Misquith & Co. also at 14 Merchant Street, Rangoon, 'O.F. Misquith, Managing Partner'. Oscar Franklin Misquith, who died in Bangalore 12 November 1924, was another brother. They also had a branches in other places, including Penang.

In 1902 (26 June, 10 July) Vincent Noble (1883-1960), then organist of St Stephen, Ootacamund, together with Wallace Misquith, opened a new organ by Hill, which had been erected at St George, Wellington by Misquith & Co. However, when he married in 1928 at St John, Preston, Brighton he names his father as Willie Misquith, and as the marriage regis-

ter records, had changed his name by deed poll to Noble. How this relates to the relationship between the Misquiths and Alfred Noble is unclear. Vincent Noble was living in Brighton as an organist in 1911, but on his marriage became organist of Bombay Cathedral. He later returned to Brighton, and was organist of Cowfold church in the 1950s. His brother Arthur (born c. 1881), having become organist at Christ Church, Madras at the age of 14, also took the name Noble, and was apparently a bank clerk in Selkirk in 1901.

Wallace Misquith junior evidently retired (after 1908) to England, living with his wife at 54 Fordhook Avenue, Ealing in 1910 when his 2nd son, Franz Cerille, died at the age of 16. (*Ealing Gazette*, 10 September).

Misquith advertised reed organs extensively in the 1880s and 90s, but even after Noble's disappearance they worked on one or two pipe organs.

MWM 3 August 1905. All Saints, Bangalore, Bevington, erected by Wallace Misquith. 2 manuals, 7 ss.

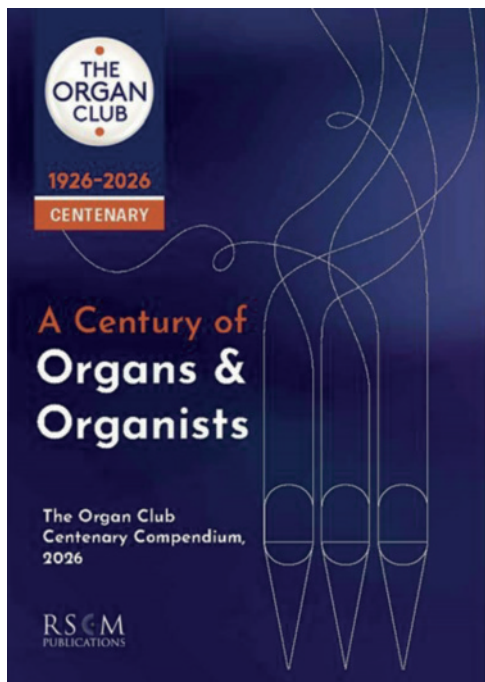
6 July 1905. St George's Cathedral, Madras. Hill 1857 in the west gallery. Moved to the north chancel 1864. Overhauled by George Forster of Calcutta 1887 (MWM 16 November) with new keys and stop knobs. Now Hill is to add a bass to the TC swell, to be erected by Misquith & Co. 3 manuals, 26ss. Organists Dr G.M. Garrett 1858-c.1860, John T. Mayne 1864-75, W.D. St Ledger 1877-date.

Mayne was 'an accomplished musician and draftsman' according to the notice of his death in the *Indian Statesman* of 6 August 1875. He published a book entitled *Short Notes of Tours in America and India* (Madras, Gantz Brothers 1869). It is actually quite extensive, and he mentions the organs that he saw. The American tour (which took place in 1859) included Canada.

MWM 17 December 1908. St John, Secunderabad. Said to have been made by Misquith & Co, and Wallace Misquith presided at the opening, playing 'Bach's Fugue in F' and a piece of his own composition. Two manuals, eleven stops and three couplers, It cost Rs 4000.

The *Civil and Military Gazette* of 29 June 1902 has an advert from a Willie E. Pauchard of 267 Cooper Road, Donald Town, Lahore. He was 'Late of Misquith & Co.', and described himself as 'Professional tuner and repairer of Pianos, pipe and reed organs'.

A NEW PUBLICATION TO MARK THE CENTENARY OF THE ORGAN CLUB



A handsomely produced book, *A Century of Organs & Organists* (RSCM Salisbury 2026, ISBN 9780854023684, £25 plus p&p) has been published to mark the centenary of the Organ Club, edited by Paul Hale. The book is a compendium of essays that cover many aspects of the activities of the Organ Club (Bruce Buchanan, Colin Menzies and John Sayer), notable developments in case design (John Norman) and technology (Geoffrey Coffin, Andrew Moyes and Richard Lowe) over the past century. Individual organ projects that loomed large in different ways over the past 100 years are described - Liverpool Cathedral (Peter Lynan)

and Gloucester Cathedral (Paul Hale). Recorded music, whether relayed by the BBC from its own organs (Graeme Kay) or through the various constantly evolving media (Gary Cole), has considerably enlarged the audience for organ music over the past century. Nicholas Thistlethwaite celebrates the creditable half-century by another member of the British Organ team - BIOS. Changes in styles of worship and music have had an impact on the role of the church organ (Andrew Reed, Stephen Beet and Jonathan Rennert). Organ performance has changed since the heyday of Victorian organists such as W T Best (Roger Tebbet) but concert organists such as Thomas Trotter (interviewed by Mark Joyner) have a greater range of instruments at their disposal, as well as new music (Kevin Bowyer). Encouraging the next generation of organists from the earliest years (Jeremiah Stephenson and James Parsons) to adults (David Baker) is one of the challenges of today. Dame Gillian Weir tops and tails this very informative volume with some personal reflections on the glory and the agony of a musician's life.

MR KERSHAW'S SNETZLER ORGAN

DAVID SHUKER

Eaton Hall in Cheshire is the much-rebuilt ancestral home of the Grosvenor family. One of the most spectacular rebuildings to make one of the largest and best-known examples of domestic Gothic Revival architecture took place in the early decades of the nineteenth century under the direction of William Porden.¹ The surviving plans in the Eaton Hall archives include two designs for the case of an organ in the Saloon. The two designs differ only in the provision of either gable or transom cresting for the top of the richly carved case (Figures 1a and 1b). In the event it would appear that a modified transom design with a small gable, seemingly added as an afterthought in Figure 1a, met with Lord Grosvenor's approval as it appears at the side of illustrations of the saloon in contemporary guidebooks (Figure 2). The richly carved lower panels are the doors which cover the keyboard and stops and there is no pedal board.

In the early 1980s Betty Matthews gathered together all the available information about both domestic and chapel organs in Eaton Hall, including a reference from an early 20th century guidebook that an organ had been given to Eleanor, only daughter of the first Earl of Wilton, by her father on the occasion of her marriage to Robert Grosvenor in 1794.²

Robert Grosvenor (1767-1845) succeeded his father to become second Earl Grosvenor in 1802, subsequently becoming the first Marquess of Westminster in 1831.³ In 1803 Robert Grosvenor inherited not only Eaton Hall but also a vast fortune. It was this wealth and status that enabled the redevelopment of the family seat. On 28th April 1794 he married the Honourable Eleanor Egerton, the only child of Sir Thomas Egerton, who was created Earl Wilton in 1801. During an examination of the Porden drawings and Eaton Estate account books in Chester Archives in February 2025 a folded sheet of paper with the handwritten title '*Account of the purchase of the organ, built by Snetzler for Eaton Hall*' was found in the archive box.

¹ Peter Lindfield, 'Porden's Eaton: William Porden's role in the development of Eaton Hall, Cheshire, 1802-1825', *The Georgian Group Journal*, Volume XXI (2013), 151-165.

² Betty Matthews, 'The Organs of Eaton Hall, Cheshire' *The Organ*, Volume 60, No 235 (January 1981), 15-19.

³ Diana Newton and Jonathan Lumby, *The Grosvenors of Eaton: The Dukes of Westminster and their Forbears* (Eccleston, Chester, Jennet Publications 2002) 21.



Figure 1a. William Porden's design for an organ case with a transom crest, with an afterthought.
(Eaton Hall Archives ZCR 63/2/754, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies).



Figure 1b. William Porden's design for an organ case with a gable crest.
(Eaton Hall Archives ZCR 63/2/753, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies).



Figure 2. The saloon at Eaton Hall in 1826 with part of William Porden's Gothic organ case just visible on the right.

The sheet of paper⁴ is clearly part of a longer letter addressed to Eleanor, Lady Grosvenor from her father, Thomas Egerton, the Earl of Wilton. A transcript of the relevant parts of the handwritten text is given below:

Your mother, my dearest Elea[no]r, I believe informed you that from hearing different accounts of the organ I had been over to see it, [and] had taken Mr Ludlow with me.

I found it very different from what I expected but still thought it a most capital instrument and desirous that you sh[oul]d have it, but limited Mr Ludlow to 300 guineas – yesterday he returned having been successful in purchasing it for 270 guineas, to the mortification [and] disappointment of many who came on purpose to buy it. I may therefore give you joy of hearing, as Mr Snetzler told Mr Herschel the organist at Halifax, the best instrument he thought he had ever made, and I flatter myself you will approve of it when you hear it. I sh[oul]d recommend some alterations to be made in it, which I can have done here by a very clever man in Manchester and at a very trifling expense. He is to go to Halifax on Tuesday to put it up [and] I hope to get it safe here the latter end of this week or the beginning of the next – you cannot conceive how very anxious I have been it knowing about its value, and the excellence of its tones. I quite envy you the Dulciana stop, it is the best I think I ever heard, [and] goes quite through the organ -

I shall send to pay for it on Tuesday, [and] I trust that you will not think I have been lavish with Lord Grosvenor's money. Had it been for myself I w[oul]d have given more for it – as I am certain such an organ c[oul]d not be had now for any sum...

Wilton

Heaton House

Sunday Nov. 25th

The reference to 'Mr Herschel' is interesting. Did the Earl of Wilton have this information from William Herschel himself or was it via Robert Grosvenor whose father Richard, 1st Earl Grosvenor was a Fellow of the Royal Society (elected in in 1777) and therefore likely to have known Herschel, who was elected FRS in 1781.

The year of the letter can be assumed to be 1804 from the date (Egerton was ennobled in 1801) and that, and the details in the letter, fits in precise-

⁴ Eaton Hall Archives 9/145c

ly with dates of the purchase of the organ from the following newspaper advertisement:⁵

Halifax, 3rd November 1804

SALE BY AUCTION

At the house and warehouse of Messrs. JAMES KERSHAW and SON, bankrupts in Halifax ... on Thursday, Friday and on Monday and Tuesday following, the twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh days of November instant ...

All the HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE...

also a most capital organ built by SNETZLER ...

Interestingly, this information also tallies with a Snetzler organ (see rear cover) whose case is known to have been made for Mr Kershaw of Halifax in the 1760s. This organ ‘reappeared’ in 1891 advertising its sale in Leamington Spa. From that point it proceeded through various hands before being bought by Noel Mander in 1960, by which time it had lost its internal mechanism and pipework. He combined it with another Snetzler organ of 1759 and the result was installed in Westminster Abbey as a gift from the Vincent Novello Society in 1965. The broken pediment was added by Mander. Subsequently the composite Snetzler has been in the Oratory of Cardinal Vaughan’s School, Holland Park since 2015.⁶

So what happened to Lady Eleanor’s Snetzler organ between about 1810 when Eaton Hall was extensively rebuilt and its reappearance in 1891? The organ acquired by Lady Grosvenor’s father, and held by him in such obvious high regard, would have been seen as somewhat outdated by 1810. Furthermore, as William Porden comprehensively furnished the interior of Eaton Hall in the same Gothic Revival style as the exterior, a mid-eighteenth century Snetzler organ case would have looked completely out of place. The fact that the Snetzler organ was intact in 1891 suggests that the organ in the case designed by William Porden was built by someone else.

Thus, the fate of Mr Kershaw’s Snetzler organ during the greater part of the nineteenth century remains to be elucidated.

⁵ *Manchester Mercury*, 13th November 1804.

⁶ Information from the revised edition of *The Life and Work of John Snetzler* (in preparation) kindly provided by Paul Tindall.

REVIEW

Charles Burney *Six Cornet Pieces with an Introduction for the Diapasons and a Fugue*

Charles Burney *Preludes, Fugues and Interludes Book I*

Editor: David Patrick

Publisher: Fitzjohn Music

Available from Banks Music £8.50 and £11.00 respectively, plus p&p

Charles Burney is probably far better known for his books on the music across Europe and a general history of music than for his keyboard music, of which some of the harpsichord or piano forte collections do not seem to have been published in new editions. He was organist of St. Dionis Backchurch and of St. Margaret's, Kings Lynn before he returned to London, becoming organist at Chelsea College. Both of the collections for the organ that he published have been edited by David Patrick for a new edition.

The set of VI Cornet Pieces with an Introduction for the Diapasons and a Fugue, very unusual for the time, and indeed throughout the 18th century, to be presented without introductions, was published by Walsh in 1751. It opens with an extended Introduction for the Diapasons in E minor marked Largo, with a variety of textures in each hand and mainly semiquaver movement in the right hand with tr sometimes marked on them. This movement could well be paired with the first of the six one- movement Cornet Pieces, which is also in E minor; the other five being in A, D, B minor, E flat and B flat, the latter three keys being unusual for Voluntaries at this time. Tempo indications are Allegro for numbers one, three and six, Spiritoso number two, Presto number four and Allegro Affetuoso number five. All are in two voices, a single note solo with semiquaver passagework in the right hand over quavers or crotchets in the left hand. Apart from no. 4 which is 2/4, they are in C time, and average around 60 bars. It is worth noting that the left hand does not exceed tenor B, making the performance on the Great possible, since the Cornet did not go below middle C. Although not marked, some right hand passages which repeat

the preceding passage at the same pitch could be taken on the Swell Echo Cornet. The closing Fugue is in F minor (the original was written with three flats as the key signature, David Patrick has referred to this in the introduction but has published it with the modern four flats) covers 70 bars, a very unusual key for organ pieces at the time, although previous examples were included by Thomas Roseingrave in his collection of Voluntaries and Fugues of 1728. It is a typical Corellian double fugue, popular in several Voluntaries of the period as well as in Handel's set of Six Fugues published in 1750; the second subject opens with repeated quavers and enters in the alto before the first subject has finished. It finishes with a dominant seventh third inversion followed by a rest with a corona, indicating a brief improvised cadenza, a coda of four-part crotchets concludes the piece. The Cornet Pieces could well be introduced by a Prelude in the same key by a different composer, this practice of pairing movements was commented on by John Reading in one of manuscripts. Ornaments used include tr, appoggiaturas of different lengths, and the double stroke sign //. Unfortunately no suggestions for performance are given.

The "Preludes, Fugues and Interludes alphabetically arranged in all the keys that are most perfectly in tune upon that instrument. Printed in a pocket sized edition for the convenience of Young organists ...", is a more substantial publication probably written in about 1787, with pieces arranged in ascending order of key from A to D (including A minor and major, B flat, C minor, C major and D major), here divided by the editor into ten sets. Again this is an unusual title for the time.

The Preludes (marked Introductions in the score) are the longest - between 22 and 86 bars -and most varied of the three genres, with tempo indications from Andante to Adagio and Grave, and Maestoso for number 10; number seven is marked Allegretto. Apart from number three which is in 3/2, five in 2/4, and six in 3/2 which has a Da Capo al Fine they are in C time. Numbers one to four and seven finish on the dominant. Textures vary considerably within the individual movements, as do rhythms and note values, for example number five contains moving parts ranging from quavers to hemidemisemiquavers as well as demisemiquaver triplets and in number 10 dotted crotchets and minims at the start to sudden demisemiquaver scalar runs are found. Number eight includes crotchet, quaver and demisemiquaver movement as well as runs in thirds, which also occur

in number six in quavers. The prevalent language is of the Rococo and Galant, number nine being a particularly dramatic piece in C minor.

The Fugues vary in length from about 35 to 75 bars, and are in C time apart from number three, which is in 4/2. The subjects usually commence with a minim, followed by quavers. The predominant movement is in quavers (crotchets in number three), with semiquavers appearing throughout number four, as part of a dactylic figure and some passagework in the treble in numbers five and six. In number six towards the end there is a syncopated passage in minims and crotchets. Numbers seven and eight conclude with a quaver passage an octave apart. Numbers nine and ten have quaver passages in thirds. The part writing is quite loose in places with voices appearing and dropping out at will.

Interludes are found only in numbers one, three and five and are the final piece in the group, apart from number five, which is marked *Allegro*. Fuga, they also have the title of *Fughettas*. The subject usually opens with two minims before continuing in quavers. A *Fughetta* (not actually entitled *Interlude*) is inserted between the Prelude and the Fugue of number eight, the subject opening with a minim followed by a mix of dotted quavers and quavers with chromatic steps ascending from E to A. Texture is variable, and note values include semiquavers. They are shorter than the Fugues and are also mainly in quaver movement, with an equally loose approach to part writing. The introduction gives a brief biography and critical commentary, and a note on the ornaments found, which include tr, appoggiaturas of varying lengths, the turn, and the compound ornament of the turn turned sideways preceded by a straight line.

These pieces are well worth reviving in this 300th anniversary of Burney's birth, some of the longer Preludes and Fugues would make useful Voluntaries as well as recital items. The shorter Prelude and Fugue in A, number two, would be a good choice where a shorter Voluntary would more appropriate. It is a pity that a second volume, covering the remaining keys from E to G, was not issued.

John Collins

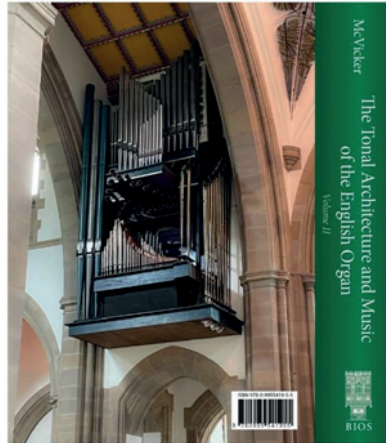
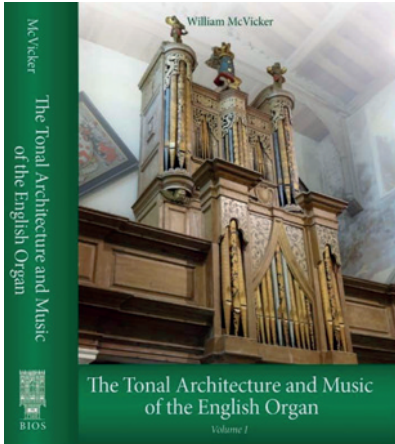
Just published!

William McVicker

The Tonal Architecture and Music of the English Organ

(BIOS, 2026) ISBN 9780995541955

2-volume set £100 (via the BIOS website and exc. of post & packing)



Which came first: pipe organs or their repertoire? Sometimes the instrument influences the music; sometimes the reverse is true. This book brings together, for the first time, technical aspects of organ manufacture in England and organ repertoire through an analysis of tonal architecture and musical style.

The concept of 'tonal massing' describes the dynamic balance between stops and reflects an architectural approach to chorus design. The emergence of French and Brabant influence after the Restoration is reappraised, alongside 'lost registrations' and changing keyboard compasses, with important implications for performance practice.

Developments such as two Great Open Diapasons and graded choruses in the work of Green, Elliot, and J. C. Bishop are examined, together with the influence of *empfindsamer Stil* on English galant style. By the 1840s, tonal grading had established clear stylistic differences between English and European organs. From 1850, continental influences, including the 'German Plan', reshaped English organ-building.

After 1851, the influence of Schulze and Cavaillé-Coll contributed to mature Victorian instruments, balancing melodic clarity and contrapuntal function. By 1900, reform movements and critics such as Albert Schweitzer encouraged new approaches, later reinforced by the *Orgelbewegung*.

Debates over historic performance practice, mechanical action, and tonal balance persisted into the late twentieth century. Today, neo-Romantic instruments and new compositional trends reflect changing musical priorities, with modern works increasingly designed for adaptability rather than specific organ types.

CHARLES WOOD CONFERENCE

Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge

October 31, 2026

This year marks the centenary of the death of Charles Wood (1866 - 1926), Precentor and Director of College Music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge and later Professor of Music at Cambridge University in succession to Stanford. He also taught at the Royal College of Music in London, where he had a formative influence on the musical development of the younger generation of English composers including Samuel Coleridge Taylor, Herbert Howells, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Michael Tippett.



Wood was himself a significant composer. He wrote extensively for the Anglican church service, including repertoire intended originally for use in the College Chapel, and also composed solo and part-songs, instrumental chamber music, cantatas and organ music, and published collections of folk songs, carols and hymns.

To mark the centenary, there will be a day conference at Gonville & Caius College on Saturday 31 October. It will begin with a keynote address by Jeremy Dibble (Emeritus Professor of Music at Durham University) whose new biography of Wood is due to be published before the summer. It is also hoped to include performances of secular songs and string quartets, and Dr Nicholas Thistlethwaite will give a lecture on the evolution of chapel choirs in Cambridge in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The programme will end with a service of Choral Evensong including items of Wood's church music sung by the Gonville & Caius chapel choir.

Information about the conference and a booking facility will shortly be available on the college's website: www.gonvilleandcaiuschoir.com. BIOS members and others will be most welcome.



The British Institute of Organ Studies

Saturday 30th May 2026 11.15 am

Day Conference and Annual General Meeting

Farm Street Church, Mayfair, London W1K 3AH
Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street, Mayfair, London W1K 2PA

This year's AGM meeting begins at Farm Street Church (The Church of the Immaculate Conception), Mayfair, which houses an organ rebuilt by Henry Willis III in 1926 incorporating pipework by Anneessens and Bishop. The organist at the time was Guy Weitz (1883 – 1970) and the instrument was considered very advanced both tonally and mechanically. Bruce Buchanan will speak about the organ, organ builder and organist, whom he met towards the end of his life. James Todd, a post-graduate at the Royal College of Music and former Organ Scholar at Farm Street will play Weitz's three movement *Symphonie* no. 1 of 1932, based on plainsong themes.

A sandwich lunch at the Grosvenor Chapel will be followed by the AGM at 2pm. All members may attend the AGM without payment, but it would be helpful to know in advance if you are coming just for the AGM. The charge of £35 for the conference includes lunch and tea. The AGM will be followed by a lecture and recital (on the 1991 William Drake organ) by Dr David Ponsford on his new edition of the organ music of Louis Couperin, ending about 3.45.

BOOKING FORM

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ORGAN STUDIES DAY CONFERENCE & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

Saturday 30th May 11.15 for 11.30

Farm Street Church and Grosvenor Chapel, Mayfair, London W1

Please reserve a place for the BIOS Day Conference and AGM for £35 (including lunch).

There are three ways to book, by Monday 25th May if possible :

- a) By returning the form below to the Meetings Officer by post, accompanied by a cheque made payable to BIOS;
- b) By returning the form to the Meetings Officer by email and paying by BACS. Account: BIOS; sort code: 52-30-44; ac no: 05097169, please identify the payment as AGM, and highlight option B before returning your form;
- c) By booking online through the BIOS website.

<https://bios.org.uk/day-conference-annual-general-meeting-2026/>

Please let the meetings officer know of any dietary requirements. Contact details below.

Fill out a separate form for each person.

Name (including title).....

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Telephone.....(daytime and/or mobile)

Telephone.....(evening)

e-mail.....

Note: Acknowledgements will be sent by e-mail. If you do not have an e-mail address, and require an acknowledgement, please send a SAE with your booking form.

Please return this booking form (or a photocopy) to:

Richard Hobson,

or meetings@bios.org

Future Meetings

Day Conference and Annual General Meeting

Saturday 30 May 2026 at
The Grosvenor Chapel, 24 South Audley St, London W1K 2PA
at 14.00

The AGM forms part of the programme for a
Day Conference to be held at
Farm Street Church, Mayfair, London W1K 3AH
commencing at 11.15am

Full details of the Day Conference and an application form can be
found in p. 51 of this issue.



AIMS OF BIOS

To promote objective, scholarly research into the history of the organ and its music in all its aspects, and, in particular, into the organ and its music in Britain.

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

To work for the 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.