

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: Sacred Trinity, Salford. See page 77.:1

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FROM THE CHAIR

Julia Rausing Trust Grant Award

Adrian Mumford has been busy revising the BIOS Safeguarding Policy. This was approved by Council and should be available on the website by the time this *Reporter* reaches you. The revision was a requirement for a grant from the Julia Rausing Trust, which has awarded BIOS £10,000 over five years. The funding is specifically for the NPOR.

I am grateful to Adrian for masterminding this relationship. BIOS will, of course, put the funding to good use by further developing the NPOR. The NPOR Joint Management Committee will consider how best to deploy the grant at its next meeting.

BIOS Website

BIOS members may have noticed an experimental enhancement to the NPOR website search facility. This will return to the website in the autumn. The aim is to provide a less literal search function and a broader, more contextual search experience.

I found the earlier trial particularly interesting, as the search produced a wider range of relevant results in addition to the specific information I was seeking. I am grateful to Matt Dixon for his work on this and would welcome members' feedback in due course.

Business Continuity Plan

BIOS maintains legal agreements with a number of organisations, including the BOA and the RCO, together with other important documentation such as publication agreements. I am grateful to Melvin Hughes for his continuing work in identifying key BIOS documents for secure storage and easy retrieval when required. The material is remarkably wide-

ranging and includes databases, domain name records, recent BIOS Council minutes, year-end financial records, archive documentation, files relating to published books, and HOSA sound files.

PhD Studentship at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Negotiations with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and the University of Birmingham are now virtually complete, and we expect to announce significant developments in the autumn.

This brief note is intended to alert anyone already in higher education who may be interested in a postgraduate opportunity to deepen our understanding of the relationship between organs, repertoire, and performance practice. The proposed research will focus on musical activity up to the mid-nineteenth century. Full details will be published in due course.

Publicity Officer

BIOS is seeking a Publicity Officer. The role is relatively light and involves ensuring that BIOS activities are publicised in relevant magazines according to their publication schedules.

Please let me know if you are interested.

Conferences

Jonathan Goodchild and I attended the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance's annual conference, *The Big Update*, held at the Dutch Church in London on 10 June. This full-day event brings the sector together to share developments, combining short, focused talks with case studies and examples of innovative practice.

I presented an overview of BIOS's work, highlighting its diverse activities, including the NPOR, BOA, HOSA and HOARR. The session also addressed a number of pressing challenges facing the organ world. In particular, the current Renewal Fund does not adequately support organ conservation

in the way the former Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme once did. Its loss has removed a crucial source of funding for restoration projects.

Changing patterns of church use are also having a significant impact. Organs are not always prioritised musically, and in some cases institutions are seeking to dispose of them altogether. As buildings are repurposed, instruments can become redundant, leading to a growing surplus and an increasingly saturated rehoming market. While BIOS was not originally established to tackle this issue, it is becoming an area that demands further attention. A key priority is to assess the quality of redundant instruments, where the listing scheme has an essential role to play.

There are, however, encouraging signs. Interest among younger players remains strong, although access to instruments is often restricted. Locked churches and consoles present practical and insurance-related challenges, raising questions about how to enable safe access without compromising building security.

Across these discussions, one theme emerged clearly: collaboration is vital. Strengthening links between builders, restorers, performers, researchers and those working in heritage skills and cultural preservation will be crucial to sustaining the future of the pipe organ.

The presentation was well received and helped to raise BIOS's profile within the wider heritage sector.

As BIOS is a member organisation of The Heritage Alliance, I was invited to join its newly established Chairs' Peer Network. Building on the success of the CEO Network, this initiative brings together Chairs from across the sector to share experience and address the particular challenges of governance. Chaired by Carole Souter CBE, the group meets informally each quarter, providing a trusted forum for discussion, mutual

support and the exchange of ideas. The Alliance is especially keen to involve those leading smaller organisations (such as BIOS) or those new to the role (such as me).

Early sessions focused on core governance themes, including Chair–CEO relationships and approaches to funding and fundraising. A subsequent meeting provided an opportunity to introduce BIOS and to reflect on some of the wider sector concerns also raised at the recent Dutch Church conference. In this context, it was striking how prominently issues of archives and digitisation featured in the discussion. This is an area long recognised by BIOS Council as a priority, and one that is now moving towards more sustained and structured development as a potential long-term project.

William McVicker
BIOS Chair

BIOS Council (January 2026)

BIOS Council met on Saturday 20 June 2026. Nine members of Council were present. The President was also in attendance.

Council received updates and Reports and from them noted the following

- On the basis of the positive feedback received, the *BIOS 50th Anniversary Residential Conference (9 to 11 April 2026 at Wadham College, Oxford)* could be regarded as great success.

- The *BIOS 50th Anniversary Publications (2026)* - 'Organ-makers of the British Isles' was making good progress.
- The arrangements for Annual General Meetings were being reviewed.
- The Safeguarding Policy had been reviewed and the new version was approved.
- An Officer Group would review the Risk Register.
- Key documents were being identified for the purposes of business recovery/resilience.
- The Chair had spoken at the *Historic Religious Buildings Alliance (HRBA)* 'Big Update' (10.06.26) about the extent of BIOS activity in supporting the cause of historic organs.
- The Treasurer identified the need for a Plan to set out more strategically our approach to activities and funding.
- Both *Gift Aid & GDPR documentation* needed to be revalidated.
- BIOS Members were invited to support the *Charles Wood Conference at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge (31 October 2026)* *BIOS Lunch* (Saturday 28 November 2026 tbc) at The Grosvenor Chapel.
- JBIOS 50 (2026) (Editor David Force) should be out in the early autumn.
- David Shuker was thanked for his undertaking of a 2nd period as BIOS Reporter Editor and Paul Tindall was thanked for taking on the role.
- On the recommendations of the Listing Committee Council approved the listing of 4 organs and declined the listing of 5 organs.
- There had been a 37% increase in the number of submissions to the NPOR (72% of which were currently made online).

BIOS Council meets next on Saturday 17 October 2026.

MEMBERSHIP DATA REFRESH

BIOS stores member information in a database and under our data privacy policy and to meet GDPR (UK) legal obligations we must periodically revalidate your consent for us to store information. Not doing so would make it impossible to send publications and manage membership topics so it is important all members agree. In addition, a large proportion of UK tax paying members have given consent for BIOS to reclaim the standard rate UK tax on subscription and donation payments. We also need to refresh this info, as some may have ceased to be tax payers since authorising Gift Aid and others may not have previously provided a Gift Aid authorisation but now feel they could.

There are therefore two parts to the form available at this link <https://bios.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/GiftAid-GDPR.pdf>

Downloaded PDFs can be completed on screen and saved complete with names, ticks, and other details without needing to print them on paper. They can then be emailed back to membership@bios.org.uk. If you prefer, they can be printed, completed by hand and posted back to the address below. Blank forms can also be posted to you on request if all other options are not suitable.

Prompt return of these forms will be greatly appreciated.

Melanie Plumley, Membership Secretary

MYSTERY WATERCOLOUR

The illustration on the front cover of the last *Reporter* generated considerable interest. David Lawson of Totnes makes the following suggestion and supplied an intriguing period photograph.

Regarding the image on the front of the current Reporter 50 (2), it's not an unrealized scheme for Hull City Hall is it? It's known the Corporation originally anticipated a smaller instrument but plans were changed, which is what led to the clever Forster and Andrews solution to house a larger instrument in a cantilevered case. Granted the decorative treatment doesn't match, but the hall interiors were not finished when the organ scheme was first being discussed, and the chamber is somewhat similar in proportions.



KING JAMES'S TRAVELLING ORGAN

David Force

On 27 June 1924, Sotheby's auction house listed a sale of 'important Jacobite relics and valuable works of art comprising the property of Rev. Canon [A.F.] Sutton'.¹ Lot 55 was a seventeenth-century consort organ described as 'An extremely interesting organ, *temp. James II...* the travelling organ of James II, used in his camp on Hounslow Heath.'² The catalogue photograph (Fig. 1) showed an instrument with a richly carved pipe front and oriental decoration on the case panels. The latter was described as 'Indian scenes (with the exception of two which represent "Music" and "Singing")'. The organ was sold for £255 to H. & J. Simmons of Duke Street, London W1, and then by them to an unnamed American buyer.³ It subsequently disappeared from public view, and for over a century now it has not been seen: its whereabouts, and even its existence, are uncertain.

The appellation 'King James's Travelling Organ' was first applied to the instrument in a sale catalogue drawn up by Messrs. Christie & Manson for dispersing the contents of Stowe, the mansion of the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, in August and September 1848. It listed the organ as:

2481. The travelling organ of James II., used in his camp on Hounslow Heath, with stop diapason, cornet,

¹ Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge. *Catalogue of ... Jacobite relics including ... the Travelling Organ of James II* (London, 1924).

² *Ibid.*, 13-14.

³ Reported in Harvey, Sidney W. 'Two Father Smith Organs' *The Organ* 4 (1924,) 221.



Lot 56.

Fig. 1. Photograph of the organ from the
Catalogue...of Jacobite relics (1924)

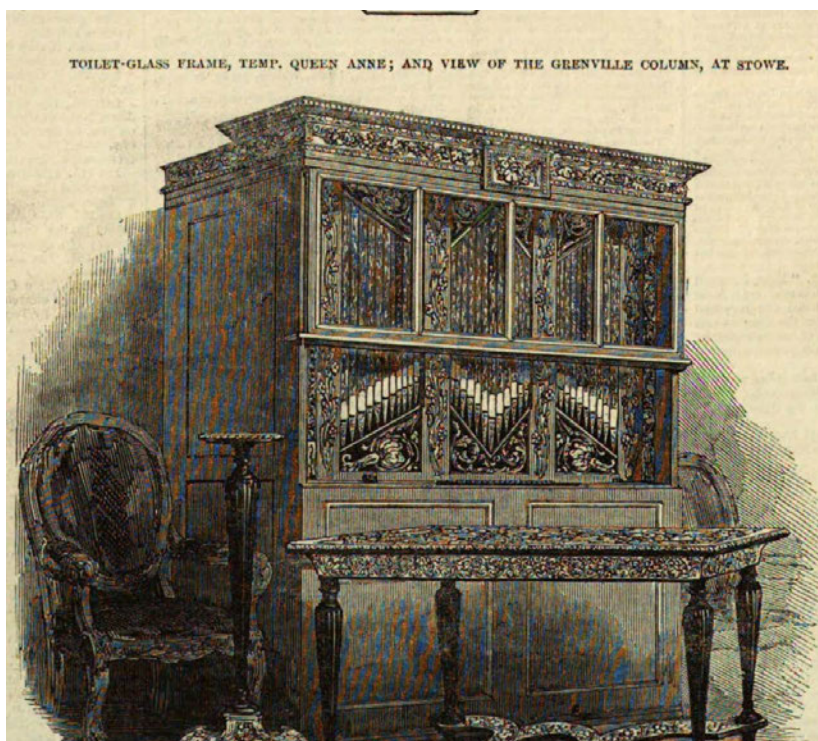


Fig. 2. The organ as illustrated in *The Stowe Catalogue Priced and Annotated* (1848)

sesqualtra [sic], principal, twelfth and fifteenth stops: after the Revolution, it was conveyed to Lord Wharton's seat at Winchendon, and from thence purchased by Mr. Grenville.

A list of the sale contents with annotations by Henry Rumsey Foster, was published in the same year, where it was noted that the organ had been bought by a commissioning agent for £30:⁴

This instrument is of small size, being about six feet nine inches high, and about five feet wide by two feet and a half in depth. Our illustration shews the front of the organ as ready for the player; that is, a glazed window which can be elevated or lowered (in the later case shutting up the instrument), is represented as thrown up. The stops of the organ are the following:- Fifteenth-bass, sesqui-altra, twelfth-bass, trumpet, fifteenth-treble, cornet, twelfth-treble, and stop-diapason. The notes, ranged in two rows, are forty-three in number, the lowest having black, the upper white keys. The false pipes to the front are merely flat pieces of wood, painted to resemble pipes, gilded and ornamented with arabesques, and above and below them are some pieces of pierced carving of good design. The case of the organ is painted a dull red colour, the mouldings to the panels and frames to the windows being gilded, as is also the carved fruit and foliage, and architectural enrichments in the frieze and other parts of the instrument. This curious relic was purchased for Robert Sutton, Esq., of Ross-way, Herts.

⁴ Foster, Henry. *The Stowe Catalogue Priced and Annotated* (London: David Bogue, 1848), 245.

The accompanying illustration (Fig.2) showed the sash window arrangement, but no sign of the oriental decoration. Foster noted a division of the Twelfth and Fifteenth, and a Trumpet instead of the Principal, which, though not totally impossible, seems very unlikely. The keyboard description was demonstrably incorrect: the two ‘rows’ refer to the natural and sharp keys rather than two manuals, but the number of keys (43) is contradicted by both the 1848 illustration and the 1924 photograph, which clearly show 48 keys with a compass of C D-c³.⁵

A more reliable description was given in *The Organ* of 1924 by Sidney W. Harvey.⁶ Here the specification (representing the layout of the stop levers) was given as:

Fifteenth (bass)	Fifteenth (treble)
Sesquialtra (bass)	Sesquialtra (treble)
Twelfth (bass)	Twelfth (treble)
Open Flute	Stopped Diapason

Andrew Freeman noted that there was a blowing pedal, a shifting movement, and a slot at the side that he thought had been for an additional blowing pedal, which are all visible in the 1924 photograph.⁷

The Stowe catalogue reported that the organ had been ‘conveyed to Lord Wharton’s seat at Winchendon’; this was Thomas, 1st Marquess of Wharton (1648-1715), Comptroller of the Household to William and Mary, so the organ was possibly a gift from the king or queen. The next owner, ‘Mr Grenville’, was either the grandfather or father of the Duke of Buckingham

⁵ The misinformation was also included in the 1924 catalogue.

⁶ Harvey, op.cit., 221.

⁷ Freeman, Andrew. *Father Smith* (London: Musical Opinion, 1926), 46-7.

of Stowe, the father having been George Grenville, Prime Minister from 1763-1765. The organ was then sold to Robert Sutton, a member of the family that included Sir John Sutton (himself at that time the owner of two consort organs) and his brother, the Rev. F.H. Sutton, who inherited the organ and passed it on to his nephew, the Rev. Canon A.F. Sutton, the seller in 1924.⁸ A description and illustration of the organ whilst in the ownership of Robert Sutton appeared in an 1850 book of 'Historic reliques' (Fig. 3).⁹ The text was a précis of Forster's notes (including the same errors) but the illustration showed the red hue of the case panels and the gilding of the carved details. According to Freeman, it was F.H. Sutton who stripped the red paint off to reveal the oriental decoration beneath.¹⁰ Whether this was an original feature is difficult to say. Freeman felt that it was of a later date than the organ, which could be correct, although the photograph reveals that the inspiration for most of the paintings is more akin to the taste for Indian and African derived decoration rather than the later chinoiserie, the former style having been introduced in English furniture in the early seventeenth century.¹¹ Such decoration would certainly have been unsuitable for use in a royal Catholic chapel, so either it was a seventeenth-century feature that was covered by the red paint when the organ was used in the chapel, or it was added after it ceased to be a chapel instrument and was later still painted over.

⁸ Davidson, C.H. *Sir John Sutton: A Study in True Principles* (Oxford: Positif Press, 1992), 73-5.

⁹ Williams, Joseph Lionel. *Historic reliques: a series of representations of arms, jewellery, gold and silver plate, furniture, armour etc etc* (London: 198 Strand, 1850), np.

¹⁰ Freeman, op. cit., 47.

¹¹ Lee, Hannah. 'Serving as Ornament: The Representation of African People in Early Modern British Gardens and Interiors' *British Arts Studies* 21 (2021), 235-64.

The buyer in 1924 has been the subject of some confusion. Some sources claimed that it was William Randolph Hearst and that he had later given the organ to St David's school in New York, but this is incorrect. The St David's organ was acquired by Hearst on 28 December 1923 from French & Co. of New York who claimed it to be an early-seventeenth-century instrument once owned by James I.¹² Dominic Gwynn examined it in 2002 and found that it was a fake comprising a mixture of foreign and continental components dating from the seventeenth to the early-twentieth centuries.¹³ None of the other instruments in the Hearst collection matches the description of the travelling organ, and the buyer thus remains unknown.

The 'camp on Hounslow Heath' mentioned in the Stowe catalogue was a series of summer military camps that were held from 1686 to 1688 as an attempt by James II to intimidate Parliament in the events leading up to the Glorious Revolution. They were large affairs, housing 12,000 or more troops and were run as much as public spectacles as training exercises. The camps included a royal enclosure, with residences for the king, Queen Mary, and various officials, and there was also a portable Catholic chapel, apparently a wooden building, supplied for £505, that could be moved on iron wheels. There was also a much larger Catholic chapel supplied for the troops, which, like much of the camp infrastructure, was 'so artificially framed that it may speedily be put together and as suddenly disjointed'; this was later purchased by Dr Thomas Tenison, Rector of St Martin's-in-the-Fields, for use as chapel of ease for the parish in Conduit Street, but it was more probably the royal chapel in which the travelling organ was used.¹⁴ Both the

¹² Details from the Hearst Collection Catalogue, Album 26 Item 57.

¹³ Unpublished report and estimate for repair (2002) held in the Goetze and Gwynn archives.

¹⁴ For an account of the chapel, see Paul Jeffrey. 'Trinity Chapel, Conduit Street, Westminster'. *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* 39

king and the queen had a private musical establishment of singers and instrumentalists, quite separate from the Chapel Royal, who served the royal Catholic chapels in London, and it is possible that the organ was used at the camp in conjunction with some of these. The third camp, held in 1688, was a much smaller affair than the previous two, and there was ‘not so splendid entertainment nor consequently, the concourse so great’.¹⁵ Many of the facilities provided in the previous two years were not employed, and the chapels were among them, thus making the travelling organ redundant from the autumn of 1687.

The organ’s fate between then and its acquisition by the Marquess of Wharton is undocumented, but there are some facts that might suggest a hypothesis for what happened next. At Whitehall, the lavish new ‘Popish’ chapel was under construction to designs by Christopher Wren. In 1687, Renatus Harris was paid £500 as the first instalment for ‘making and buying’ a large new organ for the chapel,¹⁶ and by January 1688 the case was being finished by being gilded for a further £100.¹⁷ In April of that year the accounts recorded another payment to Harris:

To Rene Harris for fitting and preparing an Organ for the Chappell at Whitehall and for altering and preparing an Organ for the Chappell at Windsor, and removing that Organ from Winchester thither: £137 7s. 0d.¹⁸

(1995), 73-83.

¹⁵ Taylor, Stephen (Ed.). *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice IV: The Reign of James II* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2007), 285.

¹⁶ Ibid. 144 and 169.

¹⁷ Ibid. 179.

¹⁸ Ibid 180.

The wording is significant here: the Whitehall organ was being fitted and prepared rather than bought or made or altered. The main organ was already in place, so this was a smaller, secondary organ for the chapel, and it appears to have been a pre-existing instrument rather than one newly made. We do not know what the ‘fitting and preparing’ involved, but a possible clue may relate to one of the most unusual features of the travelling organ as illustrated in the 1848 Stowe catalogue, namely the sash window affixed to its front.

The use of sash windows on the facades of a number of late seventeenth-century organs was a phenomenon unique to London and to organs that were provided for buildings in which Christopher Wren was involved in the design or alterations.¹⁹ A notable example was the Bernard Smith organ for St Paul’s Cathedral (1696-7), but there were others, including Westminster Abbey (1700) and St Sepulchre-without-Newgate (1702). We also know that Harris’s main organ of 1687/8 made for the Whitehall Catholic chapel had sash windows: it was given to St James’s Piccadilly by Queen Mary in 1691 (where Thomas Tenison was now rector) and in a copy of Raphael Courteville’s *Select Psalms and Hymns for the use of the Parish-Church and Tabernacle of St James’s Church Westminster*, published in 1697, there are a set of hand-written ‘Rules for the Organ’ that include instructions for use of the sash windows at certain times.²⁰ Among them, Rule 1 specified ‘The Organ to be used, Every Sunday in the year: the sashes drawn up’, and Rule 7 stipulated that ‘On the 30th Jan: Ashwednesday; Good Friday: and all Other solemn fasting days; the Psalms to be play’d (With the sashes close) on the

¹⁹ Force, David. ‘Through a glass darkly: transparent evidence for the origins of the early swell?’ *JBIOS* 45 (2021), 8-28

²⁰ See Leaver, Robin. ‘Psalm Singing and Organ Regulation in a London Church c.1700’, *The Hymn* 35/1 (1984), 29–35.

plain Stops'. Whether this use of the sashes was purely symbolic or whether it had an appreciable effect on the output of the organ is not clear, but it does provide evidence that they were present when the organ was at St James's, and presumably also when it was at the Whitehall Catholic chapel. The reason was possibly the fact that work on the chapel was still ongoing when the organ was installed, and the windows were intended to keep out building dust. The fact that the travelling organ also had a sash window may suggest that, once redundant from its duties at the Hounslow portable chapel at the end of 1687, it became the instrument 'fitted and prepared' for Whitehall in April 1688. Small, consort-style secondary organs were a feature of the royal Catholic chapels and were used with small instrumental and vocal ensembles in the liturgy; at Whitehall, one was used in the gallery opposite the main organ.²¹ The drawings show that the upper sash was placed behind the lower, which rose to sit in front of the upper when it was raised. There is no sign of how it was kept in place, either by counterweights or some form of catch. It is possible that cords for counterweights passed vertically up into the roof of the case, and then descended into the body of the instrument over pulleys: such a system would have rendered the cords invisible when the organ was open, which is perhaps why they do not appear in the drawings.

Nothing is known about the origins of the travelling organ, but it was the Dallam/Harris dynasty that made the organs for the chapels of the post-Restoration Catholic queens and James II, whereas it was Bernard Smith who made most of the organs for the Chapel Royal establishment in this period. There is a close resemblance between the carvings seen on the 1924 photograph and the outer panels of the extant Compton Wynyates consort organ, which is known to be from the Dallam/Harris workshop.

²¹ See Force, David. *The Consort Organ and its Role in Seventeenth-Century English Music* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2026), Chapter 4.

Both organs bear sunflowers, roses and rosebuds, all of which were later to become symbols associated with Jacobite support for James II in exile.²² The sunflower in particular was a motif that was frequently found on Stuart court furnishings, and particularly those associated with the queens. The symbolism here was one of loyalty, the flower following the sun at all times. In the orbit of the Stuart court the loyalty was overtly offered to the king, but covertly often to Catholicism too.

There is little more one can presently say about this intriguing instrument. The uncertainty surrounding its buyer in 1924 and its subsequent disappearance from public view means that not only do its whereabouts remain in doubt, but also its very existence. It is strange that such a distinctive organ should have avoided all attention for over a century. Perhaps one day it might be found and will reveal its secrets at last.

²² See Fry, Carol, 'Acorns, Sunflowers and Moths', *Context* 117 (November 2020), 34-5. I am also grateful to Dr Susannah Lyon-Whaley of the University of York for her observations.

A NEW BOOK ABOUT HILL

Hannes Ludwig (born 1974) studied musicology and philosophy in Berlin and since 2008 has been Kantor of the Protestant church of Prenzlau, and organ expert for the Evangelical church region of Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz. He has published two books on organ building in the Uckermark, and has more recently developed a strong interest in the work of William Hill and his successors. It will be known to many readers that his enthusiasm and extraordinary energy resulted in the production in 2024 of a 3 CD compilation of both historic and new recordings of Hill organs entitled 'The Genius of Hill & Son'. In addition, he arranged to save the large organ from the closed Kilbarchan West Church near Paisley (Hill & Son 1904, III/38), and it has been exemplarily restored by Eberswalder Orgelbau in the impressive Marienkirche of Prenzlau, a project celebrated with a festival in May of this year. A new gallery was built for the instrument, and the pneumatic action and other historical features were restored with admirable attention to detail. Hannes has even commissioned a new gravestone for William Hill in Highgate Cemetery to replace the one destroyed by time and neglect.

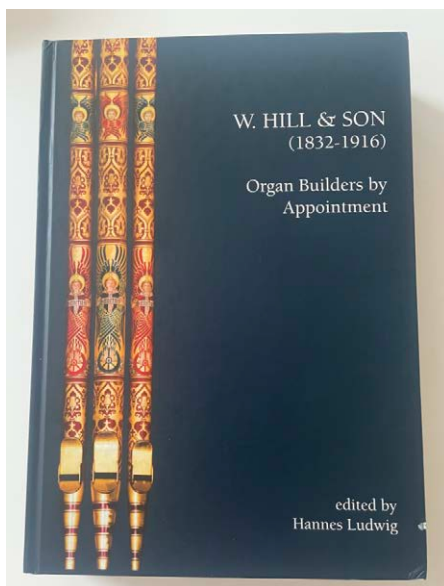
Now appears the first book about Hill, a collaborative publication, published to a high standard by Hannes himself with the support of the *Gesellschaft der Orgelfreunde*, whose 300th publication it is. It is a very large hardback of nearly 600 pages, and he has commissioned articles from, among others, Nicholas Thistlethwaite, John Maidment, Paul Hale and Andreas Mähnert (the organ-builder responsible for the restoration). It is available in German and in English and is richly illustrated in colour. For me some of the highlights are the many very large, crisp photographs of pipework, and Paul Hale's most interesting discussion of the English romantic

Echo organ, not a subject I have seen approached before. There is also a complete facsimile of the 1913 Hill trade publication ‘The Art of Organ Building’.

Highly recommended, and available from www.hills-angels.org/buch/. It costs about 100 Euros including the now-sadly high cost of postage, but is well worth it.

Hannes Ludwig (ed.), *W. Hill & Son (1832-1916) Organ Builders by Appointment*, (Prenzlau, the Author 2026)

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THE HOPE - JONES SCRAPBOOK

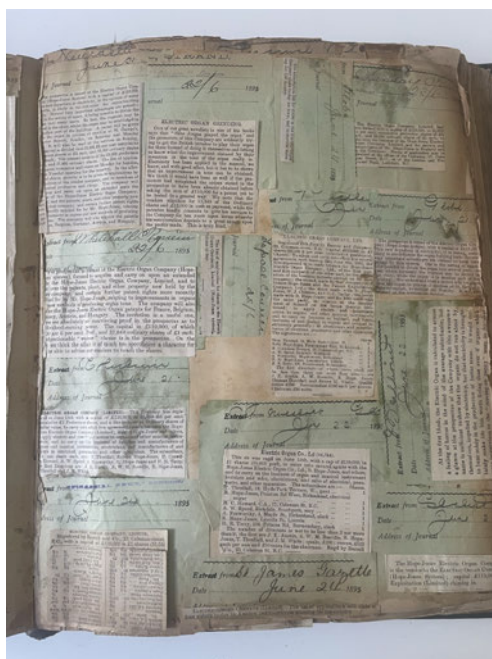
Paul Tindall

The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust has for the past two decades occupied the Sunday school of the former Patricroft Methodist Church in Eccles, near Salford. Here regular recitals took place on cinema organs by Compton and Wurlitzer, and there was a small but fascinating museum dedicated to the life and works of Robert Hope-Jones. Although audiences have remained good, the Trustees have reluctantly decided that because of a lack of new volunteers the Theatre Organ Heritage Centre must close, and its collections be dispersed.

The two large consoles from St Modwen's and St Paul's churches, Burton-upon-Trent are to be moved to Carl Heslop's East Midlands Organ Museum in Saxby near Melton Mowbray. There is also quite a lot of Hope-Jones pipework from St Paul's and other material, which will also go there. Very generously, the Trustees have decided to pass the Hope-Jones Scrapbook to the British Organ Archive, and we have now taken possession of it. It was acquired by LTOT from descendants of the family, and is an enormous volume, entitled 'Electric Organ and Testimonials'. In it, Robert Hope-Jones pasted every press comment he (and later a cuttings agency) could find about his activities, from April 1890 until the completion of the Worcester organ in 1896. Interestingly, there is a great deal of comment from business sources in 1895 saying that they felt the newly re-financed company of that year ('The Electric Organ Company') was a bad risk.

This makes up about three quarters of the volume. The remainder is of autograph letters from a wide variety of organists and organ-builders, mostly dating from 1891, when

Hope-Jones invited everyone he could think of to visit the organ at St John's, Birkenhead, rebuilt under his direction. All the writers are laudatory, with the exception of F.A. Brassey Salt of Liverpool, who went to the lengths of publishing a leaflet in February 1896 pointing out that he had changed his mind since a short positive letter of five years earlier. It is interesting to note the variety of the great and the good of the organ world who provided unstinting praise, including T.H. Collinson of St Mary's, Edinburgh, D. J. Wood (Exeter), Harry Perrin, then at Coventry, later Canterbury, Haydn Keeton of Peterborough (who was a shareholder), Walter Alcock, Alfred Hollins and J. Varley Roberts. W. John Reynolds of St Michael, Cornhill was perhaps unaware of the painful brush with electric action which the church had already suffered in 1868. BIOS is extremely grateful that the Trustees have passed this unique document into our care.



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 is now available on the college's website: www.gonvilleandcaiuschoir.com. BIOS members and others will be most welcome.

FRONT AND BACK COVERS

This is the organ case in Sacred Trinity, Salford, the oldest of the town's churches, built in 1634 and mostly rebuilt in 1752–53. The *Manchester Mercury* of 27 July 1790 advertises the opening of an organ by 'John Schultz of London' on the 9th August, and this is probably the case from it. Schultz is first found in Soho in 1782, but while there built several organs in the 1790s for the Manchester area. Richard Parker, the local organ-builder, who lived in Chapel Street, where Sacred Trinity stands, had retired by 1794 and probably earlier. Schultz may formerly have been one of Snetzler's workmen, and he eventually moved to Liverpool late in 1798, where his work is last noted in 1813.

It's interesting to compare it with the case depicted on the back cover. This was opened at St Peter, Chester in 1821 (*Chester Courant*, 17 April), and was advertised from there in 1858 (*Chester Chronicle*, 11 August), when it had eight stops and was said to be by England. It may have been one of the organs advertised in 1819 from the bankrupt estate of William Nicholls, England's successor. It migrated to Saltney Methodist church, and the case was saved from there by Martin Renshaw and David Shuker, who have restored the mutilated tower.



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.