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THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ORGAN STUDIES

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[redacted]

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

Front cover: Illustration is of Holdich's now-lost organ for St Oswald's Malpas, Cheshire. - see pages 87 and 99.

Back cover: The organ of St James Garlickhythe in the City (1718) - see p. 104

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EDITORIAL

When I first came across BIOS in the form of a copy its *Journal* in the Open University library at Milton Keynes almost 25 years ago I assumed that our founding fathers and mothers had searched every nook and cranny for records of historic organs and their builders. It certainly never occurred to me that I could uncover anything new of consequence, especially as I entered the field at a relatively late stage of my life. It was only when I was working with the late Rodney Matthews on the publication of a book based on his PhD thesis on the life and work of George Maydwell Holdich that I came to see that databases such as the British Newspaper Archive could be productively mined for missing information on nineteenth-century organs. After all we knew that Holdich's business records had been lost in a skip, didn't we? Well, perhaps the bulk of the core business records had indeed been lost but the accidents of history and chance encounters do sometimes work in our favour and a 'scrapbook' of Holdich's early work has recently come to light. This unique collections of items, including some exquisite watercolours of organ cases apparently painted by Holdich himself, has been acquired by BIOS (see cover and p. 90).

As our Golden Anniversary approaches it is clear that not all the work has been done, or uncovered, on the history of the organ in the United Kingdom - there is still plenty left to do by the new and next generations of organ enthusiasts.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Stephen Alliss, elected as Membership Secretary at the 2024 AGM regrettably had to relinquish the role. We are grateful to David Shepherd for looking after the data files and in due course a new Membership Secretary will need to be nominated and voted into office. In the meanwhile, the Chairman has asked Melanie Plumley to be "Acting Membership Secretary". Mel occupied the Membership role for 13 years until 2015 and her contact details are in the inside front cover. She will be glad if the larger than desirable group of members who have not yet paid their 2024 subscriptions would do so urgently. If you aren't sure whether you've paid, get in touch, though you might already have heard from her! Card payments can be made via the BIOS website and bank transfers are fine too, as are posted cheques. Subscriptions for 2025 will also become due on 1st January and prompt payments are extremely helpful.

Mel Plumley (Acting Membership Secretary)

FROM THE CHAIR

The front cover of this edition of the Reporter shows a watercolour of an organ made by George Maydwell Holdich (1816-1896). It was for '[St Oswald's'] Malpas, Cheshire', and was opened 21st November 1841. It had one row of keys, a general swell, key-compass GG to F, ten stops up to Sesquialtera, with Trumpet. (See NPOR N04357). The image was painted by Holdich himself and is one of a series of eighteen such illustrations contained in an album.

I am delighted to announce that BIOS has purchased this material for the British Organ Archive. More details of this remarkable acquisition are given on p. 99 of this issue.

The last months have seen a series of developments in the Institute's affairs and I am pleased to be able to bring you the latest information.

BIOS has a new website, which continues to be found at **https://www.bios.org.uk.** The site has been given a fresh look and a number of areas have undergone development in order to look better across digital platforms. We now have a formal contractual arrangement with Codeveloped Ltd to look after the website, and, as a consequence, BIOS now owns the domain name and the underlying open source application code for its website. I should like to record BIOS's thanks to Doug Levey, who has looked after the BIOS website for many years.

The site has links to BIOS's wide-ranging resources, including, of course, the frequently visited National Pipe Organ Register. The extent of the material in the Historic Sound Archive is worth a visit, as well as the latest news from the Historic Listing Scheme and Historic Organs at Risk Register. There are also links to the British Organ Archive, the Freeman Collection and the *Directory of British Organ Builders.* If you have not had a look at the website for a while you might like to refresh your acquaintance with the section on Guidance, which offers thoughts on a general approach to Care and Conservation alongside advice on pipework, console and fittings. David Wickens's valuable material entitled *Pipe Markings* can also be accessed. There's an interesting guide to Organ Registrations common in the eighteenth century, especially useful given the range of publications of English organ music from the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (e.g. Fitzjohn Music Publications). *Sound Advice* (care of your pipe organ) continues to be available, plus the *Guide to Grants,* and the Video Guide to the Organ by Tom Bell and Richard Brasier.

These areas of BIOS's work were, of course, available through the old website. So, what's different? Publications have become a major part of BIOS's offerings,

and it is this section of the website that has undergone an overhaul with further development anticipated. You can purchase copies of BIOS's publications, including back copies of the Journal, many of which are now available digitally as well as in hard copy. There is a range of other books which have been drawn together from other publishers to help BIOS to become the 'go-to' site for such items. The digitisation of the Reporter has been a huge piece of work - and although there are some minor glitches still to iron out, this work means that many back copies of this newsletter and magazine can now be accessed and searched. We are keen to know how you get on with the website which we hope you will agree is a firm foundation to engage existing and new audiences. Please get in touch with your feedback.

The Golden Jubilee Trail

As we head towards BIOS's Golden Jubilee in 2026, a series of new books will help mark 50 years of BIOS's work. We eagerly anticipate Gerry Sumner's long-awaited study *Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, Organ Builder of Paris: The British Connections*. This book is due for publication next year and we hope to announce more about this soon. As the restoration and reinstallation of the 1877/1893 Cavaillé-Coll organ in Manchester Town Hall draws ever closer, this book is a timely addition to BIOS's work.

Further along the pipeline is *The Biographical Dictionary of British Organ-builders*. This is a new and comprehensive encyclopaedia of the English Organ under the editorship of Nicholas Thistlethwaite. It will contain entries on a wide range of topics authored by leading scholars.

What makes a 'Father' Willis organ of (say) the 1870s sound so different from examples by Hill & Son or T.C. Lewis from a similar period? My study, *The Tonal Architecture and Music of English Organ* is now being prepared for publication. It investigates the relationship between the way the sound of the English Organ has changed over the centuries, alongside the development of native repertoire. There is a symbiotic relationship between the organ and its music which is perhaps vested in the question posed by the organologist Gustav Fock: 'which came first, the chicken or the egg?" This three-volume work explores how tonal architecture has changed over time, with specific reference to the organ's repertoire and how it has affected English organ-building and *vice versa*.

Readers will be interested to know that BIOS is in possession of a manuscript by Dominic Gwynn (1953-2024). It is hoped that this work will join the list of BIOS publications in due course. Some of these new books will be available in time for the Golden Jubilee residential conference entitled *The Global British*

Organ which will be held in Oxford in mid-April, 2026. We hope to have guest speakers from around the world. Please make sure your diary is free for this momentous event.

Reporter articles

I have been in contact with a number of BIOS members to ask whether they might contribute short pieces to the Reporter. I am aware that there are several people currently researching various topics. We would be delighted to hear of what you are doing and to bring to attention any material that you think would be of interest to readers.

We would also be interested to hear from any organ-builders who have recently undertaken restoration or conservation work. Please send any potential articles to the editor, David Shuker (**info@signofthepipe.com**).

Membership matters

We have had a slight glitch with such matters in recent times and I am pleased to say that David Shepherd initially stepped into the breach, followed by Melanie Plumley, who has agreed to take on the role of Acting Membership Secretary.

If you have been able to or being reminded to pay your subscription, please attend to this matter as soon as possible. The Membership section of the new website enables new members to join; we hope to launch a log-in page for members in the coming months. In the interim, please email **membership@bios.org.uk** to update your subscriptions.

Barbara Owen (1933-1924)

As the Reporter goes to press, readers will be saddened to hear of the death of Barbara Owen at the age of 91. She was the founder of the Organ Historical Society in 1956 and its president for many years. She was librarian of the Organ Library of the American Guild of Organists at Boston University in 1985, held various other positions in the Guild and wrote, several important books, her most recent being *Pioneers in American Music 1860-1920* - see **https://ohscatalog.org/#f92b/fullscreen/product/m=and&q=barbara+owen** for further information. The OHS's website records: '*At one or another stage over a remarkable seven decades she was builder, restorer, author, researcher, advocate, consultant, musician, editor, lecturer, hymn writer, librarian, and mentor.*'

William McVicker

FROM THE SECRETARY

BIOS Council (September 2024)

BIOS Council met on Saturday 21 September 2024. Nine members of Council were present. John Norman (Webmaster) also attended.

Council received Reports and from them agreed/noted the following:

- The Golden Jubilee *Biographical Dictionary of Organ Builders* was making progress and publication should be achieved in 2026.
- Plans were underway to hold a 50th Anniversary Residential Conference in April 2026 at an Oxford College.
- A list of follow-up actions derived from the earlier brainstorming (using SWOT analysis) was considered. The main actions were:

  o Spend more financial resources particularly on publications, HOSA and publicity

  o Explore viability of sponsoring a postgraduate studentship.

  o Find out what new joiners expect from BIOS and attempt to fulfil it, and, encourage individual members to seek out just one new joiner.

  o Explore potential synergies in working with meetings organised by other organ or music-based societies.

  o Establish a Publications Team to support the Publications Officer, and, make more of our print output digital.

  o Establish a log of outcomes to monitor effect of casework intervention.

  o Explore potential for achieving greater coverage in the listing of historic organs including upgrading unlisted Certificates and/or pursuing themed topics to drive a wider campaign of awareness.

  o Move to making NPOR coverage more proactive e.g. asking to IBO to encourage sharing by firms of their records, and, asking the membership to update and improve information for organs in their immediate vicinity.

- o Rethink size and appearance of advertisements in organ journals and magazines, do more publicity electronically and explore scope for reciprocal advertising with other organisations.
- o Develop new improved website, including paywall for members.
- o Achieve fuller engagement, greater visibility and improved day-to-day working arrangements with the other amenity societies and the wider heritage sector.
- o Seek funding for digitisation of material deposited in the British Organ Archive.
- o Achieve improved coverage of HOSA recordings.
- o Draw up of a strategy for achieving a more regular presence on social media.

- A provisionally costed proposal for BIOS to fund a postgraduate student to research performance practice in 17th and 18th century English organ was considered and the Chairman was invited to bring to the next meeting a fully-worked up proposal.
- It was understood that Adlington Hall had been bought by the British professional boxer, Tyson Fury and the Chairman would write to him drawing attention to the importance of the organ.
- Membership subscriptions were around the level to be expected this year to date and investment income was ahead of last year.
- Stephen Alliss had resigned from his role as Membership Secretary and David Shepherd had agreed to resume as Membership Secretary as a temporary stop-gap measure pending the appointment of a permanent successor.
- A number of members had accepted the invitation from the IBO and joined their Conference at the Guards' Chapel on Saturday 17 August 2024 to see and hear the new Harrison & Harrison organ.
- JBIOS 48, 2024 (Editor, Andrew Hayden) was ready to go to the printers and 3 books were in preparation for publication.
- Since the publications area of BIOS was becoming increasingly busy, David Force would be taking over as Chief Editor of JBIOS from 2025

and options were being explored of spreading the workload in the book publication area.

- On the recommendations of the Listing Committee, Council approved the listing of four organs.
- Council agreed an addition to the Historic Organs at Risk Register.
- The transfer of hosting and technical maintenance of the NPOR from the RCO's provider to Codeveloped Ltd (Director: Matt Dixon) had been completed satisfactorily.
- Work was ongoing on the development of a new BIOS website.
- Attempts were being made to establish which grant making bodies supported digitisation of archive material.
- The University organ in Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge had been recorded and added to the HOSA YouTube channel.

BIOS Council meets next on Saturday 18 January 2025.

HISTORIC ORGANS AT RISK REGISTER

Since the last entry in the *Reporter*, the organs in the Royal Sea Bathing Hospital in Margate, and in Devoran Methodist Chapel have been removed from the Register.

The organ in Kelton Church, Dumfries and Galloway (R00317) was added to the Register in September 2024.

There are currently eight organs on the Register:

Cambridge, St Andrew	April 2017
Devizes St Mary	May 2018
Tollington Park, St Mark	June 2019
Ipswich, St Clement's Congregational church	October 2019
Edge Hill, St Mary/All Saints	September 2020
Cornholme, St Michael and all Angels	January 2022
South Pickenham, All Saints	April 2024
Kelton Church	September 2024

Jonathan Goodchild

NEWS from PUBLICATIONS

I am pleased to announce that from 2025, Dr David Force will be taking over as Executive Editor of the BIOS *Journal.* Individual guest editors of each volume will still be sought, as usual. I will remain Publications Officer with general oversight of the *Journal* and other publications, but my concentration will now be with the occasional book publications. Proposals for *Journal* articles for the time being can still be sent to publications@bios.org.uk.

Welcome, David, and very many thanks!

Katie Pardee, Publications Officer



Dr David Force. David read music as an organ scholar at the University of Durham; he subsequently gained an MA with distinction in musicology and a PhD in English domestic music of the 17th century. David taught for 34 years as a Head of Academic Music and Director of Music in independent schools in Cumbria, East Sussex and Kent. He is now a Visiting Fellow in music at the Open University and has written many journal articles on topics relating to 17th century music. He is the author of the book *The Consort Organ and its Role in Seventeenth-Century Ensemble Music* (Ashgate Historical Keyboard Series, forthcoming 2025). He is an English language editor for the Centro Studi Opera Omnia Boccherini and the Ut Orpheus Edizioni in Italy, and for the Brepols publishing house in Belgium. He works as a freelance organist and continuo keyboard player and directs the Mayfield Consort.

HISTORIC ORGANS LISTING SCHEME

Grade I organs are of exceptional interest
Grade II* organs are particularly important and of more than special interest
Grade II organs are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them

The following organs were awarded Historic Organ Certificates at the BIOS Council meeting on 21 September 2024

Location	Builder and Date	Comments	Grade
Disley, St Mary the Virgin	Renn, 1836, Young 1882	An important organ built by Samuel Renn of Manchester in 1836 containing later work by Alexander Young, also of that city, retaining probably the most complete example of a Great division by Renn.	II*
Langbank Parish Church	Lewis & Co, 1903	A rare survivor of the work of Lewis & Co Ltd of London, unusual for its date (1903) in having mechanical action to the manuals, and in an area where many pipe organs have been lost in recent years.	II
St Newlyn East, St Newlyna	Brewer & Co, 1893	A very fine organ from 1893 by Brewer & Co of Truro that survives in original condition in the church for which it was built, and one of very few such instruments remaining.	II*
Falinge, St Edmund	Hill, 1873	An early example of the output of Thomas Hill dating from 1873, substantially intact tonally and retaining the original divided layout of casework and mechanisms.	II*

Future submission date: 09.00 on 29 November 2024

Jeffery Williams



St Newlyn East, St Newlyna
(Brewer & Co., 1893) II*
Photo: Jeffrey Williams

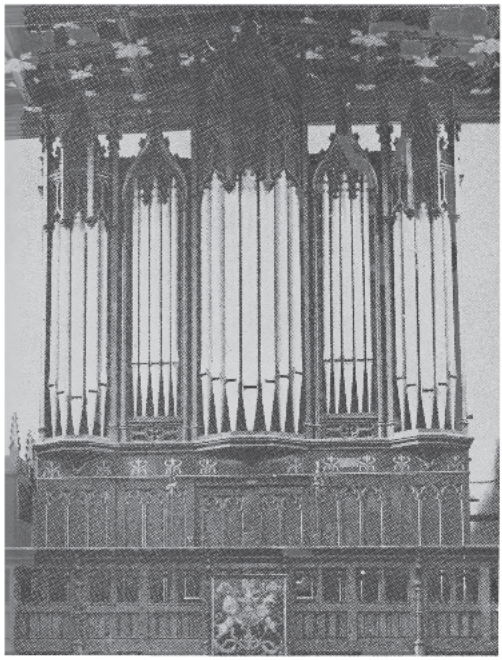


Falinge, St Edmund (Hill 1873) II*
Photo: Howard Bowden

HOLS GALLERY



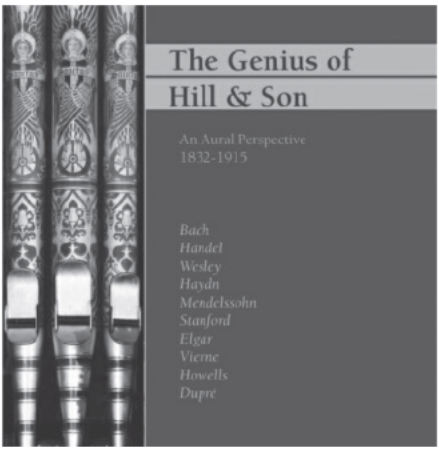
Langbank PC (Lewis & Co. 1903) II
Photo: NPOR



Disley, St Mary (Renn 1836) II*
Photo: © Michael Sayer

THE GENIUS OF HILL & SON: AN AURAL PERSPECTIVE, 1832-1915

This is a 3-CD collection of recordings of twenty organs built by the Hill firm between 1832 and 1915. The compiler is Hannes Ludwig, a German organist, who was involved in acquiring the redundant 3-manual Hill & Son organ (1904) from the West Parish Church, Kilbarchan for his church in Prenzlau where it will shortly be installed. Herr Ludwig has become a keen enthusiast for the work of the Hill firm, and this compilation is one of the outcomes.



The recordings include recent performances by Hannes Ludwig on the organs at Warwick Bridge (1843) and Ingrave (1856), Robert Mingay Smith at St Mary-at-Hill, London (1849), Jonathan Scott at the Holy Name, Manchester (1871), Chris Bragg at St Modan, Rosneath (1873), David Stevens at All Saints, Hove (1905) and Martin Kemp at All Hallows, Gospel Oak (1915). There are also recordings of a number of Hill organs in Australia, including Sydney Town Hall, and historic recordings of the Queen's Hall, London, Westminster Abbey and Westminster Central Hall.

The collection was sponsored by The Organ Historical Trust of Australia (OHTA), and the substantial accompanying booklet includes an Introduction by BIOS's Hon. President. Proceeds from the sale of the set will go towards the cost of restoring William Hill's headstone.

Orders can be placed via Hannes Ludwig's website:
www.hills-angels.org

William Hill's headstone is located in an overgrown corner of Highgate cemetery and the name is still visible (see right) but without some conservation could soon become lost.



MEETING REPORT - THE PIPE ORGAN AS A SITE FOR MUSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

A Royal Musical Association study day hosted by and in collaboration with City, University of London

Friday 6 September 2024

John Forster (City, University of London) - conference organiser

Andrew McCrea (Royal College of Organists)

Katharine Pardee (University of Oxford and BIOS)

Stephen Cottrell (City, University of London)

This day-long conference was organised by PhD candidate (and BIOS member) John Forster. Papers covered innovations in organbuilding and music from the medieval period through the nineteenth century and into the present day, and were given by researchers, organbuilders, and performing musicians. A number of BIOS members participated both as audience members and as presenters. Hans Fidom of the Orgelpark in Amsterdam delivered the keynote speech, and the day culminated in a performance at St John the Evangelist, Duncan Terrace, Islington.

The focus of this conference invited a wide variety of papers. Martin Renshaw and Victoria Harding discussed their work in investigating the earliest organs in England in their paper '*Organs in the "Light Ages*"', while unusual experimental organ-based instruments in the early 20th century were the topic of a paper given by Elisabeth Salverda ('*Volumes of Air, from the Organ to the Orphéal and Ocléal: Georges Cloetens' Early-20th Century Search to Collapse Space*'). Owen Woods looked at innovations in pipe voicing in the late nineteenth century ('*The Leathered Lip: Tonal Innovation in British Organ Building*'), and Cassian Southwick explored the use of modern technology in the economical design of 21st-century organs ('*Pitting Innovation against Financial Constraint in Construction of New Pipe Organs*'). Martin White explored the importance of the design of player/instrument interface, using his background in information science as a jumping-off point ('*Optimising the Player-Instrument Interface*'); and Tony Decap and Seppe Verbist brought a set of pipes and a keyboard to demonstrate their innovation called the '*smARTvalve*', which allows flexible expression on individual notes, depending on the touch of the player--sounds like a good tracker action!--but extends into the realm of vibrato, dynamic range, and so on.

The afternoon began with a keynote address by Hans Fidom of the Orgelpark in Amsterdam, called '*Rethinking the Organ from the Ground Up: Hyperorgans*'. Hans's talk directly addressed the critical problem of church closings and the loss of historic pipe organs. He urged lovers of these historic instruments to think

beyond church and concert music and reach out to new audiences, by exploring different ways of making music besides playing the 'right' music the 'right' way on the 'right' organ. His words, followed by several talks by musicians who are actually making this new music on historic organs, opened my eyes to an entirely new way of looking at, listening to, and playing the organ. Following Hans's talk, further papers and performances were given by Lauren Redhead ('*Developing Live-Interactive Approaches to new Music for Organ and Electronics through Collaboration*'; she also performed at the closing concert), Kjel Sidloski, who called in from Canada to give his paper on '*Contemporary Perspectives on the Hyperorgan: Designing, Playing, and Writing for an Augmented Casavant Frères Pipe Organ*'; and Robert Sholl and Justin Paterson ('*Les Ombres du Fantôme: Improvisation, Recording, Production in Artistic Research*'). As mentioned above, the day concluded with a beautiful and thought-provoking concert featuring Lauren Redhead and Alistair Zaldua on the Walker organ at St John the Evangelist, Islington.

One of the first lightbulbs (to use an antiquated concept) that went off in my head during the course of the day was the link between the concepts Hans Fidom described, the music we heard, and a particular kind of organ music that utterly entranced me back in the 1980s and early 1990s in New York: the organ improvisations by Paul Halley at the Cathedral of St John the Divine, which often were in collaboration with the Paul Winter Consort. This music incorporated classical, jazz, and world music, along with voices from nature: whales, seals, wolves. In the massive acoustic of the cathedral, on the huge historic Aeolian-Skinner organ, the impression was unforgettable. Yet my love for this music did not erase my passion for historic performance practice and early repertoire. Indeed, Hans's approach does not in any way advocate for this new way of making music to replace the 'old' way, and there is no reason to be concerned that early music and historic performance practice will disappear because of it. Hans, and the others, are interested in new ways of looking at old instruments, and all were explicit in their high regard and respect for fine historic organs, and their role in these new concepts of music-making.

BIOS members concerned about the future of historic pipe organs will be interested to hear that this conference was well attended by young and old, most of whom were very much not under the BIOS umbrella. If the mandate of BIOS is in the preservation of historic British pipe organs and the dissemination of interest and awareness of them, it is clear that we need to open our minds to all kinds of music-making on those instruments-even if it is not what we are accustomed to.

Hearty congratulations to John Forster for putting this stimulating and interesting conference together.

Katie Pardee

GEORGE MAYDWELL HOLDICH (1816-1896) AND HIS BOOK OF WATERCOLOURS

WILLIAM MCVICKER

Whilst visiting the Leeds area earlier this year I got to know the organ-builder Antony Spink (https://www.jmspinkorganbuilders.co.uk). He asked me if I knew whether Holdich had exported an organ to Mount Zion in Jerusalem. I replied that I had seen some information in Rodney Matthews's work and that I would look up further details, which I soon did. Antony then told me that he had image of the instrument concerned and promptly showed it to me. I was, naturally, intrigued and asked where this image came from. Antony revealed that he was in possession of a book by Holdich which contained watercolours from the 1840s. I asked whether it would be possible to see this album, and, when I returned to Leeds in May this year, Antony kindly let me have a closer look at it. Apparently created by Holdich himself, this album has been in private hands since the late nineteenth century. It provides a wealth of new information relating to the early period of Holdich's work.

BIOS commissioned Charles Warren to study the book in more detail and estimate its value. In addition to being an organist, Charles specialises in rare and antiquarian books and music (charleswarrenmusic.co.uk).

This album assessed on Thursday 8th August 2024, is of ephemera relating to the work and life of Holdich, including specifications, watercolours and letters, etc. The watercolours are finely executed, showing interesting detail. They cover the period 1838 to 1845. It is not clear exactly what the book was used for, but it seems most likely that Holdich used it as part of his sales pitch, showing potential customers the nature of his work. As the paintings do not continue beyond 1845, Holdich evidently then used the volume as a repository for various documents and publications relating to his instruments.

After appropriate negotiation, BIOS has purchased this album for the British Organ Archive. With regard to the content, it is worth quoting from Charles Warren's physical description of the album.

'*Folio. Half leather and marbled boards with gilt bands, worn, particularly to spine which is torn at head. As issued the book comprises circa. 100 blank leaves, with items then either pasted or loosely inserted within.*

Holdich business card (12 Greek Street) pasted to front endpaper, and loosely inserted handwritten list of organs (from 1838-1845), with numbers, 'where placed' and 'when opened'. Pages from the beginning are numbered to the top right of rectos, with a total of eighteen watercolours of organ cases, on card, either pasted or inserted, presumably corresponding to the handwritten list (not every numbered page

has a watercolour). The remainder of the book contains either pasted or inserted ephemera of various kinds, including the following:

1. 25 specifications, illustrations or programmes for inaugural concerts of Holdich organs.

2. A newspaper clipping [from The Leader] *dated 23rd August 1851, describing the organs at the Great Exhibition, including the one by Holdich.*

3. Handwritten descriptions of the organs at St Paul's Cathedral, London, Great St Andrew's, Cambridge, St James' Palace, London, and Haarlem, the latter with a discussion of the role of the 32ft.

4. A letter thanking Holdich for his work on an organ in Wiltshire, dated July 24th 1842.

5. Circulars listing Holdich's organs, dated Jan 1846 and 1860, and an undated circular (possibly early 1850s).

6. Print of "Father" Bernard Smith, organ-builder.

7. A 'removal of residence' notice.

8. Another business card from premises in Lambeth.

9. Correspondence dated 22nd April 1960 from A. Claypole, organ builder, concerning the provenance of the book, and Holdich's organs more generally.'

It was unclear what had happened to Holdich's business papers and there was a widespread assumption to that they had simply disappeared. The book came into the possession of the Spink family through their acquisition of the organ-building business of A. Claypole of Woodston, Peterborough. According to the letter, it was passed to the firm by Holdich's granddaughter (or great granddaughter?) at the time that Claypole moved the organ 'from her Hall' to Laxton Parish Church.

Holdich's handwritten list of organs built between 1838 and 1845 doubles the number of instruments from this period listed in Rodney Matthews's book: *A Reluctant Convert* … (West Malling: At the Sign of the Pipe, 2013), which is available through the BIOS website.

It is my intention to ask Council to consider publishing a facsimile of this album - especially because the fine watercolours are worth seeing. They could be reviewed against the specifications of each instrument and a survey undertaken in order to establish whether they are extant.

We are extremely grateful to Antony Spink for agreeing to part with this family heirloom. Its acquisition for the BOA will ensure its survival. In view of the fact that this document was unknown until recently, one can't help wondering what other material lurks in our organ-builders' archives.

JOHN KNOPPELL (c. 1672-1745)

PAUL TINDALL

Bernard Smith, the Queen's Organ Maker, died in 1708, and the post passed to his son-in-law and successor Christopher Shrider (died 1751, but he retired in favour of his son Christopher junior in 1740). The post was no doubt lucrative in ways that are now unrecorded, but for whatever reason, Shrider gives the impression of being somewhat less active than his master as a builder of new organs. The only instruments which can be attributed to him with confidence are the Chapels Royal at St James's (1710) and Hampton Court (1712), St Mary, Whitechapel (1715), All Hallows, Bread Street (1718), the Oxford Chapel, Marylebone (1723) and St Martin-in-the-Fields (1726, a Royal gift). He also made the organs of St Alban Wood Street (1729) and Westminster Abbey (1729-30), but these were in collaboration with the young and vigorous Abraham Jordan.

As a result of this diminished activity, it is thought that there was an exodus of workmen from Smith and Shrider's workshop, especially to Jordan's expanding business. Smith's nephews Christian and Gerard were already working independently well before their uncle's death. William Stephens, mentioned as Smith's employee in 1698,[1] and 1699,[2] was a tenant of Jordan's in 1704. The will[3] of Thomas Friend (died 1749) leaves money to 'My Master' Abraham Jordan, but also to 'My Master Mr Shrider,' and to members of the Knight family, one at least of whom was apprenticed to Bernard Smith. When he made his will, Friend was living in the parish of St John Baptist Walbrook, the location of Jordan junior's house and workshop after 1731.

Two organ builders with German names seem very likely to have come from the Smith/Shrider workshop. One was Johann Ulrich Killingburgh (d 1739), who is first visible in 1730 and was active in East Anglia. The other was John Knoppell, the subject of this paper, who is a witness in the same court case of 1698 that involves William Stephens, where Knoppell implies that he also works for Smith, and has done so for four years, since he was about 22 years old.

Knoppell's first known appearance on his own is in the vestry minutes of St Nicholas Deptford in 1709,[4] where the church was rebuilt in 1696, and an organ provided then by Smith, the case of which survived until the second world war.

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[1] National Archives, PRO C24/1207/101; Dean & Chapter of Christ Church Dublin v. Bernard Smith, 18 January 1698, kindly transcribed and supplied by Dominic Gwynn

[2] Jeffery, Joan, 'The 17th and 18th Century Quire Organ in Canterbury Cathedral: Some New Observations,' *The Organ Yearbook* Volume XXVII (1997), 14

[3] PROB 11/767/494

[4] I am very grateful to Claire Randall, who first transcribed and alerted me to these entries, found in the course of her research into William Richardson (d. 1731), organist of Deptford, and his brother Pelham Richardson, London Archives P78?NIC/044, Vestry Minutes 1628-1797.

Knoppell's contribution was this, and the document also appears to say that some stops were 'prepared for' by Smith: an early example.

> At the Publick Meeting held in Vestry the 15th day of March Anno Dom 1709 We the Inhabitants and Feoffees of this Parish Whose Names and [?] are Written Down on Behalf of our selves and other Inhabitants of ye Parish Order and Agree That ye [Deformity?] of ye Church be forthwith Repaired and Amended And that Ye Money Expended in Repairing ye Same shall paid and moved to ye Church Wardens and their Successors for ye time being in ye Book of Accts for ye Parish And We do offer that Order and Agree That ye Organ of ye Parish Church be forthwith Repaired Amended and Cleaned and That ye ffour following Stops of Pipes be added to ye Said Organ according to ye first Design when ye Same was first made and Sett up (Vizt) First a Trumpett of Mettle 2. a Cromorne of Mettle 3. A Sesquialter of Mettle Three Ranks 4th a fflagelett of Mettle and ye Stops Drawn in halfe throughout ye Whole Organ and ye Cornett Amended Which Work Was Due. Order and Agree That Johan Knoppell of St. James Westm[inster] Organmaker Do Perform ffinish by Articles of Agreement And That ye said Church Wardens and their Successors for ye Time being Do pay for ye Same Work ye Sum of One hundred Sixty and Five Pounds And That a Rate be made for ye Repair of ye Church Organ for ye Ensuing year.
>
> Geo. Stanhope DD Vicar Jerome Collins/ H.Humphrey [Church Wardens]

Knoppell was later paid at Deptford for maintenance at least 1731-42:[5] earlier accounts are not available.

His name, like Killingburgh's, provided a challenge to English record keepers; appearing in various translations, such as 'Conoble' or 'Knople,' but he seems to have worked modestly, yet continuously. In 1711 he was at St Alfege, Greenwich,[6] probably dismantling the organ from the church, which had collapsed in the previous year. In 1713 he began a connection with Canterbury Cathedral,[7] where Smith and Shrider had worked until at least 1704. He replaced the Trumpet and Principal stops in 1713 for £120, made an undated proposal, (probably of 1714) for an Eccho ,'with or without swelling,' and proposed to move the organ onto the screen in 1733. The next builder to be paid in the accounts was Richard Bridge in 1746, the year after Knoppell's death. A connection would be that the Dean from 1704, Dr George Stanhope, was also Vicar of Deptford 1702-1728. He was a Royal Chaplain from 1694, so in a position to know the King's (and Queen's) Organ Makers.

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[5] Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust, Charlton: Deptford 1.M.3.3 Churchwardens Account Book 1727-1760.

[6] *BIOS Reporter* Volume 1 No. 3 (July 1977), 7

[7] Jeffery, op. cit.

Further repairs are recorded at St Katherine-by-the-Tower (1714)[8] and the Hamburg Lutheran Church in the City of London (1724 and 1733, succeeding Shrider).[9] The attendance on foreign congregations was an obvious fit, and Knoppell (or 'Cnobel') is also found at the German Lutheran Church in the Savoy, in 1712 in direct succession to Shrider, and 1738-44.[10] Another presumed connection with Shrider was in 1734, when Knoppell was paid £32 to set up an organ in the French Chapel at St James's Palace,[11] for the wedding of the Princess Royal and the Prince of Orange, for which Handel wrote an anthem, *This is the day which the Lord hath made*, HWV 262. Normally, Shrider erected temporary organs of this nature.

There are several other traces of Knoppell's activity.

Hackney.[12] In January 1714 Knoppell signed articles for the rebuilding of the organ of 1666 which was probably built by Ralph Dallam. He was to receive £90, which was to include seven years of free maintenance. In 1722 he was paid £8 for repairs and £3 a year in future, and in 1724 added a Sesquialtera for 12 Guineas. In December 1731 there were complaints about his work, to which he replied that the organ was 'very foul and cannot be kept in tune,' after which he was allowed to clean it for two Guineas.

St Paul, Covent Garden.[13] Tenders were received in early 1719 from Mr [John?] Harris, Knoppell, Gerard Smith, Christian Smith and Christopher Shrider, but in the event Jordan built the organ in 1726.

St Giles-in-the-Fields.[14] The church was rebuilt in 1730-34, and in late 1733 the vestry ordered 'that Mr Knople & Smith Organ Builders do prepare an Estimate' for setting the old organ up again. The implication, since Gerard Smith received the contract in November, is that there were two estimates, rather than a partnership, despite slight uncertainty in the wording. The separate estimates at Covent Garden support this.

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[8] Plumley, Nicholas, *The Organs of the City of London,* (Oxford, Positif Press 1996), 173

[9] ibid, 207

[10] Westminster Archives (WA), 90/4/a (accounts 1694-1717) and 90/4/b (1736-63). The intervening book is lost.

[11] Burrows, Donald, *Handel and the English Chapel Royal,* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 2005), 517-8, 612. The 'French Chapel' was the Inigo Jones building built in 1623-25, known later as the German Chapel, and now the Queen's Chapel (still).

[12] Tindall, Paul, 'Carriage from Hackney,' *BIOS Reporter* Volume XXXII No. 1 (January 2008), 41-46

[13] WA, H 803. St Paul Covent Garden Vestry Minutes, 1706-1723

[14] Thistlethwaite, Nicholas, *The Organ of St Giles-in-the-Fields*, London, (Oxford, Positif Press 2008), 12

Durham Cathedral.[15] Knoppell was paid 5 Guineas in 1738 repairs to the Smith organ. There were also anonymous payments in 1711 (£120) and 1713 (£20), and these may possibly have been to him as well, but there is no evidence.

New organ contracts were evidently harder to come by in the face of powerful competition from Bridge, Harris & Byfield and the Jordans. The Vestry of St Bartholomew-the-Great[16] agreed in 1715 that 'Mr Conoble's organ' should be brought into the church, but only a part-payment of twenty pounds can be traced, so it was probably both small and second-hand: Bridge built another in 1731. The organ of St James Garlickhythe in the City (1718)[17] is the only one of Knoppell's of which something survives: the splendid case is in full-Smith four tower style, with a large pediment on top which looks like an addition. Although the musical effect is now Victorian, there is some Swell pipework marked identically to Smith's known work, and some more of similar date on the Great which is not.[18] Knoppell was paid a total of £136 in two instalments after the organ was erected, but there may have been more previously. It seems likely that the organ was partly second-hand. He made new bellows in 1729 for 12 Guineas and continued to be responsible for maintenance for the rest of his life: his executrix Lydia Berry was paid in February 1746.[19]

Knoppell's other known new organ was at the Well Walk Chapel in Hampstead, installed in 1726, details of which are known from a complex but essentially trivial court case of 1729.[20] This was a Proprietary chapel, converted from the former Long Room by William Hoar, and he originally agreed with Knoppell in August 1725 to remove an organ from the Savoy and set it up there for approval. This idea was superseded by the building of a new organ, paid for by Joseph Rous Esq, said to have two sets of keys, in a case 15 ft high and 9 ft wide, with '4 or 5' stops, but this last must be an error. The organ was valued at £400, but there was a disagreement amongst the professional assessors. Maurice Greene of St Paul's and Benjamin Short of St Sepulchre (for the builder) agreed with the valuation, but for the Proprietors, Henry Green of St Giles Cripplegate and William Moore of Bermondsey (and the new chapel), along with Gerard Smith, said that it was

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[15] Hird, Richard and Lancelot, James, *Durham Cathedral Organs,* revised edition, (Durham, The Dean and Chapter 2014), 15

[16] Plumley, 49

[17] *Daily Courant*, 22 November 1718 records the builder and the opening by Talbot Young on the following day, even though he was not appointed organist until the following March.

[18] Thistlethwaite, Nicholas, 'Organo Pneumatico: The Construction and Design of Bernard Smith's Organ for the University Church, Cambridge, 1698,' *BIOSJ* 2 (1978), 32-33

[19] Thistlethwaite, Nicholas, *The Organ of St James Garlickhythe in the City of London*, (Oxford, Positif Press 2007), 6-8

[20] National Archives, SP36/15, 17, from the Domestic State Papers of George II. Discovery and transcription kindly made by Dominic Gwynn.

not worth more than £170, or 200 after some faults had been fixed. The outcome is unknown.

The will of John Knoppell 'of St Giles-in-the-Fields, Organ Maker' was proved on 1 June 1745.[21] His daughter and executrix Lydia had become the wife of a Thomas Berry, which is interesting, because an otherwise unknown 'Berry the Organ Maker' is found doing organ work at the Moravian Chapel in Fetter Lane in 1745,[22] though his services were soon dispensed with. A Thomas Berry was buried at St George-the-Martyr on 11 April 1760, from Red Lion Street, which was the location of the Byfield workshop, and prime organ-building territory.

[21] LA MS 9172/152. Made 10 October 1739

[22] Tindall, Paul, 'Moravians in London: their Organs and their Music,' *BIOSJ* 48 (2024), 113

NEWS FROM THE ORGAN PODCAST



A fortnightly podcast from the RCO - *The Organ Podcast* - continues to provide a high-quality and varied menu of interviews by Mark O'Brien about organs, organists and organ music. Each podcast is about an hour long and is to be found at:
https://theorganpodcast.buzzsprout.com/

The latest three episodes are illustrative of the range of topics covered.

Episode 19 (1 Nov) includes completing Bach's Orgelbüchlein with William Whitehead and rediscovering Victorian organs with Tom Bell.

Episode 18 (15 Oct) has an interview with William McVicker on The Organ Reform Movement - what was it all about? - and Ben Bloor reflects on the pros and cons of using social media to promote the organ and engage with audiences

Episode 17 (1 Oct) brings us up to date on Liverpool Cathedral's new Echo division with Ian Tracey and St Paul's Cathedral's Organ Education Lead Jeremiah Stephenson talks about his work devising events and workshops designed to introduce children to the organ.

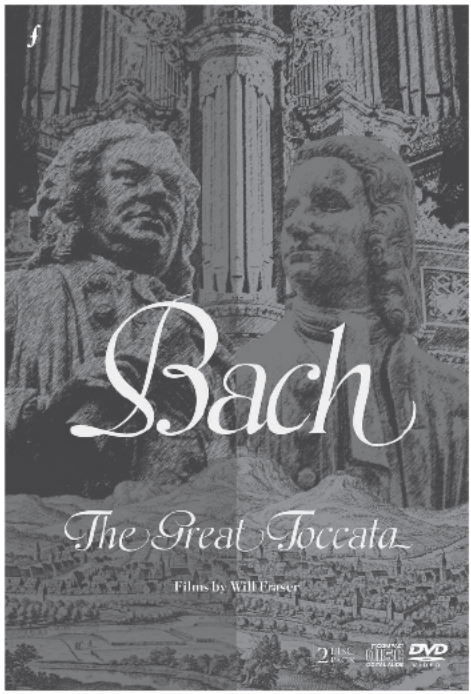
All 19 episodes can be found on the podcast website, which also has links to more information on the various topics covered. Incidentally, the web-site has 'Season 1' in its banner title - let's hope that, unlike many promising TV dramas, a second season of podcasts is in the pipeline.

REVIEW

Bach: The Great Toccata

Films by Will Fraser

Fugue State Films, FSFDVD017 (DVD and CD, playing times 102 and 59 mins respectively) £ 28.50 available from https://fuguestatefilms.co.uk/



The first mordant of the *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* is possibly one of the most instantly recognisable openings of any piece of music. From that (literally) high point down to the bottom D in the pedal and then back via a diminished seventh chord to a tonic major cadence gets our attention. And so on, through all sorts of musical gymnastics to a fugal subject of startling simplicity followed by playful episodes to a conclusion of dramatic progressions. Surely one of the pinnacles of composition of that genius of the organ - Johann Sebastian Bach. Mendelssohn thought so as one of the key architects of the revival of Bach's organ music in the first half of the nineteenth century. For almost two centuries the *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* - BWV 565 - has been a staple of organ recitals. All the great recitalists have recorded it from that great Bach scholar Albert Schweitzer onwards. However, in recent decades, the idea has emerged that the Bach might not have been the composer of the 'Great Toccata' - largely because BWV 565 lacks the overall gravitas of his other substantial organ works, but also because there is no original manuscript of the work in Bach's hand.

Many of the 'problems' of BWV 565 have been discussed in detail before - notably in a scholarly analysis of the arguments for and against by Rolf Claus (*Toccata and Fugue in D minor - a work by J S Bach?* [2018] ISBN 9780956710260). The problems arise because of perceived 'errors' in the

compositional technique - such as, extended unisons and repetition, limited harmonic vocabulary, and an episodic, loose structure. One of the 'killer' criticisms is that the use of C# in the bass would have precluded its performance on the majority of central German organs in the first half of the eighteenth century - such organs had short octaves (you save money by not having large bass pipes for notes that are only occasionally required).



In Will Fraser's series of films the irrepressible Daniel Moult tackles all of these questions and many others by looking at both the music and the organs, as well as the wider context of music-making in early eighteenth-century Germany. The available evidence suggests that BWV 565 is likely to have been composed in the early part of Bach's life - a time when he was exploring all sorts of musical possibilities - including his famous long walk to Lubeck where he met Buxtehude and encountered the *stylus phantasticus* of the North German school. There is good evidence - but sadly no surviving examples in central Germany - of large organs with a full compass which would be entirely suitable for playing BWV 565 to full effect - particularly in Eisenach, Bach's home town, where other member's of the Bach family were organists.

Domestic instruments, such as clavichords and harpsichords, were much more likely to be played than organs, as there was no need to employ someone else to fill the bellows. Such instruments were almost always of full compass and could be fitted with a pedal board. Daniel Moult explores the idea that BWV 565 might have been composed on such an instrument and that Bach was perfectly capable of imagining how his compositions would sound on the ideal organ. Manuscript books that Bach would have known, such as a collection put together by his elder brother (the Andreas Bach collection), contain examples of Toccatas and Capriccios by composers such as Pachelbel that contain stylistic elements which occur in BWV

565. Thus, the idea of a *spielfuge*, which translates approximately as 'playful fugue', is not something that would be unknown to the young Bach, even if he was supposed to frown on such things in has later life (but perhaps he didn't anyway).

This suite of films takes Daniel Moult on a wide-ranging tour of musical possibilities. The wonderful Schnitger organ in the Martinikirk Groningen serves as the exemplar of North German organbuilding. But we also examine the world of the pedal clavichord and harpsichord with Terence Charlston and the violin hypothesis (that BWV 565 was possibly written for solo violin) with violinist Fenella Humphrey.

The DVD is accompanied with a CD containing almost an hour of first-rate recordings of organ music that is explored in the film. In addition to the Martinikerk organ the smaller 1734 Hinsz organ in the Petruskerk at Leens also features.

Why is BWV 565 so popular when most of Bach's other 'proper' organ music is less so? The film suggests that the enduring popularity of the Great Toccata is because it combines simplicity with power and uses a musical vocabulary that is not difficult to understand. So, if Bach did compose BWV 565 is there a time and place in Bach's life when it would 'fit'. The year 1707 might qualify - Johann Sebastian Bach was 22 years old and very sure of himself - getting into a fight with a bassoonist during his time in Arnstadt, for example, (where a statue shows a rather more carefree younger JSB rather than the more well-known one showing a mature, serious, Bach in front of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig). The four-manual and pedal 58-stop organ that his relative and mentor Johann Christoph Bach had designed for St George's Eisenach had been completed in 1707. It would have been the perfect instrument for the Johann Sebastian to demonstrate his skill as an organist on a trip back home. Alas, there is no direct evidence for this conjecture and that, at the end of the day, is where much of the discussion about the authorship of the *Great Toccata* ends up. Unless a manuscript of the *Great Toccata* in Bach's hand is found, the debate about the authorship of BWV 565 is destined to run and run. Overall, Will Fraser's films and Daniel Moult's scholarship and playing provide an arresting insight into the structure and broader musical context of the *'Great Toccata' and Fugue in D minor* by J S Bach (or not).

David Shuker

Future Meetings

Saturday November 30th BIOS Lunch at Grosvenor Chapel.

Saturday February 22nd 2025 Bernard Edmonds Research Conference at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

Further details of both events will be sent by email in due course

CALL FOR PAPERS - RECENT RESEARCH IN ORGAN STUDIES

BERNARD EDMONDS RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2025

Proposals for papers are invited for the British Institute of Organ Studies *Bernard Edmonds Recent Research Conference* to take place on 22nd February 2025 at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

Proposals should present some recent research into aspects of organ history, including music and performance. A broad range of subjects is encouraged and papers on organs and organ builders, including British organ-builders working overseas and organs built in Britain by foreign organ-builders, will be welcomed alongside papers more broadly based.

Papers about organ repertoire, organ playing, composers and performers are also encouraged. Papers should be around twenty-five minutes in length, and the use of musical and pictorial illustrations is encouraged. Students are encouraged to apply for short slots if they wish to present initial research findings.

Proposals will be reviewed by members of BIOS Council and the authors of successful proposals will be notified as soon as possible.

A summary proposal of 200 words, along with a brief biographical note, should be sent by 1st December 2024, but enquiries are welcome at any time.

Richard Hobson [redacted]



AIMS OF BIOS

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

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

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

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