NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION



FROM THE EDITOR



This is my final edition of the NDOA Newsletter. Richard Tapp, who may be known to some of you as the organist of St. Mary Magdalene, Castle Ashby, will be taking over as editor, beginning with the Winter Newsletter.

It has been a great privilege to have sent out to you my modest efforts over the last six years in the hope that you would find something of interest in it. Richard may have his own ideas as to what the Newsletter contains and its format. Do please give your support to him. I took on the Newsletter rather hurriedly **shortly after Roger Smith's diagnosis of Motor Neurone Disease** in 2013, and a steep learning curve ensued as I got to grips with the software which I had always had on my computer but never used. Fortunately, Richard is familiar with this publishing software.

Meanwhile, enjoy the delights in this edition, including reports on the Bank Holiday Organ Crawl, the visit to Organ World and **'Bach's Journey' as presented by Mark Gibson and Lee** Dunleavy on 4th of May. And, if it is not too early, may I, for the last time, wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas, when it arrives.

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News from South Africa



"Gabola Church is a church for those who have been rejected by other churches," Bishop Tsietsi Makita told his congregation in Johannesburg, "because they drink alcohol. Here we celebrate the drinking of alcohol. Our aim is to convert bars, taverns and shebeens into churches, to convert the tavern owners into pastors."

"Gabola church was established to redeem the people who are rejected, who are regarded as sinners. We baptise with beer, and we ordain ministers with a double whiskey in the chalice. We drink for deliverance, we are drinking for the Holy Ghost to come unto us."

However, the South African Union Council of Independent Churches refuses to recognise Gabola church. "It is blasphemous," declared Archbishop Patrick Shole, "it is heresy and totally against the doctrines. These are not church services, they are using the Bible to promote taverns and drinking liquor."

Such criticisms are rejected by Nigel Lehasa, the professor of scripture at Gabola church. "Nothing is as happy in the world as people who drink," he told reporters. "There is no fighting. No arguing. We have nothing but love."

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Note: In the African language of Tswana, Gabola means drinking.

Das Land Ohne Musik

Dale Winton: What was the English Composer Elgar's first name?

Contestant: Wolfgang.

Organ Scholarship at St Mary's, Finedon

The position of Organ Scholar at St Mary's, Finedon is currently vacant. If you are interested please contact the Director of Music, Jonathan Harris (email: jonathan.harris1717@gmail.com or tel: 07791664507) or come along to a service and introduce yourself. The position is fairly flexible and can include free organ lessons, regular or occasional playing in services, and training in choral conducting. Prospective applicants should, as a minimum, be aspiring to play occasionally for parts of our services (Sunday morning 9.30am services and our monthly choral evensong which is 6pm on the first Sunday of the month). Some keyboard ability is required but as important is enthusiasm for the organ.

(Your notice could go here)

Contact the Editor to find out more

Everyone's a Critic

George Bernard Shaw: "Brahms German Requiem is patiently borne only by the corpse."

Ronnie Scott (jazz musician) on being told that Mozart's *Requiem* had been written for his own funeral: "Well, he must have lived a bloody long way from the cemetery."

Sir Adrian Boult, when asked whether he had conducted any Stockhausen: "No, but I think I may have stepped in some."

Thomas Adès accused Mahler of producing "Cheap, automatic trash."



Don't forget. The clocks go back one hour at 2.00 a.m. (0200) on Sunday 28th October.

Barry Wadeson

The time has come to say farewell as editor of the Newsletter. It has been a great honour and privilege to have served in this capacity for the Northampton & District Organists' Association. For some time now I have felt that the Newsletter (really a small magazine) would benefit from a new perspective and a new editor. When I took over from Roger Smith I knew it would be a hard act to follow. He was both Hon. Secretary and Newsletter Editor; I do not know how he found the time to do both jobs at once.

Some of you may have wondered why I never play the organ these days when we enjoy visits out? Over the last four or five years I have been experiencing pain in my thumbs and fingers (which has now spread to larger joints) and a curious **phenomenon when my fingers start to lock together. Yes, it's the dreaded arthritis** (and perhaps something else with a longer name). It also affects me when sitting and typing up the Newsletter for hours on end, and I reluctantly came to the conclusion that it would be better to hand over the editorship early rather than later. Despite this handicap I have no intention of quietly fading away.

When my beloved wife died, I began working for the Churches Conservation Trust, which looks after redundant Church of England Churches. I am now an Area Volunteer looking after nine lovely, mostly medieval, buildings in and around Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire (there may even be one near you). The responsibilities of this job include regular inspections of the buildings and the fabric. In some ways this is a job made for me, travelling to remote villages, down cart tracks and into farmyards or across fields. I also visit as many other CCT churches as possible which are cared for by other volunteers. Some of these little churches still have organs in them, now sadly neglected, but which I have reported on in previous Newsletters. I hope to contribute as much as I can to future Newsletters.

Fortunately, Richard Tapp, organist of St. Mary Magdalene, Castle Ashby and All Saints, Earls Barton has thrown his hat into the ring and at a recent meeting with the Hon. Secretary and myself I handed over the Newsletter files to Richard. He will begin with the Winter Newsletter, so this is my final effort on your behalf. Over the last six years it has become obvious that the membership is now more diverse than **when organists' associations were first set up. Back then you were expected to hold** a position as organist at a church, chapel or municipal building. Today we have singers, and organ music lovers as well as organists. I would like to think that I have reflected that in the content over the years. I am especially grateful to Helen Murphy, our very own Hon Secretary who has acted as roving reporter sending in regular contributions (and keeping me sane). I am also pleased that more and more members are sending in contributions to the Newsletter; it is after all your Newsletter—please support Richard as he takes over what I like to think is one of the better association newsletters.

A New Organ at St Mary's, Finedon

by Jonathan Harris

Don't panic... the c.1704 Father Smith organ remains and continues to be used regularly. In January 2018, a Peter Collins organ, built in 1970, was installed next to the choir stalls at St Mary's, Finedon to accompany the choir during anthems and parts of evensong and, as such, has proved a huge asset to the musical life of the church.

The organ is tracker action and one manual -56 notes with reverse key colours (Rosewood naturals and Ivorine sharps) - together with a straight pedalboard which is permanently coupled to the manuals. It is a neo-Baroque organ, typical of Collins' early work, with а pleasing attack and light precise keys. Visually it is typical of the early '70s



'minimalist' design. It was previously a house organ, residing on the 2nd floor of a converted windmill. It was installed by Holmes & Swift who added a wooden, ash 'grill' to protect the pipework from the inquisitive, wandering hands of some members of the congregation and choir (surely not – Ed). Although some don't like this aesthetically, others do, and sadly the necessity of protecting the organ has already proved essential both with this chamber organ and from our experience of the restoration of the Father Smith organ in 2014.

Finedon, St.	Ma	ry the Virgin—Collins organ
Metal Gedact	8	
Rohr Flute	4	Wood pipes
Spitz Principal	2	
Sesquialter	II	From middle C

The casework is Sapele veneer and the blower is incredibly quiet. The 8, 4, 2 stops either side enables different registration in the left hand (below mid C) to the right hand (mid C upwards - plus the sesquialter); when used as a solo instrument, 18th century English repertoire works very well.

If any organists wish to come and play either of the organs at St Mary's, Finedon, you would be most welcome. Please contact me any time to arrange access.

Jonathan Harris Director of Music, St Mary's, Finedon Email: <u>hjonathan83@aol.com</u> or Tel: 07791 664507

Bank Holiday Organ Crawl 2018

by Helen Murphy

A lthough Bank Holiday Monday didn't exactly dawn clear and bright (like the two previous years), it was a great deal better than the day before, when the torrential rain must have put paid to many plans.

At St Mary's Titchmarsh, 18 members, family and friends were welcomed by Peter Montague, who gave us a brief history of the church (built by stonemasons from Somerset in the 12th century), including the recent re-ordering to include a kitchen area, lavatories (in the former vestry), new chairs and a renewed stone floor. Although I'm not a great fan of chairs, I have to admit that this is a sensitive and effective (beautiful even) re-ordering. Removing pews can be controversial (but here they were mainly rotten; however, the best were saved and placed along the side walls so they can be used again if necessary; but the subsequent opening up of the nave (a wonderful space!) means that it can serve the community as it had done in the 'olden days'. As a village hall (we learned that it holds far more than the actual village hall) it has hosted meetings, flower and vegetable shows, concerts and recitals (including as an Oundle for Organists venue). In fact the church was busy with a coffee morning when we arrived - a very encouraging sign!

It was then time for the Grade 2* listed TC Lewis organ to have its own restoration. It had been installed in 1870, but with two stops missing - they had been allowed **for, but not included as the parish couldn't afford the 'full' organ. This was to be** remedied! With William McVicker as the adviser, after six months away in Durham at the Harrison and Harrison workshops having the full TLC treatment, the organ was returned and re-assembled in 2016 with the inclusion of the missing Oboe (salvaged Lewis pipework from a redundant organ) and Dulciana (specially made in spotted metal in Lewis style). As usual, members took it in turn to play, until it was time to repair to the pub - only to discover that it was not serving food (unbelievably because it was a Bank Holiday!). Luckily, I remembered The Fox, just a little way down the road towards our next destination, which provided a very tasty and efficiently served lunch.

Then it was off to Warmington, where John Miley was waiting for us. Here, as I **discovered during William Whitehead's Big Bach Walk earlier in the summer (as** part of the Oundle International Festival), they are blessed with two instruments. John explained that the original Nicholson still in situ in the choir had been badly damaged by rainwater after thieves had stolen the lead from the roof – although

currently the Great is still playable, to get the Swell back in order would need some very expensive repair work (not to mention the damage caused to the wall of the south aisle, badly stained with damp). However, Cranleigh School in Surrey (who had recently had a new organ installed) were looking for a 'good home' for their 'old' one (Grant, Degens and Bradbeer of 1973) and in 2009 offered it to James Parsons for the Nene Valley Organ Project for Oundle for Organists, provided that they moved it. The then vicar was quick off the blocks: he acquired a faculty, hired a lorry and dismantled it (even sleeping in the lorry overnight to protect it!), and brought it back. Richard Bower was engaged to rebuild it in its current position at the west end of the nave at the foot of the tower. It's a bit of a squeeze to get round the font (also at the west end of the nave) so it's a good job that babies are small! John pointed out various aspects of the case design, including a rabbit and a cat (something to do with Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass - had Lewis Carroll been a pupil there? I can't remember) and other signs and symbols connected with the school. Although its tuning had suffered a bit during the recent hot weather, it was recovering and again members queued up to 'have a go'.

John was our guide at Tansor too - where the small two-manual Walker had been renovated in 2004 as part of the Nene Valley Organ Project. I remember in the early **2000s meeting the then organist at Tansor and 'having a go', and being told about the** plans for its restoration. As usual, members waited patiently in turn to play, while I explored the church. I was interested to see the misericords in the small chancel, which had come from Fotheringhay after the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s - six on each side and a larger separate stall on the north side. Although **Fotheringhay, being a Collegiate Church, was not monastic, that didn't save it** - sadly colleges all suffered the same fate in due course. As usual the misericords reward close observation - the underside ledges display the usual delightful array of imaginative carvings, featuring musical angels, birds, a lady in an elaborate headdress, and the falcon and fetterlock (as the symbol of the Duke of York, more examples of this can be seen at Fotheringhay, where the future Richard III was born). According to the information guide, there were more stalls, which have found their way into various other local churches.

It was very heartening to find all three churches open for Bank Holiday Monday visitors (not just us!) - usually I have to go knocking on doors to find the designated key-holder. Perhaps it is a sign of the times, and of course greater accessibility is encouraged these days - a requirement, even - in some restoration projects (and rightly so), whether of the church or the organ - or both - and that can only be a good thing.

Photographs: pp 9–11; Specifications: back page.



Above: the console of St. Mary, Titchmarsh, IIP Lewis organ. Inset: Thomas Lewis's trademark label. Below: Front pipes, flanked by stop jambs.





Above: Grant, Degens & Bradbeer IIP console at St. Mary's Church, Warmington. See front cover picture for case. Below (left) is a picture of the Nicholson IIP organ that has been water-damaged due to theft of lead on the roof above. Part of the action of the Nicholson organ (below right).





Above: John Miley (who is also the organist at Warmington) demonstrating the IIP Walker organ at St. Mary the Virgin, Tansor.

Below: John Miley outlining the histories of the Warmington organs to NDOA members.



Mixbury, Sulgrave and Other Delights: 2nd June 2018

by Helen Murphy

Aving carefully sent out all Mark's careful directions to Church Organ World at Mixbury, near Brackley, I failed to read them properly myself and needless to say got lost... but I arrived eventually (after having driven past it a couple of times) at the converted barn in a farm where Church



Organ World (an amalgamation of Makin, Copeman Hart, Johannes and Rodgers) has its home, to find a dozen or so members and friends already ensconced. It was thanks to **NDOA President Mark Gibson's contact with Richard Goodall of COW who oversaw the** recent rebuild of the Makin organ (within its existing case) at Abington Avenue URC, that we were there.

Although some people get very worked up about it, this is not the place to go down the tired old route of pipe versus digital - it is a pointless exercise, as in the end it's always a matter of horses for courses, and there were some fine glossy thoroughbreds on show as well as sturdy ponies to suit a more modest budget - and that (i.e. money!), for all the fancy talk, is the bottom line for most. Richard showed us a number of different models, outlining their features and styles (both musical and 'architectural') and invited us to try them out.

After we'd all 'had a go' so to speak, we thanked Richard for his hospitality and moved off to Sulgrave for lunch, agreeably supplied by the Star Inn, before assembling again at the

church - located up a very narrow lane! We were welcomed by Libby, a parishioner and Andrew, a churchwarden who, between them, gave us an account of the rather chequered history of the historic Binns instrument. Having been built originally for the Peterborough Cathedral Choir School (as it was then), it was moved to All Saints' Kettering in the 1920s. Then to in everyone's surprise it was bought by the then vicar and brought to Sulgrave in 1975. However, it was already in a rather 'delicate' state and was soon clearly in need of some serious attention. And so it limped on until, after a massive fund-raising exercise - a superb effort for such a small parish - it was taken on by Peter Spencer, and the work was completed in 2017, celebrated with an inaugural recital by lan Tracey on 21st October of that year.

You might think there is a predominance of **8'** (see specification p12) but despite the lack of either a 2' or a mixture, it gave forth a good, strong sound, which would certainly provide the right support for a congregation.



The historians among us were aware of the American connection - as Lawrence Washington (one of George Washington's ancestors) and his wife and son were remembered in memorials bearing their coats of arms which, with its pattern of mullets and bars, is said to have been the inspiration behind the Stars and Stripes. But that wasn't all! Libby and Andrew explained how, commendably, as a result of the success of the fund-raising efforts, it had been decided to set up an organ scholarship, offering free lessons from an enthusiastic ARCO, with no specific criteria for potential applicants, other than to have reached Grade 5 keyboard standard. (I've already put out the full information about this on the NDOA general circulation list, but if you missed it, please contact me.)

Sulgrave, St. James the Less							
Great		Swell					
Open Diapason	8	Oboe	8				
Dolce	8	Lieblich Gedacht	8				
Hohl Flute	8	Geigan Principal	8				
Harmonic Flute	4	Violon Cello	8				
Flute Harmonique	4	Waldflute	4				
Pedal		Couplers					
Bourdon	16	Swell to Great					
Bass Flute	8	Swell to Pedal					
		Great to Pedal					
Combination Pistons	5						

Again, we all 'had a go', trying out our various pieces. At the end of the afternoon we thanked Libby and Andrew for their hospitality and gathered up our vehicles left in Sulgrave's narrow lanes. But it wasn't the end of the day - there was another event on that evening at Dodford; the hardy among us decided there was time to go home for a bite to eat and then venture out again to what, for me at least, is 'the other side of the county' (twice in one day!) and I was glad I made the effort.

The newly restored organ at Dodford was featured in the most recent NDOA newsletter (Spring **2018)**, and Jem Lowther (DoM at All Saints', Northampton) was due to give the inaugural recital - good! But, even better, was that Richard Young, the organ builder who had carried out the restoration, was lined up to talk about his work (a full account of which can be found in the article). Richard explained that, although it was re-voiced and installed by Bevington and Sons in 1892, no-one knows who actually built it. Nevertheless, in spite of its sorry state, it was, in Richard's words a 'pedigree instrument'. With the aid of his PowerPoint presentation, we could see its original poor condition and then, satisfyingly, what was done and how it was done.. And for the final finishing touches he paid tribute to the wonderful work of French polishing and restoration of the striking blue-and-gold front pipe painting by Robert Woodland and Deborah Miller. Jem gave us a wide-ranging 'European' programme (JSB, Francisco Peraza, Nicolas de Grigny, George Thalben-Ball, RVW, Mendelssohn and Vierne), showing the full range of the organ's voice. Thank you, Jem and Richard. And last, but not least, we have to thank NDOA member Jane Day for her untiring efforts in spearheading the work for its restoration. Well done everyone!

Everyone's a Critic of Liszt

His music is all but unplayable by anyone but himself; it represents improvisations without order and without ideas, as pretentious as they are bizarre (*Critique et Littérature Musicales*, Paris, 1853).

Liszt is a mere commonplace person, with his hair on end - a snob out of Bedlam. He writes the ugliest music extant (*Dramatic and Musical Review*, London, 1843).

BACH'S JOURNEY

by Helen Murphy

N o, not that one when he walked 250 miles from Arnstadt to Lübeck to hear Buxtehude play! but his life's journey, from his birth in Eisenach in 1685 to death in Leipzig in 1750 - though probably it was the furthest that he ever travelled in his whole life. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Handel for instance, Bach never travelled abroad and indeed spent most of his life in a small area of what was to become part of the German Democratic Republic (i.e. the former East Germany).

On 4th May, Mark Gibson and Lee Dunleavy gave a joint presentation at Abington Avenue URC on **Bach's life and work: Mark gave us the words and** pictures and Lee the organ music that went with them.

Eisenach 1685-1695: Bach's family was large, with

many musical uncles and siblings (particularly called



Johann!), so in order to avoid confusion Mark referred to him as Sebastian (but I shall stick to JS). After the deaths of first his mother and then his father, JS and his brother (Johann Jakob) went to live with their older brother (Johann Christof) in Ohrdruf.

[*Prelude on 'Erbarm dich' mein O Herre Gott'* by Heinrich Bach (1615-92), a great uncle]

Orhdruf 1695-1702: Here at Orhdruf, not far from Eisenach, JS studied Latin and Theology, and later he sang in the boys' choir in Lüneburg.

[*Praeludium in Eb Major* by J C Bach (uncle) 1642-1703]

After his voice changed, he auditioned for various posts (some of which fell through), finally finding himself at Arnstadt, after being asked by the Consistory of the Council to inspect a new organ. He must have caused a good impression, as he took up duties there a month later at the tender age of eighteen.

Arnstadt 1703-1707: It was here that he composed the famous *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor.* The organ gallery on the west side of the church there still contains the original instrument built by Johann Friedrich Wender that JS played and visitors to Arnstadt can see the modern statue of him in the town square. Still only in his early twenties, he was then invited to Müllhausen to be the organist at St Blaise's church.

[Praeludium in C minor BWV 549a JSB]

Müllhausen 1707-1708: Here, he married his cousin Maria Barbara, but, as he seemed to have had some differences of opinion with his pastor, he didn't stay long.

[Fughetta on 'Durch Adamsfall ist ganz vanderbt' BWV 705 JSB]

He was soon off again, to Weimar, at the invitation of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar to the court as a chamber musician and organist.

Weimar 1708-1717: This brought him into a very different world, with a very enthusiastic and musical patron.

[Praeludium et Fuga in C Major BWV 545 JSB]

After nine happy and productive years, the fallout from a family quarrel brought about his move to Cöthen, with a letter of introduction to Prince Leopold, who appointed him as conductor at his court.

Cöthen 1717-1723: Owing to the very strict Calvinist nature of the court, the only liturgical music permitted was very simple Psalm-singing, so most of JS's creative work here was secular. It was during this time, while he was away with the Prince in Carlsbad, that Maria Barbara was taken ill; he found on his return that not only had she died, but had already been buried.

[Prelude on 'Allein Gott in der Höh sei her' BWV 662 JSB]

In time he found happiness again and in 1721 married Anna Magdalena, a singer at the Cöthen court who, as we know, proved to be an invaluable help in producing the **'fair copy' of much of his work. Prince Leopold also married a new wife but, sadly, she** had no interest in music, so JS was ready for another move – this time, after much toing and fro-**ing, to Leipzig, as cantor at St Thomas's church, where** he stayed for the rest of his life.

Leipzig 1723-1750: Here, he also had responsibility for all the other churches in the city and for running the St Thomas's school. This was a very fruitful and productive period - five sets of cantatas for the Church Year (totalling 295), the first performance of the *St John Passion* in 1724, followed by the *St Matthew Passion* on Good Friday 1729. However, the effect of having been working and copying out music by candlelight over many years finally took its toll on his eyes, By 1749 he was almost blind and underwent two unsuccessful operations. Then in July 1750 he suffered a stroke and died on 28th.

[Praeludium st Fuga in Eb 'St Anne' BWV 552 JSB]

Fast-forward to the late 20th century ... and a peaceful demonstration, starting in the Nicholaikirche in Leipzig in 1988, grew into the mass movement that resulted in the demolition of the Berlin Wall, leading to a united Germany once more. And then, at the turn of the 21st century, a new 'Bach organ' (by Gerald Woehl of Marburg) was built in St Thomas's church in 2000 for the 250th anniversary of his death.

Do we know what JS looked like? True, there is the portrait by Haussmann (1748) on display in **the museum at St Thomas's - although it's formal and posed, it looks like a real person and I think** can be assumed to be a reasonable likeness of the 63-year-old Bach (see previous page). Finally, there is the equally well-known statue by Carl Seffner (a Leipzig sculptor) dedicated in 1908, which was clearly based on the portrait, though the hair (a wig presumably) looks rather wilder. Perhaps the wind was blowing when it was erected!

Keep up to date between Newsletters digitally at:		
https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4606513	&	http://www.northamptonorganists.org.uk/

Titchmarsh, St. Mary the Virgin					Tansor, St. Mary					
Great			Swell			Great			Swell	
Open Diapason	8		Geigan Principal	8	TC	Open Diapason	8		Open Diapason	8
Rohrflote	8		Lieblich Gedacht Bass	8		Clarabella	8		Stopped Diapason	8
Salicional	8	TC	Lieblich Gedacht Treble	8	TC	Keraulophon	8	TC	Principal	8
Octave	4		Dulciana	8	TC	Principal	4		Oboe	8
Rohr Flöte	4		Geigan Principal	4		Flute	4		Horn	8
Flautina	2		Trumpet	8		Fifteenth	2			
			Oboe & Bassoon	8		Mixture	II			
Low C—g3			Low C—g3			Clarinette	8			
						Low C—f3			Low C—f3	
Pedal			Couplers							
Bourdon 16			Swell to Great		Pedal			Couplers		
Sub Bass 16 Swell to Pee		Swell to Pedal			Bourdon	16		Swell to Great		
Low C—f1		Great to Pedal		Low C—c1		Swell to Pedal				
									Great to Pedal	

Warmington, St. Mary the Blessed Virgin Grant, Degens & Bradbeer Organ (West End)

I Hauptwerk		II Brustwerk	
Quintadena	16	Holz Gedackt	8
Praestant	8	Spitz Gedackt	4
Rohrflote	8	Prinzipal	2
Prinzipal	4	Quintflote	1 & 1/3
Waldflote	2	Zimbel 1 / 2	III
Cornet 2&2/3	II	Krummhorn	8
Mixtur	IV		
Trompette	8		
Low C—g3		Low C—g3	
Pedal		Couplers	
Subbass	16	II to I	
Oktave	8	I to Ped	
Quintade	4	II to Ped	
Fagot	16		
Rohr Schalmei	4		

Combination Pistons Toe & thumb pistons

Warmington, St. Mary the Blessed Virgin Nicholson Organ (Chancel)

		8 ()	
Great		Swell	
Open Diapason	8	Open Diapason	8
Clarabella	8	Lieblich Gedacht	8
Dulciana	8	Gamba	8
Principal	4	Voix Celeste	8
Fifteenth	4	Harmonic Flute	4
		Oboe	8
Low C—g3		Low C—g3	
Pedal		Couplers	

FoundConstraintBourdon16SwSwLow C—f1Sw

Couplers Swell to Great Swell to Pedal Great to Pedal

Combinations pedals: Great x 2



