

December 2013

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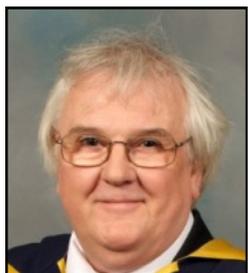
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Reg. Charity No.274679

The magnificent organ in Rugby School Chapel is both beautiful to behold and to hear. The stylish case blends seamlessly with William Butterfield's gloriously multicoloured Gothic design for the Chapel. The organ is the work of Kenneth Jones Pipe Organs Ltd of Bray, County Wicklow in Ireland.

FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the start of another NDOA year. As usual there are changes with a new President and new committee members who are listed next to this column. This year the presidency falls to Lee Dunleavy who really needs no introduction but is going to get one anyway. Lee is Director of Music at All Saints Church, Northampton and Conductor of the Northampton Bach Choir. A composer of distinction he has made several CDs with All Saints Choirs and the Bach Choir. He is noted for his regular lunchtime organ recitals at All Saints throughout the year. We are also saying goodbye to departing President Stephen Moore and thank him warmly for arranging such interesting and stimulating activities during the past year. As Past President Stephen remains a committee member.

You may have noticed that the cover page has changed (I would be surprised if you hadn't). After many years the old format was beginning to look a little faded and, perhaps, a teeny bit jaded. The recent publication of recruitment leaflets in the same style as our website convinced me that the time had come for a makeover of the Newsletter front page in much the same manner. I dislike the term 'corporate identity' so let's just say they are now in harmony. For those members who have not browsed other organists associations' websites it might come as a surprise to them, were they to do so, to discover that many are worthy but very dull compared to our own. Their newsletters are, sadly, often little more than a few pages of typewritten paragraphs. Not much to show for a membership fee about the same or sometimes higher than our own.

This is also the last Newsletter to be sent out to all members by post. In future the Newsletter will be sent out by email as a PDF document. Members wishing to receive traditional printed copies will be asked to pay an extra £6 to cover printing and postage. In many ways the PDF version is of higher quality and can be read in its original A4 size, you will be able to store hundreds of them on a memory stick and thanks to digital technology PDFs are searchable. Please see pages 7 & 9 about the changes

Over this last year, whilst I have been feeling my way as your new editor, I am immensely grateful to the NDOA committee for their support, and especially to Helen Murphy our Secretary who collects the Newsletter from the printer, stuffs the envelopes and posts it off to members.

Finally, a very Happy Christmas to one and all. May it bring peace and joy to everyone.

Editor, NDOA Newsletter



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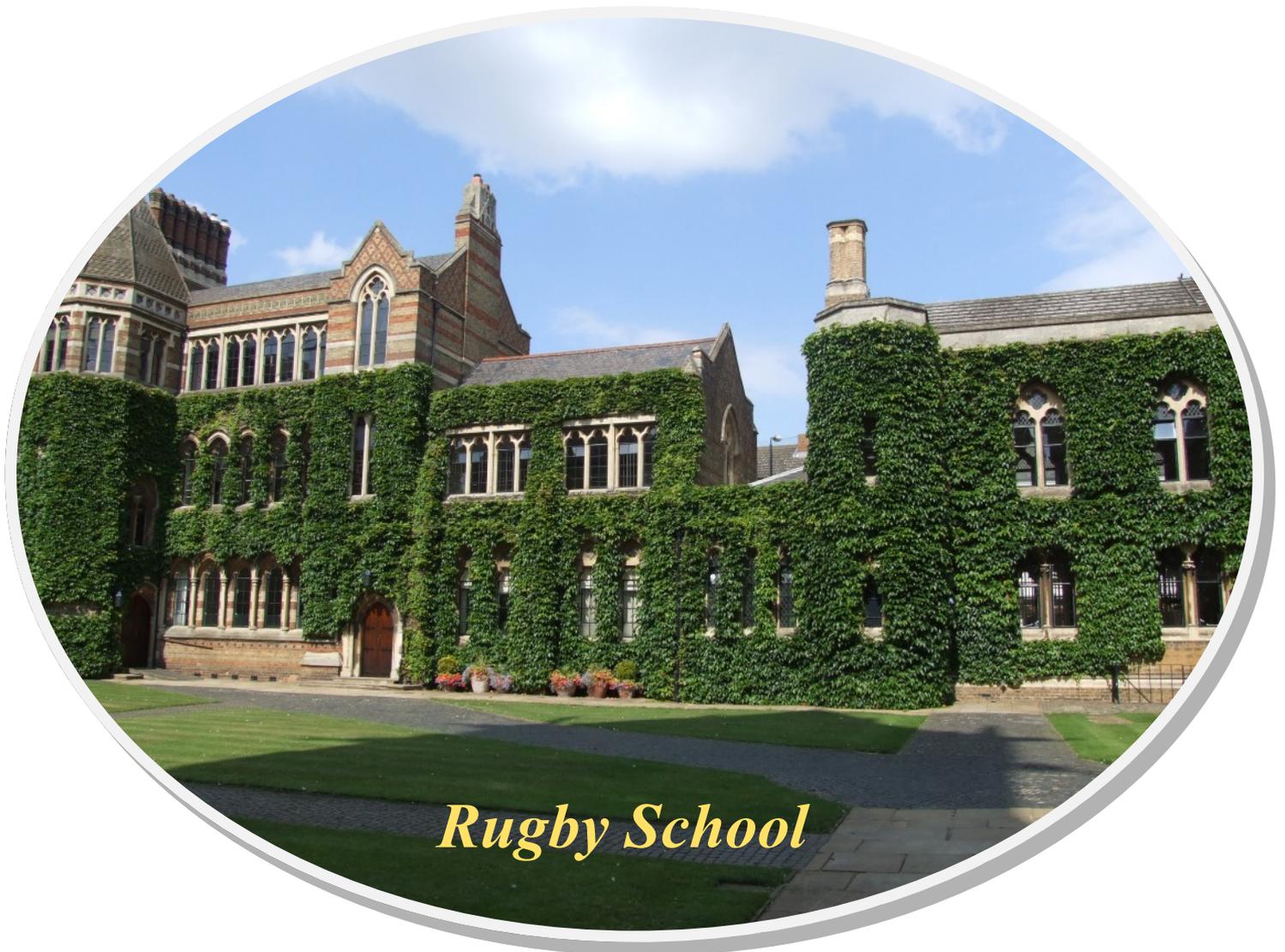
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BANK HOLIDAY ORGAN CRAWL TO RUGBY SCHOOL– 26th AUGUST, 2013

by Helen Murphy



Rugby School

Untypically for a Bank Holiday Monday, the sun was shining and no rain clouds threatened as 18 NDOA members and friends gathered by the Queen's Gates (so-called after their inauguration by HM the Queen in 1967 in celebration of the school's 400th anniversary), to be met by Richard Tanner, the Director of Music, ready for a tour of the school's four organs. Incidentally, just down the road on the right is the site of the last reading of the Riot Act in England in 1797. It seems that some boys had blown off the door to the Head Master's classroom, burnt their books and desks and, having retreated to an island, were only overcome by the local militia bearing pikes and muskets. According to the school's web site, "The Riot Act was read and some boys were expelled - some later to be renowned military leaders." *Plus ça change...*

Richard led us across the road to the Temple Speech Room ('Room' is perhaps an understatement) and the first of the organs we were to enjoy, where we were joined by two more members who had been held up in the traffic and who, luckily, on hearing sounds of music from across the way, found an open door... To give an idea of the tonal and dynamic range of the 3-manual-and-pedal Bryceson instrument, Richard simply gave us a 'twiddle' on each stop before showing off its potential with some contrasting Bach, Guilman and Elgar, after which members were queuing up to have a go themselves.

In contrast to the huge Temple Speech Room, with its raked seating leading up to the organ at the top, Richard's office in the Music School housed in the same block, was home to a small 2 manual and pedal mechanical Škrabl instrument available for pupils to practise on. Although there are currently



Richard Tanner demonstrating the Bryceson organ in the Temple Speech Room.

just two stops on each manual, comprising both wooden and metal flutes contrasting with and complementing each other, there is space for more pipework, if desired.

The gods of the weather continued to look favourably upon us when we broke up for lunch - some of us enjoying our sandwiches *en plein air* and others adjourning to one of the nearby hostelryes - before we re-assembled at the Queen's Gate at the appointed hour, for Richard to lead us towards the delights of the Chapel and its amazing contents (Bully for Butterfield!).

In my purist and po-faced teens I would have recoiled in horror at his polychromatic extravagancies (stripes! good grief!!). However, a little older and wiser, having experienced the beauties of Florence, Siena, Orvieto (et al.) with their alternating layers of indigo and ivory marble, I came to appreciate stripes - after all, some of my favourite local Northamptonshire buildings are striped brown ironstone and white limestone. So why not extend and continue the theme with brick? Why not indeed (or even with what seems, by the feel of it, to be purple/brown paint on the alternating blocks of the columns in the Chapel)?



The two manual Škrabl practice organ.

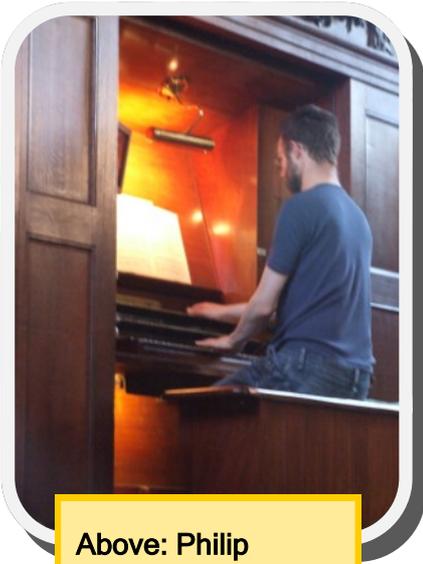
Richard explained how the reconstruction, extension and re-siting of the organ from its own chamber in the chancel to a spectacular position at the north-east corner of the nave, where it meets the chancel, has transformed the sound. Such has been its dramatic effect that Richard has had to re-position the choir! Its visual effect is pretty dramatic too: rank on rank of clustered pipes soaring up to the roof, complementing rather than rivalling Butterfield's exuberance. Again Richard demonstrated its sounds and then members experienced it for themselves.

As for the almost-adjacent Memorial Chapel, a simpler, sober Gothic style building dating from 1923, the little 2-manual and pedal Harrison and Harrison organ I found there a sheer delight - ideally suited to the rather modest music I had brought with me. Its access is not for the faint-hearted (or the stout-bodied, dare I say!) - up a narrow spiral stone staircase to the organ loft overlooking the chapel via an oriel window. Very romantic and medieval. There is not much room - but it does the job! I don't know when or how often the Memorial Chapel is used, but I hope not too rarely.

Thank you to Richard, for an interesting, informative and inspiring day.

More pictures of the Rugby visit can be seen opposite on page five (Ed).

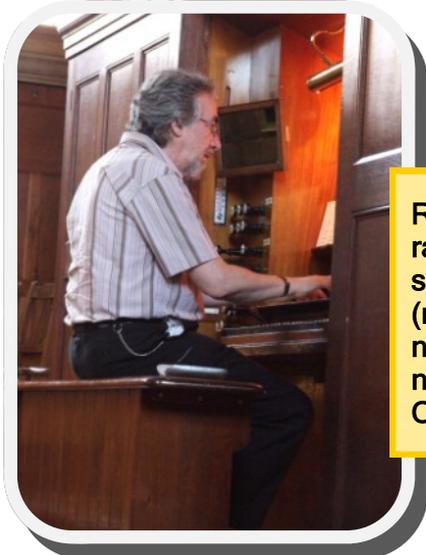
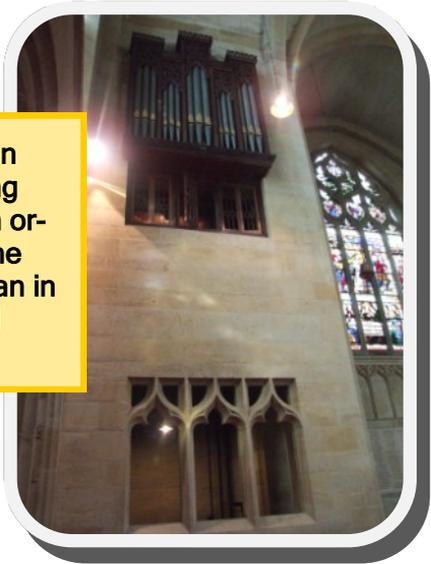
MORE RUGBY SCHOOL VISIT PHOTOGRAPHS



Above: Philip Bricher at the Bryceson console and below (middle) members make their way to the chapel.



Left: Jonathan Harris playing the Bryceson organ. Right: the Harrison organ in the Memorial Chapel.



Robert Page (left) was also rather taken by the Bryceson organ and members (right) listen to Richard Tanner demonstrating the Kenneth Jones organ in the Chapel.



OBITUARY

John Kenneth Tavener 1944–2013

The December edition of *BBC Music Magazine* (out a month early) celebrated the coming 70th birthday of the twentieth-century composer Sir John Tavener with an effusive article and a CD of *The Protecting Veil*. This proved to be somewhat premature when Tavener died on the 12th November, aged 69, two months short of his 70th birthday on January 28th, 2014.

His father was organist at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Frognaal, Hampstead and he was a contemporary of John Rutter at Highgate School where both were pupils. Later he became organist and choirmaster of St John's Presbyterian Church, Kensington from 1961 to 1975. Tavener claimed descendency from the 16th century composer John Taverner (losing an 'r' from the middle part of the name somewhere along the way). He became increasingly engrossed with the music, liturgy and mysticism of the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches and converted to the Russian Orthodox Church in 1977. This was to have a major influence on his music for the rest of his life. A gifted and original composer combining mysticism and minimalism. Although reports circulated in the British press that he had abandoned Christianity in favour of Hinduism and Islam Tavener, in a BBC interview in 2010, described himself as remaining 'essentially Orthodox'. Only days before his death on *Start the Week* (broadcast 11th November) Tavener reiterated his devotion to orthodoxy whilst exploring the music of other religions.

Throughout his life he was dogged by ill-health due to a genetic disease called Marfan's Syndrome. A characteristic of the disorder is a long thin frame and long fingers. It is accompanied by heart disease and musculo-skeletal problems. With his long flowing hair and tall, thin body Tavener made a distinctive impression wherever he went. He first came to prominence with his cantata *The Whale* based on the Old Testament story of Jonah. *The Whale* is possibly the only classical piece to have been recorded, in 1970, on the Beatles' Apple Records label. Tavener met Ringo Starr through his brother Roger, a builder, who was at the time working on Starr's house.

Most directors of music and singers will know Tavener's delightful miniature *The Lamb*. However, in 1988 Tavener was commissioned by St. Matthew's, Northampton to write a piece for St. Matthew's Day. Seldom, if ever, is *The Call* mentioned in lists of Tavener's works. This is a beautiful, otherworldly piece of writing which completely suits the acoustic of St. Matthew's with each ascending line lingering high above the congregation and fading into silence before the next begins. Performed during Evensong on 27th September 1988, the text is based on a line from St. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 9, verse ix and three languages are used: English, Greek and Church Slavonic, repeating 'Lord have mercy', then 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner'. The number three symbolises the Trinity and is embedded in the musical structure with three simple musical figures, centred around the note G at three pitches. Three arch-like statements of the material, which represents Saint Matthew rise transcendently as they are developed through two and three part canons. Each appearance is preceded by an increasing period of silence; finally the phrase from St. Matthew's Gospel rises firmly and triumphantly, then fades into silence suggesting, in Tavener's words, the 'ascent of the spirit into silence - the silent prayer and music of the heart'. Two days after the performance James Rushton of Chester Music (Tavener's publishers) wrote to Andrew Shenton:

Thank you very much indeed for the marvelous premiere that you gave John Tavener's THE CALL in Northampton on Sunday. The performance had a great deal of majesty and space to it and I believe that you fully realized John's intentions. As I said to you, I am so very impressed by your Choir and by your guidance of it.

Sadly the music has disappeared from the Song Room and it appears never to have been performed again. This is a piece that St. Matthew's Choir really should record at a future date. Be warned though it is for SSSSAAAATTTTBB choir (although a reduced version exists) and the choir had to be augmented for its first performance. If ever there was a piece that encapsulates Tavener's style and spirituality this is it.

NDOA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 89th Annual General Meeting of the Northampton and District Organists Association took place on Sunday 17th of November 2013 at 4.30 p.m. in the nave of All Saints Church, Northampton.

Tony Edwards, Director of Music at Higham Ferrers Parish Church, was nominated as President Elect for 2014–2015 and will succeed Lee Dunleavy at the AGM next year.

Officers.

The following were confirmed:

- Lee Dunleavy (President)
- Stephen Moore (Past President)
- Tony Edwards (President Elect)
- Helen Murphy (Hon. Secretary)
- Jonathan Harris (Hon. Treasurer)
- Barry Wadeson (Hon. Auditor)*

Some discussion took place on exactly how many members should be on the Committee according to the constitution and the length of time that committee members should serve before retiring. [Members, once elected, serve for 3 years but can be re-elected once that period ends.] Generally the Committee consists of six members plus the Hon Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. The President, President Elect and Past President are also Committee members. Roger Smith, former Hon. Secretary stated that there had always been some flexibility as to the size of the Committee and members could be co-opted for particular reasons such as their expertise, advice or activities on behalf of the NDOA, or to replace a committee member who has resigned.

Election of Committee members.

New members of the Committee:

- Andrew Moodie
- Christopher Colby
- Tim Dolan
- Robert Page (co-opted)

Current serving members:

- Sally Desbois
- Roger Palmer
- Robert Tucker

*Barry Wadeson the Hon. Auditor and Newsletter Editor is not a committee member.

Hon. Secretary's Report.

Helen Murphy reported that her first year as Hon. Secretary had been a steep learning curve which she had survived with the advice of Roger Smith who stepped down last year after ten years in that position. She thanked all members for their patience and forbearance during the year.

Hon. Treasurer's Report.

Jonathan Harris presented the accounts of the NDOA for 2012–2013 which were accepted by the members present. In summary the current account balance after accounting for income and expenditure at the end of September 2013 was £482.15 and the David Morgan Education Fund (held in the current account) stood at £1058.19. The largest expense to the association has been the production of the Newsletter and postage, the costs of which rose by nearly 67%. Although printing costs have risen, by far the largest cost to the Association, has been the rise in postage expenses—which members may recall increased significantly in March 2013. Subscriptions were raised last year as a result of the increase in capitation fees by the IAO and it was felt that a further increase in subscription fees was unsustainable.

Continued on page 9....



What's On



Thursday 5th December	1.10 p.m.	Lunchtime Organ Recital. Nathan Lam (Grosvenor Chapel, Mayfair). All Saints Church, Northampton, NN1 1DF
Saturday 7th December	7.30 p.m. and	Britten: St. Nicholas and A Ceremony of Carols. Northampton Bach Choir, Cond. Lee Dunleavy. St. Matthew's Church, Northampton, NN1 9RY.
	7.30 p.m.	Haydn: St. Nicholas Mass in G major; Symphony No. 102 (Miracle); Te Deum with Carols for audience. Northampton Philharmonic Choir, Queens Park Sinfonia, Cond. Christopher Mabley. Christchurch, Wellingborough Road, Northampton, NN1 5LL.
Sunday 15th December	5.30 p.m.	La Nativité du Seigneur (The Birth of the Saviour). In preparation for Christmas, Stephen Moore plays Olivier Messiaen's influential work, interspersed with readings. In nine movements, Messiaen describes all the familiar characters of the Nativity story and prepares us for the coming of Christ. St Matthew's Church, Northampton, NN1 4RY.
Thursday 19th December	1.10 p.m.	Lunchtime Organ Recital – Christmas Special. Lee Dunleavy, David McConkey & Hilary Punnett. All Saints Church, Northampton, NN1 1DF.
Sunday 22nd December	5.30 p.m.	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. St. Matthew's Church, Northampton NN1 9RY.
Thursday 9th January	1.10 p.m.	Lunchtime Organ Recital. Hilary Punnett. All Saints Church, Northampton, NN1 1DF.
Saturday 18th January	3.00 p.m.	 Desert Island Discs. Members are invited to the home of the President and his wife where a guest 'Roy Plomley' will ask for his selection of Desert Island Discs. All members are invited to bring their one treasured recording that they would take to the Island! 337 Wellingborough Road, Rushden, NN10 6BB.
Saturday 1st February	3.00 p.m.	 Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony: Each one Reach one. Organ: Stephen Farr. Also works by Fauré, Rachmaninov and Widor. The Each one Reach one event is designed for you to bring someone new to introduce to the organ. Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Thursday 6th February	1.10. p.m.	Lunchtime Organ Recital. Lee Dunleavy. All Saints Church, Northampton, NN1 1DF.
Monday 31st March	7.00 p.m.	 A Feast for Bach's Birthday. The first annual dinner for the NDOA, and a chance to celebrate the 339th birthday of J. S. Bach with Bratwurst and Potatoes (and not a little Sauerkraut) followed by Black Forest Gateau. Guest speaker will be Adrian Lucas, former Director of Music at Worcester Cathedral, amateur pilot and <i>bon viveur</i> . The Roade House, Roade, NN7 2NW.

Continued from page 7.

The committee has reluctantly, therefore, decided that whilst subscription fees should remain unchanged with the Newsletter and accompanying leaflets sent out by email an additional fee of £6.00 will be charged for those wishing to receive a hardcopy of the Newsletter sent by post. This is in line with practices adopted by other associations. Members wishing to continue at the same subscription level as last year should send their email address to the Hon Secretary, Helen Murphy, and they will receive PDF copies of each Newsletter together with all accompanying leaflets, flyers, etc. that the NDOA receives in this format.

Members wishing to retain the hardcopy option will need to inform the Hon. Secretary and add an additional £6 to their subscription fee as outlined below.

	Membership with Newsletter by email	Membership with Newsletter by post
Full Member	£14	£20
Family Members (Two members at the same address)	£21	£27
Student Member (Under 22 years of age and in full-time education)	£7	£13

Subscriptions became due for renewal at the Annual General Meeting and should be paid by 1st January, 2014 (members joining during the year pay an appropriate proportion of the above rates). Cheques should be sent to:

Jonathan Harris,
Hon. Treasurer NDOA,
11, Pytchley Way,
Brixworth, Northants.
NN6 9EF
Tel: (01604) 881182
e-mail: treasurer.ndoa@gmail.com

Payment can also be made by standing order or via the PayPal facility on the NDOA website.

Installation of new President

After reports, Stephen Moore, the President for 2012-13 handed over the President's medal to Lee Dunleavy our President for 2013-14. Stephen was thanked for his work on behalf of the Association during the year.

There being no other business the meeting was closed. The AGM was followed by a short recital by Lee Dunleavy and afterwards Choral Evensong by the Choir of All Saints.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Organ of Turvey Church

I was most interested to read the article about the organ in Turvey Parish Church in the NDOA September magazine and thought that the following might be of some interest.

In the early 1950s, as an 11 year old assistant organist at Wollaston Parish Church, I was taken by Ted Holloway, my organ teacher, to visit the organ at Turvey and was (naturally enough) quite overwhelmed by the magnitude of the Tuba. I was told that the organ (installed, you tell me, in 1855, by Hill & Son of London) had in fact been built for the Great Exhibition of 1851 and so was exhibited, and performed on, there in Hyde Park.

I was also told that it had taken part in an Organ Extravaganza when every organ in the building joined forces in accompanying a choir of thousands to perform the Hallelujah Chorus. (Which perhaps explains the Tuba!)

After the closing of the Exhibition it was sold, I understand, to the benefactor who placed it in Turvey Church.

Roger Tivey

(This would also explain how the organ came to have a Sesquialtera which Longuet Higgins had removed, Ed.)

RSCM NEWS

The Peterborough and Northampton section of the RSCM have launched a new website which N&DOA members may find of interest. It appears to be still under construction (at time of writing) but will no doubt make a major contribution to advertising RSCM events as well as other organisations with similar aims of upholding high standards in church music. It can be found at:

www.rscmpeterboroughandnorthampton.co.uk

Most directors of music are aware of the tremendous resources available from the RSCMs main website but if you have not visited www.rscm.com it is well worth a look. The RSCM has acquired the publishing rights of a number of well-known works in the mainstream repertoire published under its RSCM Press title and has also just acquired the publisher Cathedral Music.

As well as old favourites published by RSCM Press, such as Brewer's Canticles in D, there are new works by twenty-first century composers such as Malcolm Archer. All available from the online bookshop and all styles of music and worship are catered for. And for those who think that the only music that should be heard in church is organ music, well, the RSCM has a wide range of organ music for sale too (although you might blench at the thought of the Barenreiter edition of Bach's complete organ works at £226.50). However, Barenreiter online is offering it for £175.50 as a special seasonal offer at the moment.



NDOA NEWS

Jacob Collins, a recipient of the David Morgan Education Fund, has made a good start to life in Wells, is already playing for parts of some Cathedral services and is being encouraged to apply for their Junior Organ Scholarship for next September.

Callum Alger, Organ Scholar at St. Matthew's, Northampton, has been awarded the Organ Scholarship of Portsmouth Cathedral for 2014-2015 during his gap year before music college or university in 2015.

Congratulations to Callum and Jacob both beneficiaries of the David Morgan Education Fund.

ENGLISH CHURCH COMPOSERS

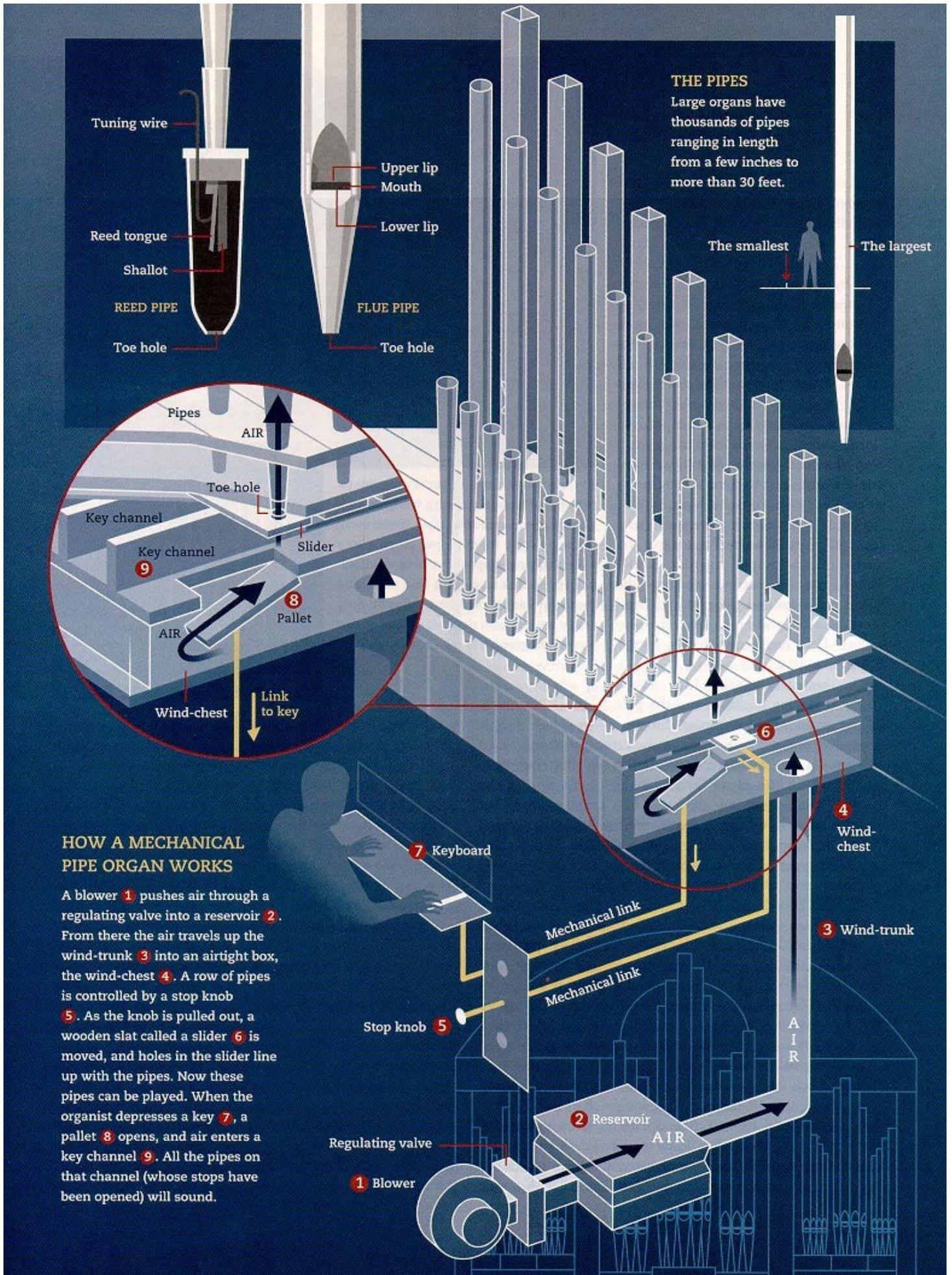
The series of articles on English Church Composers will return in the spring with a look at the life and works of Thomas Weelkes.

ERRATUM

A Gremlin 4' has attacked the 2014 Annual Programme of Events. As anyone with a next year's diary will have noted it should be Saturday 18th October and not the 19th for the 'Pedals, Pipes and Pizza' event at All Saints, Northampton. Correct your programme now.

HOW IT WORKS: THE MECHANICAL PIPE ORGAN

© Smithsonian Magazine



THE PIPES

Large organs have thousands of pipes ranging in length from a few inches to more than 30 feet.

The smallest The largest

HOW A MECHANICAL PIPE ORGAN WORKS

A blower **1** pushes air through a regulating valve into a reservoir **2**. From there the air travels up the wind-trunk **3** into an airtight box, the wind-chest **4**. A row of pipes is controlled by a stop knob **5**. As the knob is pulled out, a wooden slat called a slider **6** is moved, and holes in the slider line up with the pipes. Now these pipes can be played. When the organist depresses a key **7**, a pallet **8** opens, and air enters a key channel **9**. All the pipes on that channel (whose stops have been opened) will sound.

ST MATTHEW'S FESTIVAL CONCERT

by *The Editor*



The Choir of St. Matthew's Church, Northampton

On the 120th anniversary of its consecration St. Matthew's Church could be forgiven for being a bit self-indulgent in its celebrations. It is a great survivor of the Victorian era when the mania for building new churches reached its peak. Many of those Victorian churches have fallen by the wayside and have long since been demolished, e.g. St. Paul's Church, Semilong. But St. Matthew's remains, an icon of the great religious revival of the 19th century.

Approaching St. Matthew's from the north it sits like a medieval gothic cathedral on the skyline (an optical illusion due to the descent of the Kettering Road into a valley). However, time has not stood still inside St. Matthew's with its mix of traditional (choir and organ) and modernity (seventy years of commissioning contemporary church music and works of art). The Rev'd Walter Hussey who started it all in 1943 by commissioning Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* would no doubt have felt quite at home on Saturday 21st of September hearing, once again, the first work ever commissioned for St. Matthew's.

In a concert which lasted nearly two and a half hours (with a brief intermission for refreshments) a large and appreciative audience was treated to a feast of church music both old and new. Starting with John Rutter's *I will sing with the Spirit*, a modern piece which harkens back to an earlier more tonal age, it was quickly followed by Byrd's *Ave Verum* and Tallis' *If ye love me*. Two sublime works written at a time when the English Church was torn apart by the Reformation. Both representative of their age, the beautifully crafted Catholic *Ave Verum* contrasting with the miniature masterpiece *If ye love me* for a Protestant Church. Tallis even managed to sneak in a few passing notes under the noses of the music police.

Hussey had desperately tried to get another work out of Britten, but Britten found the text to *A Litany* by W. H. Auden too difficult to set to music and as something of a consolation wrote his only known solo organ piece, the *Prelude and Fugue on a theme of Vittoria*, for the 1946 festival. Performed by Callum Alger, St. Matthew's organ scholar, whose technical excellence grows ever more impressive by the day, this piece sounded remarkably fresh and convincing on the organ for which it was written.

During the nineteen-eighties the spiritual hymn *Were you there when they crucified my Lord* from the New English Hymnal in its choral version became a regular piece performed by the choir. On this occasion a new arrangement by Bob Chilcott gave an old favourite a contemporary feel. But as if to show that St. Matthew's had not entirely forgotten its Victorian origins this was followed by the jubilant *Ye choirs of new Jerusalem* by C. V. Stanford.

The second half of the concert began with another 1946 commission: *Lo, the full final sacrifice* by Gerald Finzi. Without wishing to disparage any of the fine works commissioned over the years this is surely one of the most profound and beautiful pieces ever written for St. Matthew's, right through to its ethereal eight-part polyphonic Amen. Sung by the recently re-formed St. Matthew's singers and conducted by Malcolm Archer (making his first appearance as Patron of the Friends of St. Matthew's Music) this is a work straight from heaven.

Back with St. Matthew's Church choir there then followed *My soul there is a country* the first of C. H. H. Parry's *Songs of Farewell* (words by Henry Vaughan 1622 -1695). Unfortunately, this is not one of Parry's best pieces, lacking unity and cohesion due to the rapid mood changes in Vaughan's poem. More consistent, however, was Grayston Ives' schmaltzy ear tickler: *O for a closer walk with God*, a congregation pleaser which is small and perfectly formed. After Mark Sirett's *Thou shalt know Him when he comes* there followed another of St. Matthew's commissions: *Sweet was the song* - one of five Carols composed by Richard Rodney Bennett in 1967 for Michael Nicholas and the choir. Then, whilst the choir rested its vocal cords, Director of Music Stephen Moore played Percy Whitlock's *Canzona* from the *Sonata in C minor* on the 1895 Walker organ.

With the concert drawing to a close the commission for this year, David Halls' *This is the Day*, had its second outing of the day (the first being for the morning service). Not as revolutionary as some previous commissions which, it has to be said, have been performed only once and are unlikely to be anything more than collectors' items, *This is the Day* grows on the listener the more it is performed. Finally, Malcolm Archer conducted his own *At the round earth's imagined corners* to bring the concert to a rousing conclusion. There was well deserved applause at the end for Stephen Moore and Malcolm Archer who shared the conducting and especially for the organist throughout this marathon concert, Thomas Moore who, as everyone knows, is Stephen's brother and Director of Music at Wakefield Cathedral.

St. Matthew's Church Choir has not sounded this good for many a long year with a very secure bass foundation and a confident treble line well supported by the inner parts. It is also noticeable how much more intelligible the words are to the audience when the choir faces into the church rather than singing to itself across the choir stalls. If anyone had any doubts as to the future of Walter Hussey's legacy this concert will surely have dispelled them.

And it is good to see the revived St. Matthew's Singers making a comeback. Somewhat larger than the small chamber choir first formed by Alec Wyton in the late 1940s the St. Matthew's Singers has had mixed fortunes. After Wyton left for America it gradually fell into obscurity, was brought back from extinction by John Bertalot and flourished for a while under his successors. Andrew Shenton was the last Director of Music to acknowledge its importance in the musical life of St. Matthew's before it disappeared from view again. Now, under Stephen's directorship it is once again making a significant contribution to St. Matthew's Church, singing services when the church choir is on holiday.

The 120th celebrations continued with organ recitals on Sunday 22nd September by Colin Walsh Organist Laureate of Lincoln Cathedral and on Sunday 6th October by Richard Tanner, formerly Director of Music at All Saints, Northampton and now Director of Music at Rugby School who, members will recollect, gave us an engaging tour of the organs of Rugby School in August.

VISIT TO TICKELL & CO LTD WORKSHOP

by The Editor

On Thursday 17th October around 9 members of the NDOA paid an evening visit to the workshop of Kenneth Tickell and Company in Rothersthorpe Crescent, Northampton. Unfortunately Ken was undergoing hospital tests and unavailable. We were met by Tony Coles who, until fairly recently, was Tickell's workshop manager. Although retired Tony still works for the company and gave an engaging and informative tour of the works and current contracts.

The Tickell company is one of a small number of high quality British firms to emerge in the late twentieth century bringing about a renaissance in the craft of the organ builder. In the early twentieth century the easy option was to build organs with electric action and functionalist cases (or, in some instances, no case at all) with specifications that took extended ranks of pipes to a new level of absurdity. Kenneth Tickell believes that organs should not only sound good but look good too, with cases designed to make the organ look as if it is a permanent fixture of the church that had always been there. Apart from Worcester Cathedral (which for practical purposes had to have electric action) Tickell organs are mechanical action with, for larger organs, electric stop and piston action.

Starting with his own in small premises in 1982 Kenneth Tickell was later to be joined by Tony Coles. Gradually the workforce increased and the firm moved to larger premises. As the company began to gain a reputation for high quality tracker organs of increasing size the company moved again in 1996 to its present location in Rothersthorpe Crescent – a spacious, modern building that can accommodate even the largest Tickell organs which are assembled in the workshop to fully winded condition. Final voicing of the pipes is carried out on site. Cases are made of European oak and other solid timber sources (depending upon the design of the case and the sound that the pipes will make).



Sitting in the middle of the workshop is the partially constructed new 25-stop two-manual and pedal organ for St. Michael's Parish Church, Betchworth. This organ has been specially designed to fit between two arches and will have swell shutters that open towards the choir and into the main body of the church.

Kenneth Tickell was the first organ builder in Britain to use Computer Assisted Design which allows the mechanical action to be planned down to the last millimetre. It also enables the company to squeeze a lot of organ into a small space. However, as Tony Coles points out, one of Kenneth Tickell's main concerns at the design stage is to ensure that all parts of the organ are accessible for tuning, maintenance and repair. There are many organs still around from an earlier age that require tuners to have the agility of a monkey, or worse, make parts of the organ totally inaccessible without dismantling it completely. Thus, Tickell organs have numerous panels fitted into the casework that are either discretely hinged or can be removed completely allowing an organ builder full access to all the moving parts of the action and pipes.

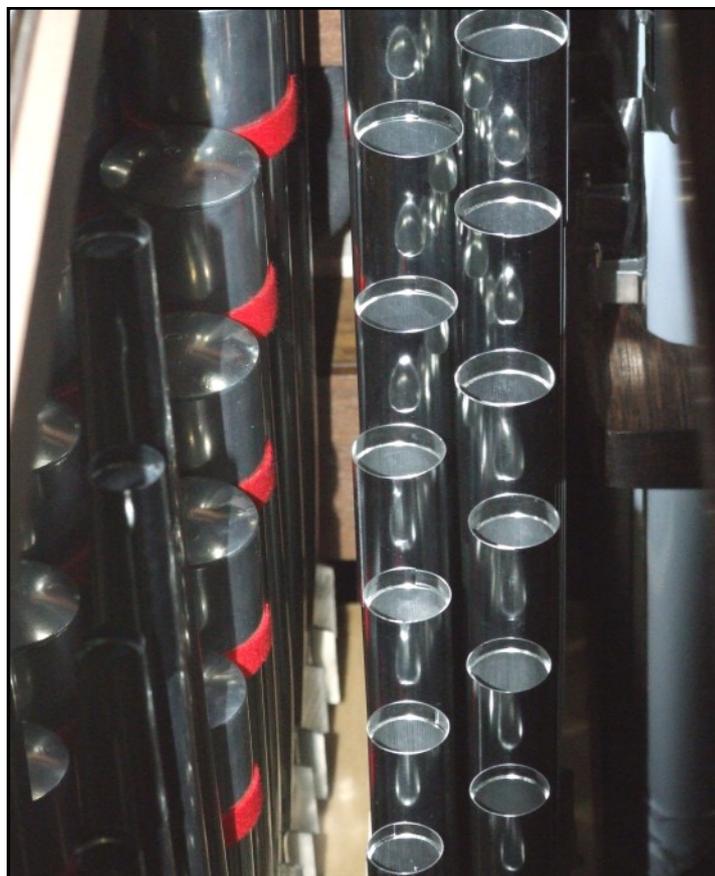
With nine full-time employees and several part-time associates the company also outsources some of its more specialist work such as pipe-shades to Norfolk woodcarver Keith German for specialist designs like motifs and symbols which are associated with the building. And Jenny Duffy, featured in a previous newsletter is frequently engaged to decorate pipes and parts of the casework with gold leaf. Members reading this may also have an organ that is tuned and maintained by Tickell & Co. Most of these tunings are subcontracted to local tuners that have a long association with the company, including Michael Latham who is now based in Worcester where he tunes and maintains the Cathedral organ on behalf of Tickell as well as several organs further North.

Tickell has a reputation for producing organs that can accommodate different characteristics and styles of playing from the English and Romantic traditions to the early continental repertoire. Although wooden pipes are made in the workshop, metal pipes are made to exact specifications by pipe-maker Terry Shires of Leeds which includes the bold Principal choruses and by continental pipe-makers for the distinctive European repertory. The pipes arrive in more-or-less a virgin state; it is the work of Simon Brown, Tickell's voicer, that produces the warm strings, colourful flutes and vibrant reeds that have become a feature of Tickell organs. Although the bulk of this work takes place in the voicing room it is not until the organ has been assembled on site that all the different stops can be balanced against each other.

Kenneth Tickell is equally well-known for his portable continuo and chamber organs of one manual and 3 – 4 stops (although Canterbury Cathedral has one with 6 stops and pedals). These compact organs are completely mechanical and much in demand for accompanying early music either as part of the liturgy or for concerts. To date Tickell's have built continuo organs for the cathedrals of Peterborough, Liverpool Metropolitan, St. David's, Truro, St. Paul's, Blackburn, Hereford, Worcester, Christ Church Oxford, Bristol, Portsmouth and Exeter. Others can be found at Bath Abbey, Tonbridge School, the BBC (BBC Singers), Selwyn and Jesus Colleges Cambridge, Magdalen College, Oxford and Westminster Abbey with several in private residences.



Roger Palmer, watched by other NDOA members, tries out the 3 stop continuo organ destined to be delivered to Lincoln Cathedral.



The compact interior of the Lincoln Cathedral continuo organ. Note the stopped flute with the red felt bands.



Members listening to Richard Tanner, DoM of Rugby School playing the Kenneth Jones organ in the Chapel at Rugby School. The enlarged Chapel designed by William Butterfield is a remarkable example of the polychromatic style which is now complemented by the organ.