

NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

December 2015



Reg. Charity No. 274679

Another mystery organ. Clue: it isn't in Northamptonshire but just outside the county and is only a few miles down the road from where your Newsletter editor lives. It is in a beautifully adorned village church and the decorated front pipes are another clue – this time to the organ builder. Note the unusual console facing outwards. See page 9 for more details.

FROM THE EDITOR



I had hoped to begin with wishing you all a "Merry Christmas," however problems with my computer resulted in reassembling everything from a partially finished backup file. So please accept my apologies for late delivery and I hope you will accept "A Happy New Year" instead. Hopefully, the problem has been solved, but I am no computer genius so files will be backed up more regularly from now on. The glitch has, however, allowed me to fill the Newsletter with all the remaining reports that have been waiting for an appropriate space.

There is no 'What's On' in this edition; by the time this Newsletter reaches you what's on will have become what's been on, and very little goes on in January as church musicians, exhausted by the exertions of Advent and Christmas are seriously in need of a break.

The front cover is another mystery organ picture and you can read about it on page 9 with thanks to Canon Hilary Davidson for sending it in.

Barry Wadeson
(Editor)

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The August Bank Holiday Monday Organ Crawl: 31st August 2015

by
Alan Cufaude

Despite a typically wet August Bank Holiday Monday, the turnout was good for the organ crawl, with around 15 members.

St Mary the Virgin, Finedon

We started at St Mary the Virgin, Finedon, where Jonathan Harris introduced us to the Bernard 'Father' Smith organ built c. 1704, supposedly for the Chapel Royal in Windsor Castle during the reign of Queen Anne. It was installed in Finedon Church in 1717, rebuilt by Holdich in 1852 and additional pipework added by Trustam of Bedford in 1882 and 1888. The most recent restoration by Holmes & Swift took place between November 2013 and September 2014, and has been written about in previous editions of the NDOA Newsletter. Shanna Hart, former organ scholar at Finedon, ably demonstrated for us the wonderful sounds this organ can produce by giving a short recital made up of the following pieces:

Scheidemann: *Magnificat Quinti Toni (2nd verset)*

Krebs: *Jesu Meine Freude WV 110*

J S Bach: *Prelude & Fugue in E minor (The Wedge) BWV 548*

Members and guests had the opportunity after that of trying the organ themselves and appreciated how well it had been played to us, given the unusually narrow pedal spacing.

The specification for St. Mary, Finedon was included in the December 2014 edition of the Newsletter.

St Mary, Rushden

Rosemary Nayyar introduced us to this two-manual tab-stop organ constructed by J. Walker & Sons of London in 1935. In that year the organ was newly constructed for the church and was paid for partly by John White, the shoe manufacturer, and partly by general public subscription - 'Pay for a Pipe'. Paul Harris demonstrated its typically English sound, which is very good for accompanying choral music. During the time since the organ was constructed there have been relatively few organists at St Mary's, one organist having served there for 50 years. Rosemary has been organist at St Mary's for six years now. Paul Harris played for us Theodore Dubois's *Toccata* from memory, very impressively, and Rosemary's pupil Nathaniel played the Theme from *Pirates of the Caribbean*, which I doubt has ever been heard in St Mary's before. The specification of the organ can be found on the next page.



Strainer arches are found in only a handful of buildings.

Interestingly, both this church and St Mary's Finedon are constructed with strainer arches across the naves. It is unexpected to find two churches so close together with this same unusual architectural feature.

We enjoyed a splendid lunch laid on for us by Tony Edwards, our President, at his home in Wilby, for which we expressed much appreciation.

All Saints, Mears Ashby

This church is in the same Benefice as St Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers. The first, or previous organ to the present instrument, was given to the church in 1883 by Sarah Emily Stockdale, and dedicated by the Bishop of Peterborough. Sarah was organist here from 1883 - 1896. Her uncle, the Revd David Knight, Vicar of Earls Barton, gave the organ to Sarah, who did not want it at home. In 1903 the church decided to buy a new organ by W Hill & Sons, of London. The pipes on the front were pipes from the original organ, and were painted by the Revd David Knight, and the fifteenth stop was added to the Great to make it brighter. Tony Edwards demonstrated the organ to us by playing George Thalben-Ball's *Elegy in B Flat*. Rosemary and her pupil Nathaniel delighted us by playing a duet, namely *Jazz Debonaire* by Martha Mier, with Rosemary on the Swell manual and Nathaniel on the Great manual.



This picture of Mears Ashby Church can be found at British History online. The view today is identical to the sketch made in Victorian times.

The organ specifications of St. Mary, Rushden and All Saints, Mears Ashby

Specification: St Mary, Rushden		
Pedal	Open Wood	16'
	Bourdon	16'
	Octave	8'
	Flute	8'
	Oboe	16'
Great	Bourdon	16'
	Open Diapason I	8'
	Open Diapason II	8'
	Stopped Diapason	8'
	Dulciana	8'
	Principal	4'
	Flute	4'
	Fifteenth	2'
	Swell	Open Diapason
Leiblich Gedacht		8'
Viola da Gamba		8'
Voix Celeste		8'
Geigan Octave		4'
Mixture II		12, 15
Contra Oboe		16'
Oboe		8'
Trumpet		8'
Tremulant		
Sw Octave		
Sw Sub-Octave		
Couplers: Sw to Gt, Sw to Ped & Gt to Ped. Thumb and toe pistons. Electric action.		



Specification: All Saints, Mears Ashby		
Pedal	Bourdon	16'
Great	Open Diapason	8'
	Stop'd Diapason	8'
	Dulciana	8'
	Principal	4'
	Harmonic Flute	4'
Keraulophon		8'
Swell	Open Diapason	8'
	String Gamba	8'
	Voix Celeste	8'
	Lieblich Flute	4'
	Oboe	8'
	Cornopean	8'
Pedalboard: straight concave; Swell pedal: lever action.		
Couplers: Sw to ped; Sw to Gt; Gt to Ped; 2 combination pedals Gt.		

Two contrasting specifications for a day out studying organs with the NDOA. Thanks must go to Tony Edwards for arranging such an interesting day and for his time as President over the last year which has seen such innovations as 'Sing a New Song' hopefully to be repeated in the near future.

A Convivial Dinner and Other Thoughts: 11th November 2015

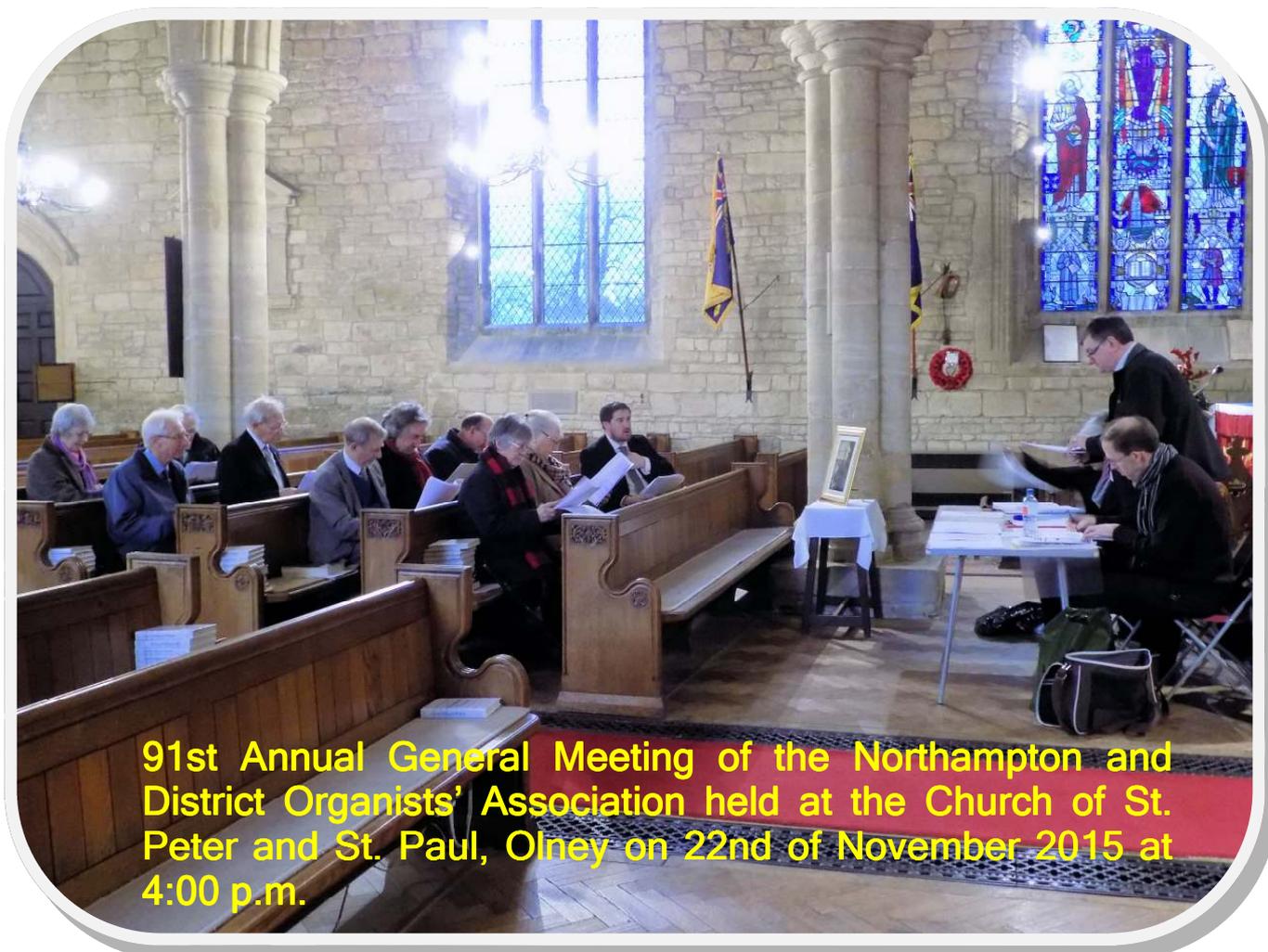
by
Helen Murphy



A dark night in November was perhaps not an obvious choice for a convivial dinner - but we all lead busy lives and the difficulties of finding a mutually agreeable date seemed almost insurmountable. However, it finally it came to pass that, after the solemnity of our various local Armistice Day involvements at 11 o'clock in the morning, some half-dozen or so NDOA members gathered at the bar at the historic Harrowden Hall, aka Wellingborough Golf Club and former home of the recusant Vaux family (but that's another story) - prior to enjoying a meal together with local RSCM members and Finedon parishioners, followed by a talk by the Revd Richard Coles, broadcaster, vicar of Finedon and former pop star. Fr Richard entertained us with his story of his journey from Barton Seagrave, where he grew up, to Finedon - all of four miles down the road (with, needless to say, a great deal in between).

And what a journey! Like Dick Whittington, he went off to London to seek his fortune and, although the streets were not paved with gold, one thing led to another (as they do) and this young Richard soon found himself riding a wave of fame and adulation in the world of pop music, as one half of the duo The Communards, with his singing partner Jimmy Somerville (most definitely not Jimmy Savile, as one elderly lady in a nearby village recently misheard it). As the pop world waned, so broadcasting beckoned, and after a few more steps he found himself presenting Night Waves on BBC Radio 3, which I remember listening to on the car radio as I drove back from choir practice in Northampton on Thursday evenings. And so, in the fullness of time, this led to a re-awakening of a religious sensibility, last experienced dimly in the chapel choir at Wellingborough School. God moves in a mysterious way, as the hymn says, and we don't know what is round the corner, but somehow Richard ended up, not as the Lord Mayor of London, but as the Vicar of Finedon (and with a dog rather than a cat).

Continued bottom of page 10



91st Annual General Meeting of the Northampton and District Organists' Association held at the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Olney on 22nd of November 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

A small but dedicated band of hardy members attended the ninety-first Annual General Meeting of the NDOA on Sunday 22nd of November in the beautiful surroundings of SS Peter & Paul, the parish church of the historic market town of Olney. A chill breeze blew down the old winding streets as members assembled for the usual business of electing officers and president for the coming year. Annual General Meetings are an important part of the NDOA calendar, even if some members find them boring. They are the democratic heart of the Association allowing members to elect committee members, to receive reports from the Secretary, Treasurer and President and to question officers.

As the daylight faded the business was briskly handled by retiring president Tony Edwards under the watchful eye of Charles King (or at least his photograph) the very first NDOA president. We began with a minutes silence for Adrian Smith who died during the year at the age of 76. An obituary written by Adrian's friend Peter Whittle can be found on page 7.

Following the reading of apologies the minutes of the previous AGM at St. Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers, which were accepted unanimously without any matters arising, the Hon. Secretary, Helen Murphy, reported that membership remained stable and she thanked Tony Edwards for his enthusiastic work during his term as president over the last year. Helen then thanked Lee Dunleavy for returning so soon to take over the presidency for 2015–2016. Lee was president for 2013–2014 and had agreed to put himself forward as president in place of Fr David McConkey, the President Elect, who had had to stand down. Lee brings with him a wealth of experience having so soon relinquished the post.

The Hon. Treasurer, Jonathan Harris, reported that the finances were in a healthy state and that the membership fees would remain unchanged for the forthcoming year at: £14 for full members (or £20 with postal newsletter), £21 for family membership (or £27 with postal newsletter) and £7 for students (or £13 with postal newsletter). The meeting then went on elect officers for the forthcoming

year. The committee nominated Helen Murphy to continue as Hon Secretary, Jonathan Harris to continue as Hon. Treasurer and Barry Wadson as Hon. Auditor. Committee members Sally Desbois and Roger Palmer were due to retire and Alan Cufaude and Eric Cave were elected in their place. There is a vacancy for a further committee member due to the resignation of Christopher Colby. Also vacant is the position of President Elect for the year of 2016–2017, this will be left in the hands of the committee to approach a willing member for that period.



Tony Edwards then handed over the presidential medal to Lee Dunleavy for his second term in office as President. Lee also reminded members of the sad losses to the organ building world of organ builders with close connections locally. As well as the premature death of Kenneth Tickell in 2014 we have now lost Peter Collins who died on October 24th and Martin Goetze of Goetze & Gwynn who died on 23rd of August this year. Both Peter and Martin died of cancer.

Lee is already planning the annual calendar of NDOA events which will be sent to members in due course. It was also agreed that, following a recent survey of members, that funeral fees for organists would remain the same as last year at £70 for a simple service with no choir.

The meeting was declared closed at 4:35 p.m. so that members could stretch their legs and use 'the facilities' before choral evensong at 5:00 p.m.

Following the meeting NDOA members were treated to a fine choral evensong by the combined choirs of Olney Parish Church and St. Mary the Virgin, Finedon. Stanford's *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* in B flat is everybody's favourite (except for curmudgeons) canticles and the anthem was the ever popular Handel *Zadok the Priest* here scored for organ and trumpets (provided by two of Olney's choir members). Having never heard it performed this way before (except with an orchestra) it was something of a revelation and an exciting and enjoyable experience. Lee Dunleavy conducted although somebody should repair Lee's choirmaster surplice which appears to have been rent in twain.

Following on from Tony Edwards' interesting and enjoyable programme from last year which included the Sing a New Song afternoon for local composers and the trip to North London we look forward to Lee's programme of events for the coming year. Refreshments were served by members of the host church choir members. A full report will be published by the committee next year.

Please note, subscriptions are now due for membership 2015–2016. The treasurer would be grateful if payment could be made before December 31st as it costs money to chase up absent-minded members for their subs.



Peter Whittle remembers Adrian Smith (14 June 1939 - 24 September 2015)

I first came across Adrian in July 1982 when my father, the Revd Fred Whittle, retired to Raunds. I, along with an uncle and aunt, helped to settle my father in and, of course, on the Sunday, we went to St Peter's church, Raunds. At morning service, the late Peggy March played; in the evening, the organist was Adrian. They shared the duties - Peggy playing when Adrian was detained by the other love of his life: railways. He was a competent organist, playing in what was by then an 'old-fashioned' style, not ashamed to use manual doubles and generally producing a full-bodied sound.

Through the years we became great friends, especially after 1988 when I joined my father permanently in Raunds. By this time Malcolm Pentelow had become organist and Adrian was a loyal deputy. When not playing, Adrian could be found singing in the choir or serving. He showed the same loyalty to me when I was organist for a short while and, later, to Nigel Buckby. He was an excellent colleague in all aspects of church life, as well as a great friend outside church.

After Sunday Evensong, he and his wife Elizabeth would accompany my father and me back to 6 Coleman Street (the Whittle residence) for a 'quickie' - his favourite tippie being a Bristol cream sherry. When its makers, Harvey, adopted a bright blue bottle reminiscent of the poison bottles of yore (but without the fluting), Elizabeth nicknamed the drink 'meths' - and it remained meths ever since. When, sadly, Elizabeth died, there were just the three of us for quickies; when my father passed away there were two, until my friend Joan made the number back up to three.

One of the things we joked about on these occasions was a confusion suffered by a mutual acquaintance if a hymn tune served for two sets of words; for example, if one sang Dundee to 'The people that in darkness sat' he would feel uncomfortable as he really only knew it to 'Let saints on earth'. We discussed the day's hymns to find similar examples. Joking apart, Adrian's knowledge of hymns and hymnals was encyclopaedic. During a hymn pick there was seldom need to refer to the index of first lines, as Adrian knew his hymn numbers by heart.

In latter years, Raunds Evensong was conducted by a lay team of Pat Stuart, Mike Turner and Adrian. Adrian made himself responsible for finding lesson readers and those to prepare and deliver intercessions. Readers were issued with biblical references on small notes in Adrian's distinctive hand; these notes came to be known as 'betting slips'. To the best of my knowledge, Adrian was no gambler!

Hymns were not the only topic on which Adrian amassed a store of knowledge: one example was multiplication tables up to 20, claiming he found this very useful. Another was his memory for the sounds of different engines. As a youngster he could tell which make of bus was toiling up Wellington Hill in Raunds; later on, when in the country with Elizabeth, he remarked, 'I can hear a brush'. Elizabeth expected to come upon someone sweeping up leaves with a besom, but what Adrian was hearing was the sound of a Brush diesel-electric locomotive!

When I could no longer see well enough to drive, Adrian would transport me to musical events, such as those arranged by the N&DOA, which in turn resulted in his joining the organisation. Adrian was generous to a fault in giving lifts to medical appointments and the like, frequently offering without being asked.

November 2015

THE ORGAN IN CALVERTON CHURCH

by
Canon Hilary Davidson

Recently, I had to attend a funeral at the parish church at Calverton, just south of Stony Stratford, and hence out of the NDOA territory - if you want to be strict. I was seated in a choir-stall in the chancel, and found myself facing the organist, and not as in many of the village churches in our district, looking at his back.

As the service progressed, I wondered whether the organ had been rebuilt fairly recently with electric action, which would make a semi-detached console an easy way of helping the organist to a real control of the choir. Then I studied the cheerful patterns stenciled on the front pipes and realised that I had seen a very similar set on the front page of our Newsletter of March 2015, in the church at Ansty in Warwickshire - and that until not long ago, there was a third set at Badby near Daventry. All these organs have (or had) the name of Thomas Atterton of Leighton Buzzard on a brass plate.

I had to leave fairly soon after the end of the service, but like many others of the NDOA, I felt that I must have a closer look at this 'reversed' console; and the organist kindly opened it again for me to see the keys, pedals and stop-knobs. When I listened to the music, I guessed that there was one manual and about half-a-dozen stops; but to my surprise, I counted twelve knobs, six on each side of the single keyboard. There are some registers that we didn't hear during this particular service, reasonably enough for a funeral, I suppose; but an unusual feature for an organ probably built in the 1880-90 period is that three of the foundation stops are divided into Treble and Bass, with two knobs each. So the specification reads like this (below right):



The knobs controlling the three divided registers are on different sides of the console, so you can't grab the two with one hand; but this arrangement does make it possible to play a solo with the right hand as long as the 'tune' doesn't go below middle C. Someone is bound to ask why the Oboe is not divided too: the only answer I can give is, "Ask the organ-builder" I assume that the pedal Bourdon has only the bottom twelve pipes, so as to meet the manual Double Diapason; and the coupler Bourdon on Keys makes it possible for someone who doesn't play the pedals can, by using this coupler and playing the bass in octaves, make the 'noble bass' so beloved by Victorian musicians. There are still a number of small organs around in Northamptonshire which have only twelve pipes of 16' at the bottom end of the manual, for the same reason. In the days when the manuals of English organs often began at 10' G, organists were taught to play three notes with the right hand, so as to be

Calverton, All Saints		
Pedal	Bourdon	16
Manual	Double Diapason	16
	Open Diapason Bass	8
	Open Diapason Treble	8
	Stop Diapason Bass	8
	Open Diapason Treble	8
	Principal Bass	4
	Principal Treble	4
	Mixture	12, 15
	Oboe	8
Couplers: Keys to Pedals; Bourdon to Keys		
Swell lever pedal; Mechanical Action		

able to play the bass in octaves - and this way of playing didn't die out until the music of, for instance, J. S. Bach began to be popular, and C-f pedalboards of 30 notes became necessary.

I think I must visit Calverton again soon!

Editor's note: The NPOR tells us that Henry Willis & Sons Ltd installed a 'Scudamore-type' instrument in around 1860 which was rebuilt by Atterton in 1867. The specification of the Willis instrument is not given so we do not know what Atterton did to the organ.

Scudamore takes its name from the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Upton Scudamore in the Diocese of Salisbury. A nineteenth century incumbent (the Rev John Baron) devised a low cost, high quality organ of one manual, usually without pedals, based on medieval designs. Baron's organ design was suitable for small churches without the financial resources or the need to buy a larger instrument but, at the same time, to accommodate the growing fashion for accompanied hymns. It also meant that these organs took up very little space.

The Scudamore organ design proved to be so popular that some of the most well-known organ builders (in this case Willis) turned their hand to building organs based on Baron's principles. Over time many were rebuilt with the addition of pedals and a second manual to support the vogue for choirs in chancels. Nevertheless, many of these little instruments still exist intact in our smaller parish churches. The term 'Scudamore organ' fell into disuse in favour of the much grander 'chamber organ' which they definitely are not.



Revd Richard Coles, speaker for the RSCM Dinner

We'd enjoyed a good meal, engaged in lively conversation with our neighbours at the table, caught up with news with friends and colleagues and been entertained by Fr Richard's stories - but as I drove home I couldn't help thinking back to the morning, and the simple ceremony that had been going on in towns and villages all round the country. At Finedon, for example, a group of us stood beside the war memorial on the High Street while the local RBL representative held up the traffic, the flag-bearer and his escort moved forward and lowered the standard for the two-minute silence, after which he marched back whence he came, the traffic resumed its inexorable flow and the 20 or so locals dispersed after exchanging a few words. I was brought up in the early post-war years when all this was taken very seriously. And then, after the CND marches of the Fifties, the 'make love not war' mantras of the Sixties, the 'loony left' of the Seventies and Eighties, it became deeply unfashionable to remember the war dead; there was also some silliness concerning white poppies some years back (well, we all want an end to war, we all want peace). But it seems that the wheel has turned full circle, as it always does, and now it's taken seriously again and dealt with properly in the media and by Town Halls. So I wore my poppy to the dinner - a very fetching red on black. Just right.

Picture © Daily Mail

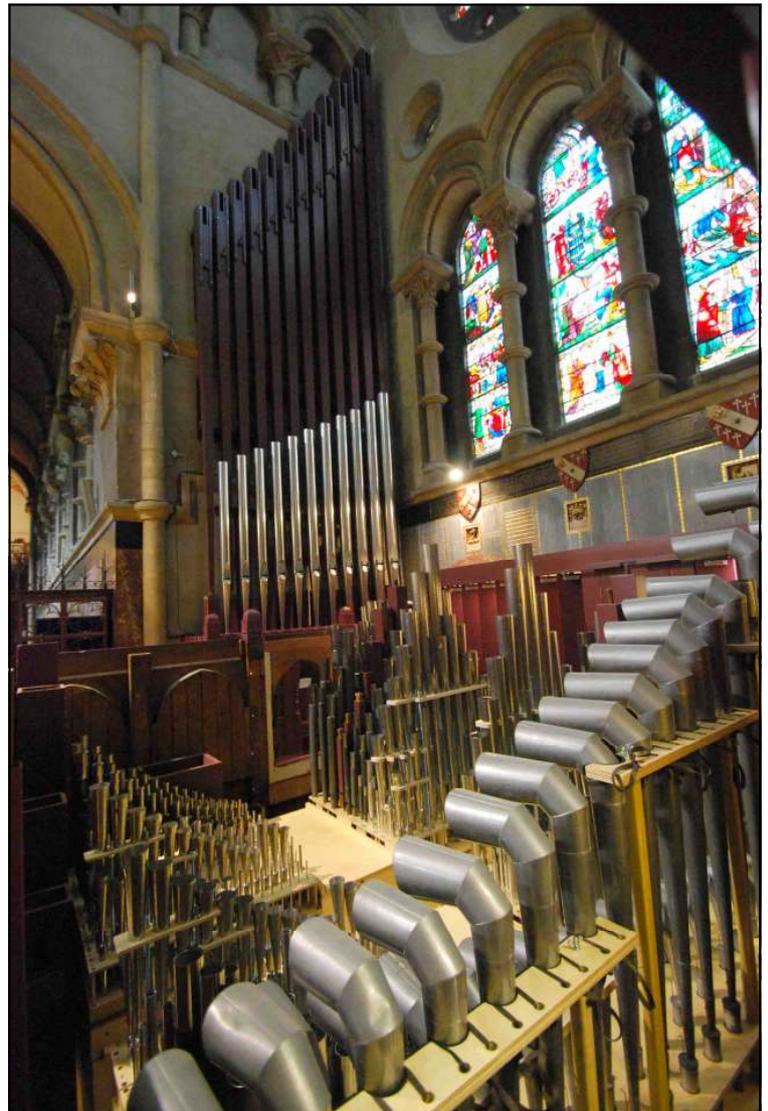
Ireland for the Organ-Lover: St. Fin Barre's, Cork (and other delights)

by
Helen Murphy

Last summer I spent a few days in the Republic of Ireland (my first visit). Based initially in Limerick, then moving on to Cork, we travelled round quite a bit. Apart from the surprising lack of rain (we had a little, but nothing like the downpour England suffered - I was expecting to return to a parched garden and wilting plants, but everything was green and sodden), the thing that most struck me (again, apart from the natural friendliness of the natives) was that, wherever you went there were two cathedrals. Without going into the whys and wherefores of complicated Irish ecclesiastical history, it was apparent that, basically, the Church of Ireland had all the old buildings and the Catholic Church had all the 'new' ones - but not always. One exception was Waterford, where both had a cathedral built by the same man (John Roberts) in the same style (Baroque) twenty years apart and within easy walking distance of each other. Another exception was Cork, where the Catholic one was, strictly speaking, a 'pro-cathedral', but the Church of Ireland was 'new' - i.e. a neo-Gothic fantasy by William Burges (of Cardiff Castle fame) inspired by his love of the 13th-century French style. (Co-incidentally, Cobh, just down the river from Cork, boasted a neo-Gothic cathedral also in the French style, but this time by Pugin).

Dedicated to St Fin Barre (from Fionbarr = fair-headed), the first Bishop of Cork who founded a monastery there in the 7th century, the cathedral grew and developed during the Middle Ages and, at the Reformation, became part of the Established Church (later to become known as the Church of Ireland). St Fin Barre's is the 'mother church' of the Church of Ireland United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, with a cathedral also at Clynne and Rosscarbery. The mediaeval cathedral was pulled down in 1735, to be replaced by a plain Classical style building. And so it continued; this in turn was deemed no longer fit for the purpose and was demolished in 1864, to be replaced a few years later by the present magnificent edifice. Although it was consecrated in 1870, work there continued for many years, following Burges's meticulous designs. Burges, like Pugin, was a purist and a man who believed that if a job was worth doing it was worth doing well, and designed every part of the building - sculptures, fittings, stained glass, you name it. His design for the font had originally been conceived for Lille cathedral (a genuine 13th-century French Gothic setting perhaps), but Lille's loss was Cork's gain. I could spend a long time describing the wonders of this amazing building, but I'm coming to the point, as it's the wonders of the organ that I want to write about.

First of all, as you enter the cathedral, you are aware of organ pipes on the West gallery (nothing remarkable about that). However, as you walk round the building, as I did, from the South aisle, along the ambulatory round the apse, and head back down the North side, your senses are assailed by a wonderful smell of new wood emanating from a pit in the North transept. Take a peep through the gaps in the protective screen - lo and behold a veritable





forest of organ pipes reveals itself, row upon row of gleaming metal set in the fresh timberwork. And not only pipes in the pit, but pipes up on both the East and West walls of the transept. How did this surely unique arrangement come about? The earliest record of an organ is the Chapter Acts of 1633 when the Dean and Chapter authorised 'that the sum of Ten Pounds be paid for the completion of a musical instrument, called in English, organs, as is the custom to have in Cathedral Churches...' and so it came to pass. Soon afterwards, however, Cork was taken by English Parliamentary forces, with Cromwell himself there, in 1649. Sadly, we know only too well Cromwell's opinion of organs and the effect that his parliamentary troops had on church furnishings in England and it was no different (and probably worse) in Ireland.

However, in 1710 another resolution was passed for a new instrument to be ordered from John Baptiste Cuvillie of Dublin, which was eventually installed in 1739. A report from 1805 gives the maker's name as Renuus Harris, so it is possible that Cuvillie was acting as an agent. By 1816, as this instrument was giving trouble, a new organ was ordered from Flight and Robson - however, this didn't last long, as the Classical Cathedral, as we know, was demolished in

1864. So many buildings, so many organs! It seems that Burges had considered two organs - one at the West end and another smaller one near the Chancel (in the French style, of course!). Buttresses and supports and a door leading to a staircase which would have given access to the organ loft, are still visible in the South aisle of the Ambulatory, and Burges's design for the organ case can be seen in the cathedral archives.

In fact, a single instrument was eventually installed on the West gallery by William Hill of London in 1870 (3 manuals and 40 stops, with pneumatic action on the Great and tracker on the rest). Nevertheless, although the organ itself was fine at the West end, as can be appreciated, there were problems with accompanying the choir at the East end. Eventually, it was proposed to move it to the North transept, but to avoid blocking the window and mosaics there, it was placed in a 14ft-deep pit in 1889 by a local firm, T. W. Megahy, leaving only the tops of the tallest pipes visible. A further enlargement by Hele and Co of Plymouth in 1906 involved adding a fourth (Solo) manual and pneumatic action throughout. This too underwent a rebuilding in 1965/66 by J W Walker, with a complete overhaul resulting in electro-pneumatic action, 56 stops and 3012 pipes. Although this was considered a fine instrument, very well suited both to 19th-20th century solo repertoire and accompanying the choir liturgically, another re-build took place in 2011-2013 by Trevor Crowe, after a massive fund-raising project, with a complete redesign and augmentation. This resulted in the transfer of the Great to the West gallery, with the Choir and Swell remaining in the pit, new 32' pedal reeds to the West wall of the transept and some re-located pipes on the East wall - altogether, a stunning arrangement. There was a small, but interesting display of the organ builder's technical drawings but, sadly, no updated information leaflet. And my efforts to find out more from the builder's web site have come to naught, as there doesn't seem to be one. Unfortunately, owing to the constraints of time and circumstance, it was not possible to experience the organ either liturgically or in recital mode. However, next time... who knows?

Organ Building News

Sadly we report the deaths in 2015 of Peter Collins of Peter Collins Ltd, Melton Mowbray who passed away on October 24th after a long battle with cancer, and Martin Goetze of Goetze & Gwynn located at Worksop, Nottinghamshire who also died from cancer.

Like the late Kenneth Tickell, who tragically died in 2014, Martin Goetze began his career at Grant, Degens and Bradbeer which for a time shared premises with the ill-fated firm of Alfred E. Davies & Son Ltd on Campbell Square, Northampton. Martin was born in 1951 and began his organ building career in 1971 with GDB at a time when GDB was building English organs to traditional designs but with modern materials. In time Martin went on to launch, with Dominic Gwynn, the firm of Goetze & Gwynn in the 1980s. Initially, the firm's workshop was in Northampton, however by 1985 the firm had moved to the Welbeck Estate in Nottinghamshire where it gained a reputation for high quality mechanical action instruments along with a growing reputation for historical restorations based on painstaking research; for example, the restoration of the 1821 Henry Lincoln organ in Thaxted Parish Church in 2013.

Martin Goetze was committed to the training and nurturing of young organ builders. A matter of some importance for English organ building with the industry now employing something like a tenth of the number of skilled craftsmen (and women) that it did fifty years ago. Martin was President of the Institute of British Organ-Building from 2009 to 2013 and a member of the Publications Committee 2009 until his death. As a member of the Training Committee he was closely associated with the founding of an IBO apprenticeship programme.

Peter Collins will have been well-known to many members, mainly for the hybrid (pipe + digital) organ at St. Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers. The firm of Peter Collins Ltd was formed in 1964 in Melton Mowbray. Specialising in tracker organs and restorations he was an advocate, like Kenneth Tickell, of computer assisted design (CAD). Examples of Peter's work in Northamptonshire are small in number; apart from Higham Ferrers only two other examples exist: St. Peter & St. Paul Harrington (a rebuilt Robson/Bevington) and St. Nicholas, Potterspury (Alfred Hunter/Grey & Davidson rebuild). His organs can be found more extensively in the counties of Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, in many other parts of the UK and as far afield as Australia, France, Germany, Norway and Korea. For those with a desire to visit Norwich a look at the IIP tracker organ of St. Peter Mancroft provides convincing evidence of the skill of the Collins company. However, controversy followed the firm when Peter formed an alliance with the digital sound firm of Allen in Trönö, Sweden to produce hybrid organs. This proved to be too much for the staid IBO which frowned upon the practice and Peter was expelled from the IBO. However, in 1984 Peter Collins had received a more favourable reception for his small 8' 4' 2' organ for St. Alban's Cathedral and he has been associated with the St. Alban's International Organ Festival ever since.

Rather late, perhaps because it received hardly any publicity at all, I would like to remember my old friend Robert Shaftoe of Pavenham, Bedfordshire who died on 19th March 2013. Robert was in his final year of apprenticeship with the firm of Alfred E. Davies & Son when I joined as a novice apprentice. By then under the directorship of Jack Davies (Alfred's son) the company was rapidly gaining a reputation for shoddy workmanship. It was thanks to Robert, who had accumulated a wealth of knowledge about the work of many other organ builders both historical and contemporary, that I learned what real organ building was about. Under Jack Davies ranks of pipes had a habit of disappearing from one organ and appearing in another! Robert soon left to continue his experience at Mander's in London, by which time he was already building spinets and harpsichords in his spare time. Setting out on his own he returned to his native Bedfordshire as a one man firm occasionally accompanied by his wife Joy and Jack Russell, Ben on tunings. He built few organs, mostly around Bedfordshire. It was said that although his organs took a long time to emerge from his workshop that they were well worth waiting for.

To lose so many 'local' organ builders in so short a time is a sad reminder of *tempus fugit*.

Handel, his Hornpipe and Harrow on the Hill: 18th July 2015

*by
Helen Murphy*

What a gem! St Lawrence Whitchurch, with its beautifully restored Italian wall and ceiling paintings - both realistic and trompe l'oeil architectural features, is pure theatre (almost literally) and pure Italian Baroque. Behind the centrally placed altar at the east end of the nave, in front of a raised 'stage', with wings (painted scenes), proscenium arch (yes, really!) surmounted by a heavenly Adoration of Jehovah (i.e. the Hebrew tetragrammaton set in a burst of light), lies framed the exquisite little organ. Set in the internal semi-circular apse (a bit of stage scenery as the church walls are four-square, painted with its cerulean sky and fluffy white clouds on the half-dome of its ceiling), the instrument has pride of place.

But I'm getting carried away with my enthusiasm! Back to the beginning: eight NDOA members and friends set off on 18th July in two cars, one from Higham Ferrers and the other from Northampton and, by the wonders of modern technology (satnav) and by good old-fashioned route knowledge (one member used to live in that part of the country), we contrived to meet at the appointed time.

We have James Brydges, the first Duke of Chandos (1674-1744), to thank for all this - his family 'pew' was the west gallery (in a similarly internal semi-circular 'apse' to match the one at the east end), with its own separate access, thus avoiding any contact with the lower orders. It was his association with Handel that had brought us here, as it wasn't only Italian painters he employed - Handel was his composer-in-residence, producing many works performed in the church (and not only the well-known Chandos Anthems) by the Duke's concert of musicians, with Handel himself at the organ. Having admired the organ from the nave, we had quite a trek to get to it - exit stage left, up some steps, round to the back of the 'apse', in which a curved door opened on to the rear of the 'stage', behind the painted scenery, through a small gap - and there it was, with much more room behind than you would imagine. The two short manuals have reverse black and white notes (like a harpsichord) - however, the 'black' notes were not just white, but striped like my favourite Liquorice Allsort (white/black/white) - very jazzy, but unnerving to play in negative when you are not used to it. I found it difficult to see the joins between the notes and wasn't quite sure where I was (and I think I was wearing my glasses!). These were not Handel's manuals of course - that venerable 3-octave keyboard was preserved in a special glass case. The organ has endured several restorations/renovations/extensions over the years by various companies, concluding with Comptons in 1951 who (according to the 1950s guidebook) 'brought it up to date with electrical action and fitted it with press light stops'. Enough! No more!! Nothing at all remains of all this activity now, thanks to the final (definitive?) re-build by Goetze and Gwynne in 1994, which incorporated the surviving parts of the original 1716 Gerard Smith pipework within its original Grinling Gibbons casework, together with new pipes based on the organ at St Mary the Virgin, Finedon (hoorah!) - now known to be by Father Smith (1704). What a little beauty! For full details of specification and pictures, go to the Goetz and Gwynne web site (www.goetzwynn.co.uk).

I fell in love with St Lawrence's - even with its box pews (and I don't do box pews!) - which just goes to show how we can change over the years: in my teens and twenties I would have loathed it.

Harrow on the Hill is aptly named: the approach road winds up the hill past Harrow School (one gaily patterned building in warm brick and white stone looks just like the renewed St Pancras Station - which I've always loved, even when it was black), doubling back in a hairpin bend to the last lap up to St Mary's Church. We had a moment of panic passing several rather smartly dressed people on the bend - had we been double booked with a wedding? Fortunately, by the time we reached the church, they had vanished (prize-giving at the school perhaps?).

St Mary's, while pleasant enough, is a fairly standard mid-Gothic edifice, having been given the usual radical make-over by Sir Gilbert Scott in the 1840s, with later work by Sir Aston Webb at the turn of the twentieth century.

It had originally been proposed in 1893 to install an organ in the south side of the chancel, but this was abandoned when three Norman windows were uncovered, still bearing traces of painted decoration on their splays. However, the early-20th century enlargements gave space for an organ, and a three-manuals-and-pedals instrument by Lewis and Co was installed in 1900, later to be restored by David Wells of Liverpool in 1998. The organ has a good rich sound, with particularly fine strings, and an unusual arrangement of drawstops - in blocks rather than vertical rows. Interestingly, the two flat arrangements of pipes flanking the central tower have closing doors. They were open of course, which made me wonder what their purpose was - do they act like the shutters on the swell box, with some modification of the sound? Are they for house-keeping purposes - keeping the dust off and stray birds out? Or are they simply there for reasons of aesthetics?

The barrel-vaulted chancel roof, having been renewed in the 18th century, now has a pretty painted ceiling, each panel patterned with gold on a rather dark-blue background, thanks to the work of Campbell Smith and Co in 1972. The original Elizabethan memorial brass to John Lyon (1514-1592) and his wife (in English of course at that date) is now placed on the north transept pier; Lyon was the founder of Harrow Free Grammar School in 1572, the ancestor of the present school. For reasons unknown, below it on the floor, a white marble tombstone, bearing a Latin translation of the English inscription was laid in 1875. Now, that's a curiosity.

And so, after a delicious Italian lunch, on to St George's, Headstone - quite a different building - red-brick and 20th-century for a start, though still in the Gothic style, built as part of the Diocese of London's northward move into 'Metro-Land', as John Betjeman referred to it. Designed by John Samuel Alder (1847-1919), it was consecrated in 1911, though not finished until 1961. Historically, Headstone Manor and its estate had been owned by Archbishops of Canterbury since 1344 until being requisitioned by Henry VIII from the then incumbent, Thomas Cranmer, in 1545. I don't know where Cranmer moved to, but when the King took a fancy to something of yours, you didn't argue. (The same thing happened to Cardinal Wolsey with Hampton Court.)

The interior at St George's - basically red brick up to a head-height dado, plastered above, and with stone columns and arches - is simple but effective. I detected a hint of Comper in its clean elegance and subtle colours, and was not surprised to learn that the main influence in its style and character was actually one of his pupils - Martin Travers (1886-1948) - whom I did not know, but who clearly reflected Comper's vision of eclectic purity. Travers was the chief stained-glass instructor at the RCA for many years, with his magnificent *Te Deum* East window at St George's (1937) probably his tour de force; however, he contributed many other smaller objects and furnishings, giving a unity to the whole.

The font cover, although designed by John Crawford in 1947, for some reason was not actually made until 2003. However, his screens for the Lady Chapel, designed at roughly the same time, were installed in 1949 (having being made at the Faith Craft Furnishings studio in St Albans). Further screens were added on the north side in 1954. But the curious thing about the Lady Chapel screen (elegant spindles, greenish-grey and bronze in colour, mounted on a wooden lower section) is that, as it advances eastwards, it encounters an immovable object i.e. the organ console and, as it obviously cannot go in front of it, it must go round the back, effectively enclosing it in a cage (albeit a three-sided one). It is a fairly tight fit (sadly, Carlo Curley would not have coped!), with some space for music storage, but not a lot - but at least it might serve to deter passers-by from distracting the organist by asking inappropriate questions.

As for the organ itself (Rothwell three-manuals and pedals), with the pipework housed in its own fine oak case in the north choir aisle opposite, it has several unusual features, as well as being in a cage. For a start, it has the Rothwell patent console, where the stop tabs are placed over their respective manuals with, helpfully, the pedal tabs repeated on each and - what is more - they are all placed in logical order: 16ft → 8ft → 4ft and so on, and pp to ff, so making it easier to achieve a quick crescendo and/or diminuendo with very little hand movement, all of which is very helpful to a visiting organist. Of only 13 in the world, this one at St George's is the largest and oldest, having achieved its century this year in 2015. What is more, it has a very unusual stop: the Aeolian (inspired by the ancient Aeolian harp, an arrangement of suspended strings which sounded as and

when the wind blew) - very soft, as you might imagine, and ideal for accompanying the choir. Although the manuals are set further apart than normal, it is still possible to use a 'thumbing' technique. And, finally, the stool - which must have been shaped with a particular bottom in mind (the first organist's perhaps?), as it has two indentations for the legs either side of a wide middle section extending forwards -for an extremely fat person with a large gut to support? Who knows, but significantly it is now placed the other way round - phew!

After all that, it was time for some refreshments, generously provided by St George's, before we had to gird our loins for our journeys home. At each church we had been to, we were met and welcomed: at St Lawrence's by Stuart Cawthorne, who kindly gave us a potted history and a guided tour of the place; at St Mary's by Isobel Platings, the granddaughter of Martin Shaw (a minor composer who, along with RVW, was one of the music editors of Songs of Praise, which those of a certain age will remember was the standard hymn book in many schools - those were the days!); and at St George's by Meg Pointer, who fed and watered us, as well as providing us with much background information - for which many thanks. And thanks are due too to Robert Tucker who with his local knowledge was able to plan and guide us in this most enjoyable day. Even the sun was shining!

NDOA News

Congratulations to NDOA student member Lauren Hollis. In December she was awarded a high merit (127) in her ABRSM Grade 7 organ exam, playing J.S.Bach's *Prelude & Fugue in A minor* BWV 551, the second movement of Boellmann's *Suite Gothique* and Philip Moore's *Paeon*. Lauren is the Organ Scholar at St Andrew's, Great Linford but took the exam on the Binns organ at Olney Parish Church.

In addition, she has recently been awarded the Hibbs Organ Scholarship by the Prayer Book Society to enable her to extend her experience of accompanying and conducting BCP services, and she has been offered a place at Chetham's Music School in Manchester to study in sixth form from September 2016, first study singing, second study organ.

Lauren is a student of Jonathan Harris and was awarded some funding from the NDOA's David Morgan Education Fund earlier this year to purchase her grade 7 organ music.

Make the most of your membership

As well as our superb website (one of the best designed websites for an organists association in the country) the NDOA has a new venture. Begun in 2013, but so far with few members, the NDOA has a forum on LinkedIn the site for serious users of social media. Unlike Facebook which is frivolous and used for product placement LinkedIn offers users the opportunity to discuss with fellow NDOA members current organ and organ playing topics. If you have a query you may find the answer there. Or perhaps you just want to talk about something, or offer other organists the benefit of your experience.

Go to: <http://uk.linkedin.com/> and sign up. There are two types of membership; standard membership which is all you need to access the NDOA forum is free. Once you have signed up search for the NDOA forum and join it.

Why not go digital to receive this Newsletter? Not only does it reduce your membership fee if you go digital but the end product looks so much better because it is designed to be viewed on screen.