



NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

June 2015

Reg. Charity No. 274679



Where in Northamptonshire is this organ? See page 9 for the answer. You may be surprised to learn that although some of Northamptonshire's Anglican churches are redundant (clue) they still contain workable organs, and that those who continue to use the churches love them and work to have the organs restored. (*Picture: Barry Wadeson*).

FROM THE EDITOR



As usual the summer months change the rhythm of church music with choirs and organists taking a break from the long, uneventful days of Trinity (unless your church is one of those that celebrates every minor saint in the calendar. But this does allow us to get out and about to look at organs elsewhere and admire the instruments that others get to play on a daily basis. In July we have a trip arranged by our President to Harrow and in August the annual organ crawl takes us to Finedon, with its recently restored Father Smith organ, followed by Rushden and Mears Ashby. As a little treat, this Newsletter includes a look at an organ that is, perhaps, not on your guest playing circuit – All Saints, Holdenby (see front cover). This is a beautiful church, abandoned by the Church of England, and tucked away from sight. Fortunately, the Churches Conservation Trust is only too happy to add it to its list of 347 architectural gems, many of them still with working organs. If you get a chance to visit Holdenby church you will not be disappointed.

Barry Wadeson
(Editor)

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TWO LONDON ORGANS:

Behind the Scenes with our Roving Reporters

by

Helen Murphy & Don Kennedy

1) Organ Masterclass with Bine Bryndorff - Royal Academy of Music, 11th March 2015

Recently I had the rare opportunity of attending part of an organ masterclass with Bine Bryndorff in the Duke's Hall at the Royal Academy of Music. Bine is Professor of Organ and Church Music at the Royal Danish Academy of Music and Head of Department. She has done much as a soloist, teacher and examiner, and has many recordings to her name.

I say 'part of' the masterclass because it was scheduled from 6 till 9 and I had another appointment elsewhere, so could only stay for the first hour. But what an hour! And what an organ! (But more of that later.) Six or seven students were gathered on the platform together with a few members of the sparse audience brave enough to venture up there - chairs had been put out for us but some chose to stay in the main body of the hall. It was certainly a good decision to move up to the platform, firstly to be closer to Bine (and what she might be saying) and secondly for a better view of the business section of the organ and what each particular student might be doing thereon.

The first played Buxtehude's *Praeludium in G minor* (BuxWV 194) - a lengthy work in several sections. After commending the player, Bine launched into an account of the type of education Buxtehude would have received - crucially it would have included Rhetoric i.e. how to present a subject, develop it with a counter subject/counter argument and come to a conclusion - all of which Buxtehude translated into his *Praeludium* (this was powerful stuff and a total revelation to me, an amateur musician). Bine discussed the student's choice of registration, commending it, but giving a demonstration of possible alternatives. The second student chose a much shorter piece, also by Buxtehude - *Vater unser im Himmelreich* (BuxWV 219), not one that I knew.

Again, Bine listened carefully, commended the student on his interpretation and suggested possible alternative registration. More interestingly, she stressed the importance of the words - words which Buxtehude's listeners would have been very familiar with, but we are not. Read the words, she said, and not just the first verse! Make sure you have an English translation if you don't read German, and (and this is the best bit) write them in your music where the chorale line occurs, all the way through, all the verses! By so doing, you can see just how Buxtehude is interpreting, developing, shaping and revealing the all-important message of the text. Sadly, at that point, I had to leave, but lingered a few moments in the doorway to hear the opening of the next student's stab at the *Praeludium* in G by Bruhns, born the same year as Buxtehude. (Although I'm familiar with some of Bruhns's choral works, I knew nothing of his organ repertoire).

And now to the organ itself. Installed in the summer of 2013, and fitting snugly into the far end of the hall (its distinctive, unusual case echoing the lines and colours of the hall), it looks like nothing else I have seen. It is characterised by strong vertical lines (the major pipes) and short horizontal lines in red, white and blue across the face of the lesser pipes (yes, I know it sounds ghastly, but it works), the whole creating a pattern not unlike a knitted 1930-40s tank top (the sort of garment sported by bespectacled junior boffins - think Christopher Gable as Eric Fenby in Ken Russell's film about Delius). David Titterington, Head of Organ, and his colleagues at the RAM drew up a specification to suit all the possible needs of the Academy, that is to say, not just a solo instrument but one suitable for performance with an orchestra. It was built in the Kuhn Orgelbau workshop near Lake Zürich in Switzerland and is known as the Sir Elton John and Ray Cooper Organ, after the two Academy alumni who spearheaded a series of fund-raising events. For full details about the specification, and pictures of its installation, visit www.ram.ac.uk/organ.

Helen Murphy

2) Messiaen's Muses - Royal College of Music, 9th March 2015

Two days earlier there had been a similarly rare chance for the public to hear the organ at the Royal College of Music (no, not the one on show in the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, which, according to a student I spoke to, is actually in store under the concert platform; the visible pipes are for show only!). The College instrument available to students is a three-manual Walker organ of 1993 in the West Parry Room, "high in the roof space of the main College building", according to the RCM's website (which doesn't actually depict this particular room or mention the organ). I frequently attend concerts at the College, but had never before penetrated beyond the East Parry Room!

David Graham, Professor in Charge of Organ, has told me that the instrument wasn't designed for concerts/recitals. Rather, it was intended as a teaching instrument - the specification (drawn up by John Birch, Nicholas Danby and others) being intended to provide a wide variety of registration possibilities in music of different periods and styles. By 2018 the RCM will, in fact, have a new instrument in its Concert Hall - one much more suitable for concert- and recital-use. It's also worth noting that "Although we do some examining on this organ, most of our major examination recitals take place in churches close by."

Messiaen's Muses was described in the programme booklet as "Four days of spell-binding piano music" - but I was especially spell-bound by my close-up experience of a magnificent organ (five paces from my seat and I could have helped to turn pages)! The room is small (space for an audience of no more than around 60 people) and the instrument packs quite a punch. In a programme subtitled *Couleurs et mystères* no fewer than nine students brilliantly demonstrated every nuance of Messiaen's inimitable music. 11 separate pieces were performed - including six movements from *La Nativité du Seigneur* shared between five different organists! We also had two movements from *Messe de la Pentecôte, Joie et clarté* (Les corps glorieux), *Le banquet céleste* and *Transports de joie* (L'Ascension).

In his introduction to these unusual proceedings Professor Graham (who is also Director of Music at the Jesuit Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, in London's West-End) emphasised that, although we were in a small room, we would lose nothing of the true organ colours and timbres expected of this particular composer's music... and he was right! The ambience may have been nothing like hearing such things in a massive space, reverberation-and-all, but the intimate nature of the occasion meant that every detail of the music was crystal-clear and that Messiaen's "Colours and mysteries" were in no way diminished. (See www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=D07226 for more details and a photo of the instrument.)

I attended most other events during the festival: *Chants de terre et de ciel* (songs by Messiaen, Poulenc and Ravel), *Visions de l'Amen* (the eponymous work for two pianos), and part of *Oiseaux exotiques* - a remarkable all-piano event lasting from midday until 7.00pm and divided into eight, individually-titled sections, containing music "that reflects time, place and the natural world"; before each one the hall was even filled by a recording of a specific bird, before we heard the relevant movement from *Oiseaux exotiques* itself!

I can't stress strongly enough what wonderful performances are available to the public at London's music institutions (very often, free of charge - as was Messiaen's Muses - or for a nominal sum). So many of my most memorable concert experiences in central London since 1973 have been at the Royal College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (not forgetting Trinity Laban in Greenwich); Messiaen's Muses - in particular, *Couleurs et mystères* was no exception.

Don Kennedy

ENGLISH CHURCH MUSICIANS VI

Thomas Tallis (c1505 - 1585): A composer for all seasons.

by
Barry Wadeson

Thomas Tallis and William Byrd are often written of as if they were joined at the hip. It is true that they formed a remarkable partnership with Byrd as the junior partner in a publishing enterprise; and both survived the back and forth swings of the Reformation from Catholic to Protestant then back to Catholic and finally Protestant again. But, other than the fact that they both composed music to Latin and English texts they were individuals of very different temperaments and the older Tallis seems to have adjusted better to Protestant England than did his junior, William Byrd. Consequently, they will be treated separately in this series of the lives of English Church Musicians.



Tallis was one of the first composers to write anthems and canticles to English texts for the Protestant Church. His *Dorian* [Short] *Service* and the anthem *If ye love me* have never been out of the Anglican choir repertory. It was his diligence in writing for the prevailing religious tides, his sober lifestyle and restrained views on religion that kept him alive during the years of bloody Tudor politics where to say the wrong thing was to lose your head (and probably your intestines and genitals too). Whilst Merbecke (born around the same time as Tallis) ranted about Catholic Masses, and got himself into trouble for it, Tallis kept his opinions to himself although, as we shall see, he wasn't averse to tweaking the noses of the Tudor music police.

As with many other musicians of his time his date of birth is shrouded in mystery. He was born in the opening years of the 16th century and most sources suggest this was 1505 and possibly in Kent. But we hear nothing of him until 1532 when he was appointed *joculator organorum* of the Benedictine Priory at Dover. The quaint term *joculator* (which can also be interpreted as juggler, jester or joker) is Middle English (derived from Latin) for a wandering minstrel or entertainer. However, anyone expecting the sober Tallis to cavort around the organ loft dressed in a suit covered in bells and waving a pig's bladder on a stick would have been in for a disappointment. He was a model of discretion. Between his birth in 1505 and 1532 nothing is known of his early life or where he received a musical education. Some writers (Long, 1972; Arnold and Milsom, 2014) suggest he was one of the children of the Chapel Royal which is where so many of our Tudor musicians were trained. The fact that he was buried at Greenwich where the Chapel Royal was situated and that he was a gentleman of the Chapel Royal for most of his life would tend to support this assumption.

In 1537 he was appointed conductor of the choir of St. Mary-at-Hill in London but left after a year to take up a post of either master of choristers or, possibly, organist of Waltham Abbey. He lost his post on 23rd March 1540 when Waltham became the last of the monastic foundations to be dissolved under Henry VIII's infamous destruction and plundering of England's monasteries. Clearly, a talented musician such as Tallis would not remain unemployed for long and in 1541 he popped up as a lay clerk at Canterbury Cathedral. This adds weight to the hypothesis that he had been at some time an experienced chorister/singer rather than just an organist. His stay at Canterbury was brief too and in 1543 he was appointed a gentleman of the Chapel Royal, a position he retained until his death in 1585. Unlike the ideological Merbecke, who escaped death by the skin of his teeth, and the restless Byrd (fined several times for being a recusant) Tallis led a quiet and sober life, singing, playing the organ and composing. The last two lines of his epitaph read: "As he did live, so also did he die, in mild and quiet sort (Oh happy man!); to God full oft for mercy did he cry, wherefore he lives, let death do what it can."

Yet underneath this pious demeanour an uneasy peace was maintained between the necessity of earning a living and Tallis' Catholic leanings. This perhaps explains the edgy *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, *Suscipe quaeso* and *Miserere nostri*. It has been suggested that Tallis' moody and reflective *Lamentations of Jeremiah* were meant for private Catholic devotion and were not sung liturgically because the text used by Tallis does not follow exactly the Sarum liturgical texts as would be expected. In particular, some of the Hebrew letters that mark off the verses e.g. Aleph, Ghimel, Heth etc. are in the wrong order and some verses only partially used. However, there were other composers at this time composing for Holy Week liturgies that included the same 'errors' and perhaps we should not read too much into Tallis' state of mind some 500 years ago (Arnold and Milsom, 2014).

I well recall in the late 1980s singing Tallis' *Lamentations* from the west gallery at St. Matthew's after Friday choir practice in Lent. After a full rehearsal the boys would depart to their respective homes whilst the men would process, robed, into the choir stalls, lit only by candles and there sing Compline to plainsong in a dark and empty church. Afterwards we processed silently up to the west gallery to sing one of Tallis' *Lamentations*. It was a moment connecting a large Victorian gothic church with a centuries old monastic tradition of singing the last office of the day followed by one of Tallis' masterly choral pieces for men's voices. Such special moments come to us rarely in life and I have never experienced one again that held such calm spirituality at the end of a hectic day. On the other hand, one of the other enjoyable experiences at St. Matthew's was singing Tallis' *Five Part Litany* in procession on the first Sunday in Lent. Only a large church the size of St. Matthew's can give you the space to process in a figure of eight and sing Tallis' *Litany* arriving in the choirstalls with a just a few petitions to go. I can still sing the bass line from memory. It was the Great Litany that introduced me to such delicious words as fornication (and all other deadly sins). One wonders, however, what the Catholic Tallis may have thought of the supplication:

From all sedicion and privye conspiracie, from the tyrannye of the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, from al false doctrine and herisy, from hardnes of heart, and contempte of thy word and commaundemente.

Good lorde deliver us."

By 1559 when the Prayer Book was revised (yet again) under Elizabeth I the "tyrannye of the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities" had gone. With several Catholics among Elizabeth's advisers this may have been an act of statesmanship. Tallis lived through the turbulent reigns of four Tudor monarchs: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. We can only surmise that Tallis would have felt quite at home in the court of Elizabeth where Latin was not only permitted but encouraged. A Latin translation of the *Book of Common Prayer* was made by Walter Haddon and published in 1560 as the *Liber Precum Publicarum* with Elizabeth's approval. These Latin prayer books were for use in places where Latin was understood and spoken: at court, at universities and colleges and, also, where English was *not* spoken such as in Ireland. Latin was a hard language to eradicate; we tend to think of the Reformation as an overnight revolution but, in fact, it was a slow process and despite Henry VIII declaring himself Head of the Church in England he died a Catholic (if not a good one). Latin was the universal language that transcended national borders and the preferred language for communicating ideas. It was still being spoken in preference to English by Bishops in James I's time – several years after Elizabeth's death.

There is thus a large canon of Latin Church music by Tallis, which he continued composing even as he was setting English texts to music for a Protestant liturgy. And for that we have Elizabeth to thank for her patronage of both Tallis and Byrd, and her love of Latin liturgical works. Take, for example, Tallis' *O nata lux de lumine* published with Byrd in *Cantiones qua ab argumento sacras vocantur* in 1575. This, their first book of Latin texted motets, was the first ever printed in England, and dedicated to Elizabeth I (it always pays to suck up to the most powerful person in the land). Apart from not having an English text, *O nata lux* is virtually homophonic, demonstrating that in the hands of a master composer great music could still be written without the need for long polyphonic runs. Indeed, one of the most beautiful pieces ever written by Tallis is his *If ye love me*, with which I am sure the reader is acquainted. This short, English texted, anthem is to all intents and

purposes homophonic (thus conforming to the stricture laid down years earlier by Cranmer that music should have one note or chord to a syllable). But look closely at the score and there we see how Tallis subtly inserted passing notes here and there and used staggered entries to give a suggestion of polyphony. After just four bars at 'I will pray the father' Tallis breaks out into semi-polyphony, almost as if he is toying with the Protestant music police, before returning to a stricter homophonic style at: 'that he may bide with you'. However, even here the staggered entrances of first the tenors and basses, then the altos and finally sopranos gives a sense of constant movement. What is not there are the long runs on vowels that we see with his *Salve intemerata* written when he was a young man (possibly whilst he was still at Dover Priory). *If ye love me* is, in my view, a masterpiece in the repertoire of Anglican Church music, and it is beautiful.

We should not, however, be fooled into thinking that this conversion to a less florid musical style was entirely down to the English Reformation. England was not cut off from the continent and a much simpler style of music was already making its way across the channel. Tallis' earlier Latin Mass for Four Voices was homophonic and, in any case, the highly decorated fashion of Dunstaple and Taverner was falling out of fashion. Even the most music-loving congregations were finding that antiphons that went on and on (and on) for up to 25 minutes just a little tedious.

Of course, we couldn't leave Tallis without mentioning his, perhaps, most well-known work today: *Spem in alium*. It is strange that this forty-part anthem is virtually the only one of Tallis' works that those outside of the close-knit circle of church musicians can think of (that is, if they have even heard of Thomas Tallis). The origins of the work are shrouded in mystery and speculation – Tallis' own manuscript was originally held in the library of Nonsuch Palace and was listed in 1596 as: "a song of fortie partes, made by Mr. Tallys." Nonsuch was Henry VIII's most grandiose palace, built over the village of Cuddington in Surrey, it remained unfinished at his death. In 1556 Queen Mary I sold Nonsuch to Henry FitzAlan, 19th Earl of Arundel, who completed it. It returned to royal possession in the 1590s, and remained royal property until 1670, when Charles II gave it to his mistress, Barbara, Countess of Castlemaine. She had it pulled down around 1682–3 and sold off the building materials to pay off gambling debts. Today, no trace of the palace remains.

Scholars have been left to work on two seventeenth century copy manuscripts, one of which is a contrafactum (i.e. English words replacing the Latin text) version for the investiture in 1610 for Henry, Prince of Wales, James I's son. It is claimed that Tallis rose to a challenge when Italian composer Alessandro Striggio brought his 40 - 60 part mass *Missa sopra Ecco si beato giorno* to London in 1567. In 1611 (over forty years later) a law student, Thomas Wateridge wrote:

In Queen Elizabeth's time yeere was a songe sen[t] into England of 30 partes (whence the Italians obteyned ye name to be called ye Apices of the world) wch beeinge songe mad[e] a heavenly Harmony. The Duke of – bearinge a great love to Musicke asked whether none of our Englishmen could sett as good a songe, and Tallice beinge very skilfull was felt to try whether he would undertake ye matter, wch he did and made one of 40 partes wch was songe in the longe gallery at Arundell house, wch so farre surpassed ye other that the Duke, hearinge yt songe, tooke his chayne of Gold from his necke & putt yt about Tallice his necke and gave yt him.

Now, the problem with anecdotal evidence such as this is that details of times and places change in much the same way that they change with Chinese whispers. Arundel House was the London residence of Henry FitzAlan the Earl of Arundel and the Duke mentioned by Wateridge is believed to be his son-in-law, Thomas Howard, the 4th Duke of Norfolk. More to the point, FitzAlan owned Nonsuch Palace which had an octagonal banqueting hall with four first-floor Balconies. It is quite plausible that Tallis designed *Spem in alium* to be sung with four choirs on the ground floor and four from the balconies. Moreover, FitzAlan employed one of the largest companies of musicians in England.

If we accept that *some* of the details here are accurate, and they appear not to be completely exact since, for example, Wateridge erroneously refers to 30 parts to Striggio's *Missa sopra Ecco*. Furthermore his identification of Arundel House as the place of performance is suspect. The latest that the Duke of Norfolk could have put a gold chain around Tallis' neck was 1570 when Thomas

Howard was released from the Tower of London and before he was re-arrested and imprisoned again in 1571. Howard was executed in 1572.

Other explanations for *Spem in alium* are that the anthem in forty parts was written to celebrate Elizabeth I's fortieth birthday; let's not forget that Tallis and Byrd's *Cantiones qua ab argumento sacras vocantur* was a bit of brownnosing of the first degree; it contained seventeen motets by Tallis and seventeen by Byrd and was presented to Elizabeth I in honour of her 17 years on the throne. And since Elizabeth had, by royal decree, granted to Byrd and Tallis a patent to print music and lined manuscript paper it is equally conceivable that Tallis and Byrd would take every opportunity to flatter the Queen. On the other hand, it has been suggested that *Spem in alium* was written for Queen Mary I since both composers were favourites of her court too. This latter suggestion is, in my view, unlikely.

Regardless of its provenance and the motivation for writing it, *Spem in alium* is one of the most astonishing pieces of writing by any composer.

After the most intricate chordal passage so disposed between the various choirs, Tallis contrives the entire choir of 40 voices to enter as one after a pause, "upon a magical change of harmony". With the words "respice humilitatem nostrum" Tallis ends with the most strikingly unhumble polyphonic passage yet heard, framed by the strong harmonic rhythms of the ensemble. The view that this might be Tallis' opus magnum is intriguingly suggested by Hugh Keyte's observation of a possible numerological significance in the work's duration being exactly 69 long notes: in the Latin alphabet, TALLIS adds up to 69 (Legge, 2014).

Spem in Alium is a majestic work throwing the sound from one choir to the next. Interestingly at bar 40 of this 40 part motet this is the first time that all eight choirs come together before dissipating into quieter passages only to reach another burst of *tutti* at bar 70. Finally, at bar 122 to the end we are treated to a magnificent ending that leaves the listener breathless as each of the eight choirs weaves its way through a complex polyphony that many of us could only dream of writing. The extraordinary thing is that the eight choirs are not doubling up but singing independent choral works within a much bigger work.

Tallis left three masses including the *puer natus est nobis*, two Latin Magnificats, two sets of Lamentations, around 40 Latin motets and other pieces, psalms, litanies and approximately 30 English motets but very little instrumental music. And we really must not forget Tallis' famous canon normally sung to the words 'Glory to thee my God this night'.

Tallis married his wife Joan in around 1552, believed to be the year that he took on William Byrd as a pupil. There is no record of children from the union. Thomas Tallis died on either the 20th or the 23rd of November 1585 (records differ) and he was buried in the chancel of St. Alfege, Greenwich. The current 18th century building replaced the original church after a great storm brought the earlier building down, destroying Tallis' monument in the process.

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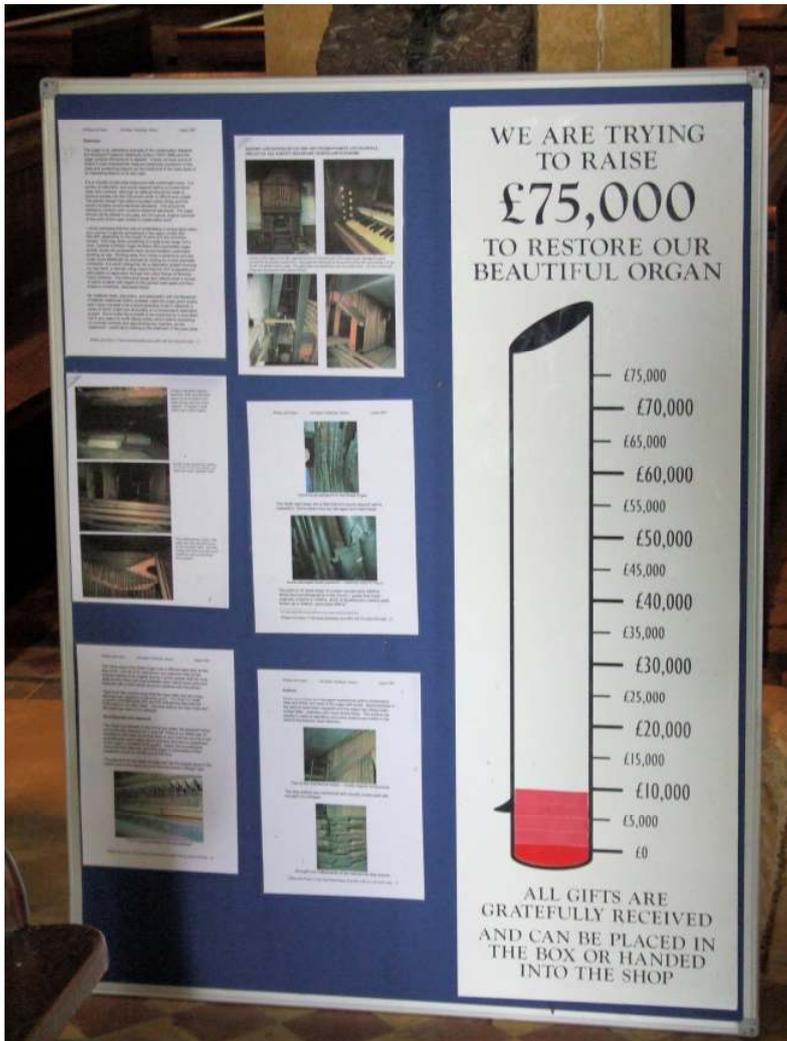
THE ORGAN OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH, HOLDENBY

by
The Editor

As many of you know, I am a volunteer for the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) that looks after redundant Anglican churches in England. (A similar organisations exist in Wales under the name of the Friends of Friendless Churches). Volunteers work in various capacities either looking after a single church or as a team caring for groups of churches. Around 280 of the CCT's 347 churches are in rural or remote locations. As well as cleaning and caring for the fabric of the buildings (the churchyards remain the responsibility of the dioceses) many of us work on projects such as researching the history of the buildings and monuments. Quite a few volunteers have undertaken courses in conservation and others are retired lecturers, teachers, architects acting as tour guides, or have other skills such as project management or organisational skills.



All Saints Church, Holdenby, with its splendid yew trees is hidden behind the rear gardens of Holdenby House and is accessed nearly a mile down two lanes (Picture: Barry Wadeson)



Redundant does not necessarily mean neglected. CCT churches are still consecrated with services still held in them (usually at Christmas, Easter and the churches patronal festivals). Most are grade I listed buildings and are open to the public throughout the year (although you may have to find the key-holder first).

Redundant also does not mean that the churches have no organs. Although some instruments have been removed others are still in working condition whilst a few are in need of restoration; the organ of St. Peter's Church, Deene (another CCT church) has recently been restored. Sadly, the CCT is not flush with money, relying on the free time of its volunteers and the subscriptions of supporters as well as grants and donations. It is not surprising, therefore, that whilst the CCT concentrates on maintaining the fabric of the buildings (mostly ensuring that the churches have a roof to keep the rain out) it has no money left over to restore the organs in its care. It is left to local volunteers to raise funds to restore the



Reaching Holdenby Church requires a vehicle with good ground clearance or a sturdy pair of legs. This is the cart track behind Holdenby House. The owners of Holdenby House can simply cut across their garden and enter the churchyard by a private gate!

organs, and Holdenby Church is currently raising funds to repair its Wordsworth and Maskell of Leeds organ.

Before we go on to look at the organ, which will cost £75,000 to restore, you may be wondering why Holdenby Church is so difficult to reach. Indeed, some of you may have visited Holdenby House itself at sometime or another and noticed the absence of a church in the village. In fact, Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor to Elizabeth I, came into possession of the village of Holdenby and presumed it to be a fine location to build a grand house. However, the village of Holdenby was located on land that Hatton had earmarked for his gardens and house and so Hatton simply moved the village (as one does). Thus, to visit the church, one is obliged to travel half a mile along

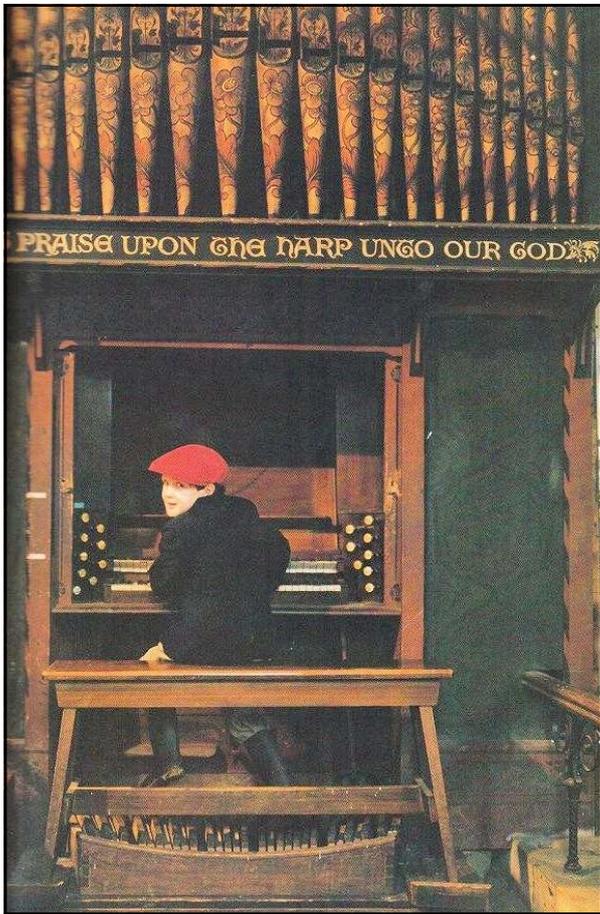
the side of the grounds of Holdenby House and then a further half mile along a cart track behind Holdenby House gardens to reach the church.

Despite being difficult to find, the church is in a delightful location with splendid monuments and tombs in a churchyard, lined with yew trees and a view across the Northamptonshire countryside. On the day that I visited I sat in my car eating my sandwiches and enjoyed the sheer pleasure of being totally alone (apart from the departed sleeping peacefully in the churchyard). Inside the church are monument slabs dating back to the 13th century and several panels of Biblical texts on the walls placed there in Elizabethan times. They are not, therefore, from the King James Bible as some believe, but the Great Bible which preceded the King James version. There is also a magnificent screen installed around 1700 that came from Holdenby House itself; Hatton is said to have been a Catholic and rumoured to have once assured Mary, Queen of Scots that should Elizabeth die the throne would pass to her. However, in 1587, he was one of the commissioners that found Mary guilty of treason and urged that the warrant for her execution be taken forthwith to Fotheringhay. Quite possibly, like many in the Tudor Court, he was keeping his options open rather than being disloyal.

The organ

The organ was installed by Joshua Wordsworth & Samuel Maskell of Portland Street, Leeds. The company was established in 1866 as Wordsworth & Maskell. A new workshop in Hanover Avenue was built in 1888 by which time the firm was known as Wordsworth & Co. It became Wood, Wordsworth & Co. in 1922 and by 1957 incorporated the three businesses of Abbott & Smith, Andrews & Co. (of Bradford) and T. E. Hughes. Wood, Wordsworth & Co worked on the organs of Leeds Town Hall, Leeds Parish Church, and Worcester Cathedral. The firm ceased trading in 1981.

Under the Wordsworth name, from its various incarnations from Wordsworth & Maskell to Wordsworth & Co the company, had large and useful connections in the counties of Lancashire (c. 60 organs), Lincolnshire (c.23 organs) and Yorkshire (c. 80 organs); in Leeds alone the firm built over fifty new organs as well as rebuilding fifteen others. Wordsworths exported instruments as far afield as India, Newfoundland, Russia, Australia, Canada, and the West Indies. Of the Wordsworth & Maskell organs however, only 53 can be found on the NPOR today.



Rather surprisingly, over 80% of Wordsworth & Maskell's 53 organs still on the NPOR were built in what Yorkshire people would regard as 'the south', that is: Hampshire, Herefordshire, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, Sussex and Northamptonshire. The Northamptonshire organs are those of: St. Mary Magdalene, Cottingham (IIP, 11); St. Andrew, Kettering (IIP, 21); St. Peter, Lowick (IIP, 16); St. Helen, Sibbertoft (IIP, 12); St. Mary the Virgin, Weekley (IIP, 13); St. Mary the Virgin, Welford (a Bevington rebuild: IIP, 18)); St. Peter, Northampton (IIP, 17) and, of course, All Saints, Holdenby (IIP, 14).

The Holdenby organ is in a chamber on the north side of the chancel, in fact the chancel rail penetrates the case work, and the pedalboard and bench are on a raised platform. On the day that I arrived the console doors were locked. I always find the locking of consoles somewhat irritating, it is as if organists regards the organ as their own personal property. At St. Lawrence's, my own CCT church, the console is unlocked and if members of the public wish to try their hands (and feet) at playing the organ they are encouraged to do so. However, to return to Holdenby; since I could not open the console I have been reduced to 'borrowing' a Facebook picture from the Holdenby organ appeal page. Quite why this young man is wearing Wellington's and a bright red cap I have no

idea, but he has that look of enjoyment that I experienced when I was first allowed to sit at the console of an organ around the same age.

The NPOR rather vaguely suggests that the organ was installed c1890, but Canon Hilary Davidson in his fascinating book *Choirs, Bands and Organs: A History of Church Music in Northamptonshire and Rutland* (2003) tells us that the Rector's wife was playing the organ in 1884 making it more likely that the organ was built in 1867 when the church was restored. If so the Holdenby organ could be one of the earliest examples of Wordsworth & Maskell's work since the company flourished 1866–1888.

Unable to play the Holdenby organ (that is, if it is currently playable) I cannot say what it sounds like. Perhaps a member of the NDOA who has done so can enlighten us. All Saints is quite a large church with two side aisles and has seating for around four hundred. In May last year (2014) the Choir of Peterborough Cathedral conducted by Robert Quinney gave a concert in the church in aid of the appeal fund.

Specification: All Saints, Holdenby			
Pedal	Bourdon	16	
	Soft Bass	16	Wind cut
Great	Open Diapason	8	
	Stop Bass	8	12 pipes
	Dulciana	8	TC
	Principal	4	
	Flute Harmonique	4	TC
	Mixture	II	12.15
Swell	Open Diapason	8	
	Lieblich Gedact	8	
	Keraulophon	8	Grooved
	Principal	4	
	Oboe	8	
	Cornoepen	8	
Manual compass 56 notes (Low C to high g3)			
Pedal compass 30 notes (Low C to high f3)			
Coupplers: Sw to Gt; Sw to Ped; Gt to Ped			
Combination pedals x 2			
Mechanical action. Electric blower (very prominent)			

Entry to Holdenby Church is free, but if you visit do please leave a donation in the wall safe and/or a donation to the organ fund in a separate box. The church is open between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sundays during the Summer; at other times you will have to contact the keyholder. There is a notice in the church porch with the keyholder's telephone number. Take a mobile phone with you, it's a long walk back to the village.

SING A NEW SONG: 25th April 2015

by
Helen Murphy



The Sing a New Song Choir

About 14 singers, 12 composers, three accompanists and a small gathering of supporters assembled in plenty of time in the unique historic surroundings of Brixworth Church to work out the logistics for a new joint RSCM/NDOA event - Sing a New Song. This was the first of its kind (and, it is hoped, will not be the last) - a chance for local composers to present their pieces and hear them sung by this small SATB group singing at sight, with no chance to 'practise beforehand and spoil all the fun', as Flanders and Swann would have it. ('They argue with umpires, they cheer when they've won, and they practise beforehand, which spoils all the fun!' Who are they? Why, foreigners, of course! See A Song of Patriotic Prejudice) Well, with no practice beforehand, the singers and accompanists managed to give quite a good account of themselves and the music and have plenty of fun as well - if not quite what was implied in the song.

So how did this come about? Many NDOA members, as well as being organists, also conduct choirs and even sing in them as well, and so it was suggested that that it might be interesting to see/hear what people were actually singing in their churches. People write liturgical music for a variety of reasons (though strictly speaking, perhaps only half of the day's compositions could be described as liturgical, in that they accompanied the liturgy itself, rather than being an add-on, such a hymn or an anthem): David Watts wrote a Christmas carol to Susan Hill's words for a competition; Andrew Moodie set a psalm as a birthday present for his wife; John Wilson took a simple melody-only setting of Psalm 116 he had come across in Montserrat and arranged it for piano and mixed

voices for a local community choir; Teresa Brown needed a Communion Processional chant for a special occasion - and so on. As for me, after the musical baby had been thrown out with the bathwater of the post-Vatican II liturgical reforms, I looked with increasing dismay at the abysmal quality of what was falling into the hole to replace it and thought 'I can do better than that!' and have been hard at work ever since. (I should add that the standard has improved somewhat since then!) And, of course, we've had a similar situation in the Catholic Church yet again, albeit somewhat less traumatic, since the introduction of the new translation in 2011, when we've all been obliged to update our Glorias and Sanctuses (though this time we were given a reasonable transition period, after which the old words should not be used - that some people have chosen to ignore this is another story).

There was no going back - with Tony Edwards in charge of the time-keeping, we started at the beginning and, with a short break mid-afternoon for refreshments, sang through everything on the programme, each composer giving a brief introduction to the music- how and why it came about - and finished on time. I'm not going to attempt any sort of critical analysis of the day's works - that would not be appropriate to the event, and in any case, as an amateur, I would not consider myself suitable for such a task. Nevertheless, as a participating singer and contributing composer, I can say that I thoroughly enjoyed singing all those various settings. (For full details of all the works and their composers, see below.) Next time (and there will be a next time) we could perhaps look at fewer pieces and incorporate a little practice in order to make a better performance - the committee is working on it!



Robert Page (left) conducts one of his choral pieces during an afternoon showcasing the compositional talents of members of the NDOA and RSCM. Each composer conducted his/her own compositions (with the exception of the editor who was busy taking photographs). Accompanists were Andrew Moodie, Jonathan Harris and NDOA President Tony Edwards who also organised the event and kept the house in order. Many thanks are due to the choir that, apart from a 30 minute rehearsal, largely sight-read the pieces for the afternoon. More pictures of the afternoon are on the page 15.

View looking down the nave (right). All Saints, Brixworth is a superb example of an Anglo-Saxon church dating back to the 7th century (the tower was added in the 10th century). Originally part of a monastery, which explains the large size of the church, synods were held there in the 8th and 9th centuries. The style is described as Romanesque and is shaped like a basilica. The high altar at the East end is situated within an apse. Although later additions have been made to the church it remains one of the finest examples of Anglo-Saxon Architecture both in England and Europe.



Title	Words	Composer
We call to you, O Christ of hope (hymn) Tune: Bletchley	Richard Sturch	Robert Page
Can it be true? (Christmas carol)	Susan Hill	David Watts
In the bleak mid-winter (Christmas carol)	Christina Rossetti	Robert Tucker
Lucis Creator (Vespers hymn)	Trans. Michael Hodgetts	Helen Murphy
How lovely is your dwelling place (Responsorial Psalm for the Anniversary of the Dedication of a Church)	Trans. The Grail	Helen Murphy
Refrain Gloria (new translation)	ICEL 2010	Helen Murphy
Evening Service in B flat	BCP	Robert Page
Bless the Lord, ye his Angels (anthem)	Ps 91:1; Genesis 28:12	Andrew Moodie
Hosanna to the Son of David (anthem)	Matt 21:9; Luke 19:38	Sue Allen
Act Justly (Procession Chant)	Micah 6:8	Teresa Brown
I am the vine (anthem)	Teresa Brown (based on John 15:5)	Teresa Brown
What shall I render to the Lord? (anthem)	Psalm 116	John Wilson
Psalm chants		Barry Wadeson
The Chichele Mass	Common Worship Order 1 Com- munion Service (modern lan- guage)	Robert Tucker
Come unto me (anthem)	Based on Matt 11:28	David Pugh
Versicles and Responses	BCP	Robert Page
Gloria (from Missa Peregrinorum)	Common Worship Order 1 Com- munion Service (modern lan- guage)	Lee Dunleavy
Hymn to St Mark (anthem)	Christopher Smart	Robert Page



A very brave choir indeed put themselves forward to sing nineteen works at sight. It is true that some of the choir had received copies the previous day and a short rehearsal took place half an hour before the session began – but apart from that all singers sang the works as if hot off the press (and some of them were).

Many present suggested that the format be repeated next year but, perhaps, with fewer entries and more rehearsal time.



Top left: Tony Edwards gathers the choir together with words of encouragement. **Top right:** John Wilson conducts *What shall I render to the Lord*. **Middle left:** David Watts conducting *Can it be true* **Middle right:** Robert Tucker conducts his *Chichele Mass*. **Bottom left:** David Pugh conducts *Come unto me* **Bottom right:** Hon. Secretary Helen Murphy conducts her own *Lucis Creator*.



What's On



- Saturday 13th June** 3:00 p.m.  **Members Recital.** St. Michael's Church, Perry Street, Northampton, NN1 4HL. Retiring collection in aid of the David Morgan Education fund
- Saturday 27th June** 7:30 p.m. **Concert.** Mozart *Great C Minor Mass & Clarinet Concerto*. Northampton Bach Choir, Cond: Lee Dunleavy; Clarinet: Harry Michalas. St Matthew's Church, Northampton, NN1 4RY
- Tuesday 30th June** 7:45 p.m. **Concert.** A Summer Soirée of Seasonal Songs, Madrigals and Partsongs from across the ages by Morley, Lassus, Haydn, Schubert, Holst, and more. Northampton Philharmonic Choir. St Michael's Church Perry Street Northampton, NN1 4HL. Admission free, donations to choir funds.
- Saturday 4th July** 7:30 p.m. **Organ Recital.** St. Mary Magdalene, Castle Ashby, NN7 1LQ. Martin Setchell (Christchurch, New Zealand). Admission £10.
- Saturday 18th July** All Day Event  **Handel, his Hornpipe, and Harrow-on-the-Hill.** NDOA visit beginning at Little Stanmore, HA8 6QS. At Little Stanmore (IIP 16) we visit the organ Handel played and where he composed The Chandos Anthems; its Grinlin Gibbons case is beautiful. Next, to St. George, Headstone HA1 4RJ where the Rothwell organ (IIP 32) is 100 years old this year. The final stop is at St. Mary, Harrow-on-the-Hill, HA1 3HL with its splendid Lewis organ (IIP). Please watch out for further details such as start time and refreshments.
- Saturday 29th August** 11:30 a.m. **Organ Recital.** St. Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers, NN10 8DL. Philip Bricher (Holy Trinity, Northampton). Admission free, retiring collection.
- Monday 31st August** 10:00 a.m.  **Bank Holiday Organ Crawl** beginning at St. Mary's Church, Finedon, NN9 5NR. We begin with the recently restored instrument at Finedon (IIP 21) Father Smith/Holdich organ. Then on to St. Mary's, High Street Rushden, NN10 0PG (IIP 22) Walker organ, finishing at All Saints, Mears Ashby, (off Wilby Road) (IIP 13) Hill organ with its beautifully decorated front pipes. Lunch will take place between Rushden and Mears Ashby at the President's home in Wilby NN8 2UB.
- Saturday 17th October** 3:00 p.m. **Messiaen Rarities.....never before heard** (except for last year). We are delighted to be joined by members from neighbouring associations to this event when Don Kennedy will present his never before heard recordings of Messiaen in performance and improvising. Don't miss it. St. Matthew's Parish Rooms, NN1 4RY