

# NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION



June 2017

*Reg. Charity No. 274679*

## FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the June issue of the NDOA Newsletter. This being a rather packed edition I hope there is something for everybody; from the magnificent organ at the Archikatedra in Gdansk, Poland to the refurbishment of the Abington Avenue URC Makin organ. I don't know if

this is a first for the NDOA Newsletter but I don't recall a digital organ having an article all to itself before. Electronic instruments have come a long way since the days when analogue electronic organs first appeared which sounded rather like someone playing a pipe organ in a septic tank. Elsewhere you will surely find something to tickle your fancy; from Helen Murphy's visits to recitals in and around London to a trip down memory lane and the great freeze of 1962-63 as I continue to reminisce on the trials and tribulations of being an organ builders apprentice.

Do not forget the dates for your diary on the back page. Jonathan Harris is looking for singers for RSCM Sunday on the 18th June at Finedon. And a treat for fans of The Sixteen: they are coming to Northampton on June 21st at All Saints.

*Barry Wadeson*  
(Editor)

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*Front cover picture: The Great organ of the Archikatedra, Oliwa, Gdansk, Poland.*

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# AN ORGAN TRILOGY No 2

by  
*Helen Murphy*

## Part 1: Royal Naval College Chapel, Greenwich

In the commercial world, 22nd November is mid-Christmas. However, in the ecclesiastical world (and I prefer to think the real world) not only is it the feast of St Cecilia (hurrah!) we are still several days short of Advent Sunday, so organ recitalists at this time wisely ignore all the surrounding hype and hysteria and get on with the job regardless. The organ scholar at Trinity Laban, Max Barley, in his lecture-recital in the Chapel of Ss Peter and Paul in the Old Royal Naval College at Greenwich, gave us Bach, Elgar, Couperin, Bridge and Walton, with not a whiff of the festive season. Beforehand, we learned that the organ was originally built by Samuel Green in 1789 for £1,000, with an extra £500 paid for the making of the case by William Newton, and is believed to be Green's largest instrument still in its original position. It has since undergone many rebuilds in an attempt to increase its volume, as Green's much-loved characteristic 'soft and sweet' sound proved inadequate to later needs; the most recent was by David Wells of Liverpool in 1997, which usefully included the provision of a second console in the chancel, thus greatly improving communication between choir and organist during liturgical use.

## Part 2: Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, London

Next day, former NDOA President Lee Dunleavy delighted us with a Feast of Czech Music at Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, as part of their after-work Wednesday recital series, once more refreshingly free of any hint of the prevailing outside influence (frivolous fairy lights in the trees and the ubiquitous Father Christmas - a good bloke, Father C, but at the right time): a *Prelude and Fugue in D* by Dvorak, a *Notturmo* by Bedrich Antonin Wiedemann (a new one to me!) and an arrangement by Adrian Self of Smetana's *Vltava* from *Ma vlast*. The original J W Walker instrument was restored and enlarged in 2012 by Harrison and Harrison, which the resulting Wednesday concert series, of which this was one, celebrates. Next stop, Westminster Cathedral.

## Part 3: Westminster Cathedral

We are used to seeing buildings, particularly churches, lit up dramatically, but as I rounded the corner into the piazza in front of Westminster Cathedral, there it was, all red. Red? Yes, and with a large screen to one side,

reading: 'Thank you for supporting Red Wednesday' followed by long list of names of various churches and organisations. It was an article in *Oremus* (their free magazine) that enlightened me - briefly, Red Wednesday is part of an inter-faith drive to draw attention by ACN (Aid to the Church in Need) to the plight of Christian communities in the Middle East, Pakistan and, in particular, Syria and the current conflict in Aleppo. Red Wednesday, 23rd November, was promoting ACN's Religious Freedom report, to be launched the following day at the Houses of Parliament - highlighting abuses to religious freedom around the world. I remember meeting a young man a couple of years ago at St Gregory's Church in Northampton, born in England of Iraqi parents, who was touring the country giving organ and/or piano recitals in aid of ICIN (Iraqi Christians in Need). The cradle of Christianity is indeed in dire straits, with numbers plummeting as people flee to escape the persecution - so, all power to Red Wednesday's elbow.

But that wasn't why I had gone to Westminster Cathedral on 23d November: it was actually the last recital in the Grand Organ Festival 2016 by Vincent Dubois (from Notre Dame de Paris) that had drawn me. And what a programme! He started off with the *Allegro Vivace* from Widor's 5th Symphony (making a splendid change from you-know-what), followed up with the Impromptu and Toccata from *Vierne's 24 Pièces de Fantaisie*, Duruflé's *Prelude et Fugue sur le Nom d'Alain* (one of my favourites, both that and the Litanies that he quotes). And he concluded with Dupré's *Symphonie-Passion*, which, in spite of my being a Dupré fan (*Cortège et Litanies* got me hooked many years ago) I didn't know! Another thing I didn't know about was Dupré's connection with Westminster Cathedral's Grand Organ. It seems that it was installed in stages: not only was he involved with the siting and design, he gave an inaugural recital in 1922 on the incomplete instrument and again in 1932 when it was finally finished. But during that period he regularly came back, most memorably in 1924 for the world première of *Symphonie-Passion*, when the most recent addition, the 32' pedal reed, a *Contre Bombarde*, made its début. Even with the then incomplete organ, it must have been something spectacular - far more than simply the sheer volume (and that in itself is quite something!). It was the quality and timbre of the sound that marked it for me. Quite stupendous! But this was far more than just a virtuosic performance - it would be remiss of me not to make mention of the overwhelming spiritual power of the music, the resulting religious energy bouncing back off the walls - it's not just a loud noise! And the cathedral was nearly full too - can't be bad.

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## AN ORGAN BUILDER'S TALE – PART 2

by  
*The Editor*

**M**y first year as a pre-apprentice at the Northampton firm of Davies's had taught me a number of things, the first being not to get on the wrong side of Dennis Macready the works foreman. The second was that all was not well with the company. For a start Davies's new organs were built with frames made of something called Handy Angle; metal strips with slots that is nowadays used to construct warehouse shelving. A sort of grown-ups Meccano. This was because it was cheaper to buy large quantities of handy angle than pay for craftsmen to cut and mill wooden frames. Davies's also relied heavily on electric action for new organs. It was quite the vogue in the 1960s to build extension organs whereby, as a result of electrical jiggery-pokery, one rank of pipes could replace two or more.

For example, an 8' Diapason could also be the 4' Principal simply by adding an extra 12 pipes at the top end and using an extra stop marked Principal 4' (effectively an Octave stop under another name). Two ranks of pipes for the price of one. Although many British organ builders were doing much the same thing only Davies's carried it to the extreme by turning one rank of 85 pipes into a Diapason 8', Principal 4', Fifteenth 2' and perhaps a Twelfth thrown in for good measure. The customer, of course - who didn't have the first clue about the insides of organs - thought they were getting a good deal when they saw the impressive stop list. It also saved on tuning and voicing! However, the balance between 8', 4' and 2' stops was, to say the least, one of the major problems. Quite simply - there was no finesse - just a wall of similarly sounding noise as if coming from an organist with four hands. And, more importantly - limited power when you needed it.



The 'naked organ' at the Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart, Weston Favell.

Now, many organs have sub-octave and super-octave stops sometimes with ranks of pipes being extended or borrowed but Davies's turned extensions into an art form. It was also fashionable in the 1960s to build organs that were architecturally minimalist in design - that is, without cases; one example can be found at the Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart at Weston Favell where the organ stands on a large platform above the main entrance. I do not know who built this organ, but quite likely Davies's, and it does not even get a mention in the NPOR. Since the church was opened in 1974 it suggests that minimalism was still alive and well after I quit organ building.

No doubt these 'nude' organs were influenced by Harrison and Harrison's huge

organ built for the Royal Festival Hall in 1954. And Coventry Cathedral's organ is semi-nude flashing its wares (like ladies in the red light district of Amsterdam in their windows) from compartments rising high on each side of the choir entrance. Caseless organs were all the rage! These were part of a movement that supposedly returned to classical styles of organ building. 'Classical' is, perhaps, an inapplicable word and it wasn't just the prudish Victorians that felt some things were more alluring covered up. The movement did not last long, however, and beautifully decorated cases gradually made their return. Even the simple architectural style of a decorated row of dummy front pipes give an organ a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Perhaps one day the naked organ will be seen not as classical but rather an aberration or a curiosity.

The other advantage for organ builders at this time was that electric action meant that consoles could be placed anywhere in the church, indeed, you could have as many consoles as you liked and organs could be spread out all around the building. Davies's had many such organs where a small wind chest with just a few ranks of pipes had been grafted on to a chancel wall perched above the choir. Stowe School Chapel, St. Mary's, Warwick and St. Mary's, Henley come to mind. In each building a small wind chest clung tenaciously to the chancel wall - presumably to accompany the choir. To be fair to Davies's they were not the only company indulging in these practices - even the mighty Walkers were turning out ropey organs. There were around 2,500 people working in the industry back in the 1960s (compared to about 200 - 400 today). It was a cut-throat business with firms undercutting rivals (and denigrating them whenever possible to get the business). If the Victorian period had been the golden age for organ building (at least in the number of organs built) the 1960s was the nadir.

In the meantime, I continued to learn from Robert Shaftoe (who would go on to work for Mander's in London) and John Bowen who *had* worked for Mander's (and didn't we know it). From these two, especially when out on tuning and maintenance visits, I began to formulate a concept of organ building that was quite different from that which I experienced at Davies's. It was Robert who encouraged me to spend a hefty chunk of my apprentice's wage on a subscription to the *The Organ* (a worthy but dull publication). Back then there was no *Choir and Organ* or other similar journals although the *Musical Times* covered organs and organ music to some degree and many organists belonged to local organists associations. But even today, not all members of associations subscribe to the IAO magazine. Needless to say, I learned more about organ building when out with Shaftoe and Bowen than the whole four years of my apprenticeship in the Campbell Square works.

One thing I discovered was that I was not much good at woodwork. I was not to find out until years later that I suffered from astigmatism, a condition in which the eyes bend straight lines. Even today, when I put a picture up I use a spirit level because what my eyes tell me is straight is skewed to other people. However, I had an aptitude for tuning and even in my second and third year I was trusted to take a junior apprentice and go and tune smaller organs. But being still an apprentice meant that big jobs required the 'big boys' to do the job. And there

was no-one bigger or louder than John Furniss whose voice could be heard over even the loudest tuba stop. Thanks to John I learned many new words, which are unrepeatable here, that emanated from inside organs. When not shouting at apprentices John spent his time shouting at the players and referee during Cobblers matches.

Organ builders have two interests in life - organs and beer. It was one of the initiation rites that apprentices should be rendered incapable by alcohol on their first tuning visit out. And so it came to pass that on my first visit to Coventry (for some reason Davies's had a respectable number of organs in and around the midlands) I was taken to the nearest pub at lunch time and duly initiated. I do not remember much about the afternoon or the journey home on the floor in the back of the works van but I was decanted unceremoniously onto Campbell Square and expected to make my own way home.

Tuning visits, however, were always enjoyable; working in beautiful buildings and visiting new places; what was not to like. The Coventry round came up twice a year and involved two pairs of tuners tuning three organs per pair in a day. One modernist church in a suburb of Coventry had a small tower with no bells. Instead 12 tubular bells inside the organ with a microphone were attached to speakers in the tower. They were played from the organ console when a tab labelled Carillon was pushed down. Unbeknown to me this also switched on the microphone and amplifier. John Bowen had just entered the swell box when I decided to explore this exotic stop. Not only were the bells heard all over the neighbourhood but so was Bowen's opinion of me. Later that day we wandered down to Coventry Cathedral where Harrison's men were installing the new organ and Bowen, fully recovered from his encounter with the tubular bells, offered his opinion on Harrison's workmanship (which wasn't complimentary). In fact, John Bowen had a poor opinion of everybody's workmanship (including, possibly, Mander's) except his own. When asked his opinion of such and such an organ he would make a gesture similar to pulling down a lavatory chain. That, and his rich vocabulary of swearwords made for exciting moments, especially when he tangled with the works foreman - which was often.

The earliest, and most memorable apprentice journeyman visit occurred during my pre-apprenticeship year. For those of you old enough to recall, the end of 1962 and beginning of 1963 produced one of the worst winters in living memory. Well, my living memory at least. Up until November I had been travelling back and forth daily from Wolverton to Northampton by train. In the summer months I had cycled the almost twenty mile journey each way to save money; after all, a weekly wage of £2 - 9s (two pound, nine shillings to those of you too young to remember non-metric coinage) did not get you much in those days, although beer was about 9d a pint (nine pence in old money). As the evenings began to draw in the Rector of St. Mary's back in Shenley used his contacts to find me digs in Northampton. I was fortunate that one of his contacts was the Rev Philip Turner of St. Matthew's, Northampton. The Rev Turner arranged for me to stay with the Tuck family (Ma Tuck and her two daughters Jacquie and Gill) at 4, The Crescent. This was a large house with several other paying guests.

I arrived late one Sunday evening at the end of November. The streets of Northampton were already foggy and it would get worse over the following weeks. Looking back there was something exciting about moving about in those foggy Victorian streets such as The Crescent, The Drive, Holly Road, Byron Street and The Drive with their equally Victorian lighting. However, I was grateful to be living in Northampton close to my work.

The first snow arrived in the second week of December. Nothing exceptional, just an average snowfall but it gave St. Matthew's Church down the road a fairy-tale appearance like a huge gothic cathedral sticking up out of the snow. But then, just before Christmas the air turned very cold. Breath almost froze at every exhalation. St. Matthew's Church had strange electric heating tubes under the chairs (you can still see the plug sockets in the floor even today) which had little effect. It felt



The winter wonderland of January 1963.

like the coldest church in Christendom (and probably was). At Davies's a permanent gas stove on which to heat the animal glues kept us warm and at The Crescent Ma Tuck ordered extra coal deliveries. That's right—coal.

It snowed heavily on Boxing Day and the following day, and then after a brief respite blizzards and storms hit the country again. Snow drifts of 8 foot or more covered many roads and villages were cut off. To a 16-year-old this was exciting although Northampton itself did not suffer so much as the rest of the country, particularly the southern counties. It was during this period that I first experienced the joy of 'being on the road'. I was instructed to accompany Robert Shaftoe, who was in the last year of his apprenticeship, on a trip to Berkshire to repair a small organ in a church in the middle of nowhere. We set off in Robert's little green Austin van and the further south we went the higher the snow became at the roadsides. In places it towered over us at eight feet or more. Reflecting on how the country now grinds to a halt with even the lightest snow fall it says much for local authorities back then that they managed to get snow ploughs out, clearing even some of the back roads. Now, I don't want to suggest that things were better then, because the whole of Britain was in the grip of one of the worst winters since 1947. The country was paralysed and many villages cut off. Temperatures fell to - 22° C in the North of the country. Trains were frozen to the tracks and coal was frozen solid at depots. Even the sea froze around the coastline. But to me this was an adventure; even following a snow plough for several miles was something novel.

Much to my surprise, our first port of call was to a large house, manorial in size,

occupied by a maker and repairer of harpsichords called Michael Thomas. This was not an official Davies' visit but to deliver harpsichord jacks that had been made by Robert in his spare time. I did not, at this time, know that Robert was already making spinets in his spare time and was now working on his own first harpsichord. Over the next few years I would learn much more about craftsmanship from Robert. To our list of official duties had been added two tuning visits but in the end it turned out that it was far too cold for tuning; it was as cold inside the churches as out and with temperatures dropping to minus eight Centigrade overnight there was little point in it - services had been cancelled anyway. We repaired the little organ in between sitting in Robert's van with the heater full on to get some feeling back into our fingers and working for fifteen minutes at a time on the organ.

Because of the continuing snowfalls we could only manage one job a day and stayed overnight in a hotel which had central heating - another innovation for me used to wood fires and hot water from a back-boiler at home in Shenley Church End. The return journey to Northampton was even more hazardous than the journey down. The snow had ceased but the roads had turned to sheets of ice. For the first of many occasions I was glad to get back to the welcoming lights of Northampton.

During my pre-apprenticeship year I was encouraged by the two Tuck girls to join the Bach Choir and the Northampton Musical Society (now the Northampton Philharmonic Choir). John Bertalot had left St. Matthew's during that year and Michael Nicholas had arrived to take over not only St. Matthew's Choir but the Bach Choir as well. Quite soon I found myself on the back row of St. Matthew's Choir along with characters such as Ray Allen, Charles Barker (who was accompanist to the Bach Choir and sometimes played the organ for services at St. Matthew's), the Meakins brothers: Vaughan and Stephen, Robert Walker, Bernard Darby and a whole host of stalwarts with vast musical experience. One of the men, named Ken Smith was an able clarinettist and was so enamoured of Mozart that he would bow whenever the composer's name was mentioned. My musical education proceeded to increase in leaps and bounds. In fact, my voice was beginning to settle into a pleasing baritone. Then of course there were the commissions. One, I recall, was Gordon Crosse's *Covenant of the Rainbow*. Not everyone's cup of tea it has to be said, and quite challenging even for St. Matthew's choir. During rehearsal Graham Mayo, who was then Director of Music at All Saints, thumped the pounding piano part out with his elbows. I cannot recall if he did the same during the first performance at Evensong, at any rate it sounded much the same.

My life revolved around work and organs during the day, and rehearsals and choir practices almost every evening of the week. And I got to be allowed to play St. Matthew's organ on any spare evening left. On one occasion, the Rev Turner had to tell me to stop playing the organ with all manuals coupled to the Great because he could not get his children to sleep in the Vicarage next door.

It was at this time I first met Ron Gates. For some time I had been used to Charles Barker playing the organ for services, but Charles was not a well man and soon Ron Gates began to appear more regularly on the organ bench. It was the beginning of a long friendship with this modest and talented man. However, at this time, the choirstalls at St. Matthew's were bulging with men and boys. At festivals such as Easter former choristers would return from their universities to sing in the choir greatly enhancing the back rows and enabling the choir to sing large scale works. Looking back, it was probably one of the most enjoyable periods of my life.

*To be (yawn) continued.*

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## **NEW DIRECTOR OF MUSIC FOR ST. MATTHEW, NORTHAMPTON**

After 6 years at St. Matthew's, Northampton, Stephen Moore left last year to take up the post of Director of Music at Llandaff Cathedral. Following in the now established tradition of directors of music at St. Matthew's, moving on to greater things. Stephen, probably one of the most affable and modest leaders of the music at the church, proved to be an energetic and active DoM improving the music during his tenure. His replacement is Justin Miller – a native of Michigan, USA. Justin Miller has had a diverse career as an organist, pianist, and conductor with degrees from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, USA, and the Cleveland Institute of Music, where his teachers included Ken Cowan and Todd Wilson.

Until recently Justin was Sub-Assistant Organist at Worcester Cathedral. In addition to his duties with the Cathedral Choir, he was Choirmaster of the Cathedral's Voluntary Choir, the oldest cathedral voluntary choir in the country and the last one to use only boy trebles. He has held positions at Blackburn Cathedral, St Albans Cathedral, Ripon Cathedral, and Winchester Cathedral. Whilst completing his MMus degree, Justin was Director of Music at Christ Episcopal Church in Shaker Heights, Ohio, where he conducted the church's choirs and administered the concert series.

As a soloist Justin has performed in various cathedrals, including Winchester, Hereford, Truro, and Worcester. In addition to his work as an accompanist, he has given performances of Rheinberger's second organ concerto with members of the Toledo Symphony, and the Heights Chamber Orchestra.

A truly international musician, we look forward at the NDOA to welcoming Justin to our local organists' association and wish him well in his new post at St. Matthew's and the continuation of the church's fine musical tradition.

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## Orgelbüchlein – A Talk at All Saints, Northampton by William Whitehead

by  
Jonathan Harris

We were most fortunate that William Whitehead, Curator of the Orgelbüchlein Project, kindly agreed to visit and inform us about this project through a fascinating talk and demonstration lasting around 75 minutes on Saturday 25th February. William is an international recitalist, often heard with the Gabrieli Consort; organist at Lincoln's Inn, London; a renowned teacher; and the inspiration and driving force behind the Orgelbüchlein Project.

William informed us that he dreamt up the project after hearing a young organist perform their own chorale prelude in a recital on the Oundle for Organists course. Over the past decade the project has developed on two lines: one with well-known composers being commissioned to write pieces, and the other, more community-based, allowing any composers to submit a composition based on one of the chorales (anyone who is simply inspired to 'have a go'). Some enthusiastic amateurs have taken this to heart and two are in the process of writing organ chorale preludes on all 118 chorales.

Please do check out the website [www.orgelbuechlein.co.uk](http://www.orgelbuechlein.co.uk).

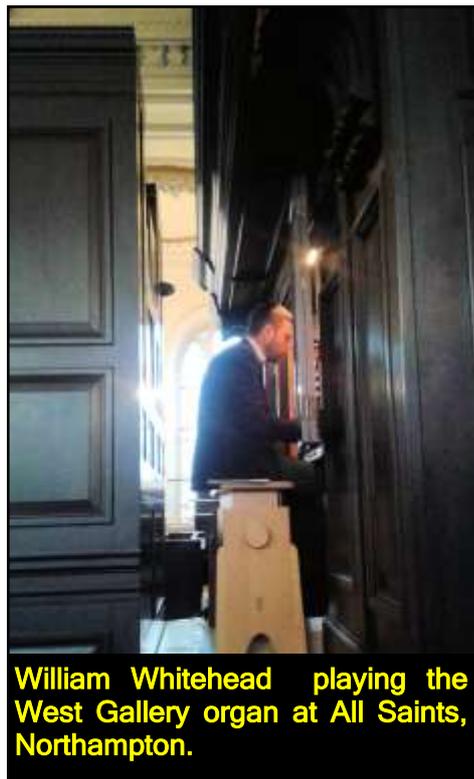
To quote the summary on the home page: "The Orgelbüchlein Project is a major international composition project to complete J S Bach's Orgelbüchlein (Little Organ Book). It is curated by William Whitehead. The manuscript of Orgelbüchlein has 118 missing pieces, ghostly gaps with only the title penned by Bach. Each of these gaps will be filled by a new composition based on Bach's intended melody. The new pieces, written by the most interesting composers at work today, will survey a range of modern styles."

Along with some of the settings by Bach in different styles, William performed Iain Farrington's Prelude on 'The Old 100th', Gabriel Jackson's *Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen*, John Frandsen's *Nun lasst uns den Leib begraben* and finally *Wohl dem, der in Gottes Furcht steht* by Simon Johnson (NDOA Honorary Member and former DoM of All Saints', Northampton).

There are several preludes on the website that can be downloaded free of charge but the good news is that the first publication of these pieces (interspersed with Bach's) is scheduled to come out in May 2017, published by Peters. The subsequent books will be published in stages over the next year. The final commissioning is currently taking place with the whole series due to be published by mid-2018. The books will also contain Bach's Orgelbüchlein preludes. Radio 3 listeners on Thursday 18th May 2017 would have heard the live evening concert broadcast, with William Whitehead and the BBC Singers, devoted to this project.

I have been following the project fairly closely over several years and intend to buy the music as it is published. I'll try to bring copies along to NDOA events so do ask if you want to have a look through the music.

To conclude, I have to say a huge thank you to William for his generosity, and for taking the time to talk and play to us. We were truly very fortunate that such a high-profile organist and musician visited us. Thank you to those NDOA members who were able to come along to the event and also to Father Oliver Coss and Jem Lowther for allowing us to use All Saints'.



William Whitehead playing the West Gallery organ at All Saints, Northampton.

# The Great Organ at Archikatedra Oliwa, Gdansk, Poland

by  
*Alan Cufaude*

As some of you may know my fiancée is Polish, and I spend my life travelling back and forth from Northampton to Poznan, Poland. In August 2014 we were able to spend five days in Gdansk, which is famous as the place near to where the first shots of World War II were fired and for being the birthplace of the Solidarity movement which ultimately led to the downfall of Communism in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany.



It is also famous amongst organ enthusiasts for the incredible historic organ at the Arch-Cathedral of Oliwa, surrounded by beautiful parkland in a quarter on the north side of Gdansk. The cathedral houses one of the most impressive Rococo organs you're ever likely to hear – and see.

Originally part of a Cistercian monastery, the cathedral church was erected during the 13th century. Like most other structures in Poland, it has been rebuilt many times, resulting in a hodgepodge of styles from Gothic to Renaissance to Rococo. It is distinctive for its slender twin towers, each 46 metres high, and its long 107-metre narrow nave, the longest of any church in Poland, and the longest Cistercian church in the world.

The organ was built over a 25-year period by a monk at the Cathedral named simply Brother Michael, whose original name was Jan Wilhulm Wulff. It was basically his life's work from 1748 to 1773. This was no ordinary monk. He was the grandson of organ-builder Johann Georg, and following his construction of an earlier instrument of 14 registers, two manuals and pedals at the then monastery church, he was sent to Germany and Holland for three years to learn the skills of the greatest masters. At the time it was built it was the largest organ in Europe, with 4/5 manuals and 50 speaking stops and over 8,000 pipes.

The long, narrow nave presented a problem for Brother Michael; also it was a stipulation that an oval-shaped stained-glass window in the west end should not be obscured. He resolved this by constructing the unique Rococo organ case around the window, as you can see from the photographs below.

The organ construction was completed after Bach's death, but begun before. Was Bach aware of its construction? At the time he lived about 700kms away in Leipzig. The case was planned to be finished in gold but Poland was partitioned at this time,

coming under Prussian control, and the money was not made available to finish this aspect. During the First World War, the Prussians wanted to dismantle the organ for military use of the metal pipes, which was resisted, and they obtained only the pedal pipes made from zinc.

During the Second World War, 90% of the buildings in central Gdansk were destroyed by enemy action, but the pipework was removed and the oval window bricked up, which saved the case. The Red Army severely damaged the console upon 'liberation' of Gdansk in 1945. A thorough renovation of the organs was carried out in the years 1966-1968 by the company Zygmunt Kaminski of Warsaw. A small Positive organ was added and placed in the left arch of the central nave.



In recent years, the company Zdzislaw Molina conducted a thorough renovation of the historic prospectus. They restored 445 pipes made by Brother Michael. In addition, they installed a new console from which all three organs can be played, which allows quick selection of sixty-four piston combinations.

The Oliwa organs are used every day not only for liturgical purposes, but also for demonstration purposes. In the summer, these presentations are held every hour for most of the day. Also in summer, they hold two concerts a week at the International Festival of Organ Music, organized by the Polish Baltic Philharmonic.

Every three years the Archikatedra hosts the J. P. Sweelinck Organ Competition.

Gabriela had bought us tickets to hear a recital of French organ music by Jean-Paul Imbert, aged 72. Imbert was a pupil of Pierre Cochereau and Jean Gillou, (who himself was pupil of Marcel Dupré and Oliver Messiaen). Jean-Paul Imbert is an international concert organist and has held positions as assistant organist at St Eustache Paris (1971 - 1993), organist of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Paris, 1997 - 2007, (Dargassies organ, completed in 2004). Since 1982 he has been a professor at the Schola Cantorum in Paris.

Every summer since 1988, he teaches organ and choral singing at Notre-Dame des Neiges de l'Alpe d'Huez which has an organ in the shape of a hand pointing skywards, designed by Jean Guillou, and built by German organ builder Detlef Kleuker. We saw him walking around the Gdansk waterfront in the afternoon before the evening recital, but not to speak to; impressive for 73 years old - I think I would have been resting. The sound was MAGNIFICENT. The thick reedy quality of the Oliwa organ was ideally suited to the French music programme which was as follows:



Eugène Gigout *Grand Choeur Dialogue*

Joseph Bonnet *Deuxième légende*

Théodore Dubois *Fiat lux*

Léonce de Saint-Martin *Choral-prélude pour le temps de l'avent*

Charles-Marie Widor *Allegro vivace, Allegro cantabile, adagio, Toccata de la 5ème symphonie*

It was good to hear some movements of the Widor *Fifth Symphony* as well as the *Toccata*. Some of the delicate solo reed stops have a haunting quality with a hesitant throat which makes them sound like an elderly human voice. As a novelty, the organ case includes Angels which move, and incorporates a multitude of bells and Cymbalsterns which Imbert made full, perhaps some would say, excessive use of.

The full organ sound was splendid. But do not take my word for it - I have uploaded to OneDrive a track of the resident organist Roman Perucki playing Leon Boellman's Second Suite, and it can be heard by using the following link:

<https://1drv.ms/f/s!Au2jwGR24CXO11JV5CjODrBAfDKm>

And here is a link to You Tube recordings made at Oliwie, or just search 'Oliwa organy' in You Tube:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8yX55TPA8&list=RD\\_I8yX55TPA8#t=84](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8yX55TPA8&list=RD_I8yX55TPA8#t=84)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiDiUJ4Xx1Q>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TWSzsQzXJA>

The recital was one in the 57th Organ Festival of Oliwa, claimed to be the longest running organ recital series in Poland/Europe, unless you know better? Other recitalists included Martin Baker from Westminster Cathedral, but he was the only Brit.

Further information about Oliwie Archikatedra, the organ and Jean-Paul Imbert may be obtained from the following websites:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliwa\\_Cathedral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliwa_Cathedral)

<http://www.gdanskie-organy.com/main.php?lang=en&sessionid=id1488122167876>

[http://pomorskie.travel/en/Dzieje\\_sie-Muzyka/4418/](http://pomorskie.travel/en/Dzieje_sie-Muzyka/4418/)

If you enjoyed this article, or if you have any difficulty accessing the reference websites, please contact me, and let me know what you think at [alannorthampton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:alannorthampton@hotmail.co.uk)



The Choir Organ in the South transept of the Cathedral which can also be played from the Great Organ console.

## Great Organ, Archikatedra Oliwa, Gdansk, Poland

*This stop list is claimed to be the English equivalent of Polish & German stop names\**

### Positive (Manual I)

Stopped Flute	8
Quintadena	8
Principal	4
Rohrflöte	4
Octave	2
Small Quint	1 1/3
Sifflte	1
Scharf	IV
Mussette	8
Tremulant	

### Brustwerk (Manual III)

Nachthorn	16
Italian Principal	8
Copper Flute	8
Violflöte	8
Octave	4
Flat Flute	4
Quint	2 2/3
Octave Flute	2
Terza	1 3/5
Gemsquint	1 1/3
Octave	1
Tertian	II
Mixture	III-V
Quintzimb	III
Musette	8
Trichterregal	8
Barpfeiffe	8

*Couplers: IV-III, V-III*

### Kronwerk (Manual V)

Hornprincipal	8
Stopped Flute	8
Gamba	8
Flute	4
Octave	4
Viola	4
Quint	2 2/3
Waldflöte	2
Terzflöte	1 3/5
Seventh	1 1/7
Ninth	8/9
Principal Mixture	III-IV
Scharf	V
Terzzimbel	III
Dulcian	16
Bright Trumpet	8
Oboe	8
Vox Humana	8
Schalmay	4
Tremulant	

### Hauptwerk (Manual II)

Principal	16
Gedacktpommer	16
Principal	8
Open Flute	8
Rohrflöte	8
Viola	8
Great Nasard	5 1/6
Octave	4
Blockflöte	4
Gemshorn	4
Sesquialtera	II
Quint	2 2/3
Superoctave	2
Mixture	V-VI
Scharf	IV
Bombardon	16
Trumpette	8
Clarion	4

*Couplers: I-II, III-II, IV-II, V-II*

### Schwellwerk (Manual IV)

Quintadena	16
Principal	8
Marine Flute	8
Salicet	8
Praestant	4
Querflöte	4
Vox Coelestis	8
Octave Flute	2
Superquint	1 1/3
Sedecima	1
Mixture	II-IV
Acuta	III-IV
Ranket	16
Oboe	8
Violin Regal	4
Bells	F-c1

*Couplers: V-IV*

### Pedal

Contrapincipal	32
Principalbass	16
Subbass	16
Violonbass	16
Quintbass	10 2/3
Octavebass	8
Rohrflöte	8
Stopped Flute	8
Choralbass	4
Wide Flute	4
Rauschpfeife	2 + 2 2/3
Ocarina	1
Mixturebass	VI
Contrposaune	32
Trombone	16
Dilcian	16
Trumpet	8
Schalmey	4
Coernttino	2

*Couplers: I-Ped, II-Ped, III-Ped, IV-Ped, V-Ped*

\* There is perhaps no English equivalent of Barpfeiffe (which is a small, angry squashed reed pipe that sounds like an enraged captured bee). I have only ever seen one of these pipes in my lifetime, in Davies's cellar (Ed).

## Choir Organ

### Manual I (IV)

Bourdon	16
Principal	8
Gamba	8
Open Flute	4
Gemshorn	2
Progression	II-IV
Octave Zimbel	II

*Coupler: V-IV*

### Manual II (V)

Principal	8
Salicet	8
Stopped Flute	4
Rohrflöte	2
Tremulant	

### Pedal

Subbass	16
Flutebass	8
Cello	8

*Couplers: IV-Ped, V-Ped*

**ABINGTON AVENUE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**  
**The Three-Manual Custom Organ by Makin Organs Ltd. February 2017**

*by*  
*Mark Gibson*

The previous organ at Abington Avenue URC was a Makin Encore 3-manual and pedal instrument with 38 stops and the usual array of couplers and pistons. It was installed in the church around 1993 and it is believed that, prior to its permanent installation at Abington Avenue, it was used by the organ builders as a demonstration instrument, probably being originally built around 1990. Of its kind and period it was reckoned to be a good quality electronic organ and perfectly adequate for the needs of the church.

By 2013/14 it was recognised by the organist that it was becoming unreliable with intermittent faults - such as notes not sounding or being noticeably out of tune, and some stops and couplers becoming temperamental. Makin Organs Ltd, the original builders, and now part of Church Organ World which included Copeman Hart Ltd, advised that as it was around 25 years old, the internal electronic components were obsolete, meaning that maintenance would become increasingly expensive, with many of the components no longer available.



The console stripped of keyboards, stop jambs and electronic components.

In early 2015, at the request of the organist, a survey and report was commissioned from Church Organ World with a view to rebuilding the organ totally within the existing casework. This would provide a bespoke organ suitable for the building and for its principal use in leading congregational singing in services, plus weddings and funerals, and its role in accompanying choral concerts.

The proposal put forward by Church Organ World provided for a very high-quality sampled pipe sound based on a recording (or “sample”) of a pipe rank for each stop, providing a very realistic and accurate method of recreating pipe sound. They suggested a revised specification for the range of stops but based on the stops in the “old” instrument, with a number of additional stops to provide a wider tonal palette, allowing greater musical variety. Critically, the proposal also included a revised speaker system using modern technology with new speaker cabinets mounted at high level either side of the main window on the west wall of the sanctuary. Some minor modifications to the console would be incorporated to allow provision of state-of-the-art console features, and new keyboards would be incorporated.

Following discussion between the organist and Church Organ World, a final report

was prepared and presented to the Elders on 1st March 2016 with a recommendation that Makin Organs Ltd of Church Organ World be instructed to re-build the current organ in accordance with the recommendations in the report. Discussion by the Elders at their meeting on 16th April 2016 approved the proposal which was confirmed by the Church Meeting on 26th June 2016.

Detailed discussion then took place between the organist and Dr Keith Harrington of Church Organ World to finalise the specification and stop list, and it was agreed that the "old" organ would be collected from Abington Avenue URC during the week commencing Monday, 1st August 2016, with a return to the church of the rebuilt organ before Christmas 2016.

In the event, the organ was collected on Thursday, 4th August 2016, and removed to Church Organ World's workshops at Shaw, Oldham, where it was stripped ready for the rebuild.

Whilst at the workshops, the whole of the interior of the organ was removed to be replaced by state-of-the-art technology. New wood core keyboards and stop jambs were made in oak, new piston rails added and a digital display screen installed. The majority of the drawstops and solenoids were re-used and a number of additional stops and couplers were added, giving a total of 14 speaking stops on each of the four stop jambs. Two new speaker cabinets were manufactured each with room for one UL3000/3300 bas subwoofer and seven UL27000s. The Specification of the new organ is given in below and the new stops and couplers are indicated.

The rebuilt organ was returned to the church on Wednesday, 14th December 2016, and the installation was completed by the evening of Thursday 15th, the team consisting of Steve Lanyon, Steve Bell and John Harrington. Initial reaction was that the new organ lived up to the promises of Church Organ World, with a hugely improved sound and range of tonal colours.

On Tuesday, 20th December, Richard Goodall of Makin Organs Ltd attended to carry out a preliminary "voicing", and this was followed by the full "voicing" carried out by Professor Ian Tracey, organist of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, together with Richard Goodall on Wednesday, 1st February 2017.

Thanks to the patience and skill of the staff of Makin Organs Ltd, we now have a virtually brand-new organ able to reproduce a wide tonal palette with an optimum delivery of sound into the church using a sampled pipe-sound system. This results in an instrument as close as possible to a real pipe organ for use in worship and concerts in the church.

*Addendum: The original organ at Abington Avenue Congregational Church (as it then was) was moved from King Street Chapel around 1910. This was superseded in 1933 by a new pipe organ built by A E Davies & Son, which lasted until 1993. If anyone has any information about these two instruments, particularly the earlier one, the current organist, Mark Gibson, would be pleased to hear from them (Helen Murphy). For specification see page 19.*



The new organ, custom-built by Makin Organs Ltd. The console has been completely refurbished and new components installed.

<http://www.churchorganworld.co.uk/>

Southern Showroom:  
West Barn, Middle Farm  
Featherbed Lane  
Mixbury  
Brackley NN13 5RN

Tel: 01706 888 100

Email: [sales@makinorgans.co.uk](mailto:sales@makinorgans.co.uk)  
[service@makinorgans.co.uk](mailto:service@makinorgans.co.uk)

## Abington Avenue United Reform Church, Northampton The Makin Organ 2017

### Swell

Clarion	4
Trumpet	8
Contra Fagotto	16
Oboe	8
Mixture III	15.19.22
Fifteenth	2
Principal	4
Voix Celeste	8
Echo Gamba	8
Lieblich Gedackt	8
Geigen Diapason	8

*Octave*  
*Unison Off*  
*Sub Octave*

### Choir

Tuba	8
Clarinet	8
Larigot	1 1/3
Tierce	1 3/5
Blockflute	2
Nazard	2 2/3
Chimney Flute	4
Viole Celeste	8
Viol d'Orchestra	8
Gedackt	8

*Swell to Choir*  
*Octave*  
*Unison Off*  
*Sub Octave*

### Great

Posaune	8
Fourniture	IV
Fifteenth	2
Twelfth	2 2/3
Harmonic Flute	4
Principal	4
Gamba	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Hohl Flute	8
Open Diapason II	8
Open Diapason I	8
Bourdon 16'	16

*Swell to Great*  
*Choir to Great*

### Pedal

Trumpet	8
Trombone	16
Contra Trombone	32
Choral Bass	4
Bass Flute	8
Octave	8
Bourdon	16
Violone	16
Open Wood	16
Contra Violone	32

*Swell to Pedal*  
*Great to Pedal*  
*Choir to Pedal*  
*Gt & Ped Combs Coupled*

## **ST MARY THE VIRGIN, FINEDON. NN9 5NR**

**Saturday 17th June at 7.30pm**

Concert by the Northampton Philharmonic Choir.  
Music to include Haydn's *Little Organ Mass* and Handel's *Organ Concerto in F*

## **ST MARY THE VIRGIN, FINEDON. NN9 5NR**

**Come and Sing on RSCM Sunday 18th June at 6pm  
(4.15 rehearsal)**

Handel's *Messiah* (part 3) and Gorecki's *Totus Tuus*  
Soloists Colleen Nicoll and Benjamin Ellis

**We need as many visiting singers for this as possible, please!**  
Donations split between church funds and RSCM.

## **ALL SAINTS CHURCH, NORTHAMPTON. NN1 1DF**

**Wednesday 21st June, 7.30pm**

### **The Sixteen**

The Choral Pilgrimage, 2017: Music by Palestrina and Poulenc  
Tickets £15 – £25

## **NDOA MEMBERS RECITAL**

**Saturday 24th June at 3.00pm**

**Holy Trinity Church, Rothwell, NN14 6BQ**

## **CASTLE ASHBY ANNUAL ORGAN RECITAL**

**Saturday 8 July 2017 at 7.30pm**

**St Mary Magdalene, Castle Ashby, NN7 1LQ**

This year welcomes Hans Uwe Hielscher from Germany, who is on a concert tour of the UK taking in a number of cathedral venues.

## **EARLS BARTON ORGAN RECITAL**

**Friday 21st July at 7.30 pm  
All Saints, Earls Barton, NN6 0JG**

Thomas Heywood (Australia) who played at Castle Ashby a couple of years ago and has also played a recital at Higham Ferrers in the past, will visit Earls Barton. The church there has not had a recital for a number of years so it will be great to welcome Thomas.