

Northampton and District Organists' Association

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The NDOA's Fourth Beginners' Guide to the Organ

These annual courses provide excellent opportunities for both young and old and, members and non-members who have had no formal training in playing the organ, to spend a hour or so learning a few tips and tricks of the trade. Such was the case once again when fourteen people arrived at All Saints', Brixworth, and listened to Jonathan Harris describe and then demonstrate, the various sounds and pitches of stops, their use in combination, basic hymn playing techniques and, not least, ways of coming to terms with playing pedals.

The instrument, dated 1880, is by Porritt of Leicester with 2 manuals, pedals and 20 stops It was refurbished in 1973 by Alfred E. Davies & Son, of Northampton, when a 2 rank Mixture was added to the swell, a Twelfth to the Great and, a 5 $\frac{1}{3}$ ft pedal Quint made from the 16ft Swell Bourdon pipes which were removed to make room for the Mixture and then mounted on a new chest to the west of the case. A balanced swell pedal was also installed. Interestingly, one of the gentlemen who came to the afternoon wasn't too interested in learning the organ, but came along out of curiosity to see and hear it because he was one of the tuners who worked for Starmer-Shaw of Northampton when they looked after it up until about 1970.

After Jonathan's demonstration and explanations, the group gathered around the console and it was there, that the questions came in abundance. Even some adults were astounded to learn that each stop had a pipe to each key amounting in total to somewhere around a thousand. Several people had a go and one young boy, who is already being taught piano, made a very convincing performance of a piece of Bach seemingly quite at home with the weight and touch of the organ. Jonathan introduced a wide selection of music books all of which were designed for the beginner and available for people to browse. Complimentary copies of our Newsletters and memberships details were also available. As the last people didn't leave until at about 4.45pm, the whole experience was obviously of great interest to everyone, as well as being a boost to morale and confidence to those who perform at their own places of worship. Our thanks to Jonathan Harris, who organised and led the afternoon.

Young Members' Recital

Around 40 people came to hear an impressive programme of organ music presented by six student members of N&DOA in Olney Paris Church in April. All the organists played exceptionally well and coped admirably with the demands of playing an unfamiliar organ in front of a captive audience. Credit to all the players for their efforts; the programme is listed below which, in itself, reflects the achievement of the pupils so far. All of them have benefited from the David Morgan Education Fund, either through funding towards lessons or by receiving second hand organ music. Donations received at the concert towards this fund totalled £140. The organists (with details of where they have lessons) pictured in the photo in front of the Binns organ at Olney are, from left to right, Callum Alger (St Matthew's, Northampton), Tristan Hasson (St Thomas', Simpson, Milton Keynes.), Alex Grinyer (St George's, Wolverton), Jacob Collins (St Mary St Giles, Stony Stratford), Kate Hollins (St Peter St Paul, Newport Pagnell) and Eleni Simpson (St George's Wolverton).

Callum Alger (age 16)

Folk Tune; Whitlock (1903-1946)

Prelude & Fugue in A minor; BWV536
J.S.Bach (1685-1750)

Tristan Hasson (age 16)

Prelude in G minor; BWV558 J.S.Bach

Mit ganzem Willen wünsch ich dir; Conrad Paumann (1410-1473)

Chaconne in F minor; Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Toccata in F; D. Buxtehude (1637-1707)

Kate Hollins (age 16)

Puer natus in Bethlehem; D. Buxtehude

Rorate Caeli; J.Demessieux (1926-1968)

Eleni Simpson (age 17)

Fond d O'rgue; L Marchand (1669-1732)

Lamento; F.A.Guilmant (1837-1911)

O quam sauvis; C. Geoffray (1901-72)

Alex Grinyer (age 12)

Andante; from Voluntary 13 in G. Maurice Green (1696-1755)

Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen and, *Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier*; G.J.Walther (1684-1748)

Tranquility; C. Hubert Parry (1848-1918)

Jacob Collins (age 14)

Tuba Tube; C.S.Lang (1891-1971)

Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ BWV 639
J.S.Bach (1685-1750)

Introduction - Choral & Menuet gothique from Suite Gothique; Boëllmann (1862-1897). (Thanks to Jonathan for his report).



Kate Hollins

Also, Congratulations to N&DOA Student Member Kate Hollins (2nd from right above) who passed her ABRSM Grade 4 Organ Examination in March with a distinction. Her examination pieces were those listed above plus, Parry's *Tranquility*. Kate is taught on the 3 manual Willis organ in St Peter St Paul, Newport Pagnell where she receives lessons from Jonathan Harris.

David Morgan Education Fund

We record with much appreciation, a further donation of £250 from David's Sister, Helen Farrington. I was pleased to acknowledge receipt of this and inform Helen of the amount of Grants already made, the Fourth Beginners' Day held on 24th March and, the Young Members' Recital at the end of April with donations at that event also going to the fund. The NDOA is most grateful to all those who have contributed.

Northampton's Redundant Churches

A prominent landmark along the A508 Kingsthorpe Road in Northampton, is Primrose Hill Congregational Church designed by the Scottish architect Alexander Anderson who, in 1893, began his practice in the town. The Foundation Stone was laid in 1901 and the church opened in 1903 with a capacity to seat 500 people. Closed some years ago and, in 2005 converted into flats, the town still enjoys what is probably its only legacy other than its portico - The Northampton Concert Orchestra - which was formed in 1903 as 'The Primrose Hill String Band'.



Canon Hilary Davidson's book *Choirs, Bands and Organs* refers to the first organ (hand-blown) as being a gift but for whatever reason it didn't last long, because in 1911 an organ appeal was launched by opening an account for £10 with the Northamptonshire Union Bank and, on 18th October 1912, a contract was placed with Conacher of Huddersfield for a two manuals and pedal organ of sixteen stops for £340 (plus £1 for an organist's mirror). The elaborately designed cover to the Contract and Specification includes an artist's impression which I've shown here. There were extra costs; one of which was the supply and installation of a 2HP blower carried out by the quaintly named, Northampton Electric Light & Power Co. Ltd. of Bridge

Street. The Church Trustees were evidently quite satisfied with the finished product for in March 1914, they wrote to Conacher saying that they had recommended them to Doddridge Memorial Chapel who happened to be looking for a commendable Organ Builder. Conacher lost no time in sending them a quotation.



In the 1990s it was replaced by a very modest organ from the Methodist Chapel in the Northamptonshire village of Piddington. It is shown below and thought to be by Barker of Northampton from around the 1850s and, other than for some over exposure in the photo, the case was known to have been



Painted blue! Woodworm seems to have been a problem and so after only a few years, it was replaced by a 13 stop instrument by George Benson from 1890 (shown below) which was originally built for a Methodist Church in Manchester. Interestingly, the NPOR record for the period adds 'Amateurs', implying that the installation wasn't professional but probably a D.I.Y. expediency. The sequence of the organs is a little obscure, but Canon Davidson saw the Benson organ when, in 2005, the Chapel was being emptied prior to its conversion into flats. The current understanding is that in turn, all three instruments were eventually destroyed.



Pamela Rawlinson's Recital

On an evening in late April, a large audience sat enthralled with Pamela's programme and the glorious sound of the Pleyel Piano, owned by the acclaimed pianist, David Owen Norris and on permanent loan to St. Matthew's, Northampton. This instrument, by the illustrious Parisian firm *Pleyel et Cie* founded toward the end of the eighteenth century, not only has a rich sound but is beautifully adorned with ornate gold motifs of the period.

The recital began with Bach's *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor*, the Fantasia being reminiscent of a cascading waterfall—a theme which ran throughout Sydney Smith's arrangement of Debussy's *Le Jet D'eau* which followed three of Mendelssohn's *Songs without words*. Water featured again in Liszt's arrangement of two Schubert songs *Das Wandern* (Wandering is the Miller's pleasure) and *Wohin* (I heard a streamlet rushing out of its rocky source...).

What also contributed to the evening's enjoyment, was Pamela's introductions to the pieces, some of which she had been introduced to during her travels. Pamela's real-life anecdotes of people she has met while abroad and their links or connection with the families of several famous composers often influenced her choice of pieces. One such instance was when Pamela's first piano tutor told her that when a young girl herself, she had met Brahms!

The evening continued with Chopin's *Trois Ecossaises* before settling back to the joys of the sleepy, delicate tones of his *Waltz in A minor. Si Oiseau J'étais* (if I was a bird) by Adolf von Henselt and *Rhapsody No.2 in G minor* by Brahms concluded the programme which was followed by extensive applause and an encore of Villa-Lobos.

The sound of this instrument in the lofty space of St. Matthew's carried beautifully, but this was in no small part due to Pamela's control and touch which articulated each piece in turn. As a young girl, Pamela studied with Professor Leonie Gombrich and attended the R.A.M for four years to obtain her LRAM and ARCM Diplomas. She subsequently studied with Joseph Cooper and Kendal Taylor who prepared her for recital work. Pamela has taught in many schools, set up her own music studio and given recitals in numerous places including a recent performance in Christchurch Priory, Dorset. I do hope we hear more of Pamela Rawlinson closer to home.

Roger Palmer

We send Roger and his wife, Rosemary, our best wishes for an ongoing recovery following a serious road accident at the beginning of April. Many of you will know that Roger is one of the Assistant Organists at All, Saints', Northampton.

Well, fancy that!

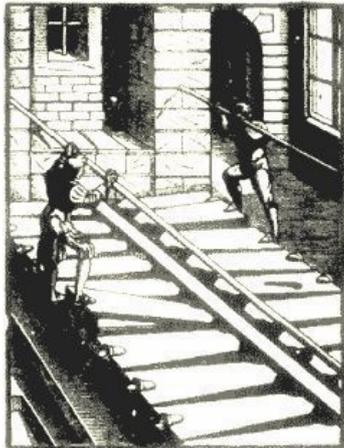
While reading an account of the organs in the old Coventry Cathedral, I came across this entry, 'The Vestry meeting of St. Michael's ... in 1733, placed an order with Schwarbrick [*Thomas Schwarbrick, was a German organ builder living in Warwick*] for a new organ'. Later on the record mentions that, 'A special feature of the organ was a set of three percussion stops—Harp, Lute and Dulcimer'. Can anyone suggest what use they may have been put to? They were removed in 1763 owing to the difficulty in keeping them tuned! The new Cathedral, consecrated in 1962, had a new Harrison & Harrison instrument of 73 stops and a new organist, David Lepine, who sadly died in 1972 at the age of just 43.

History of the Organ Part 2

You may recall that in the last Newsletter, we traced the fundamentals of the organ from 6,000 year ago - *Pan pipes* to the Roman *Hydraulus* - a favourite instrument of the Emperors Nero and Claudius.

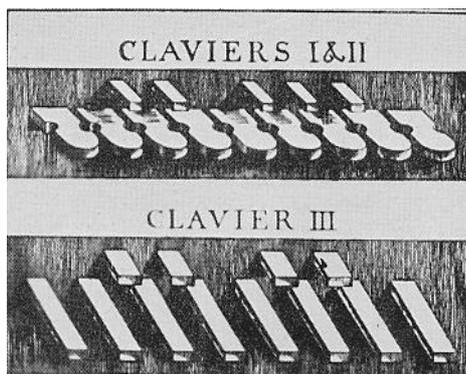
It was not until about the tenth century that a large leap in design took place. Elphege, Bishop of Winchester, is said to have had built for his cathedral a mighty organ of 400 pipes with over twenty sets of bellows which required seventy men to keep them supplied with air. Even allowing for much exaggeration, organ building had become significantly advanced from the Roman era of some six or seven centuries before.

Power was (and would continue to be) a limiting factor as organs grew in size. William of Malmesbury (1095) even suggests, the possibility of using steam. Generally though, it was the job of 'bellows treaders' to produce the air by walking



on the bellows. This is portrayed here on an organ once in Halberstadt Cathedral, Germany, but despite such huge powerhouses, the number of stops were modest mainly because of the heavy mechanical leverage required via the keys to activate the process of producing the sounds. Views of the keys on the Halberstadt instrument are shown

on the right in Praetorius's book, *Syntagma Musicum*, illustrating the point that being



up to 3" wide, they were literally thumped with the side of a clenched hand. But, as with most things, ongoing development of mechanics, pipe design, an awareness of pipe ratios, overtones and the use of different materials, all led to more advances in the capability of the organ. Although mechanically noisy and, far from meeting with everyone's approval, by about the 12th century organs were more widely used, with smaller instruments such as the *Regal* becoming increasingly popular. These were *Portable Organs*, often hung around the neck of the player when being carried in liturgical procession. The modern one shown here



was made in Nuremberg in 1988. Larger instruments, being less portable were simply called, *Positive Organs*.

The expansion of Christianity was most advanced in Europe and so it was there, that the organ's ongoing development was centred. Although *Reed Pipes* came into use around the fifteenth century, it's interesting to learn that *Mutation Stops* were in use three hundred years before that. These, and *Mixtures* add piquancy to the sound by speaking the 12th, 17th, 19th and so on, above the note being played. Some have delightful names such as, Nazard (12th), Tierce (17th), Larigot (19th) and Sesquialtera (2 or more ranks). All this was seminal in what would eventually follow into the modern era during the next five hundred years or so. However, Church, Governments, Monarchies and basic technology all played their part in what was to come, when, and where. The next Newsletter explores the consequences.

The Diamond Jubilee
of
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Perhaps it isn't such a coincidence that this year's national celebrations commence on the same date as the Queen's Coronation - 2nd June, albeit, that took place the year after her accession. Cecil Beaton's iconic Coronation photo (below) was, of course, never taken in Westminster Abbey as one might think from the background, but was taken in front of a backdrop after returning to the Palace. For all that, this beautiful



young woman was to become our Queen for sixty glorious years, strengthening the Monarchy even further by following the example of her father, King George VI.

In March's Newsletter, the article 'Let us now praise famous men' described the life and times of Sir William McKie, Organist and Master of the Choristers at the time of the Coronation. In this Newsletter, I thought it appropriate to include the music played and sung at the service. Although it was a truly long 'do', the overwhelming amount and variety of music was astonishing, with many familiar titles and quite a number of new and unfamiliar ones.

**MUSIC PLAYED FOR THE
CORONATION OF HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH II IN
WESTMINSTER ABBEY
June - 2nd 1953**

* indicates first performance

**Orchestral music played before the
service**

Chaconne from 'King Arthur': Henry Purcell (arranged Herbage)
Trumpet tune: Purcell
March: Crown Imperial: William Walton
Fantasia on the Alleluia hymn: Gordon Jacob
Jupiter: Gustav Holst
Epic March: John Ireland
Regalia procession: Oh most merciful: Charles Wood
Regalia procession: Litany for 5 voices: Thomas Tallis
March: Pomp and Circumstance no.2: Edward Elgar
Idyll: 'Banks of Green Willow': George Butterworth
Processional *: Arthur Bliss
Greensleeves: arr.Ralph Vaughan Williams
Nimrod: Elgar
March: Orb and Sceptre *: Walton
Fireworks music: overture & minuet: George Frederic Handel.

**Music during the service, orchestra and
choirs**

Fanfare I
Anthem 'I was glad': C.H.H.Parry
Fanfares II, III, IV, V
Introit: Behold, O God our Defender*: Herbert Howells
Gradual: Let my prayer come up * : William Harris
The Creed (from Gminor mass): Vaughan Williams
Come, Holy Ghost: VIII Mode Melody:

arr. Ernest Bullock
 Zadok the Priest: Handel
 Confortare *: George Dyson
 Rejoice in the Lord: John Redford
 O clap your hands together: Orlando Gibbons
 I will not leave you comfortless: William Byrd
 O Lord our Governour *: Healey Willan
 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace: S.S. Wesley
 Homage fanfare VII founded on Scots tune 'Montrose'
 Hymn: All people that on earth do dwell: arr. Vaughan Williams
 Versicles & Responses, Sanctus: Vaughan Williams
 O taste and see *: Vaughan Williams
 Gloria in Excelsis: Charles Villiers Stanford
 Three-fold Amen: Orlando Gibbons
 Te Deum *: Walton
 Fanfare VIII and God save the Queen: arr. Gordon Jacob
 (Fanfares I to VII composed by Sir Ernest Bullock)

Orchestral music after the service

March: Pomp and Circumstance no.1: Elgar
 Coronation March *: Arnold Bax
 March: Pomp and Circumstance no.4: Elgar.

And finally,

On behalf of the NDOA, I sent a message of congratulations to Her Majesty and a copy of her acknowledgement is enclosed.

'Let us now praise famous men'

With the article in the last Newsletter about Sir William McKie who was Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey at the time of the Coronation and, with a full list of the music used shown above, I thought I would perpetuate a little further continuity by including William McKie's successor,

the well respected, Douglas Guest.

Douglas Albert Guest was born in May 1916 in Mortomley, near Sheffield, Yorkshire and was educated at Reading School and the Royal College of Music before taking up the Organ Scholarship at King's College Cambridge from 1935 - 39, where he was also the John Stewart of Rannoch Scholar in Sacred Music. He served as a Major in the Royal Artillery during the war years and was mentioned in despatches during 1944. In 1945 he became Director of Music at Uppingham School where he remained until 1950 when he was appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers of Salisbury Cathedral, a position he held with other teaching and musical appointments. In 1957 Douglas Guest moved to Worcester Cathedral taking up other appointments there in addition to his work at the Cathedral. In 1961 he moved to Westminster Abbey where he was to remain until 1981.

His obituary informs us that, 'There was indeed something of the schoolmaster about him, with a warmth and sense of humour beneath the surface as well as the firmness and sense of discipline to be expected of an army major. That he would take no nonsense was made perfectly clear to new choristers at Westminster Abbey, who were told that any misbehaviour would result in a "reign of terror which would make the French Revolution look like a children's tea party". The boys quickly got the message and soon grew to respect and feel genuine affection for him - indeed at his last service several were in tears'.

During his time at the Abbey, he was also a Professor of Music at the Royal College of Music in addition to duties as an examiner and Council member of the

Royal College of Organists and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. He held the degrees of M.A. from both Oxford and Cambridge in addition to B.Mus and the Lambeth degree of D.Mus. In 1975 he was created Commander of the Victorian Order. In 1981 Dr. Guest retired from Westminster Abbey and accepted the title of Organist Emeritus.

Not surprisingly after having led such a full professional life, he found time to publish only one organ piece and made only one solo organ recording. He died in 1996 and was succeeded by Simon Preston.

John Stanley 1712-1786

Born in London on 17th January, young John Stanley began studying music at the age of seven with John Reading but it was under Maurice Green, Organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, that his ability advanced, taking the appointment of Organist at All Saints', Bread Street, London, at the age of eleven. Three years later, he was appointed to St. Andrew's, Holborn, and aged only seventeen, gained his degree of B.Mus, at Oxford University. It seemed nothing could stop his progress, for in 1734 he was appointed to the Temple Church, London, where he remained until his death. His time there was marked by his brilliant organ and harpsichord playing which attracted on a regular basis the likes of Handel and others to hear him. He was also an accomplished violinist.

Such achievements might not seem that unusual for someone of his ability for there were other contemporaries similarly endowed. What may have well set him apart however, was not only his musical prowess but the fact that he was almost blind; the result of a domestic accident at the age of two. And yet, as many of us have witnessed, such misfortune generates in its

stead heightened alternative senses which in Stanley's case, involved an incredible memory. He could commit to memory after a play-over by another musician, works by other composers and then conduct choirs and orchestras across London in those performances. Not only did he play with great skill, but of course, composed much too.

Conceivably, it's the length of his incumbency at The Inner Temple which provides us with his greatest legacy. Inevitably, after so many years there, he would sooner or later be involved in the replacement of the organ and that, eventually took the form of a contest between the organ builders, Fr. Smith and Renatus Harris—the first *Battle of the Organs?*. In 1685 each provided, and erected on site, the instrument they believed was suitable for the needs of the church but, hardly believable among such distinguished personages, much sabotage to the other's instrument took place in order to extol the qualities of their own instrument. Smith won the day with his organ of three manuals and twenty-two stops.

After Handel's death, Stanley was in demand for performances of Oratorios at Covent Garden. He was also called by the Court, composing an ode for the late George II and an oratorio for George III's wedding. His succession to Handel on the London scene saw him appointed Governor of the Foundling Hospital where he directed annual performances of *The Messiah* in aid of hospital funds.

He eventually succeeded William Boyce in 1779 as Master of the King's Band of Musicians, in which role he composed several odes to celebrate Royal events. The quantity of his compositions was not huge but included thirty Voluntaries for organ. He died in May 1786 aged 74.

Organ Cases Part 1

Ok calm down; this isn't about *nutcases* or *hardcases* but about the first thing we see on entering a church that tells us there is an organ. Before we ever hear the instrument we see it – the case(s). Many a church doesn't have the space, money, nor the size of instrument to harness anything more than a design a tad more pleasing to the eye than plain wooden struts and metal straps to support the pipes. But on those occasions where there is a *wow!* element, I wonder whether it's the public who *wow* more than some organ enthusiasts many of whom are merely interested in how big? are there any 32 footers? or, whether it has a Tuba Mirabilis - like a motorist who is only interested in what's under the bonnet, 0-60 times and, sitting behind the wheel! Fortunately, many of us know from visits to organ-builders' workshops what goes into such designs. It's not just embellishment for its own sake, but an attempt to exploit the acoustic, reflect the ambience of the building in design and colour, overcome architectural obstacles or, even, avoid hiding a prominent feature such as a stained-glass window. I hope to illustrate a few UK examples before reaching out to some of the astonishing works of art which are to be found on the Continent. Needless to say, the confines of our Newsletters will only allow the surface to be scratched but let's start with what can be done.

In a 2008 Newsletter, I covered the modern replica by Goetze and Gwynn of the Wingfield organ, shown right, which arose from the discovery of medieval soundboards in an old house in Suffolk. Its colours reflect those used in wall



paintings and screens to decorate church interiors in the 15th and 16th centuries. Then, in a similar style, Mr. Stephen Dykes Bower designed the case for Great Yarmouth Priory which, after war damage, was rebuilt in 1961 and is shown above, both instruments having a stunning visual impact.

Following the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, organ building took off again but with much more restraint in case design than those above. In the largest cathedrals and churches, equally large cases were being designed by the likes of Grinling Gibbons (1648-1721), who was commissioned by Wren to build and carve the cases in St. Paul's Cathedral.

His contemporary, Renatus Harris (1652-1724), built the organ and this case (right) in 1685 for Bristol Cathedral but



both are in the style of their time, consisting predominantly of austere amounts of dark, stained woodwork and, although complimenting the furniture of the stalls, are sombre in their robustness and heavy on a modern eye.

Now look at the photo below - talk about the bare necessities of life! This is part of the pipe display of an instrument that's out of site in a pit 14ft deep! No attempt has been



made to make what is above ground more appealing and, neither was this picture taken before completion, nor in a humble parish suffering penury. It's a photo taken last year in St. Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork! In fairness, the instrument has been shunted around over the years and is, even now, the subject of yet another rebuild, but the very nature of its position lends little scope for much visual improvement.

Contrast that with the modest little village of Ashley close to our County border with Leicestershire. The church was restored in 1865 to designs by

the noted Victorian architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott, so no expense spared there! But in fact,



the organ is a very modest, one manual, nine stop Bryceson with twenty pedal keys and yet, just look at what they've done with the case. Beauty for beauty's sake? Not if you saw the nave vault, because then, you might agree that the case simply had to join the club! Staying with the nineteenth century, it's worth remembering that the Oxford Movement and the Cambridge Camden Society influenced both the positioning and design of organs in their pursuit of beautifying churches and putting dignity and holiness back into the pattern of worship. From around the 1830s to 40s and, parallel with more and more organs being built to replace the groups of musicians who hitherto provided the music, the move toward Tractarian values also resulted in robed choirs sitting in stalls in the Chancel. In smaller parish churches, organs were often free-standing in any convenient floor space, whereas in larger buildings which required greater tonal resources, space was found (or created) in various chambers in Chancel arches and Triforia in which to install an organ and case where, of course, it was in prime posi-

tion for accompanying the singers. One noted adherent was Sir John Sutton Bart. (1820-1873) and we'll look at his contribution in September's Newsletter.

New Member

We welcome Gareth Grayson who joined in March. Gareth assists with the organ playing at Holy Trinity, Northampton.

To all those who teach the Organ

We have come across instances where organ students studying with professional tutors have been unaware of the NDOA. Would you please ensure all your students know of the Association and where possible, arrange for their membership of just £6. (R.S.)

Organ For Sale

Frank Field has a Viscount Jubileum 227 organ he wishes to sell. It has 2 manuals, pedals CC to d (2 octaves plus), 25 speaking stops plus the usual combinations. It comes with a matching original dark-oak bench and two matching speakers. The instrument is about ten years old, little used but kept in moderate temperatures and is in perfect condition. Frank is asking £1,000 and his contact number is; 01604 713821—he is at a Northampton address.

Hon. Secretary

As we continue to talk with my possible successor(s) one thing is emerging for sure. The present role will be divided up but as far as Newsletters are concerned, from November they will rely on members to submit reports, articles and news of events including 'What's On' and anything of interest. Unless you do, future Newsletters will be quite sparse.

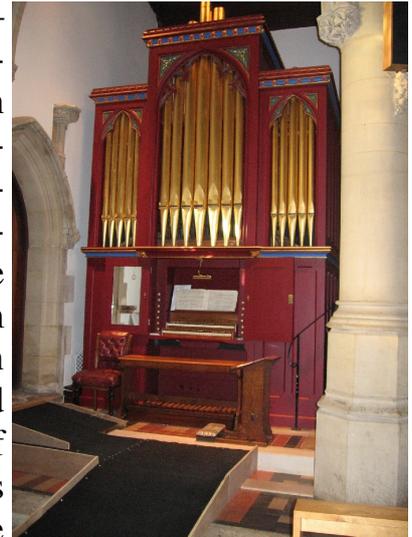
The Organ You Play

Helen Murphy, familiar to many of us as an avid supporter of choirs and organs, has sent this interesting article. (R.S).

I have been playing the organ at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic church in Wellingborough for more years than I care to remember. It is currently situated in a space at the left side of the chancel (in what was originally planned as a chapel, judging from the distinctive floor tiles), but at a lower level, with the console facing the congregation. (As the church is built on a hill, there are steps all over the place, the most dramatic being the flight up from the nave to the chancel.)

But the organ has moved about a bit over the years. When I first encountered it (I was living in Northampton and having lessons at All Saints with the late Graham Mayo in the mid-Sixties) it was actually in the same space, but facing towards the chancel and at the same level. I don't know how this was achieved – was the pipework built up on a platform? It was then in a very poor state: ivories broken and coming off the notes, action very stiff and erratic, so that I was glad not to have to play it very often. Coming from pneumatic action to very out-of-condition mechanical was a bit of a shock! Sometime during the early Seventies, it underwent its first overhaul: it was dismantled and rebuilt on the opposite side of the church in a small transept at nave level. Apart from notes that no longer wobbled about, the most notable improvement was the action – which was a great relief, as it was at this point that I became the organist. As the original registration was somewhat dull, I organised a fundraising drive during the Eighties to provide an additional stop – a fifteenth – which has transformed the sound. And then, in 2001, after its restoration by Peter Collins, it was

returned almost to its original position, now not only working well but beautifully painted – with previously hidden carvings highlighted in contrasting colours to the Victoria Plum of the main casework and gold leaf of the front pipes – which made



a welcome change from its previous livery of grey and white. There has never been a maker's nameplate on this organ, but Hilary Davidson (*Choirs, Bands and Organs* 2003) thinks it might be by Bevington of Soho, having come from the Congregational church in Cheese Lane (demolished long ago) at some unknown date after 1886, when the church was built.

The current specification is as follows:

Swell: Lieblich Gedacht 8', Violin Diapason 8', Gemshorn 4', Cornopean 8'

Great: Open Diapason 8', Dulciana 8', Clarabella 8', Principal 4', Fifteenth 2'

Pedal: Bourdon 16'

Swell to Great, Swell to Pedal, Great to Pedal drawstops, three combination pedals and a kick-lever Swell pedal.

Oddly, the drawstops are reversed from the usual position, with the Swell on the right and the Great on the left. It is a very modest instrument, but serves its purpose. Although I am told that there is nice bright sound from the back of the nave, I do sometimes find myself yearning for something a little more exotic...

To all Members—please let's have more articles from you like this one (R.S.)

What's On

- Sunday 3rd June **Stephen Moore** (DoM St. Matthew's, Northampton) Organ Recital in St. Matthew's at 7.30pm following Choral Evensong at 6.30pm
- Thursday 7th June **Lunchtime Live** - All Saints', Northampton Organ Recitals at 1.10pm. every Thursday until 19th July
- Friday 8th June Organ Recital by **Gerard Brooks** (Methodist Central Hall) on the Augustus Gern organ in St. Gregory the Great, Northampton at 7.30pm.
- Saturday 9th June  **Visit to London.** Meet at Southwark Cathedral for 11.30am, time for lunch and thereafter, Greenwich.
- Friday 15th June **David Briggs.** Organ recital at St. Mary and All saints', Fotheringhay at 7.30pm
- Saturday 16th June Organ Recital by **Richard Pilliner**, (London). 7.30pm at St. Mary's, Wellingborough.
- Sunday 24th June Organ Recital by **Parker Ramsay** (Organ Scholar, King's College, Cambridge) 7.30pm at Thorpe Underwood House. Tickets required from; 44, High Street, Harrington, NN6 9NU.
- Sunday 1st July **Timothy Wakerell** (Asst. Sub. Organist, St. Paul's Cathedral). Organ Recital in St. Matthew's, Northampton at 7.30pm following Choral Evensong at 6.30pm
- Saturday 7th July **David Humphreys** (Peterborough Cathedral). Organ Recital in St. Mary Magdalene, Castle Ashby at 7.30pm.
- Also **Wellingborough Orpheus Choir's** Summer Concert at 7.30pm in All Hallows Church, Wellingborough.
- Sunday 29th July **Stephen Moore** (DoM St. Matthew's, Northampton) Organ Recital in St. Mary the Virgin, Wellingborough at 6.30pm.
- Monday 27th August  Bank Holiday Organ Crawl. Meet at Hanslope Parish Church at 11.00am followed by Potterspury, and Towcester—see Annual Calendar of events.

Internet Address: www.northamptonorganists.org.uk The Association's web site has received a total of 4,955 visits.

If you wish to inform members of forthcoming events please provide 100 flyers on A5 in good time for circulation with the quarterly Newsletter. The NDOA is unable to finance printing from a single copy.