

Northampton and District Organists' Association

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September 2013

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Front pipes of the organ at All Saints Parish Church, Turvey.

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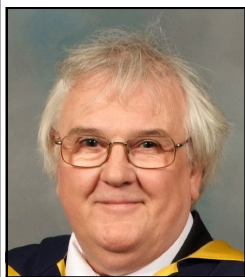
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FROM THE EDITOR



This year is the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Incorporated Association of Organists of which the N&DOA is an associate member. Much has changed over a century, not least the profile of organs and organists. The organ is no longer seen as a dull and dusty instrument winded up on Sunday mornings. Thanks to performers like the late Carlo Curley who popularised the organ with his astonishing feats of dexterity at the keyboards and the BBC2 and BBC4 television broadcasts (albeit late at night) of John Scott Whiteley playing the complete cycle of Bach's organ music in chronological order.

Despite the decline in church attendance young people are still coming forward to be trained in the art of singing and the playing of the organ with many going on to professional careers in music. Don't write churches and chapels and their patronage of the arts off just yet. Even organ building is going through a renaissance; after the hideous monstrosities perpetrated on our churches in the early twentieth century English organ builders have rediscovered their craft and are today producing organs that sound good and which are a delight to the eye.

Whilst it is the IAO's one hundredth anniversary there is one much closer to home. 2013 happens to be the 120th anniversary of the consecration of St. Matthew's Church, Northampton, during which time Stephen Moore, it's Director of Music, has been our President. It seems only fitting, therefore, that I should mention some of the events occurring at one of our most significant churches this September. You will find, enclosed, more information with dates and times of services and events. The first performance of David Halls 2013 commission *This is the Day* will take place during the Parish Mass on Saturday 21st September at 10.15 a.m. At 7.30 p.m. a concert given by St. Matthew's Choir and the St. Matthew's Singers will include Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* – the very first of the St. Matthew's commissions (now 70 years old) and Finzi's *Lo! the full final sacrifice* to be conducted by Stephen Moore and Malcolm Archer (who is also Patron of the Friends of St Matthew's Music). Also included is Britten's *Prelude & Fugue on a Theme of Vittoria* for organ. And, there will be another opportunity to hear Halls' *This is the Day* at the concert. On Sunday 22nd, after Solemn Choral Evensong (at 6.00 p.m.) there is a Festival Organ Recital at 7.30 p.m. by Colin Walsh, Organist Laureate at Lincoln Cathedral. Coincidentally, 2013 is the 100th anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Britten which is another good reason to hear *Rejoice in the Lamb* and the *Prelude & Fugue on a Theme of Vittoria* again in the church for which they were intended to be performed.

As if that was not enough St. Matthew's choir has produced its first recording since 1977 with the release of a CD. 'My Lord Has Come' is a feast of Advent and Christmas music which includes *Sweet was the song* one of the five Christmas carols written by Richard Rodney Bennett for Michael Nicholas and the choir in 1967 (all five were sung at the service of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge that year.) The CD costs £12.

As the N&DOA comes to the end of a momentous year with all these anniversaries and as Stephen hands over the President's Medal to Lee Dunleavy at the AGM let us all hope that Lee's inspiring leadership will bring us another year of exciting visits, recitals and events.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Barry Wainwright'.

Editor, N&DOA Newsletter

With your Newsletter this quarter you will find an insert containing hymn and psalm chants composed and sent in by member Dr Gwilym Beechey (organist of St. Judes, Peterborough). He is probably well-known to some members for his published works and music editing.

***Notice is hereby given of the 89th Annual General Meeting
of The Northampton & District Organists' Association
to be held at All Saints Church, George Row, Northampton.
NN1 1DF on Sunday, November 17th, 2013 at 4.30 p.m.***

AGENDA

1. In Memoriam.
2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of the 88th A.G.M. held at St. Matthew's, Northampton.
4. Matters arising.
5. Hon. Secretary's Report.
6. Hon. Treasurer's Report.
7. Nomination of President Elect for 2013 – 2014.
8. Election of Officers: Hon. Secretary.
 Hon. Treasurer.
 Hon. Auditor.
9. Election of Committee Members:
10. Subscription Rates 2013/14. Currently: £21 families; £14 individuals;
£7 students.
11. Installation of the new President: Lee Dunleavy for 2013–2014.
12. Any other business.

Followed by:

*Organ Recital at 5.30 p.m.
and
Service of Choral Evensong at 6.00 p.m.*

Street parking around All Saints is free on Sundays and the Piazza in front of the church is available for those with mobility problems. If you need to park on the Piazza contact Lee Dunleavy, DoM, direct on (01604) 632845 or by Email: music@allsaintsnorthampton.co.uk

A DAY AT TURVEY AND BEDFORD

by The Editor



All Saints Parish Church, Turvey

Turvey is a village that you pass through on the way from Northampton to Bedford. Quite charming, but you are swiftly through it (although not so swiftly as to set off the speed cameras). However, hidden away off the A428 is an impressive 12th century parish church with a wide nave, side aisles and monuments to the Mordaunt family dating back to 1506 – not to mention the only four manual organ in a Bedfordshire village church! On Saturday, 22nd June more than a dozen N&DOA members had the opportunity to visit this church and play its flamboyant organ.

We were met by the Rev'd Canon Peter Mackenzie who introduced members to the history of the organ, the proportions of which he cheerfully described as 'pure swank'. Turvey House, which was once owned by the Mordaunt family eventually passed into the hands of the Higgins family, a branch of which came to occupy Turvey Abbey (a private house dating back to Jacobean times). Although called an abbey it had no religious connections until it was purchased by the Benedictines in the 1980s. In the 19th Century Charles Longuet Higgins occupied Turvey Abbey and became the main benefactor of the parish church paying for the enlargement of the chancel and the building of the organ. He also happened to be the church's organist for 31 years.

Higgins knew what he wanted. The chancel was designed by Sir Gilbert Scott with Purbeck marble arches to frame the organ chamber situated in a former mortuary chapel. The display pipes are richly decorated in gold and dark colours. The organ was installed in 1855 by Hill and Son of London and has since passed through the hands of Hopkins and Sons of York (1924) and Hill, Norman and Beard (1974). The first thing one notices about this organ is the impressive array of front pipes ranging

across three arches. The second, is the very solid console shutters secured by a handsome brass padlock, above which is a memorial plaque to Charles Longuet Higgins (dated 1885).

More surprises were revealed to N&DOA members when the console was unlocked. Notably, the Swell and Great stops are reversed with the Swell on the right side and the Great on the left which had members used to the traditional arrangement reaching for stops that did not sound. Labels for the divisions are so large (no doubt to warn visiting organists of this unconventional arrangement) that they can be read from the choir stalls opposite.



An impressive console on the Turvey organ

The Solo manual has but one stop, the Tuba Mirabilis, which deafened anyone sitting in the chancel. On 11 inches of wind pressure this is the loudest Tuba in a confined space I have ever encountered, save for that on the organ of Stowe School Chapel (but then I was inside the organ and tuning it at the time). It being rather superfluous to have a Solo to Great coupler there is instead a Tuba to Great coupler. Charles Longuet Higgins was determined to have an organ decidedly for his own use; he also had an aversion to mixtures and a Sesquialtera III on the Great was removed and replaced by a second Open Diapason 8' thus leaving the organ with nothing more than a Principal, Twelfth and Fifteenth on the Great and a Principal and Fifteenth on the Swell to provide some sparkle to a preponderance of 16', and 8' stops.



N&DOA members enjoying that special Tuba moment at Turvey

Nevertheless, N&DOA members who played this monster village church organ rose to the challenge with music ranging from Whitlock to improvisations (including the use of the overwhelming Tuba) over several hours. If there could have been a more enjoyable afternoon spent in the company of some of our most accomplished organists I have yet to hear of it. We were not due at St. Paul's Church, Bedford until after 5 p.m. leaving the assembled members plenty of time to demonstrate that despite its unconventionalities this is an organ that can sound majestic and with imagination can provide a wide range of tonal intricacy. In many ways the organ at Turvey is a treasure of English idiosyncrasy. Every organist has their own idea of the perfect organ for their church and most are a compromise between what the

organ builder thinks is the right scheme and what the sitting organist thinks is the right scheme. Some work but others do not. The Turvey organ has attitude but does work if approached with respect for its distinctiveness.

Bedford, St. Paul's Church

The Church of St. Paul is Bedford's civic church dating back to 1066 although the current building is largely 13th century. The size of a small cathedral it is situated on one of the prime spots in Bedford. Surrounded by the Town Hall, the Magistrates Court and a shopping centre behind the historic facade of what was formerly Bedford Modern School (the school has since moved to another location). Behind St. Paul's is the market square and all are situated close to the historic town bridge over the River Ouse.



16' Bourdon and Diapason pipes at ground floor level in St. Paul's, Bedford.

Perhaps due to the length of time at Turvey and, also no doubt another attraction that evening, a recital by Ian Tracey at Castle Ashby Church (see p. 7) the number of members who finally made it to Bedford was somewhat reduced. We were met by Ian Runnells (Director of Music) who allowed N&DOA members free run of the splendid new organ in St. Paul's. To be more exact the 44 stop, three manual and pedal board organ is a rebuild of a former Norman and Beard organ. The work carried out by Charles James Organs, founded by Ian Harvey, incorporates pipework dating back to 1900. The organ is situated on the north side of the chancel and the console sits opposite on the south side.

The first recorded organ at St. Paul's was installed in 1719 by Gerard Schmidt (Smith), a nephew of the famous Bernard 'Father' Smith. Consisting of 16 stops divided into Choir, Great and Swell (but no pedal board) it was said to be a fine organ but spoiled by the Sesquialtera and Tierce being too loud and, it appears, the organ was 3/4 of a tone too sharp. Quite which standard the critic was using at the time we do not know as orchestral concert pitch as we know it today was by no means fixed in the 18th century. This organ was eventually sold to the nearby Moravian

Church and replaced in 1832 by a 13 stop, 2 manual organ by Flight and Robson of London in the south aisle.

In 1879 the organ was substantially rebuilt retaining Flight and Robson pipework by William Hill & Son of London. A pedal board was added and a choir organ was prepared for but not taken up at the time. Presumably the cost of £550 was all that the church could afford. However, in 1895 Norman and Beard of Norwich added a choir organ at a cost of £280 and refurbished the organ.



In 2009/10 the organ was 'remodelled' and rebuilt with the Great organ speaking into the Nave and Swell shutters facing south and west. The Charles James organ largely retains the Hill, Norman and Beard pipework (some of which dates back to the old Flight and Robson organ). Now with a modern

It's a long way down! Philip Bricher (left) and Ron Gates (right) at the console which is high above the choir. The organ is situated opposite at the same height except for the larger pipes.

console and virtually a complete rebuild this is a commanding organ with main divisions and console high up above the choir. This is a truly modern organ with electric action and enough pistons and combinations available to make most organists salivate at the prospect of playing it. And the members who eventually made it to Bedford clearly relished their time spent with this vibrant instrument.

THE STANLEY VANN MUSIC LIBRARY

For N&DOA members who are unaware of it, there is a substantial library of organ music which can be borrowed free of charge. Dr. Stanley Vann was for many years organist and director of music at Peterborough Cathedral. During his lifetime he acquired over 1,600 pieces of organ music by more than 370 composers. The Stanley Vann Collection is stored at St Mary the Virgin, Finedon, and is available for loan, free of charge (except for postage and packing each way) for up to twelve weeks at a time. A PDF catalogue can be downloaded at:

<http://www.choirofstmarythevirginfinedon.com/library.asp>

For further information contact Jonathan Harris, Director of Music at Finedon (details on page 15).

IAN TRACEY AT CASTLE ASHBY

by Richard Tapp



Professor Tracey has a reputation as one of our foremost recitalists - as well as that of being a fine entertainer – and his recital at Castle Ashby on 22nd June exceeded all expectations on both counts.

An appreciative audience was treated to a virtuoso performance of ease and grace, Ian's mastery of the instrument and fine choice of repertoire showing off the Nicholson at its best in its 140th year, and the 10th anniversary of the Castle Ashby annual recitals.

The programme had been chosen to demonstrate all the colours of the organ - starting with the Soler *Minuet* in Ian's own arrangement, which transported us to Spain, through Albinoni's *Adagio* and three of Haydn's *Pieces for Mechanical Clock*, demonstrating to great advantage the Nicholson's exquisite 4' flute and its Swell Piccolo.

With his usual style, the second half of Ian's programme contained both established repertoire and popular transcriptions, beginning with Boellman's *Suite Gothique* ("a piece for every occasion") leaving the audience with the pedal line ringing around the church - and doubtless their heads for the rest of the weekend. Whitlock's *Elizabethan Serenade* and two pieces from the Nutcracker (chocolate advert, anyone?) led us seamlessly to Garth Edmundson's *Toccata Von Himmel Hoch*. As Ian said, given this was six months out of its liturgical Christmas season, but none the worse for that and a marvellous conclusion to the recital.

Staying to chat with the audience at the end of the recital, it felt that neither recitalist nor audience wanted the evening to end. David Spokes, our Rector, concluded by thanking both Ian for his outstanding work, and also the many organists present for their continuing ministry - albeit perhaps at more manageable consoles than Ian's in Liverpool. All in all, an inspiring celebration of Ian's genius and the organists' art.

A date for your diary - Castle Ashby's 11th Annual Recital will be on 5 July 2014 and will feature the Australian concert organist, Thomas Heywood. Book the date now!

NOT LAST AND NOT LEAST

Special congratulations to our very own Secretary, Helen Murphy, who has just been awarded the RSCM Bishop's Silver Award with Distinction. Helen is organist of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Wellingborough and a noted singer whose engagements take her all around the country.



What's On



Thursday 5th September	1.10 p.m.	Lunchtime Organ Recital: Lee Dunleavy, All Saints Church, George Row, Northampton. NN1 1DF.
Saturday 7th September	11.30 a.m.	'Coffee' Organ Recital: St Mary the Virgin, Wellingborough, NN8 1HU by the St Mary's Organists. Refreshments from 11.15am. Free entry; retiring collection.
Sunday 15th September	6.00 p.m.	Flower Festival Choral Evensong: St. Mary the Virgin, Finedon. NN9 5NR (see P. 15).
Friday 20th September	7.30 p.m.	Fotheringhay Annual Organ Recital: Daniel Moulton St. Mary the Virgin & All Saints, Fotheringhay. PE8 6TE
Saturday 21st September	7.30 p.m. also	St. Matthew's Day Concert: St. Matthew's Church, Northampton. NN1 4RY. Britten, Finzi and 2013 commission by David Halls <i>'This is the day'</i> .
	7.30 p.m.	Inaugural Organ Recital: Andrew Reid, Director of the RSCM at Holy Trinity Church, Rothwell NN14 6BQ to celebrate the restoration of the organ.
Sunday 22nd September	6.00 p.m.	Solemn Choral Evensong: St Matthew's Church, Northampton. NN1 4RY, followed by:
	7.00 p.m.	Organ Recital: Colin Walsh, St. Matthew's Church, Northampton.
Thursday 3rd October	1.10 p.m.	Lunchtime Organ Recital: Lee Dunleavy, All Saints Church, George Row, Northampton. NN1 1DF.
Sunday 6th October	6.30 p.m. and	Choral Evensong: St Matthew's Church, Northampton. NN1 4RY followed by:
	7.30 p.m.	Organ Recital: Richard Tanner, Director of Music at Rugby School.
Thursday 17th October	Evening time to tba	Visit to Kenneth Tickell's Workshop. 16 Rothersthorpe Crescent, Northampton. NN4 8JD. This is an evening visit and the exact starting time will be sent by email to those on our email list. For those without email please contact the Secretary by telephone on (01933) 680955 if you are interested in this visit. Unrestricted parking.
Thursday 7th November	1.10 p.m.	Lunchtime Organ Recital: Lee Dunleavy, All Saints Church, George Row, Northampton. NN1 1DF.
Sunday 17th November	4.30 p.m.	 N&DOA Annual General Meeting: at All Saints Church, Northampton. NN1 1DF. Followed by organ recital at 5.30 p.m. and Choral Evensong at 6.00 p.m. See P. 3 for Agenda and further details.
Saturday 23rd November	tba	Rutter Requiem: Northampton Chamber Choir, Cond. Stephen Moore. St. Matthew's Church, Northampton. NN1 4RY

N&DOA NEWS

Young Organists' Progress

It is with great pleasure that we report on the continuing progress of four of our most promising young organist members who are moving on to new things. Nurturing musical talent has been one of the great achievements of Churches and chapels throughout the ages. Here at the N&DOA we play our part through the David Morgan Education Fund in supporting those with young members talent. It is through N&DOA members and the public who donate money to the David Morgan Educational Fund at N&DOA events that we are able to continue this work.

Nathan Lam

Nathan (organ scholar at All Saints, Northampton) will be taking up the new organ scholarship at the Grosvenor Chapel, Mayfair in September whilst studying medicine at University College, London. He has been awarded

the Eddie Palmer Memorial Award by the Royal College of Organists to help towards his RCO exam fees. Congratulations to Nathan on recently passing his ARCO exam. Nathan also plays the piano and violin. Current organ teacher: Anne Marsden Thomas.

Callum Alger

Callum (organ Scholar at St. Matthew's, Northampton) is currently preparing for Oxbridge organ scholarship auditions. Callum, who is currently learning works by Leighton and Widor, also plays the piano and bassoon. Current organ teacher: Stephen Moore.

Jacob Collins

Jacob (St. Mary and St. Giles, Stony Stratford) has been awarded the William Robertson Exhibition by the RCO to support his organ studies at Wells Cathedral School in September. Jacob is

currently learning Widor's Toccata and Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor BWV 565. He also plays violin, viola and harpsichord. Current organ teacher: Jonathan Harris.

Ben Sinclair

Ben is to be congratulated on passing Grade 6 organ, with distinction. As the current organ scholar at St. Mary the Virgin, Wellingborough, Ben studies with the church's DoM, Christopher Colby, and although he departs in the autumn to read mathematics at Birmingham University. Ben fully intends to continue his organ studies.

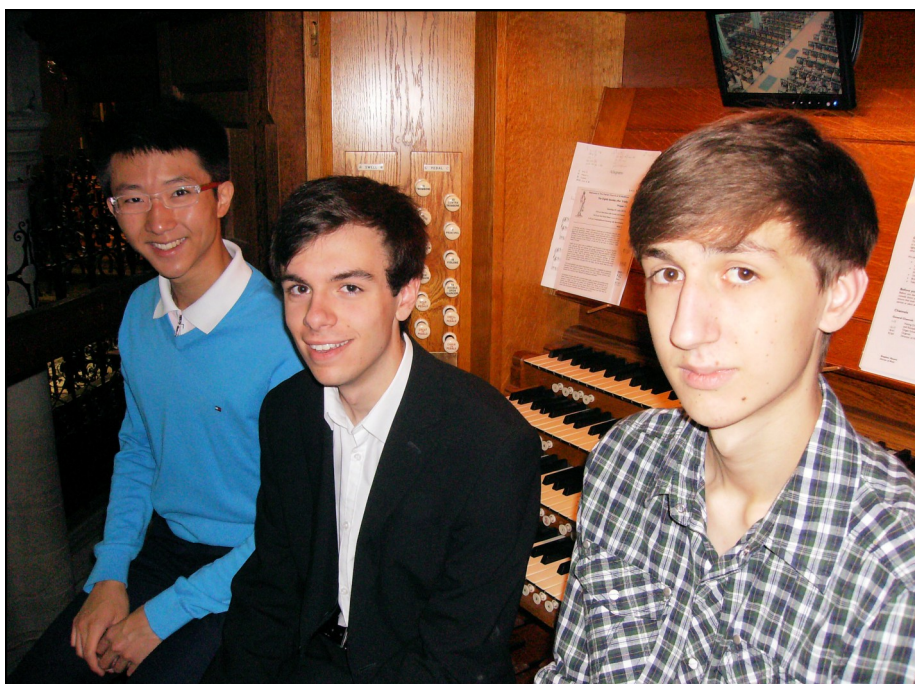
We send Nathan, Callum, Jacob and Ben congratulations on their achievements and the very best wishes with their studies in the future.

Lottery Success

St. Mary the Virgin, Finedon has just announced that it has been successful

in its application for funding from the National Lottery towards restoring the historic Father Smith organ. With a successful application already to Church Care St. Mary's is close to achieving the £52,000 needed for the restoration. The project is being overseen by John Norman as independent organ advisor and will be undertaken by Organ Builders Holmes and Swift of Fakenham, Norfolk. There are over 1,000 pipes to be cleaned and the action and bellows to be renovated. In addition the gloriously decorated front pipes will also be refurbished to their former glory.

During restoration the work will be photographed and videoed and made available online. Part of the successful application depended upon the organ continuing to be used for educational purposes; that is, teaching, recitals and educational visits.



Left to right: Nathan Lam (All Saints, Northampton) Callum Alger (St. Matthew's Northampton) Jacob Collins (St. Giles & St. Mary's, Stony Stratford).

COME AND SING CHORAL EVENSONG

by Spitzflöte

Come and sing events are immensely popular. Who hasn't sung in a 'Come and Sing Messiah' put on by some enthusiastic conductor somewhere? Of course, there's little chance of balancing a choir when one hundred basses and twelve tenors turn up. Yet, for those of us more used to listening to a nuanced performance by a church choir the invitation to attend a 'come and sing choral evensong' was irresistible. Two recent come and sings provided just that opportunity.

Come and Sing for the Coronation at St. Matthew's Church, Northampton on Sunday 2nd of June under the direction of Stephen Moore, Andrew Moodie and Callum Alger was an exciting celebration of Her Majesty's 60th coronation anniversary. The combined choirs of St. Matthew's Church and St. John's Church, Kingsthorpe augmented by around eighty willing volunteers easily filled the nave with the congregation sitting each side in the transepts of this magnificent building.

The introit was Parry's *I was glad*; surely one of the most spectacular pieces of celebratory music ever written. From the spine-tingling opening on the Solo Tuba this majestic anthem filled St. Matthew's to its lofty roof. It had one member of the congregation, sitting next to the organ, grinning from ear to ear with delight. The measured pace continued with Vaughan Williams' arrangement of *The Old One Hundredth*. This superb version of 'All people that on earth do dwell' with its trumpet introduction and descant is too often ignored by church musicians. *The Old One Hundredth* is a worthy tune that is all too frequently boringly sung and played. Even a village congregation without a choir would thank the organist who adapted Vaughan Williams' wonderful adornments to liven up an old favourite.

The anthem, of course, was Handel's *Zadok the Priest* with its 22 bar introduction gradually ramping up the tension until the listener is almost begging the choir to come in. And come in they did with a mighty chord of D major on 'Zadok the Priest'. On the whole the large group of singers managed the semi-quaver runs competently and the second half of this splendid anthem is stylistically reminiscent of the Hallelujah Chorus from *Messiah* which was composed some years later. Written for the coronation of King George II and Queen Caroline at Westminster Abbey on 11 October 1727 it is, thanks to a British Airways advertisement, probably the only one of Handel's four Coronation Anthems that the British public is familiar with. But who cares when you can have such a thrilling performance in Northampton. The choirs of St. Matthew's and St. John's sang the rest of the service alone; namely the ever-popular Tudor responses by William Smith and Stanford's Canticles in C. The service ended with Walton's *Orb and Sceptre* played by Stephen Moore.

RSCM Come and Sing Choral Evensong at St. Mary the Virgin, Finedon with somewhat smaller forces still managed to provide a thrilling evening with Robert Page conducting and Jonathan Harris at the organ. With the choir at the chancel entrance facing west this was, like St. Matthew's, not a normal Choral Evensong. The introit was Wood's *Hail Gladdening Light*, probably one of the best of Wood's pieces it requires a double choir and a great deal of precision. Although there were some tentative moments at the beginning the choir soon got into its stride and by the middle of the piece had warmly embraced this splendid anthem bringing it to an exciting close. Having gained confidence with the introit the choir gave a creditable performance of Smith's *Preces and Responses* in its four part version. The Psalm was No. 150 to C. V. Stanford's roof-lifting chant.

This was an evening of old favourites with the hymns 'How shall I sing that majesty' to *Coe Fen* and 'Holy, Holy, Holy' to *Nicea*. The canticles for the service were Brewer's *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in D*. One of the reasons why Brewer's canticles are so popular is that they sound terrific and a choir of modest ability can sing them well with training. It was a wise choice with Finedon's regular choir supplemented by additional singers. Despite the limited rehearsal time the choir sounded as if it knew the *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* by heart. They probably did!

As at St. Matthew's the anthem was Handel's *Zadok the Priest*. This was a little more difficult to bring off with the choir down in the nave and the organ at the west end. However, there was a spot in

the church where the choir and the organ coincided perfectly. Jonathan Harris finished the service with J. S. Bach's *Dorian Toccata* BWV538. Donations by choir members collection was in aid of Finedon's choir and the Royal School of Church Music.

WHOOPI GOLDBERG VARIATIONS

by the Editor

Should we be surprised that in this increasingly secular world requests for music at weddings and funerals have become progressively more banal not to mention profane. How about *A pair of sparkling eyes* for a deceased optician? This request was made to a crematorium organist a few years ago and was included in a list of quirky requests on the Society of Crematorium Organists message board. Organists may have got to the yawning stage when relatives ask for Frank Sinatra's *I did it my way* to be played for uncle Joe's funeral but there is always something to top it, like *Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye* as the curtains swish around the coffin at a crematorium service.

A recent survey by the RSCM catalogued bizarre music requests from all over Britain and a few from abroad. And, it seems, pre-recorded music to cope with these demands for secular interludes is on the rise: 52% of churches reported that pre-recorded music is used more often. Organists, as inventive as ever, resort to a number of tactics when confronted with something outside their normal repertoire; although over 80% of organists purchased the music themselves, 45% made their own arrangement of the requested piece and others resorted to learning the music from YouTube or a CD (presumably playing it on the organ from memory). Nevertheless, organists are just as likely to be pushing the music system buttons these days as starting up the organ.

Among the many strange requests received by churches of all denominations have been the 'Star Wars' theme and the 'Dr Who' signature tune and, oddly, the theme tune from the 'Benny Hill Show'. One respondent referred to a request for music from the film 'Sister Act', starring Whoopi Goldberg as a nun, as "being the most ridiculous in recent years". Although 70% of requests were for classical music a range of other genres from pop and musical theatre to jazz and rock were requested.

Even traditionalist customers seemed to confuse classical with religious music. Although Elgar's *Nimrod* is regularly played at funerals other requests such as for *Nessun Dorma* (None shall sleep) have raised eyebrows. Hymn requests tend to be those learned during childhood rather than based on relevance to the ceremony. Blake's *And did those feet* set to Parry's *Jerusalem* was banned by two churches as not really being a hymn at all and/or inappropriate. So too, surprisingly, was Wagner's *Bridal March* from *Lohengrin*. 'Here comes the bride' ('short, fat and wide' we sniggered under our breaths as choristers). The Roman Catholic Church tends to be opposed to its use on the grounds that it is a secular piece and Lutherans because Wagner's operas celebrated paganism. Also banned was the Wurzels *I've got a brand new combine harvester* for a funeral (pity really, I always thought it quite fun). John Lennon's *Imagine* was similarly banned for 'theological dissonance'. Unsurprising really since the opening line is 'Imagine there's no heaven' followed by: 'and no religion too'.

Of pre-recorded music played at funerals (probably with some reservations) was Johnny Cash's *I fell into a burning ring of fire* for a deceased heading for the crematorium, the 'Captain Pugwash' tune, 'The Archers' theme and Vera Lynn's *We'll meet again*. Wedding pre-recorded music was similarly eclectic; Liverpoolians preferred *You'll never walk alone* and the Z Cars theme whilst, more broadly, music included Pachelbel's *Canon*, the Beatles *All you need is love* and Robbie Williams *She's the one* (of course she is).

***Please submit all items of news, events, and other articles that you wish to be included in What's On, to: Barry Wadson, 24, Bransgill Court, Heelands, Milton Keynes, MK13 7LN. Telephone: 01908 315880. Email: editor.ndoa@gmail.com Internet Address: www.northamptonorganists.org.uk The Association's web site has received a total of 5,985 visits.**

ENGLISH CHURCH COMPOSERS - III

John Taverner (c1490–1545)
(The last flowering of the Sarum Rite)
by Barry Wadeson

Well, it is true that there is no known connection between John Taverner and Salisbury Cathedral. I am referring, of course, to the influence of the Sarum use on his music. By the early sixteenth century the Catholic Church in England had largely adopted the rites in the missals and breviaries as practised within the diocese of Salisbury. There were others uses; York, Lincoln and Hereford for example, but these had largely given way to Sarum by the time Taverner came to compose his most famous masses and other church music. Sarum was noted for its elaborate ritual and extensive use of music within the mass and the divine services such as Matins, Vespers and Compline. And, hard as it may be to believe, Sarum use is stamped all over the *Book of Common Prayer* (which led to it being banned by the Puritans).

Nearly fifty years after John Dunstable's death church music had become more elaborate (indeed, one could call it florid) with intricate part lines, melismas of extraordinary length and 5, 6, 7 or 8 parts to a composition. However, what marked out Sarum use in Taverner's music was his extensive use of antiphons from the propers of the services as *cantus firmi*. For example, the mass *Gloria tibi Trinitas* has a *cantus firmus* based on a plainsong antiphon for the first psalm at Lauds on Trinity Sunday. It occurs, unusually, in the mean (or lower treble part) which today is usually sung by altos, in the *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*. In the example (below) we see the tune of the plainsong antiphon making its appearance in bar 2 of the *Gloria* in the alto/mean part. The antiphon tune is woven into each movement with the remaining parts intricately weaving in and around it.



First part of the plainsong antiphon for Trinity Sunday the tune of which appears as *cantus firmus* in the mean/alto line below.

Gloria SOPRANO

Et in ter - - - - - ra

ALTO

Et in

TENOR 1

Et in ter - ra

TENOR 2

BASS 1

BASS 2

ho -

Taverner is also well-known for using a secular tune in *The Western Wynde Mass*. Tye and Sheppard also used the Western Wind tune in masses. Although a common practice on the continent it was highly unusual in England. The tune accompanies a Middle English rhyme:

Westron wynde, when wyll thou blow:
The smalle rain downe can rayne.
Christ, if my love were in my armys:
[and] I in my bed agayne.

I have no intention of displaying my ignorance by even attempting an interpretation of this strange verse. The only known copy of both verse and tune is in a British Museum manuscript.

It is something of an irony that just as England's church composers (Ludford, Fayrfax, Cornysh and Taverner) were reaching the pinnacle of musical achievement in the sixteenth century – which surpassed even the widely admired Italian School – the Reformation, which had begun on the continent some half a century previously, was fast catching up and much would soon be wiped out. If not by the Reformation then by the Puritan revolution which followed. During the Commonwealth many of the part books still in existence would be destroyed (Kenneth Long writes that over a thousand of these precious books were lost for ever). It would be left to later scholars like E. H. Fellowes and R. R. Terry, travelling from library to library searching out pages and fragments of this celebrated era of church music, to reconstruct just a fraction of the flowering of England's most glorious moment in church music.

What we know of Taverner's life is that he became a lay clerk at Tattershall Parish Church in Lincolnshire. This is a magnificent collegiate church next to Tattershall Castle and in the sixteenth century it maintained a highly professional choir. Although there is no evidence that Taverner was a boy chorister there, it is possible since he became a highly accomplished musician from an early age.

In the autumn of 1525 Bishop Longland of Lincoln, asked Taverner to become the first Instructor of Choristers at the new Cardinal College, Oxford (founded by Cardinal Wolsey). Taverner was by this time organist of St. Botolph's Parish Church, Boston (1500 – 1525). Boston has one of the largest parish churches in the country and it was also one of the wealthiest as a result of the wool trade. It appears that Taverner refused on the grounds that he would lose the chance of a good marriage by moving away from Lincolnshire. Nevertheless, in early 1526 we find him at Cardinal College recruiting for a new and very large choir of 12 ordained clerks, 12 lay clerks and 16 choristers. After Wolsey fell out of royal favour in 1529 the choir at the college was reduced in size and Taverner returned to Lincolnshire as a lay clerk at St. Botolph's. Following Wolsey's downfall Cardinal College was renamed Christ Church.

Taverner was a contemporary of Merbecke who was transformed from Catholic composer to angry Protestant reformer. It has been assumed by some that Taverner also travelled the same journey as Merbecke when he oversaw the removal of the Rood screen in Boston Parish Church. However, he carried out this task, which was government policy, with courtesy and discretion. He was no Protestant iconoclast. It seems, however, that he did show an interest in Lutheran ideas which came to the attention of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's henchman. Cardinal Wolsey, when asked about it, dismissed any serious intent on Taverner's part by saying 'He is but a musician'

The choir at Boston was well remunerated; and large, with 10 ordained clerks, up to 12 lay clerks and up to 10 choristers; and the church was prepared to spend generously on both music and musicians. Despite the fact that Taverner had overseen the removal of the Rood screen at Boston with politeness and consideration for the friars there he had no scruples in becoming a wealthy burgher of Boston through opportunistic land-dealings stemming from the Reformation. He secured enough to live comfortably on and to retire from music. He became an Alderman of Boston in 1545 and died shortly afterwards. He is buried beneath the Bell Tower of St. Botolph's.

Although Taverner may have continued composing until his death, scholars suggest that his most fruitful years were before 1530 and by 1540 he had all but retired from music. We will never know just how much Taverner composed in his lifetime, most of what we do have of his music has been assembled from sources such as the Forrest-Heyther and Peterhouse part books. What has survived are eight masses:

Missa Gloria Tibi Trinitas (6 voices)
Missa Corona Spinea (6 voices)
Missa O Michael (6 voices)
Missa Sancti Wilhelmi (5 voices), sometimes called the Small Devotion Mass
Missa Mater Christi (5 voices)
Mean Mass (5 voices)
Plainsong Mass (4 voices)
Western Wynde Mass (4 voices)

There are also three Magnificats in 4, 5 and 6 voices respectively, a *Te Deum* for 5 voices, two versions of the well known *Dum Transisset Sabbatum* for 4 and 5 voices, several votive antiphons and anthems and fragments of other masses.

The suggestion that the mass *Gloria Tibi Trinitas* was sung at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520 when Henry VIII fêted Francis I of France is doubtful although Henry (as was customary) took the Choir of the Chapel Royal with him. Scholars believe the mass was composed somewhere between 1526 and 1530 for a Trinity Sunday at Wolsey's Cardinal College.

Music to buy

You will find modern sheet music editions of Taverner's works, especially the masses, in abundance with free downloads of versions by aspiring amateur musical editors. Boosey & Hawkes.com have a quite a selection of well edited editions but are expensive. Look for reputable publishers such as Chester Music for good editions.

Music to listen to

You really are spoiled for choice when it comes to CDs (or MP3 downloads). Most of the masses have been recorded (some as they would have been sung with antiphons preceding sections of the mass according to the Sarum use) by The Sixteen, The Tallis Scholars and by the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford itself with prices ranging from around £8.00 to £15.00 per CD. For a small sum you can download individual movements and other works via Amazon. So well performed are these works that it is almost impossible to recommend one over the other. Although my own preference is for the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral performances.

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FLOWER FESTIVAL CHORAL EVENSONG, ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, FINEDON

Another opportunity for would-be come-and-singers will take place at 6.00 p.m. on Sunday 15th September at St. Mary's, Finedon. Director of Music, Jonathan Harris is looking for visiting singers to augment the regular choir for this prestigious occasion.

Dress is choir robes, dark suits or all black. All rehearsals take place at St Mary the Virgin, Finedon. This year's Flower Festival theme is the 'Best of British' - hence the choice of music. Hard copies of the music will be available at the rehearsals.

Music List:

Introit: James MacMillan *O Radiant Dawn*

Responses: Tallis

Canticles: *Dyson in C* (nb changed from earlier information)

Anthem: *Parry Blest Pair of Sirens* (4 part version)

Psalm: 124, 125 (from The Parish Psalter with chants)

Hymns: *I vow to thee my country* (harmony version)

And did those feet in ancient times (Jerusalem)

Organ Voluntary: *Walton Crown Imperial*

For practice purposes, Jonathan can email you a copy of the MacMillan, Dyson in C, Psalms, Responses or Hymns; just let him know if you'd like these. The church has borrowed copies of Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens* so it is essential that these are returned immediately after the service (there is a useful recording of this on You Tube that can be followed along with the music). It would be most helpful if visiting singers could come to the rehearsals with the majority of notes learnt beforehand! Although you may not be able to attend all the rehearsals please attend as many as you can.

Please ensure you get a message to Jonathan before the first rehearsal, via phone, email or through a member of the Finedon church choir, to indicate if you are able to come and sing at this evensong (and, if you've not sung at St. Mary's before, which part you sing (e.g. SATB).

Rehearsals:

Friday 6th September 7.00pm to 8.30pm

Friday 13th September 7.00pm to 8.30pm

Plus a short rehearsal on the day at 4.30pm before the Festal Evensong at 6pm.

Contact Info:

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CORRECTION

Under New Members in the June edition of the Newsletter we stated that the Very Rev'd Canon Alan Horsley was a member of the clergy team at All Saints, Northampton. In fact, he is part of the team of the St. Crispin Group of churches which includes: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Christ Church, Holy Trinity (and St Paul) and St Michael & All Angels (with St Edmund). We apologise for any embarrassment this may have caused.

100 YEARS OLD – THE INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION OF ORGANISTS

by The Editor



On January 2nd 1890 a group of organists met together in Wakefield. In the chair was J. Naylor Hardy (organist of Wakefield Cathedral) and the principal guest was the organist of York Minster, Dr J. Naylor. Although in October 1853 a contributor to the *Musical Times* had suggested an association for organists as being “both desirable and necessary for preserving the general interests of organists” little had come of this proposition. And at the meeting in 1890 nothing further than a local annual event was on the minds of those attending the meeting.

However, at Hardy’s suggestion a Mr A. E. S. Sugden prepared a paper on the feasibility of an organists’ association. Thus was born the Wakefield and District Organists’ Association, the oldest organists’ association in the country. In 1903 an organists association was formed in Huddersfield to be followed in a few years by associations in Derby, Bradford and Oldham.

Following a proposal by John Brook in early 1913 that a federation of the growing number of associations should be formed it was on November 15th, 1913 that delegates from

various associations met in Manchester with Mr S. W. Pilling, President of the Wakefield Organists’ Association presiding over the election of officials for what was to become the National Union of Organists Associations. The *Quarterly Record*, the official journal of the Union was begun in 1915.

What began as a union of a some thirty associations with 300 members has grown to 6,000 members worldwide and around 90 affiliated associations. Initially, membership of the associations was confined to those holding the position of organist at a church, chapel or secular institution. It was incorporated as a company in 1927 and registered as an educational charity (No. 269986). The *Quarterly Journal* later became the *Organists’ Review*.

The Northampton and District Organists’ Association was formed in 1921 when Charles John King (organist of St. Matthew’s, Northampton) became its first president. Although King stands out as one of the foremost organists and musicians of the town, he was followed as president by Walter Handel-Hall (1922 – 1923) and Ralph Richardson-Jones (1923 – 1924) both prominent organists in Northampton. Richardson-Jones was organist of All Saints, Northampton from 1921 to 1961 and Handel-Hall was organist of the Doddridge Chapel.

These three were undoubtedly the driving force behind the formation of the Northampton and District Organists Association. They were frequently mentioned in the *Northampton Mercury* as performers at small chamber concerts, organ recitals and as conductors. Ralph Richardson-Jones was conductor of the Northampton Symphony Orchestra and Charles King, of course, of the Northampton Musical Society.

We will be looking at the history of the Northampton & District Organists Association in a future Newsletter. Anyone wishing to contribute their reminiscences, memories or old photographs of the N&DOA should get in touch with the Editor.