



# NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

Autumn/Winter 2016

*Reg. Charity No. 274679*



## FROM THE EDITOR



And so, 2016 is nearly ended. Christmas is upon us and so too is 2017. Cassocks are swished and sleeves rolled up for all the hard work that organists and choirs will be putting into services over Christmas-tide. Although a joyful Christian festival we are beset on every side by the secular concept

of Christmas – over indulgence and tacky presents! Only rarely does Our Lord get a mention now that Santa has taken over.

But, onward and upward. I am conscious that we have missed an edition due to difficult circumstances and so this Newsletter has some extra pages to make up for earlier omissions. I am immensely grateful to Helen Murphy, our Hon Sec, for virtually writing all the articles during what has been a difficult year for the editor. The good news is that the editor's computer has been in for repair and all the software now seems to be working perfectly again. Please turn to page 13 for early NDOA events (programme to be issued separately) and page 15 for advance notification of a memorial recital for Roger Smith in March 2017 at St. Mary's Church, Wellingborough. And finally: Merry Christmas everyone.

*Barry Wadeson*  
(Editor)

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*Front cover picture the Tickell organ of All Saints Church, Oakham.*

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# August Bank Holiday Organ Crawl

## 16th August 2016

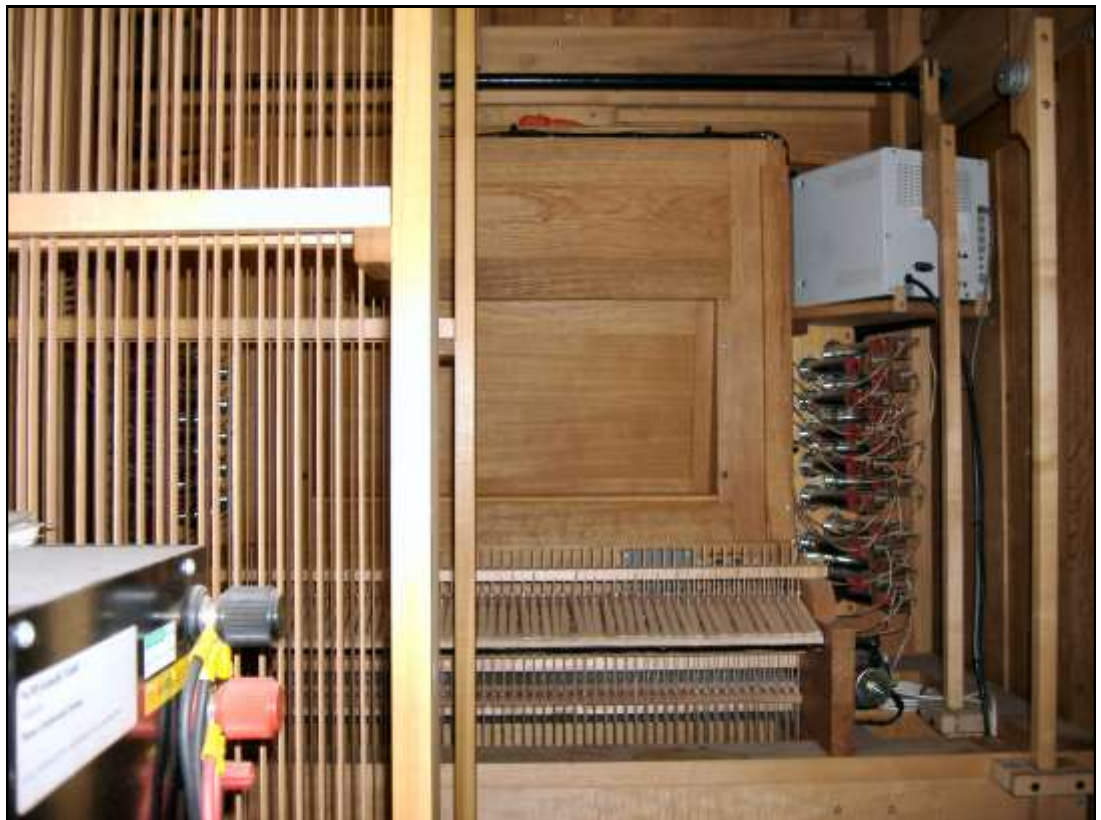
*by  
Helen Murphy*

The weather gods were smiling on us as Bank Holiday Monday dawned fine and clear. NDOA members and friends (eventually numbering an impressive 19!) made their various ways to All Saints' Oakham to find a church quickly filling up with visitors ready for the organ recital at 11.15, which was to be the springboard for our organ crawl. William Fox, currently organ scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford, was



a former pupil not only of Oakham School just across the churchyard, but also of NDOA President Lee Dunleavy - he had been a chorister at York Minster for five years, which was where he had met Lee.

Though not particularly long, Oakham church is rather wide; even the transepts each have a two-bay arcade across north to south, which I don't think I've seen before. Wonderful carvings embellish the capitals



Behind the console. (Picture by Barry Wadeson taken January 2014). Stop solenoids and CCT equipment to the right with trackers and transformer to the left. Still surprisingly spacious allowing easy access for tuning and maintenance.



View of the Tickell organ from the Trinity Chapel. The little balustrades give the impression that the console sits to one side of the organ above the arch but is, in fact, on the ground. Dual swell pedals open shutters East and West and can be used independently. Pedal pipes are in the chamber to the right and entrance to the action on the left. Trackers for the pedal pipes run over the entrance arch. In the archway is William Fox preparing to give his recital.

of the four-bay pillars in the nave - a green man, Adam and Eve, dragons, Reynard the fox, and so on. Tucked neatly into the archway of the Holy Trinity chapel on the north side of the chancel, where possibly a wooden screen might have been in the Middle Ages, is the 1996 Tickell organ. It sits on its own handsome oak gallery, with access to the chapel (and the console on the right-hand side) through a 'tunnel' underneath. The case is perfectly balanced, each side having its own central high tower flanked by two smaller towers whether facing west or east (the Great speaks to the west and the Swell to the east) - the only difference between the two sides is that the western front bears the carved painted Oakham coat of arms, with its motto *Mulum in parvo* (much in little) and its front pipe mouths are gilded. With only 20 speaking stops, this is a relatively small instrument but, reflecting Rutland's motto, gives the impression of a much larger size. And William's programme fully demonstrated the amazing

variety of sounds - colours, textures - particularly in the Buxtehude (*Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*). I don't normally go for sets of variations (life is too short, basically) but William made the most of the resources available to deliver a fantastic set of contrasting sounds (and I didn't die!). As well as Buxtehude, he gave us Rheinberger, JSB, Boyce, Vierne and Alain, concluding with an arrangement of Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March No 4* - all on two manuals and pedals with 20 stops between them (you see what I mean?) - all very different in style, all very different in sound, and all pointing up the design skills of the late Ken Tickell.

The packed church decanted itself into the parish hall for a buffet lunch, after which we re-assembled in the church so that members could have a go themselves. We were aided and abetted by Kevin Slingsby, the resident organist at All Saints', until it was time to take our leave, stroll down the path, across the lane and through the gate to the school chapel, clearly visible over the wall.

Peter Davies from the school was there to meet us and give us some background information - the chapel was built in 1924 (dedicated 1926) as a war



memorial, on the initiative of the parents in response to the terrible slaughter and loss of young lives. The names of old boys who fell in the Great War are carved on either side of the entrance and a further panel inside records those lost in the Second World War. (With 120 in the choir alone, Peter Davies explained that on Remembrance Sunday in addition to the school chapel, they need to use All Saints' and St Joseph's Catholic church.) A further memorial inside pays tribute to another old boy, Vivian Redlich (1905-1942), a missionary priest working in New Guinea, who was executed along with his fellow missionaries by the invading Japanese in 1942 - known as the New Guinea Martyrs.



Peter Collins organ at Oakham School.

His watercolour portrait, with its explanatory panel, is complemented by a framed hand-written tribute and letter of apology by the Bishop of Yokohama, dated 1992. respectively.

*Editors Note: Before the Tickell organ was installed in All Saints, Oakham in 1995 there was a Brindley and Foster organ of IIIP and 46 stops. Built in 1872 it cost £750 (or around £60,400 in today's money). It was located on the opposite (South) side of the church in the Lady Chapel. Described in 1934 as "ridiculously out of date and unworthy of the church." Roger Yates of Nottingham moved the organ to the North West corner of the Church in 1937 and electrified it with a detached console in the Trinity Chapel. Undoubtedly there was a delay between pressing the keys and hearing the sound. A rather large organ it included a Glockenspiel on the Choir manual. As mentioned by Helen when Ken Tickell was asked to build a new organ it was no surprise that with just 20 stops he chose to place the county crest of Rutland (the smallest county in England) over the archway on the organ case. The Latin*

| Specification: Oakham School Chapel   |               |       |            |
|---|---------------|-------|------------|
| <b>Pedal</b>  | Principal     | 16    | Pine       |
|   | Sub Bass      | 16    | Pine       |
|   | Octave        | 8     | From Great |
|   | Open Flute    | 8     | Pine       |
|   | Octave        | 4     | From Great |
|   | Trombone      | 16    | Pine       |
|   | Trumpet       | 8     | From Great |
| <b>Choir/Echo</b>   | Gedact        | 8     |            |
|   | Flute         | 4     |            |
|   | Nazard        | 2 2/3 |            |
|   | Principal     | 2     |            |
|   | Tierce        | 1 3/5 |            |
|   | Quint         | 1 1/3 |            |
|   | Vox Humana    | 8     |            |
| <b>Great</b>  | Tremulant     |       |            |
|   | Bourdon       | 16    |            |
|   | Principal     | 8     |            |
|   | Chimney Flute | 8     |            |
|   | Octave        | 4     |            |
|   | Flute         | 4     |            |
|   | Fifteenth     | 2     |            |
|   | Cornet        | III   | tf         |
|   | Mixture       | IV    |            |
|   | Trumpet       | 8     |            |
|   | Tremulant     |       |            |
| <b>Swell</b>  | Open Flute    | 8     |            |
|   | Gamba         | 8     |            |
|   | Celeste       | 8     | TC         |
|   | Prestant      | 4     |            |
|   | Gemshorn      | 2     |            |
|   | Mixture       | IV    |            |
|   | Cremona       | 8     |            |
|   | Cornocean     | 8     |            |
|   | Clarion       | 4     |            |
|   | Tremulant     |       |            |
| Couplers: Sw to Pd; Sw to Gt; Ch to Gt; Ch to Pd; Gt to Pd. Radiating concave pedalboard. 6 departmental pistons, 6 general thumb pistons |               |       |            |

| Specification: All Saints Oakham   |                     |     |                           |
|--|---------------------|-----|---------------------------|
| <b>Pedal</b>   | Subbass             | 16  | poplar                    |
|  | Principal           | 8   | 70% tin                   |
|  | Trombone            | 16  | Zinc/50% tin              |
| <b>Great</b>   | Open Diapason       | 8   | 70%/50% tin               |
|  | Stopped Diapason    | 8   | cedar                     |
|  | Dulciana            | 8   | Bass from St Diapason     |
|  | Principal           | 4   | 70%/50% tin               |
|  | Fifteenth           | 2   | 50% tin                   |
|  | Sesquialter 12 17   | II  | TC 50% tin                |
|  | Mixture 19 22 26 29 | IV  | 50% tin                   |
| <b>Swell</b>   | Trumpet             | 8   | 50% tin                   |
|  | Tremulant           |     |                           |
|  | Chimney Flute       | 8   | 20% tin                   |
|  | Salicional          | 8   | 50% tin (Bass from Ch Fl) |
|  | Voix Celeste TC     | 8   | 50% tin                   |
|  | Principal           | 4   | 50% tin                   |
|  | Flute               | 4   | 50% tin                   |
|  | Gemshorn            | 2   | 50% tin                   |
|  | Mixture 26 29 33    | III | 50% tin                   |
|  | Cremona             | 16  | 50% tin                   |
|  | Hautboy             | 8   | 50% tin                   |
|  | Tremulant           |     |                           |
| Couplers: Sw to Pd; Gt to Pd; Sw to Gt. Mechanical action with electric stops and pistons. Gt and Pd pistons coupled. 5 pistons each on Sw, Gt and Pd. Drawstops of blackwood and case of solid oak. Radiating concave pedalboard. |                     |     |                           |

*motto meaning "Much in little" would no doubt have amused Ken who was already beginning to build organs that were compact but included 'a lot of organ' in small spaces.*

*With less than half the stops of the Brindley & Foster organ Tickell managed to make the smaller replacement organ as powerful as the old instrument but with a brighter tonal scheme.*

*Above for comparison are the specifications of All Saints and the School Chapel Oakham. Two fine organs within two hundred yards of each other. In fact, it is just a short walk across the churchyard, through an alley and into the school grounds. Both organs are characteristic of their builders. Loudness isn't everything and whereas the Collins organ has a wall behind it to project the sound into the chapel, Tickell solved the problem of projecting the swell sound in both directions (East for the choir and West for the congregation) with shutters each side that can be used independently or together. Both make full use of the surroundings in which they are situated and cannot really be compared. The Collins organ has to support a regularly full Chapel with human bodies absorbing the sound close to its situation whilst the Tickell organ has to carry sound to the West of the Church and the choir either simultaneously or separately.*





Interior of All Saints Church, Oakham facing West. The Tickell organ is on the right with the console just behind the choir stalls. Below members try out the organ.





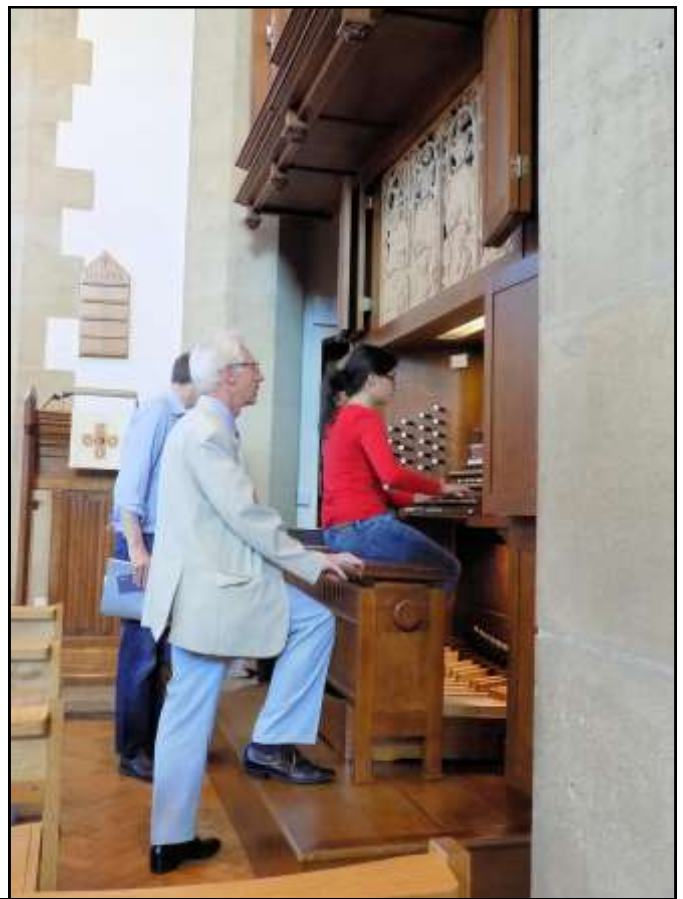


The impressive front of Oakham School Chapel with classical figures decorating the entrance.

Oakham school was founded in 1584 by Archdeacon Robert Johnson, along with Uppingham School, a few miles away. They share a common badge design (and a strong rivalry). Uppingham's colours tend towards blue and white whilst Oakham's are black and red.

Under Headmaster John Buchanan, in 1971 Oakham was the first boys' independent secondary school in Britain to accept both male and female pupils throughout the whole school and not just in the Sixth Form. In 1995, it was the first public school to go on-line. Fees range from £15,615 per annum to £29,355 according whether pupils are day or boarders or middle or upper school (in case you are interested!).





NDOA members take turns at the console of the Peter Collins organ, or listening whilst waiting for their opportunity to play their favourite pieces. The three manual sounds loud, but wait until the chapel is filled with pupils to absorb the sound.



# Deene, St. Peter



And so, on to Deene, following a cross-country route which somehow took us twice under the spectacular Haringworth viaduct - it must have been a winding road! And just in case you were wondering - it is the longest one in the country. A few years ago I was travelling up to Leicester on Sunday on a diverted train (engineering works on the main line); as it is a rare occurrence, a number of railway enthusiasts, keen photographers, were on board to record the occasion. One man (not a photographer) was giving a running commentary and guiding his wife with all the posh camera gear, pointing out the best bits (she bore it very patiently I have to say!). Other passengers were assembling at the windows (I was on the opposite side from the lady photographer, looking out over the eastern edge), while Mr Keen tried to rally an unresponsive elderly couple sitting opposite me, who appeared to be oblivious to it all. 'It's the longest viaduct in the country!' Mr Keen enthused. 'What, not longer than that one in Yorkshire?' said Mrs Elderly Person disbelievingly. 'Yes, really the longest!' Mr Keen and I chorused. But by the time they had realised the significance, we had reached the other side. The photographers were happy, though!

Peter also gave us a potted history of the organ (Peter Collins 1992, IIIP 85). Some of us were at the memorial recital for Peter given by Douglas Hollick earlier in the



summer, when he talked about their long collaboration and friendship over the years and how he had made the keyboards for the organ.

Deene church is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust whose object is to 'ensure that all these churches [i.e. redundant] are kept in repair and cared for, in the interests of the Church and Nation, for present and future generations'. Our editor, Barry Wadeson, in his account of his visit to Deene not so long ago (Spring Newsletter 2016) writes movingly of the ill-fated Charge of the Light Brigade in 1854, led by the 7th Earl of Cardigan, the local boy from Deene, telling us that 'nearly half of the men of the Light Brigade were killed, wounded or taken prisoner and 355 horses were killed or put down due to injuries'. But not the 7th Earl and not Ronald, his horse, who both survived to enjoy the luxury of dying in their bed and stable. Ronald was clearly much loved because the last time I visited Deene Hall (and it was a long time ago) Ronald's preserved head was on display in the hall. I wonder if it still there?

Although the church is open all the time now (as required by the CCT), and there were visitors other than the NDOA group, sadly it has an air of neglect, in spite of the CCT's care, and we wondered if it was ever used - for weddings perhaps? - certainly the presence of coffin supports in the chancel suggests it might still serve the occasional funeral. It's a large church for what is today a tiny village, but let's not forget that in the Middle Ages, villages were more densely populated, the countryside was a busy working environment with people employed in a wide variety of activities, particularly in connection with the big house (such as Deene Park) which required a large range of support services employing many workers, all interdependent. There was a sign on the console with an invitation to play, giving instructions how to switch it on and a request to cover the keyboard with the cloth and close the doors afterwards. Although the organ was repaired in 2007/8 by courtesy of the Nene Valley churches Organ Project, there was a cipher on the Swell (E above middle C); it was possible to couple to the Great, but it was rather erratic to say the least. It was playable, but only just, as long as you were able to avoid the dreaded E. So, we were rather constrained by the conditions in our choice of music to play - but managed a few simple pieces between us, after which we followed the instructions about the cloth and the doors.

Once part of the huge Rockingham Forest, this is a beautiful part of the county; since the demise of the ironstone mining and the steel industries, nature has taken over and I feel that in many respects Northamptonshire (which as a child I thought was distinctly industrial) has returned to how it must have looked two hundred years ago.

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Foreground: The 7th Earl of Cardigan with his second wife Agnes (gazing adoringly at him). He died in 1868 and she in 1915. Very appropriately for a man of horse her maiden name was de Horsey. In the background is a monument to Sir Robert Brudenell (died 1531) with his two wives Margaret Entwissell and Philippa Power. Robert Brudenell was Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas.



The organ case is richly decorated with both English and Latin quotations.



Members take turns with the Deene, St Peter organ (avoiding playing in the key of E of course).

Behind the organ is a mass of electrics with two consumer units. After a lot of trial and error and pushing down some very resistant switches the organ was eventually brought to life.

The 1890 Nicholson organ was restored in 2008 after lead was stolen from the church roof and rain-water flooded the organ. Sadly, although this is a beautiful church which at one time must have had a sizeable congregation, the local population has dwindled and with other more accessible churches in surrounding villages this redundant church gets few visitors these days.

So not surprisingly the organ is descending into a poor state of repair once again.



#### **FORTHCOMING NDOA EVENTS 2017**

##### **Saturday 4th February at 3pm**

CD Afternoon at Alan Cufaude's home, Northampton, hopefully coinciding with the launch of the David Morgan CD

##### **Saturday 25th February at 3pm**

Talk by William Whitehead on The Orgelbüchlein Project at All Saints', Northampton

##### **Saturday 22nd April**

Trip to Cambridge to see Selwyn (Letourneau), Downing (Tickell), Sidney Sussex (Flentrop) and possibly Great St. Mary's (Father Smith) organs.

##### **Saturday 20th May at 7.30pm**

Concert celebrating the tercentenary of the installation of the organ at Finedon - free to NDOA members.

# St Matthew's Festival 2016

by  
Helen Murphy

The recent St Matthew's Festival (21st to 25th September) celebrated all the arts, not only music and the visual arts, but literature too. Not everyone is aware that, as well as its famous commissions (the Henry Moore, the Graham



This rare picture of St. Matthew's dates back to around Walter Hussey's time with a view that can no longer be seen. A wall and tall trees enclosing the vicarage (now in private ownership) hide this imposing vista.

Sutherland, the Benjamin Britten and so on) Walter Hussey, the driving force behind it all, also commissioned written work - poetry, written by W H Auden and Norman Nicholson.

When, in 1943, Walter Hussey decided to celebrate the church's 50th anniversary, there was a war on - but no matter - the Madonna and Child (Henry Moore) was completed and installed but its unveiling was delayed because of enemy action (bombs on the line make an exciting change from leaves or the wrong kind of snow!) but eventually Kenneth Clark (then Director of the National Gallery) was able to do the business and delivered a seminal speech which was published in the parish magazine (and which can be read in the archives). Walter's other planned events (concerts, recitals and such like - not forgetting Benjamin Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*) also came to pass in spite of the challenging times.

The pattern having been set, other commissions followed (Graham Sutherland's Crucifixion in 1946 for example), albeit sporadically, the most recent being an Introit, Behold, the tabernacle of God, written by Simon Johnson and sung by the combined choirs of St Matthew's, All Saints' and St John the Baptist, Kingsthorpe on the Sunday evening, 25th September, the anniversary of the church's dedication - and almost the end of the festival (but not quite). An impressive 66 singers, boys, girls and adults, filled all three rows of the choir stalls and spread



along the sanctuary step. They delighted us with Dyson in D, the Sanders Responses and Brahms's *How lovely are thy dwellings fair*.

And so to the concluding event of the festival - the Ronald Gates Organ Recital, sponsored by Kenneth Tickell and Co and admirably delivered by Richard Pinel (who had spoken so movingly at Ron's funeral in St Matthew's earlier in the year).

After kicking off with Brahms (*Prelude and Fugue in G Minor*), Schumann (*Adagio in B Major* from Studies in Canonic Form) and good old Percy Whitlock (*Fantasie Chorale No 2*) who, as Richard says, always raises an affectionate smile (he certainly puts me in a good mood!), he moved on to a group from the Orgelbüchlein project. As you probably know, William Whitehead conceived the idea of completing Bach's unfinished project by inviting composers to fill in the remaining chorales. Here, we heard Grayston Ives on *Es steh'n vor Gottes Thron*, Jacques van Oortmerssen on *Nun ruhen alle Wälder* (my favourite) and David Maw's *Allein nach dir, Herr Jesu Christ, verlanger mich*, commissioned for this recital and therefore a world première.

If you think you know about Lutheran chorales, think again. *Allein nach dir* is not only long, but irregular, a single verse of 21 lines, of different lengths. Crikey! In David Maw's words, this 'commands a melody that stretches the coherence of the chorale genre to its limits'. An essential part of our recital programme was the insert giving the melody line and all 21 lines of the text in English, together with David's comments. My first thought on seeing the melody line receding into the horizon, with a range of E to E, was - how on earth would a congregation cope with this? Some people have great difficulty in remembering a four-line hymn tune, but 21 lines, with no repetitions (apart from at the beginning) and, although there are similarities, there are also subtle differences? No chance. Bach's congregations must have been made of tougher material. David Maw gave us a very helpful analysis of the chorale melody and how he tackled it, which makes me want to hear it again soon. Richard concluded with Reger's phenomenal *Phantasie über den Chorale 'Hallelujah! Gott zu loben bleibe meine Seelenfreud*, a veritable tour de force and a fitting conclusion to the festival.

*Helen Murphy is a member of the Festival Planning Team*

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## ROGER SMITH MEMORIAL RECITAL

*Saturday 4th March, 2017 at 3.00 p.m.  
St. Mary the Virgin, Wellingborough*

There will be a special Memorial Recital for the late Roger Smith at St Mary's Wellingborough at 3:00pm on Saturday 4 March 2017. It is being given by his colleagues and former organ scholars of St Mary's, including many of his favourite pieces, as well as a performance by Pamela Rawlinson of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 (Elvira Madigan), accompanied by Lee Dunleavy on organ.

# Oxford Trip: 22nd October 2016

## New College, Church of St Mary Magdalen, Keble Collge

*by  
Helen Murphy*

An eventual total of 15 NDOA members, friends and family, from various corners of the county, mustered at New College on a bright autumn morning. Owing to a breakdown in communication, there was no one to meet us at the porter's lodge as arranged - however, after some to-ing and fro-ing, an unbelievably young-looking organ scholar, Charles, came to the rescue to save the day. He showed us the 1969 Grant, Degens and Bradbeer instrument (IIP 49 - Swell, Great and Positive) situated on a roomy gallery separating the chancel from the ante-chapel, allowing good views both east and west, and invited members to try it out. The console is of a lightish wood, with black drawstops and black keys - even the black keys were black, with just a strip of white along the top.

I, meanwhile, was taking a good look at the chapel itself - lofty, late-Gothic, with a high wooden roof - which I'd not seen before. The whole east wall is covered with an enormous reredos, rows of stone carved saints, bishops, Old Testament prophets and patriarchs, all surrounding a central crucified Jesus, and each with his/her (and, yes, there were some females!) own crocketed canopy looking from the distance of the gallery like sets of exotic antlers - a real nineteenth-century extravagance.

As for the organ case (designed by George Pace in metal, not wood) and its surroundings, I needed to go down to ground level for a proper look. Seen from the east end, the case is sharply angular, reflecting its metallic element - mainly silver-coloured, but with a touch of warm copper in the large central V-shape and in the horizontal projecting Trompeta Real pipes (see picture right). A stroke of imaginative genius was the vertical glass swell shutters on the front, allowing both a view of the pipework within and a constantly changing pattern of reflections from the stained glass windows of the north wall as the shutters moved. With collegiate seating, everyone gets to witness this fantastic effect from time to time (unless they have their head





permanently bowed in prayer).

However, the most striking thing in my view was the most unusual painted west window (a brilliant view from the organ gallery) - all in subtle shades of brown: amber, chestnut, sepia, burnt umber - a whole paintbox of browns on a light ground, apart from a single splash of Hooker's green (someone's cloak - I wonder why?). A nativity scene sits at the centre, its design spreading across the full width of the window. The glazing below was populated by a row of elegant ladies, much lighter (dressed in muslin perhaps?) each surmounted by a similarly faint, painted canopy (as on the reredos, but less antler-like). They looked much more like Muses than saints, I thought, and I wasn't that far out. They are in fact the Seven Virtues: Temperance, Fortitude, Faith, Charity, Hope, Justice and Prudence and the whole thing was designed by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Jervais (1779-1785). And that wasn't all. Down below in the antechapel, a life-size stone Lazarus (Jacob Epstein, 1937) faces the west door, still bound but just awakening, his head twisted sharply to the left, his features contorted as he begins the struggle to break free.

After our various lunches (some more exotic than others), it was on to St Mary Magdalen's church, where DoM, Will Dawes, met us and gave us a quick introduction and demo of this highly unusual instrument - sited on a newly built gallery in the west tower (with room for a small choir), above where the previous organ had stood at ground level. That space is now occupied by kitchen facilities, with a new stone spiral staircase winding up to the first floor, where the glass-backed console (yes, glass again - is this an Oxford thing?) facing towards the centre reveals the all innards, trackers going down, with the organist sitting back to the wall and facing outwards over a low music stand. In fact, a vital condition from the architect for the new gallery was that the west window should be fully visible - which necessarily affected the organ design).

The Swell division (on the north side) is therefore enclosed in glass, with the shutters opening onto the gallery as well as the nave and there is more glass separating the (unenclosed) Great pipework on the south side from the gallery, with manually operated shutters above the organist's head to direct the sound into the nave (or not, as the case may be). In fact, we all felt that it was loud enough in the gallery with these shutters closed (never mind open!), but we were assured that it was much better downstairs in the open position for the congregation. And yes, I suppose it was - but that wouldn't stop the organist (and indeed the choir too) from feeling rather overwhelmed.

With your back to the north wall of the tower, sitting on the organ stool, you are faced with a console like no other I've seen: the stops are push buttons, stretched out on either side in a flattish arrangement sloping outwards, not unlike the French style, but much lower, so that there is easy eye-contact between the organist and choir (and, crucially, leaving a clear view of the

window). The colour scheme is somewhat unusual too - a light, golden-tinged green (even the stool!) chosen apparently to match the general effect of the west window glass - which to me looked rather yellower and lighter; as it was (I think) supposed to represent gold. This time the white keys were white and the black ones were chestnut, which makes a change.

As a self-proclaimed Anglo-Catholic establishment, St Mary Magdalen's is a fairly typical example - with elegant chandeliers hanging over the chancel area, tall elaborate candlesticks on the altar and a general air of restrained indulgence (that, for me, sums up what I most like about these churches - and I speak as a member of the Roman branch), warm and comfortable, in a subdued light - even on a sunny day - but, above all, an atmosphere of elegant good taste. (As a child, I went to St Mary's, Wellingborough - recognised as Ninian Comper's masterpiece - which probably explains it all.)

And so on to Keble. Years ago, I used to hate Butterfield (in the Sixties, I remember being absolutely horrified by All Saints', Margaret Street - and it wasn't only the architecture!) - all that frenetic patterning, not an inch left untouched - but I've grown to like his madly exuberantly patterned red brick, indigo and cream exteriors (ahem - not totally unlike Wellingborough railway station actually - gosh, there's a thought - did the great man have a thing going with the Midland Railway?).

We had been met not only by the organ scholar, James, but by DoM (and composer) Matthew Martin, as well, who was able to give us chapter and verse on the recent re-voicing by Ruffati of the 2011 Tickell organ (IVP 43). This was something that had intrigued some of us - why such a recent instrument should need to be re-voiced and, if so, why by a distant Italian firm. Matthew talked of 'opening up' the sound so that it would speak better into the chapel and seemed very pleased with the result. He wouldn't be drawn (quite rightly) as to why this might be necessary, other than to say that the organ had been installed before his time and perhaps designed to someone else's ideas. Fair enough. Whatever the reason, he (and James) seemed very pleased with the result and he gave us a quick demo before leaving us with James. We had ascended by a very narrow spiral staircase and there wasn't much room in the loft, and I couldn't get close enough to see the keys - what colour were they? Black, white, striped - who knows? Probably the most outstanding feature here was the lack of glass; so I decided to go down again and listen from below and the chapel gave a good resonant acoustic without the organist up aloft feeling overcome by the sheer volume, as at St Mary Mags. Although I'd heard this instrument before, I couldn't say whether it had been improved by the re-voicing - only those using it constantly would know, and they seemed to be satisfied.

The interior is different but still the total Butterfield experience - wall-to-wall



decoration like a Persian carpet. The organ sits high up on the south wall, with a small balcony jettied out into the chapel; even the painted front pipes above (non-speaking) were to Butterfield's design - sage-green, brick-red, gold and cream, the bands of patterning giving an overall striped effect, like a Fair Isle jumper, toning in with the tiles and large mosaic panels at the middle level. All busy with saints, prophets and patriarchs, and guarded by archangels at the doors, these mosaics, together with the windows, illustrate John Keble's inspiration of the Christian Year in Butterfield's lively vision - the New Testament growing out of the Old and culminating in the Last Judgement on the west wall.

Finally, amid all this activity, the observant would notice a small door below the organ loft, leading to a place of calm - a tiny chapel, whose altar piece is Holman Hunt's famous painting *The Light of the World* (one of the two known versions - I've forgotten where the other one is) - required viewing after a long, busy and ultimately rewarding day. But it wasn't over! Some of us had to go at this stage, but the delights of Choral Evensong back at New College awaited those who were able to stay.

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### **Annual General Meeting held at St Mary the Virgin, Finedon Saturday 5th November at 3.00 p.m.**

The Annual General Meeting of the Northampton and District Organists' Association was held at the beautiful medieval church of St. Mary, Finedon. Followed by a simple evensong sung to plainsong in the choirstalls.

Shanna Hart (pictured right) a former organ pupil of Jonathan Harris took over the presidency from Lee Dunleavy and has already been working on a programme of events for 2017. John Wilson and John Welch were elected as committee members (Andrew Moodie retiring plus one vacancy). Mark Gibson was nominated as President elect for 2017–2018 and agreed by members.

With a healthy bank balance due to more members taking up the option of the eNewsletter membership fees are to remain unchanged. Recommended funeral fees for organists also remain unchanged for the coming year.







The magnificent southern aspect of All Saints Church, Oakham in Rutland—the tiniest county in England. But as befits a county town it's parish church is one of the most stunning and could put many county churches to shame. The building is largely 14th Century although the South door, considered to be the oldest part of the building, is 13th Century.