

ND NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT
ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 2/2021



FROM THE PRESIDENT.

When we put together the Programme of Events for NDOA's 2021 Centenary Year, none of us could have contemplated the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. It does great credit to our Association that undaunted by these challenges we have set about our Centenary Projects (which you can read about on p.3), and embarked on a programme of exciting online meetings.

For our Zoom event on 10th April, we are especially pleased to be joined by Daniel Moulton, who will be in conversation with NDOA. Daniel's work as a recitalist, presenter, and Head of Organ Studies at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire is well-known, and the event is not to be missed.

We began 2021 by asking everyone to encourage new members to join us. In spite of Covid-19, it is really pleasing to report that so far this year, we have been joined by more than 15 new members, not only in and around Northamptonshire, but as far afield as Australia and New Zealand. We are also working closely with the Springfield AGO Chapter in the US, and as this Issue went to press we enjoyed a superb online presentation from Bill Czelusniak, the highly-respected organ builder in Northampton, MA.

Our centenary Organ Scholarships and Composition Competition have now been launched - more details are on the facing page and in the flyers which have been sent to members. Do please spread the word about NDOA membership, and about our Scholarships and the Competition. We would be so pleased if we could encourage more members to join us, and to receive as many applications as possible to both schemes. If you know anyone who just might be interested, do please invite them personally. We have some new Centenary membership flyers in both PDF and A5 hard copy - if you would like some to distribute, do please just ask.

Last Spring, we had hoped to join in the celebrations for the Royal College of Organists' Organ Day. Again, Covid-19 put paid to that, but this year there is an online Organ Week in prospect, from 18th - 24th April. You can find details at [RCO Courses, Classes and Events: interNational Organ Day + Organ Week \(18-24 April\)](#). The programme on Monday 19th April is intended to celebrate the work of local organists' association, and if you tune in, with a bit of luck you will see some people you may recognise!

As such, our Centenary year can be said to have begun remarkably well given the circumstances. One moment of sadness, though, has been the passing of our much-respected former President, Canon Hilary Davidson. Canon Hilary was a member for no less than 53 years, and his contribution to the study of organs in the county is unparalleled. You can read our celebration of his life and work on p.4.

Richard Tapp

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The NDOA Newsletter is published four times a year. Contributions are always welcome and should be submitted to the Editor, please.

NORTHAMPTON AND DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

Founded 1921

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Cover: All Saints' Earls Barton. The fascinating story of this multi-faceted - and much changed - instrument starts on p.8. Covid-19 restrictions permitting, we hope to visit on Saturday 5th June.

NDOA 100 YEARS: 1921 - 2021

NDOA 100: PROGRAMME. On Saturday 10th April at 5pm by Zoom, we are delighted to present **Daniel Moulton in conversation**. Daniel is an outstanding teacher, recitalist and presenter and his presentation is not to be missed. Then on Saturday 17th May at 7.30pm, our Past President **John Wilson** and member **Robin Palmer** will speak about the only pipe organ in the South Pacific islands, at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Suva, Fiji, and the Fuji Arts Choir (see p.15 for a sneak preview). Login details will be sent to members before each session. We hope to be able to resume our physical programme as soon as possible, subject obviously to Covid-19 restrictions, but the success of our Zoom programme means we would also like to seek to maintain an online programme too. Do please look out for updates.

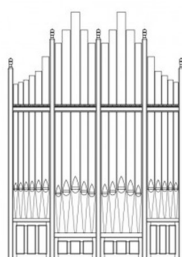


NDOA 100: PROJECTS. Although inevitably the Covid-19 lockdowns have delayed work on the planned Centenary CD and Centenary Organ Book, they are both very much in preparation and details will be circulated when they are available. *NDOA: A Short History* - a special expanded edition of the *Newsletter* will also be published in the coming months, telling the story of the Association's formation, its development over the years and the people who made it.

NDOA 100: CENTENARY SCHOLARSHIPS and COMPOSITION COMPETITION. Details are now available of our Centenary Scholarships and our Composition Competition. Full details can be found on our website, and in the flyers (*pictured below*) which have been circulated to members. Do please spread the word and circulate details to anyone who you think may be interested. Both the scholarships and the composition competition will give grants of £100 to successful candidates, together with support from the Association, performance opportunities and, in the case of the composition competition, the opportunity to have the winning entries published in our Centenary Organ Book. Further copies of the PDFs giving full details are available on request from the Editor.

CENTENARY ORGAN SCHOLARSHIPS

Northampton and District Organists' Association (NDOA)
welcomes applications for a number of organ scholarships to
celebrate the Association's centenary in 2021.



Applications are welcomed from young organists in or around Northamptonshire who may be embarking upon the early stages of their playing careers

- Entrants are required to submit an audio recording of one or two organ or piano pieces of their own choice sufficient to give a general view of their current standard, together with a written paragraph of support from their organ or piano teacher
- NDOA Scholarship award holders can expect the following benefits:
 - £100 towards the purchase of music or other materials for their organ-playing studies
 - Encouragement to support our meetings in person or online
 - Recital and concert performing opportunities as part of NDOA's calendar of events
 - An invitation to write a column in NDOA's *Newsletter* outlining their experiences and opportunities in learning the organ
 - Assistance from the Association in finding a suitable church or parish which would offer regular performing experience and the opportunity to accompany services
- Entrants will also be offered student membership of NDOA, which is free for students under 22
- NDOA Scholarship award holders can expect the opportunity to perform on some historic, amply resourced and well-maintained pipe organs in Northamptonshire and beyond
- NDOA Scholarships are valid for the period of 12 months, but current award holders may be invited to secure funding and associated opportunities for a further year from the Association's David Morgan Education Fund
- Please see overleaf for full details of the entry requirements, application process, and the terms and conditions of the Scholarships

For more details of the Centenary Scholarships please contact
NDOA's President-Elect, Jonathan Kingston at jonkingston@hotmail.co.uk

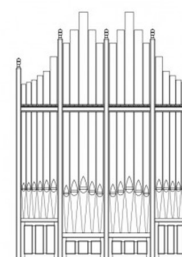
Find more about NDOA at www.northamptonorganists.org.uk. 2021 Membership is available to anyone who plays or is interested in the organ at only £10 for individuals, and is free for student members - details at www.northamptonorganists.org.uk/join.

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CENTENARY COMPOSITION COMPETITION

Northampton and District Organists' Association (NDOA)
welcomes entries to its composition competition for a Fanfare
for Organ to celebrate the Association's centenary in 2021.



Do you compose? Or perhaps you would like to compose for the first time? We are inviting entries from both students and adults to our Centenary Composition Competition. Entrants should compose a short **Fanfare for Organ** which we hope to publish in our forthcoming Centenary Organ Book.

- Entrants are required to submit a fanfare for solo organ which should be no longer than two pages of manuscript.
- The competition will have two categories: one for students under the age of 22, and one for adults (22 or over). The adult competition (22 and over) is open to composers of any nationality and of any age. The student competition (under 22) is open to composers within or around Northamptonshire. There is no entry fee.
- Winners can expect the following benefits:
 - A prize of £100 for the winning entry in each category.
 - The publication of the winning entries in the forthcoming NDOA Centenary Organ Book, to be published later in 2021. Publication is at the discretion of the publishers and will require the publisher's copyright arrangements to be met.
 - Encouragement to support our meetings in person or online.
 - The opportunity for the entries to be performed as part of NDOA's calendar of events.
 - An invitation to write a column in NDOA's *Newsletter* outlining their experiences. Entrants to the student competition will also be offered student membership of NDOA, which is free for students under 22.
- Entries must be received by **Saturday 1st May 2021**. Please see overleaf for full details of the entry requirements, application process, and the terms and conditions of the Competition.

For more details of the NDOA Centenary Composition Competition
please contact Lee Dunleavy at lee@dunleavy.co.uk

Find more about NDOA at www.northamptonorganists.org.uk. 2021 Membership is available to anyone who plays or is interested in the organ at only £10 for individuals, and is free for student members - details at www.northamptonorganists.org.uk/join.

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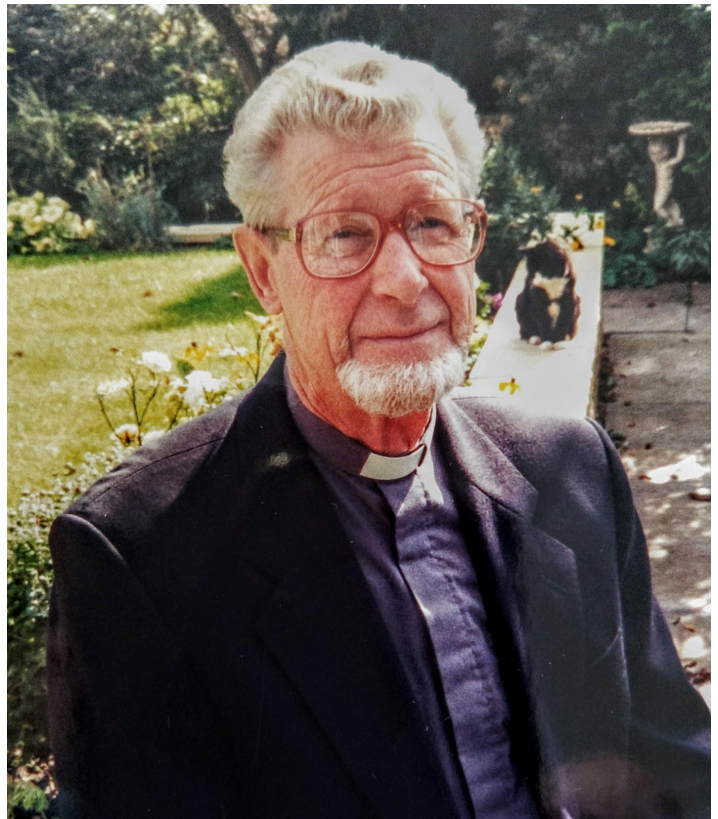
CANON HILARY DAVIDSON

MA MPhil

1929 - 2021

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death, on 24th January, of our Honorary Member Canon Charles Hilary Davidson MA, MPhil. Canon Hilary was a member of the Association for some 53 years, having joined in January 1968, and was twice President, in 1998-99 and again in 2010-11.

Hilary Davidson was born in Rutland in 1929, and educated at Christ's Hospital, and then St. Edmund Hall, Oxford where he graduated BA in 1952 (MA 1956). He studied for the Priesthood at Lichfield Theological College, being ordained Deacon in 1954 and Priest in 1955. He was awarded MPhil from the University of Leicester in 1989. His organ studies were with Craig Sellar ('Robin') Lang - remembered for his famous *Tuba Tuna* - who was Director of Music at Christ's Hospital.



Canon Hilary spent his entire ordained ministry in the Diocese of Peterborough. He was curate at St. Peter and St. Paul Abington from 1954-59, living in Barry Road, Northampton, and then at St. John the Baptist (Mission Church) Peterborough. His first incumbency was at Sywell with Overstone from 1960-66, moving to Lamport with Faxton in 1966 and adding Maidwell, Draughton and Scaldwell to his responsibilities in 1977. He was also Rural Dean of Brixworth from 1977-79, and was installed as a Canon of Peterborough Cathedral in 1979. His next, and last, incumbency was St. Mary the Virgin, Roade where he was Vicar from 1980-94, with Ashton and Hartwell from 1987.

He served as Rural Dean of Towcester from 1991-94. Our member Jenny Railton remembers Hilary and Pauline becoming good friends with her parents in Overstone, and joining various family occasions over the years. When in 2000 Jenny returned to the county, Hilary told her that Woodford was in need of an organist, and recalls that she became their organist. In 2018, Jenny married a former churchwarden and Reader there, and she reports that she is indebted to Hilary for introducing her to Woodford!

Hilary's work as a dedicated Parish Priest was greatly valued, but was only part of his ministry. He served as Diocesan Organ Adviser for Peterborough Diocese for many years, and his diligent and insightful study of the organs of Northamptonshire and Rutland for more than eight years after his retirement led to the publication of the seminal work on organs in Northamptonshire and Rutland *Choirs, Bands and Organs: A History of Church Music in Northamptonshire and Rutland* (2003). He made an extensive study of the works of Sutton, publishing *Sir John Sutton: a study in true principles* in 1992, a reprint of Sir John Sutton's *A short account of Organs built in England from the reign of King Charles II* with his own introduction in 1979, and a new edition of Frederick Heathcote Sutton's *Church Organs: their Position and Construction*, again with an introduction by Hilary, in 1998. Finally, he published *Between the Nene and the Welland: Some East Midlands hymn-tunes from the west-gallery period*.

Hilary's dedication to the organ extended to his private life – our former President and Treasurer Jonathan Harris notes that for many years his GP was Dr Dudley Ingram of Earls Barton, latterly owner of the Starmer Shaw firm, and who was responsible for moving the Willis currently in SMSG Stony Stratford.

Hilary's first term as President came about in an unusual way. Richard Tanner had been appointed

President Elect, and expected to become President in the normal course of events in 1998. However, his appointment to Blackburn meant that he was unavailable, and Hilary found himself elected at an Extraordinary General Meeting. He led the Association in a very successful Presidential year in which membership increased, the Association enjoyed an excellent programme including a choir-training workshop under Simon Johnson, and a visit to Harrison & Harrison in Durham. Fittingly, his second term of office in 2010-11 saw the Association's membership reaching a record high of 107 members. The then-Hon Sec, the late Roger Smith, paid tribute to Hilary at the end of his Presidential year in words which are as apposite now as then:

'Any evaluation of the Association this year will bring us round to our President, Hilary Davidson. In more ways than are evident, Hilary leads a very demanding life and so we are most fortunate that he undertook the onerous duties of a Presidency. Arranging this year's events proved, in some instances, fraught with difficulties... Unflustered as Hilary is, the feet sometimes paddling furiously below the water while on the surface, the swan characteristically glided elegantly about its business. We are all grateful to Hilary for his year as President, and for his wider counsel and contribution to the world of the organ.'

His musical influence extended far beyond Northamptonshire. Sutton's continental travels in pursuit of ancient organs brought him to Kiedrich-im-Rheingau in Germany, whose organ dated from the 16th-century, and in due course they brought Hilary in his footsteps. A firm friendship developed between Canon Hilary and the Scholl family of Kiedrich, and in ordering his affairs in recent years Hilary donated his house organ, built by Kenneth Tickell in the 1980s, to St Michael's chapel in Kiedrich, Sutton's own resting-place.

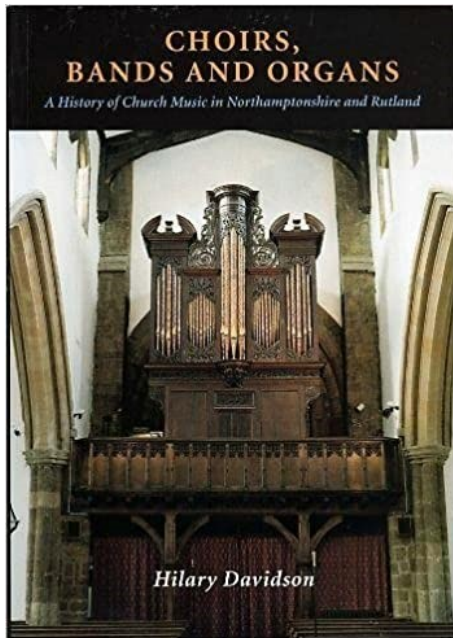
Between the Nene and the Welland is dedicated to the memory of Christian Scholl, and a member of the family, Andreas Scholl, the internationally-renowned counter-tenor, writes:

'Canon Hilary Davidson was a good friend to the entire Scholl family. He and my parents met on many occasions discussing the incredible legacy of Sir John Sutton, a great benefactor to Kiedrich. He shared with them a great love for music, and when he learned that I was going to study in Basel to become a countertenor, he sent me a Henry Purcell Song Collection as a gift. I still sing from this beautiful book that he and his wife Pauline signed back then with their best wishes for my studies. His memory will always be cherished by his friends from the entire Scholl family in Kiedrich.'

Hilary was also instrumental in the procurement of the lovely 5-stop Tickell chamber organ built for Peterborough Cathedral in the late 1980s, Hilary sourcing the pipework from a redundant organ in Kent to be incorporated into the instrument.

In later years, Hilary cared for Pauline throughout her illness, and Michael Woodward recalls their generous hospitality at home in Roade during Hilary's Presidency. Given his love of the organ, it was entirely appropriate that Hilary worshipped at St Mary the Virgin, Wellingborough, with its fine Hill organ and its musical tradition, and it was there that he celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination. Our former President, and DoM at St Mary's, Lee Dunleavy, has a number of Hilary's books, and also the splendid objet d'art, *pictured right*, celebrating Hilary and his house organ.





Canon Grant Brockhouse recalls that when he came to the Diocese in 1998, Hilary soon welcomed him to the Association and he well remembers one meeting when Hilary showed slides of various European organs with their colourful and intricate casework, demonstrating how his knowledge extended beyond English organs to the particular characteristics of European organ builders. Canon Grant also recalls that whilst Vicar of Higham Ferrers it was a joy that occasionally Hilary would preside at the Sung Eucharist, so allowing Grant to play the organ.

In retirement, Canon Hilary served for many years as Assistant Priest at St Mary's Wellingborough, as well as being one of the church's team of organists. On Thursday 25th February a Requiem Mass was held at St Mary's in advance of Canon Hilary's funeral. The music before, during and after the Requiem comprised a complete performance of Sir Edward Elgar's *Vesper Voluntaries*, played by Lee Dunleavy. Canon Hilary's ministry, his scholarship, his service to his parishes and the wider Diocese, and his dedication to this Association were unparalleled. We send our sincere condolences to Hilary's son, Philip, and remember Hilary with affection, respect, and with sincere gratitude.

It is hoped that a service to remember Canon Hilary will be held at St Mary the Virgin, Wellingborough, when Covid-19 restrictions permit. Donations in Hilary's memory for the National Pipe Organ Register may be sent to Hollowell's Funeral Directors, 148-150 Beech Avenue, Northampton, NN3 2JN (cheques payable to The British Institute of Organ Studies) or online at <https://hollowells.co.uk/funeral-donations>.

JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE RECITAL – RICHARD PINEL HELEN MURPHY

I was pleased to find on Facebook recently a notice about a recital to be given by Richard Pinel on Sunday 24th January at 5.15pm from his base at Jesus College, Cambridge, along the theme of 'light'. I was even more pleased when I managed to find it again on the right day and the right time (more by luck than judgement!).

He kicked off with a brief but effective little Choral Prelude on *Lucis creator optime* by Flor Peeters (Op 75 No 10), followed by Sigfrid Karg-Elert's gentle *Claire de Lune* (Op 72 No 2).

However, the magnum opus was the magnificent Fantasy on *Wir schön leuchtet Der Morgenstern* by Max Reger (Op 40 No 1). 'How brightly beams the morning star' has always been one of my favourite chorales – and with the snow still falling outside, this was just the right medicine for a dark, cold January day at a dark and cold time. Thank you, Richard!

* * * * *



DANIEL MOULTON
CONCERT ORGANIST | ORGAN TUTOR

On Saturday 10th April at 5pm, online via Zoom NDOA is delighted to present a unique opportunity to hear

DANIEL MOULTON *in conversation*

DANIEL MOULTON - concert organist, organ tutor, recording artist and film presenter - is 'one of the finest organists of our time' (*The Organ*). His innovative approach to the promotion of organ music has reached its pinnacle in *The English Organ* - one of the largest film projects ever made about the instrument. The project provides a detailed history of English organ-building and organ music spanning 500 years of repertoire and filmed in 33 locations in the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand.

Daniel is director of the highly acclaimed organ department at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, offering educational excellence to aspiring professional musicians. He is one of the consultants for four significant new organs at the Conservatoire, commencing with the recently-commissioned Flentrop organ in the style of Schnitger & Hinsz. As a soloist, Daniel has performed at major venues and festivals worldwide, and has edited several published editions including the *Easy Bach Album* and the *Easy Handel Album* for Bärenreiter, and the *Complete Church Organist*, Volumes 1 and 2, with RSCM Publications.



Daniel is a highly engaging and entertaining presenter, passionate about the organ and its repertoire, and the development of the next generation of organists. You can find more about Daniel and his work at www.danielmoulton.com.

This is a unique opportunity and not to be missed. Online joining details will be circulated to members before the event. If you are not a member and would like to attend, or have any queries please contact editor@northamptonorganists.org.uk.

Find NDOA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and at www.northamptonorganists.org.uk

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NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT
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EXAMINER ESCAPADES

JONATHAN KINGSTON

While still a full-time school Director of Music, I always used to include the following sentence for completion on the application forms of prospective music scholars: 'Music is important to me because...'
One of the best answers I received read thus: *Music is important to me because **you always get to go on the best trips!*** Amen to that, I thought as I smiled at this jolly retort delivered by a 12-year-old keen to show some wit. Very perceptive too, as there is much truth in this. When I considered areas for further professional development some years ago, I was persuaded by a retired colleague to throw my hat into the ring for consideration to join the examiner panel of the ABRSM. 'You want to do WHAT??!' shrieked several other incredulous colleagues... 'Why on earth would you put yourself through THAT??' Depending on whose story I found most believable, I was promised a euphoric lifestyle of International touring and fine dining, glimpses of the Singapore Grand-Prix from my 5-star hotel balcony, drinks in the long bar at Raffles, dim sum at Hong Kong's legendary Peninsula Hotel, and roof-top picnics while viewing quite incredible local wildlife and associated scenery in Penang. The counter-argument concerned affixing a gurning 9-hour smile even when presented with 30 back-to-back identical repertoire Grade I recorders in an unheated church hall, which the local vermin deserted in one of our more industrialised areas here in jolly old England. The surprising truth is that both observations are accurate, although images of the rat-infested church hall and that barrage of Grade I recorders has a small amount of embellishment in order to make for a good story!

It is difficult to describe how heart-warming it has been over recent months to experience performances by candidates again after such a hiatus, and despite understandable exam nerves, how thrilled some of them have appeared given the opportunity to play and to have their skills assessed by another musician. Covid-19 has been challenging at best for the arts, and in many spheres deeply destructive; however the resilience of candidates who seem keener than ever to forge a connection to live music while still facing disruption and uncertainty has been remarkable. Music exams open doors to Higher Educational pathways carrying all important UCAS points at the higher grades, while Associate, Licentiate and Fellowship diplomas all help form the path for any aspiring music professional.

In the midst of another long lockdown, examination boards have had to move quickly and we have seen a shift to a new breed of online exams which will run in parallel with those in the traditional sense. As I casually mentioned to our esteemed President the other day, I have been fortunate to see candidates present programmes from the USA, Macau, Singapore, Indonesia and the UAE(as well as Margate, Wolverhampton and Manchester) all via secure streaming platforms from my home. So, costa del Banburyshire is as glamorous as it gets for now; however, my sights are still aimed at Raffles for that Singapore Sling in the Long Bar. As 'The Terminator' once remarked (do you think this is the first time in any Organists' Association history he's had a mention?) (Yes! Ed) I'll be back!



THE ORGANS THAT I PLAY – ALL SAINTS' EARLS BARTON

RICHARD TAPP

All Saints' Earls Barton

A warm and welcoming congregation at
the heart of the village of Earls Barton



Readers may remember from my previous article in this series (Issue 1/2019 and the update in Issue 4/2020) that I am organist at St Mary Magdalene, Castle Ashby – but the nature of rural ministry means that at Castle Ashby we have services on only two Sundays a month, and on the others (at least in 'normal' times), I play at All Saints' Earls Barton.

An instrument I recall from my childhood - I was a chorister at Earls Barton - in some respects it is a complete contrast to the Nicholson at Castle Ashby. The Nicholson is effectively unchanged since its construction in 1872, retaining its straight pedalboard, lever swell and a tonal scheme unaltered since new.

The Hill at Earls Barton - for at least it became a Hill in 1860 and it still bears a Hill maker's plate from a later rebuild in 1896 - has led a rather more chequered career. It has undergone at least five significant changes in specification (and one wholesale change in location) over the ensuing years. It has survived a fall from grace to the extent that drastic alternatives and a digital replacement were actively considered. One very well-known and respected organ consultant was asked for his view, which was along the lines of 'Oh no – surely not Starmer Shaw and Canter in the same instrument!' Perhaps a little unfair?

The 1848 Organ and the 1860 Hill rebuild. To history, though. We know the organ was inaugurated on 23rd September 1848 'in the presence of a numerous and extremely respectable congregation'. Its original builder is not known, but we do know that in 1860 Hill's letter book quoted £140 to rebuild the organ, alter the case and add a new Swell with four stops – Open, Gedact, Gemshorn and the original Oboe, plus a Sw to Gt coupler. It seems Hill's alternative quotation of £265 for a new organ was not accepted. All was not, though, altogether well, and we know that a significant obstacle was the siting of the organ in the chancel, which by all accounts was not wholly satisfactory.

The new Organ Chamber. By 1868, a report noted that 'the Chancel is most inconveniently blocked by a large organ'. Drastic measures were needed, and by the early 1870s a decision had been taken to construct an external organ chamber at the east end of the north wall of the chancel, at the same time



carrying out extensive renovation and rebuilding. The former west gallery, which would have housed the church band, had also been removed by this stage.

This was a momentous decision, and one with which subsequent generations have struggled. In essence, it meant that the organ could be heard much more clearly in the Vicarage garden than in the nave. The problem was - and is - compounded by the church's beautiful medieval rood screen, famously (and controversially) decorated in the 1930s by Henry Bird (right). Fabulous to behold, it does rather restrict the sound of the organ reaching the congregation, and at least four different solutions have been tried over the years to improve matters.



1896 – the second Hill rebuild. In 1896 Hill essentially had another go, rebuilding the organ with a new action and additions, leaving it with the specification shown in the box (right). We must assume this rebuild owed much to William Sheffield, who was organist for 23 years from 1893-1916, and who is remembered by a plaque on the organ. The organ was certainly well-used at the time, and the



Northampton Mercury of 14th July 1916 reported there was 'an excellent congregation in the parish church on Sunday when Mr C.J. King, organist of St Matthew's, Northampton, gave an organ recital which was greatly enjoyed.'

The Peace of 1938 - Starmer Shaw. The 1896 rebuild survived for more than 40 years, until Starmer Shaw electrified the action, moved the console to the west end of the chancel, where the Vicar's stall should be, and made a number of changes – again, perhaps, with mixed success. A large Open Diapason appeared – labelled No. 1 Open Diapason – relegating the original to No.2. The Hill Swell Horn metamorphosed into a Cornopean, and a 4' Clarion was added. The Great Sesquialtera became a three-rank Mixture, and Octave and Sub-Octave couplers were added to the Swell, and also duplicated onto the

1896 Hill Specification

Great	Open Diapason	8'
	Keraulophon	8'
	Claribel	8'
	Principal	4'
	Leiblich Flute	4'
	Fifteenth	2'
	Sesquialtera	8'
	Clarinet	8'

Swell	Open Diapason	8'
	Stopped Diapason	8'
	Dulciana	8'
	Vox Celeste	8'
	Gemshorn	4'
	Flautina	2'
	Horn	8'
	Oboe	8'
	Tremulant	

Pedal	Bourdon	16'
	Flute	8'

Couplers: Sw to Gt; Sw to Ped; Gt to Ped
Four combination pedals



Great. Incidentally, the 1939 console came with manuals which had – and still have to this day – a very light action which is guaranteed to catch out the unwary. At the time, the organ was said to have carried a plaque to the effect that the work was 'dedicated to the Peace of 1938 brought about by prayer and the work of the English Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain.' Unsurprisingly it is no longer in situ.

All this work was part of a range of improvements of the church led by Canon Louis Ewart, who was Vicar from 1930 to 1959. The church guidebook notes that Canon Ewart

'would not have been unhappy to be described as a showman', his ministry including conducting services on the roof of the nave, with choir, servers and incumbent all in attendance; and he himself preached on occasion from the external door of the belfry – some 25 feet up. In the later years of his ministry, during these events he was secured by a bell-rope tied around his waist by the Verger in case he stumbled.

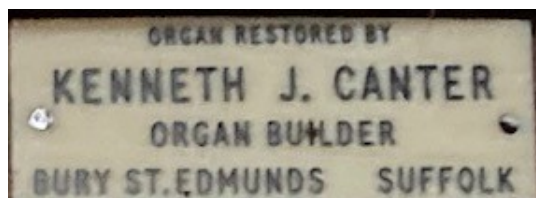
Starmer Shaw came to have a very local connection. As readers may know, Dr Dudley Ingram, who was the local doctor in Earls Barton for many decades until the 1980s, came from the Ingram family of organ-builders in Edinburgh and owned Starmer Shaw in its latter years. By repute, at least, there were many ranks of pipes and other parts of instruments in his outbuildings in West Street. By the late 1960s, though, further change was required, with the Starmer Shaw rebuild forming the basis.

1970s Baroque. By this time, the incumbent was the Revd (later Canon) Nigel Abbott, a former chorister at Christ Church, Oxford, who set about revitalising things wholesale. He led Earls Barton's Festival 1000 in 1970, an amazing celebration of 1000 years of the church's Saxon tower, hosting events of the highest quality throughout the year. His attentions also included the music, with the choir re-founded, and a focus on thinking about work to the organ.

With hindsight, his best idea of the time was not adopted – reinstating the west gallery and re-siting the organ to it. Instead, and I'm sure much more affordably, in keeping with the fashions of the time, the organ was lightened and re-voiced in a more baroque style. There was the addition of a 12th and Tierce, and the removal and re-voicing of the Keraulophon from the Great to the pedals to become a Krummhorn. My late father, who was church warden at All Saints', used to refer to this fondly as the 'strangled duck' stop. Listen to it now and you will hear exactly what he meant. At the same time, the No. 1 Open Diapason was also re-voiced to make it less out of keeping with the rest of the instrument, and a sound enhancement system was fitted with speakers atop the screen to try to help things along.

The 1996 Canter rebuild. With the passage of time, things moved on again and in 1996 a further programme of work was carried out by Kenneth J Canter of Bury St Edmunds, who added a Trumpet stop to the Great (it is believed using second-hand pipework) with an extension providing a Trombone on the Pedal Organ. He also introduced 8 and 4ft extensions to the pedals from the Great No. 1 Open, and added a sequencer and a range of further combination pedals. For some reason, matching stop tabs were not sourced and his work can be identified by a different style of key, as may be seen in the picture of the console.

Before this work had been carried out, the Parish had considered replacing the organ altogether, but chose to proceed with the Canter work after a visit to hear a Copeman Hart had not gone well – perhaps surprisingly given how well-regarded Ernest Hart's instruments tend to be by those who play them (and the workmanship of our member



1996 Specification - Current

Great	No. 1 Open Diapason	8'
	No. 2 Open Diapason	8'
	Claribel	8'
	Flute	4'
	Twelfth	2 2/3'
	Fifteenth	2'
	Tierce	1 1/3'
	Mixture	III
	Trumpet	8'
Swell	Open Diapason	8'
	Stopped Diapason	8'
	Dulciana	8'
	Vox Celeste	8'
	Gemshorn	4'
	Cornocean	8'
	Oboe	8'
	Clarion	4'
	Tremulant	
Pedal	Bourdon	16'
	Principal	8'
	Flute	8'
	Fifteenth	4'
	Krummhorn	8'
	Trombone	16'



Steve Bell), but the organ survived and lived to play another day in its new form. By the early 2000s, when I was again playing reasonably regularly at Earls Barton, the instrument was once more not in the best of health. One never quite knew what would, or wouldn't, work at any given time. The Trumpet and its pedal Trombone extension had been disconnected by the then-tuner because he could not keep it in tune, and the increasingly fraught notes in the tuning-book suggest he was exasperated by the instrument.

The Organ Today. As such, it is only right to commend the work done by Charles and Stephen Hall of Norman Hall and Sons of Cambridge. They took over the care of the organ and over a period of perhaps three years diligently worked through the instrument, tuning it properly and rectifying many of the numerous faults which had, by then, presented themselves. More recently, they have carried out a programme of work including the replacement of the console contacts, which has again helped to improve reliability.

The result has been that the parish now has an instrument which is pretty reliable, effective and capable of carrying out its role of leading a congregation and enhancing worship. It has been said that it is not, perhaps, the last word in quality or quantity, and continues to suffer from the fateful decision to put it in an external chamber 150 years ago, but it continues to do the job. One should also not dismiss its finer points. The Swell is largely Hill, and is just as beautiful as that maker's outstanding opus at St Mary's in Wellingborough - if, sadly, without the magnificent acoustic. The Starmer Shaw Mixture perhaps needs to be used sparingly, the Canter Trumpet stays in tune only for a couple of weeks, but the 12th and Tierce do come into their own with Bach or Buxtehude, and of course together facilitate a cornet. Even my father's 'strangled duck' Keraulophon slots into place in context.

All Saints' today is a busy, vibrant church and the organ is fortunate to have the outstanding support of my colleague (and NDOA member) Catherine Johnson, who leads the choir as well as playing the organ herself, of the Vicar, the Revd Jenny Ingram, and the PCC. A couple of years ago, it hosted its first recital for many years with a visit from the Australian concert organist, Thomas Heywood, who showed just what the organ can do in spectacular fashion - and, thanks to the help of his wife Simone, used the church's big screen to show Thomas's virtuosity to the assembled audience. It was a delight to hear, and extremely well-received. The pandemic put paid to our plans to hold a further organ event in 2020, but watch this space! The view is very much that the organ is there to be heard and played, and we hope that it will continue to serve All Saints' and its congregations for many years to come.

W. STARMER SHAW & SON traded in Northamptonshire for the better part of a century, from the later years of the 19th-century to the 1980s. Shaw was organist of Hardingstone parish church in 1884, and built a substantial business in the tuning and repair of organs in the county. Canon Davidson's seminal book *Choirs, Bands and Organs* records only one new instrument definitely built by Starmer Shaw, for Brafield Baptist Church. Their influence, however, was much greater and the National Pipe Organ Register records some 17 instruments in their name, most of which will have been rebuilds or relocations, from Barby to Upton, as well an outlier at Worthing Baptist Church in Sussex.

Father and son kept the business going throughout both world wars, and Canon Davidson records many local tales of 'old Mr Shaw' arriving by bicycle to tune or repair organs in the centre or south of the county. He notes also that they were 'rather addicted to replacing upper-work with string or flue stops'.

In the 1950s the firm was acquired by Dr Arthur Dudley Ingram of Earls Barton, a member of the Ingram family of organ-builders from Edinburgh. Dr Ingram was the family doctor in Earls Barton for more than 40 years, but as Managing Director of Starmer Shaw he also arranged the installation of the magnificent Willis from St George, Charlotte Sq., Edinburgh at St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford. This was not his only relocation, the 1880 Harrison and Harrison from Trinity College and Moray Knox church in Edinburgh being moved to Haversham in 1962, where the opening recital was given by no less a personality than Sir Thomas Armstrong, then Principal of the Royal Academy of Music.



The organ today, showing its location in the organ chamber on the north wall of the Chancel.

LOOKING AHEAD - LOOKING FORWARD - 2021

LEE DUNLEAVY

Traditional Irish Tune

Moderato

Zsolt Gárdonyi, 1996

Labialsolo

pp

mp

ff

In my article of this title in Issue 1/2021 I included a list of composers with significant anniversaries this year, and spoke about Maurice Bevan (centenary of birth on 10th March 1921 (died 2006)) and Robert Walker (75th birthday, born on 18th March 1946).

The Hungarian composer and organist Zsolt Gárdonyi (75th birthday on 21st March - born 1946) and not to be confused with his father, the composer Zoltán Gárdonyi!) is best known for *Mozart Changes*, which jazzes-up the finale of Mozart's last Piano Sonata, but perhaps most useful are his *Fünf Choralvorspiele* (Ostinato Musikverlag 12006), not least for the splendid settings of the hymn tunes THE OLD 100TH and SLANE (left), the latter of which might be included on his birthday - Lent 5 (21st March).

However, his finest work is surely EGATOP, which you can see and hear here: <https://youtu.be/eijlflj6hks> - it might be best reserved for Mothering Sunday or Harvest, depending on your congregation!

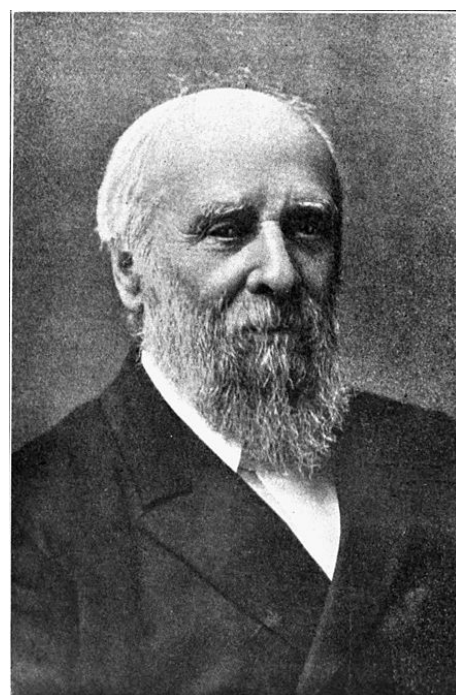
Ronde des Princesses

Sw. Soft strings
Gt. Diap. II or French Horn
Ch. Flute Celeste
Ped. Ged. 16' to Sw.

from
"The Bird of Fire"

It will be considerably trickier to commemorate Igor Stravinsky (50th anniversary of death on 6th April 1971), who said of the organ 'the monster never breathes', though there is a fine transcription of the melodic and gentle *Ronde des Princesses* from *The Firebird* by Clarence Dickinson (Eastman Scores Publishing). It won't frighten the horses.

On 27th April we mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of 'Father' Henry Willis born 1821 (died 1901) (pictured, right). The most significant instrument in Northamptonshire by this legendary builder is in St Andrew's Hospital Chapel with two manuals and pedal (twenty-three stops). I wonder if someone will be able to gain access on the exact day and – if nothing else – play *Happy Birthday*?



On 1st May we reach the 75th anniversary of the death of Sir Edward Bairstow (1874-1946), who is pictured (right) at the console of Sheffield City Hall Organ, the specification of which he drew up in conjunction with 'Father' Henry Willis. On Sunday 2nd May (5th of Easter) you might consider one of his *Three Short Preludes* (OUP), though the third is the best, and not suitable as it is founded on the Advent hymn *O come, O come, Emmanuel*. Another option would be his *Evening Song* (available free from IMSLP online) – <https://youtu.be/tY5MI-Lt8IY>, even if you only play at a morning service. There are some mildly tricky corners for the right hand - take a moment to write in fingerings at those points, and it suddenly becomes much more manageable.



SIR EDWARD C. BAIRSTOW
(York Minster)
at the console of Sheffield City Hall Organ, whose specification he drew up in conjunction with Mr. Henry Willis, and which he opened on January 12th of this year.

Bairstow was by all account the most masterful choral accompanist, and I recall a number of the organ copies of services and anthems which were still in use at York with his clear registration markings. Of particular interest are his *Organ Accompaniments to 24 Unison Hymn-Tunes* which are available free from IMSLP online. Some of them are very difficult to pull off in this age when so many hymns are robbed of their dignity by being played at a universally rapid tempo. Some are also very difficult full stop. Pictured (below) are the final seven bars of EBENEZER, with its nut-cracking pedal part. However, his versions of HANOVER, HELMSLEY, HYFRYDOL, LEONI, LLANFAIR, and RICHMOND, are all highly recommended. I would also encourage you to get hold of Bairstow's biography, written by Francis Jackson, and available from Banks Music Publications (on sale at the moment from their website at £10). It is a fascinating read, with lots of photographs and information on his other works. If you have a choir at your disposal there are many pieces you could sing on 2nd May, depending on your circumstances - his stunning Easter anthem *Sing ye to the Lord* would be especially appropriate, and it is much easier than it sounds. This recording <https://youtu.be/1vAMHIBI3V4> is wonderful, but you don't need the optional brass and percussion!

Next time we visit Marcel Dupré, Philip Marshall, and Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck.

thou hast sought us, Thou hast heard thy child - ren's wail,

Thou with thy dear Blood hast brought us: Hail! Thou might-y Vic - tor, hail!

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ORGAN, SUVA, FIJI

ROBIN PALMER and JOHN WILSON

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church is situated towards the edge of the business area in Suva, the capital of Fiji. It is marked by a white picket fence, the wooden building almost dwarfed by the tall concrete buildings around it. The original timber building, completed on 23rd September 1883, was destroyed in a cyclone in January 1886. The current timber church, with a seating capacity of 150, was opened in April 1895 and is one of the oldest Christian church buildings in Fiji.

The Church Minutes for 1899 show that a Miss Rennie was appointed as the church's organist, but that she resigned later in the year after being 'asked to improve her playing'. That instrument would have been a harmonium, as the first pipe organ was installed in 1908 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the church. It was a tracker-action one-manual instrument of about 1,000 pipes built by George Croft of New Zealand and cost £470. In 1913 for an additional £312 a second manual was added. The Church Minutes also record that in 1929 an electric blower was added, which resulted in 'Demise of the position of organ blower.'

By the early 1990s the organ needed a complete overhaul, so the church decided to have it rebuilt as an electric action instrument with a detached 2-manual console. The rebuild was carried out in 1994 by John Langley, a retired Methodist minister from New Zealand who took on rebuilding organs as a hobby. The pipes came from various sources, including a dismantled organ in Christchurch, New Zealand, and even it seems from a disused cinema theatre organ.

There were two other pipe organs in Suva, at the Anglican Holy Trinity Cathedral and the Roman Catholic Cathedral and it seems they also needed repairs at about the same time, but it was only St. Andrews that decided to keep a pipe organ. It is therefore the only pipe organ in Fiji and appears to be the only pipe organ in the South Pacific islands

The rebuild team was headed by John Langley, but the instigator from the church was the late Ethel Naidu. She was a New Zealand music teacher married to an Indian agricultural officer and was 'Queen pin' from start to finish of the project. The rest of the team were local volunteers, mostly unskilled in organ building, but including Ruci Donu, who still looks after the organ as needed. One of the team was a former Fiji Arts Club Choir member with some soldering experience, who recalls: 'whenever I visited the church I would hide from Ethel because she thought I knew how to fix things'.

There were, and remain, two main problems for the organ - tuning the pipes, and the unreliability of the electro-magnets. The first arises from the climate in Fiji which is generally very hot and humid, with temperatures in the 30s and rainfall up to 3 metres a year, often falling in heavy short bursts.



(The architect for the church must have had the weather very much in mind as at the sides of the building are many doors and windows that can be opened, and the roof is a high-pitched gable that dissipates the heat.) Also, Fiji lies within a seismic zone and is subject to cyclones, so it is possible that tremors and vibration might cause some of the pipes to go out of tune.

Problems with the electro-magnets might be attributable to dry joints in the soldered connections done by inexperienced helpers. Maintenance of the organ is also a continuing challenge for the church, as there is no organ builder or even a piano tuner in Fiji.

It has to be said that, for all these reasons, the organ has not always performed as well as could be wished. However, in the hands of an experienced organist (such as John Wilson, immediate Past President of the NDOA who played for services regularly from 1998 to 2000) it has a very satisfying resonance which is good for accompanying hymns and choirs and it has given pleasure to many since it was installed.

In 2014 Belgian organist Jérôme Giersé and musicologist Alexandra Gelhay were sponsored to sail around the Pacific to find musical instruments in need of repair. The only pipe organ they found was the one at St Andrews. They made a short video of Jérôme playing the organ which can be seen on You Tube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dx7czQCOSIA>.

After Tropical Cyclone Ana in 2020, electrical repairs were needed in the Church, including the organ. These have been done and the organ has also recently been cleaned and tuned. The church has a number of other restorative, building and repair projects and a Fund-Raising Working Group with a target of \$100,000 Fijian.

St Andrews Church continues to serve its congregation, which has changed over the years from the established settler families of Suva to a more Pacific representation. All readers of the *Newsletter* will, we are sure, hope the church is able to maintain the pipe organ as it is unique to Fiji and the Pacific. It represents a significant cultural and musical heritage and is an instrument worth preserving.

FIJI ARTS CLUB CHOIR

ROBIN PALMER

In late 1992, after a lapse of many years, the Fiji Arts Club Choir was re-formed by their present conductor, Robin Palmer, to record a programme of Christmas music for the Fiji Broadcasting Commission. That programme was for radio; at that time there was no television service in Fiji.

This truly multinational choir has achieved much in its aim to perform a wide range of choral music to a high standard. Throughout its history the membership of the choir has changed considerably, mainly due to the coming and going of overseas members with limited time contracts in Fiji. At one stage, with a





membership of around 25 to 30, we had members from 13 different countries from literally around the world. Nowadays there is a much higher proportion of local members as, due to the Covid-19 virus, many of the expatriate members have returned to their countries and sadly some will not be returning. Over the years, the choir has performed many different types and styles of music including full staged versions of *Trial by Jury* and *HMS Pinafore* by Gilbert and Sullivan, selections from the shows by Rodgers and Hammerstein and others, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, the Mozart Requiem, Stainer's *Crucifixion*, portions of *Messiah* and many items of music for Easter and Christmas. The music has included first performances of some of John Wilson's compositions and also music by two music students from Rugby School.

In 2002 in the Fiji Arts Club, and again in St Andrew's Church with John Wilson at the organ, the choir sang the Faure Requiem in remembrance of those who died in the USA on 11th September 2001. It has frequently sung for the British High Commission in Suva at Christmas and to celebrate the Queen's Birthday. It has also sung for the American Embassy and the Embassy of South Korea for their National Day celebrations. The choir has performed with a section of the Fiji Police Band, the Republic of Fiji Military Forces Band, and a string quartet of teachers from the Conservatoire of Music in New Caledonia.

In 1996 the National Youth Choir of Great Britain was on a world tour and came to Fiji for one performance. The Fiji Arts Club Choir was invited to sing two items with them to close the programme. That was a wonderful experience for the members of both choirs, but especially for the Fiji choir. The final piece, the Fiji farewell song, 'Isa Lei' was greatly appreciated and was a fitting ending to a very successful and much appreciated visit by the young British singers.

The choir first started recording for Fiji Television in 1993, and a fruitful relationship continued until 2013. Since 2014, the choir has built up an excellent working relationship with Fijian Broadcasting Corporation TV. Since 1993 we have recorded well over 40 programmes, mainly for Easter and Christmas. For several years the choir could be heard at the start of the day's television programmes singing the Fiji National Anthem, and at the close of programmes singing 'Isa Lei.'

On 11th June 2016, in association with the British High Commission, the choir proudly presented a concert to celebrate the 90th birthday of Her Majesty the Queen. That concert was recorded by the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation TV and a DVD copy was sent to the Palace. A lovely reply came from Her Majesty's Lady in Waiting from which it was evident that Her Majesty had enjoyed seeing the programme.

The Fiji Arts Club choir is temporarily on hold because of the pandemic. Once things return to 'normal' I have no doubt it will continue to rehearse and perform and give musical pleasure to the people of Fiji for years to come.

MAKING MUSIC IN A TROPICAL PARADISE

Join us on **Saturday 15th May 2021**
at **7.30pm** via Zoom for a slideshow
presentation by
Robin Palmer and **John Wilson**
about
**the only pipe organ in the
South Pacific**
and the **Fiji Arts Club Choir**



The organ is in St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Suva, the capital of Fiji. The church dates from 1883, and is one of the oldest Christian church buildings in Fiji. The organ was installed in 1908 and re-built in 1994. It continues to serve the church and community in spite of the challenges of a hot and humid climate, with temperatures often in the 30s and up to 3 metres of rainfall per annum! The presentation will include details of the 1994 rebuild and more recent work on the organ.

The Fiji Arts Club Choir is a truly multi-national choir which performs a wide range of choral music. It was re-formed in 1992 by our member, Robin Palmer, and has since performed a breadth of choral music from Gilbert and Sullivan to Haydn, and Rodgers and Hammerstein to Stainer. It has recorded and broadcast widely with both Fiji Television and the Fijian Broadcasting Corporation TV.

Robin Palmer currently lives in Rugby, but when in Fiji is the Conductor of the Fiji Arts Club Choir. He was a boy chorister at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, and later sang in choirs in Trinidad and was a member of the CBSO Chorus and Semi-Chorus before going to Fiji. When there he advises on building work for the Judiciary, mainly converting existing buildings into law courts.

John Wilson is the immediate Past President of NDOA and is a legislative drafter by profession. His work has taken him to many parts of the world where he has always managed to maintain his interest in organ and piano playing, choral singing and conducting and composing. He played the St Andrew's organ regularly while living in Fiji from 1998 to 2000.

The presentation will last for approximately 90 minutes.

All are welcome. Joining details will be circulated to members before the event. If you are not a member and would like to attend, or have any queries please contact us by email at editor@northamptonorganists.org.uk.

Find NDOA on [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) and at www.northamptonorganists.org.uk
Registered Charity no. 274679

**NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT
ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION**

THE ORGANS OF ST. MARY'S FINEDON

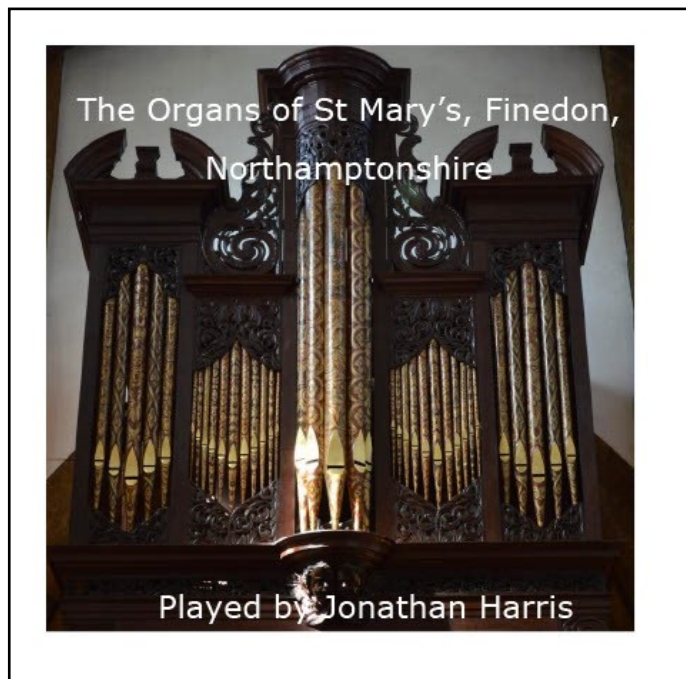
JONATHAN HARRIS

Our former President, Jonathan Harris, has issued a new CD of the organs of St Mary's, Finedon.

Jonathan's CD features the famed early 18th-century organ installed in the church in May 1717 and believed to be the work of Father Smith, originating from Windsor Castle. Most of the original pipework survives and the casework is original c.1704. The organ was restored by Holdich in the 19th-century, and again by Holmes & Swift in 2013/14. Two tracks are also performed on the Collins chamber organ in the church. The track listing is detailed, *right*.

If you would like a copy of the CD, please email Jonathan on jonathan.harris1717@gmail.com with your address. £5 to cover costs including p&p will be appreciated (Jonathan can provide online banking details). If you wish to contribute more than that (!) then Jonathan has kindly suggested you should feel free to make a donation separately to NDOA.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of Rob Page's choral preludes which feature on the CD please email Rob on rpmusic@hotmail.co.uk and he will email you a pdf of the music. Rob would also be pleased to hear of any performances of his pieces. A full list of his works are on his website www.rpmusic.org.uk.



1. Anonymous – Erster Thon Praeambulum No.1	4:56
2. William Jones (1726-1800) – Voluntary in G	4:24
Four Chorale Preludes:	
3. J.S. Bach (1685-1750) – <i>Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ</i> BWV 639	2:31
4. Robert Page (b.1952) – <i>Es spricht der Unweisen Mund wohl</i>	2:06
5. Robert Page – <i>Christus der ist mein Leben</i>	0:40
6. J.S. Bach – <i>Christ lag in Todesbanden</i> BWV 625	1:19
7. William Croft – Voluntary I	2:19
Kaja May (b. 1971) – Three pieces for organ:	
8. Parhelia	1:57
9. Nimbus	1:44
10. Glamorgan	3:09
Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749) – Suite de deuxième ton	
11. Plein Jeu 1:49 12. Duo 1:45 13. Trio 1:55 14. Basse de Cromorne 1:51	
15. Flûtes 2:18 16. Récit de Nazard 2:37 17. Caprice sur les grands jeux 1:54	
18. William Croft (1678-1727) – Voluntary III	2:18
19. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) – Rhosymedre ('Lovely')	3:56
20. J.S. Bach – <i>Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme</i> BWV 645	4:22
21. John Stanley (1712- 1786) – Voluntary VIII in a	5:45
22. Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) – <i>Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott</i>	3:18
23. John Stanley – Voluntary VI in D	6:10
(Tracks 24 and 25 are played on the Collins Organ)	
24. William Croft – Voluntary XII	3:22
25. Thomas Sanders Dupuis (1733-1796) – Trumpet Voluntary	1:41

NORTHAMPTON BACH CHOIR

Celebrating eighty-five years of glorious choral music making

CONCERTS ARCHIVE

One of the tasks that I set myself during this enforced shutdown was to compile a listing of all the concerts that have been performed by the Northampton Bach Choir since its formation in 1935. My own personal collection of programmes goes back to around 1966, but before that time records are sketchy and in places there are several years where I have no information at all.

It occurs to me to ask if any members of the Association have copies of any programmes for Bach Choir concerts, press cuttings, or other memorabilia, which might help to fill that gap. If so, I would be grateful if you could contact me on either 07766 880227 or by e-mail at markandpatgibson@jcd.co.uk

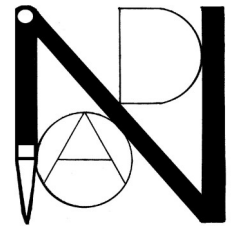
Mark Gibson

Mark Gibson *Concerts Manager, Northampton Bach Choir*



AGELESS ORGANISTS

CORNO DOLCE II



One of the planned events for 2020 was a Young Organists' Day to be held at SMSG Stony Stratford. The event could not be held, for reasons all know, and has now been re-scheduled for a second time to Spring 2022. Even though it can't go ahead live at the moment, this is a good time to note the age range of organists, which must be among the longest of all musicians.

Mozart and Mendelssohn both played the organ from a young age and wrote for it. Verdi started playing the organ at the age of 12 in Busseto and lived to 88. Sir David Willcocks was still active in his 90s as an organist and conductor. Ralph Vaughan Williams composed for six decades, and Sir George Thalben-Ball, the Australian-born organist and composer, spent almost all his life in England, attaining the age of 100.

In January the pipe organ community wished happy 80th birthday to Dame Gillian Weir. In 2019 Canon Hilary Davidson of Roade, who passed on recently, was given a 90th birthday recital by Lee Dunleavy at St Mary's, Wellingborough. So we can say that, like conductors, organists can attain great age with great distinction. Not for them the 'Last scene of all, that ends this strange eventful history, [in] second childishness and mere oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything'.¹

What of the other end of the 'seven ages of man'? We can confidently say that young organists defy that description also.² There is ample evidence of youngsters keen to study the organ, despite its technical demands and serious repertoire. Corno Dolce II knows of several youngsters who signed up for the Young Organists' Day. Even though it has had to be postponed again, let us hope their enthusiasm will not diminish but will increase in eager anticipation.

The nearest US equivalent to the NDOA is the Springfield Chapter of the AGO, currently in its 75th Anniversary year. They announced in their latest newsletter (*Chiff Chat* as of a flute pipe) that Cyrus T Arwade is their newest and youngest member at 10 years old. Another young organist known to Corno Dolce II is Anna Hallett who is now 16 years old and has her own website [Pipes, Keys and Chords](#). It is hoped that she will be appearing at the NDOA Midlands Organ Day in September, if that is able to go ahead.

Two years ago Louis Moss, age 12, became organ scholar at Jesus College, Oxford - the youngest person ever to play the organ for an Oxford College. You Tube has videos of him and of several other young people who have enthusiastically taken up the 'King of Instruments.' They include beginner organ student Mikey (10 years old) demonstrating a 38-rank organ, the winners of the American Guild of Organists' National Young Artist Competition in Organ, and Jayden Arnold (just 9!) at the Hammond convention.

In the UK there are several schemes to support young organists:

- Young Organ Scholars' Trust (YOST) – [Yost](#)
- RSCM [Pipeline Organ Scholarships | RSCM](#)
- Leeds Diocese Organist Training Programme [Organ Lessons | Diocese of Leeds Music](#)
- PipeUp (Salisbury) - [Pipe Up! — Diocese of Salisbury \(anglican.org\)](#)
- School Organists' Association [School Organists' Association - Young Organists' Competition](#)
- Royal College of Organists - The Organ Student Experience (TOSE), director Daniel Moults³ [RCO Courses, Classes and Events: The Organ Student Experience \(TOSE\)](#)

And, of course, NDOA has its own Centenary Organ Scholarship scheme - see p.3 for details.

So, there are a lot of opportunities for youngsters to gain experience on the organ, and it seems that a new generation of young organists is pulling out all the stops to keep the tradition alive.

¹ Jacques, in Shakespeare's *As you like it*

² The whining schoolboy with his satchel and shining morning face, creeping like a snail unwillingly to school.'

³ Daniel Moults will be in conversation with NDOA on Saturday 10th April - see p.3 and p6 for details

A FEW THOUGHTS ON WOMEN COMPOSERS

HELEN MURPHY

In his Zoom presentation on Saturday 6th February, *New Year: New Repertoire*, looking at new organ music, (see report on p.22) Lee Dunleavy made reference to, among other things, the expectation nowadays of the inclusion of women composers (and why not?). There certainly are plenty around these days, but in spite of that, there are not so many writing for the organ (which was what he was specifically referring to), though that may change. This started a train of thought: there have been not a few female composers in the past who were very well appreciated in their day, but who seem to have fallen off the cart: what happened to them after they died?

BBC Radio 3's *Composer of the Week* has been very good in bringing them to our attention. I remember a few years ago being introduced to Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre – who apparently was very much admired at the time, but had since slipped into obscurity, unlike her male contemporaries of whom she is surely their equal. I'd never heard of her. Ditto Barbara Strozzi. Why? Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schuman are there, but on the sidelines. We've also had Amy Beach and, recently, Florence Price, both rather nearer to us in time and of course our own Dame Ethel Smyth who, though certainly not forgotten, has tended to be defined by one aspect of her life – namely her

passionate involvement with the women's suffrage movement – but she is so much more than that. Dame Ethel's Prelude and Fugue on "O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid" can be found in Schott's *Female Composers* album at [Female Composers \(schottmusiclondon.com\)](http://schottmusiclondon.com).

And it wasn't only Hildegarde of Bingen beavering away in her convent – it seems there were other similarly creative nuns: we just don't know about them (though there is more reason for the obscurity of nuns – individual impulses/desires are not to be encouraged and must be sublimated in the life of prayer and work). What is more, with regard to nuns, we mustn't forget that a great number of them were not there because of a burning religious vocation, but because their cash-strapped fathers, unable to afford a dowry for more than one or two daughters, found it a much cheaper (and respectable) way of finding them a 'home'. And some of them rather specialised in music, particularly in Ferrara, where it seems that some convents would actively recruit musical girls as novices to enhance their regular concerts open to the public, albeit with the singers and players performing behind a screen (and if singers and players – some were probably composers too). The writer Sarah Dunant undertook much research for the authentic background to her novel *Sacred Hearts* set in Ferrara at a time when the reforms of the Counter-Reformation were beginning to take effect (inspections leading to cracking down on various unorthodox practices such as these public concerts, nuns having their own comfortable furniture from home in their cells and even enjoying the company of pets). But I digress.

One thing that has always puzzled me is why these women have not survived when clearly in many cases they were equal in stature to their male contemporaries? Was it a lack of male support (from the family?) to push forward their musical legacy? Was it because of a change of fashion? After all, the great JSB fell out of favour for a couple of centuries after his death and was only restored through Mendelssohn's keen promotion (thank you Felix!). Women certainly had a lot more to contend with at the time, not least, if they were married, the constraints of child-rearing (Clara Schumann had eight children), together with the usual domestic expectations (even with servants someone has to manage them), and possibly an uncooperative husband. In Amy Beach's case,



KINGS COLLEGE REVISITED

HELEN MURPHY

although hers apparently encouraged her composition - it kept her at home - he forbade her to continue with her career as a concert pianist; in Clara's case, as well as all the children, she had to cope with an increasingly ill spouse. We shall probably never know.

There is also the question of genre: there is no lack of women composers now, but not so many writing for the organ - which was the point made by Lee in his talk. So I thought I would take a look at William Whitehead's *Orgelbüchlein* project, completed in 2019*. [The Orgelbüchlein Project \(orgelbuechlein.co.uk\)](http://orgelbuechlein.co.uk) Out of a total of 137 various composers involved (if I have counted correctly!), only 16 were women.

Again, I suppose it is only a question of time, with several female directors of music now in place in cathedrals and an increasing number of female organ scholars and assistants (and it is within the cathedral environment that we have to look) - though the two that spring most readily to my mind from this list (Cecilia McDowall and Roxanna Panufnik) are not cathedral DoMs, or even organists for that matter as far as I am aware - rather they're composers in their own right but, crucially, they are writing in that particular area - the liturgy. Indeed, in Bach's day, chorale preludes were very much a part of the liturgy: in the original *Orgelbüchlein*, the chorales are listed liturgically, each for a specific feast or season or occasion - although, as we know, he never finished it.

There is no magic bullet to produce more female composers but, given time, the situation will surely improve; however, in regard to organ music specifically - a niche area if ever there was one - we have to accept that any improvement is only ever going to be 'up to a point'. But that is much better than nothing.

**Up to the time of writing this was correct; however, since then, a last-minute entry has appeared - 'Das walt' mein Gott' by John Rutter - which received its first performance on 19th February 2021 by Andrew Prior who, together with his late wife Dee, had commissioned this in the first place, which is now dedicated to her memory. You can find a YouTube video of Andrew's performance of the work at [Das walt' mein Gott - John Rutter. A chorale prelude for the Orgelbüchlein Project - YouTube](#)*

The current issue of *Laudate*, the Guild of Church Musicians' journal (no 103 Jan 2021) carries an article by Steven Benson, a former BBC TV producer, recalling the days when he was involved in working on 'Carols from King's'. Later, through a contact at Harrison and Harrison, he learned of the organ restoration project they were about to undertake there and, though by this time he was no longer with the BBC, he had hoped that they might be interested in a documentary on the work to complement the Christmas Eve programme and to celebrate the rebuilt organ's first use. They were not. And so it came to pass in the fullness of time, that Fugue State Films (with whom he was now working) released a DVD/CD box set, featuring David Briggs and others (January 2021). He writes of how he was invited on a tour of the innards of this famous instrument, which, in time, enabled them place their microphones in such a position over each of the sound boards, so that the organ could be heard 'before it was lost in the acoustics of the building'.

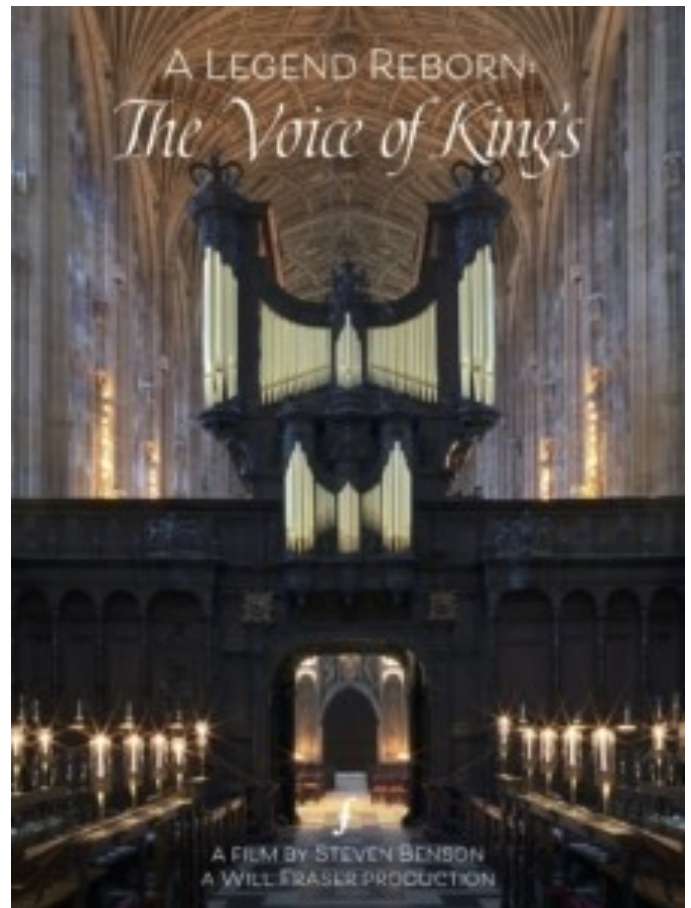
All of this brought back to me the memorable occasion in 2016 when Lee Dunleavy (who was NDOA President that year) had arranged for us to visit as guests of Jim Reeves, Harrison and Harrison's project manager, which turned out to be the highlight of the day for us. After visiting Girton and Jesus Colleges in the morning, we had dispersed for lunch, agreeing to re-assemble either at King's (where we would be required to pay the entrance fee, despite being guests of Jim Reeves) or at the next venue, later in the afternoon. In the end, three intrepid members took up the challenge (and expense) of seeing what was going on at King's (IVP 79). Well, a complete clean for a start, and not only of the organ, but of the chapel too. As Jim explained to us, all the pipes had been removed for overhaul and cleaning at Harrison and Harrison HQ in Durham, then replaced and partly re-arranged in the case to effect a better speaking quality into the choir area. The organ was surrounded by scaffolding and completely covered with protective sheeting and, although most of the pipes were returned, there was still a bit more to do.

Would we like to see what we they had been doing, Jim asked? We certainly would! So, forcing our way down the nave between all the hordes of

camera-festooned tourists, we followed Jim up the stairs (now cleared of various bits of pipes and other stuff) to the console to see what Harrison and Harrison had been doing. For a start, and as a sign of the times, a page-turning piston had been added (with appropriate icon) to each manual for the benefit of those playing from an electronic device. Access into the various divisions had been improved, with the boards now lining up at the same level and with improved visibility in all directions possible (i.e. looking through the pipes), thus greatly aiding future tuning and maintenance (and some of the pipes in the towers, which hadn't spoken for perhaps a hundred years, were now fully functional – others never would be!). The swell division was much improved, having been re-arranged, and with an opening roof to protect it from future accumulation of dust, whose shutters opened and closed in co-ordination with the usual ones but which – a stroke of genius – closed automatically and *independently* when the organ was switched off.

Would we like to see it all from above? Again, we certainly would! Jim sprinted up the ladders and we followed rather more gingerly to arrive at the top of the scaffolding, and a view from the platform down into the various divisions and see close up many details of the exquisitely carved case by Thomas Dallam (1606, enlarged in the later 17th Century), barely visible from below. I made sure I stroked one of the large wooden crowns overlooking the choir. However, we couldn't reach the trumpets borne aloft by the angels projecting from the corners (neither had the cleaners, perhaps lacking a long-enough feather duster, according to the official guide who welcomed us at the entrance)! Descending the ladders, we came down to earth in more ways than one. Well, beat that! Still on Cloud Nine, we legged it off to the next venue, fortunately only a short way away.

Steven's *Laudate* article is amply accompanied by photographs and technical information – ranging from the logistical problems of dismantling, labelling and packing pipes prior to their removal to the H&H workshops in Durham to the gilding of the front pipes – a wide array of crafts and skills all coming together to produce this world-renowned instrument fit for purpose once again. Amen to that!



A LEGEND REBORN: THE VOICE OF KINGS

The Fugue State Films box set (2xDVD and 2xCD) which Helen mentions (*left*) has now been issued as *A Legend Reborn: the Voice of Kings*. It features an extensive documentary film detailing the restoration of the iconic 1934 Harrison and Harrison organ, filmed over more than a year, and presented and narrated by David Briggs.

In addition to the documentary, it also includes a set of filmed performances, duplicated over the two CDs, by King's organ scholars past and present - David Briggs, Robert Quinney, Ashley Grote, Tom Winpenny, Richard Gowers, Henry Websdale and Donal McCann.

In the words of our President Elect, Jonathan, '*... and it is stunning on every level. Fascinating to hear first hand from H and H how they did the rebuild as well as what was done, the challenges as well as the successes...*' '*Probably the best thing I've seen on the instrument since Howard Goodall released his series on the organ back in the early 1990s.*'

The box set is available from Fugue State Films at <https://fuguestatefilms.co.uk/product/the-voice-of-kings-a-legend-reborn/> at £38.50.

ASSOCIATION NOTES AND NEWS



Callum Alger FRCO. We are delighted to report that our member Callum Alger, former organ scholar at St Matthew's, Northampton, has been awarded the Fellowship Diploma, together with the Turpin and Durrant Prizes. We are delighted to send our congratulations to Callum.

Imogen Morgan FRCO. We are equally delighted to hear that Imogen Morgan, Peterborough Cathedral's organ scholar, has also been awarded the Fellowship Diploma, and the Harding/Durrant Prize for the best written papers. NDOA also congratulates Imogen on such a splendid achievement.

The New Oxford Method. A few weeks before Christmas 2020, I had an email from Anne Marsden-Thomas (St Giles, Cripplegate) asking me if the NDOA would be interested in a Zoom presentation delivered by her and her colleague Frederick Stocken (St George's, Southwark) on their new organ primer *The New Oxford Method*. Well of course we were! And in the fullness of time we sorted out a mutually agreeable date and time – January 16th at 5.00pm.

Come the day, it was very encouraging to see the number of participants (34 by my reckoning), including a group from the USA via the AGO (American Guild of Organists). Anne and Frederick both spoke explaining the rationale behind their method – for example starting not with *legato* touch as many of us, as pianists, would have been taught; certainly I was - as it is such a different feel from what we experience on the piano (so different in fact that some pianists do not take to it at all and fall at the first hurdle). Be that as it may, there are many organ manuals (mine was Percy Buck's *First Year at the Organ* - sadly I no longer have my original copy with marks from my teacher, the late Graham Mayo, as I lent it to someone and it never found its way home) - and this new one must take its place in that corpus.

There was time built in for Q&A afterwards; this is always an interesting part of any presentation -the feedback and comments - and one of them at least is worth a mention: the choice of music examples and the lack therein of female composers. Well, as a female and one who composes (albeit rather modestly, mainly for my own church choir as and when the need arises), I have a view here. Bearing in mind issues of copyright and the need to keep costs down by using mainly composers already in the public domain, it was acknowledged that there is not a great deal of choice: there are plenty of women composers around but, even so, not so many in this particular genre. However, time will tell and, provided we are spared (Covid-19, climate change, nuclear weapons etc notwithstanding), I am confident more will emerge, particularly as we now have a good number of female musicians working in cathedrals. The sample recordings used in the presentation were made in Anne's own church, using both of the organs there. Thank you, Anne and Frederick. *Helen Murphy*

New Year - New Repertoire. Our February Zoom meeting was presented by Lee Dunleavy, who brought us a varied and exciting programme of new repertoire for the New Year, focusing on repertoire from female and BAME composers who might sometimes not have the exposure their music deserves. From *Frauen komponieren* (Schott Music), Lee brought us *Fiesta* by Emma Lou Diemer, *Improvisation* by Nadia Boulanger and Dame Ethel Smyth's *Prelude and Fugue on 'O Traurigkeit, o Herzelied.'*

Lee then introduced us to a composer many of us thought we knew, but it was particularly enjoyable to be reminded of the *Prelude and Fugue in D minor*, Op. 16, No. 3 by Clara Schumann. Turning to an anthology of black composers, past and present, Lee introduced us to *King of Kings*, volume 2, ed. Abbington, taking us to Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Impromptu*, Op. 78, No. 2, Florence B. Price's *In Quiet Mood* and Fela Sowande's arrangement of *Yoruba Lament*.

From Rachel Laurin's *Douze Courtes Pièces*, volume 5, Op. 75 Lee introduced us to *Three Inventions*, *Three Evocations*, *Three Visions*, and the exquisite *Three Impressions on 'Kingsfold'* before concluding with Adolphus Hailstork's splendid Toccata on *Veni Emmanuel*. Thank you to Lee for a particularly enjoyable and informative presentation which will have given us many ideas for our post-lockdown repertoire. Details of the recommended editions of the repertoire are still available on request from the Editor.

Sacred Music by Women Composers.

Building on Lee's themes, members may be interested in the three volumes under this title now published by the Multitude of Voyces project covering SATB Anthems, Upper Voices Anthems, and Advent to Candlemas. The Anthologies aim to address the underrepresentation of women composers in sacred music by providing choirs with themed volumes of historically, stylistically and culturally diverse works. [Multitude of Voyces: Sacred Music by Women Composers. Volume 1: SATB Anthems - Stainer & Bell](#)



Making the most of a digital organ - and - word painting in hymns and psalms. On 6th March, our President Elect, Jonathan Kingston, brought us the latest in our series of Zoom meetings - covering two topics which at first sight may have appeared to be quite distinct, but in fact Jonathan showed were inextricably linked. The dark art of registering an organ - with all its complexity and artistry - is no less important on a digital organ than on a pipe instrument, and Jonathan took us through the steps which we might go through, with the help of a modern digital instrument. In the second part of his presentation, Jonathan focused on using the colours of the organ to paint the word-pictures in hymns and psalms to enhance worship. Many members will know that Jonathan works with Viscount, and may well have enjoyed his recent recital on three of their Regent Classic instruments and a rather lovely Hill which can still be found at [Evening Organ Recital with Jonathan Kingston - YouTube](#).

Messrs Czelusniak et Dugal, Inc. As this edition went to press, we enjoyed a Zoom presentation by Bill Czelusniak, President of Messrs. Czelusniak et Dugal Inc, of Northampton Massachusetts. Czelusniak et Dugal look after many of the organs in and around our sister city of Northampton and beyond, and Bill's presentation covered many of the organs in their care. Bill was introduced to us by our friends in the Springfield Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and we are very grateful to them and their Dean, Martha Sienkiewicz for facilitating the event for us. A fuller report will appear in the next edition of the *Newsletter*.

NDOA Membership. We hope you are enjoying our centenary events, projects and scholarships. We would love to use the opportunity to grow the membership substantially, and we would ask every member to take the challenge of recruiting at least one further member during the year. Our membership rates for 2021 are:

individual membership - £10
student membership (under 22) - FREE
family or corporate membership - £15.

Our new corporate membership category allows churches, choirs, PCCs or businesses in the organ world to join us. Rates include on-line copies of the quarterly *Newsletter*. If you would like a hard copy of the quarterly *Newsletter* there is an additional cost of £6. Do please consider who you know who might like to join us - and spread the word. Membership details and forms are on the website and can be found at www.northamptonorganists.org.uk/join.

NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

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 - our Centenary and Members' Recitals
 - the Midlands Organ Day and Recital at St Matthew's Northampton
 - our forthcoming CD of local organs, and centenary organ book of new organ music
 - our fantastic quarterly full-colour Newsletter
 - online events, and help with lockdown music!

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**NORTHAMPTON AND DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION
CENTENARY YEAR 2021- PROGRAMME OF EVENTS**

Please see forthcoming monthly issues of Newsletter Extra, www.northamptonorganists.org.uk
and our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for updates.

Online events via Zoom

Further Zoom events are intended to be added during the year.

DANIEL MOULT IN CONVERSATION

Saturday 10th April at 5pm

International concert organist and Head of Organ Studies at Birmingham Conservatoire, Daniel Moulton, in conversation with NDOA in an exclusive Zoom presentation. Login details will be circulated to members

MAKING MUSIC IN A TROPIC PARADISE

Saturday 17th May at 7.30pm

Robin Palmer and John Wilson will give a Zoom presentation about the organ of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Suva, Fiji, and the Fiji Arts Club Choir. For more details see the articles beginning on p. 14 of this Issue. Login details will be circulated to members.

Physical events

Please note that the following physical events are subject to change and cancellation to comply with Covid-19 regulations in place from time to time.

COMPOSITE RECITAL

Saturday 5th June at 2.30pm

All Saints' Earls Barton

CENTENARY RECITAL

July - to be confirmed

St Mary Magdalene Castle Ashby.

VISIT TO THORPE UNDERWOOD (house organ) AND HARRINGTON CHURCH

Bank Holiday Monday 30th August 2pm - 5pm

Visit to Benedict Cadbury's house organ at Thorpe Underwood and to Harrington Church: talk on the Northamptonshire Villages Church Organ Trust.

MIDLANDS ORGAN DAY

Saturday 25th September at 10am

St. Matthew's Church, Northampton. IAO Regional Organ Day focusing on liturgical playing, including a short recital by Callum Alger and masterclasses hosted by Simon Johnson (St. Paul's Cathedral) and Richard Pinel (Jesus College, Cambridge). Open consoles will be available at St Matthew's and elsewhere.

CELEBRITY ORGAN RECITAL WITH SIMON JOHNSON AND RICHARD PINEL

Saturday 25th September at 7pm

St. Matthew's Church, Northampton, on the J.W. Walker organ - 'the finest parish church organ in England.'

RELUCTANT ORGANISTS' AFTERNOON

October - date and time tba

Hardwick Parish Church, hosted by Tony Edwards.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND INAUGURATION **Saturday 6th November at 3pm**

St. Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford.

More details from our President, Richard Tapp at editor@northamptonorganists.org.uk or 01933 664896