

NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

www.nhoa.org.uk

Newsletter 206 December 2021



Gert van Hoef

PROGRAMME

Saturday 22 January 2022: AGM at 12 noon at St. John, Fleet Road, Hartley Wintney, Hook RG27 8ED, followed by lunch and a talk and demonstration by Geoff Willis, Rob Goldfinch and Martin Barnes on our **Schools Organ**. *See also article below.*

Future dates: As you might expect, venues are proving even more elusive than usual, and it has not yet been possible to arrange our **February** visit. However, this is likely to be on **Saturday 19 February** and to be somewhere in the **London area**. Details will be sent by **e-mail** once they are available, so **watch your inbox and the website**.

Wednesday 9th March, 7.30 pm on Zoom. An evening with charismatic young Dutch organist Gert van Hoef (<https://gertvanhoef.nl/en/biography>), who will talk to us about how he came to play the organ and his life as an organist. A Zoom link will be sent out nearer the time.

Saturday 2 April Joint NHOA/RSCM Young People's event with member Ian Rees (RSCM Winchester area team leader) and Claudia Grinnell (Assistant Organist, Winchester Cathedral) at St. John, Hartley Wintney. Further details in Newsletter 207 and on the website.

Summer 2022 Exciting news! It looks as though we shall at last be able to visit **East Yorkshire**, probably for a week from Thursday - Thursday in early September. No details yet: watch this space...

News of members and friends

Most of this section is simply a recap of the news that has been sent out in recent e-mails, but some of you will not have received those, and in any case, it's always good to revisit good news! First, though, we send our best wishes to John Mansfield and Richard Martin, both of whom have spent time in hospital recently, and to Jo Huddleston, who is suffering considerable pain and frustration because of arthritis. We also send our thoughts to Mike Clift and his sister Mary, who are going through a hard time at the moment.

Contact details for Peter Rowe: 9, Mallard Close, Basingstoke, Hants. RG22 5JP: tel: 01256 322275: e-mail: peter@pjrowe100.com.

A warm welcome to new members Ray Fell (10, Parkside, Farnham, Surrey GU9 0JP: tel: 07305 795516: e-mail: rayfell10@gmail.com) and student member Miss Amelia Wilde, one of Gillian's pupils, who is being supported by the Spiers-Turner Fund. Amelia has written a few lines to introduce herself:

Hello! my name is Amelia. I am 17 years old and I am currently a student studying Health and Social Care. I aspire to go to university next year to study Adult Nursing. I started learning the piano when I was 6 years old, where I was taught by mum. I am approaching my Grade 7 exam soon. However I have recently taken an interest and have been encouraged to start learning the organ to expand my musical abilities. So far I am really enjoying myself; with access to a local church organ, I feel like I am progressing well and look forward to improving more and more. In the future I hope to have the confidence to play a wide range of music, some of which I may not feel is within my comfort zone, to be able to challenge myself to become a more established player.

A very warm welcome also to Mike Keays (2, The Beeches, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7RH: tel: 01622 719589: e-mail: mkeays@blueyonder.co.uk), director at Manders, who did such a wonderful job in organising our Kent visit in August. In recognition of this, your Committee decided that Mike should be offered Honorary Membership. He has accepted, and we are very glad to have you on board, Mike!

(continued on the next page)

Copy Date for next Newsletter Please send any material for Newsletter 207 to the Secretary not later than **15 January 2022**.

North Hampshire Organists' Association

Registered charity, no. 275207

affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists

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Congratulations to young member Tim Stewart, who has been appointed Organ Scholar at Chichester Cathedral for the academic year beginning in September, 2022! Well done, Tim - and all the best for your forthcoming conservatoire auditions.

Congratulations too to Emily Nott, who recently took part in the Memorial Concert for the late Jennifer Bate. Emily played (most beautifully) Jennifer's own Festal Fanfare, at what was both an uplifting and a deeply moving occasion.

Then on 3rd November, Jozef Gaszka gave a fine lunchtime recital at The Queen's College, Oxford. His programme included Sweelinck's Chromatic Fantasia, Bach's arrangement of Vivaldi's A minor violin concerto and Bruhns' Prelude in E minor.

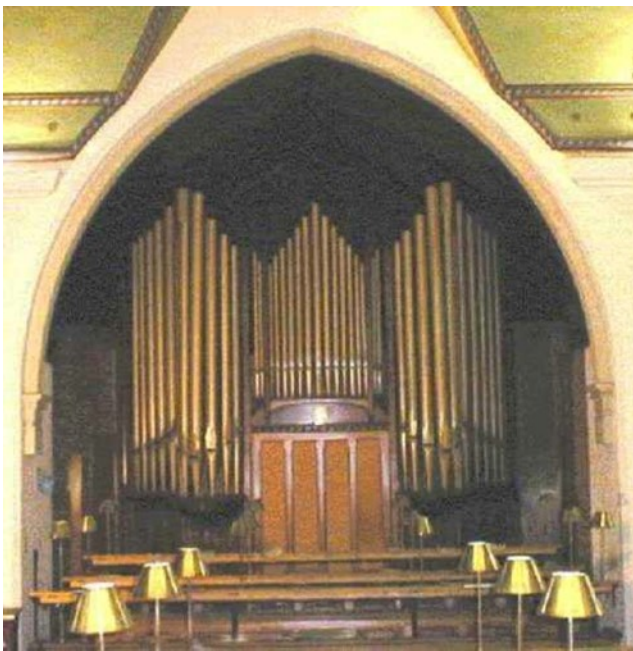
It's so good to hear such encouraging news from our youngest organists.

If *you* have any news, of yourself or others, that you would like to share, please let Gillian know (nhoa.secretary@gmail.com)

News Round-up

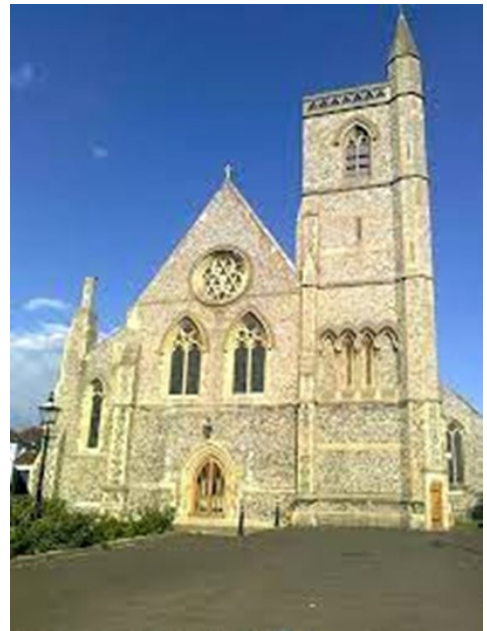
Gillian Lloyd writes

If you have been expecting an account of our recent **Kent visit**, we're afraid that you'll have to wait a little longer! The article will appear in the next edition of our annual publication **The North Hampshire Organist**, which John Mansfield is gallantly compiling for us ahead of the AGM. Meanwhile, just *two* of us made the trip to Eastbourne on 11th September. We started off at Eastbourne College, an impressive public school which is deeply committed to partnership with local state schools through the Eastbourne Schools Partnership. Our host, Alex Eadon, introduced us to the 1889 2-man./ped. Walker, last rebuilt in



1998 by Wood Brown, who, amongst other work, had provided it with a new console. Alex, though not entirely enraptured with the instrument, which has an impressively large specification, brought it to life admirably with Howells' Psalm Prelude 'Out of the deep' before letting us loose on it.

We then moved on to Christ Church, a large Anglo-Catholic church in the Seaside area of Eastbourne, which boasts a fine Father Willis organ of 1880. Penny Marr, the charming Australian lady who met us there, is learning to play the organ, but unfortunately has not had much luck in finding an encouraging and supportive teacher. Like Penny, we found it difficult to judge the balance of our registrations from the console, but the sound in the church was very satisfying.



Our final venue was St. Mary, Willingdon, where our host was Anthony Wilson, President of the West Sussex OA. The smallish Hill organ of 1893 fits very snugly into the west end gallery, from which it speaks effectively into the largely 14th-century church (*see picture overleaf*).



The next visit was much better-attended, and it was especially good to have with us new member Jane Edwards, and also Martin Barnes, who is not often able to attend Saturday meetings.



We started at Binfield, whose 1910 Norman and Beard organ has not been altered since it was installed! Our host Michael Hawkins drew our attention to the alcove housing the Swell organ - *in the churchyard*. This must be unique, surely? Another interesting point was that Harvey Grace, whose organ arrangements of pieces such as ‘Jesu, joy’ are familiar to many of us, had his first organist’s post at Binfield. We tried out the organ in music by Brahms, Bach, Mendelssohn, Kaufman and that well-known composer T. Mee Pattison, before heading off to a substantial lunch at The Duke’s Head in Farnham Royal, not far from our next venue.

Frances Whewell writes

St Anthony of Padua, the 12th century saint, gave his name to this Roman Catholic church in Slough, dedicated in 1964.

The Pipe organ was installed ten years later, one of the last of Grant, Degens and Bradbeer, specialists in creating a ‘classical sound’, much loved by the late organist and composer, Peter Hurford.

The organ was restored in 2012, the electric action being improved, and new keyboards, couplers and case were added. Martin Baker, Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral, was invited to give the opening recital.

The church website says that the organ ‘speaks wonderfully into a glorious acoustic.’ The building is quite plain, with a very high, flat ceiling, and no transepts. I don’t think that the organ ‘speaks so wonderfully’ now. (This church was not Jeff’s first choice for the second church of the day.) Some of the NHOA organists found difficulties with notes and pedals, and the instrument didn’t quite do justice to the beautiful pieces they played.

Gillian Lloyd concludes

We then made our way to Caldicott School, where the Director of Music, James Paget, was waiting to talk to us about the 1932 Harrison instrument, which was installed when the school moved to its current location in 1938. The then headmaster, who at that time *owned* the school, provided it with the organ, and his family still own the instrument. (It’s on a long loan to the school!) It has only ever been worked on by Harrison’s, and is in effect a miniature cathedral organ. James, who has been in post for 22 years, has many piano pupils and one 11-year-old harpsichord pupil, who has already studied for four years at the Paris Conservatoire (!!!) - but no organ pupils. His predecessor as Director of Music, who was in post for 40 years (it must be a satisfying job) was, for some reason, not keen on the boys learning the organ, but James is trying to remedy that situation.



This proved a stimulating day - and it was very good to be back to ‘proper’ NHOA visits at last!

Upgrading a house organ

What would you need? Two manuals or three? Pipes or digital? Draw-stops? Isn't it a tricky balance between 'the ideal' and 'the practical'? In the mid 1980s, my uncle Maurice started with something nearer to what would be 'the ideal' for a lot of organists but it was also the most difficult: he built a small 2 manual pipe instrument with electric action in his lounge.

Maurice is the youngest of my Dad's brothers and they all played the organ at one level or another. Maurice took private lessons and played for many years on a big three manual at St Matthew's church in Bristol. He gained the FLCM diploma and also accompanied choirs on the Colston Hall Harrison.

He enjoyed building the pipe instrument but its



limitations gave way to a much better appointed electronic organ. In the late 1980s, Maurice obtained a three manual draw stop console. He agreed a contract with Wyvern and the console was shipped to their workshops in Bideford. They fitted it with their state-of-the-art sound generators, amplifiers and draw stop system. It was returned to Maurice as a fully built instrument and he has enjoyed playing it for many years.

During the lockdown periods last year, Maurice found some Youtube videos describing consoles being refitted with the Hauptwerk system. He asked me if it would be possible to upgrade his console. Ironically, he is the person who told *me* about Hauptwerk about twelve years ago after he had been to a demo organised by the Bristol & District Organists' Association.

Where to start? You might remember my article in the most recent edition of 'The North Hampshire Organist' describing the various options to make a Hauptwerk organ. This would be one of those options with some variations.

Maurice had four main things he wanted from the upgrade:

- 1 Use the Wyvern console 'as is' and a switch to select the Hauptwerk virtual pipe organ system.
- 2 The Hereford Cathedral sample set with its stops mapped onto the physical Wyvern draw stops.
- 3 The two expression pedals to work with the selected organ.
- 4 His existing Hi-Fi amplifier and speakers to be used for the Hauptwerk organs.

I wondered how much Maurice would use the Wyvern 'as is' after he got familiar with the Hereford organ and Hauptwerk but his wish to select either organ didn't affect the upgrade work. What *did* affect it was the absence of an accurate service manual for the Wyvern.

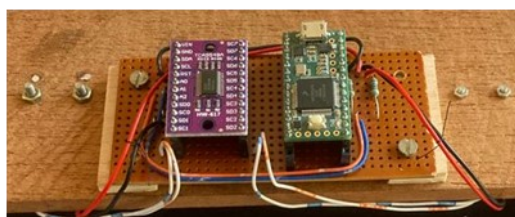
To use this console for Hauptwerk, the Wyvern sound had to be muted while the keyboards, stops and pistons remained active. Unfortunately the Wyvern volume control started at a medium level and for some reason when the headphone plug was inserted, the speakers weren't muted so these quant 'features', which would have made the upgrade straightforward, meant a more detailed investigation was required inside the console.

The solution took a bit of time to sort out and in the end it amounted to:



Rewiring four circuits inside the Wyvern console to incorporate some small relays and adding a rotary switch on the front of the console to select the required organ.

Fitting new position sensors behind each of the two expression pedals. These sensors were connected to a tiny processor that was in turn connected to the two computer with a USB cable.





How did it sound? After some minor adjustment to restrain some roaring reeds and balance the volume of the Swell against the Great.... it was *magnificent!*

This story is about ambition and perseverance, which is a good thing... as uncle Maurice is 92 and now enjoying a marvelous up-to-date house organ! By the way, he still plays regularly for services at a village chapel.

Geoff Willis

The stop list of the Hereford Cathedral organ mapped very well onto the draw-stops of this Wyvern so a PC monitor screen was only required for initial setup and then occasional changes. The monitor was mounted on one of the console doors and the computer on a lower inside panel of the console.

If you're familiar with the Hereford Cathedral instrument, you might have wondered how its four manuals would work with this three manual console? Fortunately, Hauptwerk has some very useful facilities so the Hereford Solo division could be easily mapped to the Wyvern Choir manual.



Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the North Hampshire Organists' Association will be held at 12 noon on Saturday, 22nd January, 2022 at St. John's Church, Fleet Road, Hartley Wintney, Hook RG27 8ED. Items for the agenda should be notified to the Secretary not later than 15th January. Jane Jacobs, Frances Whewell, Jeff Lloyd, John Mansfield and Derek Stebbing all come to the end of their terms of office on 22nd January. Derek feels that the time has now come for him to stand down from the Committee, although we are delighted that he will be continuing his vital work with our website. We thank him for his much-appreciated service on the Committee, and wish him well for the future. Jane, Frances, Jeff and John have expressed willingness to serve for a further term of two years if re-elected. Geoff Willis, Gillian Lloyd and Ian Harrison have a further year to serve. Members will find a form enclosed with this Newsletter to enable them to nominate any other member of the Association (including themselves!) who has agreed to serve if elected as a Committee member. This form also contains other necessary returns, so, for everyone's convenience, please could you all fill it in as required and post it (not forgetting to enclose your subscription, which remains unchanged for 2022) in time to reach Jeff Lloyd by 31st December. Please will you also note any changes to your Members' List entry clearly on your return slip (i.e., changes to your address, including postcode and e-mail, telephone/fax/mobile number, membership status and availability to teach and/or deputise).

After the essential business (admin and tasty buffet lunch!) we will be treated to an extravaganza of musical gratification with the "**A**rthur, **G** Geoff and **M**ichael Show" starring none other than Martin Barnes, Geoff Willis and Rob Goldfinch! Early billing says we can expect to be educated about essential organ enhancements; enthralled by energetic extemporization and definitely exhilarated by an exhibit of ensemble-playing entertainers. Please do come along to cheer up a cold, January Saturday lunchtime!

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