



NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

www.nhoa.org.uk

Newsletter 204 June 2021



PROGRAMME

Monday 28 June:
7.30pm on Zoom. Presentation by Geoff Willis, Martin Barnes and Rob Goldfinch on **The Schools Project**. See page 5 below for details and **Zoom link**.

Saturday 24 July:
All being well, and strictly weather permitting, Jane Jacobs and Rob Goldfinch have kindly offered to host a **barbecue** at their home. Further details by e-mail in due course.

Monday, 23 - Friday 27 August: again, ABW and Covid permitting: **Kent visit**. Plans are well advanced! Those who've already expressed an interest will be e-mailed with further details as they become available. If you're *not* in the loop, and would be interested in joining the group, please contact Jeff Lloyd on jeffreyloyd@talktalk.net as soon as possible.

We hope to run an **organ visit** in September and possibly again in October; please **watch this space**, the website and your e-mail inbox for updates. And if you haven't already done so, do have a look at John Morris' **interactive poster** featuring **Home-made and unusual instruments**. Find it on the **website** (www.nhoa.org.uk): click on the 'Programme' button.

News of members and friends

It's good to report that Rikki Willis continues to make a steady (although, for her, frustratingly slow) recovery.

Jozef Gaszka has recently taken part in two prestigious events as part of his second-year studies at the Royal Academy of Music. Emily Nott continues to enjoy her Classics course at Cambridge and her organ lessons with Anne Page, and hopes that chapel services will resume soon. Tim Stewart may be taking up the post at Dummer, and is also looking at taking a gap year as an organ scholar at a cathedral. We wish all our young people every success in their studies.

Pete Currie has a Big Birthday coming up at the end of July, and has very kindly invited NHOA friends to drop in at his Bash on 7th August. We are asked to pop in for from five minutes to five hours! to play the Hauptwerk organ if we would like to: not to bring any presents, but, if we wish, to make a donation to Lifeboats, the Air Ambulance, or our own Spiers-Turner

Fund. This is very generous of you, Pete, and we look forward to hearing more details in due course.

David Oldfield has moved. His new address is 13, Conifer Grove, Gosport, Hants., PO13 0TP. His mobile number and e-mail address are unchanged. We hope you will be happy in your new home, David, and that you will keep in touch.

We have another new member! Mrs. Jane Edwards joins us through the good offices of Martin Barnes (who is fast becoming our Recruiting Sergeant...), and whose playing at St. John's, Hartley Wintney, she very much enjoys. We look forward to meeting you, Jane. Contact details: 6, Beech Lodge, Hartford Court, Hartley Wintney, Hants. RG27 8PQ, tel: 01252 844928.

And finally: if you have any news that you would like to share with members, please do let Gillian know (nhoa.secretary@gmail.com).

Front cover picture: The new Canterbury Cathedral Organ
(photograph printed by courtesy of the Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral)

Copy Date for next Newsletter Please send any material for Newsletter 205 to the Secretary not later than **1st July**.

North Hampshire Organists' Association

Registered charity, no. 275207

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News round-up

We continue to run events on Zoom, and in March enjoyed a fascinating evening with Mike Keays, formerly of Browne's of Canterbury, now Mander's.



Mike took us through the history of Browne's, which was founded in 1871 by F.H. Browne, then aged only 22, who had been apprenticed to William Hobday, a well-established Canterbury organ-builder and music seller. By 1891, Browne had taken over Hobday's business. He continued to build organs for local churches and chapels,

and also for clients in Canada and Egypt. In 1906 the firm moved to Canterbury, and, following the deaths of both F.H. Browne and his son William in 1933, was led by Arthur Willey, a former apprentice, and Harry Fagg, a long-standing employee. Under their leadership the company embraced the developing trend in electric action and extension organs and continued to give sound and reliable service until the deaths of both men in 1982. Leadership then passed to Roger Greensted, another former apprentice, along with Reginald Cobb and Gordon Chapman, who in the following year moved the business to The Old Cartwright School, Ash. Stephen Bayley joined as an apprentice in 1994, going to work for Mander's in 1998 in order to broaden his experience. He returned to Browne's in 2010, becoming managing director in 2013. He was joined by Yvette Bayley and Mike himself, a high-profile project manager. The company took over Morgan and Smith in 2007 and Foster Waite in 2012, then in 2020 entered a very significant new phase in its development with the acquisition of Mander's. The move to a brand-new purpose-built workshop at Stourmouth had been made at the end of 2019:



and the firm now has 600 organs in its care, including St. Edmund's School, Canterbury, St. Stephen, Canterbury, Holy Trinity, Folkestone and Battersea Arts Centre. Mike paid tribute to the company's great team, which includes

no less than three apprentices, and which is committed to investing in British organ-building. They have aspirational vision for the future: we wish them well-deserved success.

How I started playing the organ

Many youngsters have come to the organ through being a church or cathedral chorister. I never had that opportunity. The nearest cathedral was 30 miles away (Blackburn) and had day choristers, and my parents (with a very modest income) would not have known about chorister opportunities, plus sending an 8 year old away to board would not have been something they considered possible, healthy or financially viable.

I started life going to the local Methodist church with my parents, in Lytham, Lancashire where I was born, and that was where I developed an interest in the organ. I learned the piano from the age of 8, and the organist at the church was Frank Dickinson (the father of the composer Peter Dickinson) who encouraged me by giving me a hymn to practice for the following Sunday, which I would play to him once the service was over. At the age of 11, I went to my local grammar school in Lytham (King Edward 7th School) and luckily, there was a Walker pipe organ there and several of my school friends sang in the choir at St. Anne's Parish Church; so I decided to jump ship and join the Anglicans, although too late to join that choir as a treble. My organ teacher at school, Michael Addison had been a pupil of Conrad Eden at Durham Cathedral, and I can remember several trips to Durham to play the organ there; it was an inspiring and memorable experience for a youngster to play to Conrad Eden on that magnificent organ. (especially as we travelled in my organ teacher's ancient classic car!) I can also recall visits to an orthodontist in Liverpool, when a special treat was visiting Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. (I could never understand why other cathedrals seemed so small!) When I was 14, I became Assistant Organist at St. John's Church in Lytham and then Organist there when I was 16.

I can remember having a difficult choice to make when I was applying to music college aged 17. My violin teacher at school (who played in what was then the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra, now the BBC Philharmonic) wanted me to take violin as first study, and I had always enjoyed the social aspects of violin playing, especially as a member of the Lancashire Youth Orchestra where we played some wonderful orchestral repertoire (and went on some marvellous tours, including to Salzburg. To this day, Brahms 2 is still one of my favourite symphonies) However, I was aware that it was always a great effort to practice the violin, open the case, play a few scales and Kreutzer studies and then be technically warmed enough to make music. Yet, it was never an effort to get on my bike, cycle down to a freezing cold church and practice the organ for several hours! That told me a lot about my musical preferences. At the church, I could play as loudly as liked and imagine I was playing the wonderful organ in Blackburn Cathedral. The preference question was answered for me when I was offered an RCO scholarship to

study the organ at The Royal College of Music. I remember that the adjudicating panel was Harold Darke, Richard Popplewell and John Stainer, grandson of composer Sir John Stainer.

I am still greatly indebted to John Bertalot who was the organist at my Diocesan Cathedral in Blackburn. He encouraged me in my later teens, giving me advice about my ongoing education and inviting me to give a recital at the cathedral. This was all excellent preparation for my two years at the RCM (when I was also Assistant Organist at the Chapel Royal of St. Peter ad Vincula within HM Tower of London) which preceded my time as organ scholar at Jesus College, Cambridge. There, I read for a degree in music, trained the chapel choir of local choristers and college choral scholars who sang four services each week, and conducted one of the University orchestras. I think my time at Cambridge cemented my ambition to become a church musician.

Thinking of my student days, I had some very inspiring composition and organ teachers: Herbert Sumsion and Alan Ridout for composition and Richard Latham, Ralph Downes, Gillian Weir and Nicolas Kynaston for the organ. Far from being dogmatic, my organ teachers encouraged me to find my own style of playing and to question in detail what I thought was in the mind of the composer.

My experience as a youngster learning the organ has very much shaped my own approach to teaching of the instrument. Those visits to play fine cathedral organs, learning how to detach your ears from the console so you can hear the music as the person in the pew does, the exposure to the best organ repertoire and a chance to learn something about what goes on inside the organ all helped to develop my own passion and knowledge of the instrument. I also valued the opportunity to be trusted to be a parish church organist at the tender age of 16, with all the responsibility that entailed (and the chance to earn money!) I remember being asked to play for a wedding when I was 16 and they wanted Widor's Toccata, which I could not play! So not wishing to pass up a fee, I learned the first two pages and the last, figuring that the bride and groom would be out of the church having photos taken after the first page. I was right, though I did subsequently learn the whole piece!

We should all be grateful for our teachers and it is wonderful that NHOA takes the musical education of youngsters so seriously. They are our future church, cathedral and concert organists, and raising awareness of the instrument is essential at a time when fewer people can experience traditional church services with a choir and an organ. I fully support all the NHOA initiatives in taking organ music into schools and finding ways for young people to become curious about such a varied and fascinating instrument.

Malcolm Archer

NHOA Schools Project

It seems a long time ago that we published blogs and updates about our Schools' Project. In March last year, we were within a crotchet beat of holding the first demonstration, workshop and appear in a concert at Calthorpe Park School in Fleet when the first lockdown imposed a long pause! We are hoping to reschedule those events early in the Autumn term.

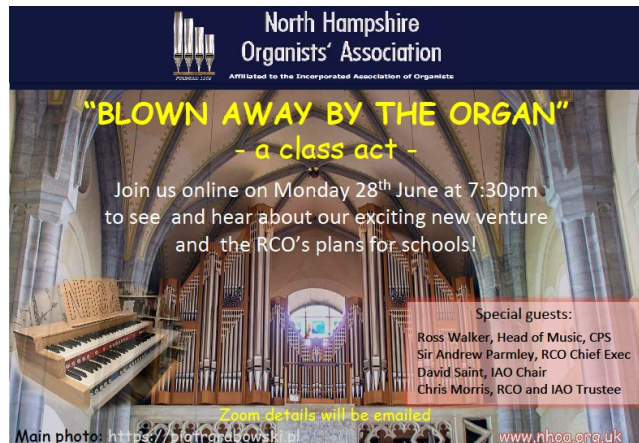
In the meantime, we would like to show you what it's all about. Rob Goldfinch, Martin Barnes and I will be joined by Special Guests who will give some glimpses of how we will wow a young audience and what we hope will be the outcome.

NHOA is not the only organisation with ambitions to wow young people with the organ and the fantastic range of music it can produce. Sir Andrew Parmley, Chief Exec of the Royal College of Organists will be online with us to tell us about their ambitions and how they hope to achieve them.

There will plenty of opportunity for questions about our project and the RCO's activities.

Oh, and you will see and hear the portable organ - it really exists!

We look forward to welcoming you on Zoom. The link is below and it will also be emailed to you nearer the day.



Zoom details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9947494011?pwd=SjBRbTVlZGVpQlcvTlNCYlNKdVlMzZ09>

Meeting ID: 994 749 4011

Passcode: 142240

News from Edinburgh

Our most northerly member, John Riley, has composed "Wedding Bells" and recorded it on the Kenneth Jones organ of Loretto School, Musselburgh. You can hear it and print it off at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFu5wG7w2t4>.

John has also written a piece on 20th century style French improvisation. <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=2949b442df&attid=0.2&permmsgid=msg-f:1700752471877257254&th=179a495cb91c8826&view=att&disp=safe>

(The article has already appeared elsewhere, and incidentally there is also an excellent article by Ronny Krippner in the latest issue of Organists' Review on the topic, though perhaps targeted at more experienced improvisers).

Finally, here is a short video highlighting some of the sounds on a 1902 J.J. Binns organ in Edinburgh, which may also prove of interest: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLBSbpbWlrc>

Website

In spite of the social distancing the Programme page on the website is still very much active. Do visit it at

www.nhoa.org.uk/

These days, while we are unable to visit organs, every month the Programme page will include a new virtual event such as a talk or a demonstration. John Morris's interactive poster for May featuring home-made and unusual instruments has been quite popular, keep watching for more. Note that all previous interactive posters can be found on the Events page. We hope to be able to get back

to more social events very soon so watch this space!

The Photo Gallery page has photos of recent visits and there is always room for more photographs of other NHOA events, recent and past. If you have any you would like to share on the site (any format but should be at least 640 pixels on the longest side), please email them to Derek at the address which appears on the foot of every page — just click on Derek's name to bring up an email page. If they are too big to email please send a message to let him know so that an alternative means of sending can be arranged.

Music Review

A choral miscellany

A few weeks ago I reviewed seven organ pieces from Banks Music Publications in York. Banks have been busy B's for we have another five choral and seven organ pieces from them: this week it's the chorals – the others shortly!

Three of these pieces are from the *Eboracum Choral Series* with an index number beginning "ECS"; all are available in hard copy or to download.

We begin with the most straightforward, a setting by Anthony Baldwin of new words – "*Praise to the King, the Lord of all we see*" - by Alan Playfair Calder-McNicoll (a guid Scots name!) to the bagpipe melody "Highland Cathedral" by Michael Korb and Uli Roever (ECS 612). Interestingly, the "straight" version of this tune for organ was included in Baldwin's collection of Scottish melodies that I reviewed last time. Beginning with an introduction that evokes the pipes it basically comprises two stanzas for SATB and organ and, like the original, the second part of each stanza is in the dominant. So we move from G major to D major, then slide up to A flat major and E flat major before ending back in A flat. It's a very effective piece well within the compass of most choirs and adds a bit of variety to the usual diet.

Another piece arranged by Anthony Baldwin is an abbreviation of the hymn "Think of a world without any flowers" (ECS 610). In *Singing the Faith* (No. 92) it runs to eight verses and choruses. Baldwin has reduced that to just three verses (Nos. 1, 2 and 6) for SATB and organ to make a nicely balanced piece. It tends to be thought of as a children's hymn but this version is very suitable for gen-

eral use. Although quite straightforward throughout, verse 2 requires divided altos and verse 3 has a descant for sopranos above the rest in unison.

Now three pieces to put in the locker for forthcoming events. Paul Drayton has set the words of *Holy is the True Light* from the Salisbury Diurnal for SATB and piano/organ (ECS 609) as an Anthem for Remembrance. Again, it would seem to suit a small ensemble to bring out the pathos of the words "*lending radiance to them that endured in the heat of the conflict*". The piece includes short duet passages for soprano/tenor and alto/bass before moving back to a peaceful harmonic "*Alleluia*".

Followed by two pieces for Christmas: Peter Warlock's setting for soprano solo of the 16th century cradle song *Balulalow* is well known. Paul J Smith uses the same words but in an arrangement for unaccompanied SATB but with short soprano solo passages (Genesis Choral Library 042). It is very effective and would, I think, suit a small ensemble – perhaps just four or eight voices who would need to feel confident in this mode.

The most complex of these pieces won the Radio 3 Christmas Carol Competition in 2019: "*Go to the Child*" a setting by Chris Black of the poem by Imtiaz Dharker (BMP 020). It requires confident singers and a very competent pianist; you can listen to it on the web performed by the BBC Singers. It's a lovely piece but not for the faint hearted – and again, a small ensemble will work best. It requires a solo soprano as well as divided sopranos and altos.

Ian Harrison

The RCO Christmas Card

Calling all photographers

It might be hard to think about Christmas now that the sun has finally decided to shine, but . . .

. . . would you like to see an organ-related image of yours on the front of a College Christmas card? If so, you are

invited to enter a competition. Just email us a high-quality digital image, preferably with a nod to the Christmas season (a Santa hat on the 32-ft open wood, perhaps). No prizes, other than the kudos of seeing your photo in print, suitably acknowledged.

We need a well-composed and well-focused picture, with a resolution of at least 300dpi (pixel dimensions 3508 x 2480). If you did not take the photo yourself, you must be able to show that you have the photographer's permission to submit the image. Email it to us at competition@rco.org.uk by the end of June, please.

From the archives

Some of us will remember Peter Hawker, a long-standing and very likeable member of the Association, who played at one of the village churches in the Crondall area, and, if memory serves, rode a motorbike. For our centenary Newsletter of December 1994 Peter contributed to our series 'How I came to the Organ'. His article was so lively and amusing it seems a shame not to share extracts with our present readers.

How the Organ came to me

The first event happened in 1927 (I was 7). When falling asleep in bed I was transported to heaven by the sound of music coming from downstairs: my father was having a test-run with his home-built amplifier and huge loudspeaker. I was utterly melted and for ever after, Handel's harmonies have meant something special. So great was the impression on me that when the multiple murderer, Rowse, was executed at about that time and had made a last request for Handel's Largo to be played for his march to the scaffold, I thought he wasn't such a bad chap after all.

Then it happened. I was visiting Chelmsford Cathedral on one of our Austin Bathtub outings, the organ was playing and once again I was transfixed by the same melting emotions which Mr. Handel had induced. The man at the console was God and I had become organ-mad with a burning ambition to become a Cathedral organist.

Later in the same year (1928) I began piano lessons but it was not until four years later that I first played an organ, after persuading my parents to let me have a go on the small but attractive organ in the Chapel of Bishop's Stortford College just down the lane.

I was wisely kept off the organ at boarding school until after School Certificate but piano lessons were unrestricted; moreover I had an unexpected bonus

of organ lessons from Dr. A.F. Barnes of the College. Thus I received my first regular organ lesson at sixteen and in retrospect I feel that, ideally, the policy of 'piano first, organ later' is sound - no wasted time learning keyboard and therefore quicker progress. I acknowledge, however, that I was lucky indeed to have had those early school holiday lessons.

Playing for morning Chapel soon followed together with a bit of experimentation; for concluding voluntaries I got away with 'Temptation Rag' (Harry Roy's Band) but was carpeted for the 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' (Henry Hall's No. 1 hit with the BBC Dance Band).

No young organophile in the Thirties could be expected to ignore the parallel world of secular cathedrals - those palaces of colour, warmth and fairytale architecture enshrining 'alternative' organs of the utmost fascination. I was irresistibly drawn along and broke bounds many times to hear Edgar Peto at the Regal, Hendon Central, or Sandy MacPherson play the concluding voluntary to H.G. Wells' 'Things to Come' (Bliss' Epilogue), or Frederick Bayco at the vast four-manual console of the Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Court Road, or Quentin Maclean at the Trocadero, Elephant and Castle (he also examined for the Royal College of Organists).

Between schooldays and the war there was time for barely a year of lessons from Norman Askew of St. John's, Wimbledon and later Chapel Royal, Hampton Court; then a whole lifetime idled away with six years of war and two-and-a-half careers, sometimes in faraway places, doing anything but playing the organ - until retirement.

Retirement presents for everyone a last opportunity for fulfilment. For me this has meant resuming life after a series of interruptions by way of usefully playing the organ and trying to get better at it. This in turn has meant lessons and no wasting of time on examinations - even if that in turn means I shall never, ever, become a Cathedral organist.

Kitty Milroy

St Mark's Church in Upper Hale, Farnham, where our member Frances Whewell is the organist, is fundraising for the restoration of important murals originally painted by a local artist, Kitty Milroy, in the 1920s. Sky News got hold of the story and broadcast it. They insisted

on hearing some organ music so there is a brief moment of Frances at the instrument. Do visit the following clip, but don't blink or you may miss her:

<https://news.sky.com/video/who-was-the-artist-known-as-kitty-milroy-12307871>

The other Hope-Jones

We have all heard of Robert Hope-Jones the controversial organ builder, but some while ago I came across another Hope-Jones, Ronald, who died in the year 2000. His obituary in *The Times* told how, as head of the Disarmament Department at the Foreign Office, he was one of the driving forces behind the successful British efforts to bring about the international treaty banning the use of biological and chemical weapons in 1967. His final posting was as Ambassador to La Paz in Bolivia, where he was taken aback by the armour-plated Daimler and nine SAS-trained bodyguards which came with the job. He reduced the complement of guards to five, one of whom was the pistol-shooting champion of Bolivia. Hope-Jones became lastingly fond of the country, and the Andes, but offered a cautionary limerick:

They say that Sir Laurence Olivier
Remarked, on his way through Bolivia:

“La Paz is all right,
For a day and a night,

But no one could possibly live here.”

Hope-Jones seems to have been inventive with limericks and readers of *The Times* were reminded that he was, deservedly, the winner of a competition, set by Deinhard Green Label wines in the 1970s, with the following entry:

When last I had dinner with Mabel
I ordered five Deinhard Green Label.

We had two with the meat
and two with the sweet:

The fifth we had under the table.

Naturally that set readers’ pens wagging and others sent their own entries in the competition:

In my dreams I regale at my table
With gallons of Deinhard Green label

Of the silver screen’s host
Those I’ve worshipped the most—

Errol Flynn, Mickey Mouse and Clark Gable.

(*Philip Hebbert*)

A winetaster skilful and able,
Who expired while imbibing at table,
With his very last breath
At the threshold of death

Cried: “I’m done for! it’s Deinhard Green Label!”

(*Charles Lewis*)

Later, Ronald’s son, Kenneth, disclosed that a number of years later the wine maker held another competition and his father won yet another case of wine with the following limerick:

My Hilda, though simply divine,
Is suspicious of men and of wine,
But with Deinhard Green Label
She’s always unable

To think of the English for nein.

I remember the publication of these limericks; my personal favourite, written by a distinguished lawyer whose name I forget, is:

Drink Deinhard Green Label for jollity,
For evenings of fun and frivolity;

For amorous laughter

And what follows after,

And Christening parties of quality.

Finally, Mr G. M. Wedd recalled the following rhyme, nothing to do with Deinhard Green Label, or Ronald Hope-Jones, or the organ:

Pamela’s party was better than mine;

The minx got her drinks from Victoria Wine.

So perhaps we had better leave the subject there.

J.M.