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THE NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANIST

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THE NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANIST

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Welcome to our 4th annual publication of The North Hampshire Organist. We have brought together some absorbing stories from the wider organ world which we hope will be entertaining and inspiring.

It's fascinating to hear how great musicians started their careers and we start this edition with our President, Malcolm Archer, telling us about his early musical journey.

A big NHOA news story of the past year is that we held our first 'organ awareness' event at Calthorpe Park School! The near three year delay due to Covid did nothing to dampen the enthusiastic reception from students, staff and parents alike. You can find out how we made this happen in our diary.

Malcolm gives us his insight into making the organ more accessible to attract wider audiences back to organ concerts and recitals.

The 2022 annual tour to East Yorkshire found some fascinating places, charming people and fabulous instruments. You can get a taste of the goings-on.

You might recall at our first on-line talk by Barry Rose, he told us that he was working hard to complete his memoirs. He did it! Ian Harrison gives us the essence of an extraordinary musical life in a review of Barry's autobiography "Sitting on a Pin: a musical memoir".

In a somewhat more modest way, your Committee have jotted down some of their 'organing' highlights of 2022.

Please enjoy!

Geoff

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 Poplewell 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

Diary of the first event in NHOA's Schools Project

Back in 2020, NHOA commissioned the making of a portable organ to demonstrate to young people. The Covid restrictions meant that the project had to be shelved awaiting better times.

After a hiatus of near three years, Martin Barnes, Rob Goldfinch and Geoff Willis held the first demo and workshop at Calthorpe Park School in Fleet and supported students to play the organ at the school's Christmas concert.

The whole thing was a great success! Here is a diary that gives an idea of how it happened in 2022 ...

<u>23rd Nov</u>	Geoff finds all the parts of the organ and assembles it in his house
<u>25th Nov</u>	Team meet to fine tune the plan. RG sets up pistons for use in the demo. We check the session timings, the main points to emphasise, likely questions, follow-on activities etc.
<u>6th Dec evening</u>	MB & GW load organ into two cars
<u>7th Dec</u>	
8:00 am	Team meet at Geoff's
8:30	Drive two cars to school. Sign in. Unload and transport organ to Music Room, three trips, escorted
9:00	Ross Walker, Head of Music, explains change of plan: he has to take a class in the Music Room while we set up. Using hand signals, we assemble table, organ, pedalboard, speakers and plug it all in. No sound check possible!
9:50	Arrival of GCSE Music students and younger members who have keyboard experience. Demo session starts

10:35	Demo finishes a few minutes early. Unexpectedly, Ross invites students to play. After a bit of teenage reluctance, a student improvises with suggestions from Rob.
11:00	Younger keyboard players return for workshop including the student who played earlier. They each play, all without music. Some play own compositions, others a Grade 5 piano piece. Rob inspires them with suggestions. Students watch while colleagues play.
11:40	Session ends. Various staff including Headteacher come to see what's been going on. Rob plays some spectacular bars. All are amazed at the console and sound.
12:00	Disassemble the organ. Pack units into protective bags and onto trolleys Pack up cables. Transport to cars, escorted. Take leave of delighted music staff.
12:45	Team debrief in local hostelry.
16:00	Unload two cars at Geoff's
<u>14th Dec</u> 13:00	MB, RG and GW load organ into two cars. Drive to school. Sign in, unload and transport organ into school hall, three trips, escorted. Assemble the organ, connect to school audio and video system ready for rehearsals next day. 'Sound checked'!
<u>15th Dec</u>	
09:30	Geoff attends rehearsals and assists Ross W and students to play. Good organisation - students appearing at the appointed time for their rehearsal. All goes well and organ items finish by lunchtime.
18:30	Geoff and Rikki Willis arrive at school. Headteacher, staff and governors all very welcoming and enthusiastic

19:00	<p>Performance starts.</p> <p>Ross accompanies the handbell team. Students from the workshop perform their improvisations. One student, who was not at the workshop, accompanied the string ensemble for two carols. Unexpectedly, he started peddling. Geoff assisted with some nifty registration.</p> <p>A video, showing the music events of the term, included an inspiring piece showing our demo and workshop and thanks to NHOA.</p> <p>Afterwards, plaudits and thanks from many people.</p>
<u>16th Dec</u>	
09:30	<p>MB and GW arrive at school in two cars. Disassemble the organ, pack it up, transport back to cars, escorted. Further compliments from Ross with a suggestion of the organ at a Spring concert.</p>
11:00	<p>Unload two cars at Geoff's</p>
17th Dec onwards	<p>Find places to hide all the organ parts around the house!</p>



Martin, Rob and Geoff

Making the organ accessible as an instrument

We live at a time where 1 per cent of the population regularly goes to church; in a post Christian society where religion is often viewed with suspicion, and where young people are growing up in a culture where Sunday is for sports clubs and recreational activities. The organ and the popularity of organ music has waned as a result.

The problem is that most organs are in churches and the instrument is seen as a 'church instrument'. This has not always been the case. In the late 19th and early twentieth centuries, the organ was seen as an instrument for entertainment, primarily. In this country, many town halls had a pipe organ (a few remain) and you could also expect to hear an organ if you went to the cinema. Composers such as Franck, Bonnet, Gigout, Dubois, Widor and Vierne all composed organ music designed for the concert hall, and without any religious connection. (despite the fact that they were all in fact church organists)

It is gratifying that places like Birmingham, Leeds, Lancaster, Liverpool and Huddersfield have retained and maintained their town hall organs and have regular recitals on them. The key, therefore, is to re-establish the organ as a concert instrument and to de-mysticise its perception as a purely church instrument. However, it is sad that a conservatoire like the RNCM in Manchester does not any longer have an organ department, because they say there is little demand. It was a thriving department at one stage. There is low demand also for harpists, but they would never dare not teach the harp, since it is seen as a vital orchestral instrument.

The way to increase popularity for the organ is through appropriate choice of repertoire and making organ concerts engaging. I recently played an organ concert in a Lutheran church in Prescott, Arizona, where the organ console was in the middle of the sanctuary so everyone could see, and I had a hand-held mic and could speak to the audience between pieces. I also kept my comments light and very humorous, and chose a programme which I knew people would enjoy. I think that the approach of the recitalist is vital. Of course, not all churches can have a centre console, so this is where technology becomes important so everyone can see the recitalist. Nobody wants to be lectured at about the music, but an amusing story linked to it is

always very well received. Choice of repertoire is important, and we must not be afraid to play good transcriptions of orchestral or other well-known works. 'Themed' concerts are often popular.

I think there is much more scope for combining the organ with other instruments, or even a choir. A popular choral work in the second half of the programme with an organ concert in the first half is often a winning combination, and the presence of a choir also ensures a decent audience. Combining with a school choir has the double purpose of widening appeal and attracting interest in the organ from young people. Combining with another instrumentalist can also work. It could be programme such as 'Bach the Magician' which combines organ works with a couple of the magical unaccompanied Bach cello suites. Presented in the right way, this ensures also that organ is seen as a concert instrument in its own right.

Publicity and how the organ is promoted is vital in all this. We need to take the organ out of the church (difficult as most organs are in churches!) and make our churches 'concert halls' for those occasions. Also, publicity must not be stuffy and boring, but have colour, imagination and an image that will encourage people to come. Also, let's stop using the word 'recital' and start calling them 'organ concerts', which will immediately present a more professional and broader perception of the event.

One-off concerts by a known organ celebrity can be attractive; it costs more, but someone like Olivier Latry, with his Notre Dame links, is a household name these days, and with local sponsorship, should attract a good crowd.

In his day, Carlo Curly did much to try and make the organ universally popular in this country, as did Virgil Fox in the USA. Cameron Carpenter is the contemporary equivalent and is now resident in this country. Let's try and utilise his skills as a player and popular concert artist. (though we can't all play 'The Flight of the Bumble-bee' with our feet!!)

A series of recitals is always good for building up a regular crowd and will attract local organ societies. Here again, it is important that programmes are varied and interesting with a few 'pops' thrown in, and

the recitalists are engaging with the audience. (David Briggs is brilliant at this) Every so often, a silent film accompanied by David Briggs or David Bednall (who are masters at this art) will attract not just organists but also local film societies. Wayne Marshall will often present programme which is half piano and half organ, with an attractive work such as 'Rhapsody in Blue' in Gershwin's own version for piano alone.

The organ is an amazing and fascinating instrument. NHOA is doing much to help promote the organ in schools and let's hope that other societies will follow our example. Each area will know what works best for their locality, but let's try and get rid of the 'churchy' image alone, and see the organ as a concert instrument in it own right, which works alongside its liturgical role.

Malcolm Archer

NHOA Visit to Stowe School and East Yorkshire, September 2022

Ever since my first trip away with NHOA (2015 to Copenhagen), I have looked forward to the annual Visits. 2022 was the turn of East Yorkshire, having been postponed for a while thanks to our great chum Covid-19. The following is a write up by one of the growing number of non-organists for whom the trip presents an opportunity to visit buildings sometimes not open to the public, go to places you would never have visited (and you really should!) and enjoy the company of a lovely bunch of people.

Day 1 Stowe School Chapel



Now this is an example of a building that you would normally never be able to visit on your own and we were lucky to be able to do so as the pupils had not yet returned.

The school has over 900 students living in 10 'houses'. Of this number, some 70 form the choir, 40-45 the orchestra and only 5 are organ scholars. Having been treated to the scale and scope of the organ, this is little short of a tragedy.

Stowe School's life as a private house ended in 1914. The history of this now-restored and quite beautiful building started in 1571 when Peter Temple

leased some land for sheep farming near the village of Stowe in North Buckinghamshire. Some 250 years later, his family became the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos (with the family name enlarged to Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville) and they built the landscape gardens along with the palatial mansion. The demise of the great estate began in 1813 with the death of the 1st Marquess.

In 1923, Stowe was bought by The Reverend Percy Warrington who was acting on behalf of a group founding new independent schools. It opened in May 1923 with an initial intake of 99 boys all of whom had to be hardy individuals as Ducal Palaces were never meant to be inhabited beyond October and are virtually impossible to heat! Boys used to be told to 'put on more clothes' and I wonder whether the same still applies? With the crippling costs of maintaining such an important English house and grounds, money was always tight for the school and pupils. (One states that the food committee couldn't afford potatoes, so the boys had to make do with rice with most meals). From 1989, the colossal upkeep of the grounds and the buildings were passed to the National Trust and the Stowe Preservation Trust. The school is now free to upgrade its academic and boarding facilities.

The Rushworth and Dreaper organ of 1929 was housed in the case on the large gallery at the West End. It was very generously voiced and apparently large registrations are needed to lead the whole school assemblies. Richard M described the sound as "absolutely thrilling, leaning on the woodwork gave an awesome, knee trembling feeling!



After the organists had put the very fine instrument through its paces and a brief stroll around the main building, it was time to head off up to Willerby and our home for the week, the Mercure Hull Grange Park. A hotel which can be highly recommended if you're ever in need of a place to stay whilst near Hull. Quiet, comfortable with good food and very friendly staff and plenty of parking.

Day 2. Hessle, Barton-on-Humber and the Pemberton Residence.

Hessle is a small, Domesday listed, East Riding town on the north bank of the Humber estuary where the Humber Bridge crosses the river linking Hessle with Barton.

All Saints Church is a grade 1 listed building with some stonework dating back to the time of King Stephen (1135 - 1154). It once served

as the Mother Church to the chapel of the Holy Trinity in Hull (with the latter only becoming an independent parish in 1661) and has been much rebuilt over the years including the 15th century spire and the doubling of the seating capacity in the late 1800s.

As in so many churches, the organ has been moved, updated and replaced over the years. (The organ installed by Forster and Andrews in 1846, having been removed, now resides in St George's Church, West Grinstead, not all that far from home). The current 1890 Forster and Andrews instrument was moved to its present position in the early years of the 20th century and a restoration plan had to be scrapped as it coincided with the exact date of the outbreak of WW1. Recent improvements date from 1969 and 2001.

For the bellringers amongst us, major work took place in 1892 and again in 2001 where an 8 bell peal tuned to F sharp was created.

Over the famous bridge and on to St Mary's having stopped off at the Humber Bridge Garden centre for lunch. This is situated on the banks of the Humber with views of the bridge and on the site of the last remaining historical tile works in the UK. The William Blyth company makes tiles here at the Hoe Hill and Far Ings tiles works. The food was good too!

It is very likely that Barton has been inhabited since the Neolithic era and the Castledyke South area has been suggested as a probable site for the Battle of Brunanburh (937) where King Athelstan of England met an army led by the King of Dublin (Olaf Guthfrithsson) the King of Scotland (Constantine II) and Owein, King of Clyde. Athelstan's victory prevented the dissolution of England and has been described as "the moment Englishness came of age".

St Mary's was once a chapel-of-ease for St Peter's Church which, no longer used for worship, is now under the care of English Heritage. It is one of the best researched churches in England with origins dating back to the 10th century with evidence of a far earlier Christian presence. I did try to visit St Peter's but as I only reached the doors at 3:50 and they were closing at 4pm, I was not allowed in. Thanks!

Meanwhile, back at St Mary's. This started out being the Chapel of All Saints and first recorded in the early 12th century. There are



architectural findings of a large building beneath the present church so the exact origins remain unknown. The name was changed in the 13th century to St Mary, a common occurrence at the time with the growing devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The church is light and airy which is partly due to a lack of stained glass, this being destroyed by the Puritans in 1651, but some small fragments of the mediaeval glass have been pieced together to depict the crucifixion and are to be found in the east window.

The organist played an extensive demo but there was still time for all to play. The action was rather clunky so it was tricky to make a delicate sound.

I paused by a door in the north aisle which leads to the church hall and discovered it dates back to mediaeval times and also admired a mediaeval chest created out of a hollowed solid tree trunk.

Ancient treasures and worthy of attention.



We also visited the home of Dr and Mrs Pemberton on this day and were treated to an incredible tea in their gardens whilst the organists played the organ in the house. John Pemberton built his house organ in an upstairs room with pipes from Jardine and Compton instruments with additional electronic pedal stops. The four manual console was very comfortable and although the sound was inevitably rather dry, there were some beautiful stops of which John was rightly proud.



Our hosts were generous to a fault and with the weather being kind to us as well, this was a lovely, unhurried and very sociable moment in our programme. Thank you once again to Dr and Mrs Pemberton for making us feel so very welcome.

Day 3 North Dalton, Kirkburn and South Dalton

The name Dalton comes from the old English 'dael' 'tun' which means Valley Farm. Today's villages are all mentioned in Domesday, so another day of English history beckoned. In Dalton, archeologists have discovered extensive evidence of Neolithic habitation.

Queen Matilda gave land to the local priory to find her a chaplain to celebrate her soul in North Dalton and this is probably the 'trigger' for the building of a stone church. The Grade 2 listed church sits on the top of a steep hill and overlooks a Victorian village. Renovations in 1872 revealed a Norman archway and doorway and a leper's window hidden within the walls. Amazing what you can find hidden in a small country church!

On to Kirkburn, where in 1987 an iron age sword was discovered. This now resides in the British Museum where it has been described as "probably the best Iron Age sword in Europe".



Many Norman elements are still to be found within St Mary's church including the south doorway which, having been protected from the elements by a 14th century porch, still has pristine carvings. Equally pristine is the Norman font with



wonderful carvings which include a pouncing cat and Christ handing the keys of heaven and hell to St Peter. Incredible.



One would be forgiven for thinking that all churches in this area are called either All Saints or St Mary's as we went on to another St Mary's, this time in South Dalton. In Domesday, this village was called Sneculfros and I am only telling you that as I simply had to put that name in print.

The village forms part of the Dalton Estate and is owned and managed by the Hotham family. St



Mary's was commissioned by Lord Hotham and completed in 1861 having cost £25,000 (around £3,900,000 today). Of note is the marble monument to Sir John Hotham (d 1689) which resembles the Hatfield tomb of Henry Cecil with Sir John reclining as a knight in full armour on the upper level and as a skeleton on the lower with the four cardinal virtues on each corner supporting the monument.

Maintained by Historic England it has a 60m spire which makes it a truly prominent landmark. It is a beautiful building and well worth a visit.

Today also saw the formation of the NHOA Tour Choir. Our host requested a robust performance of "While shepherds watched their flocks by night" to the tune of Ilkley Moor Baht 'at. With no rehearsal and a few "dissenters", we battled our way through too many verses!

Day 4 'Free Day'

Day 4 was a free day so a group of us decided to visit both Beverley and the seaside. We arrived at the Minster and someone was quite

appropriately playing the organ, so we were 'serenaded' whilst we wandered around the 1,300 years of history to be found here. Of note is the visit of the aforementioned King Althestan who is reported to have visited the tomb of John, bishop of York, to pray for victory in battle and we know how that turned out! (See above Day 2, Barton). Quite out of sync with everywhere else we have been, the Minster is The Parish Church of Saint John and Saint Martin. NO St Mary or all Saints here until you go further down the road to St Mary's church, (phew) another building absolutely steeped in history and worthy of more scrutiny than we were able to afford. We had the seaside to visit and daylight hours are limited.

You can't go this close to the North Sea and not see it, so we went to Hornsea. Not the greatest place on the planet, but there was a beach, a place to park and it wasn't raining yet!



Day 5 Queen Margaret's School, Central Methodist Church York and York Minster

Named after Queen Margaret of Scotland (1070 - 1093) this school was established in 1901 in Scarborough. Evacuated to Pitlochry (another town you really must visit) during WW1, then to Castle Howard in WW2 the school finally arrived in Escrick Park in 1949. The original building dates back to 1758 and is set in around 75 acres of parkland.

Queen Margaret's school has an active music department and an impressive organ to be found after a lengthy walk through the school buildings (and past some really polite and well behaved pupils) to the main music



building and the chapel. It's really very encouraging when music teachers are accomplished organists and we were treated to the organ having a good work out from JSB's Sinfonia to Cantata No. 29.

The instrument was built by Geoffrey Coffin of Principal Pipe Organs in 2003. The casework is cleverly installed in a narrow chamber hidden behind a full height slatted wooden screen at the front of the hall.



York Methodist church is Grade 2* listed and is to be found in the centre of the fabulous city of York where there is archaeological evidence of human habitation dating back to around 7 - 8,000 BC.

Designed by James Simpson in a classical style constructed in 1840 thus marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the first Methodist Society. The portico is wonderfully grandiose and suits York well. The church can seat 1500 in a horseshoe operation and the ground floor still has a few numbered box pews.

It's never a hardship to visit York with some fine restaurants, old walls to walk around and a Minster (Cathedral and Metropolitan Church of St Peter in York). Completed in 1472 this is a simply stunning building and we were there after hours so the organ could 'let rip' and it did!

The Nave console was very comfortable although in the short time available we were glad to be assisted by Assistant Organist, Asher Oliver to find the desired stops on the well appointed jambs. Was it the aura of the building, the beautiful pipework or the massive console that brought out the best





sounds from all our players?

The walk back to the park and ride bus was later in the evening with York almost empty and walking down a near deserted Shambles



was, again, a privilege and a pleasure.

Day 6 Howden and Selby

The minster church of SS. Peter and Paul, Howden together with the 14th century chancel and chapter house ruins, owe their existence to the Prince Bishops of Durham who used Howden as a centre of administration for their vast estates. Howden probably belonged to the monks of Peterborough Abbey but they defaulted on a Danegeld payment and King William I gave the church and manor to William, Bishop of Durham.

Howden survived the Dissolution intact as it was not a monastery, but attracted attention in 1536 when Robert Aske raised an army in a Roman Catholic rebellion against Henry VIII. A shrine to St John of Howden was broken up, pilgrimages to Howden ceased and the Princes Bishops left, returning to Durham. During the Dissolution of the Collegiate Churches and Chantries of 1548 the rectorial revenues were taken by the Crown. Queen Elizabeth I granted these revenues to local gentry who refused to help with repairs to the Minster and in particular, the choir. This was abandoned in 1609 and blocked off with the nave being used instead. Lead was removed from the choir roof to repair that of the nave and the final insult was in 1644 when Parliamentarian troops stabled their horses in the north transept and

choir causing immense damage and destroying a new organ (using the pipes as whistles on their march).



The choir roof finally collapsed in 1696 and that of the Chapter House fell in 1750. Finally, in 1972, the Dept. of the Environment took over the ruins and now they are being cleaned up and repaired so that they constitute a 'safe ruin'.

More damage occurred in 1929 when arsonists set fire to the building which destroyed remaining

woodwork. "Mousy" Thompson helped with the restoration creating the choir stalls amongst other works and there are some 30 mice to be found, carved into the woodwork. Since then works have continued in both 2006 and 2011 thanks to grants from English Heritage.



The organ has been restored on many occasions, the most recent being in 1998 when repairs to the roof of the Lady Chapel resulted in water and thick dust entering the organ which took some three weeks to remove.

Selby Abbey is another fabulous and ancient building and was the first monastery to be founded (1069) in the north of England after the Norman conquest.

Fire, as we see so often, plays a huge part in the history of this building with the first recorded event being 1340 which destroyed the Chapter house, Dormitory, Treasury and left the rest of the building in a parlous state. Building and repairs continued until the 15th century, but the Abbey began to decline and fell at the Dissolution. The abbot at that time was Robert Rogers AKA Robert Selby who was on good terms with King Henry VIII having signed his 1530 petition in favour of his

divorce from Queen Katherine. Unlike Robert Aske (see Howden above), Rogers did not take part in the Pilgrimage of Grace and when the Abbey surrendered in 1539, the church was left standing with only the north transept window and some statues being destroyed.

More damage occurred in 1690 when the central tower fell destroying the south transept, but the church remained in use and was finally repaired in the 19th century. Another appalling fire followed in 1906 and the Reverend Maurice Parkin was instrumental in raising £40,000 and the church was once again restored.

Another fine rebuild by Geoffrey Coffin (you might remember the online presentation about Selby that he gave to NHOA in 2021). We played the Nave console which gave a well rounded acoustic from the whole of the building. The organ is split into two chambers north and south of the choir stalls. Another console has a commanding position behind the choir which is probably a blessing for the choristers who would otherwise find themselves competing with this massive instrument!



So, apart from the ever present dangers of fire, this building has survived 'intact' despite its having been a Benedictine monastery. Quite an amazing feat and a truly stupendous building.

Day 7 City Hall Hull and St Mary's Cottingham

Hull was City of Culture in 2017 and this has caused it to have been transformed from the somewhat dingy city I remember visiting rather more years ago than I choose to remember.

Hull City Hall is a marvellous baroque revival building built between 1903 and 1909 and never intended to perform the function of offices for Hull Council, but as a Hall for functions. The organ was installed by Forster and Andrews in time for the Grand Opening with Edwin Lemare



playing on 30th March 1911. The organ is not without controversy as many considered it to be too big and works were only given the go ahead after a Government inquiry. To this day, it remains one of the largest working organs still in use in the UK and as there were no other members of the public in the building, it was beautifully put through its paces by our members whilst your lucky author was taken on a quick tour of the auditorium and given exclusive prime viewing and listening opportunities.

Once again, one of the incredible and memorable moments on an 'organ crawl'. On an instrument of this size, thumb pistons are invaluable for finding 'good enough' registrations to exercise the sweetest strings through to the robustest reeds!



Damage from WW2 bombings have been fully repaired and the organ is lovingly attended to by our tour guides - Adrian Crawford, the Curator and Graham Smales, the Tuner. They were marvellous company and made us all feel incredibly welcome. They were most impressed by our itinerary and the enthusiasm of our group.

John Scott Whiteley, the Organist of Hull City Hall, gave us a great demonstration of the instrument. It included the Hollins “Trumpet Minuet” having told us that it was written after Hollins had heard the Trumpet stop on this organ.

We went back into the countryside and to Cottingham another Domesday settlement. Once owned by Robert Front de Boeuf who very sensibly changed his name to de Stuteville. In 1201, this family obtained a ‘licence to fortify’, thus marking the beginnings of Baynard Castle, the 12th and 13th century moated castle in Cottingham.

Some wonderful stories abound surrounding the history of the manor house not least of which being its destruction in 1541 by the owner to prevent King Henry VIII from visiting and thus protecting his wife from Henry’s “attentions”!



The earliest part of the current church dates from around 1320 with the oldest part being the nave, with transepts added in the 14th century and the tower dating from 1400. The grade 1 listed building, which contains monuments to the Burtons of Hotham (see South Dalton Day 3), was restored in the 19th and 20th centuries. Our host demonstrated the fine Forster and Andrews organ improvising in “a Vaughan Williams modal style”.

Day 8 Mansfield

Another great trip ended with a visit en route back home to St Peter and St Paul in Mansfield. Mansfield is a market town in Nottinghamshire. Settlement here dates back to Roman times and it became a base to hunt in Sherwood Forest.

The Grade 1 listed church is in the centre of the town and is of Saxon origin but the only fragment of this building left is the lowest weathering on the east side of the tower. Some building work took place in the

12th century to accommodate the expanding population but Norman zigzag brickwork pattern is still in evidence on the walls.

Surprise, surprise, there was a fire in 1304 which destroyed almost the entire building. The new church was completed in 1420 along with a new tower. An altar destroyed during the reign of Elizabeth I has been cemented back together and can still be seen.

One lovely brass commemorates John Firth, vicar from 1654 to 1699. He had the job from before the restoration, during the reign of James II and the Glorious Revolution. All this while, it is uncertain whether he was ordained.

It is these fascinating little snippets from the past that remind you that all the names you see in churches on notice boards and on memorial stones were once real people.

And so ended our visit to East Yorkshire. It is always sad to say goodbye after sharing so much, but there's always next year and Austria beckons us!

Jane Jacobs and Others



Book Review

Sitting on a pin : A musical memoir

by Barry Rose

Published by Barry Rose; 2021 ISBN
978-1-3999-0667-8

312 pp, Hardback, £18.95

This is a delightful book which is a joy to read. Organists' memoirs can be a bit tedious, but not this one! It appeared late last year and just missed the deadline for the 2022 "The North Hampshire Organist" so some colleagues may have already read it. It is of particular interest for NHOA members because a good part of it is concerned with establishing the musical dimension of Guildford Cathedral.

This is a long book – 312 pages – but broken down into 25 bite-sized chapters plus an annex about Guild Records and the text of a brilliant speech given to the American Guild of Organists in 1988. Barry Rose made a name for himself as something of an entrepreneur in the 1970s and 80s: he certainly does not come from the usual stable of Oxbridge organ/choral scholars and one suspects that various people have found that a bit difficult to cope with.

Barry was born in Chingford in 1934 to a very ordinary family. He was evacuated at the start of the war but found his way back to Chingford fairly quickly. The family was moderately musical and his mother insisted on his having piano lessons once he reached the age of 10. But an assiduous student he was not: skipping lessons, failing to practise, not keen on scales and arpeggios..... At school he was something of a tearaway and a frequent visitor to the Headmaster's study for all the wrong reasons! His father wanted him to learn at least one instrument "properly" so, having a harmonium at home, he graduated to the organ at Chingford

Parish Church with lessons from the organist. Musical friends took him to concerts and performances of *Messiah* and *Elijah* thence to local church choirs. The seed was sown! A chance walk into Epping Forest led him to the hamlet of High Beach. Looking round the church organ he was asked if he could play answering in the affirmative led to a regular commitment with a tricky walk home in the darkened forest.

He left school as soon as possible and got a job as a clerk in the insurance department of the W.H. Smith empire. That did not last too long before “call up” papers arrived and he found himself in the Royal Air Force. Being considered bright enough for aircrew duties he had an aptitude flight but couldn’t stand heights and was “grounded” – back to clerking with links to the station chaplaincy where he began to play the piano for services.

Back in civvy street he became involved again with choral music and was invited to lead a choir in Kingsbury and The Jacobean Singers. He must have impressed various people because a somewhat tongue-in-cheek application to be Director of Music at the prospective Guildford Cathedral led to an appointment in 1960 – no Cathedral, no choir, no organ! In fact when tasked with “where is the organ” the Cathedral architect said “there’s no money”: his plans for pipes above the choir stalls had been shelved. Eventually an agreement was reached to insert a special gallery for the console and a “positive” organ on the other side of the chancel with the rest tucked away. A second-hand organ (Harrison, naturally!) was found in Shipley, Yorkshire (close to where Charmian and I grew up and where she went to school). Dismantling, storage and rebuilding in Guildford by Rushworth & Dreaper was achieved for the consecration service with the Queen and Prince Philip present on 17 May 1961. Of course there had also been the small matter of creating a Cathedral choir, with boys and men drawn from the Guildford area and particularly from Lanesborough School. Starting from scratch, Barry melded the group together such that they became one of the foremost Cathedral choirs in England.

Whilst at Guildford he became interested and involved in recording and television. It may have been the attraction of someone new for the producers or simply finding his metier for Barry, but he soon became well known in the field. In fact, Christmas arrives in this household with

a playing of Victor Hely-Hutchinson's *Carol Symphony*: I hadn't realised that this was Barry's first outing as an orchestral conductor including various choral items sung by the choir! Christmas recordings seem to have been a mainstay of his productions and have been the backdrop for many other recordings of more cerebral music.

A BBC recording from Guildford in 1970 led to contacts with the Head of Religious Broadcasting who was looking for a successor to Dr George Thalben-Ball as Musical Adviser and conductor of the *Daily Service*. Barry was propositioned and accepted – leading to a long period of service as conductor, producer and the “go to” man for radio and television broadcasts!

At about the same time Barry was involved in establishing Guildford's own record label – Guild Records – which was to produce many EPs (remember them?) and LPs of choral music.

A somewhat chance meeting with Christopher Dearnley, organist of St Paul's Cathedral led to an offer to go there as sub-organist in 1974. A bit strange after being the Director of Music at Guildford: but this was St Paul's after all!

It's not quite clear how much the Dean & Chapter knew about all this, but the move was, to say the least, hand to mouth. Christopher Dearnley realised that he did not have the skills to be a first class choirmaster and short-circuited the system!

For Barry, the daily early morning journey to Broadcasting House was now easy – but the work was not. The St Paul's choir needed livening up and improving in quality and range. This he achieved, but not instantaneously. Of course, one of the attractions of St Paul's is the exposure via State occasions, such as the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 and the marriage of Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer in 1981. The cathedral authorities almost made a point of importing “famous” people – such as Sir David Willcocks - to be “up front” on these occasions – hardly a gesture of confidence in the home team who'd done the spade work.

But Barry pressed on, involving the choir in recording up-beat material with people like Paul McCartney and Harry Nilsson as well as a wide range of sacred music.

Choir trips overseas also became a feature of the programme, building the kudos of the Cathedral in faraway places, especially in the USA.

Our own Malcolm Hicks – and more particularly son Christopher, then a senior chorister at St Paul's - get a special mention. Malcolm was playing the organ for a carol concert and wanted Chris to sing the treble solo: A Chapter member refused permission. The wind had changed.

Things went downhill fairly rapidly and new proposals for management of the music would have again demoted Barry. He had to go. His last week of Evensongs at St Paul's included four different versions of *There is no rose (of such virtue)*. He doesn't say if the clergy got the joke (!) or made any comment!

A contact with King's School, Canterbury led to his appointment as Master of Choirs in 1984 – a role in which he seems to have been very happy. Another chance meeting at St Alban's in 1988 led to his being persuaded to go there as Director of Music - beginning again with another new choir. To say he made another success of it would be a severe understatement.

Not bad for a chap who left school at 16, has none of the expected qualifications for church musicians but acquired an OBE, an Honorary MusD and Fellowships of the RSM and RAM.

Barry retired in 1998 and has carried on doing what he does best. But I cannot end this review without quoting from that speech to the AGO in 1988

“.....Clergy and musicians [should be] creating a close partnership on what must be equal terms.

But the fact remains that the church organist and choir director is a highly skilled employee sometimes treated like an unskilled employee, subject to peremptory dismissal, often unappreciated, unloved and certainly underpaid.”

Amen to that!

And the title of the book? Well it's a schoolboy joke.....

“Barry Rose sat on a pin, and Barry ROSE”

Compared with being a Cathedral organist, sitting on a pin sounds like the height of comfort!

A brilliant book, highly recommended (and our President endorses those sentiments on the cover!)

Ian Harrison



Organ jottings from your Committee

My Organing Year - Gillian Lloyd

For me, 2022 saw the usual round of Sunday services, weddings, funerals and recitals. There were, however, a few stand-out moments. On 30th April I was asked to play for the wedding of two young friends at Royal Holloway, University of London. As you probably know, this is a fabulous place, and the Chapel is not the least among its glories. The couple (the groom is the son of a musical friend of mine, and I've known him since he was about eight) had taken an extraordinary amount of trouble over every detail for both wedding and reception (which I think bodes well for their marriage) including the music, which was a mixture of traditional (Bridal March, Wedding March and 'Jerusalem') and more contemporary (a wedding hymn set to 'Bunessan' and 'Can you feel the love tonight?'). They'd also taken the precaution (to avoid lateness) of telling everyone that the wedding started half an hour before the actual start time; unfortunately, they didn't let me in on the secret, so the pre-service music went on for rather a long time!

The Holloway organ (west-gallery Harrison, 1978/2003, 3/P/42 with some borrowing) possesses a magisterial en-chamade Trumpet/Clarion, plenty of authoritative stuff for the hymns (just as well, given the length of the chapel) but also some nice gentler sounds for the pre-service and register music. It was a joy to play, and a privilege to be part of such a very special occasion.

The other memorable moments relate to my pupils. I have four at the moment, and they all exemplify the adage 'If you want something done, ask a busy person'. You will know about Alfred, whose picture appeared on the front of Newsletter 209. Just 16, a diploma-level pianist and Grade 8 standard on both violin and 'cello, he has so far, in his GCSE year and with 6th Form Common Entrance, managed to cram in playing for three services as well as expertly accompanying the choir items for our Carol Service. (For someone of his age, he is an unusually fine piano accompanist.) Highly motivated, with a real gift for hard graft, Alfred will take Grade 8 in organ this term: he aspires to an organ scholarship, and I think he may well manage it.

Hayoon, at nearly 14, has Grade 8 in piano, and will take the same grade in 'cello early this term. He's only had three or four organ lessons, but has made an intelligent job of 'the' Toccata in D minor: I'll be interested to see whether the Boëllmann Toccata similarly floats his boat. Alfred's sister Charlotte (just turned 12) is now at Cheltenham Ladies' College, where she has weekly organ lessons, so I only teach her in the holidays. She too is an accomplished pianist and violinist, and has a certain flair on the organ, which we hope will translate into Grade 5 this term. Hayoon also has a sister, Soyoon (nearly 11, Grade 7 with Distinction on 'cello and Grade 6 on piano). Like her brother, she has only had a very few lessons, but is cracking on with Batiste's cheerful Offertoire, and is about to tackle Lang's Tuba Tune. All four of them seem to really **enjoy** playing the organ, despite the difficulties of fitting in their practice, and although I feel I'm running to keep up with them, it's really inspiring to think what they might discover and achieve in the future.

DIY Organ Visits - Jeff Lloyd

Successful day visits depend on many things, from an initial idea to satisfied members going home at the end of the day. A day planned for 2023 serves as an example. Just looking at the cover of a music magazine gave me the idea. A lovely-looking French organ recently installed in a church some fifty miles away would make a good focus. Fortunately, the priest was encouraging, and a date was suggested. Now, by chance, only a few miles away stands a newly-rebuilt organ in a school chapel. (To do what I do, you need to keep up-to-date with new, rebuilt or just 'good' organs for the membership to enjoy.) Again, the contact at the school was very helpful, but the date arranged with the first venue did not work. So more 'phone calls and e-mails gave me another venue. At this point, we got lucky, as in the same town as the new French organ stands a large abbey with another interesting organ recently added to. A 'phone call here was positive, but for some reason they have two diaries! Unfortunately, on the date convenient to the school, there was a concert (in the other diary), but this had just been cancelled, so diary one was right all the time. Having sorted out the school and the abbey, it took another 'phone call to the priest at the

first church to tie up all three venues for the same day! It can be really confusing...

An important part of a successful visit is a good place for lunch. Someone usually plans this in advance, or we ask the locals on the day. Usually, I consult my own records or websites such as the National Pipe Organ Register, and then a sensible route between venues has to be established. Often the resident organist is a mine of useful information. Easy when you know how!

Did someone mention foreign visits? That's quite different. Making contacts abroad can be difficult. Having said that, I do remember that a request to play at a famous German abbey was granted by return e-mail!

A Year in the life of an Organist - Frances Whewell

When vacant, the post of Organist for the Hale churches should advertise as: 'Organist and Pianist'. On taking up this post in 2015 I never dreamed that I'd be called upon to play piano pieces such as 'How long will I love you', (for a wedding, and later for a funeral), and similar popular songs – 'Love hurts', 'Stairway to Heaven', 'You'll never walk alone', etc.

Quiet piano music is often requested during the signing of the register. One wedding couple wanted not only 'Pachelbel's Canon' for the processional music, but also Ed Sheeran's variation of the Canon for the piano, called 'Perfect'. This was a perfect nightmare to learn over many weeks, but rewarding in the end. No organ piece caused me quite so much trouble last year.

It's not always quiet music that's required during the signing. Last October a Mexican bride and her groom wanted 'Land of Hope and Glory!' The choir really enjoyed singing that. Incidentally, this couple had a wedding hymn, 'As man and woman we were made'. It's sung to the tune of 'On Christmas Night all Christians sing', which is really lovely.

Families planning funerals for their beloved lost relatives sometimes

ask for reflective piano music before the service, as the mourners are arriving. This is not always 'background music'. One grieving widow asked for specific piano pieces which her late husband had played on his guitar. The family sat in the front pew, pre-service, and listened intently. It was as though they were involving me in a tribute to him. This was a huge responsibility, but also a privilege.

On another occasion, two brothers, who'd recently lost their mother, gave me a few days notice to learn 'Fairy Garden', (on the *organ*), the last movement of Ravel's 'Mother Goose Suite'. Geoff W kindly emailed me this fiendishly difficult piano piece, with huge spread chords. I told the brothers that as a grade 6'ish organist, the music was impossible for me. They insisted that this had been their mother's favourite work. Two nights before the funeral I had to prove to them, on the St John's organ, that the piece was beyond me. A compromise was reached, and a CD was found.

A good result came of this. Geoff had sent me all the movements of 'Mother Goose'. The first, 'Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant', is a slow, beautiful, relatively easy piece to play on piano or organ. It's in my repertoire now.

I've honed in on these special services because the music is entirely chosen by the people there. I often find them more satisfying than the regular Sunday services, where there can be tension over the hymns chosen, whether modern or traditional, or controversy about poems read in church making the service 'invalid'!

Questioning me about my faith one day, the Rector asked: 'How are you with God?' I felt like saying that God would be much happier if I had more practice time, instead of all the admin.

What faith I have comes through the music, and that faith dips very low when compelled to play 'My God is a great big God', and other hymns/songs I consider very poor quality. But when playing Vaughan William's 'Come down, O Love Divine', *then* I feel God near.

The Organist Entertains - Martin Barnes

Fund raising continued for the organ rebuild at St John's, Hartley Wintney. All we needed was £53,000! We started raising the money the previous Autumn and finally reached our target at Christmas with two anonymous cheques for £5,000 filling the £10,000 still needed.

Work is planned to start this year in July. The vicar had two concerns about weddings, firstly scaffolding and secondly an organ to use. Bishop & Son use a large scaffold tower which is only up when they are working (no extra cost, unlike the other quotes) and they would have a digital 3 manual to lend us during the work. How good is that!

Then I have been helping out at St Catherine's, Bearwood. Two lovely ladies are trying to keep it all going with a three-year interregnum and an organ problem with various notes on the swell firing off intermittently on their own. Bishop & Son are giving it a go but with ancient wiring and an obsolete system it is not easy. All a bit challenging!

In the meantime, the two lovely ladies have asked that I play while it is in this state as the visiting organists they have had for funerals are not happy to play until the fault is rectified. I agreed; the ladies are so nice and 'no' just isn't in my vocabulary!

Having agreed they informed me that there were two funerals coming up, both a bit 'difficult' because one is a 4-month-old baby and the other a suicide of a 27-year-old lad.

The baby one is quite straightforward, I was told. Just a bit of music beforehand, recorded music to go out and one hymn that no one knows so that would be recorded as well. The hymn? 'When peace like a river' – (It is well with my soul). Despite telling them I know the hymn, the visiting priest wanted it from a recording.

As the congregation started to arrive it became clear that the family were black Africans and typical to their culture, they showed their emotions. The father walked in carrying the little coffin and at his side, his wife was wailing loudly in her grief.

The hymn was announced. There was a pause and a lady peered into a smart phone. Suddenly we heard it as she turned up the volume ...

halfway through the first verse. All was well until the end of the first verse, when the music stopped and the lady was seen frowning at her phone. The hymn started again at the first verse and she hissed at her friend that she only had the first verse on it and it would stop again. It did. We then had the congregation singing in various places a cappella. It was then the priest announced that we would start again and use the organ this time.

What a good job I took the music with me!

The year ended with the Carol Extravaganza at St John's on the Saturday morning before Christmas. The church was packed and the coffee shop made record sales. 85 bacon butties were sold, with eggs if wished! The singing was amazing, all had a good time. The Christmas jokes were lame, as usual, but no eggs were thrown!



Organing in 2022 - Geoff Willis

I don't have a regular church appointment so deputising for organist friends takes particular preparation - not so much with the hymns but certainly familiarisation with the order of service. C of E services have a huge variety in what is sung, what is announced or not and of course the location of the console for the organist to see what's happening! I've enjoyed playing in Thursley, Basingstoke and Hartley Wintney - all with the expected number of verses and no missed entries (that I know of!)

I was fortunate to play lunchtime concerts at Farnham in March and Hartley Wintney in August. I did round up some 'volunteers' to bolster the audience numbers at Farnham but at Hartley Wintney, Martin Barnes has cultivated a very loyal following for the organ. I use these events as a goal to learn new repertoire. You might have seen from other articles I have written that I'm a big supporter of accessible, tuneful and generally harmonious pieces for lunchtime audiences. New pieces this year have included a lively arrangement of Rule Britannia, pieces by young German composer Paul Fey and a terrific Toccata by a largely unknown English composer William Driffill.

The number of friends and relatives who have wanted the Hauptwerk digital organ system seems to increase every year. After the initial conversion or installation, there are always changes or improvements that the new owners realise "would be really useful" and sometimes there are faults to fix as well. My 93 year-old uncle has been very happy playing the Hereford Cathedral sample-set on his lovely three manual draw stop console but suddenly after many months all sound ceased. A trip to Bath where he lives revealed a tiny fuse had blown in the original electronics. We could only assume this was due to old age: the 35 year old console - not my uncle!

Of course the highlight of the year were the organ events at Calthorpe Park School where we had a marvellous reception. It was a privilege to introduce students to the organ, assisting them to explore the sounds and then to see them perform to an audience of parents at the school's Christmas Concert. We will let you know what comes next in this educational adventure!



This is the back of
A North Hampshire Organist