



# NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

[www.nhoa.org.uk](http://www.nhoa.org.uk)

Newsletter 212 September 2023



*The Aubertin organ at Paul Griffiths' residence*

# Programme

**Saturday, 21st October:** Improvisation workshop with Malcolm Archer, FRCO at St. Andrew's Church, Lower Church Lane, Farnham GU9 7DP. 2pm, followed by tea and cake.

No charge: please do come along to support the 'guinea-pigs' and benefit from Malcolm's skilful teaching. *See article below.*

**Saturday, 18th November:** Composers' Anniversary Event at St. John's Church, Fleet Rd, Hartley Wintney, Hook RG27 8ED. 2.30pm, followed by tea and cake. *See article below.*

**Saturday, 27th January, 2024:** AGM at St. John's Church, London Rd, Hook RG27 9EG. 12 noon, followed by buffet lunch and talk by member Mike Keays, of Mander Organ Builders. *Further details in Newsletter 213.*

***And to look forward to:*** London visits are proposed for February and March: details to follow.... Also, on **Saturday, 6th April** we are invited to join our friends from the East Surrey Association for a visit to **Arundel**.

## **Improvisation Workshop with Malcolm Archer, FRCO**

'I can't improvise.' How often have you heard a perfectly competent church organist say that? Perhaps you've said it yourself? I'm sure we all remember that icy moment when, confronted with an unexpected gap in a service, someone hisses, 'Just *play* something': and the pressure is suddenly on to string together a few notes (any notes) to cover an embarrassing silence. Oops - panic! But, as we shall be learning on 21st October, there really is no need. Under the expert and kindly guidance of our President, Malcolm Archer, we'll be shown how effective the very simplest 'instant composition' can be, and how it can be developed once we have a little more confidence. We'll be using the fine organ at St.

Andrew's Church, Farnham, where those who aren't themselves playing can easily gather around the console to see what's going on. We're hugely grateful to Malcolm for making the journey from Wiltshire to share his expertise with us, so please do come along if you can.



There is no charge, but admission (for those aged 18 and over only, please) is by **ticket**, available from

Geoff Willis ([nhoa.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:nhoa.chairman@gmail.com)) or Gillian Lloyd ([gillian.lloyd@hotmail.com](mailto:gillian.lloyd@hotmail.com)).

### **Composers' Anniversary Afternoon**

Do you play any music by Ned Rorem? What do he, William Byrd, Charles Villiers Stanford, Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens, Max Reger, György Ligeti and Donald Swann have in common? Well - they, no doubt along with many other composers, celebrate important anniversaries this year. On Saturday, 18th November we will be sharing in these celebrations! You'll remember that last year we did the same for Vaughan Williams, Franck and Messiaen and found it a good opportunity to bring forward pieces that perhaps we hadn't played for a while (and to explore new repertoire). This year the remit is a little more open-ended; in fact, if you can justify an 'important anniversary', you could more or less choose your composer - which should give us plenty of variety... Please start thinking about it, and let Gillian Lloyd ([gillian.lloyd@hotmail.com](mailto:gillian.lloyd@hotmail.com)) know by **11th November** what you would like to play. We shall be using the newly-refurbished organ at St. John's, Hartley Wintney, which will be a treat in itself. Please don't be anxious: this is **not** a concert, just a group of supportive friends playing for each other, so even if you don't usually play 'in public', this will be a good chance to try out that piece that you've been learning. And you don't *have* to stick to the organ. A number of you are good singers: I play the 'cello: I know we have an accomplished trumpeter in the Association. So: rummage through your music cupboard, and see what you can come up with to share with the rest of us. There will be tea and cake too!

### **Combined Events**

In the aftermath of Covid, many local Associations are experiencing seriously depleted attendances at events, especially visits. To tackle this problem, NHOA has this year been sharing in combined visits with the East Surrey, Surrey and Crawley and Horsham Associations. On the whole, this has worked well, although there's always a slight concern about numbers of those wishing to play. For the moment, though, your Committee proposes that we should continue with *some* (not all) combined visits, so that there will always be enough attendees to make it worthwhile for our hosts. Accordingly, we are looking to share visits to London in February and March, to Arundel in April, and probably other attractive venues later in the year, if the hosts can accommodate us. Watch this space!

Our joint events are likely to attract more members to attend so to ensure everyone has a reasonable amount of playing time, please let us know if you are intending to PLAY at any of these events. Thank you!

Gillian: [nhoa.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:nhoa.secretary@gmail.com) or Geoff: [nhoa.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:nhoa.chairman@gmail.com)

### **Two more Organ-related events from "Guildford Music Society at GURC"**

On Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm the Music Society will be presenting an 'Organ Plus' concert featuring the young organists and other instrumentalists from St. Catherine's School, Bramley. We are very grateful to the girls and their teachers for providing this event, which will last about an hour. Refreshments will be available before and after the concert, for which there is no charge. There will, however, be a retiring collection in aid of The Cheryl King Trust, which helps to provide music tuition for young people who would not otherwise be able to afford it. Please do come and bring your friends! This will be a very enjoyable and worthwhile evening.

Then, on Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> February at 3.30pm, organist Jeremy Barham will be playing alongside instrumentalists from the University of Surrey and pianist Margaret Ozanne. Further details for that will be available for the next Newsletter.

### **And Christmas is on the way!**

The annual Carol Extravaganza St John's, Hartley Wintney will be held this year on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 11:15 am. Sing carols as you've never done before with a cup of coffee and splendid company, all hosted by Martin Barnes.

## *News of Members and Friends*

We are very sorry to report the death, in July, of our member, Committee member and good friend Frances Whewell. Frances, along with her husband Paul joined the Association in 2005, and the couple have been loyal and enthusiastic attenders at nearly all of our events until Frances became ill earlier this year. They have been valuable members of our overseas and longer domestic visits, and Frances was especially diligent in promoting and hosting our self-help group NHOA's Ark. Her kind and gentle nature concealed a considerable determination to improve her own skills and to help others to develop theirs. An extremely dedicated and hard-working organist/choirmaster in the Hale parishes, she played a major rôle in the restoration of 'Emily', the organ at St. Mark's, and will be remembered with great affection there, as she will by NHOA. Her funeral at St. Mark's, for which Frances herself had made most of the preparations, was a beautiful and utterly 'Frances' service, attended to capacity by her family and many friends. Frances will be greatly missed, and we send our sympathy and love to Paul and their family. One piece of good news: Paul has decided to continue his NHOA membership, and we look forward to seeing him at forthcoming meetings. Paul has written a tribute to his wife, which you can read later in this Newsletter.

It's good to report that John Mansfield was well enough to attend Frances' funeral, and that he will soon be moving into a flat. We hope you'll be very happy in your new home, John. We send our best wishes to Pete Currie, Mike Cliff and John Riley, all of whom have some health issues at the moment, and to other members in the same position.

Congratulations to Jozef Gaszka, who has recently achieved his ARCO! Jozef has also graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, but will be returning there shortly to study for his Masters degree with David Titterington. Jozef writes: *I have just been to Moulins in France on an organ course with the Cambridge academy of organ studies. It was a wonderful experience to play on the 1880 Merklin organ for a week culminating in a public concert. We also visited Orléans cathedral and played the magnificent four-manual Cavallé-Coll.*

Young member Tim Stewart has now finished his year as Organ Scholar at Chichester and is shortly to begin his course at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire where he will be studying with Daniel Moulton and Nicholas Wearne. He will also be the Organ Scholar at Birmingham Cathedral, where the organist is David Hardie. Tim gave a number of recitals during the summer and we're sure that he will do very well in his studies at RBC.

## *A Coda for Frances (1949 -2023)*

Frances was a real North Hampshire lass. Born at the old Frimley Cottage Hospital; grew up in Farnborough, Hampshire; sang in Saint Peter's Church Choir; attended St Peter's School, Farnborough and then St Nicholas's School, Fleet.

She went to Winchester to train as a nurse and started work as a SRN at Frimley Park Hospital and was investigating the possibilities to train as a specialist oncology nurse.

She then met Paul and everything changed except that she continued to live only a few miles from where she was born.

The change had a lot to do with Frances' father, and his membership of Farnborough Rotary Club. The Club was involved in an initiative to start Rotaract clubs, a sort of Rotary Club for young professionals between 18-28yrs. The club had a strong social calendar with meetings in the backrooms of Pubs but was also involved in initiating and supporting local events like an Easter Bonnet Parade, a Donkey Derby and Community and Social Care. Rotary, an international organisation, also promoted interest in international affairs, development and aid. With this range of topics there was a great opportunity for members to become involved in presenting ideas to the group and working together on various projects.

To cut a long story short, a number of long term relationships developed between members, including Paul and Frances who married in 1976 and lived happily at 12 Brook Avenue for 47 years. Over this period they raised two children, Ben now married with two children, and Edd.

Reflections from Edd...

"... and the barge with oar and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull

Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away".

*From Morte d'Arthur, by Alfred Lord Tennyson*

I think everyone is aware of Frances' contributions to the musical community so I will speak of other things.

We all start out thinking our parents are normal because they're the only parents we're ever had. But this is a fallacy. There is no way to summarise the life that Frances had so instead I will give a few salient examples.

When Frances was invited to be organist for the 3 churches in the Parish of Badshot Lea and Hale she hesitated. It would be a big commitment so she wrote a list of pros and cons. On the list of pros she underlined "Power". Frances was quietly ambitious, and saw this as an opportunity to help people appreciate better music. Similarly, she was creating an anthology of poetry for funerals, that was to help people access great poetry when they needed it the most. Many people make few new friends after the age of 30 but Frances never stopped (it was lovely to meet so many of you in the last few months) and she would adopt people who needed it as well. In James's speech at the funeral he stated that Paul and Frances had treated him like a son, and this was no hyperbole. When we were house sharing, I hadn't seen him for a few days but we worked different shifts so this was not extraordinary. Phoning home I discovered he was staying with my parents for a few days. None of them had bothered to tell me.

On a personal note, I am so pleased I kept almost every card that Frances sent me. There are 100s, maybe over 1000, carefully chosen and often accompanied by a piece of poetry or literature, selected to appeal to my taste. It was usually Frances who took photos. She liked her compositions to be naturalistic, and in particular she liked to photograph the backs of people's heads.



*"You can't affect a pose with the back of your head".*



*On her beloved bike "Seraphina"*

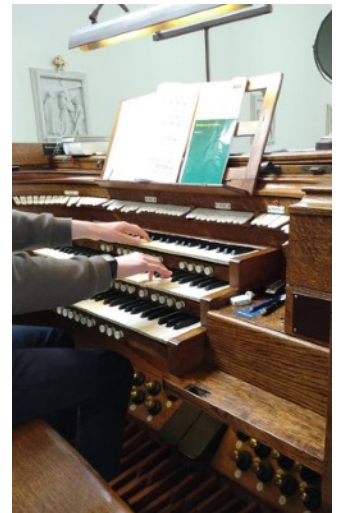
*Paul and Edd Whewell*

## News Roundup

*We thank Susan Parsons, of the Crawley and Horsham Association, for permission to reprint her report on the Portsmouth visit on 19th May....*

On Friday, 19th May, some of our members travelled to the church of the Holy Spirit in Southsea where we met members of North Hampshire and East Surrey Organist Associations. We were warmly welcomed by Philip Drew who has been organist there for 40 years. The church was built in the 19th century and of the three churches in the area is the only one to survive the war and now serves all three congregations. On entering, the first impression is that it is very open and full of light, with a high ceiling. All is white with the stations of the cross depicted on the walls and coloured lines forming squares decorating the ceiling. A large statue, Christus, hangs over the altar which is of sculpted white rock from Portugal. In the north-east corner is a vestry above which is the Lady Chapel. In the opposite corner is the chapel of St. John the Baptist and the organ is situated in a chamber above this. The console is on the floor of the nave in front of the chapel.

The instrument was built in 1938 by Rushworth and Dreaper for a church in the suburbs of London and was installed here in 1976. The organ is built on the unit or extension principle with all the pipework, except the Pedal Open Wood and Bourdon, enclosed in two Swell boxes: the Great and Choir in one, the Swell in the other. The pipework to the Great and Bombarde organs was placed outside the boxes to create unenclosed divisions and three new ranks of pipes were added. An Open Diapason of medium scale and a Principal 4ft were added to the unenclosed divisions, whilst the Swell Voix Celeste was replaced by a Clarion 4ft. The Great organ was remodelled as two separate divisions of which the Secondary could be transferred to the Choir to create two contrasting unenclosed choruses. At a late date, the Secondary Great was replaced with a Positive division played from the Choir manual. The Great has 10 stops, the Swell 19 stops, the Positive 5 stops, the Choir 9 stops, the Bombarde 7 stops and the Pedal 18 stops and there are 8 Couplers.



After lunch we all met in St. Mark's church, North End. The first church of St. Mark, sited on the corner of the road, had burned down, so they moved into this very modern church where, formerly, the Greek Orthodox community had worshipped and there are a few Icons left from that time. This church is also very open, but smaller than the previous one and not with so much light.



Here we were welcomed by David Oldfield who explained that this organ is known as a "Baseless" organ, i.e. many of the ranks have shared bass octave stops. The instrument was built in 1971 by Hill, Norman and Beard and is Grade 2\* listed. The pipes are arranged over a wide area on the north wall with the wooden pipes on one side. The detached console, to the side of the altar, faces the congregation and has three manuals.

We then went on to St. Mary's, Portsea, where the Project Manager, Matt Dixon, welcomed us and offered tea and coffee. St. Mary's is a very large, open church with a high hammer-beam ceiling. The first church here was founded by Norman Lord of the Manor, Baldwin Portsea. The second church, built in 1843, incorporated the Tudor west tower of the old church but didn't last long as it was too small and was demolished in 1887. The present church was intended to accommodate the growing population and to be the "chief Parish church of a great town". It was designed in the neo-perpendicular Gothic style by Sir Arthur Bloomfield and is a very large church. Its construction wasn't completed till 1889.

The first organ was built by Walker & Sons in 1888 and had only three manuals as there were not enough funds for the fourth manual. The present Walker organ has four manuals and is set up high on the north-east side of the Sanctuary and, as the church is open, can be heard well throughout the building. In 2020 the instrument was in a dire state and not expected to last much longer, so to celebrate 130 years of music-making at St. Mary's, the Organ Project was set up.

The restoration was carried out by Nicholson & Co. over three years and the Consultant was Mr. William McVicker. It included restoring the pitch and a new electro-pneumatic mechanism and the organ now sounds magnificent. As we had plenty of time, everyone was able to play and our visit ended with our President, John Sharples, playing a short recital of music by Rheinberger and a little-known piece by Fanny Mendelssohn.



Our final venue was the Cathedral Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury, which is down by the sea. The cathedral started as a Parish church in the 12th century. It has a very unusual layout and is a culmination of many years of construction. It is defined as two separate parts: the Quire where most services are held and the Nave for special occasions. The organ is high up between the two which are linked by a passage underneath the organ. The main organ faces into the Quire and the later addition with the modern case faces into the nave.

The organ was built by Nicholson & Sons in 1861, originally for Manchester cathedral. The first phase of renovation in Portsmouth was carried out by Nicholson & Co. in 1994, which included a new console "en fenetre" within the 1718 Jordan case. In 2001 a new west Great division was added. This new nave organ was designed and voiced to become a partner of the greater instrument and a new case of imaginative and contemporary design was built for it. In 2017 more refurbishment was carried out and a new "en chamade" solo read stop, the Trompette de Maris, was mounted below the ceiling at the west end, which provides a thrilling addition to the organ for special occasions.

Some members of the West Sussex Organists Association joined us and, after Evensong, Dr David Price, the cathedral organist, welcomed us all and invited us to play the organ. So ended a very pleasant day in Portsmouth and we are very grateful to John Sharples for arranging it all.

*Susan Parsons, C.H.D.O.A*



Our Boxmoor visit on 17th June began at St. John's Church, where we were made very welcome by Keith Beniston and Nicholas King. The organ here is a very comprehensive new-build Nicholson of 2011, commissioned to replace the 1969 Davies instrument, which had come to the end of its days. The organ's generous specification gives it great flexibility, both for accompanying (the church has a flourishing choir) and recital work, for which the mobile console is particularly useful. One unusual feature is the Great to Swell coupler, which further increases the instrument's adaptability.



*Denny Hunter at the console*

Our second venue was Carey Baptist Church where, once again, we received a warm welcome, this time from Clifford and Charlene Clarke. The church, opened in 1861, is on the characteristic Free Church plan, with a substantial gallery which includes the

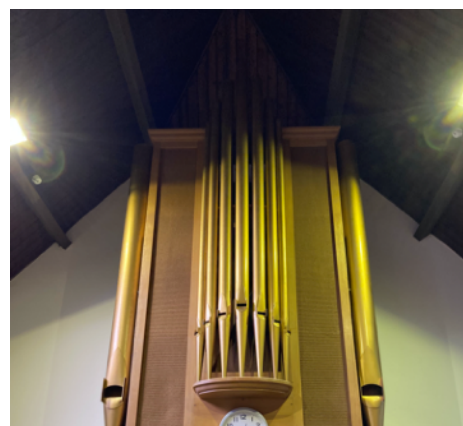


organ, sited immediately above the pulpit and Communion table. The church clearly cherishes and appreciates its 2-man./ped. Kirkland organ, whose ideal siting enables its relatively modest stop list to be heard at its best. The organ is evidently used in conjunction (or maybe in parallel?) with the church's worship band. It's to be hoped that this is an amicable arrangement which allows the congregation to benefit from a wide range of music in worship.



*Jeff Lloyd playing at Carey Baptist Church*

We ended the visit at the small Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary and St. Joseph. Denny Hunter remembers hearing a pipe organ live for the first time in this building during a family wedding when he was a small boy. This is a three-rank Walker extension organ of 1961. The ranks are: Principal (from 4'), Gedeckt (from 16'), Dulciana (from 4') and Mixture (22.26.29 at CC). It is evidently adequate for the church, and we were glad of the opportunity to try it.



*We are grateful to Melvin Hughes, Anne Bennett and, especially, David Fishwick, all of the East Surrey Association, for allowing us to reprint David's account of our visit to the home of Paul Griffiths and Joanna Marsh on 1st July...*

Members of ESOA, together with North Hampshire Organists' Association and Surrey Organists Association, about a dozen-and-a-half all told, attended a meeting at **Arnolds**, in Fairwarp on the edge of Ashdown Forest on the afternoon of Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July. What an amazing place! What an amazing organ! (See cover picture). It rises indoors to a height of surely twenty feet (?), a splendour of gleaming tin frontal pipes embedded in a case of polished woodwork and dazzling ornaments in an astral theme of stars, comets and moons, all perfectly proportioned, and stunningly designed. If this seems a bit fulsome, I assure you it is no exaggeration! Nor does the case belie the quality of the instrument itself. Built over a period of seven years, beginning in 2007, by the firm of Aubertin of Courtefontaine in France (claimed to be the best builder anywhere at the time and especially recognised by the French Ministry of Culture), it houses thirty speaking stops, all with original pipework by the builder: no extensions, no imports from other firms, and nothing second-hand. The chamber that accommodates it can seat up to seventy visitors if required, and the organ dominates it completely; yet it is not so overwhelming as you might suppose, while its softer stops fall lightly and delicately on the ear.

Paul Griffiths, the owner and our host, gave us a short introduction, including an entertaining email from a local resident when it was proposed that must count (if we may paraphrase Saki) as "a model of repressed nimbyism". He played variations by Pachelbel to demonstrate the different voices that are on the instrument. Paul commented that while the organ is perfect for music before about 1830 and after 1920, it is beaten by the Hauptwerk instrument (he has two such) loaded with the Cavaille-Coll organ of Caen for the intervening period.

We then had a go. We heard music by Georg Bohm (the lovely chorale prelude on *Vater Unser in Himmelreich* delivered with great sensitivity by one of our guests), Bach (several pieces including the E minor trio sonata, played faultlessly by our own Ian McFarlane), a Handel organ sonata, and much more.

The console was something I found a little disconcerting, but then, which organ does not have its idiosyncrasies? The keys are short so that the white notes protrude but a little beyond the black. To couple the great to the choir you physically pull the manual towards you. There are no pistons or electronic aids here: everything is mechanical. What I particularly liked was the layout of the drawstops in which each manual is served by stops of a different colour, placed at a height to match the layout of the manuals themselves: thus on each side of the console the stops for the Recit were above those for the Great, with the Positive and Pedal in order below that. The pedal board is straight and flat, which fazed our more expert performers not at all – would that I could say the same for myself!

After most of us had tried the organ, Paul then gave us a demonstration of the Cavaille-Coll Hauptwerk, with a fiendishly difficult work by Durufle [*Suite pour orgue Op5. - Ed*]. If you can play this, you can play anything. It was a thrilling performance, and the applause was long and enthusiastic. "Took me eighteen months to learn it," he told me when I spoke to him about it. This may be unduly modest, for I judge he is an organist of the very first rank. A second Hauptwerk loaded with a William Hill organ (Peterborough, I think) was demonstrated in another room in this beautiful house. While we were listening to this, the Aubertin was in use, yet the soundproofing is such that we were quite undisturbed by it. We were treated to tea and biscuits outside on

the terrace, looking out over Ashdown Forest. It had been a wonderful afternoon, and we cannot thank our hosts Paul and Jo enough for their kindness and generous hospitality. A special word of thanks as well to Lucka, their housekeeper, who looked after us all with charm and a radiant smile, and for whom nothing was too much trouble.

*E.S.O.A*

### Update on St John's, Hartley Wintney organ restoration

Bishop & Son arrived at St John's in the middle of July as arranged and made quick work of stripping the console. They have their own scaffold tower which is an impressive bit of kit and has saved a considerable cost of hiring scaffolding for the three months this work will take. This was quickly assembled and then with the exception of the largest pipes, most of the 1,500 pipes were removed and stacked in the transport boxes. Various other parts were removed such as various chests, bit of the mechanism and the swell engine. All have been transported up to the works at Beethoven Street, London, where they are being worked on.

*Martin Barnes*



In mid August a group of nine members set out on the NHOA tour to Vienna and Graz in Austria. The weather was hot, the organs were wonderfully varied and the buildings were grand! The players had plenty of 'bench time' and the non-players discovered the foibles of continental pews! A full exposé of this adventure will be published in our next edition of "*The North Hampshire Organist*" available after the AGM in January.



## *Supporting Learners*

NHOA's bursary fund was initiated by past members Geoff Spiers and Peter and Elma Turner. It has helped young organ students by providing music, lessons and attendance at events such as study events held at Oundle School. These organ students have now moved on having undoubtedly benefited from our support.

We are able to help more organ students, young people or adults. If you know of anyone who might be eligible please tell them about this offer. The Application Form is on the back of this Newsletter and on our website [https://nhoa.org.uk/?page\\_id=5580](https://nhoa.org.uk/?page_id=5580) Applicants will need to be or become a NHOA member and those details are on the website page "JOIN US".

## *The organ I play*

Organists know that every instrument is different in the way it plays, sounds and looks. Every one of them has some wonderful qualities and maybe the odd challenging feature - all to managed in the hands of the player. In a new series of articles, members are invited to reveal the ins and outs of the organ that they play. Malcolm Hicks leads off with his experiences of a famous Allen organ...

The organ I look forward to playing every Sunday morning is at the Catholic Cathedral of St. Michael and St. George, Aldershot.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral\\_of\\_St\\_Michael\\_and\\_St\\_George,\\_Aldershot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral_of_St_Michael_and_St_George,_Aldershot)

There are sometimes further services to play for, between Sundays. If there happen to be none I usually go there at least a couple of times, to put in some serious practice and to enjoy the sound and make use of the impressive technical facilities of this excellent instrument, which works faultlessly, and speaks very well in the spacious building. It has a wealth of beautiful quiet sounds, as quiet as you like, for preparing an ambience before a service and for accompanying the choir, as well as impressive fuller sounds capable of louder volume than you could possibly need, for supporting the congregational singing and for producing extra brilliance at festive times. The Sunday congregation is usually large. As this is the Cathedral of the Bishopric of His Majesty's Forces occasional services involve a band too, and the organ and a band work very well together.

You can learn from the link above that this organ is a modern large 3 manual and pedal Allen digital organ, and was formerly owned by the late great Carlo Curley - one of his touring concert organs. It was bought shortly after Carlo's much too early death in 2012, and it has been skilfully installed in its present home. I was privileged to know Carlo and I like to think that something of his exceptional talent and imagination lives on in the workings of this instrument. It replaces a Hele pipe organ, which was taken out of service for practical reasons – and which I regret I have never heard.

The tonal specification of this Allen organ:

Great:	Choir:	Swell:	Pedal:
Violone 16	Erzähler 16	Bourdon Doux 16	Contra Violone 32
Diapason 8	Erzähler 8	Flute Celeste II 8	Bourdon 16
Gamba 8	Erzähler Celeste 8	Viola Pomposa 8	Diapason 16
Harmonic Flute 8	Holz Gedackt 8	Viola Celeste 8	Lieblich Gedeckt (sic) 16
Bourdon 8	Erzähler Celeste II 4	Rohr Bourdon 8	Violone 16
Chimes (Great fun !)	Prinzipal 4	Oboe 8	Gedackt Flöte 8
Octave 4	Koppelflöte 4	Vox Humana 8	Octave 8
Flute 4	Oktav 2	Celesta - sounding like the orchestral	Flute 4
Twelfth 2½	Quintflöte 1½	keyboard instrument of the same name,	Choral bass 4
Fifteenth 2	Zimbel III	and handy if you want to play the <i>Dance of</i>	Mixture IV
Cymbale III	Rankett 16	<i>the Sugar Plum Fairy</i> for a voluntary (!)	Contre Bombard 32
Mixture IV	Krummhorn 8	Traverse Flute 4	Contre Trompette (Sw) 16
Tromba 8	Festival Trumpet 8	Octave Geigen 4	Trompette 8
		Nasard 2½	Clairon 4
		Piccolo 2	
		Tierce 1½	
		Contre Trompette 16	
		Trompette 8	
		Clairon 4	

It has all the usual couplers, and more, which makes borrowing stops between divisions very easy and comprehensive: for example solo voices at various pitches for Chorale Preludes. The couplers are operated by rocking tabs, collected together in a horizontal row above the manuals, as on many large pipe organs. There is generous provision of divisional and general pistons, and sixteen available memory channels, which can all be quickly set and changed at the console.

There are two 'swell pedals' of the usual kind, one controlling the Swell, the other controlling the Choir, Pedal and Great together. ( The Great can be made 'unenclosed' by a draw-stop, when preferred.)

There is a Crescendo pedal, and two Tutti pistons. All details are settable, naturally. And steppers can be set up, too.

Each manual has a tasteful tremulant available. In addition, a *Tremulants Full* tab, which makes the tremulants much deeper than normal. 'Useful for Gospel music', as it helpfully hints in the User's Manual.....

The elegant and beautifully made draw-stop console (which is very comfortable) is positioned at floor level on the north side of the nave near the chancel steps. So there is good contact with the activity in the chancel, and sociable proximity to the congregation.

The majority of the organ speaker cabinets are installed fairly high up in the west gallery, and balance can be judged well by the player, who just needs to bear in mind that the rear of the congregation hear the sound more strongly than the front. An inspired touch is that the Choir division has a further set of speakers in a small gallery on the north side of the chancel. This is an invaluable luxury for accompanying the choir (singers) and the Cantor in the chancel. The organ Choir division speakers in the west gallery can be switched off, so that the congregation easily hear the singers in the distant east, accompanied, very quietly if needed, just by their own local speakers. There's a further bonus. The Choir division can of course sound through the speakers at both ends of the church at once, (not so easily achievable with pipes.....) This is particularly effective in spreading the sound through the building, using the acoustics to enhance both the soft atmospheric sounds and the louder ones, and filling out the sound - of the Festival Trumpet for example.

What I've described is a resourceful organ, which I approach from my experience of playing many conventional large pipe organs in my other professional work. I find this digital organ very satisfying to play. As a musician I particularly value the fact that it never has tuning deficiencies, for one thing! But, as it has all the resources of computer technology, this instrument offers much more than I've so far been able to learn to use. ( I'm no Luddite, but I'm still learning what my PC and my phone can do....) Online there is an Owner's Manual AOC P/N 033-00153 from which you can learn a huge amount more about the instrument's scope. Our organ is model Q 370.

One thing I have got to grips with though, and which I find very worthwhile, is being able to select different sampled genres of organ-building style and sound. See section IX Stop-list Library in the Owner's Manual. Using the Console Controller at the left-hand end of the console one can select Classic Allen, Aeolian-Skinner, Orchestral, Arp Schnitger, Schlicker, Cavallé-Coll, and English Cathedral. The different characteristics of these various genres – especially the string sounds and reeds – are well worth exploring, I've found.

Having now retired from most of my other professional playing - which was mostly with the orchestras and choirs in London and abroad - I'm now very lucky to have such a good instrument to play regularly, and I also very much relish collaboration with the lovely people who work and worship at St Michael and St George Cathedral. Alongside my other work I've always played in church (and, at times, synagogue) since childhood. My father, though a technician by profession, played the organ in mostly non-conformist churches in the Birmingham area and the Black Country, and I started playing very early.

Recently I've very much enjoyed getting to know some local organists, having joined the North Hants Organists' Association, and I look forward to reading other members' articles in this series.



*My first paid church job, in about 1956, in the Black Country. Naturally, I spent the first money buying some long trousers...*

*Nowadays at St Michael and St George's.*



## *I Once Met...*

In the mid-1950s, doing my National Service, I was living in an army tent in Egypt and the next-door tent was occupied by Clive Swift (much later to become “Mr Bucket” in “Keeping up Appearances”) and another fellow officer. They had a portable record player and for the first time I heard Bach’s “Little Organ Book” exquisitely played by Helmut Walcha, the Austrian recitalist, on a Deutsche Grammophon Archiv long-playing record. This was an eye-opener after the heavy interpretations of Bach’s works by the previously acknowledged authority, Albert Schweitzer. I thereafter acquired all of Walcha’s Bach recordings (and, in complete contrast, those of Fernando Germani, the Vatican organist whose grand romantic sweep was only slightly marred by an occasional loss of rhythm).

Some ten years later, I used to attend the 5.55 p.m. after-work Wednesday organ recital series at the Royal Festival Hall. I was delighted to find that some of these were to be given by Helmut Walcha and I determined to meet him. I went to his masterly performance of “The Art of Fugue” and will always remember his dramatically abrupt break-off in mid-flow of the last, and incomplete, eighteenth fugue just after the appearance of Bach’s own name in musical notation, and the subsequent absolute stunning silence, when one could imagine Bach stopping writing. I found this sudden ending much more dramatic and moving than any versions subsequently written by others to complete the last contrapunctus.

After the concert, having met Walcha and shaken hands with him (sadly I spoke no German) I produced my copy of "The Little Organ Book" Chorale Preludes and asked by sign language, if he would kindly autograph it for me. He readily agreed and signed the Title page and handed it back.

When I got home I eagerly turned to the sacred page signed by my hero, only to find an indecipherable scrawl across the centre. *Mea culpa!* I had very foolishly overlooked the fact that when Helmut Walcha was one year old a defect of vision had appeared after his first vaccination and, as a result, he had been completely blind from the age of 16. In fact, however, this, and the devotion of his parents had given him exceptional powers of concentration which enabled him to play all of Bach's organ works from memory and to give so much pleasure throughout the world.

Somehow this incident made it even more precious to me and I have remembered it with affection ever since.

*Walford Taylor*

## Organ Concerts

### Jane Austen meets the Organ

Our member Will Nisbet opened the lunchtime concert series at St Lawrence, Alton on 22 June. He is the resident organist and this date was planned to coincide with the Jane Austen Regency week.

It was great to see there were some authentically dressed members of the audience which totalled nearly eighty. How's that for an organ event?



*Will Nisbet accompanies Tony Willman*

Tony Willman, Director of Music at Alton, was appropriately attired in a gentleman's cream morning coat. He introduced Will, who wore a period waistcoat.

Will started with the impressive JSB "Prelude and Fugue in C" BWV545 in which he included an additional Largo movement borrowed from the fifth JSB Trio Sonata. He then explained some interesting tidbits about the pieces in the programme.

You will know that we are enthusiastic about including other instruments with the organ and there was a very pleasant surprise in this programme. Tony played the trumpet solo in Jeremiah Clarke's "Trumpet Minuet" and John Stanley's "Trumpet Voluntary"! What a delight and the acoustics of the church gave a very full sound.



Other items in the programme included some Buxtehude and the Madrigal from “24 pieces in a free style” by Vierne. As you would expect, Will knows the instrument well and we saw and heard some lovely smooth registration changes. Will ended with Karg Elert’s “Nun Danket Alle Gott” which gave the organ some exercise!

The vote of thanks was given by Pat Lerew, a prominent person in the organisation of the annual Jane Austen / Regency week. She also talked enthusiastically about the various celebratory events including a Choral Evensong where the whole choir, including Tony, were dressed for the period. She was dressed in an Empire line outfit and bonnet very fashionable in the 18th century. The concert wasn’t over though because we were further delighted by Tony’s offer of an encore - Jeremiah Clarke’s “Trumpet Voluntary”! This concert raised £300 for the organ restoration fund.

The lunchtime series and the evening recitals at St Lawrence are particularly enjoyable not just for the organ and variety of players, but also the great view of the console and pedalboard on a large screen high over the chancel step. All this obviously encourages people to come - there is usually a very good attendance.

*Geoff Willis*

### **Friday Lunchtime Organ Concert at St John’s, Hartley Wintney**

On Friday, 7th July, at Hartley Wintney, the Friday morning summer concert series took on a new format. Instead of just one organist, there were three! Martin Barnes was joined by Stephen Davies from St Johns’, Hook (left) and Ben Constant from All Saints, Basingstoke (right). This was Ben’s debut on the ‘lunchtime circuit’. The audience were entertained to the different personalities and music styles and of course all the work involved in rehearsing to a performance standard was shared.



The programme was...

March Triomphale – Paul Fey (b. 1998)

Aria on Greensleeves – James Biery (b1956)

Prelude “The new Commonwealth”  
– R Vaughan Williams

Funeral for a friend – Elton John

Festival March in C major – Stanley Winn (c1910)

Allabreve (BWV 589) - J. S. Bach

*from* Variations on Old Psalm Tunes - George Dyson  
Thomas Campion: 'By the waters of Babylon'

Postlude in C - Henry Smart

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### **North Hampshire Organists' Association**

Registered charity no. 275207

affiliated to the Incorporated Association of Organists

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## APPLICATION FOR SUPPORT FOR ORGAN TUITION FROM THE NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION SPIERS-TURNER FUND

### PURPOSE OF THE SPIERS-TURNER FUND

Geoff Spiers and Peter and Elma Turner, all former members of the the North Hampshire Organists' Association (NHOA), left legacies to be used for educational purposes. It is a charitable fund which is maintained by donations. It is open to NHOA members, who in the exclusive opinion of the NHOA Committee, deserve financial support to enable them to start or continue organ tuition with the aim of reaching their stated musical goals.

Applicants are urged to provide as much detail about their situation and goals as possible to give the NHOA Committee a well-rounded view. The Committee will look positively at any application that shows candidates with good potential and motivation which otherwise could not be realised.

<b>Date</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Phone</b>	

How long have you been playing?	
What is your organ playing ambition? <i>e.g. what music do you want to play, what type of event do you want to play at, what grade/ accreditation do you want to achieve?</i>	

How frequently do you play/practice?	
Are you taking lessons?	
If so, who is your organ teacher?	
Describe your current level e.g. <i>have you studied /passed exams, what music have you studied, what type of events have you played?</i>	
Do you play any other instrument?	
What will a bursary from the Spiers-Turner Fund enable you to do which has not been possible to date?	
If you receive a bursary, NHOA members and other organ enthusiasts will be very interested in your progress. Do you agree to write occasional updates about your musical activities with the organ?	

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR NHOA CONTACT  
OR  
GILLIAN LLOYD, NHOA SECRETARY,  
104, THE MOUNT,  
GUILDFORD  
GU2 4JB  
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