



NORTH HAMPSHIRE ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

www.nhoa.org.uk

Newsletter 214 March 2024



Frances Whewell's Wyvern organ in its new home at Calthorpe Park School

Programme

Wednesday, 20th March: Joint visit with East Surrey OA to Westminster University, 309 Regent St., London W1B 2HW (2pm) and another venue TBC. **POSTPONED** due to issues with the venues.

Saturday, 6th April: Joint visit with ESOA to Arundel Cathedral, London Rd, Arundel BN18 9AY (11.30am): St. Mary, 11 Church Hill, Slindon, Arundel BN18 0RB (2.30pm): St. Mary Magdalene, Madehurst, Arundel BN18 0NJ (4pm). <https://npor.org.uk/survey/E01240>, <https://npor.org.uk/survey/N15252>, <https://npor.org.uk/survey/N15283>

Saturday, 18th May: Joint visit with ESOA to Magdalen College, Oxford OX1 4AU (12 noon) and Harris Manchester College (Arlosh Hall), Mansfield Rd, Oxford OX1 3TD (4pm). <https://npor.org.uk/survey/K01675>, <https://npor.org.uk/survey/N11117>

Saturday, 15th June: Visit to St. Paul's, The Common, Chipperfield, Kings Langley WD4 9BS (10.30am): Christ Church, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth WD3 5SG, (2pm): St. Mary the Virgin, Church St, Rickmansworth WD3 1JB (4pm). <https://npor.org.uk/survey/D02229>, <https://npor.org.uk/survey/N12889>, <https://npor.org.uk/survey/D06109>

Saturday, 20th July: Joint visit with ESOA to Horsham. Horsham URC, Springfield Rd, Horsham RH12 2RG (10.30am): Christ's Hospital, 43 Bluecoat Pond, Christs Hospital, Horsham RH13 0NW (main entrance)(2pm). <https://npor.org.uk/survey/N09113>, NPOR ref. TQ1248

9th - 13th September: West Country visit. Venues to be confirmed, but to include Downside Abbey, Malcolm Archer's residence, Wimborne Minster, Sherborne Abbey (TBC) and Wells.*

Saturday, 21st September: Joint visit with ESOA to Croydon and Shirley.*

October: Proposed joint NHOA/ESOA/SOA to the RC church on London Bridge (Lewis) and Methodist Central Hall.*

9th or 16th November: Composers' Anniversary afternoon.

* Further details when available

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 or Geoff: nhoa.chairman@gmail.com

Copy date for next Newsletter:

Please send any material for Newsletter 215 to the Secretary not later than

1st MAY 2024

News of Members and Friends

The funeral of our friend Bill Cartwright took place on 5th March at Elstead URC, where Bill had been the organist for 12 years. Geoff Willis and Jeff and Gillian Lloyd represented NHOA at the service, which was full of warm and affectionate memories of Bill. We hope to publish a tribute in Newsletter 215.

We're delighted to welcome into membership our friend Andrew Cesana, whom some of us know from our longer visits. Andrew is a long-standing member of the Kent Association and joins us as a country member. We hope you'll enjoy your closer links with us, Andrew. Contact details: Mr. Andrew Cesana, 41, Peregrine Drive, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4TZ: 01795 472235: 07788 867234: andrewcesana@gmail.com

It's also good to welcome Mrs. Carol Pritchard into family membership alongside husband John. We hope to see you both at an event before too long.

News Roundup

Adventures with the school organ

It is flattering to be invited back to a venue and it's really satisfying to be able to report that our recent sessions at Calthorpe Park school were not just repeat performances. We have kept the original format of our demonstration and workshop because it has worked well. The difference in the December sessions was the students - new ones from the new school year and excitingly some enthusiastic musicians from the previous year wanting another go.

The best part of the day is the workshop when the students play. The younger ones (12-14) were very inquisitive, most playing without music and enjoying the sounds (that we select on the screen) as they play. By the end of the session more than twelve students had played.

At the end of a tiring but most enjoyable day with the Calthorpe students, we packed up the organ back in the cars, delivered and re-installed it at "Old St Mary's" in Hartley Wintney (read about how the Advent service went later in this Newsletter). A week after the Advent service we took the organ back to school for their evening Christmas concert. The students played much more confidently than this time last year. Geoff W played the organ with his arrangement of "Joy to the World" for organ and two trumpets. The trumpeters were 14 year-old students. Two younger students played the organ - the JSB Prelude in C major BWV 846 and "In the groove" by Mick Cormick (in the ABRSM Grade 5 list!). Ross Walker (Head of Music) accompanied the handbell team on the organ and Thomas B received highly enthusiastic applause for his splendid performance of the Willcocks arrangement of "O come all ye faithful" with full organ for the last verse.

Our next outing will be to Bishop Challoner School in Basingstoke where the Head of Music is James Bryant, one of our more recent members. The story of the school organ continues!

Martin Barnes, Rob Goldfinch, Geoff Willis

Our Schools Organ at The Advent Carol Service in St Mary's Church,

Hartley Wintney.



The beautiful church of St Mary's, Hartley Wintney, now in the hands of The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), seen here on a lovely summer's day. Even then it is a cool church, not only as in the place to be seen, but also as in not a warm environment.

If it is a cool church in the summer, it is certainly very cool in winter, in fact bitter is more descriptive. The Old Friends of St Mary's or to use their correct title The Friends of Old St Mary's are an active group who open the church on Sunday afternoons in the summer and promote various other events through the year, mainly in the summer for obvious reasons. Their annual Advent Carols Service is one that

cannot be held in the summer, obviously and this year hit a very cold period.

In previous years The Friends have hired a digital organ, but it is expensive at £520 a time. Various people and organisations have sponsored the cost in the past but now The Friends are on their own and the money raised from the service is to swell the funds of the CCT. Costs to hire an organ would



probably exceed the collection so in stepped NHOA with the school organ and for a donation of £100 to NHOA our organ filled the breach!



But was it cold! It is hard to see the temperature from this picture of the keys but the blue speaker cables hanging down the wall were red when we put them in there! Luckily, I had bought some electric hand warmers beforehand which were a lifesaver, and something I really recommend to any organist who has to play in a cold church.

All went well, the church was packed and out came the 'electric candles', an innovation this year to prevent a sudden dramatic rise in the temperature in the church! There were several comments about the wonderful organ sound and the singing was good; a great time was had by all.





Martin Barnes

Summary of the AGM

AGMs are not usually a great attraction for members of some organisations but we were delighted to see 21 NHOA members at this year's AGM held at St John's, Hook on Saturday 27th January. Stephen Davies, organist at St John's, made us particularly welcome. The format that we have used for a number of years appears to work well so the 'business' meeting was kept at a brisk pace. Your committee was re-elected and ideas for potential new events in this year's programme were presented. Please find the minutes of the meeting with this Newsletter.

The buffet lunch provided and funded by Jane Jacobs and Rikki Willis was much appreciated and enabled members to do some essential catching up and socialising. After lunch Mike Keays, Director of Mander Organ Builders, gave us some fascinating insights of the organ building world with photos and descriptions of recent work carried out by his company. This included the rebuilds at St James, Sussex Gardens, Wimborne Minster and Christ's Hospital, Horsham and commencement of the Halifax St Paul's rebuild that Michael Brough told us about at last year's AGM.

Mike also gave an overview of the state of the industry in terms of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. We were pleased to hear that the outlook appears to be fairly steady so we can anticipate continuing to hear and play some great pipe organs around the country!

The last part of the afternoon was a treat for some players who explored the splendid Wyvern organ with the help of Stephen Davies. The installation was specified by Paul Wren (see 'The organs I Play' in NL213). The audio system located in the pipe case gallery provided a very satisfying vibrant and resonant sound.

Manuals and Pedals

Martin White, from a neighbouring O.A. was busy during the Covid lockdown period producing some interesting reading for other organists. He writes...

"I have been the editor of the Newsletter for the Crawley and Horsham District Organist's Association for a number of years. During the Covid lockdown I made an effort to keep up a monthly newsletter to maintain the momentum of the Association.

Based on my experience with the Newsletter and feedback from CHDOA members I launched a weekly blog in July 2023 aimed specifically at parish church organists. It is entitled Manuals and Pedals and the link is

<https://martinwhite.substack.com/>

I have been a church organist for over 60 years and the blog is based on my experience and interests, together with a substantial library of around 100 books. I also have an academic background and several of my posts highlight theses on organ performance techniques, organs and organ music".

Anniversaries and Swann songs

An increasingly popular event in NHOA's annual calendar is the members' opportunity to present works of composers whose anniversaries fall in the current year. This year's celebration was held at St. John's, Hartley Wintney on Saturday 18 November 2023.

It offers presenters and listeners alike with the chance of discovering new music and/or recalling pieces not thought about or played for a long time. It also unlocks creativity in the forms of improvisation, composition and re-arrangement and provides an occasion to perform for those who would otherwise have nowhere else to play, or indeed are needing to practise performing.

The earliest piece involved all of us, under the direction of Ian Wickens, singing a short, joyful piece by William Byrd (b. 1623), and the latest piece was 'Sunrise', composed and performed in memory of Frances Whewell by Rob Goldfinch. Rob also played Jacques van Oortmerssen's fascinating 'Nun ruhen alle Walder'.

A substantial part of the first half of the programme was devoted to a most entertaining and very informative talk by Ian Harrison on the life of Donald Swann (1923 – 1994), illustrated by his renditions of several of the songs which he composed for the lyrics of Michael Flanders. Needless to say, we all joined in with 'Mud, mud, Glorious mud'!

Most memorable was John Mansfield's stylish performance of 'The Gnu Song', and it was lovely to have his presence (John's, that is!) amongst us once again. I can't remember if the Lemmens 'Fanfare in D' (mentioned in the programme) was played.

Opening and closing the event was our ever-resourceful chairman, Geoff Willis, who began with an arrangement of 'Home! Sweet Home!' (1823) in a style approaching that of the theatre organ - which style was reflected in Denny's evocative performances of Roger Whittaker's (d.2023) 'The Last Farewell' and 'A New World in the Morning'.

Max Reger (b. 1873) featured twice. Chris Dew played a Short Chorale Prelude, 'Ach bleib mit deiner Gnade', and David Markby performed the more substantial 'Te Deum'. Chris also introduced William Harris's (1883 – 1973) 'Combewater', the third of Three Preludes.

More 'local' fare was presented by Gerald Marlow who played two pieces – both interesting and useful for church organists, by Philip Moore.

Martin Barnes, whose 'patch' St John's is, featured two works, 'Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier' and 'Trumpet Fanfare' by an interesting new organist/composer, Paul Fey (26 this year!). Paul's music is attractive to the ear, uncomplicated to learn and easy to purchase by downloading.

Our tireless secretary, Gillian Lloyd, played both the organ and her beloved cello. The organ piece, 'There is a spirit that delights to do no evil' by Ned Rorem (1923 – 2022) was a most welcome addition to the works heard, and Rachmaninoff's (1873 – 1943) famous 'Vocalise' arranged for cello and piano was beautifully played and was accompanied by James Bryant.

Another Bryant was young Zach who's clearly got a musical future ahead of him and who regaled us with a lively rendition John Rutter's Toccata in 7.

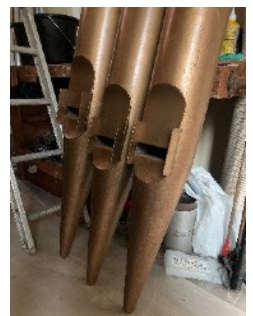
Concluding the musical presentations was Geoff, this time with an arrangement of James Leith Mcbeth Bain's 'Brother James's Air' by Searle Wright and Geoff Willis himself.

Particularly well received was the composition and performance of tea, sandwiches and cakes by Jane Jacobs and Rikki Willis, which was much appreciated by all.

Chris Dew

The overhaul of the organ at St John's, Hartley Wintney

Bishop and Son are still working on the organ at St John's, Hartley Wintney. All the pipes and chests that have been taken up to the workshops are reputedly completed and ready to return. The pedal 16' Violon bottom pipes stood on a separate chest and have always been quieter than the rest of the rank. Bishops have re-grooved the chest and put in new pallets.

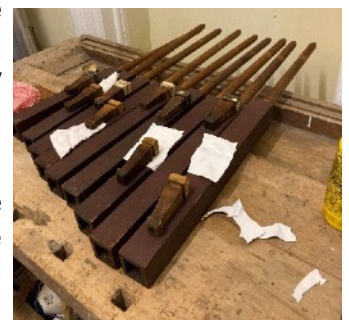


Back at the church they are working on the larger ranks that were left in the church, The Pedal 16' Bourdon, Pedal 16' Violon pipes, Swell 8' Open Diapason pipes and the façade pipework which is the Violon extended from the Great Open Diapason.



The smaller Bourdon pipes are being re-leathered and greased, the stoppers being completely seized up.

The previous company who tuned and looked after the organ were concerned about the façade pipes. They had heard of an organ elsewhere with pipes high up above the congregation (such



as St John's) where one of the cotton ties failed allowing a pipe to fall and drop into the congregation like a javelin! Luckily it did not hit anyone saving another funeral at the church. After that every time this company tuned the organ at St John's something was put across the back of the pipes to make sure that if a tie failed the pipe would not fall. Bishop and Son found a considerable amount of duck tape, string and some rope along the back of the pipes. They



have removed and cleaned these pipes and identified that they were in fact not secure and one of the wooden face rails is cracked. So, there is some repair work to be done and they are making up rails to go along behind the pipes to ensure they are secure.

Interestingly the façade corner pipes each side have no back as can be seen in the photo, to enable the front pipe to sit correctly. It turns out that the side pipes of the façade are in fact dummies.

As always, the front pipes are somewhat larger on the ground than they appear in the façade!



The question I keep being asked is 'when is it going to be finished?' Well, it appears that with organ builders it takes as long as it takes whatever the promised timescale was!

Martin Barnes

Organ Plus and a Masterclass at Guildford URC

On 11th February, staff and students from the University of Surrey Department of Music and Media presented 'Organ Plus', a wide-ranging programme showcasing Guildford URC's fine organ, on its own and in combination with another organ, the piano, trumpet, flute, 'cello and voices. It included witty duets for organ and piano by Denis Bédard and Camille Saint-Saëns; Gaetano Piazza's Sonata for Two Organs; Saint-Saëns' 'The Swan' for cello accompanied by the organ; Bach's 'Jesu, joy of man's desiring' arranged for trumpet and organ; a Handel flute sonata and his 'The Trumpet shall Sound' from Messiah and four impressive organ solos, amongst them Kristina Arakelyan's 'Star Fantasy', which some of you may have heard played by Anna Lapwood at last year's Proms. The standard of playing and singing from both students and staff was impressively high (as it always is from this group), and it was fascinating to hear the organ in so many different settings. The programme offered something for everyone, not least those for whom the organ is not really their 'thing'.

Then the following Saturday saw the church host a visit from The Organ Club of Great Britain who, as part of their day in Guildford, presented a masterclass for young players, given by Daniel Moulton, Head of Organ Studies at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Again, the standard of playing from these five young people, aged 14 to 18, was very high, and we were all able to benefit from Daniel's perceptive and stimulating teaching. He gave each player some illuminating background to his or her piece, and made some important general observations.

He stressed the need to share our enjoyment of the music and to be as relaxed as possible when playing: "Loose joints - minimum energy". It's a good idea to breathe out before starting to play and indeed, Daniel suggested that all Organ Club meetings might begin, as do organ seminars in some parts of Germany, with half an hour of yoga... Interestingly, for those of us who were taught that the correct style for Bach is *détaché*, Daniel urged a gentler and more detailed approach; a happy mean between staccato and legato avoids tight muscles and allows the articulation to serve the music. He also reminded us that French 19th-century playing was slow and legato, with pronounced *rubato* - even allowing the melody and accompaniment to be out of step. As to practice, Daniel emphasised the importance of 'micro-chunking': taking tiny sections of technically-awkward music and polishing them intensively,

before rewarding ourselves with more enjoyable longer stretches of playing. All in all, this was a thoroughly illuminating afternoon, full of useful suggestions.

Gillian Lloyd

A Cherished Legacy

Having a passion for music and the organ in particular, Frances Whewell had a three manual Wyvern organ that gave her great pleasure and the opportunity to play at home. She was very keen for her organ to continue to be used by other learners and enthusiasts when she no longer needed it.

Our work at Calthorpe Park School in Fleet has generated a continuing interest across all their music year groups - 12 to 16 year olds - see the report above. Head of Music, Ross Walker, has shown great enthusiasm for our project in the school and would love to have an instrument permanently available for students.



Planning the move

We arranged for Ross to meet Paul and see the organ. What a great result when everyone wants the same outcome: a few weeks later, during half term, the organ was moved to school.

Now, you can imagine that moving an organ, even a digital one, is a big job even for those used to heavy work so let's take a peek "behind the scenes"...

The Calthorpe School Site Manager, Jay, and Mark an experienced member of his team met Geoff at school. Jay and Mark had loaded the van with a four wheeled flat platform and P.E. crash mats to protect the organ. At Paul's house, we 'tested' the weight of the console. It was clearly in the 'VERY HEAVY' category!



Stuck!

Pulling the pedalboard and bench aside, the console was turned on its end, eased onto the platform and wheeled to the door. A door opening too narrow by even a couple of millimetres is enough to stop anything escaping. Several attempts at different angles didn't solve the problem. The suggestion that the door had to come off had Paul quickly unscrewing the hinges. With fingernail thickness gaps, the console eased out of the lounge into the hall. Much huffing, puffing and grunting got the party moved through the front door, onto the drive and with a mighty HEAVE, up into the van. The pedalboard and bench were featherweight in comparison. With careful packing with the crash mats and securing with strong straps, oh, and re-hanging of the lounge door, the journey to school began!

As is often the case, unpacking is a lot quicker than

packing up, so it was relief that the Roadie Trio offloaded and installed the organ at school in much less than half the time.

A successful switch-on check brought this strenuous episode to a rewarding conclusion.



The door is removed



This way up



Ready to roll

Geoff Willis

The organ(s) I play

Since 2019 I have remained in Malawi and played just 2 organs.

1. At home I have a two-manual and pedal Omegan 7100 which I bought in the 1990s from a John Forster who worked for the railways here and brought it with him. He offered it to me when he returned to England because he wanted to buy a new organ there.

Manuals C-F 53 notes, Pedals straight 27 notes C-D.

Specification

Upper – Principal 8, Salicional 8, Flute 8, Octave 4, Flute 4, Octave 2, Sharp 2, Quint 1 1/3, Nazard 1 1/3.

Lower: Flute 8, Gamba 8, Principal 4, Flute 4, Piccolo 2

Solo: playable on either manual: Trumpet 8, Fagotto 8, Oboe 8

Pedal: Subbass 16, Bourdon 8, Octave 4, Bassoon 16, Trumpet 8

No couplers.

Unfortunately, the Swell pedal for the upper manual gradually crumbled away and after many repairs disintegrated completely. So the upper manual is at maximum volume only. However there are hand controls for Lower Volume, Pedal sustain, and tremolo for each manual – Speed and Depth.

The sounds are acceptable though the Salicional at full volume sounds very reedy. The upper manual I use mainly for solos and adjust the balance with the lower volume control. Most of the time I use Pedal 16+4 which gives a better definition than 16+8 and compensates for lack of a coupler.

Most mornings except Sundays I spend about an hour after breakfast, playing mainly slow pieces these days, and practising the music and hymns for St Paul's.

2. On Sunday mornings I play at the Anglican Cathedral of St Paul, Blantyre. High church with smells and bells laced with a good dose of Malawian informality. In 1986 during a visit to England I toured around with our late members Ken and Pat Sargent looking at various installations, including those at Wyvern Organs where Paul Wren demonstrated various instruments. In the end we opted for a Norwich Sprowston B with additions, as being acceptable quality within the budget. This was installed in 1987. The instrument it replaced was an electrified reed organ with as much sensitivity as a motor horn. This was considered substandard for a parish church about to become a cathedral.

Manuals C-C 61 notes, Pedals R & C: C-G 32 notes

Specification

Great: Diapason 8, Stopped Flute 8, Dulciana 8, Principal 4, Nason Flute 4, Dulcet 4, Twelfth 2 2/3, Fifteenth 2 Trompette 8

Swell: Gedact 8, Salicional 8, Octave 4, Salicet 4, Piccolo 2, Larigot 1 1/3, Mixture III, Contra Fagotto 16, Trumpet 8, Clarion 4, Clarinet 8, Tremulant

Pedal: Geigen 16, Bourdon 16, Bass Flute 8, Fifteenth 4, Trombone 16, Rankett 4
Usual couplers.

For its age it's standing up pretty well, with attention from knowledgeable church members to the electrics and dodgy contacts. Clarion 4 stopped working soon after installation, and Geigen 16 only works spasmodically when the humidity is high... Norwich Organs gave it 30 years.

Pretty realistic pipe-organ sound, though there isn't much sound from the bottom octave of the 16' bourdon, and the reeds scream rather with the swell box open.

Chris Ingram



Accompanying Blantyre Music Society Choir at St Paul's Church circa 1986

(Yes, that young man is me... and today's BMS choir is 80% Malawian)



The Norwich organ



Having a rest while the youth choir sings



Practicing at home



The Omegan 7100 console

North Hampshire Organists' Association

Registered charity no. 275207

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