

March 2015

Reg. Charity No. 274679



This little organ hides a secret. It stands in the Parish Church of St. James, Ansty, Warwickshire and was built by one of our lesser known organ builders: Thomas ('Tom') Atterton of Leighton Buzzard in 1869. More about this strange little organ inside. *(Picture: Richard Young)*

FROM THE EDITOR



Well, here we are again. With Holy Week and Easter only weeks away, organists and choirs are preparing for the most important festival in the Christian calendar. All over the country organ tuners are emerging from their long winter hibernation to tune up (or down) organs that have detuned themselves since they were last tickled by the organ tuner's reed knife in the autumn. In some tiny churches this may be the first time they have wheezed into life since the carol service. Spare a thought for these workhorses of church music sitting in their cold, lonely churches waiting for the organist, choir, clergy and congregation to visit them and be grateful to the organ builder who created such a robust instrument for our musical tradition. Above all, be kind to your organ this Easter.

Editor, NDOA Newsletter

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REPORT ON THE NDOA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 16th NOVEMBER, 2014

by
Helen Murphy
(Hon. Secretary)



NDOA Members listen attentively to the Hon. Treasurer's report.

that expenditure had decreased considerably since the introduction of the electronic Newsletter (but not forgetting the paper option was still available).



Outgoing President, Lee Dunleavy, confers with the Hon. Treasurer, Jonathan Harris.

us, *O Lord* for the anthem. The concluding organ voluntary, Howells's *Rhapsody No 1*, perfectly rounded off the afternoon.

The 90th AGM of the NDOA took place on Sunday, 16th November 2014 in St Mary's church, Higham Ferrers. Led by President Lee Dunleavy, members stood for a minute's silence in memory of Kenneth Tickell who had died during the year.

The Secretary delivered her report (copies of which were available), referring to the variety of events that had taken place during the year, and her continued research into the long career of Sophie Boys from Weedon, which involve delving further and further back into the archives from time to time.

The Treasurer delivered his report and presented the annual accounts, noting

The President-Elect for 2015-2016 was nominated as Fr David McConkey of All Saints' church, Northampton and officers and committee members for the current year were elected. The new President, Tony Edwards, was installed, took the Chair and copies of the programme of events for the forthcoming year were distributed.

After the conclusion of the official business, tea and cakes were a welcome refreshment, prior to settling back to enjoy a short recital by the new President. The following celebration of Choral Evensong by the church choir featured the first performance of a set of *Versicles and Responses* by Past-President, Lee Dunleavy. The canticles were sung to Stanford in C, with Bairstow's *Save*

Donald Owen Barford (1934 - 2014)

by
Michael Woodward

My friend Donald Barford died on 23rd November, a few days after his eightieth birthday. He had been in declining health for some time and the last couple of years had been very difficult.

Ever since boyhood Donald had been involved in the musical life of churches in the Northampton area. He began as a chorister in the Choir of St Matthew's in the 1940s when Alec Wyton was in charge. Later he had organ lessons from John Bertalot. On leaving school he served an apprenticeship as a printer. For a time he worked for HMSO in London and took the opportunity to have lessons from Harold Darke.

After serving as organist at Flore and then at Blisworth, Donald was appointed Organist and Choirmaster of Christ Church, Northampton in 1957 and remained there for twenty-one years. During that time he oversaw the removal of the Barratt Organ into Christ Church. It is worth recalling that as late as 1978 regular Sunday Evensong continued to attract a regular congregation with the Canticles sung to Anglican Chants and a weekly anthem sung by a four-part choir.

During his first spell at Christ Church Donald married Valerie who later became one of the first women to be ordained in the Diocese of Peterborough. She sadly died in 1997 after a long battle against cancer. But Donald remained a champion of women priests. Their two children, Andrew and Helen survive them, both are accomplished amateur musicians.

Donald served for many years on the Committees of the NDOA and the local RSCM. He was also Secretary of both organisations and was NDOA President on three occasions 1969-1970, 1992-1994 and again in 2004-2005.

Unfortunately Donald never really settled for long at any other post until he returned to Christ Church in 2002. He loved the Barratt Organ and I shall always remember his performances of the Mendelssohn Sonatas on that instrument. The grand opening movement of the third sonata almost became his calling card.

Donald Barford was that old-fashioned thing 'a character'. You usually knew what he was thinking - he did not dissemble. He could be infuriatingly inflexible but also unobtrusively kind. He was a shrewd judge of the clergy! A day spent in his company was never dull, I particularly remember accompanying him on the IAO Paris Congress in 2002 which was enlivened by his enthusiasm and sense of fun.

In the 1970s Donald forsook printing and trained as teacher at Nene College. Having qualified he taught at Cherry Orchard Middle School for some twenty years. In retirement he regularly played the piano for morning assembly at Weston Favell Church of England School. You may be certain that the children sang good traditional hymns and not inane worship songs!

The high regard in which Donald Barford was held by many people was reflected by the size of the congregation at his funeral at Christ Church on 8th December. Several friends had come from far afield. A choir sang a good deal of music by Stanford, including *Beati quorum via*, (always a favourite) as well as the *Evening Service in A flat*. Ron Gates gave his usual demonstration of service playing, the congregation lustily sang some uplifting hymns, and the service was as memorable as a funeral service can be. Donald would have been pleased. He was laid to rest in Bugbrooke churchyard but will not easily be forgotten.

*Loud organs, his glory
Forth tell in deep tone,
And sweet harp, the story
Of what he has done.*

THOMAS ('TOM') ATTERTON (1845–1920) - A LESSER KNOWN ORGAN BUILDER

by
Barry Wadeson

I must confess that I had never much thought about Thomas Atterton until I received some pictures attached to an email from organ builder Richard Young recently. Richard, will be familiar to many members because he tunes a number of organs in and around Northamptonshire and a few years ago installed the Gern organ in St. Gregory's Church, Northampton.

Richard has been commissioned to restore the one manual Atterton organ in the Parish Church of St. James, Ansty in Warwickshire (see front cover picture). From the front this organ could easily be mistaken for one of the many small organs built during the mid to late Victorian period by builders such as Alfred Hunter, George Maydwell Holdich or Henry Bevington. The second half of the 19th century saw an explosion of organ building with churches and chapels being built at a phenomenal rate. By 1858 over 3,000 new churches alone had been built. Quite often, religious buildings were erected next door to, or across the road from, an already existing place of worship. Poaching of congregations was common and there was little love lost between the denominations as they competed in every aspect including music. Organs became a 'must have' acquisition if your church or chapel was going to entice the punters in. In fact, the number of instruments in existence soon outstripped the number of organists available to play them and some of our most well-known organ builders, such as Bevington turned their attention to constructing barrel organs.

Along with the three better-known British organ builders I have mentioned above were many small organ building firms. One of these was Thomas Atterton of Leighton Buzzard (just a few miles down the road from Milton Keynes). He first comes to our notice in 1861 when it seems he set up in business in the village with two names, Heath and Reach in Bedfordshire, not far from Leighton Buzzard, at number 3 Birds Hall Road. There has been much speculation that Atterton was related in some way to the Holdich family, possibly by marriage to a distant relative. Although little evidence (other than handed-down stories) exists to support this view it seems he did know members of the Holdich family, which lends some weight to the belief that he may have been trained by Holdich. But not much.

By 1880 Atterton had moved to number 161 Heath Park House, Leighton Buzzard and in 1891 he was living at 11 High Street and had a shop at 89 High Street, Leighton Buzzard. Like Alfred Hunter we may assume that behind the High Street shop was a workshop. Atterton built organs often ready made for the market which he displayed in his High Street shop; we know this because he regularly advertised completed organs in local newspapers. In 1896 in the Bucks Herald a small advertisement appears:



FOR SALE, ONE MANUAL ORGAN,
suitable for small CHURCH or CHAPEL; four
stops, in oak case. Price 35 guineas.—ATTERTON,
Leighton Buzzard.

Bearing in mind that a four stop continuo organ today costs over £50,000 you may think that 35 guineas is something of a bargain – but that's inflation for you! Atterton's small ads can be found frequently in the For Sale columns of the local newspapers.

According to the 1911 Census, Atterton was born in Manchester, not in Bulwick, Northamptonshire as recorded in Canon Hilary Davidson's book. Almost nothing is known of his early life and some idiosyncrasies have crept into the Atterton story; for instance Canon Davidson has his date of birth as c1830 and the NPOR as c1833, but the Census records him as being 66 years old in 1911, making his year of birth 1845. Atterton was therefore 75 years old at the time of his death in 1920. Thomas gave way to the more informal Tom during his career; there do not appear to have been any other Thomas or Tom Attertons around in Leighton Buzzard to confuse the issue.



Benedictine Monastery, Arcadia, Australia.

He married his wife Emily, a Londoner by birth, in 1875. Emily was 10 years younger than Thomas and was described as a music seller in the 1911 Census. A son, Herbert, was born in 1882 and followed Thomas into the organ building business. A daughter, Isabel, was born in 1887 and she too joined the family as an assistant to her mother's music selling business. The Atterton's appear to have become part of the prosperous middle classes with two or three servants to service their needs including a parlour-maid, cook-housekeeper and an upper maid.

Atterton had a curious habit of spelling (Leighton) Buzzard as Bussard on some of his plates. This appears to be derived from an old spelling of the name Busar added to Leighton by the Dean of Lincoln Cathedral, in whose diocese the town lay in the 12th century. To differentiate the town from other nearby Leightons (L. Linslade and L. Bromswold) the Dean of Lincoln named the town after one of his canons, Theobold de Busar. Nothing whatsoever to do with birds, apparently.

The quality of Atterton's work does not seem to be in doubt; despite building organs of modest proportions, mostly one and two manual instruments, Atterton gained something of a reputation for superior workmanship, as

we can see from this fine example (above). This organ is in the chapel of the Arcadia Road Benedictine Monastery, Arcadia in Australia. It had been installed in a Masonic Lodge in Perth before coming into the hands of a private owner who sold it on to a piano tuner. It was to have then been moved to a Baptist Church in Melbourne but the deal fell through ("the Minister not being a great lover of such things"). It was finally bought by the monastery, where it accompanies the services. The 11 stop, IIP has fairly straightforward 16' 8' 4' and 2' stops. Atterton's organs are frequently described as having a nice rounded tone to them. It seems possible that before the organ was installed at the masonic lodge it had been made for a private individual, motifs on the casework indicate that it may have been made for a wealthy or titled individual in England before finding its way down under.

Only 60 Atterton organs are listed in the NPOR. 18 in Bedfordshire, 16 in Buckinghamshire and 6 in Northamptonshire. The rest are variously in Kent, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire and a few other counties. By and large, Atterton seems to have developed his business close to home, perhaps because he had other interests in the locality; he was something of a bird fancier, entering his fowls in local shows. In 1881, one James Humbles of Leighton Buzzard was convicted of stealing some of Atterton's birds and received the sentence of a month's hard labour. Chicken theft seems to have been a major source of crime in Leighton Buzzard for Atterton lost three more prize fowls, worth 15s to theft in 1884. A labourer, William Finch Baines, received three months hard labour for that offence and for absconding from police custody.

The Northamptonshire organs are:

St. Leonard, Aston le Walls, IIP 7

St. Mary, Badby, IP 7 (replaced with electronic 1996)

St. Botolph, Barton Seagrave, IIP 13 (Holdich rebuilt by Atterton)

St. John the Baptist, Boddington, IP 8 rebuilt as IIP extension with electric action by Mitchell of Bideford. The NPOR carries the cryptic comment: "this was 'outed' 1981 for an extension organ by one Mitchell, against advice."

St. Peter & St. Paul, Cosgrove, IP 10

St. Mary & All Saints, Nassington, IIP 12

After Atterton's death in 1920 the company continued under the ownership of his son. Herbert. The firm had already been renamed Atterton & Son in 1906 but after Tom's death in 1920 it seems that there were to be no more new Atterton organs and the company was taken over in 1924 by Rest Cartwright of Finsbury Park, London.

And so we come to the little organ at Ansty. The first thing to notice on the cover picture is that the organ is not much wider than the console. And, it transpires, not very deep either as we can see from this first picture:



1. Ansty Church: This has to be the thinnest organ I have ever seen (picture by Richard Young).

I have never seen an organ designed like this before and I doubt whether there are many around that make such economical use of the space in a swell box. The organ is now in Richard Young's workshop being refurbished. This really should go down as one of England's eccentric organ treasures. Fortunately, the organ has been left more-or-less untouched for nearly 150 years, apart from some repairs done in 1975 when Burns of Nuneaton carried out some minor work which may have included the removal of the pedal pipes.

Although some wooden pedal pipes were tucked away in an arch just behind the organ these were scrapped some years ago having rotted and everything else is in the swell box. So how did Atterton solve the problem of getting 56 notes for each rank into the swell box, except for the shared bass? Picture 2 (below) shows just how inventive Atterton was.



2. Atterton's ingenious answer was to build a small wind chest above the main chest for the top octave and a half (picture by Richard Young).

Atterton is typical of the many small organ builders around in the latter half of the 19th century such as Henry Achurch of Banbury, William Barker of Northampton and William Dawkins of Rothwell. Some built very few organs and may have gone bankrupt in the process since there was great competition from the more established firms such as Bevington, and dare we say it, the well-connected such as Holdich. Thomas Atterton certainly did well for himself though and although only 60 of his organs are listed in the NPOR he may well have built many more which have since been dismantled, lost, or in the case of the Arcadia Monastery organ, found their way overseas.

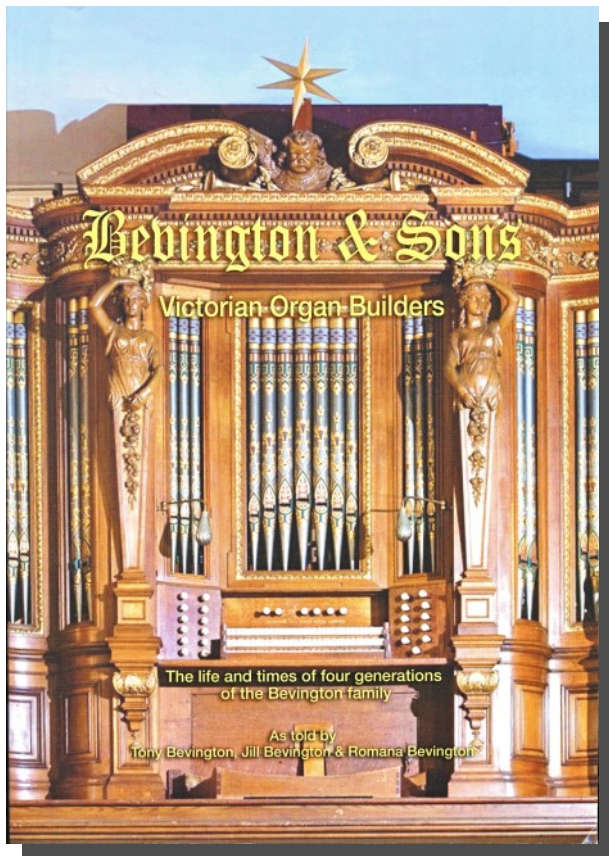
See also *Organ Building News*, p 14 (Ed)



What's On



Wednesday 4th March	12:15 p.m.	Organ Recital. St. Margaret's, Crick, NN6 7TP (Lent Recital Series). John Merrigan (St. Margaret's, Crick). Admission free.
Saturday 7th March	7:30 p.m.	Organ Recital. St. Mary the Virgin, Finedon, NN9 5NR. Steven Grahl (Peterborough Cathedral). Retiring collection.
	and	
	7:30 p.m.	Concert. St. Matthew's Church, Northampton, NN1 4RY. Leighton: <i>Crucifixus pro nobis</i> also music by Howells, Moore and Walton. St. Peter's Singers. Admission £9 at the door.
Wednesday 11th March	12:15 p.m.	Organ Recital. St. Margaret's, Crick, NN6 7TP (Lent Recital Series). Philip Bricher (Holy Trinity, Northampton). Admission free.
Wednesday 18th March	12:15 p.m.	Organ Recital. St. Margaret's, Crick, NN6 7TP (Lent Recital Series). Lee Dunleavy (St. Mary's, Wellingborough). Admission free.
Saturday 21st March	7:30 p.m.	Concert. St. Michael's Church, Perry Street, Northampton, NN1 4HL. Haydn <i>Nelson Mass</i> , Duruflé <i>Requiem</i> . Northampton Philharmonic Choir. Tickets: on the door – £12 (students £5). Box office 07958 768661
Wednesday 25th March	12:15 p.m.	Organ Recital. St. Margaret's, Crick, NN6 7TP (Lent Recital Series). Martin Jackson (St. Margaret's, Crick). Admission free.
Saturday 28th March	7:30 p.m.	Concert. J. S. Bach: <i>Mass in B Minor</i> . St. Matthew's Church, Northampton NN1 4RY. Northampton Bach Choir. Tickets: £16 (adult), £14 (concessions), £5 (students).
Saturday 25th April	2:00 p.m.	 Sing a New Song! Composers & New Music. All Saints Church, Brixworth, NN6 6DF. In association with the RSCM. New compositions for people to hear and play. Singers will be present to perform and comment on the works. Please get in touch with the President with details of your composition.
Saturday 9th May	10:00 a.m.	Organ Recital. Kingsley Park Methodist Church, Northampton, NN2 7JF. (Spring Fair). Philip Bricher (Holy Trinity, Northampton). Admission free.
Saturday 16th May	7:30 p.m.	Organ Recital. St. Mary the Virgin, Finedon, NN9 5NR. Ben Bloor (Westminster Cathedral). Retiring collection.



BEVINGTON & SONS
Victorian Organ Builders
The life and times of four generations of the Bevington
Family
Book Review

I have had this book for a little while but have only just got around to reading it. No doubt some members have already thumbed the pages of this delightful book which now sells for just under £20 on Amazon.

First of all, the book is more a family history than a dedicated books about organs. There are no stop lists and if you are expecting to read about pipe scales, actions or other intimate details of organs you will be disappointed. However, there is a very useful appendix put together by three current descendants of the Bevington family (Tony, Jill and Romana Bevington) from the National Pipe Organ Register and other less accessible sources. From around 1798 through to the early 20th century, the firm of Bevington & Sons built over 2,200 organs but the family have only been able to trace around 1,600. As the family point out, many organs may have been destroyed by fire, broken up, rebuilt under another name or shipped abroad.

Many have been rebuilt or plundered for their pipework – such is the sad fate of organs.

Nevertheless, the value of this book is in showing the family connections with other prominent Victorian figures. The lives of the Bevington's intertwined with the likes of Florence Nightingale, Augustus Pugin, Jenny Lind, the Novello's and Charles Dickens, and institutions such as Bedlam and Foyle's Bookshop. The book is well illustrated with photographs of organs and facsimiles of documents in the authors' possession. The cover picture is of the recently restored Bevington at St. Mary's Church, Hay on Wye which was originally in Holmer Parish Church near Hereford.

There are many curious snippets of information; such as that some of Bevington's pipework was made from metal mixed with ground glass from beer bottles and that Henry, the son of the first Henry Bevington was appointed to the post of organist of the Chapel of King's College, London. He was recommended for the position by Dr William Crotch, Professor of Music at the Royal Academy of Music and whose own father, a carpenter, had built a small organ so that William, at the tender age of two, could play tunes on it.

This is not just a story of the Victorian age of organ building but of Victorian society as a whole in which understatement by officials, which would today be treated with laughter, was then considered the height of propriety. It is no surprise that 'Victorian novel' is a term many use today to describe extreme wordiness (no-one more so than Charles Dickens who was actually paid by the word for his stories). Thus, when a fire broke out at Bevington's Rose Yard premises we learn that

Police constable No. 80 of C division, whilst returning from church, had his attention directed to the upper gallery of the building by perceiving large volumes of smoke pouring forth from the various windows and through the roof. This convinced him that the establishment was on fire in some part. He therefore lost no time in sending intelligence to the principle factory in Greek-Street and also to the fire-engine station.

Unfortunately, many of Bevington's craftsmen lost their tools in the fire but fortunately the Rose Yard was not their main premises. It did, however, destroy the nearly completed organ for St. Martin's in the field. The Book is published by Preston House Publishing and is A4 size with 329 pages, well illustrated and well worth the price. (BW)

GOOD FRIDAY AT ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, FINEDON

Dear Singer,

Good Friday Service of Readings, Music & Contemplation: Friday 3rd April 2015 at 2pm at St Mary's, Finedon

You are welcome and invited to join us to sing at this service which is loosely based on Tenebrae.

Music List:

The Reproaches - Tomás Luis de Victoria

Thou knowest, Lord - Henry Purcell

Kyrie eleison - Jonathan Harris

Ubi Caritas - Maurice Duruflè

Hymn 120 - *O Sacred head, surrounded* (from Common Praise)

Ave Verum Corpus - Clifford L. Woods

Psalm 22 v1-18 (from Parish Psalter with chants)

Benedictus - Philip Moore

Hymn 121 - *Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle*

Concluding with the organ solo: *Sounding Heaven and Earth* - Cecilia McDowall

All the music is available to borrow from Finedon church and will be available at rehearsals and on the day. I also have 'emailable' copies of everything except the Duruflè & Philip Moore. The music to the Duruflè can be followed on YouTube.

Rehearsals:

On the day, Friday 3rd April 12.30pm to 1.45pm. And, for anyone who wishes, any Friday during March from 7.15pm onwards at St Mary's Finedon (our main practice starts at 7pm but we'll be rehearsing our Sunday morning music for the first 15 minutes).

(In addition, Robert is running two rehearsals at Holy Trinity, Wolverton on Saturday 7th & 21st March 2pm-5pm.)

I don't mind singers turning up just for the rehearsal on the day provided they have made themselves familiar with most of the music beforehand.

Dress is choir robes (cassocks only), all black or dark suits. As usual, Robert Page will conduct the choir with myself at the organ.

The Finedon Festival Chorus consists of the Choir of St Mary the Virgin, Finedon plus visiting singers from local choirs and the local area. Please pass these details on to any singers who may be interested in joining us.

Please could you ensure a message gets to me via phone, email or through a member of the Finedon church choir, to indicate if you are able to come and sing at this service, and which part you sing (SATB).

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Harris

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Reflections on *How shall I sing that majesty* and its tune, *Coe Fen*

by
Helen Murphy

I first heard the tune *Coe Fen* some years ago on Radio 3's live Choral Evensong. When I found out, a while later, that *Common Praise* (first published in 2000) was the only hymnal to contain it, I promptly bought a copy - it was worth it for this one item alone, which I was now able to read in detail.

Ken Naylor (1931-1991) wrote that memorable music; I deliberately don't say 'tune' because *Coe Fen* is so much more - with rich, scrunching, exotically coloured harmonies underpinning its wide-ranging melody - all of which exactly complement the words. And what words! John Mason (1646-1694) lived almost exactly 300 years before Ken Naylor and was even younger when he died, but he speaks for us today, especially if we are singers.

'How shall I sing that majesty which angels do admire? Let dust in dust and silence lie; sing, sing, ye heavenly choir...' makes me think that Mason must have been a singer as well as a poet, as he clearly sees God, and indeed God speaks to him, through music. He contrasts the magnificence of the angelic hosts with his own insignificance, their dazzling brightness with his own best efforts (which seem so meagre by comparison), their wondrous gifts with his poor offerings and pleads, 'Lord, treasure up my mite'. He's overawed, but gains confidence and is emboldened to ask that God will enlighten his heart with the fire of love, so that he too can take his part with the celestial choir, who 'sing because thou art their sun' and begs, 'Lord, send a beam on me.' And what better summing up of the eternity of God could there be - 'thou art a sea without a shore, a sun without a sphere; thy time is now and evermore, thy place is everywhere' - than Mason's concluding lines? When I join the heavenly choir (well, I shall apply for an audition and hope for the best) I shall make myself known to Ken Naylor and John Mason and say, 'Thank you'!

It's very odd that in the *New English Hymnal* (1986) Mason's words, as richly ecstatic and radiant as Naylor's music, are partnered with Tallis's *Third Mode Melody* (with *Kingsfold* as an alternative). Much as I love Tallis (and the *Third Mode Melody* in particular), that is a most ill-matched wedding. Whatever were the editors thinking of? Without a shadow of doubt, the pairing of Mason's words and Naylor's music is a marriage made in heaven. Well done, the editors of *Common Praise*!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

A very warm welcome is extended to the following new members: Stephen Lawes, David Walling, Roger Skoyles and John and Susanne Garside. We hope that you will enjoy your time as members of the NDOA and look forward to seeing you at some of our events.

This is a good time to remind our newest members and older (by that I mean well-established) members that we have a splendid website at: <http://www.northamptonorganists.org.uk/index.shtml> and we have a LinkedIn group running at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=4606513> if you haven't signed up for LinkedIn please sign up (it's free unless you want the professional service).

The NDOA website is the place to go for all the latest news; the Newsletter comes out quarterly and many items of news and events appear in between issues on the website - so keep an eye on the noticeboard section.

The LinkedIn NDOA forum is for members to share ideas, tips and seek answers to questions like: 'why does the Tuba come on when I draw out the Principal'? Well don't ask me - organs have a mind of their own.



*Helen Murphy
reports:*

NDOA DESERT ISLAND DISCS: 24th JANUARY 2015

A baker's dozen of castaways, led by NDOA President Tony Edwards, gathered at base camp in Wilby to celebrate our life in music while awaiting rescue. Tony kicked off by relating hearing as a small boy an LP of organ music playing in Hardwick church - which sparked off a life-long love of the organ. The piece in question, *Toccata in G* by Theodore Dubois (here played on the organ of the Royal Albert Hall) led him to seek organ lessons in the fullness of time - and subsequently to serve as organist at Hardwick for many years. Like many organists, Tony also sings and he recalled singing in Peterborough Cathedral in 1998 with the Keble Choir (a Southampton-based group) Stanford's *For lo! I raise up*, one of those anthems he felt where everything seems to come together at the right time and in the right place (whether in spite of or because of its rather blood-and-thunder Old Testament text from the book of Habakkuk, who knows, but I must look it up). An orchestral arrangement for strings of the much-loved organ prelude *Rhosymedre* by Vaughan Williams threw a new light on a familiar piece. Herbert Howells's setting of the psalm *O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem* (which Tony reminded us they had sung at Higham Ferrers) was out of the same stable as his *Coll Reg* canticles, managing to be both ethereal and sturdy at the same time, as only Howells can. For Tony, New Year's Day is sacrosanct, when he locks the doors, battens down the hatches and stands by to repel boarders - nothing must be allowed to disturb his enjoyment of the traditional annual concert from Vienna! However, rather than the expected Strauss, his next item was something he first encountered at school - Dimitri Shostakovich's *Second Waltz* - which has remained a favourite of his ever since. Rachmaninov's sumptuous *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* made us think it had been used as a film or TV series theme tune - we knew it wasn't *Brief Encounter*, but couldn't think what it was (if

indeed it had). Any ideas? Fittingly, his final choice, the Finale from Guilman's *Organ Sonata No 1*, summed up his long love of Guilman's music.

He declared his luxury item would have to be his own bed - a hammock or bedding down in the bracken or palm leaves would just not do. Like most of us, Tony felt he would need a good night's sleep in a proper bed before he could think about tackling the tasks of the next day. As for his book, he said he enjoyed biographies most of all, and so would take his current reading matter - a biography of Guy Martin. 'What about a favourite hymn?' someone asked. Well, for Tony, that would have to be 'There's a wideness in God's mercy' sung to *Corvedale*.

Fellow castaway Robert Tucker chose one of Brahms's *Hungarian Dances* played by Thomas Heywood in Buffalo in a transcription for organ by Edwin Lemare, showing something old and familiar in a new light.

A love of the Gloucestershire countryside (where she once lived) prompted Carla Radok's choice of Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* - for her a source of creative inspiration - which she complemented by reading an extract from George Meredith's poem of the same name, which RVW must surely have known.

Drawing together different strands in his life (with York Minster as a focal point), Robert Page related how, having started organ lessons at the age of 12 (and being the proud possessor of an LP in the *Great Cathedral Organs* series of Francis Jackson playing the York Minster instrument) he later encountered a young John Scott Whiteley at Waltham Abbey. Many years later, back in York during JSW's tenure, by special request he was given permission to play the organ 'after hours' enabling him to let rip with impunity on the magnificent Tuba Mirabilis with no danger of frightening the horses. So his choice was a *Magnificat* composed and played by JSW himself, with the Minster choir, in which the said Tuba Mirabilis could be heard to splendid effect.

As we are all probably aware, the organ at Peterborough Cathedral is about to undergo a massive off-site re-tuning programme to adjust its pitch down to concert pitch (lowering it by about a quarter-tone), which it is hoped will enable it to be used together with other instruments unable to adjust to match its tuning; it is also hoped that it will aid the singers too, who, having practised in the choir room at one pitch, then have to sing everything up a bit! Even if you are not blessed (cursed?) with perfect pitch, this can be disconcerting. Grant Brockhouse therefore played us a track from the most recent recording by David Humphries (the Assistant Director of Music there) of the Finale from Dupré's *Sept Pièces* - the last before the organ is dismantled and taken away.

We don't just play the organ in the NDOA - some members do crossword puzzles and even win prizes! John Wilson's prize for his successful completion of the puzzle in the *Organists' Review* was a CD, from which he chose a movement from Mendelssohn's *Organ Sonata No 1* played by Bernhard Leonardy on the Holzhay organ in Nereheim Benedictine Abbey.

In challenging mode, Philip Bricher presented us with *Santiago* an unusual CD by Andrew Campling (organist, composer and choral conductor) featuring the organ at St James, Garlickhythe, in combination with various other unexpected instruments - such as electric guitar! Surprisingly, in its first outing, it sounded remarkably like a lute (to my ears, at any rate) and the variations on *Picardy* were very effective, with various crumhorn-like medieval sounds enhancing what is one of my favourite tunes.

Sadly, we were running out of time and the refreshments were beckoning us (for which we owe many thanks to Carla for her thoughtful cake-making, taking into account various dietary requirements!). We thanked Tony for his hospitality and entertainment and made our various ways home as the gentle winter light diminished, thankful for the lack of rain, wind, snow etc., which the gods of the weather had not thought fit to bestow on us.

Organ Building News

Kenneth Tickell & Company Ltd are currently working on a new IIP 36 stop organ for Leatherhead School in Surrey due to be completed in the summer of this year. Tickell is also well-known for its smaller continuo and house organs and is currently building a IIP 6 stop organ for a private residence with an 8' Regal stop with wooden resonators on manual II to blend with the overall combination of stops. In the picture (right) we can see the Leatherhead console beginning to take shape in Tickell's workshop. Although the organ is due to be completed by the summer it is expected that installation will begin in April freeing up space in the workshop for work to begin on the new organ for Birmingham Cathedral.



The frame of the Ansty organ reveals that it was built around an old door arch, which possibly led to a medieval rood loft stairs. Stephen Taylor surveys the remains of the organ. (Picture: Richard Young)

Richard Young of Rugby will, following restoration of the Atterton organ at Ansty (see pages 5–7), commence work on the organ of the Wycliffe Memorial Methodist Church, Lutterworth, Leicestershire. Beginning in the autumn, this will be a complete restoration of the fifteen stop tracker instrument built by Wadsworth & Bro of Manchester. Work to include: pipework, slider soundboards, reservoir, manual & stop actions and manual key actions. Work will commence during Autumn 2015 and funding is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. For those who are not aware of it, Richard is assisted by Stephen Taylor, a great grandson of the founder of the famous organ building company: Taylor's of Leicester (1838–1920). The organ building world is indeed small. At the moment Richard is inundated with work on restorations which is a particular specialty of his company.

Alan Goulding of Pipe Organ Services has completed the work on the organ of St. John the Baptist, Kingsthorpe (see back page picture) and is currently building a new IIP organ for the Chapel of Ratcliffe College in Leicestershire which has a 3.5 second acoustic.

If you have any news of organ building activity in your church or chapel please do share it with the rest of us - who knows, a visit by the NDOA on the August Bank Holiday Organ Crawl might bring fame to your organ whatever its size or shape. Don't let modesty hold you back, size isn't everything (as the well-worn saying goes). And if you can send a digital picture for the Newsletter, all the better.

FUNERAL FEES WITH EFFECT FROM JANUARY 1st 2015

To the Rural Deans and Funeral Directors in the Peterborough Diocese (excluding Oundle, Barnack and Peterborough Deaneries) and to members of the Northampton and District Organists' Association.

At a Committee Meeting of this Association held on 15th October 2014 at which the subject of Funeral Fees paid to organists was discussed, the following recommendation was passed:

“That the minimum fee for a simple service with no choir or previous rehearsal should increase from Sixty-Five (£65.00) to Seventy pounds (£70) with effect from January 1st 2015.”

RONALD GATES

As some of you may know, Ron had a serious fall at home in early January and he is still recovering in Northampton General Hospital. On behalf of NDOA members I am sure you would like the Editor to wish Ron a good recovery and to send our best wishes to his family during what is a very stressful time for them.

ADVANCE NOTICE – MEMBERS RECITAL: CHANGE OF VENUE

Please note that the Members' Recital on **Saturday 13th June** will now take place at 3:00 p.m. at **St. Michael's Church, Perry Street, Northampton, NN1 4HL**. This is due to work on the roof of St. Mary's Church, Wellingborough. On the other hand, this will allow you to hear that other unique, Northampton Walker organ which, like St. Matthew's, faces diagonally into the church (although a detached console has since replaced the attached console).



The Dean and Chapter felt that they had no option but to dismiss the new lady director of music for inappropriate behaviour during choral evensong.



The console of St. John the Baptist, Kingsthorpe following fitting of electric draw-stop and piston mechanisms (*Picture by Andrew Moodie*).