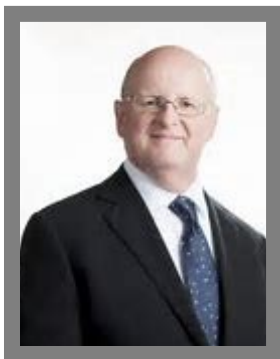


ND NORTHAMPTON & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER—ISSUE 4/2019



FROM THE EDITOR

The summer months have seen a number of excellent Association events - a visit to St Mary and St Giles' at Stony Stratford, the summer organ crawl to Towcester and Buckingham, and the annual Members' Recital. For me, the Members' Recital was an absolute delight, exemplified by the sheer joy of Merryl Willis's performance of the *Alleluja* from Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate* which really set the tone for the evening.

Your Association functions only because of the significant amount of hard work behind the scenes by all those who make our events happen, as well as those who kindly contribute articles to the Newsletter. As such, it is particularly pleasing to report that Helen Murphy, our Secretary, has been awarded an RSCM musical development scholarship, which is richly deserved. Further, we now have a new Treasurer. Our member Glyn Hughes—with whom I have the pleasure to work in the Yardley Hastings Benefice—has most kindly agreed to take on the role. Glyn's contact details are in the Association Contacts section on this page.

We also have some key dates for your diary. Alan Cufaude, our President, has kindly secured a rearranged visit to Stowe School on Saturday 19th October at 10.30 am for us to play the 4-manual Rushworth and Dreaper organ. Our AGM, and the inauguration of John Wilson as our next President, takes place on Saturday 9th November at 3pm at Abington parish church, followed by Choral Evensong directed by Tim Dolan. Finally, John's excellent programme for 2020 is set out on p.14. Do please put these dates in your diary now.

A highlight of this issue is Tony Edwards' report on the fine organs at All Saints', Mears Ashby and St. Leonard's Hardwick. An Organ and Musical Evening to celebrate the restoration of the Hardwick organ will take place on Friday, 25th October at 7.30pm—this promises to be an outstanding evening and all are welcome, but please pre-book with Tony. Full details are on p.11.

Richard Tapp

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The NDOA Newsletter is published four times a year. Contributions are always welcome and should be submitted to the Editor, please - by 1st December for the next issue.

NORTHAMPTON AND DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity no. 274679

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Cover: All Saints', Mears Ashby. Photo by kind permission of Tony Edwards. Tony's account of the organs of Mears Ashby and Hardwick begins on p.3

THE ORGANS OF MEARS ASHBY AND HARDWICK

TONY EDWARDS

Nestled in the Northamptonshire countryside are the two delightful villages of Mears Ashby and Hardwick. They form part of the United Benefice of Mears Ashby Hardwick & Sywell cum Overstone. The two churches each contain wonderful village organs of great worth, and which are a delight to play. They are perfect for the church buildings they serve.

Mears Ashby All Saints'

The larger of the two villages is Mears Ashby. Set in the centre of the village sits All Saints' church, a large medieval building famed for its Doom Painting over the chancel arch. Within the chancel stands the 1903 Hill organ donated by the Stockdale family (*pictured, front cover*), which has given faithful service ever since and continues to do so.

The first striking things you see are the elaborate decorated front pipes - which are unusual for a Hill. The church possessed an organ from around 1860 which was built by the then-vicar of Earls Barton (Revd. David Knight) for his home. When he retired, he donated the organ to Mears Ashby church, and this gave good service until it was replaced by the present instrument in 1903. The village loved his decorative pipework so much, it was decided that the pipework should be incorporated into the instrument we see today. Directly under the pipes is situated the two-manual console. The organ has the same specification as when it was built, apart from the great Kerolophone, was replaced around 2006 with a Fifteenth to make the whole brighter. This was carried out whilst the organ underwent a complete restoration.

The present specification is:-

Great:

Open Diapason 8'
Dulciana 8'
Principal 8'
Stopped Diapason 8'
Harmonic Flute 4'
Fifteenth 2'

Swell:

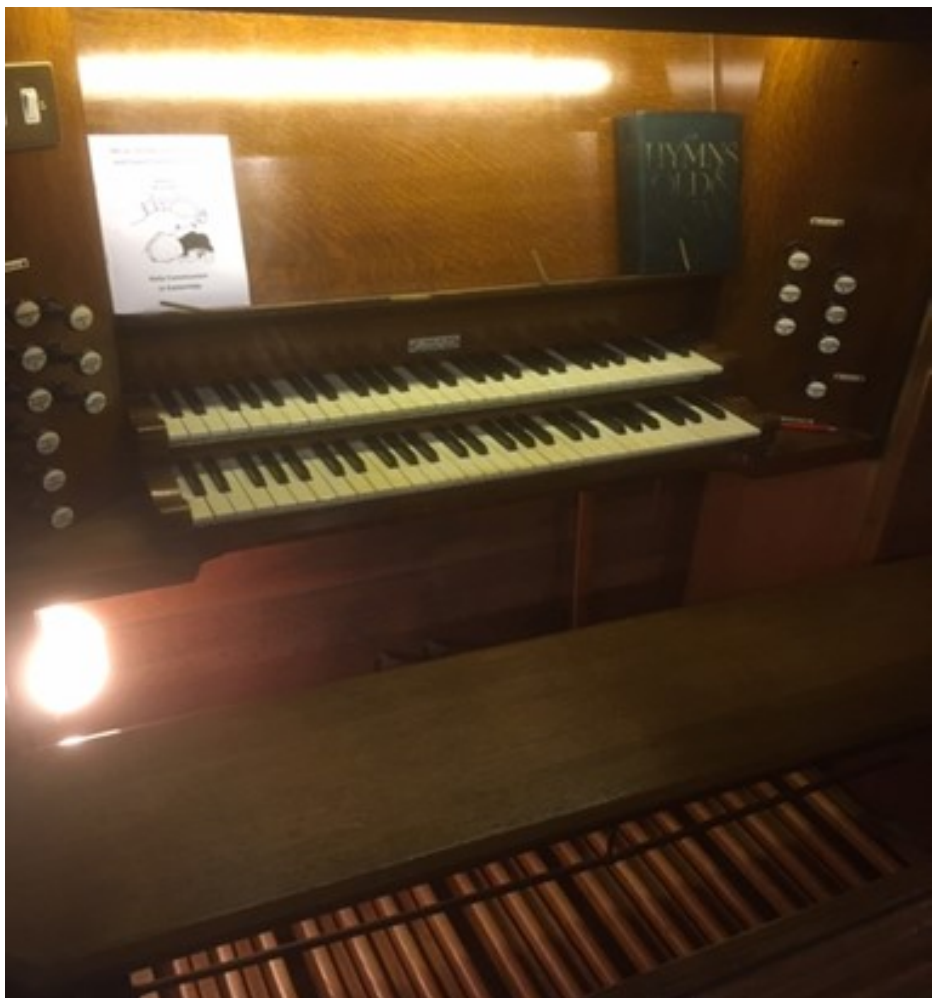
Stopped Diapason 8'
Celeste 8'
Salicional 8'
Lieblich Flute 4'
Oboe 8'
Cornopean 8'

Pedal:

Bourdon 16'
Sw to Gt; Sw to Ped; Gt to Ped.

One area that might be unique to Ashby is that the bellows are not situated under the instrument, but are located high up in the Victorian vestry roof behind the organ itself. This vestry was built to house

the organ, and having the bellows outside the casework means that the organ fits quite snugly into the vestry, leaving room behind for the vicar's vestry. A large arch in the west vestry wall allows the organ to speak well into the nave.



Hardwick St. Leonard



Set in a delightful fold of the countryside is the tiny village of Hardwick, numbering only seventy souls. In the centre of the village in immaculate grounds is the tiny church of St Leonard.

Seating only ninety people, this gem of a building holds some priceless treasures. The tower contains one of the oldest bells in the county, dating from 1410, and situated in the chancel is the original consecration window dating from around 1222. In the south-west corner of the nave is the two-manual Henry Jones organ dating from 1898. It was originally built for a side chapel in St George's Chapel, Windsor, but was acquired by the then-Rector (the Revd.

Ambrose Richards) for the church in Hardwick. The front pipes are very decorative for a small village.

The organ is a two-manual and pedal tracker which has just undergone a thorough restoration by Alan Goulding. The restoration included new bellows, complete new tracker rods as well as two brand-new keyboards in bone. In 1930 the organ was refurbished and the Swell Harmonic Flute was relocated to the Great making way for an Oboe on the Swell. This new stop was never successful and in the 1990 restoration, it was decided to scrap this stop and return the Harmonic Flute back to its rightful place. A new Geigen stop from the redundant organ in All Saints, Kingston-Upon-Thames was put on the Great so the organ returned back as it was when first built. This stop was voiced by Matthew Copley.

The specification is:

Great	Swell	Pedal
Open Diapason 8'	Leiblich Gedact 8'	Bourdon 16'
Dulciana 8'	Gamba 8'	
Clarabella 8'	Harmonic Flute 4'	Swell to Great
Geigen 4'	Octave Coupler	Great to Pedal



In November 2015, the parish embarked on the journey to raise £19,000 to have the organ restored, and this was completed in November 2018. Various events took place such as coffee mornings, beetle drives, village suppers and concerts—and a scheme whereby people could sponsor part of the organ was a resounding success. Some grants were also forthcoming, and the outcome is that Hardwick now has an organ that will give sterling service for many years ahead. A free Organ and Musical Evening is taking place in October to say thank you to everyone for all their hard work (see *page 11 for details*), and also a book is being put together about the history of the organ and its organists. £19,000 probably doesn't sound much in this day and age, but for a tiny community to raise this in a massive feat.

It is a real privilege to be involved with these two beautiful organs. These are wonderful examples of truly village instruments. Both are a delight to play and both can lead a full church easily. As well as being played for the usual round of Sunday worship, they also lead the newly-formed 4 Villages Community Choir which sings on a regular basis in our churches. So ... what next needs doing? We shall be moving on to look at restoring the one-manual Hunter organ in Sywell church, and in due time, the Porritt organ in Overstone, which never had its second manual added. Plenty to do as they say.

2019 MEMBERS' RECITAL

What a splendid evening—and what a lovely welcome from the kind people of Castle Hill URC for our Members' Recital on Saturday 20th July. From the delightful reception of visitors as they arrived, to the excellent and varied programme produced by our President, Alan Cufau, the audience had much to enjoy and appreciate.

Alan had set out to do something different: to showcase the organ and other instruments, including the human voice, and to give our student members and those who had benefitted from the David Morgan Education Fund a chance to demonstrate their talents alongside those of our more established members.

The evening can only be judged an unqualified success. Beginning with David German's *Festive Trumpet Tune*, our President set the tone for fifteen performers to bring us a wide and varied selection of music spanning five centuries.

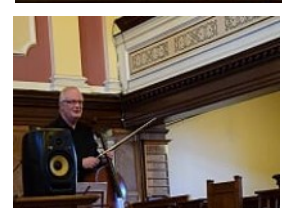
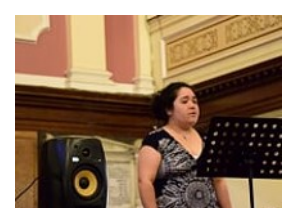
Organ and voice were superbly covered by Lauren Hollis, currently studying a Vocal Performance degree at Bath Spa University; Merryl Willis, who studied at the Royal Academy of Music and currently directs a local choir in Northampton; Richard Jackson, soon to start his Vocal and Operatic Studies Masters at Birmingham Conservatoire, and Rosanne Wilson, currently studying for her Grade VIII singing exam.

From the moment Lauren began to sing Faure's *Pie Jesu*, the audience was spellbound by the quality of the vocal performances. Merryl's *Jesu Joy* was simply outstanding; Richard's performance of Schubert's *Ave Maria* a joy to hear; and for me, Rosanne's singing of her father's (and our President-Elect's) *Beatitudes* accompanied by the composer himself, one of the highlights of the recital.

Other instruments were covered by Matthew Foster on violin in Rheinberger's *Prelude* from the Suite for Violin and Organ in C Minor, Vaughan Griffiths on cello playing Saint-Saëns *Prière* for Cello and Organ, John Wilson on piano accompanied by Roger Skoyles in an arrangement for organ and piano of César Franck's *Andantino*; and—by the miracle of technology - a live recording of Catherine Gunn playing Elgar's *Chanson de Matin*, accompanied by our President.

I should mention too the sterling efforts of our accompanists throughout the evening, which made the performances come to life. Alan also accompanied both Merryl and Richard, Mark Gibson accompanied Vaughan's cello performance, while Jonathan Harris richly deserved his vote of thanks from Alan at the end of the evening, accompanying Matthew, Merryl, and Richard in different pieces.

We also enjoyed a number of works for solo organ. In Part One of the programme Matthew Foster played the second movement of Bach's Trio Sonata No.2 in C minor; Mark Gibson, Gordon Young's *Prelude in Classic Style*; and Tony Edwards, Anthony Foster's *Jubilate Deo*. Matthew is one of our student members, a member of county ensembles and CBSO Youth Orchestra.



In Part Two we were treated to C.S. Lang's *Tuba Tune* played by Michael Henson, aged 15 and studying with Jonathan Harris at Finedon as well as playing regularly at Sulgrave, and Roger Skoyles with Bach's chorale prelude on *Liebster Jesu, Wir Sind Hier*,

The evening ended—far too soon—with Callum Alger's impeccable and moving performance of Buxtehude's Toccata in D Minor BuxWV155 and Reger's Toccata and Fugue in D Major/Minor on Buxtehude's theme. Callum has now taken up his new role as Organ Scholar at Westminster Cathedral following the completion of his studies at Birmingham Conservatoire. Callum was awarded first prize in the inaugural IAO/RCO Organ Competition in Peterborough, and the Dame Gillian Wier Prize in Birmingham. His performance of the Buxtehude and Reger pieces was superb—and his mastery of Castle Hill's Eminent digital organ transported us in spirit to Buxtehude's Lübeck and Reger's Wiesbaden.



The limitations of space prevent me from detailing the programme in full, but suffice it to say that Alan produced an evening of outstanding variety and quality, which was hugely enjoyable and a great showcase for the talents of our members, both those young in years and those young-at-heart. Fittingly, a retiring collection was taken for the David Morgan Education Fund, which had supported four of the evening's musicians, and which had been established in 2010 in memory of our former member Dr David Morgan, who had himself played at Castle Hill.

As John Wilson noted in proposing a vote of thanks to the performers, to the good people of Castle Hill who had welcomed us so warmly, and to Alan himself, an extremely high standard has been set for future recitals to seek to reach. What a delight!

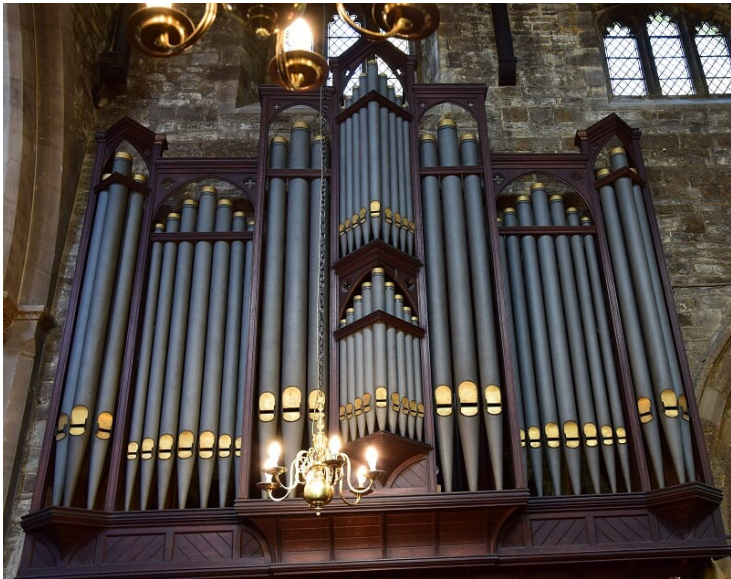


TWO OUT OF THREE—COULD DO BETTER!

ALAN CUFAUDE

Unusually for a Bank Holiday we enjoyed sunshine and record temperatures for this year's Bank Holiday Organ Crawl. Thank goodness it was cool inside both churches. We started at **St. Lawrence's Towcester** at 11am, which I had arranged many months ago with Revd. Ben Phillips who had subsequently moved on to a parish in Oxfordshire, but left instructions regarding our visit, unlike our second venue where our host had departed without instructions being left—but more of that later.

John Smith was our host at St. Lawrence's, and gave us a short history of the instrument and demonstrated its romantic sounds by playing the Adagio from Concert No.2 in G minor by Matthew Camidge, (the Camidge Family supplied York Minster with organists for 103 years), and a transcription of



the duet *Au Fond du Temple Saint* from Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*. The organ in St. Lawrence's was built in 1886 for St. Edmund's Northampton by William Hill & Co., and was relocated to St. Lawrence's in 1978, when St. Edmund's became redundant. It was then a two-manual instrument and was relocated as it was. The Choir department was added on a rebuild in 2000 by the Village Workshop, Finchingfield, using Hill pipework from St. Mark and St. John, Chelsea, stored by Willis. Three new pedal stops and the Swell Mixture were also added, but only the pedal Trombone (Wood) is not Hill pipework. The manual action is tracker and could be quite heavy when coupled, and there is no Swell to Choir coupler. John has served as organist on

occasions both and after the 2000 rebuild, and so has had the opportunity to make the comparison.

Prior to the St. Edmund's organ, there had been a 1906 two-manual and pedal Nicholson & Co. instrument in St. Lawrence's, which unfortunately was destroyed by fire when the church was vandalised in the 1970s. Before that there had been an historic instrument in the West Gallery which may have come from Fontainebleau. That organ once belonged to William Beckford; it was purchased at his death and brought from his mansion at Fonthill, Wiltshire. Earl Pomfret bought it and gave it to Towcester in 1817. It was known as the Fonthill organ. The V&A restored it and the museum now has it in storage.

Many members and friends played the instrument, delighting us with the following pieces:

- Colin Ashworth – *Cantabile* from Widor's Fourth Organ Symphony
- Philip Bricher – *Benedictus (Diapasons)* by William Lloyd Webber
- John Wilson – *In Nomine* by Richard Alwood (16th-century) and Voluntary on A minor Anon. (18th-century)
- Sheila Jackson - *Pie Jesu* by Andrew Lloyd Webber
- Eric Cave – *Pieds en L'Air* by Peter Warlock
- Mark Gibson – Voluntary in C minor by Maurice Greene
- Robert Tucker – *Now Rest beneath Night's Shadow* by Flor Peeters



- Chris Covington – *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, and *If I Fell*
- Alan Cufau – ‘Morning’ from the *Peer Gynt* Suite by Edvard Grieg, from a piano arrangement.

I was recently asked to play the Grieg at a funeral. It sounded quite well on the organ, and worth transcribing, but I understand from John Smith that Andrew Moore has beaten me to it in ‘Wonderful World of Grieg’ published by Mayhew in 2002.

Many thanks are due to John Smith for hosting our visit. The Association will be making a donation to St. Lawrence’s organ fund. Six of us then took lunch at 185 Watling Street, just over the A5 from St. Lawrence’s, which is a pub and restaurant I can heartily recommend. We were grateful for their efficient air-conditioning system.

Onwards then to **Stowe School**, to sample the four-manual Rushworth and Dreaper Organ in the school chapel. I was already a little apprehensive because I had not heard from James Speakman, the Assistant Director of Music and Chapel Organist, since May, but I assumed this was because we were still in the school holiday period. Alas, life is never so simple. Mr Speakman had left the school’s employment without alternative arrangements being made for our visit and no-one had contacted me in that regard. Whilst the security guard at the gate of the school premises was aware that we would arrive, he had been instructed that the visit would not proceed. Some members who had arrived before me were preparing to sing a chorus of John Stainer’s *Fling Wide the Gates*, no doubt to be answered by a Gandalf-like figure saying ‘You shall not pass!’.

I wrote subsequently to the Headmaster of Stowe School, Dr. Anthony Wallersteiner, and received a full apology with an invitation for Association members to visit at a later date. Member Jonathan Kingston has subsequently been appointed as Organ Advisor to the school following James’s Speakman’s departure, and a visit has now been arranged for Saturday 19th October at 10am, in place of the proposed talk on the organs of Poland and Denmark.

Unfortunately some members decided not to hang around for the visit at 4pm to the Parish Church of **St. Peter and St. Paul, Buckingham**, but the eight people who stayed the distance were well rewarded by the magnificent sounds of the restored Norman & Beard instrument.

The Organist, Mr. Robert Tucker, who was due to have hosted our visit was in fact on holiday in France, but like Revd. Ben Phillips at Towcester he made alternative arrangements and we were hosted by Brian Hirst, a member of the choir. His absence came as something of a disappointment to our own Robert Tucker who was particularly looking forward to meeting his namesake. Nevertheless the Buckingham Robert Tucker had provided me with a written history of the organ which I have summarised for you below.



The organ, built by Norman & Beard in 1913 was originally installed at St. John’s Aylesbury. Following closure of that church it was moved to Buckingham in 1969 and overhauled with some rather extreme tonal alteration, probably for sufficient brightness.

In 2015 the instrument was restored, including new stops in accordance with the original schemes. The console is mobile and includes provision for a choir organ, subject to raising the necessary funds for the

additional wind-chest and the Clarinet. The Tromba is already in place and all other pipes are ready in storage, having come from a redundant Norman & Beard organ at St. Andrew's, Kettering.

Peter Collins carried out the 2015 redesign and restoration. The manual wind-chests were replaced and the pedal wind-chests have retained their main power pneumatics. The original stop list has remained with some additions. A new solid-state switching system was introduced, and the keys converted to optical switching. The stop action is now totally electric, together with a modern accessory scheme. The whole instrument was assembled onto a new platform enabling the console to be detached and moved to the stage for recitals. Geoffrey Coffin of York has been reviewing and amending some of the work by Peter Collins following his death and folding of the company.

This instrument is now a delight to play. It has some beautiful voices. The string tones are divine and the Tromba is so impressive I wished I had brought my copy of David German's *Festive Trumpet Tune* and risked other members saying 'He's not playing that again!'.

Several members and friends played the instrument delighting us with the following pieces:

- Philip Bricher – *Paen* by Philip Moore, and a Hymn Prelude on *Brother James's Air* by Noel Rawsthorne
- John Wilson – *Elgar Vesper Voluntaries*
- Robert Tucker (NDOA) – Another of RT's awesome improvisations, and Trio in B flat by Rheinberger
- Alan Cufau – Chorale Prelude by Flor Peeters on *Wachet auf ruft uns die stimme* and Partita on *Alles ist an Gottes Segen*.

Many thanks are due to Robert Tucker and Brian Hirst for hosting our visit. The Association will be making a donation to St. Peter and St. Paul's organ fund. Before we departed, Brian showed us his restored Austin 10 motor car dating from the 1930's in which he had driven to church.

The title of this article reminds me of my school reports. We will do better—do join us on the re-arranged visit to Stowe School on 19th October. It is a Rushworth and Dreaper instrument dating from 1922, with four manuals and pedals, and 79 speaking stops!

There are opportunities in the forthcoming year to forge links between the Association and the young organists at Stowe School, such as the 2020 Members' Recital which is due to be held on Saturday 15th February 2020 at St. Andrews Parish Church Kimbolton, and then on the morning of Saturday 9th May 2020 the Young Organists' Day at St. Mary and St. Giles Stony Stratford with member Jonathan Kingston at the very fine Willis organ. So, as the title suggests, something much better may well come from our unfortunate experience at Stowe.

Editor's note: Alan has kindly provided full specifications for each of the organs visited. Sadly space does not permit their inclusion here but if any member would like a copy do please email editor.ndoa@gmail.com.





THOMAS TROTTER AT CASTLE ASHBY

A large and appreciative audience gathered at St Mary Magdalene, Castle Ashby for the church's annual organ recital, given this year by Thomas Trotter, Birmingham City Organist, organist of St Margaret, Westminster, and renowned international concert virtuoso.

Thomas performed a varied and eclectic programme, beginning with Bach's *Fantasia in G*, BWV 572, before playing the four movements of Handel's *Organ Concerto Op.7 no. 41*. Lesser known, but much appreciated, the *Pepusch Voluntary* demonstrated the colours of the organ well, whilst Thomas rounded off the first half of the recital with the *Toccata, Villancico and Fuga (B.A.CH)* by the 20th-century Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera.

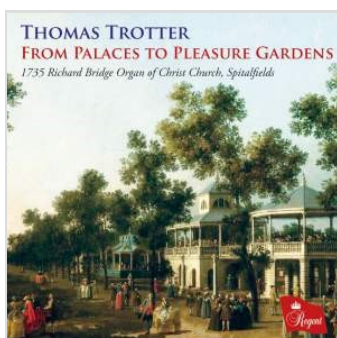
The second half of the recital began with Vaughan Williams' *Three Welsh Preludes*, respectively on *Bryn Calfaria*, *Rhosymedre*, and *Hyfrydol*—well known, but nonetheless well-liked and appreciated by the audience. Perhaps less familiar, Rowley's *Rustic Suite* took us from a *Sunlit Morning* through a *June Idyll* to a *Rustic Scherzo*—highly appropriate, perhaps for the very rural setting of Castle Ashby.

Thomas concluded his performance with Boëllmann's *Suite Gothique*—again, very well known, but not perhaps performed in full in recital so often in recent years, and it was good to hear the Suite in its entirety. The camera and screen also allowed the audience to see the extent of Thomas's virtuosity in the final *Toccata*—not easily rendered on an organ with playing aids limited to the original three mechanical coupler pedals from 1872, a straight pedal-board, and a lever swell.

Pietro Yon's *Toccatina for the flute* performed on the Castle Ashby Nicholson's exquisite 4' Great Flute ended the evening on a somewhat calmer note, in time for the maestro to be mobbed by members of his fan club, both local and those who had travelled from a much greater distance.

The annual Castle Ashby recital is most fortunate to be supported by a loyal audience, some of whom have now been to every one since the recitals started some sixteen years ago, as well as by the most welcome addition of new faces. It was a delight to welcome a number of NDOA members to the evening, and on behalf of the PCC the Rector, the Revd. Paula York, thanked Thomas for his outstanding performance, and the audience for their participation.

The 2020 Castle Ashby recital will take place on Saturday 4th July 2020. The recitalist will be Rachel Mahon, Assistant DoM at Coventry, who will be well-known to members from the Association's visit to the cathedral earlier in the year.



From Palaces to Pleasure Gardens. Thomas Trotter has released a brand-new recording on the Regent label, REGCD526, recorded on the 1735 Richard Bridge Organ of Christ Church, Spitalfields.

It covers a wide range of sacred and secular music from Georgian London, including works by Corelli, J.C. Bach and Stanley, as well as the Handel and Pepusch works which Thomas played in his Castle Ashby recital.

Available from prestomusic.com at £10 plus P&P.

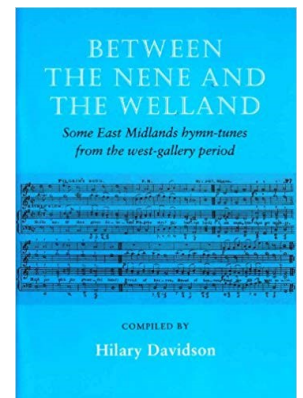
MORE MARVELS FROM ST. MARY'S...

JOHN WILSON

The organ of St Mary the Virgin, Wellingborough, has featured in this Newsletter several times recently, including a piece by me about Lee Dunleavy's French Connection recital in May. Now here is St Mary's again – but that is no surprise, as John Burden* and Lee Dunleavy (Director of Music) between them keep a flow of monthly organ recitals going at that very fine church, usually on a Saturday morning. The recitals are free, but with a donation invited at the end, either for the music, or the refreshments – or both!

I missed Lee's All-Yorkshire recital in June, but did get to the ones on 6th July and 3rd August. The July recital was to mark the occasion of Canon Hilary Davidson's ninetieth birthday, and it was given by Simon Bland, formerly a pupil at Oundle School, and now teaching at Haileybury School. It was to have been given by Lee, but he was unable to play at that time (see below).

Canon Davidson, known to many readers of the Newsletter as the former Diocesan Organ Advisor and incumbent at Roade, is also known to local choirs as the publisher of a book of hymn-tunes - 'Between the Nene and the Welland.' This is a collection of East Midlands tunes from the West Gallery period of the late 18th-and early 19th-centuries. Members may recall that copies were handed out the West Gallery event hosted by last year's NDOA President, Mark Gibson, at Abington Avenue URC (*and are still available on Amazon—Ed*).



It was good to see Canon Davidson at the recital and to know that he has renewed his membership of NDOA for another year! It was also good to hear the organ so well played by someone who began his organ studies in our county, at Oundle School. Simon's programme included Mendelssohn, Bach, Dupré, Franck and Mulet, with a couple of 'lollipops' by Elgar and the little-known Allegretto by Frank Bridge, reminiscent of his better-known *Rosemary* for piano. The programme showed off the versatility of the instrument, and Simon did it full justice.

By August, Lee Dunleavy was out of hospital and celebrated with a programme called 'Too Hot to Handel!' The pieces arranged from Handel included the *Royal Fireworks Music* and the *Water Music*. The 'original' Handel was his Organ Concerto in F, known as the *Cuckoo and the Nightingale*. The recital ended with Guilment's *Marche religieuse sur un motif du 'Lift up your heads' du 'Messiah' de Haendel*, op.15/2 of 1861. It was a fine tribute from a late 19th-century French romantic organist to an early 18th-century German/English baroque one, and a fitting way to end Lee's welcome return to St Mary's. I look forward to hearing many more recitals by him and more music-making at St Mary's.

**John would be glad to add people to his circulation list for music at St Mary's if they wish—contact jonwburden@aol.com.*

ST LEONARD'S, HARDWICK ORGAN AND MUSICAL EVENING Friday 25th October, 7.30pm

There will be a Organ and Musical Evening to celebrate the restoration of the 1898 Henry Jones at Hardwick Parish Church on Friday October 25th at 7.30pm.

Entry is by free ticket only (to assist with catering) and these can be obtained from Tony Edwards on 01933 276433 or e-mail with your address to: TonyE1960@aol.com.

OUNDLÉ INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 2019

HELEN MURPHY

OUNDLÉ
INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL
4-13 JULY 2019

I've been going to the Oundle International Festival for more years than I care to remember – just how long was made clear at the 25th Anniversary Recital by Anne Page at the Church of the Most Holy Name of Jesus (generally known as the 'Jesus Church') on 12th July. The 25th anniversary in question was that of the installation of the Richard Bower organ, which had been enabled by a grant from the Oundle Music Trust supported by the RC diocese of Northampton (which provided the gallery and fittings). Before the start, Kenneth Richardson (current Artistic Director) introduced James Parsons (founder of the original Oundle Organ Festival 34 years ago), John Miley and a third person (whose name I didn't catch), as the main force behind the project to install an organ there as a facility for the festival.

Some time ago, this morphed into two separate, but connected and complementary parts – firstly, Oundle for Organists (currently under the directorship of Ann Elise Smoot), with students from as far afield as the USA and Hong Kong, as well as the UK, studying with an international team of distinguished tutors; and secondly, the Oundle International Festival, offering a wide range of events: ceilidh, opera, art, folk, jazz, theatre and classical (though we haven't done a community opera for a few years, we did have one written for us).

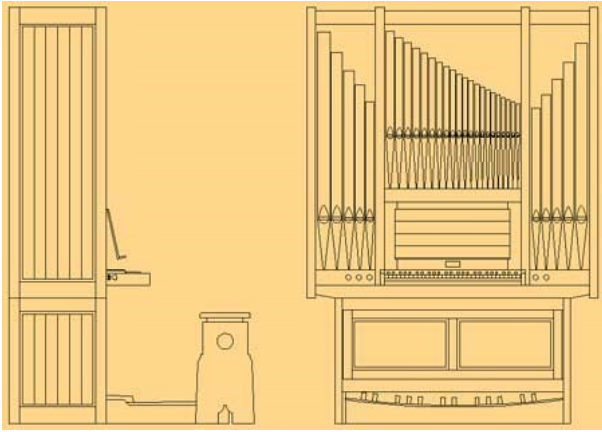
And how does the Oundle for Organists play a part in the festival? As well as attending the various classes and lessons, the students have the opportunity to try out the organ in a number of local churches (such as the Jesus Church in Oundle and others beyond) and attend the recitals which are part of the main festival. This year, the Vincent Woodstock instrument at Fotheringhay (also installed via the Trust) was now accessible again after having been kept carefully under wraps while restoration work was underway on the church tower. So, as well as Anne Page in the Jesus Church, we had Jeremy Filsell on the Frobenius in the school chapel, Martin Baker at Fotheringhay and David Goode at Woodnewton – all four recitalists being course tutors, along with Ronny Krippner, James McVinnie, Richard Pinel and Ann Elise Smoot.

Whoever or whatever else may come and go, there is always a 'Bach Walk' – involving a little bit of gentle waking between villages (and a pub!). This year, the walkers met at the White Swan in Woodnewton, walked to Fotheringhay to hear Martin Baker, then walked back to Woodnewton for supper, followed by the late-night recital there by David Goode. Last year (2018) was rather a special Bach Walk – it celebrated the completion of the Orgelbüchlein Project, curated by William Whitehouse, whereby the 'missing' 118 pieces, having only the title of the chorale melody at the top of Bach's manuscript page, have been finished by composers from all over the world.

William (and his fellow walkers – an ever-changing group of supporters) started at St Lawrence's, Towcester and, proceeding via Northampton (All Saints'), Little Houghton (St Mary's), Finedon (St Mary the Virgin), Titchmarsh (St Mary's), Oundle (the school chapel), Warmington (St Mary's) and thence to Peterborough Cathedral. At each stage of the journey, a recital was given, sometimes by William alone, sometimes with someone else (not necessarily an organist) – all completed within nine days and consisting of Orgelbüchlein and/or Orgelbüchlein Project compositions. This was quite an achievement!

In previous years, the Festival used to conclude with a Festival Eucharist sung in Fotheringhay Church by the students supported by various local singers (for which we would have a series of rehearsals). However, for various reasons, this does not happen any more in quite the same way – there is still a Festival Eucharist, and local singers are still invited, but without the previous advance notice (details only appear in the full programme) there is not time to plan and rehearse as one would wish. Ah well... autres temps, autres moeurs.

That little disappointment apart, the Oundle International Festival is something that we in NDOA should be more aware of. Perhaps next year, I might see some of you there...



THE ABBEY CENTRE TICKELL—AN UPDATE

The Abbey Centre Tickell—Opus 19—has found a new home at Cheltenham Ladies' College, where it will join the 3-manual Tickell installed in 2006 in the College's Princess Hall. Sarah Baldock, formerly DoM at Chichester, is Organist at the College, and the Revd. Dr Ted Hale, Minister Emeritus at Abbey, reports that the pipe organ is already included in the College's extra-curricular activities and that Sarah has 12 students under instruction plus a waiting list.

The Abbey Centre instrument will be installed on a small, moveable platform which will allow the organ to be transportable to facilitate maximum use by Sarah and her students. It will also mean that the College can invite local primary schools to send pupils for an introduction to the pipe organ. Dr Hale notes that there is some satisfaction in knowing that the organ will be used for training new young organists, and will be in constant use, and that surely the late Miss Winnie Throssall, who originally donated the organ to the Chapel, would give her blessing to its future.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN—BY BATTLESHIP!

James Jephson Binns was, of course, one of the most famous of the Yorkshire organ builders of the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries, and earned his reputation for high-quality, sturdy workmanship leading to the nickname ' Battleship Binns'. His flagship organ for Nottingham's Albert Hall remains in fine voice after restoration in recent years. Wellingborough's own example of Binns' work is the very substantial four-manual rebuild of the earlier 1875 Hill at High Street United Reformed Church.



A summer evening in mid-August saw an enthusiastic audience gather at High Street URC to hear American organist Christian Schoen perform an interesting and varied programme. Having studied organ at the University of Michigan, Southern Methodist University, Capital University, and the University of Texas, Christian came to the town having performed extensively throughout the United States and the United Kingdom.

His programme began with Percy Fletcher's *Festival Toccata*, and took the audience through a Merkel Prelude and Fugue, Franklin Ashdown's *Tuba Tune* and Vierne's *Berceuse* before concluding the first half of the recital with James Mansfield's *Toccata*.

Following the interval, Christian played two Chorale Preludes from Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*, an organ transcription of the Introduction and March from Walton's *Battle of Britain Suite*, and a Franck Andantino—which showcased the Binns' flutes quite superbly—before concluding with an epic performance of the *Toccata* from Widor's *Symphony No. 5*. Whilst some of the organ's reed stops were perhaps a little out-of-tune, the quality and presence of the organ shone through, and the string and flute stops which Christian used in the Vierne were quite beautiful.

Coupled with the warmest of welcomes given to the audience by members of the church, it was great to hear the High St. organ in recital, and it is to be hoped that further recitals will be held in the future.

ASSOCIATION NOTES AND NEWS

Jem Lowther FRCO. Many congratulations to our member Jem Lowther, DoM at All Saints' Northampton, on the award of his FRCO.

Rescheduled visit to Stowe School. Our visit will take place on Saturday 19th October, from 10am to 12.30pm. This visit will take the place of the presentation previously planned for that day. Please look out for fuller details from Helen in due course.

The **Annual General Meeting** of the Association, and Inauguration of John Wilson as our President, will take place on Saturday 9th November at SS. Peter & Paul, Abington (the Church in the Park) commencing at 3pm, followed by Choral Evensong, directed by Tim Dolan.

Midlands Organ Day 2020. MOD 2020 will take place on Saturday 26th September 2020 in Northampton. Fuller details later, but do please save the date.

Presidential Year 2020—Probable Programme. Our President-elect, John Wilson, has prepared the following excellent programme for the year. Do please mark the dates in your calendar now.

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| Nov. 2019 | Sat 9th AGM and Inauguration, followed by Choral Evensong directed by Tim Dolan.
3pm at SS Peter & Paul, Abington Park, Northampton. |
| Jan 2020 | Sat 11th afternoon. Members' CD choice.
With quiz and tea, at Alan Cufau's house, 2 Frank Large Walk, Northampton. |
| Feb 2020 | Sat 15th afternoon. Members' Recital/Composers' Day (with pub lunch)
Kimbolton PC (Robert Tucker, host) |
| March 2020 | Sat 14th afternoon. Corby Crawl.
Jonathan Mack, Roger Skoyles (house organs); SS Peter & Andrew, Corby; St Michael's, Gt Oakley (Peter Collins organ) |
| May 2020 | Sat 9th morning. Young Organists' Day jointly with RSCM at St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford, with Jonathan Kingston |
| June 2020 | Sat 6th all day. Visit to Southwell , Nottinghamshire.
David Butterworth house organ, Halam; Southwell Minster, to include Evensong. |
| July 2020 | Sat 18th afternoon. Visit to Benedict Cadbury at Thorpe Underwood.
House organ (Walker); talk on the Northampton Villages Organ Trust; also Harrington church. |
| Aug 2020 | Monday 31st (Bank Holiday) afternoon.
President's Garden Party at 84 Headlands, Kettering (with house 'organ' and slideshow of world organs, etc.) |
| Sep 2020 | Sat 26th all day. Midlands Organ Day, based in Northampton. |
| Oct 2020 | Sat 17th or 24th Reluctant Organist afternoon at Hardwick PC (Tony Edwards, host) |
| Nov 2020 | AGM and inauguration. Date and venue to be advised in due course. |

Happy Birthday—Canon Hilary Davidson. NDOA sends belated congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of the 90th birthday of our member, and former President, the Revd. Canon Hilary Davidson. John Wilson refers to Canon Davidson's excellent book on local hymns in his review of Simon Bland's recital on p.11, and of course his *Choirs, Bands and Organs: a history of church music in Northamptonshire and Rutland* is the seminal work on our 'patch' - and certainly never far from your Editor's computer keyboard.

RSCM Award for Helen Murphy. In addition to her outstanding work for NDOA and at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Wellingborough, our Hon. Secretary, Helen Murphy, has been awarded a musical development scholarship, worth up to £1000, by the Royal School of Church Music. Helen took up the award through a week's residence at the RSCM Summer School in August. Congratulations Helen!

Hon. Treasurer. NDOA is very pleased to announce that our member **Glyn Hughes** (*pictured, right*) has kindly agreed to act as Hon. Treasurer, in succession to Jonathan Harris. Glyn plays the organ and leads the benefice choir in the Yardley Hastings Benefice. Your Committee is most grateful to Glyn for taking on this role, and to Jonathan for his excellent work over the years. Glyn's contact details can be found on p.2 of this Newsletter.



St. Mary and St. Giles, Stony Stratford. A select group of members and friends much enjoyed an invitation to come and play the splendid three-manual Willis at SMSG, and sincere thanks are due to our member Jonathan Kingston for his invitation. Originally from St. George's, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, the Willis was installed in SMSG in the mid-1960s by Starmer Shaw. A new console was installed by F H Browne & Sons in 2010. The remainder of the organ was comprehensively overhauled by 2014-15 and new casework installed at the same time (*pictured, left*).

Obituary – Bernadette Rogers. *Helen Murphy writes*—NDOA member Bernadette Rogers died in May after a short illness. Before moving to Northamptonshire many years ago, she had followed a career as a scientist. As well as her love of music (and the organ in particular) she had had a strong faith since childhood and was active in her parish of Woodford Halse not only musically but also as a church warden, helping to achieve a number of projects, and in the wider community as a parish councillor. Although I did not know Bernadette personally (we had only the occasional e-mail communication), I have been able to write these few words of appreciation with the help of the Revd. Stevie Cross at Byfield who conducted the service of thanksgiving for her life. It is understood that Bernadette's family are considering the future of the 1870s Hill organ which Bernadette restored and installed at her home.

List of NDOA Presidents. Readers may recall that Barry Wadeson noted in the Summer 2018 edition of the Newsletter that the Association used to produce a printed card setting out the year's events, including on its reverse a list of past Presidents since the Association's formation in 1921. Barry revived the tradition by including an updated list on the final page of that edition of the Newsletter, beginning with the presidency of Mr C.J. King, Organist of St. Matthew's Northampton and composer of the splendid hymn tune, *Northampton*, sadly omitted from some recent hymnals. Barry noted the intention to continue to update and publish the list annually, and your present Editor is pleased to uphold the tradition by including the current list overleaf.

NORTHAMPTON AND DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

Presidents of the Association

1921 – 22	Mr. C. J. King	1973 – 74	Miss O. M. Tomalin*
1922 – 23	Mr. W. Handel-Hall*	1974 – 75	Mr. S. Watts
1923 – 24	Mr. R. Richardson-Jones*	1975 – 76	Mr. G. S. Philcox*
1924 – 25	Mr. F. Haddon Bond	1976 – 77	Mr. M. Woodward*
1925 – 26	Mr. J. C. Dunlop	1977 – 78	Mr. M. Holland
1926 – 27	Mr. S. Tomes	1978 – 79	Mr. J. Wearmouth
1927 – 28	Mr. R. Bartle	1979 – 80	Mr. L. Brown
1928 – 29	Mr. R. W. Palmer	1980 – 81	Mr. R. Davies*
1929 – 30	Mr. J. Robinson	1981 – 82	Mr. M. Whitehall
1930 – 31	Mr. E. A. Oliver	1982 – 83	Mr. A. J. K. Moodie
1931 – 32	Mr. W. Crawley	1983 – 84	Miss O. M. Tomalin*
1932 – 33	Mr. W. Handel-Hall*	1984 – 85	Mr. G. S. Philcox*
1933 – 34	Mr. R. Richardson-Jones*	1985 – 86	Mr. K. H. Tickell*
1934 – 35	Miss L. M. Harris	1986 – 87	Mr. W. R. Gates*
1935 – 36	Mr. A. J. Addis	1987 – 88	Mr. A. Shenton*
1936 – 37	Mr. B. Archer	1988 – 89	Mr. A. Shenton*
1937 – 38	Mr. S. J. Loasby	1989 – 90	Mrs. J. Pearson*
1938 – 39	Rev. R. M. Tuke	1991 – 92	Mrs. J. Pearson*
1939 – 40	Mr. P. R. Pfaff	1992 – 93	Mr. D. Barford*
1943 – 44	Mr. R. Richardson-Jones*	1993 – 94	Mr. D. Barford*
1944 – 45	Mrs. S. Lievesley	1994 – 95	Mr. H. W. Wilson
1945 – 46	Mr. C. Davies	1995 – 96	Mr. R. Davies*
1946 – 47	Mr. Gilberthorpe	1996 – 97	Mr. M. Woodward*
1947 – 48	Mr. H. T. Jewell	1997 – 98	Mr. M. Latham
1948 – 49	Mr. F. J. Morley	1998 – 99	Revd. Canon C. H. Davidson*
1949 – 50	Mr. W. J. Pain	1999 – 00	Mr. A. S. Tarry*
1950 – 51	Mr. R. C. Felce*	2000 – 01	Revd. Canon G. Brockhouse
1951 – 52	Miss P. E. Brown	2001 – 02	Mr. R. D. Smith
1952 – 53	Mr. B. G. Hall*	2002 – 03	Revd. Canon P. Rose*
1953 – 54	Mr. W. R. Gates*	2003 – 04	Mr. F. Field
1954 – 55	Mr. H. Fussey*	2004 – 05	Mr. D. Barford*
1955 – 56	Mr. R. S. Pauley	2005 – 06	Mr. M. Woodward*
1956 – 57	Mr. C. J. Walker	2006 – 07	Mr. W. R. Gates
1957 – 58	Mr. R. C. Felce*	2007 – 08	Mr. K. H. Tickell*
1958 – 59	Mr. B. G. Hall*	2008 – 09	Mr. J. Harris*
1959 – 60	Mr. A. S. Tarry*	2009 – 10	Mr J. Harris*
1960 – 61	Mr. R. A. Floyd	2010 – 11	Revd. Canon C. H. Davidson*
1961 – 62	Mr. H. F. Brown	2011 – 12	Revd. Canon P. Rose*
1962 – 63	Mr. J. Bertalot	2012 – 13	Mr. S. Moore
1963 – 64	Miss B. W. Burman	2013 - 14	Mr. L. Dunleavy*
1964 – 65	Mr. H. Fussey*	2014 - 15	Mr. T. Edwards
1965 – 66	Mr. H. J. Nash	2015 - 16	Mr. L. Dunleavy*
1966 – 67	Mr. W. R. Gates*	2016 - 17	Miss. S. Hart
1967 – 68	Mr. G. L. Mayo	2017 - 18	Mr. M. Gibson
1968 – 69	Mr. M. B. Nicholas	2018 - 19	Mr. A.R. Cufau de (current)
1969 – 70	Mr. D. Barford*		
1970 – 71	Mr. G. Care		
1971 – 72	Dr. P. Robertson		
1972 – 73	Mr. S. Holland		

* Denotes multiple terms of office