



*Kent County Organists'
Association*

February 2025 Journal





Kent County Organists' Association

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Notification of change of address and membership matters should be sent to the

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY email: secretary@kcoa.org.uk.

Articles and letters for publication in the Journal should be sent to the

JOURNAL EDITOR

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not commit either the JOURNAL or the KCOA

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Photographs

Cover: Winchester Cathedral *by Colin Jilks*
 (Canon EOS 5DSR TS-E 24mm rising front lens f20 4sec iso-100)

Others: *As marked*

Sub Editors: *Stephen Banfield, Kevin Grafton & Nicholas King*

Set in Hoefler Text

Printed by Jenwood Printers, New Road, Sheerness, Kent.

Tel: 01795 663861

THE KENT COUNTY ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION welcomes new members with an interest in the organ and its music. Also those who enjoy visiting churches with appreciation of architecture and heritage. Membership of the Association is not based on the ability to play; we welcome equally those who enjoy listening, as well as those who enjoy playing.

Our President writes

By Stephen Banfield

READERS WILL recall my email plea at the end of November for help in getting us beyond our membership of 99. Alas, we promptly lost three people. We regret the passing of Mrs Elizabeth Moore in December. The other two decided not to renew, notwithstanding our Treasurer and Membership Secretary's heroic efforts to let nobody slip through the net. (Talking of our Treasurer, we offer him our congratulations—see p.98 of the current *Organists' Review*.) I'm happy to say, however, that we have acquired the five new members needed to reach the heady total of 101, a number not exceeded where the KCOA is concerned since 2011. Three of them are already familiar guests at events; another is Tim Parsons, long a good friend to the Association, whom many will know from his work at Holy Trinity Folkestone, and the fifth, an associate member, is Levente Vas, 2024 Competition intermediate class winner who plays at Aylesford when not away studying at Merton College Oxford. We welcome them all, as we do those who joined us earlier, including another two associate members, Noah Davis of Otford and Charles Francis of Faversham. (A very special greeting, Charlie: we look forward to your recital at St Chad's during the KCOA trip to Birmingham in March.) But another English association is right behind us with 100 members, so keep 'em coming!

The size and scope of this issue of the *Journal* again testify to a healthy and lively association. We continue to profile new members. Chris Anthony was introduced in my previous column; Colin Hartley will already be familiar, having been a regular meeting attender since he joined. On other pages, Gavin Barrett's article will interest many, and I use this opportunity to thank him for the hugely generous wealth of CDs he donated to the Christmas raffle. Patti Whaley's on organs in Istanbul coincides with my return in spare moments to unconsolidated research on the history of music in the 'British World' (as opposed to Empire, a more politically restricted term). One of the key indications of a place that has been within the British World's sphere is the presence of organs by British builders. Most of these, many now crumbling to dust, have of course been in Protestant, above all Anglican, churches, but not all, witness the concert instruments in Japan and elsewhere.

The next two KCOA meetings branch out into new ventures, with the improvisation workshop at St Leonard's Hythe on 1 February and the Association trip to Birmingham, 10 to 13 March. Our visits beyond the region, and even overseas, have previously been day trips, so the Birmingham visit, meticulously organised by Jim Bryant, is a new departure indeed, taking in three cathedrals, a conservatoire master-class, and three recitals by renowned players. But we are not ignoring outreach, and will be discussing in committee how we can contribute to the RCO's Play the Organ year, which will have been inaugurated in London by our member Gerard Brooks by the time you read this.

Review of recent Meetings

A visit to Eastbourne

ON SATURDAY 14 September fifteen members and their guests visited Eastbourne on the Sussex coast. It was a beautiful sunny day and those who arrived early were able to take in the seafront and the town at their best. Much of the land on which Eastbourne is built was owned by the Duke of Devonshire and when sold off in the 19th century was subject to strict covenants relating to the type of premises permitted. The seafront is lined with hotels and guest houses but there are no amusement arcades or tacky gift shops. A Victorian pier, an Art Deco(?) bandstand and Martello towers dating from the Napoleonic era complete the ensemble. Just to the west of the town rise the cliffs up to Beachy Head. Eastbourne attracts holidaymakers and language students and is popular as a retirement destination.

The first port of call was Christ Church, a grade 2* listed building consecrated in 1859 to serve the needs of people in the east end of the town, which had expanded following the arrival of the railway ten years earlier. The priest-in-charge, Father Josh Delia, welcomed the group, briefing members on the history of this poor working-class parish in a generally opulent town and pointing out significant architectural features of its large church designed by a pupil of Pugin. John Ross, our host for the afternoon, introduced the *Father Willis* organ which was built in 1880 and through lack of subsequent funds survives tonally unaltered.



Father Willis 1880 organ Photo M Curtis

The case, to all appearances polygonal, is unusual with a façade of decorated pipes fronting a large two-manual and pedal instrument. The action is also unusual, being Barker-Willis pneumatic lever to the Great and the three Swell to Great couplers at octave, unison and sub-octave pitches, enabling them to be drawn without any noticeable increase in key weight. A letter from *Henry Willis III* of 1963 states “The organ has an unusual and cleverly designed site, the Great organ is tonally magnificent and with a good development of upper work. The Swell organ is subservient to the Great organ and typical of its period. The pedal organ is limited to three stops - a meagre provision, which must have been due to restriction of finance and/or restriction of space”.

The organ has been well maintained

over the decades. A balanced swell pedal was fitted in 1948. John briefly demonstrated some individual stops as well as the full Swell and Great choruses. He concluded by playing a transcription of *Air from the Orchestral Suite in D* by J S Bach, followed by Stanford's *Postlude in D minor*. Several members then put the instrument through its paces with a selection of composed pieces and improvisations, and thanks to Alistair Curtis, a temporary malfunction of the Great Tromba drawstop was quickly rectified.

John worked in secondary education in Eastbourne for over 20 years and has now chosen to make the town his retirement home—and how! The party continued by car and on foot uphill to ‘Zermatt,’ where he has lived since mid-June 2024. Built in the mid-1920s, this gorgeous house retains many original features but has also undergone a substantial renovation this year. John proceeded to demonstrate his two residence organs, which are in separate rooms. In the music room, which has a magnificent sea view, there is an organ built by *Vincent Woodstock* in 2017 for the late Gordon Frier FRCO of Glasgow. Frier was well known there and further afield and gave over 600 recitals on the organ at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery. He acquired a succession of house organs over some fifty years and this was his final commission. After his death it was advertised for sale in November 2023 and, following a visit to Glasgow to inspect the instrument, John bought it. *Woodstock* himself was commissioned with dismantling and transporting it and reassembling it at ‘Zermatt’. This took place over a period of three months after Easter 2024, and was not without incident when it was discovered that while the ceiling was *just*



Škrabl practice organ Photo M Curtis

higher than the case, two pipes invisibly protruded above the latter. *Woodstock* then returned for three days just before the KCOA visit to complete the rear case, re-site the two offending pipes, and undertake some tonal finishing. The organ has 17 stops spread over its four manuals and pedals, with the 6-stop Swell under expression. The keyboard action and couplers are entirely mechanical, the stop action and adjustable combinations electric. The organ has just one pedal stop, a 16-foot Violone, of which the lowest 12 pipes are stopped. Pedal couplers from Great, Swell and Solo manuals expand the pedal provision, including the 16-foot Fagotto and 8-foot Trumpet on the Solo manual which can become pedal reeds. John demonstrated the instrument by playing Bach's ‘*St Anne*’ Fugue



Vincent Woodstock organ 2017

Photo S Banfield

(‘Zermatt’ is in St Anne’s Road) and the *Festive March in D* by Henry Smart, which showcased the three Solo reed stops, not to mention colourful Victorian taste.

Visitors then moved to the four-stop Škrabl practice organ in the dining room. This was commissioned by John in 2017 when Škrabl was building two similar instruments for other UK customers. It has four independent stops, two on each manual at 8ft and 4ft pitch. Manual I, which is the lower, is permanently coupled to the 30-note straight pedalboard whose notes do not however depress the manual’s keys. Coupling of the manuals is achieved by pulling the upper manual forward. The two contrasting 8ft stops, a Bourdon and Rohr Flute, are delicate in tone and complement one another. The 4ft Open Flute on the lower manual can be used as a solo stop or added to the 8ft Bourdon for brightness. The upper manual 4ft Spitz-gambe can be used in combination and is also effective as a solo stop, especially when played an octave

lower. The organ has digital pedal stops added by Hugh Banton in 2018, including flutes at 16ft and 8ft and reeds at 16, 8 and 4ft pitch, adding versatility to the organ. John concluded his demonstration with a short *Voluntary in A minor* by Thomas Weelkes, one-time organist of Chichester Cathedral in Sussex, followed by the chorale prelude ‘*Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott,*’ *BuxWV 199*, by Dietrich Buxtehude.

Members were then able to try both organs for themselves - there was much to-ing and fro-ing between rooms and some Ives-like polyphony as doors opened and shut - before the party adjourned for a splendid tea of sandwiches, cakes and scones with jam and cream. Rarely have KCOA members experienced such a civilised domestic treat (when did you last hear a pipe organ live from a comfortable upholstered armchair?), and John was warmly applauded for his supremely generous and meticulous hosting.

All Saints' Church, Maidstone, October 2024

THE FINE instrument of All Saints' Church, Maidstone is the regular venue for our biennial Organ Competition, but it is rare to schedule a regular meeting there. The success of the recital day in January 2023, organised in memory of the late Brian Moore, spurred a decision to hold a more general event there in October, allowing members to perform on a broader canvas than is usually possible. With the more usual 'meetings performers' willingly standing aside, it was possible for six members, most of whom we do not normally hear at any length, to show us the lights which they normally keep well hidden under their bushels.

Michael Cooke opened proceedings with a transcription of *Finlandia* by Sibelius. The heavy reeds found themselves deployed extensively, contrasted effectively by Stephen Banfield's unassertive delivery of the *Be still my soul* interlude on the *Willis* chamber organ at the west end, which had been donated to the church by Brian Moore.

Church musicians have been marking the centenary of the passing of Stanford this year (why have so many neglected the sesquicentenary of the birth of Bairstow?). Jim Bryant was next at the console, delivering a tidy and flexible account of the *Postlude in D minor* which concludes the second set of Stanford's opus 105. His thoughtfully disciplined delivery demonstrated the wider resources and contrasts of the instrument to good effect.

S.S. Wesley is another composer who,



All Saints' Maidstone Photo C. Jilks

with the exception of a handful of pieces, is perhaps better remembered for his choral rather than instrumental output, though the latter has assumed greater prominence in recent times through the advocacy of the scholar Peter Horton. Having prefaced his performance with a witty introduction, Malcolm Riley delivered an effortless account of the *Andante in F* with suitably reflective use of the quieter stops.

The next item was something of a novelty: *Fugue (Moderato)*, the second movement from the *Triptyque Symphonique sur deux thèmes* improvised by Pierre Cochereau and transcribed by David Briggs from a recording. To quote John Henderson, one wonders how any mortal can produce such a colourful, varied and well-shaped piece on the spur of the moment. This was performed by Gavin



Nicholas King at the All Saints' console

Photo C. Jilks

Barrett with persuasive conviction, including sufficient spaciousness in the more chromatic moments, some of which could otherwise easily have weakened the harmonic argument.

Toby Huitson was next on the bench, giving us a reasoned account of *Master Tallis's Testament* by Howells; a work which is deceptively more difficult than might appear on the page, particularly in selecting a tempo which gives sufficient space to the ornamental melody without sacrificing overall flow and direction.

Concluding the afternoon, Kevin Grafton, having foregone his initial intention to play more Howells, performed *Alleluyas* by the late Simon Preston. The brilliance of the piece was conveyed with evident enthusiasm, yet suitable restraint.

This was a memorable afternoon, with a wide range of repertoire from the past

200 years (one wonders if it is the first KCOA function which has not included any Bach?), and it is hoped that the format can be repeated elsewhere before too long. It is important that we hear each other at some length from time to time, rather than each remaining cooped up in our own worlds. Playing to a potentially-critical audience of colleagues is always a challenge, perhaps more so than to our usual congregations, and all who performed are to be thanked for being prepared to place themselves under the spotlight.

Special thanks to Nicholas King, who organised the event for the Association, and to Lionel Marchant who, in addition to finding time to host individual practice sessions, organised his team of caterers to provide the splendid tea which we have always come to expect at All Saints' Church.

Lullingstone & Otford

IN MID-NOVEMBER 2024, eighteen members of our Association and three guests travelled to north-west Kent for what has now become our annual evensong event. The weather, while chilly, was pleasantly sunny as a small advance party of five of us had a swift lunch (very quickly and efficiently produced) at the Malt Shovel in Eynsford. We then set out to join most of the rest of the group, travelling along narrow, positively Cornwalesque lanes, along the picturesque Darent Valley and beneath the impressive nine-arched Eynsford Viaduct, carrying trains to London some 75 feet above the river.

Our first destination was the church of St Botolph, Lullingstone, which lies within the grounds of Lullingstone Castle, a 16th-century manor house. The church is in an idyllic setting, near the castle, with a beautiful lake as backdrop. It dates from the late 14th century, with later additions. Joanna Comer, who has been associated with the church for many years, guided our members around the various points of interest, including tombs of the Peché and Hart families (the Hart Dykes still occupy the house after twenty generations), a magnificent rood screen, ornate plaster ceilings and 14th- and 16th-century stained glass.

The organ is small but fine-sounding, and suits the small church very well. It was built in 1879 by *Harrison & Harrison* for a church in Edinburgh and subsequently moved to Lullingstone; the specification comprises a mere five stops – Open Diapason, Lieblich Gedackt,



St Botolph, Lullingstone Photo S Banfield

Salicional, Stopped Diapason Bass and Flute Harmonique 4ft – but produces a pleasing variety of sounds.

Our party then moved on to St Bartholomew's, Otford, where a few more members joined us. Our Treasurer, Kevin Grafton, who has been Organist and Choirmaster at this church for 44 years, briefly introduced the church and the organ (1913 *Spurden Rutt*), though time for this aspect of the meeting was short, in order to leave sufficient time to rehearse evensong. Many members had in any case previously visited the church, most recently in 2020, when it formed part of a Sevenoaks visit.

Our choir for the occasion consisted of 26 singers, 12 members of St Bartholomew's choir, and 14 Association members, which amounted to a very well-balanced ensemble. Despite the time pressure, the choir was taken by Kevin through the entire programme for evensong with very few difficulties, and produced a delightful range of sonorities, from very quiet passages to a thunderous *fortissimo*.

The traditional tea then followed, provided by some of the church ladies (one of whom then metamorphosed into a lay

minister who led the evensong!). There was high praise from members for the quality of the tea.

The programme for evensong had been put together with the centenary of Stanford's death in mind: Introit, Crossing the bar (Parry); Responses, Richard Ayleward; Psalm 150 (Stanford chant); Magnificat and Nunc dimittis, Stanford in C; Anthem, Te Deum in Bb (Stanford). Hymns, How shall I sing that majesty (tune: Coe Fen) and When in our music God is glorified (tune: Engelberg, Stanford). Before the service, Morwenna Brett played Stanford's *'On a theme of Orlando Gibbons - the Angel's Song'*, and to conclude, our President Stephen Banfield played Frank Bridge's *'Allegro ben moderato'* from his Second Book of Organ Pieces. Toby Huitson, Nicholas King, Patti Whaley, Roger Gentry and Michael Cooke all provided able accompaniment to different parts of the service. It was particularly appropriate that Nicholas, our President Elect, should accompany the Te Deum, which was written for Trinity College, Cambridge, where Nicholas was Organ Scholar.

The two lessons at evensong were given in exemplary fashion by Stephen Banfield and Nicholas King.



Lullingstone 1879 Harrison Photo S Banfield

The choir rose magnificently to the occasion, and those present, the non-singing Association members and some of St Bartholomew's congregation, expressed much appreciation afterwards. It was generally felt that the whole day had given us much justification in continuing the tradition of this annual event.



The choir at St Bartholomew's, Otford

Photo S Banfield

Canterbury Christmas Luncheon

HOW OFTEN do you encounter the word 'luncheon' these days? The very sound of it would entice you to participate, as indeed it did, to judge from the fact that thirty-two members attended the 2024 iteration. 'A good organistic number', Malcolm Riley observed, unable to be present himself due to a different kind of encounter, not far away, with the Bach Magnificat in Chilham.

We held the event once again at the Canterbury Cathedral Lodge, this year on Saturday 7 December, and once again the food, the service, the atmosphere and the facilities proved faultless. We are on each successive occasion more and more grateful to our (now) Deputy President, Jim Bryant, for organising the event, coordinating everything from the menu choices to the parking options, and

achieving a most affordable rate through his membership of the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral. We would not easily find an alternative venue to match this, as the breathtaking close-up of the Cathedral's south-west transept must have reminded every guest as they left after a thoroughly enjoyable and uniquely sociable time. The splendid premises were fully described in last February's *Journal*, and there is no need to supplement the account here.

It is gratifying to note that not far short of one-third of the members and guests present were relatively new to the Association or newly active. The KCOA is undoubtedly rejuvenating itself. In several instances a lesser-known face, combined with the excellent bar provision for a full hour beforehand, facilitated our President's rapier-like attack of unsuspecting victims for the purpose of selling them raffle tickets, which time-honoured ritual, conducted by the President, raised £183.40 for Association funds, considerably more than all previous highs, though a slightly puzzling total given that tickets were £1 each. The array of prizes, entirely



Members and guests at Canterbury Cathedral Lodge

Photo C Jills



President Stephen Banfield and guests

Photo C. Jilks

due to the great generosity of those present, was truly dazzling, and they took up one whole side of the room.

It was pleasing too to welcome the first return of our previous Secretary, Matthew Young, to a KCOA meeting. Now without sight after his stroke but glad to be back home in Canterbury following a year in care, he was attended by his son Christopher. They struck up all

manner of interesting conversations. There was time for everything, it was all very relaxed, our Deputy President said grace, our President led the round of applause for the kitchen staff, and there were no speeches, it being difficult to tell whether this disappointed or relieved a recent member who had asked whether there would be any. See you next Christmas!



A plethora of donated raffle prizes

Photo C. Jilks

Front Cover

Winchester Cathedral Organ

by Paul Hale

WHAT IS the connection between Winchester Cathedral and St Dunstan's parish church, Cranbrook, here in Kent? You'll find out at the end of this article.

Winchester has the unique privilege of being the only cathedral in the country whose pre-medieval organ is known about. Albeit in the previous cathedral building, an organ here was described by the tenth century monk cantor, Wulstan. Recent scholarship debunks the familiar story that it had 400 pipes, needed 70 men to raise the wind, plus two men to play it, and 'could be heard all about the city'. It now seems that it existed from about the year 990 (just after the building had been greatly extended), probably had two octaves of notes with two ranks of pipes, and could be carried in processions – indoor and outdoor, hence allowing it to be 'heard all about the city'.

In the new (11th-16th century) cathedral there are references to the presence of an organ from c.1150. It is clear that the instrument, and its successors to this day, stood on the north side of the choir, in line with the transepts, above the Holy Sepulchre chapel. Many references to the organ are found in the cathedral records though no mention of a named organ-builder until *Thomas Thamar* appears on the scene in 1665. *Thamar* seems to have been at something of a peak at that time, as in the same decade he also executed four major projects in Cambridge college chapels (King's, St



Winchester Cathedral Quire Photo C Jilks

John's, Pembroke and Emmanuel). For Winchester he provided a double case containing a 2-manual organ of some 14 stops. A curved soundboard was installed above the organ in order to project its tone into the choir and not to let it dissipate in the north transept behind.

Renatus Harris was next on the scene, repairing the Chaire organ in 1691-2 and revoicing/replacing several ranks. In 1694 he returned to add mutations and Mixtures to the Great. His son *John Harris* took over the tuning on Renatus's death, followed in due course by a builder trained in their workshop, *Richard Bridge*. In the 1760s *Charles Green* (a Salisbury-based relative of the more famous organ-builder *Samuel Green*) gilded the front pipes and re-leathered the bellows. In 1798-9 *John Avery* added a Swell as part of a major rebuild, which the cathedral considered in effect a new organ – albeit still within the *Thamar* cases, which must

have been getting rather full by then.

A curious thing then occurred: in 1819 the organ was 'temporarily' removed and stored in pieces on the floor of the north transept during major restoration work in the building. At first, the plan was to re-erect it on a new choir screen, but this did not come to pass and the organ remained in pieces until 1823, when *Benjamin Blyth* was employed to reinstate it in its old position. However, *Thamar's* double case appears to have been in too lamentable a state to merit re-use, so a new case – larger, but with no 'Chaire' case – was commissioned from Edward Blore, designed to sit in harmony with the 14th century choir-stall canopies. This is the case that remains to this day, though the current organ has outgrown it, as we shall see.

Edward Blore (1787-1879) was an antiquarian draftsman rather than an architect, a discipline in which he received no training. Nevertheless, he obtained significant ecclesiastical contracts for Westminster Abbey (where he became Surveyor to the Fabric), Lambeth Palace, Peterborough Cathedral (an organ case on the choir screen, later removed by Pearson) and the organ case at Winchester. He succeeded John Nash at Buckingham Palace, completing the building and designing the great façade which faces The Mall. He was involved in many major projects in the overseas territories of the British Empire, including for Government House in Sydney, Australia. Shortly after the Winchester project he designed the enormous and complex Vorontsov Palace in Alupka, Crimea. Blore's massive new case may have survived, but *Avery's* organ has not. In 1845 *James Blythe* extended the 'fiddle G' Swell downwards, but this was not sufficient to prevent the newly-arrived cathedral organist, none other than Samuel Sebastian Wesley (in post from 1849 to 1865) agitating for a new organ.

Wesley did not have long to wait, for

in 1851 he visited the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, where more than 14,000 exhibitors from around the world displayed examples of the latest technology. The building, designed by Joseph Paxton at the instigation of Prince Albert, was three times the size of St Paul's Cathedral (just pause and consider that), the cast-iron frame being clad in 293,000 panes of glass – the greatest area of glass ever seen in one building. When the Exhibition closed, the Crystal Palace was taken apart and removed to Penge Peak, Sydenham, remaining there until a fire in November 1936 (witnessed by this writer's 18 year old father) totally destroyed all but its foundations, which are still to be seen. In the Great Exhibition were fourteen pipe organs, of all sizes and makes. The two largest were a 34-stop 3-manual by *Gray & Davison*, and an enormous 70-stop 3-manual by the ambitious thirty-year old *Henry Willis*.

Wesley knew *Willis*, for the young organ-builder's big break was his 1847 reconstruction of the Gloucester Cathedral organ, where Wesley was organist at the time. Seeing and playing *Willis's* Great Exhibition organ he must have been completely bowled over by the 18-rank Great Diapason chorus (including four Mixtures) and its battery of Trumpets (16.8.4.2), and perhaps even more by the simply enormous 22-stop Swell, with a similar size Diapason chorus, five reeds and seven flutes and strings. The Choir was equally impressive in its rich selection of flutes, strings and three imitative reeds. And of course, all was underpinned by a Pedal Organ which must have taken up more space than the whole of the rest of the organ – a 32ft Double Open Wood underpinning 10 further flues (including two Mixtures), with reeds at 16.8.4.

Determined to secure this organ for Winchester, Wesley asked *Willis* to devise a scheme. Of course there was no opportunity to replace the nearly new



Winchester Cathedral south Quire aisle

Photo C. Jilks

Blore casework, so *Willis* could fit only 49 of the 70 stops, though he did divide the Choir Organ in two, making half of it into a Solo Organ on a 4th manual. Key action was tracker, with Barker-lever to the Great and its couplers. The Great, Swell and Pedal still had complete flue and reed choruses, so the effect in the smaller surroundings of the Winchester choir would still have taken listeners' breath away, used as they were to the gentle singing tones of the low-pressure ranks in the *Avery* organ. The *Willis* was fitted with a new invention: brass thumb pistons, and was the first organ built with a concave and radiating pedalboard, the result of a conversation between *Willis* and Wesley at the Great Exhibition. This is why the first generation of such pedalboards were called 'the Wesley/*Willis* pedalboard'. In 1898 *Willis* returned, fitted tubular-pneumatic action and reorganised the layout in an attempt to make the organ more audible in the long nave – at 242 feet in length, second in the land only to that of St Albans (279 feet). He added a pair of high pressure Solo Tubas, too. Still not loud enough for the nave, the organ was next worked on in 1905 by the Plymouth firm of *Hele*, who – in the spirit of the time, where massive Diapason tone was coming to be 'the ideal' – added two more Great 8ft Diapasons and a matching 4ft Principal (there were already two Principals, so it became the only British organ I know of with three Great 4ft Principals). Their most telling additions, however, were the enormous wooden 32ft and 16ft Pedal Bombardes, placed one bay further west (where they still remain).

It was to be another thirty years before the organ received serious attention, which took the form of a complete *Harrison & Harrison* rebuild and revoicing in 1937-38. By that date *H&H* had rebuilt and 'Harrisonised' so many *Fr. Willis* organs (much to the chagrin of *Henry Willis III*) that they and the cathedral

organist, Harold Rhodes (previously of Coventry Cathedral) must have been confident of both the nature and top quality of the outcome. The organ had arrived at 67 speaking stops – and yet it still was ineffective in the nave. A cleaning and remodelling of the Choir Organ took place in 1960, and at much the same time the dark wood of the case and the choir stalls and screen was 'stripped' – hence the Blore case looking slightly orange now – and the front pipes gilded. We have to move forward to 1987-8 before a Nave division could be added, in the final bay before the choir screen. Dressed in a simple 'post and rail' pipe front, designed by Michael Gillingham, notionally in the manner that *Fr. Willis* might have done, this case (visible in Colin's excellent front cover photograph) also now contains an entirely new 1988 Choir Organ. Pedal upperwork was added at the same time, along with some tonal additions to both Great and Swell, plus a new Tuba Clarion (the *Willis* Tuba Clarion had disappeared in 1938).

In 2015 I was called in by the cathedral to see if together we could find somewhere in the nave for a more effective nave chorus. After much measuring and pondering, the answer, sadly, had to be 'no', so in 2023 *Harrisons* carried out a major overhaul of the instrument and console, adding a Vox Humana to the Swell. *H&H* had removed the 1851 *Willis* Vox Humana in 1938; how the wheel of taste turns! The organ now boasts 79 speaking stops, making it one of the largest cathedral organs in the country.

Now, back to St Dunstan's Cranbrook: you will recall that only 49 of the 70 stops of the *Willis* 1851 Great Exhibition organ went to Winchester in 1854. It turns out that 22 of the remaining ranks, plus two soundboards, were acquired by St Dunstan's and installed by *Willis* on the west gallery there in the same year. Its later development is a tale for another day.



Winchester Cathedral Retro-Quire

Photo C. Jilks

Letters to the Editor

'Faking it'

DEAR SIR, I read with interest and approval Berkeley Hill's letter to the editor in the August 2024 *Journal* about faking it, and agree that 'quinting' the low B in the Bach BWV 572 *Fantasia* (by keeping the right foot on the B already sounding and adding F sharp below it) is a highly convincing solution on any instrument worth its salt. But Widor's *Toccata* really needs those two-octave-below pedal quavers if you play the piece at Widor's own speed, which as many readers will know was very slow by current standards in his 1932 recording of the *Toccata*, made when he was 88. In his performance (at St-Sulpice) those low notes have plenty of time to sound, and are thunderous and thrilling.

The recording can be heard on *YouTube*.

Stephen Banfield
Canterbury

Karg-Elert's staggering *Marche triomphale*

DEAR SIR, There can be few pieces better known to jobbing organists than Sigfrid Karg-Elert's Opus 65 Choral-Improvisation on 'Now thank we all our God' (*Nun danket*). The melody, which is found in J Cruger's *Praxis Pietatis Melica* (c.1647), is rather buried within the dense texture so that recourse is taken in the edition I use (prepared by Swinyard for the 'average organist') to

indicate the notes of the choral tune using asterisks. It remains a popular final voluntary for festival services.

But many of the performances I have heard, including those broadcast from aspiring town and village churches, include major flaws. The most common is to ignore the label that this is a *Marche triomphale*, marked *Pomposo e con brio*, so that the impetus of a march is lost. The first four bars are generally played far too fast. For the whole piece I advocate a pulse not faster than Minim = 38 (probably thought better as crotchet = 76), which also enables the many detailed articulations in the score to be observed and heard. But the biggest issue is in bar 16 where the 12-note keyboard flourish is often preceded by a grinding halt and taken too slowly. It really *must* be fitted into the space of a single crotchet to keep the march's drive going. This means dividing the notes between the two hands so that the first chord of bar 17 is correct in terms of notes and in the right rhythmic position; the last four notes are easiest if the first (C) is given to the LH and the next three to fingers 2, 3 and 4 of the RH. This will change the performance from a staggering lurch to something nearer a triumphant march.

The other place at which an hiatus threatens is at the end of the central section. Here the flourish is a two-octave scale leading to the *da capo*. Again the 16 notes have to be fitted into the time taken by a single crotchet. Dividing them into groups of four, using fingerings LH 4,3,2,1 RH 1,2,3,4 works. The critical thing is to ensure that the final note D is heard clearly before the G major chord of the *da capo*, topped by a repeated D, hits the listener.

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Miriam Reveley

Rochester Cathedral recital

IT WAS with a keen sense of anticipation that a small group of members joined the public audience for a lunchtime recital given on 12th October at Rochester Cathedral by Miriam Reveley.

Miriam's career in church music started in the choir of St John the Evangelist, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead, where her father was Vicar at the time, under our President Elect, Nicholas King. She took up organ studies in 2017 whilst a chorister at Ely Cathedral under Sarah MacDonald, being appointed as Sixth Form Organ Scholar there in 2019. Miriam spent a gap year as Organ Scholar at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, where she played for part of the committal service of the late Queen Elizabeth II, and amongst many other successes passed her FRCO with the coveted Limpus Prize as the best performer in the July 2022 session before taking up her present role as Organ Scholar at Jesus College, Cambridge, now being in her second year there.

Her programme started with Bach's "Short" *Prelude and Fugue in C, BWV 545*. This took a few bars to settle into a consistent tempo after a rhythmically uneven start, with a sense of authority then prevailing. Some might have expected a little more ornamentation in the fugue, as generally demonstrated by other performers.

The next two pieces were unfamiliar to most, if not all, of the audience. *Prelude*



Miriam Reveley Photo C. Jilks

on "Solothurn" was written specially for Miriam by Sarah MacDonald, primarily as a study in legato pedal technique accompanying a lyrical melody and accompaniment. This was performed cleanly throughout. *Adoration* by Florence Price followed; a short piece played with suitable reflectiveness and lyricism. It was of particular interest to hear two pieces by female composers, a cause which Miriam champions with some passion.

The meat of Miriam's programme comprised the entire *Symphony no. 5 in F* by Widor. The first movement, *Allegro Vivace*, essentially a set of variations, is tolerably well-known; the resources of the Rochester instrument were exploited to good effect with tidy fingerwork, if perhaps with more localised changes of tempo than are indicated on the score,



Rochester Cathedral organ Photo C Jilks

particularly where the return of the main theme towards the end of the movement needs to be phrased seamlessly in the preceding bars. The middle three movements are rarely heard nowadays; the challenges of thumbing-down in the *Allegro cantabile* were despatched well, and the *Andantino quasi allegretto*, a particular favourite of audiences in Widor's time, was kept moving, avoiding the murkiness or muddiness which are all too often a risk, given its predominantly 16ft timbre. The *Adagio* which sets the scene for the famous (infamous?) *Toccata* recognised the need for easeful rather than turgid delivery, so that the *Toccata* itself arrived as a logical summation of the complete symphony, rather than as a stand-alone warhorse. This brought the recital to a convincing conclusion, rewarded by generous applause.

The recital formed part of Miriam's prize as winner of the Advanced Class in our 2024 Organ Competition, and we look forward to the complementary recital at Canterbury Cathedral which also forms part of her prize. There can be no doubt that she has a bright future ahead of her as an organist, should she so choose, and we shall all be privileged to

watch her developing career.

A footnote, however, of disappointment that the audience was seated in the Nave. This meant that balance in the quieter items was often lost, since the more delicate solo ranks sit to the east of the instrument, and were often overpowered by the accompanying manual and pedal flues, which are on the west side. The somewhat aggressive character of the bigger reeds also tended to dominate unduly when they were drawn in *pleno* work. Doubtless the balance sounded fine in the organ loft and in the Quire, where audiences were placed until recent times, and one might, with due diffidence, hope that that arrangement should resume.

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Attention to precise articulation has much to offer in this piece in terms of enhancing its brilliance. Of course, there is also a place for *rubato*, but the danger is that too much can destroy the structure and impact of this rather wonderful composition. Keep away from screaming mixtures, play it as a dignified march free from interruptions and it becomes a worthy and rewarding part of the repertory of the 'average organist'. I used to play it on the University of Reading Great Hall *Binns* organ at degree ceremonies back in the 1960s, and it always went down well. I also use it at St Leonard's, Hythe after services that conclude with singing *'Now thank we all our God'*, though I doubt whether many in the congregation make the connection between hymn and voluntary.

Do others share my feelings about speeds and rhythmic impetus of this piece?

Dr Berkeley Hill
Hythe

Transcription – treasure trove or travesty?

By Gavin Barrett

JOHANN GEORG SCHÜBLER, engraver, organist and pupil of J S Bach in Leipzig in the 1740s pulled off something of a *coup* in persuading the master to transcribe six cantata movements into the set of organ chorale-preludes which we know as the eponymous Chorales. Transcription undertaken or, at the least, sanctioned by Bach – whether as useful pedagogic material, for cash, for publicity purposes or some other motivation is not clear. However, we do know that Bach was a voracious student of other composers' works and no slouch when it came to copying them and, importantly, transcribing them.

Think of the Vivaldi *concerti* rendered as exquisite organ solos courtesy of Bach. The tip of the iceberg, insofar as it was common Baroque practice to make works available for the resources that were on hand and, of course, to borrow fairly freely.

We might think of such transcription effort as being in the line of work – a necessity for busy musicians, especially *Kapellmeisters* – and less a quest for novelty.

Roll on a century or so and we come to the omnivorous demands of the weekly town and city-hall organ recital, the staple of musical life across the UK. A recital that did not contain a clutch of transcribed orchestral favourites would be regarded as thin gruel by the large, loyal audiences. To feed this demand, organists great and small had to develop the skills necessary to extract not only the melodic and harmonic structure of

the original work, but to find ways of evoking the orchestral colours with the ever-richer palettes available in large Victorian organs.

Audiences knew what they liked. It would be an unwise recitalist who failed to serve up Mendelssohn, Wagner, Suppé, Lehár, Tchaikovsky and all the rest of them. Some of these transcribers, such as W.T. Best, had remarkable skill in capturing just enough of the notation of the original score to be able to build a considerable organistic edifice that could prove as exciting, rousing, moving or whatever as the *echt* composition itself.

Those who some years ago essayed higher diploma qualifications as organists would have been expected to be able to read open-score at sight. Not for the faint-hearted!

The Baroque revival produced some backlash against this looting of treasures from other genres. Any self respecting organist must only play true organ music. Happily, the fanaticism has waned and we are now in a world where transcription can sit relatively happily alongside the core organ repertoire. Just consider the marvel that is Jonathan Scott's transcription of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 (available on YouTube) – it is a revelation not only for technical mastery he shows in getting a large orchestral canvas to fit two hands and two feet, but to explore Beethoven's genius by adding the unique capabilities of a great organ, handled with consummate art. It is completely recognisable and yet utterly different to the experience of hearing the orchestral original. Readers may well be familiar with Jonathan Scott's vast catalogue (for purchase) of transcriptions – many of them an utter delight to learn and play.

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The history of Forwoods - part two

by Stephen Yarrow

JULIA FORWOOD, born in the middle of the Second World War, when Canterbury was effectively a front-line city within easy reach of German bombers, married civil engineer Roddy Tyndale-Biscoe in 1963. As Reggie approached retirement age, the family's thoughts began to turn to the future of Forwood's Music Centre, as it was then known.

In 1974, Roddy made the decision to give up his international engineering career, settle back in Canterbury with Julia and their two young daughters, and together take on the running of the shop.

Slowly, the premises expanded from 37 Palace Street with the addition of numbers 35-36, the new units providing a brighter home for classical LPs and cassettes and creating more space for the classical sheet music in No 37. The sales area of No 37 was extended backwards into what was previously a bakery.

When May Forwood retired from teaching singing in 'the upper rooms' an extensive new first floor musical instruments showroom was opened over all three units. The business rebranded as Forwoods Classical Music to indicate the direction the new owners wished to take, and the interior was given a groundbreaking make-over, masterminded by David Stewart of Dart Designs.

An advert from 1979 shows that, by then, Forwoods was the sole agent in East Kent for the Boosey & Hawkes musical instrument rental programme, a

try-before-you-buy scheme that enabled countless aspiring musicians to get their hands on an instrument for a fraction of the purchase price. Rentals then started from 80p per week for up to 6 months.

Forwoods had always been a place where one could buy tickets for local concerts, and this was formalised so that, by 1982, the aptly named Forwood Bookings was operating from a box office just inside the front door. Here, one could book tickets for cathedral concerts, theatre at the Marlowe and – via a Keith Prowse agency – for London's West End. Forwood Bookings was the official box office partner for Canterbury Festival and Stour Festival and coastal venues such as Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone and Margate Winter Gardens.

Running the box office was a genius piece of marketing because it brought into the shop not just performers, but a wider clientele with an interest in music and the arts, most of whom would leave with more than just the tickets they originally came in for. With the printed music department, the first floor instruments showroom and the expanded recorded music department, it made Forwoods a true hub of Canterbury's musical life.

Nestled in the historic heart of Canterbury in what is known as The King's Mile, many famous visitors have passed by the front door of Forwoods, including royalty and foreign dignitaries. None more so than Pope John Paul II, who in 1982 headed past in his popemobile on his way to the cathedral where he knelt in prayer with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, at the shrine of the Martyrdom of St Thomas Becket.

As musical tastes began to evolve, and with the excellent Classical Longplayer

providing stiff competition from St Peter's Street, Roddy & Julia took the difficult decision in 1986 to close the record department and replace it with an expanded popular music showroom. By now, the designers of music books had worked out what the record industry already knew – that a strong visual image on the cover could help to sell a book and add to its value, so Dart Designs went for a concept where, in contrast to the classical department where everything was stored side-on in red boxes (which, by the way, are still in use) books were displayed, forward-facing, in open racks. The fittings were largely black, but a striking lighting design ensured the colourful products were attractively presented.

The late 1980s were a time of particular flourishing for Forwoods Classical Music. By now, Keith Wilson was running the instruments department, James Pertwee the popular music showroom and Stephen Yarrow the classical sheet music section. A rival store, Kennards, closed in 1987 giving Forwoods another boost, and attractive window displays and hanging baskets brought admiring comments from customers and those passing by.

The shop supported summer schools such as that run by the eminent flautist Trevor Wye at Ramsgate, Kent Music School at Benenden and Mark Deller in Aix-en-Provence, either by attending with pop-up shops or by being the approved supplier for their syllabus material. When Oxford University Press launched their new book 100 Carols for Choirs in 1987, the editors David Willcocks and John Rutter came to the shop to sign copies on the day, Rutter recently recalled, that weatherman Michael Fish assured TV viewers that there definitely wasn't a hurricane on the way.

Forwoods became the hub for various

charitable events. Owner Roddy Tyndale-Biscoe was a member of the Rotary Club of Canterbury and as Vice-President in 1990-91 took a leading role in 'M20 Yours for the Day'. This was a fun day held on the 'missing link' of the M20 between Lenham and Ashford which would open two days later. A rare opportunity to run, walk or cycle or even ride a horse on a stretch of British motorway! The Rotary Clubs of Canterbury, Ashford and Maidstone collaborated to raise over £48,000 which was divided between Kent Air Ambulance and the three clubs.

Forwoods was effectively the call centre for the event, as it was again for an 'organ crawl' in aid of the Life for Laura appeal to fund a new Special Care Baby Unit at Kent & Canterbury Hospital. Churches all over Kent opened their doors for the day to visiting organists, converging on Canterbury Cathedral at the end of the day for an organ duet recital by Michael Harris, the Assistant Organist, and his wife Brigitte.

It must have been very gratifying for Reggie Forwood, by now approaching his eighties and still working part-time, to see how his daughter and son-in-law had taken over his beloved music shop and created something which was, by any standards, a first-rate business and a community-minded establishment.

In the early 1990s, Roddy & Julia were approached by an entrepreneur looking to buy the shop and began to explore, perhaps for the first time, what life after Forwoods might be like for them. Being an engineer, Roddy always brought his practical skills to the repair and maintenance of musical instruments. He saw an opportunity to be relieved of the day-to-day commitment of running the shop and concentrate instead on rehairing bows and fixing up unloved fiddles. They

undoubtedly wanted to enjoy the fruits of their labours in semi-retirement, with the opportunity for more travel and leisure time.

What they had not foreseen was that their three key staff, Messrs Wilson, Pertwee and Yarrow, would stage a management buy-out, which was completed in the summer of 1993. The founder Reggie Forwood died in October 1993, just months after attending his daughter's retirement party and no doubt content in the knowledge that the future of Forwoods Classical Music was in safe hands. His wife May passed away in 2000.

Sadly, shortly after retiring from the shop, Julia suffered a serious illness, and much of Roddy's time thereafter was taken up with caring for her. Nevertheless, he was a valued consultant to the new owners, and he continued to repair instruments and bows for Kent Music School until shortly before his death in 2019, leaving a workshop full of them when he passed away, just three days after Julia.

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During lock-down I put in many hours transcribing works that I am passionately fond of but which did not appear to exist in a published transcription. I looked, especially, for pieces that would benefit from what the organ can do. For example, the sombre Masonic music in Act 2 of *The Magic Flute* – scored for trombones, low strings, tenor and bass soloists – makes a ravishing organ solo. So, too, does the *Andante* from Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony – not only is the original wonderfully evocative of an Easter Day procession, but the scoring, with a bass *ostinato* cries out for organ treatment.

It is a sad fact of life that many a bridal couple or even families of the late lamented want music more in tune with popular taste and, if the horrors of a CD player blaring out a distorted favourite are to be avoided, the hapless organist must purchase a piano transcription and make the best of it with the organ. Sometimes, improvisation is the better answer. A funeral I played for some months ago needed to reflect the deceased's passion for ballet – so a little work produced a serviceable variation on the Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy, to the contentment of the family, I'm told.

So much music in the classical canon can benefit from sensitive transcription. I find that audiences and congregations appreciate these detours into other genres – rather as a sorbet refreshes the palate between principal courses at a feast.

Taking our cue from Bach, the art of transcription is surely legitimate work for organists. But, of course, you may not agree. Let us see what the post-bag brings.....

Colin Hartley

A short profile

BORN IN South Africa in January 1946, with parents undoubtedly supportive of musical interests, Colin Hartley's childhood piano lessons remained somewhat desultory; nevertheless, with the arrival of a new director of music at his Johannesburg church school, he started to take a much greater interest, especially in church music and organ playing.

However, practical music making at the school was rather limited. There was a chapel choir with a good reputation, perfunctory instrumental teaching, although no orchestra or band, but occasional Gilbert and Sullivan productions. This all changed with the arrival of Malcolm Tyler, an assistant cathedral FRCO organist from England. Unfortunately, he did not remain long in post, but his energy and enthusiasm were infectious and the quality of the singing in chapel improved dramatically. It was undoubtedly his influence that awakened Colin's musical interest and led him to complete a degree in music at the Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg.

This enabled his completion of a teacher's diploma and appointment to a newly created Anglican boarding school, St Alban's, in Pretoria. It was a small school at that time, but with co-operative staff and a friendly atmosphere between boys and teachers, very different from his own school, and he

can safely say that his seven years there were the happiest in his school-teaching life.

One has to bear in mind, that with a white population (during the years of apartheid) vastly outnumbered by the indigenous Africans, and an English-speaking community outnumbered hugely by Afrikaners, the classical music scene and Anglican church music were very restricted compared with England. There were some eight cathedrals, but no professional choirs, no daily sung evensongs, and a shortage of professionally trained organists. Thus readers will understand that travelling to England, after seven years in his job in Pretoria, where he taught English as well as training the chapel choir, Colin was to acquire extensive further knowledge and experience.

However, during his time in South Africa, Colin did have two spells as assistant organist at St Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg, and the opportunity to play an excellent renovated four-manual instrument built originally by *Rushworth and Dreaper*. He regrets that he was unable to make the best use of it; having only 'got the bug' at age sixteen, he simply did not have the skill or the repertoire. It was, however, a very interesting time; Desmond Tutu was dean and then bishop, and churches were the only places where black and white could mix for any religious or, indeed, social event.

Sadly, Colin's mother died of cancer during his last year at school, although his father lived until 1978. This was the year Colin travelled to England to seek his fortune. He arrived in the midst of the



Colin Hartley

Photo C. Jilks

'winter of discontent' and coming out of early spring in South Africa to winter in England, he very nearly returned home!

When he came to Britain, he taught first at what he describes as a 'truly dreadful' prep school in Malvern, before escaping to a big rural secondary school in Warwickshire as head of music. He did play the organ at several parish churches within reach, but more beneficial and enjoyable was the chance to sing, at different times, in the Malvern Festival Chorus, the Worcester Choral Society and the Hereford Choral Society, taking part one year in the Three Choirs festival in Hereford under the direction of Roy Massey.

His life in church music was largely as a singer, as he found that there were already a great many very talented organists in place wherever he went. South Africa was a very small musical pond in which he had been a fairly large frog; in this country it was very different.

He gained promotion in his teaching career by taking a school post in Canterbury, but found that the pressure of work and subsequent roles did not allow much time for organ playing, and there was a period of about twenty years without attachment to any church. It was here, in 1988, that he met his wife Margaret, an artist and art teaching colleague; they were married for some thirty years, before she sadly died six years ago: regrettably, they had no children.

A subsequent job in a large school in Tenterden proved very demanding in terms of travelling (by then living in Deal in Kent) and as his wife's health was not good, he abandoned class-room teaching in favour of a job as peripatetic piano tutor within the county of Kent. In later years Colin also gave lectures on aspects of music at the Adult Studies

department at the University of Kent and for Kent County Adult Education.

It was a request to play for the wedding of a friend that led him to seek an organ nearby to on which to practice, which led to the role of playing hymns once a week for communion in a small church in a Deal benefice. Money had previously been set aside for a new electronic organ and once the parish council decided to re-order the interior of the church and dispense with the very basic three rank pipe organ, Colin was invited to select a suitable replacement; an instrument from the firm of Wyvern was selected.

That role continued for about five years, after which, for a short time, there was no playing, but he was given the chance to practise occasionally to 'keep his hand in' at the Catholic Church very near his home. At that stage there were several organists of recital standard there and at one point, everyone in the choir of some eight or ten members, was capable of playing. Gradually, however, as is the way with church choirs, most left or moved away and Covid finally destroyed the musical tradition that the church once had. But just before Covid struck, the parish priest had been able to fulfil an ambition to replace the basic three rank instrument, lacking even a swell box, with a tracker-action organ, purpose built by *Browne/Mander*, which Colin played regularly until he retired and which he still plays occasionally. This organ, at St John's Catholic church in Deal, has been viewed in recent years by the KCOA members. Colin has a large collection of works by J S Bach and others which haven't *quite* been learned, so with the church being just five minutes' walk away there is still hope!

Organ recitals in Istanbul?

by Patti Whaley

ORGAN RECITALS in Istanbul? To understand why I was so surprised to see a poster advertising recitals at the Anglican Church, you might need a bit of background.

In 2014, my partner Ron was offered a 14-week consultancy on 'data governance' at one of Istanbul's largest banks. I went along (of course!). I searched high and low for an organ to practise, but had limited success: the Anglican Church welcomed me, but their organ was in a pathetic state of disrepair; the university gave me one practice date, and then cancelled it; of the three Catholic churches, only the Cathedral very kindly let me practice a couple of mornings a week. When we went for a visit in 2018 and again in October 2024, I didn't even bother googling "Istanbul organs", having given it up as a lost cause. It's not really surprising; most of the Christian Churches are orthodox, so their music is primarily a capella; and there aren't enough organs to keep an organ tuner in kabobs, so what organs there are, are poorly maintained and jealously protected. For many years I described Istanbul as "simply the greatest city in the world...except that there are no accessible pipe organs."

We visited our favourite city again in October 2024. It turns out that a lot has changed in ten years! The Anglican Church, more properly known as the Crimean Memorial Church, near Galata Tower, now has an enterprising Russian organist, Sergei Lukashuk, who plays for Sunday services and gives short recitals



Hill & Son, Crimean Church Photo P Whaley

every Saturday and Sunday. He has managed to get the organ into working order, except for the clarinet stop (more on that later). He was assisted by a group calling themselves "The Istanbul Pipe and Reed Organ Team", who have been tracking down organs, repairing them where they can, publicising their state of (dis)repair, and organising small annual Organ Festivals. For a city that seemed to be an organ desert, this is amazing progress.

The organ at the Crimean Memorial Church is a *Hill & Son* II/P, installed in 1911. Its specification is: Great, Open Diapason 8, Dulciana 8, Hohl Flute 8, Principal 4, Harmonic Flute 4, Flautina 2, Clarinet 8; Swell, Geigen Principal 8, Echo Gamba 8, Voix Celestes 8, Rohr Flute 8, Gemshorn 4, Oboe 8; Pedal, Bourdon 16, Flute 8; Swell to Great, Swell to Pedal, Great to Pedal.

The flutes in particular are very nice; the Oboe, from the nave, sounds more like a Trompette, but overall the organ makes a good sound. Sergei tends to alternate Baroque and French romantic programmes. He attracts an audience of about 50 people – an audience many of us in England would envy – plus the odd cat

wandering in and out (this is Istanbul after all!). One of the programmes we attended had this programme: Transcription of Vivaldi *Autumn* concerto; a short piece by William Byrd; J S Bach *Fantasia and Fugue in C Minor BWV 537*, Pachelbel Canon in D and a transcription of Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* – a nice mix of recognisable crowd-pleasers and more serious repertoire. He was very willing to let me come and play any morning of the week. I've since contacted Martin Renshaw to see what hope there might be of sourcing a reusable clarinet to complete the restoration of this organ; although he advises that clarinets are particularly hard to find, one seems to have been located and will be fitted when funding has been raised.

A second *Hill & Son* has recently been restored at the English Embassy's St Helena Chapel. This is a smaller instrument — four Great stops, three Swell stops, plus a Pedal Bourdon. It had been severely damaged when a ceiling collapsed on it, but the plucky Istanbul repair team has it working again. The other English organ in Istanbul is at Boğaziçi (Bosphorus) University, a 3-manual *Norman and Beard* where we heard a recital in 2014. Bosphorus University was founded by Americans in 1883 and formerly called Robert College; in 1971 it was bequeathed to the Turkish government and is now a substantial research university. The organ was installed in the main performance auditorium in 1913. With 28 stops, this is a substantial instrument, although not the largest organ in Istanbul.

That honour goes to the 3-manual *Vincenzo Mascioni* organ, Op.623, built in 1948 and installed in the beautiful church of St Antony in Padua, with 38 speaking stops. St Antony actually has two organs – there is a 2-manual *Gebrüder-Rieger* in the crypt. Along with these organs



Vincenzo Mascioni, St Antony Photo P Whaley

Istanbul has two further *Gebrüder-Rieger* instruments, two 2-manual *Cavaillé-Coll* organs, and single instruments by *Camillo Bianchi*, *Louis Debierre*, *Carl Gesell*, *Bossi*, and *Robert Jennings* – fourteen organs in all. Not a grand number for one of the largest cities in the world, but it is cheering to hear that these organs are now being cared for, played, and most importantly, heard by a small but enthusiastic audience. If you go to Istanbul, please do search them out and support them. All best wishes to Sergei and The Istanbul Pipe and Reed Organ Team for their continued success!

For more information:

Database of all Turkey organs:

<https://www.orgelsite.nl/categorie/land/turkije/>

Facebook page of the Istanbul Pipe and Reed organ team <https://www.facebook.com/istanbulpipeorgan>

Annual organ festivals

<http://www.opusamadeus.com/orgFestivali/Onceki-Festivaller>

Playlists on Istanbul organs:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-860541990>

and

<https://www.youtube.com/@istanbulpipereedorgan>

Chris Anthony

A short profile

CHRIS ANTHONY was born on 24th December 1952, arriving earlier than expected; his mother apparently commented, 'what a nice way to ruin Christmas'. Chris has two siblings, a brother and a sister, who were both born at the same time of the year. Chris assumes it was due to the fact that his father, a captain on deep sea freighters for six months of the year, was at home only in the earlier part of the year.

However, Chris attended the local primary school in Hythe and his mother taught at the local Sunday School, leading to Chris being confirmed in St Leonards Church, Hythe by Richard, Bishop of Dover. He joined the church choir, but rapidly found that he wasn't a very good singer and the choirmaster 'suggested' that he leave. Owing to his connections with St Leonard's Church, he joined the team of servers where he served for many years as an acolyte, crucifer and became a member of the Guild of Servers.

Chris has always had an interest in music, probably due to his mother and grandfather. One of his grandfather's sons was a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral in London, as well as an organist and choirmaster. Chris' mother always said that her grandfather had played the organ at St Paul's and Southwark Cathedrals, as well as local churches in Kent. When his grandfather moved to St Asaph, in North Wales, he was persuaded to play the organ in the cathedral there.

In Hythe, Chris continued his explo-

ration into music, rock music and folk music, although he was never interested in the popular music of the age. Rock music was introduced to him when he joined FHODS (Folkestone and Hythe Operatic and Dramatic Society) with the cast and stage crew going out after a show to listen to music: Cream; Pink Floyd; Led Zepplin; Rick Wakeman; Jimi Hendrix; and Black Sabbath.

However, Chris was introduced to folk music at the local folk club in Hythe, and this is where he met his future wife. She, and two other girls, formed the band 'Pendulum' and were the resident group at the folk club. During this time, Chris was present in the recording studio when Pendulum recorded three tracks for an album of Kentish music, undoubtedly sowing the seeds for what came later. Chris' interest in church music began when he first heard Frederick Skinner, the organist and choirmaster at St Leonards, playing the organ.

Chris and his wife Beverley were married in St Leonard's Church, Hythe in 1974. She sang in the choir while Chris had various roles within the church: server; PCC member; and bell ringer. As a result of this, when it came to the order of service for their wedding, there were three clergy fighting over which part of the service they were going to officiate at. The organist and choirmaster at that time, Dr Berkeley Hill, rather foolishly suggested that Chris could have any music he wanted for the service. Before the service, they had several pieces by J S Bach, *The Prince of Denmark's March* on the bride's entry, a massive choral anthem during the signing of the register, and finally, Widor's *Toccata*. Many years later, this music was again played at Beverley's memorial service in Wye Church,



Chris Anthony

Photo C.Jills

with Dr Berkeley Hill playing the Widor.

After leaving the grammar school in Folkestone with four A levels, Chris applied to join PPL in Ashford as he didn't want to go to university. To his surprise he was offered a post in the research laboratory. For the next eight years he worked on developing new materials for the fragrance industry; he then moved on to becoming a Fragrance Evaluator. This involved selecting perfumes for clients according to the requirements they submitted. He worked on projects such as Lux Soap international, Axe/Lynx Europe, and even developed a fragrance to combat the smell of sports kit after a rugby match. This involved assessing the smell of the kit straight after the match and again when it had been washed.

During his time in this role, all the information of the fragrance was kept by hand on record cards. As computers were being introduced for word processing and financial accounting, it was thought that a database application could be developed to hold the information on fragrances. A volunteer was sought, and Chris put his hand up. When this was finished, the computing department recruited him to work as a database administrator and programmer. It was here that his interest in computing finally took off. Due to a major structural reorganisation at the company, several people were made redundant and, sadly, Chris was one of them. Fortunately as he knew the technical director at a company in London (through dancing with East Kent Morris Men) he was taken on as an IT Technician. After 14 years with this company, and due to the company moving from London to Oxford, he was offered voluntary redundancy, which he took.

Whilst looking for a new role, even

contemplating early retirement, he heard of a company based in Sandwich that was looking for somebody to join them. This company specialised in teaching 'silver surfers' how to use modern technology, including computers. Chris initially helped set up clients' computers getting them started. After a few years, he started lecturing on various topics, spending ten years with this company, finally leaving after the owner died and the new owners didn't fully understand how the company operated.

During this time he was also working part-time at the offices of the Diocese of Canterbury as a receptionist and the technical director offered him a role in his team. This was just prior to the recent pandemic where, due to his interest in video production, he was asked to help churches that needed to start using live-streaming. For the next three years Chris was more than fully employed. As a result of this work he published a document on 'Church at Home' which is aimed at helping churches with video technology.

Chris regularly attends the parish church at Wye and, due to his interest in sound engineering and IT, it was suggested he took on this role for the church, and has successfully continued this for some twelve years now. His late wife was a member of the choir and, due to her starting to play the organ under the tutelage of Dr David Flood, they installed a two-manual organ with pedals at their home in Willesborough.

More recently, our member, Janet Hughes, thoughtfully asked if Chris would be interested in helping the KCOA with our website and he is now our Publicity and Website Officer, a new role that that was being developed. We are indeed grateful to have him with us and his expertise on our KCOA team.



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