

Kent County Organists' Association

February 2024 Journal





Kent County Organists' Association

Patron: David Flood MA, D.Mus, FRCO(CHM), FGCM

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

President

Stephen Banfield
53 Holters Mill,
The Spires,
Canterbury
CT2 8SP
07702 798961

email: stephendavidbanield@gmail.com

Secretary

Matthew Young
(Currently indisposed)

Kevin Grafton

Acting Secretary
and Treasurer

email: secretary@kcoa.org.uk

Treasurer

Kevin Grafton
34 Dartford Road
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN13 3TQ
01732 452117

email: kevingrafton@hotmail.com

Journal

Colin Jilks
9 Rosemary Close
Steyning
West Sussex
BN44 3YT
01903 810395

e-mail: colinkjilks@aol.com

President Emeritus

Colin Jilks

Past President

James Bryant

Deputy President

Nicholas King

Elected Committee Members

Malcolm Hall	(Serving third year)
Janet Hughes	(Serving third year)
Michael Lewis	(Serving third year)
Michael Cooke	(Serving second year)
Malcolm Riley	(Serving first year)

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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

MUCH OF THIS issue of the KCOA *Journal* is about people, and they are also the focus of these notes. That is as it should be: without people to make them there would be no organs, nor anyone to play them. One aspect of this is worth reflecting on. Charlie Francis offered us a little workshop before his recital at Holy Trinity Folkestone last August and spoke to us about the historical context that produced the virtuoso organ works of Liszt and Reubke. They were written for the Ladegast organ consecrated in Merseburg Cathedral in 1855, a monster which, he said, would probably have taken four men to blow and two or more to register besides the recitalist: playing it was definitely not a solo activity, easily forgotten in our days of lonely organists practising in dark churches courtesy of an electric blower and maybe an iPad Pro obviating the need even for a page-turner.

The President's Lunch and the Christmas Lunch, both written up in this issue, were rewarding social occasions, and two of our nine new members, James Hobson and Tessa Rickards, attended the latter. They live in London but enjoy excursions into Kent. Most of the others live in east Kent, Toby Huitson (author of the booklet on its Cathedral organs) and David Clarke (organist of St Peter's in Canterbury, Benjamin Bevan, the opera singer, in Wingham, Colin Hartley in

Deal, Jill Reader-Moore in Westgate-on-Sea, and Jake Convery, organist of St Mary's Dover and now an Associate Member while studying at Christ Church Canterbury, in Ickham. Another new student member, Becky-Ellice Creighton, comes from Ashford and is studying at Trinity College Cambridge.

Our guest speaker at the President's Lunch exhorted us to remember our teachers and the impression they made on us. I am struck with how rich are our links with the past, as evidenced by the three profiles in this issue. Colin Jilks is now President Emeritus and it is time to spotlight the wonderful work he has done on the *Journal* over the past 28 years. David Brock is a new Honorary Member, moving away from Kent to be nearer the family; we shall miss his presence at visits. Our other new Honorary Member, David Flood, is also our new Patron and needs no introduction; we are the ones honoured in receiving his lively insights into a highly fulfilling career.

But I must end on a more sombre note. Our Secretary, Matthew Young, suffered a stroke just as we went to print last time; I am sorry to say that he has more or less lost his sight. One of our most active members, Andrew Cesana, fell down an escalator at Euston on an Organ Club trip to Birmingham in September. And our Treasurer Kevin Grafton's wife Sylvia died on New Year's Eve after a difficult illness; it seems no time since we welcomed her to the President's Lunch on that radiant day in September. Our hearts go out to Kevin and to Matthew, while we rejoice that Andrew is recovering well from his accident.

Review of recent Meetings

The President's Lunch

THE CUSTOM of a President's Dinner, taking place in September at the start of each new President's two-year term of office, had seen declining numbers in recent years. Soundings amongst members had indicated a variety of reasons for this, including reluctance to turn out of an evening (especially if faced with transport problems to and from home), a venue sufficiently central, concern that recent occasions have all been on the eastern side of the county, the quality of catering, and the cost.

With all of these in mind, and given the success of the Christmas Lunch in Canterbury introduced by Jim Bryant

during his Presidency, the Committee decided that this year's inaugural Presidential event would be a lunchtime occasion at a Maidstone location with a strong reputation for satisfactory delivery at an attractive price.

On 16th September, twenty-three members and their guests accordingly descended on the Cornwallis Suite in Maidstone, a venue used on a regular basis by the local Rotary Club and other organisations.

Fine weather meant that we were able to foregather outside in the attractive garden over initial drinks provided by our new President, Stephen Banfield. Adjourning to one of the main halls, an introductory Grace was rehearsed by the President and sung by those present, comprising a six-part canon on *Benedic, Domine* by Thomas Ravenscroft. Euphony was achieved,



President Stephen Banfield

Photo O Martinez



Jonathan Rennert

Photo J Rennert

bashfulness from the last part to finish notwithstanding.

Delicious three-course meals were then served, with three choices for each course, all delivered in ample quantity and with flawless presentation.

Coffee and mints having been served, the President proposed the toast of the King, 'the other King' (our Deputy President, who had undertaken most of the planning of the event), our indisposed Secretary, and our Treasurer currently filling that gap. These were followed by a succinct *tour d'horizon* of the current state of the Association, and the President's aspirations for developing our local influence during his term of office, before introducing our guest speaker.

Jonathan Rennert will be well known to all as Organist at St. Michael, Cornhill in the City of London since 1979 in succession to the late Richard Popplewell. He hosted a visit by the Association in 2013, had been a close contemporary with three of our senior members as a Cambridge organ schol-

ar, in his case at St. John's College, and as well as having a notable career as an organist, choir director and examiner has authored several significant biographies.

Jonathan asked us to reflect on our musical lineage, thinking about our first organ lessons and teachers, and entertained us with an account of his career, making special reference to the influence at John's of the late George Guest, before proposing the toast of the Association.

The traditional raffle then took place, with a variety of prizes (donated by members of the current Committee) being shared out amongst those present.

Closing the proceedings, the President thanked Sharon Smith and her helpers from Thyme 2 Dine, the resident caterers at the venue.

This was a hugely successful occasion, and we hope that if a future President sees fit to return to the same venue, we may see a stronger attendance, particularly from those members more local to the event.

A visit to Canterbury Cathedral

THE WEATHER had been lovely for our seventh visit in a row as twenty members and their guests formed an orderly queue outside the south door of Canterbury Cathedral on 10 October, eagerly awaiting ingress courtesy of the Cathedral's Assistant Director of Music, Jamie Rogers, our host for the evening. Most of the participants had already attended Evensong, delighted to find that a block of seats had been reserved for the Association. Jamie worked hard that evening: he had played for the



Jeremy Isom

Photo J Bryant

Evensong, in which his miraculously varied accompaniments to the psalms (all 39 verses of them) attracted great admiration and highlighted virtually every colour on the massive organ with great aptness and sensitivity.

Downstairs as we sat in the quire, he briefly introduced the main instrument in its current form, while a copy of Toby Huitson's *The Organs of Canterbury Cathedral* (soon to be updated, according to Jamie) was circulated so that those present could remind themselves of its previous incarnations, not to mention the five or six other organs dotted about the vast building. Jamie then demonstrated the organ's many divisions—Great, Swell, Choir, Solo, Transept, Nave, Pedal—and their dispositions (except for the Nave Organ) along the north and south triforium, sampling many combinations, the wealth of new solo stops, and the contrasts between *Willis's* work of 1886, *Mander's* of 1978, and *Harrison and Harrison's* of 2020. This was all done by means of expert improvisation.

The bulk of the evening was however taken up with members' and guests' own performances. Eleven people played, ranging in age from 12 to 86 and of course assisted by Jamie at the console with registration choices, for it is simply not possible to find one's way around such a large instrument on the spot without some preparation or guidance, nor can the loft accommodate more than one or two players at a time. We were most grateful for Jamie's input, especially given the time constraints, for the informal composite recital took well over an hour.

Understandably enough, most players had opted for something assertive, for it would have been a lost opportunity for them personally not to hear the sounds under their fingers re-echo from vault to Cosmati pavement. Michael Lewis led off

with the Bach *five-part Fantasia in C minor BWV 562*, which Jim Bryant followed up with Karg-Elert's '*Nun danket*' *Marche triomphale*. Paul Isom's rare treat for us was the *Finale* from Vierne's *Symphony no 3*, and Nicholas King introduced us to *A Festival Toccata* by Malcolm Archer. The closing item was a triumphant *Carillon de Westminster* (Vierne), performed by Janet Hughes. Gentler items in between comprised Alec Rowley's '*Andante religioso*', played by Stephen Banfield, a clever improvisation by Michael Cooke that appeared to require three hands (was he using the split Pedal facility?), the performance by a new member, Tessa Rickards, of the *Fugue in G BWV 557* now often attributed to Krebs, Malcolm Riley's rendition of his own lovely '*Berceuse*' from *Suite for Jasper*, and two most welcome contributions from youngsters, Corinne Hepburn's *Deux danses*, played by Jeremy Isom, and Bach's '*Valet will ich dir geben*' BWV 736, given a smart performance by Thomas Winrow-



Thomas Winrow-Campbell Photo J Bryant

Campbell. Altogether this made for a most satisfying and privileged evening.



Canterbury Cathedral Quire

Photo C Jilks

Faversham, St Mary of Charity

WITH THE success of last year's choral evensong held in Ramsgate's Holy Trinity Church, our committee decided to repeat the event, but in a venue slightly more central within Kent, and both St Mary of Charity, Faversham and St Michael's Church, Sittingbourne were suggested as being of easy access and churches possessing strong choral traditions. Unfortunately, all Saturday dates in November proved impossible for Sittingbourne and so the very splendid Parish Church of St Mary of Charity, with its famous 18th century flying 'Corona' spire, became our host for the afternoon meeting.

The Church is all that remains of a previously much larger religious community centred around Faversham Abbey which was established around 1147 by King Stephen and survived until the dissolu-



Gern plate, Faversham Photo M Hall

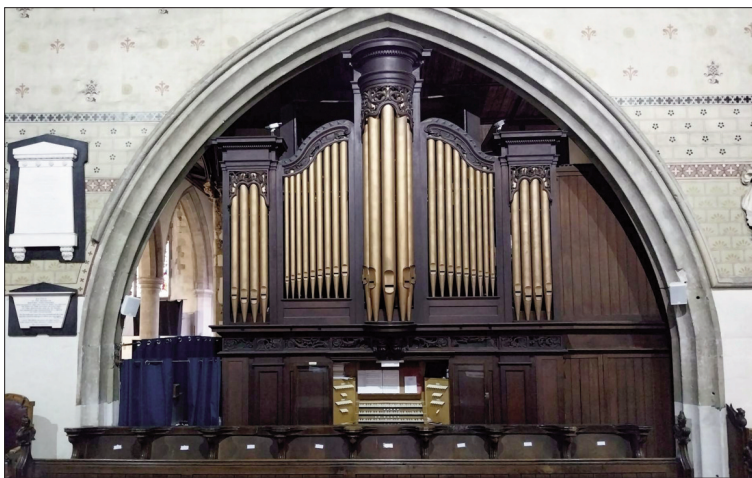
tion under Henry VIII. The remains of King Stephen are reputed to rest within the building, and there appears to be a little disagreement as to whether St. Mary's or All Saints Maidstone can claim to be the largest parish church within Kent!

The service of evensong had been organised through their musical director Ben Saul with much help provided by Patti Whaley who ably demonstrated the instrument for us by playing 'Prière' No 3 by Joseph Jongen and *Theme with Variations* by Hendrik Andriessen, pieces which skilfully demonstrated the wide tonal palate of this instrument. Unfortunately Ben Saul had to pull out at short notice, due to complicated commitments, but he provided us with the very able assistance of Jake Convery, Director of Music at St. Mary's Dover.



Richard Bridge case detail

Photo M Hall



St Mary of Charity, Faversham, Richard Bridge case 1753 Photo M Hall

We were very lucky too, to have a selection of choir members from Faversham who turned out on this rather cold dreary November afternoon to augment the choir and make a four-part Choral evensong possible; the take up for this meeting was not good amongst members, despite several encouraging emails from our President Stephen Banfield!

The instrument at St. Mary's Church Faversham has a fascinating history and contains a chancel case built in 1753 by Richard Bridge, which would no doubt have started life on a west gallery. Other builders who worked on and enlarged the instrument are: *Thomas Elliot*; *William Hill*; *August Gern*; and more latterly, *FH Browne* in 1960. The German builder *Gern*, an apprentice to the famous French Builder, *Aristide Cavaillé-Coll*, was sent to England to construct an instrument for the London Church of Notre Dame, but due to the unstable political situation was never to return to his home in Berlin and set up a workshop in 1869 in Tottenham Court Road, London. There are at least

six instruments listed as being built or rebuilt by him here in Kent, including one in the tiny Victorian church at Seal Chart near Sevenoaks. This 1877 *August Gern* instrument featured on the cover of our August 2015 Journal.



August Gern, Seal Chart Photo C Jilks

Canterbury Christmas Luncheon

ON SATURDAY 9 December, some twenty-three members and guests gathered at Canterbury's Cathedral Lodge to enjoy an excellent three-course meal served in most comfortable surroundings. As well as excellent food the service provided by the Lodge staff was first class, meals being served pleasantly, efficiently and discreetly, adding to the occasion. We were in good company as members and guests chatted and even enjoyed an exciting raffle which made a profit of £130.00 for the Association.

Canterbury Cathedral Lodge is a unique hotel and conference venue situated in the inspiring grounds of Canterbury Cathedral. It provides a superb venue for meetings, conferences and events, as well as some exceptionally comfortable hotel accommodation, with stunning views of the Cathedral.

The Lodge buildings were designed by Sir William Whitfield in 1990 with the prospect of developing the site on the south side of the Cathedral Precincts. This site was occupied by 1960s residential buildings, which had replaced ancient buildings lost during the bombing of World War II in 1942. In the decades after the end of the War, there had been various discussions about the provision of buildings for education and hospitality on this site.

Beginning in 1995, funding for this major project was sought and much was raised by a campaign in the United States; and the *Heritage Lottery Fund* bestowed a grant of £2.25 million in 1997. Various public bodies were consulted before the existing 1960's buildings were demolished, allowing archaeological digs to be carried out prior to any construction work starting. Construction started in earnest in 1998 with George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, laying the foundation stone during the Lambeth Conference of that year. The first phase was completed in 2000, and the building was opened by His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent on 18 January 2001.



Canterbury's Cathedral Lodge

Photo C.Jilks



Members and guests at Cathedral Lodge

Photo C.Jilks

The buildings were designed to fit with their surroundings in The Precincts. Sir William Whitfield studied architecture at the University of Durham, following which, from 1985 to 1990, he held the position of Surveyor of the Fabric of St Paul's Cathedral. He also designed the new Chapter House for St Albans Cathedral and, in 1996, the Mappa Mundi Library at Hereford Cathedral.

The design of the Cathedral Lodge buildings shows Sir William's interests in late Gothic and Tudor architecture, with stylistic references to the Cathedral buildings themselves. The roofing on most of the building is of lead, reflecting the lead work on the Cathedral itself.

On leaving the Cathedral Lodge we could see the Cathedral standing magnificently, as it has done for hundreds of years, glowing in the warm afternoon sunlight, bringing to a close an enjoyable afternoon which was perhaps just slightly marred for some by the Cathedral being completely closed to visitors that afternoon owing to an arranged ticket-only concert; a trifling complaint perhaps, but

something which should be considered when arranging future meetings. We must thank Past President, James Bryant, for organising this enjoyable event and our President, Stephen Banfield, for conducting the raffle with such aplomb and good humour.



A glowing Cathedral *Photo C.Jilks*

Front Cover

Chichester Cathedral Organ

by Paul Hale

FOR MANY organists, the thought of a cathedral organ conjures up the image of a *Harrison & Harrison* rebuild of a *Father Willis*, perhaps with sixty or seventy stops, electro-pneumatic action, either in an historic case on the Quire Screen or with a simple row of front pipes if placed either side of the Quire. Durham, Salisbury, Exeter, Wells, Canterbury – you know the sort of thing. The organ we are looking at in this issue could not be more different – a rare and very special example of what a cathedral organ might have sounded like before *Henry Willis I* raised wind pressures and developed more powerful reeds. Rare, too, for having fallen silent for sixteen years, mid 20th-century, and thus being saved from being recast in neo-classical mould.

What is the Chichester story, then? Well, it starts in 1678, when *Renatus Harris* made a small organ for the cathedral. Standing on the sturdy stone Arundel Screen between Nave and Quire, it was enlarged by the addition of a Chaire organ on the Quire side by *John Byfield*, who was *Harris's* partner then successor. In 1778 *Thomas Knight* added a short-compass 5-stop Swell. In 1806, *George Pike England* made new soundboards and tonal changes, including the addition of pedal pipes, making



Chichester 1888 organ case Photo C.Jilks

Chichester one of the very first cathedral organs to gain a pedal department. Alterations were made by other firms in 1829 and 1844, before *William Hill* arrived on the scene in 1849, thus beginning his firm's lengthy association with this organ. His first task was to install a new 8-stop Swell organ.

Dramas were soon to follow – one planned, the other a disaster. Those who wished for a west to east 'vista' in our cathedrals, mid nineteenth-century, were responsible for the removal of a number of mediæval stone screens, as we have observed in several other cathedrals in this series. At Chichester, though the screen was removed in 1859, it was – happily – stored, and was in fact



Chichester Cathedral Quire

Photo C. Jilks

returned in the 1960s. In 1859 *Hill* removed the organ from the screen setting it in the north transept, elevated on a new sub-structure. If the moving of the organ and the loss of the screen were not momentous enough, the fabric of the whole building was imperilled two years later, for in 1861 the central tower and lofty spire collapsed into the building, filling the central space and mortally damaging (though not destroying) the organ. The rebuilding of the cathedral took several years and it was not until 1867 that *Hill* drew up plans and cost estimates for rebuilding the organ at the head of the north transept, just behind the choir stalls which then, as now, block off the transepts from the central aisle.

Some twenty *Harris* front pipes of 1678 remained useable. These were incorporated in the beautiful new case designed by Dr Arthur Hill and added in 1888. In 1904 *Hele* of Plymouth enlarged the Swell, which came to project out of the rear panelling at the top of the case. The organ then had three manuals and a modest thirty-four speaking stops. The view of the rear of organ, from the north transept, was an ugly and utilitarian one, funds permitting nothing remotely as beautiful as the front of the case; no pipes were visible, because the Pedal pipes stood behind the panelling and the rear of the Swell box protruded at the top. *Hele* fitted tubular-pneumatic action in 1904, which remained (except for the draw-stop action, which was electrified in 1964) until the organ was withdrawn from service in 1973, having become too unreliable to use. An early Allen digital computer organ was installed on the newly re-erected stone Arundel Screen.

In 1984 the organ was dismantled

by *N.P. Mander Ltd*, in preparation for a complete rebuild with new soundboards and a new mechanical (tracker) key action. The appearance of the rear of the *Hill* case was greatly improved, as were its sides, to designs and suggestions made by Michael Gillingham, brought in as consultant. The existing rear coving was made to continue on all faces, as was the panelling and cornice. The case was roofed. The gallery, with its linen-fold panelling, also now continues all round, enabling an assistant to reach either side of the console by walking round the back of the organ. A new internal wooden staircase replaced the ugly external cast-iron spiral staircase of 1888. The sturdy wooden framework which has supported the organ from 1867 remains, now clad in new oak panelling which is extended to the pillars on either side.

The organ was enhanced by a small Solo Organ (placed above the Great, behind the upper level of front pipes), by modest choruswork on the Choir, and by a 32ft Contra Fagotto, its pipes being of wood, in the *Hill* style. A Diapason chorus was added in the nave triforium, to help support congregational singing. Of the 48 stops (excluding the 7-stop nave organ) 15 are by *Mander*, the rest being a rich mixture of pipes by *Harris* (62), *Byfield* (c.100), *Knight* (c.140), *England* (c.240), *Gray & Davison* (c.75 wooden pipes), *Hill* (some 25% of the organ) and *Hele* (the Cremona and some top notes).

Before its restoration, Dr Roy Massey wrote of the Chichester organ that it was 'the archetypal old-world Cathedral organ'. And so it still is, beautifully restored and enhanced by *Mander*, who gave it its current new lease of life in their 1985-6 work.

Practice and performance

by *J K Rishworth*

‘PRACTICE MAKES perfect, of course’ says Gavin Barrett in his entertaining article about the psychology of practising (February 2023 Journal). But why is it that we can practise things as near as we can to perfection and they still go wrong on the day? Fingers suddenly run about like startled sheep, or transpose a distance upwards, or the music just looks like dots on the page, we don’t know what we’re doing, what happens next?

I have been playing for services for decades by now, but have always suffered from such moments. Congregations are always very forgiving, saying they haven’t noticed. Perhaps they really don’t notice? After all, little slips happen all the time, in the prayers, in the readings, and all sorts of things among the congregation. We don’t pay attention to these things, imperfection is part of life. But this is reflecting rationally; what about the psychological aspects, nerves, lack of confidence, self-criticism?

After all these years, I think I’m finally getting to grips with the psychology of performance. In the first place, a wise friend of mine pointed out that nerves are a form of fear. Fear, really? What am I afraid of, if they didn’t want me to play, they wouldn’t keep asking me. Perhaps they’re desperate, but even then, a friend in need is a friend indeed.

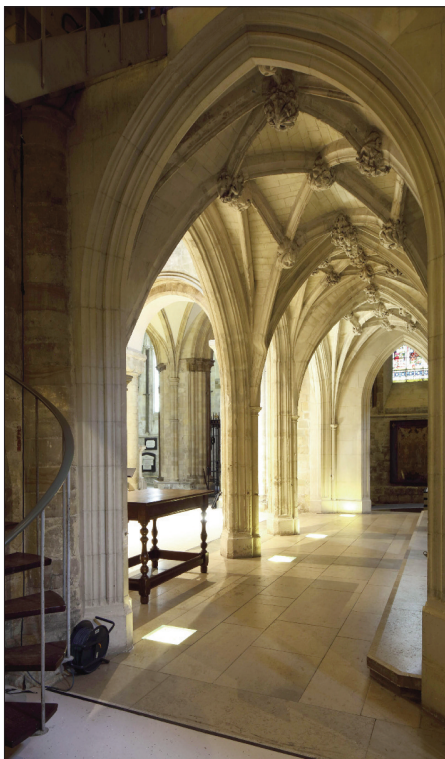
Whatever the cause might be, we need to deal with the results. If nerves are fear, and fear is a form of aversion, then we

need to bring kindness to bear, wishing happiness to all involved: to the congregation, to enjoy their singing; to myself, to enjoy my part in the music; to the clergy, to enjoy a well-spirited atmosphere in the church.

When feeling tense, we can sit up straight, breathe deeply, relax the point of physical tension. Mentally, we can deliberately switch the attitude to kindness and happiness, which makes a huge difference. But still I find the fingers run wild at times. Not long after this first step, the same wise friend, who happens to be a sporty type, was recommended by his tennis coach to a book called *The Inner Game of Tennis*, which deals with exactly this sort of psychological hindrance, afflicting people’s performance in sport. There has been a series of these books, including *The Inner Game of Music*, by Barry Green and Timothy Gallwey, first published in 1986 and still on sale in our local bookshop.

Within a few pages, I came across the ground-breaking advice to ‘Give yourself permission to make mistakes’, what a liberating idea, why did no-one ever tell me this before? Not my early piano teacher, who screamed at every wrong note, nor my very good organ tutor, who kept me working on about one Bach chorale per term, until every note was reliably played by exactly the correct finger.

Despite the language, *The Inner Game of Music* is full of encouraging suggestions, based on the principle of focusing on the music, ignoring the self-conscious part of the mind with its self-criticism, doubts and fears, and allowing our intuitive natural musicality to take control. Other nuggets that I noted include: visualise yourself playing calmly, and relaxed;



Underside of Chichester screen Photo C.Jilks

think of the tricky bits as needing full awareness, not as a problem; forget yourself, focus on the music, present-moment sensations, sound and feeling; accept any mistakes and move on.

And suggestions for alternative forms of practising: play the piece as accurately as possible; then as expressively as possible; then as fast as possible (just for fun); then from memory, so as to explore different aspects of the music, which will combine naturally for optimal performance (it says).

So now, when I make a mistake in performance, instead of fretting about it I just slide back towards the correct place and carry on. As long as we keep in time and keep playing something, a few dissonances will probably blend in among the

echoing vaults. Acoustics give us much to be grateful for.

Thirdly in the same run of developments, I re-discovered the Ten Commandments of Organ Practice, kindly passed on to me from an organ visit made with the KCOA some years ago. 'FIVE: Thou shalt never apologise for thy playing, nor say Oops! when thou makest a mistake, for thou wilt only draw attention to things which otherwise would never be noticed by the people.'

Despite all this wonderful and helpful advice, I'm aware that I'm well into the random error and good day/bad day stage of life, but I'm hopeful that, at the least, I might be able to accept the errors more cheerfully.

Thinking about lack of self-confidence more broadly, and particularly with regard to young people, who have so many reasons for anxiety these days, I wonder whether the current taste for competitive and brilliant virtuoso performances, at astonishing speeds, might actually discourage the simple enjoyment of playing, and the simple enjoyment of the sound of real organ pipes. Few young people ever hear a church organ, and they never hear a cinema organ, just souped-up sounds from electronic devices. Reading in the August 2023 Journal about the joint KCOA and RCO event in Hythe, and Berkeley Hill's introduction of the instrument to young people, gives me hope that more might be done in the way of taking the instrument to the people.

Maybe the principles I've mentioned are well known nowadays, but they didn't feature in my own musical education. I hope that bringing them in since then will better equip younger people to perform and to share in music, not from ferocious discipline or from driving competitiveness, but from simple natural enjoyment.

David Brock

A short profile

DAVID BROCK was born on 15th September 1937 at Reading. He started piano lessons aged 7. Having made good progress he started organ lessons aged 14 at Reading School, where he was a pupil from 1949 to 1954. He had further organ tuition after National Service on the fine 4-manual Willis organ at St. Mary's Church, Reading. Practising in the dark church was no problem, but when he first discovered the Ophicleide the thunderous sound gave him a big fright.

David started his career in local government finance in January 1955 at Reading Town Hall, interrupted from 1956-58 by National Service in the Royal Army Pay Corps. June 1959 brought David's first organ appointment at Elm Park Hall Methodist Church. In June 1965 he left Reading to work for Gillingham Borough Council until retirement in March 1998, apart from a short time with Kent County Council following the 1974 local government reorganisation.

David's first KCOA meeting was at Faversham in December 1965. In 1990 he started his first term on the committee, with a second term from 1997. He was treasurer from 2001 to 2007.

He met Sue, a Gillingham girl, and they were married in 1973. His best man was a long-term friend from National Service days. Their daughter Rachel was born in May 1976.

David's first organ-playing appointment in Kent was in 1970 at Byron Road Methodist Church, Gillingham, playing an electronic instrument. He got back to a pipe organ in February 1977 at H.M. Borstal, Rochester, which possessed a 2-

manual Willis, playing for the 9.00am Sunday service until 1984. Byron Road Church closed in 1981, but from October 1982 David started playing for the evening service at the Methodist Church in Third Avenue, Gillingham. He was more involved from 1994 until he resigned in 2010; at present he plays there for a monthly midweek service.

From June 1990 David deputised and played for occasional services at the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Maidstone, where he still plays once or twice a month.

After he retired David lost no time in joining Medway Scrabble Club, and served as Chairman from 2008-2018. His wife Sue has been Treasurer since 2013.

He had been attending football matches since 1947, but did not get his first season ticket until 1998 at Charlton Athletic. They had just been promoted to the Premier League. David continued his season ticket through to 2009 when Charlton were relegated for a second time.

With retirement now providing much more scope for travel David and Sue flew to Toronto, also visiting Niagara and Vancouver, before joining the Rocky Mountaineer Rail Tour to Calgary. From there they toured the Banff and Jasper national parks by car, highlights being the drive along the Icefield Parkway, and visiting Lake Louise. In 2002 they visited New Zealand and Sydney, highlights there being a performance at Sydney Opera House, and the Harbour Bridge climb. Most years they have managed to get away for some winter sun, their favourite destination being Madeira.

In 2013 they went on their first cruise after travelling on the Rocky Mountaineer from Banff to Vancouver. The cruise lasted just 7 days, going to Alaska and back: they were hooked and have been regular cruisers ever since.



David Brock

Photo C.Clemence

David Flood

The Experience of a Lifetime

IT WAS ON 1st September 1978 that I first played for a service in Canterbury Cathedral, since the Lay Clerks always used to start back on the 1st, and my, I was scared! I was playing the same Willis console that Gerald Knight and Sidney Campbell would have played but we had the newest communication device: a tiny TV screen about 4" in diameter on which I could see a tiny, misty Allan Wicks. We didn't rehearse in the choir stalls so the first time I played was also the first time I experienced the fact that I couldn't really hear the choir. So my journey began.

Allan Wicks was an amazing mentor who allowed me to make mistakes – once – and then expected not just the highest standards but the ability to add initiative and spontaneity to the performance. That took a while to come, especially since after about two weeks the organ was taken out to be rebuilt by *N P Mander*. Everything from then on was either accompanied on a three-stop *Collins* chamber organ standing by the choir stalls, or else on the 1960s Hammond which still sat both on the quire screen and in the nave. The Hammond often sounded as if it would explode (let's say we would not have been disappointed...) and it was taken out with very little ceremony! Accompanying was quite a skill in that

situation and continued to be so once the organ came back at the end of 1979, since it was very different from its predecessor.

We saw some wonderful occasions: the first Enthronement in which I played a part was for Archbishop Robert Runcie in 1980 and for which the new nave organ had just been finished – the first time that a pipe organ had been permanently sited in the nave. Pope John Paul II visited in 1982 (it was shortly after he had been injured and we weren't sure that it would happen) and we were on world-wide TV. Anything I did (there were only two of us: we had no organ scholar or extra assistance) would be heard all round the world instantly and that was something which I had to get used to. It happens much more often now but then it was quite rare.

The 'total immersion' of those eight years was the best training anyone could wish for.

So, it was in 1986 that I was appointed to Lincoln Cathedral, where I spent two very enjoyable years in that superb building surrounded by so much willing support and determination. One of the first things we had to do that September was the Enthronement of Bishop Robert Hardy, a really colourful occasion for which the whole of that huge floor space in the nave was needed. (It was the only time I can remember that a Jester was involved in the pre-service period!) So the choir was moved up on to the screen, on a scaffold on the south side of the organ and I was directing them actually standing over the edge of the screen! I had commissioned Canterbury composer Alan Ridout to set the Bishop of



David Flood

Photo D Flood

Lincoln's psalm, Ps 1, and we had but a few days to learn this new piece, performed twice in the ceremony.

On returning to Canterbury in 1988, we were sad to leave our friends in Lincoln but, as the Dean of Lincoln put it '...it won't come your way again' so I took on the challenge of succeeding my former mentor. Many of the team were the same and so to make things feel different I turned the axis of the (square) choir practice room 90°. It had an effect!

By 1991 we made our first recording together, one which is still selling in quantities. A memorable part of it was recording the Allegri Miserere, since you can only expect a certain number of beautiful top Cs in one evening. It is hard to imagine now that we made the recording in six takes and the boy who so effortlessly hit every one of those Cs is still a great friend, as is his family. A sequence of nearly 20 CDs followed, all of which are downloadable.

In April 1991 came the Enthronement of Archbishop George Carey and my first role in directing the music for such a great occasion. We commissioned a wonderful *Te Deum* from Grayston Ives for which we employed the fanfare trumpeters of the Royal Marines to play. Situated right above the choir on a special platform, it was an amazing sound! We also welcomed singers from All Souls', Langham Place, led by Noel Tredinnick, who enabled the musical spectrum of the service to be widened with great beauty.

I learned a lot about touring when we first made a short trip to Le Mans, France, travelling by coach. On preparing to put on robes for the big concert, we discovered that the basket which

was supposed to contain the men's cassocks actually had all the probationers' cassocks instead. There was an entertaining variety of attire in the back row, especially as many had 'travelled light'.

Tours to the USA and Canada were huge fun and wonderfully rewarding to everyone, especially as people from the Mother Church came to visit and strengthen the ties. Home-stays were a very special part of these with long-lasting friendships being made. Many boys reappeared the next morning with wide-eyed tales of the most extravagant hospitality. There were visits to Universal Studios, NASA and other places, including the Stockyards of Fort Worth, Texas, where the reception of these little British celebrities by the Stetson-wearing men at the bar was heart-warming and astonishing! Choir tours are important team-building times and stay in the memory for ever.

We also had great times in the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Rome but also in Norway, where the most northerly-sited relic of St Thomas of Canterbury is to be found. For this trip we were accompanied by a BBC film crew which added to the excitement, especially when the choir were taken to one of the concert venues, in a beautiful church by the side of the fjord, by rip-boats at very high speed! I had to miss this, attending a meeting with the Bishop instead... In Rome, just a few years ago, we sang together with the Sistine Chapel choir at a memorable joint service with Archbishop Justin and His Holiness the Pope. I made sure that the choristers could find a place to see the procession on the way out, close to the centre aisle. At least two of them are

proud to have shared a 'High Five' with the Pope on that occasion!

For the next Enthronement, for Archbishop Rowan Williams, it was suggested that we bring in a contribution from another part of the Communion and so it was that I made contact with a stunning dance group, Frittiti, who were then based in south London. Few people might realise that the role of the Cathedral Organist includes resourcing an African dance group. My wife and I went to Brixton one winter evening to find their rehearsal space and begin the fruitful partnership. They were so generous in their contribution to the services and gave such a splash of colour.

It was Archbishop Justin who commented that perhaps only HM Queen Elizabeth had worked with more Archbishops than I have! To plan his Enthronement in 2013 was another joy, this time with the knowledge that the world would know all about it before we had finished the last note. The video recording of the service is still on YouTube and still gives a thrill when you hear that the congregation of 2000 people all sing rhythmically together!

It was in about 2005 that we began to plan for some very significant development of the Cathedral organ. It was very small for the building and for the variety of events which were now held and we were missing the variety of the bigger organs, especially the soft sounds.

With many years of planning, research and some experimentation, we were finally able to invite proposals from organ builders, with *Harrison & Harrison* being selected. The organ, rebuilt for the second time in my connection with Canterbury, is now full of

colour and distributed in the building to the very best effect. Not only can the organist now hear the choir (and the conductor in rehearsal) but also gain a full impression of the balance. It was a huge investment for the Cathedral but one which will be repaid in the satisfaction and support brought to the liturgy over so many years to come. We broke new ground in that half of the organ is now on the north side of the quire triforium (requiring detailed temperature and climate research over years) and the connection is now made through fibre optic cable: so fast and precise. It surrounds the great quire with the finest organ sound and is even heard in the nave more effectively than before.

Throughout all of this I enjoyed the superb encouragement and support of Dean Robert Willis and his predecessor, John Simpson, who had the courage to appoint an organist with apparently short experience. The music of the Cathedral has always been cherished, with Robert himself a talented musician and author. On certain occasions he would re-write a familiar song or perhaps a Gilbert & Sullivan aria for an occasion and perform it himself with such wit and skill.

It was the most thrilling and rewarding experience to have been entrusted with the leadership of the music of these great places for all these years. I must make testament to the stream of oh-so-talented people who came along with me: choristers, lay clerks, organ scholars and assistants (including my very good friend Timothy Noon) who were really the success story of the past 40+ years. It was really they who did the work, after all.

The history of Forwoods - Part one

by Stephen Yarrow

THESE DAYS, Forwoods is one of the leading music retailers in the United Kingdom, but it could all have been snuffed out in an instant before our first shop had been open a year.

Canterbury-born tenor Reginald 'Reggie' Forwood studied in London with Sydney Coltham, before embarking on a professional career across the south east of England. The Whitstable Times carried a notice of 'The First Public Appearance in Canterbury of Reginald Forwood, Tenor' at the Regal Cinema in June 1934, with Reginald Renison at the organ.

During the 1930s Reggie broadcast with the BBC National Choir, and with an imaginatively named quartet, 'The Four Singers', with Miss Nellie White of Bromley, Miss Joyce Gayford of Redhill and Mr Frank Keyte of Rochester Cathedral.

A review of a performance for Fareham Philharmonic Society in 1936 reports that Reggie 'sang the popular solo "Take a pair of sparkling eyes" in a manner which delighted the audience', which is pleasing to note.

At around the same time, a young soprano with a voice of 'exceptional sweetness and purity' (Faversham News, 29 May 1937) was embarking on her own professional career. May Bartlett appeared as a soloist in venues including Winchester Cathedral, St George's Chapel Windsor and the Queen's Hall in London. In 1938 she sang under the baton of Sir Adrian

Boult at the 33rd Petersfield Musical Festival. The three-day Festival programme also included the famous harpist Sidonie Goossens and soprano Joan Cross, who would later create the role of Ellen Orford in the 1945 premiere of Benjamin Britten's opera Peter Grimes, as well as Elizabeth I in Gloriana, Mrs Grose in the Turn of the Screw, and other soprano leads for the same composer.

In true operatic style, at some stage May the soprano and Reggie the tenor met and fell in love. They were married on 29 May 1941.

Only fifteen miles from the English Channel, Canterbury was virtually a frontline city during the Second World War (1939-45). Exactly a year after the Forwoods' wedding, in May and June 1942, it was targeted by the German Luftwaffe in what became known as the Baedeker raids, apparently ordered by Adolf Hitler in direct retaliation for the RAF bombing of Lübeck and other historic German towns. The Corn Exchange and City Market were destroyed, along with churches and schools.

In extraordinary acts of bravery, as the German bombers approached over Whitstable, a team of volunteer fire-watchers headed for the roof of the city's most famous building, Canterbury Cathedral, and as the incendiary devices fell, they threw them from the roof into the precincts below, thus saving the mother church of the Anglican Communion from destruction.

With the city still reeling from the terror and devastation of this Blitz, and no doubt fearful of more attacks to come, Reggie and May Forwood welcomed their daughter Julia into the

world in August 1942. Happily, all three survived to celebrate VE Day and look forward to brighter times ahead.

Reggie and May decided to make Canterbury their permanent home. Reggie was appointed as a tenor lay-clerk at the cathedral, where he shared the choir stalls with, among others, the renowned counter-tenor Alfred Deller – another who would go on to work closely with Britten.

Clearly, the stipend of a cathedral singer was not sufficient to sustain a young family, and the Forwoods needed to supplement their income somehow. Taking advantage of what we can only assume were very reasonable rents in the still heavily war-ravaged Canterbury, in April 1946 Reggie took some space in the front of an old baker's shop in Palace Street, a row of buildings forming the western perimeter of the cathedral precincts, and began selling sheet music.

Only a few months later, in December 1946, whilst returning from London, where he had been to buy stock for his shop, Reggie suffered a fractured skull when his car collided with a lorry at Dartford in north Kent. Mercifully, he went on to make a full recovery and his fledgling business somehow managed to survive, but it could all have been very different.

As the Palace Street shop began to grow, Reggie and May threw themselves into the musical life of Canterbury and the surrounding area. Reggie became conductor of the Herne Bay Arpeggios Choir, a post he held until 1964. May became a highly respected singing teacher, giving lessons above the shop, no doubt accompanied by the ringing of tills from downstairs. Not to be outdone, she also became a choral conductor, leading the Canterbury

Ladies Choir until the mid-1970s.

One former Saturday girl recalls working at the shop in those days, 'The shop was very chaotic, no good putting anything down for a moment as it would instantly get covered up or put back in the wrong folder; no computers either in those days, so we had to rely on Reggie's encyclopaedic memory when ordering things in.'

Nevertheless, Reggie and May clearly managed to create a special environment in the Palace Street shop, and every serious musician visiting or living in Canterbury would call, including some very famous composers and conductors.

A customer wrote to us in 2019, 'I was at school right behind the shop in the late 1960s, I remember it very well as a musical Aladdin's cave where anything we needed could be found - eventually, together with Mr Forwood's great charm.'

Stephen Yarrow, the current owner of Forwoods, writes, 'When I began working in the Palace Street shop in 1986, Mr Forwood was still working three mornings a week. Well, I say "working", but my abiding memory of him is with his arms open wide, greeting an old friend who has just walked in the door, whereupon we would lose him for the next thirty minutes while they had a good old catch up. Mr Forwood was the absolute embodiment of charm, the very model of an English gentleman and respected by all who knew him. How fortunate we are that he survived his close encounter with a truck and went on to build a fine business. Our challenge today is to meet the demands of running a business in the twenty-first century, whilst continuing to offer a Reggie-style arms-wide welcome to customers old and new.'

Colin Jilks

A Short Profile

COLIN JILKS was born at Verulam House, St Albans, an imposing grade 2 listed building, formerly the Bishop's Palace close to St. Albans Cathedral. Colin's ecclesiastical connections are perhaps tenuous as when he was born, on 15th January 1944, Verulam House had become a maternity hospital and facility for training pupil midwives by the "General Lying-In Hospital", which had been evacuated from York Road, Lambeth, in south London during the war, a productive establishment it seems as between September 1939 and June 1946, two thousand babies were born there.

These were dangerous times as the V flying bombs started in earnest in 1944 and, having returned to Camberwell to live with his parents and grandparents above their corner shop, frequent 'Doodlebug' raids ensured many nights spent huddled in the garden air raid shelter.

August 1945 brought another brother and, with war conditions still prevailing, Colin's mother was again sent out of London for the birth. Although only eighteen months old, Colin was consequently placed into local authority care and evacuated, with brown label attached, to an unknown destination. Mother soon returned with the new baby, but Colin remained distressingly in care as, exacerbated by war damage, living conditions at the Camberwell shop were impossible for an expanding family. Eventually a flat was found in a house

adjacent to St James's Parish Church, Knatchwell Road, Camberwell, set in an attractive area, with both gas and electricity; there had been only gas lighting in the corner shop.

Only then, after an absence of some two to three months, was Colin returned to settle in the new home. Although the flat was a great improvement, another brother arrived in February 1949 requiring four children to sleep in just one room; sadly the piano, inherited with the flat, was sold to make room for the new occupant. Although still only five years old, Colin had liked to be left alone to tinkle on it and remembers being somewhat puzzled why a scale on the white keys seemed right, but not if he tried to add a few black ones; alas, piano lessons would have to wait for many years.

However, this part of Camberwell had its advantages, with a house overlooking Myatt's Fields, a listed Victorian park with bandstand, gardens and facilities for children, and St James's Parish Church, which was to sow the seeds of Colin's later life. Returning from the park one summer afternoon in 1951 with an older friend, Colin accompanied him to choir practice hoping to join the choir. He had been warned there would be a challenging voice test, but found singing a scale and the higher and lower notes of chords, played by the choirmaster, not at all difficult. The church had a four-part choir and a three-manual and pedal J W Walker organ, services were Book of Common Prayer, of course. Rising through the ranks, he became head boy before retiring to the back row aged fourteen.

When he started school in 1949, primary schools were not at their best, with bomb damaged classrooms, gas lighting and coal fires in distant corners, although

Colin remembers that, regardless of the conditions, children seemed to learn to read more by osmosis with books and newspapers in the home. Joining the church choir, aged seven, Colin remembers only briefly hesitating over words like 'omnipotent' or 'transfiguration', but remembers the mental penny dropping when the true meaning of "*a green hill far away, without a city wall*" finally revealed itself.

His secondary school, William Penn School, Dulwich, showed more promise, with the appointment of a new young and enthusiastic music master, Bernard Stapley, who was starting a school orchestra, initially with instruments gathered round the piano at morning assembly. Colin's mother, who played the violin prior to the war, encouraged him to take up the instrument with lessons provided at the school, playing on a second hand violin purchased for £2. 10s, a good quality instrument he still has today. Being a promising player, he was selected for special tuition, which included playing in an orchestral concert at The Royal Albert Hall, allowing his lessons to continue up to, and beyond, leaving school.

Although Colin became leader of the school orchestra, he was following a technical educational course, enjoying science and drawing office skills. His outlook changed following a visit to the organ building workshops of *Henry Willis* at Marlborough Grove, Bermondsey, arranged by his music master who, being an enthusiastic organist, thought organ building might be a suitable career. Seeing organ pipes being made and voiced seemed irresistible and an application for training and an apprenticeship followed. Colin was deemed suitable and served for five years under *Henry Willis III*, specialising in pipe making, tuning and voicing, qualifying at the age of twenty-one in 1965. Initial training was as

an organ tuner's assistant, tuning and maintaining a variety of instruments. The very first organ he visited was the *Willis* organ at All Soul's Langham Place, next to Broadcasting House. It was a large three-manual and pedal organ with *Willis's* impressive black polished console and tilting coupler tabs above the keys; with its 32ft reed this was an exciting start. Colin also assisted the tuner at St Paul's Cathedral during Harry Gabb's time as Sub Organist. The organ was tuned every Wednesday evening when a different section was tuned, gradually attending the whole organ over a four to five week cycle. He was also the assistant to the head voicer working at Southwark Cathedral when the organ was overhauled in the 1960s, regulating the pipes in the organ to the voicer's instruction from the console, completing the full tonal finishing. *Henry Willis III* was of the old school and thought well of his craftsmen but, following his death in the mid-1960s, the company changed dramatically when *Henry IV* took charge. Many of the best craftsmen left and Colin, now fully qualified, moved to *Rushworth & Dreaper*, undertaking tuning and maintenance work in and around London.

Outside organ building Colin continued with his violin, his earlier tuition leading to playing regularly in the *Dulwich Orchestra*, which was conducted by Jeremy Montagu, a percussionist and horn player who had played in the Royal Philharmonic with Beecham as well as BBC orchestras. The orchestra attracted music students and able musicians from a variety of student backgrounds, although all were equally beguiled by the 'Beecham' tales and offers of snuff from the 'Montagu' snuffbox, produced with a flourish from his waistcoat pocket in the pub after rehearsal.

Colin played with the orchestra for nearly ten years until his move from



Colin Jilks

Photo C.Jilks

London to Sittingbourne in 1970, leading to Kent orchestras and playing regularly in a string quartet for many years. It was always a regret he was not able to have piano lessons as a child, and his string quartet viola player, Linda Bradley, who was primarily a pianist trained at the Royal College of Music, gave Colin piano lessons starting at the age of thirty-five, progressing him through the Associated board exams up to grade seven; organ lessons followed a little later with Keith Moxon at St Michael's Church, Sittingbourne.

Colin had married on 30th March 1968 — at St James Church, Camberwell, where he was a choirboy — and he and Christine subsequently had two daughters and now six grandchildren. Arriving in Sittingbourne, Colin joined the choir of St Michael's Parish Church, then later became an assistant organist and eventually Choirmaster. He was a founder member of *The Freegard Singers*, formed in 1976, and subsequently their Director of Music for five years on the death of their founder, Harold Freegard, in 1983. They gave regular concerts and sang cathedral evensongs in Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals.

Colin's organ work expanded in 1971 as *Hill Norman & Beard* were seeking a new Kent area representative and he was appointed at the age of twenty-seven. There were many interesting organs in his charge, one being the *Binns* organ at Tonbridge School Chapel, which he maintained for many years, also getting involved with the occasional school music room organ project with Paul Hale and the boys. In time he greatly extended his area, and was responsible for the full tonal finishing of the organ at Hampton Court Palace in 1993 with Gordon Reynolds. (In 1999 Channel 4 television recorded the programme *Behind the scenes at Hampton Court Palace* which featured

Colin tuning the organ in the Chapel Royal. It can still be found on *YouTube* selecting Chapel Royal from the index).

The *HN&B* Company closed in 1998, but with many long term clients Colin continued trading as *Colin K Jilks & Associates Ltd.*, adding to a large customer base throughout the Home Counties. As well as Buckingham Palace, St James's Palace — The Chapel Royal and The Queen's Chapel — London contracts also included Kensington Palace and the Guards' Chapel, Wellington Barracks. One of the oldest organs he has maintained was the 1695 *Renatus Harris* organ at St Clement's Church, St Clement's Lane Eastcheap, in the City of London.

After moving to Steyning, West Sussex, in 2006 Colin plays regularly at two country churches and is an active member of *Steyning Jazz Club*, being their press officer and MC, providing previews and articles for West Sussex newspapers. With a daughter and three lively grandchildren living nearby, there are also enjoyable family activities. Other interests include photography; he was a Licentiate of the Royal Photographic Society.

Colin joined our *KCOA* in 1981, following an invitation from Brian Moore. He has served on the committee, was President from 1999 to 2001, Deputy President for many years and is now President Emeritus. He started our *Journal* in 1995 and produces two editions each year. The *KCOA* owes him a great debt of gratitude for his skilled editorship over the years, making our *Journal* the envy of many organists' associations. Colin's genial presence at our meetings is always appreciated, as are his professional and interesting comments on the organs we hear. He is a member of *The Institute of British Organ Building*; an Associate of *The Incorporated Society of Organ Builders*; and a member of *The Institute of Musical Instrument Technology*.



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