



Founded in 1932

# Sequencer

The Newsletter of the Nottingham & District Society of Organists

Promoting Classical Organ Music in Nottinghamshire

May 2011

## *St John's, Carrington — The New Organ demonstrated by Paul Hale . . .*

A large gathering of members enjoyed a memorable evening with Paul Hale at St. John's Church, Carrington, on 9th February. Paul asked those who heard his recital on the new organ at St. Peter's, Nottingham, whether they could detect which stops used pipes and which had sounds produced electronically, and whether they needed to know when playing or listening. Paul then recalled the history of the organ at St. John's, originally built by Roger Yates for a private house, and then enlarged and moved to Carrington. He described the changes during the recent re-ordering of the church and the rebuilding of the organ on a new West Gallery, and various design and construction aspects of the new organ case. The new Swell Oboe has been made playable from the Great manual, allowing the stop, when used as a solo, to be accompanied by another rank on the swell organ. Discussions provoked humorous responses from people apparently devoted to the 'preservation of the Dulciana.'



Paul then explained some other projects that he was working on, helped by an informative booklet that he had produced for the occasion. After a refreshment break, Paul gave a splendid recital which included works by John Stanley, J S Bach, Herbert Howells and César Franck, and showed how well the organ can give convincing accounts of such varied styles.

All those present were very grateful to Paul for such an excellent meeting.

John Bellamy

## *. . . and a Choral Workshop with Philip White-Jones*

Twenty-two members were greeted by Shaun Hooper on 23rd March, who introduced the meeting to Philip White-Jones, Assistant Director of Music at Southwell Minster. Philip explained his background — seven years as chorister at Liverpool Cathedral, organist at two local parish churches (not at the same time!), Cambridge University, Assistant at Winchester Cathedral and prep school, and Southwell 2½ years ago). He then introduced his excellent choir, the Minster Chorale. Philip stressed the importance of warm-up exercises even if time allowed for only a few minutes. He demonstrated various "wiggles" in order to stretch and relax before moving on to vocal exercises. Breathe in — hold — a small top-up breath and hold again before breathing out. Humming noises to relax the palette and vocal chords. Sing arpeggios to "How far to my cow" G up to C down through G then E to C. Repeat going up in pitch chromatically. Move on to pitch and thinking practice i.e. sing C then D; C then E; C then F etc. Sing a chromatic scale unaccompanied.



John Catling conducts the Minster Chorale

He then moved on to a practice of Elgar's *Ave Verum* with the choir (with David Rooke at the organ). The quality of the choir was very obvious — I suspect that many colleagues would have liked to see them at their own church. He handed over the choir to our own John Catling who bravely ran his own rehearsal with the choir before handing back to Philip for advice and comment. At 8.30pm, we broke for coffee before moving up to the loft for organ accompaniment advice. Apart from the relaxation/breathing/exercises detailed above, all of Philip's address was summarised on a 'hand-out'. If you would like a copy please contact the NDSO Secretary.

Ian Thompson

# News in Brief

\* In the February *Sequencer* various collective names for a collection of organists were offered. Brian Basham of the Gloucestershire Society who receives a copy, reports that Roy Massey MBE has made the suggestion 'A Grand Swell'. Could this be the best so far?

\* *Bach's Orgelbüchlein was only one quarter complete, according to the original plan. William Whitehead, Professor of Organ at the Royal Academy aims to have Bach's book completed by today's composers, with performances and publication planned.*

\* The Royal Festival Hall organ restoration is now half-way funded. Only approx. £1.1m (of £2.3m) needs to be raised. There is still an opportunity to Sponsor a pipe.

\* *Following Neil Page's account of his musical experiences in Vietnam, it is interesting to note that the first Vietnam International Choir Festival took place in Hoi An, Vietnam during March.*

\* The Managing Director of Harrison & Harrison's is now Christopher Batchelor. His predecessor Mark Venning continues as Chairman.

\* *In Organists' Review, Joe Riley highlighted the damage caused to churches in thousands of parishes by bats protected by law since 1982. His tongue-in-cheek remedy was 'Perhaps a weekly dose of Messiaen might do the trick?'*



\* Paul Hale's comments in *O/R* on the new Llandaff organ: 'Heralded as the largest completely new British Cathedral organ since Coventry I can say with conviction that the Llandaff Nicholson is also the best since Coventry.' (We now await his comment on the St. Edmundsbury Harrison.)

\* *The RSCM and Canterbury Christ Church Cathedral have combined to offer a new foundation degree course for church musicians, beginning September 2011.*

\* 2011 is the bicentenary year for Franz Liszt, and a centenary for Jehan Alain the French organist and composer, and brother of Marie-Claire Alain. It also marks 350 years since the death of Couperin, and 350 since the birth of Georg Böhm, organist at Lüneburg.

\* *Workshop College celebrates the centenary of the Chapel with its Keates organ. There is a recital on 4th May at 7.30.*

\* The Hull Town Hall Forster & Andrews organ is 100 years old. Recital by Thomas Trotter on 2 June, 2.30 pm.

\* *NDSO celebrates its 80th birthday next year.*

\* *Hymns Ancient and Modern is 150 years old this year.*

\* *The Friends of Cathedral Music awarded £130,000 between 7 Cathedrals in 2010. Of this, £25,000 was handed to Truro Cathedral by Neil Page who is a FCM Council member.*

\* Alastair Cook, star batsman of the English Ashes, told the FCM that he attributes his cricket field concentration to his intense hard work when a chorister at St. Paul's Cathedral.

\* *The authorised new Methodist hymn book, and online resources, is launched at the Methodist Conference of July. A sampler is available at [www.singingthefaith.org.uk](http://www.singingthefaith.org.uk)*

\* The Cavaillé-Coll organ of Parr Hall, Warrington, which the Society visited a few years ago, is to be dismantled with a view to moving it to Sheffield Cathedral. Roger Fisher gives the final recital on Friday 17th June at 7.30 pm (marking also the bicentenary of the birth of the builder, and the centenary of the death of Guilman.)

\* *Honorary Life Membership of the Society was recently awarded to Mr & Mrs Wright, and Mr Sewell.*

\* We regret to report the death of Mr Michael Ball and Mrs Olive Sewell.

## Cleri-who?

'Le Grand' Francois Couperin  
Was a French Baroque superman;  
Just hear the music he lavishes  
On those grateful Convents and Parishes

**Chris Burton** has moved to Winchester where he now teaches at the Pilgrim School, the choir school of Winchester Cathedral. Chris graduated from Exeter University in 2007 with 1st class honours in Music, then became Deputy Director of Music at St. Barnabas Cathedral, Nottingham and Director of Music at St. Joseph's Prep. School. He was also Director of Music for Radcliffe on Trent Male Voice Choir. We all wish Chris well in his new appointment.



*We have had, and still have, many members who are an inspiration to us.*

*The membership form dated 1932 (the year that NDSO was founded) of the organ builder Roger Yates is shown below.*

*Another founder member was Dr. W. L. Sumner the expert on organ construction. It has recently come to light that the organ composer and editor Gordon Phillips was also present at that very first meeting of the Society: he was furthering his studies in Music at Nottingham University at that time.*

Sent Miss Gandy 7/11/32

**Nottingham and District Society of Organists.**

I, W. L. Sumner, wish to become a member of the Nottingham and District Society of Organists.

Signed W. L. Sumner  
Address Brigden Street, Nottingham.

Proposer Stanley Nolan Read W  
Seconder W. L. Sumner  
Date 10 Dec 32.

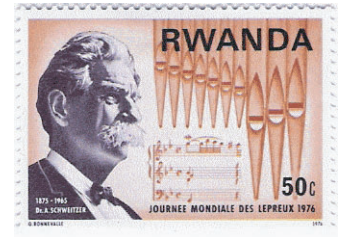
Both Proposer and Seconder must be members of the Society.

This Proposal Form should be sent to the Hon. Sec. — STANLEY NOLAN, "ROSARIO," ARNOT HILL ROAD, ARNOLD, NOTTS.



# STAMPS FOR ORGANISTS: 3. ALBERT SCHWEITZER

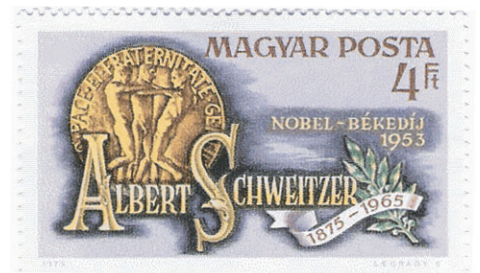
Organists have rarely been the subject of stamp designs unless they have also been composers or world-famous in other spheres. Consequently we search in vain for Dupré, Widor, Germani, Thalben-Ball etc. But Dr Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) was the great polymath having a worldwide reputation as a physician, missionary, theologian, Bach scholar and organist.



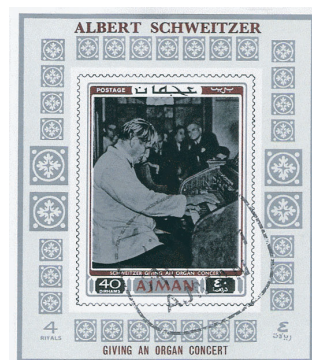
In the period 1930-1970 he made extensive recordings of Bach's organ music in which he played in the 'baroque' style of slow deliberate performance, great emphasis on phrasing and minimal changing of stops and manuals. This style is now considered very mannered but puristically correct. His two-volume treatise on Bach is still mandatory reading for scholars of Bach's music. As a missionary in Africa he worked typically for five years and then took vacation in Europe much of which he spent as a touring recitalist, the proceeds of which helped to fund his missionary work. Both as a polymath and Nobel Laureate (Peace Prize 1952) he is much featured on postage stamps and often as an organist.



Schweitzer is the only non-composer organist featured on stamps. The background scenes are usually of African Missionary or Medical context but some depict his organ playing, with Bach motifs common. A number of portraits



have been used but the best designs show him in characteristic pose. The Rwanda (1976) issue was appropriate because of Schweitzer's missionary work and shows on the 20c stamp a keyboard and the *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*; the 50c issue features organ pipes and the *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor*.



In a similar vein, the Hungary (1975) issue shows organ pipes again but the *Toccata in C*. Two stamps show him playing; first East Germany (1965) shows a pose with the music of the *Prelude and Fugue in B minor*, the second from Ajman (1971) actually at an organ console giving a recital in front of an audience. Unfortunately, from the philatelic point of view, this last stamp

has dubious value because it was probably never intended for postal use and has been ‘cancelled to order’ to meet the used stamps market. Which reminds us of the old saw that ‘post office issuing authorities love philatelists because they buy stamps not for use but merely for hoarding’.



It is a fact worth remembering that Schweitzer is the only organist to have been awarded the Nobel Prize, albeit the Peace Prize. The same Hungary issue included a commemorative stamp for this prize. He is such an iconic figure of course that all sorts of publicity and marketing strategies have been used especially commemorative covers. Such is fame!

[For the Rwanda 20c stamp, a piano version of the BWV 565 Toccata is shown. An organ score of BWV 542 was obtained for the 50c stamp! Ed.]



David Gabe

## Arnold Schoenberg and the Organ

A centenary postage stamp was issued in 1974 by Austria to commemorate Arnold Schoenberg (b.1874). He was a daring innovator. After early works which can be appealing, he adopted an intensity and expressionism, then the famous serialism. Hollywood film composers were said to have queued to take lessons from him, as they could not afford to miss out on the style he was pioneering; innumerable scores for film and TV thrillers are witness to this.



His *Organ Variations on a Recitative* Op. 40 of 1941 are very difficult for the player and listener (even the page-turner !) and his attitude to the organ could be said, if we are honest, to be awkward!. In 1906-7 he wrote “...such a vast instrument can’t display its full potential when played by one single musician only.” In 1940 he wrote in a letter “I consider the organ primarily as a keyboard instrument... I am little interested in its colours. Nobody needs as many colours as the organ has...Conversely, it would be very important if the organ could dynamically modify each single sound.” The organ just wasn’t going to be Schoenberg’s favourite instrument! At the same time, he outlined his vision of a vast organ with two to four consoles played by different players. In the same letter he describes a ‘modern’ instrument, not more than, say, one and a half times as large as a portable typewriter “...music lovers will get together in an evening in someone’s home and play duos, trios, and quartets.” Schoenberg’s views on the role of the organ can be difficult to digest! Ed.

## Organists’ Review salutes a special blood donor.

The February edition of *Organists’ Review* contained a surprise article about our President-Elect Joan Orton. In the Nottingham Albert Hall last October, under the shadow of the Binns organ, the National Blood Service held an awards ceremony at which Joan was presented with a Royal Doulton crystal plate. This celebrated her 42 year association with the Service, and her 75th donation. That is not all, and Joan declares that she will continue towards the next milestone of 100 donations, and would like to encourage others to join this special lifesaving community of donors in the UK.





## Orton's Oratory

Sifting back through your memory, can you identify changes in organ specification patterns which have occurred in the last 'x' number of years?

I have not been a regular organist at one church for 30 years, but in those days (and earlier) organs in average churches of all denominations were romantic two manual and pedals with stops of more mellow and rounded tone than we hear today — very few (if any) mixtures and mutations, and certainly no pedal reed! Since those days I have played organs with different tonal resources including the classical/baroque specifications. Following on from that, romantic specifications have come to include more of the classical tones making the playing repertoire wider. This is fine for recitals and organists of wider abilities, but there are other changes which have occurred.

One of these is congregational behaviour. In those days, people would enter the church, offer a prayer, and prepare for worship helped by a suitable opening voluntary, usually of a nature to help quiet contemplation. Occasionally, after the service, some would comment on how the organ helps to create atmosphere, and this was useful too when communicants took more time than the vicar's choice of hymn, making the gift of improvisation very handy. Quiet stops were often used.

Which brings me to the Dulciana. From Paul Hale's talk to us in February, he clearly still enjoys a little repartee with me on this subject, the funniest time being when he re-opened the organ at Gedling Parish Church and explained to the audience that the Dulciana had been removed much to my sadness — "he's the President of the Preserve the Dulciana Society!", he quipped, pointing at me sitting in the audience.

I confess I did use the quieter stops more than perhaps they are used today. To me, getting back to the Carrington organ as was, it was particularly good to have the Swell speaking out into the Lady Chapel (now gone), and the Great with its Dulciana speaking into the Chancel; it enhanced the aural qualities down the nave quite usefully giving an ethereal stereo effect.

But things change. In those days, average congregations were two or three times what they are today. People come to the service and sit chatting instead of preparing themselves for worship. Dulcianas ain't much use in those circumstances — you obviously need more choice to try and drown them out — which probably makes them chat more loudly . . . At the end of the service, people always did, as now, get up, and start chatting on their way out. You can't win 'em all!

Three or four years ago, Joan and I attended Evensong at St Mary's Warwick. As we entered the church we were given a service sheet. It concluded

with a note that the service was not finished until the closing organ voluntary was complete. Everybody there behaved themselves. I liked that.

---

## BULWELL BAPTIST CHURCH

We were spoilt for choice on 2nd April, with organ events at Holme Pierrepont, Bulcote and Bulwell on offer. Rushing the short distance from playing a service, to Bulwell, I was just in time to hear most of Paul Hale's recital, which gave a wide scope of style and colour. (The church's organist, and our member, Patrick Randle-Bass was his page-turner.) My own impression was that this was the best electronic organ I have heard, with good Diapason tone to which Swell could be added. I was reminded of the agreeable results from the new hybrid organ at St Peter's. The noble and historic case now houses a 'Content 6900': the old pipes are non-speaking, but their resonance is no doubt an asset. This new organ sounds admirably fit for the church's purposes.

---

## *The Village Organ — by Rosemary Garfoot*

Seated one day at the organ, in the church on the village green,  
A little old lady of ninety, each Sunday morning was seen,  
She played the organ faithfully, for half a century or more,  
But now her legs were weakening and her sight was getting poor.

She played each Sunday morning, with devotion, love and prayer,  
And every Sunday evening, at Evensong she was there.  
But now the organ is silent, her music put away,  
She is gone to her rest eternal, to that everlasting day.

No one would play the organ, nobody cared anymore,  
Someone brought a keyboard that they carried through the door.  
The grand old organ stood silent, the pipes were out of key,  
The mice and moths had a field day, doing damage no one could see.

Then one Monday morning a young man was looking around,  
Switched on the electric blower and knew what a gem he had found  
He removed an organ panel, he tuned the organ pipes,  
He worked all through his holiday, everyday from morning till night.

And now each Sunday morning, seated again I see,  
A young man this time at the organ, where the old lady used to be.  
Her music once more is dusted and placed on the music stand,  
And the beautiful little old organ, is played by the master's hand.

## St. Peter's, Nottingham — A new Hybrid Organ Experience

The original organ was probably built by Lincoln in 1812 and lived on the gallery under the tower until 1878, when it was moved to the chamber on the north side of the chancel. By 1952 it had deteriorated badly and Fenton Wragg overhauled it, adding much material from the organ of St. Columba's Church, Mansfield Road. Further overhauls and additions were made by Henry Willis in 1964 and Hill, Norman & Beard in 1983, but by the end of the 20th century there were further problems as the mechanism was wearing out. The additions over the years had not solved the problem of the organ being enclosed in a chamber with only two small arches to let the sound out. When the console electronics failed in November 2007 it seemed unwise to spend any more money.

The church needed a high quality but affordable instrument that would speak properly into the church, and Peter Siepmann and Paul Hale found an ingenious solution. The new organ is a combination of digital electronics from the American firm of Rodgers, expertly adapted by the Norfolk firm of MPOS to blend with their pipework.



The pipe units of the Great and Choir divisions speak directly into the church from within two cases: the original case of circa 1770 in the north isle (attributed to Snetzler) and a modern case in the chancel built by Modern Pipe Organ Solutions. Three ranks come from the old organ: two that are certainly 19th century and may date from 1812, and a rank of Pedal pipes by Norman & Beard probably added in the 1983 rebuild. The numerous loudspeakers have been carefully placed within the chamber and use its resonance to mellow their sound.

The instrument is as large and versatile as a cathedral organ, capable of accompanying the choir in the chancel or in front of the screen, supporting the congregation, and playing a wide range of repertoire. About 20% of the stops are pipe and 80% digital, but the organ is designed so that there are nearly always some pipes sounding. Our perception of sound is heavily influenced by psychological factors, and I think the reason the organ sounds so good is because the listener doesn't know whether any particular sound is pipe or electronic. When I register pieces I don't think about which stops are pipe and which are not; the organ is one instrument.

*Article for Sequencer by Michael Leuty, Sub-Organist of St. Peter's — A personal opinion by David Butterworth on this organ will be in the next Sequencer.*

---

## Annual Dinner 2011

On 27th April, 49 members and friends assembled in the comfortable surroundings of the Albert Hall. Following the meal, which was again to the familiar high standards, President Shaun Hooper introduced Dr. Simon Lindley as Guest Speaker. He told us of his early years when his father was a vicar in Kennington, south London. The family later moved to Oxford, which brought many interesting acquaintances, including an eccentric clergyman with a tendency to disappear late on Sunday until the following Saturday evening. He saw, in fact, during his career seven Bishops, five Archbishops and seven Incumbents.



*Simon Lindley at the Annual Dinner*

His love of, and memory for, the traditions and musical heritage of the church, were impressive, and he warned us of the ill effect there can be upon the young when this is weakened or lost. He stressed the need for good pastoral contact, and made clear that the appeal of music is a very broad one. This was a stimulating address, and we were reminded that musicians have much to be thankful for, and a lot to fight for.

---

*Simon Lindley's remarks on the broad appeal of Music stirred a memory of his Address to the Royal College of Organists when he was RCO President a few years ago. He had been hearing church hymns played with 'correct' registrations but the result was that he could not really hear the tune. He urged RCO members to learn from the Cinema Organist, the Club Pianist, and the Brass Band, all of which knew well how to emphasise a melody adequately! Apt and thoughtful advice from an RCO President.*

*[Please send any material for the next Sequencer to the Hon. Secretary]*