

The Cornopean

EXETER & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

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Letter from the President

28th January 2021



Dear fellow members

Despite the arrival of vaccines, the rise in the Covid infection rate still renders it still impossible to plan future events. This means that monthly, rather than quarterly, editions of The Cornopean are likely to continue into the Spring. Let us hope that the President's Evening, a river cruise on the Exe Estuary can go ahead as planned on 21st June. With any luck we might get an AGM in before then...

I would like to thank Graham Willson who has not just updated our website, he has created a whole new site. It has much more information on it than the old site and is altogether more attractive to look at. If you haven't already visited the site, please do: <http://www.exeterorganists.net>

Many people and institutions have suffered financial hardship over the last twelve months, not least our cathedrals which have had to make many redundancies. The Friends of Cathedral Music have set up a fund in an attempt to secure the future of the nation's cathedral choirs. One fundraising enterprise has been an online performance of Bach's Toccata & Fugue in D minor played on 54 different organs. Details of this appear on page 14 of this edition of The Cornopean. I commend it to you and ask you to consider making a donation to the fund.

The front cover this month features the Klais organ at Rechlinghausen, Germany (2005). The design makes the most of the limited height in the church by sending the main case high up into the apex of the vault and at the sides, where there is less height, the pedal towers reach down either side of the arch beneath

"Desert Island Discs" are contributed by Steven Martin. Steven is one of that rare breed of clergy who understand musicians because they began their career as musicians before converting, as it were, to ordination.

I am delighted that we have been able to continue the inclusion of articles written by non-member guests. This month Christopher Herrick concludes his experiences recording his best-selling "Organ Fireworks" CDs for Hyperion Records, and in the third of a series of four articles telling the story of his career, James Lancelot reaches Winchester.

Nerdy Corner this month explores a new format with another quiz focussing on composers' names.

With best wishes for the New Year as you sink back into winter lockdown hibernation...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter King'.

Peter King

Desert Island Discs

Fr STEVEN MARTIN, Rector of Colyton with Colyford, Branscombe, Musbury, Northleigh and Southleigh. Before ordination I studied music at Exeter and Bristol and was a music teacher at The Maynard School in Exeter and Director of Music at Holy Cross, Crediton. I live in Colyton with my wife Caroline and our two boys, Henry (almost 5) and John (almost 2). Thank you for asking me for my desert island discs!



My first choice is **JS Bach's Trio Sonata No. 6**. I love all the trio sonatas, and learned the first movement of this one for Grade 8 with my organ teacher, Lorna Cowdry, at the organ in St David's Church, Exeter. When I first began to tackle this piece I thought that I would never be able to play it. Lorna was very patient and encouraging, but also determined, and made me work hard! Just what I needed at that age. Learning this piece it felt like a huge achievement and gave me the confidence to persevere with the organ. I very much enjoyed learning the first trio sonata with my next organ teacher, Paul Morgan (another very patient and understanding musician!). I feel very blessed to have had Lorna and Paul as my organ teachers. On the desert island I would like to spend a few hours a day trying to learn more trios. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9QP4Xxh3nY>

My second choice is the **Toccata from the Suite by Duruflé**. Hearing this would cheer me up and keep me motivated. It is one of those pieces that reminds me of a lovely, big, cool, French cathedral. It really puts the organ through its paces, which is always thrilling. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nh3Bjm_1YEs If I could have the score too, I might try and learn it....presuming I would be stuck on the island for a very long time....I would need it!

Next is this: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abj2-m_mPPc I like the music of **William Walton**. His music is quirky, svelte and brittle in a way that is almost Handelian. I love the way that this piece ends, calmly, after all the excitement. This recording of his **Coronation Te Deum** is from Westminster Abbey, where we enjoyed a wonderful EDOA trip some years back. It is a fantastic building, and I shall always remember singing with Exeter Cathedral choir there once for a special service for Edward the Confessor...we sang Britten's Festival Te Deum, with clouds of incense swirling around. Lovely! I also took a choir to sing services there a few years ago and can honestly say it was the friendliest and most encouraging place I have ever taken a choir to—we received a warm welcome from everyone, from vergers to dean. They seemed so grateful to us for coming and were very accommodating. Often you take a choir to visit a provincial cathedral and you very much feel you are there under sufferance! Not so at Westminster Abbey.

When I trained for ordination at St Stephen's House we used to have Wednesday and Sunday evenings free, so I often went to Evensong at one of the other colleges. Edward Higginbottom retired from New College whilst I was at Oxford. One of my favourite choral pieces sung by that choir is **Totus Tuus** by **Henryk Górecki**. I was once fortunate to be in the Chapel at an Evensong when they sang this piece live, conducted by Higginbottom. He had a very particular style, especially with the Psalms. When he retired, I remember thinking what a hard act he would be to follow. His successor, Robert Quinney, is brilliant and when he came he did a very wise thing; instead of wrestling with the previous, very distinctive style of Anglican chant established by Higginbottom, he gave the choir a break from it. For a good few months, the Psalms at Evensong were sung to plainchant, with very subtle, unobtrusive, but extremely creative accompaniments. This was completely different and 'cleansed the palette', enabling the choir to let go of the Higginbottomisms and start afresh with Anglican chant under Quinney's direction. It was such a good thing to do: respecting the way things had been done, and not challenging that, but doing something new and fresh which levelled the playing field. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GT-fogvEMTs>

I used to love attending Evensong at Exeter Cathedral when I was a student at Exeter College doing my A-Levels. At that time, Lucian Nethsingha and Paul Morgan were there. This is the choir conducted by Lucian Nethsingha and accompanied by Paul singing one of my favourite Psalms, **Psalm 84** to the chant by **CHH Parry**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MKb32C66-I> I later became a bass choral scholar in the Cathedral Choir. It was a huge privilege to be a part of that choir under Andrew Millington, singing services there each day. This Psalm would remind me of all that, and of 'proper' Evensong as I sit on the desert island reading my Morning and Evening Offices each day.

My sixth choice is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6mFGy4g_n8 **Take the A Train** by **The Duke**. I play the trombone a bit, and loved being a part of the big band at school and at Exeter College, directed by Io Pugh, another brilliant musician who always encouraged us students to have a go. This piece would remind me of that, and cheer me up. I would probably play it at breakfast time, because that is usually a bustling time at home when our boys are running about causing havoc ... I would miss all that on the desert island.

Stanford's Magnificat in Bb for Double Choir. When I was director of the Exeter University Singers I did this with them and we took it on tour with us to Dublin. I conducted this piece in St Patrick's Cathedral, where Stanford had been, and played his Fantasia and Toccata on the lovely organ there. The Magnificat is tricky, long and unaccompanied, but I had some very good singers and it went beautifully in that generous acoustic. I greatly admire Stanford and his music, which I first got to know properly when I started as an organ scholar at Credenhill. I learned a lot about choirs working for Neil Page when he was at Credenhill. Neil introduced me to much of the music I most love. He and Andrew Millington were inspirational choir leaders. Hearing Stanford always makes me think of the huge choir of children and adults at Credenhill, where I was (on and off, in various capacities!) for about 14 years. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF1H6gohPZY>

A Shropshire Lad by **George Butterworth**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l39GDoyqWAw> A few years ago I went on placement to Melanesia (Solomon Islands) to spend time with the Anglican religious communities on Guadalcanal. It was an amazing trip, but it was extremely hot and humid and there wasn't much air conditioning. I imagine the desert island would be similar. Listening to this piece helped me take my mind off the heat there, and I am sure would help on the desert island. Although Shropshire is a bit of a way from Devon, this would remind me of home...country lanes, fields, trees, my faithful Morris Minor, Beryl (still going strong) and all my country churches on a spring Sunday morning.

I know that you said I could only have eight choices, but can I have one more, please? These days, all the desert island discs would be on a tiny iPod or phone or something, so would take up a fraction of the room eight 78' records would on a lifeboat. I am going to sneak it in anyway...I know Peter won't mind.

My final one is: ***When I have sung my songs*** by **Ernest Charles**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13shQla4Cto> a favorite encore at the end of song recitals. For me it has to be sung by Eileen Farrell, an amazing singer who sings this perfect song perfectly. I can listen to this one over and over again.

Clergy always think the rules don't apply to them. This is just one example – Editor

Luxury Item

The William Drake organ from the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft, in the Palace of Westminster. I remember playing this when we went on our EDOA trip to London some years ago, a brilliant expedition organised by Michael Pagliero. We played some magnificent organs, including the Harrison at Westminster Abbey (or Wabbey as Piers Howell calls it!) and the fabulous organ at Holy Trinity, Sloane Square. The organ in St Mary Undercroft is the one I remember best; it isn't too big, but has a lot of tonal colour and looks beautiful too. It was comfortable to play. It is in a Victorian English organ style—like a really good village church organ. I'm sure they wouldn't mind handing it over to me on private loan, would

they? I pay my taxes and so on. I would settle for an exact copy. I presume electricity is laid on wherever it is you are sending me?

Book

I have the Bible (with Apocrypha), I assume. I will need that, as I can't remember enough of it by heart! King James version, please. I will also need a *Book of Common Prayer* (1928 for preference), so that I can say my daily offices and celebrate the Eucharist for the locals (despite the 'trendies' there is always someone who will come and appreciate a BCP 8am Holy Communion). I will also require some organ music...would that count in the book allowance? Perhaps I could swap the complete works of Shakespeare for the complete works of JS Bach?!

Another example of clergy being unable to keep to the rules that apply to the rest of us. This is only allowed in order to illustrate our point – Editor.

Letter to the Editor of *The Cornopean*

From Piers Howell 18/12/2020

I am sure I am one of many EDOA'ers who have appreciated the regular monthly Newsletters, packed with informative, interesting and entertaining articles, and stimulating quizzes; and bursting with colourful photographs. The Editor is to be congratulated; this is one of many initiatives that have kept organisations alive during the last year.

What has stimulated me out of my lockdown torpor is the question from the Editor, two months running now, "What has happened to ...? Wonders the editor"

What happened to me was a combination of a badly-placed ladder and a smooth piece of concrete in late September. After lying immobile for 1 ½ hours in the blazing sun, being tended by kind villagers, an ambulanceman arrived and asked me if I was particularly attached to my jacket; only one answer of course, a quick flash of the snippers and it was off. Then the blessed morphine and my first ride in an ambulance. A few days later, the surgeon said we have a procedure called "reverse shoulder replacement", would I like it? Again, only one answer, and I now have a new joint which has absolutely no sensation, but everything around it has been screaming for the last 3 months. I am sure many others have personal tales of woe, so I won't take up any more space in this renowned journal, about the medical aspects.

What may be relevant to this journal, is how would organ-playing be affected? Very badly, to start with, was the answer; not much can be done with a left arm in a sling.

Our local vicar reached his retirement date in October, and had asked for Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring for his last service. It could have been played on the "Box" that the church uses when there is no organist. However, with a bit of experimenting, I found that the right hand could play the first theme, then drop to another manual to play the chorale, with feet playing the bass as usual. Surprisingly, it seemed to work, although no doubt it would have been frowned on in more musically-high-brow places.

More recently, the left arm has been persuaded back into use; no problem with the fingers, but they need an arm to hold them in position. A Bach Trio Sonata was attempted, but this might be premature (that's my excuse anyway). Most of the notes are achieved, but not necessarily in the right order ...

In summary, to get back where I started, I hope to return to "Nerd of the Month" in due course, although I see that it has really caught on, with some quite energetic competition. How on Earth can one person get all those answers right in an hour or two, without help from Mr Google?

Piers Howell.

James Lancelot looks back on his career – Part 3, Winchester Cathedral

Hard on the heels of finishing the Mus. B. examination and before Cambridge term ended, I arrived in Winchester on Saturday 31 May 1975 and was plunged straight into playing the three Sunday services. I remember that I was promised a day off at some stage to catch up domestically, but I don't remember it happening! The cathedral had been without a Sub-Organist since Easter, when Clement McWilliam stepped down; fortunately he remained as Director of Music at the Pilgrims' School, thus sparing me from a job which would not have played to my strengths, and proving a great companion. The Southern Cathedrals Festival was to be held in Winchester at the end of July, and much of our effort was directed towards preparation for that.

At King's I had been frustrated by the standard of cathedral music in too many places; there were shining exceptions but also some egregious examples. So it was a joy to arrive at Winchester and find the choir in such superb form under Martin Neary's direction. He shared David Willcocks' insistence on high standards, but he brought his own distinctive personal style to achieving them, and the experience of working under both David and Martin was invaluable in broadening my tastes and approach.



Martin Neary

Not only that, but my debt to Martin is also deepened by his readiness to leave me in charge for quite extended periods – twice for a month,



James Lancelot

once for two months, and for seven months in 1980 when he held a Bicentennial Fellowship in the USA. I feel sure I would not have stood the same chance against the competition when it came to the Durham shortlist in 1985.

The organ at Winchester was a very mixed bag. It had begun life as Father Willis' instrument for the Great Exhibition of 1851, and he had rebuilt it twice after its arrival in Winchester. (It replaced a variety of previous organs, the earliest from an earlier cathedral building – "audible at five miles, offensive at two, and lethal at one"). The slight time-lag worried me immediately; the internal layout was confused and unhelpful, the Swell being buried and much of the Great obscured by a huge Open Diapason (grandfather of a family of four) which could be used only occasionally and which blocked the egress of sound. The Choir organ, separate to the west (where the current Nave division stands) had three lovely flutes, but the tutti added up to very little. The Hele 32' and 16' Bombard unit, also to the west, was out of proportion to the rest of the instrument and was best avoided in polite company. Yet it has to be said that recordings taken from the Ladies' Gallery opposite the main organ made the instrument sound magnificent, topped by the Father Willis reeds on Swell and Great. The extensive rebuild

after my time has left the instrument with a great deal more integrity, but also to my mind a slight loss of character.



The Strawberry Hill Gothic organ case at Winchester Cathedral in disharmony with the early C14 choir stalls

And indeed the instrument was not in the best of health. The stop-purses leaked, so that the more stops one drew the greater was the rather comforting hiss that emanated from behind the jambs. Pistons were adjustable by a huge display of ivory buttons in a glass-fronted case beside the console; this included the one and only General piston. Solo to Choir had been added to the console at some unspecified time, and was left devoid of any stop-motors so that no piston affected it; a trap for the unwary. The console was lit by a solitary bulb in an enamel shade (reminiscent of the lighting in an old hospital) which swung in the breeze from the roof many feet above. This was subsequently replaced by two cleverer-than-thou halogen bulbs whose function could not be relied upon; on one winter occasion Martin had to look up at the loft during

Evensong, only to see complete darkness – I was playing from memory. The CCTV camera which replaced the mirrors was also apt to go absent without leave; a smart smack, audible downstairs, normally did the trick. The player's back was perilously near the front of the top of the quire-stalls; it would have been difficult but not impossible to fall backwards to the quire floor. Above all, the cathedral became mortally cold in winter – on one occasion below freezing, when central-heating oil supplies failed to arrive. Slight comfort was provided by an asbestos-guarded heated-oil-tube under the organ stool, a health hazard on two counts.

On this instrument I found myself playing a formidable amount of challenging music, often with the choir in the Nave, and not infrequently live or recorded on radio (including solo recitals – BBC Bristol was very good to me). Tippett St John's service, Jonathan Harvey canticles, various commissioned works (Martin excelled at inspiring Harvey and Tavener in particular) and Wesley's Wilderness (frequently!) all figured, and all needed a good deal of hand registration. (The only piece in which I was able to use two general pistons was Balfour Gardiner's Evening Hymn; I would get off the stool during the unaccompanied section and change the combination.)

Notwithstanding all this, I loved it all. The cathedral is beyond magnificent, the interior especially. Bishop John Taylor and Dean Michael Stancliffe, both men of great spirituality, headed a happy team of clergy, and the cathedral was supported by a loyal and friendly team of Virgers and an army of volunteers, many of whom made



The Nave of Winchester Cathedral - "beyond magnificent"

a young man like myself hugely welcome. There was no lack of talented Choristers, and the Lay Clerks were experienced and excellent – in particular the late, great Donald Sweeney, with a bass voice of unforgettable sonority and melliflence. Michael's preaching was past praise; his sermon at a bicentenary service in memory of Jane Austen (she is buried in the south aisle of the Nave) was just one among many unforgettable deliveries.

Shortly after my arrival the quire had to be closed for repairs and refurbishment, and the choir moved eastwards toward the sanctuary. This entailed altering the position of the organist's mirror, and as a result the caskets containing the bones of King Canute and other monarchs had to be moved along the tops of the parclose screens in order to accommodate it. I believe I am the only cathedral organist to have had the last resting-place of English kings moved in order to accommodate his needs.



The North Quire Aisle of Winchester Cathedral.
Three of the chests containing bones of dead kings can be seen on top of the screen

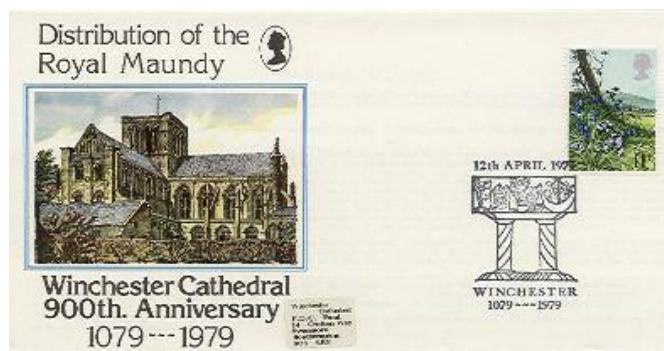
1979 saw the cathedral celebrate its 900th anniversary; the year kicked off with a spectacular three-week tour of Canada and the USA, which culminated in a memorable concert in the

Carnegie Hall. This occasion was rather marred by the failure of the electronic organ (the story is that stage crew had allegedly not been given their bung) which meant that instead of a large electronic I had a magnificent grand piano instead; but this was small consolation for Martin and the choir.



*The famous Carnegie Hall stage -
haunted by the spirits of Horowitz, Rubenstein and others*

Highlight among numerous other anniversary occasions was the Royal Maundy service, which in those days attracted a good deal more attention than it does now; it was broadcast live on television. Eleven o'clock came and went, and there was no sign of the red light on the console flashing to prompt me to play the first hymn. I was left to decide whether (a) the Queen was late or (b) the cotton-covered cable from the switch at the west end about a quarter of a mile away had failed. I decided on the former, and improvised (no, extemporised) in every key the good Lord had made for eleven minutes, sustained by hearing the voice of the BBC continuity man in the opposite stalls having to do much the same thing verbally. We later learnt that the Queen's car had been delayed by a flood in Basingstoke (there's glory for you). I've never been so glad to play over *Praise to the Holiest in the height*. The service ended with me playing the Bach D major Prelude and Fugue, something I wouldn't dare to do now.



Souvenir Cover

Settled in the post as I was, I will not pretend that after running the choir for the first half of 1980 I didn't have itchy feet; in particular I felt I needed my own choir. Salvation came when I was invited to apply for the conductorship of Southampton University Madrigal Society. The interview was conducted by the Society's President, a second-year music undergraduate; and she got more than she bargained for, because we are still blissfully married forty years later.



Southampton University presents an architectural contrast to Winchester

The choir had five most active years, broadcasting on radio, appearing on TV in the Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition, and undertaking a visiting-choir weekend at Lincoln Cathedral. In addition, Angus Watson – Director of Music at Winchester College – invited me to become Assistant Conductor of Winchester Music Club, which gave me the valuable experience of rehearsing both an amateur choir and an amateur orchestra. This was a happy relationship which was however rather strained when I was absent from the one and only full rehearsal with orchestra and soloists of Haydn's *Creation* on the afternoon of the concert; I was being interviewed for the post of Organist of Christ Church, Oxford (for which I was not really suited). Sylvia has never driven me so fast down the A34 as on that afternoon. Forgiveness came a few months later when the Club threw a party in honour of my appointment to Durham and I told them the whole story, to great hilarity.

But I anticipate, because before that came the première of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Requiem*, featuring the choir, with Sarah Brightman and Chorister Paul Miles-Kingston on solos, under

Lorin Maazel's direction. Much preparation had gone on in the previous autumn, when Martin



St Thomas 5th Avenue, New York

was away for a month; I remember that I had to prepare the choir for the *Requiem*, the *Messiah* and a plainsong concert at St George's Bloomsbury as well as the cathedral services during that time. One lay awake at night planning each minute of a boys' practice, but the experience set one up for later life. The EMI recording took place at Abbey Road – I finished the organ sections at lunchtime and travelled to Winchester in time for the first Christmas Carol Service – and the première itself was in St Thomas', Fifth Avenue, New York (with an organ in an unreliable state, something Maazel was not necessarily prepared to make allowances for; one kept on one's toes).

The generous fees from this project furnished carpets and curtains for the new more family-friendly house into which we had moved from our lovely seventeenth-century flat in Dome Alley; and predictably no sooner than we were settled than the post of one's dreams became vacant. The Dean of Durham, Peter Baelz, rang me the day

after the interviews (and ten years to the day since I had come to Winchester) to invite me to accept the post, asking whether I would like twenty-four hours to think about it. I told him he could give me any amount of time he wished, but the answer would always be the same.

And so the time came to pull up our roots and leave. My farewell speech at the end of Evensong on Michaelmas Day 1985 was not a sermon, but had it been, my text of course would have been Psalm 75 verse 6: *For promotion cometh neither from the east, not from the west: nor yet from the south.*

So, at 32 years old – a year older than my former choirmaster John Dykes Bower had been when he



The famous view of Durham from the train station - well known to James

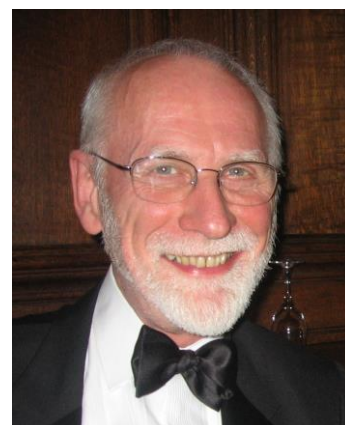
left Durham – I moved with Sylvia to “the Winchester of the North” for the next 32 years.

Organ Fireworks Odyssey: Part 2, from New York to Melbourne, Australia

Christopher Herrick

As a boy chorister at St Paul's Cathedral, Christopher Herrick sang at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Later he was Organ Scholar at Exeter College, Oxford, where he studied music. Following this, he obtained a Boulton scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music where his interests expanded to the harpsichord. This later led to the formation of the Taskin trio (violin, viola da gamba, harpsichord), playing baroque music on period instruments.

He was assistant organist at St Paul's Cathedral (1967-1974) and Sub-Organist at Westminster Abbey (1979-1984), playing at royal and state occasions and giving over 200 solo recitals there in that time. In 1984 he embarked upon a solo career as a concert organist and toured worldwide. In this was he was able to confound his former Choirmaster, Sir John Dyles-Bower, who had told the 12-year old Herrick “Well... I suppose it might be just possible to be an organist giving concerts, with no permanent church appointment – but even Thalben-Ball has a city church.” His concerts have included the solo organ concert in the centenary season of the Proms (1994), Bach's complete “Well-Tempered Clavier” on the harpsichord at London's South Bank and Bach's complete organ works at the Lincoln Center Festival in New York and in the Mariinski Concert Hall in St Petersburg.



Christopher Herrick

The Organ Fireworks series had set a precedent by going abroad for the third album in Paris. Understandably Hyperion needed a certain amount of persuasion for each newly proposed recording since travel and accommodation costs were going to be a significant expense as we flew around the world. Our prospective hosts were often more than enthusiastic to have their organ represented in the series, sometimes charging us nothing and usually having the organ prepared in perfect condition.

This was certainly true of the magnificent 1970 Aeolian-Skinner organ in St Bart's New York,

spread widely – some in the Chancel, some in the Gallery and a Celestial division in the Dome boasting a Cor de Gabriel. Douglass Hunt worked tirelessly to have the tuning and maintenance of the great beast in tip-top condition. St Bart's is a huge space, so much so that the clergy had lined the walls with sound-deadening material and had cushioned the seats to assist the spoken word. This was not helpful for the organ so for the recording we covered all the pews from back to front of the building with plastic sheeting to improve the acoustics.



St Bart's New York - a typical American monster console
 For Organ Fireworks 5 we were made extremely welcome by Erkki Alikoski, organist in Turku Cathedral, Finland who stimulated us at regular intervals with black coffee. It was a sight to behold as Erkki put on a special harness to mountaineer up the front of the organ case to tune the awesome trompeteria pipes ranged proudly on the façade of the 1980 Virtanen organ.

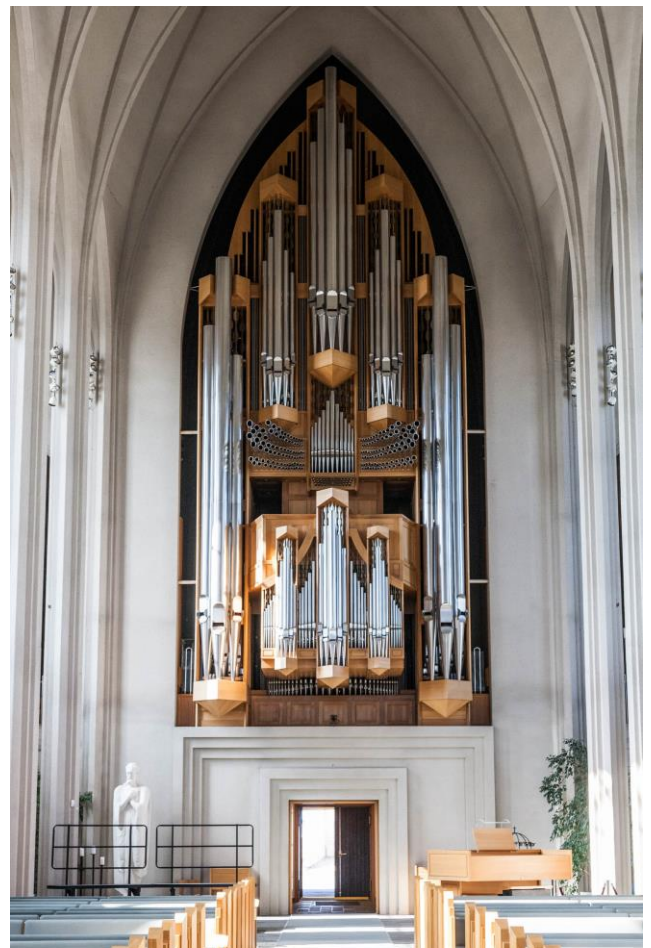


Virtanen organ Turku Cathedral

Down Under we enjoyed the classic 1906 Norman & Beard in Wellington Town Hall, New Zealand

which the South Island Organ Company had lovingly restored to its former glory in 1985. The organ builders told me that, unlike Town Hall organs in the former industrial north of England, they found the organ to be perfectly clean after eighty years in 'the windy city'. The only real damage was to some collapsed 32' reed pipes due to earthquakes.

We went to Reykjavik in Iceland for Organ Fireworks 7 to record Hallgrímskirkja's 1992 Klais. The organ, backed by a soundproofed glass screen, sings out superbly from its west end position into the tall gothic-shaped but distinctly modern church. The organ now has a separate movable console on the floor but at the time of the recording I was in the conventional middle-of-the-organ position, intimate with all the action noises and of course hearing a distorted balance while playing.



Klais organ in Hallgrímskirkja, Reykjavik

Next was Rieger's turn, the organ in Hong Kong's Cultural Centre, designed by my former organ teacher Geraint Jones in 1989. As the hall was climate-controlled the tuning had held perfectly



Rieger organ, Cultural Centre, Hong Kong

from the day before, but the tuner refused to return on the day itself to rescue us when we found one pipe, the F sharp above middle C on the swell trompette, sounding as a C! Clearly this stop was an essential for much of the repertoire so there was nothing for it but for me to ascend numerous vertical ladders, opening and closing as many trap doors, until I eventually found myself at the top of the organ in the swell division. Luckily, the offending pipe was the closest pipe and it only required a gentle tap to bring it back to its perfect resting place. Hong Kong was at the time British, but the Hall authorities were miserly with rehearsal and recording time. This was in stark contrast to when I returned to give a concert, Hong Kong having become Chinese, on which occasion the hall authorities allowed me acres of rehearsal time.

The organ builder Kuhn underwrote much of the cost of Organ Fireworks 9 on their beautiful 1999 instrument in Berner Münster, Switzerland. Kuhn used some of the former pipes as well as the historic organ case but most of the pipework and action is new, creating a glorious symphonic organ sounding into the ample acoustics of the cathedral. Kuhn's voicing as always is exceptionally subtle and colourful.

Having played many recitals in Edmonton's Anglican Cathedral, Canada, it was good to be asked to perform in the dedication series of the splendid new 1997 Létourneau organ in that city's concert hall, playing a concert and two organ concertos by Guilman and Jongen. For want of funds this lovely organ might never have existed



Kuhn organ, Berner Münster

had not an aged professor one day cycled up to the artists' entrance offering to donate a significant gift of oil shares in his wife's memory. Fortunately, the shares were quickly cashed in, because a week later they took a nose-dive and crashed.

Around this time at Hyperion, Ted Perry had been taking more of a back seat, with his son Simon Perry assuming more and more day-to-day control. In the lead-up to recording Organ Fireworks 10 in Edmonton, Simon phoned me to impart some bad news. My immediate thought was that the Edmonton recording was going to be too expensive and they were going to pull out. The news was much more devastating – his father Ted Perry, to whom I owed so much, had died.

The Organ Fireworks series not only got about the world, but it also sampled a wide range of organ builders. Next stop Dallas, Texas for the 1982 Fisk op.100, a grand concert hall organ. First, I prepared and played a public concert which aired the CD repertoire, then had to take a day off to make way for a concert by an ageing British rock star. As the hall was climate-controlled, the organ should have maintained its perfect tuning. The



Fisk organ, The Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, Dallas
rock star however felt the hall was 'too cold' and somehow managed to persuade the authorities to let in some outside Texan heat by flinging open some doors, thus wrecking the tuning. Everyone had to keep their cool as the recalled tuner fixed the mess during valuable recording time.

Much of my organ concert activity has been in Scandinavia: over seven hundred organ concerts in a period of forty years. It is hardly surprising that I jumped at the chance to record the next two Fireworks CDs on the glorious 1977 Marcussen organ in Haderslev Cathedral, Denmark and the extraordinary Åkerman & Lund organ in Västerås Cathedral, Sweden, restored in 1998 by Harrison & Harrison. The organists, Svend Prip in Haderslev and Johan Hammarström in Västerås, both put out the red carpet for us.

Finally, the Organ Fireworks series climaxed with another trip Down Under to record an Anglo-American organ in Melbourne Town Hall. Originally an 1871 Hill, this already huge organ was not only rebuilt, but was also massively enlarged in 2001 by Schanz. One of the stipulations for the rebuild was that a corridor be made through the organ with windows onto the pipes so that groups of twelve tourists at a time could be shown



Haderslev Cathedral

the inside of the organ. Most people have absolutely no idea of the complexity and extent of organs beyond perhaps the console and the organ façade. This free trip through the innards of a large organ must have made numerous converts because a lunch-hour concert attracted an extremely enthusiastic audience of over seven hundred. It was a no-brainer to return to record Organ Fireworks 14, making the most of the percussion stops in this nearly two-hundred-stop organ, enjoying the successful blend of early 20th



Paul Spicer, Johan Hammarström, Christopher Herrick Västerås
Century English style and 21st Century state of the art American style.

The Organ Fireworks series now being at an end, Simon Perry at Hyperion agreed to issue a sampler disc with one track from each of the fourteen CDs, demonstrating in a handy format the range both of repertoire and organ builders and hopefully introducing the series to a fresh audience who might scour the Hyperion website and download individual discs or tracks from other Herrick recordings. This compilation album is called 'Organ Fireworks World Tour'.

'Power of Life' is a recent release from the thrilling 2012 Metzler in Poblet Monastery in Spain. The repertoire is exciting and varied while the vibrantly voiced organ, sounding into a perfect acoustical space, makes this as much of a winner as any of the Organ Fireworks CDs.

'Northern Lights', recorded in August 2020 against the backdrop of the Coronavirus travel restrictions, comes from Trondheim Cathedral in Norway and was recorded on the huge 1930 Steinmeyer organ, rebuilt by Kuhn in 2012-14, one of the largest organs in Europe. The recording is due to be released in 2021.

To sum up, the Organ Fireworks adventure has been a lot of fun and immensely fulfilling. This world tour has explored not only the highways but also the fascinating byways of the organ's vast repertoire. Perhaps it has also played a small part in moving the organ and its rich heritage from a



Poblet Monastery, near Barcelona

comfortable ghetto into the exciting mainstream of music.

<http://www.christopherherrick.org/cd.htm> <https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/a.asp?a=A644>

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## 54 Cathedral Organists to give virtual performance of Bach's Toccata & Fugue in D minor

The Cathedral Music Trust, a voice for UK cathedral music, has brought together 54 of the country's leading organists, playing instruments from cathedrals, college chapels and major churches, to create a virtual performance of Bach's iconic Toccata and Fugue in D minor.

The video performance introduced by Clare Balding, aims to raise money for the Cathedral Choirs' Emergency Fund. You can watch it here: [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/CathedralOrganistsPlay](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/CathedralOrganistsPlay)

Believed to be the first time this has ever been attempted, each organist has recorded a small section of the work which has been edited together into a single performance. The recording includes some of the UK's most famous organs including St Paul's Cathedral, Salisbury Cathedral, Gloucester Cathedral, and the largest pipe organ in the country, Liverpool Cathedral.

Nicholas Freestone, Assistant Director of Music of Worcester Cathedral and the project's producer said: "This has been an extraordinarily exciting venture which has brought together many outstanding musicians to play Bach's most famous organ work. As well as admiring the great musical and technical feat of this performance, I hope listeners will contribute to the Cathedral Choirs' Emergency Fund so that our professional choirs can continue to deliver the world-class singing for which they are renowned."

The Fund is a partnership between the Cathedral Music Trust, Ouseley Church Music Trust and the Choir Schools' Association which was created to support choirs silenced during the Covid-19 pandemic. The fund is now well over 90% of its way to reaching its £1 million target, thanks to donations from thousands of supporters.

Chairman of the Cathedral Music Trust, Peter Allwood, commented: "The UK's 500-year-strong choral music tradition is unique and unsurpassed in the world today and transforms lives, both for the musician and for the listener. We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received for the Cathedral Choirs' Emergency Fund and are extremely grateful to all of those who have donated to help us maintain this precious music tradition. However, renewed lockdown restrictions have imposed additional financial pressures on an already precarious situation. I would like to thank the musicians who have generously volunteered their time in such a worthy cause."



Further details about the **Cathedral Choirs Emergency Fund** can be found here:

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/CathedralOrganistsPlay](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/CathedralOrganistsPlay)

#### Further information

Natasha Morris, Development Director, Cathedral Music Trust

[natasha.morris@cathedralmusictrust.org.uk](mailto:natasha.morris@cathedralmusictrust.org.uk)

Sophie Carp, Communications and Marketing Officer, Cathedral Music Trust

[sophie.carp@cathedralmusictrust.org.uk](mailto:sophie.carp@cathedralmusictrust.org.uk) 020 3151 6096

#### **Cathedral Music Trust**

Cathedral Music Trust is a voice for cathedral music, upholding this integral part of the nation's cultural heritage by campaigning on behalf of cathedral music and musicians, supporting choirs and choristers in need, and encouraging the pursuit of excellence in choral and organ music. Harry Christophers, CBE, founder and conductor of The Sixteen is our first President.

The formation of the Trust was made possible through the remarkable work of Friends of Cathedral Music which, since its launch in 1956, has given generous grants to cathedrals, church and collegiate chapel choirs in the UK and overseas, including over £2 million in the past six years alone.

The Cathedral Music Trust aims to ensure that this extraordinary living musical tradition does not just survive but evolves and flourishes.

### **Tewkesbury Abbey gets the prize for the most well ironed shirt!**

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NERDY CORNER

The pairs of letters below are the last two letters of the first and last names of a composer, or of a collection. Name the composers/collection

eg: **RD ER RICHARD WAGNER**
 ER NG CLAVIER ÜBUNG

| | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 1 | -RT | -NN |
| 2 | -RG | -NN |
| 3 | -IK | -EN |
| 4 | -RL | -EN |
| 5 | -RE | -EN |
| 6 | -ER | -EN |
| 7 | -CK | -IN |
| 8 | -IS | -IN |
| 9 | -IS | -IN |
| 10 | -AN | -IN |

| | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 11 | -ER | -CH |
| 12 | -EY | -AN |
| 13 | -RK | -EN |
| 14 | -TH | -ON |
| 15 | -IN | -ON |
| 16 | -AR | -CK |
| 17 | -AN | -CK |
| 18 | -CO | -SI |
| 19 | -CO | -LI |
| 20 | -MO | -DI |

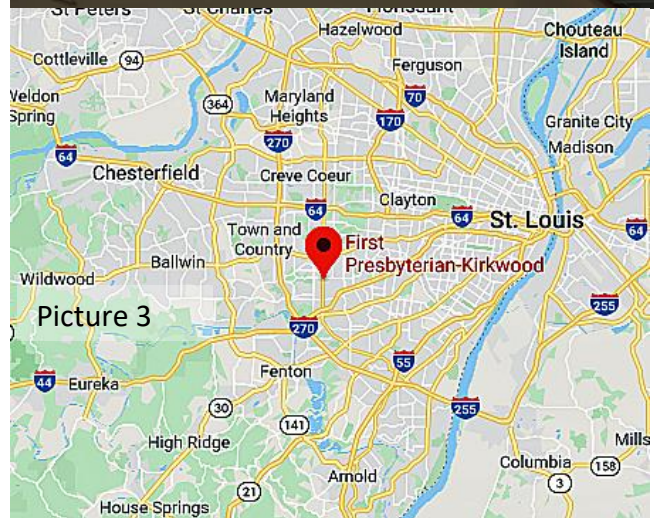
QUIZ ANSWERS FOR TRAVELLING NERDS

The photos below are of organs encountered by Ian Carson in his travels. A round trip from Exeter to view all four would encompass about 25,000 miles. The maps are clues but do not necessarily give away the locations of the organs.

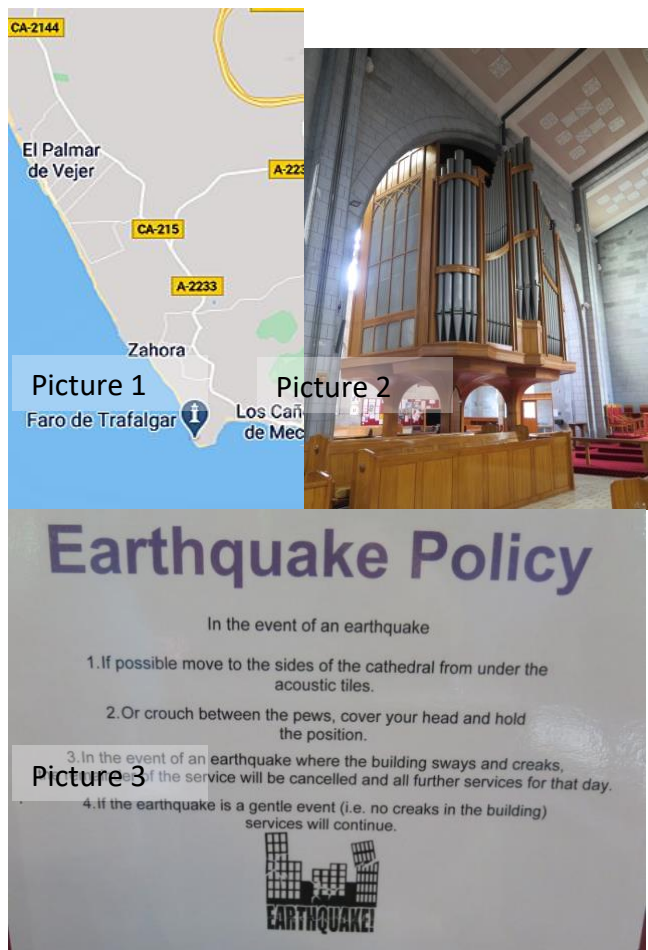
ORGAN 1 is the 1968 instrument by the Swedish builder Grønlund at Trondenes Church in the Lofoten Islands of Norway. Picture 1 below is the organ with its eighteenth century case, picture 2 is a (green) map of Greenland (in Danish 'Grønland') with the Danish and Swedish flags indicating the 'a' should be changed to 'ø', giving the name of the Swedish organ builder Grønlund. Picture 3 is a memorial outside the church to the Russian soldiers who died in WW2 at a Nazi prison camp nearby.



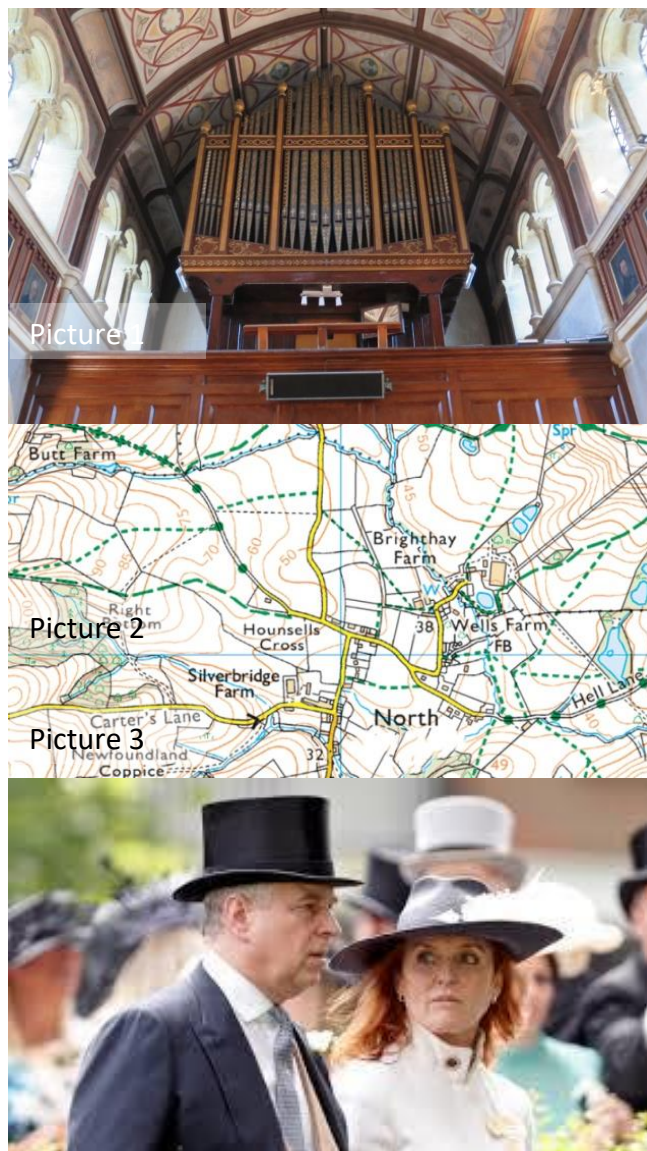
ORGAN 2 is the American Wick organ in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, situated in Apia on the island of Upolu, Samoa's capital city. The first quiz picture showed the organ in its gallery at the rear of the cathedral, the second the sign above the cathedral's refectory giving in part the name of the cathedral, and the third a map of St Louis Missouri, showing the First Presbyterian church in Kirkwood, St Louis, USA that previously housed the organ and gave it to the Samoan cathedral when it was replaced.



ORGAN 3 is the Lewis Organ in Nelson Cathedral, South Island, New Zealand. The quiz map (Picture 1) is of Trafalgar, scene of Nelson's final victorious naval battle. The city of Nelson is named after him. The organ (Picture 2) was originally built by TC Lewis of London in 1871 and shipped to Nelson. It was rebuilt in 1970 in a new location by the South Island Organ Company (SIOC) of New Zealand. The cathedral was built with the very real possibility of earthquakes in mind, hence the third picture - the country experiences about 15,000 earth tremors each year.



ORGAN 4 will be recognised from the map (Picture 2 following) by veterans of the A35 as being at Chideock, Dorset, a place surrounded by some colourful local place names, as the map clue shows. The 1874 Bishop & Starr (rebuilt Osmond) organ (Picture 1) is in the Roman Catholic Church there, which is attached to Chideock Manor, where Prince Andrew and Sarah (Picture 3) stayed shortly after their marriage, during his course of naval air training at Yeovilton.



Ian will be writing about the colourful stories surrounding each of these organs and their venues in forthcoming editions of *The Cornopean*.

NERDY ANAGRAM ANSWERS

Organ Composers

Congratulations to IAN CARSON who submitted 100% correct answers and is duly crowned Nerd of the Month! Well done, too, to Audrey Williams who also achieved 100%, but a few days later; Margaret Blackmore, with 11/12 correct answers achieved 92% - so comes within the 1st class bracket!

Born in Wolvercote Ian entered church music through the village church choir, then he became the first day boy chorister at Magdalen College Oxford, soon receiving organ lessons from the organ scholar, Dudley Moore. Ian gained an organ scholarship to Selwyn College Cambridge, where he read music, and on graduating joined the BBC, whose 24/7 demands meant hanging up his organ shoes. He eventually returned to the organ as an organist at Christ Church Clifton before moving to the Blackdown Hills and playing at churches in the area. In 1999 he became organist of St Mary Magdalene in Taunton by invitation, and stayed there for a decade, a period when he was a keyboard continuo player in Devon Baroque. Music journalism is a further aspect of Ian's career. He has written about organ and choral matters in relevant periodicals, and provided organist entries for the most recent edition of Grove. He continues to play the organ in churches as a freelance, around 30 churches in total - so far!



| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1- THICK CROW YELP | PERCY WHITLOCK | 7- CRACKER FANS | CÉSAR FRANCK |
| 2- WE BROTHERS HELL | HERBERT HOWELLS | 8- BEG, REFRESH, REJOIN | JOSEF RHEINBERGER |
| 3- PHIL, I'M HAUNTED | PAUL HINDEMITH | 9- I'D BE TOWARDS WAR | EDWARD BAIRSTOW |
| 4- I SURE IN LOVE | LOUIS VIERNE | 10- I DID THE UK EX-BRUTE | DIDERIK BUXTEHUDE |
| 5- FRIDGE GIRL SKATER | SIGFRID KARG-ELERT | 11- SUNROOF I CAN PRICE | FRANÇOIS COUPERIN |
| 6- I E MISSION REVEAL | OLIVIER MESSIAEN | 12- FLEES REPORT | FLOR PEETERS |

Calendar of forthcoming events

NB, 18th June 2021 Exe River cruise on the *Tudor Rose*.

Buffet supper, cash bar.

Departs Exmouth Quay 6:45pm,
returns 9:45pm



The Tudor Rose on the Exe

FOR SALE

3 MANUAL VISCOUNT JUBILEUM 332 32 NOTE PEDALBOARD 6 left foot operated Couplers. Plenum, Reeds & Tutti to right Digital – 4 channel Midi + Midi programme change has been housed domestically for 6/7 years now Condition very good Potential purchasers are welcome to come along and play this instrument Includes full bound copy of the service manual. 5 x A 4 sheets listing all the controls and 1 sheet showing the Midi implementation chart. These 6 sheets are available on email – contact hamyamvis@btinternet.com Tel 01726 72987 (St Austell) £2,500 buyer collects