

NEWSLETTER

MARCH/APRIL 2008

LOOKING AHEAD

Monday 7 April, 7.30 : St George, Ticknall

***O Taste and See* : Vaughan Williams - the Church and the Organ**

Please give maximum publicity to this major event in our 2008 programme, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Vaughan Williams' death. It will be of interest to many outside our immediate circle, but they will only know about it if they see it advertised or receive a personal approach from a member. A handbill, which may be photocopied, is attached to this issue; more, and larger posters, can be supplied (apply to the Editor).

The presentation itself will be given by Tom Corfield, with a contribution from your Editor on VW's later hymnodic activities (following on from our English Hymnal event two years ago), supported by Derby Cathedral Voluntary Choir and Ticknall's excellent Walker organ. Refreshments (reflecting VW's own preferences!) will be available afterwards.

Saturday 17 May : Outing to Bridlington and Scarborough

This will be most members' first chance to hear the Bridlington Priory organ since its total rebuild by Nicholson in 2004-6. It is, to all intents and purposes, a new 4-manual instrument reusing the old casework and pipes. In contrast, the 1890 3-manual Willis organ at St Martin, Scarborough, was faithfully restored and completed to Willis's design by Principal Pipe Organs in 2000, even to the extent of reverting fully to the original mixture of mechanical and various forms of pneumatic action. Apart from the fascinating contrast between these two large instruments, there is much of wider interest in the two buildings, and in their seaside locations - certain members of the Committee are already slaving over the prospect of *real* fish and chips. It is not too early to start recruiting family and friends for this trip - we ought to be able to fill the coach! Full details in our next issue.

EUROPE'S OLDEST ORGANS

Rodney's talks are always masterpieces of planning and execution, and the evening held at St John's Heritage Centre, Belper, on 27 February was no exception.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that not much remains of organs built earlier than the 15th century, but Rodney was able to conjure up some examples for us to see and hear. It was interesting to hear the early pipework; for me the first "developed" organ, as I would call it, was the single-manual instrument built in 1521 at Oosthuizen in Holland. Sion in Switzerland was a familiar organ: I wondered why we did not have a musical example - perhaps it is not in playing condition.

The most amazing instrument of the evening was the organ in Frederiksborg Castle built by Compenius in 1610. It looked absolutely fabulous and had a sound to match. As Rodney said, it was the Wurlitzer of its day.

Finally Rodney played a recording of some Sweelinck variations and asked us to identify the organ. I thought along the lines of some continental instruments, but it turned out to be the Holt organ in St Peter's Church!

Thank you, Rodney, for a most entertaining evening.

RW

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are pleased to welcome a new student member: **Ben Bloor**.

Bernard Hawley has moved

Following our notice of his retirement in the February issue, **John Poyser** has submitted an account of the life and work of his grandfather, J H Adkins, which we hope to print in our next issue.

MEMBERS' FEEDBACK

Following our request in the last issue, a certain amount of reaction has been received. Comment on the ANNUAL DINNER has so far been limited to one or two suggestions for alternative venues. The question of the change in style of *ORGANIST'S REVIEW* has elicited rather more, including strongly-expressed opposing opinions. Perhaps the following extracts from letters received from correspondents whom we will identify only as X and Y will demonstrate the disparity of views.

- X For some time I have been finding *OR* unsatisfactory . . . I don't look forward to reading (it) as much as I used to.
- Y Personally, I enjoy the journal much more now than previously.
- X For one thing the previous editor . . . was not only a professional musician, but an organ enthusiast as well . . . Ms Beedle is a professional editor . . . there seem to have been many long articles on rather obtuse (?) subjects . . . more suited to an academic home.
- Y . . . the obvious much greater professionalism of the editing, the discernible focus in each issue, and on the whole the higher quality of writing deserve not censure but praise.
- X I should be happy if the Association was to make an official complaint; otherwise I am prepared to write to the IAO myself.
- Y If the Association were to write in the critical style hinted at . . . I should feel obliged to write myself as an individual and dissent from the view expressed.

Clearly no overall consensus has emerged (!), though the majority seems to have preferred the editorship of Paul Hale, not least for the reason given by correspondent X - he was seen as "one of us". Of course, no amount of such comment will bring him back. Points made by both correspondents and others on the balance of the magazine's content reflect the difficulty the IAO has always had in positioning *OR* relative to other publications on the market - something that probably will never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

There is still time for more responses to be submitted - the Committee's next meeting, at which both subjects will again be discussed, is on 31 March.

OTHER CHURCH/ORGAN-RELATED EVENTS TO NOTE

- Fri 21 Mar *Passion of Christ* (Somervell) : St John, Derby, 7.30
- Fri 21 Mar *St Mark Passion* (Wood) : All Saints, Sudbury, 8.00
- Mon 24 Mar Carlo Curley + Paul Hale : Southwell Minster, 3.30
- Sat 29 Mar Edmund Stow + singers/instrumentalists : Spring Concert :
St Michael, Stanton-by-Bridge, 7.30 (see note)
- Sat 19 Apr David Redfern + brass : St George's-tide Concert : St Andrew, Swanwick, 7.30
- Sun 20 Apr Trevor Bolshaw : Burton Town Hall, 2.30
- Sat 26 Apr Derby Choral Union : *German Requiem* (Brahms), *Te Deum* (Dvořák) :
Cathedral, 7.30
- Fri 2 May Rodney Tomkins, Gillian Chatto + instrumentalists : *Music for a Summer's Evening* :
Nether Heage Methodist, 7.00
- Sat 3 May Edmund Stow + Steve Callow : St James, Buxworth, 7.30
- Sat 3 May Andrew Storer : St John, Derby (recital followed by cheese & wine)
- Sat 10 May Derby Bach Choir *Come & Sing* : St Alkmund, Duffield
Dido & Aeneas (Purcell), *Serenade to Music* (Vaughan Williams)
(contact Paul Marshall @ Foulds, Derby, ☎ 344842, to book)
- Sun 11 May David Redfern : The Organ Loft, Belper, 2.30
(booking essential ☎ 01773 822670/828544)

ST MICHAEL, STANTON-BY-BRIDGE has an unaltered 1872 1-manual Brindley & Foster. The event on 29 March follows a long-overdue cleaning and overhaul undertaken by your Editor during 2007. The other performers are members of Melbourne Parish Church choir.