

Derby & District Organists'

Registered Charity No. 510567

Association



*Paul Hale seated at the console of the 1996 Nicholson
quire organ in Southwell Minster*

In previous issues of the *Newsletter* I have interviewed young organists at the beginning of their careers and have found the experience not only very rewarding but also very encouraging. Each of them has been quite different in personality, yet they all possessed a love of the organ, its repertoire and a commitment to excellence, whether it be in their own playing or in the encouragement and direction of other young musicians. I felt that the time had come for a different perspective on the world of organs and organists and so looked to someone at the height of their career, as it were.

Paul Hale has been *rector chori* of Southwell Minster for a little over twenty years, during which time he has earned a formidable reputation as one of the country's leading organ consultants, an international recitalist, and the driving force behind the installation of not one, but two new organs in the Minster.

Paul and I began the interview in the book-lined dining room of the Vicar's Court house which has been the residence of the Minster organists for many years. I was struck not only by the same sharp

Intelligence that characterised the younger interviewees, but also by the undimmed enthusiasm for the organ, its construction, its music, and the great English choral tradition after a career spanning thirty-five years.

The first link with the Minster was made whilst Paul was still a pupil at Solihull School, when he acted as chauffeur for Roy Massey who was giving a recital at Southwell. The beauty of the Minster and its setting created an impression which was to have a lasting effect on him, though the sequence of events which later lead to his appointment as *rector chori* really began when he went up to Oxford as organ scholar at New College, as Paul explained:

'The Director of Music at New College was Dr David Lumsden; he was also my tutor and so I got to know him very well and had a great respect for him, as I did for the Psalter and chant book in use at New College. When I asked him about the Psalter and whose handwriting it was in the chants, he said it was Robert Ashfield from Southwell Minster - David Lumsden had been Ashfield's successor here at Southwell and had taken the Psalter and chant book with him to Oxford.'

Forthcoming Events

**Tuesday 17th November
7.30pm**

Annual General Meeting –
St Werburgh, Spondon.

Minutes for the AGM 2008 are enclosed.

Agenda 2009

Apologies for absence
Minutes of the 2008 AGM
(attached)
Chairman's Report
Secretary's Report
Treasurer's Report
Subscriptions for 2010
Election of Officers and
Committee
Programme for 2010
AOB

It will be necessary to elect two new officers: Ron Sherwood has moved to Yorkshire and will no longer be able to fulfil his role as Vice Chairman; Ed Stow has decided to stand down as a committee member. Both gentlemen have served the Association over many years; their contribution will be sorely missed.

Victoria Hall Hanley Saturdays 12 noon

Donald MacKenzie 21st Nov.

Lichfield Cathedral 7.30pm

Philip Scriven }
Martyn Rawles } 10th Nov.
Cathy Lamb }

Birmingham Town Hall 1.00pm

Thomas Trotter 9th Nov.
Ulrich Walther 16th Nov.
Thomas Trotter 23rd Nov.

St Matthew's, Northampton 7.30pm

David Briggs 10th Nov.

Symphony Hall 1.00pm

Thomas Trotter 2nd Nov.



The nave façade of the Carðe and Passmore case, originally built for the 1934 HN&B organ, viewed from the west end.

By the end of 1992 the HN&B organ became too expensive to maintain and it was decided to abandon it. However, the case was retained to save money; unfortunately, it also restricted what could be placed on the screen.

The quire console is on the north side of the case, giving a clear view of both nave and quire.

The nave organ is sited in the south triforium in four bays and has electro-pneumatic action; the console is under the first arch in the north isle. Nave stops which duplicate those in the quire organ can be played from the screen console.

'After Oxford I taught at Tonbridge School for seven years and decided that I wanted to get back into cathedral music. The local cathedral was Rochester and I was invited to go there as assistant and to teach in the King's School. I found Ashfield's Psalter there as well; Ashfield had taken both Psalter and chant book with him when he moved from Southwell to Rochester, slightly altering the books during that time. I was at Rochester for seven years. Meanwhile, Ashfield, still around in retirement, often talked fondly of Southwell – he had a painting of this very house.

'When the job here came up in 1988 and I'd done seven years at Rochester, I'd decided it was time to be a 'number one' somewhere; I could imagine nowhere more beautiful to go to. Furthermore, when I'd looked at the job I was sent a report which said that the organ was the worst cathedral organ in England and should be replaced. My passion then, as now, was organ design, so to go somewhere the organ could be replaced was a very exciting prospect.

'To be brief and frank about it, the other good things about the job were that I answered only to the Dean, or Provost as it was then, not to the Precentor. I also knew that the Minster school had a wonderful tradition of music and that the junior department was just for musical boys and girls. However, because it was not a private school the cathedral didn't have to pay very much at all for the boys' education and I thought it would be a good idea to go somewhere where the funding for the choir would not be such a big issue. All of those reasons are as true today as they were then.'

One of my reasons for approaching Paul for an interview was his role as an organ consultant.

'When I started playing the organ at thirteen I fell in love with the mechanics of the organ, as well as playing it, and soon began to read as much as I could. As you can see from the shelves there is a huge library of organ books - some of them school prizes, which I read from cover to cover, backwards and upside down. As a teenager I was totally smitten with the organ world and, of course, had opinions on what should happen. In my 20s people started asking me for advice but also asked someone else; in my 30s people asked for my advice and generally didn't bother asking anyone else; in my 40s they started paying me and in my 50s it keeps me very busy.

'That's the facetious answer but there is an interesting underlying answer which is why churches and concert halls feel that they need a consultant these days - and that's the interesting one.

'If you think about it, before the war people knew the house style of all the firms: you knew what a Willis organ sounded like, what a Harrison & Harrison sounded like, what Jardine, Hill Norman & Beard or Forster & Andrews sounded like. If you wanted your organ to sound like that or be turned into that sort of organ you would ring up Mr Willis or Mr Harrison or Mr Forster & Andrews. However, since the war and the demise of the powerful big firms managed by a 'Mr Harrison' or a 'Mr Willis', firms have ceased to have a house style which would be imposed on any organ that came through their workshops.

'I think this is one of the main reasons

why more and more people seek advice because their organ will not be made into a Harrison & Harrison or a Willis, so they don't quite know who to get or what to do to it, because the firm isn't going to say 'you must do this' anymore.

'That is coupled with an increasing historical awareness that when you do work to an organ you don't always, as firms in England did, completely rebuild and refashion it. You might want to restore it and that's where you need the advice.

'I suppose, with many of the organs I deal with, people want advice on how to restore and perhaps improve it. As you know, the English organ trade moans all the time that there isn't the demand for new organs that there is in America, so only a small portion of my work is for new organs, but it has pleased me that since managing to get accreditation with the Independent Organ Advisers, which is our professional body, there are only eight of us, the number of invitations I've had has gone up greatly. I hope that the work seen to be done under my guidance is becoming well enough known around the country for people to think that I'm a safe pair of hands.'

The question of conservation/restoration is one which now exercises organists and church authorities much more than it did even thirty years ago, and for many authorities creates a conflict of interests: the organist wants modern registration aids, perhaps a more flexible specification and a balanced Swell pedal, whilst the conservationists want to return the organ to its original condition, making it more difficult to play. As a case in point I took the 1881 Isaac Abbott organ in St Luke's, Derby: a large three manual tracker with

The nave organ (44 stops plus couplers) was built in 1992 by Wood of Huddersfield, based on a 1904 Binns organ that had been in storage for some years.

The appearance of the console is deceptive in that the lowest manual is, in effect, a solo division, rather like the H&H in Repton School Chapel; the main function of the third manual here is to accommodate the 1933 HN&B Tuba.

The console is moveable and can be played from four points in the nave.



combination pedals that are difficult to adjust, a very heavy action and a limited Pedal division. I wondered if there was any scope for some limited development of such an instrument.

'It's interesting, this, and there are several aspects that one has to consider. The demand for organs to be constantly updated with more sophisticated actions and console aids came originally in churches where they had a good choral tradition and were singing music written for cathedral choirs; that's the music in which one needs all the registration aids. The irony, it seems to me, is that in many cases the worship is now choir-less and the organ is used to accompany hymns and play voluntaries, and for that most Victorian organs can do a perfectly respectable job, just as they do in Germany and Holland.

'The way they cope with the intractability of their organs is by doing the very positive thing we should be doing of training up young organists to be the console assistant, and so, you would have an assistant on either side. If you had in your church a cathedral standard choir and wished to be able to perform cathedral standard music I would have much greater difficulty in saying 'no, you can't alter the organ in that way'.

'Now if you had an Abbott and Smith of 10 years later I would probably write to The Council for the Care of Churches and say this is probably an unaltered Abbott and Smith, but I hope you would agree with me, dear Sirs, that there are an awful lot of Abbott & Smiths around and perhaps putting electric action on one which is monstrously heavy, balancing the Swell pedal and putting solenoids on the mechanical stop action to support pistons, perhaps you might allow it. But if it's an early Isaac Abbott, unaltered, I would say take pride in it for what it is, and if you really want to accompany your choir then

buy a two manual electronic with bells and whistles.

'In the criteria used by Council for the Care of Churches, now called the Church Building Council, the criteria for giving grants, and to a certain extent, the Lottery, the organ would either have to be unaltered or would have to be returned to its 'original' state. If it had gained a balanced Swell pedal at some stage and a radiating concave pedal board, to get a grant those changes would have to be reversed, as happened at Reading Town Hall.

'The update is that conservation policy has moved on and is now more in line with what you find on the continent, which is 'let's assess the last stage at which the organ was worked on by a builder of repute doing a reasonable job and just leave it in that state. That very often means that if you had someone put a balanced Swell pedal and a radiating concave pedal board we will consider that a part of the history of the organ and consider that a 'given'. This is a positive move to accept the reality of parish life, that just to turn a tricky Victorian organ back to an almost impossible early Victorian or even a late eighteenth century one would be to impoverish its liturgical use.'

Organ design and construction has been developing for centuries and, like many organists, I have watched the way in which console design has changed in recent years and have wondered if some of the changes were for the better. I asked Paul for his thoughts on the direction of organ design, knowing that in the Minster organ he has embraced new technology in the form of electric couplers and digital stops whilst retaining the tried and tested - tracker action and slider chests.

'Like the rest of the organ world, British organ building usually followed one style - put in a standard RCO style console and

electrify the action, as was done in the 30s 40s 50s 60s and even early 70s; we are now as diverse as we could possibly be. On the one hand, modern concert organs and cathedral organs and their organists want up-to-date consoles with all the gadgets, sequencers etc. Concert hall organs often have to be low level, so, if you look around Europe and America, the most advanced consoles tend to be in concert halls or in teaching academies with separate electric consoles which either are the Cavallé Coll style, which is very big and bulky, but which quite often now use stop tabs or rocking wooden tabs that Rieger or Klais use, or just press-buttons or luminous stop touches. My view is that a console ought to have some relationship to the organ inside, so if the organ is an Edwardian octopod, to have an all-singing-all-dancing console with flashing lights isn't quite the thing.

'But for a church which has gone down the modern evangelical-charismatic route to have an organ at all, you have to make the people there feel that you're giving them something that relates to what they're doing musically. I felt the need in the Parish church here in Southwell to convince them that the organ still had a place in their liturgy but that it should look as interesting and modern as the other keyboards they might use with their pop group.

'In this case, it had a traditional specification, although it had to be electronic, have a low level console with all the bells and whistles and devices that would connect to their other midi instruments. That seemed to me to help sell the concept of an organ in a church that might have said that they didn't want any sort of organ. That's rather an extreme case, but I applied the same principle to the school organ here in Southwell. Again, I want to get youngsters interested in the organ and if the organ console looks old fashioned and 'churchy'



Nicholson had a 'cunning plan' when they installed the new console of the quire organ: above the right hand stop jams they installed the controls for the pistons, sequencer, digital recorder and the pitch control for the digital stops and hid them behind a beautifully crafted sliding panel; over the left hand stop jams, a state-of-the-art digital camera system, also hidden behind a panel, allows the organist to see what is going on in the nave stalls and other areas hidden from view.

when what they do in everyday life is sit for the nave organ; they use the same down in front of a computer and do twenty-first century things then they will not be interested; if you have a console that looks interesting to them in the same way that other technology does, they're more likely to be interested. It provides that first little 'hook' and they're going to want to play it.

'So I'm a great believer in modernising the console whilst finding the right console for the organ, and, for a tracker organ, that might mean square jams and a very straightforward design – horses for courses.

'Essentially I'm a pragmatist and when faced with any organ situation I don't try to do a 'one size fits all' dogmatic answer, which came home to me only yesterday. One of my projects is Manchester cathedral; I was there yesterday for a meeting with the cathedral Fabric Committee. One of the schemes we're looking at is a new mechanical action organ on the screen. At one stage of the meeting we were asked to name cathedrals in England which had mechanical action organs. Nicholas Thistlethwaite, a great expert, listed Chelmsford, Chichester - and paused. And I added, 'and Southwell'. He said, 'Of course! I don't really think of you as a tracker man, Paul.' I found that quite interesting because he only knows me for large electric action organs but I don't see myself as 'not a tracker man' or not anything else. Whatever the situation is I will try to ensure that the best sort of instrument for the place is there.

'Here at Southwell we thought that a good tracker organ could go on the screen but, tracker or electric, there wasn't room for 32' pipes or a 16' Open Wood. Now purists would have said, yes, you must have tracker and if there isn't room for such stops you can't have them. I thought long and hard about this and thought, it's the old thing – if you don't like them, don't use them. So, not having space, without losing half of the rest of the organ, we decided to add the 32' flue and reed and the 16' Open Wood digitally. And then, once we had the technology up there, we had an entirely separate 32' reed and flue

computer but they're different samples. It works very well.

'What has fascinated me over the thirteen years since the organ was installed is that it's the first thing people ask about when they know that we have digital stops, whereas for us, we never think about them from one year to the next.

Some very famous people (who don't know that they're digital stops because they don't operate at that sort of level) including one very famous recitalist, who, after practising all day for his recital, said, 'What a superb 32' reed you've got. Where is it?'

'So, I'm not dogmatic. It sometimes makes me appear to purists and big names in the consultancy world as a slightly doubtful customer because I will not automatically tow the party line. I won't always say 'it has to be tracker', 'you've got to restore it back to what it was', 'you must never use electronics'.

One of Paul's other interests is writing. For me, one of the most interesting elements of the quarterly magazines has been the reviews of new and rebuilt organs. Both Paul and Roger Fisher have written very interesting articles about instruments that most organists will not have the opportunity to play and, indirectly, have given us an insight into the world of organ design and organ building. Members will recall that there has been some discussion about the changes to *Organists' Review* and the inclusion of the work of local associations. I found it very interesting to hear directly from someone who was, over many years, contributor, Features Editor, and finally Editor, of the magazine that nominally represents the interests of local associations throughout the country.

'I'm now 57 and have always read avidly, and written, about organs. I love writing and first started writing about organs at school, though my first letter to *Organists' Review* was as an undergraduate at Oxford, complaining about an inaccuracy in an article about a new organ. I've collected *The Organ* back to the 1920s

and have avidly read them. I've always had *Musical Times* and *Musical Opinion*, and when *Choir and Organ* was launched I took that. I joined an organists' association aged 14 and have had *Organists' Review* ever since. What started me writing in *Organists' Review* was the reviews over the last 30 years, rather than the articles on organs.

'Basil Ramsey was the editor then, before going off to edit the *Musical Times* and start *Choir and Organ*. In about 1978 I met him at a party at Barry Ferguson's house in Rochester - Barry was cathedral organist at that time. He (Basil Ramsey) said he'd read one or two things I'd written, would I like to review this, and gave me a copy of *Hymns Ancient and Modern New Standard*. I thought that this was quite an honour and took it very seriously, writing a very detailed review comparing it with the old *Hymns A&M*; he was so pleased with that that he started giving me books to review.

'One of the first was the second edition of Clutton and Niland's book *The British Organ*. I took that extremely seriously and compared it word for word with the first edition, so much so that when the review was printed, Cecil Clutton wrote to Basil Ramsey, 'Who's this chap Hale? He seems to have fathomed out Sam Clutton more than anyone else has done and he's realised which bits I made up in the first place'. So I was hooked. I did more and more writing for *Organists' Review* during the 1980s.

'When Gavin Barrett was made editor, he asked me to be Reviews Editor. So I took responsibility for a third of the magazine and wrote quite a chunk of it. I built up a group of about forty reviewers and would send out all the material which came to me and deal with some of it myself. That went on until I came to Southwell; Gavin retired and they wanted me to be editor. I kept the review section but did start writing more about organs. I asked Alan Spedding to come in as Features Editor; he did that for a number of years and then felt that he had to concentrate on his work at Hull University and Beverley Minster, so he retired.

At that point I asked Roger Fisher to come in; I asked my father-in-law, Richard Popple, who, when I became editor, was General Secretary of the IAO, to come in as Managing Editor (we invented the role) to be the buffer between me and the IAO – I didn't want the politics.

'And I think at that point, you're right, Organists' Review had a lot of articles about new organs and rebuilds. Now I enjoyed that, you enjoyed that, I think that most of the organists in the country enjoyed that. There was however an IAO Council-based group who thought that the magazine had become too narrow, too 'organ- boyish', if you like. They had rather preferred it when Alan was my Features Editor because he didn't concentrate on the organ so much – he had a lot of peripheral articles.

'Furthermore, they thought that my adherence to a large review section was something that they wanted to revisit, but they were kind enough, because I had been Reviews Editor for twenty years and Editor for fifteen, not to instruct me to change the magazine. However, a day dawned about five years ago when I suddenly realised that the huge work involved in putting together a hundred page magazine four times a year, making up the review section on the kitchen table and then sending it to the printers, wasn't enjoyable anymore.

'That coincided with me receiving what became a mini avalanche of invitations to be an organ consultant and so I literally woke up one day and thought, OK, I'll miss it hugely. . . but. I miss all the stuff for review – that's why I was so well informed about new music and new books. It all came through that front door – I even had a large letter box fitted!

'Richard had come to the conclusion that it was, perhaps, time for me to hand over at pretty much the same time that I did, so we met for coffee and both said the same thing at the same time. Despite the fact that we had surveys asking readers if they wanted things to change – they said no – I felt that we needed a professional editor and magazine designer who took advice from organists as to content, rather than an organist trying to design a magazine in a world where print had moved on so much and magazine layouts were so clever. I couldn't do the design any more - Warwick press could do it, but they needed our design layout. So they found Sarah, who was very articulate, very bright, very sparkly, who was the editor of the Association of British Choral Directors (ABCD) magazine, *Mastersinger*. She lived in Birmingham and was close to the IAO staff. Overnight the magazine changed completely.

'I promised then that I wouldn't make any comment on my successor's policies and I adhere to that promise now. I was, however, pleased that I was asked to remain on-board and write the one

remaining column about new and rebuilt organs. You can also read about organ technology and design through John Norman; the two organ columns, *Soundboard* and *Something Old, Something New* can be found in each issue.'

And so to my final topic with Paul, the future of music in cathedrals and parish churches. Not surprisingly, Paul shares the concerns of many church organists about the future of choral music in parishes.

'This is a big question. We're all enthused by the way standards in cathedrals have continued to rise. There are occasional blips when somebody, frankly, runs out of steam and the choir doesn't get better or begins to get worse, but then their successor picks it up again. The graph of the quality of singing and performance in cathedrals has gone up; unfortunately that has emphasised the growing gulf between what happens in cathedrals and what happens in parish churches.

'When we were all growing up, parish churches had choirs, and indeed, they were often criticised for 'aping' cathedrals. That was an unkind thing because they were trying to enhance the liturgy: yes, they occasionally sang something that was a bit too difficult for them, but then they would often come to a Diocesan festival and sing difficult music with other choirs and go home very happy.

'It concerns me that the gulf between cathedrals and parish churches is widening because fewer people in the parishes have an understanding of why cathedrals do what they do - sing music purely for the glory of God - and may therefore have less inclination to become involved, which will affect the recruiting of choristers. However, my greatest fear is not for cathedral music, because it has survived a thousand years and, despite the evangelical reforms of the Church of England, there is no cathedral that has lost its music in this country.

'I'm much more worried about what's going on in the parishes where there are any number of churches which have lost their music through the so called 'evangelical reforms', so my concern is not so much cathedral music which, though one can't be complacent, still has a good following and is still respected by those whose worship is enhanced by it.

'It's music in the parishes which seems to be descending, in many of them, to an abominable level of lowest common denominator and banality. If Gerald Knight were alive today or Sydney Nicholson, they would be weeping tears of utter desolation: all the work the School of English Church Music (later the RSCM) did in educating lay and clergy during the 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, as to what constituted a huge range of wonderful liturgical music and training for youngsters in churches,

has just been swept away. So much so, that in most diocese now you can count the number of churches with choirs on the fingers of two hands, the churches with children in the choir on the fingers of one hand, and the churches with boys in the choir probably on half the fingers of one hand. That's what worries me. Even as a diocesan cathedral organist, someone who has worked for the RSCM since the age of twenty, I feel powerless to reverse this dreadful swing of the pendulum and can only hope that it won't swing much further before people say 'enough!'

On that rather gloomy note, Paul and I adjourned to the cathedral refectory for lunch, during which our conversation on the changing nature of the organists' world continued until we moved into the Minster to take photographs.

On a more encouraging note, the sounds of Bach met us as we approached the Minster; a young ex-chorister of Paul's was practising on the nave organ, and, in a sense, summed up all of the hopes for the future that we had discussed during the interview. With the prospect of an organ scholarship at Oxford a year hence, the scholar was methodically learning a new piece with an attention to detail that will surely serve him well at Oxford.

These young musicians are the future of church music in Britain and it is their enthusiasm and musicianship that will carry forward our great tradition of choral and organ music. The challenge that they face is formidable, but it is in the nature of youth to face up to challenges and to find new solutions to old problems. The final thought that occurred to me was that the young scholar was playing an instrument that represented the best of the old order in harmony with the best that the new has to offer.

My sincere thanks to Paul for giving up so much of his time, in what was clearly a busy day, and for his thoughts on such wide-ranging topics. For anyone interested in information about Paul's recitals, do look at his excellent website www.paulhale.org. Similarly, for information about the minster and the organs see www.southwellminster.co.uk

There is also an excellent book, written by Paul, on the minster organs, available at the minster bookshop.



Peter Williams, Tom Corfield, Stephen Johns and Edmund Stow who presented

Felix – Walking the Damascus Road

at St Mary's Church, Ilkeston

The Association evening at St Mary's Church, Ilkeston, was a most engaging and rewarding affair, led by Tom Corfield, Peter Williams and Ed Stow, with the excellent *ad hoc* choir directed by Stephen Johns.

Tom Corfield began the evening with an entertaining biography of the Mendelssohn family and the events which led to their conversion to Christianity, events which, sadly, still had a resonance during the period of the Weimar Republic and in other major European cities during the twentieth century. It became clear during Tom's discourse that, in this country at least, we live in relatively enlightened times.

In the early nineteenth century the process of Jewish 'emancipation' was well advanced and such punitive and discriminatory laws as had obliged Mendelssohn's grandfather, the great philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, upon his marriage to purchase from the local porcelain factory a collection of life-size china apes, were becoming a thing of the past.

Nevertheless, full rights of citizenship had not yet been achieved and popular anti-semitic feeling was often strong. It was partly to ease their path in such a world as this that the Mendelssohn family converted to Christianity, although it would be a mistake to see it as purely pragmatic. It sprang also from a conviction (very much in the tradition of the liberal thinking

of Moses Mendelssohn) that Protestantism was, in a sense, a logical development of Jewish ideals. As Mendelssohn's father wrote to Fanny: 'the Christian faith contains nothing that can lead you away from what is good, and much that guides you to love, obedience, tolerance and resignation'.

Whilst there were disturbing elements to Tom's discourse, he presented a warm picture of a family who were intelligent, well-educated, caring and successful.

After the Damascene conversion (our thanks go to Tom and Ed for creating the marvellous title for the evening *Felix – Walking the Damascus Road*) the family's fortunes, built upon talent, intelligence and application, flourished. Felix and his sister, Fanny, became an accepted part of Berlin's musical scene and, of course, Felix's ten visits to England saw him accepted by the great musicians of the day and by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

It was entirely appropriate to feature Mendelssohn, one composer amongst many in a year of anniversaries, as the focus of the evening as he was a committed player of organs wherever he went. Peter Williams' contribution to the evening was to present extracts from Mendelssohn's organ works and to explain their origins and development. (As Ed Stow later explained, the reason for choosing St Mary's was that the organ is

Believed to have been played by Mendelssohn and although the present instrument is much altered, the basic Great chorus has been retained.) The conclusion to this part of the evening was a vibrant performance of Mendelssohn's F Minor organ sonata by Peter.

The protestant chorale, which features in some of the organ sonatas, provided an appropriate link between Mendelssohn's organ music and the large-scale choral works. Ed Stow's contribution to the evening was to gather together over twenty singers to perform extracts from the choral works and to accompany them, both of which he did extremely well.

Ed explored both the role of the chorale in Mendelssohn's choral works and the different ways in which it was used. The influence of JS Bach, also mentioned in Tom's discourse, quickly became apparent as did the new dimension brought to it by Mendelssohn's nineteenth century perception of harmony, counterpoint and chromaticism.

The chorus performed very well, filling the spacious nave of St Mary's with a sound which was both clear and full-bodied. This was achieved after only one short rehearsal under Stephen Johns' direction. Our thanks go to the chorus members, some of whom had travelled a significant distance to help in the presentation of the event.

We are fortunate that the Association is able to call upon singers who can perform quite complex works with little practice and also has members who are able and willing to present an evening in which both scholarship and musicianship were displayed in good measure.

TW/TW

Parish Psalters

Peter Litman, Director of Music at St Peter's Collegiate Church, Ruthin, North Wales, has contacted the association with an appeal for unwanted copies of The Parish Psalter, for which, a donation to your church would be forthcoming. Peter can be contacted on www.peterlitman.co.uk or on 01824 707757.

I also would be interested in unused copies of the same book. TW

American Reed Organ

If anyone is interested in acquiring an American reed organ, please contact Siann Hurt who has the details. Siann's e-mail address is printed below.

Articles for the December edition of the *Newsletter* should reach me by Monday 23rd November, either via e-mail: twes@fsmail.net or by post: Tony Westerman, 44 Beeley Close, Allestree, Derby, DE22 2PX. The Secretary, Mrs Siann Hurt can be reached via: mail@derbyorganists.co.uk

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