

UNWANTED ORGANS? a national conference, 23 September 2017

St Stephen's church trust, London NW3 2PP

Conference Programme

Doors open 10 am with a recording of the 1871 Willis 3-manual organ once in this church. Tea or coffee and biscuits

Morning session: the present situation

10.30 am: chair Peter Burman's welcome, leading to:

1. Background

'Sustainability' and other current issues - *Martin Renshaw*

Faculties and Exemptions - *Peter Burman*

Dr Peter Burman MBE FSA. Studied at King's College, Cambridge, first degree in History of Art. First conservation role with Council for the Care of Churches/Cathedrals' Fabric Commission for England 22 years. Chaired FACs of St Paul's and Lincoln Cathedrals, now member of St George's, Windsor Castle FAC. Sometime Director of Centre for Conservation, University of York; Director of Conservation, National Trust for Scotland; Professor of Cultural Management at BTU Cottbus. Founded Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields with ultimate aim of bringing church and organ back to life.

2. How do Churches look after, and are advised about, their organs?

The Church of England - *John Norman*

John is a former Chairman of The British Institute of Organ Studies, a former member of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission and is currently a member of the London Diocesan Advisory Committee. Whilst professionally involved in organbuilding, he was responsible for 58 new organs. His subsequent work as a consultant has included the new organ in Worcester Cathedral and 14 other new instruments as well as four books and over 150 magazine articles.

The Church Commissioners - a statement (Peter Burman)

The Roman Catholic Church - *John Rowntree*

John is as a member of the Association of Independent Organ Advisers with substantial experience in the Roman Catholic Church, and sits on its Historic Churches and Art and Architecture/ Liturgy Committees. .

The United Reformed Church - a statement, read by Martin Renshaw

The Methodist Church - *David Wilks*

David Wilks was born in Leeds in December 1935, and has been organist at Lidgett Park Methodist Church, Leeds since the spring of 1957. He is a member of the Methodist Church Organ Advisory Service and also a member of that organisation's committee.

An interval to watch a 6-minute film about the organ at Winston (Tees-side, Durham) Methodist Church – James Dawson

3. Responding to the situation

The British Institute of Organ Studies – David Shuker

Dr David Shuker spent almost 30 years as a research chemist before ‘jumping ship’ and setting up a small organ building workshop, ‘At the Sign of the Pipe’, in Rothley, Leicestershire, almost 10 years ago. David restores small mechanical organs and carries out research into the history of British organs, organ builders and organists during the Georgian and early Victorian era. He is currently on the Council of BIOS. ‘Sign of the Pipe’, now based in west Kent, is also an imprint that publishes books on the history of British organ building.

The Churches Conservation Trust – Rachel Morley

Rachel Morley is a historic buildings conservator at the Churches Conservation Trust. Following a degree in Chemical Engineering, she completed a postgraduate course in building conservation. Rachel specialised in architectural stone and plaster conservation through the Institute of Conservation, funded by HLF. She is a Trustee of the Society of the Protection of Ancient Buildings and an assessor for the Architects Accreditation in Building Conservation

The Victorian Society - Anthony Richardson

Anthony trained at the Architectural Association and establishing his own office in 1964. He worked extensively on housing projects and pioneered architect’s involvement with urban regeneration by the rehabilitation of old buildings; from 1985-1997 he was involved in the restoration of medieval and Georgian buildings in the Precinct of Peterborough cathedral. He worked on the repair of St Stephens Rosslyn Hill . Hampstead, and St Paul’s Islington (Steiner School); at Fergie Old Kirk ,Aberdeenshire he organized the repair of the Conacher organ 1874. At Union chapel, Islington, he initiated the Organ Project to repair the Henry Willis 1875 organ.

4. At the coal face

An Anglican priest-in-charge – Paul Nicholson

Before he was ordained, Paul was a well-known professional harpsichord player. He now looks after the parishes of St Saviour, Eton Road, and St Peter, Belsize Park, both with large ‘problem’ organs.

A Baptist minister – Ewan King

Ewan is minister of Heath Street Baptist Church, Hampstead. He studied aesthetics in Helsinki, literature at Cambridge, and theology at Oxford, and has worked as a musician and as a teacher of literature.

Working with HLF - David Walmsley and Jonathan West (Northumberland)

Dr Jonathan West read German, Germanic and General Linguistics in Manchester, Bonn and Trinity College Dublin. He lectured in Bonn and TCD before returning to the UK in 1988. He now devotes himself to writing, currently on the toponymy of Northumberland. The present organist at Holy Trinity Church in Horsley, Northumberland, he has been a key volunteer in the rescue and restoration of its Nelson Pipe Organ and is the manager of Horsley Organ’s website (www.horsleypipeorgan.org).

12.30 – 2 pm LUNCH INTERVAL – sandwiches, salads, cakes and fruit, tea and coffee.

An opportunity to meet and talk with other participants, to see and hear the c1780 and 1829 organs and to examine the partly-restored casework of a c1790 organ, to see short films and to see a historical dossier of scandals, and DVD/films of a success story.

Lunch-time time-table:

1pm: Music on Olive and Eaton organs (with short introductions)

also (silent): Paul Tindall's power point of shame and scandal

1.30: Films of Winston, Finchley and Horsley

Afternoon session: responding to the situation

2 to 3 pm: Group discussions, to be led by speakers:

A. Led by John Rowntree: Wheat and chaff ... how do you sort out good from less good organs?

Crisis management: how should we alert the press, DACs etc to problems with significant organs?

Organs in proposed 'Festival' churches : how can they be kept in good order with infrequent use?

B. [led by David Wilks?] Should we copy the Breton internet solution to finding organists for every service, to help keep up the profile of organs and their music? Who will run this – would organists' associations or e.g. concert sites?

C. Led by David Shuker: Why is there no museum of organs in UK? Should we celebrate organists and organ-builders with (blue) plaques (e.g. CS Barker at Snodland, or Willis in e.g. Hampstead)? Where might there be permanent educational exhibitions, 'how-they-work' spaces? Who would look after them?

D. Led by Peter Burman: Should all faculty and other procedures to get rid of organs be challenged, as a matter of course – with legal backing? Who has the nerve to do this? Do we need to set up an Association or pressure group to do this sort of work? Pressure groups – do they work over the long term? How do they work best? If there was such a group, how should it be run, and by whom?

E. Led by Martin Renshaw: Training of advisers ; training of local groups to cope with potential sustainability problems? And how will we train the next generation of players and organ builders?

F. Led by John Norman: What are the worst enemies of organs and what can be done about them? For instance:

Organ-builders’ ‘death estimates’, where the best drives out the good. The ingrained disinclination of o-b’s to share skills and experiences widely, though experience in other professional fields shows that this leads to more, not less, work.

Organists who say that such and such an organ is ‘no good/doesn’t work’ and so ‘I won’t play it’, so church people think “if players can’t agree, why should we bother with organs or raise money for them”.

Bad publicity that harps on about cost rather than benefit.

Neglect and mice – see above re festival churches

The ‘*carpet fairy*’ who ruins the acoustic of churches, and halves the musical effect of organs, and the microphone salesman who comes along afterwards

G. Led by Rachel Morley: Might CCT churches sometimes house really worthwhile unwanted organs, temporarily or permanently, because there is no organ store or ‘recycling’ system in UK?

Might CCT churches also help mount organ training days (to maintain organs, as above) and also include organ skills, e.g. pipe-making and voicing/tuning, leather-work, making keyboards etc in their craft skills exhibition days?

Importantly, if CCT does this, what support might it receive in return?

H. Led by David Walmsley and Jonathan West: Heritage Lottery Fund: who will do the paperwork needed for applications? Is there real help for this when there are small congregations and time is at a premium? Should there be a Federation set up by those who have been or are dealing with HLF to help those hesitating to set up projects? How else might applications be supported?

2.45 pm: Break for some more music – on the ‘Olive’ organ (Paul Nicholson)

3-4 pm: round-table session with reports from discussions

Conclusions and final remarks from the Chair, followed by tea

Concert at 4.30, followed by wine reception

UNWANTED ORGANS? A CONCERT at St Stephen's church, Rosslyn Hill, London NW3 2PP. Doors open 4 pm, concert starts 4.30pm

G.F. Handel, 1685-1757

Overture from *Teseo* (in an anonymous arrangement)

John Stanley, 1712-1786

Organ Concerto in C minor, op. 10 no. 4

Vivace — Andante Affettuoso — Presto

Biagio Marini, 1594-1663

Passacaglia in G minor from op. 22 (Venice, 1655), *followed by a short organ improvisation*

Timothy Roberts, b. 1953

'Happy Birthday, Dear Mary' (after Purcell's 'Sound the Trumpet')

W. A. Mozart, 1756-1791

Two 'Epistle' Sonatas: in F Major, K244 and D major, K245

David Loxley-Blount

Première of The Magical Dwarf for violone/gamba and organ

John Worgan, 1729-1790

Three organ concerto movements, reconstructed by TR (*first performance in modern times*)

G major — A major — G minor

J. Casson, circa 1795

Variations on 'Rule, Britannia' (string parts by TR)

Organ probably made by John Cranston in 1829, for Lady St Mary, Wareham, Dorset

String players: Conor James Gricmanis, James Orrell (violins), Hatty Haynes (viola),

Katie Ross (cello), Reiko Ichise (gamba)

Organ player: Tim Roberts

Following the concert, there will be a French wine reception until about 7 pm. Wine from the south of France (Tursan), the middle of France (Cersay/Val de Loire) and around Nantes (Muscadet), and apple juice from Brittany, together with a selection of cheese from Catalonia.