

The Cornopean

EXETER & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION



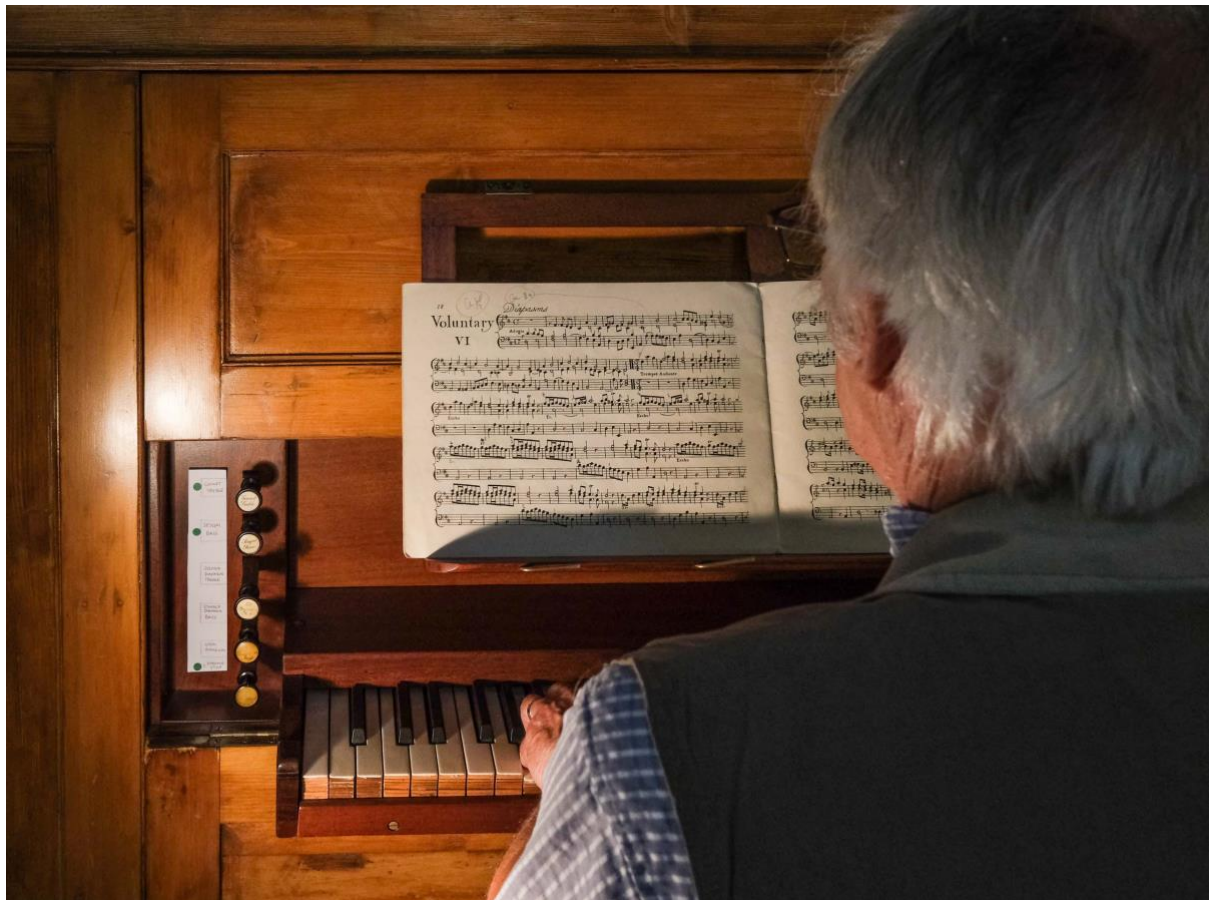
EDOA Newsletter

August 2023

Editor: Piers Howell

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Bob Millington, playing the Buckingham organ at Winterborne Stickland

Stop Press!

Forthcoming Events, see page 2

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 16th September, Visit to Torrington and the Renatus Organ Works, organised by Neil Page.

10am, St Michael's, Great Torrington, EX38 8BN, introduction to 1864 Willis organ, Lance Foy

10.15-12noon, organ available for members to play

10.30-12noon, Great Torrington Methodist Church, EX38 8AL, 1952 Compton organ, coffee and bacon butties, short talk by Michael Farley, who worked on the instrument.

2pm Visit to Renatus Organ Works, Unit 6 Alverdiscott Road Industrial Estate, Bideford, EX39 4LQ.

Talk and tour with Colin Peacock, Managing Director, who will explain the business built of ecclesiastical woodwork, consoles, casework and about the various digital systems installed by Renatus.

3.45pm depart for (optional) Cream Tea and Organ Recital given by Andrew Millington at Nichols Nymet House, North Tawton, EX20 2BP. Tickets in advance – to be advised.

Saturday 28th October, Thomas Trotter at Buckfast Abbey. He will play the work commissioned by EDOA for the 2020 Centenary, composed by Thomas Hewitt Jones.

Thursday 16th November, 7pm for 7.30pm Annual Dinner at Swan's Nest, Exminster.

These details may change.

Follow bulletins closer to the time from our Secretary for more up-to-date information.

The EDOA Committee: Ian Carson (President), Paula Taylor (General Secretary), Peter Johnson (Treasurer), Peter Johnstone (Membership Secretary), Peter King, Tim Noon, Andrew Millington, Michael Pagliero, Neil Page, Gerald Hird, Piers Howell (co-opted, Newsletter Editor)

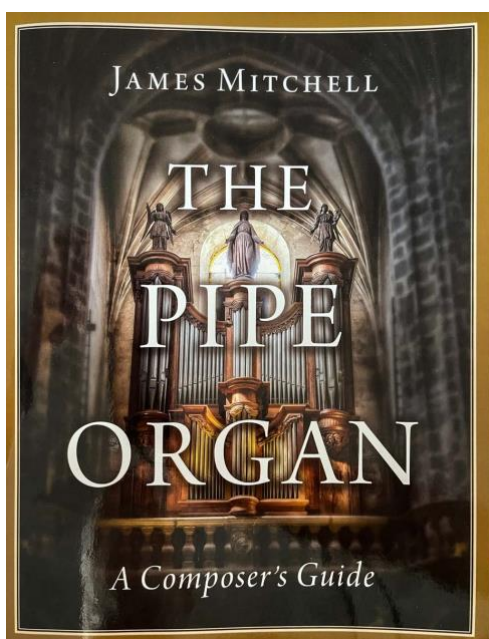
The EDOA Website: <http://www.exeterorganists.net>

Administrator Graham Willson. The website includes EDOA events, Find an Organist, Newsletters, Gallery, Links, Opportunities, Contact Us, Committee.

Graham is always looking for new content, including text and photos. The post of Deputy Webmaster is also currently vacant, and Graham would be delighted to hear from any potential volunteers.

EDOA Reviews, by Andrew Millington: THE PIPE ORGAN - A COMPOSER'S GUIDE - James Mitchell

James Mitchell is an exceptionally talented young man who hails from the Exeter area. He gained a double-first in music from Girton College, Cambridge and then completed an M Phil in musicology at Emmanuel College. He is currently Sub-organist at Gloucester Cathedral and will move to a post at Sheffield Cathedral in a few months. He is an award-winning composer and this newly-published book



provides a unique guide to writing music for the organ. The Foreword by John Rutter begins .. `One of the many reasons for giving this book a resounding welcome is that nothing like it has appeared in print before`. It is a most informative volume including aspects of organ history, registration, advice on idiomatic writing etc. There is also a companion website including video demonstrations, commentaries, case studies and a list of major organ composers. It is published by OUP (186 pages) and if I have one small beef with the publishers, the pictures of consoles and cases are rather dark and indistinct. That apart, I would highly recommend it to any organ enthusiast, particularly those who compose.

I will finish with the words of David Hill (current RCO President), taken from the back cover: `For anyone unfamiliar with the organ, it will be a fascinating journey of discovery, wonderfully written and informative. What a superb piece of work`.

PRESIDENT'S EVENING 25th JUNE 2023

This year's President's evening on 25th June brought together an array of musical talent under the title 'Singing before a Summer Sunday Seaside Sunset'. Ian Carson devised a delightful programme which was performed to an appreciative audience in St Peter's, Budleigh Salterton, and it was held in partnership between EDOA and Somerset Organists' and Choirs' Association.



Stephen Tanner, left, with Isca Voices, and Ian Carson

Isca Voices, a small group of ex-choristers from Exeter Cathedral sang with their customary excellence and fluency in a wide range of pieces including madrigals, early sacred music, jazz, spirituals and popular songs. Ian's daughter, Amy, (a founder member of Salisbury Cathedral Girls' Choir) delighted us with 2 groups of songs and her husband, Tim Dickinson sang English songs by Finzi and Vaughan Williams, and added some local flavour with 'Three Kings of Somerset'.

As well as directing Isca Voices, Stephen Tanner gave supportive accompaniment to the solo singing. To complete the varied programme, Somerset President Robert Langston contributed Bach's Prelude in B minor on the fine Budleigh organ, and Ian Carson played two stirring arrangements by Janacek.

It was a successful and entertaining evening, and we should be grateful to Ian for devising it and bringing it all together. The concert was well-supported by Budleigh folk and the members of the Associations enjoyed some 'bring and share' time in the church hall afterwards.

Andrew Millington July 2023



Amy Carson



Paula Taylor, on duty before the concert

A Dorset outing to Dorchester, Milton Abbey and Winterborne Stickland

By Marco Bresolin



Peter Collins 1974 3-manual organ in St Mary's Church, Dorchester

On Saturday 8th July, a small group of EDOA members took part in an organ crawl kindly arranged by Andrew Millington to explore 4 different instruments in Dorset. The Dorset countryside and the villages were truly pretty but unfortunately the weather became showery, and when dry quite muggy and overcast.

The first church we visited was St Mary's, a church in the arts and crafts style situated in a lovely neighbourhood south of the Dorchester town centre. We were welcomed there by Geoffrey Greenhough, the director of music, who introduced the organ, a 3-manual tracker instrument built in the northern German style by Peter Collins.



The organ is situated in the north transept on an elevated platform that allows it to speak unhindered. The church has a resonant acoustic that makes it desirable for choral and orchestral concerts. The organ tonal design was inspired by the Orgelbewegung: this inspired all the players to play pieces from Buxtehude and Bach that suited the organ well, although there was not much time to fully explore

the stops and divisions. Buxtehude's preludia certainly allowed a variety of registration for the different sections.

At this stage, Andrew told us to stagger our visit to St Peter's, the Parish church in the town centre, just a few stops down from Dorset museum.



Matt playing at St Mary's, Marco in attendance



Conacher 2-manual organ in St Peter's Church, Dorchester

We had another warm welcome from David Bruce-Payne. The vicar kindly prepared tea and coffee. The organ in this church was more modest than the one just played but not less charming. Although the stop choice appeared to be limited, they really blended together and filled the church space adequately. An organ in this more romantic style seemed to work for Baroque and Romantic repertoire alike.



Editor's note: The photos show several lighter-coloured stop knobs; I don't suppose the Tierce, Larigot and Mixture 19,22,26 were part of the original spec, and hopefully the presumed Voix Celestes pipes which were displaced for a Larigot 1 1/3ft were stored away, and may eventually be restored to their rightful place. Having said that, the organ was a pleasure to play.



At about 12.30, we took a short break for lunch [at the Dorset Museum]. As we were leaving the church, we had our first downpour of showers for the day.

After lunch, we made our way to Milton Abbas, to meet with Andrew at Milton Abbey around 2pm. The drive was nice, and Matt and I ended up in the village itself at a wrong turn, which was built in 1780 to relocate the villagers of Middleton, a village further down the valley that was demolished by the owner of Milton Abbey because it spoilt the view and also so that Capability Brown could landscape the valley itself!





Milton Abbey

The church was part of a Benedictine abbey founded by King Athelstan in the 10th century and it was sold off at the time of the Reformation. Now it is a school chapel for Milton Abbey School. The church (constituted of a transept and choir with aisles on each side) has a reredos reminiscent of New College, Oxford.



The organ (Gray and Davidson, 1868) sits on the pulpitum, although this was not the original site. The Classical English facade also comes from another organ in London, built by the same organ builder in the same period. Andrew treated us to 2 extemporisations to demonstrate the different tones of the instrument. We were amazed about the presence of the sound in the building and the wide range of tones. It was a nice instrument to play, although needing some attention to take it back to its former splendour.



The stop shaft without a head, next to the Couplers label, actuates a 32ft reed!



Photo by Ian Carson



Milton Abbey, photo by Ian Carson

From Milton Abbey, we made our way to St Mary's Winterborne Stickland, the last place of the crawl.



Winterborne Stickland church

At this time there was another downpour, but we were welcomed at the church by Andrew's friends [Angela and Richard D'Silva], with tea and delicious home-baked cakes, which made the visit quite cozy.

The organ arrived at the church not many years ago, and it is a single manual Buckingham organ, built in the style of an house organ with some split stops and nice upperwork, that allowed us to play some 18th century voluntaries. This day altogether allowed us to experience a wide range of instruments and it was nice to catch up with members.



Richard and Angela, with their delicious home-made cakes



The Buckingham organ at Winterborne Stickland

A TOUR OF POLISH ORGANS – BY IAN CARSON

Wrocław: ‘Empty your diary from 10th - 15th March’ - no ‘ifs’ no ‘buts’ - I recognised an order when I heard one. Disgustingly early on the morning of the 10th I was forced to drive to Bristol Airport, and looked at the destination board, wondering where I might be going - Hurghada? - nope I’m not packed for exotic places, Venice? - nope, Mary’s unfavourite city, what’s this, Ryanair ‘delayed’ - that sounds more like my luck. Where’s it going? - Wrocław - aha! Always wanted to go there.

Concert Hall: So I imagined a relaxing few days looking at the sights, long hours in cafés and bars - oh yes! As we got to the check-in our son Aaron appeared, and it turned out he had masterminded the whole trip - quite brilliantly I have to say. ‘Hope the flight isn’t delayed too much,’ he said, “because we’re going to a concert tonight’.

Our very smart airbnb was literally metres from an ultra modern concert hall, whose architecture and acoustics took our breath

away. I noticed an organ, but if I had known at the time it was a state of the art Klais, our trip might not have progressed any further. If you can follow this link: - <https://klais.de/m.php?sid=531> ... you will see that the stop list includes a 64’ Subcontrebombarde. Every organ should have one - as the ultimate deterrent in the organist’s armoury.



Wrocław Concert Hall, and Klais organ 2020

Our concert experience (around £10 per seat) was the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic conducted by the very talented Ken-David Masur, son of Kurt Masur. The superb playing he inspired reminded my wife Mary of her time in the RLPO under the late Walter Weller.



Basilica of Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, Klais organ 2020

Basilica of Queen Elizabeth of Hungary: It’s a good thing I didn’t know too much at the time about the other two organs we saw in Wrocław. I would still be there. Take the Basilica of Queen Elizabeth of Hungary - never heard of it nor her? - nor had I. The organ’s story is here: - <https://www.wroclaw.pl/en/reconstruction-of-the-pipe-organ-in-the-basilica-of-st-elizabeth-in-wroclaw> The organ cost a mere £4 million, but there are no playing aids, and its lowest and loudest pedal stop is a trifling 32’ Posaune. More here: - <https://klais.de/m.php?tx=264>

Catholic Cathedral of St John the Baptist: And then there’s the not-so-little matter of the Catholic Cathedral of St John the Baptist. The organ there was built by Sauer/Walcker in 1913, originally in Wrocław’s Centennial Hall - a concrete building - cross between

the Royal Albert Hall and the Pantheon - as the greatest organ in the World. In 1937 it was rebuilt by the same company with 222 stops! In 1952 the instrument was relocated to the cathedral by Biernacki (the Biernacki brothers were one of the largest organ companies in pre-war Poland, specializing in building romantic style instruments with electro-pneumatic and electro-magnetic actions). Today the cathedral organ has 151 stops. Here's what it sounded and looked like in its original location: -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIBSMgCIW7A&ab_channel=JFSnail You can see and hear Wayne Marshall getting to grips with it in the cathedral - ciphers and all - here:-

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1167860723397946>

Częstochowa: All too soon we were bundled into an Uber to catch the train to Częstochowa - a 2 hour journey, also for about £10. Aaron's parents-in-law live in a village about an hour north of this town. One Christmas they took Aaron to a service at the monastery pilgrimage church of Jasna Góra in Częstochowa. He was bowled over by the experience, especially the sound of the main organ (there are four organs, or is it five?).

Monastery pilgrimage church of Jasna Góra: The monastery is internationally famous as a shrine, housing an image of The Black Madonna, attracting - in one recent year - over 3 million pilgrims from 80 countries. In the chapel where she is exhibited above the altar, there are many medical aids - crutches etc. - discarded by those who were miraculously healed, and we witnessed people shuffling right round the sanctuary on their knees in homage.

A priest was sought out and asked if I could play the organ - he had worked in Birmingham so spoke

perfect English - and he told us to come back after morning Mass, which we did. The organist Marcin Lauzer first allowed me on to the 3 manual organ in the Black Madonna chapel. Mary had brought the smallest organ volume she could find with her, so I found myself playing Karg Elert preludes (well his mother was a Catholic). *Nun danket* caused Marcin to draw the horizontal trumpets just above my head and I came to understand why there was an acoustic barrier in between!



Ian, playing the main organ, monastery pilgrimage church of Jasna Góra

Having passed this test he then took me to the main organ, in a gallery at the rear of the huge ornate main chapel. This, like the first organ, was a recreation of imagined Baroque organ building, but with a modern action and playing aids. We asked for some Bach, but all he could find was an ancient Peters edition of a selection from the *Clavierübung*, largely in an assortment of C clefs, so I selected *Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kamm* if only because I could manage the chorale melody pedal part on a board designed for someone adept at doing the splits. Here's a demonstration of the stops on the main organ (nb 40' long!):-

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6PwsC3-zJo&ab_channel=HubertTrojanek

And here are the stop details, plus those of the Black Madonna chapel organ:

[https://organindex.de/index.php?title=Cz%C4%99stochowa_\(Tschenstochau\)%2C_Kloster_Jasna_G%C3%9C3ra_\(Basilika_Hauptorgel\)&fbclid=IwAR3pG249wi5eVp231xtXCC04tKhxcwFeVGRIWctTJwIPG_Sv5K4vAvheeWw](https://organindex.de/index.php?title=Cz%C4%99stochowa_(Tschenstochau)%2C_Kloster_Jasna_G%C3%9C3ra_(Basilika_Hauptorgel)&fbclid=IwAR3pG249wi5eVp231xtXCC04tKhxcwFeVGRIWctTJwIPG_Sv5K4vAvheeWw)

Here's what it's like to play a service. NB if there's no choir the organist has to lead the singing through the microphone as well.....

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVwYXXLgp7s&ab_channel=o.MarcinCiechanowski

Katowice: There was too much in Jasna Góra to describe in this article, but what started this whole expedition was my seeing an article in the *Slipped Disc* online music magazine claiming that the world's largest concert hall organ (hm well!) was about to be opened in Katowice, a very important city economically in southern Poland.

Concert hall: The quite stunning concert hall was built with EU financial support, and is the home of the Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra. Its acoustic features include large amounts of Californian pine woodwork, and silver threads in the seat upholstery (but for all that the acoustic of the NFM hall in Wrocław was better!). The organ is by the Slovenian company Skrabl (who built the Lyme Regis organ). Here are details of the Katowice organ, modelled extensively on the work of the legendary Cavaillé-Coll:-
<https://www.skrabl.co.uk/news-item.asp?NID=38>

It so happened there was a recital by two international organ competition winners, and we went to it. Every available seat in the hall was taken, and a remote console was positioned at the front of the stage. The concert ended with music by a composer from the Isle of Wight - Edwin Lemare's *Fantasy on themes from Carmen* - a good way to popularise the organ! Of the recitalists, the visible console, pedals and all, allowed Ms Seona Mun from S. Korea to astound those around me with

her pedagogical demonstration of what the feet can do, in (Canadian composer) Rachel Laurin's *Etude héroïque*. Germany's Ms Laura Schlappa left me full of admiration for her performance of the first movement of Widor's *Symphony No. 6*, and her Lemare *Carmen-Paraphrase* (their title) was just delightful.

Everywhere we went, there were reminders of the tragedies that Poland has suffered in its recent history, but the picture we gained was of a country that was vibrantly positive in its support for and enjoyment of the arts, and the organ is right up there with everything else.



Katowice concert hall, 2018 Skrabl organ

Members' Concert at St Margaret's Church, Topsham on 27th May

Six EDOA members gathered at Topsham to give a prepared organ recital. This is the second such event, the first having taken place at Budleigh Salterton in September 2022. As the playing time for individual players on our regular organ visits always seems to be short, the idea is for a set number of players (6 to 8) to spend the morning preparing their pieces, and then after (a not too convivial) lunch, to perform their recital in the afternoon. The assumption is that the players already know their chosen piece well, and spend their preparation time devising the registration etc.

The programme was as follows:

Tony Yates - Bass et Dessus de Trompette, by Louis Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749)

Cor van der Wijngaard - Cantabile in B major, by César Franck (1822-1890)

Michael Pagliero - "Remembering Whitlock", Percy Whitlock 1903-1946

Gabrielle Lewis (after playing for a wedding earlier) -

The Schübler Chorale Preludes, by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645 (Sleepers awake), Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 649 (Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide), Kommst du nun, Jesu, vom Himmel herunter, BWV 650 (Come thou, Jesu, from heaven to earth)

Piers Howell - Pièce Héroïque, by César Franck (1822-1890)

Alastair Johnston (who travelled all the way from Penzance) -

Contes de la rue Traversière (2013) Eric Lebrun (b. 1967), Berceuse d'automne, Des pays lointains et mystérieux, Un oncle de phrygie, Variations pour un korrigan, Ma princesse, La nef celeste, Un oiseau sur le niege

Tony Yates - Fantasia & Grave in G by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Our host for the day was Tony Yates, director of music at St Margaret's. Our grateful thanks go to Tony and the church staff. In addition to financial contributions to the cost of the day made by the players, a collection was made in aid of Pipe Up.



Alastair Johnston



From left: Piers Howell, Michael "Pags" Pagliero, Gabrielle Lewis, Tony Yates, Cor van der Wijngaard, Alastair Johnston

Roger Yates, Organ builder - an introduction

By Alastair Johnston



Fig. 1 Roger Yates.

Roger Yates was born in 1905 in Warwickshire and was fortunate in that his parents were relatively well off so that he could be sent to a good independent school (Tonbridge) and tutored in different musical aspects by members of the Dolmetsch family when living later in Kent and Surrey. He was able to tour the USA at the age of 16 and it was then that he seems to have developed his enthusiasm for the organ. An apprenticeship with Henry Willis 3 allowed him to start on the organ building path and connections from there with Willis' 'circle' (Marcel Dupré, numerous USA builders, significant players including a young Ralph Downes, then Assistant Organist at Southwark Cathedral) gave him an extra boost.

Following his time with Willis, in 1928 Yates set up on his own in Nottingham following purchase of the Lloyd company. This firm was established, included all aspects of organ building and had also employed the young John Compton (later an important organ builder in his own right) as an apprentice. Work was readily available in these pre war years and Yates' instruments showed good solid workmanship in construction, his Willis involvement in its voicing and influences from his USA connections in his robust electric

actions. New and rebuild organs in Ruddington, Nottingham, Ilkeston and Haslemere testify to this this. At this time too an interest in historical instruments also grew. Yates was much involved with the Dolmetsch collection of early keyboard instruments and in 1932 did some restoration work on their Snetzler chamber organ dating from 1764.

In 1935/6 Yates relocated to Bodmin though still maintaining his Nottingham connections and staff. Organ work from this time include instruments in the Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire area along with Oakham PC in Rutland, Bozeat in Northamptonshire and work in Cornwall at Helston and Coverack. New instruments were then very much in the style of the time though with some innovations such as Nazard and Tierce stops which were then becoming popular following Willis' inclusion at Farm Street Jesuite Church, London.

World War 2 saw Yates in the Merchant Navy where along with this Naval duties was able to survey, photograph and indeed work on instruments in Malta. In 1948 he moved to Michaelstowe in Cornwall where he bought the Old Rectory. Organs from this latter period perhaps show best the influence of his post war trips to Germany, Holland and France with his Austrian second wife Emmi. Also significant during this latter 20+ years of his work was contact with figures such as Ralph Downes, William Leslie Sumner, Cecil Clutton, Peter Hurford and Sidney Cambell. Yates' instruments now began to show signs of the 'organ reform movement' that had actually been around since the '30s but became more significant following the Royal Festival Hall organ in 1954. It must be remembered however that much of this work was rebuilding existing



Fig. 2 Kegworth Case before completion



Fig. 3 Kegworth console showing 'continental' type combination switches above the stoptabs.

historical instruments.

Organs at St Catherine's Gloucester and Kilkhampton also showed him working sympathetically (tonally at least in these) with older material to produce versatile instruments able to interpret Bach, Buxtehude etc. In the case of Kilkhampton things were very much encouraged by a Rector with an enthusiasm for Bach organ music willing to find the financial resources for the project. The BBC also recorded recitals there by Nicolas Kynaston and Peter Hurford. Subcontracted tonal work during the 1950s and 60s with Nicholson and Co. resulted in the organ at King Street Methodist Church in Plymouth. Sounding more Nicholson than Yates nevertheless a satisfying and effective liturgical instrument) and St Michael's Newquay. At Newquay Yates had much input (along with Sir John Dykes Bower) and more especially with the voicing. Again, despite a non mechanical action tonally things were quite enlightened with transparent choruses, much 'colour' (a rare 8/9' mutation on the Choir) and effective overall blend. Here also according to correspondence with Nicholsons Yates wanted to include a Cavallé-Coll style Swell, 32' reed etc. though seemingly 'calming' influences prevailed and vetoed this! Sadly this instrument was later destroyed by fire. The ingenious little Yates extension organ built in 1963 at Ulcombe in Kent (opened by Sidney Campbell) can still hold itself well with similar (eg. Walker 'Positif') organs of this period and at St John's Taunton his reworking of a Father Willis, though not at all what we would consider doing now is much admired still. Indeed when this organ was recently restored by William Drake organ builders they left the robust electric action and somewhat incongruous Drake additions alone as being integral to the instrument as it now stands.

Roger Yates was a consultant (with John Dykes Bower) for the Willis work at Truro Cathedral in 1963 (where apart from a much needed detached console and action) nothing else was done and in 1967 he returned to the Nottingham area to work at St Paul's Daybrook. This, another Gern organ was brightened up and provided with some decidedly French sounding reeds and continues today to be a resourceful instrument.

In 1969 Yates collaborated with John Wellingham and built his first 'classical' tracker instrument for Dartington College. Very much of its time it was perhaps the

instruments and that all still maintained electric or pneumatic actions despite his sometimes more enlightened tonal work. St Catherine's Nottingham received an interesting transplant in 1948 from Tockington Manor near Bristol of an organ by August Gern. Here Yates added a 'progressive' mixture quite 'in style', revoicing work took place at All Saints in Falmouth in 1950 and a mostly new organ built for Kegworth in 1953. Yates was quite clear that tonal aspects here were based on clear choruses, balance etc. experienced in Germany but still on an American style electric action. In 1950 he also worked on a little historical chamber organ for a Rev. Galpin in Kent now standing in Canterbury Cathedral. Interestingly as with the Dolmetsch connection Yates had much to do with the Galpins who collected



Fig. 4 Yates working on the Dartington organ

culmination of Yates' ideas and work. Along with the 1969 start of work at Stogursey (complete with new mechanical action which he did not complete due to his final illness and according to Joost de Boer very nearly involved electric transmission) Dartington can be seen to be where he had been heading after leaving Willis back in the 1920s when 'Henry III' decided to build no more organs with mechanical action and slider soundboards.

Yates died in 1975 in Leicestershire following two years of physical incapacitation from a stroke when nevertheless his mind and voice were still as before. Luckily a large amount of his paperwork still exists, a number of his plans are in the British Organ Archive in Birmingham and his Grand Daughter is also a font of knowledge. Much of his work can still be heard and played and there still those around who either remember him or people who knew him.

Roger Yates, although a relatively small cog in the wheel that is organ building in the years surrounding World War 2 is nevertheless interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly through his apprenticeship with Henry Willis III at a time of significant work for that firm (Westminster and Liverpool Cathedrals, London, Farm Street, Jesuite Church etc.) secondly due to an independent income which allowed him to set himself up in business relatively soon after apprenticeship, thirdly through his desire to travel after the war to look at historic organs in Europe and fourthly from a strongly single minded streak regarding his instruments from tonal and mechanical perspectives. Along with these, he was extremely well read, well travelled and also well connected with important (organ) musical individuals in the UK, France and the USA (Marcel Dupré, Ralph Downes, G Donald Harrison early on). Furthermore noted players were familiar with and happy to 'open' his instruments (Campbell, Hurford, Kynason, Ormond etc.). His links with the Dolmetsch family and the Galpins showed his interest in historical instruments and copious correspondence with such as Sumner and Clutton show at least some interest in the writings of the more 'amateur' organ consultant types much in favour then. Fitting him into a historical perspective also brings links to world financial depression, shortage of materials etc. around WW2, the Organ Reform Movement in the UK together with its developments and sometimes dead ends. Indeed apart from the Dartington link Peter Hurford at one time considered Yates for a house organ and Noel Mander considered a partnership. Above all however his work was always of a consistently high standard, often latterly with just him working on at aspects. He could apparently be quite 'difficult' but also generous with information and hospitality.

Some interesting 'asides' are also worth noting with stories about Yates' love of fast cars and collection of coin operated automata figuring together with an incident where he had to devise how stop his wife Emmi and organ builder Bill Drake's American Mother Elvira going off on a tour of Europe in his favourite Volkswagen. A bit of a dilettante maybe but significant all the same.

NB. Most of Roger Yates' organs can be found on the NPOR but do not take information there for granted!

My MPhil. research on Roger Yates is through Newcastle University and I am fortunate in having Professor Magnus Williamson (FRCO and former Oxford Organ Scholar) as supervisor. If any EDO members have any information or experiences that they feel might be of interest please do get in touch. My initial introduction to RY was on a St Margaret's Topsham choir camp back in the early 1980s when the then (as now) Director of Music, Tony Yates informed me of the organ at Kilkhampton near Bude that had been worked on by another Yates! Coincidentally he now presides over an example of the 'other' Yates voicing on the organ at St Margaret's transplanted from Plymouth.



Fig.5 Yates' saw now in the possession of and used by Joost de Boer

A private visit to the Renatus factory

by Piers Howell



Renatus factory in Bideford

I was fortunate recently to have a private guided tour of the Renatus factory in Bideford. Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the EDOA visit in September (apologies have already been made to Neil Page, the organiser!)

Colin Peacock, who founded the company in 2001, was my guide. My visit was arranged by Martin Watkins, who is one of the owners of the company.

Renatus have gained an enviable reputation for construction of organ consoles, and other cabinet making, to the highest standards, using high quality wood and materials. These consoles are being commissioned by organ-builders for churches and cathedrals, not only in the UK but internationally as well.



Console for the organ being constructed by Michael Farley for St Dominic's Priory, Valetta, Malta



Detail on rear of console

The Cornopean has followed the re-construction of the organ for Nairobi Cathedral, by Michael Farley; the console was refurbished in this workshop.

I was shown various machines, some of which are



computer-controlled, which carve and shape material to the most exacting of tolerances. A laser machine is used to engrave stop-knobs, using various text fonts, one of which was designed in-house for the Nairobi organ. Various types of hardwood are used, including oak, sapele, maple and beech with exotic hardwoods such as rosewood and ebony for details such as stop knobs and inlays. The quality of the work everywhere in the factory was hugely impressive.

for



Ebony stop knobs, after turning

Behind, oak tracery, for Winchester Cathedral

making an acrylic key-ring for me with my chosen text of Tuba Magna 8 (what else?). After setting up the design on the computer, the machine took 38 seconds to engrave and cut out the disc, all by laser.



Expression pedal, with hydraulic system to adjust the force required

All jobs are planned and designed using CAD (computer-aided-design) software, and the use of paper is minimised. All wood waste, of which there is a lot, is saved and used to heat the factory in winter, using a huge wood burning stove!

At the end of my tour, Colin demonstrated the laser engraver,



Computer controlled machine, cuts boards up to 10x4 feet

Colin has kindly offered to do the same for any EDOA member attending the visit on 17th September, if they get their request in by a week before; please notify me the required text for their key-ring, and I will forward the details to Colin.

Footnote about Martin Watkins: EDOA members may recall Martin was an EDOA member about 25 years ago, and helped to organise a memorable trip to play the organs of Birmingham. Martin, in addition to being a fine organist, also distinguished himself by demonstrating the ability to drink a pint of beer in 7 seconds! We organists have to be able to multi-task ...



Console in construction for the American organ-builder Marshall and Ogletree



My acrylic key-ring