







































## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

This column — in the Fall 1975 edition of *THE TRACKER* — carried an inquiry from Mr. Edward Bennett of Northampton, England, on a possible relationship between Henry Pilcher and a "W. Pilcher, Organ Builder & Pianoforte Manufacturer, 09 Stockbridge Terrace, Pimlico, Long." I have just written Mr. Bennett that "W. Pilcher" was probably Henry's older brother William, from whom he learned organ and piano building. Henry started his work in London in 1820 and stayed in England until 1832.

The October 1943 issue of the *New York Historical Society Quarterly* has a biographical article on Henry Pilcher by Margaret Lippincott. She refers to some material in the manuscript division of the New York Historical Society. I checked the catalogue and didn't find all of it, but it is possible that some of it is with papers of the donor, and not separately catalogued.

I am wondering if any New York area member is interested in doing the research on Pilcher for the columns of our fine magazine. I think it is probably pretty good material. I will do it myself if no one else does, but I have a couple of years of other research ahead of me, and would hope that somebody could do it sooner than that. If anyone does, I'd appreciate a postcard and would check to see if I have any other material around in notes.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Elfrieda A. Kraege  
P. O. Box A-1303  
Grand Central Station  
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Sir,

Regarding the article "San Francisco Organ Restored" in Vol. 20, No. 1, page 16, I want to correct one possible misinterpretation.

The M. P. Moller Company had nothing whatsoever to do with the mechanical and tonal alterations made to the organ in the 1960s. This was done by a former local man. The Moller Company installed a console and shades before the other alterations were made.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ Jack M. Bethards  
472 Tehama Street  
San Francisco, Cal. 94103

Dear Sir,

I am a member of the Organ Historical Society who every Sunday uses and enjoys a fine little Hook & Hastings instrument dating from 1930. Or at least, I enjoy it to the extent that its current state of repair will permit.

I am a professional church historian (Ph.D., Chicago, 1970), and since historians are notorious relativists I wonder how far up the interests of the OHS run. Is 1930 *historical* yet? Evidently, sooner or later it will be. More in your context, perhaps, how did a fine firm (H & H) maintain its standards in the 1930 atmosphere of electrification, borrowing, unitizing? I submit that my little instrument is an interesting example of such an endeavor.

The individual ranks are beautifully, if mildly, voiced. And, in their own way, they add up. All I have is a single 8' Diapason unenclosed, with a dozen other ranks enclosed and variously available on two manuals. The full Swell coupled at 4' serves as a sort of aggregate mixture; with the 16' Bourdon and the unison-off, the identical registration results in a fairly effective Positiv - i.e., Sw/Gt 4', Sw/Sw 4' with unison cut-off. My point is that hidden in what, on paper, looks like a simply awful specification is a highly effective little instrument - all within the compass of thirteen ranks.

I write with mixed motives. It is not unreasonable to suppose that a future project of the OHS will be to re-evaluate organ happenings in the thirties. Here is an example, with tight size-limits. If you find my point of view worth seconding, a letter of appreciation on your part would be of material assistance in urging a cost-conscious Vestry to preserve a delightful little instrument, and, in not too many years, a very valuable antique.

Respectfully,

/s/ Joseph Fitzer  
Associate Professor of Theology  
Organist, St. John's Episcopal  
Church Flushing, New York

### The 1930 Hook & Hastings specification:

<b>Great</b>	<b>Swell</b>
Diapason I, 8' (mounted on case)	Diapason 8'
Diapason II, 16-8-4-2-2 2/3'	Viol 8-4-2'
Gamba 8'	Oboe 8'
Clarabella 8'	Vox Humana 8'
	<b>Both Claviers</b>
<b>Pedal</b>	Bourdon (16, 8, 4' on Sw; 8' on Gt)
Sub-bass 16' (from Clarabella)	Dulciana (8) & "dolce cornet" on Sw; 8' on Gt,
Bourdon 16, 8' (from Swell)	Celeste 8' on both Sw & Gt
Gamba 8' (from Great)	Cornopean 8' on both Sw & Gt
Octave 8' <sup>1</sup> independen11	

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## NEW TRACKER ORGANS

### A. David Moore at Rochester, New York

A. David Moore & Company of North Pomfret, Vermont, recently installed a two-manual and pedal, fourteen rank tracker organ in a small recital hall at Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, New York. The organ is on 2-3/4" of wind pressure and is tuned according to a system of Werckmeister.

The stoplist is as follows:

**Great** (upper manual - 56 notes)

Stopped Diapason 8'

Prestant 4'

Tierce 1-3/5'

Nazard 2-2/3'

Flute 2'

Mixture IV

**Couplers**

Choir to Great

Great to Pedal

Choir to Pedal

**Choir** (lower manual - 56 notes)

Stopped Diapason 8'

Chimney Flute 4'

Fifteenth 2'

Larigot 1-1/3'

**Pedal** (30 notes)

Bourdon 16'

Flute 8' (ext.)

Spire Flute 4' (ext.)

The casework is oiled butternut, the frontal pipes of burnished tin, and the keydesk and bench of cherry. The natural manual keys are of grenadill and the sharps are capped with bone. The hand-carved decorations were done by Ann Fisk, and the keyboards were made by Susan Moore.

Anne Musser is organ professor at the college and gave the dedication recital which included works by Bach, Pachelbel, Telemann, Buxtehude, Schindler, Stuart, Vivaldi, Brahms, and Rohlfig.

The A. David Moore & Co. organ, Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, New York.

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Norman M. Walter

*The Electric Organ* by Reginald Whitworth. Organ Literature Foundation reprint, 1975 (originally published in England, 1948), available from Organ Literature Foundation, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184. 258 pp. paper covers. \$21.00 postpaid.

*The Electric Organ* — in *THE TRACKER?* If one is interested in "tracking" down more recent organ history, then this book belongs in the organ historian's library for it was written at what we now know was very nearly the end of a very critical period of twentieth century organ history and recounts in considerable detail the events and developments of that period.

Whitworth originally wrote his treatise on the electric-action organ in 1930 when the instrument was virtually at the height of its development. The present reprint is of the third edition, 1948, and the very fact that this work was reprinted three times should testify to its importance in the era we have just left. The virtue of the third edition is that it brings Whitworth's study up to the post-war period and the brink of the "tracker revival" period.

*The Electric Organ* begins with a history of the development of electric action in England and the continent, and although the emphasis lies across the Atlantic American pioneers such as Roosevelt, Austin and Skinner are given their due. After this the various components of electric organ action — key contacts, magnets, chest actions, stop actions, combination mechanisms and the like— are discussed historically and technically, with many clear drawings of various examples. The various "tricks" of electric action such as duplexing, double touch, and sostenuto appliances are also given detailed coverage, as are the "nuts and bolts" of electrical blowing devices and action current sources. A short chapter deals with tonal matters, and another gives a brief account of "electronic tone production" ending with this quotable statement:

There should be no question of competition between electronic instruments and the legitimate organ. Fascinating and amazingly clever as these new instruments are, they are but *substitutes* for the real organ; . . . They should however be regarded in the light of new and wonderful additions to the instrumental family: *not* as organs.

Whitworth also devotes a chapter to "Some Notable Electric Organs," beginning with some late nineteenth century examples in France and England, and his chapter on "Electric Organs Abroad" gives stoplists of Aeolian-Skinner, Kilgen, Estey and Holtkamp instruments in America, devoting several pages to the famous Midmer-Losh organ in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The addendum at the end briefly details some technical developments not covered in the first edition.

One wishes Whitworth had said more about Roosevelt, Hutchings, and the early work of Skinner, for one tends to get the impression that electric action in America began with the arrival of the Englishman, Robert Hope-Jones, which, of course, it did not.

Still, Whitworth can be forgiven for his insular bias, for in every other respect this is a thorough and technically detailed work, giving much valuable information about the history and development of organ action in the first half of the twentieth century. It is hoped that the Organ Literature Foundation will continue to reprint such worthwhile but heretofore hard-to-get reference books.

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*Brindley & Foster, Organ Builders* by J. R. Knott. Privately published, 1974. Available from the author at 101 Highcroft Crescent, Bognor Regis, Sussex, England for £1.15 (about \$2.50 at current exchange) post free (second class). 77 pp. paper covers.

This volume is perhaps the latest in the many fine organ company histories to come from England in recent years and the first by J. R. Knott, a longtime OHS member and a past president of the Organ Club [London]. Although produced privately by mimeograph, it contains a number of printed illustrations of good quality. Indeed, many current English works on organ history are privately printed, a tribute to the devotion of their authors in the face of public apathy, for their quality is uniformly high.

Knott's history of the Brindley & Foster firm, which worked in Sheffield from 1854 to 1939, is the culmination of almost a lifetime of interest in these builders and their work. Because of this it is packed with interesting details, biographical facts, technical information, quotes from contemporary accounts of organs, stoplists, and a complete installation list.

Despite the author's obvious devotion to his subject matter, he can be both humorous and subjective. Examples of the former include the description of Brindley & Foster's black, green and pink porcelain stop labels as "plum and apple jambs" and a quotation from a competing builder to the effect that "given enough tubing, they would bury themselves." With regard to the latter, Knott is not afraid to include criticisms of Brindley & Foster's often experimental and unreliable actions and excessive use of zinc pipes while at the same time praising their voicing skill and successful work with flutes and strings.

No book of this kind would be complete without detailed descriptions of notable and unusual organs of all sizes by the builder under study, and Knott has been lavish in his inclusion of such material, much of it from his own observation. Specifications, press notices, and technical details on these instruments are given in abundance. In this respect it might be proper here to mention another of Mr. Knott's publications, *A History of the Organ in Bishopsgate Institute, London*, which gives a highly detailed account of one of Brindley & Foster's most notable instruments, unfortunately no longer in existence. If you are ordering the Brindley & Foster book, you may as well put in 30 pence more (about 75 cents) and get this also. Both are interesting, informative and well-written, and are models of good research writing in our field.

—Barbara Owen

### GREATER ST. LOUIS CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

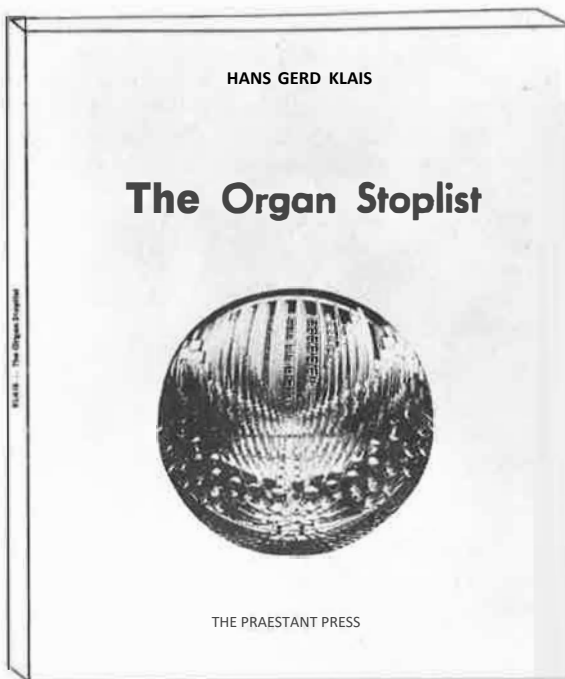
In December 1975 the Greater St. Louis Chapter, OHS, published the first issue of its newsletter, *The Cypher*. It contains a fine article by Robert I. Thomas, the Chapter's Chairman, entitled "Organs and Rumors of Organs of the old Cathedral in St. Louis, Missouri." Much of Mr. Thomas' material was obtained from publications available at the Missouri Historical Society Library in St. Louis.

The January 1976 issue of *The Cypher* announced the program for a chapter meeting on February 3. David A. Porkola, Minister of Music at Grace United Methodist Church, gave a demonstration on the 1952 four manual Moeller organ, a presentation of the history of Grace Church pipe organs, and a tour inside the instrument with special notice to the open metal 32' Violone, the only one in St. Louis.

The feature of this issue was an up-dated list of extant tracker organs in Missouri. Many items bore question marks as to dates and in some cases identification of the builder and disposition of organs, indicating that the state affords a great deal of research opportunities by OHS members.

It was emphasized that national membership in OHS is a pre-requisite for local membership and that Chapter dues for the half year are \$2.50. It was also announced that subscriptions to *The Cypher* were available at \$1.50 for the half year (through July 1). All fees should be sent to:

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## Money Matters — Again!

### ... An Editorial

Well, you didn't ask for it, but — like "death and taxes" — we have to face the subject of finances every now and then. Sometimes this is our own little brainstorm, and other times it is due to pressure from Society officials. This time it is the latter because our National Council has proposed an increase in our annual dues. Our very capable Finance Chairman, Thomas W. Cunningham, reports that it costs the Society something over \$9.00 per year per member to maintain the several services the Society provides; and since the dues are currently \$7.50 per year we are losing money in our operations. The alternatives are then obvious: either we curtail some services and activities, or we increase the dues.

The Society started in 1956 with no funds. Those who were interested contributed various small amounts so that *THE TRACKER* could be mimeo-graphed and mailed. In our third year of operations, we established dues of \$3.00 per year and were able to undertake printed issues of *THE TRACKER*. (That eight-page edition mailed to less than 200 members cost just over \$100.00 - this 24-page edition mailed to over 800 members costs about \$1,000.00.)

In 1965 we raised the dues to \$5.00 per year, and in 1972 we went to \$7.50. The last increase was for the very good reason of providing funds for the Historic Organ Recital Series, an activity which has greatly increased our stature in the organ world and one we cannot afford to abandon.

You may well ask: but how have we balanced the budget? This has been possible through the great generosity of our super-members — those to whom the Society and its works are so important that they renew their membership with more than the regular dues by becoming Sustaining or Contributing members. Without them we could not have carried on to the present day.

Oddly enough, one membership category established as "Patron — \$100.00 per year" — has never been activated! Who is going to take the opportunity of becoming *the First Patron of OHS*?

It must not be forgotten that many OHS members and officials serve the Society in numberless ways without compensation of any kind. No member of the staff is paid for any services, and only a "widow's mite" is spent annually for secretarial assistance.

But to get back to the present crisis, it seems to us that two opportunities are constantly open to us. One is the matter of Foundation Grants which is a goldmine in more ways than one because every day one hears of such-and-such a grant for the study of far less important work than ours — the money is available to others, why not us? The other is the matter of a greatly increased enrollment of members. Over a year ago we asked for 1,000 members by 1976. We have not achieved that goal to date. Why? Because you — the vast majority of our membership — have not exerted the energy necessary to get new members of OHS.

Well, you didn't ask for it, but you haven't done anything about it, and the National Council's increase of dues *must* be accepted. So, smile and pay up, and keep OHS on a firm financial footing.

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FOR SALE-OHS Convention Programs, containing specifications and photos; Capital Dist., New York State 1967, Worcester, Mass. 1968, New York City 1969, Northern New York State 1970, Baltimore 1971, Central New Jersey 1973, Monodnock Reg., New Hampshire 1974. 50 cents per copy. Order from OHS, P.O. Box 209, Wilmington, OH 45177, enclosing payment.