

Unwanted Organs - an introduction



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A warm welcome to St Stephen's, Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead - for seven years my parish church and a landmark building in my daily life.



I fought for its preservation in several contexts and roles and this earned me a double-page spread in the *Hampstead & Highgate Express* and a reprimand from the Church Commissioners! However the building is still here ...

My first meeting with Martin Renshaw prompted me to read his breath-taking article in *BIOS Journal Volume 2009*, pp. 157-197, 'Uncertain times: politics and culture in England and Brittany, 1560-1660'.



I learned more than I had ever learned before about Thomas and Robert Dallam ...

The chamber organ at Hardmead, Buckinghamshire, is by J. Walker, 1837. The church is listed as Grade I and the organ listed by BIOS. The church belongs to the Friends of Friendless Churches.



It is impossible to over-estimate the good which has resulted from the establishment of the British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS) with its newsletters, its conferences, its ministry of encouragement to organs advisers wherever or whoever they may be, to organ builders of the present day, and for 'growing the knowledge' of organs through its scholarly Journal.

Organs as acknowledged cultural property:

It is encouraging that our conference today is attended by representatives of a wide range of cultural heritage organisations and representatives of most of the main denominations in England. The challenges and problems obtain equally in Scotland and Wales.

Organs are complicated as cultural heritage because they exhibit both tangible values – their design and craftsmanship - and intangible values – they are fashioned to emit beautiful sounds which when combined with the skill of a fine performer can give utterance to some of the most sublime music ever written.



A couple of days ago I received in the post the first edition of what I suspect is going to be an influential classic of conservation - a new publication, text by Matthew Slocombe, called *The SPAB approach to the conservation & care of old buildings*. Quite deliberately, as I was thinking about today, I read through it slowly and carefully substituting the word 'organs' for 'historic buildings'. It seemed to work remarkably well!

Here are the headings which is all we have time for at this moment but might discuss later on:

Regular maintenance

Understanding – ‘All conservation work involves decision-making. For these decisions to be well-considered, knowledge and understanding are essential.’

Context and continuity

Respect for age – think of Christ Church Spitalfields

Essential work only

Repair not conservation

Conservative repair

Fitting old to new

Materials – ‘A careful choice of materials is essential to the sympathetic and effective repair of old [organs].’

Proven methods

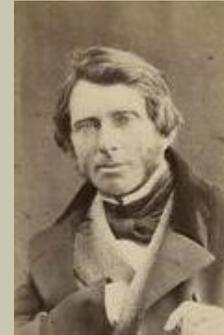
Craftsmanship and practical knowledge

Good new design to complement the old

Emergency work and a long-term view – ‘The Society has seen many examples where repair for re-use has been considered unviable at a certain point in time – usually by virtue of cost or surroundings – only to become a more attractive proposition at some later date.’

Sustainability and the SPAB approach – ‘Overall, the SPAB approach is about understanding, care and conservative repair. It is a simple message of sustainability.’

Passing on knowledge – ‘Passing on and developing knowledge is a vital part of the SPAB approach.’



For the last five years of my employed life I was Professor of Cultural Management at the Brandenburg Technical University, Cottbus, and so I know at first-hand how seriously historic organs are taken in Germany as well as in The Netherlands and in the Scandinavian countries.



Ottobeuren Abbey Church and the pilgrimage church of St Maria im Sand, Dettelbach, both in Bavaria, total works of art.



I would like to know more about how such protection is managed, monitored and honoured, but it has to be *more consistent* than the overall rather haphazard protection we have here – a certain amount of protection through the Faculty Jurisdiction, for Anglican churches, but no real protection for the organs in the churches of other denominations whether they are still subject to LBC or ‘exempt’ from LBC. If it is possible to contradict that then I shall be glad ...

In 1977 I founded the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields and right from the beginning – guided and enthused by Michael Gillingham, London Diocesan Organs Adviser – the restoration of the Richard Bridge organ was one of our most important goals, though we knew that it would be a long haul.

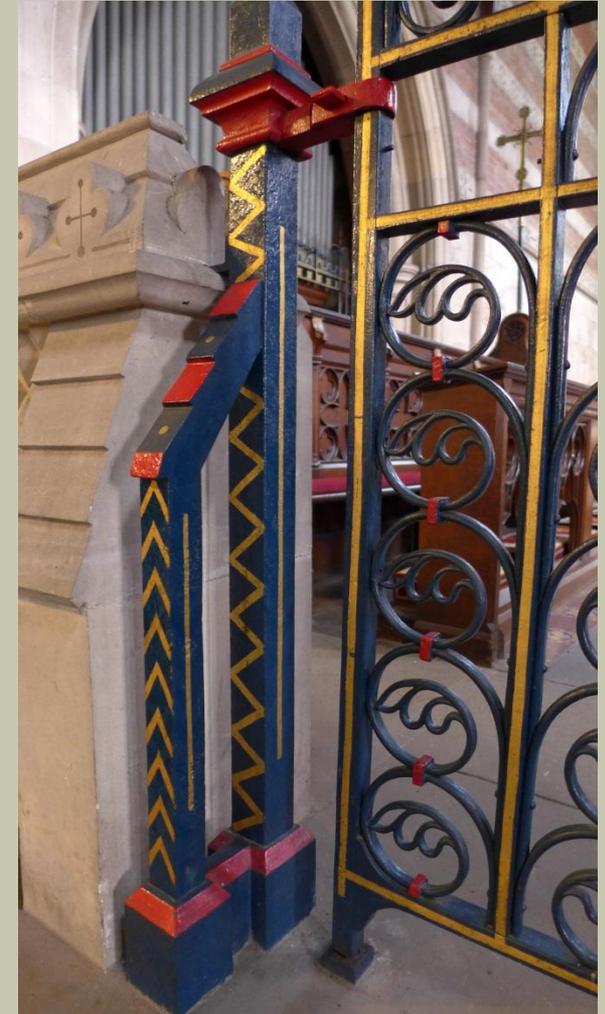


The organs in William Burges's Christ the Consoler, Skelton-on-Ure, near Ripon, and William Butterfield's Baldersby St James, also near Ripon, are vital to the character of their interiors. Each of these churches (and countless others) is a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.



Tonal beauty is related to another quality of the best in organ-building: consummate craftsmanship – but that does not mean just the case.

William Butterfield's Baldersby St James



In England, the survival of church organs before the Ecclesiological Movements emanating from Cambridge and Oxford from the 1840s onwards is comparatively rare. But from the mid-19thC onwards architects increasingly took an interest and a role in collaborating with organ builders.

We must also not forget that there are or were many culturally valuable instruments in houses great and small. In the 18th and 19th centuries an organ was almost *de rigeur* in country houses and many of them have survived in the houses for which they were designed or purchased.



The organ case designed by Robert Adam for The Wynnstay now in the National Museum of Wales. I show the silver, also designed by Robert Adam for the same patron, because I feel it is high time that *organs became more obviously mainstream*.

The listing of organs which has taken place, essentially by extremely knowledgeable volunteers, should become part of the *statutory protection of cultural heritage*. There should be a system of proactive protection for British organs just as there is for paintings and sculptures.

Furniture and fine works of craftsmanship generally are also not as protected as they surely ought to be. This is one of the justifications for the continuance of the Faculty Jurisdiction.



In lobbying for a step-change from the present unsatisfactory position we do need to make many more allies than perhaps we have at the moment: The Georgian Group; The Victorian Society; The Twentieth Century Society; SAVE Britain's Heritage; the professions of architects, art/architectural historians, engineers, conservators and others whose interventions could be critical in ensuring the preservation or appropriate treatment of organs when decisions are being made about their future.

We need to make knowledge about organs and their rich possibilities more 'mainstream' as a vital ingredient in our cultural heritage, for both their design and craftsmanship interest *and* their musical interest.

FRIEDRICH LADEGAST

Das Ladegast-Museum in St. Laurentius in Weißenfels

Friedrich Ladegast (1818 - 1905) gehört zu den großen Repräsentanten romantischer Orgelbaukunst im 19. Jahrhundert. Neben Heinrich Schütz und Novalis ist der weitberühmte Orgelbauer der dritte Große in der glanzvollen Kulturgeschichte der Stadt Weißenfels. In Ladegasts dort 1847 gegründeter Werkstatt entstanden in sechs Jahrzehnten rund 200 Instrumente, deren ausgezeichnete Fertigungsqualität und Klangschönheit Komponisten wie Franz Liszt, Julius Reubke und Max Reger begeisterten. Neben Wilhelm Sauer und Eberhard Friedrich Walcker gilt Ladegast als Schöpfer der Monumentalorgel deutscher Romantischer Prägung im 19. Jahrhundert.

Von seinen heute noch erhaltenen Orgeln stehen die meisten und bedeutendsten im Kerngebiet seiner Tätigkeit. Im Süden des heutigen Bundeslandes Sachsen-Anhalt. In Weißenfels und Umgebung sind zahlreiche schöne Orgeln des Meisters im Originalzustand erhalten geblieben. Das 2010 in der Laurentiuskirche eingerichtete Ladegast-Museum will das Andenken des Meisters in der Stadt seines Wirkens lebendig erhalten und das Verständnis für Orgelbaukunst und -musik der romantischen Epoche vertiefen helfen.



Friedrich Ladegast



Orgelpfeifen



Historische Orgelkonsole für Orgel



Ladegastorgel in Meissen (Burg) Dresden





St. Laurentius mit Ladegast-Organ

Die Sammlung ist hoch im Aufbau und soll so auch von den Besuchern wahrgenommen werden. Gezeigt werden neben der Ladegast-Organ auf der Westempore Zeugnisse von Friedrich Ladegasts Biografie und seiner Weißenfelser Werkstatttätigkeit, sein originales Orgelbauerwerkzeug und Pfeifen aus Ladegasts Produktion, außerdem Spieltisch und Windlade des absolut letzten Neubaus der Werkstatt Ladegast, sowie historische Prospektzeichnungen von Ladegast-Organen. Den Besuchern stehen darüber hinaus verschiedene orgelkundliche Funktionsmodelle, sowie ein spielbares Organ positiv zur Verfügung.



KONTAKT

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T s zu Weißenfels

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St. Laurentius mit Ladegast-Organ

KONTAKT



In Germany this summer I was delighted to find in Weissenfels, which I reached on my bicycle, that there was a museum – in a former church – devoted to the life, work and significance of a local organ builder, Friedrich Ladegast (1818-1905). There is no such museum in the UK.

There might be some comparison here with the British Horological Institute established in a country house, near Newark, Nottinghamshire.



Short and long training courses take place, there is an outstanding study collection of time-pieces, and there are Open Days twice a year. Faculty documents relating to organs?

I have praised the scholarship of the *BIOS Journal* but we need to promote and encourage articles about organs in places where non-specialists will also see them, for example in *Country Life*.



Chris Bragg and Matthew Hyne have published a fabulous article about the Hess organ in Mount Stuart House, Isle of Bute, but such an article in *Country Life*, *The Field* or the *Saturday Guardian* – why not? – would reach many more people.

Another initiative which Chris Bragg shares with his colleague at the University of St Andrews, Tom Wilkinson the University Organist, is the holding of a summer school on Organs – including the study of authentic instruments, organ-playing techniques and organ music.



An untouched organ by a good maker is one of the most satisfying discoveries any of us can make. We owe it to those instruments and to the future to fight for the preservation of all organs which have retained their integrity, and to encourage both understanding and enjoyment of them.



The Faculty Jurisdiction – this is one of two potentially tricky topics which I have been asked to introduce. There will be opportunity to tease out more detail later in the discussion groups if anyone wishes or has wisdom and experience to share.

A very short history:

1. This is a system of diocesan control over its parish churches which dates from at least the mid-13th century – I tend to think of it as having such interest and antiquity that it can itself be regarded as an aspect of cultural heritage.
2. When the break from the spiritual and legal control of Rome occurred during the reign of Henry VIII many aspects of governance were simply carried over, two of them being the granting of Faculties by a lawyer, holding the office of Diocesan Chancellor, appointed by the Bishop, and another was the idea of Canon Law to control the behaviour of the clergy and to enshrine an agreed idea of how churches should be ordered and what they should contain.
3. During the 16-18th centuries the Faculty Jurisdiction was pretty well honoured. The Faculty documents - which it is the responsibility of the Chancellor's court officer, The Registrar, to preserve (generally by depositing them in the County Record Office) – are a superb source for information about the past. Canon Basil Clarke's book *Building the 18thC Church* is a fine example of what an extensive trawl through Faculty documents can produce.
4. Peter Burman's pair of *Country Life* articles on the church of Puddletown, in Dorset, re-ordered in 1633.

5. During the 19thC and for much of the 20thC the steady trickle of Faculties became a positive flood – extensive church restoration initiatives as a result of the church renewal movements which came out of the Cambridge and Oxford Movements; and in the 20thC – amongst other factors – there were waves of memorialization following the two catastrophic World Wars. Organs were themselves quite often given or restored as a memorial. Stained glass windows, finely lettered memorial tablets, sculpture, furniture, organs – all were authorized by Faculties.

6. Chancellors have the same exalted status as High Court judges. Many cathedrals have spaces which were set aside to be used as the Consistory Court. But during the past half century it has become common to hold the courts in the church to which the applications appertain.

7. The experience of Sherban Cantecuzino during his time as Secretary of the Royal Fine Art Commission ... The Worshipful Sir David Calcutt QC ... the role of fashion ... Basil Clarke's experience as Secretary of the Oxford Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches.

8. DACs were established as a result of the report of the Dibdin Commission (Sir Lewis Dibdin, Dean of the Arches) in 1913. Archbishop Randall Davidson stood up in the House of Lords the previous year and undertook to give the Faculty Jurisdiction a thorough dusting down as an alternative to churches being scheduled as Ancient Monuments. Only 'ancient churches' were then thought to be of any value. The report was commissioned from Sir Lewis Dibdin and in the *Ancient Monuments (Consolidation & Amendment) Act 1913* enshrined in law the principal of the so-called Ecclesiastical Exemption.



9. We should not forget the *Inspection of Churches Measure* (1955). I believe that the principle and good practice of quinquennial inspection should be more clearly extended to organs.

10. Following the second World War there were gradual 'tinkerings' with the Faculty Jurisdiction, new *Rules* (1964) were produced, probably this was when the Archdeacon's Certificate idea was elaborated in legislation: and then there was the *Faculty Jurisdiction Commission* chaired by the then Bishop of Chichester, which sat for several years (I was one of its two 'Assessors') and produced comprehensive re-workings of the ways in which in future the control should be exercised over changes and introductions to churches, churchyards and cathedrals.



I have come to the conclusion, after years of sitting on DACs and FACs and on the committees of various heritage bodies (SAVE, SPAB, Georgian Group, Vic Soc Buildings Committee, London Committee of English Heritage, Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland, HLF Historic Buildings & Land Panel), that there is no perfect system for protecting cultural heritage, and that is probably true for any country as well as any system.



There is no substitute for the commitment and involvement of deeply knowledgeable people who are prepared to expend a good deal of energy and watchfulness, frequently without any kind of recompense, except for that of knowing that something bad was prevented or something good was enacted.

‘Watchfulness’ is perhaps a good note to end on – it is a very Ruskinian word for one thing – but in my book watchfulness must be followed by action. Martin and I have several times recently discussed what that action might be. I believe that some very good ideas are going to come out of the case histories which we shall start to hear about in a moment, and in our discussion groups this afternoon.



But I do commend the model of SAVE, which I was deeply involved with right from the start, and is how the founding of the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields came about. We found, initially to our surprise, that if we sent a press release – well-written, well-argued – to local, regional and national papers about some building which was threatened with demolition or some other kind of wrong action, with a good photograph or two, then almost invariably it would be published. REMEMBER – ORGANS ARE TO BECOME ‘MAINSTREAM’!

ADDENDUM on the 'Ecclesiastical Exemption' and sources of official information and advice: By the 1960s and 1970s Ecclesiastical Exemption had become the routine excuse for the UK Government not to give 'State Aid for Churches in Use'.

In 1977 there was a major exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum called *Change & Decay: the future of our churches*. The organisers were Marcus Binney and myself. We had a two-year lead in time, a full-time research assistant, a generous budget and a superb designer, Barry Mazur. We also put together the 'book of the exhibition', which had a chapter on organs by Michael Gillingham, and carried out a sustained research project which was published as a book called *Chapels & Churches – who cares*.

Taken together, with the exhibition and the two books making such an impact, the Government – to its credit – reacted. In a statement in the House of Lords, the then Minister for the Heritage, Baroness Birk, announcing that the Government would immediately set up the machinery for giving State Aid to churches of architectural or historic merit *in use*. The Government was already supporting the Redundant Churches Fund (now the Churches Conservation Trust, by now one of the most important heritage organisations in the UK).

The legislation for grant-aiding historic buildings in use (originally only secular) specified that the buildings had to be 'outstanding'. In the religious context the churches and chapels considered grant-worthy would not only be those of the Church of England – we had moved beyond 'ancient-ness'.

By many twists and turns we reached a position where a number of denominations agreed that they wished to remain exempt from listed building control, and they were and are:

Church of England

Church in Wales

Methodists

United Reform Church

Roman Catholics

Baptists

As Matthew Saunders - a key figure for many years in the church care and preservation world - put it to me in a recent email:

‘They are exempt not from the need to seek planning permission but from ‘Heritage’ consents, most obviously LBC. This is subject to irregular reviews but is premised on their having internal systems of control that are better or the equivalent of Local Planning Authority control.’

Naturally I also consulted my successor at the Church of England's Church Buildings Council, Becky Clark, and David Knight. There is an article by David Knight in the same issue of the *BIOS Journal* with the article by Martin Renshaw that I mentioned earlier and he is the Church Buildings Council spokesman on organs.

I know he is very sorry that he cannot be here today. I asked him three questions and he gave some very helpful answers but the gist of the answers is contained in a whole series of policy documents and guidance notes which are available online:

Organs, one of a long list under 'Caring for your Treasures'

Guidance note on 'Repair or replace?' ['This guidance note will help you considering whether to repair or to replace your church organ']

Guidance Note on Redundant Organs, to which is appended a 'Memorandum of Agreement with the British Institute of Organ Studies'

Closed & Closing Churches

Faculty Rules 2015

Online Faculty System

The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) (England) Order 2010

I have printed off copies and have a set with me but the best thing I can recommend to anyone who has not done so already would be to explore the very well organized ChurchCare website. I conclude with two quotations from David Knight's letter of 14 September 2017:

1. 'If you wanted a thought from me for the conference I am forming the opinion that organs are protected more by their use and being valued than by anything else'; and
2. 'There is quite a lot of legislative protection for organs – on the whole used effectively. The context in which organs are sometimes lost to 'wider needs' is complex as the way churches are used develops. From what I have seen – having now visited nearly every DAC in England – trouble is taken to get this right most of the time.'