
The Windline

Volume 15 - Number 4

A Quarterly Issue

Austin Organs official newsletter to our representatives and friends
Windline Staff: A.Q. Isaacson, Editor; N.J. Sansone, Word Processor

December 1997

News Flash!

Bruce Buchanan to Become Tonal Director

Our adorable, talented, revered, venerable, respected and beloved David Broome has announced his plan to retire, effective mid-1998. This is sad news indeed, especially to those of us who have come to know Dave as a trusted friend, confidante and advisor, as well as the master craftsman/artiste he is. A future *Windline* issue will most assuredly be devoted to the one and only Mr. David A.J. Broome.



course, soon he will be transplanted!) His accomplishments and experience can probably not be rivaled by any one organ-builder alive today, and we are extremely fortunate and grateful that he has agreed to take the position.

A brief summary of Bruce Buchanan's accomplishments and experiences:

Henry Willis & Sons Ltd.
Apprenticeship - 5 years

Assistant Superintendent of works and reed voicer - 2 years

Manager, Dublin Branch - 7 years

Inspector, estimator, voicer, finisher, negotiator - 9 years

But, now, let's introduce his chosen successor, Mr. Bruce Q. Buchanan...

Bruce makes his home in Bury St. Edmunds, England, with his wife Helen. (Of

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J.W. Walker & Sons Ltd. - 16 years

Director & Archivist; overseeing restorations, servicing & overhauls and tonal finishings.

Mr. Buchanan also holds many distinguished positions and memberships in several British organbuilding societies, as well as being a published author.

Bruce is a real find, and I know all will welcome him into the "Austin Family" warmly and openly, and that everyone will do their utmost to ensure a smooth transition. With any luck, he will be a full-time member of the team this summer.

NOTE: DON'T PANIC!!! Dave plans to stay on and voice reeds (at least part-time definitely), as well as help with the transition... so those famous Broome Trumpets can and will still be heard the world over! And, don't forget about Dave's son Christopher, who is coming along splendidly on reed voicing!

New Arrival

Congratulations to Rafael Ramos, our Mill Room Foreman, and his wife, Mariol, on the arrival of their new baby boy, Rafael Jose Ramos.

Baby Ramos entered the world on November 11, 1997, weighing in at 8 pounds 4 ounces and measuring 20 inches.



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Opus 2777 A Piece of Heaven... Palm Beach, Florida

Congratulations to our Florida-Georgia reps, Thomas-Pierce, Inc. (Thomas R. Thomas and Hugh Pierce) on securing a Letter of Intent for a new 99 rank instrument for The Episcopal Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea in Palm Beach, Florida.

Formal contract signing is scheduled for early January, 1998.

The instrument will replace an ailing Schlicker Organ. A large Antiphonal will be located at the rear of the church with a duplicate console.

More information on this exciting new project in future issues of "The Windline."

Dr. Ockse Visits Again

We were once again privileged to host Orpha Ockse for approximately three weeks this past October (leaf-peeping season) while she continues her research for the Austin book.

Her guess is that it will be another two years before it is actually "out there." The previewed text is absolutely fascinating, and some of the photos she has come up with are equally so!

Here's to hoping the two years pass by quickly!!

The AJO Conference

by Randy Thrift



Maine. I had not seen him in at least 30 years. His father was our Moravian minister in Winston-Salem in the 1950s.

The American Institute of Organbuilders conference was held in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia October 5-9, 1997.

This was my first AIO. What an appropriate setting to attend for the first time. The weather was beautiful. The accommodations were comfortable and convenient. The food was surprisingly good too.

My cohort, Patrick Donnelly and I met Fred Heffner and Mike Herzog the first night there.

I have had business around the Tidewaters area for many years, and I have stayed in Williamsburg many times. My family and I have done the tourist "thing" several times. While this is very enjoyable and educational, this conference was a unique experience. We were given the opportunity to see and hear several historic organs as well as contemporary organs. We heard a Handel concerto with organ and orchestral instrument.

The lectures and discussions were interesting, for the most part. I especially enjoyed the sessions by John Watson, Conservator of Musical Instruments, The Williamsburg Foundation. We were given the opportunity to tour the conservation laboratory and see many reproductions of early keyboard instruments, including a sackbutt. This certainly is not a pretty name, but has a curiously strange sounds.

I met an old friend who is an organbuilder in

I also met some people whose names I recognized from being in this business for so many years. A few even said they were glad to finally meet me. Imagine that!

The exhibitors did an outstanding job of displaying their latest technologies. It was fun to talk to the people who supply us year after year. I even learned about some new products and new companies.

I had missed seeing Don Austin at the reps seminar last year. So, it was a pleasure to see him and Mrs. Austin.

I am impressed enough with the AIO to want to join and go to another conference.

Smokey

No, its not a new stop, it's a new friend! Smokey, a former street urchin, has been adopted by the factory and can now be officially named "mascot". He won his way into our hearts from the parking lot, and has been checked, vetted and plumped up! He has been living the high life ever since as official office watch-cat!



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A Chance to Rescue History

The fundraising mailer of The Curtis Organ Restoration Society is enclosed with each copy of this *Windline* issue.

As reported in last quarter's issue, PENN has provided funding for pipe removal and structure protection. The Curtis Organ Restoration Society has taken on the challenge of raising the necessary funds to restore this magnificent treasure to first-class condition. Approximately one-half million dollars will be needed to re-leather, rebuild, and repair. The Curtis Organ (Opus 1416, also known as the Sesquicentennial Exposition Organ) is truly one of the last unsullied examples of American Symphonic Organ building. We are fortunate (and grateful) that Austin Organ Company was the chosen builder. This legacy can, will and must be preserved!

View The Curtis Organ website at:

www.upenn.edu/curtisorgan



Thomas W. Crossan, New Rep

Thomas W. Crossan, one half of long-time Austin Service Reps, Crossan-Savage, Inc. has taken on Eastern Pennsylvania and part of New Jersey as sales territory effective immediately.

As mentioned, Tom and partner Allen Savage have been longtime service representatives for Austin, also "going on the road" for installations, rebuilds, etc. He is a native of the Philadelphia area, and is certainly familiar with all of the local goings-on. Tom and Allen both worked with Brant Duddy for many years before branching out on their own.

Tom is also in charge of on-site work for Austin at Irvine Auditorium at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia (Sesquicentennial Organ, Opus 1416), probably one of the largest and most exciting organ projects in progress today.

If you want to contact Tom, here is the information:

Thomas Crossan
Cedars Road
Cedars, PA 19423
610/584-0243
610/584-9048 (fax)
e-mail: tomwhann@aol.com

Reminder....

A skeleton crew will be in the office over the holidays. Please put off any non-urgent matters until afterwards.

[Our goal for 1998 - Opus 2790!]

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Moraga, California

By Alan D. McNeely



Danielson Organ

Dedicated - Opus 2775

by A. McNeely & K. Austin

My 12 year old daughter Kelly, my partner, Paul Joseph and I spent a pleasant 13 days removing the old Erben, Murray-Harris, Swain and Keates organ from the balcony of the Chapel at St. Mary's College. The original Erben organ was built in 1857, and had the distinction of traveling by ship from NYC down and around Cape Horn, S.A. then up the Pacific Coast before its arrival at the Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. In 1902, the organ was moved to St. Mary's College by the Murray-Harris firm, who installed new tubular mechanisms, and made several additions. By the late 1950s, the organ was unreliable and was electrified by the Swain and Keates firm of Berkeley. Many original Erben pipes remain and will be incorporated into the new Austin organ, including a very large scaled wood Pedal Open Diapason 16'. The original Erben casework will be extended to house the new organ, which will enjoy fine placement in the rear gallery in the large chapel. Acoustics will be greatly improved by a new ceiling and tile floor to be completed by the summer of 1998.

The beautiful chapel is used for daily college masses, concerts and also is home to an Episcopal Congregation. Catholic organist Brother Martin Yribarren and Episcopal organist-choirmaster Bob Meluish were deeply impressed with the two recent California installations and are looking forward to the large new organ and the tonal design of David Broome!



Installation and finishing has been completed for this organ. The dedication was held Sunday, December 14th at 2:30 p.m. beginning with a short service of Dedication and Blessing by The Right Reverend Daniel Hart, Bishop of the Norwich, Connecticut Diocese. Mr. Ezequiel Menendez, of St. Ann's Church, Avon, Connecticut, will play several pieces and two Advent hymns will be sung.

The organ enjoys ideal placement, freestanding in the rear gallery of this large church. Some of the ranks from the old 1910 H. Hall & Company organ were completely rebuilt and revoiced, and incorporated into a new specification to serve the musical requirements of this large congregation. Of special note is the very fine new Austin Trumpet 8, which was voiced by Chris Broome. This stop works exceptionally well as a chorus or solo stop.

The church is delighted with the completed organ and the coordinating Priest, Father Brian, really is enjoying the sequencer we hooked up to the multiplex. Secretly, we digitally recorded Father Brian playing the organ, and after he finished, we played it back for him, much to his enjoyment.

The old Hall instrument had been silent for over 20 years, the music at the church then being provided by two used "toasters." The full organ completely fills the building, yet there is ample variety of soft stops to be used during the masses.

Thanks and special acknowledgement to St. James' organ consultant, William F. Czelusniak of Czelusniak et Dugal, Inc., Northampton, MA



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Church Welcomes Return of an Old Friend

from the Belmont Banner-Oct. 22, 1997

An old friend is returning to Belmont's First Presbyterian Church.

The church's 1928 vintage Austin pipe organ has been completely restored and enlarged, culminating a project in the works for several years.

A dedicatory recital will be held at the church on Sunday, November 2, at 7:30 p.m. Performing will be pianist David Lowry, who is professor emeritus of music at Winthrop University and Charlotte symphony trumpeter Michael Miller. Lowry and Miller have performed programs for trumpet and organ in Charlotte, Savannah, Tryon and Cullowhee.

"The organ sounds bigger and better. I couldn't believe it was the same instrument," said First Presbyterian organist and music director Suzanne M. Fairbairn. "It's just like it went away to a spa and came back totally rejuvenated."

About three years ago, a church committee began weighing options on how to deal with a fine old instrument that was beginning to show its age.

Originally intended for a church sanctuary one-third the size of the present building, which was completed in 1966, the organ had served the congregation well over the years.

But problems began showing up - everything from sticking notes to a weakened and less than clear sound.

The committee decided several approaches, according to Chairman David Hall. These included a minimal amount of repairs to at least make it playable to the possibility of buying a new instrument.

In time, however, the committee agreed to embark on a project of cleaning and rebuilding the original instrument. It was the first major overhaul of the organ since the mid-1960s.

"You could never get the quality of pipes we already had," Hall said. "Our pipes were beautiful. We had too much good stuff. And we used 90 percent of the old equipment. Nobody had a desire to throw it out. It was too good an instrument."

The company selected for the work was the original builder - Austin Organs, Inc. of Hartford, Connecticut.

Technicians stripped out all the old parts, including 1,600 pipes which ranged from pencil size to 16 feet high. Some of the pipes were replaced or enlarged and 1,000 new pipes were added.

18 months later, when all the pieces were reassembled, a new, room-filling sound emerged. Last Wednesday, Fred Heffner, tonal finisher of Austin Organs, Inc. and Randy Thrift, representative of the company were sending the organ through its tests.

For long-time church members like Hall, the organ restoration marks a significant landmark in the history of First Presbyterian.

His mother, Mary Hall, was a part-time organist at the church. He grew up hearing the instrument fill the sanctuary with music at worship service, weddings and funerals.

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"It's always been an important part of the worship of this church," said Hall, 59. He's glad to see the organ coming back. So is Fairbairn.

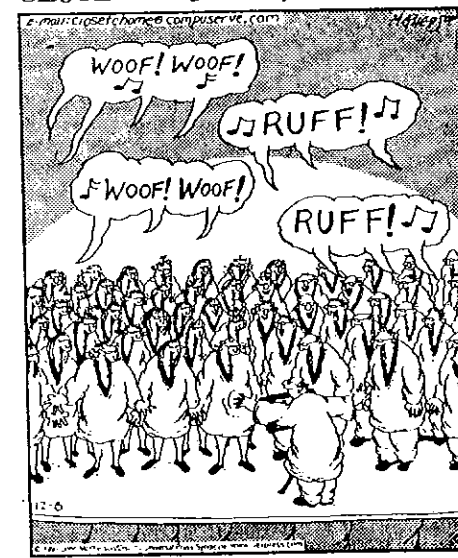
"It sounds very clear now," she said. "And very bright with a little bit of a bite and living presence."

"The organ sets the mood for the church and expresses a wide range of emotions."

The public is invited to the dedicatory recital on November 2 at the church located at 102 S. Central Avenue in Belmont. A reception will be given by the Presbyterian Women following the program.

The recital will include works by French composer Cesar Franck, Bach, Purcell and Hovhannes.

CLOSE TO HOME JOHN McPHERSON



Hoping to break out of their traditional mold, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir performs the barking dogs version of "Jingle Bells."

Recent TV Publicity

As a side benefit of sponsoring the first prize in the Albert Schweitzer Organ Competition/USA, the local TV show "Crossroads" came to our humble factory and filmed a piece about organ manufacturers. It came out quite well, and certainly pushed *Austin - Austin - Austin!!*

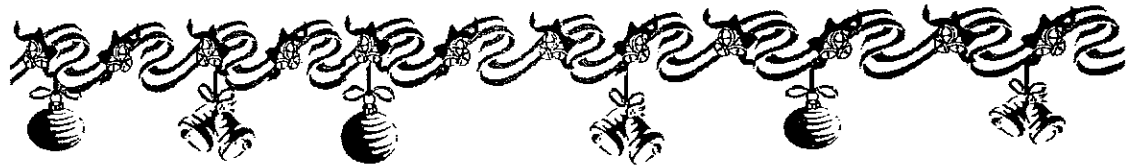
On another day, the local CBS affiliate did live on-site segments throughout the morning during "CBS This Morning's" local newsbreak times. Casting, voicing, erecting and pipemaking were all featured.

In all probability, the Schweitzer Competition in 1998 will bring even more attention to the company, perhaps even on a national level.



WFSB-TV3's Nancy Aborn with David G. Johnston

*You deal with too much aggravation
While trying to give presentations
You sell all the stops
And we think you're tops
Our gratuities close to elation!*



Happy Holidays
from all of us here at
AUSTIN ORGANS, INC.

