MUSIC OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY VILLAGE CHURCH

By The REV. NOEL BOSTON

The title, 'Music of the eighteenth century village church' needs definition. It has been said that the eighteenth century is the period which stretches from the landing of William and Mary to the Battle of Waterloo. The musical epoch about which I want to speak is clearly defined; although it is essentially a product of the eighteenth century, it cannot be fitted into the period I have just mentioned. This fashion in village church music may be said to have emerged somewhere about the middle of the century. It is impossible to associate its beginnings with any particular event; its termination, on the other hand, is due to two events; the importation of the harmonium, and the almost universal adoption of the hymn book with printed tunes. Thus, the epoch which, since it emerged about 1750, I have termed the eighteenth century, stretches, in reality, from about 1750 to the widespread introduction of harmoniums into this country and the advent of a popular hymn book in the 1850s, culminating in the publication of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in 1861. The eighteenth century proper, containing as it does the names of Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, Croft, Weldon, Greene and Arne, was for music rather more than what the sixteenth century was for English poetry and drama. These famous names are as well known as those of Adam and Vanbrugh in architecture, Reynolds, Gainsborough and Romney in painting, or Johnson, Pope and Cowper in literature. But, while Adam was designing mansions, lesser men were building humbler homes, in their way no less charming; while the beauties of the time flocked to Reynolds's studio in Leicester Square, in the provincial towns painters of very real merit set up their easels in the withdrawing rooms of prosperous merchants, and while Johnson was providing material for the faithful Boswell, in distant Norfolk the Rector of Weston-Longville was meticulously writing up that diary which we now know as 'Parson Woodforde'. Inevitably we tend to learn our history from the great names of the time.

We are to examine, in the present analysis, the music of the period; we leave the Cathedral and the Assembly Room, we are going out of the cities and towns where fashionable and exceedingly competent musicians flourished, we are leaving,

if I may use the expression, the palaces of music to take a look at its cottages.

I want to make it quite clear that the church music about which I am going to speak is the real village church music. A great deal is known about the Cathedral music of the time, and the way in which the services were taken ; rather less is known about the music of the town church ; but what never seems to be sufficiently realized is the complete divergence between the music of the Cathedral and the great church and that of the village church. To-day, when almost every parish church endeavours, with varying success, to copy cathedral music, it is difficult to realize the cleavage which existed a hundred years ago.

With very few exceptions, only one part of the service afforded an opportunity of singing, and that was the metrical Psalms. Normally, the service began with one ; another followed where the rubric directs the anthem to be sung ' In Quires and Places where they sing ', and a third before the sermon gave the parson an opportunity of slipping into the vestry to exchange surplice for gown.

The words of the metrical Psalms are too well known to need much comment. Briefly, their story is this : hymns went soon after the Reformation, when the prevalent Genevan cry was for the Bible and the Bible only. Henry VIII's Groom of the Wardrobe, a certain Thomas Sternhold, helped later by John Hopkins, tried to get over the difficulty by re-writing the Psalms in metre and rhyme, and it was these metrical Psalms which were used in our English church almost exclusively till, in the year 1696, the Poet Laureate, Dr. Nahum Tate, with the assistance of Dr. Nicholas Brady, afterwards Vicar of Stratford-on-Avon, published what was called *A New Version of Metrical Psalms.* Henceforward, until the re-introduction of hymns in the nineteenth century, it was these two versions which provided the words to which the tunes were sung. Words and music were not wedded to each other as they are to-day. The words were published, the tunes, as often as not, were in manuscript collections. Some of them are well known to us, such as' Helmsley ', which we now sing to ' Lo, He comes with clouds descending '.

Very many are still in use in our churches. Sometimes the works of great composers were adapted. The music of the chorus ' The heavens are telling ' from Haydn's ' Creation ' has been squeezed and compressed into a tune of four lines. Such were the words and such the tunes which were in vogue during the period which we have under consideration. It was a great

period of tunes and, although many of them seem incredibly florid to the modern ear, it did produce a large proportion of our finest hymn tunes.

We may divide the village church music of this period into four categories: that which was sung unaccompanied, the note being sounded on the pitch-pipe, that which was accompanied by the village band, that which was accompanied by the small organ and that which was sung to the music produced by the barrel organ.

The pitch-pipe is just a small wooden organ pipe of the stopped variety, the stopper being pulled out or pushed in to vary the note. The stopper has marked on it the names of the notes. The pipe illustrated (fig. 1)[1] certainly belongs to our

FIG. 1. PITCH-PIPE (15 IN. LONG)

period, and the man from whom it was bought said that it originally came from Landbeach Church in Cambridgeshire. There are a great many still about, some dating from the seventeenth century. Not only was the pitch-pipe the simplest and cheapest way of starting the singing, but it also had a doctrinal significance. There were those who objected to accompanied music, and especially to organ accompaniment, as being Popish. For a detailed account of this controversy I would draw attention to a little book entitled *A Treatise Concerning the Lawfulness of Instrumental Musick in Holy Places*, by Henry Dodwell, M.A., published in 1700.

The pitch-pipe for this reason was especially popular among Protestant Nonconformists in England and among the Presbyterians in Scotland. At the Old Meeting House in Norwich is preserved a pitch-pipe which is certainly of the early eighteenth century and which tradition says, though apparently without proof, belonged to Thomas Cromwell, the Protector's cousin, who was once Minister of a chapel which stood on the site of the present Meeting House, which was built in 1693. It may not be irrelevant to quote the following extract from the *Scottish Magazine* for 1755, which is copied in Dr. Scholes's *The Oxford Companion to Music*, which runs as follows:

> 'As the tune must begin on a pitch neither too high for the tenor and other parts ascending to the highest notes

[1] For the drawings of Figs. 1-7, I am indebted to Mr. R. Moore.

the tune requires, nor too low for the bass, the leader must begin with striking such a sound as will answer this end. With this all the performers join in unison ; and then the several parts ascend or descend to the notes upon which the respective parts of the tune begin, and after a little pause proceed to the tunes. This is called *pitching*.

'As it requires great practice and skill, all at once, and without premeditation, to strike a sound precisely proper for the pitch, and in order to ascertain this in the beginning, and before such expert performers can be had in a parish as are capable of doing it, an instrument is used commonly called a *pitch-pipe*, which, by moving a slider properly divided, gives all the notes, with their subdivisions, which are proper for the *tenor-part* [i.e. the part with the tune itself]. Upon this the leader gives one sound, acute or grave as the tune requires ; with which all the performers immediately strike in ; and the instrument is laid aside. Those who are offended at this (as a gentleman observed upon hearing the objection) might as well be offended at a parson's hemming to clear his throat before he begins, which is often done by some precentors with many affected airs.'

But villages which were keen on their music were not satisfied with a pitch-pipe. Generally speaking, anyone who possessed and could play a musical instrument was encouraged to bring it along to church. Thus it is impossible to lay down rules as to the composition of a village band. The fiddle, 'cello and bass were very often used. At Berkswell in Warwickshire the old 'cello is still hung in the South gallery, and the ecclesiastical museum in St. Peter Hungate Church in Norwich contains several string instruments from church bands, notably a double bass from Barsham in Suffolk. Of the wind instruments, the most popular were the clarinet, bassoon and serpent.

It is interesting to note that, when Canon K. E. McDermott made his detailed study of village church music in Sussex, he was able to find still existing memories of twenty-two village orchestras with bassoons, one with five and another with no less than nine ; fifty-seven had clarinets, but only three oboes, one of which was at West Tarring, where a fine set of instruments still remains. I once discovered an eighteenth century oboe in the tiny church of Efenechtyd, near Ruthin. Clarinets and flutes are fairly common, as are flageolets, the last particularly in the midlands. Double flageolets are less common. A very fine set of church wood wind of the late eighteenth century was, and I sincerely hope still is, preserved in the

Birmingham and Midland Institute. These originally came from Shareshill. At St. Peter Hungate is a set from Gressenhall in Norfolk and indeed such instruments are to be met with in most counties. It would, no doubt, have been desirable to have made some attempt at a list, but wartime travel difficulties have precluded such a task.

I propose to describe certain instruments dating from about 1790 to 1800. They are the flageolet, the double flageolet, the clarinet, flute, piccolo, bassoon and serpent. The flageolet and clarinet illustrated in figs. 2 and 5 were sold to me as those originally used in Hindlip Church in Gloucestershire. I have no proof of this, nor any reason to doubt it.

The flageolet, or English flute, with its six holes on top and one beneath, played a very important part in the eighteenth century. It is, of course, a development of an instrument which had been in use since time immemorial, and is the immediate successor of the old recorder. The particular instrument illustrated here belongs to the latter part of the century. One way of dating these instruments is to observe the keys. In the earlier ones these are very few and almost invariably of a square shape. The makers of this flageolet (fig. 2) are Goulding

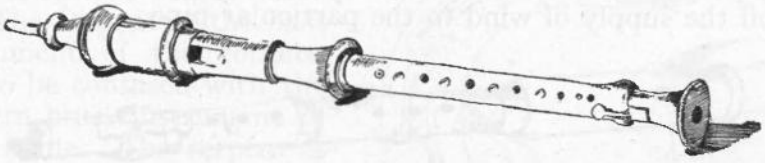


FIG. 2. FLAGEOLET (16 IN. LONG)

and Co. of London. The rather windy flutey tone of the recorder is entirely absent. It is a very finished tone and has affinities with the reed or even string tone, although the principle is that of the whistle or organ pipe. It is possible to obtain a complete chromatic scale on these instruments by means of crafty fingering. The flageolet is not a very difficult instrument to play, although to play it in keys other than its open key does require considerable skill.

From early times the idea of playing two flutes at once had occurred to men, and in one of the spandrels of the rood screen

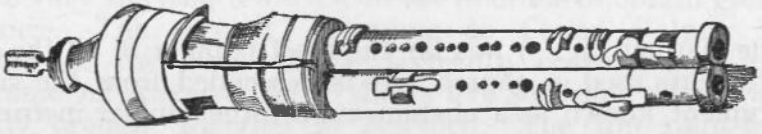


FIG. 3. DOUBLE FLAGEOLET ($18\frac{3}{4}$ IN. LONG)

at Dickleburgh in South Norfolk can be seen a little man busily engaged in playing two pipes at once. Dumbleby, the pipe maker, once showed Mr. Pepys, as he said, ' a fashion of having two pipes of the same note fastened together so that I can play on one and will echo it on the other, which is mighty pretty '. Towards the end of the eighteenth century pipe makers began to experiment with pipes of different notes, and thus evolved the double and even the triple flageolet. The most famous makers of these double flageolets were Simpson and Bainbridge. Instruments by these makers are usually of a very fine tone indeed, and when they first appeared commanded exorbitant prices. The instrument illustrated in fig. 3 is a very perfect specimen of a double flageolet by Simpson. In spite of its age it might, from all appearances, have been made yesterday. It is only when it is heard that the beauty and mellowness of its tone betokens the master who died nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. In this instrument the one pipe is tuned a third below the other. The left-hand pipe normally takes the melody, and has six holes. The right-hand pipe has but four holes and any piper will at once see the possibilities and also the difficulties of performing upon this instrument. Either of the pipes can be cut out at will by keys which, when pressed, cut off the supply of wind to the particular pipe.

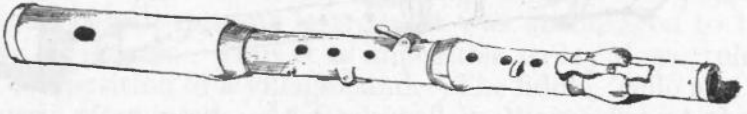


FIG. 4. FLUTE (2 FT. LONG)

It must not be thought, however, that all the wind instruments of the period under consideration were of the curious sorts now virtually extinct. There were transverse flutes (fig. 4), oboes, clarinets and bassoons.

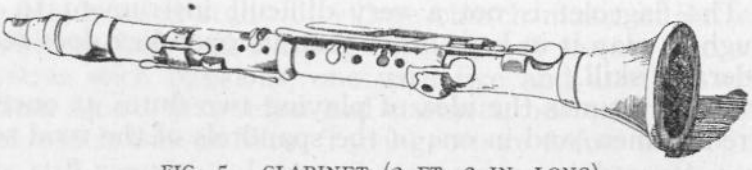


FIG. 5. CLARINET (2 FT. 2 IN. LONG)

The clarinet (fig. 5) was far the most popular of all the wind instruments used in church. It is descended from the simple instrument known as a chalumeau, a rather vulgar instrument about which very little is known. Between the years 1690 and

1700, however, one, Denner, an instrument maker of Nuremberg, seems to have been responsible for the first clarinets, while the first mention of the instrument in any score is in 1720, when it is named in a Mass by J. A. J. Faber, an Antwerp organist. It was used in oratorio in the Haymarket Theatre in 1756, and the band of the Honourable Artillery Company of London had clarinets as early as 1762.

There remain the transverse flutes, the serpent and the bassoon. Although the early English flute was a recorder type of instrument, the transverse or modern type of flute became enormously popular in the eighteenth century.

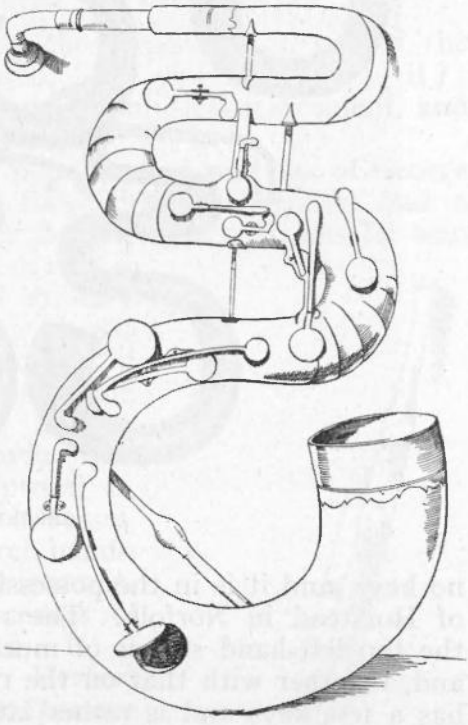
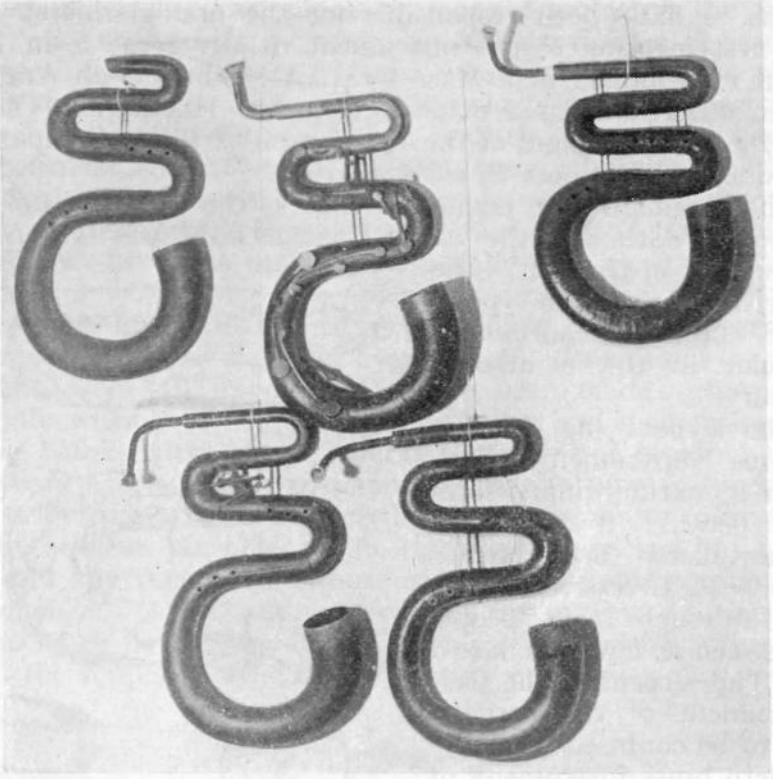


FIG. 6. SERPENT (2 FT. 6 IN. LONG)

The serpent (fig. 6) is a famous instrument, both from its extraordinary form and because it has been immortalized in Hardy's '*Under the Greenwood Tree*', but although many people have seen it, few have heard it. The serpent is the bass instrument of the cornett, not to be confused with the modern brass instrument of that name. The serpent is made of wood covered with leather, and the notes are produced as in a cupped instrument, that is in the same fashion that a bugler produces his notes, but, owing to its length, eight feet in all, and enormous mouthpiece, it is possible to obtain not just a few notes but two and a half to three chromatic octaves. The holes of the serpent do not, as they do in every other wind instrument with holes, govern the note; that is done with the lips. The holes are used to vary the length of tube in use in order to obtain greater resonance. The serpent, according to Canon Galpin, was invented at the close of the sixteenth century by Canon Guillaume of Auxerre. Pl. I shows five serpents, which were recently brought together in Norwich. The top right-hand one is the oldest; it will be seen that it has six holes and

PLATE I



SERPENTS

no keys, and it is in the possession of the Rev. V. N. Gilbert, of Horstead in Norfolk. The rather decrepit instrument on the top left-hand side is of much the same date, about 1760, and, together with that on the right of the second row, which has a few keys and is rather later than the other two, hangs in the Strangers' Hall Museum in Norwich. The first in the second row is a little later. It has more keys, and belongs to Mr. Alec Hodsdon of Lavenham. I played this instrument at a promenade concert in the Castle Museum in Norwich, in September, 1941. The middle one on the top row (fig. 6) is later than any of the others and belongs to the early nineteenth century. Its maker was T. Key of 20 Charing Cross. It has no holes but only keys, and is in my own collection.

There is a part assigned to it in Handel's Water Music and also in the Firework Music. It is, therefore, particularly appropriate that its notes should once more be heard at Burlington House in which, for three years, Handel stayed, and which

residence has been commemorated by the poet Gay in the following lines :

' Yet Burlington's fair palace still remains ;
Beauty within, without proportion reigns,
Beneath his eye declining art revives,
The wall with animated pictures lives.
There Handel strikes the strings, the melting strain
Transports the soul, and thrills thro' every vein.
There oft I enter (but with cleaner shoes),
For Burlington's beloved by every Muse.'

Not long ago I was playing the serpent when one of the basses leant over and whispered, ' Are you singing into it ? ' The serpent is not a megaphone, it is musical instrument, and the notes are produced with the lips.

The serpent was amazingly popular, and was one of George III's favourite instruments. Indeed, he, personally, had a good deal to do with its later development. It was he who suggested holding it sideways so that it should not get in the way of military bandsmen's legs on the march ; he also suggested the slight outward curve of the bell, maintaining that this would make the sound more audible. In spite of a protest by some pious divine that its use in church was unscriptural, it, together with 'cellos and double-basses, provided the bass for the church bands. The use of a serpent was fairly common, and traces and even reminiscences of it can quite often be found. It is recorded in the life of Sir Herbert Oakeley that, when his father became Dean of Bocking in 1834, the music was accompanied by a flute, a clarinet, a 'cello and a serpent. This arrangement continued till, in 1840, an organ was installed. In the nineteenth century the serpent gave way to the ophicleide, which I am told has been used in the memory of old military bandsmen.

FIG. 7.
BASSOON (4 FT. LONG)

The bassoon (fig. 7) is, of course, the bass instrument of the oboe family, and is an instrument of some antiquity.

It will be observed that the one illustrated has far fewer keys than the modern instrument.

An excellent picture of the village choir and band is shown in pl. II. It will be recognized as Webster's 'Village Choir', and its date is at the end of our period, about 1840. I am indebted to Mr. E. A. B. Barnard, F.S.A., for finding the print here reproduced and also for bringing to my notice a letter printed in the *Radio Times* of October 1st, 1941, from Mrs. D. E. Tansley, of Farnborough, in which she states that the gentleman standing with the flute is her husband's great-grandfather, and that one of the ladies is his great-grandmother. Later I received a letter from Mr. Tansley in which he said :

> 'The church depicted in the painting is the village church of Bow Brickhill, near Bletchley, Bucks. The man with the clarinet (next to man in smock) is my great-grandfather Wootton (I am not sure of his Christian name) ; the little boy last in row is my great-uncle John Wootton ; the little girl last in row is my great-aunt Emma (?) Waite. I believe some of the others are related to me, but I would suggest that if you have time before your lecture you write to my aunt, Miss Theresa Tansley, who has spent all her life in the locality and is much more closely in touch with both the church and the various branches of the family than I am able to be. . . . The painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1847 and is, I believe, at present in the Victoria and Albert Museum.'

I then wrote to Miss Tansley and received a most interesting letter from her, and also a history of Bow Brickhill by the Rev. R. Conyers Morrell, M.A., the patron of the parish. In this book Mr. Morrell states that, in 1847, Thomas Webster was staying with his sisters at Little Brickhill. He also says that Webster's father, who was a member of the household of George III, intended him for the musical profession, and the boy was educated in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. This may account for the artist's choice of subject.

Miss Tansley has been able to identify no less than twelve of the characters in the picture, and adds that 'the granddaughter of Mr. Kent brought his muffler for me to see one day. It is of pure silk, it hardly looks so'. A key is given with the illustration.

In the painting three instruments are used ; the clarinet, played by great-grandfather Wootton, the bassoon played by the gentleman with the sidewhiskers, and the 'cello.

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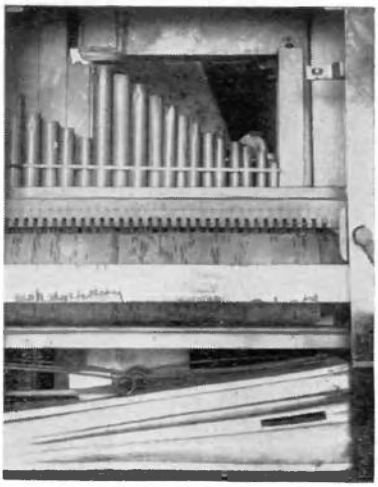
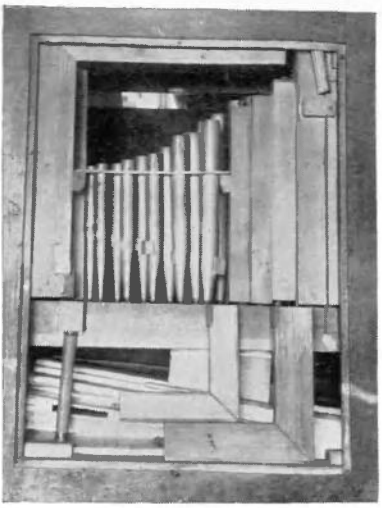
WEBSTER'S 'VILLAGE CHOIR'

Great Grandfather. Kent Wootton (Clarinet) — Barden — Frost (next Bassoon)

Hall

Emma Wootton — Misses Osborn — Mr. Osborn (conducting) — Jackson. John Wootton (Son of the Rev. Joseph Marshal Jackson, Rector of Bow Brickhill 1840-1894, B.A., Lincoln College) — Basketfield (Cello)



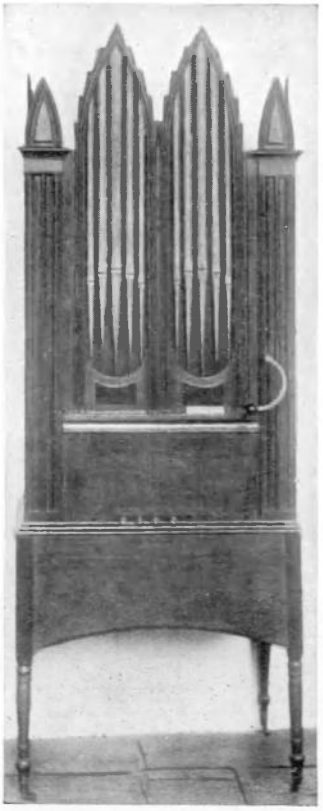


BARREL ORGAN, PROBABLY FROM ALDRIDGE

A. FRONT VIEW

B. BACK VIEW

C. ORGAN AT SCULTHORPE, NEAR FAKENHAM, NORFOLK



D. BARREL ORGAN IN ST. PETER, HUNGATE NORWICH

It would seem that the organ in the small parish church was far more common just before the Reformation than is usually supposed ; and far scarcer in the period which we have under review than is normally imagined. Many small churches did, of course, possess organs, but they were not common ; then, as now, they were expensive, and it was often impossible to find anyone capable of playing them. Often, when an eighteenth century organ is discovered in a village church, it will prove on investigation to have come from some country house. Such is the case at Great Packington in Warwickshire, where the two manual organ used by Handel at Gopsall is now situated. The Jennings family of Gopsall intermarried with the Finches of Packington, with the result that the organ was brought to Packington Hall, where it stood until, in preparation for a visit from King Edward VII, a new instrument was erected, whereupon the old organ was placed in the extraordinary church in the park. I do not wish to embark upon the subject of eighteenth century organs and their builders : it is far too large and fascinating a subject to be fitted into a section of a paper. Two illustrations must suffice. The first is of the organ at Blickling in Norfolk. It is a good little instrument by Snetzler, but the front pipes, and a good many of the others also, are modern. The second (pl. IIIc) is of the little organ at Sculthorpe, near Fakenham, in Norfolk. This organ was built by Snetzler in 1756, who also built the larger organ at Lynn for Dr. Burney, the musical Historian and father of Fanny Burney. To my mind, it is the finest organ of its size in the country, the tone of the wooden stops, particularly, being superb. The case is extremely decorative, the carved musical instruments upon it being picked out in gilt.

We will now turn to the barrel organ. This should not be confused with the mechanical piano hauled about our streets by foreign-looking gentlemen. The barrel organ is a real pipe organ, very often of excellent tone, the valves of which are opened, not by keys pressed by the fingers of an organist, but by little metal pins which are forced upwards by staples driven into a revolving drum or barrel. The barrel organ is a real organ, not a reed organ or harmonium, but almost invariably a pipe organ. Organs of this type were being made as early as 1598, and Thomas Dallam, some of whose pipes, I believe, are still in use in Norwich Cathedral and elsewhere, built a remarkable organ which could be played either by hand or by a barrel, and which Queen Elizabeth presented to the Sultan of Turkey. Since the barrel organ was not dependent on the ten fingers of the human hand, even if multiplied by

couplers and octave devices, almost any number of notes could be played at once, indeed it is all too easily forgotten that a definite technique grew up around the barrel organ.

In 1615, Peter Philips arranged one of Striggio's madrigals for the barrel organ, and Handel himself composed several pieces especially for the barrel organ, the particular one in question being that belonging to the Earl of Bute. When the village bands began to die out, that craze for the imitation of cathedrals, which found expression in the introduction of surpliced choirs and so on, led at an even earlier date to the bringing in of the barrel organ. Many churches wished for organ music, and though perhaps an organ could be provided, in many cases there was nobody who could play it. The barrel organ met this problem. I do not want to give the impression that the village band was always superseded by the barrel organ ; some churches never had a band and depended in the seventeenth century on barrel organs. But their great vogue was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Often they are beautiful little instruments and many remain to this day, neglected. In the diocese of Norwich there are barrel organs at Mattishall Burgh, Wood Rising, Witton and Bressingham, and probably in a good many other places as well. The barrel organ varies in size from a minute piece of mechanism, which can be put in the pocket, with tiny shrill pipes which make a bird-like twitter, and which was used to train canaries to sing, thus becoming known as a ' bird organ ', to a fairly large church organ with many stops.

One of the most interesting things about barrel organs is that they give us the tunes, so to speak, at first hand. There can be no argument as to how they were played in the days when the barrel organ was first built. All you have to do is to turn the handle to hear not only an eighteenth century tune but a real eighteenth century rendering, complete with flourishes and, and this is of particular interest, with interlude as well.

The interlude is almost entirely forgotten in England to-day, yet no eighteenth century congregation would sing a metrical Psalm through verse by verse. Sandwiched between every two verses came a little variation on the theme of the melody, often an ingenious piece of work. These interludes are very difficult to find to-day. Recently I wished to introduce them into a service and, in the Cambridge University Library, could find only one book which contained any number. It was *The Church Choir Book*, compiled by William Cecil, Rector of Long Stanton in Cambridgeshire, early in the nineteenth century.

A systematic study of barrel organs would discover very many lost interludes; often they consist of little more than the last line of the verse repeated, but occasionally they were, together with the introductory music, of an extremely complicated nature. A famous introduction and interlude is that of the Old Hundredth, printed in *The Psalms set full for the Organ or Harpsichord*, 1717.

How far the village band attempted the interlude would depend, of course, on the standard of proficiency. Possibly many only repeated the last lines. Canon Galpin, who I suppose has thrown more light on church music of this period than any other person, told me that he could remember a church band which invariably followed up the clerk's announcement: 'We will now sing to the praise and glory of God Psalm' whatever it was, by playing four notes in the requisite key, thus:

The barrel organ could not play the introduction for the simple reason that what it played once it had to play each time the verse came round. But the interludes are very often pinned on the barrel.

At Wood Rising in Norfolk is a typical barrel organ in a church gallery, with a particularly pleasing case. There is no maker's name, but its date is fairly obviously the late eighteenth century. There are three stops and eighty-one pipes, and the handle is manipulated from the back. The Wood Rising barrel organ is one of the larger variety. Sometimes, though rarely, you will find these larger barrel organs fitted with a key-board as well. There is a superb example of this type of instrument at Witton by Cromer in Norfolk, and a smaller one still in use at the tiny church of Eyton-on-the-Weald-Moors, near Wellington in Shropshire. Sometimes, too, the larger barrel organ has been converted into a key-board instrument. This is not often possible as most barrel organs do not contain a chromatic scale: the tunes are played in one or two keys. The Wood Rising barrel organ is an example of this.

Pl. IIID shows a typical example by Wheatstone, in 1820, of the smaller type of barrel organ, now in St. Peter Hungate Museum, but originally from Hoveton Church, Norfolk. This type of easily movable organ is still fairly common, and an

old friend of mine, the Rev. Lancelot Mitchell, collected together no less than seventeen of them. The cases of many are extremely attractive.

Yet another type of barrel organ is illustrated in pl. III, A and B. It looks like a cabinet and yet in its small compass contains fifty-three pipes, the longest being four feet, the length being obtained by curving the pipe round. This organ is of the early nineteenth century and is by Henry J. Prosser of Road in Somerset ; originally in Aldridge Church, near Lichfield, it is now in my own collection. It is in perfect condition, and, indeed, at a recent concert of eighteenth century music in Norwich, accompanied some Psalm singing.

Much has been mentioned : eighteenth century tunes, interludes, organs, barrel organs, the pinning of the barrels and the makers of the instruments, each of which would provide a fascinating subject for careful and meticulous study. Every village church of any age has its own musical history, a history which, as often as not, can be culled from the pages of the churchwardens' account books and occasionally by the exciting discovery of an instrument or book of tunes itself. The period and department of music which we have been considering is still neither well explored nor properly appreciated. Smug and formal nineteenth century musicians despised its heartiness and complete lack of formality ; ecclesiastics are apt to associate it with the very lowest ebb of church life, yet there can be no questioning the quality of a very large proportion of its tunes, a quality as far surpassing those of the second half of the nineteenth century as the buildings of the eighteenth century surpassed the crocketted efflorescences so dear to the Victorian architect. It is a thousand pities that to-day, in so many tiny organ-less village churches, the democracy of the band should have been usurped by the dictatorship of the imported harmonium.