

Dutch Organ Tour 2019—(Organ history in Overijssel)

The tour started before Easter this year for various reasons. We had the town of Zwolle as a base for the tour, and we went about in three mini buses. Around ten people of the group of 23 were enthusiastic organ players, of various playing ability – amateur ones to cathedral organists. Others recorded the various recitals with quite sophisticated recording equipment.

As an exception to the above rule, we started the tour in a Royal Church – the Grote Kerk (Large Church) in Apeldoorn, which is in the province of Gelderland, where the Het Loo (pronounced 'low') Palace was the

residence of Queen Wilhelmina, and is now to some extent used by Princess Margriet and her husband Pieter van Vollenhoven, who live in a villa in the palace grounds. The Royal loge (gallery) in the church has nice comfortable seats.

The organ in the church dates back to 1896, and was built by Johan Frederik Witte, working with the firm of J. Bätz & Co. In 1977 a third manual (positif) was added by the Van Vulpen firm. The organist of the church, Mr. Wout van Andel, introduced the organ and played a good recital, with music by J.S. Bach, Gottfried August Homilius (Hilff, Herr Jesu, lass gelingen – I marked it as a nice



Royal Loge, Grote Kerk Apeldoorn



Grote Kerk Apeldoorn organ

piece of music...), Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Johan Wagenaar, Bert Matter and Christiaan Frederik Hendriks Jr. Most of the people in the group had a go at playing the organ, which, to me, sounded like it could do with some more volume – possibly caused by the fact that most of the organ case is set back.

The next organ we visited was in the city of Deventer on the River IJssel. We visited the Broederenkerk and the Lebuinuskerk. The Broederenkerk has a two manual organ, made in 1868 by the Ibach Firm, from Barmen near Wuppertal in Germany. Small changes were introduced by the firm of Maarschalkerweerd in 1928 and in 1955 the organ was enlarged and fitted with electro-pneumatic action. The Van Vulpen firm restored the organ in 2014 and reconstructed it back to the original Ibach specification, but the electro-pneumatic action was retained as far as I remember.

Kirstin Gramlich provided the recital: two pieces by Vierne and a Fugue from the Fantasia on the Choral “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme” by Max Reger. The organ is housed in two organ cases, on a gallery - similar to the Fremantle Basilica organ, but not as large.

The next organ was the Lebuinuskerk organ, with the very ornate organ case painted in a light green colour.

Kirstin gave the recital on this organ as well, with J.S. Bach’s Fantasia in G major, BWV 572, the Toccata Chromatica by Ad Wammes and the whole Sonata nr. IV op. 65, by Mendelssohn. This is a

substantial three manual organ, originally built in 1839 by J.H. Holtgrave. It saw various changes by a number of organ builders, with the most recent maintenance, repairs and reconstruction by the firm of Reil in 2016-2018. As can be imagined: it was a joy to hear and play the organ.

During the next day we stayed in Zwolle, with visits to four organs. The first organ in the original Bethlehemsekerk was built in 1826 by Georg Quellhorst. Access to the organ is via a separate entrance to the church, as the church now houses a Sushi restaurant! Because of the restaurant opening hours we weren’t able to play the organ, but were able to



Lebuinuskerk

listen to a recital presented by Rien Donkersloot, who played pieces by Charles Wesley, Johann Ludwig Krebs, Pierre François Boëly and an improvisation by himself.

We were going to visit the St. Michaelskerk, which houses the largest of Dutch organs, but that organ was inaccessible because of renovations etc., sadly, but in its place came the Bovenkerk organ in Kampen.

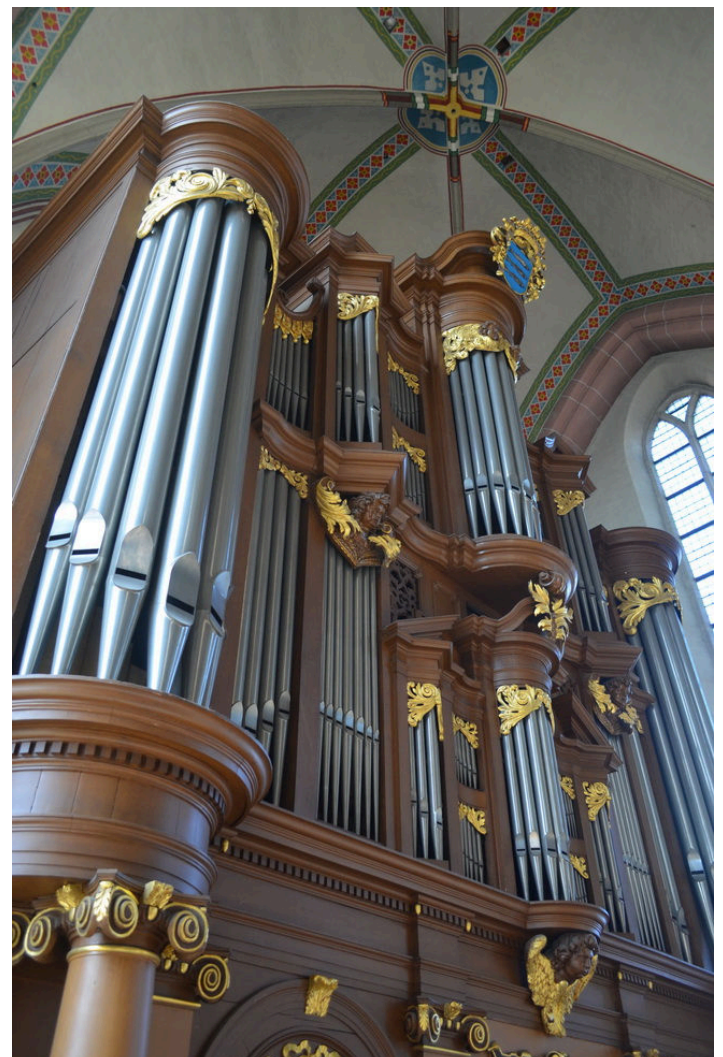
We walked across the city to the Dominicanerkerk, which forms part of a large Catholic abbey. All churches visited thus far were quite large in size, easily larger than our own cathedrals, with a possible exception of St. Mary's

Cathedral in Perth. The church has a sizeable two manual organ, originally built by Adema of Amsterdam, in 1912, and is still maintained by them. It now has electric pedal and manual action, since 1961-1978, and has a console similar to the New Norcia organ. The church is often used for concerts because of its good acoustics, and it also has a beautiful chest organ. Rien Donkersloot played the Intermezzo from Widor's Symphony nr. 6, the Reitze Smits arrangement of Rachmaninov's Vocalise Op. 34 no. 14 and two pieces from the Suite Médiévale en forme de messe basse Op. 56, by Jean Langlais.

The next organ visited was the organ of



Dominicanerkerk,



Basilica O.L.V. Ten Hemelopneming

the Basilica O.L.V. Ten Hemelopneming. (Our Dear Lady on entering heaven). This was a large 'new' three manual organ, built in 1896 by M. Maarschalkerweerd, fitted in the original case by N. Brunswick, which was originally built for the Observantenkirche in Münster. Restoration was done by Vermeulen of Alkmaar in 1982, with the most recent restoration and revoicing by Flentrop Orgelbouw of Zaandam. Rien Donkersloot's recital included part of the Sonata da Chiesa – the Tema con variazione e finale by Hendrik Andriessen, an Improvisation by Rien himself, and the Introduction und Passacaglia in d-moll by Max Reger.

In the evening we enjoyed a catered dinner in a very substantial Bookshop (Waanders in de Broeren), housed in the Broerenkerk. It still has the organ in a nice case overlooking the bookshop, where there is room to read, look for books or have a coffee or a light alcoholic beverage etc. The organ dates from 1824, and was made by J.C. Scheuer. More present work is done by the firm of Flentrop, with the last work having been done in 2001. It appeared to still be quite playable, and Rien provided a recital including parts of the Sonata in d, wq 70, nr. 5, H.86 by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, followed by an extensive improvisation.

On the Thursday we visited the Grote Kerk in Vollenhove and two churches in Kampen, to the northwest of Zwolle.

The Vollenhove organ was made in 1686

with the church dating back to 1450-1485. Before this church a small chapel was built in 1100... The "new" organ (there must have been an earlier one) was built by Appolonius Bosch of Amsterdam, with enlargements by F.C. Schnitger, a free pedal section added by J. van Loo in 1860 and a comprehensive restoration done in 1977 by Van Vulpen.

It is a nice looking organ in a large church – two manual organ: hoofdwerk (hauptwerk – Great) and Rugwerk (Rückpositiv – back section – as it is located behind the organist's back). Rien Donkersloot was the recitalist for the day and he played two pieces by Dieterich Buxtehude, the Toccata in F BWV 540 by



Grote Kerk Vollenhove

J.S. Bach and an improvisation.

Vollenhove used to be the summer residence of the Bishop of Utrecht.

The first church in Kampen was the Buitenkerk (Outside church), so called as it was located outside the original city walls. Kampen, Zwolle, Deventer and Zutphen (visited two years ago) are all Hanseatic League cities dating back to the early Middle Ages. The organ was built in 1754 by A.A. Hinsz, with the use of much older pipes, dating back to the 16th century. The Vermeulen firm of Alkmaar performed a comprehensive restoration and added a free pedal section in 1977. It is quite a nice looking two manual organ consisting of the hauptwerk and positive and pedal sections, painted in an off-white colour with gold ornamentation. Rien Donkersloot's recital consisted of J.P. Sweelinck's 4 variations of Vater Unser im Himmelreich, the Ciacona in e, BuxWV 160 by Buxtehude, the Choral prelude "Nun danket alle Gott" BWV 657 by J.S. Bach, and an improvisation by Rien himself. His improvisations have a distinct Bach-like style, as compared to two other Dutch organists, who recently visited our State of WA (Arjan Breukhoven and Evert van de Veen).

The last organ we visited in Kampen was the Bovenkerk organ. This large church also has quite a sizeable transept organ made by Reil. The present main organ was built as a new organ by A.A. Hinsz, with the use of many pipes from the former organ dating back to 1629. In 1788 HH. Freytag and F.C. Schnitger added a

free pedal section and a borstwerk (breastwork). In 1866 Z. van Dijk fitted a 4th manual for this 'new' section. The present organ consists of a Hauptwerk section with 13 stops, a Rückpositiv with 11 stops, 2x Boven(upper) werk sections, with 10 and 8 stops respectively, the breastwerk with four stops and 10 stops in the pedals, so rather a substantial organ. All this as a full tracker organ – no playing/selection aids whatsoever. Although it is a great organ with four manuals, the manuals are only four octaves wide, which would make playing a lot of organ literature quite difficult indeed, although with the judicious use of these four manuals it would be possible to play pieces written



Bovenkerk Kampen

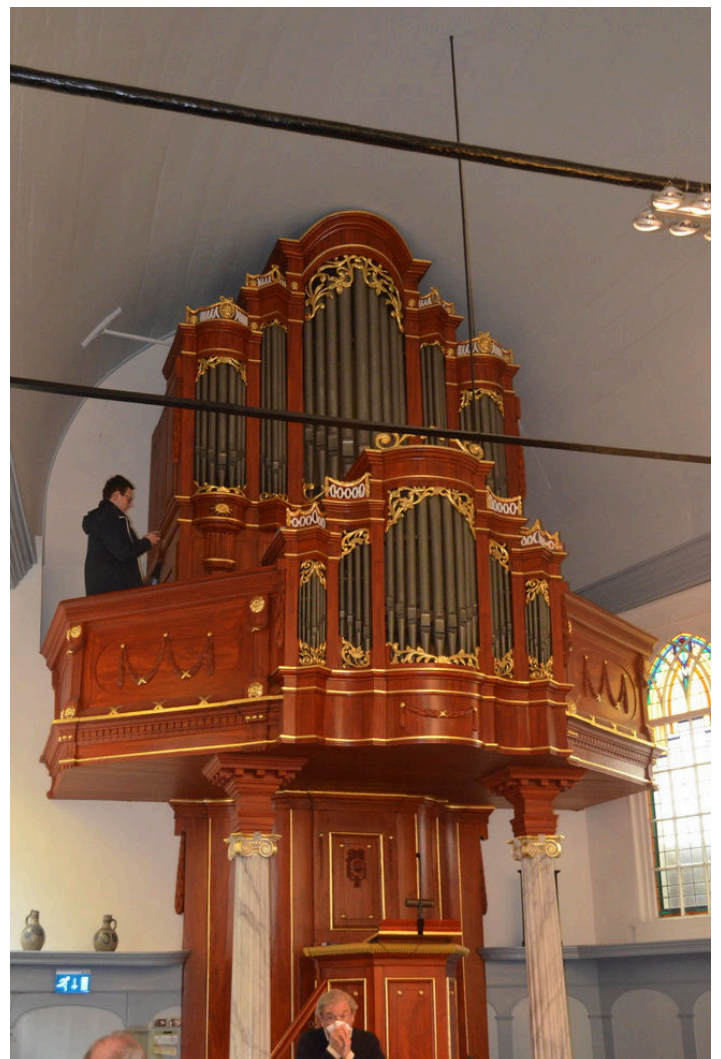
for more extended manuals. The organist Ab Weegenaar introduced the organ. Both Ab and Rien played pieces – but I don't have the names of what they played as the programme was not known at the time of publication of the tour booklet. The organ was a joy to play and to hear, and not overly heavy for such a large organ. A great time was had by all.

On the Friday we first went to Raalte, and visited the Basiliek H. Kruisverheffing, which means the Basilica of the Holy Raising of the Cross. This sizeable organ was built by Adema for the former Roman Catholic Michaelskerk of Zwolle. After the church was closed the organ was placed in the new Michaelskerk in 1964, and was moved to Raalte by Kaat and Tijhuis in 2005. This organ's compass was C-g'', a three manual organ. Dick Sanderman was the organist of the day, and he played a recital comprising the Fanfare (from *La Péri*) by Paul Dukas, Fidelis and Werde Munter by Percy Whitlock, an Aria on a Chaconne by Joel Martinson, a Postlude by William Mathias, the Intermezzo IX by Hendrik Andriessen and the Chant héroïque (à la mémoire de Jehan Alain) written by Jean Langlais.

The next organ was to be found in the centre of the town of Almelo, well known to the author as the factory of the company I work(ed) for is located on its outskirts and I have been there a number of times for training courses and meetings. It was an almost hidden

church – initially it was, as it was fronted by a normal house, without any visibility of there being a church behind the house. Later on the house was removed and the church could be enlarged a bit. It was the Almelo Doopsgezinde Kerk – a Mennonite (Anabaptist) Church – a church originating from the fourth reformer after Martin Luther, John Calvin and Zwingli: Menno Simons, originally from the province of Friesland.

Its organ – a two manual and pedal organ was built in 1791 by Heilmann (Germany), changed and finished by Courtain in 1793, with repairs and alterations made by Ambroost in 1839, with finally a 2005 restoration by Reil.



Almelo Doopsgezinde Kerk

Dick Sanderman played Charles Avison's Concerto I in G, the Voluntary in G, Op. 7 nr. 7 – the Adagio and Allegro parts, by John Stanley, a piece by Johann Ludwig Krebs called *Eine Nachahmung der Nachtigall auf die Orgel*, then Krebs' Sonata IV in D, followed by Four Inventions (1945) by Albert de Klerk. Other organs in Almelo were not chosen as this organ was the most reliably historic organ – and a nice one to play at that.

The third church visited on Friday was the Holy Simon and Judas Church in Ootmarsum, close to the German border. This was also a larger quite substantial organ, however with not much room for



Holy Simon and Judas Church Ootmarsum

any registrants during any concerts. It is a two manual organ, originally built by F.F. Epmann of Essen, Germany, with use of older material. Repairs were done by Elberink in 1870, the first phase of restauration was done by Vermeulen of Alkmaar, with the second phase done by Van Vulpen of Utrecht. This was the heaviest organ to play on the manuals: heavier than I have ever felt before. The pedals were ok. One is obviously never too old to learn...

Dick Sanderman's recital comprised of two pieces by Bach from Cantata BWV 130 (*Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir*, arranged by Lennart Moree, and BWV20" *Schäfe können sicher weiden*, arranged by André Isoir. The Fantasia in a by Jacob Wilhelm Lustig followed, then three chorale preludes by Johann Balthasar Kehl, the *Preludio pro Organo pleno in a moll* by Johann Christian Kittel, followed by a present composer's pieces: Joy 1 and Joy 2 (from *Triptych*) by Ad Wammes.

The farewell dinner was also held in Ootmarsum.

The farewell concert was presented by Jan-Willem Jonkman in the Grote Kerk in Harderwijk. He presented the Sonata in F Major by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, the Chorale Prelude "*Herzlich tut mich verlangen*" by Brahms, the Partita "*Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig*" by Böhm, the Chorale Prelude "*Herrliebster Jesu*" by Johannes Brahms, and the final piece was J.S. Bach's *Praeludium und Fugue in C*, BWV 545. The organ was originally built as a new organ in 1827 by the Bätz

brothers. Changes were made in 1891 and 1911, followed by a first restauration by de Koff, and a more recent comprehensive restoration back to the 1827 specifications by Flentrop. The church was only partly accessible due to scaffolding having been placed to restore the ornamental painting of the vaulted ceiling. That didn't have any negative effect on the sound of the organ, though.

For those interested in Hauptwerk sample sets: there is a sample set of the Vollenhove organ, but I heard from a German organist on the tour, who purchased the set, that the individual stops were ok, but things didn't stand up properly with wider selections: it appears to have been an early Hauptwerk sample set.

However, the Bovenkerk organ sample set is available in three varieties, one as a cut-down version as a two manual organ and two other four manual sample sets. These are quite pricey but if you have the money and at least a three manual Hauptwerk system to use and some good sound equipment, it may well be worth the cost.

As far as playing was concerned: although I didn't have too many problems with the straight pedal boards of the Dutch organs, I distinctly had a problem with one organ, on which I hoped to play a Bach piece: I gave up and played something else. It would also take quite a bit of getting used to the four octave manuals, especially with French music. You would have to scan the music you want to play to see whether it can

actually be done – also with the range of pedal notes available: at times there were more pedal notes than pipes linked to these. Although it was said that if you would be able to have a day on the organ to familiarise yourself properly, you would be right – however that time wasn't available, of course, and there are not many organs in Australia that you could use as an example of an older historic Dutch organ... Also, as the stop lists were known from the brochure that was sent out by email beforehand, some organists came with a registration for their particular pieces in mind, which in practice hardly worked out or things were quite different in real life as compared to what you think you have according to a stop list for a particular organ.

Our return trip to Australia wasn't as good as the early time in The Netherlands and the time on the tour: my wife and I were both struck with a bad cold and being on a long flight in a feverish condition is not a nice situation to find one in. We hope to be back to 'normal' soon. During the week of the tour the weather turned quite cold, with night frost and a cold wind and even some snow in Almelo, whereas the first few days were over 20°C and we spent some time in the Keukenhof tulip garden near Lisse/Haarlem. Overall the trip was worth the effort.

John van den Berg

Photos: John van den Berg