The Cornopean

EXETER & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

May 2021

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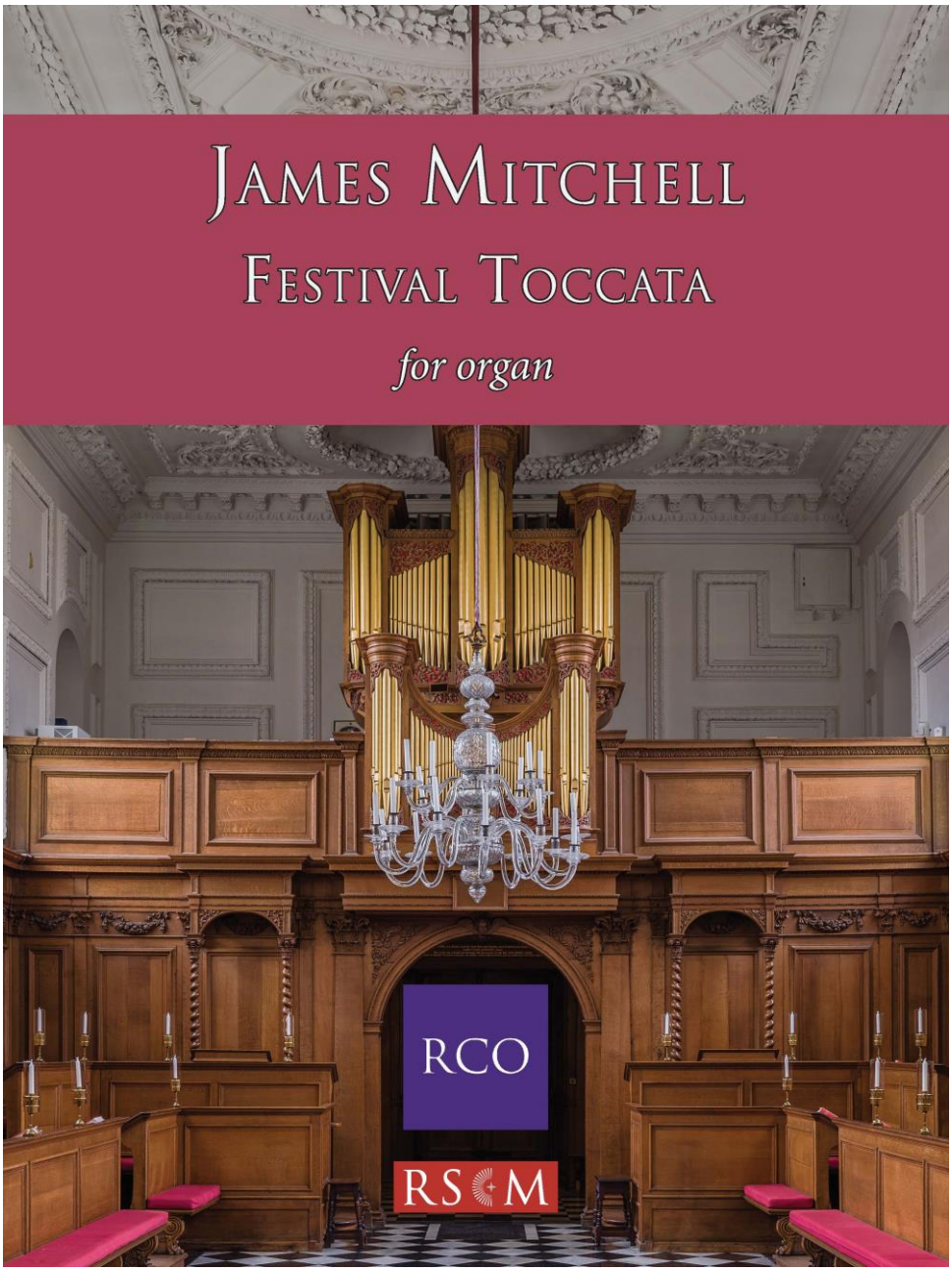

Letter from the Editor

1st May 2021

Dear fellow members

The AGM this year was held last Thursday 29th April, online, by Zoom. A total of 27 people attended; interestingly, that is rather more than usually attend a normal "in person" AGM. Indeed, it appears to be the highest attendance for the last ten years. It certainly validates the meeting and gives it a legitimacy it might not otherwise have had.

The new committee is:

Piers Howell (President)
Paula Taylor (Hon Secretary)
Peter Johnson (Hon Treasurer)
Ian Carson
John Harris
Peter King (Editor, The Cornopean*)*
Andrew Millington
Timothy Noon
Neil Page
Mike Pagliero

Office holders not on the committee

Peter Johnstone (Membership Secretary)
Graham Willson (Webmaster)

Please make a note in your diary of the Presidents' Evening – a river cruise on the Exe Estuary on the evening of Thursday 8th July, departing from Exmouth Quay at 6:45pm. This should be a splendid way for us to get together again after the privations of the last year. There will be a buffet supper (under cover in case of inclement weather) and a cash bar. There is a booking form at the back of this edition of The Cornopean*. Book early as places will be limited. Further details and a booking form are on page 19.*

I am sorry to report the death of Graeme Pryor. An obituary is published on page 3. The cover picture this month features the front cover of James Mitchell's prize-winning composition Festival Toccata*. James has contributed an article setting out his musical journey (starting as a non-Chorister at Exeter Cathedral School) and giving the background to the composition. "Desert Island Discs" are contributed by Peter Parshall, twice crowned Nerd of the Month and indeed winner of the April competition. Ian Carson has supplied the second of his series of articles about the organs in his "Quiz for travelling Nerds" published in the January edition.*

Undoubtedly the biggest recent event in our world on the national stage was the funeral of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Many have commented of the superb quality of the music making and the fact that music which would normally have been sung by a choir of c30 voices was delivered so effectively by a solo quartet. There has also been fair criticism of the lack of any acknowledgement of the musicians by the BBC. I am pleased that we are able to print here, with permission, articles by John Rutter and by Jonathan Wikeley about the role of music and musicians.

Remember to stay safe until your vaccine takes effect, and to keep to the law on lockdown and not to go mad as the regulations ease!

With best wishes,

Peter King

Obituary
Graeme Pryor

We are sad to report the recent passing of our dear friend Graeme Pryor whom I first met on the same day that we joined the Association some twenty years ago in the Great Western Hotel, St David's at the Annual dinner. With him was his dear wife Helen whom he sadly lost a few months ago. They both became a fixture for the next two decades turning up regularly at our organ crawls and at all of our annual trips further afield. He and Helen were always cheerful and they were good to have in our company and he was an enthusiastic member participant when it came to our Quiz evenings. Inevitably he joined our committee and became its Chairman. As an organist I would ascribe perhaps one word, 'rumbustious!" Bob Millington, kindly allowed him to practise regularly on the Sidmouth parish church organ every Monday much to the delight of tourists wiling away their holidays on a rainy day. Bob commented that "He certainly liked to be heard"! He certainly did with his dossier of triumphant compositions. One epic piece that sticks in my mind was the tricky *Toccata* of Dubois which was, he would admit, beyond his capabilities. However as we know the famous Widor *Toccata*, that is beyond most Village organists, has been transcribed. And so with the Dubois and, always up to a challenge, he enthusiastically composed by ear and played what can only be descried as an 'impressionistic' rendition of the piece, much to our delight. He fiercely defended the spelling of Graeme and not knowing his origin I had often wondered that Graeme might be of Celtic origin but Wikipedia informs me the name is of 'Old English' origin. May God bless him and his lovely Helen.

Michael Pagliero

Graeme, Yorkshire, 2011

Graeme, Cambridge, 2013, with Frances & Roger Quartly (centre & right)

Desert Island Discs

This month's Desert Island Discs are supplied by Peter Parshall. As a student, reading for a degree in Theology at Westminster College, Oxford, Peter was the College's Organist and was fortunate to be able to study with David Saint at the Birmingham Conservatoire. Having held church and cathedral posts in Oxford and Dublin, he is now based in Devon where he runs a private organ teaching practice and directs several choirs. He has worked for the Royal School of Church music for many years, both in the UK and in Ireland, as an educator, examiner and facilitator, and was honoured recently with the award of Associate of the RSCM. He was the founding Artistic Director of the South Wessex Organ Society and is currently Chapel Music Co-ordinator at Jesus College, Oxford. Peter is an occasional composer, with works having been commissioned, recorded and broadcast by choirs in the UK, Ireland and the USA, the co-editor of the choral anthology, *Weddings for Choirs*, published by Oxford University Press, and a contributor to the *New Dictionary of National Biography*.

1. **Maurice Duruflé *Requiem*.**
   This work combines two great musical loves of mine. To paraphrase the words of one commentator, the work might be described as Plainsong "…floating around in a luxurious bath…" of sensuous twentieth century French harmony. Perfect! I hope that the Editor will allow me this particular BOGOF deal. I've performed the work on numerous occasions, both liturgically and in concerts, and listened to it on countless other occasions. It never loses its profundity.
2. **Herbert Howells *O Holy City, seen of John*.**
   I have a bit of a love/hate relationship with Howells' music. As a young organist, I couldn't get enough of his organ and choral works (whilst, curiously, ignoring his many works in other genres). Whilst I still retain great affection for a number of the Evening Services (the early Service in G being a particular favourite) and some of the organ works (Psalm Prelude Set 2 No.1 for example), I find that I don't warm as easily to much of his music as I once did. But there remains music by Howells which 'gets me' every time I hear it, and one of these is his hymn tune *Sancta Civitas*, set to the text *O holy city seen of John* by W. Russell Bowie. There are a number of hymn tunes by Howells in various hymnals, but none seem to have caught on in the way that *Michael* (*All my hope on God is founded*) has. Long after my early fascination with Howells began, I discovered a family connection in that my great– grandfather was Howells' early Patron, paying for him to be articled to Herbert Brewer at Gloucester Cathedral.
3. **Ralph Vaughan Williams *Dona nobis pacem*.**
   I 'discovered' this work when looking for something to programme for Axminster and District Choral Society at its 2018 concert marking the 100th anniversary of the Armistice. I couldn't quite believe that I'd not heard it before. It led to some of the most rewarding rehearsals I've had as we explored the work together and overcame its various challenges. I think the choir came to love it too, and the performance was electric.
4. **J.S. Bach *Fugue in E Flat* BWV 552 (St. Anne).**
   There's something awe–inspiring about this work. Perhaps it's the sheer genius of the way Bach uses the number three in multiple ways, giving rise to its Trinitarian associations. I always find the final entry of the subject in the pedal devastating. I've no idea why it affects me in the way it does.

5. **J.S. Bach Cantata 140 *Wachet auf*.**
   There is a wonderful sense of energy in the opening movement of this work. Everything about it seems to say "wake up!" and the way that the oboes soar above the busyness of the strings is absolutely exhilarating. There's significant numerological meaning in this work as well.
6. **Gerald Finzi *Eclogue***
   I love the music of the composers of the English Pastoral School. *Eclogue* was intended to be part of a longer piano concerto, but the remaining movements never seemed to come to the composer, so he reworked it as a stand–alone piece, leaving us with a perfect miniature. It is one of those pieces whose profound (and immediate) effect allows me instantly to recall exactly where I was when I first heard it (negotiating a roundabout on the outskirts of Swindon, since you ask).
7. **John Sheppard Haec dies**
   I will need some Early music with me on the island, but it's been impossible to decide what to take. Since I can't decide, I've decided to opt for the *Cantus Firmus* based English polyphony of the Sixteenth century, represented by the setting of the Easter text *Haec Dies* by John Sheppard. There's an early recording which is probably regarded, now, as being hopelessly inauthentic in terms of pitch, but I can listen to the opening phrase, with the first sopranos soaring up to a top Bb, on a loop; it never loses its thrill.
8. **Queen *Don't stop me now*.**
   I really don't want to sound like one of those awful politicians on the BBC R4 version of Desert Island Discs who choose an entire sack–load of pop music to accompany them to the island because they think it makes them look 'ordinary'. That said, the music of Pink Floyd and of Queen forms much of the soundtrack to my teenage years. I still love Pink Floyd, but I think that most of their output might just be too depressing to take with me.

Luxury: A Coffee machine.
I can think of nothing better than lying in the sun with a cup of excellent coffee, listening to music. There will be electricity on this island, won't there? Otherwise, how am I to listen to my discs?

Book: *The Salt Path* by Raynor Winn.
I'd love to be able to say that I'd like to take the collected works of Proust, but I think the reality is that I'd give up on that quite quickly. *The Salt Path* is a book which I very much enjoyed reading recently – one of those books which one can consume on a lazy winter afternoon in front of the fire. It has the added bonus of being about a journey around the South West Coast Path and, since much of my life has been centred on the South West (having grown up in Cornwall), it will remind me of home.

Roxy Parshall

The RCO Lockdown Composition Competition

First prize winner James Mitchell introduces himself

My first experiences of the organ were back when I was at Exeter Cathedral School (although I was not a chorister there). One memorable occasion was the then-headmaster, Brian McDowell, taking me up to the organ loft after one of the school services in the cathedral. Back then, when I didn't know about registration aids, I thought the stops were going in and out as if by magic!

My organ education started in 2010, at a major transition point in my life. I was just starting secondary school in Crediton, where we'd moved only a few months before. I'd also just started piano lessons with a new teacher, Andrew Daldorph. After finding out he was not only a pianist but also organist and harpsichordist, my interest in the organ was enough to start separate organ lessons with him at Newton St Cyres. The organ there was well formed, well looked after and very satisfying to play, and so it was perhaps the best instrument to start out on that I could have had.

I was also lucky enough to have the organ of Crediton Parish Church on my doorstep and the fine Harrison & Harrison there. As well as being a physically large instrument, it was also virtually unchanged since it was built a century ago, thus being a pristine example of the English Romantic organ (this will become important later). It was also at Crediton that I first sang in a church choir. I had sung in various choirs previously, such as Devon County Junior Choir, but none of them sang evensong services or suchlike. It was therefore through Crediton choir that I learned the ins and outs of psalm pointing and layout of the service as well as the standard Anglican choral repertoire. Without this first contact with Evensong, I would definitely have struggled later down the line.

The first proper organ job I took was in 2014 at the mid-Devon parish of Chulmleigh. The organ was a true village organ and had very heavy action. However, at that stage it was perfect for what I needed to learn, and having regular weekly services to prepare for was an invaluable

James Mitchell

experience. I was also able to experience many fine instruments in mid-Devon. Particular stand-outs were a lovely chamber organ in Eggesford, and a fine harmonium in Wisbech. It is surprising the quality of instruments that can be found in some remote Devon churches!

Everything changed when I was offered the sixth-form organ scholarship at Ely Cathedral in 2015. The opportunity came around largely by a long series of coincidences. We had informally visited both Oriel College, Oxford and Selwyn College, Cambridge in 2014 to ask about Oxbridge and the organ scholarship process. The choir director at Selwyn, Sarah MacDonald, also conducted the girls' choir at Ely, and it just so happened that the school were then in discussion about appointing a new formalised organ scholar position (organ scholarships at Ely were previously organised on an *ad hoc* basis). She emailed asking if I'd be interested in applying; I auditioned, and was subsequently offered the post. The year at Ely was an enlightening experience. It was my first proper experience of the daily cycle of cathedral

worship. It was often hard work, sometimes being present at seven services a week, but there I learned how a cathedral organist thinks, a mindset which I have tried to carry forward ever since.

I then did my undergraduate degree, together with an organ scholarship, at Girton College, Cambridge. The chapel organ is one of the strangest yet most beautiful instruments I have played, with four manuals yet only 26 stops. I have still never seen 'half-draw' stops on any other instrument. However, with powerful French reeds and a well-chosen stoplist, it sounded excellent and could cover virtually any repertoire I needed it to. At Girton there were also many amazing opportunities including regular cathedral tours to Durham, Salisbury, Gloucester and St Paul's (these tours were where I first learned the unbelievable stress of a cathedral visiting weekend!), a couple of CD recordings and a broadcast for Sunday Worship. Sadly, the lockdown shut down any plans for the final term, but we did manage to fit in a couple of virtual recordings and I was able to write and record a major video-audio composition for the choir.

It was during this summer that I found out about the RCO Composition Competition, organised to provide organists something to do during lockdown. I therefore thought I'd put in an attempt. After a few false starts, I finally settled on an idea I'd been harbouring for a long time. The aim of the piece was simple: to combine the majesty of the English march, particularly the coronation marches by William Walton, with the exuberance and idiomatic organ writing of the French toccata. These two forms were always the most popular with congregations, and so I wanted to write a piece which had the best of both worlds. At Cambridge, I also started questioning why every new instrument being built seemingly had to have tracker action and French reeds; it felt like the English Romantic organ such as at Crediton was a dying breed. My piece was therefore also a love-letter to that instrument, to that style, and to that place where I'd first sung evensong all those years ago.

The 1921 Harriston & Harrison organ, Crediton Parish Church

The piece ended up winning the Under-25 category of the competition, the first composition competition I've ever won. To be honest, winning the competition has been a bigger deal than I originally thought it would be. The winning pieces were published by the RSCM (who were originally not involved in the competition at all) and I've been lucky enough to record the piece on the Crediton organ for various RCO events, although it took a lot of practice to get it up to standard! None of this would have been possible without all of the guidance I received back here when I was first starting out, so I just want to thank everyone here in Devon who's helped me get where I am today. I wouldn't have been able to do it without you.

James Mitchell

Did they mention the music?

Reflections on a royal funeral by John Rutter
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I have borrowed my main title from Henry Mancini's autobiography. He was, among other musical accomplishments, the composer of many Hollywood film scores, notably the Pink Panther series and Breakfast at Tiffany's. In studio-era Hollywood, composers always worked under great pressure and often bearing heavy responsibility for the success or otherwise of a film, but by custom were excluded from its private pre-release screening attended by the studio moguls and their acolytes. As the composer, all you could do was to ask someone who had been privy to the post-screening discussions whether anyone *had* mentioned the music (generally not, it seems), and if so, whether the verdict was favourable.

I was reminded of this telling insight as I channel-hopped around the post-funeral TV coverage following the Duke of Edinburgh's funeral. Amid all the torrents of expert or would-be expert verbiage about the service and those attending it, I heard not one word of comment about the music which had formed such a crucial part of the funeral service, much less any commendation of the musicians who had planned and executed it with such flawless professionalism and unstinting commitment.

Was I surprised? Not really. I learned a bitter lesson as a young organist sometimes drafted in to play at weddings: *not everyone loves and cares about music as you do*. Being accustomed to respectful and attentive concert audiences, I was shocked at what seemed to me the rudeness and indifference of wedding congregations who fidgeted in the pews, brought howling infants with them, coughed and rustled their Orders of Service, and chattered during our lovingly rehearsed anthem accompanying the signing of the register.

But let's return to films. If you doubt the importance of music in film, try watching the desert scenes in *Lawrence of Arabia* with the sound turned off, or (sorry if you're reading this over breakfast) the shower scene in *Psycho* – where what is actually a rather tame piece of cinematography is made terrifying by Bernard Herrmann's music with its much-imitated shrieking violins.

There are parallels with church music here. As with a film, music in a church service is there not for its own sake but to form part of a tapestry of words, music, action, costume, and (if you're in St George's Windsor or somewhere like it) scenic splendour. It's called liturgy, and if music plays its

St George's Chapel, Windsor

part properly, the event is lifted heavenward, and if it does not, the whole thing can fall flat.

Unlike in a film, the music at a church service is generally not the work of a single composer, and the task of whoever plans the service – in this case with some required inclusions of music chosen by the Duke – is to make it all fit together and flow smoothly, which was triumphantly achieved at Windsor, working with the Covid constraints allowing only a solo quartet of voices rather than the full choir. If you have studied (say) the structure of a Beethoven symphony, you will know how important the key structure is in binding a whole work together. And at the funeral there was similarly meticulous planning of keys. (Skip the next bit if it doesn't interest you.) It was all built around G, minor and major, which we were prepared for by the final pre-service organ voluntary, Vaughan Williams's *Rhosymedre* Prelude in the major, leading into a subdued improvisation in the minor. William Croft's timeless *Burial Sentences* followed (G minor) . . . and after the Bidding Prayer, Dykes's beloved *Eternal Father* (in the related key of the subdominant major, C) – in James Vivian's arrangement boldly leaving the first verse to an unaccompanied solo voice, rather like the lone trumpet at the start of *The Godfather* which makes you pay attention and listen. We stay in C major for Britten's *Jubilate* written at the Duke's request in 1961, brisk, concise and no-nonsense (qualities he would have encouraged, no doubt) . . . a return to G minor for William Lovelady's Psalm 104 setting, its key and ground-bass structure echoing one of the greatest of all laments, Dido's from Purcell's opera . . . William Smith's Responses from the early 17th century bringing a shaft of sunlight in G major, then the Russian Kontakion returning to sombre G minor, a sidestep to G minor's relative major for the Last Post in B flat, its subdominant E flat for Reveille, and a sense of return and release with the National Anthem in G major. Beethoven couldn't have planned it better. Non-musicians will not have been consciously aware of all this thread of careful planning, but, trust me, the funeral service wouldn't have felt the same without it.

William Croft

There were other threads of connection skilfully woven into the fabric of the service – royal, historical, and local. William Croft (1678–1727) shared the same teacher, John Blow, as his older contemporary Henry Purcell (to whom Lovelady's Psalm 104 setting pays homage), and like him he was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and Organist of Westminster Abbey. Most of Croft's music is forgotten, but his hymn tune to *O God, our help in ages past* is still a firm favourite and his Burial Sentences which opened the service have been sung at the funeral of every British sovereign since George II. The *Russian Kontakion* – brought into the Anglican repertoire in its arrangement by St George's organist Sir Walter Parratt over a hundred years ago – reminded us of the Duke's background in the Orthodox Church. Another St George's organist, Sir William Harris – piano teacher to the young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret – composed one of the organ preludes before the service. His friend and Windsor colleague Canon Edmund Fellowes was the first to edit William Smith's Responses from the early seventeenth century which we heard skilfully arranged for four voices (there were five in the original) by former St George's Assistant Organist Roger Judd.

And what of our superb quartet of voices? Tom Lilburn, Nicholas Madden, and Simon Whiteley, lay clerks in St George's Choir, were joined by another member of the St George's community, Miriam Allan (married to their colleague Richard Bannan, I directed the choir at their wedding) . . . Luke Bond was the impeccable organist who knew just how to match his instrument to the four voices . . . James Vivian, St George's Organist and Choirmaster, directed the music but did far more than that, in drawing together the threads of the tapestry to make the funeral, planned in the midst of a pandemic, the 'austere yet eloquent' tribute to the Duke that it was recognised to be by the *Sunday Times* music critic Hugh Canning. In *The Spectator* the eminent composer Sir James MacMillan described it as having 'a gentle but huge impact' on those who witnessed it.

Others better qualified than I am will, I hope, have commented on the splendid contribution to the day made by the military contingents in the Castle precincts and the two eminent clergymen leading the service, but I have given you my musician's-eye view. So I, at least, have mentioned the music.

John

PS How right Sebb [the author of a comment on JR's blog] is to point out my failure to mention the lovely Bach chorale prelude on *Schmücke dich* which began the thoughtfully chosen sequence of organ pieces preceding the service, and the magisterial C minor Prelude and Fugue – still embedded in my muscle memory from my organ-playing days – which followed after the service. Unfortunately they didn't form part of the service as broadcast (the prelude was faded out as the mourners left the chapel) so readers of the blog can't revisit them online, and a liturgiologist would tell you, rightly or wrongly, that organ voluntaries aren't part of a worship service as such, though I made it the custom in my Cambridge college when I was director of music to ask the congregation to remain in their places until the concluding voluntary was finished. BBC Radio 3 always broadcasts concluding voluntaries in full after choral evensongs, television channels do not. But please, sir, of course I was serious in writing what I did. And, for the record, I believe Bach to be the greatest of composers.

The lone piper, whose contribution was atmospheric and poignant, deserved mention too. My ear just wishes that bagpipes were tuned to A 440 rather than between the cracks of modern pitches! I suppose it places them in a world of their own, which is rather lovely.

John Rutter

As anyone who has spent any time thinking about the music for a wedding or a funeral will know, there is something of an art to planning a service. The Duke of Edinburgh's funeral at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, last Saturday, must have gone through some fairly drastic last-minute changes due to Covid restrictions, not least in the number of singers allowed and the make-up of those singers (usually the choir would be led by a row of trebles). But the outcome was a beautifully balanced service of music and readings which was at once solemn, majestic and intimate.

It's also worth sparing a thought for the four singers, director of music and organist. This is no easy gig – the eyes and ears of the world are upon you, and as anyone who has performed in public in any field will be able to tell you, when you are under pressure things can go wrong. Every 't' needs to be crossed, every 'i' dotted beforehand, to create that safety net of security that allows you to perform at your best and most relaxed. It's a feeling that many singers in church choirs across the country will be able to relate to, as over the past few months, the pandemic has meant a reduction in the number of singers allowed at services, resulting in many choirs fielding solo singers or trios, many of whom will have been singing quite out of their comfort zone. It's one thing performing Britten's Jubilate Deo as part of a big choir – you know if you have a rogue moment that someone else will be there to carry the line. Being the only one responsible for a line in a choir carries a surprisingly high level of responsibility.

Which made it all the more impressive the quality of the singing from the three members of St George's Chapel Choir and soprano Miriam Allen. When you put together a quartet such as this there is more to consider than just getting your four 'best' singers. Will the voices work well together? Do the voice types complement each other? Most of the singers at the funeral have sung together before in other professional choirs, which will no doubt have helped. The result was a beautifully balanced sound, but one that director James Vivian was able to let loose on several occasions, resulting in some really exciting, as well as moving singing.

And then the music, all chosen by the Duke of Edinburgh himself. Two of the pieces were pieces commissioned by the Duke: Benjamin Britten's Jubilate in C was one of two Matins canticles he commissioned – Britten was given the instructions not to make it too dreary and drudgelike, and the result has entered the canon of church music, being performed all over the world by many choirs. In typical Britten fashion, it wears its learning lightly, and is considerably easier to sing than it might at first appear – a facet that endears it to directors of music considerably!

The second piece, Psalm 104, by guitarist and composer William Lovelady, was written for the Duke's 75th birthday, and is a dramatic piece, with considerable demands placed upon the tenor soloist.

It is perhaps not always known how many church musicians spend their time arranging and composing their own music, much of which is never published, or flows around the church 'underground' music scene, popping up in churches and cathedrals here and there, often in manuscript form, composed not for money, but to fill a particular space in a service, or serve a particular purpose. This was in evidence here too – as well as arranging Lovelady's Psalm 104 for four solo voices and organ, director James Vivian also arranged the hymn, 'Eternal Father, strong to save'. This would normally be sung con belto by the whole congregation, but Vivian's sensitive arrangement made a virtue out of a necessity and created a much more intimate presentation of the words. One of his Vivian's predecessors at the Chapel, Roger Judd, had done something similar with William Smith's Responses – sung daily as part of Evensong by the choir – modifying them to fit words appropriate to a funeral service.

Take, if you will, in your mind, the prospect of singing in front of millions of people on live TV and magnify it tenfold, and your are probably approaching the magnitude of task set to Luke Bond, the organist for the service. Multiple pieces of music, multiple styles, the need to get all the notes right – and there are a lot of them – whilst barely looking at your music, because you need to be focused on the conductor, who you can only see on a small television screen. Playing the organ for any service is no easy job. Bond has prior experience in this – he played for the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle – but it cannot be overstated what a lot there is to think about and the amount of preparation (over many years) that goes into being able to accomplish such a feat. Bond is a fairly relaxed character, and his Facebook feed at the end of the day simple read 'Thank you for all the good wishes, very kind and each one meant a lot. Deepest condolences to HM and the family.' If anyone deserved a gin and dubonnet at the end of the day, it was organist.

Luke Bond

Finally, a return to the start of the service, and composer William Croft's setting of the funeral sentences. Beautiful in themselves, it seems that he something of a crisis of confidence in the midst of writing, conscious of the greatness of his predecessor Henry Purcell's setting of the same sentences for the funeral of Queen Mary. When the music reaches the setting of 'Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts' Croft defers to Purcell, with a note in the manuscript along the lines of 'Mr Purcell has written by far the best setting of these words, and I don't presume to do better than he can – just sing his setting'!

The music sung at the funeral:
Burial Sentences, arr. William Croft
Eternal Father, Strong to Save – J. B. Dykes, William Whiting, arr. James Vivian
Jubilate in C – Benjamin Britten
Psalm 104 – William Lovelady, Sam Dyer, arr. James Vivian
The Lord's Prayer, Music by Robert Stone

Jonathan Wikeley

The Organ of Nelson Cathedral
Organ 3 in Ian Carson's Organ Quiz for travelling nerds

New Zealand's two oldest cities are in the South Island - not as you might expect in the more populated North Island. Christchurch was the first, named after Christ Church Oxford (by a man called Godley!) and Nelson the second, after Britain's greatest Admiral (a city founder served under 'kiss me' Hardy). Nelson is relatively small and situated at the northern end of the island in the most wonderful seaside location.

The cathedral organ was originally built by TC Lewis of London in 1871 and shipped to Nelson. It was housed in the first (confusingly named!) 'Christ Church' cathedral, but both the cathedral and the organ have been rebuilt several times, with the present cathedral started in 1925 following an earthquake. However the work stalled several times due to world events, and the concept was re-thought, with the relocated 2500 pipe organ rebuild being completed in 1970 by the South Island Organ Company (SIOC) of New Zealand. (That company has links with the West of England in that one of the two founders came from Osmond, the former Taunton organ builders.) The present organ has three manuals, is electro-pneumatic with 49 speaking stops, and has an elevated console on the opposite side of the chancel. The cathedral has a choir which sings cathedral music in the Anglican tradition.

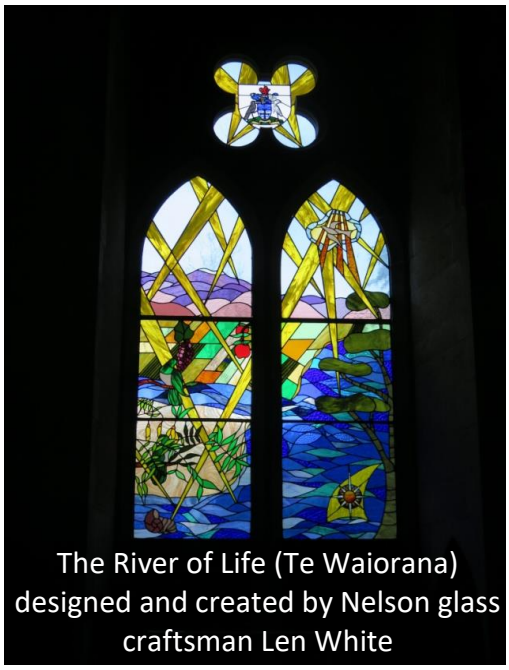
SIOC suffered a tragic loss of three employees in 2011. They were in a team of eight disassembling the organ of Durham St. Methodist Church damaged by the earthquake in Christchurch NZ when the church was hit by an aftershock.

The Nelson organ rebuild of 1970 was one of the 1968-founded company's earliest commissions. The wooden case is like no other.

The following information about the organ case and the construction of the cathedral was kindly supplied by John Hargreaves of the SIOC.

"The case of the organ is made of NZ Rimu timber and was designed by Ronald Muston, whose firm Structon Group were the architects of the newer part of the cathedral (transepts, chancel, sanctuary, vestries and tower) built in the 1960s of ferro-concrete mixed with ground Takaka marble to look like the local Takaka marble of which the nave is constructed. The organ rebuild was begun by John Lee (formerly Rushworth & Dreaper) around 1965, but after delivery problems the contract was relet to South Island Organ Co. who started again in 1969 and completed the organ in 1970 inside the already constructed case. The wind for the organ comes up inside two of the legs of the case."

The cathedral itself was finally completed and consecrated, after a number of false starts, in 1972, in a prominent position at the head of the aptly named Trafalgar St. Its design, with a skeletal tower, was the source of much controversy at the time, but the building was completed with the possibility of earthquakes in mind. It contains several stained glass windows whose images reflect creation in New Zealand



The River of Life (Te Waiorana) designed and created by Nelson glass craftsman Len White

When we visited the cathedral we were puzzled by the numerous pairs of shoes set out on the steps leading up to it. Each pair belonged to a young person who had taken their own life - sobering to think that a country as advanced as NZ has the highest suicide rate among the young in the developed world.

If you, like me, decide to ascend Takaka Hill to see the marble from which the cathedral is built, please stick to the paths. Its 'Karst' geology means that it is full of sinkholes and caves (featured in the film of 'Lord of the Rings'), and if you fall down one it won't take you into Alice's Wonderland!

Ian Carson

Ian amongst the rocks of Takaka Hill

Iveta Apkalna's Pipe Dreams - Sunday evenings on BBC Radio 3

The last 2 episodes of this 3-part series about organ music are still available on i-player

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000tw5z featuring *The Rev'd Mustard, his Installation Prelude*, played by James McVinnie, Acting Assistant Director of Music, Exeter Cathedral

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000v7zh featuring *Organ Concerto 1* (2nd movt)
by Josef Rheinberger,
played by Peter King with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, conductor François-Xavier Roth

Forthcoming Event

NB, 8th July 2021 **Exe River cruise on the *Tudor Rose*.**

Buffet supper, cash bar.

Departs Exmouth Quay 6:45pm,

returns 9:45pm

Tickets £12:50 per person
(limited to one guest per member)

The Tudor Rose on the Exe

Nerdy Corner

The pairs of letters below are the last two letters of the first and last names of a composer, or of a collection. Name the composers/collection

eg: **-RD -ER RICHARD WAGNER**
-ER -NG CLAVIER ÜBUNG

-HN	**-EY**	**-EL**	**-EY**
-AS	**-NS**	**-LE**	**-NS**
-ED	**-NS**	**-IS**	**-NC**
-RE	**-LY**	**-AM**	**-ME**
-UY	**-ET**	**-AS**	**-IS**
-UY	**-TZ**	**-AN**	**-ZE**
-UY	**-TZ**	**-ES**	**-RE**
-NZ	**-ZT**	**-EL**	**-NÉ**
-AM	**-CE**	**-RE**	**-EU**
-UL	**-TH**	**-IS**	**-ND**

Nerdy Answers

April Nerd of the Month was won, for the second time, by Peter Parshall. Diane Walker also submitted a set of correct answers but after some helpful hints so, in the manner of "Round Britain Quiz", is awarded a mark of 90%

Organist 1

Master of the King's Music from 1934 until his death in 1941, **Sir Henry Walford Davies** was also musical adviser to the BBC. He became well loved by a wide public through his explanatory talks on music between 1924 and 1941. He was Organist of the Temple Church 1898-1923.

Building 8

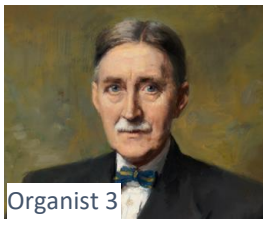
Designed to recall the circular Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the Nave of **The Temple Church (8)**, was consecrated in 1185 by the patriarch of Jerusalem. There are three other medieval round churches in England: Cambridge, Northampton and Little Maplestead (Essex). The Chancel is stylistically similar to its contemporary, the Trinity Chapel at Salisbury Cathedral, but got in first by a midge's whisker.

Organist 2

One of a cluster of stellar protégés of Christopher Robinson (including brother Nicholas, Andrew Millington, Adrian Partington, Stephen Darlington, etc, **Sir Stephen Cleobury** held important positions at Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, The BBC Singers and King's College Cambridge.

Building 12

King's College, Cambridge was founded in 1441 by Henry vi. To make way for his new college (he wanted to outdo William of Wykeham's foundations at Winchester & Oxford), the king destroyed houses, shops, lanes and wharves, and even a church in the centre of medieval Cambridge. Work was continued by Henry VII. The Chapel finished under Henry VIII is, together with The King Henry vii Chapel at Westminster Abbey, considered the climax of English Gothic.


Organist 3

Primarily a composer best known today for *The Canterbury Pilgrims* and the evening canticles in D and F, **Sir George Dyson** also held teaching posts at Wellington and Winchester Colleges and at the Royal College of Music, of which he was the Director. He co-founded the National Federation of Music Societies.

Building 7

Founded in 1883 as an alternative to the then inadequate Royal Academy of Music, the **Royal College of Music** is housed in a building by Sir Arthur Blomfield (1894). It is a significant feature of the area of South Kensington known as "Albertopolis". The College acquired a new Flentrop organ in 2018.

Organist 4

The Australian organist **Sir George Thalben Ball** was Birmingham City Organist from 1949-1983. He was also Organist at the Temple Church for almost 60 years. His choir was so disciplined that he was able to maintain the tradition of leading his choir from the organ loft. Such was his talent that, aged 19, he played the solo part in the first British performance of Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto* 3.

Building 11

Built to the design of Joseph Hansom (of Hansom cab fame) as a home for the **Birmingham** Triennial Festival, the **Town Hall**, (1834) was the first of the great Town Halls which would come to define Victorian civic architecture. Until the opening of Symphony Hall in 1991, the Town Hall was the home of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. It has seen many historic occasions, including world premieres of *Elijah* (conducted by the composer, Mendelssohn), *Requiem* (Dvořák), *The Dream of Gerontius* (Elgar), *Symphony* iii (Sibelius).

Organist 5

Sir Sydney Nicholson MVO (1875-1947) is now chiefly remembered as the founder of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) and the compiler of *The Parish Psalter*. Earlier in his career he was Organist at Eton College Lower Chapel, Carlisle & Manchester Cathedrals and at Westminster Abbey, which post he left to found the RSCM.

Building 1

The **RSCM** rents rooms in **Sarum College** (Salisbury). The main building dates from 1677 and, like many handsome buildings of the period, is attributed to Christopher Wren. From 1860-1994 it was home to the Salisbury (eventually Salisbury & Wells) Theological College. There are additions by William Butterfield (including the chapel), Randall Blacking and others. It is now a study and conference centre

Organist 6

Sir David Lumsden, at various times Organist and choirmaster, St Mary's Church, Nottingham; Director of Music and Rector Chori, Southwell Minster; Fellow and organist of New College, Oxford and lecturer in the faculty of music, University of Oxford; Principal of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD); Principal of the RAM

Building 10

Founded in 1379 by William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, as 'the college of St Mary of Winchester in Oxford', **New College** was the largest college in Oxford at that time. It very soon became known as New College to distinguish it from an earlier Oxford college (Oriel, founded 1326) also dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Organist 7

Sir Walter Alcock was Organist and Master of the Choristers of Salisbury Cathedral (1916-1947). He played the organ at the coronations of three kings: Edward VII (1902), George V (1911) and George VI (1937). He was a noted teacher and published an organ tutor, used by many young organists when first learning the organ, including the editor.

Building 2

Built between 1220-1258, following the move from Old Sarum, **Salisbury Cathedral** (like Wells) is a superb example of early English Gothic. Indeed, the two cathedrals are the first in England to be built entirely in the Gothic style. The only later addition at Salisbury is its celebrated spire, at 404' the highest in England.

Organist 8

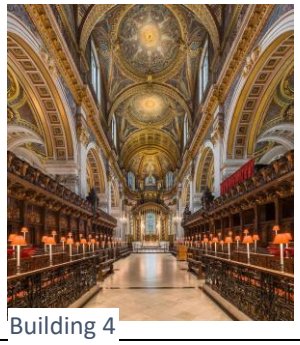
John Birch was organist at Chichester Cathedral for 24 years. His artistic partnership with Dean Hussey resulted in the commissioning of music by such as Leonard Bernstein, William, Walton, & Lennox Berkeley. On leaving Chichester Birch became Organist at the Temple Church and Curator of the RAH organ.

Building 9

Chichester Cathedral is a fine example of late Norman/early Gothic architecture. It is one of only two Cathedrals with a detached belfry (Chester is the other). The central tower is a Scott's replacement for its predecessor which fell dramatically in C19. It houses several examples of the work of leading artists of the mid/late C20.

Organist 9

Successively Choir boy, then Organist at St Paul's Cathedral, **Maurice Greene** became Organist of the Chapel Royal, Professor of Music at Cambridge University and Master of the King's Musick. His unfinished compilation Cathedral Music was finished by William Boyce. Many anthems in it are still sung in cathedrals today. He is best known for his anthems *Lord, let me know mine end*; *O God of my righteousness* & *Thou visitest the earth.*


Building 4

In 1669 Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to rebuild **St Paul's Cathedral** after the destruction of the medieval cathedral in the Great Fire (1666). The design evolved over several years and the final stone was placed on the lantern in 1708. Together with Blenheim Palace and the Royal Hospital Greenwich, St Paul's is considered one of the finest examples of English Baroque. The mosaics in the vault of the Quire were added 1891-1904.

Organist 10

Sydney Campbell was successively Organist at St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton, Ely Cathedral, Southwark Cathedral, Canterbury Cathedral and St George's Chapel Windsor Castle. He is credited with having remarked that the more eminent his appointments became, so the organs got worse!

Building 6

The church of the Order of the Garter, founded by Edward III, **St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle** was built 1475–1528. It is a virtuoso example of late English Gothic. Somehow the chapel contrives to look rather bigger than its actual small scale. Particularly notable is the elaborate lierne vault which is astonishingly flat, particularly for such a wide span.

Organist 11

David Flood was the Organist and Master of the Cathedral Choristers at Canterbury Cathedral, a position he held for 32 years. In 1978 he was appointed Assistant Organist at Canterbury Cathedral. He spent two years at Lincoln Cathedral from 1986, returning to Canterbury as Master of Choristers from 1988. He retired in 2020.

Founded in 597, **Canterbury Cathedral** is the seat of the leader of the Anglican communion. Archbishop Thomas Beckett was murdered in the cathedral (1170). The building is known for the largest Norman crypt in the UK, the introduction of Gothic in the Quire (1174), late C14 Nave & mid C15 central tower ("Bell Harry") by John Wastell (also builder of the fan vault at King's Cambridge)

Building 5

Organist 12

A Choral Scholar at King's College, Cambridge, Richard Runciman Terry eventually became Organist at Downside Abbey. It was when Terry directed the Downside choir at the opening of the new Benedictine church at Ealing Abbey that the Archbishop of Westminster, cardinal Herbert Vaughan decided that he would have Terry as his Master of Music at the newly built Westminster Cathedral. At Westminster he established a choral tradition of great merit, developing a repertoire of both Gregorian chant and polyphonic music and having a lasting influence on other choirs

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL was designed in Byzantine style by the architect Francis Bentley. It was begun in 1895, consecrated 1905. As was the fashion at the time, the organ is behind a screen rather than a case with display pipes. In fact the latter would have been a stylistically unsuitable as organs are unknown in the orthodox church. The mosaics inside the building were never finished, resulting in a cavernous interior which has an atmosphere all its own.

Building 3

Summer Cruise on the Exe Estuary

(The Presidents' Evening)

Thursday, 8th July, departing Exmouth Quay at 6:45pm, returning at 9:45pm

Buffet Supper; Cash Bar

Booking opens now. Please pay by cheque or by BACS. In either case, please return the form to Peter Johnson at:

Fairways
98, Beer Road
SEATON
EX12 2PU
e-mail: peteraj@talktalk.net

Please note that tickets initially are only available to members plus one guest per member. If there are places available after Thursday 3rd June, then booking will be open for additional guests. All bookings must be received by 24th June at the latest (for catering arrangements). The ticket price includes buffet supper

The Treasurer will acknowledge receipt of your booking by e-mail or by telephone

Summer Cruise on the Exe Estuary (The Presidents' Evening) Thursday, 8th July BOOKING FORM
Please reserve me 1 ticket (delete as appropriate) 2 tickets
Either: I attach a cheque payable to: "Exeter & District Organists Association" for £12:50 (delete as appropriate) £25:00 Or: I have paid £12:50, £25:00 (delete as appropriate) by BACS: account name: "Exeter & District Organists Association" (a club/association account) Bank: TSB Exmouth branch; Sort code: 30-93-15 Account number: 00759215
Any special dietary requirements (vegetarian, vegan, allergies):
Name (please print) Address Telephone number e-mail address (please PRINT)
Signature