



*Kent County Organists' Association*

*August 2018 Journal*



# *Kent County Organists' Association*

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*THE KENT COUNTY ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION welcomes new members with an interest in the organ and its music. Also those who enjoy visiting churches with appreciation of architecture and heritage. Membership of the Association is not based on the ability to play; we welcome equally those who enjoy listening, as well as those who enjoy playing.*

# President's Notes

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By Andrew Cesana

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AS I WRITE this page it has truly been majestic weather and it gives me a chance to reflect on my first year as President.

We were very fortunate indeed to have had Martin Baker from Westminster Cathedral as our Guest Speaker at the President's Dinner in September and there have certainly been memorable meetings since then.

There was a high attendance at St Mary's Parish Church, Ashford for the January meeting, which had an all French flavour with a recital by Brian Gipps, followed by a talk by the President on French Organ Music. The February meeting, organised by our Secretary, was also very enjoyable, with a talk on the history of Snodland Church and an organ demonstration by Dr Andrew Ashbee.

Although the March meeting at Dover had to be postponed, the London meeting proved to be particularly enjoyable, with visits to St John's Church, Kennington and St George's Cathedral, Southwark. Lionel Bourne at St John's treated us to an excellent demonstration of the *Willis/Walker* organ, and we look forward to returning to St John's when their new organ is built. Norman Harper treated us to an exceptional demonstration recital of the *John Compton* organ at St George's Cathedral: he is due to retire as Director of Music there in December.

May saw another agreeable visit, to East Peckham and Watlington, organised by David Shuker, and in June there was a

coach outing to Oxford, which saw visits to Merton, Exeter and Keble Colleges. It was the Association's first visit to Oxford since 1982.

The AGM took place at St Michael's Parish Church, Sittingbourne on 21st July, which included a first-class demonstration of the *William Hill* organ by Patti Whaley. Brian Moore was appointed as President Emeritus in recognition of his long service to the Association, joining in the late 1940s, soon after the *KCOA* was founded. Brian is in distinguished company, as Dr Robert Ashfield and Reg Adams are the only two previous members to have attained this exalted position. Brian thanked the meeting for bestowing such an honour and was much moved by the occasion. Also, may I congratulate Michael Cooke on his election as President Elect and David Shuker as Deputy President and welcome Malcolm Hall to the Committee. We do still need more people to come forward onto the Committee; it normally involves two Committee meetings a year, one in January and one July.

So what of the future plans? Next season will start on Saturday 15th September with the President's Buffet Supper at the Coniston Hotel, Sittingbourne at 7.30pm. There will also be visits to the Deal area in October and Leigh, near Tonbridge, in November. The Competition will be held on Saturday 16th March 2019 at All Saints' Maidstone, with the adjudicator being Dr David Flood. There will also be a London visit in April, so watch this space. Our next Coach outing will include a visit to Romsey Abbey on Saturday 8th June 2019, so please book that in your Diaries.

I hope that you will all have an enjoyable summer.

# Review of recent Meetings

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## Ashford, St Mary's Parish Church

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GRANTED a charter in 1243 by King Henry III, to hold markets for livestock, Ashford quickly grew as an important agricultural market town. Its Parish Church of St Mary still retains pride of place in this historic town centre, with its impressive tower visible some distance from the surrounding countryside, defying the architectural modernity beginning to encroach on the town's ring roads. The church, with its central tower and cruciform ground plan design, retains its graveyard encir-



*J W Walker, St Mary's Ashford* Photo C. Jilks

led by a boundary footpath with quaint medieval timber framed cottages, their gaily painted front doors opening directly on to the path, but all standing quietly closed, modestly concealing their inner mysteries, adding to their charm.

The history of St Mary's Church can be traced to the Anglo-Saxon period when it belonged to the monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury. Following the dissolution of the monastery in the 16th century, the church passed to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury. The earliest part of the present church is in the south aisle, where the west end wall is believed to be part of the Saxon church. In c1200 the church was greatly enlarged with the addition of a new nave to the north and a tower at its west end. A chancel was also added at this time, although the present chancel is thought to date from c1320. The Victorians, as was their wont, removed the ancient box pews and font from the nave in 1858, replacing them with more conventional pews, but retaining the nave galleries. Very recently the nave has undergone further changes with pews removed completely, replaced by stacking chairs and a raised platform, installed together with a nave altar. This has produced a multifunctional space which is used for concerts and other town activities, as well as normal services.

We were welcomed to the church last January by Bryan Gipps, St Mary's Organist and Director of Music, who outlined the history of the church and the organ, bringing it to life with bounding enthusiasm and exuberance.

The organ, situated in the north transept, dates from 1871 and is by J W



*J W Walker, St Mary's Ashford, Pedal reeds*

*Photo C. Jilks*

*Walker & Sons*, an instrument which was soon enlarged by *Walker* in 1886, but retaining its mechanical actions. It remained little changed until it was rebuilt in 1962, with electro-pneumatic actions and a new console, by *N P Mander Ltd*. Because of its position in the north transept, the organ lacked sufficient tonal projection to satisfactorily support a full nave congregation and *Mander* installed a new nave organ with eight manual and three Pedal stops in the nave's gallery: this is playable on either the Choir manual or Great manual of the new console. Interestingly, the Great 16-8-4 reed chorus is also available on both Great and Choir manuals by drawing reeds on Choir or reeds on Great stops.

Tonally, the organ retains its 1871 heritage with warm diapasons, flutes and unforced mixtures. Reeds are rich and colourful, tonal qualities, which in the choir and sanctuary, are bold and vibrant. Also the additional Pedal 16-8-4 reeds add to a telling Pedal section. Alas, the central tower of the church, with its massive masonry supports,

rather divides the church into separate isolated sections: chancel, nave, north and south transepts. Although the organ is positioned in the north transept, where it can speak quite well into the chancel, for those seated in the nave, the organ sounds uncomfortably distant, lacking tonal colour and robbed of its splendour. The 1962 *Mander* nave organ on the other hand, although only consisting of eight manual stops and three Pedal stops, sounds bold and clear, speaking from its elevated gallery position.

The organ's specification is: *Great Organ, 8 8 8 8 4 4 4 2 2/3 2 111*; *Swell Organ, 8 8 8 8 8 4 2 1v 16 8 8 4*; *Choir Organ, 8 8 4 2 2/3 2 13/5*; *Nave Organ, 8 8 8 4 4 2 111 8*; *Pedal Organ, 32 16 16 16 8 8 4 4 16 16 8 4*; *Nave Pedal Organ, 16 8 4*. There are Swell Sub and Super octave couplers with generous manual and pedal couplers and pistons.

Bryan Gipps demonstrated the organ for us playing: *Prelude in G from Book Two Op.109* by C Saint-Saëns; *Pastorale in C major* by Lefébure-Wély; *Toccata from Twelve Pieces* by T Dubois; *Nazard*



*St Mary's Ashford, Chancel* Photo C Jilks

from *Suite Française* by Langlais; *Cinq Offertoires* from "Heures Mystiques" Op 29 by Léon Boëllmann; finishing with "Carillon de Westminster" from *Suite No 3 Op.54* by L Vierne.

Following Bryan's delightfully stimulating demonstration the organ was available for members to view and try before tea was served for us by the St Mary's ladies in the nave, enhancing our already enjoyable visit.

Following tea our President, Andrew Cesana, gave an illustrated talk on French organs and organists. The CD recordings he played were: *4 Versets* by Gabriel Nivers, played by Daniel Roth at Saint Sulpice Paris; *Noel No.10* by Louis Claude D'Aquin, played by Olivier Latry at Notre Dame Paris; *Sortie in Eb* by Louis J A Lefebure-Wély, played by François-Henri Houbart at La Madeleine Paris; *Toccata de la Liberation* by Léonce de Saint-

Martin, played by Anthony Hammond at La Madeleine Paris; *Sortie on Adeste Fideles (improvisation)* by Pierre Cochereau played by Pierre Cochereau at Notre Dame Paris.

We must thank Andrew for his talk and Bryan Gipps for arranging and providing us with such an interesting and pleasant visit to Ashford, especially his opening introduction and enjoyable playing.

## *Snodland, All Saints' Church*

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UNLIKE SOME honeyed, sweet-sounding English village names, Snodland cannot pretend to aspire to be amongst the most mellifluous. The Domesday Book refers to it as 'Esnoiland', although in a charter of 838AD it was 'Snoddingland', apparently cultivated land owned by someone called Snodd or Snodda.

Nevertheless, the Romans looked kindly upon Snodland, evidenced by the remains of a Roman Villa lying close to the river and All Saints' Church. When the church was first built in stone by the Normans in c1100, materials for All Saints' were scandalously pilfered from the abandoned Villa and today some Roman tiles and 'tufa' can still be seen in the older walls of the present building. The intervening centuries have not been kind to Snodland; sitting close to the river Medway, its original lush verdant banks gradually despoiled by centuries of industrial workings. Lime working had been carried out at Snodland for centuries, expanding significantly during the 19th century, as Victorian building dramatically grew. Paper-making came to Snodland in 1740 when the May family



*All Saints' Church, Snodland*

*Photo C Jilks*

built a mill, a business which was greatly expanded in 1854, and then, with the coming of the railway in the 1850s, Snodland's industrialised fate was irrevocably sealed.

Nevertheless, the grassy banks of the river can still be selectively enjoyed looking down to the river from All Saints' graveyard (averting one's eye from the large adjacent factory), and the now redundant industrial cement works sites are being gradually redeveloped for housing under a ten-year development plan by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

Visiting on 17 February, we were welcomed to the church by Dr Andrew Ashbee, who has been associated with Snodland Church since he was a choirboy singing in the church choir in the late 1940s. Before retirement, he was Director of Music at Rochester Girls Grammar School, as well as organist of All Saints' Church. He is Chairman of Snodland Historical Society and Honorary Curator of Snodland Millennium Museum, and has published many books on the history of Snodland.

*Snodland & District through Time* is still available from book shops and online from Amazon.

Dr Ashbee presented a detailed illustrated talk on the church and its history, with many slides of now lost and war damaged stained glass, as well as more recent windows; also the evolving church architecture since the church was first built. However, before the talk Dr Ashbee demonstrated the organ for us playing: *Choral Prelude* on the hymn tune *Hollingside* by Alec Rowley, followed by *O Gott, du frommer Gott* by Brahms.

The organ, in a chancel chamber, is by the organ builder *S F Dalladay of Hastings* and dates from 1899. It has a simple case with plain unpainted zinc front pipes, the bass of the Great open diapason. Its specification is: *Great Organ, 8 8 8 4; Swell Organ, 8 8 8 8 4 8; Pedal Organ, 16*, with usual couplers and mechanical action. As demonstrated by Dr Ashbee in the Alec Rowley piece, the Swell organ has a set of beguiling strings, a clean diapason, principal and lieblich gedact topped by an 8ft 'Cor-Oboe'. The Great organ has a bold,





*Snodland All Saints', S F Dalladay* Photo C. Jilks

yet warm diapason, the late Victorian voicing continuing with the principal, hohl flute and dulciana; the Pedal has an unobtrusive, yet adequate, bourdon.

Following Dr Ashbee's demonstration the organ was available for members to try and following the publication of Patti Whaley's profile in our new *KCOA* February Journal, our Secretary, Rosemary Clemence, suggested Patti should be first to play. Play she did, stunningly capturing members' attention with the *Fugue* from J S Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C*. Then music by Brahms, *Herzlich thut mich verlangen*.

Many members tried the organ for themselves enjoying its colourful, if limited, specification. Others found much to attract their attention in the church, which was gaily decorated with banners and hangings, many produced by local school children, following the service the previous Sunday, the first for over twelve

months following a major restoration project which had kept the church closed for the year: numerous photographs were also on display showing the work being undertaken.

Of great interest was the memorial to Thomas Fletcher Waghorn, who died in 1850, and his wife Harriet who died in 1857. Thomas Waghorn, whose statue stands by the viaduct at Chatham, was a postal pioneer who developed a new overland postal route from Great Britain to India, dramatically minimizing the journey from 16,000 miles, via the Cape of Good Hope, to 6,000 miles, and reducing travel time from three months to about forty days.

Although some heating had been put on, a warm cup of tea was most welcome and the selection of sandwiches, sausage rolls and cakes proved as delightful on the palate as to the eye, all pleasantly served by the ebullient All Saints' ladies. We must especially thank Dr Ashbee for his playing and comprehensive talk, together with the other All Saints' members who kindly ensured the church was put at our disposal.



*Snodland All Saints' Chancel* Photo C. Jilks

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## *Kennington & Southwark*

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**K**ENNINGTON AND SOUTHWARK were once villages set in the picturesque county of Surrey just south of the Thames, a tranquillity soon to be subsumed into the spreading urban development of the early 19th century, laying down the street patterns we recognise today. Such was the development of London that Lord Salisbury's ministry passed the Local Government Act of 1888 reconstituting the administration of the counties, establishing the London County Council, which came into being in 1889.

Significant local landmarks include the Oval cricket ground, home of Surrey cricket, and the imposing Imperial War Museum. The Oval cricket ground was leased to Surrey County Cricket Club in 1845 from the Duchy of Cornwall, an arrangement which endures to this day, as do the legendary adjacent gasometers which were constructed in 1853.

However, our excursion in April was to visit two fine churches and their organs: St John the Divine, Kennington, and St George's Catholic Cathedral, Southwark. These are both magnificent buildings, although their organs, installed to replace instruments destroyed during the war, rather reflect the financial difficulties following the major reconstruction of these churches after the war.

With its richly decorated high church interior, St John the Divine was described by John Betjeman as "the most magnificent church in South London". It was designed by George



*Henry Willis - J W Walker* Photo C Jilks  
*Kennington*

Edmund Street and built between 1871 and 1874. Street was also the architect of the Royal Courts of Justice on the Strand, London.

Director of Music, Lionel Bourne, spoke of the busy musical activities of the church with both boys' and girls' choirs and some seven organ students being taught at present. The original *J W Walker* four-manual and pedal organ of 1875 must have been a fine instrument suitably voiced for Street's building, but following the major restoration of the church after the war a small *Henry Willis* organ was donated by Lord Hambleton, which was installed by *J W Walker* with many additions, creating, in 1958, a three-manual and pedal instrument of diversity and tonal colour. Its specification is: *Great Organ, 16 8 8 8 8 4 4 2 2/3 2 8; Swell Organ, 8 8 8 8 4 1 1 1 1 6 8 8; Choir Organ, 16 8 8 8 8 4 4 2 2/3 2 1 1 8; Pedal Organ, 16 16 16 8 8 4 16 16 8, with usual couplers.*



*St John the Divine, Kennington*

*Photo C Jilks*

Lionel demonstrated the organ for us playing *Organ Sonata No.2* by Felix Mendelssohn, its four beautifully played movements using every facet of the instrument. Its grand opening revealed the *Willis* and *Walker* tonal colours, which came together enhanced by the generous St John's acoustic. The mid-twentieth century additions ranged from a bold Great open diapason to lighter voicing, using extension work, on the 1958 Choir. This is not a powerful instrument, and can struggle with a large congregation and is now in need of a major overhaul, as the 1958 actions are beginning to deteriorate leaving missing notes and stops. Nevertheless, Lionel's playing had produced the very best from this organ, which was thoroughly enjoyed by our twenty members who were present. The organ was then made available for us to try, especially enjoy-



*St George's Cathedral* Photo C. Jilks

ing the *Walker* horseshoe stop-tab console.

There was time to find a light lunch before arriving at our second church of the day, St George's Cathedral, Southwark, situated a short distance from the Imperial War Museum. This imposing church is the Roman Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral for the Southern Province of England and it was rebuilt in 1953, following severe war damage, retaining many elements of Augustus Pugin's original building of 1848: interestingly, there were not sufficient funds to complete Pugin's original west tower and it therefore remains without its proposed spire to this day.

We were greeted by Norman Harper, St George's Director of Music, who outlined the musical work of the church and, of course the organ. Here, as at St John's, Kennington, there are boys' and girls' choirs who sing regularly with the men. The organ was installed in 1958 by



*John Compton organ west front* Photo C. Jilks



*Jim Bryant at the John Compton console*

*Photo C Jilks*

*John Compton* and consists of 19 ranks set in two 'Swell-box' chambers. As with all of *Compton's* designs these ranks are fully extended to produce some seventy-three stops, playable from the three manual and pedal drawstop console. The two chambers have more than one set of shutters, directing the organ's sound through a main chamber opening into the chancel and the other through a west arch to speak down the building.

Norman, without further introduction, retired to the console set at the east end of the church, hidden behind the choir pews and a screen. He played three pieces for us: *Tocatta & Fugue in D minor* by J S Bach; *Rhapsody No.1 in D flat major* by Herbert Howells; and *Symphonie No.6, final movement*, by Louis Vierne. Norman's playing was exemplary, capturing the vitality and excitement of these major works.

Compton's heavy pressure voicing produces telling full reeds, bold diapasons and singing flutes, even the strings are undeniably forthright, filling the cavernous building with sound. These many ranks, brought together at the

conclusion of the Bach, demonstrated the power of this formidable organ, a *tour de force*, an instrument that takes no prisoners, its thundering musicality like a foot-stamping trumpeting mastodon calling to distant mastodon across the murky mists of the primeval Thames marshes.

Nevertheless, during the time allowed for members to play it was interesting to discover more gentle ranks set in the choir division, with a beguiling vox angelica, dulciana and flutes. The three Great diapason ranks were beautifully graded with soft, medium and full voicing; these are, of course, fully extended to provide the principals, fifteenths and mixtures of the Great organ. Regrettably, as at Kennington, a few stops seemed not to be working and the Pedal contra bass 16ft, with its diaphone pipes, had only three notes working.

However, tea and biscuits were provided in the crypt before our journey home, which concluded a fascinating visit to south London and we must thank Andrew Cesana for arranging the day for us.

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## *East Peckham & Wateringbury*

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IT IS NOT unusual to find country parish churches isolated and far from their named villages. Such is the case at East Peckham, Kent, where the Parish Church of St Michael is some two miles from its village, its solitude exacerbated by the building of a new church in the village centre at East Peckham in the mid-1880s.

Set romantically high on a hilltop, surrounded by beech trees and a well maintained churchyard, looking out over the luminous beauty of the Kentish Weald, St Michael's now stands deserted, officialdom having declared its redundancy in 1973. Scandalously left to moulder for many years, the church was eventually passed into the care of the Churches Conservation Trust in 2004, who, in 2007, undertook major repairs to the



*St Michael's Nave* Photo C. Jilks

roof and church fabric to ensure the church remains weather-proof and structurally sound; it is open daily for visitors and is used for occasional services and concerts.

Originally Norman, it has been



*St Michael's Parish Church, East Peckham*

Photo C. Jilks



*Redundant Grandeur, Chancel St Michael's East Peckham*

*Photo C. Jilks*

enlarged and restored over many years, substantially during the 13th and 14th centuries, although there remains one Norman window in the chancel. The church has a number of memorials to the Twysden family dating from the late 1500s and early 1600s, and also brasses in memory of William and Mary Whetonhall set in the nave floor dating from 1539.

Visiting in May this year, the church presented a forlorn grandeur, the building bereft of hymn books and clerical trimmings and the human touch one associates with a fine church, the tiled floors scattered with a few dead leaves and dust brought in on the feet of visitors.

The church has an automatic time lock which opens the church between 10.00am and 4.00pm. Arriving at 2.00pm all was well and we were met by Margaret Lawrence, a local historian who has researched the history of St



*Chapel with The Twysden Monument  
erected in 1689* Photo C Jilks

Michael's Church, writing and producing an excellent illustrated book. Margaret spoke with great enthusiasm, highlighting the many historical facets of the building and former congregations, taking us into the old church porch, which contains some ancient graffiti markings.

The church still has an organ, although this is a small one manual *Casson Positive* instrument No.786 dating from the early 1920s. It originally had four stops: Diapason; Salicional; Gedact, and Dulcet. Alas, the Diapason pipes have disappeared from the back of the organ during the years the church has been closed. Nevertheless, speaking into a generous acoustic, the organ sounded bright and bold supported by a manual 16ft sub-bass bottom octave. Although originally blown by foot pedals (like a harmonium) it now has an electric blower, and used for hymn accompani-



*Casson Positive organ No.786* Photo C Jilks





*Positive organ name plate* Photo C.Jilks

ment or simple pieces, the organ sounds well.

Members were able to explore the church and try the organ – even the original church reed organ stored in the vestry, which Margaret Lawrence had drawn our attention to.

Leaving St Michael's, its forlorn demeanour bearing witness to a now lost generation, we made our way to Wateringbury and the Parish Church of St John the Baptist. This ancient church, which is wider than it is long, with monuments and memorials dating from the 1600s, is a busy bustling church. We were welcomed by Barry Fisher, husband of organist Hilary, who spoke of the church history and the organ, which was overhauled in 2008. This *Norman Bros & Beard* organ is set in a west gallery, inexplicably festooned with banners and children's soft toys. The 2-manual and pedal organ dates from 1893 with mechanical key action and a pneumatic pedal, has a specification of: *Great Organ, 8 8 8 4 4; Swell Organ, 16 8 8 8 4 2 8 8; Pedal Organ, 16, with usual couplers.*

David Shuker, who had kindly arranged the meeting, demonstrated the organ for us with: *Basse de Trompette* by Boyvin and *Toccata in F* by Buxtehude.

Speaking clearly into the church, with its barrelled roof, the organ presented bold bright choruses with colourful reed stops, the Swell Cornopean lower octaves sounding particularly well in the Boyvin.

There was then time for members to try the organ and explore the church before we made our way to the village centre to find "*Where Memories Meet*", a tea rooms and memorabilia shop. In a lower room our nineteen members sat around a large rounded table in stately fashion – like Knights of the Round Table - where large teapots were provided to accompany our cream tea. We were fortunate to find this venue as our meeting had clashed with a certain Royal wedding at Windsor, making arrangements difficult; we must thank David Shuker for arranging this interesting meeting for us in the heart of Kent.



*Norman Bros & Beard organ* Photo C.Jilks

# Three Oxford Colleges

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## Merton, Exeter & Keble

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VISITING THE Oxford Colleges of Merton, Exeter and Keble in June one is tempted to paraphrase Jane Austen's opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a fine college chapel, in possession of a good legacy, must be in want of a new organ".

The full financial circumstances surrounding these college chapels has not been revealed, but their propensity to keep abreast of the contemporary organ scene cannot be denied, all having new and exceedingly fine organs; perhaps at Exeter College the *Walker* instrument, dating from 1994, is a little older, but all are worthy examples of the quality of modern organ building. Interestingly, only one was completely new, two retaining original Victorian organ cases.

With our coach arriving early, members had time to negotiate the cobbled streets and enjoy the ancient architecture of Oxford before gaining entry to our first college of the day: Merton College.

### Merton College

THIS IS THE OLDEST college chapel in Oxford, its chancel dating from 1294 when its impressive east window was completed; its two transepts were built in the late 14th century and early 15th century. A proposed nave was never built, which rather limits the spaciousness and grandeur that might have been. However, set against, what would



*Merton College Dobson Organ* Photo C.Jilks

have been the nave arch, is the new *Dobson* organ, built by *Dobson Pipe Organ Builders of Iowa, USA* and installed in 2013 in readiness for the College's 750th celebrations in 2014. The organ's visually spectacular free-standing case, with its polished tin front pipes and American white oak casework, contains an organ of some forty-four ranks playable from its three manuals and pedals.

We were welcomed to Merton by their Director of Music, Benjamin Nicholas, who outlined the history of the chapel and the new organ. It replaced a 1968 neo-Baroque instrument by *J W Walker*, which was itself a replacement for an earlier organ: it has been said that the chapel's original three-manual and pedal organ of 1860



*Merton College Chapel 1294* Photo C.Jilks

by *William Hill & Sons* should never have been removed.

Before demonstrating the organ, Benjamin revealed more about the tonal design and final voicing of the new organ, which took four months. It is tonally balanced to be ideally heard half way down the chancel, by the lectern, which is where the choir sings. This requires the organ's sound to negotiate the chancel arch and Christopher Wren's screen, and indeed, heard in the chancel, the organ presents a remarkably balanced tonality. The music chosen by Benjamin for his demonstration was Bach's *St Anne Fugue in E flat BWV 552* and *Parry's Fantasia in G*, both pieces stunningly played proving to be the musical highlight of our day.

Members were then allowed to explore the organ for themselves with

its superbly balanced mechanical actions and thirty-two note radiating concave pedalboard (no straight continental boards here). The tonal balance at the console is markedly different from the chancel. Heard at the keyboard the Great diapasons, especially the No.1, are uncomfortably strident, with flutes and strings seeming to lack warmth, although the reeds, brushed with their French nuances, are agreeably colourful. Undoubtedly, the department choruses are well balanced within themselves, with stops displaying a crisp character and colour. However, just in front of the organ is not the place to be and an organist needs to judge carefully the organ's balance heard in the chapel's chancel.

The organ has created much interest with recitals given by many notable organists, including: John Scott, who gave the opening recital, James



*Exeter College Walker organ* Photo C.Jilks



*A tranquil Merton College*

*Photo C. Jilks*

O'Donnell, Thomas Trotter, Martin Baker, Olivier Latry and Daniel Hyde, who, during the academic year 2014/2015, played the complete works of J S Bach in a series of twenty-one recitals. Undoubtedly, even a seasoned organ observer will find it difficult not to be beguiled by the organ's beauty and initial sound, with a wide-ranging versatility lending itself to much of the organ repertoire; although English music of the late Victorian/Edwardian period of Elgar or Parry does perhaps require a more imaginative ear. Those of an overtly English persuasion, seeking a deeply sumptuous Elgarian richness, could feel a little disappointed, but ideally seated in the chancel, there is no music genre beyond the reach of this instrument.

We were reluctant to leave this fascinating organ and chapel, but lunch beckoned before our arrival at Exeter College.

### *Exeter College*

ENTERING THE COLLEGE, with the Porter supervising and checking we

were the expected Kent County Organists, the chapel forms part of the quadrangle. This modest Victorian building, designed by Gilbert Scott, has housed only two organs during its lifetime. The first built for the chapel by *William Hill*, was a two manual and pedal instrument, which was then enlarged to a three manual by *William Hill & Son* in 1891/2. The organ continued to serve the Chapel for another hundred years, undergoing a second enlargement in 1965 until it was finally retired from service in 1991.

The present organ, built by *JW Walker & Son Ltd* in 1994 set in the west gallery, graciously retains the decorated façade pipes from the original *William Hill* organ, although its French Romantic tonal design is far removed from its English appearance and, interestingly, is the only organ in either Oxford or Cambridge to be designed in the style of the French organ builder *Aristide Cavallé-Coll*.

This two-manual and pedal organ has a responsive mechanical key action, with electric stop and combination actions, together with a terraced stop console

and French playing aids, ventils and tirasses, which can be used in place of conventional pistons and couplers. Its inaugural recital was given on 30th April 1994 by Olivier Latry, who described it very kindly as: "A French organ but speaking with an English accent". It was fully overhauled in 2007, with the addition of an expanded memory system and sequencer in 2013.

We were warmly welcomed to the college by Organ Scholar, James Short, who was one of our *Kent County Organists' Competition* winners. James gave an outline of the organ and its unusual tonal design, before demonstrating it for us by playing: *Prelude and Fugue in G* by J S Bach and Couperin's *Dialogue on the Trompette and Cromhorne*. In contrast to the *Dobson* organ at Merton College, we were presented with a lush tonal warmth, conveyed with articulation and clarity.



*Tickell-Ruffatti, Keble College* Photo C.Jilks

The Grand Orgue has a Montre 8ft, which is a generously scaled stop with a low cut-up, (a gently blown, tubby diapason) its unforced sumptuous character providing the foundation colour of the organ. There are also two 8ft flutes on this manual, a Flûte Harmonique and a stopped wood and metal Bourdon. The department is completed with two 4ft stops, a 2ft and mixture lv-vl, topped with 16ft and 8ft reeds.

The Récit Expressif manual has flutes, strings, a cornet mixture 11 and three reeds: Trompette 8ft, Basson hautbois 8ft and Voix humaine 8ft, which sound delightfully French to English ears. The Pédale has two 16ft stops, three 8ft and one 4ft stop, together with an effective Bombarde 16ft and Trompette 8ft.

This is an enjoyable organ with its tonal warmth, colour, character and clarity, an instrument beautifully voiced for the chapel; it can fill the building, yet never shouts. James' playing was a delight, with its lilting musicality and expressive articulation, his excellent choice of music perfectly suited to the organ. There was just time for members to climb into the organ loft to explore and try things for themselves before again, reluctantly, tearing ourselves away, we set out to find Keble College, which is just a little further out from Oxford's centre.

## *Keble College*

WITH UNATTENDED PORTER'S Gates and the college open to the public for the afternoon, we were allowed to enter and take in the imposing view of a vast quadrangle, complete with manicured lawns, set before William Butterfield's resplendent Victorian chapel. Internally, this lofty spacious building, completed in 1876, is an Aladdin's cave of rich decorative

mosaics, tiling and brickwork. Its original organ, built by *William Hill*, had a case designed by the architect, and it is said that Butterfield personally supervised the execution of the stencilled decoration of the front pipes.

Thankfully, this case was retained to house the new 2011 *Kenneth Tickell* organ. Sadly, the *Hill* organ, although undergoing a number of rebuilds over the years had, by 1980, fallen into serious disrepair (who was caring for it one might ask?). Earlier proposals for a new organ did not reach fruition, and from 1992 - 2011 the chapel music relied on an electronic instrument.

*Kenneth Tickell's* new 2011 organ, a 4-manual and pedal instrument of forty-three speaking stops, was designed to be in sympathy with its Victorian surroundings. *Kenneth Tickell*, speaking not long before his tragic death in 2014, at the age of fifty-seven, said that his organ was voiced to be innately entwined with the art and architecture of the late nineteenth century; the tonal scheme having a fundamentally late nineteenth-century focus, but with the flexibility to satisfy a wide repertoire and to support the choral tradition of the chapel. It displayed some influence from *William Hill's* work, which included several typical *Hill* ranks: the stopped and open wood flutes; the cone Gamba on the Great; the Swell Cornopean; the pedal Mixture with its reedy tierce rank, and the wooden Trombone.

As followers of *Tickell's* work will confirm, he would not have intended this organ to be a period reconstruction, but a contemporary instrument designed to fulfil the requirements of a distinguished chapel.

As the Director of Music, Matthew Martin, was fully engaged, we were welcomed to the chapel by Organ Scholar



*Keble College Chapel* Photo C. Jilks

Aine Kennedy, speaking briefly about the organ. Apparently, its tonal voicing had been deemed too 'woolly' for the chapel and in 2016 *Fratelli Ruffatti* of Padua, Italy, had been engaged to completely re-voice the instrument, seeking a "singing brilliance". There is no doubt that this Italian organ builder has a well-regarded international reputation, but in following Keble's request there now remains little of *Kenneth Tickell's* tonal work, perhaps the Great diapason, stopped diapason and pedal mixture, but the overall tonal voice of the organ is now *Fratelli Ruffatti*.

Aine Kennedy climbed into the organ loft to demonstrate the organ for us. Alas, we heard just a few brief bars from the 1st movement of Widor's *6th Symphony* and a Bach *Prelude in A major*, before she had to take her departure. Nevertheless, the instrument was very kindly made available to us and mem-



*William Butterfield's resplendent Victorian chapel, Keble College* Photo C.Jilks

bers scaled the narrow spiral stairs to avail themselves of this interesting organ.

*Tickell's* comfortable four-manual and pedal console, with its light responsive mechanical action, remains little changed, retaining stop name engraving with the only visible indication of changes being a new *Fratelli Ruffatti* name label added to the right hand side of the upper key-slip, opposite *Kenneth Tickell's* original.

However, the organ's voicing now has something of Merton's new *Dobson* instrument, but where Merton's organ is required to be bright and articulate within an ancient chapel of many parts, Keble's William Butterfield's chapel is a simple oblong box, highly ornate perhaps, but lacking the gargoyle nooks and crannies of Gothic architecture which produce a softer acoustic. The re-voiced organ undoubtedly remains colourful and articulate, but with a sound which can soon become fatiguing on the ear. Alas, the penchant of some *KCOA* members for full organ, with reed and mixtures tones bouncing from wall to wall like bullets, was perhaps not an honest demonstration of this instrument, only when individual ranks and more prudently selected stop combina-

tions were tried, were the more attractive aspects of the organ revealed and appreciated. Nevertheless, setting aside any personal preference or bias, this is a fine well balanced instrument with a versatility and tonal brilliance lending itself to a wide ranging organ repertoire.

This had been a fascinating day in Oxford, members traveling home with a paean of praise on their lips for these three equally fine, yet very different organs. These are organs which must surely have eradicated any member's lingering tonal myopia, set, as they are, in three very different chapel acoustics, requiring a markedly different design from each organ builder; their success judged on how well they speak within their respective chapels.

Sadly, we were not to hear *Kenneth Tickell's* original organ, which would have been a fascinating experience: it would be interesting to hear from any members who have. Nevertheless, we must thank our President, Andrew Cesana, for arranging this enjoyable thought-provoking visit to Oxford, allowing us access to instruments which would not normally be available to the general public.

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## *Sittingbourne, St Michael's Parish Church & AGM*

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IT IS SOME eight years since we last visited Sittingbourne. We discovered there is now much activity at its main line railway station, with its approach being given a major redesign requiring complete chaotic closure to traffic while work is undertaken. Thankfully, St Michael's Church is situated on the High Street, the old Roman road stretching from London to Canterbury, a cunningly straight ancient highway which once abounded with coaching inns echoing to the coachman's call, summoning the ostler for a speedy change of horses. But no longer, few of these historic inns remain, the High Street's medieval timber framed buildings now hidden behind modern shop fronts catering to a very different clientele.

Nevertheless, St Michael's Parish Church seems to stand in defiance against these all-embracing changes, its interior presenting a light welcoming face with its ancient stained glass glowing in the afternoon sunshine. The scene was set for our AGM with a top table ready for our KCOA Officers. With some thirty members present, the AGM seemed to pass unusually smoothly, with our Treasurer, Kevin Grafton, reporting a healthy balance, and our Secretary, Rosemary Clemence's equally reassuring report that some 98% of members are now on email, making her job eminently easier. Our President, Andrew Cesana, gave a report of the past year and forthcoming



*William Hill & Son 1881* Photo C. Jilks

aspirations, before Michael Cooke was appointed as President Elect, David Shuker became a Deputy President and Malcolm Hall was welcomed to the committee. Rob Miller gave an in-depth report of the plans for our 2019 Organ Competition. Lastly, and most importantly, Brian Moore was appointed as President Emeritus following his long service to the Association since the late 1940s, soon after the KCOA was founded. Brian joins the distinguished ranks of Dr Robert Ashfield and Reg Adams, the only two members to have previously attained this exalted position. With graceful modesty, Brian thanked the meeting for bestowing such an honour and was much moved by the occasion.

Following our AGM, Deputy President,



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Colin Jilks, spoke briefly on the history of organ. The three-manual and pedal *William Hill & Son* organ was built in 1881, but not for St Michael's Church. It was built for the Chapel of Dunecht House, Aberdeenshire, where the 25th Earl of Crawford had consulted with the eminent Victorian organist Walter Parratt – later to become Master of the Queen's Musick – regarding its tonal design. However, the Earl's health suffered a serious decline and he was sent abroad to warmer climes to recover; alas, he died whilst at Florence and consequently the organ was never installed. It was subsequently advertised for sale in the *Musical Times*, and Rev W H Dyson, of St Michael's Church, made arrangements for its purchase and installation at a cost of some £600.

It was built with mechanical actions throughout and remained hand blown until 1948, with the arrival of an electricity supply. It served well until 1928 when it was rebuilt with exhaust-pneumatic actions and a new console, featuring the modern 45% stop jams and pistons. An additional 16ft pedal stop was added as well as a Swell vox angelica set on a floating wind chest suspended in the Swell. The instrument remained relatively untouched until 1976 when it was cleaned and overhauled by *Hill Norman & Beard*, with some tonal additions including a tierce on the Great and the Great trumpet set on a new electric wind chest, with 16ft and 4ft extensions, allowing it to be played very effectively at 8ft and 4ft on the Great and 16-8-4 on the pedal. Its present specification is: *Great Organ, 8 8 4 4 2 13/5 11 8 4; Swell Organ, 16 8 8 8 8 4 2 11 8 8; Choir Organ, 8 4 22/3 8; Pedal Organ, 16 16 8 16 8 4, with usual couplers.*

We were most fortunate to have with

us our member Patti Whaley from Faversham, who had agreed to give a short demonstration recital. Before playing she introduced the three pieces she was to play. Opening with Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C BWV 545*; then *Gospel Prelude No.4 - Jesus loves me*, by William Bolcom, an American composer and organist. This has the well-known children's tune, played at different registers, running throughout the intricate piece, with its dashing arpeggios and tonal changes, providing an interesting balance to the Bach and her final piece, the well-known *Toccata* by Georgi Mushel.

The organ still retains its typical *Hill* tonality, the Great full diapason chorus eminently suited to Bach, and with pedal point beautifully brought out by use of the Swell horn coupled to the pedal. The William Bolcom *Gospel Prelude* used strings, flutes and a singing Swell oboe in a variety of combinations, allowing the exciting *Toccata* by Georgi Mushel to give a grand finale, concluding with full organ. Patti's engagingly musical playing was a delight, using the organ's extensive specification to the full. There is certainly nothing stodgy about this organ, its diapason choruses, through to mixtures, having an exhilarating singing quality; the flutes speak with character and colour as do the reeds, with their crisp clarity and charisma.

A sumptuous tea awaited us, laid ready in the church transept, before members tried the organ for themselves, discovering its intricate hidden qualities and colours. We are particularly grateful to Patti Whaley for playing so entertainingly and to Nigel MacArthur, St Michael's organist and *KCOA* member, who had arranged the afternoon for us.

# Friends of Cathedral Music - Cambridge March 2018

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By Rosemary & Chris Clemence

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HERE'S JUST A FLAVOUR of our weekend in Cambridge. What a privilege it was to enter the splendour of King's College Chapel where we heard an unaccompanied Evensong ably conducted by one of the organ scholars due to Stephen Cleobury being in hospital following a traffic accident. This was followed by a short organ recital on the newly restored organ, and what a magnificent sound. The day ended with a superb dinner in King's College Hall where the speaker was to have been Stephen Cleobury. As Peter Allwood is currently Chairman of *FCM*, he had persuaded his brother, Ralph (ex Head of Music at Eton) to speak. They had both been in King's College Choir and had some interesting memories! Needless to say, he was very entertaining.

The following day we started off at

Trinity College to hear an excellent talk about the chapel and a recital on the *Metzler* organ. We crossed the road to Great St Mary's (University) Church where we attended choral mattins sung by their joint choirs (numbering 70) followed by an extended organ voluntary given by Benedict Todd. There are two organs in the church, one in the west gallery originally a *Father Smith* and maintained by the university and replaced by a *Mander* organ in 1995. The other organ (the parish organ) is a *Kenneth Jones* built in 1991.

After lunch we walked to Jesus College where Richard Pinel (DOM) gave us a recital on the two organs, 1849 (original by *Bishops*) updated by *William Drake* in 2012 and a new organ in 2007 by *Kuhn* of Switzerland. We rounded off the day at St John's Chapel for a Meditation on the Passion of Christ which included choral music by Bruckner, Byrd, Handel, Lotti, Stainer and Weelkes and appropriate readings. This was an extremely moving way to end an unforgettable weekend.



Jesus College Chapel, William Drake & Kuhn of Switzerland

Photo C Clemence

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Jesus College Chapel, William Drake & Kuhn of Switzerland

Photo C Clemence

# *Benevolent reflections*

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by *Keith Rishworth*

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DOES AN ORGANISATION have a spirit? Perhaps that's a theological question. In the case of the *KCOA*, it certainly has a character, with patience and kindness at the fore. We gather cheerfully in all corners of Kent, often having explored further corners following mysterious directions or misguided Satnavs. We hear with interest a wide variety of organs described and demonstrated, by a variety of people in a variety of styles. We listen to talks on local history, sometimes of great interest but even greater length. And finally we enjoy many good teas together, grateful for the time and trouble generously given by those who have prepared it for us.

Does an organ have a spirit? It certainly has a character, opened up to us again and again by the skill and knowledge of our expert members and players. Not so often the gentler side of its character, it's true, more often the full organ character that we can fully appreciate while strolling around the church it has been designed for. For myself, as time passes, I appreciate more and more the schooling this gives in the true organ style and character of our tradition.

The *KCOA* does have a character - a collective character - which cheerfully takes part in whatever is happening and responds to it sympathetically. Judgement and criticism are there too, but no unkindness. Could it be the collective character of its members, the organists, who cheerfully and sympathetically support, both church services, and the individual feelings of all those who hear these wonderful instruments?



*Trinity College Chapel, Metzler organ*

*Photo C Clemence*

# *The Whys and Wherefores of Extension Organs*

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*By Janus*

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**K**COA MEMBERS, on their travels around the south east, occasionally come across extension organs; in fact some members play them. For those not familiar with the concept perhaps we should query what they are, why they are built, and what their advantages and disadvantages may be. A few moments thought will show that most organs utilize their pipes very inefficiently. For example, if we have a two manual organ with five stops per manual and two independent pedal stops, the instrument would have around 650 to 700 pipes. If we play a resounding chord on full organ we hear perhaps sixty to seventy pipes. What are the others doing? Nothing! Surely it must be possible to put the silent pipes to good use. This is where the idea of an extension organ appears.

Advantages claimed are that the extension organ has fewer pipes which reduces its cost, and takes up less room. The basic principle is that the organ is built with just a few ranks of pipes, often extended by an octave at the bottom, and at the top, giving a rank of pipes around eighty-five in number, and the mechanism is made so the various stops can dip into this set of pipes at different pitches, giving rise to several different stops all derived from the one set of pipes. This is not the same as an octave or sub-octave coupler. These couplers, often mechanical and built into the keyboard, but these days often

produced using electrical circuitry, usually play the unison pipe with the pipe an octave above, or below, or both. This type of mechanism does not provide the possibility of a Unison Off capability without constructing a secondary mechanism, although this is easier to achieve with electric action. With this type of mechanism all the pipes on this soundboard will be affected.

Extension organs, on the other hand, have their own particular requirements. It is not possible to use the extension principle with a slider soundboard; instead, each pipe must have its own individual pallet. With the availability of small electromagnet operated valves it is possible to mount all the pipes on a common soundboard (windchest) with no large leather covered pallets and no sliders. Wind is available to all the pipes all the time and a pipe will sound if a signal is sent to its electromagnet.

Now we have a possible mechanism to make the thing work, what ranks of pipes are needed? This is where the skill of the organ builder can produce a thoroughly satisfactory result, or sadly in some cases, a truly horrible sounding instrument. The most basic requirement would seem to be 1. A diapason rank, moderately loud with around eighty-five pipes. This would provide three stops at 16ft, 8ft and 4ft pitch. 2. A softer rank, either dulciana or salicional in character, of another eighty-five pipes. 3. A flute rank, possibly the ubiquitous gedackt, again of eighty-five pipes. 4. A reed rank, which is rather a luxury. Pedal pipes are usually taken from the 16ft and 8ft extensions of the manual stops.

Thus we have a basic organ of four or five ranks and 400 to 500 pipes. I pre-

dict that it would sound horrible as more ranks are needed to produce anything like a balanced sound. It is considered bad practice to use the same rank to give, for example, 8ft and 4 ft diapasons. This is because when playing chords, gaps appear in the sound. Treble C of the 8 ft stop is the same pipe as middle C of the 4 ft stop. The problem of balance is difficult to solve. If you decide to have a 12th on the Great as part of the chorus it would sound very odd if it was from a dulciana rank. However, *Compton* invariably used salicional ranks, extended to 2ft pitch, to produce fifteenth and mixtures.

Tuning is also a problem. It seems fashionable to provide a tierce stop these days. An independent tierce rank is tuned 'pure' as a true harmonic of an 8 ft pipe. If a tierce is derived from a rank of pipes tuned in equal temperament then it will sound sharp. Some builders try to avoid problems by having a flute at 8ft pitch on one manual, and a 4ft flute on another manual but both derived from the same rank of pipes. This idea seems attractive until you couple the manuals when nothing much happens.

After this list of problems it is surprising that anyone builds extension organs at all. The problems largely disappear if you add more ranks to the organ but as you add more the advantages of cost and size are lost. However the KCOA have encountered several impressive extension organs. The organ at St Nicholas, New Romney, built by *Osmonds of Taunton*, produced a good sound as did the *Walker* at St. Thomas of Canterbury in Rainham, although only having five ranks of pipes. As if to disprove my earlier remarks we have also encountered two remarkably successful small extension organs. The *Mander* organ at Enon Baptist Church,

Chatham was surprisingly resourceful, although only having three ranks of pipes (but no pedal) and Lyminge Methodist church had a truly amazing extension organ of three ranks by *Brownes*. Recently a fourth rank of tierce pipes has been added, not derived as part of the extension scheme, but a stand alone rank, which solves the tuning problem at a stroke. This made a huge contribution to the overall sound. The small *Osmond* at Brenchley Church (ex Tunbridge Wells crematorium chapel), although more of a chamber organ and again with no pedals, produced some lovely sounds.

If you dislike the idea of extension as a principle then beware. It crops up in surprising places. The *Walker* at Penshurst has recently gained a reed unit on the pedal, providing reeds at different pitches. This is a small extension organ in all but name grafted onto the more conventional host.

It can be seen that electrics play a large part in these instruments and it is no surprise that *John Compton* built instruments of this type. The circuit-boards controlling even a modest instrument are an impressive and intimidating sight. A large 'cathedral' organ has electric circuit-boards secreted all over the place, a great deal of which is related to the stop and combination mechanism. It is sometimes said that an i-phone has more computing capacity than the first American moon shot. I look forward to the day when an ageing cathedral organ, instead of being rebuilt, is loaded onto a rocket and it proceeds to tour the universe, guided by its own electrics.

## *New Members*

*Elizabeth Moore - Chevening*

# *Peter Moorse - Obituary*

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## *Peter Moorse GTCL FTCL FRCO (CHM)*

*31st December 1930 – 24th March 2018*

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IT IS WITH REGRET that we record the death of Peter Moorse, who was our President 1968/9, a life member of the Association, and Organist and Choirmaster of All Saints' Church, Maidstone, 1965/70. His funeral took place on 27th April in Milton Keynes.

In his memory we publish Gary Sieling's obituary and supplementary words from Michael Towner giving further details of his achievements. It should be added that as well as a charismatic choral conductor he was a brilliant organist who frequently included a striking improvisation in his recitals.

*By Gary Sieling*

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PETER MOORSE was a champion of church music. He was a musical mover and shaker. He moved us, he shook us. He took us through a hundred shades of every emotional colour of the rainbow and brought us to a peak of performance practice that few have ever or will ever match. Peter was a complicated and amazing musician. His characteristics were many, at least one for every letter of the alphabet. We could start with affectionate, belligerent, caring, daring, effusive, fiery, garrulous – you may continue in like mind.

I first met Peter in 1970 as a first year undergraduate at Goldsmiths' College. As a fellow organist and steam train

buff, we had a lot in common and he took me under his wing. As well as rebuilding my organ technique, he upgraded my social skills and with fellow students introduced us to fine food, fine wines and fine musicians. He was ready and able and willing to share his wide knowledge and expertise in and out of lectures, and we were in awe of him.

As a choral conductor he excelled. It was said that Martin How, a good friend of his, could get a flock of sheep to sing. Peter also took a menagerie of students and by a multitude of methods had us grafted into a fine chorus. My first Goldsmiths' College Music Society Choir concert was 'Hodie' by Vaughan Williams, his favourite composer whom he had met in person. Verdi Requiem, Gordon Crosse Changes, Elgar Dream of Gerontius and many more followed.

At the end of my first year, I joined other students in the Music Society Choir to take part in the first performance of the BBC Commission 'Arena' by George Newson, lecturer in Electronic Music at Goldsmiths'. The list of performers was dazzling – Cleo Laine, Jane Manning, Alan Hacker, Joe Melia, Philip Jones Brass Ensemble and more, all under the baton of no less than Pierre Boulez. We were dazzled! Peter had met Cleo as he was involved in the first performances of Johnny Dankworth's Folk Mass. The rehearsals did not go smoothly. Michael relates the moment when Peter and Cleo met in the bar at the Roundhouse during a break in the rehearsal she said "Peter, what the f\*\*k are we doing here!?" (not a word that Peter often used....) But all went well in the end and the concert was on Live BBC TV.



*Peter Moore at St John's Boxmoor*

*Photo C Jills*

Peter's teaching career started at Repton School, and then became involved with teaching at Goldsmiths' College, rising to the position of Senior Lecturer and Director of Practical Studies. In a long career in church music, Peter held posts including sub-organist of Guildford Cathedral, Director of Music at Maidstone Parish Church, Assistant at St Martin's-in-the-Fields, and Director of Music at St John's Wood Church.

Seated one day at the organ, playing for a Choral Evensong, he demonstrated his unique way of psalm accompaniment. Every colour of the organ was used, often using the most unlikely combinations, and any moment of word painting or double-entendre in the words were given treatment according to the Moore code. His improvisations were legendary and Barry Rose writes "those who remember his playing still talk with appreciation of his amazingly inventive improvisations in and out of

Evensong, even if they did not always appeal to the Dean!"

In my final year at Goldsmiths', Peter brought some of his very many musical friends together to form the 'London Cantata Choir'. Based at St Martin's-in-the-Fields, I was honoured to be the organist for their first concerts and on many other occasions. The choir performed in many London venues including the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and St John's Smith Square and became recognised as one of the finest smaller choirs in London, attracting significant funding from the NFMS and Performing Rights Society. The tradition of the annual performance each Good Friday of Bach St Matthew Passion started in St Martin's but then moved for a ten-year run to St Paul's Cathedral, featuring some top musicians.

Peter was very involved for many years with the RSCM, acting as housemaster and director for very many chorister



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courses. In 1984 he was asked to direct the prestigious week-long Adult Summer Course at Salisbury Cathedral. This was a well-deserved honour. Gordon Stewart was booked to be organist but had to withdraw at fairly short notice. With the timetable printed with staff initials, Peter called upon me, possibly as the only other organist with the same initials. I went through the most tortuous grilling ever to make sure I was ready and able to cope with the burden of the challenging music, the daily services, and the rigour and demands of the course director. It evidently worked, as we were called back for 3 more glorious years, including Radio 3 broadcasts. Many of the course members have become very close friends. On the strength of these courses, Peter encouraged me to apply for Cathedral posts and eventually, against the odds of age and background, I was appointed as Assistant Master of Music at Peterborough in 1986, solely on the strength of Peter's teaching, encouragement and his gift of opportunity and experience.

Peter was rightly proud of the success of the London Cantata Choir. Performances blossomed and the choir started a regular round of English Cathedral visits, including St Paul's, Canterbury, Salisbury, Norwich, Derby, Gloucester, Hereford, Westminster Abbey and York Minster. Many performances were of works by living composers who became good friends. Performances were electric – thunder and lightning mixed with spring sunshine – no other choir sang quite like the LCC, thanks in full to Peter.

But it was not always a smooth ride. Peter did not suffer fools gladly and 100% commitment, concentration and dedication was the minimum require-

ment from all concerned. When matters went against Peter's requirements, he was ready to take on anyone, the lowly and the mighty, from a trembling first year student, or a maître d'hôtel or chef, through to Cathedral Precentors and Deans and beyond. Yes, there were some upsets and black-listings but all part of the nature of such a creative genius.

In more recent years, Peter had throttled back. LCC outings became fewer and there were a number of 'last performances' over the last few years. Peter kept bringing us back for more, and we were ever grateful. But in the end the baton was given up, and the London Cantata Choir and its creator and sole director hung up their cassocks for the last time.

But there has been SO MUCH music making, so many memorable experiences, tears, laughter and anecdotes. There is so much more to say, and those very many who have been touched by Peter's love and attention over so many years need to reward him by keeping these thoughts alive and by continuing to make music in his memory. He deserves nothing less than that.

*By Michael Towner*

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THE OBITUARY by Gary Sieling covers quite a lot and he mentions Peter's key church appointments. Peter's first church job was as Organist and Choirmaster at the church of St Peter, St Helier in Carshalton, Surrey, which is where I met him when I joined his marvellous choir as a twelve year old. The vicar was Neil Nye who later became Vicar of All Saints' Maidstone and who enticed him away from Guildford to work his magic on the choir there. Also



*Peter Moore, Gary Sieling, Dr Barry Rose* *Photo Gary Sieling*

at St Peter's the young curate Keith Pound worked with Peter writing pantomimes and even musicals for the church youth club!

Peter was Music Director for the Laban Art of Movement Studio in Addlestone (linked to Goldsmiths College and now part of Trinity Laban in Greenwich). As a result he was offered a full-time lectureship at Goldsmith's (London University) and the demands of that meant he had to give up Maidstone. He was assistant organist at St Martin-in-the-Fields which at that stage had no choir. The London Cantata Choir was founded in 1974 by a group of friends at a lunch-time meeting when he was encouraged to start his own and for some years it was based at St Martin's with the encouragement of the Vicar Austen Williams. Among other things we sang for the monthly live BBC World Service broadcasts. The rest is history - London Cantata was one of his proudest achievements but ill health forced him to give up all his musical activities a

few years ago. Gary doesn't mention the special relationship we had over several years with the Inn of Court at Gray's Inn at the invitation of Sir Gordon Slynn. We performed at their annual Christmas miscellany which one year involved Prince Charles playing percussion in the Twelve Days of Christmas! We did quite a few concerts at Gray's Inn.

We are planning a memorial Evensong and concert at Dunstable Priory on Saturday 22nd September. Peter was acting organist/choirmaster at Dunstable on two occasions (initially when Gary Sieling left to go to Peterborough). The Priory choir will join members of London Cantata to sing music that was important to Peter and we will include three of Peter's own anthems composed for various friends as well as his Tewkesbury Service Mag and Nunc dedicated to Roy and Ruth Massey. Roy was our organist for several years until the choir came to an end and he will be playing on 22nd September.

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