

Kent County Organists' Association

February 2023 Journal



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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.

Our President writes

By James Bryant

AS I APPROACH the end of my term of office in July I look back over recent events with renewed optimism for the future and I know the association will be in safe hands with my successor Stephen Banfield. He has already begun to think about the future of our association with new initiatives.

One such priority is the introduction of a new website to improve communication and I hope this will be in place as soon as possible. The present site whilst an improvement on the first has become cumbersome and not easy to update regularly despite our member David Shuker's best efforts. Despite this our secretary Matthew has ensured events were publicised regardless.

Looking back at previous events, we were due to attend a Memorial Concert for our late member, Brian Moore, at Maidstone; an event necessarily postponed due to her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth's death and subsequent funeral.

We visited St Peter's Church, Whitstable in October, for which my thanks go to Michael Cooke; more about this elsewhere in the Journal. However, despite my absence through illness I understand the event was successful and very much appreciated. November's meeting took the form of an Advent Evensong at Holy Trinity Church, Ramsgate, with member participation and was one of the best attended events recently: my thanks go to Janet Hughes for organising this so professionally in

conjunction with Stephen

A new initiative promoted by me was a very successful Christmas Lunch in December at Canterbury Cathedral's Lodge. Again more on this later except to say how much it was appreciated and enjoyed by all. It's a spectacular venue and the staff are always very accommodating and attentive.

It is with gratitude, but also great sadness, for members who, having served the association so well, passed away during last year. Notably: Roy Rogers; Brian Moore; Roger Greensted; and Canon John Wright. Brian was one of the first members I encountered on joining the association many years ago and I shall always remember his quiet dignity and friendship and in particular his invaluable assistance on the competition sub-committee. Roger Greensted of course served us well for many years as the owner of, what was then, *FH Brownes* the Organ Builders in Ash, and Canon John Wright was legendary in pursuit of his many interests including being a superb and well respected organist; more about their respective funerals and memorial events soon.

Looking forward, we face a number of urgent issues, particularly with regard to membership. Whilst rightly honouring those who have gone before it is vital we attract more new members and ensure our future with a continued focus on a younger membership and children. It is in all our interests to pursue this actively and I am pleased we have an event planned very soon in conjunction with the RCO and Stephen Pinnock who is now a member of the KCOA.

Finally I hope to meet as many of you as possible at events planned for 2023.

Review of recent Meetings

Whitstable, St Peter's & St Alphege

WITH ITS FOUNDATION stone laid in 1902 by The Right Reverend Montgomery, father of Field Marshal Montgomery of Alamein, St Peter's Church, Whitstable is a fine spacious red brick Edwardian church where Michael Cooke welcomed twelve KCOA members on 15 October 2022.

The two-manual and pedal organ was built by *Henry Speechly* in 1921 with a specification of: *Great Organ, 8 8 8 4 4 2; Swell Organ, 8 8 4 8; Pedal Organ, 16.* The organ, with its ten speaking stops, had originally been installed in the chapel of

Bethlem Hospital, London, in what is now the Imperial War museum, but was moved to St Peter's in 1930.

Michael Cooke then introduced us to the instrument in his usual style, followed by several other members taking turns, and between them they revealed a versatile organ suitable in volume for the size of the church and which can do justice to many styles of music. Michael demonstrated the use of a manual 2ft rank as a solo stop, when played two octaves down from coupled pedals, and the Great Dulciana sounds well as a solo against a quiet flute in the Swell.

Moving on to St Alphege Church, we found an organ with Victorian stencilled display pipes which, long ago, had suffered lowering of pitch when it had been moved from its original west gallery position to the front of the nave and a lower



St Peter's Church Whitstable

Photo K Grafton

ceiling. The organ was built by J W Walker in 1862, but rebuilt by F. H. Browne in 1892; its specification is: Great organ, 8 8 8 4 4 2 111 8; Swell Organ, 8 8 8 8 4 8; Pedal Organ 16.

The pitch has now been restored to A440 and Michael Cooke again welcomed us with a seamless merging of Karg-Elert's "Nun danket" and "Men of Harlech" which was guaranteed to have left no spiders lurking in any pipes. As at St Peter's, the members who tried their hands and feet at the keyboards displayed the full potential of the instrument's stop-list and included some of those pieces written for the reed organ but to which the pipe organ can add something extra.

Kent County Organists' Association is accustomed to good teas from generous churches, but this one at St Alphege was exceptional, impressive in quality and quantity: no one went away hungry.



1862 J W Walker, St Alphege Photo C Jilks



Michael Lewis at St Peter's Henry Speechly organ Photo K Grafton

A visit to Holy Trinity Church, Ramsgate

ON A COLD, SOMEWHAT rainy day in November, with a stiff wind blowing off the North Sea, some twenty KCOA members found their way to Holy Trinity Church, Ramsgate, built in early Victorian times but in the perpendicular style. Stephen Ansell, the Director of Music at the church, welcomed our members and their guests and gave a short history of the church and of the organ.

The ancient church and parish of St Lawrence dates from 1062. The church was made parochial in 1275 and its first vicar inducted. This large parish had within its boundary the town of Ramsgate, which was a small fishing community grouped around the small harbour of the Middle Ages. In 1750 the building of the new harbour gave Ramsgate a boost in a number of ways such as an increase in population and much-needed trade with Russia and the continent. The result was the building of fine houses in squares and crescents. The wars with France made it a garrison town, and many hundreds of troops set sail for Belgium from the harbour. (This led to the town's favourite pub becoming a 'house of ill repute'!)

Ramsgate had outgrown St Lawrence and was in need of a church. In 1790 an act was obtained for establishing a chapel of ease to St Lawrence Church. The new chapel had, in fact, been built in 1788/89. This chapel was the only Anglican Church in Ramsgate until it was decided to erect a parish church for the town, and St George's was consecrated in 1827 as

the parish church of Ramsgate.

However, the still-large parish of St Lawrence covered much of the East Cliff and here by the 1840s the population was also growing. A church was by now needed for this area. Early in 1844 the final decision was made to build a church in the area of St Lawrence known as Mount Albion. The site, with a sum of £100 for the building of a new church was presented by a benefactor, Mlle D'Este, who lived in Mount Albion House. An appeal was launched, and subscriptions received amounting to about £2,400. The first stone was laid on 29 August 1844. It was ready for consecration just over nine months later, and the choir of Canterbury Cathedral sang the music for the service. Then named Holy Trinity, Mount Albion, St Lawrence (*the name of the village, not the church*), Thanet, it became Holy Trinity Ramsgate in 1984, when the benefice was united with that of St George, Ramsgate.

The church porch, with its fine inner doorway, houses the parish war memorial,



Stephen Ansell Photo C Clemence



1871 *Brindley & Foster*, rebuilt 1889 *F H Browne & Sons* Photo C Clemence

dedicated in 1920 by the Rector. The vestibule area, with hall and toilets, is situated where the south aisle and part of the nave used to be. This badly conceived alteration, destroying the proportions of the building, came about as a result of a Church of England working party in 1977, which recommended that of three Ramsgate churches only St George's should remain, and the other two made redundant and demolished. There should however be a 'presence' in the form of an easily maintained building with seating for about 25 people. To avoid demolition, Holy Trinity made plans to form a community centre in the church; hence the alteration costing £33,000 and considered sad and badly designed, which added a large gallery at the West End, dedicated in 1979.

In 1871 Messrs *Brindley and Foster* installed a fine organ at the east end of the south aisle of Holy Trinity. In 1889 it was somewhat enlarged by *F H Browne and Sons*, and at that time their workshop was in Deal; however, there are no

records of the actual work they carried out. In 1938 it was removed to the west gallery together with the console, where it remained until 1960 when it was giving considerable trouble. A complete rebuild had become necessary and the work was entrusted to *F H Browne and Sons*, now of Canterbury. They undertook the complete dismantling of the instrument, then restored the pipework, and completely rebuilt the instrument with the most modern electric action, putting the console at the east end. There were frequent and lengthy discussions before a final specification was agreed, but eventually the work commenced and in 1963 the 'Great and Swell' organ was installed and provision made for the later installation of the 'Choir' organ, which then had to be left undone, because of lack of funds. The main instrument, however, was dedicated at Harvest Festival in 1963. The third manual was eventually installed, thanks to the bequest of a former parishioner, and this was dedicated on 21 October 1973. The 1979 alterations to the

church have left the organ looking sadly cut off from the reduced nave and the east end console.

Our member Michael Lewis spoke next. He had worked for *FH Browne and Sons* for seven years and, during this time was involved, with the workshop manager, in a major rebuild at Holy Trinity in 2002, including installing new action throughout and adding several new ranks of pipes, one of which was a 16ft trombone unit. Michael writes:

'Our first problem was actually getting into the organ through the tiny hatch from a ladder in the corner of the room at the back and moving stuff to and fro through that narrow space. Larger stuff had to come over the balcony, but as that was not floored, we had to put planks down and be careful not to put our feet through the ceiling!! One of my major tasks was to build a brand-new sound-

board for the Choir division, which was tonally considerably remodelled. The action works with individual pallet electromagnets under each pipe. A huge amount of low voltage wiring of pinboards was therefore required both at the console and in the organ, (Duncan did the former and I did the latter). In the console a computer encodes all the instructions given by the player, and sends them down a single cable to a computer in the organ, which then unscrambles them. A tricky job was getting this new cable under the church and up into the gallery, along with the separate cable for the swell box action. Another problem was to ensure that the instrument, in its unfavourable position, spoke well over the top of the vestry and into the church. We were pleased with the success of this. One error we made was with a pair of very similar 16ft Bourdon ranks. No stop



FH Brown & Sons Console

Photo C Clemence



Holy Trinity Church, Ramsgate

Photo C Clemence

names were on the pipes, and we had no clue as to which was which. Of course, we got it wrong! When the organist played the instrument, he informed us of the fact! So much for our very neat wiring and cabling. Wiring for the two ranks had to be reversed. One other little thing - I insisted on building a small wooden ladder up to the Great & Choir tuning platform so that the tuner did not have to be a mountaineer to carry out his work!! After 20 or so years it was lovely hearing this fine instrument again, the largest I had the privilege of doing major work on during my time with the company.'

The resulting three manual and pedal instrument, with 46 speaking stops, is very versatile and varied in tone, as was ably demonstrated by Stephen Ansell, and by various KCOA members during the subsequent evensong. Our members were treated to an excellent tea, before being called upon to sing for it!

After a fairly easy-going choir practice, with a few members of Stephen's choir

augmented by a dozen KCOA members, evensong followed. Several KCOA members rose ably to the challenge of accompanying various parts of the service (Jim Bryant, John Ross, Patti Whaley, Thomas Winrow-Campbell, Michael Cooke and Malcolm Riley). We sang Stanford's Psalm 150, the evening canticles by Noble in B minor, and Elgar's *Ave verum corpus* as anthem, together with some atmospheric plainsong hymns. Patti played the closing voluntary: Chorale Prelude 'Nun komm der Heiden Heiland' BWV 661 by J. S. Bach.

As a footnote, Stephen Ansell has recently created a Trinity Music Academy - a 'Choir School for Adults' - and the choir and its skills are growing. This visit, to discover more about the church and organ, and to sing Evensong, is the second one the KCOA has made in recent times. The enthusiasm of the participants - members, singers and guests - may well lead to it becoming an annual event.

Christmas Lunch Canterbury Cathedral Lodge

DECEMBER HAS long been a month during which the Association has not held meetings, because members are so busy with seasonal activities; but with the success of the biennial President's Dinner of September 2021 at the Canterbury Cathedral Lodge still fresh in the mind, it was the happy inspiration of our current President, Jim Bryant, to arrange a Christmas Lunch there for 10th December 2022.

Twenty-nine members and guests sat down to a generous and varied menu, with three choices for each of the three courses. Soup, roast turkey (with traditional trimmings) and Christmas pudding formed the default options for most, though several opted for alternatives, all accompanied by drinks and Christmas crackers, and conversation flowed freely at all five tables.

Having filled our bellies, we sat back

whilst Matthew Young delivered extracts from *The Cassock Pocket Book* (written by the inimitable Gordon Reynolds and published by the Royal School of Church Music in 1979), concluding with reflective verses on the need which so many of us have faced in attempting to justify new organs, sung by the assembled company to *Aurelia* with gradually-emergent harmonies, most(!) of them correct, or at least plausible. A raffle was then held, with a wide range of prizes being shared by a good proportion of those present, thanks to the generosity of multiple winners in putting their tickets back into the hat.

Staggering out of the event, time was available for pre-Christmas shopping in Canterbury by those who did not need to go on to prior engagements, before the more hardy souls returned to the Cathedral for Choral Evensong, including the D major setting of the canticles by Herbert Howells.

This proved to be a most enjoyable occasion, perhaps the more so because the September buffet evenings which had previously occupied alternating years had fallen by the wayside because of lack of support. There may well be a viable pattern to follow here of a lunchtime, rather than evening, event for our annual social gatherings.



Canterbury Cathedral

Photo C. Jilks

Rochester Cathedral & St John's Church, Chatham

By Malcolm Hall

WHAT IS the point and purpose of an English cathedral? Is it just a building set aside for the faithful to pray for their Bishop, and a focus for large Diocesan events? Or perhaps an expensive building whose staff strive to make it relevant to all, regardless of age, and belief.

Some of our members who enjoyed the skilful playing of our competition winner Joseph Hyam, were a little surprised to find Rochester Cathedral nave full of families enjoying bridge-themed activities and games, while the south side of the grounds was being used for family (crazy) golf.

As someone who loves the tradition of the English church and cathedral, its liturgy and music, but also sees the need to make our ancient buildings relevant to each generation, I consider that Dean Philip and his staff must be congratulated for opening the doors a little wider and using the Nave in accordance with its medieval tradition as a place for the people.

The recital by Joseph Hyam, on Saturday 6th August 2022, was a well thought out and executed selection of fairly familiar music including *Nun danket* by Karg-Elert, a *Trio Sonata* by J S Bach, which showed absolute precision in rhythm and clarity of the voice parts, two movements of *L'Ascension* by Messiaen and music from *Sonata No. 5* by Mendelssohn, ending with the rousing *Hymne d'action de grâces Te Deum* of Jean Langlais, with the only exception not played on the programme being *Adoration* by the American composer Florence Price, which was sadly omitted on this occasion and caused me to search



Rochester Cathedral Nave Photo C. Jilks

out this music on 'You Tube' - just to discover what we had missed!

Our second venue for this meeting was the recently reopened 'Waterloo' church in nearby Chatham, where their Minister, the Reverend Luke Bacon, warmly welcomed us, and spoke of the enormous and somewhat heroic task of reopening this large building after its closure of nearly twenty-five years.

Their organ, a 1955 rebuild of an older *Bevington* organ, contained a surprising amount of tonal variation and power and it is all credit to the '*Osmond*' Company as so little was not working after so many years of total disuse. It was sad that so few of our Association supported this meeting and heard the 'resurrection' of an instrument which could so easily have become lost for good. I would recommend that our members check on line for future concerts and recitals in this historical venue, and support all being done to bring new life to this building and its worshipping community.

Front Cover

Truro Cathedral Organ

By Paul Hale

THE *Henry Willis* organ at Truro is renowned for three things – the quality of its tone, the remarkable effect in the cathedral of its relatively small number of stops, and for the fact that it is essentially unaltered from 1888.

John Loughborough Pearson, the cathedral's architect, favoured two major organ-builders for his churches – *T. C. Lewis* and *Henry Willis*. *Willis* installed fine instruments for new Pearson churches at Upper Norwood (St John, 1882) and Cullercoats (St George, 1884). *Willis* built significant instruments for Pearson at Croydon (St Michael, 1873) and Kensington (St Augustine, also 1873), both of which proved an enormous success, even though in the former the casework was prepared for only (a sign of things to come at Truro) and in the latter several stops were similarly prepared for. These were Pearson's largest churches before Truro, so the choice of *Henry Willis* for this – Pearson's most prestigious and greatest creation – was entirely logical.

The Truro organ was installed by the *Willis Company* in 1887, initially with a temporary stopped bass to the 32ft rank, the open pipes being fitted during August 1888. 'Father' *Willis* died in 1901; in 1903 the company, by then directed by his son *Henry Willis II*, added numerous dummy front pipes to mask the unsightly insides of the organ, doubtless when it became clear that the elaborate carved wooden casework as envisaged by Pearson would never be installed. Pearson's twin cases (1884) at Westminster Abbey (later coloured and



Organ & Quire Truro Photo C. Jilks

gilded by Stephen Dykes-Bower) give one a clear impression of how beautiful the Truro casework might have been if installed.

Hele & Co did some work in 1924 (cleaning and the releathering of pneumatic motors) and took over the maintenance of the organ. In 1932 the original hydraulic blowing engines were replaced by a 9 h.p. Watkins & Watson 'Discus' blower.

When, by 1960, it was clear that the organ's mixture of tracker, pneumatic-lever and tubular-pneumatic mechanisms were at the end of their reliable life, the cathedral turned to *Henry Willis & Sons Ltd* to carry out a rebuild, which was executed during 1962/3 at a cost of £17,000. The work which *Henry Willis III* carried out then was modelled on similar *Willis* cathedral rebuilds in earlier years at St Paul's Cathedral (1930 and later), Hereford (1932), Salisbury (1934), and Canterbury (1940). The technique was to take a *Father Willis* organ, convert its



Quire & Nave Truro Cathedral

Photo C Jilks

tubular-pneumatic mechanism to electro-pneumatic, install a new all-electric console detached from the organ, but alter the tonal scheme only minimally, if at all. Hereford and Salisbury had been notable and renowned successes and so it was entirely logical for Truro to follow suit.

Inside the organ the slider soundboards were fitted with electro-pneumatic under-actions and electro-pneumatic slider-machines were fitted to the slider soundboards. An 8-stage 'whiffletree' machine was installed to work the swell box. No tonal changes whatsoever were made, and no revoicing. The only additional stops were a few unison and octave couplers not supplied by *Willis* in 1887. Even these were fewer in number than *Willis III* usually installed on the company's consoles; commendable restraint was shown on all fronts.

When in 1989 David Briggs became cathedral organist it was soon clear to him that the time had come for further restorative works. These were carried out in 1991 by *N.P. Mander of London* assisted by *Lance Foy*, the noted Cornish organ-builder, who by then maintained the Truro organ.

Some of the original leatherwork was in need of replacing, the manual soundboards needed glue-flooding and repalleting, the 1963 *Willis* electrical circuitry had reached the end of its reliable life, the 1963 swell engine needed replacing as did the capture system. The one stop which failed to pull its weight had always been the Solo Tuba, placed as it was on the front slide of the Solo soundboard, rather buried in the depths of the organ. After much consideration it was decided to mount it on a new *Mander* unit chest, immediately behind the upper front pipes of the left-hand casework. This has proved a great success.

The organ was fitted with new electromagnets throughout, rewired, all conveyancing and trunking re-bedded, all

pneumatic motors, purses and diaphragms releathered, as were the corners of some reservoirs. The pipes were cleaned and repaired, and the manual soundboards were glue-flooded and repalleted. The very heavy pressure 'static' reservoir (c. 28ins w.p.) was releathered. A new Kimber-Allen solid-state transmission system was installed.

The console was rebuilt with new *Mander* stop-jambes; much of the *Willis* house-style black woodwork was repolished 'natural'. A 'Pedal Divide' device was added, as was a 'Generals on Swell toe pistons' and a 'Full Organ' stop-knob. The pedalboard and keyboards were restored and the *Willis* 'toggle touch' made to work as evenly as could be contrived. A new processor-based capture system by A. J. Taylor was fitted.

In 2006 *Harrison & Harrison* undertook further work on the console. New keys were made (by *P&S*) to the exact dimensions of the originals, using the ivories from the Solo keyboard (which were scarcely worn) and the ivories from a redundant 3-manual set of *Willis III* keys which were also in first-class condition, the ivory being helpfully thick. The Taylor combination system was updated and fitted with a 'Stepper'; the toe pistons and pedalboard were re-made and the new keyboards were fitted with additional pistons, all to '*Willis III*' pattern.

In 2016 the cathedral organist (Robert Sharpe - to move to St John's College Cambridge this coming Easter) invited the current writer to advise on any necessary work. Consequently, the *Mander* swell engine was replaced with a modern stepless electric motor, some releathering took place, the reason behind mysterious failures of wind on the Swell was discovered and fixed, and some further work was done to the manual keyboards.

And that is how the Truro *Willis* remains in 2023. A glorious organ admired by all who hear and play it.

Cognitive Preferences - Practice makes perfect?

By Gavin Barrett

I MUST ADMIT, from the outset of this article, that I am less than efficient in practising. I put the time in, but, as Anne Marsden-Thomas warns in her trenchant little volume on performance improvement, that going over the same ground, inevitably making the same mistakes each time, simply embeds those mistakes. The result, a higher mountain to climb when a reliable performance is needed!

Anne's guidance that we should plan our approach to learning a piece away from the keyboard, getting details of phrasing, fingering, note allocation, overall style and tempo, all prepared with pencil on paper before a key is struck, makes immense intellectual sense but flies in the face of a very human desire to hit the keys and see what befalls. Inevitably, faults, caused by not having fingering sorted or note distribution between the hands mapped out, will occur, even if some pleasure is derived from surviving to the end, more or less intact!

I am, of course, being extreme to make a point. We are all very different in how we approach the learning of new repertoire, or polishing-up that previously learned. The range of approach is wide indeed. From those who are meticulous in silent preparation, fingering liberally and really thinking their approach through in considerable detail, to those who effectively are stuck in the groove of always sight-reading, believing (or praying) that it will be all right on the night.

Behind these habits of preparation lie our *cognitive preferences* – how we choose to think about things, such as a need for the “right answer” – understanding the theoretical basis of a piece and its related performance conventions. This, an essentially intellectual preference, is strongly drawn to analysis, established principles and logic.

Others prefer to approach learning in a linear methodical fashion with great attention to detail. They are reluctant to move on until a clear plan is worked out. Once that exists they place high dependency upon it. The likelihood that the notes will be right and the performance accurate is quite high.

Yet others find themselves rehearsing at the keyboard and getting a buzz from the emotional impact of the music. They are less concerned with accuracy and much more with feeling. They want to make sure that the music is communicated to others so that the inspiration can be shared and savoured.

And there are those, like me, who are stimulated by the ‘new’, trying things out and more than anxious to get to performance without too much pain on the way – like rigorous practice! We are easily distracted – half-way through a piece something pops into mind and a spill inevitably happens. No matter, the excitement remains and the end will be achieved, after a fashion, regardless.

I am, of course, being simplistic here. But you may glimpse a bit of yourself, even with these rough-hewn thoughts.

In the 1980s a major research project was conducted over several years at *General Electric Inc*. The objective was to increase the amount of innovation being undertaken across this vast corporation and to understand why there seemed to

be far too little of it.

The driver of the research was one Ned Herrmann, whose legacy is a vastly insightful study entitled *Brain Dominance*, which explores, in exhaustive detail, how people's thought preferences can and often do influence how they approach the practical aspects of their life at work and play.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ned_Herrmann)

The work was built on the Jungian principle of Left and Right-Brain differences, which has long been accepted as explaining various human behaviour – which foot you lead off with when walking, which hand you write with, which eye you use to take aim when shooting and that sort of thing. For Herrmann that basic duality was insufficient to explain the range of behaviour he saw in the *General Electric* managerial population.

“Thought is father to the deed” is a serious statement and merits examination. Just what thoughts are involved in musical performance? Clearly, a theoretical basis – period style, fugue, harmony – then imagination to turn notes into a performance. Then attention to detail so that the composer's intentions are faithfully realised and, a desire to project, to communicate the music.

Herrmann developed a metaphor for the brain and its attendant thought patterns to see whether he could categorise individuals with a view to avoiding square pegs in round holes and vice versa.

The model comprises four quadrants – two on the left and two on the right aligned in left-right Jungian mode, but also having a horizontal mode – Upper and Lower which he defined respectively as intellectual and limbic (essentially needs or feeling).

Thus, Upper-Left is concerned with *theoretical* thoughts – proofs, facts, analysis and high *objectivity*. Lower-Left embodies the *need* for process, plans, detail, one step at a time. Upper-Right is essentially *holistic*, making sense of patterns, managing complexity and eager for change and variety. “If I can dream it, I can do it” is very much a view from this metaphorical orientation and may well ignore the feet-of-clay problem of actually getting something done. Lower-Right expresses a need for feeling, empathy and communication. It is a *subjective* orientation.

Herrmann observed early on in his research programme that adjacent quadrants in his whole-brain metaphor work well together – thus the left-brain quadrants are expressed as a reliable, managerial, safe-pair-of-hands orientation, whereas the two right-brain quadrants manifest as enthusiastic drivers of change and leadership.

The two lower quadrants pair-up to deliver the sorts of behaviour that make for empathetic administrators – quite often with emphasis on subjective feelings. The two upper quadrants are, in contrast, concerned with forward-looking, big ideas and the rigorous underpinning of them with theoretical structures.

You might reasonably assume that an orchestral conductor needs a *whole* brain – from attention to detail, to giving a symphonic performance stylish coherence and, where possible, saying something fresh and exciting, and above all being able to get the music across the footlights to the audience.

What Herrmann found is that strong *whole* brain preferences were conspicuously rare. Most people proved to be orientated in a variety of combinations of factors to a greater or lesser preference degree.

Your author, for example, is strongly upper quadrant pair (high theory, high holistic, objectivity etc) and is somewhat averse to thinking methodically or worrying about subjective issues – eschewing hunches. So, I love the coherence of Baroque music, especially rich, complex counter-point, but I struggle to apply enough linear discipline and method to learning to play this treasure-trove!

The snag, and there is always a snag, is that there is real cognitive tension between the quadrants on the diagonals. A strong objective preference (theorist) is suspicious of subjective feeling and may come over as emotionally ‘dry’. Similarly, our upper right future-oriented thinker is frustrated by the needs for methodical process and attention to detail. You may well, like me, try to avoid filling-in insurance forms or doing harmony exercises in the style of a Bach Chorale.

Anyway, the good news is that all this is about *preferences*. It is neither right nor wrong. It is how we choose to think and thus, in all probability, behave. It does not mean that you cannot, for example, be methodical in a linear manner, it is just that, as a free-spirit, you may choose not to.

The burden of this detour into matters cerebral is to open up the possibility that your cognitive preferences, perfectly right as they assuredly are, may have some bearing on your approach to learning and playing. I know that if I apply what I would regard as my somewhat low preferences or even areas of aversion (i.e. methodical practice), I can be very pleasantly surprised by the positive results.

Practice makes perfect is surely true. What is, I hope, open to change is what constitutes practice itself. Recognising that one’s *preferred* approach is not always optimal may lead you to explore the case for alternatives.

If, however, you are blessed with that elusive *whole-brain* I salute you and rejoice in your ability to work your magic. The rest of us must stand in awe.



Great Mongeham, F H Browne organ *Photo C.Jilks*

Organists required

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Great Mongeham, Deal.

THE ORGANIST of St John’s, Mr Colin Hartley, is keen to arrange several recitals on the recent *F H Browne (Mander)* Instrument (visited by the KCOA 3 years ago) and would welcome offers from competent members of our Association who could offer their services.

Please contact Colin on

01304 360439

colin.hartley@care4free.net

Obituary - Rae Fulford

Rae Fulford

18th July 1939 -
17th September 2022

RAE FULFORD was born on 18th July 1939 in the quiet suburb of Wembley Park, Middlesex. With war imminent, to be born at such a time might be construed as an error of judgement, although her choice of parents was perhaps more happily made. Her father, an electrical engineer, was an excellent pianist (his brother was a professional) who provided a very fine musical environment for Rae, as well as her older brother and sister. Her early years were filled with nursery rhymes, hymns and piano duets, as Rae's mother was also a pianist.

Rae started piano lessons at the age of five, although her introduction to church music came somewhat later when attending St Andrew's Church, Kingsbury. This was the church where Barry Rose had his first appointment in 1955, a church which had been dismantled and moved stone by stone at the turn of the century, from Wells Street, London, to its present site.

Having been educated at a preparatory school locally till 1948, Rae started in the preparatory section of The St Paul's Girls School, Hammersmith when she was nine. She, of course, moved on in time to the senior school, a school with a fine musical tradition, Gustav Holst and Herbert Howells being just two of its directors of music. The school also gained many entrants

to the London music colleges. Whilst at St Paul's Rae, in her impressionable early teens, was fortunate to hear Léon Goossens give an inspiring oboe recital which led to her starting oboe lessons herself.

1956 brought, on leaving St Paul's school, an entrance to the Royal Academy of Music to study oboe and piano, later adding the organ as an additional second study. Rae particularly remembers, during this time at the Academy, two visits to Oxford with Sir Thomas Armstrong, the then principal. She played in the orchestra for Sir Thomas' annual performance of the Bach *St Matthew Passion*, together with the Oxford Bach Choir in Oxford Town Hall.

There were many fine concerts at the Royal Academy and Rae also took part in the first *Henry Wood* birthday concert at the Royal Albert Hall given by the first orchestras and choirs of each of the four principal London music colleges, which were conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. Rae left the Royal Academy in 1961 for an oboe teaching post with the *Kent Rural Music School* in North West Kent, travelling between



St Martin's Church, Herne Photo Herne Church

schools and the Centre at Maidstone. She was also oboe teacher at Bedales School, near Petersfield, as well as taking some oboe playing engagements.

Having passed her driving test in 1961, Rae travelled around in a 1952 Ford Popular, which caused amusement. In addition to her teaching commitments, Rae soon found herself with an organist's post at St Paul's Cray, near Chislehurst, Kent, which was on a very large LCC housing estate. The church was yet to be built and Rae played a pipe organ, which was in a purpose built church hall. There was an enthusiastic young choir, and whilst there, she met Charles her husband. Theirs was the first wedding in the new St Paul's Church just two days after its consecration by Bishop Say in September 1964.

Rae remained organist at St Paul's until August 1976, with just two 'interludes', for the birth of her daughters Alison and Kate in 1965 and 1967. 1976 brought a move to Brenley near Faversham where she was able to resume some teaching and also joined the church of St Mary Bredin in Canterbury, playing the oboe in an instrumental group at the church, which took part in services alongside the organ and choir.

It was at this time that Rae joined the KCOA following an Association's meeting at Bredin. She has since served on the committee several times and also, in 1982 to 1983, was our President. When she was still at Bredin, in 1981, Rae was asked to fill the vacant organist's post and for five years, was able to harness the skills of instrumentalists and singers, together with the organ, in a wide range of music. A further move, in 1988, to Herne Bay meant leaving the post at



Rae Fulford Photo C Jilks

Bredin, with the intention of perhaps having a break from the commitments of a church organist. Rae continued to play the oboe; she played Robert Ashfield's Oboe Sonata on a CD recording. However, in February 1989, she was asked to 'fill in' at St Martin's Church, Herne, which is where she played until her retirement and moving to the West Country

Rae Fulford was a lady endowed with a delicate charm and innate musicality, whose musical professionalism has enthused musicians, students and those who have had the most good fortune to be involved in her wide musical field. Our Association has been favoured indeed by her loyal membership over so many years.

St George's Church, Hanover Square

Ondřej Smolík

Recital, St George's Church,
Hanover Square

By Nicholas King

ON 30th AUGUST 2022, Ondřej Smolík, winner of the Advanced class at the 2019 KCOA Organ Competition, gave his winner's recital at St George's Church, Hanover Square, London on the 2012 *Richards, Fowkes & Co* instrument (which the Association visited in April 2014) to an appreciative audience including a handful of our members.

Introducing him, Richard Hobson (Organist of the Grosvenor Chapel, presiding in the absence of Simon Williams) mentioned that the programme comprised "pot-boilers" familiar to all of us, but which we might often refrain from using because they are so well-known.

Be that as it may, Ondřej presented us with fresh insights; perhaps a young man's readings, but none the less stimulating for that.

He opened with Bach's *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor*. Modern research claims that this wasn't written for organ, wasn't originally in D minor, and wasn't by Bach. Never mind! It was a tidy, non-nonsense performance, if perhaps lacking some of the period ornamentation which would undoubtedly have been added.

This was followed by the chorale prelude *Erbarm' dich mein, o Herre Gott BWV721*. Some might have preferred the lilting melody to be more legato than broken, and the voicing of the instrument seemed to lack a sufficiently subdued 16ft pedal stop, affecting overall balance.



Hanover Square Organ Photo by C.Jilks

Ondřej followed with the *Suite Gothique* by Boëllmann. The grandeur of the first movement was captured well, though some rhythmic licence in the *Menuet gothique* might have caused problems for anyone trying to dance to it. A wistful *Prière à Notre-Dame* was followed by a fulgurating reading of the *Toccatà*, in which the dottings of the pedal motif were replaced by semiquaver rests (though, curiously, not when the passage was doubled in octaves for the final section).

Petr Eben's *Moto Ostinato* from *Sunday Music* was given a suitably neat and fluent performance, before the programme ended with the *Toccatà* from Widor's *Symphony no. 5*. A sensible tempo was adopted, nearer to that of Widor himself than of many modern executants. An unfortunate mishap by the page-turner towards the end of the first section resulted in a rather surprising temporary hiatus, as if Ondřej's memory had failed him as to what came next, but he recovered well, and brought the recital to a rousing conclusion, justifying fully the generous applause which was accorded.

It was interesting to hear the instrument in full flow. For some, the chorus reeds perhaps tend to cloy after a while, especially in Romantic repertoire, but there is no doubt that this is a fine addition to the London scene.

Obituary - Rev Canon John Wright

Rev Canon John Wright

*3rd June 1936 –
6th December 2022*

First published in 2004, John reflects on his years as an organist and clergyman.

BORN at Tankerton, Whitstable on 3rd June 1936, I moved to near Watford when the war started in 1939 so that my father could be closer to his job in London. The Germans found an aerodrome near us and bombing was frequent. Many houses in the next street to ours were laid flat, with casualties; we were so glad to get back to Tankerton when my father joined the RAF.

I started going to an evangelical church for Sunday school, but my behaviour was questionable and after somehow getting my head stuck in a chair, I stopped going! One day the local curate from All Saints, Whitstable called and persuaded me (and my parents) that I should join the choir at seven years old. Twenty years later I became his curate at Willesborough.

I was studying the piano, taking exams, and went on to study the organ with my local choirmaster and organist, George Cross, who did noble service at the church for thirty years. I attended Faversham Grammar School and continued my music studies, but went on to read history at Durham University, St. Chad's College. I was organist of the college on a small one-manual, but was allowed to practise on the fine 3-manual at St. Oswald's,

Durham, where J. B. Dykes had been organist. The organist in my time was the Professor of Music at Durham, the eccentric Arthur Hutchings. He was well known for pulling out all the stops to give the vicar the note – very irritating! We had a link with the lovely Durham Cathedral and our choir was responsible for the Advent Carol Service.

From Durham I went to Ely Theological College which had links with the cathedral. I was organist and precentor of the college and was allowed to play the magnificent 4-manual *Harrison & Harrison* at the cathedral for one weekly service and during August when our college choir sang the Sunday services to plainsong. We sang this beautiful musical form every night at college evensong and I am a strong advocate for Gregorian chant. I still belong to the Gregorian Association.

The organist at Ely Cathedral was Arthur Wills who helped the college immensely and taught me a lot about improvisation — I still struggle with it! We had a great time at college; as well as theological studies it included preaching sermons to unsuspecting congregations! I will always remember two fearsome churchwardens who “vetted” students. One week they said to me, “you are improving, at least it was better than last week”. Encouragement indeed!

We played a lot of sport in the remote Fen villages. There was one incident when we played cricket in a field where the sheep had just been removed, but the electric fence had not been turned off. One of our fielders came in contact with it fielding the

ball; the language was not very ecclesiastical!

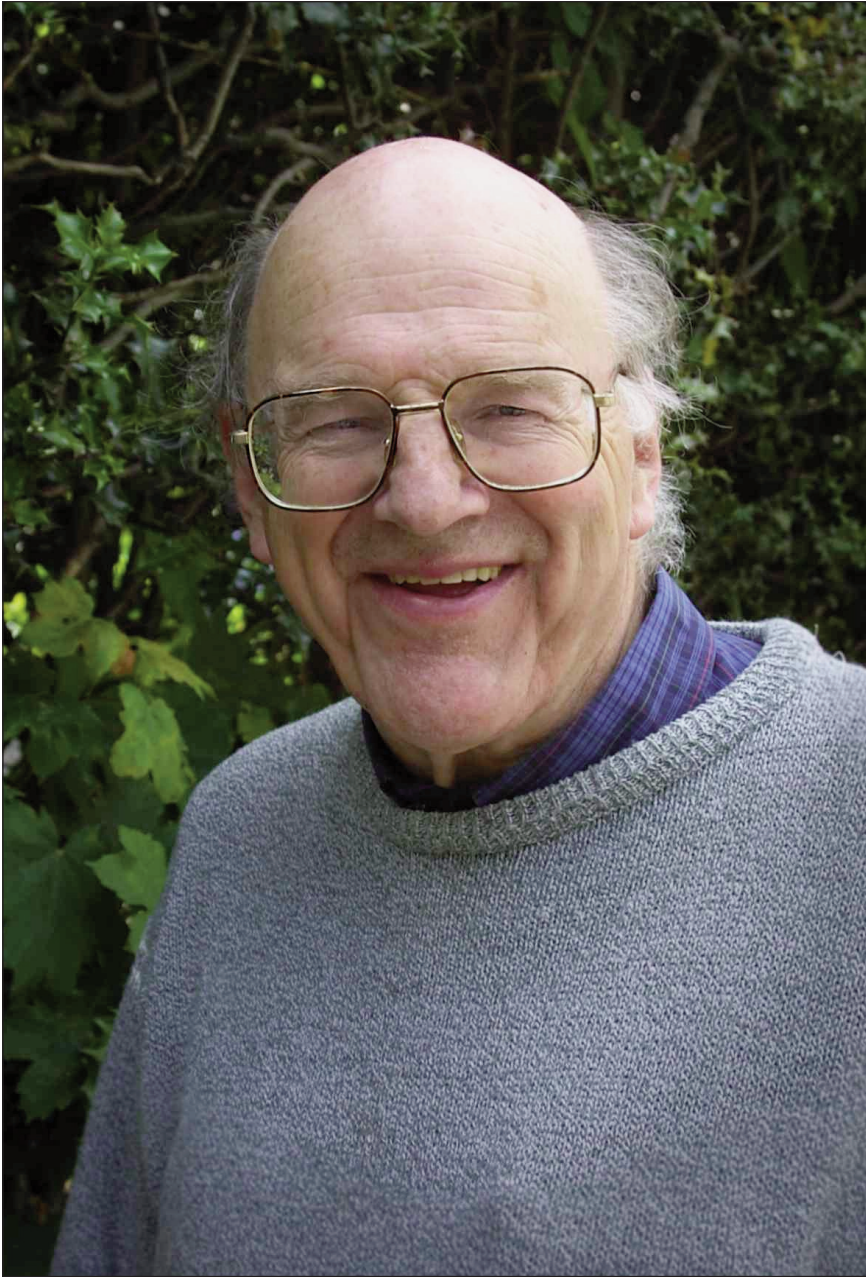
I was ordained at Lincoln Cathedral and went straight away as curate to Boston Parish Church, Lincolnshire, which claims to be the largest Parish church in England and famous for its large tower. There was a magnificent choir with a fine organist, David Wright, former organ scholar of New College, Oxford. He helped me a great deal with organ studies on the fine 3-manual Harrison. Two of his predecessors became organists at Lincoln Cathedral; one was Gordon Slater, composer of the hymn tune St. Botolph. It was a great experience to take part in the lovely singing, but I often wondered what the congregation thought; they were occasionally allowed to sing hymns! They still came and the huge church was always full, with a staff of one Vicar and four Curates — those were the days! I remember that one of my first sermons was on hymns. I did say, very audaciously, that the congregation should sing the tune and not the harmonies and put other people off. After the sermon a big man with a large harmony book came up and said, “I suppose that was meant for me!” I was quivering, but the senior curate said: “If the cap fits, Mr Jenkins – if the cap fits!” I’m glad he said it. I was able to take a full musical part at Boston joining the Choral Union and teaching music in a small private school, the church and playing the organ. The teaching helped my meagre salary, as I was about to get married!

From Boston I came down to Kent again. I was married to Elizabeth at All Saints, Whitstable and we went to Willesborough where the curate who guided me into the church at the age of

seven was now Rector, Canon Gerald Williams. I was his curate for four years and we had a happy time. I struck up an immediate friendship with the organist, Ted Solly, and we were able to perform many musical events together over many years. We both loved sport and played cricket, badminton and tennis matches for various clubs. It was a great privilege to play the organ for his funeral last year with the majority of Ashford Choral Society singing and Mark Deller giving the address. While I was at Willesborough I managed to study for organ diplomas late at night, after parish duties. I was greatly helped by John Gadsden, organist at Ashford Parish Church; a fine 3-manual organ there, where I practised.

From Willesborough over to Westwell, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell where I was Rector. All the time I was Vicar or Rector I concentrated on trying to get a choir together, which I have always found a great pastoral benefit for children and parents alike. I started one at Westwell and it served as a youth club with many activities including football against rival choirs. As our children were minute we usually lost; but they played! We managed performances of Stainer’s Crucifixion and Somervell’s Passion with the help of members of Ashford Choral Society of which I was still a member.

I then moved to Rolvenden in 1975 as Vicar: I was fortunate to have a splendid Headmaster in the village school who supported the church in every way. He encouraged children to join the choir; we had around thirty-five in the choir at one time and we organised a fairly musically ambitious Matins each week. Again, we managed the



Rev Canon John Wright

Photo by C. Jilks

choir as a youth club and we played all sorts of matches; cricket, football and rounders against other choirs. The Headmaster and I took children up to White Hart Lane to support Tottenham Hotspur; we were avid fans!

The organ, a fine Russell originally, was renovated by *Browne of Canterbury* and I believe it was the first mechanical action they had tackled. With a fine instrument on hand we had recitals by numerous people including Dr Allan Wicks, Michael Howard (formally of Ely Cathedral), Reg Adams, David Flood and many others. David had just been appointed assistant at Canterbury and I am still taking lessons with him over twenty years later!

One of the great experiences was to take children on RSCM courses at Addington Palace. Canterbury Cathedral hosted an RSCM festival every year, in which we took part, and the medals scheme which was started for junior choristers, is still continuing; I have examined the Religious Instruction Section for over twenty years.

From Rolvenden I went to Cheriton in 1984 as Rector where I was inducted on Guy Fawkes Day! As we were about to start the procession from the Rectory, the 'phone went, to enquire whether the usual dog training was taking place that night! The Bishop said, "you could call it that!"

We spent seventeen happy years in the parish. The choir was enlarged at both St. Martin's and Seabrook and it is so encouraging to know that one chorister now is singing professionally in London City Church choirs and others are singing solos in choirs in their adult life. One year we were invited to lead the choirs in at the RSCM Festival at Canterbury.

In 1997 I was made an Hon. Canon of Canterbury Cathedral; I have been a Chaplain of the Cathedral since 1968. Canterbury has some great people at the head of things and I owed a lot to Archbishop George Carey; so kind when I was ill and had a heart by-pass, and Archdeacon John Pritchard, now Bishop of Jarrow, full of concern and compassion.

I joined the KCOA many years ago in the 1960s and at one meeting we had Dr Gerald Knight to talk to us at Rolvenden. I remember him telling me he was the only sane member of one musical committee to do with a hymn book! I can guess what the others wanted!

I have had the privilege of working with wonderful parishioners, musicians and organists over the years. I hope I have avoided the awful stories one occasionally reads about vicars and organists. I did have a lovely lady organist at Westwell who used occasionally to say, "And who is going to play this Sunday Vicar?" if she didn't like the hymn, and I had to use all my tact.

Although I retired in 2001 I take services locally, sing with choirs, play the organ regularly, give the odd recital and take lessons! We can never stop learning. Elizabeth and I have joined the University of the Third Age; we are learning something new all the time in the various meetings.

In my retirement I am very ecumenical. The other day I played the organ at the local Baptist and URC churches and preached at the Anglican Church in the evening. I have also played the organ at the local Catholic Church for funerals and weddings. It is so good these days; Christians get on so well together.

Obituary - Roger James Greensted

Roger James Greensted

27th July 1948 –
26th November 2022

MEMBERS WILL be sorry to learn of the recent death of Roger Greensted, who played a huge role in the survival of *F H Browne Organ Builders* after the close deaths of Alfred Wiley and Harry Fagg in the early Eighties. Roger was born in Canterbury and, as a child joined the choirs of St. Gregory (now Christ Church University music Department) and later St Stephen's Parish Church, where he also became a member of Canterbury Choral Society. A lucky meeting and friendship with Roger's father to *Browne's* voicer and excellent organist Reg Cobb, resulted in some 'holiday work' for the young Roger, which inevitably led to full-time work in the 1960s. Roger showed an early flair for both the technical and musical side of the work which led him into many conflicts with the

'Dickensian' and non-musical Directors of that time.

Roger introduced our former KCOA member Gordon Chapman into the Company, with Gordon joining as a fellow Director who assisted in taking the Company forward with fresh ideas and working methods: our member Malcolm Hall was also brought in by Roger. Sadly, Roger suffered various medical conditions and a very bad car accident (in which he was totally innocent of any blame) which resulted in facial injuries from which he possibly never fully recovered. Roger and voicer, Reg Cobb, were for many years Choirmaster and Organist of St Mary's Church, Wingham, with Roger also playing the historical instrument at Preston Parish Church. Roger was dedicated to the work, but ill health forced him to retire from the Company and, for a few years, take on some private work where there was less pressure on his health and well-being.

Our condolences go to former Wingham chorister and wife Jill, and sons Philip and James.



F H Browne & Sons Organ Builders

Photo F H Browne

Lionel Marchant

A Short Profile

LIONEL MARCHANT has been a supporter of our Kent County Organists' Association for many years, especially our Organ Competition, adjudicated by Dr David Flood. Consequently, our Officers and Committee considered it right, last October, to invite Lionel to become an Honorary Member of our KCOA; he has graciously accepted.

Lionel was born on 25th September 1941 at Mount Pleasant, Rushmore Hill, Pratts Bottom, Farnborough, Kent. His parents were not especially musical, neither playing an instrument, although his mother did win a singing competition in her youth.

Lionel started school at the endearing age of five in 1946 at the local St Peter and St Paul C of E school, before moving on, in 1952, to his Secondary school at Quernmore. Quernmore House School for boys was founded in 1880 in Bromley, Kent. Its success was such that, by the turn of the century, it had moved to Plaistow Lodge, a large Grade II listed mansion built in 1770 by Peter Thelusson, a businessman and banker. In the 1940s, following the war, the school became a boys only Secondary School under the auspices of KCC. Before leaving Quernmore, Lionel had risen to the dizzy heights of Head Prefect. The high point of that appointment was that, depending on the lunch staff on duty on a particular day, he was permitted to choose his lunch from the teachers menu

rather than the student menu.

Lionel had started piano lessons at the age of seven, and with the encouragement from no fewer than two music masters at his secondary school, he played the school piano regularly for school assembly. Lionel's formal education continued until 1957 leaving school at the age of sixteen.

However, when he was aged eleven and had joined the choir of St John's Church, Bromley, he was able to start playing the organ; although no lessons were available at the time, he remained self-taught until lessons were later arranged. Continuing to play at St John's he eventually became Organist and Choirmaster in his mid-teens. As part of his appointment, St John's PCC required him to move on from being 'self-taught' to receiving lessons from a qualified organ teacher. This was achieved by taking lessons from the organist of St Mary's Church, Bromley under Leslie Ellis. Later, Leslie Ellis took up an appointment as organist of St Mary's Church, Shortlands where Lionel continued his lessons.

After leaving school in 1957, Lionel started work with Lloyd's of London, first as broker and then as a Syndicate Underwriter. His career involved the daily commute to London and then from Chatham when his office moved to a new building on New Road. Nevertheless, he was able to continue and enjoy the musical life of an organist and choirmaster.

Lionel married his wife Elizabeth on 17th April 1971 at St John's Church Bromley, and the organ was played by a KCOA member who brought his choir from St Mary's Church, Bromley, to embellish the music; Elizabeth and Lionel have two children, a daughter Helen and a son Andrew.



Lionel Marchant

Photo L. Marchant

In December 1972, following the arrival of his daughter, Helen, Lionel bade farewell to Bromley and arrived at All Saints' Church, Maidstone where he has been for over fifty years. At the time, All Saints' Organist and Choirmaster was Reginald Hughes, Head of Music at Maidstone Grammar School. Over the years Reginald Hughes enthusiastically applied his energy, not only to the training of the choir, but to the prospect of rebuilding of the organ.

Consequently, Lionel, together with Brian Moore, the other All Saints' Assistant Organist, engaged in a fact finding mission, visiting innumerable churches as far apart as Southend and Birmingham. They even investigated the installation of an electronic instrument, making a visit to Folkestone Parish Church to view the recently installed electronic organ there. Finally, the organ advisor to the Canterbury Diocese DAC decreed that an electronic organ was not suitable for the Parish Church of the County Town of Kent.

The organ at All Saints' had been tuned and maintained in the early 1970s by Colin Jilks working for *Rushworth & Dreaper*, but with his moving on to *Hill Norman & Beard*, the organ was then maintained by the local firm, *Wood Brown of Maidstone*; the subsequent rebuild was carried out by them in 1980. However, with continual tuning problems and general maintenance, it was not long before the organ returned to the care of Colin Jilks, who has now looked after the instrument for so many years that Lionel concedes he must now know precisely how many screws and nails keep the instrument together.

Having overseen the organ rebuild, Reginald Hughes moved on from All Saints' at the end of 1980 and Lionel became the Acting Organist and Choirmaster until, in 1983, Peter

Richards accepted the position of Organist and Master of the Choristers, in addition to his responsibilities as Head of Music at Highsted Grammar School, Sittingbourne. Over the subsequent thirty years Peter Richards brought new life to the choir. The Choir were able to visit many cathedrals - Canterbury, Guildford, Exeter, Truro, Lichfield, Ely, St Edmundsbury, St Paul's London, Coventry and St George's Chapel Windsor - sometimes for a day visit and sometimes for a week, taking the place of the cathedral choir during their holiday. These visits were enjoyable and beneficial for the choir, also for Brian Moore and Lionel, experiencing a taste of the 'cathedral style' life.

Peter Richards moved on from All Saints' in 2013, requiring Lionel to once more to be acting Director of Music until the arrival of Charlotte O'Neil as Organist. Charlotte moved from All Saints' in 2017 and yet again Lionel was on hand to take over until All Saints' appointed Philip Horley, Head of Music at Sutton Valence School, as Organist and Master of the Choristers, allowing the music at All Saints' to further evolve and prosper.

Lionel has been associated with the music of All Saints', Maidstone for some fifty years, together with Brian Moore as Assistant Organists. Brian was a founder member of the KCOA, President twice and finally President Emeritus. Lionel had worked tirelessly with him at All Saints' for the benefit of our KCOA, especially when the KCOA Organ Festival was inaugurated by President Barbara Childs, together with Brian Moore and Lionel Marchant on the committee. The Organ Competition, as it is now called, has prospered greatly over the years, having its most successful year in 2022, with ten contestants taking part with Dr David Flood adjudicating.