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MARCH 2021

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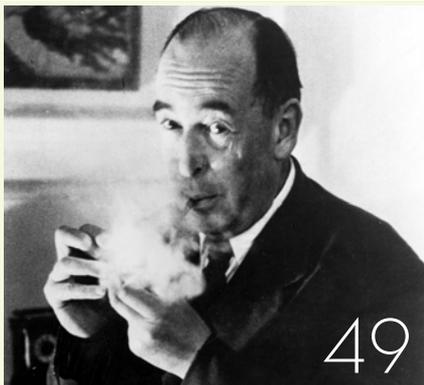


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WELCOME

'The past', as L.P. Hartley once wrote, 'is a foreign country; they do things differently there.' Many examples demonstrate this truth, not least the ways in which choristers were recruited in previous times. Nobody today would think to fill their choirstalls by 'taking as many ... children' as they see fit and conveying them by 'horse, boat, barge and cart' to fill out their local chapel or church. And yet, such practices were once sanctioned by the crown. In 16th-century England, patents were issued to choirmasters allowing them to rove the countryside looking for children who could be pressed into service. If you want to know more about how the Chapel Royal and other choirs were 'furnysshed with well singing children', then turn to page 16.

Of course, choir numbers and vitality have always shifted over time: from supposed Victorian highs to the lows of the 17th-century Commonwealth. Today, much vitality remains – even under lockdown. In this issue, Andrew Kirk and Tim Williams reveal some ideas that have helped them to establish thriving choirs in Bristol and Grantham. They have found opportunities amid the adversities and restrictions of the pandemic to keep their choirs active and engaged.

There's no shortage of organ music to mark Holy Week and Easter, but there are some lesser-known gems that are worth exploring. As David Davies reminds us: 'the onus remains on the organist to provide an appropriate arc of musical expression during Holy Week. He or she must be at one with the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the muted days that follow, the Gloria on Maundy Thursday, the hopelessness and hopefulness of Good Friday, and the silence that is gloriously shattered on the heels of the *Exsultet* and "Alleluia! Christ is risen" on Holy Saturday.' On pages 10–15 you will find day-by-day suggestions to enrich your services.

Proving that it is never too late to practise and improve, RSCM stalwart Martin How offers advice for those wishing to return to the piano later in life. For Martin, now 90, it has been a 'comfort' and a 'joy'. Why not follow his lead? There are worse ways to spend your time in lockdown.

Finally, there are a lot of changes taking place at the RSCM in 2021. The new Area Revisioning plan launches on 1 April. Eight Regional Managers will be overseeing the RSCM's teams of volunteers, and you can read about them on pages 42–44. In addition, the RSCM has a new education plan, also launching in April, and details can be found on page 20.



STEFAN PUTIGNY

CONTRIBUTORS



DAVID DAVIES is organist of Buckfast Abbey and of the Mary Harris Memorial Chapel of the Holy Trinity, University of Exeter. Educated at Magdalen College, Oxford and at the Institute of Sacred Music, Yale University, he was previously assistant director of music at Exeter Cathedral and sub-organist of Guildford Cathedral.



ANDREW GANT studied at St John's College, Cambridge, at the Royal Academy of Music and at Goldsmith's College, where he did his PhD in composition and 20th-century music. His career as a musician has included singing tenor professionally, composition and conducting. He was organist, choirmaster and composer at Her Majesty's Chapel Royal for 13 years to 2013.



GORDON GILES is Canon Chancellor of Rochester Cathedral. He has written various books on church music and hymnody published by BRF and SPCK and was on the editorial team of the new *Ancient & Modern* and the *Revised English Hymnal*.



MARTIN HOW began as organ scholar at Clare College, Cambridge. Apart from his time at Grimsby Parish Church, he spent his career at the RSCM where he was choirmaster twice and similarly field commissioner. He launched the RSCM's initial chorister training scheme and founded the Cathedral Singers.



ANDREW KIRK is director of music at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. He has responsibility for three choirs at the church. He regularly gives organ recitals around the UK. He has been involved in many RSCM courses over the years and in January 2013 directed the RSCM South Africa summer school.



TIM WILLIAMS is master of the music at St Wulfram, Grantham. He has held this post since 2008, when he completed his PhD in musicology at Cambridge University. Through the past 13 years, St Wulfram's church choir has developed into a major choral foundation with thriving initiatives for boys, girls, teenagers and adult singers. During the Covid pandemic, Tim has adapted the activities of the choristers at St Wulfram, employing digital methodologies for learning, and creating extensive virtual output in sacred music.

RSCM STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

Helen Bent, Head of Ministerial Training
Emma Huxley, Head of Voluntary
Sarah King, Education Administration Manager
Hugh Morris, Director
Miles Quick, Head of Congregational & Instrumental Music



The Big Christmas Carol Service

The service will start in: 12:50

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A very beautiful service, and so valuable to us all in these distressing times.



IN ACTION THE BIG CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

On Saturday 12 December, the RSCM held its Big Christmas Carol Service, which was broadcast live online.

The event was held in association with the Churches Conservation Trust and broadcast from the beautiful All Saints church in the heart of Cambridge. Singers from around the world joined us on the day, including the A Capella Singers from South Africa and the choir of All Saints' Cathedral, Nairobi. We are delighted that the broadcast was watched live by thousands of people.

The event was introduced by HRH the Prince of Wales, and we were joined by other special guests, including the Rt Hon. Theresa May, the Rt Revd Rowan Williams (former Archbishop of Canterbury), Timothy Bentinck ('David Archer'), Alexander Armstrong, Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith and John Rutter, who conducted his carol *What sweeter music*. We are grateful to them all for giving up their time to make it such a special event.

It was a privilege for the choir of the Chapel of the Cross to participate in the Big Christmas Carol Service. As an American episcopal parish located on a university campus, the opportunity to collaborate with members of the worldwide Anglican Communion strengthens our mission to encourage future generations of singers and leaders in the church.

Joseph Causby

What a great foundation of churchmanship: the Revd Dr John, Bishop Timothy and Archbishop Rowan. Wonderful.



Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.



Reading — Luke 2:8-16
Alexander Armstrong — Actor and Presenter



Introduction to the service
His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales — President of the Churches Conservation Trust

*Thank you to the wonderful guests!
Thank you RSCM for making this happen.*

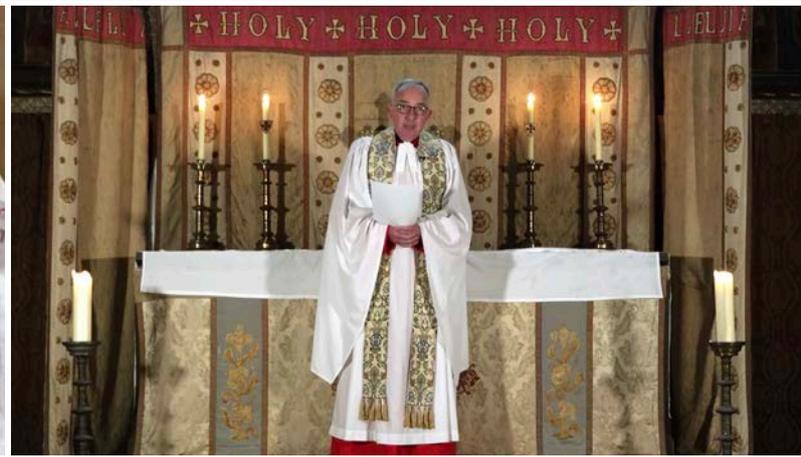
The service is available to watch online on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/watch?v=80vdYMM-XZU



O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,



O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;



The service delivered the message of Christmas in a really meaningful way.



Reading — John 1:1-14
The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

Thanks to all involved in organizing this wonderful service, and to the choirs. It is a great encouragement to us all.



come and adore him
born the King of Angels:

I just wanted to say thank you for being able to join in the lovely service. It has been a great experience and good to sing again at last. May we all be back in our choir stalls soon.

Congratulations on pulling together such a stunning online carol service.

For more highlights of events being held across the period March to July 2021 and for full details of the events listed below, visit our website: www.rscm.org.uk/search-events/ or contact the named person. Some of the events below may be subject to cancellation due to the ongoing pandemic. The area festivals will be subject to any social distancing measures in force at the time. Please contact the named person or the RSCM voluntary department for up-to-date information.

COME & SING AND SOCIAL

PORTSMOUTH AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT AREA

Stainer's Crucifixion

Friday, 2 April

Portsmouth Cathedral

Contact Peter Gould at
pdgould@hotmail.co.uk

IRELAND

Ecumenical service

Sunday, 18 April » time tbc

Venue tbc

Details tbc

WESSEX AREA

Jazz evensong

Sunday, 4 July » 14:30 (practice)
to 18:30 (evensong)

Lady St Mary, Wareham, Dorset
BH20 4ND

Composed and directed by Alexander l'Estrange. Accompanying musicians include Hugh Morris (piano). Cost £12, under-18s £5, non-affiliates £15.

SWANSEA & BRECON AREA

Knighton RSCM Pilgrimage of Song

Friday, 28 May to Sunday, 30 May
» 9:30 (Friday) to 13:00 (Sunday)

A pilgrimage of song in the Welsh Marches led by Geoff Weaver. A unique opportunity to walk in the beautiful Marches countryside, rehearse, sing, and worship in some of the delightful, small rural churches and enjoy good food and fellowship

together. Non-residential with picnic lunch and full dinner provided. Contact the course secretary, Sarah Green, 01547 560005, chrisgreen990@btinternet.com.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA

Lift up your voice and your instrument

Saturday, 5 June » 13:30 to 17:30

Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Road, Stroud GL5 2HX

Music that is particularly useful for congregations in any church, or in churches where there are limited musical resources. Do come and meet others for a joyful afternoon of singing and discovering new, useful music as well as discussion. Tea and cake provided. Registration at 13:30, event starts 14:00, service at 17:00, finish 17:30. Cost £15. Please return booking forms to Fiona Brown: fmbsoundmatters@gmail.com. Contact Fiona Brown on 01242 576069 or fmbsoundmatters@gmail.com.

NORTH WALES AREA

RSCM launch event

Saturday, 5 June

St Asaph Cathedral LL17 ORD

Launch event with RSCM director, Hugh Morris. Cost £5.00.

WINCHESTER AREA

Southern Deaneries evensong Sunday, 6 June

St Thomas, Lymington SO41 9ND

A service of evensong for choirs in the southern part of the diocese, although any other choirs will be most welcome, preceded by an afternoon rehearsal.

LEEDS AREA

Residential singing weekend with David Ogden

Friday, 11 June to Sunday, 13 June

Wydale Hall, Wydale,
Scarborough YO13 9DG

For details contact Mrs Sally Dow on 01274 565479 or at sallydow@btinternet.com

IRELAND

Chorister Day

Saturday, 26 June » time tbc

St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

Details tbc

SOMERSET AREA

Sing choral evensong with Simon Lole

Sunday, 27 June » 15:30
(service 18:30)

St Mary Magdalene, Church Square, Taunton TA1 1SA

No charge (retiring collection).



AREA FESTIVALS

📍 WINCHESTER AREA

Festival launch

Tuesday, 27 April » 19:30
The Undercroft, Winchester
Cathedral SO23 9LS

📍 SWANSEA & BRECON AREA

Area festival

Saturday, 15 May
Brecon Cathedral LD3 9DP
 This festival will be directed by Stephen Power (director of music, Brecon Cathedral). Cost is covered by purchasing an area festival booklet at £7.00 each.

📍 ELY AREA

Festival service

Saturday, 15 May
Venue tbc
 Music to include David Halls' *Wash me thoroughly*, Shephard's *The secret of Christ* and Harwood in A flat.

📍 PETERBOROUGH AND NORTHAMPTON AREA

Award holders' evensong

Sunday, 23 May » 14:15
Peterborough Cathedral PE1 1XZ

📍 WINCHESTER AREA

Festival workshop

Saturday, 5 June » 10:30 to 12:30
St Michael, Basingstoke
RG21 7QW

📍 SOUTH EAST WALES AREA

Area choral festival

Saturday, 19 June
Venue tbc
 Area festival directed by Hugh Morris. £6.50, non-RSCM members £8.00. Under 18s no charge.



WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

📍 SOMERSET AREA

A day for aspiring organists

Saturday, 17 April » 10:00 to 14:00
St Andrew, Stogursey TA5 1TQ
 Following the success of the last two events, Rosemary Field will lead another day for aspiring organists – those who might have just started playing the organ, have reluctantly been press-ganged into playing on a Sunday morning, or just want to improve their technique. If you missed out previously, or just fancy a refresher, please book early because places will be limited. Cost £10.

📍 SOMERSET AREA

Inspiring music in worship in small churches

Wednesday, 28 April » 10:00 to 15:30
Flourish House, Cathedral Park, Wells BA5 1FD
 The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on worship involving many challenges and struggles, especially when it comes to music. However, it has also paved the way

for fresh imagination and creativity. This will be a practical and visionary day relevant to the worship and music of every local church, especially those with small congregations. Come to be enthused and inspired, as we prepare for the 'new normal'. No charge.

📍 IRELAND

Children's Workshop (climate-themed)

Saturday, 8 May » time tbc
Venue tbc
 Details tbc

📍 GUILDFORD AREA

Small is beautiful, too!

Sunday, 9 May » 15:30 to 19:30
St Nicolas, Cranleigh GU6 8AS
 Rosemary Field will lead a session looking at music that 'smaller' (mainly non-SATB) choirs can easily sing on their own. The afternoon will end with an act of worship. Advance booking essential. £10 adults, under 18s free. Contact Ian Church on 07860 520686 or at ian.church@ntlworld.com.

📍 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AREA

Young organists' day

Saturday, 15 May » 10:00 to 13:00
St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford MK11 1BD
 Lead organisation is Northampton & District Organists' Association supported by RSCM Oxon, Bucks & Berks Area and Buckinghamshire Organists' Association. Jonathan Kingston will give friendly individual guidance on organ management to participants. No charge. Contact Richard Tapp on 07850 775708 or at richardftapp@btinternet.com

📍 WINCHESTER AREA

Organ day

May, tbc
St John, Hartley Wintney, Hook RG27 8ED
 A joint event with the North Hampshire Organists' Association. Further details to be confirmed.

MY SAVIOUR HANGS UPON THE CROSS

Liturgical organ music for Holy Week

DAVID DAVIES

We will not easily forget 2020. Along with all those worshippers for whom Holy Week and Easter felt very different, many organists and singers have commented on how not partaking in this most dynamic of seasons affected them more than not being able to engage in all the usual musical festivities of Christmas. The impact of missing out on sharing in the intense sequence that takes us from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday ran deep.

The significance of music along the journey of Holy Week – a journey that gives us such a stark and unique opportunity to consider both the inner and the outer Christian life – is undoubted. We can but hope that this year might offer some more rays of light, with renewed corporate worship being all the more treasured in the wake of the vicissitudes of Covid-19.

Looking ahead, however, we can remind ourselves of the riches of choral music upon which we draw to adorn the liturgies of this season, riches that access the most devotional and human of responses. We can remind ourselves, too, of the plentiful options for seasonal organ music.

In any overview of such a considerable corpus of organ music, selectivity must prevail at the expense of some important works. Only a fraction of relevant pieces by J.S. Bach are specifically cited. Charles Tournemire's *L'Orgue Mystique*, for example, regrettably is omitted, as are Marcel Dupré's *Le Chemin de la Croix* and *Symphonie-Passion*. Discussion of the colourful, choral-based *oeuvres* of Max Reger and Flor Peeters must also be reserved for another time. The selection comes, in part, from a personal experience of trying to ring the changes each year, and to highlight some perhaps lesser-known pieces.

The way the organ is used during this season varies, naturally, within Christian traditions. Roman Catholics are reminded that the role of the organ from Ash Wednesday onwards is defined more strictly. Part of the *Instruction on Music in the Liturgy*, codified at the Second Vatican Council, specifies Lent and the Sacred Triduum as being among the times when the organ is not to be played in a solo capacity, and there are many regional instances in the Anglican tradition of, for example, the use of reeds being suppressed during this time. However, the onus remains on the organist to provide an appropriate arc of musical expression during Holy Week. He or she must be at one with the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the muted days that follow, the *Gloria* on Maundy Thursday, the hopelessness and hopefulness of Good Friday, and the silence that is gloriously shattered on the heels of the *Exsultet* and 'Alleluia! Christ is risen' on Holy Saturday.

PALM SUNDAY

The 'royal pomp' of Palm Sunday gives way to the Passion, and it can be powerful to play the organ before the morning service only, leaving the church in silence afterwards. That might allow considerable scope for prelude music, especially if there is a procession starting elsewhere that will eventually arrive in the church building. Ordinarily there are congregants who choose not to take part, so the organist has an opportunity to bring the atmosphere of the procession to them. Jean Langlais's vision of the scattering of palm branches, *Les Rameaux*, immediately invites us into the energy and busyness of that scene. Less well known, but informing the same narrative, are *Pour la Fête des Rameaux sur Hosanna Filio David* by Jeanne Joulain (1920–2010),



Above: *Valet will ich dir geben* by Valerius Herberger. The words were written in response to an outbreak of plague in 1613 and published with music by Melchior Teschner in 1614.

and the *Entrée de Jésus à Jérusalem* by Maurice Gay (1897–1978). Joulain’s work resonates with her immersion in a particular French sound world: having won *premier prix* in Marcel Dupré’s class of 1952, she pursued a distinguished career of performing, teaching and composing, and several of Pierre Cochereau’s improvisations live on through her reconstructions.

J.S. Bach’s chorale preludes on *Valet will ich dir geben* are particularly appropriate when ‘All glory, laud and honour’ serves as the outdoor processional hymn. If the procession is coming from a distance, with the church doors open, it can be effective to play the exquisite BWV 736 prelude very gently, timed so that it ends just as the strains of the *al fresco* hymn are reaching the ears of those inside the church. Any resultant discomfiture of fighting tonalities can only add to this most dramatic of liturgical re-enactments!

At evensong on Palm Sunday the liturgical face has turned far away from Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. One might consider Langlais’s *Dominica in Palmis* – an apposite liturgical work as the bipolarity of its musical ideas reflects both the glory and the

desolation unique to this day. It ends mystically, almost as though the invitatory splendour of the Gregorian *Procedamus in pace* and *Gloria laus* melodies it quotes, and which were such a stirring feature of the morning liturgy, is now called into ironic question as we enter Holy Week. Although it is usually played in the morning, such a subtle, albeit subjective, theological take on the piece can be effective.

HOLY WEEK: MONDAY TO WEDNESDAY

Services from Monday to Wednesday might include hymns and choral music. It may be the custom of the church to have the organ played before or after services, or, indeed, to offer stand-alone organ meditations, and with an opportunity to play different versions of the same base material each day. The organist can be guided by penitential psalmody, too, with pieces such as Herbert Howells’s *Psalm Prelude*, Set 2, No. 1 (‘Out of the deep’), or *De Profundis* by Lowell Liebermann (b. 1961) offering extended works in mid-century and contemporary styles respectively. Written several centuries earlier, and based on



Above: Jeanne Demessieux (1921–68).

Martin Luther's metrical paraphrase of the same text, is the intabulation *Uss tieffer nodt schry ich zu dir* by Hans Kotter (c.1480–1541), while the famous quotation of *Aus tiefer Not* in Felix Mendelssohn's Sonata No. 3 (Op. 65) is but one of a number of iterations of the melody in the corpus: see, for example, J.S. Bach's BWV 686 and 687, Reger's *52 Chorale Preludes*, Op. 67, and Jürg Baur's *Partita 'Aus tiefer Not'* (published in 1965).

Sigfrid Karg-Elert's response, *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* (No. 12 in his Op. 65 collection), is an essay in how to treat diminished chords; the harmonic richness of his musical language, coupled with the palette of organ colour he specifies, are sure signs of his unique style. There is something in the music, too, that manages to capture the heaviness of the psalmist's soul. We can only hope that the imprecatory last verse of the psalm, 'happy the one who takes your children and dashes them against the rock', doesn't feature in any musical depiction, but the conclusion of Karg-Elert's prelude shows that, if the psalmist's

right hand was to have lost its skill in verse five, it has surely been rediscovered by the next verse, where Jerusalem is 'set above my highest joy'.

Two more works inspired by this text present different musical flavours. Dedicated to Harold Darke, and written in 1916, W.H. Harris's *Fantasy on the Tune 'Babylon's Streams'* is based on Thomas Campion's melody, while, written just 17 years later, the *Partita über An Wasserflüssen Babylon* by Kurt Hessenberg (1908–94), provides a variety of textures, with his signature use of quartal harmony and tonal ambiguity particularly communicating the pain of the text.

One approach for thematic consistency is to use settings inspired by Venantius Fortunatus's sublime *Vexilla regis prodeunt* as the musical 'beating heart' of successive days' organ meditations. Written in 1962, Sidney Campbell's *Variations on the plainsong 'Vexilla regis'* are structured in five distinct sections. The *Choral sur Vexilla Regis* of André Fleury (1903–95) and Jeanne Demessieux's *Prélude sur Vexilla Regis*, Op. 8 No. 13, provide contrasting reimaginings of the mode I melody.

MY SAVIOUR HANGS UPON THE CROSS



Above: The closing bars of Sigfrid Karg-Elert's *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Maundy Thursday, with its Chrism Mass and an evening Mass of the Last Supper, allows for the great Eucharistic hymns to be celebrated. *Pange lingua* settings by Nicolas de Grigny, Zoltán Kodály and Virgil Thomson offer three entirely different approaches. Joseph McGrath (1889–1968), another American composer, published *Twelve Versets on Pange lingua*, a *Chorale Prelude on Tantum ergo* and *Eucharistica*, any of which would be appropriate. Inspired by one of the great songs of the Sacred Harp tradition, Samuel

Barber's *Variations on Wondrous Love*, Op. 34 pairs academic rigour with musical acerbity. Of course, this occasion provides a perfect opportunity for improvisation on themes of humility and service, to amplify the theology of the foot washing, with the *Ubi Caritas* chant being especially useful and fitting. In many places, a tradition of playing Olivier Messiaen's *Le Banquet céleste* before the evening liturgy illuminates the theological power of the work's scriptural reference from the Gospel of John: 'Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.'



The significance of music along the journey of Holy Week is undoubted

Left: 'Aus tieffer Not schrey ich zu dir' from *Geystliche Gesangk Buchleyn* (Wittenberg, 1524). Words by Martin Luther, music by Johann Walter.

MY SAVIOUR HANGS UPON THE CROSS

22a (Adagio assai) adagissimo

Above: The closing bars of J.S. Bach's *O Mensch, beweine dein Sünde gross*, BWV 622.

riten. sempre

sehn mich nach ew - gen Freu - den, o
 Je - su, komm nur bald!

Above: The closing bars of Johannes Brahms's *Herzlich thut mich verlangen*, Op. posth. 122, No. 10.

GOOD FRIDAY

The Blessed Sacrament having been translated to the altar of repose, the organist might not be required to play between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (or, possibly, not until Holy Saturday). The array of organ music written with the Cross as its focus, however, is considerable, and on Good Friday, for me at least, few pieces bring together the agony and the finality of that day more than Bach's chorale prelude *O Mensch, beweine dein Sünde gross* (BWV 622). It is even more heart-rending when played or heard on an organ that is tuned in some form of unequal temperament, with the C flat / F flat major inflections within the final cadence yearning for the purity of the mediant G in the final resolution.

The Sayings of Jesus on the Cross are potent phrases that have inspired a number of organ compositions. Three generally lesser-known works dating from the 20th century that are worth exploring, each being wrought with evocative harmonic language and taut formal ideas, come from Denmark, the USA and England respectively. They are *Die sieben Worte des Erlösers am Kreuze* (1904) by Otto Valdemar Malling, *Meditations on the Seven Last Words of Christ* (1956) by John Huston, and *The Seven Last Words* (1968) by Alan Ridout. More often encountered is a meditation on *Ecce lignum Crucis* (1967) by Anton Heiller. A particularly effective interpretation, employing handbells, can be found on YouTube, uploaded by La Casa de Cristo Lutheran Church.

MY SAVIOUR HANGS UPON THE CROSS

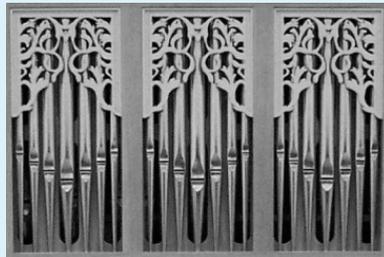
From the pen of Swedish composer Valdemar Söderholm (1909–90) comes his expressive *Ave Crux*, which pairs effectively with *My Saviour hangs upon the Cross* by the Dutch organist and composer Jacob Bijster (1902–58), and, for a work that can support readings or poetry as part of a Good Friday sequence, the Passion Suite *Ombres* by Marthe Henriod Bracquemond (1898–1973) is seldom heard in the UK.

Few pieces bring together the agony and the finality of Good Friday more than Bach's 'O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross'

As is the case with all liturgical organ music based on pre-existing chorale and plainsong melodies, the organist must consider the fact that these melodies are now recognized by fewer congregants than was once the case. But things were ever thus: Johannes Brahms's prelude on *Mein Jesu, der du mich* quotes a chorale, for example, that was already falling out of

hymnodic favour in both the Lutheran and Catholic German traditions, its text basis taken from that passage of the Revelation to John that depicts the Whore of Babylon. Brahms gives us two contrasting settings of *Herzlich thut mich verlangen* in his *Elf Choralvorspiele*, Op. posth. 122 (in which collection *Mein Jesu, der du mich* is the opening prelude). Of the two *Herzlich* settings, it is the second, with its pendulous moto ostinato, that presents the melody that we know more usually as the *Passion Chorale* in a mixture of 6/4 and 4/4 time signatures, with Brahms's skill at manipulating hemiola and cross-rhythm accents at a slow tempo managing to extract even more poignancy from the noble melody.

It is difficult to suggest, personally, which work might encapsulate Good Friday, but the 1966 chorale prelude *Drop, drop slow tears*, Op. 104 by Vincent Persichetti seems an ideal vehicle in both the liturgical and devotional context of music-making. In one sense it wears its learning lightly: Persichetti was a formidable artisan with a sophisticated ability to use myriad polytonal techniques. Yet it is also a deeply felt piece that can continue to nourish us on that journey towards our entering into the joy of the Resurrection.



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FURNYSSHED WITH WELL SINGING CHILDREN CHORISTER RECRUITMENT IN EARLIER TIMES

ANDREW GANT

It has often been stated that the celebrated Flemish Renaissance composer Orlande de Lassus (c.1532–94) was kidnapped as a child for the beauty of his voice.

He almost certainly wasn't: one of the features of early records of choirs is that the younger members leave little personal trace. Administrative accounts might list the adult singers at a coronation or high-end funeral by name, and then go on to say how many choirboys took part, but not who they were. Right through to the time of Handel, treble soloists are often identified as nothing more than 'the Boy'. Similarly, events in early childhood, including how these boys came to join choirs, have to be pieced together from circumstantial evidence and later references, like Anthony Wood's comment in *Athenae Oxonienses* (1691–92) that William Byrd was 'bred up under Tallis', implying that Byrd was a child of the Chapel Royal, where the older composer worked.

Another reason for treating the Lassus story with caution is the danger of applying the cultural standards of one age to another, distant in time: one century's kidnap is another's welcome leg-up into education, opportunity and society, sometimes from grinding provincial poverty.

Indentures and patents to choirmasters at top institutions specifically allowed and instructed them

Right: After more than a decade of interruption by war and interregnum, chorister training resumed in the 1660s, enabling the diarist Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) to employ his own houseboy, trained at the 'King's Chappell' and able to join him in singing motets and psalms. GL Archive / Alamy Stock Photo.

to travel the country 'impressing' the best choirboys from the local church or chapel. The patent issued to Richard Edwards by Elizabeth I in 1561 is typical:

To all mayours sheriffs bayliefes constables and all other our officers gretinge. For that it is mete that our chappell royall should be furnysshed with well singing children from tyme to tyme we have and by these presentes do authorize our wellbeloued servaunt Richard Edwardes master of our sayd chappell ... to take as manye well singinge children as he shall thinke mete in all chathedrall and collegiate churches as well within liberties as without within this our realm of England whatsoever they be, And also at tymes necessarie, horses, boates, barges, cartes, and carres, as he for the conveyance of the sayd children from any place to our sayd chappell royall shall thinke mete, with all manner of necessaries apperteyning to the sayd children as well by lands as water at our prices ordynarye to be redely payed when they for our service shall remove to any place ... wherefore we will and cammaunde you ... to be helpinge aydinge and assistinge to the uttermost of your powers as ye will answer at your uttermost peril.

This smacks more of the Child Catcher from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* than modern standards of safeguarding. But at around the same time the Norfolk landowner Thomas Tusser recorded that being 'pressed' into the choir of St Paul's Cathedral as a boy



| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
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| 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
| 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 |
| 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 66 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 70 |
| 71 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 79 | 80 |
| 81 | 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 |
| 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 100 |



Left: Orlando de Lassus (c.1532–94) directing a chamber service, with boys singing from partbooks. Miniature by Hans Mielich. Lebrecht Music & Arts / Alamy Stock Photo.

Right: Boys and gentlemen of the Chapel Royal at the funeral of Elizabeth I in 1603. Colour drawing, early 17th century. © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved / Alamy Stock Photo.

in the 1520s had rescued him from a miserable existence at Wallingford Abbey, remembering ‘what bare robes, what stale bread, what college fare, what penny ale’ were offered to the ‘wretched boys’, smarting from their ‘pinched noses’. At St Paul’s he was taught by John Redford, whom he greatly admired, and who got him a place at King’s College, Cambridge when his voice broke. Music provided a path into education, society, life at court and a prosperous later life.

Later in Elizabeth’s reign troupes of child actors became enormously popular. Several were based on existing church choirs: Windsor, St Paul’s, the Chapel Royal. Boys doubled as singers and actors (to the dismay and disgust of the ever-present puritan tendency). The success of the child companies had a knock-on effect on recruitment, to the extent that by the closing years of the 16th century, Chapel Royal Master Nathaniel Giles was apparently taking suitable boys from the streets. One parent at least believed that recruitment was influenced as much by the ability to act as to sing. In 1601 Henry Clifton of Norfolk lodged a complaint about his son, 13-year-old Thomas, claiming that he was kidnapped on his way to school and taken to Blackfriars where he found him, ‘amongst a company of lewd and dissolute players’. Giles refused to release the boy, but Clifton pulled strings in the Privy Council and secured his release. Clifton then spent a year assembling information about the treatment of his son and others, presenting a list of seven children who had suffered a similar fate to the Star Chamber on 15 December 1601. Their education

in godly and musical matters was so neglected that they are ‘in no wise fit for singing’. Early in 1602 the Star Chamber found in Clifton’s favour, hastening the end of the activities of the Chapel Royal choirboy troupe. By 1626 Giles’s annual warrant allowing him to ‘take up’ boys contained a proviso that the children should not be employed as comedians or stage-players, ‘for that it is not fitt or decent that such as sing the praises of God Almighty should be trained or employed on such lascivious and prophane exercises’. All of this feeds into and reflects underlying debates in wider society about religion, behaviour and morality.

These tensions exploded into civil war and interregnum soon enough. At its end in 1660 choirboy recruitment faced a particular challenge: choirs had simply stopped altogether for the best part of two decades, so the familiar cycle of younger boys learning from older ones who then graduate into adult roles had dried up.

One man deserves much credit for solving that problem: Henry Cooke (c.1616–72), known to everyone (including Samuel Pepys) as Captain Cooke for his service on the Royalist side during the wars. Cooke’s approach combined the time-honoured trawl of the country for talent with the equally well-trodden path of recruiting the latest members of well-established musical families. Among his starry line-up of choristers were several with surnames familiar from earlier years: Christopher Gibbons (son of Orlando), and, within a few years, Daniel and Henry Purcell, who joined their adult relatives Thomas and Henry senior (themselves probably former choirboys), now in the back row. John Weldon joined from Oxford, John Blow from Newark, William Turner from Windsor. Also among early recruits were Michael Wise and a ‘pretty boy’ (according to Pepys) called Pelham Humfrey. It wasn’t a bad A-team: but, as Matthew Locke records, it still took time for the old skills to be relearnt, which may well be why many of the anthems of the period feature long solo passages for men, with just brief choruses for the full choir. But talent and daily immersion in professional skills soon found its outlet: many of these boys wrote music for their peers to sing, including a joint ‘Club’ anthem by Blow, Humfrey and Turner ‘as a memorial of their fraternal esteem and friendship’ in 1664, and some splendidly plangent penitential psalm-settings by Humfrey, full of Purcellian touches before Purcell, much admired by Pepys.

Pepys benefited in other ways from Cooke’s success in recruiting able choristers. Pepys’s rising status

Children of the Chappell.



Gentlemen of the Chappell.



enabled him, to his great satisfaction, to engage a houseboy. In 1664 he ‘discoursed with Captain Cooke and I think, if I do find it fit to keep a boy at all, I had as good be supplied from him with one as by any body.’ In August ‘home and there find my boy, Tom Edwards, come, sent me by Captain Cooke, having bred in the King’s Chappell these four years. I purpose to make a clerke of him ... [I] find my boy a very schoole boy, that talks innocently and impertinently, but at present it is a sport to us, and in a little time he will leave it ... pretty well pleased with my choice of a boy.’ Later ‘the boy would, with a little practice, play very well upon the Lute’ and ‘the boy and I to singing of psalms ... the boy and I again to singing of Mr. Porter’s motetts, and it is a great joy to me that I am come into this condition, to maintain a person in the house able to give me such pleasure as this boy doth by his thorough understand of music, as he sing[s] any thing at first sight’. This is a striking tribute to Cooke’s training: like Thomas Tusser before him, young Tom Edwards has found his way into a secure place in society directly as a result of his musical ability and the actions of his choirmaster as a recruiting officer. Edwards went on to marry the Pepys’s much-loved maid, Jane Birch. It would be pleasing to think that a later choirboy who sang for Handel, another Tom Edwards, was their son or possibly grandson.

In the 18th and 19th centuries choirs, and with them the recruitment and treatment of choirboys, entered a period of mismanagement, neglect and cruelty, alleviated by occasional individuals of goodwill. Joseph Haydn trod a path familiar to many great composers in joining the choir in his

local town, then the grander establishment at St Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna, thereby reducing the burden on his family’s humble resources. Haydn was hardly a model choirboy – told off by the Empress for climbing the scaffolding on St Stephen’s, kicked out when he cut off another boy’s pigtail, left to scratch a living on the streets on his wits and his fiddle. Things gradually improved in England thanks to the efforts of reformers like Maria Hackett (1783–1874) and musicians like Chapel Royal choirmaster Thomas Helmore (1811–90), who had the boys living with him in his handsome townhouse in Chelsea and maintained a lucrative sideline in hiring them out as oratorio soloists. Helmore’s recruitment practices could be a little haphazard. On one occasion a musical lad called Arthur Sullivan, son of a south London bandmaster, spotted the Chapel Royal boys crossing St James’s Park in their state coats and resolved to apply, resourcefully tracking down Helmore’s address by enquiring at his local butcher’s.

Parish church choirs probably reached their peak of recruitment in the Edwardian era. In the modern period, recruiters of young singers battle with the many competing demands on their time and attention. On the plus side, most choirs now recruit girls alongside boys. And perhaps the increasing stresses of contemporary life are reinvigorating the appeal of simpler, old-fashioned activities such as singing together.

Recruitment remains a demanding part of a choir-leader’s life. But, compared with some of the challenges faced by their forebears, today’s recruiting officers may think themselves historically not too badly served.



PATHWAYS TO GROWTH

THE RSCM EDUCATION PLAN

HUGH MORRIS

This article expands upon ‘The pursuit of excellence’ by Sal McDougall in the December issue of CMQ. Sal wrote about the possibilities created by the pandemic and mentioned that we have been thinking a great deal about how the RSCM functions as a school.

Let me start by asking you two questions:

1. When did you last learn something new?
2. Did you find it out for yourself (perhaps by consulting the internet), or did someone actively teach it to you?

It would be interesting to hear your answers to the first of these questions. When you think about it, we learn new things all the time, leading to the development of new skills, knowledge or understanding. Learning can happen on many levels. It can be quite unconscious, or it can be utterly intentional – such as learning a new language in advance of a holiday abroad (an activity you will remember used to be possible). Some people have an active approach to learning and are always keen to know more. Others are more passive. But I would contend that learning helps us to grow as people, and that, of course, becomes the business of education.

The second question is also important. I can look up all sorts of things on a computer, from changing a tap washer to tips on part-writing for strings. The internet is a wonderful resource, but it is less good at telling you the things you don’t know that you need to know. This brings us back to education, or rather, the educator. A skilled teacher, using the right resources, will be able to help someone learn something that is tailored to them and that builds upon their existing knowledge. That brings us to the idea of a curriculum:

a central plank of education that defines what a particular organization – particularly a school – thinks learners ought to know.

I’m sure you’re running ahead of me here, but to spell it out: the RSCM has the word ‘school’ in its very name, and education is what we are about. Our mission is ‘the study, practice and improvement of music in Christian worship’. That principle will guide our future plans. There is a deep-seated need for the education work of the RSCM. Let me explain why.

The church music world at large needs to listen to the alarm bells that are ringing with increasing urgency. If we allow the scales to fall from our eyes, we can see there are serious sustainability issues. The stark reality is that the number of people involved in church music is declining, the average age of the active participants is rising, and this is doubly accentuated by the lack of young people coming through to take their place (though of course, there are inspiring exceptions to this). Left unchecked, it will not be many years before the already stretched numbers of organists, instrumentalists and singers become too low to be an integral part of worship. To be candid, they will be replaced by machines and recordings. To allow this to happen unchallenged is to deprive the church of skills and people, both of which are needed to sustain good worship. The RSCM’s mission is to improve music in worship; we are there to support the church itself. If we refocus our work on education, we help people view participating in church music as a positive thing to do – a form of music-making that is different from, say, singing in a community choir (good though that can be). In supporting the mission of the church, rather than simply for the sake of its own enjoyment, such music-making goes hand in hand with learning skills. Music

then becomes a pathway to growth for church communities, and will help them grow not only numerically but also in vibrancy and vitality. If the RSCM does not advocate the importance of such things in parishes and local church communities, who will? That's what makes our work so important, and why we need a plan to tackle the problem

Left unchecked, it will not be many years before the numbers of organists, instrumentalists and singers become too low to be an integral part of worship

systematically. This applies to all the strands of our education work: to choirs and choir trainers, to organists, to instrumentalists, to schools, and to the clergy and lay people who lead worship. The deep need for this kind of support and training is one of the things that drives me as Director of the RSCM. The church is going to need a degree of re-education regarding the power of music education as a way of growing the church.

Two things have now come together to give new impetus to this work. First, the new Area Revisioning project, formally launching on 1 April, means that we will have a strong platform for delivery across the UK and Europe. One of the key aims of the revisioning work is to enable us to connect wider and deeper to our own member churches, and to those who are not yet affiliated. On its own, the new structure will not achieve all that we would wish. It needs to be coupled to consistent content – for example, a curriculum that can actually be delivered. Second, the pandemic has provided such an abrupt change to established ways of working that we now have an opportunity to do things differently and to ensure green shoots of recovery once the health crisis is over. Into all this, then, comes the new RSCM Education Plan. This will be launched in April, alongside the formal launch of all the new local Area Teams.

So, what is the plan? The answer is something between a route map, a curriculum, and a business plan. Join us for the launch, which will demonstrate something that already exists, functions as promised and is ready for use, rather than the launch of an aspirational, but somewhat vague manifesto.

The plan contains clear objectives showing what we are trying to achieve. It contains Key Performance Indicators (which is a system to make sure it's actually working). It covers all of our RSCM educational strands: choral, congregational and

instrumental, ministerial, organ and schools (the latter being an essential part of the recipe for growth). It covers all skill levels, from beginner to professional, and addresses life-long learning by enabling engagement at every age and stage. We believe that no one is beyond the need for relevant, quality education.

It has two other important features. First, it clarifies the importance of a 'train the trainer' model. We must have an available network of skilled and effective tutors and consultant educators right across the map, even allowing for the recent addition of remote learning to our armoury. Second, the plan does not make value judgements about music or worship style, or churchmanship or other standpoints. As ever, the RSCM's role is to encourage in the best use of music in worship, whatever the context.

GETTING INVOLVED

The plan will incorporate sample content, including templates for individual sessions. This will contain:

- ▶ Engaging, effective methods, shown by practical example and demonstration as much as theoretical teaching.
- ▶ Consistency, building a connected 'RSCM world' of effective teaching, learning and practice.
- ▶ Embedded learning of technique. I have alluded to this before, where in a situation where technical training is inadequate, all people can resort to is instinct, when they lack the contextual skills. We should not feel shy of helping to develop technique. In the right context, rigour can be a good thing!

When the restrictions on life ease again, most particularly in relation to worship, I and other senior staff colleagues will be visiting more churches to make sure that we are fully in touch with life on the ground. Though, of course, you are always welcome to share your situations and experiences with us.

What does it need of you? Most importantly: engagement, and enthusiasm for our work. Spread the message. Join us for our launch. Get involved. Sign up to attend what is on offer and reap the benefits. If you want to be one of the teachers, get in touch so we can discuss whether your skills match our needs, and how we can train you to help deliver our work. We all have things to learn, and you too need to be prepared to learn. To stop learning is to close your mind, and that impedes progress.

Sir Sydney Nicholson's aim when he founded the RSCM was to address the manifest need for the improvement of parish music. Is there a need now? Yes. Is it a challenging thing to do? Yes. Is it worth doing? Yes.

Let's get going.



INSPIRING NEW MEMBERS

RECRUITING & RETAINING CHORISTERS

ANDREW KIRK AND TIM WILLIAMS

In the Autumn of 2020, a number of directors of music from major churches in England met four times on Zoom, focusing on chorister recruitment and retention in response to the impact of the Covid pandemic. Different churches face many similar issues and challenges but have responded to them in different ways. This article is partly a result of that collaboration. Its co-authors are, respectively, directors of music at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol and at St Wulfram, Grantham. It is clear from our two perspectives that there are many ways forward once church choirs resettle to a regular pattern based around in-person meeting. We hope that our experiences may give ideas to other choir directors who are wondering how best to advertise for and

welcome new members and – just as importantly – to inspire choristers to keep coming back.

In the years before the pandemic, our church choirs had different experiences of recruitment and retention, as well as sharing some common ground. At St Mary Redcliffe, recruiting choristers has become challenging in recent years. The traditional methods of visiting schools to take a singing assembly, giving out brochures, inviting children to taster choir practices, articles in parish magazines,

Above: As part of their virtual outreach, the choristers of St Wulfram, Grantham made a carols video. It was played at 18 care homes and four hospital wards over Christmas.



Left: Feedback from choir families suggests that digital methodologies (never considered before the pandemic) can boost accessibility by appealing to different ways of learning. One example is the RSCM's *Voice for Life* materials on Showbie.

school or church newsletters, website presence, and engagement with social media would produce limited interest, but often not enough. Many parents do not appear to desire the commitment of a single activity such as choir taking up five or more hours per week. Especially at weekends, there is an increasingly strong sporting and secular cultural offer, leading St Mary Redcliffe to ponder the question of quality over quantity: could the choir gain more recruits and establish a more secure future by spreading out duties, while maintaining high standards?

During the first lockdown, St Mary Redcliffe music staff invited parents and choristers to comment on all aspects of being a chorister. The most revealing insights suggested that tweaking the termly timetable (such as adding occasional weekends off, or making greater use of the student choral scholars as an independent choir) may make it more attractive and sustainable for busy families. Less than ten minutes' walk away is Bristol Cathedral, offering the full range of expected choral services. Should a city-centre church be offering similar provision, or something different?

The story at St Wulfram's (a major church in a rural market town) has been of rolling recruitment and

retention, following a sudden successful recruitment drive over a decade ago. Numbers are often near capacity levels: much recruitment has happened through word of mouth and choristers inviting friends, as well as via the choir's ongoing schools outreach programme. As a result, the music department is less experienced than many in advertising the choir, but the pandemic paused the flow of new choristers, just at a time when many senior boy choristers experienced vocal change. And so, the same questions of recruitment posed at Redcliffe and elsewhere are also now relevant at St Wulfram's, in the different demography of Grantham.

A positive story of post-lockdown chorister recruitment at Redcliffe resulted from an unexpected email exchange with a newer choir parent. The parent took the initiative to write a testimonial about how much her son had gained from being a chorister. She sent this around six schools, including those her children attended, as well as a local postcode WhatsApp group. The music department was delighted to receive contact from the parents of six new boys and four new girls. They attended Zoom rehearsals at first, along with socially distanced practices in church when permitted. Would this

have happened in our pre-pandemic busy lives? The positive influence of a choir parent ambassador should not be underestimated – especially as many choir directors expect to do most of this work themselves. A broader, collaborative scope to recruiting, using the talents of the communities around our choirs, can be beneficial.

At St Wulfram's, the most successful 2020 recruitment pitch focused on the educational value of the choir, designed primarily to appeal to parents: as a result, the choir has welcomed new younger boy choristers. Since so many of the choir's add-ons (such as cathedral residencies and social events) have been casualties of creating Covid-secure parameters, it has felt as though the choir has been pared down to the activity of singing itself, without extras. Fortunately it is still a fabulous product. Recruitment adverts can always make a pitch for the choir's role in creating a space for free, high-quality music education, especially when this is not equally replicated in every educational context. One long-term choir parent offers insight:

As a single parent, I had always assumed that music education was beyond our family's means. But my son wanted to be a chorister. It was a world I knew nothing at all about, but I can't believe all that he has gone on to achieve and the doors it has opened.

Our churches are proud to achieve results without auditioning choristers. A girl joined St Wulfram's choir as part of the choir's explosive recruitment drive of 2009, while in Year 3. Over the years, she committed to the choir, was inspired by hearing the organ to learn the instrument from the age of 11, and eventually won a place to study the organ at the Royal Academy of Music. In retrospect, she believes she would have been put off from trying the choir had there been an audition process. Undoubtedly, a culture of openness and inclusivity can help generate the achievements of the choir – an experience shared at Redcliffe and in many other churches. At Redcliffe, occasionally new parents are surprised that auditions are not held. If the child wants to give singing a try, the expectation is that they should have that opportunity. After all, to improve sporting skills, being coached and practising those skills is vital, so why shouldn't singing have the same approach? It is a simple question of church musicians trusting in their ability to teach choristers at all levels, whatever the starting point, and going on to do so over a sustained period of time.

Retention of choristers is a parallel issue. Both churches have initiatives for teenage members of the choirs, seeking to enable continued progress. In the

past year at Redcliffe, six of the boy choristers have gone through vocal change. A cambiata choir was established for those boys as a stand-alone project. It seemed clear that some of the boys (or their parents) did not want a full or regular commitment in the future, but the hope was that this initiative would spark the flame in one or two ex-trebles. The new choir met for five weeks, using music especially composed with those voice ranges in mind. The boys recorded items for a musical Advent calendar, and there was a good attendance throughout. The choir will keep meeting in 2021, having built the repertoire for a simple evensong. In parallel, the teenage youth choir of St Wulfram's remained fully engaged through the autumn, whether meeting in person or making remote contributions to virtual anthems for Advent.

Feedback from choir families at St Wulfram's suggests that some digital methodologies that the church has used (never considered before the pandemic) can boost accessibility by appealing to different ways of learning, and even by enabling some choristers with disabilities to learn on an equal basis. One chorister, an experienced former head chorister with a visual impairment, finds that the auditory basis of learning and recording from digital rehearsal files helps him cope with vocal change, when a sight-reading first approach may have left him behind. Other choristers in a similar phase are requesting continued virtual materials for learning,

A culture of openness and inclusivity

even if the choir's output primarily happens in person. This approach helps them take the individual responsibility that they crave. Choristers are also making keen use of the new interactive RSCM *Voice for Life* materials on Showbie. Church musicians in 2021 have a wealth of new resources and many potential new ways of working.

The increased outreach possibilities through virtual output are endless, too. At Christmas, St Wulfram's choristers (unable to visit care homes as usual) created a carols video for care home residents, and for those alone or in isolation. It was played in 18 local care homes, and on the wards of four nearby hospitals. Expanding the reach of the choir's singing in this way makes connections that may help recruitment in the future, while giving the choristers a heightened sense of the worth of all they do – something that will help with retention in the longer term.

It is such a good time to look ahead and see what can be done, with all we have learnt, to help make



Above: The choir of St Mary Redcliffe in Bristol.

church choirs thrive in a new era. We are grateful for the support that the RSCM continues to give our dialogue and future methods of training. Neither of our churches has answers to all the questions of recruitment, and though there may be common themes or some exportable ideas, each village, town and city will have a different set of circumstances to address. However, we have compiled our five ‘top tips’, or principles, from our shared experiences:

- 1.** Believe in the quality of the product you are offering and promote it in an inclusive and welcoming way.
- 2.** Adapt your methods to new circumstances. This may currently include making video files if school visits are impossible, or increased use of social media.
- 3.** Enable the choristers to be fully involved in encouraging others to join, and in mentoring new choristers.
- 4.** Let established choir parents take an active role in making new families feel welcome and supported.
- 5.** Do not be disheartened if a recruitment process yields little interest. One fully welcomed new chorister may later go on to recruit five friends.

*‘What should never change about the choir?’
– ‘randomness’ and ‘fun’*

Finally, in this new era, perhaps it will be best not to make the offer of being a chorister overly formal and serious. There is much to be said for engaging choristers through unpredictable methods of learning in an environment where hilarity in shared community is just as welcome as – and can help generate – high musical standards. More than one St Wulfram’s chorister, when recently asked ‘What should never change about the choir?’, highlighted ‘randomness’ and ‘fun’ – words that apply equally in Redcliffe. As in time we emerge from the many shadows that Covid-19 has cast over the church music world, we would all do well to listen to the hopeful voices of our choristers.

A portrait of Hugh Morris, a man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

HUGH MORRIS

If you are reading this edition of CMQ at the beginning of March, you will be doing so at a time when nothing is happening in your local RSCM Area. This is a good thing and not solely linked to the pandemic. In fact, the three-month break in locally organized RSCM activity was being planned before the word Covid was on any of our lips. The pause is to enable our background administrative processes to be reset as we transition to a new model for Area Teams across the UK (which, in this context, administratively also includes all of Ireland and the RSCM Areas of France and NW Europe). On 1 April (Maundy Thursday) we relaunch these new Teams, overseen by our eight Regional Managers. We look forward to working with all the volunteers who have signed up to the new systems, with those who are joining us now, and those who will join us over the next few months (and if you're interested in becoming a volunteer, visit www.rscm.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer).

The point is to create a whole new structure that better enables us to connect with our member churches, individual members, and the wider church, thereby ensuring that we fulfil our core mission to nurture, train and support. We are determined that we should be an energizing, formative voice for church music; we must be working actively with

the church itself to make our voice heard and make an impact. So, from 1 April, RSCM Area activities will start up again; while in the short term you may not notice much difference, over the next year or so you will gradually see the effect of the changes, not least in the range and consistency of events that will be on offer. Ultimately, as a Christian charity, serving the needs of others is integral to what we do.

These changes also impact upon the RSCM's education work. The Area revisioning provides for a new support system to be built, and you will be able to read more in future issues of CMQ of how these changes will advance our work. In this issue, on pages 20–22, I outline some of our future education priorities.

We warmly invite you to become involved, at whatever level, and that begins by engaging with events that are planned near you, rather than sitting on the sidelines and assuming they are for somebody else. To engage is one of the first steps towards feeling part of something. As circumstances allow, I and other members of the team will be doing what we can to lead, attend and support local events across the country. In the meantime, the administrative restructuring continues. Is such work glamorous? No. Is it necessary? Yes. Will it help us to reshape the RSCM and achieve maximum impact in the post-Covid landscape? Absolutely!

CONGRATULATIONS



Nigel Condry guesting at Bradford Cathedral.

GRADE 8 FOR RSCM PIPELINE SCHOLAR

The past year may have brought its fair share of challenges, but it has not stopped 16-year-old RSCM Pipeline organ scholar Anna Hallett from achieving her ABRSM grade 8. Having started out by attending a taster event run by the Diocese of Salisbury's 'PipeUp' scheme for young organists in 2014, she quickly took up lessons with Chris Totney at St John, Devizes, where she was already a chorister. When lockdown struck, her three-manual practice instrument at home came to the rescue and was put through its paces, meaning her progress was not hindered.

Anna has shown herself to be a wonderful young ambassador for the instrument by taking part in regular concerts, festivals and workshops at local and regional level, along with other more established courses run by the RCO, Oundle for Organists, the Jennifer Bate Organ Academy and the RSCM. Following on from the publication of her 2019 project 'Inspiring Organists of the Future: Does more need to be done?', she has recently launched The Organ Manual website and its associated social media platforms.

Before the first lockdown in 2020, Anna took part in the RSCM's membership conference in Derby, where she helped open the event by performing a solo, before



Anna Hallett

assisting and observing various workshops as the day unfolded. She now looks forward to developing her service-playing skills further and starting out on preparations for her ARCO diploma. Needless to say, she is indebted to everyone at the RSCM for all the opportunities afforded to her by the Pipeline scholarship and hopes that many more young players will be inspired to follow in her footsteps.

Chris Totney

50 YEARS AT THE CONSOLE

In the summer of 1970, a fresh-faced young organist called Nigel Condry was appointed as organist and choirmaster at the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, Mortlake, London. Fifty years later, he has finally closed the stops and taken his feet off the pedals.

Nigel studied at Trinity College of Music, where his organ tutor was Dr Harry Gabb, and among other distinguished musicians he was taught composition by Herbert Howells. Through half a century of liturgical and musical change, Nigel has provided faithful service at St Mary's with organ, choir, instrumentalists, children and adults.

Nigel met his wife, Stella, through the St Mary's choir, and their sons have taken up where he left off. David is director of music at All Saints, Kingston upon Thames, and Peter is head of performing arts at a school in Yorkshire as well as organist and choirmaster of St Margaret, Horsforth.

Nigel and Stella plan to move north, where Nigel will be available to deputize for any churches within striking distance of Leeds. They go with our love and best wishes, and the lasting gratitude of us all for Nigel's unwavering loyalty and musicianship.

Perry Kitchen

NEW YEAR HONOURS

The RSCM Wellington New Zealand regional chair, the Revd Alison Stewart, was awarded a Queen's Service Medal in the New Year Honours list for services to choral music.

RSCM VALIDATED SINGING AWARDS

VOICE FOR LIFE SINGING AWARDS

These results are listed alphabetically under RSCM Regions, Areas and Countries.

(F) = RSCM Friend,

(IM) = Individual Member,

(S) = Student member, if candidate's choir not affiliated.

🏆 Honours 90%+ (Gold)

★★ Highly commended 85%+ and

★ Commended 75%+ (Bronze/Silver)

GOLD AWARD

SE Wales: Bethan Cole 🏆 (Llandaff Cathedral & Newport Cathedral).

SILVER STANDARD

Ireland: Aedin Ferguson* (Dublin, St Mary's Pro-Cathedral).

Lincoln: Flynn Campbell**, Eddie Perrin*, Job Schofield** (Grantham, St Wulfram).

Peterborough & Northampton: Amber Welham*, Honey Whitmore (Kingsthorpe, St John Baptist), Emma Saunders** (Uppingham PC).

St Albans: Elizabeth Maddock** (Harpenden, St Nicholas), Cheryl Jeyakumar** (Hatfield, St Etheldreda).

Southwark & E Surrey: Adam Court, Mayowa Olatidoye, Grace Paruma, Aarna Wangoo (Croydon Minster).

USA: Teddy Erenson*, Lillian Mitchell** (Greenwich, CT, Christ Church).

BRONZE STANDARD

Lincoln: Faith Wilson** (Barton-upon-Humber PC), Lily Mei Liu-Child*, Grace Sparshott, Nathanael Thomas, Matthew Whysall* (Grantham, St Wulfram).

New Zealand: Bruce Binnie*, Sara Binnie*, Beverley Glover-Paix*, Leon Paix**, Ruth Wiseman (New Plymouth, Taranaki Cathedral).

Peterborough & Northampton: Odell Eady (Kettering, SS Peter & Paul). **St Albans:** Georgia Hunt*, Olivia Threlfall* (Harpenden, St Nicholas), Evangeline Harding** (Hatfield, St Etheldreda).

Southwark & E Surrey: Rheanna Byfield-Ascott, Teniola Emmanuel, Azriella Kamath, Catherine Mulroy**, Sapphy Oboh*, Natasha Smith, Sanjana Sriram* (Croydon Minster).

USA: Rosamond Cudabac** (Charlotte, NC, St Peter), Peiton Achrem**, Grayson Baker*, Reece Baker*, Obadiah Gremillion**, Madilynne Machovsky** (Newport Beach, CA, St Matthew), Hattie Landry** (San Antonio, TX, St Paul).

RSCM NEWS

RSCM HONORARY AWARDS

Each year the RSCM Council confers Honorary Awards on those who have made outstanding contributions to church music. These will be presented at Celebration Day on 9 October 2021.

FELLOWS OF THE RSCM (FRSCM)

Awarded for achievements in church music and/or liturgy of international significance, or for exceptional musical and/or liturgical work within the RSCM:

Denis Bédard

Denis Bédard is an accomplished musician, renowned internationally as a composer of chamber, orchestral, vocal and especially organ music, for which he has gained respect and admiration. The repertoire has been welcomed by organists for use in services and recitals in over 32 countries. A member of RSCM Canada, Denis has also been organist and music director at Holy Rosary Cathedral, Vancouver since 2001.

Andrew Lumsden

Andrew Lumsden has served the cause of cathedral music in this country with singular devotion. He is a deservedly renowned recitalist, much in demand at home and abroad. However, his priority always remains his work with Winchester Cathedral and its choir. He has been a good and supportive friend of the RSCM, and his contribution to its mission includes conducting an RSCM course in Auckland, New Zealand in 2018.

John Morehen

Professor John Morehen's long association with the RSCM goes back to the Addington Palace era where he was first a student and subsequently a member of the Headquarters staff

as visiting organ tutor. Over the years he has made a significant contribution to the cause of church music in this country and internationally – as a distinguished recitalist, conductor, composer, editor and musicologist. The RSCM owes him a particular debt of gratitude.

David Price

Dr David Price served on RSCM Council for an unmatched 20 years, during which time he gave outstanding support and dedication. As well as his full-time commitment to Portsmouth Cathedral and Diocese, he has used his musical skills to contribute to numerous RSCM events over the years, acting as a positive ambassador for the work of the charity in a wide range of settings.

ASSOCIATES OF THE RSCM (ARSCM)

Awarded for achievements in church music and/or liturgy of national significance, or for important musical and/or liturgical work within the RSCM:

Roy Benjamin

Roy Benjamin has served as organist and choirmaster at St Joseph the Worker, Bishop Lavis, Cape Town for 45 years. He formed a most creditable choir and spent considerable time teaching theory and the practical aspects of voice production in the many townships in the area. Roy was a member of the Symphony Choir of Cape Town, serving as vice-chairman for some time, and continues to be an integral part of the RSCM local network.

Bert Landman

Bert Landman gave distinguished service during his terms as President

of RSCM America. Over many years he furthered the work of the RSCM, placing it on firm ground for the future. Under his care he fostered a warm and productive environment, bringing about new initiatives in education and musical composition that have inspired constructive dialogue throughout America.

Christopher Slater

Christopher Slater has made an invaluable contribution to the work of the RSCM as choral trainer and conductor, offering valuable support to local choirs in the south-east of England and inspiring young choristers to participate in RSCM training schemes and awards. His work in encouraging the local communities to participate and grow in musical knowledge towards the enhancement of worship is especially significant.

Jenny Yates

Jenny Yates is the current Chair of the RSCM Eastern Cape Branch, also serving on the National Body of the RSCM in South Africa. She has played a pivotal role in the organization of many RSCM events, not least three National Summer Schools and a National Winter School in 2019. She was also instrumental in obtaining funding for bringing music to schools in impoverished areas of Port Elizabeth and becoming the project manager.

HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE RSCM (HONRSCM)

Awarded for exceptional or very significant work that has contributed to the cause of church music and/or liturgy at international or national levels, or within the RSCM, but which is not primarily musical or liturgical:

Peter Connor

Peter Connor has served on RSCM Council for the past eight years, during which time he, in addition to his Council responsibilities, has given valuable support for the RSCM Area re-visioning initiative. His wise guidance on the annual budgeting process, statutory audit procedures and key financial operations has also been of immense value. Following his retirement from Council in September 2021, Peter will continue to assist the RSCM at local level.

CERTIFICATES OF SPECIAL SERVICE

Awarded for significant administrative work as a voluntary officer or member of staff within the RSCM; or an award for a significant contribution to church music and/or liturgy at a local level:

Joan Clayton

Joan Clayton is the Librarian of the RSCM National Library in Wellington, New Zealand. Her extensive experience and expertise in librarianship have ensured that the large collection of scores is fastidiously maintained and catalogue records continually updated. Joan is also librarian to the choirs of the Wellington Cathedral of St Paul.

Barry Gibbs

Barry Gibbs worked tirelessly for many years on behalf of the RSCM as publicity officer for the RSCM Wessex Area Committee, producing a highly valued local newsletter and publicity material, often in a very short time. He particularly encouraged and supported church musicians in West Dorset, initiating and organizing the Lyme Bay Local Support Network, and arranging imaginative and well-supported events.

Michael Halls

Michael Halls has been associated with the RSCM since 1980. He has been a member of the RSCM Derbyshire Area Committee for much of that time and has acted as treasurer for 14 years. As a headteacher, he promoted the use of

RSCM material in schools over many years. He regularly hosts events at St Oswald, Ashbourne involving the choir at every level, encouraging a wide base of support at all times.

Ray Harlow

Dr Ray Harlow has been a huge contributor to the RSCM Waikato Branch in New Zealand, not least in the production of the newsletter *Notes* for the past eight years which is widely feted around the New Zealand RSCM circle. A member of St Peter's Cathedral Choir, Hamilton since 1993, Ray is also a Trustee of the Guyon Wells RSCM Fellowship which assists to fund church music activities.

John Hughes

John Hughes has been organist and musical director at Malmesbury Abbey since 1975. He directs a mixed adult choir which sings sacred music from across the centuries including contemporary works such as the world premiere of the Malmesbury Motets by Nico Muhly, and works by Jonathan Dove, Gabriel Jackson and Ola Gjeilo. John is also a composer, accompanist for Malmesbury Singers and chairman of Malmesbury Abbey Music Society.

David Jaques

David Jaques has been involved with the RSCM at local level for over 45 years. He has served as chair and treasurer of the RSCM Berkshire Area Committee and also as treasurer for the awards' accounts for the joint Oxfordshire/Berkshire/Buckinghamshire Areas. He has always been keen to organize, encourage and inspire RSCM members to attend many special occasions within Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

Nicholas King

Nicholas King has been involved with the RSCM for over 50 years since accompanying at an Addington Palace course in 1968. He was a principal player in the Canterbury Area at Folkestone Parish Church before moving to Hemel Hempstead, becoming director of music at St John, Boxmoor where he took over a flourishing choir. For a number of years he was an RSCM awards

examiner and RSCM St Albans, Hertford and Bedford Area secretary and awards administrator.

Brian Millar

Brian Millar is director of music at St Mark, Remuera, Auckland, New Zealand, a position he has held since 2011. This church has a long and distinguished association with choral music of a high standard, and Brian has continued and enhanced this choral tradition. He has served on the RSCM Auckland Branch Committee for over 10 years and has been one of its hardest-working and most supportive members.

David Oldfield

David Oldfield has been involved in church music and music education for over 40 years, training and enthusing hundreds of young choristers, a number of whom continue to serve the church. He has acted both as housemaster and director on RSCM courses, particularly in the Guildford Area, and has been a long-standing RSCM awards examiner. David is also a dedicated and loyal member of the RSCM Guildford Area committee.

George Peebles

George Peebles gave long and dedicated service to the RSCM Durham Area for a total of 21 years in the role of treasurer. He has also been organist and director of music at St Michael and All Angels, Houghton-le-Spring for over 30 years. The RSCM Durham Area Committee would like to mark his many years of work and support with this award for special service.

George Roberts

George Roberts has given 50 years of dedicated service as organist and choirmaster at Holy Trinity Washington Village, Tyne & Wear, during which time he has striven to enhance the life of the church through music and has accomplished this through his community outreach. With his drive and enthusiasm, George has managed to maintain a strong choir and, in particular, has encouraged children and young people to develop their musical talents.

STAFF NEWS



Above: The Big Music Sunday Service of 2020 was watched by thousands live and has been viewed by almost 9,000 people since.

MUSIC SUNDAY, 6 JUNE 2021: HELP US CELEBRATE, TOGETHER

RSCM Music Sunday is chance for us all to celebrate and give thanks for the role of music in worship, and in the power of music to connect churches with local communities.

Over the last couple of years, the RSCM has reinvigorated Music Sunday to draw people together. Our 2020 plans were disrupted by lockdown, but our virtual service joined thousands of people together from across the world in simultaneous song.

What are the plans for 2021?

We will be holding a central, massed service in Lichfield Cathedral. Details will be circulated in due course. The event will be streamed live so that if you can't join in person (whether due to distance or lockdown restrictions), you can still take part.

If you are able to hold a Music Sunday service of your own, or at least mark the day, then we warmly encourage you to do so. There are lots of resources, including service templates, music suggestions and prayers on our website and in *Sunday by Sunday*.

Will there be a Music Sunday anthem for 2021?

Yes. The RSCM has been running a competition, and we will announce the winner in March, with the music available from April, giving you time to learn it, whether alone or with your choir and musicians.

We strongly encourage you to join in. Music Sunday provides a way for everyone to unite, to shine a spotlight on the importance of music in worship, and to give thanks for all those who faithfully sustain the music in their own church communities. The endeavour can feel isolated at times but taking part in Music Sunday helps to remind you that you are part of something much bigger.

Raise money for your own church and the RSCM.

The RSCM is a charity and needs funds in order to provide support and resources for church music and musicians. The Holy Spirit guides us forward, but alone is not enough to sustain our work. We know that churches have been hard hit, too, and there are lots of ideas for fundraising events on our website.

How do I register?

You can register your service (or other event) on the Music Sunday page of the RSCM website (www.rscm.org.uk), where you can also find out more about the day. Alternatively, give us a call or send us an email. We are happy to provide you with more information and help in planning your celebration of Music Sunday 2021.

ADVENT CALENDAR ANTHEM

As mentioned previously in CMQ, the 2019 Advent Calendar competition was won by the choir of St Oswald, Ashbourne. Director of music Michael Halls has worked with composer Stuart Beer to produce a new work called *A Hymn to God the Father*.

Set to words by John Donne, and with 'occasional nods of admiration towards the 17th-century composers John Hilton the younger and Pelham Humfrey', it is scored for SATB and organ. *A Hymn to God the Father* will be available to buy as a download from the RSCM webshop after its first public performance on Good Friday (2 April) 2021.



REDISCOVERING THE PIANO AT 90

MARTIN HOW

Let me repeat a conversation that took place between myself and the music director at Repton School in my first term. Me at 13: 'When can I start learning the organ?' Music director: 'When you have done more piano!'

Oh dear! The piano always got in the way somehow. Little did I think that the day would come when it was the piano to which I would return with joy and comfort.

AVAILABILITY

Do you have a piano at home? What about that hardly ever used piano in the church, or in the church hall? Or perhaps you may consider acquiring a digital keyboard with headphones (good if the church hall is freezing, or you don't want to disturb your family)? What better in times of lockdown than to rediscover the piano!

Above: Returning with joy and comfort. Martin How at the piano.



Above: Harry Bramma at the piano in Addington Palace.

WHAT MUSIC TO PLAY

You don't have to be a virtuoso or prodigy to enjoy piano repertoire. You don't have to struggle with classical sonatas or challenging Chopin items. There are miniature classics from all periods, absolute gems that are really worth discovering (or rediscovering).

*Don't expect immediate results:
take a long-term view*

BEGINNER'S MUSIC

Do you still have copies of the music you were given by your early piano teacher? Take courage and revisit them. Walter Carroll gave us marvellous music, including his *Sea Idylls* and the many treasures found within his albums for beginners, for example *The Countryside* (see especially 'Purple Heather'). Then there is the series *The Hundred Best Short Classics* (Paterson's Publications), *Step by Step to the Classics* (Banks Music Publications), Stephen Heller's *25 Studies Op. 47* and Schumann's *Album for the Young*. Incidentally, have you ever rediscovered Bach's *Twelve Little Preludes*? Amazing miniatures: do return to them.

SIGHT-READING, OR PLAYING FROM MEMORY

I was brought up in a world that worshipped sight-reading. I couldn't play from memory and just accepted the fact that I never would be able to. Now, however, I don't consider that I really know a piano piece unless I can play it without staring at the music sheet. So, how did I begin to memorize?

I began from scratch, just a bar at a time. But then I began to see the pattern of the music, and the more I played from memory, the easier the process became. There were immediate technical advantages and results.

TECHNIQUE

Were you ever told, 'Don't look at your hands'?

Why ever not? What nonsense! It is half the secret when you are practising, or learning to play accurately, a new piece.

Then there are scales. Are they magic? Do they 'strengthen the fingers' in some way? Perhaps, but let's find other, perhaps more immediate and relevant aids.

PRACTICE

So, now we come to it. But what does piano practice really involve? How can we enjoy it? What of those moods when we feel like giving up?

Well, the first thing to do is to learn how to practise not only regardless of mood, but even at those times when we feel positively against it, when we feel that everything is getting worse rather than better. Don't be surprised by these moments: they can be quite frequent. Don't expect to be exhilarated every time you begin your practice; know how to use these times. The secret may lie in not expecting results there and then. Aim to build up capital for the future.

Everything in this activity is long term. Some carefully thought-out movements of not just the fingers but of the hands, wrists and arms may be set in motion and then be left and allowed to set. It is also important to know when to stop. Yes, slow practice will often be the right approach, but if so, then avoid suddenly doing it fast there and then, because that is too soon, and you will probably undo all you have been setting up. Leave it until next time and have faith in the future. Believe that the subconscious will do its work if things are left alone. Again, stop before you get tired.

Aim to use short practice times rather than occasional long ones. This is where your renewed piano playing at home is going to be so useful. It used to be said, 'Do some practice while the kettle is boiling', but that was when the kettle was a little slower than these days.

LONG-TERM RESULTS

Don't expect immediate results in one sitting: take a long-term view. It is your subconscious that will absorb the practice and will work on it long after you have left the keyboard. So, set in motion the correct movements of fingers, hands and arms. They used to say, 'You learn to skate in summer', meaning it all happens after you have left the skating rink or pond. Know how to set in motion future results. Aim to build capital for the future through your careful, and maybe (but not always) slow practice.

SUBCONSCIOUS

Beware of repetition, especially if it is mostly wrong. It could make it all worse. Give your subconscious the chance to build on a correct movement. Beware of thinking that your fingers are not working, that they are not strong enough. The answer is often that what is needed is hand movements rather than just fingers. For example, look at the keyboard and notice how the black notes are further back than the white notes and some preceding movement towards the black notes will probably be required. Work this out, looking at your hands.

HANDS AND WRIST

Most of us have a weak fourth finger. Aim to find out how a wrist movement can supply the fourth finger with more weight.

If you find that you keep playing a note or chord wrong, it is no good stopping and playing it again; it is the lead up to it that needs working on. In other words, always go back to the previous chord/notes and work on the join. See exactly what movement is required. And yes – look at your hands. Work out the shortest route between the preceding chord and the chord causing trouble. Carefully repeat the progression, however slowly, making sure it is correct. If you don't, your subconscious will go on practising the faulty move, to your detriment.

FURTHER TECHNIQUE

It is easy to get carried away by fads, perhaps taken on board in our early days. One referred to the passing of the thumb underneath the hand in the playing of scales or arpeggios. It was not until I happened to sit in on a day course given by Harry Bramma at Addington Palace that I had heard anyone condemn this advice. He said that this movement of the thumb led to the stiffening up of the whole hand, and when I tried it out later, I realized he was right. I've never used the idea since, preferring instead to move the whole hand.

FINGERING

People used to say, 'No thumbs on black notes'. But why ever not? It is almost a joke to see the lengths to which editors will go to provide fingering that avoids this rule, and the alternatives they provide, which do not always help. Well, whatever you do, make a point of writing in fingering when learning a new piece or revising an old one. Consistent fingering is surely a basic requirement.

One of the dangers of repeatedly just sight-reading a certain piece is that fingering can be haphazard. This is especially so with Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier: 48 Preludes and Fugues*, where constantly just sight-reading them can play havoc with the fingering and prevent any final real learning. If a piece has been learnt badly in one's childhood, with all the wrong fingering, there is almost nothing harder than to relearn it in adulthood.

FINAL HINTS AND WARNINGS

Yes, slow practice can be invaluable for setting in motion various requirements, but beware: it is not always the answer. In fast music, one has to search for the kind of movement that will enable one to travel fastest, joining up the notes (chords) without gaps, which is to say, without unnecessary lifting of the fingers or hands (which will cause gaps and so slow the music).

Having found the required movement, play the passage up to speed. This will test the solution and consolidate the whole process. But be careful lest you merely repeat a movement that is altogether faulty and requires further research. Remember we are talking about correct and appropriate movement, not just strong or supple fingers. Do you need to practise more scales? No. Search for the correct movement of hands as well as fingers.

OUTREACH

If your church does have a piano, why not provide an instrumental final voluntary rather than the usual organ one? Here, perhaps, is a way of bringing a young person into the church. Get him or her to bring their instrument with them and to play a short piece at the end with you at the piano. This could be an important part of your outreach.

If you would like to buy a recording (complete with flaws) of 32 classical miniatures, plus four extras by this elderly pianist, please contact Christopher Town at christophertown@ntlworld.com or 020 8851 9116. Price per CD is £12.00 (including postage).

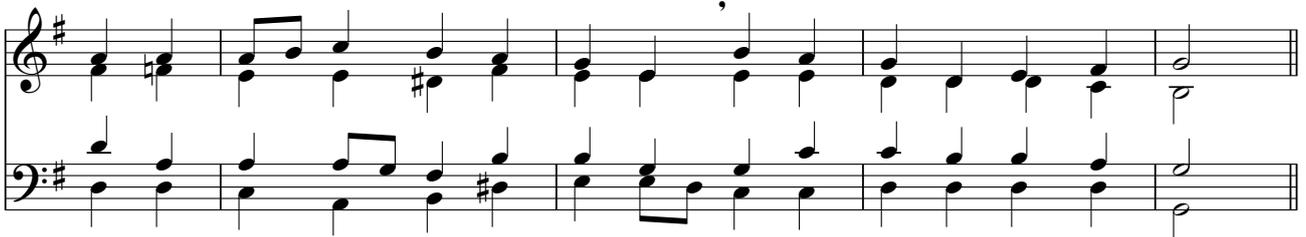
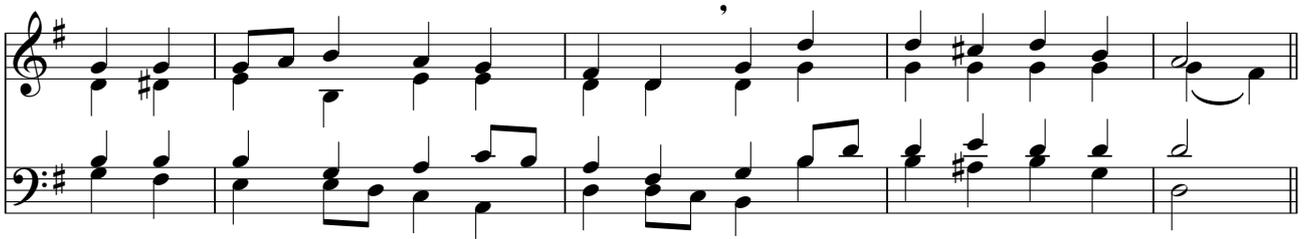
HYMN MEDITATION

GOD OF EVE AND GOD OF MARY

GORDON GILES

LOVE DIVINE

87 87



God of Eve and God of Mary,
God of love and mother-earth,
thank you for the ones who with us
shared their life and gave us birth.

As you came to earth in Jesus,
so you come to us today;
you are present in the caring
that prepares us for life's way.

Thank you that the Church, our Mother,
gives us bread and fills our cup,
and the comfort of the Spirit
warms our hearts and lifts us up.

Thank you for belonging, shelter,
bonds of friendship, ties of blood,
and for those who have no children,
yet are parents under God.

God of Eve and God of Mary,
Christ our brother, human Son,
Spirit, caring like a Mother,
take our love and make us one!

Words: Frederik Herman Kaan
(1929-2009)

Tune: *Love Divine* John Stainer
(1840-1901)

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Mothers Sunday in 2020 was the first Sunday to be hit by the widening impact of the Covid virus. Very few churches celebrated the day in their usual manner last year, and few will be able to mark the occasion this year in their customary way. Among the tens of thousands who have died of the virus are many mothers, for whose grieving children the pains of Mary at crib and cross are the more sorrowful this year. Last year, the fourth Sunday of Lent saw the dawning of lockdowns. The traditions of family gatherings, which date back to when the Victorian simnel cakes were presented to mothers, were displaced by fearful isolation, which with ups and downs in between, culminated in a Christmas period with similar deprivation of family fellowship, companionship and comfort. The dawning of 2021 brought further restrictions alongside glimmers of post-vaccination hope.

Fred Kaan, the author of this Mothering Sunday hymn, knew lockdown and fear in his youth. Born in Haarlem in the Netherlands in 1929, he experienced oppressive Nazi occupation and, while his father fought in the Dutch resistance, his family concealed and saved a Jewish woman. After studying at Utrecht University, Kaan moved to the UK in 1952 to study at Bristol University. He was ordained as a Congregationalist minister, initially serving in Barry, near Cardiff; in 1963 he moved to the Pilgrim Church in Plymouth, where he began writing hymns weekly to suit a post-war context. His first hymn collection, *Pilgrim Praise*, contained 25 of these and was published locally in 1968 and more widely in 1972.

In 1968 Kaan went to Geneva to become minister-secretary of the



MOTHERING SUNDAY.

DEAR SIR,—I notice in this week's *Bucks Herald* that it is suggested that "Mothering Sunday," one of the numerous titles applied to the Fourth Sunday in Lent, was more likely derived from the custom of young people employed away from home making a point of visiting their mothers and taking them little presents of ornaments and Simnel cakes, than from either the reference in the Epistle for the day, to Jerusalem as "Mater omnium," the mother of all, or from the custom of visiting the cathedrals or mother churches on Mid-Lent Sunday. This is an opinion shared by many people, but there are others who emphatically declare that the title "Mothering Sunday" has nothing to do with the mothers of earthly homes, but refers solely to the mother churches which were visited by the congregations of their daughter churches on this day.

The conclusion that I have arrived at, after considerable research, is that the truth lies in a combination of these two ideas. There is no doubt that the family festival in honour of earthly mothers grew up side by side with the family festival in honour of "Jerusalem, the mother of us all." Families met on this day and gave gifts to the mothers of earthly homes, but the primary object of those gatherings was that families might "go up into the House of the Lord," there to join in a service of praise and thanksgiving. Thus Mothering Sunday is the great "Day in Praise of Mothers," in praise of earthly mothers, in praise of the Church, our spiritual mother, and of "Jerusalem supernal, the Mother of us all." It is in order that the social observance of the day may ever be connected with the religious observance of which it is the offspring, and divorced from which it loses most of its significance, that the Mothering Sunday Movement was started. This movement works solely by spreading a knowledge of the beautiful old custom and its significance. Particulars may be had by sending to the Editor, 6, Regent-street, Nottingham.

Believe me, yours faithfully,
 CONSTANCE PENSWICK SMITH,
 Coblington Vicarage,
 Newark-on-Trent, March 29.

Above: Constance Adelaide Smith (1878-1938) pictured alongside one of her many letters to newspapers on the subject of Mothering Sunday. *Bucks Herald*, 7 April 1917. © iop-imaging.

International Congregational Council, and then executive secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, responsible for inter-church relations, human rights issues and communications. In 1978 he returned to the UK to become moderator of the West Midlands Province of the United Reformed Church, and then in 1985 he became pastor of Central Church, Swindon. He retired in 1989 and remained highly respected in the world of hymnody until his death in 2009.

'God of Eve and God of Mary' was first published in *Planting Trees and Sowing Seeds* in 1989. The volume reflects Kaan's environmental concerns, as well as his pacifist, humanitarian and multifaith tendencies. The text is rich and

resonant, and draws together understandings of motherhood, procreation and pastoral sensitivity. Mothering Sunday is not always a happy day for those who have lost mothers or children, or for those who cannot be mothers. Kaan touches on this sensitive dynamic in the fourth verse, in which he writes of the universal call to mutual parenthood of each other under God. Transactional analysis helps us understand that in all relationships the various aspects of our own childlike, adulthood and parental instincts can combine, or indeed become skewed. In a good relationship we need sometimes to be a parent figure, or to be parented, or simply to interact as adults or even as fellow children in a spirit of

play. If these become imbalanced then relationships can break, but if held together they are healthy. Similarly, our relationships with our own parents and children evolve through time and age, but can become damaged where that is prevented, frustrated or misunderstood.

This is one of the reasons why we should not refer to Mothering Sunday as 'Mothers' Day'. The latter nomenclature forgets the Mother Church and the distinctive devotion

Sunday was not so much about going home to mum, but about going 'a-mothering', that is, to one's mother or home church once a year. The picking and giving of flowers became associated with this homecoming. It was not until 1914 that vicar's daughter Constance Adelaide Smith launched the Mothering Sunday movement and in 1921 wrote a book calling for the traditions of Mothering Sunday to be revived. With the revitalization of Mothering

conception, Kaan's point is that they are both fundamentally human, children of God as well as archetypes of procreation and motherhood. The God of creation and procreation is the same, always has been and always will be. That same God became human (verse 2), and, according to Kaan, motherhood is also incarnational inasmuch as God's love is manifest in and by it. There is emphasis on the Mother Church (verse 3), who in Eucharist ('bread' and 'cup') feeds and nourishes us, aided by the Holy Spirit. Yet motherhood transcends and expands upon the natural and ecclesiastical, extending into fellowship of friends and wider family, all of whom bear a nurturing, loving care (verse 4). Finally, in the fifth verse comes a creative, newly explained statement of Trinitarian faith: that the God who created Eve and called Mary as mother of our Lord is therefore Christ our brother and spiritual mother, who both unites and is united in the perfect love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Here, at the end of this hymn, is a statement of Trinitarian faith that draws together male, female, motherhood, fatherhood, comfort and love in a divine bundle of human Godhead.

'God of Eve and God of Mary' draws together understandings of motherhood, procreation and pastoral sensitivity

to Mary that the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare or Refreshment Sunday) brings. We sometimes say that as God is our Father, the Church is our Mother. It is in the church that we mature in our faith. It is Mother Church that loves, cares for, teaches and helps us as we journey through life. In this sense motherhood is located not only in the traditions and teachings of the church, but also in each other. This can make the celebration of Mothering Sunday broader and deeper than the affirmation of female parenthood, and it can be experienced in an inclusive, almost non gender-specific way. For we are the body of Christ, and the Body of Christ is the Church, and the Church, in nurturing our faith through the ministry of both men and women, is like a mother to us.

Laetare Sunday also became associated in the UK with domestic servants being released for the day to return home, to attend church, with their families, and mothers too, no doubt. The 'mothering' of Mothering

Sunday a century ago and the creation of Mothers' Day blurred in the early 20th century, it is helpful to unravel some of these scriptural, traditional and sociological strands.

Liturgically, Mothering Sunday gives a strong focus on Jesus' human mother Mary. We are reminded of and reflect on her calling, and her sufferings as Mother of the Lord. Mary need not be seen as a weak, acquiescent figure, who simply says 'yes' to God, but as a strong, faithful woman who owns and demonstrates courage, determination and power in her destiny and vocation. No mother should see their child die, but sadly some do, and Mary was one of them. There is an ancient tradition of celebrating the joys of Mary and the pains of Mary. So, Mary is *the* mother, an archetype, an example, an inspiration and a saint among saints.

The juxtaposition of Mary, mother of Jesus, with the first woman, Eve, is made at the outset of Kaan's text, and while we might want to emphasize theological connections between Eve's sin and Mary's immaculate

O God, by whose incarnation earthly motherhood and divine creative power were brought together by the Holy Spirit of love, hear our prayer of gratitude for all who have mothered us, in body, mind or spirit. Grant to the unloved a sense of belonging to Church and world, that all your children may be united in the knowledge of your love, revealed in the sending, salvation and spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This quarter, CMQ talks to two more members of the RSCM's office staff, Sarah King and Emma Huxley.



SARAH KING

Sarah King is the RSCM's education administration manager. She came to the RSCM in 2013 after graduating with a degree in music and is now partway through an MA in Christian Liturgy at Sarum College (so if she's not in the RSCM office, she can probably be found in the College library). Outside of work, Sarah is currently supporting a rural Somerset benefice with their online worship and trying to master new technical skills before she actually has to use them. She also sings and plays the trumpet.

CMQ A lot goes on under the education banner, making your corner of the office always busy. What are some of the department's key activities?

SK Yes, we're never stationary for very long! Fundamentally, the department office team helps to facilitate anything educational in nature offered by the RSCM. At the moment that includes residential and non-residential courses covering a range of subjects, the Awards scheme, national and regional choirs, other programmes such as Pipeline and Church Music Skills, and, increasingly through the course of the pandemic, online activities such as webinars and online courses. It's an ever-evolving picture and there is always plenty to do.

CMQ What do you enjoy most about your role?

SK The variety, I think. Every week is different, and every year is different; you never quite know what the next email or phone call is going to bring. I particularly enjoy having conversations with people, listening to their stories and thinking through with them how the RSCM can support them in their own contexts. It's always a privilege to witness learning taking place, whether that's as part of a huge choral event or a smaller group of worship leaders attending an online course, and to know that what they learn will benefit them and the worship of their churches in the months and years ahead. Also, it's wonderful to work within such a

motivated, creative and enthusiastic staff team, which has been a particular blessing over the last year.

CMQ All jobs come with joys, but also pitfalls. What would you say is the most challenging aspect of your role?

SK I find it most frustrating when a practical problem hinders delivering our mission, whether that's a financial issue, or something logistical or technical. I do like a challenge, though, and there is something satisfying about working with colleagues to overcome a roadblock.

CMQ What are some of your favourite pieces of sacred music?

SK That's a difficult question, and whatever I say now is likely to have changed by the time this magazine is delivered! I'm writing this during the Epiphany season, and I suppose two of my favourite pieces of choral music for this time of year are *Bethlehem Down* (Peter Warlock) and *Here is the little door* (Herbert Howells), both of which reflect beautifully on the intimacy and magnitude of the incarnation in an understated way. A perennial favourite hymn is 'How shall I sing that majesty' (sung to *Coe Fen*). On a different part of the timeline in terms of text, I was introduced to *See, what a morning* (Stuart Townend/Keith Getty) several years ago, and that led me to uncover more of their hymnody. Once sung, the tunes (and therefore the words) tend to stay with you for a while.

CMQ What previous experience did you have with the RSCM before coming to work here?

SK Like so many others, the RSCM has underpinned my choral education since I first started singing. My parish church choir in Backwell (south of Bristol), which my dad ran for most of the time I was in it, was RSCM-affiliated, and I attended my first RSCM course – a three-day post-Easter course at Bristol Cathedral – when I was eight. From there, I joined what is now Voices West and attended two cathedral courses as a teenager, working my way through the *Voice for Life* levels in the meantime. It's wonderful to see the next generation of church musicians benefiting from what the RSCM has to offer, as it has supported me.

CMQ What exciting initiatives can we expect from the education department in 2021?

SK The new education plan will be launched shortly. In fact, there is an article about it elsewhere in this issue of CMQ [on page 20]. Also, the RSCM Hub (the virtual learning environment, which will be explained in a future issue) is well on its way, the new Award syllabus (valid from September) has recently been published, and we really hope that our in-person choral, organ and instrumental work can get going again, when it is safe for it to do so. That said, there's been lots happening online, all of it offering opportunities to deliver education creatively, both now and in the future.



EMMA HUXLEY

Emma Huxley is head of the RSCM's voluntary department. She previously worked for the NHS as a health visitor support worker and, prior to joining the RSCM, for Girlguiding SW England, processing DBS checks. Originally from Hereford, Emma moved to Salisbury in 2004 and in May 2006, joined the RSCM after its move to Salisbury from Cleveland Lodge. Married to a farmer, she enjoys living in the countryside and being part of a rural community.

CMQ Emma, what does the voluntary department do?

EH Our main responsibility is to support our volunteers, while managing the running of the 50 RSCM Areas and facilitating compliance locally. Changes in how the RSCM organizes local activity across the UK are taking place this year and the Voluntary team will be working hard to guide our volunteers through the changes. At the same time, we will streamline our processes and systems to support the new way of working.

CMQ What do you enjoy most about your role?

EH I'm a people person, so I enjoy the interaction with RSCM volunteers and colleagues based around the UK and beyond. Also, you never quite know what the working day will bring. It is never boring at the RSCM!

CMQ What would you say is the most challenging aspect of your role?

EH Ensuring good compliance in an ever-changing landscape. Our volunteers give their time freely and having to be bureaucratic isn't always easy.

CMQ Outside of the RSCM, are you involved in church music?

EH Not beyond enjoying congregational singing.

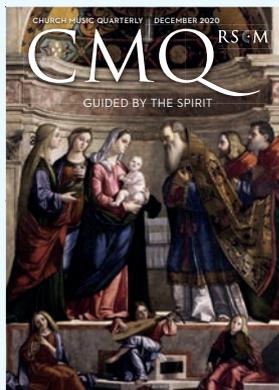
CMQ What are some of your favourite pieces of sacred music?

EH I enjoy listening to music composed by Thomas Hewitt Jones, especially his *Electro Cello* album. I also found his *Can you hear me?* particularly poignant. I love traditional hymns, too. My favourites, 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind' and 'Praise, my soul, the King of heaven', were sung at my wedding and at the christenings of my two children.

READERS' LETTERS

THE POSSIBILITIES OF PERCUSSION

Sue Wallace's article on 'Percussion in Church' (December 2020) reminds us of exciting possibilities for today's church and outreach. In writing on praying with music, I recently suggested that rhythm alone can play a part. Moods of all kinds can be expressed in rhythm, and the use of percussion can be therapeutic for people of all ages and conditions. For example, try beating a strong rhythm on a drum (plastic box) if you feel frustrated and lessen the beat as you calm down. A congregation that is not allowed to sing at a service due to Covid restrictions can participate by tapping out, with fingers or feet, the rhythm of the hymns being sung by the choir.
Valerie Ruddle, Sevenoaks Methodist Church



HITTING THE RIGHT BUTTONS

What a splendid and fascinating issue of CMQ in December! I realize that you have many different interests to try to cover, and not every issue grabs me. But this one hit so many buttons! M.J. Kramer's piece about the nature of Advent has provided me with a very useful sermon. The article about Candlemas gave me some useful angles on that subject, along with a Byrd motet which I had not previously met. The story of the restoration of the organ at King's, Cambridge, along with its photographs, was good to read. And that's just a few. The energy and enthusiasm, and the determination to carry on through the pandemic is very heartening. Keep up the good work.
David Jones, Morland, St Lawrence

WHO READS YOUR COPY OF CMQ?

Do share your copy among the other musicians in your church, pass it round the vestry or staff room – and encourage others to become Friends or Members of the RSCM and receive their own copy.



Sarum
College

COURSES & EVENTS AT SARUM COLLEGE

While our buildings have been temporarily closed, our learning programmes continue online.

Christian Initiation

Monday 8 to Thursday 11 March 2021

Explore historic context for the baptismal liturgies that have emerged in the last 50 years in response to the changing place of church in society. £300.

Working Well with Children and Young People in Rural Ministry

Wednesday 17 March 2021

A day to share problems and best practice for a shared vision to help children and young people grow in faith and discipleship. £60.

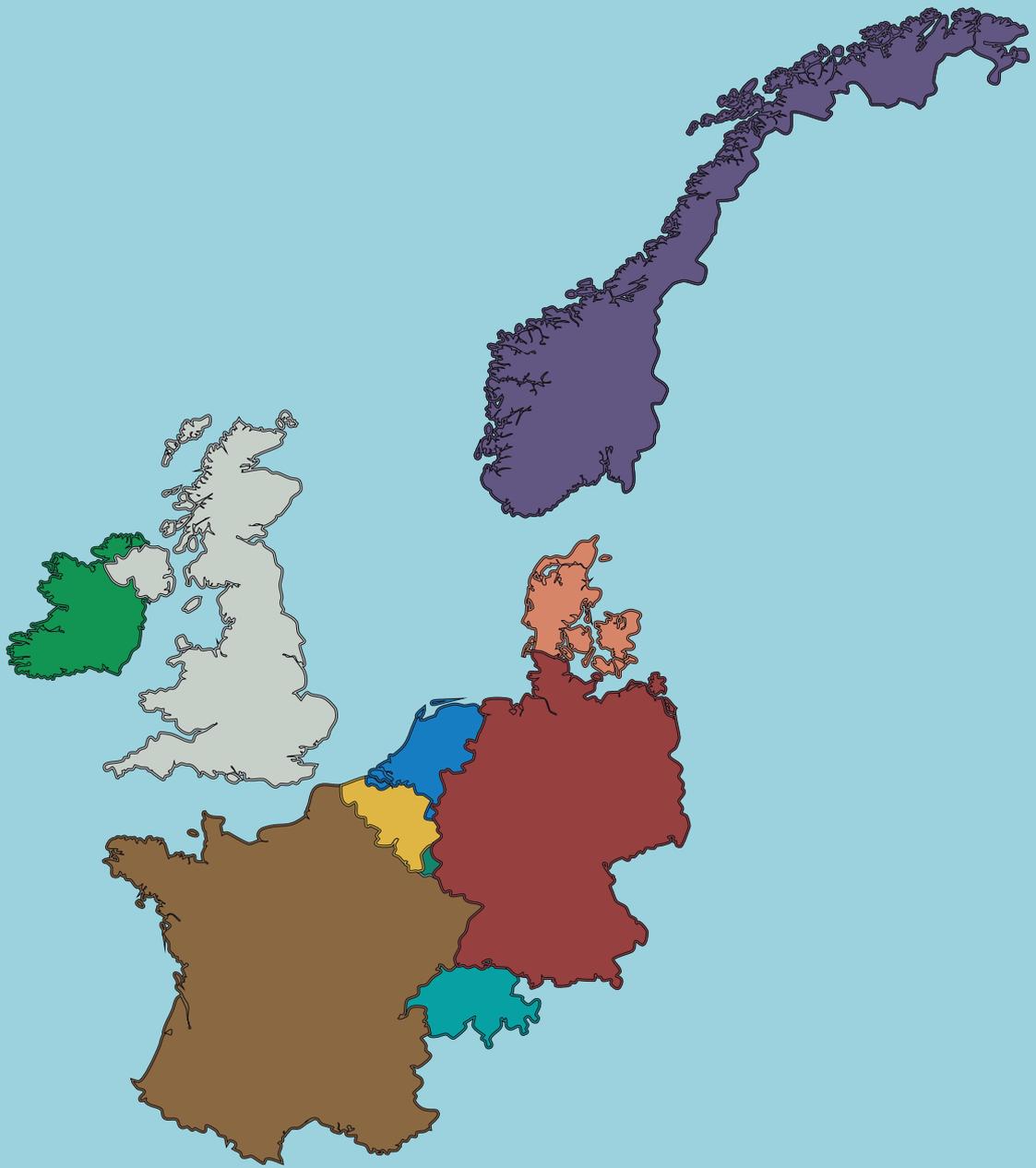
Reading the Bible with People Who Don't Read the Bible

Friday 16 April 2021

For anyone working with individuals and groups who are unfamiliar with the Bible and the various ways it can be read and understood. £60.

For a full list of courses, visit sarum.ac.uk/events

19 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EE
courses@sarum.ac.uk
01722 424800
sarum.ac.uk/events
[@SarumCollege](https://twitter.com/SarumCollege)



REGIONAL MANAGERS

Eight RSCM Regional Managers now work in line with new Voluntary Areas terms of reference to oversee and manage 50 Area Teams of volunteers who arrange RSCM activities in their local geographical area.

REGIONAL MANAGERS



CATHERINE CHAPMAN
Northern England
(covering Cumbria,
Durham, Lancashire,
Leeds, Manchester,
York, Northumbria
and Sheffield)

Music has always been a central part of Catherine's life: she was a chorister in her parish church choir (directed by her mother) from age 5, and her grandfather was a gifted church organist and director of music. Catherine studied violin and piano at the Royal College of Music Junior Department before reading music at Cambridge University, and then going on to teach music in schools.

Via a rather circuitous route (including Zimbabwe, Bristol, London and Zambia), and having acquired a husband and three children, Catherine found herself teaching music in Sheffield and for a short time directing the music at St John, Ranmoor. Moving a little further north, she became Volunteer Team Leader for the RSCM in January 2019. Now appointed Regional Manager for the north of England, Catherine is looking forward to the new opportunities this presents. Catherine believes that Christian worship provides the ultimate fulfilment of our musical gifts, and feels privileged to be able to work with the RSCM to help the sharing and enhancement of these gifts.



MARTIN FOYLE
South West and West
Midlands (covering
Bristol & Swindon,
Channel Islands,
Cornwall, Devon,
Gloucestershire, Hereford
& South Shropshire,
Portsmouth & Isle of
Wight, Somerset, Wessex,
Winchester and
Worcester)

Before joining the RSCM as Regional Manager (South West & West Midlands) in October 2020, Martin held a number of senior positions in business, most recently as Sales and Marketing Director and European Managing Director for companies operating within the water industry.

He studied business at Aston University and spent much of his career travelling extensively across the UK, Europe and the USA, fostering connections and relationships and supporting commercial activities across wide geographic areas.

Martin has been an individual member of the RSCM for approaching 25 years and sings in his local parish church choir in Bristol. He is married and spent much of the recent lockdown home schooling his 11-year-old son.



ELENA HENRIQUEZ
Ireland

Elena, who is originally from Spain, has lived in Dublin for the last 20 years. She has been involved with St Mary Pro-Cathedral Girls' Choir.

Elena has brought years of organizational experience and enthusiasm to the RSCM Ireland committee from her background in educational and musical spheres. She looks forward to continuing to expand the work of RSCM throughout Ireland and bringing together musicians and performers who enjoy church music.



ANDREW MOODIE
South and South East
England (covering
Canterbury, Essex & East
London, Ely, Guildford,
London, Norfolk, Thames
Valley, Peterborough &
Northampton, Rochester,
St Albans Hertford
& Bedford, Southwark
& East Surrey, Suffolk
and Sussex)

Andrew has served as an Area secretary, awards administrator, ETO, YPO and chair of RSCM Peterborough and Northampton Area, and for a number of years played the organ for the Southern Cathedral Singers.

From the mid-1990s he was an Assistant Regional Director and Education Team Leader and was appointed Regional Coordinator for the South of England in 2015, having taken early retirement from teaching. He has led a number of three-day and day courses, as well as training events for awards examinations. He is an examiner for Bronze, Silver and Gold awards.

REGIONAL MANAGERS



IAN MUNRO **Scotland**

Ian holds music degrees from universities in Edinburgh and London, where he specialized in orchestral percussion. However, church music has always been important to him and he is fortunate to enjoy a career that allows him to enjoy both interests.

In addition to his work at the RSCM, Ian is Musical Director of the Kilmarnock and District Choral Union and the Pentland Singers. After six and a half years as organist and choirmaster of St Luke's Church of Scotland in Paisley, Ian was appointed to the same post at St Machar's Ranfurly Church in Bridge of Weir in April where he follows in the footsteps of his grandfather who held the same post for 50 years. In addition, Ian teaches percussion and piano privately, as well as being on the instrumental staff at St Aloysius' College in Glasgow.



WILLIAM REYNOLDS **Wales**

William Reynolds joined the RSCM Voluntary Team as Coordinator for Wales in January 2020, having been involved with the RSCM for several years prior to this as ETO and awards administrator for the Swansea & Brecon Area, and as a validated RSCM *Voice for Life* awards examiner and a tutor for the RSCM *Complete Church Organist* course.

William is organist and director of music at St Mary's Collegiate Church, Swansea, and a visiting music tutor at Swansea University. Previous church music appointments have included organist at Christ College, Brecon; sub-organist at Cardiff Metropolitan Cathedral, and organ scholar at Bangor Cathedral. He is an FRCO. William studied music at the University of Wales (under Professor John Harper), where he gained the degrees of BMus, MA and PhD. He has had some of his research published in the *Journal of the Royal College of Organists*, *Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies*, and *Welsh Music History*, with Cathedral Press publishing some of his performing editions of 17th-century anthems.



SIMON RUSSELL **Central and East England** **(covering Birmingham, Chester, Coventry & Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Isle of Man, Leicestershire, Lichfield, Lincoln, Liverpool and Southwell & Notts)**

Simon was born in Liverpool. He studied organ at Birkenhead School with Timothy Lawford and then at Cambridge as organ scholar at St Catharine's College, where he continued studies with Gillian Weir and the late Peter le Huray. After Cambridge he was appointed assistant organist at Chester Cathedral but decided after a while to keep music as a hobby and gain fortune from computer keyboards working for Pilkingtons, ICI and AstraZeneca.

He was firstly accompanist and then music director of the Hoylake Choral Society from 1982 until he moved, in 2000, to Nantwich in South Cheshire where he is organist at St Mary's parish church. Since May 2014, he has been a full-time professional freelance musician and, from 2015, Regional Coordinator for the North of England for the RSCM. He is also an examiner for the London College of Music.



DAVID SCOTT-THOMAS **France and North West Europe**

David Scott-Thomas is head of music at Broughton Primary School, musical director to Sing Together and directs the chamber choir Octavius. Studies as organ scholar at Liverpool Cathedral and then at Trinity College of Music, London shaped what was to become a long and varied career in music. He has served as director of music at several churches in the north-west including St George, Stockport and Bury parish church. He was assistant organist at Blackburn Cathedral from 2006 until 2010. From 2006 until 2019, David was musical director at Blackpool & The Fylde College where he led a successful choir that performed at high-profile events in London and Birmingham and to HRH Prince Edward.

David splits his time between the UK and France and has latterly developed associations at the abbey church of Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys and Vannes Cathedral in Brittany. He is married to Erik and they live with two beagles, Berkeley and Willow, and several chickens!

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS NEW PATHWAYS THROUGH THE 'NEW NORMAL'

HELEN BENT

Within a few days of the first lockdown one year ago, the RSCM's online Hymn for the Day and weekly Sunday Self-Services were providing a lifeline, so that those bereft of services or somewhere to sing had a place to turn for comfort and spiritual nourishment. Familiar liturgy and hymns provided stability for many in an uncertain landscape. In addition, the daily offerings opened a window onto new repertoire.

Commenting on the Sunday Self-Services, one worshipper wrote: 'I'm from a Pentecostal background and perchance happened on this series. It has introduced me to this more Anglican (I suppose) method of worshipping God with liturgies ... I will be trying to introduce aspects of it with fellow believers and in my own life. I thank God for what you've done!' These services gave us an opportunity to showcase good practice in a variety of styles, as well as introducing alternative approaches. There were daily prayers and readings through Holy Week, and, during Thy Kingdom Come, ten days of prayer from Ascension to Pentecost, all sensitive to the daily news as well as the seasonal message. Meditations at Rogation expressed our fresh awareness of creation on daily walks in our natural surroundings and gave thanksgiving for key workers in agriculture and the food supply chain – as well as providing timely reflections on our responsibility as stewards of the environment. The Sunday Self-Services were complemented by the RSCM's Big Sings at Easter, on Music Sunday and at Christmas, all of which enabled us to join in on a grander scale with Christian worshippers around the world.

BLENDED LEARNING

Throughout the year, we have seen the RSCM in action in the real world, adapting to present



'Carols around the Lychgate' is a well-established annual event at Kirk Michael

challenges with fresh and imaginative approaches online. With Covid restrictions still in place, Autumn 2020 saw the Music for Mission and Ministry (MMM) course transfer online, taking ministerial training into the world of blended learning. As a result, we are now offering a combination of online and face-to-face, three-day courses in 2021.

One immediate advantage of an online course is its international accessibility, with people from our

A CHURCH MUSIC TIMELINE

THE FIRST GOLDEN AGE OF ENGLISH CHURCH MUSIC

The Reformation period produced some of the finest music of the English church. Thomas **Tallis** (c.1505–85, pictured) and Christopher **Tye** (c.1505–c.1573) worked through the reigns of Edward VI and Mary and, in Tallis's case, well into the time of Elizabeth I. Due to the constantly changing nature of the church and its liturgy, both composed works in Latin and English, depending on the country's religious affiliation. Compare pieces such as *Spem in Alium* and *If ye love me*.

The generation following included Orlando **Gibbons**, Thomas **Weelkes**, Adrian **Batten** and William **Byrd**. Byrd (c.1540–1623), likely to be a Catholic by conviction, wrote a wide variety of music serving both the Anglican tradition and undercover Catholic circles. Examples of the former include his *Short Service*, *Second Service* and *Great Service*, and *Sing Joyfully*.



METRICAL PSALMS

Metrical psalms are paraphrases of psalms set to a regular metre, designed (like Lutheran song) to be sung by the whole congregation. The most notable collection of metrical psalmody of this period is the Genevan Psalter which was instigated by John Calvin and finally completed in 1562. The most famous example contained within is the tune 'Old Hundredth', originally set to Psalm 134 for the Genevan Psalter, but later paired with a version of Psalm 100, attributed to Scottish clergyman William Kethe (*All people that on earth do dwell*).

ISAAC WATTS

The herald of the new era of the hymn was a Nonconformist minister called Isaac Watts, who contributed a vast quantity of hymns to the repertoire, often using old psalm tune metres, allowing his new words to be sung to old and familiar tunes. Within his output were a number of hymns that interpreted the psalms in light of the New Testament (*O God our help in ages past*, for example).



THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

The Oxford Movement brought 'high church' cathedral worship into the parishes. Organs were built, choirs moved into the chancel and gallery musicians disbanded. Much music was written by composers such as Thomas **Attwood**, John **Goss**, T.A. **Walmisley** and John **Stainer**. Beyond a handful of stand-out works of great quality it is generally thought that much of the music composed during this period is better forgotten!



LUTHERAN SONG

The key feature of Lutheran song is that it is in German, the language of the people, rather than Latin. Some melodies originate from Gregorian Chant (heavily simplified), others from tunes that would have been familiar to local people. Many of the Propers found in the Mass were replaced with German hymns.

c.1200 Emergence of harmonic writing

1517 Luther's posting of the 95 theses

..... Counter-Reformation 1545–1648

1662 Book of Common Prayer reinstated

Isaac Watts 1674–1748

1549 Book of Common Prayer

Henry Purcell 1659–95

1861 Hymns Ancient & Modern published

ORDINARY/PROPER

Musically, Gregorian Chant written for the Eucharist can be split into broad categories, depending on its role within the liturgy and the way in which it is used.

Ordinary chants – the basic text is the same regardless of the season (though extra text may be added). These were the sections of the liturgy where the chant was often straightforward enough for the people to sing:

Kyrie Eleison, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Benedictus, Agnus Dei

Proper chants – the text changes depending on the liturgical occasion. The music was more complex and so was sung by a choir and/or a soloist:

Introit, Gradual, Alleluia/Tract and Sequence, Offertory, Communion



BOOKE OF COMMON PRAIER NOTED

John Merbecke's *Booke of Common Praier Noted* set to music the parts of the liturgy that were meant to be sung. Like much of the choral music of the time, the music is monosyllabic – i.e. every note has its own syllable. It only had a couple of years' usage before Catholic Queen Mary ascended the throne, and it fell out of use in the Protestant and Puritan periods that followed. It was rediscovered during the Oxford Movement, and has been in use ever since, at least until the introduction of ASB...

HENRY PURCELL

Though perhaps not known primarily for his compositions for the church, Henry **Purcell** (1659–95) contributed a large quantity of anthems and canticles in the years after the restoration of the monarchy, while holding posts at Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal.



METHODISM AND HYMNODY

Some of the best-known and well-loved hymns are those written by Charles Wesley, brother of John, the founder of Methodism. These were hymns designed to spread the message of the grace of God in a powerful and personal way. The ideas of the Reformation took a more Evangelical focus in the 18th century in England and corporate singing of hymns expressing a personal salvation and relationship with God fitted in well with these aims. Such hymns are still popular today across a variety of denominations.

Above: Excerpts from the Music for Mission and Ministry musical timeline.

overseas branches able to join us, despite sometimes significant time differences. An Australian participant joined us at night, commenting afterwards: 'I couldn't expect the timetable to suit me, but it really was a bit of a novelty to stay up late for a few days!' One Canadian participant was a professional soprano with experience of Anglican, Roman Catholic and Reformed Jewish churches. They both had interesting stories to tell, and it was refreshing to incorporate a flavour of the Anglican Communion alongside other denominations. There was 'a lovely sense of unity within the group', who clearly 'appreciated making contact with church musicians on the other side of the world', as one participant said. These courses are fertile ground for lifelong learning, and as a course leader and reflective practitioner, I always come away enriched by the discussion and sharing of repertoire.

FEASTING ON MUSICAL RICHES

I was joined in the autumn by RSCM Education Officer, Jonathan Robinson, who gave us a veritable feast of church music history in his presentation of the MMM 'timeline', which included the wisdom of renowned scholars via video clips, as well as a wide range of audio examples spanning the breadth of musical traditions. Originally conceived some years ago by another member of the RSCM education team, Sarah King, the 'musical timeline' has gradually evolved into a resource that is now available from the RSCM's webshop as a wall poster and as an interactive online tool.

We were able to consider the challenges of music making during the pandemic. Reflecting on lessons from church history during plagues in previous centuries, we explored the place of lament, new hymnody prompted by the pandemic, and creative ways of using music in worship when we are unable to sing together corporately. We have also seen the blossoming of virtual choirs and small socially distanced singing groups, again supported by new RSCM materials. In my own context of four village churches in rural Northamptonshire, we now have the potential for the virtual and socially distanced to emerge as a new benefice choir post-Covid.

NO REPLACEMENT FOR LIVE WORSHIP

We still plan to offer the residential version of MMM for those who prefer to learn face to face and who want interaction with real people. So often the informal conversations around the meal table prove as valuable and as instructive as the formal input, and there is much mutual sharing of fresh musical repertoire.

Sadly, this more relational aspect is lost on Zoom. Although the online course included various acts of worship, there is no replacement for worshipping live. The residential course enables participants to immerse themselves in worship together in a variety of different styles, as well as planning their own 'pilgrim' service together as a group. Whether outside on city streets, within a retreat house chapel and gardens, or within a cathedral and its close, each pilgrim service has been a moving and memorable climax on the final morning of the residential.

ONE-ON-ONE SURGERY

Another invaluable benefit of the MMM course is the provision of one-on-one surgery sessions, when participants have the opportunity to receive tuition, advice or encouragement on a subject of their choice. The availability of Zoom has now added a new dimension, putting the whole of the RSCM staff at the disposal of the course leader. Each course participant can now be teamed up with the most appropriate member of staff, ensuring access to the best possible expertise and experience to match the request.

INSPIRING MUSIC IN WORSHIP, POST-COVID AND BEYOND

The book *Inspiring Music in Worship: A short course of guided conversations for churches* was launched at the Church of England's General Synod in February 2018, but it could have been written for such a time as this. It could be exactly what is needed now to harness the creative flexibility and imagination that has been generated through worshipping under current restrictions.

In September 2019, I was invited by the Bishop of Sodor and Man to run to run an Inspiring Music in Worship event to introduce the course to all diocesan clergy and readers. During my stay, I met with various church musicians and worship leaders from across the island, including an ecumenical group from the parish of Kirk Michael on the west coast. In January 2020, the parish church hosted an ecumenical IMiW course, which is proving particularly fruitful. Corporate group learning enabled this group of Anglicans and Methodists to study, enjoy fellowship, and share musical repertoire together. The leader of the group, Joanna Fisher, is now exploring vocation, and she has become an ambassador for the RSCM on the island, encouraging others with their music and worship.

Already at ease with one another, working together ecumenically as a group has stood them in good stead during the pandemic. Conscious of the challenges in

small village churches, this has led to a strategic review of buildings and sustainability as they live God's mission in their community. Rather than share specifically Anglican or Methodist services, there has been opportunity to co-create liturgy, and there is now a developing instrumental group alongside the choir.

The parish church in Kirk Michael is approached through a lychgate, which was originally built in 1907 to house numerous ancient Manx crosses from the surrounding area. The crosses were moved inside the church in the 1970s to protect them from the weather. The site therefore draws together a rich heritage and an interesting blend of Manx, Celtic and contemporary spirituality on which to build.

'Carols around the Lychgate' is a well-established annual event, which had grown significantly at Christmas 2020 despite the year's challenges. Sparked by discussions during the IMiW course, it was suggested that the lychgate could be used at other times of year. The lychgate stands alongside the Tourist Trophy (TT) route, which normally brings thousands of visitors to the Isle of Man. With TT races postponed now until 2022 due to Covid, there is plenty of time to mull over ideas and plan ahead. However, in the meantime, acknowledging the enduring interest many villagers share in their

Manx heritage and culture, the lychgate could become a focus for the church's patronal festival in September, celebrating both the past and present, the sacred and the secular with an accessible blend of traditional and contemporary worship.

NEW PATHWAYS TO TRAVEL

This is a powerful reminder that we have an exciting future ahead when we are all able to worship freely once more. We don't have to slide back into the same old styles of worship. We have the opportunity to revitalize congregational worship and song, as part of the 'new normal'. Certainly there will be some losses, including sadly some church closures, but there will also be new opportunities and new pathways to travel. There is potential to access MMM and IMiW training days via the 50 new Area Teams, again ensuring access to quality ministerial training across the country.

A final word of encouragement in these days of challenge: as in the days of Ezra and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 3), worship can hold together in tension shouts of joy and the sound of weeping, songs of praise alongside cries of lament in a glorious medley of sound which enriches our spirituality and takes us to a deeper place with God.

OBITUARIES

ARTHUR WILLS

Dr Arthur Wills OBE, former organist and choirmaster at Ely Cathedral for over 30 years, died on 30 October 2020.

Born in Coventry, Arthur was educated locally and at the College of St Nicolas (RSCM), Canterbury. After spells at St Alban, Leamington Spa and St Mary's Collegiate Church, Warwick, he became assistant organist at Ely Cathedral in 1949. From 1953 to 1965 he was director of music at the King's School, Ely, and he held a professorship at the Royal Academy of Music from 1964 to 1992. He obtained numerous qualifications and awards, including a DMus degree from Durham University and FRCO.

Arthur became organist and choirmaster at Ely in 1958, a position he held until retirement in 1990. After retirement he remained active for many years as a composer and performer, as an examiner for the ABRSM, and as a much-loved member of the Cathedral community.

Arthur was a towering figure in the world of church music. He was also an outstanding organist and composer who toured the world as a recitalist. The music library at Ely overflows with Arthur's immense output of choral works and a huge volume of very effective organ music. He broadcast on radio, appeared on television and made many recordings, both as a soloist and with the Ely choir.

Arthur married Mary Titterton in 1953, and their happy union lasted for almost 62 years. They are survived by their children, Colin and Rachel.
John Marshall

STEPHEN ROWLEY

We note the death in December 2020 of Stephen Rowley, much admired musician, teacher and RSCM supporter who was involved in the training of junior choristers in New Zealand. He is much missed.

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS, LIFT UP YOUR VOICE

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING AFTER LOCKDOWN

MILES QUICK

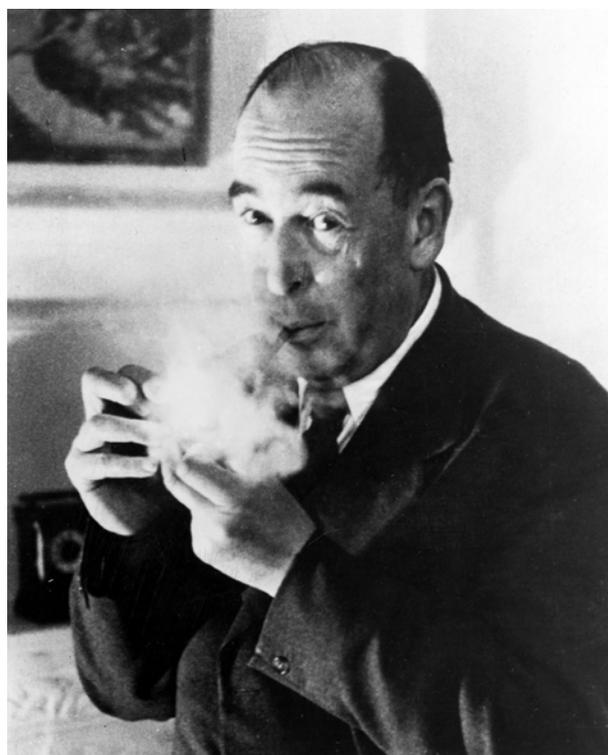
To recast C.S. Lewis's introduction to his ever popular *The Screwtape Letters*: I have no intention of explaining how the diary entries below fell into my hands. They were written by a traveller, having visited two different parish churches. He later wrote some notes in his diary.

CHURCH A

In the porch there are smiling pictures of all the officeholders with their names clearly displayed. I am warmly welcomed and shown to a comfortable seat. The building is warm, and I notice newly renovated facilities at the back of the church, creating a nice synthesis of medieval architecture and 21st-century convenience. The music is wide-ranging, from Tallis via Taizé to Townend. The congregation sings heartily from copies of the bespoke hymn sheet, which also contains all the latest church news and staff contact details. The worship is alive and there is an atmosphere of joy, love and mutual support. The organ alternates with the band to create a wonderful kaleidoscope of sounds, and sometimes organ and band play together. Some chants are sung quietly without any instruments at all. I join in heartily and have a jolly good sing, which really cheers me up.

*'At present we are on the outside of
the world, the wrong side of the door...
Some day, God willing, we shall get in.'*

The church is packed, and people seem glad to be there. After the service I am warmly greeted by those sitting near me and invited to have a cup of coffee at the back of the church. The next week I go back and am greeted by name. I am hooked.



Above: C.S. Lewis (1898–1963). Everett Collection Inc / Alamy Stock Photo. Used by permission.



Frederic REGLAIN / Alamy Stock Photo. Used by permission.

CHURCH B

As I enter, I notice a few poorly displayed and faded notices. Most are out of date. The vicar's name has been crossed out. The door needs oiling. No one greets me, but there is a pile of old and musty-smelling prayer books and hymn books. I help myself. The pews are a bit hard and the lighting poor. I try to sing the hymns, but I cannot use my usual hearty voice because people keep frowning and looking round to see where all the noise is coming from. The organ is far away and hard to hear, and the PA system keeps cutting in and out. There is a vague moaning noise from the other 'singers' so I begin moaning along with them. We are invited to stay for coffee at the end, but very few do so and no one greets me, rather they just talk to each other. They seem to be complaining about something. Everyone looks rather miserable and the worship doesn't really feel alive. I don't go back.

COMING BACK STRONGER

I heard a sermon many years ago entitled 'A tale of two churches', from which I have developed the above. What struck me was that the preacher suggested that the quality of congregational singing can be a barometer to gauge the spiritual life of a church. For those of us involved in helping congregations to sing, that is both a challenge and an encouragement. It suggests we can really make

'You don't know what you've got 'till it's gone.' Could it be that one benefit of this time of fasting might be a new appreciation of the value of congregational singing in worship, and an aim to make it more exciting and heartfelt?

a difference! For a year now, congregations have been masked and banned from singing inside church buildings. For some the situation has seemed reminiscent of the story of Palm Sunday in Luke 19.39–40, when the Pharisees ask Jesus to tell his disciples, who were rejoicing and praising God with a loud voice, to be quiet. Jesus answered: 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would shout out.'

It has indeed been a painful loss for our congregations to be silenced, and, even when able to gather again at a distance and with distanced choirs allowed to sing quietly, for the congregation to be forbidden to join in. As Joni Mitchell sang in *Big Yellow Taxi*: 'Don't it always seem to go, you don't know what you've got 'till it's gone?' Could it be that one benefit of this time of fasting might be a new appreciation of the value of congregational singing

in worship, and an aim to make it more exciting, meaningful and heartfelt?

This last point is well illustrated by John Bell of the Iona Community in his book *The Singing Thing: A Case for Congregational Song*. Among many wonderful insights into congregations and their singing, he points out that it is not just, or even primarily, sermons and homilies that inform people's thinking about God. 'It is much more what they sing that shapes their faith. For when the most memorable line of the most rhetorically astute sermon has been forgotten, people will remember the words of *Abide with me* or *Love Divine, all loves excelling* or *Majesty*.'

Hymns, perhaps learned in childhood, can return at times of stress and crisis to sustain and stabilize us, as Anne Harrison movingly pointed out in her recent RSCM lecture *Hymns and the First World War*. She cited several poignant examples of how soldiers and others in extreme wartime situations were comforted and strengthened by remembering the words of hymns. Surely too in times of pandemic, remembering the words of an Easter hymn such as 'Jesus lives! thy terrors now can no more, O death, appal us' can help stabilize us and act as an antidote to often appalling news.

Paul and Silas certainly knew the value of hymn singing in less than ideal conditions, as we are reminded in Acts 16. They were singing hymns while in prison, having just been harshly beaten, yet they ended up baptizing the jailer and all his household! Rory Noland in his book *Worship on Earth as It Is in Heaven* quotes Washington DC pastor Mark Batterson:

Worship is forgetting about what's wrong with you and remembering what's right with God. It is like hitting the refresh key on your computer. It restores the joy of your salvation. It recalibrates your spirit. It renews your mind. And it enables you to find something good to praise God about even when everything seems to be going wrong.

John Bell reminds us that as believers we have 'the voice of an apprentice angel', and Rory Noland gives four quotations from Revelation to emphasize the loud volume of worship and praise in heaven, quite the opposite of where we are now: silenced, masked, and restricted. It is something to look forward to, and indeed to prepare for.

Another recently published book that gives a glorious vision of how congregational singing can contribute to building up a healthy church is Andy Thomas's *Resounding Body: Building Christlike Church Communities through Music*. Andy points

out that even in churches that seem to have limited resources, when you get to know the congregation prayerfully, and they get to know you, new possibilities will emerge. When still a full-time schoolteacher, I was tasked by the deputy head with introducing a 'house singing competition', with the particular aim of improving the hymn singing in school assemblies. There was some opposition to this from my teaching colleagues owing to the amount of extra work involved. One of the housemasters

'...forgetting what's wrong with you and remembering what's right with God.'

involved came to me several years later and said that he had been quite wrong, and that it had become one of the best house events of the year. Because everyone was included, young and old, British and overseas pupils alike, it became a great community builder at the start of the school year. And so I was delighted to find another example of the power of congregational singing to build community and unity.

What of the future, when congregations are eventually unmasked and unmuted? How would it be if as congregations we aimed to come back stronger, re-energized, and with fresh determination to make the most of our singing, especially in churches that don't appear at first sight to have many musical resources. How would it be if new ideas were available: tips on encouraging congregations; new repertoire ideas; perhaps a webinar involving experts with ideas like those quoted above; a programme around the country of inspirational workshops based on these resources and principles. These are all resources the RSCM is hoping to provide.

As worshippers we are doing nothing less than preparing ourselves and helping others to prepare for heaven. In our singing, congregational and choral, we already get glimpses. As C.S. Lewis puts it:

At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in.

And, with God's help, our music and our singing can help us to be ready.

REVIEWS OF CDs

CDs

- ★ Worth hearing
- ★★ Recommended
- ★★★ Essential listening

ORGAN CDs

★
**CÉSAR FRANCK:
THE ORGAN WORKS**

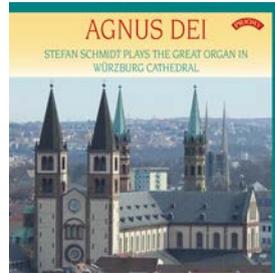
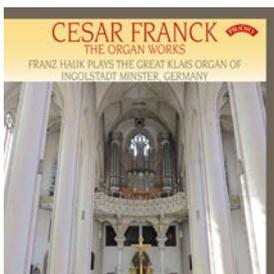
Franz Hauk plays the great Klais organ of Ingolstadt Minster, Germany ♦ **Priory PRCD 1227**

Franz Hauk's recording from Ingolstadt Minster in Germany offers an interesting overview of the organ works of César Franck (1822–90). Not all of Franck's works are featured as the title might suggest, but most of the well-known ones are included, in addition to some pieces that had previously been published as works for the *Orgues de salon*.

Although a little rigid in places, the playing is undeniably skilful, and well executed throughout. Some of the tempi are a little fast, particularly in the *Prelude, Fugue and Variation* and *Pastorale*. Whilst the Klais organ of Ingolstadt Minster invokes the necessary drama and power when required, some of the softer, more expressive corners of the recording are let down by the rather dense sound of the foundation stops.

The organ has been captured well by the engineers, which in turn produces a magnificent sound. While the playing might not be for purists, there are certainly some very admirable moments.

Richard Brasier



★★
**ORGAN TRANSCRIPTIONS
AGNUS DEI**

Stefan Schmidt plays the great Klais organ of Würzburg Cathedral ♦ **Priory PRCD 1224 and 1225**

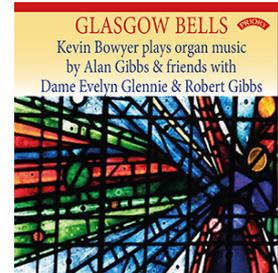
Stefan Schmidt's recording of *Organ Transcriptions*, including Oskar Gottlieb Blarr's arrangement of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and Brahms's *Variations and Fugue on a theme of Handel*, Op. 24 in an arrangement by Martin Schmeding, is a whirlwind of colour from start to finish. While some of the registrations don't immediately imitate the sound of a traditional orchestra, they showcase the wonderful variety of colour that the organ offers. The playing is excellent, as is the recorded sound. While this is not the first recording of Mussorgsky and Brahms on the organ, it is certainly up there with the best.

Agnus Dei takes its title from the opening work on the disc, Frank Martin's arrangement for the organ of his *Agnus Dei* from the Mass for two choirs. Here we can find a good mix of arrangements and original works for organ, ranging from Bach to Rachmaninoff. The largest work by far on the recording is Reubke's *Sonata on 94th Psalm*, which interestingly features at number 13 of a track listing of 15. Again, the playing is vibrant and musical throughout, and deserves to be listened to more widely.

Richard Brasier

★
GLASGOW BELLS
Kevin Bowyer plays organ music by Alan Gibbs and friends with Dame Evelyn Glennie and Robert Gibbs ♦ **Priory PRCD1215**

This recording reaffirms Kevin Bowyer's reputation as a leading interpreter of contemporary organ music, and there is no doubting his

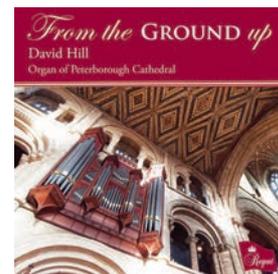


commitment to the music of Alan Gibbs. Bowyer has chosen his tempi well and plays to the acoustic demands of the chapel so that the Glasgow University Memorial Chapel organ gets a chance to shine. However, there is a huge range of dynamics in the recording. I had to keep changing the volume levels on my CD player to compensate for the difference between the brightness of Dame Evelyn Glennie's xylophone in *Glasgow Bells* and the almost inaudible violin of Robert Gibbs (the composer's son) in the *Tartuffe Suite* and *1789 Fragments*. The music by the composer's friends includes the wonderfully atmospheric *Sunlit Ambiguity* by Bethany Patterson and Anthony Baldwin's rousing *Variations on 'Kelvingrove'*.

Ian Munro

★★★
FROM THE GROUND UP
David Hill plays the organ of Peterborough Cathedral ♦ **Regent REGCD539**

This is an attractive and enjoyable recital of music based on or incorporating passacaglia construction by many under-performed composers, played with aplomb by David Hill. The programme has been well thought out with the more substantial pieces interspersed with shorter works. The tempi are well paced and, along with the choice of registrations, suit the acoustic. Every note is audible: in particular, the counterpoint in



Alcock's *Introduction and Passacaglia* is heard clearly. The cascading semiquavers of Murrill's *Carillon* never rush and the rhythm remains clear and crisp. The range of dynamics and the timbres the Hill organ has at its disposal are simply staggering. None of the acoustic problems common with recordings made in a large cathedral are evident here and praise must go to engineer Gary Cole for producing such an impressive disc.

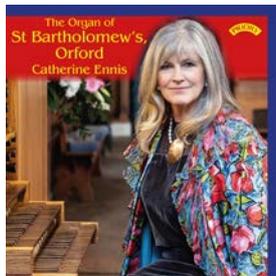
Ian Munro

★★

THE ORGAN OF ST BARTHOLOMEW'S, ORFORD
Catherine Ennis ♦ Priory PRCD1235

The title of this CD leads with the instrument, a 1976 three-manual mechanical action instrument built by Peter Collins for the Turner Sims Hall at Southampton and now rebuilt in Orford Church, venue for the first performances of Britten's *Noye's Fludde* and his three church parables. But now the CD must be treasured as the final recording by the inspirational Catherine Ennis who died last December. Two preludes and fugues – J.S. Bach BWV 565 and Reger from his Op. 59 *Zwölf Stücke* – frame 17 other varied tracks. The five movements of de Grigny's *Veni Creator* alternate with its plainchant sung by the men of Orford's excellent church choir. Handel's F major 'Cuckoo and Nightingale' concerto is given in Dupré's solo organ arrangement. Other works are by Mendelssohn, Brahms, Parry (three chorale preludes), Britten and Dan Locklair. Whether serene or vivacious, Catherine Ennis's playing is always engrossing – the recording and presentation (liner notes by Graeme Kay, Paul Hale and Ennis herself) are a worthy tribute.

Judith Markwith



CHORAL CDs

★★

BENJAMIN BRITTEN: SACRED CHORAL WORKS
Choir of Norwich Cathedral / David Dunnett and George Inscoc (organ) / Elizabeth Green (harp) / Ashley Grote ♦ Priory PRCD1233

Here we have in one hit a valuable catalogue of Britten's key sacred works, namely *Rejoice in the Lamb*, *A Ceremony of Carols* and the settings of canticles for morning prayer. Then there are the four 'hymns' to St Columba, St Peter, the Virgin and St Cecilia. Each is so different – from the rather unsettling (and tricky!) *Hymn to St Columba* to the simplicity of the *Hymn to the Virgin*, an early work. Recorded spaciouly but very clearly in February 2020, the cathedral choir of boys, girls, men and women is in excellent voice and well balanced. Ashley Grote allows each work to breathe; for instance, the steady pace of the *Jubilate in C*. Similarly, the 'instead of thy fathers' passage in the *Hymn to St Peter* is not at all rushed and to my mind better for it. There are accompanying notes from Michael Nicholas, former Norwich Cathedral organist, who makes the point that Britten's writing showed 'startling originality'. How true!

Stuart Robinson

★

LONGING FOR HOME: THE AMERICAN HYMN TRADITION
Choir of St Peter's Church, St Louis, Missouri / David Sinden ♦ Regent REGCD509

'This is not hymn singing as you might know it, Jim.' Well, certainly not if you're reading this in the UK. The American hymn tradition (as Dr Richard Longman explains in the sleeve notes) began in New England in the early 18th century. On this CD we have what British readers might term 'hymn anthems' – strophic texts set for singing by a trained choir. St Peter's well-balanced mixed choir present 16 settings by 20th-century composers of a range of texts ranging from the African American spiritual *Steal away to Jesus* to Gerre Hancock's complex *God is ascended*. There's a fine unaccompanied setting by Harold Friedell of George Herbert's 'King of glory, king of peace'. This

is a fascinating insight into a tradition that has developed considerably ever since the first African American spirituals mingled with metrical psalms and chorales brought over by European settlers. The website stpetersepiscopal.org is worth a visit.

Stuart Robinson

★★

A CELTIC PRAYER
Choir of Paisley Abbey / David Gerrard (organ) / Ewan Robertson (bass flute) / George McPhee ♦ Priory PRCD1234

This disc is a wonderful selection of Scottish church music from the Renaissance to the present day. Martin Dalby's *Mater salutaris* is sung well and Thomas Wilson's a cappella setting of *There is no rose* is divine with the sopranos' final note floating effortlessly and ethereally. Cedric Thorpe Davie's *The Lord is He whose strength doth make me strong* is given a majestic performance. David Gerrard's organ accompaniment is consistently sympathetic to the choir although the singers' impeccable diction sometimes is a little lost in the acoustic. Three solo organ pieces, all compositions by George McPhee based on hymn tunes, are exquisitely played. It is a shame that there is no information in the accompanying notes about the abbey's 1874 Cavaillé-Coll organ. *Three Donne Lyrics* by Edward McGuire are beautifully sung and the accompaniment of the bass flute is unique yet effective, although sometimes slightly lost in the choral texture.

Ian Munro

★★

IAN VENABLES: REQUIEM
Choir of Gloucester Cathedral / Jonathan Hope (organ) / Adrian Partington ♦ Somm SOMMCD0618

An excellent new work receives an excellent performance and recording. Ian Venables has made his name as a composer of songs and this setting of the Requiem Mass is full of detail in its response to the words. The Offertorium is particularly powerful, not least at 'Libera eas de ore leonis' where the lion's mouth is threatening, and towards the end of the movement – after which the inserted Pie Jesu provides welcome repose before an expressive Sanctus. The Libera me is another movement where the terror in

the text inspires music of overwhelming power. Adrian Partington's choir responds with fervour. To complete the disc there are anthems by composers associated with Gloucester: John Sanders, John Joubert, Ivor Gurney and Ian Venables himself.
Judith Markwith

★★★

VEXILLA REGIS

A sequence of music from Palm Sunday to Holy Saturday ♦ **Choir of Westminster Cathedral / Peter Stevens (organ) / Martin Baker** ♦ **Ad fontes AF002**

The recording was made in Buckfast Abbey and with its Ruffatti organ, but it is the Westminster Cathedral singers with their organist and director who provide this insight into the music as it was in the cathedral. The insight comes not only from the recording, but also from two essays: one by Peter Stevens describes Holy Week as he saw it as a musician and one by Jeremy Summerly discusses the music in the context of the Holy Week liturgy. Some of the music is well known and

expected: Byrd *Ne irascaris Domine* and *Civitas sancti tui*, Duruflé *Ubi Caritas*, Bruckner *Christus factus est*, Victoria *Improperia*, Lotti *Crucifixus à 8* and Anerio *Christus factus est*. But this disc is also valuable for the eight plainchant tracks, sung with generous accompaniment, and for compositions by the cathedral's own R.R. Terry, George Malcolm and Martin Baker himself.

Judith Markwith

★

CORNHILL VISIONS

A century of musical innovation ♦ **Choir of St Michael's Cornhill / William Morley (trumpet) / Nicola Corbishley (soprano) / Patrick Craig (countertenor) / Colin Huchns (erhu) / Jeremiah Stephenson, Graham Thorpe, Benjamin Newlove (organ) / Jonathan Rennert** ♦ **Regent REGCD550**

Although there are three big Ralph Vaughan Williams anthems here (*Lord, Thou hast been our refuge*, *A Vision of Aeroplanes* and *Valiant-for-Truth*),

it is Bax's 1949 Magnificat, written for Harold Darke and first performed at St Michael's Cornhill, that has the central place, literally and figuratively. Four anthems by Darke, not easy to find on disc, also give great pleasure. Jonathan Rennert's 13-strong choir sing musically and without forcing themselves to sound bigger than they are: the result, thanks to singers and director, is subtle and satisfying performances, well captured in the excellent acoustic.

Judith Markwith

You will find reviews of recent printed music publications in this issue of *Sunday by Sunday* (no. 96). All the latest reviews are available online at www.rscm.com/reviews

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WANTED

Stoke Gabriel Parish Church in the Totnes Mission Community. **Organist/Director of Music**. We seek an experienced organist and choral trainer to contribute to the worship and musical life of this thriving village church set beside the River Dart in the South Hams of Devon.

The church has a tradition of choral music, a Harrison organ and an adult SATB robed choir of around 20 singers. There are some 85 on the electoral roll with Sunday morning congregations of around 50–60. Duties will include preparing and playing music for services in church and rehearsing and developing the choir.

Remuneration arrangements and contracts are negotiable. An enhanced DBS check and on-line safeguarding training (C1) is required before appointment. Please see the church website for further details of the church and the choir www.stokegabrielchurch.co.uk For further information, application arrangements or to arrange a discussion or visit, please contact: churchwarden, on DMN1532@gmail.com

St Peter's Bishop's Waltham Hampshire: A Director of Music and/or Worship Leader is sought for a warm-hearted active church of all ages in our market town community. A practising Christian of suitable character and musical skills is needed to play, lead, support and grow our worship through music. Our classical and traditional services are mainly organ and choir led (some piano) with varied settings, anthems, psalms and some modern hymns/songs. Our more informal services are band-led with a group of singers. We have about 20 in our choir and 5 amateur organists, and there are 8 musicians in our band with 5 singers. We also have various periodic festival and joint congregational services. This is a paid position at or near recommended RSCM/Worship Leader rates.

For more information please look at our website www.stpetersbw.org.uk/about-us/vacancies/ and to have an initial conversation please contact: Revd James Hunt jameshunt1966@gmail.com 07570 042916 or 01489 892618

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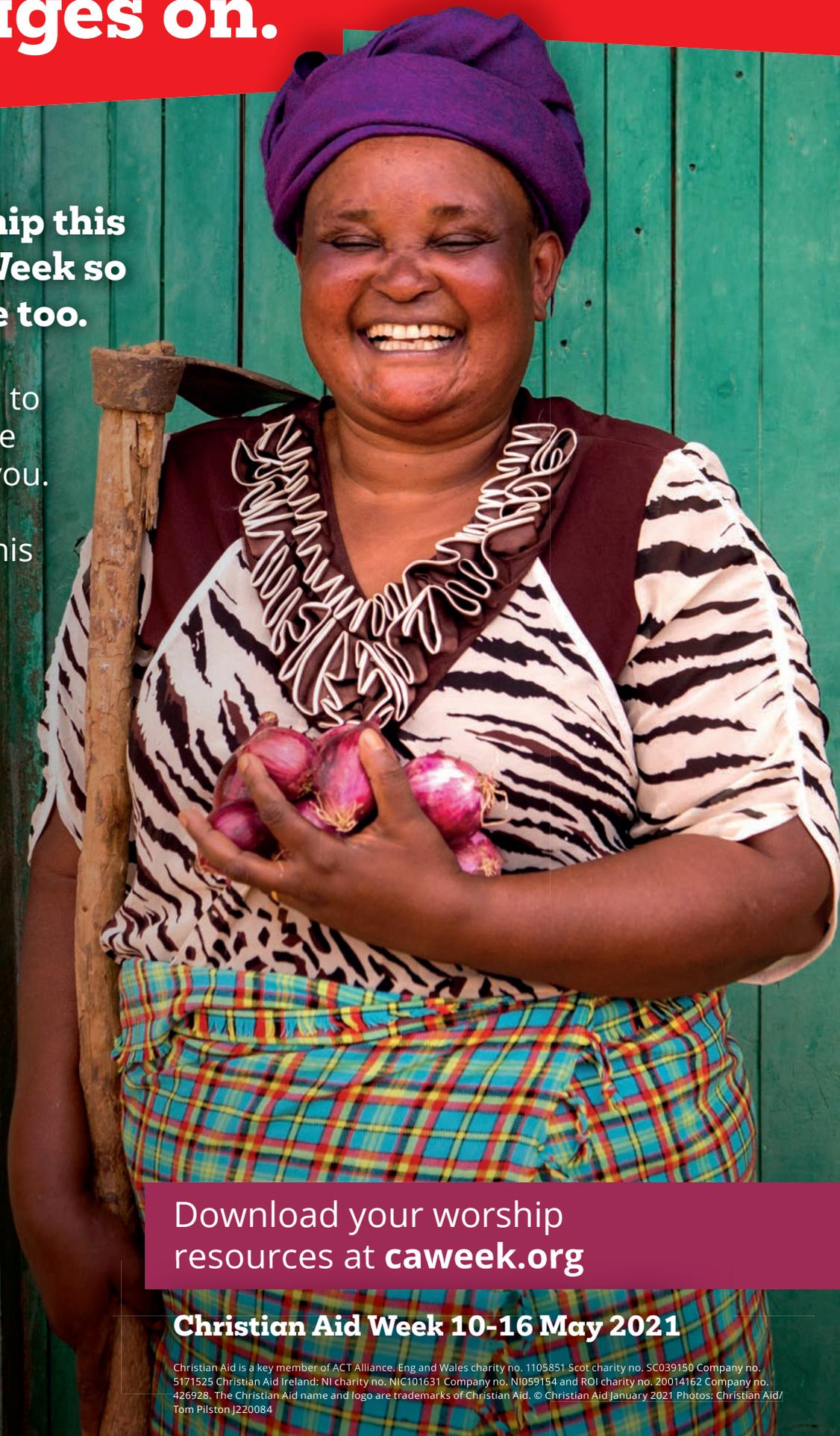
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