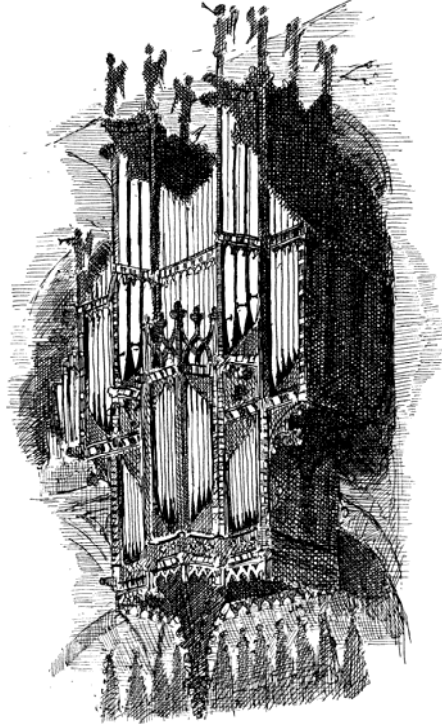


The Organs and Organists



of Ely Cathedral

by
Nicholas Thistlethwaite

**with an Appendix on the Organists
by Watkins Shaw**

Original line drawing of the Gilbert Scott case - John Maddison

I

From the earliest times to 1644

We shall probably never know the date of Ely's first organ, its location, or the precise use to which it was put. However, Ely's links with Winchester, and its status as a Benedictine house after Aethelwold's refoundation in 970, encourage the thought that there may have been an organ in the minster before the Norman Conquest. Benedictine monasticism was instrumental in developing the technology of organs, clocks and other mechanical apparatus, and its products were disseminated throughout western Christendom through the network of Benedictine monasteries. The Old Minster at Winchester had a remarkable organ built (or perhaps enlarged) c990. Knowing, as we do, that other Saxon monastic churches possessed organs, and that an organ was used at the dedication of nearby Ramsey in 991, it is a not unreasonable conjecture that Ely would have acquired an organ by a similar date.

What were these early *organa*? That they had bellows to raise a supply of wind, a wooden chest to support the pipes, and a set of levers to admit wind to the pipes, thus causing them to sound, is all that can be said with any confidence. Perhaps they were used as signalling devices (like bells) or to enrich the liturgy at the great festivals. There was certainly no question of them being used as accompanimental instruments at this early date - both mechanism and sound would have been too crude for that.

The earliest reference in the Ely records to organs may date from 1133, when Bishop Nigellus gave tithes 'ad emendationem organorum'. It is tempting to translate this as 'for the maintenance of the organs', but it has been pointed out recently that the term *organa* had wider application. Apparently it could also mean an instrument or tool whereby (in this context) the liturgy was ordered one possible interpretation is that it means a service book or text.

There is no such ambiguity by 1367 when the Keeper of the [Lady] Chapel recorded charges 'for making a pair of organs' (1367). The materials included 94 pounds of tin costing 53s 4d and the organ-maker was paid 3s 4d. In 1374, the Precentor's Computus Roll notes the payment of six shillings for painting the 'small organ' (this may not have been the new Lady Chapel organ) and mention is also made of the existence of a 'great' organ 'Super Chorum' - presumably a reference to its physical relationship to the monastic choir, then under the octagon. The suggestion has been made that this instrument stood on the Norman pulpitum, but it may equally have been on a gallery behind the stalls or in one of the transepts.

In 1396, a total of £5 1s 5 1/2d was spent 'pro organis ex parte australi ecclesie operand. & emendand' ('for working on and repairing the organs from the eastern part of the church'). The account for this work survives in a nineteenth-century transcription of a lost Precentor's Roll, and has recently been translated by Stephen Bicknell, with whose permission it is reproduced here:

| | | |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | Spent on 20 stones of lead for working on and amending the organs from the eastern part of the church' | 16s 9d |
| 2 | Spent on nails for the same | 1d 0b |

| | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| 3 | Also for the cost of one man and a horse conveying the workman to Ramsey to seek various tools for the same | 12d |
| 4 | Also spent on timber and boards for making them | 4s |
| 5 | Also for fetching one man to make the bellows from the Abbey | 3s 4d |
| 6 | Also for the cost of another workman to Ramsey for another purpose | 10d |
| 7 | Spent on 4 white horse hides to provide 4 pairs of bellows for the said organ | 7s 8d |
| 8 | Spent on providing hoops of ash for the bellows of the same | 4d |
| 9 | Spent on glue | 8d |
| 10 | Spent on wire | 12d |
| 11 | Spent on 16 pairs of hinges for the same | 22d |
| 12 | Spent on nails for the same | 14d |
| 13 | For the wages of a carpenter brought for 8 days to make the conflatorium for the said organ | 2s 8d |
| 14 | Spent on nails for the same | 6d |
| 15 | For 1 piece of timber to hold the pipes up | 6d |
| 16 | Spent on wire to hold the pipes together | 7d |
| 17 | Spent on one iron strap for the same | 4d |
| 18 | Spent on 12 springs for the same | 3d |
| 19 | Also paid to the carpenter for making a roof over the said organ | 6d |
| 20 | Spent on 3 hooks and 3 staples of iron for the same | 6d |
| 21 | Spent on 1 pound of glue | 1d |
| 22 | Spent on 1 pound of tin for the same | 3d |
| 23 | Spent on 6 white calf hides | 2s 6d |
| 24 | Spent on 12 sheep skins | 2s 4d |
| 25 | Spent on 2 pounds of quicksilver | 2s |
| 26 | Also for fetching a man to make and repair the said organs | 40s board |
| 27 | Also for wages for the repair and emending of the small organs | 2s 6d |
| 28 | For the board of the said workman for a period of 13 weeks together with the board of his servant for the same period | 8s 0d |

Bicknell has pointed out that much of the work seems to relate to the wind system; the 12 springs may imply that the organ had 12 notes, and the provision of a roof might suggest that the instrument was being enclosed in a case of some sort. Several workmen were involved - it is clear that this was a major project.

For the next two centuries the surviving records have little to say concerning the organs. In 1407, Nicholas Stokes was paid 30s for 'teaching the Precentor's clerk to play upon the organ, for one year' - an indication of the growing importance of the organ in liturgy, perhaps especially in the daily Lady mass.

At the time of the surrender of the monastery to the king's commissioners on 18 November 1539, there were 'Two paer of organs in the Quyer and a paer of organs in the Ladye Chaple'. What became of them is unknown because of the paucity of documentation for the remainder of the sixteenth century. Perhaps one instrument survived, to be used in the reformed liturgy - the new statutes of 1544 required the Master of the Choristers to be skilful in organ-playing as well as singing.

Organs fell silent in many churches (and even some cathedrals) during Elizabeth's reign, but the rise of Arminianism from the 1590s onwards gradually brought better times for

church musicians and received vigorous expression during Archbishop Laud's ascendancy in the years preceding the Civil War.

Unlike many other cathedrals, Ely provides no evidence for the acquisition of a new organ during this period. It is possible that one had been installed before 1604 when the surviving accounts begin, or that a generous benefactor (Dean Caesar?) provided an instrument at no expense to the Chapter. The sparsity of references to organ repairs between 1604 and 1644 when choral services were finally suppressed implies the existence of an efficient organ.

Ian Payne has collated the entries relating to the organs and music during this period and the author is grateful for permission to draw upon his research.

The earliest reference occurs in 1604-5 when 45s 8d was paid 'for workmanship and stuffe aboute the organs'; a further 3s was laid out later in the year. There was then a spate of work in 1606-7 when Robert Pike received 8s 6d for 'mending the Organs'. Later that year, £13 6s 8d was spent on 'repairing the Church Organs', and there follow payments of 28s 'for winscott for the Organs', and 40s 'for painting them'. In the next year, 2s was paid 'for a casement & mendynge the stayers to the organ loft & nayles', and another 6s 3d for 'mendynge'. Two years later (1609-10) an unnamed person was paid £8 4s 11d - a charge which included 'making a new parre of bellowes for the organes'.

These are not insignificant sums, but nor can they represent a major rebuilding, let alone the purchase of a new organ.

Following minor repairs in 1620-1 (40s), 1621-2 (6s 8d) and 1627-8 (12s 2d), the organ was overhauled in preparation for an impending royal visit by the King in 1635. Ten shillings was paid 'for taken [sc. taking] out the Orgaine Pipes & scouring them, & for mending the keyes & doores of the Orgaines', and 3s 8d 'for Glue, Leather, nailes, Cloath & dustailes spent about the same worke'. John Amner, the organist, was given five shillings 'for his Paines in helping to retune the Orgaines'. In the following year's accounts (1636-7) expenditure of a further £1 7s 2d 'on mending the Orgaines, for workmanship and materialls' is noted. A final pre-War payment of 17s 5d for repairs is recorded in 1642.

It is therefore a fair assumption that Ely Cathedral possessed a competent instrument able to satisfy the demands of two capable organists (Barcroft and Amner) in the first four decades of the seventeenth century. Regrettably, nothing can now be discovered of its design, location or musical character.

II

From Restoration to Reform

The fate of Ely's pre-War organ is unknown. If it survived at all it was probably not playable in 1660 when choral services were resumed, because the Treasurer's accounts for 1660-1 record a payment of £65 'for the Orgaine bought for ye use of ye Quire and for ye bringing of it down to Ely'. This may be the organ for the playing of which Robert Claxton received ten shillings in the michaelmas quarter 1660, although it is curious that regular payments to an organ blower were not resumed (or, at any rate, were not recorded) until the midsummer quarter of the following year. The new instrument may have stood on the floor of the quire near the singers - there may have been no alternative if an old organ survived in a ruinous state on the screen.

Various payments connected with the organ appear in the accounts for 1664. In January, a curtain was bought for the organ. In April, the carpenter Anthony Brignall was paid £10 'for the Organ loft'. In July, six shillings carriage was paid 'for bringing downe part of the Organ', and in October the same sum 'for bringing the remainder'. Most significantly of all, the organ blower, John Bolt, was paid £1 8s in November 'for 28 dayes Work at the Organ' - could this have been for attendance whilst the instrument was being voiced and finished? There are no other clues as to what was afoot, but it is likely that either an old organ was being renovated or a new one installed.

The re-furnishing and paving of the quire in the 1680s was accompanied by further work on the organ. In June 1682 the Chapter 'desired to signifie to Dr Holder o^r thankful acceptance of his intended Gift to O^r Organ and o^r readiness to compleat ye Great Organ according as he hath desired'. Dr William Holder was a canon of Ely, Sub Dean of the Chapel Royal, and a musician of some accomplishment, whose anthems and services are represented in the Ely part-books of the period. His generosity enabled the Dean and Chapter to engage Thomas Thamer to reconstruct the Cathedral organ.

Thamer is known to have undertaken work at Peterborough (1661, 1680) and Winchester (1666) Cathedrals, as well as in a number of Cambridge colleges, in the years succeeding the Restoration. At various times he seems to have been resident in both Cambridge and Peterborough, and is first named in the Ely accounts in 1682-3 when he was paid £6 for unspecified work (at the same time Brignall received twelve shillings 'for worke about the Organ'). This may have been in preparation for 'ye inlarging of [the] Great Organ', and in December 1683 he was paid £ 10 on account. Thamer proved to be a slow worker: the quarterage book records frequent small payments to him throughout 1684, eventually amounting to £60. Some significant stage was evidently reached in August 1684 when the Dean ordered the workmen to be given a gratuity of two shillings, but disaster struck in the early part of 1685 when five shillings was paid to 'the Chirurgeon for his service about M^r Thamer'. Unfortunately, it was to no avail, and the next entry records the payment of 2s 6d 'for watching the corps and removing it'. Thamer was no more.

Thamer's untimely death may have left the Dean and Chapter with an incomplete, and possibly otherwise unsatisfactory instrument; evidence from elsewhere suggests that Thamer was an old-fashioned builder whose work was speedily rebuilt or replaced following his death.

This is precisely what happened at Ely. In 1688-9 an agreement was entered into with Gerard Smith, nephew of the King's organ-maker, Bernard ('Father') Smith, an immigrant of German or Dutch origin, to build what was effectively a new Chair Organ inside the existing case. The original agreement has been lost, but, fortunately for us, there was a dispute about charges, and the surviving documentation includes a summary of Gerard Smith's work:

A particular of y^e works done by M^r Smith
in y^e Chair-Organ belonging
to y^e Church of Ely

- 1 The front-stop of metal-pipes, w^{eh} stand behind y^e Principal, half way new; y^e other half (w^{ch} are painted) being only new voyc't.
- 2 The Diapason & y^e Recorder-stops, of wood, are new voyc't, but made of our old materialls
- 3 A fifteenth, being a metal-stop, is made of new materialls, t old 15th being thrown by.
- 4 The Comet-stop, two rowes of metal-pipes halfway of y^e Keyes, all new.
- 5 The mixture stop, two rowes of metal-pipes, y^e other half of y^e Keyes [] wholly new.
- 6 The iron-work that draws all y^e stops, wholly new.
- 7 Half of our old wind-prefs is ioyn' d to y^t new work wcb Mf Smith has added
- 8 A Rolling-board, stickers, a set of Keys & three payrs of bellows, all new.

This reveals a number of things about the old Chair Organ. It stood in its own case, of which the front pipes were painted (perhaps in a similar style to those surviving in Tbamer's organ in Framlingham Parish Church). It had some wooden pipes -like many English organs of the mid-seventeenth century - and its registers included a (stopped?) diapason, principal of metal, recorder of wood, and fifteenth. The old soundboard was retained, but the stop and key actions, the keys themselves and most of the wind system were replaced.

In order to settle their dispute with Smith the Chapter sought the opinion of William Preston, a London organ-maker. A report incorporating Preston's comments was prepared and has survived. The opening paragraph may be a summary of the Organist's criticisms, perhaps sent to the Dean in London.

Severall of y^e Pipes (he saith) are fuzzy & speak ill, others are not well in tune, & that y workman who was sent to mend y Organ, since y damage by y^e Ratts, has done his work imperfectly, so that there will be need He should come to repayr & review it in April, as M^r Smith has promis'd. And further, he saith that there are severall Runnings in the Stops. &c.

Preston duly went down to Ely, and when he returned to London, reported to the Dean on the quality of Smith's work and the reasonableness of his bill for £130.

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Whereas I [William Preston] was sent over to y^e Church of Ely to view y^e Chair-Organ there, & y^e Work y^{ch} has been lately done in it by M^r Smith; after a full view, & an impartiall & deliberate judgment thereof, I doe declare that y^e work is as yet v^{ey} imperfect, & y^t 4 score pound is not only a sufficient, but a liberall reward for y^e said work ...

The writer of the report (possibly Dean Spencer himself) adds a note to the effect that
This Preston is a profest Organ maker, & lately
an Apprentice to M^r Dallarn, an emin[en]t Man
of y^e same Profession in London. The said Preston brings me
word that most of y^e Quire at Ely judg M^r Smith's
demands very unequall & unreasonable...

He tells me further y^t y^e many weeks spent
by y^e workmen about y^e Organ, & y^e journeys
bestow'd upon y^e business, might have been
sav'd in a great measure; but y^e (as He heard at Ely)
they sometimes did not doe above 2 or 3 houres work in a day.
And some forecast might have sav'd y^e
trouble of some of y^e iournays, w^{ch}
may perhaps be pleaded in defence of
Mr Smiths' high demands.

In fact, Preston may not have been the disinterested critic that he sought to appear. As a product of the Dallam workshop, he may have shared the Dallams' animosity to the incoming (and highly successful) Smith clan. Confronted with this brew of gossip, opinion and scarcely veiled hostility, the Chapter backed off, and Smith was eventually paid £120 - only £10 less than he had claimed.

The Chapter cannot have been too dissatisfied with Gerard Smith's work because on 3 August 1691 they made an agreement with him to replace the Great Organ.

For this, Smith received a deposit of £100. The work was to be completed by the beginning of April 1692, and once it had been approved by 'any sufficient Artist or Artists as they the sd Deane & [Chapter] shall nominate and appoint', Smith was to receive a further two hundred pounds. The agreement provided for the retention of the existing Great case, which was to be raised and enlarged, but reserved to the Dean and Chapter the option of commissioning 'a more Beautifull Case than [that] now standing ... after the pattern or moddell of the Organ at the Temple sett up by M^r Smith or after the pattern or moddell of that at Christ Church Hospitall sett up by M^r Harris', which case Smith undertook to supply at an additional charge of £100. The Chapter decided to exercise this option, and Smith was ordered to proceed with a new case. A fragment of the additional agreement survives, and reveals that the Chapter was concerned about the effect on the newly-finished Chair Organ:

But in rigard the making of this new case & y^e settling
of so many new pipes therein may occafion y^e rayseing
of a great deal of dust, & other disturbance in y^e
Organ-loft, to y^e p^ejudice of y^e chayre-organ; M^r S. shall

stand oblig'd to leave y^e sd chayre organ well clean'd & freed from dust or any other harm or annoyance whatsoever.

The agreement implies that Smith was only to be paid £80 for the case. In the event, the 'modden' chosen was Renatus Harris's organ (1690) in Christ Church,

Newgate Street, London (next to Christ's Hospital, and used regularly for its services) - a three-towered composition, with round-shouldered upper flats supporting trumpeting angels. There were two fronts, and the organ stood on the pulpitum at the west end of the liturgical Choir.

The list of stops to be included in the new Great Organ is given in the 1691 agreement:

Ten new and substantiall stopps (viz) Two open Diapasons consisting of one hundred and six metall pipes A stop Diapason of wood and metall consisting of ffifty three pipes A Principall metall of ffifty three pipes A great Twelfth metall consisting of Fifty three pipes A Fifteenth metall consisting of Fifty three pipes A Nazon or Flute of wood or metal I consisting of Fifty three pipes A Sexquialtera of Four Ranks mettall consisting of Two hundred and twelve Pipes A Furniture offour Ranks mettall consisting of Two hundred and twelve Pipes A Cornett of five Ranks mettall consisting of One hundred and twenty pipes the [lowest] note being Double Gammut and the highest C Solfa in Alt ...

Smith further undertook to leave space for three more stopps ('to be added to the sd Organ when it shall please the sd Dean & Chapter or any other Benefactor') and to maintain the organ for seven years after its completion, free of all charges except travelling expenses. The only evidence that these were ever paid is found in 1693-4.

The agreement provided for the organ to be completed by 1 April 1692. The fact that 'Mr Smith Jun^r y^e Organ maker' was ordered to be paid £100 on 14 June 1693 suggests that work did not progress as rapidly as has been hoped. In all the Dean and Chapter paid Smith £380, completion fortuituously coinciding with the payment by Sir Richard Onslow of a large fine.

Gerard Smith was paid £10 15s for cleaning the organ in 1704-5. By 1714-15 it had passed into the care of Henry Turner, who received £20 'for Mending & Voicing the Organ'. Turner was a Cambridge organ-builder (originally Heinrich Tomer, and possibly one of Bernard Smith's workmen) and the organ remained in his care and that of his son Barnard for the next sixty years or so. They cleaned the instrument in 1725-6 (£20), 1747-8 (£20) and 1763 (£30), and also in 1735-6 when the opportunity was taken to add a trumpet to the Great bringing the total cost to £40. They, and others, effected minor repairs on various occasions detailed in the accounts, and no doubt successive organists undertook tuning when necessary. The Turners were succeeded by another Cambridge organbuilder, Humphrey Argent, who first appears in 1778-9, when he was paid £6. In 1787, the Chapter ordered

that Mr Argent of Cambridge be allowed an Annual Stipend of six Guineas, to keep the Organ in Tune, he having engaged to come over three times a year & oftener if called upon by the organist. ..

In 1800, this payment was increased to seven guineas.

By the time Argent took up his duties, the organ no longer stood on the old Norman pulpitum, for in November 1768, the Dean and Chapter resolved to accept James Essex's plan for removing the Choir from the Octagon to the Presbytery. Essex, a Cambridge architect and antiquarian, proposed siting the organ on a gallery behind the altar, at the extreme eastern end of the Cathedral, and (as Jose Hopkins has shown) produced a design for a 'Gothic' re-working of the Smith case. The attraction of the scheme was purely aesthetic - it would have opened up a dramatic from west to east. However, it would have also obstructed the east window, and made co-ordination between organist and singers virtually impossible. Wisely, the Chapter adopted a more conventional arrangement, with the organ sited on a new stone screen at the west end of the new Choir, some three bays into the eastern arm of the building. This is the position shown in Turner's well-known painting of the Octagon.

The Chapter ordered that, as well as being moved, the organ should be 'put into good repair, the Pipes gilded, and the Case clean'd and varnished'. According to a later source, the work was undertaken by Byfield and Green at a cost of £142 (the indenture dated 28 April 1770 is now lost). They also agreed to bring the organ down to concert pitch, stipulating, however, that 'Double G is not to be added, and the said organ is to go no lower than double A'. Like many other organs made at the end of the seventeenth century, the Ely organ was sharp in pitch (Hawkins noted that it was '3 quarters of a note higher than the pitch of ye Organs now'). The disappearance of the lowest note of the old keyboards (GG) suggests that Byfield and Green lowered the pitch by the simple expedient of re-making the action so that the AA key sounded the old GG pipes, D sounded C, and so on. The GG key therefore became redundant, as James Ambrose noted in 1809, and the Ely organ acquired the curious compass of AA to d³.

Samuel Green returned .ID 1782 when he was paid ten guineas for cleaning and tuning (according to the 'Order Book) or for gilding (according to the accounts). Apart &om regular tuning by Humphrey Argent there are few references to the organ in the Cathedral records for the next fifty years. The tonal scheme, construction and winding arrangements must have seemed increasingly antiquated as the years went by, and this impression would have been reinforced by the absence of 'modern' features such as a swell organ, pedals, dulcianas and imitative registers.

It is, though, at this period that the organ's stop list is first recorded - in the notebook of Mr Henry Leffler. The notebook was begun c1800 and this is what Leffler has to say of Ely:

Two setts of keys - Great and Choir, AA (long octaves) to D.

Great (11 stops)

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Open Diapason (No.1) | 54 pipes |
| Open Diapason (No.2) | 54 pipes |
| Stopped Diapason | 54 pipes |
| Principal | 54 pipes |
| Flute | 54 pipes |
| Twelfth | 54 pipes |
| Fifteenth | 54 pipes |
| Sesquialtera, III Ranks | 162 pipes |
| Mixture II Ranks | 108 pipes |
| Trumpet | 54 pipes |

Choir (5 stops)

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Stopped Diapason | 54 pipes |
| Principa | 54 pipes |
| Flute | 54 pipes |
| Fifteenth | 54 pipes |
| Sesquialtera, III Ranks | 162 pipes |

The front the same as at St Andrew's, Holborn

Leffler's notes confirm that, with the exception of the Trumpet, the stop list had not changed since the 1690s.

Some letters survive in the Cathedral archives which cast light on the state of the organ in 1808-9. It would appear that Highrnore Skeats, the Organist, was agitating to have the instrument repaired, and was in contact with John Lincoln, a London organ-builder, and also James Ambrose of Dedham, Essex. Lincoln proposed to repair all the pipework, including the fronts, and to improve the staying of the Trumpet. His estimate of 'about £150 or £160' included '2 pair of new Bellows & 3 new Wind Trunks & New Keys the 3 Soundboards Must be new palleted & Leathrd With Movements Made free & Easy ...'. Ambrose noted that the wind was 'particularly unsteady' when full organ was used, and that the keys needed re-covering and re-centring 'to keep them steady'. His estimate was £98.

Warming to his theme in a later letter, he proposed an additional wind trunk 'on the bass .side of the wind Chest, as the bass have the most need of wind and at present there is but one trunk, and that on the treble side'. Clearly anxious to secure the work, Ambrose even promised to find a way of supplying the redundant GG key with pipes.

III

Ely and William Hill

Despite the shortcomings graphically described by John Lincoln and James Ambrose, it was to be another twenty years before the Chapter finally addressed the problem of their 'venerable but decayed' instrument. In June 1830 they ordered that 'an estimate be procured of the expense of putting the Organ in complete repair'. No reports have survived, but their conclusions can be inferred from the fact that in March 1831 the Chapter agreed that 'a new Organ be erected by Messrs Elliot & Hill according to their estimate at the expence of £600, and that Mr Novello be appointed to Superintend the Erection'.

Elliot & Hill were one of the two leading London organ-building firms of the day. They pioneered improved wind systems and pedal organs, and William Hill (1789--1870), the junior partner, experimented with pipe scales and reeds in an attempt to increase the power of English organs. At the time they secured the Ely contract, Elliot & Hill were building a mammoth organ for York Minster, and would shortly win the contract for another gigantic instrument in the new Town Hall in Birmingham (where, interestingly, the organist Vincent Novello was also retained as adviser).

Neither the contract for the new organ, nor any contemporary account of the stop list has been found, but it is possible to reconstruct the latter from later documentation.

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>Great Organ</u> (GG-f ³) | | <u>Choir Organ</u> (GG-f ³) | |
| Open Diapason | 8 | Stop Diapason | 8 |
| Open Diapason | 8 | Dulciana | 8 |
| Stop Diapason | 8 | Claribella (thro'out) | 8 |
| Principal | 4 | Principal | 4 |
| Twelfth | 2 ² / ₃ | Flute | 4 |
| Fifteenth | 2 | Fifteenth | 2 |
| Sesquialtera | III | | |
| Mixture | III | <u>Swell Organ</u> (c-f ³) | |
| Trumpet | 8 | Open Diapason | 8 |
| Clarion | 4 | Stop Diapason | 8 |
| | | Principal | 4 |
| Pedal Pipes (unisons) | 8 | Trumpet | 8 |
| | | Hautboy | 8 |

The new organ stood within the old cases, which must have been considerably deepened to accommodate it. The organ-builders were paid £615, and one Isaac Benton received £20 for carriage.

Maintenance of the organ was covered by irregular visits from Elliot & Hill at a fee of eight or ten guineas. Clearly, this was not adequate, and a Lay Clerk received an annual salary to attend to tuning. The first was George Woodhatch, who was paid £10 p.a. When he died in 1838, George Gray succeeded him and was reimbursed expenses 'incurred by him in London to qualify himself for tuning the Organ'. By the 1850s, the rapidly expanding railway network meant that local expedients could be discontinued,

and from 1852, Hill & Son (successors to Elliot & Hill) were paid an annual salary of sixteen guineas for maintenance and tuning.

Elliot & Hill's new organ did not remain long on Essex's screen. Less than twenty years after its installation it was dismantled to make way for Gilbert Scott's reordering of the eastern arm of the Cathedral, and the removal of the Choir to its three westernmost bays. With the approval of the ecclesiologists and the enthusiastic support of Dean Peacock and his ally Professor Willis, Scott decided to dispense with a solid screen or pulpitum and instead substituted a light wooden screen, thus revealing the splendours of the Choir and Presbytery to the viewer in the nave.

This left the problem of what to do about the organ. The Choir arcades were too low to allow the construction of a gallery behind the choirstalls. Scott's brilliant solution was to design a 'hanging' case after the manner of the late-mediaeval organ, in the nave of Strasbourg Cathedral. The console stood in a loft behind the stalls on the north side of the Choir, and Hill re-constructed the 1831 organ to suit its new location: the Choir was in the base of the Scott case with the Great Organ above; the Swell and Pedal Organs stood in the triforium, immediately behind the case. Rattee of Cambridge was the contractor and Mr Castell of London was responsible for the splendid diapering of the front pipes.

It had been hoped to modernise the 1831 organ to take account of the revolution in organ design that had taken place during the 1840s, of which William Hill was a leading pioneer. Hill's Letter Book records estimates for three schemes in June 1849. The most ambitious envisaged the introduction of a six-stop 'German' Pedal Organ, the reduction of the keyboards to the newly-fashionable C-compass, and the re-designing of the Great Organ. This was essentially the scheme adopted, though financial constraints meant that little new pipework could be installed - it was mainly 'prepared for'. Only one of the six Pedal stops could be afforded (the Open Diapason), although before the work was far advanced it was agreed to proceed with the Double Diapason, Quint and Posaune of the Great. The Choir Organ gained a new Open Diapason, probably in place of a Dulciana. In all, the work cost £665, and was finished during 1851.

The organ remained in this incomplete state until 1867 when Hill returned to make additions that went somewhat beyond the 1849 proposals. In particular, the Swell was reconstructed as a modern full-compass division, with a 16' reed chorus and a palette of accompanimental voices. A Harmonic Flute replaced the 1851 Quint on the Great and the Choir gained a Piccolo. The Pedal stops prepared for in 1851 were now added, together with a 32' Sub Bass stop, given by 'Goodwyn Archer, Esq. and certain other inhabitants of Ely', to whom the Dean and Chapter expressed their grateful thanks, and whose generosity was recorded on a brass plaque originally fixed to the pipes. The cost was £510, exclusive of the 32', and expenses were paid to choristers from Cambridge, Peterborough and Norwich who joined the Cathedral Choir at the opening on 24 June 1867.

The specification was as follows.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|----|
| <u>Great Organ (C-f³)</u> | | <u>Swell Organ (C-f¹)</u> | |
| Double Diapason (w. & m.) | 16 | Double Diapason (w. & m.) | 16 |
| Open Diapason | 8 | Open Diapason | 8 |
| Open Diapason | 8 | Stopped Diapason (wood) | 8 |
| Stopped Diapason (wood) | 8 | Salicional | 8 |
| Principal | 4 | Principal | 4 |
| Harmonic Flute | 4 | Lieblich Flute (metal) | 4 |
| Twelfth | 2 ^{2/3} | Fifteenth | 2 |
| Fifteenth | 2 | Mixture | IV |
| Sesquialtera | III | Double Trumpet | 16 |
| Mixture | III | Trumpet | 8 |
| Posaune | 8 | Oboe | 8 |
| Trumpet | 8 | Clarion | 4 |
| Clarion | 4 | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|---|
| <u>Pedal Organ (C-e¹)</u> | | <u>Choir Organ (C-f³)</u> | |
| Sub Bass (wood) | 32 | Open Diapason | 8 |
| Open Wood | 16 | Stopped Diapason (wood) | 8 |
| Open Metal | 16 | Dulciana | 8 |
| Bourdon (wood) | 16 | Principal | 4 |
| Octave | 8 | Flute (wood) | 4 |
| Mixture | III | Piccolo (wood) | 2 |
| Trombone | 16 | Clarinet | 8 |

| | |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Swell to Great | 3 composition pedals to Gt + Ped |
| Great to Pedal | 3 composition pedals to Sw |
| Swell to Pedal | 1 pedal, Great to Pedal |
| Choir to Pedal | |

A new bellows was added to wind the Pedal Organ, and Hill also provided new keyboards. Equal temperament was introduced. According to one commentator, the reeds were 'positively models of smoothness, equality, and power', and all the compound stops (mixtures) were 'very brilliant'.

Whatever the tonal qualities of the instrument, its unusual mechanical layout caused difficulties for the player. Apparently Dr Chipp 'used to complain severely of the great physical labour involved in playing the organ as it was' and in 1884 some attempt was made to ameliorate this by partially pneumaticising the action. (The work was undertaken by Hill & Son and paid for by the Walker Joy family the Reverend Frederick Walker Joy was then a minor canon at the Cathedral.) There were other problems to vex the player. Basil Harwood recalled that the keyboards were placed 'right back under the vaulting of the Triforium ... the sound of the Pedal Organ ... came perceptibly late to the player [and] in any piece of organ music with rapid movement ... one had to play without listening to the sound, for the sound was always behind the fingers'.

Small but significant tonal modifications were made in 1884. The Swell gained a Voix Celeste and Vox Humana, and a Viol di Gamba 4' displaced the Lieblich Flute. On the Choir, the Piccolo gave way to another Gamba 4', and the Pedal Mixture was replaced with a Clarion 8'.

IV

The Twentieth Century

By the early-1900s the state of the organ was giving rise to concern. No action was taken following a report by J.W. Walker & Sons in 1902, but in 1906 the Chapter decided 'that an effort must be made this year to raise a sum of money for the repair of the Cathedral Organ'. It was further agreed

That the primary object be to replace the present mechanism for playing the Organ by new and better mechanism and either to repair the present bellows or to substitute other apparatus for providing wind and that in connection with the former object the placing of the organist in a more suitable position for playing be considered.

Experience of organists no doubt lay behind a third resolution:

That proposals for enlarging the Organ be not entertained unless special gifts for this purpose of adequate amount are made.

An appeal was launched in October 1906. In the appeal leaflet, the Dean noted that the old organ was 'justly famous for the fine quality of its tone', but 'as compared with the great modern organs, it is deficient in range and variety of stops, while its mechanism is not only cumbrous and noisy but is so nearly worn out as to threaten a collapse'. He added that it was 'necessary to reconstruct the mechanism, to have the blowing done by an engine instead of by hand, to clean, revoice, and re-arrange the pipes, and to add a very few stops'.

In the event, the final statement proved wide of the mark. The Hill organ of 1867 had thirty-nine stops; the organ commissioned from Harrison & Harrison in 1906 had sixty-nine.

| <u>Pedal Organ (C-g¹)</u> | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|----------|
| 1. | Double Open Wood | (20 from no. 3) | wood 32 |
| 2. | Double Stopped Diapason | (from no. 24) | wood 32 |
| 3. | Open Wood | | wood 16 |
| 4. | Open Diapason | | metal 16 |
| 5. | Stopped Diapason | (from no. 24) | wood 16 |
| 6. | Sub Bass | | wood 16 |
| 7. | Violone | (from no. 59) | metal 16 |
| 8. | Salicional | (from no. 15) | metal 16 |
| 9. | Octave Wood | (20 from no. 3) | wood 8 |
| 10. | Violoncello | (from no. 59) | metal 8 |
| 11. | Flute | (20 from no. 6) | wood 8 |
| 12. | Bombardon | (20 from no. 13) | metal 32 |
| 13. | Ophicleide | | metal 16 |
| 14. | Posaune | (20 from no. 13) | metal 8 |
| | Choir to Pedal | | |
| | Great to Pedal | | |

Swell to Pedal
 Solo to Pedal
 Great & Pedal combinations coupled
 Pedal to Swell pistons

Choir Organ (C to c⁴)

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-------|-----|
| 15. Double Salicional | | metal | 16 |
| 16. Open Diapason | | metal | 8 |
| 17. Gedeckt | | wood | 8 |
| 18. Salicional | | metal | 8 |
| 19. Dulciana | | metal | 8 |
| 20. Flauto Traverso | | metal | 4 |
| 21. Salicet | | metal | 4 |
| 22. Dulcet | | metal | 2 |
| 23. Dulciana Mixture (12.19.22) | | metal | III |
| | Swell to Choir | | |
| | Solo to Choir | | |

Great Organ (C to c⁴)

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 24. Sub Bourdun | | wood | 32 |
| 25. Contra Clarabella | (19 from no. 6) | wood | 16 |
| 26. Gross Geigen | | metal | 16 |
| 27. Open Diapason I | | metal | 8 |
| 28. Open Diapason II | (20 from no. 4) | metal | 8 |
| 29. Open Diapason III | | metal | 8 |
| 30. Geigen | | metal | 8 |
| 31. Hohl Flöte | | wood | 8 |
| 32. Quint | | wood | 5 ¹ / ₃ |
| 33. Octave | | metal | 4 |
| 34. Geigen Principal | | metal | 4 |
| 35. Wald Flöte | | wood | 4 |
| 36. Octave Quint | | metal | 2 ² / ₃ |
| 37. Super Octave | | metal | 2 |
| 38. Harmonics (10.17.19.21.22) | | metal | V |
| 39. Mixture (15.19.22.26.29) | | metal | V |
| 40. Trombone | | metal | 16 |
| 41. Tromba | | metal | 8 |
| 42. Octave Tromba | | metal | 4 |
| | Reeds on Solo | | |
| | Choir to Great | | |
| | Swell to Great | | |
| | Solo to Great | | |

Swell Organ (C to c⁴)

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|-------|----|
| 43. Lieblich Bordun | | wood | 16 |
| 44. Lieblich Gedeckt | | wood | 8 |
| 45. Open Diapason | | metal | 8 |
| 46. Echo Gamba | | metal | 8 |
| 47. Vox Angelica (c) | | metal | 8 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 48. Principal | metal | 4 |
| 49. Lieblich Flöte | wood | 4 |
| 50. Fifteenth | metal | 2 |
| 51. Sesquialtera (17.19.22.26.29) | metal | V |
| 52. Oboe | metal | 8 |
| 53. Vox Humana | metal | 8 |
| Tremulant | | |
| 54. Double Trumpet | metal | 16 |
| 55. Trumpet | metal | 8 |
| 56. Horn | metal | 8 |
| 57. Horn Quint | metal | 5 ^{1/3} |
| 58. Clarion | metal | 4 |
| Octave | | |
| <u>Solo Organ</u> (C to c4) | | |
| 59. Contra Viola | metal | 16 |
| 60. Viole d'Orchestre | metal | 8 |
| 61. Viole Celeste | metal | 8 |
| 62. Viole Octaviante | metal | 4 |
| 63. Cornet de Violes (10.12.15) | metal | III |
| 64. Harmonic Flute | metal | 8 |
| 65. Concert Flute | metal | 4 |
| 66. Harmonic Piccolo | metal | 2 |
| 67. Clarinet* | metal | 16 |
| 68. Orchestral Hautboy | metal | 8 |
| Tremulant | | |
| 69. Tuba | metal | 8 |
| Octave | | |
| Sub Octave | | |
| Unison Off | | |
| Swell to Solo | | |

* a piston labelled 'Clarinet 8 ft' drew the Clarinet 16' with the Octave coupler and Unison Off

Accessories

7 combination pedals to Pedal Organ

5 combination pistons each to Choir and Swell organs

6 combination pistons each to Great and Solo Organs

1 patent adjustable combination piston to each manual department

1 patent adjustable combination piston to the Pedal Organ

2 reversible pistons: Great to Pedal, Swell to Great

1 reversible pedal: Great to Pedal

2 balanced crescendo pedals to Swell and Solo Organs

The old organ remained in use until 28 October 1907 and the new instrument was inaugurated on 13 October 1908. The choirs of Trinity and St John's Colleges, Cambridge joined the Cathedral Choir at Evensong, and Sir Walter Parratt gave an

evening recital which included Bach's Toccata in C major, the Largo from Dvorak's 'New World' Symphony, and the first movement of Basil Harwood's Sonata in C sharp minor.

Despite the fact that much of the pipework of the old Hill organ had been incorporated, Harrison's was to all intents and purposes a new instrument. It necessarily occupied a much greater space than its predecessor. The largest of the 32' Pedal pipes were laid horizontally in the north transept gallery, and the Tuba was located there too, with the intention (presumably) that it should make some impact in the Octagon and Nave. The remainder of the organ occupied the North Triforium of the Choir, although one of the Great soundboards remained in the upper part of the Scott case. The new console was brought forward as far as possible, and the player now faced north rather than (as before) south.

Harrison overcame the difficulties of the sprawling location by using tubular pneumatic action for the Great, Swell and two Pedal stops; the rest of the Pedal, together with the Choir and Solo Organs, was on electro-pneumatic action.

For the first time, the Ely organ was mechanically blown. A gas engine was installed in a small shed outside the North Choir aisle, and the main trunking was run up the external Choir wall.

The initial contract was for work costing £1660. The Solo Organ could not be afforded until 1910 when a Mr Harlock offered to pay for the pipework if the Dean and Chapter would meet the remainder of the total cost of £500. In 1913 Mr Harlock offered two further stops 'to complete the organ' and these were installed the following year.

Harrison's work at Ely was highly influential. It established the pattern for other English cathedral organs until the 1950s, and its mechanism and console set a standard against which all others were measured. With its massive Great flue chorus, opaque yet powerful chorus reeds, and unambiguously orchestral Solo division, it defined a whole generation of instruments.

The next fifty years in the organ's history were uneventful. There were problems with the gas engine in 1919 and Noel Ponsonby's chamber organ was moved into the Presbytery while repairs were carried out at a cost of £162. The engine continued to prove unreliable and, moreover, its fumes did serious damage to the pneumatic motors. Eventually, in 1931, it was replaced with a Discus electric blower, and Harrison & Harrison cleaned and repaired the organ. It was probably at this time that the Tuba was moved from the North Transept gallery to the westernmost bay of the North Choir triforium.

Nave services remained a problem. In 1938 Dean Blackburne commented that 'it seems to most of us that, until we can place a second organ in the cathedral, it will be impossible to conduct services in the nave'. That desirable objective eluded the cathedral for many years.

By the 1950s, taste was changing, and under the direction of Michael Howard the Ely Choir played a significant role in the rediscovery and performance of the earlier choral repertoire. The 1908 organ was ill-adapted to the accompaniment of music pre-dating the nineteenth century, and Howard instigated some modifications to the Choir Organ. In 1956, the Flauto Traverso was transposed to 2' pitch; the Salicet became a Nazard and the Dulcet a Tierce.

A few years later, Howard's successor, Arthur Wills, persuaded the Dean and Chapter to consider a report on the state of the organ. The pipes and soundboards had been found to be in good condition, but the leatherwork had deteriorated badly and the mechanism was judged 'obsolete'. Restoration to 1908 would cost £10-15,000, whilst a rebuild would be at least £20,000.

Nothing was done at this stage, though in 1962 repairs were carried out at a cost of £2,500. Plans to relocate the console at floor level had to be abandoned for financial reasons, but the Great and Pedal reeds were revoiced on lighter pressures, and the Solo strings, the Hohl Flöte and the Vox Humana were also revoiced.

Over the next few years, occasional expenditure on repairs preserved the organ from extensive failure, but it was all too clear that major work could not be postponed indefinitely. This began in 1974 when Harrison & Harrison were commissioned to undertake a reconstruction of the now historic instrument of 1908.

Writing of the work, Dr Wills described the objective as being 'an eclectic rather than an historically restrictive instrument'. With his collaborator, Cecil Clutton, he sought to increase the versatility of the organ by modifying some of its Edwardian characteristics, and introducing voices and inter-manual balances that would enable it 'to deal with as many schools of composition as possible'. So, the Great and Pedal reeds were remodelled using open shallots and lower wind pressures, and the upperwork was augmented or revised along the lines of classical flue choruses. With a particular eye to the French repertoire, the Great acquired a 5-rank Comet and a Double Tierce to complete the 16' mutation series. The Pedal, too, acquired new upperwork on a separate soundboard, and the existing pipework of the Choir Organ was brightened up. Most significantly of all, a new Positive Organ was fitted into the lower part of the Scott case; it formed a sprightly secondary division to complement the Great, but also made a telling contribution to the Full Organ, assisting the projection of sound into the building. The revoiced Tuba (now Fanfare Trumpet) had little difficulty in making its presence felt.

The work included the complete renovation of the instrument, with the conversion of the actions and console mechanism to electro-pneumatic action (though the two new soundboards - Positive and Pedal upperwork - had electro-magnetic actions). The console was rebuilt and equipped with the full range of modern accessories.

To celebrate the completion of the reconstruction an Organ Festival was held in the summer of 1976, including recitals by George Thalben Ball, Peter Hurford and Frederick Swann. Arthur Wills appeared as soloist in three organ concerti (by Handel, Poulenc and Wills) in an orchestral concert directed by Richard Hickox.

V

Into the Twentieth Century

The organ as rebuilt in 1974-6 served well for two decades. But the progress of the Great Restoration (1986-2000) caused major disruption to the use of the Cathedral, and - more significantly for the organ - unavoidably created a great deal of dust and dirt. When work on the fabric reached the North Choir triforium it became essential to dismantle the organ in its entirety to make way for the stonemasons and carpenters; shortly after Easter 1999 a bridge was built across the Choir, and the pipework and most of the components of the organ were moved into the South triforium. Other parts were sent to Durham for renovation. The instrument was reassembled in 2000 and the work was completed in the early part of 2001. As well as cleaning and renovation, the opportunity was taken to make some tonal modifications suggested by the experience of using the organ over the course of the previous twenty years.

The revised specification was evolved in discussions between the builders (Harrison & Harrison), the Organist (Paul Trepte) and the advisers to the Dean and Chapter (Patrick Russill and Nicholas Thistlethwaite).

A major part of the project was the renovation of the soundboards, actions and wind system.. The majority of the soundboards date from 1908; they were generally in good condition, and were simply opened up, cleaned, and checked over. Two (the Solo and one of the Great soundboards) required workshop attention and were returned to Durham for re-palleting.

The Swell soundboards dated from the Hill work of 1867. They were in poor condition and had been altered on various occasions to accommodate revised stop lists. The compass in 1867 was only 54 notes and so the work of 1908 had necessitated the unwelcome expedient of top-note chests. It was therefore decided to make new soundboards incorporating a 61-note compass and a more logical layout for the pipework (the Vox Humana, for example, no longer stands at the back of the box but is at the front of the low-pressure soundboard).

Another new slider soundboard was provided for the Great reeds: the old soundboard required major overhaul and was too small to accommodate the new pipework.

The organ actions were completely overhauled and regulated - this included the re-leathering of the primary motors and the drawstop slider machines. A new electro-pneumatic action was provided for the Swell soundboard, and the electro-magnetic actions of the Pedal and Positive slider chests were converted to electro-pneumatic action.

The console was overhauled and the piston system up-graded. Reversible toe pistons were added for the 32' and 16' reeds, the manual to pedal couplers were altered so that they only couple their 'home' departments, and a drawstop, 'Manuals I and II Exchange', was fitted.

Eight of the fourteen reservoirs required re-leathering (largely due to the unusually damp conditions which prevailed in the Cathedral in winter before 1990), and all the wind trunking was re-bedded and patched as necessary.

Turning to the tonal modifications, the objective of the scheme was to improve the blend and cohesion of reeds and fluework, and to minimise the stylistic differences between the upperwork of 1975 and the individual registers of the flue choruses, most of which had been little altered since 1908. Attention was also needed to the musical balance of the various departments, and to consistency of voicing throughout the instrument. A number of registers had been much altered over the years and were not performing well: it was agreed to replace them.

The most significant change on the Great Organ was the replacement of the three chorus: reeds. Some of the resonators and boots were Hill, some were Harrison. The shallots and tongues dated from 1975. The Hill pipework had been rescaled and revoiced in 1908; all the stops had been re-modelled in 1975. It was felt that further alteration was undesirable, and the only way to achieve better blend and a more conventional 'English' sound was to replace the old stops. This has been done. The three reeds, of generous scale and fitted with English shallots, stand prominently on a new slider soundboard in the second bay of the triforium from whence they contribute materially to the musical splendour of the Great Organ.

In the next bay west stands the former Fanfare Trumpet (1975) now restored to its 1908 calling as a Tuba. Sharing its new slider chest is an Orchestral Trumpet, intended to be both tonally distinct from, and yet an effective partner for, the Tuba on those occasions when the organ needs to make its presence felt in a packed cathedral.

Of the other reeds, all have been repaired as necessary, and the Cremona and Vox Humana have been replaced.

All the mixture work has been reviewed and the compositions revised with the intention of lowering the pitches somewhat in the treble to improve blend. The Swell Sharp Mixture IV (26.29.33.36) was particularly unsuccessful and seldom used; it has been removed. However, the Swell has acquired a new Echo Comet (12.17) which will be useful in a wide range of repertoire.

The Great Comet was not felt to be essential to the tonal scheme, especially as the Positive offers the possibility of a cornet decompose, and nor was it a particularly attractive or authentic sound. It has made way for a new Sesquialtera (17.19.22) which, with its characteristic tierce, will offer an additional colour to the flue chorus. The Great wind pressures (fluework) have been returned to their 1908 levels.

At the other end of the pitch spectrum, the 32' Sub Bourdon has again been made available on the Great.

On the Pedal, the reeds have been revoiced along similar lines to the new Great reeds, whilst the impact of the upperwork has been improved by increasing the wind pressure.

Finally, the Positive Organ. In the 1975 scheme, this added an important new dimension to the organ's tonal resources, enabling players to tackle parts of the solo repertoire which had been scarcely known and less appreciated in 1908. All the pipework has been regulated or revoiced as necessary to achieve consistency of approach and to improve blend with the rest of the instrument.

The revised specification follows

Pedal Organ (C-g¹)

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|----|--------------|
| 1. Double Open Wood | (from no. 3) | 32 | 1908 |
| 2. Sub Bourdon | (from no. 49) | 32 | |
| 3. Open Wood | | 16 | 1851 |
| 4. Open Diapason | (from no. 50) | 16 | |
| 5. Bourdon | | 16 | 1867 |
| 6. Violone | (from no. 69) | 16 | |
| 7. Principal | | 8 | 1975 |
| 8. Flute | (from no. 5) | 8 | 1908 |
| 9. Violoncello | (from no. 69) | 8 | |
| 10. Fifteenth | | 4 | 1975 |
| 11. Octave Flute | (from no. 5) | 4 | 1975 |
| 12. Mixture (19.22.26.29) | | N | 1975 |
| 13. Bombardon | (from no. 14) | 32 | 1908* |
| 14. Bombarde | | 16 | 1867 & 1908* |
| 15. Trumpet | (from no. 14) | 8 | 1908* |

Positive to Pedal

Great to Pedal

Swell to Pedal

Solo to Pedal

Great and Pedal combinations coupled

Pedal to Swell pistons

Swell on General foot pistons

Choir Organ (C_c⁴)

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|-----|-------------|
| 16. Open Diapason | | 8 | 1831 |
| 17. Gedackt | | 8 | 1851 & 1908 |
| 18. Fiffaro | | 8 | 1867 |
| 19. Unda Maris | | 8 | 1851 |
| 20. Principai | | 4 | 1884 |
| 21. Flauto Traverso | | 4 | 1867 |
| 22. Fifteenth | | 2 | 1908 |
| 23. Flautino | | 1 | 1975 |
| 24. Mixture (19.22.26) | | III | 1908 |
| 25. Cremona | | 8 | 2001 |

Tremulant

Choir on Swell

Swell Organ (C_c⁴)

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|----|-------------|
| 26. Bourdon | | 16 | 1867 |
| 27. Open Diapason | | 8 | 1867 |
| 28. Gedackt | | 8 | 1867 & 1908 |
| 29. Echo Gamba | | 8 | 1908 |
| 30. Vox Angelica (c) | | 8 | 1908 |
| 31. Principal | | 4 | 1867 |
| 32. Nason Flute | | 4 | 1831 |
| 33. Fifteenth | | 2 | 1867 |
| 34. Echo Cornet (12.17) | | II | 2001 |

| | | |
|------------------------------|----|-------------|
| 35. Mixture (12.19.22.26.29) | V | various |
| 36. Oboe | 8 | 1867 |
| 37. Vox Humana | 8 | 2001 |
| 38. Double Trumpet | 16 | 1867 & 1908 |
| 39. Trumpet | 8 | 1867 & 1908 |
| 40. Clarion | 4 | 1867 & 1908 |

Octave
Solo to Swell

Positive Organ (C-c⁴)

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------|
| 41. Chimney Flute | 8 | 1975 |
| 42. Principal | 4 | 1975 |
| 43. Spitzflute | 4 | 1975 |
| 44. Nazard | 2 ^{2/3} | 1975 |
| 45. Blockflute | 2 | 1975 |
| 46. Tierce | 1 ^{3/5} | 1975 |
| 47. Larigot | 1 ^{1/3} | 1975 |
| 48. Sharp Mixture (19.22.26.29) | III | 1975 |

Swell to Positive
Solo to Positive

Great Organ (C_c⁴)

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 49. Sub Bourdon | 32 | 1867 & 1908 |
| 50. Double Diapason | 16 | 1851 |
| 51. Bourdon | 16 | 1908 |
| 52. Large Open Diapason | 8 | 1908 |
| 53. Small Open Diapason | 8 | 1831 |
| 54. Hohl Flute | 8 | 1908 |
| 55. Salicional | 8 | 1867 |
| 56. Quint | 5 ^{1/3} | 1851 & 1908* |
| 57. Octave | 4 | 1908 |
| 58. Principal | 4 | 1867 |
| 59. Wald Flute | 4 | 1908 |
| 60. Double Tierce | 3 ^{1/5} | 1908 & 1975 |
| 61. Twelfth | 2 ^{2/3} | 1831 |
| 62. Fifteenth | 2 | 1908 |
| 63. Sesquialtera | III | 2001 |
| 64. Fourniture | V | 1908, 1975, 2001 |
| 65. Cymbale | V | 1975 & 2001 |
| 66. Trombone | 16 | 2001 |
| 67. Trumpet | 8 | 2001 |
| 68. Clarion | 4 | 2001 |

Positive to Great
Swell to Great
Solo to Great
Great Reeds on Pedal
Great Reeds on Solo

Solo Organ (C_c⁴)

| | | |
|-----------------------|----|------|
| 69. Contra Viola | 16 | 1908 |
| 70. Viole d'Orchestre | 8 | 1908 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----|-------|
| 71. Virole Celeste | | 8 | 1908 |
| 72. Virole Octavante | | 4 | 1908 |
| 73. Comet de Violes | (10.12.15) | III | 1908 |
| 74. Harmonic Flute | | 8 | 1908 |
| 75. Concert Flute | | 4 | 1908 |
| 76. Clarinet | | 16 | 1908 |
| 77. Orchestral Hautboy | | 8 | 1908 |
| 78. Cor Anglais | | 8 | 1908 |
| 79. Tuba (unenclosed) | | 8 | 1908* |
| 80. Orchestral Trumpet (unenclosed) | | 8 | 2001 |
| | Octave | | |
| | Sub Octave | | |
| | Unison Off | | |
| | Swell to Solo | | |

Accessories

8 foot pistons to Pedal Organ

10 thumb pistons to Positive & Choir Organs

8 thumb pistons to Great Organ

8 thumb pistons to Swell Organ

6 thumb pistons to Solo Organ

8 general pistons (duplicated by foot pistons)

Capture system with 8 divisional and 128 general memories 9 reversible pistons for couplers

2 reversible foot pistons to Great to pedal, and Swell to Great 2 reversible foot pistons to Pedal 32' and 16' reeds

Cancel piston to Positive Organ

General cancel piston

Manual I and II Exchange (by drawstop)

Balanced expression pedals to Swell and Solo Organs

The dates recorded beside stop names indicate the likely date of origin of the majority of pipework in the register. All the pipework predating 1908 has been significantly altered since it was made. and so the information is of archaeological. rather than musical interest. An asterisk () indicates particularly radical remodelling.*

Acknowledgements

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- 1 See, Peter Williams, *The Organ in Western Culture. 750-1250*. (Cambridge, 1993): 187-203.
- 2 Ibid: 223-4.
- 3 Stephen Bicknell, *The History of the English Organ*, (Cambridge, 1996): 17-20.
- 4 J. Bentham. *The History and Antiquities of the Cathedral and Conventual Church of Ely*, (2nd edition, 1812): 225.
- 5 Ian Payne, *The provision and practice of sacred music at Cambridge colleges and selected cathedrals, c1547-1646*. (New York & London, 1993): 87-92. All the citations are from the Treasurer's accounts, 1604-67 (EDC 3/1/2).
- 6 EDC 3/1/2: 1660-1, Domestic Expenses.
- 7 Idem.
- 8 EDC 3/1/2: 1663-4.
- 9 EDC 2/2A/2 (1660-1729); 14 June 1682: 159.
- 10 EDC 3/1/4: 1682-3.
- 11 EDC 3/114: 1683-4, 1684-5; EDC 3/7/1.
- 12 See, EDC 3/1/4: 1688-9 - payment of £30 to Gerard Smith, 'the Organ-maker'.
- 13 EDC 10/12/??
- 14 EDC 3/1/4: 1688-9, 1689-90.
- 15 EDC 10/12. The articles of agreement are transcribed in: Jose Hopkins, 'Organs in Ely Cathedral before 1851', in, *BIOS Journal*, 21 (1997): 13-15.
- 16 EDC 10/12.
- 17 EDC 2/2A/2: 203 (14 June, 1693).
- 18 Reginald Gibbon, 'John Lambe, Dean of Ely, 1693-1708', in *The Church Quarterly Review*, vol. 119(1934-5): 232.
- 19 EDC 3/1/4-7: passim.
- 20 EDC 3/1/6: 1778-9; EDC 2/2A/4: 128 (14 June 1787); 234 (25 November, 1800).
- 21 EDC 4/5/54 (copy of Chapter Order, 25 november 1768).
- 22 Hopkins, loc. cit: 7-9, 17-19.
- 23 EDC 4/5/54.
- 24 The accounts record the payment of £100 to an unnamed organ-builder during 1769-70 (EDC 3/1/6).
- 25 The source is C.W. Stubbs, *Ely Cathedral Handbook*, (Ely, 1904): 260.
- 26 EDC 4/5/25 (James Ambrose to [H. Skeats], 10 May 1809).
- 27 EDC 2/2A/4: 102A (25 November, 1782); EDC 3/1/6: 1781-2.
- 28 C.W. Pearce, *Notes on English Organs*, (London, 1912): 65.
- 29 EDC 4/5/21-25.
- 30 EDC 4/5/23 (Lincoln to the Dean & Chapter, 7 January 1808).
- 31 EDC 4/5/21 (Ambrose to Skeats, undated).
- 32 EDC 4/5/24 (Ambrose to Skeats, 18 November 1808); 4/5/25 (Ambrose to Skeats, 10 May 1809).
- 33 W.E. Dickson, *Fifty Years of Church Music*, (Ely, 1894): 53.
- 34 EDC 2/2A/5: 277 (14 June, 1830); 284 (4 March, 1831).
- 35 The stop list is derived from entries in the Hill Letter Book (1838-61) concerning later proposals for alterations, and from the Sperling Notebooks, vol. 2: 36 (BL, Dept of Manuscripts: on loan from RCO). There may have been spare slides on both Great and Choir; the Great may have had a Flute 4', but it seems there was

no reed on the Choir, because Hill estimated to add a Cremona in 1838 (Letter Book: 12).

36 See, Hopkins: 18-19, where the dimensions of the old cases are given derived from Essex's drawings.

37 EDC 3/1/8: 1830-1.

38 EDC 3/1/8-9: passim.

39 The fate of the old case is obscure, although there is evidence that parts of it survived in the Cathedral until the mid-twentieth century; according to Dean Hankey, writing in 1952, 'columns from the old organ case' were incorporated in the war memorial panelling beneath the east window. (Friends of Ely Cathedral, *Ninth Annual Report* (1952): 9). On 17 March 1934 the Chapter accepted an offer of £12 from a Mr M. Talbot of Canterbury 'for the old Organ case' (EDC 2/2A/10: 22); it is not clear whether this was the remains of the old Smith case, or part of some other organ.

40 Hill Letter Book (1838-61): 243, 248.

41 EDC 2/2A77: 85 (14 June 1867).

42 EDC 3/1/10: 1867.

43 Hill Estimate Book (1861-77): 30-1; *Choir and Musical Record*, vol. 5 (1867): 385.

44 *Choir and Musical Record*, loc cit.

45 Harvey Goodwin, *Ely Gossip*, (Ely 1892): 73.

46 EDC 2/2A/7: 303,309 (14 June and 25 November 1884).

47 EDC 14/26 (reminiscences of Basil Harwood and others).

48 The specification is given in, Marmaduke Conway, 'The Organ at Ely Cathedral', in, *The Organ*, vol. 11(1932): 194.

49 EDC 2/2A/8: 154, 157,219 (17 May and 14 June 1902; 14 June 1906).

50 EDC 4/5/32 (Ely Cathedral Organ Fund).

51 EDC 2/2A/8: 233, 281, 327, 335 (14 June 1907; 28 July" 1910; 25 November 1913; 15 June 1914)

52 EDC 2/2A/9: 74, 76,94 (8 August and 8 October 1919; 9 September 1920).

53 Ibid. 317, 329 (28 July and 25 November 1931); Marmaduke Conway, 'The Organ at Ely Cathedral', in, *The Organ*, vol. 11 (1932): 197.

54 Friends of Ely Cathedral, *Second Annual Report*, (1938): 7.

55 EDC 2/2A/11: 110 (31 December 1960).

56 Ibid. 162 (20 January 1962); Laurence Elvin, *The Harrison Story*, (Lincoln 1973): 115.

THE ORGANISTS FROM 1541 **by W ATKINS SHAW**

This section has been contributed in memory of BERNARD CLINTON PAWLEY, sometime canon of Ely Cathedral, afterwards canon of St. Paul's Cathedral and Archdeacon of Canterbury. Interested readers are referred to the author's large work, *The Succession of Organists in the Cathedrals of England of Wales* (Clarendon Press, 1991) for documentation and other details.

In the Middle Ages, Ely Cathedral, like certain others in England, was not only a cathedral, but also a monastic church - a cathedral priory. As such, it fell to the Crown under the Act of Suppression of 1539, but in 1541 was re-founded by Henry VIII (not over-generously) purely as a cathedral. Under the new constitutional arrangements then ordained, the duty of organist was laid on the master of the choristers.

1541-1542: WILLIAM SMITH. In a list of the first members of the reconstituted cathedral body, William Smith 'the elder' was named as master of the choristers (and so he would be organist). He had been cantor of the former priory, and, as his tenure was brief, he may not have been a young man.

1542-1561: CHRISTOPHER TYE. Before coming to Ely, Tye had taken the Cambridge degree of Mus.B. in 1536, and the name 'Christopher Tye' is found among the lay clerks of King's College in 1537-8-9. Though not attested by any official document, there is no reason to doubt his own assertion on the title page of his *Actes of the Apostles* (1553) to the effect that he was in the choir of the Chapel Royal of Edward VI, probably continuing into the reign of Elizabeth, and in all likelihood serving turns as organist there. Such appointments at that time were compatible with posts elsewhere. In 1545 he proceeded Doctor of Music at Cambridge, and in 1548 thought it worthwhile to incorporate as such at Oxford. (When interpreting biographies it should be borne in mind that these early degrees in music involved only the most transient relationship with a university. Regular examinations were not imposed until 1857 at Cambridge and 1862 at Oxford.)

In his historical play, *When you see me* (1605), Samuel Rowley puts into the mouth of Edward VI some imagined words of Henry VIII, thus:

I oft have. heard my Father merrily speak
In your high praise, and thus his Highness saith,
England, one God, one truth, one Doctor hath
For music's art, and that is Doctor Tye,
Admired for skill in music's harmony.

peevish and humoursome man', and that when rebuked for his organ playing by Queen Elizabeth 'sent word to her that her ears were out of tune'. But Wood was writing more than a century after Tye's death.

Tye was paid as master of the choristers and organist of Ely Cathedral up to March 1561. But late in 1560, having been ordained deacon and priest in that year, he became rector of Doddington-cum-Marche, Isle of Ely, a living which in March 1573 was reported to be vacant following his death.

As a composer he bestrides the religious changes of his day. He wrote (perhaps without a view to practical performance) elaborate music to Latin texts, and then shorter, simpler works, in accordance with reformist principles, to English words. He also set, in straightforward, tuneful fashion, 14 chapters of a rhyming version of the Acts of the Apostles. One verse from this was adapted in the 19th century to form an attractive short anthem, *O come, ye servants of the Lord*.

1561(or2)-1566: ROBERT WHITE (d. 1574). At the time of his appointment White (or Whyte, and other varieties of spelling) already held the Cambridge degree of Mus.B. There are reliable indications that he married the daughter of his predecessor. There are also strong grounds for concluding that he was the Robert White who became organist of Westminster Abbey in 1570, having in the meantime been organist of Chester Cathedral.

In his day he was rated one of the leading English composers. Some MS partbooks now at Christ Church, Oxford dated about 1581 contain this tribute.

Maxima musarum nostrarum gloria White'
Tu peris, actemum sed tua musa manet.

(Thou, O White, greatest glory of our muses, dost perish, but thy muse endureth for ever). Like Tye he composed much to Latin texts, but there is only one English anthem, *Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle*, that can be ascribed to him without doubt, though certain Latin works were adapted to English words at an early date.

1566-1570: JOHN FARRANT. Details of Farrant's appointment disclose that his duties included teaching the boys not only singing but also instrumental music. Assuming, as seems reasonable, that the name John Farrant found in succeeding years elsewhere refers to one and the same person, he subsequently became organist of Bristol, Salisbury, and Hereford Cathedrals, and then vicar choral in holy orders of Wells Cathedral. It is even possible that he lived to a great age as organist of Christ's Hospital, London, dying in 1634. At Salisbury he achieved the doubtful distinction of being the only cathedral organist ever to have attempted to murder his dean, leaving Evensong to go to the deanery for the purpose (taking a choirboy with him!), and then returning to the service. His son, John Farrant the younger, became organist of Salisbury Cathedral.

The son, John Farrant the younger, became organist of Salisbury Cathedral. The well known Service in D minor may perhaps be the work of the younger rather than the older man.

1571-1579 WILLIAM FOX. A useful short anthem by Fox, *Teach me thy way, O Lord*, recovered from 17th-century MSS still belonging to Ely Cathedral, continues to find a place in the repertory of church music.

1580-1610: GEORGE BARCROFT. Barcroft was unusual among cathedral musicians of this early date in being a Bachelor of Arts, as described in his patent of appointment. During his time at Ely he became also a minor canon.

1610-1641: JOHN AMNER (d. 1641). Amner was an Ely man by birth. Like Barcroft, he became ordained, and from 1617 he was also a minor canon. He took the Oxford

degree of Bachelor of Music in 1613, incorporating at Cambridge in 1640. In 1615 he published *Sacred Hymnes ... for Voyces* and *Vyols* from which a beautiful Christmas item, *O ye little flock*, has been revived in recent years. One of his two surviving Morning, Communion, and Evening Services became known as *Cesar's Service*, so called after the Dean of Ely, 161436. Amner was buried at the Cathedral.

1641-1662: ROBERT CLAXTON (d. 1668). Before becoming master of the choristers and organist Claxton had been a lay clerk from 1624, and from 1636 he also taught the choristers to play the viols. His term of office was interrupted by the abolition of the Book of Common Prayer and of cathedral bodies by the Long Parliament; but he remained in occupation of his house, and lived to resume his cathedral work after the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. He retired, probably on account of ill-health, at Christmas 1662.

1663-1682: JOHN FERRABOSCO (b. 1626; d. 1682). The Ferrabosco family came from Bologna, and John Ferrabosco's father and grandfather had been musicians at the courts of Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I. A few years after his appointment at Ely the duties of master of the choristers were divorced from those of the organist, who was partially recompensed for the consequential drop in salary by the sinecure post of cook. In 1671 Charles II, perhaps recollecting the family's royal service, directed the University of Cambridge to grant him the degree of Mus.B. where upon the Dean and Chapter gave him £3 'for his degree'. On his death he was buried at the expense of the cathedral. The Cathedral MSS contain many compositions by him, but these have not survived in use. In the short interval before the arrival of his successor the youthful *Thomas Bullis* acted as organist, for which the Chapter made him a present of £5, with an additional £5 to his father, also Thomas Bullis.

1682-1729: JAMES HAWKINS (d. 1729). Hawkins seems to have had some early connection with St. John's College, Cambridge, perhaps as chorister, then as organist. In 1719, fairly late in life, he took the Cambridge degree of Mus.B. On his appointment at Ely the duties of master of the choristers and organist were once more combined. He developed a teaching practice at Bury St. Edmund's and the Chapter allowed him three days a fortnight for this, though after many years it was necessary to remind him that he must not thereby neglect his duty to instruct the choristers. He seems also to have been zealous in extending the repertory by copying out music for that purpose, and the Chapter eventually refused to settle any bills for this unless approved beforehand. As a composer himself, he is now forgotten. But he also transcribed a good deal of earlier and contemporary music as a private interest, some of which copies the Cathedral now possesses.

He evidently had non-juring sympathies, (i.e., with those who felt they could not conscientiously swear allegiance to the Hanoverian dynasty). He did not go so far as to sacrifice his cathedral post for them, but he inscribed an anthem, *Behold, O God, our defender* (the autograph MS of which is at the Royal College of Music), to 'the very Revnd. Mr. Tomkinson and the rest of the Great, Good, and Just Nonjurors of St. John's College in Cambridge'. His tombstone, which may be found in the south transept, refers to his professional eminence and his cheerful, friendly manner. His son, also named James, became organist of Peterborough Cathedral.

1729-1762: THOMAS KEMPTON (b. 1702; d. 1762). Little is known of Kempton, an Ely man by birth, who is the composer of a demure Evening Service in B flat, not

altogether grammatical, which was amended and revived in the 19th century by Sir Frederick Ouseley, and is still occasionally to be heard. Members of the Kempton family are still living in Ely.

In 1737 a bedesman's place was allotted to the Cathedral organist as a means of augmenting his stipend, an arrangement which continued until the death of Robert Janes.

1762-1768: JOHN ELBONN (d. 1768). A plaque in memory of Elbonn may be seen on the external wall of the Lady Chapel.

1768-1774: DAVID WOOD. This is probably the David Wood who became a gentleman of the Chapel Royal in April 1774 and died in London in 1786.

1774-1777: JAMES RODGERS. Rodgers was appointed following the novel step of public advertisements of the vacancy in newspapers in Cambridge and London. Candidates were required to produce a testimonial of 'good life and conversation'. He left Ely for Peterborough Cathedral.

1777-1778: RICHARD LANGDON (d. 1803). Named in the Ely Cathedral minutes simply as 'Mr. Langdon', this must be the Richard Langdon who had been organist of Exeter Cathedral from 1753. He belonged to a Family connected for many years with that Cathedral. He took the Oxford degree of B.Mus. in 1761. So far as Ely is concerned, he was a mere bird of passage, becoming organist of Bristol Cathedral in 1778 and of Armagh Cathedral in 1782. He retired to Exeter.

He wrote songs, glees, and harpsichord sonatas, and published an anthology of other composers' works under the title of *Divine Harmony* (1774). He is remembered now only for a double chant in F, often associated with Benedictus Dominus.

1778-1803: HIGHMORE SKEATS (I) (d. 1831). Skeats is said to have been a chorister of Exeter Cathedral, presumably under Langdon. His father was a lay vicar of Salisbury Cathedral. He was appointed organist of Canterbury Cathedral in Nov. 1803, and remained there until his death. [The implication of a former booklet on the organs and organists of Ely Cathedral to the effect that he held the degree of Mus.D. is without foundation.]

1803-1830: HIGHMORE SKEATS (II) (b. c.1787; d. 1835). The son of his predecessor, Skeats, then aged only about 17, seems to have slipped directly into his father's place, and the minute of his appointment of November 1804 at the annual 'audit' must be regarded as formalising an existing situation. He left Ely to become organist of St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, and died there at the early age of 48. His daughter became the first wife of his successor at Windsor, G. J. (afterwards Sir George) Elvey. An excellent double chant in E is all that now survives in use of his work as a composer.

By the end of his time at Ely the organ which he had to play (rebuilt 60 years earlier; see p.8) was in a deplorable condition, some of the front pipes having to be kept in position by cords.

1830-66: ROBERT JANES (b. 1806; d. 1866). Janes was a chorister of Dulwich College and an articled pupil of Zechariah Buck, a famous trainer of choirboys and

organist of Norwich Cathedral. It was shortly after his arrival at Ely that the 'dangerously crazy' organ was replaced. He enjoyed a large and wide-ranging teaching practice, travelling on horseback with lamps attached to his saddle for night journeys.

1866-86: EDMUND THOMAS CHIPP (b. 1823; d. 1886). To his work at Ely Chipp brought a more varied experience than any of his predecessors. After being a chorister of the Chapel Royal he worked for nearly 20 years in London as organist of various churches and violinist in leading orchestras.

He took the Cambridge degrees of Mus.B. and Mus.D. (non-resident) in 1859 and 1860. In 1862 he became organist of the Ulster Hall and St. George's Church, Belfast. In 1866 for a few months before coming to Ely he very briefly held posts in Dundee and Edinburgh. Besides a quantity of church music now forgotten, Chipp wrote an oratorio, *Job*, in the Victorian English tradition.

1887-1892: BASIL HARWOOD (b. 1859; d. 1949). Educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Oxford (B.Mus., MA), Harwood is an early example of a newer type of cathedral organist with public school and 'Oxbridge' background.

Furthermore, he went abroad to study composition at the Leipzig Conservatory. Before appointment to Ely Cathedral he was organist of St. Barnabas', Pimlico, London. He left Ely to become organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and took the Oxford degree of D.Mus. in 1896. He retired into private life at an early age in 1909. As a composer, Harwood made durable contributions to English church music, notably by his Service in A flat, and a fine anthem for All Saints' Day, *O how glorious is the kingdom*. At a time when English compositions for the organ were largely unadventurous, he struck out more boldly with a Sonata in C sharp minor, and two pieces named Dithyramb and Paean. Two hymn tunes, *Luckington* (to 'Let all the world in every comer sing') and *Thornbury* (to 'Thy hand, O God, hast guided'), are splendid contributions to the congregational repertory.

1892-1898: THOMAS TERTIUS NOBLE (b. 1867; d.1953). After training at the Royal College of Music, Noble was assistant organist under Stanford at Trinity College, Cambridge, until his appointment to Ely Cathedral. There he promoted special musical services (including what is named as Haydn's Passion. which one takes to be *The Seven Last Words on the Cross*).

Afterwards he was organist of York Minster until leaving for St. Thomas's Episcopal Church, Fifth Avenue, New York, where he was in charge of the music from 1913 to 1943. In 1932 he received the Lambeth degree of D.Mus. His Evening Service in B minor, an early work, has continued to prove its worth.

1898-1900: Sir HUGH (PERCY) ALLEN, GCMG (b. 1869; d.1946). Allen became organ scholar of Christ's College, Cambridge in 1892, and having taken the Oxford B.Mus. degree as an external student in 1893 he took his Cambridge BA degree in 1895. He was organist of St. Asaph Cathedral for a few months before his appointment to Ely. He took up his Oxford D.Mus. degree (for which he had qualified in 1896) while at Ely. He was organist of New College, Oxford, from 1901 to 1918. In that year he became professor of music at Oxford, a part-time post which he retained till his death, combining it with that of director of the Royal College of Music from 1919 to 1937. He was a stimulating choral conductor and an apostle of J. S. Bach. His posts at Oxford and the RCM, combined with a powerful personality, gave him commanding

influence in national musical affairs. He was knighted in 1920 and became CYO, KCYO, and eventually (1935) GCYO.

1901-19: ARCHIBALD WAYETT WILSON (b. 1869; d. 1950). Having been a pupil of Sir Walter Parratt at the Royal College of Music, Wilson became organ scholar of Keble College, Oxford, and took the degrees of MA and D. Mus. In 1898 he became organist of St. Asaph Cathedral in succession to Sir Hugh Allen, whom he followed also at Ely. Afterwards he was organist of Manchester Cathedral until retirement in 1943.

1919-26: NOEL EDMUND PONSONBY (b. 1891; d. 1928). After leaving the choir of St. Georges Chapel, Windsor Castle, Ponsonby was educated at Repton School and Trinity College, Oxford, where he was organ scholar and took the degrees of B.Mus. and MA. He came to Ely Cathedral after a short period as director of music in public schools. Subsequently, like Basil Harwood before him, he became organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, but did not live to enjoy that distinction long.

1926-31: HUBERT STANLEY MIDDLETON (b. 1890; d. 1959). Middleton was a scholar of Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he read classics and also obtained the Mus.B. degree. He was organist of Truro Cathedral from 1920 to 1926. He left Ely to become organist of Trinity College, Cambridge. Although he had taken the Oxford degree of D.Mus. in 1937, he took the Mus.D. degree of Cambridge in 1943. He was specially influential in framing the original syllabus for the Cambridge Music Tripos, newly instituted in 1945.

1931-49: MARMADUKE PERCIVAL CONWAY (b. 1885; d. 1961). The first 20 years of Conway's career as organist from the age of 15 were spent in Eastbourne. During the early part of that time he held a scholarship at the Royal College of Music. While still in Eastbourne he took the Oxford degree of B. Mus. and the Dublin degree of Mus.D. as an external candidate. After experience as assistant organist of Wells Cathedral he became organist of Chichester Cathedral in 1925.

1949-53: SIDNEY SCHOLFIELD CAMPBELL, MVO (b. 1909; d. 1974). Campbell was an organ pupil of Sir Ernest Bullock and Dr. Harold Darke. For 20 years he had wide experience as a parish church organist in posts of increasing importance at Leytonstone, Chigwell, West Ham, Croydon (St. Peter's) and finally at St. Peter's, Wolverhampton (1943-7). He was then subwarden of the College of St. Nicholas (RSCM) at Canterbury until his appointment to Ely Cathedral. Following that he was organist of Southwark Cathedral, Canterbury Cathedral, and St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. He took the D.Mus. degree of Durham University in 1946, and in 1972 was appointed MVO.

1953-8: MICHAEL HOWARD (b. 1922). Howard was educated at Ellesmere College and the Royal Academy of Music. At first he worked chiefly in London (though briefly at Tewkesbury Abbey), and established a small specialist choir, The Renaissance Singers. After leaving Ely he once again worked in London, and directed another select choral group, Cantores in Ecclesia.

1958-90: ARTHUR WILLS (b.1926). Wills was organist of St. Alban's, Leamington Spa, and assistant organist of St. Mary's, Warwick, before winning a scholarship to the College of St. Nicholas (RSCM) at Canterbury in 1948. There he was a pupil of Sidney Campbell, to whom, on Campbell's appointment as organist of Ely Cathedral; he became

assistant organist (1949), serving similarly under Howard before succeeding to the full post. He holds the Archbishop's Diploma in Church Music and the Durham degree of D.Mus. He was appointed OBE on his retirement in 1990.

He is the first organist of Ely Cathedral since Basil Harwood to be significantly active as a composer. Among his works in different fields the following are selected for mention:

Symphony 1 in A minor (1958); Concerto for organ, strings and timpani (1969); An English Requiem (S & B solo, chor. and orch.) (1971); Symphonia Eliensis for organ (1976); Concerto for organ and guitar (1988); Opera: 'Nineteen EightyFour' (1989); Missa Sanctae Etheldredae (1990).

He has contributed a short book, *Organ, To the Yehudi Menuhin Music Guides series.*

From 1990: PAUL TREPTE (b. 1954). Trepte was organ scholar of New College, Oxford, and was placed in the 1st class of the Oxford Honour School of Music. Before his appointment to Ely he was assistant organist of Worcester Cathedral, organist of St. Mary's Warwick, and in 1985 he was appointed organist of St. Edmundsbury Cathedral where his task was to re-establish an all male choir. At Ely he has continued to compose and arrange for the Cathedral choir which has recorded a disc of his Christmas arrangements, 'Carols from many lands'.

Nicholas Thistlethwaite is a national authority on the history of the British organ.

He is the author of *The making of the Victorian organ* (Cambridge University Press, 1990) and joint editor of *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (Cambridge, 1999). He has written numerous other articles and served as chairman of the British Institute of Organ Studies. An accredited organ advisor, his clients have included several cathedrals and he assisted with the most recent rebuild of the Ely organ. He is also a member of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and a consultant for English Heritage.

Dr Thistlethwaite is Canon Precentor of Guildford Cathedral, having previously served as a Cambridge college chaplain and then as a parish priest in the Ely diocese.

The late **Watkins Shaw** (1911-96) was a musicologist and music educationalist who spent the majority of his career as lecturer at the Worcester College of Education.

His edition of Handel's *Messiah* remains the standard edition in English. He has written extensively on the history of English church music and on music education matters.
