



Issue 18 – January 2012

Readers are encouraged to pass this Newsletter on to any interested non-members and they in turn encouraged to join any affiliated society as detailed below.

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Recommended Salary Scales for Organists

Readers are reminded that having considered the current financial climate and the decisions made by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 2010 regarding the remuneration of ministers and also the Church's office staff, the Salaries Committee resolved (with the agreement of the SFO Committee) that the increase in salary scales due on 1st January 2011 would not take place. A further review was undertaken early in 2011 and in view of the continuing freeze on salaries, stipends and pensions it was decided that no increase in organists' salaries could be recommended for 1st January 2012. Therefore the current scales will remain effective until at least 1st January 2013. Full details of the current scales were published in the August 2011 issue of SFO News and are also available on the website at <http://www.scotsorgan.org.uk>.

Borders Guild of Organists

Lynda Jeffrey

At a social lunch in 2007, the guest speaker was Lord David Steel. He told of his early years as a child of the manse and his introduction to church organs. Later in life he was privileged to hear some of the best Cathedral organs and organists on various state occasions. He likes to play the organ and has been known to play in his local church. He and his wife, Judy have always been actively involved in all aspects of life in the Borders so we were delighted when he became our Honorary President of the Borders Guild of Organists in September. We could not have a better patron for our cause.

At the beginning of November Brigitte Harris organised and ran a very successful Choral workshop in Peebles Old Parish Church assisted by Sarah Brown. We started the morning with an illuminating talk from Sheila Robertson and the Rev. Charles Aitchison on repertoire for Advent. Then Brigitte put us through our paces with vocal excises and Advent music for a service at the end of the afternoon. She was ably accompanied by her husband, Michael on the piano and later the organ at the service. It was well attended and the participants got a lot out of it. The service was a fitting end to a very worthwhile day.

On the first Saturday in December we held an Advent Service in St Michael's Church, Gordon. Another tremendous turnout! Music was performed by Organists and singers from the Borders and directed by Brigitte Harris. At the end of the service we all had wonderful refreshments.

Our next events in our Social Calendar are:

Saturday 11th February our annual Social Lunch at Carfaemill Hotel, Lauder 12.30 for 1pm. Our guest speaker is the concert organist Kevin Bowyer

Saturday 21st April our AGM and Organ recital at Caddenfoot at 2.30pm.

Saturday 9th June a social outing to Holy Island where there will be a chance to play the one-manual Harrison & Harrison at St Mary's.

Glasgow Society of Organists

Jane J. Stirling

Our centenary celebrations are now almost at a close. Although I was unable to be present for the centenary organ recital by James Lancelot at Kelvingrove, the feedback was that it was an "inspiring and virtuosic performance." The programme included works by Bach, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Whitlock and Vierne

The Civic Reception in the City Chambers Banqueting Hall was a most successful and enjoyable evening. Baillie Liz Cameron gave us a superb account of the magnificent hall and some history of the city. George McPhee replied most appropriately and Kerr Jamieson gave us a brief history of the Society. The finger buffet which followed was none other than first-rate. A few extra calories must have been put on that night! Two days later we met at Govan Old Parish Church for a Thanksgiving Service led by Reverends Tom Davidson-Kelly, Robert Currie and Dr. Moyna McGlynn. George McPhee read the passage from Ecclesiasticus "Let us now praise famous men" which reminded us of the well known anthem by Vaughan Williams. The acoustics and organ of Govan Old are superb and our member Stanley Thomson rose to the occasion and let us hear the organ in all its glory.

In November our monthly meeting took the form of a talk by Kerr Jamieson on Glasgow Organ Music. Kerr had gone to a tremendous amount of work and let us hear some wonderful recordings and passed round the scores of the music being played.

In December we heard The Rt. Hon Brian Gill speak of his school days singing in the choir at St. Aloysius before studying law at Glasgow University. His career in law has led him to being Justice Clerk of Scotland and the second most senior judge. Lord Gill spoke about church music in general and as Chairman of the RSCM.

The first meeting of 2012 (7th January) takes the form of hearing Members CDs and on 4th February a composite recital by Stephen McIntyre and Ben Fowler at Pollokshields Parish Church.

Also in February we have an additional meeting on the 18th by Alan Thurlow, President of the IAO giving us a question and answer session regarding the IAO.

A Come and Sing at Wellington Church on March 3rd is our final meeting before the AGM in April and our Outing in June. We also intend to have another Education Day.

As you'll know by now the Glasgow Society is hosting the SFO Conference on Saturday 12th May. Arrangements are well in hand based at Glasgow Evangelical Church and Glasgow Cathedral. We look forward to welcoming you all then.

LANARKSHIRE SOCIETY OF ORGANISTS

Margaret H Filshie

Following the effort to raise the profile of the LSO with an attractive coloured leaflet sent to as many organists in Lanarkshire as possible, we have been very pleased to increase our membership by a total of 7 - a significant increase for us. With our new website we have also been able to offer information to a wider audience, and to advertise other events of interest in the vicinity.

The current season started in Lanarkshire in September in Carluke with a visit to three churches - St Andrew's with its restored Henry Willis and Sons organ, 1906; St John's (organ built by Joseph Brook and Co, Glasgow, rebuilt by Ronald L Smith) and the United Reform Church and its three manual tracker action organ, H Hilsdon, Glasgow, and with an opportunity for many of us to play a different instrument. This was followed in October with an excellent Organ Recital presented by Dr Malcolm Willis, the Deputy Locum Organist at Glasgow Cathedral, playing the Father Willis organ in New Andrew's Church, Coatbridge. It was especially rewarding that this organ concert attracted a large audience.

In November, we welcomed the members of the Stirling and District Society to a 'Come and Sing' event led by Frikki Walker, Master of the Music at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in Glasgow. Everyone enjoyed an afternoon of accessible singing from the Royal School of Church Music carol book, and also from The Oxford Book of Flexible Anthems. Such meetings continue a valued link between our two societies and a chance to renew old friendships.

Following a tradition of presenting a 'Songs of Praise' service in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, on Sunday, 22 January, we will gather in New Wellwynd Parish Church in Airdrie, for an ecumenical service of hymns and songs, readings and prayers, led by representatives from different churches in the district. Members of churches from all the denominations are invited to join together for an evening of praise and fellowship.

In February, the LSO is pleased to present a SCOTS Training Day for Organists, and we are fortunate to have the use of some superb facilities in the Carfin Grotto and Chapel, thanks to the clergy of St Francis Xavier. We are hoping that this will be supported by organists of all abilities and/or leaders of praise and, also, in a catholic venue, by catholic organists. Further information about this event, on Saturday 18th February, will be available on the LSO website.

On Tuesday, 13 March, 2012 at 7.30 p.m. (a new time for us) the Spring Organ Concert will be presented in St Mary's Parish Church, Motherwell, by their organist, Alan Gillon, playing the new three manual Allen Organ.

The Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 21 April, in Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Motherwell will end the 2011 - 2012 season, and following the AGM, members of the LSO will share a selection of Accessible Music for Choirs.

Stirling & District Society of Organists

Ailsa Simpson

It is with deep regret that the Stirling & District Society of Organists records the death of Piers Jones, a stalwart member. Piers was a man of many parts who will probably be best remembered as the organist and choirmaster of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Stirling.

Visitors are always welcome at any of the Society's meetings, the next two of which are:

Saturday 10 March - "You Are What You Sing!" Stuart Muir, the Pastoral Musician of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, Dundee, explains his message in Grahamston Parish Church, Bute Street, Falkirk, starting at 2.30. The postcode is FK2 7DH for people who use satellite navigation; and parking is usually possible in nearby streets.

Saturday 21 April - a recital given by Nicholas Wearne, Assistant Organist of St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh, in the Church of the Holy Rude, St. John Street, Stirling, FK8 1ED. It should be noted that parking in and around this area, which is at the heart of mediaeval Stirling, is usually problematic; Stirling station and bus station are not too far away. The 1939 Rushworth & Dreaper four-manual instrument, which was restored by the original builders between 1992 and 1994, is an important example of the late Romantic period of British organ building and is the largest organ in Scotland. This opportunity to hear an outstanding organ demonstrated by one of Scotland's finest organists is entirely free and starts at 2.30.

Tayside Organists' Society

Sally Carus

The first meeting of our season was a recital by David Hamilton on the organ of St Mary Magdalene's Church, Dundee. (*reviewed here by Ian McLagan*)

David Hamilton opened our new session with a thrilling organ recital in St Mary Magdalene's Church, Dundee. The attendance was very good and also very appreciative of the performer and his varied and well-thought out programme. President Roger Clegg introduced David to the audience.

The programme opened with Bach's Prelude and Fugue in D and David used the organ to display the best sounds to do justice to the piece. It was a taste of what was yet to come. Healy Willan's Rondo, Elegy and Chaconne, written in 1956 was a complete contrast in style and it came over beautifully.

Rory Boyle, who had recently celebrated his 60th birthday, is a Scottish composer and David's interpretation of Ha-Ha-He-He was again top class. It could be said that some of the music could be hard to listen to but it was still very enjoyable. Buxtehude's Ciaccona in C, probably the oldest piece performed that night was again a delight to hear with David's sensitive use of the many stops on the organ.

The first half was brought to an end with an Improvisation - but no named piece on the programme!!!! David asked for suggestions and Roger suggested that as it was near the Last Night of the Proms, how about Land of Hope and Glory? And that was what we got - a glorious piece of music!!

After the interval, the second half was devoted to Vierne's 3rd Symphonie, completed in 1911, exactly 100 years ago - to the day! David showed his love for Vierne's music with an excellent interpretation of the music and received thunderous well-earned applause for the programme. His comments about each piece of music before he played it were very appropriate and pointed the audience to certain aspects of the composer's thoughts.

An excellent start to the session was enjoyed by all present and David will certainly be asked back in the future to give us another enjoyable evening of music.

Our next meeting was in October when Neil Smeaton gave a recital in St John's Episcopal Church, Forfar. *(Reviewed here by Roger Clegg)*

This was an evening of essentially Victorian and romantic music featuring some well known organ composers of the period. This was a time when technological advances in organ building led to increasingly large instruments being constructed providing a wide range of orchestral colour. The first two pieces in the programme illustrated these developments with a majestic Postlude by Henry Smart opening the concert. The rich forte sounds from the great and swell were heard well down the church and then the softer stops had their turn in the Maytime Gavotte by Alfred Hollins, a composer well known in the area for his design work on the famous organ in the Caird Hall.

Eugene Gigout is best known for his organ Toccata in B minor from his 10 Pièces pour Orgue but it was the Scherzo from the same collection which Neil played next demonstrating some neat fingerwork and how well the organ lends itself to echo effects. This was then followed by the Theme and Variations from Organ Sonata No.10 by Josef Rheinberger, a prolific composer for the instrument although perhaps a little out of fashion these days. The first half of the programme concluded with the Toccata in E by Remigio Renzi, a piece unfamiliar to most of the audience by a little known composer but Neil convinced us that this was music well worth hearing again.

The second half of the programme opened with another Scherzo, this one by Enrico Bossi who was professor of organ and harmony at the Naples Conservatory in the 1890s and went on to play in New York and Philadelphia in 1924. This Scherzo is an accomplished piece and was both rewarding and interesting for the listener. Charles-Marie Widor was one of the great French composers of organ music and it is perhaps unfortunate that the famous Toccata, so often heard at weddings, is the only piece which is widely known. Neil chose the Andante Sostenuto from the Symphonie Gothique and this gentle music showed the harmonic idiom so typical of French music of the period.

Two arrangements followed and demonstrated how well the organ lends itself to the concert hall setting. Gounod's Funeral March of a Marionette arranged by W.T. Best and William Walton's Popular Song from Facade arranged by Robert Gower both showed the organ in a lighter mood and Neil made the most of the range of sounds at his disposal. This mood was continued with the final piece of the evening, the Eb Sortie by Lefébure-Wély which has an almost fairground-like feel to it. Like the Bb Sortie and other pieces by the same composer, this is music to send listeners away with a smile and was an excellent choice to end the recital.

Thanks to all at St John's for a warm welcome and congratulations to Neil for some fine organ playing which was much enjoyed by the audience.

Our next event is an evening of music by Robin Bell and pupils of Madras College, St Andrews to be held on Tuesday 14th February in Dundee West Church, Perth Road, Dundee. On 28th February at 7.30 we are visiting St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth where Sandy Edmonstone will talk about the organ and on 17th March at 11.30 we have a visit to Dunblane Cathedral with Matthew Beetschen.

We would also like to record the sad death of Mr George Mottashaw who was a founder and life member of the Tayside Organists' Society.

Response to "Show-off organists put me off church"

Helen Bews, Edinburgh

The original article, by David Campbell, first appeared in the Sunday Post on 26th June 2011 and was reproduced in the August 2011 issue of SFO News.

I cannot remember when I disagreed more with a person than with David Campbell, over church organists!

When I hear a fine church organist playing as I expect to hear the instrument played by a professional musician, I rush to thank him/her for the glorious sound. I know that "glorious sound" requires much practise and much talent . . . and I am thrilled by it! In fact, when I hear inadequate organ playing during a service – I am so put off that I never visit the church again! How often can a person put up with the same mistake every week in the same piece played every week, in the same bar every week . . . because the "organist" cannot count the beats in the bar?? I am a musician . . . and if the organist is brilliant, I thank God. If hopeless . . . I say "Thank you God, but help him/her – and in the meantime, I'll look elsewhere!" As I said, if I am lucky enough to hear a brilliant organist on Sunday, I rush to thank him/her with all my heart for the joy he has given me!!

'Horses for courses'; the organ, its music and use in St Mary's.

Philip Sawyer

Fellow church musicians might be interested to read the following article that I wrote for the Newsletter of St Mary's Collegiate Church, Haddington when I was organist there 1999-2003.

The musical instrument that we call 'organ' has a long and complex history. 'Long' because the ancient Greeks and Romans certainly knew instruments that are clearly the modern organ's predecessors; 'complex' because the instrument developed differently in each country and even in different regions of one country, sometimes depending upon religious affiliation. Whenever a church has to take some kind of action about its organ, it makes decisions that are affected, to a greater or lesser extent, by the needs of the church and by the long history of the instrument. As you read this article you should bear in mind that the Church of Scotland had no organs - and therefore no history of organ music or organ-accompaniment - until the 1870s.

In the late 1980s the congregation of St Mary's decided that it wished to replace a small pipe with an instrument worthy of the large, restored, Gothic cruciform building. The result of that decision is there for all to hear and see; it is visually stunning and speaks with a voice that is both beautiful and strong in character. Its position is not perfect - organs should, ideally, speak down the longest axis of a building - but it does enable the instrument to make itself felt equally in all parts of the building.

It is customary for churches to appoint a consultant (i.e. an expert adviser) whose rôle is to help with the selection of a suitable organ-builder, to work with that builder in the tonal planning of the instrument and to ensure that all work is carried out to the satisfaction of the congregation. The consultant at St Mary's was Professor Peter Williams; his scholarly interests focus mainly upon music of the 17th and 18th centuries, the organ music of North German composers, and the organ music of JS Bach in particular. His views, based upon a lot of experience and research, are that:

- an organ should be built in a particular style to suit a particular repertoire.
- one of the high points in the history of organ-building and of composing for the organ was reached in north Germany in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

It came as no great surprise that he recommended the appointment of Lammermuir Pipe Organs as organ builders. This small company, based in Oldhamstocks, was founded and is directed by Neil Richerby, part of whose training took place in north Germany and whose sympathies were formed by contact with north German baroque and baroque-style instruments.

St Mary's has, therefore, an instrument that both looks and sounds as if it is firmly rooted in the culture and music of the north German baroque. It is relatively small (only 24 speaking stops plus three couplers and one tremulant), has no Swell-box (i.e. it is incapable of crescendo and diminuendo without the addition or subtraction of stops) and has no 'gadgets' for helping the organist to manage the stops. The performer has at his/her disposal, therefore, two keyboards for the hands, one keyboard for the feet and 28 stops nine of which are behind him/her. The temperament (the tuning of the instrument) is an 'antique' one resulting in a 'scale' in which the musical distance between each pair of notes (e.g. C/C#, D/D# etc) is slightly different. The effect of this temperament is to make the tonalities nearest to C major sound 'in tune' while the more remote ones sound rather 'wild' (out of tune). The keys for the hands are shorter and narrower than modern keys; in addition, the amount of physical space between certain pairs of notes is reduced in order to increase that between others. The keyboard for the feet is, likewise, built in an 'antique' style.

All of this means that this instrument is ideal for the music of the north German composers of the late 17th and early 18th centuries such as Buxtehude, Böhm, Bruhns and JS Bach. It is also able to deal relatively well with:

- Dutch music of the late 16th and early 17th centuries (e.g. Sweelinck).
- English music of the 16th, 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries e.g. Tomkins; Gibbons; Purcell; Blow; Stanley; Boyce; Samuel Wesley.
- Some of the Italian, South German and French baroque repertoire e.g. Frescobaldi; Georg Muffat; Titelouze; Couperin; Marchand; de Grigny.
- Some 19th century organ music by composers who were influenced by 18th century music e.g. Mendelssohn; Brahms.
- Some 20th century repertoire e.g.:
 1. the 3 sonatas of the German composer Paul Hindemith.
 2. Dutch and Belgian music written either in or for the Protestant tradition by, amongst others, Cor Kee, Piet Kee and Flor Peeters.
 3. repertoire by composers such as Kenneth Leighton and John McCabe who are/were alive to the possibilities offered by organs designed and built like the one in St Mary's. Most of this music tends not to find a place in church services, but rather in recitals.

Because of its design and temperament, the organ in St Mary's is not suited to most of the music by the romantic, late-romantic, post-romantic and modern composers such as Liszt, Franck, Widor, Vierne, Parry, Elgar, Reger, Langlais and Messiaen. Persuading the St Mary's organ to deal with this repertoire would be rather like asking the members of a small group that specialises in baroque chamber music to perform, without additional help, a symphony by Beethoven. In other words the organ sounds best in music written by north German Protestant composers. The instrument is aesthetically unsuitable for most of the music the inspiration of which is rooted either in Roman Catholic liturgy or in Anglican churchmanship of the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Here is an example to explain how this affects what you do and do not hear in St Mary's. I have, once, played Widor's famous *Toccata* at a wedding ceremony in St Mary's. Because Widor demands changes of tone-colour and volume when both of the organist's hands are fully occupied playing the notes, I needed two assistants to operate the stops, one on either side of the console. Two people were not available - and would not be paid for by most congregations or wedding couples! - so my wife, who was also a guest at the wedding, did the job by moving from side to side of the console by way of the north transept gallery! This music requires a large French romantic organ with three keyboards for the hands and one for the feet, a swell box (for crescendos and diminuendos), mechanical aids to help with the changing of stops, and musical colours that are unavailable in St Mary's.

Although it is physically and musically almost impossible to give convincing performances of certain styles of organ music in St Mary's, the present organ encourages the performance of music by composers (usually Lutheran) who wrote for Reformed worship. The greatest of these composers were Dieterich Buxtehude and JS Bach, so their music forms the basis of my repertoire. I am able to play their music - and the rest of the possible repertoire by composers mentioned above - without doing a lot of musical 'damage' and without expensive specialist help at the console. JS Bach composed what is probably the largest and most varied repertoire of organ music that exists, all *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*; the range of styles and forms is unequalled. It is a privilege to be able to play the music by this great Lutheran composer on an instrument with which he, his north German predecessors and contemporaries - and some of his pupils - would have had a great deal of sympathy.

The organ 'issue' affects the choir too, and the relationship between the choir and organist. Our small choir ought to sing music with a gentle and supportive organ accompaniment. Because most of the sounds on the St Mary's organ are too loud for our choir, and because the instrument does not have the range of accompanimental sounds that would be appropriate, we have to forego most of the accompanied repertoire. The position of the console means that the organist has no eye contact with the choir - and *vice versa* - and is therefore not able to play and conduct the choir at the same time.

This situation could not have happened by accident; those responsible both for selecting the consultant and organ builder, and for determining the siting of the instrument, obviously knew the ramifications of their decisions. However, what St Mary's may have lost on the musical swings it most certainly gained on the roundabouts!

Philip Iain Piers Jones, B.A. Hons; M.A.

with thanks to Bill Munro and David W. Loosley.

Piers Jones was a true 'Man of Parts', who excelled in a wide range of interests. He was a teacher, organist, choirmaster, violinist, fencer, computer buff, and businessman, to name but a few of his many talents, careers and pastimes.

While still at Edinburgh University, Piers embarked on his career as Organist and Choirmaster at St. Saviour's Episcopal Church, Bridge of Allan in September 1961. A year later he went to St. Mary's, Dunblane and then on to Holy Trinity, Stirling in 1978. He was justifiably proud this year to reach his 50th anniversary at the organ. He also was active in the Scottish Federation of Organists, creating its first website, and was a founder member of the Scottish Churches Organist Training Scheme. He also produced the SFO

news, in a glossy booklet format, a vast improvement on what had gone before. Unfortunately for us he found copy hard to coax from the readership and the demand of his ever increasing business commitments must have meant it was one of his shortest jobs ever; only because he could not do it justice.

When newly qualified, Piers took up a position as an English teacher at Bannockburn High School, before joining Denny High School. He enjoyed many happy years at Denny and produced school musicals, started the school Fencing Club, ran the staff catering company and took many school parties abroad. He then moved onto Wallace High in Stirling as Assistant Rector where he also produced school musicals, started a Fencing Club and became part of the woodwork.

When Piers retired from teaching at the tender age of 55, he landed his dream job. He had always loved travel and had been organising school trips and fencing competitions abroad for many years so it was no surprise that he went to work for a travel company. It was an extremely good fit with his knowledge of travelling combined with his previous business experience of owning and managing a hairdressing salon, his computer skills and use of language. He compiled travel brochures and booked hotels as if to the manner born. He had a roller-coaster time with many trips and tales to tell, culminating in him buying the company four years later.

In recent years Piers' principal activity within the SFO was as a very active member of the SCOTS team, giving huge amounts of time and effort to committee activities and to helping to run many of the Training Days.

We give thanks for the happy life Piers lived and for all he did within the organ world.

Three subjects and a resignation

The following has been handed to the editor. Some of it may strike a chord with you; if it does, then the realisation that you are not alone may bring some small comfort. But what can, or should, be done in situations such as this?

The background: The (CofS) church in question has a decent organ and a history of reasonable music-making, but is, like everywhere else, finding it difficult to recruit new singers to the choir. The Director of Music (D) was in post before the induction of the Minister (M).

D is a professional musician. M had not responded to requests from D for a meeting to discuss the music of the church. M communicated with D almost entirely by means of e-mail. The following has been edited slightly to preserve anonymity.

Subject 1. Congregational singing.

These messages were exchanged in response to M's statement that he wished to do something about the standard of the singing at the church's 1100hrs Sunday service. He had made the congregational singing at 0930hrs services 'excellent' (ipse dixit) by starting a Praise Band and amplifying its sound, the sound of his own voice and the voices of some members of the congregation who had 'rehearsed' and who 'sang' into a microphone.

D to M. I've been giving some thought to the congregational singing.....

1. It's a good idea to begin with a hymn that does not make too many vocal demands. Most members of the congregation will not have sung since the previous Sunday, so something musically straightforward with a low-ish tessitura (not too many high notes) is a good idea. 'Immortal, invisible' and 'All people that on earth do dwell' are good starters; 'Christ is made the sure foundation' and hymns with Irish tunes are not because they contain many high notes even when transposed.
2. It's a good idea also not to have too many long hymns in a service; they can be very tiring vocally, especially for older people.
3. A varied diet of musical as well as poetic styles is good. If the verbal message is consistently attached to Victorian/Edwardian music it loses its punch and means that there is no ebb and flow in the service. CH3 has a good, wide range of styles.
4. Responsorial items might be worth a try e.g. the psalms by Gelineau that are included in CH3. In these items, the congregational 'antiphon' is simple and easily picked up. The choir has performed some of these already.
5. The sung Amen. Do you see the 'Amen' as loud or soft, or should its character change depending on the service? My concern about the sung 'Amen' is that the physical layout of the church, for the musicians, means that the response to the Benediction will inevitably lack immediacy and spontaneity. If you want to give this a real chance then I suggest that I should write a simple 'Amen' that includes a very brief organ introduction. The problem with the 'Dresden' Amen is that it ends on a high note and can sound pathetic. I wonder if instead of just 'Amen' we should think of something like 'Amen, Alleluia, Amen' or 'Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Amen'.

M to D. Thanks for your thoughts. You and I have very different views on congregational singing. We seem however to work along fine together. I agree about the choral Amen. I chose the wrong one. I don't sight read music well enough to distinguish. I'd need to have you play the various alternatives to find the one I was thinking of.

D to M. What are your views on congregational singing? Perhaps we should have a chat sometime. Church musicians.....tend to consider aspects such as:

- the vocal capabilities of the congregation;
- the speed of harmonic change of a hymn tune. Slow harmonic change can seriously hamper a congregation's perception of tempo;
- the appropriateness of the music to the words;
- the need to educate. For many people church is the only place where they hear live music so the integrity and quality of that music is important;
- the need to keep a choir interested.

Shall I go ahead and write an 'Amen'?

No reply. End of correspondence about congregational singing.

Subject 2. Christmas Eve.

The previous Christmas Eve there had been a rehearsal of a guitarist (who could not read music), a pianist and a poor trumpeter just before the early family service.

D was not informed about the rehearsal or the musicians to be present.

D to M. I note the (projected) presence of the praise band on Christmas Eve. I hope that it will:

- not rehearse just before the service; it ruined the pre-service atmosphere last year;
- be musically more competent than it was last year; whoever was playing trumpet could not play the notes. It's a pity for St X's, a church that has a certain reputation for the quality of its music, to be seen and heard to be lowering its standards.

M to D. I have had nothing but good comments from folk (musical and otherwise) regarding the competence (*sic*) and standard of the Praise Band, the purpose of which is to lead and enrich worship, whilst encouraging wide participation, and not to give a professional performance. Some may not like the style of music, but then that is true of any style. I agree that any rehearsals immediately before a service, whether it is praise band or choir, does not help the pre service (*sic*) atmosphere. Playing over the music to be used in the service, quietly, can enrich folk's preparation - especially at the 9.30 service.

D to M. I was referring to last Christmas Eve only.

End of correspondence about Christmas Eve.

Subject 3. Music for the next 1100hrs service taken by M after his vacation.

M to D. I am away from now until..... (*details of the hymns etc were attached to this message*).

D to M. Thanks. The congregation knows the tune 'Michael' to hymn 405 ('All my hope on God is founded'), so I suggest that we do that; it's a much better tune than 'Groeswen', and, like 'Meine Hoffnung' was written specifically for the words of 405. It has the advantage of being modern, too.

M to D. I have sung both and prefer Groeswen.

D to M. We have a duty to the congregation to expand their repertoire. To organise things in a way that plays to your own preferences - especially as you don't read music and cannot get to know new music - leads to a rather boring stagnation that is suffused with Victorian and Edwardian musical values. 'Michael' is a far superior tune, whatever you prefer, and, as your D, I suggest that we use 'Michael'.

No reply. End of correspondence about this issue.

Resignation of D.

Postscript

The above might be funny if it were not true. If this is what M meant by working 'along fine together' (see above), heaven only knows what life would have been like had there been 'problems'! The style of management that gets what it wants by not entering into dialogue, and is based upon ignorance, seems to be fashionable in a number of places, not only churches. What on earth is wrong with:

- creative dialogue?
- respect for other people's (perhaps more informed) views?
- taking advice from those who know better?
- good quality?
