

'That glorious song of old?'

The history of music-making of St Davids Cathedral, with specific reference and concentration on the twentieth century.

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Abstract

This submission charts the development of the Anglican choral foundation at St Davids Cathedral in Pembrokeshire, with particular focus on the 20th century. Using deposited papers at both the Cathedral and National Library of Wales consisting of previously published and unpublished documents (much of which has not formally been catalogued or investigated), the paper presents the case for a greater understanding of regional choral foundations outside of major centres of culture and learning, their development throughout the twentieth century (with a particular focus on the growth of ‘Welsh’ identity and political development), and the prominent role they played (particularly following the Second World War) in ensuring wider dissemination of culture to the masses. These are augmented (where possible) with links to original, and often limited-release, recordings which aurally illustrate performance standards.

The archival resources proved exceptionally fruitful in being able to illustrate a representation of wider issues within the world of cathedral music (such as employment rights and freehold of tenure, socio-political issues at local, regional, and national levels, and an insight into governance of cathedrals in general throughout the period). In establishing an understanding of these, we gain greater understanding of a differing model of delivery within cathedral music, whilst also delivering reasonable performance standards, contributing to wider conversations on how cathedral music can be maintained against current market forces of secularization within cathedrals as they embrace the ‘Heritage Sector’ model, and increasingly tighter finance and regulation (especially regarding the position of choristers).

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

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Preface

Cathedrals of the Church of England are rightly noted for their contribution to the musical life of the United Kingdom. Up until the late 19th century, their organists and singers were recognized as leading musical figures, whether as performers, composers, academics or for their pedagogy. The 20th century, with its colossal societal changes in religious belief and social structure, lessened this impact, but gave output for composers from differing schools of composition the opportunity to write for commission for cathedral ensembles. However, much of the historiographical output has focused on a small number of foundations, often historically well-endowed or centred within London or the South-East of England. What of those who are further away, who may ‘get-by’ rather than flourish financially? This study examines an extreme when defined by those parameters. St Davids is designated a city by charter, but in reality, is smaller than some villages adjacent to it. With a population of 1841, ¹ St Davids is the smallest city in the United Kingdom. ² Even two decades into the 21st century, transport links are less than adequate – the nearest public transport hub is 16 miles/40 minutes away by car either travelling North-East towards Fishguard or South-East towards the county town Haverfordwest. The Welsh centre of culture from the mid-20th century, the capital Cardiff, is still over 2 hours by car and nearer 3 hours by train from Pembrokeshire. A whole century before, this would have taken significantly longer – in what some would call the ‘golden’ age of St Davids in the 15th century, it would take a day to travel the 16 miles to Haverfordwest.

If location and population size were not challenging enough, in the period explored in this submission we see significant political and socio-economic changes which constantly make the viability of running a ‘cathedral-style’ choral foundation threatened and, for a time, almost extinct. The dis-establishment of the Church of England in Wales to form ‘The Church in Wales’ left the entirely new province with only £1 million – with land and property assets purchased following the Act of Uniformity 1662 ³ seized under the terms of the Welsh Church Act 1914 and distributed between the various county councils and the University of Wales. Coming out of The Great War, into the ‘Great Depression’ and almost straight into the Second World War, brought the church half-way through the century with little gain. Whilst we will see the now overused epitaph of *Keep Calm, and Carry On* during these periods, it was not until Peter Boorman was appointed as Organist and Master of the Choristers in 1953 that serious thoughts about viability of the choral foundation were made. Boorman’s pragmatism, combined with sheer necessity, led to the introduction of girls as full choristers in 1966 – some 25 full years prior to the first English occurrence at Salisbury. Whilst Boorman remained in post for almost a quarter-century, standards waxed and waned, as can be noted in a

¹ Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics, Office for National Statistics, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=W37000368>, accessed 18 January 2020 at 15.38.

² The smallest distinct city in England is Wells (population 10536); the City of London (being a part of the Greater London Authority although under local governance of its own governing corporation) has a population of 7375.

³ The Act of Uniformity 1662 (3 Car 2 c4.)

number of larger and more prestigious foundations. His successors were faced with the ever-continuing loss of cultural Christianity, the competition of after-school activities and changes in lifestyle which were unsuited to a traditional model of a choral foundation, to the extent that, by the appointment of Kerry Beaumont in 1991, a great deal of work was required on both choir and organ in order to re-build reputation and standards. This was continued under Beaumont's successors Geraint Bowen and Timothy Noon.

This submission is based on archival papers deposited both at the Cathedral, at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. St Davids Cathedral has never been blessed with an outstanding archive like many of its fellow Norman foundations:

'By a letter from the Revd. Richard Davies, Archdeacon of St Davids, to me dated 3. Aug 1740 I am informed that he, at my desire, whilst on his residence there, looked over all ye Records in ye chest, and found most of them, ye oldest especially, in a most miserable condition, having scarce any covers to them at all, the leaves loose, torn, mangled and transposed, several of them quite torn away, ye writing in a great measure obliterated, and ye hand in many places to him legible.⁴

Like in all establishments, paper trails were lost, destroyed (whether accidentally or purposely) or redacted in order to preserve official policy of the era and protect reputations in situations less than desirable. When researching the choirs and musicians of cathedrals, this has been especially true.⁵ With the advent of new media and technology, records, artefacts and memorabilia survive from the mid-twentieth century in a near pristine condition, making this researcher's study less arduous than Archdeacon Yardley's. Reliance upon the cathedral's Chapter Acts and other works (especially H. Watkins Shaw's *Succession of Organists*)⁶ has been crucial in piecing together the progression of musical life of St Davids Cathedral. Through it, we encounter the men (and, up until the time of writing – only men) who have led the music-making in it, the children, men and women who sang under them and the characters who have contributed to the continuation and development of the music at St Davids Cathedral.

⁴ Ed. Yardley, E and Green, F. *Menevia Sacra*, Cambrian Archaeological Association, Cardiff, 1927. p.320

⁵ The famous incident of Thomas Weelkes urinating upon his Dean from the organ loft of Chichester Cathedral is one which should have been redacted, but fortunately for us, the Chapter Clerk must have felt that there was an important precedent set by it, meaning it was, fortunately, kept in perpetuity in their Chapter Acts.

⁶ Watkins Shaw, H. *The Succession of Organists of the Chapel Royal and the Cathedrals of England and Wales from c.1538*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the culmination of a journey started when I was just 7 years old. It has been a journey which has been fascinating, and certainly cannot be described as a being purely linear in any way, shape, or form.

I am grateful for the support I have received from all who have taken interest and aided me in the discoveries I have made, with particular thanks to The Very Reverend Jonathan Lean, sometime Dean of St Davids, for authorising unprecedented access to papers in the hands of the Dean and Chapter, and to Mr Arwel Davies, Chapter Clerk and Registrar of the Diocese of St Davids, for providing access to the current Chapter Acts book. I am also indebted to Ms Llywela Harris, sometime Warden of the Royal School of Church Music and Administrator of St Davids Cathedral Festival, whose encouragement, support and knowledge of both church music and the specific context at St Davids spans nearly a century; to the Right Reverend Wyn Evans DD, who uniquely in the modern era served in each clerical position within the Cathedral foundation – his knowledge of the history and antiquities of St Davids Cathedral gave great insight into the early modern era, and the continued legacy on which the foundation was built upon. I am fortunate to have found a willing and inquisitive source in Mr Robert Evans of the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, whose patience and fortitude were invaluable in unearthing and (re-)discovering the 19th and early-to-mid 20th century archives of St Davids Cathedral within the wider Church in Wales depositary at the National Library. I am hugely grateful to Professor Jonathan Wainwright for supervising this work. He knows that this was not what we signed up for to start but has helped guide me to a position where I am able to present what I hope is an original contribution to the canon of history for the Anglican choral tradition. Jo has been nothing short of exceptional in encouragement, in enabling my continuation (often in challenging circumstances) and in offering critical support for the entire project. Any inaccuracies or errors in this work are mine alone.

I am exceptionally grateful for the support and encouragement offered by a wide range of friends and family. I am indebted to my parents, who started along this journey with me without themselves realising the route it would take them on; to my parents-in-law, who provided me a launchpad in the earlier years of research, and finally to Charlotte, who has patiently accompanied me to libraries, heard me give talks and been alongside at every turn.

Chapter I. Background

The Norman to Tudor period

The earliest written references to a choir at the Cathedral are dated from 1132 – although it is almost certain that there was a group of musicians present contributing to worship prior to that date. In a lecture given to the Friends of St Davids Cathedral in August 1960, the Reverend R J Tree succinctly describes the *raison d'être* for the existence of a corporate body of Vicars Choral:

St David and his fellow priests resided in St Davids [Menevia] and regarded the rest of the country as a vast parish to which they ministered from this centre. Other centres were established and priests began to reside in them – but St Davids was always regarded as the Mother church. At a later date, an acute problem arose for those priests who held appointments both at the Cathedral and elsewhere – How could they be in two places at once? Well – of course, they could not be. But they solved the problem [...] by appointing deputies to discharge their duties and obligations for them. Thus the Bishop's deputy was known as the Bishop's Vicar, and those who deputized for the Canons were called Vicars Choral.⁷

The first known references made to individual musicians at the Cathedral was during the episcopacy of Bishop Anselm,⁸ who inducted two vicars choral to vacant incumbencies in order to secure their singing positions. These were held by the Vicars under Anselm's successor, Thomas Wallensis.^{9,10} The original number of Vicars Choral were limited to eight – five of whom would be in Holy orders, three of whom could be lay – one of the latter would serve as Organist.¹¹ By 1287, Bishop Thomas Bek ordered that all Vicars Choral who did not possess their own residence, or who did not occupy the residence of the Canon who they represented, '...must reside together in their own property'¹² – remnants of which can still be found in the premises currently used as the residence of the Assistant Organist – Cloister Hall.

In order to assist the Vicars Choral at divine service, boy choristers would join in singing the service. As early as 1364, reference is made to educational provision for choristers and Vicars Choral, with classes starting at 6.00am in a school paid for out of general cathedral funds. However well the Chapter cared for the spiritual and educational needs of the choristers, they desperately needed to pay attention to their material needs in order to encourage attendance from them. In a meeting with

⁷ Tree, R.J 'St Mary's College at St Davids' in *The Friends of St Davids Cathedral Annual Report 1960*, The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Misc./479. p.8

⁸ 1230-48

⁹ 1248-55

¹⁰ Jones, W.B.T, & Freeman, E.J., *The History and Antiquities of St Davids*, J.H. & J. Parker, J. Russell Smith & J. Petheram, London, 1856, p.303

¹¹ Tree, R.J 'St Mary's College at St Davids' in *The Friends of St Davids Cathedral Annual Report 1960*, The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Misc./479. p.8

¹² Ibid.

the Chapter, held on March 24 1363, Bishop Adam Houghton ¹³ decided to make suitable provision for the choristers. His reasoning was clear and is a recurring theme in the history of most British cathedrals before and into the 20th Century.

...the choristers, few in number, and without proper vestments attend the Choral services irregularly and lukewarmly, because in times past little or no provision had been made for their temporal wants; namely for their diet and clothing, without which, spiritual things cannot long subsist. The duty of our station and the dictates of piety alike require us to promote the solemnity of divine worship in our Church of St Davids by making suitable provision for those who officiate in the Choir, lest the Bridegroom of the Church should be disgraced by the poverty of the servants and Ministers of the Bride. ¹⁴

Houghton provided in statute for the funding of four choristerships using revenue from the living of Lanwynnen,¹⁵ to 'attend at the canonical hours [...] in proper habits, humbly to minister as Choristers according to the use of Sarum'.¹⁶ Houghton appointed a 'Bishop's Vicar'¹⁷ to act as his commissary and '...to be Master of the said choristers, to elect and perfect them as choristers'.¹⁸ The choristers would be housed, clothed, fed and educated out of the revenues of Lanwynnen, and the Bishop's Vicar would receive half a mark of silver each year in return for his work as Master of the Choristers.

The notating of the propers for Mattins, Lauds and Vespers for the Feast of St David ¹⁹ during the Middle Ages demonstrate the importance of both David as a Saint, and of the musical foundation at the Cathedral (although it has been noted that there are musical similarities between the propers for St David and those of the 'recent' martyr Thomas Beckett).²⁰

Bishop Houghton, born locally in the parish of Whitchurch (around 3 miles from the Cathedral), made clear that he wanted to enhance the musical and liturgical life of his Cathedral. Houghton was close to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who had procured him his appointments at court. Together with John, and John's first wife the Lady Blanche (heiress of Henry, the Earl of Lancaster), Houghton founded the Collegiate Church and College of Saint Mary the Virgin in July 1365. The reason these three co-founded the college at St Davids was to encourage sufficient dignity and splendour within the Cathedral. The College Master (to whom the First Cursal Canonry was granted) and 7 priests, would sing services in the Cathedral, and celebrate Mass daily. The Master and priests

¹³ Bishop of St Davids 1361-89. Houghton was not only bishop of a see that stretched from the Irish Sea to 7 miles from Hereford, but he also served as Lord Chancellor to King Edward III, and as a negotiator for King Richard II's marriage to Anne of Bohemia.

¹⁴ Tree, R.J 'St Mary's College at St Davids' in *The Friends of St Davids Cathedral Annual Report 1960*, The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Misc./479. p.8

¹⁵ Llanwynnen, nr Lampeter, Ceredigion.

¹⁶ 'Liber Statutorum Ecclesia Meneviensis.' Manuscript, 1588. Harl MS 6280 f 133. London, The British Library.

¹⁷ Even now, the junior stall assigned to Minor Canons of the Cathedral holds this title.

¹⁸ Hackett, M. *A brief account of Cathedral and Collegiate Schools; with an abstract of their statutes and endowments. Respectfully addressed to the Dignitaries of the Established Church*, J.B. Nichols, London, 1825. p.18

¹⁹ Ed. Tudor Edwards, O, *Matins, Lauds and Vespers for St David's Day – The Mediaeval Office of the Welsh Patron Saint in National Library of Wales MS 20541 E*, D.S Brewer, Cambridge, 1990.

²⁰ Reynolds, T.R, 'A Study of Music and Liturgy, Choirs and Organs in Monastic and Secular Foundations in Wales and the Borderlands, 1485-1645', PhD Thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, October 2002. p.22.

of the College sang Vespers and Compline in their own chapel daily, but would be present for the High Mass and Vespers on Sundays, saint's days and during the Tridium.²¹ Members of the college dressed in the same vesture as the Cathedral's Vicars Choral, and were also subject to the same discipline as the Vicars Choral. Ultimate governance was vested in the Bishop and Cathedral Chapter. By 1384, the importance of the College and its Vicars Choral led to them being granted the same rights and privileges when purchasing provisions within the city's market as the Canons and Burgesses.

It seems that Houghton's reforms saw a reasonable choral foundation in place by the middle of the 14th century. A poem entitled *I Ddewi Sant* (To Saint David), the poet Iolo Goch (c.1325 – c.1400) describes the cathedral in verse:

Ac olewydd a gwydd gwin
ac edmig musig a moes
a gwrle gwyr ac orloes
a chytgerdd hoyw, loyw lewych,
rhwng organ achlân a chylych,
a thrwbwlym aur trwm tramawr
yn bwrw sens i beri sawr.²²

*...and olive trees and vines
and excellence in music and manner,
the sound of men and of clock
a lively harmony, shining brilliance,
between an entire organ and bells,
and a great heavy golden thurible
emitting fine incense to give a sweet odour.*

The foundation at St Davids during the middle ages was immense for a cathedral of its physical size and geographical position, in no small measure thanks to the dedication of Bishop Adam Houghton. In 1501, Bishop John Morgan amended Bishop Houghton's ordinance, increasing the number of choristers to six, granting them additional funds from the living of the Priory of Llawhaden²³ 'taking into consideration the paucity in number and the poor provision which had been made for the choristers of the Cathedral.'²⁴ The dissolution of St Mary's College, being brought into effect by The Suppression of Religious Houses Act 1535,²⁵ caused it to pass into the hands of the Crown,²⁶ which seized the property, any of the rights associated with the property, and its associated revenue and

²¹ Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

²² Ed. Joneston, D., *Iolo Goch – Poems*, Gomer Press, Llandyssul, 1993.

²³ Hackett, M. *A brief account of Cathedral and Collegiate Schools; with an abstract of their statues and endowments. Respectfully addressed to the Dignitaries of the Established Church*, J.B. Nichols, London, 1825. p.19

²⁴ Tree, R.J 'St Mary's College at St Davids' in *The Friends of St Davids Cathedral Annual Report 1960*, The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Misc./479. p.9

²⁵ 'An Act that all Religious Houses under the yearly Revenue of Two hundred Pounds shall be dissolved and given to the King and his Heirs.' 27 Hen VIII c 28 (Suppression of Religious Houses Act 1535) – citation of the Act by the short title was authorised by section 19 (2) of the Interpretation Act 1978.

²⁶ Whether this is meant as 'the Crown' in relation to the state (the Government), or the personification of the Crown (i.e. the Sovereign personified) has been questioned. The accepted view by both Buckingham Palace and the Cathedral's Chapter is the latter rather than the former.

endowments.²⁷ The relationship between Chapter and the Sovereign continues to this day – the Sovereign holding the First Cursal Canonry, which was attached to the Mastership of the dissolved college.

Little is known about the earliest Organists, William Warryn ²⁸ and Thomas Elliot (c.1563-?), although some fragmentary documents suggest that Nicholas David held the position of Master of the Choristers in the years around 1490 until his death in 1497.²⁹ Warryn is certainly the first identifiable Organist of St Davids Cathedral. In the cathedral account book, the *Liber Communis*, 'et sol[utum] Will[ielm]o Warryn organizanti 40s ³⁰ ³¹ for each of the three years 1490-92. Warryn also was the book-keeper, and received additional fees for keeping the accounts.³² As a Vicar Choral, Warryn was also in Holy Orders, having been ordained deacon on 20 May 1486, and priest on 23 September 1486.³³ Warren combined his duties at the cathedral with other commitments. He is also mentioned in the bishops' register as having resigned as rector of Freystrop in 1494.³⁴ Nicholas David is separately listed as 'Master of the Choristers' by the *Liber Communis* in 1492, which he was paid 26 shillings and 8 pence for the instruction of 4 choristers. The accounts of the chapter throughout the fifteenth century indicate that large sums were spent on feeding and clothing choristers. The *Liber Communis* records that wine, amounting to six pence worth (6^d) was provided to the Vicars Choral who sang the Passion narrative at the Mass on Palm Sunday.³⁵

The musical prestige of St Davids was well known in this period, drawing musicians from across England and Wales, and bringing to St Davids the family of one of its most famous musicians. An archiepiscopal visitation, held on 8 July 1504 found 16 Vicars Choral and seven choristers. It was noted that several of the Vicars Choral were also in Holy Orders and held other roles in addition to their singing positions. The prefix 'Dominus' indicates the person also being in Holy Orders.

Nomina Vicariorum Choralium [Names of the Vicars Choral]

D[ominus] Will[iam] Stevyns, Subdecanus	D[ominus] Joh[anes] Vachan
D[ominus] Tho[mas] Bacon, Succentor.	Joh[ann]es Lloyd
D[ominus] Tho[mas] Karun, Vice Thesaur[us],	Philip[us] Glynn
<i>detegitur de incontinentia</i> ³⁶	
D[ominus] Joh[ann]es Sydon	

²⁷ 27 Hen VIII c 28 (Suppression of Religious Houses Act 1535)

²⁸ c.1490

²⁹ Jones, W.B.T, & Freeman, E.J., *The History and Antiquities of St Davids*, J.H. & J. Parker, J. Russell Smith & J. Petheram, London, 1856, p.380

³⁰ '...and paid to William Warryn, organist'

³¹ National Library of Wales, MS SD/Ch/B 13, chapter account book (*Liber Communis*), 1384-1661 (partly a transcript), pp. 13,15,19,22.

³² Ibid.

³³ Issacson, R.F, & Roberts, R.Arthur, 'The Episcopal Registers of the Diocese of St David's 1397-1518', The Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion, London, 1917, Volume II, pp.462,474

³⁴ Ibid, p. 688

³⁵ National Library of Wales, MS SD/Ch/B 13, chapter account book (*Liber Communis*), 1384-1661 (partly a transcript), pp.14, 21

³⁶ Detected in fornication

D[ominus] Hugo Lloyd, <i>detegitur de incontinentia</i>	Jacob[us] White
D[ominus] Willfiam] Laurence	Joh[ann]es Adams
D[ominus] Philip de Wile	Joh[ann]es Parker
D[ominus] Jacobus Wilcoks	Henricus Pab
	Ric[ardus] Pab

Nomina Choristarum [names of choristers]

Tho[mas] Jevan	Ric[ard]us Jeffry
Will[iam] Morgan	Hugh Tawe ³⁷

Under Bishop Edward Vaughan,³⁸ the cathedral (in much of its current format) was completed – the addition of the perpendicular style chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity, the completion of the nave’s roof in Irish Oak and the completion of the upper extension of the tower. Music benefited from Vaughan’s grandiose vision for the Cathedral: the appointment of the composer John Norman³⁹ as Master of the Choristers early in his musical career certainly would have been a boon for cathedral music making – Norman’s *Missa Resurrexit Dominus*⁴⁰ and a three-part anthem *Miserere Mei*⁴¹ were included in collections which numbered compositions by John Taverner, John Merbecke, John Shephard, and Christopher Tye. One of Norman’s votive antiphons *Euge Dicta*, dating from the late 1520s, can be found contained within the Forest-Heyther part-books of Peterhouse, Cambridge. Norman left St Davids for London, finally serving as a clerk at Eton College between 1534-45. The final Master of the Choristers prior to the Reformation was Lewis Morris, aged 34 at the time of the dissolution of St Mary’s College in 1549. The Chapter account for the years 1557-58 show an award of £10 per annum ‘To the Master of the Choristers for keeping of the organ and teaching of the choristers’.⁴² As no person other than Morris is named between 1549 – 63, it is highly probable that Morris held the musical reigns until the appointment of Thomas Elliot in 1563.⁴³

The early 16th century saw a rise in complaints regarding the Vicars Choral to the Chapter. In 1561, Thomas Jones was dismissed for repeated drunkenness, and John Williams was threatened with expulsion for ‘improper conduct at the Lord’s Table & setting a bad example to others’.⁴⁴

David Lloyd was charged with the offence of keeping a tavern in the Cathedral precincts contrary to the Chapter Acts of 1562. It is possible that there were those more senior to Lloyd at

³⁷ Yardley, E and Ed. Green, F. *Menevia Sacra*, Cambrian Archaeological Association, Cardiff, 1927. p.383

³⁸ d. 1522

³⁹ c.1502-22

⁴⁰ Oxford, Bodleian Library Mus. Sch. E 376–81

⁴¹ Found in the Ritson manuscript

⁴² Yardley, E and Ed. Green, F. *Menevia Sacra*, Cambrian Archaeological Association, Cardiff, 1927. p.376

⁴³ Yardley, E and Ed. Green, F. *Menevia Sacra*, Cambrian Archaeological Association, Cardiff, 1927. p.376

⁴⁴ Payne, H.T., *Collectanea Menevensia* (MS SDCh/B28 National Library of Wales) p.9

fault, as Lloyd's response to the accusation was that he '...kept a better house than Mr. David Powell the Chancellor doth'.⁴⁵ July 1562 saw John Harris and Evan Ellis charged with '...coming by night unlawfully to Mr Chanter's⁴⁶ orchid suspiciously'.⁴⁷ What other deeds they committed are, unsurprisingly, omitted from the record. The chapter had cause in 1562 to remind the vicars choral of their attendance, especially when it was their turn to read the 'Epistles, Gospel or Chapters of the Old & New Testament'; they were to be penalised 12d should they neglect this duty.⁴⁸ Less than a month later William Owen, nominated to a post of vicar choral which had recently become vacant, was proved to be

insufficient, speciallye in redynge the Old Testament: whereupon he is enjoined daiely to read distinctlye XX psalmes of Davyd the Prophete, & also ii Chapters of the Olde Testamente, whereby he maye be perfect to execute the Office of Vicare Chorall: and thus to contynue untill suche tyme as he be approved by the worshipfull M' Thomas Huett Chauntor of the saied Cathedrale Church of S' Davyds - The premises observed by the saied William Owen, his admission to take effect otherwise not observed, fiat in misericordia Precentoris &c [may he be at the mercy of the precentor, etc]⁴⁹

Thomas Elliot was appointed by the Chapter on September 8 1563 as Organist and Master of the Choristers. The chapter act noted:

'...that one Thomas Elliot be at the same time appointed to the vicarage of the Canonry & Prebend of Clydey. VVhich said Thomas, besides his duty in the choir, shall teach the Choristers their plainsong, prick-song, & discant, & shall play the Organ when time requireth, upon such direction, order & wages as the worshipful M' Thomas Huet the Chantor, at his next coming shall take direction & order with the rest of his said Brothers, for his wages in doing yearly the same'⁵⁰

Elliot's appointment seemed to make little difference to discipline – the Chapter noting that on 22 November 1564,⁵¹ the Vicars Choral and others were found to be playing cards for candles in the residence of the Archdeacon of Cardigan.⁵² The younger vicars choral and choristers in 1564 had been neglecting their schooling, and so it was ordered that they

...shall be daily at school-days appointed to learn at six o'clock in the morning, & obediently to learn & continue with the school in all their accustomed times, obeying the said Schoolmaster.⁵³

⁴⁵ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/BI, CA1 p. 52

⁴⁶ There are discrepancies between the spelling – Chantor or Chanter? For the purposes of our research, the spellings in the source are given, accepting both as being the Precentor.

⁴⁷ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/BI, CA1, p. 57

⁴⁸ Payne, H.T., *Collectanea Menvensia* (MS SDCh/B28 National Library of Wales) p.51

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p.60

⁵¹ Ibid. p.87

⁵² Now a ruin opposite the Organist's Lodgings.

⁵³ Payne, H.T., *Collectanea Menvensia* (MS SDCh/B28 National Library of Wales) p.87

During Elliot's tenure, a number of changes occurred '...including the addition of several new stops to the organ and the purchase of three metrical psalters and three other books of 'Geneva Psalms'.⁵⁴ Protestant zeal certainly was in full swing in St Davids during the period. The sexton,⁵⁵ Ellis ap Howell was dismissed for concealing 'ungodly popish books...mass books, hymnals, Grails, antiphons and such like...'⁵⁶ The Precentor, Thomas Huett, ordered the books to be destroyed in the vestry in his presence, so that they could not be hidden or saved, destroying forever a rich and valuable part of St Davids' medieval past.

The Tomkins Family

The composer, Thomas Tomkins, received his early musical education as a Chorister at St Davids from his father, Thomas Farington Tomkins.⁵⁷ T.F. Tomkins came to St Davids from his familial home in Lostwithiel, Cornwall to take a position as Vicar Choral. The Tomkins family had a long association with the cloth trade in Cornwall. The first record of T.F Tomkins being in St Davids is his signature as a witness to a deed on 28 July 1565.⁵⁸ Chapter papers from July 1571 deal with T.F Tomkins and an illicit relationship with a maid, whilst Margaret Pore, his wife (and mother to Thomas Tomkins) was not resident in the close. On July 14 1571, T.F Tomkins was

Admonished by Mr Chanter...to procure and get home his wedded wife as is supposed betwixt this present day and one fortnight after Lamma Day next, and for his sinful act committed with his maidservant etc., though he seem, from the bottom of his heart to be sorry for his offence, yet to give to the poor namely to David Glover 3s 4d to pray for him upon pain of deprivation of his stall and living thereunto belonging to the which article he did assent.⁵⁹

The Chapter must have held T.F. Tomkins in high regard, both musically and personally, for them not to be dismissed from their employment.

By 1573, T.F. Tomkins had been named as 'Master of the Choristers' in addition to his role as Vicar Choral. H. Watkins Shaw, in research during the 1970s at St Davids, suggests that T.F Tomkins held this position as early as 1571, as he ranked in precedence below four ordained members of the College in Chapter documents of the period,⁶⁰ however it is likely that Tomkins was acting as assistant to Thomas Elliot. In his work on the younger son Thomas, Anthony Boden believes that the original appointment of T.F Tomkins as 'Master of the Choristers' may have been in fact a general teaching

⁵⁴ Evans, D., 'A Cornish Musician in Wales' in *Journal of the Institute of Cornish Studies*, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1987, p.15

⁵⁵ A precursor of the modern Verger, however it is possible that Ellis ap Howell fulfilled other roles within the Cathedral.

⁵⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/BI, CA1, p.236

⁵⁷ In order to save confusion, Thomas Farington Tomkins is referred to as 'T.F.Tomkins', his composer son referred to as 'Thomas'.

⁵⁸ Ed. Green, F., *The West Wales Historical Records*, Carmarthen, 1916, p.11

⁵⁹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/BI, CA1, p.236

⁶⁰ Watkins Shaw, H. *The Succession of Organists of the Chapel Royal and the Cathedrals of England and Wales from c.1538*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 149

position, rather than one associated with teaching choristers music for cathedral worship.⁶¹ It had been usual for one of the Priest Vicars to serve in a teaching capacity to the choristers as 'Bishop's Vicar'.⁶² By 1577, T.F Tomkins had been appointed 'organ player' (or Organist) in addition to his duties as Master of the Choristers. An entry in the chapter act book on 29 April 1577 shows that a stipend of a vicar choral was allocated to Tomkins's eldest son Thomas (a chorister, and **not** the composer) in order to ease financial strain to the family. The same entry provides proof that T.F. Tomkins served as both organist and master of the choristers. It goes on to indicate that there were problems maintaining the statutory number of choristers:

Whereas Thomas Tomkins Master of the Choristers, & Organ Player in this Church, as well by his own report, as by testimony of others, declareth that he hath not so great wages as others have had who occupied his place heretofore; and also credibly affirmeth that he is not able to live and continue a member of this Church upon such wages and commodity as he now enjoyeth, but must of necessity be obliged to leave this Church, and to accept such a place, as with greater commodity, wages and living, is elsewhere offered unto him. It is therefore ordered, constituted and appointed [...] that Thomas Tomkins the younger, Son unto the foresaid Thomas Tomkins the elder, now being one of the Choristers of this Church, shall from henceforth, to the end that his poor Father at whose finding he is, may thereby the rather be relieved, have a Vicar's Stall in the said Cathedral Church of St David's which one Richard Johnson lately held, and is now void, and from the Feast of St John the Baptist next coming, shall and may enjoy all profits and commodities belonging to the same stall and place of Vicar Choral, without defalcation, according to the custom of the Church. And it is further appointed, constituted and decreed that there is now but one chorister in this Church besides the said Tomkins the younger (the Statute requiring six in all) two other children of years, voice and aptitudes, likely to do God's service, as appertaineth to a Chorister of the foresaid Church, shall be appointed by the Chanter and Chapter, so that at least there may be three of them continually kept and maintained. ⁶³

The musical life of the cathedral quickly began to deteriorate. By 1577, recruitment of both Vicars Choral and choristers was beginning to falter, and the organ itself was beginning to fail. By 1585, the post of organist had been suspended – the organ being found to be unplayable. Bishop Marmaduke Middleton directed the chapter on 10 June 1584 to erect a new organ,⁶⁴ however as no work had been undertaken by the chapter meeting held on 27 July 1585, the position of organist was suspended. T.F. Tomkins' first wife, Margaret, had died during this period, and by 1586 he had married Anne Hargest of Penarthur.⁶⁵ The Hargest family originated in Radnorshire, and had considerable wealth. It

⁶¹ Boden, Anthony, *Thomas Tomkins: The Last Elizabethan*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2005, p.23

⁶² As prescribed by Bishop Adam Houghton.

⁶³ Payne, H.T., *Collectanea Menvensia* (MS SDCh/B28 National Library of Wales) p.43

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.56

⁶⁵ Penarthur is a farm, located 0.7 miles north of the Cathedral

is believed that this was the first time in his life that T.F. Tomkins could consider himself financially stable. It is likely that after his marriage, T.F Tomkins took his family to Gloucestershire. His departure from St Davids came at a difficult time for the family, as the eldest son Thomas was expelled from his position as Vicar Choral for 'gross misbehaviour' on 22 January 1586⁶⁶ – the expulsion saw him taking to sea, and drowning aboard Sir Richard Grenville's ship, *Revenge* at the battle of Flores in 1591. Thomas Farington Tomkins' career ended at Gloucester, where he retired as Precentor of the Cathedral, dying in 1627. Whilst there is little evidence to suggest that T.F Tomkins' most famous son ever served as a chorister at St Davids, certainly Thomas Tomkins, and indeed his eminent organist brothers John and Giles' future careers as musicians and singers stems in no small part from the early musical upbringing they experienced at St Davids.

The Tumult, Commonwealth and Restoration

Following T.F. Tomkins' departure, William Huett was appointed as Master of the Choristers in 1587. Huett, son of Prebendary Thomas Huett, had been an objectionable character, but, upon appointment as Master of Choristers, he apologized for any past incidents⁶⁷ and agreed to mend his ways. Rev. Marmaduke Pardo, who had served as Vicar Choral under Tomkins, was appointed as Organist following the repair of the organ sometime before 1617. Pardo's tenure was tempestuous - he was censured twice by the Chapter for 'sundry misdemeanours'. In 1617 He was deprived of the curateship of the parish of St Davids⁶⁸ and later the role of Master of the Choristers. He remained Organist until Chapter Day (24 July) 1619, when he was then suspended from that post.⁶⁹ He later served as Organist of St Laurence, Ludlow, before emigrating to British North America and settling as a Quaker in Pennsylvania.⁷⁰ Richard Marrock succeeded Pardo as Master of the Choristers, being appointed by chapter on 28 June 1617.⁷¹

The chapter account book of 1620-21 records a payment to 'one John Silvester – Organist of Old Radnor', although the amount paid is illegible in the account book.⁷² As no further reference to Silvester is made, we must assume that he was either paid to repair the organ or was simply acting as a relief organist. Between 1619 and 1642, separate payments were made to an Organist and 'Instructor of the Children'. After 1642 there is little recorded information in chapter records and accounts and no indication regarding the identity of the organist prior to 1672 when William Pardo was appointed. The choral foundation was at a low ebb, only able to perform the more modest works of Gibbons, Weelkes and the St Davids-born Tomkins. The eminent musical scholar Peter le Huray notes in his

⁶⁶ Payne, H.T., *Collectanea Menvensia* (MS SDCh/B28 National Library of Wales) p.63

⁶⁷ Jones, W.B.T, & Freeman, E.J., *The History and Antiquities of St Davids*, J.H. & J. Parker, J. Russell Smith & J. Petheram, London, 1856, p.343

⁶⁸ Then, a well-endowed position.

⁶⁹ Former St Davids Organist, Geraint Bowen, in research for his book *The Organs of St Davids Cathedral*, suggests that Marmaduke Pardo had contracted a clandestine marriage, without the approval of the chapter.

⁷⁰ Reynolds, T.R, 'A Study of Music and Liturgy, Choirs and Organs in Monastic and Secular Foundations in Wales and the Borderlands, 1485-1645', PhD Thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, October 2002. p.162.

⁷¹ Payne, H.T., *Collectanea Menvensia* (MS SDCh/B28 National Library of Wales) p.79

⁷² The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B13, 1620-21 Accounts

article 'Towards a definitive study of pre-Reformation Anglican Service music' that the choir of St Davids in 1644 consisted of only eight men and four boys.⁷³ Numbers continued to dwindle, and the choir was disbanded during the Commonwealth period. Local legend speaks of Commonwealth soldiers destroying the organ and music, and of Commonwealth soldiers facing attack by the boy choristers. A boy, by the name of Williams, seriously injured one of the soldiers by throwing a stone at him from atop the Quire screen. It was believed that Williams escaped retribution by concealing himself under one of the bells.⁷⁴

For the foundation at St Davids, the Commonwealth period was more musically devastating than the Reformation. Whilst theological and ecclesiological changes had swept through the church, and the political climate of the period had led to the seizure of monastic lands and financial holdings, as a cathedral of the 'Old Foundation', St Davids' exposure was more limited than those of the monastic cathedrals (the 'new foundations'). The disruption of the Commonwealth and Protectorate period seems to have had far more of a degrading effect.

Evidence suggests that the choir had been reformed by 1668, when William Pardo was listed as a Vicar Choral in Visitation documents,⁷⁵ but not as either Organist or Master of the Choristers. However, between the period of 1668-72, Pardo had been elected to both positions, leading a choir of four men and four boys⁷⁶ - sadly, the highs of the Restoration, which brought a new era of great church music, did not immediately trickle down to St Davids. At the Chapter meeting of 24 July 1672, Pardo was deprived of the role of Master of the Choristers, remaining Organist and Vicar Choral, being replaced as Master by David George, also a Vicar Choral.⁷⁷ By 1695, the Chapter had agreed that the Organ, again in dire straits, having survived almost intact since 1581, needed replacing, and decreed '...that £10 out of the allowance to the Master of the Fabric should be set aside annually for five years...' so a new instrument could be built by 'Father' [Bernard] Smith. H. Watkins Shaw, in his 1971 article 'Some stray notes on 'Father' Smith', discovered that the 1705 Organ was overseen and undertaken (on Smith's behalf) by Christopher Schreider, Smith's son-in-law. Watkins Shaw calculated the total expenditure by the Chapter on the instrument, was almost £550, an amazing amount for a remote cathedral lacking in major endowments.⁷⁸ By the time the organ build was complete, Henry Mordant (I) had taken up the role as Organist. Firstly appointed as Master of the Choristers in 1697, by 1697-98 accounts showed his stipend being increased in each year, in addition to his payments as copier of music. Unlike his predecessors, Mordant was not elected to as a Vicar Choral until 1713, when the Chapter voted at their meeting to elect him to the next vicar-choralship, thereby solidifying

⁷³ le Huray, P., 'Towards a definitive study of pre-Reformation Anglican Service music' in *Musica Disciplina* Vol XVI, 1960, pp. 167-195.

⁷⁴ Fenton, R. *A Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire*, London, 1810, p.47-8

⁷⁵ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/BI, CA5, p.127

⁷⁶ Ibid, CA1, p.315

⁷⁷ Ibid, CA1, p.312

⁷⁸ Watkins Shaw, H. 'Some stray notes on 'Father' Smith', *The Organ*, 1971.

his importance within the Cathedral's musical life. Chapter Acts of 1707 provide an interesting snapshot of repertoire performed, including services by Tallis and Blow (in E minor), anthems including Farrant's *Call to Remembrance*, Pelham Humphries' *O give thanks* and the anthem attributed to John Redford, *Rejoice in the Lord*, as well as Orlando Gibbons set of responses.⁷⁹ Within a year of his election to a vacant Vicar-Choralskip, Mordant was deposed in place of his son, Henry Mordant (II) the younger, whose tenure is lacking in any evidence or anecdotes, save for a reference in the July Chapter Acts of 1714, where it notes that '...Henry Mordant the younger to be organist in room of his father Henry Mordant the elder and elect Henry Harries to be a chorister in the room of Mordant [the younger]'.⁸⁰

The junior Mordant's immediate successors were less than notable, with exceptionally short tenure. Mordant's successor, Richard Tomkins, whilst holding the post in an undistinguished manner for under a year in 1719, did lead the Chapter to resolve, at their July Chapter meeting, to annex the post of Junior Vicar Choral to that of organist in perpetuity. It seems that there were worries regarding Richard Tomkins, as the Chapter stated that '...Richard Tomkins, the organist...' was to hold the vicar-choralskip 'so long and no longer as he shall hold the situation and perform the duties of organist'.⁸¹ The Chapter's fears were well-founded, as at the following years Chapter meeting, the office of organist was declared vacant '...in consequence of the dereliction of the same by Richard Tomkins',⁸² appointing William Bishop to the joint role of Vicar Choral and Organist by a majority of the Chapter, with the Precentor⁸³ dissenting. Bishop's tenure was slightly longer and more tempestuous than his predecessor's. He was suspended less than a year after taking the post, being restored for one year '...by way of probation'.⁸⁴ In 1725, he was suspended '...for his stupid and notorious neglect of duty and intemperance and more especially for his drunkenness' for a period of two years, not to return to his post once the suspension was over. In the interregnum between the suspension, and the appointment of Henry Williams, Matthew Madox was appointed Vicar Choral and organist. Williams again is a holder of the position to whom little is attributed, however it seems that some efforts were made during this period to keep repertoire up to date, for the Cathedral acquired a copy of Croft's *Musica Sacra* shortly after its publication in 1725.

The Eighteenth-Century Part-books and Cathedral Repertoire

Matthew Madox, together with his successors Matthew Philpott and Arthur Richardson are most likely to have been responsible for the majority of transcriptions within the St Davids Part-book,⁸⁵ a collection containing selections from Croft's *Musica Sacra* (1725) as well as Thomas

⁷⁹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B6, 27 July 1707.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 24 July 1714.

⁸¹ Ibid, 24 July 1719.

⁸² Ibid, 23 July 1720.

⁸³ At this point, the Precentor was the highest ranking official – his dissent proved ominous.

⁸⁴ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B6, 24 July 1722

⁸⁵ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Ms E 3/5

Tomkins' own *Musica Dei Sacra* (1684), William Boyce's *Fifteen Anthems and Te Deum and Jubilate in score* (1780) as well as some additions from the eighteenth and nineteenth century. These part-books served the Cathedral well – additions in the hand of organist John Barrett are contained within the book, making it entirely possible that their lifespan was well over a century. The musical choice within the part-book represents the repertoire of that period – some of it now confined merely to academic note rather than active performance.

The 16th and 17th century are represented by repertoire that still remains within the canon of Anglican repertoire. The popular responses setting by Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-85) are the only contained within the manuscript – a highly popular setting during the 18th century, yet incredibly simple. The familiar funeral anthem *Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts* by Henry Purcell (1659-95) join the now forgotten canticle settings *in D* by Benjamin Rogers (1614-98) and *in G major* by Henry Aldridge (1647-1710). Both are incomplete settings to modern standards: in Rogers' setting *in D*, the Morning canticles of *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* are joined by a setting of the Nicene Creed from the Communion service, followed by the Evening canticles of *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*. Aldridge's communion service *in G* follows a similar format with the addition of the *Kyrie Eleison* – an oddity to modern liturgical musicians would be that the text of the *Sanctus* is written within the score and would be said, not sung. Whilst foreign to Anglican liturgical musicians, chopping and changing between settings was commonplace in the 17th and 18th centuries. One can hope that the inclusion of a *Sanctus* by Thomas Dupuis (1733-96) was a sign of the continuation of the liturgical principals of the Laudian movement (espoused by the former Bishop of St Davids and later martyr Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud), rather than the musical fashion of the period of singing movements of the communion service as introits at the start of the liturgy, only for the choir to disappear following the ante-communion⁸⁶ as was the custom late into the 19th century.⁸⁷ Some inclusions from the 17th century seem to be repertoire known only to God and the occasional chance academic – William Croft's *O be joyful in God* and Jeremiah Clarke's *I will love thee* join then choirmaster John Day's own setting of the Morning canticles *in D* as well as his chorus-anthem *Let thy hand help me*.⁸⁸ However, some repertoire and works of this period would be instantly recognisable today – G.F Handel's coronation anthem *Zadok the priest*, and selections from his oratorio *Messiah*, including *Halleluia Chorus*, *Glory to God* and the bass air *The trumpet shall sound*.⁸⁹ Whilst some of the contents of the partbook are of some difficulty, the majority can be best described as simple, and of moderate musical quality. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Chapter seem to have regained musical impetus.

Madox successor, Matthew Philpott (alias Matthew Phillips) was appointed at the July Chapter meeting of 1734. The eminent authority, H. Watkins Shaw, in his work *The Succession of Organists*

⁸⁶ Following the Nicene Creed and the sermon in the 1662 communion rite.

⁸⁷ Bartlett, P., *Barchester: English Cathedral life in the Nineteenth century*, SPCK, London, 1993 p. xx

⁸⁸ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B8, p.115

⁸⁹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Ms E 3/5

suggests, through evidence gathered via John Rouse Bloxham's *A Register of the Presidents, Fellows, Demies, Instructors in Grammar and in Music, Chaplains, Clerks, Choristers, and other Members of St. Mary Magdalen College, Oxford*, that Phillips may have also served briefly as Organist of Magdalen College, Oxford earlier in 1734.⁹⁰ Again, there is little, if any interesting information regarding such a long tenure – the Chapter were concerned at the expense of the Cathedral's staff, including eight Vicars Choral, four Choristers and an Organist in 1740, for the sum of £336 10s 10d.⁹¹ The Cathedral's fabric was in a desperate state, with the majority of houses for Vicars Choral deemed uninhabitable.⁹² The role of formally appointing Vicars Choral (then, as now) fell to the Chapter – and during the latter half of the eighteenth century, to the 'Chantor and the Chapter'.⁹³ As these appointments were to the Lower Chapter,⁹⁴ formal collation and installation was necessary. We are fortunate that three legal documents or 'bonds' of appointment are held in the National Library of Wales from 1742, 1753 and 1794. The three bonds appointing Richard Propert, John Roberts and William Wright are explicit in their demands of attendance:

And whereas it hath often happened that several of the said Vicars Choral after they were admitted into the said office and place in the said Cathedral Church have been remiss and negligent in the performance and duty of their office and in attending Choir Service in the said church, and have very often totally neglected the same and have gone to live and reside in places remote and have taken up office, employs and business whereby the honour of God and the duty and honour of the said church have been very much neglected Now therefore the condition of the above obligation is such that of the said John Roberts shall well and truly discharge and attend the duty and office of Vicar Choral in the said church and shall and will live in the City or Parish of St Davids and not remove from there nor be absent from the duty and service of the choir without leave first had and obtained from the Chantor and Chapter of St Davids or at least from such Canon or Canons as shall happen to be upon residence at the time of such his removal or absence.⁹⁵

In each bond, the terminology becomes ever more succinct, but the general rule that a Vicar Choral must be present at services (rather than providing a deputy, and thereby being able to enhance his income through alternative means) and only be absent with the permission of the senior prebend.⁹⁶

At the July Chapter meeting of 1775, John Bowen was elected to Matthew Philpott's post of Vicar Choral. Bowen's appointment was not tied to the post of Organist. Bowen's successor as choir

⁹⁰ Bloxham, J.R., *A Register of the Presidents, Fellows, Demies, Instructors in Grammar and in Music, Chaplains, Clerks, Choristers, and other Members of St. Mary Magdalen College, Oxford*, The University Press, Oxford, 1853-7, volume iii, p.210.

⁹¹ Yardley, E and Ed. Green, F. *Menevia Sacra*, Cambrian Archaeological Association, Cardiff, 1927. p.330

⁹² *Ibid.* p.7

⁹³ 'Mr Chantor' is referred to in both SDCH/Misc/244,248 and 255 in the appointment of Vicars Choral.

⁹⁴ The formal corporation of Lay Vicars Choral and Priest Vicars.

⁹⁵ The National Library of Wales SDCH/Misc/248

⁹⁶ SDCh/Misc/248 states that permission must be sort from the 'Chantor and Chapter...or from such Canon or Canons as shall happen to be on residence'. SDCh/Misc/255 states that permission should be sort from the Canon Residentiary – whether that is the senior prebendal canon holding residence at that time is unclear.

trainer was taken up by John Day in 1782. Day's election was significant, as he was appointed to fill the vacancy of a priest-Vicar Choral, which was more financially rewarding. The Chapter formalised Day's responsibilities over the choir in 1783, granting him 'the sole care' of instructing the choristers, and granting him an additional stipend of £10. 10 s,⁹⁷ granting him a leave from reading duty at Mattins.⁹⁸ His resignation is recorded in the Chapter minutes of their July 1787 meeting. Day however did not play the organ – Matthew Philpott served as Organist until his death in 1792.

The appointment of Arthur Richardson, who was appointed from Armagh Cathedral as a Vicar Choral in 1787 and Organist from 1792, saw a re-invigoration of the choral foundation, with the Chapter agreeing to the repair of the Smith/Schreider organ, with Richardson himself giving £5. 5s towards the repair.⁹⁹ Richardson's appointment was lengthy – 31 years in total. Three of his sons, John, William and Peter served as choristers under him; Peter was later ordained and served as Perpetual Curate¹⁰⁰ of Henfynw, Cardiganshire, within the Diocese of St Davids. The investment in repairing the organ and introduction of new music, including a setting of Evening canticles by the organist of Armagh Cathedral Robert Langdon, showed bright promise at the start of Richardson's tenure - but by 1825 the Chapter had become impatient. At the July Chapter, Richardson's slackness with the choir was reprimanded, with the recommendation that 'the Chapter gift of Six guineas to the lay vicars for anthems on Sundays be withdrawn, no anthem having been sung for the last two years; and that the organist be admonished to pay more attention to the instruction of the choir than he has lately done'. This, whilst a disappointment to twenty-first century readers, seemed to be the norm within many foundations during the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth centuries.

⁹⁷ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B8, 24 July 1782

⁹⁸ St Davids maintained the tradition of a Vicar Choral reading the first lesson until 1804. Within the clergy, the tradition is maintained to this day, with the junior and senior members of the Lower and Upper Chapter reading the first and second lessons respectively at Morning and Evening Prayer.

⁹⁹ Payne, H.T., *Collectanea Menvensia* (SDCh/B28 The National Library of Wales), p.447

¹⁰⁰ Vicar or Incumbent

Chapter 2. The Established Church 1840 - 1896

Cathedrals in the age of reform

The cathedrals of England and Wales had, with some minor exceptions, remained consistently unchanged since the end of the Reformation. Many of them retained privileges (by law and by custom) that had survived (albeit, slightly curtailed) since the Middle Ages.¹⁰¹ Cathedrals were governed independently of one another – being a part of the local diocese, whilst remaining independent of its own bishop and diocesan structure, and with no national co-ordination of governance.

By 1830, there was growing demand for parliamentary reform of the entire Church of England, especially in relation to its finances and fairer distribution of ecclesiastical revenues. In many cases, cathedrals were viewed as the embodiment of unaccountable power, with many holding large estate portfolios funding their retinue of clergy and lay servants. These fiefdoms thrived on political intrigue and good living, described by Philip Barrett as ‘general worldliness’,¹⁰² with nepotism playing a huge part in local appointments,¹⁰³ and often in appointments to the cathedral’s governing body, the Chapter. This was the era of non-resident clergy, as epitomised by the fictitious Prebendary of Barchester and Rector of Crabtree Canonorum, Dr Vasey Stanhope in Anthony Trollope’s Barchester Towers, who rarely (if ever) resides within his parish, spending much of his time on Lake Como collecting butterflies. This too affected Cathedrals: Deans and residentiary canons also held pluralities – Kenneth Long uses the example of the plurality of the Deanery of Carlisle and the Rectory of St George’s, Hanover Square.¹⁰⁴ Two notable examples of plurality in the nineteenth century in Wales include the combination of the Bishopric of Llandaff and the Deanery of St Paul’s (multiple instances), and the Bishopric of St Davids and the Deanery of Durham under Connop Thirwall. The widespread plurality led to the slackening of standards in Cathedrals in all areas, including the state of the buildings, in worship and in the conduct of their choirs, as will be demonstrated below in relation to St Davids.

Early attempts by the Whig government of Lord Grey to begin any review of the church ended in defeat for the reformers, leading to a direct intervention by William IV to end the dead-lock between the reformers (mainly based in the House of Commons), and the bishops who took their places in the House of Lords. The Whig government successfully steered the Reform Act 1832 through to promulgation, keeping the torch of reform of public institutions ablaze. The bishops realized quickly that their political protectors, the Conservatives, had also taken up the cause of reform. Sir Robert

¹⁰¹ For instance, the secular jurisdiction of the Bishop of Durham over the County Palatine of Durham until the powers were surrendered to the Crown through the Durham (County Palatine) Act 1836.

¹⁰² Barrett, Philip. *Barchester: English cathedral life in the nineteenth century*. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1993. pp. 4 – 5.

¹⁰³ Such as for Vicars Choral, Minor Canons, Vergers and lay staff.

¹⁰⁴ Long, Kenneth, *The Music of the English Church*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1972, p.319

Peel's *Tamworth Manifesto* of 1835 cemented the Conservatives to a platform of modest reform of the Church of England, promising to undertake a careful review of civil and ecclesiastical institutions, and, in the case of the ecclesiastical institutions, to preserve and reform them in the interest of the Established religion. Whilst at first Peel and the Conservatives formed a minority government, as per custom of the time, Peel conceded to the Whig opposition when it became apparent that he could not command a majority in the House of Commons. Whilst Peel would not return as Prime Minister until 1841, the Whigs enthusiastically took up the review and reform mantle. In 1835, two commissions were formed to lead the review and make necessary reforms. These dealt with a wide remit within the Church of England, leading to a number of reports and six acts of Parliament between 1836 and 1866. The 1840 Act 'to carry into effect, with certain Modifications, the Fourth Report of the Commissioners of Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues'¹⁰⁵ dealt exclusively with cathedrals, their governance and financial reform. At St Davids, the act suspended two canonries,¹⁰⁶ with the cure of souls for the parish of St Davids granted to Chapter shared amongst them, with one-sixth of revenues put aside to endow the prebendary of the Archdeacon of Cardigan.¹⁰⁷

The governance at St Davids had been irregular since the Reformation. Prior to 1840, the Chapter was led by the Precentor,¹⁰⁸ referred to as 'Mr Chantor' in documents throughout the post-Reformation period, together with a Treasurer and Chancellor. These form three of the four designated offices of an Old Foundation cathedral. A Dean, who presided over and led the Chapter, was the customary fourth (and most senior) officer. The incumbent Precentor, Llewelin Lewellin, became the first Dean on the implementation of the Act on 13 August 1840, combining the office of Dean and Precentor. The combination of these two offices would shine unwanted light on activities within the Choral Foundation, and later in the century demonstrate the friction between the Chapter as governing body and the rights and customs of its lesser officers and servants.

The Choir and Musical Life in the age of reform

The Reverend John Jebb, in his *The Choral Service of the United Church of England and Ireland*, documents the despicable standards of many notable foundations – at St Paul's Cathedral, a choir which at one time had forty-two choirmen, was reduced to six in 1843, and that the choir of Westminster Abbey was '...wretchedly few in number, were permitted to perform their duties by deputy,¹⁰⁹ and these were discharged in a manner which at best was barely tolerable, without life or

¹⁰⁵ Ecclesiastical Commissioners Act 1840, c Victoria 3-4, 113. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/3-4/113/introduction/enacted> accessed on 18/05/2020 at 14.56.

¹⁰⁶ Membership of the governing body (the Chapter), together with tithes, revenues and other payments belonging to it reverting to the commissioners.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ The title is taken from the Latin *Præcentor*, meaning 'one who sings': prior to the Reformation, the person was the chief cantor, or first singer.

¹⁰⁹ The role of deputies in Cathedral Choirs is a continuing tradition – many cathedrals have a pool of singers who can be called on to augment the choir or replace a Lay Clerk or Vicar Choral not in attendance. Rules regarding deputies vary from foundation to foundation.

energy'.¹¹⁰ If this was the case at both St Paul's and the Abbey, then what hope was there for regional cathedrals?

By the end of Arthur Richardson's tenure as Organist at St Davids in 1822, choir practices had been abandoned; like many other cathedrals of the period, the repertoire would have been stifled – placed into 'rotation'.¹¹¹ As can be seen in the verse anthems of Thomas Attwood (some of which are still in the repertoire today) and William Crotch (many which have been discarded), standards had to be kept low in order to guarantee any sort of performance, which explains why much of the sixteenth and seventeenth century repertoire fell into disuse. Cathedral chapters in this period were not prepared to spend money on replacing or purchasing new music, having sacrificed much of their corporate income to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and day-by-day experiencing such low-quality performance. An account by an 'anonymous' organist, tells of the desperate situation chapters faced: 'They [the chapter] never spend a pound to purchase music; and if they did, the choir is in such a wretched state, we could not sing it'.¹¹² The campaigns of Rev. John Jebb and Samuel Sebastian Wesley greatly brought to light the need for reform of Cathedral music, and its importance within liturgical worship, leading to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners sending a questionnaire to precentors and organists in order to take the temperature of the national church. Both Jebb's publication and Wesley's *Few Words on Cathedral Music*¹¹³ enshrined ideas that helped shape cathedral music for the next generation. The opening of St Michael's College, Tenbury by Frederick Gore Ouseley in 1856 as a training ground for church musicians, a raise in organist pay and their education, as well as better conditions for gentleman singers promised a golden age for cathedral music.

The crusading zeal of Maria Hackett, whose campaign for the better treatment of choristers at St Paul's led to a national re-evaluation of choristers training and treatment through her work *A brief account of Cathedral and Collegiate Schools* published in 1821.¹¹⁴ Hackett devoted her life to investigating, encouraging and protecting choristers from those set above them within a cathedral's hierarchy. St Davids, being geographically much more isolated than the other cathedrals of Wales could have been neglected from surveys and scrutiny – however, Maria Hackett was never one to shirk responsibility and her publication of 1821 sheds some light on chorister's education and conditions at St Davids. At the time of her investigation, there were six choristers, who would be recruited between the ages of five and ten years old, who could hold their choristership until the age of 16 – by this age, they would either be sent off to work as an apprentice, or, as Hackett herself writes 'after completing their studies... [some] enter into holy orders, and many have risen to

¹¹⁰ Jebb, J., *The Choral Service of the United Church of England and Ireland*, John W. Parker, London, 1843, pp.130-2

¹¹¹ Unlike the rotation of today, it would mean the same two or three sets of canticles and anthems being repeated at every sung service.

¹¹² Long, K., *The Music of the English Church*, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., London, 1971, p.320

¹¹³ Wesley, S.S., *A Few Words on Cathedral Music*, Riddington, London, 1849

¹¹⁴ Hackett, M. *A brief account of Cathedral and Collegiate Schools; with an abstract of their statutes and endowments. Respectfully addressed to the Dignitaries of the Established Church*, J.B. Nichols, London, 1825.

eminence within the church'.¹¹⁵ Their education, under Bishop's Vicar, the Rev W. Richardson, included Greek and Latin, and were '...carefully instructed in the principals of religion'.¹¹⁶ Their school was located in what now is the Cathedral's library. They received their musical education under the Organist, at his house.¹¹⁷ Some months before her death in 1874, Maria Hackett, aged 91, finally visited St Davids to enquire and inspect the conditions of the choristers. Her role as 'the Chorister's friend' is still remembered, and she is commemorated with a memorial in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral.

Whilst reforms began to take hold in much of the country, the general round of *opus dei* continued in St Davids, as it did in other cathedrals, with musicians and clergy arriving and moving at some frequency. Arthur Richardson's successor, John Barrett ¹¹⁸ being appointed Vicar Choral and Organist in 1826, ¹¹⁹ has very little written about him. It is clear that some reforming progress was made. The Smith/Schmidt organ, now well over a hundred years old, was now in desperate need of replacing. The Chapter commissioned London organ-builder Henry Cephias Lincoln to build a new instrument, whilst keeping the original Smith/Schmidt case; the new instrument was dedicated and inaugurated at the July Chapter meeting of 1843. It seems that, like many organ projects, the Chapter had been too ambitious – the Great Organ lacked its Clarion reeds (certainly because of cost – Hopkins and Rimbault in their 1855 edition of their book *The Organ* noted that 'the instrument is pierced and ready for the clarion, although there are as yet no pipes for it'¹²⁰), the organ was not fitted with a Choir organ, which Hopkins and Rimbault agree is '...a sad defect, as it is so much required in Cathedral services'.¹²¹ It seems that the instrument was beset with technical and settling issues with damp affecting it both tonally and structurally.¹²²

This instrument was inherited by William Peregrine Propert, who was appointed as organist following the death of John Barrett in 1851. Propert, born locally in Milford Haven in 1831, studied at St Davids College, Lampeter, being admitted in 1848. In 1849, he matriculated at Jesus College, Oxford, where he took the degree of Bachelor of Music in 1850. He was appointed as Organist and Junior Vicar Choral at the July Chapter meeting of 1851. ¹²³ It seems that an arrangement had been made for Propert to continue his studies whilst holding both posts, matriculating at Trinity Hall, Cambridge in the Lent Term of 1852. He incorporated as a Bachelor of Music from University of Cambridge) in 1852, and took the BA in 1856 in Theology and Mathematics. He returned to St Davids in 1853,

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p.19

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p.19

¹¹⁷ One would assume that this would be at that time Cloister Hall. The Organist's Lodgings was not carved out of the Chancellor's Mansion until the early twentieth century.

¹¹⁸ Organist, 1826-51

¹¹⁹ This is the first time in the modern era that the posts are joined from the start of tenure.

¹²⁰ Hopkins, E.J. and Rimbault, E.H., *The Organ, its history and construction*, Robert Cocks & Son, London, 1851

¹²¹ Ibid. p.557

¹²² Jones, W.B.T. & Freeman, E.J., *The History and Antiquities of St Davids*, J.H. & J. Parker, J. Russell Smith & J. Petheram, London, 1856, p.95

¹²³ The position of Organist was 'additional'. To be in receipt of a stipend (pay) and other rights within the College of Vicars Choral (the 'Lesser Chapter'), the position of Organist was annexed to the position of the Junior Vicar Choral. This put the Organist at a disadvantage within the 'Lesser Chapter'.

formally accounting to Chapter regarding the performance of the choristers in the previous year – ‘...seventeen anthems have been learnt by them...together with fifty chants and sixteen psalm tunes’,¹²⁴ as well as encouraging the recruitment of three local adult singers at the cost of £45-50 per year. J.P Williams, the Sub-Chantor, replied to Propert on September 2, 1853 regarding the recruitment of the additional Vicars Choral, claiming that the lower chapter ‘...had not received a sufficient order from the Dean and Chapter for that purpose.’¹²⁵ It seems that Propert had been too quick off the mark – at the time of his correspondence with the Chapter, he still had not been inducted as Vicar Choral. Whether this was a recognised probationary period is unclear, however Dean Llewellyn Lewelin served a mandate on the Lower Chapter on October 3 1853 to induct and install William Propert into the Lower Chapter. At the 1855 July Chapter meeting, Propert asked to be considered for the post of ‘minor canon’ (Priest Vicar), in which case he would seek holy orders and resign as organist; it is not known whether this was formally turned down, but Propert was never ordained.¹²⁶

The Deprivation of Mr Propert (The Propert ‘Saga’)

The restoration of the Cathedral between 1864 and 1876 saw the first wave of structural and aesthetic building work on the Cathedral since John Nash rebuilt the West Front and carried out structural work in the 1790s. George Gilbert Scott’s work to rebuild the western piers of the crossing made it necessary for the Lincoln organ to be dismantled. During this period of restoration, cathedral worship was heavily disrupted; without organ, the choir’s repertoire would have been severely limited, making it difficult to add new works to what was now a growing canon of new liturgical music for the Anglican Church. Watkins Shaw, in his opus magnum *The Succession of Organists of the Chapel Royal and the Cathedrals of England and Wales from c. 1538* attempted to chart what was a rather problematic and challenging issue regarding Propert and his role as Organist. Indeed, it could be argued that the Propert ‘saga’ could still be an issue for future St Davids organists regarding their appointment and dismissal, as no formal statute regarding appointment of the Cathedral’s musicians exist currently.¹²⁷ The Propert ‘saga’ is complex and has proven difficult to fully piece together as a great deal of the papers have been lost. Whilst we cannot be completely sure of the outcome, we are now able to gain greater understanding of the timeframe and circumstance of events more clearly.

In readiness for the Scott restoration, the Lincoln organ was dismantled in 1863. Whilst it is clear that the instrument was in a poor condition, its dismantling was necessary in order to prevent serious damage during the restoration. As a consequence, the Chapter did not give Propert ‘the

¹²⁴The National Library of Wales, Letter of W.P. Propert to the Chapter of St Davids, 24 July 1853, SDCh/Let/320-1.

¹²⁵ The National Library of Wales, Letter of J.P Williams to W.P Propert, 2 September 1853, SDCh/Let/322.

¹²⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B10, 24 July 1855.

¹²⁷ However, Propert’s life interest as a Vicar Choral too would disappear 60 years later, causing one of his successors a major issue.

annual chapter gift of £20 together with £5 for tuning'.¹²⁸ In a letter to James Sumner, the Chapter Clerk dated April 23, 1870, Dean Llewellyn Lewellin reported that the reason for 'discontinuing the arrangement... to a claim for £5 for keeping the 'organ in repair' when there was no organ to keep – as it had been packed into boxes in 1863...the 'Chapter Gift' of £20 was for performing on that organ'.¹²⁹ It is unclear whether or not Propert was consulted before the Chapter decided to deprive him of the gift and fee for keeping the organ in repair, for by 1870, five years after the Chapter had deprived Propert of these fees, he began legal proceedings against the Dean and Chapter, issuing a writ on May 18 1870 for the Dean and Chapter to appear before the Court of the Queen's Bench.¹³⁰

Propert, through his solicitor, wanted the Dean to call an extraordinary chapter meeting to discuss payment of five years' worth of fees and 'gifts'. It seems that relations between Propert and the Chapter had deteriorated, necessitating the intervention of legal professionals. The Dean notes that there had been complaints regarding Propert's deportment and conduct: one that particularly stands out is the complaint from Sir Grosvenor Williams, who 'perpetually harassed me for not insisting that Mr. Propert [appears] in the choir in his surplice as a Lay Vicar - of which office he [Propert] holds'.¹³¹

Dean Lewellin remarks in his letter to Sumner that his belief was that the post of Organist was 'not a patent office'¹³² – meaning that it was not an office of itself, but rather that it was '...simply of a nature of a bonus to a 'Lay Vicar''.¹³³ This therefore confirms that the post of Organist and Master of the Choristers was not a formal office within the Lower Chapter, but a plurality held by the junior Vicar Choral. Why is this important – surely it is just a semantical dispute? It is clear that Dean Lewellin was not trying to deprive Propert of his position as Vicar Choral – indeed, it seems that the tenure of a Vicar Choral is for life once appointed, unless formally deprived. The Chapter's deprivation of Propert's gift began a raft of communications between the Dean, ¹³⁴ the Chapter Clerk, Propert's solicitor William Davies, the Chapter's advocate's William Thomas and G. Eyre. Of course, the archives do not contain all the correspondence, which means that deduction is necessary in order to chart the course of events. Propert was clear in his objective – the Dean and Chapter owed him £125, and he began proceedings to sue them through the courts,¹³⁵ having failed to satisfactorily reclaim monies owed to him following the normal proceedings – as a member of the Lower Chapter, he would, in normal terms, have been allowed to appeal to the Upper (or Greater) Chapter to hear his

¹²⁸ Watkins Shaw, H. *The Succession of Organists of the Chapel Royal and the Cathedrals of England and Wales from c. 1538*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 254

¹²⁹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Let/572 (1870)

¹³⁰ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/MISC/163

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² The underlining of 'patent' was present in SDCh/Let/572

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Who was in residence at Lampeter in his sinecure role as Principal of St Davids College.

¹³⁵ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Let/577 (1870)

case. The Dean's refusal to call an extraordinary meeting seems to have been the commencement of civil legal proceedings.

Language within the letters suggest that it did go to trial – in a letter dated 23 March 1871, G. Eyre, representing the Dean and Chapter, asks for the original accounts and associated documents in order to present them to 'the plaintiff's attorneys'¹³⁶ in order to demonstrate that Propert had indeed been aware of the reason for the deprivation of his gifts by Chapter, and that they were not an entitlement of post or part of the agreed stipend. Eyre writes to Dean Lewellin the following day, requesting that he and 'any other surviving member of the Chapter who has a distinct recollection of the Chapter Gift being explained to the plaintiff' to attend the trial.¹³⁷ Eyre writes again to the Dean on 29 March 1871, requesting further clarifications in regard to the Chapter Act Books and whether there are receipts stamps for the gifts made by the Chapter to Propert (or indeed, anyone else). G.B Allen QC, who was to represent the Chapter in court requested to know whether or not 'the office of Organist is part of the Cathedral Foundation?'¹³⁸

To us, it is clear now that the 'office of Organist' was not part of the Foundation – indeed, it was a combined role tied to the most junior Vicar Choral – that having been the case since the annexation caused by the appointment of Richard Tomkins in 1719. It therefore suggests that even at this late stage of the nineteenth century, the 'Organist' was not even *primus inter pares* within the Lower Chapter, but purposely their 'Junior' – which certainly left Propert (and indeed those who came before and after) in a rather odd position as to being junior (albeit a formality within the Foundation) to the Vicars Choral and Priest Vicars. With reviews of the Statues and Ordinances taking place at disestablishment in 1920, and new 'Measures' being published in 1922 and 1971 omitting any mention to lay employees of the Chapter or even the 'Lower Chapter' save for the Priest Vicars,¹³⁹ it must be concluded that, at least within the statutes relating to the appointment of Vicars Choral, that the 'Organist and Master of the Choristers' is indeed only a title for the person appointed to play the organ and direct the choir – in fact, the position they are appointed to within the context of the foundation would still formally be that of 'Junior Vicar Choral' with the offices of Master of the Choristers and Organist being additions to that office under the statutes and ordinances which were in place during the era of Propert, which have not been replaced.

It has proved difficult to gain a satisfactory finality to this saga – it is clear that Propert was deprived of the post as Organist and given six months' notice at the July Chapter meeting of 1870, but the Chapter accounts for 1872-73 show that Propert was paid a sum of £52.10s, suggesting that legal proceedings partially went in Propert's favour. Propert leaves St Davids in 1871 for Cambridge to study law, being called to Inner Temple in December 1871, proceeding to the Cambridge Master of

¹³⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Let/581 (1871)

¹³⁷ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Let/582 (1871)

¹³⁸ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Let/583 (1871)

¹³⁹ Although the 1967 questionnaire on which the 1972 measure was based refers to the organist, together with the verger and the groundsman as being 'servants' of the chapter.

Laws in 1872, being called to the Bar in January 1875, and finally supplicating for the degree of Doctor of Laws of the University of Cambridge in 1878, before returning to live in Manor House, St Davids. Hereupon Propert returned to the Cathedral as a Vicar Choral – although, it must be assumed that he returned to St Davids during his time away, as his signature appears on the accounts of the Lower Chapter consistently for 1874 until his death in 1906,¹⁴⁰ thereby settling the inconsistency between John West's short biography of Propert in his work *Cathedral Organists Past and Present*¹⁴¹ and C.F Stephens, who erroneously declared that Propert had been deprived of the position of Vicar Choral.¹⁴² There is evidence to suggest that this was attempted ¹⁴³ in 1900, ¹⁴⁴ but a further minute at the July meeting notes that the Chapter '...resolved to take no further steps for the present in the matter of Dr Propert's position as Vicar Choral.'¹⁴⁵

Propert certainly returned as no shrinking violet. The organist and composer William H. Harris,¹⁴⁶ articulated pupil to Herbert Morris, recalls Propert wearing the hood of a Doctor of Laws in the University of Cambridge during Harris' period in St Davids (1896-8). Indeed, Dr Propert's importance seemed to be undiminished by the episode, as Propert gave one of the inaugural recitals on the new Willis Organ in 1883. There is still a further oddity to these rather bizarre goings on – upon his death in 1906, Propert's obituary in the *Haverfordwest and Milford Telegraph* makes no hint of his tenure as Organist of St Davids Cathedral – a twenty one year appointment – which seems rather peculiar, even when tallied with his legal accomplishments. The Dean and Chapter did however record their debt of gratitude to Dr Propert for his 50 years' service as a Vicar Choral. ¹⁴⁷

Without the full docket of correspondence, it is difficult to be in possession of the full facts of this saga – however, this much can be certain: Propert was a man who would stand by his position and did not take being deprived of what he believed to be a part of his entitled stipend lying down. The Chapter seem not to come out of this well – from the correspondence, we can deduce that Propert was never formally warned that the £25 was a 'gift' rather than a part of his salary. The payment of £50.10s to him suggests that the courts must have felt some sympathy with Propert's claim, although it did not award the entire £125. It therefore seems appropriate that Propert returned to St Davids permanently following the death of Llewellyn Lewellin in 1878 and returned to playing a full part in the musical life of the Cathedral he served and that had treated him so poorly.

There is an obscure omission in the Chapter documents regarding the music of the Cathedral after Propert's tenure until 1879. A minute from the Chapter meeting of 27 July 1874 note that Robert

¹⁴⁰ The National Library of Wales. SDCh/B53 (1872)

¹⁴¹ West, J.E, *Cathedral Organists Past and Present*, Novello & Son, London, 1921, p.77

¹⁴² Stephens, C.F. *Bemrose's Choir Chant Book*, Bemrose & Son, London, 1882

¹⁴³ One can assume at this stage it was due to his age (Propert was 69 in 1900) – most voices begin to decline post 60, but the position was tenable for life.

¹⁴⁴ The National Library of Wales. SDCh/B52, 20th April 1900

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 25th July 1900

¹⁴⁶ Organist, New College Oxford (1919-29), Christ Church Oxford (1929-33) and St George's Chapel, Windsor (1933-61)

¹⁴⁷ The National Library of Wales. SDCh/B52, 25th July 1907

Ellis, organist of St Mary's Church, Tenby, had been appointed as lay Vicar Choral and organist – an organist, however, without an instrument. The Lincoln Organ had not been returned to position in the aftermath of the Gilbert Scott restoration and remained in storage. The Chapter, at their July 1879 meeting, resolved, 'that Mr Willis the organ-builder ...be requested to examine the organ which was taken down...and give an estimate for erecting a new one using as much of the old organ as may be found available'.¹⁴⁸ The Chapter accounts do shed a light on what musical accompaniment was available – a harmonium was used to accompany services.¹⁴⁹ The appointment of Frederick S. Garton in 1883 begins the cycle of promotions that have brought many of the later twentieth and early twenty first century organists to St Davids. Before taking up the position at St Davids as Organist, Garton served as Assistant Organist at Worcester Cathedral, then as Organist of Dudley Parish Church,¹⁵⁰ before arriving in St Davids. Garton, sadly, had not been appointed at the time of the new Willis organ's installation – it seems that Dr Propert gave one of the first recitals on the new instrument in honour of the Cambrian Archaeological Association's visit to the Cathedral.¹⁵¹ The archives provide little evidence to the state of the choir during Garton's period as organist. The end of Garton's 11-year tenure saw the appointment of D. John D. Codner in 1894. Codner had been Organist of St Bride's, Fleet Street in the years leading up to 1888. The Chapter Acts record his appointment, with a salary of £100.00 per annum.¹⁵² At the same Chapter Meeting appointing Codner, the Chapter assented to change the 'daily afternoon service' – Evensong or Evening Prayer – to 4.00pm.¹⁵³ His tenure was brief - John West, in his study *Cathedral Organists Past and Present* suggests that this was on account of his ill health,¹⁵⁴ although he later served as a cashier of an estate agent.¹⁵⁵ His brief and reasonably undocumented tenure and his change of career do suggest that the true reason for Codner's departure was not for reasons of 'ill health'. The minutes of a special Chapter meeting, attended by the Dean, the assistant bishop of Swansea, Canon Dr Williams and the Cathedral Chancellor, Canon Davey, record Codner's resignation and the candidates to be his successor.¹⁵⁶ The term resignation is formal and purposely ambiguous – at this time, an 'office' could only be vacated by death, or resignation: whether the resignation was due to preferment to another office or what we would refer to as a 'sacking' therefore would be purposely unclear. Codner's letter of resignation has not been discovered, however it is unlikely that it would offer any insight into the nature of his tenure and resignation.

¹⁴⁸ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B10, 24 July 1879

¹⁴⁹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B18, 1877-9

¹⁵⁰ It must be remembered that, until recently, some larger parish church positions would have been more desirable than provincial cathedral positions.

¹⁵¹ Bowen, G. *The Organs of St Davids Cathedral*, St Davids Cathedral, St Davids, 2001, p.13

¹⁵² The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 25th July 1894

¹⁵³ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 25th July 1894

¹⁵⁴ West, J.E, *Cathedral Organists Past and Present*, Novello & Son, London, 1921, p.77

¹⁵⁵ http://www.organ-biography.info/index.php?id=Codner_DJohnD_1851 accessed 18/05/2020 at 15.59

¹⁵⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 10th April 1896

3. Disestablishment: Herbert Morris 1896 - 1921

In the years leading up to the Great War, much energy was focused on the upcoming disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales – the outcome of which would see the biggest threat to individual cathedrals and churches since the reformation. Out of it would be born *The Church in Wales*, a ‘national’ church without legitimacy or assets in a non-conformist nation. Post 1920,¹⁵⁷ the financial struggle would be critical, and as we will see, left no part of church life unaffected, and left it in a vulnerable state heading towards the Second World War.

The road to Disestablishment

The disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales to form *The Church in Wales* followed a torturous and not easily followed path. Prior to the disestablishment of *The Church in Ireland* in 1870, groups of Liberal Party activists and non-conformist fellow-travellers began discussions on whether a similar disestablishment could be granted to Wales. The reasoning was, of course, political. The non-conformist churches in Wales saw the established Church as an interloper – neither the church of the majority of people, nor speaking the language or advocating on behalf of them. In contrast to the Church of England in Wales, the non-conformist denominational groupings were heavily dependent on voluntary alms-giving, by gifts of land and money and by generosity of individual benefactors for the building of their (often over-large) chapels. Combined with general political dissatisfaction amongst the emerging lower middle-class,¹⁵⁸ the Liberal Party under the leadership of William Gladstone and his successors both as party leaders and Prime Ministers Herbert Asquith and David Lloyd George, used the potential of disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales for political gain.¹⁵⁹

The Established Church however, continued to survive off of historic assets, and, in the living memory of some in this period, the controversial tithe.¹⁶⁰ Cathedrals such as St Davids were fortunate in possessing land and buildings which could be farmed, rented and used for commercial and residential purposes which helped in funding its staffing and general running costs.¹⁶¹ This allowed for them to continue almost unabated. A number of schemes for the centralization of church assets led to concerns regarding seizure of land and property by the Church Commissioners. A number of reviews following the 1860 Ecclesiastical Commissioners Act saw many cathedrals and dioceses do all in their power to keep hold of land and property holdings. At St Davids, the tale of James Allen¹⁶² residing in the

¹⁵⁷ The year in which *The Church in Wales* became an independent entity.

¹⁵⁸ Who often were Welsh speaking non-conformists.

¹⁵⁹ This contributed greatly to the Liberal (and later Liberal Democrat) party holding a number of Welsh parliamentary seats.

¹⁶⁰ Tithes were a system of taxation directly allocated to the Church. Whilst biblical in nature, they had continued to be a central source of revenue for the Church of England exclusively. Non-conformist denominations were ineligible to receive the funding. The Tithe was ended as a method of ‘Church Tax’ by the introduction of The Tithe Commutation Act 1836.

¹⁶¹ The staffing of the Cathedral at this time consisted of the Dean and at least one residentiary canon (during this period there was a separate Vicar of St Davids, often a Canon, who would have received a stipend via the parish) together with a number of Priest Vicars and Vicars Choral, a Verger and other domestic and auxiliary workers.

¹⁶² Dean of St Davids 1879 – 95.

Chancellor's Mansion so that the commissioners were unable to dispose of either it or the Deanery, demonstrates the concern of loss of control of assets was having on these communities – for without potential revenue making assets, it would be nigh-on impossible to continue to employ junior clergy and lay staff.

Hebert Morris

Upon John Codner's resignation, the Chapter advertised for his successor. 'After full consideration, Mr G.J Wesley Martin and Mr Herbert C Morris were selected from a large list of applicants'¹⁶³ to be called for personal interview. 'Having taken charge of the choir and organ on separate Sundays the two candidates were duly proposed for the office, and the voice of the majority of the Chapter being in favour of Mr Herbert C Morris, the Dean declared Mr Herbert C Morris to be duly elected Organist.'¹⁶⁴ The act also notes that the salary of the Organist would be increased to £120.00 per annum, and that an 'agreement embodying the terms be prepared for the signature of the parties'¹⁶⁵

Morris was born in Coventry on 18 June 1874, receiving his early musical education from Herbert Brewer,¹⁶⁶ who was Organist of St Michael's, Coventry¹⁶⁷ between 1886-1892. Morris left Coventry in 1891 to study at the Royal College of Music with Sir Walter Parratt.¹⁶⁸ Whilst studying, he acted as pupil-assistant to Edward Lemare at Holy Trinity, Sloane Square. Then followed several short London appointments, before being appointed Assistant Organist at Manchester Cathedral under J.L Pyne, before returning south for in 1896 to be Organist of St Andrew's Church in Bath. In 1904, he matriculated at Downing College, Cambridge,¹⁶⁹ - the Chapter giving him permission to be away from St Davids in order to satisfy residency requirements,¹⁷⁰ being awarded a Bachelor of Arts in 1908, and proceeding to the Master of Arts degree in 1911. Morris also held the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists (FRCO), as well as both the Associateship of the Royal College of Music (ARCM) and the Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music (LRAM).¹⁷¹

Uncertain beginnings

Time and again, the question of the status of the Organist within a cathedral's organisational structure reappears. A circular from the Royal College of Organists was read.¹⁷² The letter suggested

¹⁶³ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 10th April 1896

¹⁶⁴The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 11th June 1896

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Organist, Gloucester Cathedral, 1897-1928

¹⁶⁷ St Michael's Church became the first Cathedral of the Diocese of Coventry in 1918. The building was decimated in a German bombing raid of 14 November 1940. A new cathedral, to a design of Basil Spence, incorporating the ruins of the older church, was consecrated in 1962.

¹⁶⁸ Organist, Magdalen College Oxford (1872-1882); Organist, St George's Chapel Windsor (1882-1924); Heather Professor of Music, University of Oxford (1908-1918); Professor of Organ, Royal College of Music (1884-1923); Dean of the Faculty of Music, University of London (1905); President, Royal College of Organists (1905-09)

¹⁶⁹ Bird, E. *The Organists and Organs of the Welsh Cathedrals in the 20th century*, Enid Bird, Wakefield, 1992, p.31

¹⁷⁰ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 26th January 1904. The Chapter also agreed that a deputy could be appointed so that Morris could fulfil his residency requirements at Cambridge.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

that cathedral chapters formally recognise the Organist as a member of the foundation. Whilst this became common in English cathedrals following the Howe Report and the Cathedrals Measure 2000, the Chapter in 1899 considered it 'not desirable that Cathedral Organists should be placed on the foundation'.¹⁷³ Morris himself would be placed in an awkward position both by the Chapter and the Vicars Choral – Upper and Lower Chapter respectively, in regards to the position of the Organist within the Foundation. It is unclear how the situation arose, but it is apparent from the documents of both Lower and Greater Chapter that the Lower Chapter refused to appoint Morris as a Vicar Choral.¹⁷⁴ Morris appealed directly to Dr John Owen, the Bishop of St Davids, who as diocesan bishop was (in this, and most cases) the final arbiter. The Diocesan Chancellor¹⁷⁵ found in Morris' favour, giving the Dean and Chapter the right to appoint Morris directly to the Lower Chapter over the Lower Chapter's objections, providing a memorandum which even today lays down the rights and privileges of the Vicars Choral – the Lower Chapter, and their relationship to the 'Upper Chapter'.

The Diocesan Chancellor's memoranda¹⁷⁶ clarifies that that the right of appointment to the Lower Chapter ultimately rests with the Dean and Chapter (the 'Upper Chapter'), who '...have power to define and regulate the duties associated with the office'.¹⁷⁷ The Ecclesiastical Commissioner Act 1840¹⁷⁸ – the importance of which will become clear later - whilst creating the Deanery of St Davids, suspending all but two residentiary canonries and legally removing the system of tithes from the Lower Chapter,¹⁷⁹ did not specify the number of Vicars Choral, or the proportion of clerical to lay vicars,¹⁸⁰ although local custom settled on eight Vicars Choral, divided between 4 Priests Vicar and 4 Lay Vicars. The Chancellor's memoranda confirmed that the position of Organist had been amalgamated with the position of Junior Vicar Choral in 1790, however, the Chancellor notes that whilst the Organist may retire, the position of Vicar Choral would be '...vested for life'.^{181 182}

The language used to report Morris' appointment in the Lower Chapter Act Book is telling of the forced nature of the appointment:

To the Subchantor & Vicars Choral of the Cathedral Church of St Davids

I hereby certify that at a meeting of the Dean & Chapter of the said Cathedral Church held on the 28th December 1899 Mr Herbert Charles Morris [...] was by the said Dean and Chapter appointed to the office of Lay Vicar Choral of the said Cathedral Church...¹⁸³

¹⁷³ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 26th May 1899

¹⁷⁴ This would grant Morris rights to a stipend (salary) and tenure.

¹⁷⁵ The Diocesan Chancellor is the senior legal officer, appointed by a diocesan bishop to act on his behalf as judge and arbitrator in ecclesiastical cases.

¹⁷⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/L/181 (1898)

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ 3&4 Victoria c.113. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1840/113/pdfs/ukpga_18400113_en.pdf. Accessed 02/05/2015 at 21:42

¹⁷⁹ Although, as will be seen shortly, the Lower Chapter replaced the monies gathered by tithe with the direct grant by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and split it in the same way as before, which was illegal.

¹⁸⁰ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/L181 (1898)

¹⁸¹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/L181 (1898)

¹⁸² This would not be the case.

¹⁸³ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 30th January 1900

Below this, another entry ratifying the appointment by the Dean and Chapter:

Be it remembered that on the 30th day of January 1900 Mr Herbert Charles Morris [...] was in pursuance of a resolution of the Chapter of the 28th day of December 1899 duly inducted into and installed in the office of Lay Vicar Choral of this Cathedral Church.¹⁸⁴

The minutes of the Chapter meeting held on April 20th 1900 note that the Chapter Clerk has sent a copy of the record of installation to the Subchantor, with the Dean and Chapter's opinion that Morris was fully entitled to play a full part within the Lower Chapter, which suggests that he was still being denied this right.¹⁸⁵ The situation deteriorates further over the course of the year, when the Dean and Chapter report that they intend to carry out a visitation of the Lower Chapter. A Visitation is an inspection, carried out by the Bishop (as Ordinary) – which can be delegated to his deputy (usually an Archdeacon), or by the person(s) holding the patronage (or rights as visitor) of a church or collegiate body. In this case, the Visitor was the Dean and Chapter. The Subchantor, the Reverend John Philips, appeared before the Dean and Chapter in person, representing the Lower Chapter, and presented them with a note (reading it to them first, before taking leave of them):

We desire to act in submission to all commissioned authority, but no record of a previous visitation of the Lower Chapter, if it has ever occurred, is acceptable to us, and we consequently do not know our rights and duties nor have we any knowledge of what are the powers if any of the Dean and Chapter as Visitors, nor of the object to which the present proceedings are directed. On these points, we addressed your clerk, but received no information from him. I may be allowed to state independently of this visitation that no books or documents are in my custody or under my control, that I am under any obligation to produce.¹⁸⁶

The Chapter Clerk was advised to reply with the terms of the visitation, noting that each of the Lower Chapter had received notice of the visitation; that there was no rule in existence confirming the services of the Lower Chapter in naming the choirboys or in the choir practices, and that no change from former custom had taken place in this respect; that the meetings of the Lower Chapter did not conform to appropriate convention – meetings were held 'irregularly at [the subchantor's] private house'¹⁸⁷ and that no tangible records were held, save for the minute book; that the Lower Chapter accounts had not been audited; that the Lower Chapter had agreed their individual communications to the Dean and Chapter in advance as a chapter; that a bank account was kept at the National Provincial Bank in Haverfordwest, and that funds granted to them by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were divided according to 'custom and practice' - £185.00 for each Priest Vicar, £150.00 for the Senior Lay Vicar, and that the junior Lay Vicars would receive whatever was left over.¹⁸⁸ The Chapter directed

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ The Subchantor presided over the Lower Chapter, granting him the right of 'Vicar Principal'.

¹⁸⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1900

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

the Chapter Clerk to write to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to see what payments had been made to the Lower Chapter.

The situation deteriorates further when, on 18th October 1900, the Dean reports that Morris still had not received a stipend as a Vicar Choral. The Dean and Chapter are informed that no Lower Chapter meeting had taken place due to the absence of Dr William Propert.¹⁸⁹ The Chapter resolve that Morris was to try once more, and if his claim was denied, Morris was to return to the Upper Chapter to take legal action. The Chapter Meeting held on February 16th 1901 records that both Morris and the Chapter Clerk had been in contact with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners regarding Morris' membership of the Lower Chapter. The Dean and Chapter took the odd step of halting any payments to Morris until Morris had obtained from the Lower Chapter their receipts and payments of the previous year, and would continue to withhold payment until the Lower Chapter paid him the full share of their income '...to which he [Morris] as a member of that body is entitled'.¹⁹⁰ Morris was asked to reply to the Chapter within three weeks. The April 20th 1901 Chapter meeting recorded that the Chapter Clerk had been in correspondence with Morris, and that the clerk had explained to Morris that the Dean and Chapter were not prepared to pay the stipend owed to him from their accounts, when it was due from accounts of the Lower Chapter. The Dean and Chapter would allow him to keep any money necessary to cover legal expenses in reclaiming his stipend from the Lower Chapter, and that the Dean and Chapter would 'reserve for future consideration of the disposal of the balance of any money to be so recovered'.¹⁹¹

The situation finally resolves by the July Chapter meeting, where the Clerk read correspondence from the Bishop regarding his assistance in securing a memorandum signed by three members of the Lower Chapter '...having reference to the division of Lower Chapter income'.¹⁹² The Chapter resolved to thank the Bishop 'for his action in procuring for Mr H.C Morris the organist an equal share of the Lower Chapter income after distribution amongst the Priest Vicars of 1/8th share. However, the Dean and Chapter, trying to make appease what must now be a febrile relationship with their Lower Chapter, note that they 'desire to record their inability to recognise that the agreement entered into by the Lower Chapter at the insistence of the Bishop in any way binds the Dean & Chapter or affects their powers over the Lower Chapter'.¹⁹³ A copy of the resolution was sent to the Bishop to note. Whilst Morris eventually was installed as a Lay Vicar Choral, and received a further rise in pay to £150.00 per annum (in line with the stipend of the Senior Lay Vicar Choral), this curious incident demonstrates a fatal flaw which, over a century later, still could prove problematic. The right

¹⁸⁹ Propert had, at one stage, been Organist of St Davids, but had entered into a legal battle with the Chapter having been temporarily deprived of the post whilst restoration work was carried out on the instrument. Culminating with an *in camera* ruling in the High Court, the ruling found in favour of the Chapter in depriving Propert of the position – however, it did confirm that Propert remained a Vicar Choral for life.

¹⁹⁰ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 16th February 1901

¹⁹¹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 20th February 1901

¹⁹² The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1901

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

of appointment as a Lay Vicar Choral, and later, the Songmen, according to this judgement, rests wholly with the Dean and Chapter – not with the Organist or even amongst the Lower Chapter themselves. It demonstrates the eccentricities of Cathedral appointments - the customs and practices of these bodies override often what now would be the acceptable norm. It is interesting to note that these documents still bind the present Dean and Chapter, and that no document or resolution has been passed to clarify the relationship between Organist, Vicars Choral and the Chapter.

In an interesting turn of events, the Lower Chapter tried (unsuccessfully) to reaffirm their authority and independence over the Upper Chapter and the Dean. The 26th January 1904 [Upper] Chapter acts record that the Bishop's Vicar, the Reverend A.B. Evans, claimed that, by virtue of his office, he had put forward a claim to the style and title of Sub-Dean in virtue of his office as Bishop's Vicar. However, the Dean made investigations, and found the claim to be unfounded.¹⁹⁴

The state of the Cathedral Choir

It was a wonder that, with the disputes between Morris, his Vicars Choral and the Chapter, that anything musical took place – however, the state of the choir seems to be reasonable upon Morris' arrival. With 15 boy choristers in 1898 and a new organ in place, it would have been a prosperous time for music making within the cathedral. The use of Hymns Ancient and Modern¹⁹⁵ as a hymnbook would unite St Davids with the rest of the Anglican world in its hymnody. It is also apparent that the Litany was sung regularly – a Chapter minute from 1896 approves that no sermon should be preached on Sunday afternoons when the Litany is said or sung.¹⁹⁶ John Miles Thomas,¹⁹⁷ a chorister under Herbert Morris, recalls a favourite carol by Gounod – *Cradled all lonely, behold the Saviour Child, a being holy*.¹⁹⁸ Stanford's Morning Service in B flat was certainly sung during this period,¹⁹⁹ however it is evident that some canticles would have been chanted,²⁰⁰ and indeed Morris himself composed a setting to chant of *Benedicite, omnia opera*²⁰¹ for use.²⁰² This seemingly popular counterbalance of performing canticles during this period survived in St Davids well into the 1980s. It is difficult to understand why this occurred: two rational explanations present themselves. Firstly, it must be remembered that the community was very influenced by non-conformity: congregational inclusion would probably not be

¹⁹⁴ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 26th January 1904

¹⁹⁵ The edition most likely in use at this point would have been 1916 edition, encompassing the final printing of Charles Steghall's 1906 *Old complete edition*, with an secondary supplement by Sydney Nicholson appended to it.

¹⁹⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 10th April 1896

¹⁹⁷ John Miles Thomas, towards the end of his life, wrote a memoir of his childhood in St Davids, which recalls his days as a chorister.

¹⁹⁸ Miles Thomas, J. *Looking Back – A childhood in St Davids a century ago*, Merrivale of St. David's, St Davids, 1977, 1999. p.43

¹⁹⁹ Copies dating prior to the Coronation of Edward VII in 1902 can be found in the Cathedral's Music Library. Stanford added an introduction to the work for the 1902 coronation, with the original work dating back to 1879.

²⁰⁰ Chanted to Anglican chant rather than to a through-composed setting.

²⁰¹ *Benedicite, omnia opera* is deemed an 'alternative' canticle in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. The *Te Deum* (a non-Biblical canticle dating from the late fourth century Ambrosian rite) and *Jubilate Deo* (Psalm 100) were paired together as the canticles within the Morning Prayer service, with the *Benedicite* and the *Benedictus* (Luke 1 vv68-79) being alternatives. The *Te Deum*, *Jubilate* and *Benedictus* gained popularity in sung settings around the time of Morris' tenure, as C.V Stanford included each for his 'Morning, Evening and Holy Communion Services', but omitted the *Benedicite* in each set.

²⁰² Morris, H. *Benedicite, omnia opera Domini, Domino; or Song of the Three Children*, Ll.Brigstocke, Haverfordwest. Date unknown [certainly early Twentieth century]. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

expected at Matins and Evensong but would possibly have been demanded by some within the Cathedral's parish who had migrated from the non-conformist movement. Whilst English was the language of the liturgy, and was formally the language of the Cathedral, Welsh was, for most of the populace, the mother-tongue. The lack of church music written for the Welsh language made for great difficulty, especially at services where the congregation would play a more active role. Setting the sung portions of a service to Anglican chant would have helped the congregation greatly, especially when being sung in Welsh. The 1922 Cathedral Scheme allowed for two Evening services on a Sunday – one in Welsh (with sermon) held in the Nave, and another in English held in the Lady Chapel.²⁰³ Even early in the 21st century, a Welsh language Eucharist is celebrated each Sunday in the Lady Chapel, as well as Morning Prayer and the Eucharist being said in Welsh on one occasion each week. The second, and possibly more convincing reason during Morris' tenure was that some of the choir could not read music, as is verified by the 1910 Chapter minutes, where the Canon in Residence reported that the instruction of the choir in reading music was 'proceeding satisfactorily'.²⁰⁴

There are several occurrences where *The Musical Times* note that a 'musical'²⁰⁵ service held at the Cathedral. The limited records of these suggest that these were not Matins (although the *Te Deum* is sung), but rather a devotional service with a canticle, organ and chorister solos, an anthem sung by the choir, and various hymns. Unsurprisingly, Morris requested additional payment for these services – Canon R Camber Williams was tasked with investigating whether that service was within the purview of Morris' bond of employment.²⁰⁶ One such service, held in July 1899, records that Dykes' 'melodious' *Te Deum* in F,²⁰⁷ anthems by Stainer, Attwood and Vincent, and organ pieces by Smart, [Lefebure-] Wely and Salomé were played '...by the organist, Mr H.C Morris'.²⁰⁸ Another of these, held on All Saints Day 1899 '... consisted of various hymns; Bowdler's *Te Deum* in D; 'Lie still, beloved', a solo for boy's voices by C.H. Lloyd; John Stainer's anthem 'What are these'; an organ solo, 'Marche Funèbre' and 'Chant Séraphique' by Guilmant, and a concluding voluntary, 'Allegro maestoso' by Ouseley.²⁰⁹ The inclusion of this report in *The Musical Times* is to demonstrate that there the Anglican choral tradition was still very much alive at St Davids. *The Musical Times*, in September 1898, notes that Remote as this stately old church is from the busy tides of life, it has happily become, by the earnestness, energy, and good taste of the Cathedral authorities, including the enthusiastic and excellent organist, a musical centre of already no small account, and with every indication of great

²⁰³ The National Library of Wales. SDCh/Misc./413

²⁰⁴ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1910

²⁰⁵ One deduces that this term refers to the fact that none of the canticles were chanted – the canticles being sung to settings, rather than it being a service *with* music.

²⁰⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 23rd October 1901

²⁰⁷ Patton, J. and Taylor, S. *A Century of Cathedral Music 1898-1998: a comparison with previous music surveys of 1898, 1938, 1958 & 1986*, Patton, Winchester, 2000. p.128. A popular setting during the period, however by the 1938 Church Music Society survey, it had completely disappeared from the repertory.

²⁰⁸ *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* Vol. 39, Issue 666. Aug 1898 p.625.

²⁰⁹ *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* Vol. 40, Issue 682. Dec.1899. p.654.

future usefulness.²¹⁰ Morris instigated a weekly recital series during August 1898, playing it himself ‘...with well-selected programmes’, raising funds for the ‘Church Choir Excursion Fund’ which *The Musical Times* believes to be ‘...an arrangement creditable to all concerned and deserving of imitation’.²¹¹

Whilst the reforms of the ‘chorister crusader’ Maria Hackett had saved choristers from the more vile and repugnant acts they had previously carried out, St Davids choristers still combined their singing life with education and servitude. One of the Priest Vicars, a bachelor by the name of John Phillips,²¹² the Subchantor, lived in one of the Cathedral Villas on Nun Street. In return for housing one of the boys who came from an outlying farm community, the boy would clean the priest’s boots, run errands and be generally useful.²¹³ This was in addition to the housekeeper the Priest Vicars employed. At this point, Priest Vicars still were employed both for their singing ability. John Miles Thomas recalls other Priest Vicars – J.R Jones, later to be Vicar of Llandysul, was remembered for having a good singing voice, but also by the choristers for being a harsh disciplinarian. He was replaced by a Mr. Gabriel, whose singing capabilities Miles Thomas does not comment upon. A Mr. Evans lived in the Treasury Cottage, whose tenor voice Miles Thomas describes as ‘crystal clear’.²¹⁴ Together with the Lay Vicars Choral, the Priest Vicars formed the backbone of Morris’ Cathedral Choir, augmented by local ‘Songmen’ from the surrounding community. Following the intervention of the Chapter into the financial practices of the Lower Chapter in 1901, the Dean and Chapter resolved to make the system of payment uniform, by dividing the stipends equally. The Dean and Chapter also resolved that the appointment of additional Lay and Priest Vicars or Songmen lay entirely with them, and not the Organist or the Lower Chapter.²¹⁵ However, a concession was made to the Subchantor, whose stipend would be made up to £185.00 by the Dean and Chapter.²¹⁶ Following the death of Dr Propert, it seems the term ‘Songman’ is used to refer to the Lay Vicars Choral, as the 1907 Chapter minutes demonstrate that the four songmen, H. Manger (?), J.J Sime, W.H Lewis and G.J Young be ‘reappointed for 12th months subject to the same conditions as previously’.²¹⁷

The little evidence (oral or physical) regarding Morris’ personality cannot be described at complimentary. Herbert Morris is remembered as a ‘small man, unsmiling, cynical and distant’.²¹⁸ Photographs of the period demonstrate his lack of height, and one photograph, dated 1898, demonstrates a somewhat distant and pained man. It seems that there were rumours that Morris had

²¹⁰ *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* Vol.39 Issue 667. September 1898.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² The correct term for a cleric who does not hold a title belonging to a dignitary is ‘Mr’ – only in the middle parts of the century, as Anglo-Catholicism became more popular did the term ‘Father’ become wide spread – at the end of the last century, first name terms were seen as more becoming, as the nature of parochial ministry changed.

²¹³ Miles Thomas, J. *Looking Back – A childhood in St Davids a century ago*, Merrivale of St. David’s, St Davids, 1977, 1999. p.44

²¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.45

²¹⁵ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 4th December 1901

²¹⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 28th January 1902

²¹⁷ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1908

²¹⁸ Miles Thomas, J. *Looking Back – A childhood in St Davids a century ago*, Merrivale of St. David’s, St Davids, 1977, 1999. p.39

a negative association with alcohol – it is recalled in St Davids folklore that choristers used to be sent to Morris' house in order to awake him for weekday Matins by throwing stones at his window: sadly, there is no documentary evidence of that. However, references to Sir William H. Harris' time at St Davids continually make euphemistic use of the term '*somewhat easy going nature*',²¹⁹ which may be some sort of nod to Morris' alcohol dependency.²²⁰ Alas, whilst this would be commented upon by the St Davids chattering classes, it certainly would not have been written about or eluded to in formal documents unless deemed severely necessary. Certainly Harris would not have been referring to Morris' discipline as a choir trainer when describing his nature. Like many of his era, Morris believed in the use of corporal punishment. John Miles Thomas, a chorister under Morris, recalls an incident which resulted in a flogging.

He [Morris] decided we should attend for practice during our dinner hour as well as in the evening. After a day or two of this we decided to rebel, and did not attend at dinner time. We went to evening service, but we knew we were 'for it', and some of us had stones in our pockets to throw if things got bad. Mrs Moss had sent him a note saying that Harry Morgan was the ring-leader of the 'strike'. Harry was a telegraph boy at the time, and Morris had happened to meet him near 'Big Steps' during the afternoon. He had beaten him all the way down the steps and told him never to come to choir again. After service that evening, Morris took us into the Choir [sic.] instead of the Nave. He was in a towering rage and went threateningly from boy to boy, compelling each to agree that Harry was the ring-leader. Each boy reluctantly admitted this was so, but when he came to me, I said we had all agreed, and that it was not one more so than another. He shook me violently by the collar and said he would take me before the Dean. As a revenge, he said we would attend a practice the following day at eight a.m. at his house. When we left church that day, Mary Ann Morgan, Harry's Mother, was waiting for him, and harangued him at the top of her voice, mostly in Welsh, and, towering over him by six inches or more, frightened him quite a bit.²²¹

Whilst to modern readers, Morris' behaviour seems barbaric, for choristers up until the post-war period, this kind of response could be expected for any degree of resistance shown by choristers – of course, as this example demonstrates well, the wrath of chorister parents could scare a Director of Music, even during the era of corporal punishment.

It is clear that Morris did not believe that he was subservient to the Chapter – numerous chapter acts from 1899 deal with the revisions to his contract of employment, which was finally signed

²¹⁹ http://www.naxos.com/person/William_Henry_Harris/23287.htm. Accessed 05/04/2014 at 18:15

²²⁰ Personal correspondence between Anne Egger (daughter of Sir William H Harris) and Llywela Harris, daughter of Canon William Harris, late Professor of Hebrew at St Davids College, Lampeter and a Canon of St Davids confirm the validity of Morris' alcohol dependency.

²²¹ Miles Thomas, J. *Looking Back – A childhood in St Davids a century ago*, Merrivale of St. David's, St Davids, 1977, 1999. p.39-40

on 26th May 1899 – three years after his appointment.²²² The relationship with his men – the Priest Vicars and Lay Vicars Choral - must be assumed to have been strained, even impossible at times, especially if we consider the controversy surrounding Morris' appointment to the Lower Chapter in 1899 and his pursual of his stipend in the following two years. Whilst Morris had a firm temper, which he used often, the choristers on the whole were cared for well. Along with their choir robes, each chorister was given funds for the purchase of an 'Eton Suit' and Mortar Board. The Chapter acts from October 1901 note that Morris instigated a half day of sung services each Tuesday.²²³ The Cathedral dignitaries²²⁴ took a great deal of interest in the choristers – Dean David Howell, the 'prophet' of the Welsh Revival, was particularly keen to promote to his choristers the importance of a good education, giving them gifts of books, encouraging their public speaking by having them recite to him collects from the Book of Common Prayer and entertaining the choristers and their families to tea at the Deanery at Christmas. Other canons entertained the choristers – Bishop Lloyd, Assistant Bishop of Swansea, entertained the choristers to tea in the summer, and would tell jokes – his wife is believed to have introduced an exotic fruit - the Melon to St Davids for the first time.²²⁵ The 1912 Chapter minutes report that Canon Brown and Morris wished for some of his choristers to sit examinations in reading music. It can be assumed that payment of these examinations would be covered by the Chapter.²²⁶

Unlike many other foundations, St Davids was (and remains today) a locally sourced choir. The sons of blacksmiths and farmers, widows and fishermen, telegraph apprentices and bank clerks made up the choir in Morris' time. The chorister's schedule was a busy one: following the daily 8.00am Holy Communion (which the choir did not sing for), the boys would be ready for 8.20 and the start of Matins. They would then arrive at the school (now the Cathedral's Education Centre) in time for lessons. A day of schooling would follow, followed by Evensong at 4.00pm in the winter, and 4.30pm in the summer²²⁷ with an evening rehearsal following. Sunday would also include a sung Holy Communion in addition to Matins and Evensong. At the 1919 July Chapter meeting, it was resolved that Thursday Evensong would be shortened – it must be assumed that this meant omitting the penitential rite – in order for a choir practice to be held.²²⁸ The First World War took its toll on St Davids, and the *opus dei* which envelops Cathedral life. The Dean reported in the 1917 Chapter minutes that due to the war service of one of the Priest Vicars, and the other caring for the parish of Whitchurch and Solva, rearrangement of services was necessary, and as such the 'English Service at 3.30pm [on Sundays] had been discontinued.'²²⁹ It is clear that for a part of the First World War, Morris was absent from St Davids on war duties – the Chapter minutes of 10 January 1919 resolved

²²² The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 26th May 1899

²²³ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 23rd October 1901

²²⁴ The corporate name for the senior canons – Dean, Precentor, Treasurer etc.

²²⁵ Miles Thomas, J. *Looking Back – A childhood in St Davids a century ago*, Merrivale of St. David's, St Davids, 1977, 1999. p.34

²²⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1912

²²⁷ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B/52, 25th July 1906

²²⁸ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1919

²²⁹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1917

that the 'Chapter Clerk apply to the War Office for the release of the organist Mr Morris from War service'.²³⁰

The Articled Pupil

Morris, like many Organists of the period, took on an 'Articled Pupil'. These would be young men who would wish to gain experience, either before or after university²³¹ or conservatoire, of working within a cathedral environ whilst continuing to learn their trade – an earlier, more primitive form of the 'Assistant Organist' of today. Morris' most renowned pupil was William Henry Harris, later Organist of New College, then Christ Church, Oxford, and St George's Chapel, Windsor. Harris spent eighteen months in St Davids between 1886 and 1888 as pupil to Morris to gain some practical experience before going on to the Royal College of Music. It is certain that Harris was given a great deal of responsibility by Morris, as references to Morris' 'somewhat easy going nature'²³² in not wishing to woken for weekday Matins left the teenage Harris in charge of the choir for the Morning Office. Harris retained a fondness for St Davids and for Wales throughout his life – his legacy to the Church in Wales was as Musical Editor of *Emyniau Eglwys*, the first Welsh language Church hymnal, published in 1940. Another of Morris' articled pupils was Wolverhampton born Alexander John Bibb,²³³ who served as his articled pupil from 1904-1909, before being appointed as Organist and Choirmaster of St Mary's Church, Newtown, serving there for 50 years.²³⁴ The Cathedral Archives have little evidence of Morris' articled pupils by name – the Chapter agreed in their 1911 Chapter meeting to grant Morris an increase of salary of £20.00 per annum 'towards the expense of the said articled pupil whilst he should continue at St Davids'.²³⁵ By 1913, the 'articled pupils' were recommended by Morris to take positions as Songmen. The Chapter discussed this, and consented, with payment at £10.00 per annum, on condition that the pupils attended all services, 'excepting two afternoons in each week when he shall be free'.²³⁶ The Chapter also made it a condition of appointing Morris' pupils that the experience 'would benefit their future work'²³⁷ – an example of what would later become St Davids' Choral Scholar scheme at the start of the 21st century. 1914 saw the retention of 'Mr Mason and Mr Priestman (pupils of Mr H.C Morris) as songmen'²³⁸ and that in addition to the £10.00 per annum they each received, Morris himself would receive £5.00 per annum 'in respect of Mr Mason's and Mr Priestman's services'²³⁹ – a generous fixing fee for the services of these two young men. The Chapter, always cautious when it came to Morris and money, noted that the arrangement was 'temporary...and not

²³⁰ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 10th January 1919

²³¹ And during this period, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge dominated church life, both in providing clergy and in providing musicians.

²³² http://www.naxos.com/person/William_Henry_Harris/23287.htm. Accessed 05/04/2014 at 18:15

²³³ Ed. Thornsby, F.W *Dictionary of Organs and Organists*, H. Logan, Bournemouth, 1912, p.248

²³⁴ <http://www.hoadly.co.uk/hoadly2/fam552.html>. Accessed 05/04/2014 at 21:08

²³⁵ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1911

²³⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1913

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1914

²³⁹ Ibid.

necessarily applicable to any new pupils'.²⁴⁰ Morris again attempted to gain further funds from the Chapter for Mr Mason in 1915, to no avail.²⁴¹

The Willis Organ

It is certain that Morris took care of the St Davids organ during his tenure, improving and modernising the 'Father' Willis rebuild of 1883, adding a 16 foot Ophelcide for the pedal in the South Triforium, and a Swell Tremulant – it appears that Morris himself fundraised and supplied the majority of the £149.00 necessary for the installation of the stop, with the Dean and Chapter making up the shortfall of around £50.00.²⁴² Morris' first petition to the Chapter concerned the installation of a hydraulic power unit for the organ, to dispense with manual hand pumping. The Chapter referred the request to Mr Rees, the engineer, to present a report as to the engineering difficulties. Following Mr Rees' report, the Chapter resolved that no further action be taken at point.²⁴³ At the February 16th 1901 Chapter meeting, the Chapter ask the Dean to enquire whether instead of hydraulic power, the necessary power could be gained by using electricity.²⁴⁴ It would be a further 20 years before the organ was hydraulically powered. Preparatory work was made for an 8 foot Trumpet on the pedal, but this was never realised. A proposal in 1906 to build a new organ case on the north choir stalls came to nothing, although this idea would be tried (and finally abandoned) by Morris' successor, Dr Soar. From July 1904, the care of tuning the organ was entrusted to 'Messrs. Willis ... at £25 per annum'.²⁴⁵ By 1917, the care of tuning and repairing the organ lay with Hill, Norman and Beard, however the Chapter minuted that this cease at the end of the 'current contract (if there be one)'.²⁴⁶ The Cathedral archives deposited at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth hold a small note from Dean James Allen Smith from 1917. Dean Allen Smith's note refers to the gift of an 'American Organ' – a harmonium – for use in the Sunday Evening Lady Chapel service. Allen Smith notes that '...it was exactly what was needed...' suggesting that there had been little or no instrumental support at that service. Allen Smith however is concerned at financial arrangements for the full restoration of the American Organ, as visitor numbers have been non-existent:

I have been fortunate to get it put in order as good as new for £39, and for this total amount I have had to make myself responsible because the Restoration Fund is nearly £200 in debt, and in this war-time, we scarcely have any visitors and have difficulty in paying our way with services and upkeeps.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1915

²⁴² The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1906

²⁴³ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 2nd February 1898

²⁴⁴ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 16th February 1901

²⁴⁵ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 26th July 1904

²⁴⁶ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1917

²⁴⁷ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/Misc/406

Whether Allen Smith's note is meant to be an *aide-memoire* to his chapter brethren to reimburse him for the £39 restoration, or a note of his explaining its acquisition is unclear – but what is clear is that the Cathedral's finances in 1917 were less than healthy.

The end of war brought with it some restorative fortune, as funds were available for a more extensive rebuild of the Willis Organ, which took place in 1920-21. A Mr H.H Hancock provided the sum of £450.00 to 'meet the expenses of putting up hydraulic machinery to blow the organ' some 20 years after the initial idea was placed before the chapter.²⁴⁸ The Chapter record their generous thanks to Mr Hancock for enabling the work to be undertaken. The Choir manual was enclosed with a tremulant added to it. The Choir 4 foot Viola was transposed to become an 8 foot Voix Céleste, and finally, three hydraulic engines were installed in the south transept to blow the organ, relieving the choristers of having to pump by hand. Local folklore claims that the hydraulics were not reliable, and that it was impossible for the cathedral's organ and the organ of Tabernacle Chapel in Goat Street to be played at the same time, due to them sharing the same water.²⁴⁹ The addition of unenclosed 16 foot pipes disfigured the 1883 Willis case, leaving it looking a Victorian monstrosity on a Norman screen.

Final Settlement

Herbert Morris left St Davids in 1921 to serve as Organist of Queen Street Congregational Church, Wolverhampton, and remained there until his retirement in 1938. He continued to receive a stipend of £150.00 per annum 'in respect of his life interest' as a Vicar Choral.²⁵⁰ The Chapter, although admitting that they were still liable for Morris' payments as a Vicar Choral, found the burden of payment unnecessary – the Chapter requested that the Representative Body of the Church in Wales (as successor to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in Wales) take over the payments.^{251 252 253} The cathedral he left faced its most perilous period since the Commonwealth era.

The Yorkshireman in Wales

The difficult, tempestuous loner Morris was replaced by a man who embraced the community he came to serve. Joseph Soar's tenure as Organist and Master of the Choristers for 32 years, from

²⁴⁸ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1919

²⁴⁹ Whilst unlikely, it could have been possible. D.J Lewis in his book of collected thoughts *Dai the Mill* claims that sewage and other essential utilities were not properly sorted until after the Second World War – Mr Lewis believed that the Borough Council had done such a poor job, that they were still sorting it out in 1995.

²⁵⁰ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1927

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 29th July 1928.

²⁵² Full correspondence of the argument over the stipend between Morris and the Chapter was unavailable. It seems that Morris expressed concerns over the coming implementation of the Cathedrals Measure 1931 in England, allowing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to pension off those holding sinecure offices for life (such as Vicars Choral). The Welsh Church Act 1914 and the Constitution of the Church in Wales based any legislation for the disestablished church on future implementation – any applicable law prior to 31 March 1920 remained law within the Church in Wales unless changed by its Governing Body. Within the Church of England, the 'Lesser Chapters' of Vicars Choral were dis-endowed by Cathedrals (Amendment) Measure 1934, removing from them any real power and role in governance. As a result of disestablishment and that Measure not being binding upon the Church in Wales, the legalities regarding whether a College of Vicars Choral at St Davids remains established as a separate body corporate remain somewhat unclear.

²⁵³ No more is heard from Morris at St Davids, and scant evidence exists of his musical output in Wolverhampton. Morris passed away on 15 January 1940.

1922-54, covered an era which included the Great Depression, the Second World War and the financial calamity that faced the United Kingdom following it. In the 'lifecycle' of cathedrals, he could not have arrived at a worse time. Disestablished and disendowed, the Cathedral quickly took efforts to secure its assets, with the assistance of the newly established Representative Body of the Church in Wales, and with some diocesan financial support. The foundation of *The Friends of St Davids Cathedral* in 1931 allowed direct fundraising for the first time, enabling some restoration work to be undertaken. Whilst some may feel that financial downturn, followed by near-total war, again followed by economic depravity in an area poor in any sort of modern industry would annihilate any chance of growth or steadiness within cathedral music-making, St Davids, during this period, bucked the trend. Unlike in many cathedrals, daily sung Mattins continued, the choir kept singing in their own cathedral, and a new organ built and installed in 1953 whilst the nation came out of the worst economic period to date.²⁵⁴ Where many men would have failed, Soar triumphed.

Soar was born in Fence, Derbyshire, on 9 October 1878. The family later settled in Chapeltown, Sheffield. It is clear that his musical virtuosity was apparent at a young age, for at the age of 14, he was Organist of St John's Parish Church, Chapeltown. Around this time, the Polish composer, pianist and later Prime Minister of Poland Ignacy Jan Paderewski heard Soar playing the piano and advised the young boy to take up music professionally. By 1900, the young Soar was in London, having been an Exhibitioner at the Royal College of Music, studying under Henry Walford Davies, and becoming his articled pupil at Temple Church. He was awarded the Associateship of the Royal College of Music and the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists in 1900. After graduation, he held the post of Organist of St John's, Clapham, Soar then took up the position of Organist of All Saints, Derby in 1901.²⁵⁵ In 1904, he returned to Yorkshire, as Organist of Barnsley Parish Church, where he began his wider involvement within the community, as conductor of the Tankersley Choral Society, Barnsley Amateur Operatic Society, the St Cecilia Choral Society and as Music Master at Barnsley Grammar School. Soar took the Durham external examination of Bachelor of Music, being awarded the degree in 1911. This was a popular route with many Organists who did not study at Oxford and Cambridge until being ended by the University of Durham in 1994. He married his first wife, Mary Dulcie, in 1909. In the 1911 census, Soar lists his occupation as 'Professor of Music, Organist etc.' Even at this stage in his career, Soar was making a name for himself. A report in *The Musical Times* from May 1909 notes that

²⁵⁴ It must be noted that the 1953 instrument had a number of serious technical issues during its short life-span, before it was deemed irreparable in the mid 1990s.

²⁵⁵ Until the mid-to-late twentieth century, it was common for Organists to be appointed to cathedrals directly from parish churches (SS Wesley: Exeter to Leeds Parish Church to Gloucester; Bairstow: Leeds Parish Church to York etc.). The 'closed-shop' process within cathedral music is a modern phenomenon.

...mention must be made of an excellent performance by the Tankersley Choral Society of a cantata, 'Ariadne of Naxos', composed by Mr. George Blake Walker, a well-known South Yorkshire amateur musician. Mr Joseph Soar conducted.

From 1912 to 1915, Soar served as Organist of Halifax Parish Church. Within eighteen months, Soar was called up for war service, seeing action at Gallipoli and on the Egyptian West Front, holding the commission of Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corp. Following the cessation of hostilities, Soar served in India as Officer-in-Charge at the Indian Army supply and transport depots at Poona and Trimulgherry, remaining there until 1920.²⁵⁶ On returning to civilian life, Soar took up the position of Organist at Burnham-on-Sea Parish Church, Somerset in 1921. Within a year of taking that position, Soar had been appointed as Organist and Master of the Choristers at St Davids, at a rate of '£200 for the first year, and thenceforward £160'.²⁵⁷

Soar at St Davids

Soar inherited the routine at St Davids. Sung Mattins at 8.30am and Evensong at 4.00pm each weekday (sung to chant), whilst Sundays saw Morning Prayer with Sermon at 11.00am and Evening Prayer with Sermon at 6.00pm. There was also a 'Welsh Service' on Sunday evenings which were attended by 'the Welsh Canon and Welsh members of the choir'. Thursday's saw 'Choral Evensong' – where the canticles would be sung to a setting rather than chant, with the addition of an anthem, taking place at 7.00pm. The Eucharist would follow Morning Prayer twice a month. This seems to have remained fixed right through the Second World War and until Soar's successor, Peter Boorman, succeeded in 1954.

George Harris, a chorister under Soar, partially recalls some repertoire of the early to mid-Soar era.

...and the anthems were not all like the Hallelujah Chorus. Mouldy phrases come to mind
...all flesh is as grass, the grass withereth...imagine the relief when we got to the jaunty ...but
the word of the Lord endureth forever ... The sun shone outside for me.

Harris recalls that the choir followed the psalms given in 'the lectionary'.²⁵⁸ The disestablishment of the Church in Wales did not affect the liturgy until the early 1960s, with only the 1662 Book of Common Prayer being used for services, being augmented with the 1664 translation of the Book of Common Prayer into Welsh.

²⁵⁶ *The Musical Times*, in a description of Soar in 1943, claims that Soar is the first professional musician to have played First Division football – Soar (it claims) was a 'regular member of the Derby County [Football] Team in the great days when Stephen Bloomer was centre-forward.' Research has proved difficult, but I have discovered that a 'Thomas Soar' played for Derby County during Joseph Soar's period as Organist of All Saints – sadly these are not the same person, as Thomas Albert Soar (known as Albert), was transferred to Fulham in 1903, and was forcibly retired due to injury in 1908. Whether the *Musical Times* got the pair confused, or Joseph Soar did indeed play for Derby County, is lost to history. Whilst for many, the idea of a distinguished organist also being a keen sportsman is anathema, Soar was known throughout his time at St Davids, and almost to his death, for his active and healthy lifestyle. In all weathers, he could be found at Whitesands Beach swimming in the sea daily well after his ninetieth birthday!

²⁵⁷ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 25th July 1922

²⁵⁸ Very much likely to be following the 1662 Book of Common Prayer order appointed for 'Psalms of the Day', as no separate lectionary provision for psalmody existed in the Church in Wales at that point.

My research has sadly not discovered any music lists of the Soar era,²⁵⁹ although he composed a Communion Service in F, published by Novello in 1936, an Evening Service and two versions of a choral 'Amen' (one for Sopranos and Contraltos, another for full choir) which was also published by Novello. These certainly would have been sung at St Davids, as well as anthems such as Hubert Parry's *I was glad* as well as the Evening Services of Walmsley *in D minor*, and Charles Stanford's *Morning and Evening Services in A, B flat and C*. Whilst St Davids was not included in either the 1938 or 1958 repertoire surveys conducted by the Church Music Society, these were core pieces of repertoire during the period. It must be presumed that many choral services, and certainly daily Matins, were still sung to Anglican chant, but it is apparent that the use of plainsong was re-introduced during Soar's tenure. Soar also composed some secular songs and piano pieces, and contributed to the Welsh language hymnal *Emyniau Eglwys*, with a tune named after his home 'Swn-y-Mor'.

The Cathedral Choir maintained year-round duties, as then-chorister George Harris recalls the late Canon Professor W.H. Harris, Professor of Welsh at St David's College, Lampeter, as Canon in Residence for the month of August. Canon Harris' daughter, Llywela also recalls the choir continuing whilst her father maintained residence during the Second World War. Sunday services of Matins and Evensong were held in the Nave, with George Harris recalling sitting on 'Cantoris' side stalls, when one of the choristers was violently sick, and saw the famous slope of the Nave put to a practical use. Unlike his predecessor, Soar is recalled as a kind man, wanting to get the best out of his chorister not through intimidation, but through reward and encouragement. George Harris recalls Soar finding the St Davids choristers 'a trial', although he devised an ingenious scheme of rewarding the boys, by opening an account with Mrs Moss at Gwalia Stores, so the choristers could redeem a few sweets. In the same year, Soar was awarded the degree of Doctor of Music by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang. This was a first both for St Davids and for Wales – an organist of a Welsh cathedral being honoured for his work with a Lambeth Doctorate. The conferment of the Lambeth D.Mus on 15 February 1934 demonstrates the respect for Soar within the wider world of church music. The Letters Patent, conferring the degree of Doctor of Music on Soar, notes some of the names of those who had recommended Soar for the conferment, which included Sir Hugh Allen, Director of the Royal College of Music,²⁶⁰ Sir Walter Alcock, Organist of Salisbury Cathedral, Sir Ivor Atkins, Organist of Worcester Cathedral '...and several other distinguished musicians'.²⁶¹ In no way can Soar's musical achievements be understated – Allen, Alcock and Atkins are remembered and revered even in the twenty first century as leading organists and musicians of their generation. For such men to believe that Soar should stand as their equal is a testament to Soar himself, and to the musical foundation at St Davids during his tenure.

²⁵⁹ It is understood that Soar destroyed his own copies of them before his death; whether they were published in a modern sense is unclear, and it would be quite possible for there to be no formal record of music during this period.

²⁶⁰ Where Soar had studied as a young man.

²⁶¹ The text, as stated on the Letters Patent granted to Soar.

Soar was very moved by the conferment, and of course, is remembered locally as ‘Dr Soar’. Former chorister Leonard Narbett recalls that after the conferment, Soar addressed his choristers, informing them of the decision by the King and the Archbishop²⁶² to confer upon him the doctorate, one of the boys forgot himself and referred to Soar as plain ‘Mister’. Soar took this badly – possibly that the boy was winding him up – and bellowed at him that a change in his [Soar’s] stature had taken place, and that he was now a ‘Doctor’; and if any of the boys forgot themselves again, they would receive a clip around the ear!²⁶³ Whilst it may be more apocryphal than fact, Soar, like many in authority over children at that time, did employ from time to time corporal punishment. In a newspaper profile on Soar from 1959, the reporter Derek Rees recalls from his own time as a chorister, that Soar made use of corporal punishment on rare occasions:

On the rare occasions when his severe eye or huge frame failed to command order, a stout blackthorne [*sic*] stick soon put matters right. A boy who received one stroke of this across his upturned behind never required a second dose. The fact that the stick was leaning against the wall in the choir-practice room was a strong deterrent of delinquency in itself. The doctor laughed when I asked him about the blackthorne [*sic*] stick. ‘Oh, you remember that, do you?’ he chuckled. ‘Bit of discipline is a good thing. Pity there isn’t a bit more of it today.’²⁶⁴

Dr Soar’s leadership certainly endeared him to his choristers and Vicars Choral, as can be seen by the numbers within his choir. Visitation reports from the period show healthy numbers of boys and men serving within the Cathedral Choir. The 1932 Visitation Submission of names of Vicars Choral and choristers show 10 men and 24 choristers. The 1943 Visitation submission again shows the same number of 10 men and 24 choristers, as well as two Priests Vicar – although all the Vicars Choral when preconised²⁶⁵ were noted as absent by the Diocesan Registrar. Bishop David Prosser, in his 1943 visitation address to the Chapter, pays tribute to the choir and cathedral, saying ‘You try and keep up the high standards of your services here, although so many of the men of the choir have to be away on some public work.’²⁶⁶ In the 1943 visitation questionnaire, Prosser enquires of his chapter whether any evacuee boys are singing as choristers – unfortunately, the chapter’s submission was not attached in order to ascertain whether this was the case.²⁶⁷

Dr Soar rightly is remembered for his organ playing – many issues of *The Musical Times* record his recital programmes at St Davids. His recital works reflect the period – little avant-garde, but firm, standard Anglo-Germanic repertoire of the mid-to-late nineteenth century, with a nod to the French and some eighteenth century flurries. An undated recital, recalled in *The Musical Times* in November

²⁶² As a Degree of the Realm, the degree velum is in two parts – both Letters Patent, one of the Archbishop, who confers the degree; the second of the Sovereign, who validates the degree.

²⁶³ Narbett, L., *St Davids – the early years*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

²⁶⁴ A profile on Dr Soar by Derek Rees. *The Western Mail*. September 30 1959. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

²⁶⁵ Enquired whether they were present.

²⁶⁶ The National Library of Wales SDCh/Misc./534

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

1935, lists the following recital programme: 'Overture – Adams; Pastorale and Finale (Symphony No.2) – Widor; Elegy – [Hubert] Parry; Pastoral Sonata – Rheinburger; Sonata No. 6 – Mendelsohn; Prelude and Fugue in B minor – Bach; Minuet – Maurice Greene; Air with Variations – C. Wesley'.²⁶⁸ Other recitals noted in *The Musical Times* show a consistency of repertoire with other leading players of that era.

The end of the Willis Organ

Both at the start and end of his tenure, Soar had plans for the instrument. Having inherited Herbert Morris' 1920-21 rebuild, it seems Soar left the Willis instrument intact, save for replacing the pedal-board in 1938 and installing electric blowing equipment in 1951. However, a flurry of activity begins to appear in 1934, returning to the idea highlighted by Soar's predecessor, Herbert Morris, of moving the instrument from its central position on the screen, housing it on both North and South cases of the Triforia, in a similar arrangement to the instrument at Westminster Abbey. This seems to have been a reoccurring idea, for it was not until 1951, when it was becoming obvious that serious work was needed on the Willis instrument, that the consulting organ builders formally instructed the Chapter that housing an instrument in triforia that were only 18 inches deep was totally infeasible. The Second World War put pay to any work being carried out on the Willis Organ before 1945. By 1947, the organ situation was grave. Dean Albert Parry notes in response to a question regarding the organ in the Episcopal Visitation questionnaire that the organ's condition was 'Very bad. A written report has been presented. The organ builders state that a new instrument of a cost of £5000 is needed.'²⁶⁹ Within the next six years, a new instrument would be constructed. Geraint Bowen, a later successor of Soar, in his definitive work on the organs of the Cathedral, brings to our attention an interesting 'diplomatic incident' in 1951. Mr Bowen's research discovered that the Chapter had gained – and it should be noted, unasked for – the services of an unofficial consultant who began co-ordinating a possible re-build of the Willis organ. The 'consultant' began putting out to tender specifications and designs to leading organ builders of the period. It was not until the 'consultant' wrote to Dean Carl Witton-Davies in 1951, advising that he [the consultant] had undertaken to be the Chapter's advisor, that any official orders to the selected organ builder would read '...the work to be done to the satisfaction of [name redacted]',²⁷⁰ did Dean Witton-Davies find that the Chapter may have, inadvertently, over-stepped the mark. The Dean had to affirm in writing that Dr Soar felt '...very strongly that his position as organist had been overlooked, and he insists that so long as he remains our organist he is our organ advisor...', before politely asking the correspondent to cease and desist, which the correspondent dutifully did.²⁷¹ Dr Soar undertook Hill, Norman & Beard of Norwich to rebuild the instrument, with the agreement signed on 21 September 1952. The 1883 Willis instrument was dismantled in January 1953. Whilst it was hoped that the instrument would be enlarged, lack of

²⁶⁸ *Recitals in The Musical Times*, Vol. 76, No.1113, November 1935. p.1007.

²⁶⁹ The National Library of Wales. SDCh/Misc/534.

²⁷⁰ Bowen, G. *The Organs of St Davids Cathedral*, St Davids Cathedral, 2001, p.21

²⁷¹ The name has been redacted in documents seen by the author at the National Library of Wales.

finance saw the Hill, Norman & Beard rebuild follow a more modest route, leaving the 1883 Willis pipework and voicing untouched. Two pedal stops – a 32 foot Harmonic Bass (borrowed from the Open Wood), and a 4 foot Choral Bass (which was placed in the slide for the 1906 Trumpet) were added. The case, designed by Alban Caroe and made by Boulton and Sons, Cheltenham²⁷² was much smaller than the Willis case, making the inside of the instrument dangerously cramped. Some of the ornate, painted Willis pipes that had graced the 1883 instrument ended up hidden behind a façade of non-sounding pipes in both East and West cases – some were discovered being stored in the Deanery, and were returned to the instrument during the rebuild of 2000. The pedal ranks however were severely depleted – necessitating additions and partial rebuild under each of Soar’s successors until the 2000 rebuild. The 1953 instrument was inaugurated by Dr William H Harris²⁷³, articled pupil of Herbert Morris, then serving as organist of St George’s, Windsor, on Tuesday 18 August 1953. It has to be acknowledged that the project was not successful, and that issues beset the instrument from early on in its life.

Dr Soar in the Community

Whilst many cathedral organists are remembered fondly by their cathedral communities, Dr Soar is unique in our study – whilst his work within the cathedral is fondly recalled, his presence and work within the wider community and county cannot be forgotten – indeed, he remained an active figure within county and regional life well after his retirement as Organist on December 31 1953. In recognition of his long and devoted service, the Chapter bestowed the title ‘Organist Emeritus’ upon Dr Soar immediately upon his resignation of the post.²⁷⁴ As we will see in the forthcoming paragraphs, his work with the Royal National Lifeboat Institute is preminent, but his work with many other organisations demonstrates his love and devotion to serving his adopted community. The conferment of a Presidency²⁷⁵ of the 1936 Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales at Fishguard demonstrates the high musical esteem that Dr Soar was held. The Eisteddfod – the bastion of Welshness – embracing an English-speaking Yorkshireman, shows Soar’s importance in the region’s musical life, and the community’s acceptance of him. Dr Soar served as an examiner and member of council for the Royal College of Organists from 1933-46. Dr Harold Darke, President of the College, addressing conferees of the Associate and Fellowship at the Annual General Meeting of the College on July 26, 1941, held up the example of Dr Soar at St Davids as an example to young organists, quoting Soar’s letter to the honorary secretary sending his apologies for being unable to attend the meeting:

This is indeed a hectic time – twice last week I was on lifeboat service. Once, to bring in seven bodies we found floating in their life jackets near the scene of the casualty, having been machine

²⁷² ‘Cathedral Organ rebuilt’ *The Times*, Tuesday 18 August 1953. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

²⁷⁴ A clipping from the West Wales Gazette, November 6th 1953. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2. There was, however, no mention in the corresponding Chapter papers.

²⁷⁵ The senior ‘non-bardic’ position within the Eisteddfod, granted by the local organising committee.

gunned. Again, we were out in the early hours of the morning to the bombed *S. Patrick* crossing from Ireland to Fishguard. The week previous we went out to the rescue of a Polish pilot who had made a parachute descent into the sea from his aircraft on fire. A call may come at any time of day, so you will understand how impossible it is for me to attend the meeting. Please remember me to all. I wish I could be with you.²⁷⁶

Dr Darke commends it to the young organists, saying that it is 'a wonderful letter'.²⁷⁷

Dr Soar was awarded the Medal of the Order of the British Empire in 1946, for services to the cathedral, community and the Royal National Lifeboat Institute. Dr Soar was created a Deputy Lieutenant²⁷⁸ of the County of Pembroke in 1950 and served in such capacity at the visit of Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh to St Davids in June 1955. Dr Soar, whilst not being of an age thought fit to serve on the front during the Second World War, served the county as Commandant of Pembrokeshire Police Special Constabulary. He did not view this as a mere honorary commission – during the conflict, Soar was called out to deal with an 'alien' being sighted on the St Davids coast.²⁷⁹ Impressing both his captive and the local populace, Dr Soar interrogated the 'alien' in French, before handing him over to the authorities for further questioning.²⁸⁰ Dr Soar was a loyal member of the local and county branch of the Royal British Legion, and served as President of the Country Branch for many years up until his death.

However, in St Davids, Dr Soar is remembered for his work with the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, serving as its honorary Secretary from 1926 until his death, and serving as a lifeboatman well into advanced age, acting as Coxswain for a period²⁸¹. There are apocryphal stories of Dr Soar abandoning the organ mid service to get out to the lifeboat station at St Justinian's.²⁸² He and Lifeboatman Gwilym Davies were awarded the Lifeboat's Bronze Medallion for Gallantry in 1943 for their efforts in saving a man trapped on the cliffs at Llanunwas, Solva. Dr Soar, second coxswain and Lifeboatman Davies landed ashore; Soar tracked and found the casualty on the cliffs in gale force winds, whilst Lifeboatman Davies climbed up 200 feet of rock face to help the Coastguard find the casualty. Davies was then winched down to get the injured man, before both were brought back down to the lifeboat²⁸³. Dr Soar was honoured by being appointed an Honorary Governor of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute in 1950. Soar's faithful service to the station led to the 1963 Watson Class Lifeboat

²⁷⁶ *The Musical Times* Vol.82 Issue 1183. September 1941. p.338.

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*

²⁷⁸ A 'Deputy Lieutenant' is a commission, granted by the Lord Lieutenant of a county, to assist him (or her) in their duties as representative of the Sovereign.

²⁷⁹ A foreigner, rather than of the extra-terrestrial variety.

²⁸⁰ *A profile on Dr Soar* by Derek Rees. *The Western Mail*. September 30 1959. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

²⁸¹ My research suggests that this was an occasional role – most likely during the 1930-40s. In his book *Dai the Mill*, D.J Lewis (locally known as 'Dai the Mill') does not mention Soar at all. Mr Lewis' involvement with the lifeboat certainly stemmed back through Soar's period, which suggests either dislike or disregard. St Davids natives during this period (Mr Lewis only passed away at the very end of the last century) continued a mutual distrust and active ambivalence to 'English in-comers'.

²⁸² Bird, E. *The Organists and Organs of the Welsh Cathedrals in the 20th century*, Enid Bird, Wakefield, 1992, p.32

²⁸³ Information gathered from <http://www.stdavids-rnli.org.uk/history/awards-1/>. Accessed 16/05/2014 at 18:55

being named RNLB Joseph Soar.²⁸⁴ A short film shot by the American writer and actor Julius Evans, acting as narrator with his wife Joan in the late 1950s – early 1960s saw Dr Soar interviewed about his work with the RNLI at St Davids.²⁸⁵

The death of his second wife, Mary J Soar in 1951 saw the now septuagenarian Soar widowed for the final time. Through his lengthy retirement, he remained close to friends and acquaintances and continued to play a part in the life of the community and wider county. His death, three months short of his 94th birthday, on 9 June 1971, was noted in both local and national press, and his funeral was held in the Cathedral. A memorial to Dr Soar, carved into the South Transept organ case was unveiled by the Lord Lieutenant of Pembrokeshire, The Honourable R. Hanning Phillips at a County Memorial Service held at the Cathedral on 13 August 1972.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ <http://www.stdavids-rnli.org.uk/history/history-2/>. Accessed 16/05/2014 at 18:47

²⁸⁵ Americans discover St Davids Lifeboat (1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVIWexHkIV0> and (2 – interviewing Dr Joseph Soar) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eg9nu_E8BNE accessed on 7 May 2021 at 23:48

²⁸⁶ Major Hanning Phillips' wife, the Lady Marion, became a key proponent of establishing a choir school at St Davids in the mid 1980s, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 4. Peter Boorman 1954 - 1976

‘The Old Order Changeth’ – The Post-War period

Dr Soar’s retirement in 1954 saw the arrival of Peter Boorman, whose tenure would last nearly quarter of a century, making him only the third Organist and Master of the Choristers of St Davids Cathedral of the 20th century. Boorman was a remarkable man in so many ways – a supremely talented musician: an eminent organist and Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, as well as a double bassist and continuo player of renown within the London musical scene after the Second World War. Unlike the honoured and feted Soar, Boorman never received the accolades or attention richly due to him and the cathedral. Part of this could be attributed to his own philosophy in regard to his role – seeing himself not as the great and glorious musician, but as a humble craftsman passing through an ephemeral moment within the Cathedral’s history. Watkins Shaw, in his masterwork *The Succession of Organists* has no mention of Boorman, save for the dates he served. Shaw, who spent several decades compiling this near definitive work, recalls in his introduction that, in regards to Boorman and his history, ‘to my regret, more than one application failed to secure a response.’²⁸⁷ The BBC Wales producer Selwyn Roderick famously quipped in a *Radio Times* advertisement for his programme on Peter Boorman, that a guide to Peter Boorman should be included in the next imprint of the Cathedral’s *Pitkin Guide*.²⁸⁸ The actual programme *Organ, organ* (1971) is a unique viewing experience – compared to programmes about cathedrals in the 21st century, *Organ, organ* shines a light on St Davids Cathedral through the eyes of its ‘non-conformist East Anglian’ organist²⁸⁹ – it is almost a miracle that the then Dean T. Edward (Eddie) Jenkins did not reprimand Boorman for some of his more outlandish comments on camera! Dean Jenkins however paid tribute to Boorman as ‘a man of many interests, of wide reading and of true culture’. However, Boorman’s forthrightness can and must be forgiven – this was a man driven with continuing the choral foundation at St Davids almost at any price. His introduction of Girl choristers in 1963, due to a crisis with the boy trebles prior to a BBC Radio Choral Evensong broadcast, then presenting his girls to the world in 1966 as part of the Cathedral Choir, was a first within the Anglican choral tradition, and finally can put to bed the rival claims by Salisbury Cathedral²⁹⁰ and St Mary’s Cathedral, Edinburgh²⁹¹.

Boorman must also be credited for opening St Davids to the wider musical world – his Tomkins Tercentenary Festival of 1956 brought to St Davids major musicians of note, including Alfred

²⁸⁷ Watkins Shaw, H. *The Succession of Organists of the Chapel Royal and the Cathedrals of England and Wales from c.1538*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991, p.ix

²⁸⁸ Producer Selwyn Roderick writes about Boorman the Organ, *Radio Times*, 26 February 1970. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ A girls treble line was introduced from October 1991 – St Davids separated their girl and boy trebles in April 1991. The public relations machine that Salisbury have created surrounding this massages some plain truths about some of the necessary facts: such as which line is the ‘main’ treble line, according to Chapter statute, and how often do the girls sing – is there total parity with their boy counterparts?

²⁹¹ A mixed line of boys and girls introduced in 1978. Whilst St Davids was ‘officially’ a mixed line from 1966, there were long periods (including in footage included in *Organ, Organ* in 1971) which show only a female treble line.

Deller and the Deller Consort, the renowned tenor Kenneth Bowen,²⁹² as well as the leading violist Harry Danks, the eminent musicologist and harpsichordist 'Bob' Thurstan Dart, Denis Stevens, then Professor of Music at Columbia University in New York, whose work on Thomas Tomkins was published in 1957,²⁹³ as well as Boorman's mentor, the organist of the Chapel Royal Dr Harry Gabb.

Peter Boorman was born on February 6 1923 in Walkern, Hertfordshire. The middle son of a cycle shop owner, he spent his formative years at Stevenage Grammar School, before being called up to serve in the Royal Tank Corps. Although he had served as a parish church chorister, Peter believed that he would eventually become an analytical chemist rather than a professional musician, but he met and grew close to Harry Gabb, then Organist of Llandaff Cathedral, also serving within the Royal Tank Corp, who encouraged Peter to try the musical profession. On being demobbed in 1945, Peter began working as an organist and musician. It is around this time that he met his first wife, Kinnie Adam. In his eulogy for Peter, The Very Reverend Jonathan Lean noted in Boorman's funeral panegyric that 'Kinnie and Peter supported each other in their musical endeavours.'²⁹⁴ Boorman's first post was as Organist of St Nicholas' Parish Church, Stevenage, where he was fortunate to make the acquaintance of one of the church's parishioners, the composer Elizabeth Poston. Together, they founded and successfully developed the Stevenage Musical Society. Whilst at Stevenage, Boorman worked for the Hertfordshire Rural Music School, helping to pioneer musical education throughout Hertfordshire. Being well placed geographically, Boorman played his part on the London circuit of musicians, being in demand as both a double bassist and as a continuo player. His relationship with Harry Gabb continued – by 1953, Gabb had left Llandaff and was appointed Organist, Composer and Master of the Children at Her Majesty's Chapel Royal, holding with that post the role of Sub-Organist of St Paul's Cathedral.²⁹⁵ The Boorman family recall Peter acting as Gabb's assistant at the 1953 coronation – it is highly likely this was a page-turner, as Boorman is not credited in the list of musicians taking part in the Coronation orchestra or as one of the organists.²⁹⁶ The 1953 Coronation saw choristers and songmen from many of the key English foundations taking part, ²⁹⁷ as well as representative choristers and songmen from St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, and from Llandaff Cathedral – one must theorise that that came about through Harry Gabb. Even with its historic connection with the Monarchy, St Davids Cathedral were not represented - a sad, but accidental oversight.

²⁹² A remarkable coincidence seeing that Kenneth's son, Geraint, was appointed Organist in 1995.

²⁹³ Stevens, D. *Thomas Tomkins 1572-1656*, Macmillan, London, 1957.

²⁹⁴ Notes made by The Very Reverend Jonathan Lean for the eulogy of Peter Boorman. Private correspondence between The Very Reverend Jonathan Lean and the author. Reproduced by permission.

²⁹⁵ This was possible as the convention of the time was for the Organist to play, and not conduct. St Paul's did not appoint a person specifically to train the choir until Barry Rose was appointed as Master of the Choristers in 1977. Jonathan Bielby, who served as Organist and Master of the Choristers at Wakefield Cathedral continued this for much of his tenure at Wakefield between 1970-2010.

²⁹⁶ http://www.westminster-abbey.org/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/65658/Coronation-1953-musicians.pdf. Accessed 09/08/2014 at 18:52.

²⁹⁷ The names of many well-known cathedral organists can be found 'lurking' in the choir as 'additional basses'.

Boorman's arrival in St Davids in 1954 can be attributed as the start of the 'Modern' era in the cathedral's music-making. A new and improved instrument awaited him, as well as a choir of 13 boys and 10 men²⁹⁸ – a healthy number in such a rural area²⁹⁹. After Dr Soar's remarkably long tenure, Boorman's arrival may not have been the most comfortable – rarely does a new organist feel at home starting in a new position – but Boorman certainly had plans for St Davids – for the choir and the musical life of the cathedral.

The Tomkins Tercentenary Festival (1956)

The post-war formation of the Arts Council of Great Britain, and its regional committees in Scotland and Wales is certainly key to ensuring continuity of music-making in all parts of Great Britain. Without the support and funding, the proliferation of smaller, niche festivals and concert series in the 1950s and 1960s would have never been possible. Boorman, with his experience in both London and regional music-making was perfectly suited to enable the beginnings of such a venture. 1956 saw the tercentenary of the death of the composer and sometime chorister Thomas Tomkins – son of Boorman's predecessor, Thomas Farrington Tomkins. It was decided that a festival should be held in honour of the tercentenary, with services sung by the Cathedral Choir, concerts by leading artists, and a lecture by Professor Denis Stevens, the leading researcher on Tomkins.³⁰⁰ The lasting memorial to Tomkins would be a small, inanimate organ case³⁰¹, with an inscription written in Latin. The Boorman Archive in the Cathedral's library fortunately has a great deal of the correspondence received from those who took part, charting the arrangements and changes – sadly, there are no copies of the letters sent by Peter Boorman to those taking part. However, it is clear from reading the torrent of correspondence that Boorman was the driving force behind getting the festival going. The majority of those responding seem to signal their appreciation to Boorman for his zeal and foresight to organise such a festival. The remaining records seem not to suggest when it was agreed that the festival should be held – indeed, the lead Viola for the BBC Symphony Orchestra Harry Danks, whose section formed the leading viol consort in the United Kingdom at that time, wrote an impassioned note to Boorman asking for an idea of dates – August already being a busy month in musical circles:

Dear Mr Boorman,

Can I please have an idea of the proposed dates you intend to use in August for the Tomkins festival and if possible the day or days you would require the viols? I need this information to put before the B.B.C. so that I can obtain their permission to be with you. As you most

²⁹⁸ This would also number the Dean and two Priest Vicars.

²⁹⁹ A word of caution – the number of men and boys may have been reasonable, but the quality of their voices may have left a lot to be desired. It certainly is clear from Boorman's own recollections in *Organ, organ* (1971) that the choir may not have been in the best of health upon his arrival.

³⁰⁰ Stevens was at that time Professor of Music at Columbia University, New York.

³⁰¹ Purely decorative, and not playable.

probably know I play with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra and during August the Proms operate. I would like to have everything cleared up as soon as you can let me know.³⁰²

The dates finally settled upon were the week of August 13 -17 1956. Danks wrote to confirm his and the Viol Consorts attendance, but imparted to Boorman that their availability would only be for August 15 and 16, as the BBC Symphony Orchestra were playing a Proms concert at the Royal Albert Hall on August 17.³⁰³ An impressive array of artists were invited to join Danks and his consort– the countertenor Alfred Deller brought *The Deller Consort*, the leading exponents of historically accurate performance of the period to St Davids to perform the vocal works of Tomkins, performing by themselves and with the Cathedral Choir. Boorman wrote to Deller to ask whether he would be willing to perform the Gibbons anthem *O clap your hands together* with the Dean, Carl Witton-Davies, both singing the Decani Alto part. Deller, the world's leading Counter-Tenor replied;

I not only consent to singing with the Dean in the Gibbons, but I shall see that a mention of the occasion is made in my next brochure!!³⁰⁴

Deller brought with him Desmond Dupré, the eminent lutenist, to accompany him in a solo recital. The leading harpsichordist Thurston Dart came down from Cambridge to offer a lecture/recital of the keyboard works of Tomkins. In a letter written to Boorman dated May 14th 1956, Dart acknowledged the considerable expense of getting a harpsichord, tuned and insured to St Davids:

...I do not think it could be done for less than £50, and that would be cutting things to the very bone. There'd be my own fee on top of that: and, all in all, I think your committee might well blench. I know I should if I were them! I honestly think it would be better to use a piano & the organ that's already on the spot; I'm not such a purist as to believe that TT's music should only be played on the harpsichord, and I can't help feeling that he would have been horrified if it was proposed to spend so large a sum just for a couple of hours' music.³⁰⁵

Dart concludes the letter by offering to bring a single-stringed clavichord with him, although he stresses that '...it would not be practical to play this to an audience of more than about a 100, however, and preferably, fewer.'³⁰⁶ One of Boorman's *coup de grace* was the appearance of Denis Stevens, Professor of Music at Columbia University, New York. Stevens was finishing the first major academic work on Tomkins and was going to be in the United Kingdom for its launch. Dean Carl Witton-Davies had sent Professor Stevens an article written by Boorman about Tomkins, contained

³⁰² Letter from Harry Danks to Peter Boorman, February 6th 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³⁰³ Letter from Harry Danks to Peter Boorman, April 17th 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³⁰⁴ Letter from Alfred Deller to Peter Boorman, Ascension Day 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³⁰⁵ Letter from R. Thurstan Dart to Peter Boorman. May 14th 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

within the 1955 Friends of St Davids Cathedral report. Stevens writes to Boorman, offering his services for a lecture during the festival week:

With all this material prepared³⁰⁷, I am wondering whether your committee would (even at this late stage) care to have me give a lecture on some aspect of Tomkins' life or music? I think I can fairly say that the preparation of this book (to be published by Macmillan's) has enabled me to gain access to much information hitherto quite unknown.³⁰⁸

We do not see Boorman's response to Professor Stevens, but for Boorman (and indeed any musician undertaking such a festival), the thought of having the fore-most expert on the festival's dedicatee present a lecture would have been a great boon, adding an additional level of credibility and importance. Indeed, many were joining the effort in getting publicity for the festival. Dean Carl Witton Davies approached the first Musical Director of the Arts Council of Great Britain, then serving as Deputy Administrator of the Royal Opera House, Sir Steuart Wilson, inviting him to the festival, and asking him to read the first lesson at the Unveiling Ceremony of the Tomkins organ case. The Dean had asked Sir Steuart to arrange some sort of press coverage – Sir Steuart, writing to Dean Witton Davies on 18 July 1956, reports:

The Times will take an actual account of the opening ceremony and I hope I can arrange it so that it can appear the next day – as it will be mainly a notice to say that the festival will continue – and not a criticism of the performance, it can be safely written in advance!³⁰⁹

Wilson continues, informing the Dean that he had not been successful in getting The Times musical critic Frank Howes to devote an entire article to Tomkins and the festival, however had managed to get Howes to write a '...small statement about the actual celebration'.³¹⁰ Herbert Sumsion, then organist of Gloucester Cathedral, then at his prime as a composer and as tri-annual director of the Three Choirs Festival, wrote a small note to Boorman, giving him details of his families' summer address, as well as indicating that '...I would like a programme...'³¹¹ of the festival. Sumsion hoped that he would be able to visit St Davids around that period, and would call on the Boorman family when visiting. Boorman also sent an invitatory letter to the poet Cecil Day-Lewis, who, upon writing back, politely declined the invitation, stating that he was '...overburdened with work for as far ahead as I can see.'³¹²

³⁰⁷ Stevens had already recorded several lectures on aspects of Tomkins' life and music for radio transmission in the United States and the Commonwealth.

³⁰⁸ Letter from Dennis Stevens to Peter Boorman, May 1st 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³⁰⁹ Letter from Sir Steuart Wilson to Dean Carl Witton Davies, 18 July 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Note from Dr Herbert Sumsion to Peter Boorman, 18 July 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³¹² Letter from Cecil Day-Lewis to Peter Boorman, 23 May 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

There seems to be some ambiguity as to who was originally asked to unveil the Tomkins memorial organ case. It seems that at one point, Sir Arthur Bliss was to have carried it out³¹³ – Bliss was then serving as Master of the Queen’s Music, a post which co-incidentally had been held last but one by the frequent visitor to St Davids and friend of Dr Joseph Soar, Sir Henry Walford Davies. There is no further mention of Bliss, or any reason why he was unavailable to carry out the act. Dean Witton Davies next approached Sir William H Harris, then serving as Organist at St George’s, Windsor. Harris, who had co-conducted the musical forces at the 1953 Coronation, and had received the KCVO in 1954,³¹⁴ was well respected for his work at Windsor – therefore his joint connections between Court and St Davids (as Herbert Morris’ articled pupil) made him an ideal candidate to unveil the organ case. Unfortunately, Sir William had to decline – ‘...as I have to be in Glasgow for an Organist’s Conference (of which I am President).’³¹⁵ Boorman quickly called on his friend and mentor Harry Gabb, Organist and Master of the Children at Chapel Royal and Sub-Organist of St Paul’s Cathedral. Boorman had already asked Gabb to act as accompanist for the festival late on in 1955,³¹⁶ and flurries of letters were exchanged between the pair. Fortunately, the Boorman Archive in the Cathedral’s library has some of these – they show a remarkable friendship and working camaraderie, even though the pair are separated by the River Seven and some 250 miles of land. Once it becomes clear that Gabb was to unveil the Tomkins memorial organ case, the letters become rather interesting – in between asides as to what the appropriate garb to wear for conducting the unveiling: ‘...DB [John Dykes Bower – Organist, St Paul’s Cathedral 1936-68) thinks a dark suit will do – not morning dress’³¹⁷ or what should appear on the small plaque: ‘...I think ‘Harry Gabb, organist, choirmaster and composer of Her Majesty’s Chapel Royal’. This is as written on my Patent.’³¹⁸ Boorman asks Gabb to write ‘...a few lines on [his] office’³¹⁹ however, Gabb admits that this has stumped him – ‘...the thing has, between ourselves, dwindled so much, no doubt because of the business of life in Royal circles, and also the cost.’³²⁰ Gabb puts it to Boorman that he should get Dean Witton Davies to write ‘...something from the facts, it would be alright, but I think it is probably best left alone!’³²¹ Gabb goes on to describe life as a servant of the Sovereign:

My choir sings ...each Sunday from 2nd Sunday in October until the end of July when Court technically goes out of season (later grouse shooting comes in!). We sing at Marlborough House, and Buckingham Palace (carols) and at any service of importance

³¹³ Letter from Alfred Deller to Peter Boorman, 2 May 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³¹⁴ Harris was appointed a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO) in the 1954 Birthday Honours List.

³¹⁵ Letter from Sir William H Harris to Dean Carl Witton Davies, 24 May 1954. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³¹⁶ Letter from Harry Gabb to Peter Boorman, 24th November 1955. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³¹⁷ Letter from Harry Gabb to Peter Boorman, 4th June 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Letter from Harry Gabb to Peter Boorman, 6th February 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

either Commanded (no extra fee!) or by permission of (extra fee!) the Queen. The children still wear their Jacobean costume instead of cassock and surplice (scarlet tunic and black breeches) and there are 10 of them and 6 gentlemen. We are in attendance on Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph, and at the Maundy Service wherever it is held (the Abbey, St Paul's or Southwark). There is a fine service at the Epiphany when the Queen or her deputy offer Gold, frankincense and myrrh at the Holy Communion. Each of the children, during their tenure of office receives a Bible from the Queen signed with her own hand.³²²

Dean Witton Davies included in Gabb's biography in the tercentenary programme descriptions of the Jacobean uniforms and the ceremonies at Epiphany, but neglected to include the comments regarding fees!³²³ Although the choir at St Davids was healthy in size, Boorman did employ one or two 'ringers' to help bolster the choral forces— Alfred Deller notably joining Dean Witton Davies to sing Gibbon's *O clap your hands together*.³²⁴ Another 'ringer' invited in by Boorman was the young Welsh tenor, Kenneth Bowen. Bowen, then holding a Choral Exhibition at St John's College, Cambridge, writes enthusiastically to Boorman to accept the invitation; however Bowen's enthusiasm does give way to some practical points regarding the transport situation in Pembrokeshire.

...I'm delighted at the offer because I would probably have come in any case to a concert or two. I'll be much happier doing something...When on the 13th would you require me? Our services at John's finish on the 12th and I'll travel all night if necessary. I could probably stay in Fishguard, but would prefer, if it is at all possible, to stay in St Davids, as the bus service is a little tricky.³²⁵

The Bowen family would again experience the trickiness of public transport at St Davids, when Kenneth's son, Geraint, was appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers in 1995.

Amidst the flurry of correspondence from well-wishers and enquiring types, one letter stood out in particular. It was an enquiry from Brian Runnett, then assistant organist of Chester Cathedral. It is a simple enquiry regarding information about the festival and accommodation, concluding '...May I be allowed to congratulate you on this enterprise and hope that it will be well supported'.³²⁶ Runnett went on to serve as Organ Scholar to Dr George Guest at St John's College, Cambridge before being appointed as Organist of Norwich Cathedral. Rightly acknowledged as one of the leading recitalists of

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Boorman, P., *A Souvenir Brochure issued to mark the Tercentenary of the death of Thomas Tomkins with details of the Commemorative Festival held in the Cathedral from August 13th to 17th*, Hall the Printer Ltd, Oxford, 1956, p.46

³²⁴ Letter from Alfred Deller to Peter Boorman, Ascension Day 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³²⁵ Letter from Kenneth Bowen to Peter Boorman, 16 July 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³²⁶ Note from Brian Runnett to Peter Boorman, 20 July 1956. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

his generation, Runnett was killed in a car crash returning to Norwich from a recital engagement at Westminster Abbey in 1970.³²⁷

When viewing the week's programme, it is clear why so many wanted to attend. Boorman, in his introduction in the souvenir brochure for the festival, eloquently states his reasoning for organising such an event:

It is plainly the duty of those living in the birthplace of a great figure to celebrate the anniversary of his death with all the resources at their disposal. We are attempting this at St Davids, and, in order that the ordinary listener may judge for himself, are setting the composer's music among that of his contemporaries and of his immediate predecessors and successors.³²⁸

Even up until going to print, arrangements were not totally fixed, as Boorman notes in the souvenir brochure:

At the time of going to Press, the following events have been arranged. Times are subject to alteration to fit the convenience of broadcasting, and enquiries should be made at the Cathedral or reference made to posters.³²⁹

The Boorman Archive in the Cathedral library sadly does not give any hint as to which concerts were recorded for broadcast – however, the BBC Home Service broadcast a number of programmes (including three on Thomas Tomkins)³³⁰ pairing the Deller Consort with Professor Denis Stevens. It is possible that excerpts were recorded during the Tomkins Festival at St Davids, however the BBC's Genome Archive demonstrates that there was neither a live broadcast nor a recorded concert broadcast from St Davids during the festival. This is a great shame, as the festival's programme featured a line-up that many would still be willing to see and hear:

MONDAY	3.0	Opening Service in the Cathedral. Unveiling of Tomkins Memorial
August 13		Organ Case by Harry Gabb, Esq. lessons will be read by Sir Steuart Wilson and Lord Kenswood.
	8.0	St Davids Dramatic Society in <i>The Zeal of Thy House</i> by Dorothy Sayers.
TUESDAY	11.0	Lecture by Professor Denis Stevens.
August 14	3.0	Recital by Thurston Dart (harpsichord) and Desmond Dupré (viola de gamba).
	8.0	Organ Recital by Harry Gabb.
WEDNESDAY	11.0	Lecture-Recital by Thurston Dart

³²⁷ In tribute, the Cathedral Organists Association commissioned Kenneth Leighton to write the 'Second Service' in his memory.

³²⁸ Boorman, P., *A Souvenir Brochure issued to mark the Tercentenary of the death of Thomas Tomkins with details of the Commemorative Festival held in the Cathedral from August 13th to 17th*, Hall the Printer Ltd, Oxford, 1956, p.12

³²⁹ *Ibid*, p.9

³³⁰ Thomas Tomkins – Musica Deo Sacra. BBC Home Service. 19 January 1957. Radio

August 15	8.0	Recital by the Deller Consort and the London Consort of Viols.
THURSDAY	11.0	Recital by Alfred Deller (counter-tenor) and Desmond Dupré (lute).
August 16	7.15	Recital by the Deller Consort, the London Consort of Viols, the Cathedral Choir, and Harry Gabb.
FRIDAY	3.0	Recital by the Elizabethan Madrigal Singers of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, conducted by John Cynan Jones, with Henry Sandon (bass).
August 17	8.0	Repeat performance of <i>The Zeal of Thy House</i> by Dorothy Sayers. ³³¹

An impressive yet busy programme for a five day festival. The involvement of the Cathedral Choir may seem light – singing the opening service and performing anthems Orlando Gibbons anthems *O clap your hands together*, and *See, the word incarnate* with the Deller Consort and Harry Danks' London Consort of Viols – but this would have been an amazing opportunity for the choir, almost in the pre-infancy of the Early Music Movement that would come to the fore over the next decade. The opportunity for 'authentic' performance would have most certainly thrilled Boorman and his choristers. The impact of the Tomkins Tercentenary Festival is left in no doubt. The political magazine *The Spectator*, in their musical review of 1956 begins drably 'It has not been a rich year in music'³³² and recoils in the celebrations of Mozart in Austria, and the lengthening of the Glyndebourne season to accommodate performances of his operas.

Almost inevitably the centenary of the death of Schumann has been rather neglected, but the tercentenary of the death of Thomas Tomkins received due recognition at St. David's (*sic*), where he was born.³³³

The Summer Recital Series

To those researching this period, it seems strange that it was Boorman's successor, Sir Nicholas Jackson Bt., who instigated the St Davids Bach Festival some 22 years later, and that Boorman himself did not repeat his festival triumph. Boorman's festival output heavily squared on the recital series that had been a fixture of a St Davids summer throughout the tenures of his predecessors Morris and Soar. Boorman however, was not content with six weeks of organ concerts – he devised inspiring programmes of artists that made the series a viable and exciting part of local culture. By inviting world-class musicians to St Davids, it opened up the village-city³³⁴ to both London and internationally recognised musicians and ensembles, greatly adding to the cultural enrichment of West Wales. Within his first decade at St Davids, Boorman had brought musicians and ensembles as diverse as the counter-tenor Alfred Dellar and lutenist Desmond Dupre; organists as diverse Lady Susi Jeans, George Guest, Christopher Dearnley, Francis Jackson, Noel Rawsthorne, Peter le Huray, Richard

³³¹ Boorman, P., *A Souvenir Brochure issued to mark the Tercentenary of the death of Thomas Tomkins with details of the Commemorative Festival held in the Cathedral from August 13th to 17th*, Hall the Printer Ltd, Oxford, 1956, p.9

³³² *The Year's Music* in 'The Spectator'. 28 December 1956. p.15

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ At this point not formally a City, although still laying claim to the right removed by the Local Government Act 1897.

Lloyd, Gordon Slater, Allan Wicks and David Stancliffe, and from further afield renowned organist Fernando Germani from the Vatican (on numerous occasions) and Professor Kurt Senn from Berne; other ensembles and musicians included Yvonne and William Mathias, the contra-alto Helen Watts, the Choir of St John's College, Cambridge under George Guest with Jonathan Bielby accompanying, the choristers of Coventry Cathedral with the harpist Ann Griffiths and the pianist, composer and educator Freda Swain – performing piano duets with her teacher Arthur Alexander. Boorman also encouraged local music-making of a high quality, and included choirs from both Ysgol Dewi Sant³³⁵ and Tasker's School for Girls³³⁶ in Haverfordwest, as well as from local soloists. This series, although having been in existence during the tenures of Morris and Soar, certainly had not been attracting top-level musicians in the manner that Boorman had begun to. The usual length of the series was six weeks, with either one or two concerts per week.³³⁷ The local choral ensembles such as the schools or the Cathedral Choir would perform early in July, before the later July, August and early September concerts would either be organ or instrumental/soloist. Running a lengthy series certainly meant certain dedication for Boorman, his concerts secretary Major B. St John Howells (referred to as 'the Major' in the 1971 BBC documentary *Organ, organ*) and the loyal attending public. Boorman was no fool in keeping the series running from July through to September – the growth in tourism had started to benefit St Davids and the wider county, as had the continued expansion of transport. Boorman, however, took no chances when it came to his paying public – at the bottom of the Summer Concert Season brochure of 1962, Boorman helpfully provides information on public transport – in the case of St Davids, this was the bus timetable from Haverfordwest:

TRANSPORT

Western Welsh buses leave Haverfordwest at 5.45, 6.15 and 7.10, arriving in St Davids at 6.50, 7.10 and 8.10. A bus returns to Haverfordwest at 9.45, arriving at 10.40.³³⁸

In retrospect, readers in this century can look back at these halcyon days as a golden era for culture in the United Kingdom – out of 12 concerts in the 1962 summer series, seven of them were subsidised by the Arts Council of Great Britain.³³⁹ Throughout this period, sponsorship from the Arts Council is apparent – the 1962 series brochure acknowledges each concert that the council sponsored, whereas the majority place on record the Cathedral's thanks to the Arts Council for sponsorship. For many choristers, the Summer Concert Series was their first experience of professional musicians outside of the robed choir setting, and certainly would have given impetus for them to continue as choristers and musicians within the Cathedral choir and at School.

³³⁵ St Davids' comprehensive school

³³⁶ Later amalgamated as Tasker Milward School

³³⁷ It seems to have started with up to two per week but slowed to one per week by the mid-1960s.

³³⁸ 1962 Summer Concert Series, St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³³⁹ Ibid.

Repertoire and conduct – the Boorman notebooks

In an era where many choirs ‘web-cast’,³⁴⁰ and where technology can provide an immeasurable half-life for broadcasts and recordings, finding out what the musical day-to-day life was like in earlier eras is both frustrating and difficult. Without recording, we can only make educated guesses, and even then it cannot be viewed as absolutely correct. However, we have a small glimpse of what the situation was like in St Davids during Boorman’s era through two sources – firstly, Boorman’s exquisitely presented music lists. The majority of these do not survive, however it does provide us with some information over the period of his tenure – although it certainly lacks the depth of the second source. The week commencing Sunday 4 October 1959 demonstrates an average week within the Cathedral.³⁴¹ Mattins with Sermon at 11.00 see *Stanford* in C (we assume the *Te Deum*), with a chanted Benedictus, with *The Lord is my shepherd* by SS Wesley as the anthem. Evensong, with Sermon and Procession for Harvest Thanksgiving see *Stanford* in B flat evening canticles paired with the eighteenth-century English composer Maurice Greene’s Harvest-tide verse-anthem *Thou visitest the earth*. Tuesday 6 October sees Evensong at 6.00 with the canticles as *Morean* in D and the anthem *Rejoice in the Lord* by Henry Ley. Thursday 8 October sees Evensong at 6.00 where the canticles are *Arnold* in A and the Tudor motet *Hide not thou thy face from us* by Richard Farrant. Saturday 10 October sees Evensong sung to plainsong – the Magnificat sung to *Tone VIII.2* and the Nunc Dimittis to *Tone I.2*. Sunday 11 October sees the Bishop preach at Mattins, so the *Te Deum* is sung to *Stanford* in A, although the Benedictus is still chanted. The evening canticles are *Stanford* in C.

The next list in the archive, for the week commencing Sunday 17 September 1961 shows that the situation has deteriorated, with choral services only being on Sunday. Mattins and Sermon on Sunday 17 September at 11.00 see *Byrd* responses, together with *Stanford* in C morning canticles, with the anthem *O God, thou art my God* by Henry Purcell. Evensong sees *Walmsley* in D minor together with the anthem *Mine eyes for beauty pine* by Herbert Howells. The printed list refers to ‘Mattins’ and ‘Evensong’ daily – neither with music listed, suggesting that either the services were said, or that Boorman did not wish to publish what was performed in case of needing to change the repertoire.³⁴² The only weekday service that week to include music is Evensong on Saturday 23rd September. The service is entitled ‘Evensong (Plainsong)’, which explains the lack of an anthem. The Faux-bourbons are sung to a setting by the Italian composer Viadana. Boorman was keen on the use of plainsong, and used it often for services sung only by the Vicars Choral.³⁴³ Sunday 24 September saw a Sung Eucharist – although Boorman has written it on his list as ‘Mattins with Sermon’. The use of 4 hymns (Introit, Gradual, Offertory and ‘Final Hymn’) suggest that it was a Eucharist. The choice of setting – *Merbecke*

³⁴⁰ Broadcast their service on the internet via a website. The Covid-19 pandemic has seen these phenomena grow in like manner.

³⁴¹ St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

³⁴² There are ‘urban myths’ that Francis Jackson would change repertoire at short notice during his tenure at York Minster, making the Music Scheme there less authoritative than the printed copy suggests.

³⁴³ Annotated copies of the English Gradual were found during a clearance of the former choir vestry in the mid-2000s.

also lends credence to the service being the Eucharist. Evensong saw *Hylton-Stewart* in C and *Byrd* responses. The choice of music seems to be in low rotation, as again on Sunday 8 October, *O God, thou art my God* by Henry Purcell appears, this time at Evensong. Saturday 30 September sees an exact replica performance of Evensong the previous week. The music lists suggest this to be a regular occurrence.

The second of our sources however serves even more interest to musicologists and historians. Boorman kept his own notebooks, listing services (including the music sung), together with a head-count of the congregation, and often other comments. Whilst we cannot judge for ourselves what the singing was like on 21 January 1962 – the Third Sunday after Epiphany, we are able to see Boorman's thoughts on it, together with his views on a range of matters. The top left hand corner of the document provides a weather report – 'mild and damp',³⁴⁴ which may also describe the music for that day. 11.00 Mattins, with a congregation of 33, saw *Byrd* responses, coupled with *Stanford* in C. We must assume that this would be either the *Te Deum* or *Jubilate*, as both the other Matin canticles (the *Venite* and *Benedictus*) are suffixed by numbers – 103 and 114 respectively, which would strongly suggest that these were sung to chant by choir and congregation. Boorman's comments on the service are not encouraging – 'Very dull...boys very weak throughout'.³⁴⁵ 6.00 Evensong (and Sermon), with a congregation of 57, see *Byrd* responses reprised, this time coupled with *Walmsley* in D minor. Other than the chant for the appointed psalm, the evidence suggests that both the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* were sung to the setting. Easter Day 1962 sees the choir singing 3 choral services – the 8.00 Eucharist, 11.00 Mattins and 6.00 Evensong. The 8.00 Eucharist setting was *Herbert Sumsion* in F, composed in 1959 – an accessible piece which, whilst not pushing the boundaries of avant-garde composition, was rooted in the mid-20 century tradition of English church music. It is encouraging to see St Davids taking up music so early in its published life. Part of the service was also sung to *Merbecke* – it is not made clear which parts, but using the 1959 BBC broadcast of a Eucharist for St Davids-tide from the Cathedral as a basis, it is probable that the Creed would have been sung to the *Merbecke* setting. 11.00 Mattins sees *Ireland* in F as the canticle setting. It seems that the *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* were sung by the choir from the setting rather than chanted on this occasion. An 'Antiphon' (more properly an Introit) was sung from the North Transept – *Haec Dies* by the Italian renaissance composer Viadana. Although a simple piece, it is a surprising choice as an introit, as the renaissance repertory was still rarely heard anywhere in the United Kingdom outside of Westminster Cathedral.³⁴⁶ The opening plainsong declamation gives way to a vibrant polyphony. The use of Latin also is something not often seen within the music lists of 1960s St Davids, or indeed in the majority of foundations outside of the universities of Oxford or Cambridge. Evensong at 6.00 sees Boorman note two 'firsts'

³⁴⁴ Untitled notebook '1962'. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Westminster Cathedral being a Roman Catholic foundation

– the first performance of *Stanford in A*,³⁴⁷ one of the core Anglican evening canticle settings, and Patrick Hadley’s anthem *My beloved spake*. Hadley’s exotic anthem, written in 1938, demonstrates Boorman’s determination to include repertoire that represented the continuation of the Anglican choral tradition into the mid-20th century, as well as developing the choir’s repertoire to include works that fellow cathedrals would be performing.

Epiphany 1963³⁴⁸ sees St Davids covered in a deep snow that had prevailed for 10 whole days – Boorman notes that a slight thaw had begun. Even under deep snow, the choir are tasked with singing 3 choral services – 11.00 Mattins followed by Evensong at 2.30, in order for the Nine Lessons and Carols to take place at 6.00.³⁴⁹ Evidence suggests that Boorman instituted the service of Nine Lessons and Carols upon his arrival, however early in his tenure, the service was held on consecutive years on Boxing Day – we will come later to talk about the additional services Boorman introduced over the Christmas season. In what seems to be a passing phase in a number of cathedrals during the period, Boorman has put on the music list *Stanford in C* for both morning (Te Deum only) and evening canticles. The morning’s anthem *Say, where is he born* is taken from Mendelssohn’s unfinished oratorio, *Christus*.³⁵⁰ Set in two parts, the first being a quasi-recitative trio for a tenor and two basses, before the whole choir come in with the second part *There shall a star from David come forth*, culminating in the choral *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*. Evensong on the First Sunday after Epiphany 1963³⁵¹ sees Boorman make comment about the conduct of his Vicars Choral. ‘ND [Nunc Dimittis] was unspeakable...ND of Stanford in B flat cannot be allowed any more until men understand how to count 2 in a bar’.³⁵² That morning at Mattins, Boorman had re-introduced the morning setting of *Stanford in B flat* – ‘resurrection after 3 years’.³⁵³ On Easter Day of that year, we see *Harwood in A flat* being sung as the setting at both the 8.00 Eucharist and Mattins, although the Benedictus at Mattins was again sung to chant. Hadley’s *My beloved spake* returns as the anthem at Mattins. At the time of writing, this was the only one of Boorman’s notebooks deposited in the Cathedral library. As Archdeacon Richard Davies made clear to Yardley and Green in 1740, the passage of time leaves the records of St Davids incomplete and what survives is never wholly intact. Although it is disappointing that more have not yet been discovered, a number of things have been learnt from this period. Firstly, it seems that Boorman was determined to enhance the choir’s repertoire with music firmly associated with the ‘Cathedral tradition’, as well as introducing more modern works into it. He does, however, have to tread a thin path with the local tradition, which would explain why some canticles were sung to chant rather than composed settings. There also seems some instability within both treble line and

³⁴⁷ From the copies in the Cathedral’s music library, it is probable to presume that it was the first time during Boorman’s tenure as Organist.

³⁴⁸ Sunday 6 January 1963

³⁴⁹ We must presume that, due to the snow, the carol service had been put off until the New Year.

³⁵⁰ Op.97

³⁵¹ Sunday 12th January 1963

³⁵² Untitled notebook ‘1962’. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

³⁵³ Ibid.

back row – this seems to be a running pattern throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s. The instability within the choir needed to be halted, and during the mid-1960s became Boorman's goal, leading him to unsuspectingly alter the choral foundation, and one could argue, the Anglican choral tradition, for ever.

'The Mini-skirt ascended upon Pembrokeshire' – St Davids and Girl Choristers

Peter Boorman's lasting legacy to St Davids, and indeed, to the wider Anglican choral tradition is one which has widely ignored, and often forgotten in favour of other cathedrals claims – that of the introduction of girl choristers during the 1960s. The 'white heat'³⁵⁴ of the revolution taking place even permeated the western part of Pembrokeshire. In the 1971 BBC documentary *Organ, organ*, Boorman talks of continued difficulty of recruiting boy choristers through his first seven years – as he entered his second seven years in 1962, the number of boy choristers was dropping at a worrying rate. The situation was evidently in decline from the mid-1950s. Boorman, in the BBC documentary, speaks candidly about it – rather than making usual pleasantries with the locals, he would begin by enquiring if the particular person had a son, and of his age.³⁵⁵ It is clear, both from chapter papers, from recollections of the era, and from Boorman's own pamphlets that the situation was becoming drastic. By the early part of the 1960s, rates of pay for school-age children working in agriculture, particularly potato picking, combined with wider social trends of travel and social activities were drawing boys away from the choir. Potato farming in North and West Pembrokeshire was at its highest during this period – agriculture still being a major staple of the local economy. Very few families did not have some relation to the agricultural industry – the possibility of children making a decent wage for a few hours work was more appealing than standing around in a surplice for a full day on Sunday for a pittance of what could be made potato picking. Whilst agriculture was a large force in Pembrokeshire's economy and general life, the Royal Naval Air Station at Brawdy and the oil refineries on the South Pembrokeshire coast brought a much-needed boost to the local economy. The buoyant post-war era had come to Pembrokeshire, bringing with it a growing economy and disposable incomes, leading to the tiny village of St Davids becoming ever increasingly less remote from the outside world with the popularity of the motor car for '...day trips to Tenby'.³⁵⁶ The community too was growing – the two primary schools (one being a diocesan voluntary aided school, the other an education authority school) and the village's grammar school Ysgol Dewi Sant continued to serve the locality with the children of the 'baby-boom' years. Social pursuits began to become more common – the village's Rugby Club encouraging a generation of boys to take up the national sport. But Boorman continued to struggle in attracting boys to the choir.

³⁵⁴ 'The Britain that is going to be forged in the white heat of this revolution will be no place for restrictive practices or for outdated methods on either side of industry.' J. Harold Wilson MP PC, Speech at Labour Party Conference, Scarborough 1963. Labour Party Annual Conference Report, 1963, p. 139-140

³⁵⁵ *Organ, organ*. BBC Wales Television. 1st March 1971. Television

³⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

His 'publicity drive' began by utilising his printing press – his poster, featuring his eldest son Adrian in ruff and surplice, bears striking reminiscences of Alfred Leete's poster 'Lord Kitchener wants you' poster. The poster makes for rather a dramatic read:

WANTED! YOUR Cathedral Choir badly needs sharp-witted boys (8- 11) who are ALIVE to the opportunities, musical and otherwise, it offers; and whose parents are DESPERATE to see their sons doing an important, historic and masculine job in providing the music of Wales' National Cathedral. REWARD is paid in cash quarterly. Opportunities of recording, broadcasting and T.V. work. Recitals at other churches. Thorough musical training. Travelling expenses where necessary. 357

National interest was brought to the drought of boys for the Cathedral Choir came, with an article in The Western Mail. Boorman's quotes in the article make for concerning reading – 'I don't think the situation has ever been as bad as this...we need a miracle to save us.'³⁵⁸ In the early part of the twenty first century, the fact that Boorman could claim to have 10 gentleman singers is indeed a miracle in itself – but it is clear that his concern was for the lack of boy trebles. 'We should have 10 men and 16 boys in the choir, but we have only about 7 boys and 10 men'.³⁵⁹ The article is blunt in its view on where Boorman thought the problem for finding boys laid – 'Mr Boorman blamed apathy among parents and children for the lack of choir-boys. 'I find that very few boys have hobbies these days and they are just not interested in taking part in church matters'.³⁶⁰ In further press cuttings, we begin to understand the issue facing Boorman, and indeed the now perennial issue facing the choirs of St Davids – that of the age of the choristers. In 1966, Boorman's 10 choristers were aged between 8 and 10 years old – for the burden of responsibility being placed on boys too young and inexperienced at 10 years old (emotionally and musically) to carry the weight placed on them, whilst grappling with the new probationer and junior choristers aged 8 and 9. Without senior choristers on the cusp of secondary school age to take the lead, having had between 4 and 5 years' experience, the 'middle aged' boys thrust to leadership would have been ill-prepared, and certainly would have been worked harder than is reasonably expected of choristers of that age. In order to continue a choral foundation in St Davids – at this time a village of 1,100 inhabitants (and only an extra 1,400 people living in the wider area), drastic action was needed. In an open letter,³⁶¹ A.T Pinder, a lay clerk of St George's Chapel, Windsor, writes of the dismay he shares with many on the situation at St Davids and the possibility of the disbanding of the cathedral choir. 'Knowing the situation which has to be faced there, i.e. a village 'city', with its small population and resultant difficulties in recruiting boys, it would seem to me that

³⁵⁷ St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³⁵⁸ *Choir may disband after 500 years – 'Desperate' shortage at St David's.* 'Western Mail Reporter'. October 6 1964. The Western Mail, Cardiff. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Unfortunately, the cutting does not state which newspaper the letter was published in.

the only possible solution is for a choral foundation to be instigated.³⁶² I feel that [...] if a choir-school could be commenced there I feel that it would fill a need and at the same time provide a source from which to obtain boy choristers.³⁶³ Whilst Boorman himself floated this idea publicly, it was not brought before the Chapter formally – although the topic of a choir-school would return two decades later.

Boorman reflects on the difficulties of the period in the 1971 BBC television programme *Organ, organ*.

Even with a tiny population, like St Davids has, there must have been a time when the Organist could pick and choose, and sort out these boys. Thomas Tomkins, the great British composer was a boy here, and the accounts say that, during his time, that two boys were appointed to do 'God's service'. I've had no chance of selecting boys on that basis – I've had to take them likely or unlikely to please the Almighty. But that was four hundred years ago. Four hundred years - that represents a great amount of anxiety to an organist, of grey hairs and ulcers, wondering whether the trebles would be there on Good Friday, or whether they would be on the beach for Evensong. But all the time, the solution – the marvellous solution was under our noses, and we didn't cotton on to it until the mini-skirt ascended on Pembrokeshire.³⁶⁴

St Davids folklore once again takes hold. The Cathedral's 'Porth-y-Twr' exhibition, opened in 2002 by Her Majesty The Queen, records on its interpretation boards that girls were introduced in the mid-1960s due to the boy trebles succumbing to 'flu. Other stories include incidents of a local society wedding where the boys did not attend and the boys absconding to a rugby match among others. Boorman's own obituary in *The Times* presents the story as the boys succumbing to 'flu prior to a BBC Home Service broadcast of Choral Evensong in February 1963.³⁶⁵ The BBC's archive shows no broadcast from St Davids in February 1963. So much of the narrative has been lost over the years – truth and half-truth merge and concoct stories that are half recalled many years after. It is clear that the situation in St Davids was dire, and that something needed to be done.

Throughout the early and mid-1960s, the choirs of two local schools, Tasker's School for Girls in Haverfordwest (under the direction of Miss Margaret Roberts), and Ysgol Dewi Sant – St Davids' own secondary school under its Head of Music, Miss Rosalind Charles, has performed almost annually in the Summer Concert Series. Boorman himself has accompanied the girls of Ysgol Dewi Sant, and had played double bass (and other instruments) for them on a number of occasions. Rosalind Charles, herself an organist, had begun to deputise for Boorman at the console, so he could spend more time, like many of his contemporaries, in front of their choirs directing, rather than dominating from the loft. The relationship between Cathedral and school was thriving musically. Whilst thoughts of choir

³⁶² Pinder, of course, means an established choral foundation with a school attached.

³⁶³ 'St Davids Music'. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

³⁶⁴ *Organ, organ*. BBC Wales Television. 1 March 1971. Television

³⁶⁵ *The Times*, 28 October 2009.

prep schools and other ingenious ideas bounded around, the solution had been staring Boorman, and the Cathedral, squarely in the face. The moment of truth came on Wednesday 20th April 1966, when Boorman was preparing to broadcast live on BBC Radio 4;³⁶⁶

Here I stood, in these stalls [the stalls in the Quire] with the men, waiting to rehearse the music for an important broadcast Choral Evensong, and treble trouble again cropped up. We hadn't enough boys to hold the part down. I tore home, rang the Headmaster of the Grammar School [Ysgol Dewi Sant], and said, 'For mercies sake, lend me some of your girls from your choir'. He sent them down post haste, they sight-read the stuff before a million listeners with great effect. So much so, that I had tonnes of letters saying 'Where did you get those excellent choir boys from?' On the strength of this providential rescue from disaster, the girls were appointed official choir-boys to the Cathedral.³⁶⁷

The recording of the service itself is a gem – it cannot be described as a perfect broadcast by any means, but it is a marvel, given the situation and the historic significance. Musically, it is not of any note - Tallis' *Ferial Responses*, Stanford in B flat, and the anthem *Awake, thou wintry earth!*- the final movement of JS Bach's cantata *Gelobet sei der Herr, mein Gott* BWV 129 to an Eastertide text by the poet Thomas Blackburn. Boorman leads the girls magnificently through a sight-read service. He leads them through the Magnificat at a speed that we would recognise today – a comparison between this recording and a recording of York Minster's choir under Francis Jackson of the same era show great disparity in tempo, with Dr Jackson's speed greatly restrained compared to Boorman's. One thing that is noticeable is the pronunciation– not so much with the girls, but with the Vicars Choral -the phrase *he hath shewed strength with his arm* becoming *he **herth** shewed strength with his arm*, and *thy people Israel* becoming *thy people **Is-rai-el***. Whether this is a mixture of what was the prevailing 'Anglican' style of singing during this period, or if this was confounded by the Pembrokeshire accent, is hard to distinguish.³⁶⁸ In a letter to *The Times* on July 24th 1993, Boorman recalls a letter he received post broadcast. 'After the transmission a card arrived from Sir Percy Hull, Organist Emeritus of Hereford, praising the tone of our 'boys'. He was old, experienced, and distinguished, and I fell into none of these categories, so I did not enlighten him. There was no secret, merely the careful choice of high-calibre, musical girls of early secondary school age.'³⁶⁹

At the July Chapter meeting, held on Monday 25 July 1966, the Chapter minutes note the historic decision that they had approved, sandwiched between a complaint by Boorman regarding the state of his residence, and an increase in the honorarium of the choir men from £20 to £30 per annum:

³⁶⁶ Following the BBC re-organisation of radio networks, Radio 4 (successor to the Home Service) became the home of *Choral Evensong* until moving to Radio 3.

³⁶⁷ *Organ, organ*. BBC Wales Television. 1 March 1971. Television

³⁶⁸ *Choral Evensong*, BBC Radio 4, 20 April 1966. Radio

³⁶⁹ *The Times*, 24th July 1993, p. 13

...approval to girls in choir – separate vestry – clothing left to Dean. Approval to Miss Charles being appointed assistant organist and to receive honorarium – annual appointment.³⁷⁰

Boorman notes, in *Organ, organ* that his Vicars Choral, which included his own Dean and two Priests Vicar,³⁷¹ that rather than being difficult or objectionable to the move, were wholly approving of the move.³⁷² Without fanfare, and with little movement of metaphorical eyebrows, St Davids Cathedral became the first cathedral to allow girls into the main line of trebles on parity with their boy counterparts. The first girls were full choristers – members of the foundation, on an equal footing with the boys.

Boorman's printing press and the 'Special' services of Christmas

Boorman's legacy did not end with the introduction of girl choristers. At the start of his tenure at St Davids, working together with Dean Carl Witton-Davies, the start of the liturgical year would be marked with a set of three distinct liturgies. The first, 'The Procession with Carols for Advent Sunday'³⁷³ begins the liturgical year and the preparations for Christmas. Whilst it is unclear who the author of the introduction is, the sentence structure and turn of phrase suggest that Boorman may have contributed to its creation:

In the old liturgies, the Advent Offices made a more vivid preparation for the coming of our Lord to earth than those of the Prayer Book. This carol service is designed to include many of these older features. ³⁷⁴

The introduction continues by describing the liturgy, with the choir moving in darkness from West to East – 'from darkness to light'³⁷⁵. The service opens in almost darkness, with the choir singing *The Mattins Responsory*,³⁷⁶ adapted by David Willcocks from a Magnificat by Palestrina, immediately followed by the hymn *Veni Redemptor Gentium*³⁷⁷. A reading and an anthem follow, followed immediately by the first congregational hymn *Vox clara ecce intonate* – Hark! a thrilling voice is sounded. The round of readings and carols continue: the booklet, undated as they were re-used for several years before updating, includes the following anthems and carols: *The Cherry Tree Carol*, *Adam lay ybounden* by Boris Ord, *This is the truth sent from above* arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Balulalow* by Peter Warlock, Tchaikovsky's *The Crown of Roses* and Howells' *A spotless Rose*. The service concluded, '...the procession retires as if going to Bethlehem singing *Adeste Fideles*.'³⁷⁸

Boorman's first Christmas at St Davids sees the first Nine Lessons and Carols based on the King's College, Cambridge model. It is a simple affair, with congregational carols and simple choir

³⁷⁰ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B54, 25 July 1966.

³⁷¹ Whilst styled 'Minor Canon', the 1971 Cathedral Scheme refers to them as 'Priest Vicar'

³⁷² *Organ, organ*. BBC Wales Television. 1st March 1971. Television

³⁷³ *The Procession with Carols upon Advent Sunday*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p.2

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ I look from afar

³⁷⁷ Come, thou redeemer of the earth

³⁷⁸ *The Procession with Carols upon Advent Sunday*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2. p.2

anthems, many of which derive from traditional melodies. The booklet for 'A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in St Davids at Christmas MCMLVII'³⁷⁹ opens with an introductory message.

'The Cathedral again offers this Service of Lessons and Carols, framed on ancient precedent,³⁸⁰ upon the Sunday after Christmas...between the lessons are sung carols, to praise the goodness of our Lord, and voice the joy and worship of us all at the coming of his Son.'³⁸¹

The 1957 service featured a wide range of anthems and carols – the recitative *Und es waren Hirten in derselben Gegend* (And there were Shepherds abiding in their fields) followed by the chorale *Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht* (Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light) from JS Bach's Christmas Oratorio BWV 248;³⁸² the traditional English carols *Past three 'o clock* and *Ding, dong, merrily on high*; a commissioned carol in Welsh by Ian Parrott, the Greynog Professor of Music at University College, Aberystwyth, *Carol Phlygain*; and the Basque Carol *Sing Lullaby*. A later, undated version included two carols arranged by John Rutter – Boorman adds to the order of service 'The latter carol [Deck the Hall], with that following Lesson VII are modern arrangements by John Rutter. They are designed to cause audible mirth.'³⁸³ The service also included the carol *Love came down at Christmas* by noted Welsh composer Mansel Thomas and the *Gloucestershire Wassail* arranged by Vaughan Williams.

The Epiphany Carol Service follows a similar pattern to its Advent counterpart – indeed the 1961 booklet even borrows some of its musical material from earlier Advent and Nine Lessons services, opening with the *Mattins Responsary*, and including *Past three 'o clock*. As Boorman did not mass produce the booklets, they were required to serve the service for a number of years; so the final anthem became a choice of Jacob Händl's *Omnes de Saba venient* or the St Davids born Thomas Tomkins anthem *Great and marvellous*. Due to its proximity to the start of the civic New Year (and to the school term commencing), the Epiphany Carol Service has always been the poor relation compared to its fellow carol services. Even so, Boorman's legacy of these services of lessons, carols and processions continue, having changed little in structure in over half a century.

'One generation passeth ... another generation cometh' ³⁸⁴

Boorman's tenure at St Davids was long in modern terms – 22 years in all. He had indelibly left his mark on St Davids – the introduction of girl choristers, the Tomkins Festival of 1956 and the continuation of the Summer Concert Series, and his involvement locally as a teacher, printer and performer. The appointment of Rosalind Charles as his Assistant Organist in 1966 helped improve the

³⁷⁹ *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in St Davids at Christmas 1957*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

³⁸⁰ In the format presented, it was 1918, although the roots go back to Bishop Edward Benson's carol service at Truro Cathedral in 1880.

³⁸¹ *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in St Davids at Christmas 1957*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2. p.2

³⁸² The extracts were sung in English

³⁸³ *St Davids Cathedral – Nine Lessons and Carols. Sunday 26 December*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2.

³⁸⁴ Ecclesiasticus 1, v.4

conduct of the choir, with Boorman able to conduct rather than lead from the organ console. The choir's regular broadcasts on BBC radio and television demonstrate that they were able to hold their own in comparison with other choral foundations. It cannot ever be said that any of these set trends within the wider church music world, but it did demonstrate that Boorman was able to successfully continue the Anglican choral tradition at St Davids in circumstances where lesser men would have abandoned it.

For many years, Boorman has been over-looked – whilst not totally erased from the collective history of the Cathedral he served, he certainly never in life received the full appreciation³⁸⁵ the he deserved in saving the choral foundation – for by introducing girl choristers as full choristers on a parity with their boy counterparts, that is just what Boorman did. It cannot be argued that, if Boorman had not introduced girls as choristers, the choir would have continued – as the number of boys continued to decline.³⁸⁶ The choir would have ceased to function as a 'Cathedral Choir', and would have, at best, continued in some sort of fashion, in the style of a 'Parish Choir'.³⁸⁷

But why has Boorman not been recognised as the man who saved the choir? Boorman's tenure at St Davids came to an abrupt end. The Chapter Acts for the meeting held on Thursday 29th June 1976 starkly present the reason for Boorman's departure.

It was reported that the Organist had recently been divorced by his wife and that a young person was residing in his lodgings with him. The Chapter adhered to their previous resolution³⁸⁸ that a person who had been divorced was not a suitable person to be employed as an officer of the Cathedral, and the Clerk was instructed to write to the Organist pointing this out and requesting his resignation if he were not willing to abide by the rules of the Chapter.³⁸⁹

Copies of communications between J. Eaton Evans, the Chapter Clerk and Boorman have not been discovered either at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth, or in any of the Cathedral's repositories. The inner workings of Boorman's personal life were well known locally, and had not been raised formally by the Chapter in their acts or minutes before. Even in the progressive society of the mid 1970s, the Chapter felt that the situation required Boorman to resign – whether they were correct in doing so is something I wish to reserve judgement on.

However, in giving Boorman full notice that the Chapter would require his resignation should he continue to disobey their resolution, Boorman had time to find a new position. By doing so, this covered the Chapter and Boorman – although the majority of the local community would have been

³⁸⁵ Judging from *Organ, organ*, I believe he never would have expected to receive any appreciation.

³⁸⁶ During the author's time as a chorister in the late 1990s, there was an eighteen-month period when there were only 3 boy choristers.

³⁸⁷ However, it can be argued that under Malcolm Watts, that is what exactly happened.

³⁸⁸ No record of this resolution can be found in the Chapter Acts, begging the question whether members of the Chapter had met without formal minutes being taken to discuss the matter.

³⁸⁹ The National Library of Wales, SDCh/B52, 29 July 1976

aware of the true reason of Boorman's departure. Dean Lawrence Bowen, writing in the parish magazine of December 1976, notes the impending departure:

Everyone is aware of the impending departure of our Organist Mr Peter Boorman. He has tendered his resignation which will become effective on December 31st, 1976. He will take up his duties in his new post at Bedford School in the New Year. Twenty-two year is a long time to serve as Organist and Director of Music at the Cathedral and we are indebted to him for all he has done for achieving such a high standard in choral performance over the years which has evoked the appreciation of countless visitors to the Cathedral. Gratitude is also due to him for his work in organising summer recitals, bringing artistes of repute and fame to St Davids. During his term of office he has proved himself to be a very competent and versatile musician, playing many other instruments apart from the organ. These talents he now takes with him to his new post where he will have a larger field to work in and plenty of scope. We wish him well for the future. Contributions towards Mr Boorman's testimonial fund should be sent to me at the Deanery.³⁹⁰

The newsletter also notes that the Advent Carol Service would be the last under the direction of Mr Boorman. Whilst many were aware of the real reason for Boorman's resignation, the Chapter's pretence worked. However, full rehabilitation never came. On retirement from Bedford, Boorman, with his second wife Susan, returned to live in Llandeloy, a short distance from St Davids. During Malcolm Watts' tenure, Boorman returned to the organ console (albeit a now a severely changed one). With the appointment of Michael Slaney as 'part-time' Assistant Organist in 1991, Boorman again returned to the shadows – a part of Cathedral history quietly forgotten. Towards the end of his life, his health deteriorated, and he returned to a small house close to the Cathedral. He passed away on September 27th 2009, aged 86. His funeral was held in the Cathedral, sung by the Cathedral Choir – of girls and men. In his eulogy, Dean Jonathan Lean, who had been one of Boorman's organ pupils, invited the congregation gathered to give thanks for a man who 'had changed people's lives because of his love of music, for the inspiration he gave to so many, and for the firm foundation he established in this place and for the benefits we reap today in a musical foundation which equals any in the United Kingdom'.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ *St Davids Cathedral and Parish News*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 1. p.3

³⁹¹ Notes kindly leant by the Very Reverend Jonathan Lean to the author.

Chapter 5. Change and turbulence: Nicholas Jackson and Malcolm Watts 1977 - 1990

Change in the outside world

The end of the Boorman era at St Davids is one which leaves mixed feelings. It can certainly be viewed that after such a long tenure, it would take a new master to bring the choir forward and build upon his work. In the near quarter century that Peter Boorman served as Organist and Master of the Choristers, advances in all areas of musicology had been remarkable, particularly in the rediscovery and interpretation of pre-Reformation repertoire. Research combined with performance practice was helping revolutionise the Anglican choral repertoire. The often twee and poor works of the 18th and 19th century Anglican canon were disappearing, being replaced by the canticles, anthems and mass settings of recusants of the 16th century. The world outside St Davids was becoming more cosmopolitan – as well as the growing interest in the Early Music Movement in both the performing and academic music community, cathedrals were becoming more bold with repertoire choices, with many focussing on certain genres or schools of composition – Worcester Cathedral under Donald Hunt, whose interest in French organ and liturgical music led to commissions and performances by leading French choral composers including Jean Langlais and Pierre Villette; and the Roman Catholic cathedral at Westminster, whose repertory looked to the early English catholic composers as well as 16th century polyphony of Italy and Spain.³⁹² The exploration of wider repertoire coupled with the continued liturgical experimentation in England was fast leading to the removal of repertoire from the 17th-19th centuries that could be viewed as not being the greatest proponents of compositional merit. Boorman's departure cannot be seen in modern eyes as a wholly negative thing – after nearly a quarter of a century in post, it could be argued that it was the right juncture for the choir and cathedral to be taken in new musical directions. His legacy has been shrouded almost in myth and legend. Boorman's contribution has, up until now, been overlooked by cathedral and community. Whilst his passing saw a slight acknowledgement of his genius – introducing girl choristers into the cathedral choir, the Tomkins Tercentennial Festival, his work on the Summer Recital Series and his development of a generation of boy and girl choristers into male and female singers – it can be seen as having provided security for the foundation, leaving firm foundations for his immediate successor, Nicholas Jackson, in founding the St Davids Cathedral Bach Festival, and for Boorman's later successors Kerry Beaumont, Geraint Bowen and Timothy Noon, who indirectly benefitted and were able to bring some of Boorman's ideas to completion. It was Kerry Beaumont, who, on finding that he had enough girl and boy choristers in 1991, decided to separate the treble lines on gender grounds, with the girls remaining as 'the Cathedral choristers', and the boys being re-formed as a separate 'Boys Choir'. Boorman, although at times leading a wholly girls treble line, never intimated at splitting the line along gender

³⁹² See Marc de Livet, C., *An Idealist Touched by Practicality: The work and influence of Richard Runciman Terry (1864-1938)*, PhD thesis, Christ Church Canterbury University, 2019.

grounds. Boorman's hope of rebuilding the Willis instrument was finally undertaken by Geraint Bowen, after it was decided that the Hill, Norman & Beard instrument was unfit for purpose. Under both Geraint Bowen and Timothy Noon, the choir's output of recording and broadcasting steadily increased, with annual broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 of Choral Evensong, together with commercial recordings on the Nimbus and York Ambisonic labels.

Jackson the Harpsichordist, Organist, Composer...

The appointment of Nicholas Jackson in 1977 could be described as revolutionary for the cathedral's music-making. Unlike his predecessor, Jackson received what could be described as the classic education for a cathedral organist – first at Radley College,³⁹³ then up to Wadham College, Oxford as Organ Scholar, studying composition with Edmund Rubbra, then on to the Royal Academy of Music to study Organ with C.H Trevor and Harpsichord with George Malcolm,³⁹⁴ composition with John Gardiner and conducting with Sir Adrian Boult, before studying both organ and harpsichord at Conservatorium van Amsterdam with Gustav Leonhardt.³⁹⁵ He served as organist of two of London's more eclectic churches – St Anne's, Soho between 1963-68 and St James', Piccadilly between 1971-74, before serving as organist at St Lawrence Jewry-next-Guildhall between 1974-77.³⁹⁶ A key component in his early career was a mixture of composing and performing – an opera, *The Reluctant Highwayman*, was first performed in 1955. Prior to his arrival at St Davids, he had gained some recognition as a composer of church music – his *Mass for a Saint's Day* was published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1966, along with *Twentieth Century Merbecke*, a re-working/re-harmonisation of John Merbecke's Communion Service. He made his Wigmore Hall debut in 1964 as harpsichordist with his ensemble *The Concertante of London* in a concert featuring four of J.S Bach's concertos for harpsichord. As an organist, his compositions for the instrument reflected continental influences, especially of the French organist and composer Maurice Duruflé.

Jackson's arrival at St Davids in January 1977 was on a much firmer footing than his predecessor's arrival in 1954. Whilst the number of boy trebles remained low, Jackson kept the treble line as a mixture of boy and girl trebles. Jackson's tenure saw a proliferation of recordings of the choir. Unlike his predecessor, these recordings introduced a varied repertoire, reflecting the growing infusion into the Anglican repertoire of 'Early Music' – as well as Jackson's own compositions. Jackson's compositional style, whilst not radical within the wider world of music, could justifiably be described as such within the canon of music performed by the cathedral choir during this period. Utilising techniques used within twentieth-century French organ improvisation, Jackson's compositions for St Davids pushed both choir and organ to their extremities. A setting of the Te Deum and Jubilate were

³⁹³ An independent school in Oxfordshire.

³⁹⁴ Organist of Westminster Cathedral 1947-59 – noted for developing the 'continental' sound in boys' voices.

³⁹⁵ <http://orgues.chartres.free.fr/jackson.htm>. Accessed 28/09/2014 at 16:32

³⁹⁶ <http://jacksonmusic.co.uk/>. Accessed 01/02/16 at 14:28

composed for the choir, as part of the 1984 Cathedral Bach Festival. An anthem *Behold, a great priest* was completed for the enthronement of Bishop George Noakes in 1982.³⁹⁷

Jackson was keen for the choir to record, and they undertook a number of recordings during his tenure. A review of the choir's 1979 recording 'St David's Cathedral Choir'³⁹⁸ on the Abbey Label pays tribute to the choir's determination, but honestly recognises that some of the repertoire performed on the disc was not a shining example of what the choir was capable of. Ann Bond, *The Musical Times* reviewer begins by commending Jackson and the choir for achieving '...near miracles, both in terms of repertory, and musicianship with its tiny resources may well serve as an inspiration to other choirs in similar circumstances.'³⁹⁹ Bond negatively turns to the reality that the repertoire on the disc reflects the aspirations of Jackson rather than an attempt to present more suitable performing repertoire. 'However, if records are meant to be made, not from such a motive, but out of service to the composers represented, this one falls short in several respects'.⁴⁰⁰ Her view that J.S. Bach's *Lobet den Herrn* BWV 230 (performed in English) '...accompanied by some sorry harpsichord-beating'⁴⁰¹ was beyond the technique of the choir is, whilst cutting, a fair and justifiable criticism. The repertoire on the disc is an eclectic mix of core English Anglican repertoire in Richard Farrant's *Call to Remembrance, O Lord*, and the short work often attributed to Elizabethan composers Richard Farrant or John Hilton *Lord, for thy tender mercies sake*, Benjamin Britten's *Te Deum in C* (1934) and Charles Villiers Stanford's *Evening Service in G*. The remainder of the recording features Pelham Humphrey's *A hymne to God the Father* and Henry Purcell's *Evening Hymn* performed on period instruments. Jackson's own setting of the evening canticles 'The St Davids Service' features, along with the *Salve Regina* from Jean Langlais' *Trois Oraisons* for organ, soprano and flute. Whilst praising Jackson's own canticles and the trebles 'spirited performance'⁴⁰² in them, Bond notes that even with Jackson's '...meticulous training of the choir...he can never entirely camouflage the fragility of their technique'.⁴⁰³ *The Musical Times* review, whilst critical, does not reflect the local situation at all - a choir mixed of female contraltos and male counter-tenors together with tenors and basses from a mix of backgrounds and experiences, ranging from membership of the BBC National Chorus of Wales and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir to non-conformist chapel singing demonstrates the uneven field with which Jackson was faced. The inclusion of works such as Bach's *Lobet den Herrn* is surprising – Dr John Patton's survey of cathedral repertoire of 1986 only saw the piece in the repertory of three cathedrals in the United Kingdom.⁴⁰⁴ This alone shows Jackson's determination to move his choir forward in terms of repertoire, even

³⁹⁷ Naxos 8570959, 2008.

³⁹⁸ Abbey APR 301, 1979 .

³⁹⁹ *The Musical Times*, August 1970, Vol 120, No. 1678, p.661

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ Patton, J. and Taylor, S. *A Century of Cathedral Music 1898-1998: a comparison with previous music surveys of 1898, 1938, 1958 & 1986*, Patton, Winchester, 2000. p.30.

when at some points it could be seen as unwise, as it was in its inclusion on the Abbey record. Further evidence of this can be heard as part of the Abbey labels *In Quires and Places* series, where St Davids recorded an eclectic programme of works in 1978.⁴⁰⁵ Containing a mixture of Jackson's own compositions and arrangements, together with a myriad collection of works by Thomas Tomkins, Howells, Franck and Mozart, together with a number of works by the-then Master of the Queen's Music Malcolm Williamson, buttressed by two hymns in Welsh, a similar over-optimistic presentation of repertoire regrettably demonstrates the weaknesses which one would rather avoid when making any recordings. Held against today's standards, neither of these recordings can be described as a good reflection of the choir; even compared with the recordings of the times, it reflects poorly, but much of that comes down to the extremes of repertoire and esoteric programming. Jackson and the choir feature in the television programme broadcast on Christmas Day 1978 on BBC Wales titled *Christmas in St Davids*, which formed part of the BBC's *A Diary of Britain – Fifteen programmes of life in Britain made week by week from September to Christmas last year [1977]*.⁴⁰⁶ We hear several minutes of the choir under Jackson, rehearsing Britten's *Te Deum* in C and singing various Christmas carols during worship and socially at The Organist's Lodgings. Whilst comparison should not be drawn between the two LP recordings and the television broadcast, I believe the aural evidence proves my assertion that Jackson's choice of repertoire often went against the competency of the choir in front of him – however, it can be rightly argued that it was better for him to try and challenge them musically rather than bore them with staid repertoire, and he should be credited for avoiding the simple option that many of his contemporaries would have opted for.

'You can't make a purse out of a Sow's ear...' – the Rushworth and Draper works

Jackson's interest in Baroque and early music repertoire was undeniable – however his decision to undertake a partial rebuild of the organ in 1980 in a Neo-Baroque style can be seen in hindsight as unwise, and certainly contributed to the need to replace the entire instrument 15 years later. The work, undertaken by Rushworth and Draper, under Jackson's direction, radically altered the Hill, Norman and Beard instrument. His decision to remove the entire choir division, save for the Corno di Bassetto, and replace it with a neo-baroque positive division (named 'Choir' for posterity). Whilst it would be acceptable for playing Bach and Germanic baroque, it would make accompanying the usual Anglican repertoire authentically increasingly difficult. It would also compound the continued difficulties with balance – the Choir organ being overbearing within the quire, and the Great being significantly underpowered in the nave. Whilst some further work was undertaken under Malcolm Watts and Kerry Beaumont to keep the instrument working, and to undo some of the more draconian

⁴⁰⁵ Abbey LPB 996, 1978 (a recording of which can be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ffy_GZsl3Cc&t=1319s, accessed on 15/04/2021 at 15:21).

⁴⁰⁶ *Christmas at St David's*, BBC Television. Recorded programme. Christmas Day 1978. Accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNZfmN2zTEQ> on 7 May 2021 at 21:27

actions of Jackson, the 1953 instrument had been so badly disfigured that it had deteriorated to such a state that, by 1994, a decision was made that a new instrument would be needed.

A running debate between Jackson and the Chapter throughout his tenure was the financial situation of the Organist. The 1979 July Chapter Acts note Jackson's request to the Dean to increase his salary '...having regard to the very increased cost of living'.⁴⁰⁷ The Dean notified the Chapter that the rise would be to £30.00 per week. However, the 1980 July Chapter Acts note that 'The Organist has requested that some payment should be made towards his expenses'.⁴⁰⁸ The Dean reminded the Chapter that he had agreed to a rise in the Organist's salary only one year before, so resolved that the Chapter would grant the Organist an expenses allowance of £25.00 a quarter. It was also noted that the rent for the Organist's flat⁴⁰⁹ had been increased by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales to £500.00 a year.⁴¹⁰ Continued negotiations remain constant through the period: the 1981 July Chapter Acts note that due to the increased rent on the Organist's flat, the Chapter agreed to '...take responsibility for repairs of the Organist's flat'.⁴¹¹

The Bach Festival – Jackson's legacy

Jackson's legacy to the Cathedral was the founding of the St Davids Cathedral Bach Festival in 1979. The idea of the festival saw the amalgamation of Jackson's predecessor, Peter Boorman's two feats – the summer recital series and the Tomkins Tercentennial Festival of 1956. After the 1956 festival, Boorman could not be persuaded to hold another, and placed his efforts squarely into the summer recital series. The role of the Cathedral Choir within the festival has usually been to sing the choral services – usually additional services were sung during festival week – and to take part in a concert. Often, this would see the choir performing the chorus parts of cantata sized works or anthems with period instrumentalists, often Jackson's own *Concertante of London*, with Jackson himself playing the continuo. The festival, whilst held within the Cathedral and having the Dean as ex-officio President and the Organist as Artistic Director, has never been attached to the foundation formally, and as such, will only be mentioned in the context of the choral foundation. Further work chronicling the history of the St Davids Cathedral Festival should be undertaken, as it is an excellent example of a cultural revival born from an area far removed from the traditional climes of culture and the arts. The choir, whilst having a performing role (both in concert and liturgical forms), could not be seen to have a leading role in the festival. A usually enhanced number of Evensong services (often more musically demanding) combined with one performance with professional soloists and instrumental

⁴⁰⁷ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. These are the current act books in use and are in possession of the Chapter Clerk.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 4

⁴⁰⁹ The Chapter Clerk, J. Eaton Evans, refers to it as the 'Organist's Flat' – in actual fact, the residence for the Organist is a 5 bedroom house, split out of the Chancellor's Mansion in the years after the Second World War.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. p.11

⁴¹¹ Ibid. p.13

ensemble, often with the choir in a chorus role. It certainly provided Jackson with a continued line of output for his own performing activities, one which he returned to upon leaving St Davids in 1984.

Broadcasting with Royalty

During Jackson's tenure, two major royal visits occurred, providing an excellent moment for the choir to present itself on national broadcast. The first visit formed part of the wedding celebrations of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales in the autumn of 1981. Their Royal Highnesses attended Matins at the Cathedral as part of their tour of the principality on October 28th 1981. The service was broadcast live on BBC2 and saw the rear of the cathedral transformed by grey broadcast boxes. The service was bi-lingual, opening with the Welsh hymn *Cofia'n gwlad, Benllywydd tirion*, followed immediately by the Preces and Responses set by Bernard Rose. A unique liturgical absurdity of the Welsh Prayer Book - then almost completing its 18-year trial period - is that the morning canticles are swapped in their position - the *Jubilate* (Psalm 100) or *Benedictus* come before the *Te Deum*. This led to a rather quick turnaround from the end of the first set of responses, into Benjamin Britten's *Jubilate Deo* in C. It cannot be doubted that Sir Nicholas (as Jackson had now acceded to his father's baronetcy) had turned the choir around from their 1979 LP. A bright, excited sound emits from the trebles, rather than a course, raucous shout. Following the Prince of Wales reading the lesson, the choir sing Britten's *Te Deum* in C.⁴¹² Jackson has solid control of his choir during this tricky canticle setting. The soloist in the central section does not wallow in the speed, which may cover a multitude of sins, but still comes over highly effectively. The reprise certainly is taken faster than Britten's recommended tempi, but comes over effectively. The anthem, *How lovely are thy dwelling fair*⁴¹³ from Johannes Brahms' *Ein Deutsch Requiem* again is a convincing performance. There are a couple of instances where intonation may not be as exact as it could be, however excitement and force do make up for occasional slips. The service concluded with the Welsh National Anthem *Mae'n hen wlad fy nhadau*. Following the blessing, the choir sing a choral Amen, followed by Jackson playing Maurice Durufle's *Choral Varié sur le theme du <<Veni Creator Spiritus>>*.⁴¹⁴ A commemorative LP was created to celebrate the visit, which included a number of parts of the service, together with some other choral items performed by the choir. The standard of the choir is reasonable - it is evident that Jackson has worked on the choir's technique, but there are still instances where further work is needed - in Byrd's *Sacerdotes Domini* for example, the tuning does not seem to settle, with the trebles overcompensating during passages higher in their tessitura by pushing sharp. A rather sprightly performance of Howell's *Like as hart* follows, where again technicality is exposed in the men's passages as rather woolly, and some scooping. Whilst modern listeners are used to a slow speed, the lack of acoustic in St Davids makes any such speed uncomfortable for singers. A number of Jackson's

⁴¹² Although performed as a 'service', a gap of nearly twenty-five follows from the composition of the *Te Deum* (1934) and the *Jubilate* (1961).

⁴¹³ *Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen*.

⁴¹⁴ BBC Wales Television Broadcast, 28 October 1981.

own compositions feature, which, whilst exciting and certainly a stylistic change from the Anglican repertoire, are difficult to reconcile with the technical issues evident within the choir.

The second broadcast service was that of The Royal Maundy of 1982, held at St Davids, after the Chapter petitioned The Queen to visit as part of the 900th anniversary of the consecration of the present cathedral by Bishop Peter de Leia. In bestowing the honour upon the cathedral, it both raised its profile but masked its own workings. Having provided the early musical education of the composer Thomas Tomkins some four centuries previously, and the resting place for Adam Houghton, Precentor and later Bishop of St Davids and Lord Chancellor under King Edward III, the Sovereign's ecclesiastical household – the Chapel Royal, made their first journey to St Davids. The Maundy is an important event in the life of the Court, even in the 21st century. The Sovereign is attended by the Court and the traditional office holders at such events – for the Royal Maundy, that consists of the Chapel Royal, its Sub-Dean and assistants, and the Lord High Almoner. In musical terms, that sees the combination of the choirs of the Chapel Royal at St James' Palace and the choir of the host cathedral. The service itself follows a format of prayers, two readings and the distribution of the Maundy itself. The choral role could be charitably described as akin to the Anglican 'hymn-sandwich', where music is added as padding rather than as a proactive and productive part of the liturgy itself. Musically, it is an odd service. The singing of Wesley's *Wash me thoroughly*, coupled with Handel's coronation anthem *Zadok the Priest* and Howells' *Like as the hart* in one service makes it more akin to a compilation disc rather than an act of worship – but the reason for this is to give the Sovereign enough time to distribute the Maundy, rather than for aesthetic or spiritual needs. The combined forces make a reasonable sound – it is clear at some points in the broadcast (particularly in *Zadok the Priest*) that the St Davids choir let the excitement of the event get to them more so than their Chapel Royal counterparts. In places, the sound quality is less than perfect – but, generally the St Davids contingent did not let their side down. The chanting of Psalm 138 is outstanding seeing that the forces would not have come together until the last minute. Jackson and Popperwell conducted the choirs – in what can only be believed to be a space-saving exercise, they conducted imbedded within decani (Popperwell) and Cantoris (Jackson) sides of the quire, in the manner of 'beating across the sides', which had been used when a director was not in front of their choir. In a rather unconventional twist, Jackson is not wearing a surplice to conduct – in all likelihood, this was for ease of playing the voluntary *Carillon de Westminster* by Louis Vierne at the end of the service, however it remains an oddity in what was a historic moment for St Davids and its choral foundation.⁴¹⁵

The appointment of Malcolm Watts

In the summer of 1984, the Chapter were informed by Dean Lawrence Bowen of Jackson's resignation, in order to return to the professional concert circuit. Jackson's departure coincided with

⁴¹⁵ BBC Television Broadcast, 8 April 1982. The service has been uploaded online at <https://youtu.be/8Berod29H3Q>. accessed on 7 May 2021 at 19:51.

the planned retirement of Dean Lawrence Bowen later that summer. What transpired, whilst meant to be for the best, led to one of the darker moments in the Cathedral's recent musical history.

Dean Bowen's 'suggestion' to the Chapter that they appoint the Assistant Organist, Malcolm Watts, is highly controversial for many reasons.⁴¹⁶ For Dean Bowen to 'suggest' that the Chapter make the appointment raises a number of ethical questions as to the power of the Dean – it becomes even more ethically questionable when that Dean would not hold that position by the time the position of Organist actually became vacant. That there was no open advertisement in the press or formal interview process certainly suggests a certain naivety and foolishness on the part of both Dean Bowen and the Chapter. At the special October Chapter meeting at Abergwilli,⁴¹⁷ following the announcement of Dr Gordon Macwilliam as Dean, the Acting Dean, the Venerable Alec Lewis,⁴¹⁸ followed the same procedure as former Dean Lawrence Bowen at the July Chapter. Archdeacon Lewis notified the Chapter that Sir Nicholas Jackson had tendered his resignation to the Canon in Residence in September, and that the post was vacant. The minutes continue 'Archdeacon Lewis suggested that the deputy organist Mr Malcolm Watts be appointed Organist.'⁴¹⁹ The Chapter's acceptance of the suggestion must be seen as grossly irresponsible. The Chapter however gave leave for the Dean Elect, Dr Macwilliam and the Chapter Clerk, J. Eaton Evans, to discuss the terms of the appointment and remuneration with Mr Watts.⁴²⁰ The Dean, Dr Macwilliam, reports in the chapter acts of 28th February 1985 that '...the Organist has commenced work and that he has settled in satisfactorily.'⁴²¹

The chapter's behaviour in the appointment of Malcolm Watts could be seen, retrospectively, as an omen for Watt's tenure. During Jackson's tenure, BBC broadcasting from St Davids had almost halted, save for some regional broadcasting, and as time drew closer to Jackson's departure, the choir was becoming more fragile as a performing group. There is never one reason for this, and it cannot be said that Jackson, Watts or any other person was to blame. It was the circumstance of location. However, Jackson's preference for period performance, coupled with his concentration on repertoire that required a greater technique than his resources could offer demonstrates the fragility of the choir as a performing group upon Watt's appointment.

Malcolm Watts had served as Assistant Organist since 1977. A native of Cardigan, he read Music at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire (now Cardiff University). Whilst there, he studied the organ under Robert Joyce, organist of Llandaff Cathedral from 1958-74. Watts graduated in 1968, before reading for a Diploma in Education. He then worked in successive schools in Port Talbot, Haverfordwest and Whitland.⁴²² Watts himself was not a trained choirmaster – he

⁴¹⁶ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. p.26

⁴¹⁷ The Bishop's House in Carmarthen

⁴¹⁸ Archdeacon Lewis being also the residentiary canon.

⁴¹⁹ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present .p.29

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. p.32

⁴²² Bird, E. *The Organists and Organs of the Welsh Cathedrals in the 20th century*, Enid Bird, Wakefield, 1992, p.34

was a fine schoolteacher who had served in parish church appointments prior to St Davids. Whilst Boorman, Soar and Morris had all come from parish churches, they were trained musicians with advanced training as choir directors or as organists, in an era when parish church choirs could hold their own against many provincial cathedrals. It is interesting that this is the first documentary evidence in the St Davids archives as to how an Organist was appointed – but also, because of the situation, cannot be held up as an example of how appointments were made. Watts inherited a choir that was beset with a number of difficulties. It is evident that whilst Jackson had been innovative in the choice of repertoire, the vocal technique of the choir had been pushed to its limit. The reliance on local men and women, many of them with good voices, but having had little or no musical training facing music from both the sixteenth and late twentieth century would strain many choirs not made up of professional singers.

Separate, not equal – the St Davids choir school proposal

Timing is everything, and it is clear that a number of people had concerns about the structure and composition of the choir, as well as its future viability. The former St Davids Vicarage – ‘Penrhiw’ – had been occupied as a cathedral house until the mid-20th century, when the Anglican religious order of St John the Evangelist accepted an invitation to base part of their community there. With their numbers decreasing, the order moved from St Davids, freeing up Penrhiw. At the July chapter meeting, the Dean reported that a small committee including Lady Marion Phillips and His Honour Judge W. Rowe Harding,⁴²³ had been formed ‘... in the hope of establishing a choir school...’⁴²⁴ at Penrhiw. From the minute in the chapter acts, the committee had gone far in assessing the viability, with the Representative Body of the Church in Wales offering Penrhiw a lease for the first two years of the school’s formation. It was agreed that it would be a residential school for pupils between the age of 11 to 13 years old, and that ‘...the cost of this operation would fall on the Chapter.’⁴²⁵

It is a disappointment to any researcher when documents are unable to be found, and on the topic of the 1985 choir school proposal; it is a great shame. It seems that the greater amount of work on this topic was prepared without the chapter either being consulted or formally taking part, as no papers seem to exist either in the depositary at the National Library of Wales, or either in the Cathedral Library or The Deanery. It seems to have been a short lived exercise, as by its meeting on 6th March 1986, the Dean reported that Penrhiw was for sale on the open market, as ‘...it had been impractical to proceed with the establishment of a choir school.’⁴²⁶ The planning committee were of the view that the school should provide the choristers and vicars choral, and that the current singers (both children and adults) should be dispensed with, which the Dean was not prepared to let take

⁴²³ Wife of former Lord Lieutenant of Pembrokeshire, The Honourable R. Hanning Phillips. Rowe Harding served as a judge on the Welsh Circuit, but was better known for his rugby prowess having played for Swansea, the University of Cambridge and for Wales and the 1928 British Lions tour of South Africa.

⁴²⁴ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. p.42

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid. p.45

place. It is also believed that Malcolm Watts' services would be dispensed with, which naturally led to the Organist being unhappy to play a part in the project.

Malcolm Watts and Dean Macwilliam were right not to back the project. Several factors seem to have made it unviable. Firstly, the age range of 11 – 13 years. Most choir schools take singing children from the age of 8, which gives them five years to learn the skills of being a chorister, as well as the core repertory of music. Basing the school on a two-year window between 11 and 13 would generally be unworkable. The second (and in some ways, more concerning factor) was the interference of the committee who proposed the formation of the school. Whilst an admirable idea, it seems from what little evidence is available, that they would have had an incredible hold over any new establishment formed, weakening the power of the chapter in regard to its choir. It would have also destroyed the connection between choir and local community, which had been strong through the past century. It would also have destroyed the chance for many young people to experience being a chorister.

Choir life in the late 1980s

It is clear that Watts worked hard for his choir and realised the importance of choristers being recruited from the local community. He was the first organist to make a case for choristers to receive grants for tuition and reimbursements for musical examinations fees.⁴²⁷ Whilst it is unclear as to the pattern of weekday sung services during the later years of Boorman and Jackson's tenure, Watts expanded the number of weekday services sung by the choir. Evensong on Tuesday's was sung by a 'small choir'⁴²⁸, whilst Wednesday was sung by the trebles.⁴²⁹ He also re-established links with the Royal School of Church Music and introduced their chorister award system⁴³⁰ for the cathedral choristers, preparing them for the St Cecilia award. Watts published a set of 'choir regulations'⁴³¹ which set out the obligations of choir members.⁴³² They make interesting reading, particularly as there was no formal document at this time governing the choir prior to disestablishment. He requires that attendance was 'Compulsory for all practices and services. These are: Wednesdays 4. – 5.30pm Trebles only, Thursday 6.30-8pm Full Practice, Sundays 10.30am for 11am service [and] 3.30 or 5.30pm for 4pm or 6pm service.'⁴³³ Watts established a 'system of credits'⁴³⁴ for the payment of choristers as bonuses, on top of a base rate of 30p per service. The Lay Vicars would receive 50p per service. Watts also allowed up to four paid absences per quarter for '...illness or some other

⁴²⁷ *Friends of St Davids Cathedral Annual Report 1987*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

⁴²⁸ It is unclear from the records what the 'small choir' entailed.

⁴²⁹ Bird, E. *The Organists and Organs of the Welsh Cathedrals in the 20th century*, Enid Bird, Wakefield, 1992, p.34

⁴³⁰ The RSCM chorister awards grade choristers on their development, with three stages of award; Bronze (Dean's), Silver (Bishop's), and Gold (St Cecilia). Since a rebranding of the awards in the mid-2000s, the awards have been referred to by their 'colour' titles – the older titles are still referred to by area committees and members.

⁴³¹ *Choir Regulations. 7/4/86*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

⁴³² Whilst these may have been informally enforceable, as discussed earlier, these would not have been formally enforceable by the Chapter, as has been previously discussed.

⁴³³ *Choir Regulations. 7/4/86*. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

⁴³⁴ *Ibid*.

exceptional circumstances'.⁴³⁵ In drawing up these regulations, we have a glimpse of how Watts ran the choir. Even though regulations had not been set down since disestablishment, a cathedral choir would normally be regulated by the Chapter, with issues of pay agreed on an occasional basis. Watts' regulations demonstrate the mind-set of how the choir was run – in the same manner of an active suburban parish choir. Whilst both cathedral and parish choral traditions rely on tradition, parish tradition often relies on personality, whereas cathedral traditions rely purely on the traditions of the cathedral. The St Davids traditions had been lost through the fog and mist of disestablishment and indifference.

The BBC *Doomsday* project in the mid-1980s provides us with a fragmentary snapshot of what life was like in the choir, courtesy of an anonymous chorister.

I am a member of the cathedral choir, which consists of eleven girl sopranos, four male and female altos,⁴³⁶ three tenors and six basses. The sopranos sing an evensong on their own every Wednesday at 4.30pm. There's a full practice on a Thursday at 6.30pm to 8pm. Every chorister must come to every service and every practice. If they don't, they must leave the choir. In the cathedral choir concert in the Bach Festival last May ('85) we did the Mozart Requiem. It's a lot of fun in the choir. We know lots of anthems and canticles and some of the trebles sing solos. The organist and the Master of the Choristers is Malcolm G. Watts, and the assistant organist is Arwel Davies. Every Sunday we sing matins at 11am and Evensong at 6pm.⁴³⁷

Whilst English cathedrals had moved towards establishing permanent positions of an Assistant Organist, this was yet to happen at St Davids.⁴³⁸ Whilst Rosalyn Charles had served as Assistant under Boorman,⁴³⁹ both Watts (under Jackson) and Davies served whilst holding other occupations, being a teacher and solicitor respectively. Under Watts, further work was undertaken on the organ by Percy Daniel and Co., adding mixtures to both the Swell and Great and a new metal Pedal 8 foot octave in 1986, and adding a 32 foot Open Wood in 1989, reclaiming pipes removed from the Gray & Davison instrument at Marylebone Parish Church. Cost, combined with the physical weariness of the instrument saw most of the 32 foot Open Wood rank borrowed from the 16 foot Open Wood. A 16 foot Open Metal rank from Marylebone was installed at the same time. Geraint Bowen, whose work *The Organs of St Davids Cathedral* saw the first major study on the instruments of the cathedral, and who successfully brought about the Harrison and Harrison rebuild between 1998-2000 describes the installation of the 16 foot Open Metal as partially successful – '...because it was too loud for use in the Quire and did not carry well in the Nave.'⁴⁴⁰ It is clear that Watts' work weakened the integrity

⁴³⁵ *Choir Regulations*. 7/4/86. St Davids Cathedral Library/Peter Boorman Archive/Box 2

⁴³⁶ Four altos in total.

⁴³⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/domesday/dblock/GB-172000-225000/page/3>. Accessed 11/06/2014 at 10:20

⁴³⁸ Only taking place with the appointment of Simon Pearce in 1998.

⁴³⁹ Although described by Boorman as his Sub-Organist.

⁴⁴⁰ Bowen, G. *The Organs of St Davids Cathedral*, St Davids Cathedral, 2001, p.28. The author recalls Geraint Bowen and Michael Slaney (then Assistant Organist) putting this to the test in several Choral Evensongs whilst the author was a chorister.

of the instrument. The addition of new Pedal ranks ‘...stretched the wind supply dangerously, and at times of low humidity, cracks in the reservoirs opened up with alarming results’.⁴⁴¹

Watts’ directorship of the Bach Festival saw a number of commissions via the Arts Council of Wales – an organ work by Alan Hoddinott ‘Passacaglia and Fugue’ opus 122 was written for and dedicated to Watts, and premiered at St Davids on June 2nd 1985. Works were commissioned from Anglo-Welsh composer Ian Parrott,⁴⁴² local composer Seimon Morris and David Nevins. From 1987, St Davids took on a heightened role within the Church in Wales. Its Bishop, George Noakes, had been elected as Archbishop of Wales, and the cathedral would take its turn to serve as the metropolitan cathedral of the province. Famously, George Noakes’ enthronement as Archbishop in January 1987 coincided with severe snowfall, causing the service (and receptions for the new Archbishop which followed) to fall into near disarray. For the remainder of Watts’ tenure, consecrations of new bishops and other provincial services would be held at St Davids. Wider scrutiny would now befall Watts and the choir.

Turbulence

By the late 1980s, there was significant disquiet within the choir. It was clear to some that the Anglican cathedral choral tradition had been replaced with the fervency of Welsh community music making. A passionate and often acrimonious power struggle developed between those who believed in either tradition, with little middle ground. The make-up of the adult members of the choir suggests that differences in musical practice and ethos would have come to the fore eventually. Together with professional men and former choristers, there were a number of singers from Welsh non-conformist backgrounds – a background which would cherish and hold in highest regard the amateur who tried, rather than the professional who would be correct. The notable weakness of Watts was that he did not come from a cathedral background. He encouraged the choir to attempt works which would have far surpassed their skill, often with disappointing results. This led to a strange arrogance within the choir – the ‘status’ of a cathedral choir mixed with the arrogance of Welsh non-conformity. Several of the Vicars Choral resigned during the period due to the continuing deterioration in standards. Because of the resignations, the chapter discuss at their 1989 July Chapter meeting a letter published in the County Echo criticising the choir.⁴⁴³ The letter was written by a Vicar Choral who had resigned his position in the choir over the continued deterioration in standards and his lack of confidence in Watts’ abilities as Organist and Master of the Choristers. Dean Gordon Macwilliam explained the background of the letter and shared the advice he had given the Organist – that advice is, regretfully, not shared in the minutes. The clerk had also spoken with the Organist and had shared his advice – again, the advice has not been transcribed. The Dean informed the chapter that he would see the Lay Vicars and inform them that the chapter were satisfied the choir. It is unclear from the minutes

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, p.30

⁴⁴² Formerly Greynog Chair of Music at University College, Aberystwyth.

⁴⁴³ Bowen, G. *The Organs of St Davids Cathedral, St Davids Cathedral*, 2001. p.78.

whether this was a vote of confidence, or Macwilliam unilaterally declaring support and expecting the Chapter to back Watts. However, it was increasingly becoming clear that the choir needed a change in leadership. A year later, at the 1990 July Chapter meeting, the Dean reported that he

‘...had consulted with a number of leading lay people and realised there had been unrest in the choir for over two years. The Dean thought that there could be no peace or harmony whilst the present organist remained in office. He therefore accepted the notice given by Mr Malcolm Watts which expired on 31st August 1990.’⁴⁴⁴

It is clear that there had been concern for some period of time as to Watts’ capabilities.⁴⁴⁵ Like in many cases, evidence is scant as to the crux of the matter. It is telling that during Watts’ tenure, there had been no radio or television broadcast by the BBC of a cathedral service. It could be argued that Jackson was fortunate to have both the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Royal Maundy, but it was felt that the choir were competent enough for broadcast in both these cases. Whether circumstance of geography or shared thoughts on the standard of the choir meant St Davids did not broadcast during the Watts years is unclear.⁴⁴⁶ It is understood that during the discussions regarding establishing a choir school at Penrhiw, that Watts was not the favoured candidate to direct the choir – an possible explanation of his opposition to the proposals, but it could be argued that the exploratory group had in mind a director of music who fitted more traditionally with the English cathedral organist model.⁴⁴⁷ It has become clear during my conversations with those who recall the Watts era, that Watts’ inability to fathom the Anglican choral tradition, replacing it with Welsh non-conformist amateurism made for almost irreparable damage to the choral foundation. It is always disappointing when relations between a choir and its organist, or musicians and the chapter deteriorate. This is not the first time that relations have deteriorated, as can be seen as far back as the Tomkins family in the 16th century, the 17th century issues between the Vicars Choral and the Chapter regarding suitable behaviour, Dr Propert and the payment of the organist’s stipend, and the row between Morris and both Upper and Lower Chapter at the turn of the 20th century. The Watts era cannot be described as an unmitigated success. Watts had managed to get the choir singing further services during the week and had successfully fought off the 1984/85 Penrhiw choir school plan. In many ways, he attempted to set up the foundations for the modern choir; however, the choir was not run as a ‘cathedral’ choir, but instead run on the lines of a ‘parish’ choir. This was the moment where the choir stood on a precipice: whether it would remain a ‘cathedral choir’ or a choir which sang in a cathedral. It would take an organist with talent and incredible skill to revitalise the choir, and to inspire the choristers, Lay Vicars, Chapter and wider community.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid .p.95

⁴⁴⁵ It could be argued that doubts lingered from the moment of his appointment.

⁴⁴⁶ It is clear that the deterioration of standards were known more widely within the small world of cathedral music-making

⁴⁴⁷ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. p.42

Chapter 6. A second ‘Golden Age’?

Kerry Beaumont and Geraint Bowen 1991 - 2000

St Davids Cathedral Choir had a great mountain to climb. Rebuilding trust and credibility as a performing ensemble dominated the 1990s, under the leadership of Kerry Beaumont and Geraint Bowen. Bowen’s undoubted legacy is the solidification of the choral foundation and the construction of the Harrison and Harrison organ in the late 1990s. However, without the work of Beaumont, it is unlikely that the scale of the necessary rebuild of the organ would have taken place without a reasonable choral foundation being in place. During the 1990s, the choir would undertake their first tours – firstly to the Republic of Ireland in 1995, followed by the United States in 1996 and 1998. The choir’s first commercial CD on the Nimbus labelled *The Sound of St Davids* catapulted them into wider recognition, with Classic FM broadcasting the 1996 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, and one track from the Nimbus disc being included on the 1998 Hallmark Cards Christmas CD, featuring Natalie Cole singing (through the wonders of modern technology) a duet with her late father Nat King Cole. Bowen’s leadership of the organ rebuilding project by Durham based Harrison and Harrison as part of the cathedral’s Millennium Appeal⁴⁴⁸ cemented his legacy within the history of the cathedral.

Kerry Beaumont

Kerry Beaumont’s early musical training was as a chorister under Ronald Perrin at Ripon Cathedral, before emigrating to Canada in 1970 where he continued as a chorister at St Michael’s Roman Catholic Cathedral in Toronto. He undertook undergraduate study at the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia. He gained the Associateship of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto, as well as the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists and the Associateship of the Royal College of Music. He was awarded a Master of Arts in Music from the University of Durham in 1991. He undertook study of the organ with Ronald Perrin at Ripon, John Weaver in Philadelphia, Antoine Reboullet in Quebec, and Pierre Cochereau in Paris.⁴⁴⁹ He served as Organist and Director of Music of the Church of the Good Samaritan, Paoli, Pennsylvania between 1988-89, before returning to the United Kingdom to teach music at Repton School and worked as a Lay Clerk at Ripon Cathedral, before being appointed as Organist and Master of the Choristers at St Davids in December 1990. Dean Gordon Macwilliam reported to the Chapter that ‘...in the seven months since he has taken up his duties, [Beaumont] has made great strides in the musical life of the Cathedral.’⁴⁵⁰ Writing in Edith Bird’s *The Organists and Organs of the Welsh Cathedrals in the 20th century*,⁴⁵¹ Beaumont tells the reader of a choir slowly recovering and re-establishing it as a ‘cathedral’ choir, with choral services being sung on at least four evenings per week by June 1991. The choir undertook a number of concert engagements, including

⁴⁴⁸ A wide-ranging project, which included the rebuilding of the organ, the restoration of the cathedral’s west front, the restoration of the cathedral belfry, the addition of two bells and the construction of the cloister (with a larger song school and refectory)

⁴⁴⁹ Bird, E. *The Organists and Organs of the Welsh Cathedrals in the 20th century*, Enid Bird, Wakefield, 1992, p.34

⁴⁵⁰ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present, p.104

⁴⁵¹ *The Organists and Organs of the Welsh Cathedrals in the 20th century*, Enid Bird, Wakefield, 1992, p.35

performances of Haydn's *Missa Brevis Sancti Johannes de Deo*⁴⁵² with the London Festival Orchestra, and Britten's *Saint Nicholas* as part of the 1990 Fishguard Festival, which was later broadcast on BBC Radio 3. It is interesting to note that, from 1991, the *St Davids Cathedral Bach Festival* dropped Bach from its name, becoming the *St Davids Cathedral Festival*. Beaumont's arrival provided the necessary impetus to move away from the decline of the 1980s, and to present a new cathedral choir fit for the 21st century.

Raising the standards

A re-occurring theme throughout the second half of the 20th century is the lack of a suitable resource for the choir – most notably, a dedicated and modern choir room. A number of places had been used as a choir vestry and practice room – a shed in the ruins of St Mary's College had served the purpose during the Second World War, and a later arrangement was a choir vestry⁴⁵³ at the rear of the clergy vestry in the South Transept, with the Parvis over the South Door acting as a song school – this was the arrangement during Boorman and Jackson's tenure, with the Nave or Quire being used as additional rehearsal space. By July 1991, Dean Macwilliam noted that this was an '...unsatisfactory arrangement'.⁴⁵⁴ The chapter discussed a range of options, including the transformation of the Chapel of St Thomas Beckett (dedicated to the memory of Archbishop David Prosser) into a new facility, or the creation of an entirely new room linked to the North Transept from the remains of the cloister. Having received objections to the change of use of the Chapel of St Thomas Beckett, the chapter agreed that the new choir room was to be built. The chapter undertook Argent of Pembroke to build the new choir room at a cost of £61,802.⁴⁵⁵ By December 1992, the cost of building the new choir room had increased to £70,000 – additional expenditure was required to purchase a suitable piano and to replace some choir robes, totalling £6,000.⁴⁵⁶ Dean Bertie Lewis reported to chapter at their July meeting in 1993 that the new choir room was '...nearly complete although small items had to be rectified, but would soon settle down'.⁴⁵⁷ However, problems would dog the new choir room throughout its decade-long existence – issues with ventilation, doors and rising floorboards were a reoccurring theme during discussions regarding the room, up until the construction of the new choir room as part of the Cloister Project in 2004. Beaumont made haste to repair the damage of his predecessor's tenure. Several gentlemen who had left under Watts returned, with others using the interregnum to retire from the choir. The arrangement of both female contraltos and countertenors which had been a fixture under both Jackson and Watts was discontinued, in favour of male countertenors only. This coincided with the introduction of the voluntary adult choir 'The Chapel Choir' in 1991. The appointment of Mr Michael Slaney as Assistant Organist brought St Davids into

⁴⁵² Also known as 'The Little Organ Mass'

⁴⁵³ A robing room

⁴⁵⁴ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. 25th July 1991, p.111

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, p.123

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid, 8th December 1992, p.125

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid, 29th July 1993. p.128

line with its English counterparts in having a permanent assistant.⁴⁵⁸ Although originally undertaking the role on a part-time basis,⁴⁵⁹ Slaney's role greatly strengthened the choir, now developing under Beaumont's direction. The ad-hoc position that had existed under Jackson and Watts disappeared as it became clear that a full-time assistant was required to accompany the choir. By the time of Slaney's 'retirement'⁴⁶⁰ in 1998, there was no question of appointing anything other than a full time assistant. The decision to create a separate boys' choir, leaving the girls within the same body that had nurtured Thomas Tomkins some five centuries early, is one which is unparalleled in the Anglican choral tradition. Instead of creating the now favoured 'dual-line' scheme of girls and boys, the girls remained the constituent treble line of the cathedral choir whilst the boys were re-established as a separate choir, singing one evensong per week. No evidence exists as to why Beaumont decided to make such a change in April 1991. It is accepted locally that the decision to keep girls as the principle treble line was due to their lifespan as trebles from ages 8 to 18, providing more stability for the choral foundation.⁴⁶¹ In committing to this, Beaumont placed the treble line on a more secure footing than his recent predecessors – however, the decision to create a separate choir for the boys would have long term effects on providing a stable supply of young (and middle aged) men with enough experience or interest in serving as Vicars Choral. Together with Peter Boorman almost a quarter of a century before, Beaumont's courageous decision to separate the boys out of the cathedral choir has been overlooked by many within the wider Anglican choral world, in favour of instances which were aimed at supposed gender equality rather than practical need. Liturgically, the cathedral was ordered by the Church in Wales' *Book of Common Prayer 1984*. A conservative work, it differed little from the original proposals made in the experimental rites of 1966. Matins and Evensong were the norm – although no music lists from the period can be found in the archives⁴⁶² it was clear that either the Benedictus or Jubilate at Matins were chanted at the start of Beaumont's tenure.⁴⁶³ The cathedral was influenced by a mixture of traditional Welsh low-church Anglicans and conservative evangelicals during this period, leading worship to be simpler and less grandiose than under Deans Witton-Davies and Jenkins. However, it must be noted that the choral foundation received strong support from the Dean, the clergy and the wider cathedral community. The chapter acts note that The Friends of St Davids Cathedral would provide funds for the completion of the new choir room, robes and sets of music.⁴⁶⁴ Beaumont worked tirelessly to bring the choir back towards the English cathedral tradition, whilst

⁴⁵⁸ Slaney maintains that the role was only ever meant to be 'part-time'.

⁴⁵⁹ To play for Sundays and principal Holy Days

⁴⁶⁰ An active retirement – for many years after, Slaney continued to serve as the Cathedral's third organist, playing for parish services and accompanying the Chapel Choir.

⁴⁶¹ This model has been eschewed in the majority of cathedrals with girl choristers – either following the 8-13 model (usually because of schooling arrangements), or forming an ensemble of teenage girls whose voices have begun to mature.

⁴⁶² Regular music lists became the norm from 1995 under Geraint Bowen. The weekly parish newsletter up to that time served as notice of music for services for the coming week.

⁴⁶³ Evidence for this was found in remnant canticle sheets published at the same time as Beaumont printed a revised psalter for the choir.

⁴⁶⁴ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. 29th July 1993. p.128

acknowledging that they were based in the far western corner of Wales. Beaumont produced a collection of psalm sheets using text from the Revised Psalter, allowing the choir to sing the daily round of psalms as prescribed in the *Book of Common Prayer 1984*. Many of those associated with Beaumont's tenure regard his period at St Davids as fundamental in reshaping the choir and preparing it for the 21st century. At the July 1994 chapter meeting, Dean Wyn Evans announced to the chapter '...the preferment of Mr Kerry Beaumont to be Organist and Director of Music at Ripon Cathedral⁴⁶⁵ with effect from 23rd October 1994.'⁴⁶⁶ The chapter invited Dr George Guest⁴⁶⁷ to act as consultant for the appointment of Beaumont's successor. During the interregnum over the Autumn of 1994, Llywela Harris⁴⁶⁸ would conduct the choir, with some assistance from Dr Guest.

The demise of the 1953 Hill, Norman & Beard Organ

The 1953 Hill, Norman & Beard instrument had been extensively modified over its short life.⁴⁶⁹ Within its first two years, severe cyphers were noted on the Pedal Trombone, and that the piston action was slow. It was also noted that the swell box would not shut fully and that the wind was unsteady. A major water leak in 1959 caused damage to the Great Organ, causing some damage, including sticking sliders. As described previously, additional work had taken place in every decade to either enhance the instrument – the early 1980s saw Jackson's radical work on the Choir division, and the late 1980s saw Watts' addition of the pipework from Marylebone Parish Church. 1991 saw storm damage to the North Triforium, with the Trombone and Choral Bass chest damaged by rain water. It became clear that the instrument was failing, and that its working life was coming to its ultimate conclusion. Kerry Beaumont's final report to the chapter before leaving for Ripon, following an investigation of the instrument by both John Mander of Mander organs and Mark Venning of Harrison & Harrison of Durham, made depressing reading for an instrument just over 50 years old. Beaumont noted in his letter to the Dean that the St Davids organ was 'a great treasure [...] and that we have an opportunity to restore the original vocal scheme and action'.⁴⁷⁰ The Dean presented the options to the Chapter:

The instrument is short of wind and the 1953 blower is only suitable for the 1953 pipes.⁴⁷¹

The system has leaks, and in 1953 a quarter of the [Willis] organ was removed with serious implications. The options are:

- a) Restoration (£300,000)
- b) rebuilding (£300,000)

⁴⁶⁵ In succession to Ronald Perrin

⁴⁶⁶ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. 28th July 1994. p.133

⁴⁶⁷ Former Organist and Director of Music, St John's College, Cambridge (1951-91)

⁴⁶⁸ Formerly Warden of the Royal School of Church Music at Addington Palace

⁴⁶⁹ It is often the case that a major rebuild of an organ is warranted around once every century – and even then, it will be for cleaning and repair of the instrument rather than having to start almost from scratch.

⁴⁷⁰ Letter from Kerry Beaumont to Very Reverend Wyn Evans, 8 May 1994, St Davids Cathedral Archive

⁴⁷¹ Beaumont, in his 8 May letter suggests that this was not the case, and that there were issues emanating from the 1952/53 build.

c) or rebuilding electrical action (£300,000)⁴⁷²

Canon Geoffrey Morris, who chaired the chapter's Organ Sub-Committee, wrote an extensive letter to Dean Wyn Evans, laying out his views on both Mander and Venning's reports on the Hill, Norman and Beard instrument. His letter lays out a number of considerations for the Chapter, together with his own thoughts as to how the project should develop.

I am sure that our organ must be a first-class instrument [...] neither is quality the only thing that matters. It must also be *versatile*. This may well be the hardest nut to crack. Nicholas Jackson tried to crack it, and the experts now agree that the result was disastrous.⁴⁷³

Rushworth & Draper, who undertook the Jackson revisions, warned Malcolm Watts in 1984 not to contemplate any addition to the pipework, declaring that the wind supply system was 'border line at the moment as a result of the earlier rebuild'.⁴⁷⁴ Canon Morris notes the issues with the instrument unable to sustain congregation singing in the nave, and makes the radical suggestion of re-sighting the new instrument at the west end of the cathedral, in the manner of many Parisian churches. Morris understands that this would cause issue for services within the Quire, and would cause severe architectural difficulties at the west end of the cathedral – although Morris notes that Henry Willis III suggested this to Dr Soar in 1934. Both Morris and Beaumont agree that the remnants of the 1883 Willis instrument were worth preserving, rather than removing the entire instrument and beginning afresh with an entirely new instrument and specification.⁴⁷⁵ Beaumont makes clear at the end of his letter, that

Willis built a fine organ which has been systematically eroded and spoilt. That is a fact. Fortunately, the Willis pipes are still in the Deanery⁴⁷⁶ and there is a British organ company which is expert at restoring Willis instruments. That is Mander. I think the organ should be restored to its former excellence and Mander should be the ones to do it.⁴⁷⁷

Whilst Mander had undertaken the successful restoration and overhaul of the 1872 Willis instrument at St Paul's Cathedral during the 1970s, and their later highly celebrated 2004 restoration of the 1871 Royal Albert Hall instrument, the contract for the work went to Harrison & Harrison of Durham, who had worked on Willis instruments at a number of cathedrals, including Durham, Exeter, Hereford and Lincoln, and who had built the radical organ under the direction of Ralph Downes at the Royal

⁴⁷² St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. 28th July 1994. p.133

⁴⁷³ Copy of correspondence from Canon Geoffrey Morris.

⁴⁷⁴ 'Dates of work carried out on St Davids Cathedral Willis Organ' – Letter from Kerry Beaumont to Dean Wyn Evans, 8 May 1994. St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. 28th July 1994. p.136

⁴⁷⁵ As had taken place at several Oxbridge colleges, sweeping away historic English instruments in favour of continental instruments.

⁴⁷⁶ Stored in the Deanery Garage and Attic since 1953 – presumably in case a situation came when it could be afforded to restore the instrument to its former glory.

⁴⁷⁷ Letter from Kerry Beaumont to Dean Wyn Evans, 8 May 1994. St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. 28th July 1994. p.136

Festival Hall in 1954. The decision to commission Harrison & Harrison was taken under Beaumont's successor, Geraint Bowen.

Geraint Bowen

Bowen was born in London in 1963 and began as a chorister under Martindale Sidwell at Hampstead Parish Church.⁴⁷⁸ Bowen went up to Jesus College, Cambridge where he served as organ scholar, being awarded the BA in 1985. In 1986, he was appointed assistant organist at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin under John Dexter. Whilst in Dublin, he studied for an external Mus.B.⁴⁷⁹ He then served as assistant organist at Hereford Cathedral under Roy Massey from 1989-94. Bowen started at St Davids in January 1995. Bowen solidified and built upon the work of his predecessor. During Bowen's six year tenure, St Davids was brought into line with its English counterparts – directing the choir's first commercial CD, leading tours to the United States and Australia, broadcasting on BBC Radio Choral Evensong after a hiatus of nearly four decades, and overseeing the construction of the Harrison & Harrison organ. It was an exciting period for the cathedral community – the rebuilding of the organ came as part of the Millennium Appeal, which saw the re-facing and restoration of the cathedral's western façade, together with the augmentation of two new bells in the Belfry, along with the construction of an exhibition space in Porth-yr-Twr, and the completion of the medieval cloisters, with working refectory, treasury and song school.

Bowen arrived at St Davids finding a choral foundation on a firm footing, but with plenty of room for improvement. The cathedral choir sang Matins and Evensong on Sundays (with a sung Eucharist on the 4th Sunday of the month); a dumb day on Monday and alternate Fridays, with Evensong sung on Tuesday by the boy choristers, on Wednesday by the girl choristers, and on Thursdays by the cathedral choir. On alternate Fridays, the Chapel Choir sang Evensong.

The summer of 1995 saw a flurry of activity for the choir. The annual Cathedral Festival at the end of May 1995 saw a busy week of music-making in the Cathedral. On Thursday 1st June, Her Majesty The Queen attended Matins with The Duke of Edinburgh to confer City Status upon St Davids. The choir sang the service, with a choice of music that was designed to showcase the choir at its best: the *Te Deum* from Stanford's Morning Service in B flat, the *Preces and Responses* by Ayleward, and Hubert Parry's coronation anthem *I was Glad*.⁴⁸⁰ Later in the summer, the girl choristers undertook the choir's first foreign tour, by joining the choristers of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin to sing services.⁴⁸¹ It is clear that Bowen intended to professionalise the choral foundation at St Davids within the constraints (both social and geographical) which any professional encountered at St Davids. At the first full chapter meeting of 1995, Dean Wyn Evans informed the Chapter that the Organist's Working Party had

⁴⁷⁸ Martindale Sidwell (1916-98) is well known for having established flourishing choral foundations at both St Clement Danes and Hampstead Parish Church in an era when parish music making was in severe decline.

⁴⁷⁹ In the Oxbridge fashion, the Mus.B is a post-graduate degree.

⁴⁸⁰ Excerpts of the service are included in the documentary *St Davids: A City Celebrates*, St Davids City Council. 1995.

⁴⁸¹ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. 27th July 1995. p.140

reported that rates of pay for cathedral organists had risen and were now between £15,400 and £26,000 per annum. Acknowledging that the Welsh cathedrals lagged behind in paying their musicians, it was decided that the cathedral could not increase the salary of the organist at that juncture. It was, however, acknowledged that the overall settlement given to the post-holder included accommodation, expenses of office and a pension. By July 1996, having seen the work that Bowen had undertaken, it was agreed that £2,000 per annum would be added to his salary from the organist's expenses budget, and that a computer allowance would be given, so that Bowen could professionally typeset the cathedrals orders of service.⁴⁸² At this early juncture, there was concern about the post of the Assistant Organist. Mr Michael Slaney had undertaken the role since retiring to St Davids, and had, by the time of Bowen's arrival, begun a second career as a full-time assistant organist. It was becoming clear that he would wish to embark on full time retirement, and that a return to the system of a part-time assistants would not be in the best interest of the musical foundation.⁴⁸³

A 'new' organ (with some bits from The Deanery Garage)

A growing pressure was building on the chapter to authorise work to be undertaken on the organ. At the June 1995 meeting, the Organ subcommittee reported. Having looked at the stored 1883 Willis pipework, the committee concluded:

The good news was that the 1883 pipe work was in good condition and reusable. However, the bad news was as follows:

- a) The 1883 Willis Organ has an insufficient winding system. The sound boards are 1883 vintage and there is considerable vintage through age. The console and action need to be replaced and the mechanical parts of the organ are in dire need of renewal.
- b) In 1952, Dean Witton Davies commissioned A.D.R Caroe to design an organ case. The organ builders tried to fit the pipework into the case but this could not be done and the pedals etc. are excluded. The case itself is a major problem. The case could be raised and house a pedal department or choir organ.⁴⁸⁴

When invited by the chapter to share his views on the instrument, Bowen did not mince his words.

He expressed horror at the console and expressed the view that when the instrument is switched on it is far more satisfying to listen to than to play...There is steady predictable decay.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸² St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. 25th July 1996. p.145

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

At the December chapter meeting, the chapter were informed that Dr Roy Massey, Organist of Hereford Cathedral⁴⁸⁶ had undertaken an inspection of the organ, together with a team from Harrison & Harrison.⁴⁸⁷

The development of the choir

At the end of Bowen's first year at St Davids, it was clear that the wider world was beginning to take note of what musical developments there. Early in 1996, the record label Nimbus recorded the first commercial CD of the choir.⁴⁸⁸ The label had produced successful recordings of the choir of Christ Church, Oxford, and St John's College, Cambridge. The CD itself was highly successful, with the Dean informing the chapter that 'letters of commendation had been received from many people after recent broadcasts which show the musical standards are appreciated by many'.⁴⁸⁹ Bowen's second St Davids Cathedral Festival saw the introduction of the festival's own chorus – made up of the vicars choral, members of the Chapel Choir and other associated local forces. It was also the first year that the festival spanned an entire week (including the choral services) from Saturday to the following Sunday. The autumn and winter of 1996 saw the choir at its busiest, with an October tour to the southern United States, visiting Charlotte, North Carolina, Orlando and Atlanta. Nimbus Records donated 1,000 CDs for the visit. The tour made a great impression, and laid the ground work for return visits in 1998 and 2006. HRH The Prince Edward made a visit as part of the 40th anniversary of The Duke of Edinburgh Awards, and attended a service at the Cathedral, during which the girl choristers sang. The end of 1996 saw Classic FM⁴⁹⁰ record the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on 22nd December, for broadcast over the Christmas period. At the July 1997 chapter meeting, the chapter recognised Mr Bowen's efforts in '...raising the profile of the Cathedral and the Choir.'⁴⁹¹ At their December meeting, the now looming issue of the Assistant Organist's retirement came to a head. Unlike in many cathedrals during the period, Michael Slaney's retirement was of his own decision, rather than it being coerced by the chapter. Slaney (at this point, aged 67), had provided the first continuous assistantship since Rosalyn Charles. His role – which certainly cannot be understated – developed the need and necessity for a full-time assistant organist and proved to the Chapter the necessity in appointing a full-time replacement. Without Slaney, the improvements undertaken by Beaumont and Bowen would have been significantly more difficult, and it is thanks to him undertaking this post-retirement career that the choral foundation was able to develop and thrive throughout the 1990s. Following consultations with Bowen and Dean Wyn Evans, Slaney 'confirmed that he wished to finish at the end of the Summer [term] of 1998 but would like to continue playing for the [Sunday]

⁴⁸⁶ Where Geraint Bowen had served as Assistant, and his successor, Timothy Noon served as Organ Scholar and pupil under Dr Massey.

⁴⁸⁷ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – . 5th December 1995. p.142

⁴⁸⁸ Founded in 1987, Nimbus was the first UK recording company to produce CDs.

⁴⁸⁹ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – present. 25th July 1996. p.146

⁴⁹⁰ The UK's first commercial classical music radio station

⁴⁹¹ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – . 31st July 1997. p.150

9.30am service.⁴⁹² Careful thought was needed as to how to fund the post, and where to accommodate the new post-holder. Early negotiations between the Chapter and the Representative Body of the Church in Wales regarding accommodation of a new assistant organist at Cloister Hall were less than promising. The legacy of the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, even 77 years later, continued to present difficulties. The disestablishment had virtually destroyed the cathedral's property portfolio from being held by the Chapter, with it being turned into fragmentary pieces held by a conglomeration of interested parties, including the Friends of St Davids Cathedral, the Representative Body of the Church in Wales and the St Davids Diocesan Board of Finance. Further to that, funding of the post also presented an issue for the Chapter. An innovative scheme involving a grant from the Representative Body of the Church in Wales, together with a significant grant from The Ouseley Trust⁴⁹³ and The Pilgrims' Trust.⁴⁹⁴ Bowen, addressing the Chapter, emphasised that 'It is of particular importance that the post attracts a person of the highest calibre. A place like St Davids has its charms but also its challenges'.⁴⁹⁵ In this regard, Bowen was entirely correct.

'...that the music must be as good as we can make it'

St Davids' population of around 1700 people, geographically set on the western tip of the British mainland, with poor transport links eastward, provides a great challenge for anyone who wishes to work or live there. The beauty of the Pembrokeshire coast, together with the charm of a community which is slightly behind the modern world creates an inviting isolation. But it is an isolated community – for a musician, it makes collaboration more difficult. Cultural and teaching opportunities were difficult – Peter Boorman seemed to create a cultural flurry at the start of his tenure, as well as have a good number of teaching pupils; Sir Nicholas Jackson founded the St Davids Cathedral Bach Festival, continued by Malcolm Watts, which later became the Cathedral Festival in 1991 under Beaumont and continued its growth under him and Geraint Bowen. Each community and town have a suspicion of one another – in St Davids itself, the scars of 18th and 19th century non-conformity continue to linger amongst those whose families go back several generations in the village-city. For them, the Cathedral would have represented the zenith of English oppression – the class system personified. Whilst there have been some excellent personal instances of co-operation between church and non-conformists, as religious observance has decreased, and the idea of Welsh identity has steadily grown, an ambivalence (and on occasion, passive hostility) had developed. Hand in hand with this ambivalence and isolation is coupled the lack of a choir or cathedral school. Education provision in St Davids descends from the educational provision provided for the choristers, dating back to Bishop Adam Houghton in 1363. The choristers of St Davids had been most often educated at either the Cathedral, and later diocesan voluntary aided school, and later in the 20th century, children had been accepted

⁴⁹² St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – . 2nd December 1997. p.155

⁴⁹³ A charitable body supporting Cathedral Music.

⁴⁹⁴ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – . 1st December 1998. p.3

⁴⁹⁵ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – . 2nd December 1997. p.155

from the council school.⁴⁹⁶ In the late 1990s, the two primary schools, faced an uncertain future, with radical closure and re-structuring plans suggested by the Education Authority. The least radical plan at the time was a merger of the two, remaining a diocesan voluntary aided school, but granting significant⁴⁹⁷ concessions to opponents of a church school, against the advice of the Welsh Office,⁴⁹⁸ who argued for ‘...the close[ure] of the CP school and to extend the VA school’.⁴⁹⁹ Both schools were dissolved in favour of a new diocesan voluntary aided school, Ysgol Bro Dewi, which opened on the VA school site in September 1999.⁵⁰⁰ Whilst primary education provision would be guaranteed up to the age of 11, post-11 education remained a concern. Ysgol Dewi Sant, which was established in 1895 out of the original cathedral grammar school, had been under almost constant threat of closure throughout the previous three decades. Since Rosalyn Charles’ departure, the relationship between school and cathedral had deteriorated. Even though the Dean sat as an ex-officio governor of the school, neither school nor cathedral attempted to build good relations. The majority of choristers over the age of 11 were educated there, and its position, both geographical and social within the community, was crucial in the continuation of choristers for the cathedral. Whilst the issue was not resolved until the middle of the 2010s, a metaphorical axe hovered above the school throughout this period.

In this climate, the appointment of an assistant organist was a gamble for the Chapter. Appointing a person of the highest calibre was crucial, as was being prudent in the financing of the post. The Chapter agreed to accept Mr Slaney’s resignation ‘...and that the advertising for an Assistant Organist should go ahead, [and] that an Assistant Organist be subsequently appointed.’⁵⁰¹ Four candidates were shortlisted, leading to the appointment of Simon Pearce, who had been Organ Scholar at Ripon Cathedral under Kerry Beaumont. Pearce joined the Cathedral in September 1998, at a time when it was musically flourishing. Following the success of the 1996 American tour and recording by Nimbus records, Hallmark Cards invited the choir to sing on their 1998 Christmas disc. The royalties from the recording of a carol for that disc provided the choir with secure finances for well over a decade. The summer of 1998 saw a highly successful Cathedral Festival week, and the choir’s first BBC Choral Evensong broadcast since 1974. The broadcast was well acclaimed by fellow musical professionals and listeners alike.⁵⁰² Bowen chose a programme of music which aired on the conservative of repertoire, but did so wisely, creating a balanced programme. The St Davids connection was through Sir William H Harris, and his introit *Behold, the tabernacle of God*, written for

⁴⁹⁶ Originally established to provide education through the Welsh language, with a heavy non-conformist leaning.

⁴⁹⁷ In the author’s opinion, a highly unnecessary and unwise move.

⁴⁹⁸ The UK Government department which dealt with Welsh issues, which included education.

⁴⁹⁹ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – . 2nd December 1997. p.157

⁵⁰⁰ A new school building was subsequently built and opened in May 2002.

⁵⁰¹ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – . 2nd December 1997. p.156

⁵⁰² St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – 31st July 1998. p.158

the dedication of the RSCM headquarters at Addington Palace.⁵⁰³ The Preces and Responses were by William Smith (of Durham), coupled with a setting of the Lord's Prayer by Robert Stone. The canticles of T. Tertius Noble in B minor had featured on Boorman's final broadcast in 1974, whilst the anthem was Hubert Parry's *A Song of Wisdom* with its coupled hymn-anthem *O, for a closer walk with God*. Bowen took no chances with congregational participation, keeping them silent for the hymn,⁵⁰⁴ with Michael Slaney concluding the service with another Welsh connection – the composer William Mathias' *Jubilate*. Bowen, Slaney and the choir produced an excellent broadcast, which has been re-aired by the BBC a number of times.⁵⁰⁵ The broadcast certainly reminded the BBC that St Davids were worthy of inclusion in their Choral Evensong schedule, and presently remain the only Welsh cathedral regularly included.

In October, the choir visited the North-eastern United States, in part to raise money and awareness of the Millennium Appeal, singing at a number of churches in Baltimore and Washington DC, including St Paul's K Street and the National Cathedral. In his yearly report, the Dean praised the choir as '...excellent ambassadors' for the cathedral.⁵⁰⁶ By the Autumn of 1998, the appeal work had begun, with Harrison & Harrison removing the Hill, Norman & Beard instrument. The 1953 instrument was used for the last time at Evensong on Tuesday 15 September 1998.⁵⁰⁷ For almost a two year period, the Cathedral used an electronic organ system from Copeman Hart, with a console in the Quire and another at the entrance to the Nave from the North Transept. The speakers were placed on top of the now vacant rood screen, with some speakers being placed in the triforium. By February 2000, the Cathedral was ready to install its new organ – an undertaking that would take several months. The cathedral was turned 180 degrees, with the worship space in front of the Great West door. By Easter, the majority of the construction work was complete, with voicing taking place over the summer. The Bishop of St Davids dedicated the Organ at Matins in Sunday 15 October 2000, with the inaugural recital taking place on Wednesday 15 November 2000.

Strangely, Bowen did not provide a full report to Chapter between 1997 and 2000. Whether this was because of lack of time on the Chapter agenda or a general oversight is unclear. However, Bowen delivered a retrospective at the July Chapter meeting in 2000. On the appointment and subsequent performance of Simon Pearce as Assistant Organist, Bowen rightly describes Pearce's first months at St Davids as '...a baptism of fire',⁵⁰⁸ praising him for his excellent work during his first two and a half years at St Davids. Bowen noted the philanthropic support of The Pilling Trust, The Friends of Cathedral Music and The Ouseley Trust in supporting the creation of an endowment to help fund

⁵⁰³ A rather convoluted connection was that the then Cathedral Festival Administrator was Llywela Harris, (whose father, Canon W.H. Harris had served as Treasurer and co-editor with Sir William of the Welsh Hymnal *Emyniau Eglwys*) who had served as the last Warden of Addington Palace before the RSCM moved to Dorking.

⁵⁰⁴ The author's personal recollection.

⁵⁰⁵ Most recently in 2015.

⁵⁰⁶ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – . 1st December 1998. p.3

⁵⁰⁷ The author was present as a chorister at this service.

⁵⁰⁸ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 – . 27th July 2000. p.12

the Assistant Organist's post. The total funds donated by them (at December 1997) totalled £78,000.⁵⁰⁹ He applauded the Chapter for their foresight in making such 'a huge leap of faith' with the appointment.⁵¹⁰ At that time, and at the time of writing, St Davids remained the only Welsh cathedral to have a full-time, fully salaried music department. Bowen reported that Michael Slaney, formerly the Assistant Organist had adjusted to his second retirement, and had been awarded Membership of the Order of the British Empire in the 2000 New Year's Honour's List. Bowen's report on the organ certainly pays testament not only to the staff of Harrison & Harrison, but also to Bowen himself in undertaking stewardship of the project.

When we decided to award the contract to Harrison & Harrison nearly 5 years ago we knew from their long and distinguished track record what the likely results would be, and we have not been disappointed. From the first moment the team from H&H arrived[...] we were aware that we were seeing something special in terms of skill and devotion which these men lavish on this somewhat rarefied craft...Work of this quality does not come cheap, but what we have is an instrument which is stunning both to look at and to listen to, and worthy of its magnificent setting.⁵¹¹

Bowen's report on the choir could be described as the most positive in its history:

In October 1998 [the choir] undertook a second tour of the USA, visiting in the course of ten days Baltimore, Maryland; Norfolk and Richmond, Virginia; and Washington DC, where they had the privilege of singing Evensong at National Cathedral...Once again, the whole venture was wholly successful at a number of different levels: musically and socially it bonded the choir, our choristers experienced the very different lifestyle in the USA, and it was an excellent opportunity to promote St Davids...The financial success of the 1998 tour [is] in large part due to a recording entitled *Christmas with You* made by the American greetings card company Hallmark, on which the choir featured on three tracks...it was the first time that a European choir had featured on it, and it sold over one million copies in Hallmarks' 8500 American shops.⁵¹²

It was reported to Chapter that the choir would undertake a further tour:

...the choir undertakes its most ambitious venture yet, a two-week long tour of Australia...we have arranged an itinerary which includes St David's Cathedral, Hobart, Tasmania; Holy Trinity Church, Laucenston, Tasmania; and St James' Church, Sydney.⁵¹³

Bowen then recounts to Chapter a short account on BBC Radio 3 broadcasts – the second having been on 1st March 2000. Bowen makes it clear to the Chapter the importance of these broadcasts and the status that it brings the Cathedral: 'Invitations to make these broadcasts only come through the

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ St James' Church is an Anglo-Catholic parish in a diocese known to be radically conservative and evangelical.

maintenance of high standards on a day-to-day basis'.⁵¹⁴ Bowen concluded his review by paying tribute to the loyalty and commitment of the lay vicars and choristers: 'They understand that the music must be as good as we can make it on the proverbial wet Monday afternoon in November when there are two people in the congregation, or at the carol service when there are seven hundred there.'⁵¹⁵ The Dean thanked Mr Bowen on behalf of the Chapter – an understatement, in light of the fact this may be the most successful period for the choir in several hundred years.

Building for the future – Timothy Noon and a firm foundation

Chapter accounts recognise the importance in continued investment in the choir. In 1998, the Chapter allocated £37,547.00 for 'Organist, Choirmaster and Choir' account – to pay for the salaries of the Organist and Master of the Choristers, the Lay Vicars, both girl and boy choristers, and for the provision of purchasing assets such as music and robes. By 1999, this had increased to £41,835.00.⁵¹⁶ The accounts for 1998/99 demonstrate further investment in music purchasing, with £431.00 being spent on purchasing music. Bowen's management of the choir is undoubtedly the cause of its success. He maintained a full complement of girl choristers throughout the period, but was less successful in recruiting boy choristers, with chorister numbers dropping to 3 between 1998 and 2000.⁵¹⁷ It cannot be said that Bowen neglected the boy choristers, rehearsing them 4 mornings a week with a Tuesday evensong. The girl choristers rehearsed before and after their Wednesday evensong, before rehearsing prior to the Cathedral Choir⁵¹⁸ on Thursday evenings, together with two rehearsals and services on Sundays. Whilst Bowen encountered the same issue that his predecessor Peter Boorman encountered in recruiting boys, a number of boy choristers under Bowen returned under him and his successor as Choral Scholars, laying the foundation for the Choral Scholar programme implemented upon Bowen's successor, Timothy Noon's departure in 2007. However, the recruitment of able men (and later, women) to serve as Vicars Choral has remained a continuing source of concern, and present socio-economic trends suggest that it will worsen in the coming decades.

The retirement of Dr Roy Massey as Organist of Hereford Cathedral after 27 years in post led to one of the leading cathedral organist posts becoming vacant. At their December 2000 meeting, the Dean announced that Mr Geraint Bowen had been appointed as Organist of Hereford Cathedral, and would be leaving St Davids at the end of the Summer term in 2001. The Dean paid tribute to Bowen's musical abilities, both in the direction and management of the choir, as well as his work managing the rebuild of the organ. The Dean also recalled Bowen's contribution as a typesetter, both of the cathedral's expanding programme of liturgical services, as well as of the Cathedral Festival programmes and much other paraphernalia.

⁵¹⁴ St Davids Cathedral Chapter Act Book 1979 –. 27th July 2000. p.13

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid. p.14

⁵¹⁷ The author formed one third of the choir during that period.

⁵¹⁸ Girl Choristers and Lay Vicars.

The appointment of Timothy Noon as Organist and Master of the Choristers saw the youngest person appointed to that position since the 17th century. Noon's musical education as a chorister and organ scholar at Hereford Cathedral (under Dr Roy Massey) and as organ scholar at Christ Church, Oxford, prepared him for his first post as Assistant Organist at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin under John Dexter in 1995, followed two years later by his appointment as Assistant Organist at Canterbury Cathedral under David Flood. His arrival at St Davids as successor to Geraint Bowen confirmed that the cathedral once again was serious in continuing the work of both Bowen and Beaumont in developing the choir for it to be en-par with many of its English counterparts.

Noon, upon arrival, began updating the choir's repertoire, introducing a great deal of mid-to-late 20th century English choral repertoire, as well as repertoire from the European classical era. A number of compositions were commissioned during his tenure, including a setting of the morning canticle *Jubilate Deo* from Howard Goodall, and a mass from Irish composer Michal McGlynn. Noon himself followed the English tradition of composing for his own choir – a setting of texts from John Dryden for a visit of Her Majesty The Queen on St Cecilia's Day 2001; an anthem for the enthronement of the Right Reverend Carl Cooper in Mary 2002; a setting of evening canticles for the Cathedral Boys' choir in 2006, as well as other pieces for liturgical use.

Noon built upon the legacy of his predecessor, enhancing the choir's radio, television and commercial recording output, as well as committing to regular touring of Europe and the United States. Working with the York Ambisonic record label, Noon undertook three commercial recordings of the choir – *A Christmas Greeting* in 2002, *Sing Joyfully* in 2004 and *Walking in a Garden* in 2006. Noon himself made the first recording of the Harrison organ in 2002, returning to make a second disc in 2006. Noon encouraged the choir to tour, undertaking a tour of The Netherlands in 2002, of Barcelona and Catalonia in 2003, of Paris in 2005, and of the United States in 2006.

Under Noon, the number of choristers and lay clerks increased to 16 choristers and 10 lay clerks. The number of sung services increased, with an early initiative of the boy choristers and lay vicars leading to a round of 7 sung services per week. The choirs' involvement with the festival continued, with the involvement of the choir continuing to grow, with collaborations with artists and groups including *Chapel du Roi*, Jeremy Fissell, *Charivari Agreeable* and *Florigelium*. The choir continued to broadcast annually on BBC Radio 3's *Choral Evensong*, as well as broadcasting on BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio Cymru. Noon's departure, to be Director of Music at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral in August 2007, saw the choir on the firmest of footings, on par with many of its English counterparts.

The period 1991 – 2007 could be classed as a modern 'golden age' of music making at St Davids. Bowen must be seen as an arbiter of change at St Davids. Whilst Kerry Beaumont must be acknowledged as having steered the choir back towards the Anglican Cathedral musical tradition, Geraint Bowen brought St Davids forward, creating a choral foundation that could truly stand up (and potentially rival) many of its English counterparts. Some of this must be attributed to luck, but the

majority of it was down to Bowen's foresight as both musician and manager. Bowen (in many ways by accident) was ahead of many of his English counterparts in directing girl choristers. However, it is notable that in a choir made up of girls aged from 8 through to 18, that a sound which was in keeping with boy trebles was developed and maintained. It must be acknowledged that very little work on training teenage girl voices for use within choral music had been done at this point, as many cathedrals who were early adopters of girl choristers provided a limited chorister 'lifespan' which mirrored their boy counterparts by starting aged 8 and leaving aged 13. In the early 2000s through to the time of writing (2020) a number of cathedrals (including Canterbury, Winchester, and Ely) exclusively appointed girl choristers from the age of 13 through to late teens. This sound has seemed to wane in recent years, but it must be realised that we are still in the infancy of understanding and using young female voices within cathedral settings, and that no definitive thoughts or processes on training girls distinctly from boys has yet been developed. Bowen's steering of the organ restoration has left St Davids with an instrument worthy of a cathedral rich in musical history. Timothy Noon successfully took up Bowen's mantle, and continued the work of his predecessors by developing a cathedral choir fit for the 21st century. Noon's parting gift – the recommendation to the Chapter that choral scholarships be endowed, has alleviated somewhat the concerns in recruiting locally based lay vicars choral. His successors, Alexander Mason, Daniel Cook and Oliver Waterer have continued and successfully developed the choir as a musical force, ensuring its survival into the 21st century.

Chapter 7. Charms and Challenges – A Conclusion

Music making at St Davids could neither be described as either simple or straight-forward. There have been moments of excellence and despair, triumph and tribulation in the long history of music making in this cathedral. Certainly, the early investments by Bishops Adam de Houghton and John Morgan established and built a liturgical choir of some prestige. The era of the reformation saw standards held at a reasonable state – why else would a man called Tomkins journey from Cornwall to hold an appointment in West Wales? The Commonwealth era certainly left the choral foundation inevitably weaker than before – but that it was able to reform during the Restoration period is remarkable, given the amount of damage inflicted to the cathedral, both physically and financially. Its continuation through the 17th-19th centuries, unlike choirs in other cathedrals,⁵¹⁹ demonstrates a determination to continue the Anglican choral tradition in the most unlikely place, even when non-conformity and local culture begin to turn against it.

By journeying through the narrative, we come to understand (for good and ill) the workings of a cathedral choir – its importance within worship and cathedral life; its importance within the wider community; and also its crucial role in enabling education and social mobility – whether that is through the training of young choristers in order for them to seek ordination or an apprenticeship in the 14th century, or giving opportunities to young organists to begin their careers (as was given to William H Harris at the start of the 20th century), or to enabling generation after generation of choristers to continue singing, whether that be in concert hall, opera house or small parish church.

At the start of our period of concentration, we begin to see the first fruits of the reforms brought about by both public opinion and parliamentary legislation. After the hobby-like nature of clergy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the reforms cemented a concentration and acceptance of clergy and church musicians as ‘professional’, rather than both being the preserve of gifted amateurs or (as was more prevalent) men of independent means using such positions to indulge other pastimes. The mass restoration of British cathedrals and churches during the period demonstrated a rediscovered seriousness in revitalising their *raison d’être* – the daily offering of worship. Societal change in the status and welfare of children, as demonstrated by the zeal of Maria Hackett, together with the campaigns for significant improvements in church music by Rev. John Jebb and Samuel Sebastian Wesley helped steer cathedrals into better decision making in regard to their musical forces. We see, however, that medieval employment practices still continue largely unabated. The instance of William Propert versus the Dean and Chapter of St Davids demonstrates the gross power (and incompetence) of the clergy in relations with their subordinates. Whilst now, it is most probable that Propert would have settled by signing a non-disclosure agreement and received substantial financial restitution at an employment tribunal, the fact that Propert had a position guaranteed for the remainder of his life gave him the

⁵¹⁹ Notably, in Wales, at Llandaff.

leverage to remain as a Vicar Choral whilst challenging the chapter using legal means. The later instance concerning Herbert Morris and his admittance to the College of Vicars Choral suggests relationship issues between musicians and the senior governing body – whilst now deprived of going to this level of deception and skulduggery, the ‘soft’ power⁵²⁰ of lay clerks and vicars choral continues to remain crucial, both in terms of supporting their director of music, or not.⁵²¹

The 20th century has seen the most testing of situations face the cathedral and its choral foundation. For St Davids, the implementation of the Welsh Church Act and subsequent disestablishment of the Church in Wales led to serious financial concerns, but little changed in regard to the provision of music. The anomaly regarding the continuation of the College of Vicars Choral post disestablishment remains one which requires further research and consideration as an anomaly – not whether it was dissolved, but whether its continuation (like the larger body aggregate) automatically was re-founded on 31 March 1920. The financial challenges post disestablishment consolidated upon the formation of the cathedral’s ‘Friends’ organisation in 1931 benefited the cathedral as a whole, and enabled retention of housing for both clergy and lay staff. The cumulative half-life of the Great War (both in economic, physical and psychological effects), the 1929 economic depression and the Second World War presented difficulties for the tenure of Dr Joseph Soar. Though the choir continued through significant periods of growth and decline, it is clear that significant investment into the Willis organ and adequate song school facilities would have been of great benefit. We see that the Hill, Norman and Beard refurbishment of the organ in 1953 was less than successful, but we must acknowledge the wider economic climate necessitating frugality. The saving grace of the whole project was the preservation of parts of the original 1893 Willis instrument in The Deanery garage for well over 40 years, much of which was incorporated into the Harrison 2000 build.

Peter Boorman’s arrival and early years in post were exceptionally fruitful. His success with the Tomkins Tercentenary Festival of 1956 as well as the annual summer musical recital series would have been significantly more difficult without the generosity of the Arts Council of Great Britain. His lasting legacy must be the introduction of girl choristers on an equal standing to boys. Whilst many English cathedrals believed they were ‘smashing the glass ceiling’ in the last three decades, Boorman’s pragmatism in formalising a female treble line in 1966 deserves greater recognition. For a majority of the period, girl to boy chorister ratios were often 4 girls to 1 boy, with significant periods where there were no boy choristers. Boorman’s departure, preceded by a period of malaise, helps present a worthy case for investigating employment trends for cathedral organists.

Nicholas Jackson’s appointment on many levels was inspired. Jackson’s musicianship, his compositional output and his work in creating the St Davids Cathedral Bach Festival in 1979 demonstrated vision and drive that were significantly needed. It cannot be said that some of his choices

⁵²⁰ Defined as the ability to attract and co-opt, rather than coerce.

⁵²¹ As was illustrated in the late 1980s and 1990 with the resignation of Malcolm Watts as Organist.

were wise in hindsight: the revisionist work on the Hill, Norman and Beard instrument exacerbated key flaws already present within the instrument; the recording output of the choir early in his tenure regretfully does not stand the test of time – although, we must acknowledge the fact that he tried to push the choir forward in terms of repertoire and performance. Jackson’s tenure overall was successful, and a worthy successor could have been found through appointing an external candidate. If blame can be apportioned in regard to the criticisms and failings of Malcolm Watts’ tenure, it is wholly and squarely laid at the Chapter, and in particular at the role of the Venerable Alec Lewis in his position as both Canon Residentiary and Acting Dean in proceeding with the appointment. The evidence suggests that the decision was brought to chapter without open competition for the post, and without seeking formal advice from a qualified external source who could have acted as a ‘critical friend’. Many foundations have made similar mistakes in regard to key appointments, and whilst many blame the person appointed, it often is those that made the appointment who should share in condemnation.

At the end of the 20th century, Kerry Beaumont’s short time at St Davids settled the choir and returned it to its place as a *Cathedral* choir upon more recognisable English lines. Beaumont’s tenure laid great riches for those who came after him, with the hard decisions regarding the future of the Hill, Norman and Beard instrument made during his tenure. The formal separation of boy and girl choristers into two separate (but, in fact, unequal) lines is historic, as it gave St Davids the unique distinction of being the first British cathedral to have girls for their principal line of choristers. Whilst almost guaranteeing the provision of trebles in the short term, the issues regarding the training and retention of boys and their transition into the ‘back row’ of the choir would become a continual concern in the near future. Under Geraint Bowen’s tenure, the choir grew in prestige, potentially unrivalled since the Middle Ages. The death-knell of the Hill, Norman and Beard instrument and its replacement with the Harrison instrument between 1998 and 2000, two successful overseas tours to the United States and one to Australia, the recording of a number of highly regarded CDs for the Nimbus record label, together with a revitalisation of the St Davids Cathedral Festival leading to its nomination for a Royal Philharmonic Society award in 2001 demonstrates the sure footing established, continued and enhanced by Timothy Noon, Alexander Mason, Daniel Cook and Oliver Waterer.

At the start of the 21st century, we saw concerns regarding education provision on the St Davids peninsula, the increase in house prices out-pricing many locally born, and the lack of a wide employment market coupled with the unavoidable geographic challenges inhibiting recruitment of talent and expertise. These are real concerns which need addressing by those who are given the great fortune of calling the cathedral their own. From this study, we can see that a great deal of pragmatism was necessary by each of the Organists in order to achieve their goal. Some were more successful than others in that endeavour. The current arrangements at St Davids ⁵²² seem to suggest a model that

⁵²² Prior to March 2020.

many English cathedrals may need to seriously investigate in the coming years.⁵²³ Delivering seven services per week without imposing on the education of the choristers or tying Vicars Choral into menial occupations to facilitate being available for Evensong has proven its worth. Whilst Peter Boorman's experience of gaining 'commitment' from his choristers proved not wholly successful, any future organist will need to carefully balance the requirements from singers with the singers' goodwill. As many of the choristers do not come from a 'church' background, it is essential that an organist make clear why the need for so great a commitment is crucial – but that must remain balanced, acknowledging that it may not always be a choristership that comes first, and strategic pragmatism required by an organist to ensure a right balance of commitment and flexibility. A supportive cathedral chapter has proven to be a safety net in times of disquiet; whether that can be counted upon in the present and future climate remains one which poses concerns for all musicians, in all cathedrals.

We see, through the organists, the supreme change within church music-making – the evolution from the player/'note-basher' to the trained choir director. A trend can be seen through the twentieth century of the change from near-total practical based qualifications⁵²⁴ to the current trend where post-graduate specialisation in choral direction and/or performance is *de rigueur*.⁵²⁵ The supreme dominance of Oxford and Cambridge as the nursery of cathedral organists becomes ever-increasingly apparent in the latter half of the twentieth century. Further work is needed in assessing the choke-hold that these two academic institutions have within cathedral music, and lead many (the author included) to consider the extent to which this gives organist candidates a 'leg-up' in being shortlisted and appointed. The role of the Royal College of Organists as a validating organisation within cathedral music must receive further questioning, not through any faults in the College itself, but due to the rising necessity for candidates for more junior vacancies being required to possess the Fellowship over the Associateship. It can be argued that this is due to the lack of understanding or knowledge by cathedral chapters and advisors when drawing up specifics for a vacancy of the rigour placed on it being primarily focussed on performance and technicalities related to an instrument, rather than placing it in the context necessary to gain wider choral direction skills.⁵²⁶

Financing a choral foundation remains a negative cost upon cathedral budgets. Savings are difficult to achieve, as they often are based on staffing levels, and this is worsened in larger foundations which have their own schools. It seems that in the post-Covid era, we will see cathedral chapters forced to make serious decisions in how they educate and keep their choristers. For organists and other lay staff, whether the current employment practice of salary plus housing can continue is one that troubles musicians, financiers and government agencies dealing with taxation.

⁵²³ At the time of writing, the financial state of many English cathedrals can be described as 'unsound' or 'perilous'.

⁵²⁴ The submission for the external BMus at Durham which did not require residency, for instance.

⁵²⁵ The Royal Academy of Music MMus in Choral Conducting, or its counterpart at Cambridge.

⁵²⁶ It is important to recognize that the Royal College of Organists themselves are keenly aware of this, awarding a Diploma in Choral Direction (DipChD) separate to the A/FRCO degrees.

A further concern is the remnant of 'freehold' left to organist/directors of music, and ensuring that standards remain at an appropriate level.⁵²⁷ From discussion with colleagues on all sides, there are very few friendly ways of dealing with this – suggestions range from 'term limits' based on the English clergy practice of 'Common Tenure',⁵²⁸ to peer or external review/assessment (which is dual-edged for all parties). The question both musicians and chapters must grasp is how to successfully maintain an agreed standard if a post-holder is to remain in post for two or three successive generations. There are modern instances of standards remaining high and being embarrassingly poor in this scenario. There are, too, questions as to how best to acknowledge issues surround social mobility, UKME, gender and wider diversity within the choral world, particularly in cathedral music-making, which will need wider thought and implementation so as to best reflect both church and nation in the 21st century.

Whilst these will require a 21st century solution, we can look back and know that many of these issues have faced cathedrals in centuries past. From this case study, we see the illicit behaviour of Vicars Choral in the 14th and 15th centuries to Dr Propert's legal challenge to the Chapter in the latter part of the 19th century; Herbert Morris' own battles with his own Vicars Choral at the turn of the last century back to the boy Williams, who took matters into his own hands in the face of attack by Commonwealth soldiers, solutions have been found and the choir has continued in some form. Sometimes, these solutions have to be radical – but as we have seen through our journey through the history of the choral foundation of St Davids Cathedral, there always has been an underlying radical and non-conformist streak in it, whether through encouraging the best musicians of each generation to tread the steep road from Haverfordwest, up and down until reaching Glyn Rhosyn, or encouraging successive generations of choristers to open their minds and discover the kaleidoscope of music sung as part of the daily *opus dei*. As long as this continues, the choral foundation of St Davids Cathedral will remain.

⁵²⁷ This is of concern, as many cathedral statutes create the post-holder an 'Officer' of the Chapter (the body corporate). Lack of understanding, caused by the embrace of business-style modernism, has left cathedrals open to potential legal quandaries if (and when) relationships go sour.

⁵²⁸ which encourages organic movement after a set number of years.

	Held in plurality, with the appointment made from 1238 from among the College of Vicars Choral	
William Warryn	<i>Organist</i>	c. 1490
Nicholas David	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	1492
John Norman	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	1502
...
Lewis Morris	<i>Organist, Master of the Choristers of the College of Saint Mary the Virgin</i>	1549
Thomas Elliot		1563
Thomas F. Tomkins	<i>Master of the Choristers, Organist</i>	1570
William Huett	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	1587
Marmaduke Pardo	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	? – 1617
	<i>Organist</i>	? – 1619
Richard Marrock	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	1617
	Held in plurality, with no identification	1619 - 68
William Pardo	<i>Organist, Master of the Choristers</i>	1668 - 72
	<i>Organist</i>	1673 - c.1704
David George	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	1673
Henry Mordant (I)	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	1697
	<i>Organist</i>	1704
	<i>Vicar Choral</i>	1713
Henry Mordant (II)	<i>Organist, Vicar Choral</i>	1714
Richard Tomkins	<i>Organist and (Junior) Vicar Choral</i>	1719
William Bishop	<i>Organist</i>	1720
Matthew Madox	<i>Vicar Choral, Organist (in tempus)</i>	1725
Henry Williams	<i>Organist</i>	1727
Matthew Philpot	<i>Organist</i>	1734
(alias Phillips)	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	1736
	<i>Resigned Vicar Scholarship, remaining as Organist</i>	1775
	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	
	held in plurality, with no identification	1775
John Day	<i>Vicar Choral</i>	1782
	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	1783
Arthur Richardson	<i>Vicar Choral</i>	1787
	<i>Organist</i>	1792
John Barrett		1826
William Propert	<i>Organist</i>	1851
	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	c.1853
	<i>Resigned as Organist, remaining Vicar Choral</i>	1871 - 1906
Robert Ellis	<i>Organist</i>	1874
William Appleby	<i>Master of the Choristers</i>	1877 – 79
Frederick Garton		1883
D. John D. Codner		1894
Herbert Morris		1896
Joseph Soar		1922

⁵²⁹ For ease, the title 'Organist' is used – prior to unification of the post with that of Master of the Choristers, where both these posts are held will be indicated. Until 1921 the post was held by a member of the College of Vicars Choral but has been solely in the gift of the Dean and Chapter since that date.

⁵³⁰ Watkins Shaw, H. *The Succession of Organists of the Chapel Royal and the Cathedrals of England and Wales from c.1538*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991

Peter Boorman	1954
Sir Nicholas Jackson, Bt.	1977
Malcolm Watts	1985
Kerry Beaumont	1991
Geraint Bowen	1995
Timothy Noon	2001
Alexander Mason	2007
Daniel Cook	2011
Oliver Waterer	2013

**Appendix II List of Precentors of St Davids until 1840 ⁵³¹
and Deans of St Davids post 1840 ⁵³²**

Thomas de Barri	c. 1296
Richard de Mosslewyke	1328
David Barret	1335
Adam Houghton	1339
David Lee	1350
Henry Rhydderch	1383
John Nook	1393
Thomas Wollaston	1413
Huw ap Owain	1437
Richard Machyn	1486
John Hywel	1492
Lewis ap Rhys	1509
Thomas Llwyd	1534
Thomas Young	1558
Thomas Huett	1562
Roger Gyfforde	1591
William Hinton	1596
Griffith Higgs	1631
William Thomas	1660
Richard Watson	1663
John Ellis	1677
Charles Pryse	1693
Hugh Powell	1696
John Davies	1717
John Pember	1733
Joseph Hill	1735
John Morgan	1753
John Jekyll	1775
Francis Wollaston	1777
Richard Richardson	1816
Llewelyn Lewellin	1839
James Allen	1878
Evan Owen Phillips	1895
David Howell	1897
James Allan Smith	1904

⁵³¹ Holding in plurality the Prebendary of Llanbedr-pont-Steffan

⁵³² 'Index of persons,' in *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300-1541: Volume 11, the Welsh Dioceses (Bangor, Llandaff, St Asaph, St Davids)*, ed. B Jones (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1965), 88-96. British History Online, accessed May 8, 2021, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/fasti-ecclesiae/1300-1541/vol11/pp88-96>.

David Watcyn Morgan	1931
Albert Parry	1940
Carlyle (Carl) Witton-Davies	1957
T. Edward ('Eddie') Jenkins	1957
Lawrence Bowen	1972
Gordon Macwilliam	1984
Bertie Lewis	1990
J. Wyn Evans	1994
Jonathan Lean	2009
Sarah Rowland Jones	2018

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