

THE ORGANS, ORGANISTS AND MUSIC OF  
THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST.MARY THE VIRGIN, BRADING, I.W.

By Michael Griffin, ATCL

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M.G. March, 1969

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SECOND EDITION

In this second edition opportunity has been taken to make a limited number of corrections and improvements:

The suggested scheme for tonal modification of the organ has been slightly amended in the light of further consideration concerning the 'economics' of the scheme.

Details of the present Choir and of the present musical policy of the Church have been brought up to date.

Some sections have been 'reset'.

M.G. August, 1969

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

The 1804 Organ case in West End Gallery	cover
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## **BEFORE THE FIRST ORGAN**

### Section 1

Until 1804 the music of this Church was directed by a group of instrumental musicians who led the music from a gallery at the west end of the Church. This gallery is shown on the cover illustration.

The musicians played violins, oboes and bassoons – as shown by these entries from the Churchwarden's Accounts of the period:

- 1790 purchase of 6 bassoon reeds
- 1793 paid for an hautboy (oboe) for use of choir £1. 11. 6d.
- 1796 purchase of violin strings and of hautboy and bassoon reeds 13/-

In 1780 a choir of singers was paid £1. 1. 0d. We do not know if the choir of singers regularly performed with the instrumentalists – they may have been a visiting choir or a choir formed for a special event.

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## THE 1804 ORGAN

## Section 2

The first mention of an organ is in 'Letters Archaeological and Historical Relating to the Isle of Wight' where the Revd. Legh-Richmond is shown to have expressed a strong desire to have an organ installed at Brading. (Legh-Richmond was best known for his book 'Annals of the Poor' and was Brading's Curate-in-charge at this time). His efforts were rewarded when, on December 13, 1804:

A group of subscribers purchased an organ to be lent to the Parish Church. They requested permission from the Vestry that the organ might be put in the gallery. They retained, however, the right to remove it if they felt fit to do so.

The curious conditions attached to the installation of this instrument were probably made in the expectation of strong opposition from the gallery musicians.

As far as can be ascertained, the specification of this one-manual organ was as follows:

open diapason	8
clarabella	8
gamba (tenor C)	8
principal	4
twelfth	2.2/3
fifteenth	2
mixture	III (probably 17-19-22)

If we are correct in assuming that the 'clarabella' was part of the organ at this time this would suggest that the instrument was built by J.C.Bishop of London. Bishop invented this stop and most builders did not use it until many years later than this.

Another possible clue to the builder of this instrument is the fact that Benjamin Flight is believed to have visited the Island to do some work on the organ at Godshill at about this time. With so few organ-building connections at this time it is very likely that the group of subscribers took the opportunity of approaching Flight with their plans for an organ at Brading.

The two most likely solutions seem, therefore, to be either:

- 1) the instrument was built by J.C.Bishop or
- 2) the instrument was built by Benjamin Flight and later altered by J.C.Bishop...

Most of the stops which appear in both the above specification and the present specification (section 4) are still, as far as we know, untouched originals from the 1804 instrument.

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## THE 1864 REBUILD

## Section 3

In 1864 a contract was awarded to Messrs. Forster and Andrews of Hull to rebuild the organ at a cost of £276. The probable specification at this time is as follows:

<u>GREAT</u>		<u>SWELL</u>		<u>PEDAL</u>	
open diapason	8	open diapason(tc)	8	bourdon	16
clarabella	8	dulciana(tc)	8	violin	16
gamba(tc)	8	stopped diapason	8	spare	
principal	4	flauto traverso	4	spare	
twelfth	2.2/3	oboe	8		
fifteenth	2	spare		swell to great	
mixture(17-19-22)	III	spare		great to pedal	
				swell to pedal	
				trigger swell pedal	
				3 comb'n pedals	
				Compass 54/30 notes	
				Wind 2¾ inches	

### NOTES ON F. and A. SPECIFICATION

- 1) The 'spares' were probably for swell principal and cornopean, and pedal bass flute and violoncello.
  - 2) Although F. and A. quote for no swell principal on their order book, this is such an unusual omission that one can assume that this may have been supplied from discarded pipes of the old instrument.
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## REPAIRS 1904 – 1957

## Section 4

No further work was done to the organ until 1904 when a quotation from Messrs. Scadding of Newport was accepted:

To repair and clean the organ. To amend its power and compass (probably changing manual compass from 54 to 56) £89. 18. 0d.

It was probably at this time that the great keraulophon was inserted in place of the twelfth – a most unfortunate change!

The organ was again brought into use on December 25, 1904 and completed on January 15, 1905. The completion was marked by a Recital given by Mr.Scadding himself.

In 1932 Messrs.W.Teague & Co. of Ryde submitted a quotation for £26.10. 0d. for repairing Oboe stop and carrying out other minor modifications.

In 1948 Mr.H.Richards (for E.C.Bishop of Winchester) quoted as follows:

- |                                                                |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| (1) Restoration of the organ without alteration of pedal organ | £90 |
| (2) Conversion of the pedal organ to pneumatic action          | £78 |
| (3) Other improvements                                         | £60 |

Items 1 and 2 were accepted and the firm also installed discus electric blowing apparatus. This work was done as a memorial to the Revd. Hampton Weeks.

In 1957 a quotation for £250 was accepted from Messrs.Hill, Norman and Beard to restore the organ and to re-pallet the great and swell soundboards.

THE SPECIFICATION OF THE ORGAN IS NOW:

<u>GREAT</u>		<u>SWELL</u>		<u>PEDAL</u>	
open diapason	8	open diapason(tc)	8	violin	16
clarabella	8	keraulophon(tc)	8	bourdon	16
dulciana	8	stopped diapason	8	spare	
gamba(tc)	8	principal(aa)	4		
principal	4	flauto traverso	4	3 couplers	
fifteenth	2	oboe	8	3 comb'n pedals	
mixture(19-22)	II	tremulant(1963)		trigger swell	
				compass 56/30	
				Wind: 2¾ inches	

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## A SCHEME FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT

### Section 5

As it now stands, the organ is mechanically in fairly good condition and is, on the whole, tonally very effective. There is, however some needless duplication of similar stops and no complete chorus structure on the swell or pedal organs. A few tonal modifications would make the instrument immeasurably more effective.

A quotation has been received which provides for necessary work to be carried out in manageable stages. The total cost of a thorough mechanical restoration would be about £750 and the tonal modifications would total about £600. The tonal modifications can be broken down into 4 stages (average £150 each) which could be tackled separately.

If the whole work is carried out the specification will then be:

<u>GREAT</u>		<u>SWELL</u>		<u>PEDAL</u>	
open diapason	8	stopped diapason	8	violon	16
dulciana	8	keraulophon(tc)	8	bourdon	16
clarabella	8	principal(aa)	4		
principal	4	gemshorn	2	3 couplers	
flauto traverso	4	larigot(tc)	1.1/3	3 comb'n pedals	
fifteenth	2	trompette	8	balanced swell pedal	
mixture(22-26-29)	III			compass 56/30	
				Wind: 2¾ inches	

It would also be highly desirable to enlarge the pedal by using the bottom 12 violon (wood) pipes, and adding 42 new open metal pipes to provide the following pedal organ:

bourdon	16	(wood)
violon(open metal from 8'C)	16	(wood/metal)
violoncello – extension	8	(metal)
fifteenth – extension	4	(metal)

This important modification is being seriously borne in mind but is certainly not of immediate financial practicability.

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## ORGANISTS FROM 1888 UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME (1969)

## Section 6

circa

1888-1901 W.T.Russell – ex S.Philip's, Kensington  
Salary £35 per annum (in 1820 it was £26. 10/- P.A.)

circa

1901-1916 J.W.Rogerson – local schoolmaster  
salary from 1900 was £20 per annum.

1916-1937 Sebastian Mellish  
salary in 1937 was £36 per annum

1937-1948 Mr.Osborn

1948-1951 J.Ward

1951-1953 Mr.Leighfield

1953 the Revd.Shepherd

1953 Miss E.Black, A.R.C.O.

1954-1955 Mr.Charlesworth

1955-1957 Mr.Bennett

1957-1960 Brian Schollar

1960-1961 Michael Griffin

1961-1963 Wilfred Johnson, L.L.C.M.(assted.E.Hutchinson,L.R.A.M)

1963-1965 Michael Griffin  
deputy organist – Evelyn Pym  
deputy choirmaster – E Hutchinson, L.R.A.M.

1965-1967 Elsa Scott  
Deputy organist – R.H.Toogood

1968- Michael Griffin, A.T.C.L.

The frequent appearances and disappearances of the author was explained by his working at Southampton (1961-1963) and being a student at Portsmouth College of Education (1964-1967)!

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**Extracts from contemporary documents**

- 1888 Choir Practice Friday evenings at 8pm.  
The choir, Organ and Organist were the subject of a separate account which was made to balance by the periodic taking of collections.
- 1889 The Cathedral Psalter was introduced.  
18 copies were purchased at a total cost of 22/-.  
Adult Choristers supped in the Town Hall at the invitation of the Vicar (there were 21 present).  
A tea for the choirboys was given by Mrs. Summers – the Vicar's wife.
- 1900 The vicar is to consider the possibility of singing the psalms at morning service.
- 1901 Recital in aid of School Building Fund.
- 1908 Two new settings by J.W.Rogerson introduced.

Under Sebastian Mellish, the Three Choirs Festival was a regular feature of the musical life of Brading, Bembridge and St.Helens.

The following seem to typify the sort of music performed by the Choir at this time:

Te Deum	Stanford in B flat.
Magnificat etc	J.Stribling (sometime deputy Organist), J.W.Rogerson, Walmisley in D minor.
Anthems by	Stainer, Smart, Mendelssohn and Handel.

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**CHORAL AND ORCHESTRAL SOCIETIES FROM 1890****Section 8**

- 1890 Choral Society proposed – W.T.Russell to conduct.
- 1893 Choral Society performed 'The Wreck of the Hesperus'.
- 1898 Choral Society performed 'St.John's Eve' (Cowen).
- 1908 Orchestral Society performed at Carol Service.
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## SOME EVENTS IN 1950

## Section 9

### 1) 800<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY – JULY, 1950

(a) Choral and Orchestral Recital directed by Miss E.Black, A.R.C.O.

(b) Evensong – Hymn; We Love The Place, O God

Psalm 84

Hymns: Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven  
Christ is Our Cornerstone  
O God Our Help in Ages Past

### 2) BROADCAST – 26 February, 1950 at 7.45 p.m.

Combined Choirs, directed by Miss E.Black

Hymns: Lead Us, Heavenly Father

Psalm: 143

Hymns: Lord, When We Bend before Thy Throne  
Glorious is thy Name, O Lord

### 3) ORDINATION – October 8, 1950 at 10.15 a.m.

By Dr. W.L.S.Fleming (now Bishop of Norwich)

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## THE PRESENT CHOIR

## Section 10

Organist and Choirmaster Michael Griffin, A.T.C.L.

Cantor Edward Hutchinson, L.R.A.M.

boys 5, girls 6

adult sopranos 7

altos 2, tenors 2, basses 3

The choir is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music and performs a wide range of Choral music in Recitals as well as in the regular services. The following list is representative of its repertoire:

Masses Martin Shaw, Missa Seraphica, Merbecke, Statham, Peter Burton in F, Allegri Sanctus, L.K.White, M.Griffin 'Missa Brevis'.

Nunc Dimmittis Bairstow, Parry, William, Rogerson, Moeran.

Anthems by Bach, Mozart, Farrant, Morley, Bullock, Pearsall etc.

At the time of publication we shall be preparing Malcolm Williamson's Harvest Thanksgiving and Bach's 'Sleepers Wake!'.

The Choral Services are normally Parish Eucharist at 10.30am and Evensong at 6.30pm and the Full Choir Practice is on Friday at 7.30pm – new Choristers are always welcome.

A notable event this year was the R.S.C.M. Choirs' Festival (21 June, 1969) when about 190 Choristers sang under the baton of Peter Stevenson, B.Mus., F.R.C.O. with M.Griffin as organist. The service included Healey Willan in Eflat Evening Service and Anthem: Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones by J.V.Peters.

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## THE BRADING FESTIVAL

## Section 11

During 1969 the Church at Brading was responsible for presenting the first annual Arts' Festival under the title 'Brading 69'. More than fifty musicians took part in this event and over a hundred paintings were offered for exhibition by local schools.

The main events were as follows:

April 25	Organ Recital by Michael Griffin, (Music by Bach, Walther, Buxtehude, Rheinberger, Gigout etc)
May 21	Music by Edward Hutchinson (baritone) and M.G (organ) (Music by Campion, Bach, R.Strauss, Bliss, Bingham etc)
June 25	Margaret Lee (soprano) and M.G (organ) (Music by Handel, Bach, Dvorak, Caccini, Milner etc)
July 30	Grieg Psalms and Vivaldi Gloria by Brading Festival Choir (soloists: M.Lee, F.Hewson, B.Bridges, E.Hutchinson)
Augt 20	Music by Gordon/Vivian Ellis and Angela Brice (vocalists) Including Mozart Exsultate Jubilate and Bach Cantata 32
August	Midday Organ Recitals for Visitors and Art Exhibition
Sept 3	Organ Concerti by Haydn and Handel (D.Tallent, Leader – Michael Griffin, organ)
Oct 8	Choral Music by J.S.Bach and Malcolm Williamson Augmented Choir of Church.

Next Year's Festival will include a concert in April by the Choir of Maidstone Grammar School (Kent). At the moment we are considering the possibility of some sort of subscription plan to enable us to engage some professional performers, for next year's Festival.

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## A LIST OF OTHER ISLE OF WIGHT ORGANS BY FORSTER AND ANDREWS

## APPENDIX A

Barton, St.Paul	Bembridge Holy Trinity	Bonchurch St.Boniface
Calbourne Church	Newport Congregational	Newport S.Thomas
Newport Wesleyan	Newport Unitarian	Ryde Congregational
Sandown Bible Christians	Sandown Christchurch	Sandown Congregational
Shanklin S.Paul	Shanklin Winchester House	Thorley Church
Ventnor Hospital	Ventnor Holy Trinity	Ventnor S.Catherine

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## APPENDIX B

Carisbrooke Castle	Churchwardens Accounts and Quarter Sett Books 1748-1834 (former in 3 volumes)
Brading	Vestry and P.C.C. Minute Books from 1900 Church Magazines 1888-1910 (3 volumes) Engraving of West Gallery Organ (c.1860) 'Settings' by Rogerson and Stribling
Ryde Library	Letters Archaeological and Historical Rel/I.W.
The Author	Details of 1864 Rebuild of Organ – letter from Laurence Elvin, F.R.Hist.S. of Lincoln.

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