

United Parish of East Harptree with West Harptree and Hinton Blewett

ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER

This United Parish, with three mediaeval church buildings (used in rotation) and a strong musical tradition, is seeking a new Organist and Choirmaster to lead the Parish Choir and accompany services.

The post becomes vacant in September 2011 upon the retirement of the present organist, David Nash, after ten years in post. The Parish is unusual for a rural parish in having had a strong choral tradition for more than 25-years. This provides opportunities for a church musician who wishes not only to play the organ but also to explore parts of the mainstream Anglican choral repertoire with a mixed choir.



The musical style of the Parish is rooted in the Anglican choral tradition in a way that is responsive to the needs of a thriving mixed-age congregation. There is a single sung service each Sunday, usually a Common Worship Eucharist to a congregational sung setting written specially for the Parish some 15 years ago. One Sunday per month there is a Family Eucharist using alternative contemporary congregational settings. On one other Sunday, the sung Eucharist is replaced by a Family Service. Musical support for the Family Service

can be provided by several experienced musicians from the Parish, thus providing the Organist and Choirmaster with a Sunday off duty each month, although if the postholder wishes to play the organ and lead the music for this service he/she would be most welcome to do so.

There is one monthly BCP Choral Evensong, sung throughout by the choir, occasionally with a special setting of the canticles. The choir also sings services on the major Festivals and has participated in special diocesan and deanery services and in the Diocesan Choral Festival in Wells Cathedral.

The Choir is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music, and some of the younger members have in the past been awarded RSCM Bronze and Silver Awards. Two members of the choir are able to provide accompaniment when required, either for rehearsal or occasionally to permit the Organist and Choirmaster to conduct; one of these is an experienced organist who is also willing to accompany more complex works and deputise on an occasional basis. The number of regular choir members has fallen slightly in recent years, but still numbers around ten each week (all four parts) and rises to up to 20 at major Festivals. The new Organist and Choirmaster will be encouraged to recruit new choir members from the local community.

There are a number of other musically talented people in the Parish, some of whom are able to play the organ or accompany services on piano; there would be no difficulty in covering Sunday services during the Organist and Choirmaster's holidays. The choir takes a holiday from church singing during August.

The United Parish is committed to developing the role of music in worship in new ways. It is hoped that the new Organist and Choirmaster would play an active part in this.

The three parish churches vary in size and acoustics. Each church possesses an organ, maintained in a good state of repair. The organ in East Harptree is a Vowles two manual pipe organ that is advantageously positioned in a west gallery. It was fully overhauled and extended by Keith Jones in 2009; a testament to the commitment to music that exists in this Parish. West Harptree is served by a two manual instrument built by Sweetland of Bath. It was fully restored to its original state some 20 years ago. The latter organ has a historic pipe organ certificate and the full specifications of both instruments are listed in the National Pipe Organ Register. In Hinton Blewett (the smallest of the buildings) there is a two manual electronic organ (with full radiating pedal board). East Harptree church also has a piano and the Parish possesses an electronic keyboard which may be used in any of the churches

This is a lively and interesting Parish, which has been United successfully for over 30 years. The total population of the United Parish is approx. 1,400. Unlike many united benefices, our congregation and choir usually worships in each village in turn, Sunday by Sunday. Our usual Sunday attendance is approx 45, with a considerable increase on major occasions. We have a children and young people's group which meets on Fridays and we are keen to involve them in the worship of the Church as fully as possible.



There is much secular musical talent in the community. Members of the Choir form a nucleus for *ad hoc* secular singing in the village and several choristers are enthusiastic members of the Chew Valley Choral Society. An amateur orchestra, the East Harptree Orchestra, meets each fortnight and local people of all ages play in other local groups. Our Church School has also developed a strong musical tradition in recent years. Our churches host concerts from time to time. There is an active group of bellringers in East Harptree, and the bells in the tower of East Harptree church are particularly fine, attracting ringers from far and wide.

The Parish is located some 10 miles from Wells, 12 miles from Bristol and 15 miles from Bath, on the northern slopes of the Mendip Hills. It is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which is very popular with many Bristol and Bath commuters. Some of our congregation come from the wider surrounding area, drawn (we believe) by the warmth of welcome they find among us.



The PCC is financially solvent and pays its full share to the Common Fund of the Diocese. The three church buildings (St Laurence in E Harptree, The Blessed Virgin Mary in W Harptree and St Margaret in Hinton Blewett) are all in sound structural order.



The Choir of the United Parish of East Harptree with West Harptree and Hinton Blewett



Appendix

Refurbishment the organ at St Laurence's Church, East Harptree 2008



The Organ

David Nash

The organ in St Laurence's Church, East Harptree, is mainly the work of W G Vowles of Bristol, being mentioned in a document prepared by him during his lifetime but not published until after his death. Evidence exists that some of the current pipes, pre-dating 1780s, were included in a previous instrument belonging to The Rector, and then to a certain Captain R J Lawrence. According to the maker's plate the organ was originally installed in 1883. It was located in the place now occupied by the Lady Chapel. A missing section of the chancel screen bears evidence of where the facade for the display pipes projected into the nave.



Chancel Screen

The instrument was moved by Percy Daniel to an especially constructed balcony in 1926. The original casework was shortened so as to fit the organ between the west wall and a roof truss. The horizontal swell box shutters that now open to the back wall of the church were not changed. In 1973, Percy Daniel added a rank of Fifteenth 2ft pipes to the Swell where space had probably originally been provided for an Oboe 8ft, and provided a balanced swell pedal system with vertical shutters still opening to the back wall.



The organ, obscured by a roof truss from 1926 to 2008

Graffiti has been inscribed by generations of children on the back panel of the organ who pumped the instrument by hand prior to the introduction of electricity.

Recognising that the organ would benefit from an overhaul, Dr Andrew Day (Organist & Master of the Junior Choir) started an organ fund in 1998. By 2006, the monies collected into this fund enabled quotations to be provided for refurbishing and improving the organ. After independent assessment by Dr Christopher Kent (Head of Music at University of Reading) and an independent review by Jonathan Price (UK representative of Kuhn Organ Builders Ltd, Switzerland) an order for this work was developed by David Nash (Organist & Choirmaster of the Adult Choir) who project managed refurbishment undertaken by Keith Jones in 2008. The costs of refurbishment have been met by an anonymous benefactor.

Refurbishment included providing horizontal shutters at the front of the Swell Box so that the sound is projected into the nave rather than towards the back wall, tonal improvement, correction to the positioning of the swell pedal and moving the facade to its rightful position in front of the roof truss. The object of these changes was to make the organ a more suitable instrument for accompanying congregational singing, improve the playability of certain pedal notes, and to enhance its appearance.

The refurbished organ was dedicated to Almighty God on 16 November 2008 by the Rural Dean, Revd Jan Knott.

Specification

Great

Open Diapason	8ft	(1883)	
Dulciana	8ft	(1883)	[1]
Principal	4ft	(Pre 1780)	[2]
Mixture	15 19 22	(2008)	

Swell

Lieblich Gedackt	8ft	(1854)	[1][3]
Viole	8ft	(1883)	[1][4]
Flute	4ft	(2008)	
Fifteenth	2ft	(1973)	

Pedal

Bourdon	16ft	(1883)	[5]
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Couplers

Swell to Great, Swell to Great Super, Swell to Pedal, and Great to Pedal.

- [1] The bass pipes of the Swell Lieblich Gedackt 8ft are borrowed to provide the bottom octave notes of both the Great Dulciana 8ft and Swell Viole 8ft.
- [2] Moved from Swell in 2008 before which it spoke a semitone lower
- [3] Made from a Stopped Diapason 8ft, which before 1780 spoke a whole tone lower.
- [4] Inscribed "Hor" [for Horn Diapason].
- [5] Two octaves.



Pipework

Conditions of Employment.

The post is for an initial three year period, renewable by agreement, with an initial six month probationary period.

Salary is paid at the RSCM rate for a Director of Music (Category B) adjusted pro rata depending on whether or not the postholder elects to play for the monthly family service. The annual salary (fulltime) for 2011 is in the range £2,050 to £2,620 depending on previous experience. Expenses subject to negotiation.

The post-holder may take six weeks leave each year, which will normally include the month of August (when the choir is also off duty). Leave dates will be agreed in advance with the Priest in Charge. The post-holder may also take one whole Sunday off duty each month if he/she elects not to play for the monthly Family Service.

The post-holder will be accountable to the Priest in Charge.

Duties of the post are

- Organ playing and musical direction for services;
- Weekly rehearsal of Parish Choir;
- Preparation of music for services as appropriate;
- Selection of hymns, anthems and other music in collaboration with the Priest in Charge;
- Preparation of necessary schedules for choristers;
- Membership of the Worship Committee;
- Advice to the PCC on music in the Parish, including attendance at PCC meetings when appropriate.

The postholder will be given a contract of employment as recommended by the RSCM, to be signed by the applicant and the Priest in Charge.