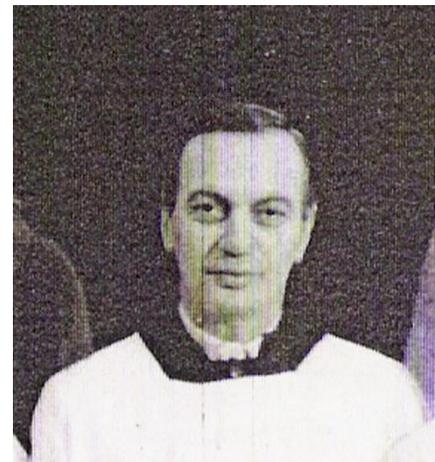


Edward Bloomfield, Director of Music Jan 1959 - Dec 1961

Ted Bloomfield was educated at Bec School, Upper Tooting, from 1931-38. He obtained his ARCO while still at school. He studied at Trinity College of Music from 1939-40 and, after Army service, from 1949-54. During Army service Ted was for some years organist at the King's Chapel, Gibraltar. After demobilisation he taught part-time at Bec School, joining the full-time staff in 1954. Ted had to fund himself through music college as funding from his Father was not forthcoming - his Father disapproved of him studying music, wanting him to study Classics instead.



On the departure of the Head of Music he was appointed to this post, and maintained this position when Bec merged with Hillcroft to form the Ernest Bevin School. He wrote three comic operas for school productions, to libretti by the Classics Master, T.W. Mellhuish. He retired at the age of 60. His church appointments, in addition to St. Alban's Holborn, included St. Barnabas Pimlico, St. John's Upper Norwood, St. Mark's Notting Hill, St. Thomas Durban, the Holy Apostles Pimlico and Holy Trinity Upper Tooting. He moved to the North East of England in 1980 and became organist of All Saints Lanchester, which post he held till his death.

Ted regularly conducted amateur choirs and orchestras, notably the Cecilian Consort, the Streatham Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, and the Avalon Light Operatic Society. He was also associated with Durham Cathedral Choir School, where he was visiting piano teacher.

Ted, aged 39, arrived at St. Alban's when the work of rebuilding the church was underway. But, by this time, the choir had all but fallen by the wayside. Ted brought a few boys from Bec School with him to form the nucleus of a new choir. There were two midweek choir practices. Ted took enormous pride in his choir. He really cared that his singers should achieve their full potential, and that his choir should give their best possible performance to the glory of God. Coupled with his serious approach, though, was a terrific sense of humour.

The parish magazines for 1959 are missing, so sadly there is little information about Ted's first year at S. Alban's. We can guess though that it was a time of great excitement and anticipation. Ted's appointment was perhaps an indication that St. Alban's felt the time had come to reclaim its musical heritage.

For services, the choir sang from the balcony to the ground floor hall of the old social centre, and was accompanied on an electronic organ. The organ hissed and spat, and was referred to by the choir as "the chip fryer". Because of this, and Ted's great love

of polyphonic music, much of the repertoire was unaccompanied. Ted also had a great love for and knowledge of plainsong. Given this, and his preference for High Church ritual, St. Alban's suited him very well.

The chapel, Little St. Alban's, in the old Social Centre, faced West, the door being at the East end. The choir processed in (the men robed), past the back of the congregation, and up a flight of wooden steps onto the stone balcony, in one long line.

1960

Patronal Festival, described by our Vicar, Fr. Startup: 'We began with a glorious pilgrimage to the shrine of our Patron Saint in S. Alban's Abbey on Saturday, June 18th. This year we received permission to sing the English Litany in procession through the Abbey and I hear that one member of the Chapter was so impressed by the singing of our choir that they may find themselves asked to sing at another function.

'On the Sunday our little church was completely packed out three times, at the 9.30 Mass, then for High Mass and for Evensong. After High Mass there was our Annual Parish Luncheon when I had to give some sad news. Owing to the present enormous amount of building going on in London, our contractors are finding a difficulty in obtaining sufficient skilled craftsmen. They are doing their best to overcome this but the fact remains that the restoration of our church is behind schedule. I had arranged with the Bishop of London that the re-consecration of the church should take place on Feb. 4th. 1961 but I have had to ask him to postpone this. For the moment no definite date is fixed but the contractors assure me that we shall be in our new church by S. Alban's Day next year.'

Ted wrote in the parish magazine in July: 'When I arrived at S Alban's 18 months ago I found a very small but keen group of choristers....I feel that I must pay tribute to that loyal band who filled the breach so willingly during the days when there was a shortage of choristers. Most of them are still with us, and they have worked very hard indeed in our attempts to raise the standard of our music. We have been fortunate enough to secure the services of good leaders in each of the four parts, around which to build our choir.'

In November Ted took the St Alban's Choir to sing in the Croydon Music Festival. They entered the Church Choir category, and sang R. Farrant's *Hide not thou thy face/Call to remembrance* and Vaughan Williams' *The blessed Son of God*. The music was memorised, which was remarked upon by one of the judges, Leslie Reagan. He said it demonstrated that the choir was able to give its full attention to their conductor's beat. They won first prize - the Professor George Oldroyd Memorial Trophy. (This was a very fitting trophy for the choir to have won, as George Oldroyd had been St. Alban's Organist and Choirmaster from 1919 to 1920.)

1961

Holy Week. The Vicar writes: ‘We probably could have squeezed in a few more for the Good Friday Liturgy but it would have been very difficult. And what glorious music we had from the choir. Many hours of patient rehearsal must have been devoted to such a wonderful result. As I said at the Parochial Meeting, at the moment I feel we are rather like an athlete about to take his part in an important race. For us the tape goes up on June 17th. All I dare say is that the team is most encouraging - staff, church officers, choirmaster and choir, congregation. Please pray that I may not fail you.’

MUSIC for the GREAT WEEK

17th JUNE. THE CONSECRATION DAY.

The Solemn Pontifical Mass will be the “Aeterna Christi Munera” by Palestrina.

Before the Communion hymn the choir will sing the motet “Sacerdotes Domini” by Byrd.

18th JUNE. TRINITY III.

11 a.m. An orchestra will accompany this Mass and Mr. Arnold Richardson will be playing the organ; he will play a Handel Organ Concerto with the orchestra after the Mass.

Mass: Mozart in B flat

Motet: “How lovely are thy dwellings” by Brahms.

6 p.m. Canticles - Weelkes

Te Deum - Stanford in B flat.

22nd JUNE. S. ALBAN'S DAY.

12 noon. “Masse for Four Voyces” - Byrd.

6.30 p.m. Canticles - Holmes (Fauxbourdon)

Anthem: “I was glad” - Bloomfield.

Saturday June 17th. THE DAY OF CONSECRATION, described by the Vicar in the *Bourne Echo*: ‘Even at 9.30 the congregation had begun to arrive and the first trickle became a steady stream.....At 10.25 a few seats were left and so those who had no tickets were admitted and the church was completely full....10.40 - a procession of nearly 100 priests entered the church and was followed a few minutes later by the Mayor of Holborn attended by Councillors.’

Sunday June 18th: ‘At 11 o’clock came the Solemn Mass in the presence of our dear Bishop of Stepney, who also preached. An orchestra accompanied the music, Mr. Arnold Richardson played the organ and it was easy to shed a tear when the fanfare greeted the consecration in the Mass.

‘Then came the next thrill of the nine days. Somewhat earlier than I had expected him, but all the more welcome, there arrived Father Henry Ross. Nearly 45 years ago he came to S. Alban’s as Vicar and it is hard to believe that in two months’ time he will be 97. Although he is very alert, his sight is not too good and so he preached without notes.

‘The nine days brought us many happy memories and they had been helped by the glorious music, and again the Lord had provided in the person of Mr. Bloomfield and the choir he had gathered together and inspired.’

The consecration service was recorded, and two 10” vinyl LP records were produced, one of music, one mainly of the spoken parts of the service. The music LP includes music from the following day also. Ted’s empathy with plainsong is very evident - the ebb and flow of the plainsong echoing around the new church is a joy. The trumpet fanfares, especially at the elevation of the host and the chalice, are stunning. It seems likely that they were composed by Ted. The orchestra (which performed at Mass the day after the Consecration) is slick and polished, and the singers produce a gentle, warm, well-blended sound. Brahms “How lovely are thy dwellings” is serene - all anyone could wish for to mark the end of the 20 year wait for the rebuilding of the church.

July: Mr. Arnold Richardson (Organist & Choirmaster 1936-41) is recording a recital on the new organ in our church and this will be broadcast on the Home Service on Sunday, July 30th at 11.06 p.m.

ORGAN RECITALS

A series of THURSDAY Recitals at 6.15 p.m. to inaugurate the new Organ

21st September

Organ Recital - Arnold Richardson

This recital was reviewed by Adrian Gaster. He wrote: ‘Mr. Arnold Richardson is an artist of catholic tastes, but one who seems to have a natural affinity of mind with the Romantics. His playing of Liszt’s Prelude and Fugue on B.A.C.H. was quite brilliant and showed that though organ builders still like their instruments to be capable of a lot of noise, a true artist will only rarely take advantage of such power. Even more impressive was Mr. Richardson’s tender and sensitive handling of Franck’s *Prelude, Fugue and Variation*. Mr. Richardson put the instrument through its paces with a programme that ranged from Couperin to Gigout and apart from Vierne’s *Clair de*

Lune, all copies of which ought to be ceremoniously burnt in Trafalgar Square, all the music was interesting and well-played.’

5th October

Demonstration Recital - “How it works” EDWARD BLOOMFIELD

(assisted by Michael Foley, Assistant Organist., St. Alban’s Holborn)

19th October

Organ Recital - Harold Darke

Organist of S. Michael’s, Cornhill

2nd November

Organ Recital - Margaret Cobb

Organist of St. Lawrence, Jewry, E.C.2

16th November

CECILIAN CONSORT

Conductor - Edward Bloomfield

Organ - Michael Foley

Choral and organ items, including first London performance of a work by Clifford Curwen

30th November

Recital of Early English Music

Michael Parker - Counter-tenor with Harpsichord, Viola da Gamba etc.

At the weekend following the Cecilian Consort concert the choir had a celebration lunch at the “Cheshire Cheese” pub.

School Nativity Play

Monday & Wednesday, December 11th and 13th at 7p.m.

‘The music has some special items of interest - in particular, the *Magnificat* and Psalms 23 and 84 in a new translation and to music by Gelineau, a setting of the *Nunc Dimittis* by our own Organist, Edward Bloomfield, and Psalm 150 and the *Sanctus* from Geoffrey Beaumont’s Folk Mass - a completely “modern” setting with a jazz flavour.’

December: Stop Press. ‘It is with many regrets that I have to announce the resignation of our Organist, Mr. E. Bloomfield. His place will be taken for the time being by Mr. Michael Foley as from the first Sunday in the New Year. Space this

month is rather restricted and so I cannot say more except how much we regret Mr. Bloomfield's departure and welcome Mr. Foley.'

Ted Bloomfield died on Easter Monday, 23 April, 1984. A memorial service was held on his birthday, 10th June, at Holy Trinity Church, Upper Tooting. The music included a Kyrie, Sanctus and Benedictus composed by Ted in 1977.

Music performed at St. Alban's under Edward Bloomfield

Bloomfield	Faux Bourdons on Tonus Peregrinus I was glad
Brahms	How lovely are thy dwellings
Byrd	Mass for 3 voices Mass for 4 voices Sacerdotes Domini
Casciolini	Mass
Holmes	Faux Bourdons
Morley	Faux Bourdons
Mozart	Mass in B Flat
Palestrina	Missa Aeternana Christi Munera
Parry	I was glad
Plainsong	Missa Orbis Factor Missa Seraphica
Shaw, Martin	Anglican Folk Mass
Tallis	Faux Bourdons
Weelkes	Evening Canticles
Wesley	Lead me, Lord

This list is certain to be incomplete, given that some parish magazines are missing, and that the magazine at that time did not always include the monthly music list.

