

## XII

The Hawks Family and the Progress of Church Music  
on Tyneside before the Oxford Movement*Paul Gailiunas*

## SUMMARY

*The early nineteenth century was a time of rapid change in all aspects of society, including devotional practice in the Church of England, and the music in churches reflected this. The vestry accounts of St Mary's, Gateshead, are particularly detailed, and, taken with some other evidence, provide some insight into the development of church music on Tyneside.*

## INTRODUCTION

IN HIS NOVELS, especially *Under the Greenwood Tree*, Thomas Hardy presents a picture of church choirs, which included instrumentalists, continuing a tradition dating from the early eighteenth century until removed by zealous clergy inspired by the Oxford Movement, and replaced by an organist with a choir in the chancel, rather than a singing-gallery at the west end of the church. Christopher Turner<sup>1</sup> has observed that, while it has some validity, this picture obscures a much more complicated reality.

The parish churches around the river Tyne reflect many aspects of the national situation around the beginning of the nineteenth century. The ancient parish organisation in the towns was unable to cope with the demands of a rapidly increasing population, and non-conformity, in particular Methodism, was growing in popularity. It was not enough for the established church to provide more new buildings, it had to encourage people into them, and involve them once they were there. Music had an important role to play, and there were some strongly held views about what was appropriate for worship that did not always coincide with the practice in some churches, but conflict was more likely to be with the ambitions and musical aspirations of the wealthy, rather than the conservatism of a rural church band. Even away from the main centres, the villages of the North East had a significant industrial aspect at quite an early date, and local choirs do not seem to be like those described by Hardy.

## GATESHEAD PARISH AND THE HAWKS FAMILY

In Northumberland and Durham, unlike the standard practice in the rest of the country, where every male rate-payer had the right to vote, the parish vestry usually consisted of a limited number (often twenty four) of members, either hereditary or co-opted for life, known as a select vestry. In Gateshead the 'four-and-twenty' had appointed the parish officers, and were responsible for much of the administration of the parish, although their power had started to diminish by the end of the eighteenth century, and by 1821 their main function, poor relief, was constituted on a different basis.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the parishes in London also had select vestries, and in discussing them Temperley comments that they tended to be dominated by the rich and aristocratic, often adopting paternalistic attitudes, sometimes with beneficial effects, but they tended to run the church for the benefit of their own class, at the expense of the poorer worshippers. As far as church music was concerned, they held a patrician view of its function, paying professionals to provide elegant music for the congregation to listen to, and discouraging the traditional congregational singing.<sup>3</sup>

In many respects this reflects the situation in Gateshead at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the Hawks family being particularly influential. The vestry book lists Robert Shafto Hawks and his father as members of the four-and-twenty in 1809 along with his brother, John, as vestry clerk.

Sir Robert Shafto Hawks (1768–1840) was a joint owner and London agent of a very prosperous, and expanding, iron and steel manufacturing business which he had inherited with his brothers, George and John, on the death of their father, William Hawks, son of its founder, on the 10 December 1810.<sup>4</sup> Robert Shafto Hawks is listed as a woollen draper in 'Battle-bank' (Bottle Bank, Gateshead) in 1790,<sup>5</sup> and as a woollen draper and hosier, Church St., Gateshead in 1801.<sup>6</sup> Even as late as 1824 Sir R. S. Hawks is listed as a woollen draper in Sandhill, Newcastle.<sup>7</sup> In addition, a rather confused account, printed in 1889, probably based on company folklore, identifies him as an early owner of Felling Shore paper mill.<sup>8</sup> He was knighted by the Prince Regent in April 1817.

David Shafto Hawks (born 16 February 1791), the elder of Sir Robert's two sons, was blind, and had been something of a prodigy, having performed the service on the organ in Gateshead church when he was only seven years old.<sup>9</sup> A set of marches, composed when he was nine, was published shortly afterwards, dedicated to 'his father, Major Commandant of the Gateshead Loyal Volunteers'. The hand-written inscription on the front of the copy held in Newcastle Central Library reads,

The Author's most respectfull Compts to his Master Mr. Thompson whose Instructions in the Rudiments of Musical Science have so materially led to this his first Composition.

It appears (from the hand) to be written by his father. Mr Thompson is Thomas Thompson, organist of St Nicholas, Newcastle, from 1795 until his death in 1834.<sup>10</sup> The title page includes the following note:

The Major part of the following Pieces, were composed during the short time the Young Author recieved [sic] the Instructions of Mr Shield, who has also directed him in the Modulations of a Sonata for the Piano Forte, which will shortly be submitted to the eye of the Publick.

William Shield was a celebrated musician, born locally, who became Master of the King's Music, and is buried in Westminster Abbey. He is best known for his theatre music,<sup>11</sup> but he also published two musical text-books.

Sir Robert's other son, William (born 22 January 1799), entered the church, becoming curate of Gateshead, then the first vicar of St John's, Gateshead Fell in 1825. He published a book of hymn tunes, *Hymnarium*, in 1837.

#### THE ORGAN AND ORGANISTS AT ST MARY'S, GATESHEAD

Like the churches in Newcastle, St Mary's, Gateshead, had an organ at quite an early date. The churchwardens' accounts include

An Account of Money disbursed for and towards the Building and furnishing of the new Organ in the Parish Church of St. Maries in Gateshead. Begun 2 July 1672.<sup>12</sup>

The builder was Roger Preston.<sup>13</sup> It is not clear if there had been an earlier one.

By the nineteenth century the organ had deteriorated, and entries in the Vestry Book<sup>14</sup> (16 January 1820) record a meeting of the inhabitants, convened by public notice to hear a report from Mr. A. A. Nicholls of London (organ builder) that the existing organ was not worth repairing since it was in so decayed and serious a state, and they had agreed to purchase a new one for a cost of not more than £500, to be raised by subscription. If that proved inadequate pew rents were to be used. A committee was set up, consisting of the rector, Rev. J. Collinson, the churchwardens, with Mr. James (one of the churchwardens) appointed treasurer.

The following year (22 February, 1821) J. Collinson and Sir R. S. Hawks were appointed joint treasurers, following the death of Mr James. The organ fund stood at £172 10s 2d, including interest and the proceeds of a ball held in Mr Methuen's Long Room<sup>15</sup> on 18 January. It was agreed that, 'A circular be sent to such inhabitants as the committee may think proper who have not already subscribed.', and that 'Mr. David Hawks and Mr. William Falla be appointed members of the committee.'

There seem to have been problems with organists during the whole of this period. Mr Samuel Worrall, the former organist, had died in 1817, having served since at least 1809, when names first appear in the accounts, rather than simply 'organist's salary'. Throughout the whole of this time there were regular payments to him. Edward Elliott, who is identified as a singing master in the accounts for 1817–8, also appears throughout the whole of this period until the appointment of Mrs Hammond and Mrs Shephard in 1824 (described below).

The churchwardens had agreed to advertise in the *Newcastle Courant* for a replacement organist, and the accounts for 1817–8 include a payment to Mr Walker (the proprietor) for the advertisement. At the annual Easter vestry meeting, 8 April 1817, it was resolved that Mr Charles Makeby be appointed Organist during the pleasure of the electors with a salary of twenty pounds per annum for playing and keeping the organ in repair.

The next meeting relating to the organist was on 12 July 1818, when they agreed, '... that the election of organist be deferred until the second Sunday in November next, and that Mr. Graham be allowed to play the organ until August (when a quarter's salary will be due to him) and the other three candidates viz. Messrs. Hemsley, Sipford and Green in the months of August, September and October. . . '. This seems to have been to allow them to give all the candidates a fair hearing. The accounts for that year record a payment of £15 to Mr Charles Makeby,  $\frac{3}{4}$  year's salary, and 8/8d for locks for the organ.

Thomas Graham was appointed organist on 12 November, and the following year was paid £25 for  $1\frac{1}{4}$  years.

All was not well, however, since on 13 January 1822 it was agreed,

That the night for the organist and singing master and scholars attending the practice in the church be fixed for the Sunday Evenings. That a notice be placed on the table in the vestry every Sunday Morning of the Anthems to be sung that day.

Apparently the church musicians had not been carrying out their duties to the satisfaction of the vestry.

The routine that was agreed roughly corresponds with that described in Edward Miller's influential *Psalms of David*,<sup>16</sup> which describes how a notice was published in the parish church of Doncaster, requiring the regular attendance of the masters and mistresses of the Sunday

Schools, with their children, to be instructed in properly singing the psalms, and hoping that parishioners would also attend.

It is not clear where the Gateshead scholars came from. The oldest school was the Anchorage, dating from the seventeenth century, which occupied a large apartment, above the vestry of St Mary's church. In 1827 there were upwards of ninety children, including 15 free scholars.<sup>17</sup> As Temperley<sup>18</sup> has described, throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, charity children were often the only singers in urban churches, and the fifteen free scholars could have been required to sing in St Mary's, although I have been unable to find any reference confirming this.

Another school was established in 1808 in Mr Methuen's Long Room, and moved to St Edmund's chapel in 1810. In 1827 it was attended by about 350 children.<sup>19</sup> Mackenzie records that on the coronation of George IV in 1821 about 340 children of St Edmund's chapel were assembled in the rectory garden where they sang 'God save the King', and received each a glass of wine, a cake, and sixpence.<sup>20</sup>

A third possibility is that the Gateshead scholars were Sunday School children, as in Doncaster. Parson and White record a total of 3838 children in Newcastle and Gateshead in 1827, attending 'a number of Sunday Schools for the instruction of such as, from the abject poverty of their parents, are obliged to labour at an early age, and have therefore no opportunity but on the Sabbath of attending to civil or religious instruction'. Of these there were 60 at St Mary's and 160 at St Edmund's.<sup>21</sup>

On 22 August (seven months later) it is recorded that a new organist is needed, Thomas Graham having resigned, and the minute records that the organ committee was summoned to meet on Monday, 26th, to proceed with the purchase of the new organ, suggesting that the state of the old organ was among his reasons for resigning. The churchwardens were asked to engage Mrs Hammond and Mrs Shephard, two candidates who had offered to play alternately in the meantime, and to divide the organist's salary between them, indicating that the old organ was still playable. The demanding nature of the position might have been the real reason for the resignation, which would explain why a joint arrangement had been proposed by the replacements.

On the 26th the committee for procuring a new organ reported that the parish was competent to purchase an organ for not more than 500 gns. (£525), and that they had a plan for raising this amount. They proposed that 'a detail, as stated by Sir R. S. Hawks' be sent to a specified list of organ builders, and that Sir R. S. Hawks, David Hawks, Mr Falla and Mr Willis should carry out the necessary arrangements.

The plan for raising 500 gns. involved the existing funds, further subscriptions, pew rents, and the mortgage of some property, the interest from which was distributed to the poor.

When the estimates for the organ were received most (the London firms) were for more than 500 gns. A local firm (John Davis of Bishopwearmouth, which was not on the original list, and seems never to have been in the running) was for less (£450), and Wood, Small & Co. of Edinburgh quoted exactly £525, but added that there could be further expenses for carriage, packing etc. The organ committee were to investigate this quote. (Although almost all the references are to Wood & Co. or Wood, Small & Co., their organ builder was actually James Bruce.)

On 10 November 'Col. Ellison and the officers of the late Gateshead Volunteer Corps' were reported to have donated 100 gns (£105). The Gateshead Volunteers had been disbanded on 24 March 1813,<sup>22</sup> and in reality this would have been a donation by Ellison and the Hawks

family and maybe some others. It cannot be coincidental that this exactly matches the amount planned to be raised by the mortgage of the charity property, and there is no further mention of the mortgage. About a year later the Corporation of Newcastle subscribed 20 gns.<sup>23</sup>

It seems that Mrs Hammond and Mrs Shephard could not work without an organ, since:

At a meeting held in the vestry on the 30th November 1823 to consider the state of the singing in the church: It was resolved that the churchwardens be desired to engage a person or persons to conduct the singing during the time between taking down the present organ, and erecting the new one. H. Salvin in the chair.

The opening of the new organ on 25 January 1824 was announced in advance in the local press, and widely reported. The Rev. Charles Thorp, rector of Ryton, preached the sermon, and the Rev. J. Collinson of Lamesley<sup>24</sup> gave a lecture in the evening. David Hawks was organist.<sup>25</sup>

The committee (Feb 2nd 1824) were so impressed by the new organ, which had had an extra cornet stop gratuitously added with 90 additional pipes, that they voted to pay 20 guineas in addition to the 500 guineas + £25 carriage which had been agreed. At the request of the rector and the churchwardens of Gateshead, Charles Thorp's sermon was published, and was advertised for sale in the 31 January edition of the Newcastle Courant.

#### THORP'S SERMON ON THE OPENING OF THE ORGAN

Charles Thorp was an influential figure in the first half of the nineteenth century. His father, Robert, had become rector of Gateshead in 1781, archdeacon of Northumberland in 1792, and rector of Ryton in 1795, until he resigned in favour of his son in 1807. Charles (1783–1862) retained the living until his death. With Bishop Van Mildert he established Durham University in 1832, seeking to protect the Church of England from attack that was anticipated once the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed, and pre-empting a mooted 'infidel' college in Newcastle.<sup>26</sup> Temperley sees his sermon at Gateshead as an attempt to harness Romanticism, with its appeal to feeling, in the interests of religion,<sup>27</sup> but it also provides some clues about prevailing musical practice.

Thorp is very definite in his rejection of hymns in favour of the metrical psalms:

It is observable that the distaste for the ordinary versions of the Psalms, and the fondness for lighter airs and poetry, began with the decay of true religion; — may it cease with the revival;

From this we can infer that hymns, usually associated with non-conformity, are becoming a feature of some Anglican practice, along with the 'lighter airs', which had worried Methodists for some time.

Thorp's main concern is that congregations should participate in the music of the church. He certainly advocates simple tunes that everybody could sing:

You have heard the tunes of the 100th and 149th psalms; and I might instance several in Dr. Millar's collection, with others, of scarce inferior reputation, occasionally employed in psalmody.

(A footnote lists York, Rockingham, St James, Lincoln, Dr Croft's C. M. [common metre, possibly St Anne], and some used at Scarborough.)

'Dr. Millar's collection' is almost certainly a reference to *The Psalms of David*, 1790, by Dr Edward Miller of Doncaster, referred to earlier, with which Thorp was certainly familiar, since his father is listed among the subscribers. Although often credited with composing Rockingham, in fact Miller is responsible only for arranging the tune (which is by Aaron Williams).<sup>28</sup>

Thorp's advocacy of organs follows from his desire to involve congregations:

The use of the fine instrument, we have this morning heard, takes away the apology of those who, from want of habit, or excess of diffidence, have hitherto been silent; because the organ's tone will enable the least skilful to unite in the general song, and make it easy to the timid. . . .

There is a footnote (added later on publication?) which is not entirely consistent with the rest of the sermon, and seems to advocate the older 'improved psalmody' of the urban churches:

May we not lament that musical talents, which grace and delight society; and upon the cultivation of which, for the sake of personal gratification, or a more amiable and worthy motive, the desire of pleasing others, much pains have been bestowed; are so commonly denied to the church service.

### LATER DEVELOPMENTS

The problems with organists at St Mary's continued. Mrs Shephard and Mrs Hammond were appointed in 1824, were confirmed in their appointment, then resigned in 1825. The churchwardens were at great pains to record how well they had carried out their duties playing the organ and teaching psalmody, and paid them an extra £5.

Mrs Hammond is Martha Hammond, listed in Parson & White (1827) as a music teacher, 8, Lisle St. (Newcastle, off Northumberland St). She was a well-known vocalist, and sang solos in local concerts and music festivals. She is listed in 1824 as teacher of singing, harp, & dital harp, &c. No. 2, Brunswick-place. Mrs Shephard is also listed, as Mrs Sheppard, teacher of music and drawing, Brunswick-place,<sup>29</sup> but she is not in Parson & White, so she presumably had left the area by 1827, which would explain her resignation. It was not unusual for a church to have a woman organist. Mackenzie<sup>30</sup> records, for example that Miss Kinlock was elected as organist of St John's on the retirement of Mr Simpson in 1818.

Edward Elliott, who seems to have been the singing master throughout Samuel Worrall's time and beyond, appears in the accounts for the last time when Mrs Hammond and Mrs Shephard are appointed. He is identified as the parish clerk to St Nicholas's (Newcastle) in Parson & White, presumably having replaced John Thompson, who is recorded in this position in the 1824 directory.

Following the resignation of Mrs Hammond and Mrs Shephard, Richard Graham was appointed as organist and singing master, at a salary of £20 as organist, and a further £10 as singing master, provided that the scholars were taught satisfactorily.

There follows a period of stability, perhaps because there was now a good organ, and the organist from 1827 to 1833, Richard Ingham, was an accomplished musician. He was paid £20 per annum, rising to £30 in 1830, with T. Richardson (listed in Parson & White as a music teacher, 11 Lisle St) as singing-master, paid £10. Ingham became organist at Carlisle Cathedral,<sup>31</sup> and was succeeded by Thomas Ions, who was paid £20 a year until 1835, when he moved to St Nicholas, Newcastle.

### ST JOHN'S, GATESHEAD FELL

Although the act of parliament for dividing Gateshead Fell and allowing a church to be built was passed in 1809, it was not until 13 May 1824 that the foundation stone was laid.<sup>32</sup> St John's, the new church (with William Hawks as its first vicar), was opened on 20 October,

1825, with a sermon by J. Collinson, who was eager to welcome Methodists, professing a belief that they did not seriously dissent from the established church, but had assembled in other places of worship because there was nowhere else,<sup>33</sup> although it should have been obvious that there were additional factors at work. From its earliest days the music of the Methodists had attracted and involved people. In 1787 it was observed

That the people are alive to attractions of this kind no other proof is wanting than the attraction they all experience in the psalmody of the Methodists. It is not rashness to assert that for one that has been drawn away from the Established Church by preaching, ten have been induced by music...<sup>34</sup>

Wesley himself always advocated simple devotional tunes, but successive Methodist Conferences had to pass resolutions reaffirming this policy, indicating that the actual practice could be different. One particular concern, as it was for Thorp, was that everybody should be able to join in.

In about 1803 W. E. Miller, Edward's son observed

It is to be lamented that, lately among the Methodists, a light, indecorous style of music has frequently been introduced, diametrically opposed to the genuine tones of sacred harmony... A number of these effusions of folly and ignorance have lately been brought over from America, which expose an important part of the worship of God to the merited censure of the judicious, and to the sorrow of the truly pious, while some of the best hymns and most appropriate tunes in the English language are laid aside, and nearly forgotten.<sup>35</sup>

The *Methodist Magazine* in 1803 had published letters describing a great revival of religion in the frontier states of North America based on a series of outdoor meetings for public preaching and prayer.<sup>36</sup> Camp meetings, as they were called, quickly came to England and developed into Primitive Methodism, separating from the Wesleyans who rejected the informal open-air gatherings, with their raised emotional atmosphere and unlicensed preachers. After the troubles that followed the end of the Napoleonic wars, and in the years preceding the Reform Act such activities could easily be viewed as a further threat to the establishment. Methodist leaders were anxious to be accepted, and they wanted to avoid anything that could be perceived as subversive. Primitive Methodism arrived in Gateshead in 1821, and was immediately successful. Their camp meetings were held on the Windmill Hills and Gateshead Fell throughout the decade.<sup>37</sup>

Collinson's sermon seems to be directed at Wesleyans, since at this date the Primitives did not have their own chapel, which is presumably what he meant by 'places of worship', but Thorp's denunciation of 'lighter airs and poetry', although addressed to 'churchmen' (as opposed to dissenters, not part of the established church), could just as well apply to Primitive Methodists. His observations on music's power to communicate sentiment could refer not just to the contrast with the elegant music of improved psalmody on the one hand, but also with the emotionally charged hymns of the Primitives on the other.

Contrary to the expectations expressed in Collinson's sermon Methodism in its various forms continued to grow in popularity and influence throughout the century, particularly in the North East.

#### THE HAWKS FAMILY AND GATESHEAD FELL

The organ of St John's was opened in 1827, and again David Hawks played at the opening service. The report in the press praises his playing, and the singing of the children who, it

states, had only been instructed two or three weeks. It also refers to the subscription made for the organ in St Mary's in 1824 by Col. Ellison and the Gateshead Volunteers.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps someone, probably Sir Robert, saw it as their lasting memorial, or he might be asserting David's continuing moral right to play it.

A newspaper article on St John's, Gateshead Fell, written over 50 years later by R. W. Hetherington, son of its first clerk,<sup>39</sup> provides some further insights into the Hawks family:

In many things Sir Robert might be said to have had his prototype in Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley. During service on Sundays, he occupied a pew at the foot of the pulpit, facing the congregation. It was nothing remarkable for the old knight to leave his pew while the service was going on, and proceed to some distant part of the church to correct some boy whose misbehaviour he had observed. Sir Robert was always great at Sunday school treats, and was therefore much beloved by the juvenile parishioners, and heartily respected by the elders.

In 1827 Mr D. Hawks, brother of the Rector, presented an excellent organ to the church, at which he himself presided on the day of opening, and frequently at the Sunday services. Though totally blind he was a first class musician. The organ was placed in the gallery, and, as a screen for the organist Sir Robert erected a beautifully-decorated figure of David playing the harp. A few weeks later the rector objected to this carved figure; for when he was preaching it faced him, and he said it reminded him of the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up. It was therefore removed and placed in limbo in the belfry.<sup>40</sup>

Sir Robert broke his connection with the parish after an acrimonious dispute, and about five years later the rector resigned, and moved to Saltash on the Devon/Cornwall border 'which was in his father's gift, and of which he was the non-resident vicar'.<sup>41</sup>

The reference to the idol set up by Nebuchadnezzar is rather odd, since that was an image of himself, and it may be that William felt that his father was idolising David, the musician.

### ORGANS IN RYTON

In Ryton, Thorp's parish, the vestry book for 18 March 1830 records 'That the expences attendant upon the Organs at Ryton and Winlaton churches shall be considered and are deemed chargeable upon the Parish, to be defrayed out of the Church Rate'.<sup>42</sup> Separate accounts for the organ fund, which included other repairs to the church, are recorded a few pages later, starting in 1828, suggesting that they have been copied from another document. They show that the rector donated £100, followed by a further £50 'to cover the expences of the organ', which cost £165. It is listed by Boston and Lyndesay<sup>43</sup> as:

Barrel organ by Wood & Small, Edinburgh, 1828, bought by public subscription. Later altered to manual and in 1853 pedals were added. In 1856 swell and 5 stops added. Each barrel had 12 tunes.

Wood, Small and Bruce were the same firm that had built the organs in Gateshead. Although Ryton did not have a benefactor like Sir Robert Hawks, Thorp was clearly putting his money where his mouth was, and offering every encouragement to his congregation to sing, even before he could be sure of the services of an organist.

In January, 1830, Thorp's wife gave £30 'For the Keys of the Organ', and the minutes of the Easter Meeting that year record the organist, Mr Newton being paid £5 per annum, with the same sum paid to George Agnew Reay for singing. In 1827 Geo. Agnew Rea is listed as having a music academy in Hencotes, Hexham.<sup>44</sup> He had clearly moved to Ryton since the accounts



record payments to him as vestry clerk for several years subsequently. Mr Newton is identified as John Newton in the accounts for 1831, and it is clear from the 1832 accounts that he is the same John Newton listed in Parson & White as a stone mason. In 1834 and 1835 Henry Down is paid as an assistant organist, and in 1834 there is a payment for candles for singing nights. After that there are no further entries relating to music. Since even a barrel-organ needs an operator, then either accompanied singing in the church had ceased, which seems unlikely, or there was a volunteer, or Thorp paid directly from his own pocket. If this was a common arrangement it would explain the lack of evidence of music in many churchwarden accounts.

The church at Winlaton had just been consecrated, on 9 September, 1828. As early as 1814 Thorp had been campaigning for it, to relieve the overcrowding in the parish church, which could not cope with the size of the congregation,<sup>45</sup> despite having a gallery erected in 1703 'at the cost of Mr Ambrose Crowley, and the company of Smiths, at Winlaton.' to accommodate Crowley's workers.<sup>46</sup> The organ, again built by Messrs. Wood, Small and Bruce was opened the following year, and reported in the press.<sup>47</sup> Mackenzie notes that 'besides being a finger organ, it contains four barrels, each of which plays ten tunes, so that when the organist, Mr. Laws of Newcastle, is unable to attend, the singing can still be accompanied by an organ.'<sup>48</sup> As well as Mr Laws, the vestry accounts for 1831 also mention Henry McPherson, Singing Master, Winlaton. There are several Mr Laws listed in the Newcastle directories, but none with occupations that relate to music. Either by design or out of necessity, Thorp was using amateur musicians as organists, and having the barrel-organ option seems to have been a prudent measure.

#### MUSICAL LIFE ON TYNESIDE<sup>49</sup>

The changes in church music around this time were happening in the context of a musical community that had been active since the early eighteenth century. Charles Avison's annual series of subscription concerts had begun in 1735, and Percy A. Lovell has argued that this put Newcastle well ahead musically compared with most other provincial centres.<sup>50</sup> After his death in 1770 musical life continued, with concerts organised by various bodies, and from about 1813 a society of gentleman amateurs, including David Hawks, held concerts almost every winter. (For further details of musical life in Newcastle in the eighteenth century see the exhaustive thesis by Southey.)<sup>51</sup>

Avison was organist at St Nicholas, Newcastle, and based on statements in his *Essay on Musical Expression and in A dissertation on ... poetry and music* by Dr John Brown, the vicar, Temperley<sup>52</sup> concludes that Newcastle was exceptional at this time in having, in Brown's words, 'the union of [the organ] with the voices of a well-instructed congregation.'

In 1796, 1814 and 1824 Thomas Thompson (David Hawks's teacher, who had succeeded Charles Avison jr. as organist at St Nicholas) was involved in organising Grand Music Festivals, similar to those held in other provincial cities at the time, such as one in York in 1823 mentioned in Thorp's sermon. The tickets in 1796 cost £1 11s 6d., and in 1814 they were 2 gns.; prices that must surely have excluded most of the inhabitants. (See Southey for details of the 1796 and 1814 festivals.) The 1824 festival was held over three days, with the cheapest tickets costing 6s, still quite expensive. A collection of programmes and handbills relating to the festival in Newcastle Central Library Local Collection also includes a manuscript copy of the accounts that identifies all the performers. Along with professional instrumentalists from

London and other centres such as York and Birmingham, the local professional musicians also took part. The choir included many singers from Durham cathedral, and some from Lancashire, along with many locals. Mrs Hammond was paid extra for taking a more prominent part.

At the same time as the music in the churches was developing, various amateur groups were being formed. The Newcastle and Gateshead Amateur Choral Society, which sang at the opening of the organ in Winlaton in 1829, had held their first concert on 31 October 1827, a performance of Handel's *Messiah* in St Mary's, Gateshead, along with an organ concerto with Mr Ingham the soloist.<sup>53</sup> The accounts for this concert are recorded in the vestry book, which shows that a professional trumpeter and trombonist were employed, along with five boys from Durham (presumably cathedral choristers) at 21s. each. There were 430 tickets sold at 5s each, and 212 books (of words) at 6d. Mackenzie writes that the society included the best vocal and instrumental performers locally.

Another group, the Amateur Harmonic Society, had been formed in May 1824 and had held 31 concerts by April 1827. Mackenzie comments:

Most of the performers, both vocal and instrumental, are mechanics, and maintain this institution by a subscription of 2s. per month. Mr George Bagnall is the manager and leader of the band. This ingenious young man is entirely self-taught; and, notwithstanding the incompatibility of his employment as a chain-maker,<sup>54</sup> has become an able and scientific performer... He has lately become organist to St John's church on Gateshead Fell.

The bands attached to the numerous military corps embodied during the late war have tended greatly to extend the knowledge of music. At present, there is a band belonging to almost every extensive colliery upon the Tyne and Wear, all of which are encouraged by the owners on account of the moral influence of music. In Newcastle, it has become, as in other parts, an essential part of education.

The observation that military service had increased the general knowledge of music was presumably true for the rest of the country, and it would be interesting to know what proportion of church bands, as opposed to a solitary instrument, date from the years after the Napoleonic wars. Certainly most of the printed church music that I have seen from the eighteenth century tends to be either for voices only, has an organ accompaniment, or has a single instrumental bass line (usually figured), and churchwardens' accounts of that date tend to mention most frequently either bassoons or 'bass-viols'. Temperley<sup>55</sup> gives a list of eighteenth century printed sources with instrumental parts, and some call for larger forces, but they are exceptional.

Winlaton Brass Band, which was formed around 1801, and attended the Gibside Cavalry, until the troop was disbanded, was closely associated with Crowley's workers,<sup>56</sup> but there is no evidence of any of its members playing in churches.

#### WERE THESE PARISHES TYPICAL?

The detailed vestry minutes and published sermons by the rectors mean that there is more information available about Gateshead and Ryton in the first half of the nineteenth century than the other parishes on Tyneside, outside Newcastle, and it is difficult to establish the wider context of church music in the region with any accuracy. Because it was the regional centre, the churches in Newcastle were not typical, but how did those in Gateshead and Ryton

compare with other parishes? Usually accounts of the changes that occurred around this time consider the music, the instruments and the personalities, including the musicians. Of these there is usually evidence only about the instruments since even basic churchwardens' accounts and vestry books sometimes refer to their purchase and maintenance.

### INSTRUMENTS IN OTHER CHURCHES

Gateshead is much more like Newcastle than surrounding parishes, being more urban, and having had an organ since just after the restoration, at the latest. Other parishes, although not typically rural, usually depended on agriculture along with coal-mining, possibly with some manufacturing industries. References to instruments begin around the end of the eighteenth century. For example in 1799 at Ovingham, some way up the Tyne valley, they bought a bassoon with instructions (£5 14s 6d), suggesting that they felt the need of an instrument, but had no-one able to play. It is never mentioned again, and it is not until 20 August 1822 that there is mention of a string for the bass viol, then in 1825 a payment to James Maughan, the sexton, for fiddlestrings. On 15th December 1827 'Mr Morn' is paid 4s 6d for violin strings. The first reference to an organist is in 1839.<sup>57</sup>

In the neighbouring parish of Heddon, closer to Newcastle, and across the Tyne from Ryton, there are references to a bassoon from 1808 until 20 March 1818 when an entry records 'Balance paid on Organ 3-13-6'. There are no records of any other payments, although a gallery was built that year, and there was probably a separate fund. It was presumably a barrel organ, since there are subsequent payments for 'turning the organ'. By 1857 they had a harmonium.<sup>58</sup>

Sometimes, as at Ryton, there are no references to instruments until the purchase of an organ. In Whickham, between Gateshead and Ryton, there are no instruments mentioned, even in an inventory of 1803, although there are occasional references to music books (in 1780 and 1845-6) and on July 11 1850 Thos. Richardson is paid £1-10-0 for 'singing scholars' (Swalwell quarter). This is probably the same Thos. Richardson who was at St Mary's in 1830: Whellan has a music professor of that name at 60, Grainger St in 1855.<sup>59</sup> There are further references to singers throughout the fifties, then in 1861 they hire, then buy, a harmonium, followed by an organ in 1869.<sup>60</sup>

Of course absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and, as Mackenzie points out, one outcome of the Napoleonic wars was a significant increase in the number of instrumentalists, and colliery bands. If instruments belonged to the local band then they would not appear in any church records, so it is quite possible that instruments were being played in the churches. However if there were instrumentalists from colliery bands, 'encouraged by the owners on account of the moral influence of music', it is not likely that they would demonstrate the kind of unruly behaviour described from other parts of the country, or that they would be able to protest should an alternative arrangement be introduced.

### THE CHANGES AT ST MARY'S

Newcastle City Library has a printed list of the *Anthems and Hymns used in Gateshead Church* (Appendix 1) dated 1818, bound together with a copy of Thorp's sermon. There is also a slip of paper tipped in at the front, before the sermon, in Sir Robert's hand that reads, 'This is not intended for public inspection RSH'. This is the only available detailed evidence of the music

in local churches at the time, but it is doubtful that many parish choirs could aspire to the same level of musical proficiency. It lists anthems by cathedral composers as well as some by less sophisticated musicians, along with 'odes', which Temperley identifies with the set-pieces associated with the Methodist and Evangelical movements.<sup>61</sup> The setting of *Vital Spark* (*The Dying Christian to His Soul* by Alexander Pope) is almost certainly the very popular one by Harwood, and is a particularly clear example of one of Thorp's 'lighter airs and poetry'. Unless there had been a major change in taste over seven years, at the time of the sermon the music in Gateshead would still be the improved psalmody, similar to the secular music of the time, that Temperley describes,<sup>62</sup> which would probably be consistent with the tastes of Sir Robert and David. If so, Thorp's sermon implied some criticism, and Sir Robert's sensitivity, suggested by the note attached to it, becomes understandable.

The criticism might have been even more apposite. The minute of 13 January 1822 differs from Miller's account of Doncaster in two ways: parishioners are not encouraged to attend the practices, and a notice of anthems, not psalms is displayed. This suggests that there were no attempts to encourage congregational singing, and it is even possible that there was none in the church at that time. This interpretation is supported by Thorp's statement, 'You have heard the tunes of the 100th and 149th psalms'. Clearly the congregation had not *sung* them.

Sir Robert Hawks was the driving force behind much of public life in Gateshead. Without him it is unlikely that there would be a record in the press of David's youthful proficiency on the organ, and he probably influenced the reporting of the opening of the organs. He played an important part in the acquisition of the new organ in St Mary's, and there is some indication that he was motivated, at least in part, with a desire to provide an instrument for his son, David. With George Bagnall (who was almost certainly a Hawks employee) as the church organist at St John's, it is not surprising that David was able to play 'frequently at Sunday services'.

Unlike parishes described by Thomas Hardy there was no church band in St Mary's to remove, but there are indications of a determination to change the music in the church on the introduction of the new organ, so that instead of an emphasis on music performed by a choir to a high standard the participation of the congregation in the music would become important. We cannot be sure, but it is likely that Sir Robert would not welcome the change. A country church band could usually be disposed of fairly easily, but one of the richest families in the parish that had dominated the select vestry would be harder to deal with, a problem that evaporated when, in effect, they were provided with their own church and parish.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## APPENDIX 1

## ANTHEMS AND HYMNS BEING SUNG AT ST MARY'S, GATESHEAD, IN 1818

Lift up your heads, O ye Gates	Psalm XXIV	Manners
Hear my prayer, O God	Psalm LV	Kent
Awake up, my glory	Psalm LVII	Broadrip
Sing unto the Lord	Psalm XCVI	Arnold
O be joyful in the Lord	Psalm C	Manners
O God, my heart is ready	Psalm CVIII	Arnold
O clap your hands together	Psalms XCVII & CL	Wright
Is there not an appointed time	Job, ch. VII	Knapp
Behold the Lord is my Salvation	Isaiah, ch. XII	Holroyd
Comfort ye, comfort ye my people	Isaiah, ch. XL	Crompton
Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion	Isaiah, ch. LII	Tansur
Blow the trumpet	Joel, ch. II	Arnold
Sound the Trumpet in Zion	Joel, ch. II, Haggai, ch. II, v. 7	Sparrow
My Soul doth magnify the Lord	Luke, ch. I	
And there were shepherds abiding	Luke, ch. II	Manners
Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace	Luke, ch. II	
Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us	Corinth, ch. V, Rom. ch. VI	Dixon
To God, O my Soul	from Psalm CIV	Ebdon
Meet and right it is	from the Communion Service	
Why do the heathen	Psalm II	Kent
I will always give thanks	Psalm XXXIV	Arnold
My song shall be of mercy	Psalm CI	Kent
All thy works praise thee	Psalm CXLV	Kent
Who is this that cometh	Isaiah, ch. LXIII	Kent
Prevent us O Lord	Collect from Communion Service	Ebdon
O God the Author of Peace	Collect at Morning Prayer	Key
Lord of all power and might	Collect, 7th after Trinity	Mason
Grant we beseech thee, merciful Lord	Collect, 21st after Trinity	Calcott

## ODES

The spacious firmament on high	Psalm XIX	
The Lord is risen from the dead	Psalm XXIV, Ascension Day	
Before Jehovah's awful throne	Psalm C	Madan
O then that all the Earth with me	Psalms CVII & CVI	Arnold
From all that dwell beneath the Skies	Psalm CXVII	Madan
Give to our God immortal praise	Psalm CXXXVI	Harrison
Vital Spark of Heavenly flame	The Dying Christian	
Again the day returns of holy rest	Hymn for Sunday Morning	Denhain
Jesus Christ is risen today	Hymn for Easter Day	
From Heaven the loud, th' Angelic Song began	Easter Ode and Hymn	
The righteous Souls that take their flight	Wisdom, for funerals	

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> C. Turner, 'The Decline of the Gallery Tradition', *Georgian Psalmody 1, Papers from the First International Conference*, (1997), 71.
- <sup>2</sup> F. W. D. Manders, *A History of Gateshead*, Gateshead (1973), 30–42.
- <sup>3</sup> N. Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church*, (1979), vol. 1, 114–5.
- <sup>4</sup> C. Evans, in ODNB, (2004), vol. 25, 944–5.
- <sup>5</sup> *Whitehead's Newcastle and Gateshead Directory for 1790*, D. Akenhead, Newcastle (1790).
- <sup>6</sup> *The Directory for the Year 1801 of the Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead, and Places adjacent*, J. Mitchell, Newcastle (1801).
- <sup>7</sup> *A General Directory for Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead, and Places Adjacent*, 1824, Newcastle, printed for the publisher.
- <sup>8</sup> *Tyneside Industries*, London [1889], 173.
- <sup>9</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 19 May 1798.
- <sup>10</sup> E. Mackenzie, *Descriptive and Historical Account of the Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne*, Newcastle (1827), 590, 592.
- <sup>11</sup> R. H. Legge rev. Bennett Mitchell Zon, in ODNB, (2004), vol. 50, 351.
- <sup>12</sup> Durham C. R. O. EP/Ga. SM 4/1.
- <sup>13</sup> S. Bicknell, *The History of the English Organ*, (1996), 108.
- <sup>14</sup> Durham C. R. O. EP/Ga. SM 5/2.
- <sup>15</sup> Parson and White's directory for 1827 lists William Methuen as victualler and attorney, Duke of Cumberland, 188 High St., Gateshead.
- <sup>16</sup> E. Miller, *The Psalms of David for the Use of Parish Churches*, London (1790), xi.
- <sup>17</sup> W. Parson and W. White, *History, Directory, and Gazetteer, of the Counties of Durham and Northumberland*, 1827, vol. 1, CL–CLI.
- <sup>18</sup> N. Temperley, *Music of the English Parish Church*, 100ff.
- <sup>19</sup> Parson and White, *Directory*, 1827, vol. 1, CXLIX.
- <sup>20</sup> Mackenzie, *Newcastle*, 86.
- <sup>21</sup> Parson and White, *Directory*, 1827, vol. 1, LXXIX.
- <sup>22</sup> W. Fordyce, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*, Newcastle (1857), vol. 2, 790.
- <sup>23</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 25 October 1823.
- <sup>24</sup> At this period there were, rather confusingly, *two* clergymen in the Gateshead area called John Collinson. They were closely related, probably cousins. One had been rector of Gateshead since 1810. The other became perpetual curate of Lamesley, and of Tanfield, in 1820, resigning the curacy of Ryton which he had held since 1817.
- <sup>25</sup> *Tyne Mercury*, 27 January 1824.
- <sup>26</sup> C. D. Watkinson, in ODNB, OUP (2004), vol. 54, 662.
- <sup>27</sup> N. Temperley, *Music of the English Parish Church*, 245–6.
- <sup>28</sup> F. Fowler, *Edward Miller Organist of Doncaster His Life and Times*, (1979).
- <sup>29</sup> *General Directory for Newcastle upon Tyne ...*, 1824.
- <sup>30</sup> Mackenzie, *Newcastle*, 346.
- <sup>31</sup> M. B. Foster, *Anthems and Anthem Composers*, (1901), 178.
- <sup>32</sup> Fordyce, *County Durham*, vol. 2, 788–9.
- <sup>33</sup> Printed by R. Akenhead, Newcastle. A handwritten transcript of part of it survives in *Gateshead Notes*, Vol. 4, in Gateshead Library.
- <sup>34</sup> W. Vincent, *Considerations on Parochial Music*, London (1787), quoted in J. Spencer Curwen, *Studies in Worship Music*, London (1880), 31.
- <sup>35</sup> W. E. Miller, *David's Harp*, London (c. 1803), III–IV.
- <sup>36</sup> W. Stokes, *The Place of Methodism in Georgian Psalmody*, *Georgian Psalmody 2, Papers from the Second International Conference*, SG Publishing (1999), 61.
- <sup>37</sup> Manders, *Gateshead*, 153–5.

- <sup>38</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 28 April 1827.
- <sup>39</sup> *PSAN*<sup>3</sup>, 10 (1921–2), 34.
- <sup>40</sup> *Newcastle Chronicle*, 31 December 1881.
- <sup>41</sup> R. E. C. Waters, *Genealogical notes of the kindred families of Longridge, Fletcher and Hawks*, London? (1872?), 26.
- <sup>42</sup> Durham C. R. O. EP/Ryt. 5/3.
- <sup>43</sup> N. Boston and L. G. Langwill., *Church and Chamber Barrel-Organs*, Privately published (1967), 78.
- <sup>44</sup> Parson and White, *Directory*, 1827.
- <sup>45</sup> Visitation records in Durham University Library, Auckland papers.
- <sup>46</sup> R. Surtees, *History and Antiquities of the County of Durham*, Gateshead Section, reprinted Sunderland (1909), 155.
- <sup>47</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 15 August 1829.
- <sup>48</sup> E. Mackenzie, M. Ross and W. Fordyce, *An Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive View of the County Palatine of Durham*, Newcastle (1834), vol. 1, 197.
- <sup>49</sup> Most of the information in this section is taken from Mackenzie, *Newcastle*, 590–2.
- <sup>50</sup> P. A. Lovell, in *Bicentenary Lectures 1993*, The Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne (1993), 125–6.
- <sup>51</sup> R. Southey, *Commercial music making in eighteenth century North-East England: a pale reflection of London?* PhD thesis L7134, University of Newcastle (2001).
- <sup>52</sup> Temperley, *Music of the English Parish Church*, 128–9.
- <sup>53</sup> Advertised in *Newcastle Chronicle*, 27 October 1827.
- <sup>54</sup> Almost certainly employed by Hawks.
- <sup>55</sup> Temperley, *Music of the English Parish Church*, 150.
- <sup>56</sup> W. Bourn, *History of the Parish of Ryton*, Carlisle (1896), 137.
- <sup>57</sup> NRO EP. 102/58.
- <sup>58</sup> NRO EP. 37/24 and 25.
- <sup>59</sup> W. Whellan & Co., *History, Topography, and Directory of Northumberland*, London (1855), 289.
- <sup>60</sup> Durham C. R. O. EP/Whm/16.
- <sup>61</sup> N. Temperley, *Music of the English Parish Church*, 167.
- <sup>62</sup> N. Temperley, *Music of the English Parish Church*, 227–32.

