Bangor and Its Cathedral

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Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 44, No. 728 (Oct. 1, 1903), pp. 641-650

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/903185>

Accessed: 22-01-2016 01:58 UTC

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THE MUSICAL TIMES

AND SINGING-CLASS CIRCULAR.

OCTOBER 1, 1903.

BANGOR AND ITS CATHEDRAL.

'At evening [at Penmaenmawr] the moon shone eminently bright, and our thoughts of danger being now past, the rest of our journey was very pleasant. At an hour somewhat late, we came to Bangor, where we found a very mean Inn, and had some difficulty to obtain lodging. I lay in a room where the other bed had two men. . . . We went to worship at the Cathedral. The quire is mean, the service was not well read.'

Thus recorded Dr. Johnson while on his North Wales journey, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, during the month of August, 1774. Were the great lexicographer to re-visit Bangor now, at this interval of 129 years, he would have a different tale to tell. It is true that he might not wax enthusiastic in regard to this Carnarvonshire city *per se*, but such institutions as the North Wales University College and other educational features would certainly meet with his approval. He would find that the Cathedral quire is anything but 'mean,' and that the service is remarkably 'well read' (or intoned) by Minor Canon Hughes Williams. Moreover, were Dr. Johnson to mount the picturesque heights of Upper Bangor, he would not only be charmed with the lovely environment of the Menai Straits, but he might perchance find occasion to be pleased with the two famous bridges that span those Welsh waters—the graceful Suspension Bridge (opened in 1826), and the famous Britannia Tubular Bridge (opened in 1850), both noble specimens of English engineering skill with which the names of Thomas Telford and Robert Stephenson, respectively, are worthily associated and perpetuated. Both these bridges will be found in the landscape view on page 643.

The name of George Grove is associated with the Britannia Bridge. As a young engineer he assisted in the construction of that gigantic work, and contributed to *The Spectator* of June 23, 1849, an account of the floating of the first tube, this being one of his earliest appearances in print. The tubes were constructed on the Carnarvonshire shore of the Straits. A month previous to the floating of the main tube, preparatory to being hoisted into its elevated position, an unusually novel music-making took place in that elongated iron structure. The event is thus recorded in the *North Wales Chronicle* :—

CONCERT EXTRAORDINARY. — Friday evening [May 18, 1849] a Concert was given to the whole country round by the Engineering Staff at head quarters connected with the Chester and Holyhead Railway in the great centre Tube of the Britannia Bridge, which was brilliantly lighted up the entire

length, lined with branches at the entrance to resemble a grove, with seats run along the sides for the promenaders to rest them. The vocal ability of Carnarvon and Bangor were in full force on this occasion, assisted by Mr. Hayden, of St. Mary's, of the former place, who accompanied on the melodium. The *corps musicale* consisted of forty or more vocalists; and allowing for the diluting effects upon the human voice of a chamber containing from seven to eight hundred persons, with an area of upwards of 470 feet long, better adapted to the sax-horns of the Distin family—the concert went off with as much *eclat* as could fairly have been expected. . . . We may say all present were struck with the novelty of the thing; while few could have had any previous conception of the brilliant spectacle presented by the illuminated Tube and the animated countenances on which its coruscations fell.

It may be assumed that George Grove, as one of the Engineering Staff, took an active part in promoting and arranging this concert, which, by the way, is duly noticed in *THE MUSICAL TIMES* of fifty-four years ago. Judging from internal evidence, Grove probably contributed to the local journal the account from which we have quoted. Certain it is that, during his sojourn at Bangor, 'G' must have known full well the village at the farther end of the Britannia Tubular Bridge—that Anglesey parish which bears the pronounced Welsh name of (Please, Mr. Printer, exercise more than your usual care in setting this much-lettered place, as the process may exercise a spell over you)—

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwll-llandysiliogogoch.

Did Shakespeare visit Bangor? If we turn to Part I. of his *King Henry IV.*, Act III., we shall find that Scene 1 is laid in that city. Tradition has it that the conspirators, Hotspur, Glendower, and the rest, met at 'Plás Alcock,' now the site of the City Vaults Hotel. The immortal Bard gives us, in the Scene referred to above, some interesting references to the Welsh language, a tongue probably in the nature of a sealed book to him. *Mortimer*, who could not speak Welsh, thus addresses his wife, who could not speak English :—

Thy tongue
Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penn'd,
Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower,
With ravishing division, to her lute.

Hotspur, who may have become acquainted with Llanfair P. G. (as the above-named village is abbreviatively called), took a different view of the Welsh language, as later in the scene he says :—

Now I perceive, the devil understands Welsh;
And 'tis no marvel, he's so humorous,
By 'r-lady, he's a good musician.

Bangor ought to be a musical place, as its name is derived from two Welsh words, *ban cor*, meaning good or high choir. Its Cathedral, with which we have especially to do, is snugly situated in a hollow in the centre of the city. One of the most ancient of existing Sees, it was founded by Deiniol (or Daniel), the first Bishop, in the 6th century. The Cathedral has passed through many vicissitudes, and has been more

The Musical Times.]

*(From an oil-painting in the possession of Dr. Pring's grand-daughter,
Mrs. Turner, of Thornton Heath, and reproduced by her kind permission.)*

[October 1, 1903.]

DR. JOSEPH PRING,

ORGANIST OF BANGOR CATHEDRAL FROM 1793 TO 1842.

than once destroyed—first by the Saxons in 1071, and again by Ōwen Glyndwr (Glendower) in 1402. It remained in ruins for nearly a century, but it has been restored and added to, the last time under the direction of the late Sir Gilbert Scott. The eminent architect reverently preserved and used up much of the earlier sculptured stone that he found. In this connection he records:—

This exhuming and restoring to their places the fragments of the beautiful work of the 13th century, reduced to ruin by Ōwen Glyndwr, used as mere rough material by Henry VII., and rediscovered by us four and a-half centuries after their reduction to ruins, is one of the most interesting facts I have met with in the course of my experience.

Of the Cathedral destroyed in 1071, there remains a buttress and rude round-headed window, now placed in the south wall of the Choir. When King John invaded Wales (A.D. 1210) he burned the city of Bangor and seized the Bishop, Robert of Shrewsbury, before the high altar, and would not release him till a ransom had been paid of 200 *hawks*, according to some authorities, 200 marks according to others. The western tower was added in 1532 by Bishop Skevington, who also rebuilt the nave. In the south wall of the south transept is the supposed tomb of Owain Gwynedd, Sovereign Prince of Wales, who reigned thirty-two years and died in 1159. The edifice is singularly devoid of antiquarian interest in regard to its monuments, but a tombstone (of a member of the Rathbone family) in the churchyard has this parental epitaph:—

Father to the fatherless so much,
You will seldom meet another such.

At the west end may be seen fragments of a 13th-century pavement formerly placed at the east end of the Cathedral. The ancient designs of the tiles have been copied and reproduced in the pavement in the Choir. A pair of lazy-tongs (or dog tongs) is a curious relic of old times, when churches and churchyards seem to have been greatly troubled by canine interlopers. These tongs are so constructed as to grip the unwelcome animal round the neck, whereby he could be ignominiously ejected without fear of retaliation in the nature of a bite. The Records of the Cathedral contain a curious 17th-century reference to these ecclesiastically disposed 'Dogs.' Here it is:—

The Presentment of the Churchwardens of Llannor,
for the year 1682.

We present Maurice Hughes of Llannor, Tayler, for disturbing divine service and sermon severall times in the church of Llannor.

We present the said Maurice Hughes for breaking Robert Rowland his pate on Sunday morninge, being March the fourth to the great effusion of his blood—who meetinge the minnister and others, cominge towards Church, they were all amazed.

Further we present the said Maurice Hughes for dареing the minster at the altar, having a staffe in his hand—threatninge him wth the sd staffe near his face, and threatninge us the Churchwardens, vilifyinge the whole Congregation May the 6th being Sunday fighting or quarrelling with some one or other every Sabbath wth in the Church or Churchyard when he is att home; and May the 29th, being

the nativity and restauration of our Gracious Sovereign King Charles, when the minster was readinge of divine service, the said Maurice Hughes was settinge of Doggs to fighte and baite one another at the Churchyard wall over against the door of the church to the disturbance of divine service and the congregation there present.

While on the subject of Records, a curious entry from the Baptismal Registers may be quoted:—

Dec. 11, 1807: Owen, son of Hugh Jones, of Llanrhwydrus: a Vagabond.

And another, from the Burial Registers:—

Oct. 18, 1749. Sidney Jones, wife of Henry David, was Buried. She was murdered as is supposed by her brother, Richard Jones.

Before making mention of some Bishops of Bangor, and referring to matters strictly musical, one or two peculiar features of the Cathedral may be noticed. Curfew has been rung on the tenor bell for centuries, and is still rung daily at the hour of 8 p.m. As the chiming is now concluded by the announcing of the day of the month on a smaller bell, no one can charge curfew with not being up to date. The Cathedral also serves as the Parish Church of Bangor, of which there are two vicars with equal rights. A Parochial Service in the Welsh language is held twice on Sundays; on these occasions the music is sung by a mixed choir. Fully Choral Services (in English, of course) are held twice on Sundays, Saints' Days and their Vigils, with Evensong on Saturdays throughout the year, and daily (at 5 p.m.) during the summer months.

The Bishops. One of the most distinguished occupants of the See was Anian (Einion, or Eujan), who died in 1305. He had the honour of christening the first Prince of Wales—born at Carnarvon Castle, April 25, 1284. In recognition of his services in administering that sacrament, King Edward I. bestowed upon the Bishop certain 'ferries and manours' in the neighbourhood, which constituted the barony by which he is said to have claimed his seat in Parliament. Moreover, Bishop Anian compiled the Pontifical, or *Liber Bangor*, the greatest treasure in the Cathedral library. This precious manuscript is thus described by Browne Willis:—

It is a folio of a moderate thickness containing 32 Offices, and has abundance of Anthems, with musical notes to them for Singing. At the beginning are the Offices for making and ordaining the Acolyti, Subdiaconi, Diaconi, Presbyteri, and Episcopi; Forms of consecrating Churches and Church-yards, &c. Forms of adjuring of bread, cheese, and honey; Offices for all Sundays and Holydays throughout the year; Prayers in times of pestilence, war, and other occasions.

The 13th Office contains the Mass; the 19th the form of the Chapters electing their Bishop. In the latter end is the Office of Baptism (where twice immersion is expressly enjoined), &c.

This Pontifical formed 'The Use of Bangor,' and reference is made thereto in the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer. An antiphon from this old manuscript has been adapted for use at organ-opening services by Mr. J. T. Field.

THE BRIDGES OVER THE MENAI STRAITS: THE SNOWDON RANGE IN THE DISTANCE.

(Photo by Mr. John Wickens, Upper Bangor.)

A 14th-century Bishop was Thomas de Ringstede, a Dominican, or Black Friar, who is said to have cherished no great affection

THE ORGAN IN SHRUBSOLE'S DAY.
(From an old print.)

for 'the sheep of his pasture.' Bishop Skevington, as already stated, did much for the Cathedral. He died in 1533, when his body was buried at Beaulieu, but his heart was taken to Bangor Cathedral and sunk, none too securely, in the pavement in front of what seems to have been a picture of Daniel, the patron saint of the Cathedral. A Master Humphrey Humphreys used to play with the Bishop's heart! This heartless young gentleman then little thought that he would become Dean and afterwards Bishop of Bangor. Hoadley, the first Englishman appointed to the See since the Reformation, obtained notoriety by the 'Bangorian Controversy,' a theological squabble that need not detain us. He held the office of Bishop for six years (1715-1721), but never once visited his diocese! Coming to later times, Daniel Lewis Lloyd, Bishop from 1890-98, compiled a well-known Welsh Hymnal.

The Organs. The celebrated Bard, Dafydd ab Gwilym, who wrote in the 14th century, makes particular mention of an organ and choir at Bangor Cathedral in his day in an Ode entitled 'Awdl o Folawd i Ddeon Bangor ys ef Hywel ab Tudur ab Ednyfed Fychan.'

Teyrn llwyd prophwyd o hil Bran, mae au gwr,
Ym Mangor mewn gŵn pân;
Ty geirw galch teg, ei Organ,
Tant Cor, heb attynt ai Can.

That is, A Commendatory Ode addressed to Hywel, Dean of Bangor, whose organ, and harmonious choir, are unrivalled in performance.

It is obvious that there must have been an organ at that time, *circa* 1360. An interval of 300 years elapsed before the next record having reference to an organ. Browne Willis, in his 'A Survey of the Cathedral Church of Bangor,' issued in 1721, says:—

The organ-loft is in a gallery over the entrance into the Choir. The case of the organ is very plain, and both that and the organ-loft are painted of a marble colour; upon it are painted some verses—alluding to Bp. William Roberts giving £100 for erecting it after the Restauration *Ann.* 1660, and Bp. Robert Morgan's laying it out.

It appears that Bishop William Roberts bequeathed the sum of £100 'towards beautifying the choir,' with which money the organ was erected. This instrument stood in a gallery at the entrance to the Choir, as shown in the adjoining illustration. The celebrated builder Samuel Green supplied, in 1779, the next organ at a cost of 360 guineas; but in the manuscript collection of organ specifications in the handwriting of the late Dr. E. J. Hopkins (now in the possession of the present writer), the Doctor has endorsed that of Bangor with 'Great organ only by Green, and that without the trumpet.' At the restoration of the Cathedral in 1873, a new organ by Messrs. Hill was erected in a chamber on the north side of the Choir, the screen having been entirely removed. Twenty-four years

THE ORGAN CONSOLE,
(Photo by Mr. John Wickens, Upper Bangor.)

later the instrument was rebuilt and enlarged, according to a scheme prepared by the present organist, Mr. T. Westlake Morgan, and opened

Bangor Cathedral.

(Photo by Mr. John Wickens, Upper Bangor.)

by Sir Walter Parratt in 1897. The following is the specification of this fine instrument:—

GREAT ORGAN (17 stops).			
	Feet.		Feet.
Double Open Diapason	... 16	Stopped Flute	... 4
Bourdon	... 16	Principal	... 4
Large Open Diapason	... 8	Twelfth	... 3
Small Open Diapason	... 8	Fifteenth	... 2
Stopped Diapason	... 8	Mixture (4 ranks)	... —
Clarabella	... 8	Contra Posaune	... 16
Spitz Flute	... 8	Posaune	... 8
Viol di Gamba	... 8	Clarion	... 4
Harmonic Flute	... 4		

SWELL ORGAN (14 stops).			
Bourdon	... 16	Principal	... 4
Open Diapason	... 8	Octavin (harmonic)	... 2
Violoncello	... 8	Mixture (4 ranks)	... —
Lieblich Gedact	... 8	Contra Fagotto	... 16
Echo Violin	... 8	Cornopean	... 8
Voix Celeste (B flat)	... 8	Oboe	... 8
Flauto Traverso	... 4	Harmonic Clarion	... 4

CHOIR ORGAN (12 stops).			
(All enclosed in a separate Swell Box.)			
Lieblich Gedact	... 16	Unda Maris (2 ranks)	... 8
Geigen Principal	... 8	Röhr Flute	... 4
Stopped Diapason	... 8	Suabe Flute	... 4
Dulciana	... 8	Gemshorn	... 4
Viola	... 8	Harmonic Piccolo	... 2
Vox Angelica (B flat)	... 8	Clarinet	... 8

SOLO ORGAN (9 stops).			
(Enclosed in a separate Swell Box, except Tubas.)			
Harmonic Flute	... 8	Vox Humana	... 8
Harmonic Flute	... 4	Musette	... 8
Viol d'orchestre	... 8	Contra Tuba	... 16
Orchestral Oboe	... 8	Tuba Mirabilis	... 8
Cor Anglais	... 16		

PEDAL ORGAN (12 stops).			
Double Open Diapason	... 32	Violoncello	... 8
Open Diapason	... 16	Bass Flute	... 8
Open Diapason	... 16	Fifteenth	... 4
Violone	... 16	Contra Trombone	... 32
Bourdon	... 16	Trombone	... 16
Quint	... 12	Trumpet	... 8

Manual compass Cc to A.
Pedal compass CCCC to F.

COUPLERS, &c.

Swell to Great (left and right).
Great to Pedal (left and right).
Solo to Great (left and right).

Choir to Great.	Solo Sub-Octave.
Swell to Choir.	Great Sub-Octave.
Solo to Choir.	Pedal Octave.
Swell to Pedal.	Pedal to Great Pistons.
Choir to Pedal.	Pedal to Swell Pistons.
Solo to Pedal.	Pedal to Choir Pistons.
Swell Octave.	Swell Tremulant.
Swell Sub-Octave.	Solo Tremulant.
Solo Octave.	

ACCESSORIES.

Four combination pistons to Great Organ.
Four combination pistons to Swell Organ.
Four combination pistons to Choir Organ.
Four combination pistons to Pedal Organ.

Three poppet pedals (on and off) acting on Swell to Great, Great to Pedal, Solo to Great.

Three balanced crescendo pedals (Swell, Solo and Choir), placed at the right of the pedal-board.

SUMMARY.			
2 stops of 32 feet	... ..	60 pipes	
13 " 16 "	... ..	614 "	
30 " 8 "	... ..	1,674 "	
12 " 4 "	... ..	668 "	
7 " various	... ..	726 "	
64 speaking stops		3,742 pipes.	
23 couplers, &c.			
87 draw-stops.			

The action is tubular pneumatic throughout, manuals, pedal and drawstop work, some three or four miles of tubing being used, and the instrument is blown by hydraulic power.

The console, which is detached and situated in the North Transept, is fitted with diagonal jambs at an angle of about 45°, with four patent desk-hooks, and an adjustable stool to screw up and down for the convenience of all performers.

Among special features may be noticed the three species of Voix Celeste—one of Gambas, tuned sharp; another of Dulcianas, tuned sharp; and a third of Dulcianas, tuned flat. It is also possible by means of couplers and contiguous balanced crescendo pedals to obtain a simultaneous crescendo of some 25 stops.

For a period of a hundred years the organ at Bangor Cathedral was blown by a woman. The first of these female officials was a widow named Jane Jones. In an affidavit made before the Court of Chancery in 1817, this lady stated that she had been organ-blower in the Cathedral for above thirty years, and that her first husband 'held that situation for about thirty years before her.' Widow Jane Jones went on to say that she 'verily believes that an organ-blower has been employed ever since an organ has been set up in the said Cathedral,' and furthermore she 'has been informed and verily believes, that the office of organ-blower is attached to every Cathedral church where there is an organ, and even in those (which are numerous) which have no foundation for an organist.' In the spirit of a true philosopher, Mrs. Jane Jones informed the Court that 'without an organ-blower the organist would be quite useless and the organ too, as it can produce no sound without the working of the bellows.' True, O lady blower, perfectly true!

The Organists. The earliest mention of this official by name was on a tombstone in the Cathedral bearing the inscription: 'Here lies the body of Thos. Bolton, Organist of Bangor, who died the 1st day of January, 1644.' In the Chapter Books, under date of October, 1689, we find this entry:—

That Hugh Johnson be one of the singing men in the choir of the said Cathedral, while a Vicar Choral is organist there and no longer, and that he have a salary of eight pounds per annum payed him during the said time out of the tithe of Llandinam in the county of Montgomery, pursuant to an Act of Parliament in that behalf made and provided.

The Act of Parliament above referred to—passed in the year 1685, the first of King James II.—was entitled—

An Act for the repair of the Cathedral Church of Bangor, and for the maintenance of the choir there, and for the augmentation of the revenue of the Bishoprick of Bangor, and also for an augmentation of several vicarages within the Corporations of Llandinam, in the diocese of Bangor aforesaid.

The first endowed organist, as distinct from a vicar-choral performer, was one Thomas Roberts, appointed in 1691, who received a stipend of £20 per annum. His tombstone, once in the North Transept of the Cathedral, stated:—

Here lies in the hope of a joyful Resurrection, the body of Thomas Roberts, the first Endowed Organist of this Cathedral since the Restauration, who died on the 18th of May, in the year of our Lord 1705, and the 48th year of his age.

It was during the organistship of Mr. Thomas Roberts that the Dean and Chapter—

Ordered that the organist be obliged to teach and practise three other services besides Tallis (whereof two at least to be alternate, or for sides), and that the singing men and boys be obliged to learn and practise the said services, and the Dean and Chapter allow them time till Christmas to be perfect in the said Services.

The successor of Thomas Roberts was a Priest organist, that is to say, an organist named Priest, possibly Nathaniel of that ilk. He

was 'recommended by Mr. Hall, organist of Hereford.' The Chapter minute, in recording Mr. Priest's appointment, says :—

He [Priest] be obliged to teach the four boys and as many of the singing men as have need of teaching, with great care and diligence at least two days in the week, and if it appears at the year's end that the said Mr. Priest hath performed his duty to general satisfaction, and done much in way of improvement of the choir in point of singing, with relation to services, and anthems, and chants, That then the said Mr. Priest have five pounds given him at the year's end by way of gratuity to reward and encourage his diligence.

If Mr. Priest had to teach some of the 'singing men' as well as the boys, he well deserved the extra £5 as a reward of his diligence.

Richard Gerard (whose tomb is in the Cathedral yard)—and come to a rather celebrated occupant of the post in the person of William Shrubsole, whose hymn-tune 'Miles's Lane,' associated with 'All hail the power of Jesu's Name,' has given him the widest fame of all the Bangor organists. The extracts from the Chapter Records relating to the election, the removal of his harpsichord from London, and the dismissal of young Shrubsole—he was only twenty-two at the time of his appointment—may be given in full :—

September, 1782. William Shrubsole was named Organist with a Salary of forty guineas a year, payable, from the 22nd day of August last, from which time he has attended the duties of the Organist's

BANGOR CATHEDRAL FROM THE NORTH: A WINTER VIEW.

(Photo by Mr. John Wickens, Upper Bangor.)

Chapter Records throw some very curious sidelights on old-time music in Cathedrals. For instance, in November, 1718, the Dean and Chapter of Bangor—

Ordered that the organist be obliged to teach forthwith the Commandments and Nicene Creed in Rogers' Service, and those in Tallis's and Child's, as soon as they can be had, and to add Bird's service to the others you now perform, and also to teach two new anthems every year as long as the present stock holds, or new ones can be procured.

We may pass over the successors of Mr. Priest—Messrs. Smith, Ferrer, John and Thomas Rathbone (father and son), Thomas Lloyd,

place in a manner so satisfactory and promising that we think proper for his encouragement to direct the Treasurer to pay him also the sum of eight guineas towards the expenses of his journey, the removal of his Harpsichord and other effects from London to Bangor.

October, 1783. Mr. William Shrubsole the Organist of this Church, having given great offence to the Dean and Chapter by his close connection with one Abbott, late of this place, as by his frequenting Conventicles, that Mr. Dean be empowered to discharge the said William Shrubsole from his place of Organist, if the said Abbott, (who is supposed to be gone to reside in Dublin) shall at any time hereafter return in order to abide in the town of Bangor, or the neighbourhood thereof, or if

the said William Shrubsole shall be found to frequent any Conventicle or Religious Assembly, where anything is taught which is contrary to the Doctrine or discipline of the Church of England.

December, 1783. That William Shrubsole be employed to play on the Organ of our Cathedral Church till Lady-day next and no longer, that in case it should not be convenient for him to continue in that employment till Lady-day next, he shall be at liberty to leave it before that time, and shall be paid the full allowance to Lady-day next notwithstanding.

THE TOMBSTONE OF WILLIAM SHRUBSOLE
IN BUNHILL FIELDS.

The Dean and Chapter showed no signs of holding out the olive branch to their late organist, but appointed Mr. Edmund Olive to succeed the excommunicated Shrubsole. During Mr. Olive's chief-musicianship the Dean and Chapter generously added to his emoluments (£42) by paying him the sum of four pounds a year for instructing and teaching the singing boys, and four pounds a year for keeping the organ in tune!

During the period (1773-1793) when Robert Hudson held the office of Almoner of St. Paul's Cathedral, he had under him as choristers three brothers who bore the scriptural names Jacob, Joseph and Isaac, conjoined with the patronymic of Pring. All three brothers graduated in music at Oxford. Jacob became organist of St. Botolph, Aldersgate (not *Aldgate* as is generally stated) and composed several glees and anthems, while Isaac succeeded Dr. Philip Hayes as organist of New College, Oxford.

Joseph Pring (born at Kensington, January 15, 1776) was only a stripling of seventeen when, in 1793, he succeeded his relative Mr. Olive in the organistship of Bangor Cathedral. He was not however formally elected to the office (at a salary of £60 per annum) till September, 1810. In 1805 he published by subscription a volume of 'Twenty anthems,' one of the subscribers being Vincent Novello, who is set down as 'organist of St. Patrick's Chapel, Soho Square,' an appointment not hitherto mentioned by Novello's various biographers. Pring seems to have been

an industrious young man during the early years of his residence at Bangor, as on January 27, 1808, he accumulated the degrees of Bachelor and Doctor of Music at Oxford. The following entry in the Chapter Books may be regarded as an instance of coming events casting their shadows before:—

December, 1811. Dr. Pring, the organist, having conducted himself with disrespect to the Dean, the Archdeacon of Merioneth, and Precentor, it was ordered that he should be reprimanded, and he was reprimanded accordingly.

But Dr. Pring was a man to be reckoned with, even by so mighty a power as the Dean and Chapter. He became acquainted with the Act of Parliament passed in 1685 (to which we have already referred) which included provision for the maintenance of the Choir at Bangor, but which the capitular body had diverted to other purposes! It was now the turn of Dr. Pring to reprimand the Dean and Chapter. Accordingly, in 1813, he and three of the vicars-choral presented a petition to the Court of Chancery for their rights of which the Dean and Chapter had wronged them. The suit dragged on for six years (till 1819), when Lord Chancellor Eldon, setting at naught the express provisions of the Act, sanctioned a scheme which indeed gave to the organist and choir increased stipends, but yet kept them considerably below the amounts they would have received if the Act had been fully carried out. It is not surprising that these long-protracted law proceedings impoverished Dr. Pring, and that he and his family were for some time in great need; but he fought a good fight, and, if he did not come off entirely conqueror, his action was fully warranted and his memory is justly honoured for his strenuous and self-sacrificing endeavours to uphold the rights of those who maintain so important a part of Cathedral life as the choral service.

Dr. Pring published in 1819 the whole of his case and the Chancery proceedings in an octavo volume of 264 pages. From a copy of this scarce, interesting and well-compiled book now before us, we extract the following amusing remarks made by Lord Eldon on Cathedral music during the hearing of the case:—

The Lord Chancellor said, he was no judge of the component parts of a Choir, but he thought he had heard the Rev. W. Moore, on great days in St. Paul's Cathedral, become as musical as he well could, at the end of the verses in the Psalms; and he believed (but he might be wrong) that the Service should be so uttered in all Cathedral Churches. He should let the case stand over until the 11th inst., in order to make himself more sufficiently acquainted of what were the component parts of a Choir.

Dr. Pring compiled a word-book of anthems for use in Bangor Cathedral. Two extracts from the Preface to this book are indeed worthy of quotation:—

The Chant, though a monotony, is capable of all the graces of accent, emphasis and pause; it is also more audible, and more striking, and upon the

whole produces a greater effect than can the best cadences in speaking.

Every Cathedral might become a glorious church, wherein all the members rejoice, animated with one spirit; the Spirit of God, of love, and sacred harmony.

Another literary production by the old organist claims notice. It is an exceedingly interesting pamphlet of forty pages, entitled 'Particulars of the Grand Suspension Bridge erected over the Straits of Menai . . . narrated by Dr. Pring.' In his 'Preparatory observations'—dated 'Penrallt, near Bangor, Feb. 22d. 1826'—our organist-author modestly says:—

The humble Author of this Epitome (wholly devoid of architectural talent) resided about a mile from the spot where the Menai Bridge is erected. Innate curiosity drew him frequently to the spot, to observe the growing 'form and feature' of a structure so novel, and which has left an indelible reminiscence on 'the mind's eye.'

One sentence from the 'narrative' must at least be quoted; it records 'the final opening of the Bridge for the accommodation of the public.' To quote Dr. Pring's words:—

On Monday, the 30th Jan., 1826, this stupendous, pre-eminent, and singularly unique structure, was opened to the Public, at 35 minutes after one o'clock, a.m., by the Royal London and Holyhead Mail Coach, conveying the London Mail-bag for Dublin; David Davies, Coachman, William Read, Guard.

It must have been a weird scene. A heavy gale was blowing on that January night; but, as Dr. Pring tells us, amidst the glare of lamps, the heavily-laden Mail-coach passed across the Bridge in grand style:—

The high-mettled steeds, mantling their proud crescent necks,
As if conscious of the triumphant achievement.

After having officiated at the organ in Bangor Cathedral for forty-nine years, Dr. Joseph Pring died, greatly respected and beloved, on February 13, 1842. He is buried in the Cathedral churchyard. His tomb bears the following epitaph in Welsh and English:—

ORGENYDD 'n ei ddydd oedd ef—dihafal,
Hyd fywyd, rhaid addef:—
Boed e'n awr, a hodau nef,
Yn gweini *Anthem* gwiwnef.

His master music in the Church below
Is hushed for ever!—still we hope he plays
Immortal anthems; where the sounds of woe
Shall never damp the sweetness of his lays.

Dr. Pring was succeeded by his son—James Sharpe Pring, formerly a chorister in the Cathedral and assistant to his father. During his occupancy of the post (from 1842 to 1868) he edited the musical portion of the 'Bangor Collection of Anthems adapted from various composers' (1848), of which the English words were fitted to the music by Dean Cotton. The subscribers to this anthem collection included a 'Mr. Beer, Livery Stables, Bath.'

Dr. Roland Rogers was the next man of mark to hold the chief-musicianship of Bangor Cathedral. He was appointed in July 1871,

the competition taking place at the Chapel Royal, with George Cooper as the umpire. One of the tests which the young organist had to undergo was to accompany a solo, the soloist on that occasion being one of the tenor Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal, Edward Lloyd by name. When Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Roland Rogers went to Bangor he found that the *Te Deum* was sung to two chants! When he left (in 1892) he had added to the repertory thirty services and 300 anthems. He played on the old Green organ, which had toe pedals and which stood on a screen in the Nave. At the restoration of the Nave, in May, 1880, he

DR. ROLAND ROGERS.

ORGANIST OF BANGOR CATHEDRAL FROM 1871 TO 1892.

(Photo by Mr. John Wickens, Upper Bangor.)

organized a performance of the 'Hymn of Praise'; and during his organistship of twenty-one years he raised the musical status of the Cathedral to a high standard of excellence. Moreover, he soon made a name as a skilful choir trainer beyond the walls of the Cathedral. He conducted the celebrated Bethesda choir which won £1,000 in prizes at various Eisteddfodau, and discovered the contralto voice in North Wales. Till then the alto part in choruses was sung by boys whose voices were bordering on the 'breaking' point, and all the women sang soprano! He was quick to perceive that the beautiful deep-toned voices of Welsh women could be used with splendid effect in choral music, with results that are too well-known

to need further comment. Dr. Rogers has opened 'scores of organs' in Wales, and is in great request as an adjudicator at musical competitions. He is now organist of St. James's Church, Upper Bangor.

Mr. T. Westlake Morgan, the present organist of Bangor Cathedral, was born at Congresbury, Somersetshire, on August 6, 1869. He was a chorister at King's College, Cambridge, and afterwards pupil-assistant to Dr. Mann, and organist of St. Catharine's College. He studied the organ under Sir Walter Parratt at the Royal College of Music, and became organist of St. George's Church, Paris, in 1889, having for his Vicar the Rev. George Washington,

MR. T. WESTLAKE MORGAN
ORGANIST OF BANGOR CATHEDRAL.

(Photo by Mr. John Wickens, Upper Bangor.)

the direct descendant of George Washington. His subsequent organistships were those of St. John's Church, Wilton Road—a post held by Dr. G. J. Bennett and Mr. T. T. Noble—St. David's, Merthyr Tydvil, and from thence, after competition, he went to Bangor Cathedral in 1892. His Bardic name is Mwyndaf Bencerdd, a title conferred upon him by the Gorsedd in 1901. As a Freemason he received the Coronation honour of Past Grand Organist of England, the only musical distinction of the kind bestowed by the Duke of Connaught in connection with the Coronation. He has till quite recently been a member of the Bangor School Board: one of

his hobbies is the history of the Cathedral, a pursuit which he follows with all the zeal of an enthusiastic antiquary.

The choir of Bangor—which consists of six lay-clerks and twelve (town) boys—had the honour of being invited *en bloc* by Sir Frederick Bridge to take part in the Purcell Celebration Service held in Westminster Abbey in 1895, the only choir outside London that so participated in a complete form. The boys sing remarkably well, and the lay-clerks can furnish a male-voice quartet that can give a very good account of itself. Bangor seems to be an excellent stepping-stone to other appointments and spheres of influence. Mr. Ffrangcon Davies was formerly a member of the choir, as were also Mr. William Davies and Mr. F. W. Norcup, now of St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey respectively; and Mr. Charles H. Moody, now organist of Ripon Cathedral, was at one time an assistant organist at Bangor.

For valued help in the preparation of this article, thanks are specially tendered to Mr. T. Westlake Morgan, Cathedral organist; to Mrs. Turner, of Thornton Heath, for the loan of the portrait of her grandfather, Dr. Pring, which forms our special portrait supplement; and to Mr. John Wickens, Retina Studio, Upper Bangor, for the use of his excellent photographs.

DOTTED CROTCHET.

VINCENT NOVELLO.

1781-1861.

(Continued from page 581.)

No biographer of Novello mentions the fact that he was organist of St. Patrick's Chapel, Soho; but he is stated to have held that post in the list of subscribers to the Anthems composed by Dr. Joseph Pring, organist of Bangor Cathedral, published in 1805.

Although slightly out of chronological order in the resumption of the narrative, the last reference to Charles Lamb may find a place here. It is an unsigned letter from the genial scribe, and is preserved in the MS. department of the British Museum. Novello has endorsed this comical communication thus:—

A very characteristic note from Dear Charles Lamb, who always pretended to hate all kinds of memorials and *relics*, and assumed a look of fright and horror whenever he reproached me with being a *Papist*, instead of a *Quaker*, which sect he pretended to doat upon.

The letter itself, of the year 1830, reads:—

DEAR N—,

Pray write immediately to say 'The book has come safe.*' I am anxious not so much for the autographs, as for that bit of the hair brush. I enclose a cinder, which belonged to *Shield*, when he was poor, and lit his own fires. Any memorial of a great Musical Genius, I know, is acceptable; and

* Doubtless Novello's album. Lamb wrote to Hone, on May 21, 1830: 'Pray, if you have time to, call on Novello, at 66, Great Queen Street. I am anxious to learn whether he received his album I sent on Friday by our nine o'clock morning stage. If not, beg him to enquire at the *Old Bell*, Holborn.'