

Biographical Note: Douglas Jones



Douglas was born in Greenwich, London in 1956. He lived his early years in Kent where he began his musical studies at the piano at the age of seven. Since joining the choir of St Alban's Church, Dartford at the age of ten, Douglas' career as a church musician has never looked back. At fourteen he gained his first organist's appointment at St Mary's Church, Castle Street in Reading and took on his first role as conductor of the Reading Musical Society Orchestra and official accompanist to the society's chorus. The following year he returned to Woodley Parish Church where he acted as joint Organist and Choirmaster, building a large RSCM choir of about 30 boy choristers and a mixed choir of altos, tenors and basses consisting largely of teenagers and ex-trebles. During his last two years in Berkshire Douglas was assistant Director of Music at All Saint's, Wokingham and afterwards at St Paul's, Wokingham.

He managed to continue his work in Berkshire at weekends whilst studying for his Graduate Diploma at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and completed his Teacher training at Berkshire College of Education in his home town of Woodley. Part of his professional training included the study of Church Music and Palaeography with Anthony Greening and Choral Conducting with Brian Wright and later Gwyn Arch, conductor and arranger of the highly acclaimed Bulmershe Girls' Choir.

After a spell teaching in West Sussex, Douglas moved to Northamptonshire where he sang in the choir of St Matthew's Church (for whom Benjamin Britten wrote

much commissioned music) and later served as organist for a time at St Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers. Since then he has lived and worked in Yorkshire, first as Director of Music at Moorlands Preparatory School, Leeds and also as Principal Cantoris Alto Lay-Clerk at Leeds Parish Church under Simon Lindley. Later he became organist at All Souls Church, Blackman Lane in Leeds. In 1996, Douglas was appointed to the post of Director of Music at Birkdale Prep School here in Sheffield and has been for many years Organist and Choirmaster at St Andrew's United Reformed Church, where he also helped design the present organ.

Douglas' keen interest in music and computing also stretches to the brass band and orchestral traditions; he is able to play the euphonium and trombone. He has always been an enthusiastic promoter of music for children and founded the annual Birkdale Festival of Music and Performing Arts. He also founded the children's training orchestra, SISTO, which aimed to give orchestral experience to students of approximately Grades 1 to 4. But his greatest love will always be church music and he has composed and arranged a considerable amount of choral music in the form of hymn tunes, anthems and liturgical settings, examples of which may be seen here:

www.douglaspjones.co.uk/FreeDownloads.html

Douglas has now retired from over thirty-three years of teaching but continues to contribute to the Sheffield musical scene, both at St Andrew's URC and as accompanist to the Hallam Choral Society. Throughout his career Douglas has composed his own music and completed many arrangements. He continues with this work today and some of his compositions and arrangements are performed by the Hallam Choral Society and used in the Sunday services at St Andrew's.

The Organ at St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Sheffield



The organ was custom-built by Hugh Banton of The Organ Workshop, Lymm, Cheshire and was inaugurated by Neil Taylor (Sheffield Cathedral) as part of St. Andrew's 150th Anniversary celebrations on 26th October 2003. It is a large three-manual instrument with forty traditional voices and another forty alternative voices. Despite looking and sounding like a pipe organ, the instrument is all-digital, the seven speaker units being concealed within the case of the pipe organ which it replaced.

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