

**APCM Music Report for the Windmill United Benefice
St Bartholmew Burstow, St Mary the Virgin Horne and St John the Baptist Outwood
April 2024 – March 2025**

I am privileged to hold a unique position in our Archdeaconry, Director of Music across a Benefice of three churches. I enjoy working with the dedicated choristers who lead our worship and with Peter, Roger, James and Emma who accompany our services. As I am also Director of Music at Horne, I am there most Sundays, but over the past two years, I have tried to be at services in both Burstow and Outwood once a month. I enjoy working with choristers and accompanists in both churches supporting and facilitating the music we have prepared at choir practices. Thank you all for making me welcome.

This past year has been a year of change, half of it during an interregnum and the second half with our new incumbent. I would like to thank Rev. Charles Sargent and Rev. Steve Bishop for their support and guidance throughout the interregnum, and since, which was always so helpful and reassuring.

Choirs

The choirs of Horne, Burstow and Outwood have continued to lead worship at services in our churches. Sometimes choir numbers are very small but those singing accept the challenge and manage very well. Confidence is growing. I am grateful to choristers who support music by singing at a different church. It feels special that all singers are welcome at any of the churches and because we have practised together, everyone is prepared for everything every week.

In addition to Sunday morning services, the choir has sung three Choral Evensongs – on Palm Sunday 2024, at the Burstow Flower Festival on 28 July 2024 and at Candlemas on 2 February 2025. Other special services include Ascension Day 2024, Rev. Alan Bayes' Induction on 30/09/2024 and Ash Wednesday 5/3/2025

A small choir gathered for the Victorian evening at Horne and sang in Victorian attire. The choir sang in a concert on the Royal Earlswood Estate on 13 December, with both Roger and Peter playing the pipe organ there.

On 19 December, the choir sang for East Surrey Hospital's Christmas Carol Service, which was recorded by Radio Redhill and broadcast on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Horne's Christmas Carol Service was recorded by Susy radio and also broadcast on Christmas day.

Junior Choir

Bryony and Elizabeth attended the Royal School of Church Music Bath Course in August 2024. It was Bryony's first visit and Elizabeth's second. Both girls thoroughly enjoyed the week and plan to go again in 2025.

To offset some of the cost of the course, the girls gave an afternoon concert at St Mary's, singing solos and some pieces together. This was very popular and the audience was most supportive. Some funds are now held at Horne to support young choristers wishing to attend future courses.

RSCM Awards Elizabeth Barrett gained the RSCM Silver Award in September 2024 and now wears a medal with a purple ribbon. Others are working towards awards and hope to receive them later this year.

The Windmill Songmen

The Songmen sang at the Burstow Flower Festival on July 26, 2024. They have also performed in East Grinstead, on 7 November and at WOW on 15 January. In all these places they have been warmly welcomed. Return visits have been requested. The Songmen have plans to sing in Horley Community Centre in April and at a Nursing Home in Reigate. All men are welcome to join. No experience or expertise is necessary, but experienced singers are also welcome. It's meant to be fun and enjoyable, with no commitment. Anyone interested in coming along should speak to Ginette or Peter (ginettenye@gmail.com or 07714403624)

Horne Church Band

We are pleased to have welcomed Rachel Bayes to the group. The Accordion is a great addition. I am grateful to Sue, Andrew, Elizabeth, Gill, Steve, David, Rachel, Peter and Michael for your loyal commitment to the monthly Family Services at Horne as well as to the extra services we play for.

Music at Café Church

Peter Nye, Steve and Gill Robinson and Rachel Bayes play for Café Church each month. With minimal rehearsal, the group enables the singing of some great worship songs.

Handbells

The handbell choir, run by Rev. Charles Sargent, performed at the Burstow Flower Festival in July, the Christmas Carol Service in December and at WOW. Practices are usually on Sunday afternoons and the group has continued to become more confident and develop a wider repertoire. They are always well-received when they play.

Concerts

Peter Nye has given several organ recitals over the past year; in October and November 2024 and in February and March 2025. His recitals are popular with many, who enjoy hearing not just the music but also what he tells them about the music, the composers and the organ. 2025 is Play the Organ Year and Peter hopes to allow several people to have a go on the organ at Horne. If you are interested, speak to Peter Nye (ppn@blueyonder.co.uk or 07790 727570).

Petty Cash

At the end of March 2024, the balance was £111.25.

The choir has sung for three funerals and two weddings, proceeds from which have gone into petty cash after paying the choristers. The Songmen received a donation for singing in East Grinstead.

I have bought anthems for the choir, Voice for Life workbooks, service music for Burstow and Outwood, paper and plastic wallets for the new psalms. The fund has also paid some of the cost of making hymn booklets for the choir and printing other music as required.

The balance on 11 March 2025 is £111.45

Organs

The pipe organs at both Outwood and Burstow are in need of repair and restoration. The Diocesan Organ Advisers visited both organs on 23 July 2024, to give advice.

At Outwood, repairs are needed. The organ cannot be played until these are done. There is an option to also replace the keyboard so that future breakages are less likely. Currently the situation is still waiting to be discussed at a PCC meeting.

The situation at Burstow is much graver, with the organ needing both repairs and restoration.

In August we took step 1 of the Organ Advisers' advice and bought a Data Logger. It has been monitoring temperature and humidity in the organ loft. The data we have collected shows that the humidity in the organ loft is far too high most of the time. When the heating is then turned on for Sunday, the instrument suffers a thermal shock and is sometimes not playable at all. To alleviate this problem, the heating has been on (low) for days before the Sunday service. This has mostly avoided losing the organ all together, but it is costly. People at Burstow have been diligent in managing the heating and keeping doors closed.

In addition to this problem, there are several parts of the organ which need to be repaired. Roger manages valiantly to play without the notes which don't speak and avoiding those which cause cyphers, but it is difficult and not a pleasure for him at all. The next stage is to seek quotations for both repair and restoration. I am hoping this can be agreed in the next few weeks. The quotations will involve large sums of money. If we decide to go ahead, fund-raising and grant applications will be necessary. On the positive side, the Organ Advisers loved the Binns organ and appreciated how close to its original state it has been kept. Binns organs are renowned and well-respected in the organ world. We have a gem!

At Horne, the electronic organ continues to give good service. The electrical contacts on the pedal board have been renewed and it is in good working order.

The pipe organ at Horne also needs renovation involving a large cost and the plans from 2020 have fallen through because the chosen builder went out of business during the pandemic. The organs at Burstow and Outwood are taking priority.

I would like to finish by welcoming Rev. Alan Bayes to the Benefice. His enthusiasm for music is exciting and I look forward to a wonderful musical future.

Ginette Nye
March 2025