

# Church Music in London 2005

A survey drawn from churches and  
RSCM members in the London  
Diocese of the Church of England

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# Objectives

- To gain insight into the music leadership resources in London churches.
- To identify needs and ideas for events for music leaders, singers and instrumentalists that will help parish church music grow in London.
- To assess the general availability of singers and instrumentalists for traditional robed choirs and music groups.



# Survey and Communications

- Letter and a survey form prepared in mid-2005
- Agreed with RSCM London NW area committee and supported by St Paul's Cathedral Music Department.
- Mailing by post to all RSCM members and affiliated churches in London.
- Through Diocesan Communications Office:
  - included in London Diocese emailing to all clergy on 3 occasions.
  - Posted on the London Diocese website.
- Plus emails to church administrators and deanery chapters.
- Data gathered during August-October 2005.



# Background Statistics

(from London Diocese Web site)

- London diocese 277 square miles
- Population 3,500,000
- Churches - 479
- Clergy ~ 480
- Church Schools – 148 with 46,582 pupils
- Church-goers
  - 68,000 electoral roll
  - 71,400 average weekly attendance
- *RSCM Affiliates and Members ~250*



# Survey Returns

<b>RSCM Affiliated</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Amateur</b>
Yes	5	30
No-send info	1	7
No –no interest	3	10
Don't Know	0	3
No Answer	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>55</b>



# Some cautionary notes:

- The number of returns at 13.4% of churches is low and for some deaneries there were no responses.
- Returns outside of N, NW and W London few!
- Insufficient to make a robust assessment of the composition of choirs and available resources in the diocese.
- All ideas received have been noted.
- A few survey returns indicated that choir directors and choir members may be too busy with their own programme to participate in more events.
- Eight returns were from churches with no choir or music group. It is not known how many churches in the diocese are in a similar position.



# Professional Choirs

- 9 returns from an estimated 35 who are mainly in “Zone 1” Central London
- Resources vary:
  - Foundation is often a quartet or double quartet of professional singers
    - E.g. St Bartholomew the Great, St Giles Cripplegate,
  - possibly expanded on occasions up to a substantial professional chamber choir ( e.g. St James Garlickhythe for a livery service )
  - St Giles also has a junior parish children’s choir
  - Some City churches- pattern or worship often driven by weekday programmes
  - Hampton Court Chapel Royal 14 trebles +10 adults
  - Goodenough College Choir 16-20 adult, some postgraduate singers
  - Well-known evangelical centres have substantial choral and instrumental resources.
    - e.g. All Souls Langham Place, St Helen’s Bishopsgate, Holy Trinity Brompton

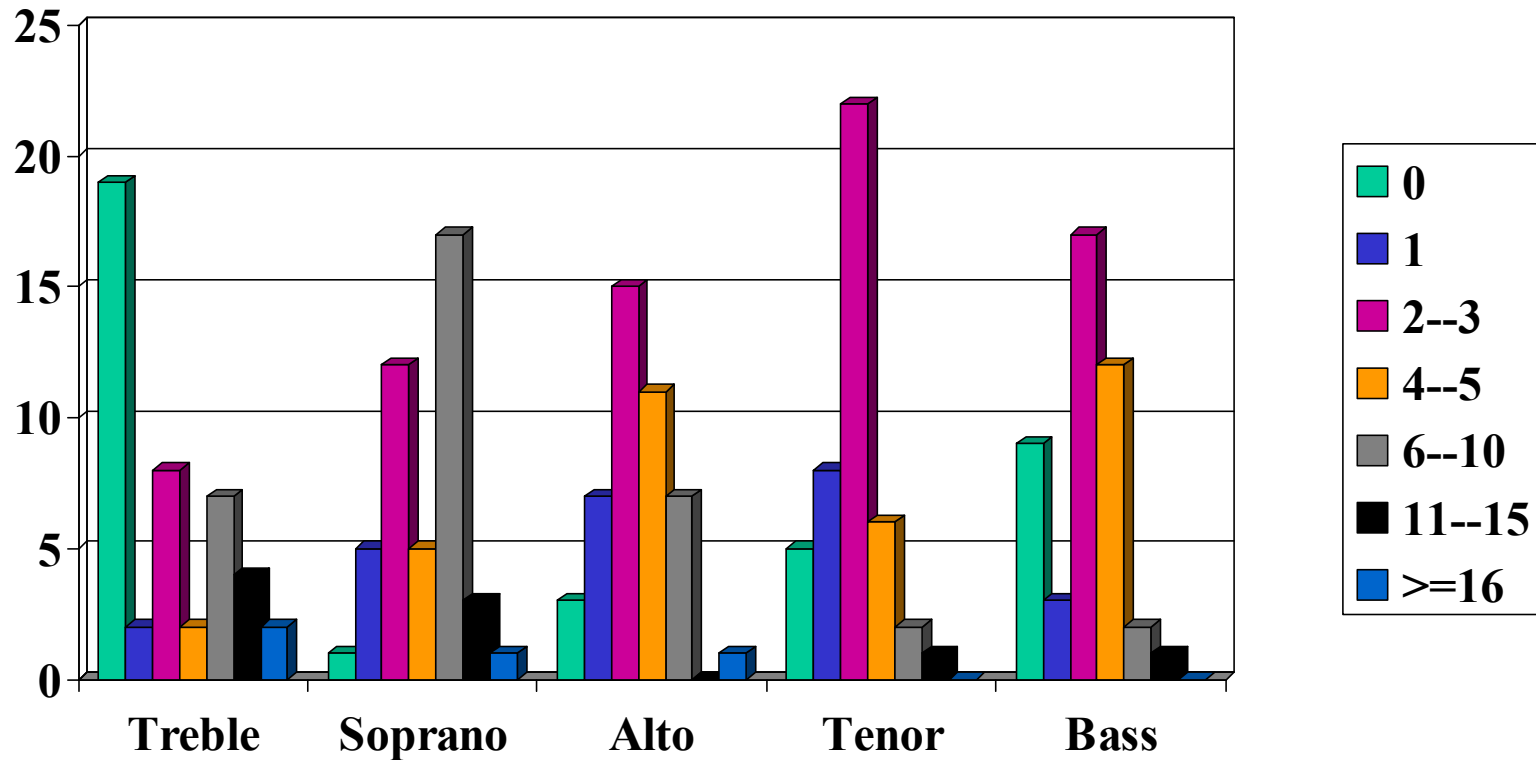


# Traditional Parish Choirs

- 44 returns
  - 25 choirs include children
    - 12  $\leq$  5 ; 7 with 6-10 ; 4 with 11-15 ; 2  $\geq$  20
  - Youth participation
    - 20 none ; 20  $\leq$  5 (typically 2-3) 4  $\geq$  6
    - one choir unusually had 16 in this age group
  - Adults
    - Seven choirs had  $>$ 5 adults in 20-30yrs.
    - Most adults were in the range 31-59 yrs.
    - Some choirs had one or more parts absent altos 3; tenors 6 ;basses 9.
  - Ladies (Sops and Altos)
    - Sopranos: 17 1-3; 5 4-5; 17 6-10; 4  $\geq$  11
    - Altos: 22 1-3; 11 4-5; 7 6-10; 1  $\geq$  11
  - Men ( Tenors and Basses)
    - Tenors: 30 1-3; 6 4-5; 2 6-10; 1  $\geq$  11
    - Basses 20 1-3; 12 4-5; 2 6-10; 1  $\geq$  11



# Traditional Parish Choirs: Composition by voice part



# Churches with Music Groups

- Music group 6 returns from churches with no traditional choir
  - Substantial
    - St Stephen's Twickenham
      - Instrumentalists 57 Singers 44
    - St Barnabas Woodside Park
      - Instrumentalists 31 Singers 36; organised as 4 rotating bands with 6 leaders.
  - Others
    - Variable composition from 5 instrumentalists & a singer, 11 instrumentalists and a singer, 6 instrumentalists & 2 singers
    - One group of 16 singers.



# Churches with Traditional Choir and a Music Group

- Music groups at churches with traditional choirs 23 returns
  - Singers and Instrumentalists often overlap with membership of choir
- Instrumentalists
  - Adults: 10 <= 5 6 with 6-12
    - 7 include children 8 with youths
    - Larger instrumental groups
      - Church of the Ascension, Wembley St Mary's Islington, All Saints, Staines, St Andrews Uxbridge
- Singers
  - Children: 6 2-3; 2 4-5; 3 6-12
  - Youths; 3 2-3; 3 4-5; 1 6-12
  - Adults 4 1-3; 4 4-5; 5 6-12; 3 with >=13
  - Larger singing groups with 13-20 singers in a category
    - St Ann's Tottenham, Christ Church Barnet, St Martin's Ruislip, St Jude on the Hill, NW 111.



# Conclusions on Musical Resources

- Traditional Choirs

- Churches are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain musicians and choir members who are willing to commit to regular weekly practices and Sunday services.
- Competing external, outside church, attractions are depleting the junior and youth sections of choirs to the point where their medium to long-term existence is under serious threat.
- Shortage of singers, especially for harmony parts, makes it difficult to prepare and present interesting music
- Today's absence of a singing tradition in state schools makes it difficult to recruit singers. Conversely the public schools are so busy doing their own thing that there is a reluctance to offer support to Parish music.
- New ways of working together and support the growth of church music are urgently required if it is to have a future.

- Music Groups

- Many churches with traditional choirs have extended their musical offerings by adding singing groups and instrumentalists. This both extends the range of music in a church and enables more people to contribute to music in worship.
- Cover a variety of traditions including folk groups, gospel singers through to 'rock' bands.
- Can provide more opportunity to instrumentalists but sometimes with less scope for singers to develop their skills.
- Capable of providing an interesting and valuable new approach to engaging more people in worship.
- Reaching and retaining a high standard requires similar commitment to rehearsal, preparation as classical four-part music.

- *Need to take the best ideas from both styles and build a sustainable pattern of quality church music that is rich, diverse and attainable.*



# Ideas for development and events

- Note several respondents indicated a lack of interest in purely networking events.
  - The demands of their professional lives and the provision of music in their own church left little time for events that do not offer high relevance and value.
- It is vital that each event has a clear focus and explicit benefits for participants.
- London is vast. Some events need to be targeted at a local episcopal area or deanery level.
- Challenge in taking these ideas and developing an attractive programme of events that truly reaches the needs of many.



# Singing Events

- Get together with a good mix of locally usable pieces and music for larger resources
  - Music Festivals need plenty of notice and time to prepare on top of normal liturgical year
- A Diocesan choir festival every year and other central London events
- A Choir Festival for East London
- Area and Deanery evensong /festival services in Hillingdon
- Harrow Deanery Festival
- Sing & Sight-reading events
- A Special Sunday Evensong targeted at including young people and choristers
- Joining with other local parish choirs
- New repertoire ½ day event for children
- “Singing the Standard” Sunday or Weekend at St Paul’s Cathedral
- Major choral works and oratorio workshop



# Singing Events Key Points

- Develop events that meet needs of geography
  - Adjacent parishes joining together for a patronal festival
  - Deanery and Area Services
  - Diocesan Services
  - Cathedral Services when choir is on leave
- Develop events within musical capabilities that provide some stretch
  - Small choir festivals with music that can be reused in parish services
  - Singing from Scratch for Charity
  - Praise Festivals embracing all styles of music with solo, group and joint items
  - Cathedral services where the measure is against world-class excellence.
- ***Success (and repeat demands) will come from events that are well run and music that is prepared and presented to a high standard.***



# Training Events

- More training events for senior choristers for awards
- Training for young people in singing and general choir work- check out what happens in Essex and E. London
- Plainsong workshops
- Workshops on performing oratorios and other major works
- Training children in singing technique
- Workshops on specific periods and styles of music
- Evening or day courses for singers and instrumentalists
- Easy and approachable anthem repertoire including accompaniment
- Mass setting repertoire and how to teach it
- Session on sight-singing and learning new music quickly but reliably
- Training in instructing for 'Voice for Life'
- Choir exercises, reading skills, tuning etc
- Music group 'jam sessions' with coaching
- Working with microphones and PA systems
- How to play worship songs for classical musicians
- Music theory for singers



# Other Events

- Annual exhibition and sale of choir and organ music especially Mass settings
- Presentation of New Music, esp. seasonal but well in advance
- Workshop on Congregational Music for the Liturgy
- Provide performance opportunities for budding singers and musicians to gain experience and introduce a wider range of music to congregations
- Anglican Church music workshop at St Paul's Cathedral for musicians
- Workshop on worship music and bands
- Music for liturgy and worship in the rich cultural mix of London
- Team building for choir and musicians.
- New ways of organising and providing church music amidst the competing pressures of modern life
- Discussion event covering topics such as Finance and Budgeting, Time management, Clergy- Musician relationships etc
- Reluctant Organist Session
- Tackling “ How to recruit and retain choir members of all ages”
- Performing Arts in the Church



# Discussion Forums

- How to recruit new choir members?
- Play, Sing and Discuss music from contemporary composers
- Clergy- Musician Relationships
- Sharing ideas with others
- Getting diverse cultures to work and participate together



# Repertoire Guides

- Repertoire
  - Graded repertoire lists of copyright-free music with voice resources
  - Sectionalised catalogue of music with graded repertoire- start with psalms?
  - Encourage publishers to make new hymns available on the internet- too many expensive hymn books.
  - Guide to the different methods of singing the psalms with a CD demonstrating how to do them well.
  - New spiritual music
  - New material for Christmas and Easter
  - Simple anthems with easy accompaniments



# Other Requests

- Internet-based Directory of reserve organists
- Newsletter with information for church musicians about events in churches.
- Visits during normal practices and services from an expert to provide reflection, advice and ideas.



# Leading Events and Support

## From "Zone 1" musicians

- Organ Playing
  - ½ day event for children aged 7-15 in an attractive location
  - Leading events or organ accompaniment
  - Talk 'From Performance to Praise' plus managing diversity of styles of music in worship including playing from a chord chart.
  - Worship seminars and the Performing Arts
  - Placement of a RAM postgraduate choir director student in a local church
  - "Singing the Standard" event at St Paul's Cathedral.
- From Greater London musicians in the diocese
    - Leading singing events
    - Leading training days for organists, choir directors, choirs and composers
    - Repertoire Event
    - Providing a venue for an event Ealing, Chelsea, Wembley,
    - Compositions to accompany the liturgy
    - Hosting a Hillingdon Deanery choirs festival
    - Assistance with organising and running events
    - Leading choral and singing courses/events plus becoming an RSCM awards validated examiner
    - Event with Gregorian Association
  - *Wonderful Willingness to help with leading of events and organisation!*



# Where Next?

- Rich Collection of Ideas for Events, Training and Support Needs.
- Great offers to lead and help with running events.
- So find people to put together a programme.
  - Material from survey will be used by RSCM London NW to plan events programme.
  - Seeking active support and participation from RSCM HQ.
  - Organise a Church Music Forum with the support of the Cathedral Music Department to nurture music in the London Diocese.



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