

# **Dr Cyril Stanley Christopher**

## **(1897-1979)**



**A short biography of the life, career and ancestry of Dr Cyril Stanley Christopher**

**Author Yvonne Moore BSc 2013, 2021 ©**

***Photograph kindly contributed by Birmingham Conservatoire Archives – with thanks.***

## **DR CYRIL STANLEY CHRISTOPHER**

### **Introduction**

Dr Cyril Stanley Christopher was a Doctor of Music (from Durham University.)

My interest in him and his life comes through a family member who purchased his house in Sutton Coldfield after he had died and his widow was moving into care. The family always wished to know a little more about him.

Dr Christopher died in March 1979 and the family member moved into the house in November 1980.

The house is at 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield. It is a 'between the wars' semi - detached house with an arts and crafts period influence.

It is not known if Dr or Mrs Christopher drove a car throughout the time that they lived in Four Oaks, but the house is very close to Four Oaks Railway Station and a bus route, both of which go into Birmingham City Centre. They would have relied on a good transport system to follow their careers. It was thought Dr Christopher may have owned a green Wolseley car.

It seems that at some point, Dr Christopher lost or destroyed the deeds to the house and my family member was in possession of various sworn documents from Mabel, his wife and the two executors to Dr Christopher's Will to this effect. His wife Mabel survived him and moved out of the house during 1979, when the house went on the market.

Dr Christopher had a varied and prolific musical career and several archive sources have been found to outline his achievements.

The author is a genealogist and family historian and has followed the ancestry of Cyril Christopher, back to his fairly 'working - class' origins in the 'Black Country'.

It is clear that Cyril Stanley Christopher came from a humble, but musical 'Black Country' family. This makes his achievements all the more remarkable.

### **Aims**

This work aims to outline the achievements of Cyril Stanley Christopher and also those of his wife Mabel Senior by collating the available archive materials found about them, along with some personal memories about the couple.

The research begins with outlining the musical achievements and work undertaken by Cyril Stanley Christopher, including, where appropriate, some information about other people who influenced his musical career. Also included is some information about the musical career of Mabel Senior, Soprano.

This is followed by the ancestral line for the families of Cyril Stanley Christopher and Mabel Senior.

Included is some information about the house at 23 Cremorne Road which was the home of Cyril and Mabel between 1941 and 1979.

A piece of organ sheet music by Dr Christopher was purchased by the author and is also included.

At the end, can be found the sources of materials with acknowledgments to those who have contributed to this work.

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## **A short biography about Cyril Stanley Christopher from the archives of the Birmingham Conservatoire by John D. Smith**

John D Smith is the Honorary Archivist at the Birmingham Conservatoire.

### **Cyril Christopher (1897 -1979) Organist and Member of Staff**

#### **Birmingham School of Music/Conservatoire Honorary Fellowship conferred in 1970**

“Cyril Stanley Christopher, English Organist and composer, was born on 23 June 1897 in Oldbury. He began piano lessons at an early age and his father, an Organist and Choirmaster, and mother would supervise his practise. His first composition was published when he was thirteen and at sixteen, he received his first organ appointment in open competition. At that time, he had never had an organ lesson though he had already played for two full - scale performances of Haydn’s *‘The Creation’*.”

He was a private pupil for the organ of C. W. Perkins (Organist of Carrs Lane Church and the City), Dr Alfred Hollins (the blind Organist of Edinburgh) and G. D. Cunningham, and for composition of C. H. Kitson and Sir Edward C. Bairstow of York Minster.

Among the diplomas and degrees, he took are the ARCM and LRAM (1925), ARCO (1928), FRCO with the “Turpin” Prize (1929), B. Mus of Durham University (1935) and D. Mus (Dunelm, 1940).

In 1927, he was offered, through Dr Alfred Hollins who had been touring America, an organ appointment at St John, New Brunswick. The offer was renewed in 1930 and declined on both occasions.

He was conductor of the Dudley Madrigal Society (1921-26) and other choirs; Chorus Master of the BBC Midland Region (1927-30); Organist and Choirmaster of Wretham Road, New Church; Organist for the BBC’s Bach Cantatas; Organist and Choirmaster at Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham from 1930 for 37 years, following Graham Godfrey who went to Canada; conductor of the Oldbury and District Male Choir, and conductor of the Oratorio Choir of the Free Churches of Dudley from 1942.

He was music master at King Edwards Five Ways School (1944-5) where he gave eight piano recitals in 1944. The following year the Five Ways Music Club was founded; the Vice - Presidents included Dr Christopher, Paul Beard, Dr Christopher Edmunds and Professor Victor Hely - Hutchinson. The First Annual (music) Festival took place in the School Hall, Five Ways, in April 1945.

He was an extra - mural lecturer at Birmingham University and, from 1947, lecturer for the Birmingham Board of Adult Education. He gave organ recitals periodically and appeared as solo organist at orchestral concerts and with the Birmingham Bach Society (later Club) which had been founded in 1920 by Mrs Minadieu.

In 1950, he adjudicated at the Bournville Works Musical Festival.

He was appointed teacher of theory at the Birmingham School of Music in 1956. His considerable output of compositions, some of which were broadcast in this country, Holland, South Africa, USA and Canada, includes church music, choral and orchestral works and he wrote for various periodicals.

A member of Carrs Lane Church congregation recalled that he used to put a ‘hanky’ on his seat so he could “slide up and down better”.

His wife, having been selected from over 30 applicants, was Principal Soprano at Carrs Lane Church for 26 years. The Church Journal of January 1968 recorded that “in addition to being a fine soloist, she was a splendid leader”.

Dr Christopher died in Sutton Coldfield on 31 March 1979.

His name is in The Musicians Book of Remembrance in the Musicians' Chapel of the National Musicians' Church, St Sepulchre-without-Newgate in London."

**John D Smith 14 January 2009** – with thanks

**Biographical information about Cyril Stanley Christopher, taken from the Bach - Cantatas website and written by Aryeh Oron**

"Cyril Christopher obtained his Music Degree at Dunelm College, Durham University in the academic year 1934-5. (This is confirmed by the Durham University archive website).

Dr Christopher was an accomplished Organist and music composer/arranger. He studied music with Sir Edward Bairstow, Prof. C. H. Kitson, Alfred Hollins, G. D. Cunningham and Ambrose Covieilo.

He held numerous posts including church organist, choral conductor, lecturer, adjudicator and organist emeritus at Carrs Lane Church in Birmingham (1930). He taught theory (harmony, counterpoint etc.) at Birmingham School of Music (now Conservatoire). He taught also at Birmingham University.

He was the music master at King Edwards Grammar School Five Ways in Birmingham. He was a chorus master at the BBC (Midland Station), the Birmingham Bach Society, the City of Birmingham Choir, plus others.

**Titles gained**

FRCO – Fellowship Diploma of Royal College of Organists (Turpin Prize Winner, 1929)

LRAM – Licentiate of Royal Academy of Music

FBSM – Fellowship of Birmingham School of Music

ARCM – Associate of Royal Academy of Music

**Some examples of his work – compositions or arrangements**

Wedding Day at Troldhaugen (Grieg) (arrangement)

Variations on an Old English tune for strings

Midsummer Night

The Lone Shore

Freedom (these things shall be)

Fantasy trio for clarinet, violin and piano – 1939

Sonata for oboe and piano – 1956

Serenade for violin and piano

Quartet for piano and strings

Sonata for violin and piano

Piano – three concert preludes, tone stanzas etc.

Organ Sonata Brevis

Organ Rhapsody on a ground

Three choral improvisations

Hymn of Nature – soloists, chorus and Orchestra

Cantata Via Crucis – arranged for soloists, chorus and organ

(The author has a scanned copy of Via Crucis, courtesy of Tim Batty, Carrs Lane Church)

A New Heaven

Plus, many more that cannot all be listed here.”

Aryeh Oron cites these following publications used as a basis for his research

‘Bakers Biographical Dictionary – twentieth century classic musicians’, published 1997

‘International Who’s Who, in Music and Musicians’, published 1972

The research above was undertaken by Aryeh Oron in July 2011 as published online and used with his permission.

### **The Birmingham Bach Choir and Society/Club - archive information**

John D Smith notes that Cyril Christopher appeared as a solo organist for the Birmingham Bach Society/ Club. Below is a brief description of the history of the society to further our understanding of how Cyril Christopher worked with eminent musicians.

The choir was established in 1919 by Dr Bernard Jackson. The choir continued until 1927 then closed until 1929.

The choir was re-established in 1929 by Madame Minadiou and she renamed it ‘The Birmingham Bach Club’. It later became affiliated with the Bach Cantata Club in London.

Dr Allen Keet Blackall was the organist and he was also the organist at St Mary church, Warwick. He later became the principal and conductor at the Birmingham School of Music.

The choir continued until the outbreak of the war and was re - established again on 30 September 1947 as the Birmingham Bach Society.

Dr Willis Grant was the organist at the time and stayed with the society for eleven years. He was also the organist at Birmingham Cathedral and later became Professor of Music at Bristol.

After Dr Grant left, he was followed by Thomas Tunnard for one year, Hamish Preston for five years, and Roy Massey for two years until September 1960 and he was followed by Richard Butt and Paul Spicer.

The society underwent many changes during the 1960’s.

**Source:** Michael Palmer, archivist for the Birmingham Bach Society/Club.

## **Corrine Bennett – from the ‘Memoires of a Soprano’**

A lengthy memoir written by Corrine Bennett in November 1999 from her home in Witney, Oxfordshire was posted online in a pdf format.

This is paraphrased and included here for interest as it gives us a brief personal view of the Birmingham Bach Choir and Society/ Club, as well as its links to Carrs Lane Church. It is likely that Corrine would have met Dr and Mrs Christopher.

Corrine Bennett was a soprano who first encountered the Birmingham Bach Society in January 1960 at the old Carrs Lane Church. A choir of around thirty people were gathered in an upstairs room that was very draughty.

The conductor was Hamish Preston who had taken over from Willis Grant, who had recently retired. The choir were rehearsing for a Lent concert. At that time, most concerts were performed at Birmingham Cathedral.

Corrine Bennett's first Mass in B minor was sung with Roy Massey. Corrine was 'uncomfortably pregnant' at the time. This was in 1966 and she took maternity leave until February 1967. She started with rehearsals for a Lenten concert – Bach's Motet, 'Jesu, Meine Freude'.

Corrine noted that in 1965, tickets for performances at Birmingham Cathedral cost 7/6d. In 1970, the tickets were £2.50 and by 1985 they were between £5 and £7.

Corrine's last concert was in June 1997.

## **Some information about some of the eminent people Dr Christopher worked or studied with**

These details are added to give context to the musical career of Cyril Christopher and for general interest.

### **Sir Edward Bairstow**

Edward Bairstow was born in 1874 in Huddersfield and he died in 1946. He was an English organist and composer. He studied with John Farmer at Balliol College, Oxford.

After Oxford he was articled at Westminster Abbey and then went on to study organ and theory at Durham University. He gained his Bachelor of Music in 1894 and his Doctorate in 1901 (Durham).

Sir Edward held posts at London, Wigan, Leeds and York Minster (1913- 1946). He was knighted in 1932.

### **Professor Charles Herbert Kitson**

Charles Herbert Kitson was born in 1874 in Leyburn, Lancashire. He was an organist, teacher and author.

He gained his B.A. in theology in 1896 and his M.A. in 1904 (Cambridge, Selwyn College). He gained his Bachelor of Music in 1897 and his Doctorate in 1902, as an external student at Oxford.

He taught at Haileybury and at St Edmund School, Canterbury. He was the organist at St John the Baptist Church in Leicester and Organist at Christ Church Dublin between 1913 and 1920.

He became a non-resident Professor of Music at Dublin in 1915. In 1920, he was in London where he was the Professor at the Royal College of Music. He retired in 1935 and died in London in 1944.

## **Alfred Hollins**

Alfred Hollins was born in 1865 in Hull and he died in 1942.

He was an organist, composer, teacher and recitalist (in Scotland). He was blind from birth and went to the Royal Normal College for the Blind.

He gave many recitals in London. He studied music in Berlin and Frankfurt. He was awarded an honorary music doctorate from Edinburgh.

## **George Dorrington Cunningham**

George Dorrington Cunningham was born in 1878 in Birmingham. His parents were both musical.

George studied the organ at the Guildhall School of Music and the Royal Academy in London.

He became a well - known recitalist and played the organ at Alexandra Palace until the organ was damaged in 1915.

In 1924, he became an organist for the City of Birmingham Choir and also at Birmingham School of Music.

He later became a conductor for the City of Birmingham Choir. The choir performed at the Birmingham Town Hall. In 1930, he played and was recorded playing on the restored organ at Alexandra Palace.

George died in 1948. There was a memorial concert given that year for him by the City of Birmingham Choir.



**George Dorrington Cunningham**

## **The City of Birmingham Choir**

This choir was established in 1921 and performed at the Birmingham Town Hall.

The first President was Sir Granville Bantock, who had succeeded Edward Elgar as Professor of Music at Birmingham University.

Sir Granville was also the Principal of the Birmingham and Midland Institute School of Music.

The first concert was given on 28 November 1921 and was conducted by Joseph Lewis.

Later conductors included G. D. Cunningham (1926-46), David Willcocks (1950 – 57), Meredith Davies (1957 – 64), Christopher Robinson (1964 – 2002) and from 2002, Adrian Lucas.

In 1923, the first concert was broadcast on the BBC Midlands from Birmingham Town Hall.

Other broadcasts include 9 May 1924, 'The May Queen', Sterndale Bennett (BBC Studio Concert Orchestra) and 5 April 1933, 'Belshazzar's feast', Walton and 27 February 1937, 'The Shepherd of the Delectable Mountains', Vaughan Williams (BBC Studio Concert Orchestra).

There were no broadcasts between March 1939 and 16 May 1943 (due to the war).

Later broadcasts include 3 October 1950, 'Dream of Gerontius', Elgar, (BBC Midland), 23 and 24 June 1952, 'Requiem for choir and organ' played and composed by Durufle, and 17 and 20 February 1953, 'A Child of our Time', Tippett.

Further broadcasts were made up until the end of 1963.



**The City of Birmingham Choir 9 October 1945 at the Town Hall Birmingham**

**'Dream of Gerontius' by Elgar, sung for the Newman Centenary Celebrations on 9 October 1945**

Source: City of Birmingham Choir Archives – [www.citychoir.org.uk/about/history](http://www.citychoir.org.uk/about/history)

### **Royal College of Organists – information about Cyril Stanley Christopher**

Frances Pond, library archivist and Andrew McCrea, Director of Academic Development at the Royal College of Organists have been able to provide more information about the "Turpin Prize", and Cyril Christopher's entry into the Royal College.

Many thanks go to Frances and Andrew for their kind assistance (in 2013).

Briefly, the office of the College originally was situated at the Freemason's Hall, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.

The college then moved to the private house of Mr Limpus, the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer.

In 1868, he moved to 41 Queen Square, Bloomsbury, which remained the official address for the College until some years after his death, which took place on 15 March 1875.

A funeral service was held at the Church of St George the Martyr, Bloomsbury when Mr E. H. Turpin, who was afterwards elected to succeed him as Honorary Secretary, presided at the organ.

The post of Honorary Secretary was held by Edmund Hart Turpin from 1875 until his death on 25 October 1907.

The "E. H. Turpin Prize" is a prize for fellowship to the value of £4 (in 1929) which was awarded to the candidate who, at the examination at which the Fellowship Diploma is obtained, is awarded the *second highest* marks for "tests at the organ", provided that the marks are not below 68.

**In July 1929, C. S. Christopher was awarded the Turpin Prize.**

Source: Calendar of the Royal College of Organists, 1929 -1930.

"Cyril Stanley Christopher entered the Royal College of Organists on 9 June 1928.

His address at the time is taken to be 193 Barclay Road, Warley Woods (near to the 'Black Country' areas of Oldbury and Smethwick and the Birmingham boundary).

He had an appointment at the time at Wretham Road Church, Handsworth (as an organist).

He obtained his A.R.C.O in July 1928 and F.R.C.O in July 1929 (the same time as the Turpin Prize award).

He was awarded his Doctor of Music at Dunelm in (probably) December 1941".

Royal College of Organists

PO Box 56357, London SE15 7XL Telephone 05600 767231 [www.rco.org.uk](http://www.rco.org.uk)

## **Newspaper archives featuring Cyril Stanley Christopher.**

Source: British Newspaper Archive, Findmypast.co.uk

### **Western Daily Press, Thursday 4 February 1915**

“(At the David Thomas Memorial Church, Bristol)

An evening of music and poetry entitled ‘A - Maying with the poets’, at the Lecture Hall of the David Thomas Memorial Church, by members of the Literary Society. The evening featured a song by Rose E. Sharland with music by Cyril Christopher.”

### **‘British Broadcasting Company, Midland Broadcasts featuring Cyril Christopher.’**

#### **Hull Daily Mail, Tuesday 1 November 1927**

“8pm: First performance of ‘Sigh no more, ladies’ by Cyril Christopher plus other songs by the Birmingham Studio (Small) Chorus, songs include ‘Fairings’ by Easthorpe Martin, sung by Arthur Smith, baritone, *Après Reve* (after a dream) by Faure and selections by Herbert Stephen (violoncello), *The Dove* by Landon Ronald and other songs by Lillian Cooper, soprano. Conducted by Cyril Christopher and relayed from the Birmingham and Midland Institute.”

#### **Derby Daily Telegraph, Saturday 28 December 1928**

“Sunday 3 -3.30pm: Church Cantata no. 22 Bach ‘The New Born Babe’, with Kate Winter, soprano, Esther Coleman, contralto, Tom Pickering, tenor, Arthur Cranmer, bass and Cyril Christopher, continuo. Conducted by Joseph Lewis and relayed from the Birmingham and Midland Institute.”

(Note: continuo means a bass part written out in full – basso continuo, or bass part)

#### **Derby Daily Telegraph, Saturday 12 January 1929**

“8.45 pm: Bach Cantata No 112 ‘The Lord is my Shepherd’, relayed from the Church of the Messiah Birmingham. Soloists: Lillian Cooper, soprano, Dorothy D’Orsay, contralto, Eric Greene, tenor, Sinclair Logan, baritone and Cyril Christopher, continuo. The ‘Birmingham Studio Choir and Orchestra’ relayed from the Birmingham and Midland Institute.”

#### **Tayside Evening Telegraph, Friday 22 February 1929**

“Sunday 6.45: Church Cantata No 113 by Bach ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Blessed Grace’ relayed from the Church of the Messiah Birmingham. Lillian Cooper, soprano; Esther Coleman; contralto; John Armstrong, Tenor; Harold Williams, baritone and Cyril Christopher, continuo. Conducted by Joseph Lewis with the Birmingham Studio Choir and Orchestra.”

Note: The Church of the Messiah was in Broad Street, near the canal, but is long since demolished.

#### **Hull Daily Mail, Saturday 23 February 1929**

“To be broadcast on Sunday 8pm: Relayed from the Church of the Messiah, Birmingham. Bach Church Cantata no 113 ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Blessed Grace’: Soloists: Lillian Cooper, soprano, Esther Coleman, contralto, John Armstrong, tenor, Harold Williams, baritone and Cyril Christopher, continuo and conducted by Joseph Lewis by the Birmingham Studio Chorus and Orchestra.”

### **Western Daily Press, 17 August 1929**

“Sunday 5.45pm: Bach Church Cantata No 137 ‘Praise Him the Father’. Kate Winter, soprano, Esther Coleman, contralto; Tom Pickering, tenor, Arthur Cranmer; bass and Cyril Christopher, continuo. Conducted by Joseph Lewis. Birmingham Studio Chorus and Orchestra relayed from the Midland Institute Birmingham.”

### **Hull Daily Post, Saturday 24 August 1929**

“5.45 – 6.15 Bach Church Cantata No. 95 ‘O Christ My All’. Soloists: Doris Vane, soprano, John Armstrong, tenor, Joseph Farrington, bass, Cyril Christopher, continuo. Birmingham Studio Chorus and Orchestra relayed from the Birmingham and Midland Institute.”

### **Derby Daily Telegraph, Saturday 14 September 1929**

“Sunday 5.45pm: Bach Church Cantata No. 95 ‘O Christ My All’. Soloists Tom Pickering, tenor, Doris Vane, soprano, Joseph Farrington, bass and Cyril Christopher, continuo and conducted by Joseph Lewis. Birmingham Studio Chorus and Orchestra.”

### **Derby Daily Telegraph, Saturday 5 October 1929**

“Sunday 3.30pm: Midland String Orchestra conducted by Joseph Lewis. With Doris Vane, soprano and Cyril Christopher, organ. Relayed from the Midland Institute Birmingham.”

### **Evening Telegraph, Dundee, Friday 27 December 1929**

“Sunday 3.30pm: Church Cantata Bach No. 22 ‘The New Born Babe’. Kate Winter, soprano, Esther Coleman, contralto, Tom Pickering, tenor, Arthur Cranmer, bass and Cyril Christopher, continuo. Conducted by Joseph Lewis. Birmingham Studio Chorus and Orchestra relayed from the Midland Institute Birmingham.”

### **Exeter & Plymouth Gazette, Saturday 12 July 1930**

“Midland region 9.05pm: The Midland String Orchestra conducted by Frank Cantell, Arthur Cranmer, baritone, Cyril Christopher, pianoforte.”

### **Hull Daily Post, 13 September 1930**

“Sunday 6.30pm: A religious service conducted by Rev Dr Parkes Cadman. Cyril Christopher is Organist and Choir Master. Relayed from Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham.”

### **Hull Daily Mail, 31 January 1931**

“Sunday 8pm: A religious service conducted by Rev Leyton Richards. Choir Master and Organist is Cyril Christopher. Relayed from Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham.”

### **Derby Daily Telegraph, 31 January 1932**

“8pm: A religious service conducted by Rev Leyton Richards, Cyril Christopher Choir Master and Organist, relayed from Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham.”

### **Derby Daily Telegraph, Saturday 6 February 1932**

“Sunday 8pm: A religious service conducted by Canon G Rogers, address by Rev Leyton Richards, conducted by Cyril Christopher. Relayed from Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham.”

### **Derby Daily Telegraph, 22 April 1933**

“Sunday 8pm: A religious service conducted by Prof. Herbert Wood with the Choir of Carrs Lane Church. Organist is Cyril Christopher. Relayed from Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham.”

### **Gloucester Echo, Saturday 27 May 1933**

“BBC Midland Sunday 8 pm: A religious service relayed from Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham with Dr Basil Yeaxley and Cyril Christopher, Organist and Choirmaster.”

### **Western Daily Press, Saturday 16 December 1933**

“Sunday 7.30pm: A Carol Concert by the City of Birmingham Choir, conducted by G D Cunningham, Stuart Robinson, baritone, Hilda Parsons, pianoforte and Cyril Christopher on organ. Relayed from the Town Hall Birmingham.”

### **Tamworth Herald, 21 March 1936**

“A radio concert with Cyril Christopher on organ – details are hard to read as very blurred.”

### **Western Daily Press, Saturday 27 February 1937**

“Sunday 7.55pm: Congregational service at Carrs Lane Church with address by Rev Leyton Richards, Choir Master Cyril Christopher, Organist and J C Parsons.”

### **Western Daily Press, 17 December 1937**

“BBC Midland Saturday 9.40pm: Songs by Cyril Christopher sung by Frank Titterton, tenor.”

### **Tamworth Herald, 28 May 1938**

“Wilnecote Congregational Church held a recital by Cyril Stanley Christopher, Music Bachelor, FRCO and Organist at Carrs Lane Church was attended by a crowded audience.”

### **Funeral report - Tamworth Herald, Saturday 2 July 1949**

“Headline: “The funeral of Mr T Matthews and Cathedral tribute by the Succentor”. The funeral took place at Birmingham on Saturday of Mr Thomas Matthews, first music director of the City of Birmingham Orchestra, whose death was reported in last week’s issue of the Herald.

Mr Matthews’ long and close association with the musical life of the city was reflected in the congregation at the funeral service in the cathedral.

The Succentor, the Rev E W Hunt who conducted the service referred to him as one of the music makers of Birmingham. To him the city owed a great debt for his work with band, Orchestra and Choir.

They of the Cathedral remembered that he was their assistant Organist from 1907 to 1914 and that during the second war he deputised for the Organist who was on active service.

As a musician Mr Matthews was a great interpreter of Beethoven, Bach, Handel, and Elgar. As a man his outstanding qualities were kindness and a great sense of humour.

During the service Dr Cyril Christopher, Organist at Carrs Lane Church, who was an assistant with Mr Matthews in the Choral Union concerts, played Nimrod from Elgar’s variations and an excerpt from his ‘Dream of Gerontius’.

## Tamworth Herald, 21 January 1950 - Memorial to a fine musician

"Sir, The death of Appleby Matthews has caused a gap in the musical life of Birmingham and many of the neighbouring towns. Not only are early days of the City Orchestra, City Choir and Police Band recalled but also the regular production of the many oratorios associated with Easter and Christmas time; his conducting of several operas including "The Immortal Hour" which he also conducted in London; his fine gifts as pianist and Organist, and not least, his invaluable instruction as teacher.

There must be many who feel that Birmingham should have a memorial to this great music lover, who gave so willingly so much of his time to promote a better understanding of music in so many forms. It is, therefore, proposed to endow a Scholarship to be known as "Appleby Matthews Scholarship or Prize".

This appeal is supported by Mr Paul Beard, Mr Eric Blom, Sir Adrian Boult, Sir Barry C Jackson, Sir Wilfred Martineau and many others.

Many friends of Appleby Matthews will wish to be associated with this scheme, and contributions large or small will be very gratefully received and acknowledged by Dr Cyril S Christopher who has agreed to act as treasurer at his address **23 Cremorne Road** Four Oaks Warwickshire: or by Mr Eric Blackwell "Brackley Dene" 30 Chantry Road Moseley Birmingham, assistant treasurer.

Messrs' Dale Forte Co Ltd New Street Birmingham has also kindly offered to receive personal contributions.

On behalf of the appeal committee Christopher Edmund, Chairman."

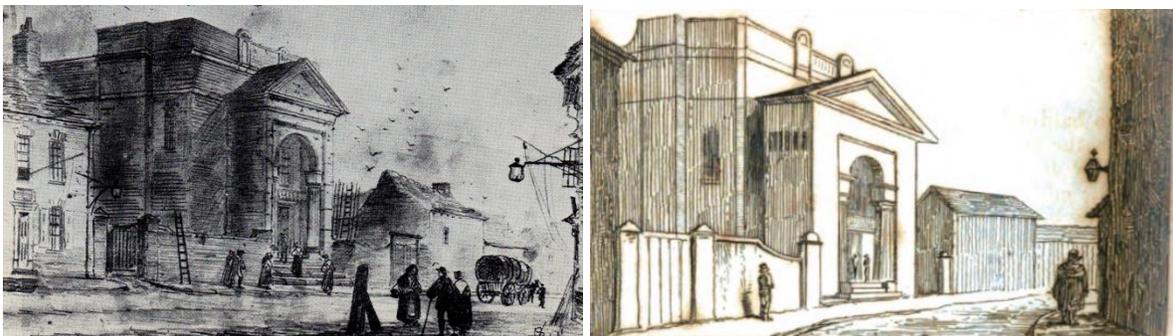
## Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham

The church was founded in 1748 as an Independent Chapel. After various enlargements and rebuilding, it became part of the congregational union in 1832. The current building was finished in 1971 when it became part of the United Reformed Church in 1972, after the Presbyterian and Congregational churches merged.

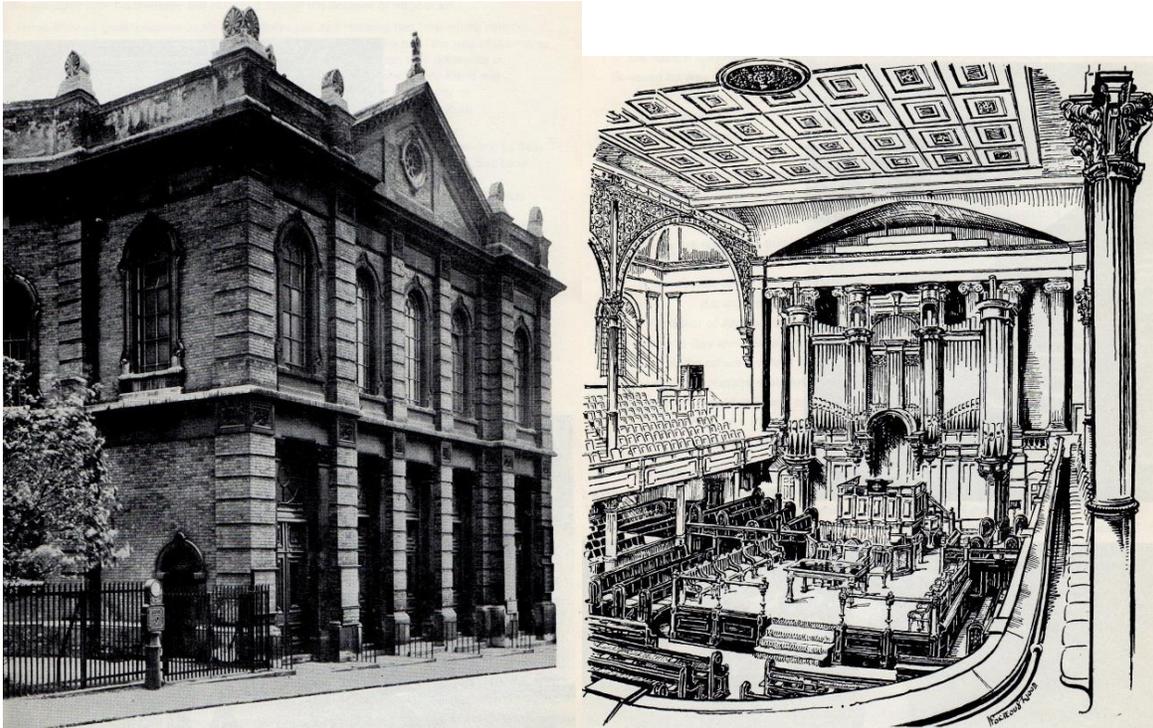
The building is shared with a local Methodist congregation as an Ecumenical Partnership and the church is now known as 'The Church at Carrs Lane.' Wikipedia creative commons 2021.

During the nineteenth century, the church had major social role in helping out the citizens of the city and currently many faith based, cultural and social activities are undertaken at the church centre.

The organ at the old chapel was based on the 'Werk-prinzip' system and replaced an older organ (dating back to 1826), in 1933. This organ was made by Norman & Beard. Between 1968 and 1971 a new church was built and there was not enough room for the 1933 organ, so a new organ was built by Hill, Norman & Beard.



Reproductions of early views of Carrs Lane Meeting Place



### **Photographs of the third Carrs Lane Church**

Source: 1970 Carrs Lane Church booklet, kindly loaned by Robert Payne (of Payne's Shoe Repairers)

Dr Christopher had resigned his positions at Carrs Lane Church prior to the new church being opened. It does not appear that he ever played on the new organ installed at the new church. Dr Christopher was not mentioned in the 1970 Carrs Lane Church 1970 booklet.

### **The Carrs Lane Journal – extracts relating to Dr Christopher and Mabel Christopher**

Many thanks go to Rev. Neil Riches for allowing the author to visit the church to look at the church journal archive collection in 2013.

**1930**

### **OUR NEW ORGANIST**

"The vacancy caused by the removal of Mr Graham Godfrey to Canada has been happily filled by the appointment of Mr Cyril S. Christopher, F.R.C.O., A.R.C.M., and L.R.A.M., who presided at the organ on Sunday June 29<sup>th</sup>, and took the choir practise the preceding Friday.

Mr Christopher has been for some years Organist and Choirmaster at the Wretham Road New Church, where the music has always been a distinguishing feature of the services. In addition, he was conductor of the Dudley Madrigal Society from 1921 to 1926, and is now conductor for the Oldbury and District Male Choir.

Mr Christopher is also Chorus Master for the Midland Regional Chorus of the B.B.C, and acts as Organist for the same corporation's Bach Cantatas.

Under his leadership, the Church at Carrs Lane may confidently expect that the music of the church, both choral and congregational, will continue to be an inspiration to all who join in the services. He hopes to commence his duties on Sunday September 21<sup>st</sup>."

1931

## THE ORGAN

### An extract from the (lengthy) article about the new Organ and its specification

“After a silence of four months the organ should be in commission once more in November. However adequate may have been the use of the piano during the interval – and our gratitude is due both to Mr Christopher and the choir for the way in which they have sustained the music traditions of Carrs Lane under somewhat difficult conditions – there must be a few of us who do not feel that after all, if an instrument is to be used in public worship, there is no satisfying substitute for the organ.

We may perhaps liken our organ to a person who has had a bad nervous breakdown – the “nerves” in this instance consisting of the “action” which connects the keys, or console, with the pipes.

The specialists who have been called in are Messrs’ Wm. Hill and Son and Norman and Beard, Ltd., a concern which combines the firm of Wm. Hill and Son, one of the oldest and most famous of English Organ Builders (our own Town Hall Organ is their work). Norman and Beard, Ltd. are the original builders of the Carrs Lane Organ.

(The author paraphrases the text here: there is now an electro-pneumatic action, 2510 pipes and at least 10 miles of electrical wire and many thousands of electric contacts which replace a system of some five miles of lead tubing.)

The formal reopening of the Organ has been fixed for Sunday November 8<sup>th</sup>. The details of the service are in the hands of Mr Leyton Richards and Mr Christopher and we feel assured that the significance of the occasion will be suitably recognised, and that we shall also have the pleasure of hearing Mr Christopher give a recital before the service.”

## AUGUST 1932

An extract from the memories of Miss Jane Taylor is included to give a brief insight into the organisation of Carrs Lane Church.

“Miss Taylor explains that in her father’s time, the singing was led by a bass viol and several violins but these were superseded by an organ eventually. The choir consisted only of boys, one of whom was her father.

The organ was placed at the other end (opposite the pulpit) with a deep red curtain, behind which the choir was seated.

The pews were high and with doors, which fastened, and each family provided cushions and book box, and used their own books. A huge chandelier, glittering with glass, appeared to be let down from the ceiling; as a child I thought it wonderful and beautiful. “

## Sunday Service

Also in the 1932 Journal was the notice for Sunday 7 August for the 8pm broadcast service by Rev. Leyton Richards

1937

## Music, Literary and Dramatic Society

“October 12<sup>th</sup> 1937, a Lecture Recital in the church; “The Organ as a Solo Instrument”

Cyril S Christopher Mus B (Dunelm).”

1943

**ANTHEMS FOR THE MONTH - 25<sup>th</sup> January 1943**

“Evening “Once to every man and nation” by Christopher.”

1968

**CYRIL S CHRISTOPHER, D.Mus. F.R.C.O.**

“In the Carrs Lane Journal of September 1930, it was recorded that Mr Cyril S Christopher had been appointed to succeed Mr Graham Godfrey as organist and choirmaster, and that “under his leadership the church at Carrs Lane may confidently expect that the music of the church, both choral and congregational, will continue to be an inspiration to all who join in the services”.

How well this confident expectation has been fulfilled over the ensuing 37 years we now know, and the sorrow – even dismay – which followed news of Dr Christopher’s decision to resign last month brought fresh realisation of just how much his ministry amongst us has meant to so many. His distinction in the world of music is, of course, recognised far beyond the walls of Carrs Lane.

There are references to him in Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Reiman’s Musik-Lexikon, Who’s Who in Music, and in the Dictionary of International Biography.

In recent years there have been broadcasts of his organ and choral compositions from Holland, South Africa, U.S.A., and Canada; and he has declined several invitations to accept appointments abroad.

The reflections which follow are on a more personal level: they have been selected to show how Cyril Christopher’s genius has enriched both our corporate worship and our individual lives, and, because those who have written are representative of a far greater company, these extracts from their letters are published anonymously.

*Others will pay their tribute to Dr Christopher as an outstanding Organist both in interpretation and execution. What I shall never forget is the help that he gave to those who had the responsibility of conducting worship. His improvisations before the sermon were a real inspiration. One knew always that the music of the service would be presented as an act of praise and thanksgiving.*

He has given me, personally, an appreciation of classical music which affords me continual pleasure. Choir practise was always a time of education and enjoyment, and his choice and treatment of music gave the Sunday services a spiritual atmosphere which was of real help.

*He has quite remarkable sensitiveness to quality in music and – perhaps, especially – to the appropriateness of fine musical settings of noble words. It is surprising, after so many years, to be shown fine shades of meaning which we had not consciously recognised before in music we had been singing for a long time.*

There is no need for me to inform the congregation that he is a great organist – but we choir members had the joy of being trained by a great teacher. The two don’t always go together! We learned so much from Dr Christopher while he prepared us for our work in leading the worship – for that is what it meant to him. *It is said that “music begins where speech ends”, and under Dr Christopher’s musical leadership one continually realised the truth of this, not least during the quiet moments of improvisation or the singing of the anthem – so often a perfect preparation for prayer.*

*His wide knowledge of composers throughout the ages enabled him to contribute a wealth of music possibly unparalleled, and his awareness of the Christian year rightly gave us the joy of carols to the end of January! And on Sundays after Easter, we were never allowed to forget that “the Head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now”.*

It is sad that throughout so many years the congregation as a whole did not respond to his concluding organ voluntary, so often a supreme work of art and the climax of a carefully chosen musical theme. Music was never a mere appendage to a service, but always an integral part – “the handmaid of worship”.

*To his wide knowledge and great technical skill, Dr Christopher has always added deep thought. These, combined, brought to his choice of music and to its performance a valuable and remarkable sense of fitness.*

The 6 o'clock organ recitals – so often the most peaceful half - hour in the week

*Now that many of my happiest hours are spent in listening to good music, I should like to pay a tribute to Dr Christopher and his choir, who are mainly responsible for this great interest.*

He has intense feeling for the dignity of worship, creating an atmosphere of reverence and praise. He has never compromised his high artistic standards.

*The interpretation of the hymns, the rendering of the anthems, the organ voluntaries – all have combined to add to the true worship of the service. His love for the highest and best in music has always been – and still is – for him the only fitting expression for the reverence and love of God in the worship of His Church.*

“They that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth”. During all these years of faithful service, this is exactly what he has done, and we thank him.

*A talented musician will inevitably stamp his personality on the work he undertakes. Perhaps the best judgement on Cyril Christopher is that people wanted to come and hear his music and other musicians to learn from him. To those who know him well he reveals a keen sense humour and a depth of human understanding.*

Dr Christopher was outstandingly the best organist for a church service I have ever known. This was due to his determination and care that everything he did should contribute to the sense of worship of the congregation. He never failed us, and we are full of gratitude to him for it.

*Our final extract is from the Carrs Lane Journal of January 1950, and these words, written by the late Rev. Leslie J Tizard, are a fitting summary of so much that others would wish to say, and they have been as true of the years since 1950 as they were of the previous twenty. “His contribution to the church’s worship is beyond compute. His standard is high; his judgement of what is fitting in a service is unerring. Whatever does not add to the value of worship has for him no place, and anything in the nature of self-display by himself or his choir would be to him anathema.*

*There can be few Organists anywhere who can lead congregational singing better or give a more sensitive interpretation of a hymn. He is exacting with himself and with those who work with him, for nothing second-rate is to be tolerated.”*

***Compiled by Neville C Smith.”***

## **OTHER RESIGNATIONS FROM THE CHOIR**

“Mrs Christopher, selected at the end of 1932 by a well - known Midland musician from over 30 applicants, remained Principal Soprano for 26 years.

All members of the choir agree that in addition to being a fine soloist, she was a splendid leader.

She was also a great influence for “harmony” in the choir and in the private lives of more than one chorister. We shall greatly miss the wisdom and sympathetic natures of both Dr and Mrs Christopher.”

**1979                    Dr Cyril S Christopher, D. Mus (Dunelm), F.R.C.O**

“We mourn the passing of a musician who made a great contribution to worship in the old Carrs Lane Church.

Dr Christopher died peacefully on 31<sup>st</sup> March last after spending 14 weeks in hospital.

He was appointed Organist and Choir Master of Carrs Lane Church in 1930 and served it faithfully for 37 years. We in the choir found that Dr Christopher prepared all his music with the greatest care.

His vocal compositions were often unconventional and sometimes difficult, but to learn them was to realise their deep religious conviction. In this context I would particularly mention his Easter Cantata ‘Via Crucis’. His choir practises were thoroughly enjoyable, instructive and good humoured.

He loved the fine organ in the old church, and played it brilliantly. His improvisations were masterly. He composed a considerable quantity of religious and secular music, both vocal and instrumental, having been published since the age of thirteen. He gained his doctorate in 1940.

Dr and Mrs Christopher were happily married for 53 years.

We recall the fine service rendered by Mrs Christopher, Principal Soprano for many years, and extend to her our deep sympathy in her great loss. Unhappily she is now suffering considerably from arthritis and impaired vision.”

By Alison Hepburn.”

**Carrs Lane Church archives relating to the Organ and Dr Christopher**

**18 March 1931**

From a typed document of six pages of foolscap paper written by Cyril S. Christopher (FRCO, ARCM, LRAM, Organist and Choir Master) and James C Parsons (LRAM, ARCM, Deputy Organist) to H W Gosling, Honorary Treasurer of Carrs Lane Church.

In summary, the letter outlines that the church organ, which was built in 1909 by Norman & Beard Ltd., had developed various defects and was unreliable. The ‘action’ had been specifically designed to fit into the church building by way of an experiment.

The care of the organ (by Nicholson & Co. of Worcester) was no longer tenable and an entire reconstruction was advised.

Estimates had been gained from Nicholson & Co.; Rushworth & Draper of Liverpool; Henry Willis of London and Messrs Hill & Son, Norman & Beard of London.

The Messrs Hill, Norman and Beard estimate of £1650 was recommended for acceptance, for a reconstruction and electrification of the organ.

**14 September 1962**

Letters from Messrs Hill & Son, Norman & Beard Ltd were sent to the church secretary and copied to Dr Christopher at 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield.

Following an inspection of the organ it was agreed that it would still be possible to keep the organ working through “first aid” repair measures, although a major overhaul was needed.

## **26 February 1965**

A handwritten report of a meeting between Mr Norman (of Messrs Hill, Norman & Beard); Mr Brown, architect and Mr Nicholls, secretary of the music committee

The present organ had a replacement value of £25,000 and only the console suffered from wear thus needing renewal. It seemed that the space in the proposed new church was not sufficient for the organ to fit in without major problems. A new organ could be fitted for about the same cost as moving and adapting the old organ. A cheaper option of a smaller 3 manual organ was possible but would only be suited to accompaniment of hymns and not recitals etc.

A new organ would be within the range of £13,000 and £15,000. There was a waiting list of about two years. A question was raised about the need for good quality of tone if BBC broadcasts were to use the church in the future, or other concert organisers.

The music committee debated these recommendations and eventually agreed to recommend that a '3 manual' organ, using as many of the old pipes as possible, be ordered as this would need less floor space. Five rounds of pipes in the great organ, 4 ranks in the choir organ, 6 in the swell organ and 7 in the pedal organ would cost about £9,000.

It seems that by the end of 1965, some arguments about the scheme had arisen.

## **1 June 1965**

A letter from the music committee to Messrs Hill & Son, Norman & Beard Ltd was written.

The letter outlines a meeting in February with the architects where it appeared that the dimensions of the new church were fixed, leading to a difficult situation about the size of the new organ. The design of the building turned out to be more fluid than at first thought.

The music committee, which included Dr Christopher, suggested that the company gave advice about what parts of the old organ could be retained to keep the essentials of variety, tone, control and flexibility.

## **18 November 1965**

A letter to Mr Nicholls (Private and Confidential) from J W Walker & Sons, Organ Builders of Ruislip

"You will now have received a report from our Managing Director. There was a lot of head scratching and discussion over this, but they felt that they should stick to their modern policy that Walkers have adopted in such matters.

They fully appreciate that this may not be exactly what Dr Christopher will want to hear, but they feel with Walkers existing reputation it would be better to maintain the policy, even if it means losing any chance of the contract. I hope you will not be too disappointed over this. Signed F N Fowler."

## **2 December 1965**

Mr Fowler again wrote to Mr Nichols.

"I only hope you will be able to find a suitable solution to your problem, and maybe the delay will give you a chance to load up with further ammunition. I shall look forward to the hope of meeting you and Dr Christopher again in the future".

A handwritten note from Frank Fowler to Mr Nicholls dated 10 November 1965 thanks him for the copy of Dr Christopher's Via Crucis, which seems to be a very fine work.

## **9 December 1966**

A letter from the Music Committee to Messrs Hill, Norman & Beard outlined the fact that the plans for the new church had been delayed because of planning application difficulties, but it was agreed to go ahead anyway and place an order for a new organ.

## **1 March 1966**

A letter from the music committee to Messrs Hill, Norman and Beard Ltd

....” Dr Christopher has received from the architects a letter which we think indicates that there is now a good chance for a successful discussion of the whole matter”

## **7 March 1965**

An extract from a letter from Mr Nicholls to Mr Norman

“... Dr Christopher and several others are already feeling more cheerful and hoping progress will be made”.

## **7 February 1966**

A letter from the music committee to the building committee

“The most difficult feature of a church building to arrange satisfactorily, from the points of view of the congregation, the choir and the organist, is probably usually the organ with its console. This is more certainly true when, as in this case, it is necessary to adapt a large solid instrument to a much smaller building”.

## **16 March 1966**

“Mr Herbert Norman (organ maker); Mr Charles Brown (architect); Rev Michael Hubbard; Dr Christopher and Mr Nicholls met to discuss the new organ.

The meeting lasted one hour ten minutes and made satisfactory progress. Mr Norman said that they could start on the job in about 18 months' time and would take about five months to complete.”

## **9 December 1966**

A letter from the music committee to Messrs Hill, Norman & Beard outlines that the planning application has caused further delays, but plans should still be made to start the organ removal.

## **9 June 1967**

An extract from a letter from Messrs Hill, Norman & Beard to Mr Nicholls

“... Dr Christopher's reminder some months ago regarding the proposed heating system – no doubt prompted by the unfortunate effects on many well - known instruments of the recent winters heating at modern standards of comfort, has been taken into account as in the past two years much useful experience has been gained and development taken place in perfecting means to overcome this difficulty brought about by what in effect is a change of climate for the organ.

We have therefore included the provision of an organ humidifier unit and some extra sealing work to the large wooden pipes which must be affected.”

**16 August 1967**

A letter from Messrs Hill, Norman & Beard to Dr Christopher at 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

"We are having difficulties in getting the organ in, in a technically satisfactory way, but I believe we shall achieve this. There are some problems regarding the console position which it seems to us must be considered from the musical point of view. I shall be in Birmingham on Wednesday next week, 23 August and would like at least a telephone talk with you in the early afternoon if that is possible."

**8 September 1967**

An extract of a letter from Denys Hinton & Partners, architects to Messrs Hill, Norman & Beard

"... As Dr Christopher does not wish the organ to be reduced in any way, it was decided that the most favourable position for the instrument will be in the "apse" of the new church....."

**19 September 1967**

A letter from Messrs Hill, Norman & Beard to Dr Christopher at 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks

"I would like to say how please I was to have had the opportunity of meeting you on the 8<sup>th</sup>. I much admired your stout defence of the organ, and I believe much was achieved as a consequence.

I had a good look at the organ after lunch and was able to try it thoroughly, and I must say I was most impressed. No wonder you are resisting alteration so strongly! I was particularly interested in going over the pipework to find some of it much older than I had supposed – indeed, much of the Great Organ Diapason chorus (except the large open) appeared to be 100 years old or more."

Mr Norman then outlines several technical items and suggestions for Dr Christopher to consider.

**27 September 1967 – Resignation letter**

COPY

F.R.Liddell Esq.,  
80, Thornhill Park,  
STREETLY, Sutton Coldfield.

27th  
September,  
1967.

Dear Mr Liddell,

It is after much thought, and with deep regret that I write this letter:-

(a) resigning my position as Organist and Choirmaster at Carrs Lane Church, as from quarter day, 25th December, 1967;

(b) withdrawing, together with my wife, from membership of the church; and

(c) giving six months notice, in accordance with the agreement, terminating my tenancy of the rooms at 19, New Meeting Street, to take effect on 25th March, 1968.

The last few years at Carrs Lane have not passed without an undue amount of difficulty and frustration for me; conditions are becoming more and more unfavourable to music as an aid to worship - the 'handmaid of religion' so-called; and, as a result, I am finding it increasingly difficult to make any worth-while contribution in this very unhappy situation - a situation which offers but a slender prospect of recovery in the foreseeable future.

Yours sincerely,  
(C.S.C)

CYRIL S. CHRISTOPHER,  
D.MUS.(DUNELM), F.R.C.O.

23 CREMORNE ROAD,  
FOUR OAKS,  
SUTTON COLDFIELD.  
TEL. FOUR OAKS 1848.

Noel A. Nicholls Esq; M.Sc.,  
43, Green Road,  
Hall Green, BIRMINGHAM, 28.

27th  
September,  
1967.

Dear Noel,

Here it is! I have forwarded a copy to  
Judge Carr.

I fear that Carrs Lane has now reached the  
'point of no return'. All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,



The archive material leads us to a feeling of frustration on the part of Dr Christopher about the proposed new church building and the changes to his much beloved organ. This frustration led to his resignation.

It appears that he wished to sever his ties with the church.

#### **28 November 1967**

An extract from a letter to Messrs Hill, Norman & Beard from the music committee

"You have probably learned with regret of the coming resignation of Dr Christopher from the position of Organist and Choirmaster here. Many of us are deeply grieved that he has found it necessary to take this step, and we think we understand the necessity....."

#### **1 December 1967**

A letter from Messrs Wm. Hill & Son & Norman & Beard Ltd to Mr Nicholls

"We are both surprised and sorry to hear of the resignation of Dr Christopher, which was not previously known to us. We are so sorry that this has happened".

#### **7 December 1967**

A letter from Gladys Price of Solihull to Mr Nicholls

"I knew that Dr Christopher had resigned from Carrs Lane as I have seen him and Mabel on several occasions and he told me of his reasons for resignation. I think it is very sad indeed for the Church and especially for the Choir as he has been such a wonderful Organist and Choir Master."

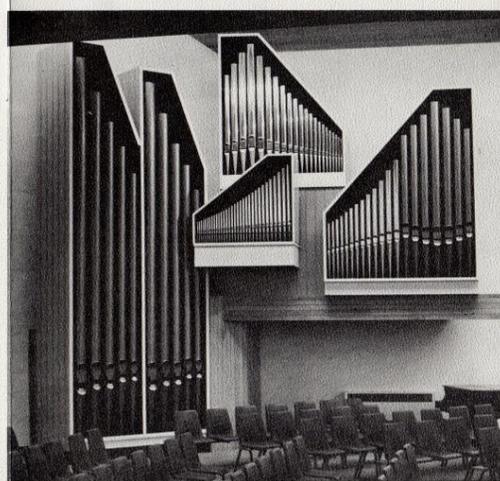
It seems that Dr Christopher did have some contributions to make regarding the new organ after he resigned.

However, he and his wife remained resolute in their decision to leave.

# The new Carrs Lane Organ



The three-manual console is wide and low, suited to its detached position in front of the choir.

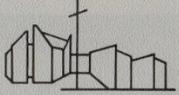


## THE CARRS LANE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH BIRMINGHAM

THE HILL NORMAN & BEARD ORGAN



**HILL NORMAN & BEARD**  
WM. HILL & SON AND NORMAN & BEARD LIMITED  
MANOR WORKS, HIGH ST., HORNSEY, LONDON, N.8  
01-340-2271



**CARRS LANE CHURCH CENTRE**

The new organ has been designed as a worthy successor to the famous Norman & Beard instrument in the old church, parts of which date back to 1826. It was hoped to transfer this organ to the new church, but in the reduced space available this proved not to be possible. A new organ has therefore been built, matched to the new church, and incorporating the best of the old pipes.

The instrument is laid out on the classic 'werk-prinzip' whereby each division has its own clearly visible case. It has been found that this arrangement, with roofed cases to each department gives a warmer and livelier tone. The shapes are strictly functional, following the lengths of the pipes they contain, yet forming an interesting design in themselves.

The mechanism of the organ is electromagnetic incorporating patented solid-state relays for silent and rapid working. The wind regulators are built into the soundboards themselves to give a very steady wind supply.

The console is in the choir gallery, having a low layout to enable the player to see over it.

The stop list was designed by H John Norman in consultation with William Timmins, and the case-work by Herbert Norman and the Architects of the Church Centre, Denys Hinton and Partners.

<b>GREAT ORGAN</b>		<b>SWELL ORGAN</b>	
Open Diapason	8*	Hohl Flute	8*
Stopped Diapason	8*	Sallecional	8*
Octave	4*	Voix Celeste (Tenor C)	8
Chimney Flute	4	Principal	4*
Gemshorn	2	Mixture	19.22.26
Sesquialtera (Tenor C)	12.17*	Contra Hautboy	16*
Furniture	15.19.22*	Trompette	8
Trumpet	8	Tremulant	Octave
	Swell to Great		
	Choir to Great	<b>PEDAL ORGAN</b>	
<b>CHOIR ORGAN</b>		Principal	16*
Rohr Flute	8*	Bourdon	16*
Spitz Flute	4	Octave	8†
Principal	2	Gedeckt	8†
Largo*	11	Superoctave	4†
Cymbel	29.33	Mixture	21.2*
		Trombone	16
	Swell to Choir		Swell to Pedal
			Great to Pedal
			Choir to Pedal
Compass - Manual CC-C	61 notes	27 speaking stops	
Pedals CCC-G	32 notes	1625 pipes	

Stops marked \* contain some or all pipes adapted from stops of the former organ. † derived

'Discus' Blower

New front pipes to Great and Choir organs of tin metal. New Swell organ front pipes of copper. 'Discus' Blower

The playing aids include:—

Thumb pistons:	Toe pistons:
5 to Great	5 to Pedal
5 to Swell	5 to Swell (duplicating)
5 to Choir	Swell to Great (reversible)
General Cancel	Great to Pedal (reversible)
4 to couplers (reversible)	Piston coupler:
	Great and Pedal

Pistons rapidly adjustable on the Hill, Norman and Beard capture system.

From a copy of the pamphlet with thanks to Carr Lane Church (2013)

## **The teaching career of Dr Christopher at King Edward's School, Five Ways, Birmingham**

Contact was made with the school archivist at the Schools of King Edward the Sixth in Birmingham, Alison Wheatley. Alison very kindly checked the archives and supplied the following information. Many thanks go to Alison for her help with this research.

The records tell us that he was appointed on a temporary, part time contract from 1<sup>st</sup> September 1944 to teach music at King Edwards Grammar School, Five Ways.

The school magazine (summer term 1944) reports that 'music will be in charge of Dr Christopher, Choirmaster and Organist of Carrs Lane Church'.

The School Magazine (summer term 1945) tells of Dr Christopher performing eight recitals on Thursday evenings at the school.

In the Governors' Minutes (October 1952) the School Governors are asked to 'approve the part time appointment of Dr C S Christopher from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1952, in connection with the teaching of music at the Five Ways Grammar School'.

It would appear therefore, that his post at the school was never permanent or full - time, maybe his role was similar to that of a modern-day supply teacher.

At a Governors' meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1953, the Head Master of Five Ways Grammar School applied for permission to 'make a re-arrangement of his staff involving the addition of one half-time appointment to the authorised number of 27.

It is suggested that the appointment of Mr Bradley as part - time PT master and that of Dr Christopher as part - time Music Master (who together make up an equivalent of one half - time appointment), be ended in August next and a full - time PT Master be appointed in their place'.

There are no further references to Dr Christopher in the records.

Alison Wheatley, archivist

### **Author's note**

There is a very informative website – <http://www.eggleton.free-online.co.uk/headmasters75yearhistory.pdf> that outlines the history of the school.

It seems that during the years of the Second World War, and in the few years after the war ended, school teachers were in short supply.

It is possible that Dr Christopher stood in as music master because of this shortage, to ensure that music was taught at the school during this difficult time.

## **Some personal memories of Dr Christopher**

### **Memories by Peter Marchbank**

An old boy of King Edwards Five Ways, Peter Marchbank, remembers Dr Christopher, although not from the school.

"I remember the name well. My great - aunt, with whom we stayed when we first arrived in Birmingham in 1950, was a member of Carrs Lane Congregational Church and knew him well.

Occasionally, she would take me to one of their services if there was to be a lot of music and I remember him as a fine Organist and the Choir there sang well.

He always seemed to be an august figure in the Birmingham School of Music where I went to study piano and violin. I suspect that in those days there weren't too many Doctors of Music around!

I don't remember him at Five Ways where I started in 1954. Did he fill in for Dennis Davenport during his absences?

If you need any more help concerning him, I can ask some of the old alumni of the BSM. We hope to find out if anyone else has any memories they are willing to share."

### **More about Peter Marchbank** (Wikipedia and Peter Marchbank)

Peter studied music at Cambridge University. He was briefly the music master at Queen Mary's School for Boys at Basingstoke and then he joined the BBC in 1969.

In 1977, he was appointed Senior Producer of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra.

Peter left the BBC at the end of 1990 to conduct and to write about musical matters.

In the UK he conducted the Northern Sinfonia and the Orchestra of the Swan. Worldwide he has conducted at Australia, Bulgaria, Columbia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Panama, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela.

Several music discs and downloads are on sale where he is the featured conductor.

### **Memories of Dr Christopher from two members of the Carrs Lane Church congregation**

Donald and Robert Payne are brothers who attended Carrs Lane Church and remember Cyril Christopher very well.

Donald and Robert are descendants of Harry Payne, the well - known founder of the Payne's Shoe and Boot Repair business that was started in 1908 at Balsall Heath in Birmingham.

More can be found about the remarkable history of the Payne family on: [www.harrypaynetrust.org.uk](http://www.harrypaynetrust.org.uk)

### **Robert Payne**

"Thank you for sending the interesting document about Dr Christopher. It is good that you are taking such an interest in a gifted musician whom my wife and I remember fondly.

Our recollections are of a personal nature but I will try to set down a few snippets which may be of interest.

I grew up in Moseley, Birmingham, and worshipped with the rest of the family at Carrs lane Congregational Church.

Dr Christopher was the Organist and Choirmaster and held in high esteem. I applied to join the church choir in 1958 or thereabouts, and was accepted after a brief audition.

Dr Christopher inspired in me a love of the organ and I became a pupil of his for a year or two before my wife and I moved to Edinburgh in 1960.

Part of his duties at the church was to give a half - hour recital before each Sunday evening service. I was often privileged to sit in the organ pit with him during these times. It was inspiring.

I too remember that he placed a silk handkerchief on the organ bench before playing as an aid to mobility.

As a pupil of his I was able to practise on the organ at Carrs Lane. On one occasion he found me there with my future wife in the organ pit. He remarked that the great J. S. Bach had also entertained his future wife in such a way!

Our wedding day, in 1961, was at Carrs Lane and Dr Christopher suggested and played some inspiring music.

While I do have an electronic organ at home, I play very little I am sorry to say. I must try to do better before my fingers get even stiffer!"

I remember that Dr Christopher used to drive a green *Wolseley* car, possibly a 4/44 model when he came to Carrs Lane Church.



**A Wolseley 4/44 car produced between 1952 and 1956**

This photograph was found on [www.oldclassiccars.co.uk](http://www.oldclassiccars.co.uk)

Many thanks go to Robert sharing for this information.

Robert also shared a leaflet from Carrs Lane Church, dated 18 June 1961 which is reproduced below.

### **Donald Payne**

"Like my brother, I joined the Carrs Lane Choir when I was 18 (in 1950). I am still in the choir, and the longest serving member. Standards were very high under Dr Christopher and I had to pass an audition.

I sing bass, while Robert is a tenor. Through force of circumstances, I sing tenor now because of the usual shortage but it is not my comfortable range.

There were at least 20 people in the choir in those days and the principal soloists received a small stipend. I believe Dr Christopher's wife; Mabel was the principal soprano. We learnt a very wide range of choral music, from Renaissance to the present day, including some of Dr Christopher's own compositions.

Most important was a work called 'Via Crucis'. I would very much like to see this work performed again as I suspect it has not been heard since his death.

The church organ was built by Hill, Norman and Beard and was second only to the Town Hall organ in size and quality. When the decision was taken by the congregation at Carrs Lane to build a new church and demolish the old one it was decided that as far as possible the old organ would be rebuilt in the new church.

Although Dr Christopher had retired at this time, his advice was sought by H, N & B. I have in my care copies of correspondence between them and Dr Christopher.

Some modifications had to be made so that it would be suitable for use in a smaller building, notably affecting the Great Organ, which lost the largest rank of pipe, the 16ft, as they are known. Apparently, the effect in the new church would have been beyond deafening!

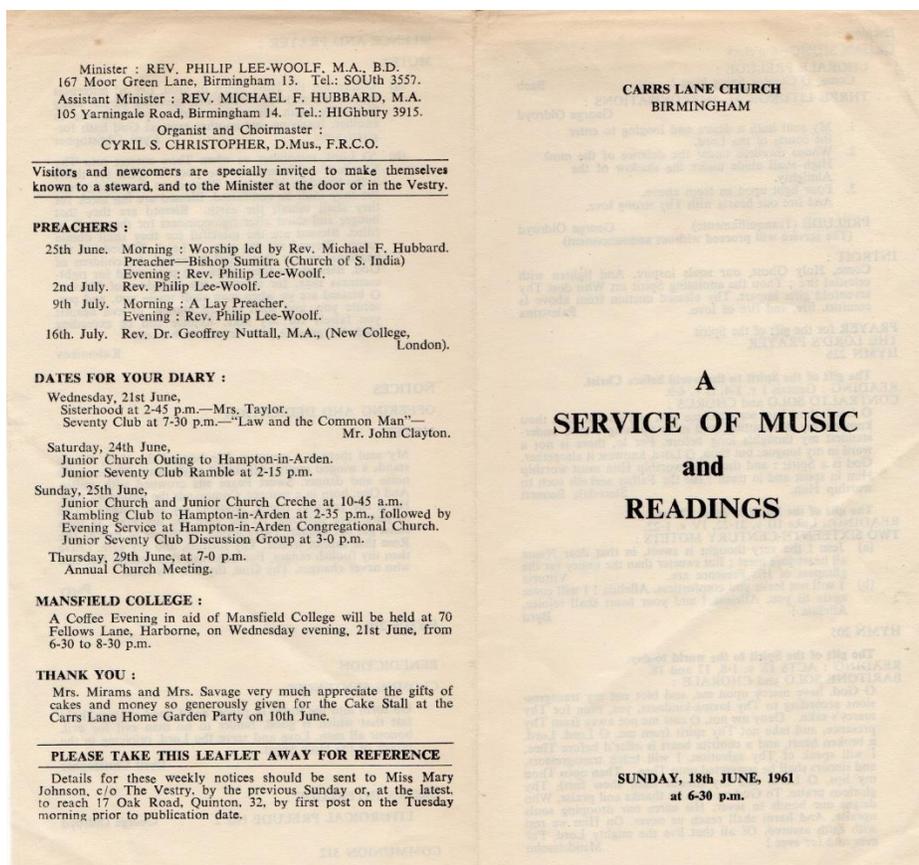
Dr Christopher held a high post at the Birmingham Conservatoire. I have seen a photograph of him on the wall there. I have just discovered that the photograph was given to the Conservatoire during a clear out!

Robert mentioned his organ lessons. Quite often when he was practising the manual parts on the piano at home, I would play the pedal part for him so we got the full effect of the piece being played.

Dr Christopher could be a little temperamental at times. There was a period when he stopped giving the recitals before the service. I think someone had complained that the organ was "too loud". Occasionally when he thought a sermon (usually by a visiting preacher) had gone on long enough he would switch the organ blower on again as a hint to the preacher to move on!"

Many thanks go to Robert and Donald for sharing these interesting memories. For a number of years, their family lived at Wyvern Road in Sutton Coldfield.

### Front and back pages of the Carrs Lane Church leaflet, kindly loaned by Robert Payne





## **The memories of Dr Christopher by Michael Jones of Stourbridge**

Michael Jones is a pianist, organist and teacher and responded to the article published in the spring edition 2013 '*Blackcountryman*', the magazine of the Black Country Society edited by Mike Pearson.

Michael is a life member of the Birmingham Conservatoire Association.

"I do remember seeing Dr Christopher at the Birmingham School of Music during the late 1960's when, as a schoolboy, I used to pass his teaching room en route to my piano lessons with Miss Marjorie Hazlehurst.

I also attended a musical event of some kind at the old Carrs Lane Congregational Church and hearing the organ played by him during the same period.

More significantly, however, I came across his collection of music manuscripts when I catalogued them as part of an on-going cataloguing project, I undertook a few years ago. They include a Symphony, String Quartet and other orchestral works. If you require a copy of this list, I would be happy to send you a copy.

You presumably already know that he had many works (organ, piano music and songs) published by various publishers: Patersons, Hinrichsen – even James Pass of 48 Cherry Street among them – I well remember Pass's music shop during my time as a student.

You refer to Dr Christopher's early life in Oldbury and Rounds Green. I don't know how close his connection was with St James' Church, Rounds Green, but when the new church was built on the Lions Farm Estate in the early 1960's, the old organ from the soon-to-be-demolished St James was moved to the new church. I have played this organ on numerous occasions over the last fifteen years and am fascinated by the realisation that this could well be an instrument that Dr Christopher himself played in his youth".

"I promised you a copy of my listing on Dr Christopher's collected Music Manuscripts (MSS) in the Birmingham Conservatoire Library – please find enclosed. As there do not appear to be any sets of MS orchestral parts to go with these full scores, it would seem to imply that these works have never been performed. But of course, there is always the possibility that parts originally existed but were destroyed at some stage.

However, there are many other composers whose MSS orchestral works in the Conservatoire Library do have complete sets of orchestral parts and so for now I have to incline to the option that these works may not have had orchestral parts for them – hence no performances, but that can only be conjecture at present.

I hope that we may be able to get an article written on Dr Christopher's life and music for the Conservatoire Association 'Fanfare' Newsletter, which is an excellent magazine, but only appears about twice a year. If John Smith and his editorial team are sympathetic to the idea (I strongly suspect they will be) then we might see something published in a year-or-so's time, but again it is early days at present!"

Many thanks go to Michael for taking the time to respond to the '*Blackcountryman*' article and for sharing such interesting memories.

Thanks also go to Mike Pearson, editor, for adding the article to the magazine in 2013.

Below is the list compiled by Michael Jones of Dr Christopher's collected Music Manuscripts (MSS) in the Birmingham Conservatoire Library

CYRIL S. CHRISTOPHER (1897 - 1979): original MSS in B'ham Cons. Library.

STRING QUARTET IN C MINOR:

1 Hardbound Full Score MS in black cover, 107pp. Same work, however, as:

SYMPHONY FOR STRING ORCHESTRA:

1 Hardbound Full Score MS in dark green cover, 107pp. Same page layout as String Quartet, but with added double bass part throughout. Inserted inside is a typescript on tracing paper of a 'brief analysis' of the three movements. Also set of MS string parts: 3-2-1-1-1.

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'A HYMN OF NATURE': For Soprano, Baritone, Chorus and Orchestra, to words by Robert Bridges. Hardbound Full Score MS in red cover, 197pp. Scoring: 2-2-2-2/4/3/+Tuba/Timp, Cymbals, Bass Drum, Bells, Harp, Strings.

VARIATIONS AND FUGUE ON AN OLD ENGLISH TUNE for String Orchestra. (Theme: 'Down Among the Dead Men'). Dated March 1935.

Score 1: Neat Full Score MS, blue paper cover, contains occasional pencil markings and metronome marks, 22pp.

Score 2: Inscribed in pencil: 'To Johan C. Hock'. Blue paper cover. MS heavily marked with bowings (presumably by Hock), 22pp.

Set of string parts for the above: 3-3-2-2-1.

A Large Folder containing 3 MS Full Scores:

(a): 'TWELFTH NIGHT' FESTIVAL OVERTURE (Full Orchestra)

MS Full Score, 47pp. Scoring: 2-2-2-2/4/2/3/Timp, Tambourino piccolo/Strings.

(b): 'ON A SUMMER NIGHT' (Full Orchestra)

MS Full Score, 39pp. Paper cover has pasted on it a typed description of the narrative behind the music. Scoring: 2-2-2-2/4/2/3/Tambourine, Castagnette, Harp/Strings.

(c) 'THE LONE SHORE' Tone Poem (Full Orchestra)

MS Full Score, 50pp. Paper cover has pasted on it a typed description of the narrative behind the music. Scoring: 2-2-2-2/4/2/3/Timp, Tambourini piccolo, Piatti/Strings.

There are no parts for these three works, nor for the String Quartet and 'Hymn of Nature'.

## **Mabel Senior, later Christopher**

### **The known music career of Mabel Senior**

Mabel Senior was a soprano. She too had an extensive musical career, including the position of Principal Soprano at Carrs Lane Church.

Below are some of the newspaper archive articles (BBC radio broadcasts etc.) found in the British Newspaper Archive - Findmypast.co.uk, that relate to Mabel Senior.

The BBC radio broadcasts only began in 1922. The first broadcast from Birmingham took place on 15 November 1922. The 'daily transmissions' by the BBC soon created a 'social and cultural phenomenon' known as 'listening in' to the wireless.

**Mabel was performing on radio from at least 1923, so she was right on the 'cutting edge' of the early broadcasting of the BBC.**

#### **Derby Daily Telegraph, Saturday 27 October 1923**

"Sunday 8.30 Station Orchestra Miss Mabel Senior, soprano, address by Rev. G H Moore, Chaplain of the Queens Hospital. Hymns by Mabel Senior."

#### **Derby Daily Telegraph, 28 November 1923**

"7.30 A special repeat performance of "The Magic Flute". Queen of the night – Irene Wynne, Tamina – Emily Broughton, Tamino – Charles Hedges, Sarasto – James Howell, Papagena – Harold Casey, three genii – Gladys Whitehall, Mabel Senior and Amy Carter."

#### **Derby Daily Telegraph, Tuesday 26 February 1924**

"8.45 Madame Alice Couchman pianoforte, Mabel Senior, soprano Harold Howes, baritone and Eric Wilde, entertainer."

#### **Derby Daily Telegraph, Wednesday 21 May 1924**

"10.30 Selections from the opera "The Magic Flute" – Orchestra Bert Ashmore, tenor, Gladys Whitehill, Mabel Senior, Amy Carter, Harold Casey, baritone and James Howell."

#### **Derby Daily Telegraph, 15 August 1924**

"Birmingham 8pm Request night Station Orchestra. Miss Mabel Senior, soprano, Mr Charles Barker (entertainer)."

#### **Derby Daily Telegraph, 2 September 1924**

"8pm Orchestra Miss Mabel Senior "The Irish Doctor" – a one act play."

#### **Derby Daily Telegraph, Monday 4 May 1925**

"6.45- 7.55 Programme from London, popular Orchestral programme by the Station Orchestra. Mabel Senior, soprano, the 5IT male Voice Quartet, Janet Joye (in impressions).

8pm. Orchestra, march "A Wounded Friend" (Myddleton) selection, "A Princess of Kensington" (German). Mabel Senior. "The Fairy Laundry" (Montague Phillips), "I know a Bank" (Martin Shaw). "They kissed; I saw them do it" (Hawkey) Mabel Senior."

**Derby Daily Telegraph, 20 August 1925**

“6pm Lozells Picture House Orchestra- Mabel Senior, soprano.”

**Derby Daily Telegraph, Wednesday 16 January 1926**

“6.30 Pattison’s Salon Orchestra; Mabel Senior, soprano, Norris Stanley, violin, Charles Badham, pianoforte.”

**Hull Daily Post, Monday 22 August 1927**

“4pm City of Birmingham Police Band with Mabel Senior, soprano and Margaret Althorpe, pianoforte – from Birmingham

PLUS 6.40 The Midland Wireless Chorus. Mabel Senior, soprano, Harold Howes, baritone.”

**Derby Daily Telegraph, 18 May 1928**

“6.45 Pattison’s Salon Orchestra Mabel Senior, soprano and Norris Stanley, violin.”

**Chelmsford Chronicle, Friday 10 August 1928**

“6.30 Birmingham Studio Orchestra. A Moore, baritone, Edith Penvile, flute, Mabel Senior, soprano, chorus – from Birmingham

8.30 Mabel Senior, Alice Vaughan, Frederick Stephenson, James Howell and Birmingham String Chorus and Orchestra.”

**Exeter & Plymouth Gazette, 10 November 1928**

“6.45 The Birmingham Studio Orchestra. Mabel Senior, soprano – from Birmingham.”

**Derby Daily Telegraph, 14 December 1928**

“6.30 Light music is put over, opening with the well-worn “Light Cavalry March” (Suppe), Appleton Moore, baritone and Mabel Senior, soprano are the singers.”

**Exeter & Plymouth Gazette, Thursday 9 January 1930**

“12pm Joseph Bourne, tenor, Mabel Senior, soprano, Leonard Hunt, baritone and Rita Munton, pianoforte.”

**Smethwick Telephone, 2 May 1931 – Extracts of a long article**

“Warley Wesley Guild Eisteddfod, Central Hall, Birmingham

The music classes provided yet another unique experience. In this class Miss Mabel Senior and the same song to the accompaniment of three different competitors.....

Mr Christopher in his crisp expert manner had instructed the four mixed choirs who severally had so beautifully sung Brewer’s “O love most wonderful”. He took the massed choirs in charge and won from them a glorious inspired rendering which one would not willingly have missed.....

The West Smethwick Choir was declared the winners.”

**Midland Counties Tribune, 20 January 1939**

“Abbey Street Methodists – Re-opening of organ at Nuneaton

The organ which has been overhauled and renovated was re-opened last night when a recital was given by Mr Cyril S. Christopher Mus. B, FROC organist of Carrs Lane Chapel Birmingham with Miss Mabel Senior of Birmingham, soloist.”

Mabel Senior continued to use her maiden name after marriage for her professional career.

It is clear that Mabel and Cyril worked together constantly and in very many different settings and venues.

This newspaper article may relate to Mabel Senior, but contains scant information

**Western Gazette, Friday 14 January 1921**

“St Margaret’s School, Dorchester – Associated Board Examination for Division 1 Theory of Music – Mabel Senior.”

**Source for all of these articles was the British Newspaper Archive found on Findmypast.**

## **Family history for Cyril Stanley Christopher**

Cyril Christopher was born on 23 June 1897 at Rounds Green, Oldbury in Worcestershire.

Cyril Stanley Christopher married Mabel Senior on 9 September 1926.

### **From the marriage certificate**

The marriage took place on 9 September 1926, by licence, at the Wretham Road New Church, Handsworth

Cyril Stanley Christopher was aged 29 and a bachelor. He was a Professor of Music and lived at 41 Dingle Road, Rounds Green, Oldbury

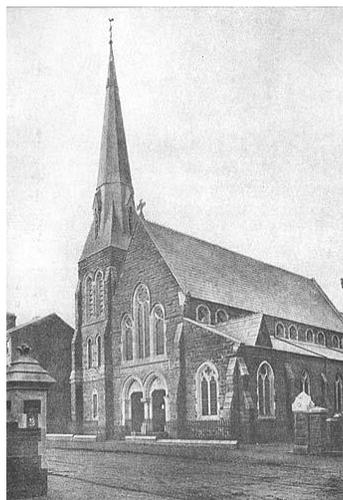
His father was William Frederick Holden Christopher who worked as a roller.

Mabel Senior was a spinster, aged 30 of no occupation. She lived at 15 Linwood Road, Handsworth

Her father was Charles Frederick Senior, who worked as a clerk.

They were married by E J E Schuck and the witnesses were Elizabeth Christopher and Charles Frederick Senior

The Wretham Road New Church Handsworth was built in 1879 by the Swedenborgians and was also known as the New Jerusalem Church.



**Wretham Road New Church**



**Wretham Road Church Organ**

This is also the church where Cyril Christopher held an organist appointment in 1928.

The Christopher family had strong ties to the areas of the Worcestershire and Staffordshire borders, especially the areas around Hales Owen, Oldbury, Rounds Green, Stourbridge, Belbroughton, Old Swinford, Kingswinford, Kinver, Wombourne and Dudley.

It is likely that various branches of the same original family spread out across the area during the start of what we call the 'industrial revolution'. Records show that the Christopher males tended to follow 'industrialised' occupations such as iron forge men rather than working in agriculture.

It seems likely that the three times great grandfather of Cyril Christopher was called William Christopher, who was born around 1760.

## **Baptisms**

So far, a definitive baptism for William Christopher has not been found. It is possible that the William Christopher we are seeking was born in about 1754 at Kingswinford to parents John and Anne. If this theory is correct, then John and Anne are Cyril's four times great grandparents.

John Christopher, was baptised on 20 January 1722 at Kinver to parents Gray Christopher and Mary Simkis. Gray and Mary Christopher also had a daughter called Susanna, who was baptised on 20 January 1722 at Kinver.

Gray Christopher and Mary Simkis were married on 8 September 1717 at Wombourne. Gray and Mary Christopher could theoretically be Cyril Christopher's five times great grandparents.

## **Marriages**

There was a marriage between William Christopher and Sarah Parker on 20 August 1780 at Halesowen in Worcestershire.

William and Sarah Christopher had a child, Mary baptised on 4 March 1781 at Halesowen. They had a daughter Sarah baptised on 26 December 1788 at Wolverley and a son Thomas baptised on 31 August 1794 at Belbroughton.

It appears that William and Sarah Christopher and William and Ann Christopher (below) each had a child baptised at Halesowen and at Wolverley. It seems likely that they were in some way related, for example as cousins.

William Christopher married Ann Cartwright on 11 February 1781 at Worcester. This couple could be direct relatives for Cyril Christopher.

**William and Ann Christopher had a son called John who was baptised on 2 September 1781 at Halesowen.**

Other children born to the couple were Joseph, 1784; Thomas, 1787; Anne, 1788; Elizabeth, 1791, William, 1795; Sarah, 1797 and Benjamin born in 1799.

These children were born at Wolverley, near Kidderminster.

**These baptisms were found on the International Genealogy Index, Batch Number C013762.**

**John Christopher was married to Sophia Lester on 19 October 1815 at Kidderminster**

**International Genealogy Index Batch Number M043951**

By the time of the 1841 census, John Christopher was widowed. He was living at Hagley, Worcestershire and worked as an iron forge man.

From the places of birth for their children, it appears that John and Sophia moved around many times, most likely in search of work.

Their children were Elizabeth, 1815; William John Lester Christopher, 1816; James, 1818; Joseph, 1819 and Sarah Sophia, 1825;

**International Genealogy Index Batch Number C019610**

**William John Lester Christopher married Mary Halbard on 19 July 1841 at Kinver, Worcestershire.**

The groom's father was John Christopher, forge - man and the bride's father was James Halbard.

On the 1851 census, William Christopher and his family lived at Northfield Head, Dudley. He worked as a forge man. His wife Mary was born in about 1816 at Lichfield in Staffordshire.

They had four children living with them: William John aged 7 born in Stourbridge; Ann aged 4 and twins Sarah and Mary aged three, all born in Cradley.

The family had one house servant, Emma Halbard, aged 11, from Stourbridge. She would appear to be a relative of Mary. There was also one apprentice, Henry Crew, aged 20, from Redditch.

At the time of the 1861 census, the family lived at Hollis Hill, Belbroughton, Worcestershire. William remained working as a forge man. Their son William John was now aged 17 and also worked as a forge man. Their daughter Ann was 14 and Mary and Sarah were 13.

Further children had been born: Elizabeth 9, Sophia 7, Jane 6 and John Henry aged two. All were born in Dudley plus Alice, just four months old, who was born at Belbroughton.

By 1871, the family had moved to Glebe House, Chaddesley Corbett, Worcestershire. William continued to work as a forge man, now aged 54. Living with William and Mary were Elizabeth, 19; Jane 15; Joseph (John) Henry, 12 and Alice, aged 10.

It appears that after 1871, the family moved to the Sheffield area. Mary Christopher died in 1875 at the age of 58.

In 1881, William Christopher lived at 108 Leadmill Road, Sheffield. Now 65, William continued to work as a Scythe forge - man, making agricultural machines. Three children and one grandson lived with him: Sarah was unmarried, aged 32; Joseph was also unmarried, aged 22 and working as a scythe forge man and Alice. Alice was unmarried, aged 20, and worked as a dress maker. She had a son, Francis, who was born in Brighton in 1879.

In 1891, William lived at Dam Cottages, South Sheffield. He was 75 and still working as a scythe forge man. His son Joseph was aged 30, and now married to Minnie, 30 from Sheffield. Joseph continued to work as a scythe forge man. William's grandson, Francis (now known as Frank) continued to live in the household.

## **Death**

The death of William Christopher was registered in the September quarter of 1896 at Wortley Yorkshire volume 9c entry 177 – aged 80

## **William and Mary Christopher had eight known children who were:**

William John Christopher, born about 1843 at Stourbridge.

Ann was born in 1847 at Old Swinford; Sarah was born in 1848 at Cradley; Mary was born about 1849 at Cradley; Elizabeth was born in 1852 at Dudley; Sophia was born in 1853 at Dudley; Jane was born in 1854 at Dudley; Joseph Henry was born in 1858 at Dudley and Alice was born in 1869 at Dudley.

William Christopher's son, William John, continues the ancestral line for Cyril Stanley Christopher.

The birth of William John Christopher was registered in the December quarter of 1843 at Stourbridge volume 18 page 472

The marriage of William John Christopher and Sarah Ann Holden was registered in the September quarter of 1866 at Dudley 6c 41

Sarah Ann Holden was born on 4 September 1844 and baptised at Rowley Regis on 15 March 1846.

Her parents were John Holden and Ann Hunt.

John Holden married Ann Hunt on 30 June 1833 at St Thomas, Dudley

### **International Genealogy Index Batch Number M040144**

At the time of the 1871 census, William and Sarah Ann Christopher lived at 33 Bath Row, Oldbury.

William was 27 and worked as a scythe forge man. They had two children; William, aged 3, born at Netherton and Alice Maude, aged 1 born at Oldbury. The family had one servant, Hannah Rose, aged 13 who was from Halesowen.

In 1881, the Christopher family continued to live at 33 Bath Row Oldbury. William Christopher continued to work as a scythe forge man. Their children were William Frederick, aged 13; Alice Maude, aged 11; Lizzie H, aged 9; Annie, aged 6; Lillian A, aged 3 and Florence, aged one.

Apart from William who was born at Netherton, the children were born at Oldbury.

The death of William John Christopher was registered in the June quarter of 1881 Dudley 6b 406, aged 37

### **The Will of William John Christopher – proved on 20 May 1881 at Worcester**

“The Will with a codicil of William John Christopher late of Rounds Green Oldbury in the county of Worcester, Scythe forge man who died 22 April 1881 at Rounds Green was proved at Worcester by Sarah Ann Christopher of Bath Road Rounds Green Widow the relict and Thomas Lavender of Rounds Green, grocer the Executors. Personal estate under £100.”

### **England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations 1858 – 1995)**

By the 1891 census, Sarah Christopher had moved to 22 Dingle Street, Oldbury. She was a widow, aged 46 and worked as a housekeeper.

Living with her were her children William F H, aged 23, a machinist; Alice Maude, aged 21, a domestic servant; Annie, aged 16; Lily Agnes, 1aged 3, a dressmaker’s apprentice and Florence, aged11.

Her daughter Lizzie was living at 274 High Street, West Bromwich, where she worked for Edward Pincher, architect, as a domestic servant.

### **Death**

The death of Sarah Christopher was registered in the September quarter of 1891 at West Bromwich 6b 410, aged 47

## **The children of William and Sarah Christopher**

William Frederick Holden Christopher was born in 1868 at Netherton.

Alice Maude Christopher was born in 1870 at Oldbury. Elizabeth H Christopher was born in 1872 at Oldbury. Annie Christopher was born in 1875 at Oldbury. Lillian A Christopher was born in 1878 at Oldbury and Florence Christopher was born in 1880 at Oldbury.

## **The line for Cyril Stanley Christopher continues through William Frederick Holden Christopher**

The marriage between William Frederick Holden Christopher and Elizabeth Harris was registered during the September quarter of 1893 at Dudley 6c 140

### **In 1891, the family of Elizabeth Harris lived at 34 Newbury Lane, Oldbury.**

The parents of Elizabeth Harris were John Harris, 34, who was a blacksmith from Oldbury and Mary, 44, from Oldbury. Their children were Elizabeth, aged 20; William, aged 19; Mary, aged 17; Annie, aged 13; John, aged 11; Phillip, aged 8 and Edwin, aged 6. All the children were born in Oldbury.

### **On the 1901 census William Frederick Holden and Elizabeth Christopher lived at 98 Dingle Street, Rounds Green, Oldbury**

W. Frederick Christopher was aged 33 and worked as a machinist at a spade works. He was from Netherton. His wife, Elizabeth, was 30 and from Oldbury.

Cyril Christopher was aged three and from Oldbury.

### **On the 1911 census the family lived at 41 Dingle Street, Oldbury**

Frederick Christopher (sic) was aged 43 and a spade and shovel machinist. Elizabeth was 40 and Cyril was 13.

The couple had been married for 17 years and only had one child. No children had died.

It does not appear that Frederick and Elizabeth had further children after the 1911 census.

### **Working in the Rounds Green district of Oldbury**

At Rounds Green, near to Dingle Street, was a large factory known as 'Brades Steel Works' (William Hunt and Sons, of the Brades).

'Brades' manufactured pressed steel and made very many items of 'edge tools' such as chisels, spades and hunting knives etc.

It is highly possible that this is where William Frederick Holden Christopher worked as a spade and shovel maker.

## **Death**

The death of William Frederick Holden Christopher was registered in the June quarter of 1940 at West Bromwich 6b 1356, aged 73

This is interesting because his wife Elizabeth was seen living with her son Cyril and daughter in law Mabel in Edgbaston, Birmingham from at least 1935.

On the 1939 Register, Elizabeth stated she was married, so they were living apart.

The 1939 Register shows that William F.H. Christopher was living at 41 Dingle Street, Oldbury.

He lived alone. He stated he was married. His date of birth was 10 April 1867 and he was a retired spade and shovel roller.

It is not known why Cyril's parents were not living together. It appears that Cyril Stanley Christopher was an only child.

Probate was not found for William Fredrick Holden Christopher.

## **Musical background**

It has been suggested by other researchers that William Frederick Holden Christopher was an organist and choir master at a church or chapel and this influenced Cyril in taking up the piano and organ and that his mother helped him with his practice.

No official records have been found that support the fact that William Christopher was a church or chapel organist or choir aster at this time.

There were several churches and chapels that the Christopher family could have attended for worship.

These include the early nineteenth century Primitive Methodist Chapel and Day School, which later became the Mission Church of St James that was opened in 1892 at Rounds Green.

The parish of Rounds Green was formed in 1900 with St James Church.

There was also St Nicholas Church, Oldbury, that was dilapidated by 1837 and rebuilt in 1841, then known as Christ Church, Oldbury Parish Church.

It is also possible that they worshiped in Dudley, possibly at the Central Methodist Church or at one of the many chapels that were in existence at the time.

## **British Newspaper Archives**

Online newspaper records were searched to see if anything was found for Oldbury, Dudley or other areas of the Black Country in relation to church choirs or organ playing.

It seems that the Dudley Primitive Methodist Church Choir held an anniversary celebration on Saturday 4 November 1905, when they performed a rendering of Handel's "Messiah".

There was a large audience for the event and members of the choir were Mr G Bell of Dudley; Mrs G H Storey, soprano; Miss S E Johnson, contralto; Mr R Humphreys, baritone of Gosforth and Mr T Watson, Tenor. The Organist was Mr J Dunsdale.

On Saturday 20 July 1907, the members and friends of the Dudley U M Free Church Choir held their annual trip to Saltburn (Morpeth) where between 80 and 100 people were present.

## **The Morpeth Herald**

No mention of any of the Christopher family was found amongst these archives.

## More about the life of Cyril Stanley Christopher

### Military service

There is no evidence that Cyril Stanley Christopher served in any capacity in military service.

### Residential history

It appears that after their marriage in 1926, Cyril and Mabel Christopher resided at 193 Barclay Road, Warley Woods.

Cyril received his Bachelor of Music degree at Durham in the academic year of 1934/35, so he must have spent some time at Durham, at least to take exams.

We can then trace their residential history from 1935 until 1979 through Kelly's Directories (much like our Yellow Pages and phone books), Electoral Roll records and the 1939 Register.

### Kelly's Directory for Birmingham (private residents' section)

1935, 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939 at 149 Knightlow Road, Harborne, Birmingham

Cyril Christopher  
Mabel Christopher - wife  
Elizabeth Christopher - mother

### Electoral Rolls for Birmingham

1935, 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939 at 149 Knightlow Road, Harborne, Birmingham

Cyril Christopher  
Mabel Christopher  
Elizabeth Christopher

### 1939 Register 149 Knightlow Road, Harborne, Birmingham

Cyril S Christopher	born 23 June 1897	married	
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Professional musician and teacher, organist, accompanist, composer, adjudicator and editor

Mabel Christopher	born 12 January 1896	married	domestic duties
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Elizabeth Christopher	born 22 May 1870	married	domestic duties
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149 Knightlow Road, Harborne is a substantial detached house in a quiet leafy road. It is valued in excess of £645,000 in 2021. It is not known if they lived there as owners or if they rented.

### Sutton Coldfield Electoral Rolls

1941 – 1960 at 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

Cyril Christopher  
Mabel Christopher  
Elizabeth Christopher

1961-1979 at 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

Cyril Christopher  
Mabel Christopher

1980 at 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

Mabel Christopher

It is known that Mabel had left the house in late 1979 or early 1980.

The death of Elizabeth Christopher was registered in the September quarter of 1959 at Birmingham 9c 509, aged 77.

Probate was not found for Elizabeth Christopher.

### **The death of Cyril Stanley Christopher**

Cyril Stanley Christopher died on 31 March 1979 at Highcroft Hospital Psychiatric Hospital in Erdington, aged 82.

His death was registered in the June quarter of 1979 at Birmingham.

It is recorded in an affidavit that he died after being in hospital for 14 weeks. He died in Highcroft Hospital, Erdington, Birmingham after a 'mental breakdown'. It is not known what caused his 'breakdown'.

Mr and Mrs Morgan were neighbours of Dr Christopher at the time he died (both no longer with us) and they reported that Dr Christopher developed "Alzheimer's disease", and took to wandering around the streets in his pyjamas.

One day he had a huge bonfire in his back garden and burnt all of his papers. This resulted in a lot of legal problems for Mrs Christopher after Cyril died.

Mr and Mrs Morgan also thought that Mabel went into a home after Dr Christopher died. She was said to have been frail and in poor health.

This information was given verbally to the family member who purchased the house.

See below for the details of the last will of Cyril Stanley Christopher.

The Carrs Lane Journal stated that after Dr Christopher died, Mable suffered from arthritis and impaired vision.

### **Children of Cyril Christopher and Mabel Senior**

So far, no evidence has been found that Cyril and Mabel had any children that survived and had a birth registered in England.

**There is just one family tree on Ancestry.co.uk that includes Cyril Stanley Christopher and that is run by user name Barbsteph319.**

This tree does not show any children for Cyril and Mabel.

## **More about Mabel Senior**

Mabel Senior was born in Glasgow in 1896. Her birth is shown on the Scotland's People online index.

It is not yet known how or why her parents found themselves in Scotland. Here is Mabel with her parents on the 1901 and 1911 census

### **1901 census 86 Woodland Road, Handsworth**

Charles Frederick Senior was aged 29 and worked as a Manager for a Trades Professional Society. He was from Manchester.

His wife was Bessie Senior who was aged 33 and from Kilburn in London

Mabel Senior was aged five and from Glasgow.

### **1911 census 43 South Road, Handsworth**

Charles Frederick Senior, now 39, was a Chartered Accountancy clerk. Bessie was 43 and Mabel was 15.

The couple stated that they had been married for 17 years and had one child.

A comprehensive search of the marriage index for England and Wales and Scotland between 1890 and 1911 did not find a marriage between Charles Senior and someone called Bessie.

Bessie could be a derivative of Elizabeth and this name was also checked with no positive result. It is possible that they were not married or were married abroad.

It appears from available electoral roll records that Charles and Bessie possibly became a couple somewhere between 1912 and 1922.

## **Electoral Rolls - Handsworth**

### **1912 69 South Road, Handsworth**

Charles Frederick Senior (women did not vote at this time)

### **1922,1925, 1927- 15 Linwood Road, Handsworth**

Charles Frederick Senior  
Bessie Senior

### **1930 11 Richmond Road, Handsworth**

Charles Frederick Senior  
Bessie Senior

No electoral roll entries for Mabel Senior were found online.

Women over the age of 30 were given the vote in 1918 and in 1928 this was changed to 21.

## **1939 Register**

The 1939 Register was taken on 29 September 1939 in order to provide ID cards, and later ration books. It was also used to administer conscription, direction of labour, monitor the population and prepare for evacuation.

A 1939 Register entry for both Charles and Bessie Senior living together was not found in England or Wales.

This could be Charles Frederick Senior in 1939

**1939 Register 25 Sandringham Road, Perry Barr, Birmingham**

Living in the household of Norman L Dean, an industrial diamond setter and toolroom chargehand

The daughter of Norman L Dean was Audrey Louise Dean, born on 18 October 1904.

She was single and worked as a trade protection office enquiries registration supervising clerk.

She also served with the Birmingham Fire Brigade and the Auxiliary Fire Service.

Her entry is notated 'Senior' which means she later became Audrey Senior.

Charles F Senior      born on 8 June 1871      married      a retired debt department manager

Possibly Charles was lodging in the Dean household. He does seem to have gone on to marry Audrey.

**Marriage**

The marriage between Audrey Louise Dean and Charles Frederick Senior was registered in the September quarter of 1943 at Birmingham 6d 498

It is not known if Charles Senior was divorced between 1939 and 1943.

This appears to be Bessie Senior in 1939

**1939 Register 27 Vale Road, Poole, Dorset**

Bessie Senior born on 29 November 1867      Widow      unpaid domestic duties

Living with her was Emily M Francis born on 20 April 1870. She was single and living on private means.

**Deaths**

A search on the death index records for Charles Senior found one possible death

The death of Charles F Senior was registered during the September quarter of 1953 at Birmingham 9c 447 – age 82 (born in 1871)

This could well be the correct man who was the father of Mabel.

Probate has not been found for him.

However, this entry was found on the Wills index for England

“The Will of Bessie Senior of “Therapenia”, Wilderton Road, Branksome, Dorset (wife of Charles Frederick Senior) died on 20 December 1952 at 19 Queens Park Gardens, Bournemouth. Probate at Winchester 26 February 1953 to Charles Ernest Newall, Minister of Religion.

Effects: £275 17s 9d.”

**England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations 1858 – 1995)**

The death of Bessie Senior was registered during the December quarter of 1952 at Bournemouth 6b 293 - aged 84

It appears therefore that the death of Charles F Senior registered in Birmingham in 1953 is most likely the father of Mabel Senior.

It rather appears that Charles Frederick Senior was a bigamist. This was not uncommon during the war and post- war years.

### **Death and probate**

The death of Audrey Louise Senior was registered in the December quarter of 1974 at Warwick 31 1503. Her date of birth was 18 October 1904.

“Audrey Louise Senior of 27 Sandringham Road, Perry Barr, Birmingham died on 7 October 1974. Probate at Birmingham on 31 October. Effects £8573.”

### **England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations 1858 – 1995)**

No children appear to have been born to the couple.

### **The last person to die was Mabel Christopher.**

The death of Mabel Christopher born on the 12 January 1896 was registered in December 1982 at Preston & South Ribble 40 2082

### **Probate**

“Mabel Christopher of Flat ? Grosvenor House, Grosvenor Street, Preston died on 5 December 1982. Probate at Liverpool 27 November.

Effects £28,586.”

### **England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations 1858 – 1995)**

Modern maps failed to find Grosvenor House in Preston.

It is not known why Mabel moved to Preston.

## **The home of Cyril and Mabel Christopher : 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield**

Cyril Stanley and Mabel Christopher were the owners of 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield from 1941.

The house was originally known as 'Barrinka'. The house was most likely built during the late 1920's or early 1930's. As the deeds to the house are lost, there are no early land registry records available.

One interesting piece was found in the *Tamworth Herald* on Saturday 14 August 1937.

### **“Wilnecote Division Petty Sessions – motoring offences**

Frederick Eden, building contractor of 23 Cremorne Road, Sutton Coldfield was fined 15 shillings for speeding. He was caught speeding along Watling Street in Wilnecote, Staffordshire.”

### **British Newspaper Archives - Findmypast**

On the 1939 Register, 23 Cremorne Road was empty.

### **British Telecom – archived telephone books (Findmypast.co.uk)**

For 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield - Cyril S Christopher, Doctor of Music

For the years 1949 to 1978 Cyril was listed at this address.

### **Legal documents relating to the ownership of 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield**

There are various affidavits and a copy of Dr Christopher's Will and Probate that were sworn by Mabel Christopher, that were left in the house by Mabel Christopher.

“My late husband Cyril Stanley Christopher died on the 31 March 1979. Prior to his death he suffered a mental breakdown and on or about the 22 December 1978 became a patient at Highcroft Hospital, Erdington, Birmingham.

Prior to my husband's mental breakdown, he told me on about 5 October 1977 that he had removed from the safety deposit box at the Trustee Savings Bank in Birmingham all except the deed of the freehold property (being 23 Cremorne Road Sutton Coldfield).

Therefore, I understood the deeds of the property were still in the box, as he never again mentioned the deeds. I believe that he last accessed the safety deposit box on the 5 October 1977.

When the box was visited after his death it was empty”.

*Signed Mabel Christopher”*

### **From the executors of the Will, Miss Florence Marjorie Greaves of 21 Tamworth Road, Sutton Coldfield and Mr Phillip Henry Perks of Coventry Road, Warwick**

“An extensive search of the house produced no trace of the deeds”.

The solicitors acting for the sale of the property were Vickery & Co of Four Oaks. The original solicitors who dealt with the purchase of the property in 1941 were Messrs Vernon and Shakespeare of Oldbury.

A letter dated 18 July 1979 shows that the house was purchased on a mortgage for an advance of £650 (pass books were also seen). The mortgage was paid off on 31 March 1954.

The house was in continuous undisturbed occupation by Dr and Mrs Christopher since 1941. Dr Christopher paid all of the outgoings on the property. There was no knowledge of any covenants on the property or of any disputes.

Miss Florence Marjorie Greaves swore an affidavit that she had known the couple for upwards of 40 years and she was aware that they purchased 23 Cremorne Road in 1941. Her late mother found the property for the couple and assisted them with the move to the property.

When Dr Christopher was admitted to hospital Miss Greaves visited him regularly.

Miss Greaves could not find the deeds at the house and over the years she had assisted in concerning these affairs.

She swore that Dr Christopher was admitted to Highcroft Hospital in December 1978 and died on 31 March 1979 at the hospital.

It was also sworn that between 1973 and 1978 Dr Christopher had visited the bank and looked in the safety deposit box.

The deeds, as she remembered, were tied together with wax and ribbon. There were also payment books showing the mortgage payments to the 'Incorporated Building Society', Waterloo Street, Birmingham.

Also included with these documents was a list of the people who lived in Mere Green (including Cremorne Road) entitled the 'Civilian Residents Register'. This was compiled by Dr Christopher it appears.

### **Last Will and Testament**

The Inland Revenue documents state that the estate of Cyril Stanley Christopher was valued gross at £37, 317, 16p and net at £36, 835, 96p and was proved at the High Court, Birmingham on 7 August 1979.

### **The sale of 23 Cremorne Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield**

It is not known exactly when Mabel Christopher left 23 Cremorne Road, but her neighbours thought that she went into a nursing home. It was probably during late 1979.

The house was vacant for about a year until the family member purchased it on 28 November 1980.

A hairnet and other 'ladies' items' were found in the kitchen, presumably items belonging to Mabel Christopher.

Mrs Christopher had left a newspaper cutting about her husband, plus a hand written note about the house, on a shelf.

**JUST AVAILABLE**  
EXCELLENTLY SITUATED, SPACIOUSLY ARRANGED  
FREEHOLD SEMI-DETACHED COTTAGE STYLE HOUSE

**23, CREMORNE ROAD  
FOUR OAKS**

Located in a most popular and convenient residential area near to Mere Green centre. Well planned, unusually designed accommodation comprises: Reception hall, delightful lounge, separate dining room, breakfast / kitchen, three good bedrooms, bathroom and w.c. Carport, garage and charming gardens.

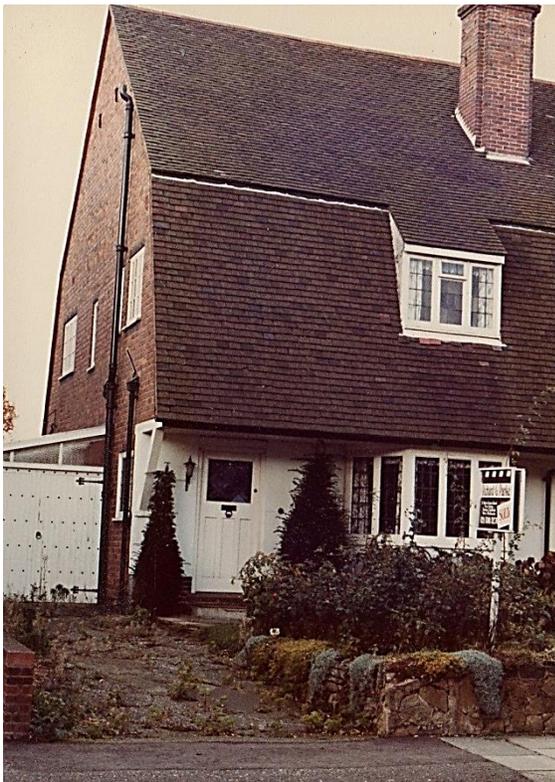


**PURCHASE PRICE: £26,950**

Viewing: By arrangement with sole agents

**The advert for 23 Cremorne Road in April 1980**

**Sutton Coldfield News**



**The front of the house and the back garden in November 1980**

It is believed that Dr Christopher had a grand piano in the sitting room that overlooked the rear of the house.

## Variety in concert

It is surprising how often amateurs find new, unusual or virtually forgotten works for their concerts.

There were items of all degrees of familiarity in the concert given at St. James's Church, Shirley, last night, ranging from Haydn's 104th Symphony and the *Magic Flute* overture to four choral works by Cyril S. Christopher (including one first performance), and Boellmann's *Symphonic Variations* for cello and orchestra. This last really does not deserve its present neglect, and was most capably played by Hugh Jones.

\* \* \*

Dr. Christopher is perhaps better known in Birmingham as an organist and choirmaster, but the four pieces given last night showed him as a composer with a complete understanding of his chosen medium. The Greathead (treble) was the musicianly soloist in his *Veni Emmanuel*, a most effective setting this, and the choir of St. James's Church sang well throughout, with splendid concentration from the boys. Saltley Grammar School Madrigal Group distinguished themselves in *Music's Spell*, to the words of Thomas Moore.

Others taking part in this imaginatively-planned concert were the Solihull Society of Arts Orchestra and a section of Shirley Silver Band, all firmly controlled and conducted by Gerald N. Gillett. The final item was the Vaughan Williams arrangement of the *Old 100th* in which everyone, congregation included, was employed.

W. H. P.

**This undated cutting was left at the house by Mrs Christopher**

It probably came from either the Birmingham Mail or the Birmingham Post.

Cost £266-65  
Hall Landing & Stairs  
Carpet from Maples.  
Fitted - March 10<sup>th</sup> 1945

---

Mr Bakery put new  
lavatory suite upstairs  
April 25<sup>th</sup> 1945

---

Mr Bakery put blue  
lavatory suite in kitchen  
pantry.  
May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1945.

12<sup>th</sup> July 1946  
Mr Bakery did Hall Doors etc  
& shelves in Scullery

---

10<sup>th</sup> July 1946.  
Suite upholstered (Red)  
by Shelley Bros. £160.

---

July 15<sup>th</sup> 1946.  
Lounge carpet turned (Bakery)

---

July 12<sup>th</sup> 1946.  
Mr Bakery painted Kitchen &  
Scullery.

---

July 19<sup>th</sup> 1946  
Mr Bakery painting back  
bedroom (Pink) & bath  
room

These notes were left at the house by Mrs Christopher

## Dr Cyril Stanley Christopher - Organist Emeritus of Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham

### Organist

**A**FTER 37 years as organist and choir-master at Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham, Dr. Cyril Christopher has been designated its Organist Emeritus.

"It is a rare title," says Dr. Christopher, who lives in Cremerne Road, Four Oaks.

Dictionaries describe "Emeritus" as a recognition after long service, generally used for professors on retirement.

The son of an Oldbury organist and choirmaster, Dr. Christopher was taught to play the piano from what he

calls "very early years."

His first composition was published when he was 13, and three years later he received his first organ appointment in open competition — although he had never had an organ lesson.

Now he ranks his own entry in Grove's Dictionary of Music, Reiman's Musik-Lexikon, Who's Who in Music and the Dictionary of Inter-



**Dr. Christopher — a favourite cartoon of himself.**

national Biography—as composer, organ recitalist, adjudicator, lecturer and tutor.

He has had, in his career, three offers of posts in Canada, all of which he has declined.

Countries that have recently broadcast his organ and choral compositions include Holland, South Africa, the United States and Canada.

Dr. Christopher will continue as a tutor in harmony and counterpoint at Birmingham School of Music.

These cuttings were shared by Carrs Lane Church but parts of the article are missing

**Birmingham Evening Mail, Monday 11 December 1967**

From the Carrs Lane Church archive – with thanks

Sheet music for the organ by Cyril Stanley Christopher – purchased by the author



No. 198a, b

# CHRISTOPHER

## TWO RECITAL PIECES

H. 198a FANTASY (Duration : 4½ mins.)

on a Tune from Ravenscroft Psalter (1621)

H. 198b SCHERZO-FUGUE (Duration : 3 mins.)

Organ

# FANTASY

on a tune from Ravenscroft's Psalter (1621)\*

"Disposer supreme, and judge of the earth."

CYRIL S. CHRISTOPHER  
(Op. 20, No. 1.)

**Maestoso**

Manual

Gt. *ff* (Sw. coup.)

Sw. (full)

quasi cadenza

Pedal

*ff*

Gt. to Ped.

Gt. *f*

\*'Old 104th'

System 1: Treble clef, bass clef, and a lower bass clef. Treble clef contains a guitar part with a forte (*f*) dynamic, a triplet of eighth notes, and sixteenth-note runs with sixths. Bass clef contains a similar sixteenth-note run with sixths. The lower bass clef contains a triplet of eighth notes.

System 2: Treble clef, bass clef, and a lower bass clef. Treble clef contains a piano (*p*) dynamic, a *Sw.* (Swell) marking, and a *Calmato* marking. Bass clef contains a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *Gt. (Diap.)* marking. The lower bass clef contains a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *ritardando* marking.

System 3: Treble clef, bass clef, and a lower bass clef. Treble clef contains a *poco rall.* marking, a *Gt 5* marking, and a *più f* marking. Bass clef contains a *più f* marking and an *accel -* marking. The lower bass clef contains a *più f* marking.

System 4: Treble clef, bass clef, and a lower bass clef. Treble clef contains a *er - ando* marking and a *più f* marking. Bass clef contains a *più f* marking. The lower bass clef contains a *più f* marking.

System 5: Treble clef, bass clef, and a lower bass clef. Treble clef contains an *allarg - - - an - do* marking and a *ff* marking. Bass clef contains a *ff* marking. The lower bass clef contains a *ff* marking.

First system of musical notation. It consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass clef staff. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat). The first staff has a dynamic marking *f* and a tempo marking *a tempo*. The notation includes a series of sixteenth-note runs in the right hand, with long slurs connecting them across measures.

Second system of musical notation, continuing the piece. It features similar sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

Third system of musical notation. The right hand continues with intricate sixteenth-note patterns, while the left hand provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

Fourth system of musical notation. The piece continues with consistent rhythmic and melodic motifs in both hands.

Fifth system of musical notation. The right hand features a sixteenth-note run that concludes with a trill. A dynamic marking *a piacere* is present above the final notes. The left hand has a section marked *Sw.* (Swell) and a fermata over the final notes.

First system of musical notation, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music consists of sixteenth-note runs in both hands, with sixteenth-note triplets and sixteenth-note sextuplets indicated by the number '6' above the notes. The key signature has one flat.

Second system of musical notation. It includes a guitar part labeled 'Gt.' with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The piano part continues with sixteenth-note runs and triplets. The tempo marking 'a tempo' is present. The system concludes with a triplet of eighth notes.

Third system of musical notation, continuing the piano part with sixteenth-note runs and slurs. The bass line consists of simple chords and rests.

Fourth system of musical notation, featuring more sixteenth-note runs in the piano part. The bass line has rests and a few notes.

Fifth system of musical notation, showing the final part of the piece. The piano part has sixteenth-note runs with slurs. The tempo markings 'poco rall - en -' are written above the staff. The system ends with a fermata over a note in the piano part.

*- tando* *Larg* *a - 7*

*piu f*

*- mente*

*ff*

*accel* *er* *ando*

*ff*

**Molto maestoso**

*fff* (Reeds)

*ff* *poco* *a* *poco* *rall.* *fff*

*ff*

To James C. Parsons

# THREE CHORAL IMPROVISATIONS

## CANZONA

on an ancient Irish hymn melody ("St. Columba")

CYRIL S. CHRISTOPHER

"The King of love my Shepherd is"

*Adagio espressivo*

MANUAL

PEDAL

Sw *p*

Gt

*mf ma dolce*

*mf ma dolce*

Gt to Ped.

Sw *pp*

Ch

Gt

Gt

*cres*

*cemb*

Printed by kind permission of Messrs. Steiner and Bell Ltd.

Hierchen Edition No. 52.

## PASTORALE

on the tune "Surrey"

CYRIL S. CHRISTOPHER

"The Lord my pasture shall prepare"

*Alliegretto*

Solo (or Sw. soft reed)

MANUAL

PEDAL

Sw *p*

Ch *p*

Sw (or Ch. *mp*)

Sw (or Ch. *mp*)

Solo (or Sw. soft reed)

Sw (or Ch. *mp*)

Ch *p*

Sw (or Ch. *mp*)

\* Alternative registration where no Solo Organ available

Hierchen Edition No. 53.

## VOLUNTARY

on a tune by Orlando Gibbons ("Song 5")

CYRIL S. CHRISTOPHER

### EXTRACT 1

"Strong Son of God, eternal Love"

*Maestoso*

MANUAL

PEDAL

Gt

*ff*

### EXTRACT 2

Gt

*mf*

*rall.*

Gt *f a tempo*

Gt to Ped. off

Gt to Ped.

Hierchen Edition No. 52.

To Sir Edward Bairstow

# RHAPSODY ON A GROUND

CYRIL S. CHRISTOPHER

### EXTRACT 1

*Appassionato*

MANUAL

PEDAL

Gt. Sw. *mp*

*ff*

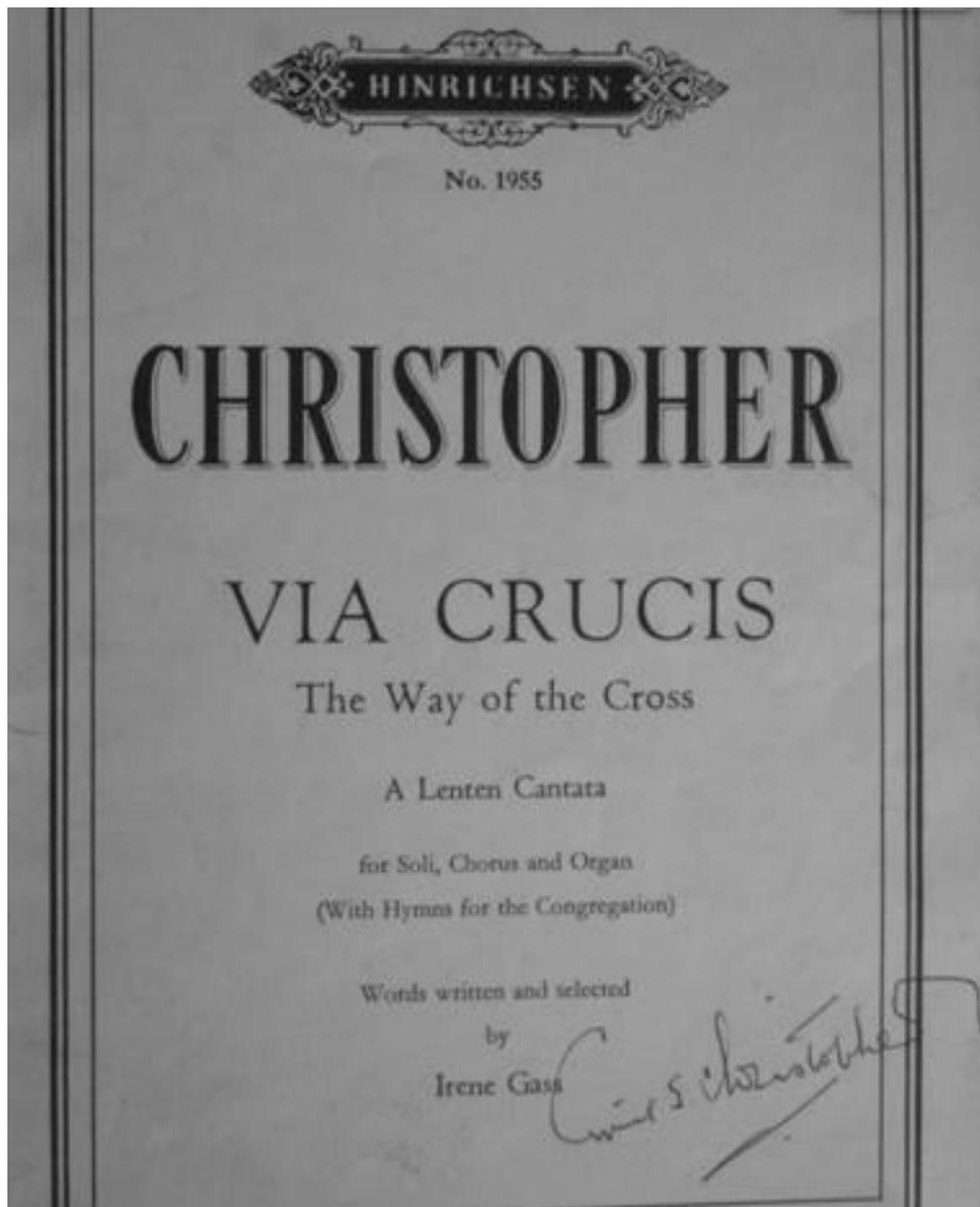
Gt. to Ped.

### EXTRACT 2

Sw *p*

### EXTRACT 3

Hierchen Edition No. 53.



This piece of sheet music was found on 'eBay', but had already been sold.

The author has a scanned copy of Via Crucis loaned by Carrs Lane Church

## **Acknowledgments**

Many thanks go to all the people who helped me with this piece of research.

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Andrew McCrea	Royal College of Organists Director of Academic Development
Rev. Neil Riches	Carrs Lane Church Minister
Tim Batty	Carrs Lane Church Musical director
Mike Pearson	'Black Country Society' magazine editor
Aryeh Oron	Bach-Cantatas Website
Robert Payne	Member of Carrs Lane Church
Donald Payne	Member of Carrs Lane Church
Michael Jones	Pianist, Organist and Private Teacher

## **Sources**

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Royal College of Organists archives

Carrs Lane Church archives and publications

King Edward Schools Birmingham archives

Sutton Coldfield library archives

Bach Cantatas Website

Ancestry.co.uk – genealogy website

Findmypast.co.uk – genealogy website

FamilySearch – Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) online genealogy search engine

Oldbury History Society Website

Digitalhandsworth Website

[City of Birmingham Choir Website](#)

[Old Birmingham Pictures Website](#)

[Family documents and photographs](#)