

## NORMAN COKE-JEPHCOTT

### HIS LIFE AND FAMILY

1893 – 1962



Norman Coke-Jephcott Mus.D.<sup>1</sup> F.R.C.O.<sup>1</sup> F.A.G.O.<sup>1</sup> F.T.C.L.<sup>1</sup> spent most of his life in the USA. This is his story, as researched by Roger Jephcott, Norman's great nephew. Coke-Jephcott was known to his close friends and colleagues as Coke, or Cokey, but not to his face by pupils or students. Information and explanation against the index numbers will be found in the 'Footnotes'.

All the records suggest that Norman did not hyphenate his name before moving to the USA in 1911 when he was 18. Neither his parents, nor his brother and sister, hyphenated their names, Coke being simply their middle names. The introduction of Coke<sup>2</sup> as a family middle name occurred in 1830s and 1840s.

### **1893-1911: His Formative Years**

Norman Coke Jephcott was born at the home of his parents, Edwin Coke Jephcott (1857-1927) (Professor of Music) and Annie Mary Jephcott (née Clarke) (1855-1922) on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1893. His parents lived at 11 Bishop Street, Coventry, Warwickshire. They had two other children Edward Coke Jephcott (1885-1962, the Researcher's Grandfather) and Mary Coke Jephcott (1887-1962). Norman was baptised at Holy Trinity Church, Coventry on 20 April 1893.

Norman's father Edwin had studied under the organist at Holy Trinity Church in Coventry. Edwin's profession was variously given as a Professor of Music or Teacher of Music and organist. The latter is probably a more accurate description since in advertisements for music tuition in 1916, Edwin adds the letters ISM after his name. The ISM (Incorporated Society of Musicians), based in London, was inaugurated in 1882 as the UK's body for musicians to champion the importance of music and to protect the rights of those working in the business. Edwin taught privately the organ, pianoforte, violin, violoncello and singing to pupils in the Coventry area and was admitted as an Alto (Cantoris) in the choir at Holy Trinity, Coventry in 1900. He was Organist and Choirmaster of St Giles Church, Exhall, Coventry from 1903 to 1910 and had the same role at St Thomas Church (now demolished), The Butts, Coventry between 1904 and 1909.

As composer as well as teacher, Edwin wrote 'A Hymn for the King'<sup>3</sup> in June 1902, a hymn sung at a Coronation Service at Exhall Church. At the same time, he also wrote 'The New King'<sup>3</sup> for Edward VII's Coronation on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1902 which was submitted for the occasion [but to which body/organisation is unknown]. However, a response from Marlborough House, Pall Mall reads, "Sir Francis Knollys is desired by The King to thank Mr E Coke Jephcott for the Verses sent for His Majesty's acceptance". Furthermore, in 1896, Edwin composed a bright and tuneful gavotte to which he gave the name "Ye Ladye Godiva", and dedicated it to the inhabitants of Coventry.



Bablake School

Not much is known, however, about the early life of his son Norman, except that he was educated at Bablake School, a prestigious public school for boys in Coventry, which opened in its present form on Coundon Road in 1890.



At the time of the 1901 Census, Norman, his parents, and brother and sister were living at 15 White Street, Coventry (in the Parish of Holy Trinity); a privately owned house. His father, Edwin, was teaching music from home and his brother Edward was working as a zinc etcher, presumably in the print trade. The 1911 Census also shows the whole family living at the same address.

Norman acquired early musical experience when, on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1904 he was admitted as a chorister at Holy Trinity, Coventry (opposite) where he sang treble. He became a solo chorister and was presumably taught the piano and organ by his father, who was then organist at St Giles, Exhall. It must have soon become clear that Norman had an extraordinary musical talent. At the age of only 15 (in 1909) he was assistant

organist and assistant choirmaster (to Harold Osmond) at Holy Trinity. In the same year, his first orchestral work, 'Prelude in C-Sharp Minor' was performed under the direction of its youthful composer and conductor.

Holy Trinity Church, Coventry is one of the largest medieval churches in England. It is a prestigious church dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century in the city centre, with an impressive spire. It is almost the size of a cathedral, yet is situated alongside Coventry Cathedral. Holy Trinity is 194' (59 m) long, has a spire of 237' (72 m) and was restored internally in 1854.

On 13 November 1909, whilst living at 15 White Street, Coventry, Norman was first registered with the Royal College of Organists (R.C.O.), Kensington Gore, London. The R.C.O. is a professional chartered institute which partly exists for the purpose of setting oral, written and practical examinations for professional organists. It has never been a residential college, nor had a student body. Norman passed the examinations of Associateship of the R.C.O. (A.R.C.O.) in July 1910.

With regard to his family, Norman's sister Mary Coke Jephcott married Joseph Henry Wheat in July 1909. They lived in Nuneaton and had four children. Only one lived to adulthood.

Norman's brother Edward was an accomplished cellist, although his life-long career was in the print business. Edward and Norman regularly played together at venues such as the Coventry Musical Club and the Bablake Old Boys' Club; also, they accompanied their father, Edwin, at St Giles Church, Exhall (opposite). One newspaper cutting recorded, "At the close of the evening service at the Parish Church (Exhall) on Sunday evening an organ recital



was given by Master Norman Jephcott. He was assisted by Mr Edward Jephcott (brother) who played two 'cello solos, and Mr Coke Jephcott (father), who sang a solo. The recital was very much appreciated". The Researcher has many similar extracts glued into a file of newspaper cuttings from the early 1900s, none of which are dated or attributed to any particular publication.

Edward (Norman's brother) married Lillian Gertrude Rees (1885-1963) on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1910 at Holy Trinity Church, Coventry. The marriage certificate shows Edward's name as being hyphenated (Coke-Jephcott), as was that of Edwin, his father. This written record, linking middle names and surnames, may have encouraged Norman, who was presumably present at the wedding, to do likewise after his immigration to the USA. There is no evidence that Edwin continued hyphenating his surname. In fact, Lillian later stopped Edward hyphenating his name because she did not want to be so closely associated with the Cokes, as she considered her husband's forefathers to have spent too much time drinking. She also dropped Coke as a middle name when her son Cyril was born. He was given the middle name of 'Rees', his mother's maiden name.

In addition to his involvement with the Coventry Musical Club and church recitals, Edward took part in recitals at Coventry's *Empire Theatre* from about 1915 onwards. Coventry's first cinema had opened in 1910. Edward accompanied the silent movies at *The Scala Picture House*, Far Gosford Street and *The Picture House*, Smithford Street.

Meanwhile, Edward's younger brother Norman succeeded in passing the Fellowship examinations of the R.C.O. (F.R.C.O.) in July 1911. This was the R.C.O.'s highest level of qualification which he achieved at just 18 years of age. Norman would have prepared in Coventry and travelled to London to take the exams. His examiners were Frederick Bridge, Walter Parratt, F G Shinn (paperwork), H A Harding (Hon. Secretary of R.C.O.), G C Martin and A L Pearce (organ playing).

Following the Fellowship examination, Norman received two letters from the R.C.O., one typed from H A Harding, informing him of his success in the examination and advising him that on the payment of two guineas he would be presented with his diploma. The other, handwritten from Thomas Shindler, Registrar R.C.O., informed Norman that he had been awarded the Turpin Prize which consisted of £4 to be spent on books; resources calculated to advance his studies in music. The Researcher has the originals of these two letters.

Norman was the first recipient of the Turpin Prize, which had been instituted in memory of E H Turpin, who was Hon. Sec. of the R.C.O. until his death in 1907; the prize was awarded to the candidate who achieved the second highest marks in any year's examinations. The Turpin Prize (albeit in modified form) is still awarded today and is secondary to the Limpus Prize (which did not exist in 1911) for the highest marks.

Some years later, David Pizarro<sup>4</sup> a pupil of Norman asked him whether he had been upset to come only second in his R.C.O. Fellowship examinations. He replied that the winner had been a blind person, whose greater achievement, he felt, had been rightly acknowledged. According to the R.C.O., the winner was a Douglas Fox and evidence at the time suggested, however, that he was not blind!

Norman became Organist and Choirmaster of St Giles Church, Exhall circa December 1910, perhaps succeeding his father when he left St Giles in the same year. Norman continued to work as assistant at Holy Trinity. The Exhall church is about six miles north of Coventry City centre, where he lived, towards Bedworth. At that time, travel between Coventry centre and Exhall was probably taken by train or tram (originally steam and then electric driven). Public transport was not enhanced until 1914 when motorbuses took to the local roads. Bedworth was very much a coal mining area. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Coventry had become a major centre of bicycle manufacture.

### **1911-1932: Emigration, His Early Years in the USA and Marriage**

In July 1911, according to the May 1933 edition of 'The New Music Review', Norman saw an advertisement in *The Churchman*, an ecclesiastical publication, that read: "Wanted: Organist and Choirmaster for the Protestant Episcopal Church in Kingston-on-Hudson - must be of good character, pleasing disposition, and a good tennis player".

Feeling that he was the right man, Norman answered, more out of curiosity than with any serious intent. Shortly afterwards, he left for a holiday in the south of England, forgetting the application entirely. Upon his return in September he was surprised to find he had been offered the position.

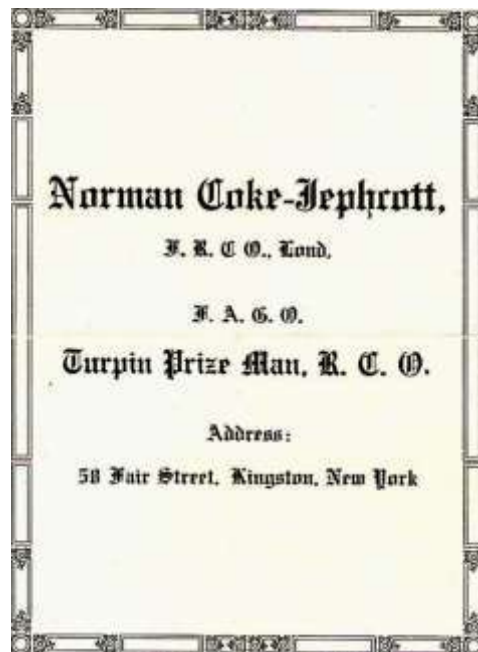
This turn of events altered his entire career. Previously he had not entertained the idea of emigration to America. His post in Coventry was steady and the atmosphere pleasant. Again, according to 'The New Music Review', it would have been difficult and discouraging for a man of his background to uproot his national and cultural traditions to start life in a new country. Nor would it have been easy to leave a family who regarded the proposition unsympathetically and sceptically.

Norman was adventurous and accepted the position, travelled to the USA and spent the rest of his professional life there. He travelled alone from Liverpool to New York aboard the 'RMS Celtic' (20,904 ton ocean liner of White Star Line) arriving on 17 November 1911. He travelled 2nd class (347 1<sup>st</sup> class passengers, 160 2<sup>nd</sup> and 2,350 3<sup>rd</sup> class). The ship's manifest described him as having brown hair and blue eyes.

The Parish Register of Holy Trinity dated 27 January 1912 recorded, "A vote of congratulations to Mr Norman Jephcott on having obtained the Fellowship Diploma of the Royal College of Organists and also on having received the appointment of Organist at the Parish Church, Kingston, New York – was proposed by Mr Sherratt and seconded by Mr Carson and unanimously carried. The Hon. Sec. was desired to convey the same to Mr Jephcott and also to thank him for his past services as Assistant Organist". By the time of this entry, however, Norman had already left the UK.

The Church of the Holy Cross, Kingston is some 100 miles north of New York City. Kingston was a sleepy, dull Hudson town. Home sickness started almost immediately. The church was small and the choir uninspiring. The organ was old and worn out.

The following is a printed teaching brochure that Norman issued when he was in Kingston.



#### ORGAN RECITAL.

Mr. Norman Coke-Jephcott, organist and choir master of the Church of the Holy Cross, and music master Christ Church School, Kingston, N. Y., is ready to accept engagements for Organ Recitals, Etc.

#### CORRESPONDENCE TUITION.

Mr. Coke-Jephcott gives lessons by correspondence in all theoretical subjects, and makes a specialty of preparing pupils for the Associateship and Fellowship of the A. G. O., and other examinations.

All exercises are carefully corrected, and when necessary, REWORKED, so that a high standard of musicianship may be attained.

Special terms to Professional Musicians.

#### PERSONAL TUITION.

Mr. Coke-Jephcott receives resident pupils in Kingston for advanced piano forte playing, organ playing, composition, etc.

For further information apply—58 Fair Street, Kingston, New York.

In 1912, the American Guild of Organists conferred their diploma of Fellowship on Norman which is the highest academic honour an organist can gain in the USA.

In 1913 Norman gave an organ recital at the John Wanamaker Auditorium, a 1500-seat theatre on Broadway and 9<sup>th</sup>, New York. The Wanamaker organ was deemed exceptionally good and was played by reputable organists of the day. The Wanamaker Auditorium was across the street from the John Wanamaker departmental store and the two were linked by an above ground walkway. The store was destroyed by fire in 1956.

Also in 1913, Norman returned to the UK, perhaps in the June. No passenger record can be found or the reason why he returned. It might have been simply for the reason that he was homesick and wished to see his parents; he was only 20. Norman returned to the USA from Liverpool on RMS Carmania (19,524 tons) of Cunard Line. He arrived in New York on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1913 having travelled 2<sup>nd</sup> Class as one of 350 passengers (there being 300 in 1<sup>st</sup> Class and 900 passengers in 3<sup>rd</sup> Class).

In early 1915 the Astors of Rhinebeck enticed Norman to cross the River Hudson from Kingston on the west, to Rhinebeck on the east in order to establish a choir school in the town. This he did as Organist and Choir Director at the Church of the Messiah, Rhinebeck (also known as the Astor Memorial Church). The Choristers School, a weekly boarding school for boys, was set up by Norman on Montgomery Street. It was an ambitious project, sponsored by a few local families, and was an instant success. Life was pleasant for Norman in the charming town of Rhinebeck.



Rhinebeck Church

The Astors were impressively rich, but the death of John Jacob Astor IV in the April 1912 Titanic disaster (hit by a falling funnel according to John Maxtone-Graham, Titanic historian), and the beginning of the First World War later spelled the end of the school's viability. John Astor was believed to have been the wealthiest man on Titanic. His pregnant wife survived (although injured accessing a lifeboat through a broken glass window according to J M-G) and John Jacob Astor V was born four months later. President Clinton's daughter Chelsea was married in 2010 at the opulent Astors Courts Estate, a private mansion, set in 50 wooded acres that overlook the Hudson River at Rhinebeck.

The New York Times reported the marriage of Mary More Preston and Norman Coke-Jephcott of Rhinebeck, New York on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1917 at the Church of the Ascension in New York City (5<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 10<sup>th</sup> Street). Mary was the daughter of the late George C. & Cynthia Preston of Kingston, New York.

The 1900 Federal Census for Kingston, New York shows Merry (Mary) Preston, age 24, born in January 1876, daughter of George C. (born 1844 and aged 56) & Cynthia Preston (born 1848 and aged 52). Mary's father was the proprietor of an insurance company known as George C. Preston & Son, Inc.

The 1910 Federal Census for Kingston, New York shows Mary M. Preston, age 34, living with her widowed mother Cynthia in Kingston, Ulster County, New York.

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1917 Norman was required to complete an American Registration Card for World War 1. He was not, however, called up to fight. The Poughkeepsie Supreme Court, New York confirmed his 'naturalisation' as an American citizen on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1919.

Norman presented organ recitals for Sunday evensong at the Messiah, Rhinebeck each weekend; he frequently performed at St John the Divine in New York, and at the Cathedral of All Saints in Albany.

Norman travelled to Liverpool aboard RMS Caronia (19,524 tons carrying 2,650 passengers in three classes) of Cunard Line arriving on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1920, presumably to take a holiday. He returned to the USA on the same ship from Liverpool arriving in New York on 15 August 1920. He travelled in both directions in 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. The ship's manifest shows him as being married, but his wife was not travelling with him.

According to the Poughkeepsie Eagle News, Mrs Norman Coke-Jephcott underwent an operation for appendicitis at the Thompson House Hospital, late on the evening of Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April 1921. She died as the result of the appendicitis on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 1921. Mary Coke-Jephcott's funeral was held at the Church of the Messiah (where Norman was organist) on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1921, followed by internment at Wiltwyck Cemetery, Kingston, New York.

Mary was 45 at the time of her death. Norman was 28. In May 1921 Norman sold their house in Rhinebeck.

Norman travelled to France from New York, one of 100 musicians, on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1922 on SS Paris (34,569 gross tons, 764' in length, 1,930 passengers, 560 in 1<sup>st</sup> Class, 530 in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 840 in 3<sup>rd</sup>) to spend three months at the American School for Music at Fontainebleau, near Paris. The school was founded in 1921 to introduce the best American music students to French methods of teaching, composing and performing. One of the founders, Walter Damrosch, had chosen the musicians to attend the course.

At the end of the Fontainebleau course Norman Coke-Jephcott won the Premiere Grand Prix d'Orgue (first prize for organ playing).

Walter Damrosch (1862-1950) was a German-born American conductor and composer. He was a distinguished musician who conducted the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the New York Symphony Orchestra before it merged with the Philharmonic, and the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington D.C. Damrosch conducted the USA premieres of Tchaikovsky's 4<sup>th</sup> and 6th symphonies. He was NBC's Musical Director (1928-1942) and hosted the radio network's weekly '*Music Appreciation Hour*', which was broadcast throughout the USA and Canada.

Norman's mother died in Coventry on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1922. She died, according to her death certificate, as Annie Mary Coke Jephcott (the *Coke* was not on her marriage certificate, nor



was it hyphenated). Her death must have been whilst Norman was at sea on SS Paris. The routing was New York – Plymouth – Le Havre. He may have disembarked in Plymouth and travelled to Coventry for his mother’s funeral, or he may have landed in France and then travelled to the UK. Whichever, he would have missed the start of the summer school. He may not have attended the funeral at all, but instead, he may have waited and travelled to Coventry after the Fontainebleau course, because he returned to New York from Plymouth on SS France (1,023 passengers in three classes), arriving in the USA on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1922, after a crossing of eight nights.

It is believed that Norman did not travel again to the UK during the rest of his life, not even when his father died in 1927. However, the Researcher’s father, Cyril Rees Jephcott, can recall meeting his uncle Norman once only, which he believed was in the late 1920s. The evidence suggests however, that it was more likely to have been in 1922 when Norman was in Coventry around the time of his mother’s death.

Given the demise of the Rhinebeck choral school, Norman moved to Utica, New York State, in 1923 on his appointment there as Organist and Choirmaster at Grace Church, Utica, situated about 250 miles north of New York City.

The Kingston Daily Freeman of 15<sup>th</sup> January 1923 had the following column:

“Norman Coke-Jephcott tenders his resignation from 1<sup>st</sup> March after 8 years in Rhinebeck to go to Grace Church, Utica.

N C-J is one of the best known and highly accomplished organists in the State and has won high praise as a composer as well as an organist. Many people in the city have become familiar with his ability through the series of organ recitals which he has given during the past year at the Church of the Messiah, Rhinebeck”.



Utica Church

Coke-Jephcott took up his new appointment in Utica in early March 1923. In the following month, the Poughkeepsie Eagle News reported on 23 April 1923, that Norman who resigned his position as organist of the Church of Messiah, Rhinebeck to go to Grace Church, Utica had been re-engaged at the Church of Messiah, and would return to Rhinebeck to resume his duties on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1923. He would also become organist at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie (a girl’s school) during September 1923 taking over from Professor Harold Geer who had been given a year’s leave of absence. Norman was also Director and conductor of the Eurterpe Club, Poughkeepsie (a men’s vocal society that gave many concerts in New York State).

The 30<sup>th</sup> April 1923 Kingston Daily Freeman noted an item in the Rhinebeck Gazette:

“Norman Coke-Jephcott exercises his artistic prerogative and changes his mind. After arranging to resume his position at the Church of Messiah, Rhinebeck on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1923, has now notified Rev. Belshaw, the rector of Grace Church, that he will remain in Utica.

His position at Vassar College could not be determined.”

Norman had been so content in Rhinebeck that he found it difficult to leave. However, he did recognise that Grace Church, Utica was a more influential church and after some early indecision he did move finally from Rhinebeck.

Norman met his second wife in Rhinebeck, Dutchess County, New York State. She had lived there all her life. Her name was Eunice Snyder, she was born on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1903 and was the descendent of an old Dutch family. Her father was Franklin Rutsen “Frank” Snyder (1860-1910) and her mother was Claudia Snyder (née Marquardt) (1863-1937). She had four sisters and two brothers. Norman and Eunice became engaged on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1923.

The marriage of Miss Eunice Snyder and Norman Coke- Jephcott of Utica was solemnized at noon on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August 1923 at the home of Miss Snyder. The marriage was a simple one and there were no attendants, only relatives and close friends were present. The wedding ceremony was conducted by Harold Belshaw, rector of the Church of Messiah, Rhinebeck.

In Utica Norman quickly established himself as a major musical figure. He brought to Utica such internationally renowned figures as Marcel Dupré and Alfred Hollins. In his autobiography, Hollins comments on the excellence of Mrs Coke-Jephcott’s biscuits!

The 1930 United States Federal Census lists Norman (age 36), as the Head of Family at the family’s home in Utica, Oneida, New York with the other occupants shown as Eunice Coke (age 26, wife), Eunice Coke (age 5, daughter), Ann Coke (age 2, daughter) and Clara Folts (age 17, Servant). Eunice, the daughter, was born on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1924 (died Martha’s Vineyard 24<sup>th</sup> June 2013) and Ann on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1927.

### **1932-1953: St John the Divine Cathedral Church, New York**

On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November 1931, The Very Reverend Milo Hudson Gates, Dean of St John the Divine, travelled to Utica to listen to Norman playing the organ and leading his choir. Later he listened to Norman giving a recital. The Dean considered Norman to be the best organist in America and Norman’s subsequent appointment as organist-elect at St John the Divine was confirmed by Bishop Manning. At the age of 38, Norman became the youngest cathedral organist of the time. He succeeded Dr Miles Farrow who had been organist at Saint John the Divine for twenty years, but then forced to retire due to ill health. Norman took up his appointment in January 1932.



THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, NEW YORK CITY

The building work for the Cathedral commenced on St John's Day in 1892. The Cathedral is located at 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (between 110<sup>th</sup> Street, also known as 'Cathedral Parkway', and 113rd Street) in Manhattan's Morningside Heights. It is 601' (186 m) long.

The picture (above) of St John the Divine is that of a post card of the early 1930s. It shows Transepts designed with a breadth of 320' (99 m) and a Central Tower designed to be 455' (141 m) high. The Transepts and Central Tower were never built and in their place is a 'temporary' dome built by Guastavino.

St John the Divine is the largest Gothic Cathedral in the world although some think that honour should go to the Cathedral of Seville, Spain. Also, St John the Divine contests its status as the world's largest Episcopal/Anglican Cathedral with the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, and the fourth largest Christian Church in the World. St John is nicknamed *St John the Unfinished* as completion work continues to this day.



THE NEW ORGANIST OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE  
NORMAN COKE-JEPHCOTT

As well as being organist, Norman was Master of the Choristers at St John's. The Cathedral boasted a choir of 40 boy sopranos augmented by 20 or more adult men. The boys at the choir school were just 100 metres from the Cathedral and wore a uniform of mortarboards and an abbreviated gown. They also wore Eton collars (a large stiff collar) as worn at Eton College, Windsor, in the UK. On arrival at the Cathedral they

dressed in choir vestments that were kept in the Cathedral vesting room.

One of Norman's pupils, Charles Dodsley Walker, wrote,

"He (Norman) was admired and respected by all the choirboys – not a boisterous type, but not by any means a taciturn type. He had a dry sense of humour. Being an excellent choirmaster he did not tolerate improper behaviour. At the Choir School (a boarding school) we had a system to keep things in order. A few of the older boys held the coveted position of 'prefects' and they would hand out demerits, at this school called 'marks' for infractions of the rules of conduct, punctuality and tidiness.



Without going into detail on this subject, I'll tell you that any boy who received 3 conduct marks in a given week was denied the privilege of being allowed to leave the school after Evensong on the following Sunday – when many of the boys were taken out to dinner by parents or relatives. Prefects would give a conduct mark to a boy who misbehaved. On the rare occasions when Norman lost patience with a misbehaving boy he would be given a DOUBLE conduct mark. As stated above, this was a rare occurrence. The boys liked him, and were particularly happy every year to contribute, on his birthday, to the purchase of a container of Granger Tobacco for his pipe. The boys liked him, as did his colleagues in the profession - something I learned in later years”.

As mentioned previously, Norman's first post in the USA was at Kingston in 1911. He had responded to an advertisement for an organist who played tennis. Norman maintained his enthusiasm for tennis through his time at St John the Divine. Also, he never lost his English accent.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1935 Norman's brother Edward (who owned Bristol Photo Engraving) sailed in 1<sup>st</sup> Class on RMS Berengaria (52,100 tons), with some colleagues (from Purnell & Sons, a printing company in Paulton, Somerset) from Southampton to New York. One of the party was Wilfred Harvey (accountant at Purnell & Sons) who later became Chairman of the British Printing Corporation. The group travelled to the USA to obtain the most up-to-date colour printing equipment available, for colour printing in books, magazines and the like, since colour printing was fairly primitive then. Edward always said his was the first company to produce books on the Royal Family in colour.

Edward's wife Lillian had the opportunity to travel with him but she would not go because she loathed Wilfred Harvey, believing him to be an unscrupulous business partner ready to take her husband's business away from him if he had the opportunity. This prediction became a reality with the merger of the two businesses in the 1950s, in which Edward lost out. Edward's photo engraving company had become too beholden to a single printing company.

On the same ship travelled Joseph Kennedy, his wife and son Jack Kennedy who later became President of the USA. Also, on the sailing was Merle Oberon, a well known British Indian actress at the time.

Edward and his colleagues stayed in New York, travelling on to Hartford, Connecticut, Springfield Ohio, Stamford Connecticut, Philadelphia and back to New York. In Manhattan they stayed at the Biltmore Hotel (adjoined Grand Central Station, demolished 1981) and the Lexington Hotel (3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and East 46<sup>th</sup> Street). Edward met his brother several times in New York at St John the Divine and at his home, Apartment 83, 412 West 110 Street. He met Eunice and their 'delightful children'.

Edward and his colleagues returned to Southampton on RMS Berengaria departing New York on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1935. The time Norman and Edward spent in New York was to be their last together. This was to be Edward's life-long regret.

In Norman's early days, only the Choir and Crossing<sup>5</sup>, with the seven Apsidal Chapels of St John the Divine were in use. The Nave of the Cathedral was opened on the Sunday before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour in Hawaii, in December 1941, the event that brought the USA into World War II. Norman realised quickly that the opening of the Nave had resulted in peculiar acoustic difficulties in the long building. He soon adapted his style and compositions to the grandiose surroundings that now challenged him.

The organ at St John the Divine was originally built in the Cathedral by the E M Skinner Company in 1911. It was considered to be the finest instrument of its kind in America, and the most expensive at the time. It was the gift of Levi P Morton who was Vice President of the USA in 1889-1893. The Skinner Organ Op 150 became known as the Great Organ.

In 1950 the Trustees of the Cathedral realised the need to update and improve the sound quality of the Great Organ. Norman contacted the President of the Æolian-Skinner Organ Company and requested them to examine and report on its condition. They reported that the organ's use as an accompaniment to the choir was extremely limited, as was its effect in a room holding 8-10,000 worshippers attending the great festivals. Also recommended were the replacement of worn-out mechanical parts and the addition of the State Trumpet below the Great Rose Window some 500' (152 m) from the organ console. New Tubas were installed to operate at a higher pressure. The re-building of the organ was completed in 1952 making it, 'one of the most powerful instruments on the face of the planet'. The Great Organ is still in use at the Cathedral. Restoration work was undertaken between 2003 and 2008. The organ has some 8,500 pipes ranging from the size of a pencil to 32 feet tall.

In 1942 Eunice and Norman separated. It was a legal separation. The Bishop of the day, like many orthodox Anglican churchmen, would not permit divorce and would not have countenanced a divorced man as a cathedral organist. In the same year, Norman had to complete a Registration Card for World War II. In it he gave his address as Harmony Hotel, 5XX West 110<sup>th</sup> Street, presumably because he had only recently left Eunice. Those who knew him said he never talked about his wife Eunice and almost nobody close to him knew he had been married previously. After the separation, Eunice remained in New York City; later, she moved to Martha's Vineyard where the C-J's had a summer house. It is not known whether they divorced, but it is doubtful they did. Norman meanwhile lived at 554 West 110 Street.

In September 1948 Eunice Coke-Jephcott (daughter of Norman and Eunice) was married<sup>6</sup> to Bill Honey (1920-2009) at Grace Church, Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts. He was later President of the Martha Vineyard National Bank. They had three children Sarah Honey, Elizabeth Honey and David William Honey (1956-2005), who died in a motorbike accident. Bill and Eunice divorced in 1983.

In addition to being F.R.C.O.<sup>1</sup> and F.A.G.O.<sup>1</sup> Norman was made Doctor of Music, *honoris causa*, at Ripon College in Wisconsin in 1945. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Canadian College of Organists (ad eundem) and Fellow of Trinity College in London (a leading international examinations board). For many years he sat on the National Examinations Committee of the A.G.O. He also served as Dean of the Central New York Chapter.



The picture of Norman at the Great Organ was taken at the Cathedral in the late 1940s. He regularly performed on radio broadcasts.

Norman was a member of the Century Association at 7 West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street; a private club (all male until 1989) to promote fine arts and literature. He was also a member of the St Wilfred Club in New York, a society for those who have distinguished themselves in the field of church music.

### **1953-1962: His Retirement and Final Years**

Norman retired as Organist and Master of Choristers from St John the Divine on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1953. In retirement, he spent part of his time re-organising the music of St Luke's Church, West Harlem (435 West 141<sup>st</sup> Street), a part of St Martin's Parish, Harlem (119<sup>th</sup> Street and Lenox, between 7<sup>th</sup> and Park), where, as in his previous positions, he won the enduring admiration and affection of his choristers. He also continued teaching privately, composing and giving recitals. He played, also, at St Philip's Church, Harlem (204 West 134<sup>th</sup> Street).

He spent his later years in retirement at "Blue Gates", an estate in Stony Point, Rockland County, New York (about 28 miles north of Manhattan on the Hudson River). Norman resided in an estate building that was smaller than the main mansion, where Commander and Mrs Findlay lived. The *chattelaine* of the estate was a former pupil and great admirer of Cokey. Mrs Findlay's name was Gae, and one of Norman's published organ compositions, using the notes G, A and E, as a theme, was dedicated to her. The composition was called, *Fugue on G A E*.

Norman is photographed at his "Blue Gates" home in the late 1950s.



Norman Coke-Jephcott was an acknowledged master of fugal composition. He enjoyed writing fugues, and he enjoyed teaching fugal techniques. For many years he provided the fugue question for the Fellowship Examination of the American Guild of Organists.

Norman and Eunice's daughter Ann Coke-Jephcott was married<sup>7</sup> to Walter Harris Pogue Jr on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1960 in Grace Church, Vineyard Haven.

It was well known by colleagues that Norman drank heavily in his later years. He was a regular at a bar known as the Gold Rail on Broadway near 112<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **1963 Post Death: Funeral, Memorials and Accolades**

Norman died on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1962 in St Luke's Hospital (1111 Amsterdam Avenue at West 114<sup>th</sup> Street). His obituary<sup>8</sup> was carried in the New York Times on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1962. There was a large gathering for Norman's funeral which was held at 1130 on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March 1962 at St John the Divine. It would have been his 68<sup>th</sup> birthday. His death must have been sudden as David Pizarro, a former pupil, had arranged to meet him that evening for supper.

Norman's brother Edward and his sister Mary both died in the same year.

The anthem, *Before the Ending of the Day*, that was sung by the choir at Norman's funeral was thought to be his first composition published in the USA around 1918. The concluding voluntary at the funeral service was his 'Cathedral Procession' ('Bishops' Promenade'). Eunice, his wife, travelled from Martha's Vineyard for the funeral. It is thought to be the last time she left the island. Norman was cremated at Ferncliff, Hartside (280-284 Secor Road). Also cremated here were John Lennon, Yul Brynner and Jim Henson. Joan Crawford and Judy Garland are interred at Ferncliff.

The urn containing Norman's ashes was brought back to the Cathedral and placed, along with others, beneath the tall rugged cross in the Narthex of the Cathedral. In the cleaning process, that followed the fire in the Gift Shop in 2001, the cross was taken down and the urns from the Narthex stored in a small room. The urns were later re-interred in the floor of the Old Columbarium (located adjacent to the Stuyvesant Baptistry).

As mentioned previously, Norman and Eunice had a legal separation in 1942. According to David Pizarro there was a Will in which all Norman's possessions were, allegedly, left to Mrs Findlay (mentioned earlier) of Stony Point. The Will was never found and to all intents and purposes, he died intestate. The royalties were frozen for 21 years and attempts by the widow to collect them up to 1983 had been unsuccessful. Whether they were later collected is unknown.

On the day after Norman's death (15<sup>th</sup> March 1962) a regular meeting of the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church took place. Those present were the Dean, the Sacrist, the Theologian, the Precentor, the Pastor, the Bursar and by special invitation, the Assistant Minister and the Organist. The Dean opened the meeting with prayers, including one for the repose of the soul of Norman Coke-Jephcott.

The first order of business was the proposal that a Minute on Dr Coke-Jephcott's life and work be prepared for inclusion with the other Minutes of the Meeting. This was unanimously adopted, and the Dean directed the Sacrist to prepare this Minute. Included was the following:

"..... Regarded by his colleagues as one of the World's greatest masters in organ improvisation, he (Dr Coke-Jephcott) had also to his credit over twenty published works, one of them being *Surely the Lord is in this Place* which sold 3,000 copies last year (1961). His *Variation and Toccata on a National Air* and his *Miniature Trilogy* are popular recital pieces. His arrangement during the War, of a famous Polish

Carol, earned him the gratitude of the Polish Government. His fanfare for the National Anthem of The Netherlands, composed for the Thanksgiving for Queen Wilhelmina's Reign, is still broadcast by the Dutch on great national Days. The Book of Descants which he compiled for St Thomas Church has become increasingly popular with churches having great choirs.

Known for his mastery of harmony, counterpoint and fugue, his teaching schedule was extremely heavy and both because of the number and importance of his students and his forty years of service as a member of the National Examination Committee of the American Guild of Organists, his influence on Church Music was felt throughout the whole country. He was regarded by other musicians as an institution in himself, and his genius for adding personal interest to teaching accounted for the fact that twice during his career former students of his from all over the United States gathered to honour him with testimonial dinners.

His very presence and his invariably gentle courtesy lent to the Cathedral Church a warmth and humanity which did much to make it an institution beloved of those who knew it in his day. He was not *only pater cententium organo*, but also *carissimus frater, et conservus in domino*. R.I.P."

On 17<sup>th</sup> March 1963 (one year after his death) a Memorial Evensong<sup>9</sup>, was held in the Cathedral. Some of the musicians present were there to pay homage to the man they knew as 'Coke'.

In 1993 two of Norman's pupils conceived the idea of marking the Centennial of his Birth. They were Bruce McInnes (Organist and Choirmaster at Grace Church, Manhattan) and David Pizarro (Organist at Emanuel Lutheran Church, 197 Manville Road, Pleasantville, New York). Two events were held, the first an Organ Recital<sup>10</sup> at Grace Church, 802 Broadway (between East 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets), at 12.30 pm on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1993, and the second, a Centennial Evensong at 4 o'clock on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1993 (Trinity Sunday) at St John the Divine.

Bruce G McInnis, on the back of the Organ Recital Programme for 17<sup>th</sup> March 1993, wrote of him:

"..... I had the great fortune to have been a Chorister at the Cathedral (as did David Pizarro) during Dr Coke-Jephcott's tenure, and, in fact, started my organ studies under his tutelage. He was a magnificent human being, a man of God who gave every ounce of energy and of the significant talent at his command to the Cathedral and to the young choristers committed to his charge. He was everything that a truly great teacher must be: firm yet sympathetic, demanding yet patient with faults and weaknesses, able to command respect while shedding quiet affection, dedicated to the highest standards and never willing to settle for less than fully realised potential. And as a musician there is no way of knowing how many, many souls he touched, and how many of us have chosen careers in music and education through the influence he had on our lives. We hold him in highest esteem and seek to honour his memory in this, the 100<sup>th</sup> year since his birth".



The second, 'Divine Service to Commemorate the Centennial of His Birth' at St John the Divine Cathedral, on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1993, included the Choristers of the Transfiguration, the Choristers of Grace Church, Newark, New Jersey, the Choristers of Trinity Church, Southport, Connecticut, and the Choristers and Adult Choir of Grace Church, New York. The organist, James E. Reyes, CCS '54 (another of Coke-Jephcott's pupils) played the music, all of which were compositions of Norman, namely:

Bishops' Promenade  
Variation and Toccata on a National Air  
Classical Fugue on a subject by Paul Vidal  
Londonderry Air (*an arrangement*)  
Scherzo Classique  
Fugue on G A E  
Toccata on "St Anne"

A plaque<sup>11</sup> to Norman was installed in 1993, to coincide with the Centennial of his Birth, but it was removed some time after the 2001 fire in the Cathedral Gift Shop when the organ loft wall was being refurbished. It was reinstated on this wall prior to the re-dedication of the Cathedral in November 2008, following restoration work after the fire damage.

On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2003 a number of Norman's former students, including David Pizarro, arranged a Memorial Concert to honour his life. It was held at St John the Divine. The Memorial Concert programme produced for the occasion listed all his works and this appears in Footnote<sup>12</sup>. Also in the programme there is a commentary entitled 'Musical Notes', Footnote<sup>13</sup>, about the Coke-Jephcott music played at the Memorial Concert.

His sheet music compositions and some of his recordings are widely available over the internet. The most commonly mentioned appears to be *Bishops' Promenade*, a jaunty, lively work that is popular as a wedding processional.

Eunice (Norman's wife) died on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1991 (aged 87) in Oak Bluffs, Vineyard Haven, Dukes, Massachusetts. She died as Eunice Coke-Jephcott. Norman and Eunice did not divorce after their separation. Norman's daughters are still alive, Eunice in Vineyard Haven, and Ann in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

### **In Summary**

Norman Coke-Jephcott had a unique career, having come from a fairly humble but comfortable background in Coventry. If his father had not been a music teacher, he might never have known that he, himself, possessed immense musical talent. He was undoubtedly a child prodigy to become F.R.C.O. at just 18 years of age. He was assistant organist at a large church (Holy Trinity, Coventry) at 15, where he also composed and conducted at this tender age. He was fortunate to have an older brother, also a talented 'cello and piano player with whom he performed at concerts. Norman's single-minded ambition was displayed in his decision to emigrate alone to the USA at the age of 18, a considerable undertaking at that time when a seven or eight days' voyage on a ship took him almost to the other side of the world.

In the USA, he established himself and his career in an extraordinary way in order to have ended up as Organist and Master of Choristers at St John the Divine. He had not been to university nor attended the Royal College of Music or the American equivalent, as many of his contemporaries had done.

In an interview in 2010, Charles Dodsley Walker responding to a question about early influences in his musical life, said, "I think of my first teacher as being an exemplary practitioner of the art of church music as an organist, as a choirmaster, and as a teacher. Norman Coke-Jephcott was a hard-working, dedicated musician in the service of the church. He was a real inspiration."

It was the remarkable career, of a much admired man, one that ended with his early death at the age of 67.

### **POSTSCRIPT**

On 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010, the Researcher and his wife Rosalind, on a glorious late summer morning, sailed up the River Mersey on Queen Mary 2. The ship berthed in the city centre from where the Anglican Liverpool Cathedral could be seen sitting high on a slight rise overlooking the city. We walked to the cathedral (the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in the World), and coincidentally, the organist of 30 years, Professor Ian Tracey, was about to begin a recital. He was the youngest cathedral organist in the UK when appointed in 1980 (like N C-J in the USA in 1932). The recital was delightful and afterwards I approached the organist and asked him if the name Norman Coke-Jephcott meant anything to him. "Yes indeed", he responded. He said he regularly travelled to the USA and had bought sheet music of N C-J's compositions which he played from time to time. He knew he was born in England and had been organist and choirmaster at St John the Divine in New York. Norman's music lives on.

### **FOOTNOTES:**

#### 1. His Qualifications

Mus.D. Doctor of Music, *honoris causa*, at Ripon College in Wisconsin

F.R.C.O. Fellow of the Royal College of Organists in London

F.A.G.O. Fellow of the American Guild of Organists

F.T.C.L. Fellow of Trinity College in London. A unique high level qualification, not course based, but through the submission of a dissertation of 11,500-12,500 words.

#### 2. The Cokes

On 10<sup>th</sup> August 1842 Norman Coke-Jephcott's grandfather, Thomas Davies Jephcott, married Charlotte Coke, a minor, at St Nicholas Church in Warwick. She was born to Thomas and Charlotte Coke on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1825 at Greenwich in Kent. Her father's name on the Marriage Certificate is given as Thomas Coke, Gentleman. A 'Gentleman' usually meant they were landed people and had private means. He may have been a Barrister.

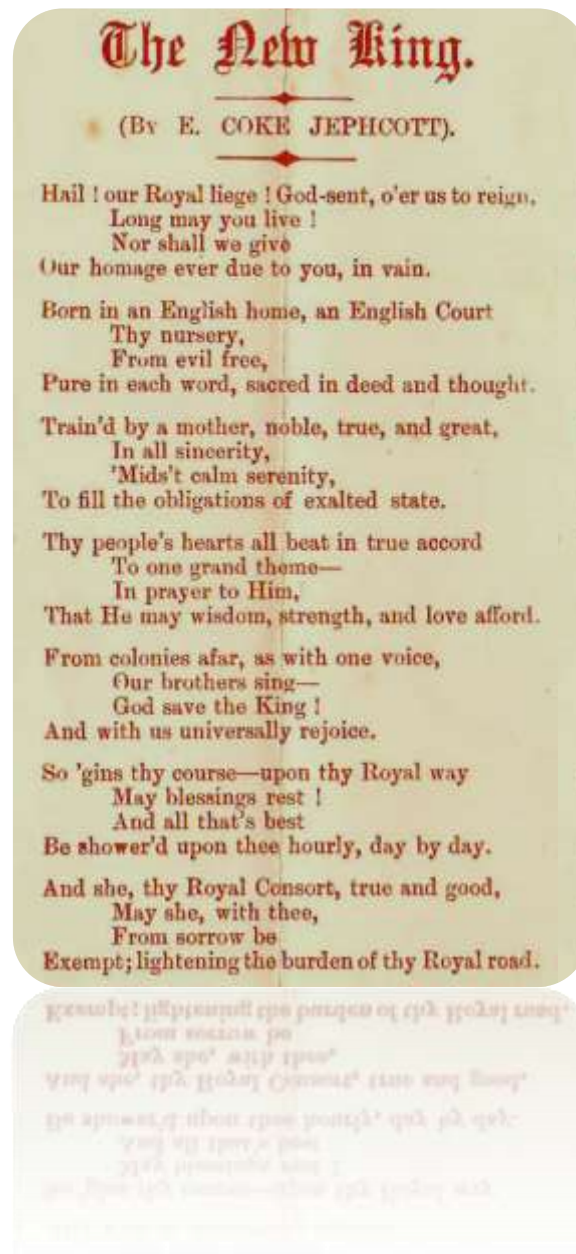
Norman's father Edwin, claimed, and it is now family folklore (but maybe true), that he (Edwin) was descended from the Earl of Leicester (their family name being Coke) and one of them, Sir Edward Coke, was Recorder of Court appointed in 1613, and he represented Coventry in two different Parliaments, and became Lord Chief Justice of England.

The Researcher has not been able to verify the connection between Thomas Coke, Gentleman, and the Earl of Leicester's family. Perhaps someone will.

Thomas and Charlotte Jephcott had several children and each was given the middle name of Coke. In turn, they gave their off-spring the middle name of Coke as well.

### 3. Edwin Coke Jephcott's 1902 Coronation Hymn and Verses

Verses submitted for Coronation



Hymn for Coronation Church Service

**Coronation Service,**  
EXHALL CHURCH, COVENTRY,  
**June, 1902.**

---

**Hymn for the King.**

---

*Written by* *E. Coke-Jephcott.*

By high decree, 'tis kings do reign  
And nations rise and fall ;  
As thankful people ; we again  
Upon our God would call.

Endow, Oh God, our gracious King  
With truth and heavenly zeal ;  
Help him, and us, 'bove everything,  
Our Father's love to feel.

Oh, may he rule Thy people well,  
Uphold the faith of old ;  
That we, his subjects, safely dwell  
At peace within Thy fold.

God bless the nation, bless the King—  
Give truth, and love, and light ;  
And grant Thine angels one day bring  
To all, a crown more bright.

AMEN.

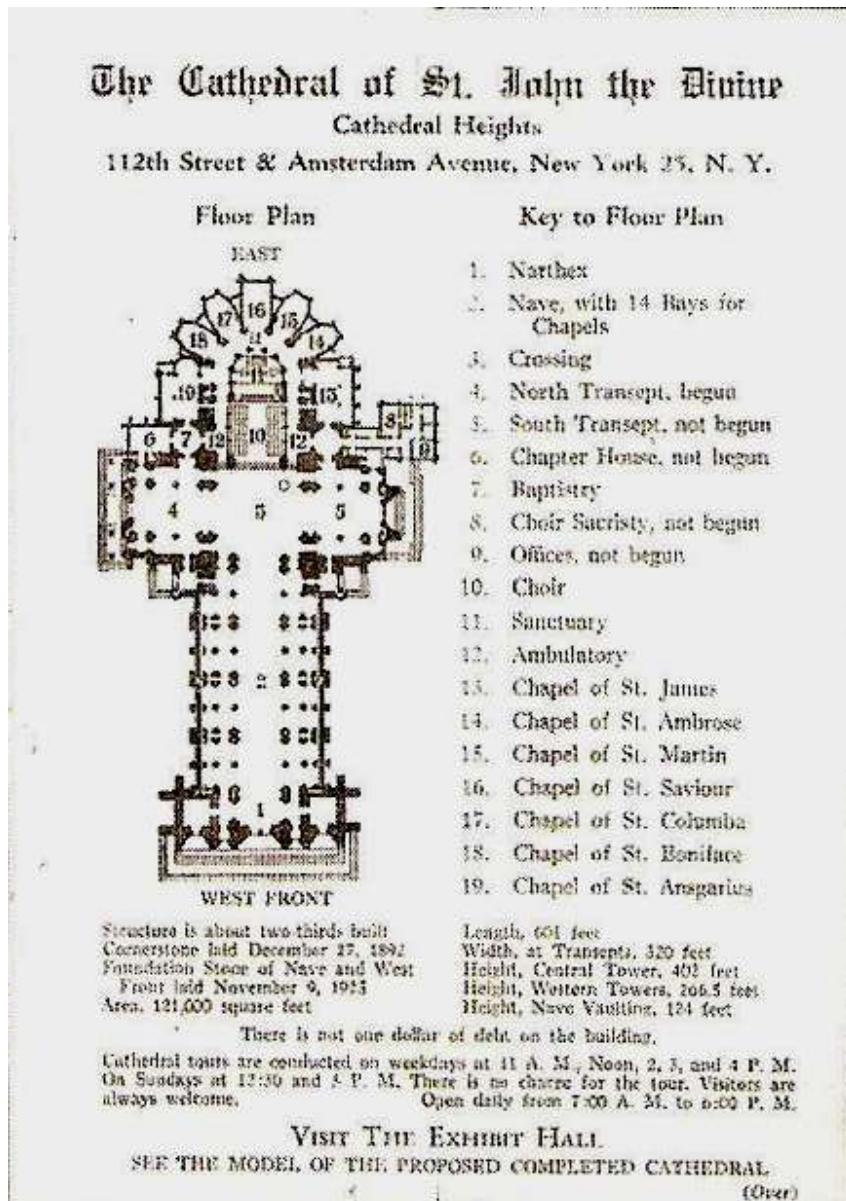
(Copyright.)

#### 4. David Pizarro (1931-Feb 2011)

David Pizarro came to the UK and Europe regularly in the 1980s and 1990s to give organ recitals, at venues including Holy Trinity Church, Coventry and St Giles Church, Exhall. The Researcher met him on several occasions and corresponded with him. David had become a Chorister at St John the Divine in 1942. He then studied the organ under Norman and some time later became Organist and Master of the Choristers at the Cathedral from 1974 to 1977.

David took a great interest in Norman's life, almost to the point of obsession, and sought to keep his memory alive at every opportunity. He played his music at recitals, was a driving force behind the Centennial of Norman's Birth Memorial, he talked endlessly about erecting plaques, producing documents about Norman, corresponding with anyone remotely interested in Norman and visiting and talking on the telephone to Norman's widow, Eunice, before her death in 1991. This was also remarkable because by the time David went to St John the Divine in 1942, Norman and Eunice had already separated. At his home in Mount Vernon, New York, David had a small building in his back yard totally devoted to Coke-Jephcott memorabilia. Sadly, David Pizarro died three weeks before the Researcher started delving into Norman's life. If only the Researcher had taken more interest in the 1980s and 1990s.

5. St John the Divine Floor Plan



The central, horizontal, rectangular block known as 'The Crossing', between the South and North Transepts, the Choir area and Chapels above 'The Crossing' on the plan were in use during Norman's early days at the Cathedral. The vertical rectangular block, below 'The Crossing' on the plan, 'The Nave', was completed and opened in December 1941.

## **MISS COKE-JEPHCOTT BRIDE OF W. M. HONEY**

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

1948

VINEYARD HAVEN, Mass., Sept. 14—The marriage of Miss Eunice Coke-Jephcott, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Norman Coke-Jephcott of New York and Vineyard Haven, to William Morgan Honey took place this afternoon in Grace Protestant Episcopal Church here. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Halsey DeWolfe Howe.

The bride was given in marriage by her father, who is organist and choirmaster of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Miss Ann Coke-Jephcott was her sister's only attendant. The bridegroom, son of Mrs. Henry M. Honey of Vineyard Haven and the late Mr. Honey, had for his best man Frederick Lawrence Athearn, also of Vineyard Haven. A reception was given in the home here of Mr. and Mrs. Denys Wortman.

The couple will reside here after a wedding trip.

The bride was graduated from the Lenox School and attended Barnard College, in New York, and served for eighteen months in the Waves. Her husband, now with the Martha's Vineyard National Bank, served for three and a half years with the Army Air Forces.

7. Ann Coke-Jephcott Marriage 1960

Oct 24, 1960

## **Ann Coke-Jephcott Wed To Walter H. Pogue Jr.**

Dr. Norman Coke-Jephcott of Stony Point, N. Y., and Mrs. Coke-Jephcott of Vineyard Haven, Mass., have announced the marriage of their daughter, Miss Ann Coke-Jephcott to Walter Harris Pogue Jr. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Pogue of Richmond.

The Rev. Henry Bird performed the ceremony on Oct. 15 in Grace Protestant Episcopal Church, Vineyard Haven.

Mrs. Pogue studied at St. Agatha's School here, and was graduated from the Lenox School and Barnard College. Her father was organist and choirmaster of the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.

The bridegroom is an alumnus of Valley Forge Military Academy, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. He is district representative for the American Car and Foundry Company, a division of ACF Industries, Inc.



8. Norman Coke Jephcott New York Times Obituary 1962



9. Memorial Evensong at St John the Divine 1963 (two pages)

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH  OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

THE RIGHT REVEREND HORACE W. B. DONEGAN, C.B.E., D.D., D.C.L.  
BISHOP OF NEW YORK

THE VERY REVEREND JOHN V. BUTLER, S.T.D.  
DEAN OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH

THE REVEREND EDWARD N. WEST, D.Th., Litt.D.	CANON SACRIST
THE REVEREND HOWARD A. JOHNSON, D.D.	CANON THEOLOGIAN
THE REVEREND HAROLD R. LANDON, B.D.	CANON PRECENTOR
THE REVEREND PETER CHASE, S.T.B.	CANON PASTOR
THE REVEREND MAXWELL McN. THOMAS, M.A., B.D.	HONORARY CHAPLAIN
THE REVEREND JEREMY W. BOND, S.T.B.	ASSISTANT MINISTER
ALEC WYTON, M.A., ORGANIST	LYLE HAGERT, Mus.M., ASSISTANT ORGANIST

HONORARY CANONS

THE RIGHT REVEREND CHARLES F. BOYNTON, S.T.D.  
THE RIGHT REVEREND STUART WETMORE, D.D.  
THE VERY REVEREND CUTHBERT A. SIMPSON, D.D., D.C.L.  
THE REVEREND CANON FREDERICK C. GRANT, D.D., D.S.Litt.

ORGAN RECITAL, EVENSONG, AND  
SERVICE OF MUSIC IN MEMORY OF  
NORMAN COKE - JEPHCOTT\*

March 17, 1893 - March 14, 1962

Sometime Organist of the Cathedral Church

MARCH 17, 1963

3:30 — ORGAN RECITAL

Fugue on GAE *Coke-Jephcott*

Miniature Trilogy *Coke-Jephcott*

1. Prelude (on C H D)
2. Ground Bass
3. Toccata on "St. Anne"

*played by* JAMES E. REYES, Mus.M., '54

Variations and Fugue on a theme by Beethoven *Coke-Jephcott*

*played by* GEORGE MARKEY, D.Mus., F.A.G.O.

4:00 — EVENSONG AND SERVICE OF MUSIC

¶ *The Service begins with an opening sentence from page 21 of the Prayer Book and continues on page 25.*

PSALM 46 (page 397)

ANGLICAN CHANT

THE FIRST LESSON Ecclesiasticus 44:1-8, 11-14

read by S. LEWIS ELMER, L.H.D., A.A.G.O., F.R.C.O.  
Sometime President of The American Guild of Organists

MAGNIFICAT in G

Coke-Jephcott

THE SECOND LESSON Revelation 21:1-7

read by GORDON ALLISON, '29

NUNC DIMITTIS in G

Coke-Jephcott

AFTER THE FIXED COLLECTS, ANTHEM (¶Sung kneeling) Kiev Melody

**G**IVE rest, O Christ, to thy servant with thy Saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

Thou only art immortal, the Creator and Maker of man; and we are mortal formed of the earth and unto earth shall we return: for so thou didst ordain, when thou createdst me, saying, Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. All we go down to the dust and weeping o'er the grave we make our song, Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give rest, O Christ, to thy servant with thy Saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

AFTER THE GRACE, AT THE OFFERING, Organ Improvisation

GREETING

ANTHEMS

Coke-Jephcott

**W**HEN the aged walk with gladness  
In a city bathed in light,  
When the races know no sadness  
In the waning of their might,  
When the very earth is ringing  
From the temple to the sod,  
With the sound of children singing  
Then its peace was born of God.

(Sung by St. Martin's Parish Choir, directed by

WILLIAM J. KING.)

Coke-Jephcott

**S**URELY the Lord is in this place: this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And this stone shall be God's house. Behold now, praise the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord. Praise the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and praise the Lord. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting and world without end, and let all the people say, Amen. Alleluia, Amen.

(Sung by Cathedral Choir, C.S.S. Alumni, and St. Martin's Choir.)

Organist THOMAS MATTHEWS, D.MUS., F.A.G.O.  
(Trinity Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma)

Conductor CHARLES DODSLEY WALKER, M.A., F.A.G.O., '34

IMPROVISATION

DR. MATTHEWS

HYMN 289

ST. ANNE, with Descant by Coke-Jephcott

PRAYER AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE played by DAVID PIZARRO, MUS.M., A.A.G.O., '46


Bishop's Promenade

Coke-Jephcott

Improvisation on a "Celtic Air" (mss)

Coke-Jephcott

10. Centennial of Birth Organ Recital Programme 1993



GRACE CHURCH in NEW YORK  
802 BROADWAY

**ORGAN RECITAL**

David Pizarro  
Organist  
Emanuel Lutheran Church  
Pleasantville, New York

MARCH 17, 1993, 12:30 PM

A CENTENNIAL RECITAL IN HONOR OF  
NORMAN COKE-JEPHCOTT  
(MARCH 17, 1893 - MARCH 14, 1962)

WORKS BY COKE-JEPHCOTT

Miniature Trilogy:                      Prelude on C H D  
    Ground Bass  
    Toccata on 'St. Anne'

Variation and Toccata on a National Air

Melodie Religieuse (originally for violin and piano;  
    arranged as Organ Duet)

Bishop's Promenade

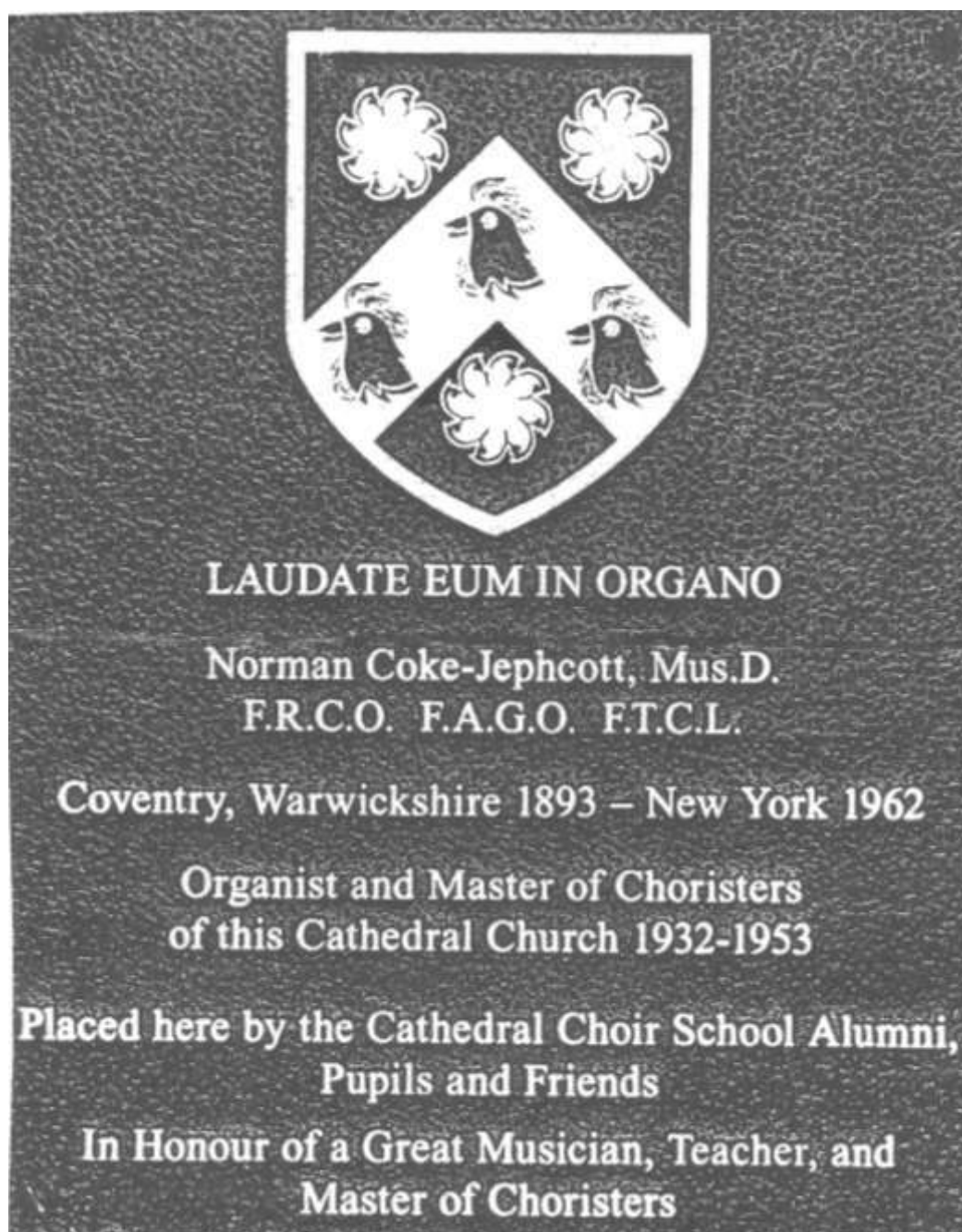
Londonderry Air

Improvisation on an Irish Air (MSS)

Organ Recital next Wednesday at 12:30  
Andrew deMasi  
playing works by Johann Sebastian Bach

11. St John the Devine Plaque to Norman Coke-Jephcott

With 'Jephcott' Family Coat of Arms



## 12. The Works of Norman Coke-Jephcott

### The Works of Norman Coke-Jephcott

#### Published works for keyboard:

For organ:

- 1939 Miniature Trilogy
- 1941 Variations and Toccata on a National Air
- 1943 Variations and Fugue on a Theme by  
Beethoven
- 1947 Symphonic Toccata
- 1952 Fugue of G A E
- 1954 Bishops' Promenade
- 1955 Londonderry Air (arrangement)
- 1956 Little Fugue on B A C H  
Cathedral Procession  
Legende  
Scherzo Classique
- 1959 Fugued Final

For piano:

- 1955 The Lotus Pool  
Ballata

For violin and piano:

- 1928 Melodie Religieuse

#### Works in manuscript:

- Classical Fugue of a subject of Paul Vidal
- Fantasia on a National Air (Variation,  
Fugue and Toccata)
- Improvisation on an Irish Air
- Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Beethoven  
(for orchestra)
- Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Beethoven  
(for two pianos)
- Terzetto
- Paeon
- Missa Sancti Joannis Theologi
- Overture in C Minor "From the 18<sup>th</sup> Century"  
(for full orchestra; for organ and two  
pianos)
- Part Songs
- The Bandits (an Operetta)
- Christmas Carol: "Bethlehem"
- Latria (for orchestra; for violin and organ or  
piano with optional parts for cello and  
harp)

Rhapsody on Two Church Themes

"Tansy" (for organ)

Fugued Final for two pianos

#### Published choral works:

- 1918 Te Deum Laudamus (dedicated to Miles  
Farrow)  
Before the Ending of The Day (inscribed to  
T. Tertius Noble)
- 1927 Hymn of Resurrection  
Benedictus es, Domine, in G  
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, in G
- 1931 O Saving Victim
- 1932 Blessed are the Pure in Heart  
The office of Holy Communion in C  
sharp-minor
- 1933 When Wilt Thou Save the People?
- 1935 O Love That Casts Out Fear  
Descant to St. Anne
- 1937 Come, Holy Spirit
- 1938 O God, Who Hast Prepared for Those  
That Love Thee
- 1943 When the Day of Pentecost was Fully Come
- 1946 Surely The Lord is in This Place
- 1948 Descant to Duke Street  
Polish Carol  
Bohemian Carol
- 1952 The Peace of God (SATB)  
The Glory of The Lord  
O Perfect Love
- 1953 O Lord, Support Us
- 1956 Victime Paschali  
The Gate of The Year
- 1957 Variants for St. Anne  
The Love from Galilee
- 1958 The Manger of Bethlehem Cradles a King  
Awake, Awake to Love and Work!
- 1959 St. Thomas Church Descant Book

#### Published posthumously:

- 1999 Fugue on a subject of Paul Vidal
- 1999 Improvisation on an Irish Air
- 1998 Fantasia on a National Air (early version of  
Variation and Toccata on a National Air)

13. 'Musical Notes' in Memorial Concert Programme 2003 (two pages)

### **Musical Notes**

Norman Coke-Jephcott (1893-1962), organist, choral director and composer, is significant in the history of both this Cathedral of Saint John the Divine and Anglican liturgical music. Coke-Jephcott provides a clear and powerful link between the European and French ecclesiastical virtuosic organ tradition of the late nineteenth century and the development of Anglican music here in New York City and the United States. Inspiration for Norman Coke-Jephcott's music comes from the early Christian Church through to Coke-Jephcott's own contemporaries and pupils.

The first piece in today's program is an ancient hymn, *Veni Creator*, chanted by the men of the here-assembled choirs from behind the High Altar. The opening *Occasional Fanfare*, based on a fragment by Handel, was composed by Coke-Jephcott during World War II for Sunday evening services held at the Cathedral. The *Bishops' Promenade* is a jaunty, lively work composed at the time of Coke-Jephcott's retirement (and now extremely popular as a wedding processional).

Coke-Jephcott wrote the anthem *Surely the Lord* around 1945 on the occasion of an architectural adjustment to the Cathedral's sacred space that permitted a long and unbroken view (now made impossible by subsequent architectural changes) from the West Doors to the Eastern Window of St. Saviour's Chapel. Throughout his tenure at the Cathedral, Coke-Jephcott composed pieces for both specific occasions and for the liturgical holidays of every year. Early on, he composed a full *Ordinarium Missae*, an Office of the Holy Communion, of which today's *Agnus Dei* is a part. This "Widor-esque" piece is much beloved by Coke-Jephcott's students and followers. The 1930s and 1940s were particularly productive decades for Coke-Jephcott and his students. The anthem, *When Wilt Thou Save the People*, has been orchestrated by Dr. Paul Lindsley Thomas (CCS 1944) for today's concert.

Today, *Bluegates*, one of the beloved hymns of the Cathedral Choir School Alumni Association, written by G. K. Bell, Bishop of Chichester, sung by choirs and audience together marks the mid-point of our program.

The anthem *See the Conqueror Mounts in Triumph*, whose words were written by Christopher Wadsworth in 1862, was composed by Hampson A. Sisler and dedicated to Norman Coke-Jephcott and the choir of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Sisler, an ophthalmic surgeon by profession, devotes his "free time" to organ composition and performance. When he sat for the Fellowship Examination of the American Guild of Organists, in which Coke-Jephcott was a member and leader for over forty years, he passed in all categories with the highest possible marks.

Coke-Jephcott, even as he shaped and defined contemporary Anglican church music, drew constant inspiration from composers of the past. He wrote Variations and Fugue on a theme by Beethoven in several iterations; today, this piece is being performed in its two-piano version. Similarly, the *Surrexit a Mortuis* motet, composed originally by Widor, was arranged for

brass sextet, tympani, chorus and organ by David Pizarro. A pupil of Widor, Marcel Dupré wrote the *Ave Maria*, sung by boys' voices alone. This work is being sung today as a tribute to Coke-Jephcott who trained hundreds of boys at the Cathedral School.

Coke-Jephcott's extensive influence has been clear among both organ composers and performers. Coke-Jephcott's *Symphonic Toccata*, written in eighteenth century sonata form, seems first to have been conceived for orchestra, and then for two pianos. Today's version for organ was published in the late 1940s and is performed here by John Alves, an assistant to Coke-Jephcott. Throughout Coke-Jephcott's tenure at the Cathedral, he transposed texts and music to the needs and possibilities of numerous Cathedral occasions. In the mid-1930s, Coke-Jephcott adapted César Franck's choral arrangement of Psalm 150: Franck wrote a great deal of music that influenced Widor and Coke-Jephcott. The English translation of the psalm by W. D. F. Hughes, a Headmaster of the Choir School in the 1930's, as set to Coke-Jephcott's music, proved to be one of the most enduringly popular of Coke-Jephcott's compositions.

Coke-Jephcott himself had favorite melodies and hymn-tunes. One of these was *St. Anne*, based on Psalm 90 as paraphrased by Isaac Watts (1674-1748), much beloved by the Cathedral School choristers. This hymn was, in fact, frequently a part of special services presided over by both Bishop Potter and Bishop Manning of this Cathedral.

Coke-Jephcott, wide-ranging in his musical tastes and inspirations, relished all aspects of the Anglican musical tradition. The Russian Orthodox *Contakion* is based on an ancient Russian melody; it was first arranged for the Anglican Liturgy by Walter Parratt, Windsor Chapel Organist at the time of Queen Victoria's funeral in deference to Her Majesty's many Russian Orthodox relatives. In September, 1946, when the Serbian Archbishop was present for a service at this Cathedral on behalf of the suffering peoples of Yugoslavia, Coke-Jephcott conducted this *Contakion*. Subsequently, Coke-Jephcott frequently saw to the inclusion of this piece in Cathedral services.

Certain pieces have become associated with the Cathedral School Choir and with Norman Coke-Jephcott simply on the basis of their popularity. One such piece is Balfour-Gardiner's *Evening Hymn*, with orchestration by Paul Lindsley Thomas. Charles Dodsley Walker, Alumnus Emeritus of the Cathedral School, has conducted this piece at countless Cathedral Choir Alumni gatherings over the past fifty years.

The music of today's commemorative service concludes with a work by Siegfried Karg-Elert's arranged for organ and brass. Norman Coke-Jephcott often played this piece at the conclusion of services here at the Cathedral. It is fitting that we end today's commemorative concert with triumphant music, celebrating the magnificence of Norman Coke-Jephcott's contribution to the musical life of this Cathedral and the Anglican musical tradition.

- David Pizarro, Jean Ballard Terepka



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Charles Dodsley Walker in USA – born in 1920 and former student (1932-1936) of Norman Coke-Jephcott. N C-J was one of four examiners' signatures on C D W's American Guild of Organist's certificate in 1947.

Wayne Kempton, Historiographer, Episcopal Diocese of New York

Stephen Facey, Executive Vice President, Cathedral Church of St John the Divine

Neal Campbell, Newsletter Editor, New York City of American Guild of Organists Chapter

Andrew McCrea, Director of Development, Royal College of Organists

Peter Burden, Archivist, Bablake School, Coventry

Debby Lapworth, Receptionist, Bablake School, for the photographs

Bruce G Smith, Organist/Choirmaster, Grace Church, Utica, New York

Vince Taylor, Local Historian/Archivist, Exhall, Coventry

Peg Masters, Historian, Town of Webb, Old Forge, New York

Irène Diakoff-Pizarro, provided some of N C-J's papers held by her late husband

Roslyn White, the Researcher's niece, for editorial suggestions

Researched and written by Roger Jephcott

E-mail: [roger.jephcott@btinternet.com](mailto:roger.jephcott@btinternet.com)

Thornbury, South Gloucestershire

January 2012