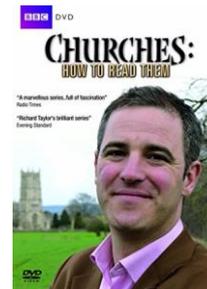
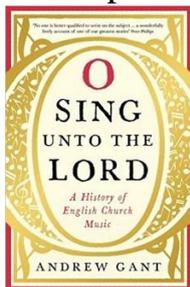


REFORMATION TALK 2 – WORSHIP AND MUSIC



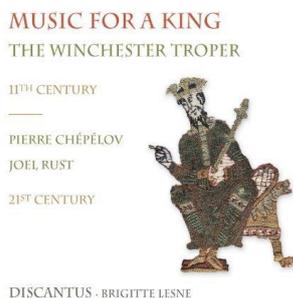
Last time I told the story of the Reformation, starting in Wittenberg in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed (or pasted) his 95 theses to the church door. We looked at the changes in Europe, then crossed the Channel, where Henry VIII was a good Catholic and married to Katherine of Aragon. Then he wanted to marry Anne Boleyn, and that led to the split from Rome. The English Bible, the Church of England, the suppression of the monasteries, new Prayer Books. Edward, Mary and Elizabeth – amazing decades of change. There are some leaflets if you didn't get one last time – and if you want to read the whole talk I've put it on <https://stmatthewschurchdarleyabbey.wordpress.com/> - look under worship



I said I would do a talk on Worship and Music in the Reformation, and now I wish I knew more. I have done some research, and I will tell you some stories – I hope you enjoy the stories, I hope you enjoy the music. If you want to know more, from a person far more qualified than me, I recommend Andrew Gant, [O Sing unto the Lord](#). It was published two years ago, and my wife bought me a copy as a Valentine present. £20 she spent – I can't remember what I got her, but I don't suppose it cost that much. The same book is now on sale for £5 at Works in the INTU centre and on line. It is an excellent book, a very readable book – I highly recommend it. There are also several programmes on Radio 3 worth listening to. Saints and Sinners with Janina Ramirez is on BBC iplayer – three programmes about the monasteries. Well worth watching. This is a 2010 series by Dr Richard Taylor – just £7.

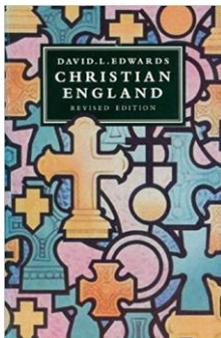


In the words of Julie Andrews ... let's start at the very beginning. This is a page from the Winchester Troper – a music book which dates from about 1000, one of the earliest we have in England. It is said to be by a Winchester monk called Wulfstan – apparently he was a child oblate, singing in the choir, when the body of St Swithun was moved to the New Minster in 971 – if you remember, Swithun said he wanted a simple grave, when they moved him to a posh tomb in 971 he made it rain for forty days. One singer, or group of singers, sings the tune, others put a second melody in. This is an Alleluia, there are also Sequences, Graduals, Introits, sections of the ordinary of the Mass – there are hundreds of texts in these two books. Imagine yourself, a thousand years ago – in a dark church, listening to this sound.



TRACK 1 – 4 MINUTES

Alleluia (Versets: Pascha nostrum – Epulemur) Discantus & Brigitte Lesne



Let's jump on five hundred years. In 1500 what would it have been like to go to church? What was worship like? David Edwards Christian England was the church history book when I was at College. "Late medieval England knew a real, although patchy, prosperity" (page 245). Small villages, and I suspect Allestree would have been reasonably prosperous – probably a couple of hundred people, fertile land beside the river, traders travelling up and down the road, a market town three miles away, a large abbey just a mile away (with lots of business, economic activity, based there). I've given you a quote, from A.H. Thompson writing in 1947, "The church in England continued to pursue its old paths, an unchangeable and apparently impregnable institution, mechanical no doubt in its processes, restrained from beneficial innovations by the prevailing spirit of legalism, but presenting a calm and unruffled front to the political chaos and social change" (page 246).

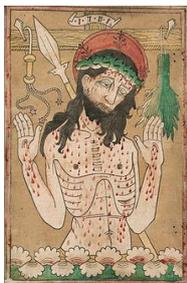


For many years the priest for Mackworth and Allestree was appointed by the Touchet family, but they lost everything when they were involved in a rebellion against Henry VII in 1495. The Abbot of Darley brought the advowson, the right to appoint the parish priest. According to the list at the back of church Mr Wryght was Vicar from 1471, then Edward Somner, then Edmund Lowe came in 1509 - and was Vicar for 34 years.



Pugin illustration - <http://modernmedievalism.blogspot.co.uk/2013/08/a-look-into-medieval-parish-churches.html>

No doubt some clergy were good caring people – who celebrated when a couple married, who baptised their baby, who cared when a new born baby died, who ensured no one starved, who kept the peace in their village, who brought God closer to the people, and the people to God – and no doubt some clergy were not. They were not trained in preaching or pastoral work. Most were not completely illiterate, and the number of graduates was increasing. But not many clergy own bibles, as not many were proficient in Latin. They knew what they needed to know to lead worship, but that was it. Everybody went to church. No doubt some were regular, others less regular – people are people. It was not an act of worship you joined in with. The priest did his job in the chancel, speaking/singing in Latin. The people watched from the nave. Even though there wasn't participation, in the sense that we understand it, most writers agree that there was a sense of the holy, of prayer, and the presence of God.



Indeed, in a world that was hard and brutal, where pain could rarely be cured, where painful death was a daily occurrence, you would surely need God more than perhaps people feel they do today. Christ suffered with you. In a world

which believed you needed God's blessing, and you feared his punishment, you would be more devote than people are today.



Many churches were extended, rebuilt, beautified in the years leading to the Reformation. This is SS Peter and Paul in Lavenham in Suffolk – which had a major rebuild between 1485 to 1525. 40 years of having the builders in! Many people left money to the church in their wills – paying for prayers to be said, and to be said for ever. Religion, faith was not limited to the church building. Think of the tradition of carols and singing. Think of drama – medieval Passion plays, for example.

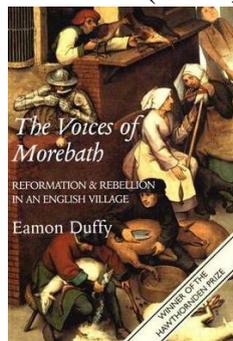
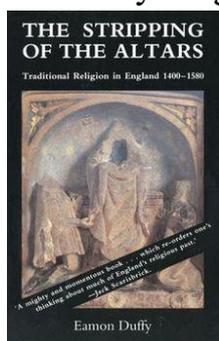


Think of Chaucer's pilgrims. His young squire sings and plays his flute all the day long, the Friar has a merry note "well could he sing and playen on a rote", the Pardoner could sing a melody, the Clerk "angelus ad virginem he song" – a hymn of praise to the Blessed Virgin Mary – the Prioress can "sing the service divine". As they walked through the fields from Southwark to Greenwich, they would have sung. "For them the pilgrimage itself was an act of worship, the open road as good a place to sing praise as the Shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury or the various churches, chantries, pubs and monasteries where they would stop along the way" (Gant, page 32).



The medieval rood screen at Ranworth Church, Norfolk

I've given you a good quote from Gant's book. "As the Reformation approached, English religion was at ease with itself. This was the last moment when everyone believed the same things. Continental reformers had not yet begun to dismantle the old certainties. Musically, this meant substantial, sometimes sumptuous polyphony in well-established and well-funded organisations. Choral music was woven into the ancient plainsong fabric Parish churches would imitate the music of their cathedral or monastery according to their resources. Music formed part of the training and inheritance not just of the professional but of monks, nuns, chantry priests, parish clerks and choirboys. Their music was heard not just in the regular, ancient cycle of services in church, but in Rogationtide and saints' days processions around the parishes and in theatrical spectaculars in the town square. ... The people were like us. Some were as sophisticated as any musicians of any age, anywhere. Some no doubt were beginning to relish the music for its own sake. Some enjoyed the status and comfort it brought the. Many felt safe in the comforting familiarity of songs they had known before they could read. ... All believed what they sang without question." (Gant, page 54).



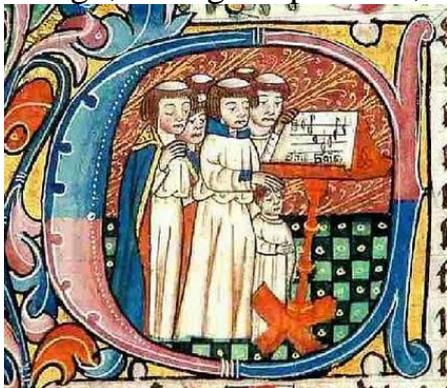
The Stripping of the Altars by Eamon Duffy is 25 years old now. It is a very thorough look at traditional religion in England 1400-1580, and paints a picture of a strong and vigorous tradition. In 2001 Duffy wrote this book The Voices of Morebath, Reformation and rebellion in an English village. Morebath is a tiny and remote village, just 33 families, on the south side of Exmoor in Devon. The priest for 54 years from 1520 was Sir Christopher Trychay. He kept the parish accounts, and tells a wonderful history. As you read the book you feel you get to know one man and his parish. He details Catholic ritual. In 1529 one female parishioner leaves her silver wedding ring which is melted down to make a little silver shoe for the figure of St Sidwell, the local saint. Yet, within a few decades, he records the removing of such statues from the church. When Protestant Edward came to the throne, the vestments were quietly put away, only to come out again when Catholic Mary returned. When the rule of Elizabeth demanded the priest was Protestant, preaching regularly, explaining the English Scripture, Sir Christopher did as he was told.

In most churches, changes tended to be slow – and clergy and congregations were human, just as we are. Most would be conservative, but with the

occasional radical. No doubt there were generational differences – younger people wanting more change than the older ones. You can imagine some being sad when a favourite saint was removed, and other wanting a change. You can imagine some hating the new English service, hating that they were expected to learn the new responses, that they had to sit in a different place, and do things a different way. You can imagine others welcoming it. The vast majority of priests obeyed the rules, served their people, kept their jobs. In most parishes, yes, life changed, but life went on. These days we'd have a major row, people would leave in anger – but then, you obeyed, you obeyed your priest you obeyed the Lord of the Manor, you obeyed the authorities. You didn't walk away, because really there was little alternative.



Some rich families would quietly keep their Catholic Worship. This is Hengrave church and Hall in Suffolk. Originally the parish church for the village, sitting in the grounds of the Hall – when the Reformation came, the family at Hengrave kept to their Catholic beliefs. The church became their chapel, and their parish became the village church in the next village of Flempton. Usually though, in English parishes, life went on.



Ranworth antiphoner -

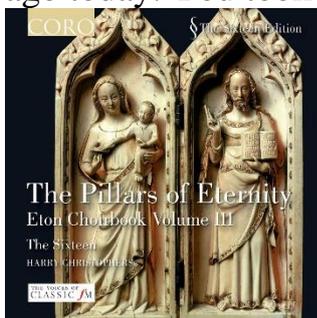
<http://www.broadsideparishes.org.uk/bspicons/antiphoner/cantors.htm>

In the monasteries, life did not go on. Monasteries, no doubt including Darley Abbey, were places of worship and of music, and had been for centuries. The monks would have come together in prayer eight times a day, and music had become more complicated over the years. When the abbeys were dissolved, worship usually stopped. Organs were sold, monks were pensioned off, and I suspect many of the musical ones found work as musicians. Perhaps employed at the local big house, perhaps gravitating to a nearby Cathedral or to London. Monks who were ordained would have ended up as parish priests, and perhaps took their skills into the new churches.



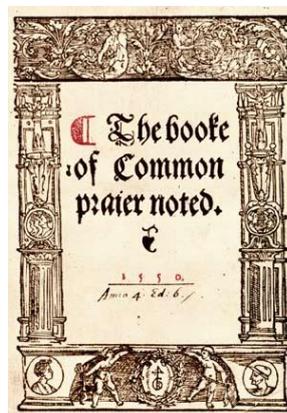
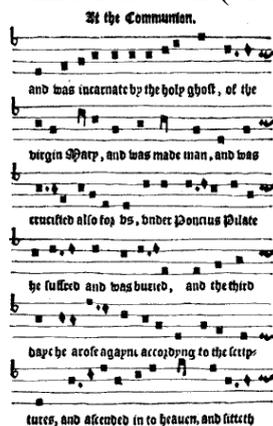
<http://indianapublicmedia.org/harmonia/music-eton-choirbook/>

The music of the monasteries would also have been heard in Cathedrals, most of which were monastic foundations, in the greater parish churches, in colleges and in schools. This is the Eton Choirbook. It was assembled about 500 years ago, and is a collection of 64 pieces, from several centuries. Many of the composers were members of the King's own household, men who had gained their degrees from Oxford or Cambridge, and were now in the Chapel Royal. We're going to listen to an Ave Maria by William Cornysh – he was active at the Court from 1493, and was involved in the music at the wedding of Arthur, Prince of Wales, and Catherine of Aragon in 1501. He sang at Coronation of Henry VIII in 1509, and then led the Chapel Royal when they went on a Royal Tour with Henry VIII into France in 1520. They sang at the festivities at the Field of the Cloth of Gold – when Henry met King Francis of France, 497 years ago today. You took your best musicians with you to impress the foreigner.

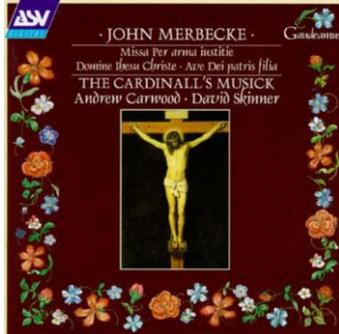


TRACK 2 – 4 MINUTES

We know the stories of several musicians who lived through the Reformation. John Marbeck (or Merbecke) is a name known to many Anglicans.



He was probably born in Beverley in Yorkshire in 1505, and by 1531 was serving as a “Singing Man” at St George’s Chapel in Windsor. This piece is from his Latin Mass *Per Arma Justitiae* – a setting of the Latin Mass he wrote.



TRACK 3 – 1 MINUTE

However, although he wrote this traditional Latin music, Marbeck was excited by the new Reform movements in Europe. On 16 March 1543 his house was searched and some writings of Calvin, copied out by Marbeck himself, were seized. He may even have possessed an English bible. Two days later he was summoned before the Privy Council, and thrown into prison. He was condemned to be burned at the stake. Fortunately he had powerful friends, the political climate changed, and he was eventually pardoned – the pardon names him as “Johen Marbeck de nova Wyndesour in com Berks Organplayer.”



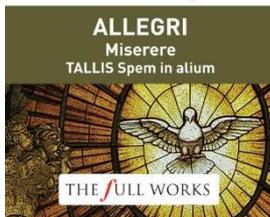
When the new English Prayer Book was published in 1549, Archbishop Cranmer asked Marbeck to produce service music for it similar, to that which had been used with the old Latin rites. “The Prayer Book noted by John Merbecke” was published in 1550, but was only used for a few years until the Catholic Queen Mary became Queen and the services went back to those of Rome. Queen Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, but as her reign progressed Protestant sympathies were prominent enough that service music itself had fallen into disfavour, and it wasn’t until the mid 19th century that people started singing Merbecke again – and in St Edmund’s we continue to sing it on the first Sunday of each month at 11.15 am. John Marbeck himself died in 1585 – he was still an organist at Windsor. His sons went on to be pillars of the Elizabethan Courts – sons to be proud of. But just ponder for a moment as to how you keep your faith when you’re lying in prison expecting to be sent to be burned.



Merbecke was not the only musician to weather the changes. Thomas Tallis may have been a boy chorister at the Chapel Royal in St James Palace. In 1532 he was appointed organist of Dover Priory, a Benedictine monastery. It was dissolved in 1538 and Tallis came north to Waltham Abbey. That was an Augustinian monastery, the burial place of King Harold (of arrow in the eye fame). He was there for less than two years before that monastery was dissolved – you can imagine him, once again, playing the organ for the final service. Part of me wondered whether he got a reasonable pension when Dover was closed, and another reasonable pension when Waltham Abbey was closed. He continued to go up in the world, and went to Canterbury Cathedral. The monastery had been dissolved, and the Cathedral was now run by a group of clergy, secular canons. Daily worship continued, and worship needed music. In 1543 he moved into London and joined the Chapel Royal. He served as a musician through the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. He died in 1585 – probably in Greenwich.

Tallis could write in Latin, he could also write in English. Here is his anthem “If ye love me”

CLASSIC *f*M



TRACK 4 – 2 MINUTES

This anthem reflects major aspects of the Reformation. No longer in Latin, now in English. No longer complicated, now the words can be heard. Edward VI decreed that choral music in worship must be brief and succinct “to each syllable a plain and distinct note”. Tallis had certainly done that.



One of Tallis’s pupils was William Byrd. Born about 1540, probably in Lincoln, he may have been a boy in the Chapel Royal or at St Paul’s, but by 1563 he was organist and master of the choristers at Lincoln. He was a composer and, like

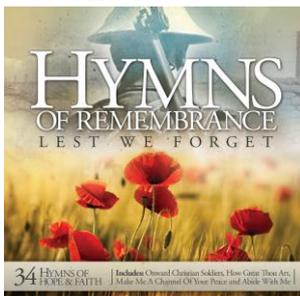
Tallis, he ensured his liturgical music for the English Prayer Book was acceptable – clear words, simple musical textures. In 1572 he moved to the Chapel Royal, and here he had more freedom. Queen Elizabeth liked her music, and she liked her ritual. She was also perfectly happy with Latin – and for 21 years Byrd and Tallis held the patent for the printing of music. Byrd went further than was really wise – he was increasingly drawn to the Catholic faith. He just about managed to stay on the right side of the law, but only just. His Patron was another Catholic, Sir John Petre, and he wrote Latin mass settings that would have been used – quietly – in the chapel at Sir John’s house, and he wrote Latin and English songs that would have been sung in the Hall. We could have listened to a wide variety of works – I’m just going to play one. “O Lord make they servant Elizabeth our Queen”. After you listen to this, you will understand why the monarch gave him a job, and protected him.



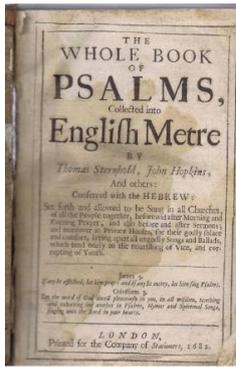
TRACK 5 – 4 MINUTES



We’re getting towards the end of this talk, and we haven’t mentioned the sort of music Luther is best known for, and that is his hymns. He wanted people to be part of worship, and what better way than getting them to sing. He took old religious songs and melodies and adapted them. The first book of eight German hymns, including four by Luther, appeared in Wittenberg in 1524, then another edition of a further 32. They are simple expressions of heartfelt trust and praise. In many places the children were taught them in school, they were expected to teach them to their parents, so they could sing them in church – often from memory and without books. In Common Praise we have 366 A Safe Stronghold our God is Still – and 51 From heaven high I come to you, which I have to say I have never sung (perhaps we can remedy that this year), Neither are in Hymns Old and New.



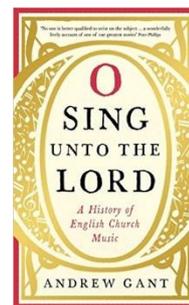
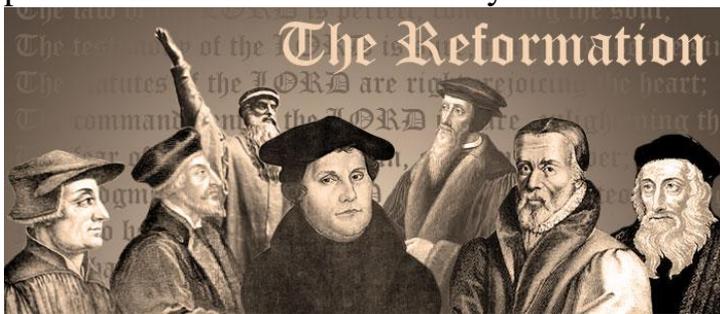
TRACK 6 – A SAFE STRONGHOLD



It has been suggested that in Europe the Reformation was bottom up – the people rose and demanded change. Popular risings need popular music. In England Reformation was top down – imposed by authority. That doesn't need popular song in the same way. In England hymns were not permitted unless they were Scriptural – in other words, if they were Psalms. Singing psalms is not easy, so in many places they would have been said. Work was done on producing psalm versions that could be sung by the whole congregation and in 1562 “The Whole Book of Psalms collected into English Metre”. It is known as Sternhold and Hopkins after the two Edwardian versifiers who created and assembled its contents. This is a 1682 edition. It was acceptable to sing one before and one after the Office.

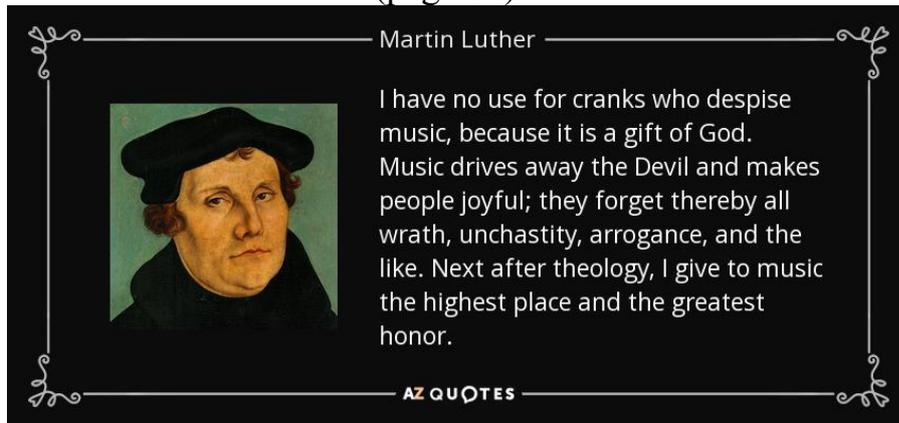
My shepherd is the livyng Lord
Nothing therefore I neede,
In pastures fayre with waters calme,
He set me for to feede.

By the end of the 1500s psalm singing had become part of daily life – at home, at school, in church. It wasn't until the mid 1700s that hymn singing became part of church life – that's a story for another day.



Back to the Reformation, and its effect on worship and music. Andrew Gant puts it very well – “With the Reformation, English church music hit puberty. Before this, you didn't have to think about whether you accepted the authority of the Pope, or if the Virgin Mary answered your prayers: Mum and Dad were always right. Afterwards, there was a period of rapid experimentation, and a series of associations with partners of wildly varying character, none of which – perhaps fortunately – lasted very long. Eventually, church music settled into a

more stable, long-term, relationship with the new orthodoxy that grew from the Elizabethan settlement” (page 61).



I will let Martin Luther have the last word.

Peter Barham
7 June 2017