

missed it owing to absence on the grand tour.¹¹ His notions of what sort of music was suited to the weekly round of a parochial church are best attested by a magnificently bound organ book ‘dedicated in perpetuity to the use of the church of St Hugh Letchworth by Adrian Fortescue’. This book, now in the Westminster Archdiocesan Archives (but it would still be perfectly serviceable at Letchworth for the ‘Extraordinary Form’), contains Fortescue’s instructions for the organist at Sung Mass, for the organ at Vespers and Compline, and for the celebration of Sunday and weekday Benediction.

This may be a good point at which to interject a note on Fortescue’s great keenness that the people should attend the Liturgy of the Hours and especially Vespers. Before the 1911 breviary reform of St Pius X, the Office of Vespers changed so often on the different feasts of the calendar that one needed a *Vesperale* to keep up with it. After that date, when for most of the year Sunday Vespers was, precisely, ‘of the Sunday’, it was nearly as easy to follow Vespers as it was Compline. Pointing out that ‘in most Catholic countries Vespers on Sunday evening are almost as much a matter of course as Mass in the morning’,¹² Fortescue saw no reason why, especially after 1911, English Catholics could not follow suit. The Pian reform ‘removes the chief difficulty against celebrating Vespers as the normal Sunday evening service; it opens the way for a more general use of the official evening prayer of the Church’.¹³ And he added that he wanted the laity to come to the Liturgy of the Hours above all for Matins of Christmas Night, for *Tenebrae* (on the last three days of Holy Week) and for Sunday Vespers, since then ‘lay people will not altogether lose touch with what was originally meant for them, as much as for the clergy’.¹⁴

The bulk of the Letchworth organ book — to return to that important monument of Fortescue’s period at St Hugh — is occupied by stave music, chiefly harmonisations of the chant for organ accompaniment, in his own hand. As its indications of source material show, it is an eclectic work. Its sources range from organ accompaniments for the Vatican edition of the chant from two Regensburg publishers, Pustet and Coppenrath,¹⁵ as well as a book of similar character produced for Benediction and processions (‘*Les Saluts*’) at Solesmes;¹⁶ the Oxford University Press’s admirable *The Unison*

Chant Book;¹⁷ *The English Hymnal with Tunes*, famously yet discreetly edited by Ralph Vaughan Williams;¹⁸ Terry’s less successful Catholic counterpart *The Westminster Hymnal*,¹⁹ and such gems as *The Cowley Carol Book* of the Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society collector G.R. Woodward,²⁰ and Massé and Scott’s *A Book of Old Carols*.²¹ (Recovering for use forgotten English carols became a Letchworth specialty.) The book, which a splendidly written title page in Latin and Greek declares to have been begun on the feast of St Cyril of Alexandria (9 February) 1916, is prefaced by a fading black and white photograph of the church — *Ecclesia Sancti Hugonis apud Rivalem Villam* — taken in 1916.²²

The visual setting

Fortescue did his best to render worthy the visual context of this aural offering to almighty God. A parishioner noted:

His church, dedicated to St Hugh of Lincoln, and built largely out of his own means and earnings, was a mere barn as he said, but made beautiful by the devotion he bestowed upon it. It is the only church worth looking at west of Constantinople, he would say with a mischievous smile.²³

This gem was replaced in 1963 by a new building better able to accommodate an increased worshipping attendance, and downgraded to the status of a hall, but a contemporary description is available, incorporated in a tribute to Fortescue published by a Letchworth newspaper at the time of his death.

In three short years, owing to the enthusiasm of our well-loved priest, Dr Adrian Fortescue, the church has become as nearly perfect as knowledge and love allied can make it. Built according to Byzantine ideas, of a type severe and dignified, its interior decorations are a running pattern with a Latin inscription,

Accompagnement d'orgue (Versailles, 1894).

17 *The Unison Chant Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909).

18 *The English Hymnal with Tunes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907).

19 R.R. Terry (ed.), *The Westminster Hymnal* (London: R. and T. Washbourne 1912).

20 G.R. Woodward, *The Cowley Carol Book* (London: Mowbray, 1902). This is generally held to have been the best carol collection until the 1928 *Oxford Book of Carols*.

21 H.L.L.J. Massé and C.K. Scott, *A Book of Old Carols* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1910).

22 Westminster Archdiocesan Archives, Box MR.

23 C.B. Purdom, *Life Over Again*, op. cit., p. 245.

11 R.R. Terry, *Catholic Church Music* (London: Greening, 1907).

12 ‘Preface’, in *Vespers for Sunday with an Introduction* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1913), p. 12.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

15 F.X. Mathias, *Organum comitans ad Vesperas et Compl[etorium] iuxta ed[it]ionem Vaticanum* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1913); M. Springer, *Orgelbegleitung zum Kyriale Vaticanum* (Regensburg: Coppenrath, 1907).

16 *Chants usuels pour les Saluts ... éd. Par les Bénédictins de Solesmes ... avec*