

OrganFax.co.uk Article

Allen Warrender

Allen was quite a familiar figure on the organ circuit in the latter part of the last century and many on the east coast will remember him. He was born in Wellington, Shropshire in 1948, to parents Joseph and Edith and is one of three children. He was educated at Market Drayton Grammar school and later at the Priory school for boys (Shrewsbury).

His musical ambitions were 'fired' when he used to visit his granny Crowe's house where uncle Squibby` (mum's brother) would often be furiously pumping the harmonium, whilst playing his own rendition of the popular tunes of the day. It was during this time that his love affair with music started. It continued with the taking of piano lessons which progressed to classical organ tuition under the guidance of Mr R.G. Harwood at St Chad's church in Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The fee's for the lessons were paid for by an early morning paper round, an even earlier, daily milk round and a job stacking shelves at his local newsagent/confectioners, after school! His mum is ever eager to point out, that this was only possible because she got up each morning before him and made him a flask of tea and sandwiches! She is very proud of him, and he always acknowledges that all of his endeavors have been due to her contributions and encouragement.

On leaving school he had a brief 'dalliance' with the Royal Marines School, in Deal, but decided it was far too tough and not the type of

life he fancied. He was lucky enough, in part because of his father's considerable mechanics reputation, to gain an apprenticeship at Hall Engineering (Harlescott) where, after five long years, he emerged as a fully skilled fitter/turner, learning many skills that have since been of great benefit to him.

However playing music was his first love and his spare time was spent as the keyboard player with Shropshire's then well known pop group, the 'Karacters'. This band achieved a certain amount of success with their cover version of an American demo song – 'I feel a love that's comin' on strong.'

He sent demo tapes to holiday



Allen at Valley Farm in 1969

camp all over the country and secured a summer `season` at Valley Farm Camping Ground (as it was then known) in Clacton on Sea, in 1969. After this first season he went back to the Midlands during the winter period and returned the following year. Allen was taken

with the lifestyle and saw the potential to travel, so it was that he was offered a job aboard Thomson holidays cruise ship 'Ithaca' for their new venture, 'fly cruises to the Mediterranean'. He stayed on board for two years until he left in 1974 to base himself in Athens, where he had his own short series of musical items on Greek television, and did many cabaret performances throughout the country and isles. Whilst there part of his income was also provided by working with Greece's top harmony and instrumental group 'Nostrathamus'.

After two successful years there, he returned back to this country, whereupon Thomsons again contacted him, this time inviting him to participate in their Baltic cruises, on board the ship 'Calypso' which he eagerly accepted! After this venture and being back home again, he formed the 'Clacton and District Organ Society', which still flourishes today under the auspices of Carol and Vic Wiggins www.organfax.co.uk/clubs/clacton Shortly afterward Allen decided to take up his travels again as he had been offered yet another cruise, this time starting in the Caribbean, through the Panama Canal, up into Mexico and along the Western coast of America, on to the beautiful glaciers in Alaska, a trip which he readily accepted.

On his return another twist in his musical life presented itself and he became the proprietor of a music shop. In addition a further offer to work back at Valley Farm, where it

all really started, saw him on the entertainments team, where he stayed until, one night, he was suddenly struck down by a massive and debilitating brain haemorrhage. Thankfully, he survived, however in his own words “it has been a very long road back”. Since then he has made a fairly good physical recovery, but many things which he considered mundane before are now very difficult for him to do. One of the things he had taken for granted was his music. He has lost a lot of his co-ordination, but, with determination has managed to regain some of it, although playing professionally is no longer possible, he still continues to enjoy the efforts of others, being a familiar face at many of the local organ societies and festivals.



Allen in Greece in 1974

During much of his life he played the organ, on Sunday mornings, at Christopher’s church, Jaywick, and is still there - ‘boy and man!’ (although these days he limits his musical offerings, to hymns and easy liturgical pieces). He was never told, over this long period, that he was the ‘official’ organist there, and not too long ago



Allen at home in Clacton 2009

happened to casually mention this to one of the female clergy. To his utter surprise (and everyone else’s!) she presented him early one Sunday morning after the service, with a framed 27 year service diploma and then they celebrated with tea and buns!

Allen can still be found out and about in Clacton on Sea today!

Many of his musical efforts have now been transferred on to CDs the list is as follows, and any can be obtained from him by emailing :-

warrender651@btinternet.com

or by visiting his website at

www.freewebs.com/warrender

Allen Warrender - Discography

‘Roland SH1000 synthesizer’ (recorded at Cambridge Road studio) - 1971.

‘Allen and Pixie’ (recorded on the SS Ithaca) Lowrey TLOKS -1973.

‘Nostrathamus Live’ cabaret recording in Athens (Greece) Lowrey TLOKS -1975.

‘A tribute to Elvis’ (recorded at the Wooky Hollow Club - Liverpool) - The Elvis show band - AW Elka organ and Welson synthesised strings) - 1977.

‘Yours sincerely’ (Lowrey SCT1 and TGS organs.) - 1978

‘Songs of praise’ - (recorded at St Christopher’s Church) - 1979.

‘A Heritage in sound’. (Recorded on Lowrey Heritage Deluxe) - 1981

‘Hymns played on American organ’- 1982.

‘Live at St Christophers’ (on Yamaha MC600 (2 CD set) – 1983

‘Allen and Marie’ (Yamaha MC600 + Roland vocoder) - 1986.

‘Allen Warrender’ - (Roland SH1000, monophonic synth)- 1987

‘Allen Warrender at the Allen computer organ’ (recorded at St Bartholomew’s church) - 1988.

‘The Bryan Allen duo’ (Yamaha MC5) - 1990.

‘Blue Skies’ (Hammond M102 spinet)

‘Yesterday once more’ (Lowrey Heritage, circa 1966) - 1999.

‘The special years’ (Yamaha PSR 270 keyboard) - 2006.

‘A little bit more’ - 2007.

‘A tinctzy bit more’ - 2008.

‘Standing Room Only’-2008

John Romero, 2009
OrganFax.co.uk

Visit the [OrganFax Forum](#) to comment on this article...