

## Did You Know.....

That the elegant wooden pulpit in St Peter's was designed and made by the oldest son of our then organist and choir master?

John Panting was only just in his early 20's when he designed the pulpit, made it and also made the bronze castings on the front of the lectern and pulpit. He went to England shortly after that to further his training and was killed in an accident in his mid-twenties without realising his full designing potential.

John's father, Stuart, was organist and choirmaster from 1948 to 1967 and was very strict with choir members. Those were the days when six rows in the chancel were filled with choristers. Choirboys in the front rows (including Stuart Panting's two younger sons), then facing the altar, the sopranos were on the right-hand side with tenors behind them. In the tenors was an elderly tiny woman, Mrs Borreson, who was determined not to let age keep her out. On the other side were the altos behind the choir boys with basses in the back row.

There was no photocopied music and choir members often processed in with at least four different books for Matins – hymn book, prayer book, psalter with the "pointing" for the psalm and anthem book. It was the same for Evensong. Communion only seemed to be once a month and then it was full choral. Woe betides the chorister who had not been to choir practice and didn't know what was being sung or how to sing it.



*Bronze casting on the St Peter's Lectern*

Stuart Panting was a perfectionist in his music and in the way the choir dressed and processed. Mortar boards at the correct angle with the tassel over the left eyebrow, discreet black shoes, and no comments during the service. Walk tall, no interaction with members of the congregation as you processed in and so on. He is also responsible for the glass wall at the back of the pews. Fed up with crying babies during "his" music, he paid for the screen to deaden the sound! For years it was simply known as the Panting Wall.

The Panting household was not houseproud. Lou, Stuart's wife was a warm person but could be just as fierce as he was, if need be, with a rather gruff voice. Their lounge was almost wall to wall music in piles on the floor and Stuart knew where every bit was.

A talented family in different ways but always working for the church and giving up many hours of time in the process.

### **Now You Know!**



*St Peter's Choir - 1960s*