

PROPOSAL: THE INSTALLATION OF A MEMORIAL PLAQUE IN CROYDON MINSTER

THE PROJECT

The aim of the project is to install a brass plaque to commemorate the life of Martin How MBE, choir director, organist and composer, who for most of his working life was on staff at the Royal School of Church Music and then for nearly 3 decades was Organist Laureate at Croydon Minster as well as a much beloved member of the congregation.

Martin passed away in July 2022 at the age of 91. His funeral was attended by church musicians from all over the UK who had worked with him at the Royal School of Church Music, had sung with him under the RSCM Chorister Training Scheme, or had sung in RSCM-associated choirs who performed his compositions. His death sparked fulsome obituaries from colleagues in the church music world which appeared in the Church Times [Obituary: Martin How \(churchtimes.co.uk\)](https://www.churchtimes.co.uk) and in the RSCM's own website: [The passing of Martin How, Long-Time RSCM Staff Member and Supporter | RSCM](#) in which he was dubbed "the best Cathedral organist this country never had".

After having been organist and choirmaster at a number of churches in both the North and South of England in between studying and working at the RSCM, Martin ultimately became Commissioner for the South. This involved travelling to churches and working with the choirs, or holding training days for choristers of all ages. His legacies include the formation of the Southern Cathedral Singers, and the Chorister Training Scheme, which is still used today. His far-reaching influence on English choral music, and those who make it, is incontrovertible. He was awarded an MBE for services to church music in the 1993 New Year Honours. More recently at the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee Service of Thanksgiving, Martin's *Homage to Elgar* was one of the pieces played before the service.

Following his retirement from the Royal School of Church Music, Martin continued to compose and play the organ as an honorary member of the music staff at Croydon Minster. He composed 3 cantatas which were premiered by the Minster choirs, as well as a number of organ pieces, descants and piano works which were enjoyed by the Minster community. He was a quiet but passionate and generous influence on all the musicians and clergy at the Minster, and he is much missed. The level of affection that the congregation felt for him can be seen in an issue of the Minster Magazine which was devoted entirely to remembering Martin. [Parish Magazine for October / November 2022 - Croydon Minster](#)

After his funeral, Martin's ashes were interred in the Garden of Remembrance at the East End of the Minster. It was at this point that the idea of having a memorial to Martin in the form of a plaque in the church was discussed. He would join other key Croydon residents, such as the Headmistress of Croydon Girls' High School, Dorinda Neligan and Ernest Taberner, a former Town Clerk of Croydon. Given his lasting legacy on church music and the esteem in which he was held both locally and internationally, and the continuing inspiration his Chorister Training Scheme provides, we believe that this is an entirely

appropriate and fitting project. It is also a project that was welcomed with enthusiasm when it was suggested at Martin's memorial, a Come and Sing event held last February, when choristers from all over the UK came to sing one of his cantatas and some have already made a donation towards a plaque.

The key sponsors of the project are the Priest in Charge and Churchwardens of Croydon.

PROJECT BRIEF

- The proposed location is on the south wall of Croydon Minster (see photographs 1 - 4). It would be brass, in keeping with the other boards on this wall – and, indeed, much of the rest of the church. The location is very close to where Martin habitually sat, which will have a great deal of resonance for current members of the congregation.
- We envisage a classic font style (the one on the mock up is Goudy Old Style) and a simple angel graphic (see photograph 5). The wording has been checked for accuracy with the RSCM and a number of Martin's former colleagues. The quote comes from Martin's favourite hymn: "Lo He Comes With Clouds Descending" and reflects Martin's ability to bring so many people together in musical worship.
- The planned dimensions for the plaque are 594mm x 420mm x 3mm. The brass is available in polished & satin finishes and can be stove lacquered to avoid regular cleaning. It is likely that we would opt for satin finish, as the plaque immediately adjacent to our proposed location is also satin, and it is more understated, which is in keeping with Martin's very understated character.
- The budget is approximately £500, which will be raised through voluntary contributions made at the 'Come and Sing' memorial event on February 18, 2023 and through subsequent contact with Martin's many friends and associates worldwide, once the project gets underway.

Three companies have been approached:

1 – Brunel Engraving www.brunelengraving.co.uk

2 – Lewis Howes Signs & Engraving www.lewishowes.co.uk

3 – The Sign Maker www.sign-maker.net

The quotes were comparable, so we propose to use Lewis Howes as they updated our Vicars of Croydon brass and we are pleased with the work they did.

Photograph 1 – Mock up of plaque on South Wall (space left on right for hymn board – see Photograph 2)



In loving memory of Martin How MBE
1931-2022
Southern Commissioner for the Royal School of Church Music
& creator of the Clergy Training Scheme
Organist Laureate of Croydon Minster
Composer & mentor to generations of choristers
 "You, Amen, let all adore Thee"


In loving memory of
Deary Galsworthy Whiting MBE LSA
who died at sea on 20th Dec 1907 aged 48 years
His funeral
is placed in memory with gratitude for friendship in
which of the best years in which they both lived and
of their service for the Lord.
Christmas 1887.

Photograph 2 – Mock up of plaque with hymn board in situ



In the Church of St. Andrew the Martyr
of Charles Sorrell, Organist, Choir Master
and Sidesman of the Church from 1904 to 1930
September 1904 - and 1930 - 1931. He served his
duty loyally until his death on 15th May 1931.

In loving memory of Martin How MBE
1931-2022
Southern Commissioner for the Royal School of Church Music
& founder of the Choral Training Scheme
Organist Laureate of Gordon Ministry
Composer & mentor to generations of choicesters
"Yes, Amen, let all adore Thee"

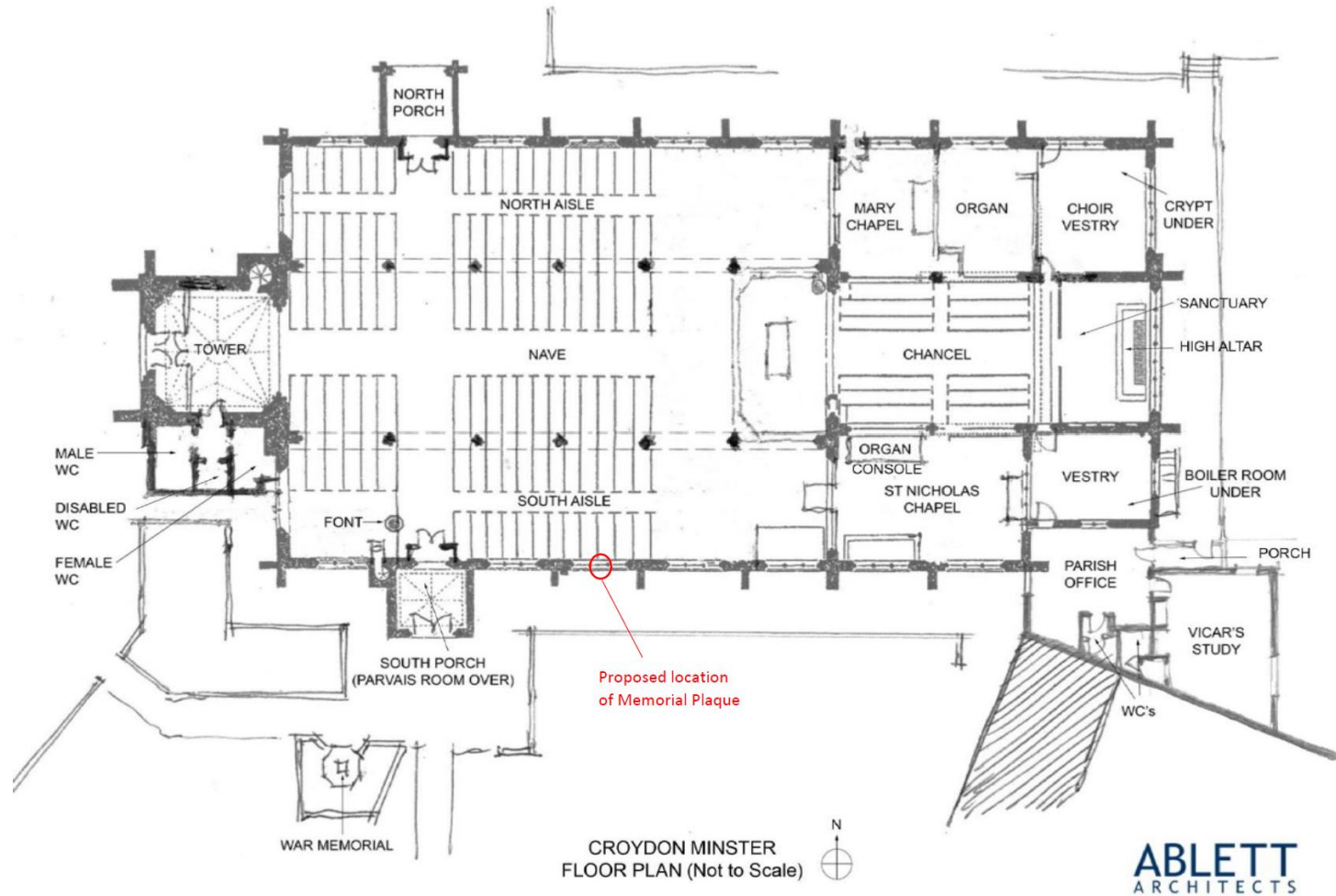
HYMNS
56
353
200

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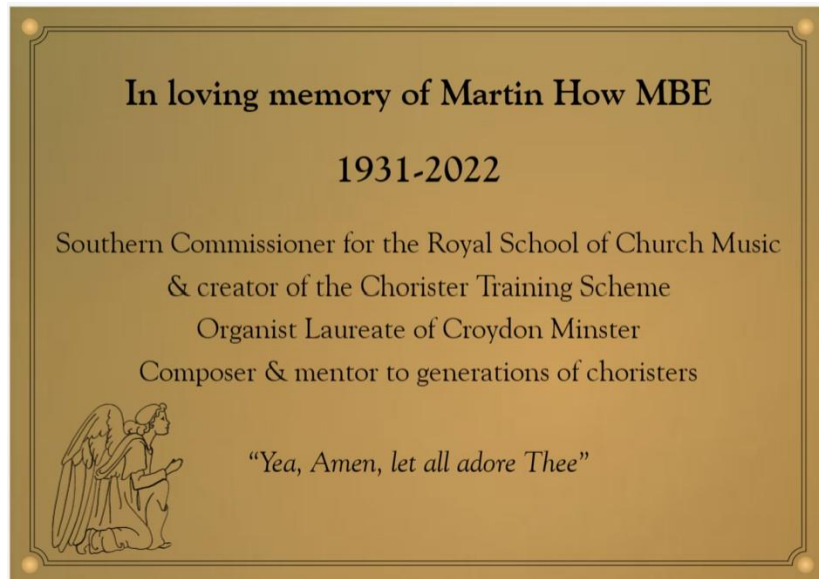
Photograph 3 – adjacent brasses (under window East of proposed plaque)



Photograph 4 – Situation of proposed plaque



Photograph 5 – Draft of proposed plaque



Photographs 6-8 – Other memorial plaques on North Nave wall of Croydon Minster for context

