



# Edington Music Festival Association Newsletter

Summer 2005

## *From the Editor*

WELCOME TO the summer edition of the newsletter as we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Edington Music Festival. The Festival Director's introduction to this year's festival reminds us that this is a *Festival of Music within the Liturgy* and that is how best we should celebrate this milestone.

Our enthusiasm for this unique festival has recently been shared with a wider audience in an article celebrating the fifty-year history of the festival in the latest edition of *Cathedral Music*—the Friends of Cathedral Music magazine.

We would all recognize that there are many other great music festivals, but the character of the Edington Music Festival is unique and with the help of your support it will continue for many years to come.

## *Edington Music Festival 2005— the Festival Director writes:*

AS I HOPE YOU ARE AWARE, this year we celebrate the 50th Edington festival—a wonderful milestone, and a testament to the dedication and enthusiasm of so many people during that time.

The theme of this year's festival is 'Discipleship and the Kingdom of God'. Following last year's exploration of the Rule of St Benedict and monastic values, I hope that this year's theme will enable us to look more specifically at the role of the individual in faith, and our personal response to Christ. Thus we begin the week with *The Call to Discipleship*, what we understand by *Belief*, and the role of *The Apostles* (to coincide on Wednesday with the feast of St Bartholomew). In the second half of the week we turn to our own role in the Church, in *Preparing for the Kingdom*, and *Preaching the Faith*, and on Saturday we concentrate on *Salvation through Christ*. As we prepare to return to our many different places and environments at the end of the festival week, we look at our personal challenge to spread the good news, reflecting on the phrase in the Lord's Prayer, *Thy will be done*.

At a very early stage in the planning for this year's festival, we unanimously agreed that the best way to celebrate the 50th anniversary was not to stage big celebration concerts or television broadcasts, for example, but rather to relish what we do

best: the daily round of services. This is, after all, what makes Edington unique amongst music festivals. Thus, with the exception of the Saturday evening service (which this year will be a Sequence of Music and Readings instead of Evensong), the pattern of worship is exactly as in previous years. We have nominated the Saturday to be the 'reunion' day in the hope that many former singers and congregation members may be able to come back that day, and the Sequence will give us the opportunity to involve some former singers in a performance of Tallis's forty-part motet *Spem in alium*.

As well as our own very special anniversary, 2005 also sees the 500th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Tallis and the 100th anniversary of the birth of Sir Michael Tippett. On the Thursday evening, the Consort will perform Tippett's much-loved five spirituals from *A Child of our Time*, and several works by Tallis will be sung during the week. In particular, the Wednesday morning Eucharist (*N.B. at the earlier time of 10.30am*) will include the rarely performed *Missa Salve intemerata* and two of his motets, *Loquebantur variis linguis* and *O sacrum convivium*.

I am delighted that, once again through the generosity of the Festival Association, we have been able to commission a new setting of the *Magnificat & Nunc dimittis* from the highly esteemed composer Judith Bingham. Her work is regularly heard in services and concerts, and on the radio, and this piece will be given its premiere at Evensong on Tuesday before being given its first broadcast on BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong the next day.

During the course of the week there will be the usual mix of familiar and less well-known works reflecting all periods of composition, including Rheinberger's beautiful, Romantic setting of the Mass for double choir at the Friday evening Eucharist. As always, the Schola will provide the backbone of plainchant throughout the week, and if you have never been to either Matins or Compline, I would urge you to make the effort to attend—they are a real highlight of the festival.

I look forward to seeing as many Association members as possible during the festival as we celebrate 50 wonderful years.

## *Association News*

IT IS WITH SADNESS that we report the death of Roland Blackburn of New York, a long-standing supporter of the Edington Music Festival. Roland was unable to attend last year's festival and was diagnosed with cancer shortly afterwards. Sadly a course of treatment was unsuccessful and he died in February 2005. Newell Middleton, who always accompanied Roland to the festival, was with him to the end. We hope to see Newell again, and send him our sincere condolences on the loss of a close friend.

## *Annual General Meeting of The Edington Music Festival Association*

THE AGM will be held in the Priory on Monday 22 August 2005 at 2.30pm. Please notify the secretary, Joy Cooke, of any matters you wish discussed at least seven days in advance of the meeting. Notification can be made by post or email as follows:

Mrs J L Cooke, Aeron House, Llangeitho, Tregaron, Ceredigion SY25 6SU. Email: joycooke@aol.com

## *Profile*

ROBERT QUINNEY is the most recently arrived of the Festival's choir directors (and, as it happens, the youngest). It was in his last year as Organ Scholar at King's College, Cambridge, that he was approached to become Peter Barley's successor as festival organist in 1998. His major contribution to the festival that year was breaking the organ, precipitating a memorable performance of the penultimate movement of Brahms's Requiem using the church piano, throughout which Father George Bush, hemmed into his place by the instrument, looked wan and held his fingers in his ears. Robert is relieved not to have broken anything associated with the festival in the years since his debut.

Robert has been involved in church music since he was briefly a chorister in Dundee Cathedral Choir; upon his family's move to Sheffield he sang in their local parish choir—then a large and well-disciplined ensemble of men and boys—and took organ lessons from the church's organist. His experience of cathedral music was then largely confined to weekly Choral Evensong broadcasts; he is a world authority on the repertoire and performance practice of the period 1989–1992. After two years at Eton College and a

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gap-year in Winchester (as Assistant Organist of Winchester College and Organ Scholar of the Cathedral) he went up to Cambridge in 1995. Assisting Stephen Cleobury was in some ways akin to an apprentice directorship at a repertory theatre or opera house: the skills required to perform a huge and stylistically encyclopaedic repertoire, under the constant pressure that comes with a reputation like that of King's College Choir, are subtle and not easily assimilated. It was a physically and sometimes emotionally exhausting three years!

Robert spent a further year at King's, as a postgraduate M.Phil. student. His supervisor, John Butt (now Professor of Music at Glasgow University) has been a huge influence, not just academically but also on his organ playing, particularly the music of Bach, which remains his specialism. He presented a lecture course on Bach at King's College, London, last year, and was recently called upon to perform (with his wife, the soprano Cecilia Osmond) the newly discovered aria *Alles mit Gott und nichts ohn Ihn* on the Radio 4 *Today* programme, using a photo in *The Guardian* as his source!

He is currently Sub-Organist of Westminster Abbey, having previously served as Assistant Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral. His four years at the Cathedral were a hugely valuable lesson in many ways: the repertoire of Westminster Cathedral Choir, based on plainchant and dominated by the great Renaissance masters, is inexhaustibly rich and perfectly suited to the dignified, devoted celebration of the Mass which is still often to be experienced at the Cathedral. The singing of the Cathedral Choir, well known from its many recordings, is itself a lesson in the importance of vocal line to the performance of music in any style: Robert can often be heard stressing this point to the Nave Choir!

As organist at the festival he was constantly astounded by the skill with which David Trendell coaxed polished and passionate singing within moments of first encountering each year's Nave Choir. Robert took over the running of the Nave Choir with some trepidation, acutely aware of the shoes he was filling. The challenges of directing the choir—which this year include the live broadcast of a commissioned *Magnificat & Nunc dimittis*—are great. One has constantly to bear in mind that the singers are on holiday and giving generously of their time, and are therefore unlikely to respond well to the crack of a whip!—and the sheer volume of music can seem overwhelming. But the week is so immensely satisfying and enjoyable that Robert doubts any of the participants would have it any other way.

IT WAS WITH GREAT SADNESS that we learnt of the death of Frank Angell who was the Verger of Edington Priory Church for twenty-five years, serving four vicars—Ralph Dudley, Maurice Bird, Neil Heavysides and David Belcher. After retirement Frank continued to help and support whenever he was needed and he was always very evident during festival week. The parish will miss his gentle presence and we will all give thanks for his contribution to the life of the Priory Church. Andrew Carwood and Peter Roberts represented the Festival and the Association at the funeral.

As of 30 January Jean Hall ceased her position as House for Duty Priest in the Benefice (a position she had held since 2000) and has moved to live in the Benefice of South Petherton with the Seavingtons in Somerset where she will continue in active ministry. Jean's new address is: The Rev'd Jean Hall, 26 Summer Shard, Southerton, Somerset TA13 5DP. Tel: 01460 240099.

The Methodist Church is now settled into its new home at the Priory Church and maintaining regular Sunday services.

With the closure of the village school the future of the building has been under discussion. The County Council has been investigating the feasibility of developing it as a Heritage and Fieldwork Centre. Watch this space to learn of further progress.

This year Edington is once again entering the Wiltshire Best Kept Village Competition. A successful result requires a great deal of hard work so we wish them well.

Those who drive to the festival may be interested to know that improvements to the B3098 are continuing. The 30mph signs have been relocated and 'gateway' markings made, which it is hoped will reduce the speed of traffic entering the village.

As reported in an earlier newsletter a successful jazz event was held last year. The date for this year's event is to be 29 July.

In an earlier newsletter we mentioned the possibility of the departure of Tom and Vicki Faulkner—Landlords of the Lamb Inn. Sadly, we hear they have indeed moved on, and we wish them well. Tom and Vicki made the Lamb a very welcoming place in which to renew friendships and make new friends whilst eating the excellent food cooked by Tom, and of course enjoying a drink or two. They will be a hard act to follow.

### School Howlers

A FEW SCHOOL HOWLERS gleaned from a variety of sources—there is often more than an element of truth in the misinterpretation.

- A surgery is a place where people insult their doctors.
- Henry VIII thought so much of Wolsey that he made him a cardigan.
- It is sometimes difficult to hear what is being said in church because the agnostics are so terrible.
- Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock.
- A class of seven-year olds were asked to draw a picture illustrating *The Flight to Egypt*. A little boy drew a large jet aircraft with three people looking out of the windows. When asked who they were he replied, 'That's Joseph, that's Mary with the baby and that's Pontius—the Pilot'.
- A power of eternity is what you get when you are very ill.
- Surely good Mrs Murphy will follow me all the days of my life.

### Compact Disc offer

ANDREW CARWOOD and his group The Cardinal's Musick have recently embarked on a series of recordings with the Hyperion label. The Festival Association is pleased to be able to offer the first of them—*Gaude gloriosa* and other sacred music by Thomas Tallis—to Association members at the special price of £12 (inclusive of p&hp), £3 of which goes directly to Association funds.

The full programme of the disc is as follows: *Jesu salvator saeculi*, *Gaude gloriosa*, *Sermone blando angelus*, *Magnificat*, *Nunc dimittis*, *Mibi autem nimis*, *Absterge Domine*, *Derelinquat impius*, *Loquebantur variis linguis*, *Suscipe quaeso Domine*, *O nata lux*.

Hyperion's commitment to the recording of sacred choral music is constantly praised in the pages of the FCM magazine; we hope to be able to offer preferential rates on further recordings to Association members during the course of festival week. Watch this space.

To receive a copy of The Cardinal's Musick's new Tallis recording, please send a cheque for £12 (per CD) payable to *Edington Music Festival Association* to the Honorary Treasurer: Justin Lowe, 192a Bravington Road, London W9 3AP. Provided that the treasurer is not abroad maintaining oil industry mainframes, discs will be despatched by return.