



Edington Music Festival Association Newsletter

Winter 2007

WE WELCOME WITH THIS ISSUE our new chairman, Peter McGearry, who was unanimously elected at this year's AGM in succession to Andrew Carwood. Peter has kindly contributed a biographical note which is to be found below. Meanwhile we thank Andrew most warmly for his hard work and for his vision which led to the establishment of the Association, as a result of which the Festival is on a much sounder financial footing than previously. We are absolutely delighted that Andrew has decided that he is, after all, able to continue as director of the Schola Cantorum.

We warmly congratulate Ashley Grote, our organist at the 2007 Festival, on his appointment as Assistant Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral, a post he takes up after Easter next year. The summer newsletter will feature an interview with Ashley.

It is however with great sadness that we have heard of the death of Major General Sir Jeremy Moore, honorary treasurer to the Festival from 1997 until 2004, and Canon Dr. Judith Rose, a member of the clergy team in 1996 and 1997.

Obituaries

Jeremy Moore

READING the extensive obituaries in the press last September, none of us can have entertained any doubts as to what an exceptional man Jeremy was. We knew principally the warmth, the sense of fun, the commitment, the efficiency of the man. The wider world knew of his bravery as Commander of the British land forces in the Falklands War, the culmination of a distinguished career in the armed forces in recognition of which he was knighted in 1982.

In retirement Jeremy undertook a range of activities, of which serving as a most excellent treasurer to the Festival was but one. He qualified as a guide in Wells Cathedral, a task he much enjoyed, and it was there that his most splendid funeral service took place on October 5th. Many representatives of village and Festival were able to attend, amongst them Peter and Emily Roberts, Peter Barley, Jeremy Summerly, Joanna Robertson, Robin and Jane Wilson, Michael Jones and Antonia Southern. The Right Reverend Humphrey Southern gave the blessing.

We shall miss Jeremy greatly, and we extend our condolences to his wife Veryan and his three children.

Judith Rose

JUDITH ROSE, who attended the Festival along with Paul and their children in the early years, was a founder member of the Samaritans in Peterborough whilst Paul was Precentor there, trained as Reader in the 1970s after the family had moved to St. John's, Hyde Park, and felt a deepening calling to the priesthood when they returned to the Peterborough diocese in the 1980s. Ordained priest in 1994 she twice served in that role at the Festival. Sadly, her final years were blighted by ill health. Our love and prayers go out to Paul in his loss.

Chairman's Report

THE CHAIRMAN highlighted the following points in his report: grants from the Association had funded the following:

- a) the service booklets
- b) catering for the 2006 festival
- c) the 2006 Commission by Antony Pitts, which had received favourable comments by many members present at last year's festival.
- d) the website—renewed thanks were expressed to Nick Flower for his continued hard work on this project.
- e) the Music Festival library, which is now housed on the 2nd floor of the Parvis. This means that the music library has a permanent home and can be organised properly.

A grant had been assigned for the payment of the cassocks obtained from New College, Oxford, however the college declined to accept any payment. The Chairman expressed thanks on behalf of the membership to New College for their generous gift.

ANDREW CARWOOD

The Edington Music Festival 2007

IN THE THEME for this year's festival the Director wanted to continue the inspiration of Jesus's 'I AM' teachings from last year with the parables.

On Monday the focus was the parable of the Ten Virgins expressing the idea of

Watchfulness. The setting for Solemn Eucharist was William Byrd's Mass for four voices. Both voluntaries at this service were by Dietrich Buxtehude in recognition of the three hundredth anniversary of his death.

On Tuesday the focus was Foundations demonstrated well through the hymn *Christ is our corner-stone* and Palestrina's *Missa Tu es Petrus*.

This year, due to the changes in the BBC radio schedules for Choral Evensong, Wednesday was the evening for the Sequence of Music and Readings. The theme for the day was Forgiveness and the service featured an interesting choice of readings and music including a motet by the Icelandic composer Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson.

On Thursday we moved to a focus of Faith with a challenging sermon at the Solemn Eucharist given by the guest preacher the Very Reverend Victor Stock, Dean of Guilford Cathedral. The Mass setting was by the new Nave choir director Matthew Martin. The 2007 Festival Association commission by Grayston Ives, (set to words by Charles Wesley) *Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire* was sung for the first time by the Nave Choir as the communion anthem for the Eucharist and then again as the Introit for the recording of Choral Evensong for broadcast on the following Sunday.

Under the new arrangement the Musical Supper was held on Thursday evening with the musical entertainment being provided by all the members of the Schola Cantorum (plus John Barnard) and by a group from the Nave Choir.

The focus for Friday and Saturday was the challenging theme of Judgement and on Friday evening there was a well-attended Solemn Requiem. The setting for the Mass was Requiem Op 9 by Maurice Duruflé and the preacher was Canon Neil Heavisides.

The final Sunday of the festival took as its theme The Water of Life with all three choirs taking part in the singing of the Mass. All three choirs as usual, brought the festival to a close with the singing of Robert Parsons' *Ave Maria*.

The choice of repertoire during the week recognised other significant milestones occurring this year: the 300th anniversary of the birth of Charles Wesley and the 150th

and 450th anniversaries of the birth of Edward Elgar and Thomas Morley respectively.

Overall a very successful festival with new faces in all the choirs and a new Festival Organist, Ashley Grote who rapidly 'tamed' the Edington Priory organ and enjoyed the experience enough to express the hope that he can return next year.

Finally don't forget to put the date of next year's festival into your diary—Sunday, 17th August to Sunday, 24th August 2008.

MICHAEL J COOKE

Peter McGeary

PETER McGEARY was born in Durham to a bank manager and a professional musician. He was educated at St Alban's and Nottingham High schools. While at St Alban's he found himself being drafted into the school choir, which marked the start both of a love of singing and a vocation to the priesthood. He read Theology at King's College, London, graduating in 1980. A brief period of teaching was followed by some years of selling men's clothing in various parts of south London.

Ordained in 1986, Peter served as a curate for over three years in the centre of Brighton, and for almost six at All Saints', Margaret Street, in the West End of London. After a short incumbency in suburban Middlesex he was appointed Vicar of St Mary's Cable Street in the East End in early 1998. The parish is immensely needy, and has many issues to do particularly with poverty, overcrowding and drug use, which the church tries to address. Approximately 65% of the population is Muslim.

Since 2000 Peter has also been one of the Priest Vicars of Westminster Abbey, which provides a fascinating counterpoint to his parochial ministry. In his spare time, such as it is, he sings with various groups in London.

Plainsong at the Edington Festival

THE REVD DAVID EVANS, priest at the Festival in 1969, 1973–1985, and in 2002 writes:

I have read John Barnard's articles on the Schola Cantorum since 1978, and it has been a privilege over the years to be the officiant at their services as it is to own their compact disc[†].

My own memories of plainsong go back further, in particular to 1961. The Festival Companion for 2005 lists Warren Green, the first Director of the Nave Choir (1956–1960) as Director of the Schola Cantorum from 1961 to 1963. I sang in the Schola of 1961, and my unreliable memories are as follows.

Our founder, David Calcutt, and Warren were keen to develop plainchant within the Festival and had gone to a course at Solemnes-sur-Sarthe which was the fountainhead of the subject. For the 1961 Festival they invited a scratch choir to rehearse the plainsong services on quite a rigorous basis. Alas, I cannot remember names, and being a scratch choir we were not listed. But we were keen enough to return to Edington in Holy Week to sing *Tenebrae* and more. I believe this happened only once. After that I was tied down in theological college and was not available for whatever happened in 1962 and 1963, the other years when Warren was running a Schola. I was however very grateful that I had taken part in those two early choirs, just as for every experience of Edington before and since.

[†]This disc, recorded in Edington by the Schola Cantorum under Andrew Carwood immediately after the 2003 Festival, remains available. It includes Matins, Compline and miscellaneous chant from that year. Please send a cheque for £11 (to include postage and packing) to John Barnard at the address given for the latest CD offer.

Interview with Andrew Carwood

I TALKED with Andrew very shortly after he had announced, to our surprise and delight, that he would be able to continue next year as director of the Schola Cantorum.

He spoke with great warmth of the people at the Festival—the singers, the villagers, the visitors who meant so much to him. He loved the ethos of Edington, the quality of the liturgy and the preaching, the support he received from the other choir directors. All of this he found captivating and powerful. In the Schola Cantorum he was 'as close as I am ever likely to get to a monastic calling, a little glimpse of that'.

On the issue of singing plainsong with early music groups Andrew was quite clear. 'They just don't get it—the flexibility, the word stresses. They are not singing in services, they are not in the right buildings, they don't smell the incense, they don't see the light on the chancel floor. Half an hour of rehearsal in the chancel is worth one and a half hours anywhere else. The building teaches so much about the chant.'

We moved on to the issue of training boys' voices, something of which Andrew has not had direct experience, but which will be fundamental to his work at St. Paul's Cathedral. He reminded me that he has been very fortunate to sing under some very fine choir trainers at St. John's College, Cambridge, Christ Church Cathedral Oxford

and Westminster Cathedral. 'The great English thing is that you don't get taught choir training. You watch.' On St. Paul's he commented. 'I don't bring any baggage with me. I think St. Paul's was looking for a new direction in a building which has a major national even international profile, someone from the freelance professional world. I am reputed to be a diplomat too! The difficulty is that I don't know the boys' routines, how long it is going to take them to learn a piece. I've got to learn about the whole psychology of being a boy who works in a cathedral setting. Basically, I am going to treat the boys like I treat the men—with deference.'

He was impressed by the sheer size of the St. Paul's repertoire, basically that bequeathed by John Scott and to which Malcolm Archer had made additions, such as the Frank Martin Mass. Andrew wanted to introduce more Restoration music, particularly Purcell and Blow, more from the German Romantic repertoire which he thought would sound wonderful in the cathedral, and in particular he mentioned a dearth of Finzi which he was keen to rectify.

Andrew has had to give up taking courses and teaching, and—more sadly—his professional singing career during which he has sung most of the great tenor solos in works such as the Verdi Requiem, Mahler's eighth symphony, and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*. He will miss that greatly, but he will be continuing with The Cardinal's Musick, with the BBC Singers as Principle Guest Conductor ... and of course with the Schola Cantorum at Edington. And it is up to us to make that August week so pleasurable and relaxing for Andrew that he will want to come to Edington for many years yet!

JOHN BARNARD

Compact disc offer

OUR 'CD OFFER' THIS ISSUE features the first commercial recording of the 2006 festival commission—Antony Pitts's *Before Abraham was, I AM*. Recorded in 2007 by the composer's own ensemble, Tonus Peregrinus, this disc will be released worldwide in February 2008. We are grateful to Hyperion Records for agreeing to make advance copies of the recording available exclusively to members of the Festival Association.

If you would like a copy, please send a cheque for £12 (per CD) payable to *Edington Music Festival Association* to the Editor of this newsletter: John Barnard, 34 Queens Walk, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 1XS.