



# Edington Music Festival Association Newsletter

Autumn 2010

## *The Edington Music Festival 2010*

THE 2010 FESTIVAL was, from a musical point of view, one of the best ever. The Nave Choir, once again under the direction of Matthew Martin, distinguished itself throughout, with a particularly fine team of boys matching the usual high quality of the men. Highlights were the consistently sensitive psalm singing, not least during the broadcast when two difficult but splendid chants by Matthew provided a perfect accompaniment for Psalm 86, a most beautiful performance of Brahms' *How lovely are thy dwellings*, and thrilling accounts of the evening canticles by Wood in E flat (No 2) and of the Howells' *St Paul's Service*. (It was especially revealing to hear the Howells in an acoustic much smaller than that for which it was originally written—as a result we could hear much detail normally submerged.) The broadcast evensong brought us Tallis's Evening Canticles *Octavi Toni* in combination with the Schola, almost certainly new to most of the trebles at the start of the week, but marvellously secure by Wednesday evening. A very large congregation enjoyed the choral matins on Friday, no doubt drawn by the prospect of Stanford's *Tu Deum* in B flat and Howells's *Like as the hart*.

The Consort under the direction of Jeremy Summerly offered us a stunningly controlled performance of Górecki's *Totus Tuus* at the opening compline, the rare *Missa Miserere mihi* Domine by Cardoso (1566–1650) for the Tuesday Eucharist, the splendidly rich *Gaude, gaude, gaude Maria* by Sheppard in combination with the Schola during the broadcast evensong, and most memorably of all a wonderful performance of Domenico Scarlatti's *Stabat Mater* at the Thursday Sequence. Here in Ashley Grote's intelligently devised programme the *Stabat Mater* was heard in five sections spread throughout the service. Taken together with the Schola's plainsong, two hymns and four readings, it was one of the most memorable services of the week. One could mention much else, but suffice it to say that the Consort, in which there were many new faces this year, thrilled us as ever with its excellent performances.

The Schola Cantorum, under Andrew Carwood's direction for the final time, was also in fine form. Psalms at matins and compline were sung this year without a conductor, and one could only marvel at the

perfection of the ensemble. These young men think and sing as one, and it was an enormous tribute to all that Andrew has achieved with the Schola that they can achieve such standards. Throughout the week their plainsong was an enrichment, and it is clear that the plainsong Masses on Wednesday and Saturday are nowadays a big attraction, drawing large congregations. At the close of the final compline the Schola offered Bach's *Jesus ist das schönste Licht*, stunningly beautiful in its simplicity. As Andrew Carwood leaves the Festival, we thank him most warmly for all he has contributed over the last 23 years as singer, festival director, and director of the Schola Cantorum. In this last role he is to be succeeded by Ben Nicholas, director of music at Tewkesbury Abbey, who was able to spend a few days with us in Edington this year.

Another particular expression of thanks is due to our new Festival Organist, Peter Stevens, who has just finished his time as organ scholar of King's College, Cambridge. In every way he matched the superb standards of his predecessors, and proved the most charming and modest of festival participants.

Unfortunately, the weather did not support us as it might have. Indeed Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday were horribly wet—but that did not deter our regular congregations, who struggled through wind and rain to get to church; and by the end of the week some admittedly rather autumnal brightness had established itself.

This was a very successful first Festival for Ashley Grote as Director, and we look forward to many more.

JOHN BARNARD

## *Advent in Edington*

FOR THE SINGERS who love coming to Edington each summer, it seems an awfully long time from one August to the next! For those in the village, the sentiment is similar—sixty musicians descend on them for one week and then disappear for another year. It was with both of these issues in mind that we have planned an event to 'bridge the gap', a Concert of Music and Readings for Advent, to be given in Edington Church by members of the Festival on Friday 10 December.

The concert will bring together singers

from the Nave Choir and Consort in one choir who will sing a sequence of motets for the Advent season from the renaissance to the present day. Advent hymns for the audience and seasonal readings will be linked together by chant sung by members of the Schola Cantorum. I know that members of the Festival are looking forward eagerly to this reunion at the start of the Festive season! As is always the case, the musicians are giving of their time and talents for nothing in order that all profits can go towards the Church funds.

I do hope you will consider making the journey to Edington for what promises to be a very special evening. Tickets priced £7.50 are available from Church Wardens Clare Norfolk-Brown, 01380 830733, or Robin Wilson, 01380 830566.

ASHLEY GROTE

## *Edington Organ Project*

THIS SUMMER'S FESTIVAL saw a great step forward towards our goal of providing a new organ for Edington Priory Church. At the annual general meetings of both the Festival Association and the Friends of Edington Priory Church, motions were passed to support the launch of an appeal to raise the necessary funds to make the project a reality.

In November 2008, Edington PCC established a working group consisting of PCC members and representatives of the Festival to examine the possibility of a new organ for the Priory Church. A faithful servant of the Church for over one hundred years, the 1905 Henry Jones organ is now in decline, and a full restoration of it was deemed to be uneconomical both by the Diocesan Organ Advisor and local organ builder Stephen Cooke. Its sharp pitch makes its use with instrumentalists and visiting choirs problematic, and its mechanical deficiencies present increasing difficulties to the organists who play it. The annual Music Festival now places demands on the instrument that could not possibly have been envisaged one hundred years ago!

The working group, aided by experienced consultant John Norman, worked hard to establish the best possible plan for a replacement instrument. The group was united in the view that any new instrument should meet the needs of the church congregation and musicians in their worship week by

week, serve the complex demands of the Music Festival and, crucially, enhance the aesthetic appearance of this most beautiful building. All in all, it was clear that in a special and unique environment such as this, any new instrument should be the best that we can offer.

Having received bids from three of the most highly respected English organ builders, the working group recommended to the PCC the plans produced by Harrison and Harrison of Durham, a company whose work has been associated with the finest English church music since its foundation in 1861. Their carefully thought-out design is for a two-manual mechanical action organ in the same location as the current instrument. The casework, facing both South into the choir stalls and West into the North nave aisle, incorporates the style of the beautiful tracery on the chancel screen. The specification and console design will be ideally suited to Parish worship, whilst providing a colourful musical palette for experienced organists during Festival week. It is hoped that an exceptional instrument in this exceptional Church can attract musicians and music lovers from further afield, providing an excellent concert venue as well an ideal environment to educate organists both young and old.

And how will the cost of this project be met? It is in no way the intention of the Music Festival that the financial burden should fall on the church itself, with its many existing obligations both to maintaining the fabric and to its Christian mission both locally and further afield. Rather, the Festival intends this as a gift to the Church and people of Edington, a way of giving back something of the goodwill and generosity that the Festival has received from the village over the past fifty-six years. The total cost of the project including all ancillary work will come to £400,000. Generous and substantial pledges to the sum of £165,000 have already been made by the Edington Music Festival Association, the Friends of Edington Priory Church and private sponsors. With this promising start, we have begun work planning an appeal to be launched officially next summer, coinciding happily with the 650th anniversary of the Church itself.

A brochure with full details of the project and ways of giving will be distributed early in 2011. We are of course happy to hear sooner than that from those who may be interested in helping not only financially but also with their time and skills.

I am delighted that the PCC have taken the courageous step to allow us to proceed with this appeal, graciously accepting the gift of a new organ for Edington Priory Church should the necessary funding be forthcoming. Although I did not have the

privilege of knowing the Reverend Ralph Dudley who founded the Festival back in 1956, I have learnt from those in the village who knew and loved him dearly that his vision for the Festival was to enable worship and music of the highest possible calibre to be offered to the glory of God in the surroundings of this beautiful Church. I believe sincerely that a new organ in the Church would serve to preserve this vision, and I hope that those of you who share this view will consider supporting us in this exciting venture.

ASHLEY GROTE  
*Festival Director*

### *The Schola Cantorum in Paris*

IN JULY the Schola Cantorum went abroad for the very first time. The chosen venue was Paris which, as well as being conveniently accessible, had a wealth of potential concert venues both within the city and outside.

Our repertoire for the tour was somewhat different to that which we sing at the festival. Outside the liturgical context of the festival, it was felt that concerts of nothing but plainsong would have appealed to a rather niche audience, so we decided to broaden the appeal with some polyphony. This led us to a rather radical departure, namely the addition to our usual TBarB line-up of two counter-tenors, Nave Choir regulars Jonny Darbourne and Hugo Janacek.

And so it was that ten of us arrived at the Gare du Nord in sweltering heat, and braved the Paris Metro to find our hotel—a modest but well-located establishment not far from the Bastille. The staff were extremely helpful, allowing us to rehearse the next morning in their breakfast room, prior to our first concert that afternoon, at La Madeleine.

Our programme was built around John Sheppard's superb *Plainsong Mass for a Mene*, which with its mixture of plainsong and polyphony was well suited to our forces. This was dispersed among other polyphonic items, such as Tallis's two contrasting settings of *Salvator Mundi*, and plainsong favourites including the *Miserere Mei* that was so effective at this year's Festival. The concert was a resounding success, and pleasingly well-attended.

The following day saw our sole excursion beyond the centre of Paris, as we headed to Chartres to sing in its remarkable cathedral—although it nearly didn't happen after we misjudged just how long it would take to get to the Gare Montparnasse, catching our train by the skin of our teeth! Our lunchtime concert was made rather more exciting than planned, first by the crashing of the scaffolders as we rehearsed, and then by the discovery that the organ we had access to was rather more *petit* than we'd anticipated.

Nevertheless, after a swift re-jig of the programme, the concert went well.

The following morning we performed in Notre Dame de Paris. It was a huge privilege to sing there, albeit for only a half-hour recital. The audience was largely made up of tourists, many of whom would have been hearing the likes of Tallis and Sheppard for the very first time—which made the fact that they were so attentive and appreciative all the more gratifying.

Our final concert took place in the beautiful church of St Severin, on the Rive Gauche. Despite being the most intimate of the venues, and slightly off the tourist trail, we collected more money in our retiring collection there and sold more CDs than we had at any of the previous concerts. It was marvellous to end on such a good note, and we headed for a celebratory dinner in high spirits, before returning home the next day, exhausted but with many wonderful memories.

It is fair to say that the tour would never have got off the ground without the generous financial backing of the Association. It was wonderful to be able to take a little piece of Edington abroad, and to bring some beautiful music to a wider audience, and I know I speak on behalf of us all in expressing our immense gratitude to the Association for its support.

Our thanks go to Andrew Carwood not only for his inspirational musical direction but for his sense of humour and good company as well, and also to my fellow organisers Justin Lowe and Adam Baker. Adam's knowledge of Parisian nightlife proved invaluable!

WILL HARE

### *Edington: the Bishop's Legacy* by Graham Laslett

THOSE OF YOU unable to be at this year's Festival may be unaware of Graham Laslett's new book. Running to over 200 pages it is a most readable and detailed study of the Priory Church and of its historic background. Profits go to the Society of Friends of Edington Priory Church. Copies are available from Graham at £14.95 plus £1.30 postage and packing—£16.25 in all. Cheques to G F Laslett at Shore House, Edington, Wiltshire BA13 4PJ. Highly recommended!

### *Andrew Carwood*

The 2010 Recording of the Year in the prestigious *Gramophone* awards has been won by The Cardinal's Musick under Andrew Carwood with their final recording of music by William Byrd for the Hyperion label. See the CD offers if you wish to buy this recording. And congratulations to Andrew and his marvellous singers.

## David Pinson

FOR THOSE that had the pleasure of knowing David, this year's festival was overshadowed by sadness following his tragic death at the age of just 33 in a swimming accident some weeks previously. As a born and bred Edingtonian, it was perhaps natural that David should have become a member of the festival as a server in the 1990s. To those of us who come to Edington as visitors, however, it was not this that made David memorable but rather his huge enjoyment of us and our annual invasion of church and village alike.

In the week following the festival a service of thanksgiving was held at which the love and affection in which David was held by so many was easy to discern. Whether in the touching tributes given by his grandmother, Vera Tyler, and friends, the carefully chosen words read and sung reflecting so many aspects of his life, or simply in the faces of the well over 400 people who attended, one was inescapably reminded that we have lost a kind friend for whose many achievements we should give thanks and for whose family we should continue to pray.

*Give rest, O Christ, to thy servant with thy saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.*

PETER ROBERTS

## Eileen Bird

JUST TOO LATE for the last newsletter came the sad news of the death of Eileen Bird after a long fight against cancer. I was privileged to represent the Festival Association at her funeral Mass in Wakefield Cathedral. It was most splendid occasion with both the boys' and girls' choir in attendance alongside the men.

But during the last verse of the final hymn *Thine be the glory* with a most magnificent descant filling the building and enthusiastic singing of the melody by choir and congregation, the sound of what we initially assumed was a rather loud police siren pierced through. It turned out that liberal use of incense had set off the cathedral fire alarm! A modern take on 'all the trumpets sounded on the other side' ... Eileen would have loved it. We miss her greatly, and thank God for all she and Maurice contributed to the Festival in earlier years.

JOHN BARNARD

## Joy Cooke

JOY WISHES TO CONVEY to you all her deepest thanks for your concern and your prayers during her recent illness. We were amazed but delighted when she was able to be with us in Edington on the final weekend. Answered prayer, no less!

## An interview with Graham Southgate

I BEGAN by quoting a comment from the interview I conducted with Julian Thomas in 2009. 'You do liaison with the clergy of course, but you have more control over the direction you are taking things than in a normal church where the priest is in charge.' Graham came at this from different angle. 'One of the things we don't get to do within regular Sunday worship is to explore a theme. Our lectionary is not thematic—the three Sunday readings may or may not have a common thread. So the Festival offers an interesting and different way of approaching readings, by exploring a theme from two standpoints: that of music and of scripture.'

But I wanted to know whether Graham found it inspiring to be part of an act of worship largely devised by others, or did he feel in some way deprived of a personal input? 'One half of me would say yes, I would enjoy being involved more; but if I played too big a part in planning the Festival I wouldn't get to experience it—for instance if I had chosen the readings. I would know exactly what was going to happen. It's a holiday for me, clearly a busman's holiday, but it gives me insight into the way other people think, how they view scripture, and I hear music that I would not hear otherwise. It's also a holiday in the sense that there are things going on in the church for which, once they have been arranged, I can simply turn up. So today I was simply a communion assistant; another day I might be the preacher, the deacon or the sub-deacon.'

I mentioned that the list of clergy participating in the Festival these days included many local people. Was this deliberate? 'The Festival was not new to me when I arrived here in 2003, because I come from Warminster and have known about the Festival ever since I was a child. But it always seemed to me that it was people from outside the area turning up to do the Festival, so I was keen to involve clergy from the locality. They appreciate being involved; and I think it is good that people from the locality are seen to be playing a part.'

Graham's combination of modesty, charm and spirituality is immensely attractive; and it struck me as we finished talking how fortunate we have been that the vicars of Edington since the Festival began in 1956—Ralph Dudley, Maurice Bird, Neil Heavisides, David Belcher, and now Graham Southgate—have each brought such special gifts to the parish and to the Festival. To all of them, and now particularly to Graham, we owe an enormous debt of thanks.

JOHN BARNARD

## The Helping Hand

ONE MORNING I went out from the Porch to offer a little help to Lady Calcutt as she arrived for a service, and she indicated to me that her friend could do with an arm as well. So, with a lady on each arm, I entered the porch. I hoped that someone might notice that we could do with some further assistance as we continued into the church itself, but none was forthcoming so I gingerly led the ladies down the final two steps.

Just at this moment the Australian member of the Schola, Ross Jelf, came up behind us and saw what was happening. 'Got two ladies to lend you a hand, have you, John?'

JOHN BARNARD

## Compact disc offers

THREE DISCS THIS ISSUE: we have no qualms about offering again the final instalment of Andrew Carwood's survey, with *The Cardinal's Musick*, of the complete Latin sacred music by William Byrd: the disc which takes its title from the masterpiece *Infelix ego* is now only the second recording of 'early music' ever to win *Gramophone* magazine's 'Recording of the Year' award.

In our second disc, David Trendell (Director 1987–1991; Nave Choir Director 1991–2000), directs a Mass and motets by the Flemish composer Philippe Rogier with the Choir of King's College London. Including lively motets with sackbut accompaniments this disc is well worth investigating.

Our final disc presents the little-known *Requiem* by Clemens non Papa. Recorded by Stephen Rice and his Brabant Ensemble (with producer/engineer team Antony Pitts and Justin Lowe—friends of the Festival both), this beautiful disc, which will not be available in the shops till January, also includes a selection of Clemens' Penitential Motets. We are grateful to Hyperion for allowing us to make this recording available to Association members well in advance of the official release date.

Discs are £12 each. If you would like to order, please send a cheque payable to *Edington Music Festival Association* to the Editor of this newsletter: John Barnard, 34 Queens Walk, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 1XS.



*Edington Music Festival Association*  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Edington Priory, Monday 23 August 2010, 1500 hrs

*Chairman's Report  
for the year 2009–10*

THE MAIN TASK OF THE Association is the administration and appropriate distribution of money. During the past year the following grants have been made by the Association:

- Core costs of the 2010 Festival
- A grant for the 2010 Festival Commission
- A grant for the hire of a chamber organ for the 2010 Festival

The arrangements put in place for a standing grant to be paid the Association upon receipt of a grant request from the Festival continue to work smoothly; the grant funds 'core costs', which have been identified as printing, mailing, organ tuning, catering, hiring of facilities and insurance.

Last year there was a suggestion that the accumulating funds of the Association might be used to begin some kind of chorister bursary scheme, and this has been the subject of ongoing thought and discussion. As was pointed out last year, any such scheme would of course require the approval of the membership in order to proceed in any substantive way.

Work has continued regarding the possible construction of a new organ for the Priory. Projects such as this take a lot of time and energy; I merely want to repeat here that the Association is delighted to offer and provide such practical, administrative or financial assistance to the PCC as might be deemed appropriate or helpful. During the year a grant was made to cover the cost of an organ consultant.

The Schola tour (19–23 July) was a great success, in terms both of musical development and publicity for the Festival. Concerts were held the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and the parish churches of the Madeleine and St Severin, and also Chartres Cathedral. Many CDs were sold, and Festival literature was given away to audience members. Members of Schola are most grateful to the Association for their financial assistance that made this tour possible.

I must finally record my thanks to all the members of the Association Executive Committee for their dedication and hard work during the past year. They perform many important tasks, each of which ensures that the Festival runs as smoothly as it does.

This year I should add a special word of thanks to Michael Cooke, who has decided to step down after ten years as Administrator of the Association (although he remains a member of the Executive Committee until 2011). Michael had an important role in the establishment the Festival Association, and we are all in his debt, both for this and for his support in other ways over the years. Neither he nor Joy have enjoyed the most robust health in recent years; they remain in our prayers.

PETER MCGEARY

*Treasurer's Report*

THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1 May 2009 to 30 April 2010 has been another good year for the Edington Music Festival Association. We started the year with £44,631 in the bank and finished the year with funds of £52,531 with an excess of income over expenditure of £7,719.

Our membership subscriptions were slightly less than previous years partly owing to timing of cash/cheque payments but it is noticeable that the standing order subscriptions are down around 9%. The collection plate income is healthy, especially when considering that the plate from two services now goes to the parish. As last year no significant gifts were received. The income from interest has dramatically reduced reflecting the difficult financial times. CD sales from the festival week and newsletter now remain at a background level. There was an increase in gift aid income this year as the claims for 2008/9 were only received in this financial year.

The Association's running costs increased this year owing mainly to the £450 that was incurred for the independent examination for three previous years. The underlying cost base of the Association covers items such as postage, administrative costs and CD purchases and is very low. We do not expect this to change significantly in the future but independent examination costs of up to £200/yr should be factored in.

During this financial year grants were awarded for:

- 2009 Festival core costs standing grant
- 2009 Festival commission
- 2009 Festival chamber organ hire.

The recently introduced standing grant (currently £10,000) to cover the core costs of

each Festival seems to be working well and we do not see the need to change this at the current time.

The Association maintains a reserves policy as recommended by the Charity Commission. During the year we have reconsidered the amount of reserves we should maintain. The Executive Committee feels that now the finances of both the Association and the Festival are stable the reserves fund should be reduced from £12,000 to £10,000. This new policy has been agreed and is now in force. Owing to the low returns from interest we are considering investing the reserves fund so it can be earn a regular return for the Association whilst remaining protected.

The independent examiner's report has not yet been completed for 2009/10 but should be done in the next few months and will be posted on the website along with previous years.

So far in the 2010/11 financial year the Association has been pleased to provide a grant to assist a tour by the Schola to Paris which took place in July. The Executive Committee has also pledged support financial support of order of £25,000 towards a possible Organ replacement project. The association has also provided a grant for the costs of the organ consultant who is looking into this project. The Association has also provided the standing grant for the 2010 Festival and the 2010 Festival Commission.

Although the Association currently has what might be considered to be significant funds in the bank these are all destined for worthy projects and the Trustees constantly monitor what levels of funds it is appropriate to maintain.

Finally I would again like to thank the members of the association for their continued generosity which ensures that the Association and Festival remain in such a healthy state.

JUSTIN LOWE