



Edington Music Festival Association Newsletter

Summer 2013

The 2013 Edington Music Festival Appear & Inspire

THE 2013 festival takes its inspiration from the lives and teaching of a group of female saints: Mother Julian of Norwich, St Teresa of Avila, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, St Cecilia and St Teresa of Lisieux. The services on Saturday 24 August celebrate the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This year's festival commission is from Neil Cox, who has set Blessed Teresa of Calcutta's words 'The fruit of silence is prayer'. Cox is a widely commissioned composer and is Director of Choral Music at Lancing College. The Consort will give the first performance during the BBC broadcast of Choral Evensong on Wednesday 21 August. Also setting words by Blessed Teresa is the young Latvian composer, Eriks Ešenvalds; his *A drop in the ocean* will be heard at the festival, as will compositions by Matthew Martin and Francis Pott.

Of the larger-scale repertoire, the boys and men sing the *Requiem Mass* of Maurice Duruflé on Friday 23 August, and Mozart's *Coronation Mass* is sung at the climax of the Festival on Sunday 25 August. Three of Victoria's Masses are heard during the week as well as a remarkable range of continental renaissance motets, from Laloux to Lobo, and Manchicourt to Rebelo. No music festival this year would be complete without a tribute to Benjamin Britten on the one hundredth anniversary of his birth. We include three of his most popular choral works, including the *Hymn to St Cecilia*, alongside music by Holst, Finzi, Howells and Tippett.

It is good to welcome John Challenger, Assistant Director of Music at Salisbury Cathedral, to the 2013 Festival as Festival Organist, succeeding Peter Stevens who directs the Schola this year. Matthew Martin is once again directing the Nave Choir, and Jeremy Summerly and Paul Brough share the conducting of the Consort. Visitors to the Festival include Daniel Hyde, from Magdalen College, Oxford, who gives an organ recital at Steeple Ashton Church on Friday 23 August, and The Very Reverend Michael Taviner, Dean of Hereford, who preaches at the Eucharist on Saturday 24 August.

To hear this music in the context for which it was written is a special experience,

especially at Edington. I hope you will join us for what will be a thrilling week.

BEN NICHOLAS

Edington Music Festival Association

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Edington Music Festival Association will be held in Edington Priory Church on Monday, 19 August 2013 commencing at 15.00 hrs.

AGENDA

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting
4. Matters Arising
5. Chairman's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
*Financial Report
& Adoption of Accounts*
7. Election of Officers
8. Organ Appeal
9. Plans for 2013/2014
10. Any other business
11. Date of next AGM

Any member wishing to place an item on the Agenda is asked to submit this in writing by letter or email to the Administrator by 9 August 2013

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An interview with John Pepler

JOHN PEPLER is the genial Master of Ceremonies at the Musical Evening which takes place on the Wednesday of each Festival. He tells me this was not part of the job description when, 12 years ago, he became Treasurer for the event, but it is certainly a role he fulfils to perfection.

I started by asking him wherein his connection with Edington lay, given that he lives 15 miles away in Box. 'I was born and brought up here and lived here for 45 years, so my roots are very much in Edington. I became involved with the Musical Evening because I felt the village gave a lot to the Festival, and this was a way of raising a bit of money for village projects, and indeed it has been an extremely successful way of doing that.'

I wondered what the main attraction was—the food or the music? 'It's everything. The Musical Evening is a wonderful climax to the summer social scene here. We couldn't do it without the music—the choristers produce such an entertaining programme each year—but of course the food is an integral part of the event, and the ladies of the village are superb in producing such a feast for us. They exhibit unending enthusiasm which is really rewarding.'

I was interested in how the ticket allocation worked, given that the event always seems to be a sell-out. 'A system has evolved over the years, and because the evening is so popular we usually have a ballot. Fortunately we only have to disappoint a very few people each year, and they are almost always late applicants. The only time we have seats left over is when someone is indisposed at the last minute. We have often wondered whether we should change the format, but since demand is still there we follow the line 'If it ain't broke, don't try to mend it.'

I ventured to suggest that the price of tickets had gone up over the years beyond the rate of inflation. 'Initially I think the Musical Evening was under-priced for what people were getting. Costs have gone up dramatically of course; and the committee also felt that the evening should be seen as a fund-raising opportunity and not just a nice social one. We like to think we can raise about £2,000 a year, to which incidentally the raffle contributes a considerable amount.'

And what were the projects that the evening had supported over the years? 'There have been several—the maintenance and redecoration of the parish hall for a start. This year the hall is to be re-roofed. Then there is the minibus; and we have been able to support various projects in the church, not least the heating and the organ.'

As we came to the end of our chat, John was keen to commend the organising committee for its boundless enthusiasm, Eric and Vera Tyler for their enormous generosity in allowing us to use Millside year after year, and the singers for their immense contribution to the success of the Musical Evening.

As for us, we can only be grateful to John for his own commitment to an event which gives so much pleasure to us all.

JOHN BARNARD

Advent Sequence

THE SEQUENCE OF MUSIC and Readings for Advent that has become a regular event in recent years took place once again on 7 December 2012. An assortment of singers from the Schola, Consort and Nave Choir encountered the unfamiliar sight of Edington covered in frost and fairy lights, whilst hats and scarves seemed somehow out of place to those of us who usually meet in August.

Nevertheless, the choir and its conductor Jeremy Summerly acclimatised to these circumstances to deliver a diverse programme of Advent music interspersed with seasonal readings, complemented by the serene setting of a candlelit Priory Church.

The sequence began with the traditional advent chant *Rorate caeli* and other seasonal staples including Vaughan Williams' *This is the Truth Sent from Above* and Gibbons' *This is the Record of John*, the latter featuring a fine countertenor solo from Edward Edgcumbe. Of the less well-known music, two pieces were recent commissions for the Choir of Merton College, Oxford: Eriks Ešņvalds' ethereal interpretation of *O Emmanuel*, and Matthew Martin's setting of the familiar words *I Sing of a Maiden*.

The sequence also included Rachmaninov's 'Magnificat' from the *All-Night Vigil*, and the declamatory *Nova! Nova!* by Bob Chilcott. The singing concluded with a spirited rendition of William Byrd's stirring anthem *Vigilate*, before John Challenger brought the sequence to a close with Bach's chorale prelude on 'Wachet Auf'.

Many thanks are due to John for his playing and accompanying of the hymns, especially after being called in at short notice. We are as ever extremely grateful to the villagers for their accommodation, food, and good humour, as well as the kind folk at The Duke in Bratton where some of us enjoyed a drink or two at the end of what was an immensely enjoyable day in Edington.

DAN MACKLIN

Organ Appeal

AS WE REACH the second anniversary of the Edington Organ Project, the really great news is that we are a mere £28,000 short of the target we need to reach for the new organ to be finished, installed, and voiced in Spring 2014.

The Fundraising Committee has been greatly touched by the enormous generosity of so many friends far and wide, and by the commitment shown by the Parish to the campaign. A huge 'thank you' to you all.

As in most really big challenges though, the last bit is the most difficult, and we need to redouble our efforts to raise this final

portion. We are well aware that in all likelihood, anyone who wanted to support the campaign has already done so, possibly more than once, and we are now beginning to run out of fresh funding sources.

We have some opportunities in the planning, but please, if you can think of anyone new who might be interested in making a donation, or if you personally might consider making a fresh donation to help us complete the Appeal, we would be delighted to hear from you.

We're so nearly there!

BEN NICHOLAS

An interview with Guy Willis

GUY HAS BEEN SINGING with the Schola Cantorum these past two years and has for some time felt a vocation to the priesthood, though there has been a 'not yet' stage along the way. But now he has started training at St. Stephen's House, Oxford. I caught up with him during the 2012 Festival.

Guy attended Brentwood School which held regular services in the Roman Catholic cathedral across the road. He sang in the chapel choir—which apparently performed only once a year, at Christmas! 'Brentwood was not really a serious singing school' he commented. I wondered when Guy discovered church music. 'I went with some of my school friends on a Morland choristers' camp in Cumbria when I was about sixteen. That's when I first encountered singing in a cathedral.'

'After school I went to Jesus College, Cambridge to read social and political sciences. I turned up and discovered the chapel, and the chaplain got me lighting candles or something. At the end of my first year the then director of music, Daniel Hyde, asked me if I would like to sing in the chapel choir. From then on I was singing four services a week.'

'I was confirmed at Cambridge. I had been baptised at the age of eight at my own request and had been going to church regularly since then and was therefore a 'practising Christian', but I suppose I started going to church a lot more at Jesus. The first person to put ordination into my mind was my college chaplain, the Rev. Jonathan Collis, who one evening in the bar said 'My dear boy, have you ever considered taking the cloth?' To which the answer was 'not really', but him saying that caused me to consider it nonetheless.'

'After Cambridge I had a term free before going off to train as a ski instructor(!) and I sang for Peter Nardone in Chelmsford cathedral. He had offered me a choral scholarship because he was short of basses. After the skiing I worked for Accenture in the

city for two years, and whilst there I got to the point where I wanted to put myself forward for ordination. I had always thought: 'Maybe not yet. I'll go to the city first and make some money.' After about a year in the job I thought to myself: Actually this is not a very good reason to put it off. At that point I said to my parish priest: OK. Please write my sponsoring papers.'

I asked Guy how singing in the Schola Cantorum at Edington connected with his spiritual life. 'It's odd when you are singing in the Schola because you practise the service. Some people see it as a performance, and they don't find it very prayerful. I actually find singing one of the most effective ways I can pray. The busy front bit of the mind is taken up with getting the detail right, and that leaves the praying bit of the mind free to come to the fore. It's absolutely wonderful to be able to sing the office every day. I think if there were a monastic community that sang like the Schola, then it would probably be full!'

We have been privileged to have Guy amongst us as singer, and we look forward to the day when, perhaps, he celebrates the Eucharist during Festival week. That would be very moving for us all. Meanwhile we wish Guy well for his studies.

JOHN BARNARD

The Three Daggers

EDINGTON'S PUB has now opened a farm shop selling organic meat and dairy products, fruit and vegetables, as well as local breads, cakes and 'home made' pub pies. Further information (with photos) can be found on the pub's website: www.edingtonfarmshop.co.uk

Compact disc offer

OUR COMPACT DISC OFFER this issue is a new recording from The Choir of Westminster Cathedral featuring the music of James MacMillan. The album is centred on the impressive *Tenebrae Responsories* and includes several dramatic 'ceremonial' pieces for which the choir is quite awesomely joined by London Brass. You can listen to extracts on the Hyperion website (www.hyperion-records.co.uk—search for 'CDA67970').

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.

