



Edington Music Festival Association Newsletter

Summer 2014

The 2014 Edington Music Festival

THE 59th EDINGTON Music Festival, taking place from 17 to 24 August 2014, celebrates the installation of a new organ by the Durham-based firm, Harrison & Harrison. A gift from the Festival to the Priory Church, the dedication of the new organ marks the end of a two-year appeal to raise the required funds.

There are a number of themes to this year's Festival in which the poetry of George Herbert and the Seven Sacraments provide the framework to the week. Within that, we celebrate the completion of the organ not only in the choice of choral works, but also in daily organ recitals. Musical highlights include Mass-settings by Tallis, Victoria and Haydn, Fauré's *Requiem*, Langlais's *Messe solennelle* and settings by Judith Weir of George Herbert. As usual, there will be a live broadcast of Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3, featuring music by Victoria, Howells and Matthew Martin.

Jeremy Davies, the former Precentor of Salisbury Cathedral, and a great friend of the Festival, gives a lecture on the afternoon of Friday 22 August when he will discuss George Herbert and his relationship with music. This will take place in the beautiful church at Steeple Ashton.

The organ is to be dedicated by the Bishop of Ramsbury on Saturday 23 August, and later that evening former Festival Director, Ashley Grote, will give the opening recital. In addition, Daniel Hyde, Peter Wright, Stephen Farr and Julian Thomas will give short recitals as a prelude to the evening services on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Edington has an impressive history of commissioning new music, and this year is no exception. Three world premieres take place: *Et organo* by Alec Roth has been written for choir and organ, and Joseph Phibbs and Guy Bovet are writing short organ pieces which will be heard in organ recitals during the week. The pieces by Phibbs and Bovet are to be included in the *Orgelbüchlein* Project www.orgelbuechlein.co.uk.

Please join us for what should be a stimulating week!

BEN NICHOLAS

Joy Cooke RIP

JOY WAS ONE of the first people I met at Edington. She was a great one for wanting to get to know new clerical faces, and I know I am not alone in being very grateful for the kindness of her welcome. She and Michael gave a great deal of their time and talents to supporting the Festival, perhaps most especially in the work they put into setting up and maintaining the work of the Association.

The Festival cannot run on nothing, and the Association was originally set up to deal with very prosaic but vitally important questions to do with money and resources. Joy's part in this was a combination of working with people and paper: she put in a huge amount of time in getting to know people, and in getting them to express their enthusiasm for the Festival in tangible ways. The very success of the Association in recent years is a testimony to this. She and Michael would often be the first faces that a visitor might see, and her work as an ambassador for the Festival is incalculable.

It was not until I attended her funeral service on 26 November last year, however, that I realized how many people appreciated her dedication to church music in other spheres outside Edington. It was good that some of us from the village and the Festival could attend, but we were no more than a small part of a large congregation that filled Sherborne Abbey for a liturgy of great formal beauty. It was a moving tribute to Joy to see so many there, not least the young singers from Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls whose talents Joy had been so very keen to support and who formed a most excellent choir for her funeral.

Our thoughts and prayers continue for Michael, and we thank God for Joy's life and legacy.

PETER McGEARY

John Barnard adds: Peter and I were privileged to represent the Festival at Joy's funeral; and Peter Roberts along with Adrian Hutton were part of the company that assembled for the interment of Joy's ashes at the Priory Church on 2 April. Association members may wish to visit Joy's tablet which can be found on the north side of the church.

Edington Music Festival Association

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Edington Music Festival Association will be held in Edington Priory Church on Monday 18 August 2014 commencing at 15.00 hrs.

AGENDA

- 1 Prayers
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting
- 4 Matters arising
- 5 Chairman's report
- 6 Treasurer's report *Financial report & Adoption of Accounts*
- 7 Election of Officers
- 8 Plans for 2014/2015
- 9 Any other business
- 10 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 8 August 2014.

SUE LOWERY

Administrator, 10 High Street, Steeple Ashton

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Organ recital

ON WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH a number of supporters of the Edington Music Festival attended John Challenger's recital in Salisbury Cathedral. Whilst part of the cathedral's annual series, the Precentor's welcome and introduction drew attention to the Festival, and indeed the retiring collection was in aid of the Festival.

All of us who heard John's playing in Edington last August know what a fine recitalist he is, and he certainly lived up to his reputation in this concert. His interesting and varied programme included works by Francis Jackson, Olivier Messiaen, William Lloyd-Webber, William Walton and J S Bach. We heard the great Willis organ in a variety of colours played by someone who knows it inside out. We look forward to hearing John play our new Harrison & Harrison organ at some point in the future.

BEN NICHOLAS

An interview with Peter Roberts

PETER ROBERTS has been Festival Administrator since 1999 when Peter Barley, David Trendell and Jeremy Summerly invited him to come to Edington and ‘help out’. Peter knew them all well and accepted the invitation—which has turned over the years into what Peter describes as a happy habit.

‘Knowing that what happens as a result of my efforts enables people to enjoy themselves gives me pleasure; and sometimes it is much more pleasurable to sit in the background and watch something wonderful happen than to be in the foreground and think it has not gone in the way you would have liked it to have done. And if you can influence and arrange things so that other people don’t have to think about them, that is actually very worthwhile. I have learned a lot over the years, but the key to everything is careful preparation. If you have done that you can cope with the things that inevitably go wrong.’

Peter spoke warmly of the close way he had been able to work with Christine Laslett over the years in organizing accommodation for festival members. Between them they had a pretty encyclopaedic knowledge of those who offered accommodation and were able to fit hosts and guests together such that the best possible solution to the annual puzzle was achieved. Peter could tell a few stories about blips in this area. In particular he remembered with fondness Andrew Carwood’s phone call at 1.30am on the final night of a Festival when he found himself locked out of his accommodation. Not the only time that has happened, for certain!

We discussed child protection legislation. Peter felt that in general it was beneficial, and not least for the protection of adults offering accommodation. ‘It is done quietly and carefully in the background. It is extra work, but that is the way of the world.’

I wondered whether Peter—who is a fine singer—would not prefer to spend a year at the Festival singing rather than organizing. Did he ever feel undervalued? ‘There is obviously a risk that people can take things for granted. There was an occasion many years back when I had the misfortune to overhear a rather grand singer refer to me somewhat disparagingly as ‘that admin. person’. But that’s the exception that proves the rule because people are very kind. As for the singing there was one year when I sang on five days in all three choirs and did the admin. too. I certainly would not like to do that again—it nearly killed me!’

The running of the Festival is so smooth that it would be easy to underestimate the extent of what Peter describes as ‘paddling under the surface’. That he makes it look so

easy is a mark of how well the administration is done. Our warmest thanks are due to him.

JOHN BARNARD

The Henry Jones organ

ON THE FIRST WEEKEND of January this year Edington played host to a small group of Estonians who had come to pack up the Church’s 1905 Henry Jones organ which is a gift from Edington PCC to the Gustav Adolfs School in Tallinn.

The operation was overseen by Ago Tint who has been rebuilding the instrument in time for it to make its debut performance on 6 June at the school’s Founders’ Day celebrations. Robin Wilson, chairman of the Edington Organ Liaison Group, has been asked to unveil the instrument.

Hendrik Agur, the headmaster of the School, was in charge of packing up the various parts of the organ prior to loading the lorry. For two days a small group of local volunteers helped to dismantle the organ, but by Sunday more muscle power was needed and extra villagers were recruited to help lift the two main bellows—which needed 8 people to get them into the lorry.

Local people provided accommodation and hospitality over the weekend and supplied wonderful soups and cheeses supplementing Estonian black bread (!) to help sustain the workers. The weekend was rounded off with a celebratory drink or two in the Three Daggers where new friendships were formed and knowledge of life in Estonia greatly improved. The Estonians were surprised and greatly impressed by the help and kindness shown to them by everybody.

SUE LOWERY

Edington’s new organ

INSTALLATION of the new organ started in February with staff from Harrison & Harrison spending a total of five weeks in the Church. Then in April the head voicer, Andy Scott and his assistant Andrew undertook their work. Andy gave two evening talks about the organ which were very informative and greatly appreciated. Meanwhile at the back of the church Paul Whiffin set up a slide show of photographs he had taken during the installation. Throughout their time in Edington, Harrison & Harrison’s staff impressed people with their enthusiasm and friendly cooperation. They were always willing to talk about the new organ and to show off the workings of the instrument.

During the installation period the new organ received visits from the organ fraternity including people from France and the USA. The Parish had the opportunity to hear the organ for the first time at a regular service on Palm Sunday.

SUE LOWERY

Edington Arts

THE EDINGTON ORGAN PROJECT is complete. The Priory Church has a fine new organ, and the programme of music for this year’s Festival will give it particular prominence. So what’s next?

The Arts Council of England was one of the organizations to provide significant funding for the new organ; and like many grant-awarding bodies, they had requests for the way that public funding should be used. One of these was that the organ should be used for secular as well as sacred music.

To satisfy this criterion Edington Arts has been formed to bring a variety of musical events to the Priory Church, supplementing existing musical activities. It will act as a kind of marketing umbrella, helping provide publicity for all the musical activity in the Church, including the Festival. It will have its own visual identity, its own website, its own publicity material, and will organize ticket sales. It will use email to build a list of supporters who will receive news and information about forthcoming musical events.

The idea is to build in the local area a strong community of supporters for music in the Priory Church. This should have knock-on benefits for the Festival and indeed for support for the Church more widely.

Edington Arts is a charity, and the first trustees are Christine Allanson-Bailey, John Bush, Anne Curtis and Sue Lowery. They will be joined on the Executive Committee by two representatives from the PCC and two representatives of EMFA/EFS. An application for a grant will be made to the Arts Council of England.

Edington Arts will have preliminary information available at the Festival and anyone who would like to sign up for news, especially by email, will be able to do so.

SUE LOWERY

Compact disc offer

OUR COMPACT DISC OFFER this issue comes from St Paul’s Cathedral Choir and its director Andrew Carwood (and it won’t be in the shops till August). *Canticles from St Paul’s* features old favourites (Wood in E, Stanford in B flat, Walmisley, Gray, Walton) as well as some intriguing new settings (Alec Roth’s *Jubilate* and Malcolm Archer’s *Benedicite*). You can listen to extracts on the Hyperion website (www.hyperion-records.co.uk—search for ‘CDA68058’).

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.