



Edington Music Festival Association Newsletter

Autumn 2014

David Trendell (1964–2014)

JUST as we go to press, the immensely sad news has reached us of David's untimely death at the age of just 50. David sang alto in the Nave Choir from 1984 to 1986, served as Festival Director from 1987 to 1991, and directed the Nave Choir for ten years from 1991 to 2000. A full tribute will appear in the Spring 2015 edition of this newsletter. Meanwhile a fine *Telegraph* obituary can be found on the internet.

We offer our sincere condolences to David's parents, his brother and sister, and his wide circle of friends, which includes those for us who had the privilege of knowing him during Festival week. He was an immensely warm-hearted, generous and talented man. May he rest in peace.

The 2014 Festival

WHILST THE THEME of this year's Festival was the poetry of George Herbert and the Seven Sacraments, the musical focus was inevitably directed towards the new Harrison & Harrison organ. That these two elements were so successfully and seamlessly combined does great credit to Ben Nicholas and the three music directors who had devised an outstanding programme for the week.

The organ proved to be a most excellent instrument both for solo work and for accompanimental purposes. We were treated not only to a full-scale opening concert by Andrew Lumsden on the Saturday but also to four short recitals before evensong on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday given by Peter Wright, Daniel Hyde, Stephen Farr and Julian Thomas respectively. These half-hour recitals gave a wonderful insight into the warmth and delicacy of sound to be obtained from the organ along with the sheer range of colour it offers; and we are indebted to these four distinguished musicians for the self-effacing way in which they demonstrated the organ's qualities rather than their own virtuosity. Space precludes a detailed account of each, but Peter Wright's recital included *Alleluys* by Simon Preston, organist at the first Edington Festival in 1956, Daniel Hyde played Bach's Trio Sonata No 6 as part of his survey of all the Bach trio sonatas before the various services, Stephen Farr offered a Festival commission: a chorale prelude by

Joseph Phibbs as part of the *Orgelbüchlein* project, and Julian Thomas played Hubert Parry's substantial Fantasia and Fugue in G.

The week began with the traditional Compline sung by all three choirs, and Monday's Solemn Eucharist brought us Victoria's *Missa Simile est regnum caelorum*, beautifully performed by the Nave Choir. Monday's evensong (Noble in B minor and Leighton's setting of George Herbert's *Let all the world in every corner sing*) gave initial opportunities for the quality of the organ to be assessed in accompanying familiar music.

Features of Tuesday's and Wednesday's evensongs were Matthew Martin's recently composed evening canticles for St John's College Choir, Cambridge, and a distinctive anthem *Christ the King* by Clare McLean, performed by the Consort. Wednesday's Eucharist brought us Haydn's *Missa brevis Sancti Johannis de Deo*, joyously sung by the Nave Choir, and the unusual treat of hearing the Consort accompanied by the Nave organ in Thomas Attwood's *Come, holy Ghost*. (Needless to say the choirs no longer have to put up with the Henry Jones organ's sharp pitch.) The broadcast evensong included Howells' demanding setting of George Herbert's *Sweetest of sweets* along with Victoria's *Laetatus sum* (Psalm 122), both performed by the Consort. Thursday's Eucharist offered Allegri's *Miserere mei*, the ordinary of the Mass being sung to plainsong by the Schola Cantorum, along with a fine but unfamiliar Tomkins motet *Dear Lord of life*.

In the traditional Thursday Sequence, bookended by William Harris's beautiful *Faire is the heaven* and *Bring us, O Lord God*, the Consort sang two motets from Judith Weir's *Vertue* along with a Byrd masterpiece: *Infelix ego*. Plainsong from the Schola and four readings from Herbert's *The Temple* completed this beautifully constructed service.

Friday's Choral Matins included Walton's *Jubilate* and responses by Thomas Tunnard along with a Festival commission from Alec Roth—*Et organo*—which drew many complimentary comments from both listeners and performers. The evening Solemn Requiem drew a predictably large number of worshippers for Fauré's setting, wonderfully sung by the Nave Choir. Anthems by

Howells and Guerrero completed the offering.

Saturday's plainsong Eucharist included two little-known but immediately attractive offerings from the Consort: Eleanor Daley's *Upon your heart* and Eric Whitacre's *This Marriage*. More familiar and beautifully performed were the Nave choir's *My beloved spake* (Purcell) and *Love bade me welcome* from Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*.

The focus of the final evensong of the Festival was the dedication of the organ by the Bishop of Ramsbury. Starting with Bach's Prelude and Fugue in G major, the introit—Philips' *Cantabibus organis*—led into Stanford's setting of Psalm 150 (with congregational participation), Howells' St Paul's Service in which the full power and weight of the organ were prominent, Byrd's *Laudibus in sanctis*, the hymn *Angel voices ever singing*, and, finally and most appropriately, Karg-Elert's *Nun danket alle Gott* (*Now thank we all our God*) as organ postlude. Fifty minutes of pure joy!

The Sunday Eucharist once again featured the organ at its grandest in Jean Langlais' *Messe Solennelle*, sung by the joint forces of the Nave Choir and the Consort. The effect was breath-taking and made one realise yet again the possibilities that the new Harrison & Harrison organ opens up. Louis Vierne's *Final* from his first organ symphony brought this memorable festival to an appropriately joyous close.

A brief mention must suffice for the consistently excellent standard of preaching at the main morning services and also for the Schola Cantorum's fine work in carrying the weight of so much music during the week, particularly at Matins and Compline. In addition, Jeremy Davies gave a much appreciated lecture on George Herbert to a packed Steeple Ashton church on Friday afternoon.

If the focus of the 2014 Festival was on the new organ, the star was undoubtedly Daniel Hyde who offered an incredible quality and indeed quantity of organ solos and accompaniments throughout the week. We were indeed blessed to have him preside so faultlessly and with such good humour at the Priory Church's new Harrison & Harrison organ.

JOHN BARNARD

Chairman's Report for the year 2013–14

THE MAIN TASK of the Association is the administration and appropriate distribution of money. The arrangements for a standing grant to be paid by the Association upon receipt of a grant request from the Festival continue to work, although lower income from the collection plate has caused some management issues; and we will be reviewing these arrangements now the Organ Project is drawing to a close.

This time last year saw the Festival Appeal for the new organ 'only' £20,000 short of the target figure. It can often be the case that last part of an appeal is the hardest, so it was good to be able to report that the target had been reached by the end of the 2013 Festival. I imagine that many Association members will now have heard the new organ for themselves, and I hope you will agree that this is a magnificent instrument, and an appropriate expression of the thanks owed to the people of Edington by so many of us who visit the village year by year.

So many people are responsible for the success of this project, and it would be invidious to mention them all by name. I would, however, like to pay tribute to Joy Cooke, who sadly died during the course of the past year. Her work, with Michael, in establishing the Festival Association, and her unfailing welcome to visitors to the Festival, achieved a huge amount. We will miss her very much. Joy's ashes are interred in the Priory churchyard, and we shall pray for the repose of her soul at the Solemn Requiem on Friday evening.

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.

PETER McGEARY
Chairman

Treasurer's Report for the year 2013–2014

THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2014 has been another highly successful one for the Edington Music Festival Association. We started with £154,796 in the bank and finished the year with funds of £61,659. During this period we have been making regular payments to the organ builder which resulted in an excess of expenditure over income of £93,137.

Our membership subscriptions are broadly in line with last year, and the vast majority of this continues to be paid by standing order. The 2013 collection plate income to EMFA increased, as for the first time we were able to claim Gift Aid under the new HMRC Small Donations Scheme for

loose change which previously was not claimable and went to EMFS directly. We expect the collection plate income to increase and return to previous levels in future festivals as the Organ Project will no longer be competing for funds.

The Association no longer benefits from high interest rates on current and deposit accounts, and this is expected to continue given the current financial climate. Special high-interest accounts have been established for EMFA reserves funds and the Organ Fund. (The latter has now been closed as it is no longer needed.) CD sales from the festival week and newsletter now remain at a background level. £13,571 was received from Gift Aid claims during this financial year.

Our expenses increased again this year owing to the Organ Fund running and fundraising costs. During the financial year 2013–2014 two grants were made. The first was for the 2013 Festival Standing Grant (£9,000), and the second was a grant in advance for the 2014 Festival (£11,083). The Association also made payments for the organ construction of around £167,000.

The Association maintains a reserves policy as recommended by the Charity Commission and this has been maintained at £10,000. These funds are kept in a separate CAF/Scottish Widows account.

This year has seen the Organ Project exceed its target and begin to close down. Whilst not all costs are yet in, it is expected that we will have exceeded our target by around £5,000. These additional funds will be divided equally between EMFA, the Friends of the Priory Church, and projects specific to the village and parishioners of Edington.

We have been treating the Organ Project as a separate restricted fund under the umbrella of EMFA, and this restricted fund is shown in the accounts. The financial activities of the Organ Project are now beginning to ramp down, but we do not expect to be able to close out the project until the end of the 2014–15 financial year.

Raising all the funds required for the Organ Project in just a few years is an outstanding achievement. The EMFA trustees would like to thank all donors for their generous contributions. Without this generosity we would still have a long way to go. A special word of thanks is due to all members of the organ project team and especially to Sue Lowery and Anne Curtis for their outstanding effort and dedication to the necessary fundraising activities. We look forward to the new organ enhancing our worship for many years to come.

JUSTIN LOWE
Treasurer

Organ Dedication Concert

ON SATURDAY 23 AUGUST, Andrew Lumsden played the Dedication Concert on the new Harrison & Harrison organ. The result of an exceptionally successful (and short!) appeal, the organ has transformed the music-making at the festival and is a fitting tribute to former Festival Directors Julian Thomas and Ashley Grote. We were sad that Ashley was unable to play the Dedication Concert (and look forward to hearing him on the instrument in the future), but were grateful that Andrew was able to step in with such a varied and brilliantly played recital.

The programme was chosen to demonstrate the variety of colours on the instrument, and did so very effectively. The Sweelinck Variations and Bach Prelude and Fugue in C (BWV545) enabled Andrew to choose sounds which sparkled in their clarity, whilst the Variations from the *Veni Creator* suite by Duruflé demonstrated some of the more romantic sounds, not least the beautifully voiced swell strings. Guilmant's *Grand Choeur* showed how thrilling the 'tutti' sounds, and *Dieu Parmi Nous* from Messiaen's *La Nativité* was a brilliantly chosen finale, showing that a two-manual instrument with the right specification can respond surprisingly well to Messiaen's unique sound-world. The Schola Cantorum sang the plainchant verses in the *Veni Creator* Variations; and the combined choirs, conducted by Matthew Martin with Daniel Hyde at the organ, completed the concert with a terrific performance of Parry's *Hear my words*. The evening was a fitting celebration to christen this new instrument, and I am very grateful to Peter Roberts for his meticulous attention to detail in organising the occasion.

BEN NICHOLAS

Compact disc offer

OUR CD offer this issue is a glorious new recording of the three Masses by William Byrd. Performed by The Choir of Westminster Cathedral, the CD is accompanied by informative notes by John Milsom reminding us just how pivotal a role this choir had in the restoration of these works to the core of the repertory at the beginning of the last century.

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.

