



# Edington Music Festival Association Newsletter

Summer 2015

## *The 60th Edington Festival 23–30 August*

IN 2014 we celebrated the installation of the new Harrison & Harrison organ with concerts, recitals and commissions; this year we celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the festival with a glance back to previous commissions as well as two world premieres and a reunion of many former singers, players, conductors and directors. The resident festival organists (including Simon Bell, Matthew Martin and Peter Stevens) will play music before the evening services, and Bishop Humphrey Southern, recently appointed Principal at Cuddesdon Theological College, will preach at the Festival Eucharist on Sunday 30 August.

The theme is 'Praise'. Inspired by a cycle of organ pieces by Jean-Louis Florentz entitled *Laudes*, the seven movements provide the structure for the week: *A call to prayer, Incantation, Sacred dance, Meditation, Sacred song, Procession and Hymn*. This, the 60th Festival, offers the opportunity to look back at previous Festivals, and we include a number of previous commissions: *The Edington Service* by Grayston Ives, *Pater noster* by Nico Muhly, and Elena Vorohtko's setting of *Sancte Pater Benedicite*. Two new works have been commissioned for this year: a Magnificat (based on the 8th tone) by David Briggs will be written for all three choirs and organ, and Marco Galvani is setting *Tantum ergo* for the Consort to sing on the BBC broadcast on Wednesday 26 August. At the Requiem Mass on Friday 28 August, those who have given so much to the festival and have passed away are remembered, including former Festival Director David Trendell, with a liturgical performance of Duarte Lôbo's Requiem. Other substantial choral works included in the festival are Parry's *Blest pair of sirens*, Walton's *Coronation Te Deum* and Haydn's *Missa Sancte Nicolai*.

Please do join us for a celebration of this most special festival. BEN NICOLAS

## *David Trendell*

*17th August 1964–28th October 2014*

IT IS AN HONOUR and a great opportunity to be able to write something about David for the benefit of Edington enthusiasts. Much has been said and written about him already—obituaries in the

national press, articles in musical journals, a masterly tribute by Michael Nicholas at the splendid memorial Evensong in Norwich Cathedral last May, Bishop Humphrey Southern's moving and apt sermon at the High Mass of Requiem at St Mary's, Bourne Street last February—these all added to the effort I made at the remarkable funeral in King's College, London last November. That effort: to bring the many marvellous facets of this irreplaceable character once again into our minds and hearts.

So at Edington we can feast on local references rather than rehearse once again the biographical minutiae. David's years as Festival Director were marked by the extraordinary generosity of the man. Those who manned the tea hut, organized and provided accommodation, fetched and carried music and robes, wrote boring letters and paid boring bills—all of these mattered as much to him as the musicians and clergy, and it showed. The Festival glowed with a generosity of spirit that came 'from the top down'. Then there was his presence between the Nave choir stalls: an account of the second movement of Brahms' Requiem, Klemperer-like in stature and symphonic arc, remains etched on the memory. Unfettered, physically healthy choral singing, with no neurotic fads, was the order of the day. Singers and composers were the first people this Nave Choir Director sought to serve. In serving them, he served his God, with whom his relationship was both private and profound. His biggest scholarly coup was to compose, in perfect style, a Kyrie for a rare English Renaissance Mass setting that had previously lacked one, and only to let us know after the performance that this was the case, since NOBODY had noticed.

Andrew Carwood, in a brilliant appreciation of Peter McCrystal in 2002, wrote of Peter's 'cavernous laugh'. David's gifts as raconteur and high-spirited companion in every sense are already much missed. It is uncanny that David should have been taken at a similar age to Peter, and now also have a place in Festival folklore. These are two Edingtonians that singers and clergy will continue to celebrate through inn conviviality and the recounting of stories, perhaps even long after those of us who were privileged to know them are no longer here.

PAUL BROUGH

## *Edington Music Festival Association*

THE ANNUAL General Meeting of the Edington Music Festival Association will be held in Edington Priory Church on Monday, 24 August 2015 commencing at 15.00 hrs.

### AGENDA

- 1 Prayers
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of the 2014 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 2015/2016
- 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 14 August 2015.

SUE LOWERY

*Secretary, 10 High Street, Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire  
BA14 6EL Email: sue.lowery@edingtonfestival.org*

## *Interviews with Sue Lowery and Robin Wilson*

*Now that the organ appeal is well and truly behind us, it seems appropriate to look back at what has been achieved through the eyes of two people without whose efforts the appeal would have not have been as successful as it proved to be.*

Sue Lowery is now retired from her career as a Chartered Secretary 'so I have a legal, accounting, running-companies background'. Moving some years ago with her husband Peter to Steeple Ashton and encountering the Edington Festival for the first time, she offered her services to the Association committee at just the point when the appeal was imminent and an administrator was needed. Sue reminisced: 'Peter Roberts looked at me and said 'What sort of experience do you have in fund-raising for an organ?' Of course I had none at all.' Nonetheless in no time the committee had identified Sue as having just the qualities required and she was taken on board.

Sue spoke warmly of the relationship with Ashley Grote and with Anne Curtis who,

with her PR background, became involved soon after. On the success of the project Sue commented: 'I think we were incredibly lucky in the funding that we got and the support that people were able to give us. By the 2013 Festival we did not have proportionately so much more to pick up, but we were in danger of people getting rather bored of being pursued for money.' As we now know the necessary funds were raised by the end of that festival. Yet some fundraising ideas worked better than others: 'We were going to have a sponsored bike ride but there were problems agreeing a route with the MOD because it was going to be on Salisbury plain, and then there was insufficient interest and we had to cancel it.'

I wondered whether Sue felt pride at what had been achieved: 'Oh yes, but I also feel slightly at a loose end. And I was conscious after the 2013 Festival that I was only known as that woman who tries to squeeze money out of people, and I'd like to change that image of myself.'

On a different issue, I wondered whether, as a resident of Steeple Ashton, Sue felt the villagers there were pleased at the recently re-activated link with the Festival through the Friday afternoon event (two organ recitals and a lecture) over the past three years. 'People that I know in the village think it is really lovely that the Festival has come back. And it has certainly raised people's awareness of the Festival more generally.'

Following on the death of Joy Cooke, Sue has been appointed Secretary of EMFA, and she is looking forward to getting to know the membership better in this new role. We have every reason to be grateful to Sue for what she has already done for the Association and for all she will be doing for us in the future.

**Robin Wilson** was Churchwarden at the time that the decisions needed to be made by the PCC as to what was to happen regarding the organ: whether work should be done on the Henry Jones instrument or whether a new organ should be purchased.

'When the issue was first broached, everyone knew that the Henry Jones organ needed a total overhaul and that we were going to have to spend money on it. The diocesan adviser raised the possibility of having a new organ. When the cost of £300,000 to £400,000 was mentioned, most of the PCC threw up their hands and said we could not possibly spend that amount of money. It took quite a bit of persuasion to change that view; and thanks are due here to Julian Thomas and Ashley Grote who very diplomatically suggested that with an overhaul requiring £40,000-£50,000 and further work almost certainly necessary further down the road, a

new organ that would need no significant extra work for a hundred years could be a good investment.

This was put to the PCC and they said no. It was only when Julian and Ashley, with the backing of EMFA, said 'Don't worry about the money. We will raise it' that the PCC felt able by a unanimous decision to support the project. It was also felt that the Festival needed a new organ to help keep it fresh for the next fifty years.'

Robin's role in all this was crucial. He was aware that the BBC was saying 'You really do have to get something done about that organ' and that muddling through for another few years was not really an option. He spent a lot of time talking through the issues locally, and indeed the success of the appeal has relied on considerable local support, including that of the Friends of the Priory Church who have been most generous.

I wondered whether the regular Sunday-by-Sunday congregation in the Priory Church was pleased with the sound of the new organ. 'They are very satisfied. They love it. They are fully appreciative of both the sight and the sound of the Harrison & Harrison instrument. In particular they think the look of it is brilliant. The commonest remark is that one would not have realised it had not been there for years.'

We are indebted to Robin for his unfailing commitment to the project over several years. That he is so delighted with the result brings its own reward, but it would be churlish not to add our own warm thanks.

### *Edington Arts*

FOLLOWING a marvellous and very well attended concert by the Gentlemen of St John's (choral scholars of St John's College Choir, Cambridge) given to a well-filled church on April 10th, Edington Arts is hosting a Workshop Day on Bob Chilcott's *St John Passion* (led by the composer himself!) on June 20th—with a 6pm concert at its conclusion—a concert by Regency Brass on October 17th, and an Advent concert given by the award-winning choir of Merton College, Oxford under Ben Nicholas on December 12th. These are high quality events deserving of our support—do put the dates in your diary and check the Edington Arts website for further details. ([www.edingtonarts.org](http://www.edingtonarts.org))

### *Organ Project 2/200 Club Standing Orders*

THOSE OF YOU who were supporting the organ appeal by standing order should be aware that, now the appeal has ended, you need to cancel that standing order—unless you wish by that means to continue to help finance the Festival

Association. Either way we are enormously grateful to you for your support.

### *Matthew Martin*

ACD of Matthew's music, some of which has been sung at recent Edington Festivals, has been made by the choir of Magdalen College, Oxford (where Matthew was once organ scholar) directed by Daniel Hyde and with Stephen Farr at the organ. (Both were former Festival organists.) *Gramophone* ends a very positive review thus: 'Superb recorded sound from Opus Arte adds lustre to a recording of an outstanding choir singing music which, in continuing an age-old tradition, also adds something new and distinctive to it.' *Opus Arte OACD9030D*

### *Electronic Newsletter*

RECIPIENTS of the newsletter will realize that the costs of postage are considerable nowadays, and it could well be that many of you would be happy to receive the newsletter in electronic form in the future. If you are amongst those willing to do so, please contact Sue Lowery by email. We will continue to send paper copies to all other Association members.

### *Dates of the 2015 Festival*

PLEASE don't come a week too early! The Festival always ends with the late August Bank Holiday weekend. This year the final August Monday is the 31st, and the Festival therefore runs from 23 to 30 August.

### *Michael Atterbury*

WITH GREAT SADNESS we have to report Michael's death in January this year. Michael and Maggie have long been great supporters of the Festival, regularly hosting Festival members in their Bratton home. Our deepest condolences go to Maggie in her loss.

### *Compact disc offer*

OUR CD offer this issue presents a programme of twentieth-century American choral works. Performed by Polyphony and Stephen Layton, the CD include popular works by Samuel Barber (the *Agnus Dei*) and Randall Thompson (his famous *Alleluia*) as well as Bernstein's *Missa brevis* and motets by Copland.

Discs are £12 each. If you would like to order, please send a cheque payable to *Edington Music Festival Association* to Sue Lowery, 10 High Street, Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire BA14 6EL (01380 871549).

