



# Edington Music Festival Association Newsletter

Spring 2017

*Edington Festival 2017—This year the Festival takes place from 20 to 27 August*

## *New Director for the Edington Music Festival*

**I**N THIS, its 62nd year, the baton of the Festival Directorship has passed once again. Thanks to the hard work of so many, the Edington Festival is as healthy as it has ever been and remains relevant and meaningful. Under the directorship of Benjamin Nicholas, the Festival celebrated the arrival of the wonderful new Harrison and Harrison organ, continued the tradition of commissioning new music from some of the most prominent contemporary composers and enriched the lives of countless festival-goers. Therefore it is with no little excitement that I humbly take up this venerable baton and begin to carry it forwards.

As the world continues to struggle with uncertain times, it is perhaps no surprise that more and more people turn to their local Church, Chapel or Cathedral for solace at the end of each day. The potent mixture of liturgical ritual, words, and music found in a choral service is a unique way to commune with one's spiritual side. A churchgoer can engage with this on a number of levels, ranging from active immersion into the theological questions and musical expressions to a more passive, meditative experience. It is the unique concentration of this essence into an intensive week of liturgy, music and theological discourse that makes the Edington Festival such a special institution. Perhaps, therefore, it comes as no shock that the Festival continues to be a highlight in the calendar for legions of preachers, musicians and worshippers alike.

When a new director steps into the breach, there is always a danger that things will be 'fixed' that are unbroken. Rest assured that this Director has no intention of doing so. As a newcomer to the Edington family, I will be drawing this year on the institutional knowledge of our conductors, clergy and administrators to ensure that my first Edington Festival experience is quintessentially Edingtonian!

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those that have striven to welcome me into the fold and particularly to the Reverend Andrew Sinclair,

whom I look forward to working with very much. As the late, great, Winston Churchill remarked: 'I am easily satisfied with the very best.' Nowhere is this more appropriate than when applied to those who work together for the common purpose of the Edington Festival. I am confident that I will find that satisfaction both in this year and in those to come.

RICHARD PINEL

Richard is the new Director of Music at Jesus College, Cambridge, moving from St George's Chapel, Windsor where he has been Assistant Director of Music for a number of years. He is well-known as a brilliant organist and choral director, and has invaluable experience as a church musician, having previously served at Magdalen College, Oxford and at St Albans Cathedral. Planning for the 2017 Festival and beyond is well under way, with this year's chosen theme: The Beatitudes.

## *Chairman's Report for the year 2015–2016*

**T**HE MAIN TASK of the Association is the administration and appropriate distribution of money. During the year grants are made by the Association towards the 'core costs' of the Festival, which have been identified as printing, mailing, organ tuning, catering, hiring of facilities and insurance. Specific details may be found in the Treasurer's report. The arrangements for a standing grant to be paid by the Association upon receipt of a grant request from the Festival continue to be satisfactory.

With the completion of the organ project the past year has been of reflection and consolidation, allowing the Committee time to review issues of increasing the membership, and thus the income, of EMFA. Funding has been allocated for a special book to be produced to commemorate donors to the organ project.

Collation of the EMFA newsletter has been co-ordinated during the year by Peter McGeary and Sue Lowery.

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

PETER MCGEARY  
*Chairman*

## *Treasurer's Report for the year 2015–2016*

**T**HE FINANCIAL YEAR 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2014 has been another great year for the Edington Music Festival Association. We started the year with £59,715 in the bank and finished the year with funds of £49,454. A key feature of this year has been the continued rundown of the organ campaign which included covering the outstanding costs and distribution of the excess funds.

Our membership subscriptions are slightly up on last year and the vast majority of this continues to be paid by standing order.

The full collection plate continues to come to EMFA so that we can claim gift aid on the loose change under the HMRC Small Donations Scheme. We have refined and simplified the way we provide grants to the EMFS for the running of the Festival. This ensures that we make full use of the gift aid open to us.

The collection plate income has not yet returned to what it was before Organ project and the collection plate from 2015 was lower than anticipated. This is beginning to be of concern as the income is struggling to cover the Festival running costs which have increased over recent years.

The Association no longer benefits from high interest rates and even our special high interest accounts provide little additional income.

Postage costs continue to increase and we would urge any members who wish to do so, to let us have their email address so they can receive the newsletter by email.

During the financial year 2015–2016 grants were made for the 2015 Festival and

for marketing and promotion materials. The Association also made the final payments relating to the organ fund for the organ consultant and has distributed remaining funds to the Friends. Final remaining funds have been donated to the Parish to be put towards the running costs of the organ.

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

Once again I, and all of the EMFA trustees, would like to thank all donors for their generous contributions to the Association and the Organ Project.

JUSTIN LOWE  
*Treasurer*

### *Why do we do it?*

I WAS ASKED to write a piece on the Edington Festival's role in the wider life of the Anglican choral tradition, and in some respects that is an easy task. Year by year, hundreds of people come to the Festival to hear wonderful music sung to a very high standard in a liturgical context that can at least give some idea of the music's intended purpose. Year by year, singers and organists of all shapes and sizes give up a week of their time to pay to do what a lot of them get paid to do the rest of the year. Year by year, the people of Edington and beyond open their homes to these strange people and offer them hospitality. Why do we do it?

The Edington Festival is not a series of concerts, nor is it a kind of pop-up cathedral: it affords opportunities for performances of pieces that (due to length or complexity) might not make it ordinarily onto cathedral music lists, and it also commissions new pieces to help make sure that the 'Anglican choral tradition' is authentically that: something that we pass on, something that is constantly evolving. Hopefully, this musical adventurousness is complemented by dignified, authentic liturgy and intelligent preaching.

That is why a lot of us do it: we believe in the importance of order, beauty, excellence and truthfulness. And some of believe that some of these things are under threat at the moment, by elements—musical and theological—that exalt the stupid and the banal for no good reason.

2015 marked the sixtieth Festival, and the theme was appropriately one of praise and thanksgiving. The Friday of the Festival registered a change in tone in the evening, however, when the annual Requiem Mass

was offered with due solemnity, the setting being that of the late Renaissance Portuguese composer Duarte Lobo. For many of us, the one person we remembered at that service was David Trendell, who had died unexpectedly the previous October and whose many years of service to the Festival was but one part of a very rich musical career.

In place of a voluntary, the Consort sang the final section of the Lobo Mass from the east end of the chancel. At end of the piece, I am quite sure that I heard upper harmonics being sounded in the church, such was the perfect alignment of the final chord. The effect was astonishing; I can remember only one other instance of hearing this consciously in my lifetime (July 1975, St Mary's Nottingham), and the silence that followed was electric.

For the quality of the silence that lies beyond the music, through which we might begin to apprehend the Divine: that is why we do it.

PETER MCGEARY

Peter McGeary has served as one of the Chaplains to the Festival, and was Chairman of EMFA until August 2016. He is the Vicar of St Mary's Cable Street in the East End of London, and a Priest Vicar of Westminster Abbey

### *Edington Arts 2017 programme*

THE 2017 EDINGTON ARTS concert season builds on a remarkably varied and successful 2016 season that ended with a sold-out Advent concert from the choir of Magdalen College, Oxford.

We opened on March 25 with our first string sextet, the Chamber Players of St John's. These talented musicians are all Principals from the London and Oxfordshire-based Orchestra of St John's, who have formed an ensemble to perform more expansive string chamber repertoire.

On May 6, a wind quintet of horn, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and flute Principals from Wales' innovative chamber orchestra The Welsh Sinfonia will play divertimenti, shanties and dances as quartets, solos and quintets, by Haydn, Arnold, Britten, Ibert, Farcas, Reicha and Rossini.

Does three workshops make it a tradition? This year we are delighted our own Andrew Carwood has taken time out of his busy schedule at St Paul's and The Cardinal's Musick, to lead a choral workshop on Handel's showpiece *Dixit Dominus*. Our five soloists are current or recent Festival choristers, with Chris Totney accompanying.

Everyone is welcome to sit in and listen to the final session of the day from about 4.30pm.

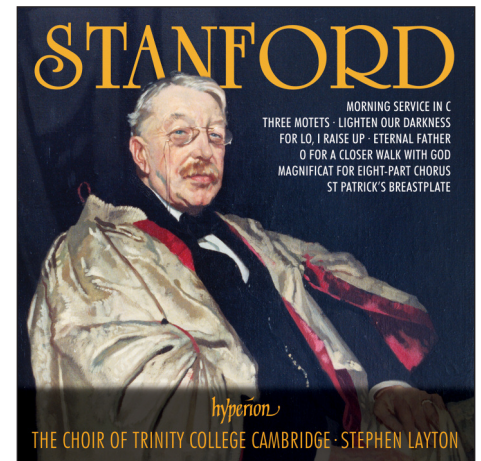
Information on all the programmes, including the two concerts coming up in October and December, and how to buy tickets or take part in the workshop, are on the website, [www.edingtonarts.org](http://www.edingtonarts.org)

Alternatively, phone 01380 831256

### *Organ Project*

AT THE 2016 FESTIVAL a book of Organ Project donors was available in draft format. Supporters were asked to view the entry relating to their gift if they wished. If you were unable to attend last year and would like to check the information shown for your donation please contact Sue Lowery no later than 15 May. She can be contacted at [sue.lowery@edingtonfestival.org](mailto:sue.lowery@edingtonfestival.org), on 01380 871549 or at 10 High Street, Steeple Ashton BA14 6EL.

### *CD Offer*



OUR CD offer this issue comes from The Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, and conductor Stephen Layton. The programme spans the variety and sheer emotional range of Stanford's Anglican choral music (and includes a notable contribution from Owain Park in the Fantasia and Toccata for organ). You are unlikely to hear quite so stirring a rendition of 'St Patrick's Breastplate' for some time to come ... And it won't be in the shops until July.

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).