

## Saturday June 18<sup>th</sup> Visit to Chelsea

The EDOA Chelsea Visit had two parts:

- Visit Christ Church Chelsea to see the newly refurbished Flentrop Organ with Joe McHardy (resident organist)
- A guided walk around Chelsea with Gary Fahy (Chelsea Walks)

### Christ Church, Chelsea Visit – June 2011

Joe McHardy gave the EDOA a warm welcome and we were very impressed with his demonstration of the organ. He showed the instrument both in performance, and allowed members of the party to enjoy playing themselves. He clearly knows the instrument very well, displaying an infectious love of and enthusiasm for the instrument.

The voice of the instrument and the acoustic does lend itself particularly well to early music, and we were very impressed with the whole experience. The party was very grateful to Joe for his kind attention on the visit.

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### CHELSEA WALKS

After our visit to Christ Church with Joe McHardy, we met up with Gary Fahy, Chelsea Walks, and he gave us a guided tour of Chelsea, opening downtown and moving uptown. We were introduced to places associated with A A Milne, Thomas Carlyle, Alexander Fleming. Inns, taverns and tea gardens were mentioned in diaries and literature of Evelyn, Pepys and Walpole, and one former tavern (now a Building Society) was the scene of state secrets being transferred. There were homes of spies. There was the Chelsea Drug Store, Mary Quant's Bazaar, and going back a long way, Chelsea China. This was an interesting and enjoyable tour with a good guide who had a sense of humour.

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### Background Information

#### Joseph McHardy – Resident Organist, Christ Church, Chelsea

Joseph McHardy (harpsichord/organ) was born in Dundee in 1981. After graduating in Music from the University of Edinburgh in 2002, he moved to London to study harpsichord at the Royal Academy of Music. His professors there included Laurence Cummings, Carole Cerasi, Terence Charlston and Virginia Black and he graduated with Distinction in July 2004. He also studied at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam.



He has performed with the Gabrieli Players, OAE, English National Opera, English Touring Opera, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Retrospect, and plays regularly with the London Handel Orchestra, and Vivaldi

specialists La Serenissima, with whom he has made several recordings. In Autumn 2010 he conducted English Touring Opera's new production of *The Duenna* by Thomas Linley Jr. He was one of Paul McCreesh's assistant conductors for Komische Oper Berlin's Handel *Alcina* (2004 — 6) and for Teatro Real Madrid's *Tamerlano* (2008), and he assisted Laurence Cummings in Garsington's Vivaldi *L'Incoronazione di Dario*. He pursues his interest in 17<sup>th</sup> Century music as a founder member of La Nuova Musica.

### CHRIST CHURCH CHELSEA

Christ Church today stands in contrast to the grandeur of the Royal Hospital and nearby Cheyne Walk, and is typical of the special character of Chelsea. Consecrated in 1839 and originally a Chapel of Ease to the Parish Church St Luke's, Sydney Street, it was given its own parish in 1860. Chelsea was still an independent village separated from London by open countryside, and the church was built in an area used extensively for market gardening just off Flood Street. There was pressure for development and particularly streets of small cottages to house numerous servants from the grand houses on Cheyne Walk and the newly constructed streets and squares of Belgravia and Hans Town.

Built in an early Victorian Gothic style, yet retaining elegance and symmetry associated with the Regency period, it was designed for working class people to accommodate the maximum number of people at minimum cost; the church would have been barely indistinguishable from a non-conformist chapel. The traditional layout of the church comprised nave and aisles, a gallery over each of the aisles and much of the west end. The interior was dominated by a centrally positioned three tier pulpit with the altar behind (as the majority of services would not have included Holy Communion).



The building was financed by the Hydman Trust: the family had extensive sugar plantation interests in the West Indies. The Trustees were concerned for the spiritual well-being of the emerging urban working class, and used the considerable funds at their disposal for the erection of churches. Soon after the consecration of Christ Church, a church school was established, initially for boys in rented premises on Flood Street, but in 1843 new schools were erected for boys and girls on land donated by Lord Cadogan opposite the church. The school remains today.

The church architect was Edward Blore (1789 – 1879), who specialised in church and country house work. His work included restoration work at Westminster Abbey, and both Peterborough and Glasgow Cathedrals. He also designed many parish churches, church schools, and a principal front for Buckingham Palace (later to be re-faced by Sir Aston Webb). Edward Blore also designed a new wing for Lambeth Palace.

In 1876, Queen Victoria Street was created; it cut through the medieval street pattern of the City of London, with the loss of several churches. Christ Church was given two articles salvaged from these churches, which are its finest features; an organ and the pulpit.

The organ was built by England and Russell in 1779 for the Church of St Michael Queenhithe. The pulpit is typical of those designed for Wren's City Churches, and characteristic of the famous wood carver Grinling Gibbons (1648 – 1721).

By the 1890's, not only had the local population grown, but the social character changed. New palatial houses were erected along the embankment, Tite Street became an artist's colony, Tedworth Square was being completed and large blocks of mansion flats replaced old shops and cottages. Christ Church was extended and improved at this time; the nave roof rebuilt, pillars between nave and isles encased in plaster with pointed arches between. Both the east and west ends of the church were extended to the extent of the site, and the western gallery removed. Box pews were replaced with more spacious pews. 1933 saw the entrance porch alteration by G G Woodward.

### **Flentrop Organ**

The 1779 England and Russell organ from The Church of St Michael Queenhithe was installed in Christ Church in 1876 with some modifications. England and Russell was a London based firm of organ builders (John England and Hugh Russell) and the National Pipe Organ Register indicates that the period during which they were most active was 1776 – 1784. Their workshop was at Theobalds Road (opposite Green Street) from 1779.

- John England was active during the period 1774 – 1790, in Theobalds Road, and later Stephen Street, Tottenham Court Road.
- Hugh Russell was most active 1781 – 1825 (born 1731, died 1825) in Theobalds Road.

In 1890 and 1957 the organ underwent some amendment. However, more recently in 2007 it was decided to undertake a major refurbishment and rebuild using the existing pipes. The pipes are said to have been made by people with Dutch connections, and Flentrop immediately recognised their significance, and regarded them as Dutch cousins. This is why Flentrop organ builders were particularly excited to become involved in the extensive work to this particular organ. The original 1779 plans were used as the basis of the restoration work, and where possible the old pipework registers were used. The work was completed early 2010, and commissioning took place in June of that year.



The voice and style of the instrument particularly lends itself to early music, and Joe McHardy the resident organist offered a demonstration of three distinct pieces to show the natural characteristics of the instrument. The Flentrop organ specification of 2010 is set out below.

**Flentrop Organ Specification – 2010**

**Great**

Bourdon	16'
Open Diapason	8'
Hohl Flöte	8'
Quintaton	8'
Principal	4'
Flute	4'
Twelfth	2 2/3'
Fifteenth	2'
Mixture	IV
Cornet	III
Trumpet	8'

**Positif**

Stopped Diapason	8'
Salicional	8'
Principal	4'
Rohrflute	4'
Nasard	2 2/3'
Fifteenth	2'
Tierce	1 3/5'
Sharp	IV
Cremona	8'

Tremolo

**Pedal**

Bourdon	16'
Principal	8'
Bass Flute	8'
Fifteenth	4'
Trombone	16'
Trumpet	8'

**Couplers**

Great + Positif  
Pedal + Great  
Pedal + Positif

Compass Manuals	C - g'''
Compass Pedal	C - f'

**David Hainsworth**