

Past Events

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Review of Members' Recital at St Luke's Church, Browning Road, Enfield, Saturday 19th September 2015

This event was one of a series of recitals and concerts to celebrate the renovation of the century old pipe organ at St Luke's. I grew up in the St Luke's community and was in the congregation at the time of the previous renovation in 1973 and have many memories of the sacred, grand and mysterious sound produced by this instrument. The 2015 renovation was carried out by Tarquin Wiggins over 6 months. The pneumatic action was partially electrified which facilitated installation of programmable thumb pistons below each keyboard as well as toe pistons above the pedalboard and a midi interface. It has 24 speaking stops and contains approximately 1,500 pipes. The casing is made of teak with ornate carvings that suggest it may have been built for export to India. The organ, with attached console, is positioned in the south transept of the red-brick building with its favourable acoustics. It is listed by the British Institute of Organ Studies in the National Pipe Organ Register and was awarded a Historic Organ Certificate Grade II in 2010.

The organ was rededicated by the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dr Richard Chartres, on St Luke's Day, Sunday 18th October.



EDOA members who played - Left to right: Michael Hennin, Peter Smith, Ashley Wagner, Terence Atkins, Robin Coxon, Robert Evans

Photo: Bernard Hennin

Fr Edward Dowler introduced the members' recital which started at 7.30pm with over 50 people in attendance.

Each recitalist gave an interesting and informative introduction to their piece.

Michael Hennin began with *Processional* (William Mathias 1934-1992), composed in 1964, a familiar piece which superbly demonstrated the dynamic and tonal range of the instrument. Robin Coxon performed "Canticle" from *Ringmer Suite* (Gordon Lawson b. 1931). The clarinet and flute stops were explored to full potential. Robin then played *Paeon* (Phillip Moore b. 1943) using the distant sound of the swell, concluding with a big crescendo, completely exploiting the dynamics of the instrument.

Robert Evans introduced *Sortie Fanfare* (J-B Maillouhaud 1840-1928) dating from 1922. As a novice keyboardist I was wondering if he had a third hand playing the tune!

Ashley Wagner gave an enjoyable rendition of “Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot”, BWV 678 (J S Bach 1685-1750).

Terence Atkins performed Andante sostenuto from *Symphonie Gothique* (C-M Widor 1844-1937) exploring the quiet textures of the instrument to the full.

Peter Smith introduced *Alleluias* (Simon Preston b. 1938), explaining the representation of music quoting from Scripture. The dynamic crescendo reached full volume at the conclusion.

All of the performances were to a high standard. The event concluded at 8.15pm with a cheese and wine reception. It was an enjoyable and informative evening, which effectively showcased the newly refurbished instrument.

Many thanks to Michael Hennin for organising the event and Fr Edward Dowler, John Wright and the Church Wardens of St Luke’s for hosting.

Peter Jones

Peter Jones is a parishioner at Our Lady and St George Catholic Church in Enfield Town. On Sundays he plays flute with the 9.15am Mass music group. He is a paramedic and works at the ‘111’ call centre. Peter is married to Tamara and they have a son, Luke.

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**Talk on French Classical Organ Music
by Dr Peter St John Stokes**

If your organ music diet, like mine, was German and English baroque together with the organ music of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including French this time, then French music of the baroque period was probably a mystery.

After the fascinating and beautifully illustrated talk by Dr Peter Stokes on the subject at St Saviour’s Church in October, the mystery will have been dispelled. Not intended as recital or accompaniment music, the French baroque, probably more often improvised than written, consisted of a large number of short pieces interspersed between the spoken parts of the Mass. The music was based on plainsong chants which later also included music of a slightly more secular type.

There is a body of written music available today which at the time it was written was perhaps designed to help local and small churches to obtain an insight into what was happening in the more sophisticated cathedrals and cities. French organs of the period were different from English and other continental organs in both the action as well as in the type of stops they had, with a range of more strident and powerful reed stops. The pedal was generally little

used except that in some pieces using the reeds, the pedal was given a dominant and very satisfying role. Peter included pieces of this type in his recital.



Dr Peter St John Stokes playing the Peter Collins organ at St Saviour's church, and Hilary Bailey page-turning
Photo: Morwenna Brett

We were introduced to the registration of stops in the grand plein jeu, the petit plein jeu, the cornet and to some of the mysteries of French stop names. The St Saviour's organ is well suited to the playing of this style of music and Peter, who practises on this organ weekly, understands the instrument perfectly. One member of the audience who has listened to countless recitals at St Saviour's since the organ was installed said he had never heard it better or more sympathetically played.



Dr Peter St John Stokes (left) and members

Photo: Morwenna Brett

Thank you, Peter, for an excellent and most rewarding evening.

Ted Sharp