

Past Events

- Members' Recital 10th September 2016
- EDOA visit to Eaton Bray and Woburn

Members' Recital 10th September 2016

This was a golden opportunity to hear the newly refurbished organ of St Andrew's Enfield put through its paces by old and young friends alike in EDOA. Emphatically it was no disappointment! Unfortunately the audience numbers were low, but British Rail's failure to run trains on one of the key approach routes to Enfield - that did hinder me - may well have contributed to that.



Participants in the 2016 Members' Recital

Photo: Susan Dingle

Michael Hennin chose *Scherzo* by Roudot as opener, followed by a Rheinberger D flat Trio. My appetite for this composer has grown over many years: Eric Pask back in March '79 played the No 8 Sonata specially for me to record on tape – the 1st movement of which I added to EDOA 1978 St Andrew's CD of 'The Journey' directed and conducted by Eric (ABCD 1202), of which some members have a copy and with it a 100 word history of this organ up to 1972.

J S Bach's *Fantasia in G*, BWV 572, was Terence Atkins' choice, beautifully clean and bright to match the new sparkle of the organ's appearance. Next up in the programme was Rosemary Knight with *Postlude on Song 22* (set 2 No 2) of C V Stanford, giving opportunity for displaying some of the many less demanding sounds available – very beautiful and worshipful.

Then the fire, especially of the reeds (always good but now with an extra 'edge' to them), burned as Robert Evans played *Fanfare* (Whitlock) and *Élévation* (René Vierne). The pent-up power sensed from within a decent closed swell box is far more magical than a mere volume control. (This is why Peter Collins, daring to mix electronic sounds with pipes experimentally, put his loudspeakers for swell ranks into a proper swell box.)

Malcolm Archer qualifies as a good friend of EDOA and Robin Coxon raised *The Royal Standard* of his after having lulled hearers with *Aria* by Andrew Carter.

The final player for this programme, Philip Shrimpton, sat everyone up with *Fanfare* by John Cook; then when we thought perhaps we had heard the loudest, gave us even greater excitement with the James Bond theme by Monty Norman.

‘Comparisons are invidious’ we are often told, but they help to measure progress and test improvement. ‘If it’s not broke, don’t fix it’ is good cautionary advice, but before ‘the works’ fail miserably or a ‘thing’ loses its shine, we know a makeover is sensible. What David Wells has done with this fine instrument, assessed by comparisons of its sound, appearance of pipework and splendid new console – and I did play the old one years ago at a flower festival, being watered by dutiful flower sprayers in the chancel – has rejuvenated it superbly: typical of what in ‘Organ Advisers’ Conferences’ I have found of his work ‘up north’ several times.

Jack Beeson

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EDOA visit to Eaton Bray and Woburn

On Saturday 22nd October Ted Sharp kindly arranged for a visit to two very different but pleasantly interesting organs in Bedfordshire. About 10 members attended, including a few from the Beds. and Herts. Organists’ Association.

St Mary’s Eaton Bray is a typical country parish church dating from the Early English period onwards, but the organ is placed on a gallery on the west wall in an attractive oak case looking more Dutch or German than English. It was built in 1991 by Peter Collins with tracker action and has two manuals comprising 15 stops, of which 3 are doubled on the pedals.



EDOA and BHOA members at Eaton Bray

Photo: Hilary Bailey

After the churchwarden had opened up access to the organ gallery, Stephen Turner kicked off the proceedings by playing Gordon Young's *Prelude in Classic Style*, and then Peter Smith played *Prelude and Fugue in E minor* by Bruhns, which demonstrated the contrast between the choruses on the two manuals and the clarity of the parts in both manuals and pedals. Most of us then had a go, playing music from Bach to Flor Peeters and showing how this lightly-voiced instrument suits the modest size of the building for music from various periods. The music played included a *Largo* and a *Toccata* by Peeters, Stanford's *Prelude on a theme of Orlando Gibbons*, a Bach *Trio Sonata* movement showing a good balance between the manuals, Armstrong Gibbs' *Folk Tune*, an *Allegro* from a Stanley voluntary, and the first movement from Walther's arrangement of a Vivaldi concerto.



Michael Hennin playing at Eaton Bray

Photo: Hilary Bailey

After a break for lunch, most of us then proceeded to St Mary's Woburn, a large squat building in Romanesque style built by Henry Clutton in the late Victorian era. The organ was built by Norman and Beard in 1904 and is prominently situated on pillars in the north-east of the nave. The voicing suits this position in the building, which has very good acoustics, and we noted how clear and yet warm-toned the organ sounded in all parts of the church, whether using a single stop or full organ.

Roger Lander, the organist, introduced us to the organ, which has 3 manuals with exhaust pneumatic action. It survives unaltered apart from a modification to the composition of the harmonic 32', electric action on the pedals, and balanced swell pedals fitted. We were given freedom to play and listen for as long as we liked, and most of us found it a very satisfying instrument to play. Pieces played included Guilmant's *Sonata no.2*, Bridge's *Adagio in E*, a

Stanford *Prelude*, Dupré's *Sortie* Op.62 No.3, Whitlock's *Andante tranquillo*, a Howells *Psalm Prelude*, and Bach's "*Dorian*" *Toccata*.



The organ at Woburn

Photo: Michael Hennin

The organs we visited could hardly have been more different, one from the Neoclassical and the other from the Romantic tradition, but both built by masters of their style, and I found it a most enjoyable day out.

Tony Bralant