

Past Events

- **Members' Recital at St Mary the Virgin, Ware**
- **"Music and the Reformation" – a Talk by Philip Norman**
- **"Luther, the Reformation and Liturgical Music in Germany" – a Talk by Richard Brasier**

Members' Recital at St Mary the Virgin, Ware 16th September 2017 at 6 pm

This year's Members' Recital took place in St Mary's, Ware, which has a fine 3-manual Hill organ on the north side of the chancel. It was renovated in 2015-16 by the Village Workshop, with a new detached console opposite the pipes, at the front of the nave.

The programme began with two contrasting pieces played by Peter Smith, the Director of Music: *Heraldic Flourish* by Francis Jackson, who has just celebrated his 100th birthday, showed off the reeds and full organ, while the oboe, flutes and celestes were heard in the Canadian composer Denis Bédard's *Andantino*, a reflection on Vierne's *Berceuse*.



Members who took part in the recital

Photo: Marilyn Hennin

Michael Hennin then played William Lloyd Webber's *Verset in G minor*, followed by Lefébure-Wély's *Sortie in B flat*, quite an achievement given the time-lag between console and organ.

Robert Evans' programme consisted of Francois Couperin's *Les Moissonneurs* ("harvesters"), his own arrangement of *Basse-Danse* and *Pieds-en-l'air* from Warlock's *Capriol Suite*, and his own composition *The Magistrate's Divertimento*. There then followed three different works by J. S. Bach, beginning with Robert's performance of *Fugue in E (BWV 878)* sometimes nicknamed "Saints in Glory". Rosemary Knight played *O Mensch, beweine dein Sünde gross (BWV 622)* from the *Orgelbüchlein*, with mutations bringing out the florid melody. Another chorale prelude *Allein Gott in der Höhe sei Ehr (BWV 675)* for manuals only, played by Terence Atkins, showed the silvery tone and clarity of the upper flues. Terence followed this

with Francis Jackson's *Prelude on "Repton"*, with the decorated melody played on high pitched pedals.

Peter Smith completed the programme with two pieces by Jean Langlais: *Chant de Paix* on a 4ft pedal flute accompanied by quiet strings, and *Chant Héroïque* in memory of Jehan Alain, which includes quotes from Alain's *Litanies* and from *La Marseillaise*.

I found this full and varied recital programme very enjoyable, the disappointment being that only 11 people attended, including the 5 performers and 3 family members.

Tony Bralant

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"Music and the Reformation" – a Talk by Philip Norman

On the evening of Tuesday 3rd October a small audience gathered at St Andrew's Church in Enfield Town to hear a talk by Philip Norman, organist at St Marien mit St Georg Lutheran Church in London, on music and the Reformation.

Philip began by describing the musical scene prior to the Reformation: there was grand and glorious polyphony and there was monastic plainchant; all of this was remote from the congregation. Secular tunes might be incorporated into church music. Many composers including Dufay made use of the popular tune "L'homme armé" in their masses.

Religious practices of the time which provoked opposition included the sale of indulgences and the misuse of relics. Luther was not the first person to call for reform; others included John Wycliffe and Jan Hus, both born in the fourteenth century. Martin Luther was born in 1483 and wrote his ninety-five theses in 1517. His first hymnal was produced in 1524.

Luther's aim was to provide hymns which could be sung by ordinary members of the congregation. He used folksongs, such as 'Mein G'muth ist mir verwirret' which we now know as the Passion Chorale, as well as medieval hymns such as 'Christ ist erstanden'. He also composed hymns himself, for example 'Ein feste Burg'. Congregations would sing the hymns unaccompanied in unison; but there were also four-part settings for choirs and for domestic music making. Luther also introduced the German mass, with metrical paraphrases of the ordinary of the mass, and he gave instructions on how to sing the epistle. Latin was still sometimes used, however, and J. S. Bach himself wrote some settings of Latin words, for example his Magnificat. It goes without saying that Bach's sacred works are imbued with the Lutheran tradition of chorale singing.



Philip Norman speaking about the Reformation

Photo: Rosemary Knight

We all found Philip’s presentation style engaging; his PowerPoint slides were informative and the recordings well chosen. It was an enjoyable evening to mark the 500th anniversary year of the Reformation

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**“Luther, the Reformation and Liturgical Music in Germany” –
a Talk by Richard Brasier**

There was a good audience on Reformation Day (Tuesday 31st October) for Richard Brasier’s talk at St Laurence, Upminster on “Martin Luther, the Reformation and Liturgical Music in Germany”. This was Essex Organists' Association event sponsored by EDOA and CLESO. The scope of Richard’s talk was similar to that of Philip Norman’s: Luther’s life, music and liturgy in the medieval Catholic church, music and liturgy in the Lutheran church, the Counter-Reformation, the use of the organ in church and the legacy of Martin Luther’s Reformation.



Richard Nott, Richard Brasier and Tom Bell

Photo: Michaela Cottee

This was a talk without any audio visual trappings but with live music provided by Tom Bell playing the two organs, the Kenneth Tickell organ and the chamber organ, and tenor Richard Nott as well as some recorded music. Finally, those present joined in the congregational hymn: Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott.