

From EDOA Newsletter June 2007

President's message

May/June 2007

Simon Williams (President)



I was honoured to be invited to take on the Presidency of EDOA, but also a little nervous knowing that I would succeed Andrew Parnell who served in this office with distinction over a period of 12 years.

Since joining EDOA (sometime in the 1990s) I have enjoyed leading and contributing to a number of events, including hosting an AGM at my own church of St George's Hanover Square.

Now, as President, I look forward to renewing acquaintances made on these occasions and getting to know more members of the Association, though I fear that commitments for the Royal College of Organists and at St George's Hanover Square will prevent me from attending all the events organised by EDOA's hard working committee.

During my time as President I would like to contribute to the development and the implementation of the following ideas:

1. The construction of a website so that members can more easily access up-to-date information about events and other matters. A website would also allow us to, *inter alia*, disseminate information to assist EDOA members and members of the general public in finding an organ teacher and finding somewhere to practice, and could advertise recitals and news of other opportunities within and beyond the EDOA area.

2. Ensuring that recruitment to the Association remains buoyant – if we do not recruit we will gradually fade away. As part of this I would like us to consider what we do for young organists and what we might offer them but also to make sure that we meet the needs of our core membership, that is those of us aged at least 40!

3. Running regular events designed to introduce young children and adults to the organ.

I will let you know how these ideas develop through discussion at committee meetings - and how you can contribute to them - in future issues of the newsletter.

Playing the organ is a great joy, and those of us who play in church and/or for choirs enjoy the privilege of having a ready-made outlet for our talents - a context in which to make music - something which most of the much greater number of pianists (and other instrumentalists) lack.

So if you are a player, keep practising and, if your interest is more passive, keep listening and supporting the players!

With very best wishes,

Simon

Simon Williams

EDOA Events

Saturday 28th April

EDOA visit to St Botolph's Church, Aldgate, EC3N 1AB

Those who were unable to come and 'meet' the recently restored Goetze and Gwynn three manual organ missed a rare treat. But those members and their students who made it were rewarded by having a chance to play their 18th century English 'pedal-less' pieces on a mean-tone temperament instrument which is arguably the oldest parish church organ in the country. Perhaps Stanley, Travers, John Camidge and his teachers Greene and Handel would have bristled with pride to hear their works being brought to life on this faithfully-restored organ.



St. Botolph – the Organ Case

Midst the ‘radiant splendour’ of the interior, John Bamford, the present organist, gave a matter-of-fact account of the instrument and its history. The Thomas Whiting organ of 1676 was replaced in 1704 by an organ built by the great Renuus Harris himself for an earlier St Botolph’s. His instrument was later re-installed in a church built on the same site in 1744. Throughout its history the organ was altered to meet the tastes of the times but in 2005 it was fully restored to its 1704 specification by Master Organ Builders Goetze and Gwynn and re-installed in February 2006. One detail of its authentic appearance is that the pedal board may be detached so that the organ may be played exactly as it was in 1704. Many of the stops are original, like the Open and ‘Stoppt’ Diapasons (Great and Eccho); others have been reinstated, like Furniture III (Great), Vox Humane (Choir) and Trumpet (Eccho).

Those of us who approached the church via Houndsditch perhaps invoked the aid of St Botolph himself, (a sort of English St Christopher) for safe deliverance. The less intrepid travelers used Aldgate tube station next door. But however we arrived we were all most appreciative of Roger Carter for his stimulating comments and the keyboard demonstration that concluded the ‘workshop’.



St. Botolph – the Console

(note the 3rd (2 1/2th?) manual – and the original picture is clear enough to show that the music is one of the John Stanley Concertos)

Jack Beeson, Robin Coxon, Susan Dingle, Joyce Beaumont, Alan Beaumont, Lillian Gibbens, Rosemary Knight, Kathy Westwood, Peter StJ Stokes, Derek Hart and Keith Mitchell were the performers.

Thanks are due to the Teachers’ Forum committee, namely Roger Carter, Robin Coxon, Joyce Beaumont, Carol Jarman and Susan Dingle for organizing this event.

Alan Beaumont.