

## Visit to Flamstead and Redbourn

Saturday 6th July 2024



*The organ at Flamstead*

The picturesque village of Flamstead, although not far from the M1, is off the beaten track and not somewhere that one would drive through en route to somewhere else. The church is worth a visit though. Probably most visitors go there to see the medieval wall paintings, but on July 6th a small number of EDOA members went to try the small but perfectly formed organ, built by the German organ builders Hey Orgelbau in 2006. It was used first as a show instrument for church fairs and then moved to St. Mary's Church, Maldon in Essex in September 2015, coming to Flamstead in July 2019.

The organ has a single manual and a pedalboard but the manual has a split compass with the break between B and C. Helpfully, those stops which are divided are positioned side by side on the jamb. Unlike an English organ, the 8 foot stops are at the top and the mixture at the bottom.

Members played pieces from various periods ranging from Bach (Michael and Rosemary) through Pescetti (Hilary) to Rheinberger and Dupré (Roger) and everything sounded effective.. All agreed that the touch was responsive and the organ was well voiced for the building. Personally I prefer white keys to be white and not to see a sea of blackness when I look down but I suppose that is a matter of taste.

Our next port of call was Redbourn, reached along a tortuous narrow lane. Here we were greeted by Simon Pusey, one of the church's organists, who demonstrated the various sounds

of the organ to us. The organ was rebuilt in 2005 by Vincent Woodstock, and some of us remembered the opening recital given by John Scott.

This organ is more substantial than the Hey organ, having two manuals and pedals, and some 26 stops. Members played a variety of music from Georg Böhm (Rosemary) to Lefébure-Wély (Michael and Hilary) and Reger (Roger) and Peter improvised. Simon kindly provided us with tea and biscuits. This church too is in a delightful setting and we enjoyed views of the churchyard.



*The organ console at Redbourn*

Details of the two organs can be found in NPOR at <https://npor.org.uk/survey/K01659> and <https://npor.org.uk/survey/E01204>

We are grateful to Roger Carter for organising the visits and to Simon Pusey for being our host at Redbourn. What a pity there were not more EDOA members to enjoy this visit to the Hertfordshire countryside.

*Rosemary Knight*

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