

Oundle for Organists

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This July, I was fortunate to attend the Oundle for Organists Summer School for a week based at the historic Oundle School near Peterborough. I had been working hard to reach the standard for this course since attending their short introductory course at Easter 2013.

There were thirty four young organists aged 13-24, some from abroad. We had 10 brilliant tutors, all well-known organists, to inspire us.



The week is part of the Oundle International Festival and we were able to attend nine recitals and concerts during the week given by our tutors and guests. An outstanding event on the first evening was listening to Richard Hills accompany a silent Buster Keaton film in Peterborough Cathedral. Later in the week, we were all able to have a session playing that amazing instrument.

However, we were mainly there to play in small tutor groups and immediately set to work moving around nine organs in Oundle and surrounding villages. We had each prepared pieces to work on with the tutors and it was fascinating listening to other students play & take the tutors' comments on board. We had such a wide range of repertoire and skills between us that it was really fascinating getting to know each other.

We spent a fantastic day in Cambridge playing organs in Trinity, Queen's, Trinity Hall and St Catherine's Colleges and returned to Peterborough Cathedral to hear Choral

Evensong by the choir of King's College, London.

The course was wide ranging and we were able to spend time on conducting skills with that superb choir. I chose to direct Bruckner's Ave Maria; their choirmaster, David Trendell, offered many insightful comments which I shall aim to put into practice.

Also, Robert Woolley, the Professor of Harpsichord at the Royal College of Music gave a recital followed by master classes for which we had all prepared pieces. I had only played an harpsichord briefly before; it is an instrument which I would like to explore further.



Throughout the week, we prepared to play and sing for the Sunday morning Festival Eucharist in the historic Fotheringhay Church. I was chosen to play immediately before the service & played a reflective piece by Guilmant. After lunch some students who had not played for the Service, took part in a recital in Oundle School Chapel & afterwards we were all presented with certificates & music provided by sponsors. Martin and Mary came to join us for the afternoon.

It was an amazing & exhausting week both socially and musically; a brilliant time spent with organists my own age. I am in touch with many of them and hope to see them at future events. It has really inspired me to continue working hard on my technique & explore new areas of repertoire.

I played fifteen organs of all styles but it is great to be home at All Saints.