

## Opening Autumn and Winter Concert – Amersham Festival Chamber Orchestra

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2013 – St. Mary's Church, Amersham

What with the high winds and lashing rain it was a pleasure to look forward to attending the opening concert of the Autumn – Winter season of the Amersham Festival Chamber Orchestra, last Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November, at St. Mary's Parish Church in Old Amersham. This church – which dates back to the middle ages - was a lovely venue for what was, once again, a very fine performance from the orchestra, and of course their conductor Iain Ledingham.

On this occasion we were very fortunate that Iain, directing the orchestra from the harpsichord, was playing one that had just come into his possession having been recently restored. It is a beautiful instrument, and the sound Iain gets from it is like honey. It will be lovingly played and looked after. What a privilege to have been at the first concert, and to hear it being played for the first time since its restoration.

The programme was of Baroque Masterpieces, for this concert works by Bach and Handel, and they started off with Bach's 'Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 in F' which made us forget the weather outside, and put us all in a much better frame of mind.

Handel's 'Concerto Grosso Opus 6 No 12 in B Minor' followed, taking us through the opening Largo – with its dramatic changes of key, to the final jaunty Allegro.

Then we returned to Bach for 'Sinfonia from Cantata No. 42'. This is a religious work and the music we heard was taken from an account in St. Luke's Gospel in the Bible which describes one of Christ's resurrection appearances. Indeed the well played interplay between the 2 oboes and bassoon seem to symbolise the encounter between Christ and the two disciples. This was heart lifting music to take us into the interval.

We ended the concert with Handel's magnificent 'Water Music Suite in F'. This seemed to cement his reputation with King George 1<sup>st</sup> who never tired of hearing it, in fact at the first performance on the Thames, the King asked for it to be played twice more. Not a bad encore!!!!!!

The Orchestra were in fine form, especially the oboes, bassoon and horns – we even got our own encore – the well known hornpipe.

What an uplifting way to end the first concert of the new season – and despite the lashing rain and howling wind, well worth turning out for, and we all left feeling the world – and weather – was not so bad after all.

Thank you all for a super evening and I look forward to your next concert. Anyone who is undecided about attending any of these concerts, or indeed any of the Amersham Music Festival Events, do go and buy a ticket, see and hear for yourself what interesting events they put on, and what wonderful music is played by the Amersham Festival Chamber Orchestra, under their charismatic, and very musical, conductor Iain Ledingham – YOU WILL NOT REGRET IT.

Kay Johnson

4<sup>th</sup> November 2013