

S' ANDREW'S ORGAN REFURBISHMENT

Friday 9th May was a great day for music lovers from around S. Cambs as they gathered for a concert to celebrate the much anticipated return of the church organ to St Andrew's, Orwell. The organ was built in 1878 for Baldock Methodist Church then moved, repaired and augmented by Orwell Organ builder, David Miller, assisted by Churchwarden, John Stammers. It has now been rebuilt by the Leicestershire firm of Cousans Organs Ltd. It took 9 months for the craftsmen to dismantle and transport the organ to their workshop and then rebuild it, repairing or replacing its thousands of parts, then bring it back to Orwell.

The work cost £70,000 over half of which was raised locally, including sponsorship by 73 people of 233 of the 944 pipes. The project was also supported by Mantles Garage, Wilshers Garage and Accora Ltd, and by grant making trusts including the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust and especially by Thalia WB Community Fund which contributed £21,000.

The concert was given by the acclaimed organist and organ designer, Paul Hale, who played a variety of music ranging from the famous Albinoni "Adagio" to "Variations on Amazing Grace" by contemporary Canadian composer, Denis Bédard. The programme demonstrated the capabilities of the rebuilt organ which Hale described as a mini cathedral organ. The evening was a great success and greatly enjoyed by everyone present, including some who had been rather sceptical about the project!

The church will take part in "Play the Organ 2025" during which anyone interested is welcome to try out the organ and discover the thrill of making music on the "king of instruments". The first opportunity will be between

11.30am and 1pm on Sunday 8th June

(before the "Orwell Open Gardens" begins). Other opportunities can be arranged by contacting the church. It is also planned to arrange a talk about the secrets of organs in general and St Andrew's in particular.

The church hosts regular Sunday afternoon concerts which usually include organ music and further organ concerts will be arranged.

Chris Ivory