



St Mary & St Giles Church Willis Pipe Organ restoration open day

On Saturday 13th September you will have the opportunity to see inside the Willis Pipe Organ in St Mary & St Giles Church, Stony Stratford as work progresses on its restoration, which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. As part of the National Heritage Open Days weekend, Music for all @ SMSG are showing the work in progress on the organ, which commenced in July. We are delighted that the organ builders, FH Browne & Sons Ltd, are participating in the Pipe Organ restoration open day, giving people the chance to look inside the Willis pipe organ and talk to the organ builders to find out about the progress with its restoration and how it works.

In addition to viewing the organ you can also see an exhibition of its history as we discover more in our research, help fill in the history timeline and enjoy delicious refreshments. There will be a variety of other fun activities such as the pipe organ quiz with a chance to win a small prize, a short video about pipe organs, pictures from the video to colour in or draw a your own picture of the pipe organ. In addition you can sponsor a pipe in the organ to help replace the missing pipes or make a donation towards building casework for the front pipes. We will also be welcoming cyclists and walkers taking part in the annual Buckinghamshire Historic Churches trust Ride & Stride event.

The Pipe organ open day is from 10:00 am – 3:30 pm on Saturday 13th September 2014 at St Mary & St Giles Church, Stony Stratford.

See more about the Pipe Organ open day at: <http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/directory/willis-pipe-organ-restoration-work-in-progress-open-day>

ENDS

Notes to editors

About St Mary & St Giles Church and Music@SMSG

The Church of St Mary & St Giles exists to worship Almighty God and to serve the people of the Parish, and further afield, whether they worship or not. For more information about the church see the Parish website at <http://parishstonystratfordcalverton.com/>

Music for all at St Mary & St Giles (Music@SMSG for short) is an increasingly important part of our regular activities, as one of the ways in which we serve the wider community. We founded the Pipe Organ Restoration Action Group in 2006 and this has run over 150 fundraising events with results which demonstrate local support for our Pipe Organ far beyond the church family. We organise a variety of concerts and musical events for the enjoyment of the wider community, as many as possible of these using the Willis Pipe Organ. We also encourage other local musical groups to make use of our church because of its good acoustic and lovely Grade 2* listed setting. For more information see the Music@SMSG page on the organ fund website <http://www.smsg-organ-appeal.co.uk/MusicSMSG.htm>

The Heritage Lottery funded Willis Pipe Organ Restoration & Reach-out Project is led by volunteers from the local community. It focuses on restoring the 3 manual Willis Pipe Organ, researching and interpreting its history, producing audio visual, print and online learning resources to enable exploration of the organ and its history; creating and delivering an Education and Activities programme, recruiting and training more volunteer organ guides and delivering a Community Music Programme using the organ. The Heritage Lottery Fund grant funds the education and outreach activities of the new project and enables the commissioning of the work on the organ. The project started in April; the organ is being restored during 2014-15 and will be brought back into use in 2015-16, in time to be used in Milton Keynes' 50th birthday celebration in 2017.

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported almost 35,000 projects with more than £5.3bn across the UK. www.hlf.org.uk.

For further information, images and interviews, please contact

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About Heritage Open Days

Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to places that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission.

Every year on four days in September, buildings of every age, style and function throw open their doors. It is a once-a-year chance to discover architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of tours, events and activities that bring local history and culture to life.

See more at: <http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk>

Photo of organ dismantling work in progress

