

JOHN BISHOP GIVES HISTORICAL OVERVIEW TO CAPE COD AND ISLANDS AGO CHAPTER

On January 7, 2018, the Cape Cod and the Islands chapter enjoyed a fascinating presentation by John Bishop on the history of organ pistons from antiquity to the present, held at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Osterville, Mass. Bishop operates the Organ Clearing House, is an organ builder, and is an experienced organist. Entitled "From Pythagoras to Pistons," the presentation also provided much of the history of the pipe organ as an instrument, which evolved from several hundred years BCE to the current day. Of particular interest was John Bishop's explanation about how overtones build on different pitches and the role of semi-tones in well-tempered instruments. The origin of the word "stop" regarding organs is the method of turning off a rank, rather than having all ranks performing at the same time. In fact, the organ was the most complex machine in existence all the way up until the Industrial Revolution. Included in the presentation was discussion of the historical importance of those giants of organ construction—Cavaillé Coll and Ernest Skinner—in their enabling of such organists as Widor, Dupré, and Franck among others to perform their monumental compositions.

Submitted by David Martin, Dean

