

Report on The Church Organists' Clinic – Part 2

**Saturday May 12 10.00 am – 12 noon
Grange Park Methodist Church**

On Saturday 12th, a group of around a dozen of us assembled at Grange Park Methodist Church, Enfield for the second workshop given by Roger Carter for members and visitors invited to be ready to play a short piece or a hymn and to benefit from his helpful advice. Of the twelve, six had come to play.

We were very warmly and hospitably welcomed by the Church organist Joyce Beaumont and some helpers from the congregation. The organ is a two manual Walker instrument which makes excellent use of its ranks of pipes by extension to produce a very full and pleasing sound well related to the size of the church and with plenty of variety of stops available.

Arranged around the organ console were some rows of chairs which gave the eleven not playing a good view, perhaps too good for the ease of mind of the player at the time. It is surprising how much confidence is provided by a curtain or a pillar or a dark corner high up somewhere, in which to hide.

Roger is however very skilled at putting players at their ease such that even after just a minute or two at a strange console, it was possible to think about what you were doing as opposed to how you were feeling. The players had a wide range of experience of organ playing from very little to one being well advanced on the taking of organ examinations, yet all had something to learn from each of the sessions.

The emphasis was on the accompaniment of congregations in hymns and chants in which the almost universal issue was steadiness of tempo and the management of bringing the congregation in comfortably and confidently at the start of the hymn and particularly at the start of each succeeding verse. We have all experienced starting a verse with empty lungs because it happened too quickly or conversely standing there with full lungs waiting interminably.

Are you an aspiring organist? Are you a pianist being pressed into service perhaps with uncertainty about the idea? Are you an organist of some experience who would like to improve in some respect? Whichever of these, this workshop, if it is repeated, is for you. The time flies and the workshop is both instructive and very enjoyable.

And when you do come, even as an observer, bring a good voice with you as you will be singing together as a “guinea pig” congregation for each of the participants.

Ted Sharp