

EDOA 50 years young

EDOA member Mrs Hilary Smith, who lives in Enfield Highway, recently brought to my attention that this association has reached a milestone in its history, and was anxious to learn how many of the original members were still around, or were still in action.

It was in 1963 that the idea arose of trying to get the organists of the Enfield Deanery to work more closely together, especially as many of them were getting older, and it was feared that a shortage of suitable people to replace them could occur in the near future.

Alfred Flower, the former organist of St Andrew's Enfield Town prior to Eric Pask, had been responsible for training a number of these who were currently in operation, although I believe that, at that point of time, he had retired from the position. (My memory does not allow me to be clear on these points.) But I do remember he gave me a list of people to contact regarding the possible formation of the Association; but I think Eric had taken up the post by the time that it came into being. I was given the position of secretary, and others included Alwyn Wright - organist of St John's, Clay Hill; William Reeve (St Saviour's Alexandra Park, now alas, no more); James Wilkinson (now deceased); Molly Wade (St Stephen's, Bush Hill Park); Joyce Beaumont - still playing; Peter Smith, and Robert Evans; also Edgar Brown (still playing at St Mark's Barnet Vale as an assistant), and Christopher Garratt who now lives in Goffs Oak but who is unfortunately not well; Mervyn Hogg, now I believe in Ruislip, Mrs. South, and last but by no means least Robin Coxon, at that time organist at Broxbourne Parish Church. There are others that I have not mentioned, that Robin or Eric may be able to recall.

Our aim was to try to encourage people to learn the organ, and also, to develop our church choirs in the various parishes. This included an annual local Choir Festival which worked very well, but in more recent years appears to have fallen by the wayside.

We must not forget of course John Cook who when we started was organist of Holy Trinity, Winchmore Hill prior to his move to St Mary's, Cheshunt, and later of course to be an RSCM Commissioner for the North of England, and the Rev. Jack Beeson, minister of Winchmore Hill U.R.C. He later moved away from the area, as I did in 1984 after my move to St Mary's Burnham on Crouch in Essex, and my 'early retirement' as organist of Enfield Crematorium in 1988. I was 53 at the time.

Since that time I have continued to further Alfred Flower's vision of training young and not so young organists, and currently have eight students, most of whom play regularly at churches in the Colchester Episcopal area of the Chelmsford Diocese. I am also an assistant at the deanery church of St Mary, Bocking, and organist of two village churches in Shalford and Wethersfield, both part of a 4-church benefice.

This keeps me busy and active, as I hope to continue to be for as long as possible. I hope that I can attend a future celebration.

David Felstead

Robin Coxon actually joined EDOA in 1967. *Ed.*