

**President's Message
September 2012**

"One afternoon in 1977 I met a 24 year old genius who entertained and inspired me." (Barry St-John Nevill)

"The organ is a great promoter of discipline and integrity...and the best players welcome the challenge; that young American is a first-rate player." (Sir George Thalben-Ball in 1982)

"He opened my eyes to many new pieces...by his often very descriptive points...and 34 years later I am very grateful." (A non-playing organ enthusiast and friend, summer 2012)

With the passing of Carlo Curley, at the sadly early age of 59, the organ world has lost one of its greatest ambassadors. Big-hearted and larger-than-life, he made a huge impact wherever and whenever he played. When he came to Barnet 25 years ago, the church was packed to the gunnels with an audience of 550 and, indeed, we could have paid his (not insubstantial!) fee twice over. We had a screen, which was rather a novelty, and Carlo lost no opportunity, even in mid-flight, to smile or wave at the camera. His playing was brilliant and seemingly effortless and this was epitomised by his performance of the Dupré 'G minor', not only in Barnet but also, memorably, so I am told, at Queenswood School in the late John Blaskett's day.

A natural communicator, Carlo was marvellous with audiences of all ages. The ten year old son of the friend quoted above was entranced at the Alexander Palace when Carlo described the Pierné 'Trois Pièces' as being like children playing in the playground (the outer movements) and suddenly becoming quiet when the head mistress appears (the 'Cantilène'). What an inspiration he was! Whatever strengths we ordinary mortals may humbly aspire to as performers or enthusiasts, we can all strive in whatever way suits us best to follow Carlo Curley's legendary example as an ambassador for the instrument we love.

With our summer memories behind us – be they of treasured music-making, such as the Proms, or our national pride in the Olympics, or simply the fickle weather – we can now look forward to our own EDOA Golden Jubilee celebrations in 2013. David Felstead has written in this Newsletter about the beginnings and early days of the Association, and do note the title of his article! It is most heartening to read that he continues "to further Alfred Flower's vision of training young and not so young organists". It is very much hoped that David Felstead will be able to accept an invitation to one of our special events next year, such as at St Andrew's, Enfield or at Methuen Park, Muswell Hill. Details of these and all other EDOA events are made known both in our Newsletters and on the EDOA website, and there is every reason to be very grateful to Rosemary Knight for her hard work with both of these. Meanwhile I look forward to seeing as many as can be there for our visit to St Silas, Kentish Town on Saturday 29th September, hosted by Peter Stokes.

Terence Atkins