

**John David Collinge, LRAM, ARCM**

1943–2017

John Collinge, organist at St Mary's Church, Essendon, died on 14th January 2017. The notes which follow are adapted from the address given by Rev. Canon Pauline Higham at his funeral service:

"Our Group of churches, villages and communities is full of people of all ages who have gifts and talents, not least those who make music for us to enjoy and with which to worship God. John David Collinge was no exception. He was one of our organists who, for the past 16 years played predominantly at Essendon, but also as needed in other churches of the Hartford Hundred Group of Parishes.

Born on the 15th April 1943 in war-torn Coventry, John grew up surrounded by his family and being a part of his local church where he was christened and later confirmed.

As John grew up music became very important to him, particularly trombone, organ and piano. He studied at the Royal School of Music and played in several orchestras as well as with the Salvation Army. Later he attended Dartington Hall in Devon to train as a teacher.

He taught music at several local schools: Chancellor's, Haileybury, Monks Walk, Stanborough and Dame Alice Owen; many people remember John as their music teacher. In 1979, he also helped George Hill to found the Hatfield Concert Band (later the Hertfordshire Concert Band), often giving popular pieces new arrangements. The recordings of the Hatfield Concert Band we heard following his funeral service at Essendon on 27th January 2017 paid great tribute not only to his musical ability but also to his encouragement of others to exercise their gifts and skills.

John's family reminded us of his sense of humour and his "Les Dawson" style of piano playing when he was larking around!

He had other talents too — notably his photography, for which he won prizes. He used this ability to help us when he took photographs of each of our churches to be made into postcards to sell. He also made a calendar and a booklet for Essendon Church.

John loved to read lessons in Church and we always loved to hear him. It mattered to him to read God's word as well as he could.

John was taken into hospital at the end of August 2016. Since then, his musical duties have been covered by other people, as he was too ill to play. He faced the last few months with great courage - prior to that all we knew was that he really wasn't well and he was often very down on occasions. Life was sometimes a real struggle for him.

Several people went from our Group to see John regularly in hospital. This cheered him up greatly. I had the privilege of taking him his Christmas Communion at home and later, accompanied by an Essendon churchwarden, of being with John as he slipped from this world into the presence of his Heavenly Father on the 14th January.

We give thanks for John and his gifts so freely shared with all of us. Well done, good and faithful servant - John will be much missed and we give thanks to God for his ministry amongst us (as we give thanks for all our musicians including choristers and bellringers) and all those who share their skills and talents among us. Maybe this Lent will be marked by a dedication made by as many of us

as possible that we will use our gifts, skills, talents and money to serve God and to serve our churches and communities or to renew our commitment to these things."

*Paul Minchinton*

John Collinge was not an EDOA member but was well known locally as a musician and organist. *Ed.*