

President's Message
March 2018

At the Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Ruth Sharp, it came as no surprise that Tewin Church was bursting to overflowing, with as many standing as seated, and as can happen on such occasions one heard so much more than might have been imagined of a wonderful life lived to the full. For us in the EDOA, we recall with affection and gratitude the generous hospitality with which we were welcomed by Ruth and Ted to 'At Homes' over the years. We continue to hold Ted and his family in our thoughts and prayers.

The AGM followed on the same day and it was good to note a healthy turnout, especially for the recital and meal. Robin has the warm thanks of us all for enabling the use of St Francis' Church, Welwyn Garden City and for all his hard work in preparation and on the day, including booking Prezzo's for the enjoyable meal. It was especially good to welcome back Andrew Parnell as guest recitalist in a stunning programme concluding with Rheinberger's magnificent 8th Sonata. Thank you, Andrew!

I would like to endorse the thanks made at the AGM to our hard-working committee. Susan Dingle has stepped down after one term, but we hope she will soon return. Roger Carter and Robert Evans are continuing, as of course are Robin Coxon as treasurer, Michael Hennin as secretary and Rosemary Knight as editor and web coordinator. Words are inadequate to express how grateful I am for all they do. It's pleasing to report that Peter Smith has returned to the committee, and Ruth Lewis has kindly responded to our plea to fill a vacancy.

It has been sad to learn of the demise of the New School of Organ Studies (please see Tim Easter's tribute) and the long-standing supportive recital series at Marlborough Road, begun in 1995. The first of my eighteen was at the invitation of David Cartwright, but thereafter it was Robin at the helm. All credit to Robin for his devoted planning week after week for almost two decades, and I would also mention Mary Cook and Basil Lewis for their constant support. Whenever I was there simply to turn pages (and press the odd piston, as one does), I was always struck by Robin's gracious acknowledgement of this lowly role. BUT, page-turners beware! Recently at Cornhill, Jonathan Rennert developed cramp in a leg and Benjamin Newlove found himself sliding onto the seat to take over for the last page or so of ...Parry's Fantasia and Fugue in G of all things!! Amazingly, there was no discernible break in the music.

Any glance at the *Organists' Review* will show that it is worth every penny. This month's has two brief articles that are particularly apposite to our work as organists. Alan Thurlow has written about the On Organ Fund, a recently established charity for supplying modest grants to support work on pipe organs: www.onorganfund.org.uk. The Organist's Toolkit features James McVinnie on the accompaniment of Anglican chants, with many helpful ideas, applicable also to other accompanying requirements. Such practical insights are relevant to the workshops the EDOA offers from time to time, thanks to Roger Carter. The next is on Saturday morning 21st April at St James's Church, Enfield Highway. Do consider taking part, in however modest a way, for you will not be disappointed; and if you have been a previous participant, you are welcome to come back for more! www.edoa.org.uk

Terence Atkins

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