

## President's Message March 2022

The debt of gratitude we owe to Robin Coxon is incalculable. His remarkable length of service of 49 years as our Treasurer must surely be something of a record, unbeaten and likely never to be surpassed within the whole of the Incorporated Association of Organists. As an expression of our tremendous thanks, Robin was presented at the AGM with a substantial gift voucher and Mary with a houseplant in acknowledgement of her constant support. When Robin gave his final treasurer's report, it was the end of an era.

St Mary Magdalene, Enfield, proved a good venue and the attendance encouraging, as was the case with The Jolly Farmers for our convivial meal. In thanking everyone who helped, I make particular mention of Michael Hennin, Jonathan Marten and, not least, Ruth Lewis for the much appreciated welcome tea upon arrival. Jonathan has kindly reviewed Damon Ying's splendid recital, and we thank Damon most warmly.

Trying to maintain our committee numbers is a constant source of anxiety and so it is a relief to report that Rosemary Knight and Ruth were willing to be co-opted and Roger Carter and Peter Stokes willing to stand once again. They have our grateful thanks. Sadly, Martin Penny has felt the need to resign owing to other commitments, but it is reassuring that he will continue to support us.

Finding a worthy successor to Robin had been another worry, so it is extremely gratifying that Matt Tattersall has taken up the mantle. He is Rosemary's assistant organist at Leverstock Green, and it is just possible that some gentle persuasion was applied! It was good that Matt could join us at the AGM, and we welcome him as EDOA Treasurer with our thanks and best wishes.

Peter Stokes was in good form at St Stephen's, Walbrook the other Friday lunchtime. Bach's under-performed F minor was imaginatively presented with a couple of the 'Liebster Jesu' preludes inserted before the fugue. Another pleasant surprise was Stainer's Prelude and Fugue in C. The recital ended with a fine improvisation on 'Ave Maris Stella'. This was a reminder that improvising is one of Peter's strengths which he has shared with us before and, we hope, will be willing to do so again before long.

Walbrook was the last venue where I heard Francis Jackson and there are many accounts of other recitals by him when well into his nineties. My first occasion of hearing him was at the RCO's 'Hoffnung-ish' *Organ in Sanity and Madness* at the Royal Albert Hall in 1966. This began with the tossing of a coin to see who would play the Bossi Etude Symphonique. Simon Preston won (or lost), but we all knew that Dr Jackson would have made just as good a job of it. We were later treated to the piece that owed its initial popularity in this country to him, 'That' Toccata by Widor. There are many fine obituaries (I point you to Simon Lindley's in *CMQ*) and of course stories abound, such as when the head chorister was despatched to the organ loft just before Evensong to say "Dr Jackson, we don't know the anthem" and being told "Never mind, you'll love it!"

Jackson's *Music for a Long While* is a good read, as is his biography of his equally legendary predecessor at York, Edward Bairstow. The reminiscences of former cathedral organists have lately been added to by Roy Massey and now Barry Rose, the latter's intriguingly entitled *Sitting on a Pin*.

It was a disappointment that the Bloomsbury Organ Day had to be cancelled, but thankfully the monthly Saturday afternoon recitals and (not least!!) buffets are restored, starting on Saturday, 26th March at 4:00 with the brilliant young Sebastian Heindl from Leipzig. As has been noted many times before, we are so fortunate to be placed within easy access of an abundance of organ recitals and so much wonderful music-making. A recent, personal highlight was hearing the Hertfordshire Chorus under David Temple in St Albans Abbey sing Elgar's rare *The Black Knight* and Parry's hitherto unjustly neglected since 1891 *De Profundis*.

This newsletter is an invaluable source of listings of many recitals and other events, for which our thanks to Rosemary are inadequate. Look out also for planned EDOA events, including a visit to the organ at St Mary's, Potters Bar on May 14th, and do start preparing something to play in the next members' recital, for which we will be returning to St Mary Magdalene Church, Enfield on June 11th.

*Terence Atkins*