

President's Message April 2025

We were well hosted for the AGM at St Michael's, Highgate, and I thank Michael Hennin for securing this venue with such alacrity when our previous plans fell through at the last minute. The facilities were good and Rosemary is thanked for providing the welcoming tea. Words are simply inadequate to express my gratitude to the committee for its devotion to the EDOA. Michael Hennin and Matt Tattersall remain as Secretary and Treasurer respectively and Rosemary Knight has been co-opted to continue as Editor and website keeper. Roger Carter and Peter Stokes are completing their terms and it is most pleasing that Ruth Lewis has been able to rejoin. The old mantra is repeated: new members welcome! Jonathan Gregory's recital (reviewed in this newsletter) was an absolute delight, enjoyed by a goodly number – thank you Jonathan! Finally, hunger and thirst were sated at the nearby Flask, amidst much lively fellowship.

We were saddened at the end of January to hear of the death of our distinguished member, John Herbert Norman, a true 'elder statesman' and friend of the EDOA and rightly described by The Telegraph as "the last of a great British organ-building dynasty". It is hard to believe he was 93, being so active and enthusiastic, not least when promoting his book *Organ Works*, less than five years ago.

Following the success of the event in Chelmsford two years ago, plans are now well in hand for the IAO Eastern Regional Organ Day on Saturday 31st May in Cambridge. It will take place at the RC Church of Our Lady and The English Martyrs, Hills Road, CB2 1JR, from 10:30 to 16:30. One of the highlights will be a composite recital by players from the various associations involved and we in the EDOA are pleased to be represented by two of our younger members, Joel Colyer and Luke Jones, who will each play a piece. Visit iao.org.uk/eeod/ for further details and tickets.

The monthly Saturday afternoon organ concerts at 4:00 in Bloomsbury Baptist Church are always good value, not least because the instrument, the screens and the buffet are all superb and everything's free (donations welcome, of course!). This month (April 26th) there's an added extra, for the internationally renowned recitalist and teacher Jeremiah Stephenson will also be leading a workshop on every aspect of the organ, from 14:00 to 15:30. This is one of many events taking place for Play the Organ Year 2025, in association with the Royal College of Organists. Looking ahead, Jonathan Gregory is planning one for Saturday 13th September from 10:00 at St Mary's, Monken Hadley, with himself giving a concluding early evening recital at 19:00; further details in due course. A reminder of the website for everything you need to know about PTOY: <https://www.rco.org.uk/play>.

Somewhat akin to Samuel Sebastian Wesley, his illustrious predecessor at Leeds Parish Church (now Minster), Simon Lindley was a force to be reckoned with and the world of church music is much the poorer with his passing. Obituaries, like funeral tributes, can reveal charming nuggets and in Simon's case one learns that his great-grandmother sang the Angel in the première of The Dream of Gerontius. The finest performance I can recall of the Duruflé Requiem was given by Leeds PC Choir under Simon's direction in the late 1980s in St Michael's, Cornhill. It is worth remembering that, prior to Leeds, Simon was Peter Hurford's first full-time assistant at the Abbey, whilst also directing the music at St Albans School, for which choir he commissioned some of John Rutter's most engaging Christmas items, such as 'Donkey Carol' and 'Jesus Child'.

The recent death of Nicholas Kynaston has also been noted with sorrow. What an outstanding performer he was, being appointed to Westminster Cathedral when only 19, and what an absolute inspiration to generations of aspiring young organists from the 1960s onwards! Kynaston was one of the privileged few whose appearances at the weekly 5:55s at the Royal Festival Hall went into double figures, occasions awaited with eager anticipation. His recordings were also legendary, including popular repertoire from the Royal Albert Hall when that instrument was not heard so often. Above all, I would commend his 1977 disc of Vierne's Sixth on the remarkable Klais organ of Ingolstadt Minster. Incidentally, if you would like to hear the Vierne performed live, go to St James', Muswell Hill, on Saturday 5th July at 12:00 noon for a recital by EDOA member Damon Ying; you will not be disappointed!

Meanwhile, I'm looking forward to a fascinating day in Cambridge on the last Saturday of May and hope to see you there!

Terence Atkins
