

## Obituaries

\* \* \* \* \*

- **Joyce Beaumont**
- **Peter Smith**

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Joyce Beaumont FRCO LRAM**

**5 July 1937 – 7 November 2023**

Joyce Beaumont, a native of north Lincolnshire, was born Joyce Miriam Banks in 1937 at Kirton Lindsey, where her father – Charles Frederick Lesley Banks - was a wind miller and corn merchant. The family lived next to the mill where he ran his business.



Her mother – Edith Alma Banks - was very musical and taught her to play the piano from a very early age. It soon became clear that Joyce had a natural ability at the keyboard and she was soon playing hymns and simple pieces such as *Schumann's Album for the Young*.

Joyce attended Brigg High School gaining 10 O-levels, and immersed herself in activities of the Methodist Church, developing a passion for

the organ which remained throughout her life. At 16, Joyce began formal lessons on piano, theory and organ in Scunthorpe, where she travelled twice a week.

In 1955, Joyce came to Furzedown College in London for teacher training. She studied organ at the Royal Academy of Music with Douglas Hawkrige, gaining her LRAM in organ teaching and her FRCO with the Harding Prize for top marks in the paperwork section in 1962.

Having qualified as a teacher, Joyce embarked on a teaching career, during which she taught class music, O-, A-, GCSE Music and theory. Her first paid job as an organist was at Middlesex Hospital in London, which involved playing for two services each Sunday attended mostly by nurses. Joyce also joined the Kingsway Choral Society, which later became City of London Choir, where she was the deputy rehearsal accompanist.

In 1963, Joyce married Alan Beaumont BA (Hons) LGSM ARCM, the then organist of Mildmay Park Methodist Church, at Kirton Lindsey Methodist Church where she had grown up.

In 1964, she became organist and choir director at Trinity-at-Bowes in Bowes Park where she

remained for over forty three years, with her husband Alan as her assistant.

In her memoir, Joyce wrote:

“My first Sunday was on my birthday. I set off, buoyed up by my fairly recently acquired FRCO and youthful enthusiasm. I was warmly welcomed by everyone and immediately felt at home. There was a mixed adult choir of about 26, nicely balanced, very well trained and very experienced. They sang an introit and anthem each Sunday evening so my job was to try and continue this tradition.

“The choir librarian was a great help and support, always had the music ready and was absolutely dedicated to the job and the choir. Alan was my great support in everything and became the rehearsal accompanist. He was also assistant organist as his church had closed. We made a brilliant team and I stayed there for over 40 very happy years.

“I really enjoyed training the choir. We were able to tackle ambitious anthems, some of which were new to me, some which I introduced. The choir had been used to presenting a musical service each Palm Sunday so we continued that tradition, doing Stainer’s *Crucifixion*, Williamson’s *Procession of Palms* excerpts from Handel’s *Messiah* and many more.

“The choir enjoyed working on more demanding music. We presented a secular programme at the Wesley Guild regularly and had a lot of fun with very varied part songs. Alan was very involved, both accompanying and writing amusing and informative scripts to link our songs. It was obvious he was a very talented wordsmith, and the choir loved his description of their activities in the Secretary’s reports at the AGM. I was able to play for many big services including an Ordination Service for the Methodist Conference.”

It was during this time that Joyce joined the Enfield and District Organists’ Association and soon became involved in all its activities. The EDOA arranged an annual Members’ Recital at various local churches, so Joyce was able to become familiar with different organs and prepare more interesting and demanding pieces. There was also a Choirs Festival each year, when members’ choirs came together.

When the EDOA was celebrating an important anniversary in 2013, Joyce reflected on the great influence the EDOA had over her musical career. Joyce wrote:

“It must have been early in 1967 when I picked up a flyer at my church, then Bowes Park Methodist, advertising the Association. Our daughter was only a few months old, so leaving her in the care of my husband Alan, I attended my first meeting at Joyce and Prue Lambert’s home in Gordon Hill.

I was given a very warm welcome and David Felstead introduced me to everyone by name. Obviously, I could not take in all the names but eventually I got to know them and if memory serves they were Eric Pask, Robin Coxon, Peter Smith, David Holliday, Alwyn Wright, Chris Garratt, Rev. Jack Beeson, Robert Evans, David Felstead, Ken Lea, Prue Lambert, Margaret Williams, Bill Smart and John Cook. It was pretty crowded! Apologies if I have forgotten anyone. The format of these meetings was firstly to deal with any business, planning future events, sharing news and advertising our own events, followed by a talk or discussion led by one of our own members or a

visitor, or looking at and choosing music for a forthcoming Choirs' Festival.

“These Festivals were the highlight of the year for many. Not every church could boast a full Soprano Alto Tenor Bass (SATB) choir but every church could send their singers to take part in music they could not have tackled in their local situation and have the exhilarating experience of being part of a sometimes 200 strong choir.

“We also included some simpler pieces which were accessible to the smaller groups, thus enriching the music in all our churches. The Festivals were always so impressive with the different coloured gowns, a very well organised procession and fine organ music throughout, with the choirs conducted by one of our own or a visiting conductor. I know my own choir really valued and enjoyed these occasions and we were the only Methodist choir taking part at that time so to experience Choral Evensong was something new for most of them!

“The real benefits of my membership were still to come for me personally. So many of my organ students came from that source; Eric Pask invited me to accompany three concerts with his ‘St.Andrew’s Singers’, Jack Beeson invited me with Alan and our daughter to do several concerts at his church, Winchmore Hill URC, David Felstead offered me practice facilities at St.James, Enfield Highway while my church was being rebuilt and Bridget Marshall gave my name to the Rev.Chad Varah as a lunch-time recitalist at St.Stephen Walbrook in London where I gave an annual recital for fourteen years. I was most grateful for all this encouragement and help.

“I was very flattered and somewhat disbelieving when, as I was leaving one meeting, Jack Beeson said I should consider conducting the next Choirs' Festival. It could be at my own church, now newly rebuilt and renamed Trinity-at-Bowes Methodist. Jack would write the service suitable for a Free Church. After much thought I said I would only do it if Eric accompanied, but at the afternoon rehearsal I was so paralysed with nerves I made them sing every verse of *My song is love unknown* before I gathered myself enough to take charge. Then I had the time of my life!

“Our regular meetings were led by a Chairman who did a two year stint and after Margaret Williams nominated me I became the first woman to hold this office. In those days women organists were quite rare and I had previously been turned down after applying for an organist's post simply because I was not a man! They would never get away with it today! My first aim as Chairperson was to make sure that meetings (by then held at Eric's and Pam's house in The Orchard, Enfield) would finish by 10pm as they had previously gone on until well after 11.00 and I and others felt this was taking unfair advantage of people's hospitality. I was ably supported by Bill Smart as Secretary and at a later date, when I did a second stint as Chair, David Holliday was my right man as Secretary.

“I have recently served since its inception on the Teachers' Forum, a small group which is of great value to teachers and students alike, due to the students' concerts and workshops we have arranged.

“The friends and contacts I have made during the forty-six years of my membership have been of immense value to me, enriching and enhancing my life as an Organist and Choir Director. I want to pay tribute to the elder statesmen who believed in me and gave me opportunities to develop my abilities and confidence. I hope we are all still

doing this for our younger members.”.

Joyce was most recently organist at Grange Park Methodist Church – *The Church in the Orchard*. After retirement, she continued to enjoy playing and teaching the organ. She survived her husband by ten years.

Joyce will be lovingly remembered by her daughter Sarah and family, and all those who were privileged to know her as a colleague, a teacher or a friend.

*Sarah Beaumont  
January 2024*

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Peter Smith 1944–2023**

The passing of Peter Smith on Christmas Day 2023 has taken from us one of the most able and colourful individuals. He made an enormous and priceless contribution to the cause of music education in general and church music in particular. To quote from Geoffrey Roberts’ book *Treading on the Camomile* (a former headmaster at Bishop Stopford School where Peter worked for many years): “Our debt to Peter Smith for his outstanding music making is very great indeed”.

I personally knew Peter for 60 years, and was involved in many of his church and school music-making activities. He joined my family for 38 consecutive years for Christmas dinner and Boxing Day.

Born in 1944 in Edmonton, his attraction to music was evident at a very early age, His mother told me that when he was a toddler the family went for a seaside holiday and one day Peter went missing. After much frantic searching, he was discovered sitting on a wall listening to a brass band. When they stopped playing he clapped his hands and shouted “More, more, more, more. Play more!”



Peter joined the choir of All Saints’, Edmonton and had piano and organ lessons with Ernest Grove. He attended Latymer School, where his musical talents flourished. Following A-levels he became a student at Durham University, successfully gaining a BA degree in music. He fell under the spell of the legendary and charismatic Dr Arthur Hutchings, whose impish sense of fun was quickly appreciated by Peter.

On leaving Durham, Peter taught briefly at Tottenham County School, then at Eversley Primary School, and then finally at the newly created Bishop Stopford School in Enfield.

In partnership with his colleague Charles Whitehead, a musical tradition of the very highest standard was achieved. Choirs came out of the woodwork. I was privileged to have played the organ for nearly all the madrigal choir services when they sang at Bath Abbey, Tewkesbury Abbey, Bristol, Chichester, Gloucester, Hereford, St Albans, St Edmundsbury, Salisbury, Wells and Winchester Cathedrals as well as Southwell Minster. They were splendid occasions.

The numerous Bishop Stopford school choirs performed a repertoire worthy of the Royal Choral Society with standards to match. The list of music performed at concerts was extraordinary. This included full scale oratorios and masses often with full orchestral accompaniment. A key feature of the choir form was the annual singing week in the Michaelmas term. Venues included Bradwell, Seasalter, Walsingham and Winchester.

Peter and I shared an active interest in organ building and were involved in a number of transplants, organs being rescued from redundant buildings. He was the guiding light in the installation of the fine organ in Bishop Stopford School.



Peter gave sterling service as organist and choirmaster to All Saints' Edmonton, St Mary's Cheshunt (for over thirty years) and St Mary's Ware (for eight years). If Peter did have his Krakatoa moments, he was driven by a great desire to achieve the very highest standards possible. His exacting manner did sometimes test his relationships with others and that included the glass door of his classroom (R9) at school.

In his last years Peter endured increasing and serious health problems with great fortitude but he never ever grumbled. He was forever grateful to the NHS who did so much in caring for him.

I'll end with a quote from a light-hearted book on musicians. "Organists are a strange race. The demands of the instruments they play require the use of two hands and two feet simultaneously.

The manipulation of countless stops comes with it. There's no doubt organists are in the superman class." Peter was indeed a superman.

He will be greatly missed.

*Robert Evans*



*Photo: Nathan Collins*

Many of Peter's former colleagues, students and friends, including two EDOA members, formed a choir for his funeral, conducted by Jonathan Dods. Robert Evans was the organist.  
*Ed.*

\* \* \* \* \*