

## Anthony J Walker

I first met Tony in June 1980 ... my first visit to the Lewisham Recorded Music Society, held in the old Bromley Road Public Library, next to Catford Bus Garage. Indeed, it was Tony, and his great friend Audrey Rhys-Tyler, (as Chairman and Secretary respectively), who made me particularly welcome. I soon found out that Tony was a founder member who had joined as a school student.

Already a fixture at LRMS, he remained its Chairman for most of the subsequent years up until the group's dissolution in 2021. There were just 7 years during this time that the chair passed to me.

His friendship with Audrey led him to serve for many years on the committee of the Southeast London Regional Group, acting as Secretary for a number of them as well as providing an introduction to the workings of the National Federation (Audrey being a long-time Committee Member). Attending AGMs (up and down the country) he was also a regular at their Annual Musical Weekends, initially at Hoddesdon, and then Cambridge, Corby and Daventry. Concurrently, from the early 1970s, he was a stalwart of the Torbay Musical Weekend, held for many years at the Palace Hotel Torquay, and latterly The Grand.

Great though his organizational skills were, both locally and regionally, Tony's love of music expressed itself as a regular programme presenter to societies across the region—from Banstead to West Wickham—as well as reaching out further into Kent, to Gillingham and Ightham for instance.

Although his presentations centred on British repertoire, echoing his love of British history, chivalry, architecture and the countryside, this was not exclusive. As recently as 2017 his programme on the LRMS card was entitled "Peter the Great", an examination of Tchaikovsky. His inclusion of the Theme and Variations finale of the Third Suite gave him particular pleasure as it introduced, for many in the audience, an unknown gem in the Russian composer's repertoire.

Moreover, on digging around a little I discovered, to my great surprise, that his first programme, presented during Lewisham's first season, was on ... WAGNER!!! Here is a quote, from a draft submission to the SE Region, written in his own hand, about that very occasion.

*For my first programme (29<sup>th</sup> May 1964) I was so nervous that my knees were literally shaking throughout the first 60 minutes. Moral support (however) was close-at-hand; several school friends and a couple of relatives being in the audience. Though not quite so nervous today when addressing the society, I do sometimes feel like the early Christian in the arena of the Coliseum. And then he's put in brackets (i.e. Rome not the one in St Martins Lane!).*

Katie Severs, Secretary at the West Wickham Society, wrote this to me on being apprised of Tony's death:

*He was such a charming **gentleman**, and I spent many a pleasant meal with him at Torbay, (acknowledging my mobility issues) he was very kind helping me (in many ways) especially over dinner and at coffee times. He will be greatly missed by all of us in the Music Societies who knew him.*

Yes he was organised, yes he was efficient, and yes accomplished at managing...but he could also be friendly, good company, and particularly **solicitous** of those he gauged needing help and assistance. Many in the movement will mourn his passing. I know I have lost an old, and very valued friend.

**Ian Bailey**  
**Secretary & Programme Compiler, Orpington RMS**



**LRMS 50<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY – SEPTEMBER 2013 – THE LAST FOUNDER MEMBERS CUTTING THE CAKE - BERNARD SMITH (left) AND TONY WALKER**