

Alexander (Lex) S. Dunlop - a tribute

Lex Dunlop began playing the organ in the family church which was Livingstone Church in Stevenston, Ayrshire. He of course had had piano lessons but the church organist gave him lessons and encouraged him to learn the instrument. His first position was as organist in St. John's Church in Ardrossan where he played for 10 years (1958-68). While there he started having lessons at Glasgow Cathedral from Wilfrid Emery, after whose death he continued to learn from John Turner at the cathedral. In 1968 he moved to be the organist and choirmaster at St. Cuthbert's Church in Saltcoats where he remained for another ten years until he was appointed Rector of Blairgowrie High School in 1978. After deputising off and on in various churches in Perthshire he took up the post in Blairgowrie Parish Church (then St. Andrew's) where he remained until ill health forced him to finally give up last Christmas.

I have personal memories of Lex: shortly after I was appointed to the organist's post at Coupar Angus Abbey in 1996, my church was approached by Grampian TV to record three services for broadcasting later that year. I asked Lex for help in the music and choir side of the services and he immediately agreed. I was impressed by the way he encouraged the joint choirs, in what I would call a quiet yet commanding way.

I also met him briefly a few years later in Ninewells hospital in Dundee. He was at that time involved in a Church of Scotland project - the creation of the hymnary that became "CH4"; unfortunately his views, which I must state that I agreed with, were not those of the rest of the committee and he was relieved of his involvement!

He had other interests outside his Church work; he was a very keen gardener and very proud of his garden. His interest in flowers, chrysanthemums, sweet peas and roses was well known; he won many prizes in flower shows, especially for roses in which he was an expert.

He will be sadly missed not only as a very talented musician, but as a family man and condolences are extended to all his immediate family.

I would like to thank his wife Elspeth and niece Esther Jack, for their help in this tribute.

Ian McLagan
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