



Donald Lane, 1935–2022

Donald was born to Violet and Stanley Lane on 19 February 1935. Sadly, his female twin died at birth. Donald's brother, Robert, was born two years later. The family lived in Morden, Surrey. Methodism featured importantly in the boys' upbringing. In due course, Donald went to Rutlish, the local grammar school where his love of science, maths and music was developed.

Further significant factors in Donald's early years included the Second World War which affected his primary education. He was often sent to Devon to stay at his grandfather's farm to avoid the London bombing. This fostered a love of animals and an interest in trains. Donald and his daughter, Tess, returned to the hamlet, Salmon Hutch, in 2006 on a family history holiday and found his grandfather's cottage where he stayed – a simple one-room wattle and daub house. They were lucky to see it since it had a destruction notice pinned to the door and survived only one week more.

Donald started piano lessons at the age of seven. He attended Trinity College of Music in London on Saturdays and entered numerous piano competitions. His piano playing was the vehicle for him to get a scholarship to Oxford University. He came from a family which survived generations of poverty and poor education so had no idea about universities. It wasn't until much later that he understood the enormity of his choice to go to Christ Church, Oxford. He had chosen that location merely because some of his mother's family lived nearby.

His brother, Robert, was born with cystic fibrosis and was a very poorly child in and out of Great Ormond Street Hospital. Despite his affliction, Robert attended scouts with Donald. Donald was incredibly proud when Robert achieved the Cornwell Badge for 'bravery in the face of adversity' for his positive mood and perseverance. They both loved cricket and would often watch games at Lord's. Robert was well known by the cricket teams because of his illness so he and Donald often got special treatment.

Robert died from cystic fibrosis at the age of 15 and this had a profound effect on the rest of Donald's life. On entering Christ Church, Donald switched to study medicine, specialising in respiratory medicine, instead of chemistry. He did his DPhil at Manchester in 1970 on ventilator control in patients with lung diseases and was appointed a consultant in general medicine at the Radcliffe Infirmary and a respiratory consultant at the Churchill Hospital in 1971 until his retirement in 2000. He developed a particular interest in asthma and cystic fibrosis and, with Dr Anthony Storr, wrote a popular book in 1979 for patients on asthma. His contributions to respiratory medicine in the UK were considerable and he was made the annual president of the British Thoracic Society in 1994. He was involved in the creation of the National Asthma Campaign in 1990 and was vice-president from 1993 for many years.

One of the other impacts of his brother's early death was for him to express himself through music; his first piece of serious composition was in memory of his brother. The setting of Psalm 23, *The Lord is my Shepherd*, was written in 1958 but first performed at Donald's 80th birthday celebrations in 2015 in this church.

He stumbled on Wesley Place while house-hunting in Deddington with a friend. They peered through the window and Donald made the decision to buy. He

loved its quirky chimney piece and remembered the pleasure of designing the stained-glass window and hung his great collection of Christ Church engravings and other pictures, not least a few of his own watercolours. Buying Wesley Place was a decision he never regretted, and it proved an excellent base for pursuing his artistic interests. He moved to Deddington in 1996 and organised many musical events, especially encouraging young talent. He composed more than 75 pieces.

Donald became a patron of Music in Adderbury which provided high calibre chamber concerts just down the road. When that season ended there were Sunday Coffee Concerts in Oxford, along with treats like the annual Lieder Festival and a host of others, not least the occasional performance by Donald's own Radcliffe Orchestra. Thanks to his wonderful carer, Beatrice, who also passionately loved classical music, the Coffee Concert trips continued right up to the outbreak of Covid.

Two weeks before he died his family arranged a private concert at Chacombe Park Care Home – a string quartet led by Chris Windass – originally a birthday gift but in the end his final concert.

Donald joined several others in starting the Deddington Festival, with particular interest in its classical music component. Possibly his most notable performance was the *Four Queens*, a four-movement work for orchestra and choir; Donald's music and Norman Stone's words, conducted by a young Alex Soddy. In a lighter vein he happily adapted music for the Deddington Players' annual panto. He wrote 'Musical Notes' for the *Deddington News*, providing information on musical events of all kinds around the village. At home his baby grand was put to good use accompanying local musicians, playing together for fun or preparing for music exams.

Donald was a stalwart of the Book Club where his analysis and knowledge of books was appreciated and his choice of book keenly awaited. He continued to take part in Writers in Oxford while also becoming a participant in the Deddington Writers' Group whose members met regularly to critique each other's work and set up a competition for both adults and children which received entries from across the country. It became part of Deddington Festival and continued until there were no longer group members left to manage the time-consuming assessment process.

***Contributions from Donald's family,
Professor John Stradling and Diana Marshall***