



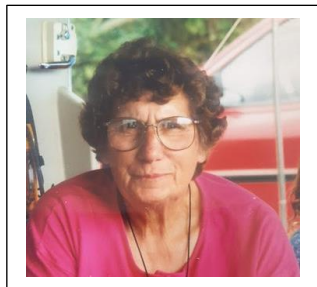
# NEWSLETTER

February 2021

[www.waveneysinfonia.org.uk](http://www.waveneysinfonia.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 277743

## A tribute to Olive Jenner



Many of you will already know that our dear friend and co-founder, Olive Jenner sadly died last April 2020. The orchestra had hoped to dedicate a concert to her memory last autumn but events took a different course and so far, we have been unable to fulfil these plans. In the meantime, we thought it would be appropriate to pay tribute to Olive in the form of a newsletter; the concert will come later!

**Michael Taylor, Chairman**

**\*\*Please see updates on playing opportunities on last page\*\***

## Memories of 'Mum'

Mum was a life-long lover of music – classical music that is – nothing too modern, which she branded 'squeaky gate!' She inherited this love from her mother and enjoyed singing with the church choir at the old High Street Methodist Church. In her turn she encouraged a love of music in her daughters. Elizabeth remembers singing with mum as she was riding along on the child seat of mum's bike. Mum encouraged our early forays into instrument learning. Christine chose the flute. Catherine came home with a trumpet, which was promptly sent back, in favour of the oboe! and Elizabeth played the clarinet.

It was while mum was working as a Teaching Assistant that a new opportunity for music presented itself. Richard Featherstone came to the school to teach violin and asked if anyone could help the children with their practise during the week. Step forward, Olive Jenner! And so, started a new phase in mum's life, which saw her taking up the violin again, after a break of 40 years!

Mum was there when Richard first had the idea of forming an orchestra for adults and students to bring classical music of a high standard to Lowestoft. Both Olive and husband Roy, were great champions of 'Waveney Sinfonia' from the beginning, and both worked hard, taking on a variety of roles, over many years for the society. Mum excelled in feeding people. She would host the soloists and conductor, providing what the grandchildren named a 'Waveney tea' and a space to relax before a concert. Many of the pupils mum taught, went on to play in the orchestra, some returning as soloists. She encouraged families to come to concerts, and this extended to her own family. Many is the time that she would be at the back of the hall with a small grandchild asleep on her lap. Mum regularly sold tickets to friends and shared publicity with the U3A music group and the coffee mornings she attended until her stroke in 2018.

Mum loved the music of Mendelssohn, especially 'The Hebrides Overture'. One of the highlights of her many trips to Scotland was taking the boat out to Staffa (snapped here with granddaughter Naomi and son-in-law David, both regular Waveney players).





For her eightieth birthday she went on a canal boat holiday with her family. Mum was never afraid of hard work and getting stuck in.

***Christine, Catherine & Elizabeth***

### **Our conductor writes:**

When we begin to play our concerts again it will be hard to believe that Olive Jenner is not with us. For all my time (some forty years) I have been with Waveney Sinfonia, from the start Olive and her much missed husband Roy were the mainstays of the founding of the orchestra. They had a belief that good music could be made in Lowestoft, collaborated with Richard Featherstone, and I am so glad I was asked to conduct. Roy's quiet, determined efficiency (I still keep his wonderful hand written letters to me!) was complemented as it was in their family life by Olive's 'get up and go', strictness and indomitable personality. She was, though, the most kind and understanding friend to me in good times and bad. She was from a background of hard work, no nonsense and had an uncompromising knowledge of what she liked and what she believed in.

She, not even really being a violinist as such, took up all the possible violin teaching Suzuki style she could, along with Richard and following him, the late, lamented Peter Youngs. She became a testament to the devotion she had for a good standard in music and education. We talked a great deal the many times I was given wonderful hospitality at Park Road. We certainly 'wound one another up' and 'pulled legs' and I was certainly told if I was out of order.



But I knew that there was mutual respect for what we both wanted. The best music and an unerring instinct for smelling a 'fraud' or a self-seeker! A standard such as Roy and Olive always instilled in their three amazing daughters.

Olive had principle but could be difficult. I am sure she persuaded many a youngster to do something they might not want to do! Even her grandchildren! Even me! But over the pre-concert family teas with wholesome food, I saw love, order and a routine that kept us all going. I regretted her ill health and am sad that we have not yet been able to pay a musical tribute. Olive was unique; steadfast in believing with music making she could, with her abilities, help run something very special. She has left a great legacy as did Roy with Waveney Sinfonia. She meant a great deal to me and I shall miss her so very much.

***Adrian Brown***

### **...and on behalf of the grandchildren:**

When I was a child I always looked forward to the big festivals. For me there were three main ones – Christmas, Easter and Waveney. I soon got the idea of how things worked. Each celebration shared a basic format – we would go to my grandparents' house, which would be full of people and buzzing with activity, I'd get the chance to play with my cousins, there would be lots of delicious food, and we'd go to church. But each festival also had its own individual traditions – the tree and presents at Christmas, the chocolate eggs at Easter, and of course the concert at Waveney.

I assumed that friends and family members that didn't spend Waveney with us would be celebrating with their own concert elsewhere. I was quite surprised when, at the age of about six, I realised that Waveney wasn't actually a worldwide event but happened only in Lowestoft. It turned out that its full name was the Waveney Sinfonia, our much-loved local orchestra. My grandparents were both heavily involved in the running and organisation of the orchestra, my parents and aunt and uncle played regularly in the concerts, and my grandparents' house was on the same road as the church where the concerts took place, providing a handy bolthole for hungry or lost musicians (not to mention the conductor!).

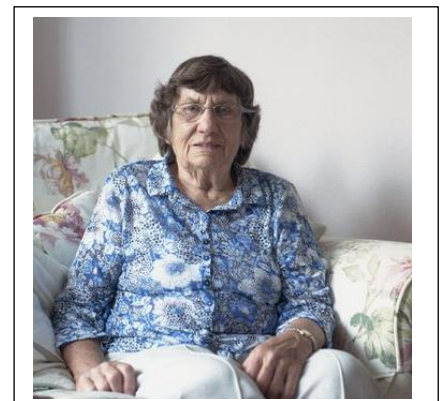


'Waveney weekends' were one of the highlights of my childhood and I loved the purposeful atmosphere and the familiar traditions. There was Grandpa's yellow van (which I now know was actually owned by LEC van hire) in which he would transport hefty items like the timpani. I remember on a few occasions being lucky enough to get a ride in the front – it was very exciting sitting so high up. Grandma would always have a long list of tasks – selling tickets, putting up posters and making sure everyone was well fed. The famous 'Waveney tea' has set countless orchestra members up for a stellar performance, and the leftovers were always a welcome accompaniment to the post-concert debriefs which took place late into the night.

My involvement in the concerts increased as I got older. As a small child I would go with Grandma to listen to part of the rehearsal on Saturday afternoon, but as my bedtime got later, I would go to the first half of the concert itself. At the time I was only vaguely aware of the names of the pieces I was listening to, but the music formed a core part of my early memories and I still feel a sense of homecoming whenever I hear a piece typical of Waveney's repertoire (for example Mozart, Haydn or Beethoven).

When I was old enough to stay until the very end of the concert, I discovered a whole new source of excitement – helping to take the stage down! That stage was more complicated than the one we use now – lots of boards, held up by a variety of wooden blocks that looked like mini castles. All the bits had to be stacked up in a very narrow hidden cupboard at the back of the church, which to me seemed like a mysterious secret cave. From then on, I was always keen to stay until the end of the concert – even if my hands got tired from all the clapping we had to do – so that I could go in there for another look.

A few years later Grandma recruited me to sell programmes, with my brother and cousins joining in when they each got old enough. Then, when I was fourteen, I played with the orchestra for the first time – a truly unforgettable experience. It is amazing to be part of that big team of people working hard together to create a wonderful sound. I have been hooked on orchestral playing ever since then, and I will always look fondly on those childhood memories and the insights I got 'behind-the-scenes'. I look forward to a time when we can be together safely again, but for now may I wish you all a very happy Waveney.



**Naomi Adelson**



**Elizabeth Skinner** began playing violin with Richard and Olive whilst she attended Kirkley Primary School. She now plays with many orchestras across the region including Waveney Sinfonia. Elizabeth has been a soloist for Waveney Sinfonia on many occasions and writes:

*'I hope Olive would be pleased to know that 40+ years on, I am still using and passing on to my own pupils many things she taught me. Alongside the many aspects of learning the violin, a healthy work ethic and patience were always so important. Last Friday saw the return of the "Flick the Pen Lid" competition!'*

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I must have first met Olive when I joined the Waveney Sinfonia over 30 years ago and we moved up to North Suffolk. It was at the time when Peter Youngs had just been tragically killed in a road accident. However, it wasn't until my oldest son started violin lessons with Olive in about 1995/96 that I got to know her really well.

For many years Olive was an inspiration to a significant number of young people and her determination to get them to play and perform was outstanding. Although she used the Suzuki Method of learning, she was quick to 'adapt' it to her own use and philosophy. It was an experience to watch and be part of lessons and group lessons (part of the Suzuki method), where the youngest students joined the older ones, listened to and made music together, thus allowing the younger ones to see where their efforts could lead.

I have many memories of sitting in lessons with both my sons learning the violin, but the most prominent one of all was when my youngest (aged about 4) dropped his violin on a hard church floor during a concert and smashed the instrument. Certainly, some way to get out of a concert! And the 1/8<sup>th</sup> size violin belonged to Olive!

Michael and myself are grateful to Olive for her contribution to our sons' musical development, which is still a source of great enjoyment and fulfilment to them both.

Certainly, an inspiration to many, she will be sadly missed.

**Margaret Taylor**

#### **\*Update from Committee Meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021\***

It was decided at the recent meeting NOT to go ahead with the proposed rehearsal day on 27<sup>th</sup> March. It is difficult to predict what restrictions may still be in place on our next concert date - Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021. However, subject to agreement with St Margaret's Church, it may be possible to schedule two performances (4pm and 6pm) with a slightly reduced programme. You will be pleased to know that we still hope to perform Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 with guest soloist *Nathan Williamson* and Mendelssohn's *Italian* symphony (No. 4) on that date. For our players, please note that the rehearsal weekend for this will be 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> May.

#### **First Light Festival and Making Music Day – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021**

Last year the First Light Festival and Making Music Day was held online. Both encourage music contributions. Our very own wind quintet played an impromptu recital on Lowestoft seafront during a windy August day last year but it is contributions like this that will be welcomed by Making Music for 21<sup>st</sup> June (and possibly the First Light Festival). Please think about how your ensemble (if you have one) may be able to contribute to either of these projects and put Waveney on the map. Further details from Cecilia at [dcmetherell2001@gmail.com](mailto:dcmetherell2001@gmail.com)