

## **STEWART AND MUSIC (words by Robin Eaglen, read by PPM)**

Among Stewart Lyon's wide interests and accomplishments, music was pivotal.

The son of an organist and choir master, he grew up to be an accomplished pianist and possessed a fine voice, unusually at home in both the bass and alto register.

His Anglican background nurtured a lifelong love for church music and, as an undergraduate at Cambridge, he was a member of the renowned choir of Trinity College.

In 1958 Stewart married Elizabeth, whom he had known since their childhood days in Liverpool. Her father was also an organist and she had blossomed into a gifted pianist and keyboard teacher.

With such genes and abundant musical skills, it was not surprising that their five children should develop into accomplished singers and instrumentalists, and that these talents were in turn passed on to their grandchildren.

In 2018 Stewart and Elizabeth celebrated their Diamond Wedding in Guildford when, before a splendid lunch, the family sang a grace written for Stewart by his close friend, the eminent Welsh composer William Mathias. Later that day they performed a memorable choral evensong in the nearby Church of Holy Trinity.

Stewart's influence and contribution to the musical scene was felt not only domestically and locally, but also at a regional and national level, for example in his commitment to Welsh National Opera and Opera North. Over many years he and Elizabeth were also gracious hosts for performances at Glyndebourne. Stewart's taste in music was truly catholic but he did once confide in me that he felt Wagner 'went on a bit'.

It is no exaggeration that, in the pantheon of musical families, Stewart's deserves its place with such others as the Von Trapps and Kanneh-Masons.