

**Donald Preece
Memorial Day**
Queen Mary University of London
17 September 2015
Schedule



- 10.30, FB: Arrival and coffee
- 11.00, FB: R. A. Bailey, Professor emerita of Statistics, QMUL, and Professor of Statistics and Mathematics, University of St Andrews
"Donald Arthur Preece: a life in statistics, mathematics and music"
- 11.35, FB: Byron Morgan, Professorial Research Fellow, University of Kent
"Canterbury Tales"
- 11.55, FB: Martin Ridout, Professor of Applied Statistics, University of Kent
"Slow ripening fruit: Donald at East Malling"
- 12.30, GH: Lunch
- 14.00, GH: Peter J. Cameron, Professor emeritus of Mathematics, QMUL, and Professor of Statistics and Mathematics, University of St Andrews
"Donald at Queen Mary: climbing walls and PLRs"
- 14.30, GH: Philip Ogden, Professor of Geography and Senior Advisor to the Principal, QMUL
"Donald's non-mathematical contributions to Queen Mary"
- 14.50, GH: Philip Luke, organist, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church
"Donald's interest in organs"
- 15:00, GH: Organ recital by Alan Wilson, former music director at Queen Mary University of London (to include pieces by Donald Preece)
- 15.30, FB: Cream tea
- 16.15, FB: Ian Anderson, Honorary research fellow in Mathematics, University of Glasgow
"Variations on musical and mathematical themes"
- 17.05, FB: J. P. Morgan, Professor of Statistics and Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives, Virginia Tech
"Donald Preece, Multi-Dimensional Man"
- 18.00: Reception and dinner, Senior Common Room

(FB=Fogg lecture theatre and foyer, GH=Great Hall and foyer)

Thanks to the School of Mathematical Sciences, Queen Mary University of London, and to the British Combinatorial Committee, for support.

Donald Preece: brief biography

Donald Arthur Preece was born on 2 October 1939 and died on 6 January 2014. While at school, he had to make a choice between mathematics and music; he chose the former, but music remained a lifelong interest.

After graduating from St Andrews and a year in Cambridge, he took a job at Rothamsted Experimental Station in Harpenden, in 1963. He remained there until 1969. During his time at Rothamsted, he became interested in experimental design. Among other things, he set up the Rothamsted Manor Recitals.

In his next position in Canterbury, he began moving from statistics into combinatorics, attending the 4th British Combinatorial Conference in Aberystwyth in 1973. After spells in Australia, again at Rothamsted (where he was involved with mentoring new staff), and at the East Malling Research Station in Kent, he returned to the University of Kent in 1990.

In 1999, when at short notice the British Combinatorial Conference found itself without a home, Donald stepped up, and with John Lamb's help, he organised and ran a successful meeting in Kent. He became a regular attendee at the Conferences, and organised the Conference concert for many years.

Following his 60th birthday, he moved to Queen Mary, University of London, to take up a post as professorial fellow. In London, he began or continued several projects: as well as work with mathematical and statistical colleagues, he joined the users of the Mile End climbing wall, and progressed to abseiling down tall buildings or climbing old industrial chimneys. His career as a climber was, unfortunately, brought to a halt by a detached retina.

He spent a lot of time on a detailed survey of the organs in the East End of London, talking to vicars and organists and poking around in organ-lofts. He wrote a book on the pipe-organs of the East End and typeset it himself; it was published by Queen Mary in 2013. He was also deeply involved in the restoration of the Rutt organ in the Great Hall of Queen Mary. One of Donald's compositions was played at the concert which inaugurated the refurbished organ.

Over the Christmas break in 2013/4, which he spent (as usual) in Edinburgh, he was taken to the Western General Hospital, where he died of a brain haemorrhage.

For a fuller biography and publication list, see <http://arxiv.org/abs/1402.2220>