

Colin was a great supporter of the charity Sightsavers and Lowry strings have twice before raised money for their cause, through donations at concerts. We would be delighted if you could take part in the tradition of our concerts—admission is free but there is a charge for leaving!!! Please give generously on your way out. Thank you.



About Sightsavers

There are 45 million blind people in the world and 75% of this is avoidable. More than 90% of visually impaired people live in developing countries.

Sightsavers' mission is to eliminate preventable blindness, and make sure those whose sight can't be restored receive the support they need to live independently. We work with local partners in over 30 countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

In order to be as effective as possible we try to strengthen health systems that are already in place. We also demonstrate best practices in the countries where we work, in the hope that governments will follow our examples. Working in this way means we can aim for real and lasting change, to help as many people as possible.

In the past sixty years, Sightsavers has treated over 200 million people for blinding and potentially blinding conditions, and carried out over seven million operations to save sight.

Maasai women in Kenya queue up to receive antibiotics to relieve a painful and potentially blinding eye condition called trachoma.

Kate Holt/Sightsavers

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Memories of Colin

A short biography



Colin was born and brought up in Tunstall, Staffordshire, the youngest of three brothers. Both his parents worked in a local pottery factory. Colin was exposed to music from an early age, in that every Sunday morning, his father and mother would listen to recordings of operas – whilst Colin was trying to have a lie-in!

It was when he was at his secondary school that his class was asked if anyone wanted to learn the violin. Although Colin was keen to volunteer, he was originally refused on the grounds that he couldn't sing! However his persistence paid off, he started lessons, and subsequently got his parents to write a note to school asking that he be excused from rugby in case he damaged his hands! Colin had very fond memories of the great help and support he received from his school music teacher.

He was then selected to attend Saturday classes at Manchester Northern College of Music and travelled there every week on the train. On leaving school he trained as a music teacher at the same college and enjoyed the student life.

Colin then obtained a post at Salford Music Service and was the first teacher in the Northwest to complete the Suzuki violin training. He subsequently became head of music at Salford for many years, which involved him taking the Youth Orchestra abroad, where he had to deal with some rather tricky situations! Around this time the first adult string group, which in time went on to become Lowry Strings, was formed from parents of children attending the orchestra. Sean Munster was its original conductor before 'handing the baton' to Colin. He subsequently moved to work for Bolton Music Service and continued with his teaching career.

Colin played in several groups over the years including Salford Symphony, Bolton Symphony Orchestra, Manchester Opera Orchestra and was also MD for West Manchester Operatic Society.

Over the years Colin has taught many pupils, from schools and privately, including children of Chinese and Japanese families who had moved to the UK and wished their children to continue with their Suzuki training. He also enjoyed teaching adults, including some from our group, and was always patient and encouraging—even with me (well almost always!)

Colin did a huge amount of work for Lowry Strings, especially in relation to the brilliant weekends away which were great. We were all very lucky to have him as our conductor and friend.

Marion

He was noted for saying 'That's about as rhythmical as a chocolate teapot!' Julie



' A dedicated and accomplished musician whose teaching style encouraged improvement, at the same time making rehearsals enjoyable. What a kind person Colin was offering a hand of friendship to others ' Jenny

A regular feature of our musical weekends was the Saturday evening Soiree.

I asked Colin to be part of my performance. He had to stand there whilst I sang a Gilbert & Sullivan song to him. He looked as if he wanted the ground to swallow him up, but stoically stood there looking ever more embarrassed.

A new cellist Kath, who had only done a few lessons got up to do a solo with her cello. Colin offered to tune it for her first, but she said that "wont be necessary". The look on Colin's face..... She went on to give us a poem about starting the cello, and not a note was played – hence no tuning needed!
June

I will always remember how diplomatic he was if something went wrong in rehearsal, he didn't pick out individuals he addressed the relevant section.

I like to remember the last time we were at Alston Hall at our soiree on the Saturday evening and Colin was dressed in a black cape.

A funny incident at another soiree was when Kath took to the stage with her cello and the look on Colin's face when he offered to tune it for her and she said NO THANKYOU and went on to recite a poem she had written just playing one string on her cello.
Sheila

He used to burst out of the fire exit door during rehearsals and scream, then come back in with a smile before resuming his attempt to get us to play musically!

Megan

When I was a beginner on the cello and played in Colin's beginners class he kindly asked me to stay on to the full rehearsal. It so happened that I was the only cellist that evening and I couldn't get most of the notes, but Colin was very sympathetic and perhaps I was better than having no cellos at all!

When I used to drive to the rehearsal I arrived one day with a flat tyre. Colin put the spare wheel on for me after the rehearsal which is a typical example of his kindness.

When I had my stroke he kindly visited me in hospital and brought a marvellously funny book called 'Musical Bumps' which was just what I needed to cheer me up. John

I have known Colin since the age of 4 , he has taught me a lot over the years, and was responsible for my first concert and helped me to develop my skills on the violin up to the standard I am today.

He has known many members of my family and we have always known him for his quirky and funny personality, he will be sadly missed, although I'm sure he will still be conducting in heaven Emily

This is Colin playing at my 50th birthday party. He surprised me by bringing a CD backing track and leading the chorus of Happy Birthday. That was typical of his thoughtfulness and kindness.
Megan

He use to hit the stand with his baton so hard that it would break. He got through quite a lot of batons!!!!!! Julie



I, like a lot of Salford parents, whose children played music met Colin when he was ' Mr Music Man' of Salford - that's from an article then in the Salford advertiser. He taught the Suzuki method and did the exams for the children. - he kept a supply of sweets which accompanied the certificate or kept younger siblings lying on the floor or protesting in other ways distracted and occupied.

He was an excellent teacher, kind examiner and the children were at the same time in awe, with respect of ' Mr Green'. While waiting in the rooms for the children he invariably suggested parents should be occupied and make music- so the adult beginners happened! When Salford no longer supplied teachers for the 'adult beginners ' Colin was happy to continue with a motley group of adult players and so the 'Lowry strings' were created. The only rooms we could afford to hire for our small band was at Monton Bowling Club and so the bowlers, first amused, then bemused wondered what their visitors thought. Who can tell??.

Colin can take credit, but I do not think he was really aware of how many lives he influenced by encouraging adults to return to music, if they played as children, or started anew. When I had lessons from him I told him I did not think he could teach an old dog new tricks; I have improved my playing and enjoyed music making which is something I never envisaged after having played as a child 30 years before. I had kept my old violin it had come apart at the seams; he was horrified to find out I then stuck it back with wood glue!