The IAO Brereton Memorial Fund supports organists, choirs and a monkey

Susan Hollingworth developing The Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box

The Brereton Memorial Fund has awarded funds to help the youngest children enjoy music and singing before they can even talk, with the help of a monkey and other animal friends.

The Melody Monkey's Marvellous Music Box includes instruments, puppets, songs, games and stories suitable for children under 5 years of age. This year the Brereton Memorial Fund awarded just over £200 to the organisation which invented the box, to enable them to provide help to childminders, nursery workers and other early years childcare professionals to attend training courses to learn how best to use the resource.

This bursary was just one of nine awarded in this, the Fund's 8th year. Others awarded this year included help for one young organist to attend the Oundle course in April, three bursaries for students to attend the IAO Congress in Cambridge and a grant to St Lawrence Parish Church, Ludlow, to help with costs of purchasing music. It was a lucky happenstance that some some second-hand copies of some of the music on the choir's list had recently been given to Edward Rigg, one of the trustees of the Fund. He was able to pass these copies directly to the choir, which meant that the Fund could not only help the choir, but also save some trees in the process!

The Fund, which now incorporates the Agnes Rolph bequest, was set up in 2001 in memory of Philip and Gwen Brereton, who for many years were involved with the IAO and its activities and were probably best known as the organising team of the IAO annual congress.

Every year the trustees receive around a dozen or more applications from organists, choirs and those involved in primary school music and generally are able to award bursaries from £100 to £500, although requests for larger sums of money are considered for larger scale, more wide ranging projects.

Judith Brereton, founder trustee and family representative of the fund, said: 'it's so rewarding to be able to help such a variety of people, old and young, every year. I'm especially thrilled that this year we can support music for pre-school children since my mother, Gwen, was so involved in primary school music making and music for children of all ages at school and church. As a mother of two small children I see how youngsters have such fun with music-making from a very early age'.

The Brereton Memorial Fund aims to support:

- the teaching and learning of the organ at every level to students of all ages
- the nurturing of choral music, especially church music
- music education projects both in the north-west area and nationally
- a local memorial project to commemorate the work of Philip and Gwen Brereton.

Applications to the Fund should be made by 28 February each year. Application forms and further information about the Brereton Memorial Fund are available from Judith Brereton, Trustee, Brereton Memorial Fund, 78 Millfield Lane, York YO10 3AL, 01904 413548 or can be downloaded from www.breretonfund.org.uk.