

The Anthony Baines Memorial Prize 2023

The Galpin Society confers the twenty-fifth
Anthony Baines Memorial Prize on

Margaret Birley

In recognition of her outstanding contribution to organology over many years. After starting her career at Sotheby's as cataloguer and secretary to the Society's chairman Graham Wells, her interest in ethnomusicology soon took her to the Horniman Museum. There she rose to be Principal Curator of Musical Collections and Cultures, responsible for the interpretation of the musical instrument collection and its development. During her 38 years she played a critical role in the acquisition of many important collections including the Wayne collection of over 550 concertinas and related free reed instruments. Her work was distinguished by her quiet authority and her indefatigable pursuit of quality and accuracy. She commissioned modern examples of traditional instruments in Belarus, India and Uzbekistan for the Horniman's collections, and filmed them in performance. As lead curator she organised many exhibitions in the museum and elsewhere in the UK, as well as helping to deliver projects with local community groups to explore the heritage of historic instruments from Africa and Asia. She also chaired Music in the Making, the programme to improve the understanding of the museum's collections. Margaret was also involved in a wide range of related organisations, such as serving the Galpin Society as its Reviews Editor and as a committee member, and CIMCIM as secretary and head of its Classification working group. She chaired the consortium of European musical instrument museums updating the Hornbostel Sachs classification for the MIMO project. She has also published in various journals, primarily about the history of the musical instrument collection at the Horniman and its Music Gallery.