



**IESF**  
SOCIÉTÉ DES INGÉNIEURS ET  
SCIENTIFIQUES DE FRANCE

# Newsletter



British Section

[www.iesf.co.uk](http://www.iesf.co.uk)

Christmas 2020

## IESF Virtual Carol Service

As we approach the great festival of Christmas, with all of its long-established traditions and cherished memories, we look back on a difficult and challenging year, when because of the global pandemic we have been unable to lead our normal lives or to meet family and friends. There is renewed optimism for the future with the rapid development of the means to combat this unseen enemy.

There would be no opportunity this year for IESF members to follow the established tradition in early December of joining the joint ICE/RICS Carol Service in St Margaret's Church, Westminster, followed by a buffet supper. Undeterred by the present difficulties, the creation of an opportunity for us to join together to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas and to offer each other seasonal greetings would be welcomed.



President David Hughes with his wife Jane

Further to a suggestion from Frances, following one of the 'Zoom' social gatherings, when those members present had made a valiant attempt to sing *Happy Birthday* to Michael Muller, the alternative of a remote *Carol Service* was conceived.

This was to take the familiar form of a normal *Carol Service* with a series of pre-recorded hymns, to which the 'congregation' could sing along at home, interspersed with live readings.



John & Frances Beck



The Choir at King's College, Cambridge

*Making a connection with French engineering and science*

Armed with the order of service, the two John's, Duthie and Beck, set about compiling the various elements, respectively music and words, and after several iterations, finally assembled the pieces of the jigsaw.

As custodian of the IESF Zoom licence and with the skill and experience of having organised and facilitated several successful remote social events, Roger Venables provided the vital technical input. After several trial runs, we were obliged to conclude that, whilst in John Duthie we are fortunate to have a fine church organist, the transmission of live organ music via Zoom was not going to produce the necessary clarity of sound.



Event Co-ordinator John Duthie



Soloist Lester Sonden at his Church

For the service itself, after welcoming the remote 'congregation', President David led the worship with the Bidding Prayer. There followed the mood-setting music of *Gabriel's Message* and recordings of some well-known hymns, and we heard Lester Sonden sing a modern carol with his vocal assistant Carol singing duet on the choruses! Bible readings, interspersed between the hymns came from John B, John D, Jane Hughes, Frances Beck and David.

After the closing prayer and sharing in the Blessing, we were treated to a lively rendition of *Sleigh Ride*, before catching sight of our friends in the on-screen gallery view to be able to wish each other a brief 'Happy Christmas'.

Based upon the number of screens that logged in, it is estimated that our 'congregation' numbered around 72.

Many encouraging messages from those who had attended have been received.

I conclude with the final line of the closing prayer, appropriate at this time of year: -

***May you follow the light of the stars in your dreams and know that God is with you, wherever you go.***

John Beck, Hon Secretary

### **A Christmas message from the President**

**"Jane and I wish our Members and their loved ones  
a Peaceful Christmas and the best of Health throughout 2021."**

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