

# The Elgar Society JOURNAL



SEPTEMBER

1980

# The Elgar Society Journal

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EDITORIAL

Vol.1, no. 6

During the last few months the Society seems to have been very active. More ambitious programmes from the branches are also in evidence, and all these activities are reported in the following pages. The Elgar Foundation series of concerts is reported, but we must also mention the brave series of performances at Hereford, when there was a great deal of music-making and much less familiar Elgar was performed. Our thanks and congratulations to all concerned. We gather that financial results were disappointing, but the organisers should not be too disheartened. These are difficult times all over the country, and many organisations and commercial ventures meet problems which were not in evidence two or three years ago. However, the history of music shows that it usually triumphs over economic problems in the end, and the Society, we are glad to say, is in good heart, and is still growing. Music is a vital part of our lives, and Elgar's music in particular is a constant source of strength as well as a marvellous source of relaxation. Amateur and professional music-makers all help to enrich our lives, and just now it seems to me we could all do with some enrichment!

RONALD TAYLOR  
Editor

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*The editor does not necessarily agree with the views expressed by contributors, nor does the Elgar Society accept responsibility for such views.*

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RADIO TIMES,

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# THE ELGAR FOUNDATION'S LONDON CHORAL FESTIVAL

June - July 1980

The Elgar Foundation is to be congratulated for organising this ambitious series of four concerts designed to raise funds for the Elgar Birthplace. The opening concert on 12th June was devoted to *The Dream of Gerontius*. This received a powerful performance, with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and the City of Birmingham Choir, responding well to Norman del Mar's supple and passionate direction. The soloists, who donated their services, were Kenneth Bowen, Michael Rippon and Dame Janet Baker. The latter gave a particularly thrilling performance as the Angel, her strongly assured technique enabling her to fill the Albert Hall with beautiful and noble tone.

After this fine start, the performance of *The Apostles*, on 16th June, was a slight disappointment, though it must be stressed that any sound performance in London of this neglected large-scale work is to be welcomed. The Worcester Festival Choral Society and Cathedral Choristers, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Dr. Donald Hunt, with soloists Linda Esther Gray, Anne Collins, Neil Jenkins, John Noble, Christopher Keyte and John Tomlinson, produced a very musical performance, but one that was lacking in that final degree of commitment and intensity which is needed to bring out the almost incandescent quality of much of the music of this work. It seems possible that the chorus, particularly, were disheartened by the distressingly sparse audience in the Hall. Where were all the people? This concert should certainly have had more support. (T.F-J.)

On 11th July came the performance of *The Kingdom* at the Royal Festival Hall. The RPO and the Croydon Philharmonic Choir gave a very good performance, but the acoustics of the Hall are notoriously unkind to choirs, and it took some time for the performance to come alive. Wendy Eathorne took the place of Sheila Armstrong, who was indisposed, and gave a fine rendering of the role of Mary. Alfreda Hodgson, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, and Michael Rippon were the other soloists, the latter being a particularly effective Peter. The conductor was James Gaddarn. (R.P.T.)

The final concert on 15th July at the Royal Albert Hall was a very enjoyable occasion, honoured by the presence of the Foundation's patron, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. After the *Civic Fanfare*, and the composer's arrangement of the National Anthem, came the short oratorio *The Light of Life (Lux Christi)*, from 1896, in which Elgar demonstrated his growing mastery of choral and orchestral forces, albeit on a smaller scale than in the great religious works which were to follow. Sir Charles Groves directed the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, with soloists Margaret Marshall, Helen Watts, Robin Leggate, and John Shirley-Quirk, in an excellent performance. After the interval the *Pomp and Circumstance March no. 4* was followed by *Spirit of*

/Continued on page



## NEWS ITEMS.....

DAY SCHOOL IN BRISTOL. After the enormous success of the first Day School organised in May, with Michael Kennedy, a Second school has been arranged by the South West Branch, in conjunction with the Extra-Mural Dept. of Bristol University. This will be on Saturday, 6th DECEMBER 1980, in the Reception Room, Wills Memorial Bldg., Bristol University, starting at 10.15 a.m. for 10.30 a.m. VERNON HANDLEY will speak on "*Elgar from the Rostrum - a Conductor's View.*" This promises to be another splendid occasion and application should be made to Ian Cartwright, whose address is at the head of the South West Branch report in this issue.

BBC RADIO LEICESTER's Choral Workshop, announced in our last issue, is likely to attract a large attendance from amateur singers. The final concert, open to the public at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, will be recorded, but at this stage we do not know which local stations will broadcast it. The concert will take place on Sunday, 21st Sept.1980, and will include *The Music Makers* and *Sea Pictures*, with Sarah Walker.

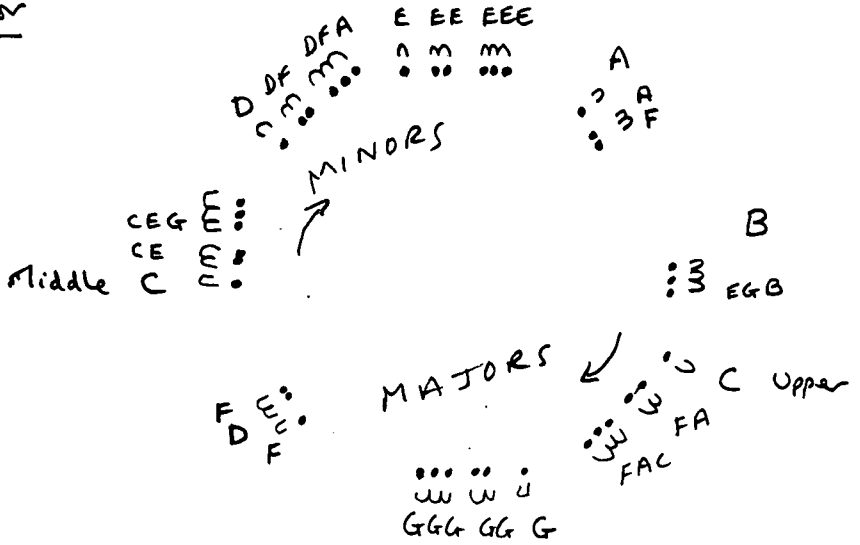
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ELGAR'S INTERPRETERS ON RECORD July 'Launch' at Direction Dean Street Photographs opposite: 1) Dr.Jerrold Moore talking to Elizabeth Parrott. 2) John Knowles(right) and John Walton, of Abbey Records. 3) Elizabeth Parrott signing a record sleeve. 4) Journal Editor(left) and Michael Pope, taking a very serious view.

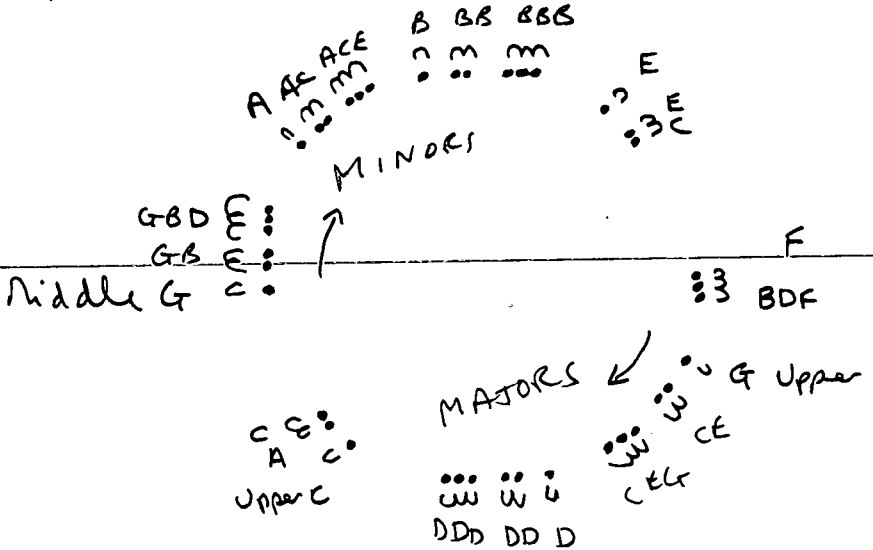
*"It is fine that the Elgar Society feels itself able to issue records, and I hope they will be very successful and others will follow. I send my best wishes to you all."* Thus ran the message from Sir Adrian Boult, at our record launch on July 10th. After reading the message, the Society's Chairman, Michael Pope, went on to quote from Elgar's views on the state of music - still very pertinent today. Mr.Pope also praised Elizabeth Parrott's painting which had been used, with her and Sir Adrian's permission, for the record sleeve. Thanks and congratulations to John Knowles were also expressed for all his work and enthusiasm in preparing the recording, and negotiating its successful production. Dr. Jerrold Northrop Moore spoke next, and praised the Society for its enterprise. He then introduced some tracks from the recording. Wine was dispensed to all present in the shop, with our good wishes. We were greatly indebted to the management of Direction for allowing us to use their premises, and to their staff for staying on long after their usual closing time. We hope they do well from our record! If the record does sell well, we can plan ahead for ELG 002.

Members who have not yet purchased a copy at the special price of £3.50 should send a remittance and request now to the Treasurer: 11 The Chase, Watford, Herts.

Starting Point  
C Major



Starting Point  
G Major



# THE ELGAR CIPHER

by Beatrice V. Gwynn

When the Elgar Society Newsletter published my article on the Elgar cipher in January 1975, the editor (Wulstan Atkins) did so after a mutual discussion in which I explained that I did not wish it published if he assessed the music as not valid. Mr. Atkins said: "It is music, but it is not Elgar", and on that basis we published. The present editor has now given me space to amend the results in the light of subsequent work. In doing so, I acknowledge the help given to me by Mr. Atkins himself, by Mr. J. Henry's tireless and scholarly interest, and by all the unwilling musicians of England whom I and others consulted.

The first minor correction is that of the Newsletter on p.20 of that issue. In correcting the proof, I missed the error made by the typist in the second line of the letter-text, where 'with' has been typed instead of 'whom'. 'Afternoon' also belongs to the second line, not the third. However, there is no major alteration of sense caused by the typist's error.

We now come to the musical side of the cipher. My chief difficulty has been that Elgar designed his musical cipher for a simple but musical 21-year old girl. I am not musical; and therefore as every question had to be answered on musical grounds, I was obliged to find a musician at every major turning to consult. This accounts for the length of time in correcting errors.

The placing of the scale round the rosette correctly done produces a small piece of music which is acceptable and also contains a surprise. My 1975 placing of the scale on the rosette was only half-correct because I assumed the scale went straight around the eight sets of symbols. Now, the chief relationship in the cipher, as explained, lies between the second and sixth symbol sets; and a straight placing of the scale round the rosette produces two main sets of units each founded on a major triad. The end triplets of line 1 and 2 then become minor, instead of the minor-major the ear would expect, and the intervals become equally unsatisfactory.

I was obliged to consider if another musical factor lay in the placing of the scale round the rosette which I had overlooked, and which took the minor-major sequence into account. I found then that the notes of the scale on which the minor triads are founded occupied the upper half of the rosette, and the scale then reversed and went down, taking in the notes founding the major triads in the bottom half. C as the keynote started off the rosette, and the diminished B faced it as the right-hand single symbol. Once this arrangement had been made, further detail of Elgar's musical plan became visible. The piece was founded on the chord DFAC split between the 2nd/6th sets (the main relationship) and between the 4th/8th sets (third relationship); and on the chord CEGB split between the 3rd/7th sets (second main relationship) and the

1st/5th sets (fourth relationship).

Now the rosette is started at C major for reasons explained in my first article; but there is nothing to stop it being started at any other note in the scale, when the piece then takes on the appropriate key accidentals. As musicians had remarked to me, even with wrong notes and various time estimated, the likeness of the cipher piece to the later Enigma theme, it was only natural to start off the rosette again this time in the Enigma key of G. I attach the result, and the opening of the Enigma theme stripped down to notes only. The family likeness of the two openings is without doubt. The opening GB of the cipher is used by Elgar in the Bass clef for the Enigma.



The surprise that lies in the cipher piece once the scale is correctly put around the rosette, does not, however, lie in the familial tie with the Enigma theme. What did happen was that I played the first five units roughly on the basis of the value of the units as  $1/1\frac{1}{2}/1/1$ , and I heard a familiar sounding tune. A few weeks later, while I was playing the notes again, I found myself humming the words of the second line of a nursery rhyme. The first line is actually five syllables with lengthened time values, and I merely accomodated the second line which has six syllables, to the six notes. I presumed Elgar had opened his piece with a snatch of a nursery rhyme to confirm to Miss Penny that she had correctly got the placing of the scale. However, Wulstan Atkins, who said he thought a tune that she knew would have been sent to the girl, was right in the matter. I realised at a later date that the whole nursery rhyme was played in each Line of the cipher, plus the first line repeated as a refrain either whole (Line 2) or partially (Line 1 and 3). Once the rhyme is recognised and realised as composing the whole piece in three repetitions, the value of the musical units can be established from the tune instead of being surmised, as in my previous article, as using a whole note, a half-note and a third-note. Also, it is now possible to establish the time from the tune instead of surmising (as previously) that it appears to be in  $3/4$ . The time of the nursery rhyme tune is  $6/8$ , and one can therefore mark out the three Lines of the cipher piece accordingly. However, here I came up against musical laws. Mr. Henry pointed out a contradiction which arose, and judged the time must be in  $12/8$  to iron this out: his opinion was confirmed by another musician. This time actually suits very well, since it is approximately a line of the nursery rhyme per bar of  $12/8$ . The phrasing would follow from the demarcations of the rhyme.

A result of the time being correct is that the high spot I commented on in my previous article is now seen to occur regularly at the end of a bar in each Line, and is indeed Elgar's handling of a concluding phrase in the last line of the rhyme before the repeat of the first line as a refrain.



My original view was that the high spot represented Dora's particular moment of reference in the cipher piece; but indeed her connection is far closer. If one takes the name DORA and spells it out in the 20-letter alphabet against the repetition of the musical scale A-G, it is found that DORA spells out musically as DFAA. I therefore consider the choice of the chord was a compliment to her by the composer; and also that the other chord CEGB represents, so to speak, the Elgar side. EG has been considered by others to be Elgar's musical signature.

SUMMARY: As readers will have noticed, I have not disclosed the name of the nursery rhyme, and for good reason. My recognition of it has to be checked, and until it is checked by the following method, I propose only to leave the title with the Editor.

Although the Society is an organisation whose main tenet is interest in things Elgarian, I am by no means sure this extends to what was clearly a delight in his life. After my last article was published, I received not one communication from the then 500-odd members of the Society, not even to say that I was wrong. I was not too disillusioned, but it held me back in my studies. Now I wish to make the matter clear.

This Cipher represents Elgar at his best as a 'sparkler', a loving friend, a noticing man, and a gentleman. As I said often enough to myself, "England, you had a clever man - once." It is only fair to him to pay it attention, because it landed him in a jam. From the relationship of the cipher music to the Enigma, from the title of "Riddle" (Enigma) bestowed on the theme by Jaeger, from the silence Elgar increasingly observed about the origin of the music, it is clear to me that he correctly estimated the pompous society from whom he had suffered, and who would not take a joke lightly. He did not originally design 'Nimrod' as a funeral piece, almost a state hymn. Yet if I am correct about the rhyme used, the words of it, although harmless, are the last thing one would wish to know about in connection with 'Nimrod', and it is my belief that Elgar feared for his beautiful music being injured by the revelation of the original source of the music.

It is therefore only fair that the matter should be cleared up, and I am asking, not very hopefully I own, members of the Elgar Society, of which I too am a member, to study the cipher music, to play it and to endeavour to recognise the tune. I would be grateful if the Editor receives the titles; and if a general agreement is reached on the name of the unknown, then it can be officially established. If no agreement is reached, then I will not trouble the Society with the title, but leave the matter in abeyance.

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SPECIAL NOTICE. A performance of Elgar's Piano Quintet will take place at Petworth House, Sussex on 12th September at 8.0 p.m. Richard Markham (piano) & the Coull String Quartet.....

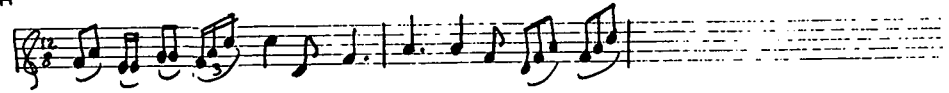
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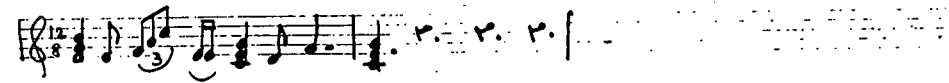
CARICE



DORA



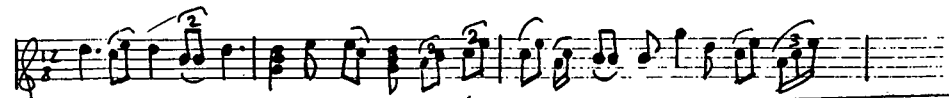
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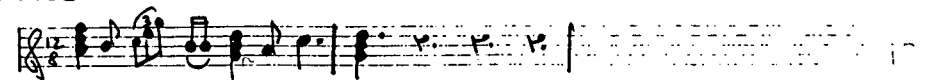
CARICE



DORA



ALICE



# ELGAR and GRANVILLE BANTOCK

by Gareth H. Lewis

## PART TWO

Bantock took up his appointment as director of the School of Music at the Birmingham and Midland Institute in September 1900. Shortly before, he had conducted a concert of British music at Antwerp, including Elgar's *Serenade for Strings* - which had been given its first performance in the version we know today at that city four years earlier. Before Bantock took up his appointment, tuition in music at the Institute had been somewhat disorganised. There had been no director and there was no syllabus, visiting lecturers being given a free hand to pursue their own interests. Bantock's first task was to impose some structure on the teaching. A course of lectures on the principles of music was commenced - but he also instituted a series of talks on modern music. Strauss, Sibèlius and Debussy were amongst those featured, and some of the lectures were given by Ernest Newman, who, as a young bank clerk (then known as William Roberts) had written programme notes for Bantock's concerts at New Brighton. What part Elgar played in his appointment as 'Visitor' to the Department of Music is not clear - but no doubt the presence of his name on the prospectus added prestige to the new department.

Bantock's incredible energy allowed him to undertake a variety of appointments outside the Institute - not, it must be said, with conspicuous success in most cases. He took over the conductorship of the Birmingham Amateur Orchestral Society, but his drive and ambition proved too much and the Society folded in a year or two. At the end of 1903 Elgar resigned as conductor of the Worcester Philharmonic Society after two or three years of disagreement - centring mainly on his dissatisfaction over the standard of choral training, and his insistence on re-auditioning the instrumentalists every three years. Bantock was already well-known in Worcester musical life and was appointed to succeed Elgar. Unfortunately the Society soon had reason to regret its choice. Bantock attempted to mount a performance of the Berlioz *Romeo and Juliet*, which proved well beyond the capabilities of the performers - and the Society disbanded.

Such was Bantock's reputation, however, that offers kept coming in. He was sufficiently well-remembered on Merseyside for the Liverpool Orchestral Society to invite him to take on their conductorship in 1904. Happily they proved more resilient than their Midland counterparts and struggled on for several more years before they, too, disbanded at the outbreak of the First World War. By far the most interesting of Bantock's appointments, however, was that of conductor of the Wolverhampton Festival Chorus, in succession to Henry Wood. Bantock took over in the Summer of 1902. His biographer H. Orsmond Arderton makes the interest-

ing claim that at Wolverhampton Bantock conducted 'the first provincial performance (after the production at Birmingham) of *The Dream of Gerontius*.' This is probably untrue, as Henry Coward gave a fine performance at the Sheffield Festival in September 1902 - too soon for Bantock to have prepared his choir for an unfamiliar work. However, it was almost certainly the first successful performance of the work in the region where it had originally been so badly served.

The friendship between the two composers continued to deepen during this period. They seem to have visited each other's homes frequently and there are mentions of Bantock in Elgar's letters ("dear old Bantock, God bless him!") - and it was Bantock who organised the subscription list to purchase robes for Elgar following his being awarded a Cambridge Doctorate. The closest professional contact between the two friends, however, came a few years later when Elgar accepted the position of Peyton Professor of Music at Birmingham University. The actual influence carried by Bantock, who was a member of the committee responsible for the establishment of the Chair, is not clear. Elgar was, of course, well-known and respected in Birmingham. On the other hand the donation of the Chair was made conditional upon Elgar's acceptance - and Bantock seems to have played the role of intermediary between the committee and Elgar.

It is difficult to know exactly what Peyton was expecting of Elgar. There was no department of Music at the University, and the post involved little except regular public lectures. Elgar's eminence clearly attracted attention to the young University and its expansion into the field of music. Elgar himself at one time declared a vision of Birmingham becoming a leading musical teaching centre - "the English Leipsig" - with a dynamic academic unit and a large permanent orchestra. Perhaps Peyton was hoping that Elgar would become a full-time teacher who would help to establish a full Faculty of Music and organise a programme of undergraduate teaching. If so, Elgar, with his well-known disrespect for musical academic life, was obviously the wrong man for the job.

As is well known (and documented in Percy Young's book covering the lectures and their background, 'A Future for English Music') the period of the Birmingham appointment was desperately unhappy for Elgar. He gave eight lectures between March 1905 and November 1906. He was abroad for the early part of 1907, but returned to Birmingham in the autumn to chair a series of lectures by Walford Davies, Ernest Newman and Thomas Whitney Surette. He apologised for the fact that his chronic eye complaint prevented his personal participation. By the middle of 1908 Elgar was certain that he could not continue and resigned. Peyton's relief is shown in a letter, in which he wrote: "I am pleased to think that there will be now a prospect of some satisfactory results attending the existence of a musical professorship in the University. The actual result and virtual waste of time has,

I need not say, been a great disappointment to me."

The relationship between Bantock and Elgar at this time is fascinating. Bantock was able to give Elgar incalculable support. He was well aware, however, that eventually a full Department of Music would develop, and that he would be the person in the best position to take charge. Before this stage was reached, however, Elgar's status was necessary to attract attention to the growing musical interest in the community and to add prestige to the new professorship. Following Elgar's resignation, Bantock was appointed his successor. The interest Elgar's lectures had attracted undoubtedly made it easier for the lesser-known man to press immediately for the establishment of a proper University teaching department, in accordance with Peyton's wish. The appointment was not initially full-time - Bantock retained his position at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, but, with his usual energy, rapidly drew up a syllabus for a degree course.

The two men clearly shared the vision of the role Birmingham might play in the musical renaissance of the first decade of the century. The dream of a permanent orchestra at Birmingham was not realised until 1920, although intermittently throughout the intervening years both men tried to bring influence to bear to raise funds. In 1907, at a time of frustration, Elgar wrote to Bantock: "Now can we drop it? I cannot possibly get more guarantors if the Birmingham people do not want the scheme. I cannot see why we should attempt to force it: do we want to be musical philanthropists and give people what is good for them or make them buy against their wills? I don't." In fact later letters, so Percy Young tells us, showed Elgar's continuing interest, and it was Bantock who was the major force which led to the eventual establishment of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Bantock's extra-ordinary energy and the diversity of his interests did not diminish with the passing years. In addition to conducting and teaching he was a much-travelled examiner and adjudicator. There was less time for personal contact with old friends, although he and Elgar met from time to time - and tried to attend first performances of each other's works. They sometimes found themselves both actively participating in Three Choirs meetings, and there was a memorable occasion when they shared the platform at Queen's Hall - 24th May 1911, the day when Elgar's *Second Symphony* received its first performance, and when Bantock conducted his *Dante and Beatrice*. Walford Davies also conducted a new work in that concert.

Following Alice Elgar's death, Bantock tried to visit his old friend more often - this was facilitated by his purchase of a car. Elgar's affection for Bantock clearly emerges not only from the surviving correspondence, but from his admitting to being responsible for suggesting Bantock's name for a knighthood - which was conferred in 1930 - although in a letter of congratulation (characteristically sent to Lady Bantock, not her husband) Elgar wrote: "I was able to suggest - that is all, so you must not let my old friend think that anything



JOURNAL BACK NUMBERS

Some back numbers of the Journal (and its predecessor the Newsletter) are still available. For the benefit of those readers who have joined the Society in the last year or so we give brief details of some of the articles contained in back numbers, together with prices for each issue including postage.

JANUARY '77. (Photocopy only) "Birmingham Post" Letters on Elgar, 1934; Elgar & Denmark; Fifteenth Variation-Elgar and Sullivan, pt.I. £1.10p

MAY '77. Fifteenth Variation, pt.II; Edward Lloyd; Guide to Places of Elgarian Interest, pt.I. 70p

SEPTEMBER '77. Guide to Places...pt.II; Edward J.Dent and Elgar. 70p

JANUARY '78. "In Moonlight", a Forgotten Elgar Song; Richter and 'Gerontius'; Strange Case of the Odious Letter-Elgar and Stanford. 70p

MAY '78. An Angel as Ever...Elgar and Parry. 70p

SEPTEMBER '78. Some Reminiscences of Elgar by Sir Steuart Wilson; Elgar's Music in Print, pt.I. 70p

JANUARY '79. Elgar's Music in Print, pt.II; Sir Edward Elgar, by Basil Maine(1934). £1.10p

MAY '79. The Enigma-a Dark Saying. 80p

SEPTEMBER '79. Edward Elgar, by Sir Arthur Bliss(1951); Elgar Recollections, by Edgar Day; Elgar and the Three Choirs' Organists. 80p

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Continued from page

England, Elgar's neglected choral masterpiece from 1915/17. The compassion, the poignancy, and the deep sadness in Elgar's settings of the Binyon war-time poems was fully brought out in another fine interpretation by Sir Charles. The excellent soprano soloist was Margaret Marshall, whose sensitive, radiant singing exactly matched the mood of the work.

This memorable concert, and the notable festival of which it was part, was fittingly brought to a close with a lively arrangement for chorus and orchestra, by Edmund Walters, of God Bless the Prince of Wales.

## Dates for your Diary

Sept. 15	Serenade in E minor <i>English Chamber Soloists/ Josefowitz</i>	Queen Elizabeth Hall
	Cello Concerto <i>Anna Carewe/LSSO/John Carewe</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Oct. 9	Enigma Variations <i>RPO/Previn</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Oct. 12	Introduction & Allegro <i>Scottish Chamber Orch/Laredo</i>	Theatre Royal, Glasgow 7.30 p.m.
Oct. 22	Introduction & Allegro <i>London String Orch/Maddocks</i>	Purcell Room, South Bank
Oct. 23	Violin Sonata <i>Ralph Holmes (violin) &amp; Peter Dickinson (piano)</i>	Purcell Room, South Bank
Nov. 6	Dream of Gerontius <i>Philharmonia Orch/Willcocks, Baker/Burrows/Roberts</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Nov. 7	Symphony no.1 <i>Halle Orch/Loughran</i>	Royal Festival Hall
1981		
Jan. 9	Symphony no. 1 <i>Halle/Loughran</i>	St.George's Hall, Bradford
Feb. 8	Cello Concerto <i>Jablonski/Polish Nat.Radio SO/Kasprzyk</i>	Leeds Town Hall (Tickets from Barker's Music Shop, Headrow)
Feb. 21	The Music Makers <i>LSO/Willcocks, with Janet Baker</i>	Royal Festival Hall
<del>Feb. 28</del>	<del>Enigma Variations <i>Halle/Loughran</i></del>	<del>St.George's Hall, Bradford</del>
April 25	Violin Concerto <i>Menuhin/Halle/Loughran</i>	St.George's Hall, Bradford
May 16	Overture in D minor <i>Croydon Symphony Orch./Davison</i>	Fairfield Hall, Croydon



# Record Reviews

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE MARCHES : IMPERIAL MARCH

London Philharmonic Orch./Daniel Barenboim

CBS Classics 61893

The performances on this, the latest of the CBS Barenboim reissues have many of the characteristics which I have enjoyed in previous issues in the series. Barenboim treats the music in a big-hearted and enthusiastic way, displaying his obvious love of the music, and yet in the ultimate I find these recordings somewhat disappointing. Tempi are extreme - even faster than the composer's own records in the outer sections and very slow in the trios. This works well enough in no.3 - the central cantabile section is beautifully moulded and vividly contrasted with the more fiery outer sections - but in no.5 the speeds are just too extreme, the opening rushed and the trio painfully slow.

Although the record is in the mid-price range, it can hardly be regarded as a bargain as each side lasts only just over 16 minutes. The original record (CBS 76248) issued in 1974 included the *Crown of India suite*, as well as the Marches. The short sides have enabled the record to be cut at a high level, but I don't care for the rather as-tringent close-up effect this gives. A liberal use of treble filter tames the violins, but even then the sound is far from natural. A much better bargain is Norman Del Mar's DG record (2535 217) (also available cheaply on the St.Michael label from branches of Marks & Spencer). Buy that and not only will you have fine performances of the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*, but also an outstanding account of the *Enigma Variations*.

J.G.K.

CROWN OF INDIA SUITE

London Philharmonic Orch./Daniel Barenboim

CBS Classics 61892

The Barenboim Elgar recordings for CBS have probably not been treated with the respect they deserve - mainly, I think, because the sound quality of the earlier recordings, devoted to the bigger works, was rather poor. The later recordings in the series were very much better. John Knowles praised *Falstaff* and *Cockaigne* in the last issue of the Journal. This latest reissue is just as good, and for the same reasons. The *Crown of India suite*, which originally appeared in 1974, is given a bright open, recorded-sound with well-caught percussion. My only grumble is that, at about 18 minutes, the side is rather short. In the *South* is given a less dynamic performance than the famous Silvestri version, and the sound is marginally less clear than in *Crown of India*, but it is perfectly acceptable, and the more contemplative moments in the work come off beautifully. As in the other recordings of this

series, the orchestral playing is superb. The sleeve note (anonymous) falls well below the standard set by the previous reissues. One wonders now what CBS intend to do with the Yvonne Minton *Sea Pictures*, originally coupled with *In the South*.

G.H.L.

ENIGMA VARIATIONS. (Coupled with Vaughan Williams' overture *The Wasps* and the *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis*)

London Symphony Orch./Andre Previn.

HMV ASD 3857

In view of Previn's well-known affinity for British music, his first Elgar recording has been awaited with great interest. Unfortunately many are going to be disappointed. The performance is careful and somewhat understated. The effect is to emphasise the unity of the work - but this is achieved by the individual variations being less-strongly characterised than we are used to. Indeed, the whole production has a somewhat lack-lustre quality; the orchestral playing is sometimes tentative, with moments of shaky ensemble suggesting less than adequate rehearsal time. I also felt that the sound-quality was below the best EMI standard. It gives an initial impression of being warm and rich. It soon becomes obvious, however, that this effect is the result of a rather diffuse quality with lack of internal clarity and poorly-defined bass. The percussion is given a backward balance (the famous 'boat-engine' effect in the 13th Variation is practically inaudible) and no organ is used in EDU. This is a pity, as it is presumably the last recording produced by Christopher Bishop, (to whom Elgarians have such cause to be grateful) before his departure from EMI.

*The Wasps* is given a rather more lively performance, although lacking the rhythmic drive (and bright recording quality) of Previn's earlier version for RCA (recently reissued on GL 42953 - a record including some VW rarities). The gem of this new disc, however, is Previn's first recording of the *Tallis Fantasia*, which is one of the best versions I have heard. The string playing is beautiful, and Previn manages to combine an air of mystery with an undercurrent of passion, as Barbirolli used to do. The recorded sound on this item is exceptionally fine - it is presumably a more recent recording, having been produced by Suvi Raj Grubb - and it is a pity the major work on the disc has not fared so well.

G.H.L.

SYMPHONY NO. 1, Op.55.

London Philharmonic Orch./Vernon

Handley

*Classics for Pleasure CFP 40331*

The A flat Symphony has been recorded nine times already, so that we find ourselves in the position of asking whether this new recording has anything further to add. It has, I feel, faithfully reflecting

Elgar's score, although there is some latitude in matters of speed.

Handley's is a broad, measured view of the first movement, the motto theme presented at crotchet=60, rather than the 72 marked. Yet it never seems to drag (as does Barbirolli's in his second recording), due to the fine pointing of rhythm and a very subtle use of rubato, reaching almost the elusiveness of Boult. Handley makes much of the detail - observing carefully the largamente and accelerando markings before cue 7, for example, and making much of the myriad tenutos throughout. When he does assert his individuality (as in making a distinct rallentando before the second subject-group), Handley does not halt the movement's progress, playing the new theme at the same tempo as the motto - the subconscious, thereby, feeling no drastic change and the continuity remaining unbroken. It is the sort of reading a foreign conductor, new to the work but knowing something of Elgar's style, might give. But this is not to say that Handley is new to the work, or fails to inspire his orchestra.

The Scherzo is masterly, the transition to the Adagio akin to Handley's Falstaffian splendour, whilst the great Adagio itself, somewhat coolly played is not unlike Elgar's own reading, and reminds one of Jaeger's beloved Beethoven. Elgar overcame the problem of following this beautiful movement with consummate skill, and it is at the opening of the Finale that Handley displays his best qualities of balance and atmosphere. The Allegro, somewhat steady, picks up before 117 with an accelerando which, although slight, is one of the few points which jar. The glorious augmentation at 130 is moving (the soft trombones very effective) although there is some uncertain ensemble at the reprise. The re-appearance of the motto is prepared beautifully (the 3rd trumpets mf being observed meticulously), even if the climax before 149 is less impressive than Boult's on HMV.

Throughout, the recording quality is very fine, the brass a little raucous occasionally, but not disturbingly so. The 2nd violins are clearly on the right - as they should be (why has this practice largely died out? Solti's marvellous reading suffers because of it). To sum up then - a very fine performance, perhaps more direct than most. At its price, and with excellent playing and recording, an ideal alternative to Solti or Barenboim, and a fine supplement to Boult. It is a version for anyone who loves this work, if only to emphasise the glories and wonders of Elgar's score.

P.A.B.

SEA PICTURES (Coupled with Berlioz' *La Mort de Cleopatre*)

Yvonne Minton, London Philharmonic  
Orch./Daniel Barenboim

CBS Classics 61891

And here is the Minton/Barenboim *Sea Pictures*, reissued in a coupling which can only be described as eccentric. The Berlioz side, in fact, is a delight, being well-characterised, and captured in well-focussed,

if somewhat hard, sound. The conductor is Boulez. The Elgar, however, fares much less well in every way. It must be the slowest, most lugubrious performance I have ever heard. Not only is it slow, but none of the songs seems to settle into a steady rhythmic pulse. Perhaps it is this lack of firm direction which results in the singer sounding uncharacteristically tentative, and limited in dynamic range and vocal colour.

Nor does the recorded sound help. Yvonne Minton's warm tones are reasonably well caught, but the orchestra is given a rather backward balance and lacks clarity. There also seems to be a slight haze of distortion over the sound - and my review copy had a very poor surface.

Anyone seeking a bargain *Sea Pictures* ought to try and hear the RCA Gold Seal recording by another Australian contralto, Lauris Elms, who has an attractive, bright-toned voice and who sings these songs with much greater dynamic range - helped, no doubt, by the fine conducting of John Hopkins, whose excellent Elgar performances with the BBC Northern Orchestra in the 1950's will be remembered by many.

G.H.L.

VIOLIN SONATA in E minor, Op.82 (Coupled with Vaughan Williams'  
*Violin Sonata in A minor*)

HMV ASD 3820

*For peace, than knowledge more desirable,  
Into your Sussex quietness I came,  
When summer's green and gold azure fell,  
Over the world in flame.*

John Drinkwater's paean to Sussex perhaps exemplified what Brinkwells, and its country, was for Elgar during the dark days of World War I. Frequently dragged to London for personal, professional and patriotic commitments, Brinkwells all the same became the cradle for Elgar's last creative period. The three chamber works and the *Cello Concerto*, were either born or nurtured in this rich countryside, which must have cried peace at Elgar, whilst his tranquility was shattered by the rumble of guns across the Channel, and the headlines in the occasional newspaper.

Yehudi Menuhin's unique understanding of Elgar is demonstrated in this recording, and his performance appears to emphasise Elgar's longing for the past, his loathing of the War, and his fears for the future. He shows the final coda to have the poignancy of that in the *Cello Concerto*, which, for him, becomes the heart of the work. I have listened to this recording many times, and after my initial surprise at its different sound I have become used to the Menuhin view of its essential bigness. The sound is large, and the relationship with the *Violin Concerto* is more apparent than we are perhaps used to. The playing of the piano part by Hephzibah Menuhin is a little more diffident, as she allows her brother to lead the performance. The instruments are an essential partnership, despite the rewarding part for violin, and their

*/Continued on page 30*

## Branch Reports

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### EAST MIDLANDS

Secretary: Malcolm Smitham, 5 Ridдон Drive, Hinckley, Leics, LE10 OUF.  
Tel: 0455-613737

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Apr. 22nd. The last meeting of the Spring season was well attended, and we heard a most interesting tape entitled "The Fifteenth Variation," being reminiscences by people who knew Elgar. The tape was introduced by our Chairman, who had also mounted a fascinating exhibition of Elgar memorabilia from his private collection. A short AGM followed, during which members unanimously elected the Steering Committee en bloc, to serve for the next year. An excellent supper of Cheese and Wine followed and an opportunity was given for members to peruse the exhibition.

The Branch Committee has been busily preparing the Programme for next season, details of which follow, and they are pleased to note that it has been possible for our ex-Chairman, the Rev. Gordon Richmond, to rejoin the Committee.

#### Programme 1980-1981

- Sept. 30th. Recording the *Violin Concerto*. Brian Crimp (formerly EMI).  
[This meeting is in association with the Leicester Recorded Music Society]
- Oct. 28th. The Unknown Elgar. Barry Collett.
- Nov. 25th. Vaughan Williams in the Elgar Era. Michael Kennedy.  
1981
- Jan. 27th. Elgar's Concert Overtures and their  
Associations. Diana McVeagh.
- Feb. 24th. *The Dream of Gerontius*. Percy M. Young.
- Mar. 31st. *The Second Symphony*. Christopher Kent.
- Apr. 28th. Triple Bill: (i) Raymond Monk introduces the 1932 recording by Sir Hamilton Harty of the *Enigma Variations*  
(ii) AGM. (iii) Wine and Cheese to the music of Ray Noble and his Orchestra. (*I'll be there!*--EDITOR)

All meetings will be held in the Charles Wilson Building (Third Floor), University of Leicester, and will commence at 7.30 p.m. Members from our neighbouring Branches will be most welcome at any, or all of our meetings.

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### NORTH WEST

Secretary: Malcolm H. Key, 10 Eversley Pk, Oxtон, Birkenhead, Merseyside, L43 5XA. Tel: 051 652-6388

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March 29th. Ken Kidd--"Elgariana". Our member entertained us after our AGM with an illuminating account of his own interest in Elgar, dating from the time he heard Sir Malcolm Sargent at the Liverpool Philharmonic. Then throughout a lengthy correspondence with Mrs. Elgar Blake and that prodigious Elgarian, Havergal Brian, and culminating with a recorded conversation with Sir Adrian Boult. All this kept us enthralled until late evening.

April 26th. Maxwell Hutchinson--"Troyte Griffith, friend and architect." Mr. Hutchinson, with his wife, gave a splendid account of Troyte, his work, his environment, and his relationship with Elgar. After a detailed look at the place where the friendship began, Malvern, his work as and "intelligent, perceptive, architect" who designed over 100 buildings and alterations in Malvern, the friendship itself was described. It was very much an attraction of opposites: Troyte the aristocrat and Elgar the tradesman's son. They had things in common however, with their love of the countryside, bicycling, crosswords, chess and books. Elgar enjoyed Troyte's friendship as an anchor, and, after the death of Alice, spent many hours in Troyte's office. A deep and abiding friendship which profoundly affected both lives. Mr. Hutchinson's talk amply illustrated this, and impressed his attentive audience.

May 24th/25th. Outing to Hereford. Nine members went to Hereford for the Elgar Festival. They thoroughly enjoyed the Philomusica of Gloucester's performance of *Caractacus* and *Light of Life*, the latter, unfamiliar to most of us, created a great impression. A dinner-party at the Lichfield Lodge Hotel, where five of the party were staying, commenced the proceedings, and in smaller groups we were shown over the ground floor (including Elgar's old study) of 'Plas Gwyn', and meditated on Mordiford Bridge on the Sunday morning. A great weekend, and, in company with fellow Elgarians, one to remember for a long time.

July 5th. Neil Tierney--"The Music Makers". The Liverpool music critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, gave us a selection of favourite Elgar works, with highly appropriate comments and background. Commencing with Elgar's words to the orchestra before playing *Land of Hope and Glory*, he described Elgar as an amazing conductor inasmuch as never rehearsing in the traditional manner, he none-the-less achieved maximum results with the greatest ease. Mr. Tierney reminded us that in creating the *Starlight Express*, Elgar took the opportunity to re-discover the enchantment of childhood by returning to such pieces as *Humoresque*, *Op. 10*, and the *Wand of Youth Suites*. In explaining Elgar's employment of Wagnerian techniques Mr. Tierney concluded with an excerpt from *The Apostles*. He said that the reason it and *The Kingdom* were coolly received was very likely due to the use of 'leitmotif' which at that time has as many stern critics as adherents. Perhaps Elgarians would disagree with some of Mr. Tierney's observations, but they did give an insight into how a modern critic views the Great Man and his music.

Following the summer break our programme will continue as follows:

- Sept. 13th. A Recital of Songs by Elgar and others. Doreen Wedgewood (soprano) accompanied Valerie MacLean.
- Oct. 11th. Edmund Walters, chorus-master of both the RLPO and the Liverpool Welsh Choirs, on his experiences as trainer and conductor of large choirs.
- Nov. 8th. The Elgar Quartet will play Elgar's *String Quartet* in company with those of Mozart(K.465) and Mendelssohn(Op.12)
- Dec. 6th or 13th. AGM and Christmas Party
- with, it is hoped, an extra occasion on the 15th October to the Crosby Civic Centre to hear our member Gerald Brown conduct his talented singers in a repeat performance of that rarity, *The Banner of St. George*.
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WEST MIDLANDS

Secretary: Alan Boon, Old School House  
Martley, Worcester. Tel:088 66 527

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June 8th. Once again Dr. Hunt and the Cathedral Choir gave members and friends present at the annual wreath laying ceremony great pleasure with their beautiful performance of *Give unto the Lord*, as the anthem, and *They are at Rest* as everyone gathered round the memorial window and tablet.

June 28th. We were grateful for the hospitality of Malvern College, and their Director of Music, Mr. Neil Page, for our Music, Wine and Cheese evening. Numbers were slightly down due to two other Elgar concerts in the locality, but all present thoroughly enjoyed the spirited performance by the Barbican Music Group of the Elgar *Piano Quintet*, with Sally Haines, piano, followed by the Brahms *Clarinet Quintet*, with Philip Shirtcliff, clarinet. This music for a delightful evening was arranged through Rebecca Wade, the group's viola player.

The Branch were pleased to be hosts for the AGM of the Society at Hereford, and glad to be able to arrange for a visit to 'Plas Gwyn' afterwards.

Members and friends from any part of the country are welcome at the first two meetings of our 80/81 season.

Sept. 6th, at 7.30 p.m. At All Saints Church Centre, Hereford.  
"Elgar in Hereford," with Martin Passande.

Oct. 11th, at 7.30 p.m. At the Commandery, Worcester.  
"Arthur Troyte Griffith - Friend and Architect,"  
with Maxwell Hutchinson.

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The past few months have been some of the most exciting during the brief existence of the Branch. This excitement is the result of four events, the first two of which were closely connected - being a performance of *The Apostles* in Bristol Cathedral under our branch chairman, Clifford Harker, and the excellent introductory talk he gave six days before the performance.

Nearly 50 people attended Mr. Harker's talk, when we were joined by a substantial contingent from the chorus, the Bristol Cathedral Special Choir. All present agreed that it was both fascinating and invaluable to have this well-presented insight into the conductor's inspiration. His feeling for the "Betrayal" scene, and his emphasis on Elgar's sympathy with Judas, were in evidence both during the talk and the performance. The contribution of the soloists made a particular impression on the audience, and it was obvious that all concerned enjoyed working under Mr. Harker's direction.

The next highlight was our Day Trip to the Birthplace and Malvern on June 28th. The weather stayed dry, except for one heavy shower after our arrival at Broadheath when we were able to shelter inside. At least it did not rain when we lunched at British Camp! We also went to see the exteriors at 'Forli' and 'Craeg Lea,' and during our free time in Malvern discovered a rehearsal of *The Music Makers*, in anticipation of a performance in The Priory that evening. This successful day was due in no small measure to the co-operation of Jack MacKenzie in specially opening the Birthplace for us in the morning, and for his hospitality.

Recently a team has participated from the Branch in the BBC Radio Bristol "Words and Music" quiz, where we won our way through to the second round by beating the South-West Branch of the Friends of the Welsh National Opera by 80 points to 78. In the second round we faced Yate Choral Society who had had won through to the final twice before, and experience told. We lost by 73 to 63, We earned some valuable media publicity, and the members, both team-members and audience, thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It is to be hoped we can gain a place next year.

Our meetings up to Christmas are as follows: Sept. 20th, at 7.30 p.m. in the Music Room of Bristol Folk House, 40 Park St. A Recital by the Cassio Wind Players, including some of Elgar's *Harmony Music*. Oct. 18th, at 7.30 p.m. same venue. "The Strange Case of the Odious Letter" - Elgar and Stanford, talk by Vincent Waite. The day school on Dec. 6th is reported elsewhere, and future dates for your 1981 diary are Jan. 24th, Feb. 28th, March 28th, April 25th, May 30th, and June 27th.



April 28th saw a departure from the printed programme when Arthur Darkin deferred his own intended offering to allow our Secretary to present the audio-visual show cancelled in February due to bad weather. Entitled 'The Yorkshire Elgar', this was really concerned with Charles Buck, the Settle doctor whose invitations to holiday with him in Yorkshire provided Elgar with much welcome relaxation during his frustrating early years. Members were taken on a pictorial tour of the Pennine beauty spots which the two men were known to have visited together. Music inspired by Elgar's visits to Yorkshire were played - *Rosemary, Gavotte* (dedicated to Dr. Buck in 1885), and *Salut d'Amour*, plus other examples of Elgar's early work. Through the friendly co-operation of Mrs. Anne Read, of the North Craven Heritage Trust, we were able to display items from an exhibition, still on in Settle, of material relating to the Elgar/Buck friendship. These included letters not otherwise available to us; one amply illustrating Elgar's affection for his dogs. In it, the composer recounts gleefully how Scap, the dog Buck had given him, had got the best of a fight with a St. Bernard. 'I did not know Scap could fight, but I was rejoiced to see that he pulled three good lumps of wool out of the enemy, which floated gaily in the breeze.'

'Elgar and Huddersfield' was the title of an excellent presentation given on May 19th by Lance Tufnell. A very lucid talk based upon exhaustive local research was accompanied by some of the works which had featured in Elgar concerts in Huddersfield down the years, commencing with the organ arrangement of the Imperial March, played in Huddersfield as early as 1898. The northern choral tradition is nowhere stronger than in Huddersfield and this was reflected in extracts from *Spirit of England* and, finally, *The Music Makers*. This latter featured prominently down the years. It was heard in Huddersfield in 1951 at a Festival of Britain concert, then in 1961 when the freedom of the Borough was conferred on Malcolm Sargent, and yet again at a concert for Sir Malcolm's 70th birthday. Elgar conducted his own works there on several occasions, and we heard of a 'Grand Elgar Night' on 2nd Nov. 1917, which included (they had long concerts in those days!) *The Dream of Gerontius* with Olga Haley, Gervase Elwes, and Robert Charlesworth, the Huddersfield Choral Society, and E.E. wielding the baton.

Our AGM was held on June 9th. The attendance (thirteen) was disappointing, although six were known to be on holiday. It does seem that many members, although happy with what the branch offers, are content to leave administration to others. A full committee of seven was elected, but a discussion on the position of chairman once again revealed no enthusiasm for inviting an outsider, however eminent. The meeting expressed confidence in the acting-chairman, Dennis Clark, and confirmed him in office as Branch Chairman. Opportunity was taken to discuss

views on future activities, and many sound ideas were aired. It is highly probable that a branch outing(a weekend) to the Malverns and the Birthplace will now be arranged for October 1980. All interested please contact the Secretary.

We next meet on Sept.22nd, when Arthur Darkin will present 'A Light-Hearted Look at Elgar.'

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LONDON

Secretary: Garry Humphreys, 4 Hill Ct,  
Stanhope Road, London, N.6. Tel: 348-  
1678

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April 14th. Hans Keller - Elgar the Progressive. Many of us are probably unaware of the considerable work done by Hans Keller within the BBC to promote performances of Elgar's music during his time as Chief Assistant for New Music, until his retirement last year. Thus we looked forward to his talk, anticipating that we might be able to share a little of the wide knowledge of such an erudite and distinguished musician. In the event, however, it was something of a disappointment, as it became increasingly difficult to follow his argument and his reasons for advocating the 'progressive' nature of Elgar the composer. There were, of course, the expected references to Mozart's G minor Symphony, to Schumann, Berlioz, and, unexpectedly, to Mozart's Piano Trios, and the orchestral music of Britten, though the connection of the latter remains unclear. But it was unfortunate that one was left with no precise idea of Mr.Keller's opinions; an atmosphere of superiority over his audience did not help either, especially when, having invited comments, he added that he would quickly destroy any suggestions which were offered! There was little response! Excerpts from *In the South* (Boult recording) and *Introduction & Allegro* were used - the latter from Britten's splendid recording, which Mr. Keller confessed he had not heard before and liked very much. Michael Pope felicitously thanked Mr.Keller on our behalf.

May 12th. Ian Lace - Elgar's London. This was obviously the result of meticulous research and preparation. In his preamble Mr.Lace said he intended to include not only those places connected with Elgar's life and music, but also the political, social and artistic significance of London when it was the centre of a great empire. His excellent survey spanned the period from the year of the Great Exhibition in 1851, until Elgar's death in 1934. In addition to recalling all Elgar's various residences in London, the talk very much comprised a social history of the times, coupled with various anecdotes relative to the composer's life and music during the period.

This was an admirable and extremely interesting talk, embellished with countless slides of photographs, many of which had been specially taken, with appropriate music for the particular environment. Ian Lace is to be congratulated on his splendid presentation, in which his wife and Garry Humphreys and Malcolm Sced, collaborated. The Hon.Secretary expressed to each of them the warm thanks of the audience.

June 2nd. The Marchioness of Aberdeen - Music at Haddo. What an exhilarating meeting this proved to be! Those members who had journeyed to Aberdeenshire several years ago to hear *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* in memorable performances by the Haddo House Choral Society, conducted by Lady Aberdeen (herself a professional musician known as June Gordon), had awaited the evening with great expectations. The audience was not disappointed, as Lady Aberdeen exactly fits her description given in a letter from Sir Adrian Boult, which referred to her as 'a real dynamo!'

After the last war, in conjunction with her late husband, she founded the Haddo House Choral and Dramatic Society. A splendid concert hall was built in the grounds of Haddo House, and under the continuing direction of Lady Aberdeen the whole enterprise has become an important centre of music-making in the far north. It is a remarkable and praiseworthy achievement.

Lady Aberdeen gave an extremely entertaining, and often hilarious, account of the early years, during which we had no difficulty in believing that her own lively personality and enthusiasm has been the prime factor in the Society's undoubted success. As a committed Elgarian, she played excerpts from a tape made at Haddo of *The Apostles*; these confirmed the splendid singing of the choir which she continues to train. The Chairman thanked Lady Aberdeen for her delightful talk. It was an admirable meeting with which to close the season.

E.W.A.J.

The AGM was held on June 23rd. It was a special event in that for the first time in the history of the branch we changed out officers. We owe much to these two gentlemen: Douglas Guest, who is leaving for the delights of Gloucestershire, and Bill Jackson, who has decided to retire. It is impossible to put into a few words our debt of gratitude, but suitable expressions were made when Douglas Guest was presented with a travelling clock from the branch, and with a book on fly-fishing by the committee. Bill Jackson received a framed reproduction of Elizabeth Parrott's painting of 'Plas Gwyn', which appears on the sleeve of our gramophone record.

The new officers are Diana McVeagh (Chairman), Geoffrey Hodgkins (Vice-Chairman), Garry Humphreys (Secretary), and at a special meeting held on August 11th Michael Sanderson (Treasurer). A full committee was also elected. At the August meeting we elected a new auditor to replace Mr. Stanley who is retiring after serving the branch so well for many years.

Our new season commences with a Social at our new premises in the rooms at Imperial College. (Full details from Garry Humphreys). There will be plentiful supplies of wine and cheese, and we hope for a performance of the *Violin Sonata*. It should be a very pleasant occasion on OCTOBER 6th, at 7.30 p.m. and all in the London area are invited. Alas, there must be a charge, so apply to Garry Humphreys as soon as possible. Speakers for the season ahead will include Michael Kennedy, Peter Pirie, Geoffrey Brand, Robert Phillip, John Whittle, Richard McNichol, and Martin Grafton. An impressive list!

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Our 1980-81 Season promises to be as enjoyable as the one recently concluded in festive spirit with a strawberry and wine party at the home of our Treasurer.

We start in September with a visit to Hengrave Hall, nr.Bury St.Edmunds, for music in a Tudor mansion (organized by our small Suffolk contingent) In October a record recital is to include *Froissart*, *Spirit of England*, and the *Cello Concerto*. The following month we welcome back John Warren, organist of Franlingham Parish Church, and founder of the Debenham Festival, for a lecture-recital. This will set Elgar's piano works into their musical context. The talk will be based on his recent research. We have three social events planned before Christmas: a fireworks party, a (now annual) dinner, plus a new Christmas 'Edwardian Evening' in costume! January sees our AGM with the record 'Contrasts' for the second half of the evening.

In February Mr.Nicholas, the Norwich Cathedral organist, kindly returns to talk on the Pre-Gerontius Cantatas. The March meeting includes records of the *Soliloquy for Oboe*, *The Sanguine Fan*, *Three Bavarian Dances* and *Enigma Variations*. During March we also have a party arranged, at the home of a committee member. In April Dr. Gareth Lewis is visiting us to talk on Elgar's singers, and in May the Chairman and Secretary are presenting 'Elgar and Jaeger,' based upon the correspondence, with generous musical embellishments. In June we are hoping to hear a talk on Elgar's musical style from a visiting speaker, and in July we have our annual Strawberry and Wine Party. We conclude with an outing to Suffolk, as we began the year. On this occasion the Bury St. Edmunds Cathedral organist, Harrsion Oxley, who, with his wife, is a life-long Elgarian and one of our branch members, is arranging an Elgar Evensong and organ recital. We hope to link with the Norfolk Guild of Organists for this event.

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AT LEICESTER in April a most interesting exhibition was put on at the University. This consisted of treasures from the private Elgar Collection of Raymond Monk. This was the final event of the East Midlands season, and attracted a photographer from the local paper.

SIMON PRESTON of Christ Church, Oxford has been appointed to succeed Douglas Guest, C.V.O., as director of music at Westminster Abbey.

JOHN MORRISON, of 28 Westwood Road, Barnes, London, S.W.13. asks us to make clear that his collection of Elgar music is not just a score collection. He has the complete music for some 400 different Elgar works and arrangements, often in multiple copies. Application for loan of copies by all interested persons is encouraged

# THIRTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## A report by the Secretary

This took place in Hereford on Saturday, 31st May, and although regrettably few members attended, a number of items of importance were covered.

The following proposals were put to members, passed, and are now effective:

1. From 1st January 1981 the subscription has been raised to £3.
2. A new Constitution was adopted. Should a member require a photo-copy, perhaps they could send an s.a.e. to the Hon. Secretary. It is hoped to have copies of the Constitution printed when funds permit.
3. A new committee was elected under the new constitution. This now consists of:

Michael Pope	<i>Chairman</i>
Trevor Fenemore-Jones	<i>Vice-Chairman</i>
Andrew Neill	<i>Secretary</i>
John Knowles	<i>Treasurer</i>
Ronald Taylor	<i>Editor, Elgar Society Journal</i>
Michael Trott	<i>Chairman, West Midlands</i>
Diana McVeagh	<i>" London</i>
Alan Childs	<i>" East Anglia</i>
Raymond Monk	<i>" East Midlands</i>
Clifford Harker	<i>" South West</i>
Dennis Clark	<i>" Yorkshire</i>
Douglas Carrington	<i>" North West</i>
Ian Lace	
Geoffrey Hodgkins	
Gordon Richmond	
Ronald Bleach	
Bill Kemp	

Next year sees the 30th Anniversary of the Society, and we intend to celebrate the occasion with a Dinner after the AGM. This will take place in Malvern on 30th May, 1981. We are negotiating for a suitable place, but it is impossible to be exact as far as costs are concerned. These should be approximately £6 - £7 per head.

Members who feel they would be able to attend can assist by notifying the Secretary of their interest so that the right venue can be chosen. You will in no way be committed; but interested members are invited to complete the following and return this to the Secretary:

.....  
.....

To: The Secretary, A.H.A. Neill,  
Elgar Society  
11 Limburg Road  
London, SW 11

I hope to be able to attend the Society Dinner on 30th May, 1981, and would require ..... seats.

I understand that I am not committed to attend, and that full details will be published in the January Journal.

Name.....  
Address.....  
.....  
.....

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Readers not wishing to cut the magazine should copy the form on to a sheet of notepaper.

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*Continued from page 20.*

mutual understanding is best heard in the slow movement. Elgar is here at his most ingenuous, and the Menuhins bring light to a work which does tend to be overlooked in favour of the *Quintet* and the *Quartet*. His playing is not completely precise, but there is no doubt that this is a great contribution to the recordings of Elgar, and one which should be heard by all.

The Vaughan Williams work is very different, and though nearly 40 years younger, occupies another world from that of the Elgar. Much of Vaughan Williams's music does not currently inspire the devotion now given to Elgar, and listening to the emotions exposed by the latter in his sonata: nostalgia, anger, and fear, we can perhaps understand why. He could see the world would not be the same again, and mourned; when Vaughan Williams wrote his work, things again were changing, but there was cause, perhaps, to be grateful all the same.

A.H.A.N.

# LETTERS

From RODNEY BALDWIN

In his appreciation of the life of Nella Leicester Dr. Jerrold Northrop Moore refers to reminiscences of Mrs. Leicester and Elgar. While I hesitate to dispute one of the events quoted by him I would point out that according to Basil Maine in his book "The Best of Me" page 199-200, the road in question to which he would come back and haunt was not at Wyre Piddle.

Basil Maine claims that Elgar spoke those very words to him when on a car ride with Elgar near Drakes Broughton. (Elgar liked the place so much that he wrote a hymn tune in his early years and called it Drakes Broughton.) The road in question is a turn off the main Worcester to Pershore road by the Plough Inn and it is labelled Wadborough. The road here goes through deep woodland, and even though tree felling operations have reduced them somewhat in recent years, the atmosphere is still there. This is the road that Elgar intended to come back and haunt - if further 'proof' be needed I can vouch for the truth of this from personal experience long before I knew of the existence of this story. That for me is proof enough of where exactly this event took place.

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From DR. L.F.W. EICKHOFF

Would you please correct two errors in my article "The Elgars at Hampstead" that appeared in the May issue, the first of which is not in my manuscript, and the second which is a typing error.

1. Dishonest Ex-Policemen should read Dishonest Policemen. (They were both active members of the force at the time.)
2. Mrs. Long's death was Jan. 1907, not 1906.

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items wanted by members.....

Boxed set of 2-record "Complete Organ Works" (RCA); and Piano arrangement of Symphony no.2 by Karg-Elert wanted by N.J.Alexander, 23 Canonbury Rd. Canons Park, Edgware, Middlesex

J.Henry, 112 Ellerdine Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, wishes to purchase any Promenade Concert programmes 1895-1953 which members may have for sale. Also requires information on relatives of the late W.W.Thompson, BBC concerts manager up to 1953.

Malcolm Smitham, 5 Riddon Drive, Hinckley, Leicester, requires a copy of the NURSERY SUITE conducted by Lawrance Collingwood on Music for Pleasure label.

# THE ELGAR SOCIETY

(President: Sir Adrian Boult, C.H.)

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From January 1st 1980 the annual subscription to the Society will be raised to £3.

At the same time several of the Branches have been forced to raise their local subscriptions because of rising costs. These new subscription rates will be listed in the January issue, but members wishing to pay in advance to their local branch should enquire from their branch secretaries or Hon. Treasurers as to the correct subscription.