

Elgar

Society



JOURNAL

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Notice from the Treasurer: In view of the high cost of postage, I am not now sending out receipts for subscriptions received, unless specifically requested. In such cases an SAE would be appreciated.

John Knowles.

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

Photograph on page 4 by Berrow's Newspapers, Worcester

The cover photograph of the new Elgar statue was taken by Tom Bader, of Worcester

Elgar Society Journal : ISSN 0143 - 1269

The Elgar Society Journal

01-440 2651

104 CRESCENT ROAD,
NEW BARNET,
HERTS.

SEPTEMBER 1981

EDITORIAL

Vol. 2, no. 3

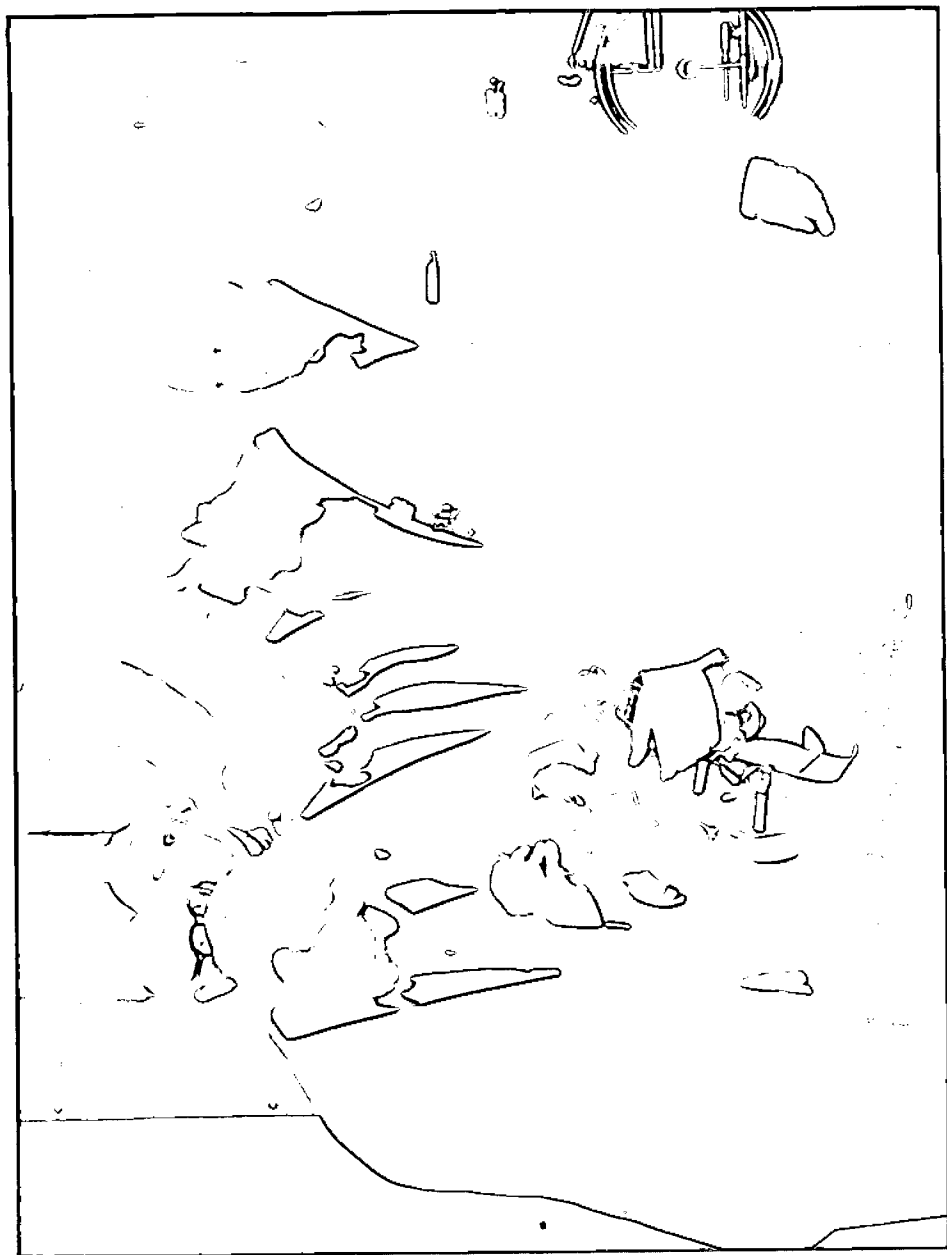
Readers will recall that in recent issues we have appealed for material for a Society Archive. I am pleased to say that excellent progress has been made in this direction, particularly a donation of papers from Mrs. S. Lambert, who was joint secretary with her husband for 11 years in the days when the Society was based in Malvern. These papers are of great interest and tell us much of the early days of the Society. We are now, as a matter of policy, trying to retain photographs, programmes, and newspaper cuttings which touch on the activities of the Society and its branches. The recent flurry of happenings in Worcester has been well covered. Also, we have been fortunate enough to acquire copies of the very first *Newsletters* to members, dating from the 1960's, which most of us had not previously seen. They will be kept carefully so that future researchers can trace the history of the Society.

However, gaps still remain and we again appeal to members for any material which they think relevant. Do photographs exist of early gatherings of members? Surprisingly little exists regarding the early days of the London branch - the first to be set up outside Worcestershire. No general letters to members, nor any kind of publicity material designed to attract Londoners remains in our files. If any of our readers has such material we should be extremely grateful for the loan or gift of it. A further need is for a complete copy of the 1951 Malvern Elgar Festival Programme. Unfortunately our only copy is not complete. Your help would be much appreciated.

Programmes announced by the various branches show what splendid activities are planned for the coming months, and we wish all branches a very successful year. Addresses of secretaries and treasurers are to be found on the back cover of the Journal, and they will welcome enquiries and/or subscriptions.

RONALD TAYLOR

Editor



THE PRINCE OF WALES LAYS THE ELGAR SOCIETY WREATH

On June 2nd this year the Society was honoured by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales when he placed the memorial wreath below the Elgar window in Worcester Cathedral. In the Society's early years the wreath was laid on Elgar's grave at Little Malvern, but for some years the ceremony has taken place in Worcester Cathedral on the anniversary of Elgar's birth. During the interval of the special concert held in the Cathedral the Prince of Wales was invited by Michael Pope, Chairman of the Society, to lay the wreath "which is traditionally placed here each year by the Elgar Society." The Prince responded "that he would do so with pleasure", and the wreath of red roses was then laid by the Elgar plaque. . His Royal Highness then stood in silence for a few moments before passing to the end of the cloister where he was introduced to the conductor and soloists, the Cathedral choir-boys, and others associated with the concert. He then returned to meet those members of the Society who had formed a group for the presentation of the wreath. In addition to Michael Pope, Michael Trott and Alan Boon of the West Midlands branch were present, (they would normally have arranged the ceremony), together with Trevor Fenimore-Jones, Andrew Neill, John Knowles, and Ronald Taylor. (SEE PHOTOGRAPH OPPOSITE)

The Prince remarked that he really knew little of the Elgar Society, though of course he knew much of the work of the Elgar Foundation. In the brief moments available it was not possible to tell him much of our work, though it is hoped that His Royal Highness will learn more of our activities in the future. Last year, following the last of the Foundation concerts at the Albert Hall in London, Raymond Monk, chairman of the East Midlands branch of the Elgar Society, was introduced to the Prince of Wales and was able to tell him something of the Society's work, particularly of his own Leicester branch.

It was a particular pleasure and honour for the Society to be associated with the Prince of Wales in a year when he is so much occupied with other, more personal, matters!

ELGAR STATUE UNVEILED AFTER ROYAL CONCERT

The 124th Anniversary of Elgar's birth was celebrated in Worcester in a remarkable way. The efforts of the Elgar Statue Appeal Committee had been very successful, and H.R.H. The Prince of Wales was to unveil the statue, which had been sculpted by Ken Potts, of the Royal Worcester Porcelain Co. Surprisingly, it is the first public statue of a composer in the British Isles - not something of which the country can be particularly proud! We have had to wait 47 years since Elgar's death to see a statue raised to his memory, but the unveiling was certainly done in style, and before large crowds.

Prior to the ceremony a splendid concert was held in the Cathedral, and this was also attended by the Prince of Wales. A capacity audience

heard the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Cathedral Choir and Festival Chorus, conducted by Donald Hunt. The concert began with Elgar's arrangement of the National Anthem, as befitted the occasion, followed by *Pomp and Circumstance No.4*. The contralto, Sandra Browne, was the soloist in *Sea Pictures*, and, after the interval, in *The Music Makers*. *The Severn Suite*, in its orchestral form, was also performed, and the choir gave us *Go Song of Mine*. All concerned rose to the occasion, and Miss Browne was a fine soloist who gave us a new insight into the *Sea Pictures*. *The Times* described it as "a performance of exciting originality, lifelike in its response to words as well as music, exultant in tone."

Among the distinguished guests were Sir Charles Groves, J.B. Priestley, and Michael Kennedy. We were also delighted at the presence of Bertie Shaw, who has done so much for Elgar and the Elgar Society.

Following the concert a somewhat unseemly dash was made for vantage points to watch the unveiling, the patiently-waiting crowds outside being contained behind rather flimsy looking barriers. However, all was well - it was a fine bright evening, the people cheered, and everyone appeared in the best of spirits. In his speech the Prince of Wales praised the hard work put in by the Appeal Committee. He 'gave' the statue to the City of Worcester authorities, and requested that they "look after it". He praised Elgar's genius, and remarked that he intended to have some of Elgar's music played at his wedding. (A photograph of the statue appears on our cover. It shows Elgar in middle age, wearing his Cambridge Doctorate robes and the Order of Merit.)

A short walk through the High Street to the Guildhall brought more cheers and good wishes, and vast numbers of small children all equipped with miniature Union Jacks. Whether they knew who Elgar was is doubtful, but they certainly knew their Prince of Wales! It was a happy occasion, and all concerned are to be congratulated on a memorable day.

NEWS ITEMS.....

WE ARE HAPPY TO INFORM MEMBERS that our Secretary, Andrew Neill is to marry Vickie Langly-Smith on September 26th. They have our very best wishes for a long and happy married life.

THAMES PUBLISHING's Managing Director, John Bishop, tells us that there is a special offer to Society members who wish to purchase both books recently issued by his company, and reviewed on our book pages. The titles are Elgar Country and Elgar Lived Here and both may be obtained for £7, including postage. Cheques, made out to Thames Publishing, should be sent to Mr. Bishop at 14 Barlby Road, London W10 6AR. The offer closes at the end of the year.

ROSE IMPERIAL, "a memoir of Sir Edward Elgar and his Friends", devised and written by John Hunt, a member of the Elgar Society, will be present-

ed by The Masque Players in National Trust Houses in 1982. The Masque Players have built up a wide audience for their plays in historic houses, profits being donated to restoration projects. 50% of profits from "Rose Imperial" will go to the Elgar Foundation for the Birthplace, and 50% to the National Trust. More details in our next issue.

THREE AUTOGRAPH LETTERS FROM ELGAR TO T.E.LAWRENCE were sold at auction at Sotheby's in July. Two had been published in "Letters to T.E.Lawrence" but the third appears to have remained unpublished. They fetched a total of £520.

THE ELGAR MUSIC LOAN COLLECTION, which has been put together by John Morrison, remains at the disposal of all interested persons. There is no charge for loan of the music, except for postage and packing. Mr. Morrison is particularly keen for branch officials to have a list of the collection, and on receipt of £1 towards copying and postage he will send the complete list by return. The list now runs to 12 sheets, and contains nearly 400 pieces. Mr. Morrison's address is 28 Westwood Road, Barnes, London SW13 0LA.

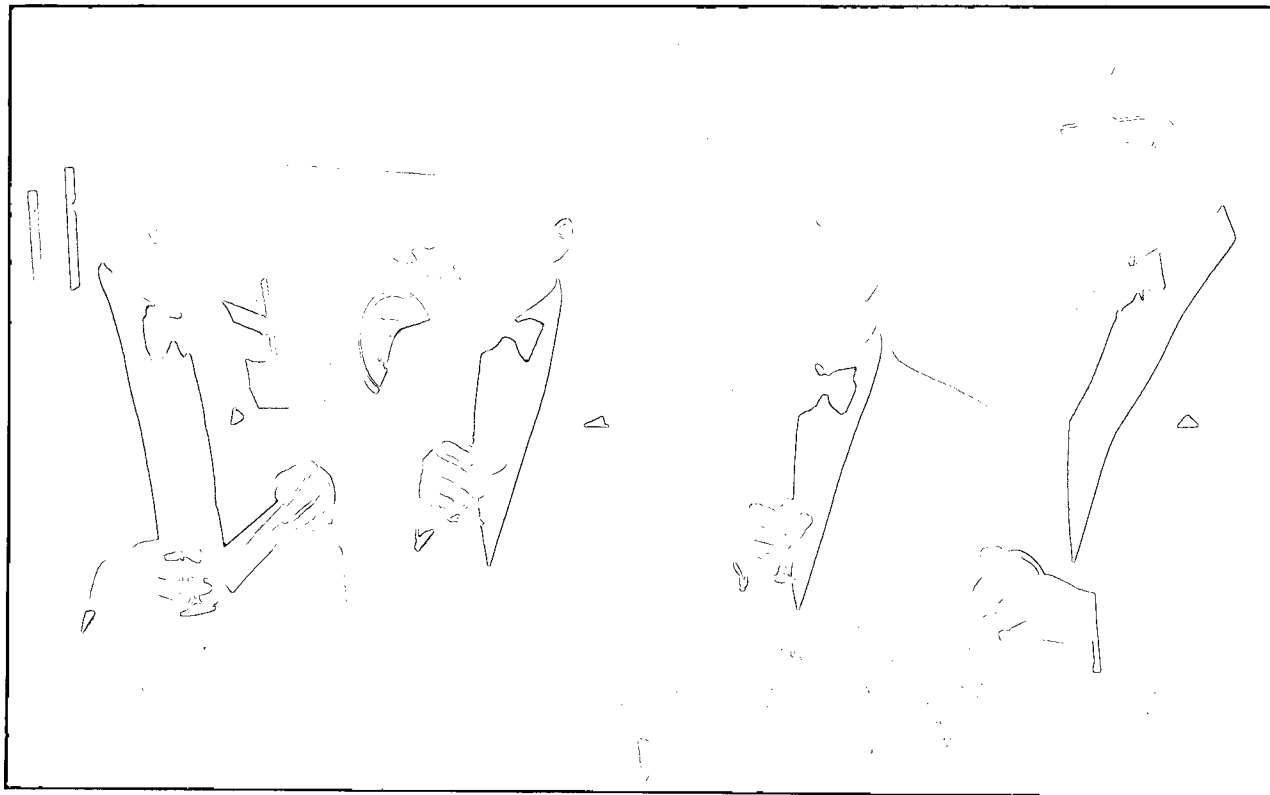
AN ELGAR FESTIVAL was held in Sydney, Australia, last February. Alan Webb has passed on the details to us. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Philharmonic Choir were conducted by Maurice Handford. The music included: *Dream of Gerontius*, *Introduction & Allegro*, *Falstaff*, *the Violin Concerto*, *the Cello Concerto*, *Froissart*, *Serenade for Strings*, and *In the South*.

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST is offering travelling fellowships for 1982. Generally the subjects covered are far removed from the Society's interest, but the current prospectus does include the offer of fellowships overseas for those involved in conducting youth orchestras and brass bands. Full details may be had from the Trust at 15 Queen's Gate Terrace, London, SW7 5PR, but application forms must be returned by Nov.2nd.

AN ELGAR POSTAGE STAMP is considered by many to be long overdue. Mr. Alan Wall of the London branch has been making representations on the matter, and has had a letter printed in the magazine "Stamp Collecting". The General Committee of the Society has also been considering the matter and has been in correspondence with the Post Office. We await further news.

AN APOLOGY..... 'The record of Elgar part-songs *EVENING SCENE* issued by Meridian Records was listed in our previous number as shortly to be issued, and many members sent remittances to the Treasurer for a copy

Unfortunately the record has been much delayed, and it is only now that copies are available. We sincerely regret this delay and assure those members who have paid that their copies will be sent as soon as possible. Also we have been informed that the price has been slightly increased. Previous orders will be honoured, but future copies will be £4 post included from the Treasurer.



A drink before the Elgar Society Dinner at the Abbey Hotel, Malvern. Guest of honour, Michael Kennedy, talking to Michael Pope, John Knowles, and Andrew Neill.

Photograph by courtesy of Berrow's Newspapers

THIRTY FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A Report by the Secretary

This took place in the York Hall, Malvern Girls' School on Saturday, 30th May, at which 74 members were present.

The 30th Birthday of the Society was celebrated by a dinner that evening, mentioned below, but the significance of the occasion was appreciated by those present, who were pleased to receive confirmation that membership now exceeded 1000.

The following proposal was passed:

Family Membership. Where more than one member of the society in a family prefer to receive only one copy of the Journal then in place of the £3 annual subscription the following subscription will apply:

2 members & 1 Journal	- £4
3 members & 1 Journal	- £5
4 members & 1 Journal	- £6

To be effective from 1st January, 1982

A new Committee was elected as follows: Michael Pope(*Chairman*); Trevor Fenemore Jones(*vice-Chairman*); Andrew Neill(*Secretary*); John Knowles(*Treasurer*); Ronald Taylor(*Editor, Elgar Society Journal*); Michael Trott(*Chairman, West Midlands*); Diana McVeagh(*Chairman, London*); Alan Childs(*Chairman, East Anglia*); Raymond Monk(*Chairman, East Midlands*); Clifford Harker(*Chairman, South West*); Douglas Carrington(*Chairman, North West*); Dennis Clark(*Chairman, Yorkshire*). And the following members: Ian Lace, Geoffrey Hodgkins, Ronald Bleach, Bill Kemp, David Mooney, Sylvia Strange.

In recognition of their services to the Society Mrs. Lydia Shaw and Mr. Frank Greatwich were both elected Honorary Members

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATORY DINNER.

Mr. Michael Kennedy was the guest speaker when the Society held its celebratory dinner in the Abbey Hotel, Malvern at 8 p.m. on 30th May. He proposed a toast to the Society to which the Chairman, Michael Pope, responded. Some 83 members were present, making the occasion a memorable part of the Society's history. A message was read from the President, Sir Adrian Boulton, sending his good wishes and regretting his inability to be present.

The Secretary, Andrew Neill, proposed 'The Guests' and Mr. Christopher Harmer, deputy Chairman of the Elgar Foundation replied. Many distinguished members were present including Mr. Alan Webb, Professor Ian Parrott, Mrs. Winifred Lambert and Mr. Frank Greatwich.

ELGAR & JAMES WHEWALL

A STUDY OF NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE CHORAL SOCIETY

by David Bury

In October 1902 Elgar received a letter from William Sherratt, organist to the North Staffordshire Choral Society extending an invitation to conduct *Gerontius* in Hanley. The driving forces behind this suggestion were in fact Havergal Brian, then a youthful admirer of Elgar and rising local musician, and Arthur Bailey, treasurer of the Choir, Sherratt proving useful no doubt as the original point of contact in view of his having been organist at Elgar's last appearance in the Potteries for the première of *King Olaf* in 1896. A meeting was quickly arranged and a delegation waited upon Elgar in Malvern. The composer was offered his choice of soloists and orchestra, and convinced of the ability of the Choir by references to competitive successes. By 13th October Sherratt was writing to Alice Elgar to express his "gratification" at Elgar's agreement to conduct. It was the beginning of an exciting period of association between the composer and the Choir, and the introduction of Elgar to its remarkable Chorus Master, the taciturn James Whewall who had sat anonymously in a corner at the Craeg Lea discussions. "Might I ask who is the gentleman to be responsible for the Choir?", Elgar had asked, at length. Arthur Bailey pointed to the small, neat, unlikely figure of Whewall.

Havergal Brian has recalled Whewall as "the greatest enigma I ever met. He baffled every man who met him for the first time. He had nothing to say, speech was of no use to him - his genius was essentially musical. He never evinced any enthusiasm for literature or the other arts "...even in conversation on music he didn't enthuse", and Brian goes on to confirm that "on deputations to composers, conductors, etc...on each occasion I had to transpose his thoughts into speech". But of his musical genius there was no doubt. "When he faced a Choir his silence was broken. Here the real man stood revealed...the quiet man gave way to one of astonishing energy and vigour".

Whewall was born at Kingsley, near Leek, and as a boy sang in the parish church choir. Subsequently he became Choir Master at a Wesleyan Chapel, and organiser of a local juvenile chorus with which he obtained his first competition successes. Out of this chorus developed, as the members matured, the Talke and District Choir which in 1900 tied for 1st prize in the Small Choir section of the Welsh Eisteddfod. By profession Whewall had been a coal miner, but a serious accident caused him to leave the pit and to concentrate virtually all his energies on the Choir. His new occupation of insurance collector was almost deliberately geared to assisting him in maintaining contacts with his singers, while it has been suggested by Reginald Nettel, in his "North Staffordshire Music", that he asserted his primacy the more through his music in order to convince himself that he was not a coward. In rehearsals his motto was "thorough". "No conductor could be more determined to



James Whewall

make tell every moment given to rehearsal, and few got through more work in a short time", observed *The Staffordshire Sentinel* in 1909. "When you went to a rehearsal under James Whewall, you went to work", recalled one Choir member. The best remembered story of his discipline is his ban on the wearing of corsets among choristers since this he believed was prejudicial to good breath control! By the time of the approach to Elgar, the Choir had been enlarged, the name of the North Staffordshire and District Choral Society adopted, and the unique triumph of carrying off the main Eisteddfod class in consecutive years (1901 at Merthyr Tydfil and 1902 at Bangor) achieved.

The Hanley performance of *Gerontius* duly took place on Friday, March 13th 1903 and was a huge success, even the less than ideal expedient of merging a contingent of the Halle Orchestra with a group

of local players proving quite satisfactory. While the meticulous preparation of the chorus (Whewall even insisting that Elgar mark the score at points where the choir should stand so that he might "drill them"), and the distinguished soloists (Coates, Frangcon Davies, Foster) ensured a triumph. Alice Elgar, writing to Dora Penny, soon sets aside the "horrid journey" and extols the "splendid chorus rehearsal -- so fresh and spontaneous --. E had no trouble and they took all his nuances at once". As for the performance itself - "First came *Froissart* beautifully played, then *Sea Pictures* (3), and two choruses, and then a reception in the Mayor's Parlour, - then a most beautiful performance of *Gerontius*. I think I never heard anything more lovely than the beginning of the Kyrie and so it went on, simply splendid and such enthusiasm".

After the performance Elgar was apparently too overcome with emotion to say anything, but *The Staffordshire Sentinel* predicted that "there will be no room for surprise if he does not candidly admit that it was the best reading of the *Dream* that he has yet heard." And indeed Elgar Subsequently wrote to Frederick Meier, the secretary of the Choir: "I was delighted, and, I will add, deeply impressed by their performance. I have rarely heard such finished, musicianly singing, and have never

had less trouble to get my exact reading...This was made easy for me by the splendid training of Mr. Whewall...The tone is magnificent - silvery, yet solid, well-balanced and sonorous, and the attack fine. I place the chorus in the highest rank, and I thank the members for giving me the opportunity of hearing a performance of my work almost flawless". To the bass soloist Ffrangcon Davies, he contented himself with the more modest observation: "I am told the work made an effect and my dear wife seems beaming with happiness". The performance was further commemorated by the presentation to Elgar of the *Gerontius* Cup, which today is to be seen at the Birthplace.

The clearest evidence that Elgar had indeed meant what he wrote is that within two days of the performance he was suggesting the Choir for the projected London premiere of *Gerontius*. The enthusiasm of the Choir can be gauged by the fact that before March was out, Meier was writing to Elgar making the same suggestion after reading a rumour of a proposed performance "by the Hallé people". There was no need to await any such development argued Meier, "our people are ready and willing...and they would be prepared to pay their own travelling expenses. Can't this be arranged soon?" Whewall was even prepared to abandon his ambition of a third Eisteddfod triumph in favour of the project. On April 4th Jaeger wrote to Elgar of a visit of the Hanley Committee to negotiate details with the impressario Görlitz, and their clear preference for Elgar to conduct: "they want you to conduct cos they are proud of you, I daresay"; a preference which subsequently led to the withdrawal of the Amsterdam Orchestra from the performance.

The Westminster *Gerontius* was a highlight in the association of Elgar and the North Staffordshire Choir. Whewall carried out his usual meticulous preparation, including a public open rehearsal on May 25th in Hanley. At 3.30 a.m. on Saturday, June 6th, the day of the performance, a special train began its tour of the Potteries Halts picking up the Choir. It was a dull, cold morning and the train ran an hour late. After breakfasting hastily at the St. James's Restaurant, Piccadilly, the Choir was whisked by omnibuses to a rehearsal at the Cathedral, scheduled for 9 a.m. but now unavoidably late. Elgar placed Whewall at his side and found few problems with the singing, apart from the difficulty of registering a piano effect in the vast, unfinished building. The rehearsal, however, was protracted since the makeshift orchestra was "frequently called to book for sins of omission and commission". There was just time for a rushed lunch before the performance started at 3 p.m.

On the face of it the Choir triumphed once again. All tickets had been sold, and the large, fashionable audience made the London *Gerontius* the great musical event of the year. Whewall felt that he had never before been so moved by the rendering of a musical composition. While the Elgars departed with the Schusters to the Hut at Bray, the Choir was feted by Görlitz back at the St. James's Restaurant. In a humorous speech he attributed the success of the Choir to Potteries Beer (or ginger beer, remembering, perhaps, the large Methodist contingent) as opposed to whisky. The National Anthem was sung

and "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" rendered in tribute to Whewall "with such heartiness that the room seemed to vibrate in apparent sympathy", observed R.W.Ship. The taciturn Whewall was moved to reply. It was, he said, "the proudest moment of my life".

By Monday, however, it was clear that the Choir shared to an extent the mixed critical reception which greeted the performance. For the *Daily Mail* they "sang wonderfully well" and according to the *Daily Chronicle* "made a great impression", but *The Standard* noted that "effects were not always satisfactory" and *The Monthly Musical Review* condemned their performance as "tame and colourless". Both *The Staffordshire Sentinel* and Elgar were incensed. The composer wrote to thank the Choir for "their splendid performance in London", while the local newspaper observed that: "something would appear to have gone wrong with the London press" and took the critics to task for their niggardly and ungracious response, speculating that journalists did not perhaps care to be called out on a Saturday afternoon and, more pertinently, commenting on the "inexplicable" misjudgment of seating critics behind "pillars and masses of masonry", which obstructed both sight and sound.

However, immediately after this performance (June 11th) Meier was writing to Elgar to re-open a matter already raised back in March, namely "producing in this district your new work *The Apostles* under exactly the same conditions as our recent performance". *The Apostles*, with Elgar again conducting, was given in Hanley, but not until 30th March, 1905, and not before Meier ("smart, business-like and pushful" according to R.W.Ship) had experience of how elusive Elgar could be.

First Elgar was unsure whether he would be in England in March, 1904, nor was he to be pinned down to a date in April or May. Without the composer, the undertaking "would, without doubt, be a failure" argued Meier. A clear assurance was needed before commitment to such heavy financial liability. The project was deferred until November, 1904, and instead the Spring production was Sullivan's *Light of the World*. In April 1904 Meier, armed with favourable reviews of the Sullivan, was still trying to pin Elgar down, and in June he nearly lost him! "Your decision if unaltered means a death blow to our Society... The public expect and are looking forward to your visit... we dare not come before the public, after repeated announcements, unless the work be *The Apostles* under the composer's personal direction. We are as yet in our infancy as a Choral Society and have an uphill fight against prejudice in this district". Despite this desperate plea the November arrangement also fell through. But at least Meier got a more definite assurance from Elgar about the following Spring, and Whewall obtained consolation by returning to Wales for a further Eisteddfod victory at Rhyl. Subsequent negotiations went more smoothly apart from Elgar's refusal to fall in with the suggestion of giving a chance to a local singer in the part of Peter. An interesting late replacement among the soloists was Gervase Elwes, "little-known locally" but "secured on the nomination of Sir Edward Elgar" when the tenor Evan Williams went down with laryngitis. He joined such well-tried Elgarians as Muriel Foster, Ffrangcon Davies and Andrew Black, while as in

1903 the Hallé provided the band.

At the final rehearsal, closed because of the numbers seeking admission, Elgar met with his usual great reception. He was, he announced, "not quite well" and proposed to make a light evening of it. But by the end the excellence of Whewall's preparation had quite perked him up, while among the few admitted to the hall was Henry Wood (whose wife was among the soloists), and he insisted on adding his impromptu congratulations on "the exceptionally fine singing". The performance was another great triumph: "A Great Evening" proclaimed *The Sentinel* headline. There was a capacity audience, and a bunch of orchids awaited Alice in her seat--a gift from the ladies in the Choir. The gentlemen, notwithstanding their working-class status, were "without exception in evening costume", the ladies in uniform cream dress. "It may be said without exaggeration", commented *The Sentinel*, "that the singing of the Choir was the finest which has yet been heard in the work". As for Elgar, "even as a conductor there is something about the man which places him on the mountain tops". Alice was so stirred - that with moist eyes and quivering voice she said she thought it impossible that the work could be done at any time better than it had been done that night. Wood thought it "wonderful" and expressed the wish to hear the performance transferred to London. Whewall was elated at the ovation which greeted him at the conclusion. "This", said Elgar, "is the gentleman responsible for it all".

In his customary letter of thanks, Elgar called the performance "superb", and went on to say that "so far as my experience goes (the choruses) have never been sung with more intelligence, pathos and force... I have been, as you know, very unwell for more than a month and have had to give up many engagements, and, somewhat against my doctor's wishes, I made a special effort to be with you and was amply repaid". All the long negotiations and machinations were forgotten.

In 1906 Whewall, though having no liking nor aptitude for orchestral conducting, gave a performance of *Gerontius* in Hanley, resulting, recalled R.W.Ship, in "a very fine entertainment". Later in the same year the Choir was yet again placed first at the Caernarvon Eisteddfod. Meanwhile Elgar was completing his new oratorio *The Kingdom*, which was to have its first performance at Birmingham on 3rd October. A year later, Tuesday, 15th October, 1907, Elgar returned to Hanley with this latest choral masterpiece. Inevitably there was the familiar "rousing reception" at rehearsal, and a capacity audience which included the Grand Duke Michael of Russia. The performance was judged to be "not a flawless representation, but...as near being perfect as is likely to be reached for some time to come". Shortage of rehearsal time explained any shortcoming, but *The Sentinel* could not resist a comparison with the Leeds Festival performance of the previous Friday - the Staffordshire Choir "succeeded where the Yorkshire singers failed". Of the original Birmingham soloists John Coates was joined by Frederic Austin, Mrs. Henry Wood, and Miss Grainger Kerr. The Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, having been passed over

in favour of the Hallé at the premiere in its native city, now provided the band. At the close Elgar "was recalled three times, and the Chorus would not leave their seats until the trainer had received the ovation to which they knew he was justly entitled". It was another joint triumph for Elgar and Whewall, but there were to be no more oratorios and this was to be their last appearance together.

Whewall was to have further successes such as the London performances of Delius's *Sea Drift* in February 1909 and the *Mass of Life* in June of the same year, both under Beecham. But the final recognition, which to an extent involved Elgar once more, was the Command Performance at Windsor to which the Choir was summoned on 15th October 1909. The occasion was the visit of King Manuel of Portugal, who, together with Edward VII and the Queen, the Queen of Norway, the Prince and Princess of Wales, Asquith and Grey, was among the glittering audience. The Choir did not leave the Potteries until mid-afternoon and within a few minutes of arrival were required to take their positions in St. George's Hall. But Whewall later observed that all passed off "without a hitch", and that Elgar's song *Weary Wind of the West* made the greatest impression on the King, who applauded vigorously at its conclusion." Dr. W.G. McNaught, later editor of *The Musical Times* but then a close supporter of the Choir, described this rendition as "gorgeous", while the performance of another Elgar piece, *Go Song of Mine* was "very fine". It was one of the red-letter days of his life. At the conclusion Edward VII approached Whewall and offered congratulations, observing that he had never heard such singing in his life; and indeed he had demanded a number of encores including Barnby's *Sweet and Low*. Queen Alexandra presented a box of chocolates to each member of the Choir.

Still the day was not at an end. At Windsor Railway Station, the Choir sang two pieces for the benefit of the vast crowd of townsfolk assembled. Whewall had made two visits to Windsor and two to Buckingham Palace to see to arrangements, and had been dashing to and fro to Wales as an Eisteddfod adjudicator. He was 58 years old and as some of the men hoisted him shoulder high to conduct on the station platform, it was reported that they "noticed the deadly pallor of his face in the lamp-light".

On the 19th Whewall's illness was announced and he was unable to rehearse the Choir "an almost unheard of abstention". The Whewall Benefit Concert, arranged in Hanley for the 25th, in a repeat of the Windsor programme, was taken over by McNaught. "The Choir" said *The Sentinel* "sang as if inspired". The programme included, as an encore, the ladies singing *In Haven from Sea Pictures*. Two days later Whewall underwent an operation for appendicitis, apparently successfully, but subsequently there were complications and he died on the evening of 28th November. According to Arthur Bailey, who had succeeded Meier as Choir secretary, his last message was: "Remember me to all members of my dear Choir; I love them, and I know they all love me".

Vast crowds attended the funeral at which the Choir sang *Jesu Lover of My Soul* at the graveside. A letter of sympathy was received

from the King and Queen, hard upon one which had followed the news of his illness. Doggerel verse was contributed in considerable quantity to *The Sentinel*:

*Weep England, weep for now he moves no more,
His baton free to sway the glorious song,
Which swells from earth to open heaven's door,
And moves the pulse of all the listening throng!*

began one offering.

From Hereford came a telegram to the widow: "Deeply grieved to hear of loss of your husband whom I valued and admired greatly. My sincerest sympathy with you and the Choral Society. Edward Elgar." It was the end of an episode in Elgar's career and a chapter in Potteries music.

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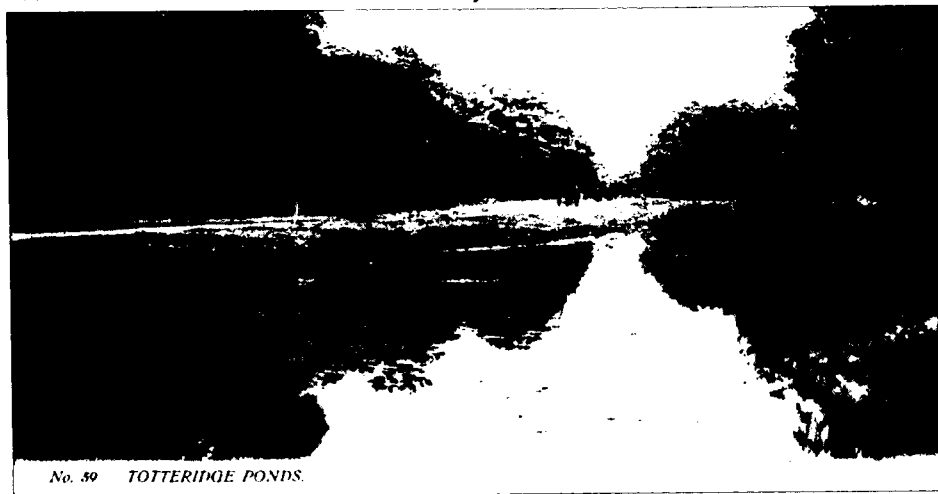
"A COUNTRY LIFE I FIND ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL"

ELGAR IN NORTH LONDON 1912-1914

by Geoffrey Hodgkins

PART TWO

Elgar had moved to London from his beloved Worcestershire and Herefordshire countryside. Alice Elgar realised that her husband needed the inspiration of the rural scene. The country lay beyond Hampstead ... In 1912 Alice wrote in her diary:-



No. 39 TOTTERIDGE PONDS.

Lovely day. Persuaded E. to have a car - & had lovely drive thro' Garden Suburb to Edgware a lovely place. Glorious shades and blossoms.

Four days later a similar journey was undertaken:

After lunch for drive with Frank [Schuster] & Alice [Stuart-Wortley] to Garden Suburb and Edgware lovely day - they wanted to live in about 20 houses.

Throughout May, June and July 1912, Elgar was in the throes of completing *The Music Makers*. He was working against time as it had been commissioned for the Birmingham Festival that autumn. Every so often he would go into the countryside as if to consult his oracle.

5 May: Lovely drive in p.m. - to Totteridge & walked about on Arkley Common. Heard cuckoos - lovely lovely aftn.

26 May: E. A. & C. for drive after lunch Totteridge & c. beautiful.

29 May: E. & C. by tram & c. to Barnet. had lunch there and walked to Elstree - long walk but E. not tired.

20 June: E. looked tired and A. persuaded him to have a taxi - drove thro' Edgware & c - very nice lovely country.

11 July: E. out to Totteridge - lovely day

14 July: Alice SW drove E. to Totteridge

Four days after that last entry, Elgar finished *The Music Makers*. The following day he poured out his heart in a famous letter to Alice Stuart-Wortley, in which he explained his attempt to celebrate the completion of the work: "I should be crowned - it wd be lovely weather - I should have open air & sympathy & everything to mark the end of the work - to get away from the labour part and dream over it happily...But...I wandered alone on the heath - it was bitterly cold - I wrapped myself in a thick overcoat & sat...tears streaming out of my cold eyes and loathed the world...how I hated having written anything..."

A visit to Totteridge was once again prescribed by Alice in order to overcome Elgar's depressed state:

24 July: Very hot and heavy air. E. still porsley - A. persuaded him to go for drive. He was busy finishing *Ode*[i.e. the orchestration] E. A. & C. motored to Totteridge - lovely there & lovely white waterlilies, but too stuffy to be very refreshing.

27 July: E. & Alice SW motored to Totteridge

As the name suggests, Totteridge stands on a narrow ridge between two tributaries of the river Brent. The long winding Totteridge Lane links Whetstone to Mill Hill, and commands pleasing views both north and south. Opulent houses of the rich and famous can be found along this road, yet the area retains much of its rural character, and the ponds where the Elgars saw waterlilies and fished for water beasts are still there much as they would have found them then, thanks to a vigorous local preservation movement.

The Music Makers was first performed at Birmingham on October 1st, 1912. In a note on the work Elgar wrote: "I have used the *Enigma* theme because it expressed when written (in 1898) my sense of loneliness of the artist as described in the first six lines of the ode

and to me it still embodies that sense".

There were no more visits to Totteridge or Barnet that year (most of Elgar's work was done in the spring or summer), but they did go to Harrow on November 18 - to buy a dog:

E. A. & C. to Harrow to look for a wow - at Major Richardson's - did not buy one. Called on Mrs. Griffith [Troyte's mother] & walked up to church. Too misty for wonderful view - thought Harrow a dull place.

Because Elgar hated the cold weather, January and February 1913 were spent in Italy, at Naples and Capri. During this holiday Elgar decided on his next major work, *Falstaff*, commissioned for the Leeds Festival that year. As with the 1912 compositions *Falstaff* was not a new project, having been contemplated for a number of years. Elgar began work on it when he returned to England on February 23rd, 1913, but he was unwell again and in March went to Llandridnod Wells to take the waters. However, he was back in 'Severn House' in time for Easter.

22 March: Alice SW took him for motor drive to Totteridge in aftn.

23 March: E. A. & C. for drive Totteridge & c.

29 April: E. & Alice to Arkley hunting water beasts

The springtime visits to this area continued as Elgar once again strived to complete his work in time for its festival premiere in the autumn.

4 June: E. & A. for lovely taxi drive to Totteridge. E. fished for creatures Lovely there, larks singing and water lilies coming out - lovely time.

19 June: E. & A. to Mill Hill. Lovely afternoon - sat in field & heard larks & saw wild roses. Both loved it - E. immersed in his music

Like Totteridge, the village of Mill Hill lies along a ridge-way and is still largely unspoiled (later development took place further west by the A41). The 'field' mentioned is almost certainly the Mill Field, with a spectacular view westwards towards Harrow and beyond. This is the only recorded visit that Elgar made to Mill Hill; the weather records at Kew confirm that it was a fine day, so what inspired Elgar to write a song called *The Shower*? It is interesting to see the effect on Elgar's musical imagination of good weather and the congenial atmosphere of the countryside - "E. immersed in his music".

Two days later a visit to Hendon for a very different reason.

21 June: Alice SW drove E. out to Hendon & saw flying & back to tea.

25 June: E. a shade better - he and C. to Barnet thought it a lovely place.

From now on, Elgar made several visits to Barnet, or to be more specific, Hadley Green, a small but pleasant area of common land beyond Barnet, and crossed by the Great North Road. The Green is surrounded by picturesque old houses, in one of which lived David Living-

stone.

11 July: E. & A. to Barnet & Hadley on top of omnibus all the way.
lovely evening & lovely place. Vesy nice evening togesser D.G.

17 July: ASW drove E. to Barnet & Hadley

August was spent in North Wales correcting proofs of *Falstaff*, which was first produced at Leeds on October 2, and received with respect but little enthusiasm.

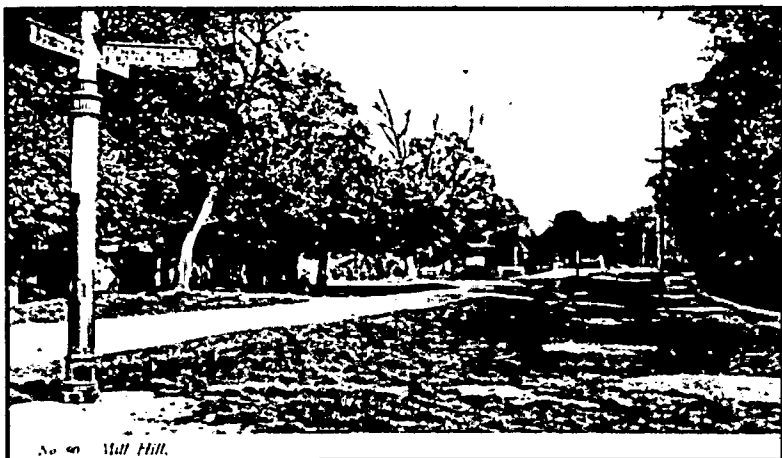
18 Oct: E. with ASW to Hadley & c. - lovely sunny afternoon

24 Nov: Muriel [Foster] motored E. to Barnet

20 Dec: E. & ASW to Hadley, took lilies to the old lady who sits at window

By the end of January 1914, Elgar had written five part songs, the first totally original pieces of music to be written at 'Severn House.' They were accepted by Novello on 7 February, and were given the opus numbers 71, 72, and 73. The first two are opus 71; *The Shower*, at the end of which is written "Mill Hill", and *The Fountain*, at the end of which is written "Totteridge". Opus 72 is just one song, the wonderfully atmospheric *Death on the Hills*. Opus 73, no.1 is entitled *Love's Tempest*, and no.2 is *Serenade*, which has after it "Hadley Green, 1914". There is, however, no recorded visit to Hadley in January 1914.

There is a possible significance in the dedication of the songs. The three which bear place names are dedicated to friends from Malvern, Worcester and Hereford. The other two dedicatees (Frances Colvin and Professor Terry) had no west country connections. Is it too fanciful to suppose that in Elgar's mind the north Middlesex landscape had been temporarily transformed into the hills, fields and woods of Worcestershire?



No. 40 Mill Hill.

Dates for your Diary

Sept	12	Te Deum & Benedictus* and works by Ireland, Faure, Pierne, Ropartz <i>Broadheath Singers & Windsor Sinfonia</i> * Performed with orch. accomp.	School Hall, Eton Coll. Berks. at 8 p.m. Tickets at door £2.25 & £1.75
Sept	21	Cockaigne <i>ILEA Schools' SO/Jorgensen</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Oct	4	Cello Concerto; Enigma Variations <i>Young Musicians' SO</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Oct	13	Introduction & Allegro <i>Divertimenti String Orch</i>	" " "
Oct	27	Cello Concerto <i>Harrell/SNO/Gibson</i>	Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool
Oct	31	Spirit of England; Symphony no.2 <i>Armstrong/RLPO/Handley</i> String Quartet <i>Van Dieren Quartet</i> **Tickets in advance £1.50 (£2 at door) from J. Dodd, .. 40 Laburnum Rd., Maidenhead, Berks SL6 4DE	" " " London Coll. of Music Gt. Marlborough St. W.1.
Nov	2	Introduction & Allegro <i>RPO</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Nov	5	Serenade in E minor <i>London String Orch</i>	" " "
Nov	7	In the South; Enigma Variations <i>LPO/Handley</i>	Town Hall, Leeds
Nov	22	Cockaigne <i>LPO/Handley</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Nov	29	Dream of Gerontius	" " "
& Dec	1	Watts/Dowd/Lloyd/LSO Ch. & Orch/Svetlanov	
Dec	12	Symphony no.1	Fairfield Hall, Croydon
Dec	13	<i>Philharmonia/Andrew Davis</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Dec	18	P & C nos.3 & 4 (also on Dec.11) <i>LPO/Handley</i>	Royal Albert Hall
Dec	19	Repeat of above concert	White Rock Pavilion, Hastings, Kent
1982			
Feb	17	The Apostles <i>Lott/Walker/Woollam/Shirley-Quirk/ Wilson-Johnson/Tomlinson/BBC Singers & Symph. Chorus & Orch/Rozhdestvensky</i>	Royal Festival Hall

Book Reviews

BRITISH COMPOSER PROFILES, by Gerald Leach *British Music Society,*
available from 40 Laburnham Rd,
Maidenhead, Berks. at £3

What a fascinating book! The main part consists of short biographical notes (in most cases just a few lines) on something like 450 British composers active since 1800. Living composers are excluded. All the great names are here of course, but the real value of the book is the mass of information on the lesser men whose music is long-forgotten, but whose names crop up when their paths crossed with the giants. Information is short on many, of course - those who worked as provincial schoolmasters and amateur organists, or those whose main careers were in other fields - but the extent of Gerald Leach's perseverance is awe-inspiring.

Light music and operetta composers are rightly included - one is often surprised by the range of work of many composers whose reputations lie in a fairly restricted field. Every lover of British music should possess a copy of this book. It serves as a reminder of the extent of talent still, perhaps, not given full recognition. As a work of reference it is unique - it will never be far from my typewriter.

G.H.L.

ELGAR COUNTRY, by Barry Collett	Thames Publishing,	£2.95
ELGAR LIVED HERE, by Pauline Collett	" "	£4.90

Early in 1979 Barry Collett issued his handy pocket guide to the 'Elgar Country'. Surprisingly it was the only guide of its type, and within the confines of its size it was a useful publication. Now comes a bigger and better version, with more illustrations, some revision of the text, and an index which the earlier edition lacked. The new edition is to be welcomed, and particularly since it is now joined by a companion volume by Pauline Collett, who contributed the illustrations to her husband's book.

Elgar Lived Here not only expands the brief mention of houses in the earlier book but covers all of Elgar's 'homes', including the flats and houses which he occupied in London. The book includes house-plans and map reproductions to show actual locations (particularly useful where houses have been demolished). It is remarkable how many of the buildings still exist, and in addition to providing attractive sketches of each house it is obvious from the text how well the author has researched her subject. The book will have permanent value to researchers, and will satisfy the curiosity of those who merely wish to know "where the great man lived." In addition to the sketches there are numerous photographs of interiors or Elgar 'at home'. The book, like its companion, is bound in bright stiff boards, is well-designed, and pleasant to read. A small criticism,

/Continued on p.31

Record Reviews

Two curiosities of the Elgar discography have appeared in recent months. L'Oiseau Lyre DSO44 is the third volume in Stuart Burrows' exploration of English ballads. This one is called *Life's Sweet Melody* and it includes Elgar's *Pleading*. Personally I have found Burrows' singing on all these discs rather lethargic and lacking conviction. The singers whose bread and butter these songs were knew how to put them over with sincerity, avoiding the pitfalls of over-sentimentality and cloying charm. This is possibly the best of Burrows' series so far, but he tends to adopt a rather limp and mannered style which can be irritating. *Pleading* is, in fact, reasonably well done. The accompanist is John Constable.

The second disc is a real oddity. It contains the first-ever recording of the female-voice part-song *The Snow* in its intended form - the choir, however, is a vast one. The recording was made at the First Festival of Welsh Ladies Choirs, at the Royal Albert Hall in May 1980, and apparently 800 singers took part. It is hardly surprising that the two violinists, correctly (and anonymously) included in the accompaniment, are not easy to hear. In fact, the singing is not bad at all under the circumstances. The rest of the disc is an interesting mixture of popular and unfamiliar music, including some Welsh part-songs not often heard. Non-Welsh listeners will regret the lack of information on the music in the sleeve. There are also several items played by the Band of the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. The recorded sound is excellent, and the disc is issued by the small Swansea-based Black Mountain Records, number BM39.

G.H.L.

FROM THE BAVARIAN HIGHLANDS, and other Part Songs

Donald Hunt Singers, Keith Swallow(piano), Jeremy Ballard and Paul Smith(violins)

Abbey ABY 821

This is obviously a valuable disc as the only previous LP recording of *The Bavarian Highlands* in its original version (Polydor 2460239) is deleted. In any event, in choral tone quality, balance and intelligent response to the mood of each of the six songs this version is superior. The Donald Hunt Singers are, as one would expect from their conductor, an experienced Elgarian, an excellently trained body of singers, about thirty strong, and Keith Swallow's sensitive accompaniments enhance his already enviable reputation. The only drawback is that few of the words are clear - this is doubtless due to the acoustic of the Chapter House of Worcester Cathedral where the recording was made - and it is as well that the words of all the songs on the record appear on an insert.

The items on the reverse include three first recordings: the charming *O Happy Eyes* and *Love*, both opus 18 but composed as far apart as 1890 and 1907 respectively, and the enchanting *Spanish Seren-*

ade, an early piece but memorable for its warm melodic line and evocations of guitar music. The two violins play in this as in the two opus 26 songs for female voices (*The Snow and Fly*, *Singing Bird*, *Fly*) which are notable in their delicacy. Almost too much delicacy, in fact, as the accompaniment seems too much for the singers, though doubtless that acoustic is again to blame. The much later (1925) *Prince of Sleep*, a brilliantly responsive setting of words by Walter de la Mare, sounds very poised as does the more famous *My Love Dwelt*. The excellent sleeve notes are by Michael Kennedy. I strongly recommend the disc despite the blurred words.

P.L.S.

ELGAR CHURCH MUSIC

Worcester Cathedral Choir, directed by Donald
Hunt. Paul Trepte and David Hill (organists)
Abbey ABY 822

This disc contains ten Elgar choral pieces, all, with one exception, church music or religious songs. Unlike previous records devoted wholly or mainly to this composer's church music, it concentrates on works produced at the climax of Elgar's creative life. At least seven come from the years 1909-1914. Two, *Psalms 48 (Greet is the Lord)* and *Psalms 29 (Give unto the Lord)* show Elgar the large-scale composer writing expansively and excitingly within a relatively small compass - these *Psalms* were designed respectively for Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's and sound magnificent here. The singing is splendid, not least Thomas Hunt's solo *Great is the Lord*; Dr. Hunt shows us once again his outstanding ability as a choral trainer.

The "odd man out" is *Go Song of Mine*, first-rate Elgar certainly, but hardly church music. The cathedral acoustic robs it of much of its intimacy, though one has to admit that the drama and majesty of the climaxes are powerful counterbalances. *Angelus* is perhaps also really a part-song, but its devotional words make it less of an interloper; there could hardly be a greater contrast from its rich Southern warmth, well realised here, than the austere carol *I Sing the Birth* (published in 1928 but probably written considerably earlier) which precedes it on the record. Two unaccompanied "occasional" anthems, *They are at Rest* and the chromatic *O Harken Thou* are restful and finely balanced; there is smooth, poised singing in the rather less ambitious motets written for St. George's, Worcester, *Ave Maria* (1887) and *O Salutaris Hostia* (1898); and the robust, straightforward, hymnlike Harvest anthem, *Fear Not O Land* (1914) concludes side 1 stirring. The five items requiring organ accompaniment are shared between Paul Trepte, who takes the larger-scale *Psalms*, and David Hill - both do well. The sleeve design is attractive and Michael Kennedy's notes are a model of their kind. An essential issue for Elgarians and those interested in English church music.

P.L.S.

CELLO CONCERTO (with Tchaikowsky: Rococo Variations & Pezzo Capriccioso)

Lynn Harrell /Cleveland Orch, conducted by
Lorin Maazel.

Decca SXL 6965

This record will not please everybody. Indeed, two leading magazines have already published conflicting reviews, the one reckoning it to be the best recorded performance since Du Pre and Barbirolli, the other considering that neither Lynn Harrell nor Lorin Maazel begin to understand Elgar.

On the face of it this is a most exciting issue - Elgar played by American artists on a famous label and (with its popular coupling) aimed at an international market. Let me say at once then that few people around the world will be disappointed to own a copy. The two Tchaikowsky pieces are brilliantly played, and emerge as more than mere virtuoso showpieces. The recording is excellent, the soloist rather forward (in true American tradition) but with no highlighting of individual instruments - which can be so distracting elsewhere.

The Elgar, however, is a difficult work to 'sell' in such a venture. Its origins were too personal to allow of any superficiality of treatment, all too easy in a commercial recording venture. It is in this respect that this record is most successful. Neither soloist nor conductor treat the work as if it were anything less than the masterpiece it is. The trouble is that in avoiding a glib approach, both tend to over-emphasise. This is effective in places (the very first note should make listeners sit up!) but mostly it serves only to break up the flow. For instance, Maazel makes a distinct and unmarked rallentando in the two bars before cue 2, which makes for an impressive entry for Harrell but interrupts that wonderful skein of melody which seems to emerge from among the violas as if it had been playing for ever. Elgar, of all composers, does not need this emotional underlining.

It is tempting to say that Harrell "wears his heart on his sleeve" throughout. I think, rather, that he is too conscious of trying not to make the music seem facile; the couplings are rather lightweight, which may have encouraged a heavy approach in the more serious work. Harrell's technique is superb, his tone rich and mellow in turn, and all faithfully captured by the bright recording. The scherzo, perhaps a little slow, is nonetheless deft and gossamer-like. The adagio is beautifully moulded, although a slightly faster speed (or lightness of touch) would have enabled it to flow better than it does. When this music returns at cue 69 in the finale, the effect is more Mahler-like in intensity than wistfully despairing - perhaps a sign of an 'international' approach to Elgar.

The finale is the best movement. It has a rumbustious swagger which almost brings a smile to the lips, and the forward balance enables us to hear the arpeggios at cue 55 (one of the few instances of Elgar's miscalculation perhaps?). However, because the same balance means that there is no real *p* or *pp*, much of the piquancy of the music is lost.

To sum up, this is a welcome record which should sell well, attract non-Elgarians and give very little offence to the majority (who will probably not know Tortelier's or Cohen's or Du Pre's versions) and which has some very positive features to recommend it.

P.A.B.

SYMPHONY No. 2

London Philharmonic Orch/Vernon Handley

Classics for Pleasure CFP 40350

Vernon Handley's recording of the Elgar *First Symphony* was justly highly praised. I think this new recording of the *Second Symphony* is even better. Handley's image as a conductor is one of being much influenced by his master, Boult. This is quite wrong. He is an interpreter with a mind of his own: he has inherited the Boult ability to keep a firm grip on the rather rambling structure of the first movement, but he allows himself greater flexibility of tempo. Indeed his ability to handle long rolling phrases, with quite a bit of rhythmic freedom within the phrase, often reminds me more of Barbirolli. There is perhaps not the rhythmic crispness of Boult at his best, but tempi are often a trifle brisker, and there is an exhilarating sense of forward movement. Quite frankly I was absolutely bowled over by his handling of the first movement, and I can say without hesitation that this is a highly recommendable performance - easily amongst the best of the many excellent modern performances recorded in the past decade.

Some critics have drawn attention to evidence of limited rehearsal time on some Handley CFP recordings. This certainly does not apply to this one. The orchestral playing is outstandingly confident, and has an attractively involved and spontaneous quality. Their committed playing is aided by absolutely outstanding recorded sound - the best I have ever heard from CFP. The *First Symphony* was recorded at EMI's Abbey Road studio, and had the slightly dry sound associated with that location. This new recording was made at Watford Town Hall - a more resonant hall which gives the strings a rich glow and the brass a roundness reminiscent of Kingsway Hall. The balance is excellent, and the natural sense of depth and perspective suggests that a simple microphone set-up, without undue spotlighting of individual instruments was used. It is at least the equal of the sound of Boult's 1976 HMV recording.

The other point I should make is that I have, in fact, been reviewing the cassette version - the disc has been delayed and at the time of writing is still not generally available. I shall add a note in due course. It is as good as any cassette production I have ever heard, having none of the slightly hollow disembodied quality often encountered on even recent cassettes. I have praised CFP's tape quality before, but this time they have really come up with an absolute winner. I cannot believe that the disc will have much advantage, although it might reproduce a little more cleanly in the deep bass; in the cassette the unique feature of this performance - the introduction of the optional organ pedal near the end of the last movement - is not really audible.

G.H.L.

EVENING SCENE. Part-Songs by Edward Elgar.

O Happy Eyes; Love (Op. 18, nos. 1 & 2) To her beneath whose Stedfast Star; Weary Wing of the West; Evening Scene; Windlass Song; Death on the Hills; Serenade (Op. 73, no. 2); Credo in E minor; Lo! Christ the Lord is Born; O Mightiest of the Mighty; How Calmly the Evening; Good Morrow.

Philharmonic Chamber Choir/David Temple
with Keith Beniston (organ) Meridian E77040

A full review of this new recording - originally announced for early summer - must await our next issue. However, a copy is just to hand, and a first hearing indicates that it is a record worth waiting for. The Philharmonic Chamber Choir is a disciplined and professional body of singers who seem to have studied and appreciated this rarely performed music. *O Happy Eyes*, also sung on the recent Abbey record, is here sung at its correct speed according to Elgar's markings, and the difference is quite startling. The unaccompanied part-songs on side 1 are mostly first recordings, and include two real rarities: (1) *To Her Beneath whose Stedfast Star* was written as part of a poetical and musical offering published in honour of Queen Victoria's 80th birthday. After two performances before the Queen at Windsor the piece lapsed into obscurity, possibly because of the scarcity of the volume in which it was printed, and possibly because the death of the Queen less than two years later made F.W.H. Myers' rather curious verse out of date. (2) *Windlass Song*. A specially-written part-song for an American educational project, which Elgar did not wish published outside the U.S.A. It was unknown here until a year or two ago when Alan Webb was sent a copy from the United States. It is a bright and breezy item - not great music, but with no special pretensions. As music for young people it admirably fills its purpose, and it is hard to see why Elgar should have wished to keep it at a distance. The other part-songs are Elgar at his best - scoring voices as instruments with maximum dramatic effect.

Side 2 has a première recording of the *Credo in E minor* dating from the 1870s. This has never been published and is taken from the British Museum MS. *Lo! Christ the Lord is Born* and *O Mightiest of the Mighty* are carol and hymn-tune respectively. They represent Elgar writing in a form for which he did not feel instant sympathy, but, typically, he produced a better than usual result from the material. *Good Morrow* is an 'old carol' from words by the 16th century writer George Gascoigne. It was written as an offering from the Master of the King's Musick to celebrate the recovery of King George V from a serious illness in 1929.

Conductor, organist and choir are to be congratulated on the performance of so much unfamiliar and neglected work. Definitely a record for the collection.

NEMO

News

from

the

BRANCHES

The seven branches of the Elgar Society have ambitious programmes for their Autumn and Winter seasons. Full details can be obtained from local branch secretaries, but all members of the Society are welcome to attend branch meetings, and all branches particularly welcome new members. The EAST MIDLANDS has an outstanding programme: Wulstan Atkins on "The Writing of the Apostles" on September 29th; Eric Fenby, O.B.E. speaks on "Delius as I Knew Him" on October 27th; and Lady Barbirolli's talk on November 24th is "Barbirolli - Missionary for Elgar". In the new year Diana McVeagh "Elgar's Concert Overtures and their Associations"(Jan.26th); Barry Collett "Elgar's Musical Style" (Feb.23rd); Ronald Taylor "Music in the Air all Around Us(Elgar and the BBC) (March 30th). All meetings are held at the Charles Wilson Building, University of Leicester, Mayor's Walk, Leicester.

After a highly successful season the YORKSHIRE BRANCH recommences on September 14th with a visit from Simon Lindley, organist and choir-master at Leeds Parish Church. Full details of the other programmes arranged have been despatched to Yorkshire members of the Society, including those not yet branch members. The branch is based in Leeds and welcomes enquiries.

The NORTH WEST is based in Liverpool, and unlike other branches runs by the calendar for its season commencing in January. To conclude the 1981 meetings they have Barry Collett on "The Lesser-Known Elgar" (Sept.12th); Bill Jackson(former secretary of the Elgar Society) on "A Musical Pilgrim's Progress"(Oct.10th); and Ian Hare(of Lancaster University) "The Major Choral Works of Elgar"(November 7th). The year will end with a Christmas Party and AGM on December 12th. Next year's programmes are confirmed and full details will appear in the January JOURNAL. The speakers will include Diana McVeagh, Ian Lace, Dennis Clark, Peter Waddington(Librarian of the Halle Orchestra), and Andrew Burn, General Administrator of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society. The secretary Malcolm Key writes: "We will also be having a recital of English guitar music(including some Elgar!) by Peter White, a local guitarist of blossoming talent."

The programme for the LONDON branch is as follows: October 5th: A Live performance of Elgar's *Piano Quintet*, followed by a social evening; November 2nd: Elgar's *Violin Concerto*, by Bryan Crimp; December 7th: Finzi and Elgar, by Diana McVeagh. In 1982 on January 4th: "The Evolution of a Contemporary Composer's View of Elgar, from

contempt to love and admiration, by David Bedford; Feb.1st: Dorabella, by Claud Powell; March 1st: Elgar and Walton, by Michael Pope; No April meeting; May 10: Elgar and Yorkshire, by Dennis Clark; June 7th: Discovering Elgar, by Steve Race; June 14: AGM and Election of Officers. Undoubtedly one of the strongest London programmes for some time, and one which the committee hope will be strongly supported. Full details will be mailed, as usual, to Branch members. Meetings are held in the Read Lecture Theatre, Imperial College, South Kensington.

The meetings so far announced by the WEST MIDLANDS will be held in Worcester, the first two at the Commandery, and the last at The Old Palace. On September 12th a talk by Peter Smith, founder and administrator of the Aldwyn Consort called "Elgar and the Three Choirs Festival." Peter Smith has been working on a book for a couple of years on this subject, and it is now almost finished. On November 14th Martin Grafton will talk on "Reminiscences of Elgar". On February 6th there will be a joint meeting with the Recorded Music Society. The speaker will be Louis Carns, Head of the Birmingham School of Music, and also a violinist, who will speak on the *Violin Concerto*. All Branch members should have received their programmes by now. If not please contact the Branch Secretary Alan Boon.

The SOUTH WEST Branch has a new Secretary, Ron Bleach, and their new programme has been announced up to January. September 19th: Geoffrey Hodgkins on "Providence and Art, a study of Elgar's Religious beliefs". On October 31st Clifford Harker will speak on *The Dream of Gerontius*, and in the following month, November 14th, he will conduct a performance of the work with the Bristol Choral Society. December 5th: A Christmas Social with the theme "Bring along a British Music Record." The big event to start off the new year is on January 23rd. This will be another one-day school organised jointly with the Extra-Mural Dept. of the University of Bristol. (Readers will recall the two previous schools with Michael Kennedy and Veron Handley). This time the singer Brian Rayner Cook is the speaker, and the subject is "Elgar from the Singer's Point of View". The day will include sessions on songs and the oratorios. It will conclude with a 'workshop' with two singers. Full details can be obtained nearer the date from the Extra-Mural Dept. Music, University of Bristol, Tyndalls Park Road, Bristol, 8.

The EAST ANGLIA Branch always arranges attractive and interesting activities, but unfortunately no details are to hand as we go to press. However, a note to the Branch Secretary will bring details of the new programme.

....LOOKING BACK at programmes held in recent months....Alan Boon writes from WEST MIDLANDS: "The profit of £10.00 from the Elgar Birthday Tea was donated by the branch to the Summerhouse Fund, and at the same function the Branch also donated a collection of sheet music bearing a variety of Elgar Bros. shop stamps.

The interesting news from the SOUTH WEST is that the branch has once more taken part in the BBC Radio Bristol "Words and Music" Quiz.

In brilliant fashion the Branch team has got through the three rounds into the final, beating last year's winner in the process. As we write the team faces the final, and by the time these words are read the result will be known. In the meantime 'Good Luck, South West!' and congratulations on giving the branch valuable publicity.

At the LONDON AGM in June the officers and committee were re-elected, except that in place of Maxwell Hutchinson and Gareth Lewis who retired, newly elected committee members were David Bury and Malcolm Walker.

At EAST MIDLANDS AGM the committee were re-elected, and the Chairman, Raymond Monk, reported an upward trend in membership. At the end of official business a pleasant 'ceremony' was the presentation to Barry Collett, Director of Music at Uppingham Community College, and his wife Pauline, of a book "Life in the English Country House". The presentation was made in recognition of their studies on the life & work of Elgar.

YORKSHIRE Branch had three interesting meetings before the summer break. Dennis Clark writes: "Our April meeting saw a visit from Douglas and Linda Carrington. Douglas interested us all with a talk on Elgar's music making in the North of England. Much music was played, but the final tape was a surprise, particularly to Mrs. Carrington, who was not aware that Douglas had recorded an earlier organ performance of hers!" In May Jack and Vivienne Mackenzie spoke on the Elgar birthplace, and played some of their favourite Elgar pieces. A joint meeting with the North West Branch in July was an excursion to Settle (the Dr. Buck country). "Of particular interest was a visit to the beautiful chapel of Giggleswick School, where an organist member of the Yorks. branch found the Willis organ unlocked...The resulting sounds added much to the pleasure of the visit...A great social occasion."

NORTH WEST invited Martin Passande to give his talk 'Elgar and Hereford' in April. The importance of the Hereford years was shown, and recordings were played of those pieces particularly associated with Hereford. To accompany the music there were slides of the area, and Malvern and Worcester. In June Albert Howell gave his 'Reminiscences of an Elgar Lover'. As well as playing many favourite recordings, contrasting interpretations of *Gerontius*, he also reminisced on performances of Elgar in Liverpool.

Branch secretary Malcolm Key says that the outstanding talk was in May when Robert Seager spoke on Elgar in 1904. Tracing his story from the performance of "The Apostles" at the Birmingham Festival in 1903, the speaker dwelt at length on the Elgar Festival of 1904. The Festival, which took place from March 14th to March 16th at Covent Garden, was a unique event in British musical history. No other British composer before or since has been thus honoured. The decision to purchase 'Plas Gwyn', the knighthood, the completion of *Introduction and Allegro* all followed. Despite this success Mr. Seager emphasised that Elgar was still beset with doubts and misgivings. Only later would these disappear.

Letters

From BEN KINGDON

Members may remember my suggestion in the May, 1979, issue that the 'Dies Irae' might be the hidden theme behind the *Enigma Variations*; further factors in support of this theory have now come to light. However, a new and completely separate idea has presented itself, on which member's comments will be welcomed.

Using the simple substitution cipher common in musical cryptograms (where each alphabetical group of seven letters from H onward is made equivalent to A-G inclusive) and applying this to the first notes of bars 1 - 6 (the minor section) of the 'Enigma' theme, we find that this series, Bb(B) D Bb F A Bb, together with the chord of G which commences bar 7 (the start of the major section) is a perfectly conventional way of putting into music the word Britain.

Naturally there is a reminder here of Theodore van Houten's theory on *Rule Britannia* (Jan.1976 Newsletter and *The Music Review*, May 1976), but this is based on entirely different grounds. The present idea, however, could explain the marked similarity between parts of the 'Enigma' theme and various motives from *Caractacus*, noted by Percy Young ("Elgar, O.M." p.301) and Eric Sams ("*Musical Times*", July 1970). There are other corollaries too, but perhaps readers might like to discover these for themselves.

From GEOFFREY HODGKINS

The release of a new record containing some of Elgar's songs with orchestral accompaniment has served to perpetuate the myth surrounding the two songs, 'The Torch' and 'The River' (Op.60). They are supposed to be "Eastern European folk-songs paraphrased by E.E. and Pietro d'Alba." As we know, Pietro d'Alba was Peter, Carice Elgar's (white) rabbit, and was credited with the words of the earlier part-song 'Owls'. In fact the words of 'The River' and its companion piece are by Elgar himself. This is confirmed by the manuscript in the British Museum(Add.58026); at the top left of the first page (i.e. where the author's name traditionally appears) is written "(Original)Pietro d'Alba". At the end of 'The River' is written "Leyrisch-Turasp, 1909". This is presumably included to add verisimilitude to the supposed Eastern European origin of the song. I have been unable to trace this place and assume that it is fictitious, although I did wonder if the name was an anagram, possibly on somewhere near Hereford where the song might have been composed. The name TUPSLEY (on the outskirts of Hereford) can be found, but this leaves several letters over.

The songs were written in late 1909 when Elgar was deeply immersed in the violin concerto, a work closely associated with Alice Stuart-Wortley (she is generally accepted to be the 'soul' of the concerto). Both

her Christian name and that of her husband can be found in 'Leyrisch-Turasp'. Apart from this, I am totally mystified by Leyrisch-Turasp and would be interested to hear from any members, via the Journal, their ideas on what it might mean.

From MICHAEL ROSTRON

Perhaps I am now more knowledgeable, more critical, less interested or just older, but the Society doesn't seem to me to be what it was. Of course, the pioneering spirit of the old days is an anachronism now that Elgar (in this country at least) needs no special pleading. Compared with the 1950's, when my enthusiasm for Elgar was looked upon with indulgence as an aberration I would grow out of, today he is given the stature which his genius deserves.

In those terms the Society has probably been more successful in achieving its aims than any organisation that I have been connected with. But what can its purpose be now? It has achieved its aims and I think it now needs a new purpose. My own view is that it should become more scholarly and more orientated towards research. The record, Geoffrey Hodgkins' published paper, the Journal, are all things I wholeheartedly support, but what about a bibliography to accompany John Knowles' excellent discography, what about a photographic archive, a score library and a manuscript index? These I think are some of the reasons for continuing the Society

From JERROLD NORTHROP MOORE and CHRISTOPHER KENT

We are preparing a complete collected edition of Sir Edward Elgar's works, the first volumes of which will be published within the next 12 months. May we ask any reader who has discovered errors or inconsistencies in the printed music (excluding orchestral parts) for their kind assistance, in writing? All letters will be gratefully acknowledged. Please write c/o Novello & Co.Ltd. 1 - 3 Upper James Street, London, W1R 4BP.

BOOK REVIEW continued from p. 21

common to much off-set printing today, is the grey appearance of many of the photographs. This is a technical problem affecting many printers, but it is not an insoluble one.

Both these volumes should be on the reference shelves of all keen Elgarians.

R.P.T.

THE ELGAR SOCIETY
(President: Sir Adrian Boult, C.H.)

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We regret that all other issues are now out of print.