

# The Elgar Society JOURNAL



SEPTEMBER  
1988

# Contents

Page

Editorial	3
Articles:	
Elgar and Fritz Volbach	4
Hereford Church Street Plan Rejected	11
Elgar on Radio 3, 1987	12
Annual General Meeting Report and Malvern Weekend	13
News Items	16
Concert Diary	20
Two Elgar Programmes (illustrations)	18/19
Record Review and CD Round-Up	21
News from the Branches	23
Letters	26
Subscriptions	Back cover

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

The cover portrait is reproduced by kind permission of RADIO TIMES

---

ELGAR SOCIETY JOURNAL

ISSN 0143-1269

# The Elgar Society Journal

104 CRESCENT ROAD, NEW BARNET, HERTS. EN4 9RJ  
01-440 2651

EDITORIAL

Vol. 5, no. 6  
September 1988

The first weekend in June (sounds like a song-title!) was one of the most enjoyable for Society members for some years. At least it was greatly enjoyed by those who attended the various events. Structured round the AGM in Great Malvern, the committee were the first to benefit from the hospitality of Lawnside. We met in the Library, passing first the awful warning "No hockey sticks or tennis racquets upstairs" (and we didn't take any), and we were charmingly escorted round the somewhat confusing grounds and corridors by some of the girls of the school. After a lunch in the drawing room where the famous grand piano on which Elgar & GBS played duets at that first Malvern Festival so long ago, was duly admired (and played on), we went to the main school buildings for the AGM. After tea, and the renewal of many acquaintanceships, we made our way to our several hotels scattered around Malvern, or, for those 'locals', to their homes. That evening a splendid performance of *THE APOSTLES* was the highlight of the Malvern Festival. Afterwards a reception and buffet supper was held in the Winter Gardens restaurant. We were happy to greet Mr and Mrs J. Bennett from the Birthplace, as well as some of the soloists of the performance.

On the Sunday morning coffee was available at Birchwood Lodge, and at mid-day back to Lawnside for a 'Brains Trust' of distinguished Elgarians. Dr Percy Young, Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore, Prof. Ian Parrott, and our newest Vice-President Michael Pope took part and answered a number of interesting questions from the floor of the meeting. A pleasant Ploughman's Lunch, and then it was away to Worcester for the Choral Evensong in the Cathedral. A splendid performance of the Organ Sonata no. 2, and some fine choral items, then the traditional wreath-laying ceremony at the Elgar window, the choir singing "They are at Rest." Then away once more to Broadheath, and the Birthplace. The garden looked beautiful — a tribute to the care bestowed on it — and the weather was benevolent. A crowded birthday party, splendid cakes, with enough sherry, or something lighter, to wash it down. A constant stream of visitors toured the building, whilst others enjoyed conversing in the evening sunshine. Gradually we moved away, some to attend the final concert of the Malvern Festival. It was a happy and memorable week-end — an excellent mixture of business, pleasure and knowledge, with not a little music! To the staff of Lawnside we extend our very grateful thanks, to the girls our appreciation of their courtesy, and apologies for any disruption we made to their weekend, and finally to our Secretary Carol Holt our deepest appreciation of all the hard work and organisation she put in to the arrangements. We hope that we showed our gratitude, but if not — here it is in print.

RONALD TAYLOR  
Editor

# EDWARD ELGAR and FRITZ VOLBACH

by

Walter Volbach

(Readers may recall that some time ago we published a translation of an article on Elgar by Volbach, a contemporary and friend of Elgar, and a musician and scholar of some repute in Germany. The following article appeared in "Musical Opinion" for July 1937, and appears here by kind permission of the proprietors of that journal. Readers will notice that there are several factual errors in Herr Volbach's article but we are reprinting it without alteration. EDITOR)

My father first met Elgar towards the close of the last century. At that time he was conductor at Mainz and reader for Schott's. One day when in his office, Dr Strecker, the chief of Schott's Edition, entered accompanied by a lady and gentleman. Introducing the couple to my father, Dr Strecker said "Mr and Mrs Elgar". This was the famous composer of the oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius* which, through a friend, my father had already taken to heart. But there was a difficulty. Elgar could not speak German and my father could not speak English, so they stood silent not knowing how to communicate. Dr Strecker had a very good idea; he went to the piano, opened it, and suggested a means of the two composers communicating. Elgar sat down and played from his *Gerontius*, and my father answered by playing parts of his own works. They continued, and thus came to understand each other. Elgar's playing of his work so affected my father that he wanted to perform it at once. But Elgar had already composed other works, and when he returned to England he sent my father his oratorio *The Apostles*. My father made up his mind to perform this work. He gave it very careful preparation, and in performance the impression was overpowering. Elgar was present and very pleased with his success. From this time onward until Elgar's death, he and Volbach remained most excellent friends.

In 1902 Henry Wood performed a symphony by my father at the Sheffield Festival. My father was invited to be present, and was glad to have another opportunity of meeting Elgar who directed *Gerontius* at the same festival. *Gerontius* was a big sensation which my father never ceased to talk about. Never before had he heard such perfection in chorus singing, and such profound conception of the mystical sense. It was a new type of expression, this mystical sense, which my father found in Elgar's work from the first to the last bar. Only a few days later he met Elgar in London. He took my father to the museums and the National Gallery. Here as they both stood before a picture my father had a similar sense as when hearing *Gerontius*. "That is Elgar", said my father. "Yes", he replied, "I like it best of all". It was a seascape painted by Turner. Elgar's mysticism sprang from his Catholicism, he was a good Catholic. Therefore, his inclination to Turner, Browning and Wagner, whose *Parsifal* influenced him profoundly. Though he talked very little of influences with Volbach, my father is sure that without a knowledge of *Parsifal* Elgar could not have composed *Gerontius*, *Apostles*, or *The Kingdom*. This common sense of mysticism, usual with Catholics, drew Elgar and Volbach together. Of my father's works Elgar preferred his *Raffael*, and he did not rest until this work was performed in London under the direction of my father.

Volbach was very much touched by all the kindness shown to him at Sheffield. He began to like England, and had a wish to improve his knowledge of the language. Elgar wanted to help him and presented him with Browning's poems. My father thought they were rather hard for a beginner. He was pleased with the performance of his work; he was also introduced to the Duke of Norfolk, president of the Festival. He liked English generosity, and never forgot to talk of the big banquet after the Festival. He also noticed that at the beginning of the banquet the whole company stood up and the Mayor said grace, and that the two Catholics, the Duke of Norfolk and Elgar, made the sign of the Cross without shyness and without anyone noticing it.

In the following years my father met Elgar sometimes in London or Mainz when Elgar came to be present at performances of his works. Sometimes my father stayed in London as the guest of Mr Schuster, Elgar's friend, who had a wonderful collection of china and beautiful pictures. Elgar would stay for hours in his picture gallery contemplating. As Elgar liked to hear brass bands sometimes when he was in Mainz my father took him to hear concerts by the brass bands, performed in the open air. When Elgar came to Mainz to hear Volbach conduct *The Kingdom* in 1908, they met for the last time. It was my father's farewell concert; Elgar was present and brought some of his friends, also his publisher who undertook the organ part and played it excellently. Elgar's work had a great success; his community increased, and he was regarded as a compatriot. He told my father that it was his intention to add another work to *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* called *The Last Judgement* to complete the trilogy. I am sorry that Elgar never completed his work. He never mentioned it in his letters, and my father never saw him again. Then the Great War came and people became separated. Lady Elgar's death was the worst blow Elgar had to suffer. It was a tragedy. Later my father would have liked to meet Elgar again, but he became ill and could not travel. Then Elgar died. The following letters and postcards from Elgar to my father, in date order, reveal the friendship of the two composers:

Langham Hotel, London, W.  
Jan. 19, 1902

My dear Friend,

Very many thanks for your very kind messages and greetings. I am glad the Centium went well, and it gives me great joy that you find my work interesting. I have ordered "Reigen" long ago, but it has not come yet.

Herzlichst greetings to Frau V. and yourself, E. Elgar.

Malvern, Febr. 1, 1902

My dear Volbach,

We live on these hills. Many thanks for the "Page and the King's Daughter", which I received with great joy via Breitkopf. I have "Reigen" from Schott now, and my wife is trying a translation. She joins me in kindest regards to Frau Professor and yourself. From me you must accept warmest greetings. I expect to hear much news of you from Ettlinger.

Always yours, E. Elgar.

Malvern, Febr. 10, 1902

My dear Friend,

My wife has just completed a little adaptation (paraphrase) in English of your "Reigen". The Chorus might have sung it in German, but we could not get for this concert a tenor-soloist who could also sing in your language. Now we may sing it in English, writing the words in the *Chor-stimmen* we buy from Schott, or shall we wait until it may be published in English dress? My dear wife joins me in kindest regards to Frau Professor, and I send the warmest greetings to you.

Yours ever sincerely, E. Elgar

Ettlinger is in England but I have not seen him yet.

Malvern, March 28, 1902

My dear Volbach,

Our best greetings to you and the Frau Doktor. By this post comes the paraphrase of the work of your "Reigen" which my wife has made, and which we have copied with the Chorstimmen for our own use, a labour of love. There are a few places where the music is altered — the length of some notes of which you may not approve. Tell me if you do not like the setting, and we will try to do better. Our ladies enjoy singing it very much. Anyhow, if you do not approve of my wife's paraphrase, it comes to you with best spring wishes and feelings, most suitable to your "Reigen" from us on this real spring day.

I have been very busy revising proofs and writing a Coronation Ode and arranging "God save the King" in practicable form. I hear from Ettlinger sometimes, but he is busy in the North. I will send you a copy of our programme soon; the concert is not until May. Now with very kindest regards from both of us to both of you.

Yours ever, E. Elgar.

Wurtemberg Hof, Nürnberg,  
July 22, 1902

My dear Friend,

I am so very, very sorry about the confusion yesterday. I have looked forward so much to a few hours with you; as it turned out everything went to prevent it. Our luggage was foolishly registered all on one ticket so we could not separate, otherwise I would have stayed alone in Mainz and let the others go on. The long journeys do not suit me, and I am suffering from headache. A rest at Mainz would have been lovely. I hope I may be able to stay on my way home.

Ever yours most sincerely, E. Elgar.

Leeds, Nov. 6, 1902

Dear Friend,

We were so glad to receive your letter. I am very busy conducting and travelling about; soon I shall be home and will write. I am glad to hear "Raffael" is nearly ready, and I wish my best for my friend's work ever!

Yours, E. Elgar.

Malvern, Dec. 13, 1902

My dear Friend,

The *partitur* of "Raffael" arrived yesterday, and it gives me the greatest pleasure to see it. I will do all I can to get a performance, only the words are rather difficult for English Church people. All greetings to you both from us.

Yours ever, E. Elgar.

Malvern, Dec. 17, 1902

Dear Friend,

All thanks for your letter, which gave me the greatest pleasure, and the score which I enjoyed very much. I have not time to write a letter. Breitkopf will send you an Organ Sonata of mine. I believe it is very awkward to register it, but you may perhaps play some of it. It is intended for a very modern organ with all sorts of mechanism.

Kindest regards, yours ever, E. Elgar.

Malvern, Jan. 1, 1903

Dear Friend,

All good wishes for the New Year. When the Klavier Ausgabe is ready ("Raffael") send it please as soon as possible to G.H. Johnstone, Esq. Headingley, Hampstead Hill, Handsworth, Birmingham and to Dr Hans Richter. Ettlinger (to whom also good wishes) will give you his address, but I hope you have seen him (Richter) and talked about it.

Yours ever, E. Elgar.

"Unser Wohnsitz", Malvern,  
February 7, 1903

Lieber Freund,

Wo ist Ihr Englischer brief ausgeliebt? Gatuliere und gute inspiration für den Wagnerschen Hymnus in Berlin.

Ihr getreuer, E. Elgar.

Malvern, March 24, 1903

Dear Friend,

Do not be surprised at this printed card. This schreib-machine is my new, and most useful toy (*Kinder Spielzeug!*), and I use it very much for libretti and other business things. I was rejoiced by your letter, and hope soon to have the pleasure to write fully. In the meantime, let me say how pleased we both are that you, my dear friend, are going to write about me in the German press. I wish you had a worthier subject. It gives us great joy that your work is once more associated with mine at an English festival (Middlesbrough). My wife and I send you many things for your notice. Kindest regards to the Frau Gemahlin.

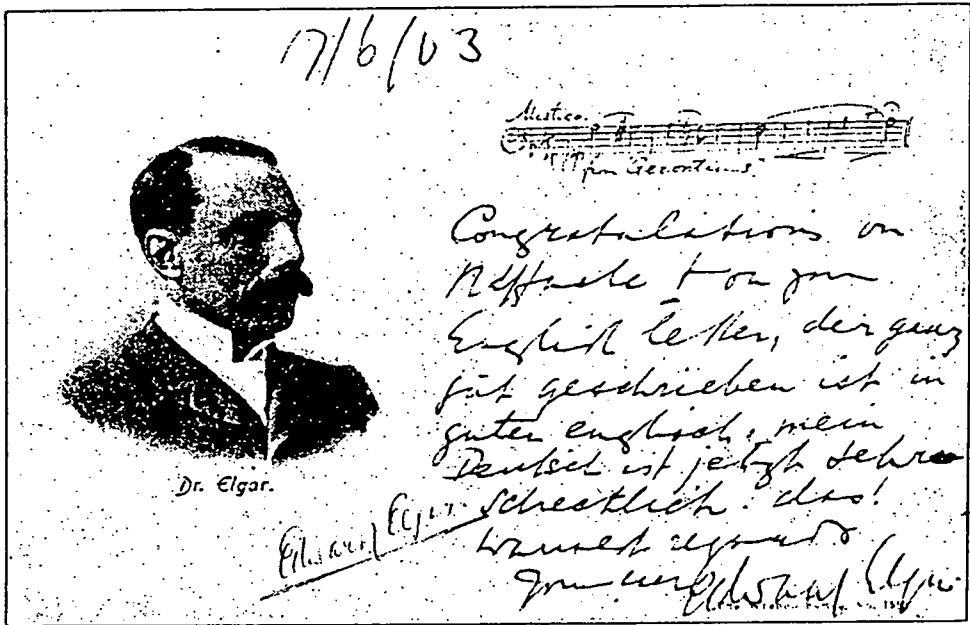
Yours, E. Elgar.

Malvern, June 17, 1903

Congratulations on "Raffael"\* and on your English letter; der ganz gut geschrieben ist in gutem Englisch. Mein Deutsch ist jetzt sehr schrecklich das!

Warm regards, yours ever, E. Elgar.

[\*Choral work by Fritz Volbach, inspired by four pictures.]



Reverse of a post-card issued in the Wrench Series and seemingly used by Elgar three years after the first performance of "Gerontius".

London, Nov. 23, 1903

My Dear Friend,

I have been wishing to write to you for a long time, but so many things have occurred time after time opportunity has slipped away. This is only to carry greetings from us both to Frau Volbach and yourself. We are starting for South of France tomorrow, and may travel via Mainz. I will let you know if we do.

Ever, E. Elgar.

Bordighera, Hotel Royal,  
Dec. 3, 1903

Dear Friend

We are so very sorry that our proposed German visit could not be carried out. We had to come straight on, and so miss the pleasure of seeing you. Send me a line sometime. This address (although we are abroad) will find us always.

Kindest regards, yours ever, E. Elgar.

April 24, 1904

My dear Volbach,

I fear I have been a bad correspondent, but I have been so very much tried with all sorts of journeys and conducting. Now, in a few days I see quieter times coming, and hope I may be able to look round and clean off a lot of neglected correspondence. One thing, however, I wish not to wait until the leisure time comes. I want to thank you again for the photograph of the Bach portrait\*, and beg to know more of this most interesting find. Have you the original, and will you not allow Breitkopf or someone to publish a really fine engraving? Do tell me all about this, and if you can, send me another of the little photos. I have given the one you sent to Stanford, who sent it to Joachim this evening.

I hope you and your family are all well, and that the pen has not been idle. Send me some news! I have written nothing since I left Italy. I was so sorry that our journey would not take us through Mainz either going or returning, but I hope we meet soon. You will have had greetings via Ettlinger, to whom kind regards. Weingartner has also been with you, or is now. He has been giving London some wonderful performances.

Yours ever sincerely, E. Elgar.

[\*This photo appears in Parry's *Bach* by permission of Dr Fritz Volbach].

Plas Gwyn, July 26, 1904

Dear Friend,

Once more I must say how sorry I am to have been so long in writing to you. Before I explain anything, I must send you my thanks for the beautiful article on "The Apostles". My wife has read it, and is quite touched by the sweet and beautiful way in which you have written of my work. Thank you again. Since we left Cologne where, after I saw you, I had a bad cold which kept me in the hotel for two days, we paid a short visit (only a few days) to Dusseldorf, and then came here. Our things have been moved to this house, larger than the old one, and there is room for you if you will come over.

In this confusion of moving the letters have been mislaid, and yours I cannot at this moment find. I am sorry as I wanted to talk to you about your composition which you mention. This must wait for a little time. I will only say that I hope your work is going on well, also good wishes to you and yours. This house is twenty-two miles away from the old one, and in charming country quite close to Hereford. Adieu for the present.

Ever yours, E. Elgar.

I was delighted to hear what you may do with "The Apostles", and I hope it will come off, and thank you for the trouble you have taken.



Plas Gwyn, Nov. 24, 1904

My dear Friend,

I am hoping to come, and shall telegraph to Dr Strecker when I start. I have much to do here, but I want to see you very much. My good wishes to your wife. Thanks for your kind care and trouble. My wife joins me in best greetings.

Your friend, E. Elgar.

Plas Gwyn, Dec. 7, 1905

My dear Volbach,

You must not think that because I have not written you have been out of mind. We very often think of you and your kindness and your gift of the Bach portrait is always before us if a reminder were necessary. Now I have to thank you for the Beethoven volume which looks beautiful. I say looks, because in the natural order of things I have been too much occupied since its arrival to allow myself the pleasure to read it; this I shall hope to do during the leisure time which somehow always comes about Christmas. In the meantime, my warmest thanks. I have been trying to get our conductors to perform the two choral works which I know ("Raffael" and "The Page"), but in both cases the libretto is the difficulty. The translation of "The Page" is not good, and the Hymnus to the Blessed Virgin will not do for our Anglican audiences. I see no reason at all why they should not be done in concert rooms, but it is impossible here to get them performed where I wish them, in their natural place, our cathedrals. The authorities will perform a Mass, Stabat Mater, &c. in our English cathedrals during a musical festival, but they will not hear of "Raffael". That is to say the lesser authorities dare not propose it. We hope you and your family are all well. We were distressed to hear of the death of Frau John. I hope Ettlinger is not too much upset. Write to me (in English) of your doings, which always interest me. I am forming a library at the University, and wish to include also your *prose* works; music will come later. Will you send me a list?

Kindest regards, yours always sincerely, E. Elgar.

Rome, via Gregoriana 38,  
Dec. 10, 1907

My dear Volbach,

I send you my most sincere thanks for your kindness over "The Kingdom". We have received the journal and I am most interested in the beautiful introduction you wrote. I am glad then that all went well. I am sorry you should have been worried by Professor Franke's illness; I wish I could have been with you to hear my work under your most sympathetic direction. Now I shall hope to hear some time of your own works, and what you are to do in Tübingen. Please tell me this, and that you are happy in making the change in residence. Here we are leading very quiet lives, and are seeing all the artistic things we can, and revelling also in the remains of ancient Rome. I have not been well since we arrived more than a month ago, but hope I may be in better health soon. Once more all thanks. My wife joins me in greetings to Frau Gemahlin and you.

Always sincerely yours, E. Elgar.

I hope Professor Franke is better.

Rome, Jan. 16, 1908

My dear Volbach,

I must add one line to my wife's letter to thank you for your letter, and for the beautiful articles you have written. I am sorry it is not possible to obtain a really satisfactory photograph of the fresco as it is in an apse and the focussing is impossible. I wish you were here to see many of the things with me. The modern Romans do all they can to spoil the ancient things, but there is much left to feel. I still remember with the greatest pleasure our walks in London, and our short time at the British Museum.

Always yours, E. Elgar.

Plas Gwyn, August 15, 1909

My dear Friend,

I was delighted to receive your letter, and to hear of your doings. I am so glad that the Symphony was such a great success, and I have had great pleasure in reading the score which Hug has sent me to see. It is indeed wholesome good music that makes one feel happy to see and hear. I am not now concerned with my concert-giving, and am therefore going to send on the score to some conductor who may be able to give a performance of your work, and I will let you hear if I am happy enough to be successful in this. I was so sorry we did not meet in Florence. We had a most lovely time there, and I should have had much added joy if we, you and I, could have seen some of the lovely things together.

I was very much interested in your account of your work at Tübingen. I wish I could look in on you some day, but it is far from here. With good wishes for more composition and your success in which I hope to lend a hand.

Believe me your sincere friend, Edward Elgar.

Plas Gwyn, Hereford,  
Nov. 6, 1910

My dear Volbach,

It is long since I heard from you, and I hope that you and all are well and that all things are flourishing with you in health and in art also. I wish it had been possible for me to travel to see you, but I have had no opportunity during the last eighteen months. I was delighted to see the *partitur* of your symphony, but could not myself give a performance of it as I have no orchestra and conduct very little. I sent the score to a conductor in the North of England, but his programmes were already made out. However, this winter I may be home in London, and possibly conducting; and if this should happen so, I will take care the performance is as good as can be.

I travel to Crefeld in December, but I come no further south this time. Send me a line telling me of your doings, which always interest me. For my own work, I have completed a Violin Concerto, which Kreisler plays for the first time on November 10th.

" Warmest regards. Believe me always, Edward Elgar.

Plas Gwyn, Hereford,  
26 März, 1911

Sir Edward ist auf der Reise und soll einige Zeit in Amerika zubringen. Wenn er zurückkommt und wenn Sie vielleicht nach England kommen werden, so werden wir uns sehr freuen Sie wieder zu sehen.

Besten Grüßen, C.A. Elgar

Tiddington House, Stratford-  
upon-Avon,  
May 30, 1929

My dear Friend,

I send you most hearty thanks for kindly sending me your very delightful and friendly article; it reminds me of the dear old days of our beloved artistic intercourse. I hope you are well and that all flourishes with you and yours. I am, as I think you know, alone in the world; Lady Elgar died in 1920. So my memories of friendships shared with her are doubly pleasant. She was a great admirer of yours.

I fear I shall never see Germany again; but if good fortune should take me there, I shall make a pilgrimage and shake you by the hand.

With heartfelt greetings. Your friend, Edward Elgar.

\*\*\*\*\*

## 20 CHURCH STREET SHOPS PLAN REJECTED

Hereford City Council has turned down plans to build shops in the garden in Church Street, Hereford, which surrounds George Sinclair's former house.

The owners, the city's Conservative Club, wished to build seven two-storey shops around a courtyard. The City Council Planning Committee decided in June that the garden in the shadow of the Cathedral had 'quite exceptional' associations with Elgar and his music and should be conserved for the city and the nation.

As a peaceful unspoilt part of the green belt round the Cathedral Close, the development, which would incidentally have covered the site of the grave of Sinclair's bulldog Dan, was thought over-intensive and inappropriate by the officers, who were impressed by the clear evidence of the site's historical importance in relation to Elgar (*see Journal, December 1987*). The councillors went even further, and one expressed a wish to see the gardens acquired for the public and called 'Elgar Gardens.' Earlier this year the owners applied for permission to build the shops over the site. The result was a 5000-signature petition to the Council, headed by the Bishop of Hereford, as well as protests from the Society and the local Civic Trust, and individuals like Lady Hull, Sir Roy Strong and Ken Russell. Officers reported a 'colossal' number of letters had been received in opposition, and that the historical associations made the site of considerable interest and were a material planning consideration.

The garden lies near the Cathedral Close and surrounds the 15th century former canonical house where Elgar stayed during his visits, notably that of 29 October—1 November 1898, during which the incident depicted in *Variation no. 11* occurred. This was, of course, the weekend following that in which he conceived the idea of the *Variations*. He also wrote part of *The Apostles* in a room provided by Sinclair for his use, according to Percy Hull (*Elgar at Hereford*, R.A.M. Magazine, Lent term 1960, pp.7).

The Grade II\* listed house, which has a mediaeval hall, has fallen into dilapidation since its purchase by the Club from the Cathedral in 1930. The Club said it needed the development to finance repairs to the building. The Dean and Chapter still have a restrictive covenant in force which would prevent development, which they were reportedly offered £5,000 to waive. They were also asked to consider providing access for servicing the 10,000 sq. ft. proposed precinct through the Close itself. Although there is nothing wrong with waiving a redundant covenant for a payment, many local people were dismayed that in this case the foresight of the 1930 Chapter was to be overruled — and for a relatively trifling sum. The owners have until the end of the year to appeal against refusal. One hopes that instead they will take the sensible and far-sighted course of accepting instead an offer like that of the Landmark Trust, to restore the house and garden intact, and so make them accessible to visitors.

One positive aspect of the controversy has been wide public interest in publicity about Elgar, Sinclair and Hereford — not least in Hereford itself — and the local Council are realising what an asset they have in the city's unique link with an artist of world fame. The days of demolition seem over — even though, astoundingly, *Plas Gwyn* is still not listed as a building of historic interest!

The sometimes circuitous genesis of Elgar's musical ideas have also intrigued those who have tended to be over-awed by Elgar's 'image'. The humble origin, for instance of the *Gerontius* 'Prayer' motif in a musical sketch of Sinclair's bulldog in his *Visitors' Book* may be disillusioning for some, but is a good example of what Jerrold Northrop Moore, in a stimulating forum during the Society's AGM weekend, called his 'inductive' method. After all, his admired Donne once found poetry in a flea! All in all, perhaps the Society should be grateful to the owners for indirectly furthering its object of 'promoting a wider interest in his life and music.'

Incidentally, the famous Visitors' Book itself containing the '*Moods of Dan (Illustrated)*', has at last returned to Hereford, where it is on permanent loan in the Cathedral Library.

JACOB O'CALLAGHAN

\*\*\*\*\*

A greatly expanded new edition of Jacob O'Callaghan's *Elgar: A Herefordshire Guide*, containing previously unpublished photographs of Elgar at Church Street, and examples of the *Moods of Dan* is to be issued in September, available from the birthplace.

---

### ELGAR ON RADIO 3 1987

Readers may recall that a year ago we published a short article by T.W. Rowbotham, of Stockport, on the 'popularity' of Elgar's music on Radio 3 during the previous year. He has now compiled his list for 1987 which may interest members.

On Radio 3 in 1986 the total number of Elgar performances was 149. In 1987 it has been exceeded . . . 158 items, either on records or in live concert:

In order of popularity:

In the South Overture	8 performances
Symphony no. 1	6            ,,
Cockaigne Overture	6            ,,
Serenade for Strings	6            ,,
Falstaff	5            ,,
Introduction & Allegro	5            ,,
Enigma Variations	5            ,,
Violin Sonata in E minor	5            ,,
String Quartet in E minor	4            ,,
Dream Children	4            ,,

A few comments:-

*Froissart* his first concert overture (1890), was performed on Radio 3 three times. Some interesting rarities included the *Andante* from *Six Easy Pieces for violin and piano*; *Ecce Sacerdos Magnus* (for choir and organ); and some of the Harmony Music emerged from time to time. Writing this in December, I am looking forward to hearing, for the first time in my life *Allegretto on G.E.D.G.E.*, for violin and piano, composed in 1886, and inscribed to 'The Misses Gedge . . .'

Finally, it is heartwarming to see that of his over 60 songs at least 15 were performed on the radio in 1987.

T.W. Rowbotham

# REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1988

After last year's disappointingly low turnout for the AGM, it was good to see some ninety members at Lawnside, Malvern, for this year's meeting. It was part of a busy weekend for Elgarians, and there were record numbers attending for all events thanks to a contingent from London Branch who had organised a weekend to run concurrently with that of the Society.

## *Chairman's Address*

Michael Pope welcomed all those present and brought good wishes from the President, who said that Elgar's works are loved and appreciated not only in England but the world over. The Chairman referred to the early days of the Society and commented on the far-sightedness of those who had formed it in Malvern. As this address was to be his last as Chairman he felt it appropriate to look back over the past and to how the Society had progressed. Undoubtedly much had been achieved with the recording of the major works, but we need to press for lesser-known works to be performed. Because the Society has grown there is always a tendency to lose sight of its original aims. We must guard against turning it into a fan club, and we must preserve its dignity and high level of scholarship.

## *Election of Officers and Committee Members*

*President:*

**Sir Yehudi Menuhin, O.M., K.B.E.**

**Vice Presidents: Dr Herbert Sumsion, C.B.E., Lady Hull, Alan Webb, Dr Douglas Guest, C.V.O., Prof. Ian Parrott, Sir David Willcocks, C.B.E., Dr Percy Young, Diana McVeagh, Vernon Handley, Michael Kennedy, O.B.E., Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore.**

The Vice-Chairman proposed that, in recognition of his outstanding service to the Society, Michael Pope be elected as an additional Vice-President. This was seconded by Andrew Neill.

**Christopher Robinson**, proposed by David Michell and seconded by Dr Melville Cook, was elected Chairman.

*Vice-Chairman:*

**Trevor Fenemore-Jones**

*Secretary:*

**Carol Holt**

*Treasurer:*

**David Morris**

*Journal Editor:*

**Ronald Taylor**

*Membership Secretary:*

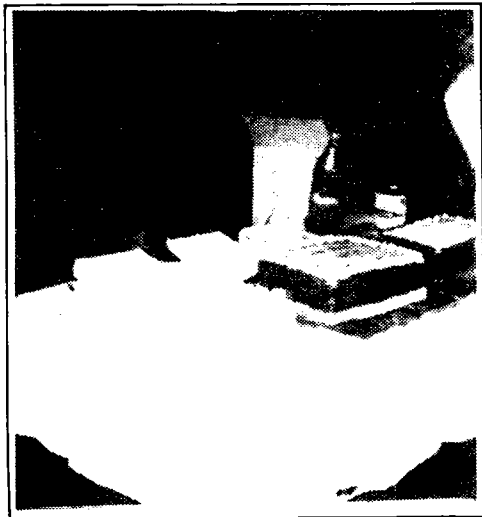
**John Greig**

**Committee Members: Margaret Elgar, Charles Myers, Robert Tucker, Margaret Benselin; and new members, Andrew Neill and Geoffrey Hodgkins.**

THE TREASURER reported disappointing sales of *King Olaf* recordings, but latterly they had increased and the outlook was more promising. THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY reported the total number of members at 31st December 1987 was 1154. Following a statement by the Treasurer it was agreed to raise subscriptions to £7 per annum from 1st January 1989. Family membership (one copy of the Journal), two members £8; three members £9; four members £10. Student members £5; overseas members 15 US dollars or sterling equivalent. THE EDITOR of the Journal reported that in the year's three issues he has tried to cover all significant recordings issued, as well as books and pamphlets, and has also tried to reflect the various activities taking place at home and abroad where Elgar's music is being performed. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE reported a small fall in the net number of overseas members, and clearly there was still a great deal of work to be done in encouraging overseas interest. THE SECRETARY spoke of her personal pleasure in

*Continued on page 16*

## Scenes at the Birthday Party at the Elgar Birthplace



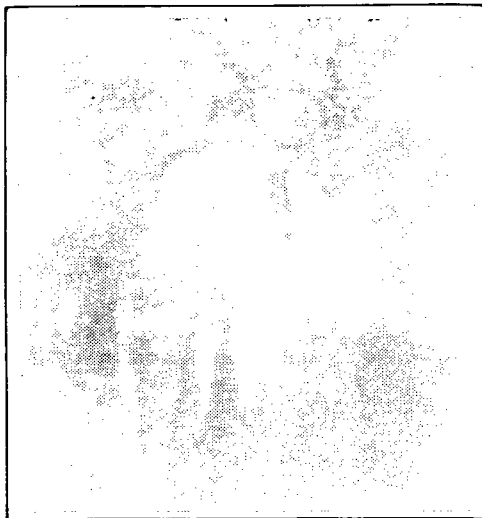
The Birthday Cakes, just before cutting!



Dr. Percy Young and Dr. Jerrold Moore in discussion

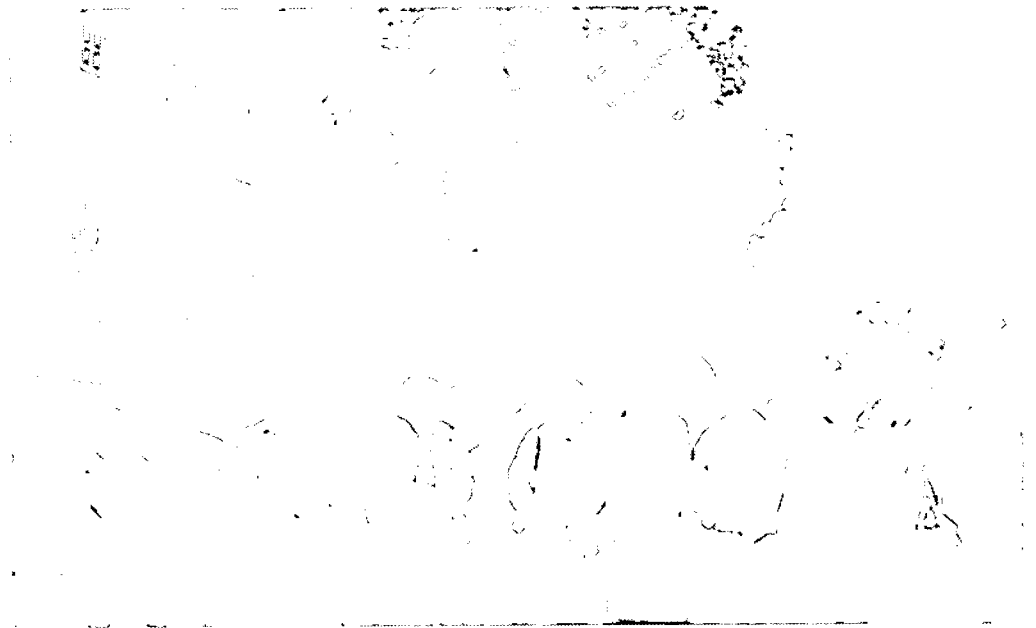


Carol Holt in conversation with Dr. Donald Hunt



Christopher Robinson, newly elected Society Chairman

*Photographs by Ronald Taylor*



Members of the London Branch pose by the Elgar Statue in Worcester during the Elgar Weekend in June.

*Photograph by Bob Hellen*



"Lawnside". The main school building, and venue for this year's Annual General Meeting.

*Photograph by Ronald Taylor*

welcoming the Society to Lawnside, a school with many Elgar connections. She hoped all would enjoy seeing a small display in the Hall, and have time to look at the Steinway in the drawing-room on which Elgar and George Bernard Shaw played duets in August 1929. She hoped that the Society would be more outward-looking, and encourage members to visit other branches, and help in promoting live performances.

During a lively 'Any Other Business' many matters were discussed and will provide the General Committee with points for consideration in the coming year. They included: An insignia as an aid to recruitment, a Society tie, and the proposed development of 20 Church Street, Hereford.

On behalf of the Society the Vice-Chairman made a presentation to Michael Pope, the retiring Chairman, of a copy of Jerrold Northrop Moore's "Letters of a Creative Life", signed by the author; scores of the Elgar Edition of *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*; and record tokens. Michael Pope expressed great pleasure at the gifts, and "wished the Society well from the bottom of his heart".

\*\*\*\*\*

## NEWS ITEMS

### ST. MICHAEL'S CORNHILL, LONDON 19 July 1988

Due to the foresight of John Kelly who spotted a poster advertising a concert at St. Michael's, and brought it to London Branch AGM, a number of members were able to attend a most enjoyable and unusual concert.

The evening opened with Finzi's *Magnificat*, not in any sense a liturgical setting, as it specifically omits the Gloria, but a dramatic example of Finzi's choral writing, full of his individual touches of harmony and phrase. The richly resonant Victorian acoustic was not kind to Bach's motet *Jesu, meine Frende*, and although finely sung and characterised the many strands of counterpoint blurred. The first movement of Elgar's *Organ Sonata*, Op. 37, received a very vibrant and rhythmically alert performance, on the very grand Victorian organ, from Andrew Lucas.

The highlight for all of us and obviously for others in the audience was the second half of the concert - a performance of *The Black Knight*, sung by the St. Michael's Singers. Conducted by John Hutton, with Andrew Lucas accompanying with virtuosic skill which helped us to forget the absence of an orchestra. Here the organ and acoustic were just what was needed, a rich round resonance made a choir of about 30 sound like 100. The text became submerged in a welter of rich choral lines and strands of colour from the organ. The symphonic structure was very apparent in a thoughtful, lively and obviously enjoyed performance.

We look forward to hearing more from these artists, especially when they choose Elgar's music.

M.P.



## ANOTHER ELGAR RARITY . . .

Robert Tucker's concerts at Windsor are noted for the 'unusual' items which he slips into the programmes — often works which have been unheard for many years, or which tax the memories of even the most astute of music buffs! For his latest Windsor Sinfonia concert on 24th September he has selected *With Proud Thanksgiving*, a re-writing by Elgar of *For the Fallen* from *The Spirit of England*. It is possible that this is the first performance of this work before the public since the 1920s. A full account of how this version came to be written, and the strange events of its non-performance are contained in the editorial notes to The Elgar Edition of *The Spirit of England*. These notes are the work of Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore. Suffice to say that the original setting for military band, scored by Frank Winterbottom, in 1920, and intended to be played at the unveiling of the Cenotaph in Whitehall, was — for unknown reasons — never used. Neither was it used at the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. However, Elgar was persuaded to rescore this new work for orchestra and it was performed at the Royal Albert Hall on 7th May 1921.

\*\*\*\*\*

ELGAR STUDIES. This volume, edited by Raymond Monk, is at last moving towards publication. It has been a long wait, but the results should be well worth the waiting! Scolar Press hope to publish the work in Spring 1989, and as the book is to be published for the benefit of the Elgar Society we wish it large sales. The proposed line up of articles will include Peter Dennison on "Elgar's Musical Apprenticeship", Percy Young on "Friends Pictured Within", Robert Anderson on "Elgar's Magus and Projector", Ian Parrott on "Elgar's Harmonic Language", Michael Pope on "King Olaf and the English Choral Tradition", Brian Trowell on "Elgar's Use of Literature", Diana McVeagh on "Elgar and Falstaff", Michael Kennedy on "Some Elgar Interpreters", K.E.L. Simmons on "Music for the Starlight Express", Ronald Taylor on "Shaw and Elgar", and an "Envoy" by Jerrold Northrop Moore. That should suffice to keep any Elgarian happy for many a long evening, and we are certain that the essays will add greatly to our knowledge and appreciation of Elgar. Further information in the next issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

## NEWS FROM THE BIRTHPLACE

The Curator, A.J. Bennett, writes:

Swallows have been observed by the curator perched in lines on the overhead power cables, as if to challenge the summer to come back or else to stay away for good. However, the adverse weather does not seem to have had an adverse effect on activity at the Birthplace. Judged in revenue terms the summer has started well.

Notable visitors have included Joseph Cooper and Mrs Cooper and it was great to welcome them back. Nigel Kennedy called when performing in Cheltenham, having acquired a Birthplace sweatshirt which is displayed on one of his record sleeves. We have noticed an increase in the number of foreign visitors — from Japan, Korea and China as well as nearer home. We have been pleased to receive a group from the University of Miami in Ohio.

We now have available in the shop copies of W. R. Mitchell's book on Elgar in the Yorkshire Dales — highly recommended. Copies can be supplied to readers at £2.70 post free.

A service that the Birthplace can provide which may not have come to the attention of all readers is the provision in bulk quantities of vocal scores and sheet music for Choral Societies. We are in a position to offer attractive terms for scores from most of the major publishers, and the offer is not restricted to Elgar's music. If you would like to help your Choral Society as well as helping the Birthplace, the curator will be pleased to respond to your enquiries.

THE ELGAR BIRTHPLACE, Crown Lane East, Lower Broadheath, Worcester.

\*\*\*\*\*

# LONDON COLISEUM

CHARING CROSS

PERFORMANCES TWICE DAILY AT 2.30 AND 8 P.M.

WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY, JULY 23<sup>rd</sup>

MRS.  
**LESLIE CARTER**  
And a LONDON COMPANY, including  
MR. JULIAN ROYCE and  
MISS PHYLLIS STUCKEY  
In a Play in One Act, by  
Miss GERTRUDE E. JENNINGS.  
"THE LADY IN RED."  
The Play produced by Norman Page.

**BILLY MERSON**  
COMEDIAN,  
"BILLY PEPPERCORN"  
from  
"LOOK WHO'S HERE."  
The London Opera House Success.

The Celebrated London Actor, Mr.  
**CHARLES HAWTREY**  
Supported by Miss  
GLADYS MAUDE  
AND COMPANY, in Comedy,  
**'WAITING AT THE CHURCH'**  
BY FREDERICK LONSDALE.  
Scene, A Room in a Flat in London.

## THE FRINGES OF THE FLEET

FOUR SONGS from the above work by

**RUDYARD KIPLING** Musically Specially Composed by **Sir EDWARD ELGAR**

Who will conduct in person songs sung by **CHAS. MOTT & CO.**  
Music published by Enoch & Sons, Gt. Marlboro' Street, W.

**CARLTON**  
AND HIS SATELLITES.

**SCOTCH KELLY**  
COMEDIAN.

AND HIGH-CLASS VARIETIES.

BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE GERRARD 7541.

Hudson & Kearns, Ltd., London, S.E. 1.

1917 A contemporary advertisement, in a Stoll Theatres programme, for the current programme at the Coliseum — 'The Fringes of the Fleet'. Its position on the 'bill' is interesting!

QUEEN'S HALL  
(Sole Lessees: Chappell & Co. Ltd.)

LONDON  
MUSIC  
FESTIVAL  
1934

(Organised by *The British Broadcasting Corporation*)

SIX CONCERTS, MAY 4—16 at 8.15 p.m.

*The following works will be included in the  
Programmes.*

ELGAR :       Third Symphony  
                  (First performance).

WALTON :      New Symphony.

HINDEMITH : Das Unaufhörliche

THE B.B.C. CHORUS

THE B.B.C. SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

*Conductors :*

ADRIAN BOULT

BRUNO WALTER

A poignant programme for Elgarians. A page from the BBC programme of Symphony Concerts, Season 1933-34, announcing the May performance of the Third Symphony — the performance that was never to be.

## CONCERT DIARY

10 Sept	Enigma Variations BBC Welsh SO/A. Davis	St. David's Hall, Cardiff 7.30 pm
13/14 Sept.	Symphony no. 1 CBSO/A. Davis	Birmingham Town Hall 7.30 pm
21 Sept.	Violin Concerto Nigel Kennedy/RLPO/Pesek	Philharmonic Hall Liverpool, 7.30 pm
23 Sept	Cello Concerto Robert Cohen/Halle O/Hughes	St. George's Hall, Bradford 7.30 pm
1 Oct	Powick Asylum Music Rutland Sinfonia/Collett	Oakham Church, Rutland 7.30 pm
2 Oct	Symphony no. 2 Halle O/Groves	Free Trade Hall, Manchester 7.30 pm
9 Oct	In the South Overture Philharmonia O/Sinopoli	Royal Festival Hall 7.30 pm
18 Oct	Enigma Variations RLPO/Menuhin	Royal Festival Hall 7.30 pm
20 Oct	Sea Pictures CBSO/Berglund/Janet Baker	Birmingham Town Hall 7.30 pm
27 Oct	the same	Nottingham Royal Concert Hall 7.30 pm
28 Oct	the same	Warwick Arts Centre, 8 pm
29 Oct	Introduction & Allegro; Cello Concerto; Symphony no. 1 R. Cohen/BBC Welsh SO/A. Davis	St. David's Hall, Cardiff 7.30 pm
8 Nov	Cello Concerto R. Kirshbaum/CBSO/Levi	Birmingham Town Hall 7.30 pm
9 Nov	the same	Derby Assembly Rooms 7.30 pm
12 Nov	In the South Overture RLPO/Pesek	Leeds Town Hall, 7.30 pm
12 Nov	Spirit of England Halle O/Hickox/Janice Watson/Bradford Festival Choral Society	St. George's Hall, Bradford 7.30 pm
17 Nov	Enigma Variations Halle O/Skrowaczewski	Free Trade Hall, Manchester 7.30 pm
17 Nov	Froissart; Music Makers BBC Welsh SO/Hunt/Sally Burgess	Worcester Cathedral 7.30 pm
20 Nov	In the South Overture RLPO/Pesek	Free Trade Hall, Manchester 7.30 pm

26 Nov	The Apostles Armstrong/Walker/Caley/Cook/Macann/ Thomas/Leeds Phil. Chorus/English Northern PO/Groves	Leeds Town Hall 7.30 pm
1 Dec	Syumphony no.1 Halle O/Menuhin	Free Trade Hall, Manchester 7.30 pm
8 Dec	Cello Concerto U. Heinen/CBSO/Daniel	De Montfort Hall, Leicester 7.30 pm

\*\*\*\*\*

## RECORD REVIEWS

Organ Sonata no.1 in G. *Christopher Herrick (on the organ of Westminster Abbey)*  
Vesper Voluntaries Op.14 and works by S.S. Wesley and E.H. Lemare.

*Meridian E 77085 (disc)*  
*KE 77085 (cassette)*

Organ Sonata no.1 in G. *Thomas Murray (on the organ of Immaculate Conception Church, Boston, Mass.)* and works by Gade and Franck.

*Town Hall S—23 (disc)*

Christopher Herrick is the latest in an impressive list of British organists who have recorded the Elgar sonata, a work which has emerged from its former obscurity and now holds a high place in the list of 19th century organ masterpieces. Herrick's technique is admirable, as indeed it needs to be, for his time of 22'20" is over six minutes faster than Sumsion's classic 1965 recording. Admittedly, without metronome markings there is a good deal of scope for individual interpretation of tempi, and one could easily argue the case for a fast speed in a work which has a slow movement marked *andante*, and a finale *presto (comodo)*. But no doubt Elgar had in mind the average church organist who plays everything slowly! Herrick's performance rather lacks shape; climaxes, particularly in the two outer movements, are taken as they come rather than prepared. The speed makes for little inaccuracies — the important rhythmic figure



(which first appears at bar 104, first movement) is sometimes played



and semiquaver arpeggios are just a blur of sound. The general feeling is one of breathlessness. Yet I have enjoyed listening to it, and as a virtuoso performance it certainly has a vitality. The recording also includes the early Vesper Voluntaries, once again faster than usual, but the effect is less noticeable in these short pieces. The real curiosity on the disc is Lemare's *Marche Moderne*, a curious mixture of *Die Meistersinger* and *The Arcadians*.

Thomas Murray's recording of the sonata is ten years old and not available in this country as far as I know. Its inclusion in this review is on the grounds that I have never heard a finer performance of the work. More than anything else one is struck by the symphonic nature of the sonata, written thirteen years before Elgar's next great abstract work, the First Symphony. Some years ago another American organist, Rollin Smith, wrote: "(Elgar) has abandoned the traditional modes of organ composition and created a monumental work wholly symphonic in design and orchestral in concept". I believe that Murray's performance here fully vindicates this view, and makes comparisons with the A flat symphony inevitable. His playing of the

*tranquillo* section in the third movement brings to mind that superb *adagio* in the later work where the dying Jaeger was brought near heaven.

Though much slower than Herrick, Murray is quicker than most but still finds time for tremendous attention to detail; for example, the *staccato* markings in the accompaniment of the first subject, first movement (bar 43). He is equally masterful in both lyrical and dramatic episodes, and his clever changes in registration bring the best out of the marvellous Hook organ. If there is a slight weakness it is that the interest sags a little in the finale, but generally Murray's technical and interpretative ability combine to make this a recording to treasure.

G.H.

## CD ROUND-UP

Boult's interpretation of Elgar's *First Symphony* has never been held in such special affection as that of the Second. Now, at last, the 1976 version of the First has been joined on compact disc by his last recording of the Second, completed some eight months earlier. The legendary rich, glowing sound quality of these recordings comes up even better in the digital reprocessing of the *Second Symphony*, and Boult's interpretation, if lacking some of the drive and fire of the famous 1944 recording, has a magisterial dignity all of its own. The CD (no. CDC 7 47205) has the slightly low-key *Cockaigne* as a generous fill-up.

However, the most important of these Boult/Elgar CD reissues is undoubtedly the 1968 *The Kingdom*, which takes a disc-and-a-half, the second disc being filled with Philip Ledger's very fine account of the *Coronation Ode*, recorded at King's College, Cambridge. *The Kingdom* sounds splendid; the recorded sound is very fine, with exceptional choral clarity. The choir (London Philharmonic) may not be as polished as on the later Boult recordings, but they sing with great commitment, and of the soloists, Margaret Price and John Shirley Quirk are particularly outstanding. Hopefully *The Apostles* (which should sound even better) will follow soon (CDS 7 49381-2).

Two Boult/Elgar CDs have appeared in EMI's mid-price 'Studio' series. When I first played the two *Wand of Youth* suites and the orchestral *Bavarian Dances* (on CDM 7 69207-2) I rushed for my Boult discography to confirm that these exceptionally well focussed and crystal clear recordings were, indeed, recorded as long ago as 1967. They are — and EMI has padded out the bulk of the original LP issue to over 74 minutes by adding *Polonia*, 'Mediation' from *Light of Life* and the *Caractacus* 'Triumphal March' from 1974 sessions, also recorded at Abbey Road, in vivid but slightly less clear sound quality.

CDM 7 69200-2 is also exceptionally well filled (again over 74 minutes). The main work is the Boult/Tortelier *Cello Concerto* — a characterful interpretation by two veterans, recorded in 1972. In addition we get a 1971 version of *In the South* — one of the best products of some experimental sessions held at the acoustically tricky, but now popular recording venue, All Saint's, Tooting. It has come up vividly, and after a slightly scrambled start, settles into one of the most dynamic of the later Boult recordings. So far this Studio issue duplicates, and I think outclasses, the CFP Robert Cohen/Norman del Mar CD (CD-CFP 9003) from the sound quality and interpretative points of view (especially in the concerto). The matter is clinched, despite the slightly lower price of the CFP, by EMI's inclusion of *Froissart* and a spirited, if slightly matter-of-fact, *Introduction and Allegro*.

Another version of the latter can be heard on Arabesque Z 6563, devoted entirely to the Elgar string music, played by the English Chamber Orchestra under Sir Yehudi Menuhin. I won't enlarge on the limitations of this recording which I have already discussed in detail in its LP form. The recording was made in a very dry New York hall, and *Introduction and Allegro*

suffers most, particularly as the recording does not integrate the solo group very well with the main body of strings. The sound of the other items is better, the playing excellent, but the total playing time of under 46 minutes, not good value on LP, is even more of a deterrent on a top price CD. Of course the real problem is the shortage of suitable Elgar material for the medium (padded out here by arrangements) but surely some extra items for strings by other British composers could have been added.

Boult's version of the orchestral *Bavarian Dances* is nicely complemented by the full price EMI reissue of Norman del Mar's vividly performed and recorded Bournemouth version of the six choral *From the Bavarian Highlands* songs in their orchestral version. The very clear digital version of the original analogue tapes shows up the limitations of the Bournemouth choir — but this distracts only slightly from a most enjoyable disc — the other items being Vaughan Williams' rarely heard cantata *In Windsor Forest*, and an addition to the original LP issue, *Toward the Unknown Region*, a genuine digital recording, made by the American Chalfont company with the far superior Birmingham choir, in most spacious sound (CDC 7 497382).

Finally, an outstandingly important Classics for Pleasure reissue. Many Elgarians regard Vernon Handley's *First Symphony* (recorded in 1979 with the LPO) as arguably the best ever recorded. It is certainly a 'best buy' as a bargain price CD, selling at only £5.99. There were always slight doubts over the recorded sound, which has some odd perspectives (the brass very closely balanced), but this restless, passionate performance, bowled me over yet again in its new format. Highly recommended on CD-CFP 9018.

GARETH H. LEWIS

## NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

LONDON's season came to a triumphant end with two unusual meetings. In May there was a charming and delightful presentation by Margaret Elgar of her 'Reminiscences'; and the evening was further enhanced by the showing of rare film of Elgar made available by our member, Andrew Youdell. The great man, a sprightly septuagenarian, was seen cavorting with Mina and Marco, speeding off in a car with Carice and Dick Mountford, consorting with cronies at the Three Choirs festival etc. It was the perfect prelude to Miss Elgar's talk, and she was not alone in finding it extremely moving.

In June the branch met at the Royal College of Organists to hear Stephen Cleobury (who is Honorary Secretary of the College as well as Organist and Master of the Christers at King's College, Cambridge) honour us by giving a performance of the *Organ Sonata*. This was followed by the AGM and a convivial reception at which the indefatigable Martin Passande was already planning the next branch outing to *The Black Knight!* The new season will commence on 10th October at Imperial College, when Lady Barbirolli will be the speaker.

WEST MIDLANDS. The autumn programme begins a little later than usual, but is well worth waiting for. On 1st October at 2.30 pm at the Friends' Meeting House in Worcester, Journal Editor Ronald Taylor visits with a talk entitled 'Music in the air around us' — a study of Elgar and the BBC. On 22nd October in Malvern Priory the noted Lancashire organist, Charles Myers, will give a recital of music by Elgar and his British contemporaries. On 26th November at the Friends' Meeting House, Lyndon Jenkins, who is much heard on Radio 3 these days, gives a talk on 'Elgar links with Birmingham'. Refreshments follow all events and members are encouraged to bring along friends.

The branch has recently arranged for the complete renovation of the graves of Elgar's parents and two of his brothers in Astwood Cemetery, Worcester. Frank Elgar's previous unmarked grave has now been installed with a named cross, and is well worth a visit.

**YORKSHIRE.** The branch's season ended on 25th July with the usual summer 'Soiree' at the Secretary's home in Leeds. 23 members consumed more food and drink than can possibly have been good for them, struggled with a music quiz and won some very worthwhile prizes in a raffle which netted £23 for Branch funds. Some weeks earlier, on 6th June, our concluding speaker had been Margaret Glover, music teacher and old friends of the branch. Never at a loss for a subject, she decided that having been entrusted to round off the season for us, she would discuss and illustrate how Elgar had rounded off several of his better-known works. We heard some concluding movements on record and a number of piano illustrations.

Next season commences with a visit from Claud Powell on 26th September. Mr Powell is the son of 'Dorabella' and his talk will provide an interesting start to the season. Ian Parrott makes his second visit to us on 24th October to speak on 'Elgar's harmonic language'; and other interesting evenings are in the process of being arranged. The branch is in good heart, with a strong membership and rewarding attendances at all meetings. We look forward to 3rd April next year, when we shall celebrate our tenth anniversary.

**EAST ANGLIA** has now fully recovered from earlier setbacks and a full list of meetings and events is included in our forthcoming calendar. This year we celebrated our tenth anniversary and in May our Chairman, Alan Childs, repeated the illustrated lecture on Elgar's houses which he gave when the branch was originally formed in 1978.

The itinerary this summer has included visits to the Corn Exchange, Cambridge for an excellent performance of the *Dream* by the Hertfordshire Symphony Orchestra; and to St. Edmundsbury Cathedral at Bury for a concert of English music including *Sea Pictures* and *The Music Makers* with Diana Walkley. Our appreciation is due to the conductor of the St. Edmundsbury Bach Choir and orchestra, Mr F. Harrison Oxley, for furthering the Elgarian cause in East Anglia. A highlight of our spring meetings was the visit to Sir George and Lady Burton's home set in idyllic surroundings near Hadleigh in Suffolk, where we enjoyed early Elgar 78s played on a 'vintage' horn gramophone. This was a truly memorable excursion and our thanks are extended for first class hospitality from Sir George and Lady Burton. On 17th June we welcomed Michael Pope who gave a most interesting lecture on the Cantatas.

Forthcoming events will include lectures by Harrison Oxley on the Enigma Variations, and by Michael Woodward who makes a hobby of recording organ music of all kinds, including Stephen Cleobury's recording of the *Sonata* in King's College Chapel, Cambridge.

The summer programme for the **SOUTH WEST BRANCH** began on 16th April when a pleasant evening was spent with the Delius Society listening to a recording sent by Dr Eric Fenby about his life with Delius. This was followed on 21st May by Anton Millard's interesting talk on Glazunov, and on 18th June the Avon Brass Ensemble treated us to a programme which included an arrangement of *Chanson de Matin*.

We recommence with a talk by Mrs Mary Whittle on 17th September. Her lectures are always interesting and informative. Then on 15th October, Garry Humphreys is giving a lecture-recital which will include *The Fringes of the Fleet*; and on 19th November Ronald Bleach will speak on the life of Alice Elgar, with Cathy Jones reading the part of Alice. The AGM is on 21st January 1989, and on 18th February Roger Huckle gives a violin recital.

**SOUTH WALES.** Friendship House, Swansea was the venue on 14th May for a talk by Ian Parrott entitled 'The musical language of Elgar'. The speaker concentrated upon the composer's melody, harmony and orchestration, devoting special attention to certain aspects



of Elgar's harmonic practice and illustrating many of his points, chiefly at the piano. Sequences, suspensions and secondary sevenths ('The Three S's') were noted as recurring features of Elgarian style, and he seemed to do some of the very things that students of composition were enjoined to avoid. Points raised during 'Question Time' included the influence of Meyerbeer on Elgar's orchestration; and the distinctive Elgarian voice which could be heard in one of his Anglican chants, a mere seven bars long!

Other things being equal, the next meeting of the branch will take place in Swansea on 5th November. However, the week before that, on 28th October the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra conducted by Andrew Davis will play an all-Elgar programme, consisting of the *Introduction & Allegro*, the *Cello Concerto* (soloist Robert Cohen), and the *First Symphony*. The concert, which will be recorded for BBC TV will be held at 7.30 pm at St. David's Hall, Cardiff. At 5.00 pm Kenneth Loveland will give a pre-concert talk on the works to be performed (illustrated with records) in the St. Asaph Room of the Hall; light refreshments will be available.

The SOUTH WALES branch have arranged for Elgar Society members and their friends to attend the talk for £1 (normal price £2), and have reserved a small block of seats at £9 each (normal price £10). Members who wish to come to the talk and/or the concert are asked to send a remittance for the appropriate amount to Ken Wallace, 6 Ridgeway, Newport, Gwent (tel: 0633 67345) to whom further enquiries should be addressed. Applications for concert tickets should be made before 24th September.

Kenneth Loveland is also giving a talk in connection with the Swansea Festival at the Brangwyn Hall, Swansea on 10th October at 7.30 pm, entitled 'Elgar, the man and his music'.

## LONDON BRANCH: MALVERN WEEKEND

3 — 5 JUNE 1988

Driving through Oxfordshire in driving rain and through blackened skies I thought that this was 'par for the course' for an Elgar Society weekend away. Ever the optimist, I decided it must improve, and it did — beautifully.

Our weekend began at the Cotford Hotel, Great Malvern, where warm hospitality and superb and groaning board were to be enjoyed by all. After dinner we were joined by Jack and Vivienne Mackenzie and Winnie Lambert of the West Midlands Branch and gathered in the lounge for a light diversion — an illustrated talk on Elgar's hobbies and interests.

Saturday was a very full day — a train journey to Worcester; an enthusiastically guided tour of the Commandery as the crown of a *Severn Suite* walk; lunch; and return to Malvern for the Society's AGM. The day concluded with a fine and memorable performance of *The Apostles* at the Winter Gardens. The sunrise scene, the Tower of Magdala, Judas's soliloquy . . . will be difficult to forget.

On Sunday in bright sunshine, sometimes cloaked in fluffy cloud, we joined local members at Birchwood Lodge, returning for a Symposium led by a distinguished panel.

Our day was rounded off by choral evensong at Worcester Cathedral. Elgar's *Great is the Lord* included a most eloquent solo by Tom Hunt. The wreath laying was most movingly conducted, with the choir singing *They are at rest* and Canon Fenwick reading from *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Birthday cake and sherry at the Birthplace in a sunny flower-filled garden completed a most happily spent weekend, the success of which was in large part due to the events planned for us by Carol Holt and our friends from the West Midlands branch.

M.P.

## LETTERS

From: MICHAEL POPE

*May I request the courtesy of your columns to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to members of the Society for the most generous gifts presented to me after the Annual General Meeting on 4th June? They will be a constant reminder, both to my wife and myself, of the many friendships formed during the ten years in which I have had the honour of serving as chairman.*

*The achievements of the Society during the past decade could only have come about through team-work of a high order; and it has been a privilege to be a member of such an outstanding team, and to realise that, through the united efforts of all concerned, real progress has been made in carrying out our aim of promoting a wider interest in Elgar's life and music. With all the principal works now on record, a significant stage has been reached; and the increasing number and range of live performances is one of the most hopeful signs of our times. Yet much remains to be done; challenging and important tasks await us. I shall follow the Society's future with keen interest.*

*To all the Branches, and to members at home and abroad my wife and I send cordial good wishes for the future.*

---

From: RAYMOND MONK

*Recently a friend said to me in the most challenging way, "I'm sure that you won't find any highly critical comments about Elgar in the Society Journal". Well, just to prove him wrong here are just a couple: 'A score of insufferable length, pretentiousness and mediocrity'. That was Olin Downes writing about the Violin Concerto in 1938. And: 'I am sorry. I can't help it; there is something in Elgar that gets on my nerves. I want to flee after a few bars — his descending brass is a weariness to the flesh'. Thus said Busoni (in conversation with Bernard van Dieren). Perhaps fellow Elgarians can provide other examples?*

*Incidentally, van Dieren's reply to Busoni was: 'Elgar's crudities at least come straight from the heart'. Paradoxically, Busoni also said 'After Strauss there is no greater virtuoso with the modern orchestra than Elgar'. As for Olin Downes — well, his comment should perhaps be placed within the context of his virulent opposition to John Barbirolli at the New York Philharmonic.*

From: CARL NEWTON

*On 8th June I attended Prof. Ian Parrott's lecture on 'Elgar's Harmonic Language' at the British Music Information Centre. The experience made me feel like GBS at the notorious performance of "The Apostles" in 1922. I distinctly saw eight other people in the audience, of whom three were members of the Society. Professor Parrott had many interesting things to say and illustrate about the music, notably concerning the composer's continual disregard of harmonic rules (deliberate) and the clashing and disturbed tonality of much of what is superficially regarded as a serene, assured, 'nobilimente' style. He also, as an extra, provided in his best Enigma-solving manner a very convincing case for the theory that the 'Welsh' theme of the "Introduction and Allegro" is simply a snatch of the Welsh National Anthem.*

*For a non-musician such as myself this was, despite occasional excursions into technicalities, an excellent account of a fundamental subject — how Elgar actually wrote music. Presumably the*

members of the Society are much more musically sophisticated than I; or perhaps they have had a surfeit of the great man; or do they simply not care? I understand that Professor Parrott met the cost of this event himself; if so he was as well rewarded as was Elgar for "Salut d'Amour".

---

From: Dr A.J. DEWAR

Recently I was reading "Final Edition" the last volume of E.F. Benson's memoirs which he published shortly before his death in 1940. In view of Elgar's famous collaboration with Benson's brother A.C. Benson on the 'Coronation Ode' I was not surprised to find a reference to Elgar in the index. However, I was intrigued to find that the reference alluded to a collaboration between Elgar and E.F. Benson himself.

Benson describes how he first met Elgar at the house of their mutual friend Lady Maud Warrender, and gives an account of how he once assisted Elgar in a fruitless search for the grave of a remote ancestor in the churchyard at Winchelsea. However, of particular interest to Elgarians is the following passage (which I quote in full):

"He asked me also to write four songs for him on the subject of flying, air raids and travel by air, and these he set for solo voice, chorus and orchestra. They were to have been a turn at the Coliseum, but he had some disagreement about terms with the management, and bundled them into a drawer, refusing to take any further steps about them. It was a pity, for he never wrote anything more characteristic. Search was made for them after his death, but it was as vain as the search for his great-grandfather's tomb at Winchelsea."

This clearly implies that Elgar did set Benson's texts and that Benson heard (or possibly played through himself, since he was a capable amateur pianist) the work in question. In his book Benson is rather vague about dates. However, the context suggests that Elgar's request occurred after 1916 and the choice of air raids as a subject for one of the songs is consistent with this. Could it be that Elgar was considering an aeronautical counterpart to 'The Fringes of the Fleet' composed in 1917 and performed "as a turn" at the Coliseum?

I have been unable to find any account of this collaboration with E. F. Benson in any of the major Elgar biographies, and no song cycle resembling Benson's description figures in the list of unfinished, projected and lost works given by Michael Kennedy in his 'Portrait of Elgar'. Indeed, apart from a brief mention in Percy Young's 'Elgar O.M.' of Benson calling on Elgar at Severn House in 1912 "to submit his 'The Friend in the Garden' to Elgar's literary judgement" references to Elgar's apparently long-standing acquaintanceship with Benson are virtually non-existent. Can any Elgar scholar throw any further light on the relationship, and the fate of their aviation-inspired song cycle?

---

# THE ELGAR SOCIETY

(President: Sir YEHUDI MENUHIN, O.M., K.B.E.)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: £6. Family membership is available if only one Journal is received per family: two members per family £7: three members £8: four members £9. Branch members pay their branch subscription in addition to the basic amount. Applications for membership should be sent to the Hon. Membership Secretary, J.R. Greig, Orchard Barn, Derrington Street, Barham, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 6QB. Renewal of subscriptions, due January 1st, should be made to the Hon. Treasurer, David Morris, 2 Marriotts Close, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP17 8BT. The Hon. Secretary is Carol Holt, 20 Geraldine Road, Malvern, Worcs. WR14 3PA.

## BRANCHES:

- London *David Bury, SECRETARY, Flat 6, 19 Ringstead Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4SE. Tel: 01-661 2120. John Greig, TREASURER, Orchard Barn, Derrington Street, Barham, Canterbury, Kent CT4 6QB. Tel: 0227 831841, to whom combined subscription should be sent.*
- Subscription £5
- West Midlands *Alan Boon, SECRETARY, Old School House, Martley, Worcester. Tel: 088 66 527. Jim Holt, TREASURER, 20 Geraldine Road, Malvern, Worcs, WR14 3PA, to whom combined subscription should be sent.*
- Subscription £1
- East Midlands *Leslie Mustoe, SECRETARY, 18 Coniston Crescent, Loughborough, Leics.*
- North West *G.E. Thomason, SECRETARY, 3 Thornton Drive, Handforth, Cheshire SK9 3DA. Dorothy Lawson, TREASURER, Meadowcroft Farm, Woodhouses, Failsworth, Manchester, to whom combined subscription should be sent.*
- Subscription £4
- East Anglia *Mrs Joan Pearson, SECRETARY, 4 Spinney Road, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich NR7 0PW. Leslie Reason, TREASURER, 10 Kenwyn Close, Kelling Road, Holt, Norfolk NR25 6RS.*
- Subscription £2
- South West *All correspondence to Carol Holt, 20 Geraldine Road, Malvern Worcs, WR14 3PA.*
- Subscription £4
- Yorkshire *Dennis Clark, SECRETARY, 227 Tinshill Road, Leeds, LS16 7BU. Tel: 0532 671533, to whom combined subscription should be sent.*
- Subscription £2
- South Wales *All correspondence to the Branch TREASURER, Ken Wallace, 6 Ridgeway, Newport, Gwent, NP1 5AF.*
- Subscription £3