

The Elgar Society JOURNAL



**SEPTEMBER
1991**

CONTENTS

Page

Editorial	3
<i>Articles</i>	
Lady Hull – a memoir – Part III	4
R.M.S. 'Hildebrand'	6
In the North	10
The Elgar Hall	12
A.G.M. 1991	13
An Agreement: The Elgar Society and Friends of the Birthplace	15
A Salute to R.P.T.	16
Random Ramblings of an Elgarian Editor . . .	18
Reception at Highgrove	21
Concert Diary	22
Music Review	24
Book Review	26
Audio Tape Review	27
Record Reviews	28
Branch Reports	34
Letters	37
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

The Elgar Society Journal

115 MONKHAMS AVENUE, WOODFORD GREEN, ESSEX IG8 OER
081-506 0912

EDITORIAL

Vol. 7, No. 3
September 1991

When I joined the Elgar Society over twenty years ago there existed among many of its members what I can only describe as a pioneer spirit. Elgar's reputation was still at a fairly low ebb, despite a few encouraging signs. I can remember the excitement of hearing performances of rare works for the first time – *King Olaf* and *Caractacus* are two that spring to mind – and it is thrilling and gratifying to look back now and see what has been achieved, including the significant contribution made by the Society and its members (and dare I say it, the *Journal*).

Obviously it is impossible for anyone joining the Society now to experience that same atmosphere of expectancy. I know that there are Elgar-lovers who have given up membership of the Society because they believe it has largely fulfilled its purpose of bringing Elgar's music before a wider audience. All the major works are now recorded, and some which had been neglected for years are enjoying a new popularity. So does the Society still have a function to proclaim and advance the Elgar cause? Three things happened recently which left me in no doubt.

First, I conducted a performance of *The Light of Life*. A common reaction of 'musical' people afterwards was "Of course I'd never heard the work before, but isn't it marvellous?"

Then I turned on the radio to hear Richard Baker interviewing two great ambassadors of English music, Vernon Handley and Bryden Thomson. Handley confirmed that it was still considered second-class to do English music in a concert. "We are bad exporters of our own genius", he said. As if to underline this Thomson said that last year he had given the first performance ever of *Belshazzar's Feast* in Norway.

Finally, the BBC's Controller of Music was interviewed in *The Sunday Times* about the forthcoming season of Promenade concerts. He was asked if he had any musical blind spots. "Gilbert and Sullivan", he replied, "and British music of the early 20th century".

Eloquent tribute has been paid elsewhere to Ronald Taylor and his tremendous achievements with the *Journal*; and as I face the daunting task of following him as Editor, I would ask for your help. Please support concerts of Elgar - and other British music - if you can. Keep me informed (well in advance please!) of Elgar concerts. Tell your local choral society of the wonderful facility of the Elgar Loan Collection. If you know any brass players, why not buy them a copy of *Une Idylle* (see Music Review section)? In hundreds of little ways like this we can all contribute to promoting "a wider interest in Elgar's life and music"

GEOFFREY HODGKINS

LADY HULL: A MEMOIR OF ELGAR

Part III

Edited by Jacob O'Callaghan

The 1933 Festival was a memorable one. At one rehearsal I met Mrs Richard Powell, "Dorabella" of the *Enigma* Variations. It was difficult to adjust one's preconceived idea of the young girl with the infectious laugh and little stammer to the elderly lady who struck me as having very definite opinions and seemed a trifle dictatorial, but I could recognise the bright, alert smile and also the slight stammer.

Of the three "Variations" I met (one being GRS of course) "Troyte" was the greatest surprise. He came to tea with us soon after we were married and I expected the door to be thrown open and an irrepressible, "rumbustious" character to rush in. Instead of which a very tall, slightly stooping figure arrived in a rather shabby mackintosh and enormous boots and sat on the edge of his chair, so shy that he hardly spoke a word! I was glad to find out later that Mrs Powell, who knew him well, says in her book *Memories of a Variation*:

I never fully understood the Troyte Variation... my recollection of Troyte in the early days was that he used to sit and grin with amusement, but say hardly anything.¹

But he seems to have been an argumentative person which might be a slight clue to his Variation. I would like to think of him and Elgar walking on the hills in a gale of wind – but that is sheer supposition.

Although he became such an important person in our lives I cannot remember when I first met R. Vaughan Williams. His *Pastoral Symphony* was played in 1927, as was also *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* (a Pastoral Episode from *Pilgrim's Progress*) which was repeated at the 1933 Festival, and his beautiful work *Sancta Civitas* in 1930, all of which he conducted himself, so I must have known him well during those years. He was soon to become Uncle Ralph to me as to all his "Nymphs" – his name for his many girl friends. It did one good just to be near him and be given one of his affectionate bear-like hugs! He was the only other man I was ever to meet, excepting Elgar, whose mere presence in a room spoke of his greatness. There could never have been two men more diametrically opposed in temperament or whose music had so little in common. Yet both drew inspiration from the same source – a deeply rooted love of the English countryside. It was probably in the early '20s and I think at a Worcester Festival that we came upon Billy and Uncle Ralph light heartedly playing Raff's *Cavatina*, with Uncle Ralph playing the fiddle to Billy's piano accompaniment! (From memory needless to say).

At that time folk dancing was very popular. Classes were held all over the county and as well as playing for many of them I got together a small orchestra to play at the Annual County Folk Dance Festival. This was held in the garden of some stately home or other and was a very friendly affair. We were always incredibly lucky with the weather for, though it was sometimes so windy we had to anchor our music to the stands with clothes pegs, it was never wet. Most of the dances and folk songs are hundreds of years old and a part of our national heritage, and it was largely due to a Herefordshire lady – Mrs Leather of Weobley who with Vaughan Williams's and Cecil Sharp's help and co-operation saved many from extinction, for up till then they had never been written down but passed on from one generation to the next by ear. When I think of the simple beauty of these songs and dances and compare them with the shoddy, worthless "pop" music that

the present-day young seem to think a necessity of life I am sick of heart. But even as I write I hear there are signs of a revival in folk dancing.

Mrs E. M. Leather was a folklorist with whose help V-W was collecting traditional songs such as *The Truth sent from Above* (his work bore early fruit in his *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* for the 1912 Hereford Festival) in the early years of the century, much as Bartok was doing in Transylvania. Yet it seems that Elgar remained largely uninterested in such proximate activity – perhaps because of his cool relations with South Kensington. V-W and Mrs Leather collaborated for *Twelve Traditional Carols from Herefordshire* (1920). Folk music and dancing had a strong renaissance in the sixties and the annual Bromyard Folk Festival has become an established item on the national musical calendar.

Another composer whose music is full of the beauty of the country, and the Cotswolds where he lived, was Gerald Finzi. He, his wife, Joy, a most gifted artist, and their two small boys became regular Festival goers, generally staying with John and Alice Sumson for the Hereford Festivals. I remember him most clearly as such a *happy* person and this I think is reflected in his music. His deeply moving and most beautiful work *Dies Natalis* exemplifies this, as do both his *Intimations of Immortality* and the clarinet Concerto which he wrote for the 1949 Hereford Festival for PC. His early death was a tragedy, but his influence on English music will remain, and though at the time of writing I feel his work is much neglected, I am sure, like all great art, it will find its true place with the immortals.

There is a note in my husband's writing in the 1933 Festival programme for *The Kingdom* on the Thursday morning – "this was his last public performance as Conductor". Elgar became ill in the Autumn and after much suffering died on February 23rd 1934. But during the Festival he seemed in splendid form, and was photographed outside the cathedral in all the glory of his regalia as "Master of the King's Musick", with my husband in his D.Mus. robes.

We always gave a little party after the evening performances and I plucked up my courage and asked him if he would come and let us see him in his "Glad Rags". He pooh-poohed the idea – "No, no, certainly not" – so I said nothing to our friends, but, after dinner, when everyone had arrived, the door was flung open and he made his entrance – a truly magnificent figure in all the splendour of his Court Dress and obviously delighted with the impression he made, his eyes twinkling and blinking as they always did when he was pleased – just like a small boy at a fancy dress party!

It is thus that I like to remember him. By far the greatest man I ever knew – great as a man as well as a musician, who found time to bestow his friendship on people such as me, and many like me. Our only claim on him was our complete devotion to his music and our wholehearted affection for him, which perhaps in his last years as a very lonely man touched him more deeply than we knew.

Percy Hull, after a distinguished career, retired in 1949, dying in 1968. Molly Hull died on the 7th November, 1989, aged 92. Many Society members will well remember her and she was a familiar presence at local concerts until shortly before her death, and a kindly and alert source of information and encouragement to researchers. She followed her husband in emphasising the significance of Herefordshire and its people and places in the life and music of their friend; and she took part in efforts to

preserve Plas Gwyn and her old home at 20 Church Street (the latter is now sadly bereft of the "Apostles Room" described earlier in this Memoir). The beautiful gardens and Dan's grave remain; she described to me where the latter's headstone originally stood. It was also her wish that her important collection of letters from Elgar, many still unpublished, and signed photographs and scores, be made locally available for scholars and visitors and this has already been arranged, as regards the letters, at the County Record Office, Harold Street (an article based on these by the present writer can be found in this year's Hereford Festival programme).

Her funeral service took place on a cold winter's morning in a little church near her home high up on the wooded slopes of Aconbury Hill, south of Hereford. The music she requested, movingly played by "P.C.'s successor, Roy Massey, was part of Peter Warlock's *Capriol Suite* and the Prelude from Part II of *Gerontius*.

© The Estate of Lady Hull, and Jacob O'Callaghan

References

- (1) Powell, Mrs Richard, *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation*, London 1937.

R.M.S. 'HILDEBRAND'

by
John B. Knighton

It is well known to Elgarians that at the end of 1923 Sir Edward took a long holiday of six weeks by boat up the River Amazon and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Nevertheless, little detail is given of this voyage in any of the major biographies and it has been left to James Hamilton-Paterson in his award-winning novel 'Gerontius' to supply a number of important facts in addition to his imagined chronicle of events, so skillfully handled.

Little has been written about the vessel concerned, the Booth Line's R.M.S. 'Hildebrand', weight 6,991 tons gross, 12,000 tons displacement. This vessel was built in 1911, the year of Elgar's *Second Symphony*, and entered the service of the Liverpool-based company. She presumably undertook a programme of cruises, but between 20th November 1914 and 15th July 1919 was taken over by the Admiralty and served, with numerous other vessels, as an armed merchant cruiser. She was armed with eight 4.7 inch guns (later replaced by eight six inch guns) and two six-pounder guns; her commanding officer initially was Captain H. Edwards, R.N.



*Above: the Dining Saloon on the 'Hildebrand'.
Overleaf: One of the Staterooms*



H.M.S. 'Hildebrand' (with two other Booth Line vessels, the 'Hilary' and the 'Ambrose') formed part of the Cruiser Force 'B', 10th Cruiser Squadron (Grand Fleet) under the command of Rear-Admiral Dudley de Chair, who was succeeded in 1916 by Vice-Admiral Sir Reginald Tupper. These vessels were employed on the Northern Patrol which covered an area bounded by Iceland, St. Kilda and Norway. Their duties included the interception of all merchant shipping and the escort of neutral shipping to British ports for inspection and search, plus unmasking and attacking any German raider, so enforcing as tight a blockade on Germany as possible. This squadron was frequently commended by both the Commander-in-Chief and the Admiralty for its valuable services.

In late 1916 some of the ships were detached to act as ocean escorts for convoys and after the entry of the U.S.A. into the war in April 1917 they were almost all employed on that duty. It is at this point that I must declare a personal interest. My father joined the R.N.V.R. as a signalman in September 1917 (after declaring himself to be a year older than he actually was!) and was later posted to convoy duty on several vessels, one of which was H.M.S. 'Hildebrand'.

The practice at the time was for the merchant cruiser to either escort an outgoing convoy from Britain or sail alone while carrying a number of signalmen. These signalmen would then be allocated on the basis of one per convoy merchant ship at the overseas port of departure and their task would be to transmit all orders or messages by semaphore or signalling lamp, so as to maintain radio silence. In late 1917 and 1918 my father visited West Africa twice (to Dakar and Freetown) on such duties, one voyage on H.M.S. 'Hildebrand' and the other on the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's vessel (then also a merchant cruiser), H.M.S. 'Ebro' - though the precise details of voyages are not available to me (though the logs are available for inspection at the Public Record Office in Kew).

The end of the war brought about the return of the 'Hildebrand' to its owners and the demobilisation of my father (both in 1919). After necessary refurbishment, the 'Hildebrand' presumably returned to her former duties as a cruise liner. Although only small, she offered a considerable degree of comfort. I have in my possession a brochure produced by the Booth Line entitled "A unique cruise 1,000 miles up the Amazon" in the mid-1920's which my father obtained for obvious reasons of interest. The photographs show a large dining saloon, lavishly though tastefully decorated and comfortably furnished, while the staterooms show a considerable degree of comfort. The vessel carried an orchestra, a doctor, a library, a barber's shop and full radio facilities. The complete round voyage was almost 12,000 miles, 2,000 of which were on the Amazon itself.

The career of the 'Hildebrand' was unfortunately short, for in 1934 (after only 23 years) it was sold for the sum of £11,000 to a Monmouthshire man and on the very day of Elgar's death was being broken up for scrap.

IN THE NORTH (HADDO HOUSE)

Elgarians in Scotland May 1991

By Peter Greaves

As my wife and I motored north on the 400 mile journey to Haddo House, Aberdeen, for the May Music Festival, the question inevitably arose: how far should we be prepared to travel to hear good music? Historical precedent soon came to our aid. Did not Edward Elgar himself consider music well worth the journey? There were the Saturday excursions from Worcester to the Crystal Palace Concerts, leaving by train at 7 o'clock in the morning and returning at 10.30 p.m. and, of course, the Wagnerian visits to Bayreuth and Munich, incidental to the holidays spent mainly in Bavaria in the 1890s.

For seven members of the London Branch, the purpose of the visit was to attend performances of *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* on consecutive days, 18th and 19th May by the Haddo House Choral and Operatic Society, conducted by June Gordon (The Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair C.B.E.) Lady Aberdeen is a musician by profession, having studied as a pianist at the Royal College of Music: and soon after her husband, Major David Gordon, took over the Haddo Estate in 1946, they gathered together a group of local people to sing carols in 'The Hall', a large, wooden building modelled on Canadian lines, which had been erected by the first Marquess and Marchioness of Aberdeen as a community centre in the 1890s.

From these modest beginnings in the Community Hall, which turned out to be acoustically perfect, the Haddo House Choral Society has developed over the last 45 years and now occupies a major position in the musical life of Scotland. After Lord Aberdeen's death in 1974, his wife has carried on the great musical tradition which is remembered with great affection by the people of Aberdeenshire and the singers and musicians who have performed at Haddo (among them Janet Baker, Peter Pears, Heather Harper, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten and Michael Tippett).

Performances of Elgar have featured prominently: *The Dream of Gerontius* was given in 1954, 1957, 1965 (H.R.H. the Prince of Wales made his first appearance in this performance). 1971, 1982 and 1989, *The Kingdom* in 1973, *The Music Makers* in 1984, *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*, on successive days "as the composer wished", have been performed three times in 1975, 1978 and now in 1991, surely a unique record.¹

Writing in 'The Times' about the 1978 performances of *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*, Dr. Jerrold Northrop Moore drew attention to Lady Aberdeen's great love of the music of Elgar which led her to take the scores of *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* to Sir Adrian Boult for interpretation. The result was "a compelling performance . . . Lady Aberdeen is also the controlling musical genius of her performances. In the case of Elgar's music . . . she was the first musician of her generation to grasp the importance of performing *The Apostles* and *the Kingdom* together."²

And so it was 13 years later in 1991. Both performances were chorally superb. In *The Apostles* especially, the bold finale describing the Ascension was excitingly dramatic and gloriously broadened to the *nobilmente* climax at the words "the power of God". The Beatitudes from the "By the Wayside" sequence were movingly sung by Henry Herford who gave a devotional performance as Jesus.

Although Jean Rigby can hardly be anyone's idea of a "desolate woman", her performance as Mary Magdalene in the Tower of Magdala sequence beautifully presented the darker hues of the contralto voice, and brought what is usually considered a weaker part of the oratorio dramatically alive.

In Part II the fine bass voice of Michael Pearce singing the part of Judas dominated. It was a moving and well-rounded characterisation of a man whose only crime and sin, according to Elgar, was despair. The other soloists were Patricia MacMahon (soprano). David Stephenson (bass) and Anthony Roden (tenor) – all excellent choices for their respective roles.

The following day's performance of *The Kingdom* clearly demonstrated how supremely it depends on the pivotal role of St. Peter. At Haddo, Michael Pearce excelled once again. His singing of the noble solo including the unforgettable passage, "Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams" was intolerably moving. This was well-complemented by Anthony Roden's singing of the part of St. John, and the other soloists Jean Rigby, and Patricia MacMahon, who sang the long and beautiful soliloquy "The Sun goeth down" radiantly.

Two unforgettable performances then, made the long journey well worthwhile, but there were other memories to treasure. Before leaving for Scotland, we had all received invitations to lunch in the library before both performances. We had the great pleasure of meeting not only Lady Aberdeen but also Sir Keith Falkner who sang frequently at the Three Choirs Festivals in the 1920s and 30s. Sir Keith, now a lively 91 years, met Elgar on several occasions, and still had many vivid memories to recall.

Before leaving Haddo to make our various expeditions across Scotland, we agreed to meet again, two days later at the Gairloch Hotel, Ross-shire where Elgar spent a summer holiday in 1914, after having made a nerve-shattering 30 mile journey with Alice and Carice along the precipitous Loch Maree road in a taxi driven by a slightly drunken driver. However, when they arrived, Alice thought it a most wonderfully beautiful place as indeed we did.

That evening members of London Branch assembled at the hotel for dinner. Naturally the toast was "Sir Edward – grateful thanks for making the long journey worthwhile."

NOTES

- 1 Eric Linklater "The Music of the North" (1978) p. 19-22.
- 2 Op. cit p. 24.
- 3 I am indebted to Mrs. M. B. Longley, Choral Secretary of the Haddo House Society, for assistance in the preparation of this article.

“THE ELGAR HALL”

Inaugural Concert by The Rutland Sinfonia Elgar's First World War Music Comes to Malvern

by K. E. L. Simmons

Under John Curtin, the new General Manager, things are happening at the Winter Gardens complex in Malvern. As well as the Shaw Studio and Spa Suite, Sunday 14 April 1991 saw the launch there of the Elgar Hall – the new name for the old hall of the Assembly Rooms which Elgar knew and where he himself once conducted a concert. The present event was marked by an all-Elgar programme performed by the Rutland Sinfonia under its conductor Barry Collett before a large and appreciative audience, the main items being the five works composed by Elgar during the Great War which the same enterprising maestro and orchestra had recorded, with most of the same soloists for the Pearl label in 1987.

The first half of the Malvern concert began with the *Imperial March*. Next came the two songs *Pleading* and *The Wind at Dawn* in their rarely heard orchestral versions sung, in ravishing voice, by Teresa Cahill. *Carillon*, the first of the three pieces for narrator and orchestra, followed with Richard Pasco declaiming the words with authority and utter conviction, re-creating the spirit in which this and its companion works were originally conceived and performed (the only way to do them). The first part of the concert ended with the *Fringes of the Fleet* sung by the four baritones Steven Holloway, Stephen Godward, Simon Theobald and Malcolm Rae. These rousing and, let it not be forgotten, at times disturbing songs with orchestra brought the house down so that the obligatory encore – the unaccompanied unison song *Inside the Bar*, delivered by the singers with great feeling and intensity – seemed even more appropriate than usual. The second half of the concert opened with the rarely heard *Empire March*. Then came the two other works with narrator: *Le Drapeau Belge*, and *Une Voix dans le Desert* – in which Teresa Cahill joined Richard Pasco to sing the affecting song “When the spring comes round again”. The concert ended with the symphonic prelude *Polonia* which is now something of a speciality of this conductor and orchestra.

The utter enthusiasm and dedication of the conductor and performers – including every member of the orchestra – made the concert particularly memorable and enjoyable, this being reflected not only by the favourable reaction of the audience but by an invitation from Mr Curtin to “come again next year”. One well-known local Elgarian I met during the interval and again at the end declared it “The best Elgar concert I have heard in a very long time!”. But, of course, it was Elgar the old wizard himself who emerged best from the event, re-inforcing the claim that he never composed a dud work and confounding those who turn up their noses at his war music and other such lesser works as somehow being unworthy of him. One last thought: Teresa Cahill is a fine Elgar singer, we all know, but why do we have so little Elgar from her on record? It is good news therefore that she and Barry Collett have recently made a first recording of some little known Elgar songs. More please.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1991

The 41st Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, on Sunday, 2nd June at 2.15 p.m. Some 65 members attended. The Chairman conveyed good wishes from the President, Sir Yehudi Menuhin. He referred to progress in the relationship with the Elgar Foundation and announced that Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore and Leonard Slatkin would be the first recipients of the Elgar Medal. Arrangements for a suitable presentation would be announced in due course. He expressed thanks to Mr and Mrs Hessel for tending the Elgar grave.

The Secretary reviewed the work of the Committee over the year. Arrangements were in hand for the production of a Society Christmas Card. The Membership Secretary announced a total membership of 1,148 at 31st May 1991 which included 147 new members.

The Treasurer referred to proposals for change in the organisation of Society finance. Further consideration would result in a proposal for next year's A.G.M.

The Journal Editor referred to the increased size of recent issues. Problems of delivery dates and printing errors persisted. The International Sub-Committee Chairman reported limited time had been given to chairing the Committee.

The President and Vice-Presidents were re-elected by acclaim. Christopher Robinson was elected as Chairman for one year only as his new appointment in Cambridge would prevent him



Society Vice-Chairman Andrew Neill at the birthday celebration at the Birthplace. Mrs Diana Quinney, Director of the Birthplace Development Appeal, looks on.



Editors, old and new, at the AGM in June. The Secretary looks apprehensive about the change.

continuing in office. The Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary were all re-elected unanimously and Geoffrey Hodgkins was elected as Journal Editor to succeed Ronald Taylor who was to retire. Four current members, Simon Holt, David Hughes, John Knighton and Raymond Monk, were elected to serve for a further year and after a ballot Dennis Clark and David Hawkins were elected Committee Members.

Andrew Neill introduced a document outlining proposed terms of a merger of the Society and Friends of the Birthplace (see below). It was carried with one vote against. Diana Quinney presented a report on the progress of the Appeal. After lengthy discussion definitive building plans were almost ready for publication. Two Events Committees had been established and several events had been organised.

A presentation of a CD player and discs was made to Ronald Taylor and the Chairman paid tribute to his work over a period of fifteen years. All agreed enthusiastically that he be made an Honorary Member. The next A.G.M. was fixed for Saturday, 30th May, 1992 at Lawnside School, Malvern.

At noon on 2nd June, members heard a fascinating, scholarly and thought-provoking talk "A Man's Attitude to Life" given by Diana McVeagh.

The Elgar Society Evensong was shared this year with Friends of Worcester Cathedral and ended with the customary laying of a wreath by the Chairman at the Elgar Memorial. Members then enjoyed sherry and birthday cake at the Elgar Birthplace during which Sam Driver White launched a booklet entitled "Elgar's Birthplace at Broadheath" written by Mike Grundy and illustrated by Paintings by David Birtwhistle. These were on display and for sale in the Birthplace and the artist autographed booklets.

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

THE FRIENDS OF THE BIRTHPLACE

An Agreement with the Elgar Foundation

Following the work undertaken by the members of the joint committee of The Elgar Society and The Elgar Foundation, an agreement between the two organisations was ratified at the recent AGM of the society and a subsequent meeting of The Trustees. This agreement could have far reaching benefits for the Birthplace and to the members of the Elgar Society.

Many members of the Society will be aware of the organisation; The Friends of the Birthplace. It has proved difficult to maintain contact with The Friends and provide them with regular news of the Birthplace, which will become more important as the development appeal moves forward and work on the Elgar Centre commences. Discussions therefore took place to see if ways existed in which The Society might provide assistance to The Friends in return for some tangible benefit to members. As a result, it has been agreed to merge the two bodies on the following terms with effect from the 1st of January 1992.

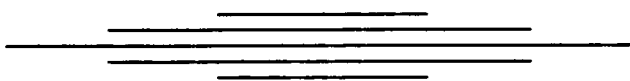
- (1) Prior to the end of the year, letters will be sent to all Friends of The Birthplace inviting them to accept membership of the Elgar Society on the terms outlined below. Those Friends not wishing to accept the terms would continue to give support to The Birthplace in the way they covenanted to do.
- (2) Friends joining The Society would be given two years free membership from the 1st January 1992.
- (3) Provided the majority of Friends elect to become members of the Society then the Society will pay to The Birthplace a sum equivalent to ten per cent of its total annual subscription (not including any amounts paid to branches). The Society retains the right to adjust this amount if there is a less than satisfactory response from the Friends to the offer of membership.
- (4) Friends will commence receiving copies of The Society Journal with the January 1992 issue.
- (5) Members of The Society, on production of a membership card which will be issued to all members annually on renewal of their subscriptions, will be entitled to free access to The Birthplace.
- (6) The Society will work closely with The Birthplace to encourage an increase in membership and a wider contribution by members to the funds of the birthplace.
- (7) The Editor of The Journal will set aside one page per issue for the publication of Birthplace news. At his discretion this space can be increased, from time to time, as developments at The Birthplace and Elgar Centre become of increasing interest.

- (8) This scheme would be reviewed in two years (i.e. at the AGM in 1993 and by the Trustees at a similar time).

It is to be hoped that these arrangements will enable members of The Elgar Society to become more closely associated with The Birthplace which is so often at the centre of our thoughts and activities. The ability to review the effectiveness and equity of the arrangements after two years gives both organisations the opportunity to propose amendments or abandonment of the scheme before any lasting difficulties become enshrined in our activities.

There are over 300 Friends of the Birthplace of which 125 are life Friends and 60 are members of The Elgar Society

July 1991



A SALUTE TO R.P.T.

Ronald Taylor's stewardship as Editor of the *Elgar Society Newsletter*, as it was then called, began in 1976 and was completed at the 1991 A.G.M. In 1976, even though the Society still had fewer than 700 members, it was growing rapidly. The previous Editor, Wulstan Atkins, had already acknowledged the importance of the function which the *Newsletter* would have to play as an essential link between members - there were still only three Branches at that time - a function which combined the recording of news items about personalia and activities with the publishing of signed articles about Elgar's life and music. Ronald Taylor's appointment as 'Editor-in-chief' resulted from the realisation by the Central Committee that the duties of Editor had become too time-consuming to be combined with the Secretaryship. Indeed, the original plan was for there to be a small editorial sub-committee. This plan soon proved effectively unnecessary, such was the confidence and clear-sightedness which the new Editor-in-chief brought to his work, though for some years occasional meetings of the sub-committee took place.

The first important decision the new Editor made was to change the format of the *Newsletter* from duplicated quarto sheets stapled together to a slightly smaller but neater 32-page booklet style. The reaction of members when the January 1977 issue with the now familiar portrait of Elgar on the cover duly appeared in its new format was very favourable. Later issues were to include photographs, illustrations, music examples, colour covers and typesetting by computer. The change of title to *Elgar Society Journal* for the January 1979 and later issues was fully justified both by the improved format and by the increased content of specialist articles.

Ronald Taylor's work as Editor was characterised by constant attention to the maintenance of standards, a balanced sense of perspective, the absence of pretension and the cultivation of a direct style of presentation. There was always a good mix of content, and his concern to publish the reminiscences of the dwindling number of those who had known Elgar and also to reprint articles first published many years ago proved most fruitful. His friendly guidance to contributors and his knack of getting the appropriate persons to review records or books became well-known, his own occasional book reviews being invariably clear and informative. His editorials were always to the point and up to date, this being quite an achievement when deadlines for printing usually entailed going to press well over a month before publication.

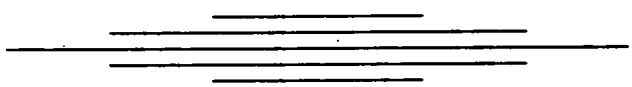
In the fifteen years there were countless production problems, but rarely were members aware of them; the flow of well-filled issues was constant. Only once was there a real policy difficulty, this being when the growth in the number of branches threatened the swamping of the available pages with Branch Reports, traditionally printed in the form received. Quite logically, the Editor claimed the right to edit such Reports but some Branches opposed the idea. The General Committee backed the Editor and the new system, endorsed at the 1981 A.G.M., was soon accepted.

When the Society's constitution was reconsidered in 1979/80 it was quite clearly appropriate to make the Editor of the *Journal* one of the Officers of the Society. Bringing his intimate knowledge of current activities, events and opinions to the General Committee and Executive subcommittee, Ronald Taylor could always be relied upon to be positive and constructive.

The *Journal*, under his guidance, has become, and has consistently remained, the valuable and respected organ of a vigorous Society. It has been praised by the professional experts as essential and invaluable reading for Elgarians. The legacy to his successor, Geoffrey Hodgkins, is notable and inspirational, particularly in that the *Journal* has never become hackneyed, diehard or set in its ways; each issue has had a freshness and variety of its own. Perhaps this has been the secret ingredient, reflecting the Editor's own dedicated enthusiasm, which has led members over such a long period to look forward so much to receiving the next copy of the *Journal*.

His many friends acknowledge all the effort that has gone into the 44 issues he has given us; we salute him and wish his successor well.

T.F.J.



Random Ramblings of an Elgarian Editor

How do you pronounce 'Elgar'? A few months ago the *Church Times* raised the question. Is it two stressed syllables, like 'bell-jar', or a short final syllable, like 'Edgar'? The case for the latter is that similar words, eg vulgar, similar, Oscar, Poplar, are accented thus. Apparently Graham Pointon, the BBC's pronunciation adviser, has consulted radio recordings of the Thirties and Forties, with inconclusive results: speakers who knew Elgar were divided between the long and short endings. Needless to say, I rushed to the Society's own record which contains an interview with Carice, but she doesn't say the word at all! Sir Adrian Boult, who interviewed her, is very definitely in the 'bell-jar' camp. Can any members offer further enlightenment?

* * * * *

Although Elgar sometimes found travelling tiring and tiresome (Alice's diaries often make mention of this) he loved going to new places, as Rosa Burley noted when he joined her for a holiday at Llangranog in South Wales in August 1901: "There was nothing he enjoyed more than making a complicated journey . . . the thing he loved best was Bradshaw's Railway Guide. This journey to Llangranog was after his own heart". Many Elgar-lovers are also railway enthusiasts (*vide* letters section) and they and others may be interested to know that a short section of the Carmarthen to Newcastle Emlyn branch line has been re-opened. A mile and a half of narrow gauge track has been laid west of Henllan, the station to which Elgar travelled. Trains run on the hour from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. during the summer months, and there are the usual tourist facilities. Further information can be obtained from The Teifi Valley Railway, Henllan Station Yard, Nr. Newcastle Emlyn, Dyfed.

* * * * *

The author of a recent *Daily Telegraph* article on Harrison Birtwistle, referring to his latest composition, writes: "The Elgar Society won't like it". I'm not sure what contact if any this person has had with the Society, but it's rather sad that we should be so pilloried as a bastion of reaction. Does he have any information to suggest that The Delius Society, The Wagner Society, or the Friends of Sviatoslav Richter would be any more sympathetic? Or is he still assuming the misguided and out-dated Pomp & Circumstance view of Elgar which the Society and its members have fought to rectify for so long?

* * * * *

On April 27 Jerrold Northrop Moore compared recordings of the *Cello Concerto* in 'Building a Library' on Radio 3's *Record Review*. He was in good form, very provocative and stimulating, and making a plea for authenticity in performance by use of gut strings which produce a darker sound more appropriate to the mood of the concerto. No punches were pulled in his remarks about some highly-revered accounts - Casals, Ma, the later du Pre - and some performances were not improved by technical changes in re-mastering, eg Fournier. His choice? Beatrice Harrison and Elgar, in its CD format (coupled with the Menuhin *Violin Concerto*). Of modern versions JNM chose Lloyd Webber/Menuhin, closely followed by Tortelier/Groves, and Isserlis/Hickox (this last the only modern recording where the soloist uses gut strings). A quick look at back numbers of the Journal showed considerable differences of opinion with our own GHL; but then variety is the spice of life, and we are fortunate to have so many excellent versions to choose from.

I caught Channel Four's film of Nigel Kennedy playing the Brahms *Concerto* the other day, and found myself feeling profoundly grateful that he had recorded the Elgar before allowing himself to be overtaken by all the hype of his publicity machine. Having said that, I am not particularly bothered by the performer's dress as long as the music itself is not tampered with, but there are those (and they seem to be increasing in number) who believe that Kennedy's playing is not what it was, and that must be worrying. Another, potentially greater, cause for concern in the campaign to bring music to a wider audience is the reduction in the provision of musical education in state schools: local authorities see arts subjects, especially music with its need for expensive instruments, as a soft target when cutting budgets. Confining music to the children of parents who can afford to pay is a serious matter, compared to which Nigel Kennedy's wardrobe seems trivial indeed.

* * * * *

Members may have seen references in the national press to the furore surrounding the ownership and future location of Elgar's diaries. Comment must be limited as the matter is at present *sub judice*, but perhaps two observations may be made. First, it is good to know that the local council now see themselves as the guardians of Elgarian heritage, and it is sad that their predecessors did not adopt a similar policy when they allowed Marl Bank to be destroyed in 1969. Second, the statement by the council that "it would give rise to legitimate concern if the collection was now to be transferred to a less secure home" will raise a few eyebrows among members who have used the Record Office at St. Helen's. Security is a good deal tighter now – although nothing compared to the British Library, for example – but I well remember my first visit to consult the diaries, about twelve years ago. When I completed my research about 12.30 pm the office was deserted: I could have easily walked out with the entire collection. Instead I sought out an assistant who was eating a sandwich behind a bookshelf and suggested that it might be unwise to leave such valuable items lying around. Let us hope that the outcome will indeed be "a secure home" for the diaries and other memorabilia.

* * * * *

Two apologies are due to Dr. George Guest, the retiring Master of Music at St. John's College, Cambridge. In the May Journal we not only gave him a false Christian name, but also implied that he had given Elgar less than his due at St. John's over the years. Professor Ian Parrott has drawn our attention to these errors, which we humbly acknowledge, and we wish Dr. Guest a happy retirement.

* * * * *

David Bury has kindly pointed out that a book mentioned in the last Journal, *Victorian Music Publishers* by John A. Parkinson may be obtained (shortly, we understand) from the author at 130 Farley Road, Selsdon, South Croydon, CR2 7NF. The price is "expected to be about £30".

* * * * *

A Christmas card will be on sale this year to mark the merger of the Elgar Society with the Friends of the Birthplace. It is a colour photograph of the Birthplace, with the words "With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year" printed inside. Packets of three, including envelopes, may be purchased at the Birthplace for £1.50 or from the Secretary (Mrs. Carol Holt, address on the back cover) at £1.75 (to cover postage and packing).

Bridget Duckenfield has produced a pack of three cards showing Elgar houses (Plas Gwyn, Brinkwells, and Severn House) taken from her own original watercolours. Each pack is £1.50 and may be obtained from her at 94 Station Avenue, West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 9UG.

* * * * *

The production of *The Dream of Gerontius* as the opening concert of this year's Proms prompted two significant articles in the national press the previous weekend. In *The Times* Richard Morrison's stimulating article was given the unwieldy title 'Tunes for a land of bold hope and shabby glory'. He linked Elgar with Newman, Kipling, and General Gordon. The following day in *The Sunday Telegraph* under the title 'I always said God was against art' James Hamilton-Paterson wrote on the background to *Gerontius*, and Elgar's motives for writing it. Though one might challenge some of his assumptions, here again was a thought-provoking article. But **why** accompany it with a photograph from Elgar's later years, complete with bowler hat, white gloves, and sherry glass?

* * * * *

The proximity of the Birthplace to Birmingham and the brand new Symphony Hall has led to visits from players belonging to the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, and from the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Also paying their respects have been young people from the chamber group of the Frederic Chopin Academy of Music at Marienbad in Czechoslovakia. It's good to know that these international links are being made.

* * * * *

More detailed information is now available about the contents of Barry Collett's recording of the outstanding choral and vocal items. The list is as follows: Choral: *Salve Regina*; *Four Litanies of the Blessed Virgin Mary*; *Grete Malverne on a Rock*; *Follow the Colours*; *The Birthright*; *The Brook*; *The Merry-go-round*; *The Windlass Song*; *Fight for Right*; *Big Steamers*; *Sailing Westward*; *Immortal Legions*; *Queen Alexandra's Memorial Ode*.

Vocal: *The Language of Flowers*; *The Wind at Dawn*; *The little eyes that never knew light*; *Dry those fair those crystal eyes*; *Always and Everywhere*; *Speak my heart*; *A child asleep*; *The King's Way*; *In Moonlight*; *It Isnae Me*; *A War Song*; *Chariots of the Lord*.

The performers are the Tudor Choir under Barry Collett; Teresa Cahill, and Stephen Holloway.

A second release comprises a violin and piano recital, and will include the complete *Etudes Caracteristiques* (Op.24) plus Szigeti's arrangement of *Adieu* and *Serenade*, among other items.

No details of the release of these recordings are yet available, but I trust your appetites are whetted.

* * * * *

An announcement of particular interest to our members in the Midlands is the concert on Wednesday 18th December at the new Symphony Hall in Birmingham, when Andrew Davis will conduct the the BBC Symphony Orchestra , the BBC Singers, the BBC Symphony Chorus and the Worcester Festival Chorus in a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*. The soloists will be Florence Quivar, Keith Lewis, and Willard White, and this will be the orchestra's first visit to the new hall. The concert is in aid of the Elgar Birthplace Appeal, so this is an extra incentive (if any were needed) for members to support it. Tickets will be available from the Symphony Hall Box Office (021-212 3333).

It is hoped to include an up-to-date report on latest developments in the Birthplace Appeal in the next Journal. Meanwhile, members can make a note of 29th April next year when there will be a Gala Concert in Worcester Cathedral (an all-Elgar programme) not only in aid of the Appeal but to celebrate the completion of the restoration work on the Cathedral. More details in the January Journal.

Reception at Highgrove

H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, Patron of the Elgar Foundation, gave a Reception at Highgrove on Monday, June 10th on behalf of the Elgar Birthplace Development Appeal. Among those present were Mr. E. Wulstan Atkins, Mr. Christopher Harmer, and Mr. Raymond Monk (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Senior Trustee, the Elgar Foundation). Mr. Roy Roberts, CBE, Chairman of the Appeal Committee, and Mrs. Diana Quinney, Appeal Director, were also present. Prince Charles provided warm and generous hospitality and showed his guests many aspects of his delightful Gloucestershire home and later gave them a conducted tour of his beautiful garden. All agreed that it had been a most wonderful and memorable evening.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

21 September	Banner of St. George (& Arwel Hughes: St. David) <i>Broadheath Singers/Windsor Sinfonia/Tucker</i>	School Hall, Eton 8.00pm
4 October	In The South <i>LPO/O. A. Hughes</i>	Royal Festival Hall South Bank
11 October	Repeat of above concert	Royal Festival Hall South Bank
13 October	From the Bavarian Highlands <i>City of London Choir/Wren Wind Ensemble/Robert Bridge/ H. Davan Wetton</i>	Queen Elizabeth Hall South Bank
13 October	The Kingdom <i>J. Booth, A. Hodgson, R. Tear, B. Luxon/Midland Fest. Choir/ Bournemouth SO/Goldring</i> Tickets from Mrs. N. Little (tel: 0533 537902 or Box Office (0203 524524)	Warwick University Arts Centre, 7.30 pm
16 October	Cello Concerto <i>J. Lloyd Webber/Royal Ballet Sinf/ Wordsworth</i>	Birmingham Town Hall 7.30 pm
14 October	Falstaff <i>RPO/Ashkenazy</i>	Royal Festival Hall South Bank
24 October	Cello Concerto <i>Lynn Harrell/ASMF/Marriner</i>	Royal Festival Hall South Bank
9 November	Coronation Ode <i>Bach Choir/LPO/Willcocks</i>	Royal Festival Hall South Bank

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY *(Continued)*

10 November	Enigma Variations <i>BBCSO/Atherton</i>	Royal Festival Hall South Bank, 3.15 pm
10 November	The Music Makers (& Bliss: Morning Heroes) <i>Sarah Walker/E. London, Harlow & Hatfield Phil Choruses/ LPO/Kibblewhite</i>	Royal Festival Hall South Bank, 7.30 pm
11 November	Cockaigne <i>RPO/Menuhin</i>	Royal Festival Hall South Bank
17 November	Serenade for Strings: Chanson de Matin <i>Two Children's string groups</i>	Purcell Room South Bank
23 November	Dream of Gerontius <i>Kidderminster Choral Soc/Orch</i> Tickets telephone 0562 822549	Kidderminster Town Hall 7.30 pm
18 December	The Dream of Gerontius (see separate news item)	Symphony Hall, Birmingham 7.30 pm

CONCERT FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Royal Festival Hall 10th November 1991

As it was on that memorable opening night of the Prom Season, music by Sir Arthur Bliss is included with Elgar's in a programme at the Royal Festival Hall in November, only this time in a rather more equal partnership.

In their Concert for Remembrance Sunday presented jointly by Hatfield Philharmonic, Harlow, and East London Choruses, one of the remembrances will be of an RFH joint presentation by the same choirs in 1985, featuring the same musical partnership. One that occasion, the 'stirring performance of a work that has been spurned in recent years' praised by the Guardian's Hugo Cole was of Elgar's *Spirit of England*: this time its first half place will be taken by *The Music Makers*, Elgar's autobiographical work of reminiscence appropriate to the theme. However, the second half item from 1985, Bliss's major choral work *Morning Heroes* is retained by the three choirs this year to mark his centenary, and provides through its subject matter the link with Remembrance (with a capital R), recalling that more far-reaching allied endeavour of 1914-18.

If Elgar was scarred by the First World War, Bliss was the more so. His direct involvement in it took five years out of his composing career, he was wounded and gassed, and lost his brother at the Somme. *Morning Heroes* came out of those experiences.

Bliss was one of the early 20th century English composers who regarded Elgar as their leader: he wrote to Elgar of 'the fine and rare encouragement your presence is'. Whether or not Elgar enjoyed much of his young admirer's music, he was sufficiently impressed to recommend it to Herbert Brewer for the new commission at the 1922 Three Choirs Festival: he respected its 'vitality and grip', and applauded its independence of the English musical establishment he so despised. It is not too fanciful to suggest that Elgar would have been happy to include Bliss amongst the music makers, the dreamer of dreams.

For the concert, the choirs are joined by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Elgar specialist Sarah Walker CBE, and Brian Blessed, orator for *Morning Heroes*, all under the baton of Michael Kibblewhite.

MUSIC REVIEW

Severn Suite (Op. 87), version for full orchestra

Study score £12.50

Civic Fanfare

Study score £6.00

Both Published by Acuta Music, and available from them at Hambrook, Ledbury HR8 2PX

The background to the publication of these scores was covered quite fully in the last Journal so it seems unnecessary to go over the details again. The publishers deserve full marks: first, for their initiative in making the works available for the first time, and thus not only anticipating the Elgar Complete Edition but also producing them at a price and in a format more agreeable to the ordinary music lover. Second, the quality of scholarship and depth of research are exemplary. For instance, as the manuscript full score of the *Severn Suite* had been stolen in the 1960s, the present score has been put together from Elgar's own short score; a hand-copyist's full score from the

publishers Keith Prowse; and the brass band score (the three seen in the light of Elgar's own 1932 recording). The main differences between the final edition and the brass band score are helpfully tabulated in an appendix. Third, it was a brilliant idea to produce the scores in a buttermilk yellow cover to make them resemble Novello's short scores of a few years back. The quality of printing is excellent: the staves are slightly further apart than with Novello, so there is a greater feeling of spaciousness.

I have one rather important reservation. To be perfectly frank, the *Civic Fanfare* seems of little more than curiosity value, though of course it is wonderful to have the score in one's possession. Even when the opening five bars are repeated three times (as on Elgar's recording) it barely lasts a couple of minutes. In terms of value for money then its separate publication must be questioned, as members will be able to judge from comparing the prices of the two works. With the *Severn Suite* you get 70 pages of music, with the *Civic Fanfare* a mere five pages. (Would it not have made greater economic sense to publish the two works in one volume?) However, I hope that sufficient copies of both works are sold to encourage the publishers to issue further study scores as they have promised.

Une Idylle (Op.4 , no. 1)

£4.50

Mot d'Amour (Op. 13, no. 1)

£3.95

Both arranged for euphonium and piano, and available from the publishers, Rosehill Music, 64 London End, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2JD.

That indefatigable Elgarian of the brass band world, Eric Wilson, has come up with two more fine arrangements of Elgar salon pieces, including the haunting *Idylle*. Both pieces are relatively easy to play, and in each case the melody line is preserved intact without the jarring octave leaps which mar some transcriptions. The euphonium part is written out twice, on both the treble and bass clef. Two very useful additions to the growing repertoire of Elgar's music in arrangements for brass.

The Giggleswick scores of Edward Elgar (Castleberg Publications).

This little 24-page book was sponsored by the National Westminster Bank at the instigation of W.R. Mitchell (whose latest book is reviewed below). These scores, which were given to him, he has now kindly handed over to the Birthplace. The most interesting are the song *Thro' the Long Days* from 1885; and a Menuetto & Trio in G for violin, cello and piano, dating from September 1882. The Trio constitutes the first appearance of what was to become a piano piece *Douce Pensee*, and then arranged for orchestra as *Rosemary*. The other pieces are two cello parts for Dr. Buck *Out on the Rocks* and *Absent yet Present*: a piano piece for Mrs. Buck from 1885, which is actually *Griffinesque*, written the previous year: and two harmonisations, one of *Clapham Town End*, a Yorkshire folk-song, and the other of a melody of Buck's own in a folk idiom. The music is a reduced photocopy of the original, and very well reproduced. I understand that unfortunately the original print run has almost gone, but that there may be a possibility of another printing. Members will be kept informed of any developments.

BOOK REVIEW

'Mr Elgar and Dr Buck' by W. R. Mitchell

Castleberg Publications: £5.60

Dr Charles Buck, the Settle GP with whom Elgar corresponded for fifty years and who provided him with many enjoyable holidays in the 1880s, has had thousands of words written about him in recent years. As one responsible for many of them I have heard it said that we must be approaching saturation point. However, Buck was a significant figure in Elgar's early life; without his undemanding friendship, warm hospitality and sympathetic encouragement, Elgar's life at that time would have been that much more frustrating. We are also enormously in debt to the good doctor for preserving those many scores of letters from which we learn so much about the Elgar of that period.

Four years ago, Bill Mitchell gave us 'Elgar in the Yorkshire Dales', a well-produced booklet combining the known facts on this friendship with interesting detail and pictures of the district which provided its setting. Warming to his task, and with over twice the pages and many more photographs, Mr Mitchell now gives us what must be the definitive 'Dr Buck story'. I use this phrase advisedly, since the additional material is almost all about Buck himself, resulting from considerable research into family records. Encouraged by the author – who himself lives on the spot – local people have dug out old photo albums (and even opened up old grandfather clocks!) A spin-off from all this research was the discovery (in the clock) of a number of signed manuscript scores of early Elgar works. These have been published separately and deserve a review in a future Journal issue.

This is not a scholarly work – Mr Mitchell's style is still that which northerners became used to during his many years with 'The Dalesman' and those who prefer their Elgar reading unaccompanied by homely narrative of the author's peregrinations in search of his material might have to look elsewhere. But I must say that picking up Elgar-associated material in a Lakeland cottage, with home-baked bread, scones and several kinds of jam waiting in the kitchen beats studying in a Records Office.

This book may be **read**, rather than referred to, as with so many Elgarian tomes. Many people well-known to Society members get a mention and the author's visit to the Birthplace to present the 'Giggleswick Scores' is given the coverage, with a photograph, that it didn't get in the Journal.

I have not scoured the book looking for errors – they occur in the most erudite of books and one cannot be sure whom to blame – but our Editor, an authority on Canon Gorton, would not forgive me if I overlooked the misspelling of his name as 'Gordon'.

A neat little volume, just about pocketable and at £5.60 a welcome change from some recent books costing the proverbial 'arm and a leg'.

D.C.

AUDIO TAPE REVIEW

The Elgar Trail. Two tapes & booklet

Bob Cartwright, Audio & Visual Production,
78 Chance Lane, Malvern, Worcs.
WR14 3QZ

£11.99 incl. Post to Elgar Soc. members

Tourism in Elgar Country is now a thriving, and growing, industry and it is perhaps surprising that until now there has not been a taped guide to the many places which come into the Elgar story. Bob Cartwright, a local audio and visual aids producer, has come up with two tapes, attractively packaged with a 32pp. illustrated booklet, to fill the void. It will particularly appeal to drivers with radio/cassette decks in their cars, and also to those who tread the roads and paths with their 'Walkman' firmly clamped to their heads. The tapes take you on a journey, largely chronological, through Worcester and its surroundings, through Malvern country, and to Hereford. Various voices tell us what to look out for, and set the musical or topographical scene. The booklet contains photographs of some of the buildings visited, and there is the usual, but important, warning that many of these houses are privately owned and do NOT cater for visitors. At a time of increasing interest in this area it is a timely warning, and encourages a more responsible attitude on the part of the occasional visitor. Some 54 places are visited, and the journey has been well sign-posted in the booklet. Snatches of music and natural sound form a background to the tapes, and whilst one can appreciate *why* this was done it does not always succeed in practice. The music is so much recessed, and often very brief, that I suspect that the sound of the car engine would often drown it out! Sometimes a little too much realism is injected as in the sound of a scratching pen when mentioning that Elgar is writing a letter! One must congratulate Mr Cartwright and his collaborator Cora Weaver on a well-prepared guide to the many Elgar places and scenery, and a word of thanks too for the excellent Ordnance Survey map references. Not all of the Elgar sites are easy to find!

There are, however, one or two criticisms which must be made, and which we believe may be corrected in a reissue. The short bibliography needs to be updated, and perhaps extended. The compilers do not seem to be aware of the researches published several years ago by Ken and Marion Simmons on 'The Elgars of Worcester'. Were they aware of these they would have correctly identified no. 2 College Precincts, and not had their tape stop us outside no. 2 College Yard, which has no place in the Elgar story. The account of no. 1 Severn Street too would have been more accurate. There is a slip of the tongue when talking of 'Plas Gwyn' in Hereford. It was not *The Apostles* which was written there, but *The Kingdom*. It would assist also if the reference numbers to places in the booklet could be used on the tapes. This would make it easier to find a site quickly. However, as we have said, we believe these things can soon be put right. Altogether, a welcome and interesting aid to exploring the town and country of Elgar's landscape, and one which should find a ready sale.

R.P.T.

RECORD REVIEWS

Symphony No. 1 in A flat, opus 55
'In The South (Alassio)' opus 50

London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Leonard Slatkin
RCA RD60380

Symphony No. 1 in A flat, opus 55
Concert Overture 'Cockaigne', opus 40

London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras
Argo 430 835-2

Both these new recordings of the 1st symphony are amongst the best versions currently available—but they are quite different. Mackerras gives us what can best be described as a mainstream 'English' interpretation: fresh and imaginative in detail, but not straying too far from the pattern laid down by Elgar himself in 1930. Slatkin, however, comes from outside the British tradition, yet has already shown himself to have an instinctive understanding of the elusive Elgar idiom. Nevertheless I had some reservations about his recording of the 2nd symphony, and I was very disappointed by his excessively introspective *Enigma Variations*. His new, and highly individual version of the 1st symphony may well disturb some listeners, but in general I found his approach challenging, exciting, and ultimately extremely satisfying.

Having said that, however, his performance gets off to a lethargic start with an introduction to the first movement which is too slow to sustain the shape and phrasing of the broad melody. Mackerras here adopts just the right tempo, allowing this section to stride along at the pace of a steady slow march. When the main part of the movement arrives, however, both conductors chose almost identical basic tempi.

Slatkin's first movement is characterised by a ready response to the underlying emotions in the music, and by wide tempo fluctuations. This, in the wrong hands, could be disastrous, but Slatkin skilfully prepares and links his tempo changes, and he is a master at phrasing Elgar's long melodic lines. The result is therefore exciting, dramatic, yet well controlled. Mackerras, in this movement, is equally satisfying, but he takes fewer risks. I nearly said that he is more conventional, but that might have implied some degree of dullness, which would be unfair: in his hands the music bowls along with perhaps more consistent forward movement and with resulting greater clarity of its slightly rambling structure.

In the *scherzo* Mackerras's handling is crisp, precise and again very satisfying. Slatkin, however, launches into this movement at a very fast speed of over 80 minims per minute, compared with Elgar's indicated 69. The effect is exhilarating, the LPO fiddles playing with great virtuosity and Slatkin gets the violas, cellos and basses to dig into their repeated semiquaver figures with unrivalled precision. However, he sustains this fast tempo throughout the movement, and the melody of the central section sounds too rushed to provide the necessary contrast to the short repeated motifs of the outer sections.

In the slow movement Slatkin really comes into his own. He again takes a risk by adopting a rather slow tempo, but his mastery in handling the phrasing, and his steady rhythmic control ensure that the music keeps moving, and avoids any trace of sentimentality. By comparison Mackerras, in this movement, sounds rather prosaic. There is little to choose between the two conductors' handling of the fourth movement, although Slatkin's gentle, contemplative opening *lento* section brings into sharper relief the sudden change of mood, with its undercurrent of nervous anxiety, at the arrival of the *allegro*, five bars after number 111 on the score.

The couplings are both enjoyable: Mackerras gives us a sparkling *Cockaigne*, by turn lively and delicate. Slatkin's *In The South* is one of the best versions available – fast, exciting, and spontaneous, wonderfully capturing Elgar's delight at his discovery of this glorious part of Italy. Both these recordings were made at Walthamstow Town Hall, but they sound quite different. Slatkin's producer and engineer, Andrew Keener and Mike Hatch, have chosen a nicely recessed balance, which adds warmth and perspective to the sound. The Decca team, however, has given Mackerras a closer balance, and as a result the LSO strings (first and second violins divided left and right), sound rather dry, and there is a tendency for the brass to dominate the sound when playing above *mezzoforte*.

This is not, however, a serious criticism, and in no way undermines my respect for Mackerras's fine and thoughtful interpretation. Slatkin's performance, however, is something special which every lover of this symphony should hear – although I suspect that not all fans of this wonderful symphony will enjoy it as much as I have done.

GHL



Concerto for Cello and Orchestra in E minor, opus 85
(coupled with Tchaikovsky: Variations on a Rococo Theme, opus 33)

Mischa Maisky, cello, with Philharmonia
Orchestra conducted by Guiseppe Sinopoli
Deutsche Grammophon 431 685-2

This is an exceptionally fine performance of the Cello Concerto. Tempi are sometimes a little slower than Elgar's markings, but never too slow and, the music never drags. On the other hand, Maisky actually manages to play the *scherzo* slightly faster than Elgar's already brisk marking of crotchet = 138, and he does so with a clarity, rhythmic precision and control of fast, feather-light bowing which is quite breathtaking.

Maisky gives us a 'big', spontaneous-sounding interpretation, of wide dynamic and emotional range, which may not please those Elgarians who favour the slightly understated performances by Tortelier or certain British cellists. Nothing, however, is exaggerated, and a glance at the score soon reveals how carefully Maisky has noted and understood Elgar's copious markings.

The recorded sound may not be to everyone's taste. Maisky is given a close balance which captures every intake of breath – yet such is the security of his technique that no extraneous twangs or squeaks intrude. The orchestra, however, is balanced rather distantly within the resonant acoustic of Watford Town Hall. As a result the soloist, to my ears, sounds somewhat acoustically separated from the orchestral sound, and, indeed, at times dominates unnaturally – as in the early part of the fourth movement (between figures 50 and 53 of the score) where the soloist (admittedly instructed to play, for the most part, *fortissimo*) almost completely obscures the quiet accompanying string chords and woodwind figures.

The same care in preparation and the same slight reservations concerning the recorded sound apply to Maisky's recording of the Tchaikovsky warhorse – played, once again in the familiar version edited by the dedicatee Fitzhagen. Tchaikovsky's original, slightly longer version (and with certain of the variations in different order) is now generally available and it would be nice to see it taken up by a few more younger cellists (only Wallfisch, on Chandos has, so far, recorded the original version). Maisky's recording can, nevertheless, be strongly recommended. It is worth noting, however, that Paul Tortelier, with the RPO under Groves, recorded the same couplings three years ago, with the addition of Dvorak's little *Rondo* (RPO Records, 8012). The older master could not, at that stage, match Maisky's virtuosity, but his wealth of experience and very special insight, made it a most moving recording of both the major works – and the balance of the recorded sound is just about perfect.

GHL

Symphony No. 2 in E flat, opus 63

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by
Sir Yehudi Menuhin
Virgin Classics VC 7 91182-2

Pomp & Circumstance Marches, 1-5, Coronation March, Empire March,
Imperial March, Triumphal March from *Caractacus*, Concert Overture *Cockaigne*

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by
Sir Yehudi Menuhin
Virgin Classics VC 7 91175-2

Menuhin's recording of the 2nd Symphony has been well received elsewhere, but I have to say that I found it extremely disappointing. The problem, for me, is an absence of a consistent overview of this complex work. In the long first movement, Menuhin's speeds are mostly within reasonable reach of Elgar's indications, but changes in tempo are often jerky and seemingly ill-prepared. There is a lack of rhythmic consistency and no real attempt to shape Elgar's long-breathed phrases. As a result the movement has a decidedly episodic feel.

The larghetto is played with satisfactory directness, at a steady, not too slow a speed, but again insufficient attention to the phrasing of the long melodic lines meant that this deeply felt music quite failed to move me. The *scherzo* is handled briskly, but the climax sounds merely coarse, quite lacking the scalp-tingling shock which this sudden outburst of angry passion elicits in the best hands.

I have written often about the need to avoid exaggerating the autumnal and melancholy aspects of the fourth movement. Menuhin however, bats through more quickly and perfunctorily than any other conductor on record. Boult, in his earlier recordings, is quicker overall in this movement, but handles the earlier sections with an unhurried gentle swing. Menuhin is inclined to rush – but then ludicrously exaggerates the *rallentando* just before no. 167 on the score, and the music almost comes to a complete stop for the last 45 bars.

To add to Menuhin's problems, the orchestral playing is surprisingly unrefined, the textures too often dominated by rather coarse brass sound – the dynamics rarely dip below *mezzoforte* – and ensemble goes awry far too often for comfortable listening. The recorded sound, surprisingly for an EMI production team working in the familiar environment of Studio One, Abbey Road, lacks definition with rather muddy and ill-defined bass. There are several much more satisfying versions of the 2nd Symphony available – including two at mid-price: Handley on CFP and Gibson on Chandos.

I really cannot imagine who would want to pay full price for a CD chiefly devoted to Elgar marches – and the inclusion of a major work like *Cockaigne* in this company is surely anachronistic. Tempi are often brisk, (Menuhin rushes at P&Cs 1 and 2, and the rhythm takes a few bars to settle down) and once again, from time to time, sudden changes of gear tend to disturb the flow of the music. The orchestral playing is no more refined, but the recorded sound seems a little more open than in the Symphony.

Cockaigne is not an easy work to hold together. It is given an adequate performance, but like the first movement of the Symphony, sounds episodic. As I have said, it is hard to visualise the market for such a disc – and once again there are more rewarding mid-price versions of some of the items – Barbirolli's *P&C Marches* coupled with *Froissart* and an outstanding *Cockaigne* is available on an EMI Studio CD, and with different couplings, there are also fine versions of the marches from Del Mar and Handley on DG and CFP respectively.

GHL

CD ROUNDUP

I have only two Elgar reissues to consider this time – but a wealth of new recordings of other British music to recommend. Both my Elgar CDs include the ‘Enigma’ Variations. Philips (432 276-2) have provided a most imaginative coupling by linking Haitink’s 1973 recording of the Variations (with the LPO) with his superb version of Strauss’s *Ein Heldenleben*, recorded with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra three years earlier. The Strauss, despite being, in places, a little too gentlemanly, remains a classic, and the remastered sound retains the rich glow of characteristic of Concertgebouw recordings of the time. The *Variations*, however, is not quite so successful. It was never one of the more exciting versions, played perhaps a little too carefully and with the individual variations not very sharply delineated. The recorded sound is quite acceptable (with some excellent LPO brass playing) but by comparison with the Strauss, the string tone lacks warmth and body.

My other version of the *Variations*, however is one of the finest ever recorded – Barbirolli’s 1956 recording with the Halle Orchestra, which has already appeared twice on CDs issued by the now defunct PRT company. Their rights to the old Pye recordings have now been acquired by EMI, and are gradually reappearing on the new ‘Phoenixa’ mid price label. Not only is this a glorious performance, sensitive, witty and sharply characterised, but the sound, despite a little tape hiss, is extraordinarily good. This is no doubt due to the skill of the engineer, Robert Fine, of the American Mercury company, whose excellent results using simple microphone techniques are winning new respect through a series of recent reissues from Polygram.

As before, the *Variations* is coupled with the Cello Concerto, with Andre Navarra as soloist (in mono sound, as on the earlier CDs: the original stereo tapes have unfortunately deteriorated over the years). This recording originally filled a gap, but has long been superseded: Navarra’s tone is warm and appealing, but his intonation is fallible, and for sheer virtuosity he is no match for some of his successors on record. The recording catches the cello well enough, but the orchestral sound is a bit dim.

PRT’s first CD reissue of these performances contained just these two works. Within a year or two, however, they had reappeared with the addition of two Grieg Elegiac Melodies as a fillup. EMI has added a wonderfully vivid version of *Introduction and Allegro*, which PRT had coupled with the 1st Symphony, and the *Elegy for Strings*, both again in excellent sound. A highly recommended CD which I hope will remain available for a little longer this time (CDM 7 63955-2).

I am amazed at the range and variety of unfamiliar British music appearing in new recordings, despite the current recession. Chandos continue their series of Parry recordings, with the LPO under Mathias Bamert, with the impressive 5th Symphony (CHAN 8955). In recent years this has become the most familiar of Parry’s large-scale orchestral works, through Boult’s 1978 recording with the same orchestra. Mathias Bamert’s version is, I think, preferable. There have been great strides in recorded sound since 1978, and by comparison, the Boult performance sounds under-rehearsed, with frequent lapses in ensemble.

Bamert's main fillup is the late tone poem *From Death to Life*, a curiosity in two sections, celebrating the victory of life over death. By coincidence it also appears, in a rather more leisurely performance, on the first of a rival series of Parry recordings from Nimbus, featuring William Boughton's English Symphony Orchestra (NI 5296). The main work is Parry's fresh, joyful, Schumannesque 1st Symphony of 1880, but unfortunately Nimbus's sound quality is rather diffuse, and not very satisfactorily balanced. No doubt Bamert's version will be available soon.

Elgar gave a great deal of encouragement to the young Arthur Bliss, whose centenary we are celebrating this year. At the older composer's suggestion, Bliss was commissioned to write his *Colour Symphony* for the 1922 Three Choirs Festival. Each of the four movements (subtitled Purple, Red, Blue and Green) was stimulated by Bliss's discovery of the heraldic significance of each of the primary colours. This time Nimbus have provided vivid, dramatic, sound for Barry Wordsworth and the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra (NI 5294). The disc is completed by a performance of Bliss's last major composition, the *Metamorphic Variations* of 1972 – a mystical and totally individual work, in complete contrast to the rhetoric of the Symphony. At an early 1960s Prom I fell in love with Bliss's 1928 *Pastoral: Lie Strewn the White Flocks*, dedicated incidentally, to Elgar, and I was delighted that Chandos have issued a new recording as their contribution to the Bliss celebrations. It is beautifully performed by the Northern Sinfonia chorus and orchestra under Richard Hickox, with Della Jones as soloist in the central *Pigeon Song*. The other work is the more familiar *Music for Strings*, first conducted by Boult at the 1935 Salzburg Festival (CHAN 8886).

However, the most remarkable new recording of British music this quarter is devoted to music by Elgar's almost exact contemporary (and arch enemy) Dame Ethel Smyth. Her Mass in D of 1891 is surely one of the greatest of all British choral works – intended purely for concert rather than liturgical performance, as the *Gloria* is placed last. The performance by the choir and orchestra of the Plymouth Festival (from Minnesota, USA) under Philip Brunelle, is not quite top drawer, but acceptable – and we are unlikely to get an alternative version. The rest of the CD (from Virgin, number VC7 91188-2) consists of a charming aria from Smyth's opera *The Boatswain's Mate*, beautifully sung by Eiddwen Harrhy, and the preposterous *March of the Women*, written as a rallying cry for the suffragette movement.

GHL



BRANCH REPORTS

YORKSHIRE BRANCH have had three meetings since the last Report. The first – in April was the AGM and was significant for the standing down of stalwart Jim Anderson as Chairman. Jim had held the post for seven years, longer than he had intended or expected, but his willingness to 'hold the fort' until the emergence of a suitable replacement has been much appreciated. We now welcome at the helm founder member Robert Seager, whose former position as Treasurer has been taken over by Brenda Biltcliffe.

Robert gave the formal welcome on May 13th to Malcolm Ruthven, of the BBC. The informal welcome was provided by one of our biggest audiences ever – over forty members and guests – who heard a delightfully witty talk on 'Elgar in Camera', not just about the Brinkwells chamber music, but covering some of Elgar's earlier works for the smaller ensemble. At the June meeting, we welcomed Stephen Hartley from York to give an illustrated talk on *The Dream of Gerontius*, with particular reference to the notorious first performance in Birmingham, but continuing with substantial extracts from the recording by Barbirolli. Another well attended meeting.

We now look forward in a few days' time to that annual institution, the Yorkshire Branch 'Soiree' at the Secretary's home. As ever, we pray for fine weather to relieve the congestion indoors, but those who *are* able to investigate the garden will find they are too late for the strawberries and too early for the tomatoes and will have to forage indoors, where the usual substantial buffet will await.

Next season's programme consists at the moment of a confusion of names, dates and titles awaiting assembly into coherent order. This will happen during the next three weeks or so and members will receive their printed copies well in time for the new season, commencing on September 23rd.

The EAST ANGLIAN BRANCH of the Elgar Society started their year with the Annual General Meeting in March. In April we were very pleased to welcome Margaret Elgar, her talk 'Mainly Anecdotal' was well attended and much appreciated. In May Mr Ray Howling gave an illustrated lecture on Elgar and Butterworth titled 'Elgar and the lad from Shropshire'. Also in May we had the opportunity of sharing a visit with the Norfolk & Norwich Music Society by Mr Robert Walker the composer who lives at Brinkwells. During June we were pleased to welcome Dr Percy Young who as usual gave a very interesting talk 'Elgar and the Irish Dramatists'. All in all a most enjoyable year so far.

SOUTH WALES. "Elgar's Perennial Wand of Youth" was the title of a talk given by Trevor Fenimore-Jones at Friendship House, Swansea on 20th April. The talk was in some measure complementary to an address entitled "Elgar: Man of Mission" that had been given to the Branch by the same speaker in May, 1989 – this for the reason that it was concerned not so much with Elgar's music *qua* music as with a particular aspect of Elgar's personality that had not been explored on the earlier occasion.

As was to be expected, the composer's *opus 1(a)* and *opus 1(b)* provided the *point de depart* for this second talk, and it is useful to be reminded that the sequence in which the several movements of the *Wand of Youth* music appear in the two published suites differs from the original order.

Another work that played an important role in the afternoon's proceedings was, of course *The Starlight Express*, in which a number of motifs from *The Wand of Youth* are quoted. We heard also three movements from the *Nursery Suite* – a work once described by Herbert Hughes as “the sublimation of eternal youth”.

The speaker reminded us, too, of the reminiscences of childhood that could be found in the scores of *Falstaff* and the first Symphony.

As Andrew Neill, who was to have addressed the Branch on 1st June, found himself unable to travel to Swansea on the day in question, Kenneth Wallace, the Branch Treasurer and Secretary, deputized at short notice by providing an afternoon devoted to the music of the last fourteen years of Elgar's life – the period described by Michael Kennedy in his *Portrait of Elgar* as “a long and slow diminuendo”.

But that the springs of creation were not completely exhausted we were reminded by the opportunity of hearing an excerpt from the music for *King Arthur* (the first original work to come from the composer's pen after the death of Lady Elgar), the *Empire March*, *The Prince of Sleep*, the *Serenade* and *Adieu* for piano, two movements of the *Nursery Suite* and the *Soliloquy* for oboe (played in Gordon Jacob's orchestral version) – all this and much else besides.

There were also, at an early stage of the talk, the music played at Lady Elgar's funeral – the second movement of the string Quartet (taken from the early recording made by the Stratton Quartet) – and the concluding part of *The Spirit of England*, for which the speaker had taken the trouble to provide everyone present with copies of Binyon's words.

LONDON BRANCH. In May our guest was Christopher Finzi, son of the composer, and his subject was “20th Century English Music for Strings”. We enjoyed a most comprehensive survey, despite revive problems with Imperial College sound equipment, as well as an abundance of splendid anecdotes, especially about Vaughan Williams who was a frequent visitor to the Finzi home.

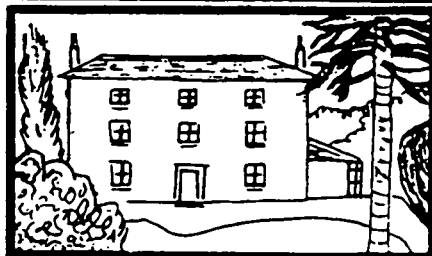
In June we held a rapid AGM at which Carl Newton was elected for another stint on the committee to replace the excellent Kevin Mitchell whose term had expired. Formal business was followed by a *searching* quiz organised by Andrew Neill and Martin Passande. The present writer soon retired from that particular fray – though it was reassuring to see Committee members prominent among prize winners!

The new season will open at Imperial College on October 7th when the recently retired and recently appointed *Journal* Editors will chat about the Society's “mouthpiece”. With luck, members will receive full details in good time!

WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH. Farewell to Ron Taylor, welcome to Geoffrey Hodgkins! Our final afternoon meeting of the 1990/1991 season was in April at The Stables when Diana Walkley, mezzo-soprano, and Carol Holt, piano, presented 'Elgar in Words and Pictures' to an appreciative audiences. This was a unique talk on how two musicians approach the performance of Elgar's songs. The Malvern Festival was well reported in the May issue of *The Journal*'. However, one additional item must be mentioned. Our member, John Winsor, in presenting his afternoon slide show "Elgar's Malvern" drew such a large crowd that a second performance had to be hastily arranged for that very evening. The West Midlands Branch now enters its annual close season while preparing for the 1991/92 events which will be heralded by the Three Choirs Festival Tea on 18th August.

THE NUPEND

Unwind in peaceful surroundings at the Nupend, a small Georgian country house set in 2 acres of grounds and enjoying panoramic views of the Malvern Hills.



All rooms have private bathroom and colour TV. We offer a choice of breakfasts and a four-course dinner. Vegetarians catered for. Central heating and open fires in winter. No smokers please. German and French spoken.

Mrs ROSALIND TEUMA
The Nupend
Cradley, near Malvern
Worcs. WR13 5NP



Telephone : (0886) 880881

LETTERS

From: Ronald Taylor

May I, through the columns of the JOURNAL, express my gratitude to the Society members and committee for the superb gift of a CD player which was presented to me at the Annual Meeting on June 2nd. It was a most generous gesture and one which I greatly appreciate. With the CD player was the recording of Hickox's version of 'The Apostles', and I have already listened to this with great pleasure. Again I thank you all.

I was also made an Honorary Member, and I am aware that this is indeed an honour! I know that I join a distinguished band of those who have served the cause of Elgar's music in one way or another. I am very grateful, and suitably humble, that the Society has seen fit to award me this status, and I hope that I can continue to serve the Society in various ways.

May I also extend my very good wishes to Geoffrey Hodgkins, the new Editor. I am sure that under his guidance the Journal will go from strength to strength.

From: Michael Plant

In September 1984 you were good enough to publish some notes of mine on railway locomotives bearing the name of our composer. Since then, the class to which the present 'Sir Edward Elgar' belongs has fallen on hard times. Changing traffic patterns on British Railways and a shortage of spare parts have taken their toll. Withdrawals have been heavy, although this has at least solved the shortage of spares, and I am glad to say that 50 007 remains in service for the present. The survivors are concentrated at Plymouth and may be seen chiefly between Exeter and London (Waterloo). They are expected to continue on these duties for the immediate future and are immensely popular with the fraternity of railway enthusiasts, who know them affectionately as 'Hoovers'.

Readers may also be interested to look out for 86 231 on the electrified lines from London (Euston) to Birmingham, the North West and Glasgow. This electric locomotive bears the name 'Starlight Express' and although the inspiration for this was of course the long-running Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, the idea is a happy one and we of the Elgar Society know which 'Starlight Express' it really honours!

LETTERS (Continued)

From: Dennis Clark

It has long been realised that we have within the Society many members with the necessary knowledge and speaking skills to give instructive, entertaining and indeed valuable talks. Most branches are aware of the talent within their own ranks and make good use of it. Many of the talks given are worthy of further airings, but other branch secretaries would not normally know whether such a speaker would be willing to travel outside his (or her) own area, whether a fee would be asked, or whether the need to go to work next morning would preclude an overnight stay.

With the approval of the General Committee, I am attempting to compile a register of members who have – or could prepare – a talk on an Elgarian subject and would be willing to visit other branches. Clearly, I am not looking for speakers who would charge a professional fee; rather for those who would welcome the opportunity to share the fruits of their researches with others and so get more 'mileage' out of a talk which might have involved much preparation. No-one need be out-of-pocket over such a visit, but it would be helpful for branch secretaries to know what the possibilities were, particularly as regards a speaker's freedom to be away from home for a night, where this might exist. (At least three branches meet on Saturdays, making this less of a problem).

Would those willing to help please write to me (address on the back cover) saying what they might have to offer and what sort of arrangements would apply in their case? More modest speakers might be urged by their branch Secretaries to volunteer! Information so gained would be circulated to branch secretaries.

From: G. Nall

Can any member offer any solution to another little Elgar enigma as portrayed on p.103 of Jerrold Northrop Moore's Elgar – A Life in Photographs, and which also appears in his Creative Life (p.731)?

It concerns the piacevole Slow Movement of the String Quartet and a snatch of conversation between Elgar and Troyte Griffith, when Troyte says after playing this to Elgar during his illness. "Surely that's as fine as a movement by Beethoven". Elgar replies, "Yes it is, and there is something in it that has never been done before".

Troyte asks "What is it?", to which Elgar replies, "Nothing you would understand, merely an arrangement of notes".

Has anyone any knowledge whether a solution has ever been offered, or has anyone any theories or suggestions as to what this "arrangement of notes" might be?

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

(President: Sir Yehudi Menuhin, O.M., K.B.E.)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: £7. Family membership is available if only one journal is received per family: two members per family £8: three member £9: four members £10: student members £5; Overseas £10 or equivalent, Branch members pay their branch subscription in addition to the basic amount. Applications for membership should be sent to the Hon. Membership Secretary, David Morris, 2 Marriotts Close, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP17 8BT. Renewal of subscriptions, due January 1st, should be made to the Hon. Treasurer, J. R. Greig, Orchard Barn, Derrington Street, Barham, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 6QB. The Hon. Secretary is Carol Holt, 20 Geraldine Road, Malvern, Worcs. WR14 3PA. Tel: 0684 568822.

BRANCHES:

London
Subscription £7

David Bury, SECRETARY, Flat 6, 19 Ringstead Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 4SE. Tel: 081-661 2120. John Kelly, TREASURER, 79 West Hill Avenue, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 8JX, to whom combined subscriptions should be sent.

West Midlands
Subscription £3

Jim Holt, SECRETARY, 20 Geraldine Road, Malvern WR14 3PA Tel: Malvern 568822. W. Cullis, TREASURER, 6 Barbourne Court, Barbourne Crescent, Worcester, WR1 3JF, to whom combined subscriptions should be sent.

North West
Subscription £4

Mrs. Pat Hurst, SECRETARY, 60 Homewood Road, Northenden, Manchester, M22 4DW. Tel: 061 998 4404. Dorothy Lawson, TREASURER, Meadowcroft Farm, Woodhouses. Failsworth, Manchester, to whom combined subscriptions should be sent.

East Anglia
Subscription £2

Mrs. Joan Pearson, SECRETARY, 4 Spinney Road, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich, NR7 OPW. Leslie Reason, TREASURER, 10 Kenwyn Close, Kelling Road, Holt, Norfolk NR25 6RS.

Southern
Subscription £5

W.J. Essex, CHAIRMAN, 39 South Road, Hayling Island, Hants. PO11 9AE. Tel: 0705 466 974

Yorkshire
Subscription £3

Dennis Clark, SECRETARY, 227 Tinshill Road, Leeds, LS16 7BU. Tel: 0532 671533, to whom combined subscriptions should be sent.

South Wales
Subscription £3

All correspondence to the Branch TREASURER, Ken Wallace, 6 Ridgeway, Newport. Gwent, NP1 5AF. Tel: 0633 267345.