

The Elgar Society

NEWSLETTER



MAY

1977

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

PRESENTATION TO A. T. SHAW -- Founder of the Elgar Society

Many members recently subscribed towards a presentation to be made to Mr. A. T. Shaw to mark the completion of twenty-five years continuous service as Chairman of the Society until his retirement in 1976.

They will be glad to know that the presentation will be made during the Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 11th June, 1977, when it is hoped that both Mr. & Mrs. Shaw will be present.

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Elgar Society Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

NEW SERIES No. 2

Our second issue of the New Series now lies before you. The reception given to the first issue was almost entirely favourable--many readers wrote letters, or made comments at meetings. Your interest and encouragement is most gratifying, and we shall do our utmost to maintain the standard which members obviously expect. When you have criticisms I hope that you will let us have them. They are just as necessary as praise!

The present issue is rather crammed--much of the material arriving at the last moment--and I am sorry that it has been necessary to omit or curtail certain articles and letters. Where possible we shall try to include these items at a later date, but some contributions are topical and lose their point when held over for several months. The mysterious number which appears at the foot of the contents page is our International Standard Serials Number, and by this the NEWSLETTER can be classified in any library in any part of the world. So internationally we have arrived!

Our Music Diary, and the notes on the Three Choirs and Malvern Festivals, show how much of Elgar's music is being played in the coming months. This is an indication of the broad appeal of his music, and we hope that this interest will be translated into a further increase in the Society's membership. May I suggest that an excellent birthday gift for a friend or relation would be a year's subscription to the Society?

RONALD TAYLOR
Editor

Editorial: John Buttrey, Michael Rostron, Trevor Fenemore-Jones

ELGAR SOCIETY Annual General Meeting. With this Newsletter comes notice of the Annual Meeting to be held at Central Hall, Westminster, on Saturday, June 11th. Despite the long journey for many members we hope to greet as many as possible on that day. These meetings are of the greatest importance, not the least part of which is in meeting other members from all over the country.

News Items

Sir Adrian Boult, C. H. Our President celebrated his 88th birthday on April 8th. To him we send our belated but sincere greetings and take this opportunity to express our grateful thanks for the continuing stream of masterly performances and recordings of Elgar's music. By these performances he has greatly enriched our lives over a long period.

Bank Holiday Elgar. Thanks to the BBC, there are special treats in store for Elgarians this Spring Bank Holiday weekend. On Sunday, June 5th, at 3.25 p.m. Radio 3 are repeating their successful broadcast of "Caractacus" conducted by Sir Charles Groves. Then on Monday, June 6th, at 3 p.m. also on Radio 3, comes the long-awaited transmission of the 1976 performance of "King Olaf" conducted by Bryan Fairfax, and recorded in the Royal Festival Hall. Further details will be found in 'Dates for your Diary'.

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O B I T U A R I E S

LORD BRITTEN The entire musical world was saddened early this year by the news of the death of Lord Britten. Honoured, and rightly so, by the Queen, to the majority he will always be known as Benjamin Britten--an outstanding international composer. His achievements in the field of opera alone serve to put him among the giants of 20th century music. We had hoped to include in this issue an account of the work Britten has done in connection with the music of that other great Englishman Edward Elgar, but unfortunately it was not ready in time for publication.

VISCOUNT COBHAM By the death of Viscount Cobham, KG, PC, GCVO, TO, a former Governor-General of New Zealand, and Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire from 1963 to 1974, who died in London on March 20th, many friends suffered a great loss. As a public servant Charles John Lyttelton was exceptionally diligent. He played a leading part in the affairs of his home county where his warm friendliness endeared him to people in many different walks of life. His interests ranged from cricket to education, literature and music. He was Chairman of the Governors of the Alice Ottley School where young Elgar had taught the violin; he showed his interest in the Three Choirs Festival by attending Worcester Cathedral in state during his time as Lord-Lieutenant; and he was one of the first Vice-Presidents of the Elgar Society. The last time that he graced the Society was when he attended the luncheon given by Mrs. Douglas Guest in the Jerusalem Chamber after Mr. Edward Heath had unveiled the Elgar Memorial in Westminster Abbey.

A. T. Shaw

D A T E S F O R Y O U R D I A R Y

<u>May 22</u>	Dream of Gerontius Hallé Orch. & Choir, cond. James Loughran, with Janet Baker, Philip Langridge, Michael Rippon.	<u>Free Trade Hall, Manchester</u>
<u>May 28</u>	Sevillana/Grania & Diarmid Funeral March/Pomp & Circumstance no. 5. Rutland Sinfonia, cond. Barry Collett.	<u>Uppingham Theatre, Uppingham, Rutland</u>
N. B. ALTERATION OF PROGRAMME ALREADY ANNOUNCED		
<u>June 1</u>	Cockaigne Overture London Schools SO, cond. Charles Mackerras.	<u>Royal Festival Hall</u>
<u>June 3</u>	Dream of Gerontius NPO, London Choral Soc. cond. Leon Lovett.	<u>Royal Festival Hall</u>
<u>June 3</u>	Cello Concerto Hallé Orch. cond. James Loughran, with Paul Tortelier.	<u>De Montfort Hall, Leicester</u>
<u>June 4</u>	Cockaigne/Introduction & Allegro/ Sea Pictures/Enigma Variations CBSO, cond. Maurice Handford, with Alfreda Hodgson.	<u>Birmingham Town Hall</u>
<u>June 5</u>	Caractacus RLPO & Chorus, cond. Sir Charles Groves, with Sheila Armstrong, Peter Glossop, Robert Tear, Brian Rayner Cook & Richard Stuart.	<u>BBC Radio 3, 3.25p.m</u>
<u>June 6</u>	King Olaf NPO, London Choral Soc. cond. Bryan Fairfax, with Anne Pashley, John Mitchinson & John Barrow.	<u>BBC Radio 3, 3p.m.</u>
<u>June 10</u>	Symphony no. 1, included in concert by RLPO, cond. Sir Charles Groves.	<u>Royal Festival Hall</u>
<u>June 11</u>	Enigma Variations LSO, cond. Rudolph Schwarz.	<u>Ken Wood, Hampstead Lakeside Concerts</u>
<u>June 16</u>	Violin Sonata Sergei Bezkorvany, Julian Dawson.	<u>Purcell Room, South Bank</u>

<u>June 17</u>	Serenade for Strings/Introduction & Allegro. Monteverdi Orch. cond. John Eliot Gardner.	<u>Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank</u>
<u>July 3</u>	Cello Concerto, RPO, cond. Sir Charles Groves.	<u>Royal Festival Hall</u>
<u>July 5</u>	Symphony no. 1 Scottish NO, cond. Alexander Gibson.	<u>Cheltenham Town Hall</u>
<u>July 6</u>	Symphony no. 2	<u>Cheltenham Town Hall</u>
	** Both concerts part of Cheltenham Festival.	
<u>July 9</u>	Symphony no. 1 Bournemouth SO, cond. O. A. Hughes.	<u>Ken Wood, Hampstead Lakeside Concerts</u>
<u>July 9</u>	Symphony no. 1/Cockaigne Overture ** Part of Upton on Severn Arts Festival. (Tel: 2826)	<u>Upton Parish Church.</u>
<u>July 17</u>	Violin Concerto NPO, cond. David Atherton, with Yehudi Menuhin.	<u>Brighton Festival</u>
<u>July 19</u>	Cello Concerto BBC Northern SO, cond. Walter Susskind, with Pierre Fournier.	<u>Chichester Festival</u>
<u>July 28</u>	Cockaigne Overture BBC Northern SO, cond. Walter Susskind.	<u>Albert Hall, Nottingham</u>
<u>Sept. 24</u>	The Kingdom Philomusica of Gloucestershire, cond. James Cowley.	<u>Tewkesbury Abbey</u> Tickets from: J. Walkley, 448 High Street, Cheltenham.

AUGUST 26th An Elgar Society Tea will be held on Friday, 26th August, during the Three Choirs Festival. Further details will be announced during the Festival.

STOP PRESS. A performance of "The Kingdom" on June 21st at St. John's Parish Church, Wellington, Somerset, cond. by Dr. John Cole, with Felicity Palmer and Christopher Keyte.

ELGAR BIRTHPLACE AND ELGAR FOUNDATION NEWS

The Birthplace Appeal Fund has now reached the total of £58,000 towards its target of £100,000. With the money already in hand the Trustees have begun the very necessary programme of repairs and renovations to the cottage, and its surroundings. Damp-proofing has been carried out by Phoenix Preservation Ltd. as their contribution to the appeal, and a similar contribution in the form of practical assistance has been received from Worcester Corporation whose parks department sent three men to clear up the garden and restore the paths. The Trustees emphasise however that the need for contributions is as great as ever to secure the upkeep of the Birthplace and Museum for the future, and that the figure of £100,000 is the minimum that needs to be reached.

The Curator of the Birthplace Museum, Jack McKenzie, reports: It is most gratifying to announce that the number of visitors to the Birthplace is already up on last year's figure. For the first 3 months of 1977 we had 580 visitors, and so far in April (this count was taken on the 21st) we have had 752. The Easter Weekend produced 393 visitors alone! Elgarians will also be very pleased to learn that a great deal of work has been done to the Birthplace, both inside and out, in order to keep it in good condition and maintain its attraction. During 3 weeks when the house was supposedly closed (although the visitors took no notice and kept on coming in), the Birth Room, the Room of Fame, the Landing, Staircase, Inner Hall, Study and Inside Porch were all decorated. A beautiful new rustic arch has been installed in the garden, up which four climbing roses will be trained, and three new standard roses have been planted. We hope visitors will be impressed by our improvements. Among recent visitors are Robert Anderson (conductor of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Choir) the cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, Frankie Williams (conductor of Bedford Youth Orchestra), and our youngest-ever visitor, 17-day old Sebastian Ballard, son of Jeremy Ballard, leader of the Arioso String Quartet. Another welcome guest has been Edgar Ryder, a descendant of Hans Richter, who has compiled a history of Marl Bank from 1929 to the present day. This valuable document is available at the Birthplace for examination on request. The Birthplace also has a complete set of previous issues of the NEWSLETTER for examination by visitors.

ELGAR/KILBURN LETTERS. These will be formally presented to the Trustees on 2nd June, 1977 (Elgar's Birthday). A short ceremony will be held in the Birthplace at 3 p. m. during which the presentation will be made by Dr. Jerrold Northrop Moore on behalf of all subscribing members of the Society. In addition to the subscribers the Trustees will be happy to welcome other members of the Society who may wish to be present, and all are invited to take tea with the Trustees thereafter.

250TH THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL GLOUCESTER 1977

This year one of the country's finest music festivals celebrates its 250th anniversary, a remarkable achievement which is still "For the benefit of the widows and orphans of the clergy of the Dioceses of Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester." Its importance in the early days as a celebration of Church Music is universally recognized, but its development in the second half of the 19th century, and the patronage which it bestowed on native composers, transformed English music in many ways. A large number of composers have reason to be grateful to the Festival, not least Sir Edward Elgar, commencing with the commission for his overture 'Froissart'. In the later years of Elgar's life his works often took pride of place, and he was a familiar figure on the conductor's rostrum.

A fine programme has been arranged in this anniversary year, and a larger than usual number of extra events. Among the performances which will be of special interest to Elgarians are the following:

- 21 August. Violin Concerto. National Youth Orchestra, conductor, Christopher Seaman; soloist, Krystyna Osostowicz.
- 22 August Personal Reminiscences of Elgar. A lecture by Wulstan Atkins.
- 24 August Caractacus. with April Cantelo, Kenneth Bowen, John Barrow, Brian Rayner Cook, Festival Chorus & RPO.
- 26 August The Dream of Gerontius. with Maureen Guy, Robert Tear, Ian Comboy, Festival Chorus & RPO.
- 28 August Concert in the Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham, which includes Elgar's 'Serenade for Strings.' Orchestra of St. John's, Smith Square, conductor John Lubbock.

Perhaps the most interesting of the "fringe events" will be the production "KING AND CONSCIENCE" which portrays the story of Gloucester in light, sound and vision. This takes place in the Cathedral Choir, and music has been specially composed by Gloucester-born Michael Hurd.

Until June 22nd only postal applications will be considered, but we understand that the priority booking by Stewards has been exceptionally heavy this year. Copies of the brochure with full details of booking arrangements are available from the Festival Office, Community House, College Green, Gloucester.

We hope to publish an account of some of the events and concerts in our next issue.



Malvern Festival *23 May - 12 June 1977*

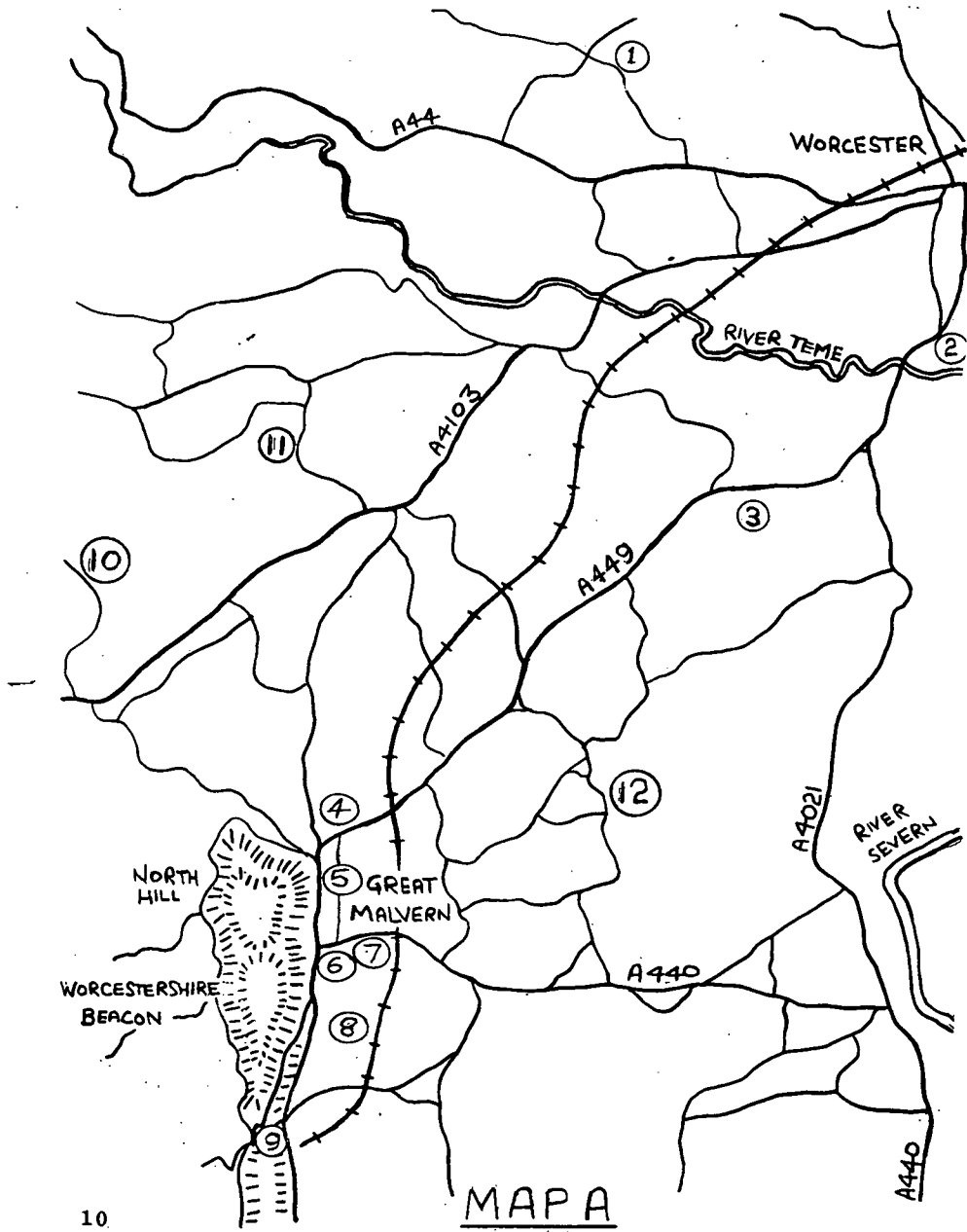
In 1929 the Malvern Festival was founded with the emphasis on the drama-- particularly the works of George Bernard Shaw. In 1931 lectures were added to the programme, in 1932 'tea-time' talks were introduced, and in 1933 concerts were held in conjunction with the increasingly ambitious dramatic programme. Elgar had been involved with the Festival from its beginnings however, both as a friend of Shaw, and as a friend of Sir Barry Jackson, Dramatic Director of the Malvern Festival. Elgar was a familiar figure at the public and social events during the weeks in summer when the small town of Malvern was almost overwhelmed with visitors.

The war caused the abandonment of the Festival in 1939, and somehow the post-war attempts to revive it did not succeed. Now a determined effort has been made to establish Malvern once more as a Festival Centre. 1977's offerings are largely from Shaw and Elgar, though another local resident, the 'Swedish Nightingale' Jenny Lind, is remembered in a programme of songs by Elisabeth Söderström.

We have not space here to detail all the programme, the brochure is available from the Box Office, Malvern Festival Theatre, Malvern, Worcs.

The first play, a performance of *Man and Superman*, will be given on May 23; the first recital, Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin, in a programme of music by Elgar and his contemporaries, on 27th May. We understand that the performance of the Elgar Violin Concerto on 28th May with Menuhin as soloist is already sold out. The Festival continues until the 12th June when in the afternoon Hubert Gregg reads from *Correspondence between Elgar and Shaw*, and in the evening the Monteverdi Orchestra, under John Eliot Gardner, gives a programme of music devoted to Elgar, including Percy Young's arrangement of the "Spanish Lady" music.

We wish the organisers good fortune, and hope that this will be the first of many Malvern gatherings.



GUIDE TO PLACES OF ELGARIAN INTEREST IN THE
WORCESTER - MALVERN

AREA

by Michael Trott

THE FIRST PORT OF CALL for an Elgarian visitor to Worcestershire must be the Elgar Birthplace and Museum at Broadheath, marked (1) on map A. The composer was born on June 2nd, 1857 and spent the first few years of his life here before the Elgar family moved back to Worcester in 1859 or 1860. He had a particular affection for Broadheath, and often revisited the familiar common. The cottage contains a wealth of scores, scrapbooks, photographs and personal possessions.

Off the Malvern road at Lower Wick, to the left of a dairy, a private drive leads to Littleton House (2) where Elgar attended the school of Mr. Francis Reeve from 1868 to 1872, eventually becoming head boy. It was here that his interest in the story of the Apostles was awakened. This listed Queen Anne building is now a private residence. Proceeding across Elgar's beloved River Teme towards Malvern, the traveller comes to Powick where the gaunt late-Georgian buildings of the old County Lunatic Asylum (3) stand back from the road on one's left. Elgar conducted the staff band once a week and composed quadrilles and other music for them from 1879 to 1884. It is still a mental hospital, but is scheduled for closure in the early 1980's.

At the top of Malvern Link Common, Alexandra Road leads to Forli (4), a semi-detached house off a short drive, where the Elgars lived from 1891 to 1899. In an upstairs room at the back Elgar wrote his early cantatas, and his Variations on an Original Theme. The dining-room was to the right of the front door, the drawing-room to the left. In the adjoining house Elgar was introduced to Arthur Troyte Griffith. Across the common at the corner of Graham Road and Zetland Road is Fairlea (5), a large austere Victorian house that was the home of the musical Fitton family. The Elgars must have visited here many times in the nineties. Isobel and Hilda Fitton were keen members of the Worcestershire Philharmonic Society, and violist 'Ysobel' is portrayed at practice in the Enigma Variations.

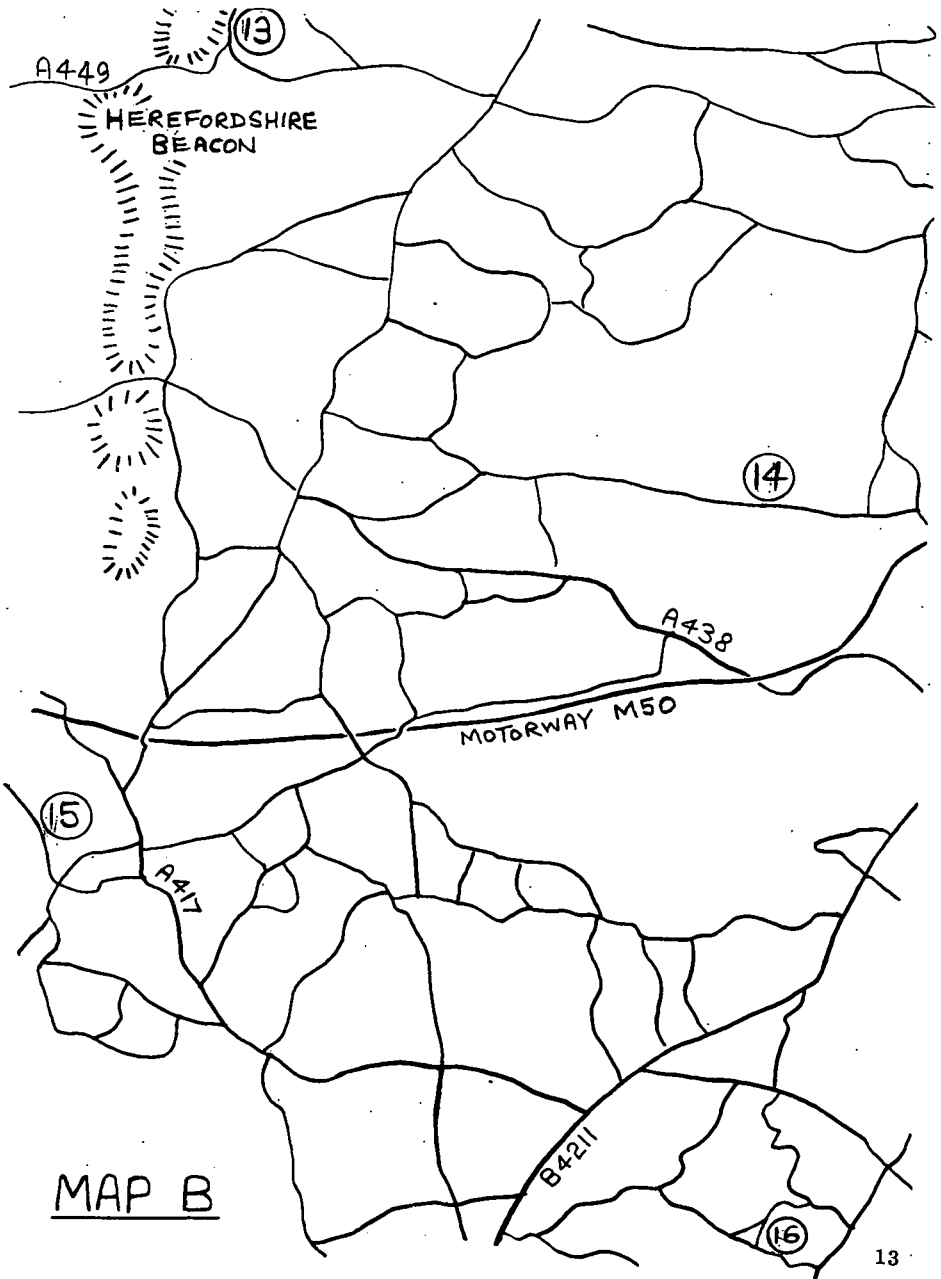
At the centre of Great Malvern, the well-known Abbey Gateway (6) used to house the office of Elgar's architect friend Arthur Troyte Griffith (1864-1942) It was Troyte (Enigma Variation VII) who designed the toposcope on the Worcestershire Beacon and, with Archire Nevinson (brother of Basil--Variation B.G.N.) designed All Saints' Church, Lower Wyche. At Elgar's instigation Griffith was made honorary secretary of the Malvern Concert Club in 1902. Down the hill in Albert Road stands a large Victorian building, adorned by an ugly fire-escape. This is the Mount (7), a finishing school for young ladies

hat was run by Rosa Burley from 1891 to 1906. Elgar used to give weekly violin lessons here. To the south of Malvern Boys' College is a crescent of rather unprepossessing brick houses called The Lees (8). When Lady Elgar came as Miss Alice Roberts to live in Malvern in 1887, she took rooms at the house called Fosmo, then called either Salerno or Saetemo. (She also lived at a house called Ripple Lodge in Leigh Sinton Road.) After their marriage, the Elgars stayed for a few months at no. 4, The Lees.

From 1899 to 1904 the Elgars lived at Craeg Lea (9) on the Wells Road, just south of the Railway Inn, Lower Wyche. In the upstairs room to the right Elgar wrote *Sea Pictures*, *The Dream of Gerontius*, *Pomp and Circumstance* Marches 1 and 2, *Cockaigne*, and *The Apostles*. These years at Craeg Lea were perhaps the composer's happiest. At the turn of the century there was nothing to mar the view of the Severn plain, but in 1904 house-building across the road prompted him to move, this time to Hereford. Birchwood Cottage (10) is the humble little dwelling where *The Dream of Gerontius* was completed in 1900. Elgar rented it as a summer cottage from 1898 to 1903, and it was then surrounded by woods. It is apparent from his letters to Jaeger that he felt a deep attachment to this place. *Caractacus* was also composed in the idyllic surroundings. Now there are farm-buildings, incongruous extensions to the cottage, and few trees. To find Birchwood take the lane off the Worcester-Hereford road opposite Storridge Church and travel a mile along the narrow winding way that must have changed little in eighty years.

Sherridge (11) is still the home of the Norbury family, and lies to the east of their extensive orchards, not far from Birchwood. Winifred Norbury (1861-1938) was a keen amateur musician and member of the Worcester-shire Philharmonic Society, together with her sister, Florence. The Norbury sisters were also keen sportswomen and diligent church-workers. Their Sunday School activities must have interested Alice Elgar, whose great-grandfather, Robert Raikes, had started the Sunday School Movement. Winifred became one of Elgar's 'friends pictured within'. Take the first right-hand turning after Leigh Sinton (Leigh is pronounced as lie), travelling towards Hereford. The stately, eighteenth century house is set behind trees opposite Sherridge Cottage. Madresfield Court (12) at Madresfield has been for generations the moated home of the Lygon family. Lady Mary Lygon was the daughter of the sixth Earl Beauchamp of Madresfield and it was to her Elgar dedicated his *Three Characteristic Pieces* of 1899 and *Variation XIII of the Variations*. Lady Mary was a patron of music in the area and was promoter of the Madresfield Music Competition. In 1895 she was appointed lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of York and in 1905 she married Major the Hon. Henry Trefusis of Cornwall. She died in 1927. Madresfield means 'Field of the Mowers' and in earl Victorian times the Lygons were among the first landowners in the county to use steam traction engines in farming. The original court was Tudor but most of

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the present building is Victorian. The west and north lodges are by Norman Shaw, who designed Elgar's Hampstead residence, Severn House.

Just below the Worcester-Ledbury road at Little Malvern stands the Roman Catholic Church of St. Wulstan, marked (13) on map B. It was here that Lady Elgar was buried in 1920, Sir Edward in 1934, and their daughter Carice Elgar-Blake, in 1970. The gardener still remembers Elgar's burial. The church was built in 1862 when Little Malvern Priory could no longer accommodate the growing Catholic congregation. Close at hand is the Hereford Beacon or British Camp, where the Britons under Caractacus made their legendary stand against the Romans. The site does in fact date back to pre-Roman times. The lofty ramparts that moved Masefield to verse, inspired Elgar to compose his stirring cantata of 1898.

Four miles to the south-east lies Longdon Marsh (14) where in his Craeg Lea days Elgar used to go to think out the great climaxes of The Apostles among the brooding willows. Until drainage in Victorian times, it was a tidal marsh and is still prone to flooding in winter. Marine plants still survive here. The country-side surrounding the southern end of the Malvern Hills provided Elgar with some of his favourite cycle-rides. Just over the Gloucestershire border lies the secluded village of Redmarley d'Abitot. On the Bromsberrow road stands Hazledine House (15) which became the home of Major-General Sir Henry Gee Roberts when he retired from exemplary service in H. M. Indian Army. He died in 1860 leaving a widow, two sons, and a daughter, Caroline Alice, born 1848. Hazledine House is now inexplicably called Pfera Hall, and the back of the house is an awful confusion of ugly outbuildings. On an aisle wall of Redmarley Church is a memorial to Major-General Roberts, praising his service in India.

Hasfield Court (16) is in another Gloucestershire village near the River Severn. It was here that the Elgars enjoyed house parties given by William Meath Baker (1858-1935), the forthright squire and intrepid mountaineer who is depicted in the Variations. W. M. B.'s sister Mary Frances was an old friend of Alice Elgar, and in 1896 became the second wife of the Rev. Alfred Penny of Wolverhampton, whose daughter was 'Dorabella'. Another sister married Richard Baxter Townshend, the Oxford eccentric (Variation III). The original medieval court was the home of the Pouncefoote family. In 1860 W. M. B.'s uncle bought it from the local architect Thomas Fulljames and had the exterior completely changed. The stone walls were refaced and the neo-Renaissance porch added (visible in some photographs of Elgar and Jaeger at Hasfield.) The best place to view is the adjoining churchyard.

THE SECOND PART OF MICHAEL TROTT'S ARTICLE WILL APPEAR
IN THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE, WITH A FURTHER MAP OF THE AREA

This year we celebrate the centenary of the invention of the gramophone. Elgar enthusiasts have special reason to be grateful to Thomas Alva Edison and his followers. Thanks to the timely development of the commercial gramophone record we have preserved for us not only Elgar's own performances of his major works, but also a remarkable account of the musical scene in the late Victorian and early Edwardian period. Indeed a study of early gramophone records allows us a glimpse into an even earlier era: a number of the artists who represented the highest levels of taste and accomplishment when the young Elgar was struggling to develop his own technique survived long enough to make gramophone records in the early years of this century.

Of special interest in this respect are the records made between 1904 and 1908 by the tenor Edward Lloyd, who was closely associated with Elgar's music for several years, and the fiftieth anniversary of whose death falls in March this year. Lloyd was, in fact, the leading British concert tenor of his time and he was a regular performer at the Three Choirs Festivals from 1871. Edward Lloyd was a Londoner by birth. He was born at Westminster on 7th March 1845, the son of a professional singer, a Welshman, who was at that time a lay-vicar at Westminster Abbey. Later he became a vicar-choral at St. Paul's, but this appointment was cut short by his early death, in 1853, at the age of 40. No doubt his father's reputation assisted the young Edward Lloyd in becoming a Westminster chorister himself. After his voice settled into a promising tenor he continued to sing at the Abbey while completing his schooling. In 1866 he moved to Cambridge to take up appointments in the chapel choirs at Trinity and King's College, but he remained there only a year before returning to London as a tenor chorister at St. Andrew's, Wells Street, (where the chorus master was the celebrated Barnby), and within a year he had been appointed a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal.

By 1869 sufficient solo engagements were coming in to allow Edward Lloyd to relinquish his choral appointments and to devote himself entirely to building his concert career. He was particularly lucky in that the celebrated tenor Sims Reeves was coming to the end of his career. The great voice was by then becoming somewhat unreliable, and Reeves was often unable to fulfil his engagements. The young Edward Lloyd happened to be available at short notice on one or two such occasions and acquitted himself with distinction; as a result he soon found himself becoming the first-choice substitute whenever Reeves was unable to appear. Particularly important in the advancement of Lloyd's career was one occasion when he stood in for Sims Reeves at a major performance of 'Messiah' at the Exeter Hall in London and made a memorable impression.

That was in 1874. Lloyd's first connection with the Three Choirs, however, had been three years earlier, when he had taken part in a performance of the Bach 'St. Matthew Passion' at Gloucester. In the same year as his Exeter Hall success Lloyd began his association with the other great festival with which he was to be especially closely linked for the rest of his career--the Crystal Palace Handel Festival. Within a few years Lloyd established himself as the most sought-after tenor by the leading English festivals. It was not only his fine tenor voice that attracted the organisers of these festivals--Lloyd was an exceptionally fine musician with a reputation for being able to learn and understand new music very quickly. Those were the days when an important attraction at the triennial festivals in the provincial cities was the 'novelty' commissioned from one of the extremely prolific generation of choral composers. Often the scores of these works were not completed until a matter of days before the first performance. Lloyd therefore found himself creating roles in many major works by leading composers of the day. He appeared in the first performances of Sullivan's 'The Martyr of Antioch' at Leeds in 1880, and at the 1886 festival at that city sang not only in the same composer's 'Golden Legend' but also in Dvorak's 'St. Ludmilla'.

I have not been able to trace exactly when Elgar first met Edward Lloyd. It was probably at a Worcester Philharmonic Society concert in the early 1880's when the young composer was the leader of the orchestra and Lloyd was a guest artist on several occasions. They seem to have renewed their acquaintance in London at the end of that decade, and by 1890 they had become sufficiently friendly for Elgar to feel able to ask Lloyd for a reference when he was attempting to pick up the threads of his teaching following his return to Worcester. Edward Lloyd's first direct involvement with Elgar's music came in 1896 when he was engaged (perhaps at Elgar's request) as the tenor soloist for the first performance of 'The Light of Life' -- a Worcester Festival commission. The other soloists were Anna Williams, Jessie King and Watkin Mills. This was such a success that arrangements were put in hand for it to be repeated at the next Worcester festival, in 1899, when Lloyd again appeared (interestingly the contralto soloist at this second Worcester performance was Marie Brema, who was to create the role of the Angel in 'Gerontius' many months later).

From 1896 until his retirement in 1900, Edward Lloyd was very much involved with Elgar's music. He sang in performances of 'King Olaf' and created the role of Orbin in 'Caractacus' at Leeds in October 1898. The story of the first performance of 'Gerontius' is too well known to need repeating here. Lloyd, then aged 55, was planning to retire at the end of the year and was occupied with the series of farewell concerts which were expected of a singer of his eminence at that time. Sensitive musician that he was, Lloyd must have been only too well aware of the importance of the occasion and the responsibility that lay on his shoulders. At that stage in his career he must have

had some doubts as to whether he was vocally up to doing justice to such a taxing role, and his unease is clearly evident in David Bispham's recollection of the occasion, quoted in an earlier NEWSLETTER. Indeed, Rosa Burley squarely placed much of the blame for the failure of the first performance on to what she interpreted as Lloyd's total lack of understanding of the part.

The 1929 edition of 'Grove' says of Edward Lloyd: "His exceptional value as a festival tenor was perhaps not fully realised until his retirement, for no one of his successors had a voice equal to his in range and beauty, or so comprehensive a talent." From 1900 until his death on 31st March, 1927 Lloyd lived in peaceful retirement in Sussex. Elgar tried to lure him into singing at the 1904 Elgar Festival at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, but without success. Lloyd did emerge from his retirement occasionally however. In 1902 he sang at a Clara Butt concert at the Albert Hall (in fulfilment of a long-standing promise); he sang a solo in an anthem at the coronation of King George V in 1911 and his last solo appearance was as late as February 1915, when he sang at a concert in aid of Belgian Refugees at the Mansion House. His last appearance on stage, however, was more than a year later when he joined a choir of over 250 leading professional singers who took part in a typically flamboyant concert in aid of the Red Cross organised by Clara Butt, at the Royal Albert Hall. Historically by far the most important occasions when he sang in these later years were the visits to the recording studios of The Gramophone Company between 1904 and 1908. Lloyd made about 34 records during this period. Allowance must, of course, be made for the fact that he was nearly 60 when the first records were made, but enough survives for certain conclusions to be drawn about the nature of his talents in their prime. The voice was probably never a very big one and was really a light lyric tenor, trained in the best belcanto style, which placed great emphasis on line and flexibility. Listening to the characteristics of the voice one cannot help feeling that Lloyd was justifiably uneasy as to his suitability for the role of Gerontius. The tessitura lies awkwardly for this kind of voice, plenty of weight being required in the part of the voice where the registers change, and which was probably becoming weaker at Lloyd's time of life (it is no accident that most of the greatest Gerontius interpreters have been darker-voiced, more baritone tenors, like Elwes, Coates, and Parry Jones). Having said this it must be remembered that Lloyd had a considerable reputation as a Wagner singer, in the concert hall only of course, and his 'party piece' was the Prize Song--the only item he sang at his final farewell at the Albert Hall in 1900.

There is no doubt that Lloyd's friendship meant a great deal to Elgar, and the inspiration of his vocal artistry and practical encouragement was of the greatest importance to the young composer. It is fitting, therefore, that those of us who love Elgar's music should pay tribute to this great singer in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of his death.

THE FIFTEENTH VARIATION. Part II.

Elgar and Sullivan. by Philip L. Scowcroft

[In the first part of this article the author surveyed the relationship between the two men, and ended by noting parallels in their music.]

Both Sullivan and Elgar were proficient conductors, without being among the best of their respective eras--Elgar, I suspect, had the advantage here, especially when each was conducting his own music. Both composed incidental music for plays about King Arthur, though very differently. Sullivan's (1895) is full of charm but Elgar's (1923) is of considerable power and may, as has been suggested recently, have been intended later to be reworked for the Third Symphony.

The younger man certainly enjoyed Sullivan's music; after all, the latter was for many years the leading British composer. The Worcester Philharmonic Society, which Elgar conducted from 1898 to 1902, often played Sullivan. On 30 March 1893 Elgar visited Hereford especially to hear "The Prodigal Son". Much later on, we see that Elgar's gramophone record collection in the 1930's included the Sargent recording of the "Di Ballo" Overture. Then again one remembers Elgar's warm defence of Sullivan's memory in his Birmingham University lectures against an unsympathetic, imperceptive and rather ill-tempered obituary notice by Fuller-Maitland--an act reflecting not only Sullivan's personal kindness to Elgar but also the latter's championship of practical musicians, particularly non-academic ones, against critics of all kinds (Sullivan, despite his formal musical education and his part in establishing what is now known as the Royal College of Music, was--for his indulgence in operetta if for no other reason--clearly a 'non-academic' musician in Elgar's eyes.) The Worcestershire man greatly admired "The Golden Legend" and, as Dr. Percy Young has pointed out, he was probably influenced by Sullivan's boldness of conception in orchestral and choral sonorities, here and in "The Martyr of Antioch", despite the uneven quality of both works. The lovely air and chorus "The Night is Calm" from the former surely bears this out, and the choral writing in the earlier "The Light of the World", though still owing much to Mendelssohn, has a breadth which presages Elgar's own mature style. Sullivan's oratorios, Victorian though they are, do represent a turning away from the overriding conventional religiosity of the similar works of his contemporaries, and a return, however slight this might seem to us, to the principles of dramatic truth. Sullivan was not, after all, a theatre composer for nothing. His tunes, his scoring, his sense of rhythm, and his dramatic sense, far outstripped those of his contemporaries. We can see now that Elgar was the main beneficiary of this legacy, and it was his three great oratorios that established him in the first place as a great composer. Other influences may be traced. Both

wrote many part-songs for male and mixed voices, and it is not surprising that their efforts often bear a family likeness--"My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land" (Mixed Voices), and the Greek Anthology songs (Male Voices), from Elgar's output, are examples of his awareness of Sir Arthur Sullivan's work in this field.

Of course, the differences between the two composers and their work are more striking than the similarities and others might be mentioned. Their respective influences were different ones reflecting the generation and more between them. Sullivan, a great eclectic, mirrors in his inspiration, and especially his instrumentation, the polish of Mendelssohn, and many earlier figures play their part in his make up. Elgar's music, while it shares with Sullivan's the important influence of Schumann, would have been vastly different without the work of Wagner, Brahms and Dvorak, three composers who made little or no impact on Sullivan.

Perhaps the most notable parallel is that Sullivan was, though never a Master of the Queen's Musick, the "Laureate Composer" of his day, just as Elgar was of his.

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FORTHCOMING RECORDINGS+++++

Sir Adrian Boult has recorded the five Pomp and Circumstance Marches, the Imperial March, and the Empire March(1924) for EMI..... Herbert Sumsion's recording of the Organ Sonata is scheduled for reissue by EMI in June..... Sir George Solti has recorded the five Pomp and Circumstance Marches with the LPO for Decca.....RCA are bringing out a double album of the complete Wind Quintet music played by the Athena Quintet.....Daniel Barenboim has recorded the Introduction and Allegro for Strings with the ECO for CBS.....

OTHER RECORDS RELEASED+++++

The recording of Elgar Rarities by the Uppingham Community College Choir, conducted by Barry Collett is now available. It consists of a number of Anthems and Part-Songs, most of them not previously recorded including the early "Drakes Broughton". There are five solo songs by the soprano Judith Robinson, and three instrumental pieces: the rare duet "Duett for Trombone and Double Bass", and the piano pieces "Skizze" and "In Smyrna." The price is £2.75 including postage, and the record is obtainable from: Uppingham Community College, London Road, Uppingham, Rutland, Leics. LE15 9TJ. The record companies have also released: Cello Concerto. Pierre Fournier/BPO/Wallenstein. Privilege 2535201 (Re-issue) [See Gramophone 12.76]----Violin Concerto. Menuhin/LSO/Elgar. and Fantasia & Fugue in C minor. (Bach, trans. Elgar) RAHO/Elgar. HMV Treasury HLM 7107. (Re-issue) [See Gramophone 4.77]

BOOK REVIEW

UNFINISHED JOURNEY by Yehudi Menuhin.

Macdonald & Janes,
£5.95

For over 50 years Yehudi Menuhin has been before the public - first as a child prodigy, then as one of the leading concert violinists in the world, then as a teacher and organiser of festivals, and parallel with his musical career went an increasing active concern for people. He has been a fighter for justice, not only for Jewish people, but for those in all countries, especially artists, who fall foul of the particular ism which is currently in power. He is admired not only by musicians, but also by many who have little interest in music, and who have never heard him play. This substantial volume is Menuhin's own account of his life, interests, and philosophy. As an autobiography it does not entirely satisfy the reader wanting a detailed account of his life and work. Often it jumps without warning from one subject, or period, to another, and when the author is emotionally involved--as with his family or friends--he has devoted large parts of the book to them, without regard to balance. But perhaps this is part of the charm of the man. He is not only an artist and teacher, he is a great humanitarian and an idealist. It is natural therefore that he should express himself at length on those people and subjects most dear to him. In the years to come another hand will write the critical assessment of Menuhin's career, but meanwhile we have his own view of his life, and the chapters devoted to his early years in America are particularly illuminating. Of great interest too is the part of the book dealing with Enesco, and the influence which he had on the young boy's developing talent.

There are some good photographs, including the usual one of Menuhin and Elgar at the piano. A less-usual picture, and one which I have not seen before, is a group taken in 1932 of Menuhin, Elgar and Beecham. His first meeting with Elgar, the story of which is so familiar to many of us, is again described, but it is followed by a "confession" which may well come as a surprise. He mentions playing the violin concerto in other countries and goes on "Usually I make a cut in the last movement, before the magical cadenza, where the recapitulation tends to sag and lose the audience's attention. Once I tried the cut version in England and was pounced upon--and rightly: one should not play fast and loose with a country's national heritage, however pure one's intentions."

A very personal "Unfinished Journey" which gives us a rare glimpse of the spirit of an international musician.

R. P. T

RECORD REVIEWS

CORONATION ODE, op. 44; NATIONAL ANTHEM (arr. Elgar) HMV ASD 3345

(With Parry's I was glad) Felicity Lott, Alfreda Hodgson, Richard Morton, Stephen Roberts, CUMS choir, Choir of King's College, Cambridge, Kneller Hall Band, New Philharmonia Orchestra, Philip Ledger.

How better to begin a record for Jubilee Year than with Elgar's arrangement of the National Anthem, written for the 1902 coronation and how grand it sounds complete with the optional parts for military band. It should perhaps be noted that this is not the full version with soprano solo but the slightly cut version as performed by Sir Adrian Boult and others. (Elgar's own recording (RLS 713) uses the choir sopranos to sing the soloist's part.)

This is followed by the premiere recording of the Coronation Ode, none of which has appeared on disc before. Although the last movement fits A. C. Benson's words "Land of hope and glory" to the tune from the trio of the first Pomp and Circumstance March, this should not be confused with the version that Elgar published as a song for Clara Butt which was in fact premiered two months before the Ode in August 1902 and has of course been recorded many times before, in one form or another. The way in which 'the tune' is used in the Ode is considerably more interesting both in the orchestral accompaniment and in the way the words are set, and is far more successful than some writers have tried to suggest. HMV have wisely included all the music Elgar wrote for the work, including the extra section for Queen Mary that Elgar added in 1911, in addition to the 1902 one for Queen Alexandra.

The first, and probably the finest movement, 'Crown the King' opens with a splendid orchestral introduction in the grand style, and shows what a fine recording HMV have produced. Every detail is clear and yet the whole is superbly rich and typically characteristic of the King's acoustic.

After the two sections for the Queens, the third movement 'Britain, ask of thyself' is a rumbustious section for Bass solo and mens' voices which is rather reminiscent of parts of 'Caractacus'. Here, and throughout the record, the choral singing is really vibrant and thrilling. Only in this movement does the King's acoustic prove to be just a little of a hindrance to clarity, but not enough to mar enjoyment. However 'Peace, perfect peace', a beautiful, short unaccompanied movement sung here by the King's choir alone with the soloists, clearly gains considerably from the recording location. The last movement, the setting of 'Land of Hope and Glory', provides an exciting and fitting climax to the work and is admirably realised here by all concerned. I feel sure that we shall be hearing this movement on the radio, many times in the next few months.

J. G. K.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE ***

Rosemary Parker (Soprano), Ann Tester (Contralto),
Paul Sutton (Tenor), Charles Kerry (Bass). With the Morden
Amateur Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Peter Smith.

[obtainable from Mr. Smith at 179 Hillcross Avenue, Morden,
Surrey, at £3.20]. *** See NEWSLETTER, May 1976.

I do not know how many members of the Society acquired this record, but it seems to me worthy of a review.

Quite apart from the well-known "Meditation", there are many things in the work indicative of the greater Elgar to come. For example, the remarkable passage for unaccompanied double chorus (Vocal Score, pp.45-6); the tenor solo "As a Spirit didst Thou Pass"; the original and very Elgarian accompaniment (pp.51-8, and 65-6) - hints of the drama of "Caractacus" and "The Apostles" here. The beauty of the women's chorus in "Woe to the Shepherds"; the exquisite orchestral passage "And He Worshipped Him" (p. 74); and the noble dignity of the final bass solo: the Elgarian traits are everywhere, but--as always with Elgar--when the words improve the music matches them. A libretto and descriptive notes are supplied with the record.

The soloists--presumably professional--are, on the whole, good. The soprano, Mother of the Blind Man, and the contralto, Narrator, are competent, if nothing more. The bass, Jesus, has an unpleasant vibrato, and his intonation is sometimes at fault. But the tenor, the Blind Man at the centre of the story, has a good voice, and sings his part with pathos and understanding. For the rest it must be emphasised that this is definitely an amateur performance, recorded at a public concert. So that accidents, which are, alas!, still a risk with amateur productions, occur here. There are horn 'blobs', and missed and late entries, both in the orchestra and chorus. The strings are inevitably a little weak, yet the orchestra sometimes drowns the chorus. Sopranos and altos are lacking in weight, except on occasions (e.g. pp.40 and 43, where there are fine bursts of sound). The tenors and basses on the other hand are vigorous and dramatically effective, from the opening Chorus of Levites(T. T. B. B.) onwards. It is good to hear the duet "Doubt not thy Father's Care" in the original form, and not arranged for S. A. T. B. A break is made in no. 9, but it does not affect the continuity.

Until we get the commercial recording of "The Light of Life" for which everyone is hoping, this is a good introduction to a less familiar work; and the enterprise of the Morden Society in making the record available deserves to be supported.

A. W. B. W.

to be reckoned with. The SNO chorus sing with great understanding and power. The crescendo from p to ff on the word "most" (just before 75, Part II) by the sopranos is absolutely breath-taking. The attack is good, and the diction and ensemble excellent. Yet there is a weakness--I think they are under-strength. In the eight-part writing most of the detail is lost, especially in the alto and tenor. The semi-chorus are similarly obliterated--they are almost inaudible after 74, Part I ("Go, in the Name of God"). This is not helped by the recording, which gives too much prominence to the soloist here. (Elgar himself recommended the semi-chorus to be placed in front of the orchestra.) The weakest singing is in the six-part female chorus after 63, Part II.

This is one of the finest of the six available versions. It can be safely and strongly recommended, even to those who already possess and treasure other recordings. The box also contains a booklet with an informative article by Diana McVeagh, and as a bonus, Jaeger's Analytical Notes.

G. H.

CORONATION ODE op. 44; THE SPIRIT OF ENGLAND op. 80 RCA RL25074
(2 record set)
Teresa Cahill, Anne Collins, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Gwynne Howell, Scottish National Orchestra and Chorus, Alexander Gibson.

As we go to press, I have just received a copy of these new RCA discs. I have long looked forward to a record of the Spirit of England, Elgar's setting of three poems by Lawrence Binyon, which he wrote during the first World War. This, Elgar's last big choral work, has up to now been a major gap in the record catalogue and it is a real pleasure to be able to welcome this exceedingly fine premiere recording unreservedly. Alexander Gibson directs a serious, devotional performance that I find most moving.

The second of the two discs, issued together in a folder and at a reduced price, brings another performance of the Coronation Ode. Neither space nor time permit a detailed comparison, but in general Gibson's performance is rather more flexible and hence perhaps rather more subtle than Ledger's. Thus, although the last movement does not quite reach the real climax of the HMV, the opening, taken slightly faster makes a really strong impact from the start, and the singing of the SNO chorus in the two 'Queen' movements (again the 1911 one is included) at slower and more flexible tempo is most persuasive. Throughout the work, the chorus and orchestra produce most beautiful pianissimo tone. The RCA recording (made in Paisley Abbey) is a shade more incisive than the HMV and yet yields nothing in grandeur and space, the organ being particularly well integrated.

J. G. K.

Robert Tear (Tenor), Alfreda Hodgson (Contralto),
Benjamin Luxon (Baritone), Scottish National Orchestra,
conducted by Alexander Gibson.

It is difficult to please everyone in reviewing "The Dream of Gerontius" simply because it refuses to fit into any category, and this allows for differing interpretations. Elgar told Jaeger that it was not an oratorio, and added "there's no word invented yet to describe it." So we must not be too hard on conductors' idiosyncracies, nor alternatively heap praise on them for adhering closely to the composer's markings.

Having said that, this latest recording is a very strong competitor indeed, judged by any criteria. In his choice of tempi Gibson is nearer to Britten than the other recordings, but I feel that he gets closer to the heart of the work than Britten does, and often sheds new light on familiar passages. In particular his pacing of the end of Part I is superb, and if his Demons do not snarl enough for me, this is a minor flaw. We need not fear to put Gibson alongside the eminent names which have previously recorded the work. I personally prefer the broader readings of Boult and Barbirolli (for example, at "Praise to the Holiest", cue 74, Part II), but Gibson is here much closer to the composer's recommended tempo.

For many, "Gerontius" stands or falls by its soloists. Robert Tear sings the title role with great fervour, and has a fine voice, although I find his approach a little too operatic. He has a tendency to start just under the note and to sing everything with a minimum dynamic of mf. "Mary, pray for me" (after 65, Part I) is much more like f than p. Again, this is a purely personal preference, and his performance is a good deal better than Gedda's on the recent HMV recording. Oratorio-lovers will perhaps opt for Heddle Nash or Richard Lewis. Peter Pears is probably the finest interpreter of the role, though technically one is left wishing that he had recorded it ten years earlier. Alfreda Hodgson is up against considerable opposition as the Angel-- Janet Baker, Yvonne Minton, Helen Watts. Yet she sings as well as any of them--Baker included. It is a magnificent performance--thoroughly committed, and sung with great beauty and control. Although the bass part is small it is very important, and Benjamin Luxon, like Robert Lloyd on Boult's recording, sings it superbly. He has the depth that is needed, and yet is capable of great feeling and tenderness.

This recording then has for me the strongest team of soloists. Barbirolli is unfortunately let down badly by his bass. But "Gerontius" needs strong choral singing too, and once again, this is a performance

B R A N C H N E W S

WEST MIDLANDS Secretary: Martin Passande, "Housemartins" 1 Stoney Street, Madley, Herefordshire HR2 9NJ

Jan. 22nd. Annual General Meeting.

Although the attendance was not high it was pleasing to see some less familiar faces. The year and its events was reviewed, and reports duly received. The formal meeting was followed by a recital of viola and piano music by Elgar, performed by Sue Savage, the Branch Chairman's wife, and Bob Thomas. Sue has had orchestral experience under Bruno Madena and Herbert von Karajan as co-principal viola player at the Sommer Akademie at the Salzburg Mozarteum. Bob is a well-known horn player, a former pupil of William Davies and Ian Cordingly, and proved an excellent accompanist.

The Six Easy Pieces, Op.22, and Virelai, Op.4, no.3, were played in viola and piano arrangements by the duo, and the Piano Sonatina was the solo. Sue Savage's rich tone and expressive phrasing, coupled with Bob Thomas's sensitive accompaniment produced pleasing and satisfying music making. The evening closed with refreshments.

Feb. 5th. Joint Meeting with Worcester Recorded Music Society.

This meeting is an annual event and judging by the size of the audience proves a welcome event for both societies. The fact that the Society's co-founder A. T. Shaw was the speaker proved an undoubted draw. The evening opened with the Triumphant March from "Caractacus", followed by the "Wand of Youth" Suite no.2. Bertie Shaw's wit and engaging remarks full of knowledge and perception heightened enjoyment of the music enormously. Next we heard Vaughan Williams' "Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus" before which Bertie belied his octogenarian years and sang us the tune which is the basis of the work. The first half concluded with Elgar's "Ave Verum" motet. In the second half we heard the new recording of Elgar's Second Symphony, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. The breadth and majesty of the reading swelled in thrilling, surging waves of sound, to the delight of us all. It was particularly pleasurable to have the opportunity to hear this new performance in spacious surroundings where it could be projected at near live orchestral level.

April 16th. Recital, and Cheese and Wine Party.

The recital given by Judith Robinson and Barry Collett at our 1976 A.G.M. was so successful that they were immediately booked for this meeting. Fifteen months of anticipation were richly rewarded by their recital of nineteen songs by Elgar and his European contemporaries. A sizeable audience were most appreciative of finely sung songs by Elgar, Fauré, Dvorak, Rachmaninov, and

Strauss. Special delights were Fauré's "Après Un Rêve", Rachmaninov's "To the Children", and Strauss's "Die Nacht". The whole recital was notable for sensitivity and true musicality over a range of varying vocal material. Barry Collett acquitted himself with panache, especially in Dvorak's rhapsodic Gipsy Songs. The formal vote of thanks was proposed by Edwin Buckhalter visiting from the London branch. Refreshments afterwards were prepared by Sue Savage and Anne Soden to whom sincere thanks are due.

LONDON Secretary: E. W. A. Jackson, "Killiegray," Batchworth Lane,
Northwood, Middx. Telephone Northwood 22010

Feb. 7th. Exultate Singers.

Our experiment with a 'live' programme turned out to be a considerable success. This small choir of 16 (SATB) is directed by Garrett O'Brien, assistant organist at Southwark Cathedral. Their recent excellent recording of Vaughan Williams had whetted the appetite for what proved to be a well-balanced programme, principally of Elgar songs. We heard Five Greek Part-Songs, and Four Rome Part-Songs, in addition to four solo songs in which the counter-tenor, Philip Manser, was accompanied by Kath Banks. Of the latter, "Sea Slumber" and "Come Gentle Night" were most sensitively performed. In contrast to Elgar, Mr. O'Brien introduced songs by a number of English composers. In one group we heard "The Goslings" (Bridge), "Brigg Fair" (Grainger) and "Shall We Go Dance the Hey" (Stanford), as well as songs by Delius and Havergal Brian. Another group comprised five songs from "A Garland for the Queen", written respectively by Bax, Ireland, Vaughan Williams, Finzi and Howells. If one's personal preference was "What is it Like to be Young and Fair" (Bax), "Silence and Music" (Vaughan Williams) and "White Flowering Days" (Finzi), all the songs effectively demonstrated the supreme value of the words of each poem for the composer. Indeed we were shown clearly by such examples that Elgar frequently used words which cannot match his eloquent music and are often tawdry. In a group of three solo songs, "Dies Amoris," composed by Mr. O'Brien himself, we again heard Philip Manser. Perhaps a counter-tenor is an acquired taste not shared by all--maybe the room acoustics were not helpful. To say that one preferred the earlier Elgar group is not to imply criticism of the work itself, which one would like to hear again in different surroundings. All praise however to the choir and conductor who often produced some exquisite singing, particularly in the quiet passages--always difficult to achieve for any choir, large or small.

March 7th. Unreleased Elgar Recordings, by Christopher Bishop.

Although it had been announced that Diana McVeagh would talk about Elgar's Concert Overtures, her illness most unfortunately prevented her appearance. This is only the second time in six years when we have had to make an enforced change in the programme. Members will be glad to know that Miss McVeagh

is better and has kindly agreed to give her talk next November.

At short notice we were indeed fortunate to find that not only did our good friend and member, Christopher Bishop, happen to be free on the evening, but also that he so willingly agreed to solve our problem. In a busy and demanding life Mr. Bishop is naturally reluctant to sacrifice his rare moments of leisure; thus we all much appreciate his kindness in coming to the rescue. It was well known that EMI had a number of new Elgar recordings in the pipe-line. How better than that Mr. Bishop should give us a preview of those for which he was responsible! He brought the 1st Symphony, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult, and the first complete recording of the Coronation Ode, with the King's College, Cambridge Choir conducted by Philip Ledger. Also included was an extract from "Caractacus" conducted by Sir Charles Groves, produced by John Willan. Further to acknowledge Mr. Bishop's kindness, we arranged to borrow the superb equipment belonging to the Ruislip Gramophone Society through the good offices of their Secretary Paul Emerson, a London member.

We heard the greater part of the "Coronation Ode", a superlative recording by any standards and rightly described by Mr. Bishop as 'a bouquet for the Queen in her Jubilee year.' This was followed by the last movement of the Symphony, which has since been released and acclaimed by the critics. Finally we heard the last part of "Caractacus", to be released in June. Such a splendid programme was inevitably enhanced by Mr. Bishop's excellent and informative commentary with his usual amusing anecdotes. The quality of the recordings was fully matched by the quality of reproduction. Indeed the latter was certainly a revelation to the large audience, many of whom had come expecting to hear Diana McVeagh, but were rewarded with a truly memorable feast of music.

April 4th. Elgar's Houses, by Dr. William Reed.

We had a full house again for what proved a completely absorbing evening. In addition to shewing his excellent slides of the majority of Elgar's houses, Dr. Reed also shewed many pictures of the environment of each house. These were displayed in chronological order, and accompanied by a most informative commentary. Appropriate recordings were used not only as links, but principally to illustrate the effect of varying surroundings on his development as a composer. Many photographs were new to us, particularly those taken at Alassio. We learnt of the difficulty Dr. Reed experienced in locating the house in Alassio where 'In the South' was written. It transpired that the present occupants had never even heard of Elgar! They were very interested to hear about the association, so Dr. Reed presented them with a copy of Silvestri's recording of 'In the South' he had had the forethought to take with him. They asked him to send them a photograph of Elgar on his return to London, which they were most anxious to display prominently in the house. Dr. Reed is to be congratulated on the splendid organisation of his lecture, in which he was greatly helped by two friends, Mr. Judge who looked after

the music and his son who kindly operated the projector. Despite his unnecessary apprehension that his lecture would be too 'elementary' for members of the Society, we can assure Dr. Reed that it was an outstanding success and a most rewarding meeting.

IMPORTANT: As the 6th June, 1977 is a public holiday, it has been necessary to change the date of Mr. Eric Fenby's address. This will now be given on Monday, 13th June. The London A.G.M. has been postponed until Monday, 27th June.

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Jan. 29th. A.G.M. and a Punch and Mince Pie Party.

The Officers and Committee were re-elected en bloc, following which the Chairman gave his report of the first 18 months of operation of the Branch, whose inaugural meeting took place on June 28, 1975. The Chairman thanked the members for their support of this venture, and said that he looked forward to the pleasure of their company on future occasions. There were some who came to the inaugural meeting but didn't come back, but for those who did we shall do our utmost to provide a continuing programme of interest to Elgarians. The Treasurer reported that the financial position was a very good one, taking into account the short period of time the Branch had been in operation. We had rounded the Branch subscription up to £1.00 and had decreased our Hall letting expenses by taking a smaller, more intimate room at a decreased cost. The business meeting over, we proceeded with the more important job of drinking Punch and eating some very tasty mince pies! Regrettably, there were only about 12 people present at this meeting, although some apologies for absence had been received.

Feb. 19th.

This was a record recital evening presented by Martin Passande of Hereford, the Branch Vice-Chairman. We heard the new Zukerman recording of the Violin Concerto, and Parry's "Symphonic Variations". Mr. Passande also provided a very concise and interesting commentary. We look forward to a return visit next year, on February 11th.

March 19th. Edward Elgar. Romantic and Visionary. A talk by John Hammond of Nottingham. (Chairman of the H.G. Wells Soc. and Co-Founder Chairman of E.M. Branch Elgar Soc.)

A very good attendance for an excellent evening. Mr. Hammond provided us with some really heart-felt knowledge of Elgar. Definitely a labour of love, a love of the subject by the speaker. Mr. Hammond told us that he had the

great good fortune to be brought up in a musical family. Music, either played on the piano or by an orchestra, on a record or on the wireless formed the background to all his childhood years. Always the music of Elgar had for him a special and distinctive appeal. As a boy it was the stirring patriotic tunes which appealed to him so much. Today, Mr. Hammond said, he is much more interested in the oratorios and the symphonies and much less interested in the patriotic tunes. Mr. Hammond said that his special concern this evening was with the Romantic and visionary elements in Elgar's make-up and approach to music. He was an essentially Romantic composer. The speaker said that he took the word Romantic to mean emphasising of the imagination and emotions over reason and intellect. In this sense it is the opposite of Classical. A Romantic takes the view that content is more important than form. Emotional expressiveness is more important than technical precision. Elgar cannot be fully appreciated unless he is recognised for what he was, an essentially English Romantic composer who was inspired and moved by Dreams and Visions. Sometimes religious, sometimes mystical but always intensely emotional. Indeed, to listen to his music is always an intensely emotional experience.

Mr. Hammond drew attention to the extraordinary parallels between the lives of Elgar and Wells, and quoted from the article which he wrote in a recent edition of the Society Newsletter. There is a restless quality about Elgar's music which finds its exact counterpoint in Well's novels. There is too an Edwardian flavour about much of Elgar's music a last sigh of regret for the passing of the Golden Age, seen in such works as *Salut d'Amour*, *Sospiri* which is closely paralleled in the early Wells.

April 23rd. Elgar's Organ Works, by Peter White.

Mr. White, Master of the Music, Leicester Cathedral, said that no other single instrument could express so well the pageantry of Elgar's music. The musical illustrations we heard were *Cantique*, dedicated to Hugh Blair, the 8 *Vesper Voluntaries*, and the G Major Organ Sonata. The speaker explained to us the ideas, development and recapitulation of a work such as this and then as we listened to the recording Mr. White took us on a guided tour of this Sonata.

We were told that much music was transcribed from Orchestra to Organ, especially in Elgar's time, as there were few Orchestras in the provinces. Compositions of Elgar's transcribed are the *Imperial March*, to which we listened, the *Prelude and Angel's Farewell* from *Gerontius*, *Prelude to The Kingdom*, *Carillon* and *For the Fallen*.

We are grateful to Peter White for coming and giving us a most interesting evening. We were very pleased to welcome to this meeting the Editor of the NEWSLETTER, Mr. Ronald Taylor. We enjoyed his congenial company and hope that he found his visit well worthwhile. We look forward to seeing him again, possibly at a Rutland Sinfonia Concert.

LETTERS

From VERONICA BROWN

Dear Sir, Is there any documentary proof that Elgar attended the 1875 "Mock Festival"? One would naturally assume that he did; and there is surely musical evidence to support that assumption. The recent recording of "Cantique" is apt to provoke such remarks as "That doesn't sound like Elgar, it's more like S. S. Wesley", and Dr. Moore assigns the central theme of "Cantique" to the 1870's. Now, the most notable occasion on which Wesley is known to have played the Worcester Cathedral organ was during the mock festival--his playing was considered by some the only remarkable feature of that truncated event--so perhaps there is material at Broadheath which would either confirm or refute a suggestion that the "Cantique" theme was composed while the mock festival was fresh in Elgar's memory, i. e. during Autumn 1875.

From DR. JOHN BUTTREY

Dear Sir, May I take up a point raised by Miss Diana McVeagh in her letter in our last issue? Regarding the Three Stars over Variation XIII of the "Enigma Variations", Miss McVeagh asks: 'Is it too naive to wonder if the reason Elgar did not want definitely to associate anyone with it is that it is no. 13?' The fact is that Elgar did associate someone with Variation XIII, and unfortunately Elgarians have been kept mystified too long in this matter.

It transpires that the descriptions we all know from the Novello booklet "My Friends Pictured Within" do not fully represent what Elgar originally wrote. His complete notes seem to have been written about 1928 to accompany the pianola rolls of the "Variations" recorded in that year. The manuscript of these notes is now at the Birthplace, and I am indebted to Mr. Trevor Fenemore-Jones for bringing them to my attention and for dating them. On Variation XIII Elgar begins: 'The asterisks take the place of the name of Lady Mary Lygon who was, at the time of the composition, on a sea voyage. . .'; the rest is as published. But when this commentary was printed, Lady Mary's name was omitted. As Mr. Fenemore-Jones has pointed out to me, the criterion for whose name went in and whose was left out seems to have depended on whether the person was still alive or not. For example, Lady Elgar, Messrs. Steuart-Powell, Townshend, Arnold, Jaeger, Sinclair, and Nevinson are all named in the manuscript, while the others are not, except--strangely enough--Lady Mary. Her name appears in the manuscript but was suppressed in the published version. When Novellos took over the notes and published them in booklet form, they did not amend this. As a result the lack of initials and the substitution of the three stars have let speculation and fabrication reign supreme. It is good news that we are at last able to be certain about the point: I had a

ussle with the late Sir Jack Westrup over the matter(see my letters in Music and Letters, January and July 1973) when he expressed his belief in the nonsense perpetrated by Miss Rosa Burley (Edward Elgar, 'Record of a Friendship,' pp.125-7).

But, as to why Elgar used the three stars rather than Lady Mary's initials, perhaps others have the answer to this. Yet I had better warn readers who have not seen my letters to Sir Jack that Mrs. Powell's story in 'Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation', Third Edn. p.115, also stands exposed as a fiction.

From P.G. LEACH

Dear Sir, Recently whilst playing through the piano arrangement of the accompaniment to the Violin Concerto, I was struck by the resemblance between the rhythmic pattern of the orchestral introduction of the slow movement of the concerto, and the opening theme of the first movement of Mozart's Gminor Symphony (K. 550). The tempo is much faster in Mozart of course but the rhythm is remarkably similar. I wonder if any of your readers can comment as to whether the resemblance was deliberate or unconscious?

STEPHEN LLOYD has kindly drawn our attention to an obituary of Lady Elgar which appeared in the Musical Times, and which was largely based on the notice in The Times. There are many interesting points in this obituary and we hope to get permission to reproduce it at a later date.

FRED MACDONALD of 42 Duddingston Road, Edinburgh EH15 1SF is anxious to obtain a copy of the "Letters of Edward Elgar", edited by Percy Young. If any reader has a copy he is willing to sell please get in touch directly with Mr. Macdonald.

We have received a number of letters from readers, and we are most grateful for all of them. It is not possible for us to publish many letters but we are glad to received them, and we hope to publish a further selection in our next issue. We do appeal to those who write to us, with a view to publication, to keep the letters short wherever possible.

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The Annual Subscription to the Society is £2 per annum.

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NEW MEMBERS are needed, and warmly welcomed. If you are not sure if you reside in a branch area or not, the Society will be pleased to advise you. It is hoped to form further branches as support increases. All members receive the NEWSLETTER, at present issued in January, May, and September.

ELGAR SOCIETY NEWSLETTER. A few of the back numbers of the previous series remain, nos. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10. All enquiries for these issues should be sent to the editor, and a charge of 10p, plus 9p. postage, is made for each available back issue. All other issues are completely out of print