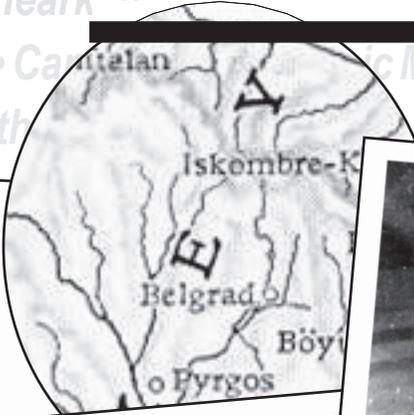
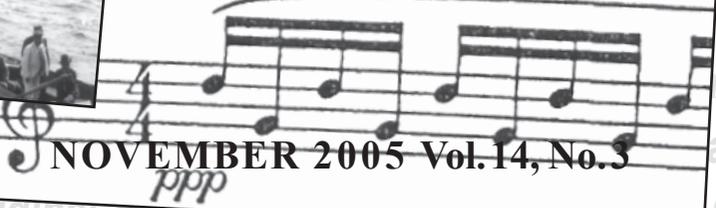


*The* Elgar Society  
**Journal**



**IN**

*quasi andante* ♩ = 72



**NOVEMBER 2005 Vol.14, No.5**

# The Elgar Society

Founded 1951

*President*

Richard Hickox, CBE

*Vice-Presidents*

Ian Parrott

Sir David Willcocks, CBE, MC

Diana McVeagh

Vernon Handley, CBE

Michael Kennedy, CBE

Jerrold Northrop Moore

Michael Pope

Lady Barbirolli, OBE

Robert Anderson

Sir Colin Davis, CH, CBE

Sir Charles Mackerras, CH, AC, CBE

June, Marchioness of Aberdeen, CBE

Dame Janet Baker, CH, DBE

Leonard Slatkin

Sir Andrew Davis, CBE

Donald Hunt, OBE

Christopher Robinson, CVO, CBE

*Chairman*

Andrew Neill

*Vice-Chairman*

David Morris

*Treasurer*

Phyllis Shipp

*Secretary*

Wendy Hillary

# The Elgar Society Journal

1 Matthews Close, Aylesbury HP20 2UZ

Telephone & Fax: 01296 422367

Email: [journal@elgar.org](mailto:journal@elgar.org)

November 2005 Vol. 14, No. 3

## Articles

Elgar in Smyrna, 1905 3  
*Andrew Neill*

'Loveliest, Brightest, Best': a reappraisal of 'Enigma's' Variation XIII (Part II) 25  
*Ernest Blamires*

The Shover Uncovered 39  
*Martin Bird and Ernest Blamires*

The Boon of Far Peru 45  
*Geoffrey Hodgkins*

Reports 48

Book Reviews 52

CD Reviews 58

Letters 66

100 Years Ago... 69

*The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily  
those of the editor or the Elgar Society.*

*Front cover: Souvenirs of Elgar's cruise in the eastern Mediterranean which took place one hundred years ago; they include snapshots taken by the composer himself and, of course, the piano piece In Smyrna. In the current issue the Society's chairman Andrew Neill documents this unique episode by referencing Elgar's own journal and contemporary naval records.*



*Lord Charles Beresford with Kora.*

# Elgar in Smyrna, 1905

**Andrew Neill**

*One hundred years ago in the autumn of 1905, Elgar was cruising in the eastern Mediterranean. This last-minute month-long excursion as guest of the Royal Navy offered an exotic and exciting interlude between the Three Choirs Festival and the second of his professorial lectures at Birmingham University delivered on 1 November. Elgar left photographs and a journal of the cruise, extracts of which are newly transcribed for this article, which also introduces the cast of characters who accompanied him and suggests the possible effects on the composer of this 'journey to the East'.*

Elgar's diary is the source for our understanding of his Mediterranean tour. Space does not permit its transcription complete but I have attempted to reproduce the most important entries for the purpose of this article. In addition to the diary entries Elgar made notes in the margin which are reproduced here in brackets.

1905 was the zenith of the Edwardian Royal Navy. For 100 years it had fought no serious engagement which challenged its supremacy and was complacent, out of date in its thinking and in many areas inefficient. The reforms instituted under the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone were beginning to be implemented and HMS *Dreadnought*, a revolution in battleship design, was laid down in 1905. This was a time when the interests of the country and Empire were most obviously protected by the Navy. Its fortunes were a constant source of interest across most areas of society. The contrast with today, when the Royal Navy is smaller than it has ever been, could not be greater.

In 1905 Malta was the headquarters of the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet, which used the harbour at Valetta. This had been developed as a naval base since Malta became part of the Empire in 1814 under the provisions of the Treaty of Paris.

The piano piece *In Smyrna* is the prime reason for our interest in Elgar's trip to Greece and Turkey in the autumn of 1905. Published as part of an anthology at the end of 1905, *In Smyrna*, as Jerrold Northrop Moore says, 'gives us a special insight into Elgar's understanding of the piano at the summit of his career'.<sup>1</sup>

Elgar kept a comprehensive journal of his trip and to read it is to be struck by many things; most notably the duality of his response to new sights, smells and sounds as an Edwardian gentleman on one hand and as an artist revelling in what he encountered on the other. The trip lasted nearly a month (he left Worcester on 14 September and returned to England on 12 October) and was another substantial event in a busy year for the Elgars. The fact that Elgar was a guest of the Royal Navy added a political significance to the trip. Moreover, as he recorded the trip through the lens of his camera and some photographs remain for us to consider we can glimpse something of what he experienced.

In 1956 Percy Young covered Elgar's trip in detail in his *Letters of Edward Elgar* when he quoted much of Elgar's diary and comments verbatim. Since then others have gone back to Elgar's own account, most notably Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore. With the additional help of Martin Bird I am now able to bring fresh eyes to Elgar's diary. I also thought it might be helpful to look at the trip from the point of view of the Royal Navy, and I examined the logs of the four principal vessels involved (*Bulwark*, *Carnarvon*, *Imogene* and *Surprise*) at the Public Record Office at Kew. Sadly, a log is no more than a laconic account of the day in the life of a ship, and not once is Elgar or his party mentioned in any of the logs I read. Nevertheless, these documents help to corroborate Elgar's

diary and clarify some minor aspects of the tour.

## Principal Characters

### Vice-Admiral Lord Charles William de la Poer Beresford, GCB (1846–1919)

Beresford had grown up in a Navy as it managed the transition from sail to power. Having experienced change so fundamental, there is irony that he is now most remembered for his opposition to the radical changes to the Navy fostered by his great rival Lord Fisher prior to the Great War.

Born in 1846, Beresford was the second of five sons of the fourth Marquess of Waterford. He was brought up on the family's 10,000-acre estate at Curraghmore, Portlaw, County Waterford, where he became an accomplished horseman. He joined the Royal Navy in December 1859, when he went to HMS *Britannia*, then based in Haslar Creek. His first ship was HMS *Marlborough*, a vessel he once described as 'ship of happiest memory'.

He became an ADC to Queen Victoria, later entering parliament as member for County Waterford (1874–80) on an anti-home rule platform. He later served as the member for Marylebone (1885–9), for York (1898–9) and for Woolwich (1902–3).

In 1878 Beresford married Ellen Jeromina Gardner, an heiress of great beauty. She was known as 'Mina' to her friends. Beresford was captain of HMS *Condor* at the bombardment of Alexandria in 1887, and naval ADC to Lord Wolseley in 1884 in his expedition to relieve General Gordon then besieged in Khartoum. By now Beresford was gaining a high profile and was appointed a junior naval lord in 1886, even though a captain of only four years seniority. He was promoted rear-admiral in 1890. 'Tactless and self-advertising' Beresford was beginning to make enemies, sowing the seeds of the enmity that grew between him and Lord Fisher. He was second-in-command of the Mediterranean Fleet 1900–2, in command of Channel Squadron 1903–5, Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean 1905–7 and of the Channel Fleet 1907–9 following his promotion to admiral in 1906.

A contemporary, Captain the Hon. V. Wyndham-Quin portrayed Beresford in 1907:

He was venerable in appearance, looking all his sixty-one years. He lived in great style, his stewards and his galley's and barge's crew being all Irish. Mostly they had little to do except be on hand looking smart—and smart they were; but one was required to attend on Kora, the Admiral's bulldog, his duty being to follow this fat, overfed bitch about the upper deck equipped with dustpan, brush and cloth to clear up the messes she was making.

...Charlie B[s]... motor car, for which he had a marine driver, was stowed in the booms amidships, being hoisted in and out with special slings by the main derrick and taken ashore in the launch.

The C-in-C's yacht *Surprise* went nearly everywhere with the fleet, and Lady Charles was often in her. . .<sup>2</sup>

Beresford won the parliamentary seat of Portsmouth in 1910, which he held until 1916. This gave him a considerable advantage when attacking Fisher. He retired from the Navy in 1911 and was created an English peer in 1916 on his retirement from Parliament. The following year Elgar dedicated *The Fringes of the Fleet* to Beresford.

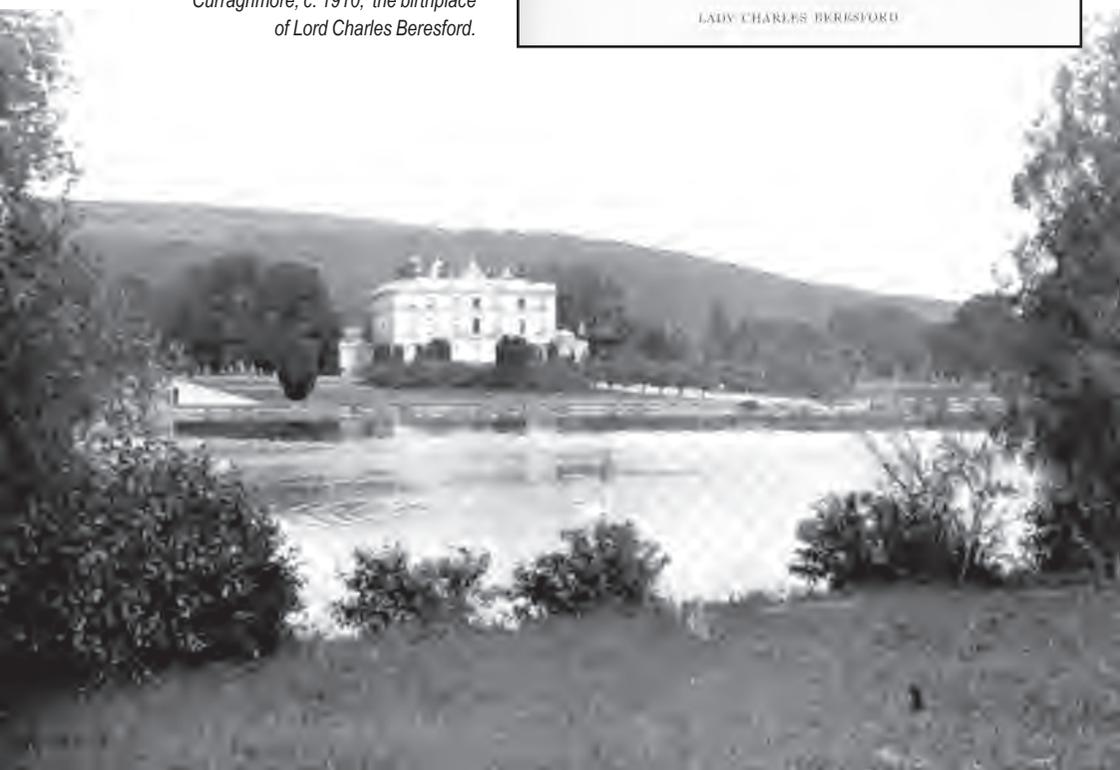
### Pearl Craigie (1867–1906)

Born in Massachusetts, Pearl Mary Teresa Richards moved to London as an infant. She wrote as a novelist and dramatist under the *nom de plume* John Oliver Hobbes. At the age of twenty she married Reginald Walpole Craigie, but this unhappy union was dissolved in 1895 after she was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1892.

*Right:  
Lady Charles Beresford,  
known as 'Mina' to her friends.*



*Below:  
Curraghmore, c. 1910, the birthplace  
of Lord Charles Beresford.*





*The authoress Pearl Craigie, from a photograph taken by Elgar (probably aboard HMS Surprise). Courtesy of the Trustees of the Elgar Birthplace and Arthur Reynolds.*

*Frank Schuster, from a photograph taken by Elgar (probably aboard HMS Surprise). Courtesy of the Trustees of the Elgar Birthplace and Arthur Reynolds.*



Craigie was known during her life for her *Some Emotions and a Moral* (1891), *The Summers Comedy* (1892) and *Robert Orange* (1902). It was said that 'her command of epigram—humorous, caustic and cynical—gives her work its value'. Her untimely death at the age of thirty-eight robbed the twentieth century of a writer of potential significance.

### **Francis Howard Leo (Frank) Schuster (1852–1927)**

A generous patron of the arts, Schuster was a member of a German-Jewish family which had previously settled in England. He was educated at Eton and, with his inherited wealth, established himself as a patron of the arts. He adopted writers, painters and musicians but it was possibly Elgar who generated his greatest devotion. This was exemplified by his financial support of the Elgar festival at Covent Garden in 1904. He kept out of the limelight but, with his sister Minnie Adela (1850–1940), opened his homes in Westminster and at Bray on the Thames near Windsor to their friends. Schuster suffered all his life from a childhood accident which left him with a deformed foot. He was unmarried.

On his death Schuster bequeathed Elgar £7,000 with the clause: 'To my friend, Sir Edward Elgar, OM who has saved my country from the reproach of having produced no composer worthy to rank with the great masters'.

### **Captain Sir George J. S. Warrender, Bt, CB, MVO, Royal Navy (1860–1917)**

Born in 1860, Sir George John Scott Warrender was the second son of the sixth Baronet Warrender of Bruntsfield and was raised at Bruntsfield House near Edinburgh. As a boy he joined HMS *Britannia*, later serving as a midshipman in the corvette HMS *Boadicea*. When only nineteen he participated in the Anglo-Zulu war as a member of the Naval Brigade where he took part in the relief of Eshowe. He was present at the battle of Gingindlovu, following which he was decorated.

For Warrender 1894 was an eventful year. His older brother died, leaving him heir to the baronetcy, and he married Maud Ashley. Two sons and one daughter resulted from the union and the Warrenders became well-known in London society, Queen Victoria agreeing to become godmother to their oldest son. Promoted commander, Warrender served as Captain of the Royal Yacht, *Albert and Victoria* (1896–9).

His next appointment (1899–1902) was as flag-captain to Rear-Admiral Sir James Bruce of the China Station, who flew his flag on HMS *Barfleur*. Once again he saw action ashore during the Boxer rebellion (along with future Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty) and whilst there he succeeded to the baronetcy on the death of his father.

In 1905 Warrender took command of HMS *Carnarvon*, the cruiser which Elgar came to know in Smyrna. The *Carnarvon's* log book shows that she was in collision with some smaller civilian ships when sailing down the Channel earlier in the year. Warrender carefully endorsed the report of the officer of the watch and the report is pasted in as evidence, should it have been needed.

Promoted to rear-admiral, Warrender was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the East India station (1907–9), returning to home waters in 1912 when he took command of the Second Battle Squadron. He was appointed KCVO in 1911 and KCB in 1913 when he was promoted again to vice-admiral, flying his flag in the new battleship HMS *King George V*. It was in this position that he led the Second Battle Squadron to Kiel on 23 June 1914. Two days later he received the German Kaiser who wore the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet of the Royal Navy. On 30 June Warrender sailed for home, the end of his visit being marred by the news of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June. As he left he radioed a message to the German fleet: 'Friends in past and friends forever'.

Posterity seems to have concluded that Warrender was more an admiral for peace than for war after his

ineffectual handling of the German raids on the east coast of England during the early stages of the war. His increasing deafness and absent-mindedness lead to his replacement and he became Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth in 1916. Following a further deterioration in his health, Warrender died at his London home on 8 January 1917. Alice and Edward Elgar attended his funeral service on 12 January.

### **Lady Maud Warrender (1870–1945)**

Ethel Maud Ashley, the fourth daughter of the eighth Earl of Shaftsbury, was raised at the family seat near Wimborne in Dorset. She followed her husband to China in 1894. On the way she met members of the Waterford family (the Beresfords) with whom she stayed for a few days. Later she would spend time at Curraghmore.

Elgar had met the Warrenders before, notably at the first London performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* on 6 June 1903 and at the Covent Garden festival in 1904. In 1908 he wrote the song *Pleading*, his opus 48, for Lady Maud.

There is a striking photograph of Warrender as 'Mercy' in Louis Parker's *The Masque of War and Peace* with music by Hamish MacCunn. The masque, in aid of a Boer War charity, had costumes designed by Percy Anderson and was first performed at Her Majesty's Theatre on 13 February 1900, the day the photograph was taken. Later in the performance, Lady Maud processed as 'Newfoundland' in the 'Procession of Great Britain and her Colonies'.

When Elgar arrived in Athens, Lady Warrender had already been aboard the *Surprise* for some time, travelling to the ship in the August of 1905. Elgar joined with the other members of the party and she wrote of 'the perfect weather at the beginning of the cruise':

... we visited Smyrna, and its especially delightful Bazaar, and had a few days in the Golden Horn, to which we went in a mail steamer, as, owing to trouble with the Sultan at that time, it was deemed unwise for the Commander-in-Chief to go to Constantinople.<sup>3</sup>

The Warrenders purchased Leasam House near Rye in 1903 where, over the years, Lady Maud entertained many in public life including the Elgars, Kiplings, the Alfred Lyttletons, Nellie Melba and Ellen Terry.

### **HMS *Surprise***

Although designated as third class cruiser, HMS *Surprise* was, in effect, a despatch ship used by the Admiralty as a fleet scout. She was built at Jarrow in the Palmers yard and launched on 17 January 1885. As a scout she was armed (at varying times) with up to four five-pounder breech-loading guns and four six-pounder guns. The accommodation was of a high standard, so the *Surprise* and others in her class were used for the transportation of diplomats and other officials. The *Surprise* was renamed HMS *Alacrity* before the First World War and sold in 1919.

HMS *Surprise* was 250 feet in length, had a beam of 32 ft. 6 in. and a maximum speed of 17 knots.

### **The Political Situation**

One of the more intriguing aspects of Elgar's commentary on his trip to the eastern Mediterranean is his oblique references to the political situation in Turkey: 'Discussed Constantinople', 'Decisive news that the fleet nor Lady Charlie may go near Constantinople on account of tension', and in a letter to Frank Schuster of 29 October (when safely back in Hereford) he writes:

Oh! how I wish when we (I, I mean *not* we) passed Hotel Kroecker the bombs *had* gone off & killed no one but your



1914 A VICE-ADMIRAL SIR GEORGE J. S. WARRENDER - ROYAL PHOTO CO. COMMANDING THE 2ND BRITISH SQUADRON.



Above: Sir George Warrender in the uniform of a rear-admiral. Carl Newton collection.

Right: Lady Maud Warrender in 1930 and (above right) a 1903 painting of her by Harrison Mann.



1930

Ray Houston

*Maud Warrender*



*HMS Surprise at anchor in Valetta harbour. © National Maritime Museum, London.*

*HMS Surprise, the captain's day cabin. © National Maritime Museum, London.*



Young, in his commentary, states: 'This was a bad time to visit Turkey on account of the Akaba crisis'.<sup>4</sup> This statement is, as it turns out, somewhat misleading, although its sentiment is true enough. This is not the place for a discourse on Turkish history (complicated enough at the best of times), but the slow disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, by its nature, dragged in the major powers either in the role of mediator or as a means of protecting their own interests. During the 1890s the Turkish government was dragged into the unrest in the Yemen, Albania and Macedonia, dispatching large numbers of troops to Arabia where countries such as France and Britain administered areas previously under Ottoman rule, most obviously, in Britain's case, Egypt.

France broke off relations with Turkey in 1901 and French troops occupied Mitylene (Lesbos) in the November. However, in 1902 Turkey's prime concern was Macedonia which, although part of the Ottoman Empire, was in an almost perpetual state of unrest. In 1903 Austrian and Russian civil agents were appointed to supervise three regions of Macedonia, with other great powers (notably Britain and France) appointing delegates to a financial commission in 1905. The Turkish government opposed this to such an extent that the major powers were forced to organise a naval demonstration and the further occupation of Mitylene. Eventually Turkey backed down in the December. It was not until 1906 that the dispute with Great Britain over Akaba led to a dangerous state of tension, when Ottoman forces encroached on the Egyptian land frontier near the gulf port.

Thus it seems that the reason for Lord and Lady Beresford staying away from Constantinople and the curtailed journey of HMS *Surprise* was as much to do with the tension over Macedonia as anything else. Although this was not recorded by Elgar, this general unrest was demonstrated by the suicide of a young Greek on 27 September, which may be the bombing outside the Hotel Kroecker to which Elgar referred in his letter to Schuster of 28 October.

## September 1905: Worcester

1905 was a busy year for Elgar. On 7 February he had received a doctorate at Oxford University. He conducted the first performances of his *Introduction and Allegro for Strings* and *Pomp and Circumstance* March No. 3 in the Queen's Hall on 8 March and a week later gave the first of his Birmingham lectures. By the end of the year he had given further lectures in Birmingham and begun work on *The Kingdom*. In between he was busy too. On 9 June Alice and Edward sailed on the SS *Deutschland* for New York. They did not return home to Hereford until 17 July, having endured the heat and humidity of an American summer. On 28 June Elgar attended his commencement as an honorary doctor of music at Yale University when he was presented with the robes he would wear in Worcester two months later.

For the 1905 Worcester Three Choirs Festival the Elgars rented Castle House in College Green from Saturday, 9 September. Visitors and house guests included Julia Worthington from New York and Frank Schuster, who arrived on the Sunday when Alice, Carice and Edward attended St George's Roman Catholic church with the new mayor Hubert Leicester and the city corporation. On 11 September Elgar rehearsed the *Introduction and Allegro for Strings* which was to have its Three Choirs première during the festival; over dinner Frank Schuster mentioned his invitation from Lady Charles Beresford for a Mediterranean cruise. Later that evening Canon Gorton and Mrs Annie Gandy from the Morecambe Festival arrived to stay.

The next day, the invitation to go to the Mediterranean was extended to Elgar, who would have been preoccupied with the events beginning at 9.30 that morning in the Guildhall. Hubert Leicester, although becoming mayor of Worcester on four occasions, maintained that the sole reason for becoming mayor at all was to give his childhood friend, Edward, the freedom of Worcester.

The ceremony took place in the Guildhall and Elgar wore his new doctoral robes from Yale. When he emerged into the sunshine and walked along the High Street toward the cathedral he looked upwards to a window above the shop where he had lived as a boy. There, looking down, was his eighty-four-year-old father. The younger man, now the city's most famous son, saluted the frail old man who sixty-four years earlier had journeyed from Kent to establish his music business in Worcester.

The following day, 13 September, Elgar was suffering from a headache but Alice noted 'Frank heard E could go in train', probably a reference to the fact that Elgar would have accommodation on the train from Calais to Brindisi. All the same, Elgar dithered as he concentrated on conducting *The Apostles* in the cathedral. That evening the Elgars dined with Schuster at home (missing a performance of *Elijah*) when, no doubt, Elgar was pressured to make a decision. Schuster left early the next morning (15 September), being told by Alice that Edward would not be going. However, after a shower, Elgar decided he would go after all and Alice immediately went and bought him a suitcase and travelling box so that he was ready to catch the 2.45 train for London.

He was seen off by Alice, Julia Worthington, Annie Gandy and Canon Gorton. Carice Elgar and May Grafton arrived just before the train started. After dining in Pall Mall with Schuster, Elgar caught the boat train from Charing Cross for the 9 p.m. sailing to Calais. On arrival, he caught the train for the south, when he shared a compartment with a young Greek.

### **The Journey to Greece**

Saturday, 16 September: Elgar awoke near Dijon, travelling for the remainder of the day through a 'wet & gloomy' France. All was to change, however, after he passed through the tunnel by Mont Cenis into Italy: 'Magnificent sights & fine weather—gorgeous sunset.'

Sunday, 17 September: Elgar rose at 7.30 and found a 'Glorious day. Found we were beyond Bologna. Travelled all day through varied country & olives; desert appallingly gloomy—stopped at many stations apparently without cause: arr[ive]d in Brindisi at 8pm.'

They had missed their connection with the Austrian Lloyd ship, which had sailed, so they had to take a small Italian steamer, the SS *Scilla*. The party arrived at Corfu at 9 a.m. on Monday, 18 September: 'Lovely looking fortification—like in Böcklin picture, square stone buildings on hills with cypresses—went ashore in small boats—very wobbly—landed & drove to hotel S. George.'

In the hotel they stayed out of the heat before continuing their journey to mainland Greece. Whilst on board Elgar began his journal, catching up on the previous four days. On 19 September they arrived at Patras at the mouth of the Gulf of Corinth early in the morning, but stayed on board the *Scilla* until 9.30 a.m. before leaving to catch the 11.45 train for Athens:

Sea rough—landed in a small boat with all the luggage: two pirates rowed, standing up with long oars lashed to the sides of the boat. They signalled to me to steer—which I did with great effect reflecting glory on the British Navy.

[The wretches boarded on the other side scrambled all over the railway carriage. Only one with lavatory 'de luxe'—a most terrible thing, but we took it.]

Train (awful) started in the open air (no station) crowds of beggars & c & c and frightful looking scoundrels—took no food. Got water on the way. Glorious views. Gulf of Corinth & currant growing drying & packing en route—Crossed the [Corinth] canal & on to Athens—a gentleman—President of the Chamber of Commerce Athens helped us a great deal.

Elgar and Schuster went on to Piraeus (or Phalerum as the Royal Navy still called it), arriving at about 8 p.m. where they were met by Sir George Warrender and another member of the party and friend of Frank Schuster, Henry 'Bogey' Harris.<sup>5</sup> Eventually they boarded a small boat to be taken out to HMS *Surprise*, their home for much of the next three weeks. They were greeted by Commander Robert Bruen, the captain, and the



*Elgar leaving the Guildhall in Worcester after receiving the freedom of the city. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Elgar Birthplace and Arthur Reynolds.*

Commander-in-Chief, Lord Beresford. Elgar was not feeling well: 'Saw the *Doctor* had some tea & toast, & later some beef tea & then slept 12 hours. Deo gratias'.

Wednesday, September 20: arose about 9. Much better through Dr. Fraser's doses. Breakfast alone. Then on deck: glorious view Athens—Acropolis &c &c & the fleet (17) all around us. Admiral to lunch. Then ashore with party—Lady C[harles Beresford]. Frank & I drove to Acropolis—walked round (saw kitten)—then drove thro Athens tea at Hotel, then to hotel on the shore. Massed bands of the fleet playing in Casino. Admiral's party sat aloft on Hotel balcony—huge crowd below—Minister there & Greek military & Naval representatives. The Minister (Sir Francis Elliott) came on board the *Surprise* to dinner, to bed at eleven.

After lunch the next day, Schuster and Elgar joined Lord and Lady Beresford for a shopping trip in Athens. They ended up at the British Embassy for tea where they discussed their proposed visit to Constantinople.

Lady Warrender wrote that: 'Lady Charlie and Mrs Craigie had a somewhat flamboyant taste in clothes and floating veils. Their appearance on the quay was such an astonishment to the Greeks that they would be surrounded by a mob, and Frankie Schuster, Bogey Harris and I found it less disconcerting to land at another time.'

Back on board the *Surprise* the party rested before dressing to dine on board the flagship, HMS *Bulwark*, as a guest of Lord Beresford.

Dined on deck—band (very good) played (strings) All Italians. They play well—during battle or in general their

duties are to hand up powder &c from below

## The Fleet Sails

That evening the fleet began to move, with the hospital ship *Maine* sailing first.

Friday, October 22: Fleet began to prepare to move about 6—Sailed off one by one about 7. Seemed quite lonely. Last despatch for shore from *Surprise* announced about 9. At eleven anchor raised & we started, taking a long, long look, for the last time, at Athens & the Parthenon.

[I wanted a shin of beef—How did you get it? I shewed him my shin—What a good thing you hadn't wanted rump-steak.]

Then began a lovely voyage: round Cape Colonna—thro Doro Channel to Lemnos. During the day we passed the fleet in singles and twos—much firing at targets &c. The most gorgeous sunset we have yet seen. Our party seemed small at dinner—6 including Capt Bruen. Bed at eleven.

Discovered to our horror that the port holes are always closed during the voyage. Frank & I [coul]d. not face being below, so I lay in the saloon, did not sleep much on acc[oun]t of noise. Frank had a slung bed on the poop.

The fleet arrived off Lemnos early in the morning of Saturday, 23 September, Elgar noting that they were entering a land-locked bay (at Moudros) where the *Maine* was already at anchor.

As soon as we had anchored portholes opened & to bed for an hour. Expect a telegram here

Telegram arrived. Deo gratias came from Kistro, eight miles on a donkey. Fleet arrived, very grand sight, solemn procession & grand noise anchoring. Admiral to lunch. in afternoon Frank & I ashore.

We walked thro the village & out to open country. Heard a pretty shepherd boy playing on a pipe quite beautiful. gorgeous sunset back to ship. Admiral to dinner. Decisive news that the fleet nor Lady Charlie may not go near Constantinople on acct of tension. Frank decided that I must go—so to bed.

## To Turkey

The *Surprise* sailed at 6 a.m. the following morning, travelling to Chanak (now Kumkale) on the Asian shore of the Hellespont, as far as the Royal Navy was prepared to go: 'Lovely journey, passing Troy & the Hellespont arrived at Tchanak about 2. All luggage in a rowing-boat & 4 servants—these we towed to the Austrian steamer *Tirol*.'

The party consisted of Sir George and Lady Maud Warrender, Henry Harris, Frank Schuster, Pearl Craigie, Elgar, Vince (Schuster's manservant), Henry Harris's manservant, and the maids of Lady Maud and Pearl Craigie.

[A lot of dolphins kept up with us a long time. Bless them]

They left Chanak in the afternoon, Elgar noting the good food, the loading of fifty casks of wine and the Viennese singer who provided entertainment. The *Tirol* entered the sea of Marmora in the dark. Elgar and Schuster were sleeping on deck when the *Tirol* ran down two boats with the result that a number of the men in the boats were drowned.

Monday September 25: Glorious sunrise, & the minarets of Stamboul began to come thro the mist—wonderful wonderful.

Sir Nicholas O'Connor (1843–1908), the ambassador to the Sultan, arranged for his boat to meet the party which, nevertheless, was delayed by customs and passport examinations, but they eventually arrived at the Perah Palace Hotel:

thro' goods, Turks, donkeys, pack trains, and dogs—& dogs.

The Perah Palace was built in 1895 for travellers arriving from northern Europe on the Orient Express. It has achieved a certain notoriety since for its 'setting for so many real and fictional Levantine intrigues'.

That evening the party '[d]rove up to the higher part for views: in the sunset the Bosphorus & Stamboul were insanely beautiful. Back to Hotel—dined altogether, & after dinner Sir G., Mr. Harris & E.E. to Cafe chanters awfully dreary entertainment—beer—home about twelve.'

The following day the party visited the San Sofia mosque.

Tuesday September 26: —very large & grand but uninspiring & ugly. The lavatories in the church: most wonderful Then to the bazaar: where we had lunch, which was wretched—again through bazaar & then to drive round the old walls. Lady M. & Frank struck after a couple of miles, but Mrs. Craigie & I went on & Sir G. & Mr. Harris followed, wonderful, gigantic.

That night Elgar paid for his dismissal of one of the most remarkable buildings in the world!

Wednesday, September 27: In the night the most fearful noise by the dogs—a sound I never dreamt possible—like 40,000 dogs—they were just under the window—this terrible noise came on about 1.30.

Rose about 8.30. At 10 drove to the Seraglio—special permit, received by an Attaché(?) somebody important anyway—the 'Minister of the Treasury' was present—much undoing of doors, presenting arms, saluting us &c &c. Treasury very dark, then to Library & the two other kiosks overlooking the sea.

In the last we were entertained. We all sat round the gorgeous room, many Turkish servants—one superior—first, one carried a stand, with a raised centre, on which stood a glass jar of rose leaf jam. Tumblers of iced water surrounded it—you took a teaspoon & ate the jam, & drank the water—this left a beautiful, delicate taste of roses all down your throat & round your mouth.

Next the servants brought in cigarettes & placed tables (very poor ones) with brass ash trays on them. Next a man in uniform: very gorgeous carried in a large round tray covered with a fine piece of embroidery another man followed with a sort of censer in which swung the coffee pot. The tray was uncovered & the coffee cups disclosed. We drank this (it was brought round solemnly & poured out to each one) & the function was over. We rose & (with) much saluting & hanging of muskets on the marble we retired. Walked thro' gardens & found the carriages—then to Bazaar, more 'engaging' than ever. Bought a few things—pipe mouthpiece & an eikon. Then drove to the Club (near the Hotel) to lunch with Capt & Mrs. Bruen.

Then grand squaring up of bills!

[Heard the real call to payer from the Minaret near the Bazaar / Later heard it in the Bazaar.]

From his account we can almost feel Elgar revelling in these new experiences and sounds. Tantalisingly, he had not yet set foot in Asia—this would have to wait until he arrived in Smyrna.

Then on this glorious evening—up the Bosphorus—as far as Teraphia—here we board the *Imogene*<sup>6</sup> & had tea, then landed Lady M., & Sir G., & Mrs. Craigie to the Embassy to sleep—Frank, Mr. Harris & myself to Hotel Angleterre.

Dressed, & bathed, & rested, & then to dine with the Ambassador. There was to have been a great reception but this was hurriedly abandoned on account of the attempted suicide of a young Greek gentleman. Lady M. sang

many songs & Frank accompanied beautifully—then we had 'In Haven' & 'Where corals lie' which Lady M. sang well & I accompanied. Walked back with Frank & Mr. Harris along this wonderful shore.

September 28th Thursday: Rose at 8. Steamers continually calling. Lovely views—a straight line of view up to Black Sea. Walked into Embassy Gardens. Monument erected 1847, commemorating presentation of the land to B[ritish] Gov[ernment] by the Sultan.

Teraphia, now called Tarabya, was where a number of summer embassies had been built, many with beautiful gardens.

To lunch at the Embassy. All luggage in blue boat—we left in Ambassador's barge great confusion as to passports. All got off safely on Mauritius steamer 'Yangtse'—very large & roomy, but not clean.

last view of Stamboul—wonderful. To bed early & slept well.

On leaving Constantinople wild confusion as to the washing which we had left at Hotel—it came in three detachments—yelling & general despair—all safe at last, save one collar of Vince's.

On Friday, 29th the *Yangtse* sailed past Mitylene (Lesbos) and arrived at Smyrna in the early afternoon. They remained aboard the *Yangtse* until Sir George Warrender's ship, HMS *Camarvon* arrived. The party went over to the *Camarvon* for tea where they remained until the arrival of the *Surprise* that evening.

We went, with very thankful hearts to be home, on board & found Lady C. very radiant & welcoming.

[Gave Lady C. the onyx chibouk for stick handle. At last had some letters—eight had accumulated & I read them all at once.]

After dinner Sir George Warrender and Henry Harris left for Malta on the *Camarvon*. That night Elgar was 'frightfully bitten by mosquitoes—my hands not recognisable & not usable scarcely.'

Saturday, 30 September: at 9.30 a.m. the fleet arrived and the *Bulwark's* log recorded: 'Saluted 21 guns. Fort returned Salute. Saluted Turkish commodore 11 guns, and acting British Consul General 11 guns.'

Rose early—glorious day. Frank, Lady M & I ashore went to the bazaar, much finer sight than Constantinople. Colour movement & camels—100s—led by a donkey through the bazaar. Lady M. gave me a silver camel lamp in remembrance of my first eastern camel. Back to *Surprise* to lunch, Admiral came, rested through the heat & then all including Capt Bruen ashore: drove thro' the town right up to the fortifications—tomb of S. Polycarp<sup>7</sup>—tremendous view, last part on foot to the watch tower. Descended & made detour round the 'Camel bridge' Mrs Craigie & I drove together: wonderful gorges with remains of ancient aqueducts. We were in the last carriage & harness broke—repaired with string & then wild gallop irrespective of rough road to catch the others, one horse fell—more broken harness—yells & excitement. Drove all thro' the narrow streets to quay.

Despite the wonders of Constantinople, one obtains the impression that this visit to Smyrna was the highlight of Elgar's trip. He embraced all that Smyrna offered. Indeed it inspired him to compose, the piano on board the *Surprise* becoming more than just entertainment.

[This was my first touch with Asia, & I was quite overcome. the endless camels made the scene more real than in Stamboul, the extraordinary colour & movement, light & shade were intoxicating. Lady M. & Frank bought heavenly jam (cherry & roseleaves) & camel-bells, rugs & coverlets.]

Dinner with Commander in Chief in *Bulwark*. Band played again, very good.

[Band played Serénade lyrique & Salut d'amour]

To *Surprise* late & slept well, but my bites too awful.

On the Sunday (1 October) the log of the *Bulwark* records the transportation of those on the *Surprise* who

wanted to attend Divine Service on board the flagship. These included Frank Schuster. They were back within the hour.

Rose late. Very, very hot & sirocco blowing—Peculiar feeling of intense heat & wind. Early lunch & then (at 2 o.c.) ashore & drove to the Mosque of dancing dervishes. Party—Lord & Lady Charlie. Lady Maud, Mrs Craigie, Frank, Captain Bruen, Consul, E. E. in two carriages.

Small mosque. Received in great style. Music by five or six people very strange & some of it quite beautiful—incessant drums & cymbals (small) thro the quick movements.

Dancing not very exciting. Entertained before & after in a large room with coffee & cigarettes.

Monday, October 2: slept well, went ashore—got a dragoman & did the Bazaar. Back to lunch. American consul's wife friend of Mrs. Craigie—volubly informing as to Turkish ways &c &c.

Bad headache: Went for a short trip in the steam launch round the fleet. Beautiful views of a most beautiful place.

Felt very unwell, having drunk, with a cachet, some foul water.

Better in evening & to dine on Bulwark.

[Sirocco began

Weather seemed breaking on Sunday evening

uncertain on Monday & on Tuesday dreadful.

End of summer.]

At 5 p.m. Beresford transferred his flag to the *Surprise*, although the party moved back to the *Bulwark* for dinner. With the exception of the *Surprise*, the fleet would follow the *Carnarvon* directly to Malta for the celebrations of the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October. The *Surprise* would arrive in Malta a few days later after she had delivered her passengers to Patras.

## The Journey Home

Tuesday, October 3: awoke at 4 by anchors weighing, left Smyrna at five—Admiral on board. Weather broke. Awful squalls all day—awnings taken down—everyone ill—dreadful day sat on deck amidships—was not really sick but headache & could not walk on acct of ship pitching &c &c—so violently.

Lady Warrender described the journey: 'Unfortunately the weather broke on our way to Patras. HMS *Surprise* had a most uncomfortable way of behaving in a rough sea, quite unlike any other craft I have ever been in, a sort of corkscrew motion which, good sailor though I am, completely defeated me. Lady Charlie was the only one who did not succumb. She even managed to sit on a surging music stool and play "The Ride of the Valkyries", and the "Fire Music" at the height of the storm, when everyone else was prone, and utterly miserable.'

8

Wednesday, October 4: woke, on deck, about four & blundered into the smoke room where managed to get an hour's sleep. Lovely quiet morning arrived at 7 at canal (Corinth) & passed slowly through.

The log of the *Surprise* states that she stopped at 5.50, and at 6.30 proceeded through the Corinth Canal en route for Patras where the civilian passengers disembarked. From there the *Surprise* sailed directly to Malta.

[Frank & I really too ill to attempt to go on—but no steamer possible until Saturday.]

Despite feeling ill, Elgar was alert enough to note the significance of the view as he sailed up the Gulf of Corinth:

Breakfasted with Admiral, *Corinth* astern, *Olympus* on the port bow, *Delphi* on the starboard bow, & *Helicon* astern.

Began packing, ready to leave Surprise at Patras

About four the Orion (Austria Lloyd) arrived but anchored *outside* the harbour—too rough for small boats to get out—so all ashore—Lady M., Mrs Craigie, Frank & I & three servants. Landed and to Hotel. Frank & I decided *not* to go on—impossible to get out to large Austrian steamer & the Scilla (Italian) which was in *harbour* & sailing same time we thought too small for comfort in the terribly rough sea.

Lady M. & Mrs Craigie decided to take the Italian boat. We dined altogether & saw them off. No steamer until Saturday. Went to bed early & got some sleep—the first real sleep for 48 hours.

Lady Warrender gave her version of the day:

At Patras, where we were to leave the yacht, there was a big sea running in the harbour. Unless we caught the little steamer to Fiume which only ran once a week, it meant staying in a very bad hotel in a very dull place. Mrs Craigie and myself hated the idea of this, so we made up our minds to make a dash in a small boat for the steamer, leaving “Frankie Schu” and Edward Elgar quivering on the quay, not daring to face the risk of getting alongside in a horrible sea.

We just made it, but we went through a hideously uncomfortable and hot time in this fig cargo boat before reaching Fiume. There were so many figs on board that the sides of our cabins were a moving mass of white maggots, racing each other up the walls.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, Elgar and Schuster were paying for their indecision:

[Weary waiting until Saturday’s steamer.]

Thursday, October 5: Patras. rose late & walked round this dreary town. Lovely calm peaceful day. Blue sky & sun again. Frank & I dejeunered at 12, then rest and sleep (much needed) tea at four & then walk with Vince up to the



*A contemporary postcard showing HMS Bulwark entering Valetta harbour.  
Andrew Neill collection.*

old castle.

[For my tea the waiter ran out into the street as the goats were coming in. One was caught & milked into my jug, on the tram lines.

Oh! the weariness of waiting]

But they had another day to fill:

Friday, October 6: Cloudy. Breakfasted at eight. for a walk round the tradesmen's qu[arter]s alone. Scirocco blowing. Bought a dagger from the man who made great excitement in the crowd.

Telegraphed home sh[ou]ld arrive on twelfth. Went for drive with Frank to Consul, then by the sea & through lovely country, grapes, currants & olives. Home to Hotel in twilight very stormy sky.

Tremendous rain in night which luckily damped the ardour of the singing & shouting soldiers.

Saturday, October 7: did a lot of repacking all the morning: terrible storm of rain & then fine. Walked about & bought a dagger. Our Steamer 'Serbia' came into harbour about four. We dine at 7.30 & went aboard. Frank spent hours trying to buy champagne [sic] & at last got a bottle. Landlord delighted with his cheque. Sailed away from Patras (Deo gratias) about 9.30—went to bed & slept well.

Views of Patras very lovely, but I was never so glad in my life before to leave a place.

Dolphins again.

Sunday, October 8: woke at sea. Tea & biscuits & dejeuner at 10.30. Arrived at Corfu about 10 (Dolphins at intervals, bless them!) rested till 2, & then ashore. Walked about & had tea Hôtel S. Georges; back to ship at four.

Beautiful sunset: last views of Greece & the isles like clouds floating in a larger sky. Frank not well & did not dine. To bed early & slept well

Monday, October 9: arrived at Brindisi about five a.m. Deo gratias. Pouring with rain. Found telegram from Alice, to Hôtel to sleep & wash. Have to wait until five this evening (twelve hours!) for a train: Saw ships come in & much wine. After a long sleep walked round the dreadfully dreary town.

At last the train journey north began:

Rushed out at Bari (7 o.c.) for soup, & then had our meat, & to bed in separate comp[artmen]ts. about 9. Slept most wonderfully—much cooler great disturbance at Foggia—people waiting to come in, a lady (Italian) who wd. have a 'cold in her stomach' if not permitted.

Tuesday, October 10: (5 a.m.) Ancona coffee brought in at 7. much cooler, lovely views of Adriatic. got up & washed well & c & felt very well. Passed Pesaro (Rossini) arrived Bologna about 10.30.

Ever alert, Elgar noted Rossini's birthplace. At Bologna, Elgar and Schuster split up, the latter leaving for Venice. Unfortunately, Elgar's train from Bologna would arrive too late for him to make his connection in Milan. However, he did not waste the time there.

Goodbye to Frank, very sad: began my lonely journey. Found train too late to get on at Milan. Arrived at M[ilan] at 3 instead of 2 o.c.—could not get on until 11.10 p.m. walked about & dined at Palma Hotel: telegram from Frank. booked sleeping berth. Saw Cathedral & Scala, tried to call on Tito Ricordi. Beastly journey: had to share an apartment with 2 other men. Slept a little.

Over night the train crossed into Switzerland:

Wednesday Oct 11: arrd. Basle at 9. Train found by Frank apparently a figment. Made to go on by this shaking old

dreadful atrocity at 10.50.

Travelled all day. At Petit-Croix (douane) put into a through carriage to *Calais* as the Boulogne route seems not possible.

At Petit-Croix, near Belfort, Elgar's prospects improved:

Got some dinner (bad) in a French restaurant car (rushed out) between Chalons & Reims.

Arrived Calais at 2. Found Mrs. Craigie on the steamer—rough crossing.

Thursday Oct. 12: arrived Dover at four o.c. Train at once to Charing X. Arr[ive]d. Langham at 6.30; rested.

Went to East End & tried to get Eastern food, dried fruits &c—then back to this dreary civilization.

Friday, October 13: midday to Norwich. Stayed with Mr. Oddin Taylor. rehearsal of *Apostles*—and the last music I had heard was the *Dervishes* in Smyrna!

And the last music he had heard before leaving England was *The Apostles*.

Saturday, Oct. 14: Back to London & on by corridor to Hereford & found my dear ones all well & safe.

## In Retrospect

So what did Elgar get out of this trip, besides the inspiration to compose *In Smyrna*? This 'holiday' was an unusual experience, even for someone with the eminence of Elgar; for most naval vessels were not usually available as a private yacht! Lord Charles Beresford, despite his many faults, would have been an entertaining and generous host and, it seems, remained in touch with the Elgars until his death in 1919. He assisted Elgar by using his influence at the War Office to delay the call-up of Charles Mott when he was performing in *The Fringes of the Fleet* in 1917, and assisted in finding some of the wet weather clothing the singers wore on stage. And the music of the tour also came to the rescue when Elgar composed the music for *The Crown of India* in 1911. He used *In Smyrna* as a leitmotiv in the aria for the city of Agra.<sup>10</sup>

Reading Elgar's journal gives us the impression of someone who enjoyed himself enormously, felt able to relax and was fascinated by all that was new and original. It would have been one of the most interesting trips he was to undertake; his trip up the Amazon in 1923 would not have been so culturally varied. And then there is that tell-tale visit to the East End of London on his return: he had been captivated!

From our point of view, we have been able to obtain an insight into continental travel 100 years ago, noted Elgar's interest in very foreign lavatories and animals, and his fascination in what was a very foreign culture and its music.

However, we too are the beneficiaries for, without this journey, we would not have *In Smyrna*, a miniature masterpiece. It is a subtle, elusive work which, to quote Robert Anderson, 'hardly represent[s] the music heard in the 'Mosque of dancing dervishes'; indeed its rapt quality recalls initially the 'Canto popolare' from *In the South*. A move to the minor produces a motif more specifically 'eastern' [used in Agra's song]... The middle section is quintessential Elgar, while the final cadenza contains a figure also impressed for [*The Crown of India*] and its 'Sacred Measure'.<sup>11</sup>

It is Jerrold Northrop Moore who gets to the heart of the matter when he writes: 'The special moment out of all this experience which may have focussed Elgar's musical expression was noted in his sketchbook beside an early idea for the music: "In Smyrna (In the Mosque)". It was nothing but the sheer musical need to evoke this exotic experience again that led Elgar irresistibly to the piano. So a representation of actual place allied itself to the music of "In Smyrna" in 1905'.<sup>12</sup>





1. Jerrold Northrop Moore, introduction to Elgar, *Two Piano Pieces* (Sevenoaks: Novello, 1976).
2. Geoffrey Bennett, *Charlie B: a biography of Admiral Lord Beresford of Metemneh and Curraghmore, GCB, GCVO, LL D, DCL* (London: Dawnay, 1968), p. 45.
3. Lady Ethel Maud Warrender, *My First Sixty Years* (London: Cassell & Co., 1933), p. 82.
4. Percy M. Young, *Letters of Edward Elgar and other writings* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956), p. 147.
5. Harris (d. 1950) was a wealthy bachelor and patron of the arts. He lived in Chelsea.
6. HMS *Imogene*, although serving for most of her commissioned life in the Bosporus, was officially part of the Royal Navy. At the time her captain was Commander Edward F. Benson.
7. Saint Polycarp (69–155 AD), bishop of Smyrna, was a disciple of St John the Evangelist and was martyred for his faith by the Romans.
8. Warrender, *Sixty Years*, pp. 83–4.
9. Warrender, *Sixty Years*, p. 84.
10. Robert Anderson, “Immemorial Ind”: Elgar’s score for *The Crown of India*, in John Norris and Andrew Neill (ed.), *A Special Flame: the music of Elgar and Vaughan Williams* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2004), 130–5, p. 132.
11. Robert Anderson, *Elgar* (London: Dent, 1993), p. 395.
12. Moore, introduction to *Two Piano Pieces*.

### *Acknowledgments*

I am grateful to Jerrold Northrop Moore and Martin Bird for their help in deciphering Elgar's hand-writing, and to Carl Newton for his general advice and the loan of the photograph of Admiral Warrender. Bertan Yordem from Istanbul was also most helpful in advising me on historical matters.

The National Maritime Museum gave their permission for reproducing the photographs of HMS *Surprise*, which I am happy to acknowledge. The trustees of the Elgar Birthplace also kindly allowed me to reproduce copies of Elgar's own photographs of his trip.

*ANDREW NEILL is the present chairman of the Elgar Society. He first became a member in 1967 and was appointed the Society's secretary in 1978, in which position he organised the 1984 Royal Festival Hall concert to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Elgar's death. Since then he has been closely involved in a number of Elgar recording projects, including the Elgar Edition issued by EMI between 1992 and 1994. In 1984 he became a trustee of the Elgar Birthplace and was appointed chairman of the Elgar Society in 1992. He has contributed to several Elgar publications including Oh, My Horses!: Elgar and the Great War (2001) and A Special Flame: the music of Elgar and Vaughan Williams (2004), the latter as both author and co-editor. Most recently he has revised and rewritten what will shortly be published as the history of the Elgar Birthplace Museum.*

# 'Loveliest, Brightest, Best': a reappraisal of 'Enigma's' Variation XIII (Part II)

## Ernest Blamires

*In the concluding part of this investigation into the concealed identity of the 'friend pictured within' the thirteenth 'Enigma' variation, we follow the political events leading to the appointment of William Lygon as governor of New South Wales, its consequences, and the secrets surrounding the Variations which only emerged many years after the composer's death.*

### A Holiday with a Twist!

William Lygon had decided that this year, 1898, he would not spend Christmas in the cold, fog and black smoke of another English winter, but would replace it with the delights of a French *haute cuisine* dinner in Paris in the company of relations and friends, then a visit to the Louvre and a viewing of a high mass in Notre Dame cathedral. After Paris, having been in Italy earlier in the year, he would move on to visit the warmer climes of Greece, travelling via night train to Brindisi, crossing to Corfu, then on to Patras and Olympia, to ultimately arrive at Athens early in the new year.

William arrived in Athens around 9 January 1899 and went to the British legation the next morning. He wrote in his diary (actually a relatively short reminiscence written a year later in Sydney):

A pile of letters was awaiting my arrival in Athens, we had really been for a fortnight without news & we fell upon them eagerly. In the course of them I came upon one from Mr Chamberlain in which, to my enormous surprise, he offered me the Governorship of New South Wales—I scarcely knew where was the colony & certainly nothing about it—my few wits indeed were rather scattered on reading the letter...

His initial reaction was to reject the offer, but friends travelling with him calmed him and acquainted him of the probable benefits which might accrue, both now and in the future. They spent the evening celebrating, '...an evening in which we imagined myself having filled every honourable post in the Empire... I wired & wrote asking for the fuller particulars which [were] mentioned in the letter. The next steamer left Athens, for a week, for Constantinople & the only thing to do was curb my impatience, seek at the Legation a little information about the colony & see the sights. The journey home could only be shortened from Turkey.'

\* \* \*

Lady Mary had written her first letter to William, having calculated the date he might arrive in Athens, already aware of the Government's offer. The letter was, as always, a loving one, but Lady Mary was actually hoping to hear if William had received the offer and had decided to accept the post. Already she could imagine herself going out with him to Sydney for the start of his appointment. Lady Mary dearly wanted him to accept the position and she—who had been a surrogate mother to her father's children after the death of their mother in childbirth in 1876—could not reveal to William that she had known of the offer for some time. Her high standards would not permit that. The future was to show that both the sisters kept their secret with the utmost discretion.

William cabled back to the Athens legation, indicating his interest and requesting a meeting soon after he arrived back in London. Since Chamberlain's secretary would be in receipt of this, Lady Mary would very quickly know what had occurred. He wished to know more of the terms of the appointment and of conditions to be met with in Sydney. He also wished to obtain advice from two close friends—Lord Kintore, a former governor of South Australia, and Lord Jersey, governor of New South Wales in 1891–3.

This was the Victorian era—the protocols were absolutely defined and rigidly adhered to. No announcement of any kind could be made until he had formally notified the colonial secretary of his acceptance of the posting; then the recommendation had to be submitted to the Queen (with a formal note of advice to the prime minister) for her approval. The Queen's approval would then be returned to the colonial secretary, and finally the notification of the appointment and the Queen's approval placed in the court announcements of the London *Times* and the London Court Circular on the morning following the Queen's announcement.

## Secrets and Whispers

William arrived back in London on Wednesday, 18 January and went directly to his London residence. On 19 January '...I dined with Lord Kintore [governor of South Australia, 1889–95] who strongly advised me to accept &, after a lot of letters, I retired to bed, certain of what my decision should be.' One of the letters which awaited him was from Lady Mary:

I am still boiling with inward excitement and cannot wait till the end of the month to see you. So, unless you absolutely forbid it (and please don't do that!) I am coming to London on Friday morning [20 January] by a train that arrives at St Pancras at 11.17(?)... There is so much that I want to ask and say!

I am still rather dazed by the whole thing. If you will let me, I would v'y much like to go out with you—that is if you will go some time in the next 3 or 4 months. I think I can easily get leave till the end of October—and I could have 3 months with you. Besides, it will be much more delightful to go with you—& see your reception etc—than to come out next year—which is a terribly long way off. The only time when I am really v'y much wanted by HRH is October to Feb. But of course it will depend upon when you go. Which you probably don't know yourself. What an upheaval, the whole thing is! Margaret and Oliver know, and have known that you wd. probably be offered it—ever since October. So we did their secret keeping powers an injustice...

Yr very loving sister—who is counting the hours till Friday morning  
Mary Lygon

(Sandringham, 18 January 1899)

It should be noted here that, apart from the staff of the colonial office already mentioned, no other persons knew of the position offered to William—neither his siblings at Madresfield Court nor his stepmother who was living at Pull Court near Tewkesbury.

\* \* \*

Lady Mary duly arrived on Friday, 20 January, and after lunch they went together to the colonial office, there to be greeted by a very happy sister and brother-in-law, the Ampthills. William continued in his diary:

Next day to the C[olonial] O[ffice], where Oliver was affable & kind. He read me Lord Hampden's letter of resignation [as governor of New South Wales], complaining of the [personal] expense, which he put down at some £12,000 a year. Then he took me to see some official who looked up NSW in their books & after gathering a lot of very

inaccurate information, I wrote from a table in the corner of the Private Secretary's room, a formal note of acceptance to Mr Chamberlain—who was in his own room next door, but who was too busy to be disturbed. The matter was so far settled, but until the Queen had approved, nothing would be said or done in public.

It was now just a matter of waiting. Lady Mary returned to Sandringham whilst William decided to leave London and return to the peace and quiet of his country estate at Madresfield Court near Malvern.

On her return, Lady Mary wasted no time in requesting of HRH that she be allowed to accompany her brother to Australia and wrote to William telling him of her good news:

I have asked HRH formally for leave until October & she is delighted to let me go... In fact, she said it was my due...  
(22 January 1899)

Then, the next day, she wrote:

Will you let me have a telegram, if possible, when the C[olonial] O[ffice] tells you when the newspapers will know it? I shall be rather glad to tell one or two people (like his R[oyal] H[ighness]) a few hours before, as it looks more civil.

Have you told Mama?

...Do find out about ships this week: The M.M.C. [Malvern Musical Competition] is on Mon & Tues the 17th, 18th [February] & I should like to be at home for that if possible, but could leave the next day.

Ever your Loving Sister

Mary Lygon

HRH wishes me to stay here till ar[oun]d the 1st [February?]

(23 January 1899)

This letter shows us just how 'correct' Lady Mary and her sister had been ever since October—they had not even intimated to their stepmother what William was doing. More fascinating is the revelation that even the Prince of Wales had no forewarning of the appointment—the Queen had not let him in on the secret!—as we see in the following letter from Lady Mary to William:

...there was great astonishment at the announcement [at Court] this morning... so I was besieged with questions.

The Prince of Wales [the future Edward VII] heard it last night from the C[olonial] O[ffice] and I think thought he would tell me as a surprise this morning!

Yr vy loving sister

Mary Lygon

(Sandringham, 24 January 1899)

What a delicious scene, the beautiful Lady Mary—knowing all—trying to keep a straight face and decorous tone as the Prince enjoyed sharing his 'secret' with her!

Lady Mary had kept the secret perfectly—no one had discovered it, not at Sandringham, not at Madresfield Court, and certainly none of the friends and acquaintances in Worcestershire.

\* \* \*

The remaining letters at Madresfield Court show just how efficient Lady Mary was in organising and planning. William must have felt very fortunate to have such a sister. Sydney beckoned and Lady Mary could hardly wait!

On Monday, 23 January, William wrote:

That same night I left for Middleton [just west of Worcester] to consult Lord & Lady Jersey, who then & always have

been most kind. A telegram that afternoon told me it would be next day in the papers.

Next morning, Tuesday, January 24, I went back to London & found the papers, not unnaturally, reproduced my own surprise at my appointment. Not only was it a great surprise, but it was especially gratifying as it had been earned by no payments to political party funds, by no asking on my part. In accepting it indeed, the prospect of the order of the KCMG was a certain inducement & my age the youngest of all colonial governors was the record...

In due course *The Times* reported: 'Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle on Frid., Feb 24, received Earl Beauchamp, Governor of New South Wales, and Lord Tennyson, Governor of South Australia, both of whom she invested with the insignia of the Order of Knight Commander of St Michael & St George.' Now life would be exciting and hectic as brother and sister prepared to leave England and journey to 'Terra Australis Incognita', the 'great, unknown Southland', Australia.

## An Announcement and its Consequences

The public announcement had been made in the afternoon Court Circular of Monday, 23 January and published in the London *Times* the next morning, Tuesday, 24 January. Shortly after that it became common knowledge that Lady Mary would be accompanying her brother to Sydney and would stay until at least September 1899.

Edward may have read of the announcement in his *Daily Telegraph* or in the local Worcester paper. But, totally unaware of the London events, on the previous day, 23 January, Elgar had suddenly decided to put aside his work on scoring the Variations and returned to three of the four suite movements he had first written in the early 1880s—Helen days—revising them in just two days.

From Alice Elgar's diary:

Jan 23: E. very busy—Characteristic pieces &c. E. to his Club &c in P.M. Dr. East came.

Jan 24: E. finishing his 3 Characteristic Pieces—& 'Lute Song' sent. F. & W. Norbury came.

Note there is no mention in the diary of what was certainly a major event in the life of Malvern—the announcement of Beauchamp's appointment. The revisions were named *Three Characteristic Pieces*, the motivation probably being Edward's need to supplement their income (they brought him £50!) which was always fragile. Certainly we can say that the motivation was not associated with Lady Mary's secret.

The availability of the revised pieces was notified to Novello and Alice's diary entry for 18 February briefly reports 'EE heard from N[ovello] re 3 Pieces', this being almost a month since their completion. It appears that nothing further happened until Lady Mary came to tea at the Elgar's new home 'Craig Lea' (now 86 Wells Road, Malvern) on Friday, 24 March. It seems that at some time during this visit Edward asked Lady Mary if she would accept the dedication of the *Three Characteristic Pieces*, to which Lady Mary graciously assented.

## 'Forli' and Unexpected Guests

Towards the end of February 1899, Alice wrote in her diary: 'Feb 21: E. vesy busy. Lady Mary to tea & W. Norbury. E. sent 'Variations' to Vert for Richter.' This is almost a month after the announcement of the appointment of Lady Mary's brother and also of the unrelated impulse of Edward, that of putting aside the scoring of his Variations to revise his old suite of 1888 and renaming it *Three Characteristic Pieces*. But it is this diary entry which now brings us to one of the strangest interludes in Edward's life, one not previously reported, and one which has particular impact on the subject of Variation XIII. This diary entry appears entirely innocent and shows, more than any other I am aware of, the limitations of diary entries and particularly the diary entries of Alice—certainly before her new diary of 1903, the year in which Edward was knighted and Alice became more focussed on writing for posterity. This is not criticism, merely a reminder that diaries are usually for personal use; they are memory prompts and certainly not written for the critical analysis and approval of strangers.

Until their departure for Australia in April 1899, William Lygon and his sister Lady Mary were intensely involved in the detail and minutiae of preparing for their journey to and life in Sydney, Australia. Whilst taking a welcome short break from Court activity and assisting her brother, one bright, crisp morning Lady Mary decided to go for a ride (she was an excellent rider) with her brother Edward Hugh Lygon, just a year younger than William and a lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards (he was to die—shot by a sniper in the Boer War—just over a year later). It is probable that the purpose of the ride was to visit the Rev. Richard Kane, an Oxford MA who resided at Suckley and the incumbent of the parish church of St John the Baptist. The way home passed through Malvern, and Lady Mary decided to make a call on the Elgars who were living at 'Forli', at what is now designated 37 Alexandra Road, Malvern Link.

Having stayed close by 'Forli' in 2004 in one of the many elegant, well-preserved Victorian houses there now, it is hard to imagine the sight of two elegant people arriving on splendid steeds in Alexandra Road back in 1899, when a local paper reported:

Alexandra road has long been a reproach to Malvern: without exaggeration it might be called the worst thoroughfare in the district. In dry weather the dust was about two inches thick; in wet weather the mud was still deeper... and much cut up by carts.

And now the mystery becomes more piquant. Lady Mary wrote again to her brother the day after her visit to the Elgars. It was four days to her thirtieth birthday.

My Dearest Willie,

I hope you will be able to dine with the Chamberlains on the 8th [March]: They have asked us together... I rode with Eddie to Suckley and then went to see the Elgars who were most pleasant. He has written some big orchestra theme & variations—& each of the latter portrays a friend. I am one called 'Incognita' but I only heard this today—as he was too shy to tell me—& would not play them...

(Madresfield Court, 22 February 1899)

This is one of the oddest incidents in all Elgar records—the Elgars greeting Lady Mary (who Alice believed was already written into the Variations) and the fine figure of a young lieutenant of the Grenadier Guards, Edward Lygon. Both were fine horse riders and it is a pleasant fantasy to imagine both riding over, with Lady Mary poised—impeccably side-saddled—on her beautiful chestnut mare. We need to imagine Alice, charmed at the graciousness of her visitors, and Edward at a complete loss as to what to say, since this was a totally unexpected event. Edward really had to think very quickly.

Lady Mary tells her brother William in her letter that it was not Elgar who told them; it was he who throughout was too shy to even discuss the topic and refused to play any of the music. She further tells us that, 'I only heard this today', that is 22 February, so it is probable that Elgar gave this explanation to Winifred Norbury after the Lygons had left and before her own departure back to Sherridge, with Edward asking Winifred to explain to Lady Mary on his behalf that he intended naming a variation 'Incognita'. The 'Incognita' echoes the name given to Australia when it was the 'unknown (south) land', that is 'Terra Incognita'. Edward was demonstrating his erudition here—his knowledge of Australia—whilst knowing in his mind that the term actually related to New Zealand as well. It was fortuitous that Lady Mary was going to a country which in the minds of most people still shared with New Zealand the aura of an unknown land.

We note here that Lady Mary uses the name 'Incognita' with—for us—the implication that Edward would actually name one of the variations as such. But this again reveals the problem of reading letters (or any other written memories) too literally. We know nothing of the dialogue which eventuated after Lady Mary and her brother had left, nor that between Winifred Norbury and Lady Mary. It is quite possible—indeed probable—that Winifred told Lady Mary that Edward intended to dedicate Variation XIII to her, but in order to resolve the twin problems of the number thirteen and the due recognition that society applied to a lady in her exalted position,

Edward had much earlier thought it best to cloak the title—render it ‘unknown’—by using three asterisks! Here we have a further Elgarian puzzle—an ‘unknown’ hidden within a further ‘unknown’! In this way only Lady Mary and a few very close friends would actually know who the dedicatee was and no one else would be the wiser!

In this way Lady Mary was rendered ‘incognita’ and the real unknown, Helen, remained safely hidden.

\* \* \*

Edward’s plan to memorialise Helen was one of those plans which, from time immemorial, has always been ‘a good idea at the time’, but had been exposed—or almost! Edward had had to think quickly. The initial profound ‘shyness’ is only explicable in this way. He then had to invent a ‘good story’ (there was no time to do it whilst his guests were still there), at least for the ears of Alice and Miss Norbury.

But by mid-February 1899, Edward had long decided to use the three asterisks for Variation XIII. Now he found that the decision had been made for him. Lady Mary was now associated (at least in her mind, together with Alice and Winifred Norbury) with that variation. Fortunately, Edward had a solution to hand—why not use his *Three Characteristic Pieces* as an alternative offering?

## The Tangled Web

It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important.

(Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Copper Beeches*)

On Friday, 24 March Lady Mary had come to tea at the Elgars’ new home, ‘Craeg Lea’, Malvern. This was only three days after the Elgars had moved into the house, and Alice’s diary tells us that Lady Mary was their first visitor, together with Richard Penrose Arnold, soon to be immortalised as Variation V. Given the relationship between the following letter and Lady Mary’s visit, it is most likely that Edward, having decided how best he could compensate for the display he had made on her earlier visit of 21 February, asked if she would accept the dedication of the *Three Characteristic Pieces*. This music had none of the connotations of ‘the friends pictured within’, indeed it had the respectable similarity of a (minor) composer seeking, as Edward had previously done, to dedicate to the Queen his *Caractacus* cantata. Seeking patronage in this way was common, but always meticulously maintained the class distinctions of Victorian society. The evidence is that Lady Mary accepted graciously and afforded some degree of relief to Edward—particularly in that his enigmatic secret was safe and any offence, perceived or otherwise, could now be considered to be in the past. Having succeeded in his solution, Edward immediately wrote to Jaeger:

Here come the proofs of the three little pieces: I want to know if you could get the title done very soon—as Lady Mary is going away [she was to leave on 11 April] & I should like her to see it first... She is a most angelic person & I should like to please her.

(24 March 1899)

Edward wanted Lady Mary to approve the title page before she left for Australia. The complete titled and bound score of the music was apparently sent to her after her arrival in Australia.

\* \* \*

On 11 April Edward and Alice attended Foregate station, Edward having rushed back that morning from London where he had rehearsed *Caractacus* and stayed with another variation, Basil Nevinson. They joined with the worthies of the city in farewelling Earl Beauchamp and Lady Mary Lygon as they departed for Sydney, Australia. Edward’s relief was tempered by his nervous disposition in that he felt that the substitution of the *Three Characteristic Pieces* was really inadequate compensation for a lady of such distinction—and a lady who

knew, in particular, of Variation XIII. Lady Mary had not yet seen a score of the Variations but, given the events of her visit to the Elgars on 22 February, she would have been forgiven for finding the whole episode distinctly odd, no matter what her outer demeanour. In some degree she would have felt an affinity with Variation XIII and then, obviously, she would certainly find at some future time that there was no such thing as the 'Terra Incognita' variation!

Edward's remaining concern, whatever explanation he might have given, was that Lady Mary might feel permanently affronted by his strange actions. He waited until she had arrived in Sydney (they arrived 18 May 1899) and wrote to her on 25 July:

The Variations (especially \*\*\* no. 13) have been a great triumph for me under Richter and he is going to play them everywhere including Vienna. People here are preparing for the Three Choirs Festival and we shall miss you very, very much. My wife joins me in sending regards and all good wishes for a safe and speedy return.

And with this Edward sought to reiterate to Lady Mary that, whatever heading she might see associated with Variation XIII in the future, she might infer that it was herself. Given the mire that he had created for himself leading up to the unexpected arrival at 'Forli' on 22 February, there was little else that he could do. Making no comment at all was simply not an option. But paramount in all this was the assurance that his 'Helen secret' remained safe.

This done, there is just one final letter to consider. Edward wrote from 'Craeg Lea' to Jaeger on 2 May, still fearing that somehow others might discover Helen's linkage to Variation XIII. He became very concerned and decided to eliminate the references to the Mendelssohn quotation by cutting them out! (Actually he proposed altering the phrase.) He continued: 'Tell me what else reminds the critics of something else. I might alter it.'

In the same letter he wrote what has often been misunderstood by subsequent writers, particularly since he repeated the statement in a programme note many years later:

The pretty Lady [sic] is on the sea and far away & I meant this (originally) as a little quotation from Mendelssohn's Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt.—but I did not acknowledge it as the critics—if one mentions anything of the kind—talk of nothing else—so I have now cut out the reference... Tell me what else reminds the critics of something else. I might alter it... I am in a fit & cannot eat or drink until I hear what else sounds cabbagey.

In woeful haste & woeful want,

Yrs.

Ed. E.

This is not Edward in jocular mood; this is his 'black dog' attacking him. He fears that his plan—and the contained secrets—is about to fall apart.

It has never been made clear before, but written at this date it is perfectly true that the new governor-to-be and his sister were 'on the sea and far away'; they were at the time approaching the town of Albany in Western Australia to first touch Australian soil on 10 May and reach Sydney on 18 May.

Which makes the variation, as viewed from our vantage point, even odder! Perhaps Jaeger convinced him that his position was pointless. Whatever, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the final score uniquely displays the three occurrences of the Mendelssohn quotation, quotation marks intact, in the clarinet part. This point is important. Edward could have left the quotations in, but removed the highlighting by having the quotation marks removed. He elected not to do that. To Edward it was vital that the remembrance of Helen and her own 'voyage' be memorialised clearly in this way. He was not writing for the now, but for eternity!

It was only slowly through the 1920s that the general public became interested in just who the 'friends pictured within' really were. Of course, Ernest Newman quickly deciphered a number of them, but it was not until Edward wrote a set of notes intended to accompany the piano rolls of the Variations recorded by the Aeolian Company and published in 1928, that Edward 'revealed' who they were. But, as this paper has endeavoured to

show, it has always been true that 'L.M.L.' is Variation XIII—it has always been so, because that is the way Edward intended it! As Rosa Burley has told us:

At the time when Lady Mary's name was becoming attached to the Romanza I asked him why he did not deny the story. His reply was characteristic. 'What does it matter?'

Nothing could be plainer. By the end of 1927, Alice, Lady Mary and his beloved Helen were all dead. His 'cloak' had done its job and he, now alone, must sail on alone.

## 1984—An Intimate Conversation

It was in 1984 that (Edward) Wulstan (Ivor) Atkins (1904–2003) published his book of family reminiscences which revealed for the first time the depth of the relationship between his father Sir Ivor (Algernon) Atkins (1869–1953) and Elgar. This relationship gave the young Wulstan entrée to information from the men's intimate relationship; a friendship initiated at the Three Choirs Festival of 1890 and not terminated until the death of Edward in 1934. It also gave young Wulstan the privilege of enjoying his own increasing friendship with Edward.

In an appendix to his book, Wulstan tells of Edward in 1932 and 1933, when living at 'Marl Bank', Worcester, often speaking of the early days, including the years of meeting Dr Buck and his love of visiting Yorkshire. There was one particular visit of Sir Ivor to 'Marl Bank' (possibly 30 July 1933) during which Atkins and Edward were alone for quite a few hours and Elgar told him, for the first time, of his first engagement in 1883. The depth and intensity of Edward's revelations, with its impact on his music, made Sir Ivor realise that these memories were from the depths of Edward's soul, and he felt privileged that this great man had felt the need—at this late point in his life—to share them with him. Wulstan wrote:

...for nearly fifty years he [Edward] had never disclosed his first engagement, and my father was certain that Carice did not know about it.

Fifty years takes Edward's memory back to 1883! This strongly implies that Alice too did not know of Helen and the first engagement. And the sensitivities of Alice's upbringing, Edward's personal sensitivities and the common social sensitivities of the late Victorian era would support this view. Edward had less than a year to live, and this suggests that the memories of lost love had been a burden too heavy for him to carry and one of which he needed to unburden himself.

Wulstan continued: 'Elgar had not stipulated that the matter was confidential', and at this late remove, there was really no need. Alice had died in 1920, and both Helen and Lady Mary had died in 1927. Perhaps Edward even hoped that his story might be told some time in the future—after his death. Sir Ivor decided, from this lengthy conversation, that Edward's experiences had had such a profound effect on much of his music that at some time it should be revealed. Sir Ivor's main concern was to protect a dear friend, Carice, who was forty-three in 1933. Consequently he decided that, in order to avoid any possible distress, it should be kept secret until fifty years after Edward's death. Thus the secret was passed to Wulstan some years after Edward's death, and later circumstance made it easier and preferable for it to be revealed in Wulstan Atkins's book, published in 1984.

Beyond the revelation of Helen and the broken engagement, the impact of that long conversation with Edward convinced Sir Ivor that at least two of Elgar's major compositions were profoundly influenced by the loss of the love of his life—these were Variation XIII of the 'Enigma' Variations and the Violin Concerto, both of which Sir Ivor took from their conversation to be actually dedicated in Edward's mind to Helen Weaver. It was for this reason that Sir Ivor, who drew up the programme for the national memorial service held in Worcester Cathedral on 2 March 1934, took particular care with his selection of the orchestral pieces. These, played by the London Symphony Orchestra led by Billy Reed, were all from the 'Enigma' Variations and were played in

their score order. Sir Ivor deliberately chose the three representing the three most important people in Edward's life. Firstly the 'Enigma' theme was played; then Variation I, Alice, his beloved life-companion and ever faithful helpmate; Variation IX, 'Nimrod', August Jaeger his musical guardian and 'good, honest SOUL', as Edward described him; and finally Variation XIII, the enigmatic '\*\*\*', played in memory of Edward's great and abiding love, Helen Jessie Weaver.

## Postlude

How often have I said to you that, when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?

(Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*)

Edward had just one last meeting with all that was 'loveliest, brightest and best.' He discovered Helen again! Not of course, the Worcester Helen, but still a young attractive violinist playing in Billy Reed's orchestra at Croydon and rehearsing *The Dream of Gerontius*. The date was 7 November 1931 and Edward had just three years of active life left.

The story is frankly told in Kevin Allen's book *Elgar in Love*, with its warm and generous introduction by the doyen of Elgar writers, Michael Kennedy. The relationship which developed between Vera Hockman and Edward had a strong echo of the past—Vera was Jewish and Edward a Roman Catholic, the problem of a clash of faiths which Edward had contended with nearly fifty years before, but this final time it was of no import.

The relationship had Carice's blessing and she became a good friend of Vera. Kennedy says that Carice 'knew that her father was not being a silly old man'. The relationship blossomed and Elgar sought to delay 'Time's winged chariot'—knowing that he had little of that finite quantity left. For Edward it was love recovered. Soon he was calling her 'my mother, my child, my lover, my friend' and himself Hyperion. Friends noticed his increased sprightliness, as if the years had rolled back and the last spark of music composition raised hope of a third symphony.

One day, Edward gave Vera his most precious gift—a gift reserved for just one other youthful love in his life. He had once given Helen a copy of his much beloved book *Hyperion*; now he realised that it was time to pass it on to new, beloved hands. He gave Vera his own mother's copy—the copy he had carried all his life.

And so the circle was complete and Edward could finally rest in peace.

## Afterthoughts

'I should have more faith,' he said; 'I ought to know by this time that when a fact appears opposed to a long train of deductions it invariably proves to be capable of bearing some other interpretation.'

(Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Valley of Fear*)

In all the foregoing I have sought to conform to one of Michael Kennedy's dictums—I have sought to recognise Edward Elgar's greatness whilst emphasising his humanity. It must be a terrible load to carry true genius throughout life—to be regarded at the same time as being god-like seems to me to actually diminish such a person!

My analysis inevitably leads to the larger questions which arose when Edward was asked what his intentions had been in writing the Variations. In part his cryptic reply was:

The Variations should stand simply as a 'piece' of music. The Enigma I will not explain—its 'dark saying' must be left unguessed, and I warn you that the apparent connexion between the Variations and the Theme is often of the slightest texture; further, through and over the whole set another and larger theme 'goes', but is not played... So

the principal Theme never appears, even as in some late dramas—e.g. Maeterlinck's 'L'Intruse' and 'Les sept Princesses'—the chief character is never on the stage.

Brian Trowell demonstrates that the 'missing character' is in both cases 'a stricken woman', which 'can only relate to Helen Jessie Weaver'. In my article I have proposed that it was on a profound impulse that he felt a theme rise within him on 21 October 1898. 'To him and him alone it would be the Helen theme...' I agree with Trowell's analysis and believe that the 'dark saying'—the 'larger theme that goes', but is not played, and never appears—in short, the 'enigma'—is that of unrequited love. And who was it whose love was not reciprocated? Clearly Elgar, which, with the minor duplication of a character, is an anagram of 'larger'.

Beyond that point, as to the riddle of the 'Theme' itself, I have little to add. Elgar often used 'theme' and 'tune' as synonyms, and both Jaeger and Carice said that they knew the answer to the riddle—with Carice saying it was a tune. But at this point I leave the challenge of 'solving' the musical theme to that noble army of Enigma hunters who are likely to seek the 'golden fleece' of music for ever; but I am cautioned in this view, as often in past times, by a famous quotation from one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, Bertrand Russell, who wrote:

Do not feel absolutely certain of anything.

(Bertrand Russell, *A Liberal Decalogue*)

Happy hunting!

#### *Author's note*

In Part I of this article, I stated that Helen Weaver met her friend Edith Groveham 'in Leipzig in 1882 when they both were studying violin'. Edith was actually studying piano.

#### *Bibliography*

- Kevin Allen, *Elgar in Love: Vera Hockman and the third symphony* (Malvern: Aldine, 2000).  
Robert Anderson, *Elgar, The Dent Master Musicians* (London: Dent, 1993).  
Robert Anderson, *Elgar in Manuscript* (London: British Library, 1990).  
Robert Anderson, 'Gertrude Walker: an Elgarian friendship', *Musical Times* (December 1984), 698–700.  
Geoffrey Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain: 1851–75* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971).  
Rosa Burley and Frank C. Carruthers, *Edward Elgar: the record of a friendship* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1972).  
Thomas F. Dunhill, *Sir Edward Elgar* (London: Blackie & Son, 1938).  
Kenneth Grahame, *Dream Days* (London: Bodley Head, 1930).  
F. W. Hetherington, *Hetherington's useful handbook for intending emigrants. Life at sea and the immigrant's prospects in Australia and New Zealand* (London, [1884]).  
Michael Kennedy, *The Life of Elgar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).  
Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982).  
Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: a creative life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).  
Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers: letters of a creative life*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).  
Jerrold Northrop Moore, 'The Return of the Dove to the Ark: 'Enigma' Variations a century on', *Elgar Society Journal*, 11/3 (November 1999), 134–43.

Mrs Richard Powell, *Edward Elgar: memories of a variation* (London: Rempoy, 1979).  
Julian Rushton, *Elgar: 'Enigma' Variations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).  
Brian Trowell, 'Elgar's Use of Literature', in Raymond Monk (ed.), *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993).  
Cora Weaver, *A Guide to Edward Elgar in Worcestershire* (Malvern: Cora Weaver, 2004).  
Cora Weaver, *The Thirteenth Enigma* (London: Thames, 1988).  
Dorothy E. Williams, *The Lygons of Madresfield Court* (Logaston, Herefordshire: Logaston Press, 2001).  
Dorothy E. Williams, 'A Most Angelic Person', *Worcestershire: The County Magazine* (March 1980).  
E. Wulstan Atkins, *The Elgar-Atkins Friendship* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1984).  
Percy M. Young, *Alice Elgar: enigma of a Victorian lady* (London: Dobson, 1978).

The letters of Lady Mary Lygon to her brother William Lygon, 7th Earl Beauchamp dated 1892–99 are archived at Madresfield Court, Worcestershire. The original copy of the 'Beauchamp Diary' is archived in the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney; this hand-written document is not really a diary, but rather a reminiscence which covers the period December 1898 to November 1900. A copy of the 'diary' is also archived at Madresfield Court, Worcestershire.

#### *Acknowledgments*

Firstly, it should be clear from my bibliography that I owe a great debt to those Elgarians listed and I extend my thanks to them. There are however a group of writers to whom, in the context of my paper, I have a particular debt. Firstly to Cora Weaver whose small but influential book on the 'Thirteenth Enigma' has proven an invaluable, seminal source which ultimately set me on the track of Helen Weaver and to the solution proffered here. Secondly, to the book by Rosa Burley, a book once reviled in Elgarian circles because it appeared to want to reduce Edward Elgar from a supposed godlike eminence to that of a flawed human being—but possessed of true genius. And thirdly, to the man who first opened to me the door to Elgar—and renewed it with his recent summation *The Life of Elgar*—that most lucid and humane of Elgarian writers, Michael Kennedy.

Finally, to my long-term friends and gentle critics: the indefatigable, always encouraging John Norris; and Martin Bird, who has trodden the 'enigma' path with me over the last four to five years and invariably dragged me back to the straight path when I occasionally wandered. Whatever its failings, 'Loveliest, Brightest, Best' would not exist but for their unflinching support.

*ERNEST BLAMIRES, an Elgar Society member since 1994, is a retired communications engineer with an M.Eng.Sc. from the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Ernest was born in Harrogate, Yorkshire but has lived most of his life in Australia. In his early years he played in brass bands and discovered the music of Holst, Vaughan Williams and Elgar in this way. Apart from his interest in writing his regular 'Japes & Larks' column for the Elgar Society News and surfing the internet for Elgarian exotica, for some years he has been researching the life of William Lygon, 7th Earl Beauchamp for a projected biography. This present paper presents some of the serendipitous fruits of that research, both in Sydney and at Madresfield Court, Malvern.*







*Above: Elgar, Rodewald and the Shover.  
Courtesy of the Elgar Birthplace  
Museum.*



*Right: 1902 Panhard et Levassor—an  
image taken from the World Wide  
Web at <[http://www.vccofgb.co.uk/  
images/p1.jpg](http://www.vccofgb.co.uk/images/p1.jpg)>*

# The Shover Uncovered

## Martin Bird and Ernest Blamires

*The cover image of the November 2003 edition of the JOURNAL displaying a photograph of Elgar at the wheel of a mystery car prompted an article in the last edition (July 2005) which investigated motor car manufacture in turn-of-the-century Malvern. This has further prompted two more Elgarian sleuths to join forces to uncover more of the background to the vehicle and propose a firm identification. Martin Bird reveals the history of the 'Shover' from Elgar's correspondence and family diaries, whilst Ernest Blamires tracks the car itself along the highways and byways of the World Wide Web. The email from Ernest reporting the finding of the Shover to his friend Martin occurred in the same few days in which Martin located the bundle of letters from Rodewald to Elgar! They had not previously told each other what Elgarian project they were independently concentrating; this solution is a happy confluence of the power of the internet and solid archival research.*

*Martin Bird writes:*

As I read Catherine Moody's interesting article, 'Elgar at the Wheel' (JOURNAL, July 2005), I remembered transcribing recently some letters from Alfred Rodewald to Elgar, enthusiastically telling him about his new car. At the same time my good friend Ernest Blamires was surfing in Sydney—the internet rather than the sea—trying to identify the manufacturer of the vehicle, which we were both sure was not a product of industrial Malvern. Between us we think we can shed a little more light on the subject.

\* \* \*

The story begins in May 1903. On the 19th Rodewald wrote to Elgar:

...I mean to buy a pair of black goggles, & have bought a motor-car to seat four & obtained the services of Gordon Chapman as chauffeur for the whole summer. If you are at home for Whitsuntide, we purpose driving to Malvern if you can hire us a double room at the Essington Hotel.

Our idea is to leave here on the 29th May, go as far as Shrewsbury, & on the 30th proceed to Malvern via Hereford & Ledbury, & if you & your wife will join us at either place we will drive you home. On Sunday aft. we might go over & see old stick in the mud Granville B[antock]. & on the Monday evening I would come home or early on Tuesday.

I have taken the same cottage as last year for July & Aug, & expect you all there for 2–3 weeks from the 1st July... we can all get to the seaside in about two hours, & we'll have a high old bully time.

Things went according to plan, as can be seen from Alice's diary:

Mr. Rodewald & Gordon Chapman came & stayed at Essington's dined here—nice Evening.

The next day:

Mr. Rodewald & Gordon Chapman & 9pin [Troyte Griffith] to lunch. After lunch they took E. for drive then took A. & C. loved it, then tea, then took E. & C. to Madresfield Rectory & left C. at Mount & so home—Mr. Rodewald & Gordon to supper—E. the better for drive—

...and on the Monday:

Rodey & G. Chapman came for E. but he thought he must not leave his work, then wanted to go & looked out for them in vain, disappointed

Elgar's work was, of course, the orchestration of *The Apostles*, to be interrupted later that week when the Elgars travelled to London for the first London performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* at Westminster Cathedral. On 11 June, Rodewald wrote again:

I am off tomorrow to Llangollen to bring the 'old steam barrow' home. It will all be in order now for the future, as we know how to lubricate properly. This is what we did not do correctly, & consequently allowed the engine to overheat.

On 3 July the Elgars set out for Wales for their holiday with Rodewald. Elgar and Rodewald brought their bikes, and for the moment both car and chauffeur remained in Liverpool. Soon Jaeger (and bike) were invited to join them, to work on his analysis of *The Apostles*. Gordon Chapman brought the car to the cottage on the evening of 6 July, and from then on it was the preferred way of seeing the countryside:

Rode', E. & A. by motor, Gordon driving, to Kerrykiddian—Fine views—

After lunch, Rode', E. & A. Gordon driving, went to Lake Ogwen—Very lovely.

Jaeger joined them on the 11th:

E. vesy hard at work—After lunch Rode', A. & Mr. Fletcher, Gordon Chapman driving, started in the motor for Llandudno Junction to meet the Mosshead. Fine rain like mist. Had a narrow escape of accident. D. G.—Had tea & when Jaeger arrived & we got in, they found there was hardly any petrol—Drove to Conway, none to be had, drove to some other place, none, then on to Llandudno & so back—E. came out to meet us but had returned—Very enjoyable drive when not too reckless, soft mist falling & mountains veiled in soft clouds—

The excursions continued next day:

Rode, E, Jaeger & Gordon driving drove to C. Curig & walked on to Llanberis pass—& so back. Lovely day. They all enjoyed it & E. looked so refreshed. After tea we all went over, Rode' & E. bicycled, the rest motored (frightful pace) but returned safely D. G.

And so the holiday continued; Rodewald occasionally returning to Liverpool for a day or two leaving 'E. & Jaeger very busy playing on in the river—'. But Elgar plainly still saw a future for his trusty bicycle as a means of exploring the countryside, as he wrote on the 15th to Frank Schuster, who had also recently bought his first car:

We shall be anxious to hear of your motor experiences & hope you will like your machine: I am somewhat disillusioned as to the 'pleasure' side of motoring—but it's most useful.

Disillusionment must have increased over the next few days as 'the Buzzer', as it was affectionately known, became plagued with punctures and breakdowns. Richter's chorus master, R. H. Wilson, had come over to the cottage to go through *The Apostles* with Elgar, and accepted the offer of being driven home. I shall let Alice tell the sad tale:

19 July: Gordon & Mr. Wilson & Mr. Jaeger started in the Buzzer about 3 or 2.30 aftn. became more rainy. They did not return. We got more wretched & anxious, wandered up the road in the rain, & listened & watched.

20 July: After breakfast a telegram from the Mosshead [Jaeger], saying Buzzer broke down about 3 miles out of

Corwen & he & Gordon spent 3½ hrs working at it, at last got back to Corwen & stayed there the night. Mr. Jaeger spent day in Chester & returned in Evng. Gordon not.

21 July: Gordon returned in 'Cousin Charlie's' splendid Car—

22 July: Rode', Mosshead & Gordon & Chauffeur drove to Corwen in 'Cousin Charlie's' car to Corwen to send off old mouldy Buzzer to Liverpool—Mosshead returned in Evening. Rode' & Gordon went onto Liverpool.

Rodewald and Jaeger decreed that, henceforth, the car would be known as 'the Shover'! Rodewald wrote Elgar an affectionate postcard on 13 August telling him of the Shover's latest adventures and attaching a small snap of the car—the very photograph that adorns the cover of the November 2003 JOURNAL. In the Birthplace Museum are two further photos of the car, one in pure 'Shover' mode, with the bonnet up and a collection of intent posteriors gathered round a flat rear tyre, and a three-quarters view (reproduced here) which between them have allowed Ernest Blamires to make a more positive identification of the vehicle.

### *Sources*

Rodewald letters transcribed by Martin Bird from microfilms held at the Worcester Record Office (BA5184 (vi) 970.5:445 Parcel 2).

Schuster letter transcribed by Martin Bird from microfilms held at the Worcester Record Office (BA5184 (viii) 970.5:445 Parcel 1).

Excerpts from Alice Elgar's diary from an as yet unpublished transcription by Martin Bird of the Elgar family diaries (1889–1939) from microfilms provided by the Birmingham University Library.

### *Ernest Blamires writes:*

I enjoyed reading Catherine Moody's article on the early days of motor manufacture in Malvern and her brave attempt at shedding light on precisely what was the mystery motor car purchased by Alfred Rodewald, the image of which showed him seated in comfort whilst Edward Elgar apparently chauffeured him, safely and expertly, somewhere in the region of the Malvern Hills.

But my interest was raised further when I read that Miss Moody had to admit at the end that, despite consulting 'experts', she was unable to claim that the car was either a Morgan or a steam-driven Burston—both products of Malvern-based companies.

There was something else. The car in which our two heroes were seated seemed a little too grand to be the product of either of the companies mentioned. After all, Alfred was a wealthy man, having made his money in cotton broking in the city of Liverpool. In short, the car looked powerful and expensive. For the first time the question intrigued me, and I decided to see if I could solve the riddle.

True, I have no expertise in motor cars or in their history—I did not even know precisely what a 'veteran' motor car was. All that I had to go on was that Rodewald had bought the car in 1902–3. But I have long known and used the power of the internet and the amazing results which the most successful internet search engine Google provides to the committed seeker after information.

It transpires that any motor car which was manufactured before the end of 1918 is usually classed as a veteran car; however the Veteran Car Club of Great Britain defines 'veteran' as those cars built before the end of 1904, and those built between 1905 and the end of 1918 as 'Edwardian'. It is this definition of veteran which applies to entrants in the famous London to Brighton Car Rally. So that clearly places Rodewald's car in the veteran class. Where to go from here? I trusted the ever reliable Google and typed in the search information 'Veteran British Cars'.

Scanning the results displayed on my computer screen, I decided that an ideal site to start with might be the Veteran Car Club of Great Britain, which has the URL (that is, its internet address is)

<<http://www.vccofgb.co.uk>>. I clicked on the 'Enter' button and from the choice of selections offered I clicked on 'Pictures'. This immediately took me to a group of eight images of cars—and the first one of the group I saw was, to my astonishment (not too strong a word), the coloured, modern image of a car which was essentially identical to Rodewald's! The car was labelled '1902 Panhard et Levassor'. By clicking on the small picture I was able to view the image full-screen size—and beautiful it is. If you have internet access, the address of the image is <<http://www.vccofgb.co.uk/images/p1.jpg>>.

\*\*\*

Between 1890 and 1905, the most important marque was, without doubt, Panhard et Levassor (P&L). René Panhard was born in Paris on 27 May 1841 and began life as a wheelwright. An old friend from his *École centrale* days was Emile Levassor, born near Paris on 21 January 1843. Their paths gradually came together until in 1876 Levassor became a full partner of Panhard's firm and the company was reformed as 'Panhard et Levassor'. Shortly after that the new company was introduced to the internal combustion engine and then through this to the horseless carriage. The full history of these early years is told in Doug Nye's excellent book, *Famous Racing Cars*.

By the early 1890s, whilst other makers continued to position the engine at the back of the car with rear-wheel drive, P&L placed the engine at the front of the chassis, driving through a clutch to a forerunner of the modern gearbox, with final drive to the back axle by chain. This gave Panhard a permanent place in the history of motoring, and its sweeping success was quickly copied by other leading manufacturers and formed the pattern for motor cars for many decades to come. It was a P&L which won the 1895 Paris-Bordeaux-Paris race (two days of continuous driving at an average speed of 15 mph!). The numerous wins in such races (on French roads, far superior to the British ones!) caught the public imagination, and for those who could afford it, a P&L was the car to have. Up to the early 1900s the demand for these cars was so high that there was a significant waiting list for new ones, and the company was paying its shareholders a fifty percent dividend each year. There was no mass-production line; the complete chassis with engine was hand-built and the body (with such exotic names as 'tonneau', 'phaeton' and 'brougham') often built to the buyer's specifications.

The history of the P&L motor car in Britain goes back to 1895, to the Hon. Evelyn Ellis, one of a small number of pioneer British motorists who had the vision to see the importance of the newly developing motor car. He was the owner of the first car imported into the country—it was a P&L. The car made its first road journey of fifty-six miles (ninety kilometres) on 5 July 1895. (On that day the relatively unknown Edward Elgar 'had lovely telegram from Dr. Heap saying The Black Knight was to be done in Birmingham.') It was this same P&L which took part on 14 November 1896 in the first 'Emancipation Run'—from London to Brighton—held to celebrate the coming into force of legislation which freed motor cars from the bane of having to travel at no more than 4 mph preceded by a pedestrian carrying a red flag. The legal speed limit of motor cars was also raised to the dizzy height of 12 mph (19 kph)! The interested reader can find more detailed information on the history of the Red Flag Act and its treatment of 'light locomotives'—the category into which the motor car was initially put—at the internet site 'British Motor Manufacturers 1894–1960' at <<http://www.britishmm.co.uk/brighton.asp>>.

Emile Levassor died in 1897, probably as a result of an accident in the 1896 Paris-Marseille-Paris race when his car overturned, but René Panhard and two sons continued to manage the firm well. Panhard died in 1908, but his firm continued successfully and finally merged with Citroën in the 1960s with Panhard family members still on the board. The name Panhard still survives today. After the Second World War a complete change in policy resulted in small, air-cooled 'Dyna' cars being developed, and a sports car, the 'Junior', evolved from the Dyna in 1952. The last Panhard was the 24CT coupé launched in 1964. The Panhard factory ceased building cars in 1967, but the production of armoured cars under the Panhard name continues to this day.

\*\*\*

We now know, from Martin Bird's discoveries, that Rodewald did as we might have expected—he bought the finest, most reputable motor car available, a P&L! He specified a four-seater machine and, comparing the freshly rediscovered photograph of the car with modern images of the P&Ls which still travel nobly from London to Brighton each year, it appears that the car was a 'rear-entrance' (a small door at the back of the car) tonneau-bodied model. The engine size was also to order and we cannot tell what Rodewald specified; the 1902 models in the upcoming 2005 London to Brighton rally (and there will be at least five) have sizes ranging from two-cylinder, 7 hp to four-cylinder, 16 hp. Rodewald first told Edward that he had bought a motor car in May 1903, but it seems likely that he ordered it sometime late in 1902.

Interested readers can compare the gradual external changes to the P&L motor car by viewing the internet site provided by the major sponsor of the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run, the *Daily Mail* newspaper, to be found at <<http://www.lbvcr.com>>. On this site you can actually look at images of over 500 veteran motor cars which will take part in the 2005 sixty-mile 'race' down to Brighton on 6 November, of which there will be at least twenty-five P&Ls. The individual cars are given entry numbers and I suggest you take particular interest in the following Panhard et Levassor motor cars:

- No. 6: An 1896 model, two-cylinder, 6 hp, omnibus body
- No. 68: 1900, two-cylinder, 6 hp, tonneau body
- No. 117: 1901, four-cylinder, 16 hp, rear-entrance tonneau body
- No. 143: 1902, two-cylinder, 7 hp, rear-entrance tonneau body
- No. 144: 1902, two-cylinder, 7 hp, tonneau body
- No. 176: 1902, four-cylinder, 10 hp, rear-entrance tonneau body
- No. 189: 1902, four-cylinder, 20 hp, tonneau body
- No. 275: 1903, four-cylinder, 10 hp, tonneau body
- No. 302: 1903, four-cylinder, 15 hp, tonneau body
- No. 371: 1904, two-cylinder, 7 hp, tonneau body
- No. 457: 1904, four-cylinder, 15 hp, tonneau body

And, for the adventurous and lovers of beautiful machines, do not fail to look at:

- No. 314: 1903 Mercedes, four-cylinder, 28/32 hp, tonneau body, and
- No. 402: 1904 Cadillac, four-cylinder, 15 hp, tonneau body

—preludes of great marques to come!

\*\*\*

A final temptation to those Elgarians who live in or close to London: this year the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run also has in addition a concours event which will take place on Saturday, 5 November in Waterloo Place, Pall Mall, London, the day before the annual run. Up to 100 of the finest examples of these veteran cars can be viewed close up in all their fine glory, free-of-charge to the visiting public. Take the challenge (and your digital camera) and go see if you can find the Rodewald-Elgar car—something I dearly wish I could do! Let me know if you find it.

Sources:

Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).

Doug Nye, *Famous Racing Cars: from Panhard to Williams-Honda* (Patrick Stephens, 1989).

'Panhard et Levassor' Web page: <<http://www.vea.qc.ca/vea/marques1/panhard.htm>>.

*MARTIN BIRD, an amateur double bass player, singer and conductor, has been pottering about in the land of Elgar since studying The Dream of Gerontius for 'A' level some forty years ago. He looks after the Elgar Society web site, and contributed 'An Elgarian Wartime Chronology' to Oh, My Horses! (Elgar Editions, 2001) from his four million-word computer database of*

*Elgarian research. He is currently working on an edition of the Elgar family diaries, 1889–1939.*

*ERNEST BLAMIREs, an Elgar Society member since 1994, is the author of the extended article 'Loveliest, Brightest, Best...', the second part of which is presented elsewhere in this issue of the JOURNAL. A retired communications engineer, Ernest was first introduced to readers of the Elgar Society News with the publication of an 'elimination' puzzle in November 1997. Later he had the pleasure of meeting John Norris and Ann Vernau who inveigled him into creating the first 'Japes & Larks' puzzle which was first published online, then became the series of puzzles published in the NEWS since July 2002.*

# The Boon of Far Peru

## Geoffrey Hodgkins

*An ear-catching phrase from Elgar's correspondence triggers a paper trail through nineteenth and early twentieth century literature in search of a solution to yet another of the composer's enigmatic utterances.*

Minor Elgarian enigmas abound. Some of the more obscure are those 'in-jokes' associated with the 'Skip the Pavement' Society, to which Bantock, Newman, Rodewald and others belonged. A mystery which has fascinated me is Elgar's instruction to Jaeger in a letter of 13 September 1903 to send a postcard to Rodewald containing the question: 'What is the boon of far Peru?'

'Far Peru' is an expression that can be found occasionally in literature. In Edgar Allan Poe's short story, *The Duc de l'Omlette* (1850) we read: 'A golden cage bore the little winged wanderer [an ortolan], enamored, melting, indolent, to the Chaussée D'Antin, from its home in far Peru.'

In an early Rodgers and Hart song, *Any Old Place with You* (1919) can be found the immortal lines:

I'll call each dude a pest  
You like in Budapest,  
Oh for far Peru!  
I'll go to hell for ya  
Or Philadelphia,  
Any old place with you.

I have never come across 'far Bolivia' or 'far Argentina', even though they and other countries are more remote. The phrase 'far Peru' certainly has a ring about it. The earliest reference I have been able to find (and possibly the original) is in *The Ingoldsby Legends* (1840), written by one 'Thomas Ingoldsby'—actually the Rev. Richard H. Barham (1788–1845). In the poem *St Medard: A Legend of Afric*, the Devil goes around collecting sinners, but has trouble finding any. The third verse reads:

He had been north, and he had been south,  
From Zembla's shores unto far Peru,  
Ere he filled his sack  
Which he bore on his back,  
Saints were so many, and sins so few!

In 1887 Elgar had set one of the 'Ingoldsby' poems, *As I laye a-thynkyng*, as a song. It is highly likely that he was familiar with Barham's poem, and that it is the source of the cryptic quote to Rodewald.

However, there is just the possibility of another musical connection.

In March 1899 the Elgars were in London where Edward conducted the Royal Choral Society in the London première of *Caractacus* on 20 March. While they were in London they visited the theatre (rather than concert hall or opera). On 18th they were at the Gaiety Theatre to hear *A Runaway Girl*, with music by Lionel Monckton

(of *The Arcadians* fame) and Ivan Caryll. This show was famous for its 'hit' number, 'Soldiers in the Park'. The part of Leonello was sung by John Coates, then a baritone.

On 21st they attended Charles Brookfield and Adrian Ross's translation of the French farce *The Cuckoo*, featuring Sir Charles Hawtrey. And the following evening they were at the Savoy to hear *The Lucky Star*, starring the great Savoyard, Henry Lytton. This had also been written by Caryll (music) and Ross (lyrics).

There is no mention of Elgar having met Caryll or Ross. He was by no means a household name at this stage in his career, certainly outside of musical circles, although he had established a reputation with his two 1897 compositions for the Diamond Jubilee—*The Banner of St George* and the Imperial March—particularly in the capital; and of course the première of the 'Enigma' Variations was only two months away.

What we do know is that over the next few weeks, Elgar had written two new works—a short orchestral miniature and a song. The former, *Sérénade lyrique*, was dedicated to Ivan Caryll's orchestra, and first performed by them eighteen months later on 27 November 1900. The song, *The Pipes of Pan*, to words by Adrian Ross, was completed on 5 June 1899 and later orchestrated.

Ivan Caryll (real name Felix Tilkin) was born in Belgium in 1861, and rose to fame in London in the 1880s as conductor and composer of musical comedies. He became popular in America too and eventually moved there. Eleven musical comedies were written with the collaboration of Ross (though some of these were the work of multiple collaborators, both lyrical and musical). Caryll died in New York in 1921 during rehearsals for a new show, *Little Miss Raffles*.

Adrian Ross was the professional name of Arthur Ropes (1859–1933), a Cambridge graduate and lecturer who began writing lyrics in 1889. He soon came to the attention of the impresario George Edwardes, owner of the Gaiety Theatre, who is widely credited with 'inventing' musical comedy. Ross contributed many lyrics to virtually all of the Gaiety Theatre's hit shows from the Edwardes era. He also translated lyrics of foreign shows for Edwardes; it was his account of *The Merry Widow* (1907) that became the standard English libretto of that piece; Ross also provided English versions of two other Lehár works—*The Count of Luxembourg* (1911) and *Gypsy Love* (1912). In 1922 he wrote the English lyrics for *Lilac Time*, the musical based on tunes by Schubert.

Elgar's song *Speak, My Heart* also has a link to Ross. In autumn 1903 Elgar had originally set some words of Ross but due to copyright difficulties the song could not be published. Boosey's persuaded A. C. Benson to write substitute lyrics to the completed tune.

The musical comedy *The Orchid* was premiered at the Gaiety on 26 October 1903, with lyrics by Ross and music by Caryll and Monckton. It featured most of the big names in musical comedy of the time: Gertie Millar, Harry Grattan and George Grossmith, Jr. One of the songs, sung by 'Zaccary', is called 'From Far Peru'. There are two verses, plus chorus; the words are as follows:

I've travelled far where panthers are  
That jump on you and catch you!  
And snakes that twist about your wrist  
And kill you if they scratch you!  
I've run for miles from crocodiles  
That came with jaws extended;  
But I have brought the flower I sought,  
The orchid rare and splendid!

In the wilds of far Peru,  
It was there the orchid grew!  
Where the vampire bats flew  
Through the vapours of blue,  
In the woods of far Peru! (repeat)

Gorilla hordes with poisoned swords  
By day and night attacked me!  
At dawn and dark, Peruvian bark  
I heard as bloodhounds tracked me!  
I climbed for weeks the icy peaks,  
And reached the top a victor;  
And lastly, I was swallowed by  
A monstrous boa constrictor!

In the wilds of far Peru,  
He had room inside for two!  
But my trowel I drew  
And I dug my way through  
To the light of far Peru! (repeat)

Although Ross/Ropes was a history graduate, whilst at Cambridge he had won the Chancellor's Medal for verse, and there must be a strong possibility that he was familiar with the *Ingoldsby Legends*. The words owe much to Gilbert, and the mood of Munchausen-style boasting makes it a first cousin to 'I shipped, d'ye see, in a revenue sloop' from *Ruddigore*. The tune is pleasant enough, and it can be heard (minus the words) via the internet on <<http://www.halhkmusic.com/orchid.html>>.

Elgar's instruction to Jaeger came nearly six weeks before the première of *The Orchid*, when obviously the work was already written, and almost certainly in rehearsal. Elgar was in London on the first four days of September 1903 for orchestral rehearsals of *Gerontius* for the forthcoming Hereford Festival. According to Alice, he also corrected *Apostles* proofs at Novello, but she was not in London so her diary does not record all of Elgar's movements. This must raise the possibility that he attended a rehearsal for *The Orchid* and heard the song. The proximity of the dates of the two 'far Perus'—the letter on the 13 September and the work's première nearly six weeks later—could be a coincidence, but without more evidence we shall probably never know for sure. So the question remains: what is the boon of far Peru?

*GEOFFREY HODGKINS* was editor of the *Elgar Society Journal* from 1991 to 2002. He edited the *Gerontius* companion *The Best of Me* (1999) and is author of *Somewhere Further North: Elgar and the Morecambe Festival* (2003). He is currently writing a book in partnership with Dr Charles McGuire on the origins of the libretto for the *Apostles* project.

# REPORTS

## University of Birmingham Elgar Conference

Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-upon-Avon and Elgar Centre, Lower Broadheath,  
1–3 July 2005

The story of Elgar scholarship, until very recently, could be characterised as a laying on of hands. It was a flame kept safe through the work of a few individuals who defied the academic resistance to Elgar's music that began during his lifetime; a resistance most notable amongst the Cambridge circle of Edward Dent. The group of people that gathered at the beginning of the summer in Stratford showed that this is no longer the case and in fact has been turned somewhat on its head. It was made up of a new generation of academic Elgarians and a large representation of North American researchers.

The conference was organised by the University of Birmingham to celebrate the music department's centenary as well as Elgar's appointment as the first Peyton professor of music in 1905. This anniversary was remembered in a paper given on the Saturday afternoon by Matthew Riley, to whom much credit is due for organising the events of the weekend. He re-constructed Elgar's lecture on Mozart's Symphony No. 40 that gave some insight into Elgar's thought on composition more broadly.

Over the weekend there were eight sessions that covered different aspects of Elgar's life, works and world. The conference got underway with a session chaired by John Pickard (co-ordinating editor of the Elgar Society Edition) entitled 'Joy and Sorrow'. In this session Daniel Grimley (University of Nottingham), who is a co-editor of the recent *Cambridge Companion to Elgar*, spoke about *The Spirit of England* as an expression of a collective structure of mourning. He observed the analogous relationship between the orchestral introduction to 'For the Fallen' and the transformation music of Wagner's *Parsifal* where we can hear the ritualised transformation of suffering into redemption.

It was then the turn of Byron Adams to take the chair for the session dedicated to 'Gender and Identity'. Byron has done much in recent articles to make this an accepted area of dialogue in Elgar scholarship. Norma E. Hollingsworth gave a paper that articulately defended Gerontius's guardian angel as a female presence rather than the androgynous being that recent contributions have seen. Corissa Gould tackled head-on Elgar's identity as a creative artist in a society where certain expectations of masculine conduct held sway. The day ended with a well-chosen recital of songs by Parry, Stanford, Vaughan Williams, Butterworth, Quilter and Elgar. The Elgar settings of *The River* and *The Torch* stood up well amongst the other more lauded song composers. Danny Whatmough accompanied by Chris Allsop performed their programme with sensitivity.

Saturday began with a session on 'Reception' in which Charles Edward McGuire traced Elgar's long decline as a popular composer after the Great War. He also touched upon the subject that is exercising the minds of many Elgarians at the present time, Elgar's relation to modernity and modernism; the fourth session, 'Modernity 1911–12', placed these concerns to the fore.

The highlight of the session was the paper given by Paul Harper-Scott entitled 'Our *Beowulf*-Poet of Music: interlace structures and Elgar's Second Symphony'. Paul, whose book on Elgar and modernism is soon to be published by Cambridge University Press, placed the symphony and its dialectic with modernity into a far longer perspective. He evoked the interlace patterns of Anglo-Saxon illuminated manuscripts as an analogy for the dialectical nature of Elgar's symphonic process.

The keynote paper was given by Patrick McCreless (Yale University) on 'Elgar and Recent Theories of Chromaticism' which showed the speaker's impressive analytical skills. At the end of a full day the delegates were treated to a lecture-recital by Clive Brown (University of Leeds) accompanied by Daniel Gordon who shared with us the fruits of his research as editor of the violin music volume of the Elgar Society Edition. He played many of Elgar's shorter pieces as well as the Violin Sonata during the course of which we were given a demonstration of many of the playing techniques implied by Elgar's writing for the instrument; perhaps most interestingly, the different styles of *portamento*, both the German and the Franco-Belgian varieties.

On Sunday the conference and its delegates decamped *en masse* from Stratford to Broadheath for two final sessions. Edward Green (Manhattan School of Music), who provided alert and keen discussion throughout the weekend, spoke on Elgar's use of rhythmic structure. He observed the way with which Elgar uses rhythm as a dialectic of surprise and expectation. However, his paper had a spiritual aim. Its conclusion, derived from his ideas on Elgar's rhythmic structures, showed music presenting time as a friend. The paper included affecting performances of the 'Angel's Farewell' from *Gerontius* and the song *Speak, Music* with his wife, Carrie Wilson.

David Manning took up the modernist pennant again with the First Symphony. He showed the work to be an expression of the tension between romanticism and modernism, between nature and alienation from nature.

The final session brought the weekend full circle with the paper given by Deborah Heckert (Stony Brook University) on Elgar as a composer of Edwardian popular culture. She focused on *The Crown of India* as the archetype of Elgar's work for the arenas of popular culture of the time. I was struck by how looking at Elgar's work from this angle is the Janus face of the modernist views of him. It shows him as part of a common culture in which the high and popular forms were enfranchised.

When Elgar's mother observed that he now belonged to the big wide world, her words proved prophetic. The spirits of past writers of the Elgarian firmament were never far from the surface over the course of the conference. However, with the passing of time and with Elgar's world moving further from our own, the need for every new generation to rediscover and re-interpret Elgar's works becomes an exercise in finding what it means to live with his music now. When we seek Elgar's relation to the modern, we are seeing ourselves in high relief through the mirror that he so generously created.

Roger Dubois

**Fifth Biennial International Conference on  
Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain**  
University of Nottingham, 7–10 July 2005

Building on the success of the previous meetings, the fifth Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain conference, held between 7 and 10 July, was a resounding success. The meeting was admirably organised and hosted by Philip Olleson at Nottingham University. As had been the case at previous gatherings, this conference brought together over a hundred participants from the UK, Europe, Australia, the North American continent, and elsewhere for spirited conversations ranging the entire 'long' nineteenth century. Topics under discussion included such stalwarts as British chamber music, imperialism, music and literature, national and cultural identity, the rediscovery of antiquarian music, and gender issues; opera, British pianists, concert life and even John Philip Sousa made appearances. Typically, with all sessions at least 'double tracked' and some even 'triple tracked', it was impossible to see everything—and most contented themselves to hear from friends and colleagues about papers in parallel sessions. Some papers tangentially related to Elgar included Paul Watt's discussion of the impact of the freethought movement on Ernest Newman, his career and his early writings in a paper entitled 'Ernest Newman's *Glück and the Opera* (1895): its genesis, publication, and reception' and Jürgen Schaarwächter's discussion of the British symphonic tradition in his paper 'Overshadowed: British

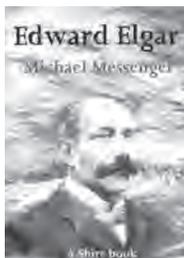
symphonism beyond Parry, Stanford and Elgar'. Friday's special events included a conference keynote address by R. Larry Todd entitled 'On Mendelssohn and Constructions of Britishness' followed by a recital of nineteenth-century song and piano music presented by baritone Steven Varcoe and Iain Farrington which included songs by Mendelssohn, Sterndale Bennett, Parry, Stanford and an Elgar encore.

Of particular interest for Elgarians were papers given by both new and familiar faces. Corissa Gould and Aidan Thompson both gave modified versions of the papers they had presented at the University of Birmingham Elgar Conference in Stratford-upon-Avon the week before. Corissa's 'Problematising Masculinity: male composers, imperialism, and the pressure of gender ideologies in the 'long' nineteenth century' sought to investigate masculinity as it related to composers like Elgar who worked within a profession still considered by many at the time to be 'soft' and 'feminine'. In the Saturday morning Elgar session (chaired by Daniel Grimley, co-editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar*) Aidan, in 'Unmaking Elgar's *The Music Makers*' discussed Elgar's construction of blatant quotations (literal representations of previous music) and subtle allusions (spectral versions) within the composition. In the spirited discussion that followed, Dan Grimley and Matthew Riley both opined that Aidan's 'allusions' might be Freudian-style 'repressed' quotation, positing a battle-narrative within the composition between repressed and liberated music—leading Aidan to quip that the piece might indeed be 'Elgar misreading Elgar'. Tim Barringer, an art historian from Yale University, presented the second paper of this session: 'Music and Vision: landscape, history and empire in Elgar's *Caractacus*'. His detailed discussion, founded in late-century landscape painting techniques, teased out the complexities of the composition, noting interesting ambiguities within it such as the late-nineteenth-century British iconographical identification with the Roman Empire (the enemies in Elgar's outwardly imperialistic composition). Aidan Thompson then chaired a session with papers about Vaughan Williams and Holst given by Nathaniel G. Lew, David Manning and Christopher Sheer. Familiar Elgarians such as Stephen Banfield, Edward Green, Lewis Foreman, Deborah Heckert, Peter Horton and Charles Edward McGuire also gave papers on other subjects; Julian Rushton was a session chair. Many more papers mentioned Elgar directly or evoked him indirectly, and one was left satisfied that the study of British music in Elgar's era continues to grow and develop with each passing year.

Charles Edward McGuire



## BOOK REVIEWS



Shire Publications,  
2005  
(Lifelines: 46)  
64 pp. soft cover  
ISBN 0747806217  
£5.99

### **Edward Elgar: an illustrated life of Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934)** by Michael Messenger

Elgar, as Michael Kennedy once observed, was a 'rum cove'. This is probably a good thing as dull personalities do not make for good biographical subjects. Elgar has garnered more biographical studies than any of his fellow English composers. Perhaps this means he was 'rummer' than any of them.

It has sometimes been opined (even within the Elgar Society, as I recall) that too much has and is being written about various aspects of Elgar and his life. Of course this is entirely subjective. If a biographical subject is 'big' enough there will always be room for more literature, including broad-brushed studies of the life in question: such is the case with the short but handsome new book by Michael Messenger (known to Society members as a director of the Elgar Foundation and chairman of the Elgar Birthplace management committee).

Elgar's life is treated here as a chronological narrative, and the portrait of the composer presented to us is recognisable and sympathetic. Where there is psychological character reading of Elgar, it is informed by the testimonies of some of those who knew him, along with a demonstration by the writer of the somewhat delicate art of 'reading between the lines' without going overboard. Thus the 'slights and rebuffs he had received as a young man' engendered a lifetime of feeling inferior and chip-on-the-shoulderish. His 'lack of confidence' was compensated for a little by his honours (no wonder he liked to don his court dress even if this was sometimes for occasions where it was not strictly necessary). The Elgar of the 1920s—immaculately turned out as always—was, Messenger tells us, sometimes mistaken for a 'retired military man, or possibly a country gentleman—an image that he seems to have cultivated, being not free of a measure of pomposity...'

The author is also sympathetic about Elgar's periods of depression and hypochondria, which one or two writers have wearied of without even having met the man. Many of his illnesses were no doubt genuine, as Messenger notes, but Elgar's tendency towards melancholy must have magnified their potency. Depression could hamper composition, but musical creation could also be thwarted if circumstance was against him: the reaction to Alice's death indicates that 'without a powerful spur Elgar was only too ready to abandon the Gethsemane of composition'—Messenger's allusion here echoes the composer's assertion that the creative artist must suffer for his art.

The book is significant in that almost half of it consists of illustrations—ones of Elgar, his family and friends; watercolour portraits of Alice Stuart Wortley, Carice Elgar and the composer; and a splendid tinted version of the well-known studio portrait of Elgar in court dress, where the eye seems irresistibly drawn to the newly-awarded Order of Merit insignia glistening proudly on the composer's chest. I particularly liked the fact that the music manuscript chosen to illustrate what an Elgar

score looks like is *The Smoking Cantata*, reproduced across two pages in all its exuberant glory. It is a piece quite in the public eye at the moment, following the Hallé recording of it released this year, and shows that when Elgar enjoyed a joke, he really went to town. One of Norman Perryman's pleasingly idiosyncratic depictions of the composer has been called into service for the striking book cover. The image here is of Elgar the Inscrutable, showing that it is not just the Mona Lisa who can conjure up an enigmatic smile.

Quibbles are slight: the caption to the photograph on p. 43 has Elgar sitting in his study at Severn House, but from other sources it would seem to be at 'Craeg Lea'; while on p. 62 there is a reference to 'Geoffrey Hoskins' (rather than 'Hodgkins').

All in all, despite its brevity, this is an informative and intelligent recounting of Elgar's life, attractively produced, with well-chosen illustrations. Its even-handedness and informed narrative makes it ideal reading for anyone relatively new to Elgar who wants just enough factual information to digest comfortably, while giving them a good insight into the life of this 'rum cove'.

Dominic Guyver

### **Elgar in America: Elgar's American connections between 1895 and 1934**

by Richard Smith

This elegantly written and handsomely produced book tells of the five visits which Elgar made to North and South America between 1905 and 1923. Elgar's biographers have of course noted these in varying amounts of detail, but Richard Smith is able to give a fuller account of the visits, setting them against the background of the composer's wider connections with the continent and the Americans he numbered among his friends.

Elgar's first visit was in 1905 through the offices of Professor Samuel Sanford of Yale University. Sanford had been present at the Three Choirs Festival of 1900, and although unable to stay in England to attend the première of *The Dream of Gerontius* in Birmingham in October of the same year he had been shown an advance copy and at once recognised its greatness. He and Elgar became better acquainted in the following year (his gift of American tobacco helping Elgar to overcome his earlier expressed reluctance to meet him). In May 1905 Yale University offered Elgar an honorary doctorate of music and on 9 June he and Alice set sail for New York. Sanford was a wealthy man and able to entertain the visitors in some style at his home in New Haven. Musical performance played no part in this visit although Elgar did agree to return and conduct at the Cincinnati festival in the following year. The degree ceremony was a magnificent event and Elgar delighted in wearing the handsome robes again when presented with the freedom of Worcester later in the year. However, probably the most significant part of the visit for Elgar was meeting and getting to know Julia Worthington on the voyage out and later at her home in Irvington near New York. She became a close friend and they were often to meet on his visits to America and hers to England.

While the first visit was largely a social one, the second in April and May 1906



Elgar Editions,  
2005  
256 pp. hardback  
ISBN 0954855310  
£17.50

imposed a heavy burden of work on the composer with rehearsals and performances at Cincinnati of *The Apostles*, *Gerontius*, the Introduction and Allegro for Strings (which he dedicated to Sanford) and *In the South*. There was however time for Alice and him to go sightseeing (including Niagara Falls) before the nine-day voyage back to Liverpool.

These first two visits left Elgar generally well-disposed to America and Americans, but the third visit in 1907 was to prove a less happy experience. Alice was unable to accompany him on this visit which was in response to an invitation to be present at the re-opening of the much enlarged Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and to receive another honorary degree. Elgar also accepted invitations to conduct in New York and Chicago. He left England in early March confident that Andrew Carnegie, the Scottish-born philanthropist who had made a vast fortune out of iron and steel production, had promised him a generous 'expenses package' worth some \$3,000. He was later to be disappointed to receive only \$276, and despite his entreaties could coax no more out of his host. The author leaves us in no doubt as to his own opinion of Carnegie, who although he gave away some \$350 million to various charitable causes (notably public libraries), made his money out of the efforts of low-paid immigrant workers—a 'robber baron' indeed. Elgar, being Elgar, did not easily forget or forgive Carnegie's treatment of him, and twelve years later still saw fit to warn Ivor Atkins to be wary of the Americans in his dealings with them.

Despite this unhappy experience Elgar was persuaded to pay a fourth visit to North America (this time including Canada) in 1911 when he accompanied the Sheffield Chorus on an extensive tour during which he conducted *The Dream of Gerontius* in five performances: in Toronto, Cincinnati, Indianapolis (where the party was invited to visit the 'Speedway' where preparations were in hand for the first ever running of the 'Indianapolis 500'), Chicago and St Paul, Minnesota.

The coming of the war in 1914 put an end to any thoughts of further visits, even if Elgar were disposed to undertake one, and it was against a very different background and in very changed circumstances that in November 1923 he made his final crossing of the Atlantic to cruise the Amazon river and spend six days in the Brazilian city of Manaus. His decision to go on the cruise was bred of sorrow and loneliness. Alice had died, Carice married, and he found the days long and empty: 'I am so desperately lonely and turn to see anything,' he wrote to Alice Stuart-Wortley not long before setting off. The trip seemed to do him good and he was particularly taken by the fine opera house in Manaus which set him thinking about writing an opera.

His old friend Sanford had died in 1910, but in later years Elgar came to know another American, Fred Gaisberg, who produced his many recordings for HMV and who accompanied Elgar on his last major excursion, to Paris by air in 1933. Elgar's last completed composition, *Mina*, was dedicated to Gaisberg.

In recounting these visits Smith handles his material with great skill and presents a story that is both scholarly and readable. One of the most pleasing features of the book is the many illustrations. Some of these will be familiar from their appearance in other books, but many were taken especially by the author himself and show the places which Elgar visited. Smith also, with the generously-acknowledged help of Thomas Cademartrie, has uncovered illustrations of people and places contemporary with the visits. These all add to the enjoyment of the book. The text is supplemented by appendices: one summarises (with the help of maps) the progress of each of the visits;

another gives concise biographies of the principal characters in the story; and a third lists the first performances of Elgar's works in America. The author also unravels the genealogy of Elgar's American cousins—his mother's elder brother John Greening having emigrated to Wisconsin in the 1840s.

As befits someone with a background in engineering (Richard Smith has published over twenty books on historical aviation) the author provides detailed specifications of the different liners on which Elgar sailed on each of the visits. (As a Belfast man I was pleased to discover that in 1906 he sailed on the *Celtic*, built by Harland and Wolff, and at the time of her launch the largest liner afloat.)

The book is well designed and printed, and it is pleasing to note that a roman face has been used throughout with the quoted extracts set in a smaller point size and indented on both margins. These seemingly trivial attentions to detail add so much to the readability of the text. The Society can take much pride in this publication which will surely find a place alongside the other standard biographies.

Wesley McCann

### **lbbs and Tillett: the rise and fall of a musical empire**

by Christopher Fifield

The role of agents has not been heavily studied and analysed in histories of the music of the last 120 years. Yet agents have had a central if initially discreet role in promoting artists and repertoire. Now, from the archives of lbbs and Tillett, Christopher Fifield has produced a pioneering study of this important aspect of music, giving us a new cornerstone of the literature. lbbs and Tillett is no more, but his book reveals a remarkable surviving archive which will inform all future musical histories of music in the twentieth century. This is a narrative history and to a large extent an epistolary one, but the level of detail is remarkable, the accuracy—with so many names—phenomenal.

The actual text occupies 372 pages, but the second half of the book (over 300 further pages), which consists of eighteen appendices, includes such things as artists' brochures, details of concerts tours, material on the emergence of CEMA and the post-War Proms, and contracts, but most importantly letters from Elgar, Rachmaninov, Myra Hess and Kathleen Ferrier. The thirty-two pages of plates give seventy-seven mug shots, many of them unfamiliar. Not surprisingly the index takes twenty-eight pages and is very thorough, though like me Fifield does not mind making the index typeface small to get it all in.

For most of the twentieth century lbbs and Tillett, and particularly Emmie Tillett, were ubiquitous on the British musical scene, the backroom controllers of British concert life at all levels. Yet neither the company nor the directors were thought worth a place in the latest edition of *Grove*, a strong indicator of their deliberate low profile outside the world of concert booking and promotion.

Fifield traces its origins in the activities of the publisher Chappells in the earlier nineteenth century in booking artists, and in the mid-century managing the public readings given by Dickens across the country and abroad. Narciso Vert took over the first agency when his boss George Dolby retired in 1880. Fifield tells us how Vert

became a significant promoter at Queen's Hall, though not discussed by Fifield is Delius's experience in 1899 when promoting a concert of his own music, which shows the power of agents even then: Delius went to the competition, Norman-Concorde, to arrange and promote his programme, but found that he had chosen the wrong man because thereby he could not have Queen's Hall or Henry Wood, as they were controlled by Robert Newman—an early example of how exclusive contracts gave different promoters remarkable power. If one controlled the hall and the artists then, *de facto*, one controlled the repertoire, and it was only the appearance of the BBC on the scene and later powerful recording executives that balanced this monopoly.

Fifield's accounts of the Edwardian years are fascinating and eye-opening: this is the world in which Elgar prospered, and appreciating how things were done is essential background. The chapter on 1906, the first year of Ibbs and Tillet, shows us very familiar names—and many now forgotten—being promoted, underlining the consolidation of modern concert life in its most active period. Even more interesting is the account of Clara Butt's Australian tour of 1907. The enormous numbers of artists who passed through the agency's hands as auditionees as well as managed artists means that Fifield's accounts of artists, and particularly their many letters, becomes an encyclopaedic source to be checked every time one comes across an unknown name.

Fifield is scrupulous in his presentation, and he manages his mountain of source material with authority and well-informed scholarship. Of most interest to readers of this journal, I suspect, will be Appendix 13, 'Letters from Edward Elgar, 1899–1932'. Here we have thirty-seven communications which I have not seen before. The first throws considerable light on how Vert was the key link in sending the manuscript score of the 'Enigma' Variations to Richter. Elgar writes to Vert on 13 October 1901:

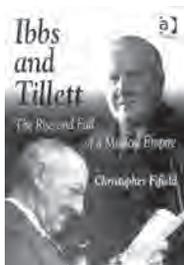
I have to thank you for the introduction to Richter which led to the first performance of the work—you may have forgotten this—but I have not & shd. Like you to understand that I am very grateful to you for your kindness when I much needed it... Plenty of people are kind to me now!

The letters are interesting for reflecting the rise in Elgar's fees, which reached seventy-five guineas for a concert in Manchester in 1928. Interesting too is Elgar's response to requests for photographs, which seems to contradict arguments by those who see Elgar as the supreme manager of his publicity and self-promotion. In 19 December 1905 he wrote:

Russell in Baker St has the latest & probably the best photos of me—Window & Grove have also some good ones. I much prefer that my photo should not appear but as it seems to be a fashion now that cannot be changed, I suppose it cannot be helped.

As to the photographs of my family & my house, will you please say, as kindly & firmly as you can that on no account are any of them to appear: the idea is too dreadful. The biographical nonsense is much overdone...

Bearing in mind the dominant position of Ibbs and Tillet for most of the twentieth century, this is not only a history of the agency and the vast number of artists they represented or booked but also a musical social history of the time; almost every event or movement is reflected in correspondence with someone at Ibbs and Tillet or their artists, and as such it is an invaluable source book. If you are interested in any little-



Ashgate, 2005  
692 pp. hardback  
ISBN 1840142901  
£29.95

documented aspect of the period, Christopher Fifield and his invaluable index will guide you to it. A marvellous book.

Lewis Foreman

## CD REVIEWS

### **Elgar: Second Symphony**

Concert Overture: *In the South (Alassio)*, op. 50,  
Symphony No. 2, op. 63.

BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by Richard Hickox

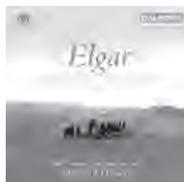
The start of *In the South* is one of Elgar's most exciting musical moments. Its thrilling energy and spontaneous attack suggests the influence of Richard Strauss (the start of *Don Juan* immediately springs to mind), while four minutes or so later (*molto espressivo e largamente*) the same composer's string writing in *Der Rosenkavalier* is recalled, though only with the benefit of hindsight because Elgar's work was written some six or seven years earlier. *In the South* was inspired by a visit to Alassio in the north-west region of Italy called Liguria over the New Year of 1903/4. A few months later, in March 1904, Elgar was honoured with a three-day festival of his own music at Covent Garden under Richter's direction. The significance of the Elgar-Richter personal and professional relationship can be seen when Elgar received three full scores of *The Dream of Gerontius* from his publisher Novello in 1902 and inscribed one 'to my dear friend and musical Godfather Hans Richter'. The First Symphony had been planned for the festival, but it would be delayed by a further four years. Instead Elgar himself conducted *Alassio* and the first two *Pomp and Circumstance* marches during a miscellaneous concert on the final day, sharing the podium with Richter. After the nightmare première of *Gerontius* in 1900, Richter was wary of delays regularly experienced when awaiting new works from Novello. Sure enough it happened again in 1903 at Birmingham with *The Apostles*, and the warning signs were beginning to appear again a year later. The orchestra was the Hallé, down from Manchester to join their conductor, and with its numbers boosted to one hundred. In this case, a century later, the orchestra is the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, whose principal violist is entrusted with the beautiful solo *Canto popolare* or folk-song but remains uncredited on this recording (why, when quite rightly the leader is mentioned?). Their outgoing principal conductor is Richard Hickox, whose elevation to conductor emeritus next year is fortunately not a matter of being booted upstairs, as is sometimes the case in the parliamentary world. He kick-starts *Alassio* with all the necessary *élan* and approaches the work's tender moments with sympathy and understanding. Apart from a somewhat dull cymbal clash here and there, the sound quality and ambience of Swansea's Brangwyn Hall is excellent and highlights some lovely instrumental solos from cor

anglais and horns.

It's a logical move to pair *Alassio* with one of the symphonies (as would also be the case with *Cockaigne* of 1901), for with both works Elgar was revisiting orchestral sonorities after the 'Enigma' Variations of 1899 and the intervening choral works. This recording takes a fresh look at the Second Symphony and may not be to everyone's taste, but then, what is? From the outset Hickox does not hang about; we are leaving the era of steadier views taken by the likes of Boult and Barbirolli (for example, the passage from figures 4 to 8), and indeed perhaps returning to some of Elgar's own tempi, as either set out in the score or in his own recordings. It takes a bit of getting used to and can make the phrasing (and therefore the listener) breathless, but at least Hickox does not push the more reflective and lyrical moments. A few details are buried, such as the trumpets at figures 17 and 56, some of Elgar's top-of-the-phrase *tenutos* (fig. 26) ignored, so too the 'tramlines' at fig. 42, but those *ritardando*, *accelerando* and *largamente* markings shown as R...., A.... and L.... so especial to Elgar's scores, are treated with care and insight.

One gets the feeling, perhaps too much so, that everything in this first movement is worked out, to the extent that at times the heart is removed from the sleeve and replaced within the body. Not so the second movement *Larghetto*, which has both passion and tenderness in its elegiac reflection upon, among other things, Shelley's poem from which two lines are quoted at the head of the score. The Rondo scherzo is fleet-footed, full of Mendelssohnian lightness and virtuosity, with all the wind solos beautifully shaped, and braying brass after fig. 104 a thrill to the ear, while from figures 120 to 122 the menacing sounds of Gerontian devils send a shiver down the spine. This is really fine playing by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and it continues throughout the finale, a highlight of which is the principal trumpet's blistering top concert B searing through the orchestral texture at fig. 149. A few details are lost, sometimes a miscalculation on Elgar's part, for example one rarely hears enough of the bassoons' chatter from fig. 154 to three after 155. Hickox reverts to the traditional broadening out between figures 165 and 166, and makes much of the wonderful look back to the very opening of the symphony at fig. 168. The harps with their glissandi now come into their own, followed by sonorous, burnished brass in the Tristan-like chordal progression eight bars from the end. Hickox is a worthy champion of familiar and unfamiliar British music, and has done a huge amount for its cause, and this is a fine recording which will surely prove a popular buy for all Elgarians.

Christopher Fifield



Chandos  
CHSA 5038

### Elgar: War Music

*Carillon; Le drapeau belge; The Fringes of the Fleet;  
Une voix dans le désert; Polonia.*

Teresa Cahill (soprano), Richard Pasco (narrator),  
Paul Kenyon, Stephen Godward, Simon Theobald,  
Russell Watson (baritones)  
Rutland Sinfonia conducted by Barry Collett

In the 1980s, as I was exploring Elgar's lesser known orchestral music with the Rutland Sinfonia, the idea dawned on me that I must investigate the works that Elgar had written for various causes during the First World War, and especially *Carillon*, *Le drapeau belge*, *Une voix dans le désert*, *Polonia* and *The Fringes of the Fleet*. These were not only unknown, but had hardly ever been played since the original performances, apart from an enterprising concert by Leslie Head with his Kensington Symphony Orchestra in the early Sixties. And only *Polonia* had received a modern recording. They were originally published by the small publishing houses of Elkin and Enoch, both of whom had ceased trading and their hire libraries subsumed into other firms. So tracing the works, let alone hiring them, proved to be something of a challenge. Because they had not been out on hire for aeons, firms did not know if they had them or where they were; the wind parts of *Une voix dans le désert* had disappeared but finally turned up in a basement in Australia; and, on the trail of *The Fringes of the Fleet*, I was told that because they were hardly performed the parts had probably been burned! In fact that work had never been printed, and the one remaining set of parts was located to the British Library. At vast and obscene cost we were allowed photocopies of this work, and the orchestra played from those, badly written and haphazard as they were.

It is possible to understand that these works would not appeal to audiences in the 1920s and 1930s—they were too close to the event. But I believed that, seventy years on from the end of the First World War, these pieces could be seen as more than historical curiosities. They were, after all, by Elgar, and as I knew of no other orchestral duds from his pen, I could not believe that these works would fall into that category.

For our first performance of all this music, and the subsequent recording, we were fortunate to have Richard Pasco, who declaims the narrations for all they are worth, and Teresa Cahill, a much admired Elgarian soprano at that time. As I'd expected, the music was extremely well received, in particular I think the audiences were moved by the grandeur of *Polonia* and the sombre darkness of *Une voix dans le désert*, while *The Fringes of the Fleet*, with its four baritones kitted out in nautical attire, never failed to bring the house down. Not only is the music good, mature Elgar, but there are some touches of colour that are unique in Elgar; a ship's bell in D for *Fringes*, and also sandpaper blocks rubbed together to give the swish of the waves.

The recording, issued by Pearl, duly appeared on CD and cassette in 1988 and was well received by reviewers in the national press and music magazines. Despite going through two full pressings it has been unavailable for some time, and I am personally delighted that the Elgar Society has persuaded Pearl to reissue it. I'm also pleased that, thanks to our chivvying and chasing, publishers now have these scores on hire in properly printed editions.

Barry Collett

## **The Romantic Violin Concerto, vol. 5**

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Violin Concerto in G major, op. 80; Arthur Somervell, Violin Concerto in G major.

Anthony Marwood (violin)

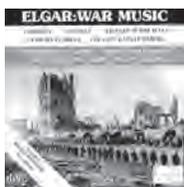
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Martyn Brabbins

This is a CD to be treasured. When I received my review copy, I put it on and was immediately taken with the Coleridge-Taylor piece, but then I listened to the Somervell concerto and was even more impressed. I played the CD again and my first impressions were confirmed. Indeed, the slow movement of the Somervell is so beautiful that I played it again and again, and I shall keep doing so for a long time.

The fifth in the Romantic Violin Concertos series issued by Hyperion, this CD follows recordings of the Saint-Saëns, Stanford (of whom Coleridge-Taylor was a favourite pupil), Hubay, Mozkowski and Karłowicz violin concertos. Hyperion are to be commended, as ever, for their enterprising repertoire.

The Coleridge-Taylor concerto—his opus 80—has a large-scale first movement, beginning with an affirmative tutti laying out the first subject of what will become a sonata form movement, before the soloist takes it up and rhapsodises upon it. Indeed, this rhapsodic atmosphere permeates the whole movement, but the music all hangs together well and knows where it is aiming. A pert little second subject adds the necessary contrast; it is a dotted theme of great charm. The development passes through a good many moods, some joyful, some melancholy, and a number of echoes of other composers may be heard—not necessarily influences, I feel, but maybe just the musical *Zeitgeist*. The passage which leads into the recapitulation—and, indeed, the recapitulation of the first subject itself—is exceedingly fine. The cadenza is accompanied by a timpani roll. I did this in my own Flute Concerto and consciously pinched the idea of an accompanied cadenza from Elgar. I wonder if Coleridge-Taylor did the same—his concerto came out in 1912, Elgar's in 1910. The second movement is lyrical from beginning to end, a beautiful piece with some degree of sentiment and intensity of expression. A grander second section makes a good contrast before a return is made to the opening mood and theme. This is an idyllic movement. The final movement mixes rondo and rhapsody in equal measure. A jaunty and amiable subject eventually makes way for an eloquent and heartfelt theme of great beauty. After sweeping this aside, the subject itself is superseded by the first theme of the first movement—a dramatic *maestoso* moment. A third utterance of the subject in turn makes way for a brief reference to the slow movement and to the eloquent second theme, while a fourth appearance leads to a final reference to the opening theme of the whole work, a strenuous utterance over a long pedal timpani, which in turn leads to the emphatic close. The orchestration throughout is deft and full of imagination. Coleridge-Taylor knows how to write for the full tutti, but also how to manage his orchestra lightly when apt. A fine work.

Equally fine is the Somervell concerto of 1930. Again we have a protracted opening movement. It begins majestically—and if I can hear Finzi in this section it is a meaningless coincidence, the *Zeitgeist* getting up to poltergeist tricks. The second theme I love. It is noble and heart-aching. Unusually, the solo violin enters with a cadenza before taking up the second theme. Again, throughout the movement, the violin rhapsodises and the orchestration is entirely apt. There are many Brahmsian echoes—music in thirds and sixths, the jagged dotted rhythm theme and the continuous variation which the themes undergo—and yet the style is quintessentially English, that endearing quality of intensity and melancholy, heartfelt yet understated, which we recognise in so many of those English composers we know and love. Another cadenza appears in the 'right' place (at the end of the recapitulation) and a magical moment occurs when the



Pearl  
SHE CD 9602

strings play quietly underneath it a slowed down version of the second theme. This moment is repeated at the end of the cadenza as the strings enter again in similar fashion before the music moves to its close. The slow movement is one of the glories of English music. It has a beauty beyond compare, singing from beginning to end. Apart from the many lovely tunes, one of its magical qualities is the ability to modulate in passing while returning to the place you first thought of. It gives the music such a mobile feeling, whilst keeping it in tonal check. There are many lovely orchestral solos—the horn certainly pulls out the plums of these. I cannot speak too highly of it: it should go to the top (and stay there) of any chart you can think of. It's an absolute winner! The final movement is a lovely piece of peasantry. It alternates a good old rustic romp with more tender moments, a jolly good (but high class) knees-up with which to end.

How do these concertos compare with Elgar's (leaving aside the fact that I wonder whether they need to)? Well, they are different. Elgar's, as we all know, is a big piece, a profound piece, a piece in which he bares his soul (at least that's whose 'alma' I think is 'acqui encerrada'!) These two concertos do not mine veins as deep as he does, but they are very fine works nonetheless and, as you will have gathered, I think that Somervell has written a slow movement of a different order, maybe, but which can hold its own against any other piece.

The performances are fine. I like very much Anthony Marwood's violin tone, playing and musicianship, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Martyn Brabbins accompany superbly, and the recording quality is fine with the balance flawless. A fine CD. Congratulations to all involved. Get a copy if you have not got one—beg, borrow or whatever.

Paul Adrian Rooke

### Thomas Dunhill: Chamber Works

Quintet in E flat, op. 3 for violin, cello, clarinet, horn and piano; Quintet for horn and strings in F minor, op. 6;  
Phantasy Trio for violin, viola and piano.

#### Endymion

Krysia Osostowicz and Fiona McCapra (violins), David Adams (viola), Jane Salmon (cello), Mark van de Wiel (clarinet), Stephen Stirling (horn), Michael Dussek (piano)

Biographer of Elgar, tireless champion and promoter of British chamber music, teacher, editor, examiner and writer of two benchmark works on chamber music, Thomas Dunhill's name still flickers as a minor member of a generation of British musicians trained at the end of the nineteenth century at the RCM under Stanford.

Yet there was a time when his gifts as a composer would have merited greater acknowledgement than his admirable musical contributions mentioned above. True, his contemporaries at the College included Holst, Ireland and Vaughan Williams, whilst



Hyperion  
CDA67420

Stanford dominated the teaching staff, Parry arrived as RCM principal and Elgar suddenly burst through onto the national scene during that period: enough to make it intimidating for any composer not of the first rank. However, time (with the indispensable help of Mike Dutton's recording) can put Dunhill's achievement into some sort of context, particularly for those of us encountering him for the first time.

The three works on the disc come from the first part of Dunhill's output, the earliest a quintet for the unusual forces of violin, cello, clarinet, horn and piano. The melancholy tread of the opening theme is transformed (unusually for a first movement) into a set of interesting variations, naturally showpieces for the excellent players of Endymion. The second movement's cello solo shows early in Dunhill's career one of his chief characteristics of long, lyrical melodies.

After the RCM, Dunhill worked from 1899 at Eton College as assistant music master (where he taught George Butterworth) and the Quintet for two violins, viola, cello and horn was composed soon after he arrived there. Apparently it is unpublished, which is a shame as it is a pleasant addition to the horn's chamber repertoire. Undemandingly diatonic and in conventional forms, the work has an echo of a folk tune in the first movement, although the *Allegro molto* marking seems to have been ignored by the players. Indeed, any tension in this or the next movement is smoothed away by Stephen Stirling's liquid tone and the final movement is not only the sole truly quick movement, but the only one to feature any dramatic climax.

Eleven years later arrived the Phantasy Trio for violin, viola and piano, commissioned by and dedicated to W. W. Cobbett, the businessman whose desire to increase the contemporary chamber music repertoire drew 'phantasies' from Bridge, Ireland, Vaughan Williams, Stanford, Howells, Arnold, Britten and others. Dunhill's work loses nothing in comparison to the products of these composers, and Lionel Tertis thought enough of it to give the première and record it. For this reviewer, this is the best of the works, with a coherence to its fifteen minutes, dramatic writing and a confidently unshowy, quiet ending. In a beautifully balanced recording, the long lyrical melodic lines sing out and complement the discreet piano writing.

So, enjoyable music, excellently played and perhaps I (and other interested Elgarians) can hope in due course for a recording of Dunhill's own *Variations on an original theme*.

Steven Halls

### **This England**

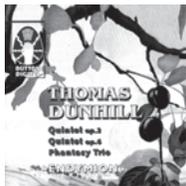
Elgar, *Serenade for String Orchestra*, op. 20; Delius, *Immelin Prelude*, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, *Summer Night on the River*; Holst, *St Paul's Suite*, *Brook Green Suite*; Warlock, *Capriol Suite*.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Alan Barlow

Just over an hour of highly familiar works from the pens of composers who dominated Britain's musical scene during the first half of the last century. Neither works nor composers need further explanation. The disc was originally recorded in 1988 at St Peter's church, Morden. Novello foolishly turned Elgar's 1892 *Serenade* down, little

realising how popular it would become, but Breitkopf picked it up with alacrity. The strings of the RPO give a nicely idiomatic account under Alan Barlow, even if the finale, by losing its sense of *Allegretto*, plods along somewhat too much and the final chords drift together in ragged ensemble. Elsewhere the music is sensitively and stylishly delivered, with little effort taken by the RPO in the Delius works to shake off the shadow of its founder, Beecham. They are followed by clean-cut accounts of Holst's works for his St Paul's Girls' School orchestra in Hammersmith, with a jolly rendition of the 'Dance' which concludes the *Brook Street Suite*, and an unexceptional performance of Warlock's *Capriol Suite*.

Christopher Fifield



Dutton Epoch  
CDLX 7152



Resonance  
(Sanctuary  
Classics)  
CD RSN 3049

# LETTERS

*From: Jeff Dunn*

*Regarding Geoffrey Hodgkins' statement (JOURNAL, July 2005, p. 69) that on 28 June 1905, Horatio Parker 'played—possibly for the first of countless times at graduation ceremonies—Pomp and Circumstance No. 1': I would like to share some interesting notes gleaned from research I undertook in the Yale University archives some years ago. It is true that Pomp and Circumstance No. 1 was played, but unlike the customary 'countless times' it has been played since, it was performed not as the processional but as the recessional in the programme.*

*The exercises began, according to the New Haven Evening Register for that date, with the traditional commencement day parade:*

*The graduates had sobered down—or up—from last night's celebration, and all appeared once more in civilian clothes, not a kilt or kimono fluttering in the breeze. Scholastic robes had the right of way today, and the graduates followed a long line of caps and gowns and hoods. Classes from as far back as 1840 were represented in the parade...*

*With the band playing Onward, Christian soldiers the parade started out of Vanderbilt at 10:30 o'clock... The route of the procession was through the Vanderbilt court to Chapel Center Church... and thence to Woolsey Hall...*

*Of the candidates for honorary degrees the greatest interest of the audience was in Sir Edward Elgar, who received an ovation that was almost tumultuous... Two of Sir Edward's musical compositions were on the commencement program. The introduction and opening chorus from The Light of Life were rendered by the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and a full chorus of 69 voices... Pomp and Circumstance, a military march by Sir Edward, was also played as a recessional.*

*Prior to the recessional, the Woolsey programme included Mendelssohn's overture to Ruy Blas, Psalm LXV to a 'York Tune'(?), the Light of Life excerpts and Ein Feste Burg.*

*Someday, someone will uncover the first time graduates marched in to Elgar's 'hit' tune! Unfortunately, I myself had no processional in college and had to endure endless repetitions of Grieg's 'Homage March' from Sigurd Jorsalfar for the long line of 550 graduates in my high school.*

*From: Peter Glasson*

*The legendary Italian maestro Carlo Maria Giulini died in June 2005 aged ninety-one. Elgar and Giulini are perhaps not considered synonymous, but with the conductor's respect for the composer, what might have been?*

*In the 1970s before a rehearsal with the Philharmonia Chorus, I encountered him sitting in contemplation in the darkened hall. On recognising me, he beckoned me to sit and talk.*

*Although within the hour he was to direct his beloved Verdi, at my instigation we spoke of Elgar, and firstly about the 'Enigma' Variations. He said, "This piece I very much admire." But with regard to performing it, "It is, for me, very English and I would not like to upset anyone." I replied that Toscanini had conducted it here before the war! "Yes," he answered, "but you must understand that he was a genius."*

*He was in awe of Gerontius and said that on his next retreat he would study it. Following a concert with the Philharmonia Chorus, summertime and in the Roman theatre at Orange, I was to hear his reply to a*

question from a fellow chorister as to what he was going to undertake next: "Now, I have some days in the mountains and I shall look at a new work by Elgar." The questioner replied in astonishment, "A new work?!" Guilini replied, "Well, new to me. Gerontius."

A noted slow and methodical worker, it would have been, in Guilini's case, diligently prepared and as with all his music, conducted from memory. Alas, to the best of my knowledge, it was not to be.

At the conclusion of the London pre-rehearsal talk, he reflected: "I have an idea that perhaps I will try Elgar first in America," where at the time he was developing a relationship with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

So now, in a finer place and in the presence of the composer and Wilhelm Pitz as chorus master, we shall one day, if we are good, hear it and, if lucky, take part!

From: John Gilbert

In the last issue of the *NEWS/JOURNAL* we read comments both applauding the new Piano Concerto (Michael Dutton in the *NEWS*) and greeting it with less than wholesale enthusiasm (Barry Collett in the *JOURNAL*). Fair enough. Like Michael Dutton, I felt that the first two movements are pure Elgar—indeed the second, the speed of which I too felt was on the fast side, was recorded by the great man himself, was it not?

I think that my chief feeling about the two 'elaborations' we have been given since 1998 is a simple one. It is that I feel greatly privileged and thankful to be provided with more music by Elgar which otherwise we should not have had. The fact that 'elaborated' music is displayed on a frame erected by other composers does not in any way lessen its validity for me provided that frame is a worthy one—which I feel both the recent elaborations certainly are (a subjective view, I agree). More importantly, it shows clearly that the oft-repeated saw that Elgar did not write anything of value after the death of his wife is totally untrue. All that was lacking for a while was the essential spark. To have written three rather than two symphonies makes the writer that much more of a great composer; to have written a piano concerto as well simply accentuates that greatness. And as for the late Percy Young's remark that the concerto was 'an intention to please other people rather than an irresistible inspiration', whether true or not, about how many of the great J. S. Bach's motets could the same be said—in that case to earn Bach his weekly crust from his patron. It does not necessarily mean that the music is of lesser stature.

As has been said before on this matter, great music is not written to be shut away in a drawer.

From: Michael Plant

Mr David Couper (*JOURNAL*, July 2005) raises the question of the tempi of Elgar's performances on 78 r.p.m. gramophone records and he is right to do so. I have been collecting 78s, LPs and CDs for nearly forty years and for all that time popular commentators have been devaluing 78s because 'of course, you had to play as fast as you could to get the music onto the record before it finished'. They are still saying this and it is just not true. Lord Menuhin was asked this very question at the launch of the Elgar Edition (of Elgar's recordings) at Abbey Road. I myself heard him dismiss with scorn the idea that the tempi of his 1932 recording of the Violin Concerto had anything to do with the space available on 78 r.p.m. sides. Experienced producers like Lawrance Collingwood were always on hand, in those days, to divide long works into segments suitable for recording and they did that before recording started.

Let me put the matter into context. Electric recordings superseded the acoustic process in 1926. To accommodate heavy climaxes, electric recordings became (temporarily) a little shorter in side-length and then started to become longer again. Thus Elgar's *In the South* (1921) was issued on four twelve-inch sides, just slightly cut, but the 1930 remake (complete) came out on five. Menuhin's 1932 recording of the concerto was released on twelve sides, but Heifetz's remarkable post-war version (in better sound) was first issued on

*just ten. He's fast, but I think he wanted to be and young Menuhin is pretty fast, too! Possibly the longest twelve-inch classical 78 was Decca X569, issued in the early 1950s, which accommodates all eleven minutes of Alfvén's Midsommarvaka (Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra/Johnson) on just two sides! Of course there would be some end-of-side distortion on most players.*

*Elgar himself was a thoroughly experienced recording artiste by the time electric recording arrived and I will give two examples of his skill. In 1929 he made perfectly successful records (1' 10" and 4' 12") of his Five Piano Improvisations. Obviously, only he knew what he wanted to play, but the pieces as we hear them are neat, enjoyable and complete, and the composer required no retakes! He had clearly planned and timed them for the gramophone. Secondly, I will revert to the 1930 In the South, where one of the 78 sides ends with a slowing-down which I always thought made no sense in the context of the piece. Elgar, I thought, had been tempted to make a tasteful side-ending at the expense of the whole, but when I finally heard the set transferred to LP as a continuous whole, his ritardando made perfect sense after all, and he was right and I was wrong!*

*There was, however, one occasion where Elgar was not too fast, but too slow! At the end of two long days of recording in 1929, he took the New Symphony Orchestra through Sérénade mauresque and ran out of time. The electronically restored transfer from the test pressing to CD runs to 5' 13"; Neville Marriner and the Northern Sinfonia take 4' 43", which is well within the capacity of a twelve-inch 78 in 1929 for lightly scored music. No doubt Elgar could have tightened his performance, for the one we have is hardly more than a run-through, but the chance never came. The history of recording is full of unsuccessful projects and spoiled recordings, but I cannot name one published Elgar 78 side which I would call rushed. His recordings are dramatic and exciting and alive, and that is how he wanted us to hear his music.*

## 100 YEARS AGO...

The 1905 Worcester Festival was Elgar's 'coronation' by his home town. It began on 12 September when he was awarded the Freedom of the City by the mayor, Hubert Leicester. During the week *Gerontius*, *The Apostles* and the new string piece, the Introduction and Allegro, were all given, together with Ivor Atkins' cantata *Hymn of Faith* to Elgar's libretto. Lady Charles Beresford had invited Elgar to join a party on HMS *Surprise* to cruise the eastern Mediterranean with the British fleet, of which her husband was Commander-in-Chief. Having thought that he would not go, at the last minute he changed his mind, and left for London on the Friday afternoon, seen off at the station by his house party guests. The following week Jaeger wrote to Alice: 'The journey will stimulate him & his creative faculty tremendously', but he also admitted his fears about the completion of 'Apostles Part II' for Birmingham the following year.

Elgar kept a diary of the cruise. His remarks show that he really enjoyed the new sights and sounds: the sunsets were 'insanely beautiful', and he was 'quite overcome' by his first experience of Asia. In Smyrna he was impressed by the dancing of the dervishes, and these and other impressions later led to a short piano piece, *In Smyrna*.

Arriving back in London with Schuster on 12 October, he went immediately to Norwich for a rehearsal for the forthcoming festival. But three days after returning to Malvern on the 14th the diary contains the ominous remark: 'Worried thinking about Birmingham'. He and Alice went to Norwich on the 23rd, where he conducted *The Apostles* and the Introduction and Allegro on the 26th. Back home on the 28th he was depressed. The main reasons would seem to be the composition of the new oratorio, now seriously behind schedule; the poor health of Jaeger, who was wintering in Switzerland; and the next lectures at Birmingham—on the 29th he wrote to Schuster: '...I am killed with the University'. He had also been invited to become mayor of Hereford, but was quick to decline the offer.

The next lecture at Birmingham on 1 November was on 'English Composers'. 'Our art has no hold on the affection of our own people', he wrote, 'and is held in no respect abroad'. Stanford wrote to the press taking issue with this remark: however, the loyal Alice described the lecture as 'very successful & interesting'. A week later the lecture on Brahms' Third Symphony was 'very delightful' but Elgar's placing of absolute music above programme music caused Ernest Newman to write: 'Why does Sir Edward choose to work in a medium that his judgement condemns?'

On 9 November the Elgars went to London, staying with Schuster, and Edward rehearsed the London Symphony Orchestra for their forthcoming tour, which began in Cheltenham on the 11th, followed by Birmingham (13th), Liverpool (14th), Manchester (15th), Sheffield (16th), Glasgow (18th), Newcastle (20th) and Bradford (21st). He arrived home on the 23rd, when he 'looked tired & had a cold. Much worried', wrote Alice. There was a visitor there—Dora Penny, whose account of her stay tells of the composition of the aria 'The sun goeth down'. This went on until after 1.30 a.m., when he finally came out of his study. Dorabella wrote: 'He looked tired, as though he had been through some ordeal'. But there was still much to be done in the way of composition, to say nothing of three more Birmingham lectures before Christmas. On the 26th Alice was 'much worried. Fate of 'Apostles' for Festival trembling in the balance'.

Geoffrey Hodgkins

*ISSN 0143-1269*

*Printed by  
Westpoint Printing Co. Ltd,  
113 Fazeley Street,  
Birmingham B5 5RX*