

Peter Warlock Society

NEWSLETTER

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Editor: John Bishop 14 Barlby Road London W10 6AR

EXHIBITION AT THE FESTIVAL HALL

This issue of the newsletter should reach you at about the time the Warlock exhibition opens at the Festival Hall. A good number of members are coming to the special reception on April 19, also the press. We hope to get some press coverage, and also hope, of course, that the general public will see the exhibition and be interested enough to enquire after membership of the society. We have produced a special leaflet for the exhibition, and a copy is enclosed with this newsletter for the benefit of those members who won't be able to get to the Festival Hall. The exhibition will remain open until May 15, but can, of course, only be seen by concertgoers; it is on the Riverside Terrace at level 5.

80th BIRTHDAY CONCERT

Plans are going ahead well for the Merry-go-down evening we are putting on at the Purcell Room on October 30 to mark the 80th birthday of Warlock. Antony Hopkins will be the narrator and the artists will include Ian and Jennifer Partridge and Fred Tomlinson. Full details in our next newsletter, but meanwhile please put the date in your diary now and make plans to bring a party of friends.

The Vaughan Williams Trust have generously given us a grant towards the cost of the concert.

THE 1974 AGM

This was held in London on March 16. The chairman's speech is given on an attachment to this newsletter. Our financial position continues to be sound, although there are likely to be heavier calls on the purse this year. At the end of 1973 the surplus for the year was over £72, giving us over £109 at the bank.

May we remind those who haven't paid yet that 1974 subs are now due.

'A PETER WARLOCK HANDBOOK' NEARLY READY

The Peter Warlock Handbook compiled by Fred Tomlinson and incorporating many recent discoveries is going to press in about two weeks' time and will be published by Triad Press at the end of May. All Society members will be sent a leaflet about it nearer the time. The price is likely to be £2 but in view of the immense amount of information it contains this represents good value.

Having had so many let-downs in the past we are loathe to give a firm promise about Dr Copley's book, but there are signs that by the time we issue the next newsletter it will be an accomplished fact.

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BRUCE BLUNT BOOKLET

Blunt was the author of the words of some of Warlock's finest songs. Your editor is currently investigating the possibility of publishing a small booklet about Blunt and his poetry. See the next newsletter for details.

MOERAN BOOKLET PUBLISHED

Triad Press have just issued a booklet about Moeran, written by Stephen Wild and with an introduction by Moeran's widow, Peers Coetmore. Although useful in a number of ways it is not as penetrating as one could have wished, and the field remains open for a more knowledgeable and comprehensive study.

Copies are available from Traid at 10e Prior Bolton Street, Canonbury, London N 1. The edition is limited to 200 copies.

'MERRY-GO-DOWN' FOR SALE

Three or four years ago Warlock's anthology about drinking, Merry-go-down, was republished in an edition selling at £3. A good second-hand copy of this edition is available from Peter Todd (75 Melody Road Wandsworth London SW18 2QQ) for £1.65, including postage.

ARMSTRONG 'CURLEW' FOR SALE

The early 78 rpm recording of 'The Curlew' made by John Armstrong with the International String Quartet had 'Sleep' and 'Chop Cherry' on the sixth side. A copy of this three-record set is available from the editor of this newsletter for £3.

RECENT WARLOCK PERFORMANCES.....

Among recent performances have been -

- a 'Merry-go-down' presented for the Kensington Music Society by David Johnston, Jennifer Partridge and Fred Tomlinson.
- the two 'Codpieces', played by Christopher Kite and Robert Ferguson at the Wigmore Hall.
- Warlock's brass-band arrangement of Delius's On hearing the first cuckoo in spring, played by the Grimethorpe Colliery Band at Lancaster University.
- Warlock songs for tenor and strings, sung by Michael Goldthorpe with the South London Chamber Orchestra.
- a Warlock group sung by Duncan Robertson on Radio Three.
- three choral items, including Corpus Christi, in the Linden Singers concert at St John's, Smith Square, in January.
- a performance of The Curlew for West German radio, and several groups of songs in recitals in England and abroad, sung by James Griffett.

ELIZABETH POSTON TALK

We understand that in the Radio Three programme 'Music Now' on May 4 at 5.50, Elizabeth Poston will be giving a talk about Warlock, illustrated with the Rene Soames recording of The Curlew.

FRED TOMLINSON TALK

Our chairman, Fred Tomlinson, has also recorded a talk on Warlock for transmission later in the year on Radio Three. This will form, we understand, part of a whole evening of music from the '20s.

PETER WARLOCK SOCIETY

Report by the chairman at the AGM, March 1974

We have come to the end of an astonishing year for Warlock enthusiasts - perhaps the most significant in the society's history so far. Last year I concentrated on the publishers and analysed the current situation regarding items in print. There have been two notable advances since then. The end of the incredible saga entitled 'Reprinting The Curlew' feels like the loss of an old friend. One might think there was nothing left to talk about at committee meetings, but we've managed. Anyway, there it is in print, thanks to several committee members - not least Dr Copley, who lent the publishers what was a perfectly good clean copy until they got hold of it. The other publication is thanks to John Bishop, whose Thames company brought out the two previously unpublished carols The Rich Cavalcade and the first Cornish one. Both were very well sung by the Linden Singers at a London concert recently.

Even these achievements have been overshadowed by the appearance of literally hundreds of new manuscripts. It never fails to surprise me that this can still happen over forty years after Warlock's death, but I suppose if Thomas Whythorne's autobiography can turn up four centuries after he wrote it, we can hope for lots more Warlock yet.

Most important, of course, are the papers made available by Nigel Heseltine and now in the British Library. I have not mentioned until now the death of Colin Taylor, a valued member of our society. We have still to devise a suitable tribute with the money he bequeathed, but when we remember that but for him the Heseltine collection of MSS might still be in a box in darkest Africa, that is a memorial in itself. With the appearance of these papers in the British Library our knowledge of Philip Heseltine is increased immeasurably. Till then most of our information was via Cecil Gray, and we have recently found more and more cause to be dissatisfied with his biography. The Nigel Heseltine MSS include hundreds of letters from Philip to his mother which were presumably not available to Gray. I won't go into details as I have written a description for the coming newsletter, but when I mention that nearly 300 of the letters were written before Warlock met Gray, you will understand what a wealth of material there is.

The Viva Smith correspondence is also described in my newsletter article. These letters are now in the BL awaiting cataloguing. There are about 100, mostly written from Oxford in 1913-14.

I have recently had the task - a very fascinating one - of assembling the material for the forthcoming Warlock exhibition at the Festival Hall. The staff of the BL and the RFH have been most cooperative, and we have some unusual items to display. I made two new acquaintances - owners of MSS who have very kindly lent them for the exhibition. Francis Dalvin lent half a dozen songs, including The Everlasting Voices, which was a mystery for so long, and different versions of Bright is the ring of words and the Blake poem. Ernest Kaye lent Sigh no more, ladies and Roister Doister (a particularly delightful MS), also a copy of The English Ayre which Warlock inscribed to Roger Quilter.

I must also record our official pub-crawl. You will remember that we planned to present framed copies of The Cricketers of Hambledon and The Fox to the appropriate hostelries. John Bishop, Malcolm Rudland and I made a day of it, visiting Warlock's grave on the way and arriving at Broadhalfpenny Down in

time for a very pleasant lunch-hour at the Bat and Ball. We even bowled a ball or two on the historic turf.

After an afternoon in Winchester we reached Bramdean just before opening time. Quite unexpectedly we heard that Bruce Blunt's housekeeper, Miss Dorcas Bignell, was still alive and living nearby. We visited her at the cottage Blunt left her in his will, had an enjoyable gossip, and were delighted when she turned up one or two items which she lent for the exhibition - a copy of the Radio Times containing The Frostbound Wood, marked in Warlock's handwriting, and the original Wysard drawing of Blunt and Warlock leaving the Antelope pub before being arrested as drunk and disorderly. Altogether it was a most interesting and successful day.

After all these discoveries one might fear an anti-climax in the coming year, but with the exhibition to come and our celebration of the 80th birthday, we look like having another busy year. We might even see the end of another long-running saga: one or two of us have actually seen the dust-cover of Dr Copley's book.

Fred Tomlinson

HESELTINE MSS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM
notes by Fred Tomlinson

The collection of papers donated by Nigel Heseltine in June 1973 is now accessible in the Students' Room, having been catalogued as Additional MSS 57958 to 57970. The musical content is comparatively uninteresting but the correspondence and other papers collected by his mother, Mrs. Buckley Jones, throw considerable light on biographical and psychological aspects hitherto unknown. Details are as follows:-57958-57961: Over 300 letters from PH to his mother, dating from early 1899, when the writer was 4 years old, to late 1930. In spite of many obvious gaps (I estimate another 200 or so letters must have been written to her) there is a wealth of information, particularly on his early life, not previously available to biographers. There is a mystery here, though, as Cecil Gray certainly asked to borrow any early letters and mentions some of them. Perhaps Mrs. Buckley Jones selected a few - Gray would surely have said more about the composer's early life if he had read them all.

Biographies so far have tended to start at Eton, but 90 or so letters from Stone House, Broadstairs, give a good picture of his development from 1904 to 1908. He was evidently brilliant at school. By 1905 he was top of the Lower Sixth, by far the youngest in the class, and the following year head of the school. There were frequent concerts at which Philip played piano solos, duets with the music teacher, and sang in G and S solos, duets and ensembles.

For most of this time his hobby was railways and he subscribed to locomotive magazines. 'I should like to be good enough to go into a railway works as that is the one thing I want to do', 28th. Jan. 1906, though he was invariably sick when he travelled.

His musical outlook was broadening, however, helped by the pianola demonstrated by the headmaster's son; and his holiday plans included Messiah, with Clara Butt, the St. John Passion, etc.

Life at Eton (Sept 1908 to July 1911) is described in 112 letters. He joined the Musical Society (despite a cracking voice), taking part in a performance of an ode specially written by Bridges and Parry when King Edward VII came to open the Memorial Hall.

He took clarinet lessons with the bandmaster, later played cymbals and bass drum under Thomas F. Dunhill's baton ('admitted to the concert free of charge for striking a dozen times in one piece', 12 Feb 1911).

Another Gray myth (see pp 37 et seq.) is exploded by the knowledge that PH had written to his Uncle Joe for Delius' autograph in 1909 or earlier, knowing they were neighbours. He was studying and arranging Delius' music before he had heard any - his 1910 Christmas request was for cash to buy scores, presumably successfully, as he bought Brigg Fair. He had organized his mother into going to the Delius concert on 16 Jun 1911 to tell her about it, long before he found out that Colin Taylor had wangled permission to take him.

PH's excitement when he found out almost jumps out of the page. He first met Delius during the interval. After PH's enthusiasm a lovely touch of bathos was provided by travelling back to Windsor with Dunhill, who didn't think he could stand a whole evening of Delius, so went to the White City instead.

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46 letters bridge the gap between Eton and Oxford, when PH was in Germany learning the language and then at various parsonical domiciles swetting Latin and Greek. Palfour Gardiner is mentioned quite often - at one time PH was doing piano reductions for him. Whether this was for Gardiner's own music or connected with his concerts furthering other British composers is impossible to say.

The letters he must have written from Oxford during the first term he was at Christ Church are missing (but see the notes on the Viva Smith correspondence later in this newsletter). By early 1914 he was already hoping to escape from Oxford. The Classics held little further interest for him and the musical activities of London drew him. Later that year he describes London in it's first black-out and his early plans for The New Flat which later became The Sackbut.

Letters become less regular from 1915 onwards, and mostly concern money. His mother kept a very tight rein on his finances, doling out his allowance monthly till his death - one way of making sure he wrote back to her. He was not businesslike and when he was in funds was generous to a fault. Often he had to appeal for an advance - one feels his mother enjoyed making him ask.

When The Sackbut was beginning to succeed but financial backing was withdrawn by Winthrop Rogers, £200 of capital could well have saved the day. The magazine could have continued its brilliant way - but then perhaps we would never have had the music of his 'Welsh Period', the Peterisms, Lillygay, Sleep, Serenade, etc.

57962 : Letters to PH from:-

- (a) Jelka Delius, written to Cefn Bryntalch in 1922, some dictated by **Frederick** and signed by him.
- (b) Cecil Gray, also written to Cefn Bryntalch about 1922, but often undated and not yet in order.
- (c) Arthur Joseph Heseltine, Philip's Uncle Joe, who lived in Marlotte. Unfortunately PH's letters to his uncle must be presumed lost, but these replies indicate a far deeper relationship than has been assumed up till now. Here was someone who had rebelled against the Heseltine menage and was doing what he wanted to do - painting in France. Visits to Marlotte in 1911 and twice in 1913 strengthened the affinity between nephew and uncle and partly filled the gap made by Philip's father's death in 1897. One particularly enlightening remark goes some way towards explaining PH's dislike of the Christmas season: 'I trust you will have as pleasant a Christmas as possible under the horrible regime that we have to submit to' (23 Nov, 1921)

57963: Letters to PH from Sorabji. The first letter sent c/o The Musical Times after PH's article 'Some reflections on Modern Musical Criticism', had appeared in the Oct 1913 issue, was forwarded to Oxford, leading to a friendship which lasted throughout PH's life.

57964 : Other correspondence:-

- (a) described as letters to PH, but four from PH are also included. Items of particular interest are (i) 13 Nov, 1919. Winthrop Rogers writing a very friendly letter on discovering Peter Warlock was Philip Heseltine: 'I am very happy to have my name on the outside'. (ii) 22 Jun 1922. A solicitor commenting on some of PH's schemes for getting round Yeats' refusal

to allow the use of his poems. Various plans were to print the poems backwards under the music, to print anagrams of the words, or to substitute nonsense poems in the same metre. (This could have been hilarious, knowing PH's facility for light verse!) (iii) Two letters to Nigel Heseltine and a print of the Collins woodcut, Christmas 1927.

(b) letters to Mrs. Buckley Jones, chiefly concerning PH, include :- (i) Churchill, head of Stone House, advising her to send PH to Eton as an Oppidan instead of taking up the scholarship 'It will do his character far more good. The college was never meant for boys with means.'

(ii) letters from PH's tutor at Eton, from one of the parson crammers, and from Dr. Strong at Christ Church, Oxford.

(iii) letters after PH's death from Nichols, Moeran, Jelka Delius, Elizabeth Poston (a particularly beautiful letter), Gray, van Dieren, etc.

57965 : Autograph score of Kodaly's Op.5 : Two songs for baritone and orchestra.

57966 : Other music :-

(1) Love Ecstasy - a song in PH's handwriting, presumably by him, the composer not being given. Unfortunately not very distinguished, this sounds like Quilter on an off-day.

(2) Good Ale - a printed copy with some comments by PH on the title page.

(3) Brigg Fair - arranged for two pianos c.1911. Dr. Copley's article on Warlock - Delius (Music and Letters, July 1968) gives the background to this. This is PH's only existing arrangement for two pianos.

(4) In a Summer Garden - a sketched arrangement for piano solo. This starts in ink, continues in pencil, and is very rough in places. Again the reader is referred to Dr. Copley's article. Late 1921 is confirmed by the fact that this is written on the reverse of PH's fair copies of quotations from Bernard van Dieren for the March 1921 issue of The Sackbut. In a letter to Cecil Gray from Cefn Pryntalch (19 Nov 1921) he fears some items have been lost in the post to Vienna - Universal Edition's headquarters. Perhaps the final arrangement disappeared that way.

(5) Analysis of Kodaly's Op. 7 and 8. This was evidently preliminary work for PH's article 'Modern Hungarian Composers' in The Musical Times, March 1922.

(6) Pencil sketches for a Fantasy for orchestra.

(7) Bartok Nem mehetek hozzád - printed facsimile from a magazine supplement, signed by Bartok.

(8) Sorabji - music to The Rider by Night, an incomplete autograph score for small orchestra, dated XIII XI XIX.

57967 : Miscellaneous papers, including :

(a) Juvenilia c 1904-5, evidently collected by his mother - many poems, plays etc. written by PH, and programmes of concerts organised by him, featuring him in songs, duets, recitations, as well as playing piano, flageolet and zither-harp.

(b) 'What Music is' - incomplete script of the lecture given in Dublin, May 1918.

(c) 'One Dozen Cursory Rhymes' - mostly in a verse form of his own, poking fun at Berners, Parry, Pridge, Pantock, Grainger, Boughton, etc.

57968 - 9 : Working notebooks.

These are perhaps the most fascinating items in the collection. I spent an intriguing few days investigating the contents to enable them to be dated on internal evidence. Particularly interesting are :-

(i) studies of the Celtic languages - Welsh, Cornish, Irish, Breton, even a little Manx.

(ii) lists enabling us to date early compositions more definitely and giving many titles previously unknown.

(iii) Diary for 1927 - fairly full for the first quarter, afterwards somewhat spasmodic. His transcription of the Dowland lute music is shown to be a particularly efficient operation: Feb 22 - travelled to Cambridge; 23 and 24 worked in the University Library; 25 back to Eynsford, started transcribing; Mar 1st finished transcribing and wrote Preface; 2nd completed work taken to Curwen. When printed the 15 pieces came to 34 pages, with a 500-word preface..

(iv) one tiny notebook containing, amongst other things, a gorgeous list of silly names, worthy of Saki, Beachcomber, Spike Milligan and Monty Python at their best.

57970 : Off-prints, including 'The Modern Spirit in Music', No. 6 of The Sackbut, etc.

VIVA SMITH CORRESPONDENCE

Note by Fred Tomlinson.

As a result of Malcolm Rudland's phone-in to Antony Hopkins, Mrs. Sally Hyam heard of the existence of the Peter Warlock Society and told us of a series of letters from PH to Olivia Smith, her great-aunt. With the cooperation of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A.H.Prewin, I was able to photo-copy the letters (101 in all) and attempt to put the undated ones in sequence.

PH met the Smiths - there were four sisters - while he was staying at Didbrook Vicarage in 1913, cramming the Classics in preparation for Oxford. While at Christ Church (Oct 1913 to June 1914) he wrote to Viva frequently, sometimes daily, on occasions twice in a day. Besides filling in many gaps in our knowledge of PH, these letters are a useful control (in the statistical sense) in our interpretation of the letters he wrote to his mother. Gray completely misses the point when analysing a letter home - ignoring the fact that PH was writing to his mother, a very domineering person. If he wrote a cheerful letter about non-scholastic activities, his mother wrote back hoping he wasn't neglecting his work. When he asked for a copy of the Apocrypha for Christmas, his mother hoped he wouldn't stop reading his Bible. Is it any wonder he learned to avoid such rebukes by writing the things she wanted to read. The Viva Smith letters illustrate the antipathy between mother and son, and the way he

would persuade her to agree to something by suggesting the opposite course.

Many of the letters are full of details of motor-bikes. PH taught Viva to ride, and frequently in the Spring and Summer of 1914 they would meet half-way between Oxford and Didbrook. They registered their machines with Greenock Borough Council so as to have VS number plates. The bikes were always going wrong, of course, catching fire or crashing, or losing bits, and frequently push-bikes were resorted to.

Particularly interesting are letters from Grey-sur-Loing, c/o Frederick Delius; Marlotte, c/o his Uncle Joe; and Cornwall c/o D.H. Lawrence. More details are filled in regarding Peecham's promises to PH late in 1914, causing him to abandon his course at University College, London.

It is almost incredible that over 40 years after PH's death we are still adding to our knowledge of him. These latest acquisitions, added to the Cecil Gray papers and others, mean that we now know of the existence of over 800 of his letters. 1973 has been a momentous year for the Society.