

PETER WARLOCK SOCIETY

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Lord Harewood, Sir Peter Pears.

# Peter Warlock Society

## NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No 24

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### A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This issue marks the start of a new era in Peter Warlock Society Newsletters. In the early years of the society, three issues of various lengths appeared, edited first by our founder, Patrick Mills, then by Bernard J Van Dieren.

December 1968 was John Bishop's first issue, and although there have been useful contributions from various committee members, John has had sole responsibility for collecting and editing dozens of news items, reprinting many crits, articles, photos, facsimiles, etc., as well as seeing the material through the printing stages and into the post.

Now that he has decided to stand down from the editorship, I must express my personal gratitude that he has given us so much of his time and energy for so long. I am sure the whole membership will join me in thanking him. Fortunately we will still have his expertise to call on.

At the AGM, while explaining his reasons for standing down, John made the valid point that when something appears to be getting done, people assume no help is needed.

We welcome Anthony Ingle, who offered his services as editor, and Jennifer Partridge and Robert Cornford, who agreed to help out with the practicalities. But I would appeal to all to help by sending or phoning news of any relevant items, rather than assume the editor already knows.

I am sure many articles are around or up people's sleeves. Let's have them - it doesn't matter how nutty you may think they are. Heaven knows, silly enough ones have been written by

Yours truly,

Fred Tomlinson

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### THE SAGA ENDS!

Last month, altogether unannounced, a copy of 'The Music of Peter Warlock' dropped through Ian Copley's letterbox, marking the end of 11 years of unbelievable delay and misfortune. The settling of the dust reveals a handsome volume, for which a note of thanks is due to Mrs Dobson for her sterling work in recovering so much scattered material; it would take a sharper eye than your editor's to spot those sections which have been photographed from an old set of proofs, as distinct from those newly set up in type. The book is an exhaustive survey of PW's music, liberally illustrated with music examples and preceded by a short account of the life. We have been able to secure a reduced price for members of £7.00 + p and p. Please order on the attached order form.

WARLOCK : A PICTORIAL BIOGRAPHY

The committee recently agreed to the suggestion that one of the 50th-anniversary-of-the-death-of publications in 1980 should be Warlock : a pictorial biography. This is now being prepared by Fred Tomlinson, drawing on the archive of photos he and John Bishop have built up over the years, and it is expected the book will appear in mid-year or earlier; Thames will be the publisher. More details in the next newsletter.

'THE ENGLISH MUSICAL RENAISSANCE'

This is the title of a newly published book on 20th-century British composers and their works, by Peter J Pirie.

'The recurring malaise of English music has been its gentility, a conservatism based on a rejection of passion, commitment, and all extremes', says Mr Pirie in describing the musical resurgence that has enabled the spirit of excellence and inventiveness sustained by the English music of the 16th and 17th centuries to be rekindled in our own. He believes that the reasons for the earlier eclipse, as for the present 'renaissance', lie partly in English history and the English character. His account of twentieth-century English composers and their works is therefore set against a broad background of social and political developments.

'The English Musical Renaissance' covers the significant works of the period, from those of Elgar and Delius, at the turn of the century, to those of the 1970s by Maxwell Davies, Birtwhistle and newer talents; but it also deals with a wide range of other composers and their works, including Warlock.

Mr Pirie's subjective but shrewd assessment of the troubled history of music in 20th-century England offers a great deal of food for thought, even if his dates are often a little approximate (The Curlew written in 1924?). Some exceedingly well-chosen photographs form the centrepiece of the book. Recommended.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

The booking of the Purcell Room for December 17th 1980 has now been confirmed. Various programmes are under consideration; more details will be given in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, book the date!

MERRY-GO-DOWNER...

A collected volume of Warlock's 'sociable' songs is under active consideration for 1980 publication by Thames. The volume will probably include songs from all the existing collections plus one or two which have only appeared separately before.

.... AND ONE FOR THE ROAD

The editor writes:-

'It is intended from time to time to add a music supplement to the newsletter, and I should like to take this opportunity of apologising for the Peterism which appears with this one. At the same time, I owe a great debt of gratitude to Robin Crofton for his splendid work in preparing the artwork and to John Bishop for printing it. There are, incidentally, seven specific and intentional references to/quotations from Warlock in it, ranging from a figure which permeates the whole song to a single chord. Should anyone find more, I should be delighted to know about it or them'.

WARLOCK SUBSCRIPTION SCHEME

John Bishop writes:

'By now all subscribers should have received the second and third items in the subscription scheme: the Five Folk - Song Preludes and Fred Tomlinson's book Warlock and Van Dieren. Members not in the scheme can obtain copies separately by writing to me (at 14 Barlby Road, London W10). The music costs £1.50 and the book £5.50, plus postage in each case. Cheques to Thames Publishing.

'Fred and I are now working on the fourth item, Warlock and Bruce Blunt, and our aim is to achieve publication very early in 1980, with publication of the fifth and final item in the spring of 1980. More details in the next newsletter'.

## PARTRIDGES AND WARLOCK

Many readers will be aware that Oxford University Press have begun to issue records - so far mainly of early music. However, we understand that one of their future releases will be a selection of 20th-century songs published by them; one side of an LP will be devoted to Warlock songs. The singer will be Ian Partridge, with sister Jennifer at the piano. It is due to be recorded in December.

## MUCKING ABOUT WITH 'CAPRIOL'

Members will probably have noticed that one of the September releases from Argo was of a Vaughan Williams/Peter Warlock record from Neville Marriner and the Academy of St Martin. The Warlock works were the Serenade and Capriol (strings version).

Just before the release date a test-pressing came into the hands of one of our members, who was horrified to discover that Capriol had an entirely gratuitous harpsichord added (the player is, we understand, Nicholas Kraemer). Nothing is said about the addition on the sleeve-note.

Needless to say, the committee moved fast in an attempt to find out how this travesty came about. It seems that a year or so ago the record's producer, Chris Hazell, approached Faber Music (the publishers) to say they wished to add a harpsichord part. Permission to proceed was given by Faber on condition they were given a chance to hear the result before release and were happy with the artistic nature of the addition. Faber were not in the event given the opportunity to hear the record in advance and were as surprised as we were by the release. But by then the record was in the shops.

Our chairman wrote suitably indignant letters to both The Gramophone and Records and Recording pointing out what has happened, and these letters have been published.

Fabers wrote to Argo and at the time of writing a reply is awaited.

## BOOBS DEPARTMENT

From a recent issue of the Radio Times:

'7.30 pm, English Romantics : Warlock - To the memory of a great singer as ever I saw'.

## FROM THE EDITOR

I feel not a little trepidation on moving into the hot seat in which JB has always seemed so comfortable, but also a great deal of anticipatory interest. What I chiefly anticipate is to be in touch with the membership as a whole. If you have anything - news items, concert previews (or reviews), thesis, polemic, music (.....?) - that you feel might interest your fellow members, please send it to me at the above address. You never know.....

## 'CURLEW' AT THE COLISEUM

The Curlew made an appearance in the current series of lunchtime recitals at the Coliseum Theatre in London. On November 20th the cycle was sung by tenor Malcolm St John, with Michael Axtell (flute), Judith Thomas (cor anglais) and a string quartet led by Joyce Nixon.

## THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY

Any member considering putting on a concert of Warlock's choral music may like to be reminded that the society's library contains sets of about 30 copies of each of the pieces. These sets can be borrowed for a nominal sum.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

The society's photographic archive has been considerably added to in recent months; a revised list will be issued in the next newsletter, but meanwhile all enquiries to John Bishop at 14 Barlby Road, London W10 6AR.



John Bishop writes:

Our long-talked-about Warlock weekend in the West and Wales eventually took place on September 8/9 and proved a happy affair. We had the advantage of a comfortable coach and an unusually co-operative coach-driver (which was as well in view of some of the lanes we asked him to drive down!).

Each of the 15 of us who participated will have his own memory of the moments that meant most. Certainly our communal supper and breakfast at Ian Parrott's beautiful home outside Aberystwyth were two of the highlights. Apart from satisfying our curiosity about some of the places that we have only read about before, it was a weekend with time to talk, laugh, drink, drink in the countryside, and relax generally in congenial company.

Thanks particularly to Ian and his wife (nice to see him in such ebullient form at the real-ale pub where we spent Saturday evening) and to Malcolm Rudland for making the arrangements. Something of the kind most certainly be attempted again.

Meanwhile, here are some notes by Fred Tomlinson on the places we visited, in the order visited.

### Didbrook

PH spent most of 1912 cramming for Oxford with the Rev. C E Rolt at various addresses in Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and Warwickshire. He failed Responsions that December and another crammer was recommended - Rev. T Allen at Didbrook.

PH stayed at the Vicarage from January to July 1913, apart from visits to London, Grez and Marlotte, Birmingham and Cefn Bryntalch. He fell in love with the Cotswolds, mo-bikes and Viva Smith, one of three sisters living in the village.

In spite of the distractions (he continued composing songs, transcribing Delius and writing musical articles) and in spite of preparing the wrong book, he passed Responsions at his second attempt and started at Christ Church, Oxford, in October 1913.

That Christmas, quarrels with his mother prevented PH from visiting Viva Smith, but they managed to meet most weekends of the next term, either by push-bike, mo-bike, or on one occasion a borrowed car. After the Easter holidays (April 1914) PH told his mother the wrong date for the start of term and was able to spend a few days in Didbrook.

His last recorded visit was later that year. On July 4th he pushbiked 53 miles from Cefn Bryntalch to Whitney and the next day a further 56 miles to Didbrook. There he borrowed Viva Smith's mo-bike and rode to London on the 7th for a Delius concert.

### Cefn Bryntalch

PH's mother remarried in 1903 to become Mrs Buckley Jones. Cefn Bryntalch was the Jones family home until after PH's death.

After the Sackbut debacle in 1921 there followed one of PH's most productive spells (referred to as his Welsh period). Between Autumn 1921 and Spring 1923 he wrote many of his finest songs (including two sets of Peterisms, Sleep, Lillygay and the revised Curlew) and the Serenade; transcribed several large-scale Delius works and hundreds of English Ayres; besides completing his book on Delius and several articles.

April 1924 was his next visit to Wales, prolonged because of a broken leg, the result of an alcoholic fall on the slopes of Montgomery Castle. (Perhaps it is as well we had no time to sample the beer there!).

His next visit was in October 1928, recovering from the financial disaster that ended the Eynsford era, and he paid a final visit two years later, just two months before his death.

### Whitney-on-Wye

PH's mother's sister married the Rector of Whitney and PH frequently stayed at the Rectory during school holidays. He presumably played the organ in the church (still there) and no doubt took a great interest in the nearby railway (now derelict).

The last recorded visit was in August 1919, whence he wrote cryptically to his wife, Puma:

Two pints = One quart  
Four quarts = One gallon  
Two gallons = One thirst

Ah!!!

Annual General Meeting - 12 May 1979 (held at David Cox's house in Kent).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In some ways this has been a rather frustrating year and I must start by apologising for the fact that some of the things we hoped for have not happened. You will hear more about our publications scheme later. Two items have appeared - the piano duet arrangement of 'Serenade' and the reissue of 'Folk Song Preludes' - but a special fate always seems to lie in wait for anything to do with Bernard van Dieren.

One long-awaited event has happened, or is in the process of happening. I am pleased to see so many of you could come to this out-of-the-ordinary AGM, and I would like to give a special thank-you to David and Barbara Cox for their hospitality.

Sadly I must record the death of Gerald Cockshott, our first chairman, which occurred just after our last Newsletter had gone out. I would like to take this opportunity of mentioning some of the achievements of those early years, particularly for some of the newer members.

The Society was founded just over 15 years ago, thanks to Patrick Mills and Gerald. At that time, much of Warlock's output was out of print. The first five years of the Society, while Gerald was Chairman, saw the appearance of the second OUP book of songs, the Boosey and Hawkes album, the Galliard book and a number of other items which virtually doubled the amount of Warlock available.

Four concerts may be singled out from those years. In 1964, Wilfred Brown sang at the 70th birthday celebration. Five years later, David Johnston celebrated the 75th. This concert, in connection with the Galliard book, led to the first all-Warlock LP since Alexander Young's 'Curlew' back in 1954. The Society's own concert in 1969 was musically a success but financially a disaster. A happier event that same year was the unveiling of the plaque to Warlock and Moeran at the Fynsford cottage, followed by a concert.

Later that year came Gerald's retirement, when David Cox took over temporarily until the next AGM, when I was honoured to accept the Chairmanship.

I cannot leave these early years without recalling the Warlock Festival in Durham in 1970. It was a wonderful experience for all of us - not least the pleasure of wandering about the grounds and hearing Warlock being rehearsed in every direction. The occasion was only marred by the news of the death of Arnold Dowbiggin, which, though it may seem ancient history, is surprisingly relevant, as only yesterday afternoon did I finally get to see some of his treasured collection of Warlockiana.

I haven't yet had time to go through them properly but already some mysteries have been cleared up and some gaps filled.

To enlarge a little, without turning this into too much of a lecture, Arnold Dowbiggin was an amateur musician but evidently a very good one. An early love of Warlock's music led to a correspondence and later a friendship between the two. Dowbiggin lived in Lancaster, and it is typical of Warlock that nothing was too much trouble for him, arranging and transcribing items specially for performances.

The solo version of 'Bethlehem Down' was written for Dowbiggin, and first performed by him only a few days before Warlock was found dead. This led, incidentally, to the posthumous dedication of another song. In the first printing of 'Bethlehem Down' the dedication was left out by Boosey and Hawkes, so Bernard van Dieren dedicated 'The Frostbound Wood' to Dowbiggin in compensation.

I will give the full story in the next Newsletter - there was a long correspondence with van Dieren over the next few years while various books were planned. The present situation is that the rarer items of Warlockiana are going to Sothebys and should be put up for sale in the Autumn. Thanks to Gareth Dowbiggin, the son and one of the executors, we will be able to photocopy the items before they go.

I seem to be talking all the time about people who have died, but I must just mention one more - Bernard van Dieren Junior. Although he died some years ago his affairs took some time to clear up - solicitors don't believe in hurrying! The Society bought a quantity of the van Dieren estate, some of which is on sale today. Again, some of the rarer items will be going to Sothebys, but we want to give members the chance to buy. All these copies were the composer's own property, which adds to their interest, and the printing in those days was incomparably better than most we see today. Some of the songs are going for only 50p, so no one need break themselves.

Finally, the question of jaunts - I am sorry plans for a New Year cricket match fell through, but as it happens the weather could hardly have been fouler, so it is perhaps as well. We have had some response to our suggested trip to Wales in September, so I hope we can make that as successful an event as today.

Fred Tomlinson

#### PS TO CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

While on the way to the meeting I heard of the death of J.B.Morton. I made a brief reference to Beachcomber's enquiry into the heseltine/warlock phenomenon but feel the time is appropriate to expand a little for the benefit of those not familiar with the episode.

I have not been able to trace Philip Page's reference which sparked off the discussion, but 'By the Way' included eight items on the subject in November 1929.

At first the enquiry was general: whether warlocks or heseltines were the same thing and whether they were invariably brown-bearded or hooded. However, the highly appropriate couplet:

'When heseltines be near  
Good hops do make good beer'

drew a response from none other than Rab Noolas, who was staying with Bruce Blunt at the time. He corrected the etymology and enlarged on the folk-lore in a letter starting 'Beer Deachcomber', pointing out that heseltines could be lured from their lairs by the sound of pewter beating on wood. In the following issue:

'Up the airy mountain,  
Down the sombre chines,  
We dare not go a-hunting  
For fear of heseltines'.

leaves no doubt how one syllable of PH's name should be pronounced (the other rhymes with 'embezzle') and sparked off two telegrams from Bramdean:

'10.16 Have captured a heseltine and have it  
in bottle can you come down at once - Noolas'.

'10.49 Sorry returned to find heseltine vanished  
twopence to pay on the empty - Noolas'.

The correspondence was closed after that, Beachcomber concluding that heseltines were not malignant unless deprived of their natural sustenance.

#### PPS TO CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Besides the Dowdiggin items mentioned in my report, many other papers have turned up relating to Warlock, Moeran, Orr, Blunt, etc.

I have not had time to do more than skim through these, but hope to be able to do so in time to survey them in the next Newsletter.



# STOP PRESS

December 4 1979

John Bishop writes

- ① On November 30 - official publication day of Ian Copley's book (see elsewhere in this issue) the committee held a party-cum-singsong, with Ian Copley as guest of honour. Other guests included Margaret Dobson and Dr Percy Young, from the publishers, Dobson.

The assembled company sight-read their way through a considerable number of PW's part-songs, with enjoyment and courage.

- ② EMI's second release for November included an LP containing the whole of Delius's music for Hansan.

PH played a part in the preparation of the score, as recounted in Dawn Redwood's book Gleichen and Delius: the making of Hansan (still available from Thames at £5.50). Mrs Redwood has written the sleeve-notes for the record, which is directed by Vernon Handley.

- ③ The point should perhaps be made that Anthony Ingle's song included with this issue was sung at this year's AGM, when it was decided that it would make a useful extra to the newsletter.

- ④ I understand from Faber Music that the Academy of St Martin (see item in main newsletter) have been using a harpsichord continuo in concert performances of Capriol, as well as on the record. Even worse news!