

Peter Warlock Society

President: Sir Peter Pears

Vice-Presidents: Malcolm Arnold, Richard Rodney Bennett, Sir Lennox Berkeley,
Dr Ian Copley, The Earl of Harewood, Patrick Mills.

Chairman: Fred Tomlinson

Secretary: Malcolm Rudland, Flat 8, 17 Gledhow Gardens, LONDON SW5 0AY

Treasurer: Robin Crofton, 11 Deans Court, Brook Avenue, EDGWARE, Middlesex
HA8 9XD

Newsletter No. 31. November 1983

Editor: David Cox, Bell Cottage, Magpie Bottom, Shoreham, Sevenoaks, Kent

TWENTY YEARS ON ...

Patrick Mills founded the Peter Warlock Society in 1963. Twenty years on, how does it feel? What has been achieved? The New Grove, in its article on Warlock, states that the Society has stimulated a resurgence of interest in the music. As a Society we are interested in the music and the man (who, according to Hubert Foss, 'exquisitely poised the psychologist's requirements of both introvert and extrovert').

We put to Patrick Mills the questions: What should members expect of the Society? And what should it expect of its members? Here is his reply.

As you are a subscriber and member of the Society, it seems reasonable to suppose that you have a keen interest in British music of between the wars - and with a special feeling for the distinctive contribution that Peter Warlock made in his chosen spheres of activity: that is, as the composer of some of the most beautiful songs since the seventeenth century, as a pioneer in the field of competent editing of what used to be known as 'antiquarian' music, and as a talented writer on music. For the last twenty years the Peter Warlock Society has been influential in promoting Warlock's music and a number of recitals and also gramophone records (some, alas, no longer available in these hard times) makes clear that the Society has had a measure of success, not only in producing its own concerts, but in encouraging others to do likewise. To all those who have supported the Society, my heartfelt thanks.

You are probably only too well aware that rising costs have forced upon us an increase in the annual subscription. In fact, to have kept the annual subscription unchanged would have meant a considerable reduction, in real terms, in what the Society is receiving. As it is, it would, I suspect, be a slight exaggeration to suggest that the increase has made the Society financially secure. But what, right now, is a member getting for his money? There is the Newsletter, of course, and since the Membership List was circulated, the chance to contact our fellow enthusiasts very much more easily. But, at present, what else are members getting?

It may be over-sanguine of me to say so, but I believe that our members are as interested in giving as in getting. We have produced publications of outstanding quality on Warlock - the man and the music - and continue to do so. No less a project than the editing of a complete edition of

Warlock's songs is under way. In other words, your money may be seen not merely as a means of producing a satisfactorily large number of 'plops' on your doormat, but of giving us a chance of promoting research in a field which even now does not get its fair share of attention. Without your support these activities would grind to a halt. And it is not only your support we need, but also your ideas and, perhaps, even a little of your time. There is, no doubt, nothing new in running a society on a shoestring; but your comments on what you expect from the Society would make interesting reading in the Newsletter.

BEECHAM AND WARLOCK

We had hoped to have a piece under this heading by Fred Tomlinson in the Newsletter. The fact that we haven't is both bad news and good news. The good news is that it turned out to be much longer than expected - so much so that Fred has decided to make a separate booklet of it about the size of Ian Copley's recently-published *A Turbulent Friendship* (Lawrence and Heseltine). More about this in a subsequent Newsletter.

Instead, your present Editor has put together a piece on Osbert Sitwell and Heseltine.

A NEW PLAQUE

The Society suggested, and the GLC has approved, a plaque for what used to be No.12(a) and is now No.30 Tite Street, SW3 - where Warlock lived for a short time, and where he died. The GLC (Historic Buildings Division) hopes to complete the job next year or the year after. There may be a problem if the GLC ceases to exist!

*If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly ...*

WARLOCK BROADCAST SERIES

The series of six programmes, organized by Eric Wetherall of the BBC Bristol, is now being realised. Between now and the end of December the programmes, devoted entirely to Warlock songs, will be recorded, for broadcasting some time next year (dates not yet decided). The singers are Peter Savidge, Michael George, Margaret Cable, John Elwes, Ian Partridge and Bernadette Greevy. Something indeed to look forward to.

ALL THE FLOWERS OF THE SPRING

As part of the Kensington and Chelsea Festival, an all-Warlock concert (for solo voice, choir and piano) was given under this title on Thursday 9 June, at Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road, SW7. Anthony Ingle was there and reports:

Very few all-Warlock concerts take place other than those promoted by the Society; so it was with great interest and a healthy regard for enterprise that your reviewer attended this presentation by the Robert Fayrfax Singers (run by Dr Russell Blacker, a member of the Society), conducted by Charles Stewart, with Nicholas Hills, tenor, and Raymond Lewis, piano. An audience which, sadly, numbered only 33, was presented with an extraordinary variety in standard of performance.

[→

The Robert Fayrfax Singers clearly thrive on a challenge. *Benedicamus Domino* was nicely poised and blended, but slightly lost in the extremely resonant acoustic. *The Spring of the Year* and *All the Flowers of the Spring*, however, were technically brilliant and expressively ravishing - I never expect to hear them sung so well again. *Corpus Christi* was a little fast to allow all the detail to register, and the excellent tenor soloist (Howard Milner) was swamped once; but the blend and tone remained impeccable. Choral versions of *Yarmouth Fair*, *The Birds*, and *Mourn no more* (sic) were pleasant, but a little pedestrian by comparison.

Nicholas Hills has a pleasing (if light) voice, but he seemed a little nervous. This might well have been laid at the feet of the pianist, Raymond Lewis, whose accompanying was not at all impressive. *Night* lacked the necessary depth; *The Frostbound Wood* was very sensitively sung, but woodenly played; *The Distracted Maid* was far too slow; *Away to Twiver* had no recognizable accompaniment at all; *Maltworms* was notably unsteady; *The Jolly Shepherd* slow and lugubrious. The concert picked up at the end with *Jillian of Berry* and *My Lady's Birthday*; but it remains a pity that the sterling work of the Robert Fayrfax Singers should have been so devalued.

PUBLICATION NEWS

John Bishop writes:

Volume 2 of our Collected Edition is now available, and those members who asked to be sent this will be receiving it shortly. (Likewise the subsequent volumes.) They may even have received it by the time this Newsletter reaches them.

Volume 3 is in active preparation, but not likely to be issued before Spring 1984. Subsequent volumes will, we hope, be at six-monthly intervals.

Ian Copley's booklet about Warlock and D H Lawrence, *A Turbulent Friendship*, has been despatched to all members who ordered it. Copies are still available: £2, plus postage and packing 50p.

In the *British Heritage* series which I publish, I have just issued a volume consisting of *Seven Songs* by Bernard van Dieren. These have been edited and introduced by Alastair Chisholm. Six of the songs were originally issued by the OUP; the seventh has not previously been printed. The book costs £3.50 plus 50p post and packing (cheques to Thames Publishing, please).

Another recent release in the *British Heritage* series is a collection of 18th-century songs from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, edited by Ian Copley.

Mention of Ian leads me to give advance news that he has prepared a small booklet about the English composer Robin Milford, who was a keen admirer of Warlock. The Milford book will be issued by Thames early in 1984.

Enquiries about any of these publications, also the two volumes of *Sociable Songs* and the earlier publications, *Warlock and Blunt* and *Warlock and van Dieren*, should be sent to me at 14 Barlby Road, London, W10 6AR.

ROBERT CORNFORD

John Bishop writes:

The sudden death in July of Bob Cornford, a Committee member, at the age of 43, was a very real loss to his friends - and there were many of those, both in the world of jazz, and what we are pleased to call 'serious music'. For he was that rare person: a musician equally at home in both camps, and unusually respected for his enormous skills as composer, arranger, pianist, conductor and musical director.

His sympathies were wide, as anybody who sat in his music-room in the Caledonian Road will know: the shelves were filled with an amazingly catholic range of scores, and the records piled on the floor were no less wide-ranging. He was an enthusiast of the best kind, and warmed as easily to the jazz piano of Bill Evans as to Webern.

He was a valued member of the team responsible for the production of the Warlock Society Collected Edition. His attention to detail as proof-reader and sympathetic approach to the practical problems will be much missed.

EN PASSANT, EN TRAIN

'Hamilton Ellis has written of a train journey to Oxford during which he and a fellow-traveller talked of railways in Wales, a subject on which his companion displayed detailed knowledge. Subsequently he discovered that it was Peter Warlock who had revealed such considerable expertise.'

From Christopher le Fleming's *Journey into Music*.

THANKS FOR THE TYPING

Brian Cook, a member of the Society, kindly offered to type the whole of this Newsletter - an offer gratefully accepted by the (slow-typing) Editor.

PETER WARLOCK SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Wellesley Arms, Sydney Street, London SW3 at 3.00 pm

Present: Fred Tomlinson (Chairman), Christine Axford, Lesley Bastable, G S Brenchley, Ian Copley, David Cox, Robin Crofton, Jonathan Edwards, Anthony Ingle, Ernest Kaye, Patrick Mills, Ian Parrott, Dick Walter.

Apologies from Robert Cornford, Malcolm Rudland.

1. The Minutes of the last AGM were read and accepted as a true and accurate record, except that it was thought to be the 19th, not the 17th AGM. (For checking)

Proposer Patrick Mills; seconder Robin Crofton: carried nem.con.

Anthony Ingle suggested that those minutes be taken as the present meeting's agenda. Agreed.

2. Chairman's report. To be published in the next Newsletter.
3. Treasurer's report. Current account balance £114.80. Deposit account £400. Anthony Ingle proposed acceptance; Ernest Kaye seconded; carried nem.con. Patrick Mills proposed and David Cox seconded a vote of thanks to Cliff Chadwick for his assistance. Carried nem.con.

Covenanted subscriptions were then discussed. This was felt to be two separate issues: the ultimate value of covenanting, and the level of subscriptions. Robin Crofton demonstrated the paperwork and the administrative work involved, to set against the increase of 30% in the value of the covenanted subscriptions to the Society. Robin Crofton proposed and Ian Copley seconded the adoption of covenanting. Carried nem.con.

Robin Crofton then proposed an annual subscription of £10; Jonathan Edwards seconded. Voting: 4 for, 5 against, 3 abstentions. Not carried.

Dick Walters suggested linking donations to subscriptions - which was felt to be a separate issue.

Ian Parrott then proposed an annual subscription of £8; Ian Copley seconded. 10 for, one against, one abstention. Carried.

4. Election of Officers. Jonathan Edwards proposed and G S Brenchley seconded, the re-election of the Committee en bloc. Carried.

As those present had already heard the reports on publications and the English Song Award, no further discussion of these topics took place.

David Cox offered the hospitality of his home at Magpie Bottom, near Eynsford, for the 1984 AGM, and a vote of thanks was recorded. There then followed general discussion until 4.00 pm, when the meeting was summarily ejected from the inn by the caretaker-landlord. Discussion continued in the nearby park until the meeting was declared closed at 4.58 pm.

1983 Chairman's Report

Every few years it is my sad task to record the deaths of friends of Warlock and the Society. This year has been a particularly hard one for us.

First, on a personal level, we were grieved to hear of David Cox's loss of his wife, Barbara. Those of us who were fortunate to attend one or both of the AGMs at Magpie Bottom will long remember their wonderful hospitality. I'm sure David knows he has our deepest sympathy and our best wishes for the future.

The death of our President, Sir William Walton, was widely covered by the media. If I may quote from a lesser known publication: "So many articles have appeared in the press since his 80th birthday, and now on his death one feels it is unnecessary to repeat all that has been written."

That was written by a chorister who followed Walton to Christ Church, Oxford. He recounts: "During the first world war when the Zeppelins droned over Oxford and the air raid warnings blasted away, the headmaster would immediately bring all the boys from the top dormitory down to his study; but Walton would disappear under the grand piano and write hymn tunes."

Another old chorister writes: "He always played the piano to accompany the hymns and morning prayers in the school dining hall, and he was frequently putting down ideas in a music manuscript notebook; these he used to discuss with Dr Henry Ley, the cathedral organist. One nice little story is that Henry Ley criticised one piece by suggesting that a very discordant passage could be considerably improved by a few minor alterations. Walton would have none of this and replied, 'But, Dr Ley, that is how I wanted it to sound.'"

I think that is as good an epitaph as any.

We sent our sympathies to Lady Walton and received her message of thanks on a postcard reproduction of the Michael Ayrton portrait.

After our committee had unanimously agreed to invite Sir Peter Pears to accept the Presidency, I had the following reply:

(Peter Pears's letter is reproduced on p.8)

We are grateful and proud that he has accepted.

Two other contemporaries of Warlock also died this last year: Herbert Howells, celebrated scatologically in the limerick, and Norman Peterkin, whose death at the age of 96 passed almost unnoticed - as indeed did much of his life. He was a very self-effacing man but in fact he was more to Warlock than many better-known people. He joined Hubert Foss when the OUP expanded its music department in 1925. Foss got much of the credit but it seems that Peterkin, out of the limelight, was equally important, if not more so. I met him some years ago and he told an interesting anecdote about *Robin Goodfellow*. Warlock turned up at the office with the MS, which included an impossible metronome mark. Peterkin just said: "Play it!". This led to second thoughts. The metronome mark was deleted and the song dedicated to Norman Peterkin.

One other remark of his I remember well. I asked him what Cecil Gray was like. "A cold fish!".

To return to the present, our most ambitious undertaking to date is well under way, though everything always seems to take longer than one expects. Volume II of our complete edition is in print and advance copies should be to hand next week. Volume III, which will contain the earlier half of the songs from the "Welsh Period", is under way. Incidentally, once Volume II is out, John Bishop intends to push both volumes with a bit of publicity, reviews, etc. It is too early yet to say how sales are going.

Dr Copley's book on Warlock and Lawrence, *A Turbulent Friendship*, is also due next week. You will have seen from the Newsletter that the two sets of *Sociable Songs* appeared during the year.

Two interesting discoveries led to the publication of two hitherto unknown Delius transcriptions by Philip Heseltine, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* and *In a Summer Garden*, both for piano solo. These had been missing for many years and I am delighted they are available at last. With two Fenby transcriptions and some useful background information from Robert Threlfall, they are the first volume in the Thames Publishing *British Heritage* series. I would like to mention that in the same series a volume of van Dieren songs is imminent. It contains seven songs, six originally published by OUP plus one previously unpublished song, *Weeping and Kissing*. I don't know how John Bishop finds time for all this along with his many other interests but I would like to place on record the Society's immense debt to him. He would have been here today but for business commitments - I'm sure he would rather be here than in Birmingham.

He also agreed to edit the next Newsletter if necessary. Our thanks are due to Anthony Ingle for the last seven issues. We are obviously sorry he cannot continue but fully understand the problems of a freelance musician.

I would again like to request all the membership to help with articles, programmes, news-items or even snippets of information. An editor should be just that, not sole progenitor.

It only remains to thank the committee for their services in the past year. We can look forward to another interesting year.



P.S. Sadly, there was yet another bereavement in July. Bob Cornford was a dear friend and a gifted musician. We shall miss him greatly. (See p.4)

Walton, Henry Ley, ... and Beecham

Brian Cook, who typed the major part of this Newsletter, has another version of the Walton-Ley story quoted in the Chairman's report. He writes:

My version was that on going for interview at Christ Church Walton produced one or two of his compositions. Dr Ley played them over and, deliberately, played a wrong note or two. Walton spotted all the mistakes! ... Still on Walton: I was told that when he was composing 'Belshazzar' for the Leeds Festival he had heard that there would be some brass bands taking part in other programmes. He wanted to use some extra brass, but, conscious of the expense involved, asked Beecham whether he should write in the parts. Beecham's reply was: 'Of course, young man. After all, you'll probably never hear the work again!'

THE RED HOUSE. ALDEBURGH-ON-SEA. SUFFOLK, IP15 5PZ.

April 13

Dear Fred Tomlinson

Very many thanks for your letter.

I am honored by your kind invitation and of course, if you want it I will gladly be

President of the Warlock Society.

I am not all that active, I am afraid, & spend most of my time down here, but I am sure

You won't expect me to do a

great deal - You and your colleagues do it all so well!

with best wishes

Yours sincerely

Peter Pean

Osbert Sitwell and Philip Heseltine

Not exactly a friendship...

Osbert Sitwell, ever witty, gave 'educated during the holidays from Eton' among the biographical details for his entry in *Who's Who*. It was at Eton that Sitwell first became aware of 'the presence in the background' of Philip Heseltine.

There are a number of references to Heseltine in Sitwell's 5-volume autobiography which began with *Left Hand, Right Hand* (1944) and ended with *Noble Essences* (1950). 'I knew him for some twenty to thirty years, and must have met him scores of times in Venice and London and Paris. I even saw him, as I tell later, on the day of his death, but though he was my exact contemporary, we were never friends, and I never cared for his songs, which seemed to me, musically speaking, to have come straight out of Wardour Street.'

Sitwell, alas, forgot to fulfil his promise to tell 'later' about seeing Heseltine on the day of his death. We can only wonder whether, if he had done so, it might possibly have thrown a little light on things which are still a matter of some uncertainty and conflicting opinion.

When Sitwell refers to the songs coming 'straight out of Wardour Street', he was thinking not of the film world, but presumably of the hallowed portals of Novello and Co., that imposing edifice, at No.160, which used to be the firm's stately home in the heart of London. (Those broad, marble stairs, statued and busted with Handel, Elgar, and other Novello key-figures - up which one made one's humble way to the enormous, carpeted music show-room!) The atmosphere of Novello's at that time was largely of a rather stuffy conventionality, an image which they eventually shook off with some difficulty. In wildly associating the Warlock songs with that *galère* of British music, Sitwell was no doubt mechanically differentiating between the Warlock style, as he saw it, and the style of the beloved Sitwell protégé and prodigy - William Walton - whose wit and sophistication were more in tune with Sitwell's own. In the final summing-up of his autobiography Sitwell makes the rather grand but debatable statement: '... at least let it be said of me... that I recognized an artist whenever I saw one, whether the scale of his creation was great or small, and respected him...'

No-one would deny that Sitwell was a man of immense erudition and culture, but sometimes the erudition could be used in an aristocratically aggressive way, as when he wrote of Heseltine: 'He may have had a great knowledge of early music - of that I could not judge -, but certainly his knowledge in other directions in which he was said to be learned was often nugatory. I remember, in Venice, his telling me how painting did not interest him, but only mosaics; it then transpired that he had just come from Sicily, but was unaware of the presence in that island of the great mosaic churches of Monreale, Cefalù, and the Capella Palatina...' It's possible that Heseltine was pulling Osbert's leg about the painting and the mosaics - and would have been amused at the solemn reaction.

[→]

Returning to Sitwell's self-contributed *Who's Who* entry of the 1950s, we read: 'For the past 30 years has conducted, with his brother and sister, a series of skirmishes and hand-to-hand battles against the Philistine. Though out-numbered, has occasionally succeeded in denting the line, though not without damage to himself...'

From that, you'd think he and Heseltine would have had much in common to bring them together. But no: temperamentally they remained far apart. Sitwell refers to Heseltine's 'assumption of cloak-and-dagger elegance, combined with an excessive love of limericks and an airy promulgation of æsthetic judgements and worldly opinions indifferently based on facts' - all of which Sitwell found antipathetic. It was understandable. Sitwell - aristocratic, élitist, highly polished and professional as a writer, elegant, poised, at times almost Olympian, often over-precious, and living apart from the real world in a self-contained, safe stronghold - Sitwell would not have responded positively to the particular kind of down-to-earthness, which was an essential part of Heseltine's make-up. The language, the limericks, the womanising, the constant carousings - most of this would have been, for Sitwell, distasteful and undignified. It was different, however, for William Walton and Constant Lambert - as Sitwell tells us: '... William entertained a high regard for him and greatly enjoyed his conversation, and, together with Constant, would go down to spend convivial evenings with him in Kent, where Heseltine was living: whence the two young composers would return very late, with footsteps faltering through the now uncertain immensity of night...'

The only warmish comment on Heseltine comes when Sitwell is discussing Delius, whom he met in London at a time when only Beecham seemed to be supporting that composer's music. 'The later advocacy of Philip Heseltine, who served the cause of his music with unfaltering devotion, should also be mentioned.' Just a mention: the tone is still rather grudging. The gulf was always wide.

David Cox

BALFOUR GARDINER

A book to watch out for - publication by Cambridge University Press expected early in 1984 - is a full-length study of Balfour Gardiner by Stephen Lloyd, editor of the *Delius Society Journal*.

Gardiner's influence on British music in the first part of the century is generally underestimated, and Stephen Lloyd has a fascinating story to tell - including references to Warlock.

Also coming from Cambridge is a major book on 20th-century English song. The author is Stephen Banfield.


WARLOCK BROADCAST SERIES

Further to the note on p.2: an approach is being made to the BBC to see whether it will be possible to issue a selection of the performances on a commercial record.

Finally, on a lighter note, we reproduce four of the items in "Merry-Go-Down: a gallery of gorgeous drunkards through the ages; collected for the use, interest, illumination and delectation of serious toppers" by Rab Noolas, with decorations by Hal Collins, published by the Mandrake Press in 1929. The Warlockian pseudonym, RAB NOOLAS - representing a familiar outward sign seen (appropriately) from the inside, in reverse - was also used by Heseltine in some correspondence with J.B. Morton in the 'Daily Express'.



AN OBSERVATION ON BEER-DRINKERS

RISTOTLE says, in his book on Drunkenness, they who have drunk beer, which they call *πίνον* fall on their backs. For he says, "there is a peculiarity in the effects of the drink made from barley, which they call *πίνον*, for they who get drunk on other intoxicating liquors fall on all parts of their body; they fall on the left side, on the right side, on their faces, and on their backs. But it is only those who get drunk on beer who fall on their backs, and lie with their faces upwards."

[ARISTOTLE. *Fragment quoted by Athenaeus.*]

A DRUNKEN SONG IN THE SAURIAN MODE



TWO Mogs which, in the abstract, pull
A Puffin and a Pentacle,
Nor synthesise too soon,
Can hocket Crisp and Cosmic Things,
What time th' untutor'd Unko sings
Her enharmonic Rune.

But ALLIGATORS, which, to One
Accustomed to the Bathly Bun,
Seem to Recant and Sneer,
Connive, and so coagulate
The polyphonic postulate
At £50 a year.

One stamping Secretary-bird
Might solve the Sempiternal Surd :
BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND,
No Judge may juggle Stibial Stars
For fubsy Punks in Public Bars
Where Cranes are Contraband.

[RAB NOOLAS. *Grisly contingencies, interspersed (however) with pleasing propositions.*]



MOTHERS' RUIN

There are certain old women of Maida Vale
Whom no prayers Bands of Hope ever pray'd avail
To convert from the sin
Of imbibing neat gin,
(Though they seem to be strangely afraid of ale).

[RAB NOOLAS.]



MUNCEY, TUMPHA AND MYFMAFFEMOSE

MUNCEY, TUMPHA, myfmaffemose. There were three good women who went ouer for refrechment and tried among themselves which of them could best keep herself from tipsiness. They stayed there till night, and when they came out of the inn door, seeing the moon shining bright, one said Muncy. She meant to say The moon schnyte. The second said Tumpha. She meant to say Thy tongue fayleth. The third said Myfmaffemose. She meant to say Ye bethe dronke bothe. Which was the best of them?

[From an early xv century ms.]