

Peter Warlock Society

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 1986

Foreword: I must explain that usually, when my report is live, rather than taped, I write it out so that I can hand it over to our Newsletter Editor for inclusion in the next issue. This sometimes means that I have to revise it due to unforeseen circumstances. For instance, I had hoped we would be meeting Messrs. Eric Wetherell and Robert Beckhard, but they were unfortunately not able to be present. However, our thanks to them still apply, so the relevant paragraphs have been left in.

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Once again it is my sad task to record the death of two of our notable members: our President, Sir Peter Pears, and Louis Pearson.

Regarding Peter Pears, and having admired his artistry since I was a teenager, I tend to regard the "Sir" bit as unimportant, just as I remember Benjamin Britten as a musician rather than as a Lord. We will all have many memories to cherish. Speaking personally, some of my happiest memories are of singing in the Ambrosian Chorus in performances of Haydn's *Creation* in Orford Church, the two Bach Passions at Snape, Purcell's *Faery Queen* at Blythburgh while the Maltings was being rebuilt and the splendid record of Percy Grainger folk songs.

As far as Warlock is concerned, I remember his recording of *The Curlew* for the BBC some years ago as one of the best ever. I don't know if it still exists in the BBC archives, but it would be worth trying to find out. It's a pity we only have one or two Warlock items on disc in anthologies, but I am sure we will all remember him with great affection.

Louis Pearson is not a household name. Those of us who went to Durham for the 1970 Warlock Festival will always be grateful to him for organizing it. We stayed on the University Campus. We were blessed with fine weather, and, with all windows open, wherever we wandered we could hear Warlock being practised in every direction.

On a more cheerful note, may I say how pleased I am to be back in Magpie Bottom, thanks to David's hospitality, and how happy I am to see some new

faces among the regulars.

Eric Wetherell was responsible for the splendid series of Warlock song recitals which we all enjoyed two years ago. Thanks to him we had a preview (or should I say 'preaud') in this very spot.

Robert Beckhard, all the way from New York, took the photograph of Warlock's grave that appears in Dr Copley's book. That was before the grave was tidied up, of course. Other photographs he has lent to us are being copied for our collection.

I would like to congratulate David Cox on the last few Newsletters. I don't wish to detract from the efforts of his predecessors, but now David has retired - although not short of things to do - he has that bit more time to spare than those who have to earn a living. He is also very good at bullying people into contributing. We have had some interesting facsimiles too, thanks to Robert Beckhard and Ernest Kaye.

Remember that he is always happy to receive items. The series "How I First Came Across Peter Warlock's Music" is an open invitation.

There have been several notable Warlock events during the year, which the Newsletters keep us all informed about, but I would like to mention our jaunt to Bruce Blunt's part of the world. Apart from the odd hiccup it was a delightful occasion. We made new friends as well as renewing long-standing relationships, if you'll pardon the expression. We heard Philip Stone sing *The Fox in The Fox* and declaim *The Long Barrow* in situ. We all joined in *The Cricketers* at the historic *Bat and Ball*.

I must put on record my additional achievement. I was working in Padua for a few days doing some Vivaldi recordings and concerts. So a visit to St Anthony's tomb was a must, and I took my copy of Warlock's *Two Songs of Arthur Symons* with me, in case there was a quiet corner with a piano. Padua itself is a lovely place, but St Anthony and the Basilica have been turned into an industry. As for the tomb itself, I've never seen anything quite so garish and vulgar. There were tourists and pilgrims everywhere, with services and confessions going on all over the place. I had to be content with finding a comparatively secluded spot and singing the song unaccompanied.

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee for their services over the year.

Given at the Annual General Meeting, Saturday, May 31st.

The AGM was held at Magpie Bottom this year. Wretched weather; but there was a better attendance than ever before. Among other things, we had a Warlock Sing-in, and we watched a video recording of the 'Warlock' Mastermind. Our thanks to David's daughter, Vivienne Murphy, for looking after the refreshments.

SIR PETER PEARS

Several members of the Society attended the memorial service in Westminster Abbey for our late President. On 4th July the musical world was united, filling the Abbey for 'a Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Sir Peter Pears, C.B.E., 1910 - 1986.' Among the most moving items were a magnificent reading (by Richard Pasco) of the 'Hymn to Saint Cecilia', the W.H. Auden poem written for Benjamin Britten, and an impressive performance of Thomas Campian's beautiful part-song 'Never weather-beaten sail more willing bent to shore'.

PUBLICATIONS NEWS

John Bishop writes:

There have been unavoidable delays in the production of Volume 4 of the Collected Edition, but there is a good chance that copies will be available in late September. The series has taken a good deal longer to reach its present stage than was originally envisaged, and I shall be asking the Committee, at its next meeting, to reconsider the project. You will be kept informed!

Readers will probably know that earlier this year Thames published *Lonely Waters* - Lionel Hill's fascinating account of his friendship with E.J. Moeran. Subsequently, Geoffrey Self's book about Moeran's life and music has been published by the Toccata Press. Thames has in active preparation a volume of twelve Moeran songs. This will be the fifth in a series 'Heritage of English Song', to be launched in August. Full details of the series can be obtained from me c/o 14 Barlby Road, London W10 6AR.

Since my pen is running so well, I might as well mention that in August Thames is re-issuing Eric Coates's autobiography *Suite in Four Movements* and a new study of Coates's music and life, *In Town Tonight*, by Geoffrey Self. August marks the centenary of the composer's birth.

"MASTERMIND"

So... 'Mastermind' has now been broadcast. For two minutes the name of Peter Warlock was in the minds of millions of BBC Television-watchers. Our warmest congratulations to Mrs Janet Williams, a member of the Society, who won the specialist part of the round with 16 points on questions about Peter Warlock set by Dr Ian Copley. After the general knowledge questions Mrs Williams had come second, with an overall total of 29 - missing victory by one point only. Bad luck. But a magnificent achievement.

How difficult it must be to achieve overall fairness in this contest! In one of the general knowledge questions, another contestant had been asked the meaning of 'tenuto'. He had replied: 'To let the note die away'. This wrong answer had been accepted by Magnus Magnusson. When it came to Janet Williams's general knowledge questions - one of them was: 'In which Welsh county is the cathedral city of St David's?' She replied 'Pembrokeshire'. Magnus said 'No. Dyfed.' Well, strictly speaking, he was right: it was in Pembrokeshire up to 1974, and then Pembrokeshire became part of Dyfed. But surely Magnus, after being so magnanimous over the 'tenuto' reply, could have found Mrs Williams's reply correct enough to accept. Had he done so, two contenders would have scored 30, and Mrs Williams would have won because she had no passes and the other contender had four... Such is life...

In the last Newsletter we gave you the 'Mastermind' questions. Here now are the answers.

1. A solicitor.
2. In an article published in 1916.
3. The British Museum Library.
4. Colin Taylor.
5. Robert Nichols.
6. The Daily Mail.
7. The motor cycle.
8. D.H.Lawrence.
9. Philip Wilson.
10. Reverend E.H.Fellowes.
11. E.J.Moeran.
12. "On hearing the first cuckoo in spring."
13. "The sick heart."
14. "Bethlehem Down."
15. Cecil Gray.
16. "Folk-song preludes."
17. Bernard van Dieren.
18. "Saudades."
19. Gerald Cooper.
20. W.G.Whittaker.
21. E.J.Moeran.
22. Hal Collins - his domestic factotum.
23. The City of Birmingham Orchestra.
24. André Mangeot.
25. Bernard van Dieren.
26. César Franck.
27. Piano duet.
28. The Delius Festival of 1929.
29. "The Frostbound Wood."
30. Tite Street, Chelsea.



From an early German edition of Martin Luther's hymns.



AROUND "BALULALOW"

First, the origin: two stanzas of Luther's hymn *Vom Himmel hoch da kom ich her* (c. 1535) - a children's song on the birthday of the child Jesus.

Ah mein hertzliebes Jesulin,
mach dir ein rein sanfft bettelin
zu rugen in meins hertzen schrein
das ich nimer vergesse dein.

Davon ich allzeit frölich sey
zu springen singen imer frey
das rechte Sussaninne schon
mit hertzen lust den süssen thon.

'Sussaninne' or 'Susaninne' is an old German word for 'lullaby' - from 'sausen', which meant (among other things) 'to hum or sing in a low voice', and 'ninne', an obsolete word for 'baby'. And 'rugen' = 'ruhen' (to rest). So a literal translation would be something like this:

Ah, my beloved little Jesus,
make a pure and peaceful cradle for thyself
to repose in the shrine of my heart
so that I never forget thee.

Thus I may be ever happy
to dance about and to sing always freely
the true lullaby now,
to my heart's delight, the dulcet sound.

The freely-adapted version by the Wedderburn brothers was set by Warlock: *Balulalow* (first published in 1923).

O my dear heart, young Jesus sweet,
Prepare thy cradle in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee in my heart,
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermore,
With sangis sweet unto thy gloir;
The knees of my heart sall I bow,
And sing that richt *Balulalow*.

That's the spelling as given in 'The Oxford Book of Carols'; but the solo version of the song, as found in Vol. 2 of the complete Warlock edition, takes its spelling from 'The Oxford Book of English Verse', which is where Warlock originally found the poem. (See also p. 7.)

We asked Patrick Mills to see what else he could discover about 'Balulalow', and he did some research in the British Library - with the following results.



The title is familiar to us as one of the most exquisite Christmas poems in the English language, illuminated by the potent and atmospheric setting by Warlock. The word 'Balulalow' said slowly has a languorous and sleepy quality and is a word apparently unique to this poem. 'Balow' and 'baloo' are slightly more known as Scottish words meaning 'Lullaby'. May we suspect, therefore, that Balulalow is to Balow what Darling is to Dear? Thus, a little lullaby? It is to be found in a volume entitled "Ane compendious Buik of Godly and Spirituall Sangis, colletit [sic] out of sundrye parts of the Scriptures, with sundrye other Ballatis changeit out of prophane sangis, for avoyding of sin and harlotry, with augmentation of syndrye gude [and] godly ballatis not contenit in the first edition".

The first edition referred to here does not appear to be extant. The 'sangis' were translations or adaptations of Lutheran verses by the brothers James, John and Robert Wedderburn. Before looking more closely at this book, it might be interesting to survey the chronology of the various composed settings.

None at all were published until 1923, and then, curiously, two appeared in that year - those of Warlock and Herbert Howells. It is hard to establish which composer's setting was first. That of Howells, composed in November 1922, was deposited by Winthrop Rogers at the Copyright Office on March 8th; Warlock's by the O.U.P. on July 10th - which hardly helps us to a definite conclusion. Howells described the text as anonymous, and Warlock as a text of the 16th or 17th (!) century. Perhaps Warlock's limerick, 'Do not ask to your house Herbert Howells' contains a veiled rejoinder to the circumstances of this remarkable coincidence... However that may be, the publication of these two settings brought the text to a wider audience than it had enjoyed for centuries.

A steady flow of settings followed during the next 40 years; the composers include such familiar names as Elizabeth Poston (1928), Gregory Murray (1937), Benjamin Britten (1943), Gerald Cockshott (1957), Ian Copley (1960), Nicholas Maw (1961), and Francis Routh (1962). It seems likely that many of these composers had had their attention drawn to the text by Warlock's setting. The next twenty years saw the flow accelerate - a reflection of an increased awareness of Warlock and his music? 1923 to 1962 had produced twelve settings, whereas 1963 to 1982, a period only half as long, had produced another thirteen settings, including those of Richard Rodney Bennett and John Gardner. No doubt there are other unpublished settings.*

The Wedderburn brothers are surely entitled to stand with Luther and

* There's an effective one by Patrick himself. - Ed.

Jan Hus in providing hymns, metrical psalms, devotional 'sangis' in the vernacular; and, indeed, they spent a considerable period in Wittenberg, which has been justly described as 'The Cradle of the Reformation'. However, whereas Luther frequently provided his own music, the Wedderburns usually used Scottish folk-melodies for their texts; 'Balulalow' is an example. Their texts are free translations from German models, but the language of their poetry is frequently robust and vigorous and, when appropriate, tender and sensitive.

The 'Compendious Buik' was issued in a number of editions, but those appearing before 1567 have not survived. Only one copy, as far as I can tell, is known to exist of the 1567, 1578 and 1600 editions, and only two copies survive of the 1621 edition. Fortunately, the Scottish Text Society produced a reprint in 1897 which is based on the 1567 edition, but with some variations. The Buik begins with an almanac, a sonnet, and a prologue which explains that "we have heir ane plane Text, that the word of God Incessis [increases] in us, be singing of the Psalmes, and spiritual sangis". Then follows "the text of the Catechisme" in prose, and then in verse. The next section is "Spiritual Sangis", and here we shall eventually find the text of 'Balulalow'. It is, however, part of a poem of fifteen stanzas, under the title "Ane sang of the birth of Christ with the tune of Baw lula low". The verses comprise a paraphrase of Luther's 'Vom Himel hoch', said to have been written for his five-year-old son in 1535. At the 13th stanza we reach Balulalow; and here it is in the 1567 spelling.

O my deir hart, yung Jesus sweet,
Prepair thy creddill in my spreit,
And I sall rock thé in my hart,
And never mair fra thé depart.

But I sall pryse thé ever moir
With sangis sweit unto thy gloir;
The kneis of my hart sall I bow,
And sing that rycht Balulalow.

Having thus dealt with the context of 'Balulalow', the time has come to place the book back on the shelf. Those who decide to look at the book for themselves will be able to find a splendid version of 'In dulci jubilo'; and then again, a spiritualised version of 'John, come kiss me now', which appears rather oddly in the middle of the Psalter. The Buik is indeed 'a box of delights'.

Patrick Mills

HOW I FIRST CAME ACROSS PETER WARLOCK'S MUSIC
or, The saga of a musical exile

The contributor to the series this time is TONY WOODWARD, an ex-patriot Briton living in Gloucester, Ontario. He joined the PWS in 1976.

Does anyone really want to hear my story? Well, here goes, anyway. Looking back at an old scrapbook, I find that I was listening to Warlock songs on the radio back in the late 1950s as a teenager. I can't recall their having any special effect on me at that time, but I suspect they have been ticking away inside me like a time-bomb ever since. I was a *tabula rasa* then, indiscriminately receptive to any and every musical experience or influence, without in many cases even bothering to distinguish one from another.

My first conscious exposure to PW was buying and playing through a copy of the *Folksong Preludes*: my copy is dated 1958. I loved them, and even wrote a piece myself which (I thought at the time) expressed the same mood as no.5. Oh, the embarrassment that callow youth bequeaths to maturity! (But I still have it.) I then found out that PW hadn't written any more piano music — and promptly lost interest in him.

After that, I went up to Pembroke College, Oxford. I didn't recall any further exposure to Warlock, until I got out my old programmes for the O.U.M.C.U. for that period. To my surprise, I found:

1 March 1960: *And wilt thou leave me thus?*
Rest, sweet nymphs
Sleep

21 Feb 1961: *Cradle song*
And wilt thou leave me thus? (again! was someone
passing the music around?)
Robin Goodfellow

Then my musical interests were squashed for many years by various external and internal pressures that I need not go into. I surfaced in Canada where, in about 1969, I suddenly stumbled across the PH/PW legend. This was something new! I wanted to hear his music, especially *The Curlew*. Now Alberta, Canada, is no place for acquiring culture, especially culture of such a peculiarly exotic sort; but the University Library had a complete set of the *Musical Times*, and I went through agonies, discovering a whole catalogue of mere names, with no music to associate them with: Ivor Gurney, George Butterworth, William Baines etc. (I'm still, even now, tantalized by names like Ernest Farrar, Denis Browne and Eric Fogg — and can anyone remember ever actually hearing John Foulds' *World Requiem*?)

To my amazement I found one day, in a Calgary bookstore, second-hand copies of *Consider, My own Country, Robin Goodfellow* and *To the memory of a Great Singer*, along with (wait for it!), Gurney's *Captain Stratton's Fancy*. At last, some real Warlock! (By now, you see, I'd discovered that he was not best known for the *Folksong Preludes*.) Suddenly, I was hooked, and desperate for more. I soon found the entries in the *Oxford Book of Carols*, followed by Janet Baker's *Saga* recording with *Balulalow* and *Youth*. And that was that, for seven years. I moved to Ontario, still an exile, but now a little nearer to "civilization".

Then came the cornucopia of recordings of the middle and late 70s. I was absolutely shattered by James Griffett's performance of *The Curlew*; it fully lived up to my long-built-up expectations. I had never heard anything so eerie, uncomfortable, but so wonderful. "Neurasthenic music"? Perhaps, but it takes courage to bare your soul for everyone to see.

The rest was all freewheeling downhill. I joined the Society, having at

last heard about it, and even met people in Ottawa who were fanatics, as I was, about English music. We all have our little enthusiasms; so I introduced them to Warlock, and they introduced me to Finzi and Havergal Brian, and we wallowed in Bax together.

In 1980 a singer friend and I performed most of *Lillygay* at a 50th anniversary memorial party at my apartment (we couldn't cope with *Rantum Tantum*). But there was no hope of hearing it done properly, because IT HAS NEVER BEEN RECORDED.

So there we are: when you are sitting at home cosily wondering whether it's worth getting up from your armchair to turn on the radio for yet another performance of *Piggies*, or grumbling about the quality of that Warlock concert at the Purcell Room (or wherever)*, please spare a thought for the people who would be grateful to hear any performance of anything by Warlock, however poor, just so that they can say that they heard it live, not canned. And remember the poor exile who had to wait nearly ten years to hear any of Warlock's music at all.

And as an afterthought: PW's limericks may be unprintable (so I've heard tell), but how else does someone in my position get to hear 'em?

Tony Woodward

* Distance certainly does lend enchantment! - Ed.



Eynsford, Kent: an impression, probably dating from the 1950s, of the ford and bridge over the Darenth, close to where Warlock and Moeran lived (from 1925 to 1928). The artist's name appears to be Dennis Hawkes.

NOT ALL OF IT WAS SET BY WARLOCK
(A series of complete poems)

Bring us in good ale, and bring us in good ale;
For our blessed Lady sake bring us in good ale!

BRING us in no browne bred, for that is made
of brane,
Nor bring us in no white bred, for therein is no gane,
But bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no befe, for there is many bones,
But bring us in good ale, for that goth downe at ones,
And bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no bacon, for that is passing fate,
But bring us in god ale, and gife us enought of that;
And bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no mutton, for that is often lene,
Nor bring us in no tripes, for they be seldom clene,
But bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no egges, for there are many schelles,
But bring us in good ale, and gife us nothing elles;
And bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no butter, for therein are many heres,
Nor bring us in no pigges flesch, for that will make
us bores,
But bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no podinges, for therein is all Godes
good,
Nor bring us in no venesen, for that is not for our
blod;
But bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no capons flesch, for that is oftè dere,
Nor bring us in no dokes flesch, for they slober in
the mere,
But bring us in good ale!

(Early English lyric)

Apropos of Peter Warlock's *Fancy* and *Good Ale*.



ARRANGEMENTS! ARRANGEMENTS!

On March 27th Radio 3 broadcast a piano recital, 4 hands, given by Peter Noke and Helen Krisos. It included Warlock's arrangement of Delius's Dance Rhapsody No. 2, and Fred Tomlinson's arrangement of Warlock's Serenade (to Delius on his 60th birthday).

Warlock's name has been appearing quite frequently in Radio Times, but we have not heard much about concert performances of his music during the last six months. We hope that members who hear of such performances will inform the Editor.

THE GKN ENGLISH SONG AWARD

This year's contest - part of the Brighton Festival - was won by a soprano, Tracy Chadwell, against heavy competition. The general standard of performance, at the semi-final and the final, was remarkably high this time.

Next year, the theme is Myth, Magic and Legend, which provides more opportunities for the inclusion of Warlock songs than was possible with this year's theme (the Four Elements and Peace). *The Bailey berith, Robin Goodfellow, Adam lay ybounden, The Birds...* and others. Yes, that's better!

We shall be giving full details of the 1987 competition in the January Newsletter.



'Puma', from a painting by Adrian Allinson. In his report, the Chairman referred to some photographs lent to us by Robert Beckhard. This is a photograph which Robert Beckhard took of Allinson's portrait. Puma - otherwise Minnie Lucie (Bobbie) Channing - became Mrs Philip Heseltine on December 22nd 1916. PH probably met her in the Café Royal, where she was 'one of the fleeting population of models'. She was portrayed by D.H. Lawrence as Pussum in the novel *Women in Love* - in which Warlock is also portrayed (as Halliday). There was trouble, and in the second edition Lawrence changed her name to Minette.

A GRAY VIEW OF ENGLAND (1936)

"... [The] spirit of smug, pharisaical gentlemanliness, complicated with social snobbery, permeates every aspect of English musical life at the present time, from top to bottom - alike in composition, vocal and instrumental performance, conducting, scholarship, research, and criticism. It is this spirit which drove Frederick Delius to spend his days abroad; this spirit which, through his acceptance of it, just prevented Edward Elgar from being the great artist he would otherwise undoubtedly have been; this spirit which, more than anything else, caused the tragic and untimely end of Peter Warlock, one of the most exquisitely gifted musicians England has produced since Tudor and Stuart times; this spirit which stunts and oppresses or forces into a pusillanimous compromise every potential native talent; this spirit which is the absolute antithesis of everything that we call art, and which must be fought as one fights the devil, without rest and without quarter..."

- Cecil Gray (*Predicaments*)

TREASURER'S REPORT

1985 was a good year for the Society. The surplus of £224 was the best figure for a long time. At the end of the year, the Current Account stood at £114 and the Deposit Account at £631.

Income

Subscriptions were up from £441 to £618. This figure included a Life Membership of £96 and £72 from the Inland Revenue for Covenants. (There are 21 members in the latter.) Bank interest was up by £22 to £49.

Expenditure

Newsletters, postage and Secretary's expenses were up £85 to £383. £80 was paid to the English Song Award. The audit fee at £63 was only slightly up on last year. (We are fortunate to have an Accountant who charges so little.)

MEMBERSHIP

The total membership is 109 - an increase of 6 over last year. We have 39 Life Members. Of the remaining 70, only 30 have paid their subscriptions for this year so far, and some have not paid any money since 1983! I earnestly ask those members who are behind with their subscriptions to send a cheque forthwith to me, thus saving the Society extra postage in sending out reminder letters.

NB

PAYMENT SLIP

I wish to continue as a member of the Peter Warlock Society and enclose my cheque for (The subscription is £8 per annum.)

Name (IN CAPITALS, PLEASE)

Address

.....

.....

Cheques made payable to the Peter Warlock Society and sent to Robin Crofton, 8 Wynbury Drive, Totteridge, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 7QB