



Stephen Shore and Mazzarella, 1926

President Sir Richard Rodney Bennett

ISSN 0266-366X

The Peter Warlock Society

Newsletter N° 68 – Spring 2001

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EDITORIAL

As I announced in Newsletter 67, this year's AGM will take place in Gloucester and full details of the day's events appear on the back page of this issue. Apart from our own meeting, the events of the day have been set up by the Ivor Gurney Society and I would like to express my gratitude to Anthony Boden and John Phillips of the IGS for their organisation. The centrepiece of the day will be a short recital by Ian and Jennifer Partridge but there will also be talks by Dr Trevor Hold and Dr Lynn Parker. Can I emphasise, please, that the payment for the day's programme should be sent to John Phillips (address also on the back page) and that cheques be made payable to The Ivor Gurney Society?

Although Robin Crofton's name appears on this page, as it has done for longer than I can remember, amongst our list of officers, he has informed the Society that he wishes to step down at the forthcoming AGM because of personal circumstances. We are all very sorry about his decision and, particularly, about the events that have occasioned it but recognise that, by relinquishing the duties of Society Treasurer, Robin will be able to devote more time to supporting his son. I had to enquire how long Robin has been Treasurer and discovered that he was elected as long ago as 1981. Nobody could have been more efficient in the post or tackled it with such equanimity although, with his characteristic modesty, he maintains that it is a job that anybody could do. Robin is keen to continue as our Hire Librarian and we are very grateful for that but, meanwhile, we send our condolences and good wishes to him and to Ralph.

Brian Collins

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REVIEWS

Frederick Delius and Peter Warlock - a friendship revealed

The Warlock-Delius correspondence ed. Barry Smith

OUP £50

ISBN 0 19 816706 7

This book tells the story of fan-mail turned life-long friendship of the most intimate kind. The young Heseltine (henceforth PW) had been an enthusiast of Delius's music since he first encountered the scores whilst in his early teens. A few years later came the chance he had been longing for, and his first letter to Delius in 1911 describes his excitement and rapture at hearing the music live for the first time, and at the honour of meeting the composer himself. Thereafter regular correspondence chronicles their twenty years of friendship, only concluded by PW's death.

Although Delius was a, probably the, major musical influence on PW, music was by no means the sole subject of their correspondence. In matters of religion and career, Delius advised and strongly motivated the very impressionable PW. It was through his persuasion that PW threw off the "shackles of the church", rejected his intended career in the Civil Service and turned to the not-always-profitable-and-rewarding (for him, at least!) role of composer. Other topics of discussion included philosophy (Delius advocated PW's reading and admiration of Nietzsche), friends and family, war, love and relationships, literature and philosophy, health, holidays and places visited. Delius, a "free spirit" himself, continually exhorted PW to be himself, live up to his own nature, and do whatever that urged. It has been often commented that PW, whilst taking to heart all of Delius's injunctions, did not possess the firmness of spirit to live up inwardly to these outer acts, and that the sense of personal unease that this created may have contributed to his spells of depression and his possible suicide.

One might have conjectured that, in the early days at least, when PW was but an excitable schoolboy, his hero-worshipping of Delius would become tiring to its recipient. Especially when one takes into account the hyperbolic, glowing terms in which he referred to Delius's work. No such thing - Delius appears to have invited the youth's enthusiasm and not actively discouraged it at all. He, too, benefited from the associatio, as eager Heseltine was a great advocate for his work, would make transcriptions and arrangements of his scores and correct proofs willingly, often unasked.

However, eighteen or so years after the correspondence commenced, Delius began to fall in PW's eyes. His music did not live up to, and erred from, PW's (possibly unrealistic) expectations. As a result PW turned away from his friend, as if in disillusionment, and the only correspondence was

from Delius's wife, Jelka, imploring PW to continue his letters to her ailing husband. By now Delius's illness was well developed and paralysis had set in severely. No doubt to the couple's delight the correspondence was resumed later that year, as PW was involved in organising a festival of Delius's music. Letters continued to flow for the remaining year until PW's own suspicious death in 1930, preceding Delius by four years.

The letters themselves, often of epic proportions (particularly on PW's side), oscillate dramatically in temperament. PW turns from wallowing in self-pity and melancholic moods of to making humorous and witty references, as befits the author of the limericks he composed. Delius's replies, thoughtful and generally quite serious, were to have great impact on PW's life and decisions as he instructed and counselled in response.

In this edition, the letters are extremely well-presented. Brief introductions to the years set the scene well and help to put the letters into perspective. A general introduction to the book gives a fluent and useful overview of the friendship, and provides readable and interesting, but not overbearing, background information. Footnotes clarify and give full references to books, events, people, works, performances, and so on, wherever necessary. Also included are two appendices - one of PW's arrangements of Delius's works, the other a list of works played at the Delius Festival.

This book offers a valuable insight into an unusual and fascinating relationship, often coming precariously close to that between a father and a son, or of a master and his pupil. As far as I can see, this excellent book has only one drawback and that beyond the author's control, namely the exorbitant price of £50 (explained by being a nice-looking hard back edition, published by OUP). If you are willing to fork out such an amount for a book, though, it is money well spent!

Emma Marshall

A paean for Peter Warlock

Ten pieces for organ

Thames Publishing £7.95

In May 1999, our Society held a weekend of lectures and concerts at the Essex village of Great Warley (The Great Warley Great Warlock Weekend!) where Warlock's uncle had built an unusual church in honour of Warlock's father. Philip spent a good deal of time in his youth at Warley and almost certainly played the organ - then considered to be one of the finest in the country - there. Included in the Society's weekend was a concert in the church for which I played six of these organ pieces, composed for that occasion. Since then four more pieces (nos 1, 3, 6 & 8) have been added to make up this volume.

Although Warlock wrote no original organ music and set few religious texts, four of his vocal works do

specify organ accompaniment. His arrangement of *Bethlehem Down* for solo voice specifies "For Voice and Organ (piano ad. lib.)" and although written on two staves with nothing marked for the organ pedals, it is almost technically impossible on the piano, but very effective on the organ with the bass line played on the pedals. Here, the textural writing does show that Warlock knew how to write for the instrument. *What cheer? Good cheer!* is "A carol for the New Year for voices in unison with Organ or Piano accompaniment" but works on either. *The Five Lesser Joys of Mary* and *Carillon, carilla* state the accompaniment as being for organ, with no mention of the piano, although it sounds equally well on both instruments. The debt English composers owe to John Bishop is vast, and this volume was the last publishing project before he died. It is also the first project of his to be printed posthumously, and contains a wealth and breadth of Warlockian melodies and harmonies which the ten composers have taken and exploited from their source.

PWS committee member Felix Aprahamian writes :

Resembling *A Little Organ Book* to which, in 1924, several native composers contributed organ pieces in memory of Sir Hubert Parry, this volume offers ten original compositions in similar homage to the memory of a younger English composer. What a pity that Warlock is not alive to be incredulous, amused, furious or even bawdy about these pieces and the bother he has created seventy years after his death!

The first piece in the collection gives the title to the volume; *Paeon for Peter*, a march based on *Piggessnie* and *Walking the Woods*, comes from a retired anaesthetist, Keith Glennie Smith, a devoted Warlockian since his student days when he introduced Warlock to several singers he accompanied. Whilst studying for Medical Finals, he discovered Eleanor Farjeon's *Nursery Rhymes of London Town* which he set in the form of an adaptation of *Candlelight* and called it *From High Savoy to Chelsea Down*. This cycle of nursery jingles was revised for Peter Warlock's 100th birthday and dedicated to the PWS, since when the composer has been a devoted member of our fold. (Copies can be obtained from the composer at 13 Boulnois Avenue, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset, BH14 9NX, Tel 01202 742250).

Trevor Hold's *Song-tune Prelude on "Sweet and Twenty"* is a gem. With inversions and augmentations galore, this is a superbly crafted composition where the Warlockian harmonies prove to sound better on organ than piano.

Timothy Craig Harrison's *Meditation upon Mr Warlock's Point* is based on *My gostly fader* and starts in the thin-veiled static mood of that song, building to a climax with a solo trumpet belting out the final phrase in octaves, before returning to the mood of the opening.

Robin's Dance by Frank Bayford is based on *Robin Goodfellow* which, with its list of "pharmaceutical remedies" in the text, is suitably and perkily composed by a pharmacist.

Betty Roe's *Leave me at the Fox Inn* is based on *The fox* and *And wilt thou leave me thus*. It was composed "For

JB Warlock from EB Warlock" – a delicate reference to the contrast of Warlock's pseudonym and real name, related to the true-to-form John Bishop and his dear widow's up-front real name, Eileen Bishop, who normally trades under her maiden pseudonym, Betty Roe. Over and under the luscious Warlockian harmonies for *The fox* the melody of the other song appears as if they were meant for each other.

Fugue on "Fair and True" (Eric Wetherell) shows the craftsmanship of a pupil of Egon Wellesz, Herbert Howells and Gordon Jacob, but uses more Anglican harmonies than in Warlock's accompaniment – until the coda, which survives deliciously intact, as in the original.

John Mitchell's *Mirth and Play* (*A jaunt through three Green Arbours*) comes from another pharmacist and is based on *Youth, In an arbour green* and *Lusty Juventus*, portraying all the varying moods of those songs.

Toccata by Brian Collins is based on *Jillian of Berry* and should last about three times longer than the original song. It exploits all the Warlockian cross rhythms, and to be effective, will need clear, crisp playing.

Ian Parrott's *An Old Tyrley Shepherd Song* is a *pot-pourri* of some of Warlock's Celtic aspects: *An old song, Tyr low tyr low, Balulalow, The curlew, Tros y garreg* from the fourth *Folk-song prelude, The full heart*; and the final page emphasises the arpeggio features of both *The jolly shepherd* and *The ash grove* by demonstrating how perfectly they blend together.

Anthony Ingle's *Prelude, Intermezzo and Fugue on "Rutterkin"* is the most extensive piece in the volume, and plunders through *Rutterkin* with a nod and a wink, a quote from *Sorrow's lullaby* and two subliminally subtle references to *Capriol*. The *Prelude* romps "like a little rutter" in 7/8 time, needing clean fingerwork and not too much echo. The *Intermezzo* is a sublime pastorella with real delicate Warlockian harmonies, and is directed to be played "pensively, like a sober and penitent little rutter". The *Fugue*, directed to be played "duckwise", starts in four parts, and is followed by a three-part episode, before the final romp exploits stretto, augmentation, and an ever increasing use of Warlockian clusters, in which the final bars seldom have more than one finger of all ten free – which is one more than Warlock ever uses in his accompaniment for that song!

Malcolm Rudland

[Although your local music shop should be able to get hold of this, it may plead ignorance. If this is the case tell the manager that it is distributed by William Elkin Music Services, Station Road Industrial Estate, Salhouse, Norwich, Norfolk NR13 6NS (01603 721302). A copy was tracked down recently at a well-known outlet in Bond Street, London, filed under "W" but Tony Shepping has guaranteed it will always be in stock at his Kensington Music Shop, 9 Harrington Road, London SW7 3ES (020 7589 9054).]

The fox . . . in Manchester

No, not some recent sighting of that most wily of fellows appearing on the Mancunian Way, or some political adage to the already controversial matters pertaining to the hunting ban, not either a reference to what could be an excellent name of a pub – and who's to say that there isn't a pub by that name in Manchester anyway? [Malcolm Rudland has found one at 97 Old Market Street, Manchester 9 – Ed.] My further reference to *The fox* will be made later in this article. The gathering of Warlockians (two dozen devotees) in addition to those who exercised and, hopefully, satisfied their curiosity at the Royal Northern College of Music, proved to be substantial and matching the size of the last RNCM Warlock birthday concert in 1989 in the same venue, now named the Lord Rhodes Room. Also in attendance were RNCM Principal, Edward Gregson, Stephen Wilkinson (former conductor of the BBC Northern Singers); the remainder of the gathering were equally divided between friends of the RNCM and civilians from the concert-going public of Manchester.

Firstly, one has to pay tribute to the exemplary way in which this event was staged. From one's initial entry into the recital room to find appropriate seating under good lighting, and not forgetting the balloons that added the extra decoration to this annual birthday "bash" to applauding all who were integral in making this 106th birthday one of, if not THE, best ever to have been performed and celebrated. This was, I'm told, the first ever birthday concert to feature a real birthday cake; it was brandished the whole length of the Lord Rhodes Room before the final group of songs, with 106 candles blazing (against fire regulations one wonders?) The substantial and tasty cake was then consumed in a lavish post-concert reception, exclusively for performers and Warlockians, where the student's enthusiasm for Warlock's music was proved to be very genuine.

Names must be mentioned here, particularly Caroline Crawshaw, director of Vocal Studies, who should be specially credited for astute programme planning from the Warlockian highways and byways (such as incorporating quotes from *Merry-go-Down* in the final boozy section) and ensuring that all songs were suitable for the singers involved. Ms Crawshaw also created an evening that showed off all the many sided emotions expressed in Warlock's *oeuvre*, and the whole event was well stage-managed with a minimum of pauses for rearranging the performers between items. The presentation booklet was very agreeably constructed by Olivia Ray who clearly researched all her material. Additional credit without question should be bestowed upon the indefatigable Malcolm Rudland for making this event such a huge success.

Huge success! My words are chosen very carefully and those who were in attendance will surely agree. I wish to mention that whilst sharing the company of Valerie Langfield (Roger Quilter biographer) from Cheadle Hulme, I also had the pleasure of spending the second half with our founder Patrick Mills. To

exchange notes with him was most refreshing. In all honesty, without shying away from the privilege bestowed upon me by the Society of "writing up" the evening's events, I would not be doing myself any favours by attempting to be too much the critic at this time. This "report" (if you like) merely accentuates the immense pleasure all attendees experienced in the company of extremely talented performers.

So, let me say that to hear so much live Warlock executed so impeccably by artists who performed as if they truly did know the material and, more than that, loved it, I have to suggest that it would be a small miracle to hear anything surpassing that evening. Warlock was never a writer for piano and he would admit it, but his use of progression and chord structure is what first startled me into realising that he was to be my musical mogul for all my life. (His somewhat controversial antics and his Bohemian life style were not known to me until I sought to look more deeply into the man after his music affected me so profoundly.) Congratulations to Russell Medley and Adrian Kelly, the accompanists of the evening. I play much of Warlock's music myself but I could not imagine getting close to the deftness and articulate class of the accompaniment.

I have one or two small concerns about "wrong notes" in *The curlew* but this was live music after all. John Christodoulou's superb execution of such a difficult work was only slightly marred by his choosing to decline the top A for the word "hurl" in the final vocal solo, thereby losing atmosphere and reducing what would be such a climax to the work. It's a pity that a student conductor wasn't engaged to keep the balance of the accompaniment under the singer more, and perhaps he/she would have been able to communicate a less strident character and offer more unity of shape and space to some of the solo phrases. This would have helped to bring out the spirit of the pathos of Yeats's poems.

Other works that particularly captured my attention were the atmospheric *Corpus Christi* – solos by Zoe Ramsden and Craig Steele; and *All the flowers of the spring* sung by a chorus which from the very first bar showed its depth of understanding of the words and sympathetic to the musical message that Warlock was intending to put across. Then followed 5 works sung by Darren Jeffery (bass). His rendition of *The Bayleyberith the bell away* literally put the proverbial lump in my throat and his closing *Yarmouth Fair* was masterfully executed with great diction. I am told that Mr Jeffery is soon to take the lead in Verdi's *Falstaff*. [Indeed, this has now come to pass and to much critical acclaim – Ed.]

The cricketers of Hambledon was memorable for many reasons, more so for the excellent choreography. I recall so vividly the male chorus sitting in their seats, only rising at "then up with every glass!"; and, in *Jillian of Berry*, the point where the chorus waltzed off at the words "And thither will we go now, now, now". Great touches of imagination, I must say, and in keeping with the character of the pieces.

The interval was buzzing with enthusiastic conversation, giving everyone the opportunity to meet new *aficionados* and make new friends. I

discovered also that, besides myself having made the long, trans-atlantic trip just for the one evening, we also had a Warlockian from Finland – such dedication!

Four settings of Bruce Blunt followed directly after the interval and opened with the women's chorus singing *The first mercy*, this would have been enhanced if the "r" of "frightened" had been rolled more, thereby adding to the otherwise lovely balance of the work. After this, Amy Freston's warm performance of *Bethlehem Down* was followed by Sarah Wall's beautiful tonal clarity in *The frostbound wood*.

The fox!

For me, the ultimate moment of the evening was without doubt the short but perfect – yes, perfect – Warlock/Blunt *The fox*. This was performed with great feeling, creating an indescribable atmosphere, by Anthony Claverton (bass-baritone) and Russell Medley (piano). This musical and literary statement will be firmly entrenched in my memory for as long as my memory will allow. I have thought deeply about what I am about to say here and, without question, I would not wish to hear another live version of this piece as I truly believe this performance surpassed anything I have heard on record or compact disc, no matter how superb those renditions might be. Incidentally, I did visit Bramdean in Hampshire several years ago, visited that very pub that Warlock and Blunt frequented and have a photo of myself holding what is now a very "tattered . . . fox's mask".

Alas! I found *Sigh no more* too slow but wouldn't attempt the piano score myself for love nor money; one wonders what Peter Warlock's fingers were doing and at what pace at his piano. I could never tire of playing the accompaniment to *Sleep* which, on this occasion, was sung with such a clear line by Rebecca von Lipinski. The 13-strong female chorus sang *Lullaby* with great warmth and melting seduction. I didn't notice the accentuation of the carol (*Unto us a child is born*) in the accompaniment to *Pretty ring time*.

The final foray of the evening commenced with the piano duet *Beethoven's binge* from *Four cod-pieces* which I thought lacked the satire it surely deserves. The same has to be said about *The old codger* which needs to be "souped-up" much more than it was here. I can never listen to Franck with any seriousness anymore since Warlock's devilish corruption of such a beautiful work. *Maltworms* was superbly sung by Anthony Claverton and male chorus and, following the poem *Mothers' ruin* the whole evening was concluded with rollicking songs, the final one being *Captain Stratton's fancy*.

Congratulations to all! This proves that English song can and should be given much more an ayre(ing) than it gets at present. The atmosphere at the Royal Northern College that evening was one I shall never forget and whilst reluctantly neglecting to mention more names for the performances, each and every one should take the proverbial bow for their efforts.

Let me conclude by sharing some of the story surrounding my visit to Manchester for such a

wonderful evening's entertainment. For many weeks I had toyed with the idea of making a brief trip to England to attend what was my first and only (to date) Birthday Concert. Besides my piano tuning job (freelance) I am also an employee with United Airlines in the Customer Service department. I booked myself a flight from JFK to Heathrow the day prior to the RNCM concert and without incident made the flight, arriving during the breakfast hours of the following day.

Following my arrival at London's major airport everything from that point was fraught with incident as England was in the midst of horrendous flooding and my arrival at Euston main-line station filled me with a combination of dismay and disgust – dismay at finding my trip to Manchester threatened by cancellation and delay, and disgust because of the lack of cleanliness and customer service at such a major railway hub. But I believe that the country was in a dismal state of shock after such appalling weather and, looking back on the trip, I count myself very fortunate in making the trip to Manchester in time.

It took me longer to travel by rail from London to Manchester than it did for me to fly the 3000 miles or so over the Atlantic. After going north for several hours and approaching the Trent Valley, we were sent south to Rugby and then north again where, at one stage, I had to change trains, eventually arriving at Manchester Piccadilly about one hour prior to the commencement of the concert. I barely had time to snatch a bite to eat but this I did with gusto and partook of several excellent brews before entering the recital room.

The evening concluded as I reported earlier in this article and, after having been offered a ride back to the hotel by new Warlockian friends, I duly crawled between the sheets anticipating a dreadful return journey to London the following day. So badly were things with the rail service yet again that, instead of waiting for my scheduled trip of the early afternoon, I hopped on a delayed earlier departure and, luckily, made the trip with only a further hour's delay. I then transferred to the underground and travelled to Heathrow with relative ease.

Yes, just one night in England for a Warlockian evening. One that I will recall with great affection for many a long year. I promise you that I will return and do it all again.

Richard Valentine (Webmaster)

www.peterwarlock.org

STOP PRESS

Dr Trevor Hold, who will be speaking on Warlock and Gurney on our AGM day in Gloucester, has recently issued *Chasing the moon*, a collection of poems and lyrics. Born and bred in Northamptonshire, where he still lives, his poetry reflects his affection for his native county. The edition is a limited one of 120 numbered copies, all signed by the author. The price is £7 + £1 for p&p. Please contact Trevor Hold direct at Dovecote House, Wadenhoe, Northamptonshire, via Peterborough PE8 5SU.

ARTICLES

Barbara Peache

Part 1 – Peaches and cream

I'm afraid this story is going to be a bit like *Tristram Shandy*, where the hero doesn't even get born for ages and ages, but I think I can promise it won't be dull. Barbara Peache first met Warlock at a party in the early 1920s (her own age roughly corresponding to that of the century), and lived with him at Eynsford, Kent, and in London for the last five years of his life, giving evidence at the inquest after his death. She died in 1977. Not a great deal has been known about her till now for the good reason that she deliberately kept herself to herself. Robert Beckhard interviewed her in the fifties; Fred Tomlinson and John Bishop tracked her down with some difficulty in the seventies: she was friendly to all but unwilling to say much about herself or her years with Warlock. I do not yet know whether it will be possible to find out much more about her life in that period, but we can certainly say a lot about her father's family and particularly the two determined and influential men who were her Peache grandfather and great-grandfather. In the next Newsletter I hope to be able to add something new about her mother's family, her parents, and herself.

We first hear of the Peach(e)s as far back as 1694 and throughout the eighteenth century they figure in the records of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights in London. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the heyday of shipbuilding on the south bank of the Thames; during this period the Peaches established themselves at Southwark and Rotherhithe. They probably came from an agricultural background in Kent, like other shipbuilding families with whom they intermarried such as the Courthopes, and the Larkins who came from Tickness (or Tickenhurst) near Sandwich; it's possible the Peaches had roots in the Beckenham area as Barbara's great-grandfather James Courthope Peache asks in his will (1856) to be buried in the family vault in Lambeth at St John's, Waterloo Road, adding that if this is not permitted he'd like to be buried at "Beckingham" in Kent. The trade directories which began to be published around 1790 give a glimpse of the family's activities at the time when James Courthope's father, a shipwright called Clement Peach (the distinctive final -e wasn't added till about 1805), was in business in the street curiously named "Shad Thames" which still curves round the Southwark river-bank just east of Tower Bridge. Clement and his wife Elizabeth had their son James Courthope baptised at St Mary's Church, Rotherhithe on 24th June 1781.

It was a pleasant place to live. As late as September 1802 Wordsworth, standing on Westminster Bridge (not the present structure) just a few hundred yards up river from the Peaches' Lambeth premises, could enjoy the view:

This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie

Open unto the fields and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

But the new century brought big changes to the area, including a large influx of population from the countryside seeking work and a decline in the Thames shipbuilding industry (ships were getting too big to be built in the local docks and wharves). Nonetheless, in 1796 Clement apprenticed his 15-year-old son, James Courthope, to the shipwright Thomas Hollands. From about 1797-1805 the family firm operated as "Peach & Larkin" from 282 Randall's Causeway, Rotherhithe and, from about 1802, also built barges at Cuper's Bridge, Lambeth. They appear as "timber merchants" at Narrow Wall, Lambeth from 1805 and it is at this time that James, now 24, begins to make his mark as the firm's name changes to "Peach, Son & Co". From about 1809-1812 someone called Fletcher is associated with the timber merchant side of the business but not the barge-building (they no longer claim to be "shipwrights"). The addresses given in the trade directories are not as confusing as might seem. "Cuper's Bridge" (1802-14) was not a bridge over the Thames, but a small area exactly where Waterloo Bridge now reaches the south bank. Waterloo Bridge was so named when opened by the Prince Regent in 1817 to commemorate the end of the Napoleonic wars on the second anniversary of the famous battle. Clearly with the building of the bridge the Peaches had had to give up their Cuper's Bridge premises – not without compensation, presumably. "Narrow Wall", presumed site of the ancient Roman river wall in Lambeth, was renamed "Belvedere [or Belvidere] Road" in about 1822, and for a while (1818-22) the Peaches used the no doubt fashionable address "near Waterloo Bridge". I go into all this detail because it's clear that the foundations of the family fortune were laid during this period. As early as 1811 James Courthope Peache ("shipwright") aged only 30 was elected a Freeman of the City of London, and between 1810 and 1820 he (not his father Clement, who died in 1815) bought up much of the land in the area that now lies between Waterloo Bridge and Hungerford railway bridge, also building a large house at what became later 59 Belvedere Road. This house, which sported "J.C.P. 1818" on a lead waterhead, was demolished early in 1949 as part of the clearance of the south bank site for the Festival of Britain. The question is – and I have not had time to research it – how did James Courthope Peache get so rich so quickly in the 1805-20 period? Was it something to do with contracts for timber for ship-building during the Napoleonic wars? Could any reader throw light on this? The timber trade certainly blossomed in this area in the early nineteenth century: an 1831 map shows at least 30 timber yards and many wharves on the south bank of the Thames between Lambeth and Rotherhithe. Once he'd made his fortune I suspect James prospered further by shrewd property speculation on the increasingly built-up south bank of the Thames. Meanwhile he had married Alice, from Rotherhithe like himself; while she busily laid the foundations of a large family, he continued to add to what by the 1830s had become a very large fortune indeed – hence the

"Cream" of my title. There seems to have been only one fly in the ointment: unhealthy living conditions. In the eighteenth century Lambeth had been a largely rural area of marshland, leafy glades and pleasure gardens (Vauxhall and Cuper's Gardens among others) but with the industrial revolution its population grew in a rapid and haphazard fashion.

At about the same time as Waterloo Bridge was opened in 1817 James and Alice's eighth child was born; seven were still living, a good proportion for the time. The proud parents, soon to move into a fine new house and no doubt looking forward to a period of peace and commercial consolidation, named him Wellington.

Living conditions on the south bank might be going from bad to worse for the increasing numbers of the less well-off but their spiritual needs were being catered for by the building of new churches such as the neo-classical edifice dedicated to St John the Evangelist opened in 1824 in what is now Waterloo Road, very near the Peache home and business premises. (Today St John's sits uncomfortably between the main entrance to Waterloo Station and the Imax cinema.)

In later years many assumed that James and Alice only had three children, but the memorial over the family vault which still stands in front of St John's (immediately on the left as you go into the churchyard from the Waterloo Road) lists ten with their ages at death, and that excludes the two (one of whom became Barbara's grandfather) who lived to a ripe old age and are buried elsewhere. Of these ten one died as a toddler in 1814 and one lived on till the 1850s, but the other eight died between 1820 and 1837, five of them aged between 10 and 16 years. At least five or six months, usually a much greater interval, separates one death from the next. Why did they die? We cannot now be sure, since it happened just before the beginning of national registration and death certificates. But there are clues. As London rapidly expanded in an uncontrolled manner, the contamination of drinking water particularly from sewage became common, causing many deaths particularly among small children from dysentery, typhoid and diarrhoea. The problem was not solved till well on in the Victorian period. As if this were not enough a new scourge, cholera, first reached England from the Far East in 1831-2, killing well over 6 000 Londoners. It hit Southwark in 1833. James and Alice had recently lost their son Wellington at the age of 13 in March 1830 and another son, James Courthope junior, aged 15, in August 1831. Though the cholera epidemic may have spared their family, James and Alice no doubt realised that there could be a link between the increasingly unhealthy conditions in Lambeth and Southwark and the mournful procession of their dying children, and this – coupled with the fact that they were not short of money – was no doubt a principal reason why they moved in 1834 with their four remaining children to the relatively salubrious village of Wimbledon (population *circa* 2 000), though retaining their properties and business premises in Lambeth and elsewhere on the south bank of the Thames. Although nothing now remains of nineteenth-century Belvedere Road but its name, it runs from Westminster Bridge to Waterloo Bridge *via*

the Jubilee Gardens and London Eye, Hungerford railway bridge and Royal Festival Hall. But the very different Belvedere Road of 1830 was obviously close to James and Alice's hearts since they named their new mansion and large estate in Wimbledon after it, and after living in Wimbledon for nearly a quarter of a century eventually chose to be buried in the family vault scarcely more than a stone's throw from their old home.

James Courthope Peache was not a man to do things by halves. His new home was just about the grandest house in Wimbledon, built in the Regency period on the site of an earlier mansion once used as a country retreat by top Whig politicians such as the Marquess of Rockingham (twice briefly Prime Minister in the later eighteenth century) and Charles James Fox. Now, in 1834, James (53) and Alice (50) had taken up residence there with their surviving children Clement (30), Lavinia (20), Alfred (16) and Kezia (13). Within three years Lavinia too was dead, but the rest survived. Clement, second-born of James and Alice's twelve children, seems to have been dear to his father but not likely to be able take over and run the family timber business. In the time-honoured manner he too had been apprenticed to a shipwright (1822), but set up in business next door to his father by Waterloo Bridge on his own account (c. 1833) as a "lighterman", *i.e.* one who uses a "flatbottomed barge or other unpowered boat to transfer goods to and from ships in harbour", according to the New Oxford Dictionary. He and his father must have commuted regularly between Wimbledon and Lambeth, probably to begin with in their own horse-drawn coach – we know they employed a coachman – though the canny James may have been attracted to the area in the first place by the fact that one of the very first long distance railways in Britain was already being built from London to Southampton *via* Wimbledon; the stretch from Wimbledon to the original London terminus at Nine Elms was opened in 1838 with an extension to the new terminus at Waterloo in 1848.

In Wimbledon the Peaches' wealth and property gave them instant status as one of the leading families in the district. James became a churchwarden and, when St Mary's Church was rebuilt (*i.e.* Victorianised), he contributed among other things a new organ, on which his daughter Kezia accompanied the church services for 15 years from 1854. The best pews were occupied on one side of the aisle by the Peaches, and on the other by Mrs Marryat, an MP's widow and mother of a naval captain who, after serving in the Napoleonic wars, was just making his name as a popular boys' novelist with such books as *Mr Midshipman Easy* and *Masterman Ready*. As in Lambeth, James was a liberal benefactor not only of the church but of local schools and other provisions for the poor. Surviving portraits indicate energy and a caring, if paternalistic, quality in James – as one might expect – while his wife Alice, in her period frilly cotton cap, is a good-looking woman with a long upper lip and a strikingly straight nose. Kezia, softer and plumper in appearance, has thick dark eyebrows and the piercing dark eyes that seem to have been a family characteristic. She too in time spent a lot of

money on good works of various kinds, including the building of some 16 quality, terraced cottages (very desirable today) intended for poor families "of good character and cleanly habits". James, no doubt responsible for drawing up the family census returns in 1841 and 1851, had an irrational streak that led him, for no apparent reason, to falsify everyone's ages. In 1841 he understates all the family's ages by 4 or 5 years and, in 1851, by 6 to 8 years, reaching a climax of absurdity with one of the female servants who is represented as having aged by only 2 years between 1841 and 1851! The Peache establishment at Belvedere House included on both occasions eight live-in servants: a butler, a footman, four women "general servants" of various ages, a lodge-keeper who doubled as gardener, and a head of stables who also served as coachman.

In 1856, James at 75 decided the time had come to put his affairs in order and drew up a closely written 9-page will, not easy to read today as it was drawn up in a very unVictorian script more reminiscent of the Secretary Hand of the Tudor period. In this will he leaves nearly all his extensive property to his elder son Clement, with some provision for his widow, his younger son Alfred, his daughter Kezia (musical instruments among other things) and three elderly, unmarried, female dependants (two sisters and a niece). He lists as his freehold property, in sole or part, messuages (*i.e.* dwelling-houses complete with out-houses and land) and wharves in Rotherhithe, Southwark and Lambeth, plus "my eighteen or more" freehold properties in Wimbledon – he seems unclear as to how much he actually does own. The mansion (Belvedere House) goes to Clement, on condition he allows his mother and sister to occupy as many of the rooms as they may need. His younger son Alfred, a Church of England parson, inherits the advowson (*i.e.* right to appoint the incumbent) to the living of Mangotsfield in Gloucestershire where he had earlier been a curate. To his "dear Wife" Alice he leaves "all my carriages horses and harnesses and all my cows and other animals and all the stable furniture and all the provisions wines and liquors in my house to and for her absolute use and benefit" but someone obviously pointed out to him that he had forgotten to provide her with an annuity so, drawing up a codicil on 7th December 1857, he remedies the omission "if omission there be", as he adds a little crossly. Only five days after this the whole will was turned on its head when his 50-year-old elder son Clement the lighterman, who had never married and lived at home with his parents all his life, suddenly died of a heart attack. This meant that his less favoured younger son, Alfred the curate, unexpectedly became principal legatee. James let this stand, adding no further codicils and dying six weeks later; his widow followed him in less than a year. Thus, out of the blue, Alfred – in due course to be Barbara Peache's grandfather – became that contradiction in terms, a seriously rich Church of England curate. Which is where the second part of this story starts.

Although James Courthope Peache was always a generous benefactor of the churches where he worshipped, he seems to have tried to dissuade Alfred from going into the Church, reportedly offering him

instead the "pleasures of Egypt" (whatever they may have been) or a chance to "suffer affliction" elsewhere. But Alfred, no less than his father, had a mind of his own. After completing a degree at Wadham College, Oxford, he took holy orders and started his apprenticeship in 1842, at the age of 24, as curate to Robert Brodie, Vicar of Mangotsfield with Downend, a parish that comprised two villages three or four miles east of Bristol. His father made him an annual allowance of £100 (perhaps £5 000 now). His sister Kezia kept house for him at Mangotsfield until 1850, when he married an army officer's daughter, Julia Augusta Cox. In 1854 Alfred and Julia moved to the curacy of Heckfield, not far from Aldershot and much nearer the ageing James and Alice at Wimbledon. The young couple already had two sons and in Heckfield two daughters were added to their family. When after his father's death Alfred inherited the Mangotsfield and Downend advowson (which James had bought not long before Alfred moved to Heckfield), his old boss Robert Brodie retired, and Alfred appointed himself vicar in Brodie's place. There was never any question of his retiring and living on his fortune at Belvedere House; Kezia moved to a more modest house close by in Church Road, Wimbledon, and the big house was let, in the first instance to the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England. Belvedere House was pulled down early this century and its estate built over. The Peache family apparently retained a measure of control: today the site, just south of St Mary's Church and the All England Lawn Tennis Club, is still marked by names like Belvedere Avenue, Belvedere Drive, Courthope Road and Clement Road. Kezia presented a large stained-glass window in memory of her father for the east end of St Mary's; this was destroyed when Wimbledon was heavily bombed in 1944 but has been replaced.

At Downend Alfred and his family resumed contact with old friends they had left five years before and settled in some style in a large house set in 16 acres of grounds with a resident staff of seven comprising governess, nurse, cook, parlourmaid, nursery maid, kitchen maid and 15-year-old "page". In the years that followed three more children were born making seven in all – two boys, then three girls, then two more boys, not one of whom was to die young, in sharp contrast to Alfred's brothers and sisters. In late March 1866 Julia Peache went to register the birth of her fourth son, who though nearly five weeks old still had no name. Clearly he couldn't be baptized without a name and eight days later, on 1st April, his father christened him Clement Kemble; in due course Clement Kemble Peache would become Barbara's father. Why did it take so long to find a name for him? Were Alfred and Julia unable to agree? A glance at the registers of births at the Family Records Office in London shows that for a child to be registered without a name was extremely unusual. The registrar who recorded the existence of this nameless infant was Dr Henry Mills Grace, an old family friend, already for many years local GP/surgeon at Downend and a passionate cricketer, no less than three of whose sons – EM, WG and GF (Fred) – would appear together for England in the first-ever Test match in this country,

played at Kennington Oval, London in 1880. Not content with riding round the countryside on horseback visiting patients, running a home full of medical students (including at one time or another all his five sons), and creating the most famous cricketing family of all time, the indefatigable Dr Grace also worked as local registrar of births, deaths and marriages and, every ten years, directed the local census.

The population of Mangostfield and Downend was rapidly increasing; one suspects that it was Alfred as owner of the living as well as incumbent, who was behind the move to separate the two villages into two separate parishes, effected by Act of Parliament in 1874. Thereafter, till he took early retirement at 60 four years later, Alfred served as Vicar of Downend, which, originally the junior partner, had become much the larger of the two villages (population 3 500 in 1875). As his successor at Downend Alfred appointed his curate J W Dann who was married to one of Dr Grace's daughters, while for nearly 50 years another daughter served as Downend church organist.

We can catch a glimpse of parish life at Downend in the 1870s in the diary of Alfred's musically-inclined daughter Nora (one of the future Barbara's aunts) who, in the spring of 1876, was about 18 years old. Nora looked down on the Grace family in general as vulgar extraverts, but she developed a crush on the youngest and best-looking of the five boys, Fred, who was to die tragically of pneumonia four years later, two weeks after playing in that first Test match and running more than a hundred yards round the boundary to bring off a catch that has a place in cricket history. On March 8th 1876 Nora had supper at the Graces' and recorded in her diary:

In my estimation [Fred] is the nicest of the Graces, of course one could wish him in some things different, but Mrs Grace is so vulgar, she does say such things, & he does not go on like that. [...] I played the violin with Mrs Grace [...] Perhaps it is conceited to put it, but I am sure Fred was watching me play, not that he might [not] watch anyone, but there are different ways of watching. I think he liked to hear me sing too, & I think it helped me. [...] Fred took me into supper, & I feel sorry for him, I am sure he co'd be better if it was not for the rest. I should like to help him, & I believe I could [...] with God's help.

On saying Good Night, I gave his hand a little squeeze, & - he did too, I am sure, but it seems dreamy for F went out directly after, & I think it was well, for I am sure I must have blushed. Poor fellow I do feel sorry for him. I wonder if he does care for me a little bit [...]

In that age of chaperones Nora looked forward to Sundays when she could see Fred in church:

Once I looked up at him & he was looking at me, & it made me blush so, I got so red. Our eyes met two or three times after. Somehow I believe he does care for me a little.

But too often Fred would be accompanied to church by a cousin or brother:

W.G. has come but I don't care for that. [...] We did not shake hands coming out; when shall we?

She was desperate to reach some sort of understanding with Fred before her family took her with them to the continent for their summer holidays, but

it all came to nothing. Even going to his home on the pretext of calling on one of his sisters did not help:

I did see him [...] but we did not shake hands, he was playing cricket.

One reason for Alfred's early retirement was that, like the cricketing Graces, he had no intention of restricting his horizons to the villages of south Gloucestershire. When he and his sister Kezia unexpectedly inherited their father's wealth in 1858, they had to face the question of what to do with it - apart from living in reasonable comfort. Both were devout Anglicans with strict Evangelical views and they decided to use their money to promote those views. What was needed, Alfred decided, was to found and develop a college in London to train Evangelical clergymen for the Anglican ministry, and at the same time to provide a new route into the church for those not sufficiently well off to go to Oxford or Cambridge.

The college started its existence in 1863 with a Principal and one student in a disused school building in Kilburn (from which it took its unofficial name of St John's Hall) but it grew so rapidly that in 1865 a college building with seven acres of land was purchased in Highbury. It now became officially the London College of Divinity, though still popularly known as St John's Hall. Within a year Classics, Mathematics, History, Scripture, Evidences, Hebrew, Liturgiology, Elocution and Singing were all being taught, and one of the first priorities after the move to the new Highbury premises was the development of a playing field and cricket and football teams. On a rare visit from Downend, Alfred Peache (now known as "the Founder") read his favourite chapter from Paul's Epistle to Timothy (*II Timothy 2*) on the theme of the qualities necessary in a good minister of Christ: fortitude, fidelity and the ability to "endure hardness".

Not content with bankrolling his Highbury college, Alfred also gave £5 000 (more than £250 000 today) to endow the Chair of Divinity at Huron College, Ontario, Canada, and later, when the Western University of Canada was founded, he became its first Chancellor and an honorary DD; it is not clear whether he spent time in Canada after finally leaving Downend in 1880, but later in the 1880s he and his family had an address in Hampstead. Even at the time people speculated about Alfred's wealth and its exact extent was never known; probably the best guide is James Courthope Peache's will of 1856, which makes it clear that most of it was invested in property, a policy clearly continued by Alfred and his sister Kezia. An anecdote went the rounds that while James Courthope Peache's ambition as a young man had been to make a hundred thousand pounds before he died, his son Alfred's had been to give away a hundred thousand. For a hundred thousand read at least five million today and you get an idea of the sort of money involved. Alfred, who always spent judiciously, had clearly inherited a sense of the power of money from his father; the two men were opposite sides of the same coin. After Alfred's death his friends speculated that he must have given away at least £120 000 (probably more than £6 million today). His *Times* obituary (27th November 1900) states that he

established the college "at great expense to himself and his family", though it is unclear whether this simply means that Kezia as co-Founder shared the cost (as she did) or that there were mutterings and grumbings among his seven children as they watched their inheritance shrink. Certainly, whatever the reason, his granddaughter Barbara was attracted in her later years to Roman Catholicism rather than Evangelical Anglicanism.

Alfred and Kezia paid or contributed over the years to the cost of extensions to the college buildings including a new dining hall and chapel. The shy Kezia came only once from Wimbledon to visit the college, but Alfred called in regularly to make sure that all was still as it should be, particularly from a doctrinal point of view. In January 1876 – a few months before his daughter Nora's infatuation with Fred Grace at Downend – Alfred was present at the opening of the "beautiful Gothic apartment" which was the new dining hall, sitting at the high table with the Bishop of Melbourne, the Hon. Francis Maude (no doubt an ancestor of the present-day politician) and other interested dignitaries, in the presence of some 70 ordained ex-students of the college. After dinner some 130 ladies and gentlemen joined the company in the (presumably rather large) drawing-room to hear speeches. When it came to Alfred's turn he said he wished as Founder to state clearly the principles which the college had been founded to teach and uphold, adding with emphasis:

I hope you will all be witness that this college is a distinctly Protestant and Evangelical college, and that if any clergymen should go out from this institution who do not preach and teach distinctively Protestant and Evangelical doctrines, they are no true members of our society. . . [Our graduates] should take as their own the College motto *Vae mihi si non evangelizavero* [Woe to me if I do not evangelize].

Meanwhile Kezia, at home in Wimbledon, took a special interest in missionary work, among other things funding former students' expeditions to places as far afield as Siberia, Chinese Turkestan and Tibet. By 1883 the number of ordained former students had risen to nearly 300. Alfred, as we have seen already holder of the Mangotsfield and Downend advowsons, decided to buy as many more as possible with the dual purpose of ensuring jobs for his graduates and keeping some control over them after they had gone out into the world. He was nothing if not paternalistic. A portrait painted of him at 53 shows a gentle if thin-lipped face with piercing eyes. He liked to call his graduates his "Highbury sons" or his "lambs" and in old age, instead of putting his feet up, he constantly travelled the country visiting them in their parishes and often thrusting banknotes into the hands those who were short of money. Eventually he came to own 23 livings and created a foundation known as the "Peaché Trustees" to look after them. His wife died in 1890 and some years later he moved to Wimbledon to be near Kezia. When Kezia died in 1899 he was over 80, and a friend who was with him on the day of her funeral recalled later that he looked from his home in Wimbledon, across his father's park to the roof of Belvedere House showing above the top of the hill, and remarked how thankful he was that, instead of

living there and spending thousands a year on himself, he had done as he had. "I tried to live upon little, and gave away the rest." He died the next year, four months after the birth of his son Clement Kemble's first child, Barbara.

Alfred's influence and the influence of his father's money live on today. Downend parish church is still Evangelical and the appointment of its vicar together with other livings is still controlled by the Peaché Trustees, who now have their headquarters in Birmingham. Alfred's college still exists too, though not in its old form. After his death money got tight and, by 1913, it became necessary to sell off part of the Highbury grounds. The buyer was Arsenal Football Club, originally founded in Woolwich by men working at Woolwich Arsenal, and now looking for a permanent home. Over the years the Highbury football stadium needed to expand and the college continued to need money, so Arsenal FC eventually bought up the whole estate and leased the buildings back to the college. This was so severely damaged by fire in 1946 that, under its then principal Dr Donald Coggan (later Archbishop of Canterbury), staff and students were forced to move first to Lingfield in Surrey then to Northwood, Middlesex, eventually finding a permanent home at Bramcote near Nottingham as part of Nottingham University; the present principal is Canon Christina Baxter.

Next time I shall look at the very different world facing the family after the age of the empire-builders James Courthope and Alfred was over.

Silvester Mazzarella

Acknowledgements

I owe a lot to the invariably courteous and patient archivists and librarians of the following institutions: the City of London Guildhall Library, the City of Westminster Archives Centre; the John Harvard Library, Southwark; the Lambeth Minet Archive and Library; the Morden Library; the Islington Central Library; the Bromley Library; the Bristol Central Library; the Bristol Record Office; the Canterbury Cathedral Library; the Canterbury City Library; and the Templeman Library at the University of Kent. Also my thanks go to the staff of St John's Church, Waterloo Road; Christ Church, Downend; the Downend Folk House; the Probate Office; and the Family Record Centre. I acknowledge the publications of the Downend Local History Society; the Mangotsfield website; and Simon Rae's monumental *W G Grace A Life* (1998) in which I first learned of Nora Peaché's diary. The problem of contaminated drinking water in early industrial London is discussed at length in Stephen Halliday's *The Great Stink of London* (1999). The story of Alfred Peaché and the London College of Divinity is largely drawn from the 1913 jubilee number of the college magazine, *The Johnian*, published on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the college.

My thanks go too to Rhian Davies for her unfailing support and encouragement, and to Anne Murch who introduced me to Downend.

"Earthly paradise"

On the trail of the Coverntons in Canada

It all began with Patrick Covernton's CD, *Guardian Angels*, which you may remember reading about in the reviews column of *Newsletter 65*. Patrick's parents, Chas and Rita, had sent a copy over from Canada for the Society's information, and Malcolm Rudland brought it along to the next Committee. He also read from their covering letter and it suddenly occurred to me that Chas – whose grandfather Percy Covernton was Covie's brother and Warlock's uncle – might just have some old family photos which would benefit the "life in pictures". It seemed worth a stamp, so I begged the address.

And so began a correspondence which would eventually develop into a five-week tour of Canada last summer. Chas and Rita replied by return and put me in touch with Penny Underwood, *née* Covernton, and her husband Les in Victoria, British Columbia. They also sent copies of the most beautiful photos from Percy Covernton's album: pictures of Warlock's maternal forebears and their home in nineteenth-century Knighton. Then, coincidentally, came an invitation to speak about Warlock at the 69th Welsh National *Cymanfa Ganu*, the extraordinary, peripatetic festival which is attended by 3,000 Welsh-North American delegates each year and which was due to visit Ottawa's downtown Conference Centre in September. "Well, if you're coming so far as Ottawa, why don't you come and see us, too?" chimed the Coverntons. The Great Canadian Adventure was underway.

I actually met Chas and Rita for the first time in Knighton on 11th May 2000. They had always wanted to visit the Welsh family seat and, before we were ever in touch, had already booked this, their first foreign trip, as a fortieth wedding anniversary celebration. They were travelling with an Edmonton-based cousin and his wife, Bob and Anne Spero, and agreed it would be fun to rendez-vous at 3 Wylcwm Street, the handsome Georgian town house which used to belong to Dr Charles Covernton (Chas and Bob's great-grandfather and Warlock's grandfather). I acted as fixer with Dr Brian Davies, the retired and much-loved Knighton GP who has lived there since the 1950s, and he generously gave us the run of his whole property, including the garden and out-buildings. We crowded into his library of rare medical books to imagine how it would have looked as Dr Covernton's nineteenth-century consulting-room. We also inspected the stall where Covernton stabled the horse on which he depended to attend his farthest-flung patients in the mid-Wales hills.

After lunch at *The George and Dragon* and a tour of the town which revealed, to Chas's amazement, that the clock tower and other landmarks had scarcely altered since his Victorian photos were taken, we went up to St Edward's Churchyard to see the family tomb. The plot had been specially cleared and cleaned thanks to Dr Davies, and it was the first time I'd been able to get a proper look at the inscriptions about Dr Covernton, his wife Jane and their eldest son, Charles

junior. Inside the church we paused before the two small stained-glass windows in the baptistry which are dedicated to the memory of Jane and Dr Covernton's mother, Elizabeth (more of her anon). Chas then suggested an impromptu visit to Cefn-Bryntalch. The light was holding and Dr Davies was game so we formed a two-car convoy and strapped ourselves in for what proved to be a rollercoaster of a route "over the top" from Radnorshire into Montgomeryshire. During a brief photo-opportunity beside the best-preserved stretch of Offa's Dyke, I wondered whether we were the most recent travellers on that ever-narrowing stretch of "road" since the King of Mercia's eighth-century taskforce, the equestrian Dr Covernton and his motor-biking grandson.

By the time we pulled up at the Hall it was belting with rain and Eric Nelson was just leaving for the vet with a sick dog. Still, he was charmingly unfazed by the appearance of six unannounced visitors in his drive and invited us to guide our own tour. Everyone admired the famous three-gabled façade and the abundant wisteria, cascading over the window of the drawing-room where Warlock used to compose. Chas also enjoyed playing the organ in Llandyssil Church, the same instrument on which Warlock gave his fabled performance of *Tŷn-y-bottel* in 1921.¹ We gate-crashed my parents' house for tea, and then it was time to say goodbye until our next meeting the other side of the ocean.

The first leg of my Canadian trip was hosted by Les and Penny Underwood. We met at Vancouver's striking modern airport on 15th August and, several ferry crossings up the western seaboard later, I emerged from jetlag to find myself at the cluster of Covernton family properties which fronts the beach at Roberts Creek. These decks overlooking the Pacific Ocean on British Columbia's famous "Sunshine Coast" had to be the best Warlock research location since Achill Island. The research information was pretty impressive, too, especially when Penny's uncle and aunt, Carleton Covernton (b. 1914) and Mary O'Brian (b. 1919), recalled their separate stays with Covie at Cefn-Bryntalch during the 1930s.

Another topic of conversation was the Warlock biopic, *Voices from a Locked Room*. Les and Penny were particularly intrigued by this so we decided to rent a copy once we were back at their home in Victoria. Imagine our glee at finding it remaindered to buy in a branch of Blockbuster Video! It was worth shelling out CAN \$12 just for the sleeve notes: "Based on a true story . . . this dark and compelling psychological thriller explores the territory between love, genius and madness" (discuss); and "**** – *Vancouver Sun*" (is that a bleep or a star rating?) Anyway, I now have an unexpurgated NTSC version of the film for those who are interested in seeing **everything** which Jeremy Northam brought to the title rôle. Dare I suggest another viewing in *The Antelope*?

I learned a great deal by examining Les and Penny's extensive family history collection, including souvenirs of their visits to *Las Dos Hermanas*, the Covernton ranch on the Pampas at Villa Canas, near Rosario, Argentina. I also met many other relatives during a splendid week's hospitality and, before my

onward flight to Manitoba on 23rd August, arranged to have a cup of tea with Penny's cousin, Jane Covernton, at the Starbucks in Vancouver Airport. Jane has had a varied career in TV as reporter, producer and line editor, and published her first novel *Raindrops and Smoke* in 1998. She corresponded briefly with Nigel Heseltine in 1994 – she felt he had sought her out as another writer in the family – and turned up a copy of the Cecil Gray biography in the research collections of Vancouver Library. Jane was impressed by Warlock's stubbornness and his deliberate avoidance of opportunities. We agreed that, if you have a particular focus in life, it can be more important to turn offers down than to accept. Jane was also struck by how many Coverntons have been – and continue to become – doctors, writers and traveller-pioneers. Her sister has nursed for six years at Nunavut in the Arctic Circle, while a namesake "cousin" – daughter of four generations of doctors in Australia – is a children's book editor in Adelaide.

I divided my week in Manitoba between the Winnipeg home of PWS member Dr Keith Davies Jones and the town of Morris, about an hour's drive to the south, where I was the guest of Chas and Rita Covernton. The flat Prairies and vast skies took some getting used to after the vertiginous landscapes of British Columbia, and I spent several days hallucinating mountains on the western horizon. The weather was also atrocious for much of the time, but no matter. The sumptuous burgundy leather interior of Chas's vintage Brougham was so spacious and comfortable that it was like sightseeing from a sofa on wheels. And the sights were very interesting indeed: fields of sunflowers and winter wheat, barley and flax; and Friesens of Altona, the mammoth printing complex where many of the *Harry Potter* books have been produced. On my first afternoon, we visited the ruined house which Percy Covernton built on the east bank of the Red River beyond Morris in 1910. Oak, ash and elm trees were felled to produce productive land, and Chas's father, Geoff (1897-1954), acquired two adjacent lots in 1933, running the whole estate from 1941. Chas also farmed there until his retirement in 1999 and now leases the land out to neighbours. He had to abandon the old homestead and move into town when the area became too prone to flooding.

Chas's grandfather, Percy Heath Covernton (1869-1941), was the sixth of Dr Charles's seven children, born in the Knighton family home and educated privately at Monmouth School. Chas has inherited the Mythe Cup – a quasi-Oriental confection in silver and lacquerwork with handles simulating bamboo and decorative rondels of birds and insects – which he clinched representing his School in the coxed fours at Tewkesbury Regatta on 1st August 1887. Prior to his marriage to Morvina ("Vene") Parker at Brandon, Manitoba, on 26th May 1896, Chas can link him with Wolseley in the neighbouring Prairie province of Saskatchewan, where he operated a Massey-Harris farm machinery dealership and broke 145 acres of land, 1890-2. A joint portrait with a Jack Russell terrier, taken at Norristown, Pennsylvania, also indicates that he spent some time in the USA. But the

inscription in Percy's photo album – a present from his brother-in-law, Rev. Walter Richings, on 29th March 1889 – suggests that he emigrated before his twentieth birthday, and that this magnificent collection of portraits and panoramas was a parting gift to remind him of the life he left behind.

It was wonderful to see the original photos and their source: a black, leather-bound album called *The Shakespeare* with illustrated dividers depicting scenes from *Falstaff*, *King Lear* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Some of the portraits are dated 1885-9, and most are "first known" images: Dr Charles; a very young-looking Covie, taken in the south of France during her marriage to Arnold Heseltine; and numerous studies of her brothers and sisters. There is a particularly handsome photo of Walter Richings and his wife Connie, the uncle and aunt with whom Warlock often claimed sanctuary at Whitney-on-Wye when the strictures of mother's régime at Cefn-Bryntalch became insupportable. There are also several shots of Minnie Covernton, who seems to have followed Percy from Knighton to Wolseley; married Frank Hockin, a Mountie who was secretary-treasurer of Wolseley Curling Club, in April 1896; and was buried in Chapel Lawn Memorial Gardens, Winnipeg, in May 1958. Her only son, Warlock's cousin Eric Raymond Hockin (1897-1918), was killed in action in France in November 1918.

Once Percy Covernton had established his wife and five children in Manitoba from October 1910, he became a pillar of community life: a trustee and secretary-treasurer of Armour School District from 1913, and a Councillor for the Rural Municipality of Morris, 1923-6. He was also a Sapper in the Canadian Engineers from November 1916, seeing active service in Britain and France before being discharged in 1919. His second son, Richard Heath ("Mick") Covernton (1899-1972), had enlisted the previous January, and Chas thinks Percy joined up to keep an eye on him. Each man clearly lied about his age to get in: Mick was 16 while his father was 46. Two snaps show Percy on leave at Cefn-Bryntalch with his toddler great-nephew Nigel Heseltine; and Nigel brought his youngest son, Richard, to holiday with the Coverntons in Morris in 1994.

After my own week's stay with Chas and Rita, Keith and his family, I felt I'd been on a thoroughly enjoyable holiday, too. For the sake of appearances, I did two hours' proper work at the Ottawa *Cymanfa*, 31st August-3rd September; and then it was on to Simcoe, Ontario, the handsome town where James Covernton, Warlock's great-grandfather, emigrated from Berkshire in June 1836. Founded as Birdtown in 1795, the settlement was renamed in honour of John Graves Simcoe,² first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada (now Ontario), in 1829. I followed much the same route as James, his second wife, Elizabeth, and their two young sons would have taken to travel the 76 miles south-west from Toronto via Brantford. Mercifully, their "apology for a stage-coach" and "hired open waggon"³ have long since been superseded by VIA Rail and bus.

Situated seven miles north of Lake Erie, Simcoe is the capital of a fertile agricultural region which has

been vaunted since the seventeenth century as "the earthly paradise of Canada".⁴ A mid nineteenth-century Census Enumerator described the excellent conditions which attracted James Covernton and his fellow pioneers:

The Country surrounding the Town is not exceeded in Western Canada for the the richness and fertility of its Soil, the pleasing and varied characteristics of its Scenery, the number and excellence of its storing of water, its admirable roads, and high state of Cultivation of its farms.⁵

White-painted huts dominate today's landscape and are used for drying tobacco, the most lucrative local crop. Simcoe itself is also lovely to look at with beautifully-kept, heritage homes and riverside parkland right in the downtown area.

Simcoe was the county town of Norfolk until reorganisation brought it within the new district of Haldimand-Norfolk in 1974; and "Glorious Old Norfolk" is still a popular tag to convey "pride in pioneer beginnings".⁶ By searching the Internet before leaving home I'd tracked the Norfolk County Archives to Simcoe's Eva Brook Donly Museum, and this proved to be the most impressive local history resource I'd ever seen. The catalogue was idiosyncratic – interpretation of its card-index abbreviations seemed to depend on the folk memory of Museum volunteers – but this rather added to the charm. People were also tirelessly enthusiastic and obliging: on my last afternoon, for instance, everyone in the reading room, members of staff and public alike, worked with and for me to ensure that I covered all outstanding references. Indeed, one researcher was kind enough to chase up several leads after I'd left. The procedure for obtaining copies of Canadian death certificates is convoluted and time-consuming and, basically, I'd run out of time. This was when Sharon Parfitt insisted on taking down all the necessary details, sent off for the paperwork at her own expense, kept in touch by e-mail until it arrived at her home address, and then posted it on to me. This information underpins several paragraphs later on; and I salute her. Major finds during my week at the Museum included eight more photos of Covernton family members. There were also three paintings of Dryden Farm, James Covernton's home, by the noted local water-colourist, W Edgar Cantelon. Situated four miles outside Simcoe and one mile north-east of Vittoria, the main section of this historic frame house was put up by Rev. Daniel Freeman, first Methodist preacher in the London District of Norfolk County, circa 1800. The walls were made of brick and a mud and pea straw stucco, lathed vertically between, and the building was gradually extended by Dryden's second and third owners – William Mercer Wilson, first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada,⁷ and Covernton himself – to include servants' quarters, schoolrooms, a nursery and a bathroom extension. Covernton also felt a need to install nine extra fireplaces, 1848-50.⁸

The first Census entry for Dryden, dated 1848, shows a household of seven: James, Elizabeth and their two

sons, two farm labourers and a domestic servant. It also confirms "Squire" Covernton⁹ as one of the biggest landowners in the Township of Charlotteville with holdings of 475 acres, 80 under tillage and 395 of wood or wild land. Warlock's great-grandfather had a high profile in community affairs, particularly education. He is described variously as District Superintendent, Secretary to the Board of Instruction for Norfolk County, and first Inspector of District Schools. Covernton was also Chairman of the Quarter Sessions, Secretary of the Norfolk Agricultural Society, and a campaigner for the extension to the Port Dover railroad via Vittoria. Chas and Rita Covernton have a copy portrait of James labelled "Grandfather Covernton, Toledo, Ohio", but no Simcoe source could cast additional light on this American connection.

Although Dryden was demolished sometime between 1910 and 1919, it was regarded in its heyday as "one of Norfolk's finest rural homes".¹⁰ Museum staff agreed that it would have been a particularly significant and substantial house by local standards; and it was clearly large enough to incorporate a bedroom-surgery for James's brother, Dr Charles William Covernton, from 1836. Once Dr Covernton married Frances Elizabeth ("Fanny") Williams on 28th January 1841, he announced, with effect from 5th February, that he had:

now removed to his own residence, situated about half a mile beyond the end of the village of Vittoria, immediately opposite the house of Mr Edwin Potts, Charlotteville.¹¹

The house which Covernton built to accommodate his burgeoning practice as well as his new bride was unnamed, but became known as *Aberfoyle* during the tenure of its second owner, Andrew McInnes, from 1848. It still stands:

on the road west of Vittoria, exactly one mile from the town pump in the village. The mile-long stretch was used as a race track for horses and buggies by the sporting community in the early days... There was a small grove of trees, mostly oak, surrounding the house, which stood on a knoll. A row of shady maple trees grew on each side of the road in front of the house, and still add much to the setting.¹²

Dr Covernton's third Canadian home was a house on the corner of Colborne and Union Streets in central Simcoe. According to the 1851 Census, his *ménage* had now expanded to include two medical students and three Irish servants as well as five of his nine children. In 1866, he was joined briefly in practice by his eldest son, Dr William Hutchins Covernton ("Toronto University, late acting Assistant Surgeon, United States Military Hospitals"),¹³ before the latter went off to Argentina and founded the south American branch of the dynasty with ten children of his own. The Coverntons with whom I stayed in British Columbia are also descended from Dr Charles W Covernton of Simcoe. His grandson Dr Charles Frederick Covernton (1879-1958), a Vancouver paediatrician, bought the first family property at Roberts Creek as a summer retreat in 1919.

The Eva Brook Donly Museum holds many auto-

graph documents of Covernton family members – letters, indentures, even bills for medical services rendered – and its nineteenth-century newspaper collection is a particular goldmine of information. The most surprising discoveries were two “Letters from the East”, penned from Constantinople by “our respected young townsman, Dr Charles J Covernton”¹⁴ to his uncle, Dr Charles W Covernton, and his younger brother, Alfred Hennel Covernton. I mentioned in a previous article about Warlock’s grandfather that his early career had taken him on a troop-ship to the Crimea.¹⁵ His letter of 8th February 1855 confirms a meeting with that campaign’s legendary “Lady with the Lamp”:

A party of us crossed over into the Asiatic suburb of Scutari yesterday, to go over the Hospital there. Everything connected with this establishment is evidently conducted in as good a manner as can possibly be expected. . . It is an immense building, well ventilated and warmed, the beds and clothing are clean and comfortable. The men speak well of the treatment they receive. I praise Miss Nightingale and her nurses very highly for their exertions on their behalf . . . There is a report to-day that there has been another battle, at, or near to Balaklava, so that it will soon be full again.¹⁶

Two Simcoe papers also reported the death of Warlock’s grandfather in 1890, stressing his Norfolk County connections and referring to the “lengthy and most eulogistic obituary notices of Dr Covernton”¹⁷ which had already appeared in the British press.

Although his country practice rooted him in Wales for 30 years from 1860, Charles Covernton did go back to Canada at least once when he had to unravel his father’s personal and financial difficulties in 1876. The Eva Brook Donly Museum – goodness knows how – has a thick file of documents about the ins and outs of all this. James Covernton was having trouble with a tenant, Richard Bowden; he was paying heavy interest on loans; and owed tradesmen for yet more alterations to Dryden (clearly a fireplace too far). Although Charles Covernton raised £500 from Messrs S & H Harris of 41 Mansell Street, London, E. – “to liquidate all my father’s indebtedness in Canada . . . to free him from the sharks that have so long played upon him”¹⁸ – he feared this would have to be secured “by a second mortgage of all his freehold estate in Charlotteville”.¹⁹ His brother Alfred suggested, “When things improve again in Canada I should think it would be better to sell off the land except the Dryden Farm and the Beaver Dam”,²⁰ but forwarded another £150,²¹ just to be on the safe side. Eight years later, once the crisis had abated, Charles Covernton sent his 24-year-old eldest daughter out to visit her Canadian relatives. Minnie Heseltine recorded in her *Letts Diary* for Thursday, 9th October 1884, that “Covie sailed for Quebec, Arnold, Edie & Fidge seeing her off from Liverpool”,²² and jotted her contact details in the memoranda section:

E. Cov.
Simcoe
Norfolk Co.
Ontario
Canada W.²³

Covie surely stayed with her grandfather James Covernton at Dryden Farm. Nigel Heseltine also states that she spent time “with the Toronto Coverntons”,²⁴ presumably at the home of her great-uncle, Dr Charles W Covernton, who removed from Simcoe to 47 Gould Street, Toronto, following his appointment to a Professorship at Trinity College.

Had things gone differently at this point, Warlock might never have been born. Nigel Heseltine detected a “strongly romantic streak” in his grandmother, “grand-daughter of a Canadian pioneer, whose father had emigrated in reverse”; and Covie does seem to have come close to securing “the pioneering husband who might have satisfied her energies”.²⁵ But her Ontario romance was ill-starred:

Fred, the man she fell in love with, died of “galloping TB”, and a diary of 1885 records her chagrin.²⁶

Nigel Heseltine gives no more detail, but I have a hunch that Covie’s lost love was Frederick George (“Fred”) Covernton, eighth of the nine children of Dr Charles W Covernton, and a first cousin to her father. A photo of Fred at the Eva Brook Donly Museum²⁷ shows an extremely young-looking young man, clean-shaven and sharply dressed with cravat and watch-chain, and a rather haunted expression on his long, thin face. His death certificate states that he was a 30-year-old commercial traveller who lingered for three weeks before succumbing to typhoid fever on 21st September 1885. As well as a standard announcement in its “Births, Marriages and Deaths” column, *The Norfolk Reformer* ran this additional sentence in “Personals”:

The many friends of Mr Fred. Covernton were deeply pained to hear of his sudden death in Toronto on Monday evening of typhoid fever.²⁸

1885 turned out to be a terrible year for the Coverntons in Canada. Fred’s mother – and Covie’s great aunt – Fanny had already fallen prey to cerebral apoplexy on 4th July, aged 65.²⁹ Then the family patriarch, 80-year-old James Covernton, died of dysentery at Dryden on 19th October.³⁰ *The British Canadian* elaborated:

Within the past few days two old and well known residents of Charlotteville have died – James Covernton, Esq., on [sic] his 81st year – who, for many years, was a Justice of the Peace; who always tried to settle difficulties among neighbors [sic] and make them friends; who never encouraged litigation to make costs. He, for a long time, was an active educationist; the inspector of the schools in that township, and a member of the County Board of Examiners. As a farmer he took a deep interest in all agricultural matters and in his earlier years was a prominent member of the agricultural societies of his township and the county. A zealous and devout member of the Episcopal Church, a kindly neighbor, and a firm friend, he had no enemies. The sorrowing relatives have the sympathy of the entire community in their bereavement.³¹

Covie, James’s sorrowing granddaughter, sailed back to the UK to become the second wife of Arnold

Heseltine on 10th October 1889. He had been the lone man in her Canadian send-off party, and his cushy London milieu was just about as far as you could get from blazing a trail in Norfolk County.

There was just enough time on my last morning in Ontario to seek out James Covernton's grave at St John's Anglican Church, Woodhouse District, about five miles south of Simcoe on the road towards Port Dover and Lake Erie. The church door was locked, but the cleaner turned up by chance and let me in to have a look around. There are three memorial plaques to Coverntons: one to Charles McKenzie Covernton, another ill-fated son of Dr Charles W. Covernton, who died in October 1870, aged 20, before completing his medical training at McGill and Harvard Universities; one to Sarah Covernton, *née* Williams, James's third wife, who died at Montréal in February 1896, aged 72; and one to James himself. This carries much the same information as his grey stone cross and plinth in the churchyard beyond:

In loving memory of
their father
James Covernton Esq
of "Dryden"
Died Oct. 19th 1885
Aged 80 Years
"Blessed are the pure in heart
For they shall see God:
Matt. v. 9."³²

The cross is at one end of a corridor of graves which commemorate the Covernton, Williams and Lowndes families who intermarried in Simcoe. Sarah Covernton seems not to have been brought back from Montréal after her death, probably because her predecessor, Mrs James Covernton II, already lay buried next to their mutual husband. The demise of Elizabeth Covernton, *née* Craggs, in August 1849 was reported in a local publication called *The Church*:

D[ied]. On Tuesday the 28th ultimo, after three days illness, Elizabeth the most exemplary and attached wife of James Covernton [sic], Charlotteville. (33)

The inscription on her rose-chiselled headstone is also graciously worded:

Sacred to the memory of
Elizabeth
The beloved and most estimable
wife of
James Covernton Esqr.
who departed this life August 28
1849

She was – but words are wanting to say what
Think what a wife should be and she was that
Secure from every mortal care
By Sin and Sorrow vex'd no more.³⁴

Finding this lovely old grave brought my Canadian quest full circle. For Warlock's great-grandmother Elizabeth is the same lady commemorated by one of the baptistry windows in Knighton Church; and an inscription on her photograph at the Eva Brook Donly Museum reveals that she was "34 years Organist at old St John's".³⁵ So I must apologize that

I joked too soon about an absence of musical genes in Warlock's forebears.³⁶ There wasn't just music, it seems, there was organ-playing, too. Well, you know what people say: the blood will out.

Rhian Davies

Notes

- 1 See Cecil Gray, *Peter Warlock: The Life of Philip Heseltine*, London, 1934, pp. 243-4.
- 2 Born at Cotterstock, Northamptonshire, Simcoe (1752-1806) died at Exeter, where he is commemorated by a memorial in the Cathedral, and is buried at Honiton, Devon.
- 3 F G Davis, "A record of the descendants of James Covernton who was buried at Sevenoaks, Kent, on 25 July 1755", typescript, 1946, p. 10.
- 4 *De Galinée's Journal*, 1670, cited in display material at the Eva Brook Donly Museum, Simcoe.
- 5 Henry G Fuller, "Observations of a Census Taker", April 1852, n.p. (Eva Brook Donly Museum, Simcoe, uncatalogued).
- 6 Display material at the Eva Brook Donly Museum, Simcoe.
- 7 Born in Scotland, Wilson (1813-75) came out to Canada in 1832 and was prominent in Simcoe's political, military, legal and municipal affairs. His monumental tomb, near the Covernton family graves at St John's Church, Woodhouse, is a favourite place of pilgrimage for Masons.
- 8 Assessment Rolls, Charlotteville, 1848-50, n.p. (Eva Brook Donly Museum, Simcoe, uncatalogued).
- 9 There are many references to "Squire Covington" [sic] in *The Vittoria Bicentennial Committee*, eds., *Vittoria 1796-1998: 200 Years of Memories*, Simcoe, 1996.
- 10 W Edgar Cantelon, Jotting on the reverse of his watercolour of Dryden (Eva Brook Donly Museum, Simcoe, catalogue no. X973.463.10 #64).
- 11 *The Norfolk Observer and Talbot District General Advertiser*, 13th February 1841, p. 3.
- 12 Ina M Aitken, "Aberfoyle", typescript, 1973, p. 1 (Larry Sinden Collection, Vittoria, Ontario).
- 13 *The Norfolk Reformer*, 13th December 1866, p. 1.
- 14 *The Norfolk Messenger*, 29th March 1855, p. 2.
- (15) See RD, "The most popular man in Knighton", *PWS Newsletter*, 66 (Spring 2000), p. 7.
- (16) *The Norfolk Messenger*, 29th March 1855, p. 2. When Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) took 38 nurses out to the Crimea, 1854-6, it was the first time women had been allowed to do such work by the British government.
- 17 *The Norfolk Reformer*, 8th May 1890, p. 3.
- 18 Charles J. Covernton to Messrs Tisdale & Co, 29 July 1876 (Eva Brook Donly Museum, Simcoe, MS OC 1053). Covernton's brother Alfred seems to have worked for Messrs Harris in London.
- 19 *ibid.*

- 20 Alfred Covernton to Messrs Tisdale & Co, 31 August 1876 (Eva Brook Donly Museum, Simcoe, MS OC 1053).
- 21 Alfred Covernton to Messrs Tisdale & Co, 14 March 1877 (Eva Brook Donly Museum, Simcoe, MS OC 1053).
- 22 Ian Hilton Collection, Great Warley, Essex.
- 23 *ibid.*
- 24 Nigel Heseltine, *Capriol for Mother*, London, 1992, p. 39.
- 25 *ibid.*, p. 128.
- 26 *ibid.*, p. 39.
- 27 Portrait photograph of the "Youngest son of Dr Covernton - Simcoe" (Eva Brook Donly Museum, Simcoe, catalogue no. CS 110ph).
- 28 *The Norfolk Reformer*, 24th September 1885, p. 3.
- 29 Copy of death certificate (RD Collection).
- 30 *ibid.*
- 31 *The British Canadian*, 21st October 1885, p. 2.
- 32 "Their father" reads curiously, but may have been a neutral phrase chosen to embrace all James's children - two sons, Charles and Alfred, by Elizabeth, and two daughters, Harriet Sophia and Amy Florence, by Sarah - without having to mention his several marriages.
- 33 *The Church*, 13th September 1849, n.p.
- 34 The start of the third line of this quatrain is illegible and the rest of the inscription is invisible because the whole stone has sunk into the ground over time.
- 35 W Edgar Cantelon, Jotting on a portrait photograph of Elizabeth Covernton (Eva Brook Donly Museum catalogue no. CW0 66ph). There have been three earlier buildings on the site of St John's, Woodhouse, and Warlock's great-grandmother would have been organist at the second, log-built church which was destroyed by fire in 1875.
- (36) See RD, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

In conclusion I should like to extend my sincere thanks to all my Canadian hosts who made this article possible.

OBITUARY

George Vincent

[George Vincent's cremation took place on 25th August, 2000, at Wheely, Essex. Jack Sharpe, who wrote this, was too ill to attend, so it was read by his son, Paul Sharpe.]

All of us will remember George Vincent in our own way. Something about him will lodge in our memory and, from time to time, some little incident will remind us of him. But whatever it is, I am sure that all of us will remember George as a good friend and a true gentleman.

George was a cultured and a well educated man. His travels around the world gave him a knowledge and understanding of ways of life greatly different from

our own. He did not travel with a closed mind. Rather he learned about the customs of other people and relished seeing their artistic and architectural heritage. He read their literature and learned their languages, and even into his 80s George was still learning to speak Danish. Yet, despite his extensive travelling, George remained very much an Englishman at heart.

And which two sports could be more English than cricket and croquet - both of which he loved? George had been a keen cricketer in his earlier days and I wonder if, since he settled in Essex, he felt a conflict of loyalty between his new county and Gloucestershire where he grew up. Perhaps by supporting two counties whose fortunes have ebbed and flowed he was always able to be supporting a winning team.

Many of us have never seen George wielding a cricket bat but few of us will not have had our croquet ball driven into the bushes by him on his croquet lawn. Yet somehow George was able to defeat you with a charm that left you not feeling beaten. It is a rare individual who has that natural grace.

Defeat, of course, was usually sweetened by tea and bread and honey on the lawn and, although the honey did not come from The Old Rectory, how many of us have not run the gauntlet of the bees that nested over the front door of his home?

The Old Rectory, Little Oakley: what address could be more English, the focus of village life? And the life of the village was important to George. He represented the village as a councillor, took a keen interest in local history and, even whilst he was unable to be in his home, he followed the proposals for closing Little Oakley school.

One of George's other great loves was music and, while I don't think his radio received Radio One, he enjoyed listening to a wide variety of orchestral and vocal works. Yet somehow it also seems fitting for such an English man that George's love of music centred on English composers. He was particularly drawn to the work of Malcolm Arnold and Delius, and was a member of the Elgar Society and the Peter Warlock Society, even hosting their Annual General Meeting [on 1st June 1991].

I have already said that we will remember George in our own way and I know he would not wish me to close on a sombre note; that was not his way. Instead I will share with you one memory of mine which will be triggered whenever I see a slice of stale bread. You may not be aware that George actually enjoyed eating stale bread and even tried to buy it from a baker's in Colchester. They told him they were not permitted to sell stale bread which, to a man who spent many years living in India must have seemed strange. He shared this problem with me and I suggested that buying fresh bread and leaving it for a few days would do the trick. George conceded that this was the only solution but still argued that bread stale from the baker's would taste better than home-staled bread.

Well, that was George, a real individual. Yes, and a true gentleman and a good friend to us all. We shall miss him greatly.

LETTERS

A letter from Jelka

[As a very large footnote to Emma Marshall's review of Dr Barry Smith's book of the Warlock-Delius correspondence, I reproduce part of a letter I received from Barry last November and, more to the point, the text of another letter which he explains himself. - Ed.]

After the [Elgar Choral] Festival [in Worcester] I had a brief, two-day holiday in Cornwall - I wanted a nostalgic visit to the place where my family came from (Fowey - Polruan and St Blazey Gate) and that was very rewarding. I had forgotten how lovely Cornwall is and it was a very moving experience to find my great-grandparents' grave. Then I went north to Zennor - what amazing scenery. I think I found the remains of the bungalow on the top of Zennor Hill (what a climb up a very narrow, muddy path through scratchy gorse) - very weird though - as I reached the top and saw the now-decaying cottage for the first time, a gust of wind (or was it a ghostly hand?!) plucked the contact lens from my left eye! Fortunately I wear disposable ones and had a supply with me.

One of the less exciting moments was when someone spoke to me at the opening of the new Elgar centre and told me he had a letter from Jelka Delius to PW. It had been given to him by Bernard van Dieren jnr. and so didn't make it to the BL. I now have a photocopy of it and am including a transcript - maybe you would consider printing it in the next *PWS Newsletter* as a kind of addendum to the Delius/Warlock correspondence. It would be very frustrating if more letters given (sold?) by BvD jnr. before the BL acquired the two collections suddenly begin surfacing. I fear there is no way of knowing if there are any more letters in private collections and, as yet, unknown. Oh, well, as I have said before, no piece of writing can ever hope to be complete.

[Would any member of our extensive Cornish Chapter care to follow up Barry's visit to Zennor? And - I hardly dare ask - does anybody know of any other PW/IFD letters? - Ed.]

Greze-sur-Loing
29. 10. [19]30

Dear Phil,

Today the O.U. Press has sent Fred your new arrangement of 'On hearing' for piano duet. Fenby being in Scarborough there is no one who could play it properly to Fred. But Fred said, that if you thought it an improvement on the other one, you made before, he was sure it could go to the printing as it stands. I told him how you had put in the orch. instruments in red; he seemed very pleased. I am therefore returning it at once to H. Foss.

May Harrison with Bax is bringing out Fred's new [Third] Violin Sonata on Nov 6th at Wigmore Hall, and I hope you will go and hear it.

The other day we heard Beecham conducting in Leipsic at the Gewandhaus. He was in splendid form.* And really, Phil, when one hears him conduct after all those others it is quite wonderfully full of Life and I cannot help thinking that he will push thro' his affairs of the League finally too.

Your last letter made us to anxious about him, but you'll see: it will be alright. It seems quite wise to amalgamate with the C.G.S, and so absorb a rival. I can believe that Austin is unpractical in affairs, but I can hardly think that he could do anything not straight. So I hope in my heart that your views were too pessimistic. However, please let us hear any future developments, it will never go any further. We both love Beecham and admire him with all our hearts and we cannot bear to think of him having so much trouble always.

I was very sorry about your rich uncle being so mean to you in his will. If you could only get a little something out of the final sale of Uncle Joe. As far as I can see his wife is too worn out and ill to do anything and all will remain as it is till after her death. Then, surely you might come in. He owned those houses, you know.

The O.U.P. have been most decent and bigminded about Fred's contracts. Excuse hasty scribble and please tear up.

Affly yrs

Jelka

*He gave Brigg Fair most poetically. The acoustic seemed glorious. There was such a peaceful calm, real mastery. It came thro' remarkably well, only fading away sometimes.

A letter from BvD

[In addition to the letter reproduced above, Dr Barry Smith has discovered the following one from Bernard van Dieren to Colin Taylor. It was found in the back of Taylor's copy of the Gray biography.]

Maida Vale 6144

35A St. George's Road
West Hampstead, N.W.6

12 April 1931

My Dear Colin Taylor,

I need hardly tell you how much you have been in my thoughts these last few months. When reading through Philip's papers, I was reminded of you every moment. Your manuscripts had a place of honour and the tone of your correspondence showed you were one of the few for whom he deeply cared.

Had I known your present address I would have written before, but I was not sure.

You can understand what I have suffered – I loved Philip like a brother, a son and a friend all in one. And I admired and loved him for his brilliant gifts. He became ever more dissatisfied with life, and it was impossible to help him at all. Never have I been able to convince him that praise or encouragement was more than a somewhat ironic kindness. He was inclined to regard all I ever said to him as a laborious edifice of charitable deception and I could not make him believe differently. The disharmony between his ideals and life as it revealed itself to him became so unbearable that to endure existence was an ever present pain to him. I was with him until past midnight of his last day, and felt terribly unhappy about him. But when I left I am certain he had no thought of anything irrevocable. As far as it is possible to reconstruct it all, he must early the next morning in an imperative return of his depression have acted automatically.

It was a most terrible shock, and God only knows how I lived through all the subsequent horrors of the inquest and the clashes of the complications of friends' and family's interests that converged on me. He had several years ago made me his sole heir and executor and the family solicitor informed me of this a few minutes before I had to go into the witness box!

And while I suffered under the irreparable loss of so dear a friend and the terrible tragedy of his whole life, I have had to fight tooth and nail against opposing interests – because only by accepting his will could I deal with his papers and the artistic side of the matter, and it has brought me much misery ever since. Still I don't like to think how it all might have gone if he had been intestate, so I had no choice.

After these four months I have not even finished sorting documents of all kinds, and it will take me quite a while yet before I can have them so arranged that one may begin classifying them for any future use.

(The main reason for my published appeal was that there were some important things missing which I have not so far discovered. One of them was a manuscript score of Delius about which he is very worried.) Then the Oxford University Press want to publish a memoir which they have asked me to edit, and I am having much difficulty with that. I have invited Gray, Lambert, Moeran [Edwin] Evans and Terry (who did not reply) to contribute to it. I wonder whether you would write me an article about his early years? A couple of thousand words?

Cecil Gray intends to write a full biography later on and I mean the earlier publication to be more in the nature of a tribute by those who knew him personally, or had some strong interest in common with him (like Terry with regard to Tudor music for instance). Evans with whom Philip was quite friendly again, wrote a really moving notice after his death, one of the very best that appeared, and therefore I asked him to enlarge on it for the memoir. Hughes also wrote a really moving column in the D[aily] T[elegraph]. The others of course were intimates. Would you consider sending me something? And

naturally I should very much appreciate it if you would lend me the letters you mention in your cable.

It was most kind of you to suggest it. When I have copied anything that could be used I shall return the originals to you. And not only of course can you tell us so much about his early beginnings but I should be happy if you could add to it a tribute to his later work which I presume you know pretty fully. There were many exquisite things and technically he had reached an amazing degree of perfection as for instance in the full score of 'Capriol' which is admirably constructed and most beautifully limned. And the orchestration is crystal clear economic and telling and both lovely and powerful in sound. It is all done with so little apparent effort that it makes one feel all the more unhappy that he gained no confidence but retained his exaggerated notion of the ease with which composers may work. I am sure that we might have expected very much more from him still. It is all to heartbreaking.

But at the same time, for those who watched the whole development of his life, the end seemed inevitable. Whatever might have been done for him could only have been done very many years ago, and I fear that just those who had the power to direct his later development could not have been expected to have any notion that they were not perhaps doing the best for him. You, who have known him so young and to whom he was so devoted must have understood that as well as I could and will know how hopeless it is when there occurs such a discord of individual dispositions and formidable conventions.

Do tell me about yourself and your work when you write. I am very much looking forward to having news from you again.

All my best wishes!

Yours most sincerely

Bernard van Dieren

Do you happen to know what happened to Philip's transcription or paraphrase of a Bach chorale?

Up Heseltine's Passage

The Editor writes:

Since Daniel P Gillingwater wrote his piece *Up Heseltine's Passage* for the last edition of the Newsletter the wires have been hot to melting point with claim and counter-claim. I exaggerate. There has been some correspondence, it is true, mostly between Lionel Carley and Felix Aprahamian, but it all does indicate that a few discrepancies on the part of Mr Gillingwater, occasional *lapsi styli* in his otherwise deathless prose, must be dealt with. I am therefore grateful to Messrs Carley and Aprahamian for elucidations pursuant to the aforementioned outpouring.

To begin with, Lionel Carley points out that Eric Fenby was in Grez-sur-Loing by the autumn of 1928 and that, when Barjansky was there in 1929, Eric Fenby must have accompanied him. However the Cello sonata was actually first given in public in 1918, more than 10 years before the private performance at Grez that Danny reports as preceding its concert *première*.

Dr Carley would also like it to be put on record that there were references to himself that demand correction. First of all he was not "resplendent in tweeds" principally because he possesses no garments in this fabric but, also, because to use his own words, he hasn't been "resplendent" in anything . . . for years". Secondly, although he joined Mr Gillingwater's party *chez* Dominique Martin du Gard, he was elsewhere in Grez beforehand. Finally, he wishes to make it clear that he was not alone up Heseltine's Passage; Mr Gillingwater was up it simultaneously. I trust this puts matters straight.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Friday 27th April 2001 at 7pm. Admission free. National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2: Harriet Fraser (soprano) Dominique Wong-Min (piano): A recital of English songs, including Purcell, Rubbra, Vaughan Williams, and Warlock's *Sleep, Jillian of Berry, Pretty ring time, and Rest sweet nymphs*.

Saturday 5th May 2001 at 12 noon: AGM in Gloucester at *The College Arms*. The landlady, Amanda Rimes, will have Uley Brewery's Old Spot Prize Ale on tap. See back page for more details.

Saturday 5th May 2001: midnight on Crickley Hill: between the Warlock and Gurney talks and walks the PWS will host a re-enactment of Warlock's ride down Crickley Hill. (See *The Music of Peter Warlock* by Dr Ian Copley p.23). Meet at the sign "Welcome to *The Air Balloon - Good Food and Ales*" by the junction of A417 and A436 at 11.45pm; the landlady, Maria Blackman, has granted use of her car park. Motor-bikes will be hired from Fowlers of Cheltenham and changing facilities will be available. More details are in Rab Noolas's historical survey of the event on p. 21 of this Newsletter.

Sunday 19th August 2001 from 12.30pm to 2.30pm Gloucester Three Choirs Festival: in the Festival Marquee, the Warlock Society will host a lunch. The Uley Brewery has kindly donated an unlimited supply of its Old Spot Prize Ale, for which the Campaign for Real Ale has just awarded this beer their Gloucestershire Beer of the Year 2001. After lunch, our Chairman, Dr Brian Collins will talk on "The choral music of Peter Warlock, sacred or profane?" Delius's *A mass of life* will be performed in the Cathedral that evening. Tickets £10. (See enclosed Three Choirs Festival brochure but note: postal booking only before 20th July from The Three Choirs Festival Office, 9 College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LX. Telephone bookings from 24th July: 01452 312990).

Monday 20th August 2001 at 2.30pm Gloucester Three Choirs Festival in the Guildhall Arts Centre: *Peter Warlock: Dewin Cerdd* (Music Wizard), Dr Rhian Davies's film for S4C on the life and work of our charismatic composer. Notice in the Festival Brochure that this is billed after Ken Russell's 1962 Delius epic *A Song of Summer*. Tickets £5 (unreserved). (Postal Booking only before 20th July from The Three Choirs Festival Office, 9 College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LX. Telephone bookings from 24th July: 01452 312990). However after PWS negotiation with the Three Choirs management, *Dewin Cerdd* will come before the Russell film to enable those who wish to hear Julie Kennard's recital in St Mary de Lode - which includes six PW songs - to do so.

Thursday 4th October 2001 at 7.30pm: Memorial concert to John Bishop at St James Norland Church, London W11.

Saturday 27th October 2001 at 7.30pm: 107th Birthday Concert for Peter Warlock in the Weston Gallery of the Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3ER. The programme will include solo and choral songs as well as transcriptions.

NEWSBRIEFS

The obituary of John Bishop reminded me that I persuaded John Bishop to act in a film I made (writes Julian Nott). It wasn't a big part, but I rather think he relished having a few minutes before the movie cameras. We filmed at a church near Ladbroke Grove and we asked the church for a local organist to provide background music. John duly turned up rather to my surprise because I knew his name from the Warlock Society. I then had the idea of using him as an actor. In the story, a batty old woman (the actress Edna Dore from *EastEnders* and Mike Leigh fame) has to interrupt his organ playing at a wedding, throw him off the organ stool, so she can play *Chopsticks* to the horror of assembled guests. John was game for this even though it was a surprise request, and he did it all excellently, indeed, with some panache. He came to see the film and I think he enjoyed his bit. (If anybody wants to see the film and John doing his stuff, the film is released in UK cinemas on 25th May, and is called *Weak at Denise*.)

A third of the current March 2001, *Fiftieth Anniversary Issue of the Elgar Society Journal*, Vol 12. No 1, is devoted to Warlock and Elgar. Dr Barry Smith has extracted every Warlockian reference to Elgar and woven them into perspective, comparing the two composers' outlook on life, and their attitudes to Delius and other English composers. The article includes the full texts of Warlock's writings on Elgar: his *Elgar and the Symphony, Elgar and Delius*, and his *Daily Telegraph* article on *Elgar's New Suite for Brass Band*, as well as his programme notes for the City of Birmingham Orchestra on *Cockaigne* and the *Second Symphony*.

Peter Warlock Society AGM 2001

followed by a joint meeting with

The Ivor Gurney Society

Saturday 5th May

The PWS AGM in *The College Arms* (upper room) at noon

The College Arms is at 4 St Mary's Street, Gloucester, on the NE corner of the north end of Pitt Street (Tel. 01452 501278). There are Saturday parking restrictions in the area until 6pm with a 2-hour limit on meters but cars marked "Peter Warlock Society" may be parked in the Kings' School Paddock on Gouda Way. (From the College Arms turn right into Gouda Way then immediately right after the traffic lights.)

Light refreshments will be available in St Mary de Lode Church, Gloucester
from 12.45-2.00pm

2.30pm at St Mary de Lode Church

A recital of songs by Warlock, Gurney and Jeffreys given by

Ian Partridge (tenor) and Jennifer Partridge (piano)

the recital will be followed by a break for refreshments

3.45pm Dr Trevor Hold will speak on

TWO ASPECTS OF SLEEP

Dr Lynn Parker will talk on

A BINDING FIGURE

(the connections between Wilfred Gibson and Ivor Gurney)

The full cost of the day will be £15 to cover refreshments,
the recital and both talks

The afternoon session will finish at approx. 5.30pm. It is hoped that those members staying on in Gloucester will make their own arrangements for supper.

Sunday 6th May

Subject to the current restrictions imposed by the foot-and-mouth outbreak, arrangements are in hand for a walk, probably in and around Cranham Woods, led by Gordon Otterwell. The likely cost will be £2, more if lunch is included. The number of walkers will be restricted to 30, first come, first served.

Please indicate on the form below if you wish to participate but do not send money for this yet.

Please send me ___ tickets @ £15 each for the recital & talks at St Mary de Lode, Gloucester on Saturday 5th May

I wish to reserve ___ places on the walk to be held on Sunday 6th May

If a pub lunch is arranged after the walk, please tick if you require one

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

Please send your cheque (payable to **The Ivor Gurney Society**) to John Phillips, 7 Carlsgate, Hay-on-Wye, Hereford HR3 5BS