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'In The Swim':  
The Life and Musical Achievements of  
William Gillies Whittaker 1876-1944

MARY CHRISTINE BORTHWICK

BA Dunelm., LRAM, LTCL

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
within the University of Durham

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Department of Music

2007



11 JUN 2008

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M C Borthwick  
Durham University.  
13 July 2007

*To my husband, Tony Borthwick,  
my children Sophia, Ben, Julian, and Peter, and to my mother Hannab Isabella Laing  
for their infinite patience and humour as I followed the 'Whittaker Trail'.  
And to Jeremy and Alison Dibble for their enduring friendship and loyal support  
with love and thanks.*

*Also to Caroline Woodard, granddaughter of William Gillies Whittaker*

*In memory of Mary Pollitzer and her son Jonathan Pollitzer,  
who both died in 2003,  
in the hope that I am able to fulfil their wishes and...*

'... draw aside the curtain from this infinitely complicated character and allow him to reveal himself in truth.

I see WG, forever solitary in the distance – work surrounding him on all sides – and never without troublesome clouds above.'

Letter from Mary Pollitzer, written on her father's birthday,  
23 July 2001

## ABSTRACT

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'In the Swim': The Life and Musical Achievements of William Gillies Whittaker

MARY CHRISTINE BORTHWICK

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy within the University of Durham 2007.

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William Gillies Whittaker (1876-1944) was one of Britain's most influential musicians during the first half of the twentieth century. Though he is now sadly neglected, during his highly productive life his name was ubiquitous in almost every branch of indigenous music-making. This study seeks to explore in depth a musical life and achievement which has until now remained cursory in detail and lacking in critical appraisal.

Since little is known of Whittaker's life, the first two chapters attempt to redress this balance by charting the direction in which Whittaker, an autodidact, forged his career. A man strongly linked with the North East of England (his unpublished *Autobiography of a Provincial Musician* accentuates this association), he did much to elevate music in Newcastle and the surrounding regions whether through folk-song arranging, school teaching, choir training, concert promotion, playing the organ, composing and as an academic lecturer. Before World War One, a period which might be described as his apprenticeship, he remained a provincial figure, but with the formation of the Newcastle Bach Choir in 1915, he was able to project his seminal interests in the music of J. S. Bach and the works of his contemporary compatriots. A close friendship with Holst and other modern British composers located the Bach Choir at the cutting edge of new music and performances of Bach's choral works (which led to the posthumous publication of his pioneering *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian: Sacred and Secular* in 1959) established his reputation on a national scale. Finding Newcastle too restrictive he eventually secured a newly-created appointment as Principal of the Scottish National Academy of Music and Professor of Music at Glasgow University, an appointment which, though productive, proved disappointing and embittering.

As a national figure, galvanised by his work for the Bach Choir (see Chapter Three), Whittaker was engaged as the General Editor for Oxford University Press's newly-founded Educational Music Department through which his name became known in schools and choirs throughout the country and gave rise to germane publications such as *The Oxford Orchestral Series*, *Oxford Songs from the Old Masters* and *The Clarendon Songbooks* (See Chapters Four and Five). This and his position as a member of three Musical Advisory Committees for the newly inaugurated BBC allowed him to 'network' and befriend a large number of fellow musicians throughout the country, and his chauvinism on behalf of British music between the wars was well known for its pugnacity and single-mindedness, as can be measured by his leadership of the ISM in 1934 and the international exposure of his choral masterpiece *Psalm 139* in Frankfurt.

One further important facet of Whittaker's career was composition, for which he had no formal training. Encouragement from Holst, who was not only a major stylistic influence but also believed in his abilities, gave rise to creative work, much of it shaped by practical circumstance. For schools there were simple unison and part-songs; for larger choruses there were fertile folksong arrangements and more extended canvases such as *The Lyke-Wake Dirge*, *The Coelestial Sphere* and *Psalm 139*; he was also prolific in the province of solo songs (where he was arguably most successful) and during his period at Glasgow he produced a substantial amount of *Gebrauchsmusik*; and he was a Carnegie winner for his piano quintet *Among the Northumbrian Hills*. Chapter Six seeks to explore the range of Whittaker's mainly unpublished output which acted as a process of catharsis during the many periods he spent abroad in Australia, America and mainland Europe.

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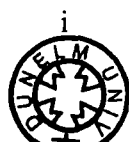
## ABBREVIATIONS AND SIGLA

### LIBRARY SIGLA

Archives of OUP	<i>GB-Ooup</i>
Blandford House Archive, Tyne and Wear Archive Service	<i>GB-NEbb</i>
BBC Written Archive, Caversham	<i>GB-BBC</i>
Cornell University Music Library (Ithaca)	<i>US-I</i>
Gateshead Public Library	<i>GB-NEgb</i>
Library of Central Newcastle High School	<i>GB-NEch</i>
Library of Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society	<i>GB-NElp</i>
Music Department, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	<i>GB-NEmd</i>
Music Division, National Library and Archives, Ottawa	<i>CA-On</i>
Newcastle Central Library (Local Studies Department)	<i>GB-NEcl</i>
Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society	<i>GB-NElp</i>
Scottish Music Centre	<i>GB-Gsm</i>
South Shields Public Library	<i>GB-SSl</i>
University of Edinburgh Library, Special Collections	<i>GB-Er</i>
University of Glasgow, Library Archive Services, Thurso Street	<i>GB-Guth</i>
University of Glasgow Library	<i>GB-Gu</i>
University of Liverpool Library	<i>GB-LVll</i>
University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Robinson Library	<i>GB-NEul</i>
University of St Andrews	<i>GB-SA</i>

### ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
ACCS	Armstrong College Choral Society
ACOS	Armstrong College Orchestral Society
BC	Newcastle-upon-Tyne Bach Choir
BMS	British Music Society
CNHS	Central Newcastle High School for Girls
CU	Newcastle and Gateshead Choral Union
DUJ	Durham University Journal
FSSSS	Folk Song Sight Singing Series
GFS	Girls' Friendly Society
ISM	Incorporated Society of Musicians
ISCM	International Society of Contemporary Music
KH	Kings' Hall
MAC	BBC Music Advisory Committee
NEMT	North of England Musical Tournament
NLPS	Newcastle-upon-Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society
NPO	Newcastle Philharmonic Orchestra
NSO	Newcastle Symphony Orchestra
OCSS	Oxford Choral Songs Series
OCSOM	Oxford Choral Songs of the Old Masters
OFSS	Oxford Folk Song Series
OOS	Oxford Orchestral Series
OUP	Oxford University Press
RCM	Royal College of Music
SMAC	BBC Scottish Advisory Committee



SMC	Scottish Music Centre
SNAM	Scottish National Academy of Music
SPGS	St. Paul's Girls' School
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
WGW	William Gillies Whittaker

Whittaker's autobiographical writings, held at the Scottish Music Archive	Abbreviation
<i>Autobiography of a Provincial Musician</i>	Aut I
Chapter 1	
Chapter 2 (from page 11)	Aut II
Chapter 3 (from page 20)	Aut III
Chapter 4 (from page 1) 1894-1898	Aut IV
<i>First years in the musical profession</i>	
Chapter 5 (First page and headings missing)	Aut V
1903-1914 (actually to 1918)	Aut VI
1918-1923	Aut VII
<i>Round the World</i> July 1923-January 1924	Aut VIII
Diary of trip to Australia	Aut IX
Summer 1926-1929	Aut X
<i>Glasgow 1930-September 1938</i> (first part)	Aut XI
<i>Musical Life in Glasgow</i>	Aut XII
<i>Second part of Glasgow portion of Autobiography</i> Holidays (from page 8)	Aut XIII
<i>Glasgow 1930-September 1938</i> (second part)	Aut XIV
Draft of 3 <sup>rd</sup> part of Glasgow section of Autobiography: <i>Semi-Retirement: October 1938-Easter 1939.</i>	Aut XV
<i>First Complete Retirement October 1941-1942</i>	Aut XVI

#### EXTRA MATERIAL: *'Diary Summer 1933'*

Throughout the text, 'Aut' signifies that the passage is from the autobiographical writings of WGW held at the SMC in Glasgow (*Autobiography of a Provincial Musician*). Another diary (holiday 1933, in Spain) has not been included in the table.

When referring to letters in Michael Short's edition of the Holst/Whittaker correspondence, for reasons of clarity, I have retained Short's format in the footnotes, as many of the letters have been dated by Short, his deductions being indicated by means of employing square brackets.

In CHAPTER THREE which concerns the Newcastle Bach Choir, unless otherwise stated, the press cuttings quoted are from the choir scrapbooks in the Music Department of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Many are un-dated and many unidentified. This is also true of many of the cuttings in John Whittaker's scrapbook.

The scrapbook of John Whittaker and the letters of WGW to his daughter Clarrie, are at present in the writer's possession, the latter documents are on loan to the writer, through the kindness of the charitable beneficiaries of the estate of Mary and Jonathan Pollitzer, for the purposes of my research.

## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

W G Whittaker's 'The Keel Row' and 'Ma Bonny Lad', heard on frequently-broadcast Kathleen Ferrier recordings were a familiar part of my childhood, though I had no idea of the arranger's identity. At school however, Whittaker's *Oxford Choral Songs* provided the mainstay of our singing lessons and I became familiar with the General Editor's name, 'W. Gillies Whittaker', in italics, at the top of each copy. Whittaker's song selection for the series was broad and interesting, my favourite for a time being the two-part 'Beauty Lately', from Handel's *Alcina*. Soon four-part songs such as 'Bobby Shaftoe' brought even greater pleasure. At the same time, I also got to know Whittaker's *North Countrie Ballads, Songs & Pipe-Tunes*, hearing them sung in a rich local dialect and warm baritone voice by Denis Weatherley, an enthusiastic exponent of the songs, his accompanist, Eleanor, being my piano teacher. While at College, I came across Whittaker's two Bach Cantata volumes, finding their detailed descriptions fascinating. As a teacher, the merits of Whittaker's extensive *Clarendon Song Book Series* in the classroom soon became evident, principally because of the satisfaction of having to hand a comprehensive range of good songs with interesting and inventive musical accompaniments, appealing to the children in sturdy and artistic volumes. I next discovered that Whittaker's *Sixty Songs for Little Children* was an indispensable resource for my own children's use and I too grew fond of 'Pancake Tuesday' and 'Dandelion Clocks', with their pleasing (if now old-fashioned) texts by Frances B. Wood set by Whittaker to Polish folk tunes. On 27 November 1976, I played in the orchestra accompanying the Newcastle Bach Choir (founded by Whittaker in 1915) in a Whittaker Centenary Concert in the King's Hall, University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Percy Lovell and Chalmers Burns (the latter once Whittaker's assistant in the Music Department at Glasgow University) conducted a programme comprising Bach's Magnificat, his *Christmas Oratorio*, and

Whittaker's *Psalm CXXXIX*. It was a most impressive event. For all these reasons, Professor Greer's suggestion in 1998 that I might like to explore Whittaker's life and achievements as a topic for research attracted me from the outset, particularly because by that date Whittaker's fame had firmly sunk into obscurity as his publications went out of print, his style dated and the memory of his magnetic personality faded. To many he was no longer even a name and the task seemed vast.

The 1976 Centenary was inspired and co-ordinated by Mary Pollitzer, Whittaker's younger daughter and her son Jonathan, a young literary journalist and apple farmer who was passionately interested in his grandfather's work. The event was successful in saving Whittaker's name from obscurity, depositories for Whittaker's books and manuscripts being set up in Glasgow, a list of his works compiled, recordings made (almost the only ones available), and a valuable examination carried out into some of Whittaker's unpublished works. Moreover, springing from a conversation at the Bach Choir concert between Jonathan Pollitzer and Peter Middleton, a new British Music Society [BMS] sprang up, a circumstance which would have delighted Whittaker. Nevertheless, the Centenary was largely a frustrating exercise in that it actually revealed little that was new about the musician. Even Mary Pollitzer and her sister Clarrie realised the shortcomings of some of the inaccurate history that was being presented, but since their help to those providing the musical insight into Whittaker's legacy, namely Nicholas Webber and Michael Kennedy, was unfortunately hampered by a desire to hide various family problems, their task was not easy. In limiting available information and striving instead to put forward a romantic image of Whittaker a restless, musical Viking raider, the family had ensured that what knowledge turned up at the time was largely a reworking of the small entries available in Grove. There was indeed little detailed biographical research.

In writing this thesis I have borne in mind this lack of knowledge and set out to unearth as many relevant details as are needed to construct a *true* picture of the subject. In view of the sheer range of Whittaker's musical attainments and the extraordinary

influence he exerted in his lifetime, it seemed imperative to provide a proper account of Whittaker's saturated life. Being in the fortunate position of living near Newcastle I could, unlike Webber, spend a great deal of time in exploring all local depositories of material, such as concert programmes, the Bach Choir archive at Newcastle University, that of the Literary & Philosophical Society, local directories, and newspaper archives, before travelling further afield to Glasgow, Little Corby, Hexham, and eventually Kent where I interviewed Mary and Jonathan Pollitzer. I also was fortunate in knowing members of the Bach Choir in Newcastle and met a chorister who had known Whittaker. Webber's Centenary articles within the Anniversary Brochure formed in fact a very able summary of the copious information provided in John Whittaker's scrapbook and, in what was probably a limited time at his disposal before the event in 1976, probably the best descriptions that could be achieved. However, lacking the in-depth research that I have carried out over a number of years, they failed to create a picture of the real musician. Finding the human side of Whittaker was I felt essential if he were to appear as anything more than a caricature of himself.

I uncovered three major family issues which I feel had a profound effect upon Whittaker's personality, and consider that they explain much about him. Firstly, both Whittaker's parents had both been without parents themselves in childhood (John Whittaker was illegitimate and was cared for by his grandparents in a remote country district and Mary Jane was an orphan, brought up by an aunt and uncle in Hexham) and consequently both showered their son with an intensity of love and attention which in some ways could have been something of a burden to the recipient (Mary Pollitzer indicated that her grandmother's close relationship with her son affected his marriage adversely). Secondly, the family suffered the grievous loss in 1887 of Whittaker's only sibling at that time, his seven year old younger brother, Harry (who died from severe complications, two months after contracting rheumatic fever). Whittaker's addiction to work as a solution to feelings of sadness seems to date from this time and he may also

have regarded his consequent attainments as a way of ameliorating his parent's distress. Thirdly, the fact that Whittaker's marriage broke down at an early stage (he married Clara Watkins in 1903, after a prolonged courtship, but before his musical horizons had widened, perhaps explained his subsequent characteristically frenetic life-style which may have been a method of overcoming a persistent underlying unhappiness. Certainly his wish to escape from his marriage probably influenced his decision to accept the rather uncongenial post at the Scottish National Academy in Glasgow, a choice which inevitably separated him geographically from so many of his friends.

I explored in detail the musical environment in which Whittaker grew up, the musical figures in the city who influenced him and the work of the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society, the intellectual heart of the city, which attracted a host of distinguished lecturers to speak at Miscellaneous lectures there during Whittaker's formative years, and the way in which the Society directly brought about the foundation of a University College in Newcastle and continued to support it, even offering lecture rooms during the First World War. I also discovered Whittaker's associations with national movements such as the Musical League, the BMS (he was local representative) and the ISM, and his close association with figures other than Holst who helped further his career, including J B Clark, Percy Scholes- a pioneering music educationalist of the time with whose beliefs and methods he had much in common, Percy Grainger, Arnold Dolmetsch, Cecil Sharp, Percy Buck, Hubert Foss, Edmund Fellowes, Edward Dent and many others. I also was able to make a much more detailed study of Whittaker's work with his Newcastle Bach Choir and follow his personal commitment to perform all of Bach's Cantatas in his lifetime. I have discovered in consequence that, far from fitting Webber's description as being the eccentric son of a Quaker railway clerk (John Whittaker was a Methodist, and chief cashier at a pottery factory) and a 'tireless Northumbrian figure' who had sprung miraculously from the 'lowly confines of his Wesleyan Methodist School ('where of music there was little') to become a 'creative

genius',<sup>1</sup> Whittaker was a great musical personality of his time, formed by his rich experiences and the music of his Newcastle environment, with a firm basis of Sol-fa established at his local school, whose passion for music replaced almost any deep personal relationships in his life, but who, surrounded with many friends, achieved a great deal in almost every area in which he was musically active.

For all these reasons I am presenting two substantial biographical chapters, needed to provide a *proper perspective* to his achievements and, since Whittaker's greatest contribution was probably his creation of the Newcastle Bach Choir (which led ultimately to the writing of his seminal work on Bach's Church Cantatas), I have next provided a detailed chapter on the subject of the choir, examining Whittaker's work as a choral conductor of what was, after all, a local phenomenon, who despite distance from London, sought to perform the latest, and often the most difficult works, in British choral music, bringing many composers and musicians of national repute to the north to contribute, while always keeping Bach at the hub of his enthusiasm. This exploration, at a depth which the material undoubtedly merits, has never been carried out before.

Chapters Four and Five feed into Whittaker's work as a pedagogue, music editor, and professional musician. Whittaker sat on three Musical Advisory Committees (being on the central London committee at its first meeting in July 1925). He was also a scholar of early music at a time when this was not the norm among university teachers and this too is illuminated in all the chapters. I have devoted Chapter Six finally to Whittaker's work as a composer and arranger, highlighting his work in folk-song arrangements but also exploring his obvious talent for song composition, for though not a major figure as a composer, he was motivated to create music and was for his time a modernist not easily appreciated by his audiences. But the overarching aim of the thesis is to present

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<sup>1</sup> Webber, N, 'Facets of Whittaker-The Man' *Music and Musicians* (June 1977). [Reprinted in *W G Whittaker Centenary Festival Brochure & Complete Programme Guide* (London: Viking Publications, June 1977), 7-10.



Whittaker as the possessor of an outstanding and pioneering musical personality which enabled him to progress easily into almost every branch of musical life. He was, as he described on retirement from the BBC in 1941, always 'in the swim'.

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James Joseph  
and my father, John Edward Laing.

## CHAPTER ONE

### ‘In the Swim’: A Biographical Account of ‘WGW’ The Local Musician

‘You seem to have come into the world solely to make people happy. Well, after all, that’s only a roundabout way of saying you’re a musician isn’t it?’<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1 1876 – 1914 MUSICAL APPRENTICESHIP

William Gillies Whittaker [henceforward ‘WGW’] was born on 23 July 1876 at 17 Clarence Crescent, Newcastle upon Tyne, the first child and elder son of John Whittaker (b. 1849). John Whittaker was a native of Little Corby, Cumberland, illegitimate son of a farm worker’s daughter, and his wife Mary Jane (née) Gillies, an orphan from a well respected Hexham family, granddaughter of the Headmaster of Hexham Grammar School. The couple had met when John worked as chief bookings clerk for the railway at Hexham, but before his marriage he obtained work at a pottery factory in Newcastle (Malings Ford ‘B’) and, remaining at this place of work for fifty-seven years, ultimately rose to the position of chief cashier. The household was both well managed and literate; both parents were voracious readers, and in spite of their general impecuniousness, indulged in culture and politics; indeed, both parents were active participants in local Liberal politics and in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, attending the largest Methodist Church in Newcastle in Brunswick Place (known as the ‘Methodist Throne’).<sup>2</sup> His mother possessed a fine voice, and had been soloist in the choir at Trinity Methodist Church, Hexham, and it was she who, according to WGW, sowed the first seeds of music in their son.

After attending a private ‘Lady’s School’ (in a neighbour’s house) from the age of four (at the time of his brother’s birth), WGW attended a Wesleyan Methodist School in Clarence Street, Newcastle, an institution overseen by Dr John Rutherford, a visionary teacher, doctor and minister.<sup>3</sup> There WGW learned to read Tonic Sol-fa. In 1885, John Whittaker, a lover of military bands, bought WGW a piccolo, from which time he was ‘launched into music’.<sup>4</sup> In January 1888,

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<sup>1</sup> Holst, G., *Letters to W. G. Whittaker*, ed. Michael Short (University of Glasgow: Glasgow, 1974), No 55, Sunday [9 December 1917], 34.

<sup>2</sup> John Whittaker was a member of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society; Mary Jane Whittaker was Chairman of the local Women’s Liberal Association.

<sup>3</sup> Though located in a deprived area, the school provided WGW with a progressive educational regime as the school was one of the ‘Bath Lane’ group, founded by Rutherford.

<sup>4</sup> Aut I, 11.

WGW moved on to the School of Science and Art, also founded by Rutherford.<sup>5</sup> At this time music was essentially an extra-curricular activity in the form of local bands; but the formation of a school orchestra led WGW to take up the flute on which he became a skilled executant. Piano and organ lessons were taken with John Nicholson, former organist of Hexham Abbey, whose influence in opening up the world of music (and that of vegetarianism) to his young pupil was considerable, and he became a schoolboy organist at St. George's Presbyterian Church, Jesmond.<sup>6</sup> Though resolved to pursue a musical career, circumstances compelled WGW to follow his father's wishes to study science, when he gained a newly-founded Corporation Scholarship, attending the College of Physical Science in 1892, to study for a two year ASc. course in Science teaching, music being relegated to a spare time activity as he worked for his B.Mus. degree (a newly-established degree at Durham University) under Charles Bowes.

WGW regularly attended Newcastle concerts, hearing performances of opera (undertaken by Carl Rosa and Sir Augustus Harris), orchestral music and chamber music, featuring prominent performers such as Hans Richter, Charles Hallé, Charles Santley, Richard Strauss (who accompanied groups of his own songs) and Joachim. A red-letter day, described by WGW as a 'great awakening', was a visit by the Scottish Orchestra from Glasgow conducted by George Henschel. 'I had never heard such a body before,' WGW recounted, 'and the mental excitement caused by Beethoven No. 5 lasted many weeks.'<sup>7</sup> At the College of Physical Science he joined the College Choral Society, founded the previous year by Charles Sanford Terry, a young history lecturer who had arrived in Newcastle in 1890 (he had been a choirboy at St. Paul's under Stainer). Terry and WGW were to become close and lifelong friends, and later collaborators, and WGW always maintained that it was Terry who facilitated his musical career. WGW played the organ while the local virtuoso organist James Preston played pianoforte at the Society's first public concert in March 1895, a performance of Elgar's *The Banner of St George*, at the Grand Assembly Rooms, in the presence of Sir John Stainer, professor of Music at Oxford,

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<sup>5</sup> WGW's younger brother Harry tragically died aged 7 on 16 December of complications following Rheumatic Fever. The family moved to 31 Cardigan Terrace where WGW's sister Lily was born on 3 August, 1888.

<sup>6</sup> This position was probably obtained through the influence of his future father-in-law, Captain Thomas Watkins, a staunch Presbyterian, WGW having met his future wife as a youth at Nicholson's music club, run for his pupils.

<sup>7</sup> Aut I, 43.

and William McNaught (both H M Inspectors of Schools and Training Colleges).

WGW's potential scientific career foundered suddenly at the end of his second year when failure in maths left him both without a qualification or an assured career. 'I was not a bad student, evidently remarkably able, merely an indifferent one,' he remembered. WGW always valued his scientific training, claiming to have used the skills acquired in music performance, teaching, and lecturing, perhaps in an effort to rationalise the expenditure of his parents' money and devotion for two years' half-hearted application at a subject which failed to ignite his enthusiasms.<sup>8</sup> WGW also acknowledged the debt he felt to his College friend J W Bullerwell, an ardent music-lover, whose sociability and good nature had enriched his life and cultivated in him a more sympathetic attitude to others.<sup>9</sup>

Having failed in his academic career as a scientist, he set out to flourish as a musician, earning his living as an organist and throwing his energies into mastering the instrument by taking lessons from William Rea (Town Hall organist 1860-80, as fine, if not finer than Walter Parratt).<sup>10</sup> WGW's choice was enhanced by his appointment at St Paul's Presbyterian Church, South Shields in 1895, a post he held until 1909.<sup>11</sup> (The organ was an electronic touch Hope-Jones model, a pioneer instrument and direct forerunner of the Wurlitzer, but its early technology led to many breakdowns.) WGW's desire for self-improvement and for professional status was marked by his election to membership of the Incorporated Society of Musicians in 1897, in Webber's words 'making him a fully-fledged professional musician'.<sup>12</sup> WGW did not stop there, however. In the immediately ensuing years he successfully passed his ARCO (1898) and FRCO (1902) and supplicated for his BMus degree in 1902, though he twice had his exercise rejected before successfully receiving the degree. Having obtained his first degree, he immediately set about study for a doctorate at Durham under Dr. F G Huntley, former organist of Newcastle

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<sup>8</sup> Aut I, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Bullerwell, a physicist and later lecturer at the College of Physical Science, received his Durham degree in June 1897. He was secretary for over half a century for the Armstrong College Choral Society and was later described by Mary Pollitzer, in a letter to the writer of June 1999, as a life-long 'buddy' of her father.

<sup>10</sup> It was at this time that WGW manifested his conversion to vegetarianism.

<sup>11</sup> Preson adjudicated the appointment and henceforward, according to WGW, 'took a keen interest in my doings & became a good friend'. Aut IV, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Nicholas Webber, 'Facets of Whittaker-1: The Man' in *Music and Musicians*, June 1977.

Cathedral, 'a fine musician'.<sup>13</sup>

With Terry's departure for Aberdeen University, WGW seized his chance to fulfil his ambition to become a choral conductor, being appointed Instructor in Music at the College of Physical Science (later Armstrong College) in 1898. However, doubting his abilities as a singer and hence choir trainer, he took lessons from James Liddell (who immediately raised WGW's voice to a tenor), one of a circle of prominent Newcastle musicians, including James Preston, organist of St George's Jesmond, and his assistant, James B Clark.<sup>14</sup> WGW sang at first with Clark in the bass section of Gateshead Choral Society (founded by Preston on his appointment to St. George's in 1888); the energetic Clark was passionate about orchestral and choral music, being described by his daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Lutyens as 'an avid amateur musician, and their house a centre of local activity'.<sup>15</sup> Clark's over-riding ambition was to transform the Gateshead choir into one of national significance enabling him to organize a national festival in Newcastle (an aim probably stimulated by the activities locally of Nicholas Kilburn, a friend and supporter of Elgar, who conducted at Bishop Auckland, Middlesbrough, and Sunderland). Under Clark's influence, the Newcastle and Gateshead Choral Union (as it was renamed in 1899), expanded, attracting new members from the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society (NLPS) and the College of Physical Science. The Choral Union [henceforward CU] became a Newcastle organisation, giving performances of contemporary British choral works including Parry's *Job* and Stanford's *Revenge* (which Parry conducted). Clark, the CU's Principal Honorary Secretary from 1899, took WGW under his wing as they visited major British music festivals, singing at the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford in September 1900, with the Leeds contingent. For four years Clark maintained a cuttings book, reflecting his intense interest in the British musical scene.<sup>16</sup> WGW sang with the CU (rehearsing now at NLPS) for the next few years, finding the experience hugely beneficial, for Preston, an enthusiast for contemporary music, was 'a man of extraordinary ability'.<sup>17</sup> WGW writes: 'In all the years I heard him play the pianoforte & organ there was never a

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<sup>13</sup> Aut II, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Arthur Milner, a local organist, composer, and music teacher, wrote a typescript biography of James Preston, a Gateshead musician of prodigious ability, a pupil in London of Stainer and Lindsay Sloper: Typescript MS, GB-NEcl

<sup>15</sup> Harries, S & M, *A Pilgrim Soul, The Life and Work of Elisabeth Lutyens*, (Michael Joseph: London, 1989), 75.

<sup>16</sup> Scrapbook of press cutting on music collected by J B Clark between June 1898- June 1904, GB-NEcl.

<sup>17</sup> Aut IV, 6.

hesitation or a wrong note, his technique seemed unlimited.' Preston gave weekly organ recitals at St George's Church, Jesmond, and according to WGW: 'As a choral trainer he was superb...it was admirable training for a young man to sit under him & realise how earnest thought & patient teaching had built up one of the finest choral bodies in the country.'<sup>18</sup> WGW comments: 'Elgar was then a rising star and we took to each new work as it appeared.'<sup>19</sup> Clark now campaigned for a better concert hall to accommodate a choir and orchestra of 500 performers and an audience of 3,000, in efforts to attract Richter to conduct concerts with the Hallé Orchestra for the following season, his underlying desire to attract Elgar to conduct at an 'Elgar Festival' in Newcastle. His aspirations for the CU encompassed both orchestral and choral music. In October 1901, Richter conducted the Hallé in Elgar's new *Cockaigne* overture, the day before the orchestra accompanied the CU in Liszt's *Legend of St. Elizabeth*. WGW disliked the work, and now resigned, partly because of his disenchantment with the Liszt, and partly through pressure of work, notably as a musical journalist (albeit short-lived) for the *Newcastle Daily Leader*, 'the chief Liberal newspaper of the north'.<sup>20</sup>

WGW's interest in chamber music was fuelled by attending concerts given by the Joachim String Quartet at the Newcastle Chamber Music Society. WGW felt more and more drawn to the Tudors and Purcell, while Parry 'stood for something new & noble in British choral music'.<sup>21</sup> WGW knew no French music except Widor; Bach, however 'loomed larger and larger'.<sup>22</sup> Lectures at the NLPS by various distinguished musical personalities were of great value to him, such as three given in the 1898/99 season by Arnold Dolmetsch, 'Old Musical Instruments', 'English music of the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries' and 'The Music of Shakespeare'. These lectures not only launched Dolmetsch's career as an early music specialist, but helped to cement a close relationship with WGW who closely applied his methods to his own performances. The two always remained in contact, WGW possessing three Dolmetsch keyboard instruments at the time of his death. He also was a signatory of a letter to *The Times* in 1930, announcing the setting

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



up of *The Dolmetsch Foundation*, to provide scholarships for students of Dolmetsch's work, and extensions to the workshops at Haslemere.

Through extensive playing of chamber music and piano duets, and reading and studying innumerable text-books and scores, WGW sought to build 'a musical general knowledge', acknowledging that he was 'fortunate in his teachers', and grasping every opportunity for self-education that presented itself.<sup>23</sup> When attending holiday courses at the Virgil Practice Clavier school in London he met Kate Emil Behnke. Liddell having died, WGW asked Behnke for singing lessons, admiring her scientific approach to teaching which successfully taught him to diagnose and correct difficulties.

WGW's horizons broadened when Edgar Bainton (a student of Stanford and Franklin Taylor at the RCM, and winner of the Tagore medal) came to Newcastle in 1901, to teach pianoforte and composition at the Conservatoire of Music (founded in 1898 at Claremont Buildings, Barras Bridge).<sup>24</sup> Bainton was wary of 'MusBac's', according to WGW, and it was some time before the two made contact, eventually discovering a mutual interest in modern movements, 'especially British', striking up, musically, a close alliance.<sup>25</sup> WGW describes Bainton as 'a remarkable pianist, with a fine brain, whose skills of sight-reading, score-reading, and transposition were as second nature'.<sup>26</sup> Well-read, and sincere, Bainton was, however, the possessor of a rather caustic tongue. This fortunately caused no offence to WGW: 'One always knew where one stood with him.'<sup>27</sup> But, an ardent socialist, he influenced WGW's political views considerably: 'We scandalised the respectable cōteries of the city by going to Socialist clubs on Sunday nights; he lectured, and I helped with vocal illustrations. I sang Schönberg songs for him at a lecture, when that composer was beginning to arouse attention.'<sup>28</sup> WGW admired Bainton's transformation of a practice orchestra, the Newcastle Philharmonic Orchestra [henceforward NPO] into the first permanent orchestra in the town, organising weekly Sunday night concerts on

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<sup>23</sup> At the advice of his former schoolmaster, W D Oliver, WGW undertook examinations organised by the College of Tonic Sol-fa.

<sup>24</sup> Bainton, H, *Remembered on Waking*, (Currawong: Sydney, 1960), 18.

<sup>25</sup> Aut VI 17.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

a profit-sharing basis (excluding himself).<sup>29</sup> Bainton and WGW met at each other's houses to make music: 'We ploughed through all Wolf and many other things'.<sup>30</sup> Bainton probably urged WGW to 'take up' Coleridge-Taylor's tuneful *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* with the College Choral Society in 1902, as the composer had conducted the work with NPO in 1900.<sup>31</sup>

Bainton persuaded WGW to find a male singing teacher. As George Santley sang in the city both in 1901 and 1902, and was still well-known as a vocal teacher despite his great age, WGW approached him. Santley, the conservative, and WGW the progressive (whom Santley described as 'a dangerous red-cap musician') would, however, never see eye to eye.<sup>32</sup> Rejecting the songs of Wagner, Strauss and other contemporaries, Santley flew into a rage 'and roared a long diatribe at me, these people couldn't compose, that wasn't music.'<sup>33</sup> 'When his energy had spent itself, he looked fixedly at me: 'Now, young man from the north, that's settled.' Santley glowered at him told him he would never sing. But WGW, much respecting Santley's prowess, persuaded the old man to take him purely to help his comprehension of vocal technique.<sup>34</sup>

In July 1905, Bainton married his ex-student, Ethel Eales, moving to Stocksfield near Hexham where his daughter Guendolen was born in 1906 (another daughter, Helen was born in 1909, both becoming friends of WGW's daughters). In Stocksfield Bainton met the poet Wilfred Wilson Gibson who introduced him to the 'Georgian Poets', through Gordon Bottomley (who became another friend), and Robert Caverley Trevelyan (meeting Walter de la Mare, Lascelles Abercrombie, and Fuller-Maitland, music critic of *The Times* at Bottomley's house in the Lake District). Bainton started to compose songs prolifically, WGW following suit, setting many poems by Gibson. Bainton's move into Newcastle in 1907 allowed him to accept the conductorship of the Sacred Harmonic Society and thus perform works by friends, such as

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> *Hiawatha*, performed first at the RCM in October 1898, was given by Kilburn with Sunderland Philharmonic Society a few days later, and then conducted by the composer with Bainton's Newcastle Harmonic Society in 1900, 'The Death of Minnehaha' and 'Hiawatha's Departure' being performed by that choir in 1901.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>34</sup> WGW writes that Santley 'would never allow...the slightest deviation from strict tempo....He insisted on an absolutely pure & unbroken vocal line, the true bel canto', and also on 'pure straight tone, without any tremor whatsoever'. Ibid., 33.

Rutland Boughton's 'Folk Song Variations' (*The Berkshire Tragedy* [sic] and *King Arthur*)<sup>35</sup>, and Granville Bantock's eight part Choral Song *The Tyger*. (Boughton lectured to NLPS in 1910 on 'Wagner', and in 1911 on 'Music of the Future'.) Bainton gave WGW his only paid engagement as a tenor soloist in Bach's *Magnificat* with this choral society.<sup>36</sup>

WGW's career received valuable stimulation when in 1902 William Henry Hadow, Classics tutor of Worcester College, Oxford, began to forge links with Newcastle when he came to lecture at NLPS on 'Principles of Musical Style' followed by many subsequent lectures. He lectured on 'Beethoven' in 1903, 'Songs of Northumberland', and 'Musical scales and their influence in composition' in 1905, and 'Opera in the eighteenth century' in 1907. In 1908 Hadow spoke on 'Schubert's songs', which encouraged WGW to extend his collection. After gaining his BMus in 1890, Hadow, a lecturer for Stainer, took over the general editorship of the *The Oxford History of Music* in 1896. After the publication of his primer on *Sonata Form*, he lectured to NLPS in 1903 on *A Sonata of Beethoven*. His singing class collection, *Songs of the British Islands* published that year by Curwen, became later an essential part of WGW's teaching repertoire. All previous principals had been scientists and 'there was a fluttering in the dovecotes when an arts man took the helm', WGW writing of the reaction of the science staff: 'He disturbed their minds by using musical similes in his opening address.'<sup>37</sup>

On 27 July 1903 WGW married Clara Watkins, the thirteenth child of Captain Thomas Watkins, a ship owner from South Shields who had retired to Gateshead. The marriage took place at Park Terrace Presbyterian Church, Gateshead, following a long courtship. The two met in 1891 when WGW was fifteen at a music club run by John Nicholson, and according to Mary Pollitzer 'it was love at first sight', WGW allowing only Clara to accompany his flute playing.<sup>38</sup> He inspired absolute devotion in her. (Never a member of WGW's choirs, Clara sang with the newer Gateshead Vocal Society from 1900.) Tragically when congenital deafness manifested itself, following the birth of her first child in 1905, she could no longer sing. Though in reality a

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<sup>35</sup> Boughton's *The Berkshire Tragedy* was a setting of an old English ballad of that name which appears in various versions in Berkshire, Lancashire and Scandinavia, and was also known as *Binorrie*. In 1909 Boughton's setting of 'King Arthur had Three Sons' from the ballad was published in London by William Reeves.

<sup>36</sup> Bainton, H, 1960, 18.

<sup>37</sup> Aut VI, 27.

<sup>38</sup> Mary Pollitzer, letter to the writer, 23 May, 1998.

lover of the solitary life, WGW honoured his long term commitment, and wrote afterwards: 'The next summer, the degree being behind me, I married. Two girls [his children] arrived during the following years, Clara Margaret (always called Clarrie) & Mary Gillies.'<sup>39</sup> The marriage was not a success, though the couple stayed together until 1929. According to Mary Pollitzer, WGW's daughter, Clara had two rivals for WGW's affection, his love of music, which absorbed most of his time, and his close ties with his mother: 'his mother, as I have come in adulthood to perceive, could not bear to share his affection and attention, and was the major factor in the collapse of her son's marriage'.<sup>40</sup>

WGW now became a subscriber of the CU, attending concerts by Richter, Henry Wood, and in November 1904, the newly formed London Symphony Orchestra [LSO] conducted by Arthur Payne. Elgar's *Apostles* was conducted by Preston in January 1905, Cowen conducting the Scottish Orchestra in his *Indian Rhapsody* (composed for Hereford in 1903) and Elgar's new *In the South*. Mackenzie conducted his *The Dream of Jubal* in March 1905. The young amateur singer Ernest J Potts made an early solo appearance in this concert. A draper's son, born in Sunderland, he was remembered well by Lambert Large (a member of Newcastle BC): 'He had a good voice, but he was very conscious that he could sing well.'<sup>41</sup> From schooldays Potts was one of WGW's closest friends, sustaining a fruitful professional collaboration until Pott's death in 1936.<sup>42</sup> Walford Davies's new *Everyman* was performed by the CU with Gregory Hast (for whom the part was written) as Death, with Preston conducting, for Clark's extravagant spending had caused financial problems for the choir. After a performance of Cowen's *Ruth* with the Scottish Orchestra, conducted by the composer, and a further Richter orchestral concert, featuring Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Preston resigned in March 1906 to devote himself solely to organ playing. Richter conducted the Hallé next season, in an orchestral concert, and Henry Coward, hailed in 1899 as 'a genius Chorus-master' by the *Musical Times*, became conductor of the CU.<sup>43</sup> (In 1914 he wrote *Choral Technique and Interpretation*, Novello, 1914, dedicated to W G McNaught.)

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<sup>39</sup> Aut II, 11.

This note was a scribbled addition to WGW's typescript MS and is a rare reference to his wife.

<sup>40</sup> Mary Pollitzer, letter to the writer, 23 May 1998.

<sup>41</sup> Lambert Large, recorded interview with writer, 1998.

<sup>42</sup> In his *Autobiography*, WGW describes Potts as 'my old school-fellow, close friend & colleague', Aut XI, 60.

<sup>43</sup> McNaught, W G, 'Sir Henry Coward, November 26, 1849-June 10, 1944, *The Musical Times*, Vol. 85, No. 1217 (Jul., 1944), pp. 217 – 218.

Coward's considerable reputation followed his conductorship of the first Sheffield triennial Festival in 1896. He was known for observing every nuance and cultivating a 'large-scaled open tone' in his singers, delivering overwhelming power.<sup>44</sup> Coward conducted Sheffield Musical Union, Leeds Choral Union, Barnsley St. Cecilia society and, from 1901, the Huddersfield Choral Society of which wrote W L Wilmshurst at the time of the choir's centenary in 1936: 'he made a flexible instrument capable of producing every gradation of tone and musical colour'.<sup>45</sup> WGW said Coward was 'a man of the people, homely of speech, & had the burning zeal of a prophet', describing his rehearsals as 'white hot'.<sup>46</sup> Coward's commitments and distance from Newcastle caused Clark to ask WGW to deputize for Coward, and give a series of music classes for the singers. Despite Coward's dislike for modern music, Bainton conducted a first performance of his own work, *The Blessed Damsel*, in 1907. After a performance of Bach's Mass in B minor, and another Henry Wood orchestral concert with the Queen's Hall Orchestra, and second performance in Newcastle of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony conducted by Richter, Frederick Cliffe's *Ode to the North-East Wind* and Boughton's *Variations* were performed in 1909. In 1908 J B Clark, 'the prince of secretaries' according to Coward, retired from the CU 'to attend to his business'.<sup>47</sup> In fact Clark was helping to organise the Elgar festival, to be held the following year. His orchestral concerts were too expensive to continue and he had essential differences with Coward over repertoire.<sup>48</sup> Since Coward was in Canada with his Sheffield Choir, WGW conducted the November 1908 concert, now officially appointed assistant conductor (at a salary of £15 for taking half the rehearsals). WGW disliked the arrangement as Coward had 'grown tired of the monotony of dissecting separate parts and correcting wrong notes', leaving WGW to act as a task master whose practices were not nearly so enjoyable as Coward's.<sup>49</sup> But there were still exciting moments: In 1911, with Coward once again away, Parry conducted a second performance of the Mass in B minor, joking with WGW, who was playing continuo, over the

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<sup>44</sup> Scholes, P A, *The Mirror of Music 1844-1944, A century of Musical life in Britain as reflected in the pages of the Musical Times*, Vol. I (of 2), (Novello & Co. Ltd. & OUP: London, 1947), 46.

<sup>45</sup> Wilmshurst, W L, *Huddersfield Choral Society Centenary Memorial 1836-1936*, (W. H. Cook Ltd., Printers: Huddersfield, 1936), 25.

<sup>46</sup> Aut VI, 19.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Press Cutting containing obituary from "Northern Worthies", collected by R W Martin, Rhondda House, Benton Northumberland. *GB-NEcl*.

<sup>49</sup> Aut VI, 20.

latter's North Country folk songs. At the same concert, WGW met the 'cellist Carl Fuchs for the first time, establishing a warm friendship thereafter.

After the accidental death in Switzerland of Principal Gurney in 1904, Sir Isambard Owen, a scientist, became his successor at AC. WGW described this new President of the Choral Society [henceforward ACCS] as an 'uxorious husband' (due to Owen's habit of obtaining a footstool for his wife during Choral concerts) with whom he had 'no connection'.<sup>50</sup> There was a good effect however. Though the ACCS committee continued to demand a diet of 'light' pieces, such as Goring-Thomas's *Swan and Skylark*, Gade's *Spring Message*, Sullivan's *On Shore and Sea*, and 'Spring' from Haydn's *Seasons* (and *Young Lochinvar* by Arnott, the first Durham BMus student in 1891), following the 1905 performances of Glück's *Orpheus*, MacCunn's *Bonny Kildare*, and Jensen's *Feast of Adonis*, WGW rebelled, performing Mozart's *Requiem* next season, defying prophecies of the end of the society. Numbers immediately doubled. 'The fugal *Kyrie* was sung at sight without a mistake. Thereafter I chose what I wanted.'<sup>51</sup> Though in 1912, there was a choir strike over Debussy's *Trois chansons de Charles d'Orléans* (from a 1908 collection), soon singers were 'keen as mustard'. 'Fallt mit Danken' from Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* left the choir 'clamouring for John Sebastian every session.' When, in 1909, Hadow was appointed Principal of AC, WGW was delighted, as the former was already admired for his 'immense, all-embracing knowledge' (though 'He was nervy, abrupt, peppery, and apt to be cutting with a disconcertingly sharp way of talking'). In 1910, Hadow became an active President of both ACCS and CU. Many wonderful concerts took place: in 1908 Stanford's *Songs of the Sea* sung by Ernest Potts, in 1909 Purcell's 'The Frost Scene' from *King Arthur*, Beethoven's Mass in C, and Vaughan Williams's *Toward the Unknown Region*, in 1911 two versions of *Naenia*, by Brahms and Hermann Goetz, Brahms' *The Song of Destiny* in 1912, and Stanford's *Phaudrig Croboore* in 1913. When Schumann's *Faust*, parts III and II, was performed in 1913, Hadow, (his book on Schumann due to be published) wrote the programme notes, assisted by Albert Latham. WGW's arrangements appeared in every programme. WGW could always rely on Lilian and Beatrice Buckley and Ernest Potts as vocal soloists.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>51</sup> Aut IV, 6.

<sup>52</sup> Programmes of ACCS concerts, *GB-NEcl*.

In June 1904 it became compulsory for new teachers to learn staff notation in their music training (though WGW steadfastly maintained that the best readers always had a basis of Sol-fa). This ruling provided WGW with another appointment at the Pupil Teachers' Centre of Newcastle Education Committee, where he taught between 100 and 150 pupils each year until 1912.<sup>53</sup> Here he found 'much that I enjoyed and much that irked'.<sup>54</sup> He probably met Annie Lawton ('Nan') as a student there.<sup>55</sup> In 1905, WGW and Percy A. Scholes, at Hadow's suggestion, were made temporary Inspectors for the Board of Education, in the absence of Dr. Somervell.<sup>56</sup> For three years WGW also conducted the Newcastle and District 'Teachers' Musical Society.<sup>57</sup> WGW took on as many and as varied jobs as possible, to avoid becoming stale.<sup>58</sup> He gave organ recitals (about a hundred at St. Paul's), lectures, evening school lessons, and preparation classes for the School Teachers' Music Certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College.<sup>59</sup>

One adult piano pupil (probably sent by J B Clark) however, opened up a new world of music to WGW, eventually earning him the award of *Officier d'Academie* from the French Government. T J Guéritte was a French civil engineer working in the Newcastle offices of Mouchel, a construction firm building important reinforced concrete buildings in the north. Once during a lesson WGW made a derogatory remark about modern French music, to be corrected by the usually reticent Guéritte who asserted that Debussy (unknown to WGW) was 'one of the greatest men of the times'.<sup>60</sup> (Tony) Guéritte was a close personal friend of Debussy, Ravel, Magnard, Schmitt, and many others. When WGW saw Debussy's music, though 'baffled by the sheer perversity of Debussy's strings of consecutive 5ths, and the 7ths, 9ths and 11ths, which seemed like the sign of a disordered brain', he was fascinated.<sup>61</sup> Persevering, he discovered 'a new method of speech which seemed designed to change the whole world of harmony' perceiving in Debussy's methods 'a way of releasing men from the bondage of German music'.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Aut VI, 13.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Lawton was to become WGW's closest friend and musical colleague.

<sup>56</sup> Aut VI, 16.

<sup>57</sup> Aut VI, 21.

<sup>58</sup> Aut VI, 13.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>61</sup> Aut VI, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

WGW now entered with great enthusiasm over many years upon a complete and detailed study of modern French music: 'guided at all points by my wise and learned friend'.<sup>63</sup>

Guéritte and his friend, Jean-Aubrey (who founded the Société des Concerts Français in England in 1907) organised concerts in London, Newcastle, Sheffield, and Leeds.<sup>64</sup> J B Clark's son Edward too was an advocate of modern French music. Having 'escaped' to Europe from his intended career as a banker in 1907, he moved in the circle of Ravel, Roussel and Debussy, and now attempted to have their music performed in England. Guéritte was present, in February 1908, when Debussy conducted *Prélude à l'après-Midi d'un Faune*, and the first performance in England of *La Mer* at Queen's Hall. WGW claimed to have played illustrations for the first lecture on Debussy ever given in this country (by Edward Clark), and to have given the second himself, followed by a large number in many places, often to hostile audiences.<sup>65</sup> WGW felt the beneficial effect on his own efforts: 'I do not attach any importance to my own compositions, but I think I can say that it was this influence which enabled me to discover my own individuality.'<sup>66</sup> Almost unheard of in 1906 in England, by 1909 Debussy's fame was growing. Aubrey however continued to inform Debussy of 'the propaganda work of Edwin Evans in London, W. G. Whittaker and J. B. Clark at Newcastle and T. J. Guéritte, whenever it was practicable.'<sup>67</sup>

Hadow's reputation was high in Newcastle before 1909 through his lectures to NLPS. Now he became the leader of cultural life in Newcastle. Hadow and his sister Grace (of Somerville College) had just co-authored *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Grace had left Oxford in 1908 to care for her mother in Cirencester, immediately preceding her brother's move north (though they jointly translated Litzmann's *Life of Clara Schumann* in 1914). WGW wrote that Hadow won a unique position in Newcastle with 'his brilliant speeches and his masterly way of handling business.' At this high point for lecture societies, Hadow was the consummate lecturer of his time, speaking on a multitude of diverse subjects, 'without notes and couched in

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Jean-Aubrey, G. 'Some Recollections of Debussy', *Musical Times*, Vol. 59, No. 903 (1 May 1918), 203-209.

<sup>65</sup> This first lecture was probably one given by Edward Clark in 1908 [E. L. P., (Papers of Elisabeth Lutyens) 'Edward Clark', lecture by Edward Clark, *A Modern French Composer-Claude Debussy*, 17.2.08]

<sup>66</sup> Aut VI, 8.

<sup>67</sup> Jean-Aubrey, 'Some Recollections of Debussy', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 59, No. 903 (May 1, 1918), 206.



choice quotations' according to WGW.<sup>68</sup> However, WGW also notes that although able to converse on many topics, Hadow never started a conversation, a characteristic that led to many awkward silences. Compromise was not part of his nature, and holding very strong opinions, he would disappear without a word if he disliked an item in a programme. But WGW appreciated the Principal's support for ACCS and the way his warm attitude brought along many staff. On arrival, Hadow immediately sent for WGW, asking for a ACCS report. After commenting on the speed at which WGW was able to teach pieces, he offered encouragement and help, and joined in the 1910 concert, accompanying a performance of three of his own solo songs.

WGW's first attempts at folk-song arrangements, using poems from *Northern Minstrelsy*, followed Cecil Sharp's lectures in 1908/9 to NLPS on *Folk song*, and *English Folk Song*. He used these in school singing classes and choral groups, at first anonymously, his first acknowledged arrangement being 'Blow the wind Southerly', given at a prize-giving at Rutherford Girls' School in February 1910. From this date their popularity ensured that WGW's arrangements were included in each ACCS concert from 1910. Hadow was delighted with them, showing them to Parry, and urged WGW to keep producing them.<sup>69</sup> Though Hadow advised publication, writing to several publishers, WGW approached fourteen firms, without result.

In 1908 WGW accepted the conductorship, at £20 a year, of the newly-founded Whitley Bay and District Choral Society, there already being in existence a Tynemouth Choral Society. (The salary allowed him to give up his organist's post at South Shields which had become tiresome.) He was not willing to accede to the rigidly monotonous repertoire expected, and after conducting *Elijah* on 1 April 1909, WGW chose what he pleased, a Bach Motet, Elgar's *The Light of Life*, Franck's *Psalm 150*, Haydn's *The Creation*, (parts I and II) Parry's *Beyond these Voices there is Peace*, and S S Wesley's *In Exitu Israel*. That the choir was trained to an incredibly high standard is illustrated by its ability to give the first performance, in December 1910, of Delius's 'Midsummer Song' (composed in 1908, for double choir).<sup>70</sup> (WGW would have heard Delius's songs at the *Musical League* festival concert in 1909.) WGW writes that at first the choir found Delius's 'On

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<sup>68</sup> Aut VI, 27-28.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 29.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Threlfall, advisor to the Delius Trust, says that Delius did not dedicate 'Midsummer Song' to WGW and the Whitley Bay Choral Society. Delius sold the original autograph MS to the German publisher and it has never been found.

Craig Dhu' 'almost beyond its powers'.<sup>71</sup> Despite vociferous opposition, WGW refused to drop the piece, and by the time of the concert 'the members were more anxious to do justice to 'Craig Dhu' than to any other number in the programme.'<sup>72</sup> In the 1911-12 season, WGW conducted Bach's *Come, Jesus, come*, Parry's *Beyond these voices there is Peace* (which he thought 'magnificent'), Rutland Boughton's *Midnight*, Coleridge-Taylor's *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, Palestrina's *Stabat Mater*, and Tudor Madrigals and Ayres.<sup>73</sup> WGW was thirty-six when he tackled Walford Davies's *Everyman* which provided his first opportunity to conduct a full orchestral accompaniment with a choir, the performance being so successful that the existing Tynemouth Choral Society amalgamated with WGW's Whitley Bay Society (becoming The Tynemouth and Whitley Bay Choral Society).

From 1902 WGW had worked 'long and hard' studying for his Durham Music Doctorate with F G Huntley.<sup>74</sup> Only with difficulty was his work accepted, at the age of thirty-three in 1909. Following the death of Professor Armes in 1907, Joseph Bridge became Professor of Music at Durham (his brother Sir Frederick had earlier been an examiner). WGW discovered that both Bridge and his fellow examiners were 'of the old school', rigid in their attitude to harmony, and disliked his setting of the American secular poem by William Cullen Bryant, 'Our Country's Call'.<sup>75</sup> WGW did not agree with the examiners' objections to his treatment of certain dissonances, and judged their harsh criticisms of his instrumentation unwarranted. The exercise was accepted, but only after WGW had revised the eight part chorus (dismissed as 'very ugly and un-singable' though WGW knew ACCS would have found it easy).<sup>76</sup> Huntley thought WGW better prepared than any previous pupil and ordered him to rest. But nerves caused WGW to cram until the eve of the exam and he failed. WGW now found himself in an embarrassing position. 'The facts were known'.<sup>77</sup> AC was part of Durham University. On writing to Bridge to discover the reason for his failure, he was told that he had not worked. When WGW angrily

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<sup>71</sup> Aut VI, 25.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Aut V, 7.

<sup>76</sup> Gray, C., *Musical Chairs: or, Between two stools* (Home & Van Thal: London, 1948), 97.

<sup>77</sup> Aut V, 8.

denied this, Bridge blamed Huntley.<sup>78</sup> WGW began correspondence lessons with Bridge, but after completing only two pieces of work, he was passed on to 'a certain cathedral organist'.<sup>79</sup> Unable to accept the restrictions imposed on him (it was forbidden to use a six-four chord without preparation even in free five-part string writing), WGW 'swore unremitting war on Durham musical degrees' and abandoned his studies, acutely disappointed.<sup>80</sup> He had not expected failure, however, for on 1 April 1909, a three-page biography and interview, outlining WGW's career to date, appeared in *The Musical Herald* (the Journal of the Tonic Sol-fa College), with the obvious intention of launching the next stage of WGW's career, that of a composer. (WGW's experience may not have been unusual: Percy Scholes, who had resolved to acquire qualifications in 1910, considered studying music at Durham, according to S. Morrish: 'but, as E. G. Bairstow recalled, the regime there was slack.')<sup>81</sup>

WGW first taught singing at Gateshead High School, a private school, under the 'excellent headmistress' Francis Tooke, of Newnham College Cambridge. Numbers fell and the school closed in 1907, when (ostensibly because of overcrowding at Rutherford College, but perhaps at that time because Rutherford governors wished to keep Miss Tooke's talents in the city) a new Rutherford Girls School was opened at Maple Terrace, the old premises of the Royal Grammar School.<sup>82</sup> Miss Tooke probably expected to succeed Miss Moberly, headmistress at the Central Newcastle High School [Henceforward CNHS] where new premises had been built in Eskdale Terrace, Jesmond in 1902. (The school had developed from the Preparatory Department of Gateshead High School, established in Jesmond some years earlier.) However, Dorothea Hiley, of Somerville College, Oxford, closest friend and weekly correspondent of Grace Hadow, was appointed in 1908, just before Hadow's arrival in 1909 at the College of Physical Science as Principal. WGW became a valued and brilliant teacher at both schools, sending his own

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>79</sup> The Revd. Arnold Culley was organist and precentor at Durham for 25 years (from 1907 until John Dykes Bower became organist in 1933).

<sup>80</sup> *Aut V*, 9.

<sup>81</sup> Morrish, P S, 'Percy Alfred Scholes (1877-1958): *Music Critic?*, *Publications of the Thoresby Society*, second series Vol. 13 (Miscellany), (2003): The Leeds Historical Society. 46.

<sup>82</sup> The dividing of Rutherford pupils into girls and boys had been recommended by Sir Michael Sadler in his 1905 report on education in the city. See Sadler, M E, Report on secondary and higher education in Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne City and County of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Education Committee (Newcastle upon Tyne Education Committee: 1905), 44.

daughters to the CNHS. At the CNHS, WGW organised 'composers' afternoons', and established a school orchestra. Hiley afterwards assessed the school's debt to WGW as 'incalculable': 'What struck me at once as remarkable and singular about the Central was its singing... what I could not fail to notice was the delicious freshness of tone and above all the spontaneous joy in singing... Many Old Girls must, in looking back, have realised how little they knew that this joyful spontaneity was the evocation of an incomparable teacher'.<sup>83</sup> Ironically, it was Dr Joseph Bridge who in 1910 undertook an Inspection for the Board of Education at Rutherford Girls' School, deeming WGW 'not only an excellent musician but a painstaking and inspiring teacher'.<sup>84</sup> In 1914, Somervell was the Inspector, and he was even more complimentary writing that WGW's results could hardly be bettered.<sup>85</sup>

WGW, as witnessed by his attitude to studying harmony, followed modern developments in music. The Musical League, founded in 1908 at the initiative of Norman O' Neill and Delius (O' Neill had joined the earlier Society of British Composers founded in 1905), held a first festival, addressed by Elgar, in September 1909. WGW, a local committee member and enthusiast would have attended. Works by Bell, Cyril Scott, Bax, Austin and Grainger were performed.<sup>86</sup> Coward, W G McNaught, Granville Bantock (members of the national committee), Bainton, Harry Embleton and CS Terry were all present.<sup>87</sup> At the second concert of the second day, some songs by Delius were performed which inspired WGW to conduct as soon as possible with his Whitley Bay choir.

The following month, Elgar and Bantock arrived to conduct at the Newcastle Festival, beginning 20 October 1909. WGW helped audition the choristers (finding those who knew Sol-fa to be at a great advantage).<sup>88</sup> J B Clark, C Francis Lloyd, and Harry Embleton, secretary of Leeds Choral Union, and friend and benefactor of Elgar, were organisers.<sup>89</sup> Arthur Payne led the LSO, with Safonoff conductor in chief, and Coward chorus master. Guest conductors performed their

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<sup>83</sup> D F P Hiley, CNHS Magazine, 1945, *GB-NEch*, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Board of Education Inspection, Rutherford College Girls' School, 30 May – 10 June, 1910. Inspector: J J R Bridge. *GB-NEbb*

<sup>85</sup> Report of Board of Education upon Rutherford College Girl's School, 1914, *GB-NEbb*.

<sup>86</sup> Lloyd, S., *H. Balfour Gardiner*, (CUP: Cambridge, 1984), 70.

<sup>87</sup> Hudson, D, *Norman O' Neill*, (Quality Press Ltd.: London, 1945), 43.

<sup>88</sup> Aut V, 5.

<sup>89</sup> Scholes, P A, *The Mirror of Music 1844-1944, A century of Musical life in Britain as reflected in the pages of the Musical Times*, Vol. I (Novello & Co. Ltd. & OUP: London, 1947), 141.

own works, Elgar conducting *The Kingdom*, Boughton his *The Invisible Armada* and Busoni his Concerto for pianoforte, orchestra and male chorus, with Egon Petri soloist. WGW wrote about the occasion: 'Busoni offered to play a Liszt concerto...for nothing, if he could conduct his concerto... which Egon Petri would be willing to play, on the same terms'.<sup>90</sup> Adam Carse, Newcastle born, conducted his Symphony in G minor while Bantock conducted Part II of *Omar Khayyám*. (repeated with the CU in the autumn of 1910, with the addition of Part III).

Rutland Boughton stayed with WGW for the Festival, and 'leading men' from the Leeds musical scene, such as Percy Scholes, (Registrar, from 1908, of the City of Leeds School of Music) and his friends Thomas Henderson, Thomas J Hoggett, and Dr H A Fricker (choirmaster of the Leeds Triennial Festival).<sup>91</sup> Scholes had just launched his *Home Study Union* (with Hadow as President). Bairstow, organist of Leeds Parish Church, Fricker and Hoggett were committee members of its journal, soon called *The Music Student*. WGW knew Fricker and Hoggett through the music critic Thomas Henderson of Darlington, and 'kept an open table' for them during the festival.<sup>92</sup> Scholes was invited as he, like WGW, was a vegetarian. Scholes and WGW struck up an immediate life-long friendship. Indeed, WGW and his wife were the newly-married Scholes's first house guests when they attended the 1910 Leeds festival.<sup>93</sup> After meeting Scholes, WGW began his own *Home Music Study Circle* among his pupils: 'Numbers increased till the studio door had to be left open & the overflow sat on the stairs. They were happy evenings'.<sup>94</sup>

In 1908 Guéritte was invited to join the committee of the new Classical Concerts Society in Newcastle launched by some of the 'nabobs of the Armstrong and Whitworth works' who deplored the endless waiting list of the Newcastle Chamber Music Society.<sup>95</sup> (There was doubtless a link with a similarly named organisation in Oxford, founded by Edward Speyer, to succeed the Joachim concerts, with Borwick, Tovey and Kelly as musical advisors.) Concerts took place in Westgate Assembly Rooms, Hadow and Guéritte joining the committee in 1909, the latter persuading the committee to include WGW. At first the soloists were German, except

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<sup>90</sup> Aut VI, 6.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Aut VI, 13.

<sup>95</sup> Grierson, M., *Donald Francis Tovey* (OUP:London, 1952), 124.

Tovey, 'who gave superb performances'.<sup>96</sup> Casals, Borwick and the D'Aranyi sisters followed (WGW remembered that the younger, Adèle, with extraordinary fire and vitality, and dressed brilliantly in Hungarian dress created a sensation). Guéritte tactfully managed to invite some of his French friends, in programmes of their own music, and in January 1911 a 'Grand Concert Anglo-Français' brought Ravel to Newcastle. Ravel accompanied some of the songs, performing with the Parisian Quartet and others including Feuillard and his wife. Ravel's *Histoires Naturelles*, was played with the composer himself at the piano, and was followed by his *Pavane pour Une Infante defuncte*. WGW was introduced to Ravel, but ignorance of each other's language prevented communication, though WGW found it a delightful experience to hear Ravel rehearse his quartet with such a brilliant and sympathetic team.<sup>97</sup> In February 1914 the Parisian Quintet with Florent Schmitt 'played his gigantic pianoforte quintet', and his *Sur un vieux petit cimetière*, dedicated to Vaughan Williams, and 'on the lighter side was Reynaldo Hahn'.<sup>98</sup> When Guéritte moved to London, he established a 'Société des Concerts Français', and continued to send first-rate artists to Newcastle. Hadow, now chairman, brought British artists such as Percy Grainger to perform. On 8 December 1913, the latter performed Bach-Busoni, Brahms, and his own *Irish Tune from County Derry* and *Shepherd's Hey*, Grieg's *Ballad-variations on a Norwegian melody* Op. 24, Debussy's *Toccata*, and *Reflets dans l'Eau* and ended the recital with his arrangement of Stanford's *March-Jig, Irish Dance, Maguire's Kick* from Petrie College.<sup>99</sup> A Dunhill chamber music team was among other British guests while on one occasion WGW accompanied a recital by Dorothy Silk.

In 1912 Bainton took over as Principal of Newcastle Conservatoire. He bought a large house, 72 Jesmond Road, for teaching and private performances, and gave public concerts in the Old Assembly Rooms. He asked WGW to join the staff to teach singing and pianoforte, and the two became much closer. Bainton now gave combined concerts with the Harmonic Society and the NPO, inviting Dorothy Silk and George Painter on 11 December 1912, to sing in a programme of Grieg's *Peer Gynt* and Hubert Bath's *The Wedding of Son MacLean*, a Scottish Rhapsody. Silk sang Balfour Gardiner's *News from Whydah* and Farrer's *Vagabond Songs*, and

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<sup>96</sup> Aut VI, 10.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Grainger had played in Newcastle Town Hall in October 1901 in one of the first concerts of his career, having just arrived in England with his mother Rose following his studies in Frankfurt.

Bainton's *Roseen-Dhu*.<sup>100</sup> Dorothy Silk, described by WGW in a letter to Holst as 'a beautiful artist and woman' returned that season when Bach, Madrigals, Stanford's Irish folk-songs arranged for chorus, and Brahms' *Marienlieder* were sung.<sup>101</sup>

Bainton had received a request from Gustav von Holst (an old fellow student from the RCM, regarded by him until this time as 'a gifted salon writer') who had decided in 1911 to 'get his things performed'.<sup>102</sup> Holst was intending to publish his choral *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, if three choral societies would perform them and cover the cost. WGW writes that Bainton invited him round one evening to show him the first set of *Veda* hymns: 'Bainton played them from the MSS full score in his own remarkable way, and we both felt that we had seen a new sun in the British sky.'<sup>103</sup> Rutland Boughton had already volunteered. WGW and Bainton now 'joined our promises to Boughton's', agreeing to perform the first group, and the hymns appeared in print.<sup>104</sup> Edward Mason performed the second group of the *Rig Veda* hymns at the Queen's Hall at one of his concerts of British Music. Imogen Holst wrote: 'Not long after the Edward Mason performances the first group of Vedas was sung at Newcastle under W. G. Whittaker, who was to become one of his greatest friends.'<sup>105</sup> Bainton gave the first performance in Newcastle with his Harmonic Society in the 1911-12 season (Holst also came to conduct his *Beni-Mora Suite* with the NPO). WGW performed Group I of the Vedic Hymns with the Tynemouth choir in December 1912, which 'proved a tough nut for the Society to crack; yet the music moved them to enthusiasm.'<sup>106</sup> WGW read out Holst's good wishes to the choir and the performance was excellent, according to WGW who wrote to Holst:

I really think that we gave a creditable performance of your works. The first two went without a single hitch, the second being particularly impressive. In the last the altos converted one of your 7/4 bars into 6/4 (I don't blame them), and there was a little wandering round for a couple of bars, when the basses came in with confident vigour and shook them all straight.<sup>107</sup>

WGW met Holst at the last festival of the Musical League from 30 December 1912 - 3 January 1913. Harry Evans was festival conductor and many members, including Elgar, had

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<sup>100</sup> Archived programmes, *GB-NEcl*.

<sup>101</sup> Holst, 1974, (c) 28, March 1916, 128.

<sup>102</sup> Holst, I, *Gustav Holst*, (OUP: London, 1938), 37.

<sup>103</sup> Aut VI, 24.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Holst I, 1938, 38.

<sup>106</sup> Aut VI, 24.

<sup>107</sup> Holst, 1974, Appendix 4, a), 19. December, 1912, 126.

resigned, and according to Lloyd, 'McNaught was left to hold things together'.<sup>108</sup> Gardiner conducted his *Overture to a Comedy*, Bax his *Festival Overture*, Bainton, Julius Harrison, and Gustav Holst their own works, and Frederic Austin sang his *Three Songs of Unrest*. 'With the festival's conclusion the Musical League quietly passed into history.'<sup>109</sup>

When Santley retired in 1911, Bainton advised WGW to transfer to Austin, 'a splendid singer' who had sung so well at the conference, a close friend of Balfour Gardiner.<sup>110</sup> Austin recognised that, unknown to his pupil, WGW's voice had the potential to fill any opera house in Europe (indeed, because of WGW's height, physique and musicianship, Austin tried to persuade him to become an opera singer). After a few months Austin's prophecy was fulfilled and WGW's voice developed an unbelievable strength. 'All the patient work I had put in had prepared the ground for this sudden and unexpected blossoming.'<sup>111</sup> WGW worked with Austin on Mozart and Wagner operatic roles, as Austin continued to urge his pupil towards an operatic career. But WGW's family commitments, the potential sacrifice of other activities, his dislike of Italian operatic repertoire, and the fact that he felt that his voice 'lacked beauty' militated against this proposed change of career.<sup>112</sup> WGW continued his lessons, but purely as a means of achieving his aim to become an expert choir-trainer.

WGW's frequent trips to London, now almost a second home, left him feeling 'artistically refreshed & invigorated' as he heard music never played in a provincial town.<sup>113</sup> His most profound experiences occurred at Westminster Cathedral, listening to R. R. Terry's choir, where one Holy Week he attended every service.<sup>114</sup> Sometimes there were 'treasures at home' in Newcastle, as when a visiting Italian opera company gave twice-daily performances of Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi or Richter conducted a Wagner concert, not to mention the experiences of Strauss's works given by Beecham, or a visit to Edinburgh, for the 1910 Denhof Season. WGW even '...slipped over to Paris for a day to see Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*'.<sup>115</sup> One date was etched in WGW's memory, 24 June 1913, when the Russian Imperial Opera and Ballet made its

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<sup>108</sup> Stephen Lloyd, *H. Balfour Gardiner*, 69.

<sup>109</sup> Lloyd, 71.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>111</sup> Lloyd, 34.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Aut V*, 13.

<sup>114</sup> *Aut VI*, 4.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.



first appearance in England and he went with R. R. Terry to see Moussorgsky's *Boris Godounov*, with Chaliapin in the name-rôle as 'an absolute revelation, the striking, vivid music, the wonderful staging & colouring, the magnificent choral singing.'<sup>116</sup> Terry remarked to WGW, as they left the theatre: 'Fancy that in Russia in the eighteen sixties! Where were we then?'<sup>117</sup>

Holst sent WGW a parcel containing *The Cloud Messenger* inscribed 'WGW from GVH Xmas 1912. Sorry to cast a cloud over your Xmas'.<sup>118</sup> WGW played the work over repeatedly, resolving to perform it next session. Holst requested that WGW re-write a more complete second piano part, perhaps using a harmonium, but Holst's visit with Gardiner to Spain (for health reasons) delayed any performance, and it was Christmas before WGW arrived at Holst's house at Brook Green, Hammersmith, to hear Holst play through the piece explaining his wishes'.<sup>119</sup> Imogen Holst remembered the occasion (though she differs over the address):

The first time I saw Whittaker was, I think, in 1913 when he came to our home at 10 The Terrace, Barnes. I was six, and he seemed to me to be immensely tall and energetic. I can remember my father's obvious delight at having him with us, and during the next few years I could recognise the particular excitement in his voice whenever he told us: 'Will is coming!'<sup>120</sup>

Holst explained that the failure of the first performance of the *Cloud* had been caused by a lapse in organisation when no semi-chorus had been appointed, the resulting sight-reading of a quiet passage by the whole choir ruining the work.<sup>121</sup> Afterwards Holst said his closest friends had told him that he had committed a grave error of judgment.<sup>122</sup> WGW affirmed to Holst his belief in the work's 'rightness' and told him it was truly an inspiration: 'He shook his head sadly and said slowly - 'If you can restore my confidence in myself I shall be profoundly grateful to you for the rest of my life.'<sup>123</sup>

On 3 November 1913, WGW conducted his new female voice choir at the Conservatoire in the first set of the *Veda's*. The young Walter Roan played the accompaniment with George Danskin. A quartet orchestra, with 'tympani', was led by Alfred Wall.<sup>124</sup> WGW

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>120</sup> Holst, 1974, Introduction, xi.

<sup>121</sup> Aut VI, 30.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Aut VI, 30.

<sup>124</sup> Alfred M. Wall (b 1875), was the son of William Wall, a 'Professor of Music', of 1 St. Paul's Crescent, London, and studied at the RCM. After playing with chief London orchestras, he became a professor at Newcastle Conservatoire of Music, directing chamber concerts in Newcastle.

wrote to Holst: 'It was a bold venture for our infant, which has only breathed eight weeks, to make its first appearance so. But the strong food has proved its very making...a progress which would have been impossible had it been fed on milk-and –watery partsongy things.'<sup>125</sup> The previous day he had started rehearsals at AC of *The Cloud Messenger* '...so that the name of von Holst has loomed large in my little sphere this week.'<sup>126</sup> (*The Cloud Messenger* was performed by ACCS on 18 March, 1914, Danskin having rehearsed the semi-chorus.) WGW was moved by the performance: 'The message was sung so exquisitely that tears came to one's eyes.'<sup>127</sup> But all were not pleased. It was an occasion when Hadow disappeared. The audience too had thoroughly disliked the work.

When Hadow joined the committee of NLPS in 1910, it was decided to create a music library, a sub-committee being appointed. Hadow gave two lectures to NLPS in 1911 (on 'Christmas carols', and 'Some English song writers').<sup>128</sup> Walford Davies, since 1913 a successful lecturer at the Royal Institution, delivered two lectures. Cecil Sharp who had founded the English Folk Dance Society in 1911, lectured in 1913 on 'English folk songs and dance airs'. Dolmetsch discussed 'French music of the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries'.

A breakthrough for WGW's career occurred early in 1914. During a singing lesson with Austin, WGW announced that he would have to leave early to rehearse some of his folksong settings with the Foxton Ferguson Vocal Quartet. Austin, unaware of WGW's compositions, asked to see some settings.<sup>129</sup> On receipt of some lithographed copies, Austin 'smiled in his significant way' when next greeting WGW, telling him that the settings were extremely original and had been shown 'all round London'.<sup>130</sup> WGW would 'hear something about them shortly'. Afterwards Balfour Gardiner wrote to WGW: Four songs would be performed by the LSO at one of Gardiner's concerts of British Music in the Queen's Hall, with an augmented Oriana Choir, if WGW could get them published.<sup>131</sup> When WGW explained that he had already tried

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<sup>125</sup> Holst, 1974, (b), 3 November 1913, 127.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Aut VI, 30-31.

<sup>128</sup> NLPS Report 1914, 2. *GB-NE/p*.

<sup>129</sup> Hadow had introduced WGW to the Foxton Ferguson Quartet which had performed with Hadow and WGW accompanying on two pianos at a previous ACCS concert.

Aut VI, 11.

<sup>130</sup> Aut VI, 35.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

unsuccessfully to do this, the matter was resolved: 'Kennedy Scott went to see Messrs. Stainer & Bell, &, hey presto! It was settled.'<sup>132</sup>

WGW found it a great joy to rehearse the splendid Oriana Choir. The concert, on Tuesday 9 March 1914, was one of Charles Kennedy Scott's most ambitious concerts so far. Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Delius's *Sea Drift*, Thorpe Bates' *April*, and Holst's first performance of his *Hymn to Dionysus* (dedicated to Gardiner) preceded WGW's *North Country Folk-Tunes* which he conducted, followed by Grainger's *We have fed Our Seas for a Thousand Years*, and the second performance of Delius's *On Hearing the First Cuckoo on Spring*. WGW felt that his dream had come true when two of his settings were encored following vociferous applause in which the orchestra joined: 'It was thus that I made my first appearance on a London platform, at the age of nearly forty. Everybody that was anybody was there, Gardiner, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Grainger, Boughton, & many others.' WGW admitted: 'It was a turning point in my life, in more ways than one.'<sup>133</sup> Gardiner entertained all the participants to dinner at Pagani's, WGW sitting between Austin and Holst, who said 'You are one of us now. You must come up more frequently.'<sup>134</sup> It had been intended to hold three more concerts, and WGW's work was to be included in the next. But the First World War intervened and the concerts were not resumed.

Holst, knowing of WGW's walking tours, asked to come to Northumberland and 'do' the Roman Wall with WGW. In June they proceeded to 'tramp its whole length'.<sup>135</sup> WGW was surprised to find Holst's idea of walking far less energetic than his own (WGW usually covered 40 miles a day). Holst preferred to sit down every hour, sometimes 'lolling on the grass' for an afternoon: 'There were never fewer than two teas each afternoon, no destination was needed, guide book read, nor information sought.'<sup>136</sup> Holst, WGW felt, had another agenda. Each evening he brought up the subject of WGW's compositions, confident that WGW had 'something to say'.<sup>137</sup> WGW now regarded Holst as 'one of the closest friends of my life'.<sup>138</sup> But, despite his amazement that Holst could take such an interest in his career as a composer, WGW

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Aut VI, 36.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 37.

felt unable to reward him. He writes that the same reasons that prevented his changing his career to singing inhibited progress in composition.<sup>139</sup> With a family to support, he could not obtain the 'leisure & reflection...absolutely essential to composition'.<sup>140</sup> Though from this time WGW used any spare time for composition, in his autobiography he confesses: 'I feel in this respect that I was a sad disappointment to him'.<sup>141</sup> After the holiday, Holst wrote to WGW: 'I hope you don't feel work as big a nuisance after last week as I do!'<sup>142</sup> Their correspondence and friendship continued for the rest of Holst's life. Percy Lovell writes: 'The two men are engagingly frank when criticising each other's music but a tone of affectionate banter informs the correspondence.'<sup>143</sup>

Each year WGW and Clara made a 'musical pilgrimage' to the continent (twice taking their two small daughters to Germany).<sup>144</sup> In 1914, having travelled to Switzerland, they discovered on reaching Strasburg that Germany had declared war on Russia, and the army had been called up. As all south bound trains were packed with soldiers and child evacuees from convent schools, the only way to Basle was by car. WGW, in the company of a Scottish doctor, fearing that they and their wives would be stranded, only managed to obtain a lift by threatening to throw out the driver. On reaching Basle the party travelled by train to Lucerne.<sup>145</sup> Next day, on 4 August, Britain declared war on Germany and the Whittakers were trapped for three weeks, reaching home by the last boat. WGW's heart was 'gladdened by the sight of the cheery British troops at Boulogne, where everyone thought the army would soon put the Germans in their place'.<sup>146</sup>

The Baintons were not so fortunate. Sticking to their plans to attend the Bayreuth Festival, despite the murder of Archduke Ferdinand (having taken flawed advice from the British Consul in Frankfurt), they boarded their scheduled train and were arrested at the next stop, and interned.<sup>147</sup> Women were released after three months but male prisoners were held throughout

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Holst, 1974, No 3, Wed. [1914], 2.

<sup>143</sup> Lovell, P., 'Musicians Associated with the Lit. & Phil. Society', (Lecture, 19 May, 1993), *GB-NEp*.

<sup>144</sup> Aut VI, 37.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>146</sup> Aut VI, 42.

<sup>147</sup> Bainton, 24.

the war at Ruhleben camp, Spandau, near Berlin.<sup>148</sup>

1.2 1914 – 1918 'THROUGH THE FIRST WORLD WAR'  
*Service in local music – founding of the Bach Choir*

WGW volunteered for military service but was rejected because of a deformed right arm, injured in childhood. Having found the volunteers disorganised, he transferred to the University Officers' Training Corps where he was given the anguishing task of making up casualty lists.<sup>149</sup> Hadow surrendered AC for use as a military hospital (it became 'The First Northern General Hospital') and 'classes were scattered about the town', at the College of Medicine and NLPS.<sup>150</sup> Though the location of the rehearsal room (under strict black-out regulations due to the Zeppelin threat to war-ship production at Elswick) was dark and distant, WGW kept up ACCS rehearsals for a term until male members 'drifted away' to war, and then ran a women's choir of around 140.<sup>151</sup> Singers might arrive at rehearsal immediately after losing a loved one, and WGW found it a tragic but almost spiritual time. He 'gladdened the heart' of B J Dale (a Ruhleben internee), by performing his *Before the Paling of the Stars* in 1915 (for the first time since its Oriana debut in 1913).<sup>152</sup> Frederic Austin sang Vaughan Williams, Quilter, and Norman O' Neil songs, and his own 'The Sleepers' and 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. ACCS accompanists, Danskin and Roan, played Saint-Saëns's *Variations on a Theme by Beethoven* as a swan song. In 1916 Holst's *Hymns from the Rig Veda* was performed with Debussy's *The Blessed Damsel*, with Dorothy Silk. Songs by Hadow, Harty, and Holbrooke, and Frederic Austin's 'Home thoughts from Abroad' were sung, and the choir sang Gardiner's 'Sir Eglamore'. Annie Eckford played Bach's *The Italian Concerto*. WGW conducted Morley Canzonets and Wilbye Madrigals from Fellowes's *English Madrigal School* series, noting in the programme that they were: 'a precious heritage to a neglectful people.'

Not all societies survived. The Tynemouth Choir performed Walford Davies's *Three Songs of Innocence*, Holst's *Four Old English Carols*, and Parry's *The Glories of our Blood & State*, then

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<sup>148</sup> Bainton was interned with many other musicians, including Ernest MacMillan, Percy Hull (of Hereford), Edward Clark (J. B. Clark's son), Benjamin Dale, and Carl Fuchs.

<sup>149</sup> *Aut* VI, 42.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*.

'petered out after a year', frustrating WGW's ambition to conduct the *Sea Symphony*, (played through to him with suggestions in 1912 by Vaughan Williams).<sup>153</sup> The CU gave popular works and Bach's *Matthew Passion* (in which WGW played continuo), but when the Town Hall was requisitioned for war purposes, the choir folded, as did the Classical Concerts Society.

Ethel Bainton returned from internment in October 1914 to a boarded-up Conservatoire. Totally inexperienced, she carried on Bainton's work (and Diploma level pupils), sending very advanced students to WGW.<sup>154</sup> When difficulties arose as men were called up, she assumed Beatrice Turnbull's secretarial duties and 'ran the Conservatoire practically single-handed'.<sup>155</sup> Her popularity and efficiency ensured she remained on the staff until the Baintons left for Australia in 1934.<sup>156</sup> Initial public objections to music-making while men were dying in the field disappeared when the valuable role of music in the community became obvious.<sup>157</sup> Ethel organised chamber concerts for both staff and city musicians in which WGW participated as singer and pianist (playing in Dvořák's Piano Quintet in E flat, No 2 in December 1915).<sup>158</sup>

WGW, cut off from contemporary French music, found himself 'spellbound' to discover *Gymnopédies*, by the unknown Erik Satie among the contents of a parcel of music from a lending library. He wrote immediately to Guéritte in London, requesting that his friend send him the rest of Satie's works.<sup>159</sup> WGW's admiration for the composer's 'whimsicality, biting sarcasm, and brilliant parodies of French music', inspired him to deliver probably the first lecture in England on Satie to the ISM in February 1915, even provoking Hadow's interest.<sup>160</sup> Replying to a letter from WGW, Satie sent one of his very rare letters 'in a unique script resembling mediaeval manuscript.' Guéritte organised an English recital tour for Satie, to include a Newcastle concert with Satie and WGW as duettists, but the proposed trip was abandoned.

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>154</sup> Bainton, 25.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>156</sup> Bainton, 25.

<sup>157</sup> Aut VI, 44.

<sup>158</sup> Before the war, WGW was already playing in city chamber music groups providing recitals for the local ISM, such as the performance of Brahms's second Piano Quartet given with J Mark, J Tucker, and J Griffiths (Newcastle Conservatoire teachers) given in Newcastle on 17 May 1913. 'Music in the Provinces', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 54, No. 844, (1 June, 1913), 401.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 45.

WGW's friendship with Holst, who was teaching at Morley College, James Allen's Girls' School [JAGS] and St. Paul's Girl's school [SPGS], and was barred from military service by neuritis and poor eyesight, intensified through the war. Its development can be traced by reading Michael Short's *Gustav Holst Letters To W. G. Whittaker*, which stands as 'a record of the friendship between the two men'.<sup>161</sup> Imogen Holst adds in her introduction to the volume: 'The letters give a wonderfully clear impression of the way my father talked'.<sup>162</sup> While pre-war letters concern WGW's two performances of Holst's works (*Hymns from the Rig Veda* in 1912, at AC, and *The Cloud Messenger* in 1913 at Tynemouth), after their Roman Wall walk of 1914, apart from a note enclosed with requested music, Holst only wrote again on receiving a WGW composition in December 1915.<sup>163</sup> Holst's well-known comment about 'teaching by correspondence' followed, with a request to meet (prevented by Holst's participation in Scholes's Music Teachers' conference at SPGS in January 1916).<sup>164</sup> On receiving more folk song arrangements from WGW in February, Holst responded by writing: 'Thanks for the new sources of pleasure you have sent me'.<sup>165</sup> The friendship, which initially stemmed from Holst's gratitude to WGW for his belief in *The Vedas*, seemed to truly blossom following WGW's letter describing the second performance of the second group of *Hymns From the Rig Veda* at AC on 28 March 1916 (sung 'with tremendous enthusiasm' and better than before).<sup>166</sup> Holst replied with genuine affection: 'The sight of yr handwriting is always a joy but this was the climax of many'.<sup>167</sup> Following WGW acceptance of Kennedy Scott's invitation to conduct the Oriana Choir in London in April 1916, Holst invited WGW to his 'leaving singsong' at Dulwich [JAGS], and to SPGS: 'Reserve Tuesday morning for me at St Paul's and I'll love you even more than usual if that's possible'.<sup>168</sup>

Now Holst and WGW demonstrated a reciprocal interest in each other's musical activities, WGW's requesting to borrow 'This have I done for my True Love', which brought a dedicated composition, the first of *Six Choral Folk-Songs* for unaccompanied voices 'I sowed the

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<sup>161</sup> Holst, 1974, Editor's Note, xiii.

Short explains that the collection exists 'simply because W G Whittaker took the trouble to keep most of the letters which Holst wrote to him over a period of many years'.

<sup>162</sup> Holst, 1974, Introduction, xii.

<sup>163</sup> The pieces requested by WGW were Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, Holst *Vedas*, and *Four Old English Carols*.

<sup>164</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 5, 6 January, 1916, 3.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 1974, No. 6, 1 February [1916], 4.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, (c), 28 March, 1916, 128.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 8, 30 March, [1916], 5.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 10, [April 1916], 6. [This date must be either 1 or 2 April.]

Seeds of Love' (the first three eventually inscribed 'Dedicated to W. G. Whittaker and his singers').<sup>169</sup> Holst wrote twenty-two letters to WGW in 1916 and thirty-one in 1917 discussing meetings, compositions, and exchanging music. WGW's 1917 Morley visit introduced him to Holst's wide circle of supportive friends who immediately accepted him, Vally Lasker frequently inviting him to 'The Jolly Talgarth'. Similarly, after returning from Newcastle that year, Holst dedicated *Suite No. 2* for military band to James Causley Windram, Bandmaster of the First Battalion of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers.

In 1914 Holst discovered his ideal retreat at Thaxted, the location of his 'Whitsun Festivals' a collaboration with the local vicar Conrad Noel (an ex-curate of Percy Dearmer), a fellow Socialist, who used art, dance and music in worship.<sup>170</sup> Holst's description of his first Thaxted festival in 1916 was of a 'feast-an orgy' when Morley students joined in 'four whole days of perpetual singing and playing'. Holst always tried to persuade WGW to attend. Alan Gibbs notes that a common purpose of Holst and WGW was to make Bach and other masters accessible to the masses, by adapting arrangements to suit available forces: 'William Gillies Whittaker was on the same wavelength, publishing practical articles during the war in *The Organist & Choirmaster* from his own experience.'<sup>171</sup> But more than an ideal linked them. Mary Pollitzer writes: 'In my opinion 'the friendship that developed between Holst and WG was the most powerful of the latter's life. They were kindred spirits.'<sup>172</sup>

On 30 March, 1917, a fortnight after his Newcastle visit, Holst sent requested music to WGW including '4 'Planet' pieces for 2 pianos (3 more not ready for sending)', as well as blessings, '(you won't see them in the parcel but they are there all the same)'.<sup>173</sup> So WGW played two-pianoforte arrangements of the *Planets* in their early stages. Descriptions of WGW's *Cloud Messenger* performance on 29 April 1917, and Holst's Whitsun at Thaxted were exchanged, but it was WGW's criticism of 'Uranus' from *The Planets Suite* (couched in a simile likening the friends to a giraffe and flea) that delighted Holst, who replied: 'I know now what it is to be a spoilt child and it is all your fault. When I see your fist on an envelope I know that inside I shall find such

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., No. 12, 24 April, [1916], 7.

<sup>170</sup> Gibbs, A, 'Holst Among Friends', *British Music*, Vol. 25, (2003), 67.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>172</sup> Mary Pollitzer, personal communication to the writer, May 1998.

<sup>173</sup> Holst, 1974, No 35, [30 March 1917], 20.



kindness, good fellowship, self sacrifice and artistic insight that answering it as it should be answered becomes an impossibility'.<sup>174</sup> For Holst (who demonstrated a similar sort of relationship with Vaughan Williams), criticism was an essential element of friendship and intimacy, an impression reinforced by Holst's next request ('Would you mind indulging me in my weakness?') for WGW's birth time and place, and those of his family, so that he could draw up astrological charts.<sup>175</sup>

WGW was impressed to see Holst in his *milieu* taking a CS rehearsal at Morley College 'the music at this evening school for working men and women was...quite unique. He had a wonderful knack with them & they all worshipped him. There was a jolly fellowship & everything was undertaken with keen enjoyment, the right spirit for the making of music.'<sup>176</sup> Holst felt similarly about WGW following his Newcastle visit, writing on 29 April: 'I trust that not only will you be allowed but will be ordered to continue your present form of N. S.[non-combatant Service].'<sup>177</sup> Morley students secretly invited WGW to give a lecture on Holst's compositions at the Old Vic. Holst eventually discovered, writing on 9 July: 'The cat is out of the bag! I am more speechless than ever and have suggested that Kennedy Scott should be approached and asked to supply the choral illustrations.'<sup>178</sup> He henceforward took control of every detail concerning the lecture, also requesting that it be repeated at SPGS, writing many letters to WGW over the next six months. WGW gave his lecture on 15 January 1918 at the Royal Victoria Hall, unattended by Holst. The latter invited WGW to conduct some of his arrangements at a concert at Morley on Saturday evening but warned him: 'The trouble is that they are all beyond our powers!<sup>179</sup> Gardiner, away on military duties, lent WGW his house. Afterwards, WGW's letter of thanks from Morley students included good wishes to his AC students, 'whom since your visit we regard as friends of our own'.<sup>180</sup> Holst wrote: 'will you permit me to thank you for enjoying yourself so much? You see, it is a sure sign that you won all our hearts'.<sup>181</sup> With musical activities Holst and WGW passed the war, but its reality was draining. Holst wrote: 'I am fed up with the raids-in the

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., No. 43, June 27 [1917], 26.

<sup>175</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 43, 27 June[1917], 27.

<sup>176</sup> Aut VI, 48.

<sup>177</sup> Holst 1974, No. 37, 29 April 1917, 21.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, No. 44, 9 July [1917], 27.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., No. 50, 7 September [1917], 30-31.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., No. 61, 23 January 1918, 38.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

day time the children are worn out and nervy and at night the cellar concerts are a great success but they last hours without any interval and leave one limp for tomorrow's work.<sup>182</sup> On 8 July 1918 Holst wrote telling WGW that Scholes had invited him to organise the music in Holland for interned British Soldiers under the YMCA, and would be away for a year.<sup>183</sup>

During the war WGW conducted at AC, Rutherford Girls' School, and the CNHS, but, with opportunities for concert going in Newcastle drastically reduced, WGW perceived an opportunity for a private group he also conducted. In 1913, whilst holidaying on a farm, WGW had read Newman's English edition of Schweitzer's *Bach* and immediately adopted Schweitzer's suggestion of singing Bach cantatas at home, posting invitations for weekly meetings to a dozen friends and pupils.<sup>184</sup> A Newcastle contemporary, Arthur Milner commented: 'Only a real educationalist would have supplemented his academic duties in this way; but Whittaker was a born teacher, and his burning enthusiasm communicated itself to all who came into contact with him.'<sup>185</sup> This 'study circle', analysed and sang cantatas, usually with two pianists and some string players, also singing madrigals 'to vary the musical menu'.<sup>186</sup> Though Ernest Potts 'sang Bach superbly', and there were good women soloists, Bainton's pre-war suggestion of making these sessions public could not be implemented without a good local tenor.<sup>187</sup> WGW's discovery in 1915 of a wonderful singer, the ex-pitman, John Vine, allowed him to found the Newcastle Bach Choir [BC](still active today), its first concert being given in the CNHS on 27 November 1915.<sup>188</sup> Milner admired the 'courageous undertaking', continuing: 'Some would have called it foolhardy, for we were at war with Germany'.<sup>189</sup> But WGW enjoyed a challenge: 'with Whittaker difficulties became incentives' and the latter channelled his characteristic energy into succeeding, achieving, according to Milner, more for the musical development of Newcastle than any one else, and in so doing earned local respect: 'There were many people, even in the early decades of this century, who recognised the quality of the man'.<sup>190</sup> WGW not only performed as many

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., No. 62, [February 1918], 38.

<sup>183</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 73, [September 1918], 43.

<sup>184</sup> Aut VI, 45.

<sup>185</sup> Milner, A., 'The Newcastle Bach Choir', *Journal and North Mail*, (Monday March 19 1951), 2.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Aut VI, 45.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Milner, *Journal and North Mail*, 19 March, 1951, 2.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

Cantatas, and other Bach works, as possible, but informed his performances with expertise acquired from musicians such as C S Terry, R. R. Terry (from 1916 editor of *Tudor Church Music* for the Carnegie Trust), Dolmetsch (a frequent lecturer in Newcastle, and author in 1916 of *Interpretation of Music of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries*), and Fuller-Maitland, lecturer to NLPS in 1914 on 'The harpsichord toccatas of Bach'. Another essential ingredient of the choir's repertory was contemporary British music.

The Whittaker family moved in 1915 to 4 Granville Road, Jesmond, an imposing, four-storey terrace house (probably affordable owing to the war), close to AC, the Conservatoire, and CNHS. Here WGW's daughters were brought up as strict vegetarians and learned to play stringed instruments (Clarrie, 'cello, and Mary, violin). Mary Pollitzer remembers: 'Our pre-breakfast piano practice of scales and arpeggios was punctuated by irate corrective shouts from bedroom, bathroom or wherever else-no faint misplacement of a B or G escaping that vigilant awareness. The terror of his fury at my paralysed inability to count accurately my bars' rests during frequent family piano trio periods, remains to this day.'<sup>191</sup> Otherwise WGW was 'an indulgent parent, demonstrative and loving to my sister and me, always guiding us along our literary paths, albeit our destined future as students at the RCM as an unquestioned foregone conclusion...' Clarrie's study of European languages subverted this intention, and she enjoyed a successful career with the Standard Electric Company, in France, England, and eventually, New York (the original contact being Tony Guéritte). Mary duly became a professional violinist after attending the RCM.<sup>192</sup>

WGW became so busy that he seemed to his family 'a human volcano, forever rumbling and surging underneath with too many new ideas and projects to be equably contained.'<sup>193</sup> Sleep, he considered an 'unfortunate waste of time'. Mary Pollitzer gives a compelling description: "The mind teems with visions of him leaping up and downstairs, always two or three steps at a time, black mop of hair flying, big red moustache glaring; bursting into the dining-room at odd moments to gulp down a glass of milk and soda-water always kept in readiness on the

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<sup>191</sup> Pollitzer, M, 'The Viking Pioneer' *British Music Society Newsletter*, Issue 1, (Winter 1978), 44.

<sup>192</sup> Personal communication to writer from Mary Pollitzer, 23 July, 2001.

<sup>193</sup> Pollitzer, M, *The Viking Pioneer*, 42.

sideboard.<sup>194</sup> Behind this frenzied bustle was the solid support of his wife, worried at his frugal eating habits (frequently corresponding with Eustace Miles, expert on vegetarianism) and struggling with his appearance, as 'extra huge manuscript-size pockets inside every jacket and overcoat, and always full to overflowing, caused him to take on a singularly peculiar shape'.<sup>195</sup> This servitude, as she cleaned his 'miles of bookshelves', hand-delivered his messages, and answered the ever-ringing doorbell for his private pupils, did not endear Clara to WGW, who preferred the company of an ex-student, thirty year old Annie Lawton, who shared his musical interests.

Family rumour hints at an affair between Lawton and WGW. Whatever the truth Lawton was a major figure (perhaps a 'Vally Lasker') in his life. Grand-daughter of Benjamin Carr Lawton, engineer and public works contractor from Dewsbury, Lawton had attended the Quaker boarding school at Ackworth, Pontefract. In 1905 she was a pianoforte teacher at her father's home in Malvern Street, also teaching singing in Hartlepool and at Atkinson Road School, Newcastle. She later became a lecturer in junior piano teaching at the Conservatoire, taking over from WGW at CNHS in 1920. 'As a contralto singer she was a charming executant', being a soloist in WGW's concerts from 1917.<sup>196</sup> A member of the CU from November 1913, and the Classical Concerts Society from December 1914, Mary Pollitzer remembers that Lawton 'steered me through my Music examinations for School Leaving Certificate.'<sup>197</sup> (*The Folk Song Sight Singing Series* in twelve volumes, which she compiled and edited for OUP in 1933, using WGW's material, with WGW and Edgar Crowe, a colleague of WGW's from Tynemouth, is still in print today.) Two factors may have influenced WGW to keep Lawton in the background before 1917, one being WGW's respect for his father-in-law, a well-known local figure; the other may have

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> WGW's paternal grandmother, Mary Ann Whittaker, had left her post as a nurse at, Holme Eden Hall, the home of Francis Dixon, an extremely wealthy cotton manufacturer, in middle age, marrying a younger man, John Dixon, a tailor from a farming family in nearby Renwick, in 1863, when her father (who until then, with his wife, had cared for John Whittaker) died. Mary Ann left the Carlisle area for Newcastle (John Whittaker too moving to the city as a railway clerk), settling in Gateshead where the couple had four children. Although Mary Ann died in 1892, her husband continued to work as a tailor, no doubt creating the special suits which WGW habitually wore. WGW never mentioned the family in his writings and his daughters had only heard rumours that John Whittaker was illegitimate.

<sup>196</sup> Obituary of Annie Lawton, *Newcastle Journal*, (12<sup>th</sup> June 1930).

<sup>197</sup> Mary Pollitzer, Personal communication to writer, 23 May, 1998.

been a desire not to 'rock the boat' for his parents' sake, since WGW's parents had been caused much heartache by the marital problems of WGW's only sister, Lily.

The war united musicians away from the front, struggling with the paper shortage, closure of foreign publishing houses, and disappearance of foreign artists. Following the closure of Leeds School of Music in 1912, Percy Scholes, editor of *The Music Student*, moved to north London where he became music critic of *The Evening Standard* and a writer for John Shedlock (music critic of *The Queen*). He also wrote a column 'Everyman and his Music' for John Sarolea's *Weekly Edinburgh Journal*. Scholes's bronchitis prevented military service and, wishing to contribute during the conflict, he briefly became a publisher, founding *The Patriotic Publishing Company* and produced a series of 'timely pamphlets' which included *National Anthems of the Four Allies* (selling a quarter of a million copies).<sup>198</sup> WGW seems to have had some involvement in this, as he used his own arrangement 'Rise ye Serbians Rise as one' (together with Japanese, Russian and French national anthems) at Rutherford Girls' School prize-giving in February 1915. In May, June, and July 1915, Scholes published three of WGW's articles on 'The Folk music of Northumberland' in *The Music Student*, and wrote a eulogistic article on WGW, with photographic portrait, in AC's *The Northerner* in 1916.<sup>199</sup> This unashamed propaganda (which asserted that WGW would 'stride through the darkened streets...dodging the Zeppelin bombs... the embodiment of Northern force and energy') was aimed at selling WGW's North Country Folk song arrangements to choirs and publishers.<sup>200</sup> However it must be said that Scholes's comment 'The keynote of WGW's character is thoroughness - and he never modulates' was undeniably true.<sup>201</sup> In reciprocation, WGW saw to it that publicity for Scholes's books and projects appeared in DUJ, and the *Northerner*.

Scholes and WGW were both dedicated to teaching music 'in the spirit of appreciation' not as 'a prelude to performance' (ideas loosely based on the writings of Fétis).<sup>202</sup> After a winter lecture tour combined with exploring teaching methods in America in 1914, Scholes returned in

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<sup>198</sup> Morrish, 56.

<sup>199</sup> *The Northerner*, (March 1916), 43-46. GB-NEul.

The article was co-written by R C Moles, author of the *Musical Herald* article on WGW of 1 April, 1909, 99-102.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Morrish, 60.

January 1915, impressed with music teaching in New York. A member of the executive committees of *The Music Teachers' Association*, and *The Home Music Study Union* (also under the auspices of *The Girls' School Music Union*, and *The Union of Directors of Music in Secondary Schools*), Scholes organised a Music Conference at SPGS.<sup>203</sup> Holst, attending every meeting, lectured on 'school orchestras', writing to WGW on 13 December (in a letter otherwise devoted to hints on composition) 'I had hoped that you might be coming up'.<sup>204</sup> WGW founded a monthly *Home Music Study Circle* among his pupils: 'Numbers increased till the studio door had to be left open & the overflow sat on the stairs.'<sup>205</sup>

At the end of 1914 a *Music in Wartime* committee was established, aiming to improve conditions at the front. Henry Walford Davies, forty-five year old organist of the Temple Church, joined the committee briefly, but, dissatisfied with its scope which also encompassed unemployed civilian musicians, he unilaterally sought out camps and hospitals to help.<sup>206</sup> Colles writes that Davies felt it his duty to 'carry on his daily work of music-making', un-ameliorated by such things as festival performances.<sup>207</sup> Davies's lecturing career followed his three Royal Institution lectures, delivered in 1913. Fuller-Maitland found him 'pre-eminent in educating the general public'.<sup>208</sup> After his first NLPS lecture on 'Voice and Verse' he returned at least once annually. WGW had rehearsed Davies's *Everyman* with the CU in 1905, conducted *Three Jovial Huntsman* with ACCS in 1907, and rehearsed *Song of St. Francis* with the CU in 1913 (conducted by Davies in November). In 1915 Davies was invited to give a prestigious 'Friday night lecture' at the Royal Institution, lecturing soon afterwards on 'To the Untrained Listener' at NLPS. His *Three Songs of Innocence* became the swansong of WGW's Tynemouth choir. In 1916 Davies visited the Western front for the YMCA, afterwards lecturing to NLPS on 'Music and the War'. In 1917 and 1918, he talked to NLPS on 'Melody', and 'Phrasing, repartee and word-play in music'. Davies's association with WGW led him to appreciate the latter's gifts and he became principal

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<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>204</sup> Holst 1974, No. 4, 3 December [1915], 3.

<sup>205</sup> *Aut VI*, 13.

<sup>206</sup> Colles, H. C., *Walford Davies*, (OUP: London, 1942), 107.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>208</sup> Fuller-Maitland, J., *A Door-keeper of Music*, (John Murray: London, 1929), 296.

referee when WGW applied for his joint posts at Glasgow in 1929, later describing WGW as 'one of 'God's own', and not merely a gifted worker'.<sup>209</sup>

Hadow and Scholes also took on administrative posts in the YMCA. Scholes's passion for good causes, liking for travel, and knowledge of almost all active musicians, meant that, in Morrish's words: 'the YMCA had provided a round hole for a round peg.'<sup>210</sup> When newsprint restrictions caused Scholes's *Everyman* column to close, he became secretary of the YMCA music Section, and honorary secretary of its *Musicians' Gift to the Forces*. Morrish writes: 'When he began wartime work with the YMCA remains obscure but it parallels Hadow's own association with education for the military both through the YMCA and at the War Office.'<sup>211</sup> Scholes visited France for YMCA in 1917, reporting the need for better music for the troops. Having joined their sub-committee in February 1918, he became secretary in July, supervising the deployment of music organizers in the field, and raising funds for musical supplies for YMCA centres. After the Armistice, Scholes, visiting Dieppe, appealed for music teachers to work with soldiers, inviting Holst to Salonica in 1918.

War casualties rose dramatically across the country in 1916, in June the DUJ reporting thirty-six AC men killed in action.<sup>212</sup> RVW wrote that he dreaded coming back to normal life with so many gaps.<sup>213</sup> Denis Browne and Butterworth were dead. When Edward Mason was killed in 1915, Holst suggested to Mason's father that WGW be given some of Mason's copies of the *Vedas*.<sup>214</sup> Walter Roan, young assistant accompanist of ACCS and the BC, was killed in action on 29 September 1916. At AC, WGW alone kept his society flourishing. He composed *A Lyke Wake Dirge* (a setting from *Border Minstrelsy*) between 1914-17, inscribing it: 'In Memory of the men of Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who, in 1914-18, gave infinitely more than 'hosen and shoon', more than 'meate or drinke' (Holst himself had composed a *Dirge and Hymneal* in 1915, to a text by Thomas Beddoes).<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Letter from Walford Davies to Peden Fyfe, [wrongly dated 30<sup>th</sup> March 1914, in fact 1931 as it is written a year after WGW took over his Glasgow appointment]] from The Cloisters, Windsor Castle, *GB-Gu*.

<sup>210</sup> Morrish, 60.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>212</sup> DUJ, Vol. XXI, No 15 (June 1916), 323.

<sup>213</sup> Vaughan Williams, 122.

<sup>214</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 14, [18 May 1916], 8.

<sup>215</sup> Published in 1924 by Stainer & Bell in the Carnegie Collection of British Music.

In 1916 WGW discovered his own country retreat, a rented cottage at New Deanham, near Wallington Hall, in 'one of the loveliest parts of Northumberland'.<sup>216</sup> It prompted Holst's greeting 'Good luck to the cottage!' in his letter of 7 July.<sup>217</sup> This cottage was 'relatively civilised' according to his daughter.<sup>218</sup> WGW's neighbour at the Hall, Sir George Otto Trevelyan, stayed there each summer, and Charles Trevelyan (Labour MP, and Secretary of Education until the war) 'used to cycle the eighteen miles into Newcastle on a Sunday evening to speak at meetings'.<sup>219</sup> Unlike at Thaxted, there was no artistic nearby church on which to centre musical activity (and the Trevelyans were not believers). New Deanham was principally a quiet place where WGW could compose. Mary Pollitzer writes: 'The only holidays we ever spent together as a family were during the period of his two successive rented cottages in the heart of the Northumbrian hills. Here we children ran wild whilst he worked, isolated.'<sup>220</sup> WGW completed *The Lyke-Wake Dirge* at New Deanham (composed between 1914 and 1917), and composed *Shine Great Sun* (a setting of Walt Whitman's 'Sea Drift') in 1916, as well as songs for choirs (such as 'A red, red rose' (Burns), for S. S. C. & piano, composed August 28-30, 1918). He composed two settings of poems by Walter de la Mare in April 1918, 'Dream Song' and 'The Ship of Rio', dedicated to James B. Clark, who had helped keep the BC afloat after financial difficulties. In August-September 1918 WGW abandoned his conventional style of composition and, at New Deanham, wrote a set of three piano pieces in severely modern idiom, *Three Mood Pieces* ('Satyrs', 'A Trill', and 'A Lament') dedicated to three old friends, Walter Corder and W. Deans Forster from the BC, and A. Ernest Belmont from the CU.

In December 1916, Clara's father died at seventy-seven.<sup>221</sup> Clara maintained her heavy workload: 'She attended every single Bach Choir concert, exhausted as she often was. No

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<sup>216</sup> Aut VI, 49.

The cottage was probably acquired through Lieut-Col. Orde of Nunneykirk, neighbour of the Trevelyans' and member of the Classical Concerts Society. Orde invited WGW to be sole adjudicator of his Wansbeck competition festival, in 1915 and 1916 (founded by Orde after his 1905 visit to Mary Wakefield's Kendal Music Competitions).

<sup>217</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 17 [7 July 1916], 10.

<sup>218</sup> Mary Pollitzer, 'Second Recollection' (sent for use in article by Jonathan Pollitzer: 'My Grandmother'). The contribution was unused, and marked 'merely for information'. *GB-Gsm*.

<sup>219</sup> Aut VI, 49.

Otto Trevelyan was biographer of his uncle, Thomas Macaulay, and of Charles Fox, Secretary of State for Ireland under Gladstone.

<sup>220</sup> Mary Pollitzer, *The Viking Pioneer*, 45.

<sup>221</sup> Obituary: 'Death of Captain Thomas Watkins (77) Gateshead, Park Terrace (Unidentified cutting in scrapbook), *GB-NEgh*.



telephone & no car meant constant journeys on foot for her to bear messages from him by hand to fellow musicians or students.<sup>222</sup> The BC's December concert was followed by an ACCS concert which included Stanford's *Fairy Day*, songs by Rimsky-Korsakov and Moussorgsky, and Weelkes' *Airs or fantastic Spirits to Three Voices*. Annie Eckford, new acting accompanist, played Ravel's *Ondine*, and Hurlstone's Trio in G.<sup>223</sup> Three more BC concerts followed; Mary Pollitzer remembers with mixed emotions how wonderful these events had become:

Those Bach Choir concerts, held in the Newcastle University hall, were a ritual of magical experience. Perfection of choice of musical material, and unbelievably total devotion from the 30 or so living souls on the platform to their Master's inspired hands-for he used no baton-rendered them unique indeed.

One human ritual was always followed. My wonderful mother, exhausted, unhappy, disillusioned & disappointed in her marriage, sat alone near the stage, holding her ear trumpet. Grannie had her place further back-also alone. After the concert we five waited at the bus stop for seeming eternity for Grannie to be put on her Heaton bus. Then we could go home.<sup>224</sup>

Hadow at first turned down WGW's request for permission to invite Holst to conduct the second group of his *Rig Veda* hymns at AC in March 1917, 'throwing back his head' at the prospect of a whole evening of Holst's works with 'those long drawling monotones'.<sup>225</sup> Holst travelled to Newcastle 'a far distant land', on Sunday morning 11 March 1917, to be met by WGW at the Central Station when the two walked together to Central Hall, Westgate Road, for a rehearsal, thoroughly enjoyed by Holst.<sup>226</sup> The Monday evening concert went well, though Holst afterwards apologised for 'trouble about Varuna. (It was all my fault-or rather my misfortune-for not being as tall as you!)', jesting that perhaps 'a severe course of physical exercises' would enable him to grow a little taller before he came back to Newcastle.<sup>227</sup> Holst's 'Pastoral', 'Tears, idle tears', and 'Ave Maria' were also sung (the last two better than Holst had ever heard them) with Morley Canzonets and three of WGW's folk-song arrangements.<sup>228</sup> Eckford played Preludes by Scriabin, Franck's Sonata in A Major for Piano & Violin (with Wall), and accompanied the Holst (Holst writing afterwards: 'Don't thank Miss Eckford-I'm going to write to her myself-her playing is most beautiful.')229 When not conducting, Holst sat next to Hadow: 'After the concert

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<sup>222</sup> Mary Pollitzer-personal communication of 23 May 1998.

<sup>223</sup> Mark, Griffiths and Hurlstone played with Eckford.

<sup>224</sup> Mary Pollitzer, personal communication to the writer, 29 December, 2000.

<sup>225</sup> Aut VI, 43.

<sup>226</sup> Holst, 1974, No 28, Feb 27 [1917], 17.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., No. 33, March 13 [1917], 19.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 33, 13 March[1917], 19.

he said in a subdued voice-‘I feel like a naughty schoolboy who has been up before the head.’<sup>230</sup> Afterwards Holst thanked all involved, writing to WGW: ‘As for your share of it all there is nothing adequate that I know of to be said.’<sup>231</sup>

Clara could not attend the concert. Ending a long letter to Holst in May 1917, WGW adds that she had had ‘a complete nervous and physical breakdown’ and on doctor’s advice, was going to Bournemouth for at least a month:

I shall soon be ‘bereft of her who is my second self’...She comes south on Wed. The kiddies go to the school boarding house. We have no maid, I shall have to grub along as well as I can. Today has been a melancholy day for my wife, she had wanted so much to hear the CM. Now about Miss Lawton’s piano, that will have to be continued in our next.<sup>232</sup>

WGW could only sympathise with his wife’s inability to attend *The Cloud Messenger*, but paid more attention to discussion of Lawton’s piano, Holst responding: ‘Am very sorry indeed about yr wife’ while he delayed advice on the piano.<sup>233</sup> Lawton was now swiftly promoted within WGW’s musical sphere, a factor which, together with her bereavement must have precipitated Clara’s breakdown.

Lawton was a BC soloist at the Christmas concert of 1917 which contained some carols (encouraged by collections such as *The Monster Book of Carols for Church and Home*, W Scott, 1912, and the *English Carol Book* by Dearmer and Martin Shaw, 1913). Holst wrote from Thaxted on 1 December ‘We’re having a carol service in the dark tomorrow night!’<sup>234</sup> The programme comprised early Italian music, madrigals, and contemporary British music, exemplified by Vaughan Williams’s *Willow-wood*, and songs by Parry, Balfour Gardiner, Butterworth, Ireland and Ernest Walker. However the *Liebesheder Waltzes* for vocal quartet and piano duet by Brahms ended the concert.

At AC, an Honours School in English and History had been established. The two year degree had been abolished, and post-graduate schemes were in the air. But finances were in a bad state. In June 1916, Hadow, appointed to the Royal Commission on Welsh University Education, became Vice-Chancellor of Durham University. His interest was now focused on Education, and he lectured to NLPS on ‘Education after the war’. Rejecting a Professorship in Music at the

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<sup>230</sup> Aut VI, 43.

<sup>231</sup> Holst, 1974, No 33, March 13 [1917], 19.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., Appendix (d), 19/5/17, 128.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., No 40, May 23<sup>rd</sup> [1917], 24.

<sup>234</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 54, Dec 1 [1917], 33.

University of California, he sought a more active role in war-time education, in 1918 receiving a knighthood.<sup>235</sup> Released immediately by the Universities' Committee, after accepting a new appointment as Director of Education for the YMCA, he took leave of absence to become Assistant Director of Staff Duties, Education, in an Army training scheme (being officially appointed in September), Professor Wight Duff becoming Acting Principal at AC. At WGW's last war-time concert at AC, on 28 March, Pergolese's *Stabat Mater*, part-songs by modern British composers, such as Ormond Anderton's 'Ode to Autumn', Bainton's 'Blow, bugle, blow', Havergal Brian's 'Ye spotted snakes', and Walker's 'In Pride of May', were sung with three WGW folk-song arrangements.

After Holst's visit to AC in 1917, WGW was co-opted onto the Music sub-Committee of NLPS, to advise with Hadow and E. Markham Lee (Cambridge University Extension Lecturer), on purchasing modern British, French, and Russian music scores. WGW lectured to NLPS on 'Exoticism in British Music' (an analysis of Holst's new methods of composition). R. R. Terry, a generous donor to the music library, lectured on 'Sea songs and Shanties'. The Dolmetschs gave an illustrated lecture on 'The original Music of Shakespeare's plays' (in honour of the Shakespeare Tercentenary), and on 3 December 1917 Canon E. H. Fellowes, spoke on 'English Madrigals' (though not published until 1921, Fellowes had just completed his *English Madrigal Composers* in 1916). WGW provided illustrations for Fellowes's lecture with a choir of women students, beginning a long association with Fellowes. WGW writes that the fact that Fellowes warmly admired his way of handling madrigals, 'allowed me to go confidently on my way'.

In 1917 WGW agreed to rehearse a local 'ladies orchestra', the Newcastle Symphony Orchestra [NSO] (founded by Editha Knocker, and led by Andrew Bevan, a pupil of Wilhelmj), with Bairstow, of York Minster, official conductor.<sup>236</sup> This subordinate position did give WGW valuable orchestral conducting experience and was socially advantageous, most members being from the élite of Northumbrian society. After a NSO concert in March 1918 when the distinguished French flautist, Louis Fleury played in Bach's Fourth Brandenburg Concerto, WGW conducted a private NSO concert, also with Fleury, at the home of ninety-year-old Lady Noble (widow of Lord Armstrong's closest assistant) at Jesmond Dene House (a setting for

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<sup>235</sup> DUJ, Vol. XXI, No 18 (NS) (June 1917), 400.

<sup>236</sup> Programmes 1917-1923, in Local Studies section, *GB-NEd*.

international soirées, and according to the Russian author Zamyatin, run with ‘inflexible standards of etiquette and decorum.’<sup>237</sup> The programme included a Bach overture, Frank Bridge’s *Suite for Orchestra*, pieces by Quantz and Blavet, Debussy’s ‘La Flûte de Pan’, and a first performance of Henschel’s *Andante Variable*, which allowed Fleury ‘to reveal his matchless execution and lovely velvety quality of tone.’<sup>238</sup>

Walford Davies briefly revisited the Western Front, accepting the rank of Major in the newly created Royal Air Force (assuming responsibility for RAF music). He returned to give the only musical lecture to NLPS in 1918.<sup>239</sup> Bainton, released from Ruhleben in 1917, ostensibly because of health problems, but perhaps at Scholes’ request, was appointed Music Director of YMCA huts at The Hague. With fellow internees from Ruhleben, he organised concerts and entertainments for interned officers and men, conducting two British Music concerts with the Amsterdam-Mengelberg Orchestra. Holst received a performance of *The Planets* on 29 November at the Queen’s Hall as a farewell gift from Gardiner before going to Salonica.<sup>240</sup> When the Great War ended on 11 November, WGW, at New Deanham, had just composed a setting from de la Mare’s *Peacock Pie*, a two part song ‘Cake & sack’, in celebration. WGW wrote: ‘The Armistice lifted a thick, suffocating pall from the minds of the nation, and the blue of the empyrean looked as if it would never be dimmed again.’<sup>241</sup> On 16 November the BC gave its first peacetime concert for four years.

### 1.3 1918 – 1923 ‘POST WAR SUCCESS AND TRIBULATIONS’

#### 1.3.1 *Competition festivals, local choirs – wider horizons*

In 1918 Arthur Eaglefield-Hull (with Hugh Allen, chairman), founded the British Music Society [BMS], publishing a monthly journal, *The Music Bulletin*. Branches opened world-wide, and WGW became local representative (and Annie Lawton, secretary). By 1920 the central Berners Street office also housed the Contemporary Music Centre (CMC), and by 1922 the British section of the

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<sup>237</sup> Myers, A, *Zamyatin in Newcastle*. ‘Literary Guide to North-east England’, Online article published by the Centre for Northern Studies, Northumbria University. ‘Literary Guide to North-east England’.[ Pages: britishlibrary.net/alan.myers/zamyatin.html. [Accessed 8 Feb. 2004]

<sup>238</sup> Review by ‘Counterpoint’ in unidentified newspaper cutting, John Whittaker’s scrapbook, 118.

<sup>239</sup> Colles, 1942, 108.

<sup>240</sup> Holst, 1974, No.69 [4 June 1918], 43-44.

<sup>241</sup> Aut VI 1.

International Society of Contemporary Music [ISCM].<sup>242</sup> During the war, ISCM's first President, Edward Dent, Cambridge lecturer, linguist and music critic, had run an International Music Conservatoire in Cromwell Road, London.<sup>243</sup> Having staged *The Magic Flute* in 1911, the war prevented Dent's next project, Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, so he became much involved with the Old Vic's 1920 production of the work.<sup>244</sup> ISCM's annual festivals began in Salzburg and Prague in 1923 and 1924.

Newcastle BMS guests, invited by WGW, included Bax, Holst, Howells, John Ireland, Vaughan Williams, and Gibbs. After the Catterall String Quartet, under BC aegis, had performed his *Lady Audrey's Suite* in February 1922, Herbert Howells gave a recital of his works to Newcastle BMS on 22 November 1922.<sup>245</sup> Beginning with piano pieces, *Sarum Sketches*, *Procession*, and *Rhapsody*, Howells played his Sonata in E major (No. 1) Op. 18 for Violin and Piano with Wall, and his *Comedy Suite* for clarinet and piano with Frederick Thurston. Songs were sung by Grace Angus, and his carol-anthems, 'A spotless Rose' and 'Here is the Little Door' (the first performed by the BC in December 1921, and the second in 1919) ended the recital. When, in 1923, Herbert Howells composed two part-songs 'The Shadows' and 'Creep afore ye gang', he dedicated both 'To Dr. Whittaker and members of the Newcastle Bach Choir', the BC performing them on 1 November 1924.<sup>246</sup> Another visitor, John Ireland, gave a Kings Hall [henceforward KH] recital in February 1923, playing his *The Island Spell*, *Chelsea Reach*, *Soho Forenoons*, *Amberley Wild Brooks*, *For Remembrance*, *On a Birthday Morning*, and *Ragamuffin*, and with Alfred Wall, two movements from his First Violin Sonata, accompanying BC soloist, Tom Purvis in his *The Land of Lost Content*, attending a reception afterwards at Tilley's restaurant, and supper at The Pen & Palette club.<sup>247</sup>

In response to a demand for local 'junketings' after the Armistice, local AMU secretary (J Hayes) proposed a monster concert on the football field, to be conducted by WGW.<sup>248</sup> This

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<sup>242</sup> Scholes, *The Mirror of Music*, Vol. 1, 467.

<sup>243</sup> Carey, H, *Duet for Two Voices*, (CUP: Cambridge, 1979), 96.

<sup>244</sup> Hugh Carey, *Duet for Two Voices*, 96.

<sup>245</sup> Howells played for BMS in St. James' Congregational Church Hall, Elswick.

<sup>246</sup> The songs were published in 1924 by Boosey & Co in their *Festival Series*.

<sup>247</sup> The King's Hall was part of the AC buildings.

<sup>248</sup> The Hyde Park musical event on 29 June 1919 (conducted by Sir Charles Harris), celebrating the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, was the probable model for the concert. The Newcastle performance was

'Peace Music Festival' with a thousand performers, including orchestra, bands and massed choirs (including the Newcastle and District Festival Choir), took place on Sunday 29 September 1919 and began with WGW's Welsh folk song arrangement 'Now let us sing, won is the day', followed by patriotic items such as Parry's 'Jerusalem', Elgar's 'Land of Hope and Glory', and Stanford's *Last Post*. Plans were laid for a second festival in 1920, WGW obtaining commissions for first performances of works by Holst and Bainton. The Corporation offered to hire the two best local bands (James Oliver's 'St. Hilda Band', and J A Wood's 'Spencer's Steel works Band'), their separate numbers also conducted by WGW who confessed that he 'would rather have faced the LSO'.<sup>249</sup> However, the players obeyed every indication from WGW, playing 'as a first class orchestra'.<sup>250</sup> Holst, initially deterred by the 'rather formidable' journey, agreed to conduct his *Two Psalms* in front of an audience which 'rivalled the immensity of a football crowd'.<sup>251</sup> WGW conducted the *Hallelujah Chorus* '...with conspicuous grip & ability' over the 'sheer overpowering sonority and mountainous sound'.<sup>252</sup> WGW (without telling Holst) requested the low basses from the bands to play the long C pedal at the end of Holst's second Psalm: 'His face was a delight when this note boomed out and provided a magnificent foundation for the climax'.<sup>253</sup> After Bainton's *A Song of Freedom* went well, both he and Holst received an ovation from the choir. WGW conducted from a wooden platform on the grass dashing to the stand for orchestral numbers. Press photographs of Oliver, Bainton, WGW and Holst on the pitch, were received with little pleasure by Holst who had not dressed up for the occasions and wrote: 'Thanks for the photos. My only consolation is that I must have afforded a little more or less innocent amusement to many a northern family circle'.<sup>254</sup>

WGW found himself a local celebrity (encouraging John Whittaker in 1918 to begin his collection of press cuttings, illustrating his son's rise to fame, maintained life-long until 1937, in a manner, according to Mary Pollitzer, that was 'meticulously chronological, neat & orderly - a

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originally planned for 19 July but postponed, perhaps to concentrate local efforts on the first North of England Tournament.

<sup>249</sup> Aut VII, 2.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>252</sup> Unidentified newspaper cutting, John Whittaker's scrapbook, 34.

<sup>253</sup> Aut VII, 3.

<sup>254</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 104, 5 October [1920], 61.

labour of love & pride indeed').<sup>255</sup> In April 1922, WGW conducted three similar concerts over a weekend at the Palace Theatre with the St. Hilda Band (and its virtuoso cornet player Arthur Laycock). Making a third trip to Newcastle in 1922, on 11 November, Holst conducted his *Ode to Death* before an audience of 10, 000 in St. James's Park. Mary Pollitzer writes: 'It was very windy out there. I was sitting 'on duty' beside the conductor's music stand, holding down the score pages.'<sup>256</sup> The appetite for outdoor events palled, Festival Choir numbers dwindled, and in 1923 WGW resigned.

In 1919, William Ellis, assistant organist at Durham Cathedral, became organist at Newcastle, inviting WGW to give a BC Cantata recital in St. Nicholas's. Holst wrote: 'I'm so glad you've got a decent vicar. That and Ellis (to whom endless greetings) ought to enable you to do big things. I wonder if you agree with me that music should either be done in a family party or in a church...it was Whitsuntide at Thaxted that convinced me first.'<sup>257</sup> WGW's 'Thaxted' materialised when Mrs Blackett-Ord invited the BC to Whitfield Hall grounds and Parish Church, ninety choristers (including WEA members) arriving in two charabancs on Saturday 10 June 1920. Press photographs show WGW conducting, Elgar-like in plus-fours, outside Whitfield Hall at what became an annual event.<sup>258</sup>

Ellis's friendship and 'an extraordinary blossoming of activities in Newcastle' placed WGW among a 'unique band of musicians at the head of affairs' with Bainton, Alfred Wall (a RCM trained violinist, brilliant accompanist 'with flawless technique and musical memory', who also played viola and 'cello and composed well)<sup>259</sup>, Potts, the Dodds brothers, Lawton, and Robert Peel.<sup>260</sup> Having adjudicated at Wansbeck Festival in 1915 and 1916, WGW now decided to establish a local competitive festival. After consultation with Bainton and the others, in January 1919, WGW launched the project at a meeting of 50 local musicians.<sup>261</sup> At George Dodd's house: 'from three till eleven in our shirt-sleeves, two or three typewriters going, we mapped out the

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<sup>255</sup> Mary Pollitzer, personal communication to the writer, 23 May 1998.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. [Press photographs of this event are in John Whittaker's scrap Book, 35]

<sup>257</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 78, June 20[1919], 47.

<sup>258</sup> Press cuttings in John Whittaker's scrapbook, 28, and in BC archive, *GB-NEMd*.

<sup>259</sup> Aut VII, 4.

<sup>260</sup> George and Herbert Yeaman Dodds were sons of George Dodds, proprietor of a music school at 14 Bentinck. George Dodds, ex-RCM, produced a two-volume publication *Voice Placing & Training Exercises*, OUP, 1927 which is still in print. Yeaman was 'an excellent pianist and organist'. Robert Peel was local Superintendent of Elementary school singing [WGW *Autobiography*, 1918-23, 4.]

<sup>261</sup> Aut VII, 5.

whole scheme, timing of classes & sessions, rooms, halls, adjudicators, stewards, combined performances.<sup>262</sup> The first 'North of England Musical Tournament' [NEMT] (later one of Britain's largest festivals) took place between 23- 28 June 1919, attracting 6000 competitors, with Deans Forster Chairman, and adjudicators R. R. Terry, Kennedy Scott, Sidney Nicholson, Cecil Sharp, Frederic Austin, Herbert Fryer, Albert Sammons and William Murdoch. Sir Henry Hadow accepted the Presidency of NEMT, but left immediately to become Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University, J B Clark becoming Tournament President.

WGW received his 'true debut' in the field of adjudication, when in 1920 he was invited to Glasgow Competitive Festival in 1920, to be welcomed as a friend by Bantock, Walford Davies, and Ernest Newman (WGW filled William McNaught's place).<sup>263</sup> Davies paced the hall, giving 'fatherly advice', as WGW spoke, discussing principles of marking, problem solving, and speech construction.<sup>264</sup> Henceforward, WGW became an energetic advocate of festivals, adjudicating all around the British Isles, personally gaining, he claimed, improved decision-making ability, communication skills, and sympathy for competitors with poor teachers. Though straight-spoken, his work was consistently appreciated. John Whittaker heard from the Provost of Hawick, after the Festival there in 1923: 'Your son has won golden opinions from all concerned'.<sup>265</sup> WGW's festival colleagues often became his friends. He admired Dunhill's calm, sound, all-round judgement, Sharp's visionary idealism, the wit of Newman and Gibbs, Davies's enthusiasm, Harvey Grace's geniality, Plunkett Green's charm, and Herbert Wiseman's ability to deal with any situation.<sup>266</sup>

WGW's favourite festival, 'the most inspiring of all', was at Leith Hill at Dorking, where 'Vaughan Williams... was its father [and] spent many nights throughout the winter going to villages & coaching the choirs, & conducted the combined performances...His benign personality shed a wondrous radiance over everything'.<sup>267</sup> Mary Pollitzer recalled his stays at Granville Road. 'RVW spent some weekends with us in Newcastle. Not a young persons' man, but a congenial

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>263</sup> Aut VII, 7.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Unidentified cutting, 1 June, 1923 (John Whittaker scrapbook, 4).

<sup>266</sup> Aut VII, 10.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 9.



friend of WG.<sup>268</sup> In March 1920 WGW performed Vaughan Williams' *Toward the Unknown Region* with ACCS. Vaughan Williams adjudicated at the NEMT during 19-26 June, and when Holst, through depression, pulled out of the first Halifax Festival, 24 and 25 November 1922, Vaughan Williams 'took the place of Mr. G. Holst...unable to fulfil the engagement previously accepted'.<sup>269</sup> Together, he and WGW judged 3000 entrants at Halifax Victoria Hall.<sup>270</sup> Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G Minor* had its first performance at Birmingham in December, the composer conducting the work with Newcastle BC on 5 May, 1923, adjudicating again at the NEMT, 12-19 of May.

WGW, an eager promoter of Bainton's works, conducted his *Sunset at Sea* with the BC in 1916 (when the latter was interned), performing his *The Vindictive Staircase* in 1919. WGW invited Bainton to be guest pianist with the choir in February 1920, when he performed pieces by Bridge, Grainger, and Ireland, before the July festival performance of *A Song of Freedom*. Bainton conducted *Sunset at Sea* with ACCS in March 1921, and the first performance of his Carnegie Award winning Symphony *Before Sunrise* with the CU in April (reviewed favourably by Colles of *The Times*).<sup>271</sup> In gratitude, two months later, Bainton began to write *A Hymn to God the Father*, for Chorus and orchestra, dedicated to WGW (only completed in 1926 for its first performance on 10 May in Worcester Cathedral at the Three Choirs Festival).

WGW's deepest friendship, however, was with Holst. Sailing from Constantinople in 1919, Holst wrote with news of his Carnegie Award for *The Hymn of Jesus*, seeming chiefly occupied with arrangements for a 'bike ride' with WGW and Balfour Gardiner: 'I want to bring you to Thaxted and it would be jolly if we could cycle from there through Cambridge to Ashampstead. Anyway we'll fix up a terrific time.'<sup>272</sup> Holst quashed a more ambitious scheme suggested by WGW (a first time bike owner), writing on 12 July 'What the YMCA do you mean by suggesting such physical tortures? Balfour and I had planned a nice gentle fat middle aged tour for you-...And then you come along with your 600 miles record stunt! NO. I can't do it. I haven't a byke or the energy or the will.'<sup>273</sup> When WGW went on to implement some of his plan, Holst

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<sup>268</sup> Mary Pollitzer, Personal communication to the writer, June 1999.

<sup>269</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 132, November 17, 1922, 75.

<sup>270</sup> Unidentified newspaper cutting, John Whittaker's scrapbook, a. I.

<sup>271</sup> Bainton, 32.

<sup>272</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 78, 20 June [1919], 47.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., No. 79, 12 July [1919], 47.

was happy to meet him whenever possible, ending a July letter 'Longing to see you.'<sup>274</sup> In 1921 WGW attended Holst's Whitsun festival, a first modern performance of Purcell's *Dioclesian* at Isleworth (in outdoor pageant form, written by Jane Joseph, costumes designed by Lasker and Joseph) prepared by Holst, who, delighted wrote: 'we shall have a great time and it's overwhelming to think that we shall have you [double underlining].'<sup>275</sup>

Holst always encouraged WGW's attempts at composition, being scrupulously honest in his criticism. He disliked two Scottish folk song settings of WGW's, prize winners in a competition organised by Sir Hugh Robertson in May 1919, which offered publication by Curwen, and performance by Robertson's Glasgow Orpheus Choir:

I liked your two first songs at the Oriana enormously. And I was struck by the contrast between them and your Scottish folksong settings which somehow seem to miss fire...It is a limited form of art and you've done splendid work in it but when one works so long in a small form mannerisms are almost inevitable so I hope 1920 will produce a rich crop of original things from you and then any folksong settings you do afterwards will have a fresh outlook'.<sup>276</sup>

Afterwards he relented: 'If your folksongs insist on coming let' em all come! Never mind me or anyone else-write what comes.'<sup>277</sup> Receiving two de la Mare settings from WGW in April 1918, Holst wrote: 'I love de la Mare and look forward to a great treat.'<sup>278</sup> In May, Ursula Greville (new editor of *The Sackbut* magazine) performed these songs at an Elkin & Curwen promotional concert in Newcastle. (In December Greville was soloist with the CU in *The Cloud Messenger*.) In December Holst again referred to them: 'It is good to have those two songs which I have loved since you first sang them to me...although I have often heard them since I have never heard them so well interpreted.'<sup>279</sup>

In summer 1919, WGW set out to win a Carnegie Award himself, emulating the successes of Bainton, Bantock, Boughton, Vaughan Williams and Wall. He left the interruptions of Granville Road to work at another, remoter cottage at 'Boghead' on the Whitfield estate of Mrs Blackett-Ord (an NSO contact) in the West Allen Valley, 'not only among the Northumbrian hills, but perched upon the summit of one of them!'<sup>280</sup> At forty-two, he bought a bike (exchanged subsequently for a second-hand motor bike and side-car) to negotiate the steep cart-track from

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid., No. 81, [July 1919], 49.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., No. 114, 27 April [1921], 67.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., No 91, Feb. 1 [1920], 54.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., No 92, March 7 [1920], 55.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., No 122, December 28, 71.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., No 134, December 28 [1922], 76.

<sup>280</sup> Mary Pollitzer. 'Second Recollection', (unused in Jonathan's article on 'My Grandmother'), *GB-Gsm*.

the village of Ninebanks.<sup>281</sup> Clara ‘dreaded these sojourns’ in primitive conditions, with water, coal, and earth-closet at a distance (WGW claimed Boghead ‘preserved his sanity’, and grew vegetables) but nevertheless demonstrated her talent for home-making, as described by her daughter, Mary, ‘...my remembrance of that Living Room is one of warmth and security [...] she created a nucleus of colour, cleanliness and comfort for us all. She was the heart of the matter—she, who disliked it all most, and for whom no warmth was forthcoming from her life’s partner.’<sup>282</sup> In an ex-army hut, planted upon the only piece of non-sloping land, WGW ‘worked constantly, sheet upon sheet of manuscript paper overflowing his desk.’ WGW composed a Theme and Variations for Piano and Strings on an original theme, *Among the Northumbrian Hills*, dedicated to Gustav Holst, both daughters receiving a ‘representative theme’ in the quintet: ‘Only a bar or two each, but they keep recurring.’<sup>283</sup> (WGW wrote schools songs too, dedicating ‘Buttercups and Daisies’, to AL [Annie Lawton], and ‘Old King Caraway’, to Ethel Waddington.) In August WGW played in a first performance at an ISM [Incorporated Society of Musicians] meeting.<sup>284</sup> *Among the Northumbrian Hills* received a Carnegie award in May 1921. ‘Hooray! Proudanappy to be Dedicatee’ wrote Holst to WGW on 24 May.<sup>285</sup> It was published by Stainer & Bell for the Carnegie Trust. At a crowded BMS concert in the King Edward VII Art Gallery at AC the three local winners and friends performed their works: Wall’s piano quartet, WGW’s piano quintet, and, rather than Bainton’s *Before Sunrise*, a piano reduction of his Symphonic Poem *Paracelsus* (soon to be given a Proms first performance by Henry Wood). One local critic wrote of WGW’s piece: ‘The work is interesting rather than appealing’.<sup>286</sup> Another thought ‘a student of recent musical development’ would take interest in the work, criticising the ‘extreme dissonance’ in numbers 6-8.<sup>287</sup> However, among several admiring voices, one critic admitted feeling immersed in the ‘fantasy, grace and grandeur’ of the pictures conjured up which ‘made the Northumbrian Hills appear nearly as beautiful and rugged and picturesque as they actually are’.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Mary Pollitzer, ‘Second Recollection’, *GB-Gsm*.

<sup>284</sup> Clarrie letters, Handwritten letter from Mary Pollitzer to Clarrie Whittaker, written on Whittaker Centenary notepaper, 17 December, 1977.

<sup>285</sup> Holst, 1974, No 115, [24 May 1921], 67.

<sup>286</sup> Unidentified press cutting, John Whittaker’s scrapbook, B.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

An Oxford and Cambridge inspired vogue for Greek University plays (stimulated by Vaughan Williams's *The Wasps of Aristophanes* in 1909), continued, the emphasis now on the use of good English translations. A lecture by Hadow to NLPS on 'Aristophanes' took place in 1920. Rutland Boughton worked on *Alkestis* by Euripides (performed in 1922), Holst completing *Seven Choruses from the Alkestis of Euripides*. WGW composed music for *The Electra of Euripides*, (Gilbert Murray's translation) for the Classical Association meeting at Durham, held between April 14-16 1920, thirty members motoring to AC for the performance. WGW's music '...hit exactly the right note, being vivid and expressive, without being too ambitious or archaic'.<sup>289</sup> In July, the producer, Classics Professor, Dr Wight Duff, attended Aberdeen University to receive an honorary degree of LLD, and obtained a commission for WGW to compose twelve *Choruses from the Chæphoroi of Æschylus of The House of Atreus* (Agamemnon and Chæphoroi), to be conducted by WGW in November in the Music Hall, Aberdeen University.<sup>290</sup> WGW worked on these at Boghead during the summer, helped by Holst who strove to eliminate 'the brass 'stodge' (warning that 'brass sound 400 p. cent louder to the audience than they do to you'<sup>291</sup>. Critic Percy Gordon of *The Glasgow Herald* liked the piece 'which with interpretive beauty and impressiveness got far beyond Parry's flowing melodies', being 'modern in idiom, with no attempt to be modal'.<sup>292</sup> Holst wrote: 'Many many congratulations on Aberdeen. You see what happens the moment you leave your benighted city.'<sup>293</sup> Bainton afterwards conducted the *Prelude* with the NPO at the Palace Theatre. His friend Dan Godfrey invited WGW to conduct it at the Winter Gardens, Bournemouth, in May 1921. Godfrey 'with all the cunning of that experienced musician' had rehearsed them perfectly beforehand. <sup>294</sup>

In September 1921 WGW's *North Countrie Ballads, Songs, & Pipe-Tunes* (largely completed before 1914) were published in two volumes by Curwen (a short version of 23 songs was also published for use in school).<sup>295</sup> Holst wrote on 2 October: 'The books of songs make a feast indeed. Thanks 1000 times. I have not heard the piano parts yet and have not even looked at

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<sup>289</sup> DUJ, Vol. XXII, No 6, July 1920.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., Vol. XXII, No 6, July 1920, 220.

<sup>291</sup> Holst, 1974, 17 October, 1920.

<sup>292</sup> Percy Gordon review, *Glasgow Herald*, November 1920, John Whittaker's scrapbook, 13.

<sup>293</sup> Holst, 1974, No 109, 3 December, 1920, 64.

<sup>294</sup> Aut VII, 13.

<sup>295</sup> DUJ Vol. XXII, No 10, December 1921.

them much yet because the tunes have fascinated me. Would you allow me to murder two or three of them in a ballet for Chicago?'<sup>296</sup> WGW's resentment at Holst's prevarication caused Holst to respond on 6 October: 'Have I really treated you badly? I should be deeply sorry to think so but surely it is justifiable to postpone anything one knows will be a treat when things are more hectic than usual.'<sup>297</sup> Speaking of WGW's photographs taken at Hereford, Holst writes: 'The photos are grand - bless you for them. But where are you? An unknown or rather anonymous Person begs to invite you to London for the Planets under Coates on November 7.'<sup>298</sup> Holst also asked WGW to an 'expenses paid', performance of a pageant in Church House, Westminster, with music arranged by Holst.<sup>299</sup>

In early June 1923, WGW conducted his own music at *A Pageant of Northumbria* at the Theatre Royal (a collaborative production with AC School of Art and Mr R. J S Bertram), WGW's music using many old local melodies. He was assisted by Percy Turnbull (and also Arthur Milner and Peel), an ex-student of the Art School, now at the RCM, who helped with the scoring and composing of two scenes.<sup>300</sup> A concealed chorus of BC members, and WGW's pupil Archie Armstrong 'sang beautifully'.<sup>301</sup> The Pageant was repeated in 1926. WGW achieved a long-held ambition in 1919, when, with a recommendation from Coward, he became conductor of the re-formed CU. But 'Pulling things together after the lamentable hiatus of the first war was a severe struggle', with lapsed subscribers, difficulty in regaining numbers and efficiency, and no funds for a professional orchestra.<sup>302</sup> Worse, local critics 'gave the false idea that performances were poor, and spoke of 'the glorious past'.<sup>303</sup> In May 1919, WGW conducted works he considered 'suitable' after the war, Elgar's works (*Sursum Corda*, *Te Deum and Benedictus*, 'The Sun Goeth down', from *The Kingdom*, and *Elegy*), Parry's *Voces Clamantium*, Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis*, Bridge's 'Lament' for strings, and songs from *The Motherland Song Book*. The antipathetic committee requested that Coward conduct *The Messiah* in December. Holst

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<sup>296</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 119, 6 October. [1921], 69.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., No. 120, 6 October [1921], 69.

<sup>298</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 120, 6 October, [1921], 70.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

<sup>300</sup> Frank Bridge's similarly collaborative *The Pageant of London* of 1911, included music by Vaughan Williams, McEwen, Holst, Blafour Gardiner, Edward German, Frederick Austin and others.

<sup>301</sup> DUJ, Vol. XXIII no. 3 June, 1923, 588.

<sup>302</sup> Aut VII, 26.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 28.

commiserated: 'I'm deeply sorry for your disappointment. Forget all about it and have a good rest...be my guest anywhere, anytime, anyday round about your lecture in London.'<sup>304</sup> In February 1920 WGW conducted Byrd's *Mass for 4 voices*, Bridge's *A Prayer*, Elgar's 'Go, Song of Mine', Bach's CC No 158, with Herbert Parker, who sang Vaughan Williams's *Five Mystical Songs*. With 'enemies within as well as without', some committee members still regretting Preston's departure, a proposal to close the CU was defeated, by one vote.<sup>305</sup> Holst sympathised 'the news in yr letter is damnable. Newcastle doesn't deserve you a bit and you ought to do work in London or somewhere and then people would realise what they had lost'.<sup>306</sup> WGW could find another big choir: 'Otherwise we must just get you boosted – I wonder if Persevering Percy would take it on.'<sup>307</sup> Holst could not attend the CU's performance of *The Cloud Messenger* on 1 December 1920 with Ursula Greville (who also sang in Elgar's *The Spirit of England*). Holst reacted angrily to news of the lamentably small audience: 'Would I could have been there...You are a great man and you have brought the CM to life after it was half killed and entirely damned and you have done other wonderful things on my behalf but there is one thing that I doubt if even you could do and that is to teach me to forgive your city for its scandalous treatment and neglect of music and you.'<sup>308</sup>

WGW's solution to some of his problems at the CU was to utilise the support of friends. He invited Bainton to conduct *Before Sunrise* with NPO, in the Town Hall. When WGW conducted the first, sixth and seventh movements of Bantock's *Vanity of Vanities* in December 1921, Bantock's brilliant student, Eric Fogg, must have attended, since he gave a recital of his compositions to Newcastle BMS two days later. H Orsmund Anderton, Bantock's secretary, wrote complimentary pen portraits, published in November and December's *Musical Opinion* entitled 'Castor and Pollux' (referring to the Rameau piece conducted by WGW at AC in October) of Bainton (Castor) and WGW (Pollux).<sup>309</sup> In 1921 Harry Embleton, resident in Gateshead, became CU President. With Vice-President, J B Clark, secretary, Richard Humphrey, and other CU officials (Deans Forster, J S Hebron, and Robert and Frank Winter) all BC

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<sup>304</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 89, 22 December [1919], 53.

<sup>305</sup> Aut VII, 28.

<sup>306</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 101, Sunday [August 1920], 59.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid. The reference is to Percy Scholes.

<sup>308</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 109, 3 December [1920], 64.

<sup>309</sup> *Musical Opinion*, December 1920, 231. (WGW had performed Anderton's 'Ode to Autumn' in an AC concert on 28 March 1918.)

supporters, matters improved. Embleton's generous offer to fund a performance of Elgar's *Gerontius* gave WGW his unique opportunity of conducting an entirely professional orchestra (Leeds Symphony Orchestra) in Newcastle. The concert narrowly missed disaster when Frank Mullings (*Gerontius*) wired on 23 March (the day of the concert) to say he was very ill, appearing white-faced two-thirds of the way through the rehearsal. A strong drug from a local doctor, and tea at Granville Terrace cheered him, but at the concert:

When he began 'Jesu, Maria - I am near unto death' the situation was so realistic that I could feel a sensational thrill run through the hall. Mullings warmed up gradually and towards the end sang in that marvellous way which distinguished him from all the tenors I have ever heard. He could scale heights that seemed almost super-human. He was confined to his bed for several days.<sup>310</sup>

In 1922, the CU performed Walford Davies's *Everyman*, Gardiner's *News from Wydad*, and arias from *The Fairy Queen* sung by Raymond Hartley. Bantock's *The Vanity of Vanities* was given in its entirety in March 1923, accompanied by Bainton and Wall. The first performance of Bax's *This World's Joie* was given in a concert of Tudor music on Wednesday 9 April in the Town Hall.

In December 1918, the women's choir of AC sang Schubert's *Psalm 23*, Bach's Duet Cantata No. 57, *Blessed is the Man*, Gustave Ferrari's vocal suite *Impressions* and Debussy's *The Blessed Damsel*. Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite* was played as a piano duct. In March 1919, with a mixed choir again, WGW conducted *For the Fallen*, by Cyril Rootham (a Ruhleben internee, Dent's Cambridge contemporary), deemed 'heavy and depressing in nature' by *The Yorkshire Post* critic, before reaching 'a striking and beautiful climax'.<sup>311</sup> Holst's *Hymn to Dionysus*, Walker's *Five songs from England's helicon*, and Motets by Gabrieli and Victoria were sung, with vocal quartets from Stelling, Lawton, Peel and Clapperton. Bridge songs, sung by Miss Panamor, were followed by *Traditional sea songs* arranged by Lucy Broadwood and Vaughan Williams 'racily sung' by E J Potts. In Bach's CC No. 95 'The balance was as good as could be got with a preponderance of sopranos and altos'<sup>312</sup>

In 1919, Sir Theodore Morison succeeded Hadow at AC. With no prospect of a professorship, and his salary at pre-war level, WGW's enthusiasm for his post as 'Reader in Choral Music' had waned. After their war experiences, some male students were apt to be troublesome in Normal classes. At 'Choral' they concentrated, but large numbers meant

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<sup>310</sup> Aut VII, 29.

<sup>311</sup> *Yorkshire Post* criticism, reproduced in DUJ, Vol. XXII, No. 5, (March 1920), 154.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*

rehearsals took place in the lecture theatre. Holst suggested charging the CS, as at Reading, giving news from Gardiner of a professorship at Johannesburg-‘£1,100 to begin with!’, writing in September 1920:

Reader’ at £150 does not sound good enough. It’s just like you to be surprised at the feeling expressed.(These people will be surprised if they ever learn my feelings towards Armstrong in general and Hadow in particular!). Anyway you’d better let everybody know that I am going to do my best to get you out of Newcastle because it’s time you were treated as you deserve. The only thing to equal it was CVS’s [Stanford’s] treatment of RVW 25 yrs ago.<sup>313</sup>

In March 1920, ACCS performed Holst’s *Turn Back, O man*, his *Diverus and Lazarus*, and Vaughan Williams’ *Toward the Unknown Region* and *Bushes and Briars*. Blanche Newcombe sang Franck, Duparc, and Grechaninov songs, and the choir performed the ‘Song of the haulers on the Volga’, WGW’s ‘Ca’ Hawkie’, and ‘The Bonny fisher Lad’. In December a Bach Advent CC No. 61, *Come Thou Blessed Saviour*, with songs by Scott, Austin, Warlock (‘As Ever I Saw’), and WGW (‘The Ship of Rio’). Brahms’s *Love Song Waltzes*, and Sailor Shanties by R. R. Terry were sung. Bainton conducted his *Sunset at Sea* in 1921, performed with Purcell’s *Dioclesian* music (loaned by Holst), and WGW’s arrangement ‘Blow the wind Southerly. In 1922, WGW conducted Brahms’s *Song of Destiny* and Bach’s *Magnificat*.

The Newcastle BC, WGW’s own small choir had ‘won its own niche in Newcastle life’.<sup>314</sup> The achievements of WGW’s creation, and main interest are detailed in chapter three, but a key factor in its success was that financial matters were taken care of by WGW’s ‘three good men and true’, J B Clark, and Walter and Percy Corder (with accountants Deans Forster and Frederick Winter).<sup>315</sup> Technical standards were high, drawing praise from Holst after the *Hymn of Jesus* performance on Saturday 5 March 1921, who after writing in glowing terms concluded ‘But my greatest delight was in their flexibility which rivalled that of a first rate orchestra – I know of no other body of singers who equal them in this.’<sup>316</sup> Although Holst invited the BC to perform the work in London, WGW reluctantly declined: ‘conditions were such that could be fulfilled only by a body of 6 or 7 times as great numerically’.<sup>317</sup> Twice yearly cantata recitals were given in Newcastle Cathedral, and many London musicians and composers contributed in some way to

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<sup>313</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 103, [September 1920], 60.

<sup>314</sup> Aut VII, 13.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Letter in archive of the BC, GB-NEmd.

<sup>317</sup> Choir report for the season, GB-NEmd.



concerts in the KH. Balfour Gardiner attended a recital of his entire unaccompanied choral works in November 1920, and a BMS reception. He also adjudicated at the NEMT in 1921, dedicating a group of five piano pieces to WGW (*Shenadoah* published in 1922, the first piece named 'Jesmond'). Harriet Cohen met WGW at Bournemouth in May 1921, volunteering to play for expenses only, performing Bach's D minor concerto at a BC concert in November 1921, with the second Sonata by Bax, her close companion. After Bax's Quartet in G major was performed by the Catterall String Quartet, in a BC chamber music series on the 1 March 1922, Bax, in appreciation, inscribed his motet *This Worldes Joie*, completed on 13 March, to WGW. On 16 December, Bax played his first Violin Sonata in E major with Wall at the BC's Christmas concert, when his motet *Mater Ora Filium* was also sung. *This Worldes Joie* was first performed by the CU, on Wednesday 9 April 1924 in Newcastle Town Hall. Always supportive of WGW, Clara 'exerted every effort within her power to forward his ideals, by the welcoming, putting up and entertaining of these musicians from London, which became an increasing strain as her deafness grew more severe'.<sup>318</sup> Holst asked WGW to join him and Vaughan Williams in September 1921 at the first Hereford Three Choirs Festival since 1912, so they could go for 'a mild tour-walking or biking-over the Malvern Hills afterwards'.<sup>319</sup> Percy Hull, Hereford Cathedral organist, had asked Bainton to conduct 'quite a Ruhleben programme', Bainton's *Three pieces for orchestra*, and works by Dale, Frederick Keel, and Percy Hull. Holst's *Hymn of Jesus* achieved notable success on the 8 September. Afterwards 'Holst, Vaughan Williams, and WG Whittaker set off from Hereford on a walking tour through the surrounding country side. WGW had brought his camera and took several photographs of the two composers in relaxed mood, clad in informal hiking clothes'.<sup>320</sup> During the tour, Vaughan Williams and Holst persuaded WGW to bring the BC to London.

The BC's 'three day Bach Festival in London', from 22 February 1922, was completely organised by Jane Joseph. The BC's reputation was assured by two packed performances at the Aeolian Hall, one with the distinguished harpsichordist, Mrs Violet Gordon Woodhouse, a pupil of Dolmetsch. On Friday, cantatas were performed in St. Michael's, Cornhill, with an orchestra and organist Harold Darke, some choristers remaining to join in a concert at the Steinway Hall

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<sup>318</sup> Mary Pollitzer, *The Viking Pioneer*, 45.

<sup>319</sup> Holst, 1974, No 113, April 3 [1921], 66.

<sup>320</sup> Short, M., *Gustav Holst: The Man and His Music*, (OUP:London, 1990), 195.

on Saturday afternoon, as part of a series of concerts of old music, given by Dorothy Silk.<sup>321</sup> The BC was also steeped in the music of the Tudor composers, and contemporary British music, WGW writes: 'Our adventures in British music were exciting, & drew so much attention that N/c was spoken of as 'the English Bayreuth'.<sup>322</sup> WGW also, rather self-indulgently, for a time, ran a series of chamber music concerts for the 'Bach Choir Society', including, in October 1922, a week long Beethoven festival, given by the London String Quartet, a concept praised as original by *The Yorkshire Post*, since it celebrated the composer rather than performers.

Following the first performance of Holst's *Ode to Death* in St. James's Park on the afternoon of 11 November, Holst, after receiving a BMS reception at Tilley's, conducted the *Ode* again with the BC at 8 pm in the KH. But his personality, strained by his new role as a popular composer, was transformed.<sup>323</sup> The choristers, eagerly anticipating Holst's visit, were confronted by his changed attitude both to choral music and them, as he progressed towards the nervous breakdown which he suffered the following year. His lack of encouragement left the choir in a state of 'sheer exhaustion & desperation' according to WGW.<sup>324</sup> Even a local press report mentioned that the choir seemed 'below par' on a couple of occasions, though Holst received a great ovation.<sup>325</sup> Confidence was restored when Vaughan Williams conducted the BC in his *Mass in G minor* in the Cathedral on May 5, 1923. He afterwards sent warmest thanks: 'I know what hard work and perseverance such perfection must have entailed...it was indeed a great experience for me to hear my music so beautifully sung.'<sup>326</sup>

In March 1920, Hamilton Harty, known for his 'intimacy with his orchestra' and *penchant* for Berlioz and Mozart, became the official conductor of the Newcastle Symphony Orchestra's [Henceforward NSO].<sup>327</sup> He took over at the March 1920 concert at the Hippodrome Theatre (with harpist Marie Goossens).<sup>328</sup> After leaving the Navy, Harty had assumed some of Michael

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<sup>321</sup> *Newcastle Journal* report of the concert, BC Archives, GB-NEmd.

RVW had only just taken over from Hugh Allen as conductor of the London Bach Choir.

<sup>322</sup> Aut VII, 16.

<sup>323</sup> Holst, I., 82.

<sup>324</sup> Aut VII, 22.

<sup>325</sup> Undated newspaper cutting, BC archive, GB-NEmd.

<sup>326</sup> Letter from Vaughan Williams, BC archive, GB-NEmd..

<sup>327</sup> Shore, B, 'Sir Hamilton Harty', *The Orchestra Speaks* (Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd: London, 1938), 95. Shore also said of Harty that he was 'one of those who wish to know their men', finding him 'an exquisite musician, full of imagination and spontaneity, and with the wayward spirit of the true virtuoso'.

<sup>328</sup> Unidentified press cutting, John Whittaker's scrapbook, 118.

Baling's work and stood in for Beecham at a *Messiah* performance in December 1919 when he was offered the conductorship of the Hallé (accepting the appointment in April 1920).<sup>329</sup> In Newcastle, Harty conducted Tchaikowsky's *Serenade for Strings*, his wife, soprano Agnes Nicholls, sang from Harty's 'Six Songs of Ireland', Kennedy-Fraser's 'Kishmul's Galley', and Elgar's *Starlight Express*. The link with Harty gave WGW valuable experience as 'many felt that London had nothing to compare with the Hallé'.<sup>330</sup> Holst had sent WGW parts of his *St Paul's Suite* in July 1919, and score in November, but it was not performed until 1921, in a charity concert for Russian child refugees when 'careful foundation work by Dr Whittaker, and six hours of rehearsal from Henry Wood brought the string playing to a pitch of excellence scarcely ever before attained by the NSO', Chausson's *Les Papillons*, and Ravel's *Nicolette* being also sung by the Russian soprano Mme. Makushina.<sup>331</sup> In 1921 Nicholls sang Weber's 'Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster', Butterworth's 'Come, my own one', and Irish Country Songs by Harty. Anderson-Tyrer played Tchaikowsky's piano concerto in March 1922, with Ravel's *Ma Mère l'Oye*, and Dvořák's symphony *From the New World*. In December, Borodin's *Prince Igor*, Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, and Bizet's *Carmen* were played, and Maurice Dambois played Saint-Saëns's cello concerto in A Minor.<sup>332</sup> WGW left the orchestra in 1923, after rehearsing Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, and Tchaikowsky's *Casse-Noisette Suite*. In 1931 George Dodds, WGW's successor, now working under Henry Wood, wrote a summary of the orchestra's work for the *Radio Times*:

The late Hildegard Werner, musician and writer on various topics founded and conducted a ladies orchestra. After her death, this became the Newcastle Symphony Orchestra, with professional leads and winds. The concerts are conducted by visiting conductors, the late Julian Clifford, Dr Bairstow, Miss Editha Knocker, Sir Hamilton Harty and at present, Sir Henry Wood. Four years ago Harty informed our local Press that this orchestra was the most efficient amateur orchestra in the United Kingdom. The 'spade work' is performed under a local musician, Dr. Whittaker and the writer being the responsible persons.<sup>333</sup>

In 1919 WGW also founded and conducted his own orchestra, AC Orchestral Society [Henceforward ACOS]. Members 'sprang from nowhere', Percy Corder, a member of Council,

<sup>329</sup> Philip Hammond, edit David Greer, *Hamilton Harty*, (Blackstaff Press: Belfast, 1978), 31.

<sup>330</sup> Hammond, 35.

<sup>331</sup> Undated, unidentified, cutting, following the announcement of WGW's doctoral award. John Whittaker's scrap book, 68q.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>333</sup> Dodds, G., 'Music in Newcastle', *The Radio Times*, (8 May, 1931).

donating woodwind and brass instruments.<sup>334</sup> WGW conducted Mozart's 'Haffner' Symphony, No 35, music from Purcell's *Dioclesian*, Gluck's Overture to *Alceste* and dances from *Iphigenie en Aulide*, and Rameau's Dances from *Castor and Pollux*. In 1922 Parry's *Lady Radnor Suite*, and Dunhill's *Chiddingfold Suite* were performed, and, in 1923, Holst's *St. Paul's Suite*.

The post-war lecture boom sent NLPS's membership soaring to five thousand by 1920, averaging attendances of 600. WGW lectured in 1919 on 'Modern British folk music settings' (and on 'Folk Music' for a Cambridge University Extension course) and Edgar Bainton on 'My Four and a Half Years as prisoner of war'. Sharp (now advisor to H A L Fisher, President of the Board of Education) lectured on 'Folk songs of the Southern Appalachians', following his visit there in 1916-1918. Dolmetsch spoke on 'Old English music, dances and musical instruments'. A packed lecture theatre heard Marjory Kennedy-Fraser's lectures in 1919 and 1920, 'Songs of the Hebrides' (her prominence following Bantock's invitation to Birmingham in June 1917). WGW had conducted Bantock's *Sea Woman's Croon* (with Fraser's libretto) in 1918. In 1921, Vaughan Williams lectured on 'Folk Song', R. R. Terry on 'The mediaeval mind in music', Ernest Newman on 'Style, manner and mannerism in music', and Bainton discussed 'The Present musical Horizon', and 'Mozart to Scriabin'.

In 1921, WGW began to give University Tutorial Classes for the Workers' Educational Association [WEA], and on Saturday 12 November launched a series of lectures at AC, open to all students, speaking on 'Tendencies of Modern Music'. In 1922 WGW lectured to the Church Musicians' Union [CMU] on Bach Cantatas. This series of lectures, published in *Organist & Choirmaster*, became the basis of WGW's *Fugitive Notes on Some Cantatas*. From September 1922, WGW gave a course of 12 Cambridge University Extension classes on *The Appreciation of music*. His lectures averaged attendances of 394, and classes 120. Music could be taken for a BA degree at AC.<sup>335</sup>

On 11 March 1920 Monsieur Lucien Poincaré (university administrator, and brother of President Raymond Poincaré) announced (at the opening of an Information Bureau for French Universities at 5 Russell Square, London) that WGW was one of five British recipients of the

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<sup>334</sup> Aut VII, 12.

WGW writes that a student, Waters, requested the orchestra be founded. Although WGW at the time was 'fully occupied' Water's persistence prevailed.

<sup>335</sup> DUJ, NS, Principal's report, NS, Vol. XXIII (December 1922), 461-462.

rank of *Officier d'Académie* from the French Government, bestowed on him for services as an ambassador for modern French music: 'We do not think there is a more versatile or more generally gifted musician anywhere.'<sup>336</sup> WGW's involvement with the British *Société des Concerts Français* and his 'methodical series of lectures, with carefully chosen examples, over fifteen years' which spread the knowledge of French music in the north and rendering Newcastle 'a centre for study of French music' had gained him this reputation.<sup>337</sup>

One accolade led to another. WGW was surprised to hear that the Durham Senate had accepted a proposal to grant him his doctoral degree without examination (not as an honorary degree, but a belated award of the degree denied by Bridge). With no available records of the decision, the exact circumstances remain obscure, but WGW received the doctorate at a Convocation on Tuesday 28 June 1921, in Durham Castle Hall. WGW explains that, due to his reputation for public work in the north of England, his popular folk-song arrangements, and recent Carnegie Award, 'The situation had become anomalous and a harmful reflection on Durham musical degrees...so Durham saved face.'<sup>338</sup> A Council member told WGW that a colleague said 'You can just tell Whittaker privately that we realise that Bridge made a bad mistake'.<sup>339</sup> Holst, with a fixed rule against accepting degrees or titles, sent no congratulations, writing on 18 July, 'I hope the Doctorate will make its due effect on your benighted Village and bring the good luck and comfort that is so long overdue.'<sup>340</sup> When discussing the subject of a lecture to give to Newcastle BMS that autumn, he joked: 'Would 'The education of a composer do? I've ideas for a continuation called 'The teaching of composition' Or would you like me to damn exams for 90 minutes?'<sup>341</sup>

When in 1919 Percy Scholes became director of holiday courses, in class-singing, pianoforte tuition, and musical appreciation for the Board of Education at the RCM, he invited WGW to lecture. Students made daily visits to Queen's Hall Promenade concerts and utilised the new Weber 'Pianola' room, installed by Scholes probably the chief British exponent of this technology in the educational field (a facility aimed at familiarizing students with Symphonies and

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<sup>336</sup> Unidentified cutting, John Whittaker's scrapbook, 2.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> Aut V, 10.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 117, July 18 [1921], 68.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

other long works). The Aeolian company of New York was based at the Aeolian Hall, New Bond Street. From 1920 the 'Pianola room' was equipped with an Aeolian grand Duo-Art Pianola piano.<sup>342</sup> Scholes recruited WGW to the scheme and the latter advertised it in June 1921, in NEMT's brochure.<sup>343</sup> WGW had his own 'Pianola' room installed at AC on 11 February 1922.<sup>344</sup> (Later Percy Turnbull and Robin Milford, RCM students and OUP contacts of WGW, worked for the Aeolian Company.)<sup>345</sup> Scholes's fascination with technical developments in music, led him towards wireless broadcasting, and he became music editor, or first critic, for the earliest editions of *The Radio Times*, beginning on 30 September 1923.

Howells's visit to Newcastle in October 1922, suggested to WGW a practical method of travelling abroad. After joining the RCM staff in 1920, Howells had become an Associated Board of Music [AB] examiner, touring South Africa for the Board in 1921. He was about to tour Canada in 1923. When Dr. Percy Buck, an AB committee member, lectured at NLPS on 6 January 1923 (on 'The elements of artistic criticism'), he took tea at Granville Road. Probably after enquiries from WGW, Buck invited WGW to undertake an AB examination tour in Australia starting in August, an offer WGW accepted immediately. Later the date was advanced to July, but, despite organisational difficulties, WGW agreed.

Both Scholes and Buck, music master of Harrow School (1901-27), were long time friends and had connections with Oxford University Press [OUP].<sup>346</sup> Buck had met a young educational music representative in the course of his work, Hubert Foss, who had the idea of editing an educational book with ten chapters, written by distinguished contributors, *The Heritage of Music*. Scholes claimed to have introduced both Foss and WGW to the Press.<sup>347</sup> Foss approached Humphrey Milford of OUP in 1922. Whether the idea for WGW to edit choral and solo songs in a series of inexpensive leaflets *Oxford Choral Songs* appeared at this time, or during WGW's meeting with Buck (who would have realised only too well the value of such a series), is

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<sup>342</sup> Morrish, 63.

<sup>343</sup> North of England Musical Tournament brochure, June 1921, *GB-NEd*. Later, in 1927, Scholes visited Newcastle and spoke on the subject in the King's Hall, AC (John Whittaker's scrapbook, 12c).

<sup>344</sup> John Whittaker's scrapbook, 20J.

<sup>345</sup> Bowman, R, and Dibble, J, notes from CD 'The Songs & Part Songs of Percy Turnbull', Somm, Céléste Series, SOMMCD 020 DDD.

<sup>346</sup> See Chapter IV on the subject of OUP.

<sup>347</sup> Letter from Scholes to WGW, 27 April, 1931, *CA-On*.

a matter for conjecture. At any rate WGW launched his project at OUP with great enthusiasm. The editing tasks altered his pattern of work, limiting his time for composition, but it was a welcome change from his many teaching and conducting commitments, a good source of income. He was not alone in feeling the need for change and travel. Holst declined an invitation to adjudicate at the NEMT in 1923, being about to accept an invitation to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.<sup>348</sup> Vaughan Williams had already visited America in May 1922, a guest of Carl Stoeckel, to conduct his *Pastoral* Symphony at Norfolk, Connecticut. With Vaughan Williams now fifty, Holst forty-eight, and WGW soon forty seven, it was a time for re-assessment.

In February 1923 Holst fell from the platform of University College Hall, Reading sustaining severe concussion (both WGW and Mary Pollitzer writing that he was never the same again). Imogen Holst recalled: 'The damage was more deadly than he could realize, and it was many years before he recovered from the after-effects of the accident.'<sup>349</sup> He had already decided to leave Reading, but was preparing Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G Minor* (dedicated to Holst and the Whitsuntide singers) for his summer concert at Morley College. In May Vaughan Williams conducted the work in Newcastle and between 12-19 May joined Frederick Keel, W H Reed, Harold Samuel, and Herbert Wiseman in adjudicating at NEMT. Wiseman, Director of Education for Edinburgh Education Authority, was a friend of WGW's from Scholes's RCM holiday courses. One regular adjudicator failed to arrive. Cecil Sharp, due on 30 May to adjudicate the folk dancing section, had travelled north to adjudicate at Ilkley on 27 and 28 May. When his severe cold worsened, he returned to London, dying there on 23 June.

WGW often burned the midnight oil while preparing for departure 'mapping out all the work which Bainton, George & Yeaman Dodds &...A F Milner, generously agreed to take over.'<sup>350</sup> Following the BC Whitfield visit, WGW left for London at 1.16 am on 14 June.<sup>351</sup> Before sailing, he called at OUP: 'In London I was cheered by seeing Foss, who gave me, to my great pride, the first copies of the *Oxford Choral Songs* [1925-1943] which afterwards were to grow

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<sup>348</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 133, 19 December [1922], 76.

<sup>349</sup> Holst, I., 85-6.

<sup>350</sup> Aut VIII, 1.

<sup>351</sup> John Whittaker's scrapbook, 40.

to such large proportions.<sup>352</sup> Sales of the new series, aimed at choral societies, competition choirs, and singing classes, reached well into five figures before his return.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> *Aut VIII*, 1.

<sup>353</sup> *DUJ*, Vol. XXIV, No 1 (December 1923), 54.



*Associated Board examination trip to Australia  
and visit to America (July 1923 – January 1924)*

As a young organist at South Shields, WGW often took sea-trips, invited by sea-faring members of the congregation. Registering as an assistant steward, he would take a pile of books, some old clothes for work on deck, and travel to North Germany, the Baltic and Sweden, and once to Russia. Later he and Clara often travelled to Germany, but this was WGW's first long voyage. The SS Narkunda (a P&O steamer of the India-China-Australia Mail and Passenger Service) sailed from London at midnight 15 June, bound for Marseilles, Port Said, Columbo, Bombay, and Calcutta *en route* to Australia. WGW's return date was January 1924, the examination tour occurring between 28 July-19 October. He typed a vivid, descriptive daily diary, *Round the World*.<sup>354</sup>

Holst, returning from Ann Arbor when WGW set off, wrote at length with advice for the trip.<sup>355</sup> He had sent copies of WGW's choral music to Earl Moore, a local choral conductor, and advised WGW to take more. Most valuably, he enclosed letters of introduction for Stock (conductor of Chicago Symphony Orchestra), Austin Lidbury, Cecil Forsyth, and sent love to Fritz Hart and family, and to 'the Mackails and Angela 'remember me to them warmly'.<sup>356</sup> Exhausted on departure, WGW was restored in two days by blue skies and Mediterranean waters. He was an excellent sailor, discovering '...a secluded nook aloft' where he could '...write without interruption'.<sup>357</sup> Shunning sweepstakes and whisky parties, WGW mingled with Australian businessmen, young men travelling abroad for new posts, and the ship's barber, who endlessly discussed literature. WGW had brought W W Gibson poems (following a recent NLPS poetry reading by the poet) hoping to set some as songs, and also Helen Waddell's translations of Chinese poetry *Lyrics from the Chinese* (published by Constable 1913, 5<sup>th</sup> imprint 1921). His interest in China may have been stimulated by his friendship with Ursula Greville, poet, and student of Taoism and Eastern Philosophy; moreover, Bertrand Russell had just lectured to NLPS on 'Young China'.

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<sup>354</sup> A typescript document, *GB-Gsm*.

<sup>355</sup> Holst, 1974, No 137, 19 June [1923], 78-80.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>357</sup> *Aut VIII*, 2.

WGW was introduced by a fellow-passenger (under the misapprehension that WGW was a medical doctor) to the young Irish-French fiancée of the European-trained Sydney violinist, Patrick MacMahon.<sup>358</sup> (Katie was travelling to Australia for her marriage but, badly affected by sea-sickness, was spending the days lying in a deck chair.) Both loved modern French music and Katie asked to sit next to WGW while he worked.<sup>359</sup> Aware that this would cause consternation (WGW wrote that ‘society’ people on board ‘whispered scandal about our sitting together every day’), WGW nevertheless agreed to her request (later rationalising his actions by writing that the objectors were ‘unable to understand a friendship between a man and a woman’).<sup>360</sup> This relationship, and the amazing conditions of sea and sky, inspired WGW to compose a choral work, *The Coelestial Spheare*, to a poem by William Habington, dedicating the work to Katie MacMahon. Years later, in 1942, he gave a paper on its composition at a Symposium on ‘The Psychology of Musical Creativity’ at The Glasgow School of Art in 1936.<sup>361</sup> Despite this dalliance, just as during his solitary ‘oasis time’ in 1902, WGW revelled in his isolation. Free of endless engagements ‘I had a feverish desire for composition, and wrote at every possible moment.’<sup>362</sup>

After Ceylon, ‘truly a paradise garden of the world’, the Narkunda reached Freemantle on 12 July.<sup>363</sup> Having driven to Perth, WGW received a Holstean ‘vast tea’ from a Border Festival contact, earning a dedication to ‘Mrs Dalziel’ on recently finished songs *Two Lyrics from the Chinese*.<sup>364</sup> After a rough crossing of the Australian Bight, WGW viewed ‘novel plants and trees’ in Adelaide Botanic Gardens, sailing south with ‘...both a pitch and a roll’ to reach cold, wet and windy Melbourne on 17 July.<sup>365</sup> Holst’s introductory letters proved to be an ‘open sesame’ to musical Australia, and his name served as a kind of password wherever WGW went.<sup>366</sup> WGW describes how, on meeting the editor of a musical journal at the principal Melbourne music dealer’s, he was ‘hauled off to a photographer’s’ with much ensuing publicity.<sup>367</sup> WGW next met

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<sup>358</sup> Aut VIII, 5.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

Once in Sydney, WGW visited the newly-weds, playing sonatas with his host. Aut IX, 5.

<sup>361</sup> Whittaker, W G, ‘Musical Inspiration’, section II from ‘Symposium on the Psychology of Music and Painting’, From: *The British Journal of Psychology* (General Section), Vol.. XXXIII, Part I, July 1942, 43-47.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Aut IX, 32.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., IX, 32.

<sup>366</sup> Davidson, J., *Lyre Bird Rising*, (Amadeus Press: Portland, Oregon, and Victoria, 1994), 99.

<sup>367</sup> Aut IX, 36.

Gibson Young, 'a sort of Walford Davies', who was conducting a thousand voices in 'Linden Lea' in the Town Hall when WGW arrived. For three days WGW studied Community singing ('another manifestation of...the democratisation of music in Australia').<sup>368</sup> Afterwards Young took WGW to a debate at the House of Representatives (the Prime Minister participating) and introduced him to 'Black Rod'.<sup>369</sup>

WGW was met at Sydney Harbour, at 6.30 am by Percival Driver, his examining colleague (a singing professor at the RCM), who informed him that an AB clerical mix-up had caused the cancellation of the Tasmania/New Zealand leg of the tour, but five months work lay ahead. A week's examining in Sydney would be followed by a month at small centres in the north. After more work in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide would be visited with additional long trips to small, distant centres. Percy Hull, the 'splendid' AB secretary, had kindly presented WGW with temporary membership of his club, but WGW spent his forty-seventh birthday alone, marking examination papers, a week-long task followed by preparation for his forthcoming Music Association [MS] lecture.<sup>370</sup> MacMahon's friend, Frank Hutchens (at seventeen, an RAM sub-professor, now Professor of Piano at the NSW Conservatorium) volunteered to play WGW's *Three Mood Pictures* at the MA lecture, and to perform his piano quintet.<sup>371</sup> The newly appointed Sydney Cathedral organist (an admirer of WGW's songs), tried unsuccessfully to persuade WGW to apply for the post of Principal of Sydney Conservatorium. Dr Arundel Orchard, a staff member since 1916, was appointed, succeeding Henri Verbrugghen, the first Director (from 1893, a teacher at the Glasgow Atheneum School of Music (later SNAM), and leader of the Queen's Hall Orchestra) who next became conductor of Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra.)

WGW's tour of Queensland covered 1,318 miles by train, with meals taken at speed, in station dining rooms where, soup having been already poured, 'subsequent courses were brought in hot haste'.<sup>372</sup> Examining began on 28 July in Toowoomba, which '...lies beautifully on the downs', with wooden houses on stilts and wide, tree-lined boulevards'.<sup>373</sup> Awaiting the AB

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<sup>368</sup> Aut IX, 89.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid., 36. WGW had already met Gibson at a meeting of the 'School Concerts Society' in Newcastle.

<sup>370</sup> Aut VIII, 8.

<sup>371</sup> Aut IX, 46.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>373</sup> Aut IX, 53.

representative WGW 'read Homer in the sunshine', in a prose translation of the Iliad.<sup>374</sup> That evening the Stella Power concert party played in the town (including MacMahon and a former Queen's Hall pianist, William James) and WGW found that 'The Little Melba', had 'a remarkable voice of huge range and excellent technique'.<sup>375</sup> An article in the *Sydney Bulletin* had already given WGW notoriety, and he was known all over Queensland as 'the man with the trousers' due to his habit of wearing plus-fours.<sup>376</sup> After Pittsworth, WGW travelled south to Glen Innes (hearing *en route* a rehearsal of Bach's Double Violin Concerto, by an orchestra in which every member had been a pupil of the European trained violinist, conductor). On 8 August, after examining at Armidale, two letters awaited WGW at his hotel, one from Holst describing his American trip, the other from Louise B M Dyer, secretary and founder, in 1921, of Melbourne BMS.<sup>377</sup> Dyer invited WGW to her home for a week. Further south, in the coal mining area of West Maitland and Newcastle, WGW recognised place-names from North Eastern England, Sandgate, Hexham, Morpeth, and Wallsend. Musical standards were low.<sup>378</sup> On a Sunday visit to Lake Macquarie, WGW read Lecky's 'History of European Morals', and completed *Six Short Pieces* for piano (published in 1924 by Augener, dedicated to Vally Lasker). He reached Sydney on 17 August.

WGW now examined in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, enduring 'a hectic rush of lectures, recitals, receptions, meetings, and social events'.<sup>379</sup> On 20 August at Community Singing in Sydney Town Hall, WGW was entertained to 'morning tea' by Dr Mary Booth and other 'ringleaders' of the movement, afterwards addressing the meeting, and gave, with his own illustrations, a talk on folk-song. He conducted 'quite a good thing of the humorous type, 'Waltzing Mathilda [sic]'.<sup>380</sup> WGW lunched with Principal Orchard, in his private room at the Conservatorium, 'most beautifully situated, overlooking the harbour', afterwards playing parts of the *Hymn of Jesus* to Orchard who was preparing to perform it.<sup>381</sup> (Earlier, Fritz Hart wrote to invite WGW for lunch at Melbourne Conservatorium, an invitation taken up on 29 August.)

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<sup>374</sup> Aut IX, 54.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> Aut VIII, 12.

<sup>377</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 144, 6 July [1924], 84.

<sup>378</sup> Aut, IX, 66.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., 78.

On 22 August, at Paling's Concert Hall a combined MA/BMS gathering took place, WGW meeting 'nearly every important musician in Sydney'. Hutchens and Cyril Monk played a sonata by Jongen (whom WGW had met with Guéritte). WGW delivered his lecture 'Present day musical conditions in Great Britain' (a succinct and accurately drawn assessment of contemporary British music), after which WGW afterwards was 'showered with invitations'.<sup>382</sup> (WGW posted the programme to England on the 'Narkunda' for the 23 September, '...by that time Clarrie and Mary will be settled down in their new homes, and, I hope, very happy.'<sup>383</sup>) Next day WGW met L Lindo, his colleague for the professional examinations, two of the eight candidates being successful. Sixteen year old Gwendo Paul, whose mother was RAM trained, had already won a London scholarship. She dined with Hull and WGW on Sunday 26, and following WGW's advice decided to enrol at the RCM. (WGW dedicated his *Five Short Sketches Without Titles For the Pianoforte* - 'To Gwendo' published by Forsyth Bros. in 1926.) Having taken a Saturday trip with friends to the Blue Mountains and Caves, WGW left on Monday for Melbourne.

On 27 August Louise Dyer drove WGW to her new large house, Kinnoull for a fortnight's stay: 'She is quite an extraordinary woman, brimful of enthusiasm and energy, wrapped up in art, music, poetry, President of the French Alliance here, (was decorated by the French government recently)' wrote WGW.<sup>384</sup> Dyer's fascinating life is described by Jim Davison in his biography *Lyrebird Rising*, (the title referring to the Dyer's Lyrebird Press, set up in Paris to publish rare editions of early music, and later producing recordings of early music under the 'Oiseau-Lyre' label).<sup>385</sup> The daughter of a rich adventurer, apothecary, gold prospector, and Trustee of the Melbourne Exhibition, Dyer had grown up 'habituated to a semi-public existence'.<sup>386</sup> She learned the piano with Grainger's teacher, Joseph Gillott, studied at Melbourne Conservatorium, became an English debutante and studied piano with Philip Halstead in Edinburgh.<sup>387</sup> She was twenty-seven when her father died in 1910, immediately marrying the wealthy James Dyer, twenty-five years her senior. A close friend of Nellie Melba, Dyer served with her on their old College Association Music Committee, from 1912, becoming part of

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<sup>382</sup> Aut IX, 80.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>385</sup> Davidson, 26.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Halstead became a trusted colleague of WGW at Glasgow.

Melba's charmed circle during the war. Dyer had developed a passion for literature, organising poetry lectures on Australian poets, including Shaw Neilson. After taking over Melba's Presidency of the Association after the war, Dyer organised lectures at the Lyceum Club, including a Georgian Evening which included a song by Fritz Hart to lyrics by Neilson, and poetry by Newbolt, Brookes, and Masfield. When WGW arrived in Melbourne, Dyer was a cultured society hostess, organiser of Melbourne BMS, but already felt constrained by Australia. Dyer was attracted to WGW, who was impressed by 'Kinnoull'.<sup>388</sup> WGW describes the house as 'furnished with exquisite taste - and yet perfectly comfortable. Rooms are large, there is a fine garden, with palms and flowering peach trees, covered with delicately coloured bloom.'<sup>389</sup> He admired Dyer, 'She is a real Lady Bountiful, paying all artists at the BMS concerts, stocking their library, subsidising a string quartet.' She was also 'an LRAM, and splendid hostess'.<sup>390</sup> WGW was given a splendid bedroom, private bathroom, and a latchkey, and Dyer acted as his chauffeur, collecting him from the examination room each day. At a BMS performance of Bliss's *Rhapsody*, Dyer pressed WGW to make a speech, the following day taking him to a fund-raising meeting for new Conservatorium buildings, chaired by the wife of the Governor of Australia. Each evening at Kinnoull WGW played Bach preludes and fugues, and sang North Country folksongs. There were dinner parties, with guests such as such as Browning (a pupil of Plunkett Greene), Bryant, a local journalist, or Zelman (violinist/conductor of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra) after which WGW would sing his *Lyrics from the Chinese*, and play his *Three Mood Pieces*. WGW found his stay 'a delightful relief from the terribly nerve-racking monotony of examining'.<sup>391</sup>

The fortnight over, Dyer presented WGW with an autographed handmade paper edition of Masfield's 'The Taking of Helen', inviting him to stay for his remaining seven weeks in Melbourne: 'Both willingly and unwillingly I consented', writes WGW.<sup>392</sup> He delighted in Louise's love of British music: 'Half our conversation is devoted to plans', but wished to explore 'ordinary' Australia.<sup>393</sup> WGW Socialist principles seemed to have weakened, for though he knew

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<sup>388</sup> Kinnoull was named after a hill near Perth in Scotland, 'a large red brick house set in an ample garden on a hillside above the Yarra at Toorak.'

<sup>389</sup> Aut IX, 88.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>393</sup> Aut VIII, 13.

that the installation of double doors between drawing-room and hall for musical parties had cost £5000, and that 'One of their treasures is a huge jewel casket...which belonged to Marie Antoinette', he insisted: 'They detest ostentation, and are always condemning extravagance.'<sup>394</sup>

On 5 September WGW gave his talk 'Present Day Musical Conditions in Great Britain' to 150 members of the BMS at 'Kinnoull':

Drawing-room and hall were, by folding doors, thrown into one big space...there were huge vases of great lilies, flowering lilac trees, miniature orange trees, with hanging fruit, and other lovely decorations. Everything was most beautifully arranged. It was an ideal setting. Every seat was occupied; all lights were turned out, except a candelabra [which shone from] behind my desk. I never spoke in more delightful surroundings.<sup>395</sup>

The room was like a stage set, supper being served on a long table covered with moss and strewn with marigolds, a large goldfish bowl in the centre in one room, a large flowering lilac tree decorated the table in the other, 'exquisite in dimmed light'.

Dyer constantly encouraged WGW to compose, inviting him one Saturday breakfast time, to sing his newly completed Masfield setting of 'By a Bierside' (dedicated to Ernest J Potts).<sup>396</sup> WGW wrote to Clara: 'I have felt, partially owing to the appreciation my music is meeting here, more desire to compose than I have experienced for a very long time'.<sup>397</sup> WGW writes that 'after a stroll by the water-side, I played Bach Choral Preludes [arrangements] and sang Lutenist songs until dinner'.<sup>398</sup> Dyer too performed: 'After dinner, Mrs. D. Read poems for nearly two hours, de la Mare, Rupert Brooke, Chinese poems from my little book, and a new and talented Australian poet, Shaw Neilson. She reads with a real appreciation of the beauty of sound.'<sup>399</sup>

On 10 September, at a large musical farewell party for thirty guests, the new BMS quartet played Mozart's E flat quartet. 'An electric candelabra was behind the players, a flowering peach tree between quartet and fire, otherwise in darkness.'<sup>400</sup> Then, as a surprise for WGW, one of Dyer's protégées performed WGW's 'Spring', another joined her to sing his 'Song of Shadows'.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Ibid., IX, 96.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., IX, 99.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 101. (Composed Mildura, 6-9, September, 1923)

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 104.

WGW performed 'By a Bierside', 'Lament' and six Choral Preludes, the evening ending with 'a sumptuous supper'.<sup>402</sup>

Convinced for some time of the greatness of the poet John Shaw Neilson, Dyer had lectured on the subject to the Melbourne Scots Club.<sup>403</sup> Having contributed £100 to the publication of his *Ballad and Lyrical Poems*, she agreed to pay for the publication of *Heart of Spring*, to influence the appearance of the de-luxe edition. Davison writes that WGW's enthusiasm encouraged this generosity.<sup>404</sup> Honoured by WGW's interest in setting his poems, Neilson wrote to him, and though matters were complicated by the intervention of Neilson's publisher A G Stephens who mistakenly suspected that WGW was about to make a fortune from the songs, delaying publication of this first Neilson song, 'The Song of Shadows' proved popular, and WGW eventually set half a dozen of his poems.<sup>405</sup>

Eventually WGW found that a life of examining duties and abject luxury began to pall. The tedium of the former meant that 'By the end of the day I generally feel like throwing things through the windows.'<sup>406</sup> He wrote to Clara of the stultifying nature of Australian musical life, lacking the community participation of Newcastle. Dyer told WGW she was coming to England, and would attend the BC's performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* in Newcastle the following year. WGW wrote to Clara of Dyer, describing the former as, 'a voice crying in the wilderness', suggesting they offer her hospitality at Granville road, since James Dyer would be 'immersed in business...and she is so homely that she would settle down in Newcastle like a native.'<sup>407</sup>

When his hosts departed for a wedding, they urged WGW to hold dinner parties, which he did once, preferring generally to work, finishing piano teaching pieces and a Shaw Neilson setting. He attended a supper party for twenty given by Fritz Hart who showed WGW Coleridge Taylor and Hurlstone manuscripts and introduced him to Holst's friends the Thirkells and 'an excellent deaf violin teacher...able to hear musical sounds but the spoken voice indifferently.'<sup>408</sup> At another musical evening on 17 September Gibson Young took WGW to meet Swartz (a

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>404</sup> Davidson, 66.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>406</sup> Aut IX, 105.

<sup>407</sup> Davidson, 100.

<sup>408</sup> Aut IX, 110.



violinist friend of Kreisler, Casals, and Godowsky). Young's wife read poems, WGW sang his Chinese songs and new Shaw Neilson song. On Friday 20, WGW was guest of honour of Melbourne Music Club, at the Victorian Artists Society's Galleries.

After finishing work in Melbourne, WGW examined at Lilydale Convent, up in the hills, completed another Neilson song, and enjoyed rehearsing combined choirs for Young's farewell concert on 30 September.<sup>409</sup> At a lecture to 200 Music Teachers on 5 October, WGW spoke on 'The Ideal Music Teacher'. Next day WGW, Dyer and relatives motored 35 miles to the Black Spur, passing Melba's house, where the Dyers were often guests: 'She is a great personality here...and simply has everyone under her thumb.'<sup>410</sup> 'Parrots were screaming on the trees' and whip birds gave a noise like a sharp crack of a whip'.<sup>411</sup> The party enjoyed an authentic picnic, using the provided brick enclosures for the gum-tree wood blaze where they boiled their billy-can, squatting on the grass to enjoy their basket of provisions. The last weekend was filled with rehearsals for a farewell concert to be given by the Dyers for WGW on Thursday. The girl 'duettists' stayed for the weekend, rehearsing Morley Canzonets, a solo number, and WGW's 'Nunc Gaudeat Maria'. Driver too, about to examine professional candidates with WGW, also stayed. Driver and WGW rehearsed songs for the following week. At a 'little supper party' for forty on Sunday, Browning sang songs by Gibbs, Davies, Vaughan Williams, Stanford, and Farrar, WGW played Chorale Preludes, Dyer read Shaw Neilson poems, the duettists sang, WGW ending with 'buy Brooms buzzems', 'Sair Fyeld hinnie', and 'Billy Boy'. On Monday, Driver and WGW rehearsed again, and WGW finished playing the '48' to the Dyers.<sup>412</sup>

From Tuesday Driver struggled with laryngitis. Thea Procter, an artist friend of Dyer, had designed Thursday's printed programme, the cover decorated by a quotation from 'The Song of Shadows'- 'Sweep thy faint strings, Musician, with thy long, lean hand.'. Driver 'made a good show in spite of his dreadful throat', and *The Bulletin* described their recital as 'probably the finest ever staged in a Melbourne drawing room'.<sup>413</sup> WGW accompanied Driver in his songs composed at Kinnoull, 'Bog Love' (Shane Leslie), 'Love's Coming' (Shaw Neilson), and 'By a Bier-Side'

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<sup>409</sup> Aut IX, 122.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

<sup>413</sup> Davidson, 102.

(John Masfield). Louise was 'radiant in golden draperies'. WGW left Kinnoull on Friday October 12, impatient for 'real Australia', where people in trains discussed 'horse-racing, gambling, and the weather'.<sup>414</sup>

The Dyers did indeed later follow WGW to England, leaving on 8 January 1924 for a two-year European tour. Davidson discovered an unsent letter written by Dyer *en route* to England discussing 'her love for a well-known figure in English 'artistic' circles'. Davidson concludes: 'There is little doubt that the gentleman concerned was Whittaker' but concludes that Dyer abandoned hope of his returning her affection on seeing Clara with WGW in England, where he seemed 'deeply involved with his wife, whose utter devotion and appealing expression was evident at every turn: her deafness made her seem unassailable'.<sup>415</sup> After her return to Australia, Dyer 'lovingly placed in her press cutting books, every reported utterance Whittaker made, together with his newspaper articles'.<sup>416</sup>

The gold town Ballarat, near Melbourne, claimed to hold the greatest competitive festival in the world. WGW disagreed, despite attending Saturday evening and Sunday morning sessions, and was disappointed with the professional candidates who all failed. After four more days at Ballarat, Driver left for Ceylon, and WGW for Geelong: 'I was sorry to part from Driver...our working in harness was always happy and helpful'.<sup>417</sup> On 19 October WGW completed examining in the town. On Sunday streets were lively with Scottish costumes and the skirl of the bagpipe bands, and drum and bugle bands, still competing. WGW was impressed by a new war memorial, a triumphal arch, and avenue of 3500 trees just erected in Ballarat, predicting that the fourteen miles of trees would eventually be a notable sight.<sup>418</sup>

At Daviesford Convent, WGW rehearsed Bach's violin Concerto in E, played by an old Ballarat boy (and pupil of Rivarde at the RCM before the war) and a Suite by Frank Bridge. It was a week of examining in convents, begun in Daylesford and Kyneton, on 26 October, taking 'a most exciting journey' through 'English' countryside for thirty-six miles, past a station called

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<sup>414</sup> Davidson, 103.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>417</sup> *Aut IX*, 137. (15 October).

<sup>418</sup> *Aut IX*, 42.

Allendale, whilst sketching out an article for *Music and Letters* (completed on 1 November).<sup>419</sup> At Bendigo, WGW travelled through a flat, mine-dotted landscape and the bush to Kangaroo flat (now without marsupials). The famous climate exhibited oppressive heat, dust sweeping the city from the goldmines. Leaving the flat region, littered with deserted gold mines, shacks and Kerosene tins, untouched for years, WGW discovered that the very wide roads were designed to allow cattle to feed en route to Kerang. Thereafter examining during the morning of 1 November, he began the ten-hour return journey (averaging 18 miles per hour) to Bendigo and on to another gold mining town of St. Arnaud, small, with roses everywhere, due to the rich agricultural land. Polite, frightened looking bush children took their examinations behind the Town Hall stage. Afterwards WGW completed a setting of Neilson's 'The hour of parting', and next day one of W W Gibson's 'The Crowder'.

Having bought copies of Gibson poems in Melbourne to offer as gifts, WGW took the sleeper for 193 miles to Mildura (19 stops taking eight hours in hot weather), arriving on 4 November to find roads deeply buried in fine dust. The Murray, 'as broad as the Tyne at Hexham' was in flood, from 'snow water' not rain. Here lived the newer and less fortunate of the population in 'rude tents' with kerosene tins for water-cans, letterboxes, flowerpots, and miniature wells. Sometimes even the side of a shack was built of them. WGW braved the swarms of big, black ants, sitting on the hard sandy ground, reading and watching the birds.<sup>420</sup> After receiving a letter from Neilson in Ballarat, WGW had resolved to meet the poet, a man who claimed to 'know only of the bush', having worked as a stone-breaker on the roads, and now worked in an orchard. Sadly Neilson had left town.

In WGW's absence, strikes, riots and looting had broken out in Melbourne. Traffic had stopped, raiders were shot on sight. All-hours liquor sales had allowed drunken orgies and murders. (Burglaries were happening when WGW was there, as it was easy to hide in gardens.) Travelling by train to Ouyen, WGW heard passengers discussing the riots (now under control through the passing of heavy court sentences) and the Melbourne Cup. An eight hour journey of 166 miles, brought WGW to Adelaide, hilly and beautiful, with fine deep gullies, tall trees, terraced gardens and wide expanses of high lands.

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<sup>419</sup> Aut IX, 144.

<sup>420</sup> Aut VIII, 165.

After an extravagant Australian farewell involving streamers, presents and bouquets, WGW sailed on 6 December on the 'Markura': 'Hull came to see me off, but we behaved as Englishmen.'<sup>421</sup> WGW's cabin was filled with gifts, which including emus' eggs, and, from the Dyers, an Australian impressionist painting, monogrammed manuscript case, and huge cake.<sup>422</sup> The boat moored at Auckland on 10 December giving WGW a chance to sight-see by charabanc, view Maori relics, visit the theatre, and complete a male-voice setting of Gibson's 'Northumberland'. Back aboard, WGW completed the orchestral score of *The Celestial Sphere*. The boat 'crossed the line' at midnight, exactly halfway between Suva and Honolulu.<sup>423</sup> Surf broke over the barrier reef as the ship docked in Viti Levu, principal of the Fiji Islands.<sup>424</sup> On 19 December WGW wrote of the lonely Pacific, where hardly a boat was sighted. Then Hawaii appeared, shrouded in mist, magnificent volcanic hills looming, and here WGW waited for four days for the San Francisco boat. On December 23 he toured by train, exploring miles of sugar canes, banana plantations, pineapple plantations, ricefields and paupau trees.<sup>425</sup> On Christmas Eve, tropical rain washed out a Hawaiian band, and massed carol singing with torchbearers, leaving only a large electric lit fir tree in front of the Capitol. As the ship sailed, it was the loneliest Christmas WGW had ever spent: 'The last views of this earthly paradise were volcanic hills and craters steaming with mist.'<sup>426</sup> After a few days at sea WGW finished his book *Class Singing*.

Early on New Year's morning, the ship reached San Francisco, entering the new part of the city, re-built after earthquake and fire: 'I confess that I like skyscrapers, they are massive and their outlines are often quite beautiful'.<sup>427</sup> On visiting China Town, WGW was fascinated by Chinese musicians, their instruments, and their strange scale system and curious rhythmical schemes which he felt demanded 'a fifty fold repetition in order to grasp them'.<sup>428</sup> WGW loved the San Francisco bustle, and during an evening walk saw shops 'brilliantly lit for advertisement purposes', almost all with 'electric moving signs' the streets bright and animated by 'innumerable

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<sup>421</sup> Aut IX, 228.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., 229. WGW had travelled 6633 miles in Australia, 5574 by train and 1059 by motor.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>424</sup> Aut VIII, 20.

<sup>425</sup> Aut IX, 253.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., 267.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>428</sup> Aut IX, 277.

sky signs'.<sup>429</sup> He booked his return journey, taking the observation car of a comfortable Pullman coach on a 471 mile route down the California coast to Los Angeles (with a detour which took in the Grand Canyon).<sup>430</sup> Passing through Californian orchards, WGW saw oil pumped from beneath the sea, and leaving the Pacific at Santa Barbara, reaching Los Angeles at 8. 30 (where Mexicans flocked, escaping the Bolshevik revolution). Here WGW, despite the alcohol ban, surprisingly was initiated by a friend into the huge variety of drinks and American food available, and visited a Vauderville. 'It is an extraordinary business, a collection of enormities in melody, rhythm, and quality of tone.'<sup>431</sup> Here traffic was controlled by 'an automatic arrangement, which throws up a 'stop' for about 30 seconds, and then an 'on' for the next.' Armed robberies were occurring; 'Sometimes men leaped onto cars and drove off the attendant with a revolver', deterring WGW from taxiing out to see movies being made. WGW reached the Grand Canyon on 5 January, and professed himself 'in wonderland' as the party drove on the edge of the Canyon on the 'Rim Run', with drops of 4000 feet, and gorgeous colouring.<sup>432</sup> Following a movie show of the Canyon, Hopi Indians did a Buffalo dance that formerly took four days: 'The dancing was accompanied by singing and drum beating, the former most tuneful and rhythmic, generally beginning with an ominous drop of a minor seventh'.<sup>433</sup> After Sante Fe and Chicago, the car was detached at Williams, WGW travelling through the desert on 9 January, seeing cactus, salt, and sandstone rocks, carved into fantastic shapes by wind and rain, and passing Mount Taylor, at 11,000 feet high, to see scattered Indian mud houses and lonely ranches. From Arizona they passed to New Mexico, to the Spanish Abyquerque, where Apache baskets were sold by Indians by the train.<sup>434</sup> The train: 'shot across the corner of Colorado during the night', reaching Kansas when day dawned.<sup>435</sup> 'Heaven preserve me from Chicago' wrote WGW: 'People rush about as ants poked with a stick, noise is terrific, especially where the fiendish overhead railway runs along a narrow street, blotting out the sky and making a terrible din.'<sup>436</sup> He found

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<sup>429</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>435</sup> Aut IX, 295.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., 296.

skyscrapers looked abominable from narrow streets, and he chewed more quickly when eating at a 'quick lunch café'.<sup>437</sup>

WGW took his letter of introduction from Holst when he went to Orchestra Hall to meet Frederick Stock, conductor of Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and it produced 'instant smiles, effusive handshakes, and entry to the rehearsal.'<sup>438</sup> Stock was 'eulogizing Gustav', and introduced WGW to the Concert master. Next WGW called on Holst's friend Lidbury, manager of a chemical works, who knew WGW's songs thoroughly. Lidbury (originally from Cheshire) had gone to Leipzig to work in laboratories and study piano, there meeting his American wife. His comprehensive music collection included modern music for two pianos by Bloch, Casella, Berners, and Honegger. A perfect host, he took the day off to look after WGW, taking him to Niagara Falls, covered in ice, explaining how the power stations worked, and how the famous horseshoe was disappearing, viewing the upper rapids from the Canadian side, and the lower rapids from the riverside. (Lidbury confessed his desire to use *all* the falls for commercial purposes, regretting wasted potential.) For the rest of the day Lidbury brought out musical treasure after treasure.

New York was reached by sleeper, WGW staying in a 'small' hotel in room 1630, on the sixteenth floor.<sup>439</sup> He enjoyed the fine city of wide streets, clean, splendid buildings and traffic under control, despite the 'staggering' number of cars. He met the critic Aldrich (through Miss Rogers, of Winthrop Rogers) who told him of the success of British musicians in America, such as Albert Coates, Goosens, Frank Bridge, Bliss, Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Colles (and still, somewhere in the city, Tertis and Bliss), also visiting Sonneck, editor of *The Musical Quarterly*.<sup>440</sup> A visit to Carnegie Hall to see Hoogstraaten conduct the Philharmonic Orchestra in a Brahms, Ravel, Dukas programme convinced him that the Queen's Hall Orchestra was better. Appreciating the 'real delight' of the Ravel, WGW yet often detected 'raggedness at the changes of tempi'.<sup>441</sup> Hearing Chaliapin in *Boris Godounov* at the Metropolitan Opera House singing in Italian (he preferred the opera in Russian having heard it twice before) WGW thought this

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<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>439</sup> Aut IX, 301.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., IX, 304.

<sup>441</sup> Aut IX, 304.

'greatest of operatic artists... could persuade the audience that there was no stage nor part but reality.'<sup>442</sup> A Damrosch all-Beethoven concert, played by the New York Symphony Orchestra, he thought 'all a little stiff'.<sup>443</sup> The *Tyrrhenia* sailed at noon, on Saturday 12 January, in such rough weather that 'one's baggage plunges from one end of the cabin to the other'.<sup>444</sup> Unaffected, WGW read Cervantes' 'Don Quixote' and Samuel Butler's 'Erewhon', reaching Liverpool on the evening of Sunday 20 January.<sup>445</sup> The seven month trip had covered 32,000 miles. WGW summed up: 'It has been a splendid experience, health-giving, broadening to the mind, helpful and stimulating in every way.'

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<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

## CHAPTER TWO

### National and Academic Recognition

2.1 1924 – 1929 OUP EDITING, THE BACH CHOIR EXCELS;  
DEPARTURE FROM ARMSTRONG COLLEGE

2.1.1 *A developing career - choir trainer, editor and lecturer*

After arriving home on 22 January 1924, WGW found the BC and CU in financial crisis, facing competition from cinema and wireless. The first was saved by a Guarantee Fund, established by Clark, Corder, and Forster, while the CU committee pursued a 'safer' programmes policy to regain audiences. Walter Corder, chairing the Finance Committee at AC, also averted crisis there by pegging or reducing salaries.<sup>1</sup> In WGW's absence Dent had come to lecture to the Newcastle branch of the BMS and Goss appeared with the BC, but Dale failed to appear either as conductor or lecturer.

WGW's work thrived at AC and his profile was heightened by his Friday '5 o'clock's', lectures on a variety of subjects. Similar lectures also took place on Saturday evenings. Themes ranged from music of the Commonwealth and Restoration (an interest he shared with Scholes), the music of Byrd (whose centenary it was in 1924) and Gibbons, and settings from *A Shropshire Lad*. In addition, Harold Samuel, just before touring America, came to Newcastle as a BC guest, offered a private recital of the *Goldberg Variations* to WGW's students. WGW's indefatigable work for AC was also marked by a presentation on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his conducting ACCS, on 12 March 1924. His work for the society was still infected by his zeal for new works such as Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G Minor*, in 1925, Holst's recently published *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of the first Choral Symphony) and Bainton's *Dancing Seal*. Bainton loomed larger at this time since he had recently appointed WGW as director of a 'Special Training Course for Music Teachers' at the Conservatoire.<sup>2</sup>

On 28 January 1924, Holst sent a second 'welcome home' message, enclosing his *Fugal Concerto*: 'I hope the journey round the world has really done you good and given you an

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<sup>1</sup> DUJ, Vol. XXIV, No. I (December 1923), 54.

Corder had received an honorary doctorate for rescuing the College finances in July 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle-upon-Tyne Conservatoire of Music, Prospectus, March 20, 1926, *GB-NEcl*.



occasional rest.<sup>3</sup> But he was close to a nervous breakdown and suffering headaches, and according to Vaughan Williams 'his old enemy, insomnia became alarming and he was ordered complete rest.'<sup>4</sup> Because of Holst's affliction, his support for WGW dwindled rapidly. In 1924 he saw WGW rarely and invitations to meet were but half-hearted. Plans for Holst to conduct the BC in *The Cloud Messenger* and *The Fugal Concerto* on the 28 February were called off but Lasker and Day came up to Newcastle alone and played the piano arrangements of *The Planets* and *The Perfect Fool*. Holst, meanwhile, cared for by an old officer friend, spent time in Thaxted writing his Choral Symphony. Apart from issuing a pressing invitation from Morley College students and SPGS singers to WGW to attend their Whitsuntide festival at Dulwich, Holst seemed to withdraw from personal interaction for he attended neither WGW's London Byrd performances in November 1924, nor his *Lyke Wake Dirge*, and *Psalm CXXXIX* performance conducted by Vaughan Williams on March 31 1925. Moreover, a further *rendez-vous*, to hear *The Boar's Head* failed when trains arrived together at King's Cross and Holst 'wandered wildly', missing WGW.<sup>5</sup> With the vacuum left by Holst, a constant mentor, the space in WGW's life was filled to some extent by Lasker (who even took in Mary Whittaker for a time when the latter was studying at the RCM).

Another figure who filled the vacuum in 1924 was Hubert Foss. He became a dominant figure in WGW's life owing essentially to their shared energy and vision in the establishment of the OUP educational music department (for an expanded account of WGW's work with OUP, see Chapter 5). Besides the publication of a vast array of educational music, choral editions and new works, WGW's involvement with OUP and the Carnegie Trust's *Tudor Music* brought him into contact with Edmund Fellowes (on the editorial committee of the Carnegie Edition of *Tudor Music*) who had re-discovered Byrd's Great Service in Durham Cathedral library and edited the work for OUP. Foss (who, according to Hinnells, 'had long been shrewd about the importance of publicity') sought a prominent performance to advertise the new edition.<sup>6</sup> WGW's interpretation of early music had long been approved by Fellowes, and his reputation as a Bach

<sup>3</sup> Holst, G., *Letters to W. G. Whittaker*, Edited by Michael Short, (University of Glasgow: Glasgow, 1974), No. 139, Jan 28, 1924, 80.

<sup>4</sup> Vaughan Williams, R, 'Gustav Holst', *Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1949*, ed. L G Wicklow Legg (OUP: London, 1949), 442.

<sup>5</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 155, 9 PM 23 April [1925], 90.

<sup>6</sup> Hinnells, D, *An Extraordinary Performance* (OUP: Oxford, 1998), 27.

performer was high, making him the perfect choice to conduct. Fellowes gave a BMS lecture in the KH on 30 May on the eve of the BC Byrd Great Service performance (the first for three hundred years), in Newcastle Cathedral (having travelled north with Louise and James Dyer the previous day, when the party called *en route* at Durham Cathedral).<sup>7</sup> Fellowes praised WGW's 'choir of extremely intelligent singers' and the way in which 'the complex rhythms were handled with remarkable clarity'.<sup>8</sup> The *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimitis* were broadcast nationally in a BBC 'afternoon relay'.<sup>9</sup> Foss asked WGW to repeat the Byrd in London and wrote an article on WGW in August's *Music Bulletin* (approved by Holst on 7 September: 'It is rare that one gets a well written, appreciative and yet critical article. Bravo Foss.')<sup>10</sup>. Before the London concert Foss, introduced as 'an intimate friend of Peter Warlock', lectured to Newcastle BMS on the work of the composer in October 1924, providing illustrations with Lawton, Danskin, and WGW.<sup>11</sup> Two concerts were planned for 25 and 26 November, in St. Margaret's Westminster, with Stanley Roper, Foss writing on Fellowes's discovery in November's *Musical News and Herald*. Russian Ballet members were in the audience as was a 'completely thrilled' Darius Milhaud.<sup>12</sup>

WGW's capacity for work was tireless and he poured out huge quantities of arrangements, editions of the classics (particularly works by Handel and Schubert) and some original works for OUP. Besides didactic piano pieces, songs, and choral music, he also produced well edited, reasonably priced Bach Cantata scores, using C S Terry's English translations. Terry was presented by WGW for an honorary degree at Durham University on 24 June 1924, WGW recalling Terry's founding of ACCS, his work as History Professor at Aberdeen, research into Bach's chorales, translation of Forkel's biography and the libretti of Bach's secular Cantatas, and now their collaborative work. Terry lectured, with BC illustrations, to NLPS in February 1925 on 'Bach's original hymn tunes' and related how, having left WGW on the threshold of a most distinguished career, he returned 'to find Dr Whittaker a vital force in the musical life of this

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<sup>7</sup> John Whittaker's scrapbook, 1, 29.

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 31 May, 1924, (cutting in BC archive), GB-NEmd.

<sup>9</sup> *Musical Opinion*, July 1924, 991, (cutting in BC archive), GB-NEmd..

<sup>10</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 145, 7 September, [1924], 85.

Foss was rewarded when WGW's included his setting 'The Three Cherry Trees' in the choir's first choral concert of the new season on 1 November 1924.

<sup>11</sup> John Whittaker's scrapbook, 27.

<sup>12</sup> *South Wales News*, 27 November, 1924. GB-NEmd.

great community, and also one of the commanding figures in the field of British music to-day'.<sup>13</sup>

Although the work for OUP was diverting, his enthusiasm for the BC, *his* choir, remained constant. Guests in 1924 were Harold Samuel and Percival Driver, and in 1925, Harriet Cohen and Adela Fachiri. The choir gave a complete performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion on 4 April, 1925 and a third performance of Bach's Mass in B minor on 27 March 1926 when WGW boasted that 'the whole of the forces employed, both vocal and instrumental, were from Newcastle itself'.<sup>14</sup> Other novelties in 1925 were Taverner's *The Western Wynde* Mass, a new *Tudor Church Music* publication and Howells two songs, 'Creep afore ye gang', and 'The Shadows' (published in 1924) dedicated to WGW and the BC sung in November.

At the first CU concert of 1924, the choir performed madrigals and songs by Morley, Tomkins, and Wilbye, Elgar's 'Go Song of Mine', and a first performance of Bax's Motet 'This World's Joie', dedicated 'To WGW and his singers', repeated at the end of the programme, and works by Samuel Wesley, Borodin, Moussorgsky, and Gretchaninov. Arthur Milner played Bach's *Italian Concerto*, and Astra Desmond sang songs by Walford Davies, Denis Browne, C W Orr, Cyril Scott, and Herbert Hughes, and WGW's 'Dream Song'. It was the end of WGW's free rein as far as repertoire selection was concerned. Financial problems brought the establishment of a programme selection committee and the advent of less innovative repertoire. Bainton's NPO performance in March 1925 of Wagner's *Meistersinger* (Act III, Scene V), Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens*, and Elgar's *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* seemed to accentuate this change of direction, though WGW was able to include one of Howell's OOS pieces and his own 'Noble Squire Dacre'.

During the course of 1924, perhaps influenced by Foss's marital breakdown, WGW decided more decisively to address his own matrimonial unhappiness. The daughters had left home, his wife was profoundly deaf (and therefore could not share his musical obsessions) and he finally found it necessary to confess that he no longer retain any love for her. In attempting to deal with this emotional rift, WGW considered moving away entirely from the north east and unsuccessfully applied for a post at Trinity College, London.<sup>15</sup> In December, Holst consoled

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<sup>13</sup> *Newcastle Journal*, 9 February 1925. Terry's talk, illustrated by the BC, discussed how Terry had discovered in his researches that Bach only introduced an original tune into his liturgical music on three occasions.

<sup>14</sup> *The Northern Echo*, 3 April, 1926, GB-NEmd.

<sup>15</sup> WGW eventually became an examiner there in 1931. Rutland, H, *Trinity College of Music: the first hundred years* (Trinity College of Music: London, 1972), 32.

WGW: 'If TCL is what it was 30 years ago I fear I congratulate you on your escape!'<sup>16</sup> WGW's contacts at Trinity College included Charles Vincent, Stanley Roper, and Charles Pearce (editor of *The Organist and Choir Master*). Two vacancies at Trinity College had arisen with the retirement of Charles Pearce and the death of Sir Frederick Bridge, Chairman of the Corporation and Board of Trinity College.<sup>17</sup> Ironically for WGW, both posts were offered to Bridge's brother, Joseph Cox Bridge, organist of Chester Cathedral and Professor of Music from 1908 at Durham University, who had failed WGW's doctoral examination in 1909.<sup>18</sup> WGW resolved to leave AC at any cost, and, in order to emphasise how indispensable he was to AC, he launched a publicity campaign with this end in view through George Dodds' eulogistic article for DUJ (June 1925 replete with frontispiece photograph) and his own audit (in October) of the Music Department to the Council of AC.<sup>19</sup>

WGW's general disenchantment with AC, his limited academic career prospects and his matrimonial turbulence did not however distract his energy devoted to Bach and to modern music, as manifested by his BC work and his highly successful endeavours for the local BMS in Newcastle. Proselytising these virtues he became President of a new BMS branch at Alnwick, lecturing there on *Modern British Music* (he and Lawton supplying illustrations). C S Terry was a guest on 7 January 1925, in Newcastle, lecturing on 'The Music of Leipzig- Church Services in the time of Bach', three days later Lasker and Day returning for a recital in the KH, *Modern Music on two pianos*. On 7 March and 18 April, Howells played his own compositions, and on 5 June, Calvacoressi lectured on 'Hungarian Composers of Today-Bartók and Kodaly' with illustrations. Steuart Wilson sang Vaughan Williams songs on 14 November, J. B. McEwen, Principal of the RAM, lecturing on 27 March 1926. In Melbourne, Louise Dyer gave a BMS promotional concert at Kinnoull on 16 April 1925 of WGW's works. (She also supplied Melbourne University Orchestra with WGW's *Noble Squire Dacre*, performed in September, and donated WGW's music to the newly founded Cecilia Choir of Women's voices for their November concert). Dyer also had WGW's address *Present-Day Musical Conditions in Great Britain*, published by Ruskin Press,

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<sup>16</sup> Before going to the RCM, Holst had been unsuccessful in obtaining a composition scholarship at Trinity College of Music. See Holst, 1974, No. 148, Dec 8 [1924], 87.

<sup>17</sup> Rutland, 1972, 28.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 1972, 30.

<sup>19</sup> DUJ, Vol. XXIV No. 6 (June 1925), 278.

Melbourne.

While education and choral organisations were WGW's principal distraction in Newcastle, one further major development (and one that would figure prominently in his later career) was the formation of a BBC Station in the city. P T Eckersley, pioneer of concert broadcasting from 1921, became chief engineer 1923 –1927 – he had lectured on 'Wireless' to NLPS in 1924 – but perhaps more significantly, Edward Clark, who had faced the financial collapse of his own series of orchestral concerts of contemporary British and continental music, became musical director at the BBC Newcastle Station, transforming the region's broadcasts. Soon WGW was taking part in more BBC transmissions. During a BBC Bach festival of January 1925, an outside broadcast of the BC in Cantata *Christ Lay in Death's Dark prison* with Dorothy Silk was given, and the Cantata *Now shall the Grace* for double chorus was sung by Newcastle BC and Newcastle BBC choral society, chorus master Richard Pratt, with Clark conducting the augmented Station orchestra.<sup>20</sup> In 1925 WGW was invited to join the first BBC Central Advisory Committee, which first met on 8 July with the aim of 'associating the work of the BBC still more closely with the musical profession'.<sup>21</sup> In relation to the BBC, however, WGW never considered himself to be a central influence and his work for the BBC committees was a largely social one. On the other hand, his participation in the NEMT, established in 1919, was germane. He brought distinguished adjudicators to Newcastle each May – in 1924, Dunhill, Hull, Karpeles, Keel, W H Reed, and Wiseman – in 1925 Dunhill, Dyson, Plunket Greene, Julius Harrison, Harvey Grace, Percy Hull, Editha Knocker, Lady Benson (for Elocution and Reading), Tom Clough, Captain Douglas Kennedy (Kennedy Fraser's son-in-law, Cecil Sharp's elected successor as Director of the English Folk Dance Society), and A. M. Henderson, organist of Glasgow University). WGW incorporated the new Australian activity of community singing in the Town Hall, at the end of the first day. Among regular participants conducting local choirs were John Weatherley of Ryton Thorpe school, and H W McIntyre of Holystone.<sup>22</sup> Weatherley's

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<sup>20</sup> In January 1927, Clark transferred to London where he became a programme builder and conductor of studio broadcasts, also serving on a committee which recommended British works to the international jury of ISCM.

<sup>21</sup> *The Radio Times*, 17 July, 1925, cutting from John Whittaker's scrapbook, 123.

<sup>22</sup> John Weatherley, a local schoolmaster, was father of Denis Weatherley, well known singer of north country folk-songs, one-time BBC singer, and later headmaster of Bishop Auckland Grammar School, who recorded many of WGW's folk-song arrangements, other exponents being Thomas Allen (Denis

descendant, Denis later became a well-known singer of WGW's north-country folk-songs. In 1925, entries were down, discouraged by the depression. When only one of ten local orchestras (Sunderland's Wearside Orchestra, conductor Stanley Scott) entered the competition, Percy Hull pronounced it excellent, used his discretion and awarded the Ross Trophy, conducting the orchestra in Stanford's *Shamus O'Brien*, Handel works, and Parry's 'Jerusalem'.<sup>23</sup> WGW also adjudicated elsewhere, at Ayrshire, Blackpool, and Carlisle (where his new cantata arrangement of Purcell's 'The Moon' was sung by massed choirs of six hundred children), and through his acquaintance with Wiseman, he was invited to attend the Board of Education Summer Course on School Singing at Oxford, with Boult, Dyson, Sargent and Frank Roscoe.

With WGW's introduction of 'community singing' to the festival, he was soon catapulted into the position of President of the Central Committee of Community Singing in England. Locally WGW, Yeaman Dodds, and Thomas Henderson lectured on the subject, presented as 'a revival in the villages', through WEA auspices, at Bensham, Kibblesworth, Sunnyside and Eighton Bank, announcements appearing in *The Journal* on New Year's Eve, 1925. WGW conducted a Community Singing broadcast on 13 January 1926, on 5NO (followed by others from Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Darlington, and elsewhere). Eckersley lectured again to NLPS on 'The Possible Future of Broadcasting', stressing the involvement of the public.<sup>24</sup> Community singing sessions opened and closed May 1926's NEMT, and Gibson Young, the movement's Australian originator, conducted Community Singing in the Connaught Hall in December, local newspaper reports describing WGW's 'invention and pioneering of the movement in England', after meeting Young in Melbourne.<sup>25</sup>

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Weatherley's protégé, and ex-pupil at Ryhope Grammar School), and Owen Branigan, another local singer, all encouraged by the NEMT.

<sup>23</sup> The writer's grandfather, Thomas N Laing, played violin in this orchestra during this period.

<sup>24</sup> John Whittaker's scrapbook, 28a.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 28b.

In July 1926 WGW was fifty and yearned to leave Newcastle, despite enjoying his work with AC students: 'I had been there too long, and yearned for a wider sphere of activity, with more facilities'.<sup>26</sup> A complication in finding another post was that his salary would need to be large enough to maintain two domestic establishments, as he had secretly decided to leave Clara, and had continuing financial commitments to Clarrie, who, with his strong encouragement, had embarked on a study of European languages abroad. Clarrie was fearful of leaving home, and began what developed into a life-long weekly correspondence with her father. When writing to Clarrie (always 'Dear Girlie') on the occasion of her twenty-first birthday in Spain on 9 March 1926, WGW explained that he was able to put any sadness over their separation to one side, avoiding 'vain regrets', as it was best for her future, ending his letter with his habitual 'From old Daddie'.<sup>27</sup>

Hankering after removal from Newcastle, WGW considered those most expedient means of bringing about his wishes. Foss could not help him here, but Holst, who was recovering from his bout of depression and illness, seemed a much more promising prospect. Holst called on WGW early in February 1926, *en route* to deliver a Cramb lecture at Glasgow University. Interested again in WGW's doings, he recommended WGW's sending *Noble Squire Dacre* to Sir Henry Wood, as it was 'his time for taking scores'.<sup>28</sup> The two met at Newcastle station barrier at 12.20 one Friday, WGW promising to put Holst on his Glasgow-bound train 'in plenty of time'.<sup>29</sup> Holst declined WGW's invitation to lecture in Newcastle in June: 'Do you mind if I don't? I did so much jawing last winter that I want to give it up at least for a year or two'.<sup>30</sup> He had given the lecture series *England and her Music*, as first Alsop lecturer at Liverpool University.<sup>31</sup> According to Francis Thomson (University Librarian at Liverpool University), WGW was chosen

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<sup>26</sup> Aut X, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 3 February 1926.

<sup>28</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 163, 25 January 1926, 94.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 166, [17 June 1926], 95.

<sup>31</sup> The Alsop lectureship was established by the widow of a prominent lay officer of the University, James W Alsop in 1924.

rather than Walford Davies and Percy Buck.<sup>32</sup> WGW's seven public Alsop lectures on *The Art of J. S. Bach as revealed in his church music*, given at the University Arts Theatre between 19 October and 1 December 1927, coincided with the founding of the Liverpool Bach Choir by J. E. Wallace, who with the choir, illustrated some of the lectures. The lecture series enjoyed ample coverage from Holst's friend, Arthur Holland – useful publicity in WGW's quest for a new post. Indeed, on 28 October, Holst wrote to WGW with the news that a professorship was 'in the offing', though he had no details 'and perhaps you are not considering its possibilities.'<sup>33</sup>

The Liverpool professorship did not finally materialise, but a new door for WGW opened in March 1926 when Edward Dent, President of the International Society for Contemporary Music [ISCM] came to speak to the BMS, having just, reluctantly, accepted the Cambridge Professorship of Music. Dent, whose editorial work WGW knew from OUP's edition of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (which WGW had conducted with the CU on 10 March), became a good friend. He, like WGW, was also to be fifty in July and loved Italy, having travelled alone there over many years. At Dent's recommendation, and with his advice, WGW resolved to spend his own birthday alone in Italy, learning Italian, and discovering the wonders of Italian art, a decision that delighted Holst.<sup>34</sup> To realise this ambition (which he intended to carry out by car), he bought a Morris Cowley at Easter, took two driving lessons, and drove the family to Boghead for the holiday.<sup>35</sup> With this limited experience he made his way to Italy, meeting Holst on the way at Waterloo (telling Clarrie he had 'had a meal with Vally & Gussy') and hearing his daughter play at the Wigmore Hall.<sup>36</sup>

WGW drove on roads still damaged from the war, to Lausanne, the Rhone valley and Simplon Pass to Milan (where Mussolini's orders to drive on the right were often disobeyed).<sup>37</sup> taking daily Italian lessons at Berlitz schools in different cities crowded with American tourists.

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<sup>32</sup> The faculty of Arts had established a Selection Committee to choose a lecturer and its report unanimously recommended Dr Whittaker at an inclusive fee of £140. In the Faculty the Committee's further recommendation, that in the event of Dr Whittaker being unable to accept, the name of Sir H. Walford Davies and, failing him, Dr Percy Buck, be recommended, was deleted [information from Frances M Thomson, *GB-LVH*].

<sup>33</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 184, October 28 [1927], 102.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 167, June 28, 1926, 95.

<sup>35</sup> WGW and Clara had by now developed a 'semi-detached' style of marriage, similar to Holst's. By 1926, Holst, according to Imogen, only went home for occasional weekends to his house 'Brookend' near Thaxted, probably seeing more of Vally Lasker than his wife. See Holst, I, *Gustav Holst* (OUP: London, 1938), 119.

<sup>36</sup> Holst, 1974, No.168, 1 July, 1926, 96.

<sup>37</sup> *Aut X*, 1.



Dent's letters of introduction 'carried great weight on account of the reverence in which he was held', giving WGW access to many art treasures, and meetings with Dent's ISCM contacts, including the pianist Casella who invited WGW to a Verdi festival at Busseto.<sup>38</sup> The librarian of Milan Conservatoire persuaded WGW to visit the Roman amphitheatre in Verona, where, 'though distanced from the action' he enjoyed Boito's *Nerone*, finding 'a certain impressiveness was added by dark clouds over the background of Alpine peaks, and the constant rumblings of thunder'.<sup>39</sup> WGW admired Giotto's paintings in the Arena chapel at Padua, and visited Malipiero at his villa on the lower slopes of the Alps, viewing his miniature zoo during 'a happy day of pleasant chatting'. Through Ferrara to Bologna, WGW visited Florence and Rome, where he gave Italian opera 'one last chance', confirming his dislike for Donizetti. WGW reached Palestrina, but while appreciating the glories of Naples, he could never overlook the poverty and the filth: 'I do not know whether I enjoyed it or was miserable.'<sup>40</sup> Clarrie, finishing her studies at Madrid University, met him at Fontainebleau. She was distressed by a personal incident which had necessitated abandoning her lodgings, and begged vainly to return home, WGW writing later to Naples: 'Of course, I would like you at home; but I cannot allow that to interfere with your future. I would like you to add German to your acquirements, and I know only too well what it will mean to your mental development and to your experience in the future.'<sup>41</sup> At his Newcastle garage, 'attendants crowded around, shook hands and asked hosts of questions.'<sup>42</sup> Holst wrote of WGW's experience: 'We all hope and expect this latter to be the Event of the Year!'<sup>43</sup>

Foss's friendship with Dent drew WGW into ISCM activities. Since 1924 Dent 'had come to realise that the ISCM could be held together only by personal friendship and wondered whether it might be his duty to cultivate it in various countries rather than to write books'.<sup>44</sup> When Dent took on his new Cambridge responsibilities, Foss took over much of the organisation of ISCM festivals across Europe, managing to persuade the originally sceptical Vaughan Williams to allow his *Pastoral Symphony* to be performed at Prague in 1925, *Three Rondels*

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<sup>38</sup> Aut X, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>41</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 23, August, 1926.

<sup>42</sup> Aut X, 11.

<sup>43</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 169, Aug 8 [1926], 96.

<sup>44</sup> Carey, H., *Duet for Two Voices*, (CUP: Cambridge, 1979), 113.

in Venice in 1926, and *On Wenlock Edge* (unfortunately receiving a disastrous performance) with Warlock's *The Curlew* at Salzburg in September 1926. WGW submitted his *Psalm 139* setting to the British ISCM jury. Dent and Clark sat on a selection committee chaired by Edwin Evans (Foss's friend), ensuring that WGW's work would be at least considered, but its choice was far from a foregone conclusion. However, WGW was delighted to announce at the BC's Christmas concert on 21 December that his work had after all won a place at the Frankfurt Festival, and if Deans Forster could raise the money, the choir would perform the piece there. After an official Mayoral 'send-off' on 18 June, the BC left for Germany on the 2 July on the 12. 56 p.m. train.<sup>45</sup>

The ISCM Festival took place between 30 June and 5 July 1927, the BC's performance occurring on the 4 July in Frankfurt Opera House. Writing home to Forster, WGW described 'a tremendous success' with many 'recalls', added to which Furtwängler told had him the BC should remain in Germany 'To teach the Germans how to sing.' Having completed her studies at Vienna and Zurich Universities, Clarrie accompanied the choir as an interpreter for the short tour which followed, superintended by Dent. Choir organisation was splendid, with information sheets issued daily. The *Sackbut* gave an account of the choir's concerts in Göttingen and Münster, and choir member E T Stewart produced cartoons of the visit to Germany, one being published in the *Dominant*. The choir made a recording at the Parlophone studios when travelling home.

WGW returned by car to Frankfurt a fortnight later for a touring holiday with Clarrie, staying first at Eisenach, at the Villa of Frau von Kameke (subsequently a frequent holiday venue).<sup>46</sup> From Augsburg they drove to Munich to hear a Mozart opera and *Die Meistersinger*, next visiting mediaeval Nuremberg, Rothenburg on the Tauber, and Asch, with its resonances of Schumann's *Carnaval*. Nikota (Czech secretary of ISCM) showed them Prague, the place where *Don Giovanni* was written, and the opera house where it was performed.<sup>47</sup> Staying in Vienna, on the Blutgasse, in an old *pawlatsch* residence (at that time a Quaker-run private hotel), Clarrie was a knowledgeable guide. In Budapest there were 'sumptuous buildings and bare-footed peasants'.<sup>48</sup> After Linz and Salzburg, 'weary of towns', they drove through the forest to the Salzkammergut, staying at Mondsee in a pension for only four shillings a day, enjoying daily bathing and

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<sup>45</sup> Local unidentified press report, *GB-NEmd*.

<sup>46</sup> *Aut X*, 12.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

excursions round the lakes, visiting the haunts of Schubert and Brahms.<sup>49</sup> While at the Salzburg Festival they saw Reinhardt's fantastic production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Hoffmannthal's *Everyman* in the public square, upper storeys of the surrounding houses and the organ in the Minster being used to add to the effects. Mozart's *Divertimenti* were 'played to perfection by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra as supplementary feats when theatre performances were over.'<sup>50</sup> Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* was played in the church, and they went to three performances of *Fidelio*, enjoying the lonely drive back to the Salzkammergut in the early hours, with 'winding wraiths of mist circling above the trees, and the hum of the car the only sound after the throng and excitement of the Fest.' It was a fourteen hour drive to Zurich, where they stayed at Clarrie's old lodgings, Clarrie next day leaving for Venice, and WGW for the shortest route to the Channel port.

That autumn, with the deepening economic depression, BC receipts and subscriptions were down. Chairman Walter Corder, his health failing, asked to stand down, F Culley assuming his duties. WGW appointed Joseph Robinson as official deputy-conductor, and acknowledged his gratitude for all Dent's essential help with the Frankfurt tour. On 18 September a reciprocal visit was made by a Frankfurt student choir which performed German sixteenth-century and contemporary music in Newcastle Cathedral.

With the desire to take a new academic post elsewhere, WGW welcomed the offer (probably through C C Birchard, a Boston Music publisher contact from 1927's Dorking Festival) of a Professorship at Cornell University, New York State. Mary Pollitzer remembers: 'We had family talks about it, but not with much intensity.'<sup>51</sup> Though longing to accept, WGW was loath to leave his elderly parents and vacillated. An attempt at establishing a Music Department at Cornell had been made by Dr Kinkeldy (ex-Chief librarian of New York City Library), but though student numbers rose, courses remained elementary, due to inadequate education in school music. Kinkeldy then resigned in 1927, leaving an excellent University Orchestra, conducted by him from 1923.<sup>52</sup> In his report for 1927/8, the Dean of the Arts College

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<sup>49</sup> Aut X,

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., X, 14.

<sup>51</sup> Mary Pollitzer, personal letter to the writer, May 1998.

<sup>52</sup> Samuel, H E, 'The First Hundred Years of Music at Cornell', *Cornell University Music Review*, Vol. V (1965), 4.

recorded '...the failure of all efforts made during the past year to secure an appropriate candidate for the now vacant Professorship of Music' and the search widened:

Unable to find a qualified candidate in the United States, the administration turned to England and invited the Bach specialist, Dr. William G. Whittaker of Durham University to be guest Prof. of Music for the '28 Summer Session and to prepare a report and recommendations for the future. In all likelihood Whittaker was offered the position of Chairman; if so, he declined and returned to England at the end of the summer.<sup>53</sup>

WGW writes that he next received a proposal suggesting he visit Cornell for three months from early June (lecturing on music history during the summer term), analyse the situation, and submit a report on the department's reconstruction. WGW accepted immediately.

Before leaving, on 8 May 1928, a BBC relay of an ACOS concert in aid of Durham Castle Restoration Fund in the Town Hall was given, the Professor of Engineering, Dr J A Wilcken, playing Schumann's Pianoforte Concerto. Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, and excerpts from Schubert's Mass in A flat were also performed. WGW had given 'Friday 5 o' clock's' [lectures] and recitals at AC for thirty years, and now received a presentation from Dr Wilcken on behalf of grateful students. WGW had chosen for his gift a photostat copy of a manuscript in Uppsala University Library, Sweden (drawn to his attention by Dolmetsch), consisting of a set of dance tunes by the English seventeenth-century composer, William Young. Donnington considered these works to represent the earliest examples of the English violin sonata.<sup>54</sup> WGW edited the manuscript during the voyage (marred only for him by the fashion for playing gramophone music on board). The 'Transylvania' sailed from Glasgow for New York on 8 June 1928. Ten days later, OUP's Manager in America, the Scottish Duncan McKenzie, met WGW on the quay, having booked him into Columbia University Hotel.<sup>55</sup> McKenzie introduced WGW to 'hosts of people', and on 19 June, the two attended a recital by Lynwood Farnham, a distinguished virtuoso organist who played from memory.<sup>56</sup> On 8 July an article by Olin Downes on WGW, 'Renaissance of English Music', appeared in *The New York Times*.<sup>57</sup> Franklin Dunham, Educational Manager of the Aeolian Duo-Art Company, invited WGW to make a short, 'remunerative' lecture tour for Aeolian, before going to Cornell. WGW accepted, but first visited

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>54</sup> Undated letter from Robert Donnington to WGW, *GB-Guth*.

<sup>55</sup> WGW wrote to Clarrie from University Club, Ithaca, on 1 July, sorry for their 'hurried parting' and enclosing a card from Guéritte (now living in Surbiton) who had offered to help find Clarrie a work position.

<sup>56</sup> *Aut X*, 16.

<sup>57</sup> Downes, O, 'Apropos of Musical Democracy', *The New York Times*, Sunday 8 July, 1928.

Washington, touring the Library of Congress with Carl Engel. Glimpsing the Appalachian Mountains *en route* to Greenshore, he was reminded of Sharp. He lectured next in Winston, then Salem, a Moravian settlement where he met J F Williamson, conductor of the famous Westminster choir, which performed Bach's motets from memory.<sup>58</sup> After lecturing at Chapel Hill, at Wellesley College for Women, he finally visited the University of South Carolina where he met Paul Weaver, also going to Cornell for the summer (giving two courses in Music Education), and his wife.<sup>59</sup> WGW felt more relaxed with American professors, but was distressed by segregation in America. He heard the newly-formed Bach Cantata Club, 'the grandchild of our Newcastle Society', and accepted an invitation to stay at Birchard's country home on the Hudson (WGW dedicating his male voice part song, a Gibson setting, 'Outward Bound' to his host).<sup>60</sup> Arms Fisher (a former composition student of Dvořák), chief director of Ditson & Co., also gave him hospitality, and WGW again met Alfredo Casella (founder of the Italian section of ISCM) conductor that summer of the Boston Symphony 'Pops' concerts (according to WGW '...a brilliant musician but 'a conductor of icy coldness').<sup>61</sup>

In order to facilitate independent travel, WGW took driving lessons and a test in the USA, and bought a second-hand car, a 'Dodge', for £30 (selling it for £15 on leaving). Its 'unquenchable thirst' required water every hour, and it had frequent fits of 'shimmying', but the 'Dodge' could overtake the magnificent motors much in evidence. Now WGW and Weaver could weekend in the great lakes, WGW also visiting Lidbury at Niagara Falls, and 'a host of the Whittaker clan on the Canadian side'.<sup>62</sup> Lidbury, his musical interests now centred on the Tudors, had also developed a fascination with recording techniques: "The whole house was covered with wires, resonaters, reflectors, tubes and 'what-not'; it was like living in a factory."<sup>63</sup> Lidbury discussed 'upper partials', 'resonance, differentials', and amplifying, until WGW was exhausted.<sup>64</sup> WGW, consulting with Kinkeldy, wrote his report on the Music Department's reconstruction.<sup>65</sup> Observing the contrast between the Music Department's small, shabby premises and the palatial

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<sup>58</sup> WGW considered 'an indiscretion' their arrangement of the slow movement of *From the New World*.

<sup>59</sup> Aut X, 17-18.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

accommodation of other departments, WGW assessed that (knowing the American respect for size and cost) to attract students, he ought (tongue in cheek) to design a department with a fine building, spacious lecture rooms, abundant equipment, and large staff, costing around £400,000. Though ambivalent at first, the Cornell President promised that if WGW would accept the Professorship, he would undertake to raise the money within a year. It would have been a 'dream post', and WGW described the offer as 'a supreme temptation'.<sup>66</sup> He could have achieved much musically, and indulged his passion for travel. Genial Cornell colleagues, a vastly improved financial position, potential for choral conducting, and the offer of a Sabbatical year were alluring, but it was impossible:

...my parents were old. It would have broken their hearts had I left them. Transplantation was impossible with the greater extremes of climate and severance from their friends other considerations: My mother was adventurous, but my father clung to his accustomed ways...Not to have had a fireside by which to sit in his favourite armchair and smoke, not to have his Newcastle morning newspaper, these would have made him wretched. So I declined. They never knew why.<sup>67</sup>

Regrets followed: 'Often and often, when worn out by my struggle with the impossible governors of the SNAM in Glasgow, I bitterly regretted the decision.'<sup>68</sup> WGW strongly recommended Weaver for the post.<sup>69</sup>

On Harold Samuel's advice, WGW holidayed in the Adirondacks. A Jewish woman student recommended a suitable place to stay, a farm at Moriah, near Lake Champion where he booked for six weeks, driving with the student along the Mohawk Valley, through Saratoga Springs. Here he worked each day either editing Young sonatas, or composing; on 26 August he wrote 'Outward Bound' (to words by Gibson) for a chorus of men's voices, dedicated to C C Birchard. WGW's relaxed holiday *mores* would have surprised some at home, as he sometimes drove students to 'the pahnd' (insisting that they rowed the boat to the far end of the lake so that he could hear no voices), attired in a bathing suit, with 'similarly undressed females', some riding on the footboards of his car.<sup>70</sup> WGW visited Dunham at his country house in Vermont, crossing two ridges of the Green Mountains, surveying a valley ravaged by the previous year's floods: 'Tangled masses of steel from bridges were strewn in the gullies, roads by rivers were torn away

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Aut X, 25.

and bridges marked 'Passable, but not safe'.<sup>71</sup> Dunham and McKenzie gave WGW 'a wild greeting'.<sup>72</sup> WGW also went to meet Farnsworth (a retired Music professor friend of Birchard) and his wife, who ran a girl's summer camp, well-equipped for open-air study, plant collecting, Indian trail laying, wood craft, and music (there were three Duo-Art pianofortes). On leaving Moriah, WGW easily sold his car, three competitors vying for its purchase.

WGW visited relations in Windsor, Ontario, as well as the musicians Fricker, Ernest Macmillan, Mattias Turton, Albert Ham and composer Healey Willan in Toronto. There was another invitation from 'the exhausting Lidbury'. Travelling by steamer down the rapids through the 'Thousand islands' to Montreal, WGW met Whittaker cousins and stayed with Thomas Stoker (secretary in 1908 of the Whitley Bay and District Choral Society, and pupil and chairman of WGW's Music Study Circle in Newcastle) who took him to Quebec. In Montreal again, WGW visited Walter Clapperton, now Professor of singing at McGill University, who had been a BC soloist 1917-20 (before gaining a scholarship to the RCM) and met Sir Henry Lytton, and Bertha Lewis, wife of WGW's friend, Herbert Haynor. Sailing down the St. Lawrence River, WGW saw Newfoundland and Labrador, and witnessed a brilliant display of the Northern Lights, before reaching the open sea. During the Atlantic voyage, WGW did editorial work, and, from 24-27 September, composed the anthem 'I said in the noontide of my days' dedicated to Stanley Roper.

Holst wrote on 9 October: 'Welcome home! I hope you have had a really good time. Probably you are too busy to write now, but would you get Potts [who had taken over the organisation of Newcastle BMS] to let me know if December 1<sup>st</sup> is definitely settled for my lecture? I had hoped that he could alter it so that I could hear your performance of The Golden Goose'.<sup>73</sup> But WGW, with 'other fish to fry' and his eye continually on the advancement of his career missed Holst's lecture being involved in delivering three lectures at the Royal Institution.<sup>74</sup> Years earlier this would have been unthinkable. But WGW's lectures were important for several reasons. First he followed in the wake of Henschel, Walford Davies, Mackenzie and F. Bridge as a lecturer on music; secondly the invitation was prestigious and finally the lectures raised his

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>73</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 190, 9 October, 1928, 106

<sup>74</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 December 1928. Report by 'EK', *GB-NEMd*.

profile, especially since music had not been a subject for discussion at the Royal Institution since 1921.

On returning from the USA, WGW found there was unavoidably a welter of laborious tasks for OUP. He had employed translators for some of his editorial work (Clarrie occasionally obliging), but when A. G. Latham, Professor of Modern Languages at AC, retired in March 1926, WGW involved him in his new project, a twenty volume series *Arias from the Operas of Handel*, so beginning a life-long collaboration.<sup>75</sup> Latham, WGW said, possessed 'an apt knack for versification and an excellent poetic sense' and the two 'worked happily together'.<sup>76</sup> WGW also embarked on a series of Bach's extended Chorales, completed in 1929. Inspired by the Newcastle BC, Foss, Kennedy Scott, and Roper, now established a Cantata Club, aspiring to authentic performances, supported by OUP, Schweitzer, C S Terry, Hadow and WGW. WGW's Cantata editions would be used, and he was invited to conduct in November 1926. WGW, who had performed eighty Cantatas with instrumental accompaniments, recommended these editions on 10 January 1928, when delivering a paper to the Musical Association on 'Some Problems in the Performance of Bach's Church Cantatas', under the chairmanship of the President, Professor Joseph Bridge. He discussed the authentic approach regarding size of forces, balance and sound, but within the limits of modern instruments. WGW sent a copy of the paper, and following discussion to Foss.<sup>77</sup> Foss in the meantime had married Dora Stevens, who was enchanted with the social life involved with Foss's work, seeing him as 'the keystone of this growing edifice of British music', and as in a unique position: '...he had sympathy; he had understanding; he had power'.<sup>78</sup> Many composers received hospitality at 'Nightingale Corner', the Foss's home in Rickmansworth. The couple, in Newcastle to give a BMS recital, visited the Whittakers for the weekend of the 12 November 1927, WGW driving the party to Alnwick for lunch, and over

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<sup>75</sup> Latham had joined the staff of AC in 1893 as lecturer in French and Italian, being appointed professor in 1910. Educated at the universities of London, Bonn, Caen, Paris, and Florence, his publications included *The Oxford Treasury of French Literature* and the then standard translation of Goethe's *Faust*. See DUJ, Vol. XXIV, NO. 8, March 1926. Latham had in fact helped WGW for many years before embarking on OUP work, in March 1910 translating the words of Handel songs for a Rutherford Girls School Prize-giving programme, in 1911 the words of Brahms' *Naenia* by Schiller for ACCS and henceforward any translations needed for WGW's performances.

<sup>76</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 24 November 1940.

<sup>77</sup> Whittaker, W G, 'Some Problems in the Performance of Bach's Church Cantatas', Extracted from *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, Session LIV, (January 10, 1928), 35-61. [Following discussion included] Also published in *Musical Times*, lxi/1024, (June 1928), 544.

<sup>78</sup> Hinneells, D, *An Extraordinary Performance*, (OUP: Oxford, 1998), 26.



'perilous snowy roads' to Rothbury and Morpeth, via Cambo and the new line, dining with the Potts's at their new house on the return journey.<sup>79</sup> By 1929, Foss's interests had widened to European music, and in 1929 he made strong attempts to purchase the British rights to Universal Edition of Vienna.<sup>80</sup>

WGW's own sense of disaffection with the musical scene in Newcastle seemed to be reflected in the fate of surrounding of musical institutions. The energy and devotion to public lectures whether at AC, the BMS and the NLPS began to lack the momentum they had once enjoyed. On 16 January, 1928, George Dyson gave an illustrated lecture to Newcastle BMS, *From Bach to Haydn*; this event had been organised by WGW, but with the suicide of Eaglefield-Hull that same year, the parent society of BMS suffered a mortal blow and by 1933 it was extinct. Local societies continued autonomously but lacked direction without the central beacon of the London institution. Perhaps reading the writing on the wall, WGW handed over responsibility to Potts. A similar downturn in attitude overtook WGW's relationship with the CU. He had to 'cajole the committee' to accept his programme choice (which included Holst's *Two Psalms*, English songs by Walford Davies, Armstrong Gibbs, and Maurice Besly and Bax's piano work *Mediterranean*).<sup>81</sup> He reported to Holst on 2 December: 'I wish the performance had been more note-perfect, but there were really only two or three places where intonation beat the choir, but as far as the spirit was concerned it was really splendid. It sounded perfectly glorious; the climaxes were most thrilling.'<sup>82</sup> The audience was 'miserably small', however, but press reports were glowing.<sup>83</sup> Boughton's *The Immortal Hour*, performed on 3 December, was also a new attraction (which Boughton came north to oversee) but more to the CU's taste was the Beethoven centenary celebrations which involved performances of the 'Choral' Symphony', the *Three Equali* and the *Missa Solemnis*, the latter of which was the subject of his article 'The Choral Writing in the Missa Solemnis' in *Music & Letters* in 1927. After the Beethoven events WGW resigned his conductorship leaving the responsibility to George Dodds. The NEMT, having

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<sup>79</sup> An undated letter from Potts to Foss, probably from this time, reads: 'Many thanks for delightful settings in your name, which have given such pleasure.' Commonplace books of Hubert Foss, Diana Sparkes, private archive.

<sup>80</sup> Hinnells, 1998, 26.

<sup>81</sup> It is perhaps an indication of the fraught relationship between WGW and the CU Committee that, during their centenary in 1988, the name of Whittaker does not appear in any of the historical literature.

<sup>82</sup> Holst, 1974, (f), 2 December 1926, 132.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

fostered some real excellence in local performers, found itself in financial difficulty and an unpleasant row blew up between WGW and the press. In February 1928, he was accused in the *North Mail* of setting his own pieces in the NEMT syllabus for monetary gain, and it was left to Deans Forster to print a frank rebuttal on 2 February in the *Journal*.

On careful enquiry, I found that the monetary benefit derived by Dr. Whittaker as editor of his twenty-six selected pieces is ten shillings, and of Mr. E. J. Potts, one guinea. Surely the labourers are worthy of their hire, and are well entitled to whatever comes to them as a result of their work outside the Tournament. The Oxford Press is tendering a service to us by publishing separate numbers at a cheap rate rather than put competitors to the expense of purchasing the complete volumes of Schubert Songs.<sup>84</sup>

At AC he continued to his broad interests with performances of Purcell (notably *King Arthur* and the *Ode on St Cecilia's Day*), Stanford's *Stabat Mater* and Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* and there was an ACOS concert for the Beethoven celebrations. WGW also oversaw the installation of the latest technology, a Duo-Art piano, but found himself remonstrating with the college authorities over the provision of music books for the newly opened AC library.

The only factor that continued to inspire WGW to remain in Newcastle at this time was the work of the BC, principally because this instrument was his own. The choir, still a magnet for prestigious figures from London, brought Harriet Cohen and Arthur Benjamin to Newcastle in November 1928. A concert given by both pianists on 6 November was followed by Benjamin on 12 November performing his own Suite for piano and his Sonatina for Violin and Piano with Wall. The choir sang WGW's *Psalm 139* and there were other interesting novelties such as Rubbra's *La Belle Dame* and Vaughan Williams's *Flos Campi*, the *Concerto Accademico* and *Sancta Civitas*. Bach interest was marked by the inclusion of the Suite in B minor for flute and string orchestra, and the recent publication of Tallis's 40-part motet 'Spem in alium' spurred him on to perform the piece with the BC on 15 May 1929. Yet, even with these distractions, his mind was set on leaving.

WGW's search for a new post had intensified on returning from Italy in 1926, much of his correspondence with Holst being on the subject. He wrote to Holst in Edinburgh where the latter was conducting Tovey's Reid Orchestra, having heard that professorships were arising at Leeds, and finance allowing, at Glasgow. Holst replied that he would write to Hugh Allen, and

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<sup>84</sup> Letter to the *Newcastle Journal*, 2 February, 1928, GB-NEmd.

advised WGW to do the same and ask for an appointment with Allen at the RCM:

I know no one in authority in Glasgow but I go there to conduct on Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> and may be able to get in a word. Let me know if there is anything else I can do. I wrote to California some time ago telling them to snap your up before it was too late.  
As for AC I used up all my bad language long ago.<sup>85</sup>

Holst wrote to Julius Cohen, a retired Chemistry Professor from Leeds, about the Leeds Chair, enclosing a reply from Mrs. Cohen with his Christmas greetings, on 22 December.<sup>86</sup> But there was no quick resolution. Holst met the Cohens in February in London, with WGW's list of points for discussion and WGW's permission to divulge that he was leaving AC.<sup>87</sup> Holst then wrote formally to Cohen (confessing to WGW he had 'pitched it rather strong, but this is an occasion for doing so').<sup>88</sup> It was a glowing testimonial: 'As far as I can see there is no-one else available to equal him, both as a brilliant musician and experienced and inspiring teacher.'<sup>89</sup> However, the salary was only £600 a year (allowing outside work), Holst writing on 14 February: 'I will not move without your consent...Let me know if there is any other thing I can do as regards Leeds or Glasgow.'<sup>90</sup> Holst guessed that, though Glasgow might give double the salary, it would mean three times as much work, but WGW rejected the Leeds appointment. Holst met Walford Davies (who gave the news he was going to Windsor), and 'put in a good word' for WGW, at a hurried and public meeting, writing to WGW: 'I wish I could do something really helpful.'<sup>91</sup>

In 1929, WGW applied unsuccessfully for R O Morris's post at the Curtis Institute, Philadelphia, Holst writing to WGW on 19 April having heard the news from Archibald Davison of Harvard: 'I am sorry you are not leaving Newcastle and I am very sorry that you are sorry. But I am not sorry at all that you are probably not going to that Philadelphia post...As I understand it the post is chiefly an organising one. Need I write more?'<sup>92</sup> Adopting a long established tactic, WGW drew press attention, *The Evening Chronicle* carrying a pen-portrait of WGW, with caricature

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<sup>85</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 173, 16 November [1926], 98.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., No. 175, 22 December [1926], 99.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., No. 176, 24 January 1927, 99.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., No. 178, 7 February, 1927, 100.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Appendix 2, Letter from Holst to Professor J B Cohen, Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1927.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., No. 179, 14 February, 1927., 100.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., No180, 24 February, 1927, 101.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., No. 195, April 19 [1929], 108. R O Morris was vacating this post, returning to England with Herbert Sumsion (the latter to take Brewer's position at Gloucester). According to Ursula Vaughan Williams, things '...had not worked out as they [the Morrises] had hoped and R O had resigned.' See - Vaughan-Williams, U., *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, (OUP: Oxford, 1988), 172.

by Langlands, listing his achievements and reporting how WGW had declined 'offers from Wales and the United States'.<sup>93</sup> *The Evening World* also praised WGW's continuous involvement in work for north-east music. Holst sensed WGW's desperation, offering to write to Allen, Walford Davies, or F H Bissett (president of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir), but cautioned: 'I could not add anything to what I have already told them and if I were one of them I should resent being bothered...If you think it would help if I wrote to any one or all send me a pc.'<sup>94</sup>

At last the Glasgow Professorship became a reality, and on 21 July Walford Davies wrote from Windsor Castle to A Peden Fyfe of Glasgow recommending WGW for the post of Principal at the Scottish National Academy of Music [SNAM]: 'Of all your candidates and possibles of whom you told me last Tuesday, good as Bainton and Rootham are, it is my conviction that Whittaker is the best equipt [sic] and likely to go farthest in your supremely important post...He is extraordinarily sound musically and at heart, accessible and unself-regarding...He can hardly have done more for the cause of music.'<sup>95</sup> While attending the first Anglo-American Music Conference at Lausanne in August, 1929, WGW heard from Sir Donald McAllister, Vice-Chancellor of Glasgow University, that he had been appointed to the newly-created double post of Gardiner Professor of Music at the University, and Principal of the SNAM, at a salary of £1300 per annum.<sup>96</sup> It was the opportunity WGW had been hoping for and he accepted with alacrity, not realising that the political circumstances of music in Glasgow would prove to be the most testing of professional and personal challenges.

Before leaving the north-east, WGW's presence was felt at the installation of the new Chancellor of Durham University, the Duke of Northumberland, on 5 June 1928 with his new anthem 'Anxia quis quis'. He was also present to conduct the choir and the orchestra in the traditional Northumbrian tune, 'Chevy Chase', followed by a choral rendering of 'Io Triumphe', written by J H How (for a setting by the late Joseph Bridge).<sup>97</sup> It was a fitting closing off of his association with Durham and AC, for his mind was now firmly fixed on his new appointment at Glasgow which he hoped would be confirmed during the summer months. Almost certainly

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<sup>93</sup> Whittaker, J, Scrapbook, 20f.

An offer for a post in Wales must have come from E. T. Davies, or Walford Davies.

<sup>94</sup> Holst, 1974, No 196, SPGS, June 2 [1929], 109.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from Walford Davies to Peden Fife, Whittaker Collection, GB-Gu.

<sup>96</sup> WGW, Aut XI, 1.

<sup>97</sup> *The North Mail*, 5 June, 1928, GB-NEmd.

associated with his desire for the new appointment was the important venture at OUP of *The Clarendon Song Book Series*, a valuable source of repertoire for school music teachers, with interesting but not too difficult accompaniments. This series of publications would require frequent meetings in Edinburgh as his co-editors were Herbert Wiseman and John Wishart. Wiseman, Director of Music for Edinburgh Education Committee from 1920-1946, had from 1925 chaired the Edinburgh Musical Festival Association, organising orchestral concerts for school-children, and schools' concert broadcasts for the BBC. With Wishart, his Edinburgh colleague, he had written *The Music Class*, and also produced a series of seven books *Master Melodies for Schools* used at courses at St. Andrew's (his own music summer school) and Oxford.<sup>98</sup> Another educational venture scheduled for the summer was Scholes's Anglo-American Music Education Conference in Lausanne (where Scholes had taken up residence since 1928). Having taken some holiday in Germany beforehand, WGW, invited by Scholes to give a paper at the conference, travelled to Switzerland though he was by no means enthusiastic:

With my inclination to shun people, I am not fond of conferences at any time, but it is a much greater trial during holidays, when I prefer complete solitude. There was no escape, however, from the persistence of my old friend Percy Scholes, hon. general secretary of the conference, who, with enormous labour and infinite foresight, launched this idealistic scheme, which might have had far-reaching effects.<sup>99</sup>

WGW met many friends from both sides of the Atlantic, 'a most exhausting time'.<sup>100</sup> Hadow was chairman, made brilliant speeches and demonstrated his 'unlimited knowledge and his art at managing affairs', while Bairstow's handling of the massed singers, and his lecturing ability 'electrified the Americans'.<sup>101</sup> After the conference WGW made a 'blissful' escape and made for Frau Heller's battlemented home at Rothenburg where his room had a balcony and view of the valley and river, and she encouraged him to play the 'first-rate Ibach grand' in the drawing room.<sup>102</sup> On many of the old houses the names of the first occupants were carved, some being members of the ubiquitous Bach family. At 11.30 each morning a brass quartet played a chorale four times from the Rathaus tower.

Having heard the news of his appointment at Glasgow, WGW clearly felt a sense of

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<sup>98</sup> Wiseman, H, and J Wishart, *The Music Class* (Glasgow: J S Kerr, 1925).

<sup>99</sup> Aut X, 34

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Hadow's *Collected Essays*, edited by Foss, were published by OUP in 1929.

<sup>102</sup> Aut X, 35.

personal dilemma. There was no indecision in accepting the Glasgow post but he faced the awful prospect of gracefully leaving his wife. Distracted, he fell in an unmarked hole, dug by a workman, a few days later finding his foot was broken. Unable to drive, he was marooned in Rothenburg for a few weeks, describing himself as being 'almost like the inhabitants, dreaming along in a lazy contented fashion, little interested in the world outside, and positively resentful of the day-trippers.'<sup>103</sup> Clarrie (now working in Paris), met WGW in Strassbourg and the two spent a week together, travelling via Metz to Luxembourg then staying at Laon on their return. Uncharacteristically, WGW missed the date of his return ticket, though a sympathetic officer, noticing WGW's limp, offered him a chair and cigar, and endorsed his ticket, attributing WGW's delay to his accident. But his reluctance to return was understandable. He had to break the news of his departure to Glasgow to his wife. Mary Pollitzer writes:

Whilst I was at home in Granville Road on holiday from the Royal College of Music in London, WG told me he was not going to take my mother with him to Glasgow and made me promise not to tell her this. The reason he gave me was that she could provide a home for me. But he also told me that he had known since before I was born that he had made a mistake in marrying my mother. I was already back in London when WG told my mother. I do not think I have to tell you how I felt about it all. Only later did I learn that a great friend and colleague in Newcastle also migrated to Glasgow-Annie Lawton- who had steered me through my Music Examination for School leaving Certificate.<sup>104</sup>

Holst wrote to congratulate WGW on his appointment on 15 September and WGW on his part 'thanked' Holst by performing *The Hymn of Jesus* with the BC in Newcastle (thereby also commemorating Holst's visit to Newcastle in 1921). Before leaving for Paris on 6 November, Holst wrote to WGW: 'It seems wrong for you to be coming to the Jolly Talgarth without a chance of meeting. So here's love and greeting to you and Mary with many thanks for your letter and for the beautiful performance of the H of J. As for the audience – but I've no language left for N o T.'<sup>105</sup> By this time news of WGW's move to Glasgow was public knowledge and the prospect of his departure was a source of consternation to the students at AC. One student (there were never more than four students studying music), Doris Nicholson records that, in 1927: 'When we heard of our dear WGW's impending departure...we were both awed and distressed'. As the term drew to a close WGW took all four in his 'bull-nosed Morris' for a day's

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<sup>103</sup> Aut X, 34.

<sup>104</sup> Mary Pollitzer, personal letter to the writer, 23 May, 1998.

<sup>105</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 158, Nov 6, 92. [In fact this letter should be dated 1929, not 1925 as estimated by Michael Short, since no performance of the *Hymn of Jesus* was given in Newcastle in 1925. This is further corroborated when Holst writes how 'strange' it is that he would not be meeting WGW in London, and Holst was in Paris in 1929 at the time of WGW's visit.]

outing in Northumberland: 'We stopped for a picnic lunch and had tea in Alston. One thing we were all to remember very clearly was the beautiful hillside setting of the cottage and garden hut where WG wrote his music. He gave each of us a parting gift of a leather-bound miniature score of a Beethoven symphony in memory of music study together.'<sup>106</sup>

WG's resignation from AC after 31 years was accepted with regret on 10 December by Cecil Cochrane who thanked him and acceded to his request to leave on 31 December.<sup>107</sup> Next day, WG conducted Handel's *Semele* (from the abridged OUP edition) at the ACCS and ACOS concert. Photographs, imbued with sadness, were taken in the Chemistry Laboratory (the rehearsal room), and the corridor, of WG, his wife and parents, Bullerwell, and Patrick Hadley.<sup>108</sup> Only Hadley was smiling. A farewell article about WG appeared in February's *The Northerner*, ending: 'Nobody ever leaves Whittaker, even after a brief conversation, without the impression of having been in contact with a great man and a charming personality.'<sup>109</sup> Holst wrote to WG on 19 December, enclosing a book and sending warmest greetings:

You will find most of the tales soothing in the midst of all your labours and worries while settling down. When once you are settled in Glasgow I believe that you will be recognised and honoured by people whose regard will mean much...I know of no place where I would prefer you to be and I know no man whom I want to see in your post as much as I want to see you.<sup>110</sup>

He also gave WG a perceptive warning: 'PPPS. Glasgow has only one drawback as compared to Newcastle-it's further from the Jolly Talgarth! PPPPS Therefore you will need to be constantly making special efforts to keep in touch with this part of the world. PPPPPS So Make Them!<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Nicholson, Doris (née Thompson): Typescript recollection, 2, *GB-Gsm*.

<sup>107</sup> Newspaper cutting from the *Journal*, (John Whittaker's Scrapbook, 60h).

<sup>108</sup> In March 1930 Patrick Hadley took over in a temporary capacity, hoping for WG's post, but was passed over for Sydney Newman.

<sup>109</sup> *The Northerner*, February, 1930, 41.

<sup>110</sup> Holst, 74, No.198, 19 December 1929, 110. The book mentioned here was probably Richard Garnett's *The twilight of the Gods, and other tales* containing 'The Demon Pope'.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*



## 2.2 1929 – 1941 ACADEMIC CAREER IN SCOTLAND

### 2.2.1 *Gardiner Professor of Music and Principal of the Scottish National Academy of Music in Glasgow*

When WGW first took over his new joint post as Principal of the Scottish National Academy of Music (henceforward SNAM) and Professor of Music at Glasgow University on 1 January 1930, his name appeared as co-signatory of a letter to the *Musical Times*, alongside Robert Bridges, Percy Buck, Walford Davies, Hadow, Selwyn Image, D. Lloyd George, and Richard Terry, announcing the formation of a Dolmetsch Foundation, aiming to continue Dolmetsch's fifty years of work as a performing scholar and craftsman in rediscovering Elizabethan music, using authentic instruments.<sup>112</sup> Haskell describes how Dolmetsch '...now in his sixties...was no longer willing or physically able to be a travelling salesman for early music', and how being 'chronically impecunious' he 'was often forced to borrow from friends to make ends meet'.<sup>113</sup> The foundation had already awarded three practical scholarships (in instrument construction and acquisition of performance techniques) and arranged a loan to pay for the extension of the Haslemere workshops. Now it was providing a forum for enthusiasts through its new journal *Consort* to which WGW had contributed an article on 'Bach's Orchestration'.<sup>114</sup> Soon after, Robert Donington (a protégé and scholar of Dolmetsch), paid tribute to WGW and all those who had issued this 'initial statement'.<sup>115</sup>

WGW's move to Scotland at the beginning of 1930 marked the fulfilment of his academic ambitions, but also signalled the effective end of his marriage to Clara (though this was never publicly admitted). Within the family, Edna Gillies (a second cousin of WGW) recalls disapproval of WGW's 'affair with a student', and among WGW's acquaintances, Louise Dyer wrote to a friend that WGW had left his wife for 'another woman'.<sup>116</sup> In explanation WGW wrote to a friend in 1931: 'My wife is forming a home for Mary in London, and I have

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<sup>112</sup> *Musical Times*, Vol. 71, NO. 1043 (Jan 1, 1930), 61. WGW, known to Dolmetsch since 1898, had with Louise Dyer (who had first heard a Dolmetsch harpsichord at a Newcastle BC concert in 1924) encouraged the first Haslemere Festival in 1924 (Dolmetsch having lived there since 1917).

<sup>113</sup> Haskell, H., *The Early Music Revival* (Thames and Hudson, 1988), 39. At the same time a modest state pension of £110 a year was obtained for Dolmetsch. (John Whittaker's Scrapbook, 28c. unidentified cutting from the *Musical Times*.)

<sup>114</sup> Whittaker, W G, 'Notes on Bach's Orchestration', *Consort*, Vol. 1, 1929. [article from John Whittaker's scrapbook].

<sup>115</sup> Donington, R., *The Work and Ideas of Arnold Dolmetsch, The Renaissance of Early Music*, (Haslemere, 1932), 5.

<sup>116</sup> Davidson, J, *Lyre Bird Rising*, (Amadeus Press: Portland, Oregon, and Victoria, 1994), 345.



comfortable lodgings, which I scarcely ever see, so things have panned out pretty well.<sup>117</sup> Clara left Newcastle, at the age of 61, to live with Mary at Swiss Cottage, London. The house at Granville Road was left empty (apart from an occasional tenant and brief use as a Government store during the Second World War), remaining furniture being put into store. WGW sent his books, bookshelves, music, and pictures to his Glasgow 'diggings', soon to be transferred to his rented rooms in a University-owned house, at 60, Clevedon Drive, Glasgow 2, a prosperous area, near the University, at the top of a steep bank. Annie Lawton joined the Academy staff in September 1930, also lodging there (as, on a part-time basis, did Ernest Potts, when he too began teaching at the Academy). With no obvious regrets over his decision, WGW wrote to Clarrie in October 1934: 'I think that relatives, present company always excepted, of course, are better at a great distance, or non-existent.'<sup>118</sup>

On 6 January 1930, Holst wrote welcoming WGW to his '...new Vita Nuova – what I believe will prove to be your 'spiritual home' – the place where you will be respected, honoured and loved for what you are and for what you do'. An optimistic WGW also wrote to Percy Scholes on 13 January: 'There is a tremendous field here and I think I shall be happy in my work.'<sup>119</sup> Until 30 April WGW took the odd trip to Newcastle to conduct BC concerts; afterwards subsequent visits were few and brief. Writing to Ena Ross, a Newcastle friend, in 1931, WGW confided that despite meeting old friends in nearly every street: 'I feel in a sense, quite a stranger when I go back to Newcastle now. The fact is that one's interests lie elsewhere.'<sup>120</sup>

WGW received an honorary MA degree from Glasgow University, on 6 February, Stanley Baldwin being installed as Rector at the same ceremony. The Edinburgh Professor of Music, Donald Tovey, also requested an honorary Mus.Doc. for WGW, which was awarded on 19 February at a Graduation in the Upper Library Hall, at Edinburgh University, in company with Julius Röntgen (described by Tovey to WGW as 'a compound of Hans Sachs and JSB') who

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<sup>117</sup> Letter from WGW to Edna Hawkins of Regina-Sesk, Canada, 5 November, 1931, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

<sup>118</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 12 October, 1934.

<sup>119</sup> Scholes letters, *CA-On*.

<sup>120</sup> Letter from WGW to Ena Ross, Gosforth, 15 October, 1931, Principal's letters, SNAM, *GB-Gn*.

was similarly honoured.<sup>121</sup>

Röntgen presented Tovey and the Reid Orchestra, the dedicatee, with an *Edinburgh Symphony* in honour of the occasion. The Edinburgh degree recognised WGW's work at Newcastle, but Tovey also hoped that it would have some 'slight value in strengthening your hands for a task which you cannot execute without overcoming some opposition.'<sup>122</sup> He hoped too that that WGW's future work at the SNAM would help his own at Edinburgh. As a member of the Board of Governors at the SNAM, Tovey would have known only too well of the noisy disagreements which constantly erupted at meetings and the stubborn and reactionary attitudes of many of his colleagues. WGW had certainly not bargained for the obstructive and repressive reception given him by this body, but, according to his *Autobiography*, he immediately faced the rudeness and bullying ways which prevented his accomplishing anything without unpleasantness: 'I never attended a meeting without a sinking feeling at the pit of my stomach, for I never knew what was going to crop up. I even used to hesitate before entering the building'.<sup>123</sup> The stress WGW suffered as a consequence of this chronic tension may well have shortened his life (he was to die of a gastric carcinoma), one not helped by the national financial crash of 1929 which curtailed all spending at the Academy. The long Academy 'interregnum' stretching from 1904 had produced an institution both inward-looking and resistant to change. Despite the zeal and enthusiasm with which WGW tackled his projects, the constant friction with the Governors (perhaps more than his enormous workload) would eventually wear him down.<sup>124</sup> Another stress, unacknowledged by WGW, was the loss of so many friends and loyal supporters. Holst was correct in his prediction that Glasgow's distance from London would ultimately cause separation, a prediction witnessed by the exchange of only two letters written by Holst to WGW in 1930, on 6 January and 2 December.

Matchett and Spedding describe WGW's challenge: "Taking up his duties early in 1930, it was fortunate that he was able to survive on four hours sleep a night, for the tasks which lay ahead would have taxed a man half his age. He was now 53 years old."<sup>125</sup> Allan Macbeth, the first

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<sup>121</sup> Letter from Tovey to WGW, 14 February, 1930, *GB-Er*.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>123</sup> *Aut XI*, 52.

<sup>124</sup> The posts were not divided until 1953 when Henry Havergal became Principal of the Academy.

<sup>125</sup> Matchett, G, and Spedding, F, *The First 150 Years*, (RSAMD, Glasgow, 1997), 34.

Principal, had achieved certain things, but WGW was 'virtually starting from scratch. The very idea of the joint post was new'.<sup>126</sup> Having been established as the Glasgow Athenaeum School of Music in 1890, its first Principal, Macbeth, Leipzig-trained and previously conductor of Glasgow Choral Union, remained for seven years. Standards varied; memorable teachers included Henri Verbrugghen (a Belgian violinist and pupil of Hubay and Ysaÿe) and Philip Halstead (a Leipzig-trained pianist), and it was these two personalities who gave the institution its badly-needed momentum. Verbrugghen and Halstead played all the Beethoven violin and piano sonatas at chamber concerts in Glasgow and London, subsequently giving a series of historic recitals tracing the development of the sonata. Other teachers included J B McEwen of later distinction at the Royal Academy of Music in London. A second Principal, Edward Harper, (recommended by Prout), resigned after only two years in 1904, and was never replaced. The Athenaeum then consisted only of a business men's club, a Commercial College, and the School of Music. The first closed, the second moved away, and the Music School flourished, having about 3000 students at the end of the war, the curriculum being maintained by a Music Committee of staff and Governors.<sup>127</sup>

The Athenaeum School nevertheless cultivated a somewhat amateurish and atrophied atmosphere and needed a strong arm to give it proper direction and impetus. Alexander Peden Fyfe, a musical lawyer, took over as Chairman of the Board of Governors in 1928. Probably at his request, the President of the Academy, Sir Daniel Stevenson (a millionaire coal exporter) volunteered to enlarge the Athenaeum and to finance the appointing of a new joint post of Principal of the SNAM and Professor of Music.<sup>128</sup> WGW writes that, in spite of having 'odd ideas' and strange ways, demonstrated 'wide visions and fine ideals and gave freely of his great wealth'.<sup>129</sup> When the Liberal Club adjoining the Athanaeum closed, Stevenson donated £10, 000, equalled by a Carnegie grant, funding the transformation of the building into sound-proofed teaching studios and an acoustically perfect concert hall with seating for 300, a lesser hall, a good chamber-music room, and a very fine little theatre, seating 800. The Academy reopened, with

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<sup>126</sup> Matchett & Spedding, 1997, 34.

<sup>127</sup> Even in 1935, other subjects were still included in the prospectus and the SNAM music courses were listed with those of the 'Department of Elocution and Literature'.

<sup>128</sup> Peden Fyfe remained Chairman until 1936.

<sup>129</sup> Aut XI, 19.

about eight hundred students, in its new premises in autumn 1929. A Principal was sought; 'matters...' wrote WGW '...looked rosy'.<sup>130</sup>

WGW thought the Governors aspiration to establish a Scottish Academy of Music in 'purpose, scope and standards' resembling the two principal London Colleges, was nevertheless unrealistic, given the lack of financial resources. 1929 being the year of the Stock Market crash, no more funds were available. WGW found Glasgow's musical activities 'even more provincial than those in Newcastle upon Tyne', and though London music colleges, well endowed with scholarships, drew students from a wide area, the SNAM boasted only one scholarship of £120 per annum (the Caird Scholarship, set up in 1918), and one bi-annual scholarship for Singing, with some remaining awards of £5 or less, which WGW compared with 'a local school'.<sup>131</sup> WGW consulted the Principals of the RAM, the RCM, and the Guildhall, and soon told the Governors that £40,000 was needed for scholarships, for assisting poor students, attracting outstanding teachers, to provide a library, and to subsidise concerts and operas.<sup>132</sup> The request 'fell like a thunderbolt', no endowment being obtained in his time, which WGW described as 'a heart-breaking struggle against impossible odds'.<sup>133</sup> Help eventually came from various quarters: one friend donated £100 for WGW to administer, and WGW's clerk, Miss C B Taylor ('one of the few comforts I had') advised on the most deserving cases.<sup>134</sup> James Macfarlane, a Governor, presented £1,000 (and later a similar sum) to be spent over a number of years, 'a ray of light amidst the prevailing gloom'.<sup>135</sup> WGW distributed these funds after competitive examinations, helping the largest number.

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<sup>130</sup> Aut. XI, 19.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

*Establishing a Diploma in Musical Education at the Academy;  
Library-building; the innovation of 'Opera Week'  
and the founding of the Bach Cantata Choir*

WGW's main achievement at the SNAM was his creation of the Diploma in Musical Education, a three-year course designed to train prospective school music teachers which 'survived almost intact until 1981'.<sup>136</sup> WGW's watchword from the start was: 'A new broom can sweep clean'.<sup>137</sup> His first action was to survey the students and hold individual interviews, discovering that most were only seeking Diplomas from London Colleges. To remedy this situation and convert the 'local music school' into a coherent institution, WGW began to design courses for professional students, providing the necessary broad syllabus rather than allow students to choose their own curriculum. During the interregnum when the Academy had been run by the Governors and the 'Office', the latter had ruled 'with an iron hand', according to WGW, its staff, untrained musically, having the power to choose staff (only two of which were salaried) and allocate pupils, finance being the only consideration.<sup>138</sup>

WGW could not sack the many incompetent teachers. He had no alternative other than to make the deeply unpopular move of assuming the task of allocating students to staff, thus alienating himself permanently from the 'Office'. He decided to build on what was good. The violin staff was generally very able, and included the efficient Bessie Spence, the principal professor being Horace Fellowes, ex-leader of the Scottish Orchestra, an interesting man, but one with whom WGW found it difficult to work. Fortunately, the main professor of piano, Halstead, was 'not just a splendid all-round musician but 'a man of remarkable and lovable personality, with a unique vein of humour, well-read in many subjects & a splendid friend and colleague'.<sup>139</sup> WGW found Peebles Conn (another ex-Ruhleben internee) to be a sound teacher of both violin and piano, while Harold Thomson, a young Academy ex-student, was 'a brilliant keyboard player and a DMus' who had the useful accomplishment of having studied figured bass under Tovey.

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<sup>136</sup> The Scottish Teachers' Association had proposed the establishment of a Teacher Training course before WGW's arrival, freezing discussions until his appointment. Aut XI, 30.

<sup>137</sup> Aut XI, 30.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 24.

Thomson, soon a close friend, willingly performed unpaid Academy duties.<sup>140</sup> WGW invited talented local musicians to the Academy, such as the brilliant local piano teacher, Wilfred Senior (conductor of Glasgow Choral Union), and Percy Gordon (music critic of the *Glasgow Herald*).<sup>141</sup> Gordon, said WGW, gave him 'wise and balanced counsel and his warm enthusiasm for everything that was good'. He also provided WGW with useful press coverage of Academy events.<sup>142</sup> His sister, Nellie Gordon was an excellent singing teacher, and also joined the staff, with James Reid, a local school music teacher and organist, who soon was singing solos in Bach Cantatas for WGW. Annie Lawton was appointed in June 1930, as in 1934 was Ernest Potts. WGW obtained the services of a young Dalcroze Eurythmics teacher, Phyllis Crawhall-Wilson, through Percy Ingham, head of the Dalcroze School in London (of which Hadow was President). While Ingham paid her salary, the SNAM sent him a proportion of her fees.<sup>143</sup>

A firm basis of broad musical education was soon in place for the Diploma students, who were offered 'a splendid array of courses' in Music History, Dramatic Art, Dalcroze Eurythmics, Elocution, Rhetoric, Literature, Class Singing, pianoforte teaching, conducting, keyboard harmony, and transposition. Fellowes already conducted the Orchestral Society, and Halstead was asked to give a pianoforte ensemble class, and to direct and coach the newly-founded Concerto Class, which WGW would conduct.<sup>144</sup> Bessie Spence took Chamber music evening classes and an ensemble class for advanced string players, and Lawton various classes for the Diploma in Education. After disbanding the existing poor Choral Society, WGW re-established compulsory Senior and Junior Choral Societies. Overhauling the examination system, WGW made pianoforte, singing, harmony, choral singing, and gramophone sessions (with scores and recordings) compulsory subjects for all students, with a written examination each term. Counterpoint and an orchestral instrument were to be studied for two years, with obligatory attendance in either the Junior Orchestra or the new Concerto Class. Classes in Sol-fa,

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<sup>140</sup> WGW encouraged Thomson, with colleagues R. Barrett-Watson and James McKinlay to write an *Academus Rudiments Primer* and *Academus Book of Questions on the Rudiments of Music* for the SNAM, published in 1933 by OUP.

<sup>141</sup> Aut XI, 25.

<sup>142</sup> J B Clark, in many ways like a parent to WGW, died on 5 December 1934, his funeral taking place at St George's Church, Jesmond, on 7 December. Gordon, to some extent, took over a guiding role.

<sup>143</sup> Crawhall-Wilson was also encouraged by WGW and wrote *Rhythmic Movement for Nursery School or Kindergarten*, (Paxton & Co.: London, about 1941), which explained Dalcroze teaching methods.

<sup>144</sup> Wood-wind and brass players came from students on University Education and B.Mus. courses.

ear training, and sight-singing were available when needed. By 1932, WGW had also established an 'Adult Music Study Circle' for non-professional students and ex-students of the Academy, and the first two students passed examinations for the Diploma in Music education, proceeding to Training College. As the depression deepened, WGW managed to help impecunious gifted students, obtaining a substantial number of small scholarships from various donors, including the Monksland Festival, the Gaelic Society, and the Kennedy-Fraser Memorial committee.

All this was achieved by WGW working a fifteen or sixteen hour day, with preparation and rehearsals following the end of Academy business at 7.30 pm. Most days began at the Academy, but twice a week WGW rushed at lunchtime to the University, remaining there until evening. Sundays were filled with functions connected with both posts, and frequent short trips to London were needed for such events as ISM meetings and meetings of the BBC Central Music Advisory Committee. WGW found his work with the students 'a great joy', but with no assistant (save the unpaid contributions of Thomson) he found almost everything else 'depressing, devastatingly so'.<sup>145</sup>

One thing, however, was pleasing. WGW had imagined that his days for conducting large-scale Bach works were over, but he discovered that the local Glasgow Bach Choir rarely performed Cantatas. As these works were, WGW thought, perfect material for college concerts only requiring small forces as well as being 'comprehensive examples of Bach's creativity', they perfectly suited the intimate venue of the Stevenson Hall.<sup>146</sup> The already established Glasgow Bach Choir gave him free rein and WGW quickly founded the Academy Bach Cantata Choir (henceforward the BCC) for about thirty-two singers.<sup>147</sup> By September 1932 WGW could announce that his BCC recitals, despite causing 'considerable monetary loss', had become a unique feature of musical life of Glasgow, a splendid training ground for his musicians, and a means of fulfilling his ambition to perform all the Bach cantatas.<sup>148</sup> Entry depended on the ability to read a Bach aria at sight and members faced a mandatory 95% attendance record and had to be willing to copy parts. In their fourth season in 1933, WGW conducted six concerts, with four

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<sup>145</sup> Aut XI, 46.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>147</sup> The Glasgow Bach Choir's agreement led to their own demise after one of their own performances conducted by WGW led to insolvency.

<sup>148</sup> Typescript draft summary of WGW's interim report of work at the Academy, 9 September 1932. *GB-Guth*.

Cantatas in each, having after the first, conducted sixty-three works since arriving in Glasgow.<sup>149</sup> Anne Donnan, who had previously not enjoyed concerts, finding her concentration waned, was invited to join the BCC in 1934: 'But all that changed from the very first time I attended a rehearsal...which seemed for me the highlight of my years at the Academy. The combination of Bach's masterpieces and Dr. Whittaker's teaching really thrilled me.' Donnan was unaware that WGW was an eminent authority on Bach, 'but I soon learned that, and appreciated the privilege of singing in his choir.'<sup>150</sup>

WGW felt that by the time he retired, the choir's standard was higher than anything he had achieved before, and that the reason for the singers' ability to sight-read brilliantly was because of their Sol-fa foundation, which freed him to concentrate entirely on interpretation at rehearsals and to invite eminent performers from elsewhere to boost the prestige of the choir. In autumn 1933 WGW invited the talented young player, Evelyn Rothwell (twenty-two year old principal oboist with the Scottish Orchestra for the season), to play in some BCC concerts, offering to lend her one of his two oboes d'amore (originally donations to the Newcastle BC). He wrote to Rothwell the day after the concert:

Again let me say what enormous joy your work gave me last night. It is the nearest approach to the playing of Leon Goossens I have ever heard. Particularly lovely was the oboe d'amore obbligato. I have now conducted over one hundred and forty different Cantatas of Bach and for the first time what I had always imagined about the oboe d'amore was realised.<sup>151</sup>

The BCC was, WGW claimed, 'the chief joy of my time at Glasgow'.<sup>152</sup> Seventy Cantatas had been given in Newcastle and around a hundred and fifty in Glasgow (at the rate of up to twenty-three a year), until WGW had conducted all the extant Bach Church Cantatas. WGW wrote of this achievement in his *Collected Essays*.<sup>153</sup> With few scores in English (and those often in poor translations), the choir sang in German, WGW supplying literal translations of the text and instructions on principles of pronunciation. Before long the BCC could sing in German at sight.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Whittaker, W G, *Musical Times*, Vol. 74, No. 1090, (December, 1933), 1126.

<sup>150</sup> Donnan, Anne (previously Torrance), *Reminiscences of Dr. Whittaker*, 1, Typescript document in Donnan's possession.

<sup>151</sup> Letter from WGW to Evelyn Rothwell, 25 November 1933, Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Cuth.

<sup>152</sup> Aut XI, 37.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 37.



There had been no opera at the SNAM since Verbruggen had conducted *Der Freischütz*. At first deterred by the small size of the stage and the problems of settling on an appropriate rehearsal times (with diverse student timetables to consider), WGW decided to emulate the style of production he had encountered at Aberdeen University in 1920 when conducting his *Choruses from the Chæphoroi of Æschylus*. This performance had been characterised by the fashionable stylised presentation (advocated to WGW by Vaughan Williams) confining movement (such as ballet) to the stage while singers and orchestra were located each side. It is probable that WGW always intended to put on this type of performance anyway, since his published version of Gluck's *Orpheus* was used in the first Academy production.

Though initially restricted by a small number of competent solo singers, WGW soon found the enthusiasm irrepressible. After a season or two he was selecting from among twenty candidates for the leading roles (creating more opportunities by changing the principals each night) and involving a hundred students in the production. He insisted on including action at rehearsal from the beginning 'to achieve integration from every phrase of the text'. The operas continued, with involvement from the Glasgow School of Art, successfully for several years. WGW thought Purcell the 'master of stage dramatic music...It fits the stage as a glove to a hand', while Handel's *Saul* 'walked onto the boards as if it had been written as an opera'.<sup>155</sup> Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis* should be 'a stock piece in every repertory', while Vaughan Williams's *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* enthralled the audience.<sup>156</sup> WGW thought Opera Week 'the jolliest week of the session', for he knew that 'young people love anything connected with the stage' (perhaps remembering his own youthful participation in Nicholson's 'Thespian Society').

The success and popularity of Opera Week annoyed the Governors (especially Grand Opera Society members who had requested Offenbach and Gilbert & Sullivan) and attempts were made to stop the productions owing to accusation of profligacy. To deflect criticism, WGW formed an Opera Committee to promote discussion, but the Governors' appointee, an elderly city council member, tried to bully the Committee, asserting that opera was a luxury. The meetings degenerated into 'a rowdy public political gathering, the chairman shouting and banging his fists on the table', which terminated badly, on one occasion, when the producer Crawhall-

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<sup>155</sup> Aut XI, 42.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

Wilson, whose work was voluntary, 'left the room vowing never to help the Academy again' while the Governors forbade further productions.<sup>157</sup>

WGW had had doubts about supplying music for serious plays, but followed fashion and twice gave Milton's *Comus* with Arne's music. With the demise of the Opera, ballet now took WGW's attention and, following the vogue for classical ballet, in 1933 WGW paired a ballet to the incidental music of Purcell's *Fairy Queen* with a stage version of Handel's *Saul*. The following year the incidental music by Mozart to Beaumarchais's play *The Marriage of Figaro* was presented, with the ballet to Schubert's *Rosamunde*, Bach's Coffee Cantata in a stage version (arranged by WGW) and a stage version of Handel's *Jephtha*. In 1934 WGW composed his own ballet (unpublished) *The Boy who didn't like fairies* which was performed in 1935 with Mozart's *Bastien and Bastienne* and Holst's *Savitri*, works which, little by little, restored the tradition of performing opera. The trend continued in 1936 with scenes from Dibdin's *The Ephesian Matron*, Vaughan Williams's *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*, and Matthew Lock's *Tempest*. Wagner's version of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis*, in 1937, was followed the next year by a ballet to Purcell's *The Gordian Knot untied*, with a masque to Arne's music for Milton's *Comus*. WGW's last production in 1940 was Bach's *Peasant Cantata*, using his own OUP stage version, *Village Gossip*.

A large fire broke out at the Academy during the summer vacation of 1931, WGW writing to tell Birchard (his Boston music publisher friend) that thirteen class rooms, the organ, the hall, and theatre had been damaged.<sup>158</sup> A three-manual organ was immediately donated by George W Macfarlane, of Cathcart, one of the elected Governors, and installed at WGW's instruction in a special music room by Messrs Henry Willis & Sons Ltd. But one facility was missing before the fire; WGW writes that there was virtually no music library in the building on his arrival, and no funds allocated for the provision of one.<sup>159</sup> WGW donated many of his own books and eventually persuaded the Carnegie Trust Music Committee to grant £3, 000 for purchases of books, and £300 for cataloguing. This brought an angry letter from the SNAM Treasurer, accusing WGW of 'saddling the Academy with responsibilities it could not bear', and

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>158</sup> Letter from WGW to CC Birchard, 10 October, 1931, Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Guth.

<sup>159</sup> Aut XI, 46. The Academy library had consisted, according to WGW, of a few books remaining from the business men's club, and some unwanted old vocal scores.

informing him that 'The Academy is a failure and it is a bad job for you.'<sup>160</sup> The Chairman of the Governors even tried to block the use of the cataloguing grant. Notwithstanding, WGW, a passionate book-lover, was delighted at his success. Experienced at library-building both at AC and at the NLPS, he was in his element: 'There was nothing more pleasurable than planning a library & making purchases for it & I enjoyed greatly building up a really magnificent collection of books, music & gramophone records which proved a fine treasure trove for teachers and pupils.'<sup>161</sup> HMV and Columbia Records donated 400 gramophone records, and the Duo-Art Company lent pianolas and player-rolls.<sup>162</sup> In 1935 the National Federation of Music Clubs (USA) presented 'a representative collection of music and books by American composers and writers', chosen by its special committee, and so 'an authoritative guide to American Music.'<sup>163</sup> The library was open to all Scottish ISM members.<sup>164</sup> Students used the Mitchell Library, and the specially equipped Music Reading Room, while the SNAM Library catered for both staff and students. The library remains an important legacy of WGW's days at the Academy and, according to Matchett & Spedding, 'The RSAMD library of today contains one of the most comprehensive music and drama collections in Britain and features reading and study areas, listening points for the extensive collection of records, CDs and cassettes, viewing facilities for the video collection and a recently installed computer resource centre.'<sup>165</sup> WGW would have been proud to know that today the RSAMDA library is named 'The Whittaker Library', and its present web page: 'Whittaker Live'.

When Alexander Murray left a bequest, in 1929, of a valuable collection of musical instruments, WGW founded a musical instrument Museum at the SNAM, described in the 1935 SNAM Prospectus as 'the nucleus of a national collection', containing both non-European instruments (a seventeenth-century cittern, a viol da gamba, an ophicleide), and European

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Aut XI, 46.

<sup>162</sup> The SNAM bought piano rolls subsequently.

<sup>163</sup> Prospectus, Forty-sixth session, 1935-1936, SNAM (Formerly The Glasgow Athenæum School of Music), Day School, Evening School, Department of Elocution and Literature, Day Classes, Evening Classes, 15.

<sup>164</sup> SNAM Prospectus for the forty-sixth session, 1935-1936.

<sup>165</sup> Matchett & Spedding, 1997, 35.

orchestral instruments, available for student borrowing.<sup>166</sup> Henry G Farmer, a conductor at Glasgow Music Hall, became Curator of the museum, spending his spare time 'acquiring astonishing scholarship' in subjects such as Arabian music, old Scottish Music, and the history of British Military music (studies in ethnomusicology which followed the lead of such musicians as Bartók and Kodály).<sup>167</sup> He later became a friend of Fellowes, Calvocoressi, Tovey, and Allen.<sup>168</sup> Farmer vigorously supported Scottish music, and a Scottish Music Society was established on 22 May 1936, holding its first meeting at the Academy, aiming 'to compile, edit, publish and distribute compositions and books on music relating to Scotland, and to arrange meetings on the subject'. Farmer, WGW, and Ian Whyte (first director of music at the BBC and founder of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra) were inaugural members.<sup>169</sup> Farmer lamented the neglect of the work of Scottish composers since the late nineteenth century, persuading several composers (or their families) to deposit their works in Glasgow University Library. It is to his credit that the Whittaker Collection, and music by John B McEwen, Learmont Drysdale, Hamish MacCunn, Frederic Lamond, and Ladislao Zaverthal are preserved.

Every autumn, a priority for WGW was the organising of Academy concerts. In 1931 WGW prepared Holst's *Two Songs* for the December concert, a 'small event' in Stevenson Hall, since repairs had not yet been carried out. WGW consulted Halstead about arrangements: 'We can scarcely utilise the Concerto Class. The Choral Society will probably sing Brahms's 'Nänie' with two pianos and tymps, and Vaughan Williams's 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols' with one piano and one 'cello.'<sup>170</sup> 'One or even two concertos' would be played, including Gordon Jacob's, and a string concerto by Bach. On 3 November, WGW sent for Holst's *Fugal Concerto* from Cuthbertson's the Glasgow music dealers, along with Bruch's violin concerto and concertos by Brahms (for piano) and Franck's Piano Concerto in A minor. A spring charity concert in the

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<sup>166</sup> Prospectus for the forty-sixth Session, 1935-1936, The Scottish National Academy of Music (Formerly the Glasgow Athenaeum School of Music), 16-17. *GB-Guth*. Gifts and loans were made by many, including Lawton, Crawhall-Wilson, Dr Henry Farmer, Harry Hodge, and others.

<sup>167</sup> Aut XI, 1.

<sup>168</sup> WGW remained in touch with Fellowes, writing an anthem in 1928, based on the words of Psalm 93: 'The Lord Reigneth, He is clothed with majesty', which was dedicated 'To Canon Fellowes' and published by Curwen in 1930.

<sup>169</sup> Craik, S, Book of the Month, 'Henry Farmer Papers', Glasgow University Library Special Collections Department, December 2005. <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/dec2005.html> [Accessed 3 September 2007].

<sup>170</sup> Letter to Philip Halstead from WGW, 24 October, 1931, *GB-Guth*.

renovated theatre included Holst's *Choral Fantasia*, Vaughan Williams's *Benedicite* and Bliss's *Pastoral*, Thomson conducting a *Concerto Piccolo* for two violins and strings by R O Morris.

2.2.3 *Extending the work of the University Music Department:  
orchestral and choral societies.  
Introducing schemes for BMus and DMus degrees*

WGW's work at the SNAM was matched by the energy he devoted to his concomitant position at Glasgow University. With Music hardly taught there since the university's foundation in the fourteenth century, its recent development sprang from a legacy of £6, 000 left in 1911 left by Susan Cramb to found a 'visiting' lectureship (£2, 000 being intended for bursaries and scholarships). The Cramb Public Lecture Series began in 1923 with Percy Buck, the first lecturer, followed by distinguished musicians such as Colles, Walford Davies, Holst, and Tovey, each engaged to give a series of ten or twelve lectures per session. Buck published his lectures in *The Scope of Music* (OUP 1924), and Colles in *Voice and Verse* (OUP 1928). WGW was grateful for the scholarship bequest, but seems to have resented the continuance of the Cramb lectures after his arrival (complaining that audiences were small and few students attended). One aspect of this was that the lecture money would have more than paid for a teaching assistant. The speaker for 1931, Sir Hugh Allen, had already been invited before WGW was appointed. In the event, Allen was indisposed and unable to come, leaving WGW to deliver his own series on 'The Church Music of J S Bach, with special reference to the Church Cantatas', every Monday and Tuesday evening between April 13 and May 12. Allen invited WGW to be principal speaker at the annual meeting of the RCM on 9 November, honouring him on that occasion by making him a Fellow of the RCM.<sup>171</sup> Allen's Cramb lectures were eventually delivered in 1932 between 21 October and 17 December, WGW and his choir supplying illustrations.<sup>172</sup> Allen presented a gift of the Bach Gesellschaft to the University, but as a copy was already in the library, WGW told Allen that his gift had been donated to the Academy. After this time, WGW usually appointed Farmer as Cramb lecturer. In addition, with the arrival of more students, WGW was also granted the

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<sup>171</sup> Letter from WGW to the Governors of the SNAM, 11, November 1931, Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Guth.

<sup>172</sup> Letter from WGW to Hugh Allen, 16 December, 1932, Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Guth.

employment of an Assistant Lecturer, H. H. Wintersgill (a B.Mus. and Classical scholar from Cambridge, a Choral Society conductor who had taught for six years in a public school).

In other areas of the university WGW encountered further opposition and amateurism. The University Choral Society had never enjoyed much attention because most students were non-residential. The University Chapel, just completed in 1929, unsurprisingly had a musical standard that was 'none too high', but WGW had no involvement. In the Music Department itself, however, WGW discovered that the Professor of German, Herbert Smith, a member of Senate (and Governor of the Academy), had prepared the ground well for him, building up a large collection of books and music, and securing a grant of £300 to augment this.<sup>173</sup> A bequest soon provided the Department with instruments and a library. By 1936, the Ewing library, formerly in the possession of the Royal Technical College, Glasgow had been handed over to the University, and was described by WGW as 'in some ways among the most remarkable musical libraries in Europe'.<sup>174</sup> The Orchestral Society, largely a social body, founded by a student and conducted by Herbert Smith, played easy Haydn symphonies and held an annual *Conversazione* – 'a concert with coffee, cakes and speeches'.<sup>175</sup> When WGW attempted to establish a serious Society (with two concerts a season and strict rules on attendance) he was greeted with threats of resignation. He made similar counter-threats, and promised to resign and form a departmental orchestra. When he did this, despite losing some players, the membership doubled and the ensemble improved, allowing important works to be tackled. Notwithstanding the poor tone and technique of many players, WGW satisfied his wish to acquaint as many as possible with the 'best music'.<sup>176</sup> Each year, WGW presented new challenges - the *Siegfried Idyll*, Ravel's *Pavane*, Moeran's *Two Pieces for Small Orchestra*, Holst's *Beni Mora Suite* – successfully elevating the standard of sight-reading and interpretation. Once Dvořák's *Symphonic Variations* had to be scrapped at the last minute before a concert, but it was back on the stands at the beginning of the next session, seeming easier. In bringing British works to the concert programmes, WGW's orchestra gained a reputation for playing little-known works. Not knowing the composition of the orchestra from year to year made the choice of repertoire difficult, and the orchestra was liable to 'extraordinary

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<sup>173</sup> Aut XI, 1.

<sup>174</sup> Letter from WGW to Scholes, 8 October, 1936, *CA-On*.

<sup>175</sup> Aut XI, 2.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

vagaries at the concert' which made WGW vow never to conduct again. But enthusiasm soon returned.<sup>177</sup> WGW often adapted parts to allow the maximum number to play, 'arranging parts for three trombones and tuba for a Haydn Symphony if circumstances demanded (always reclaiming the parts afterwards!)'.<sup>178</sup> Oboists, Howe and Hague, Professors in the Electrical Engineering Department were extremely helpful, Hague also playing oboe d'amore, cor anglais and bass oboe. A diversity of pieces were studied each session and in 1937 the orchestra succeeded in playing Berlioz's overture *Waverley*, Butterworth's *The Banks of Green Willow*, Cornelius's overture *Der Cid*, Holst's *Beni Mora* Suite, Ireland's *The Forgotten Rite*, Parry's Symphonic Fantasia '1912', and Schubert's Third Symphony.

WGW, greatly helped by Smith, set out to extend the work of the Music Department. There was no BA degree in Scotland, the MA being achieved after three years. However, music was not a permitted subject and WGW's schemes to introduce it were strongly opposed by local schools (see Chapter Four). Eventually WGW was able to prepare regulations for the BMus and DMus degrees. The first WGW found straightforward, the second, however, requiring detailed help from Tovey who wrote WGW sixteen letters on the subject. Concerning WGW's double post, Tovey wrote: 'My dear boy, I'm quite willing & glad that you should have on your shoulders the whole burden of musical education in Scotland; I have more than enough to do in my own job. Besides, I never attend committee meetings.'<sup>179</sup> In his *Autobiography*, WGW described Tovey as a brilliant but eccentric man with a 'caustic tongue, tempered by delightful wit', who though he spoke scathingly of his own staff, and was prone to criticise famous musicians in an embarrassing way, seemed nevertheless to have a kind heart, and amazing generosity of spirit (often travelling far to lecture and play without fee). WGW was awe-inspired by Tovey's 'miraculous gifts and astonishing feats', the latter's infallible memory allowing him to recall every detail of anything he had read. Tovey was able to play anything, without a moment's hesitation, from the whole range of musical literature, and his response to a question was like 'switching on an electric switch and seeing the light instantaneously'. Once at an Academy concert, an item from *Lohengrin* brought

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<sup>177</sup> Aut XI, 5.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Aut XI, 13.

over a hundred lines of a humorous German poem on Wagner's operas from Tovey afterwards.

However conversation was one-sided, for Tovey talked without ceasing:

His conversation was completely non-stop; at meal-times one was puzzled to understand how he took any food at all, because the flow of words was not interrupted for a moment... On festive occasions he would play and sing comic songs of his own composition. The pianoforte accompaniments were like concertos and the words were so crowded with subtle witticisms that one had the greatest difficulty in following them.<sup>180</sup>

2.2.4                    *National and International musical activities,  
publishing work and musicology;  
Institutional friction; vacations in Germany and Scandinavia*

With all his new responsibilities, WGW could only maintain a fraction of his previous adjudicating commitments: 'It was a great deprivation to be cut off from these inspiring gatherings, especially when country choirs were the chief participants.' Nevertheless his travelling seemed as punishing as ever. In May 1930, WGW adjudicated at Dundee, and in May 1931 at the Cumberland Festival, Galashiels, with Herbert Wiseman.<sup>181</sup> Between 24 and 31 May, 1930, WGW attended the Three Valleys Festival of Choral and Orchestral Music at 'The Pavilion', Mountain Ash, directed by Sir Walford Davies and was guest conductor, along with Henry Wood, Malcolm Sargent, and Warwick Braithwaite, chief of National Orchestra of Wales. In September 1933, WGW declined an invitation from his old friend Mrs Dalziel of Sydney Lodge Edinburgh (to whom he had dedicated his *Two Lyrics from the Chinese*, written in Perth, Australia in 1923), to adjudicate at the Border Festival, though he added: 'I am at my wit's end as to how to get money for necessitous students', perhaps hinting for a donation.<sup>182</sup> WGW adjudicated at Eton in November, 1933, and in February 1934 lectured at Bangor University, at E T Davies invitation, on 'The Early English Violin Sonata'.

WGW took the opportunity to meet 'a host of friends' at the second Anglo-American Conference, organised by Scholes (and his American counterpart, Paul Weaver of Cornell) and held at Lausanne, between 31 July and 7 August 1931, Sir Henry Hadow, and John Erskine being joint Presidents and Conference Chairs. The four British 'hostesses' were Lady Hadow, Miss

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., XI, 15.

<sup>181</sup> WGW complimented the 'exceptionally good second bass' of the Lindisfarne Quartet of Gateshead. This probably referred to a Dixon relative. The quartet had also recently won at Dumfries.

<sup>182</sup> Letter from WGW to Mrs. Dalziel, 12 September 1933, *GB-Guth*.



Annie Lawton, Mrs Norman O'Neill, and Mrs B. W. Dyer, members of the British Committee being Scholes, Harvey Grace, Mabel Chamberlain, and W. H. Kerridge (Chelsea Polytechnic). Among Canadian members were Herbert Austin, Fricker, Healey Willan, and Ernest MacMillan, and the American Committee contained WGW's friends, Franklin Dunham, Arms Fisher, and Paul Weaver. Conference 'Masters of the Musick' were Stanley Roper and John Marshall, Dean of Boston University School of Music and among the in-house entertainment provided were two-piano duet recitals from Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson. WGW and Bruce Carey of Philadelphia conducted the conference choir in music by Byrd and Weelkes, in the organ gallery at Lausanne Cathedral. Among fifteen stewards were William G McNaught, Heller Nicholls, and Frank Eames (represented the ISM). An opening garden party, entertained by singing by the London South West Choral Society, conducted by Frank Odell, was followed by a demonstration of Eurythmics by Jacques-Dalcroze.

Scholes was left angry and disappointed when the issue of 'performer' versus 'appreciation' view of education surfaced again at the conference. Morrish writes that the debate, unresolved at the first Conference in 1929, had resumed at the 1931 event. Scholes held the minority view that aesthetic appreciation should stand on its own merit, and became annoyed when a section of the Conference passed a resolution saying that the study of masterpieces was 'entirely unsuitable' as a subject in elementary education.<sup>183</sup> Afterwards 'a sharp exchange ensued in the *Musical Times*'.<sup>184</sup> WGW reported 'differences' in the *Scottish Herald*, but, with typical ambivalence, attributed them to Erskine's desire to hold the next conference in the USA, '...about twice as expensive as the continent.'<sup>185</sup> WGW also noted the growing tendency for American Universities to attract British musicians to important posts.<sup>186</sup> WGW wrote to tell Scholes that he had enjoyed conducting at the Conference (despite his dislike of crowds), but he added: 'It is a grief to me that two such excellent friends of my own as PW [Paul Weaver] and yourself should have experienced a rift'.<sup>187</sup> He had to agree however that the Americans were

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<sup>183</sup> Morrish, P. S., 'Percy Alfred Scholes', *Publications of the Thoresby Society*, second series Vol. 13, (Miscellany), (2003), 46-72.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 66. Scholes defended his view in a book, written in 1934, refused by OUP; the work was revised and published as *Music the Child and the Masterpiece* in 1935. See Morrish, 67.

<sup>185</sup> *Aut XIII*, 23.

<sup>186</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 11 August 1931, John Whittaker's Scrapbook, 108g.

<sup>187</sup> Letter from WGW to Scholes, 7 September, 1931, *CA-On*.

exerting considerable pressure 'to alter the trend of things'.<sup>188</sup> WGW rejected an invitation to conduct at the annual Schoolmasters' Conference in Chicago the following Easter, reluctantly refusing because of Opera Week at the Academy.<sup>189</sup>

In a letter to Colles of 17 October 1934, WGW said he made 'no pretence whatsoever to scholarship', his busy 'life as a GP' having extinguished any hopes of accomplishment in that direction.<sup>190</sup> Yet, in truth, he devoted much of his time to the academic side of his work after moving to Glasgow, writing more journal articles and reviews. Writing to Harvey Grace, editor of the *Musical Times*, at Chichester, on 11 November 1931 he declared: 'Decided that for my own good I should review that Book on figured bass playing. So may I?'<sup>191</sup> He also worked quietly at editing works which interested him in the British Museum, telling Colles that he was editing Purcell's string sonatas 'for Louise Dyer'. Dyer, who had remained a close friend of WGW, announced that she had agreed to support Prunières's project to publish a complete Lully edition. On moving to Paris to 'be *in situ*', she built a double storey penthouse apartment at 17 Rue Franklin, near the Trocadéro (close to St. Gervais, where Couperin composed his two masses, and to D'Indy's Schola Cantorum, which had established its own printing press). Prunières and Dyer signed a contract in 1930, becoming joint publishers of a 36 volume edition, under the patronage of the French Society of Musicology. When Prunières' work attracted criticism, Dyer became disenchanted, sending Fellowes the proofs, the latter expressing dismay at the want of scholarship displayed and advising her to consult British and French musicologists to obtain legal grounds for pulling out of the commitment. Dyer lost her action, deciding to appeal in 1936, but this was never heard. The war began and Prunières died in 1942.<sup>192</sup> Dyer (now known to Honegger, Valéry, Milhaud and Poulenc), realising that Couperin's 1933 Tercentenary anniversary would provide a valuable opportunity, decided to establish her own press to re-publish the composer's early keyboard music. Discarding her first choice of 'Platypus', Dyer selected the name 'Lyrebird' (or L'Oiseau-Lyre) for her publishing house, as it expressed Australian links while employing the symbol of her husband's *Leidertafel* choir in Melbourne. In 1931 she spent six

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<sup>188</sup> Letter from WGW to Dr B Hague, 8 September, 1931, Principal's letters, SNAM, GB-Guth.

<sup>189</sup> Aut XI, 43.

<sup>190</sup> Letter from WGW to Colles, 17 October, 1934, Principal's letters, SNAM, Gu.

<sup>191</sup> Letter from WGW to Harvey Grace, 11 November, 1931, Principal's letters, SNAM, Gu.

<sup>192</sup> Davidson, J, 1994, 181.

months at a printing works learning the trade, hired a secretary, opened her office and appointed a committee including Roussel, Vierne, Florent Schmitt, Honneger, Nadia Boulanger, and Henry Expert. Her editor (the *Schola Cantorum*-trained Tessier) soon died, to be replaced by the scientist Maurice Cauchie (Dyer passing over Wanda Landowska, with whom she did not get on). Cauchie's work was now attacked (this time by the secretary of the *Revue musicale*), and members of the editorial team (which included Cortot), drifted away, leaving only Paul Brunold. Dyer called for subscribers for the twelve volume project, the edition respecting the composer's intentions whilst allowing a modern performance.<sup>193</sup> It was 'a quality production in every sense', the volumes 'beautiful books'. Ernest Newman admired the edition, and Dyer held a Couperin Tercentenary concert, following a formal dinner, on 29 May 1933, attended by President Lebrun.

In the spring of 1931, WGW had been working, as he had since 1924, on the twenty-two Purcell trio sonatas he was preparing from manuscript at the British Museum, always writing to the superintendent first so that the sonatas were ready. When Dyer met WGW at the Lausanne conference, she agreed to publish the Purcell sonatas and also two other pieces. On 15 September WGW sent Dyer the score and parts of two unknown John Blow sonatas from the Bodleian Library Oxford, which he had edited and performed in Glasgow. He wrote: 'I have made a start on the Purcell and shall be glad if you will give me some idea as to when you would like the first three ready.' Although the Purcell Sonatas were delayed while Dyer worked on the Couperin, the first Blow proofs soon arrived, WGW writing, on 17 November: 'It is a nuisance that your engraver has not put in the figures – that is the most troublesome of all music printing...' WGW asked for 'as many proofs as necessary' to be sent: 'It is work I must do myself - it is no good to put such work into the hands of a copyist'. WGW scrupulously placed his own markings in square brackets and included both the continuo part and his own piano realisations. Unfortunately, 'voices were raised, gently, to the effect that the Sonata in A had already been noted by musicologists, and there were copies in the British Museum'.<sup>194</sup> The second anonymous Sonata was not thought to have strong enough claims to be identified as Blow's. 'Nevertheless the edition, which contained separate parts as well as an elegant volume in its box of azure blue, was warmly commended'.

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<sup>193</sup> Davidson, J, 1994, 195.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

After the Couperin was published, the financial depression held up activity at L'Oiseau-Lyre. Although WGW described his work on the Purcell as 'reaching its climax' in September 1933 ('a long job', with 'a lot of very difficult figured bass') he expected to spend all his spare time during the winter completing it.<sup>195</sup> It was 1936 before fifty sets of the first set of twelve Purcell Sonatas were published as a limited edition. Westrup (WGW's successor at AC) contested certain points and found the bass realisation 'fussy', but welcomed a fine edition 'which will satisfy the requirements both of the scholar and of the practising musician.'<sup>196</sup> The Purcell Sonatas remained unrivalled by any English edition twenty years later, but were never completed.

Davidson writes that WGW, apart from Tovey, was 'relatively rare in being an academic who was committed to research'. None the less, musicology in Britain was 'assuming a higher profile', something WGW acknowledged, when writing to Ezra Pound whom he had befriended through Dyer's acquaintance with James Joyce. Pound was one of the first to buy the new Purcell edition. WGW wrote to Pound at the Via Marsala, Rapello, on 30 January 1934, suggesting that he might be interested in the 'two charming Sonatas of Dr Blow', wondering if they 'would be noticed in Italy'. So began a correspondence which continued until 26 October 1937, and in a strange way filled a small part of the vacuum left for WGW by Holst's death in 1934.<sup>197</sup> WGW sent Pound the sonatas on 5 February 1934, also assuring him that the *Musical Times* would be glad to publish an account of the poet's Vivaldi volumes, Pound replying with 'a long and enthusiastic letter'. WGW sent parts of the William Young Sonatas 'from my own stock', in February 1934, telling Pound that there had been no complete performances of the Young, odd sonatas having been played, 'mostly at lectures', and despite an expressed desire from the BBC to broadcast the sonatas in a series, only one twenty minute programme had resulted. Pound played Young's sonatas to his artistic friends, WGW writing on 7 March 1934: 'It is delightful that Munch is so much struck with the William Young.'<sup>198</sup>

In fact WGW found working with L'Oiseau-Lyre a trying affair through its lack of proper organisation. It was, almost certainly, a massive contrast with OUP. His position at Oxford seems always to have been secure, and he never left the company. His shrewd choice of

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<sup>195</sup> Letter from WGW to Albert Latham, 28 September 1933, (Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Guth.

<sup>196</sup> Davidson, J, 1994, 235.

<sup>197</sup> Letters from WGW to Ezra Pound, Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Guth.

<sup>198</sup> Letter from WGW to Ezra Pound, 7 March 1934, Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Guth.

works for publication maintained a steady income despite the economic depression and the drastic curtailment of Foss's unbridled freedom to expand.<sup>199</sup> But for WGW the greatest triumph of his association with OUP was the *Clarendon Song Books* series. This was an unbridled success, prompting WGW to write to Wishart on 11 September 1931: 'The sales of the Clarendon Books are astonishing, and the day of the arrival of the annual cheque is the only time in the year when I wish I could slap my chest & say '...alone I did it'.<sup>200</sup>

Glasgow's cold, damp climate made WGW's summer escape abroad to relax even more important. At the end of the first week in June, WGW would make for the port. In 1930, reaching Stavanger in Norway, his new car was lifted by derrick on to the boat which was to take him to Upsala in Sweden, to see the only copy of William Young's Sonatas. WGW named his car his 'buy British catastrophe'.<sup>201</sup> Using bottom gear on the 'climb and drops' of the Norwegian roads, WGW stopped many times when the engine overheated. WGW loved the glorious Oslo fjord, the peaks and precipices, pine forests, marvellous lakes, and red-painted wooden houses, was thrilled to see the Viking Ships, dug from the bogs, in the Exhibition Hall, but feared the road-side precipices.<sup>202</sup> A postcard to Foss read: 'I'm putting up at a little house in a little Norwegian village. The river is named FOSS. This Viking ancestry of yours explains many things.'<sup>203</sup> At Copenhagen, WGW met George Varming, 'a splendid 'cellist', and former engineering student from AC.<sup>204</sup> (Varming's firm was later to work on the construction of the Sydney Opera House, where he was photographed playing his 'cello on the steps.<sup>205</sup>) Driving through Silesia to the Giant Mountains, WGW reached Agnetendorf, his holiday destination for several week. Travelling through Wendish country to Dresden and Leipzig, WGW continued to Lüneberg, intending to make 'a further Bach pilgrimage' to Lübeck.<sup>206</sup> When his foot-brake broke at Lüneberg however, WGW made straight for Hamburg and home after repairs (after first seeing *The Flying Dutchman* as a continuous drama).<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Hinnells, D, 1998, 13.

<sup>200</sup> Letter from WGW to Wishart, 11 September, 1931, Principal's letters, SNAM, *GB-Guth*.

<sup>201</sup> Aut XIV, 17.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>203</sup> Undated post-card to Hubert Foss from WGW, Correspondence I, 155, Private archive, Diana Sparkes.

<sup>204</sup> Aut XIV, 14.

<sup>205</sup> Reference: <http://www.steensenvarming.com.au/practice.htm>. [Accessed: 7 March, 2001]

<sup>206</sup> Aut XIV, 16.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 17.

After a year in Glasgow, where WGW had steadfastly attempted to implement major reforms and improvements, there were hints and indications that he was unhappy, unpopular and even unwelcome. After a year's absence of correspondence, a letter from Holst obliquely intimated that, having heard rumours from Paggi, an SNAM cello professor, his friend was beleaguered in a strange city. 'Of course Glasgow hasn't had much BM [British Music] as Newcastle because it hasn't had so much WGW: You wait and see! - Or you wait and we'll see... And I didn't realise that Glasgow musicians were poor. Tut tut.'<sup>208</sup> Light though the tone of the letter seems, on the same day (perhaps at Holst's prompting), the Chairman of the Board of Governors at SNAM, Peden Fyfe, wrote to Walford Davies (WGW's referee for the post) with an enthusiastic account of WGW's work there, in spite of obvious difficulties:

A year has now passed since Dr Whittaker came to Glasgow, and I would like to let you know how well your recommendation of him has been justified. I can only speak for the Academy of Music but so far as it is concerned, he has risen to the occasion admirably and has handled the position- a difficult one-with great tact and discretion. I believe too that the University is thoroughly satisfied, and I hear nothing but praise.

Some of us-you included I think-recognised the possibilities but also foresaw the difficulties of the position. Dr Whittaker has made more progress in his first year with us than I thought was possible, and the difficulties of the situation seem to be fast disappearing.<sup>209</sup>

Holst's letter of 16 March proposed that WGW might help a certain Basil Hogarth of Glasgow who wished to perform *Savitri* and needed players. This too was perhaps a Holstean method of subtly supplying contacts for the isolated WGW. On 30 March, Walford Davies responded to Fyfe's letter: 'I cannot tell you what delight your kind letter gave me last month. I had great hopes of Whittaker as 'one of God's own', and not merely a gifted worker. I hope the Academy will go from good to better, daily self-surpassed under his faithful guidance.'<sup>210</sup> Davies also commented that he loved particularly 'what you say of his tact in difficulties', being able to imagine 'how difficult it must be for a man with strong ideals to build up the Academy without hurt to the Athenaeum'.<sup>211</sup> Clearly then the signals for WGW were mixed. Those in authority were satisfied with his work, but individuals and many of the SNAM governors were deeply antagonistic.

Something of a *bête noir* in Glasgow for WGW (and another cause of his discontent) was the young Glasgow musician, Erik Chisholm (born in 1904), the two almost colliding onto the Glasgow musical scene in 1930. Something of a prodigy, Chisholm, whose father directed his

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<sup>208</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 200, Dec 30 [1930], 111.

<sup>209</sup> Letter from A. Peden Fyfe to Sir Walford Davies, 6 February 1931, *GB-GH*.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

career, was a pupil of Halstead and Walton (organist at Glasgow Cathedral). After leaving school early for health reasons, father and son moving to London, where Eaglefield Hull (a promoter of British and Russian music and founder of the BMS) agreed to teach Erik by correspondence (the boy having been turned down for similar tuition by John Ireland). After studying with Leff Poushnoff, Erik departed for Nova Scotia where he became organist and choirmaster of a Presbyterian church. Despite regarding Glasgow as 'a relatively insignificant town...artistically speaking', Chisholm returned in 1929, taking up a similar post and there giving recitals of orchestral works which he had transcribed for organ, assisted by a percussion accompaniment from Francis George Scott.<sup>212</sup> In 1930 Chisholm founded his 'Active Society for the Propagation of Contemporary Music' with Scott as Vice-President, Diana Brodie (whom he later married) secretary, and his brother, treasurer, raising money by organising subscription concerts. Ian Whyte (the young Scottish private music-master to Lord Glentanar), was first recitalist of his own compositions, and Sorabji who did not accept a fee, the first 'foreign guest'.<sup>213</sup> Indeed, WGW's *Among the Northumbrian Hills* was also performed, with Chisholm at the piano, in a programme consisting entirely of WGW's works on 15 October 1930, the concert opening a season of twelve to be given by the Society.<sup>214</sup> In 1929, using letters of recommendation from Dent and Tovey, Chisholm had entered Edinburgh University, graduating in 1931 and gaining his DMus in 1934. From 1932, Chisholm conducted the Glasgow Grand Opera Society, beginning with Mozart's *Idomeneo* and Berlioz's *The Trojans*. For ten years 'a galaxy of the greatest composers of Europe travelled to Glasgow to be involved in concerts of their works', several becoming Chisholm's personal friends, and included Sorabji, Casella, Szymanowski, Petri, Bax, Bartók, Florent Schmitt, Ireland, Cyril Scott, Van Dieren, and by 1936, Thorpe Davie.<sup>215</sup> In 1938 Chisholm founded the Scottish Ballet Society, and with choreographer Margaret Morris created several ballets, including *The Forsaken Mermaid*.<sup>216</sup> WGW's involvement with Chisholm was short-lived and he soon came to despise Chisholm's badly organised events, feeling it his duty to warn friends about them. In

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<sup>212</sup> Scott-Sutherland, C, 'A Peek into Erik Chisholm's Archives', *British Music*, Vol. 21 (1999), 67.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>214</sup> John Whittaker's scrapbook, 68t. Also performed was WGW's unpublished new Sonatina in G minor for violin and piano, played by Bessie Spence and Harold Thomson.

<sup>215</sup> Scott-Sutherland, C, 'A Peek into Erik Chisholm's Archives', *British Music*, Vol. 21 (1999), 69.

<sup>216</sup> Barnett, Rob, Ed, 'Chasing a restless Muse, Erik Chisholm: 4 January 1904-8 June 1965', *The British Music Society News*, 101, March 2004, 139.

his *Autobiography*, WGW writes: 'The Active Society was formed by Eric Chisholm to bring modern music forward but it was indiscreetly managed & the scheme collapsed.'<sup>217</sup> It would have been more accurate to say that WGW left the Society and 'the scheme' grew from strength to strength.

WGW was certainly to some degree simply jealous of Chisholm, provoked perhaps by recognising some of his own traits in the latter's desire to put on adventurous concerts of modern British music (Chisholm's concerts involved a more extended European field). However, the young man's lack of adequate organisation, and low standards of performance, must have acted like a red rag to a bull to the perfectionist WGW. Chisholm's view of WGW was probably indifferent. WGW, newly arrived in Glasgow, was to a large extent 'shorn' of his previous image as a musical heavyweight, with no compensating status from his position at SNAM, where he was constantly the butt of attacks from the Governors (some of them friends of Chisholm who soon was to conduct for the Grand Opera Society). The impression that Chisholm had a low regard for WGW is reinforced by Scott-Sutherland's summing up of Chisholm's contemporary recollections: 'He confesses to opening the first season by inviting the then Professor of Music at Glasgow University, W. Gillies Whittaker who it seems was a somewhat less than popular personage.'<sup>218</sup> The fact that Chisholm's Active Society concerts took place within WGW's domain (in the Stevenson Hall at the Academy) must have made Chisholm even more of a thorn in the flesh for the new Principal. Correspondence between the two men on the performance of WGW's Oboe Suite led finally to WGW's resignation from the Society:

I have had no letter from you speaking of dates at all. You say you assumed I would play. It appears to me from what I can hear that most of your arrangements are based on assumptions. I have already told you that I am severing my connection with your Society. My name must not appear in any particular.

You complain that your schemes are not having success. If a man attempts the impossible, and goes about it in an impossible way he should not complain of failure.<sup>219</sup>

In a far from edifying turn of events, WGW asked a local organist, George Henderson for sight of some letters of Chisholm's to Medtner 'in which my name is mentioned'.<sup>220</sup> Away from direct

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<sup>217</sup> Aut XV, 31.

<sup>218</sup> Walton, K, 'Classical Music', *The Scotsman*, Monday, 5 January, 2004.

<sup>219</sup> Letter from WGW to Chisholm, 6 October, 1931, *GB-GH*.

<sup>220</sup> Letter from WGW to George Henderson, 12 October 1931, *GB-GH*.



involvement, WGW recovered his equilibrium, and always remained civil to Chisholm, writing to him over 'pencilling in bookings for Active Society' in 1933/4.<sup>221</sup>

On his part, Chisholm retained hostile feelings towards WGW, writing afterwards: 'Whittaker was really no great shakes as a composer and he resented our band of young musical hooligans leading the musical life of Glasgow under his nose. On more than one occasion, he threw a spanner in our works. There was no love lost between us.'<sup>222</sup> A claim by Chisholm, that WGW, having met him on a tram had urged him to apply for a vacancy at Cape Town University intending 'possibly to get me well out of his operational territory', seems unlikely.<sup>223</sup> By the time of the alleged meeting, WGW was retired, appreciated Chisholm's work for contemporary music in Glasgow, and habitually encouraged young musicians to achieve their potential (often by suggesting a career abroad).

Avoiding the ninth ISCM Conference in June 1931, WGW took his new car (bought at 'concession' price after the disaster of the previous year) by ferry from Hull to Rotterdam.<sup>224</sup> In Cologne he saw *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, finding it tedious', but also Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* which he described as 'a gorgeous performance'.<sup>225</sup> Now he made for Thuringia and Frau Kameke, a friend since 1927, 'a very remarkable and delightful lady' who helped with German translations and gave WGW German lessons.<sup>226</sup> WGW visited Halstead (holidaying as usual in Weimar with his friends), going twice a week to join them at concerts of all Bruckner's symphonies. Post concert, they dined in the garden of a marvellous old artists' club, adjacent to the haunts of Bach, Goethe, Schiller, Hummel, Liszt, Wagner, Cornelius, and Richard Strauss.

WGW completed the composition of a Wind Quintet, but when news of his mother's serious illness arrived, he flew from Hanover to Amsterdam. However, a violent storm took the plane off course and WGW missed a connecting flight, being forced to catch the night boat from

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<sup>221</sup> Letter from WGW to Erik Chisholm, 4 September 1933, *GB-Gu*.

<sup>222</sup> Walton, K., 'Classical Music', *The Scotsman*, Monday, 5 January, 2004.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> Aut XIV, 17.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.* WGW writes that Frau Kameke's father had been a German financier in London where his daughter was born and he retired to the slopes of the Warburg where he built a large villa within its own park. Impoverished by reparations Kameke had struggled to keep her parents house going after their death by taking in paying guests. As an accomplished French and Latin scholar and with an inspired interest in Natural History, Kameke provided a pleasant holiday companion as well as hostess. For several years she helped WGW with translations for OUP.

the Hook to Harwich.<sup>227</sup> WGW rushed north to Heaton Grove: 'I walked along the home street with beating heart & could have wept for joy when I saw the blinds of the house still up. The dear old soul was sitting up waiting for me; she had taken a turn for the better.'<sup>228</sup> WGW soon returned to Mülhausen, visiting the church of St Blasien (the sexton recalling C S Terry's visit) and stood in the organ loft where Bach had produced *Gott ist mein König*.<sup>229</sup> In Eisenach again, WGW several times met Manfred Gorke who possessed a 'truly marvellous collection of manuscripts'.<sup>230</sup> In an 'exhilarating southward trek', WGW drove through Gótha, Meiningen, 'the heavenly little Amorbach' and Oberbach, along the Neckar Valley, Heidelberg and Würzburg, then through the Black Forest to Freiburg-in-Breslau.<sup>231</sup> In Switzerland, WGW travelled through Basle, Berne, and the Swiss Feiburg, to Lausanne for the conference.

On 10 January, 1932, WGW's mother slipped when boarding a tram, injured her leg (necessitating amputation) and entered a Nursing Home on 17 January, dying from septicaemia a week later.<sup>232</sup> Her heartbroken husband described her as 'One of the noblest and lovable women that a beneficent Father ever created'.<sup>233</sup> The funeral took place, after an inquest, on 27 January.<sup>234</sup> On the eve of the funeral, WGW wrote from Heaton Grove to Foss:

Thanks for your charming letter, full of real friendliness and understanding. All is over now; the system was not strong enough to stand the shock, weakened as it was by days of terrible suffering, & on Sunday afternoon the end came, quietly and suddenly. She was a great personality, & took a vivid interest in everything right up to the last. I owe much that is priceless to her & every memory of her is one of good.<sup>235</sup>

Holst sent sympathy, writing from Harvard on 14 February.<sup>236</sup> WGW replied on 29 February, through Lasker: 'Thank you so much for your letter of sympathy. My mother was a fine character, quite an outstanding personality, and we had been such good chums all these years.' WGW told him that his mother had taken 'such a keen interest' in everything he did:

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<sup>227</sup> WGW wrote to Bernard Hague on 8 September explaining his emergency trip to Newcastle: 'I...tried flying both ways for the first time. A wonderful experience!' Letter from WGW to Dr Hague, 8 September 1931. *GB-Gu*.

<sup>228</sup> Aut XIV, 22.

<sup>229</sup> Aut XIV, 21.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>232</sup> John Whittaker's notebook, 4, 38. *GB-Gu*.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 4, 89.

<sup>234</sup> Mary Jane (Polly) Whittaker was buried in All Saints' Cemetery, Newcastle (John Whittaker's Scrapbook, 84).

<sup>235</sup> Letter from WGW to Foss, 26 January 1932. Correspondence 2, 213, Private archive, Diana Sparkes

<sup>236</sup> Holst, G., 1974, No. 208, 14 February (1932), 115.

'One's own friends were her friends...It is difficulty to realise it is all over'.<sup>237</sup> WGW's father was so shocked that WGW did not know how to treat him: 'he does and says the most impossible things. He will not listen to reason.'<sup>238</sup> John Whittaker afterwards was too nervous to live alone, needing a resident housekeeper. The bereavement caused more stress between WGW and his sister, and they became permanently estranged. In July 1932 WGW composed an unaccompanied *Requiem Aeternam*, unpublished until 1984 (edited by Paul Hindmarsh for WGW's centenary in 1976) and *A Festal Psalm - O Sing unto the Land a new Song - Psalm 98* dedicated 'To all the workers of the Tynedale Musical Festival'.<sup>239</sup> He also donated a Trophy, dedicated to his mother, to the winner of the Bach Prelude and Fugue class, first presented in March 1934.<sup>240</sup> WGW henceforward kept in contact with the friends of his youth, such as the Dodds brothers, and Deans Forster, writing to Forster: 'In spite of our separation and the rarity of our meetings, I do not want to let slip this friendship existing over so many years. The best of friends need few expressions of it - It is sufficient that it is there.'<sup>241</sup> From this time, since WGW's commitment to Glasgow and its musical infrastructure had been sapped by the personal enmities of Chisholm and various governors of the Academy and family relationships too were proving difficult, WGW, in consequence, began to focus more on his Bach scholarship, performances of new music and the consolation of his long vacations on the continent.

Two days after his mother's funeral, WGW conducted a Cantata concert and on 4 February an Academy concert was relayed by the BBC. Some works by W. F. Bach, collected by WGW on holiday, were included in the programme. Furthermore, his arrangements of Bach chorale preludes had just been published and these attracted critical attention from Scholes. WGW's heightened curiosity for the Bachs as a musical family led him that summer to take a pilgrimage once again to Vacha, the Rhönne hills, Fulda, and Mülhausen, visiting Arnstadt and then Dornheim, where the sacriston allowed him to play the organ on which Bach must have improvised, then Ordruf. His travels resulted in WGW's article 'The Bachs and Eisenach',

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Letter from WGW to Holst, 29 February, 1932, Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Guth.

<sup>239</sup> 'The Tynedale Festival was held in Hexham, WGW's mother's birthplace.

<sup>240</sup> Letter from WGW to George Dodds, 11 April, 1932. Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Guth.

<sup>241</sup> Letter from WGW to Deans Forster, 27 September 32. Principal's letters, SNAM,GB-Guth).

published in the *Musical Quarterly*, in 1935.<sup>242</sup> Clarrie arrived and they visited the Bavarian towns of Obernburg, Amorbach, and Aschenburg, attending an impressive performance of Strauss's *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Frankfurt.<sup>243</sup> Afterwards, WGW drove through the Rhine valley, seeing Mainz, Bingen, and Boppard, and Bonn (returning to the Beethoven house), then by Aachen through Utrecht to Rotterdam. There had been sinister signs:

Germany had changed. Gone were the old days when one could sit in a beer garden & talk to mine host about all manner of things. Everywhere were signs of the coming financial collapse, closed businesses, restaurants half-empty. Groups of Communists stood sullenly in the towns, watched by armed police. Troops of swaggering Nazi youths drilled. Murders were rife. During the winter Hitler came into power & I felt that I could never go back.<sup>244</sup>

WGW's enthusiasm and support for Holst's music remained as steadfast and vibrant as ever. With the performance and publication of Holst's *A Choral Fantasia*, a work which excited some controversy at its sternness and severity, WGW was quick to recommend its performance both here and abroad.<sup>245</sup> On 17 February, WGW sent a review of an Academy performance of *A Choral Fantasia* to Holst: 'You will see that we were thinking of you last night. I intended having a boiled-down score, but three weeks ago Curwen informed me that the score and parts were in America...There was nothing for it but concocting a version for a small organ, piano and timps.<sup>246</sup> Though the choir at first disliked the work, 'they gradually turned round and became most enthusiastic. Last night they really did sing the thing from the inside. It was one of the best choral performances of your works I have ever conducted. We had about eighty, fairly good balance, and lovely fresh voices.'<sup>247</sup> He continued: 'The work appeals to me very strongly. It seems to me to be the best thing you have done of recent time.' Holst replied: 'I am most grateful to you for your wonderful performance of my 'Fantasia' and wish I could have been there to hear it. Please give my thanks to your singers and players.'<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> The article was the basis of WGW's essay of the same title, published in his *Collected Essays* by OUP in 1940.

<sup>243</sup> Aut XIV, 28.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>245</sup> Philip Reed writes that critics of the work (which was a response to a request from Herbert Sumsion of Gloucester for the Three Choirs Festival of September 1931) were 'united in their dislike of the work'. Vaughan Williams however defended it writing to Holst to say it was '*most beautiful*' and that 'I just want to tell the press...that they are misbegotten abortions'. Reed, P, 'A Choral Fantasia', Sleeve notes for CD, *Holst*, Chandos, CHAN 241-6, 11.

<sup>246</sup> Holst, 1974, (g), 17 February, 1932, 133.

*A Choral Fantasia* had had its first performance in Gloucester Cathedral on 8 September 1931, conducted by Holst, with Dorothy Silk as soloist.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., No. 209, 17 March 1932, 115.

Holst was taken to hospital with a duodenal ulcer in America at the end of March 1932, missing a Music Supervisors' Conference in Cincinnati. He was also unable to conduct *Hammersmith* in Washington or to visit Canada and returned earlier than planned having suffered 'a severe attack of homesickness'.<sup>249</sup> In May he wrote from Harvard asking if there was any chance of meeting WGW in London in June when the latter was 'en route for Eisenach'.<sup>250</sup> The two men were, however, unable to meet up, and despite hopes from Holst to give a lecture on Haydn for the ISM in Glasgow, he never came to Glasgow.

At this time Holst, who was entering a more astringent neo-classical phase in his style, was much engrossed with composing canons (completing two from a set of *Eight Canons* for equal voices). Always stimulated by his friend's new initiatives, WGW too began to produce Haydn Rounds and Canons for OUP. By September, Holst had composed eight canons, the two last 'Evening on the Moselle' and 'If 'twere the time of lilies' being bitonal settings of Helen Waddell's *Mediaeval Lyrics* (the volume sent to him by WGW) the second being at the interval of a tritone. He sent copies to Edward Evans and WGW, the latter being unsure that they were successful. Holst wrote to WGW on 25 September. 'I see your point about the canon. But I do like both the singers and listeners to feel the two keys quite distinctly...Recently I have written some three-keyed canons and I hope that if they are published in both notations this distinctness will be maintained.'<sup>251</sup> Holst, as always, loved criticism: 'And I felt secretly flattered when an excellent musician complained that my two-key writing won't do because it has no 'wrong notes' in it.'<sup>252</sup> On 27 September, WGW replied: 'Forgive me for being disputatious, but I do not see how your 3-key canons could be issued in Solfa with different key signatures in each part. That would totally falsify all the principles of Solfa, & I fail to see how many singers could keep these lines.'<sup>253</sup> WGW believed that in some places, the two keys did not exist simultaneously. 'The ear will therefore judge the notes in one way & the eye in another.'<sup>254</sup> He ended: 'Solfa is a simplification of staff notation. To treat it thus would be to add to the already existing difficulties.'

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<sup>249</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 211, July 19 [1932], 116.

<sup>250</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 210, May 12 [1932], 116.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., No 212, 25 September [1932], 118.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Letter from WGW to Holst, 27 September, 1932, *GB-Guth*.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

Forgive me for getting this off my chest, but is an early hour of the morning, & I feel full of beans as I have had three days work at home.<sup>255</sup>

WGW warmed to the austerity of the Canons, a style which was further explored in *Egdon Heath*, another work championed by WGW in Glasgow and by his friend Albert van Raalte, conductor of the Scottish Orchestra.<sup>256</sup> *Savitri*, an early work, was also exhumed for performance at the Academy. Writing from St Paul's Girls' School on 26 July 1933, Holst once more looked at WGW's score of *Savitri*, which he must have been much gratified to receive: 'It is good to be able to gloat over your full score. It is good to recall the joy you gave me when you first showed it to me. And it is good to realise how much your fame has grown and your worth recognised since then. For all which, my best thanks, yrs, Gustav'.<sup>257</sup>

## 2.2.5 *President of ISM; death of Holst; Sweden 'becomes a second home'*

1933 proved an important year in that WGW was appointed President-elect of a national body, the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM). When he reluctantly succeeded Harry Plunket Greene in 1934 (thinking his talents did not extend to making public speeches), he invited Sir William Bragg, President of the Royal Institution to become an honorary member of the society, for distinguished services to music but also wishing the ISM to be recognised 'beyond the limits of its professional membership', Bragg accepting with alacrity next day.<sup>258</sup> After a period of stagnation, the institution had been revived by its secretary Frank Eames, but WGW was circumspect about his role as a titular head with leadership responsibilities. His period in office was nevertheless not without difficulties and reforms. He took over just after the abolition of children's examinations; he inherited the controversy over 'bogus diplomas', one that exercised a conflict of interests with the Tonic Sol-fa College (which was close to his heart); another conflict of interests arose with the problem of foreign musicians in England encouraged by the BBC (with whom WGW has close ties) yet perceived by indigenous musicians as a threat to their employment. This eventually rose to a climax with a visit by a delegation of group of senior

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 218., 7 January [1933], 121.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., No. 220, 26 July, 1923, 122.

<sup>258</sup> Correspondence between WGW and Sir William Bragg, 7 & 8 June, 1934, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

figures – Allen, Bairstow, Dyson, Eames and WGW – on 6 December to the Carnegie Committee. This challenge, however, proved impotent in the face, as WGW knew, of an all-powerful BBC. One other major issue was the ‘Appreciation Debate’ (See Chapter 4.2 for description of Appreciation in schools) which had rumbled on since the turn of the century, but had reached a peak, albeit unresolved, at the 1931 Lausanne Music Education Conference. Over several years WGW wrote letters to the *Musical Times*, as did Scholes in contradiction of WGW’s arguments.

Before Lausanne there had been complaints from listeners about Radio Appreciation talks given by the BBC which were sometimes well above the heads of the general public eliciting such opinions that one talk by Walford Davies should not have been ‘inflicted upon the tired everyday listener’.<sup>259</sup> The editor of the ‘Dragonfly’ column in *Amplion* magazine thought that Scholes, the BBC Music Critic had talked ‘nonsense’, condemning his talk on ‘Fugues’. There were cracks appearing in the scheme of musical education through appreciation (without technical instruction), exacerbated by the advent of broadcast music. WGW replied such a letter, writing to W R Anderson in the *Musical Times* in July 1932: ‘I am sorry the subject of Appreciation is worrying you. Like you, I have a tremendous regard for P A S. [Scholes] He is one of my oldest, best, and truest friends and I can never forget his many kindnesses to me in the past...As you suggest, he has outlived his own movement.’<sup>260</sup> Scholes responded on 1 October, complaining of ‘an attempted ‘new movement’ in Musical Appreciation, ‘first revealed at last year’s Lausanne Conference’ introduced by A Forbes Milne (Hadow presiding) and ‘strenuously supported against a good deal of opposition’ by W R Anderson, the motion being passed after amendment and the resolution forwarded to the press by Milne and subsequently published in all the musical journals.’<sup>261</sup> Scholes complained that WGW had now given a ‘robust support’ in the *Musical Times* for the new movement and revealed a sense of betrayal at what he must have found a wresting of initiative away from him in a subject in which he was the recognised pioneer.. WGW gave a speech to the Scottish Music Association in Edinburgh, on 8 October 1933, and

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<sup>259</sup> ‘Dragonfly’, ‘A Casual Contribution’, *Amplion Magazine* (April 1926), 41. GB-BBC

<sup>260</sup> Letter from WGW to W R Anderson, 11 May 1932, Principal’s letters, GB-Guth.

<sup>261</sup> *Musical Times*, Scholes, P, ‘The New Movement in Musical Appreciation’, October 1, 1932, Vol. 73, No. 1076, 890-892. Scholes writes that Milne and Anderson had since published several articles in the *Musical Times* on the subject.

said that gramophone records 'could only be used effectively after a solid grounding in the essentials of musicianship, particularly sight-singing'.<sup>262</sup> Scholes wrote to the *Musical Times* in February 1934 expressing surprise at this opinion and 'commended the Board of Education's pamphlet 'Recent Developments in School Music' (No 95) to WGW's attention since it supported this 'invaluable' teaching aid. He noted that WGW had criticised some teachers for '*ill-considered aimless* use of gramophone records as a substitute for sight-singing'.<sup>263</sup> However, Scholes concluded: 'Now Dr. Whittaker is *not* a monster... Like the rest of us he wants the child to hear as much good music of all kinds within his capacity as he possibly can.'<sup>264</sup> WGW replied, seeking not to 'enter into a dispute' with Scholes, but merely to remind him that one of his first actions at the SNAM had been to establish a gramophone room and library, his students now being expected to spend two hours per week in the gramophone room, 'score in hand'.<sup>265</sup> One thing had been proved to him without a shadow of doubt 'that the very best foundation that any student... could have in school was a thorough grounding in sol-fa... sol-fa in its full aspect, reading from the letter notation and using it as a foundation for staff.' WGW's public re-dedication to the virtues of Curwen's Sol-fa system and the need for systematic teaching marked his commitment to including the system in the professional music teachers' course at the Academy.<sup>266</sup>

WGW's seventh motoring holiday abroad, from 13 June 1933, began with a drive to Spain to meet Clarrie who was studying there. At Donzenac, WGW picked up an English racing driver on his way to Le Mans, dropping him at Tours.<sup>267</sup> Finding the driving 'exhilarating', WGW took the sharply dropping track to Rocamadour ('a temptation too strong to be resisted') where the buildings 'clung to the steep cliff like limpets on a rock'.<sup>268</sup> After driving to Foix in the Pyrenees, they rested at Ax-les-Thermes before taking the greater climb to Font Romeou (with Basque architecture and vividly painted houses). An hour later, they were over the border, on

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<sup>262</sup> *Musical Times*, February 1934, Vol. 75, No. 1092, 164.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>266</sup> Letter from WGW to W R Anderson, 11 May 1932, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth.*

<sup>267</sup> At the village of Sées they caught the end of a confirmation, '...the girls, in flowing veils, white shoes, with crowns of white roses on their heads, their hands held like those of angels in a Burne-Jones picture.' *Aut XIV*, 29.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*



roads 'like battlefields'. Andorra's 'strange houses, with hat-like roofs' were followed by Las Escaldas, 'in a large basin encircled with tremendous hills', then Barcelona which was 'an inferno' with 'perpetually tooting horns & clanging tramcar bells'.<sup>269</sup> The travellers stayed at the peaceful Monastery of Montserrat, 4000 feet up, achieved after a rope ascent up red sandstone, and then motored through old Spain to Tarragona, by the Mediterranean, where the Cathedral's exterior disappointed, its interior being 'immensely solid, dignified & impressive.' After travelling from Valencia to Alcira, outside their small, clean hotel, thousands and thousands of rejected oranges floated down the river. During car repairs in Madrid, they viewed paintings by Velasquez and El Greco, attending, with friends of Clarrie, a theatre 'matinee', beginning at 7. 00. p.m., of Falla's *El Amor Brujo* (a composer's adaptation). Toledo provided 'a veritable orgy of sight-seeing', then a bull fight, the latter making WGW feel that 'a great Gulf separated the mentality of these people from my own.'<sup>270</sup>

Alone he moved on to Vitoria, San Sebastian and then to Pampola, the part of his holiday which initiated his 'work' at the Sanatorio at Bielsa in the Pyrenees. WGW sat on a balcony to work, writing articles, arranging Bach organ preludes for Bartlett and Robertson, and composing a concerto for piano and strings. (He also read *Don Quixote* for the third time, 'with new understanding'.) After six weeks, WGW received a 'grand send-off', staff and nuns crowding the portico and balcony, patients shouting from the top storey, WGW writing: 'I might have been a hero, possibly I was, to venture over such roads in a car.'<sup>271</sup> Covering terrible roads from Barbastro, through Lerida (birthplace of Granados) to Puigcerda, WGW joyfully regained the smooth-surfaced roads of France. Avoiding fashionable Biarritz, he visited Bordeaux, sight-seeing in Chartres, Rouen, and Poitiers.

At the Academy WGW continued to perform contemporary British works by Vaughan Williams and Bax. He was visited by old friends – Vally Lasker, Yeaman Dodds and Willie James – and had news from Bainton who, having applied for the position of Principal Conservatorium, had still not heard confirmation of his appointment. Scholes, who asked after the possibility of an honorary degree at Glasgow, was curtly turned down by WGW, having had difficulty in achieving

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>270</sup> Aut XIV, 37.

<sup>271</sup> Aut XIV, 44.

such an honour for McEwen. On the other hand, his support both moral and intellectual for others was palpable. He was openly encouraging to the young Cedric Thorpe Davie, an ex-student of the SNAM, and Annie Lawton was allowed to blossom in his interests. In leading the institution's teaching of musical education Lawton published her two-volume *Foundations of Practical Ear Training* in October 1933 and received glowing reviews including one from *Music & Letters*.<sup>272</sup> She again entered the spotlight in the autumn of 1936, when, in the *Musical Times*, as a representative of the 'lah minor' school of Tonic Sol-faists, she took on Annie O Warburton who spoke for the Doh Minor group. She disdainfully responded to Warburton's attack on her first article: 'It is difficult to discuss this matter on equal terms with a person who fails, as Miss Warburton does, to understand the fundamental principles of pure sol-fa. Her letter is full of debatable points and misinterpretations.'<sup>273</sup> The debate refused to curtail, WGW joining in with a letter to the *Musical Times* in May 1938 in response to one written by Dr. Kitson, a Doh Minor protagonist. 'I have the greatest admiration for Dr. Kitson, and have used his textbooks for many years. It is sad to see that he is ignoring the work of pioneers in the field. To attempt to work out his modal examples in counterpoint with doh as the keynote would be akin to doing cross-word puzzles without gaining any of the benefits which that popular form of recreation is supposed to produce.'<sup>274</sup>

In October 1933, Holst, back from America, told WGW that Archibald Davison (conductor of the Harvard Glee Club) was arriving in Glasgow at the end of the week and wished to meet WGW.<sup>275</sup> Holst spent Christmas 1933, in New Lodge Clinic, Windsor Forest, being little improved by February, his doctors advising either 'a restricted life' or an operation to remove his duodenal ulcer. After a relapse, Holst recovered slightly 12 March, when his *Lyric Movement* was broadcast by Boult and Tertis. WGW's ISM duties of 1933 and 1934 often brought him to London which Holst greatly appreciated: 'At last I have learnt some real value in the ISM. I am most grateful to it for giving me more WGW in 1933.'<sup>276</sup> His last letter to WGW was written at Beaufort House, Ealing on a Saturday morning in spring 1934 and began: 'Dear Will, You are the

<sup>272</sup> Review of Lawton's *Foundations of Practical Ear Training*, *Music & Letters*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (July 1933), 285.

<sup>273</sup> Lawton, A., 'Lah or Doh Minor', *Musical Times*, Vol. 77, No. 1126 (December, 1936), 1121.

<sup>274</sup> Whittaker, W G, *Musical Times*, Vol. 79, No. 1143 (May 1938), 376.

<sup>275</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 221, 25 October, [1933].

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 223, [early 1934], 123.

Perfect Nurse and your letter was just what I needed, especially the parts about GFH, JSB, WGW and DFT [Handel, Bach, Whittaker and Tovey] – although I'm not convinced that a world of Toveys would be queerer than the world as it is. In fact I don't think any world could be!<sup>277</sup> He also gave him a final piece of advice about handling the Governors at the SNAM:

At first sight it is a little puzzling to find you bracketing conducting and committees together. But I see now that my first theory was right. Wallowing in committees helps you to conduct just as wallowing in whiskey helps other artists to sing or play. There is much to be said for both but I don't approve of either and the simplest way of breaking yourself of this bad habit is to get a Large Braw Scot with a Voice to deputise at committees for you. Explain what you want done and then tell him to go on talking until the others do it. And there you are!<sup>278</sup>

He ended poignantly: "Then you will have ample time to be the Perfect Nurse and sit on the JT sofa and talk to me about GFH, JSB, WGW and other nice people. Yrs ever, Gustav"<sup>279</sup>

After undergoing a major operation on 23 May, Holst died, two days later, of heart failure leaving his family stunned at the tragic outcome.<sup>280</sup> WGW responded practically, writing to Imogen: 'I saw your letter in the press last night asking for correspondence of your father. The enclosed batch is very miscellaneous. Some of the things are of no importance... They are not in any chronological order as they have just been pushed into a file.'<sup>281</sup> In June, WGW wrote to Scholes: 'As in your case, Holst's death has meant something very real to me. He has been one of my best friends of my life, & I owe more than I can tell to him.'<sup>282</sup> In April 1935, Vaughan Williams announced the establishment of a Memorial Fund for Holst. A Gustav Holst Music Room was to be build at Morley College, part of a new wing to be erected there. WGW was listed in the ten supporters of the scheme.<sup>283</sup>

WGW went to 'a lovely retreat in the north of Scotland' in the district known as the Black Isle near the Cromarty Firth during the summer (tied to Britain by ISM duties) and planned a Holst/Elgar Memorial concert at the SNAM.<sup>284</sup> He would include Holst's *The Cloud Messenger*, *Songs for Voice & Violin*, and *St. Paul's Suite*, and Elgar's *Elegy* and *Serenade*. On 4 December, he wrote to Curwen: 'I understand from Miss Vally Lasker that you are publishing a Brook Green

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<sup>277</sup> Holst, 1974, No. 224, Saturday [Spring 1934], 124.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Short, M., *Gustav Holst: The Man and His Music*, (OUP:London, 1990), 326.

<sup>281</sup> Holst, 1974, Introduction, xi.

<sup>282</sup> Letter from WGW to Scholes at Pres Chamby sur Montreux, Switzerland, 8 June 1934, *GB-Guth*.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid. The ten supporters were Sir Hugh Allen, Dr Adrian Boult, The Bishop of Chichester, Dr Archibald Davison of Harvard, Mr Gerald Forty, Miss Gray, ex High Mistress of St. Paul's Girls' School, Mrs Eva Hubback, Principal of Morley College, Dr Mackail, Mr John Masefield, and Dr W. Gillies Whittaker.

<sup>284</sup> Elgar had died on 23 February 1934.

Suite of Holst's. On Friday January 18 I am planning to hold a Elgar/Holst Memorial concert here. I should like very much to give the new work. Would it be possible to supply proof sheets to use in the meantime?'<sup>285</sup> Curwen agreed, WGW replying, 'I feel very delighted to be able to give a first performance here of a work of my very old friend'.<sup>286</sup>

The performing of music by Holst and Elgar prompted WGW to consider his own position as a composer. For some years he had produced a steady trickle of diverse pieces. Driven by his interest in the model of the Cobbett prize, a Phantasie Quartet for strings was written at Rothenburg in 1929 (a piano quartet being probably also written there) and, in 1930, a *Phantasie* Trio was composed at Agnetendorf. A Suite for Viola and Piano had emerged in 1932, probably inspired by Holst's *Lyric Movement*, and in 1933 WGW also produced a piece for brass band, also encouraged by Holst (though not subsequently performed).<sup>287</sup> After Holst's death, and feeling the absence of a holiday abroad, WGW revised his piano concerto, sending parts to Jack Derbyshire for copying. While in Scotland, he also composed a ballet, *The Boy who didn't like Fairies*, for use at the Academy and, at the request of Newman Flower (the publisher and Handel authority) who had written a play on the life of Handel, WGW prepared a score for Flower's work, selecting music from over sixty volumes of the Handel Society Edition.<sup>288</sup>

Over the winter of 1934 WGW taught himself Swedish, the following June 1935 sailing on *The Northumbria* for the Fryken Lakes in Värmland (names familiar to him from Selma Lagerlöf's novel *Gosta Berling's Saga*).<sup>289</sup> Two days in Göthenborg were an indulgence of bookshops, the botanical gardens, canals, and the evening light orchestral concerts, given by the opera orchestra (WGW hearing Dvořák's Serenade for the first time). At Badabruk, WGW found the 'paradise I had been looking for', a pension with tree-surrounded lawn and good bathing place down a slope. He worked on his balcony (on a deck-chair bought for his stay and donated to the proprietor on leaving), overlooking a mill-race, 'under the wonderful sky', away from others, until

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<sup>285</sup> Letter from WGW to Messrs. J. Curwen, 4 December 1934, *GB-Guth*.

<sup>286</sup> Letter from WGW to Curwens on 15 December, 1934, *GB-Guth*.

WGW wrote that the proofs of the 'Greenwood Suite'[sic] were fine for the first rehearsal.

<sup>287</sup> WGW's Suite of North Country Folk Tunes II, for Brass Band has just been 'realised' by Ray Farr and received its first performance at the Royal Northern College of Music Festival of Brass on 26 January 2008, played by the Brighouse and Rastrick Band, conducted by Alan Morrison.

<sup>288</sup> Aut XIII, 8. Halle Municipal Theatre proposed to stage the production but 'the project fell through'. Cecil Cochrane next made plans for its performance, the war intervening, 'after that it was put on the shelf.'

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

midnight.<sup>290</sup> He composed a three-part setting of Bridges' 'Fair Persephone', from the masque *Demeter*. He also set another four of Bridges' poems for the same forces. With occasional trips to 'clear the cobwebs', WGW worked for nine weeks.<sup>291</sup> Afterwards WGW wrote: 'That summer I fell head-over-heels in love with Sweden', proclaiming it his second home.<sup>292</sup> WGW went to Oslo, then Arvika, where the government were holding an experimental folk festival, WGW staying with a local headmaster who introduced him to the retired leader of Stockholm Opera Orchestra.<sup>293</sup> WGW's car made him a popular figure, and he often took several guests out for 'runs', practising his Swedish and enjoying getting to know the area. On one occasion he took tea with well-known author Selma Lagerlöf (held in the greatest reverence, her book a household word at the time) in her home at Mårbacka.

WGW drove north 'on a joyful run' seeing wooden churches, belfries separate and often of fantastic shape, between Dalecarlia and Halsingland, crossing huge rivers and firths, seeing Sunsvall with miles of logs on the sea-shore, massed at factories, Umeå 'the most perfect small, modern town', and Skellefteå (only 150 miles from the arctic circle) the most northerly, surrounded by trees, the Lapland mountains on the horizon. Next he travelled westwards by the coast, through autumn coloured trees to Norway, with 'wilderness, rocks, and rushing streams', the people less placid-looking than the Swedes. A rain pipe soaked WGW's car at Udevalla, and it was towed away for repair (an anxious time with only weekly crossings, and Academy interviews starting the following Monday). Finally, with shouts from the excited men, 'the beast wakened up & was driven hard & recklessly, as a punishment for its sins, to the port.'<sup>294</sup>

With the political turbulence in Germany, Sweden replaced Eisenach in WGW's affections and he continued to visit the country until war broke out in 1939. Before leaving for Sweden in summer 1936, WGW arranged a meeting with Thorpe Davie in Helsinki during the vacation. He also sent a 'heartily welcome' to Davie, a new member of the SNAM staff.<sup>295</sup> Davie had introductions for WGW to Sibelius, Kilpenin, and the secretary of the Finnish-British Music Society, and would write to the Poste Restante, Luleå, with instructions for their own meeting in

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>294</sup> Aut XIV, 52.

<sup>295</sup> Letters from WGW to Thorpe Davie, 1, and 3 June, 1936, GB-5A.

June, and would 'recommend a humble hotel'. WGW told Davie that he was to enjoy two London performances of his works, the first his ballet *The Boy who didn't like Fairies* at the RCM theatre, the second WGW's *Lyke-Wake Dirge* a BBC performance, but the choral rehearsals conducted by WGW. He had now taken Swedish lessons, preparing a more comprehensive plan for the summer, inviting 'RHT' [Harold Thomson] to accompany him.<sup>296</sup> They stayed first at the Gästgifvargård Inn, at the head of the southern lake, Fryken Lake district, next day crossing the land bridge at Sunne and travelling north on the eastern side of the upper lake, to 'strike new country'.<sup>297</sup> Mosquito-bitten, they found an Apotekare's shop in Ostersistad then drove 300 miles through splendid country to the Baltic coast, RHT revelling in the bookshops. Unusually, WGW only wanted to sit at a raised garden café watching passers-by, '...noting their different costumes and looks, wondering what their business may be, what kind of lives they lead.'<sup>298</sup> In Luleå, WGW spent 'every available hour of daylight...under the trees & large, gaily-coloured umbrellas, drinking coffee & eating delicious cakes'.<sup>299</sup> A 600-mile trip by electric railway across Swedish Lapland took them to the Norwegian port of Narvik, then Polcirklen, 'exactly on the magic line'. Here 'trees dwindled into mere scrub; there were many morasses and much ground covered only with moss'.<sup>300</sup> Waiting for the Stockholm train, they took a midnight steamer trip on lake Torneträsk, where 'Backed by bare mountains...its desolation...tremendously forbidding...The sun was poised over the heights...nothing living was to be seen'.<sup>301</sup> WGW writes that they were speechless: 'I shall never forget that solemn hour'.<sup>302</sup>

Thomson and WGW took the train to Narvik, reaching Helsinki after a four day drive.<sup>303</sup> The scenery in Norway had changed dramatically as they travelled, demonstrating now precipitous steeps, dark waters below, fjords running far inland, the railway on the edge of great heights. Finnish roads were bad, but improving, post-Tzardom, and the Finns were reverting from Swedish names to Finnish ones. In their Oulu hotel, passports surrendered, they filled in their police forms only with difficulty. In restaurants real language difficulties arose. WGW found

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<sup>296</sup> Aut XIV, 53.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Letter from WGW to Thorpe Davie, 20 June 1936, (GB-SA).

the scenery and people 'glum', writing: 'Russian oppression & their terrible civil war, fostered by the Bolsheviks, had left an indelible mark on them.' Children just stood by the road.<sup>304</sup> The town of Kajanni was empty for, during the Midsummer's Day festival, most people spent days and nights in the woods, only their pension hostess being in evidence. Breakfast was after ten, hostess in dressing gown and bare feet. They travelled to Iyväs kylä through countryside full of wild flowers, rivers, lakes, wide views, and better, brightly coloured houses. They stayed at the Missionshotelett, in Helsinki, renewed after repeated destruction. WGW wrote that the town was all new 'and pleased us vastly. It is so clean & spacious'. He admired modern Finnish architecture exemplified by the 'magnificent railway station' which he found 'original & attractive'.<sup>305</sup> WGW and Thomson visited Thorpe Davie, now studying under Kilpinen, a traditionalist composer, who, like Sibelius, had been given a life-pension by the Finnish Government.

For WGW, the holiday was interrupted tragically: 'A letter announcing the death of my old school-fellow, close friend and colleague, Ernest J Potts, one of the finest men I had ever met, shattered me...when we parted at the end of term, he had apparently been in the best of health.'<sup>306</sup> WGW informed Foss: 'You may have heard of the sudden death of our friend E. J. Potts. He was the best of men: I have loved few people as I have loved him.'<sup>307</sup> WGW dealt with his sorrow in customary manner: 'Thomson was the most understanding of travelling companions; he left me to try to drown my sorrow in work during the remainder of our stay, except that we attended service at a Russian Cathedral, which seemed a fitting requiem for my departed friend.'<sup>308</sup>

After a six-hour boat journey to Hankö, they crossed the Baltic to the Åland islands, awaking among the sunlit islands of Stockholm Fjord. Thomson, equally infatuated with Sweden, returned to Glasgow and, joining Lawton, took a party of SNAM students to summer school in Germany, organised by WGW (using contacts from his 1927 trip to Frankfurt). Jane Heath (née Gray) and Anne Donnan, were in the party, Heath writing: 'Harold was our leader, gentle, self-effacing and very often deep in his own world of musical contemplation...It was a golden

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<sup>304</sup> Aut XIV, 59.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>307</sup> Post-card from WGW to Foss from Helsinki, Correspondence 4, 128, Private archive, Diana Sparkes

<sup>308</sup> Aut XIV, 60.

summer, our hearts were light and we were prepared to enjoy everything - the beautiful Bavarian countryside, the sunny days, the balmy evenings in the local beer garden, and the serious music-making of our fellow German students.<sup>309</sup> There was also 'the wonderful swimming in the river Maine', which Donnan too recalled: 'The current was so fast that we went in and were whirled down stream.'<sup>310</sup> Donnan remembers living on cream cakes 'from a wee bakery down the road', and rehearsing every day with the choir, singing in lovely churches and learning dozens of German folksongs, and bigger works by Schütz'.<sup>311</sup>

Having found the Pensionat Ströhmsborg, Skeppsdal, on the brow of a hill overlooking the Baltic, WGW settled on this location as his 'work' base for the future. In Stockholm, he visited the royal palace of Drottningholm, where Gustavus III was assassinated on the opera house stage, during a performance, the last for a century and a half. Now re-opened, a perfect eighteenth century opera house had been revealed, a magnificent harpsichord in the orchestra pit. WGW examined the devices to bring chariots and celestial beings down from the flies for the *deus ex machina*, and the '...striking representation of rolling billows...One would like to see a revival of these old works there under conditions approaching the original as nearly as possible'.<sup>312</sup> In the city, WGW went to see *Lohengrin*, part of Stockholm summer opera season, with singing unblemished by 'a slide, a scoop or a tremolo'.<sup>313</sup>

In June, WGW told Foss that both his daughters were to be married at the end of July, 'Clarrie to a Frenchman, an engineer in her firm, and Mary to a Londoner of Austrian Jewish descent 'so I shall be a League of Nations, all within myself. '<sup>314</sup> However he harboured much resentment that he had to leave Sweden earlier than usual for the 'grime, smoke and fog' of Glasgow, and to be 'immersed in heavy duties and interminable worries, seven days and nights a week.'<sup>315</sup> Mary married Edward Pollitzer at Willesden Register Office on 21 August, 1936.<sup>316</sup> Edward, the son of a wharfinger, worked in the expanding family business, but was fascinated by

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<sup>309</sup> RSAMD Newsletter, 15, (1999), 24.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> Aut XIV, 63.

<sup>313</sup> Aut XIV, 63.

<sup>314</sup> Commonplace books of Hubert Foss, Correspondence I, 428, Private archive, Diana Sparkes

<sup>315</sup> Aut XIV, 64.

<sup>316</sup> Edward, born in July 1911, was the son of Percy Pollitzer whose own father, Sigmund, was a nationalized British subject, born in Vienna. The latter's neighbour in Cambridge Gardens, London, was a Viennese Professor of Music, Jules Sprenger. See 1881 British Census.



music. WGW found Edward 'a charming fellow, cultured, well off in business, a clever musician, newly appointed conductor of the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society, & admirably suited to her'.<sup>317</sup> Mary's happiness contrasted with her sister's anguish. In August WGW wrote to Scholes, asking him to be discreet, with the news that Clarrie's marriage hopes had been dashed by her fiancé's mother, 'a bigoted provincial French Catholic' who bitterly opposed the match.<sup>318</sup> WGW had suffered the repercussions:

Clarrie's attitude this summer has been a great grief. She has not written me for two months, & has cut herself off from all the family, even from her grandfather. She has made cruel & untrue accusations of neglect, favouritism, callousness, & so on, which have wounded deeply. They are inexplicable, except on the theory that she has been mentally deranged for a time. I have been forbearing, her Mother has gone to Paris to see her, but she still refuses to communicate with me. I have lavished love unstintingly on her; up to the breach all our letters have been affectionate. Something has gone wrong. But my conscience is absolutely clear; I could have not treated her with more love & consideration.<sup>319</sup>

This was a traumatic event in WGW's turbulent family life. Clarrie was his closest relative and they had written to each other weekly and it inevitably added to his sense of isolation. Added to which, the news of the death of Alfred Wall, his old friend from Newcastle, only intensified his sense of personal grief.

During the course of 1936, WGW continued to draft his major work on Bach's cantatas, but this work was interrupted by an invitation from Scholes to contribute to the first edition of the *Oxford Companion to Music*.<sup>320</sup> Typically WGW's contribution was to 'sight-singing', a subject with which he was both technically and practically expert. Scholes, however, was keen to seek his advice on other contributors, particularly those with insights into ethnic music.<sup>321</sup> This concerned especially the music of Scotland on which Farmer was a specialist and also the material on 'Sang-Skules' accumulated by C S Terry at Aberdeen University.

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<sup>317</sup> Letter from WGW to Scholes, [undated, but written in August, 1936], *CA-On*.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>320</sup> Letter from WGW to Scholes, 30 September 1936 which states: 'Re Encyclopedia: notes on the sight-singing article will be sent shortly.' *CA-On*.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid*.

WGW's research activity provided an important foil to the back-biting politicking at the Academy which had improved little since his arrival and for which his holidays to Scandinavia provided a vital escape. He returned there in June 1937 with Thomson, crossing from Hull to Copenhagen, to be met late at night by his friend George (Jorgen) Varming and his wife, who whisked them to their home for strawberries and cream, Varming and Thomson playing 'cello sonatas until the early hours. WGW and Thomson travelled to Hämeenlinna, Sibelius's birthplace, then to the Vehoniemi ridge, with a fine view of typical Finnish scenery, 'dark blue lakes dotted with islands, great stretches of forests' from a look-out tower.<sup>322</sup> At Tampere they admired the Church of St. John, its striking stained-glass windows and baffling paintings. Through birch and pine forests, and lakes they reached Jyväskylä, then completed the long drive to Oulu, again empty for Midsummer Festival. Driving by the dark Kemijoki river, full of logs, reindeer quickly disappeared as insects stung, rushing to the mountains, with the Lapps following, the travellers bitten themselves from plagues of flies from the un-drained morasses in Finland, thick clouds of wasps in some woods, requiring the car windows to be kept closed, (though there were no mosquitoes). At Rovaniemi, the northern terminus of the railway, they enjoyed one of the finest modern hotels WGW had ever visited, palatial, but not dear, one of the Finnish Tourist Association hotels which extended to the Arctic Circle. The following hotel had been burned down overnight, and only five miles further on they reached the Arctic Circle. At the smaller hotel at Ivazo (filled with waiters and staff who were University students on vacation, the women dressed in brilliant national costume) WGW worked on his adaptation of Bach's *Peasant Cantata*, afterwards issued as an operetta cantata *Village Gossip* (published 1939 by OUP in the *Oxford Choral songs from the Old Masters* series). This activity was part of his holiday: 'I always found it restful to have some task to settle down to after a hard day's driving. One had to be outside of course, to see the midnight sun & to feel the strangeness of the experience.'<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Aut XIV, 65.

<sup>323</sup> Aut XIV, 69.

WGW took the Arctic Road, completed in 1931 and very popular until the war. This single track road was busy with a constant stream of hikers, the great buses carrying passengers and goods while the hotels were centres of humming activity. When visiting the monastery at Ylaluostari, they were thrilled by a first peep at the Arctic Ocean. Thomson departed, leaving WGW to drive south himself, returning to Sweden by the Baltic Coast from Lulia. WGW found a guest house at Docksta, with a splendid view of an arm of the sea, where the landlady (forbidding at first since WGW was the first foreign guest) was soon charming, bringing strawberries or bilberries and cream, mid-morning to the harbour where WGW worked.<sup>324</sup> WGW managed to obtain the key to the 12<sup>th</sup> century church, where walls and ceiling were decorated with paintings of the type WGW had seen only in museums.

But the tranquillity of this Scandinavian sojourn was violently disturbed by unrelenting bad news. Annie Lawton had had an operation for breast cancer and WGW's father was dangerously ill. Returning to Newcastle, WGW drove hard for four days to catch the boat at Göteborg. John Whittaker died on 17 September, aged 88, his well attended funeral taking place the following Tuesday at 2 p.m. Under emotional strain, WGW was therefore in no mind to suffer the news that greeted him on his arrival in Glasgow, for during his absence the governors of the Academy had instigated staff changes without his knowledge and had turned down his recommendations for examiners. Lacking the stamina for further dispute, he at once decided to resign: 'I felt that I could bear the heavy burden & the nerve-racking strain no longer, & asked to be relieved of my duties at the end of September 1938, the date being chosen so that all would be in order for my successor.'<sup>325</sup> When the resignation became known a veteran Scottish musician said to WGW: 'That place has broken the back of every man who tried to improve it.' On the day WGW left the Academy, it was said that not one Academy official came to wish him goodbye.<sup>326</sup> On that day, WGW sent every Governor and every leading educationalist in Scotland a typed document of 20 foolscap pages: 'a scathing indictment of the mismanagement, injustices, obstructions, & prejudices which were ruining the institution... It had not the slightest effect.'<sup>327</sup> At a further Academy meeting a cheque for £25 for WGW, subscribed by those present, was sent

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>325</sup> Aut XIII, 52.

<sup>326</sup> Matchett & Spedding, 38.

<sup>327</sup> Aut XV, 1.

as a gift, to be immediately returned it with a sharp letter pointing out that he could not possibly accept such a thing, when already the Executive were setting out to destroy what he had built up. As an *ex-officio* member of both Scottish and London BBC Advisory Committees, WGW would now be ineligible to sit, and tendered his resignation to Ian Whyte at Caversham, writing: 'I'm not much use on committees. I haven't the 'committee mind', but I have appreciated the privilege of being in the swim.'<sup>328</sup>

In the summer of 1938, WGW spent his time in France to meet Clarrie and his future son-in-law Marcel le Guyon. There was work on his *Collected Essays*, notably on the chapter 'The Folk-music of North-eastern England', and a new book, an idea he had 'nursed for 25 years', *Music in Books*, which combined his twin loves of music and literature. It was never published.<sup>329</sup> Though almost retired from the Academy, events there still troubled him. He succeeded in recommending Davie for a university post and gave detailed instructions for the delegation of teaching at the Academy. During this second Academy interregnum, however (beginning in October 1938), it became rudely evident to the governors that the dual post could not easily be filled. Wilfred Senior and Harold Thomson had been appointed as Acting Principal and Vice-Principal respectively, but their influence proved insignificant as students mutinied, unpunctuality (on which WGW had insisted) became endemic, and attempts to stage Flotow's *Martha* collapsed through organisational incompetence. While this self-imposed destruction took place, WGW was distracted by the personal tragedy of Annie Lawton's death at 53, in a Nursing Home at Fernwood Road, Newcastle, on 17 January 1939. Devastated in his private grief, WGW now found his life empty, but almost providentially, when Sir Hector Hetherington, Vice-Chancellor of the University approached and asked him to return to his posts, he was able to take his normal route of burying himself in his work to assuage his sorrow. Moreover, realising how his return would restore some order to the Academy and University, he felt a duty to accept. WGW wrote to Davie on 25 February 1939: 'I know only too well what a heavy task & how much unpleasantness are before me, but I feel it to be my duty to the students to go back...'<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Letter from WGW to Ian Whyte, 4 July, 1938, (BBC MAC files, *GB-BBC*).

<sup>329</sup> There is no mention of this manuscript in any collections of WGW's work.

<sup>330</sup> Letter from WGW to Thorpe Davie, 25 February, 1939, *GB-SA*.

In 1939, WGW made one last trip to Scandinavia, travelling through Sweden, Finland and Lapland with a new companion, Phyllis Crawhall-Smith, and the David Maclains (a SNAM staff member and his wife). Thomson met the party in Stockholm and after three days' sightseeing at Skansa, WGW's Academy friends returned home, WGW remaining at gästgivargård at Berga, in Västmanland, Thomson soon leaving WGW to his vacation tasks.<sup>331</sup> One happy reunion was with the writer Selma Lagerlöf at Mårbacka, 'and it was a great thrill to find her, author of *Gösta Berling's Saga*, standing in the porch' (the author died a few months later).<sup>332</sup> But news of a pact between Hitler and Stalin sent WGW home immediately and while in Berwick for car repairs an air-raid warning sent the town racing for shelter, and matters were made worse on his return to Glasgow when, unable to use his ankle, he was forced to part company with his beloved car. Physically impaired also by rheumatism in his hands he took Tovey's advice by practising a second-hand clavichord to alleviate his condition. Numbers at the Academy had dwindled because of the war, but he nevertheless succeeded in resuscitating the BCC.<sup>333</sup> Concerts continued, and WGW, familiar with the exigencies of wartime constraints in choral music, rehearsed a female choir to a high standard. Moreover, he was forced to provide a choir to sing illustrations for Hugh Allen's series of Cramb lectures during the autumn of 1939.

In 1940, WGW's *Collected Essays* was published by OUP, dedicated 'To Two Old Friends George and Yeaman Dodds'. Proofs were read by Jane Dawkins and Harold Thomson. It received good reviews including an enthusiastic letter from Henry Wood; WGW's *Essays* had positively 'enthused' him, a description WGW likened to 'a volcano being improved by the application of a safety match'.<sup>334</sup> Incredibly WGW joined his daughter Clarrie in Paris for Christmas 1939 (where he had been at the outbreak of World War One). Buildings and monuments were hideous with sandbags. In the intense cold '...one walked ankle deep in slush...It was a city in hibernation, yet with fervent hope of recovery before long'.<sup>335</sup> Yet WGW feared for his daughter's safety and advised fleeing to Spain, and he was pessimistic about Britain's security, convinced that invasion would follow. In May 1940 the University orchestral

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<sup>331</sup> Aut XV, 19.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., XV, 6.

<sup>334</sup> Letter from WGW to Henry Wood, 12 January 1941, *GB-Guth*.

<sup>335</sup> Aut XV, 23.

concert had gone well, WGW writing: 'There is an air of enjoyment about our players, totally inefficient though so many of them are, which is infectious.' He told Clarrie that he seemed to get 'busier and busier... Each day there is something in connection with the A or U. It keeps one's mind from going blank'.<sup>336</sup> By June 1940 everyone was convinced of the certainty of a German invasion. WGW admitted he was 'already completely fagged out' even though Academy final exams were about to begin and then he was to examine at Sheffield University, invited by Shera. WGW wished that the government would order him to do some war work: 'It would ease the mind whatever else would have to be sacrificed'. In the meanwhile 'the only job I can do is to keep up the Home morale by giving people music'. Clarrie, out of communication for 'an agonizing month' was still working in Paris, and stories of Hitler's cruelty were coming to England as men returned from battle. Despite desperately needing a holiday, WGW stayed at home waiting for news. On 28 June Clarrie made a dramatic drive north to a channel port, catching the last available boat to England. After not hearing from Clarrie for a month, news of her arrival in England was wired to him. A delighted WGW rushed to London to see her briefly. The fate of his future son-in-law was less clear, and it was another nine months before le Guyan joined the Free French Army in London, having escaped through Spain and Portugal.<sup>337</sup>

Yet, in spite of his pessimism at German invasion, WGW's attitude to war was to always to remain positive. Numbers at the Academy held at 40 students and WGW was delighted at the appointment of a new University Assistant, William Chalmers Burns, a 34-year-old Cambridge graduate who was transferred from his reserved occupation, a policeman to University teacher.<sup>338</sup> At the University, at a lunch time concert in November, the two played piano duets and through their music-making cemented an important friendship. The advent of Burns came at an important time. In 1941 Tovey died, as did Latham, WGW's translator friend from Newcastle, both losses causing WGW great sadness.<sup>339</sup> However the realities of Hitler's anti-semitic policies brought the piano virtuoso Frederick Lamond, to Glasgow, his birthplace. He had followed a

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<sup>336</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 7 July 1940.

<sup>337</sup> WGW witnessed the marriage of Clarrie and Marcel, on 2 June 1941, at Essenden Registry Office.

<sup>338</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 29 September 1940.

<sup>339</sup> WGW regretted that he had not been able to persuade Latham to write a libretto for a light opera on a North Country subject, writing that the latter's 'whimsical humour could have provided a delightful book for me to set with lots of our local tunes & dances'. Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 24 November 1940.

career in Russia and Germany but fled the Nazis with his Jewish wife. Lamond's arrival was greatly welcomed by WGW and a teaching appointment was offered to him at the Academy.

Though he kept going, WGW's health was rapidly deteriorating, and he suffered from a permanently weakened foot, using a stick. He had a pronounced stoop and his feet, affected as he thought by cold weather, were cracked and sore. Frequently he could scarcely reach home, and exhaustion made him to fall asleep in a chair immediately. In Glasgow there was intensive bombing in the city and his own house was hit, but he made little of it given the death and destruction around him. A last University Choral Society concert, before his obligatory retirement, was at Belmont Church, and consisted of a programme of early music including Carver's *Bone Jesu*, (performed at WGW last concert with the Newcastle BC), Byrd's 'Great Service', and Bach's *Sing ye to the Lord*. The Carver, according to WGW was sung by the choir '...like a marvellously rich, soft velvet'.<sup>340</sup> The Byrd had never before 'reached the peak' attained at this time:

It was my last appearance officially as a choral conductor, & no more fitting swan-song could have been desired. My emotions were stirred to the depths & my cheeks were frequently wet with tears. There was also the sense of pride that such wonderful music had been written by an Englishman. A short gathering of the choir afterwards, in the chancel of the church, to bid me 'farewell', was heart-breaking in its poignancy, with the thought that this long period of my life had come to an end.<sup>341</sup>

Seeing his retirement at the end of the summer of 1941, WGW was seized by an extraordinary energy for composition, perhaps again a manifestation of his burying feelings of sadness in furious activity, and with various wind players at the University in mind, he produced a Divertimento in six movements for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn for the summer chamber music practices, and two movements of a Suite for bass oboe and pianoforte.<sup>342</sup> When WGW's friend Frederic Lamond (and the SNAM janitor) was involved in a serious car accident at seventy-three years of age, breaking ribs and contracting double pneumonia, WGW found his time filled with visits and also 'a continual stream of things'. He worked on his Cantata book, but was distracted by a strong desire to compose to which he succumbed.

WGW's lecture recital 'The Spinet and Clavichord' drew a large audience at the Musical Instrument Exhibition at the Art Gallery and he was asked to repeat this for the Chamber Music

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<sup>340</sup> WGW wrote an article: 'Byrd's Great Service', *Musical Quarterly*, (1941), 27.

<sup>341</sup> Aut XV, 14.

<sup>342</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 9 June, 1941.

Society (WGW said he would be giving different illustrations).<sup>343</sup> It was a promising portent for his retirement.<sup>344</sup> Leaving his posts was, however, a melancholy experience. Glasgow University made the magnanimous gesture of appointing him Emeritus Professor of Music which retained a link with the institution, but the scars of years of quarrelling, bickering and internal politics had left WGW with lingering feeling of betrayal and even abuse: 'The farewell meeting and insincere speeches had only increased the bitterness in my heart. That I did a great deal I know, & can say so without conceit, but how much more might I have accomplished!'<sup>345</sup>

2.3      1941 – 1944      SECOND BRIEF, WARTIME RETIREMENT,  
A NEW CAREER WITH ENSA  
DEATH 'IN HARNESS' AT STROMNESS, ORKNEY

'If only one could think that this is the last spring of the war!'

Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 21 February 1943

At the Army Study Centre last week I met a French parachutist. He was a law student in Paris during part of the occupation, got into trouble with the Gestapo, fled to Spain, spent 6 months in a concentration camp there, got to North Africa, joined Giraud's forces, & then deserted to join de Gaulle's. A group of men from his camp come into the centre every Sunday morning to play our records over.

Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 30 April 1944

In a sense, WGW 'cleared the decks' before retiring from SNAM by completing the 'nth' version of his large book on Bach's Cantatas which had 'filled many hours over the last few years', writing to Clarrie on 21 September 1941: 'When Schumann finished one of his symphonies he invited his friends to champagne in a restaurant. I feel inclined to ask my friends to have coffee, (small cups, bring you own saccharine) for I've finished something bigger by far than any symphony'.<sup>346</sup> It had taken two years of WGW's spare time to re-type the work, sitting in a 'remote corner of my study, with a shaded light above, while Aac-Aac guns roared, bombs fell & the house shivered from basement to roof', but he had found it exciting 'to live again through

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<sup>343</sup> Programme sent to Clarrie in letter from WGW of 24 June 1941.

<sup>344</sup> WGW took the BC Dolmetsch instruments with him to Glasgow. He had begun his lecture recitals with the BC spinet when still in Newcastle, lecturing at AC on 'Giles Farnaby' on 22 October 1927.

Unidentified newspaper cutting, John Whittaker's scrapbook, 12d.

<sup>345</sup> Aut XV, 16, handwritten addition.

<sup>346</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 21 September 1941. These letters, owned by charitable trusts, currently in the possession of the writer.



these glorious works'.<sup>347</sup> Now, at sixty-five years of age, he had arrived at another 'last time... the happiest... when I shake the dust of the Academy off my feet at the end of September'.<sup>348</sup> A farewell reception and presentation at the Academy on 25 September was followed by one or two other small ceremonies, including a money gift from the staff, then WGW was able to write: 'FREE at last. What a wonderful feeling!'<sup>349</sup> At a presentation by the University orchestral society, WGW had received a cheque from Professor Howe (who staggered the students by telling them that he had sung under WGW's baton at AC, 44 years before).<sup>350</sup> These gifts enabled WGW, who was fascinated by Tudor keyboard music, to buy a longed-for pair of Dolmetsch portable virginals, the performance of which, WGW told Clarrie: 'I now intend to go into... thoroughly', ending his letter: 'I don't think there's any more news. You can't expect much now from a dried-up mummy on a shelf.'<sup>351</sup> Though intended as a joke, this last remark summed up WGW's genuine attitude to his new situation. However, he was surprised and pleased when, on 8 October 1941, his work at Glasgow University was recognised with the award of Honorary Doctor of Laws.

An 'abnormally busy life' and 'considerable number of artistic & intellectual interests' had made WGW yearn for freedom and leisure.<sup>352</sup> However, retirement, when it came, was 'like the realisation of most dreams of human happiness far less enjoyable than had been anticipated.'<sup>353</sup> Everything pleasurable seemed behind him and the present had become 'the terrible drama' of the war, which gave him 'a continuous mental depression'.<sup>354</sup> Life was restricted in all directions, especially in the loss of his treasured holidays abroad. Now, everyone was faced with an insufficient war-time diet, with eggs, milk and almost everything else, in short supply. Retirement provided other limitations. WGW had not previously understood that in leaving all institutions and 'being put suddenly on the shelf' he would be severed from activities of more than fifty years.<sup>355</sup> Separation from his young students made him desperately lonely: one evening,

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<sup>347</sup> Aut XV, 25.

<sup>348</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 25 May 1941.

<sup>349</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 4 October 1941.

<sup>350</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 19 October 1941.

<sup>351</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie 19 October, 1941.

<sup>352</sup> Aut XVI, 31.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

when near the University, WGW saw OS members assembling for rehearsal, ‘...and returned home with an aching heart. ...such delights were no longer mine.’<sup>356</sup>

WGW’s health deteriorated steeply in retirement. Physically, he found most activities more challenging, but he also he missed the daily cut and thrust of work. When travelling to Leeds for the meetings of Council of the ICM at New Year 1942 (for discussions on the problems facing the musical profession in the war), the two successive days of six-hour train travel exhausted him, and, though pleased to meet old friends such as George Dodds at the meeting, he admitted: ‘One seems to be getting more and more remote from the present world.’<sup>357</sup> Perhaps another sign of age was an increasing interest in the past, illustrated by the comfort he admitted to feeling when a friend replaced some recordings of his North Country folk song arrangements (sung by Potts to WGW’s accompaniment) which he had given away and afterwards ‘grieved over their loss’.<sup>358</sup> Now he could again hear Potts’s ‘...glorious voice & marvellous dialect & superb interpretation’.<sup>359</sup> Harry Wilsher (‘a splendid and learned fellow’, WGW’s colleague on the BBC, SMAC research sub-committee), a librarian at Dundee University, invited WGW to lecture at University College, on ‘Tudor Virginal Music’, on 18 January. WGW took the old records with him, playing them to his hosts who insisted on hearing them twice. After describing the incident to Clarrie, WGW wrote: ‘Now I retire into an uneventful life’.<sup>360</sup>

But inactivity had never been WGW’s way of dealing with negative feelings, and when the virginals arrived, he pulled himself together and mapped out his days, ‘with systematic work’, planning a course for several years, entering details of all he practised in a card index.<sup>361</sup> He embarked on practising all suitable works by Bach (including the Italian Concerto) and many Couperin and Rameau works as well, while admitting that ‘The plethora of ornaments nearly drives me crazy’.<sup>362</sup> Keeping depression at bay, he reverted to his lifetime custom of indulging in a multitude of varied activities, writing that his retirement had now become ‘deucedly active’.<sup>363</sup> His chief pleasure was reading, and listening to music either on the radio or at concerts, and he

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<sup>356</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>357</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 4 January, 1942.

<sup>358</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 11 January, 1942.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 18 January, 1942.

<sup>361</sup> Aut XV, 31.

<sup>362</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 14 December, 1941.

<sup>363</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, November, 1941.

enjoyed the theatre, and later, some films (never of a lighter nature). He read widely but always on serious topics: 'The mental state caused by this accursed war prevents me from reading anything light...' he explained to his daughter.<sup>364</sup> Reading ultimately filled an unfamiliar vacuum, and dipping into *The National Geographic Magazine* compensated for the proscription on foreign travel. And there were occasional moments of nostalgia when he read Bax's recently published *Farewell My Youth*; it was 'hugely entertaining, especially as he deals with a lot of people I have known'.<sup>365</sup>

The war was not the only blight on his life. On visiting Newcastle in October 1941 he saw Yeaman Dodds for the last time. Dodds was dying but seemed to rally when seeing his old friend. WGW found his first Christmas in retirement, alone in Glasgow, the most unhappy he had ever spent, largely because news of Dodds' death from cancer had just arrived, the loss being 'a severe blow'.<sup>366</sup> A small comfort were letters from Guéritte (who had just founded 'Les Français de Grande Bretagne, introducing de Gaulle to the great Albert Hall meeting, held a few weeks earlier) and Dyson (the latter writing about events in Russia, having visited Moscow before the war).<sup>367</sup> WGW continued to have daily infra-red lamp treatment for his rheumatic hand, and gloomily added a handwritten note to his typewritten letter to Clarrie: 'you'd better keep in a safe place the address of the solicitor who has my will'.<sup>368</sup> WGW continued in some respects to neglect his health. He had always worked too hard, and although tee-total, smoked a pipe, asking Clarrie for 'one of those cheap tobacco jars that stand on mantle-pieces' for Christmas.<sup>369</sup>

WGW's Newcastle home, at 4 Granville Road, empty since the outbreak of war, was now let as an Army clothes store. It is illuminating that when taking out an additional war policy for £500 on his household goods in 1941, WGW had no idea where his furniture was stored, nor who in the family possessed what furniture, having to seek information from Clarrie.<sup>370</sup> An interesting reference by WGW to a 'small leather-covered autograph album' of Clara's in which he had pasted about thirty letters from famous composers (such as Elgar and Satie), appears in a

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<sup>364</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 31 January, 1942.

<sup>365</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 6 June, 1943.

<sup>366</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 28 December 1941.

<sup>367</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 4 January, 1942 in which WGW discusses receipt of these letters.

<sup>368</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 23 November, 1941.

<sup>369</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 14 December, 1941.

<sup>370</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 21 June, 1941.

letter to Clarrie at this time, WGW feeling that he wished to examine it again before embarking on his projected *Autobiography*.<sup>371</sup>

A wonderful opportunity now arose, when WGW was given 'a unique and memorable experience' by his son-in-law.<sup>372</sup> When his daughter Mary had discovered she was pregnant at the beginning of 1941, her delighted husband, Edward Pollitzer, decided, as a gift for his wife, to ask Epstein to accept a commission for a bronze head of her father.<sup>373</sup> Epstein was currently occupied with his work on 'Jacob & the Angel', and offered to start WGW's sittings when that was finished.<sup>374</sup> In early 1942 WGW began attending Epstein's studio for a fortnight of daily sittings, where *Consumatum Est* stood, along with 'Ecce Homo' (which WGW felt 'burned into my soul'), 'Adam' and two busts of the Emperor of Abyssinia (one as proud monarch, and the other as dejected exile), and the bronze of Bernard Shaw, and many other notabilities.<sup>375</sup> WGW was also delighted by Epstein's flower paintings there, 'in gorgeous masses of vivid colours'.<sup>376</sup> He wrote:

Often he was so much absorbed in his work that I dared not speak; he danced about, grunting, casting glances at me as he modelled his clay. At other times he talked freely about his early struggles, the stupidity & malignity of his critics, about the many people with whom he had come into contact, particularly about the van Dieren, Heseltine, & Cecil Gray group, whom he knew very well. When he got excited he dropped into New York alien dialect, 'foist' for 'first', & 'boyd', for 'bird'.<sup>377</sup>

WGW was fascinated to watch how Epstein built up the sculpture from small pieces of black clay on an upright stick. In March 1942, Epstein said, 'This is going to be good'. When it was finished he wrote to tell WGW that he thought the bronze one of the finest things he had ever accomplished.<sup>378</sup> Many years before WGW had been told by an anthropologist he met on a train that he was 'a throw-back to the Vikings'. Completely ignorant of this, Epstein now named the bronze 'The Viking'.<sup>379</sup> In July WGW sent photographs of the bust to Clarrie, writing: 'I'm really very proud to be the subject of one of Epstein's finest masterpieces'.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 28 June, 1942. The album of letters has not been traced.

<sup>372</sup> Aut XV, 32.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

<sup>374</sup> Epstein was engaged on 'Jacob and the Angel' between 1940-1941.

<sup>375</sup> Aut XV, 33.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid.

<sup>378</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 1 March, 1942.

<sup>379</sup> Aut XVI., 34. This title was much used by Mary and Jonathan Pollitzer at the time of the 1976 Whittaker Centenary celebrations.

<sup>380</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 2 August, 1942.

Perhaps to properly appreciate this wonderful artistic experience, in January 1942, WGW began to go to a new series of afternoon lectures on the appreciation of painting, given by the curator of the Glasgow Art Galleries. WGW sampled the first one ‘...found it most delightful and interesting’ and attended the rest, developing an enthusiasm for Matisse, Picasso, and Gauguin. He told Clarrie: ‘It’s rather a new sensation sitting at other people’s feet & learning, after having been a gasbag myself for so many years.’<sup>381</sup> As a ‘compulsory war economy’, however, he stopped taking French lessons (though continued to work at French daily). WGW’s interest in Art was maintained, and in 1944 WGW twice read Eric Newton’s ‘European painting and Sculpture’ telling Clarrie that it had given him a better idea of the development of arts than previously, and he would now like to revisit all the ‘picture galleries and churches I have seen in the last twenty years’.<sup>382</sup> A benefit of retirement was that WGW could get on with writing *Music in Books*, begun in Brittany, and he also was able to score more material for his project *The Early English Violin Sonata*. Launching his new playing career, WGW gave a lunch hour spinet recital on 4 December 1941, performing Bull’s ‘Walsingham’, twenty-five minutes long ‘and very virtuosic...the fruit of six months practise’ (the *Glasgow Herald* reporting that he played ‘brilliantly’).<sup>383</sup> Throughout 1942, WGW felt his standard of playing ‘rising and rising’, until soon he felt he could play well all Bach pieces suitable for the virginals.

WGW was restless in retirement, feeling selfish for immersing himself in studies while others were engaged in some sort of war effort. Money worries too began increasingly to concern him, and he could only envisage a worsening of his personal finances as the war continued. He felt no one had any use for a musician of his age, and the war had robbed him of half his expected income (royalties having drastically been reduced when the paper shortage cut down the printing of music, although he continued however to edit the OCS and OOS series until 1943). By March, 1942, WGW’s financial situation continually preyed on his mind since he had few paid engagements, no Academy pension and a promised lucrative AB trip to South America was cancelled due to the war. WGW began to consider taking up work in munitions, as a clerk, or teaching, but, providentially, ‘...an SOS came from London, asking if I would become ENSA

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<sup>381</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 21 January, 1942.

<sup>382</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 7 February, 1944.

<sup>383</sup> WGW wrote an article in *Music Review* on ‘Byrd’s and Bull’s Walsingham Variations’, March, 194. He also wrote on ‘Byrd’s Great Service’ in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVII No 4 (1941), 474-490.

[Entertainments National Service Association] Musical Adviser [henceforward MA] to the Scottish Command, as there was a desperate muddle to be cleared up. I accepted. Once more leisure vanished, and the work I loved so dearly had to be put to one side'.<sup>384</sup> He would be under Basil Dean, and Walter Legge (liaison officer to the Advisory Music Council of ENSA). Now another short retirement had ended and WGW embarked on a third, and last, period of employment, if not quite a career.

Once again, however, there was a drawback. For a second time WGW was to work for an organisation that did not care for its employees. The 'muddles' at ENSA, referred to by WGW, could in fact never be completely 'cleared up'.<sup>385</sup> They were directly caused by the methods of ENSA's musical liaison officer, Walter Legge, a young man in his middle thirties, who began to organise the classical music division in 1940, carrying it on successfully throughout the war. Despite Legge's lack of ability in the minutiae of management, he was, according to Russell Palmer, 'responsible for the development of the fine musical policy designed to reach service audiences wherever they might be'.<sup>386</sup> Legge invited the conductor Albert Coates to come from America, and used his 'strong personal connection' with the finest artists to put his plans into effect.<sup>387</sup> At twenty, Legge joined HMV as a lecturer, was dismissed for outspokenness three months later, and re-hired within the year, becoming head and sole member of its new 'Literary Department'. With the outbreak of war, Legge's position as a record producer was entirely precarious, although as a critic his connections with musicians were valuable to the Britain's war effort. Appointed by ENSA, he took up new responsibilities which continued in tandem with his work for EMI (probably because ENSA utilised the records which EMI could no longer sell). With his ENSA concerts, Legge kept three provincial orchestras (the Liverpool Philharmonic, the City of Birmingham, and the Hallé) busy, dividing up London work among the London orchestras. He arranged Festivals in all large troop concentrations, and provided circulating

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<sup>384</sup> Aut XVI, 34.

A salary of £500 a year was offered.

ENSA supplied concerts of serious music for the British army, navy, and air forces- in all theatres of war where there were British troops-as well as for workers in factories.

<sup>385</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 3 May, 1942. In this letter WGW writes: 'I've been typing till 1. 30 every am[sic]for a week. Many more muddles have revealed themselves.'

<sup>386</sup> Palmer, R., *British Music*, Skelton Robinson, 1947, 148/149.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

libraries of records to supply small and isolated units.<sup>388</sup> WGW's describes how Legge could only operate in isolation, possessing poor communication and administrative skills.<sup>389</sup> Joan Ingpen who worked with Legge at ENSA (and later co-founded the London Philharmonia Orchestra with him) recalled: 'He was a very strange man, wonderfully enthusiastic to work with, but he had to be emperor'.<sup>390</sup> What began as 'a muddle' for WGW to sort out, remained largely so (despite WGW's Herculean efforts, undertaken in failing health), due to Legge's inability to communicate, work co-operatively, or fulfil his promises.

The Army did have some professional musicians to lead the work, the first being Eric Fenby, who in 1943 wrote an article outlining his work for ENSA, describing how he had been transferred in 1941 to the Army Educational Corps 'to give some direction to the ever-increasing number of gramophone circles, unit choirs, orchestras and bands springing up in the various Commands'.<sup>391</sup> It soon became clear that the work was beyond the scope of one man and several young musicians were drafted into service. Fenby outlined his priorities as appreciation lectures, gramophone libraries running weekly unit concerts, music day courses. But he stressed that there was no settled policy for each region: 'Each instructor tackles the job according to his own lights'.<sup>392</sup> So a framework was established, with Fenby and others deciding the direction and content of ENSA music, but no direct supervision of area music organisation took place. Legge summed up ENSA's activities in an a letter to the *Musical Times* in February 1943, listing the provision of record libraries of 2000 records to each Command Area, circulated weekly to each of 1500 gramophone circles in the armed forces, together with an extensive central library of rarer recordings.<sup>393</sup> Each week, 1200 gramophone concerts were given which included by 1943, those in factories and Industrial hostels. The local organization of these Recorded Music Libraries was in the hands of local MA's (Legge mentioning by name only WGW and Richard

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<sup>388</sup> Schwarzkopf, E., *On and off the Record A Memoir of Walter Legge*, (Faber and Faber, 1982), 61.

<sup>389</sup> WGW's letters describe an almost non-existent working relationship, based on WGW's struggling to cope with often conflicting and intermittent instructions from Legge, sometimes impossible to implement. In a letter to Clarrie of 23 January 1944, WGW writes that if Legge did reply to a letter it took him two months to do so. On the other hand, he had demanded that invoices from consignments of records should be returned on the day of arrival, despite needing at least 4/5 hours work to check them and no advance warning being given. However, a letter from WGW to Clarrie on 3 January, 1943, shows that Legge to some extent appreciated WGW's work for when he visited the Glasgow office he complimented WGW on 'the splendid way' he had organized everything.

<sup>390</sup> Obituary notice for Joan Ingpen, the *Daily Telegraph*, Wednesday, 9 January, 2008, 23.

<sup>391</sup> Fenby, Capt. E, 'Music and the Soldier', *Tempo*, No. 8, (1944), 15.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>393</sup> Legge, W, 'ENSA's Musical Work', *Musical Times*, Vol. 84, No. 1200, (February 1943), 58.

Austin), whose principal work was the development of music by forces musicians, including the provision of good concerts (with artists such as Maggie Teyte, Joan Hammond, John McCormack and Dennis Noble), and formation of orchestras. Younger artists travelled round in concert parties.

At the end of March 1942, WGW went to London for ENSA training (also visiting Clara, aged by the bombing incident which had injured both her and Clarrie), then attended a further training week at the County Hotel, Salisbury, 'quite a holiday, at other people's expense'.<sup>394</sup> He was shadowing the Adviser of Southern Command, 'learning details, filing, reports, forms, procedures, etc. It is all administration...'<sup>395</sup> Involvement with the forces was complicated, and WGW found that 'There are a thousand and one points that cannot be learned in a talk.'<sup>396</sup> Returning to Glasgow, WGW was given an office. The gramophone library was in complete disorder:

The gramophone library (1200 discs) is an unbelievable CHAOS. There is a pencilled catalogue...but the items under these headings were evidently just dotted down as things were unpacked, symphonies next to songs, Nocturne 1 a long way from Nocturne 2 etc. There are such illuminating entries as 'Beethoven. Sonata in D' 'Grieg. Slavonic Dances.' There are things in the list which aren't on the shelves & things on the shelves which aren't on the list.<sup>397</sup>

It took WGW a day to 'box' the records for two programmes. He estimated the office would take three weeks to sort out, working each day until 1.30 am. By May, eighty programmes of records were prepared and boxed, and all the music was similarly boxed and catalogued, some already having been despatched to the Hebrides. But by now the neuritis in WGW's hand was 'excruciating' (exacerbated no doubt by WGW's prolonged typing in the office and keyboard practice at home) and he was forced to return for treatment.<sup>398</sup> Whilst his lumbago was troublesome, his sciatica even prevented him from sleeping.

WGW's path now crossed again with Hubert Foss (though the two were no longer close) for, in 1942, Foss also joined ENSA, his career at OUP having tailed off. The Music Department had moved to Oxford to avoid risk of bombing, and Foss's office became a cramped, converted bathroom, production almost ceasing. In July 1941, Foss attempted suicide, still a criminal

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<sup>394</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 4 April, 1942.

<sup>395</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 4 April, 1942.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 26 April, 1942.

<sup>398</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 17 May, 1942.



offence. After release from custody, he was given sick leave, returning only to part-time work.<sup>399</sup> Having attempted to find employment with the BBC, he eventually became MA to ENSA Eastern Command, under Basil Dean and Walter Legge in 1942. Perhaps because of his involvement with a Vaughan Williams BBC (70<sup>th</sup> birthday) programme on festivals, Foss now asked the *News Chronicle* to act as patron and inaugurate a Competition Festival for the Forces's Music Club.<sup>400</sup> After an ENSA meeting in Edinburgh on 7 May, it was decided that this should go ahead, and that preliminary tests should be carried out by ENSA MA's, and a further meeting took place in Glasgow. At the Waldorf, WGW found many of his old Central MAC friends, also on the committee, gathered, including Granville Bantock. The Forces Music Club, ENSA, and the Army Education authorities joined the BBC at a meeting on 11 August 1942 when Alec Robertson set up a committee to organise the Festival.<sup>401</sup> The Coliseum was booked for the 25 October for the competition. Finals were to take place in Central Hall, following the selection by Robertson and another member of the BBC music staff of the best material. The takeover of the scheme by the BBC annoyed ENSA officials, but similarly Robertson, in a BBC internal memo, accused ENSA (represented by Basil Dean) of 'wanting to take the credit for everything', and commented, 'I understand ENSA have an Advisory Broadcasting Council. I have no idea who they are.'<sup>402</sup>

When WGW and Wiseman began the festival adjudications in Scotland, WGW refused to allow the ENSA Entertainments Officer (who was without musical training) to adjudicate with them. WGW was impressed at the high standard of many of the entrants, beginning adjudications in Inverness: 'There were two brilliant men over from Stornaway, one a RCM pianist, the other the leader of the Torquay Municipal Orchestra....The next day I travelled to Perth....Competitions were held in the evening & the first entrant was a well-known woman professional 'cellist from London, who gives recitals in Wigmore Hall. All the world is in the Forces.'<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> Hinnells, 33.

<sup>400</sup> 'Forces' Music Club', Internal Circulation Memo, in association with ENSA, R27/104. (BBC Sound Archives, Caversham),

<sup>401</sup> See BBC archives at Caversham, R27/104, General Music, 3.

<sup>402</sup> Memo from Alec Robertson to ADM, 26 August, 1941. (BBC Sound Archives, Caversham).

<sup>403</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 7 June 1942.

In November, twenty Academy students from the Scholars' Society came to Clevedon Drive for a lecture-recital. WGW also began reviewing for a musical quarterly and Madame Guéritte called, asking him to write 'an article or two' for *Time & Tide* in support of a musical campaign she was launching.<sup>404</sup> A new enthusiasm for the theatre now captured WGW, perhaps stimulated by the many 'entertaining visitors' who called next door at the ENSA variety office. In 1940 a small private theatre had opened in Glasgow giving Synge's 'The Playboy of the Western World' in August 1941. WGW, who had seen a number of Irish plays in the early days of the Irish theatrical movement, wrote: 'These Irish plays are delicious. The flow of language is amazing, there is always something richly poetical, & the humour is truly priceless.'<sup>405</sup> In November he saw Ibsen's 'An enemy of the people', writing to Clarrie that he thought perhaps he had been the 'Dr Stockman of the Academy'.<sup>406</sup> Another great enjoyment was the Old Vic company's production of *The Cherry Orchard*.<sup>407</sup> WGW also attended performances at the Glasgow Theatre, sometimes going as many as three times a week, particularly if Sadler's Wells, or the Joos ballet company were performing. In November 1941, he attended a Moussorgsky opera (probably *Sorochintsy Fair*). Kurt Joos, a choreographer with the Sadlers Wells Ballet Company visited Glasgow in June 1942, with his production of *The Magic Flute*, described by WGW as 'a lovely allegory, a marvellous show'.<sup>408</sup> A 'Citizens' Theatre' was launched in 1943 in Glasgow giving Goldsmith's 'The Good natured Man' in November, to a 'nine-tenths empty' house, and also 'Shadow and Substance' by Paul Vincent Carroll. WGW enthusiastically supported all their productions, the next being Afinogenev's 'Distant Point' in December (WGW thought it 'propaganda but well presented'), and the Hungarian 'Liliom' (which he considered unusual 'a lot of fun but much underlying truth') by Ferencz Molnar in January 1944.<sup>409</sup> Even when his health worsened WGW continued to attend, seeing Shaw's 'Man of Destiny', and 'Blanc Posnet', in March 1944. WGW attended the last play of the season in 1944, 'a most amusing new comedy', 'Bout Market' by J. B. Priestley.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 6 September, 1942.

<sup>405</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 3 August, 1941.

<sup>406</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 2 November, 1941.

<sup>407</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 23 November, 1941.

<sup>408</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 21 June, 1942.

<sup>409</sup> Letters from WGW to Clarrie, 19 December, 1943 and

<sup>410</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 2 April 1944.

As Chairman of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Piano Society, WGW arranged several series of concerts by Lamond, as a way of re-launching the Society, suspended at the outbreak of war.<sup>411</sup> The first was given on the 20 December 1941 at the Athenaeum Theatre, when 'the old boy was at the top of his form'.<sup>412</sup> The Lamond concerts continued through the war, save when the pianist (along with the Academy Janitor) suffered a serious car accident in June 1941, sustaining broken ribs leading to double pneumonia. Lamond recovered, but, when playing in April 1943, WGW could see a dropping off in his performing ability: 'His memory is now beginning to fail, alas. One fugue he had to start twice & in quite a simple thing he got all adrift. Age again! It is very sad. Yet he has tremendous endurance & will play for an hour with only short stops between the numbers.'<sup>413</sup> Lamond played at the last Piano Society concert of the season in March 1944, when other performers that season had been Moura Lympny, Colin Horsley, Iso Elinson, and Julius Isserlis.

Though he felt unappreciated by the Academy Governors, WGW was proud of 'his own creation', the course he had established, and of the students he had trained, 'placed, and now doing hefty work for Scottish musical education. It is something to leave behind one'.<sup>414</sup> Though he maintained some contact with members of the Academy and University in retirement (when a copy of a bust of Lamond was presented to the Academy in 1942), WGW did not attend, saying that the insincerity of Academy public functions made him feel almost physically sick. He particularly disliked Robertson who was giving the address, accusing him of being guilty of 'smugness and self-advertisement'.<sup>415</sup> WGW attended student recitals, and meetings of the Scholars's Society (which he had founded), but sensing he was unwelcome at the SNAM club, he usually kept away, making an exception in March 1943 when he went to a reunion.

WGW carried on with other musical commitments, on 1 July, 1942, speaking for 45 minutes at the invitation of the Principal of the Glasgow Art School at a Symposium on "The

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<sup>411</sup> WGW had founded the society at the suggestion of Messrs Cuthbertson & Co, Glasgow, piano dealers, engaging artists such as Wilhelm Backhaus, Alexander Borovsky, Josef Hofmann, Lili Krauss, Wanda Landowska, Benno Moiseiwitsch, Egon Petri, Rosenthal, Arthur Rubinstein, and Ethel Bartlett & Rae Robertson. Aut XI, 6.

<sup>412</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 21 December, 1941.

<sup>413</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 20 March 1943.

<sup>414</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 12 July 1941.

<sup>415</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 1 March 1942.

Psychology of Music and Painting'.<sup>416</sup> Three days later, WGW left for a festival performance in Durham Cathedral, with women's, mixed, and children's choirs, at the invitation of Cathedral organist Cyril Maude, Vaughan William's *Toward the Unknown Region* being among pieces performed, with 'Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring', and 'Non Nobis Domine'.<sup>417</sup> On Friday night, WGW stayed with the Head of Durham School, adjudicating the following evening at house competitions. There was 'a lot of variety and much talent'.<sup>418</sup> The festival in the Cathedral on 5<sup>th</sup> was an 'amazing affair', with two hundred children, and a mixed choir of 330.<sup>419</sup> The women's choir was 1280 strong, occupying both transepts and the whole of the nave behind the children.

You can imagine what conducting them was like. They were all drawn from Women's Institutes. Tone & volume were GORGEOUS, a great thrill. The Cathedral was packed, chairs in the choir right up to the altar steps, people standing all along the walls & crammed in the space at the west door. The sight, lit by brilliant lamps from above, was magnificent. The Dean said that he was 'profoundly moved'.<sup>420</sup>

Unsurprisingly, WGW pronounced himself 'dead beat'.<sup>421</sup> Soon afterwards he wrote to tell Clarrie that, following a visit to a camp 'in the remote south west corner', he was 'again a cripple, in 'excruciating pain' with sciatica in the other leg this time' and had been indoors for two days (ordered to stay another by his osteopath) resting in an armchair with a hot bottle at his hip.<sup>422</sup>

After five days at home (the longest 'spell in the house since I came to Glasgow') WGW struggled to the office, finding walking 'a trial'. Each MA of ENSA had a car provided, and Legge wrote asking WGW if he were using it.<sup>423</sup> Having refrained in order to save petrol, since trains or buses were available, WGW now mapped out a trip, intending to leave on 14 August for a fortnight's tour, calling at Peterhead, Wick, and Caithness, and finishing at Inverness, and thence by plane to the Orkneys for 4 or 5 days at the two centres where he was needed. After booking the air flights, WGW found that, typically, the car was removed, so he could only go to the Orkneys. WGW writes that the next ENSA lunch 'was one long outburst of complaints. I proposed that we should bring matters to a head by resigning in a body but the others were too

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<sup>416</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 7 December, 1942.

<sup>417</sup> Undated *Durham Advertiser* cutting, enclosed in letter from WGW to Clarrie, 4 July, 1942.

<sup>418</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 5 July, 1942.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

<sup>421</sup> Programme also enclosed in letter of 5 July, 1942.

<sup>422</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 9 August, 1942.

<sup>423</sup> In a letter from WGW to Clarrie of 6 June, 1942, WGW writes that Legge had written to him, checking on the use of the car, two or three weeks earlier.

timid.<sup>424</sup> However points were made and promised consideration, including a request for an Assistant in each Command. Meanwhile 'Drury Lane', Legge's headquarters in London, continued to pile on additional work.

At home, WGW had now finished arranging some Greek folk-tunes for Calvocoressi (who had also requested some of Bax), some of which he thought 'real corkers', WGW reporting that 'Calvo' was delighted with the settings.<sup>425</sup> WGW was pleasantly surprised to discover that his OUP royalties were much larger than he expected. Thirty-one thousand copies of the *Oxford Choral Songs*, and over eight thousand of the Folk Song Sight Singing Series had sold (a considerable number to the USA). On the down side, only seventeen copies of *Collected Essays*, and no *Fugitive Notes* had sold. The aria 'Schafe können sicher weiden', from a Bach secular cantata had become enormously popular. In September, a version for small orchestra had been accepted by OUP.<sup>426</sup> Now, HMV wish to record the original, and asked WGW to prepare a score while OUP asked him to make further arrangements of the number as a two-part and a three-part song.

During the course of 1942 WGW continued to work at a rate which was incompatible with the state of his health. Undertaking a musical weekend at Moray House Training College, Edinburgh, with his old friend Wiseman he returned home his health worse than ever:

I could only get ease by lying full length in the arm chair with a hot bottle on my hip. Moving, even a little, about the house, has been agony. I couldn't type or practise, but have had to content myself with trying to write out translations of vocal records preparatory to typing... Now I've got to the stage where by means of being propped up with pillows & so forth, I can use the typewriter stuck on a little table, but I can't see what is written till the sheet is taken out. So there will be lots of corrections; my typing will not be up to its usual A1 at Lloyds standard.<sup>427</sup>

WGW tried to return to the office but by the following weekend was bed-bound. A shakily handwritten note of 12 December informed Clarrie that he had entered a nursing home in Glasgow for a few days. However WGW stayed there over Christmas, warm, well-fed, visited by five faithful friends and continuing to work on Arne and Polish folk songs. On returning to work on 3 January, WGW was surprised to find he was in a new office which was bitterly cold even with both coal and gas fire. Staff 'call-ups' now prevented the packing firm responsible for

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<sup>424</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 21 September, 1942.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., 4 October, 1942.

<sup>426</sup> The last pieces in the *Oxford Orchestral Series*, were published in 1943, consisting of Bach's 'Sheep May Safely Graze', and Handel's 'Overture from Ottone' arranged by WGW, and 'An Elizabethan Suite' arranged by John Barbirolli.

<sup>427</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 21 December, 1942.

despatching gramophone programmes to the 'Circle's' from functioning and WGW was forced to temporarily suspend the service, while he 'explored other avenues'.<sup>428</sup>

WGW worked on ENSA programmes in the house, pulling to pieces 80 programmes and blending 80 new ones in, 'like doing 20 cross-word puzzles all at once. The annoying thing is that if W L [Walter Legge] had had any sense & any understanding of what programme-building is, the worry would have been saved, & the planning of the whole thing a pleasure.'<sup>429</sup> However, if ENSA wished to pay him for 'wasting his time', WGW would not object. He wrote on 14 February: 'Think of me, immersed in gramophone records. I'm sick of the sight of them, sick of the sight of lists, sick of discovering mistakes & omissions: I dream of gramophone records.'<sup>430</sup> He was now sleeping better, having pills from the doctor, though he could not sleep 'sound and long', but found afternoons in the armchair 'a great deal of help'.<sup>431</sup> By the middle of January 1943, he felt he was recovering: 'But I have to go canny. Owing to the unstrung condition of my nerves I sleep badly & consequently feel tired all day'.<sup>432</sup>

With the translation revisions for his Cantata book now complete, WGW placed the manuscript in the safe ('probably to stay there for ever').<sup>433</sup> However, in March, he heard from Duncan McKenzie, his OUP friend in New York, who volunteered to try the book with an American firm. (WGW prepared a précis and specimen extracts, but did not feel hopeful.) In July 1943, WGW wrote to tell Clarrie that 'some American musicologists are taking an interest in my Bach book, & think they can get a grant from the music publishing fund of some University'.<sup>434</sup> WGW felt that even to have got this far was 'a bit of an excitement'.<sup>435</sup> Transporting the manuscript was risky, but he prepared it for sending only to find it would cost £30 to send, so instead investigated having it 'micro-photographed'.<sup>436</sup> It was sent in sections eventually, and began to arrive in the USA in March 1944, WGW looking forward to reports on it.<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 17 January, 1943.

<sup>429</sup> Clarrie's letters, 30 January, 1943.

<sup>430</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 14 February, 1943.

<sup>431</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 14 February, 1943.

<sup>432</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 17 January, 1943.

<sup>433</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 3 May, 1942.

<sup>434</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 4 July, 1943.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid.

<sup>436</sup> With over 3000 music-script illustrations, this too would have been expensive.

<sup>437</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 12 March, 1944.

WGW continued to write occasional articles for *The Monthly Musical Record*, writing on 'The Keyboard and Composition' in January 1944.<sup>438</sup> In this interesting article WGW's wide reading for his *Music & Books* project is very evident, and he provides evidence that most composers (even at times Mozart) preferred the assistance of a keyboard or lute, including his dear friend Holst who 'used the keyboard a great deal'. An article on 'The Treatment of Old Music' appeared in the March/April 1943 edition of *The Monthly Musical Record* which demonstrated WGW's scholarly attitude to the issue of performance practice, and showed his challenging attitude to accepted traditions of playing, such as refraining from using the sustaining pedal when playing Bach.<sup>439</sup> WGW described folk-music as 'fluid' and ever-varying, writing that elasticity was also required in some written works such as those of Frescobaldi who, in the *Preface* to his cantatas, advised that the speed and rhythm of his music should be subject to emotions, and to the brilliance of different passages (a matter raised by Esposito in his *Early Italian Piano Music*).<sup>440</sup> Flexibility was also needed when considering the acoustic of a performance-room, this illustrated by a quotation from WGW of a personal letter to him from Elgar on the performance of the latter's organ sonata.<sup>441</sup> After mentioning two Northumbrian pipers he knew, the younger of which could not equal his father in 'humouring the tune', WGW ended his article: 'Let us have our old music humoured.'<sup>442</sup>

WGW now decided to write a book on 'The Early English Violin sonata' (but only after he retired from ENSA), using material gathered for his Alsop lectures and also for his editions of the Arne sonatas. He would now prepare a plan, finish his survey of 17<sup>th</sup>-century sonatas and move on to those of the 18<sup>th</sup>, first writing to the British Museum for Photostats: 'It ought to be an interesting book, and a useful contribution to the history of British music.'<sup>443</sup> He continued to write *Music & Books* (of which the last chapter focussed on philosophy), concentrating on the

<sup>438</sup> Whittaker, WG, 'The Keyboard and Composition', *The Monthly Musical Record*, (January, 1944), 4-12.

<sup>439</sup> Whittaker, WG, 'The Treatment of Old Music', *The Monthly Musical Record*, (March-April, 1943).

<sup>440</sup> Whittaker, W G, 'The Treatment of Old Music', *The Monthly Musical Record*, (March-April, 1943), 55.

WGW also expressed the opinion, gaining ground today and exemplified in the Bach playing of the pianist Angela Hewitt, that a young pianist should not carefully '[tuck] his right foot under the stool before beginning anything by Bach'. *Ibid.*, 52.

WGW cites: Esposito, M, *Early Italian Piano Music – A collection of Pieces Written for the Harpsichord and Clavichord* (Oliver Ditson Company, London, 1906).

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>443</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 30 January, 1943.

topic of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche whose works he was translating himself to avoid problems of copyright.

At the end of March 1943 WGW noticed that, not only was his right little finger still numb and paralysed on occasions, but his whole hand had also contracted, threatening his future ability to play at all in the future. His doctor diagnosed atrophy of the muscles, and (perhaps listening to WGW's theory concerning his health problems), supplied a letter for ENSA asking for leave for WGW to take three weeks holiday in the summer. There was some improvement in health, since WGW was now able to sleep without tablets, but his leg stubbornly remained painful.<sup>444</sup> WGW now cut a pathetic figure, and, because of his weight loss, lameness and stoop, found he was often offered items of food, as he told Clarrie on 14 March: 'I told you about the EGG. This week I've been given ANOTHER egg, a piece of fruitarian cake, a bar of chocolate & a packet of sweets. That's one advantage of limping with a stick; folks think you are in need of sustenance & take pity on you.'<sup>445</sup> Anne Donnan, an old Academy student of WGW's, remembers how, because WGW had now lost height, his long coat now brushed the ground at the front (he also wore a beret, 'like a Frenchman'), Phyllis Crawhall Wilson took up the hem for him.<sup>446</sup>

A trip to Northern Ireland in April was a pleasant change and almost a holiday, WGW sailing from Stranraer 'the blowiest place in the kingdom'.<sup>447</sup> WGW avoided the icy winds in the secluded camp near an old country house and did lots of reading 'a history of Poland, a book on Emerson & Beaumarchais's 'Barber of Seville' & 'Marriage of Figaro'. He gave the list to Clarrie: 'Translations' I hear you snorting. NO. Originals. True I had a pocket dictionnaire, but then it contains all the words I know & none that I don't.'<sup>448</sup> Back at the office he was brought rudely down to earth. Un-catalogued records arrived with no covers and in the wrong boxes, new records being duplicated and triplicated, requiring listing accurately by WGW before ENSA's account could be settled with the Gramophone Companies. WGW estimated that the job would

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<sup>444</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 11 March, 1943.

<sup>445</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 14 March, 1943.

<sup>446</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 23 November, 1941.

<sup>447</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 11 April, 1943.

<sup>448</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 11 March 1943.



take between 30-40 hours.<sup>449</sup> At the beginning of May, WGW embarked on creating a card index for the gramophone library, which by that time contained 3000 records, which, he told Clarrie, illustrated his 'dull life'.<sup>450</sup> When *ennuie* overtook him one day at work, he went home early to listen to a broadcast of *The Magic Flute*, sitting with the score, similarly taking time off on 30 May, then he listened to *The Planets*, '...and loved them. I don't remember hearing them all in a bunch before.'<sup>451</sup>

At the end of May, WGW went to Borrowhead camp, on the coast, about thirty miles away. Here he rehearsed two orchestras, lectured on Sibelius, and after more rehearsals next day, he gave an evening concert of orchestral items and chamber music.<sup>452</sup> (When playing in a two piano arrangement of *Sleepers Wake*, and *Sheep may safely graze* his right hand's paralysis caused him to do 'much cooking of the chords'.)<sup>453</sup> The Colonel was extremely enthusiastic, and WGW's returned many times, but, by January 1944, felt that 'The dear Colonel is allowing his enthusiasm for his little orchestra to run away with him. The Holst was quite beyond them.'<sup>454</sup> WGW found he was always 'slaving away' in the shortest possible rehearsals to prevent actual break-downs. In April 1944, the enthusiastic Colonel was moved to another camp, eliciting a wry remark from WGW: 'I rather fancy that the high-ups disapprove of his musical activities. It will break his heart & a fruitful educational effort will come to an end.'<sup>455</sup>

WGW was pleased to be invited by the British Council to lecture in July on French Music, at a Scottish-Franco week in Edinburgh. He was also asked to give the opening address at a summer music course for teachers in Oxford in July. Another project was completed when WGW finished *Music & Books*, depositing it in his safe.<sup>456</sup> At the beginning of June the book was rejected by OUP (who would not even consider its publication until after the Peace) and soon after by Cassell. Undaunted, WGW continued working at his English violin sonata project. On 10 June WGW went to London for an ISM Council meeting, visiting both daughters and also visiting the British Museum. By 13 June, he was able to tell Clarrie that he had completed his

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<sup>449</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 25 April, 1943.

<sup>450</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 2 May, 1943.

<sup>451</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 30 May, 1943.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 21 January, 1944.

<sup>455</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 2 April, 1944.

<sup>456</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 2 May 1943.

survey of seventeenth-century English violin sonatas and was moving onto the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Though 90 manuscripts were in foreign libraries, 400 were available at the British Museum, so there was much he could do. Amazingly, WGW continued to practise the clavichord: 'I've now got up in decent playing form, the six Partitas of Bach. If the hand will hold out long enough, I'll work through all the other clavier works...that are suitable for the clavichord.'<sup>457</sup> Before leaving for London, WGW had found his hand 'better than it had been for years', and while away he suffered no pain. However 'itching to practise' when he got back, he discovered his left hand would not work, and his fingers uncontrollably curled up, although they relaxed after a few minutes the same problems recurred if he tried to use the hand. WGW went for treatment from his osteopath who blamed pressure from an adhesion ('of which my shoulders contain an amazing collection') on a nerve, and managed to free all but one finger (the third on his right hand).<sup>458</sup> A threatened operation was accordingly postponed, but in July WGW's arm was X rayed, and his consultant, Sir John Fraser, referred WGW to another Glasgow consultant who pronounced that, if there were no improvement, he would operate after the holidays, looping the damaged nerve on to the other side of a bony protuberance.

With ENSA he arranged a week's concerts during July, with more required at other camps. A chamber music party was touring the north east coast, going as far as Thurso, Margaret with them. A string orchestra was giving eight concerts around Stranraer. On 1 August, WGW prepared to go to Burrowhead camp for the weekend, in jubilant mood about the war: 'the axis is tottering. I suppose the cursed thing will last another year, but we ARE seeing the beginning of the end.'<sup>459</sup> With much to do at camp, the Colonel ran WGW around in his car, also making a twenty-mile trip to visit a Czech Professor, living in a country house with estate, a great friend of Sweitzer, who used to entertain Hubermann, Kolisch, Rose and others. WGW was unable to play sonatas, but agreed instead to play two Bach sonatas, 'which I could cook to suit'.<sup>460</sup>

WGW took his promised fortnight's holiday at Hawkstone Park Hotel, near Shrewsbury, writing to Clarrie: 'I'm getting all I wanted, rest, quiet & country air & am now feeling a different

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<sup>457</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 6 June, 1943.

<sup>458</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 19 June 1943

<sup>459</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 1 August, 1943.

<sup>460</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 15 August, 1943.

man.<sup>461</sup> He had done a lot of reading, Trollope, Lytton Strachey, Goethe, and Keats. While there he had heard that Coward had died. 'It is a comforting thought that my letter was one of the last he would receive, 'Appropriate thanks for the honour he gave in making proposal for me' wrote WGW.<sup>462</sup>

On 21 September WGW was admitted to Woodlands Nursing Home for an operation to remove an adhesion. However, the operation was postponed when it was discovered that WGW was diabetic and therefore could not undergo a general anaesthetic: his condition was to be stabilised before going ahead. Bored in the nursing home he used the time there to 'sketch out' his *Autobiography*. The operation was re-scheduled for 30 September, but did not take place until 4 October.

ENSA news was encouraging. After a thirteen month wait, the fibre boxes had arrived and the two hundred programmes were ready for packing into them. A wire from Drury Lane informed WGW that the Ministry of Labour had agreed to pay for 160 concerts by standard orchestras to be given to munitions workers, WGW to supply a list of suitable halls.

After the operation, WGW sent a short and rather strange and jovial message to Clarrie, written in block capitals, and probably affected by the pain killers he had been given. A normal letter, also handwritten and undated, followed a few days later, and included book recommendations, many concerning travel, with news of the operation only at the end.

The day after leaving the nursing home, WGW returned to the office, and took no more time off. WGW found himself weary of writing the name Tchaikowsky (never a favourite composer), as Legge sent 'shoals of his records'.<sup>463</sup> Despite WGW's protests, Legge continued to send discs in foreign languages, including works in Latin, French, German, Italian, and Russian, giving WGW a heavy load of translations to do.<sup>464</sup> When cataloguing, WGW discovered many works missing, often between one to four discs. He nevertheless soon prepared 350 boxes for distribution, and continued the task. The work of ENSA had mushroomed; ENSA in Glasgow was now spending £3000 per annum in concert artists' fees, apart from billeting and transport,

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<sup>461</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 5 September, 1943.

<sup>462</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 5 September, 1943. Coward had proposed WGW for the position of conductor of the CU, in 1919.

<sup>463</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 23 October, 1943.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.

with more demands than the allowance would permit. WGW felt angry that Scotland was not resourced at all like the Commands south of the border. A scheme for 160 concerts with good orchestras, costing £40,000 in England run by ENSA, was offering 'one or two' to Scotland.

On 4 November 1943, perhaps suspecting that his health was showing no real signs of recovery, WGW made a new will, leaving his piano, books and shelving and any furnishings desired, to Clarrie, and music, music books and shelving, and pictures on musical subjects to Mary. £50 was bequeathed to the Sol-fa College (WGW had been a Vice-President with Robertson in 1934/5, with Henry Coward as President) and instructions given to purchase a copy of the Epstein bronze which was to be offered to King's College, with the request that it be placed in the Music lecture room.

WGW was at least sometimes finding pleasure in the many trips he had to make for ENSA, and for various reasons he kept coming across news and people from his former life. A November trip to Oban to lecture to the RAF was made delightful by a wonderful view over the bay from WGW's room in the officers' quarters. On his return, WGW was pleased to be invited to be external examiner for two Durham University degree theses, and the following month, met an old friend, Harriet Cohen, in Scotland to play at a Jewish Charities Concert (which WGW did not attend). He went to see her in the artists' room, for the sake of their old friendship: 'I was almost afraid to on account of tales, only true, that are going round. But she was all right, & delightful as ever' and asked fondly after Clarrie.<sup>465</sup> Lecturing on the Isle of Arran shortly afterwards to a group of WRNS (enjoying their company, but no longer the tea-party that followed), WGW was pleased to meet the daughter of Dr. W. H. Harris, at whose home WGW had once lunched, when he was at Christchurch, Oxford, WGW adding in his letter to Clarrie: 'He is now at St. George's Windsor, living in the house where I used to stay with Walford Davies. It is a small world nowadays.'<sup>466</sup> WGW was saddened to hear, on his return to Glasgow, however, of the death of Arthur Catterall (an old guest at Granville Road, and 'an exceedingly nice chap. Modest and unassuming') and of Dr. Fricker (once a very close friend, with whom WGW had stayed in Toronto). WGW ended his letter on the subject to Clarrie: 'So they go and I am being

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<sup>465</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 12 December, 1943.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

left more & more alone.<sup>467</sup> However, after travelling for eight and a half hours to the Moray Firth to lecture, WGW met again the viola player Bernard Shore, who was staying at the same hotel.<sup>468</sup>

On Saturday 18 December 1943, WGW returned to the North East where he conducted an afternoon Christmas concert for TAMDA [Tyneside Association for Music Drama and the Arts] in St. Nicholas's Cathedral with organist Allan Simpson. He was touched to be invited and glad that 'in these troublous [sic] days, the old city hasn't quite forgotten me.'<sup>469</sup> The choirs contributed both individually and as massed choirs, and well-known community carols were sung with original modern carols by Michael Head, Alec Rowley, and Walford Davies. The choirs were thoroughly prepared and easy to work with and all went well: 'Afterwards-a swarm! Old students, members of the Bach Choir, one of the old teachers in Rutherford, & fellow professionals.'<sup>470</sup> Then WGW entertained Mrs Potts, and Miss Eckford to dinner at the Station Hotel (where he met Lamond dining with Edward Clark).

WGW volunteered to man the ENSA office for Christmas Day. But on 16 January 1944, WGW informed Clarrie that 'a breach with ENSA was nearing'.<sup>471</sup> The Head Accountant of ENSA had demanded the record numbers, and prices of all 3660 records in their collection, but WGW's office was over-burdened with work, and the information on prices was known only to Legge. WGW had explained this in three replies to Legge's demanding letters, but when a fourth arrived he did not respond. Legge had requested that invoices to be sent to head office on the day that consignments arrived, even though WGW was often out of the office. WGW felt he could do no more. At the end of February, WGW announced to Clarrie that he had made a decision: 'I have practically decided to quit ENSA at the end of July. I shall be 68 by then, and feel that it needs a younger man. It is pretty tiring. I am in need of a rest. Besides, there are all these private tasks awaiting. The thought of travelling & staying in cold camps throughout next winter is rather forbidding: & if I don't get into camps I'm not doing my job properly.'<sup>472</sup> WGW

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<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 5 December 1943.

<sup>469</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 17 October, 1943.

<sup>470</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 19 December, 1943.

<sup>471</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 16 January, 1944.

<sup>472</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 27 February, 1944.

thought he had done two years, four months, 'a fair spell'.<sup>473</sup> Although finance remained a difficulty, he felt that as the war was coming to an end, there would be a relaxation of paper restrictions, and royalties would begin slowly to increase. 'There is no getting past the fact that my powers are declining', he wrote to his daughter; 'I've got to face it & not run the risk of reducing the already diminishing number of years when I may do work useful to scholarship.'<sup>474</sup>

On 4 February 1944, WGW attended a meeting of Training College Lecturers at Fenham Convent, Newcastle, to prepare the examination papers for the early summer. Doris Nicholson, an ex-student of WGW, had been asked to take over at Sunderland Training College in 1941. She writes: 'Such wonderful news broke in 1943: Dr Whittaker was to be the external examiner in music for the five Training Colleges in the north-east of England where three of the Music Tutors were former protégés.'<sup>475</sup> Nicholson had not seen WGW since 1930, but he wrote to her from Glasgow the next day explaining his duties as a Music Adviser for ENSA. After visiting Stranraer for ENSA, 'a preliminary rehearsal of civilians & forces for...*The Messiah*', a most impossible & exhausting affair. I came back absolutely dead beat...'<sup>476</sup> The next day he began a seven-week lecture course on *The Modern Orchestra* at the Czechoslovak House, beginning with 'British Music'. Correspondence for ENSA was from Egypt, USA, Australia and Scotland causing him to claim that 'I sleep with my typewriter'.<sup>477</sup> But there was still plenty to interest WGW and he wrote to Clarrie: 'What a week it has been! Last Monday I had to take Louis Kentner (Menuhin's brother-in-law) out to a camp where he was giving a recital for us. It was very fine indeed, & the troops just loved it.'<sup>478</sup> Also, there was another Glasgow visit from the expressionist choreographer and dancer Kurt Joos, who developed the methods of Laban in contemporary dance technique: 'The Joos Ballet was here & I couldn't miss that. So I went the next three nights. I didn't see Joos this week, but we had a long talk over the phone.'<sup>479</sup>

A *Messiah* performance by combined civilians and forces, conducted by WGW at Stranraer in the Parish Church with a congregation of over a thousand, went down well, despite

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<sup>473</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 27 February, 1944.

<sup>474</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie., 4 March, 1944.

<sup>475</sup> Nicholson, D, 'W G Whittaker', typescript document, 2. *GB-Gsm*.

<sup>476</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 12 March, 1944.

<sup>477</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 19 March, 1944.

<sup>478</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 27 March, 1944.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid*.

'anxious moments', but left WGW hardly able to lift his arms above shoulder level. There was, however, no let-up in ENSA responsibilities. At the beginning of May, a further 500 records arrived, WGW desk being piled mountains high. A whole week was spent on cataloguing and stamping them as they had to be boxed, put in a programme, and card indexed: 'It probably will not be finished when I quit.'<sup>480</sup> WGW however worked determinedly to complete the huge task. A lecture tour in America had been promised for 'directly after the war', and he looked forward to a trip to 'Bawston'. WGW thoroughly enjoyed the first part of Beecham's autobiography *A Mingled Chime*, recently issued in Britain: 'I'm longing for the next volume to be out. He is very generous in his appreciation of two of my friends, Frederic Austin and Kennedy Scott. The work of the latter has never been fully acknowledged. The poor chap has been for some weeks in a sanatorium.'<sup>481</sup> Scott was now improving, and at home and had written several letters to WGW over the last fortnight.

On 14 May, WGW returned to Newcastle for the week's examining at Training Colleges, being informed that his appointment was for three years. First he attended a meeting at Newcastle to revise the syllabus, then visited Darlington, Durham, Sunderland, and North Tyne (Fenham Convent, evacuated for the war) Training Colleges to give aural examinations and listen to choral singing. He had reason to be pleased, writing to Clarrie, 'The three colleges which showed the best work were those where past Armstrong students of mine were teaching, which made me feel proud.'<sup>482</sup> At Sunderland, Doris Nicholson remembers that she and 'Whittie' sat apart, enjoying their special meal together (as she was diabetic too). In Newcastle, WGW again met old friends, Hilda Scott, Mrs Potts, and Annie Eckford, but another meeting put his mind at rest about a problem that had concerned him-what to do with his unfinished research work: 'Westrup has comforted my mind about the book on the early English Violin Sonata...I've accumulated some 300 printed copies, Photostats, MSS, & over one-third of these meant years of laborious combing from part-books.'<sup>483</sup> Although there was a lot of material still to collect, 'It would be a great pity were this collection scattered if I don't live to complete it.'<sup>484</sup> Even if he

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<sup>480</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 7 May, 1944.

<sup>481</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 14 May, 1944.

<sup>482</sup> Letter to Clarrie, 21 May 1944.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

were to survive, WGW was already finding his ability to make critical estimates of the sonatas impaired by the condition of his left hand: 'Westrup has agreed in the even of the second probability to collaborate with me. In the event of the first he will receive all the material & either do the book himself or get some younger critic to do it. So now I can go ahead without the fear of all the work being wasted.'<sup>485</sup>

On 11 June, WGW wrote that 'There have been tremendous rumpuses at Drury Lane recently.'<sup>486</sup> Basil Dean had told the Advisory Council that Legge was 'a very unpleasant personality & a bloody fool'.<sup>487</sup> The Council refused to get rid of Legge. Six MA's resigned immediately, including Boyd Neel and Herbert Lodge (the previous year Foss had left, and Arnold Goldsborough the year before). WGW sent his resignation on the 13 May (although his reasons were nothing to do with the fuss), however he told Legge that he would have had to resign in agreement with his colleagues if had not already decided to go. A year before WGW had suggested that all the MAs should resign together, now they were being driven to take that action, and seven MAs had given in their notice: 'WL hasn't lorded it over me as he has over the others; he knew that he dared not. But I'm not an MA at all; merely a clerk for carrying out his orders.'<sup>488</sup> WGW said he was never consulted on musical matters and claimed that Legge was 'an amateur, without any training'. WGW was now working until midnight each day. No acknowledgement of his letter arrived. On 25 June, WGW told Clarrie that he had been summoned for an interview 'with the Great Presence [Legge]'.<sup>489</sup> At the meeting, Legge read out a letter from Basil Deane, urging him to persuade WGW to stay on till the end of the year ('by which time the German War will be over').<sup>490</sup> Legge was shocked to discover that WGW had had no leave, apart from New Year's Day, since October (yet he had fixed duties). WGW was adamant that he could not stay and to do so would be folly.<sup>491</sup>

WGW was to have given from 1 August, three lectures, at a Summer School at Howell's School, Denbigh, run by The National Music Council of Wales, under its Director, Walford

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<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 11 June, 1944.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 17 June, 1944.

<sup>489</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 25 June, 1944.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.



Davies, with Reginald Jacques, Course Director, (Gordon Jacob had dedicated his *Denbigh Suite* to the school in 1928) and Miss Clemence Dane, novelist and artist, was to give the inaugural address, with Sir Percy Watkins the acting Chairman of the Council of Music. Hubert Davies would coach in chamber music each afternoon. WGW was to give lectures on Bach's orchestra, his church cantatas, and the larger choral works, and also on keyboard harmony and sight singing. Percy Gordon had translated Schubert's *Maid of the Mill* for the course, and would be there as an accompanist. Other lecturers were Dr Percy Young (Director of Music under the Stoke on Trent Education Authority) and Hubert Davies. Afterwards, from the 5 August, he had planned to stay with Clarrie (alone again now that Marcel was away) for the rest of the month 'If you'll have me', WGW suggested that they might even have a holiday together.<sup>492</sup> WGW wrote his last letter to Clarrie on 25 June, 1944.<sup>493</sup> He no longer wanted to go on holiday: 'I'll be quite content to be with you, & possibly, if I feel as I'm doing now, sleep all the time' He ended the note: 'The next letter will be some days late. Tonight I go to Edinburgh, tomorrow to the Orkneys where I shall be for a week. Owing to the censorship I should be able to say nothing but 'love & kisses', which wouldn't satisfy you. So I'll write on getting back.' He told Clarrie that he had been 'badly under the weather', having suffered more 'food poisoning, which is prevalent here' and was practically unable to eat.<sup>494</sup>

On Monday 26 June, WGW arrived in Orkney, to judge the Services Music Festival. The preliminary rounds, begun at Kirkwall on Wednesday and continued next day at Stromness, were almost over by Friday, when the *Orkney Blast* published a photograph of WGW and gave details on the fifty competition entries for the competition, with the news that he had now left for Hoy, to complete the first stages. H Croft Jackson, organist of St. Magnus's Cathedral, and Sgt. Gerald Dingley, AEC who did much of the organization, went with him. WGW had already given several lectures to various units on the 'big five' Russian composers, Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Moussorgsky, Borodin, and Cui, illustrated by Gramophone records. On Tuesday he had delivered 'a masterly talk' to Kirkwall Arts Club: 'It was realised that Dr. Whittaker was

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<sup>492</sup> Letter to Clarrie, 4 March 1944.

<sup>493</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 25 June, 1944.

<sup>494</sup> Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 25 June, 1944.

labouring under health difficulties then.<sup>495</sup> His arms and hands 'were out of action in a musical sense', and he had not played the piano for eleven months.<sup>496</sup> He was said to be suffering from food poisoning. Croft Jackson, his host and co-adjudicator in Kirkwall, had been 'deeply shocked at his physical appearance'.<sup>497</sup> WGW, Croft said, though obviously ill, had carried on 'for the love of his life's cause'.<sup>498</sup> After the finals on Sunday at Stromness, WGW intended to return home next day, but was too ill to travel.

On Thursday 6 July, Orkney police reported that WGW had died in his sleep at the Standing Stones Hotel, Stenness, in the early hours of the morning. An article, sub-titled 'Dr. Whittaker's devotion takes its toll', in the *Orkney Blast* expressed the shock that festival participants felt, at his death.<sup>499</sup> Croft Jackson, writing 'A Friend's Tribute' in the *Orkadian*, said he would always remember his 'active association' with WGW as co-adjudicator at the Stromness final of the Orkney Forces music festival 'his last stand in a long crusade for universal appreciation of music and its place in the life of a nation'.<sup>500</sup> The death certificate reveals that WGW was last seen at 9 pm on 5 July and had died of 'myocardial failure, gastric carcinoma and diabetes mellitus'. In 1978, WGW's daughter, Mary Pollitzer, with some poetic licence, gave her own romantically written account of her father's death: 'His end somehow typified his beginning...The 14 hours a day piano and organ practice of his early days became in 1944 the unceasing struggle with extreme fatigue and illness as head of the Scottish ENSA.'<sup>501</sup> Pollitzer recalled that her father had never tolerated illness:

Now, my father, on the account of witnesses, dying on his feet, was conducting the final concert of massed choirs and orchestras of the forces at a remote camp in Orkney. The following morning, no voice was heard in answer to the awakening knock. By some poetic stroke of fate, the man Epstein had named 'The Viking' had come to rest in the lands of his spiritual forbears.<sup>502</sup>

On Saturday 8 July, An announcement in *The Times* invited all friends to a memorial service in the Chapel of Glasgow University on Monday 10 July at 2. 30 pm. The service began with Bach's Prelude in E minor, and closed with Rheinberger's *Marcia Religiosa* from Sonata No.

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<sup>495</sup> The *Orkadian*, Thursday, 6 July, 1944, (cuttings obtained by Mary Pollitzer).

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

<sup>499</sup> The *Orkney Blast*, undated cutting of July, 1944.

<sup>500</sup> The *Orkadian*, Thursday, 6 July, 1944.

<sup>501</sup> The *Evening Chronicle*, Tuesday, November 23, 1978. Sent by Mary Pollitzer to writer.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

6.<sup>503</sup> The *Glasgow Herald* obituary recalled WGW's 'marvellously busy life'.<sup>504</sup> Later his ex-student, George McVicar singled out from his many activities, his achievement in performing all of Bach Church Cantatas, being a student choir member when the cycle was completed with *Cantata No 131, Auf der Tefe*, and also WGW's two-volume work on the subject of the cantatas (edited posthumously by Harold Thomson).<sup>505</sup> But McVicar described WGW as being 'first and foremost an educator' and counted WGW's most important work as the setting up of the Diploma in Musical Education at the SNAM where WGW, the strictest of disciplinarians and an uncompromising idealist, set similar ideals for his students:

Thus the majority of the students of his day were future school music teachers who, in turn, sent to the Academy a generation of students endowed with a richer background of knowledge and experience than they themselves could have claimed. The teachers came first and there is good reason to believe that the later flowering of performers was the result.<sup>506</sup>

McVicar writes that WGW was 'deeply interested in us all' and further comments that during the war WGW's interest extended to corresponding with his students who were in the forces: 'My own last letter from him was written on the journey to Orkney where he died in 1944.'<sup>507</sup> Philip Cox, another Academy ex-student, wrote to the *Glasgow Herald* from Gloucestershire on hearing of WGW's death: 'Let us acknowledge...that we are now enjoying the fruits of the patient and untiring struggle which he waged in the face of difficulties, discouragement, and, occasionally, opposition. We must all regret he has had so little time in which to enjoy the pleasures of retirement.'<sup>508</sup> Doris Nicholson, WGW's old AC student and lecturer in music at Sunderland Training College, had heard from WGW immediately after his trip to Newcastle, a second letter arriving from the Orkneys: 'Shortly afterwards, the sad news of his death followed - A truly great musician and a giant among men'.<sup>509</sup>

Chalmers Burns wrote an appreciation at his death which reinforced this summing up: 'By the death of Dr. Whittaker, while actively engaged in furthering the cause of music among the members of His Majesty's forces, the world of music has lost one of its most gallant champions,

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<sup>503</sup> 'The Lord is my Shepherd' was also sung, and the hymn 'O God our help in ages past'.

<sup>504</sup> The *Glasgow Herald*, 6 July, 1944.

<sup>505</sup> McVicar, G C, 'Dr W Gillies Whittaker', *SNAMD Newsletter*, No 15, 1999, 21.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>508</sup> The *Glasgow Herald*, 12 July, 1944.

<sup>509</sup> Nicholson, D, *W. G. Whittaker*, typescript document, 3. *GB-Gsm*.

and most faithful servants'.<sup>510</sup> Burns recalled WGW's achievements as a teacher, and as a man (to whom numberless students and colleagues would turn in recollection and deep affection), 'Nothing was too much trouble and nothing was ever forgotten by him. He had a genius for understanding, and many have gone away from him greatly strengthened'<sup>511</sup>. After his retirement from teaching his students, WGW's 'company, his library, and his musical instruments were always at their service'.<sup>512</sup> Burns thought that WGW never actually retired, but carried on his musical life. When he could no longer play, through ill-health, he had devoted himself to research and lecturing, 'in which latter activity many groups of students and isolated outposts of serving men and women will remember him with pleasure'.<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>510</sup> Chalmers Burns, W, 'Appreciation of W. G. Whittaker', by C B. *GB-Guth*.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*

