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

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

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Department of Music

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CHAPTER THREE

The Newcastle Bach Choir: 'That great man W. G. Whittaker'

'Be sensitive, very sensitive, to the temper of your singers, feel their pulse continually, achieve your results through them, by understanding them.'

'If any member proves impervious to general remarks...arrange for a word or two in private, or even a short rehearsal on his own. Get him to look upon it in the light of a gratuitous lesson given out of a spirit of friendship'¹

3.1 BACKGROUND

In 1943 Jack Westrup, WGW's successor at AC, wrote a survey, 'a concise account of all that the term "British Music" implies'.² When discussing the Bach revival in England, he added WGW's contribution to that of Goldschmidt, Barnby, and later, Sir Hugh Allen and Sir Henry Wood.³ Of the three small choirs, formed with the object of performing Bach's music with the proper resources, the Newcastle Bach Choir and the Glasgow Cantata Choir were both WGW's. The last, (founded by Hubert Foss, Stanley Roper and Charles Kennedy Scott), was directly inspired by the Newcastle BC's visit to London in November 1924.⁴

WGW first earned a lasting reputation for his superb training of the choir he founded, the Newcastle Bach Choir. The creation of this excellent instrument enabled WGW to embark on performing about seventy of Bach's cantatas (going on, after a very short break, to repeat this in Glasgow where, with his excellent SNAM Bach Cantata Choir, he became the first English conductor to perform all Bach's church cantatas). Though the fame of the Newcastle BC receded after his departure for Scotland in 1929, WGW left a viable legacy and the Bach Choir still thrives, its five subsequent conductors being Sidney Newman, Jack Westrup, William Chalmers Burns, Percy Lovell, and Eric Cross. The replica of Epstein's Bronze of WGW, bequeathed by him for the Music Lecture Room, now resides in the Senior Lecturer's room, adjacent to the huge scrapbooks assembled by WGW, recording the rise to eminence of the latter's BC. The late Percy Lovell, who lectured in the department between 1966 and 1984, described WGW as 'that

¹ Whittaker, W G, *Hints to Choral Conductors* (London: The British Federation of Musical Competition Festivals, undated [undated, between 1925 and 1929]). *GB-Gsm*.

² Westrup, J. A., *British Music*, from the series: *British Life and Thought*, No.18 (London, 1943), 22.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ *Newcastle Journal*, 8 November 1926, *GB-NEmd*.

great man W G Whittaker', and listed the latter's Newcastle achievements in a lecture to NLPS in 1993:

'Bach and British'. This was Whittaker's motto for the Bach Choir. He certainly was a key figure in the Bach revival-which had been gaining momentum all through the 19th Century .The Cantatas were still mostly unknown and unsung in this country 75 years ago.... Whittaker led a personal crusade by performing many of these works in Newcastle, editing and publishing others and making many lovely movements available for schools and amateurs.⁵

The late Lambert Large, who eventually became a member of WGW's BC, attended BC concerts from boyhood and was also able to describe WGW rehearsing his choir, being occasionally taken along to practices at 'the girls' school' (the CNHS, at Eskdale Terrace) by his father, who joined the choir in 1919.⁶ Large vividly remembered wanting to fidget, but being unable to do so because of the effect of WGW's 'dynamic' personality and his stature: 'such a big man physically and so passionate about the music. No-one could ignore him at all. In a company of musicians he really dominated. I was very conscious that he was a perfectionist, an absolute perfectionist. He would spend about half an hour on a couple of bars... *he just loved music* [my italics].⁷

In his 'Hints to Choral Conductors', a pamphlet written for the British Federation of Music Societies, WGW explains how he achieved his high standards (including recommendations on technical points), advising that a conductor must be 'as subtle as a serpent' in dealing with the faults of a choir, and also acutely sensitive to his choir members: 'Be *one* of the choir' he suggests, always giving instructions in the first person plural, as in '*We* will probably find this difficult'. WGW advocates giving a 'fair mixture of praise and blame...Do not say all you think-that is not always wise, but say what is best for the purpose in hand'. If a choir wearied of a piece 'change it' was WGW's advice, and if attendance were small 'do not be grumpy, but give your choir the best time possible. They are the faithful few who should not be saddled with the delinquencies of absentees'. Fault-finding should never be personal, standards varying according to the abilities of a specific choir. WGW thought rehearsal order should change, not only to avoid monotony but for inveterate early or late-comers 'it is necessary to catch these birds'. But though asserting that choral conducting was one of the few most 'important forms of social service', WGW advised

⁵ Lovell, P, *Musicians Associated with the Lit. & Phil. Society, Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, Lecture given to the Literary & Philosophical Association, Newcastle upon Tyne, 19 May, 1993. Copy of personal notes for Lecture, Section on Whittaker, 20.

⁶ Tape-recorded interview between the writer and the late Lambert Large, Newcastle, June 1998.

⁷ Large also mentioned that WGW's wife, Clara, in contrast, 'disappeared into the background'.

that a conductor 'should not take himself too seriously...Humour in viewing oneself is a saving grace'. Neither should he be hard on his tenors: 'There is a sporting joy to be found in moulding the tone of tenors from metallic hardness to silky glossiness...By your tenors shall your good deeds be known.' WGW ends: 'Finally, put music first, your choir second, competition results and yourself a lowly third.'⁸ The devotion of all WGW's choir members bears testimony to the way in which he carried out his own resolutions.

A love of Bach first struck WGW as he 'indulged in tea-time duets' with his piano teacher John Nicholson (ex-organist of Hexham Abbey), during the playing of an arrangement of Bach's Organ Fugue in G major.⁹ WGW writes: 'This began one of the ruling passions of my life, the worship of Bach.'¹⁰ WGW's next teacher, William Rea, a brilliant organist, included Bach's *Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues* and the *Chromatic Fantasia* in the large repertoire of pieces studied by WGW, but these did not ignite the passion for Bach that was to develop later (though Rea had strong Bach credentials, being a pupil of Josiah Pittman, the Bach enthusiast, and also a protégé of Sterndale Bennett who conducted the Bach Society performance of *The Matthew Passion* in 1854, and took Rea, then a boy, to play before Mendelssohn). However, Rea was able to transmit by example to his pupil a useful template for the life of a model local conductor and musical enthusiast, being the conductor of 'Dr Rea's Choir' and the 'Amateur Vocal Society', organiser of Town Hall concerts, the possessor of an extensive teaching practice and composer, on occasion, of several anthems for his choirs. Rea exhibited a passion for contemporary composition, even in his seventies regularly visiting London for lessons in new music (new music being always a major part of WGW's work with his BC, and distinguished guests from London adding an exciting element to his concerts). Well-known on the continent, Rea was an ardent disciple of Wagner and, in his youth, introduced Schumann's piano music into Britain. Through Rea, WGW also developed a passion for scores and books on music, as he enjoyed the benefit of Rea's immense library which was at his disposal while waiting for his perennially tardy teacher to arrive (a situation exacerbated by WGW's deliberately arriving earlier than necessary, in order to spend more time among the music). Despite profiting in this way from Rea's bad time-keeping, WGW

⁸ Whittaker, W G, 'Hints to Choral Conductors' (The British Federation of Musical Competition Festivals: London, undated, between 1920 and 1929), 1- 6.

⁹ Whittaker, W G, *Collected Essays* (London: OUP, 1940), 117.

¹⁰ Aut I, 17.

did not adopt Rea's habit, demonstrating instead an 'obsession for punctuality (which he always later demanded from his students) and organisation, which was essential for proper direction of the BC.

WGW's reasons for founding the Newcastle BC are detailed in his essay *A Pilgrimage through the Church Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, which describes 'the story of a journey which few men have been privileged to undertake', and aims 'to set some eager minds on a similar adventure.'¹¹ WGW's 'ploughing through' the organ works of Bach as a youth, stimulated a study of the choral works, and soon WGW conducted Cantata No. 106, 'God's time is the Best', with his choir at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, South Shields. Afterwards 'the vocal music of Bach first began to fascinate' and WGW resolved to perform as many Bach cantatas as possible, a frustrating aim due to the shortage of editions with English words. Without having seen the full scores, or having heard any cantatas, WGW did not know Bach's 'schemes of orchestration and subtleties of orchestral colour'. He could only afford to buy a few second-hand scores, without original German texts, and had to use copies where 'passage after passage was incomprehensible', translated with 'strangely little respect for its composer's intentions'.¹² WGW gave an account of his endeavours in *Fugitive Notes on Some Cantatas and the Motets of J. S. Bach*, published by OUP in 1925, a book acknowledged by Holst as 'your very best or anyway one of them'.¹³

The fruit of WGW's work with the Newcastle BC (and also his Cantata Choir at Glasgow) was another book, completed by WGW in 1941, after performing all Bach's cantatas, his two-volume *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach Sacred & Secular* which was prevented from publication by the war. After WGW's death and following re-editing by WGW's friend Harold Thomson, the book achieved publication by OUP with the financial help of WGW's family, in 1959.¹⁴ The volumes are still admired by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, great nephew of WGW's friend H. Balfour Gardiner, who describes himself as 'a fan' and can virtually be regarded as WGW's heir in the carrying on of his tradition of authentic performance. Gardiner's 'year long musical pilgrimage' celebrated the new Millennium by performing all the cantatas on the liturgical feasts

¹¹ Whittaker, 1940, 117. WGW's achievement in being the first musician and 'great Bach scholar' to perform all of Bach's church cantatas is acknowledged in Nicholas Anderson's article: 'Performing Style in Bach Cantatas 1' (of 2), *Early Music*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (January 1978), 89-93.

¹² Whittaker, W.G., *Fugitive notes on Certain Cantatas and the Motets of J. S. Bach*, (OUP: London, 1924), 1.

¹³ Holst, 1974, No.149, 9 February, 1925, 88.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

for which they were composed, a feat of which WGW could only have dreamed. While Gardiner admits that 'there are errors aplenty' in WGW's book on the cantatas, he feels that most are linked 'through no fault of his own' to mistakes in the dating and chronology of the cantatas' composition which abounded in information about Bach at the time.¹⁵ Gardiner disagrees with criticism from some quarters that WGW's 'style of metaphor-rich analysis is no longer applicable or valid', believing that 'The salient point is that his writing reveals his intimate knowledge of the cantatas, from the inside as it were, as a result of thinking about them, rehearsing them and performing them.' The series of recordings, which form a corollary of Gardiner's concerts, are accompanied by detailed notes by the conductor who uses an approach comparable with WGW's, deliberately drawing on the latter's methods used in the *Cantatas*. Gardiner writes:

His passion for the music-as well as his very legitimate reservations about the quality and content of some of Bach's librettos-comes through very clearly. In fact it has served as a kind of template for my own writing, once I've plucked up the courage to try to convey on paper to non-specialists what it is about the cantatas that makes them so eternally fascinating and attractive.¹⁶

In the *Apologia* to his volumes, WGW explains that he has quoted all the original texts because, 'without the words one cannot possibly grasp the meaning of the music, or understand Bach's methods'.¹⁷ His view is corroborated in Richard Jones translation for OUP in 2005 of Alfred Dürr's *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach* (published in Germany in 1971) as he also includes the librettos in German-English parallel text: 'The translator's aim has been to adhere as closely to the original German as is compatible with clear, readably modern English.'¹⁸ Even after such a passage of time, Jones found there was no easy solution to the problems encountered by WGW: 'Each line of English corresponds as far as possible with the German line next to it. As a result, the English word order is not always the most natural one, but it is hoped that gross distortions have been avoided.'¹⁹ WGW thought that knowledge of the texts was necessary to reflect 'the religious outlook of the people of Bach's time, reveal his beliefs and faith, and help us to reconstruct his mental and spiritual life'.²⁰ But he was also touched by Bach's personal 'strength and firm belief', and thought his portrait of Jesus to be 'the most beautiful figure in the whole range of music' as

¹⁵ Sir John Eliot Gardiner, letter to the writer, 29 January, 2007.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Whittaker, W G, *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach Sacred & Secular*, Vol. I (of two), (OUP: London, 1959), vii.

¹⁸ Dürr, A., *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, (OUP: London, 2005), Preface, vii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, vii.

the composer 'lived through' the various phases of the Church year 'as personal experiences'.²¹ In Gardiner's *pilgrimage* of 2000, all WGW's aims seem to have been fulfilled, WGW's own yearly pilgrimages with his wife to the churches and places associated with 'the Master', having begun before 1914. The recordings themselves are a tribute, not only to Gardiner and those involved, but to the authenticity movement.

The model for WGW's Newcastle BC was the Oxford Bach Choir conducted by Hugh Allen. Crotch back in 1819 had begun a tradition in Oxford for Bach performances, Stainer continuing this by founding the Oxford Philharmonic Society in 1865, a body which amalgamated in 1896 with the Oxford Bach Choir, founded that year by Basil Harwood and Hadow. Before coming up to Oxford, Allen (then assistant organist to Dr. Read of Chichester) had conducted Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and the *St. Matthew Passion*.²² When he became organ scholar at Christ's Church, Cambridge in 1892, he met Vaughan Williams, E J Dent, and Sedley Taylor, a physicist, the 'presiding genius of Cambridge music', and treasurer of CUMS who became his benefactor. (Taylor was also known at the time to WGW, then a young organist at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, South Shields, who corresponded with Taylor about a cantata he hope to perform at his church.) WGW, with J B Clark used to attend festival performances throughout the country, finding these early Bach performances disappointing, afterwards writing that he left the 'much-talked-of presentations of the John Passion at St. Anne's, Soho' feeling 'puzzled & depressed'.²³ Allen, of the same opinion, took a new look at the reason for problems of balance in performances, and aimed at a more appropriate style of performance, no doubt put into practice at his other position as organist at St. Asaph's Cathedral, when he gave the *Matthew Passion* (Novello's edition) in Holy Week.²⁴ In 1898 Allen moved to Ely, and then New College, Oxford, in 1902, founding The Oxford Orchestral Society and also taking over from Harwood as conductor of the Oxford Choral and Philharmonic Society, fusing the two for a *St. Matthew Passion* performance that year, and again in 1903 for a first Oxford performance of the *Mass in B Minor*. A review in the *Vocalist* concerning the second concert, observed 'a perception of *right proportion and balance* in music on the part of the conductor', a view soon to be espoused by

²¹ Whittaker, 1925, 30.

²² Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 11.

²³ Aut VI, 17.

²⁴ Bailey, C., *Hugh Percy Allen*, (OUP: London, 1948), 26.

WGW.²⁵ In the 1905/6 season, Allen combined the choir and orchestras as The Oxford Bach Choir and Choral Society which became the Oxford Bach Choir, which, from 1915, rehearsed in the Sheldonian theatre, 'Dr Allen's Orchestra' accompanying performances. Allen also performed works by his favourite composers, Parry and Vaughan Williams, endeavouring to cultivate a love for modern English music among the uninitiated. It was probably no co-incidence (despite WGW's protestations that other influences inspired him) that WGW's Newcastle BC was also founded in 1915. Allen's appointment in 1918, first as Director of the RCM and also as Chairman of the British Music Society, an organisation which WGW joined immediately with great enthusiasm (he was local chairman and organiser), would have elevated Allen's reputation still further in WGW's estimation, a veneration he publicly acknowledged in 1925 when he dedicated his *Psalm CXXXIX* to the Oxford Professor.

3.2 'BACH AND BRITISH' IN NEWCASTLE

Although WGW had few of Allen's advantages in developing an appreciation of Bach's choral music in Newcastle, while unable to afford Spitta's biography of Bach, he 'badgered a committee man of a local literary society'[probably J. B. Clark] to have the three volumes added to NLPS shelves.²⁶ Already he had found Prout's Augener Edition of eighty arias 'a revelation and a gold mine'.²⁷ At St. Paul's WGW performed only cantata choruses (with permission from the previously mentioned Sedley Taylor, editor of the Novello editions, to copy the parts) and cantata 106, *God's Time is the Best*. WGW first saw the *Bach-Gesellschaft* in 1906 (probably when Newcastle Cathedral organist, John E. Jeffries, lectured on 'Bach, with vocal and instrumental illustrations' to NLPS), borrowing a copy from William Ellis, sub-organist at Durham Cathedral. It was not until March 1924 that WGW received some volumes as a presentation from AC, immediately arranging for the rest to be delivered 'on the easy payment system'.²⁸ Kern Holoman, in Grove's *Performance Practice* (1989) writes that 'One of the remarkable accomplishments of 19th-century thought was to bring an approximation to the sounds of 'early music' before a large public'. The

²⁵ Ibid., 42.

²⁶ Whittaker, W. G., OUP, 1940, 118.

²⁷ Ibid. Prout had lectured in 1902 to NLPS on 'Bach's well-tempered clavier', and WGW thought his 'scholarship was profound.'

²⁸ Whittaker, 1940, 120.

Bach-Gesellschaft of 1850 was an indication of the determination amongst musicians to 'collect the monuments of a nation's music', a beginning that swiftly gathered ground with the publication of collections of the works of Handel, Mozart and Beethoven.²⁹ After the production of the *Bach-Gesellschaft*, Spitta continued his researches towards the notion of a definitive Bach biography, his book being translated and published in English in 1885.³⁰ Although WGW soon began to question the authenticity of some of the sources of the *Gesellschaft*, his access to these historical perspectives encouraged him to pursue his life-long journey towards what is now termed 'authenticity' in performance.³¹ An opportunity of involvement in a large-scale Bach performance presented itself to WGW in 1906, when Dr. Henry Coward succeeded James Preston (who performed no large Bach choral works with the choir) as conductor of the CU and immediately proposed giving the B Minor Mass in 1907. WGW writes: 'So formidable was the undertaking considered, that preparatory summer rehearsals were arranged, and, during the winter, extra rehearsals in private houses'.³² As Coward was extremely busy with his many choral commitments, and lived in Sheffield, WGW, accepted an invitation from J B Clark, the secretary, to take summer practices for choir members in a hall near his home.³³ Soon, WGW was practically training the whole choir and was allowed to advertise his sight-singing classes in the CU's concert programmes.

By now the choral music of Bach was almost overtaking that of Handel with the bigger choral societies. At his Leith Hill Festival in 1908 (its fourth year), Vaughan Williams, just back from winter in Paris, was rehearsing *Sleepers Wake* 'the first of a long series of Bach Cantatas'.³⁴ On 17 March 1908, WGW conducted his own choir, the ACCS in Bach's cantata No 21, *My Spirit was in heaviness*, which, being 'particularly big and powerful', suited a largish choir.³⁵ When Ernest J Potts sang at this concert as a soloist (for the first time for WGW) in Stanford's *Songs of*

²⁹ Kern Holoman, D, *The New Grove Handbooks in Music: Performance Practice*, ed Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1989), Chapter XVI, Introduction, 323.

³⁰ Spitta, P, *Johann Sebastian Bach: his work and influence on the music of Germany 1685-1750*, (in 3 vols) translated by Clara Bell and J A Fuller-Maitland. (London: Novello, 1885).

³¹ In the introduction to his edition of the motet 'Jesu, Joy and Treasure', published in 1925, WGW comments 'The *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition was based upon an early 19th century printed copy, which may or may not have been set up from the composer's MS., which has now disappeared.' See J S Bach's Motet, *Jesu, Joy and Treasure* ed. W G Whittaker (London: OUP, 1925), iii.

³² Aut VI, 18.

³³ Whittaker, 1940, 120.

³⁴ Vaughan Williams, U., *A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (OUP: Oxford, 1988), 82.

³⁵ Whittaker, W G, *Cantatas*, Vol. I, 110.

the Sea, a life-time association between the musicians began, and Potts became an invaluable soloist in WGW's Bach cantata performances.³⁶ WGW thought that a CU performance of Bach's Cantata No 190, *Sing Ye to the Lord* in 1909 (part of the Newcastle Festival of that year) was an unsuitable choice for such a large choir. He also felt dissatisfied by a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* at the Leeds Festival: 'It was not until long afterwards that I understood, by virtue of my own experiments, that the transference from the composer's handful of performers to the enormous masses of such performances, threw many things completely out of gear & disturbed the unified perfection of the original.'³⁷ Nevertheless, on 22 March 1911, he participated at the keyboard in Sir Hubert Parry's performance with the CU of Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, the choir's second performance.

But soon WGW heard of Bach activities in Oxford at close hand, when Hadow, a founder member of the Oxford Bach Choir, was appointed Principal of AC in 1909, one of his early visitors being Fuller Maitland, an avid Bach enthusiast and translator of Spitta's Bach biography. Maitland had formed a Sunday afternoon private Bach Cantata group for 'good readers', singing 'as many of Bach's church cantatas as were then to be had in a cheap edition'.³⁸ If not previously, WGW would have heard of Maitland's cantata group, when the latter lectured to NLPS in 1914 on 'The Harpsichord Sonatas of Bach'. In Newcastle, during the 1910/11 season, Bainton, also followed the trend, conducting Bach's *Magnificat* with his Harmonic Society, with WGW as tenor soloist. When Guéritte introduced WGW to the committee of the 'Classical Concerts Society', Bach also appeared on that society's programmes, with a performance of the *Coffee Cantata*, accompanied by Preston, on 6 June 1909, and of a Busoni arrangement of Bach's Prelude and Fugue in D major played by Percy Grainger, on 8 December 1913. In his teaching capacity at CNHS, WGW also held a 'Composer's Afternoon' devoted to Bach and modern British composers in 1913, also organising an Easter Bach programme 'of quite Brobdingnagian proportions', and conducting the senior girls in the aria 'My Heart ever Faithful' at the December

³⁶ Ernest J Potts, a gifted singer, the son of a draper, was an insurance cashier in his late twenties.

³⁷ *Aut*, VI, 7.

³⁸ Fuller-Maitland, J. A., *Door-keeper of Music*, (John Murray: London, 1929), 105.

Speech Day. WGW frequently replaced a hymn with music by Bach, in assembly at Rutherford College Girls' School.³⁹

WGW read voraciously the plethora of books on Bach which were being published at the time, such as Parry's *Johann Sebastian Bach* in 1909 and Spitta's detailed three-volume biography which WGW condemned as 'a turgid, uncouthly written, indifferently indexed, and poorly translated book, but a magnificent example of patient accurate research and of exhaustive compilation.'⁴⁰ Of largest significance to WGW was Schweitzer's two-volume *J. S. Bach* translated into English by Ernest Newman, re-edited by the author, a preface written by Widor in 1907, and published by Breitkopf and Hartel in London in 1911. WGW claims that after engrossing himself in the book, while holidaying at Easter on a farm, he became inspired to form his own group to sing Bach.⁴¹ Having until that time been left 'puzzled and depressed' by Bach performances (such as a 'much publicized' performance of the *St. John Passion* at St. Anne's Soho which made him feel 'that it was not the Bach I had pictured to myself'), there now came a revelation: 'One passage fired me - where he said that the best way to get to know the church cantatas was to gather some people together & to sing them in one's home.'⁴² Then and there, WGW sent postcards to a few Rutherford people, other pupils, and friends, 'suggesting meetings in my studio one evening a week during the summer term'.⁴³ As all invited were excellent readers '...we simply took all those published in English in their numerical order. Interesting from the point of view of performance practice, WGW instructed everyone to sing the solos, singers dropping out when a part was out of their range.'⁴⁴ Although at first the reason for this was that WGW did not have available enough soloists, a secondary motive was probably that he wanted to offer a version of Bach to his singers which could be shared by everyone, fulfilling musically WGW's socialistic principles. Although at this time there was no audience for the sessions, WGW continued later with the practice, from time to time, in performances, rejoicing in 'sharing' an aria on one occasion, even

³⁹ Board of Education, Whitehall London. Report of Inspection of RCGS Newcastle, Northumberland, 3, 4, 5 and 6 November 1914.

⁴⁰ Whittaker, 1924, 8. Although he was not interested in languages at school, WGW subsequently studied French and German at the Peugniez School of Languages, 16 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle.

⁴¹ WGW's autobiography also explains that he read other important Bach texts by Forkel, C. S. Terry and Rutland Boughton: Aut VI, 16.

⁴² Aut VI, 16.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Aut VI, 17.

when the choir were performing in London (described later in the chapter). Edgar Crowe, writing in 1922, recalls these sessions:

With a full muster of two to a part, as a beginning, [we] struggled along zealously, if not always accurately, while if your co-partner...happened to be absent, a little practice in solo singing was yours - much to your satisfaction, of course! I have known members conceal their real feeling so well, however, that a directly opposite impression might have been obtained by the casual observer.⁴⁵

The accompaniment too was improvisatory, two pianists, and occasionally a string player, accompanied the sessions, which continued until the First World War:

Dr. Whittaker 'orchestrated' at the piano...and sang, impartially, tenor, bass, and fragments of the other parts, when occasion called for such assistance, besides doing a little conducting in his spare moments. Then, as now, he always worked twice as hard as those under his direction. It was arduous but exhilarating work, and it was due to this thorough grounding that we finally acquired some knowledge of the Bach idiom and a true appreciation of his greatness as a composer.⁴⁶

WGW's cantata group was following the custom adopted by Allen and Maitland, and was also influenced by his friendship with another Bach devotee, Walford Davies, organist of the Temple Church from 1898, who had for some time given seasonal afternoon performances of the *St. Matthew Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio*.⁴⁷ When Davies took over from Parratt at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, he had become increasingly 'cantata-minded', causing trouble with the reader for 'squeezing' the sermon.⁴⁸ However, after succeeding Stanford as conductor of the London Bach Choir in 1903, the third Sunday in the month at the Temple Church became recognised as 'Cantata Sunday', Evensong being shortened. After performing the B Minor Mass in 1906 at the Queen's Hall, and again in 1907, Davies resigned from the Bach Choir in favour of Allen. A new lecturing career brought him to Newcastle, where he spoke twice at NLPS in 1913, conducted his *The Song of St. Francis* with the CU on 26 November and became a firm friend of WGW, the official rehearsal conductor.

In 1914, Bainton tried to persuade WGW to give public performances with his cantata group, saying it was selfish to keep the sessions private. Almost immediately, war broke out, Bainton being interned for its duration, and many music societies closed. Now, 'owing to the scarcity of music in the city', WGW relented and formed the Newcastle Bach Choir [BC], though

⁴⁵ *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, February 10, 1922, GB-NEmd.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Colles, H C, *Walford Davies*, (OUP: London, 1942), 47.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 55.

he felt that he had everything to learn.⁴⁹ His colleague, Alfred Wall, doubted that WGW would find the necessary soloists to sing Bach, WGW replying: that he would 'grow them'. Having ascertained that Potts was still available, as were good local soprano and contralto soloists, the question of a good tenor singer was the only stumbling block, the matter being solved when a Northumbrian organist, and ex-pitman, John Vine, wrote to WGW, 'asking for an interview to discuss lessons'.⁵⁰ The newcomer was 'a superb pianist, and strong sight-reader', and his personality 'fairly bubbled over with enthusiasm', but, most importantly, Vine was the possessor of a splendid voice, WGW writing: 'Thus John Vine made the Newcastle Bach Choir possible.'⁵¹ Through the teaching practices of Potts and George Dodds, 'who turned out singer after singer capable of doing justice to Bach', more soloists joined the choir's ranks.⁵²

It is evident that from the outset WGW was seeking to recreate to some extent the sort of performance over which Bach would have presided, for he restricted the size of the group to 24 singers to maintain a perfect balance between singers and orchestra and always remembered his disappointment at a Leeds Festival performance of the *Matthew Passion*, when, during the chorus 'O man, bewail thy grievous sin', '...the steam-roller of a choir completely obliterated the lovely flute and oboe passages, although there were eight of each instrument.'⁵³ WGW allotted an equal number of singers to each part, resisting complaints of lack of balance. However, the stress when influenza ravaged the ranks of his singers, and two or three singers dropped out of a line in an eight part motet, caused him to increase numbers to forty, and also to impose a high standard of sight-singing upon entrants. WGW accepted later applicants as reserves, which had 'a salutary effect upon 'slackers''.⁵⁴

WGW's views on dynamic markings in Bach were pronounced. Though scores contained few markings, WGW disagreed with Sullivan's editing in 1886 of the B minor Mass for the Leeds Festival (Novello Edition) which was very sparing with marks of expression. He filled choral parts with copious indications of general force and gradations, to be effected immediately 'so that the character of the music could be understood from the very start, using 'an army of

⁴⁹ *Aur VI*, 47.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

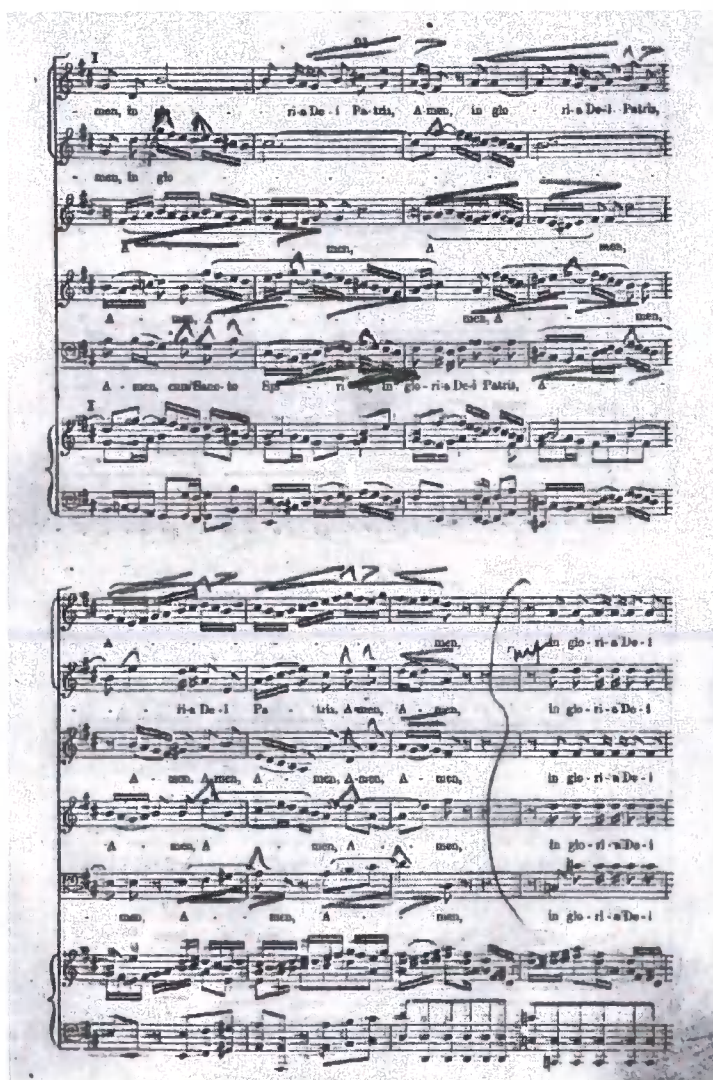
⁵¹ *Aur VI*, 46.

⁵² Whittaker, 1940, 121.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

copyists...volunteers from the choir'.⁵⁵ He also rehearsed and performed all duets and trios chorally, giving the reason that, as most soloists were unreliable at counting, one rehearsal on the day of the concert did not achieve a high standard of performance, choral rehearsals guaranteeing thorough preparation. Band parts were 'impossibly flawed' (German editors having altered bowing and tonguing, changed instrumentation, and cut out bass parts, apart from many publishing errors) so WGW compared every detail with the *Bach-Gesellschaft*, writing out band parts himself (though claiming to 'avoid modernistic tendencies' in his own editing, and studying F T Arnold's *Art of Accompaniment from a Thorough-Bass* as an aid to gauging how far he might go in the direction of dynamic changes).



Ex. 1: Page from the Gloria of Bach's Mass in B Minor, Sullivan's Novello edition, 1886 (with WGW's markings). From the Whittaker Collection, Glasgow University Library.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 124.

WGW's friendship with and consequently study of the work of Dolmetsch, also coloured the principles of his dynamic markings, which he felt could never be left to the ability of individual choristers to supply. It should be remembered that WGW attended two of the first lectures of Dolmetsch's career at the NLPS in 1898 (on 'Old Musical Instruments' and 'English music of the 16th and 17th Centuries') and from that time was aware of the developing methods of interpreting old music in an appropriate manner. It was from Dolmetsch that he had absorbed the idea of making 'frequent changes from *forte* to *piano*' and also 'perpetual changes of passion' in performance of early music.⁵⁶ It is of great significance that Dolmetsch's ground-breaking treatise *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* was published in 1915, at the very time WGW was launching his new choir.

WGW resigned from his Tynemouth choir to concentrate on the new venture, and with the help of Conservatoire secretary, Beatrice Turnbull, an information sheet was published in October 1915, with the heading 'Bach Performances', outlining the choir's aims and aspirations, and including an order form for tickets.⁵⁷ Three concerts would be given in November, February and March, to balance the 'preponderance of music-halls, picture-houses, and the lyric theatre' in Newcastle. It was hoped to compensate for the closure of musical societies due to the war, and to raise money for the Lord Mayor's War Fund, while giving Bach lovers the opportunity to hear his cantatas and some instrumental works. As far as an orchestra was concerned however, WGW's resources were limited. Only string accompaniments would be provided because of difficulties of pitch for wind players, and the expense involved in hiring wind players. Of course a piano rather than an organ would be used, although WGW would have known that in Dolmetsch's opinion: 'For accompaniments or concerted music the harpsichord cannot be replaced by the modern pianoforte. The tone of the latter does not easily blend with the voice, or with string or wind instruments.'⁵⁸ WGW wrote that 'everything had to be found out & many were the mistakes that were made' as he 'had never heard a cantata with orchestra'.⁵⁹ As hand-parts were often

⁵⁶ Dolmetsch, A, *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* ed. Ernest Newman (London: Novello and Company, 1915)25.

⁵⁷ A note in Whittaker's hand, on the edge of the copy held in the archive at Newcastle University Music Department, gives the date of the first rehearsal, to be held at the Conservatoire of Music, Jesmond Road, as Monday 4 October 1915.

⁵⁸ Dolmetsch, 432.

⁵⁹ Aut VI, 47.

unobtainable, WGW adopted the 'subtle device of allowing pupils the privilege of attending rehearsals on condition that they copied out what I could not manage myself'.⁶⁰ With no-one skilled in figured bass, everything had to be marked or written. CNHS Headmistress, Miss Hiley, gave permission for the 'intimate surroundings' of the school hall to be used, the concerts being arranged for afternoons, because of war time lighting restrictions. The *Yorkshire Post* published an announcement that all tickets for the series were sold. WGW's devoted wife Clara supported all his endeavours, despite the affliction of her increasingly severe deafness.⁶¹

At the first concert, on 27 November 1915, in the crowded small hall of the Central Newcastle High School for Girls, WGW conducted three church cantatas: No. 2, *Ah! God in mercy look from heaven*, Cantata No. 68 *God so loved the world* with an impressive fugal chorus, and Church Cantata No. 140 *Sleepers Wake* for chorus with a 'familiar chorale' at the end.⁶² WGW also set out to perform Bach's instrumental works in his programmes, on this occasion Wall playing Bach's Violin Concerto in E major, with 'executive skill and interpretative insight'.⁶³ Though the soloists, Mrs. George Dodds, Robina Burn, John Vine and Ernest Potts sang well, the *Northern Echo* detected that the audience, 'deeply imbued with the Handel tradition', had difficulty with their appreciation.⁶⁴ Thomas Armstrong, writing in the *Musical Times* in 1950, points out that Bach appreciation at this time was 'limited to a certain section of society and not widely representative in the way that Handel's public was', nonconformists appreciating the English words of Handel's popular oratorios which they found easier than Bach to perform passably 'wherever a body of singers and a building with an organ and organist could be provided'.⁶⁵ However Armstrong adds: 'I should put the date of Bach's first conquest of the English musical mind (apart from professionals) between 1900 and 1914'. On the 5 February 1916, a second concert took place, 'before a large and appreciative audience.'⁶⁶ when three more Cantatas were sung, No. 10, *Meine Seel' erhebt den Herrn*, No. 38, 'From depths of Woe I call on Thee', 'an impressive and effective work', and No. 104, 'Thou Guide of Israel', 'one of the truly

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Mary Pollitzer, personal communication, May, 1998.

⁶² Whittaker, *Cantatas*, i, 131.

⁶³ *Newcastle Journal*, 24 November, 1915, GB-NEmd.

⁶⁴ The *Northern Echo*, undated cutting in BC archive, GB-NEmd

⁶⁵ Armstrong, T, 'Bach and the English Choralist', *Musical Times*, Vol 91, no. 1289 (July 1950), 261-263.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

perfect cantatas, flawless in every detail', according to WGW.⁶⁷ Also performed was the eight part motet 'Come Jesu, come' and Bach's piano concerto in D Minor, played by Ethel Bainton.⁶⁸ The *Yorkshire Post* rated it 'one of the few positive results of the war', although 'Mr. Whittaker's little choir was timid', bravely returning when the choir split into solo choirs.⁶⁹ The *Musical Times* praised 'the full and resonant tone of the choir of 24 voices', and recorded that Ella Stelling, Robina Burn, Vine and Potts were soloists, and Eckford accompanist.⁷⁰ Thomas Henderson, writing in the *Musical News*, reported Ethel Bainton's 'finely finished performance' of the concerto, and found the singing, 'much more than effective; it was convincing...'⁷¹ The third concert on 25 March 1916 included Cantata No. 61 *Come Redeemer of our race* and *Christ lay in death's dark prison*. Potts sang the cantata for solo bass, No. 56, 'I will my Cross gladly carry' before the eight part motet, 'The Spirit also helpeth us'. Henderson of *The Yorkshire Post* wrote: 'something was lost in beauty of tone quality, but gained in intimacy of expression'.⁷² Annie Eckford, who also accompanied ACCS, had given 'a refined and sensitive performance of the Italian Concerto' and played the double Concerto in C minor, with Yeamon Dodds. The *Northern Echo* hoped that the concerts given 'in the nature of an experiment' would 'result in the foundation of a permanent Bach Choir...in Newcastle.'⁷³ WGW was delighted: 'The hall was packed, and appreciation was so great that we added an extra concert of British music.'⁷⁴

From this time WGW made a personal commitment to perform all 198 of Bach's Church Cantatas. He estimated that he performed about 70 in Newcastle (although an examination of the programmes and his lists indicates that he may have forgotten one or two, such as No 88, sung in 1926).⁷⁵ WGW rarely repeated a cantata in Newcastle (Nos. 4, 27, 53, 56, and 133 being exceptions), and some cantatas were performed elsewhere (No. 190 by ACCS, Nos. 19, 34, and 151 in London in 1922). His performances were backed up by painstaking research (including his visits to Eisenach, mentioned in Chapters I & II) during which he

⁶⁷ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 620, & Vol. II, 15.

⁶⁸ *The Newcastle Daily Journal*, 6 February, 1916. GB-NEmd.

⁶⁹ *The Yorkshire Post*, 6 February, 1916. GB-NEmd.

⁷⁰ *The Musical Times*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd

⁷¹ *The Musical News*, 7 Feb, 1916. GB-NEmd.

⁷² *The Yorkshire Post*, 25 March, 1916. GB-NEmd.

⁷³ *The Northern Echo*, undated cutting, November 1915. GB-NEmd.

⁷⁴ Aut VI, 46.

⁷⁵ Fifteen cantatas are unaccounted for, as far as WGW's lists (drawn up when he wrote his *Autobiography*) are concerned.

explored Bach's residences, his manuscripts and the history of the extended family of Bach)⁷⁶, and his intimate knowledge of the works is reflected in his erudite writings on the subject. WGW guaranteed success with his choir by auditioning strictly: 'I increased numbers somewhat, making sure that no-one was admitted who could not read a Bach aria at sight.' His string accompaniment numbered 3, 3, 3, 2, 1, which he estimated achieved the right balance to reproduce Bach's forces at St. Thomas's. Experience from WGW's summer rehearsals had taught him that 'only when intelligent singers treated every line with infinite subtlety that Bach's intentions could be realized.'⁷⁷ No copies were put into members' hands 'without copious indications of general force and gradations...so that the character of the music could be understood from the very start'.⁷⁸ WGW gave his extra concert on 27 May 1916. Soprano soloists included Mrs. Bainton and J W Fleming, the latter remembered by WGW's daughter, Mary Pollitzer, in a letter to the writer in 1998:

Since I paused here my eye fell again upon the list of the names of the Bach Choir members you sent me, and up sprang "Miss J Fleming". I searched for her face but Father Time defeated me. I do remember, however, how important she was in the choir. Her beautiful, strong soprano voice & innate sense of leadership were greatly valued by my father, & the dreadful sense of loss whenever "Jenny" was off sick spelt near disaster.⁷⁹

There were other stalwarts on whom WGW depended such as his Rutherford College colleague, Robert Peel, later a local music inspector, who sang as a tenor in the choir with J Harding of West Jesmond, first Honorary Librarian of the choir and (from the third season) Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. George Dodds and John Vine sang as additional tenors in a Byrd Mass. Indeed, commitment was essential for all members. WGW's first cousin from Hexham (an architect who returned from Canada at the outbreak of war), Archibald S Gillies, once sang in the basses, hoping vainly that his cousin would encourage his talent as a singer, but, disillusioned, according to his daughter, Edna Gillies, soon left the choir. At the end of the first season, WGW gave a paper to members and friends of the local ISM in the Connaught Hall on 'The Motets of J. S. Bach', illustrated by the BC, the notes from this lecture forming the basis of his *Fugitive Notes* published in 1924.

⁷⁶ Whittaker, W G, *Collected Essays*, 153.

⁷⁷ Whittaker, 1940, 124.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Mary Pollitzer, personal communication, June 1999.

War reduced the ranks of orchestral players, and young men of the choir appeared in khaki if attached to a local depot, but most were drafted away, sent abroad just before a concert, often never to return, while older men joined the choir to keep it going. Music soared in price, but with a stroke of luck, WGW heard that a large quantity of sold-off Breitkopf stock was available very cheaply. Borrowing £25, the choir bought an immense number of cantata vocal scores, retailing them at 4p a copy, serving the choir for years.⁸⁰

Beatrice Turnbull was forced to inform subscribers in 1916 that the future of the choir seemed in jeopardy owing to the 'exodus of male choristers' for military service, and 'defection' of subscribers. While concerts would continue at the CNHS during the war, it would be necessary to find a hall capable of holding a larger audience.⁸¹ This season, wind players had joined the orchestra as the cantatas were scored for oboes d'amore and flute. It was not easy to organise, as good wood-wind players were scarce and many only possessing high-pitched instruments, requiring WGW to hire instruments from different parts of the country, with the complications of different fingering systems. Fortunately J C Windram, bandmaster at the army barracks, 'a splendid musician and a splendid fellow' was resourceful: 'We borrowed an oboe d'amore from London. Windram's brother, a boy in the band, 'rigged it up with elastic, string, & all manner of gadgets, to make it agree with the system to which he was accustomed, & played an obbligato in a manner I have rarely heard surpassed'.⁸² Windram himself gave much advice about instruments, especially concerning high trumpets, & took part in performances.⁸³ Three cantatas were sung: No. 118, *O Jesus Christ, my Light of Life*, an extended chorale, intended for graveside performance, and No. 115, *Rise my soul, be well prepared* (regarded by WGW as 'one of the most perfect of all').⁸⁴ No 116, *O Jesus Christ, Thou Prince of Peace*, is one of only five of the Cantatas to contain a solo terzetto, and requires oboes and a flute. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto in D, No. 5 went well (except for a 'misunderstanding' in the *Adagio*), as did the Suite in B minor for flute and strings. The choir sang 'with commendable sustained power and greater smoothness than of

⁸⁰ Whittaker, 1940, 127.

⁸¹ Ticket prices now included a ten pence charge for entertainment tax.

⁸² Whittaker, 1940, 129.

⁸³ Aut VI, 47.

W. Windram was James Causey Windram's brother and later became a bandmaster. See: *Collected Essays*, 129.

⁸⁴ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. II, 42.

yore', and although 'the inner parts do not yet take their place with sufficient clearness and decision' that would soon be remedied.⁸⁵ Despite Miss Eckford's capable playing however: 'The modern piano introduced a colour somewhat foreign to the music, and blurred one's mental picture of the original orchestra.'⁸⁶

At the second concert of the season, on 2 December 1916, attendance was again good, 'the room is now hardly large enough to hold the audience'. The dubious grand piano had been replaced by 'an upright instrument more in keeping in tone and power'.⁸⁷ A later compliment to the choir from Holst was foreshadowed by a *Northern Echo* comment: 'It was really surprising how so small a body of voices attained so sonorous an ensemble.'⁸⁸ Although the 'great enthusiasm and courage' of WGW's choice of programme, which included works never before heard in Newcastle at 'concert after concert' was praised, it was suggested by one critic that it might be wiser occasionally 'to be more conservative and repeat a cantata occasionally'.⁸⁹ Cantata No. 12 *Wailing, Crying*, was 'a precursor of the Crucifixus of the B Minor Mass', and required oboe, bassoon, trumpet and strings.⁹⁰ Cantata No. 70 *Watch ye, Pray ye*, 'an excellent one for introducing Bach to choirs and audiences' according to WGW, contained 'large-scale choral writing', which 'plunges us into a world of tumult which is astonishingly powerful and descriptive' with its 'startling' trumpet introduction at the beginning.⁹¹ WGW knew the piece would 'make instant appeal' because of the work's effective choruses, short solos, and familiar chorales.⁹² The eight-part motet *Be Not Afraid*, a funeral piece, 'springs from the heart, and is vivid with all the gorgeous splendour of a powerful and excited imagination', wrote WGW, 'differing in texture from the other motets'.⁹³ Ethel Bainton played Bach's piano concerto in F minor, 'with beauty and fluency' according to the *Newcastle Journal*.⁹⁴ Wall, performing Bach's violin concerto in A minor, was called by the *Northern Echo* critic 'one of the finest Bach players'

⁸⁵ The *Yorkshire Post*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ The *Yorkshire Post*, 4. Dec, 1916. GB-NEmd.

⁸⁸ The *Northern Echo*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

⁸⁹ The *Yorkshire Post*, 4 Dec, 1916. GB-NEmd. WGW probably refrained from repetition as he wished to attain his personal goal of performing all Bach's Cantatas.

⁹⁰ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 214 & 126.

⁹¹ Ibid., Vol. I, 150.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Whittaker, 1924, 233.

⁹⁴ *Newcastle Daily Journal*, 2 Dec, 1916. GB-NEmd.

and trumpeter Arthur Laycock's fine playing was noted.⁹⁵

WGW's nucleus of loyal helpers, such as Lance Hughes, secretary, and John Harding, treasurer (and Secretary when Hughes was in Salonika) carried out 'all the detailed work of running rehearsals and concerts' and this served to streamline the organisation of the choir and relieve WGW from logistic responsibilities.⁹⁶ Hughes penned the note (copied for distribution to the audience at the third concert cantata concert, on 3 February 1917) announcing that concerts were to be held at the larger move to a larger hall (Central Hall, Westgate Road, opposite the Tyne Theatre), although doubts were expressed by the *Yorkshire Post* critic that a similar sense of intimacy could be secured there.⁹⁷ (The urgency of the decision stemmed from the nature of the next two planned performances; the *St. John Passion* was to be given in March followed in May by a concert of British music including Holst's *The Cloud Messenger*. Obviously the ability to house a larger audience for these concerts would make financial sense.) On 3 February, (with the soprano line doubled for the concert) the 5-part motet *Jesu Priceless Treasure* [Jesu, meine Freude], the Schemelli Chorales, the sonata in B minor for flute and piano, trio in G for flute, violin, and piano, and the English Suite in G minor for keyboard, were performed (programme notes on the vocal music being published in the *Yorkshire Post* on the previous Friday).

In what would be the choir's last Bach performance for over a year, WGW conducted a first Newcastle performance of Bach's *St. John Passion*, on 31 March, 1917, in the Central Hall.⁹⁸ Wall, Mark, G. Hervé, and J. Griffiths led the string sections of the orchestra. W G Windram, the 'oboe from the barracks', played with Mr. F. Holt, who also played cor anglais. Thomas Wilkinson of the CU was pianist. Potts was away 'on military duties', while Edgar Crowe's name too was crossed out of WGW's programme, which warned 'that last minute substitutions were possible, since recently 'substitutes had to be found for no fewer than half the basses.' Clapperton sang the part of Jesus, and Vine, the Evangelist, with other soloists being Mrs George

⁹⁵ Laycock was a well known virtuoso cornet player who had helped establish the reputation of the St Hilda Colliery Band of South Shields.

⁹⁶ Whittaker, 1940, 126.

⁹⁷ The *Yorkshire Post*, Saturday 3 February, 1917. GB-NEmd.

⁹⁸ Whittaker, WG, 'Some problems in the performance of Bach's Church Cantatas', *Proceedings of the Musical Association* Session LIV, (10 Jan 1928), 35.

Dodds and Ruby Burn.⁹⁹ There was no applause and those leaving early were asked to go during a chorale. Twenty-eight singers and eighteen orchestral players, gave ‘a performance nearer than most to the composer’s intentions’.¹⁰⁰ Solo parts substituted for the almost obsolete viol d’amore were ‘absolutely delightful in effect’, the pianoforte ‘very artistically employed, served passably well in the curious lute part...’ from such ‘a remote period in musical history’.¹⁰¹ However, the strings obscured the flutes and oboes, which were ‘hardly audible’, but the chorus was ‘capable, plucky and ...always alert and intelligent’.¹⁰² Vine, ‘apart from a want of clear elocution’ sang well, and ‘simply told the story’ (a change, according to the critic ‘from the traditional way of drawling recitatives’).¹⁰³ Clapperton was reverent and unsentimental in his performance, while Mrs George Dodds, ‘if somewhat tremulous’, sang well.¹⁰⁴

WGW loved modern music whether British, French or German, and also appreciated performing the re-discovered old English music currently being published by the Carnegie Trust. Indeed, at meetings of his pre-war cantata group, WGW had always included madrigals sung ‘in the informal Elizabethan fashion’, both as a change and to provide practice for reading polyphonic writing, and to improve the reading of ‘difficult rhythms and bar-less phrases’.¹⁰⁵ In May during the first season of the BC, WGW gave ‘an extra concert’ of British music, acknowledging in his *Autobiography* that ‘until I left Newcastle ‘Bach and British’ was our slogan’.¹⁰⁶ The chronologically ordered ‘Concert of British Music’ was given in May 1916, in aid of the Lord Mayor’s War Relief fund, with soloists Vine and Eckford, and accompanist Edna Steele, with James (‘Jimmie’) Mark, violin. Byrd’s *Mass for Five Voices*, Purcell’s violin sonata in G Minor and William Babell’s Violin Sonata in B flat were performed.¹⁰⁷ Bainton’s *Sunset at Sea*, R. Vaughan Williams’s *Five Mystical Songs*, Delius’s *On Craig Dhu* and choral folksong arrangements

⁹⁹ Though always named Mrs. Dodds in concert programmes, Mrs. Dodds appeared as Agnes Dodds in the *Radio Times* of 10 October, 1925, when the Dodds were to sing WGW folk songs in a 5NO programme.

¹⁰⁰ *The Yorkshire Post*, 31 March, 1917. GB-NEmd.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Aut VI, 17.

¹⁰⁶ Whittaker, 1940, 127.

¹⁰⁷ Aut VI, 46. R R Terry acknowledged the Byrd *Mass for Five Voices* to be his ‘favourite of all the Tudor masterpieces that he had performed so many times...from 1895’. See Andrews, H., *Westminster Retrospect A memoir of Sir Richard Terry*, (OUP: London, 1943).

by Bantock, Holst, Boughton, and WGW followed. Piano solos by Dale, ('Fancies'), Grainger, (*Shepherd's Hey*), and Balfour Gardiner, (*Noel*) were played. The *Yorkshire Post* regretted 'the side-tracking of the choir into the domains of modern music', while recognising that the move was 'met with hearty approval'.¹⁰⁸ Boughton's 'Bronwen', and Bantock's 'O can you sew cushions' were admired, while Holst's setting of the Hampshire folk song 'I sowed the Seeds of Love', dedicated 'To W. G. Whittaker and his singers', '...shows vividly the talent of Gustav von Holst'.¹⁰⁹

However, 'hearty approval' from the audience was just what was necessary if the BC were to continue. In any event, WGW was unable to resist including a larger work of Holst's in a BC concert, and on 19 May 1917, the BC performed Holst's *Cloud Messenger* (performed by WGW with ACCS in March 1914). Holst was to be in Paris for a performance, however, writing to WGW on 7 May: 'oh how I wish I could hear you and your dear people in the 'Cloud!'¹¹⁰ Rosa Burn was soloist, and the work was accompanied by piano, string quintet and tympani. Other works in the programme were madrigals by Farmer, Gibbons, Weelkes, and Wilbye (in 4, 5, and 8 parts), and choral settings and folk tunes by Grainger and Vaughan Williams, as well as trios by Bax and Dunhill for violin, viola and piano, played by Wall, Mark and Eckford. WGW had a stressful time, writing to Holst: 'Do not think me a pessimist, or a 'worrit'...if I detail some woes. The bass line has given me no end of anxiety, only two of those men were at the third concert, and some of the new ones were so hastily gathered into the fold that they were much below par.' The women-folk too 'trembled like the light in a Crooks tube, and prophesied disaster wholesale for today'.¹¹¹ Wall had tried to cry off at the last minute as he had 'flu, but WGW issued an imperative command for him to come: 'I trembled until he appeared at the hall...He had a temperature and no mistake, but he avowed his determination to get through at whatever cost'.¹¹² The *Yorkshire Post* preferred the performance to the College performance.¹¹³ The choir was 'tremendously keen' on the work, the audience the largest yet: 'Hadow was there (I was surprised and delighted)...The 'Message' is one of the loveliest bits of writing you have done. It goes right

¹⁰⁸ The *Yorkshire Post*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Holst, 1974, No. 30, 17 May [1917], 22.

¹¹¹ Ibid., (d), 19 May, 1917, 128-9.

¹¹² Ibid., 129

¹¹³ Ibid

to my heart'.¹¹⁴ While WGW was preparing for the concert, his wife suffered a nervous breakdown, leaving for a month in Bournemouth, on medical advice, after the concert. WGW wrote to Holst on 19 May: 'Today has been a melancholy day for my wife, she had wanted so much to hear the CM [Cloud Messenger].'¹¹⁵ Mary Pollitzer writes of life at the time: '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.'¹¹⁶

With men disappearing to war, financial support drained away, causing doubts that the concerts could survive since costs were increasing 'in all directions'; even programmes sold at a loss. The BC war fund collection stood at £10, but the deficit accrued was for the same amount, as subscribers to the half-crown seats disappeared. When Mrs Bainton could no longer afford a secretary, Harding, became BC acting Secretary and Treasurer. Realising that the public assumed all the BC's work was threatened by the lack of male choristers, WGW wrote to the local press on 30 November 1917, saying that only unaccompanied motets were ruled out for this reason, while Passions and Cantatas were impossible owing to lack of finance. Walter Corder, the honorary secretary, wealthy chemical manufacturer, of 4 Rosella Place, North Shields, volunteered to organise a guarantee fund to ensure the continuance of the concerts. The *Northern Echo* and the *North Mail* reported the names of those who had sent the 'recommended maximum sum of three guineas' to Mr. Corder for the Guarantee fund.¹¹⁷ On 19 January 1918, the *Musical Standard* published Walter Corder's article 'Music in Newcastle-upon-Tyne', and praised WGW's efforts to make music in wartime.¹¹⁸

The start of the next season was delayed, and at the concert on 15 December 1917 no cantatas or motets were performed ('because of the difficulty of keeping permanent & adequate tenor & bass lines together at present.');

instead a Christmas concert was given.¹¹⁹ Carol collections such as *The Monster Book of Carols for Church and Home* (W. Scott, 1912) and the *English*

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Holst, 1974., 130.

¹¹⁶ Mary Pollitzer, personal communication, 29 December, 2000.

¹¹⁷ Miss. Lamb, Miss Oliver, Ralph Carr, William Ellis, and W. Deans Foster.

¹¹⁸ The *Musical Standard*, 19 January, 1918. *GB-NEmd*.

¹¹⁹ BC Report for the Third Season, *GB-NEmd*.

Carol Book by Percy Dearmer and Martin Shaw of 1913, encouraged the practice of carol singing emulating Holst's similar practice at Thaxted.¹²⁰ WGW informed the audience through the Prospectus, that 'truly relevant small pieces' for Christmas were rare'; nevertheless he produced an exciting programme of British Christmas music, containing items by Byrd and Arthey, Richard Dering's motet 'Quem vidistis pastores', Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, and a second performance of B J Dale's *Before the Paling of the Stars*. There were modern British carols. WGW's four MSS arrangements of traditional carols (the *Yorkshire Post* critic found WGW's 'The Nuns of St. Mary's', with a pedal bass, sung very softly, ('perfectly effective and delightful') preceded Bainton's 'Song of the Virgin Mother', Holst's 'Of one that is so fair and Bright' (MSS), and Walford Davies's 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'.¹²¹ Frank Bridge's settings of 'Sally in our Alley' and 'Cherry Ripe' and Grainger's 'Molly on the Shore', 'Mock Morris' (for string band) and 'Clog Dance-Handel in the Strand' (for strings and piano), 'My Robin is to the Greenwood Gone' and 'Colonial Song' were 'happy and exhilarating pieces'.¹²² Clapperton sang solos with orchestral accompaniment including Frederic Austin's 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'.¹²³ Annie Lawton took part in a BC concert for the first time. The *Yorkshire Post*, preferring this 'celebratory' concert to the usual Handel's *Messiah*, summed up: 'The whole concert was 'a happy idea, well carried out, and worthy of imitation...It only wanted more comely surroundings to leave a wholly favourable impression.'¹²⁴

On 23 March 1918, a 'Second Concert of British Music' was given, influenced by two NLPS lectures in 1917, the first by R. R. Runciman on 'Sea-Shanties', and the second by E H Fellowes on *The English Madrigal School* and also containing modern English compositions. Edgar Bainton's *Humoreske: The Vindictive Staircase* (to words by W W Gibson) was performed as well as madrigals by Gibbons, Morley, Wilbye and Weelkes, and choral folksong settings by Vaughan Williams, Holst, Bantock and Grainger, including Vaughan Williams's 'The Lover's Ghost', and 'The dark-eyed Sailor', and Holst's 'Matthew, Mark', and 'There was a tree'. Lawton was soloist in

¹²⁰ See: Holst, 1974, No. 54, Dec 1 [1917], 33.

¹²¹ The *Yorkshire Post*, undated cutting. *GB-NEmd*. The critic added the comment that 'for a Christmas concert a little more thought bestowed upon the decoration and colouring of the platform than is involved in giving an order to a nursery-man for the supply of a few struggling pot plants would help materially to create a right atmosphere'.

¹²² *Ibid*.

¹²³ *Ibid*.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*.

Bantock's 'The Seal Woman's Croon', and Grainger's 'Brigg Fair'. North-Country Sea-Shanties, from Richard Runciman Terry's manuscript 'Collection of Sea Songs and Shanties', were sung. WGW contributed two choral arrangements: 'Have ye seen owt o'ma bonny lad?', and 'Billy Boy'. Eckford and Wall gave two violin sonatas in A by Philip Gibbs (1699-1788) and John Ireland's new Second Violin Sonata. Though the critic of the *Yorkshire Post* considered the programme 'overloaded', he could not have been unimpressed by the characteristic contemporaneity of the musical items, notably Ireland's work which was hot off the press.¹²⁵

It was over a year since WGW had given any Bach concerts, largely due to the effect of the war: 'In scarcely any of the great provincial cities has the cause of music suffered so severely during the war'.¹²⁶ A projected Matthew Passion had been abandoned because of the difficulty of keeping adequate tenor and bass lines, but now 'in response to a general desire' it was decided to perform more cantatas.¹²⁷ WGW always making it clear on programmes that the content 'is subject to alteration' depending on the stability of the male portion'. Parts were written out by volunteers for an extra Bach concert on the 'sunny afternoon of 25 May' in 1918, when Crüger's unaccompanied chorale 'Deck thee, O my soul, with gladness', followed by the relevant Church Cantata No. 180, 'Soul, array thyself with gladness' was heard by a good audience. WGW thought the cantata, describing a heavenly wedding feast, and employing flutes, was 'one of the most constantly blissful of the series'.¹²⁸ Choral Cantata No. 106, 'God's time is the best' was one of Bach's most popular and perfect: 'Never again did he achieve the continuous tenderness and the elevated spiritual feeling in just the same way that is found here'.¹²⁹ In performing Cantata No. 198 'Lord, rebuke me not', the *Trauerode* or funeral Ode for Queen Christiane Eberhardine, WGW made 'careful substitutions' in the orchestra, since, in his opinion, Bach's demands could only be met where there were 'specialists in old instruments'. This was certainly true for two violas da gamba (each with a separate line), and two lutes (in unison except for no. 4) were required, as well as the obtainable instruments: strings, two oboes d'amore, and two transverse

¹²⁵ The *Yorkshire Post*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

¹²⁶ The *Musical Standard*, 19 January, 1919, GB-NEmd.

¹²⁷ BC programme, 20, March, 1918. GB-NEmd

¹²⁸ Whittaker, 1959, ii, 473.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 57.

flutes.¹³⁰ WGW writes 'The lovely rich warmth of this combination is different from anything else in Bach's works. It is like the folds of opulent velvet thrown across the bier of the dead queen.'¹³¹

But the German name of Bach in the programme had caused anger in Newcastle. Under the pseudonym 'Citizen', one correspondent wrote to the editor of *The North Mail*, his letter published under the heading 'German Atrocities', to object to WGW's practice of playing music by Bach. The writer, horrified by accounts of ill-treatment of British prisoners of war by a German sea captain, agreed with the comments of a London Coroner who called for 'the extermination of the Hun race' and asked for WGW to be stopped: 'I care not who the master may be. I consider it an insult to the citizens of Newcastle that such performances should be allowed.'¹³² WGW replied that the BC had performed the music of thirty British composers in the last three years, eighteen still living, and he agreed with Alexander Mackenzie, Principal of the RAM, who had recently explained that performing Bach was a supreme necessity at this time. What had this composer to do with the war- he had been dead for over a century and a half?¹³³

Confined to a few lines by a paper shortage, the Prospectus announced the clearing of the BC's debt by 'a few friends', the establishment of the guarantee fund, and the need for more public support.¹³⁴ Holst wrote to WGW on 4 June 1918, 'Congratulations on the BC success. £30 worth of JSB at 4d each! Ye Gods!!'¹³⁵ The first BC concert of its fourth Season occurred five days after peace was declared on 16 November 1918. With the war over, the choir became a fully fledged society with six recitals per session (four would be cantata programmes), and 'in the absence of war charities, any appeals had to be made to the public on purely musical grounds.' Church Cantata No. 44, 'You will they put under ban' opened the concert. WGW described the work as 'uncompromisingly grim', and 'not among the most interesting' commenting that in the first number, the 'fanatical stamping down of the bassi, through common chord after common

¹³⁰ The lute parts, as previously mentioned, would be played on the piano and those of the violas da gamba probably by two cellists.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 558.

¹³² *The North Mail*, 1 February, 1918. *GB-NEmd*.

¹³³ *The North Mail*, 4 June, 1918. *GB-NEmd*.

¹³⁴ Whittaker, 1940, 127.

¹³⁵ Holst, 1974, No. 69, [4 June 1918], 41.

chord is sinister'.¹³⁶ Cantata No.182, 'King of Heaven be thou welcome' contained some elaborate violin writing played by Wall, and a part for flute à bec played on modern instruments by S. Middleton (Leeds Symphony Orchestra) and Alfred Wall. WGW chose this work as suitable for introducing Bach to audiences, with the imagery in its 'curving, descending passages in the obbligato flute and voice' and the way in which the 'buoyancy of the *Schlusscher* leaves one with the happiest of impressions'.¹³⁷ After the Secular Cantata No. 209, 'Non sa che sia Dolore', Bach's Concerto in A minor for flute, violin, piano and strings was played by the orchestra. WGW introduced a trumpet obbligato in the chorales, played by Windram.

3.3 THE BACH CHOIR IN PEACE TIME

3.3.1 *In search of a better hall: Venture into Chamber Music Concerts*

WGW was forty-two at the end of the war when Bainton returned in December 1918 to resume musical life in the city.¹³⁸ He was about to be appointed conductor of the CU and had sustained the ACCS throughout the war, but, with the many new attractions that followed the end of the conflict, he knew it was going to be a struggle to keep the BC going. The question of where to hold the concerts had still not been satisfactorily resolved. As the subscribers disliked Central Hall, a new venue was selected at Westgate Hall, a large Methodist Church Hall at the top of the steep bank of Westgate Road where 'accommodation...is ample and comfortable, and the Hall contains a three manual organ, which will be a valuable factor in Bach's sacred works'.¹³⁹ It was now obvious that, though the singing of Bach cantatas was the *raison d'être* of the BC, this would never attract large audiences. From this time WGW ensured that British Music concerts financially sustained the BC, and also allowed it to win a reputation worthy of the choir's attainments. In fact, organisation of the BC had become a balancing act, which WGW, with difficulty, managed successfully. Sometimes he occasionally combined Bach performances with other elements of the choir's repertoire, such as in the concert on Saturday 21 December 1918

¹³⁶ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 625-6.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹³⁸ *Aut VI*, 4.

¹³⁹ Press release giving information on the new location of BC concerts, The Westgate Hall. *GB-NEmd*.

when he gave a short preliminary lecture at 2.45 p.m. and then conducted a programme of Christmas music from the *Christmas Oratorio* and Cantata no. 133, 'In Thee do I rejoice' using four solo voices. This cantata, for Christmas Tuesday, only demanded 'an extended chorale on a large scale' from the choir, the introduction, interludes and coda, being supplied by the orchestra (with oboes d'amore). Music by Byrd and Walford Davies preceded Holst's *Choral Fantasia on traditional Carols* (described by Holst as 'poor stuff anyway and not worth doing').¹⁴⁰ Frederic Austin's very popular 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' was performed again, 'by popular request', together with four carols by Charles Kennedy Scott, from a nativity play, and Vaughan Williams's 'Wassail, Wassail'. The *Northerner* disliked the Westgate Hall, because of its width and the blank areas on each side of the platform: 'The peculiar structure of the hall... presents some difficulty in the way of satisfactorily grouping the choir and orchestra'.¹⁴¹ Holst's Choral Fantasy was considered 'the most artificial and interesting', though perhaps the combination of four popular carols with two or three different sets of words was 'rather a case of love's labour lost', as the words were rendered 'meaningless'.¹⁴² Alfred Wall's Carnegie Award winning Piano Quartet received its first performance, led by the composer, with Eckford as pianist, approved by the *North Mail* critic as 'a melodious and vigorous piece of writing' and as 'a work of serious artistic ability' by the *Yorkshire Post* critic who detected 'some influence of the modern Russian School'. The performance probably prompted WGW to begin to hold chamber music concerts in the Westgate Hall.¹⁴³

Considering that the Westgate Hall, despite having a layout which was unsuited to choral concerts, was absolutely appropriate for the giving of chamber music recitals, WGW, perhaps self-indulgently (he was a lover of string quartets) took steps to instigate a series of Chamber Music recitals there, under BC auspices. There would have been a great demand for these initially (the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Chamber Music Society being closed for the duration of the war), but WGW wrote that there was another factor in his decision. Walter Corder had offered to finance the series and 'longed for Chamber Music concerts that differed from those given by the

¹⁴⁰ Holst, 1974, No. 69, [4 June 1918], 41.

¹⁴¹ *The Northerner*, 21 December, 1918. GB-NEmd.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Both the *North Mail* and *Yorkshire Post* cuttings are undated. GB-NEmd.

Chamber Music Society, without fashion and evening dress'.¹⁴⁴ WGW, in personal contact with the artists, selected interesting programmes, and with the exception of a Beethoven Festival, ensured that a British work was included in each concert. This gave him a certain degree of influence with the composers whom he encouraged in this way, and many were attracted to take part in BC choral concerts.

On Friday 24 January 1919, The Leeds Trio (Alex Cohen, Alfred Hemingway, 'cellist', and the pianist, F. Anderson-Tyrer) played Rachmaninoff's *Elegiac Trio*, Beethoven's trio in B flat Op. 97, and piano pieces by John Ireland, Cyril Scott and Anderson-Tyrer. WGW had let it be known (according to a statement in the BC press cuttings book) that if the venture succeeded he would arrange 'a more extended series for the following winter'. The Catterall Quartet returned to give another concert on 14 March 1919: Beethoven's Op. 131 quartet, Borodin's D minor and Joseph Speaight's *Some Shakespearean Characters* were played, Ernest Walker's notes on the Beethoven quartet appearing in the programme with Ernest Newman's highly complimentary criticism of the quartet's playing. WGW wrote to tell Holst, who was in Salonica for the YMCA, about the concert:

We had a gorgeous concert last week by the Catterall String Quartet. They are amongst the very best, they played the Beethoven Op. 131, in C Sharp Minor superbly. It all seemed clear as noonday, and one wondered why it had ever been deemed obscure! We've made these chamber concerts pay, at cheap rates, 1/3 and 3/0, including tax. We had 600 people there, and the cheaper seat people, most of whom were new to chamber music, were enthusiastic. So it looks as if the Bach choir would have to run 9 concerts next season, 4 chamber and 5 choral. All this is very cheering, but it doesn't mean that I get more time to myself. Everything, in fact, works the other way. However, I mustn't growl.¹⁴⁵

The London String Quartet played at the first of the new season's concerts, on Wednesday 15 October 1919. They gave Elgar's Quartet Op. 83 in E minor, composed the previous year, Walford Davies's *Peter Pan Suite*, and Beethoven's Op. 59, No 2. Lionel Tertis (born at West Hartlepool in 1876) played on 19 November, accompanied by Ellen Tuckfield. He was a champion of Benjamin Dale and had performed his Suite for Viola at a Classical Concerts Society recital before the war. WGW's ACCS had given a second performance of Dale's *Before the Paling of the Stars* in 1915 when the composer was in Ruhleben. Now Tertis, probably the finest living viola player, performed the 'Romance' from Dale's Suite, with the Brahms Sonata in F, and Grieg's

¹⁴⁴ Aut VII, 23.

¹⁴⁵ Holst, 1974, No. 20, March, 1919, 132.

Sonata in C minor, to a large audience 'delighted with his playing', according to the *Newcastle Journal* whose critic also noted: 'This form of recital is uncommon.'¹⁴⁶ Tertis also played pieces by Cartier, Kreisler, and his own arrangement of 'The Londonderry Air', transcribed to display the distinctive charm of each string of the instrument.

The Catterall Quartet returned in January 1920 playing Debussy's Quartet, Op. 10, in G minor, Beethoven's Op. 130 and Ernest Walker's *Phantaisie*. WGW's work locally in lecturing on the composer had had an effect, the *Journal* commenting: 'Debussy now appears far less of a musical revolutionary...those present found a good many of his experiments in phraseology not nearly so ungrateful and dissonant as formerly was the case.'¹⁴⁷ On Wednesday 3 March, a fourth chamber concert of the season was given by two members of the Leeds Trio playing violin and piano music with a French tinge. Elgar's Op. 82 Sonata was followed by G Catoire's second Sonata – *Poem* – Op. 20, and César Franck's Sonata in A major, a transcription of Elgar's orchestral piece *Sospiri* being given as an encore. There is no record in the archives of the first Chamber concert of the Sixth season in the BC archives (perhaps it was cancelled), but the Rhoda Backhouse Piano Trio (with Rhoda Backhouse, violin, Felix Salmond, cellist, and G. O'Connor Morris, piano) gave the second, on 24 November 1920, with Brahms Trio in C minor Op. 101, John Ireland's Fantasy Trio, No. 2, and Dvořák's 'Dumky' Trio in the programme. Backhouse, from Darlington, had studied at York with Editha Knocker, and later with Leopold Auer in Petrograd, Dresden and Christiania. On 16 March the London Quartet once again performed, giving Ravel's quartet in F, H. Waldo Warner's 'Folksong Fantasie Quartet', and Beethoven's Quartet No 11 in F minor, Op. 95.

From the autumn of 1921 the BC chamber concerts were also held in the KH, the London String Quartet opening the seventh season with a Dohnányi work in D flat Op. 15, McEwen's 'Biscay' quartet (described by the *Daily News* as being more like a group of three impressions, the last two 'Les Dunes' and 'La Reclenste' being specially admired) and a Mozart quartet.¹⁴⁸ The quartet's playing was said to be of 'superlative quality' producing 'an exquisite

¹⁴⁶ The *Newcastle Journal*, Wed., Nov 19, 1919. GB-NEmd.

¹⁴⁷ The *Newcastle Journal*, 28 Jan., 1920. GB-NEmd.

¹⁴⁸ The *Daily News*, Wed. 19 Oct, 1921. GB-NEmd.

blend'.¹⁴⁹ There were three more chamber concerts that season. The London Trio played on 9 November 1921 (Amina Goodwin, pianoforte, Louis Pecsikai, the trio's violinist in England, and William Edward Whitehouse, an English cellist and pupil of Piatti). The Catterall String Quartet, on 1 February 1922, gave Beethoven's Op. 127, Herbert Howells's *Lady Audrey's Suite* (said by the *Newcastle Chronicle* to be 'a sheer delight') and César Franck's Quartet in D.¹⁵⁰ The Quartet gave another concert a month later, the *Chronicle* reporting a smaller attendance than at previous concerts, but blaming a tram strike which occurred at the time, describing the concert as 'an inspiring musical experience.'¹⁵¹ The programme contained a Quartet in A by Ildebrando Pizzetti, a young Italian composer from Parma (from 1918 director of the Instituto Musicale of Florence and, later in 1924, director of Milan Conservatoire) and Bax's Quartet in G and Beethoven's Op. 132.

Walter Corder, the Honorary Secretary of the BC Guarantors' Committee, announced that a Beethoven Festival week had been organised for October, to be given by the London String Quartet. Three Beethoven quartets were to be given each evening, with Op. 130, and Op. 131 on Friday. When WGW 'expressed keen regret' that he had to miss the performance of the Grosse Fugue, which he had never heard, Warwick Evans invited him to the Quartet's hotel where he was serenaded with parts propped up on a bed.¹⁵² The innovation of presenting a significant composer as the purpose of a series of concerts, rather than distinguished performers, was recognised by the critic of the *Yorkshire Post* on 6 October.¹⁵³ On 31 October, the Catterall String Quartet performed Pieces from *Les Vendredis* (an *Allegro commodo* by Rimsky-Korsakov, 'Berceuse' by D'Osten Sacken, and a Polka by Sokolof, Glazounoff and Liadof) preceded Beethoven's Op. 130. The quartet played again on 6 February 1924, in Ravel's Quartet in F (the Allied, and Léner Quartets having played the work previously in Newcastle), Mozart's E flat String Quartet K 428, and Beethoven's String Quartet E flat, Op. 74. Beatrice Hewitt died just before the scheduled performance of The Beatrice Hewitt Piano Quartet on 28 November,

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ 'TMB', The *Newcastle Chronicle*, Wed. 1 Feb, 1922. GB-NEmd. The critic though found 'fleeting impressions of roughness' in the Catterall's performance of the Beethoven. In spite of this the adagio achieved 'the most beautiful reading of all'.

¹⁵¹ 'TMB', The *Newcastle Chronicle*, Wed. 1 March, 1922. GB-NEmd.

¹⁵² Aut VII, 24.

¹⁵³ The *Yorkshire Post*, Fri., 6 Oct, 1922. GB-NEmd.

Charles Kelly joining Paul Beard, Frank Venton and Johan C. Hock, in a re-named group, the Philharmonic Piano Quartet, to play Brahms's Piano Quartet in C minor, Op. 51 No. 1, Wall's C minor Piano Quartet and Dvořák's E flat Piano Quartet. The audience's enthusiasm, according to the *Journal*, showed it was 'a fine antidote to the distractions of the General Election.'¹⁵⁴

Meanwhile, as far as Bach cantatas were concerned, by 1918 WGW had performed all the cantatas available with English translations (or all with accompaniments that were financially possible) and now embarked on using the German editions from the choir's large stock of music. WGW, in line with the opinion of Baroque composers considered it of paramount importance that the audience understand every nuance of the text. Writing on the subject in 1989, Ellen Harris cites Caccini's maxim that proper pronunciation and understanding of the text enabled the singer to express its meaning and 'delight and move the affections of the mind' of the listener.¹⁵⁵ C S Terry provided some translations, but often WGW produced his own (and through this learned so much about Bach's methods that he was grateful for the work). In supplying the words, WGW attempted to 'fit the words in such a way as to bring out Bach's faithful interpretation of his text'.¹⁵⁶ There were problems however in translation, caused 'not only on account of the difficulty of translating from one language to another, but because some of the expressions of the hymn jar somewhat upon our present-day tastes'.¹⁵⁷ Here we observe the same policy of censorship ruled by contemporary taste as that deemed necessary in the field of education as discussed in Chapter 4. The snag was that the words had to be inserted into all the copies for choir and soloists, but willing help was forthcoming from members, WGW preparing specimen copies before Easter, copyists working through the summer to prepare for autumn.

3.3.2 *Recitals in St Nicholas's Cathedral*

The difficulty of finding more opportunities to perform Bach cantatas was solved to a certain extent in 1919 when organist William Ellis became organist at St. Nicholas's Cathedral, Newcastle. He immediately invited WGW and the BC to give a cantata recital in a series usually

¹⁵⁴ 'Counterpoint', *The Newcastle Journal*, 29 November, 1924. GB-NEmd.

¹⁵⁵ Harris, E, 'Voices', *The New Grove Handbooks in Music: Performance Practice: Music after 1600*, ed. Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie (London: The Macmillan Press, 1989), 97.

¹⁵⁶ Bach, J, *Jesu. Joy and Treasure*, ed W G Whittaker (London: OUP, 1925), iii.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

reserved for organists. WGW writes that ‘Ellis, after suffering many years of discomfort as assistant organist at Durham Cathedral, took charge at Newcastle, and raised the services to a high level.’¹⁵⁸ Although the Cathedral recitals opened up opportunities, the concerts proved to be something of a ‘curate’s egg’ for WGW: collections taken never paid expenses, even with a largely amateur orchestra, and the building was ‘a heart-breaking place acoustically’.¹⁵⁹ The singers could neither hear their neighbours nor other lines. Nevertheless, WGW loved performing in the ‘fine choir of the fourteenth-century building’ for being in the ‘right surroundings’, gave him great satisfaction.¹⁶⁰ At the first recital, on 24 May 1919, the chorale ‘Schmücke dich’ followed by Ellis’s playing of the chorale prelude on that chorale, preceded an eight-part unaccompanied motet ‘Sing ye to the Lord’ (‘Singet dem Herrn’), ‘trying for the choir in the opening chorus because of its high pitch’ but demonstrating ‘delightful expression and very capable technique’, according to the *Yorkshire Post* critic.¹⁶¹ WGW described the work as being the ‘Mightiest of all motets, planned on a titanic scale’, a song of thanksgiving, ‘almost too colossal for the shouts of mankind’. He thought it ‘the battle horse of all ambitious choirs...the greatest test of pure unaccompanied choral singing in existence’, bound to be attempted as a ‘*tour de force*’, opening with a prelude and fugue.¹⁶²

With de-mobilization well under way, Potts returned to sing the solo cantata ‘I will my Cross’, described by WGW as ‘of superb quality’ with its ‘imagery of the sea’.¹⁶³ WGW implemented a policy of performing the solo church cantatas, because he feared that, with no chorus or large orchestra, they would never be revealed to the general musical public, and he was sure the best atmosphere for them was in church.¹⁶⁴ The orchestra was led by Wall, the *News Chronicle* describing the occasion as ‘one of the most impressive functions held there for many a long day’.¹⁶⁵ There was no great volume of sound, but ‘a rich harmony to which additional effect was given by the distances in the interior and which was marvellously satisfying and

¹⁵⁸ Aut VII, 15.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ *The Yorkshire Post*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

¹⁶² Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 373.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 378.

¹⁶⁵ *The News Chronicle*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

soothing...The huge gathering sat as if spellbound...' Never, said the correspondent, had the BC sounded so well as on this occasion.¹⁶⁶

On 12 April 1919, Church Cantata No. 158 'May Peace be with you', the last Weimar solo cantata, was performed in the Westgate Hall. Considered a 'beautiful cantata', rather neglected, and 'so easily performed' by WGW, it needed no special resources.¹⁶⁷ Bach's motets were intended to be accompanied by an organ, and sung by a larger choir than the cantatas (up to sixty voices). As an organ was now available, WGW included the motets 'Praise the Lord O ye heathen', 'Sing ye to the Lord', and the secular cantata 'Amore Traditore', in the concert, and the chorus 'Give welcome', from the Secular Cantata No.207, being 'determined to dispel the notion that only a huge choir should sing them'.¹⁶⁸ Mark and Eckford played Bach's Violin Sonata in F minor and Eckford the Partita No. 2 in C minor for piano. A group of songs and arias followed, including 'Edifying thoughts of a smoker' from the Anna Magdalena book, sung by baritone Clapperton (now at the RCM, and described by the *North Mail* as having 'a very rich voice').¹⁶⁹ The *Northern Echo* pointed out that, despite singing that was 'as good as always', the sopranos and contraltos were hardly strong enough to balance the tenor and basses.¹⁷⁰

Arising criticisms from the columns of the *Yorkshire Post* pointed to the appeal of the concerts 'to the inner circle of musical people', and lamented the lack of a suitable concert-room.¹⁷¹ Having already tried three venues for the BC, WGW was all too aware of the relevance of this assessment. Even now there was 'not one acoustically fitted for its purpose'.¹⁷² (This marked the beginning of WGW's campaign for a new concert hall, not accomplished until his final year in Newcastle, with the building of the City Hall.)

The 1918/19 season ended with another three cantatas, performed in Westgate Hall, on 31 May, 1919, the first being No. 93, 'He who relies on God's compassion', No. 131, 'From the darkness', for the same vocal combination and No. 176, 'Man's heart is stubborn', which employed two oboes and oboe da caccia. WGW found the chorus part in this 'splendidly

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 107.

¹⁶⁸ Whittaker, 1924, 195.

¹⁶⁹ The *North Mail*, 12 April, 1919. GB-NEmd.

¹⁷⁰ The *Northern Echo*, 12 April, 1919. GB-NEmd.

¹⁷¹ The *Yorkshire Post*, 12 April, 1919. GB-NEmd.

¹⁷² Ibid.

effective, the declamatory lines producing a turbulent mass of surging tone'.¹⁷³ The strings played Bach's Third Brandenburg Concerto. WGW now felt that the BC 'had won its own niche in Newcastle musical life', but afterwards recalled 'what a perpetual strain the question of money always was'.¹⁷⁴ With no outside agencies such as the Carnegie Trust able to help, the choir was, nevertheless cushioned to a great extent by loyal supporters: 'Five good men & true, Mr. James B. Clark, the brothers Walter and Percy Corder, both men of great culture & typical examples of the Quaker community, W. Deans Forster & F C Culley, stood by us & helped us enormously. Without them we would have collapsed.'¹⁷⁵

3.4 A PERMANENT HOME

3.4.1 *Concerts in the Kings' Hall: Larger Bach Works*

After the move to Central Hall many subscribers had threatened to resign through discomfort in the hall. Although the Westgate Hall was in fact modestly comfortable, its acoustics were impossible for choral performances.¹⁷⁶ WGW decided at the end of the season to use the King's Hall [KH] at AC for BC concerts because of its size and character. This handsome panelled room, hung with portraits and graced with a large and a small balcony, was ideal for the purpose. The Council of AC willingly giving permission (and is still used by the choir today). Chamber concerts would continue at Westgate Hall and cantata recitals at the cathedral. Cantata No. 167, (for chorus and SATB) 'Ye mortals extol the love of the Father' was given at St. Nicholas's on 29 November 1919, and, after 'a somewhat timid start' (according to the *Chronicle*) probably due to 'strange surroundings' and lack of previous rehearsal with orchestra and organ, the choir gave 'a very acceptable reading'.¹⁷⁷ In No. 73, 'Lord as Thou Wilt', WGW noted that 'The use of the organ is exceptional'.¹⁷⁸ Probably written for horn obbligato, Bach transferred the part to organ manual, with the continuo being played by the organ pedals. Of the Cantata No. 3, 'O, God, how

¹⁷³ Whittaker, 1959, ii, 226.

¹⁷⁴ Aut VII, 13.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Report for Fifth Season of Bach Choir, 1919-1920. *GB-NEmd*.

¹⁷⁷ The *Newcastle Chronicle*, undated cutting. *GB-NEmd*.

¹⁷⁸ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 518.

many pains of heart', WGW wrote that the outstanding feature was 'one of the most miraculously flexible and expressive choruses that ever flowed from his truly inexhaustible pen'.¹⁷⁹

The KH was the venue on 27 March 1920 for WGW's next venture, the complete version of Bach's Passion according to St. Matthew, conducting Part I in the afternoon and Part II in the evening, 'under intimate conditions' and with a choir of forty, twenty-two strings, & the requisite wood-wind.¹⁸⁰ Using the Elgar/Atkins edition, WGW made no cuts to retain 'the flawless unity of the work'.¹⁸¹ The *Chronicle* correspondent reported that choirs were suffering from 'unavoidable absenteeism' (due to a 'flu epidemic').¹⁸² Perhaps this was the reason WGW had brought in a choral group from Rutherford Girls' School to sing as the ripieno chorus, some being not exactly willing participants.¹⁸³ Miss Isabel Marks, of Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, whose name appeared in the list of choristers, replied through her God-daughter to the writer's inquiry. 'Yes it is the same I. Marks! She can recall some of the names and faces & says she refused to open her mouth because she couldn't sing a note! The whole class had to perform so that's why she was dragged into it.'¹⁸⁴ A week in advance, true to his 'Music Appreciation' principles, WGW lectured on the work, assisted by the BC and Potts, for the CMU in the Connaught Hall. *The Yorkshire Post*, in an article entitled 'A Question of Numbers', explained that WGW's forces were exactly the same as those used at Leipzig, and published an article by WGW on the imperative of using a small choir.¹⁸⁵ Henderson, whilst respecting WGW's opinion, confessed that within him there was 'a hunger for a grandeur of effect which is not there, and which we feel ought to be there.'¹⁸⁶ WGW's interpretation of the Passion was 'obviously intended...as a service rather than a performance' wrote the *Journal* critic.¹⁸⁷ WGW reinforced this impression by requesting that applause be withheld, until the end. Other reviewers, despite praising the choral singing, were dissatisfied at the small forces used, to which criticism WGW

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 345-6.

¹⁸⁰ *Aut VII*, 15.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *The Newcastle Chronicle*, undated cutting. *GB-NEmd.*

¹⁸³ Probably WGW was also following a new custom. Thomas Armstrong writes that 'a love of Bach singing soon spread to the public schools, to grammar schools, and to all sorts of educational groups' See his article: 'Bach and the English Choralist', *Musical Times*, Vol 91, no. 1289 (July 1950), 261.

¹⁸⁴ Isabel Marks, letter to the writer (in the hand of Joan Welsh, Miss Marks's God-daughter) from her retirement home in Corbridge, Northumberland. The *Newcastle Journal* reported that 'the ripieno chorale was given with taste and beauty by a chorale from Rutherford College'. Undated cutting. *GB-NEmd.*

¹⁸⁵ *The Yorkshire Post*, 20 March, 1920. *GB-NEmd.*

¹⁸⁶ *The Northern Echo*, undated cutting. *GB-NEmd.*

¹⁸⁷ *The Newcastle Journal*, undated cutting. *GB-NEmd.*

felt compelled to respond, by writing to the *Chronicle* to explain his reasons. Wall and Mark led the orchestras, and George W Danskin 'undertook the continuo portions with skill'.¹⁸⁸ Thomas Henderson of the *Northern Echo* said it was the first time he had appreciated the value of the orchestration in the Passion, mentioning the 'infinitely tender lapping of the flutes & oboes in the final number of Part I'.¹⁸⁹ WGW himself was touched during the performance, adding a note to this portion of his *Autobiography*: 'Never before had I felt so deeply the emotion of this profoundly moving work.'¹⁹⁰

Despite a total audience of 6000 in the fifth season, there was a loss of £45 (attributed by WGW to the 'extreme expense' of putting on the *Matthew Passion*) so it was decided to raise admission charges slightly.¹⁹¹ The Chamber Concerts had resulted in a loss of £22. WGW appealed for more subscribers for both types of concert. He was still concerned that the cantata concerts remained unsatisfactory. The Cathedral acoustics were extremely problematical, causing the second concert to be a failure with vocal forces 'practically inaudible in the body of the church'. In addition, income from the concerts barely covered expenses. Rehearsals continued to take place at the Conservatoire and in the Hall of the Central High School, while concerts were at the KH and Cathedral.

A cantata concert was given on 6 November 1920 (no details available in archive) but a second, planned for the following week, took place much later on the 7 May 1921, when an unaccompanied programme was substituted, owing to the 'extraordinary parsimoniousness of contributors to the collection plate'.¹⁹² The expenses of the small orchestra had not been covered by takings from the first concert. Cantata No. 8 'God in Heaven', which saw death as a release, was performed. WGW describes a fantasia of unique design included in it, 'a duet for two oboes d'amore, tender and mournful, an example of 'endless melody' long before Wagner coined the term'.¹⁹³ No. 26 'Ah, how fleeting' compares man's life to a mist which appears and disappears. Containing 'the longest aria in all Bach's church music', it required virtuoso singing.¹⁹⁴ In

¹⁸⁸ *Newcastle Daily News*, 28 March 1920. GB-NEmd.

¹⁸⁹ Aut VII, 15.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² BC Report for the Sixth Season. GB-NEmd.

¹⁹³ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 489.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

contrast, No. 67 'Hold in remembrance Jesus Christ', included what WGW describes as 'one of the most remarkable numbers in the Cantatas'; though termed 'Aria', WGW calls it a *scena* for bass with SAT, chorus, flute, 2 oboes d'amore and strings: 'It opens with world-tumult in the strings, whirling scales, vigorous leaping arpeggio, octave jumps in the bass...'¹⁹⁵ The soloists J Fleming, Norah Allison, Annie Lawton, Tom Purvis, Ernest Potts, and A L Lewis, and the choir sang, totally out of sight, from the Lady Chapel, an arrangement considered excellent by local critics.¹⁹⁶ However, attendance was meagre.

On 18 December 1920, in 'a sparkling performance', all three Christmas portions, 4, 5, and 6 of the *Christmas Oratorio* were sung. Vaughan Williams, who became conductor of the London Bach Choir in 1920, did not approve of the fashion of playing several Bach works together for 'mechanical completeness', writing that modern audiences with their 'quicker apprehension' could not 'endure the emotion of this music for so long'.¹⁹⁷ In this case the audience was appreciative and the *News Chronicle* critic wrote: 'the choir covered itself with glory...It has probably never produced so satisfying an ensemble', the *Journal* commenting 'their tone was at times brilliant, the attack exemplary, and the attention to light and shade conspicuously effective'.¹⁹⁸ Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F was played. The rest of the *Christmas Oratorio*, the 'New Year' portions, was sung on 8 January 1921 before 'a rather thin audience'.¹⁹⁹ The *Chronicle* noticed that the choir strained at high notes in part V, and the orchestra took time to 'settle down' in the Bach Suite in D, No. 3 eventually negotiating 'the beautiful and well-known 'Air' and the dance measures, in rare style'.²⁰⁰ McNaught, reviewing the concert in *Musical Opinion*, cryptically admired the panelled room but gave no account of the concert, saying that since the orchestra was so deprived of regular players he felt it unfair to judge the orchestra for the actual result, and described the choir as having 'a veiled tone'.²⁰¹ He thought soloists Hendry and Purvis had given 'a good account' but that Mrs Dodds '...should

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 617.

¹⁹⁶ *The Yorkshire Post*, Sat. 7 May, 1920. GB-NEmd.

¹⁹⁷ Vaughan Williams, R, *National Music and other Essays*, 'Bach the Great Bourgeois' (Oxford: OUP, 1963), Arrangement and Preface to Second Edition, Michael Kennedy, 1986. Re-issued as a Clarendon Paperback 1996, 176.

¹⁹⁸ *The Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 18 Dec, 1920. GB-NEmd.

The Newcastle Daily Journal, 18 Dec, 1920. GB-NEmd.

¹⁹⁹ *The Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 8 Jan, 1921. GB-NEmd.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ *Musical Opinion*, 8 Jan, 1921. GB-NEmd.

make a determined effort to overcome the distressing vibrato which frequently prevents one from knowing what note she is singing.²⁰²

3.4.2 *British Music: Holst and the 'Hymn of Jesus'*

But it was the British music concerts which brought in audiences, that of 22 February 1919 at the Westgate Hall, featuring Byrd's *Ground for Strings*, *When the leaves bee greene* (from a MS), Rutland Boughton's *Choral Folksong Variations*, *William and Margaret*, Walford Davies's *Solemn Melody* for strings and organ, and, from MS, Balfour Gardiner's *News from W'ydab* (conducted in Newcastle by Bainton in 1912), Goossens' *By the Tarn*, and *Rhapsody* for 'cello and piano played by Hetty Page. A first Newcastle performance of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* preceded piano pieces by Gerald Tyrwhitt. The first choral concert of the fifth season was another concert of British Music in the KH, on Saturday afternoon, 20 December 1919. Lawton was soloist, with William Hendry. Walford Davies' *Pastorals* were played with Holst's *Suite for String Orchestra*, 'a breezy suite in C...with a distinctly English character', according to the *Yorkshire Post*.²⁰³ John Dowland's *Lachrymae* followed along with Bantock's *Hebridean Folk Songs*, Boyce's *Suite for String Orchestra* and sea shanties by R. R. Terry and Vaughan Williams. At the end of the programme there were items for Christmas: Herbert Howells's 'Here is the little door', Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* and some traditional carols. The *Yorkshire Post* also mentioned that 'two carols by Mr. W. G. Whittaker were charmingly sung by Miss Lawton', being arrangements of traditional fifteenth century carols.²⁰⁴ The choir, 'small in number, but exquisitely trained and finely balanced' was heard by a large audience.²⁰⁵ However, the supply of programmes ran out because (as WGW afterwards explained to a *Journal* reporter) with £10 having been wasted on programmes the previous season 'caution must be our watchword'.²⁰⁶ At this concert, William Large, a printer, joined the tenor section, his firm soon taking on the printing of all BC programmes.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ The *Yorkshire Post*, 20 Dec, 1919. GB-NEmd.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ The *News Chronicle*, 20 Dec, 1919. GB-NEmd.

²⁰⁶ The *Newcastle Journal*, 20 Dec, 1919. GB-NEmd.

Bainton (after his return, now closely involved with WGW's in the organisation of the newly-founded NEMT) played as a guest in *Four Characteristic Pieces* by Frank Bridge and Bridge's *Capriccio* in F sharp minor at the next Choral Concert of British Music in the KH, on 7 February 1920. Grainger's *Sussex Mimmers' Carol*, and *Shepherds Hey* were so well received that Bainton gave an encore, Scott's *Danse Nègre*. John Ireland's *Rhapsody*, *Decorations*, and *Four Preludes* followed. His playing was described as 'inspired' in these pieces, especially in the famous 'The Holy Boy', 'which Bainton always performs incomparably'.²⁰⁷ Willbye's, 'Softly, O softly', and 'Down in a valley', a Morley Ballet, 'Shoot false love, I care not', and Dowland's Ayre 'now, o now, I needs must part', were sung, with a group of folk songs, including Balfour Gardiner's 'The Three Ravens', and 'The Hunt is up', and two arrangements by WGW which had won prizes in a competition organised by Hugh Robertson of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir ('The Captain's Lady', and 'The Deil's awa').

WGW plucked up courage to invite H Balfour Gardiner to be a guest at the next BC concert on 20 November 1920, after encouragement from Holst on 26 April: 'Certainly I would ask Balfour. If he doesn't want to come he'll say so (he does not love the North!) but in any case he will like being asked especially if you type the letter! Your script grows more wonderful each time.'²⁰⁸ Upon Gardiner's acceptance, Holst wrote: 'So glad about Balfour. You really do inspire us!²⁰⁹ Gardiner, famous for his *Shepherd's Fennel Dance* (and who was to give up writing 'before the bloom had rubbed off his fresh open-air inspiration')²¹⁰ travelled north on 20 November 1920 for a concert of his complete unaccompanied vocal works.²¹¹ It was Gardiner who had obtained publication of WGW's folk-song arrangements in 1914 so that the latter could conduct at the concert of British music with Kennedy Scott's Oriana Madrigal choir in the Albert Hall and while away on military service, Gardiner had lent WGW his house in order so that the latter could conduct Holst's choir at Morley College in December 1917.²¹² More recently, in July 1919, Gardiner accompanied WGW and Holst on a walking and biking holiday, during which WGW probably hatched his plan both for his performance of Gardiner's *News from Wjydab* the previous

²⁰⁷ *The Newcastle Daily News*, 7 Feb, 1920. GB-NEmd.

²⁰⁸ Holst, 1974, No. 95, April 26 [1920], 56.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 108, 24 November [1920], 63.

²¹⁰ *Aut VII*, 17.

²¹¹ Howes, F., *The English Musical Renaissance*, (Secker & Warburg: London, 1966), Howes, 195.

²¹² Holst, 1974, No. 57, Tuesday [18 December] 1917, 34.

February and now to give a largely Gardiner programme. At rehearsal Gardiner would not conduct, or at first express any opinion on, the choir's rendition until WGW had asked him half-a-dozen times over: 'Then, very apologetically & hesitatingly, he 'requested', with much diffidence, that some small point be altered, "only if you care, of course, just please yourself."²¹³ Owing to his timorousness, the ladies of the choir 'had the giggles' before the end of the evening. WGW regretted Gardiner's later withdrawal from musical creativity: 'It is a thousand pities that he dropped out of composition. An ample fortune, a love of ease, & interest in other matters, such as afforestation, caused him to disappear from the musical world. He had a charming talent, his works were so fresh. He might have done so much.'²¹⁴ 'Proud Maisie', settings of poems by William Barnes: 'Evening in the Village', and 'The Stage Coach', and three English folk song settings: 'The three Ravens', 'And how should I your true love know', and 'The Hunt is up' were sung. There was a first performance of a Masfield setting, 'An Old Song'. An item by another composer was Granville Bantock's 'The Death Croon', sung by Lawton with a six-part chorus (bouche fermée). WGW joined in as pianist, accompanying Carl Fuchs in 'cello solos, including Bach's Sonata in G for cello & piano. The *Yorkshire Post* admired the 'large and lofty room' in which H. Balfour Gardiner pieces 'took the premier share in the programme, and the composer graced the proceedings by his presence.'²¹⁵ Apart from a lack of local accent in the songs, WGW had 'got every ounce out of these somewhat exacting works.' However Bantock's 'The Death Croon' was thought to be the most effective work on the programme, and 'most exquisitely rendered by Lawton'.²¹⁶ Gardiner showed his gratitude to WGW by dedicating to him a group of five piano pieces published in 1922 under the general title of *Shenadoab*, and one called 'Jesmond' in honour of WGW's home district. Lloyd comments: 'Perhaps intentionally, in some places the sparser textures and quasi-folksong elements draw the set geographically closer to Whittaker's beloved Northumbrian region.'²¹⁷ WGW had recently introduced a new event, the 'social function' or reception, given by the BMS for musical guests to Newcastle, and Gardiner was so

²¹³ Aut VII, 17.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ The *Yorkshire Post*, 20 Nov, 1920. GB-NEmd.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Lloyd, S., *H. Balfour Gardiner*, (CUP: Cambridge, 1984), 140.

entertained that afternoon (the first guest having been Professor Tovey of Edinburgh University the previous week).²¹⁸

Holst visited Newcastle on 5 March 1921 to conduct his *Hymn of Jesus*. He had conducted the work with the Oxford Bach choir on 13 June 1920 and in Cambridge in February. He was delighted to be invited to come, replying on 14 January: 'Why use the word 'dare'? Of course I'd love to come and I think I can as it is the weekend.'²¹⁹ He sent the programme of the Cambridge performance for WGW's perusal, arriving the evening before the concert, to rehearse the choir. WGW had another appointment, his deputy H. Robinson being left in charge for the evening. Afterwards Robinson told WGW that Holst tried the work through once, said nothing, and continued to look at his score. The choir wondered what was going to happen, WGW writing: 'They knew they had it at their finger tips, for they had slogged tremendously hard'.²²⁰ Holst asked them to sing it through again, & then suggested a short interval, leaving them more puzzled than before, 'not being accustomed to even a moment's rest at rehearsals'.²²¹ WGW continued: 'Holst then put his arm through that of the assistant led him aside and said: 'What does one do with a choir when it is perfect?' 'You are joking, Mr. Holst.' 'Not in the slightest. I've never heard anything like this before. The choir is simply perfect; everything is exactly what I want, I can't tell them anything. What am I to do?' 'Well, just take it through once more.'²²² *The Hymn of Jesus* both opened and closed the concert (following Vaughan Williams's precedent, intended to familiarise an audience with a new work). A group of singers from ACCS formed the semi-chorus. Though the *Journal* thought the audience 'well used to the mystical and modern idiom' their critic wrote 'much of the music is frankly revolutionary, daringly dissonant, and uncompromisingly uncomfortable. Of enjoyment, it gave us none, yet one could not feel altogether unappreciative of its sheer audacity'.²²³ The work could 'scarcely be appreciated fully at a first hearing' and would require 'many more than two performances to persuade us that this kind of thing is worth

²¹⁸ The Pen & Palette club (of which Clark was an enthusiastic co-founder in 1901), had first acted as a forum for the arts in Newcastle, giving hospitality to many artists, writers and musicians visiting Newcastle.

²¹⁹ Holst, 1974, No. No. 110, [14 January 1921], 64.

²²⁰ Aut VII, 17.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Aut VII, 18.

²²³ *The Newcastle Daily Journal*, 5 March, 1921. GB-NEmd.

doing.²²⁴ The *Journal* observed that though some of the audience ‘declined with thanks’ the opportunity of a second hearing, ‘many stayed and faced the ordeal...Mr. Holst conducted with interest and care.’²²⁵ Holst had allowed WGW to rescore the *Hymn of Jesus* for a smaller orchestra, but the *Chronicle* critic disliked the reduced orchestral arrangement, feeling that much effect was inevitably lost.²²⁶ Holst was taken to Tilleys’ Restaurant afterwards, for a BMS reception. Back at home, he wrote to WGW:

Dear Whittaker,

I was too overwhelmed by the singing of your Bach Choir to thank them properly, so I write to ask you to do so for me.

I did not know before that so small a body of voices could produce such a wonderful volume of tone. But this is only one of their many virtues. Even more important is their clearness of diction and beautiful quality. But my greatest delight was in their flexibility which rivalled that of a first rate orchestra-I know no other body of singers who equal them in this. Accept my warmest congratulations and thanks and ask them to do the same. Yours ever Gustav Holst²²⁷

There had also been, after the performance of the *Hymn of Jesus*, in March 1921, an invitation (presumably from Holst) for the choir to repeat the work at ‘an important series of concerts in London’, but, since a larger choir was required, this had been regretfully declined.²²⁸ But the idea of a trip to London was irresistible to WGW and, shortly afterwards, the *Journal* announced that the BC was to visit London soon after Christmas to give a series of Bach cantatas.²²⁹ Staying over a weekend they would sing at four or five performances.

Early in 1921 WGW met someone who was to be a regular guest performer with the BC and visitor to his home – the young pianist, Harriet Cohen. Both were participants in the spring of 1921 in one of Dan Godfrey’s concerts at Bournemouth, WGW conducting his *Prelude to The Choephorce*, and Cohen playing Bach’s D minor Clavier concerto.²³⁰ WGW remembered their conversation in the anteroom: ‘As we chatted ...she asked if we did much Bach in Newcastle. When I told her of the Choir her eyes sparkled: ‘You must let me come up & play.’²³¹ WGW explained that the choir worked ‘almost solely with local people’ and could not afford to bring

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ *The Newcastle Chronicle*, 5 March, 1921. GB-NEmd.

²²⁷ BC Scrapbooks. GB-NEmd.

²²⁸ BC Report for the Sixth Season. GB-NEmd.

²²⁹ *The Newcastle Daily Journal*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

²³⁰ Aut VII, 13.

²³¹ Ibid.

artists from London, to which Cohen replied: 'What do I want with fees? You pay my fare & put me up & I'll come.'²³² Cohen's memory of the event differs slightly:

At the rehearsal there was a smile from the bright-eyed, moustachioed face of a very tall man, there to conduct one of his own works: he paid me great compliments on my Bach in soft, rolling Northumbrian accents. Dan Godfrey seemed very impressed by this verdict and, as he led me on to the platform in the afternoon, told me that my new admirer, Dr Whittaker, was one of the most famous choral conductors in the kingdom and that W. G., as he later became to me, had informed him that he was going to invite me to play the concerto with the Newcastle Bach Choir in November. This was another milestone.²³³

A prodigious pianist of the Matthey School, famous for her Bach performances, Cohen had enjoyed her Prom début in November 1920 at the age of only eighteen. Significantly, she began her career just as Harold Samuel's career as a Bach exponent, playing Bach's keyboard works in their original form, was launched. David Dubal writes that Busoni, one of the great figures of the nineteenth century 'brought the "Romantic" possibilities of Bach on the modern concert grand to its apogee in his monumental performances and in his transcriptions.'²³⁴ This appreciation of Bach through transcription and attitude which accepted the supremacy of the piano for playing Bach, had persisted until Harold Samuel's solo career began in 1919. Cohen, a close friend of Bax, became that composer's musical interpreter and constant companion. Through his new association with Cohen, WGW selected the Bax string quartet No 1 in G major (composed in 1918) for performance at the BC chamber concerts in March 1922. On 5 November 1921, Cohen played the Bach D minor concerto with the BC, to a capacity audience, 'the gallery too, being filled'.²³⁵ Cohen also played Bax's unpublished Second Piano Sonata in one movement and gave an encore of a Scarlatti Sonata in D.²³⁶ The choir sang Bach's Cantata No. 23 'Thou very God and David's Son' and Cantata No. 27 'Who knows, how near my latter ending' which WGW thought 'of superb quality'.²³⁷ (The *Yorkshire Post* detected that 'intonation wavered very slightly' in this work.)²³⁸ The Motet in eight parts 'The Spirit also helpeth us' (previously sung in 1915) was also sung. Though it was funeral music for the Rector of St Thomas's School, WGW (agreeing with Parry) found the work 'rather matter-of-fact and business-like', or indeed

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Cohen, H., *A Bundle of Time*, (Faber and Faber: 1969), 66.

²³⁴ Duval, D, 'Bach', Grand Piano: Bauer, Friedman, Grainger, Hess, Samuel: Bach, Nimbus Records, 1996, NI8808.

²³⁵ TMB, *The Newcastle Daily News*, 5 Nov, 1921. GB-NEmd.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 258.

²³⁸ The *Yorkshire Post*, 5 Nov, 1921. GB-NEmd.

‘untender’.²³⁹ However, the *Yorkshire Post* critic congratulated WGW on ‘so finished a performance of a splendid and exacting work’.²⁴⁰ ‘TMB’ of the *Daily News* commented that, though billed as a Cantata Concert, ‘the principal attraction really lay in the appearance of Miss Harriet Cohen, the pianist who has been attracting such favourable attention in the Metropolis.’²⁴¹ Few lady pianists could ‘so carry away an audience, whilst appearing totally oblivious that there was any audience present at all’.²⁴² Bax’s Sonata was ‘big, and sincere, a really fine work, which should do much to enhance its creator’s rapidly growing reputation.’²⁴³ (After this, Cohen returned almost yearly to play at AC, feeling gratitude towards WGW, ‘he, as it were, opened up the north of England to me’, also introducing her to Tovey who took an interest in her Bach playing.)²⁴⁴

Percy Grainger, Myra Hess, and Harol Bauer had all played Bach in London from the early beginning of the century, but it was Harold Samuel (who performed Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* there in 1898) who from 1919 led the trend towards all-Bach piano recitals. WGW was a great admirer of this *genre* of music performance, wrote Bach transcriptions himself, and, despite his desire for authenticity in his own choral concerts, found nothing wrong in the playing of Bach’s solo keyboard music on the piano. Vaughan Williams went further: ‘But we must introduce Bach to our musical public not as a museum piece Harry Haskell writes that arguments at this time would be made that had Bach been alive he would have used a modern piano and that ‘compromise with strict historical accuracy was not only permissible but essential in order to bring early music across more vividly to modern listeners’.²⁴⁵ Haskell quotes Leopold Stokowski (‘a child of the nineteenth century’), an ardent creator of Bach piano transcriptions, who regarded transcriptions as ‘a constant evolution of music and the never-ending growth of its expression’.²⁴⁶ Stokowski, Haskell writes, ‘conceived Bach’s music in pictorial terms’ and used ‘flowery language’ to describe Bach’s work, a tendency of WGW’s, as evidenced in the latter’s book on the Cantatas.

²³⁹ Whittaker, 1924, 225.

²⁴⁰ *The Yorkshire Post*, 5 Nov, 1921. GB-NEmd.

²⁴¹ TMB, *The Newcastle Daily News*, 5 Nov, 1921. GB-NEmd.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ Cohen, 67.

²⁴⁵ Haskell, H, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 89.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

At the next Cantata recital in St Nicholas's on 26 November 1921, the Weimar Cantata for Sexagesima, No. 18, 'As the rain and snow fall', scored for chorus, STB soloists, and orchestra (with four lines of violas, two flutes à bec, bassoon, and bassi), was performed. This was followed by Cantata No. 19, 'Now there was war', which begins dramatically with a rapid fugal subject in the opening chorus depicting St Michael casting out the dragon, described by WGW as 'a musical counterpart of scenes in *'Paradise Lost'*'.²⁴⁷ At a 'Christmas and New Year Concert' of British Music on 17 December 1921, Olive Tomlinson (a Conservatoire student and honorary rehearsal pianist since 1919) played Grainger's 'Sussex Mummers's carol', Ireland's 'Merry Andrew', and Balfour Gardiner's 'Noel'(so well-received it was repeated).²⁴⁸ John Vine sang Bax's 'A Christmas Carol', Balfour Gardiner's 'Winter Songs' (including 'When Icicles hang'), Rootham's 'Noel', Stanford's 'The Winds of Bethlehem', Walford Davies's 'O Little Town', songs by Berners, WGW and Noble-Vine, and carols arranged by Vaughan Williams. The choir gave traditional and modern carols, and a second performance of B. J. Dale's *Before the Paling of the Stars*, with Bach's motet in eight parts, for New Year's Day, 'Sing ye to the Lord'.

3.5 A LONDON TRIUMPH: TOWARDS AN AUTHENTIC ORCHESTRA

WGW found 1922 'a notable year for the choir, even though it brought one devastating experience'.²⁴⁹ He was referring firstly to the BC's trip to London, when their magical singing earned them a high opinion in the capital, and secondly to the disturbing change in Holst's personality which became evident during the composer's November visit to Newcastle. Although Holst had invited the choir to London, it was his ex-pupil, Jane Joseph, who organised the visit, undertaking all secretarial duties without fee.²⁵⁰ WGW writes that: 'Miss Joseph's arrangements were perfect; free accommodation was found for members who wished it...all were looked after in every particular.'²⁵¹ The BC raised money to reimburse working people among its ranks, many of whom were 'a state of high excitement' having never previously visited London. WGW's

²⁴⁷ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 529.

²⁴⁸ Tomlinson left to study at the RCM, but returned for concerts in the 1923/24 season.

²⁴⁹ Aut VII 19.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 18.

²⁵¹ Aut VII, 19.

piano pupils and choir members copied out the parts, taking many hours, WGW writing continuo parts from figured bass. It was probably WGW who elaborated a simple invitation from Holst for the choir to sing in London, to the status of a 'festival'.²⁵² WGW's model for a Bach conductor, Hugh Allen, had held a four-day Festival for the London Bach Choir, performing the three great motets, 'Come, Jesu, Come', 'Jesu, priceless treasure', and 'Sing to the Lord', giving Bach's Mass in B minor at the last concert, and Stanford had similarly given a three-day Festival in 1895, in the newly-opened Queen's Hall, repeated in 1897, opening with the *Matthew Passion* and closing with the Mass in B Minor. WGW planned the orchestra with advice from Holst, engaging eighteen orchestral players with Anthony Collins (leader), Bernard Shore, viola, Albert Fransella, flute, Leon Goossens and J Macdonagh, oboes, and oboes d'amore, and, as first trumpet, the Newcastle musician Mark Hemingway (Holst suggested that WGW tell 'the other two that you have chosen him because he can play more softly than anybody you know.').²⁵³ Leon Goossens, Eugene Goossens's brother, wrote to say that he could not attend rehearsals, unimportant as he had 'played all Bach'. WGW was resolute, 'no rehearsal, no engagement'.²⁵⁴ At one of the rehearsals, Goossens showed resentment when corrected over an uncustomary error 'by an unknown conductor from the provinces' calling out during a rest that nothing was wrong. He afterwards acknowledged his mistake, and at the end of the festival, he and Macdonagh approached WGW to say that they had played 'some marvellous things quite unknown to us' and asked where they could get hold of the music. WGW replied that the choir had copied parts out themselves of many cantatas which he was willing to lend Goossens.²⁵⁵ At this, WGW notes that the oboist's attitude subsequently was quite different.

The BC sang first in the Aeolian Hall at 8.15 pm, on Wednesday 22 February, 1922 (that evening, and the next being a 'full house'). Henry Wood, Holst, and Vaughan Williams, were in the large and appreciative audience, the latter having urged members of the London Bach choir to attend to hear 'this famous organisation'.²⁵⁶ WGW began with three church cantatas, all sung

²⁵² An advance notice talks of a trip to London at Dr. Vaughan Williams's urging, 'Bach being very much in fashion at the moment', but does not use the title 'festival'. The *Newcastle Chronicle*, undated cutting. *GB-NEmd*.

²⁵³ *Aut VII*, 19.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Newcastle Chronicle*, undated cutting, *GB-NEmd*.

previously in Newcastle, No. 3, 'Ah God! How many pains of heart', No.19, 'There arose a great strife' and No. 34, 'O fire everlasting'. The BC also sang the 8-part Motet 'The Spirit also helpeth us', and the orchestra performed the Overture in D. Soloists were Dorothy Silk, Margaret Champneys, Stuart Wilson, and Clive Carey, 'a fine team', as WGW described them, and 'all skilled Bach singers'.²⁵⁷ Dorothy Silk, with Gerald Cooper at the harpsichord, sang songs from the Schemelli book, 'with exquisite feeling' according to the *North Star*.²⁵⁸ The choir sang almost without flaw: 'The volume of tone was astonishing, and the soft passages beautifully done.'²⁵⁹ Edgar Crowe, had written on 10 February in the *Chronicle* that high praise for the choir had come from Vaughan Williams, Holst, and Balfour Gardiner, who had issued the pressing invitation to London and who must now have felt gratified.²⁶⁰

This was the first time London critics had been exposed to the Newcastle BC and their response was effusive. The critic of the *Westminster Gazette* thought the choir 'clearly an institution to be reckoned with', and enjoyed their 'admirable precision and expressiveness'.²⁶¹ The *Musical News* critic gained '...an impression of admirable discipline, both in the precision of intonation, and rhythm' but his hunger for beauty of tone was unsatisfied.²⁶² This was unlike *The Times* reviewer of 23 February who considered that the choir 'fulfilled expectations from the first, and ended by surpassing them'.²⁶³ The *Morning Post* also approved: 'The audience was given Bach's church music as interpreted by a savant and practical man in Dr. Whittaker and sang in tune. Herein the ideal of Bach for Bach's sake was satisfied.'²⁶⁴ Also testifying to the BC's intonation, the *Musical News* critic had tested the pitch after twenty minutes of extremely contrapuntal music, finding it was accurate.²⁶⁵ The *Pall Mall Gazette* said expectations had been high since WGW was 'held in universal esteem' as choir trainer and folk song arranger and his small forces, though not original, gave 'welcome relief from the mammoth combinations which were the fashion for so

²⁵⁷ Aut VII, 19.

²⁵⁸ The *North Star*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Edgar Crowe, *The Newcastle Chronicle*, 10 Feb, 1922.

²⁶¹ The *Westminster Gazette*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

²⁶² The *Musical News*, 4 March, 1922.

²⁶³ *The Times*, 23 Feb, 1922. GB-NEmd.

²⁶⁴ The *Morning Post*, 23 Feb, 1922. GB-NEmd.

²⁶⁵ The *Musical News*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

long'.²⁶⁶ Newman of the *Sunday Times* reviewed the first concert and found that, for such a small choir, 'their range of dramatic resource [was] remarkable', attained by 'perfect steadiness, clarity and balance of the parts'.²⁶⁷ He deprecated the choir's tendency to over stress words, finding the small orchestra 'solid in wind tone but feeble in the strings'.²⁶⁸ *The Nation and the Athenaeum* knew that WGW 'understands what few conductors of Bach have grasped – that Bach must be interpreted first and foremost as a musician'.²⁶⁹ However, WGW's choice of tempi caused some comment:

What is vital to the understanding of Bach is not the serpentine contour of a single phrase, but the architecture of a whole movement. This Dr. Whittaker understands fully. He has a predilection for quick *tempi*, knowing that a brisk pace helps both performers and listeners to grasp Bach in long phrases, and to see those long phrases as parts of a single whole. He makes his chorus sing them like instruments, with the clear articulation that intelligent bowing secures from the strings. It is curious that a conductor with so vigorous a sense of rhythm should allow himself frequent and regrettable *rallentandos* at the intermediate cadences. The sections hardly need marking off in so complete a manner.²⁷⁰

The *Christian Science Monitor, Boston* summed up: 'this small, compact body of singers, with ringing northern voices and the flexibility, precision, and fire of an orchestra, came as a revelation...Dr. Whittaker conducted without a baton, and his folk respond as readily to the slightest as to the most emphatic movements of his hands'.²⁷¹ Herbert Thompson in the *Yorkshire Post* admired the crisp verbal attack, the balance of tone, but noticed a lack of resonance in the basses.²⁷² He detected that the singers' attention had been directed to the varying relative importance of parts in the ensemble, but found that diction at ends of words, and conclusion of diminuendos, lacked finish due to the faults of individual singers.²⁷³

At the second concert on Thursday 23 February, at St Margaret's Westminster, WGW conducted 8-part motets, 'Sing ye to the Lord', and 'Come, Jesus come'. The solo harpsichordist, Violet Gordon Woodhouse, performed Partita No 5, Preludes and Fugues and other solos. Woodhouse, equalled only by Landowska (born in Warsaw but resident in France, who appeared in England from 1905) was a forerunner in popularising the use of authentic instruments through her concerts, records and radio broadcasts, playing the harpsichord, and, unlike Landowska, the

²⁶⁶ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

²⁶⁷ 'EN' (Ernest Newman), the *Sunday Times*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ *The Nation and the Athenaeum*, March 4, 1922. GB-NEmd.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ *The Christian Science Monitor, Boston*, 3 March, 1922, London. GB-NEmd.

²⁷² *The Yorkshire Post*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

²⁷³ Ibid.

clavichord. The same soloists sang at the 3rd concert, in St. Michael's, Cornhill, on Friday 24 February. WGW described the scene in a newspaper account:

Three hours before we began there was a crowd outside. For an hour before we commenced, the building was packed with as many people as it would hold. They were jammed right up the aisle; they were sitting on the steps of the platform from which I conducted. If I swayed an inch, I bumped into human bodies. The church grew hotter and hotter. The flutes and oboes sharpened so much that Dr. Harold Darke, the organist, had to transpose the figured bass part up a semitone during the last hour.²⁷⁴

The BC sang Cantata No. 4, 'Christ lay in death's dark prison' (first performed in 1915), No. 8, 'God in heaven, when comes my ending?', and No. 26, 'Ah, how fleeting', (both first sung in 1921). The choir sang for the first time No. 151, 'Comfort sweet, my Jesu comes'. This adoration of the Christ, for the third day of the Feast of the Nativity, was distinctive, WGW writing: 'To the soprano, is allotted one of the most supremely beautiful arias in the whole range of the cantatas.'²⁷⁵ Against a flauto traverse arabesque, this aria was 'melting in its exquisite tenderness'.²⁷⁶ The *Times* described how many of the audience stood for two hours, and reported the first Cantata 'exhilarating to listen to', while solo work preponderated in the others.²⁷⁷ When at rehearsal Carey, a baritone, had found the bass solo in 'Christ Lag in Todesbanden' out of his range, WGW asked the choir to sing the number chorally at the concert, so it 'sounded as if it were being sung by a colossal bass, & no-one was more delighted than Carey himself'.²⁷⁸

Some choir members stayed on in London, joining Dorothy Silk in the fourth and last of a series of 'old music' that she was giving in the Steinway Hall, with soloists Norah Dawnay, Norman Stone, and Clive Carey, and Harold Darke organist. Afterwards the *Newcastle Chronicle* reported that BC members were entertained at a 'beano' by Morley College students and Mrs. Gordon Woodhouse brought her clavichord.²⁷⁹ The BC gave a rousing rendering of Holst's rollicking chorus 'Bring us in good ale', and the sailor shanty 'Billy Boy', which, sung in the vernacular, 'both bewildered and pleased the London students.'²⁸⁰ Walter Corder (in an account published in the *Journal*) related how when he tried to thank Vaughan Williams, the composer replied: 'No, it is we who are indebted to Newcastle. This week has been a perfect revelation to

²⁷⁴ Aut VII, 19.

²⁷⁵ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. II, 161.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ *The Times*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

²⁷⁸ Aut VII, 20.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 21.

²⁸⁰ *The Newcastle Chronicle*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

us. We have never realised till now what Bach could really mean'.²⁸¹ Corder described how, at St Michael's: 'Perched up in his reading desk (the only available seat!) the writer looked down on one of the great city churches, packed to the point of danger at the awkward hour of 6pm. For two hours the crowded audience, largely of necessity, standing in discomfort, listened with profound attention and in reverent silence.' He attributed success to the 'almost mesmeric bond between the conductor and every member of his choir'. According to Crowe, the BC returned in the small hours, only to be 'plunged' by WGW, next evening, into a rehearsal of the B Minor Mass for their choral concert on 18 March. César Sendingen, in the *New York Musical Courier*, seemed to perceive this almost fanatical streak:

It is an organisation built up by a musical crank...and he has trained his choir of 40 or so to sing this music as he thinks it should be sung, with all the individual expression, the agility and the finesse of phrasing and diction that a soloist's ensemble would achieve. And so he has made the Newcastle Cathedral a second Thomaskirche, and spread the fame of his choir through the land.²⁸²

Bach's B minor Mass, perhaps regarded by WGW as a metaphorical conclusion to the festival presented the next challenge for the BC.²⁸³ WGW lectured on the work with BC illustrations on 11 March, the performance taking place on 18 March 1922, given by forty voices for the four and eight-part choruses, ten extra sopranos in the five-part, and ten extra altos in the Sanctus. Though the Mass had been sung twice 'on the grand scale' by the CU, it was surely the first performance in Britain by such a small choir. He felt vindicated that 'the flexibility of line, and the weaving of parts (I had inserted about a thousand expression marks in each vocal score), and the balance between choir & orchestra, revealed beauties that I had never heard before. Moreover the climaxes were positively overwhelming, because of the light & shade in the other portions.'²⁸⁴ The audience 'overflowed into all the corridors', enthusiasts standing throughout the long performance. Wall and Hemingway played their obligato parts exquisitely, one local critic claiming that the performance marked 'the highest water-mark of the society's work.'²⁸⁵ Afterwards the BC adopted a regular three-year cycle of the Mass and the two Passions.

²⁸¹ Unidentified newspaper cutting, *GB-NEmd*.

²⁸² César Sendingen, the *New York Musical Courier*, undated cutting. *GB-NEmd*.

²⁸³ Indeed, the *Newcastle Chronicle* (undated cutting *GB-NEmd*) reported that, though the choir was tired, they 'plunged' on the evening of their return 'straight into a rehearsal for the B minor Mass' having toyed with the idea of rehearsing during the train journey home.

²⁸⁴ Aut VII, 21.

²⁸⁵ Unidentified newspaper cutting. *GB-NEmd*.

In 1921 another Peace Music Festival, a hang-over from the Armistice celebrations of 1919, had been held in Newcastle (a much diminished event, limited to three concerts given by two local orchestras and two local the bands in the Town Hall) followed by a further festival in 1922. He participated on Sunday 9 April with the BC and the remnants of the war-time 'Newcastle-upon-Tyne and District Festival Choir, in a 'Grand Concert' in the Palace Theatre with Laycock, and the St Hilda Band conducted by Oliver. The programme, however, was not one that could satisfy an audience of such diverse taste, the BC performing Cantata No. 190, 'Sing ye to the Lord' and the motet 'The Spirit also helpeth us', while the band played famous test pieces, such as 'Life Divine', 'William Tell' overture, and 'Samson and Delilah'. The gulf in taste between the two types of music caused the *Chronicle* critic, T Laverick, to report that WGW's efforts to resuscitate Bach's work at the Palace Theatre 'fell flat on a big percentage of the audience'.²⁸⁶ He suggested that Bach's music, arranged well for brass, would go down well with the players but might be considered 'carrying the plan of Dr. Whittaker too far'.²⁸⁷

Nevertheless, WGW's effort was productive, for through this continued connection with the band, WGW was able to avail himself of specialist cornet players to make possible cantata performances requiring trumpet parts or *clarino* parts (extremely high by modern standards), only practical on modern larger instruments through the technical superiority of the local virtuoso brass band players. Indeed another St. Hilda band player, who joined WGW's BC orchestra, was the superb cornet player Jack Mackintosh 1891-1979 (whose father John Mackintosh of Tow Law was also a fine musician). Mackintosh left the Whitworth Prize Band, moved to Sunderland in 1882 and joined the 1st Durham Artillery Volunteers Corps Band as soloist, also being soloist in W. Lax's theatre Orchestra, J H Amer's Exhibition band, and independently with Manns, Cowen, Samuel Coleridge Taylor, and Kilburn. He was hired professionally by the St. Hilda Band in 1912, playing solos with Laycock in 1913, and replacing him when the latter was called up. In 1919, he joined Sunderland Empire Theatre orchestra, also helping Harton Band to win the Belle Vue open championship, by which time the brilliance of his execution caused a sensation. He was an optical instrument technician, working with Dr Boyd Cunningham in Sunderland, but in July

²⁸⁶ Laverick, T, 1 College Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Review of Band concert, the *Newcastle Chronicle*, Sunday, April 9, 1922. *GB-NEmd*.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

1930, invited by Henry Wood, joined the new BBC Symphony Orchestra. McIntosh also played for WGW's BC concerts, and for the BBC at the Newcastle Studios in Eldon Square. His rendition of 'The Trumpet shall Sound' from the *Messiah* was in great demand.²⁸⁸ When Hemingway left, Mackintosh replaced him and 'proved a brilliant artist', allowing WGW to prove that Bach's Cantata trumpet parts could be performed, despite William Wallace's doubts revealed in his Grove article.²⁸⁹ Many of the Bach horn parts exceeded the compass of known horns, equalling the range of the trumpet, so WGW, in consultation with Hemingway, solved the problem by hanging a bowler hat over the end of a trumpet. WGW kept the three trumpets and their hats concealed and no-one noticed. A Cathedral recital of 6 May 1922 was simple in nature, with unaccompanied chorales and the five-part motet 'Jesu, Priceless Treasure' in the programme, together with organ chorale preludes played by Ellis on 'Liebster Jesu', 'Erbarme'dich', and the giant fugue on the chorale 'Wir glauben allan einen Gott'.

By way of relaxation, on 10 June, ninety BC members, friends, and WE class members, travelled to Northumberland in three charabancs, picnicking before giving a concert in Whitfield Parish Church, with tea following in the grounds of Whitfield Hall provided by Mrs. Blackett-Orde, on whose estate WGW now had his new rented cottage. WGW reported in the prospectus that the season had been blighted for two months before the Festival with influenza, audience figures being the lowest ever, and 'empty halls were the order of the day'. In London, by contrast, halls were not big enough for the potential audience (WGW failed to acknowledge that admission to the London concerts was free). Although choristers had funded themselves, a loss of £10 had occurred. WGW thanked Jane Joseph, acknowledging 'a large debt of gratitude' since she had thought of 'every possible matter'. WGW reported an improvement in audiences since moving to the KH (rehearsals now took place in Jesmond Parish Church and Jesmond Presbyterian Church).

²⁸⁸ Sleeve notes by Robert F Wray, Charles Round, and J Stephen Goddard from: 'Heritage in Brass', a re-mastering of old recordings of famous brass bands and soloists between 1922-1926 made by Zonophone, Beltona, Edison Bell, Columbia, and HMV. [Look Records Ltd. 1983]

²⁸⁹ Whittaker, 1940, 130.

3.5.1 *Tudor Music: Visits of Bax and Vaughan Williams and a change in Holst*

Earlier in the year, on 28 January 1922, the 45th concert of the society featured Tudor and Modern British Music, the 'bread and butter' of the choir, with Annie Eckford as solo pianist and Olive Tomlinson, accompanist. Dowland's 'Ayres to foure voyces', and three Thomas Ford songs, opened the concert, which continued with Wilbye Madrigals, three songs by Parry, including 'I'm wearing Sweet violets', and Balfour Gardiner's 'Cargoes', for solo quartet and chorus. Wall and Eckford performed Eugene Goossens' first violin sonata, composed in 1918. Goossens, now 29, had trained at Bruges, Liverpool College of Music, and the RCM (Wood and Stanford being his teachers) and the previous year had conducted the first English performance of *The Rite of Spring*, in the presence of Stravinsky. Goossens left for America in 1923 (later having a distinguished career in Australia). Wall also performed his own unpublished violin sonata. On St. Cecilia's Day, 22 November 1922, Herbert Howells gave, with the BC, a BMS recital of his compositions in a crowded St James's Congregational Church Hall, Northumberland Road. Through WGW's new friendship with the pianist Harriet Cohen, who from 1921 played with the choir regularly, another renowned composer, Bax (Cohen's friend) came to hear his *Mater Ora Filium* sung by the BC at the end of their concert on Saturday 16 December. He refused to conduct, but he and Wall played his first Violin and Pianoforte Sonata. WGW intended to meet him at the station, but Bax had taken an earlier 'relief' train and was at Granville Road when WGW returned:

When I got into the house he was sitting in my study with a volume of the madrigals of Weelkes in his hand. I remarked that he must have steeped himself in Tudor music before writing *Mater Ora Filium*, as it was in the direct line of tradition. He replied that not only did he not know much of that period, but that he had never seen a Weelkes madrigal until he had taken the volume from my shelves!²⁹⁰

WGW thought the work magnificent, and it appealed to the choir enormously. The choral effects were superb and, despite its difficulties, was 'fine singing', and rehearsals 'a wonderful thrill'. Audiences were so enthusiastic 'we had to put it on at concert after concert.'²⁹¹ Other works given were Bax's 'Christmas Motet for Double Choir', Warlock's difficult 'Corpus Christi Carol',

²⁹⁰ Aut VII, 24.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

Carols by Howells, Walford Davies' 'Traditional carol', Cecil Sharp's Worcester carol ('As I sat on a sunny bank'), and Vaughan Williams's 'Hereford traditional carol' (to the tune *Dives and Lazarus*). Bach's violin sonata in B minor was given by Wall and Arthur Floyd and afterwards a BMS reception was held. Bax would offer no criticism until he and WGW were 'walking home in the 'wee sma' oors'" following supper at Bainton's. Then Bax went through the work 'bar by bar', 'discussing point after point, as though the score was in front of him.'²⁹² He was, though, pleased with the performance. The *Journal* critic disliked the violin sonata, saying it was 'very modern, the music is naturally very tuneless. That seems to be the distinguishing feature of all our modern writers';²⁹³ but the choir was admired by the *Yorkshire Post* the critic writing that the intricacies of *Mater Ora Filium*, with the choir sometimes divided in fifteen parts, were 'most successfully overcome'.²⁹⁴

In 1923, celebrations for the Tercentenary of Byrd's death were held countrywide, Scholes writing: 'The Byrd Tercentenary was observed with a thoroughness that was astonishing.'²⁹⁵ Harriet Cohen played with the BC on 24 February, giving works by Byrd and Weelkes (including Byrd's 'Earl of Salisbury's Pavan'), Vivaldi and Scarlatti, and arrangements of Bach Choral Preludes by Hummel and Busoni, with pieces by Ireland, Bax and Goossens. The BC sang secular songs by Byrd (ten members singing the *Sanctus*, *Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei*, from the 5-part Mass in D minor), and also performed Weelkes Madrigals and Ayres, and a part song composed by Edgar Crowe, 'Ah! County Guy' (a prize-winning song at NEMT in 1921) sung by Lilian Lineker. Bax's *Mater Ora Filium* concluded the programme. Another distinguished guest, Ralph Vaughan Williams, conducted his Mass in G minor for solo quartet and double choir, on 5 May 1923, in the Cathedral. Performed liturgically at Westminster Cathedral the previous summer, it received a first performance with the City of Birmingham choir, and first London performance by Wolverhampton Musical Society, under Joseph Lewis. The BC repeated it at the end of the concert. The *Newcastle Journal* reported that 'Dr Williams...brilliant pioneer and cultured leader of the modern British School' had given a short but expressive tribute to the choir

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ 'Counterpoint', *The Newcastle Journal*, 16 Dec, 1922. GB-NEmd.

²⁹⁴ *The Yorkshire Post*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

²⁹⁵ 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. II, (Novello & Co. Ltd. & OUP: London, 1947), 780.

after the performance: 'Beautifully sung'.²⁹⁶ Also sung were Byrd motets and movements from Byrd's Mass for Five Voices. Tysoe of Leeds Parish Church performed *Rhogyedre* and Bairstow's *Vexilla Regis*. The *Journal* reviewer, reflecting the current national appetite for things Tudor, found the Mass 'as difficult as it is beautiful' though 'not conspicuous for dissonances, but its colour contrasts are subtly and deftly introduced'.²⁹⁷ According to the *Chronicle* critic the Mass 'carries us away back to a glorious past in which Byrd and the great musicians of the Tudor period gave of their best to music intended for church rendering pure and simple'.²⁹⁸ Scholes, critic of the *Observer*, wrote on WGW's 'balance' in this choral performance:

Dr. W.G. Whittaker...has deliberately kept his figures low, believing, I think, that for flexibility in Bach performances you need a small but efficient body-11, 10, 10, 10-equality except for extra soprano in case of illness. In 5 part choruses he adds 10 extra sopranos. In the 6 part Sanctus of the B Minor Mass he further adds 10 contraltos.²⁹⁹

In fact the scheme looked perfect: 'This is how we shall sing Bach in heaven.' Vaughan Williams wrote on 21 May to WGW from 13 Cheyne Walk:

Will you convey to your Bach choir my warmest thanks for their splendid performance of my Mass.
I know what hard work and perseverance such perfection must have entailed
It was indeed a great experience for me hearing my music so beautifully sung under such ideal conditions.³⁰⁰

A changed Holst arrived in Newcastle to conduct a second performance of his *Ode to Death* on 11 November, 1922 (its first performance had occurred at Leeds Town Hall in October 1922 with the Festival chorus conducted by Coates) at a choral concert otherwise consisting of cantatas. It was the first time that WGW had juxta-positioned a modern British composition in a programme of Bach cantatas. The *Ode*, a setting of Whitman's poem 'When lilacs last in the Dooryard Bloom'd' from *Leaves of Grass* for chorus and orchestra was dedicated (according to Imogen Holst)³⁰¹ to Cecil Coles 'and the others', and written soon after the signing of the treaty, motivated by the futility and waste of life of the First World War.³⁰² By 1921, according to Imogen Holst, her father, who disliked publicity, 'had so many performances of his works that he

²⁹⁶ The *Newcastle Journal*, 5 May, 1923. GB-NEmd.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ The *Newcastle Chronicle*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

²⁹⁹ Scholes, P, the *Observer*, Sat., 5 May, 1923.

³⁰⁰ Letter from R Vaughan Williams to the Newcastle-on-Tyne BC. GB-NEmd.

³⁰¹ Holst, I, *Gustav Holst*, (OUP: London, 1938), 79.

³⁰² CD notes: Reed, P, (Chandos, Chan 9437, 6).

was often unable to hear them.³⁰³ The choir awaited Holst's visit with eager anticipation, though he was vague about arrangements. In July he admitted forgetting the concert date, and having no record of it. Next he agreed to come but only to listen, as he did not want to miss two or three days' work through having to rehearse. On 18 August, Holst, realising the concert was on a Saturday and he could arrive on Friday, apologised for the confusion. He was very depressed and progressing towards the nervous breakdown which overtook him the following year. WGW describes how Holst had become very obsessed with a strong objection he had developed towards, what he termed, 'expressionism' in choral singing, largely caused, in WGW's opinion, by a lack of sympathy for the 'writings and choral methods' of Elgar:

It was a phase which showed very strongly in the compositions of his [Holst's] latest period, some of which are strangely baffling. At the rehearsal he would allow no deviation from a strict p or pp, no rise & fall of a phrase in an apparently natural way. He pulled the singers up at almost every bar, found fault with them inexorably, tore them to shreds & left them in a state of sheer exhaustion & desperation.³⁰⁴

Three Bach Cantatas opened the programme, the first, No. 156, 'Of old hast thou known', a 'truly lovely solo cantata' employed chorus, SATB soloists, with strings and oboes.³⁰⁵ No. 153, 'How many and how mighty, Lord' for chorus and ATB soloists, was on the other hand 'a homily on conduct', showing 'no clear progression from one mood to another', but remarkable for its tenor aria, 'a vivid and crowded canvas, with wild leaping figures, tearing instrumental runs'.³⁰⁶ No. 45, 'There comes space' scored for flutes, oboes and strings, had two arias 'of outstanding merit' though WGW writes: 'The libretto is cold and wanting in imagery, though not devoid of skill'.³⁰⁷ The concert ended with Bach's Concerto for two violins, played by Elsie Pringle and Flo Gavin. The *Ode to Death* was played twice. A local reviewer thought the choir 'below par' on a couple of occasions, and though the orchestra played well in WGW's arrangement for small orchestra, it was suggested that perhaps this arrangement did not give 'an adequate representation of the work'.³⁰⁸ Holst received a great ovation at the conclusion. Afterwards seventy BMS members attended a reception and *conversazione* for the composer at Tilleys' Assembly Rooms including the young Arthur Milner.

³⁰³ Holst, I, 82.

³⁰⁴ Aut VII, 22.

³⁰⁵ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 276.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., Vol. II, 195.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ HW, unidentified, undated newspaper cutting. *GB-NEmd*.

Four unknown cantatas were given in St. Nicholas's Cathedral on 3 February: No. 13 'Lord my weeping tears, No. 29, 'We Praise Thee, O Lord', No. 191, 'Gloria in Excelsis', and No. 195, 'For the Righteous'(a wedding cantata). Strings, oboes, trumpets, and continuo were in the orchestra. No 13 was 'a cantata of sorrow' according to WGW, while No. 29, was composed for the election of the Town Council, and according to WGW, put together by Bach 'with the fever of transcription upon him', by 'scissor-and-paste methods'.³⁰⁹ The 'Gloria in Excelsis' was the only cantata not in the vernacular, and written for Christmas Day. The acoustics of the building, were said to have marred the opening 'Gloria in Excelsis', a 'borrowing' from the Mass in B minor, with its 'florid and brilliant writings.' Extra sopranos were used in this work to achieve a better balance. A second performance of the Mass in B minor was given in the KH on 17 March 1923 with the same soloists.

The BC Prospectus for the ninth season revealed that, though 'Beethoven week' had incurred a considerable financial loss, 'generous extra subscriptions' and choral concert profits (now reaching a 'high water mark' with the B Minor Mass) had made up the deficit, sustaining the momentum of the choir since 1918.

3.6 FINANCIAL PROBLEMS FOSS AND BYRD'S GREAT SERVICE

While WGW was in Australia for his Associated Board tour in the second half of 1923, his friends undertook his commitments, Bainton conducting the BC in a concert of Tudor music in November, with works by Gibbons, Wilbye, Morley, and Byrd, and Warlock's friend, John Goss as visiting guest performer (singing a group of Schubert Lieder from *Die Schöne Mullerin* and 'The Erl King', and modern English songs including Warlock's 'Milkmaids', Bainton's 'Ring out Wild Bells', and Peterkin's 'I heard a Piper Piping'). Annie Eckford played Dale's 'Night Fancies', Frank Bridge's 'Dew Fairy', and two Scriabin Preludes. The *Northern Echo* highly praised the choir, and said that Goss, 'very sympathetically' accompanied by Bainton, sang with beautiful quality, power of breath control, and 'instinct for the right delivery of both phrase and

³⁰⁹ Ibid., Vol. I, 254.

sentiment', reminiscent of Chaliapin.³¹⁰ But Dale did not arrive to conduct his Cantata *Before the Paling of the Stars* or perform his violin and piano sonata Op. 11 with Wall on 15 December, Max Pirani whose 'masterly efforts are worthy of the warmest praise' taking his place.³¹¹ Dale's piece was considered too long and tedious by most critics: 'Judging by the number of closed eyes in the audience, much of it had an unusually soporific influence...it is abstract music of the severest type.'³¹² There were also complaints that it was 'too eclectic for the occasion of an avowed Christmas concert.'³¹³ The *Journal* critic said of the Scriabin Preludes: 'Wild horses will not drag from us our opinion of this music!'³¹⁴ Henderson of the *Northern Echo*, preferred the title 'Afternoon of strange noises' to that of 'Christmas Concert', deriving least enjoyment from the work of Mr. Benjamin Dale, from whom the choir expected a visit, but who was too indisposed to come north.³¹⁵ However, 'HW' of the *North Star* wrote of Dale's compositions: 'One could not fail to be impressed by the sensitiveness and sincerity of his musical thinking, his feeling for beauty, and his power of expression.'³¹⁶ No Bach cantatas were given in WGW's absence.

WGW returned to a quickly deteriorating national financial situation which threatened many institutions and organisations, including the BC. However, WGW was probably more concerned that Holst, who had planned to conduct his new *The Fugal Concerto* with the BC, on 1 March 1924, with *The Cloud Messenger* (its fourth Newcastle performance), was still suffering from depression following a head injury, sustained in 1923, and had written to WGW on 28 February:

This is a horrible blow. My head got queer on Monday and worse on Tuesday. In order to get fit for tomorrow I sent a deputy to the RCM yesterday and spent most of the day dozing by the fire and lying in bed. But it was no use and I realise that my presence in Newcastle would be a greater disappointment and inconvenience than my absence.³¹⁷

Vally Lasker and Nora Day travelled north without him. At a two-piano recital to the local BMS, on 29 February they performed Holst's *The Planet Suite* and *The Perfect Fool*. Next day, before the concert, WGW explained his absence to the very large audience, telling of Holst's sadness that he could not hear his *Cloud Messenger*, as he had longed to hear it sung well, since

³¹⁰ *The Northern Echo*, 10 Nov, 1923. GB-NEmd.

³¹¹ *The Yorkshire Post* 17, December, 1923, GB-NEmd.

³¹² *The Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 17, December, 1923, GB-NEmd.

³¹³ *The North Mail*, 17, December, 1923, GB-NEmd.

³¹⁴ *The Newcastle Journal*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

³¹⁵ T Henderson, *The Northern Echo*, Other items in the programme were: Bax's 'Mater Ora Filium', Dale's 'The Holy Birth', and 'In Bethlehem', Warlock's 'Corpus Christi Carol', and WGW's 'Dollia', and 'Pelton Lonnin'. GB-NEmd.

³¹⁶ 'HW', *The North Star*, 17 Dec, 1923. GB-NEmd.

³¹⁷ Holst, 1974, No. 140, Thursday [February 1924], 82.

its poor first performance.³¹⁸ Although regretting this, the *Journal* critic saw an advantage: ‘one felt there had been no loss from the executive point of view, for Dr. Whittaker secured a rendering finer than which we have not so far heard’.³¹⁹ *The Fugal Concerto* was ‘splendid’, the orchestra playing ‘on a very high plane’.³²⁰ Bach’s secular Cantatas, ‘Was mir behagt’ (The Chase) and ‘Schleicht, spielende Wellen’ (‘Flow gently, fair rivers’) were probably given a first performance in England, using texts recently translated by C S Terry for the occasion.³²¹ The *Journal* critic thought Norah Allinson ‘marred some otherwise beautiful and effective singing by an acute and irritating attack of vibrato’, while the *Chronicle* commended WGW’s pupil, Marjorie Amati taking on the tenor part in the Bach.³²²

A memorable guest was Harold Samuel, the well-known Bach pianist, who played with the choir on 5 March 1924 (he had been an adjudicator for the NEMT in 1923). He, like WGW and Scholes, was a keen promoter of the Aeolian Company of America’s Reproducing Piano as an educational tool. Samuel, an ex-RAM student, under Dannreuther and Stanford, had played Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* at his London *début* in 1898. An accompanist and teacher, in 1919 the increase in the popularity of Bach’s keyboard music encouraged him to give ‘all-Bach’ weeks, never repeating a work, playing from memory.³²³ Months before his visit, Samuel volunteered to play the *Goldberg Variations* to WGW’s students before his recital, reminding WGW with a post-card just before arriving, ‘Don’t forget the Goldberg’. Samuel played magnificently before a large audience, despite nerves affecting him because he had not played the work for 18 months.³²⁴ At the BC concert, Samuel also performed three preludes and fugues from the *Well-tempered Clavier*, the Toccata in C minor, the B flat Partita No. I, the *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue*, and the Concerto in E. The BC sang Bach’s Motet ‘Jesu, Priceless Treasure’ as a welcome interlude.

Through his new editing role at OUP, WGW became a close colleague of Hubert Foss, head of the new educational music department. The Carnegie Trust issued Byrd’s Great service at

³¹⁸ The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 1 March, 1924, GB-NEmd.

³¹⁹ The *Newcastle Daily Journal*, Sat. 1 March, 1924. GB-NEmd.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Information from BC concert programme for 1 March, 1924. GB-NEmd.

³²² The *Newcastle Journal*, undated cutting. The *Newcastle Chronicle*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

³²³ Dubal, D, 1996, Sleeve notes from CD, ‘Bach’, *Bauer, Friedman, Grainger, Hess, Samuel*, Nimbus Records, ‘Grand Piano’, NI 8808. Dubal writes that ‘Samuel became regarded as a Bach specialist and resented the type-casting’ for the pianist played a large repertoire from the Elizabethan composers to Brahms and Ravel, Howard Ferguson’s Sonata of 1940 being dedicated to his memory.

³²⁴ Aut VII, 24.

Christmas 1922, and, in 1923, Edmund Fellowes' *William Byrd, A Short Account of his Life and Work* was published by OUP.³²⁵ As Fellowes, editor of the Carnegie *Church Music Series*, had recently rediscovered Byrd's Great Service (for a double choir of five voices) in a Durham Cathedral manuscript, OUP had published the service (from Volume II of *Tudor Church Music*) in a 'complete and accessible form'.³²⁶ With 'a high reputation as a scholar and choral conductor', WGW's interpretation of early music was already approved of by Fellowes, his recent Carnegie Award and the publicity surrounding his BC London Bach performances making him a natural choice to perform the Byrd Great Service with the BC.³²⁷ Foss, being only too well aware of the value of a well-publicized performance to sell musical publications, invited WGW to give the performance. WGW seized the opportunity of such a high profile opportunity, deciding to give the performance at the Cathedral recital usually reserved for Bach cantata performances. However, since eleven months had elapsed since the last cantata performance by the BC in February 1923, he knew he must fit in an extra concert. WGW succeeded in arranging a cantata concert in his sister's home town of Dumfries, on Saturday 15 March 1924 in the Lyceum Theatre, as part of the Dumfries Orchestral Subscription Concerts series, the event signalling a brief improvement in relations with his sibling Lily (who was a proficient local 'cellist in the Dumfries area, and now had three children). The BC programme at Dumfries included Cantatas No. 4, *Christ lay in Death's dark prison*, No. 6, *Stay with us, the evening approaches*, No. 53, *Strike thou hour* (with Lawton as solo contralto), and the Solo cantata for bass, No. 56 *I will my cross with gladness carry*, and the motet 'Jesu, Priceless Treasure'. The audience was small and Lawton was not admired, the *Dumfries and Galloway Standard & Advertiser* critic writing 'To be quite candid the solo performances were not on a par with those of the choir.'³²⁸ In Newcastle, a Bach concert took place on 12 April 1924 at the KH, a second performance of the *St. John Passion* which

³²⁵ Fellowes, E H, *William Byrd*, 65.

³²⁶ *The Observer*, 4 Dec, 1924, GB-NEmd. This smaller-sized performing edition of Volume II of 'Tudor Church Music', which contained the Byrd, would be sold at six shillings each as opposed to thirty shillings a volume.

³²⁷ Fellowes had 'approved' WGW's methods of performing Tudor music when the latter illustrated Fellowes' lecture to the NLPS in December 1917.

³²⁸ *The Dumfries and Galloway Standard & Advertiser*, March, 1924, GB-NEmd.

according to WGW had made 'a profound impression' when first performed.³²⁹

On 30 May 1924, Fellowes lectured to Newcastle BMS on the Byrd Great Service (Hadow was present), with BC illustrations, conducted by WGW. Fellowes had travelled north with James and Louise Dyer, making a visit to at Durham Cathedral *en route* where he wondered what ancient choristers would have thought of the fact that the work was about to be 'carried by broadcasting to remote corners of the country'.³³⁰ The complete Great Service was given for the first time in 300 years by the BC in Newcastle Cathedral next day, in a scene 'probably unparalleled in the history of music', according to *The Times* correspondent: 'Dr W. G. Whittaker and his very intelligent singers of the Newcastle Bach Choir gave a memorable performance...only a few miles from Durham City'.³³¹ An interesting feature of the performance was that Hymn A&M 165, began proceedings and numbers were interspersed by two groups of organ solos by Ellis.³³² Hymn A&M 634 and silver collection preceded the *Kyrie* and the *Credo*, with more solos before the *Magnificat*, and *Nunc Dimitis*. Complaints that this disturbed the 'atmosphere' of the performance were dismissed by the *Daily Chronicle* critic, who considered them necessary to relieve tension.³³³ Fellowes, writing in *The Daily Telegraph* of 7 June 1924, praised WGW's performance with his 'extremely intelligent singers' in which the complex rhythms were 'handled with remarkable clarity'. At the close, Dr Fellowes had remarked that 'everything had been done just as he would have wanted it.' Through Foss's administrations, the BC were now invited by the Carnegie Trust to sing the Byrd Great Service twice more in London, on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 25 and 26, at St. Margaret's Westminster, by the kindness of the Rector and the organist, Mr. Stanley Roper, organist of the Chapel Royal.³³⁴ Another Newcastle performance would follow on Saturday 29 November.

³²⁹ BC Advertising material for the Fourth Choral Concert, April 12, 1924. GB-NEmd. WGW explained that the work's proportions differed from those of the St Matthew Passion in that more stress is laid 'on the utterances of the crowd', it also being 'less personal and reflective'.

³³⁰ Davidson, J., *Lyre Bird Rising*, (Amadeus Press: Portland, Oregon, and Victoria, 1994), 148.

³³¹ *The Times*, May 31, 1924. GB-NEmd.

³³² The first included a voluntary by Gibbons, a Toccata by Blow, and a Fantasy on 'Babylon's Streams by Thomas Campion' by William Harris of New College, Oxford. The second group then a voluntary by Gibbons, and two works by Hubert Parry, *Prelude on Martyrdom* (H. Wilson), and *Prelude on the 136th Psalm* (Willim Croft),

³³³ *The Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, June 2, 1924. GB-NEmd.

³³⁴ Cutting from the *Newcastle Journal*, 25 July 1924. GB-NEmd.

In June 1924 WGW and C S Terry began their collaboration on a Cantata series for OUP, with Terry contributing the translations. At the time Terry was working on his book *Johann Sebastian Bach: Cantata Texts, Sacred and Secular* (which was published in 1926), a subject dear to WGW's heart.³³⁵ In the same month, WGW presented Terry for an honorary doctorate at Durham University. He sent his first cantata publication to Holst in December 1924, who pronounced his editing to be 'admirable'.³³⁶ In February 1925, C S Terry lectured, with BC illustrations, to NLPS on 'Bach's original hymn tunes'. He surveyed the old chorale and its development within the religious fervour of the Lutheran period, and its treatment by Bach, characterised by his deep piety and unapproachable skill in harmony. Terry said that Bach twice used his own hymn melody in the *Christmas Oratorio* (in No. 42) and once in the motet 'Come Jesus, Come', and listed the four sources of hymn tunes used by Bach.

The yearly visit to Whitfield by the BC to the home of Mrs. Blackett-Orde (this year 'ticket-secretary' for the event) on 7 July, 1924 became something of an opportunity for publicity for both the choir and WGW (with photographs of the choir performing on the lawns after a garden fête, and followed by a dance at 8 p.m.). WGW, conducting in plus-fours, resembled Elgar in the press photographs, his career firmly in the ascendant. He was keen furthermore to introduce new blood to his performances with solo vocalists such as Lilian Lineker, and Archie Armstrong, Beryl Cresswell being oboist, with Rosina Wall (Alfred Wall's daughter) among the players, and Olive Tomlinson on the piano. In reality, during the season there had been a 'falling off of support' for the BC, a loss of £28 being made on the choral concerts, no doubt largely caused by the financial depression, but damaging still further WGW's hope of continuing the cantata concerts.³³⁷

Another visit by Harriet Cohen on the 1 November 1924 brought Bach's *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue*, Bax's Sonata in G minor, and solos by Byrd, Morley and Gibbons to the concert platform, the choir also singing WGW's 'Song of the Virgin Mother', Stanford's 'The Blue Bird', Delius's 'Midsummer Song' and Foss's 'The Three Cherry Trees' and two Howells

³³⁵ Terry, C S, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Cantata Texts: Sacred and Secular: with a Reconstruction of the Leipzig Liturgy of his Period* (London: Constable & Company, 1926).

³³⁶ Holst, 1974, No.48, December 8 [1924], 87. WGW notes in the introduction to 'Jesu, Joy and Treasure' of 1924, where his edition varies from the *Gesellschaft* for reasons of authenticity, in one case has adopting C P E Bach's 1786 version of a chorale, on the advice of Professor Terry.

³³⁷ BC Report for the Tenth Season 1924-1925. *GB-NEmd*.

settings dedicated to BC, 'The Shadows' and 'Creep afore ye gang' (WGW had recently included Howells' 'Holly Song' in his *Oxford Choral Songs* series). The *Journal* reported 'incomparably beautiful unaccompanied singing' at the concert, a musical standard which concealed an underlying anxiety among the choir's organisers. Percy Corder chaired a special meeting when Deans Forster appealed for 'systematic support'.³³⁸ Corder's nephew, William Corder, a local schoolmaster, was elected chairman of the BC with F J Culley, vice-chairman and they pulled the choir back from the brink of disaster. Another concert largely of Tudor music was given on 7 November, when the choir sang four Gibbons madrigals, and a string orchestra played two Gibbons Fantasias for strings. More central to the 'Gibbons' theme, however, was his 'The Cries of London' sung with orchestral accompaniment, for on this occasion WGW chose to include his own 'regional' choral arrangement of 'Newcastle Quayside Cries' (specially composed for *A Pageant of Northumbria* in June 1923). The distinguished guest artist was Adela Fachiri playing Bach's violin concerto in A minor.

3.6.1 *Another London visit and the BBC in Newcastle*

Two weeks later, invited by Foss, the BC travelled to London to give two performances, on 25 and 26 November, of the Byrd Great Service at St. Margaret's Westminster (performed previously only in Newcastle, St. Michael's College, Tenbury, and at Cambridge).³³⁹ Part of the choir also went to record some of WGW's folk song arrangements for the HMV Company.³⁴⁰ For Hubert Foss, the BC trip was only one of many activities he had taken on in connection with his work at OUP.³⁴¹ He wrote a publicity article in the *Musical News and Herald* of 1 November, describing the Newcastle performance of the Byrd which was 'I can assure you, from personal knowledge, a very thrilling experience for the listener.'³⁴² Free tickets, available from OUP (with donations welcome) had all been taken a month before. Holst wanted to attend Wednesday's

³³⁸ *The North Mail*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

³³⁹ A photograph of the choir leaving Newcastle Central Station was also published in the *Newcastle Chronicle*. Whittaker and Annie Lawton did not travel with the party.

³⁴⁰ It does not appear that this record was ever released, although cartoons of the recording session are preserved in the Bach Choir archive at Newcastle University Music Department.

³⁴¹ Hinnells, Duncan, *An Extraordinary Performance*, (OUP: Oxford, 1998), 7.

³⁴² Foss, H J, 'The Drum', 'William Byrd's Great Service', *The Musical News & Herald*, Nov. 1, 1924. GB-NEmd.

performance, but asked if he could eat alone with WGW since 'Parties and crowds take it out of me horribly'.³⁴³ However, predictably he withdrew: 'My head has been bad for the last four days and I'm only fit for solitary walking, reading by the fire or bed.'³⁴⁴ The performance was again interpolated by organ solos, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pieces played by Stanley Roper. Intense interest was shown in the BC visit, the *Morning Post* printing a lively description of the scene on Wednesday at the second concert: 'The ancient church was again crowded, there not being standing room, and large numbers of people failed to get into the church. The Newcastle Bach Choir sang the music with wonderful feeling and perfection, not a note was missed in any part of the church, although the voices were sometimes reduced to a whisper.'³⁴⁵ Outside the church, a crowd had gathered 'as if for a fashionable wedding' reported the *Daily Express*: 'The setting for the singing was perfect in the warm lights, the grey arches, the gleam of colour over the altar. The women singers in white were grouped at the choir steps.'³⁴⁶ Canon Carnegie (unrelated to the philanthropist) likened the choir's singing to 'far-off strains coming from another world, and the music of angels and archangels'.³⁴⁷ The *Newcastle Chronicle*, although writing that 'better singing could hardly be imagined', questioned the great gradation of tone which WGW always employed.³⁴⁸ However, Hubert Fitchew of the *Sunday Times* was impressed: 'Frankly I have not heard another mixed choir capable of maintaining so passionless a purity of tone, as if, for the nonce, the singers were as angels, and the address with which the serious technical difficulties were negotiated was felicitous. Pitch was never seriously varied throughout the long ordeal of unaccompanied singing.'³⁴⁹ The *Musical Times* thought the depleted BC still sang finely, sustaining pitch throughout and overcoming rhythmic difficulties with ease.³⁵⁰ Holst wrote to WGW on 8 December: 'I was very sorry to miss your triumph in London. I gather that

³⁴³ Holst, 1974, No 146, Oct 31 [1924], 86.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 147, 20 November [1924].

³⁴⁵ *The Morning Post*, 26 Nov., 1924. GB-NEmd.

³⁴⁶ *The Daily Express*, Nov. 27, 1924. GB-NEmd. The critic went on to say that the number of sopranos was seriously depleted at the concert, owing to a local 'flu epidemic in Newcastle.

³⁴⁷ *The Newcastle Journal*, 27 Nov. 1924. GB-NEmd.

³⁴⁸ *The Newcastle Chronicle*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

³⁴⁹ *The Musical Times*, unidentified cutting. GB-NEmd. *The Times* critic too admired this aspect of the performance, putting the ability to maintain pitch down to the choir's 'thorough knowledge' and 'technical competence'. *The Times*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

³⁵⁰ *The Musical Times*, unidentified cutting. GB-NEmd.

you and your singers scored more heavily than Byrd and I am still wondering whether that Service is the Man at his best.³⁵¹

Afterwards, WGW and Lawton signed a brief message to Foss on BC notepaper: 'We are overpowered', enclosing a *Manchester Guardian* cutting.³⁵² On Friday WGW wrote: 'My Dear Foss, I feel I must write and thank you very warm-heartedly for all your splendid arrangements this weekend. You are an ideal 'manager'. You seemed to think of everything...you are always smiling and ready to do services in every possible direction...It has been a wonderful experience. I shall never forget it.'³⁵³ An article in *The Lady* of 4 December cast doubt on the quality of the Byrd piece: 'Only in the *Magnificat* of the Great service, a curious conglomeration of all the old Hours, bits of Matins, Lauds, Vespers, and Compline, torn from their proper setting, did I recognise the Byrd I know and love.'³⁵⁴ But more positively, the *Musical Mirror* thought it 'an artistic feather in Dr. Whittaker's well-plumaged cap to have directed two memorable performances of Byrd's fine work within such a comparatively brief space of time.'³⁵⁵ On returning, the choir gave the Byrd again in Newcastle Cathedral ('filled to overflowing'), singing with 'increased intimacy, freedom and elasticity', according to the *Journal*, and 'with impeccable attack and precision, and beautiful and artistic mixing of tone colours'.³⁵⁶ But some found the difficult acoustics more 'hampering' than ever, one singer telling the *Newcastle Chronicle* 'It all felt as if it were coming straight back at us'.³⁵⁷

At the first concert held under 'BC Society' auspices since the choir were constituted along business lines, Percival Driver, WGW's fellow examiner from his Australian tour, was guest vocalist singing in a BC programme of Christmas music on 20 December. The *Chronicle* criticized the concert for its length, though admitted the audience found items so interesting they 'showed

³⁵¹ Holst, 1974, No. 147, 20 November [1924], 87.

³⁵² The use of this word is significant, even though it reads oddly. WGW was extremely impressionable and was here employing a word from Vaughan Williams's own vocabulary. (Hinnells writes that VW thanked Foss after Foss's book about him was published: 'I am quite overpowered by the affection and thought in your book.', Hinnells, 36).

³⁵³ Letter from WGW to Foss, Commonplace books of Hubert Foss, Correspondence I, 22, private archive of Mrs. Diana Sparkes, Southampton.

³⁵⁴ *The Lady*, 4 Dec. 1924. GB-NEmd.

³⁵⁵ *The Musical Mirror*, 1 Jan. 1925. GB-NEmd.

³⁵⁶ *The Newcastle Journal*, Sat., Dec. 1, 1924. GB-NEmd.

³⁵⁷ *The Newcastle Chronicle*, Dec. 1, 1924. GB-NEmd.

no sign of weariness'.³⁵⁸ The programme accentuated the fact that WGW's imagination and appetite for British music was in no way flagging. Parry's *Ode on the Nativity*, Gibbs's 'Before Dawn', WGW's 'Morning, Noon and Evening Quatrains' for female voices, and Bax's 'Of a rose I sing' were enjoyed. There were madrigals in the form of Weelkes's Ayre, 'The Ape, the Monkey, and Baboon', Morley's madrigal 'Lady, why grieve you still me', and Bennett's 'Lure, falconers, lure'. Driver sang two groups of songs, (being praised for his interpretative skills, fine voice and technique) which included Stanford's 'To the soul', and 'Why so Pale and Wan?', and songs by Wolstenholme, Bullock and Parry, while the choir sang partsongs by Malcolm Davidson, Stanford (The Blue Bird'), carols by WGW and three Peter Warlock settings, the last being 'The Sycamore Tree'. Plant and Dodds played two Bach clavicembalo sonatas transcribed for two pianos. Three songs by WGW, including 'Love's Coming', given first at Kinnoull were sung by Driver.

The Tercentenary of the death of Gibbons, on 8 November 1925, provided another pretext for a special concert marked by the return of Adela Fachiri to play Bach's violin concertos in A minor and E, as well as two Rebecca Clarke pieces, 'Midsummer Moon', and 'Chinese Puzzle'. Four Gibbons madrigals were performed and Gibbons's 'The Cryes of London' for voices and strings was repeated as was WGW's similar composition 'Newcastle Quayside Cries'. Yet, despite WGW's continued enthusiasm for the English choral repertoire, its magic seemed to be wearing thin with local audiences. The *North Mail* reported a 'disappointingly small' audience, commenting too on the 'worn tone' produced occasionally by the sopranos, and the 'tired, forced effect among the tenors'.³⁵⁹ But WGW was not to be discouraged. On 6 February 1926 WGW conducted the BC in Peter Warlock's immensely demanding 'The Full Heart', the work having been twice abandoned by the choir when it was clear more rehearsals were needed. The *Newcastle Chronicle* critic on 8 February wrote: 'Into five minutes, or thereabouts, the composer has crowded, whether from impulse or design, a mass of bristling obstacles of every technical variety'.³⁶⁰ WGW thought the work 'the most difficult piece written by an Englishman', and after demands for an encore (a normal practice for premieres) replied: 'Ladies and gentlemen, better

³⁵⁸ The *Newcastle Chronicle*, Monday, Dec. 22, 1924. GB-NEmd.

³⁵⁹ The *North Mail*, Nov. 9, 1925. GB-NEmd.

³⁶⁰ The *Newcastle Chronicle*, Feb. 8, 1926. GB-NEmd.

leave well alone!³⁶¹ Dowland Ayres and Arnold Bax's *This worlde's joie* were finely sung, Joan Elwes (suggested by Holst as an excellent singer of Bach) was guest vocalist and WGW performed in John Ireland's *Fantasy Trio*.

There had been no church cantata concerts since the Dumfries concert in March of the previous year, but at the Cathedral recital of 7 February 1925, the choir sang four cantatas beginning with No. 11, 'Praise Jehovah' ('definitely a small oratorio' WGW wrote) with an alto aria which became the *Agnus Dei* of the B minor Mass. As it was part of the Easter oratorio, it employed a narrator. WGW liked the depiction of the ascension, when the 'absence of bassi creates a lovely ethereal quality' to 'a picture of the saviour floating above the empyrean', including a 'magnificent extended chorale' and a final number which was 'stirring, indeed overwhelming'.³⁶² Cantata No. 54, 'Watch and Pray', was a solo cantata for alto, but, since WGW described it as 'splendidly effective when performed by a group of altos' in his book on the cantatas, this suggests that that is what occurred.³⁶³ No. 104, 'Thou Guide of Israel' WGW thought 'flawless in every detail...the whole score meticulously marked with bowing and tonguing, giving us an insight into Bach's methods'.³⁶⁴ No. 107, 'Sing Praises' depicted the feeding of the five thousand and employed an orchestra of strings, flutes, oboes d'amore, and a trumpet playing the *corno da caccia*. Soloists were Ida Cowey, Annie Lawton, and S. E. Hattle, H. Frater and W. H. Hobkirk from the Cathedral Choir.

Two memorable events followed. The first was an historic early BBC outside broadcast on 5NO from Brunswick Methodist Church of a BC concert, due to the return of Edward Clark in 1924 to his native city as Musical Director of the BBC local station.³⁶⁵ The broadcast took place on Sunday 15 February 1925 and began at 8. 30 p.m.. Five chorales enveloped an address by the Dean of Durham after which, at 9 p.m. WGW conducted the Byrd Great service, interspersed with lessons. The second important choir event was the first performance by the choir of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in its entirety on Saturday 4 April. Girls from ACCS and Rutherford College Girl's School formed the ripieno soprano chorus of 40-50. The 'thunder and

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² Whittaker, 1959, Vol. II, 47.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, Vol I, 367.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 620.

³⁶⁵ 5NO was the Station identification for the Newcastle-upon-Tyne broadcasting station which began broadcasting on a frequency of 743 kHz from 24 December, 1922.

lightening' and mocking choruses were given with 'graphic force and power', and Danskin ('another product of the Newcastle Competition Festival') sang so well, his performance could hardly have been bettered.³⁶⁶ Muriel Plant played the continuo part on the modern spinet, made by Arnold Dolmetsch, 'placed at the disposal of the choir'.³⁶⁷ 'The agreeable 'plucking' tone of the little instrument helped materially to create appropriate atmosphere.'³⁶⁸ In 1925, WGW was in close touch with Dolmetsch who was preparing to hold the first of his annual Early Music Festivals in August that year. (According to the *Newcastle Daily News*, WGW, Adrian Boult, Casella, Walford Davies, and Dr Erwin Walter of the Berlin Hochschule were planning to attend.)³⁶⁹ The decision to obtain a spinet for BC use, (probably donated by J B Clark who had supplied the wind instruments for Bainton's Newcastle Philharmonic Orchestra) would have undoubtedly been WGW's, no doubt inspired by his experiences of performing with Cooper and Gordon Woodhouse at the BC concerts in London in 1922. Not all of WGW's musical contemporaries agreed with his opinion on the matter of appropriate Bach accompaniments. Vaughan Williams certainly preferred to make his own 'improvements' to Bach's orchestrations, in halls with no organs, by such methods as using both trombones and trumpets in the same piece, and cited Sir Hugh Allen 'hardly an iconoclast' who doubled the voices with trombones when conducting the last page of the B minor Mass.³⁷⁰ He also criticised 'those nasty detached twangs on the harpsichord which we hear nowadays' in continuo realisations. But WGW's close collaborator, C S Terry remained steadfast in his resolution to discover the way to perform Bach's works with integrity, his work culminating in 1932 with the publication of his book *Bach's Orchestra*.³⁷¹ Thurston Dart, who wrote the foreword to the 1958 edition of Terry's book, praised his work: 'Bach was a wise, careful composer with a most discriminating ear...[his] music will be best served, first, by discovering his intentions, and then by obeying them as scrupulously as circumstances permit. Terry decided to find out Bach's wishes about instruments by the simple means of examining his scores and the archives of his time.'³⁷²

³⁶⁶ The *Newcastle Journal*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

³⁶⁷ The *Newcastle Chronicle*, 6 April, 1925. GB-NEmd.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ *Newcastle Daily News*, 17 August 1925, cutting from John Whittaker's scrapbook, 84.

³⁷⁰ Vaughan Williams, R (Oxford: OUP, 1963), 173.

³⁷¹ Terry, C S, *Bach's Orchestra* (OUP: London, 1932).

³⁷² Ibid., viii.

In May, WGW also combined a second performance of Bach's motet, 'Be not Afraid' with John Taverner's Mass, 'The Western Wynd' at a Cathedral recital, also including in the programme some chorale preludes played by Arthur Milner of Jesmond Presbyterian Church. WGW placed the choir in the chancel, facing the South West portion of the building, endeavouring to ameliorate the acoustic problems and probably obtained the best possible results.³⁷³ However, attendance, according to the *Newcastle Chronicle*, was poor.³⁷⁴ Nevertheless, in spite of the sparser numbers, the loyal band of BC supporters had turned round the financial situation, and when the 'Bach Choir Society' AGM was held in AC, Walter Corder announced a reduction in overdraft, from £258 to £34.³⁷⁵ This more optimistic financial position was supported by a season's profit of £71 0s 2d reported by the choir's bank manager, Deans Forster, and the new earnestness with which the choir now monitored its pecuniary affairs was marked by the assistance of the new honorary financial secretary, the accountant, J Winter. In summer 1924, WGW's *Fugitive Notes on Some Cantatas and the Motets of Bach* had been published by OUP, dedicated 'To the Past and Present Members of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Bach Choir as a slight appreciation of their splendid enthusiasm and devotion'.³⁷⁶ It consisted of articles published in the monthly *Organist and Choirmaster* (now defunct) by Winthrop Rogers. WGW claimed no erudition in writing the book, explaining it was merely 'the outcome of a study of the works themselves for actual performance', together with 'a collation of the leading commentators on them, Spitta, Pirro, Parry, and Schweitzer'.³⁷⁷ Aimed at young, amateur musicians interested in Bach, WGW explained the compromises necessary to supply accompaniment (with a small orchestra, never larger than 20 players, so that the counterpoint can be heard), find soloists, and adapt solos to other voices.

3.7 DOLMETSCH INSTRUMENTS BUT FEWER CANTATAS PSALM CXXXIX IN FRANKFURT

Chamber music concerts came to an end in the eleventh season, through lack of money, but four choral concerts, two Cathedral recitals, and a celebration of Gibbons' Tercentenary were planned

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 18 May, 1925. *GB-NEmd.*

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ BC Report for the Eleventh Season. 1925-1926. *GB-NEmd.*

³⁷⁶ Whittaker, 1924, v.

³⁷⁷ Whittaker, 1924, 1.

with rehearsals at the CNHS and the King Edward School of Art.³⁷⁸ It was decided to appeal for more subscribers, but a great advantage for future performances of Bach, the gift to the society of a spinet and oboes d'amore, was reported by the *Musical Standard*.

The Society received from a kind anonymous friend a specially constructed spinet to take the place of the pianoforte in playing continuo, and to the orchestral resources two oboe[s] d'amore have been added, one a generous gift from Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch. It is thus hoped to reproduce the music of Bach more exactly and it is hoped other gifts of old instruments, such as viola d'amore, viol da gamba and violone, will be forthcoming for this laudable purpose.³⁷⁹

Understandably WGW wished to use these new acquisitions and on 19 December Bach's Epiphany and Christmas Church Cantatas were given, Nos. 12, 91, 121 and 133; only the last, 'In Thee do I rejoice' (the Christmas Tuesday cantata) had been sung before. No. 12, 'Weeping, wailing, mourning, fearing', expressed suffering and sorrow, and employed double violas and strings, trumpet, and oboe da caccia. No. 91, a Christmas Day setting of Luther's 'Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ', contains a beautiful SA duet without violas in the string accompaniment. The chorale fantasia 'combines royal pomp with festive rejoicing', using horns and timpani, and a 'powerful fanfare' is used in the *Kyrie eleison*.³⁸⁰ Cantata 121 was distinguished by 'a magnificent bass aria' with a musical representation of 'the babe leapt in my womb for joy'.³⁸¹ The audience was 'gratifyingly large'.³⁸² Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, itself a major attraction (with flautist R. Thornton) was also played. But, as usual nowadays, WGW also gave a modern work, on this occasion a second performance of Holst's *Ode to Death*. A third performance of Bach's Mass in B minor was given on 27 March 1926. WGW felt it was a great achievement that all the performers were from Newcastle, including the soloists who were prize-winners from the NEMT (Norah Allison, Gladys Thompson, Ruby Longhurst, Tom Danskin, William Hendry and H. Shuttleworth). Apart from 'a little temporary fogginess in the orchestra' during the 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus' all went well.³⁸³

The BC made a fifteenth visit to the Cathedral on Saturday afternoon, 30 January 1926, for the first cantata concert for almost a year. With an orchestra of flutes, oboes d'amore, cor anglais, trumpets, strings and continuo, the BC performed Bach's church cantatas numbers 1, 16,

³⁷⁸ *Newcastle Chronicle*, review on BC's activities, 25, September, 1925. *GB-NEmd*.

³⁷⁹ Report for the Annual General Meeting. Eleventh Season 1925-1926. *GB-NEmd*.

³⁸⁰ Whittaker, 1959, ii, 388.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 110.

³⁸² *The Newcastle Journal*, Dec. 21, 1925.

³⁸³ *Musical Opinion*, undated cutting. *GB-NEmd*.

81 and 88. The first of these 'How brightly shines yon star of morn' was a solo cantata for STB, the first issued in the new Gesellschaft in 1851, representing the caravan of the magi. WGW wrote that the 'scintillating concertante violins keep the star perpetually in sight', the horns representing the wise men.³⁸⁴ For WGW, the interest of No. 16 'centres in the choruses'.³⁸⁵ No. 81, 'Jesus Sleeps, what hope remaineth?', was written for the distinctive scoring of strings and two flutes à bec in the opening aria. No. 88 had, what WGW described as a 'a certain spaciousness'.³⁸⁶ Although not the most popular of cantatas, WGW found in the latter 'a fascination which increases on acquaintance', and was not dissimilar to Cantata 56, despite never quite reaching that level, being still a work 'of outstanding significance'.³⁸⁷

However, the next Cathedral visit on 1 May offered a mixed programme and featured Byrd's Mass for five voices, and Bax's challenging motet *This World's Joie*. It was repertoire with which the choir was familiar and now closely associated both locally and nationally. The organist-designate of Hexham Abbey, C. S. Richards, played Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor, and fugues and chorale preludes by Bach, including 'Christ, Unser Herr', and Vaughan Williams's Chorale-Prelude 'Rhosymedre'. The choir had planned to sing at St. Hilda's Church South Shields on 12 May, but this was postponed due to the General Strike, until 3 November, with organist Mr. F Younger Robson, when Byrd's Mass for five voices was sung by only 25 voices, *This World's Joie* being sung by the full choir. WGW justified his recent work with the choir in the season's report, as 'normal year's work' in which experience in singing both Bach and Byrd had been supplied 'to allow the choir to respond to the spirit of the music', although it was also fair to say that the singing of the Byrd 'Great Service' had given the choir a higher profile nationally.³⁸⁸ Donations had further reduced debt, and it was decided to start to hold evening concerts to attract larger audiences. It was announced that from now on all rehearsals would be at AC, where the Music Lecture Room was now available. On the whole, the scheme of English music and guest artists was the most successful line for the choir to follow, though some modern compositions were not appreciated by the audience. Arthur Benjamin, newly appointed RCM

³⁸⁴ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. II, 104.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., Vol. I, 514.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 431.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ BC Report for the Twelfth Season. *GB-NEmd*.

professor, and Harriet Cohen played Bach's concerto in C major for two pianos and strings at the first concert of the twelfth season, on 6 November 1926. The choir sang unaccompanied works, Ayres by Dowland, Moeran's new 'Robin Hood borne on his Bier', Walmisley's 'Sweete Flowers' and Benjamin's 'I see His Blood upon the Rose'. James Mark led a small orchestra in two Byrd Fantasias for Strings, and a Gibbons Pavane and Galliard. Cohen played Bach's concerto in D minor, pieces by Byrd, and three pieces by Bax, the choir then singing part-songs by Parry and Stanford, with 'perfect intonation, and immaculate phrasing'.³⁸⁹ Despite Cohen's polished performance of the Bax, the *Newcastle Journal* reported, 'What the music told the majority of those present would be adequately represented by a note of exclamation.'³⁹⁰ Clearly the modernity of the programme was beyond the tolerance of audience and critics.

Hubert Foss's interests in the International Society for Contemporary Music [ISCM] also involved WGW, when the latter's setting of Psalm 139 (Robert Bridges's version from 'The Spirit of Man') was selected for their Festival in June 1927. In December, local press published the news that the BC was to perform the work in Frankfurt.³⁹¹ Deans Forster launched an appeal to finance the trip, £620 soon being promised towards the £900 needed to send the 60 choristers. The Festival would last a week and perform modern music of an international character, the works having been selected by an international jury with representatives from France, Germany, Denmark, Bohemia, and America.³⁹² Edwin Evans chaired the British Committee, which called for the submission of works for selection, submitting its choice to the International jury. In February 1927, Deans Forster managed to obtain a gift of £250 from Jane Cowen (niece of Joseph Cowen, former owner of the *Newcastle Chronicle*) for the Frankfurt fund but more money was still needed. The choir was determined to make the journey with WGW knowing only they could do justice to the piece: 'Knowing how much the Bach Choir is the creation of Dr. Whittaker, and how it is like a delicate instrument under his hand, one acknowledges this argument to be a legitimate one. And Dr. Whittaker minus his own choir would surely feel like

³⁸⁹ The *Newcastle Journal*, Nov. 8, 1926. GB-NEmd.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ The *North Mail*, 22 December 1926. GB-NEmd.

³⁹² *North Mail*, Jan. 24, 1927. GB-NEmd.

Samson shorn.’³⁹³ Dent had also suggested that the choir visit several German towns to give concerts of British Music.

Plans for a Newcastle Beethoven Festival, from 10 to 27 February 1927, marking the centenary of Beethoven’s death, progressed well, encouraged by the musical mayor, Arthur Lambert, a local organist who was to chair a local BMS Festival lecture in the King’s Hall by Walford Davies.³⁹⁴ As the Chamber Music Society had decided against joining in, no Beethoven quartets would be played during the festival, but the BC would contribute at least some chamber music. On 19 February WGW’s *Psalm CXXXIX* (first performed by Vaughan Williams with the London Bach Choir in November 1925) was performed at a choral concert, with Canzonets by Giles Farnaby. Soprano Bertha Steventon sang Butterworth’s ‘Bredon Hill’, and Martin Shaw’s ‘The Rivulet’, and the Newcastle Wind Quintet played Beethoven’s Quintet Op. 87, his Trio for flute, clarinet, and cor anglais, and Serenade in D, Op. 25, for flute, violin and viola. An unidentified critic reports that the Psalm was sung ‘with great sensitiveness’ surmounting ‘sometimes trying technical difficulties’, but ran into problems of pitch when repeated.³⁹⁵ This was an indication of just how demanding WGW’s new work was.

A Cathedral recital on 21 May included a second performance of Psalm CXXXIX, sung with a Mass for Three Voices by Byrd, Fantasias for strings by John Dowland and Henry Purcell, and sixteenth-century songs with strings, recently printed by OUP, and edited by Warlock. Soon after, the *Sunday Times* announced officially that the choir were to sing at the Summer Festival at Frankfurt. Apart from a quartet by Van Dieren, WGW’s Psalm CXXXIX was to be the only British work performed.³⁹⁶ The *Daily Telegraph* announced the programme for the Festival, to be held between 30 June and 5 July.³⁹⁷ Alan Bush, writing in *Musical Opinion* in July 1927 thought that the Psalm ‘...holds its own well with any of its genre for loftiness of thought and sensitiveness of expression.’³⁹⁸

Continuing to demonstrate extraordinary imagination in his Bach programmes, WGW devised a varied combination of soloists for the next Cathedral recital on 22 January 1927. This

³⁹³ *News Chronicle*, Feb. 21, 1927. GB-NEmd.

³⁹⁴ Unidentified newspaper cutting, Jan. 22, 1927. GB-NEmd.

³⁹⁵ Unidentified, undated newspaper cutting. GB-NEmd.

³⁹⁶ *The Newcastle Journal*, Feb. 21, 1927. GB-NEmd.

³⁹⁷ *The Daily Telegraph*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

³⁹⁸ *Musical Opinion*, July 1927. GB-NEmd.

again offered an all-cantata programme, a year after the last, all but one requiring chorus. Cantata No. 65, 'Sie warden aus Saba allekommen', No. 161, 'Komm, du süsse Tod esstunde', and No. 51, 'Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen' for solo soprano alone. No. 171, 'Gott, wie dein Name, so ist auch dein ruhm', was for chorus and SATB. No. 65, another Epiphany Cantata, begins with the depiction of camels; WGW wrote: 'No painter could bring before our eyes a clearer picture or more definitely oriental scene'.³⁹⁹ In another graceful description of the nativity music in this cantata WGW comments on 'the continuo descending in genuflexions'. No. 161 concerned death, and was 'mournfully happy' being 'one of Bach's sermons on the hour of death', employing 'a simple orchestral palette' of two 'beak flutes' and strings.⁴⁰⁰ The solo cantata No. 51, WGW thought 'one of the best known of the solo cantatas', and 'while the cantata plumbs no depths, it is externally attractive and this has caused it to be a favourite battle-horse of the coloratura singers'.⁴⁰¹ WGW describes how at the close, 'the trumpet mounts to high D and then descends for more than two octaves. Bach revelled in the powers of his sopranos'. No. 171 contains the precursor of the second *Credo* of the B Minor Mass, and employs three trumpets, two oboes and strings. The BC was 'in top form' and Jack Mackintosh of the St. Hilda Colliery Band played admirably in the solo cantata, 'Praise Ye God'.

But despite this success, cantata concerts remained few, partially because the BC now regularly gave performances of the larger Bach works, a local tradition having been created. At the hundredth performance of the BC, on 9 April, the *St. John Passion* was given for the third time. An unidentified cutting in the choir archive explains (no doubt satisfying interest in the choir because of the coming ISCM performance) the 'militaristic conditions' which existed in the choir. The forty members and eight 'reservists', all who had passed a strict entry test, only sang in a concert after attending a requisite percentage of rehearsals.

F J Culley chaired the AGM of the twelfth season when the choir heard that finance was still a problem, exacerbated by the effect of the coal strike and reduced income from subscriptions. However a balance of £10 13s 2d was carried forward, and receipts from the Beethoven week chamber concert given to the Festival committee totalled £8 10s. When

³⁹⁹ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 580.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 363.

Renwick (who had supplied the German words for OUP's German edition of *Psalm CXXXIX*) proposed that WGW be reappointed conductor, WGW's response was, however, reticent; his mind was fixed at this time on leaving Newcastle, though those around him were as yet unaware. Walter Corder had written to the meeting to say that a fresh chairman with more strength and vigour should be elected. He was no longer in robust health. It was decided to re-elect him as a compliment, but to allow Culley, vice-chairman to take over his duties.

On the evening of 12 June, a Public Service of Worship, Dedication and God-Speed for the journey abroad was held at St. James's Congregational church, Northumberland Road (J. B. Clark's church). Before the start the church was full '...with a long, thick queue out over the pavement'. The Rev A D Lee spoke of the 'most signal distinction' that had been granted to the choir and conductor, 'and the city in which they lived'.⁴⁰² He saw the visit as a 'great gesture of world friendship, with thirty countries involved', WGW 'endowed and disciplined through many years, finds himself with power in the realm, the realm of Music, power to create, to express and to interpret in that high realm'.⁴⁰³ Mayor Lambert gave an official farewell to the BC, and the party left Newcastle by the 12. 56 train on Saturday 2 July.

Critical reception from Frankfurt, eagerly awaited in England, was mixed.⁴⁰⁴ The *North Star* wrote that they sang with 'great efficiency in performance and a keen sense of style'.⁴⁰⁵ WGW writes how Dent, chairman of the festival, immediately came over to say to the choir: 'You have had a great success; you have amply justified the enormous trouble you have been to in coming over here'.⁴⁰⁶ But the *Daily Mail* critic thought an opportunity had been missed, criticising WGW's 'itch to be odd', and finding 'much of the festival music so painfully curious'.⁴⁰⁷ There was '...no pleasure or edification for the listeners in the far-fetched piece which sounds as though it had been written as a Blackpool test piece, and represents the worst side of

⁴⁰² *Newcastle Daily Journal*, undated cutting. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ However, it was reported that the BC received fifteen 'curtain calls'. *The News Chronicle*, 11 July 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁰⁵ *The North Star*, Thursday 7 July, 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁰⁶ *Daily Chronicle* of 12 July, from choir scrapbook. GB-NEmd.

Dent had informed WGW that Fürtwangler, Nikisch's successor, had highly praised the BC's performance, suggesting a long tour of Germany.

⁴⁰⁷ *The Daily Mail*, Tues. 5 July, 1927. GB-NEmd.

the competition festival movement.⁴⁰⁸ The writer thought that ‘difficulty was piled on difficulty without regard to the actual musical content...The feat the poor singers were achieving was not realised by the audience who had not the score.’⁴⁰⁹ This response, grudgingly negative and not a little personal, led WGW never to trust the views of musical critics again.

On Wednesday 6 July, the choir went on a tour of University cities, organised by Professor Dent of Cambridge, travelling by train to the mediaeval town of Marburg, where the choir was met by Dr Wolfgang Schmidt and students.⁴¹⁰ Since there was a large English seminar at the University, all were delighted to try their skills at English. The students showed them the sights, carried luggage and ‘were never ceasing in their attentions’, people constantly saying that they had never wanted war and ‘were determined there would be no more wars with England.’⁴¹¹ After listening to the German University choir, the BC sang to their hosts, Potts’s unaccompanied North Country Folk songs bringing ‘a furore of applause’.⁴¹² The choir gave an evening concert, singing Byrd and movements from Vaughan Williams’s Mass in the crowded thirteenth-century Lutherkirche which had ‘perfect acoustic properties’.⁴¹³ Next day, the choir travelled to Göttingen where they were cared for by Dr Weber, Pallister Barker (an English lecturer at the University), and students.⁴¹⁴ With no time to view the town, the concert was given in a concert hall in the town park, ‘not beautiful but splendid acoustically’.⁴¹⁵ Professor Hecht, head of the English seminar, had brought a good audience. WGW first lectured on how England was not ‘a land without music’, the concert then ‘went with an enormous swing’, being the best of the tour (‘except the singing of the Psalm’).⁴¹⁶ WGW noticed that the Germans especially enjoyed Potts’s ‘renderings in dialect’ which ‘soon placed him on intimate terms with his audience’⁴¹⁷. Two musicians, Herr Walter Pfeiffer, and Dr Erdman, who played violin and piano respectively, played at WGW’s request Purcell and Babel violin sonatas.⁴¹⁸ Afterwards, all

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Whittaker, WG, ‘Newcastle-upon-Tyne Bach Choir Tour in Germany’, *The Sackbut*, August 1927. *GB-NEmd*.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

gathered in an open-air restaurant, and next morning students gathered to say farewell, singing 'Auld Lang Syne', 'in excellent Scottish!'.⁴¹⁹

It was a tedious journey to Munster, with little rest. Dr Herman Erpf, a well known musician, supervisor of the English speaking students, met the party. The BC, as 'official guests of the Municipality', was accompanied by the Oberbürgermeister, and the Stadtrat, and visited beautiful gardens, out of the city.⁴²⁰ After speeches, an official Municipal dinner was provided, the host being the Professor of English, who discussed the Venerable Bede with WGW, and the meaning of local northern words, before Potts again 'warmed them up'.⁴²¹ Although tentative proposals were made for visits to Austria and France, and for another more extensive to Germany, this did not happen. A BC member, E T Stewart, sketched cartoons during the visit, sixteen of these being published by William Large on the choir's return.⁴²²

Reaction to the Choir's performance at Frankfurt was conflicting, often heated.⁴²³ WGW's letter to Deans Forster, used for press releases, told of 'a most tremendous success'.⁴²⁴ WGW reported 'many recalls', and quoted Furrwängler's remark that WGW had come to Germany 'to teach the Germans how to sing'.⁴²⁵ But Dorothy Darlington wrote in the *Daily News*: 'the Béla Bartók piano Concerto was a disappointment, but not so great a one as that of Dr. Whittaker's 139th Psalm...too much attention was given to detailed effects at the expense of broad outline'.⁴²⁶ She accused the BC of singing out of tune and being 'scarcely equal to its task'.⁴²⁷ On 7 July the *New York Musical Courier* led its musical column with the heading 'A British Radical' and discussed the British entry:

...the *a cappella* setting of the 139th Psalm by W. G. Whittaker, the conductor of the Newcastle Bach Choir, which performed it with astounding virtuosity. Astounding, too, was the ultra-modernity of Whittaker's style, since the composer hitherto might be regarded as a perfectly orthodox follower of Elgar and the other English choralists. The biting dissonances and the absolute independence and often polytonal nature of the piece made the conservatives gasp. In retrospect the work offers little real originality of content, however and its manner is certainly

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Stewart, ET, Cartoons in BC archive published by W Large. *GB-NEmd*. These were given captions, such as 'The tenor who forgot his passport leaving Newcastle', or 'The appearance of a Celestial Tenor at an inconvenient hour at Frankfurt'.

⁴²³ They were also very widespread and included reviews from *Le Ménestrel*, Paris, the *Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, Massachusetts, as well as newspapers in Germany and Cape Town.

⁴²⁴ 'Interesting letter from Dr Whittaker', the *Newcastle Journal*, Aug. 9, 1927. *GB-NEmd*.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Darlington, D, the *Daily News*, July 1927. *GB-NEmd*.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

more remarkable than its matter. The shaggy-haired Northumbrian was gleefully received into the ranks of the left-wingers and greeted with enthusiasm before the audience recovered from its surprise.⁴²⁸

The *Times* of 7 July contrasted the Croatian Choir, Kolo, from Zagreb, which sang with brilliant individual voices an oratorio by the Yugoslav Bozidar Sirola (a rather tedious, three-hour work) and the Newcastle BC, where the voices 'sounded curiously thin and distant' but its 'English sense of *ensemble* and blended tone' went far to compensate for this.⁴²⁹ The critic wondered whether WGW's work was suitable for 'a representative continental audience' as a specimen of English choral art, and wondered how WGW with a life-time's experience of choir training 'could commit himself to such a venture as this!'⁴³⁰ Fox-Strangways in the *Observer* of 10 July 1927, under the heading 'Organised Cacophony', reported on the Festival: '...anyway the Society for 'Giving-a-fair-chance-to-the-Budding-Composer' met with help of the Frankfurt Orchestra in the Opera House, both lent by the city.' Strangways became accustomed to the 'strange sounds of modern music', but found it 'uphill work.'⁴³¹ On WGW's piece he wrote: 'As regards our own country, we think we understand choral music, and if we do, it was a pity that W. G. Whitaker's [sic] Psalm 139 should have been the only piece of evidence. The choir had its virtues...but the composition was not calculated to exhibit them.'⁴³² There were technical criticisms: 'Why expect the basses to be audible on a deep E with the other voices fortissimo in their best register; or why sub-divide the choir into eight or twelve parts, and expect a small committee, making a snapshot at an octave drop on 'marvellous' in a great hurry, not to provoke a smile?'⁴³³

The party left Münster at 4.30. a.m. reaching their London hotel at 9.15. p.m.. Next day they had a recording session at the Parlophone Company, between 11am and 4 pm: 'After having recorded Holst's 'Song of the Blacksmith', Dr. Whittaker's arrangement of 'Bobby Shaftoe', and Stanford's 'The Bluebird' for the Parlophone Company, the tired but cheerful party left King's Cross by the 5 pm train for home.'⁴³⁴ WGW, writing in the *Newcastle Journal* of the 11 July

⁴²⁸ Cuttings in BC archive. GB-NEmd.

⁴²⁹ *The Times*, 7 July 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Fox-Strangways, the *Observer*, 19 July 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, Tuesday 12 July, 1927. GB-NEmd.

thought the recording session successful: 'the choir acquitted itself magnificently'.⁴³⁵ Three of the items were to be published in gramophone records in the autumn. WGW declined to have others used as he thought the choir too tired. The recording however, seems not to have been released.

Afterwards WGW was 'disinclined' to reply to adverse press criticism about his composition and the choir's performance, except to say: 'There is nothing more notoriously erratic than musical criticism'⁴³⁶ He also rejected Strangways' criticisms, comparing his Psalm to a competition festival piece: 'The music was written as my own humble way, right or wrong, of interpreting Dr Bridges' magnificent text'.⁴³⁷ WGW thought that 'faulty intonation occurred for something like ten bars in 84 pages.' 'My own feeling was that the choir sang superbly.' But the press continued to disagree.⁴³⁸ The *Sunday Times* of 17 July commented on the dissension among critics 'The general opinion in Germany was that the singing was 'superb'.⁴³⁹ The *Spectator* of 9 October was flattering: 'England was nobly represented there at any rate, for that extremely lively body, the British Musical Society, had this matter in hand.'⁴⁴⁰ WGW had brought over 'his fine Newcastle 'Bach Choir' especially to sing his new choral setting of the 139th Psalm.' The critic thought the Psalm was 'of some complexity' and written in the 'Holst-Vaughan-Williams' modal idiom, a style accepted by some as the true English vein.'⁴⁴¹ One choir member collected all comments, whatever their view and reprinted them in a pamphlet where they were 'startling in their disagreement', WGW going on to write an account for August's *The Sackbut*.⁴⁴² Dent wrote to the *Musical Times* in December 1927 in defence of the BC's performance: 'I may add that many German musicians have spoken to me with the greatest admiration for the Newcastle Choir, and of the revelation that it was to hear English music sung by them at Marburg, Göttingen, and Münster.'⁴⁴³

⁴³⁵ The *Newcastle Journal*, 11 July 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴³⁶ The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, Tuesday 12 July, 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ The *Sunday Times*, 17 July 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁴⁰ The *Spectator*, Oct. 9, 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Whittaker, W G, 'Newcastle-upon-Tyne Bach Choir Tour in Germany', *The Sackbut* Vol. 8 no 1 (August 1927), 15-19. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁴³ The *Musical Times*, December 1927, Vol. 68 (December 1927), 1116.

WGW realised that high attendance at BC concerts depended upon the appeal of the programme. The first concert of the season, on 12 November 1927, largely consisted of music prepared for the German tour. Arthur Benjamin played his Suite for piano and three harpsichord pieces by Richard Jones, also performing his Sonatina for Violin and Piano with Alfred Wall.⁴⁴⁴ Two Giles Farnaby canzonets, 'Pearce did dance', and 'Simkin Said' were sung, and more British fare of songs by Morley, Weelkes, Parry, Stanford, Holst, Vaughan Williams, Balfour Gardiner, and WGW's 'Bobby Shaftoe' filled the programme. Edmund Rubbra's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, a MS arrangement for semi-chorus and two pianos, replacing the original scoring for small choir and chamber orchestra, was sung. The *Newcastle Journal* of 14 November commented: 'It contains many characteristic touches of the composer's teacher, Gustav Holst, delicate, imaginative and beautiful in the modern kind of way.'⁴⁴⁵ December's *Musical Opinion*, more indifferently, thought the work atmospheric rather than dramatic.⁴⁴⁶

Because a British programme had been adopted in Germany, cantatas had not been sung for some time. Although two Cathedral recitals were planned at Newcastle Cathedral, only one took place, on Saturday afternoon 26 November, when Cantatas Nos 22, 80, 169, and 185 were performed. The first, 'Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwölfe', written as a test-piece for Leipzig, only employed oboes and strings with 'no daring or disturbing flights of imagination.'⁴⁴⁷ No. 80, 'Ein Feste Burg', being 'national as well as religious', was a 'panoply of splendour', according to WGW.⁴⁴⁸ In No. 169, singers, oboes and *taille* were only heard in the opening sinfonia and the closing four-part chorale. Cantata 'Barmherziges Herze der ewigen Liebe', for chorus and SATB shone, 'where the verse is better', in the SA duet. Vocal trills feature in this cantata being 'significant of burning flames of love'.⁴⁴⁹ The *Newcastle Chronicle* reported 'a polished recital' of the four cantatas. Ellis supplied 'beautiful organ solo work' in the Sinfonia to the third of the

⁴⁴⁴ Lewis Foreman, *Arthur Benjamin*, CD notes, CDLX 7110, 2001.

⁴⁴⁵ The *Newcastle Journal*, Nov 14, 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁴⁶ *Musical Opinion*, December 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁴⁷ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. I, 174.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

Cantatas, 'Gott soll allein mein Herze haben'. Striking was the 'clear trumpet playing of Mr. Mackintosh, and the refined oboe d'amore and cor anglais obbligati by Miss Watson'.⁴⁵⁰

Vaughan William's *Sancta Civitas*, a challenging work for different choral forces, composed in 1925, was performed twice by the choir on 4 February 1928, 'a fine concert in every respect' according to an unidentified cutting, though the choir were not 'sure of their ground' in the passage 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth'.⁴⁵¹ The young bass-baritone Keith Falkner, of New College, Oxford, a student of Plunkett Greene, who had studied in Vienna, Berlin and Paris from 1923, was soloist. The composer had allowed a considerably reduced score to be used, an arrangement for strings, flutes, trumpet, tympani, and piano for the distant chorus, 'excellently sung by the Cathedral boys' and conducted by Ellis.⁴⁵² 'The entries of this distant chorus preceded every time by a trumpet call, were among the most impressive of many impressive things during the performance.'⁴⁵³ The concert was followed by another performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*, this time given on two successive nights (Monday and Tuesday, the 2 and 3 April). *The Yorkshire Post*, 3 April, reported that the choir had given 'a brilliant performance', a response which threw into relief the choir's efforts to perform contemporary music.⁴⁵⁴

As WGW's interest in the choir waned with his intention of gaining a University post elsewhere, an intended performance of the Bach Mass in B minor was postponed. Another indication of WGW's decision was the printing on programmes now of the name of WGW's official deputy, Joseph Robinson. In gratitude to old friends, WGW organised a concert of music by Holst and Vaughan Williams on Saturday 8 December, two of Vaughan Williams's works of 1925, *Flos Campi*, and *Concerto Accademico*, being performed, with Holst's *The Golden Goose* in stage arrangement. Though appealing only to a limited number in the audience, 'there were moments of great beauty'.⁴⁵⁵ James Mark played the taxing viola solo line extremely well. In *Concerto Accademico* 'Mr Wall for once appeared to be extended technically', playing well in the last movement. Holst's ballet provided 'a welcome and delightful foil to the other works...the

⁴⁵⁰ *The Newcastle Chronicle*, November 1927. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁵¹ Unidentified newspaper cutting, Feb. 4, 1928. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁴ *The Yorkshire Post*, April 3, 1928. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁵⁵ Although the BC Report for the twelfth Season had announced the innovation of holding concerts in the evening, beginning with the Christmas concert of 1926, it seems that the BC maintained their custom of giving afternoon performances.

audience rejoiced in this relaxation from the tense...Considering the concert as a whole it deserves to rank among the most notable in the choir's history'.⁴⁵⁶

On 2 February 1929 WGW gave a 'Northumbrian-Cumbrian Concert' with Ernest Potts, Ena Mitchell of Cumberland, and Jeffrey Mark (who accompanied his own songs and arrangements which included 'Auld Jobby Dixon', 'Rabbie Tamson's Smiddie', and 'Sally Gray'). Annie Eckford was solo pianist. In this 'unbuttoned' programme with its strong local appeal, Eckford played piano settings of Northumbrian folk-tunes by Holst, Ernest Farrar's *North-Country Sketches*, and a *Cumbrian Suite* (MS) by Jeffrey Mark.⁴⁵⁷ Mark had organised a similar concert in April 1928 for the Oriana Madrigal Society in London.⁴⁵⁸ Folk songs of Cumberland and Northumberland were sung. Mitchell sang: 'The Bashful Lover', 'Cumbrian Folk song', and 'King Roger', from the Curwen collection.⁴⁵⁹ Many of WGW's arrangements were included. Ernest Potts sang 'The Way to Wallington', and 'Shoemaker', and the touching 'Maa Bonny Lad'. Jeffrey Mark performed many of his own songs. The concert ended with WGW's noble choral song 'Northumberland', and 'The Waters of Tyne', and 'Bobby Shaftoe.'

The Mass in B minor was eventually given for the fourth time by WGW on 23 March 1929, the choir augmented by ACCS singers. WGW made a surprisingly unorthodox alteration, placing the 'Sanctus' at the end of the work, 'an arrangement which certainly averts any sense of anti-climax' according to the *Newcastle Journal*.⁴⁶⁰ The Mass by this time was familiar territory, but there was time for one last 'Adventure' with the choir, described in WGW's *Collected Essays*: 'It is the custom of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Bach Choir...to embark each year upon some new adventure.'⁴⁶¹ When the Carnegie Tallis volume was published by OUP in 1928, WGW developed 'an absolutely irresistible desire to tackle Tallis's forty-part motet 'Spem in alium' in 40 parts'.⁴⁶² Fifty years before he had seen the edition published by Mann of Cambridge, long out of print, but the new score seemed to WGW 'as seductive as a map of treasure island'.⁴⁶³ He however shrank from asking his choristers to pay thirty shillings each for a copy, even if they

⁴⁵⁶ *The Tyneside Chronicle*, Dec. 15, 1928. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁵⁷ *The Northern Echo*, Feb. 4, 1929. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁵⁸ Advertising material for the BC 'Northumbrian-Cumbrian Concert', Feb. 2, 1929. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁵⁹ Unidentified newspaper cutting. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁶⁰ *The Newcastle Journal*, 25 March, 1929. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁶¹ Whittaker, 1940, III, 86. Reproduced and developed from an article in *The Dominant*, May/June 1929, 6.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

were physically strong enough to hold them during rehearsals. Willy James, a schoolmaster from Gateshead, offered to make two copies of every part. OUP agreed to this, and plans went ahead. James penned eleven thousand bars (assisted by his 'no less energetic sister'), inventing his own admirable scheme of cues to enable every singer to trace some easily heard line (given in red ink) throughout every rest, 'thus making each new start as plain as any singer could desire, and lessening enormously the intricacies of rehearsal'.⁴⁶⁴ In addition, this noble pair of enthusiasts bound every copy in strong covers.⁴⁶⁵ As always, WGW devised a scheme of dynamics to avoid 'meaningless stodging through the vocal lines'.⁴⁶⁶ Leaning towards 'softer qualities', he marked nearly every phrase to elucidate the individual rise and fall of the words and melodic contour. Originally composed for eight 5-part choirs, each SATBB, WGW's group was 48 strong. Since he deemed 2 voices to a part the 'minimum for safety', 4 sopranos, 4 contraltos, 4 tenors, and 20 basses joined normal forces, 80 voices in all for the performance.⁴⁶⁷ James designed an architectural scheme for arrangement of the choir, (reproduced in WGW's essay). WGW, who considered Tallis's *tour de force* 'a work of genius' performed the 9½ minute work three times at the concert, with Byrd's 4-part Mass.⁴⁶⁸

At the AGM of 1929, Walter Corder resigned the chairmanship, on grounds of ill-health. F J Culley became Chairman. Mowbray Thompson, general manager of Leversons' Wallsend Collieries, took over as Vice-Chairman. By this time news of WGW's departure for Glasgow was well known. Unusually, WGW conducted his first Cantata concert of the fifteenth season in the KH, rather than Newcastle Cathedral, on Saturday afternoon, 2 November 1929. He gave three Bach Church Cantatas, the first, No. 130, relevant to the season (for the feast of St. Michael and all Angels), with three trumpets and drums, the second, No. 170, 'Vergnügte Ruh', from some derived material, and the third, the substantial No. 30, 'Freue dich, erlöste Schaar', in the same category but with an opening chorus considered by WGW to be 'one of the finest that Bach ever wrote'.⁴⁶⁹ The next concert unmistakably was one of thanks and tribute to Holst when the BC performed the composer's *Hymn of Jesus* for the second time (the first being in 1921, conducted

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 87.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 87.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 89.

⁴⁶⁹ Whittaker, 1959, Vol. II, 89. The Cantata is in two Parts of six numbers each.

by Holst) with cantatas 130, 170 and 30. Soloists were Grace Scott, Helen Anderton, Tom Danskin, Jack Chicken and Ernest Potts, Potts's performance in one of the cantatas being pronounced a 'notable' feature of the programme, with Jack Mackintosh's 'brilliantly played trumpet florid passages'.⁴⁷⁰ The *Yorkshire Post* critic, on 4 November, praised the small Bach orchestra and magnificent singing of the last chorus in Cantata 30: 'Saturday afternoon's performance must rank with the finest ever given by the choir.'⁴⁷¹

The Christmas Concert, on Saturday afternoon 7 December, was tinged with nostalgia as Dale's *Before the Paling of the Stars*, first sung by ACCS in 1915 and by the BC in 1917 was sung again. But the choir also sang 'New and Traditional Carols', inspired by the publication by OUP in 1928 of *The Oxford Book of Carols* edited by Percy Dearmer, RVW, and Martin Shaw. Looking forward to WGW's new appointment, the guest soloist was Miss Bessie Spence, a violin teacher from the Scottish National Academy of Music [SNAM] (where WGW was shortly to take up his position as Principal) played for the first time in the north in Armstrong Gibbs' 'Lyric' Sonata. Other soloists were G. Varming and Girdlestone. As well as the 'Boars Head carol', 'The Holly and the Ivy' and many others, three old carols arranged by Jane Joseph (Holst's pupil, who had so perfectly arranged the choir's first visit to London in 1922) were played in her memory.

Lambert Large remembers WGW's departure for Glasgow, and thought WGW a rather old looking man for his 54 years of age.⁴⁷² He also remembered the sadness of the occasion. The deputy conductor took over rehearsals, until Patrick Hadley arrived as temporary lecturer (soon replaced by Sydney Newman).⁴⁷³ AC authorities had allowed WGW to leave immediately for Glasgow, but the *Glasgow Herald* reported he had another duty to perform in Newcastle, to conduct the BC in a 'characteristically enterprising programme'.⁴⁷⁴

WGW returned on Saturday 1 February 1930, to give the first performance of Herbert Howells's *Sir Patrick Spens* for chorus and orchestra, which, with its 'uncompromisingly modern

⁴⁷⁰ Unidentified newspaper cutting, Oct. 29, 1929. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁷¹ The *Yorkshire Post*, Nov. 4, 1929. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁷² Large, Lambert, Tape-recording of reminiscences from interview at his home in Newcastle with the writer, 1998.

⁴⁷³ Percy Lovell made investigations into Hadley's time in Newcastle, in 1995, researched by librarian Ernest Bettenson. Bettenson discovered that Hadley was at AC for two terms only in 1930, having withdrawn from the post after being refused more free time for composition. (Information in copied letters from Percy Lovell, given to the writer by Mrs. Greta Large.)

⁴⁷⁴ The *Glasgow Herald*, Feb. 2, 1930. GB-NEmd.

idiom', was repeated at the end of the concert, being received rather 'guardedly' by the audience, many of whom left before the repeat according to the *Newcastle Journal* of 3 February. William Hendry and L S Hughes were soloists, and Edgar Bainton, with Muriel Plant and Rene Houison, accompanied the Howells in a version for two pianos and timpani.

Sadly Ellis (who had recently been awarded an Honorary Lambeth Doctorate in Music by the Archbishop of Canterbury) was not able to play for WGW's last Cathedral concert, being replaced at short notice on 16 February 1929 by Baker of Hexham.⁴⁷⁵ Bach's cantata No 17, 'Wer dank opfert, der preiset mich', No. 35 'Geist und Seele wird verwirret', a solo cantata for alto soloist without chorus, was sung by the whole section. No. 168, 'Thue Rechnung! Donnerwort!', with 'splendid opening bass aria', and No. 31, 'Der Himmel Lacht' for Easter Day, scored for three trumpets, timpani, three oboes, taille, bassoon and two lines of strings, (already sung in London), ended the concert. Soloists were Ethel Durant, Rosa Burn, Tom Danskin, and A. Llewellyn Lewis.

It was hoped that WGW would continue to conduct BC concerts, but the *Evening World* of 10 April gave the news: 'Bach Choir woes increase. Dr. Whittaker gives up conductorship'. A real doubt hung over the future of the choir, but public support was lukewarm, and membership falling. The Secretary, I Winter, looked forward to 'calmer weather' but he hinted that if indifference continued, the BC, 'though crowned with honours, will die.'⁴⁷⁶ (He spoke without reckoning on the determination of WGW's band of dedicated singers. In fact the choir survives to this day with a strong membership and loyal following.)⁴⁷⁷ At the fourth performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* given by the choir on Saturday 12 April, WGW was now described on the programme as the 'Honorary Conductor', but there was one last triumph: On 14 April, the *St. John Passion* was broadcast for Holy Week, the choir and same soloists singing at the Northern Regional Station at Manchester. Urgent newspaper publicity sought help to continue the choir, the *Newcastle Journal* urging support: 'Somebody must be found to carry on and keep alive the

⁴⁷⁵ *Musical Opinion*, June 1929, GB-NEmd.

⁴⁷⁶ I Winter, BC secretary, *The Evening World*, 10 April, 1930. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁷⁷ Greta Large (formerly Capel) wrote in 1975 that she had set a record by being the only member who had sung with the choir for sixty years since its foundation in 1915, missing only six concerts in that time. From: Copy of type-written letter to the choir from Mrs. Large, in writer's possession.

organization which incidentally is as fine a monument as any musician could desire to his work and worth.⁴⁷⁸

WGW chose a programme of unaccompanied sixteenth century music for his last concert, also the last in the Cathedral, on 30 April 1930, reflecting his deepening interest in older music. Thomas Christy, sub-organist of the Cathedral, played in Dr Ellis's absence and in the memorable performance, WGW turned his gaze towards Scotland as he conducted a work he loved, Robert Carver's 'O Bone Jesu', one of the oldest pieces performed by the choir, from a MS in the National Library of Scotland. The *Journal* reported: 'For the last time...Professor Whittaker gave an inspiring lead to his forces.'⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁸ The Newcastle Journal, 14 April, 1930. GB-NEmd.

⁴⁷⁹ Undated *Journal* cutting. GB-NEmd.

CHAPTER FOUR

Soaked in 'Sound Principles': Whittaker and Musical Pedagogy

4.1 WHITTAKER AND HIS ADVOCACY OF THE SOL-FA SYSTEM

One element in WGW's professional life underpinned his ideas on musical education above any other, and that was his unflinching belief in John Curwen's Tonic Sol-fa method as an efficient system for teaching sight-singing, an essential requirement, he thought, in the training of all music teachers.¹ WGW writes that the system was 'despised in so many circles' but when he became a teacher he became 'a strong supporter'.² Indeed he named Curwen's *The School Music Teacher- A Guide to Teaching singing in Schools by Tonic Sol-fa Notation and Staff Notation* by Evans and McNaught, as one of the three which gave him 'enormous help' in his school music career.³ WGW was brought up with Sol-fa and he had mastered it without knowing at Clarence Street Wesleyan Methodist School, when, though 'devoid of any inclination to work' he learned the system 'without being able to recall any definite instruction in music'.⁴ Sol-fa was a tool used in the first efforts to give music instruction in Schools and from 1870, when the Elementary Education Act provided for elected local School Boards, levying rates, it catered only for some children, but in 1876, the year of WGW's birth, some compulsion was applied.⁵ In that year, school population having doubled since 1870, Rutherford, the Clarence Street School's founder, visited the United States 'to study their educational methods, and subsequently expanded his school to pioneer free secondary and technical education in the city 'to create a ladder for the able poor'.⁶ The results of this expansion were the Rutherford schools and the Rutherford College of Technology which were extremely forward looking in educational ethos.

¹ WGW's devotion to the method is underlined by the fact that the Sol-fa College was the only other beneficiary in his will apart from his two daughters (although the amount of the legacy was only £50).

² Aut I, 11.

³ 'Mr W G Whittaker, Mus.Bac.', *The Musical Herald*, 1 April, 1909, 99.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Edith Stevenson, the assistant teacher, also taught music at the School of Science and Art, the schools being part of the 'Bath Lane' group of schools, founded by Dr John Hunter Rutherford, a Scottish pioneer of free secondary and technical education in Newcastle who had also founded the church in Bath Lane. See Sydney Middlebrook, *Newcastle on Tyne: Its growth and achievements* (Newcastle, 1950), 54.

⁵ Scholes, P A, *The Mirror of Music 1844-1944*, Vol II (of 2) (London: Novello & Co. & OUP, 1947), 617.

⁶ Middlebrook, 54.

Scholes writes that the first school music lessons were purely vocal, ‘consisting of the singing of songs (with a preference for those of which the words inculcated some virtue or discountenanced some vice), and, in schools where there was a competent teacher, sight-singing.’ Scholes describes a common practice after 1870 of ‘putting a specialist in charge of the schools of his area, the regular staff of each school teaching under his guidance...In general the men chosen for these posts were ardent Tonic Sol-faists, who, as school teachers, had shown their competence’, but they were not professional musicians.⁷ This was indeed the case at the Bath Lane Schools. W D [Billy] Oliver, WGW’s music teacher for his whole school career, was in this category. A Graduate of the Tonic Sol-fa College, London (founded in 1879), he had attended holiday courses, and though chiefly employed as a chemistry teacher at the School of Science and Art, he was responsible for music in Rutherford’s Wesleyan Methodist Schools in Newcastle, teaching at Clarence Street, Camden Street (where WGW’s brother Harry was a pupil) and other schools. In 1891, when WGW was about to leave school for a career in Science, Oliver produced a selection of Curwen Songs, reprinted from the Tonic Sol-fa Press collection of 1879 under the title ‘Bath Lane Schools School Songs’.⁸ The book was entirely in Sol-fa and contained many part songs. When in 1894 WGW turned towards music for his livelihood, Oliver ‘insisted on my taking some Sol-fa examinations, a beneficial foundation.’⁹

With public pressure calling for a place for music in schools, John Hullah had been appointed first Inspector of Music in Training Colleges in 1873 and ‘tried to employ music as a moral agent able to gain access to a universal primal harmony which could unify the community’ exemplifying his Radical and Christian Socialist beliefs.¹⁰ Cox writes that John Curwen opposed this appointment, claiming that Hullah, who was an advocate of the ‘fixed doh’ system of Sol-fa, had ‘a strong and rare professional prejudice’.¹¹ Hullah had limited musical aims for Pupil-Teacher students, the system acquiring ‘an inertia difficult for Hullah to break’, while standards in Training Colleges, though better were dogged with an inability to devise realistic tests.¹² In 1875 a written examination was devised which ‘spawned numerous textbooks’ such as Currie’s *The*

⁷ Ibid., 619.

⁸ *GB-NEbb*.

⁹ Aut IV, 2.

¹⁰ Cox, 1993, 17.

¹¹ Ibid., 23.

¹² Ibid., 26-27.

Elements of Musical Analysis.¹³ Nevertheless, Music remained a low-status subject and Hullah regretted that he had never had access to the classroom or worked chiefly with children, although he succeeded in establishing music as a subject of study in Colleges and encouraged the provision of pianos in the classroom. The controversy between Hullah's and Curwen's tonic Sol-fa systems (the latter, based on the moveable doh which 'gave a vivid sense of relationship of the sounds within a key'), intensified.¹⁴ Curwen's supporters objected to Hullah's tests and they were withdrawn. John Stainer was appointed Inspector of Music in the Training Colleges and Elementary Schools of the Kingdom in 1882 at exactly the time that the government increased the grant 'to encourage children to sing by note rather than only by ear'.¹⁵ Without experience in classrooms, Stainer appointed W G McNaught as his assistant, from the outset insisting that his remit must include work in schools. WGW was later to work under both men. Stanford had opposed the awarding of the 6d grant for singing by ear and in 1889 lectured to the Managers of London School Boards on the subject claiming that the activity had no value save amusement.¹⁶ Mary Wakefield too opposed the grant, suggesting that that the festival movement would be a better method of music education.¹⁷ Stainer found that in colleges many regarded college music tuition as useless. Cox writes: 'This had had the effect of turning teachers towards other institutions that taught specific notations or special systems of instruction.'¹⁸ In this climate Curwen's Tonic Solfa College (founded 1879) flourished. In training teachers Stainer shifted the emphasis from theory to practice, removing the requirement to study harmony, and opposed the employment of specialist teachers, as had happened in Edinburgh. Cox writes that a major theme for Stainer was the controversy over the tonic Sol-fa methods, the movement now being 'at the pinnacle of its power and influence' since the latter regarded Sol-fa as 'the way forward', despite knowing that it was not an easy option.¹⁹ Stainer favoured the letter (Sol-fa) method for simple vocal music and the staff method for tonally complex music, McNaught now drawing up an 'intellectual framework', including a history, for Sol-fa's place in the school curriculum and

¹³ Ibid., 29

¹⁴ Ibid., 37.

¹⁵ Ibid., 40.

¹⁶ Ibid., 46.

¹⁷ Ibid., 47.

¹⁸ Ibid., 48.

¹⁹ Ibid., 49-50.

proceeded to add 'Psychology of Sight-Singing' to the education of teachers, disseminating his ideas through *The School Music Review* and stressing the importance also of investing music teaching with feeling.²⁰ There were also detailed schemes devised for the teaching of time, rhythm, and ear exercises. In all this McNaught based his system of training on Curwen's method, Cox writing that 'at its best the teaching McNaught inspired must have been musical, responsive and humane'.²¹ But opposition to the Sol-fa method was soon in evidence from such influential musicians as G A MacFarren, Principal of the RAM and Professor of Music at Cambridge, and W H Cummings, Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, while Fuller Maitland, although appreciating its values in teaching thought it encouraged the production of music aimed at the Sol-fa notation.²²

When he took up his post at the Normal College at the College of Physical Science, in the autumn of 1898, although musical instruction was available in a number of schools, WGW was disappointed to find that many students came to AC 'with the veriest smattering of knowledge [sic]'.²³ He found it tiresome to have to teach them the basics of musical theory, which he thought they should have learned at Elementary School. Their heavy timetables together with a feeling among those studying Science (understood by WGW) that it was 'beneath their dignity to learn how many quavers were equal to a minim and to be taught the most rudimentary sight-singing' meant an 'uphill struggle' for him.²⁴ In consequence he subsequently conducted his own 'detailed inquiry into the history of previous local musical education (or lack of it)' for each student, sending his own annual report to the Board of Education.²⁵ He also indicated which schools 'had the blackest record and were never visited by an Inspector of Music', which, he said, caused impossible conditions to persist and his own work to become 'a mere farce'.²⁶ WGW only persisted in the post because of 'opportunities for voluntary work in the College'; in other words, the conductorship of the Choral Society.²⁷

²⁰ Ibid., 50-51.

²¹ Ibid., 56.

²² Ibid., 58.

²³ Aut V, 2.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 6.

The Choral Class was compulsory for teachers, and was much resented by many of the men, 'naturally' so WGW thought, as they could not read music.²⁸ This presented a daunting challenge for him requiring him to 'slave interminably to secure only passable results'.²⁹ He found that the only approach in these circumstances was to teach by Sol-fa, which he did entirely at the beginning of the session each year, finding that through class instruction he was able to use staff notation by the end of the year 'for easy things'.³⁰ WGW swiftly demonstrated that he was a natural teacher. Although few madrigals were then published in the letter notation, they gave WGW his first opportunity for practical study of Tudor choral music. Never having heard secular music of the period, he experimented as to how to treat them. Using 'a graph' he provided copies of Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli* and other polyphonic church music, 'and even the most antagonistic men in the choir appreciated their beauty'.³¹ In his unpublished *Autobiography* he described his experiments: 'Each session I arranged a kind of historical programme, leading up to modern part-songs. It was hard work, but I learned by the process of doing the wrong thing & then finding out the right, many lessons of choral training.'³²

Stainer, the Inspector of Music to the Board of Education, was 'genial, kindly & easy to get along with' when he came to see WGW's work at AC.³³ He brought with him William McNaught, much more critical but helpful.³⁴ Stainer generally took an interest in the work of Training Colleges and McNaught of work in schools. Stainer's opinion on Sol-fa use in schools was similar to WGW's, although he confined the use of Sol-fa in schools for simple vocal music, seeing its limitations for tonally complex music, and found it imperative that staff notation be mastered afterwards (always the intention of John Curwen).³⁵ WGW wrote of him: 'As the most distinguished man in the Sol-fa movement he naturally commended my practice of laying a foundation by the splendid principles of that method of teaching and leading by means of it to

²⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 2-3.

³² Ibid., 3.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cox, G., *Living Music in Schools 1923-1999: Studies in the History of Music Education in England*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 48.

staff.³⁶ WGW recounted that Stainer became ‘a warm friend’, giving excellent advice, including ‘Keep off Handel choruses. They make your people bawl.’³⁷ His experiences also re-echoed Stainer’s opinion of 1884, that ‘the majority of music teachers have the toilsome and thankless task of preparing many students whose musical education has not so much as been attempted, whose mind, musically speaking, is a blank’.³⁸ But Stainer was also seeking the development of ‘intelligent hearers’ and McNaught wished schools not to turn children into composers and great executants, but rather into ‘armies of trained listeners’.³⁹

By 1899 the debate over the teaching of Tonic Sol-fa had become heated, a deputation to the Education Department asking for it to be scrapped in schools in preference to the teaching of staff notation. In 1900 the Grant was withdrawn and was followed in 1901 by McNaught’s Code, which sought for children ‘a healthful and pleasant form of collective indoor occupation’ in music, and contained parallel courses of study for both staff and Tonic Sol-fa notation.⁴⁰ Somervell became Inspector of Music to the Board of Education in 1901 and was firmly on the side of National Songs for the school curriculum, supporting the publication of Stanford’s *National Song Book*, published in 1906.⁴¹ Cecil Sharp from this time stressed the importance of the true ‘folk song’ as opposed to ‘national songs’.⁴² More and more collections of classical songs were published, a change from the ‘didactic’ songs, like those of Farmer and any others, which sought to boost ‘taste’ as much as to teach music.⁴³ Somervell believed in educating children of all classes in ‘their own great song literature’.⁴⁴

The 1902 Education Act devolved responsibility for education onto the local education authorities, the Board of Education producing in 1905 the first Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers (known as ‘Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools’). From now on aims were ‘to awaken the imagination and

³⁶ Aut V, 3.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Cox, *Living Music in Schools 1923-1999: Studies in the History of Music Education in England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 48.

³⁹ Cox, G, *A History of Music Education in England 1872-1928* (Scolar Press: Hants, England, 2003), 60.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 62.

⁴¹ Ibid., 63.

⁴² Ibid., 64.

⁴³ Ibid., 72-73.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 86.

widen the capacity for emotion, while subjecting its expression to artistic restraint'.⁴⁵ Somervell wrote an introduction and appendix with outline of schemes for teaching and list of songs. WGW, as if by intuition, was already doing many of these things in his own curriculum. However, he found one of Stainer's 'humorous, if exasperating' regulations was that for the examination, every student should also sing a song.⁴⁶ He wrote that on the whole students selected 'trash', 'and bad songs meant bad marks'; he therefore added volumes of Schubert, Schumann, and works of 'good moderns' to the library, making it a rule that only music from these volumes would be allowed.⁴⁷ The results were disappointing and a 'depressing revelation of how little I had been able to teach the people concerned' resulted.⁴⁸ Finally WGW 'was driven to make a list of simple, but good, songs' and insisted that choice was limited to these. He pronounced it a 'blessed relief' when the requirement was cancelled.⁴⁹

The training of teachers was in a state of flux at the beginning of the century with School Boards only recently developing the Pupil Teacher Centres (where pupil teachers spent half their training time) as an alternative to being training in school by the headmaster.⁵⁰ After the 1902 Act this system began to break down and in Newcastle, Sir Michael Sadler, part-time professor of History and Administration of Education at Manchester University, was commissioned to write a report on the Educational facilities and opportunities available, suggesting that Armstrong College could 'be considerably enhanced by a full and complete development of the Arts side of its teaching' (as, situated in an industrial area it showed the usual scientific bias).⁵¹ WGW began to give classes for students preparing for School Teachers' Music Certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College, finding this personally advantageous 'as I became soaked in fine principles', and then was appointed to the Pupil Teachers' Centre of the city Education Committee.⁵² WGW writes that because of his pupils' ability to read well at sight, they achieved a large repertoire: 'I have never seen such discipline combined with freedom in singing classes. They all realise that they

⁴⁵ Ibid., 96.

⁴⁶ Aut V, 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Aut V, 5.

⁵⁰ Barnard, H C, *A History of English Education From 1760* (London: University of London Press, 1947), 188.

⁵¹ 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).

⁵² Aut VI, 13.

can be happiest when they are doing their job properly'.⁵³ New pupils, ignorant of even the names of great composers, soon 'loved everything they learned...Of all the thousands of girls who passed through my hands, one only said that she did not care for music'.⁵⁴ However, WGW had to work in old drill hall, 'with beer barrels and a much-bespat-on sanded floor, after evening 'smokers'.⁵⁵ The headmaster had a veritable mania for altering classes and 'used to wander about with time-tables in his hand seeking for something else to change'.⁵⁶ Some groups were disturbed from day to day sometimes mid-lesson. This cultivated an ability in WGW to be able to adapt to a new set of lesson plans on the spur of the moment, but destroyed any chance of continuity in work.⁵⁷ The centre was dissolved after a number of years but was still in existence in 1909, since as an article in *The Musical Herald* of April that year describes the activities undertaken there:

At the Pupil Teachers' Centre Whittaker instructs between 100 and 150 pupils in four classes. These students now have no examination until the scholarship examination, and the teacher is left to develop his own plans. Another teacher takes theory. Mr. Whittaker teaches Tonic Sol-fa and Staff simultaneously all through. Folk-songs and national-songs are sung from Hadow's, or Stanford's collection, songs of Purcell, Handel, Bach, Beethoven. Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, Brahms, etc. are sung. Schumann and Wagner are special favourites. An attempt is made to interest them in musical work outside their own by having attention called to the best operas, concerts, lectures etc.⁵⁸

In January 1921, the *Musical Quarterly* published Fuller-Maitland's article 'Tonic-Solfa: Pro and Con', WGW responding in a reply published in April 1922 which began: 'It seems like harking back many years to find discussion again on the question of the relative merits of the new and the old notation, but Mr. Fuller-Maitland's article...contains so many extraordinary statements that it is difficult to see how they can remain unchallenged'.⁵⁹ WGW maintained that in his 'younger days' he had been 'strongly opposed' to the Sol-fa method for teaching but, when faced with practical work in choral societies and choirs of all sorts and with both child and adult singing pupils he had been 'driven like many other musicians to seek refuge in the aid given by a system extraordinarily accurate in its notation, and devised in its teaching methods with insight rarely known in the musical-educational world'.⁶⁰ WGW now came down firmly on the side of Tonic Sol-fa he claimed because he had met so many applicants for choral societies and solo

⁵³ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁸ 'Mr W. G. Whittaker, Mus. Bac.', *The Musical Herald*, 1 April, 1909, 99. *GB-Gsm*.

⁵⁹ Whittaker, W G, 'A Reply to "Tonic-Solfa: Pro and Con"', *Musical Quarterly*, April 1922, 265.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

singers who were unable to read: 'They cannot keep time, they merely guess the interval of a tune, they have no systemised knowledge whatsoever.'⁶¹ On joining a choir, WGW said that such singers were unable to tackle simple progressions if the staff notation were in a difficult key. WGW disagreed with three of Fuller-Maitland's statements, the first being that readers of 'TSF' [Tonic Sol-fa] had no harmonic awareness: 'As a matter of fact harmonic progressions are read in a solfa score by exactly the same process that a staffist [sic] of experience uses' and stressed that the difference was merely one of language.⁶² (WGW probably felt well able to make a judgement for, though he had taken his own excellent Sol-fa education for granted and could not remember any instruction at Clarence Street Wesleyan Methodist school, he had gained enough facility in Sol-fa there to be chosen by the headmaster, along with other good readers at the school, 'to sing the tenor part of school hymns, an octave higher than the proper pitch, regardless of consecutives.'⁶³ WGW also challenged Fuller-Maitland's view that 'the representation of rests...is imperfect', on the grounds that 'one has only to teach both notations to a class of young people to find out how relatively easy John Curwen's plans are'.⁶⁴ Fuller-Maitland thought that the absence of indication of silence duration would make reading of a polyphonic piece exceedingly difficult, WGW dismissing this as 'the strangest statement of all' because 'All tonic-solfa copies are printed in score, all bars of rest are clearly given, for the duration of these the singer simply keeps his or her eye upon the nearest line. Where is the difficulty? No choir-trainer has ever found one'.⁶⁵ Indeed, WGW wrote, 'the letter system is more economical of space...the eye has not to travel so far in search of a line to follow...I fail utterly to see how this distinguished critic could have made such an accusation'.⁶⁶ He summed up: 'The writer has had a quarter of a century of experience in a University where teachers are trained, and he finds that the best classification he can make at the beginning of a new session is by the amount of reading ability in solfa that students possess.'⁶⁷

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 266.

⁶³ Aut II, 11.

⁶⁴ The *Musical Quarterly*, April 1922, 266.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 267.

⁶⁶ Ibid. WGW also discussed Sol-fa in modal singing, dismissing Maitland's proposals on this matter and also disagreed with his criticism of noting 'every slightest modulation', citing Coward's work with the Sheffield Choir when performing Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. Ibid., 268-269.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 271.

In October 1923, when on an AB examination tour of Australia, WGW was asked by Fox-Strangways, who wished to inaugurate a discussion on this subject for *Music and Letters*, to write an article on 'The claims of Tonic Solfa'.⁶⁸ This article, and a follow-up to it, formed the basis for one of WGW's *Collected Essays* published in 1940. The essay begins: 'The days of bitter controversy over the precedence of the rival methods of writing music are long past, and the dream, fondly indulged in a few years ago, that the standard notation would eventually wither and die to make room for the newer, has faded'.⁶⁹ He was ultimately wrong that controversy had faded, but right that 'letter notation' was never going to take over. His arguments in the essay were cogent and well articulated. At the outset he refuted the suggestion that notation was in itself 'beautiful'; rather it was functionality that mattered: 'We enjoy a madrigal of Wilbye no less because singers use modern copies which have been transcribed from what is now, save to experts, unreadable Tudor script. We are impressed with Gregorian chant even though the notation conveys nothing to us.'⁷⁰ He claimed that Tonic Sol-fa reduced the number of signs to a minimum, relating sounds to each other immediately, thereby cutting out an intervening process. In difficult keys 'hundreds of accidentals were swept away and apparently difficult passages proved to be quite easy.'⁷¹ He maintained that modulations (or 'removes') in Sol-fa, 'the first real stumbling-block to the student of notation', although complicating matters at first '...eventually clears away numberless tangled areas of obstructing undergrowth.'⁷² Thinking of the future he speculated: 'It remains to be seen whether the present harmonic tendencies will destroy the key system which, though ever widening and developing, has governed music since the early days of the seventeenth century. But even if this comes to pass, the Sol-fa notation of keyless passages is less complicated than the other.'⁷³ The 'Aeolian minor' was said to be easier to grasp in Sol-fa, and Curwen's 'stroke of genius' in calling the sharpened sixth in the minor scale 'ba' (pronounced *bay*) produced a 'mental effect' very different from the sharp fourth of the major scale.⁷⁴ WGW found the notation of time more accessible in Sol-fa, and even went on to propose its use for

⁶⁸ The article, written in 1923, was not published in *Music and Letters* until October 1924, the 'follow-up' article being published in January 1925.

⁶⁹ Whittaker, W G, *Collected Essays* (OUP: London, 1940), 65.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, 68.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

piano and even score-reading: 'there are no intricacies of modern keyboard music which cannot be solved by its means'.⁷⁵ He lamented that since Curwen and 'people of his stamp' were not cultured musicians, the professional musician 'gathered his robes still more about him in virtuous indignation'; Sol-fa was associated with 'Nonconformist Evangelical work among the lower orders', and that some amateurs were too indolent, having mastered Sol-fa, to master the universal notation.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, WGW regarded John Curwen as 'probably the greatest educationalist the world of music has ever seen', not only for his system but because 'he had a marvellous instinct for analysing the processes of the mind which accompany musical activity, and for devising means of ensuring an easy passage across any difficult ground'.⁷⁷ WGW admitted to being 'astonished at his [Curwen's] grasp of musical-psychological problems, and one finds nearly all the ideas passing current in modern musical-educational movements already thought out and mastered', for every step could be taught easily, and with certainty.⁷⁸

In 1928 the *Musical Times* gives an account of a demonstration of sight-singing by the children from two London elementary schools, from Sol-fa notation ('not taught by Dr. Somervell's plan'), witnessed by Somervell, Mr Richards (Chief Inspector of Education in England and Wales), Hadow, Allen, Borland, and WGW.⁷⁹ The test, given to boys and girls separately, was said to have been 'the most difficult test that has ever been given to children', and was correct, 'to the surprise, delight and satisfaction of all present'.⁸⁰ After this an ear-test, which was played on the pianoforte, was taken down in staff notation, and another sight-singing test, this time in the staff notation, was sung to the entire satisfaction 'and delight' of the audience. Afterwards 'Dr Whittaker, rising to address the audience, declared that after hearing such results his advocacy of the cause of Tonic Sol-fa was almost unnecessary'.⁸¹ Yet bitter controversy was to arise almost immediately afterwards when Somervell declared a little more than a month later that Tonic Sol-fa was to be abandoned. Scholes felt that this brought on 'a great decline of the standard of sight-singing in the country', an opinion strongly supported by WGW. Scholes also

⁷⁵ Ibid., 73.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 74.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Whittaker, W G, 1940, 74.

⁷⁹ Scholes, P A, *The Mirror of Music 1844-1944, Vol. I* (Novello & Co. Ltd. & OUP: London, 1947), 17.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

maintained that 'the scorn which pure staffists [sic] show towards Sol-fa is the result of two things, complete ignorance of the notation & of the underlying manner of teaching, & an utter lack of understanding of the true nature of the musical faculty'.⁸² He also wrote that Hadow, in his *British Music*, had paid 'an extravagant compliment to Somervell, saying that he did more than any other single man for musical education in this country'.⁸³ WGW strongly disagreed with this assertion:

My own verdict would be the exact opposite. Somervell was a doctrinaire. He opposed Sol-fa at every turn, without being able to replace it by any substitute...He appeared to me to view everything from the angle of a pianoforte keyboard, which is not the basis of real musical thought. The collection of sight-singing exercises he published shows a lack of knowledge of the fundamental principles of thinking musically.⁸⁴

Somervell objected to WGW's use of Sol-fa copies in the College choral class, 'despite the fact that [WGW] told him they were replaced by staff as soon as students had learned to read the latter'.⁸⁵ Indeed Somervell tried to get WGW to promise never to use the 'letter notation' at all: 'When I asked him how a choir could learn part-songs from a notation which they did not understand he had no reply, but repeated his demand. I refused of course'.⁸⁶ On one occasion when examining a secondary school at which WGW taught, Somervell expressed his delight at WGW's 'exceptional results in all directions' but added 'I abhor your methods'. To WGW's retort – 'the results are the consequences of my methods' – he had no reply. WGW thought he would have preferred inferior work if 'that accursed thing, Sol-fa, was not employed'.⁸⁷ In many ways, Somervell's opposition galvanised WGW into a more entrenched defence of the method and throughout his career he remained convinced that Sol-fa was an invaluable tool for teaching sight-singing. Two colleagues who attended the summer courses in Oxford, Herbert Wiseman and John Wishart, Music Inspectors for Edinburgh's Board of Education, colleagues with WGW in *Clarendon Song Book Series* from 1930, were also dedicated followers of Curwen's ideas (which they thought 'could never be overestimated'), and acknowledged the work done in spreading these ideas by W G McNaught. Their book *The Music Class*, written in Edinburgh, was published in Glasgow in 1925.

⁸² *Aur V*, 3

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

4.2 WGW AND 'MUSIC APPRECIATION'

WGW was a great propagandist for the 'Musical Appreciation movement', first introduced from the United States to Britain by Stewart Macpherson, a professor at the RAM, who pioneered 'Musical Appreciation' teaching, especially in Secondary Schools, and particularly Girls' High Schools.⁸⁸ Macpherson maintained that 'training of the ear was the necessary foundation of all music teaching'.⁸⁹ He advocated that pupils hear the finest instrumental music, which was also explained to them in such a way as to explain its place in the history of music's development, and to intelligently follow its structure.⁹⁰ This attitude was in line with Somervell's desire, in tune with general tendencies among musical educationalists, to balance 'the acquirement of a technical proficiency' with 'the cultivation of taste'.⁹¹ Somervell, Cox maintains, was successful in this and between 1901 and 1928 was responsible for 'a significant change of emphases in musical education'.⁹² Somervell saw rhythm 'as the key to musical power...In association with dance, it could make the whole body responsive, it could build human fellowship, and enable music to serve as an integrative force. At the same time he encouraged personal creativity'.⁹³ Complications in theory followed with the advent of recording and radio as the 'refining influence' of musical appreciation was 'inextricably linked with to participation within society', the new media perhaps encouraging a 'passivity' and down-grading of musical skills, a subject discussed in the Hadow Report (Board of Education 1926) and the Cambridgeshire Report (1933) to which WGW contributed.⁹⁴ Somervell's attitude 'opened the door to 'new musical education' with its greater freedom, fresh understanding of childhood and insistence on quality and led him to convince his colleagues of the 'worthwhile-ness' of music as a curriculum subject, beginning with the change from 'singing' to 'music' lessons.⁹⁵ Somervell was helped by an

⁸⁸ Scholes, Vol II, 622. Scholes writes that John Curwen himself had, 'in a small way', been a pioneer in this field, though it had 'formed no definite part of is system' and had made little headway as an idea.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Cox, 1999, 136.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid. Cox writes that this element had to be relinquished, though in his writings he maintained a close relationship between music and imagination, 137.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid

Assistant Inspector, from 1911 Geoffrey Shaw who took over from 1928-1940, himself having as assistant Cyril Wynn from 1925 who became Inspector in 1940.

WGW's involvement with the Appreciation Movement was profound and followed his meeting with Percy Scholes at the Newcastle Festival of 1909, when the fellow vegetarian stayed at his home. Scholes had become Registrar of the City of Leeds School of Music in Vernon Street, in 1908, when its running was taken over by the local authority. Scholes also took some classes there, preparing students for LRAM examinations, and teaching ear-training and rudiments of music, and with T J Hoggett, taught harmony, counterpoint, fugue and history of music. Using his experiences in Kent and South Africa, and sabbatical in Switzerland, Scholes gave lectures on the art of teaching music.⁹⁶ Bairstow was brought into the running of the school by Scholes until it closed in 1912. In 1908 Scholes launched the 'Home Study Union' (a branch of the 'Home Reading Union', which held local reading circles) with Hadow (then still at Worcester College, Oxford) as President. Contributors to Scholes's Monthly Journal, soon to become *The Music Student*, included Hoggett, Fricker, Bairstow, and Frank Kidson (the Leeds-based collector of folk song). In *The Mirror of Music* Scholes outlined the various fundamental aids to the dissemination of Musical Appreciation. These included from 1919 the gramophone, Scholes naming particularly the Gramophone Company Ltd., which became His Master's Voice [HMV]. When this company combined with the Columbia Gramophone Company a fully-fledged education department was founded in 1929, issuing Scholes's *The Columbia History of Music*, 'treating the subject from an evolutionary standpoint'.⁹⁷ At about the same time Scholes became involved with the Aeolian company of New York, WGW soon following his lead in advertising the product and setting up a 'Pianola Room' at AC.

As an adjunct to Musical Appreciation lessons, 'extra-curricular activities' were encouraged such as instrumental activities such as violin classes and school orchestras, and sometimes the learning of other instruments. These activities had already become more popular from 1905 in the Public Day School Trust schools and boys' public schools. Scholes writes that at the infant school level percussion bands too became popular from the 1920's, but these had

⁹⁶ Morrish, P S, 'Percy Alfred Scholes', *Publications of the Thoresby Society*, Second series Vol. 13 (Miscellany), (2003), 52-3.

⁹⁷ Scholes, Vol II, 622.

already existed preciously, as exemplified by the percussion bands at the Rutherford schools in the 1890's. Another innovation was that of recorder playing in schools, initiated by Dolmetsch (and later the bamboo pipes, demonstrated by the Pipers' Guild founded in 1939 by Margaret James of Oxford and supported by Louise Dyer) which could be undertaken cheaply, and taught by one teacher in a class. The giving of children's concerts had preceded the Appreciation Movement, Henschel having held some in London in 1890. But Scholes writes that they 'arose out of the 'Appreciation' idea', and were inspired by a scheme for Municipal Concerts for Children with the Hallé Orchestra organised by Walter Carroll (Musical Adviser to Manchester Education Committee from 1919).⁹⁸ The giving of operas in schools was yet another important additional method of improving musical education, but a major development occurred in April 1924 with the beginning of radio broadcasts in musical appreciation, Alec Robertson, Walford Davies and Scholes being the principal movers in the new field. Davies, according to Cox, realised the difficulties of trying to teach children music when 'most 19 year old students in training colleges were merely like nine-year-olds when they came to music whereas: 'Gramophone recording and radio broadcasts held the promise that they would be able to help overcome the seemingly intractable problem of providing a basic and effective music curriculum for all children in school capable of being taught by classroom teachers.'⁹⁹ There were however no school music broadcasts as such (although by 1938 outside broadcasts of orchestral concerts went out to schools all over Britain) at that time, opportunities for talks on music being provided by *Children's Hour*, with talks by 'Uncle Jeff', Stanton Jefferies, Musical Director of the BBC.¹⁰⁰

Scholes had taken an especial interest in the work of another pioneer in the field of Musical Appreciation, Jaques-Dalcroze, a young Swiss composer who had given two London concerts of his own music in 1897 and subsequently became famous for 'his admirable system of evolving rhythm by bodily movements'.¹⁰¹ Scholes probably got to know Dalcroze in Switzerland during his sabbatical there in 1902 when he was organist at the English Church in Vevey

⁹⁸ Ibid., 624.

⁹⁹ Cox, 2002, 34.

¹⁰⁰ Briggs, A, *The Birth of Broadcasting* (London: OUP, 1961), 262.

¹⁰¹ Morrish, 51.

(between Lausanne and Montreux), he certainly claimed the latter as an acquaintance.¹⁰² In December 1912 Dalcroze gave a demonstration with six girl pupils in London and the provinces, WGW attending the London event, having been asked by AC to write a report on it: 'It made a deep impression on me. As an educationalist I realised that here was a method of clearing away difficulties which beset every teacher, difficulties which attention to the instrument or voice only augment, that by undergoing rhythmic training separately from normal instruction, playing and singing would be vastly improved, that much more subtlety & responsiveness would be cultivated, that it was an ideal adjunct to every branch of musical tuition. It was what I had felt (in a vague kind of way) that I wanted with all my pupils, something which I had not been able to devise myself.'¹⁰³ WGW immediately organised classes in Newcastle.

Scholes, now an extension lecturer organised summer schools at Oxford, WGW acting as a tutor there in vacations until his death. WGW founded his own 'Home Music Study Circle' among his pupils, holding monthly meetings when a subject such as French music, Wagner's operas, British music, was discussed for a season. Each member contributed once a session, either by playing, singing or giving a paper (WGW supplying the material). WGW attended, but the students elected their own chair, 'in order not to restrict discussion'.¹⁰⁴ During the autumn term of 1922, WGW was lecturer for a Cambridge University Extension Course: 'The Appreciation of Music'. He later bemoaned the fact that the movement folded eventually though he nevertheless attempted to keep the spirit of the idea going in both Newcastle and Glasgow.¹⁰⁵

4.3 WHITTAKER AS CLASS TEACHER

WGW had many private piano pupils and a lecturing post at AC, but also taught in two schools for ten years, but first for a short time at Gateshead High School for Girls (the first girls' day school in the north east, established in 1876 by the Spence Watsons for their own daughters), under the headmistress Francis Tooke. The preparatory department of this school, established in

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰³ *Aut XI*, 39-40.

¹⁰⁴ *Aut VI*, 13.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Jesmond, became eventually 'The Central Newcastle High School' [CNHS] and moved to a purpose built school in Eskdale Terrace in 1902. In 1910, probably when his daughters began to attend school there, WGW joined the staff as singing teacher. After the closure of the Gateshead school (as discussed in Chapter I, 16) and Tooke's transfer to the new venture, Rutherford Girls School, WGW became visiting singing teacher, at the request of Miss Tooke, taking eight classes per week: 'Although not particularly musical herself, she valued class-singing highly.'¹⁰⁶ Here WGW was able to put into practice all the ideals promulgated by the Board of education, introducing National Songs, advocated by Stanford, and 'true' folk songs, as pioneered by Cecil Sharp and Vaughan Williams, into the singing repertoire. Older girls had theory classes, and all were in graded sight-singing classes, all girls singing individually once a term.¹⁰⁷ WGW took groups to hear performances by visiting opera companies, preceded by an explanatory talk, sixty girls once attending Wagner's *Lohengrin*.¹⁰⁸ The quality of singing was of the highest standard but underpinning this was the laying down of excellent foundations in sight-singing, rhythm training, appreciation and above all enjoyment in music. One of WGW's duties was to provide a programme of unison and part songs for the annual prize-distribution ceremonies of both schools. Apart from being a good focal point for the girls' work during the year, this display of the high standard of his work must have earned WGW much kudos, since his work at the school would be known both to parents and distinguished visitors to the schools.

WGW was evidently a gifted teacher. In March 1910 Joseph Bridge HMI, examined WGW's work at Rutherford College Girls' School, under the heading 'Singing', and seems to have found it exemplary:

Good work is being done in this subject. One weekly lesson in class singing is given in each from by a thoroughly competent visiting master, and in addition a weekly lesson in Theory of music is given in two forms. A high standard has been attained by the upper forms, but the classes were working well and reaping the benefit of the admirable instruction given them. Particularly noteworthy were the delicacy and sweetness observable in the rendering by form VI of classical music in parts and of folk-songs, while the quickness and accuracy of the response to ear tests and to sight-reading tests in both notations deserve high praise. A thoroughly good scheme is being worked by a master who is not only an excellent musician but a painstaking and inspiring teacher. It is clear that the girls are learning to appreciate and enjoy good music.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰⁷ Inspection at Rutherford College Girls' School. 30, 31 May, 1-3, 7-10 June 1910. *GB-NEbb*.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Inspection at Rutherford College Girls' School. 30, 31 May, 1-3, 7-10 June 1910. *GB-NEbb*.

(This assessment was made, interestingly enough, a year after Bridge, Professor of Music at Durham, had failed WGW's DMus.) Another Inspection of WGW's classes, on 3-6 November 1914, by Somervell yielded a similar result:

The thoroughness and the order of the work, and the excellent results, could hardly be bettered. The teacher is a man of extraordinary resource, originality and capability, and makes every lesson a model of what such a lesson should be. The material with which he has to deal is often, at the beginning of term, very mixed; but the new girls are speedily infected with the enthusiasm of those who have already been in the class. Every girl is tested individually and a record kept. No point in training which it is possible to do in class is omitted; but perhaps the finest part of the work is the way in which the girls are soaked in quantities of good music. Under this influence it is not too much to say that probably the large majority of them leave school with a trained – even an instinctive – standard.¹¹⁰

Clearly then, WGW evinced impressive credentials as a teacher in both method and scope. His teaching at the CNHS was described in an article written after his death by the headmistress Dorothy Hiley as 'an incomparable teacher', of whom the girls' joyful spontaneity while singing, and 'delicious freshness of tone' were an evocation, their singing 'a natural expression of school life'. That he somehow had Somervell's talent for relating well to small children and also his aspiration to inspire their imagination, is evidently clear in Hiley's memory of the infant singing class:

On singing days I used often to slip into the back of the Hall, closing the swing doors gently so as not to create a disturbance. It was seldom that any of the class knew for a long time that I was there. I recall most vividly the class of tinies, two rows perhaps, and each pigtail precisely perpendicular. I am told there had once been an awe-inspiring tale of a big sword hidden under the platform, but the attention I was familiar with was not frozen but tingling, and little voices like piping reeds. Dr. Whittaker would be at the piano playing a tippety-toe accompaniment, and leaning across to whisper to them with tender reverence as though each one were a little fairy princess.¹¹¹

For all WGW's criticism of Somervell's innate dislike of Tonic Sol-fa, he largely endorsed many of the fundamental principles which Somervell espoused in his various papers on educational policy in music during the Edwardian years. These stressed ideas of patriotism, the learning of national tunes (as promoted in Stanford's and A P Graves's *National Song Book*), the notion of an emotional response to music over the intellectual, the igniting of imagination by the use of national myths, historical heroes (such as Drake, Nelson, Wellington and Shakespeare) and fairy tales, the inculcation of 'taste', as well as service to the community.

At Rutherford Girl's School, the speech-day programme for 1908 embraced these ideals. It included a couple of 'National Songs' 'The Mermaid', and 'Blow, blow thou winter wind', and

¹¹⁰ Inspection at Rutherford College Girls' School, 3-6 November, 1914. *GB-NEbb*.

¹¹¹ Hiley, DF P, 'An Affectionate Glimpse', *CNHS Magazine*, 1945, 2.

songs by Rubinstein, Reinecke, and Schumann. Two years later WGW's own setting of Kipling's 'The Children's Song' was included in the selection and sung subsequently every year, being a song in the style of one of Farmer's compositions.¹¹² At a second 1910 prize-giving, when Hadow distributed the prizes, three of WGW's folk song arrangements were sung, 'Lay the Bent to the Bonny Broom', 'Blow the Wind Southerly', and 'The Outlandish Knight.' Walford Davies's two-part 'Infant Joy' was sung, with classical songs by Schumann, Anton Rubinstein and Handel (his 'O lovely Peace'), and the national song 'Here's a Health unto his Majesty' completed the programme, as it did habitually from this time at both schools. This was the policy that informed WGW's perspective of class-teaching and it continued throughout his commitment to school-teaching in Newcastle. The exigencies of teaching children folksong encouraged his own productivity in terms of folk-song arrangements; his interests in madrigals, part-songs, group-singing (especially in unison) and Tonic-Sol-fa naturally provided an environment which nurtured this 'socialistic' outlook towards music as an agency for self-improvement and egalitarianism. WGW undoubtedly also looked to the teaching of music in the classroom as a means of engendering personal discipline. A programme of the November 1911 prize-distribution in Newcastle Library's collection, marked by a young choir member, shows meticulous attention to dynamics and details, and much contrast: F, p, mf, pp, mf, p, pp, F. All commas in the text or phrase are circled, and enjambments are marked with an 'O'. WGW included most of this advice in his own *North Country Ballads, Songs & Pipe-Tunes*, similarly heavily edited with dynamics and instructions. Often a second or third piano accompaniment is supplied by way of contrast, during which the class must continue to observe all these inflections, the copy carrying complicated advice as to which accompaniment to use as can be seen in the following example from Book I of the publication:

¹¹² WGW did not acknowledge his authorship, however, in the programme of the event.

Allegretto.

1. Oh... Der-went-water's a
bos-ny lord, And gool-den is his hair, And glin-tin' is his
hawk-in' e'e, Wl' kind love dwellin' there. 2. Yes- three.

Ex. 2: Above: 'Derwentwater' from *North Country Ballads, Songs & Pipe-Tunes* showing first verse with supporting accompaniment. Below: Words with scansion, and dynamics.

<p>(I) 2 'Ye- 'streen 'he 'cam' to 'our 'lord's yett, cr. 'And 'loud, 'loud, 'did 'he 'ca': DERWENTWATER. f 'Rise 'up, 'rise 'up, 'for 'good 'King James, 'And 'buc- 'kle and 'come 'a- 'wa'.'</p>	<p>(II) 6 'He has 'drapp'd 'fræ his 'hand 'his 'tassel o' 'gowl 'Which 'knots 'his 'gude 'weir 'glove, cr. 'And 'he 'has 'drapp'd 'a 'spark 'fræ his 'e'en, dim. 'Which 'gars 'our 'la- 'dy 'love.</p>
* THE LORD. (II)	
<p>(II) 3 'Our 'la- 'dy 'held 'by 'our 'good 'lord, 'Wi' 'weel 'love- 'loc- 'ket 'hands, dim. 'And 'when 'young 'Der- 'went- 'wa- 'ter came p 'She 'toos'd 'the 'snaw- 'y 'bands.</p>	<p>7 'Come 'down, 'come 'down, 'our 'gude 'lord 'says, 'Come 'down, 'my 'fair 'la- 'dy, 'Oh, 'din- 'na 'young 'Lord 'Der- 'went stop 'The 'morn- 'ing 'sun 'is 'hie.'</p>
<p>(I) 4 'And 'when 'young 'Der- 'went- 'wa- 'ter 'kneeled: DERWENTWATER. 'My 'gen- 'tle, 'fair 'la- 'dy, dim. 'The 'tears 'gave 'way 'to the 'glow 'o' 'love pp 'In 'our 'gude 'la- 'dy's 'e'e.</p>	<p>8 'And 'hie, 'hie, 'rose 'the 'morn- 'ing 'sun 'Wi' 'front o' 'rud- 'dy 'blude, 'Thy 'blaz- 'ing 'front, 'fræ the 'white 'cur- 'tain, 'Be- 'to- 'kens 'nae- 'thing 'gude.</p>
<p>* DERWENTWATER. (I) 5 'I will 'think, 'he 'said, 'on those 'e'en o' 'blue, 'And 'on 'this 'snaw- 'y 'hand, 'When 'on 'the 'hel- 'my 'ridge 'o' 'war 'Comes 'down 'my 'bur- 'ly 'brand.'</p>	<p>(I) 9 'Our 'la- 'dy 'look'd 'fræ the 'tur- 'ret top 'As 'long 'as 'she 'could 'see, dim. 'And for 'ev- 'ry 'sigh 'for 'her 'gude 'lord, pp 'For 'Der- 'went 'there 'were 'three.</p>



Ex 3: 'Derwentwater' from *North Country Ballads, Songs & Pipe-Tunes*.
Second contrasting, independent accompaniment.

Besides those techniques of singing in choirs, there was an assiduousness for teaching 'new' music. The teaching of music by Dvořák and Wagner was juxtaposed with Bach and Purcell on the one hand and modern French music on the other and was heartily endorsed by a series of well-educated graduate teachers from backgrounds at Oxford and Cambridge. Similarly the increasing output of 'school songs' by significant British composers were promulgated as part of modern educational policy. All of this is evident from the speech-day programmes which have survived at Blandford House in Newcastle.

WGW probably left the CNHS in 1920 because both his daughters had left and also because he had become Lecturer in Music at AC in 1919. In 1925 he was appointed Reader in Music, an appointment which brought a salary increase and probably the reason he resigned from Rutherford Girl's School. In 1924, WGW used teaching experience gained at both schools to write a book on the subject, *Class Singing* (published in 1925), dedicated 'To Frances E Tooke and Dorothea F. P. Hiley under whose sympathetic & wise guidance the writer worked for many years.' He acknowledged helpful advice from Annie Lawton (who succeeded him at CNHS) on secondary school music, and Robert Peel on that in elementary schools and training colleges. The book was not intended as a complete exposition of the duties and methods of the singing-class teacher, but as WGW's attempt to 'fill any hiatus' in the writings of others on the same subject. He addressed the immediate needs of the class, and the 'ultimate aims of one's endeavours', in

the teaching of singing, and provided a chapter each on six requirements for good lessons ('the minimum of what an earnest teacher should endeavour to secure').¹¹³ A summary of those principals provides a vital glimpse of the atmosphere of music-teaching in classroom at the beginning of the twentieth century. WGW underlined the 'cultivation of enthusiasm for music', as 'perhaps the most important of all'.¹¹⁴ In the chapter on 'The teaching of Sol-fa' he recommends chapters 1-3 of Evans and McNaught's *The School Music Teacher*, plus teaching of Sol-fa chromatics.¹¹⁵ In Chapter III, 'The teaching of Tune', he suggests that the best time to begin study of the staff is 'when the d [doh] chord can be sung from a blackboard', or 'in the first standard of the elementary school', but insisted that both notations 'should exist side by side'.¹¹⁶ He acknowledges that 'a less troublesome plan or method-less method is to sing everything to 'laa'', however this would yield no progress: 'A few specially gifted people are able to recognize and reproduce progressions without any aid to memory, but this is beyond the capacity of the majority. What is wanted is not a method designed for the exceptional person, but something which will help all and sundry.'¹¹⁷ WGW postulates that teaching *facts* on staff notation would not teach a class to sing, but rather a teacher should strive to cultivate in the class fluency and accuracy in reading.¹¹⁸ Comprehensive help is offered on teaching chords, intervals, and the minor mode. WGW mentions teaching time by Dalcroze Eurythmics, and by Sol-fa, but also teaches by staff, using French time names. Ear training and breathing and voice production follow and Chapter VIII covers various matters containing useful general advice for teachers, including matters like teaching rounds, and difficulties with intonation and posture. WGW stresses that classes should not stand throughout a singing lesson: 'If the teacher will try the experiment of standing in one position for half an hour or more he will soon cease to order his children to undergo Fakir penance.'¹¹⁹ When a specific pupil is 'addicted to losing pitch', WGW's helpful view is that the child should be tested privately after the lesson, on some pretext (never pilloried before the class), placed in the front row for a time and given as much help as possible,

¹¹³ Whittaker, W. G., *Class-Singing*, Oxford Musical Essays, (OUP: London, 1925), 10.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 22

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

and discharged as soon as possible when the fault is remedied.¹²⁰ In chapter IX, on the subject of 'Song' WGW realistically hopes that teachers provide songs 'of sterling worth' but understands the limitation of many teachers, and gives suggestions for songs in all of the three possible categories, 'Folk and National Song', 'Songs by masters of the past', and 'Music by good modern British writers.'¹²¹ Chapter X comprises lists of songs (including marches and carols) for various classes including the Kindergarten, and scholars of all ages.

Though WGW gave up school-teaching by 1925, he nevertheless continued to take a keen interest in educational policy, notably in Scotland where the authorities had requested him to set up a new course for music teachers. His interest therefore motivated him to take part in the ground-breaking Cambridgeshire Report of 1933 on the Teaching of Music.¹²² It was chaired by Edward Dent, Professor of Music at Cambridge, with Henry Morris, Education Secretary of Cambridgeshire.¹²³ WGW was a member of a large committee drawn from musical pillars of the profession which produced the report, with Allen, F L Attenborough (Principal of University College, Leicester), J T Bavin (of Trinity College of Music, formerly of Berkhamstead school who had produced books on *The String-Class Instructor* and *The Piano-Class Instructor* in 1929 and 1930, published by OUP), Adrian Boult, George Dyson (of Winchester College, Professor of RCM), Armstrong Gibbs (RCM), Hadow, Alan Gray (formerly organist of Trinity College, Cambridge), C H Kitson (Professor of Music, Trinity College, Dublin), and John McEwen (Principal of RAM). Other members included C B Rootham, Geoffrey Shaw, HM Principal Inspector of Music who, previously assistant to Somervell succeeded him in 1928, and Somervell. Twenty-one other musicians including Harvey Grace (editor of the *MT*), Desmond MacMahon (Director of Music at Firth Park Secondary School, Sheffield), Alec Rowley, Percy Scholes, and Cyril Winn (who from 1925 was assistant to Geoffrey Shaw) submitted evidence to the committee or were consulted.¹²⁴

The Cambridgeshire Council of Musical Education had been founded in 1924 with a view to establishing 'proper teaching and practice' of music in every school, being in many ways a

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹²² 'Music in the Community', *The Cambridgeshire Report on The Teaching of Music* (Cambridge, 1933).

¹²³ *Ibid.*, ix.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, ix-xii.

coalescence of and rationalisation of the many disparate policies and ideas that had been current during the time of Somervell's regime and Stainer's before it.¹²⁵ For WGW the report therefore represented a more finely-tuned focus of those methods, both practical and theoretical, that he had espoused over several decades and that were now being considered finally as an established facet of national education.

The introduction of the report stressed that class-singing, using songs of 'a recognised standard of excellence', should be begun in schools 'as early as possible'.¹²⁶ It advocated that the age of reading music, though still 'a matter of some controversy' should begin with Tonic Sol-fa notation 'because it is the easier for young singers and because it encourages and strengthens the sense of tonality', followed by the staff notation.¹²⁷ (At this policy WGW must have rejoiced.) It was hoped that by the time a child left school he or she should be able 'to read music with a facility comparable to that with which they can read a poem or a drama, not only in the sense of playing or singing at sight but of interpreting the text direct from the printed page.'¹²⁸ A discussion of the meaning of music is sketched, and the report provides some suggestions for curricula, which are however not 'prescribed'.¹²⁹ The Report, discussing the 'Value of Music to the Community', begins, 'Music is the greatest of spiritual forces'.¹³⁰ Apart from a discussion on teaching methods, the report mentions 'Music and the Corporate life of the School', organisation of adult choirs and orchestras, music festivals and competitions, and the fostering of musical education by local organisations (such as the BMS, the Federation of Women's Institutes, the WEA, the YMCA, the Organists' Association). Musical libraries, musical examinations, and Community Singing were all seen as useful. The last part of the Report summarises the improvement in musical education in the last 50 years, drawn from Hadow's article 'Fifty years of Music' published in *The Times* of 16 March, 1932. At the beginning of this period 'the state of our music was deplorable' the Report states.¹³¹ The methods which led to improvement were the introduction of Sol-fa Notation, and later proper ear-training and voice-training, and now the

¹²⁵ Ibid., 2.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹³¹ Ibid., 171.

third element, the growth of intelligent listening to music 'which has derived so much help from the advent of mechanical reproduction'.¹³² To these reports and conclusions WGW gave his blessing.

4.4 WGW AS LECTURER

Although an unenthusiastic (and nervous) lecturer to begin with, WGW had soon become experienced and efficient. The popularity of the lecture as a pastime had increased to record proportions. This was certainly true in Newcastle where archives of the NLPS show that 1919 was the peak year for the Society's membership which reached 5000, Sharp's 'Folksongs of the Southern Appalachians' achieving amongst the second highest attendances at Miscellaneous lectures, at around 850.¹³³ Marjory Kennedy Fraser was next with 'Songs of the Hebrides' and then WGW, who lectured that season on 'Modern British folk music settings', followed by Dolmetsch's lecture 'Old English music, dances and musical instruments' and Bainton on 'My four and a half years as prisoner of war'- a dazzling array. In 1922 WGW was asked to give a series of twelve 'Extension' lectures under the auspices of Cambridge University, 'The Appreciation of Music', mainly concerned with form in music, WGW discussing subjects such as variation form as used by Beethoven, Schumann, and Elgar, slow movements of sonata, quartet, and symphony, rondo form, 'Horizontal aspects of Music', 'The Symphonic Poem', and 'The Music Drama of Wagner'.¹³⁴ WGW gave 120 classes. Out of 36 sitting the associated examinations, 34 were successful, 4 gaining distinctions.¹³⁵ In October 1925 he launched a series of lectures on 'Music from 1700 to 1900' for the 'Workers' Educational Association' [WEA] at the Bensham Grove Settlement, Gateshead. By December he was talking on 'England in Shakespeare's Time', giving a complementary lecture to one by Professor Renwick of AC on the social life of the period. WGW also continued to give free music lectures at AC. In October 1925 he took part in 'an attractive series of free lectures' on the operas to be given by the British

¹³² Ibid., 172.

¹³³ Spence Watson, R., *The history of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1793- 1896)* (Walter Scott Ltd.: London, 1897), 76. The most popular lecture was given by Sir F B Maurice who spoke on 'Foch'.

¹³⁴ John Whittaker's scrapbook, 20.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

National Opera Company at The Hippodrome, Newcastle the following week, Bainton lecturing on *Tristan and Isolde*, and WGW on Holst's opera *At the Boar's Head* and *Gianni Schicchi* (Tom Danskin was one of the solo vocalists in this).¹³⁶ His *Coffee and Cupid*, an arrangement of Bach's *Coffee Cantata* was also included. Also in October WGW visited Barnard Castle and used opportunities such as this to promote his own favoured policies on musical participation within the confines of formal education. At Barnard Castle he enunciated his support for school choirs in a paper entitled 'Music in Schools' which he no doubt hoped would gain endorsement from an audience which included Lord and Lady Milbank and teachers from local elementary schools.¹³⁷

WGW also used his growing reputation as a public lecturer to disseminate his research passions. As Alsop Lecturer at Liverpool in 1927, he discussed *The art of J. S. Bach as revealed in his church music* in a series of lectures given at the University Arts Theatre between 19 October and 1 December.¹³⁸ His lectures, which evidently accentuated his role as conductor of the BC, coincided with the founding of the Liverpool Bach Choir by J E Wallace, who with the choir, illustrated some of these talks. Topics were 'The re-discovery of Bach's Cantatas', 'Bach's Chorales' (with the Tudor singers under Dr. Wallace), 'A comparison of the vocal writing of Bach and Handel', and 'Bach's use of the orchestra in church music'. The next lecturer included a performance of cantata 56 with Ernest J Potts and the Liverpool Bach Choir, while the sixth, discussing hymns, Lutheran chorales, and post-Reformation liturgical music after the Reformation, was also illustrated by the choir, as was the last lecture on 'Bach's larger works for the church'.

So successful were these lectures that WGW was invited to give a second series in 1929, this time on 'The English violin sonata'. The lectures covered issues such as 'The English Violin Sonata in the Seventeenth Century' and 'William Young, a sixteenth Century Englishman on the Continent', On a different tack from the violin sonatas he discussed 'The String Quartet', Purcell's fantasies and solo violin music, and the work of John Blow, Mary Whittaker playing examples. At the last lecture, he talked on minor English composers after Purcell (Babell, Daniel Purcell, William Croft, and John Humphries). These lectures were in many ways the summit of

¹³⁶ Ibid., 121.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Information from Frances M Thomson MA BLitt, Librarian at the University of Liverpool, 24 November, 1999.

his lecturing career - at least in terms of current scholarship – although his reputation was enhanced by an invitation to lecture at Cornell University to give a summer course on musical history for three months in 1928.¹³⁹

4.5 REFORM AT THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

WGW's joint appointment to Glasgow University and the SNAM was the fulfilment of years of searching. He looked forward to the work ahead at the Academy from the start, and his accomplishments there are well-documented. His aim, from the outset, was to establish a three-year course which would train his students to a professional standard for a career in music teaching. WGW set up history lectures, concerto classes, and opera performances, took over choral classes, overhauled the examination system, introduced Dalcroze Eurythmics (the Academy became an examination centre for this subject) and a conducting class. Ex-student Bunty Dean, who gave the first performance in Scotland of *The Lark Ascending*, and after leaving the Academy studied with Ševčík in Prague, recalls that WGW was 'a stickler for punctuality' and 'indefatigable'.¹⁴⁰ However there were serious problems before WGW was able to achieve changes. One staff member said of the SNAM: 'It is not a music school; it is a shop where lessons are sold over the counter.'¹⁴¹ Only two teachers (one pianoforte, one singing) were employed on small permanent salaries, other staff paid a third of their salaries to the Academy, but had no share in administration or involvement with the Governors.

Music-making groups were few, a very small chamber music class, with no string quartet, a Junior Orchestra (playing what WGW considered inappropriate repertoire), and an Academy Orchestra largely filled with outsiders, were all that existed. An inferior Choral Society rehearsed Cowen's *Rose Maiden*, and was immediately disbanded by WGW who founded his own.¹⁴² On Saturday afternoons a few of the weaker students gave concerts before audiences of about a dozen. The Annual Students' Concert, attended by WGW before his arrival, was, he claimed, 'unbelievably bad' apart from a piano quintet formed of an ex-student and four older members of

¹³⁹ John Whittaker's scrapbook, 20t.

¹⁴⁰ Matchett, G, & Spedding, R, *Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama*, (RSAMD: Glasgow, 1997), 36.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* XI, 22.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 34.

the Scottish Orchestra. There had been no opera for twenty years, the cost of productions being considered prohibitive. He diagnosed that these difficulties stemmed from the way the SNAM was run through the interregnum by Governors and office staff who were not musically trained. The 'Office' ruled with an 'iron fist', with finance its only consideration.

On arrival, WGW interviewed all 200 professional students individually, discovering that most were aspiring pianists wanting to obtain external London diploma, having no other musical accomplishments or interests, having passed the Diploma theoretical paper, dropped harmony classes, and after qualifying, proceeded to teach at the Academy. WGW found only two students who were taking courses which would prepare them for the profession. WGW was now in difficulties in trying to establish his aim of providing an MA qualification in music, for, since most students passed a Diploma in two years, a further year of qualification was warranted. These findings left WGW depressed: 'Having to spend years & years in trying to leaven that lump, to cultivate love & enthusiasm for art itself, to create a broader outlook, to set new standards, weighed my heart down to the very depths.'¹⁴³ Yet he was able to say on leaving that: '...the Academy in 1941 was a vastly different place from what it was in 1930.'¹⁴⁴

WGW proposed to alter the attitude of the staff, difficult when rates of pay were so low. WGW estimated that about a third of the staff were good, a third mediocre, and the remainder 'hopelessly bad'.¹⁴⁵ In the first category however were some very fine teachers. Philip 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'.¹⁴⁶ The majority of the violin staff, including Bessie Spence, were excellent teachers. The principal violin teacher was Horace Fellowes (Verbruggen's successor, once leader of the Scottish Orchestra) as previously stated, despite his obvious talent he was not one of WGW's close associates. (Fellowes continued to teach at SNAM for years, eventually becoming a centenarian). However, Beecham had rated Fellowes the finest orchestral leader he had ever had.¹⁴⁷ A valued staff member was

¹⁴³ Aut XI, 24.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 25.

Peebles Conn 'delightful man and sound musician', an equally talented pianist and violinist.¹⁴⁸ WGW condemned most of the harmony teachers as 'deadly dull', because they taught by 'mere counting of numbers'.¹⁴⁹ WGW, unsupported by the rest of the staff, excepting R. Harold Thomson, a young keyboard teacher and ex-student, began to encourage concert-giving at the Academy. Thompson joined in with the right spirit, proving 'a joy and a constant stimulus' to WGW and soon became a supportive friend.¹⁵⁰

Using the same ploy as he had used with Newcastle CU, WGW brought friends into the hostile environment of the Academy, inviting 'two of the finest musicians in Glasgow' to join the staff.¹⁵¹ Wilfred Senior, a brilliant pianist, had a teaching practice based at home, but agreed 'out of friendship', becoming more involved as standards rose.¹⁵² Percy Gordon, music critic of *The Glasgow Herald*, 'a man of great knowledge, sound judgement & unique personal charm' agreed to lecture to advanced students.¹⁵³ Though Gordon was modest and retiring, WGW frequently approached him for advice, 'owing much to his wise and balanced counsel and his warm enthusiasm for everything that was good'.¹⁵⁴ Gordon to some extent replaced J B Clark as fatherly mentor, providing much emotional and practical support.¹⁵⁵ When WGW arrived at the Academy, Gordon, discussing the ability of the students, told WGW 'There's a large amount of inflammable material. It only requires a match'.¹⁵⁶ Gordon also gave to WGW a control over the local press, which he had enjoyed for years in Newcastle. Good news of the Academy and University Music Department filled the pages of the *Herald*.¹⁵⁷

Claiming that singing teachers were 'always a problem everywhere', WGW brought Annie Lawton, and Ernest Potts from Newcastle.¹⁵⁸ The *Newcastle Journal* announced that Lawton began her appointment on 1 June, 1930.¹⁵⁹ She was given responsibility for work connected with

¹⁴⁸ Aut XI, 25.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Aut XI, 25.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ 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.

¹⁵⁶ Aut XI, 25.

¹⁵⁷ See John Whittaker's scrapbook, 68e-68x, 76m-76o.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 26.

the new Diploma in Music Education.¹⁶⁰ Her previous experience as a teacher at Hartlepool, the CNHS, and Heaton Secondary School for girls, and lecturer in the Teachers' Training Course at the Conservatoire of Music, was listed. Lawton was salaried, and responsible for teaching singing to Education students, and lecturing in Class Teaching. WGW mentions 'an uncanny skill in diagnosing other peoples' difficulties & devising means of counteracting them.'¹⁶¹ Lawton also acted as an assistant to WGW in all his musical endeavours, being 'a miracle of thoroughness'.¹⁶² WGW had gathered over 3000 melodies, with the intention of producing a *Folk Song Sight Singing Series* through OUP. He had no time for the project, but with Lawton's collaboration (and to a limited extent, with Crowe's who was largely frozen out by WGW) the completed books, according to WGW, were rated by critics as the finest of their kind, and were written as soon as Lawton came to Glasgow. WGW admired another facet of Lawton's personality: '...she had a deeply spiritual nature, &, although she never spoke of religion or ethics, her moral influence on her pupils was profound.'¹⁶³

In November 1933, WGW also brought Ernest Potts to teach singing at the Academy. WGW wrote to him on 20 September 1934, encouraging him to teach in Scotland: 'You are far too diffident old chap! You want a little more conceit of yourself.'¹⁶⁴ Potts's work at the Newcastle Conservatoire was obviously not enough, for WGW in November 1931 WGW told Douglas Kennedy that he would only agree to give a 'North Country Talk' at Cecil Sharp House if Potts were invited 'because it is useless without one's 'better half'.¹⁶⁵ He also promised to 'drop a line' to W J Hands, of the Columbia Gramophone Company, on Pott's behalf, telling Hands how Potts could sing anything from Bach to Wolf: 'May I urge him upon you. He is really a very fine artist indeed...and sings North Country Folk songs better than any man living. If you care to do any of these I shall be only too glad to do the piano accompaniments without any fee to help my good friend Potts.'¹⁶⁶ There was also an effort to get Potts work with the BBC, WGW writing in December 1931: 'My Dear Ernie, The rule about London BBC is not absolute.

¹⁶⁰ *Newcastle Daily Journal*, 12 June, 1930. John Whittaker's scrapbook., PAGE?????

¹⁶¹ *Aut XI*, 26.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Letter from WGW to Ernest Potts, 20 September, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁶⁵ Letter from WGW to Ernest Potts, 16 November, 1931, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁶⁶ Letter from WGW to W. J. Hands of the Columbia Gramophone Company of 16, November 1931, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth.*

Provincials are engaged, but there is a special rule. I forget exactly what that is, but will enquire.¹⁶⁷ In November, WGW had commiserated with Potts about the folding of the BMS in London: 'I suppose you will carry on as an independent body. They ought to call it the E J Potts Society as it is that truly.'¹⁶⁸ Though Potts denied that the society was to close, after speaking to Colonel Somerville, treasurer of the BMS committee, WGW wrote to Potts that the former 'told me at lunch that the meeting was practically to wind up the society. I simply cannot reconcile the two statements, but hope your side is correct.'¹⁶⁹ WGW canvassed Potts abilities with Wiseman in September 1933: 'Foss thinks if he [Potts] had presented himself, he could have been one of the foremost of British Concert artists.'¹⁷⁰ On 15 September he told Potts of 'an encouraging letter from Wiseman' (his friend Latto had suggested Potts ask 6 guineas for 10 lessons).¹⁷¹ On 20 September 1933, WGW wrote to Mrs. E. Jack, announcing Potts' arrival to the staff of the Academy: 'He cannot begin until the first week of October, but the office will send you definite proposals in a day or two.'¹⁷² Ten days later WGW obtained an accompanist, Sydney Laird, of Cambuslay, for Potts's song class. On 18 October, WGW wrote a reference for Potts, then aged 52, for his application to join the Academy Staff. Potts had been offered 'a day or two a week', from which WGW doubted he would make any profit.¹⁷³ WGW wrote: 'We have an acute need for a male singing teacher, and Mr. Potts has all the qualities we desire.'¹⁷⁴ Potts however sometimes waived his fees in cases of need. WGW wrote to a Miss McDonald on 18 September, 1934: 'Your schooling here is through the kindness of Mr. E Potts.'¹⁷⁵ When Richard Humphrey of Newcastle CU told WGW of the death of Robert Peel, on 1 November, WGW replied: I get a fair amount of Newcastle news now that Potts is on the staff here...he is proving a splendid asset. It will be five years next month since I left Newcastle.¹⁷⁶ Neither Potts nor Lawton lived

¹⁶⁷ Letter from WGW to Ernest Potts, 10 December, 1931, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁶⁸ Letter from WGW to Ernest Potts, 16 December, 1931, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁶⁹ Letter from WGW to Ernest Potts, 10 December 1931, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁷⁰ Letter from WGW to Herbert Wiseman, 11 September, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁷¹ Letter from WGW to Ernest Potts, 15 September, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁷² Letter from WGW to Mrs E Jack, 20 September 1933, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth.*

¹⁷³ Whittaker, WG, Reference for Mr Ernest J Potts for application to join Academy Staff, 18 October, 1933. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Letter from WGW to Miss W McDonald, 18 September, 1934, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁷⁶ Letter from WGW to Richard Humphrey, Newcastle, 1 November, 1934, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

for the whole of the next decade, WGW writing: 'Unfortunately, both of them passed to the beyond, a loss to the Academy and an intense personal grief to myself.'¹⁷⁷

WGW also appointed two local teachers of singing, Gordon's sister Nellie, 'equipped soundly in every way' as a teacher, and James M Reid, a school music teacher, and organist (who later sang as an excellent soloist with WGW's Bach Cantata Club).¹⁷⁸ A few years later, WGW writes that he felt the benefit of his staff: 'To conduct a choir of students nearly all trained by these four admirable people was a new and thrilling experience. But it took a long time before one could truthfully say that the solo singing in the Academy was on a high level.'¹⁷⁹

An important addition to the Academy curriculum was the subject of Dalcroze Eurythmics, promoted by WGW since 1913, Scholes having long been an advocate of the system WGW's own daughters had attended the classes, set up by WGW in Newcastle, and were soon performing rhythmic feats beyond his own powers. WGW contacted Percy Ingham (a friend, and one-time public school teacher) who had made his passion for Eurhythmics his mission in life, opening the Dalcroze School in London of which Hadow was President. After hearing that WGW proposed producing operas at SNAM using Eurhythmics, Ingham excitedly sought out a perfect teacher for the task, Phyllis Crawhall-Wilson. Ingham paid Wilson's salary, the Academy sent him a proportion of her fees, and Wilson was 'left to develop her work as she thought fit'.¹⁸⁰ When Ingham died, in 1933, Crawhall-Wilson stayed on, but was also required to join the pianoforte teaching staff, her work being praised by Halstead and Lamond. Donnan writes that Crawhall-Wilson and WGW were close friends; certainly Crawhall-Wilson acknowledged the Principal's 'valuable advice and assistance' when writing her *Rhythmic Movement for Nursery School or Kindergarten* (with a companion book *Music for Rhythmic Movement*).¹⁸¹

WGW could not remove inadequate teachers without upsetting students, but he was nevertheless willing, ignoring the feelings of the 'Office', to take over the allocation of students to teachers which left a 'political' situation with 'undercurrents of bad feeling', leaving him close to

¹⁷⁷ Aut XI, 25.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 26.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Letter to Alice Weber at the School of Dalcroze Eurythmics, 14 November, 1931. Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

¹⁸¹ Crawhall-Wilson, P., *Rhythmic Movement for Nursery School or Kindergarten*, (W. Paxton & Co: London, c. 1940), 3.

despair. Many pupils were 'leaked' into private practices, while others attended the Academy for a year to carry off prestigious prizes.¹⁸²

Pupils had previously chosen their own courses, paying combined fees. WGW adopted the normal system in Music Colleges of offering a combination of subjects, chosen by him, at an inclusive fee, appreciated by parents. As talented pupils avoided Saturday afternoon student concerts to prepare for scholarships and prizes, WGW made it a regulation that only students performing in at least two concerts a year, would be eligible for these rewards.¹⁸³ He stipulated that concerts (always attended by him) were obligatory for Education students (though it took time for performance standards to improve), and he banned the performance of 'Royalty Ballads' in concerts, encouraging the performance of 'almost completely neglected British music'.

In Scotland, after a student had gained a recognised professional Music diploma, a year's course at a Government Training College entitled him to teach in schools. WGW found that School music-teaching 'thus became a haven for inadequately trained teachers, many without enough skills to handle a class, or teach singing'.¹⁸⁴ The problem had already been perceived, and before WGW's arrival the Scottish Teachers' Association [STA] had proposed the establishment of a Teacher Training course, the syllabus to be drawn up by joint committee, but the matter was frozen until WGW took over, when he condemned what he considered an inadequate scheme. WGW insisted on a third year of study, and remodelled the course completely, insisting upon Scottish Orchestra concert attendance. It was now a thorough and rigorous course, retaining the teacher training year, the students coming out as fully rounded musicians. WGW felt this course would be pre-eminent in the United Kingdom. Soon, increasing numbers of LEAs granted bursaries for the SNAM, and applications came from all over Scotland, helping the Academy become truly a national institution. The Education students formed the nucleus of Academy life. WGW selected students carefully, observed their personal qualities, and so 'developing character and ideals' so that he could 'mould every one of them in the right directions'.¹⁸⁵ Though they were not specialists, some students became fine performers; Bach Cantata soloists often came from student ranks. By 1941, forty students had teaching appointments from the Borders to the

¹⁸² Aut XI, 28.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 29.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 32.

Islands, demand exceeding supply. WGW by then was entirely satisfied with the implementation of his ideas in the training of music teachers: 'Without doubt these people will exercise a powerful influence on music in Scotland, for it is in the Elementary and Secondary Schools where a national foundation is laid.'¹⁸⁶

WGW established a Scholar's Society for full time students, and those with Diplomas who wished to continue their studies, to encourage a feeling of pride in their *Alma Mater*, (despite complaints from other students), WGW supplying a common room for meetings. Numbers grew, the students appreciating being treated as adults and WGW's own relationship with the students benefiting as he attended their social gatherings. WGW founded a Concerto Class to enable the students to provide an accompaniment for the annual Society's concert with Halstead as Director and coach, while he was conductor. Halstead joined the scheme with zest and was soon a great favourite with all. Concerto Class attendance (which was compulsory) grew from three violins, a 'cellist, and a pianist, to a respectable size, students from the Education Department and the BMus course providing woodwind and brass players. WGW writes that few 'could produce an agreeable sound...but...they made a formidable array and got to know a lot of music.'¹⁸⁷ Some students conducted, pianists gained experience in turn at filling in the score on a second piano, others tried timpani and percussion, and, importantly for WGW, the orchestra would later accompany WGW's Bach Cantata Recitals and Operas. Halstead and WGW selected the soloist for the annual concert from among fifteen to twenty soloists (either pianists or other instrumentalists), looked upon as the *blue riband* of the session. Anne Donnen writes that group lessons (when students from all years met for choral and orchestral work) were conducted by WGW himself, his height being a great asset as he could easily be seen from the back.

When WGW arrived in 1930, the CS was rehearsing Cowen's *Rose Maiden* (accompanied by WGW at the CS of the College of Physical Science in 1895). He disbanded the group, and re-established a CS with compulsory attendance for Education students, with practices occurring between 5.30 and 7.00 p.m., so that day time students were not kept too late. Despite a shortage of men, enthusiasm was high and reading was good. Repertoire included music by Palestrina, the Tudor composers, Samuel Wesley, and modern British composers, previously given scant

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁸⁷ *Aut XI*, 34.

attention. Bliss, Dale, Gibbs, Hadley, Holst, Vaughan Williams, and works by members of staff and past students were performed, including works by Cedric Thorpe Davie, who received some first performances in the city.¹⁸⁸ Soon two informal concerts of the Concerto Class and CS were held each year, a few professionals to stiffen the orchestra sufficing.

Anne Torrance (later Donnan) was a student on the Diploma in Musical Education course, between 1934-37, coming from Kilmarnock Academy. She recalls her interview with WGW, being nervous on arrival as she was aware from the start that he was 'such a powerful person', feeling he would be 'difficult to deal with'.¹⁸⁹ An impression soon to be corrected: 'My worst fears were confirmed as soon as I saw this giant of a man, with such shaggy hair. I was downright scared of him! However his gentle voice was a pleasant surprise, helping me to survive that first encounter.'¹⁹⁰ At a gathering of new students:

He told us...that if we were to teach music successfully in schools, we would have to love children, love our subject, but have no great love of the money we'd be paid for doing it. He urged us to think carefully about this, and be quite sure of our feelings before paying our fees the following week! Young people usually love children, the eight of us obviously loved Music, and we had no interest in financial rewards at all...so we all enrolled and started some of the happiest years of our lives!¹⁹¹

Donnan studied piano, and keyboard harmony under Crawhall-Wilson (who thought her musical and pianistic gifts most marked, and that she possessed an 'amazing power of concentration' and 'powers of interpretation beyond the ordinary'), and singing under Lawton.¹⁹² She was a Caird Scholar and very successful: 'I really did sweep the board.'¹⁹³ (Torrance won the Academy Gold Medal in 1936, taking first place, and being highly spoken of by York Bowen. In 1936 she was awarded first place by Arthur Benjamin in the Senior Piano class at Glasgow Musical Festival.)¹⁹⁴ As secretary of the Academy Scholars' Society, she frequently pinned up notices on the board in the entrance hall. WGW would 'come out of his room, read the notice, and stop to have a chat with me.'¹⁹⁵ From then on she lost all nervousness, realising that WGW was sincerely interested in all students. She adds: 'I'm sure he'd be pleased to know that so many of these old scholars of

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸⁹ Writer's interview with Mrs Anne Donnan, October 1998.

¹⁹⁰ Donnan, Anne, *Reminiscences of Dr. Whittaker*, 28 October 1979, 1. Typescript document in the writer's possession.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Undated letter of recommendation from Phyllis Crawhall-Wilson for Anne Torrance (Donnan), [probably April, 1938], in Donnan's possession.

¹⁹³ Donnan, interview, 1998.

¹⁹⁴ Phyllis Crawhall-Wilson, undated letter of recommendation for Anne Torrance.

¹⁹⁵ Donnan, interview, 1998.

his have regular re-unions at which he is always talked of with such respect, and LOVE.¹⁹⁶ She thought that WGW's ideas about teaching were not original but that he was most enthusiastic about them.¹⁹⁷ She was a good Sol-fa-ist when she arrived, having learned at school (her parents were not musical) and afterwards followed the methods of Orf and Suzuki. WGW recommended her as 'one of our best pianists', who would be 'an outstanding member of any school staff'.¹⁹⁸ Donnan says that having seen WGW almost daily for three years, she 'found him to be so kindly and considerate...provided we did our work, and never came late to lectures or concerts.'¹⁹⁹ Donnan taught briefly on the piano teaching staff at the Academy, married in 1942, and moved to London.

WGW proudly outlined the schemes he had put in place.²⁰⁰ Trainee teachers would now have three years of tuition in pianoforte playing, solo singing, harmony, choral singing (including participation in fine performances), two hours weekly of gramophone study, with scores and recordings provided, with a written examination each term.²⁰¹ Two years of tuition in counterpoint and two years study of an orchestral instrument, with participation in either the Junior Orchestra or the Concerto Class Orchestra was required. Classes in Eurythmics, History of Music, Class Singing, Pianoforte teaching, Conducting, Keyboard Harmony, Transposition, and extra tuition when needed in ear training and sight-singing (although WGW found the latter rarely required since Sol-fa was the basis of music teaching in nearly all Scottish Schools) were all mandatory.²⁰² Attendance at Academy and Scottish Orchestra concerts was expected. A lower age limit of eighteen was asked by the Department of Education, and all entrants must have passed their Higher Leaving Certificate, and be able to pass the Academy's preliminary tests. The requirement to attend, post-Diploma, a year's course at a Government Training College remained.²⁰³ Even after students left the Academy, WGW kept in touch by writing to many, including George McVicar who probably received WGW's last letter, written on his way to

¹⁹⁶ Donnan, *Reminiscences*, 1979, 3.

¹⁹⁷ Donnan, interview, October, 1998.

¹⁹⁸ Letter of recommendation from WGW for Anne Torrance, 1 April, 1938. In Donnan's possession.

¹⁹⁹ Donnan, *Reminiscences*, 1979, 2.

²⁰⁰ Aut XI, 30.

²⁰¹ In a letter to Dr Wallace of Liverpool Bach Choir, WGW writes that Percy Gordon ran this course, setting Elgar's *Enigma Variations* for fourth year students.

See: Letter from WGW to Wallace, 19 March 1933. *GB-Guth*.

²⁰² Aut XI, 30-31.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 31.

adjudicate in Orkney in July 1944.²⁰⁴ Previously McVicar had received WGW's measured and balanced advice when he wrote for advice as to whether to take up a music post in Jamaica.²⁰⁵ WGW thought it was part of his duty to act as mentor: 'I made it my business to try to mould every one of them in the right direction.'²⁰⁶

4.6 GARDINER PROFESSOR AT GLASGOW UNIVERSITY

At the University, WGW was determined to make similar improvements in the availability of Music courses. In schools it was now a recognised subject, WGW now worked to achieve the same status within the University. With no BA degree, Scottish students obtained an MA in three years. WGW and Professor Smith (who had maintained an orchestra and body of interested students in Glasgow in the absence of a Professor) decided to prepare schemes to allow Music to be a possible MA subject, Smith asking WGW to rest with this 'humble beginning', until the Faculty of Arts and the Senate had become accustomed to the idea of Music as an worthy subject for University study.²⁰⁷ In opposition, one member of the Education Department turned down the idea unless two or three hundred students could be attracted (though WGW wanted to teach Music on tutorial lines, with a class no bigger than eight. Smith guided the scheme through the University, but there was tremendous opposition from local schools. Proposals at Glasgow University had to be sanctioned by the Council. An extensive campaign was now launched against WGW's ideas (teachers wanting pupils to gain qualifications in the shortest possible time) and a disillusioned WGW felt ready to withdraw his scheme than compromise for an inferior degree. However, though WGW settled for less than his objective, he claims to have succeeded in much of it. At first quite a few of the first MA Music students resigned (having bitten off more than they could chew, after expecting an easy option, according to WGW). WGW found the general academic standard lower than at AC. Although there were more Music teachers in Glasgow, the fact that an MA qualification was only available at Edinburgh meant that a lower standard was achieved by Glasgow students. Matters had certainly changed a decade later.

²⁰⁴ Interview with George McVicar, Stirling, 16 August, 2003.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Aut XI, 32.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 8.

Though AC work had equipped WGW to draw up MA schemes, it was a different matter to prepare regulations for the BMus and DMus degrees. WGW was nervous, since proposals at the four Scottish Universities required confirmation by Parliament, reducing flexibility for changes of mind. There had to be some correspondence between courses in different Universities, to ensure uniform standards.²⁰⁸ Having been told by a local amateur: 'There's not a Mus. Bac. in Glasgow who can play a psalm tune properly', WGW decided that his ideal candidate would be:

...a young man of 18 or 19... willing to spend six or more years over his academic work at the University and concurrently qualify himself thoroughly on the practical side at the Academy, concentrating on practical work to begin with. He would then take up an orchestral instrument as second study, join the orchestra, gain experience in conducting, sing in choirs, read widely, both in musical and non-musical subjects, in short, become an all-round & cultured musician able to turn his hand to most things & be a man useful in any community.²⁰⁹

Indeed WGW had outlined his own career. WGW claimed that, in teaching a student for six years the University could 'mould his outlook and his attitude towards art in a way which would be impossible, were cramming for examinations his chief object.'²¹⁰ WGW had ideas about the financing of the degree. Now that the Kirk allowed organs in church, there was a shortage of organists in Scotland, high salaries being offered to tempt English organists. No choral training was required (as Presbyterian services had little music), so this was the ideal post for a music student. WGW envisaged a young, gifted composer completing the course in three sessions. On the other hand, a more mature organist who was seeking to secure a doctorate by virtue of his skill, should, he thought, be allowed to have theoretical demands reduced. Similarly, he felt that a musician noted for the quality of his research might deserve recognition for this. It would be a flexible scheme of study, the regulations sufficiently elastic to cope with varying needs.²¹¹

4.7 MUSIC DEGREES IN GLASGOW

St. Andrew's and Aberdeen Universities did not include Music in their curricula, therefore, only Edinburgh needed to be consulted. The Vice-Chancellor advised WGW to contact Francis Tovey. Before WGW could do this, Tovey (Reid Professor of Music at Edinburgh since 1914,

²⁰⁸ *Aur XI*, 10

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

and a Governor at SNAM) came to see WGW, offering all his help. He admitted that he was 'profoundly dissatisfied' with old regulations framed to fit the requirements of literary and scientific, rather than an artistic discipline, but was held back from change by the undue reverence still held in Edinburgh for his predecessor Niecks.²¹² Tovey told WGW that they must make Glasgow's Music degree syllabus so fine that Tovey could 'throw it in the face of the Senate' and bring about reform.²¹³ Tovey placed his knowledge and experience at WGW's disposal, and WGW availed himself to the utmost of the unique opportunity. Tovey then wrote sixteen very lengthy letters on the subject to WGW (one of 36 pages was followed by another of 13 to clarify the first).

Tovey's letters, written from 39 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh, make fascinating reading. For though WGW depicted him as absent minded and eccentric, and brilliantly clever, Tovey offered advice that was well thought out, commonsense and extremely down to earth, though admittedly exhaustively long. His first concerns were over WGW's aim to have all candidates for practical exams tested by an expert in that particular instrument, a demand he considered 'based on a misconception of the aims of University work & culture', since examining work is very different from 'coaching'.²¹⁴ Tovey explained the difference, as he saw it between 'the performing Bachelor & the performing Doctor' and thought that it would be impossible to 'get a valid distinction' between the two.²¹⁵ Playing of a concert standard would not come naturally in time: 'It is a question of athletic form: & intellectual ripeness won't replace or produce that in the interval between the two degrees'.²¹⁶ Tovey advised WGW to use performance in the 'Mus.Bac.' 'solely to turn the balance'.²¹⁷ If a student produced scrappy paper-work, he should 'weigh the resulting average'.²¹⁸ If the candidate is merely meticulous 'you find out by a viva whether there is some good stuff behind the insufficient paper-work'.²¹⁹ Tovey strongly advised WGW to do what was most valuable in Niecks's system, and make performance compulsory 'at the outset'.²²⁰ Tovey

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid., 11-12.

²¹⁴ Letter from Tovey to WGW, 22 February, 1930, 1. *GB-Er*

²¹⁵ Ibid., 2.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 3.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 6.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

²²⁰ Ibid.

warned that if WGW wanted 'to institute honours and maintain good playing in the 'Mus. Bac.' he ought not to fall into the same trap as at Edinburgh which did not permit 'distinction' for the pass degree.²²¹ However in a seven-page letter of the following day, completed soon after his first 'screed', Tovey advised that 'detailed recognition of playing should be reserved for the 'Mus.D.'.²²² He also warned WGW that, however good his schemes and his teachers were, there would always be 'a number of quite respectable people who think the methods of your institution all wrong whatever they may be'.²²³ (Tovey cited his own 'narrowest of sectarian' training in Deppé's 'very special method which I have always heard condemned bell, book and candle by teachers of every other school', including Deppé's earlier pupils.)²²⁴ On 5 March Tovey wrote to WGW: 'Congratulations: This is the best degree scheme I have ever seen. My only doubt is whether its standard is quite realisable.'²²⁵ WGW felt tremendously grateful for all Tovey's help. When the syllabus was finished Tovey said 'Now you have the finest musical degree scheme in the British Empire - won't I rub it in at Edinburgh?'²²⁶

Many objections were forthcoming from various professors to the new degree regulations. There were calls for Italian to be included in the course, since it was used in songs and operas, a demand for a course on anatomy of the larynx, and requests to remove figured bass realisation classes from the lists, as figured bass was from 'the remote past'.²²⁷ Fortunately the Vice-Chancellor, an expert at managing disputes, 'made good use of the honoured name of Tovey'.²²⁸ The Ordinance of the University Court, dealing with regulation for degrees in Music, was passed by Parliament on 12 November 1931. Although WGW's time at Glasgow University was, he thought, 'too short to build up the department to any strength', he valued his students and was proud that his first graduate was a middle-aged, black-bearded, Polish-Jewish Cantor who received a tremendous ovation from hundred of students at Convocation.²²⁹ WGW found

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²²² Letter from Tovey to WGW, 23 February 1930, 1. *GB-Er.*

²²³ *Ibid.*, 5. *GB-Er.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Letter from Tovey to WGW, 5 March 1930, *GB-Er.*

²²⁶ *Aut XI*, 12.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

this 'a comforting indication of the right thinking of the British people at a time when anti-Semitism was poisoning the continent of Europe.'²³⁰

After several years, Smith advised WGW to apply for sanction to allow students of exceptional ability to apply for permission to take 'Honours' (involving a further two years of study) on the completion of their degree.²³¹ This had to be undertaken in two cognate subjects, professors of each discipline approving the candidate's fitness for more advanced work. Though the Arts Faculty agreed to appoint a committee to consider the matter, the Professor of Moral Philosophy announced he would strongly oppose any inclusion of Music as a subject for a higher degree.²³² WGW nominated the objecting professor to the committee, and astonished the latter who asked WGW why he should be selected. WGW explained that he wished to have the objections outlined to the committee, and the professor agreed, challenging the body to suggest subjects which could be cognate with Music.²³³ Immediately Professors of French and German suggested poetry would be a most profitable subject for study, as did the Professor of English. Soon they were joined by Professors of Natural Philosophy and History. The opposing professor suggested his own subject at any rate was impossible to link, so WGW cited Wagner's study of Schopenhauer.²³⁴ At last all were convinced, the chief opponent asking for the honour of taking WGW's proposals to the Faculty of Arts. WGW was however prevented from allowing MA students to take BMus examinations (the first examination for this degree being identical with that of the MA), as it could be seen as a slight to the higher degree to use it as a stepping stone to the ordinary bachelorship (Though WGW indicated that the BMus was a professional examination, and the other cultural).²³⁵ WGW got round the regulations by making the two papers so similar that passing one could easily enable one to pass the other. WGW thought his MA course proved valuable, during his time at the University.

One new element in WGW's 'Mus Bac' course was something dear to his heart - his 'Knowledge of Critical Literature course'. He explained to Tovey that he had instituted it 'so that I may guide a student's general reading during his three years', deliberately omitting the word

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid., 17.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid., 18.

²³⁵ Ibid.

'musical', so that books on the arts could also be introduced.²³⁶ In 1933 he wrote to Tovey to welcome him back after the latter had been away from Edinburgh while severely ill: 'We all hope that you will not overdo things again. You are too precious to be spared. Things here are moving, but they involve enormous work. The job is too great for any one man; there is so much that at present cannot be delegated to anyone else.'²³⁷

²³⁶ Letter from WGW to Tovey, 6 March, 1930, *GB-Er*.

²³⁷ Letter from WGW to Tovey, 16 February, 1933. *GB-Er*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Musical Editor and Policy-Maker

5.1 WGW AS MUSICAL EDITOR

5.1.1 1923 – 1944 *First educational music editor for OUP*

WGW became Oxford University Press's first music editor when appointed general editor of the *Oxford Choral Songs* series in 1923, aged forty-seven. He retained the position for the rest of his life. While the exact circumstances surrounding WGW's move into this second career and the origins of OUP's Music Department remain obscure, they centre round the activities of the young, ambitious Hubert Foss, passionately interested in song composition, who after approaching Humphrey Milford, publisher to the University, in 1921, became educational sales representative for OUP to public schools across Britain.¹ Duncan Hinnells, in his book *An Extraordinary Performance* (commissioned for the fiftieth anniversary of the OUP Music Department) describes how Foss brought together major composers such as Vaughan Williams and William Walton, and distinguished editors and writers, 'within the exciting environment of OUP's rapid development as an influential new British music publisher'.²

A clue to events appears in a letter of 27 April 1931, to WGW from Percy Scholes: 'Now it was I who first introduced you to the O.U.P. and (very largely) it was I who got Foss into his present position.'³ Following Humphrey Milford's appointment as publisher to Oxford University in 1913, Scholes himself had enjoyed a privileged position through his successful book *The Listeners' Guide to Music* which aimed to train the listener and was by then in its sixth edition (derived from wartime lectures on music, published after the First World War with encouragement from the YMCA's Rev Basil Yeaxlee, afterwards probably developing into the *Oxford Companion to Music*).⁴ Scholes' letter to WGW, written when financial difficulties were facing the Press, reveals that Scholes harboured some resentment over Foss's appointment:

¹ A reading by Diana Sparkes (Foss's daughter) on Peter Warlock from the CD *Hubert Foss and his friends*, MCPS, HJF 001 CD [Recorded by Steve Gladders of Apex Music Production Services], indicates that Foss started work for OUP in 1921, whereas Hinnells gives the year as 1922.

² Hinnells, D, 1998, xi.

³ Letter from Percy Scholes to WGW, 27 April, 1931. *CA-On*. Hinnells writes that it is not clear how Foss met Vere Collins, Education Manager of OUP, but it was through the latter that he was interviewed by Milford. See Hinnells, 22. . Scholes probably brought about the introduction to Collins.

⁴ Morrish, 59.

‘Although Foss and I are usually on the very best of terms yet my really happy days were those before his advent, when I used to have dealings with Milford direct, when I had generous terms and no nonsense; authorship then paid; as it certainly will not do if I yield to Foss’s frequent attempts to beat me down.’⁵

Music publishing at OUP was largely a twentieth-century innovation. Little in the way of sheet music and few books on music appeared before 1900, at which date Parry became Professor of Music at Oxford, his inaugural lecture *Style in Musical Art* being published by the Press. Also in 1900, Humphrey Milford left New College with a first in Classics and, at twenty-three, became Assistant Secretary to the Delegates at OUP (an influential committee which included the two most important figures there, the Secretary to the Delegates and the Publisher).⁶ Milford worked closely with Henry Hadow, author of the much admired *Oxford History of Music*, completed in 1905, and enjoyed friendship with another Delegate, Parry’s friend Dean Thomas Strong of Christ Church, who selected hymns for the *Oxford Hymn Book* of 1908 and became Vice-Chancellor of the University during 1913-17. With advice from Hadow and Strong, Milford expanded musical publication to include technical treatises, histories and, in 1912, a catalogue of music manuscripts in the British Museum by William Barclay Squire. Under Milford’s influence the list of OUP’s musical books expanded and in 1905 Hadow’s masque *Demeter*, to words by Robert Bridges, was published, followed in 1916 by Percy Buck’s *Oxford Song Book*, these remaining the only music in the catalogue until 1923.

Earlier experience of music-type at OUP had occurred through private commissions for hymnals such as Bridges’s and Woolridge’s *Yattendon Hymnal* (1897) and *The English Hymnal* published in 1906 with Vaughan Williams as editor, which sold five million copies in its first fifty years, rivalled *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and ‘gave striking priority to Tudor music, Purcell, and folk music’.⁷ Vaughan Williams had commissioned ‘a significant number of hymns from like-minded English contemporaries’.⁸ Milford wrote to Hadow suggesting that Vaughan Williams’s folk music collections should be published as the latter had become an important figure among folk-music revivalists. Though this idea was not adopted, Hinnells writes that ‘a connection had

⁵ Letter from Scholes to WGW, 27 April, 1931, *GB-Guth*.

⁶ Hinnells, 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

been laid...crucial foundations for later events'.⁹ Milford became Publisher to the University in 1913 (the most senior executive post), and head of OUP in London (as opposed to the Clarendon Press section at Oxford which produced scholarly books) but his publishing activities were soon curtailed by the war. In 1918, the Education Act of H A L Fisher marked the expansion of further education, raising the school leaving age. Hadow's pamphlet *The Needs of Popular Musical Education*, published by OUP in 1918, called for a larger role for music in secondary education, and was thereafter reflected in OUP's policy to expand its educational role.

Percy Buck, by 1922 a friend of WGW, had emulated Hadow's 1903 *Songs of the British Isles*, published by Curwen, with his own collection of national melodies, in the OUP music publication *The Oxford Song Book, Volume I* of 1916, hoping to fill the minds of his pupils at Harrow School with 'a store of noble tunes'.¹⁰ An ex-student of the RCM, Buck had been organ scholar at Worcester College, Oxford when Hadow was Classics Tutor there, gaining his MusD and MA in 1897. He had assisted Hadow with the *Oxford History of Music* when the latter took over its general editorship in 1896, and later, in 1916, had chaired the rescue meeting held by Scholes's friends in 1912 when the Leeds School of Music closed and financial pressures threatened Scholes's journal *The Music Student*. In December 1922, Buck, newly appointed to the Tudor Church Music committee of the Carnegie Trust, called to take tea with WGW when lecturing in Newcastle.¹¹ WGW's idea for *Oxford Choral Songs* may have been discussed then, but since WGW had had two songs published in 1918 and 1919 in the Edward Arnold Singing Class Music series edited by Dunhill, he had probably nursed the plan for some time. Buck, through his teaching post at Harrow, would have met Foss in his capacity as OUP representative, and having just been invited to become first 'Cramb Lecturer' at Glasgow University, his ten lectures, given in 1923, were published in 1924 by Foss's new department under the title *The Scope of Music*.¹² An OUP publication, *The First Fifty Years*, written in 1973, finds the move into educational music publishing by OUP odd:

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Buck, P. C., *The Oxford Song Book*, Vol I, (OUP: London, 1916), iii.

¹¹ Aut., VIII, 1.

¹² Buck, P. C., *The Scope of Music*, (Oxford, 1924), preface.

The Press had no knowledge of the music trade, no representative to sell to music shops, and - it seems - no awareness that sheet music was in any way a different commodity from books...One of the instigators of the move may have been W. G. Whittaker, a leading musical scholar of the time, and the first items to appear were choral leaflets edited by him.¹³

The account relates how Foss 'had a gift for picking the ablest men in any field' and WGW fitted well into this description, representing at OUP 'the world of education and amateur'.¹⁴ WGW had wide practical experience of singing classes, and had always taken an interest in publishing, frequenting the offices of publishing houses and on one occasion playing through Philip Heseltine's unpublished songs before knowing of the composer.¹⁵ He naturally gravitated towards music publication. Foss too moved effortlessly into his new position as he 'soon made obvious his strong interest in music, and gradually took charge of the embryo music list'.¹⁶ WGW found in Foss a most compatible colleague who shared his positive and enthusiastic attitude to work, Foss in his turn respecting WGW's knowledge and ability. Foss had been a childhood pupil of Stanley Roper (who in 1929 became editor of *The Oxford Series of Modern Anthems*) but was prevented from taking up a scholarship at Pembroke College when his father died.¹⁷ After military service and teaching, having taken the OUP representative's job, he settled in Eynsford, Kent, with his wife, Kate, where both 'became intimates of the artistic community that centred on Philip Heseltine (the composer Peter Warlock)', and included Leslie Heward, Cecil Gray, Lambert, and Walton.¹⁸ He loved modern English songs, sending some of his own compositions to Hadow in 1924 who found them 'delightful'.¹⁹ The two became friends and Foss edited Hadow's *Collected Essays*, published in 1928.

Hinnells describes the 'state of upheaval' in music publishing at the time caused by the arrival of broadcasting, recording, and sound films and the economic depression which contributed to the 'virtual collapse of the traditional sheet-music trade', while 'mechanical' music 'created unparalleled new opportunities' and educational reforms enhanced the position of music in schools.²⁰ Widespread cultural nationalism encouraged the revival of old English music and the development of contemporary music. As 'guarantor of the nation's cultural capital' OUP

¹³ *Oxford Music The First Fifty Years '23 - '73*, (Clarendon: Oxford, 1973), 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Aut VII*, 17.

¹⁶ *Oxford Music The First Fifty Years '23 - '73*, (Clarendon: Oxford, 1973), 4.

¹⁷ Hinnells, 22.

¹⁸ Sparkes, D, CD *Hubert Foss and his Friends*, c. 1998.

¹⁹ Hinnells, 24.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, xiii.

could take advantage of the new developments, but was expected to finance its investments from the sale of music alone (probably an impossible task) and promote the spread of learning and culture.²¹ Hinnells, quoting Peter Sutcliffe, author of the most extensive history of the Press, writes that OUP's Music Department 'was the most imaginative of all Milford's innovations...He was then in a position to withdraw from the scene. The stage belonged to Hubert Foss, and the virtuoso performance he proceeded to give astonished not only his employers but the whole musical world.'²² Foss developed a special relationship with composers such as Vaughan Williams, Walton, Britten, Scholes, and Tovey, but he had an Achilles heel, as his inability to resolve the tensions between OUP's philanthropic patron's role and its commercial business caused him insoluble headaches as the recession of the early 1930's began to bite.²³

WGW's *Oxford Choral Song Series* [OCS], with its policy of reaching out to a much wider public, was an immediate commercial success, reaching five figure sales within six months, a source of much pride to the editor.²⁴ The OCS was committed to a 'guarantee of accuracy, practicability, suitability of pitch, and high literary quality of words, and the finest composers of past and present are represented.'²⁵ All new publications were announced in the *Oxford Music Bulletin* published quarterly, and available to anyone on request. WGW aimed to supply high quality music for competition festivals, choral societies, schools, amateur orchestras, and Women's Institutes (a body long supported by Grace Hadow) with these modern unison songs, which were also available in varied voice combinations. The first song in the series was the 'Ring Out, Wild Bells' by Bainton, a Tennyson setting, followed by Frank Bridge's 'A Spring Song' and Thomas Dunhill's 'The Milkmaid'. There was also a Christina Rossetti setting by Percival Garratt, 'Winter Rain', and songs by Armstrong Gibbs, Cyril Rootham, Stanford, and Peter Warlock (his carol arrangements 'Adam lay ybounden', 'Balulalow', 'Tyrley Tyrlow', and his edition of John Clare's 'Little Trotty Wagtail', 'Rest, sweet Nymphs', and 'Sleep'). At No. 16 WGW included a pair of his own very short songs, 'Stay in Town', and the delightful 'Spring', and at No. 20, a pair

²¹ Ibid.

²² Sutcliffe, P., *The Oxford University Press: an Informal History*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1978), 210-211.

²³ Hinnells, xiv. WGW was not convinced of Walton's greatness, writing to John Parr of Sheffield, on 5 March, 1932: 'I am sorry Tacad was encored. I thought it some of the worst rot I had ever heard. Walton is a clever fellow, but I cannot stand his tom-foolery in music.' Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

²⁴ DUJ, Vol XXIV, No 1, December 1923, 54.

²⁵ See advertisement on back cover of Robin Milford's Cantata for mixed voices *The Passing Year*. OUP:London, 1936.

by Hubert Foss ('As I walked forth', and 'Infant Joy'). Ernest Bullock, Henry Ley, R O Beachcroft (Director of Music of Clifton College), and Delius ('Two Songs for Children') were early contributors, as was Ernest Walker, Thomas Wood and Robin Milford, Humphrey Milford's twenty year old son. Milford, an ex-pupil at the RCM of Holst and Vaughan Williams, was 'patching together a portfolio of freelance musical activities to keep body and soul together, while trying to be a more or less full-time composer',²⁶ and seven songs from his children's operetta *The Shoemaker* were included with other songs. Similarly in 1924 Percy Turnbull, a protégé of WGW's from Newcastle, supplied 'A Boy's Song', and 'Piping Down the Valleys Wild'. (Turnbull had assisted WGW in composing numbers for the *Pageant of Northumbria*, mentioned in Chapter I, and dedicated a setting of Herrick's prayer, 'Ejaculation to God' to him, published by Forsyth in 1924, the *Musical Times* critic noting of the piece 'Mr. Turnbull has a strong Whittaker-like style'.)²⁷ In 1925 songs by Percy Judd, Norman Demuth, E J Moeran, and Warlock were published, including the latter's 'Come away, Death'. Vaughan Williams now had all his works published by the Press, and his Shakespeare songs 'Take, O take', 'When Icicles hang by the Wall', and 'Orpheus with his Lute', appeared as Nos. 50, 51, & 52. His fellow editor of *The English Hymnal* for OUP in 1925, Martin Shaw, whose *Mr Pepys* was performed in Hampstead in 1926, provided 'March'. Other new names were Reginald Redman, William Elborne and Roy Thompson, and Harry Farjeon, RAM trained, who set 'Carol' by his sister Eleanor Farjeon for the series.

1927 introduced Gordon Slater, William Jackman, Jasper Rooper and Alan Burr, and Harvey Grace to the lists, the latter's 'Pioneers' being dedicated to Miss Margaret Turner and the GFS choirs.²⁸ More songs followed from Milford, Judd, and new contributor Felix White. The first woman composer of the series was Barbara Thornley who provided 'The Dustman's Song' to words by John Drinkwater, followed by Winifred Bury's solo for boys voices 'It was a lover and his lass'. Another woman contributor in 1928 was Marjory Harrison. Colin Taylor, Leipzig trained and music master at Eton until 1922, and now teaching in Cape Town, at the South African College of Music at Cape Town, sent 'The Clock Shop' which appeared in 1928, as did a

²⁶ Foreman, Lewis, Sleeve notes of CD *Robin Milford, Fishing by Moonlight, the Guildhall Strings*, 2004, CD.A67444.

²⁷ Review: New Music, *Musical Times*, Vol. 66, No. 985 (1 March, 1925), 228.

²⁸ Annie Lawton conducted a GFS choir in Newcastle.

song by WGW's old colleague from the NLPS music sub-committee, E Markham Lee. R. H. Hull, Arthur Warrell (a Bristol friend of Rootham's), and Paul Edmonds provided songs that year, as did Moeran and Felix White. Norman Demuth, the thirty year old composer of film, radio and incidental theatre music, knowledgeable about modern French music and later a professor of composition at the RAM, contributed 'The Brown Owl', and the young Gordon Jacob 'The Barefoot Boy'. Ernest Bullock set Bunyan's 'Song in the Valley of Humiliation' and Bridges's 'Gird on thy Sword', songs of the virtuous type deemed suitable for schools. There was a carol from Bainton and WGW's 'Ring Out, Ye Crystal Spheres' reflected his interest in the Community Singing movement, being composed in February 1928 in time for massed singing at the NEMT. Another WGW song, probably intended for the same event, at number 1001, was 'Michael's Song', to words from W. W. Gibson's 'I heard a Sailor' and dedicated to Atkinson Road Secondary School (where Annie Lawton taught singing). Written in 1926 in Naples the words poignantly demonstrate WGW's abiding love of birds: 'Because I set no snare But leave them flying free, All the birds of the air Belong to me.' The setting is imaginative being in G minor, but quizzically begins and ends on a dominant pedal, with trills and five note groupings representing bird song. R H Hull, Demuth, and Colin Taylor (three songs of his contributed in 1929) continued to write for the series, as did Harry Brook and Arthur Baynon.²⁹

After moving to Glasgow, WGW continued to recruit composers for the OCS series, the lists soon including Bernard van Dieren, Paul Ladmirault, Healey Willan, Arthur Benjamin, Geoffrey Shaw, Patrick Hadley, and C V Hely Hutchinson. In 1931 WGW wrote to ask Alec Robertson and on 17 November Cyril Winn (Principal Government Inspector of Music) from whom WGW requested 'small things which might do for OCS'.³⁰ In a letter to Foss of 16 November, he accepted a Warrell song but rejected Clements 'Music, when soft voices die', as 'Rather nice, but nothing much in it'.³¹ He turned down some Finzi songs, 'They do not appeal to me very much. They are quite able, but not attractive. If you think of doing 'Clear and gentle

²⁹ In 1929 WGW had one of his arrangements published in another OUP series *Oxford Chamber Music from the Old Masters*, a Sonata in D by Leonardo da Vinci, for flute (or violin) and piano, with optional 'cello (dedicated to his AC friend, the flautist and Mozart expert C. M. Girdlestone).

³⁰ Letter from WGW to Cyril Winn (Principal Inspector of Music), 17 November, 1931, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

³¹ Letter from WGW to Foss, 16 November, 1931, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

stream' I will agree.³² He retained William Walton's 'Make we joy' for 'solfaing', writing to Ralph Greaves of OUP on 8 February 1932: 'As Miss Lawton has this to do I shall get her to put the thing in decent shape. I don't like words grouped together at the bottom of the page - it is always difficult for choristers'.³³ He had thus found a niche for Lawton at OUP in this capacity. From 1929 WGW included international folk songs for the OCS series, probably using material obtained for his *Clarendon Song Book Series*, the Dutch folk tune 'At the well', English words supplied by Latham being a typical example. By this method WGW avoided royalties. Now many of WGW's song composers also contributed folk song arrangements to the OCS series, including Ernest Bullock, Percy Turnbull ('There was a simple maiden'), Bainton, Gordon Slater, Gordon Jacob, H. E. Randerson, Edward Bairstow, Edmund Rubbra, WGW ('The Lincolnshire Poacher'), Michael Mullinar, Harold Rhodes, and many others. WGW also set British folk songs using words from the OUP publication *Songs of the Irish Gaels* written by Máighréad ni Annagain and Seamus Clandillon and translated by Clandillon. All the folk songs were also published separately in *The Oxford Folk Song Series*.

Dealing with arrangers was not always plain sailing, but WGW always maintained his integrity and stood out for high standards. A difficulty arose when Kodály submitted a Carol for publication, using a poor translation, passed by Foss without reference to WGW. This provoked a letter to Foss from WGW on 18 November 1931: 'Kodály remarks that as I accepted the Carol, he assumed the translation was quite good. This is some of the harm done by that number being issued without revision. The revered gentleman should have been 'nipped' in the bud at once as far as the translations go.'³⁴ On 21 December 1932 WGW broached the subject with Kodály:

It is an honour to correspond with you...but I wish it were on a more congenial subject. Let me clear the air first about the Carol. You say that I accepted the Carol, you thought the translation was bound to be good. As a matter of fact I did not accept it. Through some mistakes in the office of the Oxford University Press the work was never submitted to me, and I did not see it until it was in print. I then wrote a very strong letter to Mr Foss pointing out the badness of its translation, and protesting against anything being included in the Oxford Choral Songs in future without my being able to scrutinize it. He replied that it was due to an oversight, and he would take care that it should not happen again.³⁵

WGW forwarded a copy to Kodály, marking the wrong accents, pointing out that 'Dr Rogers knows so little about music that he is ignorant of the difference between three-four and six-eight

³² Ibid.

³³ Letter from WGW to Ralph Greaves, OUP, 8 February, 1932, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

³⁴ Letter from WGW to Greaves, 18 November, 1931, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

³⁵ Letter from WGW to Kodály, 21 December, 1932, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

time' and explained that Rogers was ignorant of Hungarian, did not understand the subtleties of word order, and lacked other necessary talents, concluding: 'It is quite certain that he knows so little of music that he is not a capable person for your purpose...Please accept my warmest greetings and good wishes'.³⁶ WGW was similarly forthright when dealing with songs submitted by personal friends, including Foss himself. On 7 June 1929, he wrote to Foss in a style redolent of Holst: 'I'm sorry we cannot see eye to eye about certain points in your Shakespeare Songs. It is evident that we view the particular problems from different angles, and that as we both compose we both have individual leanings which go in diverse directions.'³⁷ WGW found the harmonies in places were not 'modern' but 'didn't seem natural', and suggested that Foss put the works away for a few months.³⁸ Nevertheless WGW was 'perfectly willing to have them in the *Oxford Choral Songs* series as they have some attractive qualities'.³⁹

As a projection of his interest in older music, WGW also edited *The Oxford Choral Songs from the Old Masters* series [OCSOM]. This project published, over many years, arrangements and transcriptions by various composers for different combinations of voices (Unison, Two Part, Mixed voices). WGW divided the work into fourteen sections, according to content. Section 1 consisted of works by Bach, edited by WGW and translated by C S Terry, largely taken from the OUP Cantata editions, some unaccompanied, some with optional accompaniments, some accompanied by arrangements from the *Oxford Orchestral Series*, or available on hire from OUP. Soon translators other than Terry were used, WGW sometimes undertaking the translations himself. (One which achieved popularity from this series was 'Jesu, joy of man's desiring' from CC No. 147, published in eight forms in 1931, using the copyright words of the Church Music Society, with Welsh translations by Williams Parry and E. T. Davies.) In 1937, WGW prepared *A Christmas Sequence*. Based on the music from Bach's Latin Magnificat in E flat, written for Bach's first Christmas at St. Thomas's, 25 December 1723, he used the texts of a Christmas Cantata 'Von Himmel hoch' by Bach's predecessor at St Thomas's, which formed a Christmas sequence,

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Letter to Foss (C/o Miss Lasker, 103 Talgarth Road) from WGW, 7 June, 1929, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid. Foss utilised a melody, with permission, from WGW's 'North Countrie Ballads' producing an arrangement for mixed unaccompanied voices 'O! I hae seen the roses blow', but the song was eventually published in 1929 by Curwen. Foss also published his own *Child's Book of Carols*, arranging, using his own rather strange harmonies, carols from the *Oxford Book of Carols*.

and followed the tradition at Leipzig of singing subordinate numbers in a lesser gallery by a smaller choir. In the same year, he prepared an adaptation of Bach's *Peasant Cantata* which he termed 'an operetta' for female voices, entitled *Village Gossip* while on holiday at Ivazo in Sweden. The Cantata, published in 1939 was given its first performances at the SNAM during 'Opera Week', 24-27 April 1940. It worked well, and the students found 'no difficulty whatever', WGW writing afterwards to Foss: I think I can say that I've had fair amount of conducting...over 45 years, & could only wish to find every score & parts so clearly defined & so fool-proof.⁴⁰

Section 2 of the OCSOM comprised five sets of *Rounds and Canons by Beethoven* with English texts by Albert Latham, many of them tavern songs or gifts for visiting musicians known to Beethoven, he added 'copious notes' of information.⁴¹ Section 3 was devoted to Brahms, Latham translating songs such as 'To a Nightingale', though the economic depression held up the publication of some Brahms Canons, already accepted by the Press, which WGW had hoped to produce in time for Brahms's Centenary year in 1933. Another German composer was represented in Section 4, Latham translating Songs by Peter Cornelius such as 'The Three Kings', and 'The Christmas-Tree'. Section 5, a more pioneering collection, included 26 transcriptions from the English lutenists by Warlock and Philip Wilson.⁴² In Section 6 WGW arranged works by Gluck, with translations again carried out by Latham, in 1928 producing *Scenes from 'Orpheus'*, arranged for female choirs and schools (in this case only the overture was published in the OOS, other parts being available for hire). Nine arias were complete in one book, others were available separately. WGW also edited arias from *Iphigenia in Tauris*, and from *Armide*. Handel arias were published in Section 7, from *Saul*, *Berenice*, *Semele*, *Alcina* (the very successful 'Beauty lately'), *Rodelinda*, and *Tamerlano*, translators being Clifford Bax, WGW, Charles Williams, and Latham. Section 8 consisted of only one aria, 'O say what glory', by Marcello, edited by Foss, and translated by Steuart Wilson, and Section 9 only two by Mendelssohn, edited by WGW, translated by Latham, 'The Farewell of the Birds of Passage, and 'Slumber Song'.

Sections 1 to 9 of OCSOM incipiently reflected WGW's interest in bringing a breadth of 'older' repertoire into the amateur arena, but later publications began to reveal his editorial desire

⁴⁰ Letter from WGW to Foss, 18 July, 1940, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

⁴¹ Note from 'Rounds and Canons by Beethoven', OCS from *The Old Masters*, 1929.

⁴² They are in the same format as the Oxford Choral Songs, but number from No. 301 (numbering on the latter unison numbers jumping from 99 to 1000, to allow room).

to incorporate the expertise and enthusiasms of other scholars and performers. Section 10, 'Miscellaneous Old English Masters', was very large and more comprehensive, consisting of work by different editors. Peter Warlock transcribed songs by anonymous composers from manuscripts in the British Museum and songs by William Cornyshe, Robert Fayrfax, Edmund Turges, Peerson, and twelve songs by Thomas Whythorne. He also wrote a pamphlet on the latter composer. WGW edited 'Sumer is icumen in', songs by Arne, Blow and Henry Carey, and arranged Henry Lawes's 'The Angler's Song' (from Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler*) for various voice combinations. He also arranged 'The heaving of the Lead' from a score by William Shield of Whickham, Newcastle; Hylton Stewart edited songs by Boyce, Croft, Maurice Greene and Walmisley, and Bernard Jackson songs by Byrd and Tallis. Stanley Roper prepared 'Five Aires for voices in unison' by Greene, and a short motet for two equal voices by Richard Dering, 'Above him stood the Seraphim'. Additional Old English Masters were also available in the *Euterpe Collection*. (WGW also edited *The John Playford Collection of Vocal Part Music*, published in 1938.)

Section 11 contained arias (including 'The Birdcatcher's Song') and Rounds and Canons by Mozart, edited by WGW, with English texts by Latham. Section 12 was devoted to songs by Purcell whose music, in the wake of the revived Purcell Society, was increasingly held up as a national icon. WGW produced a Cantata, prepared and arranged for treble voices, with words by Charles Williams, consisting of a series of airs and duets, entitled 'The Moon', its seven numbers available also separately. Other Purcell songs included 'Elegy upon the death of Queen Mary' arranged by WGW, and songs from Dryden's *King Arthur* and from *The Indian Queen*, and *The Rival Sister*, with arrangements also by Harvey Grace, Ernest Walker, and Steuart Wilson (who arranged transposed editions for various voices of songs from *The Fairy Queen*). Section 13, also large contained songs, rounds and canons by Schubert, all edited by WGW, with English words by Arry S. Moselle, Fox-Strangways, Steuart Wilson, Elizabeth Mott, and Latham, the last song in the series being 'Swansong'. An early publication in 1923 was 'Cronos the Charioteer', to words by Goethe translated by Moselle, reprinted from *Music and Letters*. Section 14 contained only three songs by Schumann, translated by Latham.

As the momentum and appetite for OUP's educational choral publications grew, larger works, considered technically accessible yet at the same time challenging, were also produced such as Gluck's *Scenes from Orpheus*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, *King Arthur and the Saxons* (arranged from *King Arthur*), Haydn's *Seasons*, and in 1931, Brahms' *Gypsy Songs* [Zigeunerlieder] Op. 103, arranged by WGW (the last published in four ways, the piano part linked only to the first for mixed voices and piano). C. K. Scott also edited Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. In 1931 WGW edited *A Short Passion (From St Matthew's Gospel)* from Bach's St Matthew Passion hoping that it would ensure that more frequent performances of the work by small choirs or those with limited financial resources, especially in Passion Week. The work was transposed down a tone to ameliorate the problem of the extremely high tessitura of the Evangelist's part (this change being made at the suggestion of Stanley Roper, organist and composer at the Chapel Royal, and editor of the *Oxford Series of Modern Anthems*). Writing to F J Bowes on 1 April 1932, WGW began: 'So glad you like my edition of the 'Passion'. It has been much criticised, but I weighed the matter very carefully before doing it, & had the assistance of people upon whom I could rely.'⁴³

WGW's industry, ideas, and practical expertise, and Foss's energy, initiative, and charisma, led to a rapid expansion of the OUP educational music department and in Hinnells' words, OUP were focused on 'building a national institution',⁴⁴ a mindset confirmed by the company's taking over, with the blessing of Foss and Milford, the *Tudor Church Music* edition from the Carnegie Trust. At this time WGW became editor of the *Oxford Church Music Series* (available in single, inexpensive sheets), another branch of the company which hoped to rival that of Novello. In a bid to capitalise on the market of new church music, WGW had by 1927 included new services and canticles for unison singing, with contributions from Stanford, Bairstow, Dyson (of Winchester College), Ernest Bullock, of Exeter Cathedral, and Charles Macpherson (Organist of St Paul's Cathedral), F H Shera of Malvern College (later Professor of Music at Sheffield), Henry Ley, and Herbert Howells. In addition to the promulgation of modern church composers, WGW also wanted to remedy the absence of good, reasonably priced scores of the Bach cantatas, with English words, by editing them himself for OUP, with English words supplied by C S Terry. Perhaps to encourage sales of the new editions, Hubert Foss had decided,

⁴³ Letter from WGW to F J Bowes, Derby, 1 April, 1932, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

⁴⁴ Hinnells, 6.

with Kennedy Scott and Roper, to establish a Cantata Club to be run on the lines of WGW's Bach Choir. The declared aim of the society was to perform Bach's choral music with as great a degree of authenticity as possible in the use of texts and the balance of choir and instruments. It was a policy supported not only by WGW, but by Terry, Hadow and Schweitzer. Last but not least, WGW seized the opportunity to be the first to perform Byrd's newly discovered *Great Service* which OUP had published in Fellowes' edition in 1924.

1924 in fact proved to be an *annus mirabilis* for OUP in other ways. Perhaps most auspicious was the arrival of Vaughan Williams as an 'OUP' composer, an association with the company which subsequently attracted other major names such as Walton, Warlock, and Lambert. Furthermore, OUP bought the Anglo-French Music Company whose staff included Norman Peterkin, 'already well established as a composer', engaging the latter as sales manager.⁴⁵ Peterkin, who became Foss's deputy, enabled Foss to travel widely, opening distribution networks in Britain and Europe, and visiting Russia and America in search of the latest in British and continental music.⁴⁶ Besides the advent of Vaughan Williams in 1924 and the prestige which the publication of his works brought to Foss and OUP, Foss initiated a policy of publishing musical text books, again targeting the layman's market. The volumes of Scholes's *Musical Pilgrim* acted as important 'pump-primers' and the editorial assistance of Somervell, Fuller Maitland, Edwin Evans, and Eric Blom established a degree of prestige. Authors such as Fellowes produced significant monographs such as *William Byrd* in 1923, maintaining what Hinnells terms, the 'highbrow revivalism' of the pre-war generation, which 'ran parallel with the department's sheet-music policy', when 'historically and stylistically disparate music' was interpreted as 'a single great national tradition.'⁴⁷ But other publications emphasised Foss's pedagogical interests which were spearheaded in 1925 by WGW's *Class-Singing* and, in the same year, by the issuing of *Fugitive Notes on Some Cantatas and the Motets of J. S. Bach*, an assemblage of articles from *The Organist and Choirmaster*.

After Vaughan Williams had made the decision to have all his compositions published by OUP, the company broadened its publishing base to include instrumental music. In turn WGW,

⁴⁵ *Oxford Music: The First Fifty Years '23 - '73*, (Clarendon: Oxford, 1973), 4.

⁴⁶ Hinnells, 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

ever the opportunist, began to edit *The Oxford Orchestral Series* [OOS], supplying both new English compositions and edited versions from old manuscripts for amateur orchestras.⁴⁸ As with the OCS, WGW continued the series as chief editor until 1943, effectively for the rest of his life. Like the other OUP series, however, WGW co-opted the editorial assistance of other scholars. The first volume for instance not only included WGW's own editions of sinfonias selected from Bach's Cantatas (Nos 12, 18, 21 and 156) but also works edited by Peter Warlock, Bernard Jackson and Gerrard Williams; the second volume, which included a *Pavane, Idyll and Bacchanal* by Edgar Bainton (completed the previous year) was a collaboration with Michele Esposito (a friend of Hamilton Harty) and Robin Milford. By July 1926 six numbers were announced in OUP's magazine *The Periodical* indicating that the series was gathering momentum.⁴⁹ A significant feature of WGW's editorial activities was that his own OUP publications exerted an important influence on programme selection in Newcastle and elsewhere. Indeed he adopted whatever means he could to publicize his arrangements and original works, from festival selections to lectures given in the course of his very diverse musical activities. The publication of subsequent volumes not only reflected his own research interests and those of other scholars, but of a galvanising of a musical policy in which the amelioration of national 'taste' was considered essential to public education – the music of Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann were part and parcel of serious musical instruction – and original music by contemporary indigenous composers chimed with the construction of the nation's musical history. Volume III of the *Oxford Orchestral Series* included WGW arrangements of Handel's 'Il Ballo', a Suite of Dances by Handel, and four Bach String Suites, with a *Concerto for Strings* by John Humphries (Op 2 no IX), arrangements by Dunhill of *Five Short Pieces for String Orchestra* by Handel, and Cyril Rootham arrangements of Six Dances for strings and optional woodwind by Mozart. In Volume IV appeared a *Suite in D minor* by Robin Milford, Bach Suites arranged by Gerrard Williams, WGW arrangements of Sinfonias to Bach's CC's 150 and 196, a transcription by J. Bernard Jackson of 'Jhon Come Icisse Me Now' by Byrd, Four Traditional Tunes by Gerrard Williams, and transcriptions of *Six English Tunes*, and *Six Italian Dances* by Warlock. In 1927 Michele Esposito, a longstanding musical

⁴⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁹ DUJ, Jubilee No, Vol XXIV, No 9, July 1926, (1876-1926). A Report from the Periodical, reproduced in the DUJ.

pedagogue in Dublin, arranged a Concerto Grosso in C minor by Geminiani, an editorial task which reflected his own interests in Italian music of the eighteenth century. Volume V began with WGW's 1928 arrangement of Gluck's ballet music from *Orpheus*, and the Sonata from Bach's Cantata No. 31, the Sinfonia from Bach's Easter Oratorio, and 'Jesu Joy' from Cantata No. 147. Rupert Erlebach had arranged a Corelli Concerto Grosso, and Esposito an arrangement of a Minuet by Giovanni Grazioli. Alfred Wall provided a Pastorale and Bourrée arrangement in 1927, beginning Volume VI, followed by WGW's arrangement of the Sinfonia of Bach's Cantata No 29, and an Esposito edition of an Adagio and Giga, and Passacaglia by Galuppi, and a Concerto in B minor by Vivaldi. John Blackwood McEwen's *The Jocund Dance* (dance Tunes for string band), and Gerrard Williams *Three Scottish Tunes* completed the group. The chronology of the volumes was, however, never strict, so that after Volume VI came Volume IX. Here WGW once again depended on the editorial and practical expertise of Esposito. Completed shortly before his death, three Couperin pieces (mostly finished in 1929), Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, and a Handel Concerto Grosso, and Mozart Gavotta formed a substantial part of the volume. Other works were also included such as Concerto in G minor by Vivaldi, arranged by Mistowski, and an arrangement by WGW of the Minuet to the Overture to *Berenice* by Handel completed the volume with a *Denbigh Suite* by Gordon Jacob (for Howell's School, Denbigh), and Gordon Stutely's *Suite Salt o' The Sea* (composed for Liverpool String Orchestra and dedicated to the BMS). Volume X, largely compiled before in 1927-28, was especially significant in that the edition of eight Symphonies by William Boyce was edited by Constant Lambert reflecting a particular obsession of the editor. In addition, *La Favorite Chaconne à deux temps* and *L'Ansonienne* by Couperin, edited by Esposito, were among that editor's final efforts.

The contents of Volume VIII of the series was published in 1930 and had a special meaning for WGW in that he used it to indulge a personal interest in the work of William Young. Moreover, this volume appeared at the same time as the publication of an article 'The Concerted Music of William Young', in the *Dominant*. Volume XI contained more William Young Sonatas arranged by WGW published in 1931, four William Young Suites, a Purcell Chaconne arrangement by WGW from 1930, a Handel Sonata, Mozart Dance Suite in 1932, a Dunhill arrangement of a Suite for Strings from Purcell's *The Old Batchelor* and one of a Prelude and

Sarabande of Purcell by Colin Taylor. The much delayed Volume VII, which may well have been held back because of its motley content, ranged widely from an arrangement of a Mozart Minuet and Trio made in 1933, Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Greensleeves*, pieces for string orchestra by Farnaby and Byrd arranged by Leslie Russell, and, more remarkably, to the *Tempest Music* by Matthew Locke. The latter proved to be the first instance of WGW's own research into the Glasgow archives (from the Euing Library) since moving from Newcastle. 1933 had brought John Barbirolli, the feted conductor, to the Scottish Orchestra in Glasgow, which led to an invitation from WGW to contribute to the OUP series. An Allegretto by Marcello and a Concerto for oboe or flute and Strings by Pergolesi, were arranged by Barbirolli, along with a Purcell Suite for strings for Volume XII. Other juxtapositions (apparently strange, but not for the enterprising and catholic WGW) formed the content of the last volumes. Arnold Forster's compositions 'A Sword Dance Suite' and 'A Suite of Morris Dance Tunes' were published in 1937 with an edition of *Dido and Aeneas* by E. J. Dent (an important editorial landmark for the time), a Constant Lambert transcription and edition *The Power of Music* by his beloved William Boyce, and one of *Pan and Syrinx* were grouped with WGW's 1938 arrangement of the dances from *Comus* by Arne, and a Miniature String Quartet composed by Robin Milford. Volume XIII, the last volume of the series edited by WGW was produced between 1938 and 1943, beginning with a WGW Purcell arrangement, Overture in G, a Mozart Suite for Strings arranged by Barbirolli, a Boyce Overture in D arranged by Constant Lambert, and an Overture in D by Galuppi arranged by Guy Warrack, an up-and-coming young British conductor who also edited the Overture to *Oriane* by Bach.

In the years 1927 and 1929 WGW took on yet more editing with further a series of publications of Bach cantatas in conjunction with the Cantata Club. To this extraordinary productive catalogue were added *Bach's Extended Chorales with English and Welsh translations*, the *Arias from the Operas of Handel Series* and *The Oxford Descant Series* [ODS] for which WGW composed folk-tune arrangements supplied with a descant. Among these he published 'Two Spring Carols' from the Swedish *Piae Contiones*, replacing the Revd. J. M. Neale's words which appeared in his *Carols for Christmastide* and ignored the meaning, by new translations supplied by Steuart Wilson, an editor for OUP in 1929. Other series edited by WGW were the *Choral Duets for*

Male Voice Series, and *The Oxford Series of Bach Arias* (1928-1941) the latter a way of utilising material from WGW's Bach Cantata Series, usually edited by him. In 1929 Emily Daymond, first principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford, and one of the first two woman music graduates at Oxford in 1921, both arranged and edited No 23 in this series (the Bass Aria - 'How jovial is my laughter', from Secular Cantata No 205.) WGW always adhered closely to the original score, giving any additions in italics. He completed Volume 2 (from 21 - 40) of the *Arias from the Operas of G. F. Handel* series, from Ernest Walker's list.

By 1929, at OUP under Foss, over two hundred titles were pouring out of the department each year, the highest rate ever (there were over 750 items in its catalogue by 1931). OUP had moved to the forefront of music publishing, but then become a victim of its own success.⁵⁰ The international economic slump of 1929 affected sales of sheet music, already damaged by the arrival of 'the talkies' in cinemas in 1927. Expenditure doubled each year until 1930 (bringing hostility from the rest of the Press), the sharp rise in income could not prevent increased annual losses. WGW and Scholes were told to hold back publications, but seemed not to have grasped the problem, though WGW probably wondered why his anthem *I said in the noontide of my days*, dedicated to Stanley Roper, was refused by OUP (it was published instead by Banks of York).

5.1.2 *WGW's philosophy of editing*

WGW discussed his work as a music editor in his essay written in 1932 on 'The Business of a Musical Editor' in his *Collected Essays*, published in 1940 by OUP. He expressed support for Warlock's philosophy, expressed in a quotation of the Revd. A. Ramsbotham in a preface for some Elizabethan and Jacobean Ayres: 'Every editor of early music should regard himself as a steward of treasure, and is required to be faithful in the way he keeps it or deals it out to others. An editor's first business is to set down the notes he finds written by the composer; if he does that he is faithful, and very little else will be required of him.'⁵¹ But WGW's is not a hard-line approach. Though he condemns the 'atrocities' committed by von Bülow in the 'cooking' of C.

⁵⁰ Hinnells, 12.

⁵¹ Whittaker, W G, 'The Business of a Musical Editor', *Collected Essays*, (OUP: London, 1940), XII, 222.

P. E. Bach's Sonatas, or by Busoni (who deleted tutti bars from the Concerto in D minor by Bach),⁵² and points out that 'Mr Ramsbotham's 'very little else' may be interpreted so liberally that it is difficult to know where liberty ends and licence begins',⁵³ WGW feels there is 'more in the business of an editor than the quoted sentences permit', and suspects that on occasions a composer 'is not free from error'.⁵⁴ With no original manuscript available 'and we must rely on copies which may not be immaculately rendered'.⁵⁵ WGW prefers to say: 'An editor's first business is to set down the notes he judges to have been written or intended by the composer', which provides 'a working agreement as to the preparation of old works for library editions, which are necessarily intended as authoritative records of the periods of the past, giving us the exact letter of the text without any alterations or additions dictated by the changes of taste of later times'.⁵⁶ If editions of old music are intended 'for practical use', matters are more complicated: 'Of all transcribers and editors of old music, no one has been so rigid in his adherence to the strict letter of manuscript or part-book as Peter Warlock'.⁵⁷ Despite this, WGW notes that the composer nevertheless makes concessions, writing in his preface to *English Ayres*: 'There is no advantage in adhering, in a modern edition, to the obsolete conventions of Elizabethan notation, particularly in the matter of barring'.⁵⁸ Warlock also halved note-values and added accidentals he deemed necessary, 'inserted tentatively, in brackets', this applied especially to *musica ficta* examples where opinions varied and manuscripts did not agree.

WGW acknowledged having a dispute with Warlock over some songs he was editing for OCS when Warlock refused to make additions in the form of 'expression marks' to the original texts of English Lutenists, Warlock arguing that 'if a teacher didn't know how to treat these songs he had no right to be using them'.⁵⁹ To WGW's reply that not all teachers were experienced musicians, Warlock remained unmoved, only yielding when WGW explained that even with an enlightened teacher it would be impossible with no directions to persuade a class to follow him. After saying that his edition was not to be turned into *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, Warlock

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 224.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 222.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 223.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 223.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 224.

compromised and allowed WGW to 'commit the heresy of adding a few marks', salving his own conscience with a note explaining 'No indications of tempo or of piano and forte appear in the original editions'.⁶⁰ However WGW confessed that he found that Warlock's statement that 'transposition in certain cases for use in schools was regrettable' jarred with the latter's transposition of an Elizabethan song to alter the compass from that of viols to modern strings.⁶¹ WGW summed up his attitude to professional editors in the statement: 'We practical musicians admire their scrupulous accuracy and revere their high scholarship, but we know that our point of view, that connected with actual music-making, needs consideration also.'⁶² WGW also felt that the capabilities of a modern pianoforte demanded 'finer shades of nuance' than the harpsichord in old keyboard music (although he himself preferred playing them on the harpsichord), but acknowledged that many young editors were 'apt to over-egg the pudding' only acquiring moderation in later years, while certain editors like Riemann had become obsessed with certain ideas, the latter carrying them to absurd lengths. For concerted music 'Careful and detailed editing' was a '*sine qua non*', without which orchestral players treated everything as forte and choristers treated everything as fortissimo, achieving what Bernard Shaw described as 'the insufferable lumbering which is the curse of English Handelian choral singing'.⁶³ WGW noted Sinclair's Novello edition of Bach's Motet 'Fürchte dich nicht' contained only one mark *ff* at the beginning, whereas Sir Henry Wood's Breitkopf edition of the same work contained so many indications that 'his pages resemble those of Reger or Schönberg'.⁶⁴ Even so, as a choral conductor, WGW preferred the latter: 'A choir sounds sensitive and plastic only when members are compelled to think, to be continually alert, when they are prevented from settling down to 'a grand old sing'.⁶⁵

WGW judges Charles Kennedy Scott's markings in the madrigals included in his *Euterpe* edition for OUP, and those of Fellowes in his *English Madrigal School* as being examples of the

⁶⁰ Ibid., 225. Similarly, in the preface to his transcriptions from a manuscript c. 1625 in the British Museum, *Six English Tunes for String Quintet*, for WGW's Oxford Orchestral Series (OUP: London, 1926), Warlock writes that though these points of interpretation 'are best left to the taste of individual performers, conductors and teachers' the few suggestions he gives 'are only offered for the use of otherwise unassisted students'.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 226.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

best type of choral editing. In chamber or orchestral music, WGW felt that since earlier styles of music differed so much from that of the twentieth century, players unaccustomed to the style would find them dull without markings. As an example of good modern editing of Purcell's works, WGW mentions Warlock's edition of Purcell's *Fantasias*, published by Curwen: 'Peter Warlock brought his remarkably accurate mind and his almost uncanny knowledge to bear upon the texts, and all details of bowing, nuance, etc., were added by M. André Mangeot, whose intimate acquaintance with string chamber music made this presentation...completely satisfying.'⁶⁶

Foss admired WGW's work with old music, writing in his *Music in My Time* (published by in 1933 by Rich and Cowen of London) about the elements of modern English music, in particular folk song and Tudor music: 'Simultaneously with the growth of our musical consciousness, there was gradually being released the treasure of our own Tudor music', this was being made available to all to read and hear: 'The names of Barclay Squire, Fellowes, Dolmetsch, Dent, Kennedy Scott, Heseltine, and Whittaker are but a few one could mention.'⁶⁷ Foss looked on this time of music printing as not 'an age of music' but 'an age of distribution' bringing the 'evils and difficulties of other pioneer movements of distribution' such as the building of the railways and growth of traffic in London and other cities with improvement in motor transport.⁶⁸ However he rejoiced, probably with veracity, that 'Never before has there been such a vast army of composers who get a hearing wider than their own friendly sphere.'⁶⁹ WGW's attitude to music-editing, like that of Holst, was that it should enable as many as possible to perform the works of musical masters. In a letter to Dunhill, written on 16 November 1931, WGW writes: 'W. H. Reid impressed upon me some years ago the necessity of providing music for schools and elementary forces without violas. In quite a large number of our publications of this sort we have left the viola part as it stands, but have also shown it as a third violin part.'⁷⁰ WGW would also

⁶⁶ Ibid., 228.

⁶⁷ Foss, H J, *Music in My Time* (OUP: London 1933), 178.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 183.

⁷⁰ Letter from WGW to Thomas Dunhill, 16 November, 1930, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*. WGW would of course insert a foot-note to register the alteration.

substitute other notes for those below 'G', and so 'added considerably to the utility of the work'.⁷¹

5.1.3 *The Clarendon Song Books*

An important venture for WGW at OUP from 1929 was *The Clarendon Song Book Series*, containing a valuable source of repertoire for school music teachers, with interesting but not too difficult accompaniments. Books I and II were published that year, the first containing thirty-one songs, comprising nursery rhymes, folk-songs, classical and contemporary songs, rounds and canons, Book II, with twenty-seven, WGW as much as possible avoiding copyright restrictions. Co-editors were Herbert Wiseman and John Wishart (and advice was given by E T Davies of University College, Bangor). 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.⁷² He had lectured on conducting and music education at Columbia University, and adjudicated across Canada. From 1923, he and his wife ran a Music Summer School at St. Andrew's. A founder-conductor of Edinburgh Madrigal Choir, he was associated with the Petersfield Festival, (founded in 1901), producing music text books for schools. John Wishart, an Edinburgh colleague of Wiseman, was Wiseman's co-author of 'The Music Class' (Glasgow 1925, published by J. S. Kerr).⁷³ The two had also produced a series of seven books *Master Melodies for Schools*, used at summer courses at St. Andrews, and Oxford. From Book II onwards, melodies were mainly selected from the masterpieces of the great composers (perhaps WGW's inspiration for his own *Folk-song Sight Singing Series*).

The first two books were a huge success, the remaining four books of the core series being published in 1930. Individual songs were also published separately as song sheets in *The Clarendon Song Series from the Clarendon Song Books*, being also available in melody (staff) voice part

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Dr Wiseman (1886-1966) was the son of the Very Rev. Dean Wiseman of Aberdeen, and was an MA graduate of Aberdeen University, subsequently studying at the RCM under Parratt, Stanford and Charles Wood, returning to Scotland in 1908 as music master at Madras College, St. Andrews, also lecturing for St. Andrews Provincial Committee for the Training of Teachers, and holding the post of organist at Holy Trinity Church.

⁷³ The book contained a system of sight-singing and ear-training for class use, primarily for Edinburgh schools, but published for wider consumption.

editions and Sol-fa only editions. The series marked a major achievement for WGW supplying a comprehensive collection of much desired material for the school music class, with national and folk songs, some with descants, nursery rhymes for the young, classical songs of varying difficulty including those by Elizabethan composers, and modern English songs by Stanford, Vaughan Williams, WGW, Frank Bridge and others, and a few rounds and canons (also published separately).⁷⁴ A feature of the series was the original and satisfying accompaniments which 'cannot fail to inspire confidence in the pianist of the humblest pretensions, who will surprise himself at the effect he is making with so few notes.'⁷⁵ Mary Pollitzer remembered fondly how WGW would sit at the piano when composing the arrangements, turning round to her to say 'How does this sound?'⁷⁶ Supplementary to the series were Books IA, IIA, and IIIA, published in 1932, 'The Boys Book of Songs', No I and II published in 1931, which also supplied some descants. The 'Sixty songs for Little Children' was published in 1933, incorporating European folk songs (and a few British) arranged by WGW and Wiseman, set to words by Frances B Wood, and nursery rhymes. Jane McDermont, experienced 'in dealing with children of tender years' was an advisor in its compilation.⁷⁷ The arrangements were extremely satisfying musically without being too difficult for the pianist, and ground-breaking in content. Interestingly Percy Buck produced his own *Oxford Nursery Song Book* also published by OUP in 1933, which may in fact have been complementary rather than a rival publication. In 1935 came the first and only book of 'The Clarendon Classical Song Books' series, containing songs by Dowland and Campian transcribed by Peter Wilson and Peter Warlock. The rest were arrangements by WGW from Purcell's music from *Dioclesian*, Bach Church Cantatas, and from Handel's *Agrippina*, *Tolomeo*, and *Solomon*, Haydn's *Seasons*, Schubert songs (translated by Latham) and Schumann songs to texts translated by Fox Strangways and Stuart Wilson, and one translation by WGW's University assistant, H. H. Wintersgill of a song from Mozart's 'Exsultate, jubilate'. Also that year two Clarendon Song Books for boys with changing voices were published, edited by WGW and

⁷⁴ An unidentified review in John Whittaker's scrapbook, dated March 1930, ends: 'The three Ws, Whittaker, Wiseman, Wishart, have wrought wonderfully well winning, windsome works which wise workers will willingly welcome'. John Whittaker's scrapbook, 20p.

⁷⁵ Note on each Clarendon Song book.

⁷⁶ Recollection of Mary Pollitzer, given to the writer during an interview at Mrs Pollitzer's home, the Oast House, Benenden, Kent, 6 February, 1999.

⁷⁷ 'Preface', *Sixty Songs for Little Children*, (OUP: London, 1933).

Wiseman only, with advice from W Norman Mellalieu, supplying a need for material at this awkward time for the song teacher, many songs being taken from the 'Oxford Song Books' and 'English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians', also published by OUP.

WGW put great efforts into getting the series off the ground in October 1931, sending proofs of the 'Kindergarten Book' to Wiseman, 'When JW & you have examined them, please send back. Shall I take over the harmonization of this book?'⁷⁸ Two days later he wrote 'We must have a decent lot of humorous numbers' and sent dates of the publication of the proposed Aria Book, suggesting 'What about a Clarendon Lieder Book?'.⁷⁹ He reported on progress to Foss on the 7 November. 'Edinburgh and Glasgow' had again been in consultation over the Clarendon Kindergarten books, Wiseman and Wishart having talked to some kindergarten teachers, who stressed the different needs of the two age-groups 5 to 6, and 6 to 7, perhaps suggesting the need for two separate books. All agreed that singing games and kindergarten songs should not be mixed, and a separate singing game book should also be prepared. In the event, only one book, *Sixty Songs for Little Children*, was prepared. On 9 November WGW wrote to Wiseman suggesting the anglicization of 'The Laird of Cockpen' to ensure that English children could sing it, and on 24 November told Wiseman that after attending a 'perfectly delightful recital of Welsh folk songs...at Cecil Sharp House' the singer, Mrs Jones, had offered him the material, with literary translations, for Frances Wood to put into verse, and permission could be easily obtained.⁸⁰ On 26 May 1933 WGW wrote to Latham with the information that Clarendon Song Books for Senior Boys whose voices were breaking were planned, requesting that he translate some of the numbers from the Purcell volumes, from *Timon of Athens*, and *Dioclesian*: 'The words of course will have to fit in with the age of the boys.'⁸¹ Before this on 23 March 1933, WGW wrote to thank Latham for sending some Lully he had been translating with the news that *Sixty Songs for Little Children* was finished:

F B Wood is a kindergarten teacher in Edinburgh, one of Wiseman's assistants. She has a wonderful knack of meeting the needs of tiny people & without her we could not have done this book. A further volume is in progress, but you poets have to take your time over things! She is holding us up for quite a number of

⁷⁸ Letter from WGW to Herbert Wiseman, 13 October, 1931, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

⁷⁹ Letter from WGW to Herbert Wiseman, 15 October, 1931, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

⁸⁰ Letter from WGW to Herbert Wiseman, 24 November, 1931, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

⁸¹ Letter from WGW to Professor A G Latham, 26 May, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

songs. I am so glad you like the book. We all feel very proud of it. It was great composing nursery rhymes as a contrast to instructing University students.⁸²

5.1.4 *OUP and other publications*

Foss offered to resign in July 1932, to allow the department to run on a skeleton staff, Milford rejecting his proposal. While Foss's contemporary music did not sell, WGW's *Oxford Songs Series* and Scholes' books were holding up well. Foss tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a sale or merger with Novello, as this inspired solution which would have supplied OUP with a backlist of titles. Britten, unable to be paid a retainer, was lost to the Press. Hinnells describes how other complications were managed well by Foss who was 'caught in the middle of an economic upheaval and technological revolution in the music trade' with the 'rapid expansion of the broadcasting and recording industries, allied with the shrinking market for sheet music'.⁸³ When the factor of mechanical as well as performing rights became significant and composers joined the Performing Rights Society', Foss saw to it that OUP joined the PRS in 1936.⁸⁴ Hinnells writes: 'Foss always alert to ways of publicizing OUP's works, became the first English music publisher to fully capitalize on the new systems and opportunities of radio and the gramophone'.⁸⁵ He did this by obtaining recording contracts for his composers, and launched a freelance career as a broadcaster for himself by using his experience of journalism. Walton and Vaughan Williams's composing careers were established by having a week's Promenade Concerts devoted to them. But in 1932 Foss was told to retrench, cuts were made such as the copying of hire copies by hand. The Sales outlet moved from the Aeolian Hall to Soho Square, large commitments needed permission from Milford. Expenditure fell until 1941.⁸⁶

Foss, with family stresses, found these compounded by financial troubles in his department at OUP. Though uninjured, a serious car accident in 1934 shook him; he was also smoking and drinking heavily. Hinnells writes that Scholes and others urged him to rest, but he

⁸² Letter from WGW to Professor A G Latham, 23 March, 1933, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

⁸³ Hinnells, 18.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ The annual deficit fell in consequence of the savings from £18,789 in 1932 to £10,055 in 1933. Hinnells, 14.

suffered a breakdown in 1936 which afterwards left him vulnerable to illness.⁸⁷ Foss edited Scholes's *The Oxford Companion to Music*, which reached publication in 1938 only due to him (he persuaded Mrs Scholes to supervise the work daily). With the onset of the war the department moved to Oxford, which Foss disliked. Most of the staff went to war, leaving Peterkin to manage, almost alone, with production almost halted by paper and staff shortages. When doubts arose over the survival of the department, Foss attempted suicide in 1941. At Milford's insistence, he took sick leave and his authority was reduced, Milford objecting to his continuing extravagant use of the expense account. In November he offered his resignation, but in fact he just diversified, working for ENSA (the Entertainment National Service Association) as Musical Advisor to Eastern Command, CEMA (Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts), and SAME (Society for the Advancement of Music in Education), of which he was President of holiday courses. His most enjoyable work was the many broadcast talks on music he gave for the BBC. He continued to edit Tovey's work, and remained in regular contact with Peterkin and Vaughan Williams.

WGW and Scholes were very much in the dark about the actual state of OUP finances, although WGW was at all times careful about the material he accepted with an eye to sales figures, writing in April 1932 to Foss about songs by the young Benjamin Britten: 'There is no doubt about the talent of this composer. They are all out of the way & yet so natural and so charming. The accompaniments are difficult, particularly No 3, & that would hamper the sale.'⁸⁸ That year WGW found it impossible to know when his publications would be issued. He wrote to Ernest Bullock on 30 September: 'Thanks for 'British Grenadiers'. It will do excellently. Heaven only knows when it will be published because headquarters have now issued a ukase practically stopping all issues for the time being on account of the condition of affairs. However, as these things were commissioned they are bound to be accepted.'⁸⁹ Scholes wrote to WGW from Switzerland on 27 April 1931 objecting to Foss's new regime which cut foreign royalties by two-thirds, and expected Scholes 'not to quibble', and gave authors bills for 'Authors' Corrections': 'My guest is that Foss has filled up his department (in addition to your stuff and

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁸ Letter to Foss, 28 April 1932, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth.*

⁸⁹ Letter to Dr Ernest Bullock, 30 September, 1932. *GB-Guth.*

mine, which are saleable) with such a lot of dead stock that he is driven to economise...⁹⁰ WGW grumbled in assent about his bill for corrections for *Fugitive Notes* but confessed that writing for him was only 'incidental work'.⁹¹ In September Foss wrote to WGW asking him to be careful with regard to the financial affairs of the Press, WGW replying on 20 September:

This is very sad, but it is not unexpected. Conditions in the music trade everywhere seem to be terrible. In Weimar... the principal music dealer... in business for forty years, cannot sell sufficient cheap music to pay the rent of his shop, and has shifted his stock to a bedroom in his house... You ask me to be careful. I can conscientiously say that none of your advisers have considered the financial interest of the Press more than I have done. If they had there would not be so much non-productive material in your catalogue. Dealer after dealer has said to me that they could not understand why the Oxford University Press published so much that has not a ghost of a chance of selling. I do not think that could be said of my recommendations.⁹²

WGW recommended that Foss have the Purcell pieces engraved first: 'There is money in Purcell without doubt'.⁹³ He agreed however that though he had 'several interesting things' in preparation these 'had better be left over till things take a turn'.⁹⁴ A project which did go ahead was WGW's transcriptions for piano of *Thirty-Five Chorale Preludes by J. S. Bach* published in four volumes in 1931. The Scottish Orchestra performed WGW's arrangement of Purcell's *Chaconne in G minor* (No. 6 of the sonatas of four parts) in the Usher Hall, at a concert where Albert Sammons played Beethoven's D major violin concerto. The first movement of a new symphony by a young Scottish composer from Edinburgh, Guy Warrack, who also did some editing for the OOS, was also performed.

In 1932, WGW's 'Bach Book for Harriet Cohen', 12 Bach transcriptions by modern English composers reached publication.⁹⁵ Foss told WGW he must stop his project of producing an edition of the Christmas Oratorio, to which WGW replied on 4 April 1932 that it was '... a matter entirely for the Press, but you will have to make your peace with Allt about it'.⁹⁶ Dr W. Greenhouse Allt, organist of St. Giles's Edinburgh, a friend of Bantock's and Tovey's, had given

⁹⁰ Letter from Scholes to WGW, 27 April, 1931. *CA-On*.

⁹¹ Letter from WGW to Scholes, 30 April, 1931, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

⁹² Letter from WGW to Foss, 20 September, 1932, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*

⁹³ *Ibid*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*.

⁹⁵ The book, *A Bach Book for Harriet Cohen: Transcriptions from the works of J S Bach* (OUP: London, 1932), included a WGW transcription, the Choral Prelude 'Wie glauben all' in einem, gott, Vater', and contributions from Bantock, Bax, Berners, Bliss, Bridge, Goossens, Howells, Ireland, Lambert, Vaughan Williams, and William Walton.

⁹⁶ Letter from WGW to Foss, 4 April, 1932, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*

assistance to WGW and C. S. Terry, who were preparing it for the early summer. WGW told Allt in a letter of 28 March, that it had 'taken five years to get the short Passion from MS to print'.⁹⁷

On the whole WGW succeeded in getting many useful projects to fruition. A highly successful venture was *The Folk Song Sight Singing Series* [henceforward FSSSS], produced from WGW's large collection of folk songs from many countries, carefully graded for use in schools, and sorted in collaboration with Annie Lawton (who had joined him in Glasgow in 1931), and Edgar Crowe (resident in Monkseaton, near Whitley Bay, and soon dropped from the equation). The series is still in print today and the books often required text-books for music courses in the USA. Lawton wrote to Scholes on 13 November 1933 to tell him of the books, offering to send copies, to which Scholes replied that he already had the series and thought it 'admirable'.⁹⁸ WGW wrote to Foss on 13 March telling him that 'The FSSS look delightful',⁹⁹ and to his old friend Bullerwell in Newcastle on 9 September, offering to send copies: 'They are not all out yet, and the first batch was only published at the beginning of the year, but they have already sold 10,000 of the first book so it looks as if they are going to hum.'¹⁰⁰ By September 1933 books 4-10 were also published. Writing to a friend, Miss Stuart of Glasgow, WGW said how much Annie Lawton had done for the series: 'It is only through Miss Lawton that the work was entirely acceptable'.¹⁰¹

On 11 September 1933 WGW wrote to Rae Robertson at St. John's Wood, London to tell him that 'as promised' he had arranged some Bach Chorale Preludes 'for your charming wife and yourself'.¹⁰² Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson were the editors of 'The Two-Piano Series' for OUP. WGW sent a detailed description of the pieces which he had grouped together, together with programme notes and sources of organ texts: 'I am sure to have made lots & lots of mistakes as I transcribed straight from the organ without sketches'.¹⁰³ He asked to attend any performance if they were played in public, feeling that many passages should be improved with regard to balance.¹⁰⁴ The pieces were performed in December, when WGW did notice 'a certain

⁹⁷ Letter from WGW to Dr W Greenhouse Allt, St Giles, Edinburgh, 15 March, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*

⁹⁸ Letter from Lawton to Scholes, 13 November 1933, Letters of P. A. Scholes. *CA-On*.

⁹⁹ Letter from WGW to Foss, 13 March, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*

¹⁰⁰ Letter from WGW to J. W. Bullerwell, 9 September, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

¹⁰¹ Letter from WGW to Miss E. Stuart, Glasgow, 13 September, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

¹⁰² Letter from WGW to Rae Robertson, St John's Wood, London, 11 September, 1933. *GB-Guth*.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

amount of mistakes. Probably I have placed the chords too low'.¹⁰⁵ Hubert Foss also wrote a piece dedicated to the couple, *The Newcastle Dance*, published in 1934, on 'Oh Come ye from Newcassel', and arranged a Bach piece, 'Seht, was die Liebe thut', for the same series, published in 1936.

In 1933 Latham surprised WGW by asking for work, WGW replying, 'It seems that the barometer is high. Long may it stay there.'¹⁰⁶ WGW could offer work after another Saturday in Edinburgh on Clarendon business when 'the new Boys Books' would be discussed, 'so your new Purcell will come in at the right moment. We may then decide upon some Lieder which will satisfy your craving for work'. But there was a hold up, a week later, on 28 September; WGW told Latham that certain items were 'prehistoric' for Clarendon Books. WGW hoped that Handel would arouse more interest: 'One never knows when the tide will turn'.¹⁰⁷ In any case, WGW could not plan any more at the moment: 'I am busy, & have been for two years, with an editorial job which is reaching its climax this winter, the production of Purcell's 22 String sonatas. The next of the original edition of Purcell MSS and later copies have all to be collated, including a lot of very difficult figured bass. It has been a long job.'¹⁰⁸ Next, WGW intended to 'start attacking Handel operas once again'.¹⁰⁹ By 9 October, WGW could write to Latham: 'You were praying for work. Here you are. Mozart 'Magic Flute' choruses, Schubert (all for the adolescent boys books). No more Purcell - got enough.'¹¹⁰ Next day there was 'Brahms for our Boys' Book', and on 13 October WGW wrote in appreciation:

What an amazing amount of trouble you have gone to, over those verses. I can picture you chatting in technical language to the boat-hirers on Whitley Bay Sands. I wish novelists would take as much trouble over their musical references- absolute ignorance about music seems to be the chief reason why many of them write musical novels, or use musical references. I suppose you will be sending along the Gluck sometime. The new Purcell will do admirably for the OCS. I will put it in hand at once.¹¹¹

In 1933 WGW sent Milford a rough draft of Handel's *Allegro* which 'would be a jolly thing for festivals', but publication was held up by the recipient, though he liked it very much 'as a future

¹⁰⁵ Letter from WGW to Rae Robertson, 26 December, 1934, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

¹⁰⁶ Letter from WGW to Latham, 22 September 1933, Principal's letters *GB-Guth*.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from WGW to Latham, 28 September, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁰ Letter from WGW to Latham, 9 October, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

¹¹¹ Letter from WGW to Latham, 13 October, 1933, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*

scheme'.¹¹² Throughout 1935 WGW continued to send suggestions to OUP for transcription, such as an *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* 'with lots of those spicy chords and splashes of which Blow was so fond' with ambivalent response.¹¹³ Though WGW ploughed ahead with his work, endlessly industrious, on 1 October 1935 he wrote to Percy Buck: 'Anyone who has anything to do with publishing today is likely to commit suicide. Things I have sent up to the OUP disappear for 2, 3, & 4 years...If we send anything to the publisher he simply sends the thing back and says he cannot publish it. One is far better to wait.'¹¹⁴

In 1942, though over-worked by his retirement job as Musical Advisor for Scottish Command for ENSA, WGW continued to work for OUP, arranging Greek folk-tunes for Calvocoressi. WGW thought some were 'real corkers', and 'Calvo' wrote to say he was delighted with the settings.¹¹⁵ WGW found his OUP royalties were surprisingly good, much larger than he had estimated. Some things had sold very well including 31,000 copies of the *Oxford Choral Songs*, and over 8,000 of the *Folk Song Sight Singing Series* (a considerable number to the USA). However, only seventeen copies of *Collected Essays*, and no *Fugitive Notes* had sold. In 1943, two versions of a Bach aria, 'Flocks in Pastures Green' ('Schafe können sicher weiden'), from the secular birthday cantata No. 208 'The Merry Chase is All my heart's delight' (*War Mir Behagt*) had suddenly become enormously popular. The aria from had been arranged by him for a gramophone recording, and the second for a small orchestra to include in the OOS. Now OUP wished WGW to arrange the number both as a two-part, and three-part song for OCS.¹¹⁶ When this piece, transposed to the key of G for mezzo-soprano, was published in WGW's *Oxford Choral Songs from The Old Masters* series in 1936, it was edited by Phyllis James who supplied the English words. WGW's 1940 edition, published in the series *The Oxford Series of Bach Arias*, transposed the aria to the key of E for contralto or baritone unison singing, and used an unfamiliar translation (though more faithful to the original) by Emily Daymond beginning 'Calm and tranquil lie the sheepfolds'. WGW's version for the OOS was intended to be used with Phyllis James's version, but WGW requests that the voice part expression marks be adjusted for this.

¹¹² Letter from Milford to WGW, March 26, 1933, *GB-Ooup*.

¹¹³ Letter from WGW to Milford, 29 May, 1935. *GB-Ooup*

¹¹⁴ Letter from WGW to Percy Buck, 1 October, 1935, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth*.

¹¹⁵ Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 4 October, 1942. Letters in writer's possession.

¹¹⁶ Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 11 April, 1943.

WGW's work continued to earn money for many years, both for OUP, and in royalties for WGW's family. As an example, four Bach editions, Cantatas Nos. 122 and 22, 'Wachet Auf', and 'A Christmas Sequence' contracted on 26 April 1924, with others, remained on OUP's lists until a letter of 2 April 1986 informed WGW's grandson, Jonathan Pollitzer, of their removal.¹¹⁷ When Pollitzer wrote to Margaret Palmer of the copyright department on 26 August 1983, 'It is indeed sad to see my grandfather's works still drifting out of print',¹¹⁸ Palmer replied on 31 August, when *The Oxford Graduated Round Book*, and 'Bog Love' were also withdrawn: 'Yes, it is sad to see these titles disappearing, but they have done exceptionally well to stay in print for so long.'¹¹⁹

Owing to Jonathan Pollitzer's work, Banks of York took over many of the titles, with the happy result that many of WGW's songs and arrangements are still available on special request, and some on the currently available list. WGW's arrangement of 'Jesu, Joy' went out of print in 1980, and *Sixty Songs for Little Children* in 1981. Pollitzer's involvement began at the time of the Whittaker Centenary celebrations of 1976 when he was attempting to compile a comprehensive list of his grandfather's works (work carried out by Paul Hindmarsh of the Scottish Music Archive, Glasgow University), Margaret Palmer producing duplicate lists.¹²⁰ In March of 1976 Pollitzer, on the same errand, consulted Dr Loat of Forsythe's Publishing House, Manchester, to find that Loat, like Palmer, was 'staggered at the volume of output' of WGW.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Letter from Sally Bradhurst to Saffery Sons & Co (E. Pollitzer Editorial Account), 2 April, 1986. *GB-Ooup*

¹¹⁸ Letter from Jonathan Pollitzer to Margaret Palmer, 26 August, 1983. *GB-Ooup*

¹¹⁹ Letter from Margaret Palmer to Jonathan Pollitzer, 31 August, 1983. *GB-Ooup*

¹²⁰ Pollitzer had organised a Centenary Broadcast with James Langley of the BBC, to be broadcast nationally on 23 July 1976, BBC North-West and BBC Scotland also broadcasting tributes to WGW. In Newcastle on 3 April a Centenary concert took place (the writer being a member of the orchestra) in the King's Hall. In October another Centenary Concert took place at Glasgow University.

¹²¹ Letter from Jonathan Pollitzer to Margaret Palmer, 9 March, 1976. *GB-Ooup*

5.2 WGW and the BBC: WORK ON MUSIC ADVISORY COMMITTEES 1926 -1938

'I'm not of much use on committees, I haven't the 'committee mind', but I have appreciated the privilege
of being in the swim'
WGW

'...the symphony of my experiences with you has been one of excellent tunes and artistically logical
developments'
Ian Whyte ¹²²

5.2.1 *Advisor to the BBC*

In Newcastle in 1893 when WGW was seventeen, and in the first year of his career as a musician 'something of the inventive genius of the age' was demonstrated at the centenary celebrations of the NLPS when Edison's latest phonograph and an array of 'telephonic communications with the opera at the Art Gallery' were demonstrated. ¹²³ The listeners to the opera, though a quarter of a mile away, felt too near, 'so loud and resounding were the choruses and orchestrations heard, the flute always coming out most distinctively'.¹²⁴ Twenty years later, in June 1923, when WGW was leaving for an AB examining trip to Australia, wireless broadcasting in Britain was already six months old. Almost 600,000 licences were sold in the first year, rising to five million by 1932. Although broadcasting began with speech transmissions, soon it involved music of all kinds. Historian Asa Briggs writes that music 'accounted for by far the biggest slice of broadcasting time'.¹²⁵

The British Broadcasting Company [BBC] was formed on 18 October 1922. (The first concert, a vocal recital, broadcast from station 2LO, Marconi House in the Strand, on 17 April 1923, included performances of Graham Peel's 'Summer time on Bredon' Vaughan Williams's 'Silent Noon', Elgar's 'The Shepherd's Song' and folk songs including 'O Waly Waly'. The first orchestral piece broadcast by a BBC ensemble was Roger Quilter's *Children's Overture*.)¹²⁶ In WGW's absence, the first edition of the *Radio Times* was published on 30 September 1923, with

¹²² Correspondence between WGW and Ian Whyte (First BBC Scottish Director of Music and co-founder of the BBC Scottish Orchestra, now the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra) at the time of WGW's resignation from the BBC Advisory committees. Referred to later in the chapter.

¹²³ Spence Watson, R, *The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1793- 1896)*, (Walter Scott Ltd.: London, 1897), 320-21.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Briggs, A., *The Birth of Broadcasting*, Vol. I (of four), (OUP: London 1961), 275.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 254 and 262.

Percy Scholes (music critic of the *Observer* from 1920 until 1925) its first critic.¹²⁷ It was not long before a song by WGW, 'The Deil's Awa', was broadcast in Glasgow, on 13 October. By the time WGW returned to England in January 1924, the BBC was already establishing itself as a national institution, with important implications for the world of music (in view of the BBC's scope for awarding patronage). From 4 April, Walford Davies like Scholes began to give broadcast talks on music (criticised by many teachers).¹²⁸ At a second meeting of the BBC on 10 May 1924, at 2 Savoy Hill the main item on the agenda was: 'The appointment of an individual to deal with propaganda, publicity and production of a magazine'.¹²⁹ The resulting development of the *Radio Times* gave Percy Scholes a new role as not only writer and critic, but music broadcaster.¹³⁰ His explorations into the new technologies of 'mechanical music' and articles for *Radio Times* and *The Listener* 'established him as the dominating personality in the field'.¹³¹ In 1925 Scholes wrote *Everybody's Guide to Broadcast Music*, with a foreword by Reith. He was appointed editor of *The Radio Times* in 1926 (a post he held for two years), also continuing to write articles in the wireless periodical *Amnion*, explaining and commenting on classical repertoire, and to give radio talks even after leaving England to settle in Switzerland in 1928. In his turn, WGW's article 'The Future of Music', appeared in the 16 October 1925 edition of the *Radio Times*, asserting that, 'if rightly used' wireless broadcasting could provide 'the advantages of a musical upbringing', though WGW feared that it might be also deter listeners from making their own music.¹³² WGW too was now drawn into the world of broadcasting, but unlike the nature of his intense and prolific work for OUP, his role with the BBC, from 1925, was that principally of an advisor.

Exciting developments in BBC broadcasting had taken place on WGW's door-step, Newcastle being one of very few local broadcasting stations to operate immediately following the inaugural meeting on 21 December 1922. On Christmas Eve 1922, the British Broadcasting Company broadcast from a stable-yard in Newcastle (used for one night only), Reith afterwards

¹²⁷ *The Radio Times* came into being when newspapers, fearing an effect on their sales if broadcasting became popular, refused to carry transmission times of radio programmes.

¹²⁸ Briggs, 262.

¹²⁹ BBC Agenda Book, British Broadcasting Company Ltd, Second meeting, 2 Savoy Hill, Victoria Embankment, Wednesday, April 25, 1923. *GB-BBC*

¹³⁰ Morrish, 61.

¹³¹ Hinnells, 11.

¹³² Whittaker, W G, 'The Future of Music', *Radio Times*, 16 October, 1925, cutting from John Whittaker's scrapbook, 123.

inspecting the cramped permanent quarters where regular broadcasting from 5NO serving Northumbria took place before taking up his duties in London as General Manager.¹³³ The character and background of the man who became Director General of the BBC in 1927 was of vital importance in its development, and certainly affected the dealings of outsiders with the BBC. W. H. McDowell writes that 'It was John Reith who converted the commercially-founded British Broadcasting Company into what was to become a renowned and established British institution which not only began to reflect historical events but itself became a subject of historical interest.'¹³⁴ Reith, the son of a Free Church Minister, was born in Stonehaven, Scotland in 1889, and his austere upbringing, according to McDowell, caused inner conflict with his ambitions. (Malcolm Muggeridge even suggested that Reith felt predestined by God to oversee this new medium of communication.)¹³⁵ After boarding-school in England and attendance at Glasgow technical college, Reith served a five-year engineering apprenticeship, afterwards managing an engineering works. He was injured while on military service in 1915 and spent the rest of the war managing a rifle factory, returning in 1918 to become general manager of a Glasgow engineering firm. Having left this job, Reith answered an advertisement for the job of General Manger for the BBC, being appointed to this permanent position in October 1922, where he remained until 1938.

In London, Reith quickly started to establish centralised control of the work of the BBC Stations These were self-contained until May 1923 when the Post Office provided communication links to allow the relaying of programmes to all stations, following Captain P. T. Eckersley's advice. This pioneering BBC chief engineer from 1923 to 1927 discovered cheaper methods by visiting America to study their system, also having the London broadcasting station transferred from Marconi House to the roof of Selfridges & Co.. With lines to the stations, programme schedules had to be co-ordinated, though at a Station Director's meeting on 11 December, Reith made it clear he did not want 'the curbing of initiative'.¹³⁶ An example of enterprise in broadcasting could be seen at Sheffield, the first Yorkshire station, where a

¹³³ *BBC Year Book*, 1930, 309. GB-BBC. Reith was appointed on 30 December 1922.

¹³⁴ McDowell, W. H., *The History of BBC Broadcasting in Scotland 1923 – 1983*, (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1992), 6.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹³⁶ Station Directors' meeting, 11 December, 1923, Agenda Book, British Broadcasting Company Ltd.. GB-BBC.

transmitter had been installed at the University, inaugurating the Sheffield system of group reception, an experiment owing much to Hadow and Cecil Sharp, who organised broadcasts of Coward's Sheffield Choir, and Stanton's Chesterfield Choir.¹³⁷ Reith announced a slight reorganisation of office staff and change of titles.¹³⁸ The BBC Controller, Admiral Carpendale was now assisted by a committee of Assistant Controllers (including the secretary, Chief Engineer, and Director of Programmes, Captain Lewis, known as 'Programme Controller'). Music Director, Mr Stanton Jefferies, already having 'elastic duties' extending beyond 2LO, now had general oversight for music from Provincial Stations (necessary because of copyright negotiations with the copyright authorities, and for dealing with permission for 'special long pieces which involve separate negotiations from firms such as Novello).¹³⁹ Jefferies controlled the work of Musical Directors, orchestral leaders, accompanists, organisation of auditions, library arrangements in the provinces, and the engagement and tour organisation of contract artists.

In Newcastle, early Station Directors were Tom Payne, Bertram Fryer, and Lynch Odhams. Limited by the small studio (where for a time an ordinary call box in the studio was used as a Control Room, the engineer being shut up in this box throughout a programme without ventilation)¹⁴⁰, they nevertheless experimented with varied types of programmes, Odhams inviting AC staff to give ten-minute talks, and broadcasting from the shipyards in 1924. In 1924 Eckersley visited Newcastle where he lectured to NLPS on 'Wireless', returning in 1926 to talk about 'The possible future of British Broadcasting'.¹⁴¹ New broadcasting facilities were needed in Newcastle and on 18 December 1925, Dr and Mrs Whittaker were invited to attend the opening of the New Premises of the BBC at 24 Eldon Square, in the company of the Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress, Sir Theodore Morrison (Principal of AC), shipping magnates Sir William North, Sir Walter Runciman, and Sir George Renwick, Sir Thomas and Lady Oliver (representing the medical profession), the Bishop of Newcastle, the Baintons and other local notables.

¹³⁷ *BBC Handbook* 1928, 168. *GB-BBC*.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ L Stanton Jefferies, conductor, pianist, organist and composer, had studied at the RCM where he was a pupil of Franklin Taylor and Parratt. During the war he had served in Mesopotamia and Transcausia from 1915, afterwards becoming the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company's Director of Music in experimental days. See the *Amplion*, March 1926, 37. *GB-BBC*. Jefferies was to become 'Uncle Jeff' of *Children's Hour*, giving talks on musical subjects.

¹⁴⁰ *BBC Year Book*, 1930, The BBC Company, Savoy Hill, London, 309.

¹⁴¹ WGW met Eckersley again during the Second World War when attending an London ENSA 'Brains Trust' in Edinburgh which WGW found 'dull'. Letter from WGW to Clarrie of 19 July 1942.

WGW's high-profile visit to London in 1924 with his Newcastle BC to perform the Byrd Great Service in London may have brought him to prominence and suggested his suitability for the first BBC Central Music Advisory Committee [henceforward MAC](or perhaps there were recommendations as to his suitability from Allen, Walford Davies, Edward Clark or Scholes). At any rate, he was among the eight distinguished musicians ('delegates from various bodies connected with adult education')¹⁴² who first met on 18 July 1925 with the aim of 'associating the work of the BBC still more closely with the musical profession'.¹⁴³ WGW joined Sir Hugh Allen (Chairman), Tovey, Walford Davies, McEwen of the RAM, Landon Ronald, and Colonel J A C Somerville, the Commandant of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall who together with Reith, Pitt and perhaps other BBC representatives would have comprised the committee. Although no minutes survive, according to Asa Briggs, Reith described the event as 'quite successful' and 'rightly added that 'such committees are awfully difficult to handle'.¹⁴⁴

In August 1924, Edward Clark (son of WGW's friend J B Clark) returned to Newcastle to work for the local BBC Station. After internment at Ruhleben, Clark had assisted Ansermet and Boult with the Ballets Russes's London seasons, and conducted his own series of orchestral concerts of contemporary British and continental music. When financial failure overtook him, he became Musical Director at the BBC Newcastle Station, transforming the region's broadcasts. WGW benefited from his new BBC contact. During a BBC Bach festival in January 1925, WGW conducted the BC in a national relay broadcast of Bach's Cantata *Christ Lay in Death's Dark prison* with soloist Dorothy Silk, the Cantata *Now shall the Grace* for double chorus also being sung by the choir, with Newcastle BBC choral society, chorus master Richard Pratt, with Clark conducting the augmented Station orchestra.¹⁴⁵ WGW also conducted the BC in a programme of chorales, for an 8 am national broadcast, relayed from Brunswick Place Church on 15 February and, not

¹⁴² Briggs, 242.

¹⁴³ *The Radio Times*, 17 July, 1925. (It is almost certain that Pitt would also have attended this meeting.)

¹⁴⁴ Briggs, 244.

¹⁴⁵ Clark transferred to London in January 1927 to become a programme builder and conductor of studio broadcasts. His unusual interests and wide-ranging European contacts distinctively shaped BBC music programming in the interwar years. In particular, the BBC Concerts of Contemporary Music, aired from 1926 to 1939, brought to British listeners the latest works by Stravinsky, Bartok, Hindemith and the Second Viennese School, as well as English composers such as Vaughan Williams, Bridge and Van Dieren. Clark contributed to the ingenious structuring of the new BBC Symphony Orchestra in 1929. He also served on the committee recommending British works to the ISCM international jury, and was the music director of the Arts Theatre Club in London.

missing the opportunity, at 9 am the BC performed Byrd's Great Service. On 11 May, 1925, WGW played in a broadcast of his *Among the Northumbrian Hills* with the Middlesborough String Quartet, and on 10 September, Agnes and George Dodds performed his 'Bonny at Morn' in a recital on 5NO. On 10 October, WGW's singing pupil Tom Danskin sang in Peter Warlock's *The Curlew* in a Newcastle broadcast and William Hendry sang Vaughan Williams's *Five Mystical Songs* in a broadcast of 17 December. Performances of WGW's music and arrangements continued. The Elizabethan Singers performed his 'Bobby Shafto' in a London broadcast of 23 November 1925. On 11 December, WGW joined Sidonie Goossens who was a guest of the local station, and spoke on the subject of 'Community Singing'. On 13 January 1926, WGW conducted a Community Singing concert, being at that time President of the Central Committee of Community Singing (more broadcasts were scheduled in Sunderland, Darlington and Middlesbrough). WGW conducted during a Bach Anniversary programme broadcast on Sunday 21 March, 1926 at 3.30 pm, and performed with Dorothy Silk, William Primrose, and Boris Ord at the harpsichord. WGW's friend and protégé, John Vine, who had now moved to Belfast, sang various folk-songs on local wireless, including arrangements by WGW. On 25 March 1928, at 3.30 pm, a programme of music 'by Dr W. G. Whittaker, from Newcastle', was broadcast from London and Daventry 5XX. On Friday 10 January 1930, Rachel Monkhouse sang WGW's Handel arrangement of 'Oh Sleep', other Handel arrangements also appeared during the year, some of them orchestral. WGW, in a letter to Thorpe Davie written in 1936, wrote that his *A Lyke-Wake Dirge* was given from the BBC studio, but the date of this performance is not known: 'I took two choral rehearsals, & got things going quite well, but Boult conducted & adopted a far-too-slow tempo, which spoiled the work. It is the kind of disappointment which composers are forced to put up with.'¹⁴⁶

The Crawford Committee Report of 5 March 1926 recommended that the British Broadcasting Company should become a corporation. McDowell writes: 'The BBC's status and duties were now clearly expected to correspond with those of a public service.'¹⁴⁷ In September 1926 Reith sent a memo to all Station Directors requesting them 'to review the usefulness and

¹⁴⁶ Letter from WGW to Thorpe Davie, 3 June 1936. GB-SA.

¹⁴⁷ McDowell, 10.

The new licence would operate for ten years.

efficiency of existing staff with a view to transferring them to the Corporation at the end of the year'.¹⁴⁸ In the case of the Newcastle Station, this appraisal would have been straightforward, since a full 'stocktaking' of music in Newcastle, and at the Newcastle station had been carried out in August 1925, with the report sent on 26 November from the Newcastle Station Director.¹⁴⁹ The engineer in charge, J K A Nicholson, reported an increase in outside broadcasts.¹⁵⁰ This was encouraged by headquarters in London for several reasons, one being that, amid many discussions about the propriety of using records, in early 1925 the Control Board had decided to recommend that broadcasting of all gramophone records 'should cease within two months and suitable outside broadcasts be substituted for them.'¹⁵¹ Broadcasting of these had only been occasional in 1922, but from 23 August 1923 they had been introduced at mid-day, a weekly programme of new releases being instigated from 27 March 1924, copyright fees being paid to the copyright owners. But no embargo could stop the advance of this technology. The introduction in 1925 of electric records ('a revelation' in their depth and quality of tone) meant that inevitably records would triumph.¹⁵²

Autumn 1925 at the Newcastle Station under Clark had seen the establishment and stabilisation of the new Station Orchestra (other groups included the Station Military Band, the Station String Orchestra, and the Station Wind Quintet). As a significant part of the agreement between the BBC and Covent Garden had been that singers from the BNOC would tour the provinces and broadcast for the BBC from local studios, Newcastle was pleased to report that practically all these touring artists had been fitted into concerts, usually orchestral, 'of a very high order'.¹⁵³ The broadcast performance of Boughton's *The Immortal Hour* was named as the outstanding event of the period, being a 5NO programme (with little opera otherwise, because of thrice weekly relays of BNOC performances).¹⁵⁴ The brass band contest was 'original and successful', and the station orchestra had played in *Peer Gynt*, and Yeats' 'The Land of Heart's

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ 1925 Newcastle Stocktaking, Music report by J C Stobart, 28 November. *GB-BBC*.

¹⁵⁰ The figures read: 1923: 0, 1924: 32, 1925: 150. Outstanding outside musical broadcasts had included the Royal Artillery Band from the Garrison Gymnasium, Fenham Barracks, relays of 5NO concerts from Hospital Wards at Wingrove Hospital, and the Royal Infirmary. *GB-BBC*.

¹⁵¹ Control Board Minutes, 29 January, 1925. *GB-BBC*.

¹⁵² Briggs, 280.

¹⁵³ 1925 Newcastle Stocktaking, Music report by J C Stobart, 28 November. *GB-BBC*.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Desire'.¹⁵⁵ The 'crowning moment' of the period had been the studio opening, with an orchestral concert conducted by Pitt. He had demanded 'an enormous orchestra' and one was 'brought together' so successfully that even the hypercritical Pitt was completely satisfied.¹⁵⁶ 'Miniature Symphony concerts' had been given from the Eldon Square Studio and nothing else from there had ever transmitted so well.¹⁵⁷ *The Border Foray*, intended for local consumption, prompted an invitation to give regular programmes to 5XX. Among the list of touring artists were also the names of some talented local musicians who also performed for the BBC, including Ernest J Potts, Tom Danskin, and Alice Richardson.¹⁵⁸

On 1 December 1926, J C Stobart submitted a conference report to head office, beginning with section on 'Schools Transmissions'. This Newcastle conference followed a meeting in 1926, chaired by Hadow of a Joint Committee of the BBC and British Institute of Adult Education, set up to investigate the possibilities of broadcasting as a means of general adult education.¹⁵⁹ Stobart mentions the meeting of the BBC Advisory Committee (distinct from the Music Advisory Committee) and it is clear that Newcastle was following in the footsteps of Sheffield by 'transmitting to educational establishments', in this case local schools, though perhaps without the support that might have been expected: 'There was a well attended meeting of the Advisory Committee, which is particularly large here, but the Director of Education for Newcastle was not among the number. He still preserves his non-committal attitude. But there are quite a number of schools in the district which are making a success of school reception.'¹⁶⁰ The only other note reads: 'It is generally agreed that Dr Whittaker would be a more attractive lecturer than Mr Edgar Bainton, who has generally taken the subject of music in the past.'¹⁶¹ In a less complimentary note, it is clear that the wife of WGW's colleague Professor Albert Latham was to lose her job: 'Mr Rule is parting with Mrs Latham ('Auntie Kersty'), who used formerly to manage the Children's Hour. As she is the wife of a local professor, there will probably be some

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ BBC Handbook 1928, 43. *GB-BBC*

¹⁶⁰ Stobart's report on visit to the Newcastle Broadcasting Station, 1 December, 1926. *GB-BBC*.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

trouble over this; but Mr Rule says that her dull voice and manner are very unsuitable for speaking to children.¹⁶²

WGW became a member of Newcastle Station's Music Advisory Committee which held its first meeting on 25 October 1927.¹⁶³ Other members were Mayor Arthur Lambert (in private capacity as a local organist), Dodds, Bainton, Ellis, G L Marshall (Station Director), and Shepherd Munn (Leader of the Station Octet), all of whom were present. On 26 November 1927, a private report was sent from the Newcastle Station Director to the Assistant Controller (Programmes) at Head Office.¹⁶⁴ This seems to have concerned making various cuts in permanent musical staff. The Station Octet would now be 'given ample notice' and replaced when necessary by hiring orchestral players. More outside broadcasts of musical activities would be made (difficulties with this in the case of Musician's Union players). It was suggested that a good plan would be to get permission from those responsible for all suitable bodies. These were listed and their merits discussed.¹⁶⁵ The conclusion was reached that 'Newcastle is certainly a musical place', evidence of this was that in March a week long Beethoven Festival had been held in the city, 'a delightful surprise in view of the fact that neither Edinburgh nor Glasgow could rise to a festival on the centenary of Beethoven's death.'

The British Broadcasting Company met for the last time on 9 December 1926, was dissolved on 30 December, and re-established as 'The British Broadcasting Corporation' by Royal Charter on 1 January 1927. The Sykes Committee of 1922 had been a strongly governmental

¹⁶² Report of Newcastle Conference on the BBC as a method of adult education. *GB-BBC*.

¹⁶³ Unidentified cutting from John Whittaker's scrapbook [12a], 26 October 1927. This MAC was unceremoniously dropped, according to Reith's instructions, communicated to Station Directors by a BBC Director General's memorandum on 28 September, 1928, entitled 'Winding up of Advisory Committees'. *GB-BBC*

¹⁶⁴ The report notes: 'I have received your memo of the 18th inst., and as I informed you in London, I agree in principle to the general policy as it affects the Newcastle Station'.

¹⁶⁵ Bainton's Philharmonic Orchestra was 'by no means as good as the Hallé Orchestra' but was only a little inferior to the Scottish Orchestra, consisting of M. U. players. The Newcastle Symphony Orchestra, a local orchestra, was only up to standard for its two concerts in the Town Hall, conducted by Harty who brought the woodwind from the Hallé (the SD would like to broadcast the concerts but payment would be involved at MU rates). The Chamber Music Society gave 'first class concerts' with artists of international reputation, with entrance limited to subscribers, but though the SD had tackled the promoters on several occasions they 'definitely refused' to allow broadcasting. The Newcastle BC: 'As you probably know under the charge of Dr Whittaker, one of the leading authorities on Bach, and is certainly worthy of more than local attention. As you also doubtless know, they did a tour through Germany this year and I am arranging to broadcast some of their concerts. There are fortunately no difficulties here and I have agreed to give them a small contribution to their funds. Likewise the AC Choral and Orchestral Society were 'quite important' under WGW's baton, who 'arranges some very excellent concerts which we should have no difficulty in broadcasting.' The SD had been made a member of the NEMT committee. Report to head office by J C Stobart, *GB-BBC*.

committee; in 1926, the Crawford Committee (of which Hadow was a member) called for 'as many advisory committees as are necessary to ensure due consideration of all phases of Broadcasting' and sought independence for the BBC. The Crawford Committee established centralised control as a basic principle, and the Institution became a strongly nationalised institution.¹⁶⁶ Reith's attitude to Advisory Committees was ambivalent: he needed to constitute them to follow the Crawford Committee's advice, but liked to retain control, a policy which led to a chequered history for all committees. Whether WGW knew that the Central MAC would have little influence when he first joined in 1925, is unknown. However he had certainly come to that conclusion by 1940, when he wrote to his daughter Clarrie on the subject: 'I'm afraid it wouldn't do any good to be back on BBC Committees. One is absolutely helpless. Nothing can get behind the scenes, nothing can put things right, it is impossible to trace anything to its source, everyone shields everyone else knowing that that will be a means of escape for themselves in the future.'¹⁶⁷

On 27 July 1925, the long-wave 25kw station (5XX) was opened by the PMG at Daventry (fulfilling plans laid a year earlier to extend broadcasting beyond the existing main and relay stations, by constructing a permanent high-power station), its aerial, 650 feet above sea level. This marked the end of many local stations. On 29 March, 1927, the Director-General issued 'A note on Advisory Committees' to all Control Board and all Station Directors, asking all concerned in the handling of Committees to '...appreciate the etiquette, procedure and functions of an Advisory Committee, as distinct from an Executive Committee.' Reith wanted only points he had selected to be discussed at meetings; Committee vacancies were to be filled at his nomination, and the committee was 'in no sense executive.' With the closure of relay stations following the opening of Daventry, many Advisory Committees were removed. On 28 September, a staff memo from Reith discussed the winding up of Advisory Committees when stations closed. Inactive ones should, according to the discretion of the Relay Station Director, 'be allowed to fade out quietly' (a draft letter was attached), while any active committee should be called together so that the Regional Director could explain how the Relay Station had been

¹⁶⁶ The *Radio Times* of 17 July 1925 explained that 'the functions of the Committee are to give their views and advise on the musical policy of the BBC, on the systematic development of musical appreciation amongst the great body of listeners and also on the relations of the musical profession with broadcasting.

¹⁶⁷ Letter from WGW to Clarrie, 8 September, 1940.

absorbed, its disappearance thus removing the need for the Committee. The Director should express thanks, suggesting the resignation of the committee, to be received with regret.¹⁶⁸

In the later 1920s, Pitt and Clark had introduced a large amount of European contemporary music into broadcasts. In 1930 Pitt was retired by the BBC and Adrian Boult (rather than Bridge and Britten who had been 'passed over' for the position) was appointed Musical Director, being also invited by the BBC to found a new orchestra, the BBC Symphony.¹⁶⁹ As early as 1926, when the BBC was about to become a Corporation, it was realised that the BBC's Savoy Hill headquarters was too small, and it was decided to build new premises in the West End, a site at the corner of Portland Place and Langham Street being selected and developed from 1928 for the BBC by a syndicate (with an option to buy). On 14 May 1932, BBC staff left Savoy Hill for Broadcasting House, a magnificent Art Deco building in Portland Place, which included a concert hall. Boult was now also conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and had of course joined the Music Advisory Committee. The new Council Chamber, one and a half storeys high, with walls of Tasmanian oak and the tables of Queensland walnut, was described as 'dignified room intended for meetings of bodies such as the BBC's Advisory Councils'.¹⁷⁰ Perhaps the meetings were not as dignified as their new surroundings, for Jennifer Whittall writes in *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music 1922-1936: Shaping a Nation's Tastes*, that there were conflicts within the Committee between the BBC Music Department and the other members. Disputes occurred over four main issues, causing trouble over several years, these being programme balance (achieving a correct proportion of contemporary and accepted standard repertory), the nationality of musicians hired by the BBC (the committee were anxious to safeguard the interests of British musicians, while the Music Department were 'opting for performances of quality without regard for nationality'), the alleged lack of qualification of BBC staff to select programmes (the committee doubted whether staff members had professional experience necessary to plan the nation's

¹⁶⁸ Stations sent copies 'for information' were Aberdeen, Glasgow, Belfast, Newcastle, Plymouth, and Bournemouth.

¹⁶⁹ Hughes, M., & Stradling, R., *The English Musical Renaissance 1840 – 1940 Constructing a National Music*, Second Edition, (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2001), 104.

¹⁷⁰ Beckwith, R, 'Broadcasting House in 1932',

http://www.btinternet.com/~roger.beckwith/bh/bh32/bh32_i.htm [accessed 3 May 2007].

broadcasts), and the unfortunate desire (from the BBC's angle) of the MAC to become involved with programming and staff decisions.¹⁷¹

Now the BBC 'became the battlefield, the 'site of struggle', of opposed ideologues of Britain's musical future', the London Advisory Committee 'lobbying for a leading domestic edge in its programmes', according to Doctor.¹⁷² By 1933 lengthy memos from Boult, Allen, and McEwen illustrate the points of difference mentioned. It was the first year for which MAC minutes survive, and 'they reveal that tensions between it and the Music Department were approaching boiling point'.¹⁷³ Allen remained chairman of the eight-man Advisory committee, on which Bairstow, McEwen, and WGW still served. WGW was President-elect that year of the ISM (McEwen was a Past-President, and Allen and Bairstow ordinary members), an institution which strongly supported the use of British music and musicians. In 1933 the BBC faced criticism from various quarters; Harvey Grace, editor of the *Musical Times*, campaigned for more live concerts of serious music, expressing concern for professional unemployed musicians. Mase (the Assistant Music Director) put the problems down to the committee's attitude to new music, and doubted that the committee were sympathetic to present day musical developments, saying he would have preferred Bliss, Dent, Ernest Newman, Bainton, and Bantock as members.¹⁷⁴ In fact, in the case of WGW, he always maintained a life-long interest in contemporary music and composed in a modern idiom himself.¹⁷⁵ In January 1933, Reith made diary notes that at lunch the 'Allen, McEwen trouble vis-à-vis Mase (Assistant Music Director), was discussed.¹⁷⁶ Doctor writes that the dispute intensified in April and May, Boult's use of the word 'insult', causing Allen to threaten to resign.¹⁷⁷ Afterwards, Landon Ronald published three articles in the *News Chronicle* describing the meetings. However Allen stayed on, chairing the Committee until 1936.

In 1934 WGW was President of the ISM and this body too seems to have taken up the cause of British musicians, with Steuart Wilson (also of the ISM) attempting to issue an

¹⁷¹ Doctor, J., *The BBC and Ultra-modern Music, 1922-1936: Shaping a Nation's Tastes*, (Cambridge University Press: 2007), 234.

¹⁷² Hughes and Stradling, 145.

¹⁷³ Doctor, 232.

¹⁷⁴ Doctor, 233.

¹⁷⁵ On 26 October 1935, WGW wrote to the BBC Concert Manager: 'Keep me on the special invitation list for furthering the series of concerts of Contemporary Music'. Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*

¹⁷⁶ Doctor, 232.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

indictment of some sort at a meeting of the MAC. WGW wrote to him before this on 6 March: 'I shall be glad if you will let me have on paper your indictment. It will give me some chance of publishing a statement.'¹⁷⁸ WGW seemed puzzled as to what line the 'indictment' could take 'as the Advisory Committee is not appointed by, or responsible to, the ISM'. Two days after WGW's intervention, he wrote again to Wilson to inform him that another two figures ('HPG & Johnstone') had expressed their willingness 'to give experience to the Committee', ending: 'As for myself, I well remember I only attended one meeting in the official capacity of ISM rep., but I shall prepare a general statement'.¹⁷⁹ It is hard to see that the ISM's actions would have cut any ice with Reith, probably only serving to annoy him. The disingenuous nature of the BBC's relationship with Advisory Committees and the politics behind meetings ensured that members were, to a large extent, wasting their time. Reith and Eckersley, jealous of executive powers, had little real use for the MAC. When any disagreement arose, the Directors were tempted to wash their hands of the situation, and to work out schemes which would increase BBC strength on a committee of which the only *raison d'être* was for the Corporation to be seen to be representative. For WGW the proceedings were uncreative and often tedious, though he enjoyed his free visits to London and found it an undeniably pleasant experience to meet his influential and distinguished musical colleagues on a regular basis.

5.2.2 *Member of the BBC Scottish Music Advisory Committee (SMAC)* 1932 - 1938

The early days of broadcasting were notable for the widespread construction by radio listeners of their own crystal sets, from parts they had bought and assembled which needed no power supply. As the BBC Regional Scheme was implemented (it was fully operational in Scotland in 1932), the reception of national and regional programmes required the purchase of valve receivers (battery or mains powered) which caused, by 1933, the sales nationally of valve receivers to overtake those of crystal sets. By this time wireless radio had become one of the most important social and cultural influences on society.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Letter from WGW to Stuart Wilson, 6 March, 1934, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

¹⁷⁹ Letter from WGW to Stuart Wilson, 8 March 1934, Principal's letters, *GB-Guth*.

¹⁸⁰ McDowell, W., 14.

At the time of these technological advances WGW moved to Glasgow to take up his joint posts as Principal of the SNAM and Gardiner Professor of Music, but owing to the many changes in procedure and administration at the BBC in Scotland at the time (the headquarters had relocated to Edinburgh in 1930), there seems to have been no invitation to join the Scottish MAC. Instead, WGW continued to enjoy his trips to London for Central MAC meetings. When he was eventually co-opted onto the Scottish committee it was to accompanied by a period of considerable turbulence, disagreement, the irreconciliation of individual personalities, a longstanding rivalry between the two principal Scottish cities, a sense of disunity, and, perhaps most significantly, a sense that the larger edifice of the BBC itself neither wanted nor supported the original policy of regional committees.

Before the advent of Regional broadcasting, the four stations of Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Dundee had relied upon local talent to provide 'topical interest programmes'. Because of its large population, Glasgow was selected for the first BBC Station in Scotland in 1923, Station Directors keeping a 'constant liaison with headquarters in London'.¹⁸¹ Millar Craig was appointed 'Assistant Controller, Scotland' in February 1924 and, though based in Glasgow, was in control of all Scottish Stations, his post becoming 'Northern Area Director'. When on 30 September 1928 Mr Cleghorn Thomson took over, he was styled 'Scottish Regional Director' (under the Regional Scheme), and a Press Officer, Kennedy Stewart, was placed in Edinburgh to serve the Scottish Region in October 1929. On 14 July 1930, the Scottish headquarters of the BBC moved to Edinburgh along with most of the staff, leaving only the Station representative and some engineers. In April 1936, Queen Margaret College was purchased by the BBC from Glasgow University (the Music Department had had facilities there), but in 1938 the BBC moved again to other new premises. This restless pace of change at the BBC continued in other parts of Scotland. Dundee, the last station to open in 1924 with E Heddle as Station Director, closed for the purposes of regionalisation in 1929. At Aberdeen, Neil McLean, Station Director from 1924, became Station Representative in 1928, being replaced on 30 September 1930 by Ian Whyte on a

¹⁸¹ Minutes of Scottish Region Advisory Committee, SC1/45/1. *GB-BBC*. Programmes were broadcast from a power station tower, using a transmitter that was considered high powered at the time.

part-time basis, since he was also Musical Adviser to the Scottish Region.¹⁸² Due to this heavy workload, Whyte was given an assistant, then transferred on 31 October 1931 to Edinburgh as Musical Adviser. A new Scottish BBC headquarters, Broadcasting House, having opened on 29 November 1930, but the building was cramped for space, and more accommodation had to be rented (these problems persuading the BBC to re-locate to Glasgow during the war years).

Scottish Stations had continued to provide the bulk of their own programmes (of mixed quality and not all Scottish in culture). When the Regional Scheme took over it was at the expense of localised services: 'Thereafter, broadcasting in Scotland was viewed as a national service within a much larger United Kingdom broadcasting service.'¹⁸³ Technical broadcasting problems, caused by geographical conditions, were solved to a large extent on 12 June 1932 by the opening of the Westerglen transmitter (midway between Edinburgh and Glasgow) enabling synchronisation (the operation of transmitters on the same wave-length).¹⁸⁴ With many programmes now coming from London, Reith set about communicating culture to the masses, as he 'believed that the BBC had both an ethical and an intellectual responsibility towards the audience which it served'.¹⁸⁵ He endeavoured to 'carry into the greatest number of homes everything that was best in every department of human knowledge', including insisting that announcers use received English pronunciation, often an irritation to Scottish listeners.

The Scottish MAC [hereafter SMAC] was appointed in 1927, in response to the Crawford Committee recommendations (preparatory to incorporation), meeting in October and December of that year. The committee comprised Philip Halstead, F Bisset, Francis Harford, Percy Gordon, Hugh Robertson, Wilfrid Senior, the BBC's Melville Dinwiddie, Scottish Regional Director, and H M Fitch, Assistant Director.¹⁸⁶ Musical standards, new ideas for broadcasts, and

¹⁸² Ibid. Whyte was also among a group of young Scottish composers, including David Stephen, Erik Chisholm and Walter Beaton Moonie whose work was currently being broadcast by the BBC, a work of Whyte's having been performed by the Edinburgh String Quartet at the third of a series of five concerts relayed in 1927, from the music room of the Outlook Tower in Edinburgh. (At the fifth concert, the actor Alastair Sim and poet Gordon Bottomley read verse between quartets played by the Scottish Chamber Players.)

¹⁸³ McDowell, 21.

¹⁸⁴ This resulted in the closure of the Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Dundee transmitters.

¹⁸⁵ McDowell, 29.

¹⁸⁶ Halstead, a virtuoso pianist, trained at Leipzig, was a professor at SNAM. F. H. Bisset, President of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, wrote an article in 1930 for the *Musical Times* on 'The Scottish National Academy of Music'. From: *The Musical Times*, Vol 71, No. 1048, (Jun. 1, 1930), 497-501. Harford, an organist, had adjudicated at the NEMT in 1920, when a professor at Manchester RCM. Robertson conducted the

new local artists were discussed by the committee. Since London worried about standards of broadcast music, Robertson proposed that he check all songs before they were broadcast and Harford suggested that church organists broadcast instead of cinema organists. Harford also thought that choral music had been lamentably neglected, and wished for a broadcast from Notre Dame, Dowanhill (a Roman Catholic Montessori Training College) in Glasgow, which he was told would not be permitted. At the December meeting Harford produced songs which he thought should not be broadcast in future, and asked that the MD 'should exercise all possible care that unsuitable songs be excluded from evening broadcasts'.¹⁸⁷ F H Bisset volunteered a list of good local musicians, including Philip Halstead, Wilfrid Senior, Bessie Spence, and David McCallum (deputy leader of the Scottish Orchestra), and suggested a concert by the Fellowes Quartet. Another SMAC meeting occurred on 9 March 1928 when members were told their suggestions had resulted in plans to broadcast an organ recital and a performance by the Fellowes String Quartet. The Station Orchestra was also to be increased to twenty-eight members.

The committee, self-evidently, was hugely conscious of the BBC's new 'patronage' and the emerging artists and ensembles invariably reflected those who were favoured by the committee members. Series of chamber music concerts in Edinburgh and Glasgow featured the Fellowes String quartet and David Stephens' piano quintet played modern and traditional works and Scottish songs. In Edinburgh, the Edinburgh String Quartet (from the Outlook Tower music room) performed contemporary Scottish music by Ian Whyte and Erik Chisholm, the Edinburgh Ladies' Trio played music by Hodge and Moonie, and the Falconer String Quartet played music by McEwen, MacCunn, and Tovey to reflect Scottish 'creativity'.

There are no records of further SMAC meetings until March 1932, probably due to the upheaval in BBC arrangements in Scotland, and changes instigated by the new policy of regionalisation. At this time the incoming Scottish Regional Director, Melville Dinwiddie, wished to promote efficiency and 'intensive propaganda' for the BBC in Scotland, and to encourage

Glasgow Orpheus Choir. Senior, a teacher of piano, later became a professor at SNAM, and Gordon was music critic of the *Glasgow Herald*.

¹⁸⁷ Minutes of meeting of Glasgow Station MAC, held at Blythswood Square, Glasgow, 9 December, 1927, GB-BBC.

Scottish programmes to serve the whole of the country.¹⁸⁸ He was, however, responsible to the Programme Controller in London, his choice also being circumscribed by finance. In fact, although the Regional Scheme brought better reception and alternative programmes, it also ultimately brought more centralised control.¹⁸⁹ In 1931 WGW wrote to Owen Mase, Assistant Director of the Scottish BBC, hoping to persuade him to broadcast again a performance of his William Young sonata transcriptions, successfully given by BBC London, on the evening of 11 June, played by the Barbara Pulvermacher Quintet (of which WGW's daughter Mary was a member). With no works played in Scotland, WGW wrote that, though he had 'avoided currying favour' with the BBC (he had had only three paid engagements since the beginning of broadcasting), he wanted Mase to know how Boult had liked the sonatas, had 'taken them to show Eckersley', and had them performed by past RCM students, asking Mase 'Could you put in a word?'.¹⁹⁰

Perhaps this interaction brought WGW to the attention of the BBC in Scotland, which, according to WGW, was involved in 'an agitation' in 1932 to form a National Orchestra in Scotland, a joint Edinburgh/Glasgow committee being appointed.¹⁹¹ To WGW it was 'quite clear to an outsider that agreement would never be reached', both sides sat opposite each other, 'hostile from the beginning', the Glasgow team fearing a loss of control.¹⁹² WGW had previously been elected to the Scottish Orchestra Committee (with no say in what 'really mattered', conductors and soloists being governed by 'the inner ring'), where committee decisions were limited to dates of the annual *soirée* and the price of tickets.¹⁹³ In an effort to break the impasse, Sir Daniel Stevenson proposed that WGW and the secretary of the Scottish Orchestra draw up a draft scheme and submit it for discussion, which they did with the help of Percy Gordon. However the committee, to WGW's disgust, insisted that neither Tovey nor WGW was to be on the Management Committee: 'Provosts, parsons, publicans, pawnbrokers, plumbers-well and

¹⁸⁸ McDowell, 33.

¹⁸⁹ A few years later, the Siepmann Report, January 1936, drew attention to the power of broadcasting to create standardisation in tastes, standards and values in line with wishes in London, contrasted with enthusiasm of listeners for local broadcasts. (See: McDowell, 35).

¹⁹⁰ Letter from WGW to Owen Mase, Assistant Director, BBC Scotland. 17 November 1931, *GB-Guth*.

¹⁹¹ *Aut XVI*, 28

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 27.

good. But musicians...hands off!¹⁹⁴ As problems over the orchestra spiralled, (sparking outright war between Edinburgh and Glasgow musicians) WGW was invited to join the SMAC.

A BBC Memo of 11 February gave the ultimatum to the Scottish Orchestra that postponement of the orchestral scheme for a year would result in the cessation of concert relays from St. Andrew's Halls, the funds so released being employed to relay concerts from good choral societies, accompanied by visiting orchestras.¹⁹⁵ On the same day WGW wrote to Boulton: 'The marked paragraph is a surprise. I understand from you yesterday that the present Scottish Orchestra wants to be auditioned. One is simply in a state of bewilderment at the fluctuations which go on here.'¹⁹⁶ Next, WGW was invited to be Chairman of the SMAC, and accepted, despite admitting afterwards that he had very mixed feelings about the task: 'As I have before indicated it was not a satisfactory business; one can never fathom the depths of its undercurrents.'¹⁹⁷ He was not happy about the way programmes were managed and grumbled that his Academy choir had sung only once in three years for broadcasts, while 'inferior bodies appeared over and over again.'¹⁹⁸ One duty WGW really enjoyed concerned his invitation to join a sub-committee concerned with research into performance of old Scottish music. 'To hear the two chief authorities, Dr Farmer & Harry Willsher, the Librarian of University College, Dundee, display their great learning was a delight.'¹⁹⁹ Farmer and WGW made some joint broadcasts, Farmer supplying suggestions and information and WGW providing illustrations.²⁰⁰

WGW chaired the SMAC meeting, on Tuesday 15 March 1932 at Blythswood Square in Glasgow, when the BBC attempted to break the deadlock over the proposed orchestra. It was disclosed that WGW had attended previous meetings on the subject, much to the fury of Hugh Robertson, Conductor of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, and a fiery and aggressive Governor of the Academy. Percy Gordon, Wilfred Senior (a colleague and friend of WGW's from the SNAM), David Stephen, Herbert Bennett, and BBC member Ian Whyte were also present, while D

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁹⁵ Though expenditure on broadcasting orchestral music would be increased, should a National Orchestra come into being the following winter.

¹⁹⁶ Letter from WGW to Dr Adrian Boulton, Musical Director, BBC, Savoy Hill, 11 March, 1932, Principal's letters. *GB-Guth.*

¹⁹⁷ *Aur XIII*, 3.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Scottish Region Advisory Committees, Scottish Music Advisory Committee Correspondence File I (1927-35) SC1/45/1. *GB-BBC.*

Cleghorn Thomson, Sir Donald Tovey, Harford, Halstead and Farmer sent apologies.²⁰¹ Robertson, with Senior's agreement, 'intimated his complete disagreement with the policy of giving support to the Scottish Philharmonic Orchestra'.²⁰² Although some constructive business did follow this outburst, Dinwiddie sent a Memo to the Director General, expressing doubt that the SMAC should meet again, and no date was set. Robertson, he said, had been 'violently unfriendly to us, and attacked us in the press without any right of speaking as an authority in the matter of orchestral music'.²⁰³ Robertson had also questioned WGW's appointment and implied that the BBC had 'slipped Whittaker in' without consulting Robertson.²⁰⁴ Senior too had caused problems, accusing the BBC of bias against his pupils at auditions, and resenting that his position as a salaried official of the Glasgow Choral Union, prevented his joining talks on the new orchestra. Both men had voted against BBC policy, Robertson 'writing up proceedings in the press'.²⁰⁵ A BBC memo defensively records that 'throughout orchestral negotiations, the BBC had insisted that WGW, David Stephen and Tovey be included in meetings, and informed always about BBC policy, Halstead too being consulted'.²⁰⁶

The tactic was to import more BBC representation to the SMAC. Although the BBC denied having discussion about the proposed National Orchestra, Sir Charles Carpendale, Eckersley, and Cleghorn Thomson interviewed relevant representative bodies from Glasgow and Edinburgh, the BBC threatening to withdraw support for other orchestras. When Robertson inquired why no SMAC meetings had been held yet in 1933, Dinwiddie replied that 'the orchestral situation' had made this 'inevitable'.²⁰⁷ On 13 February, Boult told Dinwiddie that the committee would be changed, and would meet in March with Boult attending. On 14 February, Cleghorn Thomson requested a meeting with WGW suggesting the following Sunday, and seeking his opinion on a proposed exchange scheme between the Polish conductor of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Scottish conductor, Guy Warrack (of the RCM), whom

²⁰¹ Farmer, with a military background, was Musical Director of the Empire Theatre, Glasgow, and founder of Glasgow Symphony Orchestra, a musicologist with interests in Arabian music, later in 1936, at the SNAM he founded the Scottish Music Society (supported by Gordon, Thomson, WGW, and Ian Whyte).

²⁰² SMA Committee Correspondence, File I. *GB-BBC*.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Private Memo to the Scottish MD, 13 February, 1933, SMA Committee Correspondence, File I, *GB-BBC*.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

the BBC proposed also to have as conductor of concerts in Edinburgh.²⁰⁸ WGW poured cold water on the idea, saying he found Warrack 'uninspiring' and suggested Barbirolli, Braithwaite, or Heward.²⁰⁹ As WGW was adjudicating on the Isle of Arran just before the meeting, it was postponed until the following week. Tovey replied that he would attend the meeting on 19 March, 'unless the doctors absolutely forbid it'.²¹⁰ He too rejected the Polish exchange suggestion as offering 'neither instruction nor pleasure to the listener', regretting the cessation of the admirable work of the Scottish Philharmonic Orchestra.²¹¹ Neither the Polish conductor nor Warrack, would benefit and so the scheme was abandoned.

It was not lost on any of the members of SMAC that there was nothing to gain by this repeated infighting. In March 1933, David Cleghorn Thomson wrote a report for headquarters and announced: 'We are happy to announce that peace has been declared between Edinburgh and Glasgow on the musical front.'²¹² He gave accounts of the SMAC meetings of 11 February, 2 June, and 9 December, and said that the BBC continued 'to co-operate in the formation of a Scottish National Orchestra in 1933', and also assisted independent organisations in Scotland.²¹³ On recent BBC Music broadcasts he wrote that Guy Daines had conducted the BBC Scottish Studio Orchestra, participated in a series of schoolchildren's concerts arranged by Herbert Wiseman, relayed from the Usher Hall, and twenty-five choral broadcasts from Scotland had also been given, including concerts by the Orpheus Choir, the Glasgow Grand Opera Society and Scottish Orchestra, and Aberdeen Oratorio Choir (singing Dyson's *The Canterbury Pilgrims*), the Reid Orchestra giving Tovey's *The Bride of Dionysus*, coinciding with Tovey's return to Edinburgh after his illness. Chamber music was broadcast by the Edinburgh Chamber Music Players, Edinburgh String Quartet, Guy Daines String Quartet, and the Fellowes Quartet. Also the BBC had 'practically arranged' a series of Chamber Music Broadcasts from the SNAM: 'We may say that Dr Whittaker has given cordial support to this scheme.'²¹⁴ Halstead, the organiser, was said

²⁰⁸ Letter from WGW to Dinwiddie, 15 February, 1933, SMA Committee Correspondence, File I, GB-BBC.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Letter from Tovey to Thomson, from Black Barony Hotel, Edlestone, Peeblesshire. GB-BBC.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Report on Musical Broadcast Activities in the Scottish Region since 8 March, 1933, SMA Committee Correspondence, File I, GB-BBC.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

to be delighted. By using these bodies it was hoped to cut down the appearances of 'the mid-way artist...who doesn't quite reach the standard at which we aim'.²¹⁵ Auditions were suspended for a while. That season the Scottish Orchestra would broadcast eight times from Glasgow and twice from Edinburgh, and the Reid Orchestra eight times, with no broadcasts allotted for the Scottish Philharmonic Orchestra (negotiations continued). The Glasgow Orpheus Choir had performed at intervals over the summer, and WGW conducted a national broadcast of Bach's Cantata No 104 with the Wireless Chorus and BBC Orchestra.

Such was the 'peace' between Glasgow and Edinburgh and the factional committee members, musical events and some semblance of policy was able to function. On 24 October 1934, Programme Director, Moray McLaren wrote on behalf of Dinwiddie to answer the Controller's questions about the SMAC. Its function was strictly advisory, but Robertson (carefully controlled and watched) was found to be useful over matters concerning Scottish choirs, and Herbert Bennett advised on Brass Bands. In the autumn of 1934, Boult attended a SMAC meeting at an Edinburgh Hotel, and lunch, and met some of the Reid Committee, visiting Glasgow next day to lunch with Sir Daniel Stevenson (benefactor of the University), and representatives of the Glasgow Choral and Orchestral Union, attending a rehearsal in the afternoon. Dinwiddie was relieved that Boult could attend the meeting: 'because we need very badly a little moral support against Robertson's rudeness and Whittaker's wiseacres about the future of music'.²¹⁶ Robertson had been 'distinctly unpleasant about our wireless singers'.²¹⁷ Boult replied: 'I hope I shall be some use to you...but in my old age I find I am more inclined to answer rudeness by rudeness, and this does not set us much further; however I shall try and be patient'.²¹⁸ WGW attended lunch at the Grosvenor Restaurant with Boult, after first discussing Dinwiddie's report with him. The meeting went well.

²¹⁵ Ibid. Philip Halstead (Pianoforte), Bessie Spence (violin), Dr Mary Grierson (Pianoforte), David McCallum, W. Watt Jupp and Guy Daines (Violin), Mozart Allan, Luigi Gasparini and John Dickson ('Cellist) all were considered suitable to give broadcasts. Auditions had restarted and Glasgow had 31 successful, 100 unsuccessful, Edinburgh 8 successful, 28 unsuccessful, Aberdeen 6 successful, 46 unsuccessful. SMA Committee Correspondence, File I, *GB-BBC. GB-BBC.*

²¹⁶ Letter, marked 'Music Director, Personal', from Dinwiddie to Boult, 22 November, 1934, SMA Committee Correspondence, File I, *GB-BBC.*

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Letter from Boult to Dinwiddie, 23 November, 1934, SMA Committee Correspondence, File I, *GB-BBC.*

A BBC report of 24 May 1935 records that a new Scottish light orchestra had been formed in Scotland to broadcast twice weekly, conducted by guests Stewart Deas, Kemlo Stephen, Guy Warrack, and Erik Chisholm. Efforts were continuing to form orchestras of the same size as in Manchester, Birmingham, and Belfast, co-operative schemes with local societies being developed. Co-operation with the Scottish Orchestra, which had a short, intensive season, was impossible. The Reid would co-operate but the BBC urged that both Scottish orchestras be involved and welcomed input from the SMAC. The Music Research committee, appointed at the last SMAC meeting, had its first meeting on 22 May, both Farmer and Willsher agreeing to submit statements about the periods which interested them.

Troubles however continued. Despite another pre-SMAC consultation between WGW and Dinwiddie, on the 18 October 1935, the meeting developed into 'a rather unpleasant experience'. According to Dinwiddie: 'Dr Farmer pursued his former tactics and accused our staff of letting information leak from the Advisory Committee, so that something derogatory to his reputation was said publicly at a rehearsal of the Scottish Military Band.'²¹⁹ With the chance remark, 'anyone might be guilty', matters worsened, especially since 'the Chairman, Dr Whittaker, ruled out nothing as out of order, but allowed a very full discussion on the matter, which really had little direct concern with the Committee.'²²⁰ With the agenda completed, Dinwiddie gave no date for the next meeting, saying that the Committee '...did not seem to be getting on with the big job confronting it, viz. the progress of broadcast music in Scotland'.²²¹ However WGW maintained that the matter lay in Dinwiddie's hands, reminding the latter that, whereas at Newcastle the gulf between musicians and the Corporation was often publically criticised, in Glasgow the debate at least enjoyed a degree of healthy exchange. Nevertheless, turbulence among the members continued and Halstead was moved to resign three days later, writing to Dinwiddie:

I find I am no use in the committee of the kind, as I am tongue tied. May I say that I think it would be a good thing if others were to follow my example? You could do without Committees altogether and if need be select an adviser on any special subject for a special occasion. Pardon this comment, and accept my appreciation of your invariable courtesy.²²²

²¹⁹ Dinwiddie to Eckersley in a private note of 21 October). *GB-BBC*.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² Letter from Halstead to Dinwiddie, 24 October, SMA Committee Correspondence, File 1, *GB-BBC*.

WGW called a private meeting to discuss the situation and next day Dinwiddie wrote to Eckersley, first consulting WGW ‘...who seemed to be the most annoyed of all the members when I made my statement’ reporting what was said.²²³ WGW had reiterated his belief in the importance of contact between the musical profession and the BBC and Dinwiddie had expressed his opinion that the usefulness of Dr Farmer on the Committee was neutralised by his antagonistic opinions.²²⁴ WGW (a close friend of Farmer) had claimed that the question of Farmer ‘was closed’, having been ‘thrashed out’ at the meeting, and he thought that the committee worked well (an opinion with which Dinwiddie did not agree).²²⁵ Like a shadow hanging over the proceedings had been the possibility of abolition of Advisory Committees by the BBC, a possibility which WGW strongly opposed. He recalled how in Newcastle several years before, ‘a good representative committee’ had been disbanded without warning by the Station Director, the result being ‘a considerable amount of friction’ (in fact Reith had instructed the closing of the Advisory Committees following Regionalisation).²²⁶ Dinwiddie told Eckersley that WGW was ‘...still rather sore about the Advisory Committee’ and had made a number of threats about a press campaign and trouble in Parliament should the Committee be dissolved. Any decision would be left until after the Ullswater Report was issued.²²⁷

The Ullswater report of 1935 (written by a committee chaired by Viscount Ullswater, to consider the work of the BBC after the expiration of the Charter and Licence in 1936), which recommended extending the Charter for ten years, stated that ‘provision for Advisory Committees was wisely made and the Corporation has endeavoured to make good and increasing use of the system.’²²⁸ Twenty-eight committees existed, but more should be established in the Provinces (the number rose to 36 by 1939). The Central MAC would be composed of the Principals, ex-officio, of the three Colleges in London, the senior Musical Inspector of the Board of Education, the Chairmen of any Regional MAC, Colonel Somerville for a year (discussions

²²³ Letter from Dinwiddie to Assistant Controller, Mr Eckersley, 21 October, 1935, SMA Committee Correspondence, File I, *GB-BBC*.

²²⁴ *Ibid.* Herbert Bennett, according to a BBC ‘Record of interview’ of the 10 December 1935, between Bennett and Dinwiddie, had been told by Farmer that the latter intended to organise a protest meeting in the St. Andrew’s Halls, and bring up all the delinquencies of the BBC from its commencement thirteen years ago. Bennett had tried to dissuade him ‘but he was adamant in his decision’. *GB-BBC*.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ Ullswater report, 1934, *GB-BBC*.

would follow), Percy Buck, Lady Snowden, Plunket Greene, Bruce Richmond and W H Bell (and two more representatives for the 'musically intelligent listener'). The SMAC would be retained with no more than six members, WGW being asked to continue as chairman of the Scottish Committee, Forbes for the North, and Hely Hutchinson for the Midlands. Subsequently the Chairman would be elected by the members, monthly meetings being held excepting August and September. Reith wrote to the Controller of programmes on 7 February 1936 bemoaning the Ullswater Committee's recommendation on the extension of the Advisory committees system: 'There is only one to-day - in Scotland- and it probably gives much more trouble than it is worth. Other places had Advisory Committees in the past, but they were abandoned.'²²⁹ However, though under no obligation, the Central Committee would 'try them out'.

On 31 March 1936, Dinwiddie, in an internal memo, wrote that though still doubting the effectiveness of Advisory Committees as consultative bodies 'so far as music is concerned', he would reconstitute the committee, carefully selecting its members and setting up 'a definite constitution to govern its activities' to prevent its assuming executive powers 'such as the last Committee tried to do'.²³⁰ Dinwiddie blamed the composition of the Advisory Committee for its downfall, being 'over-weighted on the side of the active performance of music', and instead favouring greater representation from those of 'musical appreciation'.²³¹ He would now use a system of rotation for members to retire (after two years service), with the aim of obtaining the desired type of committee, which would meet with 'the approval of Dr Whittaker and others'.²³² However, Dinwiddie was not certain that WGW was the ideal chairman of the proposed body:

I have no objection to Dr Whittaker acting as the first Chairman of the new Committee, provided he is there only for a term of years. I do not regard him as a really good Chairman, and consider that his ineffective conduct in that capacity - resulting possibly from suspicion of our efforts - was one of the causes of the difficulties of the last Committee.²³³

He proposed that the two-year-old Sub-committee on music research should continue, since it had helped in the series 'Music from the Scottish Past'. The committee 'had a real task, was composed of experts, and would give the persons involved the scope to deal with more detailed problems'. Dinwiddie confessed that he hoped the General AC 'could subsume the work of the

²²⁹ Communication from the Director General to the Programme Controller, 7 February, 1936. *GB-BBC*.

²³⁰ Letter from Dinwiddie to Head Office, 31 March, 1936, *GB-BBC*.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² Internal BBC memo of 31 March 1936, from Dinwiddie, *GB-BBC*.

²³³ Letter from Dinwiddie to Head Office, 31 March, 1936, *GB-BBC*.

Music Committee, leaving only the sub-Committee', because though 'separately they can be very helpful to us: together they seem unable to agree amongst themselves and they become animated with feelings of jealousy towards us'.²³⁴

WGW was unanimously elected as chairman of the larger SMAC. He retained his position on the London AC but was required to provide a deputy if he was unable to attend. The exigencies of this requirement probably persuaded him to attend both more regularly. As chairman of SMAC, he was to some degree able to oversee a committee of more harmonious relations with a greater air of intellectual input and to a considerable extent this came about through the co-operation of new personalities such as Harry Wilsher, a research expert from University College Library, Dundee (whom WGW greatly admired and with whom he later corresponded regularly concerning his research into the early English violin sonata), Douglas Dickson (a new member representing 'the intelligent listener'), Tom Henderson (Chairman of the Schools Music Sub-Committee and another new member) and Ian Whyte. With the outbreak of peace, WGW was able to focus more readily on musical issues. There were the visits of the BBC Symphony Orchestra to Scotland, the arrangements for musical celebrations for the Coronation in the early autumn of 1937, and the King's visit to Scotland in the early autumn. But WGW, who also had his mind fixed on matters of a more broadcast performances of his Bach Cantata Choir, was, however, rejected: 'I am afraid public opinion at present still feels that the BBC rather overdid Bach Cantatas some years ago, and we are taking great care not to make this mistake again'.²³⁵ Such an unwelcome rejoinder galvanised WGW into the more assiduous attendance of BBC meetings as is evident from a letter written to Dinwiddie on 5 November, informing him that he would be attending all the London meetings 'until the end of my term of office'.²³⁶

What is evident from future meetings of SMAC is that they continued to discuss matters for which they had no powers to execute and that they insisted on straying from the agenda before them, a pattern of behaviour which seemed to be encouraged by the larger constitution of the committee. This point is accentuated by a memo from Allen of 18 November 1936 which noted

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Letter from Dinwiddie to WGW, 3 November, 1936, SMAC correspondence. *GB-BBC*.

²³⁶ Letter from WGW to Dinwiddie, 5 November, 1936, SMAC correspondence. *GB-BBC*.

that the committee was attempting to discuss matters outside its remit (having discussed Music Library and Copyright issues, purchase of old instruments, an organ for Queen Margaret College (WGW's idea) and 'internal matters', such as requesting a larger orchestra for the Coronation). A further memo, clearly regretting the committee's lack of progress, from Controller Roger Eckersley of 11 December 1936 reads: 'I spoke to SRD [Dinwiddie] about this when I was up in Scotland...He hopes to get a much better Committee together before long and will then regularise the whole thing.'²³⁷ A Regional Director's meeting of 12 July, chaired in Glasgow by Dinwiddie, explored ways of standardising the different Advisory Committees, as far as constitution, retirement of members, and election of chairmen were concerned. Eckersley acknowledged Dinwiddie's note of the same day, replying on 15 July, with the request that Dinwiddie 'hold his hand for the moment' until he had addressed the matter.²³⁸ Later Dinwiddie wrote to Eckersley on other points, wishing the number of the committee to be nine, plus ex-officio members, and disliking the selection of the chairman by ballot. Though constitutional, he had 'found from sad experience that it does not always work in the Music one', preferring a three-year term of office, and twice yearly meetings, since a yearly change made it difficult to ensure that the Chairman was really helpful.²³⁹

As if to emphasise the irrelevance of the SMAC's deliberations, WGW engineered a special meeting of the SMAC on 27 January, 1937 in West George Street Glasgow. Tovey and an extra BBC representative, J M A Cameron, were also present. He had called the meeting to consider a questionnaire issued in response to an enquiry into orchestral resources in regional centres by the Central Music Advisory Committee, the subject having been brought to its notice by Dr Dyson, Chairman of the National Federation of Music Societies, Dyson pressing the BBC strongly to employ more orchestral players. Robertson denied that the problem was acute in Glasgow, but WGW disagreed, citing the unavailability of players due to Scottish Orchestra engagements. Whyte pointed out that BBC players may well have been available, but no requests had been made. Tovey emphasised that the difficulty was not one of artistic standards but of players needing a living wage. WGW suggested adding 1 flute, 2 horns, 2 clarinets and perhaps 2

²³⁷ BBC Internal Memo from Eckersley, 11 December, 1936, SMAC correspondence. *GB-BBC*.

²³⁸ *Ibid*.

²³⁹ Letter from Dinwiddie to Eckersley, 31 October 1936. SMAC correspondence *GB-BBC*.

trombones to Regional orchestras, while Bennett mentioned the availability of amateur players (it was pointed out that they could not be engaged professionally). All in all, however, these were matters that could not be settled by SMAC alone.²⁴⁰

As if to galvanise the BBC's authority (and to mitigate its unhappiness with the position of SMAC and its eccentric constitution) a third meeting with eight members present, on 18 March 1937, added Lachlan Macrae of their Glasgow team, enlarging the BBC representation. R H Eckersley, Director of Regional Relations, also provided a bulwark against wayward Committee members. With the greater authoritative voice of the BBC present, Farmer's proposal for a BBC Scottish Music Library was turned down; a definite policy to centralise the music library in London was endorsed; and there was doubt that any 'old' instruments – a hobby-horse of Farmer, could be used or afforded. Moves towards greater and more efficient centralisation from London, in the matter of programme selection, were reiterated by Eckersley who described the successful work of the Music Panel in London. Here programmes were now being devised seven weeks in advance, but, in spite of the disagreement of some members of SMAC, there would be no such plans for Scotland.

The next meeting on Thursday 10 June, was WGW's last as Chairman. Six BBC representatives were present with eight other members. WGW gave a resume of the history of the formation of the Central and Regional MACs, the last year having 'proved their usefulness' particularly since he, being a member of both, could enable the Committee to appraise of what was going on in London.²⁴¹ He also reported on the committee to consider orchestral resources from the regions, and there was discussion of compositions for the royal visit (which were not thought to be up to standard). He finally announced that he was to retire as chairman, as his 'time was up'.²⁴² It had been suggested that he should carry on but he 'felt very definitely that he should not continue'. He had been on the Central Advisory Committee for ten years, and he thought the Committee 'required fresh blood'. He proposed that Wilfrid Senior should take over

²⁴⁰ The six questions were: 'Did BBC orchestral arrangements cause difficulties for musical societies? How many estimated engagements could good local players secure? Are local players suffering from lack of engagements? What improvements can you suggest in BBC orchestral arrangements? Give views on suggestions in appendix. What are your views on possible loss of efficiency if BBC orchestras were reduced in the regions?' *GB-BBC*.

²⁴¹ Minutes of SMAC meeting at Broadcasting House, 5 Queens Street, Edinburgh, 10 June, 1937, *GB-BBC*.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

as Chairman for the year. WGW thanked the committee and expressed the view articulated by the Central AC that the last ten years had seen 'a change of attitude' towards the musical profession, with many difficulties solved, and a much friendlier atmosphere.²⁴³ WGW sent his apologies to the next meeting on 2 November, 1938, when Percy Gordon's resignation 'for health reasons' was read out. Strictly speaking, however, since WGW had now retired from SNAM, as Wilfrid Senior explained, his resignation automatically brought about his retirement as an ex-officio member of the committee.²⁴⁴ Ian Whyte wrote to WGW informing him of the date of the next meeting, WGW replying on 6 June that he had seen from the agenda that two members of the committee were to retire, and asked to be one of them: 'I have been on BBC committees longer than any present member of yours and, moreover, I am retiring from public life at the end of September.²⁴⁵ I shall be proud to be associated with the Research Committee if that could be the case, because I am particularly interested in the valuable work it is doing.'²⁴⁶

Whyte replied on 21 June, 1938, explaining that though not due for retirement as one listed on the agenda, WGW's retirement from SNAM, meant he retired as an *ex officio* Committee Member. But he added: 'Your last paragraph of all is easily answered. I for one could not be anything but glad by your continued association with the Research Committee. As a coda to my letter, may I say that the symphony of my experiences with you has been one of excellent tunes and artistically logical developments, with kindest regards Ian Whyte'. WGW replied on 4 July warmly appreciating the 'kindly spirit' of Whyte's letter:

I know that my dropping out of things will mean a loss to me; for many years now my contact with the musical profession has been intimate & of endless variety; but there must come a time with every man when he will sink into the background & be merely a spectator of the movements in which his professional brethren are partaking. I'm not of much use on committees, I haven't the 'committee mind', but I have appreciated the privilege of being in the swim.²⁴⁷

Ironically Dinwiddie now seems to have regretted WGW's resignation, on 18 May writing to Whyte: 'The question of a Chairman is rather difficult, because it ought to be a Glasgow man this time...I think we should discuss the matter with the present Chairman before the meeting. If the worst comes to the worst, it might be a good way out to nominate Professor

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Minutes of SMLAC, 2 November, 1938, *GB-BBC*.

²⁴⁵ Letter from WGW to Ian Whyte, SMLAC correspondence, *GB-BBC*.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Letter from Whyte to WGW, 21 June, 1938, SMLAC correspondence *GB-BBC*.

Whittaker again for another year.²⁴⁸ But despite his cordiality with WGW, Whyte felt that affairs had moved on, and replied on 22 May: 'I can well understand all the points you make, but I think any re-appointment of Professor Whittaker would be un-popular and un-wise, at least for the moment.'²⁴⁹ He suggested that Francis Harford would be 'a fairly due choice', being the senior member of the committee, otherwise, Douglas Dickson.²⁵⁰

In 1939, Reith resigned and Frederick Ogilvie became Director General of the BBC. At Easter WGW returned from retirement to the SNAM and the University, and was again eligible to sit on the Scottish MAC, but sent his apologies to the meeting on 14 June, chaired by David Stephen.²⁵¹ When war broke out on 1 September 1939, all Advisory Committee meetings stopped, but in December a Memo from R Thatcher, Deputy Director of Music gave the news that the Central MAC was needed: 'The war has thrown up so many new problems in the musical world that the Director-General has agreed that meetings in London...be revived.'²⁵² Thatcher explained that the BBC wished to benefit from the 'experience and advice of those who are so kindly prepared to give them.'²⁵³ All members were from London, with the exception of R J Forbes, who representing musical activities in the Provinces. WGW did not re-join.

In 1940 the London Blitz started on 7 September, a bomb landing on the floor of the Music Library, exploding after a delay and killing seven people. Queen's Hall was destroyed, and plans were made for the BBC to evacuate to Bristol. By 1942, Boult (who had been knighted in 1937) decided to 'dispense with Regional Music Advisory Committees' wishing to have Scotland represented by Herbert Wiseman on the Central MAC.²⁵⁴ Dinwiddie refused, as Farmer and Robertson would never have allowed this and the war had halted the process of retiral. In any event, during the war representation on the CMAC was kept to 'lowest possible limits'.²⁵⁵ In 1941 Ian Whyte resigned from his post as Scottish BBC Director of Music, continuing to conduct the

²⁴⁸ Letter from Dinwiddie to Whyte, 18 May, 1938, SMAC correspondence *GB-BBC*.

²⁴⁹ BBC Internal Memo-Scottish Region, marked 'Private and confidential', letter from Whyte to Dinwiddie, 22 May, 1938, SMAC correspondence *GB-BBC*.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ Minutes of SMAC meeting, 14 June, 1939, SMAC correspondence *GB-BBC*.

²⁵² Internal Circulating Memo from Rob Thatcher, Deputy Director of Music, 12 December, 1939, correspondence *GB-BBC*.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

BBC Scottish Orchestra, but concentrated on composition. On 20 October 1942, the Controller of Programmes announced that the Regional MACs would not be reconstituted in wartime.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Internal Circulating Memo from the Controller of Programmes, 20 October, 1942, correspondence GB-BBC.

