



THE SPIRIT OF ENGLAND

NEWSLETTER OF THE ENGLISH MUSIC FESTIVAL – SUMMER 2014 – ISSUE 15

EMF 2014

The eighth English Music Festival took place at the end of May and was, once again, a tremendous success, with the highest standards of performance from all involved, healthy audiences, much musical exploration, and a friendly and welcoming ambience. Many events stand out as highlights – too many to mention in the limited space available here, but I will single out for mention Saturday evening's extremely popular concert with Hilary Davan Wetton and the City of London Choir,



Flowers of the Fields, which saw the Abbey full to capacity; the wonderful New Foxtrot Serenaders, who brought us a contrasting type of music from the First World War period; and, of course, the opening night concert with the BBC Concert Orchestra (broadcast live on Radio 3), with World Première performances of important works by Vaughan Williams, Bax and Boughton. These new works – all extremely well-received – were complemented by a searing performance of Moeran's Violin Concerto (a work I have always wanted to programme at the EMF). Incidentally, the BBC picked the Moeran Violin Concerto performance for inclusion in BBC Live, meaning that it was available for online listening for a whole month after the event. There will, as usual, be a full Director's Report on the whole Festival in the next issue of *Spirited*.

Martin Yates conducts the BBC Concert Orchestra at the 2014 English Music Festival

Gala evening at the Royal Overseas League

The next EMF event is a Gala evening, which will take place on Tuesday 14th October at 6p.m. at the Royal Overseas League, Park Place, St James's Street, London SW1A 1LR. This event combines a concert and the launch of EMRCD025, our *Phantasie* disc, of almost entirely World Première recordings of works by Holst, Goossens, Howells, Hurlstone, Holbrooke and Frank Bridge, with a fund-raising auction of 78s and LPs of English music, including some interesting and unusual items. The evening will commence with a performance of Holst's *Phantasy Quartet* of 1916, Howells's *Phantasy Quartet* of 1918, and Hurlstone's *Phantasy* of 1906, performed by the Bridge Quartet, marking the release of their disc; after an interval for drinks and canapés (included in the ticket price), our auction will take place. With a guest auctioneer, this should be an entertaining event, as well as a rare opportunity for those who own record players to obtain some very special items. All proceeds will go directly to the EMF and EM Records, to facilitate further recordings and performances of English music. There will be also be opportunities to browse sales tables of other English-music related discs and books and to top up with drinks from the ROSL's cash bar whenever required. Tickets are free to members of the EMF Friends' Scheme of Supporter level and above, to Foundation Subscribers and to those who have subscribed to EMRCD025; otherwise they are £10 (to include the concert and refreshments).



The Bridge Quartet

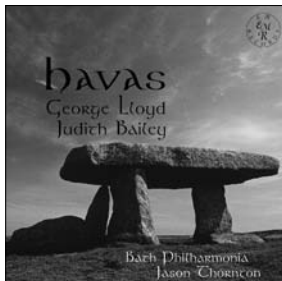
EMF 2015

The ninth English Music Festival will take place from 22nd-25th May 2015. The programme will be officially announced on the EMF website on 1st January 2015.

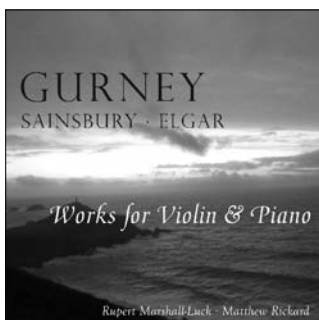
EM Records – New Releases



▲ EMRCD023 EMRCD026 ▼



Thee, our major recording with the BBC Concert Orchestra, Owain Arwel Hughes and Rupert Marshall-Luck, presenting the World Première recordings of Stanford's glorious Second Violin Concerto, and of Robin Milford's intensely lyrical Violin Concerto; and, finally, *Havas*, a disc with the Bath Philharmonia of World Première recordings of music by Cornish composers George Lloyd and Judith Bailey. All these discs are now available directly from us: please visit our website www.em-records.com for more details or to purchase these; or you can request a full sales catalogue from me by emailing or writing to me at the usual address.



▲ EMRCD011

EM Records has been continuing to release a number of discs of revelatory and exciting new music: Violin and Viola Sonatas by Cyril Scott, Sacheverell Coke and Granville Bantock; the Complete Music for Violin and Piano by Herbert Howells (featuring several world premières, including the substantial and deeply intense Sonata in B Minor); a disc of works by Stanford and Parry, most notably the glorious Mass in G, with the Choir of Exeter College, Oxford; two discs of piano music – *A Forgotten Romantic*, with the piano music of Greville Cooke alongside Holst and Vaughan Williams, and *An Irish Idyll*, focusing on Archy Rosenthal, complemented by piano works by Stanford and Bax; *The Fire That Breaks From*



George Lloyd



▲ EMRCD019-20 EMRCD022 ▼



Press Accolades for EM Records

We are delighted that two of these recordings have already been designated Recordings of the Month by MusicWeb International – our Howells Complete Music for Violin and Piano, and *A Forgotten Romantic*. The Howells disc also received a glowing review in the BBC Music Magazine, in which Anthony Burton praised Rupert Marshall-Luck's "magically ethereal tone". Meanwhile, our recording of Gurney's Violin Sonata, forming part of EMRCD011, featured substantially on the BBC Four documentary *The Poet who Loved the War: Ivor Gurney* – extracts can be viewed at www.em-records.com/videos.html.

Support EM Records We currently have two important recordings open to subscriptions.

The next individual subscription disc, EMR CD025, will be released in October 2014. This new release celebrates the rich variety of the Phantasy String Quartet, one of the forms most characteristic of English music of the early twentieth century, and a genre re-invigorated by W.W. Cobbett. The disc, featuring the Bridge Quartet, comprises six 'Cobbett' phantasies, including three sparklingly carefree contributions from William Hurlstone, Frank Bridge and Joseph Holbrooke. These are virtuoso scores from three confident young composers keen to impress with their knowledge and sometimes mischievously irreverent attitudes to nineteenth-century 'Romantic' idioms. The remaining three, by Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells and Eugene Goossens, date from around ten years later. Holst's Phantasy on English Folk Songs is beautiful and nostalgic; Howells's prize-winning entry from 1918 is darkly tinted with an austere modality; and Goossens's contribution loosens the bonds of nineteenth-century tonality and challenges the listener with sonorities more redolent of twentieth-century Europe. Most of these works presented here are World Première recordings.

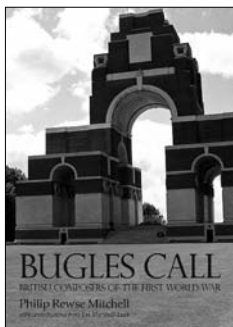
Also open to subscribers is a disc of the complete music for violin and piano by Parry, performed by Rupert Marshall-Luck and Matthew Rickard. It is easy to overlook, or at least to underestimate, the revivifying effect of Parry's work: his music was a refreshing, invigorating contrast to the reactionary environment that prevailed in British music through the first half of the nineteenth century. This new voice stemmed largely from the wider, continental European influences to which Parry was exposed as a student of Edward Dannreuther: a champion of Brahms, Liszt and Wagner, Dannreuther instituted a series of chamber music concerts at his London home, which provided both a stimulus for Parry's own important assays into the genre of chamber music and a vehicle for their first performances.

EM Publishing

EM Publishing is due to release two books over the next few months: *Armstrong Gibbs: A Countryman Born and Bred* by Angela Aries and Lewis Foreman, and a re-print of Derek Hudson's important biography of *Norman O'Neill: A Life of Music*, with additional material. Pre-orders for both these books are currently available – contact Em at the usual address for pre-order forms.

Composers of the First World War

The EMF has also released a booklet – *Bugles Call: British Composers of the First World War*, written by Philip Mitchell with Em Marshall-Luck, which was on sale for the duration of the eighth EMF. This publication explains the military context of names such as



Butterworth, Vaughan Williams, Farrar, Cole, Moeran, Gurney and Bliss, all of whom donned uniforms for their country. There is discussion, too, of those who failed to enlist because of poor health, such as Howells, Bax, and Ireland, and of those (very few) who were pacifists and chose not to serve. This thought-provoking account of the English musical landscape during this crucial time remains available, either at EMF events, or by postal order, by sending a cheque for £6.50 plus £1.50 P&P, made payable to "EMF Endeavours" to the usual EMF address.

This conspectus of Parry's works for violin and piano ranges from the early and unpublished 'Freundschaftslieder' of 1872 to the Suite no.2 of 1907, and will therefore provide a fascinating chart of their composer's progress from a young man, eager to hone his craft, to an established and respected musician, academic and teacher. His music for this genre expresses a wide range of emotions: they are wistful and elegiac; beautifully and memorably lyrical; exuberantly energetic; and full-bloodedly and assuredly celebratory.

Foundation Subscription

If you find yourself eagerly awaiting our next release, and wondering what disc you could help to make happen next, why not join our Foundation Subscription Scheme? This automatically signs you up as a subscriber to all forthcoming discs open to subscription, and you will also receive a free copy of each disc as soon as it reaches us from the manufacturer. Furthermore, it entitles you to free tickets and invitations to all EM Records recitals, parties, launches and receptions. Please, if you can, support the important work we do in this invaluable and rewarding way!

Composers on your Doorstep

At the end of last year Philip Mitchell, Vice Chairman of the Friends Scheme, announced the launch of the 'Composers on Your Doorstep' Initiative to encourage Friends and supporters to identify and write about composers and prominent musicians, living or past,

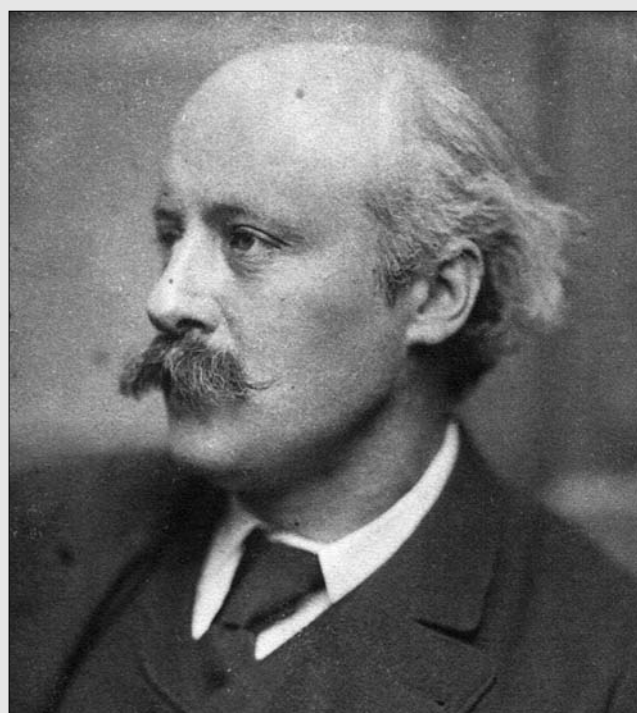


who lived or worked in their particular locality. To set the ball rolling, Philip produced a template questionnaire and conducted an interview with Ian Venables, one of our leading song composers who lives in Worcester. Both the questionnaire and the interview article will shortly be available on the Friends' section of our website and will also be published in *Spirited* towards the end of the year. Meanwhile, for those of you who would like to take up the challenge but need a little inspiration, copies are available from Philip at his email address: loremman26@hotmail.co.uk.

Call for more auction items

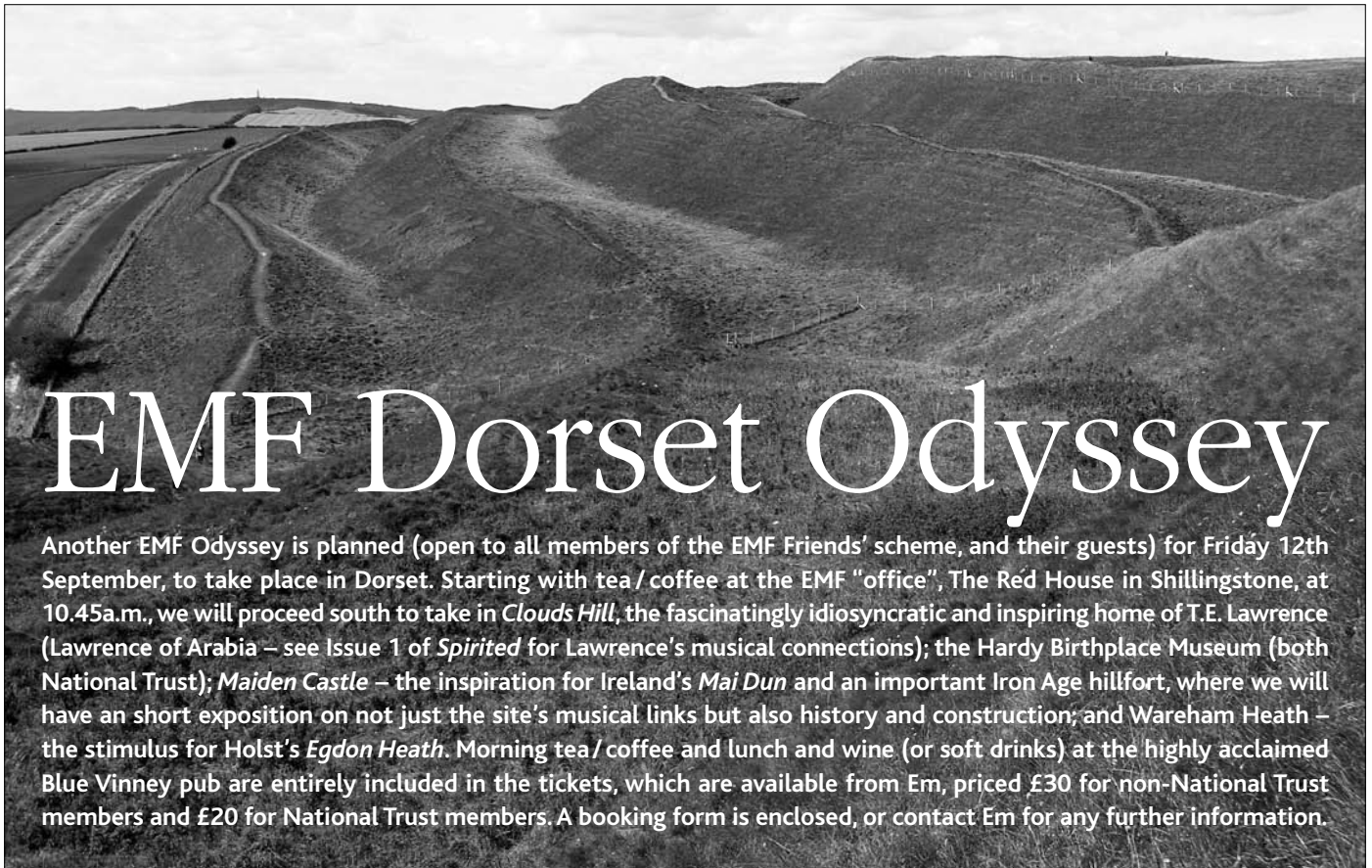
The LPs and 78s that are to be auctioned have been donated from my own collection, and although they are quite numerous, I am still looking for more items to add to the auction. Do you have any LPs or 78s of English music, in a good condition, that you would be willing to donate for the charity auction, to raise money for our continuing work?

If so, please email or write to me at the usual addresses to let me know what you would be willing to donate – with so very many thanks in advance for your help! All items would need to be received by the end of September. A full catalogue of items for the auction will be drafted and circulated at this date.



Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry

by kind permission of Laura Ponsorby and Kate Russell



EMF Dorset Odyssey

Another EMF Odyssey is planned (open to all members of the EMF Friends' scheme, and their guests) for Friday 12th September, to take place in Dorset. Starting with tea / coffee at the EMF "office", The Red House in Shillingstone, at 10.45a.m., we will proceed south to take in *Clouds Hill*, the fascinatingly idiosyncratic and inspiring home of T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia – see Issue 1 of *Spirited* for Lawrence's musical connections); the Hardy Birthplace Museum (both National Trust); *Maiden Castle* – the inspiration for Ireland's *Mai Dun* and an important Iron Age hillfort, where we will have an short exposition on not just the site's musical links but also history and construction; and Wareham Heath – the stimulus for Holst's *Egdon Heath*. Morning tea / coffee and lunch and wine (or soft drinks) at the highly acclaimed Blue Vinney pub are entirely included in the tickets, which are available from Em, priced £30 for non-National Trust members and £20 for National Trust members. A booking form is enclosed, or contact Em for any further information.

Spirited – A Message from Editor Robin Sawers

Having done so much editorial work on last year's *Spirited* and really enjoyed it, when Em asked if I would take on the task of Editor I didn't need much persuading, particularly as editing of one sort or another is what I have always done in a long career in publishing. I did have some slight qualms in view of the fact that I also edit the EMF Programme Book, but I can see advantages there with themes carried over, and our Gazette should in any case reflect and amplify what is achieved by the EMF. I would also like to bring in more general consideration of the repertoire covered by EM Records than is possible in the reviews, and in-depth exploration of the subject matter of EM Publishing titles. But this does not mean that *Spirited* should be restricted to themes covered by the EMF and its offshoots: it has always been wide-ranging and can also point the way ahead in our typical pioneering spirit. So if there is any aspect of English music (or culture in general) you feel is neglected and worthy of our attention do not hesitate to tell us about it. **Please let me have your contributions by the beginning of October if possible, but no later than the 10th.** We want to bring forward the editorial/proofing stages so they take place well before Christmas, which will also allow distribution to be completed well clear of the holiday.



Robin and Eva Sawers at the English Music Festival

Subscription renewals are now due for *Spirited*. As ever, subscriptions include the cost of the Gazette, as well these *Spirit of England* newsletters. A renewal form is enclosed.



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