The Creel

Journal of The Rawsthorne Trust
and
The Friends of Alan Rawsthorne

Volume 7, Number 1
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Contents

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Editorial

Welcome back to *The Creel* – I would say to the all-new *Creel*, except that we have gone to some lengths to make it look like the old one, for the sake of continuity. Production methods are different now, however: digital printing, as opposed to offset lithography, makes possible shorter runs, flexible extents – and colour printing, where required, at no extra cost.

The succession of twenty-one issues ceased suddenly in 2007 after Volume 6, No. 1. Looking back, one can see that a volume used to cover four years, and that there would normally (but not necessarily) be four issues in a volume. Since we are now in 2011, it is clear that we must leave Volume 6 – with its single issue – behind, and embark forthwith upon Volume 7.

But surely the reason given for the cessation was that the supply of suitable material had dried up? Has something changed – has a hoard of new facts about Rawsthorne, or a cache of lost works, come to light? Sadly no, but since the last *Creel* we have witnessed the remarkable burst of sustained creativity displayed by John Belcher (whose autobiographical article we welcome in the present issue) in expanding his newsletter *The Sprat* to fill the void, and in doing so somehow producing not just the three issues that might have been expected, but no fewer than nine, mostly of a size comparable with the average *Creel*. In doing this, he showed that material is not after all impossible to come by – especially if you are prepared to write most of it yourself: there's the rub.

At his final trustees' meeting, John expressed his wish that *The Creel* should henceforth be reborn. I was the second newest trustee, and without portfolio, whereas the actual newest (Andrew Mayes) had already succeeded to the post of treasurer. The only justification for my existence was that I took the minutes of the trustees' meetings, and although I did this with might and main, it didn't seem much in the scheme of things. I needed a job, and so I was forthwith wafted by a favouring gale into the long-vacant post of *Creel* editor – Ko-Ko, you might say, in the mighty shadow of John's Pooh-Bah.

Which, with a little contrivance, brings me to my next point. If you have seen the film *Topsy-Turvy* you may remember that at one point Richard D'Oyly Carte declares: 'I'm not in the business of revivals.' 'You are now,' snaps back Jim Broadbent in the guise of W. S. Gilbert. I mention this in reference to the fact that two out of our three main articles are in fact reprints. For this I make only minimal apology, for neither of them has appeared in *The Creel* before, or *The Sprat* for that matter, and both are extraordinarily worthy to do so. John Amis needs no introduction to the readership, and his blend of long experience and subtle wit make a welcome aperitif to this bill of fare. John Turner's article (we made a rule that you could not have an article in this issue unless your name was either John or Andrew) was in any case written for us in the first place. Because JB's ability to create material was so fecund, he was unable to find room for it in the last of his nine *Sprats*, so JT put it in *Manchester Sounds* 8 (published this spring) instead. Everyone knows that John is a professional

recorder player, and that he was a respected solicitor for many years, but it is his passion for collecting that seems to be influencing his writing at the moment. Musical instruments and printed and manuscript music are what he delights to unearth, and when he gets hold of something good he finds out all there is to know about it and writes it up – in this case producing something we are in sore need of: genuinely new information about Rawsthorne's activities. Looking at the database of recipients of *The Creel*, I see that some are also subscribers to *Manchester Sounds*, and so will already have had the JA and JT articles, leaving only the interesting contributions by JB and the two Andrews to divert you. Be consoled: at least the journal you were paying for carried the articles first. If it had been the other way round, you might have had cause for complaint.

On that same list of *Creel* readers, I recognise the names of people I have met as a result of being a Rawsthorne trustee and attending the annual reunions; names of people I have not met but have heard of for various reasons, including the fact that some of them are very eminent; and names of people I used to know as a perk of having been at the Henry Watson Music Library for so many years, but with whom I have not been in touch for a while. To all these categories of reader I send a warm greeting, in some cases from a respectful distance, but to the last-mentioned group I am particularly pleased to be able to say 'hello again!'

Martin Thacker

In Search of Alan Rawsthorne

John Amis

John Amis wrote this article to mark the 2005 centenary of Rawsthorne's birth. It originally appeared in Manchester Sounds *vol. 6 (2005–6), and is reprinted by permission of the trustees of the Manchester Musical Heritage Trust.*

The Rawsthorne Trust approached me in the early 1990s about writing a biography of Rawsthorne. 'What a good idea', I thought; there is one needed, I liked Alan and his music, knew people who knew him – and a sum of money was offered which seemed agreeable … in fact I thought of it in terms of one of Alan's favourite phrases which I'd heard so often from him: 'Time enough for that sort of thing.' I was to write about Alan's life, John McCabe would deal with the music – couldn't have anybody better, John knows the music backwards, more than anybody.

The Trust and I met, and a list of names and addresses was handed over. 'Here, they all knew Alan, you'll want to go and see them, won't you?' Yes indeed, and this article is an account of very pleasant times I had doing the rounds. Misgivings soon set in but I'll come to them by and by.

One of the first and most revealing encounters was with Marion Leigh, widow of the composer Walter Leigh, whose talent was cut short when he was killed in the Second World War. After Alan left his first wife, the violinist Jessie Hinchliffe, he lived for several years with Marion, who worked as an executive in the National Film Board of Canada, a slim, attractive, vivacious lady; even in advanced years (she was born in 1912) she was bright and cheerful but suffering severely from loss of memory. After a few minutes she said, 'The great thing about Alan was, he was very secretive.' She kept returning to this observation. She spoke of her children, two of whom – Veronica and Julian – were good friends of mine: Veronica is a violist, living in New York with her psychiatrist husband, and Julian, sadly no longer with us, was a composer who lived in Lancaster. There is also a second son, Andrew, for long a manager at the Old Vic, but I don't know him so well. He is very nice now but wasn't so years earlier at one Christmas lunch I spent with the Leighs in Brewer Street, Soho, when he treated me to a whoopee cushion, put little round metal objects in my petits pois and perpetrated other delights until Marion remarked, 'My goodness, he *does* seem to have taken a dislike to you, doesn't he?' But by now Marion could not remember much about Alan except his secretiveness – leading me to believe that their parting was not such sweet sorrow. After I left her Soho flat I was walking down the street when I heard a summoning

whistle; it was Marion leaning out of her window shouting, 'John, come back, I've just remembered something important.' I climbed the stairs again only for her to tell me once more, 'The great thing about Alan was, he was very secretive.' This interview was revealing in that I realised that most of Alan's friends were now very old and likely to have infirm memories.

This proved to be the case with the composer Alan Bush, who could recall nothing of his early Berlin meetings with AR in their student days, nor any of their several visits together behind the Iron Curtain. AR admired AB greatly and, if he liked a student wanting tuition, would always advise him or her to go to AB. AB's memory, alas, was down practically to nil; rather pathetically, this communist through thick and thin was unaware even of the dismantling of the Iron Curtain and I thought it would be unkind to tell him. So the first two interviews were not an encouraging start – two down.

But meeting Mollie Barger was quite different: positive, good memory, informative and utterly delightful. She had been a student in Bristol and became friends there with Jessie, Alan, Constant Lambert, the harpist Sidonie Goossens and Sidonie's first husband, the conductor Hyam 'Bumps' Greenbaum. In its infinite lack of wisdom the BBC had evacuated its Symphony Orchestra to Bristol. (Jessie graced the second desk of first fiddles, sharing it with Kathleen Washbourne, with whom she gave the premiere performance and recording of Alan's Theme and Variations for two violins. This was the piece that gave rise to Constant Lambert's review expressing astonishment that it contained so much double-stopping until he remembered that, before taking to composition, Rawsthorne had studied dentistry.) Until the bombing got disastrous many programmes, comic as well as orchestral, originated from Bristol. But when the bombing came, Jessie's and Alan's place was destroyed, as were many precious and, it turned out, irreplaceable Rawsthorne manuscripts. Alan, Jessie and Bumps took over the old Clifton Arts Theatre, closed for the duration, and made it habitable; Bumps's bedroom was the stage, the Rawsthornes' had been the Green Room. Mollie described Alan as quite the dandy with his blond hair, cape and posh silver-topped walking stick, unable even to boil an egg and with drinking already quite a problem: the specialist Dr Sheila Sherlock commented, 'If I were served up your liver in a restaurant, I'd send it back.' Mollie recalls the bombings vividly and remembers Lambert quoting Gorky as he tried to put out a fire with a watering can. Mollie also gave me more information than the Army was prepared to vouchsafe to an enquirer like myself who was not a blood relative or 'next of skin'. Alan started in the Royal Artillery but fortunately never had to use any weapons for real. Somebody had him tagged in the files as a *compositor* and a handyman (which he eminently was not) capable of dealing with machinery. When they got nearer the truth they let him go to the Army Educational Corps and he was sent to Wembley to make a film with Peter Ustinov. He encountered Edmund Rubbra, who remembered AR telling him how he came across a cadet named Hastings; on investigation it was found that his rifle was numbered 1066. Another army story has our hero being ordered by his sergeant, 'Rawsthorne,

band practice tomorrow morning – clarinet!' 'But sir, I don't *play* the clarinet; my instrument is the cello.' 'Rawsthorne, how many times do I have to tell you: there's a war on and we can't all do just what we please.' Mollie remained friends to the end with Alan, Jessie and, later, Isabel Lambert (née Nicholas). It seems that the crumbling of the first marriage was not bitter. Jessie tried her best to behave like a Bohemian but it wasn't really her character. She was a sensible, level-headed Yorkshire lass blessed with wonderful looks; three sensible meals a day at regular hours were not, it seems, the way to Alan's heart. Did Jessie have a miscarriage which somehow queered the marriage pitch? After leaving the BBC she ended up as a pillar of the Philharmonia Orchestra, and eventually died of cancer. Mollie's career and marriage took her all over the world – to the Middle East, Greece, China, Paris, the USA and India, mostly working for UNRRA – but she renewed her friendships when she came back to England and Soho. I never quite dared ask Mollie whether she and Alan ever … If Jessie had beauty, Isabel had beauty and intellect. My impression is that none of the women cared much for Marion Leigh (not surprising perhaps, given the circumstances).

I cannot remember when I first met AR; it must have been in the second half of the forties. We had various mutual friends and I would have 'seen him around'. I saw slightly more of him because of the Summer School of Music which I ran, first at Bryanston in Dorset from 1948 to 1952 and latterly at Dartington Hall (which of course Alan knew very well; more of that later). William Glock was the Director of Music and it was with his approval that I commissioned Alan to write a choral piece for the School. Our weeks used to run from Saturday to Saturday. On the Sunday of each week a choir was formed which rehearsed every morning and, on the Friday, performed the chosen work. At first Alan demurred about accepting the commission (for some ludicrous fee, probably £50, maybe a bit more): he said he wasn't keen on setting words, because he liked poetry too much and felt that music tended to destroy poetry. At length he agreed to compose a piece provided we could agree to ask his friend Randall Swingler to write some words specially. This was done and the piece, called *A Canticle of Man*, was duly performed in August 1952. It was a great month: Enesco was there playing the violin, teaching and conducting, Roger Désormière also conducted, Imogen Holst lectured, and so did Stanley Spencer; and Alan took a composition class and supervised the premiere of his piece for choir, flute, baritone and strings. The actual date was 22 August 1952 and the orchestra was the Boyd Neel, our chorus being conducted by Norman Del Mar. As always, Alan didn't raise his voice but quietly managed to get what he wanted. During the course of several visits he taught and gave seminars on works by two of his favourite composers, Haydn and Chopin.

Randall Swingler was a committed communist, a poet, teacher and amateur flautist, married to Geraldine Peppin who was half of a two-piano duo with her twin Mary. Gerry's daughter Judith is married to the composer Edward Williams and it is probable that the couple's move to Essex prompted AR and Isabel to follow suit. The Williamses live now in Bristol and I had a splendid lunch at their house before and after which they both talked, often at the same time, into my

mike. When Edward first met AR (with Muir Mathieson)[1] his impression was of a dapper, genial, well-educated, civilised man. Alan was soon sharing the Brewer Street flat with Marion Leigh, having moved in when her son Julian and his friend Richard Rodney Bennett left (don't jump to conclusions: they were just good friends). AR at that time was writing a lot of film music. Soho was his bailiwick: he and his friends drank either at the French Club, run by Olwen Vaughan, or the Colony Club, presided over by the foul-mouthed but fascinating Muriel Belcher. Elisabeth Lutyens and her husband Edward Clark, the pioneering BBC music administrator, later would-be conductor, were part of the scene, prodigious drinkers both. Liz Lut used to say that AR had only one tune (the *Street Corner* one, itself derived probably from Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*); Isabel used to upbraid AR with that one, too. Edward Williams said 'We rather took Alan for granted', and so did many other folks I interviewed. 'He was rather a randy chap' was another oft-heard remark. At one party AR told Edward that he had slept with every woman present but one (can't help wondering how big the party was). EW remembers AR falling over once in the Brewer Street flat, but he also said (as did many others) that Alan was almost never actually drunk despite being fairly well plastered. After doctors had at one time ordered him successfully right off booze, some fool of a new medico told him that an occasional glass of red wine wouldn't do him any harm, which, alas, started the (terminal) rot; at one stage, towards the end, AR was on two bottles a day of vermouth, one dry, one sweet, which he would mix (what a way to go).

Edward recalled Alan saying that the worst thing in the world was to see (sometimes bad) publicity advertising the premiere of a work not yet started. He went on several 'official' visits abroad with Alan, one with the Composers' Guild in 1963 to Bulgaria, an international festival which included a trip to the cave where Orpheus was said to have gone to retrieve Eurydice. In 1964 there was a Christmas gathering at the Williamses' house in Piddletrenthide in Dorset with Alan, the pianist James Gibb, Randall and Geraldine Swingler, and their son. As I was to find frequently during my researches, people didn't seem to have a lot to say about Alan; he was a wonderful chap, never nasty, never loud or disagreeable, funny but no examples forthcoming, pity he drank such a lot … but then so did most of us. Oh yes, an exception in the sharp line department was when AR said 'I hear that Edmund Rubbra has written a new tedium'. If people didn't have anything illuminating to say about Alan, I am sure it wasn't so much that they were failing to remember or holding back as that there was nothing particularly memorable about Alan except his lovable self and his music (and he didn't like talking about that).

Another hindrance to the research was that, Alan having been born in 1905 (the same year as Tippett and Lambert), most of his pals were either dead or getting on in years. Two 'golden oldies' I enjoyed going to see were Anne MacNaghten (1908–2000) in Hitchin and Iris Lemare (1902–97) near York; their joint concerts in London in the thirties had helped to set AR on the musical scene. Anne led a string quartet bearing her name and Iris was a conductor with

an orchestra bearing hers. Anne gave the first performance of AR's 1932 String Quartet, for example, and Iris in 1936 conducted Alan's first orchestral work, an Overture for chamber orchestra. They were now approaching four score and ten years. Anne was still beautiful despite her face being craggy in the Auden style, with skin like mud flats dried in the sun. Iris was skiing in her seventies but had an accident which crippled her. I had great talks with them both but I cannot pretend that they brought me much nearer to AR.

Next I went down to Sussex to see the composer Denis Apivor (1916–2004) who had been a composition pupil of Alan's but said that his turning to serialism seemed to put a barrier between them. He thought that AR didn't find him very sympathetic; it is true that Liz Lutyens's serialism didn't impair her friendship with AR, but then of course she was a friend, not a pupil. Denis also complained that he could never have a serious conversation with Alan (I had the same experience). He told me that the only time he ever saw AR express emotion was when he burst into tears on the way to Constant Lambert's funeral. Denis put forward the notion that, sexually, AR found the grass was greener in other people's marriages, which was perhaps part of Isabel's attraction for him. But only part, I think: Alan was clearly utterly devoted to Isabel – and she to him. What I do find mighty curious is that, after her various amours and marriage, after the high life of Paris and London, Isabel settled down apparently happily in rural East Anglia with Alan.

Isabel Nicholas changed her name three times before finally becoming Mrs Rawsthorne. Before that she was Epstein, later Delmer, then Lambert. Her biography would be a far meatier one than Alan's. She first changed her name by deed poll to that of Jacob Epstein, the great sculptor; she initially knocked on the door of his house to see if there was any modelling work going. Epstein's bust of Isabel shows a ravishingly beautiful young girl. Like some of his other models she became pregnant. Although in her sixties at the time Mrs Epstein touchingly sought to minimise any new scandal by shopping locally with a cushion stuffed in her clothes. Isabel's first marriage was to Sefton Delmer; she lived in Paris with him when he was the *Daily Express* correspondent there. During the Second World War Delmer directed the so-called Black Radio as a vital Allied propaganda instrument; he later wrote a fascinating book about it. In Paris Isabel enjoyed contact, to put it mildly, with many artists, including Derain, Picasso and Giacometti. She lived with Giacometti for a long period, but recent biographers seem to suggest that his capacity for sex was limited to the point of nullity. Isabel once left a party of his hand in hand with the conductor and serialist expert René Leibowitz and was from that moment out of the sculptor's life, although many years (and a couple of husbands) later Giacometti took a taxi one evening from London to visit the Rawsthornes at Little Sampford, had a lot to drink and returned by taxi to London in the small hours. Isabel was also a great friend of Francis Bacon. Perhaps the only thing about her that was not beautiful was her corncrake voice, but towards the end of her life it was her eyes that gave out: she was nearly blind in her old age. She had her own studio at Sampford to which she

Isabel *pensierosa*, with Alan and Giacometti bust

could retire to work or escape unwelcome visitors. All the local inhabitants adored her and would do anything for her.

The pianist James Gibb, now in his eighties, was a good friend of practically everybody I have written about. As with many of them, the comradeship with AR had begun and been cemented, as it were, in the pub, in this case the Washington in England's Lane, Hampstead. Jimmy's initial impressions were of a mild-mannered, dignified, fastidious, almost Edwardian gentleman. They took to each other straight away – indeed, quite soon Alan entrusted Jimmy with the premiere of his piano Sonatina, which was typical of Alan's faith in certain performers. Jimmy found it difficult to get Alan to comment on or criticise his playing of his music, although when he could be prevailed on, his views were always understanding and instructive. Even when Jimmy did something not quite as written, Alan would be prepared to consider or even accept the new interpretation. Although Alan professed not to like Brahms, Gordon Green told Jimmy that Alan's own performance of the old Hamburger's Handel Variations was excellent; Alan never referred to his own playing and Jimmy, like most people, scarcely ever heard the composer play a note. AR was always reasonable, too, to opponents or with those whose views he did not share. The only occasion on which he did round on someone was when Peter Heyworth, who had criticised a piece of Alan's in *The Observer*, started to apologise when offered a lift in Alan's taxi. (It is also on record somewhere that Alan once almost came to blows with an anti-Semitic bigmouth in a pub.) To revert to Brahms, it was noticed that AR often advised young composers to study his works if they wanted to improve their craftsmanship.

If they needed a teacher he would recommend that they study with his friend Alan Bush. AR himself said that he learned most about his own craft not from a teacher of 'compo' but from Frank Merrick, his piano teacher at the Royal Manchester College of Music. Jimmy got on equally with both of Alan's wives. He agreed that it was a strange measure of Alan's and Isabel's mutual devotion that Isabel settled down happily in the Essex countryside, which she walked vigorously, map in hand, whereas Alan never walked anywhere if he could help it, possibly because of the rheumatism he suffered from as a child and later. James Gibb played most of AR's piano music, the concertos many times, including the first concerto at Tonypandy where there was an Army symphony orchestra (Rubbra was stationed there for a time too).

Biddy Noakes lived with her husband Roy in fairly remote Yorkshire. Roy was a sculptor whose death mask of Alan will be known to readers of *The Creel*. Biddy, a daughter of the actor Bernard Miles, was for a long time the guardian of Isabel's personal effects including a bundle of her passports. It was Biddy who told me about a correspondence between Alan and Isabel during Isabel's travels in Africa. Letters from Alan? Wow! Letters, according to Biddy, that would grace, if not the *News of the World*, perhaps the *Sunday Times*. Where were they? Not with the trunkful of effects that had been in Biddy's possession but were later transferred, I gather, to Isabel's trustees at Tate Britain. The letters, Biddy told me, were with Isabel's brother Warwick Nicholas, who lived in Canberra. I wrote asking for sight of them, but in his reply Mr Nicholas informed me that there was no correspondence relating to the African visit, only some poems which, from the handwriting, could be from Alan to Isabel.[2]

I was interested to see that a detailed biography of Louis MacNeice had been published but disappointed that it contained only a couple of references of the 'and Alan Rawsthorne' kind, frustrating considering that they were supposed to have been great friends. I was similarly disappointed when Humphrey Searle's widow granted me access to his autobiography, *Quadrille with a Raven*.[3] His slight acquaintance with Alan in London grew when they were both in Bristol in wartime. Humphrey speaks well of Alan's *Kubla Khan*, performed there and lost shortly afterwards in the bombing. He tried to persuade Alan to reconstruct the work but it never happened.[4] Humphrey found AR's company congenial and his humour 'pawky'.

Encouraged by the two John members of the Rawsthorne Trust, Belcher and Turner, I went to the States in 1995, going first to Los Angeles to garner further information from Alan's friend and protégé, the composer Gerry Schurmann. Gerry also took me to see the actor and mime Basil Langton, who was at Dartington Hall when Alan was resident pianist to the mime and dance class. Basil has written a fascinating memoir of his friendship with Alan, so I do not need to rehearse it again here. But he did put me on the trail of Paula Morel (1905–96), then still at Dartington.[5] She started off in the Dance School, fell in love with Alan, and was with him in a nasty car crash in Devon in 1934; Paula married and later became librarian and wardrobe mistress at Dartington, where she and I

often had contact during the time I was organising the Summer School of Music between 1953 and 1981. Latterly Paula did marvellous flower arrangements at the Hall. Gerry enjoyed a unique relationship with Alan and I need not say more about that because Gerry has written extensively about it in *The Creel*; Alan was as much mentor as friend to him, though Alan would never lay down the law to the younger man.

Down in Dorset I saw Julian Bream who told me about Alan's last composition, not quite finished at the time of its composer's death but, as Julian explained, it was clearly in ABA form and all that was required was to represent the A2 section maybe with some slight variation and invent a final chord. Julian was present at the funeral and says he will never forget the scene when those present filed past the grave and each threw in a flower. When Isabel's turn came she hurled her flower with all her force. Rage, frustration or grief? Or maybe she had tanked up before the service.

Alun Hoddinott adored AR's music and the man likewise, but apart from some gobbets about AR the trencherman and AR the bibber there was not much fodder for the biography, except that he confirmed AR's inability to boil an egg. The violinist and conductor Harry Blech said similar things about AR's lack of domesticity but since Harry's domestic competence was roughly on a par with AR's I wonder how he would ever have noticed it. Harry knew AR from their student days in Manchester and they shared a flat in London when AR came back from his studies in Berlin and Poland with Egon Petri. AR's letters to Harry are printed in the biographical section of Alan Poulton's three-volume study published in 1984–6.

It was Poulton's work, along with Barbara Rawsthorne's *Diary of an Edwardian Childhood* (issued posthumously in 1995) plus my interview with her cousin Elizabeth Bridge, that enabled me to finish the first three chapters of the biography commissioned from me by the Rawsthorne Trust. These were not too difficult to put together, leaning heavily on these three sources. After that there is practically nothing for a biographer to work on. There are no diaries, a handful (*one* hand) of letters, an article or two – beyond that, not a thing to go on. Which is why, after two years of interviewing, writing letters, visiting the archive at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and the archive at AR's publisher, the Oxford University Press, I threw in the sponge. Sir John Manduell at the College had nowt, the late Alan Frank, AR's OUP minder, the same. The pity of it is all the more considering the few excellent letters that AR did pen, chock-full of vivid descriptions and witty accounts of people met and places visited. He was always saying to me, 'Time enough for that sort of thing, young man'; he might have had his would-be biographers in mind.

But let me continue my odyssey. The late Elizabeth Bridge, who shared a flat with Alan's sister Barbara, was most helpful. My notes after our first meeting begin: 'Hale (where she lived in Cheshire) but not hearty'. Fortunately our second meeting a year later in Dunster near Minehead found her in much better health. She had known Alan since their childhood and confirmed the universally held

impression of Barbara's great qualities. Incidentally, Liz Lutyens once composed a piece for unaccompanied violin (which my late wife Olive Zorian broadcast) called *Aptote*, a series of portraits of her friends. They are rather spiky (more enigmatic than 'Enigma') and it is not easy to recognise in them much likeness to anyone, though their verbal designations are, well, apt. Her husband comes out as a snail, Humphrey Searle a cat, Constant Lambert a bat, Alan Rawsthorne a moth and Barbara as a glow-worm. Liz's autobiography contains some eighteen references to Alan, mostly of the 'and Alan Rawsthorne' variety, which seems to be the case in any books that do mention AR. Typically frustrating for a biographer – Alan was 'there' but is all but invisible, like a well-behaved moth.

Notes

1 Mathieson, musical director of over five hundred films and chief conductor of film music in this country, worked for Korda and later the Rank organisation, and was responsible for getting Bliss, Alwyn, Rawsthorne, Walton, Richard Rodney Bennett – then only 19 – and many others to write for films; he was king of the biz at Pinewood and Denham in the forties and later, at a time when every film had a hundred-piece orchestra playing away in the background. (Strangely, the rival firm, Ealing, had Muir's brother, known as Doc, as big a cheese in their music department as Muir in his, although at Ealing Ernest Irving was the supremo with Doc as his assistant.)

2 The letters eventually found their way to the Archive of the Royal Northern College of Music, and extracts were printed in John McCabe's *Alan Rawsthorne: Portrait of a Composer* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

3 Though unpublished in book form, the memoirs are available online at www.musicweb-international.com/searle.

4 *Kubla Khan* has been newly orchestrated from the vocal score by Edward Harper (commissioned by the Ida Carroll Trust), and the work in its new form had its premiere at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, conducted by Philip Mackenzie, on 30 March 2008.

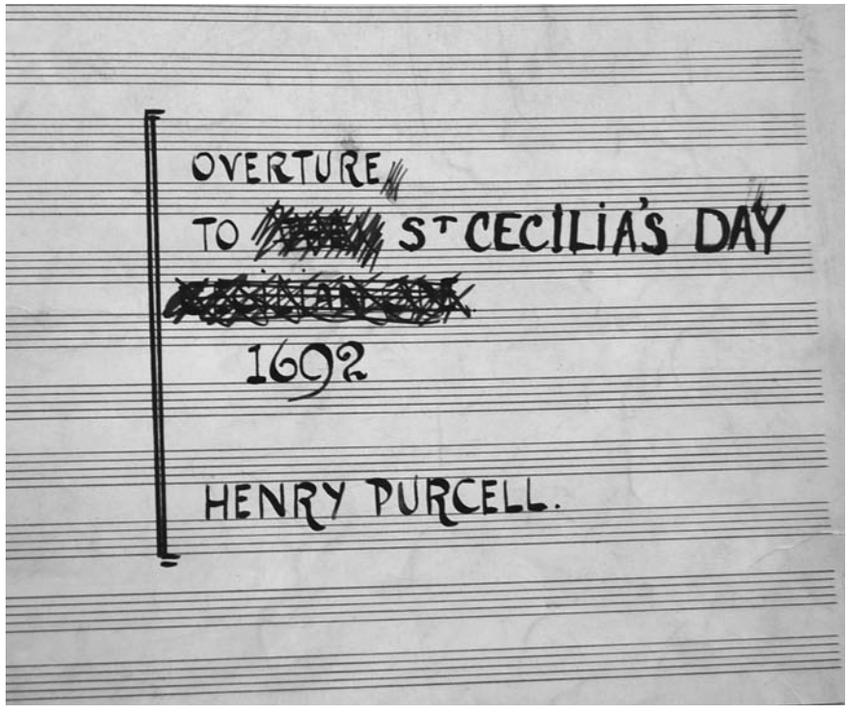
5 Some letters from Alan survive in the Paula Morel papers at Dartington: www.dartington.org/archive/display/PM.

Alan Rawsthorne and St Cecilia

John Turner

John Turner has recently acquired the autograph manuscript full score and copyists' orchestral parts of Rawsthorne's arrangement of the Overture to Purcell's 1692 Ode, the whereabouts of which were unknown, and he writes about the background to this work. This article first appeared in Manchester Sounds*, vol. 8 (2009–2010), which was published in April 2011, and is reprinted with the kind permission of the trustees of the Manchester Musical Heritage Trust.*

In 1683 the 'Musical Society' started a series of annual celebrations of St Cecilia's Day (by tradition 22 November), and poetic odes in praise of the saint were written by Dryden, Pope, Congreve and others, set to music by Purcell (1683 and 1692), Blow, Eccles and others. The celebrations, at first in St Bride's Church and later in Stationers' Hall and other venues were held annually until 1703 (except for 1686, 1688 and 1689), but thereafter only occasionally. Similar celebrations took place in Oxford, Winchester, Edinburgh and elsewhere. Purcell's great 1692 Ode, setting words by Nicholas Brady, was given in Stationers' Hall, with the



choirs of St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal, with soloists (including Purcell himself who sang the beautiful and elaborate song '*Tis Nature's Voice* 'with incredible graces') and instrumentalists from the King's Band and theatres.

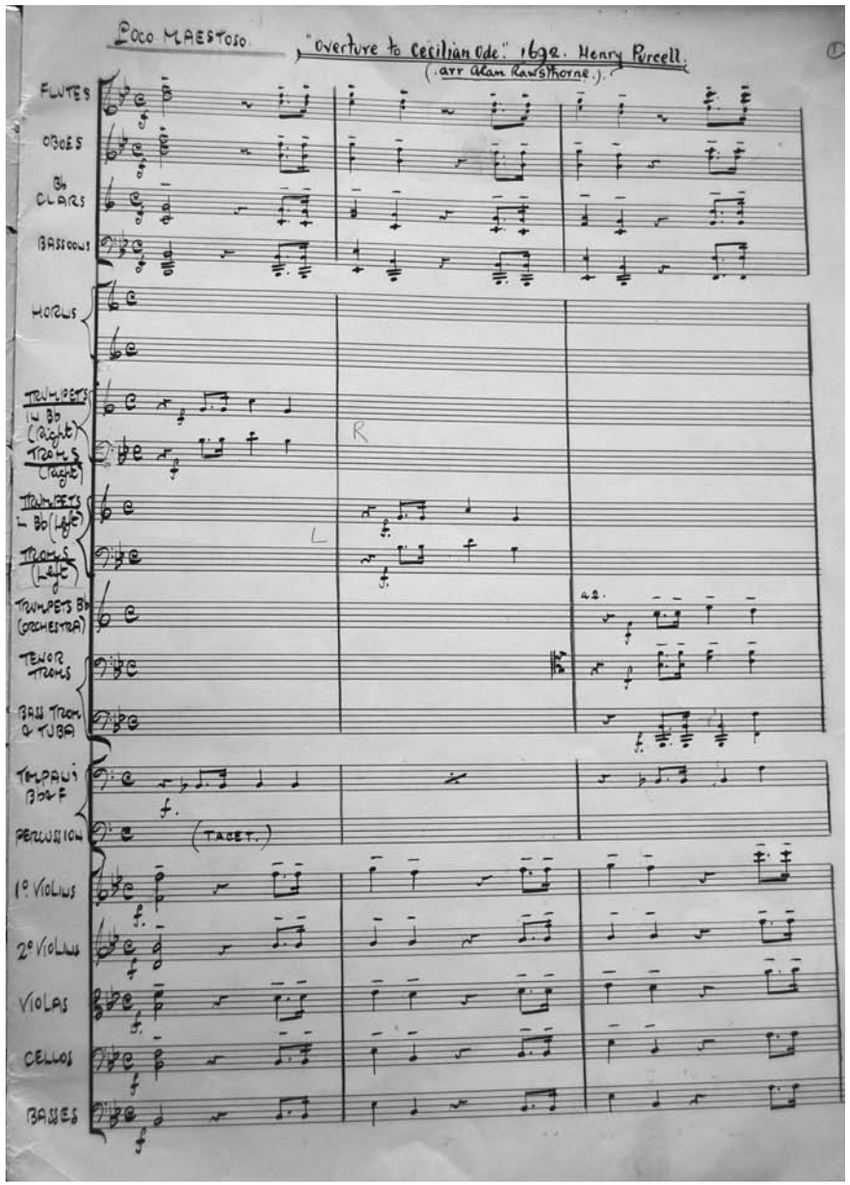
The tradition was kept alive intermittently by later composers including Boyce, Samuel Wesley and Parry, and most notably by Benjamin Britten (himself born on 22 November) in his Auden setting *A Hymn to St Cecilia* of 1942.

The Cecilian tradition in England was revived in spectacular fashion by a concert under the patronage of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth at the Royal Albert Hall on 22 November 1946, sponsored by the *Daily Herald* in aid of the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. A lavish programme book included photographs of the King and Queen by Cecil Beaton (as well as photographs of most of the composers (but not Rawsthorne), an engraving of St Cecilia ('by Stocks from an engraving by Domenichino'), a poem specially written for the occasion by the Poet Laureate John Masefield, and an article about St Cecilia by Dermot Morrah, with information taken from Anglo-Saxon texts. The article concludes: 'The present festival day ... is offered on behalf of all British musicians and especially for the benefit of those among them who are in worldly need, in tribute to her well-loved name.' The performers were the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, trumpeters from the Royal Military School of Music, the Alexandra Choir, Phyllis Sellick and Cyril Smith (pianos), and Arnold Greir (organ), conducted by Adrian Boult. There were three first performances in the concert – apart from the Rawsthorne arrangement there were Vaughan Williams's Concerto for two pianos and orchestra (arranged from his piano concerto with help from Joseph Cooper) and Rubbra's motet *The Morning Watch* Op.55 (Rubbra in 1981 wrote a *Canzona for St Cecilia*, for orchestral brass). In addition the concert included works by Bliss, Walton, Bax, Walford Davies and Elgar – a veritable feast of English music.

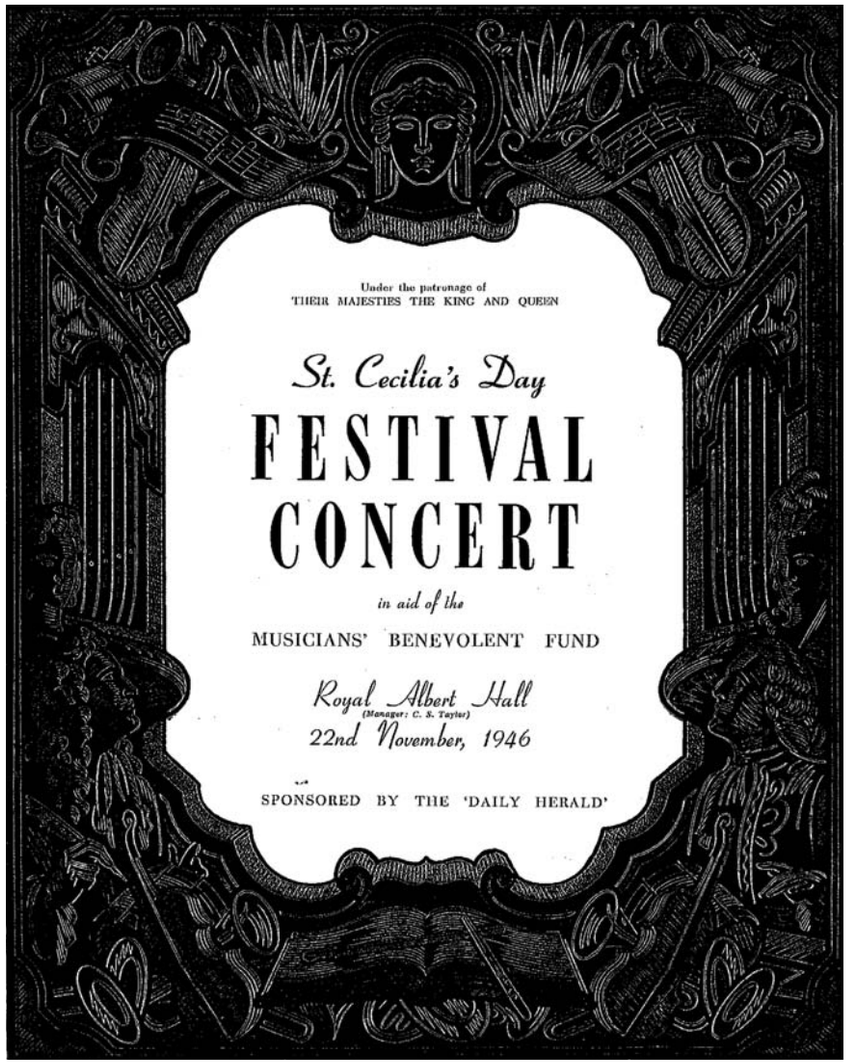
Rawsthorne's original title for his arrangement was *Overture to the Cecilian Ode (1692)*, which appears on all the original orchestral parts, but on the cover of the manuscript score this has been amended (see photograph of the title page). Perhaps Rawsthorne was recalling his own early publications with the Cecilian Press.

The original Purcell scoring for the overture was strings, two trumpets, two oboes, and kettledrums. In later movements two recorders (possibly also a bass recorder) were used, and I personally recall with some nostalgia my first commercial recording, which was of this very ode with the English Chamber Orchestra under Charles Mackerras, who adored the sound of the bass recorder that I played. It is still available on CD.

Rawsthorne's rescoring is for strings, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two orchestral trumpets, three orchestral trombones, tuba, and timpani, as well as parts for antiphonal trumpets and trombones right and left with side-drums – presumably these latter parts were played by in unison by several players, and the fact that there are no extant separate parts for these



antiphonal brass instruments with the otherwise complete set of orchestral parts might suggest that they played from memory. Their parts in the score were marked 'R' and 'L' by Boult, presumably so he knew where to look. The orchestral parts were apparently prepared by R. Bramson Music Service of Oxford Street, London.



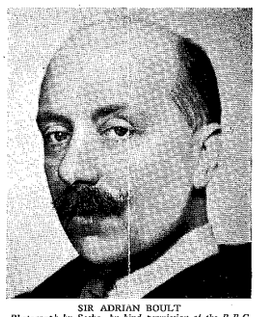
PROGRAMME

ST. CECILIA'S DAY FESTIVAL CONCERT

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22nd, at 7 p.m.

Conducted by

SIR ADRIAN BOULT



SIR ADRIAN BOULT
Photograph by Sasha—by kind permission of the B.B.C.

THE LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Leader—Andrew Cooper

THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Leader—George Stratton

TRUMPETERS FROM THE ROYAL MILITARY SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Conductor—Capt. M. Roberts
(By kind permission of the Commandant: Col. R. G. W. Callaghan)

THE ALEXANDRA CHOIR
(Conductor—Charles Procter)

Solo Pianofortes
PHYLLIS SELLICK AND CYRIL SMITH

Organist
ARNOLD GREIR

No Smoking

Fanfare for Heroes ... ... Bliss
(Specially composed for the Musicians' Benevolent Fund)
Conducted by Capt. M. Roberts
Director of Music, Royal Military School of Music

Audience standing. In memory of THE FALLEN.

* *

March, "Crown Imperial" ... ... Walton
(For two orchestras, trumpeters and organ)

* *

Overture, St. Cecilia's Ode, 1692 ... Purcell
(Orchestrated by Alan Rawsthorne for two orchestras and trumpeters. Specially arranged for this concert)
First Performance

* *

"Soul of the World" ... ... Purcell
(For chorus, string orchestra and oboes)

* *

Northern Ballad, No. 1 ... ... Bax
(For two orchestras)

Concerto for Two Pianofortes and Orchestra ... ... Vaughan Williams
(Specially arranged for this concert from his pianoforte concerto, by the composer, in collaboration with Joseph Cooper)
First Performance
PHYLLIS SELLICK AND CYRIL SMITH

Interval

Fanfare for a Ceremony ... ... Walford Davies
(Specially composed for the Musicians' Benevolent Fund)
Conducted by Capt. M. Roberts
Director of Music, Royal Military School of Music

* *

Motet, "The Morning Watch" ... ... Rubbra
(For chorus and orchestra. Specially composed for this concert)
First Performance

* *

Enigma Variations ... ... Elgar

* *

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM ... ... Elgar

Royal Albert Hall
Nov. 22 1946
at 7 p.m.
TO BE RETAINED
Balcony 5/-
S 684

Royal Albert Hall
Nov. 22 1946
at 7 p.m.
TO BE RETAINED
Balcony 5/-
S 685

Rawsthorne transposed the original score down a major third from D to B flat. The fanfare section in triple time was rescored for brass and percussion alone, and the overture concludes with the *Grave* section (without the usual reprise of the fanfares) for the full orchestra, climaxing with the entry of the organ. This splendid concert was the first of the Royal Concerts given under the auspices of the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. The tradition of the Royal Concert continued through the years, the last being given in 2008 by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, under Petrenko, and including a new work by Mark Simpson. However, the Musicians' Benevolent Fund continues to celebrate St Cecilia's Day with a Festival Service, including commissioned anthems – that for 2010 being in Westminster Abbey, with a new work by Jonathan Dove.

Editorial Disclosures

John Belcher

Foreword by John Turner

Those of us who have Rawsthornian involvement know John Belcher for his encyclopaedic knowledge of the composer and his music, and have long admired his stylish, articulate and informative writing and notes for CD booklets, as well as his enterprise and efficiency in arranging and participating in the Society's annual celebrations in Oxford. He has himself energised the recent rehabilitation of the composer's reputation, so that Rawsthorne now stands higher, albeit still not high enough, in the pantheon of British composers.

But John has always been a very private man (as evidenced by his personal reluctance to countenance any gossip or tittle-tattle about Alan Rawsthorne and his private life). None of us has known much about John's own personal life, or his professional career, and how these have been germane to his dedication to and promotion of Rawsthorne, who patently came to mean so much to him. Throughout, his much-loved partner Sybil Pentith, a charismatic music teacher, was a kindred spirit and a great supporter to John in all his musical activities, and we know just how keenly he felt her loss.

I personally begged John (who was hesitant to say the least!) to write this article, since his and Sybil's contribution to the history of twentieth-century British music demanded some documented knowledge of the person and the personality behind the printed words and the far-sighted actions to benefit the music. I know that we are all grateful to him for agreeing to reveal so much about his life and his thoughts.

When I was asked by my fellow trustees to write a valedictory autobiographical essay, two questions immediately came to mind: what purpose would this serve, and what form might it take? The suggestion was that I should provide personal and extra-musical background information which would contribute to an appreciation of the setting within which my musical enlightenment evolved. Taking a holistic approach – a symbiosis of life plus art – provides the opportunity to assess the credentials which lie beneath the wide range of views and opinions I have expressed, mainly in writing, about music in general, British music in particular, and the music of Alan Rawsthorne in detail. I concluded that a straightforward narrative best served these objectives. From such a record, readers can decide for themselves how far the extra-musical disclosures have been germane to my judgements, especially when evaluating Rawsthorne's contribution to the rich tapestry of British music.

The act of writing about the events of my childhood and early adolescence has led me to conclude that this period of my life was the most seminal for the growth of my subsequent musical awareness. These were exceptionally eventful years,

overshadowed by a world war (itself a stimulus to artistic creativity). A dependable measure of that period and its span can be expressed by the creative output of Vaughan Williams. He responded eloquently to the environment in the years extending from the gestation of his Fourth Symphony (1931–34) to the Sixth Symphony (1948); surely an exciting era in which to become musically aware.

Antecedents

'Reports of the events surrounding my birth have been greatly exaggerated.'[1] Nevertheless, the event was of a magnitude to cause mother to exclaim 'never again', which explains why I have no siblings. In a first floor flat in Salford Road, behind Streatham Hill station, London SW2, I entered the world at ten minutes past midnight on Sunday 13 March 1932, fifteen months after my parents had married.

My parents had first met early in 1918 when my father was posted to Whitby for coastal defence duties, his designated portion being the stretch of railway line between Whitby and Sandsend. Equipped with a Lee-Enfield rifle and magazine of bullets, he was the most unlikely infantryman to have been given the task of holding back Kaiser Bill's invading hoards, had they in fact invaded – at that stage of the Great War they had other pressing engagements far away on the Western Front. He had been conscripted in 1917 and drilled in the expectation that he would go to France. For some reason his regiment was overlooked (shades of Lieutenant Kijé): an early instance of the good fortune which attended him throughout the ensuing sixty-eight years of his life.

My parents' first meeting was in a musical milieu and was to be the first time Euterpe, the muse of music, song and lyric poetry, entered our lives. Mother was a semi-professional contralto on the local 'Messiah' circuit and a member of the renowned choir of the largest Methodist chapel in the town. She, and her fellow choristers, attended the local YMCA to sing to the resting troops. Shortly after this first meeting father was posted far away to the Isle of Sheppey, to carry out his coastal defence duties there instead. It seems that nothing further transpired between them for the subsequent eleven years, until, unprompted, he wrote asking after her health and marital status. It transpired that in the intervening years both had experienced failed relationships. The outcome was that they married on Boxing Day 1930, and the following day departed for the place of father's birth and upbringing: Stockwell, London SW9.

For the whole of his working life father was a clerk or cashier in a variety of jobs, dutiful but by all accounts lacking in ambition – a man who liked to control his environment. Mother was at the other end of the spectrum: gregarious and one of a large group of friends made up of both sexes. Bereft of this camaraderie her translation to London was particularly distressing.

My childhood, spent in the blue-collar quarter known as Streatham Hill, appears to have been uneventful, apart from our annual visit to Whitby for a three-week holiday. Between these visits we had a choice of local parks for our recreation. Within walking and pram-pushing distance were Tooting Bec and Streatham Commons and Brockwell Park, where the nearby photograph of a precocious conductor was taken in the summer of 1933. This image became a family icon, fancifully held to be a portent of my later musical interests. The picture has been edited to exclude father, seated on the left and in his over-cautious way saying 'Mind he doesn't poke out your eye Dot,' because Father anticipated danger even in the most benign of situations. Throughout my life at home he was the source of dire warnings; it was like having the male equivalent of Cassandra, equipped with second sight, as a lodger.

My childhood traversed the familiar path signposted 'chicken pox', 'mumps', 'measles', 'whooping cough' and 'glandular fever'. Suffering from one of these afflictions meant that I had to vacate the one bedroom in the flat, to be accommodated instead in the front room. Euterpe intervened again by directing my attention to father's 'Columbia' graphophone and his record collection, both located beside mother's upright piano. In a tradeoff I was permitted to use the graphophone but not the piano. This concession awoke in me feelings which I was then unable to articulate. I experienced pleasure each time I placed the needle of the heavy tone arm on the shellac disc. I now conclude that it was the thrill and magic of conjuring up pleasurable sounds. That feeling has remained with me, whatever the medium – shellac, vinyl, audio tape or the silver disc – and is felt most intensely at a first playing.

As to the record collection, this ranged from Ketelbey's 'Bells across the Meadows', through pieces arranged for the organ and played by Edwin H. Lemare, John Foulds's 'Celtic Lament', Ernest Lough singing 'Hear my Prayer', extracts from *Messiah*, and the 'Peer Gynt' Suite, to the crowning glory: the Prelude to *Die Meistersinger*. But above all these was my favourite, Peter Dawson singing 'The Boys of the Old Brigade', which I played time after time until mother could bear it no longer and took away the winding handle. Acquaintance with this eclectic collection served me well; repeated playings taught me how to discriminate.

In early adolescence I took this inherited collection as a starting-point in forming my own – a process which was not without difficulties. Mother, ever sensibly thrifty, did not approve of additional purchases. For her, music was something you made for yourself around the family piano. Additions had to be smuggled in beneath my pullover, a twelve-inch record producing a most unnatural profile – a deformity which rarely escaped mother's eagle eye.

Being a singer, mother encouraged me to follow in her footsteps. As a private activity this did not present a problem; performing before third parties was,

however, ruled out by shyness. Other musical knowledge came vicariously from mother's friendship with a soprano member of the BBC Choral Society, whose rehearsals mother attended. This association culminated in 1937 when mother was a guest at a dinner celebrating a season in which Toscanini conducted a series of Beethoven concerts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Her enthusiasm conveyed the message that music must be something very special and worthy of exploration.

The Day War Broke Out

We were taking our annual holiday in Whitby in September 1939 when war was declared. The moments immediately following the declaration are etched indelibly on my memory. They are centred on the figure of Grandmother Smith, my mother's mother. She was dressed in a blue-and-white patterned, wrap-round apron and a navy-blue straw hat, and standing, arms akimbo, in the middle of the crossroads adjoining her house, surveying the sky. Other neighbours were on their doorsteps in listening poses. There was an air of expectancy; they were awaiting the sounding of the sirens following Mr Chamberlain's broadcast. They didn't have long to wait. It was a defining moment because nobody made to move, as if not knowing what to expect or how to react. Embarrassed hesitation was relieved when the 'all clear' was sounded.

It was decided that I should remain with grandmother, for whom a boisterous and unhappy boy of seven was to prove a handful. This was further exacerbated by her taking in another evacuee from Hull. When mother received a copy of the school photograph [right] of her scruffy evacuee son, she arranged a half-term visit, her fear being that this was evidence that her mother was not coping. It was decided that I should return to London at Easter 1940. It was to a changed suburb that I returned: one wreathed in an air of anticipation, characteristic of this period known as the 'phoney war'. Anxiety was to some extent soothed by a glorious summer. The description of summer 1938, vividly captured by Louis MacNeice in *Autumn Journal*, might equally apply to that of 1940.[2] The clear blue skies were patterned by vapour trails, as the war was fought above us in the Battle of Britain.

School life was not impervious to change. The buildings of the school I had left had been requisitioned by the Auxiliary Fire Service. Consequently we had to be accommodated in an adjoining school. The resulting aggregate roll meant

that we had to attend alternately, mornings one week and afternoons the next. When the afternoons were free we spent them on Tooting Bec Common, the site of a barrage balloon detachment. This provided hours of interest as we watched the elephantine silver creations, made unruly by the slightest of breezes, being winched in, recharged, and then floated aloft on their cable tethers.

Irrespective of the daily reports of the Germans overrunning much of mainland Europe, the prevailing apathy in the summer of 1940 was similar to that which W. H. Auden described so eloquently and prophetically in 1933, in his poem 'A Summer Night', in which he spoke of carefree leisure activities, friendship and love in England, while political storm-clouds ominously gathered in continental Europe.[3]

The end of the phoney war was abrupt and brutal, delivered one Saturday afternoon in September 1940 and focused on London's Dockland and Woolwich Arsenal. The attack produced a collage of sounds: aircraft engines, the crack of the anti-aircraft battery on the Common, the crunch of bombs reaching their targets and the bells of fire engines converging from the southern home counties in a seemingly endless cavalcade along Streatham High Road. Daylight disclosed the carnage of the first of many nights' visitations by the Luftwaffe.

Gone to Earth

School routines began to be interrupted by daylight air raids. We would be ushered into windowless cloakrooms and seated on the long wooden benches. We were given chewing gum as a specific against ear damage caused by blast waves. I reflected that when chewing gum in class the 'blast' usually came from the teacher who proffered a waste paper basket with the exhortation 'Spit it out!' We nursed our gas masks, which went everywhere with us. We even had drills in putting these on in haste, thus emulating Wilfred Owen's apposite description of this act as 'An ecstasy of fumbling'.[4] The teacher would visit each pupil in turn to see that no gaps existed around the edges of the rubber face piece. It didn't take long for us to discover that by compressing the mask and breathing out heavily the voice of flatulence filled the classroom.

The nights of the uninterrupted first London blitz, September to November 1940, were spent underground in a public air raid shelter. This was no more than a cellar beneath a four-storey building which housed shops and flats. It had hastily been turned into a place of refuge by the construction of a wide staircase and rows of wooden slatted benches. The pervading odour of the shelter was of the aromatic resin of pitch pine and fresh limewash. As night progressed into early morning the smell from chemical closets began to taint the air, adding to its piquancy. The only prone bodies were those of children who, like me, slept on the concrete floor on a bed of corrugated cardboard beneath the seats occupied by their parents, who had to snatch such sleep as discomfort and the sound of anti-aircraft guns permitted. The steady note of the 'all clear' brought relief from this subterranean confinement. As the cramped bodies stretched their limbs in the early morning light the astringent stench of burning timber assailed our nostrils,

causing us to quicken our steps homeward to confirm whether or not our flat was contributing to the miasma.

As we made our way there the sight of rooms exposed where gable walls had collapsed became a familiar sight. They were very like dolls' houses whose hinged outer wall had been opened to gain access. Here curtains flapped in the early morning breeze and the intimacies of strangers' bedrooms were exposed to public gaze. Most impressive of all was the sight of frost covering the road and pavement outside the shelter – only it wasn't frost, it was powdered glass, a creation of 'merciless beauty'.

As we turned into our road the distant sight of our flat, apparently undamaged, brought partial relief. On opening the door the acrid smell of soot suggested that we had not entirely escaped minor damage. Splintered glass littered the floors in spite of the criss-cross application of sticky brown parcel tape to the window panes. It was tempting to snatch some sleep if we had an early 'all clear'. However, the priority was to prepare father's breakfast so that he might make his way to his job as chief cashier to a firm of law printers in Holborn – always assuming that the trams were still running and that his workplace was still standing. It was a matter of travelling hopefully rather than arriving – whether to or from his work. Should the air raid warning sound, the traffic would be halted and the passengers on trams and buses disembarked and directed to the nearest public shelter until the 'all clear' sent them on their way. At home mother became distraught with anxiety at father's unexplained absences.

Retreat

The early weeks of November brought no let up in the nightly raids and three months of only fitful sleep coupled with angst took their toll. We sought respite by moving to St Albans to stay with friends. This developed into a semi-permanent arrangement. Euterpe had not quite deserted us. During the raids she had appeared in the guise of an amateur 'entertainer' who insisted on performing on his piano accordion in the shelter, all for our delight. She was to reappear in more serious vein when she conspired with Hitler to provide an opportunity for me to receive professional music tuition. This came about as a result of mother's ambition to see me in the Abbey choir stalls at St Albans in the red cassock of a chorister. Her determination won for me the first musical and vocal training I ever received.

For probationers, training of the ear was basic and was conducted by Mr Mills, a sub-organist who came to us from St Paul's Cathedral in the City of London. We gathered round a grand piano situated at the rear of the high altar, in a pale glimmer provided by candles – the means of meeting the blackout conditions. There Mr Mills would teach us by solfège, firing random pitches on the piano for us to identify. The other part of training was rather Wackford Squeers-like, learning by doing. Dr Albert Tysoe, the Abbey's organist and choirmaster, was a formidable and pedantic tutor, whose temper was as short as his stature. In choir practices we wrestled not so much with the notes as with the unfamiliarity of the language of the Miles Coverdale version of the Psalms in the Book of Common Prayer. Apart from the usual daily choral services, weekday afternoons were reserved for funerals of civilians caught up in the conflict. Most pitiable of all was the sight of adult coffins accompanied by one or more smaller ones of children. Such sights instigated further flight.

Resettlement

The raids followed us as a magnetic mine seeks out the steel hull of a ship. This led to a further relocation, this time to the North, to mother's brother, Horace, in Leeds. After a frightful rail journey, stopping, starting and being shunted into sidings due to local raids along the line, we arrived at our destination. We sought no more than a period of respite before returning to London. However, Horace drew father's attention to the recruitment of clerical staff at the local Royal Ordnance Factory. Father applied, was offered and took up a post immediately. Aged forty at the time, he was to remain there until his retirement in 1965. His early days were exceptionally demanding. At that stage of the war he worked from seven o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock in the evening, seven days a week.

Eventually we moved to the Leeds suburb of Crossgates near father's place of work. Here mother was restored to her Methodist roots, becoming an active member of the local chapel and its choir. Just as she had secured for me a place in the choir at St Albans, she now involved me in chapel musical events which employed my childish vocal contribution. At the same time I was put to the piano rather reluctantly and impatiently, having little time for five-finger exercises and scales.

In a lifetime it happens that one sometimes meets one or more individuals who exercise a life-changing influence. I had the very good fortune to live next door to the local vicarage and to be befriended by the vicar, Father Gerard Romeo Taglis, a childless widower. Each morning the sound of his piano emanated from his music room. I later learned that it was his habit to play each day, and in published order, one of Bach's Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues. On one occasion as I played in the vicarage garden the music ceased abruptly. He left the vicarage and invited me to sit in his music room to listen to the piece I had interrupted and

whose drama had fed my curiosity. To an audience of one he played the Brahms B minor Rhapsody Op. 79. This was the beginning of a relationship which I conclude was beneficial to each of us, he the mentor and I the pupil. He would lend me records from his collection, mostly Brahms, Schubert and Schumann. The E flat Piano Quintet Op. 44 by the latter held then, and still retains, the power to thrill when I hear its arresting opening – one work in a rich legacy he bequeathed to me. Another part of his gift was to treat me as if older than my actual years. Although at the time I was incapable of fully appreciating this new repertoire, I stored it up to become capital upon which I was to draw as I matured. My father's opinion was that this made me precocious (the first signs of conflict between us, as he found it difficult to accept that I had more knowledge than he). It was Father Taglis who sowed the seeds of curiosity in me, leading to a voyage of musical discovery.

A Little Learning

Neither parent had had the benefit of secondary education. Mother's determination that I should have this opportunity was to deliver what was perhaps the greatest benefaction I was ever to receive, when in 1943 I was enrolled at West Leeds High School for Boys. In the future this was to open doors for me and to present opportunities that my parents had been denied.

Built in 1907, the school would not have looked out of place had it been situated in Stalinist Russia. It was, however, what went on inside its walls which was important. Here it was that Euterpe was to introduce to me my next musical mentor, Charles (Basher) Bainbridge. He might have been described as an ambitious and pioneering teacher, one ready to challenge convention in order to extend the experience of his pupils. His wish was to form a school choral society. That was not exceptional, but since it entailed cooperation with the Girls' School, strictly segregated in the other half of the building, it was at first too much for the establishment to contemplate. The prospect of a four-part ensemble, singing new and challenging repertoire, was a chance he was not prepared to miss, and one which drove him to persist in breaking down resistance to the proposal. Eventually he received reluctant and lukewarm consent. This was to lead to performances of demanding works culminating in performances of Handel's Dettingen Te Deum, the first performance in Leeds of Vaughan Williams' Magnificat, and of the Mozart Requiem.

On 7 June 1945 there occurred a seminal event in British music, the premiere of Britten's *Peter Grimes*. Within days Charles Bainbridge had obtained a copy of the vocal score and in ensuing lunch hours he gathered us around the piano and introduced the work, communicating his enthusiasm in the process. This was my introduction to opera, which was to draw me to the Grand Theatre, there to stand at the back of the upper balcony. I heard all the visiting touring companies, especially the Carl Rosa and Covent Garden. There I learned the 'popular' operatic repertoire. Concurrently we were encouraged to keep listening diaries. In mine, hitherto unknown names began to appear, many of them British: Elgar, Holst, Vaughan Williams, Walton, and a composer who then featured very regularly: Frederick Delius. As an ardent cinema-goer I began to see these names appearing in the music credits, Vaughan Williams and Walton in particular.

It was around this time that I first became acquainted with the name of Alan Rawsthorne. The Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) arranged a series of Industrial Concerts for munitions workers, which father was eligible to attend free of charge. I recollect two such events, one given by the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the other by the London Symphony Orchestra. The Czech-born Walter Süsskind conducted one of these. Two works captured my imagination: Sibelius' second symphony, my first acquaintance with him as a symphonist, and the overture *Street Corner*. As the opening chords called us to attention I was spellbound; I had never before encountered such sounds, such astringency and such musical energy and swagger. The journey from Ketelbey's 'Bells across the Meadows' to this urban street corner was a long stretch. Thus began a love affair with the Rawsthorne sound, coupled with frustration at not having an opportunity to hear it again. I did try to obtain a score, as was to become my practice. All that was available was a copy of the Bagatelles for Piano. Fortunately, in 1946 a recording of the overture was released, soon followed by *Symphonic Studies*. It was not until the advent of the long-playing disc that further examples of his works became accessible.

In 1947 the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra was founded, adding to the growing number of musical opportunities on hand. For a fee of sixpence, students were able to sit behind the orchestra. Under its founder-conductor, Maurice Miles, it built up a repertoire which embraced a generous number of contemporary works, many of them recently composed. The orchestra provided the opportunity for new works to be given a play-through in the composer's presence. Edmund Rubbra's sixth symphony and John Veale's first were performed. The LSO gave performances of the Vaughan Williams sixth and seventh symphonies very shortly after their premieres. Leeds had two choral societies (in one of which I sang an etiolated bass), which provided the backbone of the Leeds Triennial Festival. At the 1958 Festival I was present at the first performances of the *Nocturne* by Britten and Peter Racine Fricker's *The Vision of Judgement*. The City Library had a well-stocked music section, to which scores of the new works were added as soon as they were published. A record lending service was established upon the advent of the LP. Although geography accurately describes the location of the cultural opportunities and resources as 'provincial', in this case it would be unwarranted to ascribe to the word the meaning 'unsophisticated'. To be a resident with access to these enriching amenities caused me to count myself a 'citizen of no mean city.'[5]

Gainful Employment

It was in Leeds that I was first to earn my living. Again mother's influence, determination and connections secured for me the post of a junior clerk in The Yorkshire Penny Bank at a salary of £120 per annum on leaving school in 1948. The expectation was that I would be conscripted for two years' National Service in 1950, but I was categorised Grade 3C and so had to forego this experience. Whilst my contemporaries were 'square bashing' my career was moving ahead. In their absence I passed some parts of my professional examinations. Juniors had to pursue their studies in three-hour sessions at night school at the end of the business day, concluding at nine o'clock; onerous, but the price of progress.

In December 1950 I met Sonia who was to become my wife in 1956. That meeting had two recurring components, the first my mother's involvement, and the second music. Both came together when she arranged for us to meet at a piano recital and for me to escort Sonia home afterwards. Euterpe now manifested herself as matchmaker. During a four-year engagement we pursued our musical interests, progressing from behind the orchestra up to the balcony of the Town Hall. We attended the York Festival, most notably in 1954 to hear English Opera Group performances of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and Berkeley's freshly minted *A Dinner Engagement*, and Dame Edith Sitwell and Peter Pears reciting Walton's *Facade*. 1954 was a golden year for British opera. There were first performances not only of *A Dinner Engagement* but of *Nelson* from the same pen; Walton's *Troilus and Cressida* and Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. The names of composers hitherto unknown to me began to surface. Tippett I came to know from the recording of his second String Quartet, which led on to trying to fathom *A Midsummer Marriage*. Others were Nicholas Maw (once tutored by Sybil), John McCabe, Richard Rodney Bennett and Malcolm Arnold, to name a selection.

The birth of our first child, Mary, on my birthday, turned 1959 into a red-letter year. It also found me working on the enquiries counter of the main branch of the bank in the centre of Leeds, a position which brought variety, responsibility, and the need for a broad range of knowledge. Previously I had decided to add to my professional qualification some additional legal subjects, partly out of curiosity rather than of necessity. I gathered that this brought me to the attention of the management. Together with a handful of my contemporaries I was taken to a Leeds city centre hotel to spend three intensive days with the senior head office managers. Some weeks later I was called into the manager's office and informed that from the following Monday I was to be transferred to the Head Office Securities Department.

Securities was the bank's legal department and was almost entirely concerned with preparing documents of charge on collateral deposited to secure loans, including mortgages and debentures. The work required a high degree of accuracy and responsibility which was reflected in an above-scale salary. This year and those which followed brought curtailment of our concert and recital going: our attention was focused on the children and we were reluctant to rely upon babysitters. Records and the Third Programme became the main means of keeping abreast of musical developments, most notably of new operas from Britten and additions to the Vaughan Williams symphonic cycle.

New Pastures

In spite of a more than adequate salary I began to feel restless and unfulfilled. It was a routine, impersonal existence and I became convinced that there must be a caring role for me to fulfil, not the exploitative one I was involved with – there had to be more to life than taking the books out of the strong room each morning and returning them there each night. A crisis was threatening. Crystallization came from an unanticipated source: my mother's health. She was diagnosed with cancer, which was treated successfully. What made this so difficult was father's denial. Keeping the diagnosis from mother in these circumstances created tension which derived from having to live a lie. The tension fell upon me, testing my emotional reserves and capacity to handle the stress and conflicts of loyalty which this generated. During my lunch hour I started to visit Holy Trinity church in the heart of the city, a quiet place to contemplate the circumstances. There I met the priest who was to be another mentor and have a part to play in the future course of my life. Canon Howard Hammerton was a saintly and humble man who wore his wisdom and scholarship unobtrusively and was gentle of manner. He listened to my concerns, offering no solutions but guiding me to find my own. So it was that I found that I had a vocation to the priesthood, which I saw as the pathway to a caring ministry.

I attended a three-day residential selection conference and was conditionally recommended for training. The condition was that I should wait a year, giving both the church and myself the opportunity to be

certain that this was the right course. I made good use of that year by taking a correspondence course in New Testament Greek, a prerequisite for entering academic training. It was towards the end of the same year that I was called to a further interview, the outcome of which was that the Bishop of Ripon sponsored me for training. Two further things were required of me: first to secure a grant to pay for my training and maintenance – this Leeds City Council did for two years – and secondly to gain a place in a theological college. An invitation to an interview at Rochester Theological College followed shortly, coinciding with the birth of our second daughter, Margaret, on 30 January 1962. I was offered and accepted a place and began to make plans to move our growing family into an attic flat in St Nicholas vicarage, Rochester. We shared the vicarage with two other families and a lone student.

Rochester Theological College had opened in 1959 with the specific purpose of training men older than the usual graduate intake – men from business, industry and commerce, and those who had completed their tours of duty with the armed forces. It was situated in the old deanery, parts of which bore evidence that it had once been a monastery. The building was linked to the cathedral, in whose crypt the college had its chapel. Being attached to the cathedral and the life of its close introduced a way of life wholly unlike that of our previous experience: our days were ordered by a regimen compounded of the devotional routines of a monastery and the academic ones of an Oxford college.

The Warden

Here it was that I encountered the man whose life and example had the greatest influence upon me, a man the like of whom one only encounters once in a lifetime and who leaves an indelible mark. He was the Warden of the College, Oriel Canon Stuart Blanch, later Bishop of Liverpool and then Archbishop of York. Our Old Testament tutor, he was the possessor of profound learning. The seminar system required us to present before him and our peer group the results of our weekly assignments. To bare one's academic soul before him could have been very intimidating but for his benevolence; however feeble our efforts he always corrected us with a sense of humour and the lightest of touches. He excelled at all he undertook, including volleyball. On the tennis court I never won a match whilst playing singles or doubles against him. Sitting at his side in the cathedral library at the Rochester Hebrew Study, each a learner member, I was able to observe at close quarters his academic facility, measured against my own

inept performance. His outstanding powers of communication made him a consummate teacher, able to draw the best out of his students who, in turn, revered and loved him.

On top of the academic rigour of the theological course, we were assigned regular pastoral duties, working with a variety of chaplains – at the local borstal, Maidstone prison, the BP oil refinery, the training ship *Arethusa* and in the local hospitals. I was placed with the chaplain of St Bart's acute hospital, where I gained much valuable experience which I was to draw upon in carrying out my post-ordination pastoral ministry.

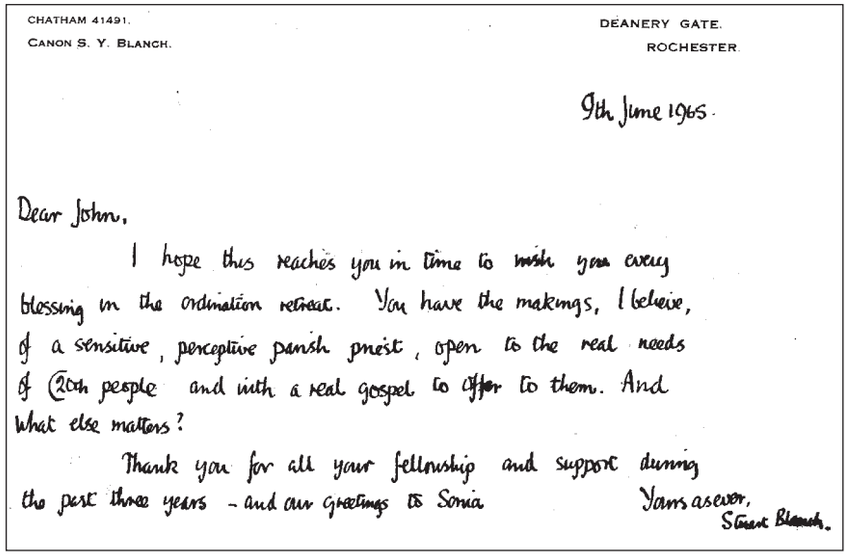
Musical activity centred on the cathedral, where the Director of Music, Dr Robert Ashfield, was charged with instructing us in the performance of the priest's liturgical music. He was a perfectionist, though he had to concede that some students were incurably tone deaf. I made known to him my musical interests and background. Each Wednesday he taught at the Royal College of Music and had a regular place at our dinner table on his return from London. Taking coffee in the common room afterwards provided me with the opportunity to learn from him about his life and music, not only as an organist but also as a composer. Just before I had come to college a major musical event had been the first performance of Britten's *War Requiem* in 1962. This work, a major topic of our exchanges, had been a prominent subject of musical discussion at the time of its premiere and remained so for some years, until familiarity dulled the edge of the debate which divided critical opinions after its early performances. The records and vocal score of the work were the only music purchases I was able to make; I could hardly afford them, financed only by a bursary, but a broadcast of the first performance from Coventry Cathedral produced this imperative response: I just had to know how Britten had created so many innovations.

I was the only member of the college who aspired to be a pianist – a designation quickly revised after my contribution to the Christmas concert. In spite of this I was pressed into playing the organ, with even more risible results and teasing by the Warden. This was characteristic of college life, imbued with a light-hearted ethos cultivated by the staff to lighten the academic load and the long days. This view was endorsed by Stuart Blanch in his reply to my letter wishing him well on his retirement in 1983.

'You mention those "matchless years" at Rochester. Looking back over my ministry now with a certain air of detachment, I realise how much I enjoyed them – not only the work and the fellowship but the sheer fun of it all, despite the pressures under which so many of you were working and living.'

On the eve of ordination he wrote to every student preparing for that day. His letter to me contained his imprimatur and encouragement for the kind of ministry he discerned that I hoped to exercise:

'You have the makings, I believe, of a sensitive, perceptive parish priest, open to the real needs of 20th-century people and with a real gospel to offer to them. What else matters?'



CHATHAM 41491.
CANON S. Y. BLANCH.

DEANERY GATE.
ROCHESTER.

9th June 1965.

Dear John,

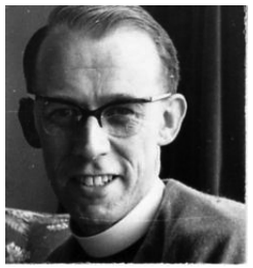
I hope this reaches you in time to wish you every blessing in the ordination retreat. You have the makings, I believe, of a sensitive, perceptive parish priest, open to the real needs of 20th people and with a real gospel to offer to them. And what else matters?

Thank you for all your fellowship and support during the past three years – and our greetings to Sonia.

Yours as ever,
Stuart Blanch.

Curate and Vicar

I graduated in May 1965 and was ordained deacon on Trinity Sunday, 13 June 1965, in Ripon Cathedral, to a curacy in the market town of Richmond in North Yorkshire. For the following three years I was given great latitude to realise a ministry consonant with Stuart Blanch's perception recorded in his eve of ordination letter. The incumbent who was responsible for my further training was the Rector of Richmond, the Reverend David Sillar. He made no conscious or formal plan for this: I think he may have felt disadvantaged by my previous professional background, or it could have been that my academic postgraduate studies were bringing new and radical insights to stimulate theological debate, which he may have considered to be unimportant. Perhaps this was reflected in his rather cryptic comment, 'When in theological college John became interested in theology.' At this distance I have to conclude that he was an extremely shy and unworldly person who sheltered in the aura of his privileged Cambridge University days. This did not detract from the warmth and the spontaneous welcome he and his family gave to the birth of our third daughter, Anne, on 13 December 1965.



My position was firmly marked out by the level at which I participated in the social life of Richmond. David conducted all the farmers' funerals, which always brought large congregations; I laid to rest the destitute, in the paupers' plot in the municipal cemetery. He joined in holy matrimony the daughters of the landed gentry; to me it fell to provide the sacrament for brides already heavily pregnant. He attended the regimental dinners at Catterick garrison; I expended great effort to avoid being invited to such events. My ministry had its foundation in the cottage hospital, in the police court, in group activities with the town's GPs and, of course, in that solid foundation of pastoral ministry, parish visiting. Musically these were thin years; highlights were recitals by Britten and Pears and by Radu Lupu just after he had won the Leeds Piano Competition.

At the end of three years, over a cup of tea at the Scotch Corner Hotel, Lord Lonsdale, patron of the living of Startforth in Teesdale, offered it to me, and I accepted. Startforth was then a very small village of some 600 to 700 inhabitants, on the Yorkshire bank of the Tees, facing Barnard Castle across the water in Durham county and diocese. This was in stark contrast to Richmond, and I swiftly discerned that the social foundations were feudal, with the local squire as figurehead and with me as his chaplain. Changes were subject to the squire's consent. I was uncomfortable to be identified with this, sorely missing the ancillary care facilities with which I had been used to working and which had given satisfying form and content to my social and pastoral ministry hitherto.

Startforth Vicarage

The village school introduced two of our three daughters to music-making through the medium of the recorder. Mary graduated to the clarinet and Margaret to the oboe. As both showed promise we were introduced to the local Music Centre in Barnard Castle, which was run by a charismatic music teacher, Mrs Sybil Pentith. On learning of my musical background she offered me a teaching post at the Centre. Through the friendship of her daughter with my three, the two families spent quite a few days of the summer vacation exploring the remote corners of Swaledale and Teesdale. During this time, after confiding in Sybil, I concluded that I would be unable to realise within the ordained, parochial ministry what I had sought when leaving banking. The consequences of this were unthinkable, but nevertheless not to be evaded.

Uprooting

The coming of autumn only increased the depth of my mood, which was becoming melancholic. I took very long walks through the woods that fringed the Tees, trying to figure out a way forward. After applying unsuccessfully for a variety of posts, a critical point was reached when I realised that I was the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time. The patronage system then considered it bad

form to apply for livings; rather one had to wait to be invited – a system hardly designed to solve my dilemma, since young and energetic clergy tended to be given unsuitable placements. This turbulence placed an intolerable burden on my wife who had never given me anything but the most unstinting support at every turn. In spite of that I deserted her and the children to go and live with Sybil, which was to be for the ensuing thirty-two years until Sybil's death in 2004. I resigned the living and asked the Bishop to set in train the relinquishment of my Orders: this he refused to do. I shall not elaborate on all the repercussions of this event. This is an autobiographical essay and not an apologia seeking to explain or justify.

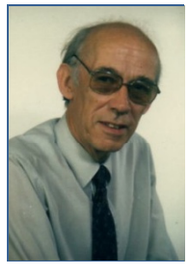
At a stroke this disruption rendered us penniless, jobless and homeless. Temporary accommodation came in the form of the loan of a semi-derelict farm cottage. I continued to apply for diverse posts without success. One day, when Sybil was preparing a bundle of newspapers for the dustbin, her eye lighted on an advertisement in *The Times* for a manager to establish a new housing association in Sheffield to be funded by SHELTER. I applied and was interviewed and immediately offered the post; the job had found me. I accepted and took up the position on 1 September 1972. I was aware that I was standing on the threshold of the unknown, and that I could not afford to fail.

A Compassionate Ministry

I had been greatly moved by the first of Ken Loach's docu-dramas, *Cathy Come Home*, shown on TV in 1966. The plight of the family portrayed was familiar, since even in a country town similar cases came my way, and I was frustrated for want of the only meaningful solution, the security provided by a permanent, affordable roof. The discussion immediately after the transmission, with a group of local authority councillors, angered me beyond words. Their defence was that the problem of homelessness did not exist, or that if it did, it was due to the fecklessness of 'these people', and the councils had neither the duty nor the facilities to deal with the problem. This event led literally overnight to the birth of SHELTER: the Campaign for the Homeless. Throughout the country Shelter campaigning and fund-raising groups were formed to conduct local campaigns and raise funds. In Sheffield, while volunteers were rattling their collecting cans, they were being made aware of the incidence of homelessness in the city. This was the genesis of the determination to have a local housing association. So it was that I became the sole employee of the newly formed Sheffield Family Housing Association. I brought to the job my legal training and management experience gained in fourteen years in banking, added to which were the pastoral concerns which took me into the Anglican ministry.

I found a large flat over a cooperative store in a large Coal Board housing estate in the heart of the South Yorkshire mining industry. Here I set up office with communication dependent upon the public telephone box on my doorstep and a photocopier on the kitchen draining board. Our financial situation was improved when Sybil was employed as a peripatetic string teacher.

By the end of the first year I had secured the target number of terraced properties for refurbishment, thus ensuring continuing financial support from SHELTER. Essentially, my first year was given over to pioneering: persuading the Council that we were not competitors but had a complementary role. Many evenings were taken up with introducing voluntary groups to our work, setting up referral and allocation systems, and joining with other pressure groups in a campaign to impress upon the Council that their plans for wholesale clearance of the older terraces would eliminate the opportunity to provide much-needed homes through refurbishment. In the ensuing years we were to pioneer the provision of accommodation for special projects, licensing properties to voluntary groups concerned: for instance with mental illness, drug rehabilitation, crash pads for young people who had run away from home, and a purpose-built hostel for the Home Farm Trust for the disabled, opened by the Trust's then President, HRH the Princess Royal (see illustration at head of this section). Likewise we designed and built a hospital for Alzheimer's patients, and the city's first women's refuge. We housed Chilean refugees and Vietnamese 'boat people', whilst continuing to improve properties and construct new-build ones for families. This multi-faceted programme was made possible by a team of energetic, dedicated young employees who were in sympathy with the founding objectives of the Association. We extended the territory in which we worked beyond Sheffield and so changed the name of the organisation to South Yorkshire Housing Association.



During my twenty-three-year tenure as chief executive officer of the Association, which terminated with retirement in 1995, it grew to have 2,000 tenancies, 100 staff, and assets of £50m. During those years it acquired an innovative and caring reputation within the voluntary housing sector. During the last fifteen years the staff complement has increased to 400.

'Music for a While … '

It was against this background that music, with its capacity to counteract the tensions of work and the anxieties born of several rounds of cuts in government financial support of the kind now again having to be faced, had for me a sustaining function. This was the time of the foundation of the Alan Rawsthorne Society, the promotion of which became an interest that further eased for me the pressures of responding to the growth of, and changes in, the Housing Association. I was introduced to and came to participate in musical activities in Rotherham, where we had settled, under the aegis of Sybil, who in 1973 was appointed Director of Music

at the local sixth form college, a post she held for twenty years until retirement. She prepared numerous pupils for Oxbridge entrance and music conservatoires, all of whom gained places, with some going on to follow professional careers in music. She also held positions with the main examination boards, in some instances as Chief Examiner.

As a graduate of the Royal Academy Sybil had much valuable knowledge to pass on to me, as well as to her pupils. Our life of music became a clearing house (Euterpe had finally taken up residence); Sybil introducing me to the French repertoire, not just the music but also literature, finding in me a receptive and appreciative learner. In turn I shared with her the more esoteric works of British composers, to which she would sometimes add anecdotal glosses, having been a composition student of William Alwyn. She had rubbed shoulders with fellow students such as Dennis Brain and Norman del Mar, and a generation of singers which included Jennifer Vyvyan and Helen Watts. She had heard of Rawsthorne, but apart from *Street Corner* was not acquainted with his output. Her education in that regard was completed when she joined the committee of the Society and later became a Rawsthorne trustee.

Between the French and British enthusiasms there was a terra incognita inhabited by Wagner, Bruckner and Mahler. We were ambivalent about these composers, especially the third-mentioned, though interested in the period in which they were composing. We explored their Viennese 'derivatives', Zemlinsky, Franz Schmidt and Korngold, adding to our growing library of CDs and scores. This progressed to embrace *Entartete Musik*, the Holocaust composers and the remarkable phenomenon of music-making – both composition and performance – in captivity. We each held that sharing our discoveries and enthusiasms was of the essence. Sybil found the ideal means of realising this by becoming a lecturer for the Workers' Educational Association. She instituted a course entitled 'Musical Journeys and their Associations'. The 'associations' were works of art, historic events, and writing contemporaneous with the works being studied. This she did by means of illustrations culled from her voluminous collection of press and other cuttings, acquired over many years.

When I retired[6] I joined her, and was assigned, among other topics, those which occupied our terra incognita. This we decided had to be explored to provide a comprehensive musical panorama. Thus I found myself researching, testing my prejudices and presenting courses on Wagner's *Ring, Tristan and Parsifal*, Bruckner's symphonies and Mahler's, but not venturing into the territory beyond the *Wunderhorn*-derived works. Seneca's axiom 'Even while they teach, men learn'[7] proved to be sound when applied to research and preparation, especially in those topics to which I was initially averse. Classes were held in three centres in South Yorkshire, and in a period of ten years more than 200 individual topics were presented. When deteriorating health made me incapable of driving to the centres, we devised distance learning courses through the medium of cassette tapes and accompanying notes. Even within eight hours of her death Sybil was dictating notes for what was to be her final session on the subject of 'Women Composers';

such was her work-ethic. She was a great admirer of the socialist, feminist, and pacifist novelist Winifred Holtby, whose epitaph would also be wholly appropriate to Sybil: 'God give me work till my life shall end, and life till my work is done.'[8]

'And so, My Friends, I Cease.'[9]

Much more might be added to the record of these years, but time and space impose their limitations. What is written here is not to be taken as a chronicle of events; the narrative is the product of selection rather than of paring down, having in mind that 'in striving to be brief one becomes obscure.'[10] Significant, but excluded, are events such as support for Opera North in its early years as assiduous season ticket subscribers, and the numerous concerts and recitals we attended. However I hope to have fulfilled my autobiographical brief to reveal the parallel, yet integrated, worlds of the man and his music. At a very personal level nothing could be clearer than that music was the cement which held together and made sound the thirty-two years that Sybil and I were together. It is to her loving memory that this essay is dedicated.

Notes

1 John Belcher – from an unpublished autobiography *A Broken Stammered Tune*, 1988.
2 Louis MacNeice, *Autumn Journal* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939).
3 W. H. Auden, 'A Summer Night', *Collected Shorter Poems 1927–1957* (London: Faber & Faber, 1966).
4 Wilfred Owen, 'Dulce et Decorum Est', *Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*, ed. C. Day Lewis (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964).
5 *Acts of the Apostles* 21.39. Also the title of the second part of my autobiography 1941–1950.
6 The illustration on page 41 shows J.M.B.'s retirement concert, November 1995, at the Merlin Theatre, Sheffield. Left to right: Alan Cuckston (piano); Norma Winstone (jazz singer); J.M.B; Sybil Pentith.
7 'Homines dum docent discunt' Seneca ('the Younger') *c.*4BC–65AD – *Epistulae morales.*
8 Epitaph on Winifred Holtby's headstone at Rudston, East Riding of Yorkshire.
9 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher – from *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (set by Britten at the conclusion of his *Spring Symphony*).
10 'Brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio' Horace 65BC–8BC – *Ars poetica*.

DVDs of Films with Music by Alan Rawsthorne

Andrew Knowles

In his spare time from administering the affairs of the Rawsthorne Trust and the William Alwyn Foundation, and his many other activities, our Chairman is an enthusiastic film buff with an extensive collection of videos, DVDs, and reproductions of original posters. Bearing in mind the considerable involvement of both composers in the production of film scores (the income from which, in latter days, has greatly helped in the promotion and recording of their other music), this hobby is entirely appropriate. He keeps a close eye on the commercial availability of the films, and we are grateful to him for providing an up-to-date list. All should be available via Amazon, or your local dealer if you have one. You will almost certainly only be able to play DVDs in Region 2 format, unless you happen to have a multi-regional DVD player available.

Burma Victory (1945)

British troops are dropped by gliders hundreds of miles behind Japanese lines.

	Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
	Imperial War Museum	AV00668	2=UK
	DD Home Entertainment	DDHE 121471	2=UK
(The Victory Films Boxed Set)	DD Home Entertainment	DDHE 121504	2=UK
(The Victory Films Boxed Set)	Imperial War Museum	AV00618	2=UK

The Captive Heart (1946)

Michael Redgrave, Jack Warner, Gordon Jackson, Jimmy Handley, and many others … featuring the well-known 'Prisoners' March' as the title music.

	Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
	Optimum Classics	OPTD 1069	2=UK

The City (1939)

Rawsthorne's first film. Produced by Alberto Cavalcanti; one of the famous GPO Film Unit documentaries (two others were Britten's Night Mail *and* Coal Face*).*

	Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
(30s Britain vol. 1 GPO Classic Collection)	Panamint Cinema	RMA 1003	2=UK
(The GPO Film Unit Collection vol. 3)	British Film Institute	BFIVD 760	2=UK

The Cruel Sea (1953)

Jack Hawkins et al.: needs no introduction!

	Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
	Optimum Classics	OPTD 0628	2=UK
(Complete War Collection)	Optimum Classics	OPTD 0774	2=UK
(Complete War Collection vol. 1)	Optimum Classics	OPTD 0664	2=UK
	DD Home Entertainment	DDHE 124505	2=UK
	Anchor Bay	Unknown	1=USA

The Man Who Never Was (1955)

With Stephen Boyd, among many others. To confuse the Germans, a dead body carrying false papers is dumped in the sea.

	Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
	20th Century Fox	Unknown	1=USA

Pandora and the Flying Dutchman (1950)

James Mason, Ava Gardner, Nigel Patrick, John Laurie, Marius Goring, and others. A twentieth-century version of the legend referred to in the title.

	Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
(Blue Ray + DVD)	Park Circus	PCB 0008	2=UK
(DVD only)	Park Circus	PC 0008	2=UK
	Kino International	Unknown	1=USA

The Port of London (1959)

Documentary about Dock Land.

	Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
	DD Home Entertainment	DDHE 121359	2=UK

Saraband for Dead Lovers (1948)

Stewart Granger, Joan Greenwood, Flora Robson: historical romance.

	Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
	Optimum Classics	OPTD 0908	2=UK

School for Secrets (1946)
Ralph Richardson, Richard Attenborough, John Laurie, et al. Comedy about the invention of RADAR.

	Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
	DD Home Entertainment	DDHE 120681	2=UK
(Ralph Richardson Classic Collection)	DD Home Entertainment	DDHE 123851	2=UK

Tank Tactics (1942)
Army Film Unit. Also known as Tank Battle.

Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
Imperial War Museum	AV 00763	2=UK

Uncle Silas (1947)
Jean Simmons as a young heiress, menaced by her uncle and his housekeeper.

Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
[Greek import]	Unknown	2=UK

The Waters of Time (1951)
Documentary by Basil Wright about the River Thames and the Port of London.

Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
DD Home Entertainment	DDHE 120685	2=UK

Where no Vultures Fly (1951)
Anthony Steel, Dinah Sheridan. Adventures of a game warden in East Africa.

Releasing Company	Cat. number	Region
Optimum Classics	OPTD 1507	2=UK

The Rawsthorne Trust: providing funding in a tough economic climate

Andrew Mayes

Taking over as the treasurer of a trust that supports the arts can be an intimidating task at any time, but to do so just as the economy entered one of its most difficult recessionary periods for decades was even more daunting. This is not to say that it has been all doom and gloom; supporting performance, publication and recording projects of Rawsthorne's music has certainly continued, but it has been necessary to consider very carefully what we are able to support and the level of funding we can provide. Recent reports of drastic cuts in Arts Council funding are an indication of just how tough the situation has become.

Looking back at the accounts for 2001 makes one realise by just how much our income has reduced since those financially more stable times. The royalty income for that year (mostly from MCPS and PRS) amounted to almost £10,600 (the figure was even higher for some years during the 1990s), but in 2010 was down to a little under £4,400. The reduction in royalty payments is sadly, in part, owing to fewer performances of Rawsthorne's music, but has additionally been affected by a reduction in the level of royalty payments as a result of changes implemented by the PRS. The most significant of these are the abolition of what was in effect their subsidy of classical music performance (the lines between what is deemed classical, light or popular music have become somewhat blurred) and that the distribution of royalty, previously divided equally between the BBC's broadcasting channels, is now based on audience figures. Needless to say Radio 3's share has reduced by about half. Similarly, in 2001 interest on our deposit account was just over £430, whilst in 2010 plummeting rates reduced this to the almost negligible sum of £7.70! Our account with RBS was attracting bank charges, so in 2008 we moved our funds to the CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Bank which provides us with free banking. However, like other banks, they are able to pay only very low interest rates on the type of instant access account we require to make grant payments.

Nevertheless, some important projects have been supported in recent years, most notable among which are the recording by Dutton of *Practical Cats* (that also included premiere recordings of *Theme, Variations and Finale, Medieval Diptych* and *Coronation Overture*); the premiere recording (on the Somm label) of the original version with strings and percussion of Piano Concerto No. 1, and the orchestration, by the late Edward Harper, of *Kubla Khan* together with its publication by Oxford University Press and subsequent performance by the Amadeus Orchestra at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall. In addition to these larger recording and publishing projects we have continued to support live performances, which in 2010 included grants to the RNCM for performances of the Clarinet Quartet and Cello Sonata during their chamber music festival; to Bushey Symphony Orchestra for a performance of the *Divertimento* for chamber orchestra; to the English

Music Festival for a performance of *Four Romantic Pieces*; to the Oxford Coffee Concerts for performances of the Clarinet Quartet and the Viola Sonata during the weekend of our annual reunion, and to the Worthing Symphony Orchestra for a performance of the music for *The Cruel Sea*. In some instances the sums involved have not been large, but grants of a few hundred pounds can make a significant contribution to such events.

The publication of a number of the film scores and a song album are two important projects currently in progress for which funding is being provided. In the case of the song album some of this will come from the Elizabeth Bridge Bequest. Another important item of continued expenditure to which we are committed is production of *The Creel*, now reintroduced and replacing the new-look *The Sprat* of which we enjoyed nine first-rate issues. There remains the need for a publication devoted to Rawsthorne and his music, which *The Creel* can continue to fulfil.

An unfortunate casualty of the present low level of our funds is, however, the Oxford reunion weekend planned for September 2011. Though we will not be able to enjoy the usual get together, with lectures and the dinner, it is encouraging to report that the Adderbury Ensemble will be including Rawsthorne's first String Quartet in the Coffee Concert on Sunday 18 September – perhaps worth a day, or perhaps even a weekend, visit to Oxford.

The Trust is always very grateful to receive donations, and anyone wishing to contribute in this way is encouraged to consider doing so through gift aid.

New Trustees

Following the resignations of John Belcher and Tim Mottershead, two new trustees have been appointed. Both have specific expertise which will be very valuable to the work of the Trust:

Maryann Davison has been archivist of the Royal Northern College of Music – where among many other collections she has responsibility for the Rawsthorne archive – for six years. Previously, she worked at the Derbyshire Record Office.

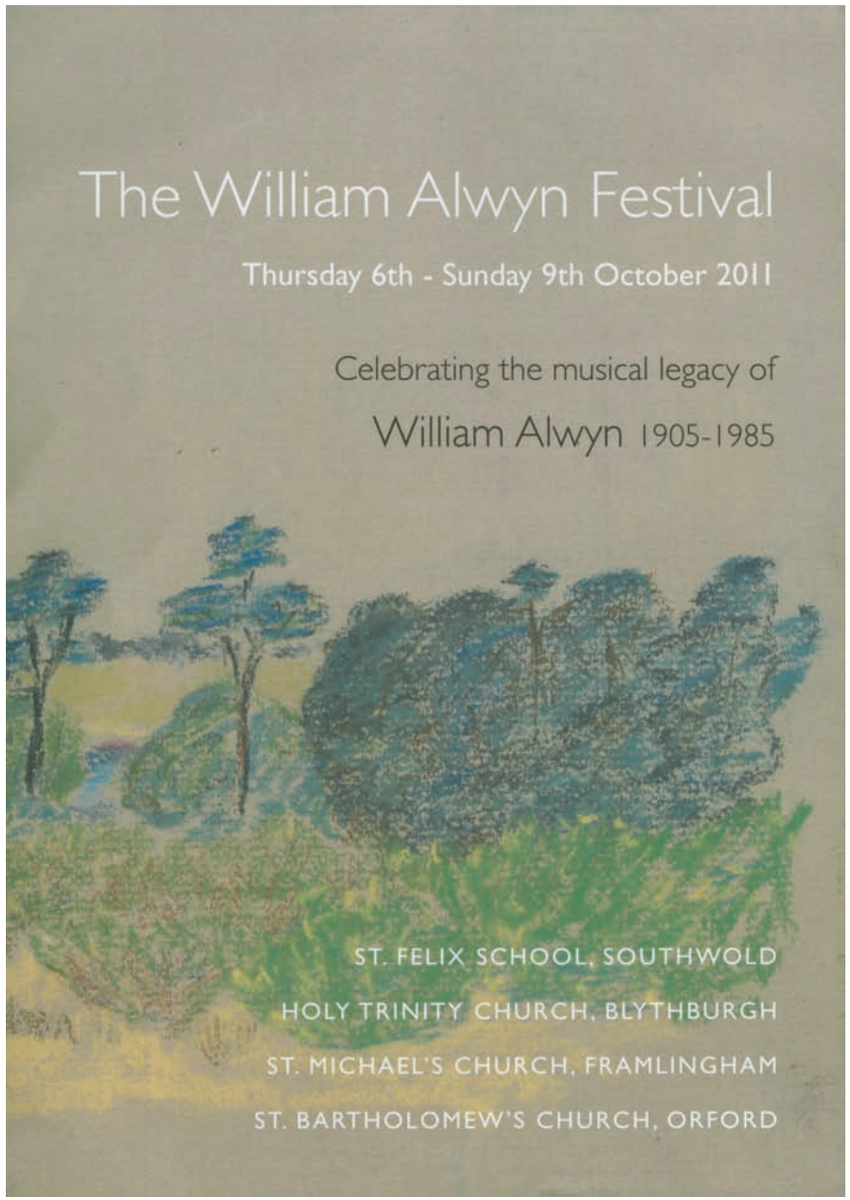
Martin Ellerby is a composer, specialising in works for concert band and brass band. He studied at the Royal College of Music with Joseph Horowitz and privately with Wilfred Josephs. He was formerly Head of Composition at the London College of Music, at the time when John McCabe was Principal.

Rawsthorne: live performances, 2009–2011

The following table, in date order, provides some evidence for the feeling expressed elsewhere in this issue that performances have recently become fewer. But the list may well be incomplete. We tend to know about performances for the reason that we have aided them with grants – and grants themselves have necessarily become rarer due to falling income.

11/1/2009	String Quartet No. 1	Barbirolli String Quartet	Holywell Music Room, Oxford
15/1/2009	String Quartet No. 1	Barbirolli String Quartet	Assembly Room, Chichester
18/1/2009	String Quartet No. 1	Barbirolli String Quartet	Cairn Hotel, Harrogate
29/4/2009	Violin Sonata	Jack Liebeck, Katya Apekisheva	Holywell Music Room, Oxford
23/5/2009	String Quartet (1935)	Bridge String Quartet	Radley College, Oxfordshire
17/6/2009	Theme and Variations for 2 Violins	Harriet Mackenzie and Philippa Mo	St James' Church Piccadilly
26/6/2009	Theme and Variations for 2 violins	Harriet Mackenzie and Philippa Mo	St Bartholomew's Church, Corsham
12/7/2009	Theme and Variations for 2 violins	Harriet Mackenzie and Philippa Mo	West Road Hall, Cambridge
20/9/2009	Cello Sonata	Gemma Rosefield, Ashley Wass	Holywell Music Room, Oxford
20/9/2009	Sonatina for Piano	Ashley Wass	Holywell Music Room, Oxford
20/11/2009	Sonata for Violin and Piano	Madeleine Mitchell, Rudi Eastwood	Rimsky-Korsakov Museum St Petersburg
08/1/2010	Clarinet Quartet	RNCM students	RNCM Theatre, Manchester

08/1/2010	Cello Sonata	Emma Ferrand, Jeremy Young	RNCM Concert Hall, Manchester
24/4/2010	Divertimento for small orchestra	Bushey Symphony Orchestra	Bushey Academy, London Rd.
27/5/2010	*Four Romantic Pieces*	Anthony Williams	Radley College, Oxfordshire
04/8/2010	Suite for Recorder	Olwen Foulkes	Woodhouse Recorder Week
19/9/2010	Clarinet Quartet	Robert Plane, Members of Maggini Quartet	Holywell Music Room, Oxford
19/9/2010	Viola Sonata	Martin Outram, Sophia Rahman	Holywell Music Room, Oxford
14/11/2010	*Cruel Sea* Suite	Worthing Symphony Orchestra	Assembly Hall, Worthing
19/11/2010	Divertimento for small orchestra	St Paul's Sinfonia	St Paul's Church, Deptford
30/4/2011	*Cruel Sea* Suite	St Albans Symphony Orchestra	St Albans Abbey
29/5/2011	*Four Seasonal Songs* for SATB	Syred Consort / Ben Palmer	Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire
18/9/2011	String Quartet No. 1	Adderbury Ensemble	Holywell Music Room, Oxford



For details of the complete programme contact Andrew Knowles

Press Release: University of Oxford Museum of Natural History

Exhibition: **Isabel Rawsthorne 1912-1992 Migrations- Paintings and Drawings**

April 8th – August 31st 2011 Open daily 10.00am - 5.00pm

Upper Gallery Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW
Mail: info@oum.oxac.uk Tel: 01865 272 950

This exhibition of works from 1946-1986 centres on the seven large and luminous 'Migrations' landscapes, the last series painted by Isabel Rawsthorne and the culmination of her sixty year career. It is the first time that they have been shown together as she would have wished.

'Art contraire'
Landscapes, and particularly birds, were as important for Rawsthorne as her portraits or nudes. She broke decisively with English pastoral traditions, however. Her years at the heart of left bank, Surrealist and Existentialist circles, working with Alberto Giacometti and later with Francis Bacon, gave her an unsentimental, philosophical, Parisian perspective. Her studies of natural history lent it precision. She called this her *'art contraire'*.

Rawsthorne grew up in the interwar depression and trained, from 16, at Liverpool School of Art, before winning a scholarship to the Royal Academy. She worked in the studios of Jacob Epstein, Andre Derain and Balthus, but her artistic soul mate was Giacometti. Always a free spirit, she made her name as an avant garde painter in the 1940s, when she exhibited the Cold War canvases of bird skeletons stalking across strange grey spaces, at the Hanover Gallery. These were adapted into her scandalous designs for the ballet version of the tale of the bisexual augurer *Tiresias*, for the Festival of Britain at Covent Garden, also in the exhibition (the Queen and Princess Elizabeth left briskly before the end). The topless costumes were based on Minoan antiquities in the Ashmolean Museum.

Rawsthorne was a pioneer of the Existentialist painting that evolved after World War 2 based on the body. Animals and man were alike for her - beings, clues to life and death. As a child she drew the exotic birds collected by her father on his voyages to trade with zoos. Later, she stole away from the studio to sketch or collect specimens in museums, parks and the countryside. *Green woodpecker (suspended)* was found during the extreme winter of 1946/7. The Natural History Museums in Paris, London and Oxford were favorite haunts.

Like her anthropologist friends Georges Bataille and Michel Leiris, Rawsthorne did not separate art and science. The geese she drew were her own, hand-reared in emulation of the behaviouralist Konrad Lorenz; she sometimes slept with them. She was an early campaigner for conservation and green issues. The most delicate series in the exhibition, based on the lacy but poisonous *Hemlock*, is a vision of Rachel Carson's 1960s description of environmental apocalypse, *Silent Spring*.

Migration is a metaphor for time and transition. The swathes of yellow divided from the blue recall the first divisions of light from dark, sky from land, summer from winter. Within these fields of colour, we see the small particular lives and deaths recorded in sketches: A fallen blackbird, like a dark burial mound, absorbs all light. A singing thrush, as transparent as its song, recalls birds that symbolize the soul in medieval paintings. Rawsthorne's favorite motif, the swallow stayed temporarily in the hand, is celebrated as a metaphor for inspiration. Its shape reminds the viewer of the pen or brush held above the picture as it was painted.

Isabel Rawsthorne painted under the name Isabel Lambert; the paintings are signed IAL.

A catalogue, *Migrations*, is published in paperback (price £5.00) available from the exhibition.

A monograph, *Out of the Cage: The Art of Isabel Rawsthorne*, by Carol Jacobi, is forthcoming from Yale University Press and the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art.

LOTTERY FUNDED ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Note to Editors: *Migrations*, curated by Biddy Noakes and Carol Jacobi, has transferred from The Old Workhouse, Pateley Bridge. North Yorkshire HG3 5LE and is supported by Arts Council England, Harrogate Borough Council and Nidderdale Visual Arts.

For further information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabel_Rawsthorne
For further press information: wendy.shepherd@oum.ac.uk carol.jacobi@bbk.ac.uk biddynoakes@btclick.com

Oxford Reunion 2011

For financial reasons, this will be 'the reunion that never was', to adapt one of Rawsthorne's titles. As Andrew Mayes explains elsewhere in this issue, the Trust's income has fallen dramatically in recent years (as, indeed, has attendance at the annual gathering). Accomodation at Wadham College is not a significant expense to the Trust, but sponsorship of the Sunday Coffee Concert in the Holywell Music Room (the artistic heart around which the rest of the weekend is planned) costs over £1200, even after taking into account the financial help we have received from the William Alwyn Foundation for several years, in an arrangement under which Alwyn's works are programmed alongside Rawsthorne's. As it happens, the Adderbury Ensemble have kindly offered to include Rawsthorne's String Quartet No. 1 in their Coffee Concert of 18 September 2011, without any subsidy from the Trust, so that we would after all have had a *raison d'être* for our gathering. But we had no knowledge of this at the point where we had to choose between booking and abandonment, so the safer course was chosen.

We hope, however, that this will not mean the end of such gatherings. The trustees are considering an event for 2012, probably to be held in Manchester – which is, of course, the city in which the majority of Rawsthorne's studies took place. The Royal Northern College of Music makes a superb venue for meetings, talks and concerts, with accommodation close by at the Manchester Business School; the Rawsthorne archive is housed at the college, making an exhibition of his manuscripts possible; and we hope to encourage student performers to play works by Rawsthorne in a concert during the weekend. At present, it looks likely that this would take place in October rather than September 2012, but at the moment no firm plans have been made.