

THE IVOR GURNEY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 54

October 2013

Report of the Society's Spring Weekend, May 11/12 2013 St Andrew's Church Centre, Churchdown Gloucestershire



The Severn at Maisemore Weir, visited on the Sunday morning walk

The Gurney Society's Spring Weekend returned in 2013 to its usual meeting place at St Andrew's Church Centre, Churchdown. After the AGM, the afternoon's proceedings began with a talk and poetry readings by Philip Gross, Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Glamorgan. He explained how the River Severn featured in his own writing, drawing on the landscape, family connections and his fascination with language and sounds. He referred

to Ivor Gurney's love of the Severn and made links to Gurney's poems.

Jeremy Dibble, Professor of Music at Durham University, presented a life of Hubert Parry. His talk was enlivened by frequent musical extracts about which he spoke knowledgeably, making Parry's work accessible to the whole audience. Connections were made with Gurney and Gloucestershire.

The day was rounded off with a recital of piano music by Jonathan Musgrave, who currently holds the Anthony Saltmarsh Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music, London. The recital included works by Parry, Howells and Moeran. Gurney's Piano Sonata in F Minor was also played movingly.

On Sunday morning, many members and friends joined Eleanor Rawling for a walk around Maisemore. The theme of the walk was *The Severn and the Saltbox*, introducing walkers to Gurney's early visits to Maisemore with his family, his poetry about the river and meadows and his desire to live up to his father's hopes for him as 'a lover, maker, server of earth, the born of Gloucestershire'. For those who finished the walk despite the rain, a visit was then made by car to the 'Salt Box', the beer house frequented by Gurney's father, now known as the Rising Sun, and to Yew Cottage, formerly his grandmother's house.



Yew Tree Cottage in the early 1900s (IG Archives)

NOTE: Spring Weekend 2014 will be on May 3rd and 4th.

Reserve the dates in your diary!

The Spring event will be held in Gloucester and the day will be designed to fit in with Gloucester Choral Society's *'For the Fallen'* Concert taking place at 7pm on the 3rd May. The concert programme will include Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*, Elgar's *The Spirit of England*, and Richard Shephard's *There Was Such Beauty* which sets words by Ivor Gurney and FW Harvey.

Chairman's Report (Rolf Jordan) 2012-13

This is my first report as Chair and I am happy to say that my predecessor left the post in excellent condition and that I sincerely hope to continue his good work. My own past twelve months as Chair have largely involved minor housekeeping duties, so I would like to draw primary attention to the important work Kelsey Thornton and Eleanor Rawling have done in producing our publications. Eleanor has collated two Newsletters - in October and February - and Kelsey delivered the eighteenth volume of the Society Journal, which I hardly need remind you he has edited for every year of its existence. His little cover drawings are a welcome sight each year. These publications go all over the world, and are an invaluable resource: sincere 'thanks' to both of them for all their hard work. Philip Lancaster's work on the website is also crucial, and is directly responsible for bringing in the majority of new members - who can pay their subscription online - and it also provides a healthy outlet for our shop. In fact a complete set of Journals recently went to the University of Korea at Seoul.

Presently we have around 200 UK members and twenty-two overseas. The membership is looked after by John Phillips, who has been on the committee from the very start. I am very pleased that he became Joint Secretary and Treasurer at the last AGM. In handling both the ticketing and venue hire for today's event, we should be particularly grateful to him.

Last year's Spring Weekend on May 5 and 6 was based in Gloucester Cathedral's chapter house. It began with a song recital by Michael Lampard

accompanied by Christopher Boodle. It was a great pleasure to meet, and indeed hear Michael, who actually lives in Tasmania. I'm sure we all would love to have him back again. Philip Lancaster then gave us a short talk on Gurney's links with the Cathedral (and then a memorably long one on where to find lunch in Gloucester!). Finally, the Society's patron, Ian Partridge, was interviewed by Ian Venables. We are very grateful to Philip for facilitating that event, which ended in the choir stalls of the Cathedral with an organ recital by Ashley Grote, prior to choral Evensong. This service featured two Gurney first performances: the organ prelude on *Rockingham* and the fascinating motet for double choir, *Since I believe in God the Father Almighty*. On the following day, Graham Middleton led an evocative and highly informative walk around the centre of Gloucester.

Earlier this year, Eleanor Rawling designed and produced a new series of Society notecards for us. There are two sets comprising four designs each, showing Gurney's Gloucestershire, together with extracts from his poems. (These are available here today, and via our website.) We feel sure these will sell as well as their predecessors did!

In reporting now on recent and forthcoming publications, performances and recordings, I hope members will be reminded to find fuller details in their Newsletters. Firstly, rumour has it that the edition of Gurney's Complete Poems, edited by Tim Kendall and Philip Lancaster will probably be issued by Oxford University Press at the end of 2014 (start saving). The Cheltenham Poetry Festival last month had what its co-Director Robin Gilbert called 'a feast of Gurney'. This included a showing of the *Severn & Somme* film, and a poetry walk led by Eleanor Rawling.

The forthcoming Novello Ivor Gurney album will be the first new song volume in twenty years. This will include first publication of recorded songs like *On Wenlock Edge*, as well as new editions of out-of-print songs such as *Snow* and *I will go with my father a-ploughing*. The Trust's work on the album should be over by the autumn. Ivor Gurney will be featured in concerts at the English Song Weekend in Ludlow at the end of this month, where audiences will hear Gurney's cycle *The Western Playland* and Iain Burnside's dramatic presentation *First War Poet of England am I*. The annual song series at Tardebigge in Worcestershire will hear further Gurney songs in two concerts during the summer.

Philip Lancaster - who on Tuesday was told that he has earned the title *Dr Philip Lancaster* – is performing a recital with Susanna Spicer and musicians from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Appropriately enough it will be in Gloucester, during the Three Choirs Festival. This will feature Philip's own arrangement of the *Five Elizas* cycle based on Gurney's unique scoring of the song *Sleep*.

Gurney's relatively neglected instrumental music continues to be explored by musicians in search of something new – as we will hear in our recital later. An EM Records disc was released in February of Ivor Gurney's *Violin Sonata in E flat* performed by Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin) and Matthew Rickard (piano). This recording, for which the Society was a subscriber, also includes music by Elgar and Lionel Sainsbury. A disc of piano music called *The Sons of the Morning* performed by Iain Burnside was issued by Albion Records. It includes Gurney's Five Preludes and his Chorale Prelude on *Rockingham* - an arrangement by Stephen Banfield of the organ piece played during our Spring Weekend last year. Gurney's *Coronation March*, one of his three extant orchestral works has been recorded by the BBC for future broadcast. The conductor was David Parry, who also conducted the recording of *A Gloucestershire Rhapsody* that was recorded and broadcast for Radio 3 last year.

An event created by the mezzo Sarah Connolly without any input from the Society or the Trust – other than donations from Society members raised via the Newsletter - is the Ivor Gurney Memorial Festival, to be held in August at Gloucester Cathedral . This takes the shape of gala-style concerts to raise funds for an Ivor Gurney window in the Cathedral's Lady Chapel. The window will be designed and made by Tom Denny, whose work you may know from his Traherne window at Hereford Cathedral. Apart from Sarah Connolly, other musicians taking part include The English Chamber Orchestra, Tenebrae, Adrian Partington and Felicity Lott, with Simon Callow as reader.

This 'outside' initiative is encouraging, and an interesting example of the rising artistic interest in both the words and music of Ivor Gurney. But he needs this Society's gentle advocacy still, and in the forthcoming centenary years of the Great War there should be ample chance for us to widen general interest far beyond our specialist and enlightened group, if only to present him in

historical context as a soldier. Go down into Gloucester and see what happens when you mention Ivor Gurney's name. I would very much like to see, by the end of the 14-18 centenary a considerable reduction in the number of people that reply 'who?'

I will finish with a date for your diaries. Provisional plans are being made for next year's Spring Event, which we hope will take place on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 May, 2014.

Rolf Jordan, 11 May 2013

The Ivor Gurney Society; Summary of income & expenditure for 2012/2013

Amount brought forward from 2011/2012		2282.22
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Income

Subscriptions & donations	1984.50	
2012 Gurney Weekend	716.50	
2013 Gurney Weekend	427.50	
Merchandise & Notecards	228.96	
Donations to Gurney Window	220.00	
Monies for transfer to Gurney Trust	239.00	3816.46

Expenditure

Subventions & Subscriptions	450.00	
Society Journal (printing)	1004.00	
Society Newsletter, printing/distribution	713.95	
Merchandise & Notecards	460.83	
2012 Gurney Weekend	405.00	
2013 Gurney Weekend	60.00	
Monies transferred to Gurney Trust	960.84	
General expenses (stationery/postage)	86.60	4141.22

Balance as at 31 March 2013		1957.46
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John Phillips (Treasurer) 1st May 2013

The Ivor Gurney Memorial Festival Gloucester Cathedral, 31 August 2013

A memorial festival was held at Gloucester Cathedral on Saturday 31 August to celebrate the life and work of Ivor Gurney, and to raise funds for a new Tom Denny stained glass window to commemorate Gurney.

Programme:

11am Morning recital of music and poetry readings

2.00 pm Talk by Stained Glass Artist, Tom Denny

7 pm Evening Concert

Review of the Morning Recital, 11am

by Ian Venables

The day's event began with a celebrity song recital, entitled, 'Ivor Gurney and Friends', given by Sarah Connolly, Dame Felicity Lott, James Gilchrist, Neal Davies together with the pianist James Middleton. Although, billed as a song recital, it proved to be much more than this. Structured around extracts taken from Kate Kennedy's forthcoming biography of Gurney, an imaginative narrative sequence was interspersed with songs that both reflected and commented upon the formative episodes of Gurney's life. Felicity Lott opened the recital with an inspiring performance of Gurney's *Down by the Sally Gardens* and Howells' exultant song *Come Sing and Dance*. The scene then moved to 'Gurney's Childhood', narrated by Vernon Harwood, a well-known presenter on BBC Radio Gloucestershire. James Gilchrist was in fine voice for the next two songs by Gerald Finzi, *Call off your eyes from care* and *Dear think not*. They provided a seamless transition for the next phase of Gurney's life at the RCM. This was underscored by Gurney's dramatic setting of Thomas Hardy's *The Night of Trafalgar* composed in 1913 and Vaughan Williams' *Let Beauty Awake* sung by Neal Davies.

The whole song sequence reached a natural climax during the War years with Sarah Connolly's moving and compelling performance of Gurney's *By a Bierside*. This song was flanked by her deeply expressive interpretation of *Sleep* and a ravishingly beautiful performance of Howells' song *King David*. After a touching account of Gurney's final years in the asylum, the recital concluded with Stanford's short unaccompanied choral work *The Blue Bird*. For this little gem of English choral music the recitalists all came together

with the solo part sung beautifully by Helena Maybery – a student from Wycliffe College in Stroud.

Review of the Evening Concert, 7 pm

by Ange Grunsell

We all owe Sarah Connolly a huge debt of acknowledgement for bringing together such an eminent group of musicians and the actor Simon Callow to deliver a programme of inspirational insight into Gurney's life and work and to bring to a wide cathedral audience the attention Gurney deserves.

The evening concert was played before a full cathedral. An introduction from the Dean silenced an excited buzz. "The nation is short of a commemoration of Ivor Gurney, a former chorister at Gloucester Cathedral, and Gloucester Cathedral is short of a window" he said, "and this concert is a small step to putting both matters right". The Dean prayed for Ivor Gurney and all those with mental illness, who have so much to teach us.

Tenebrae and Nigel Short opened the concert with exquisite and powerful unaccompanied singing of Gurney's anthem *Since by God the Father Almighty*. Simon Callow followed on with the first of his many readings from letters and poems. Ivor writing from Ypres in 1916 grieves for fallen colleagues, longs for a good piano and to be 'out of it all. I am tired of this war, it bores me.'

Tenebrae sang *Like as the hart desireth the water brooks*, composed by Gurney's friend Herbert Howells. It sounded rich, yearning and gorgeous, as a prelude to the poignant homesick writings of longing for Gloucestershire, written from Gurney's dugout and ending in bleakness: 'are you optimistic?'

We were given space to reflect as the English Chamber Orchestra played Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, intricate and emotive. The first half concluded with a 1916 letter to Howells, a poem, *To His Love*, and three magnificent songs. The first song, *In Flanders*, arranged by Howells, was sung by Neal Davis, who expressed so fully, Gurney's lucid nostalgia for Gloucestershire hills. Then Sarah Connolly's voice burst upon us reaching to the furthest corners of the cathedral, at once disturbing and exciting. She sang *Sleep* and *By a Bierside*, both examples of Gurney's words and music coming together at their most powerful.

After the interval, all the performers conducted by Adrian Partington came together to sing an extract from Part 1 of Mendelsohn's *Elijah*. They were joined by a young chorister with an angelic voice. The sadness and yearning of Elijah at human folly, expressed beautifully in Neal Davis solo *Lord God of Israel*, was followed by the hopeful chorale *Cast thy burden upon the lord*, gently sung by Tenebrae making an appropriate backdrop to the story of Ivor Gurney, sensitive victim of an insane politics.



(Source of Photograph:
<http://www.bachtrack.com/review-gloucester-cathedral-ivor-gurney>)

Simon Callow reminded us of the frustrated Gurney bewailing his unrecognised lot and his illness, as a segue into the premiere of Judith Bingham's *A Walk with Ivor Gurney*. This provided chilling and haunting sweeps of music, passionate riffs and wide open landscapes, evoked by the unaccompanied Tenebrae. Judith's programme notes speak of Gurney's sense of time and of people's past, living in the Gloucestershire landscapes, specifically the villa at Crickley.

As Gurney's behaviour became alarming and erratic, his life was eventually confined to asylums, in Gloucester initially then Dartford, Kent. Forgotten and bitter, he continued to write both poetry and music. His poem *To Crickley* reflects *The gods have not saved you. What gods are these?* As an enduring footnote to our sense of Gurney's ambiguous and lonely life, two songs *Lights Out* and *Bright Clouds* were sung hauntingly by Sarah Connolly accompanied by the English Chamber orchestra conducted by Adrian Partington. Tenebrae sang the enigmatic *Bluebird* composed by Charles Stanford.

I found myself wondering whether, if Gurney with us at this concert, he would have relished the recognition and loved the reincarnation of his landscapes, or would he perhaps have maintained a healthy scepticism and distance?

Ivor Gurney: the poet who loved the war

Clive Flowers, Director of *Other Roads*, an independent film production company, describes the background to making a documentary about Ivor Gurney for BBC4.....

There have been several attempts to tell Ivor Gurney's story on television and, while each has its merits, each has inevitably fallen short, often by attempting to tell the entire Gurney story. There is just too much to tell in any one documentary, in this case 58 minute in length. There are many potential angles backed by a mountain of material. The poems would be one focus; there are the famous ones but there also remain over a thousand unpublished poems, many unread but now graciously catalogued by Gurney scholar, Philip Lancaster. Then there is the Gurney music canon, with Radio 3 currently planning to run Gurney as 'Composer of the Week'. Then, of course, there are the letters, volumes of them. No one ever called Gurney idle - well apart from his brother and that's yet another story. The family, the eminent friends, the walker and nightwalker, the loner, Alfred Cheeseman, the tortured soul, the Royal College of Music, Marion Scott, Gurney the soldier, the asylum years and the legacy all are possible entries to discovering Gurney.

Adopting a strict chronological narrative would not only have been impossible but laborious too. It was clear we had to make choices. The plan was to run with Professor Tim Kendall's thesis that much of the asylum poetry has been wrongly dismissed as the result of sad mental decline. In fact, Kendall believes that Gurney returns compulsively to his experience in WWI, producing some of his finest work in this period. Indeed, in the documentary Tim maintains that this asylum output stands alongside the work of any of the other soldier-poets. Mike Poole, the Executive Producer of the programme, hails from Gloucestershire and Gurney was a subject he had wanted to tackle for years. Thus a meeting between Professor Tim Kendall and Mike proved to be the genesis for the programme. The project came with the provocative title *Ivor Gurney: The Poet Who Loved the War* which meant many a raised eyebrow before a single frame had been shot. There was an acceptance very early on between Tim Kendall, Mike Poole and myself that this was a broad approach intended to bring Gurney to a wider public.



Tim Kendall at Caulaincourt

During early conversations it was clear that landscape would play a major part in the programme and so we open the story near Thiepval in a poppy-lined field where, a century before, all hell was let loose. We then make a sharp turn to the Gloucestershire Archives before heading back to the trenches of WWI with Piet Chielens from the 'In Flanders Fields' Museum. Here we are introduced to the poem *First Time In*, Gurney's timeless portrait of his 48 hours in a dugout with boys from the London Welsh Regiment.

First Time In

After the dread tales and red yarns of the Line
Anything might have come to us; but the divine
Afterglow brought us up to a Welsh colony
Hiding in sandbag ditches. Then we were taken in
To low huts candle-lit, shaded close by slitten
Oilsheets, and there but boys gave us kind welcome,
So that we looked out as from the edge of home.
Sang us Welsh things, and changed all former notions
To human hopeful things. And the next day's guns
Nor any Line-pangs ever quite could blot out
That strangely beautiful entry to War's rout;...

Given the absence of Gurney film and sound archive, we re-created key scenes with the very talented actor, Robin Wilingham, cast as Ivor Gurney. His colleagues from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama play F.W.Harvey and soldiers of the London Welsh. Marion Scott is sensitively portrayed by a dancer we filmed for a Channel 4 arts series!

In telling the story we need to return to the Gloucestershire landscape from time to time and the poems turned these corners for us time and again. Unlike Wilfred Owen or Siegfried Sassoon, Gurney wrote intensely about the commonplace. As a humble private he details the rations, the boredom and the camaraderie of the front line soldier. He conflates the hills of Gloucester and the villages of France as though they are the same place. He sees the meandering Severn mirrored in the River Somme. In the documentary, we return to meet Anthony Boden telling of Gurney's boyhood adventures overlooking the Severn at Framilode, while Eleanor Rawling walks up Barrow Hill with Tim Kendall, reading Gurney's landscape along the way. Our first ascent of Barrow Hill was compromised by rain but Eleanor kindly agreed to re-shoot the sequence the following morning. During editing we ended up using material from both days - see if you can spot the difference!



Filming on Crickley Hill

In an act of extraordinary generosity Kate Kennedy offered draft chapters from the forthcoming Gurney biography she is writing with Kelsey Thornton.

The depth and detail Kate brings to her writing was priceless in terms of informing the tone of key sequences. Indeed, at very short notice, Kate made the journey out to Albert and Vermand, providing us with fresh insight into the experiences of Gurney and the 2nd/5th Gloucesters on the Western Front.

The programme is interwoven by World War One archive material and underscored by Gurney's sublime music. Prior to editing, we were frankly sceptical about a programme containing only Gurney music but the editor, Madoc Roberts, has achieved this to fine effect. Viewings of the film during post-production, especially the sequences featuring *Sleep* and *By A Bierside*, were met with an intense silence, such is the emotional pull of music and image.

Programme budgets for the production of BBC Four documentaries are ludicrously tight. Thus, given the essential trip to France and Belgium and the number of filming days required overall, the use of an experienced crew at industry rates was completely out of the question. However, part of the remit of our production company *Other Roads Films* is to nurture emerging filmmakers hungry for exposure and broadcast credits. The benefit of this policy was to secure the services of the young, gifted cameraman, Ryan Owen Eddlestone, whose pictures bring another dimension to the quality of the film.

In making a programme one needs many elements to come together. It can feel like alchemy but I know from experience that it is luck and the generosity of spirit of those involved. Everyone we approached from the Ivor Gurney Society gave their knowledge and services with exceptional generosity. One shouldn't name names for fear of leaving someone out. Nevertheless I would like to thank, from the heart, Anthony and Anne Boden, Philip Lancaster, Kate Kennedy, Rolf Jordan, Eleanor Rawling and Piet Chielens from the 'In Flander Fields' Museum in Ieper (Ypres). In addition, Gloucestershire Archives and the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum provided wonderful support throughout production.

'The proof of the pudding is in eating' and broadcast dates remain unknown. However, there is little doubt that the programme will introduce Ivor Gurney to a whole new audience and enhance his already growing reputation.

The Three Choirs Festival August 2013, Gloucester

By Roderic Dunnett [extract from a report in the *Church Times*, 30 August 2013]

'The Festival was back in Gloucester this year. It may date back to the 18th century, but it is a model 21st-century event. Everything about the organisation is top-notch. Practical problems are mopped up rapidly. This year's most vexing was external noise that nearly wrecked the first song recital at the newly restored Blackfriars Priory. Fortunately, the baritone Roderick Williams, a regular at the Three Choirs, with his ravishing command of English song delivered invariably from memory, seemed quite unfazed. His recital included Rasch's *Songs*, a foretaste of next year. You can hear how those composers Rasch has been likened to - Mahler, Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern - all play out in his informed style, which is infused with much else - even pop music. He here sets words by the Second World War poet Alun Lewis, and Gloucester's own Ivor Gurney. The poems are evocative of war and a passage from darkness to light: coming last, Housman's two-stanza "Here dead we lie Because we did not choose To live and shame the land From which we sprung. Life, to be sure, Is nothing much to lose, But young men think it is, And we were young" surely says it all, for next year as well as any.

Half of the joy of the English *Lied* is the texts chosen for setting. Richard Sisson (b. 1957), for instance, included the last poem in a cycle full of Housman rarities: "Yonder see the morning blink", "They say my verse is sad: no wonder" - which ends: "This is for all ill-treated fellows, Unborn and unbegot, For them to read when they're in trouble And I am not."

William Blake was especially featured: Britten's *Songs and Proverbs*, weeping the hopeless of the human condition; Nicholas Marshall's (b. 1942) tender and spare "The Garden of Love"; and the best item in the programme, Williams's own treatments of "The Angel" and "The Shepherd" - with late warm ninths redolent of Vaughan Williams - which drew on each part of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Even the single Holst song, setting a moving dialogue, "What will they give me when journey's done?" by Humbert Wolfe (1885-1940), spoke reams. Not everyone understood why the word-sheets were issued afterwards; it was an annoyance.

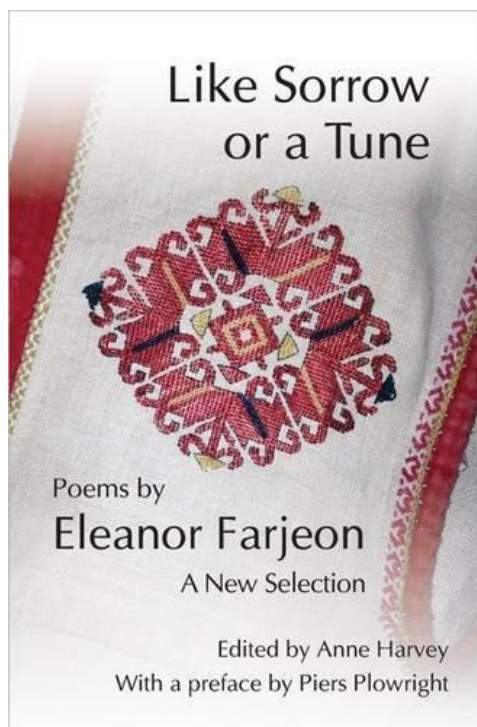
Among the other recitals, I was struck by one given by the baritone Philip Lancaster, a world expert on Gurney's songs, who in "An Elizabethan Centenary" presented, at St Mary de Lode, English music with harp and a wind sextet. This was a polished young ensemble from the Welsh College of Music and Drama. The programme included Parry, Stanford, Finzi, and Gurney's friend Marion Scott - her *Romance*, here with clarinet and harp. Oboe, as the composer intended, would have been better. The mezzo-soprano Susanna Spicer sang her part agreeably; but it is Lancaster's own voice that gave special pleasure. The harpist Megan Morris shone in Howells's Prelude No. 1; and Spicer in his melancholic song "King David", in which Lancaster's cleverly thoughtful instrumentation felt as silky as Ravel. Only the title cycle, Gurney's five *Elizabethan Songs*, seemed not quite to work: so effective was the instrumentation that it diverted from Shakespeare's and Fletcher's (though not Nashe's) words. Still, this was what Gurney intended.'

The Songs I Had

The DVD of Jeremy Gibson's play about Gurney's life, including performances of four of his songs on stage by Richard Frewer, is now available. This was premiered at the Mission Theatre in Bath last year. The action takes place between 1912 & 1932, with several quotes from his letters and poems. It was reviewed in glowing terms by the opera and theatre director, Ian Burton, in last Year's Gurnal (q.v.-page 108), eg: '*The bed in the asylum can change into the bed in the army barracks, or horrifyingly, into the barbed wire on which one of his friends hangs after being shot*'. The DVD costs £11 (inc. postage) from 76, Lower Oldfield Park, Bath BA2 3HP. Cheques payable to Mynstrallsy Press.

Like Sorrow or a Tune

.... Is a new selection of **Eleanor Farjeon's poems** edited by Anne Harvey and with a preface by Piers Plowright.



Eleanor Farjeon's name is often associated only with children's poetry or, occasionally, with the lyric *Morning has Broken* which was the basis of a hit record in the 1970s. Anne Harvey believes that her poetic talent has been neglected and under-rated. In this book, Anne Harvey aims "to take a closer look at the wide range and diversity of her writing and introduce it to new readers". Certainly, readers will find much of interest with different kinds of poems easily accessible because of the way that the book follows successive stages of her work. Eleanor Farjeon numbered amongst her closest friends Edward Thomas, Robert Frost and D H Lawrence. Of particular interest in this book will

be the poems inspired by or dedicated to the memory of Edward Thomas, 'the love of her life'. He was already married so this love could never be realised directly but, as Piers Plowright explains, some of her best poetry 'carries this special charge'. He singles out the short poem *Easter Monday* written in Edward's memory after the news of his death in France in 1917, pointing to the poignant ending *There are three letters that you will not get*. This is a wonderful book well worth reading, revealing as it does 'the depth, passion and endearing personality of a quite unique woman'.

Paperback: 160 pages **Publisher:** Laurel Books (25 April 2013)
ISBN-10: 1873390149 **ISBN-13:** 978-1873390146

Forthcoming Events and Publications

Severn and Somme (Redcliffe Films)

The film is to be shown at Mere Literary Festival 19 October 2013, and next year (2014) at the Clifton Cathedral International Music Festival, Cheltenham Music Festival, the Three Choirs Festival Worcester, St Ives Arts Festival, Truro Festival. www.redcliffefilms.co.uk

Wilfred Owen Association, Saturday 2 November

The 2013 AGM and Dominic Hibberd Memorial Event will be held at St Anne's College, Oxford, on November 2nd. The AGM will take place at 11.30am in Seminar Room 8 of St Anne's College. A sandwich/fruit lunch will be available after the meeting at a cost of £10 per head. Wine and juice will also be available. A memorial event, commemorating our much loved Vice-President who died in August 2012, will take place from 2.30pm at the same venue. It will consist of poems by Wilfred Owen and Harold Monro, accompanied by Dominic's writings about them both, and a re-enactment of an interview between Dominic and the critic Michael Benton about writing Owen's biography. Dominic made an outstanding contribution to the knowledge of First World War literature.

For information and to book a place at this event, please contact Vanessa Davis **as soon as possible** on 020 8947 0476 or vcedavis@hotmail.com

FW Harvey Society, Friday 15 November

'While blossom blows and Severn flows'

Doug McLean and Jan O'Neill supported by Keith Morgan present their concert *While Blossom Blows and Severn Flows* at the Library Room, Armoury Hall, Newnham on Severn. Jan and Doug will play tracks from their recently released CD, supplemented by three new settings of FW Harvey poems, and supported by readings from Keith. Their recording has been widely acclaimed and those familiar with their performances last year will know this is a night not to be missed. Tickets £5, available from the Forest Bookshop or on the door <http://www.fwharveysociety.co.uk/Society%20Events.htm>

Gloucester Music Society;

Thursday 27 February 2014, 7.30pm St Mary de Lode Church, Archdeacon Street, Gloucester GL1 2QT, UK premiere of *Walking into Clarity* (Rene Sampson's 'mini opera' about Gurney) as part of Gloucester Music Society's

season entitled "In Memoriam", which will also include three songs by Ivor Gurney sung by James Gilchrist on 27 March 2014. The season will also include music by Britten, Bliss, Elgar, Ireland, Vaughan Williams, Delius, Alan Bush, and Whettam as well as music by Shostakovich, Schnittke and Korth. Members of the Ivor Gurney Society are always welcome! Further details from C. Talbot Cooper talbotcooper@onetel.com

Exploring English Music – a 2 day event

Tuesday 25 –Thursday 27 February 2014 Tues at The Dumbleton Hall Hotel, Vale of Evesham (incl music by Elgar, Delius, Holst, Vaughan Williams <http://www.artsinresidence.co.uk/weekend-breaks-future.html>

The Housman Society, 5 March 2014

The AGM of the Society will take place on Wednesday 5 March 2014, 7.30pm 80 New Road, Bromsgrove B60 2LA and will be followed by refreshments. The evening concludes with a talk from Andrew Maund on A.E. Housman's life at Bromsgrove School and the relevance to his poetry.

Also in the week beginning 26 May 2014 at The Hay Festival of Literature, there will be the usual **Housman Lecture on the theme of *The Name and Nature of Poetry***. Details about the 2014 lecture will be announced in due course. For details of any of these events get in touch with the Chairman, Jim Page on 01527 878586 or by e-mail: info@housman-society.co.uk

Two Piano Trios by Ivor Gurney

January 22 2014, Bristol University

The first performance of the whole of Ivor Gurney's two piano trios, originally scheduled last January, will now take place on Wednesday 22 January at Bristol University (Victoria Rooms, Clifton, BS 8) at 1.15 pm, along with Marion Scott's *Baroque Suite*. The concert is free, with a retiring collection. Contact Richard Carder richard_carder@yahoo.co.uk

Siegfried Sassoon: Soldier, Poet, Lover, Friend

Jean Moorcroft Wilson's definitive single-volume biography of Siegfried Sassoon (£25, hardback, 640pp) will be published this month. Duckworth Publishers are offering society members the chance to purchase this 'invaluable' (Sir Andrew Motion) book for just £16.99. Members can take advantage of this special offer (including P&P) by calling 01256 302699 and

quoting the code 9KY and the ISBN 9780715633892, with their credit card details ready. Alternatively, a cheque made payable to **Macmillan Distribution (MDL)** can be sent with a letter, address details and the offer code. This offer is valid until 31st December 2013.

British Poetry of the First World War Conference

5-7 September 2014

Wadham College, Oxford

The English Association's major contribution to the events marking the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War will be an international conference at Wadham College, Oxford on 5th-7th September 2014.

This should appeal to all who have an interest in the poetry of the Great War, The various societies, fellowships and associations devoted to individual poets of the First World War will be invited to participate by contributing lectures, and recitals as well as exhibiting publications and items from their archives.

The conference patron is Professor Jon Stallworthy and plenary speakers will include Professor Edna Longley, of Queen's University, Belfast and Professor Jay Winter of Yale University. The conference will also include - a musical evening in the Holywell Music Room on Friday 5th September; a conference dinner and reception on Saturday 6th; and opportunities to visit associated exhibitions and events taking place in Oxford at this time, including the OUCS First World War Poetry Digital Archive.

The convenor - Professor Tim Kendall – University of Exeter

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/englishassociation/ww1poetry/ww1poetry>

Ivor Gurney Society Note Cards...



....are still available and some would make excellent Xmas or New Year cards. 8 different designs each with landscape photograph and extract of Gurney's poetry. Apply to E.Rawling, 8 Mill Paddock, Abingdon OX14 5EU with cheque: Two different sets of 4 - Cotswold or Severn Vale £6.00 for 4 cards £12.00 for 8 cards (incl P&P)

The Ivor Gurney Society www.ivorgurney.org.uk

Patrons of the Society:

Group Captain Anthony Boden, Sir Andrew Motion, Ian Partridge CBE

President: P J Kavanagh ***Vice-President:*** Adrian Partington

The Society Needs Your Help

At our recent Committee meeting it was recognised that we need to find members willing to undertake small tasks to assist in the running of the Society. Without this, the Society may cease to function. In particular, help is required in maintaining the Society's website, and in assisting the Secretary and Treasurer – ideally an Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer. None of these tasks would be particularly onerous and each can be performed by telephone or email contact. It would also entitle the volunteers to attend our twice-yearly Committee meetings if they so wished. Please contact John Phillips. johnl.hay@gmail.com or 103 The Rose Garden, Ledbury Road, Hereford HR1 2TR

Subscriptions

Many thanks to members who have renewed their 2013/14 subscriptions by cheque since April. These are not acknowledged individually. If you have not yet renewed, please do so as soon as possible, either through PayPal <http://ivorgurney.org.uk/join.htm> or send to John Phillips, address below. For acknowledgement, please include your email address. Many thanks.

The Ivor Gurney Society Officers

Chairman: Rolf Jordan, 24 Claremont Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 4DZ
Email: rolf@rolfjordan.com

General Secretary and Treasurer: John Phillips, 103 The Rose Garden, Ledbury Road, Hereford HR1 2TR

E-mail johnl.hay@googlemail.com

Newsletter Editor: Eleanor Rawling, 8 Mill Paddock, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 5EU
Email: EleRawling@aol.com

Journal Editor: Kelsey Thornton, 2 Rectory Terrace, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1XY. E-mail: rkrthornton@btinternet.com