

# THE IVOR GURNEY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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## **Society AGM and Conference, 1 May 2021**

This event will be held in Oxford on 1 May 2021. As well as the AGM, there will be a talk by Dr Kate Kennedy and the launch of her new biography of Ivor Gurney (*Ivor Gurney: Dweller in Shadows*). There will also be a Song recital followed by a Society dinner. Members will be notified of further details shortly.



**Dr Kate Kennedy**  
author of forthcoming biography of  
Ivor Gurney, and conference speaker

## Society Matters

### The Website

The address of the Society's website is now [www.ivorgurney.co.uk](http://www.ivorgurney.co.uk) It is full of up-to-date information about Gurney, items for sale and notification of news and events. The Resources area allows downloads of music scores (Scores Downloads) and it also contains Biography and Bibliography sections. The website shop provides a variety of items including CDs for sale. Members wishing to publicise an event should contact the Chair (email on back page)

### Subscriptions

Subscriptions are valid for a year from first payment date and can be paid through PayPal [www.ivorgurney.co.uk](http://www.ivorgurney.co.uk) or send a cheque to Ian Venables, 2 Turrall St. Barbourne, Worcester WR3 8AJ. For acknowledgement, include your email address. Individual £14; Joint £18; Individual retired £10; Joint retired £12.50; student £5.00; individual overseas £25 (for current rates, see website [membership@ivorgurney.co.uk](mailto:membership@ivorgurney.co.uk) ).

### Gurney Society AGM and Conference - postponed until 1 May 2021

Due to the current Coronavirus epidemic and the lockdown regulations our 2020 AGM at Wolfson College, Oxford has been moved to Saturday 1 May 2021. It will include a talk by Dr Kate Kennedy, a Song recital and a Society dinner. (see first page of newsletter). Further details for this event will be posted up on the IGS website early next year

### Anne Boden: In Memoriam

The Committee of the Ivor Gurney Society was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Anne Boden. Loving wife of Anthony Boden and mother of Lucy and Jonathan, Anne was a founder member of the Society, whose close family connection with both the Chapmans and Ivor Gurney, helped to inspire not only the writing of Anthony Boden's magical book 'Stars in a Dark Night' but also brought about the founding of the Ivor Gurney Society in 1990. Anne was an unfailing supporter of the Society, where her great warmth, sense of humour and welcoming presence at events, helped to make them such friendly occasions. Anne will be greatly missed by those who knew and loved her, including her many friends in the Ivor Gurney Society.

Ian Venables (Chair of IGS)

## In Memory of Anne Boden

by Kelsey Thornton



Anne Boden died earlier this year on the 21 April. It was a sad loss, most of all to her husband Tony and to her children, but also to everyone who knew her, and to those interested in Ivor Gurney. She was the daughter of Winnie Chapman, one of the Chapman children, whose company Gurney so much enjoyed, and it was this that led, not too indirectly, to the creation of the Gurney Society. All the early planning took place in the Boden's home, Chosen Hay, and many of us will have pleasant memories of the warm welcome we always received. I was asked to write something to mark her death, but also, of course, her life and not being a professional obituarist, I have found it easier to express something in a sonnet.

I was conscious that this may be a bit convoluted, and perhaps doesn't work, but what I was trying to say is this: We are bombarded with news of disasters, floods, wars and bombings on a regular basis, and become in the end rather

immune to them, not batting an eyelid at the most shocking news. But there are some things which really get under the skin, into the heart. Hopkins has somewhere a story of how a knife can be pressed on the skin and it merely presses, but at some particular small movement, it suddenly cuts, and has its effect. So I thought of this as a password to pain, a shibboleth that suddenly allows the full force of a loss to enter. This is what I felt at news of Anne's death. It was more meaningful and this was probably because for me she seemed to have had a permanence and unshakeability.

### **In memoriam Anne Boden**

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow*

We can't predict how we respond to death.  
Each week we pass some new disaster by,  
Unmoved, indifferent, unstirred to cry  
Our sudden loss of comfort. But Macbeth,  
Facing the pointlessness of drawing breath,  
Knowing his wife's death and that he must die,  
Reminds us we will always puzzle why  
Events find deep emotion's shibboleth.

Find it they do. The shock when one life stops  
Rips out the certainty on which we stand.  
Anne's steady presence made one of life's props,  
The roots by which we think we understand.  
No need to chronicle her deeds because  
More than what she did was what she was.

I could have done with some more lines to say that my picture of Chosen Hay is always of a smile that made one feel warm and welcome, absolutely valued. It is a wonderful characteristic, and a happy memory to have. It seemed that there was no point in listing all the achievements, the virtues, but simply to say, as the last line does, that it wasn't what she did which was so valuable and important, but what she was

Here below is Tony Boden's account and a memorial piece from Elise Forbes of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. These memorials tell me much that I didn't know, but what they say is not surprising. We shall all miss her warmth, her

happiness, her energy, and her love. Tony says that her gravestone on Chosen Hill will be inscribed with the words from the end of Larkin's 'An Arundel Tomb': 'What will survive of us is love'. In Anne's case, we don't have to make the reservations that Larkin typically made. It was what she was.

### **Anne Boden (30 November 1939 - 21 April 2020) (by Tony Boden)**

When Anne and I met in October 1969, she was already a well-regarded and highly skilled nursing officer in the Princess Mary's RAF Nursing Service. Having trained at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, where she had graduated as silver medalist for her year, she went on to gain a Diploma in Otolaryngology and to qualify in Midwifery before deciding to spend a couple of years in Australia. On her return to England, unsure of what to do next, her mother Winnie Miles (née Chapman) suggested that she might consider joining one of the armed forces. This proved to be excellent advice that changed both Anne's life and my own since the Air Force brought us together.



At the time of our meeting, I had just completed a second three-year tour of RAF service in the Far East and had been posted to the RAF Hospital at Wroughton in Wiltshire. Anne had arrived there shortly before me and, in addition to her work on the maternity unit, was a member of the RAF aero-medical evacuation team (based at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire) transporting casualties from the Far East and Cyprus to the UK aboard VC10 aircraft. Suffice it to say that we fell in love, were married in April 1970, blessed with two delightful children, and were inseparable for fifty years.

My interest in Ivor Gurney began in earnest when Anne told me about his friendship with her mother, Winnie, and her family, the Chapmans, two of whom, Winnie herself and her younger sister Marjorie ('Micky'), were by 1969 living on Chosen Hill in Gloucestershire. To my delight, both ladies retained affectionate memories of Ivor and were happy to show me a number of letters written by him during the First World War. Those letters and a number of related photographs and documents now comprise *The Anne and Anthony Boden Bequest of their Ivor Gurney Collection*, deposited in the Gloucestershire Archives in 2018; the letters were published in *Stars in a Dark Night* (Sutton, 2004).

Ivor had been fond of all four Chapman children: Kitty, Winnie, Arthur and 'Micky' (Marjorie). His feeling for Kitty, however, seems to have gone beyond fondness, prompting their father, Edward Chapman, to warn Ivor that Kitty was far too young to contemplate a deeper relationship. Kitty eventually married Frank Johnson, a North London man, and his grandsons still quip that, had Edward Chapman not been so severe with Ivor, their surnames might now be Gurney!

Micky followed in Ivor's footsteps to study at the Royal College of Music. Winnie meanwhile asked Ivor for a lock of his auburn hair which she secreted in a small envelope; upon it she wrote 'My dearest Ivor's curl. W.E.C.' She treasured this small but intimate trophy for the rest of her life.

Anne continued to champion the Gurney cause, assisting me hugely in the years when the RAF demanded much of my time. The Gurney Society, in which Anne played a significant part, was successfully launched in 1990.

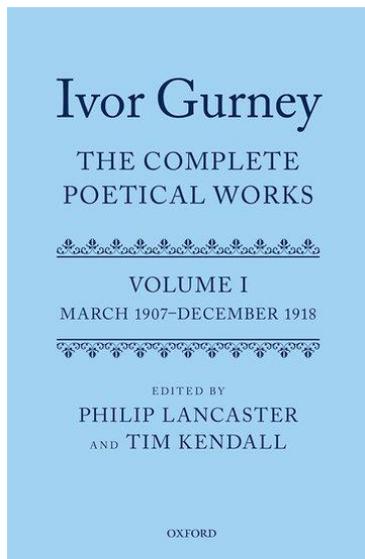
## **Anne and the Cystic Fibrosis Trust (by Elise Forbes)**

“Anne took over the role of secretary of the Gloucestershire Branch of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust at the beginning of the 1980s. As a nurse with many years of experience and the mother of a CF child, she was perfectly suited to this role which she made her own for almost two decades. Gloucestershire is a largely rural county and Anne’s wonderful scrap books give an idea of the scope of the fundraising activities which she either initiated or supported in all corners of the county. At that time, the Trust was desperate for donations to fund research into a still relatively little-known life-limiting disease.

Anne set about educating both the general public and Gloucestershire’s CF families through supportive home visits, letters and interviews in the local press, as well as meetings and lectures with eminent specialist medical staff and CF researchers. We all welcomed the opportunity to ask questions about the work of the Trust and the research we were helping to fund. Fundraising, publicity and education went hand in hand throughout the 1980s as the first genetic breakthroughs were announced, appearing to promise so much so soon. Anne was always within reach, ever cheerful and calming when her CF families needed her practical support and advice. She gave generously of her time and experience as well as her formidable campaigning zeal which she applied from the rural heart of Gloucestershire to Downing Street when it came to issues which touched the CF community. Issues included the fight against prescription charges for CF adults, promoting the organ donor register, the introduction of the Disability Living Allowance and the campaign for universal carrier testing at birth. The whole CF community became her friends, feeling the warmth and optimism of her personality encouraging us never to give up. Local community awards recognised Anne’s public role, but many families in Gloucestershire and beyond will always think of her with deep personal gratitude”.

# Ivor Gurney: The Complete Poetical Works, Volume 1

## March 1907-December 1918



**Edited by Philip Lancaster  
and Tim Kendall**

This is the first volume in a five-volume edition of the complete poetical works of Ivor Gurney (1890-1937). Following an extensive study of all known manuscripts, the edition brings much of that work to publication for the first time. The availability of his complete poetry will change absolutely our understanding of Gurney's development, and the true nature of his poetry. Volume I begins with Gurney's earliest

surviving verse, and ends, just after the Armistice, with his return to civilian life.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/ivor-gurney-the-complete-poetical-works-volume-1-9780199566952>

Oxford University Press, 2020

**- A transformative, critical edition of the complete poetry of a significant poet of the early twentieth century**

**- Gurney's poetry is presented in chronological order and accompanied by textual notes, allowing readers to chart the development of his work both within each poem and across his oeuvre**

**- Hundreds of poems across the edition have never before appeared in print and are being brought to publication for the first time**

## **The Premiere CD recording of Ivor Gurney's Violin Sonata in D**

In 2013, EM Records released the first-ever recording of a violin-and-piano sonata by Ivor Gurney; and is therefore thrilled to be given the opportunity to record the same composer's Sonata for Violin and Piano in D major, dedicated to Gurney's friend and fellow poet F.W. Harvey. Evidence suggests the work was rigorously tried through, if not performed: in particular, the violin part (copied out by Marion Scott) incorporates fingering, other technical suggestions, and performance timings. Like the shifting light cast by a windswept sky, the Sonata contrasts exuberant energy and passionate outbursts with moments of quiet solemnity and brooding introspection.

EM Records is delighted to be including on this forthcoming disc a recording of The Sonata for Violin and Piano, op.82, of Edward Elgar. a work whose presence in recording catalogues has been steadily strengthening during the last few years. Last year, the prestigious German publishing house G. Henle Verlag issued a new scholarly-critical edition of the work which draws on all the extant sources – the composition sketches and drafts, a proof copy annotated by Elgar, and the first edition – and, in the process resolves the anomalies which remained in the edition published by Novello in 1919 (the score principally used by performers since). This recording uses the new Henle edition, in the process revealing unsuspected subtleties of expression and a new fusion with the composer's original intentions.

To subscribe to this milestone CD recording please complete and return the form below to Em Marshall-Luck, Director, EM Records. For further details please visit the English Music Festival's website at:  
<https://www.em-records.com/disc-subscriptions.html>

## Focus on Ivor Gurney's Poetry

This is the second in the series of short studies of individual Gurney poems. *To His Love* is presented by **Jean Boase-Beier, Professor Emerita of Literature and Translation at the University of East Anglia**. The aim of the series is to build up, bit by bit, a corpus of criticism of the poetry. If you wish to contribute to this series or would like to suggest a potential contributor, please contact Eleanor Rawling ([elerawling@aol.com](mailto:elerawling@aol.com)).

### To His Love

He's gone, and all our plans  
Are useless indeed.  
We'll walk no more on Cotswold  
Where the sheep feed  
Quietly and take no heed.

His body that was so quick  
Is not as you  
Knew it, on Severn river  
Under the blue  
Driving our small boat through.

You would not know him now ...  
But still he died  
Nobly, so cover him over  
With violets of pride  
Purple from Severn side.

Cover him, cover him soon!  
And with thick-set  
Masses of memoried flowers—  
Hide that red wet  
Thing I must somehow forget.

Ivor Gurney wrote 'To His Love' in several drafts between 1916 and 1918, perhaps initially in response to the news (which turned out to be erroneous)

that his friend Will Harvey was missing (see Boden 2004: 135-6). The poem appeared in the book *War's Embers* in 1919.

This short poem, written in 4 stanzas of 5 lines each, will shock even the casual reader with its contrast between the apparently gentle pastoral imagery of the first three stanzas and the brutal "red wet thing" in the penultimate line.

Yet, shocking as this contrast is, the horrible final image is prepared for from the start of the poem. The very first words "He's gone" already suggest death, though they are ambiguous: the person being spoken about could, at this point, have gone to war, have been registered as missing in action, or be dead. The second and third stanzas are more specific: "His body ... /Is not as you/ Knew it..." and "You would not know him now...", but it is only in the final stanza that we are presented with that shocking image. The poem thus might be considered to reflect the thought processes of someone hearing that his friend is missing; the uncertainty about his fate does not prevent the mind from creating images of how his friend looks now.

So we could argue that this is a poem about what we think when we hear the news that someone is gone, and indeed there is a whole sequence of words and phrases to do with thinking throughout the poem: "plans"; "take no heed"; "knew it"; "not know"; "memoried"; "forget". The final image is both a contrast to the pastoral scenes and the culmination of the thinker's fears. The poem prepares us but it is still a shock. That is the logic of the poem.

A close reading of the poem tells us how its poetic style interacts with that logical sequence. There are various series of images, structures and sounds that run like threads through the poem, and that come together in the final stanza. Besides expressions of thinking and knowing, there is also a series of words to do with landscape: "Cotswold"; "sheep"; "Severn river"; "blue"; "small boat"; "violets"; "Severn side"; "flowers". In the final stanza the flowers are not just those that grow in the speaker's native countryside but they are "memoried", an ambiguous word that suggests both that they are not real but in the mind (perhaps of his friend in battle) and also that they *are* real, and evoke memories.

Perhaps the most striking of these threads of meaning is to do with colours: “blue”; “violet”; “purple”; “red”. If blue suggests the river and the sky and the distant hills, purple suggests pride and nobility. However, if you split purple (or violet) into its component parts, one is the pastoral blue and the other is the red of brutal war. Thus the sequence reflects a particular mode of thought: purple might represent nobility but what it is covering up, if we look closely, is in part the blood of battle.

Another very striking pattern is the use of pronouns and possessives: “his”; “he’s”; “our”; “we’ll”; “his”; “you”; “our”; “you”; “him”; “he”; “him”; “him”. Far from providing clarity about the people involved in the poem’s world, the heavy employment of pronouns actually obfuscates: who is the “he” to whose love the poem is addressed? Is the “we” of “our plans” and “we’ll walk no more” an exclusive one (just the speaker and “he”) or an inclusive one (to take in the person addressed)? Or does it include everyone, in a landscape seen differently after the losses of war? It has been suggested (e.g. by Rawling 2011: 104) that “his love” is Sarah Kane, whom Will Harvey later married. Yet the general sense, when first reading the poem, is that the pronouns create ambiguity. There are various reasons a poet might do this: to express feelings obliquely by attributing them to a third person, or to suggest that this uncertainty of love, regret and anguish is being played out many times over in other places.

There are also many patterns of sound and layout: a regular arrangement of shorter and longer lines, a regular rhythm, and a regular rhyme scheme, intensified by linked internal rhymes. Thus, for example, in the first stanza, “indeed” at the end of line 2 not only rhymes with end-rhymes “feed” (line 4) and “heed” (line 5), but also stands in a relation of assonance (or partial rhyme) to “sheep” within line 3. This pattern is repeated in each stanza: end-rhymes “you”; “blue”; “through” in stanza 2 are supplemented by internal “knew”, “died”; “pride”; “side” in stanza 4 by the internal assonance with “violets”, and, in the final stanza, “set”; “wet”; “forget” by the internal assonance with “red” .

The repeated rhymes and assonances are supplemented further by many instances of alliteration, such as “we’ll walk”, “pride / Purple”; “Severn side”; “masses of memoried”, and by eye-rhymes “know – now”; “cover – over”, which cannot be heard, but stand out on the page.

The dense patterns of repeated sounds serve on the one hand to link particular words and images: because the end-rhyme “you” is followed immediately by the first word of the next line “knew”, the effect is to emphasise what “you knew”, and to contrast it with both what you “know ... now” and what I “must somehow forget”. And “quick” is linked to the alliterating “quietly” of the previous line, emphasising the contrast between the unheeding sheep and the body that was “quick”, that is, alive. On the other hand, repeated sounds also suggest the repetition of obsessive thoughts and of the image of his dead friend that the speaker cannot forget.

This dense web of repeated sounds, underlining the repetitive images, creates a feeling of claustrophobic panic at odds with the Cotswold scenery. For the inner and outer worlds clash. The description of the inner world culminates in the final two lines “Hide that red wet / Thing I must somehow forget”, a point sometimes called “the eye of the poem” (see Boase-Beier 2009). This is the point in a poem where patterns come together, and it forms a vantage-point for the rest. In the speaker’s mind his friend has been reduced to a “thing”, for all that he has just been referred to directly with “he” or “his” eight times. The shockingly graphic “red wet thing” not only picks up “blue” and “purple”, but also echoes “set” and “forget”. The pronoun “I” in the final line is the first mention of the poem’s speaker and shifts the focus from the friend and his love to what is in the speaker’s mind. And the final word “forget” is not only a repetition of sound but it also contrasts with the earlier “knew” and “know” to suggest that the very obsessiveness of the repeated sounds and images will make the attempt to forget a vain one.

The switch in these final two lines is, then, from landscape to mind, from memories invested in the landscape to dreadful imaginings. Style and substance interact closely so that the reader, too, is unable to forget what has just been read. Harvey was not dead. But the shock of thinking him so persists for the speaker, and it persists for the reader.

## References

- Boase-Beier, J. (2009) ‘Translating the Eye of the Poem’ *CTIS Occasional Papers* 4,1-15.
- Boden, A. (2004) *Stars in a Dark Night: The Letters of Ivor Gurney to the Chapman Family*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing.
- Rawling, E. (2011) *Ivor Gurney’s Gloucestershire: Exploring Poetry and Place*, Stroud: The History Press.

## **Musical Update**

**(details from Ian Venables and Philip Lancaster)**

### **London Song Festival**

#### **A concert of Ivor Gurney's Songs and Poetry**

At Hinde Street Methodist Church. London W1U 2QJ and streamed online  
Saturday 7 November 2020, 2pm,

with Olivia Boen – soprano; Camille Lemonnier – piano; and John Rayment –  
speaker. (Olivia Boen and Camille Lemonnier are the winners of the 2019  
London Song Festival British Art Song Competition, sponsored by the British  
Music Society.)

This concert, part of the 2020 London Song Festival, entitled “Roads To Solace”, is given by the winners of the 2019 London Song Festival British Art Song Competition. It is a celebration of the songs and poetry of Ivor Gurney, and is a chance to hear performances of eight unpublished songs by Gurney, several of which have never been performed in public before, and a number of unpublished poems. Some of these have been edited by Ivor Gurney Society chairman Ian Venables, and others specially edited and prepared for this performance by Philip Lancaster, a leading authority on the works of Ivor Gurney and co-editor of the forthcoming complete edition of Gurney's poetry to be published by OUP. These include works written while Gurney was a patient at the City of London Mental Hospital, Dartford, and is a chance to re-evaluate this late work, much of which has been unfairly derided over the past century, but which actually is worthy to stand alongside Gurney's greatest works in their beauty and sophistication. The programme also includes songs and poetry written in Gurney's most productive period (1920-22) and songs by Finzi and John Jeffreys setting Gurney's words, all describing his search for and finding solace in the countryside of his native Gloucestershire, and in his work as a composer and poet.

This performance will be streamed online by Artist Digital, so even if it is not possible to attend in person, you will still be able to watch and listen online. Full details of ticket sales and how to access this concert online will be announced on the London Song Festival website [www.londonsongfestival.org](http://www.londonsongfestival.org), the Ivor Gurney Society Website and on social media.

With thanks to the Ivor Gurney Society, British Music Society, D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust and Finzi Friends for their support, and to Artist Digital for the online streaming.

## **Five Elizabethan Songs: original scoring**

The 2013 Three Choirs Festival saw the first performance since the early 1920s of the 'original scoring' of Gurney's *Five Elizabethan Songs*. Usually heard performed with piano, the songs were originally conceived for mezzo soprano with 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, harp and 2 bassoons. Only the final song of the set, 'Spring', is extant in full score, and so the other four songs were recreated and re-imagined by Philip Lancaster, based and inferred as much as possible from the manuscripts of the work. These versions of the songs have now been published by The Maker's Press, in association with the Gurney Trust. The 36 page publication costs £15 and is available from <https://themakerspress.com/product/gurney-elizas/>

A short video introduction to the piece in this version, including some extracts from a recording of the 2013 performance, can be seen at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv9J-1JS72E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv9J-1JS72E)

## **The Gurney Trust Song Edition**

The Maker's Press is also collaborating with The Ivor Gurney Trust to produce a new 'Gurney Trust Song Edition', co-edited by Philip Lancaster and Ian Venables. In the coming few years or so, it will see the publication of a number of previously unpublished songs by Ivor Gurney, alongside new versions and revised editions of songs that have been published previously. The first volume will be issued in late autumn and will include all of those songs composed by Gurney between 1915 and 1917. Amongst these is the first publication of Gurney's brilliant *On Wenlock Edge*, the original version of *By a Bierside* (alongside the well-known 1919 score), and the restoration of Gurney's original intentions in 'In Flanders'. Full details to follow, meanwhile check out The Maker's Press's website [www.themakerspress.com](http://www.themakerspress.com) in November when all being well it should be available.



## ***Those Blue Remembered Hills*** **EM Records**

**Ivor Gurney:** The Western Playland  
(and of Sorrow) (1920, ed. Philip  
Lancaster)

**Herbert Howells:** There was a  
Maiden Op 22 No 1 (1915)  
Girl's Song, Op 22 No 4 (1916)  
King David (1919)  
The Mugger's Song [1919]

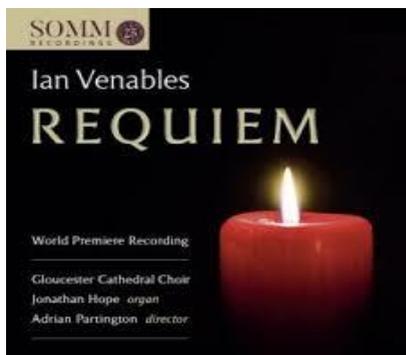
**Ivor Gurney:** Edward, Edward  
(1914)  
String Quartet in D minor 1924-25  
By a Bierside (1916)

Roderick Williams (baritone)  
Michael Dussek (piano)  
The Bridge Quartet

How can this disc claim to present a premiere recording of Gurney's *The Western Playland*? The answer is simple: between the early success of the song cycle and its publication by the Carnegie Trust in 1925, Gurney revised the score, a revision that affected all eight songs and

which made the work more dramatic. However, the printed score was full of errors which, due to the composers growing ill health, went uncorrected, so in 2013 Philip Lancaster, whose excellent notes adorn the booklet, undertook the task of correcting the score so that it was more in line with Gurney's manuscript and his intentions. It is hoped that the revisions in this new edition of the score will elevate *The Western Playland* to its rightful place in Gurney's musical legacy. The result certainly sounds more fluent, so that it is easier for the listener to appreciate how Gurney's song cycle is a real synthesis between words and music. The Bridge Quartet return for a premiere recording of Ivor Gurney's String Quartet in D minor. This Quartet is mentioned in Gurney's poem *Masterpiece*. It is a fine example of the English idiom, a strongly melodic work, its four movements being somewhat reminiscent of Vaughan Williams. It was composed in late 1924 and early 1925, when Gurney was "incarcerated in mental hospitals, a time when he was quite productive, especially of chamber music" and here receives a fitting world premiere performance by the Bridge

Quartet. Their performance is atmospheric, and this disc is noteworthy and recommendable purely on the basis of this Quartet alone. **Stuart Sillitoe** (edited extract) For further details: <https://em-records.com>



***Ian Venables: Requiem,***  
**Somm Records SOMMCD 0618**

**Ian Venables** Requiem, op.48

**John Sanders** Dedication

**John Joubert** O eternal God,  
op.183

**Ivor Gurney** God mastering me

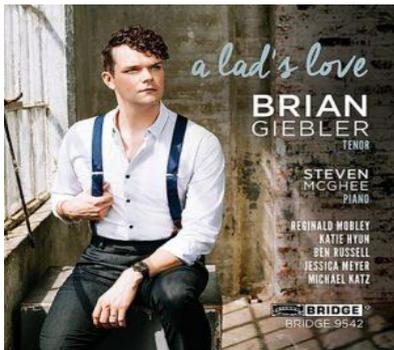
**Ian Venables** O Sing Aloud to  
God, op 19

Choir of Gloucester  
Cathedral/Adrian Partington:  
Jonathan Hope (organ)

Best known as a composer of chamber music and art song, Ian Venables marshals significantly larger forces in his new Requiem for choir and organ. This fine

recording from the Gloucester Cathedral choir and organist Jonathan Hope, under the deft direction of Adrian Partington, offers a well-balanced and responsive performance that draws out the mystery and pathos of Venables' score. Completed in 2018, the work was conceived primarily for liturgical use and the traditional Latin text is used throughout. Venables' score is by no means a radical reimagining of the Requiem, and the work carries strong echoes of Durufle in both its recasting of plainsong and its rich modal harmonies. However, while not perhaps breaking new ground, the work offers a thoughtful and deeply felt response to the ritual of the Requiem Mass as a site of solace and contemplation, and as a composer foremost of song, Venables certainly knows how to weave a melody. Among many moving moments, the spare and tender Agnus Dei is a highlight, while the affecting a cappella Pie Jesu features a remarkably assured solo from treble Arthur Johnson. A number of free-standing works complete the disc, including Venables' refreshingly joyful early anthem, *O Sing Aloud to God* (1993) and the all-but-forgotten *God Mastering Me* by Ivor Gurney,

salvaged from obscurity and transcribed for performance from Gurney's manuscript by Venables. This is a highly commendable disc, luminous and majestic, and the recording is notably atmospheric, invoking the lofty reaches of Gloucester Cathedral while retaining a good sense of clarity throughout. **Kate Wakeling (BBC Music Magazine)** For further details please visit: <https://www.somm-recordings.com/recording/ian-venables-requiem/A> **Lad's**



**Love: Brian Giebler**

**Bridge Records**

**Ivor Gurney** 'Ludlow and Teme'

**Benjamin Britten** Canticale II  
'Abraham & Isaac' and 'Fish in the unruffled lakes'

**Peter Warlock** 'In An Harbour Green'

**Roger Quilter** 'Love's Philosophy'

**John Ireland** 'A Lads Love, 'We'll to the Woods no More'

**Ian Venables** 'Because I liked you better'

Brian Giebler (tenor) and Steven McGhee (piano)

Brian Giebler is a gifted young singer who has been singled out by The New York Times, for his "lovely tone and deep expressivity". His debut CD, *A Lad's Love*, presents an imaginatively conceived programme of English songs that "brings together the beauty created by Britain's poets and composers in the face of lost youth, lost time, Lost love, Lost friends, and lost life in the turbulent years of the early 20th century." In the notes, Giebler explained that with the pianist Steven McGhee, he had performed Ivor Gurney's song cycle, Ludlow and Teme for his final degree recital and "Ever since that first outing, we have wanted to record the work. A.E.Housman's poetry, set by Gurney, was so affecting that we started digging for other settings by lesser-known British composers of that time". That led us to John Ireland's songs, and ultimately to living composer Ian Venables' 21st Century setting of "Because I liked you better"

[www.briangiebler.com/a-lads-lo](http://www.briangiebler.com/a-lads-lo)

## St Matthew, Twigworth

On Sunday December 15th 2019, a well-attended church service marked the closure of the church of St. Matthew, Twigworth (postcode GL2 9PG). Consecrated in 1844, the church lies on the main road to Tewkesbury between Twigworth and Longford and is the resting place of the war poet and musician, Ivor Gurney (1890 – 1937). The churchyard remains open and is maintained by the Seven Towers Benefice.

Note that the radio programme (4 Feb 2014) in the series **World War One and Gloucestershire** is about Ivor Gurney and finishes at Twigworth Church.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p01rnyw2>

## Walking With Ivor Gurney

A new publication by **Eleanor Rawling** to be published by Logaston Press, 2022

***Walking with Ivor Gurney in Gloucestershire*** will set out a poetry trail and circular walks around Gurney's best-known Gloucestershire places revealing, through his poetry and extracts from his letters and essays, those places that were the sources of his inspiration and the well-springs of his creativity. Specially commissioned maps will be provided to show each section of the trail and those historic, cultural and landscape features that defined it for Ivor Gurney. Further details and publication date available in the next newsletter.

Painswick Beacon



# The Ivor Gurney Society

[www.ivorgurney.co.uk](http://www.ivorgurney.co.uk)

The Ivor Gurney Trust ([www.ivorgurneytrust.com](http://www.ivorgurneytrust.com))

## ***Patrons of the Society:***

Sir Andrew Motion

Ian Partridge CBE

Sarah Connolly CBE

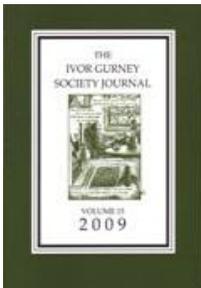
**President:** Group Captain Anthony Boden **Vice-President:** Adrian Partington

## **Membership rates (UK) (all rates per annum):**

Individuals £14; Joint £18; Students £5; Retired £10 single; £12.50 joint;  
Institutional £12.50; International see website.

## **International membership:**

You can join the Society by contacting the Treasurer at the address below  
or online at [www.ivorgurney.co.uk](http://www.ivorgurney.co.uk) via PayPal.



## **The Ivor Gurney Society Journal**

As well as the bi-annual Society newsletter, the Gurney Society publishes an annual journal, known as 'The Gurnal' which contains scholarly articles on Gurney's work and related items, incl. book and CD reviews. This is sent to all Society members and is for sale to non-members (see website).

## ***Current officers:***

**Chair and Acting Treasurer:** Ian Venables [chair@ivorgurney.co.uk](mailto:chair@ivorgurney.co.uk)

**Secretary:** Rolf Jordan [secretary@ivorgurney.co.uk](mailto:secretary@ivorgurney.co.uk)

**Membership Secretary:** Sebastian Field [membership@ivorgurney.co.uk](mailto:membership@ivorgurney.co.uk)

**Website Manager:** John Elkington [webmanager@ivorgurney.co.uk](mailto:webmanager@ivorgurney.co.uk)

**Newsletter Editor:** Eleanor Rawling [newsletter@ivorgurney.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@ivorgurney.co.uk)

**Journal Editor:** April Frederick [journal@ivorgurney.co.uk](mailto:journal@ivorgurney.co.uk)