

THE IVOR GURNEY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 68

October 2021

The Ivor Gurney Society AGM and Autumn Event in association with Wolfson College, Oxford Saturday 23 October 2021



Dweller in Shadows

This event will be held in Oxford on 23 October 2021. The AGM will take place at 2.30pm. As well as the AGM, there will be a song recital including a selection of newly edited songs composed while Gurney was in the Dartford asylum. Andrew Randall (baritone) and Eric McElroy (piano) will be the performers. During tea break at 4.45pm, copies of Kate Kennedy's new biography of Ivor Gurney '*Dweller in Shadows*' will be available for purchase.

After tea, Dame Hermione Lee will interview Dr Kate Kennedy about her book. IGS members are cordially invited to this special event arranged as part of Wolfson College's Weinrebe lecture series.

Society Matters

The Website

The address of the Society's website is now 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 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).

Gurney Society AGM and Event – rearranged to 23 October 2021

Due to the Coronavirus epidemic and the various lockdown regulations our 2020 AGM at Wolfson College, Oxford did not take place. An AGM and Society event is now arranged for Saturday 23 October 2021. It will include a Song recital and an interview with Kate Kennedy on the theme of her new biography of Ivor Gurney '*Dweller in Shadows*' (see the first page of newsletter). Further details for this event have been posted up on the IGS website.

Kate Kennedy, a writer and broadcaster, is a long-standing member of the Ivor Gurney Society. She has recently published her biography of Ivor Gurney '*Dweller in Shadows*'. See next page for flier and to purchase the book.

Kate is the Associate Director of the Oxford Centre for Life-Writing and a Research Fellow in Music and English at Wolfson College, Oxford, England. Website: drkatekennedy.com Twitter @DrKKennedy

Thank you to Phil Richardson who regularly proofreads the newsletter. His help is much appreciated.

Princeton University Press flier

Dweller in Shadows: A Life of Ivor Gurney

The first comprehensive biography of an extraordinary English poet and composer whose life was haunted by fighting in the First World War and, later, confinement in a mental asylum

Ivor Gurney (1890–1937) wrote some of the most anthologized poems of the First World War and composed some of the greatest works in the English song repertoire, such as ‘Sleep’. Yet his life was shadowed by the trauma of the war and mental illness, and he spent his last fifteen years confined to a mental asylum. In *Dweller in Shadows*, Kate Kennedy presents the first comprehensive biography of this extraordinary and misunderstood artist.

A promising student at the Royal College of Music, Gurney enlisted as a Private with the Gloucestershire regiment in 1915 and spent two years in the trenches of the Western Front. Wounded in the arm and subsequently gassed during the Battle of Passchendaele, Gurney was recovering in hospital when his first collection of poems, *Severn and Somme*, was published. Despite episodes of depression, he resumed his music studies after the war until he was committed to an asylum in 1922. At times believing he was Shakespeare and that the “machines under the floor” were torturing him, he nevertheless continued to write and compose, leaving behind a vast body of unpublished work when he died of tuberculosis. Drawing on extensive archival research and spanning literary criticism, history, psychiatry and musicology, this compelling narrative sets Gurney’s life and work against the backdrop of the war and his institutionalisation, probing the links between madness, suffering and creativity.

Facing death in the trenches, Gurney hoped that history might not “forget me quite”. This definitive account of his life and work helps ensure that he will indeed be remembered.

30% discount with this flyer: Offer valid until **30 November 2021** List price: £30 | 9780691212784 Order the book online at press.princeton.edu and quote the code **DWE21** Postage and packaging costs will be added at point of purchase

**Extracts from: Review of ‘Dweller in Shadows’
in the *New Yorker*
by Anthony Lane, July 5, 2021**

‘The Strange Case of Ivor Gurney : Composer, poet of the First World War, incurable psychiatric patient: Are we at last ready to understand this elusive figure’s interrupted idylls? Mental illness eclipsed Gurney’s career as a poet and a composer.’

Who was Ivor Gurney, and what did he do? Well, he was an Englishman, born in 1890 in Gloucester, a cathedral city on the River Severn, a little more than a hundred miles west of London. He fought in the First World War, survived, and died at the age of forty-seven, after spending most of his final decade and a half in psychiatric hospitals. He was buried in the churchyard of Twigworth, a village near Gloucester, and was described on his gravestone as “Musician and Poet / A lover and maker / Of beauty”. That stone has since been replaced by another, which reads “Composer / Poet of the Severn / and Somme.” When even a man’s gravestones disagree, further digging is required.

The latest excavator, and the most most comprehensive to date, is Kate Kennedy, whose biography, “Dweller in Shadows: A Life of Ivor Gurney,” is published by Princeton—a notable development, since the name of Gurney has hitherto struck only the faintest chord in American ears. His movements were restless rather than far-flung, and he never travelled to the United States, yet a strong international link is forged by Kennedy’s book: Gurney harbored, she says, “an infatuation” with Walt Whitman. “This Compost”, one of Whitman’s most alarming poems, which melds the pastoral and the putrefying, was a favorite of Gurney’s, and its presence haunts one of his own works, entitled “To His Love”. Who that love may be is left unsaid:

*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.*

Can you nominate another poem that turns around, just as we are expecting a tranquil end, and delivers so dizzying a shock? It's like somebody bursting into a funeral service and pulling the lid off the casket. Those flowers may bear the scent of Tennyson ("And from his ashes may be made / The violet of his native land"), but any Victorian fragrance is wiped out by the last two lines. Gurney wrote the poem in England, where he was recuperating after the Battle of Passchendaele, in 1917, having breathed in mustard gas—inspiration at its foulest. By inclination, he was a poet of the prosaic, alert to plain objects and ordinary deeds: cabbages, chocolate, soccer, and tea. Now it was human beings who were reduced, by gunfire and shelling, to red wet things.

How readers were meant to receive so hellish a vision, in the safety of Britain, heaven knows. Most likely, they preferred not to hear of horrors that the poet was trying, in vain, to unremember. "To His Love" was included in Gurney's second collection of verse, "War's Embers," published in 1919. The first, "Severn and Somme"—the title is a confluence of rivers, one winding through the landscape of his childhood, the other through the killing fields of France—had come out in 1917. A third book was submitted to the publishers, in 1922, but rejected. And that was that. The effacing of Gurney was under way.

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To an extent, Gurney seemed to think that he was Shakespeare and also that, as his medical notes say, "Beethoven and Haydn never existed, Patient having composed all their music. Very much more obscure in speech, at times

completely incomprehensible.” The final decade was marked by withdrawals into silence, spurts of aggression, frantic letter-writing, and physical decay. On the day after Christmas, 1937, Gurney succumbed to tuberculosis. His body resembled that of an old man.

His biography, by contrast, is challenging and robust. A reading of “Dweller in Shadows” compels you to ask: Gurney was no Modernist, but by what token do we treat his thronging, darting effusions as testaments to an inward disarray, while the laying down of fragments, in the hands of T. S. Eliot, is viewed as a strategy of great deliberation and cunning? Is Gurney a nature poet, a war poet, or the two bound tight together with unprecedented force? (“Glad leaf-drifts thundering under January’s stars.”) And how much can we learn from what Kennedy lauds as his crossing of creative borders—“letters that were poems, poems that were letters, a transmission between forms”?

The deepest impress of her book, however, is that it grows into the portrait of a hero. To be assailed as Gurney was, to realize that the barrages would persist in peacetime, and nonetheless to insist on making your report, in music or in verse, is proof not of surrender but of mastery and quiet magnificence. When I read a poem like “The Not-Returning,” it’s I who fall apart. Ivor Gurney holds to order, though only just, and soldiers on:

*Never comes now the through-and-through clear
Tiredness of body on crisp straw down laid,
Nor the tired thing said
Content before the clean sleep close the eyes,
Or ever resistless rise
Pictures of far country westward, westward out of sight of the eyes.
Never more delight comes of the roof dark lit
With under-candle-flicker nor rich gloom on it,
The limned faces and moving hands shuffling the cards,
The clear conscience, the free mind moving towards
Poetry, friends, the old earthly rewards.
No more they come. No more.
Only the restless searching, the bitter labour,
The going out to watch stars, stumbling blind through the difficult door.*

No Man's Land



No Man's Land is a new book of poetry by Kathryn Southworth published in 2020. It brings together two sequences of poems centred on Gloucestershire. The first, 'Bright Tracks' is a riff on the verse and life of Ivor Gurney, using the poet's words and ideas as the starting point for the author's own engagement with his thoughts and experiences.

The second sequence is a verse drama about the still flourishing, if changed, Whiteway community near Stroud, putting the ideology of

the founders in the context of a long tradition of Christian and socialist radicalism and the voices of those engaged in the cause. It was first performed (on Zoom) on 11 Nov. 2020.

The book's cover uses the powerful image of Gurney by Tom Denny in Gloucester Cathedral which inspired the author to look into Gurney's work. It is available from the publishers Dempsey and Windle [@dempsey&windle.com](http://dempsey&windle.com) £8.

Kathryn Southworth has published a collection with Indigo Dreams (*Someone was here*) in 2018, two pamphlets with Dempsey and Windle and a recent illustrated letterpress sequence of poems with Paekakariki on the death of Virginia Woolf. Originally from Lancashire, she lived for some years in Painswick and London and has now settled in Stroud. The author's career as an academic is reflected in her poetry, and the research underpinning it, but largely confined to end notes. She chooses the speaking voice of poetry and the freedom to fantasise over the rigour of scholarship.

**And may Gloucestershire guard
from all sorrows**

I searched a churchyard by the
road
That leads away from town
Toward the orchards and the fields
That spread out all around.

*Do not forget me quite O Severn
meadows*

And to the east rose Cotswold edge
Keeping its watch across the plain
Where great St Peter's tower
thrusts
Its tracery of stone

*Do not forget me quite O Severn
meadows*

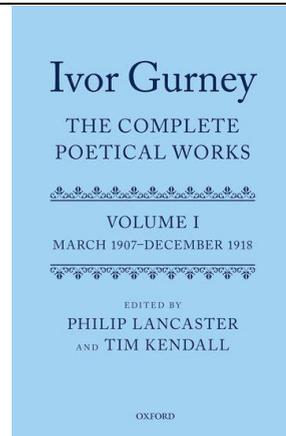
And there I found a marble slab
All white and glittering in the sun,
But set amid the tended graves
It seemed a sad and lonely one.

*Do not forget me quite O Severn
meadows*

So finding an unkempt straggling
verge,
I snapped two poppies that were
almost done
And laid them on parched earth
before the stone –

- One for the Severn and one for
the Somme.

Kathryn Southworth 2020
From *No Man's Land*



**Philip Lancaster and Tim
Kendall (editors)**

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

Holst Victorian House

Gustav Holst was born at 4 Clarence Road in Pittville, Cheltenham in 1874. The house is now a gem of an independent museum which is undergoing an exciting transformation into the Holst Victorian House (HVH). HVH is the only Victorian home in Cheltenham open to the public. The aim is to broaden the appeal to visitors, immersing them in the experience of stepping back in time and being among the residents of a Victorian home. All whilst retaining the attraction for those interested in Holst and his music. **We hope very much to welcome (back) members of the Ivor Gurney Society.**



Grand Piano Collard and Collard, Holst's piano when he lived in Thaxted

Some infrastructure work is planned for next year. However, **we will be launching the first phase to coincide with Heritage Open Days (10-19 September)**. There will be a number of events at that time: in the Museum, in the public spaces and also available online. For more details please visit www.chelctivicsoc.org/events/heritage-open-days/ and the museum website below. At launch we will have new interpretative material and visitor guide, a redesigned website, a changed visitor pathway passing through a succession of period rooms and new films which set the scene and showcase some of our key exhibits. We are also working on a redecoration of the house exterior, returning the front door and railings to their original colours.

Next year we hope to work on the hallway, install period lighting and soundscapes, revamp the Holst Museum rooms on the ground floor, and provide an audio-visual virtual house tour that visitors can access on a phone or tablet. Visitors will also have better access to Holst archive material using smart digital technology. **Follow developments on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or <https://holstvictorianhouse.org.uk/>**

From 10 September, the Museum is open 5 days a week (Tuesdays to Saturdays) for pre-booked appointments and walk-in visitors if the museum is not overcrowded. If you would like to know more, please email us at volunteers@holstvictorianhouse.org.uk.

Martin Renshaw (on behalf of the Trustees of the Holst Birthplace Trust)

Walking With Ivor Gurney

A new publication by **Eleanor Rawling**, publication 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



A Child of Joy **by William Armiger**

My acquaintance with Anthony and the late Anne Boden blossomed soon after a most moving occasion on 22 January 1977 when the commemorative plaque to Ivor Gurney was unveiled in Gloucester Cathedral at the foot of the very organ steps which Ivor Gurney, Herbert Howells and David Ivor Davies (later Ivor Novello) mounted while they were students of the then Cathedral Organist, Sir Herbert Brewer. As a Cathedral Choir lay-clerk under the Directorship of Dr. John Sanders, and as a tribute to the composer-poet, I was privileged to sing *Severn Meadows* - surely one of the most beautiful and poignant of Gurney's songs.

My wife, Judith, and I have since enjoyed many years of close friendship with that delightful Boden family and, knowing Anthony as well as I do, I know he will not mind my volunteering some further information as a supplement to John Quinn's perceptive and detailed review of the 2005 recording *Severn and Somme* (SOMMCD057) which, although originally appearing in *MusicWeb International*, was also recently published in the Finzi Friends Newsletter of April 2021.

Anthony and Anne Boden's strong links with Ivor Gurney were rooted in the care and support offered to him by Anne's mother Winifred ('Winnie;) Chapman and her family. Their home was in High Wycombe, where Ivor played the organ in the local church on Sundays. The Chapmans later moved to Gloucestershire, Ivor Gurney's own beloved county. Years later, Winnie married a Gloucester man, A.E. Miles ('Bertie,, but always known as 'Miles'). Their home was on Chosen Hill, near Gloucester. Anthony and Anne's move to that same location in 1975 also coincided most happily with the publication in 1978 of Michael Hurd's *The Ordeal of Ivor Gurney, 1978*.

Until the 1970's there had been very few significant recordings of Gurney's songs, although a number of students and friends from the Royal Academy of Music had been meeting for the occasional small recital of Gurney's songs arranged by Margery Freeman ARCM ("Micky" née Chapman) at her small black-and-white cottage on Chosen Hill

As Anthony Boden relates:

“My interest in Ivor Gurney began in earnest when my wife Anne told me about his friendship with her mother, Winnie, and her family, the Chapmans, two of whom, Winnie herself and her younger sister ‘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 now comprise *The Anne and Anthony Boden Bequest of their Ivor Gurney Collection* deposited in the Gloucestershire Archives in 2018, and the letters were published in Anthony’s book *Stars in a Dark Night* (1986 and 2018). In 1987, to mark the 50th anniversary of Gurney’s death, Anthony organised a concert of music and readings in Twigworth Church, featuring the local artists Johnny Coppin, Nancy Gower, Peter Bates and myself, accompanied by Christian Wilson - whose songs were to feature later in the “Severn and Somme” CD. At the outset it seemed something of a gamble, for there was no real grasp of what, if any, support such an event might attract. The church was packed.

Consequently, in July 1990, and to mark the centenary of the birth of Ivor Gurney, Anthony secured the financial support of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group and arranged an even more ambitious weekend series of events with leading professional artists. This project was also a total success and led to the launch, two years later in 1992, of the now-thriving Ivor Gurney Society.

The absence of a really significant recording of Gurney’s music was then addressed by the further initiative brought about through Anthony’s devotion, determination and no little authority. He, in personal and painstaking liaison with Siva Oke, M.D. of SOMM Recordings, selected the entire programme made up largely of Gurney’s songs. Anthony was also able to attend every recording session at Potton Hall in Suffolk. He was also able to provide unique and precious copies of many of these hitherto unpublished songs, whose performance fills the bulk of that CD, and it was he who recruited the wonderful talents of Roderick Williams and Susie Allen. Through his efforts and energy, he masterminded a unique and delightful experience for all for whom the English Romantic Song tradition brings so much pleasure. The programme also includes songs by John Sanders, the then Organist and Master of the Choristers at Gloucester Cathedral, as well as being Musical Director of the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival; by Christian Wilson, who was to

accompany me in many recitals of Lieder and English Art Songs, and who preceded Anthony as Secretary of the same Gloucester Three Choirs Festival; and Ian Venables, now Chairman of the Ivor Gurney Society and deservedly acknowledged as a British composer of significance, and a true heir to Britten, to Finzi, Gurney, Vaughan Williams and other masters of the art of setting the English language to music. This CD recording serves to greatly strengthen Gloucestershire's reputation as fertile ground indeed for fine musical composition and performance.

The Boden family was not just involved in the actual recording. Anthony is also the biographer of F.W. Harvey (1988) and Thomas Gambier Parry (1998), the artist whose lovely watercolour *The Lassington Oak* was chosen as the cover of the CD, and photographed for that purpose by Lucy, Anthony's daughter.

So it was that, when Anthony and Anne Boden set up home for themselves on Chosen Hill in the mid-1970s, several threads running through the sad life and tragic end of Ivor Gurney began to be gently knotted back into place in the county which the composer so clearly loved - and from which, in his latter years, he was so cruelly banished.

Despite having been labelled 'The English Schubert' in his years at the Royal College of Music, Gurney's poetry and his unique voice in the pantheon of English Romantic Song had remained relatively unknown – unlike the poetry of his friend and compatriot Will Harvey, whose work was already finding publication and increasing appreciation within the catalogue of 20th century English poets.

Anne Boden's (née Miles) close family links with that vulnerable young man are now well-known, but Anthony's dedication to the promotion and wider appreciation of Ivor Gurney as a major English Romantic poet and accomplished composer ought not to be under-estimated. With the mounting increase in interest in Gurney's work, there is now perhaps a silver gleam around the clouds of sadness which have hitherto seemed to surround his life and work. It should not be forgotten that it was Ivor Gurney himself, revelling in Nature, comforted by memories of a happy childhood and strengthened by the friendships and support he came to appreciate in his later life who, borrowing from Wordsworth, dubbed himself a "Child of Joy".

Musical Update

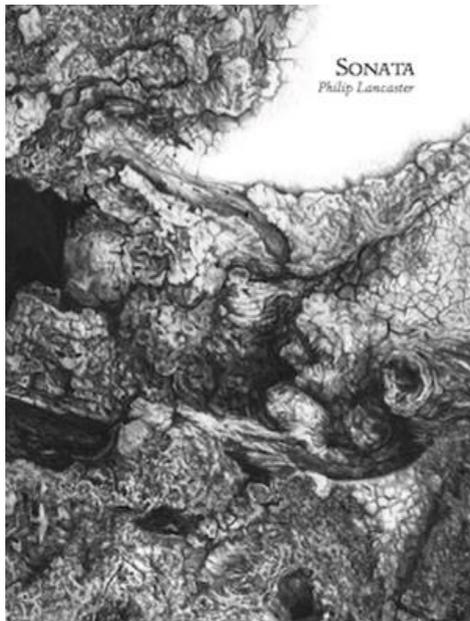
(details from Ian Venables and Philip Lancaster)

New book *Sonata: violare, col legno*

By Philip Lancaster

Guillemot Press has just published a new poetry pamphlet, *Sonata: violare, col legno* by Philip Lancaster. It is a beautiful, tactile book, its cover paper made from recycled grape waste. The poem itself goes in search of the music of silence. It blurs the boundaries between poetry and music by being written in sonata form with themes and verbal motifs that develop and feed into each other across the poem.

Sonata was given its official launch at an online Zoom event on Thursday 10 June, at which I shall be reading the whole poem! The pamphlet is just £6, and is available from www.guillemotpress.co.uk.



Philip Lancaster: New music & editions: S&B and The Maker's Press

Earlier this year, a new performing edition of Ivor Gurney's *The Western Playland* by Philip Lancaster was published by Stainer &

Bell, <https://stainer.co.uk/composer/philip-lancaster/>

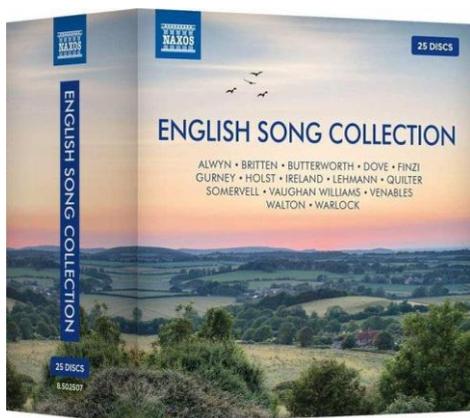
It has now also been recorded by Roderick Williams and the Bridge String Quartet with Michael Dussek for EM Records.

A number of Philip's musical works and editions of Ivor Gurney are also now published under his new imprint, *The Maker's Press*. Recent publications include the first volume in the Gurney Trust Song Edition, co-edited with Ian Venables, and his new cycle of piano pieces based on the haiku of Tomas Tranströmer, in which each piece is just 17 bars long. His poem cards are also available there. Also newly published through The Maker's Press is a lovely pair of piano pieces by Paul Spicer, which, in the coming months, will hopefully be joined by further works by Paul, new Gurney editions, vocal works by Parry and W. Denis Browne, and more! Please do take a look at the steadily growing catalogue at themakerspress.com.

Every sale of the scores and editions through The Maker's Press helps to support Philip's work in his various pursuits. Recent works and publications have also been supported through Patreon

<https://www.patreon.com/philiplancaster>

Patrons receive regular updates from behind the scenes at Lancaster towers, on new musical works and other pursuits.



Naxos English Song Collection A 25 disc celebration of the richness and diversity of British Song

In *The Story of Naxos* (Piatkus 2012), the music journalist Nicholas Soames says that the ambition of the company's founder, Klaus Heymann, was to record the complete (valid) repertoire of all classical music, and during the last

30 years or so he and his associates have gone a long way to achieving that ambition. I would be certain that we all have Naxos issues – which are outstandingly good value – in our personal libraries. The Naxos English Song Collection is a massive contribution to this corner of the market, niche doubtless, but with a faithful following amongst artists and listeners. Clearly, I cannot review it in the normal sense (at the approved level the word count would be around 10,000) but at least I can express a warm welcome and much enthusiasm for this remarkable issue. 15 mostly prominent English composers feature from Alwyn to Warlock, with substantial contributions from Britten, Finzi (all the song cycles), Holst, Gurney, VW, and, I am pleased to say, Ian Venables. The list of artists too, is impressive and includes such luminaries as Felicity Lott, Gerald Finley, Roderick Williams, and Iain Burnside. **Geoffrey Atkinson (British Music Society) CD: NAXOS 8.502507**

Gramophone Review by Andrew Achenbach (August 2021)

"All of these offerings benefit from the impeccable pianism of Iain Burnside, who likewise appears on Susan Bickley's valuable survey of Ivor Gurney (featuring among other gems, the *Five Elizabethan Songs*, 'By a Bierside' and 'Lights Out'"

[Venables has] "... a lyrical instinct, superior craftsmanship, and intuitive understanding of the text that place him firmly in the line of Finzi, Warlock and Ireland ..."

Gloucester Glow Festival – Free Event

Saturday 2 October 2021 7pm

'A Ploughman's Tale'

Robert-John Edwards (baritone), Sara Wilander (piano)

@St Mary de Crypt Church Gloucester

This is a free event is part of the Gloucester Glow Festival. Advanced tickets are available via the Discover DeCrypt website. <https://discoverdecrypt.org.uk/>

"A Ploughman's Tale" is a concept-recital which tells the story of an everyman who fought in the trenches, told through songs by composers or with words by poets who lived through the time of The Great War. It includes songs composed by Butterworth, Farrar, Elgar, Gurney, Britten, Peel, Vaughan Williams and Ireland as well as contemporary popular songs and an

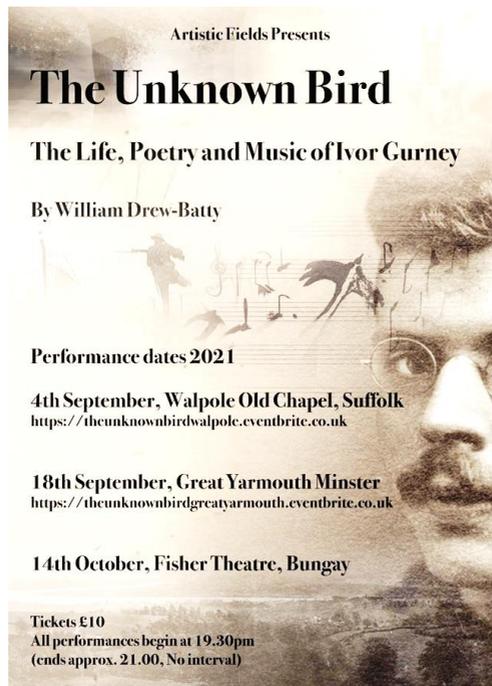
original setting of John McCrae's poem "In Flanders' Fields" by Robert-John Edwards. Further information at

<https://robertjohnedwards.co.uk/recitals/a-ploughmans-tale/>

Stanford Society Festival Weekend 2021, 2 and 3 October

The Stanford Society is holding its 2021 Festival Weekend this year in Gloucester Cathedral on October 2nd and 3rd. This was originally planned for October of 2020 but was postponed because of Covid. The programme for this event will include a focus on the music of Howells, Parry and Gurney as well as Stanford. Ian Venables will be talking about Ivor Gurney. The Society would be pleased to welcome any interested members of the Ivor Gurney Society to join them in Gloucester and will offer Stanford Society member pricing for this event to members of the Ivor Gurney Society. Use the link below to access this.

<http://WWW.thestanfordsociety.org/the-stanford-festival-2021-members-page/>



Artistic Fields Presents

The Unknown Bird

The Life, Poetry and Music of Ivor Gurney

By William Drew-Batty

Performance dates 2021

4th September, Walpole Old Chapel, Suffolk
<https://theunknownbirdwalpole.eventbrite.co.uk>

18th September, Great Yarmouth Minster
<https://theunknownbirdgreatyarmouth.eventbrite.co.uk>

14th October, Fisher Theatre, Bungay

Tickets £10
All performances begin at 19.30pm
(ends approx. 21.00, No interval)

Letters to the Editor

From Richard Carder to The Observer, May 2021

Dear Observer,

Having edited many of Ivor Gurney's unpublished songs since 1985, I need to correct some errors in the piece by Donna Ferguson about the new biography by Kate Kennedy on Sunday, 2nd May. One of my first discoveries was of his last dated song, *Western Sailors*, from March 1926, for which he wrote both the words and the music, in a glorious hymn to his beloved River Severn. Several more asylum songs were later performed in the concerts of the English Poetry & Song Society, which I chaired, by Brian Rayner Cook in 1990 (on Radio 3 also); Jane Manning in 2008; and Philip Lancaster in 2014, - who also prepared a recital of several asylum songs for the London Song Festival last autumn. So the assertion that there are '200 songs that no one's really looked at' is far from the truth. Dr Lancaster, who is editing the Complete Poems for OUP, also assures me that over 1000 of the poems were written in the asylum.

I presented my 2nd paper on the asylum songs, *The 'Mad' Songs of Ivor Gurney* at the Gurney conference at Cambridge University in 2007, which was published the following year by the British Music Society; - as was my earlier paper on Gurney's songs to his own words, *Long Shadows Fall* (BMS Journal 1993), - about half of which were written in the asylum at Dartford.

Gerald Finzi prepared a catalogue of Gurney's music in 1937, which included a page of instrumental music from the asylum years, over which he had written *Everything on this page is worthless*. When his wife, Joy, came to an EPSS song recital in Bath in 1985, she told me over tea that she regretted having burned all of those manuscripts on a bonfire in 1956 after Gerald's death, - which included the string quartet in D minor of 1924, recently recorded by the Bridge quartet. Much of this information can be found in the archives of the Ivor Gurney Society, and the Trust.

From Nigel Tyndall,

Dear Eleanor Rawling

Walking recently near Ashleworth I noticed that the lower slopes of Barrow Hill have been enclosed with a wire fence and a sign put up telling walkers to keep out! As you know, Barrow Hill, besides being a beautiful and iconic sight within the landscape of Gloucestershire, offers from its summit, magnificent views of the Malverns, and out over the river country. I have long walked there, knowing that there were no public footpaths over the hill, but was of the belief that the landowner was amenable to walkers who treated the hill with respect. The 'keep out' sign erected with the fence stated that permission should be sought for access, but no address was given. I have no idea who the landowner is, even if I was inclined to follow such a process. Equally, it creates a somewhat ambiguous situation, not knowing to what extent the landowner will enforce the warning or turn a blind eye... Perhaps I am being naive, but I was shocked to encounter what I regarded as a mean-spirited attempt at exclusion from a very beautiful part of our landscape. More and more - and I believe, without too much exaggeration - I feel we are living in a time when we can read and think, but for heavens sake don't attempt to visit the place of which you have been reading and thinking about...or you will encounter a 'keep out' sign. And I haven't even mentioned the Ivor Gurney connection with Barrow Hill! Do you think the Gurney Society should be informed? I have a copy of your book 'Exploring Poetry & Place'. (it has been with me on the Ashleworth-Barrow Hill-Foscombe tramp and it is now very creased and weather stained.)



The summit of Barrow Hill, Ashleworth

The Ivor Gurney Society

www.ivorgurney.co.uk

The Ivor Gurney Trust (www.ivorgurneytrust.com)

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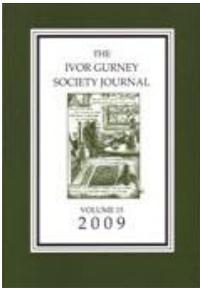
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The Ivor Gurney Society Journal

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).

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