

THE CHURCH MUSIC SOCIETY, 1906-1981

ORIGINS AND EARLY PERSONALITIES

In October 1905 two enterprising women, Miss Eleanor Gregory and Lady Mary Trefusis, invited some sympathetic people to meet at St Paul's Deanery, London, to discuss the need for improvement in music in churches. No list of those who attended has been preserved, but on Miss Gregory's retirement in 1939 both Cosmo Gordon Lang (then Archbishop of Canterbury) and Dr E. H. Fellowes recalled having been present, and Fellowes seemed to suggest elsewhere that Dr Lang (then Bishop of Stepney and Canon of St Paul's) had taken the chair.

Miss Gregory was the daughter of Robert Gregory, at that time the venerable Dean of St Paul's. Lady Mary (née Lygon) was the daughter of the 6th Earl Beauchamp and a member of the Household of the Princess of Wales (later Queen Mary). Though neither of them held any professional post, they were not enthusiasts of the dangerously uninformed kind. In later life, Lady Mary was organist of her village in Cornwall, and she was for many years President of the English Folk Dance Society. She was sufficiently in the ambit of Elgar's acquaintance for it to be said (on the authority of Sir Ivor Atkins) that she was the uninitialled dedicatee of Variation XIII of his Opus 36; and though doubt has been expressed about Sir Ivor's assertion, that does not affect the point. Miss Gregory had exercised an amateur talent as composer in some published songs as well as in a setting of Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis designed for congregational use—something of a pioneer nature in 1886. She had recently published twelve items from Palestrina's works adapted by her to English words (in 1924 eleven of them were made over to the Society, and two are now incorporated in its list as Reprints 24 and 30).

As a result of the exploratory meeting of 1905 a further meeting was held at Church House, Westminster, on 20 March 1906, with Mr W. H. (afterwards Sir Henry) Hadow in the chair, on which date the Church Music Society was formally established. The Bishop of Winchester (Herbert Ryle, later Dean of Westminster) became President, and a strong Executive Committee of 11, including Hadow as chairman, was set up. Eight of them subsequently secured mention in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*; five were afterwards knighted; six achieved entries in *The Dictionary of National Biography*. Miss Gregory and Lady Mary Trefusis became joint Honorary Secretaries, and the Hon. Spencer Lyttelton was the first Honorary Treasurer.

These were by no means the first people to feel the need to improve music in church or to take steps to effect such improvement. Examples are not lacking in the literature of the 18th and 19th centuries, especially in pamphlets and prefaces on the subject, and there are some notable instances of individuals—such as William Jones of Nayland, or John

Crosse of Bradford, Yorks.—taking practical steps. What distinguished the new little Society of 1906 was, first, that its initial impetus came neither from clergymen nor, in the main, from professional musicians; second, that it was to be a co-operative, not an individual effort, and therefore more likely to secure a continuing existence; and third, that its work was not confined to one parish or locality.

In a leaflet published by the Society in 1944 the statement was made that its origins were to be traced to a series of meetings beginning in December 1897 under the chairmanship of Sir John Stainer. Those meetings led to the compilation of a survey of the repertory then in use in cathedrals (now Tenbury MS 1482, deposited in the Bodleian Library), intended to form a statistical basis from which to argue. But this movement (apparently confining its concern to cathedrals) did not survive beyond 1900; and though E. H. Fellowes, who gives an account of it on pp. 83-4 of his *Memoirs of an Amateur Musician* (1946), considered that the Church Music Society developed from it, the known facts do not support any organic link. Some letters addressed to Fellowes in connection with that 1897-1900 movement (now at St Michael's College, Tenbury Wells, Worcs.) suggest that among the possible reasons why it made no headway may be the fact that, apart from Hadow, it was strongly biased in favour of selected musicians professionally involved with church music, and therefore lacked an adequate lay base. Moreover, it seemed to limit its attention to music in cathedrals, and it was also rather pointedly directed against the compositions of certain people in high places. Above all, it lacked a framework of organisation.

Whether or not this diagnosis is right, the Church Music Society avoided such pitfalls. What is very noticeable is the amount of non-clerical, non-professional support it commanded at the start. Neither the first chairman¹ nor any of its first officers was a clergyman, or engaged in the profession of music. The ten ordinary members of committee included one parson (Dean Strong, to whom Henry Ley and Sir William Walton owed much), a private scholar of repute (G.E.P. Arkwright), a headmaster (J.D.—afterwards Sir John—McClure), and an historian and music critic (J.A. Fuller Maitland). A glance at the list of members in general is enough to reveal a fair proportion (about one in every 15) of titled people—peers, peeresses, sons and daughters of peers, knights (not counting musical knights) and their ladies—as well as the Lord Chief Justice of England. This represents a type of interest and support which we no longer have.

There can be no doubt that Hadow's adherence to the cause was a decisively formative factor in securing recognition for the infant body. To

¹In saying in his *Memoirs* that Lang took the chair in 1906, Fellowes seems to have confused this with the preliminary gathering in 1905. The error was repeated in the Society's Occasional Paper 15 of 1944 and its subsequent revision as Shorter Paper 11, neither of which is entirely trustworthy about some details of our early history.

wide literary and classical culture he added unimpeachable technical knowledge of music and fluent skill as a writer, which made his two-volume *Studies in Modern Music* (1893-7)—and especially the introductory essay, 'Music and Musical Criticism'—epoch-making by showing, perhaps for the first time in the English language, that well-informed writing on music could be respected by literary folk. He had followed this by a substantial volume, 'The Viennese Period' (1904) in *The Oxford History of Music*. But he did not practise the profession of music, and was thus in a strong position to commend any musical cause he espoused to educated lay people, while possessing the confidence of musicians.²

To understand the needs of which the founders of the Society felt conscious, one must try to think of a world which in some of its social and ecclesiastical aspects has passed away. Seventy-five years ago, social conditions made membership of choirs much more widespread in various ranks of life, both in town and village, and the pattern of church services was generally different from now. Then, the notion of a choral service was, if not precisely universal in the Church of England, almost everywhere upheld, whether it be in cathedrals, large civic churches, churches in prosperous suburban parishes, down-town churches in working-class areas, comfortable villages in the Home Counties, or humbler villages more remotely placed. In some measure this pattern overlay the difference between Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic. Only the most openly avowed of the latter displaced Morning Prayer as the principal service on most Sundays in the month. And though there might be differences in the use of candles and incense, vestments, genuflections, and signs of the cross, one could be reasonably certain of finding Morning and Evening Prayer rendered with sung Responses, chanted Prayer Book Psalms, canticles to chants or a 'setting', now and again an anthem, and, on the first Sunday of a month, the appropriate parts of the Communion (or Ante-Communion) Service set to music of some kind.

It is only too evident that all of this, over the spectrum of churches just described, could not everywhere be adequately and suitably tackled without some guidance and training. Not all the organists required could be cultivated musicians. Not all these choirs could be other than humble, struggling bodies. In consequence, much was badly performed, whether from a musical or liturgical point of view. Sometimes music of too great difficulty was attempted. Alternatively, music which, though easy, either had no merit or, worse, was showy in style was in widespread use. Nor (but for different reasons) were cathedrals generally in much better case than many parish churches. The cathedral repertory was too often an amalgam of such few classics as had come down through Boyce's

²—Hadow was subsequently Principal of Armstrong College, (now the University of) Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield. As chairman of the Board of Education Consultative Committee he gave his name to an important report on Secondary Education. Though an 'academic', he was never an 'academic musician' in any sense in which that expression is now understood.

Cathedral Music, dull settings now defunct like 'Porter in D', and the copious work of church musicians of the day, little of which has proved durable.

THE PIONEER ERA, 1906-22

This, then, was the state of affairs which the new Society bravely set itself to improve. Its aim, as expressed in its own words, was 'to facilitate the selection and performance of the music which is most suitable for different occasions of Divine worship, and for different kinds of choir'. No wonder, in the face of such a task, that as early as 13 October 1906 Miss Gregory could write to Fellowes:

It is working in the dark, and of course it is extremely difficult and harassing to feel that all sorts of opinions and tastes are looking to us, and expecting fulfilment in their own way.

However, no time was lost in compiling lists of published anthems and services which it felt able to recommend, classifying them according to degree of difficulty and, in the case of anthems, to the seasons for which they were suitable. Three such lists, excluding works by living composers, were soon published at a price of a penny [£1/240th] or twopence. But the committee clearly felt that a considerable obstacle to choosing suitable music lay in the fact that too little which it judged worthwhile was conveniently accessible in print. It therefore immediately set about publishing such music at a cheap rate itself, with discount to members. With an optimism that could only have born of innocence, it announced its intention to publish 'Reprints'³ at the rate of one a month. It did manage to keep near to this pace from October 1906 to March 1909 (15 numbers), after which there was a marked slackening. By 1923 only seven more had been added. The 'Reprints' of this period will be discussed presently.

It was also evident that guidance, with good musical texts, was needed for such items as Responses, Litany and so on. To supply this the Society produced a helpful little 'Choir Book' at a price of one shilling [5p] in 1908. This contained plainsong Responses and Litany; 'Festival Responses in four parts'; Tallis's 4-part Litany; Tallis's Festal Responses and Litany in 5 parts; nine Kyries; two plainsong settings of the Athanasian Creed; and Ravenscroft's Benedicite. Additionally, in 1921 it published a Diocesan Festival Book, setting forth complete material for Evensong for use of gatherings of diocesan choirs.

In 1910 the Society branched out into a series of pamphlets called 'Occasional' or 'Shorter' Papers (the distinction of policy is not clear). The first few of these were on general topics, like 'Music and Christian

³—An unfortunate term, since from the start the series included, as it still does, music never before printed.

Worship' by Walford Davies, but presently they began to supply practical advisory material, as Sydney Nicholson's paper on 'The Organ Voluntary'. Of particular helpfulness in the context of the time were pamphlets on 'Music in Village Churches', containing a list of recommended easy music, and 'Music in Parish Churches—a plea for the simple', the latter contributed with sturdy good sense by Harvey Grace.

Yet a further endeavour related to a list of recommended hymn tunes.⁴ Evidently an affair of some travail, this took three years to prepare, and was published in 1915. It seemed to meet with a gratifying reception, and nearly 1,000 copies were quickly sold. It excluded plainsong and tunes by living writers but drew attention to material which had become available through *The English Hymnal*, and was introduced by a well-argued preface by Hadow, sustaining lofty standards. Argument, however, does not in itself go far to convert people to a 'better' tune, and the Society did useful supplementary work by issuing, as penny or halfpenny leaflets, some (then) less well-known tunes such as Gibbons's 'Song 1', 'Monk's Gate', 'St Columba', and—an exception to its practice concerning living composers—'Sine nomine'. These leaflets were connected with the Society's enterprise, in London and elsewhere, in holding 'Conferences' on hymn singing, or hymn festivals and congregational practices. Between November 1918 and July 1919 no fewer than nine such events were held in London and its suburbs (one of them at the People's Palace), directed by Harold Darke, Walford Davies, Harvey Grace, Martin and Geoffrey Shaw.

In the provinces such events were sometimes organised by branches of the Society which soon began to develop here and there. These represented a rather sporadic aspect of the Society's work, with a somewhat fitful existence, though those of Scotland, Bristol, and Lincoln showed some staying power. Where they existed, they assisted the diffusion of the Society's principles by means of lectures and demonstrations.

Surveying the Society's musical publications called 'Reprints', the 22 issues of this period comprise 42 pieces of music. One immediately notices the unexpected number by non-English composers: Vittoria, Mendelssohn, 'attrib. Palestrina', Croce, and J.S. Bach. Where English music is concerned, Hadow had referred in the introduction to the list of recommended Services (December 1906) to the inaccessibility then of 'some of the finest English Services', and in due course the Morning and Evening Canticles of Byrd's 'Short' Service and Farrant's Service in A minor (pedantically referred to as 'in Mode X') were published. Anthems

⁴In this connection the Poet Laureate, Robert Bridges, was consulted, eliciting from him a highly idiosyncratic letter to Lady Mary Trefusis dated October 1911 which was printed as the Society's Occasional Paper No.2 and is now included as No. XXIII of *Collected Essays Papers &c of Robert Bridges* (Oxford University Press, 1935). After giving his reason for being unable to interest himself in the work of a hymn committee, he went on—though he had been asked specifically about the words of hymn—to utter the astonishing remark that 'the tune is more important than the words'.

by Attwood, Boyce, Byrd, Hooper, Pearsall, Shepherd, and Tye were usefully included, and also the anonymous favourite, 'Lord, for thy tender mercies sake' in a newly-prepared edition by Arkwright. The other English works seem either surprisingly dull, or of a somewhat recherché character, not meeting an obvious need. One cannot think of S.S. Wesley's 'O God, whose nature and property' as either an appealing or a specially good work, while such a thing as James Hawkins's 'Merciful Lord' and one or two others seem ill at ease in the list. At the same time, Locke's 'When the Son of Man', Kirby's 'O Jesu, look', and two pieces by Ravenscroft are very unusual choices, well off the beaten track. But if we sense a little uncertainty in those days about English resources yet unexplored, we realise that the Society had no doubt at all about another source—the works of J.S. Bach, from which it derived eleven of those first 42 titles.

It was not until the mid-1920's that the full tide of the Bach revival struck English music, but its pioneers were represented on the Society's committee, as these early 'Reprints' witness. 'Ah, pass me not, my Saviour' was a straightforward lengthy extract from Cantata 23, edited by Walford Davies. 'O Lord of Life, whose glory' was an attempt to make a harvest anthem from a strong but not markedly appealing stretch of counterpoint. But most of all the Society drew on extended chorales, in which, though the organ transcription might not be easy, the the voice parts were of no great difficulty. Instead of translations of the German words, in many instances independent English words were used, like 'All glory, laud, and honour'. In one notable instance new words were specially written by Robert Bridges to the chorale from Cantata 147, brought to the Society's notice by (Sir) Hugh Allen. In publishing this in 1908 the Society established that now universal favourite, 'Jesu, joy of man's desiring', which outstrips even the Air on the G string as Bach's most loved, most widely known work, which was later taken up, under the Society's English title, by Dame Myra Hess in a famous pianoforte arrangement.

Lists of recommended music; advisory pamphlets; choir books and neglected music in leaflet form; lectures and hymn festivals: do all these now, in the light of facilities available today, strike us as somewhat small beer? If so, then that in itself should heighten our sense of the acute need to which these early activities were addressed. To the extent to which they may seem obvious, that may be due to the Society's pioneer use of them. To the extent to which they may no longer be necessary, that in part at least is due to the Society's pioneer work.

FROM 'MUSIC IN WORSHIP' TO THE END OF WORLD WAR II

In 1922 the Archbishops of Canterbury and York appointed a committee to deliberate on music in church. Of its 19 members, 11 were officers or committee members of the Church Music Society, and the chairman was Lady Mary Trefusis's brother, Earl Beauchamp. It may

fairly be supposed, therefore, that when in 1923 it published its report, 'Music in Worship', this was strongly representative of the Society's mind and efforts. Accordingly, no time was lost in propagating the recommendations. The Society acquired copies of the report and distributed these wherever it seemed desirable, to Diocesan Music Committees, Organists' Associations, and so on. Furthermore, it arranged for some of its leading members to give, by invitation, addresses explaining and advocating the report. And, most useful of all, its chairman, Mr S. H. (afterwards Sir Sydney) Nicholson who had succeeded Hadow some five years earlier, got together a demonstration choir to give practical exemplification of the recommendations. This choir consisted of volunteers from the Westminster Abbey Special Choir. The demonstrations were held under the auspices of the Society which paid the cost of music needed, advanced the out-of-pocket expenses, and provided a treat for the boys in the form of a holiday in camp. The scheme, started in 1924, was extremely successful, more applications being received than could be accepted. Excellent attendances were reported. At St Matthew's, Upper Clapton, London, between six and seven hundred people attended.

Nicholson's mind soon moved beyond demonstrations. In October 1924 he outlined to the Society's committee his ideas for more adequate training of choirmasters. 'It would seem desirable', he said,

that students should have an opportunity for definite study of church music of all kinds, with practical experience in choir training and in organ accompaniment, and also the study of the liturgical side of church music. To enable them to obtain this, it is desirable that their training should be at some place where there is a permanent choir, a good organ, competent teachers, and, above all, a church where they could attend frequent services . . . and where they could become familiar with the best church music of all styles.

All this, obviously, required resources and organisation well beyond the Society's scope, and opened up activities which it had never attempted. At the same time, it was clearly an object which its ideals and purpose logically required, and in some ways it represented a more systematic application of activities already adumbrated by the Society.

Nothing further transpired in the Society's minutes until January 1928, when Mr Nicholson outlined the provisional arrangements under which such a School had just been established, and suggested the joint production of a periodical leaflet (which became the *Quarterly News Sheet*). From this point forward until the School of English Church Music (afterwards the Royal School of Church Music) was thoroughly established, Nicholson regularly brought before the Society his plans in connection with it, and secured approval for them.

It will thus be seen that the newly-established SECM was neither a rival to, nor a splinter group from, the Church Music Society. The School

was, so to speak, born in the bosom of the Society, but grew naturally to independent adulthood. Its founder remained chairman of the CMS until 1930, and leading members of the Society like H. C. Colles, who succeeded him as chairman, were enthusiastic supporters of the School. And for many years to come the Society made financial grants to the School, particularly welcome in its early struggling years.

After the initial impact of 'Music in Worship' had passed there was a certain slackening of the Society's momentum until the end of this period. Reasons are not hard to see. For one thing, its earlier work was still alive and bearing fruit, and required no further initiative. For another, as the SECM gathered strength, it was the natural course of things that it should develop its own means of giving advice, recommending music, setting forth principles, even beginning to publish a little on its own account. For that reason the question was asked in the 1930's whether the Society should not close down, or perhaps amalgamate with the SECM. Nicholson himself was opposed to either move, though some years later he sensibly observed that if the two bodies were to continue to exist side by side a clear definition of their respective functions was desirable.

For a third reason also the purpose of the Society seemed less certain. The state of church music publishing was transformed in the 1920's and 1930's. Not only did the issue of the 100 numbers in the octavo series of 'Tudor Church Music', the Tudor Motets edited by R.R. Terry for Novello's, and other historic church music published by such firms as Stainer & Bell and Oxford University Press make available a copious repertory of church music of the past, but those same firms, and others like The Year Book Press, The Faith Press, and so on, began to produce simple music by living composers of which the Society could thoroughly approve. This activity appeared to eliminate the need for any further additions to its series of 'Reprints'.

Nevertheless, the Society refused to die. Though its activities were less vigorous it made a useful contribution in several ways. Where publishing music is concerned, Byrd's *Preces and Responses* may seem an insignificant item, but in 1925 all that was available to choirs when 'ferial' responses were not used was some form more or less approximating to Tallis. Byrd's setting had recently appeared in the library volumes of 'Tudor Church Music', and the Society did a helpful service by publishing it as a leaflet and making it available for general use. This was followed in 1933 by an album of *Preces and Responses*, edited by Ivor Atkins and E.H. Fellowes, giving not only both sets by Tallis but the splendid versions by Tomkins and Smith, together with those of Byrd and Morley. Since then, all of these have become popular to a degree which makes it hard to think that less than 50 years ago they were not accessible. Another of the Society's publications from this period is the setting of *Benedicite* from Purcell's *Service in B flat* (1937). In that connection it is amusing to find

in the Minute Book a query from so enlightened a musician as Martin Shaw, asking whether all the harmonies in the edition were correct.

A lot of time in the 1920's was spent in discussing provision that would be needed for the services of the Revised Prayer Book then in preparation. There was some idea of a complete musical Service Book, or at least of publishing what would be required for the new Offices of Prime and Compline. But as the Revised Book was eventually rejected, nothing came of this beyond the publication of music for the Invitatories proposed in connection with Venite: a tiny project to which prolonged and even anxious deliberation was directed.

Lists of recommended music continued to exercise the committee. One concerned with easy music was envisaged, but no one seemed prepared to do the necessary spade work. On the other hand, E.H. Fellowes and C. Hylton Stewart compiled 'A Repertory of English Cathedral Music' which was published by the Society in 1930. Hymn tunes went on receiving attention. The relevant chapter from 'Music in Worship' was issued for wider circulation as an Occasional Paper, supplemented by a list of 100 representative recommended tunes. The minutes show that the committee approached this task in an exceptionally rigorous mood until Geoffrey Shaw brought a little common sense to bear. Even so, something of its frame of mind is perhaps indicated by the inclusion among the L.M.'s of Battishill's 'St Pancras' but not Wesley's 'Hereford'.

A marked pre-occupation of the Society was the present state and the future of choral services in cathedrals. As early as 1922 disquiet had been voiced in committee about reduction in the number of such services, and in 1924 an Occasional Paper was published defending in pungent terms the choral foundations and what they stood for. An approach was made to the Cathedral Organists' Conference, and a joint survey was carried out. In 1934, as a result, a vigorous paper appeared, entitled 'The Present State of Cathedral Music', which made no bones about being somewhat tendentious, stating roundly on its title-page that it had been compiled 'having regard particularly to the decline in the number of weekday choral services'. Three years later a constructive paper on 'Music in the New Cathedrals' was published. This recognized that the recently constituted 'parish church cathedrals' could not, and should not, imitate in all respects the musical standards of the more ancient bodies, and set out, in its own words, 'to give some guidance as to how the parish church cathedrals may attempt the task of making their own contribution to English church music', and to deal 'in a practical and understanding manner with both the difficulties and opportunities'.

Early in World War II, feeling perhaps that reductions which were necessary expedients in war time might become permanent in peace time, the Society began to look ahead and mobilise opinion. Once more it worked with the Cathedral Organists' Association, and bore the cost of

publishing a fine joint report, 'Cathedral Music Today and Tomorrow' (1941). This was a comprehensive and penetrating document which even now, when its immediate polemical purpose is o'erpast, gives food for thought.

Before the war ended, the Society lost its chief link with its origins. Lady Mary Trefusis had died in 1927, when the Society's tribute to her said that in the cause of reform of church music 'she never ceased to labour with an instructed and uncompromising earnestness'. Miss Gregory, however, faithfully continued as Honorary Secretary until she retired in 1939 and was elected a Vice-President. An appreciation of her work appeared in *English Church Music* (the SECM magazine) for July 1940. When she died in 1943 the obituary notice in *The Times* said 'more than executive ability, it was her vivid personality which set spurs to whatever cause she took in hand'.

AFTER WORLD WAR II. CONCLUSION

From the 1940's the Society's pioneer work was behind it, though there was no feeling of complacency. Also, as we have seen, the need for its publishing activity was very much reduced. Furthermore, opportunities for musical training had greatly improved, and after the war there was to be a large expansion of these.

It therefore seemed, for a time, that the chief way the Society could exert useful influence was by means of its Occasional Papers. In the middle of the war it had published a small but distinctive historical pamphlet on 'Song Schools of the Middle Ages' by Hamilton Thompson, a leading scholar in the subject. After the war ended, the series embraced a particularly helpful pamphlet by J.H. Arnold on 'The Music of the Holy Communion', explaining the place and purpose of music in relation to the rite of 1662. Sir Thomas Armstrong's 'Church Music Today', a thought-provoking exposition of attitudes, shortcomings, and problems in 1946, is now a revealing reflection of its era. Certain other papers dealt with practical matters, others with surveys of different kinds. A series of papers on various periods of church music was projected, but only two appeared: one, by Heathcote Statham, on Restoration Church Music, the other on Eighteenth-century Cathedral Music. But a time was soon reached when pamphlets became alien to the publishing and bookselling world, and no further Occasional Papers have been published after No. 25, which dealt with the music of Holy Communion in the Series II alternative. Since then, the place of such papers has to some extent been supplied by the addresses printed in the Annual Reports. These constitute a varied and interesting series, historical, critical, challenging, or reflective, but are limited in circulation to members of the Society.

Unexpectedly, however, from the mid 1950's the series of 'Reprints' revived in importance. Publishers became reluctant to produce some needed items—for example, so standard a piece as Byrd's 'Bow thine ear'

was suddenly found to be unobtainable—and the Society accordingly sprang forward once more to fill the gaps. Between 1953 and 1967, when the 50th 'Reprint' was reached, 23 new titles were added and 10 existing titles were re-edited in accordance with better knowledge of source-texts. This work became of such importance that an Honorary General Editor was appointed in 1956, a capacity in which the present writer has been followed by Dr David Lumsden (1970-73) and Dr Richard Marlow (from 1974).

Numerous items were of bread-and-butter usefulness (and none the worse for that); others were notable classics, such as Blow's 'I beheld, and lo! a great multitude' and Purcell's 'Rejoice in the Lord alway'; others yet again represented choice but more recondite works, as for instance Greene's Evening Service in C or Amner's 'O ye little flock'. When the collection of Preces and Responses as edited by Atkins and Fellowes came up for reprinting, these were entirely re-edited and put forth in such a way as to provide the original text as set by the composers to the Prayer Books of 1549/1559, as well as the necessary adaptation for the Book of 1662.

The reason why the Society was in a position to produce items which ordinary publishers were disinclined to take was that from the start all its editorial work had been undertaken voluntarily. As no fees or royalties were asked, all the net income from sales, together with members' subscriptions, was nursed by Honorary Treasurers to be used for the publication of further works. The voluntary work of editors has meant that the cost of producing every title has been minimised, while those that have sold well have made a correspondingly bigger contribution to the expense of those which, however useful to choirs, are relatively unprofitable. An example of the latter category, which the Society feels it has some obligation to publish, is Croft's classic setting of the Burial Service, generously edited by Bruce Wood.

Contrary to the early policy of the Society, one or two works by living composers have been published, among them a particularly successful setting of the Communion Service by Kenneth Leighton. This was skilfully written to a prescription suggested by us, namely to be capable of being sung in any of the following ways: (a) unison—congregational and/or choir; (b) congregation in unison with choir singing semi-independent parts; (c) choir only, some passages in unison, others in four parts. In its present 75th year the Society is gratified to have secured a short work for treble voices by Jonathan Harvey.

At a time of unprecedented difficulty in the music publishing industry, the Society feels that the maintenance of its publishing role is of special value, but it hopes to continue to supplement this by promoting the study and understanding of all aspects of church music to the best of its powers.

Watkins Shaw