



The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024

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and presented to the Annual General Meeting on 20 July
2025**

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1 January 2024 - 31 December 2024

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Charitable Status

Founded in 1951, the Society registered as charity no. 298062 on 22 January 1988.

Office

The Society has no registered office. Correspondence should be addressed to the Society's Acting Secretary at 64 Willis Road, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8HF.

Trustees

The following acted as Trustees during the period under review:

Stuart Freed	Peter Newble (until July 2024)
Sam Dobson	Philip Petchey
Caroline Gilderdale	George Smart (until July 2024)
Liz Luder	Peter Smith
Martyn Marsh	Roy Whittaker (until July 2024)
David Morris	Prof. David Young

Elected Officers

Chair:	Stuart Freed
Vice-Chair:	Martyn Marsh
Secretary:	Post vacant, David Morris, Acting Secretary
Treasurer:	Peter Smith

Other National Post-holders

Archivist:	Post vacant. Caroline Gilderdale until July 2024.
Data Protection Officer:	Stuart Freed
Journal Editor:	Kevin Mitchell and Editorial Board of Andrew Dalton, David Morris & Andrew Neill
Membership Secretary:	Chris Bennett
News Editor:	Peter James
Web Officer:	Stuart Freed

Branch Officers

Branch	Chair	Secretary
London	Philip Petchey	Ruth Hellen
North American	Arthur Reynolds	Lee Kaufman
North-West	Geoff Scargill	David L. Jones
Scotland	Ian Lawson	Kitty Parker
Southern	David Pearce	Post vacant, David Pearce Acting Secretary
West Midlands	Wendy Hill	Richard Smith (until 13 April 2024), post vacant
Yorkshire & North-East	David Young	Malcolm Westwood

Advisers

Bankers:	Lloyds TSB
Independent Examiner:	Adrian Benselin

Honorary Posts and Awards

President – Sir Mark Elder CH CBE

Vice-Presidents - Diana McVeagh, Dame Janet Baker CH DBE, Leonard Slatkin, Sir Andrew Davis CBE (died April 2024), Dr Christopher Robinson CVO CBE, Andrew Neill, Martyn Brabbins, Tasmin Little CBE, Julian Lloyd Webber OBE, Julian Rushton.

Recipients of the Elgar Society's Medal

1992	Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore	2013	Sir Andrew Davis
1992	Leonard Slatkin	2013	Sir Mark Elder
1999	Jerzy Maksymiuk	2015	Daniel Barenboim
2000	Tadaaki Otaka	2015	Diana McVeagh
2007	Andrew Litton	2016	Martin Bird
2008	Sakari Oramo	2016	Teresa Cahill
2009	Danube Symphony Orchestra	2016	Alexander Walker
2009	Vladimir Ashkenazy	2019	Anastasia Vedyakova
2011	Michael Kennedy	2019	Adrian Brown
2011	Anthony Payne	2019	Dame Janet Baker
2012	Barry Collett	2021	Christopher Bishop
2012	Jacek Kaspszyk	2023	Neil Mantle
2012	Sir Colin Davis		

Structure, Governance and Management

The Society is governed under a constitution adopted with effect from 1 January 2008 and subsequently amended in June 2010, June 2011, June 2018, June 2022 and July 2024. Its Council consists of the elected officers, and up to eight other members of the Society.

The Executive Committee consists of the elected officers. A representative of the Branch Chairmen's Committee is a non-voting member. The task of the Executive Committee is to carry out the policy decisions of the Council and to deal with any matters which lie in its terms of reference.

There are five committees/working parties (1) Elgar in Performance (which includes Elgar in Education) which decides on grants in respect of performances of Elgar and in respect of educational projects (and special projects) and (2) the Branch Chairs' Committee, composed of the Chairs of the branches of the Society (3) three additional working groups have also been formed to deal respectively with (a) Recruitment/Retention (b) proposals for the Society's 75th anniversary and (c) Education and Young People.

Subcommittees/Working Parties active during 2024

Name	Chair/Convenor	Members
Elgar in Performance (including Education)	Dr Roger Allen	Executive Committee, Peter Newble
Branch Chairs Committee	Philip Petchey	All other Branch Chairs
Elgar Online Group	Sam Dobson	Martyn Marsh, David Young, Chris Warsaw (North America) and Marian Rutland
Recruitment and Retention Group	Martyn Marsh	Michael Trott (Sec), Philip Petchey, Frances Prince, Geoff Scargill, Peter Toothill, Chris Warsaw
75th Anniversary Group	Andrew Neill	Stuart Freed, Martyn Marsh, Chris Warsaw, Ruth Helen, Geoff Scargill, David Morris, Michael Trott, Jonathan Hope and Peter Smith
Education Working Group	Geoff Scargill	Michael Trott (Sec), Martyn Marsh, Jonathan Hope, Steven Goulden, Myles Manders-Young

Council and Executive

The Council met three times online during the year. The Executive Committee met twice. Much of the business was progressed by email and Zoom. The branch chairmen did not meet in 2024.

Branches

At the start of the year there were six UK branches organised geographically, and a further branch covering America and Canada. There are also links with Elgar Freundeskreis Deutschland in Germany. The creation of a branch is at the discretion of the Society's Council and requires substantive evidence from a sufficiently large group of members that there is a reasonable assurance of viability. Branches report on their activities via the *Elgar Society News* and are required to submit their annual accounts to the Treasurer for consolidation with the accounts of the national Society.

Risks

No major risks have been identified by the Trustees. The Society is substantially dependent on subscriptions and Gift Aid for its income and it is thus vital to retain and increase membership while ensuring that subscription rates are realistic in the light of the charity's activities and costs. The Trustees consider that if this is done there are no serious risks to future viability. This Annual Report states the position as at 31 December 2024 and the Trustees are not aware of any material change in risk which needs to be reported.

Reserves Policy

The Council's policy is to retain reserves equal to at least one year's expenditure.

Objectives and Activities

Under its Constitution, the Society's objective is the education in, and promotion of, the appreciation of the public in the music of Edward Elgar and the education of the public in the life of Edward Elgar through:

- a) the provision of educational programmes and activities to widen knowledge of Elgar's music for all;
- b) support for the Elgar Birthplace Museum (now known as The Firs) and educational establishments that attract the general public to Elgar's music and life;
- c) the funding and encouragement of performances and recordings of his works;
- d) the encouragement of research into Elgar's music, and the publication of a scholarly journal containing the results of such research;
- e) the publication of or support for a scholarly edition of Elgar's music.

The Society seeks to promote performance of Elgar's music, especially the more rarely performed works. While its focus has heretofore been on performances in Britain, it has emphasised encouraging performances of Elgar's music abroad as far as its resources permit. It is concerned to introduce the composer and his music to younger audiences and, by making grants for appropriate educational activities, to achieve this.

The Society publishes its *Journal* three times a year, which contains the results of Elgar research and is sold to educational institutions and the general public as well as being sent to members as part of their subscription benefit. There is also a thrice-yearly *News* publication sent to members only. The Society maintains a website which is proving increasingly valuable for members and non-members alike.

Funds are centrally administered, the Council approving the annual budget and budget heads. Branches submit bids for support of their activities based on their administrative costs plus an element in support of their local meetings. Grants are made both to branches and outside bodies in respect of specific charitable activities and are awarded only when a proposed project is shown to have satisfied strict conditions relating to the stated aims and objectives of the Society. The Society's grant-making policy is conditioned by its objectives and its relatively constrained financial resources. In general, grants are made for the major purposes listed below.

- Assisting sole or group performers, especially in non-commercial situations, who are prepared to play rarer Elgar works or to perform in locations in which the composer's music is unlikely otherwise to be heard and at which the public constitute the majority of attenders.
- Supporting educational activities at all levels from primary to higher and continuous learning that inculcate in the participants special and intellectual skills by using Elgar, his life and/or music as a test bed for such activities or which enhance knowledge of English culture and history.

- Aiding institutions which have a role in the musical and historical aspects of Elgar to widen the accessibility of their services to socially diverse audiences and/or to provide specific Elgar-related public benefits.
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B ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (1 January 2024– 31 December 2024)

General Overview

In considering undertaking any activities, the four objectives below are the criteria against which we judge any proposals so that we might:

1. increase our membership;
2. raise money in support of our activities;
3. add demonstrably to the encouragement of performances and recordings of Elgar's works;
4. increase access to the Elgar oeuvre.

At national level, and with all due acknowledgement of branch activities, our efforts continue to be focused on rebuilding activities following the Covid-19 pandemic nationally and at branch level.

The main developments during the year were:

- Branches have continued successfully meeting following the Covid pandemic.
- Performances supported by *Elgar in Performance* and the education and special projects funding continued to increase but pre-Covid levels have not been reached.
- The Elgar Online Group has co-ordinated the year-round programme of online offering in such a way as to avoid clashes with live branch meetings (see details below).
- The Elgar Festival has been supported alongside the Birthday Weekend events which this year again included a lunch.
- The AGM was held as a Zoom meeting to enable members who cannot travel to Worcester to participate.
- Monitoring the membership numbers;
- continuing links with Elgar Freundeskreis Deutschland in Germany;
- keeping under review the Society's financial position;
- continuing to work closely with the National Trust at The Firs and funding a programme of events containing a talk and concert with young performers;
- negotiating with the British Library regarding digitisation of Elgar scores held by them, and agreeing a grant towards this;
- agreeing a scheme with the Holst Society for joint reduced-price membership.
- During the year the Council has:
 - received a report from the Recruitment & Membership Working Party chaired by the vice-chairman;
 - formed an Education Working Group to examine the ways the Society can relate more effectively with young people;
 - continued to issue a weekly email newsletter from the chairman to all online members;
 - received reports from the group set up to look at proposals for the Society 75th Anniversary in 2026.

Elgar Society Journal: Under Kevin Mitchell's leadership, the editorial board continues to oversee the production of an informative and interesting *Journal* which is issued three times each year (together with the Society's *News*, edited by Peter James) and is distributed both in physical and electronic form.

Sponsorship and Legacies: We continue to encourage donations and legacies for specific projects.

Elgar Works and the Elgar Complete Edition: We continue to promote Elgar Works and the Elgar Complete Edition to make more of Elgar's music available in a timely fashion at a reasonable cost to performers and conductors all over the world.

Elgar in Performance

RECIPIENT	ACTIVITY	DATE	VENUE	GRANTED
Orchestra of the Music Makers	Enigma Variations	9.3.24	SOTA Singapore	250
London Chorus	Orchestral Songs Op 48, 59, 60	7.3.24	Holy Trinity, Sloane Sq	250
Brockham Choral	Part Songs, Enigma, Music Makers	7.12.24	St Martin's Church Dorking	500
Culwick Choral Society, Dublin	Light of Life	17.5.24	St Andrew's Dublin	750
Brussels Young Adult Choir	Four Part Songs Op.53	5.5.24	Brussels	200
Ormskirk Music Soc	From the Bavarian Highlands Op.27	6.7.24	Burscough, Lancs	200
Motettenchor Loerrach	From the Bavarian Highlands Op.27	13/14.7.24	Loerrach/Müllheim	350
Canemus Choir	All Elgar Programme incl.Op27	22.6.24	St James, PO10 7DP	200
Collegia Musica Chiemgau e.v.	From the Bavarian Highlands Op.27	5/6.10.24	Bad Reichenhall/Munich	500
Willow Orchestra	Symphony 1	28.9.24	St John's Hampstead Heath	500

The Elgar in Performance scheme continues to support Elgar performances in the UK and abroad with the aim of actively encouraging wider acceptance of lesser-known works. It was pleasing in 2024 to see no fewer than four performances of *From the Bavarian Highlands* Op.27, two in Germany and two in the UK, with a further UK performance scheduled for March 2025. Other significant events included the early choral work *The Light of Life* Op.29 given by the Culwick Choral Society of Dublin; and Symphony No.1 Op.55 in Hampstead given by the Willow Orchestra, an ensemble comprised of young orchestral musicians at the outset of their professional careers. The Elgar in Performance Group is keen that the scheme should become more widely known, especially with regard to the Society's aim of encouraging active engagement with Elgar's music amongst young musicians.

Dr Roger Allen, Coordinator – Elgar in Performance

The Journal

During April, August and December 2024 further editions of Volume 24 of the *Elgar Society Journal* were published, running to 77, 81 and 105 pages respectively, with a cover photograph of Elgar at Severn House in April, John Henry Newman in August and the souvenir programme for the 1924 Pageant of British Empire for December.

The April issue contained an article on Elgar and August Manns by Arthur Reynolds; Dr Relf Clark wrote on Elgar and Parratt; Paul Guinery on Elgar and Delius; and Maddy Tongue on Dorabella. Andrew Neill introduced three essays on The Importance of Elgar by Scott Dickinson, Adrian Partington and Eleanor Roberts.

The August issue opened with obituaries of Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore and Sir Andrew Davis by Andrew Neill, followed by further articles on 'The Importance of Elgar' by Dame Janet Baker, David Cairns, Andrew Staples, Neal Davies, Neville Creed and Roderick Williams. Simon Heffer wrote on Holst to commemorate the latter's 150th anniversary. Alan Tongue wrote on 'Dorabella' as a conductor, followed by an article on Frank Schuster and Leslie Wylde by Chris Adams. Professor Julian Rushton reviewed the Carus edition of the score of *The Dream of Gerontius*.

The December issue opened with an article by Andrew Dalton and Andrew Neill on Elgar's *Pageant of Empire*, marking the centenary of the British Empire Exhibition in Wembley in 1924. Dr Relf Clark wrote on Elgar and Stanford and Norman O'Neill was remembered by Em Marshall-Luck. The June A.T. Shaw lecture given by Julian Lloyd Webber and Kenneth Woods was published, with further essays on 'The Importance of Elgar' by Diana McVeagh, Julian Lloyd Webber and Dr Christopher Kent.

During the year seven books and nine CDs were reviewed as were the four volumes of the LPO Legacy which are only available as a download. A number of letters were printed and the recordings that Elgar made in 1924 were noted – the '100 Years Ago ...' columns recalled what the composer was doing during that year.

The editorial team has worked in harmony to edit, proof-read and assemble the *Journal* and we are greatly indebted to Mike Byde for carrying out the formatting of each issue, often having to produce several versions before the final copy is ready for the printers, John Price, who we also thank for their work in printing and posting the *Journal*.

The News

The usual three editions were published in 2024 with the aim of combining Elgarian news and features with information from branches and the Society's officers. Among notable articles was a feature in April's issue by Stephen Bibby, who replicated Elgar's journey up the Amazon, a century on. The Society's farewell for Sir Mark Elder at the Hallé was included in August's edition, as well as four reminiscences of Jerrold Northrop Moore. The December issue carried an article about a performance of *The Kingdom* in 1909 conducted by Elgar, and an account of a visit to Hasfield Court.

It's always a pleasure to receive unsolicited items of interest from occasional contributors, so Society members should not hesitate to send their articles or letters – even handwritten ones sent by snail mail for those without computers. Special thanks go to Robert Gilbert, typesetter and compiler of the concert diary, and to regular contributors including (but not limited to) Richard Smith, John Norris, Philip Petchey and Andrew Neill.

Peter James

Membership Report

The table of branch membership, as at 31/12/2024, is shown below. It should be noted that many members have nominated two branches, and the actual membership figure at the end of the year was 792, this to include life members, hon. members and vice-presidents. This shows a fall of 33 from the 2023 total.

The total number of new members joining in 2024 was 29 – slightly fewer than 2023's figure of 37. There were more resignations and sadly more deaths this year. The total number of members removed from the register in 2024 was just over 50.

In order to give some members more time to pay their subscriptions, there were no members removed for non-payment in 2024. This was only partially successful, and we believe we will lose some members for non-payment in 2025.

Branch membership	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
London	257	261	269	277	286	320	321	307	338
North America/Canada	50	51	49	49	52	49	42	45	45
North-West	99	104	108	114	119	120	117	113	127
Scottish	40	42	46	48	50	50	47	59	59
Southern	77	79	76	83	86	89	97	90	102
West Midlands	177	179	178	188	192	229	216	187	210
Yorkshire/North-East	56	58	55	52	52	55	53	45	50
Area Memberships									
South-West	30	31	33	41	45	54	58	58	64
East Anglia	40	43	44	54	54	56	57	50	65
East Midlands	21	24	27	31	34	37	31	24	33
No Branch/Area Affiliation	123	126	129	145	119	161	127	143	160

The Archives

All material which has been sent to me in terms of hard copies – papers, correspondence, paintings, concert programmes, newspaper articles etc. – is now stored in the Archive at the Hive in Worcester.

All documents from Elgar Society branches, vice-chairman and chair have now been collated and organised and will be transferred digitally to the Digital Archive in February 2025.

I relinquished the role of Archivist in June 2024 (due to increasing commitment to other organisations), as was briefly mentioned at the AGM. It also seemed that this was then an appropriate time for me to cease receiving any more archive material.

Caroline Gilderdale

Elgar Society Online

Elgar Society Online (ESO) has continued its work throughout the year to present a wide and interesting variety of talks available to anyone, member or non-member, with internet access. The subcommittee for the live Zoom meetings consists of: Sam Dobson (Chair), Martyn Marsh, David Young (all national Council members), Marian Rutland (Bury St Edmunds) and Chris Warsaw (North America). No meetings of the subcommittee were held during the year. The few issues which arose were dealt with by email. All matters relating to Vimeo films were dealt with by Peter Newble and Andrew Neill.

We originally aimed for eight events during the year but unfortunately achieved only six as it proved impossible to find a suitable date for a November talk and the December talk had to be abandoned due to technical problems encountered by the speaker. Titles and presenters of the six talks which did take place are as follows. Attendance at each talk is shown in brackets. The January talk was hosted by ESO but arranged by North-West Branch.

13 January 2024	<i>The Second Symphony: another Elgarian Enigma</i>	Duncan Eves
(attendance details not held)		
2 March 2024	<i>Ann Greening: Mother of Edward Elgar</i>	Michael Trott (33)
23 March 2024	<i>Elgar's Peyton Lectures</i>	Sir David Eastwood and Christopher Morley (34)
6 April 2024	<i>Elgar and Joachim</i>	Arthur Reynolds (40)
25 May 2024	<i>A Lifetime of Making Songs: Elgar au Salon</i>	Julian Rushton (30)
10 October 2024	<i>Elgar for a New Generation</i>	Ryan Czekaj (31)

All talks were recorded and requests for a link to the recording are made through Peter Newble.

The established practice is that speakers who are Society members are not paid a fee. This year the standard fee was £150 but none of the speakers were paid as they were all Society members. Of course, the group is always on the lookout for likely speakers on subjects of interest. We are aiming to present seven or eight talks for 2025. The committee have said they are happy to pay three or four speakers per year but this is not something for which we have a target.

Overall, the subcommittee are happy with the management of ESO and the choice of speakers. The average attendance for Zoom talks in 2024 was 34. The previous year's figures are 31 for 2023 and 35 in 2022, showing that interest remains steady. We gain publicity through the chairman's regular newsletters, the Elgar Society's website and with posts on the Facebook pages of the Elgar Society and the Edward Elgar Society.

Sam Dobson - Elgar Society Online

Branch Activities

The Society recognises that branches contribute to the Society's health as they promote membership and local activity throughout the country. They are particularly important for

members who enjoy meeting fellow Elgarians and listening to Elgar talks and performances in their home area.

London Branch

The London Branch held meetings as follows:

5 February	<i>Alice Elgar – guardian of a genius</i>	Simon Baggs
4 March	<i>An evening with Colin Matthews</i>	
15 April	<i>Heartbreak in Tuscany: Elgar's Op.57</i>	George Parris
13 May	<i>Elgar and his concert band transcribers</i>	Tom Higgins
10 June	Branch AGM; <i>Piano recital of music by Elgar</i>	Mitra Alice Tham
7 October	<i>Elgar's atypical variations</i>	Julian Rushton
4 November	<i>Elgar and Stanford</i>	Relf Clark
2 December	<i>The Pageant of Empire</i>	Andrew Dalton & Andrew Neill

Reports of the February to October meetings appear in the relevant issues of *Elgar Society News*. Relf Clark's talk in November compared the lives of Elgar and Stanford, showing the marked differences in their education and career development. He also shed light on the way their relationship changed over the years.

In December, Andrew Neill and Andrew Dalton gave a richly illustrated presentation to mark the centenary of the gigantic two-year British Empire Exhibition at Wembley attended by half the nation, focusing on the largely forgotten twelve-week *Pageant of Empire* that was to feature much music, specially written by Elgar, for massed bands and choirs. The presentation included recordings of most of the pageant's orchestral and solo songs, reconstructed in 2010 by Martin Yates and Roderick Williams, to show what might have been had the weather and over-ambitious programming not overtaken the event.

All our meetings were again held at Queen's College in Harley Street. Attendance is steady, though we would naturally like to see more people at our meetings, which are both varied and of a high quality. For all branch activities we are reliant on a large number of people who help in a variety of ways and our thanks go to all of them.

Ruth Hellen – Secretary, London Branch

North American Branch

The Elgar Society's North American Branch is a largely virtual branch that meets once each year for a three-day conference organized to take place in a city where a major Elgar work is being performed. A review of our 2024 conference, held in St Louis Missouri, appeared in the *Elgar Society News*. North American Branch is internally funded and makes no application to the Council for funding.

Arthur Reynolds

North-West Branch

Our total branch membership is currently down to 99 - the first time it has dropped below 100 for many years. This is mainly due to the death of elderly members and the number of new members joining the branch not compensating for the decline. As reported last year, we are not complacent and are actively looking at ways of encouraging others, particularly the more youthful members of society, to come along and join us and see what we have to offer.

All our meetings in 2024, apart from the meeting and AGM on 13th January (both of which were held via Zoom) were held as live events and were as follows:

13 January 2024 Duncan Eves presented 'The Second Symphony: another Elgarian Enigma'. Duncan's talk was testament to his scholarship and recognition that the creative process of a musical genius can only be glimpsed by inference and educated guesswork. Duncan regards this symphony as one of the twentieth century's greatest symphonic masterpieces

10 February 2024 David Jones gave an extensive, wide-ranging and well-illustrated PowerPoint presentation entitled 'Elgar: A Dreamer of Dreams'.

09 March 2024 Pupils from Chetham's School of Music (led by their Music Director, Tom Redmond) played a selection of instrumental pieces accompanied by piano. (This meeting was held at the Carole Nash Hall, Chetham's School of Music.)

13 April 2024 Michael Trott gave us a detailed and well-illustrated talk on the subject of 'Hubert Parry: The Development of a Great Personality'.

11 May 2024 Charlie Perry gave a fascinating illustrated talk on 'Angels and Demons: Elgar's Choral writing for his three major Oratorios'. (This meeting was held at the Liverpool Quaker Meeting House.)

19 May 2024 Although not a North-West Branch meeting, many members from the branch, and several from other branches of the Elgar Society, came to Manchester's Bridgewater Hall for two afternoon concerts given by the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Sir Mark Elder in which Elgar's 'Enigma' Variations featured prominently. The lunchtime concert entitled 'The Musical Story of Enigma' was a family concert designed to be fun, interactive and easy to understand by children. It was introduced by Tom Redmond and Sir Mark Elder. The afternoon orchestral concert (which began at 4.00 pm) included a performance of the 'Enigma' Variations. It was the final Opus One Series concert which Sir Mark was to conduct before stepping down as music director of the Hallé. It was appropriate that the final work played was by Elgar. In his twenty-four years as music director, Sir Mark has championed, performed and recorded with the Hallé many works by Elgar to huge acclaim.

05 September 2024 The annual North-West Branch Sunday Luncheon was held at the Alma Lodge Hotel in Stockport. After the lunch, four branch members talked about and played pieces of recorded music which held a special significance for them. Altogether a very enjoyable experience.

12 October 2024 Harvey Davies (piano) and Sarah Ewins (violin) - both of them professional musicians from the Pleyel Ensemble - played and talked to us in a delightful programme entitled 'Elgar - Live Music'.

23 November 2024 Andrew Dalton gave us a detailed and fascinating presentation entitled 'Billy Reed - A Musician's Musician'. It included many excerpts of rare recordings.

14 December 2024 Andrew Neill gave us an illuminating, wide-ranging, and well-illustrated presentation entitled 'Pageant of Empire' in which he spoke about the music which Elgar composed for a pageant as part of the 1924 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley.

David L. Jones - Hon. Sec., North-West Branch

Scottish Branch

The year was largely inactive for the Scottish Branch and, in anticipation of this, the branch waived the usual offer of funding from the Society. An AGM was held by Zoom in June at which the committee was able to report on a couple of potential home-grown events, but neither could be brought to fruition before the end of the year. These, and others, are still under current consideration, but the branch has turned largely into a promotional outpost for the Society, encouraging attendance at local Elgar concerts and promoting awareness of the Society at them by leafleting. As well as performances by amateur orchestras - notably Neil Mantle's Scottish Sinfonia which the Branch continues to sponsor - the new conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra is beginning to show a significant track record with Elgar's large-scale works. The committee aims to develop the branch's connections with performers of Elgar works, and also to organise occasional events which will feature both performance and a level of analysis rather deeper than audiences can get from programme notes.

Ian Lawson - Branch Chairman, Scottish Branch

Southern Branch

The Southern Branch had a normal year of meetings at our two locations in Winchester and Havant. However, we started 2024 by joining with others in a meeting on Zoom featuring our vice-chairman, Duncan Eves, talking about 'Elgar's Second Symphony: another Elgarian Enigma' – a subject very familiar to Duncan, having studied it at Southampton University. Live meetings continued in February at our Havant venue, with Peter Avis describing his many exploits in 'My Summertimes on Bredon', having climbed the hill a great many times. In March, Michael Butterfield took us on a tour with 'Caractacus' at Winchester, and in April Andrew Keener introduced us to some 'Unsung Elgarians' back at Havant. At our May meeting in Winchester, the former broadcaster, musician and composer Chris de Souza asked the question, 'Why did it take so long for Brahms to complete his First Symphony?' He described the many mysteries surrounding it, together with the enigma of Brahms's relationship with Clara Schumann.

I attended the 2024 Three Choirs Festival in July, this year held in Worcester. It is always an opportunity to meet musical friends and to make new ones, and to promote the objectives of our Society. It was delightful to chat informally to the then Master of the King's Music, Judith Weir, who attended most of the festival. Worcester is always a bit special for Elgarians. It also provides a good opportunity to recruit speakers for Southern Branch. My review of the festival was published in the December edition of the *Elgar Society News*.

Southern Branch commenced the second half of its 2024 programme with the September meeting, held in Winchester, when a well-attended audience heard Richard Westwood-Brookes's talk 'The Violin Concerto - Who is The Dark Lady?' Richard gave us his best guess, which prompted much discussion among the audience. This was followed in October by Andrew Neill, who gave a fascinating talk at Havant about the 'Pageant of Empire' held at Wembley in 1924 to support the Empire Exhibition. This has subsequently been published as an article in the Society's *Journal*. Our final talk of the year was given by Alexis Paterson, the retiring chief executive of the Three Choirs Festival. Her presentation discussed new music of the last 300 years of the festival's existence, ably making the point that all music was new at some stage. It was held in Winchester.

I added a plea for more members and guests to attend our meetings, particularly at Havant where numbers always seem to be lower. This is a better location with a café and excellent audio-visual facilities laid on.

Our 2025 season will open on 22 February at Winchester when Michael Trott will tell us about his joint project with Hilary Elgar and the late Dr Brenda Watson to record the life of Elgar's 'wonderful mother' Ann. Full details are on the website, Southern Branch page. A full year of presentations will then follow at our two locations.

And finally, our branch hopes for a new secretary have evaporated, so the position is still vacant. I continue to remind all members of the Southern Branch that we very much need a dedicated branch secretary, but no one seems willing to take on the job. We would also like one more committee member. Nevertheless, we managed to achieve a full programme of meetings in 2024 and plan to do the same for 2025. Member numbers have again fallen in Southern Branch, as well as more generally. Our regular meeting attendees remain loyal, but we still need to spread enthusiasm for our Society and recruit more members. We are maintained financially by the subvention from the national treasurer and raise donations and raffle income at our meetings. However, we notice that the cost of venues and speaker expenses continues to increase.

David Pearce – Chairman, Southern Branch

West Midlands Branch

For 2024 the branch held its meetings at The Firs, Elgar's Birthplace, in Worcester, Holy Trinity Church Hall in Malvern, Malvern Priory and Christ Church in Avenue Road, Malvern.

Saturday, 27 January 2024: 'Ann Greening – Elgar's mother.' The well-known Elgarian and previous chairman of the West Midlands Branch, Michael Trott, gave a most interesting presentation on Ann Greening. For several years, Michael has been researching the life of Ann Elgar, together with her great granddaughter, Hilary Elgar, and the late Brenda Watson. This research has resulted in a book about Ann which is available from Michael or at our branch meetings and formed the subject of his talk.

Saturday, 17 February 2024: Annual Branch Lunch. The ever-popular yearly branch lunch was again held at Holy Trinity Church Hall in Malvern. As always, we must thank our caterer, Leslie Hitchen, and her team for a delightful selection of dishes. She tells us that if our lunch is held in

2026 it will mark her 30th year. Our thanks to Gill Bradshaw for compiling her usual mind-bending quiz.

Saturday, 16 March 2024: 'Arranging Elgar for Military Band'. We were delighted to welcome Tom Higgins to talk on arranging Elgar for military band. Tom studied conducting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, gaining a silver medal in his first year. He has conducted several leading British and German orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic, and recorded a revival of Elgar's *Fringes of the Fleet* with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra which included Roderick Williams as the main soloist. He recently arranged and conducted two other albums for Somm records: *Crown Imperial* (CD 0138) and *Elgar and his Peers* (CD 0170). Both include several Elgar works arranged for military band, with the latter produced with the support of the Elgar Society.

Saturday, 13 April 2024: AGM. The AGM followed the usual pattern with Wendy Hill elected as our chairman. Richard Smith officially stepped down as secretary, and thus the post is now vacant. As an interim measure several of our members have taken over certain secretarial duties. After tea, five members introduced their favourite Elgar piece which brought forth some surprises.

Saturday, 11 May 2024: 'W.H "Billy" Reed'. Andrew Dalton is a member of the London Branch of the Elgar Society and joint editor of the *Journal*. For some time, he has been researching the life of Elgar's great friend William Henry 'Billy' Reed and treated us to a masterly talk on the life of the famous violinist and composer. Apart from the profuse illustrations Andrew showed during his talk he also played excerpts from some of the recordings made by Reed and several of his own compositions.

Saturday, 15 June 2024: The Albeo Trio. We returned to The Firs for a recital by the Albeo Trio (Anwen Mai Thomas, harp, Lloyd Hampton, flute, and Emily Clark, viola) all of whom are recent alumni of the Royal Academy of Music and are based in London. They began with a clever transcription of Elgar's *Chanson de Matin* which seemed to lend itself to the unusual combination of instruments. This was followed by another transcription of three movements from Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, and the Flute Concertino by Cécile Chaminade. After tea, each member told us how they began their careers in music. Then came the *Elegiac Trio* by Arnold Bax, which was actually written for flute, viola, and harp, and the trio ended with another transcription of an Elgar work, *Chanson de Nuit*.

Friday, 2 August 2024: 'Elgar as a Symphonic Poet. *The Apostles*, *The Kingdom* and the Central European Tradition.' For the Elgar Society lecture at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester Dr Roger Allen, emeritus fellow of St Peter's College, Oxford, gave us an excellent illustrated talk on Elgar's two major oratorios and how they fitted into the European tradition. A three-course lunch followed. Both events were given at Worcester Royal Grammar School.

Saturday, 14 September 2024: 'England's Britannia - Dame Clara Butt.' It was perhaps appropriate that Jacqueline Edwards's talk preceded the Last Night of the Proms, scheduled to take place that evening. Among her many claims to fame, Dame Clara Butt will be remembered for her connection with Elgar's 'Land of Hope and Glory' and *Gerontius*. Jacqui is a distant relation of Dame Clara and she gave a most illuminating talk on the contralto. This was a most entertaining afternoon, not only for Jacqui's talk but also for her even-handed views on the perhaps idiosyncratic contralto. We can certainly recommend her talk to other branches.

Saturday, 12 October 2024: 'The Dorabella Cipher'. One of our new members, Don Bartlett, gave us a fascinating if controversial solution to the Dorabella Cipher. He began by giving a brief biography of Dorabella, the tenth 'Enigma' variation. This was followed by his solution to the cipher which Elgar sent her in a letter dated 1897. Several attempts have been made to decode this and Dan's explanation was certainly ingenious.

Saturday, 9 November 2024: Elgar's Organ Sonata in G major. A large audience was present at Malvern Priory to listen to a lecture/recital given by the distinguished organist James Lancelot. Following a brief introduction by Roger Allen, James began his lecture by describing how the Sonata came to be written. In 1895 the organist at Worcester Cathedral, Hugh Blair, asked Elgar to compose a work which would be played during a visit by 150 American musicians. The resulting Sonata was only completed five days before the Americans arrived. The afternoon concluded with James giving an excellent performance of the work on the Priory's splendid organ. For the benefit of the audience, a camera had been installed above the organ keyboard to enable us to marvel at the ability which James possesses.

Saturday, 30 November 2024: Songs by Elgar and his contemporaries. Branch events for the year ended with a concert by the Elgar Chorale conducted by Piers Maxim. Their programme, at Christ Church, included songs by Elgar and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

Our branch continues to publish its bi-yearly newsletter, which is distributed to all our members with electronic versions going to the chairmen and secretaries of other branches. Current membership is 181 and continues to remain constant.

Finally, the branch wishes to report, with great sadness, the passing of committee member David Packman. For many years David had worked tirelessly to champion classical music in general, and Elgar in particular, to younger people. As part of this he originated the West Midlands Branch awards to schools which are given successively to schools in Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester to coincide with the Three Choirs events in these cities.

Richard Smith

Yorkshire & North-East Branch

Our 2024 season has been broadly successful with an exceptionally strong programme both in terms of speakers and topics. But the season was not without incident.

It opened auspiciously with Julian Rushton's talk (20 January) on Elgar's Op.59, a setting to music of words by Gilbert Parker. Julian brought to our attention a little-known but captivatingly attractive song cycle, with examples at the keyboard and from CDs. Jeremy Dibble's authoritative presentation (24 February) was based on his newly revised study of the life and music of Stanford. This was followed (16 March) by Peter Newble's thoroughly prepared presentation on Elgar's *Sea Pictures*. The first of our international speakers was Michael Schwalb from Germany, whose presentation on Albert Sammons opened our ears to fascinating aspects of style and interpretation during Elgar's lifetime.

Then the ceiling fell in – less than three days before Lewis Foreman's scheduled talk (18 May) on 'Recording British Music', which was entirely reliant on the Bedingfield Room's audio/visual facilities. There was no choice but to postpone the presentation to next year. In its place I gave a hastily prepared talk (in the chapel) on the Violin Concerto.

The entertaining, informative talk by John Dressler (22 June) from the USA on Elgar and Bantock was given in the nearby Hotel du Vin, before we returned to our regular home at the renovated Bar Convent for two related talks, on Elgar and Wagner (Michael Butterfield on 28 September) and Elgar and Germany (Geoff Scargill on 26 October).

Any fears that these two talks would be unhelpfully repetitive were eventually dispelled as the two speakers brought contrasting, fascinating elements to subjects of fundamental relevance to our understanding of Elgar's musical language.

Unfortunately, our final speaker of the year, Duncan Eves, had to withdraw because of illness, but Duncan kindly forwarded his fine, thought-provoking script and PowerPoint presentation, which I was able to deliver on his behalf.

I have now been chair of this branch for five years, a position which I have found enjoyable and challenging in equal measure. In view of the period served, and my poor health, the time is right for a change of leadership, and I am grateful to Howard Gregg for agreeing to take over the chair. I am equally grateful to our relatively new friend and colleague, Len Young, for agreeing to take over as treasurer. Both these appointments have, of course, been subject to the usual protocols.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with such dedicated and delightful colleagues as Paul Kampen (speaker secretary), Howard Gregg (treasurer), Malcolm Westwood (secretary), Richard Surrey (technical officer), and the rest of the committee – Paul Grafton, Julian Rushton, Jonathan Wainwright, Len Young, and Philip Scowcroft (who is, sadly, stepping down on health grounds, and to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for years of devoted service).

Finally, a word of thanks to all our members and friends for supporting the Yorkshire & North-East branch, as a result of which we can look forward confidently to the next five years.

C 2024 INITIAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND PLANS

During 2024 the Society has continued to build upon the successes of previous years. As has been reported elsewhere, the two biggest challenges faced by the Society are the ability to recruit and retain members and persuading existing members to take an active role, either locally in branches or nationally by serving on the Council or Executive committees. I would encourage all members to consider coming forward and volunteering in any way possible.

Whilst general membership has broadly maintained its level, the work done by vice-chairman Martyn Marsh and his Recruitment and Retention Working Group, has devised a range of strategies to develop R & R that focus upon national, local and individual contributions. It is expected that some of the actions proposed will be put in place over the coming year.

At the time of writing, The Firs, Birthplace of Edward Elgar, is in the final stages of coming fully under the control of the National Trust. The Society's most significant contribution to the development of the Firs is its sponsorship of a series of recital/lectures that take place throughout the spring, summer and autumn in the Carice Room. These offer free entry and feature a variety of Elgar's small-scale music. In recent discussions with the NT about the future of this series, it was agreed that they will investigate the possibility of including a youth event, featuring local children performing Elgar's and other composers' music.

The British Library has undertaken a project to digitise all the Elgar archive in its care and to make it available online free of charge to users. The cost of this project was put at £125,000. The Society was approached and in negotiations agreed to pay 10% of this sum. The contract was negotiated with the BL by Ruth Hellen and myself and the digitisation will '... include digitisation of all of the Sir Edward Elgar letters which are known at the date of this Agreement to be held at the BL, plus autograph manuscripts of two of Elgar's oratorios, namely *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*, entailing digitisation of six volumes of music manuscripts in total'.

The Elgar in Performance scheme continues to support performances of Elgar's music both within the UK and overseas. I am delighted to report that the main task of administrating the scheme has been taken over by Dr Roger Allen, emeritus fellow in Music, St Peter's College, Oxford. Roger brings his vast knowledge and experience to the role and, together with the other members of the EiP committee, has helped a number of performing groups to mount concerts that might otherwise have fallen by the wayside.

I am delighted to report that the acting honorary secretary of the Society, David Morris, has agreed to stand as hon. sec. on a permanent basis, adding this role to the many positions that he has held within the Society.

On a less happy note, we mourn the deaths of two great Elgarians, Sir Andrew Davis, and Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore whose funeral and memorial service I attended on behalf of the Society.

In May I attended two concerts in Manchester marking the retirement of Society president, Sir Mark Elder, from his post as music director of the Hallé Orchestra. At a reception after the second of these, I was privileged to present Sir Mark with a letter signed by Elgar. Particular thanks are due to Geoff Scargill for organising the presentation, which took place in the Bridgewater Hall.

The 2024 A.T. Shaw Lecture was delivered by Julian Lloyd Webber and formed part of the last day of the Elgar Festival. This year the lecture was in the form of a conversation between Julian and conductor Kenneth Woods. The lecture took place in the Royal Porcelain Works Museum in Worcester and was followed by the Chairman's Reception and Lunch, where forty Society members enjoyed a meal in one of the upstairs galleries, before attending a concert in the Henry Sandon Hall and the Evensong and chaplet laying in Worcester Cathedral. The day ended with the traditional Elgar toast at The Firs.

As will be seen elsewhere, the Society's *News* and *Journal* continue to thrive under the guidance of Peter James and Kevin Mitchell. Thanks are due to both as indeed they are to the countless members who serve on the Society's many committees and working groups but are too numerous to mention by name.

Unfortunately, the maintenance of the Elgar graves in St Wulstan's Church, Little Malvern, can no longer be administered by the Society. Consequently, negotiations have resulted in this duty being transferred to the Elgar family. Some time ago the Society held an appeal to raise money to carry out vital maintenance work. Once completed, a substantial sum was left over and has been used for general maintenance. It has been agreed that the residue will be transferred to the family ensuring that the money donated is used exclusively for the intended purpose.

The Society's online meetings continue to prove popular, offering a wide variety of programmes of interest. Thanks are due to Sam Dobson for seeking out excellent speakers and often guiding them through the pitfalls of internet presentation.

My regular emails to members, initiated during covid lockdown(s), have continued to be popular and have encouraged me to continue the series, which I will do for as long as members and others send me material to include.

Finally, may I offer my thanks to past chairman and current vice-president Andrew Neill. Andrew has been leading a group of members who have been gathering together to plan for the upcoming celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Society. At the time of writing, it is too early to outline exactly what is being planned, but I can assure everyone that 2026 will be an exciting year for the Society.

Stuart Freed

The Elgar Society

Statement of Financial Activities

	2024			2023
	General Fund	Restricted funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Subscriptions	25,546	-	25,546	26,388
Gift Aid	2,809	-	2,809	2,704
Royalties	-	-	-	147
Investment income	3,557	-	3,557	12,812
Branch receipts	7,964	955	8,919	8,946
Other	100	-	100	-
Lunch receipts	1,084	-	1,084	750
Donations and Legacies	5,408	-	5,408	12,079
Total income	46,468	955	47,423	63,826
Expenditure				
<i>Society objectives</i>				
Journals & Newsletters	17,772	-	17,772	17,366
Branch Activities	19,800	300	20,100	16,211
AGM	163	-	163	-
PR & Advertising	425	-	425	522
Web site maintenance	573	-	573	468
On-line presentations and meetings	1,316	-	1,316	591
Chairman's lunch	1,355	-	1,355	1,176
Sundry	962	-	962	914
Elgar in performance	6,666	-	6,666	8,665
Grant to Elgar Festival	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Grants for concerts at the Firs	1,525	-	1,525	1,750
Elgar Medals	-	-	-	48
<i>Administration</i>				
Authorised exps Council & Executive	1,328	-	1,328	1,284
Membership administration	242	-	242	98
Total Expenditure	57,127	300	57,427	54,093
Surplus/Deficit	(10,659)	655	(10,004)	9,733
Balances b/f	101,293	103,556	204,849	195,116
Balances c/f	90,634	104,211	194,845	204,849

The Elgar Society

	<u>Balance sheet</u>	
	2024	2023
	£	£
Current accounts	10,024	7,612
Deposit account	60,732	75,345
Monmouth BS 90-day account	89,676	87,143
Branches' bank balances	40,066	40,575
Debtors and Accrued Income	2,000	1,862
Creditors	(7,653)	(7,688)
Net assets	194,845	204,849
<u>Restricted Funds</u>		
Kay Trust	81,407	81,407
Branches (London & West Midlands)	21,303	22,149
	104,211	103,556
General fund	90,634	101,293
Total funds	194,845	204,849

The Elgar Society

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024

1. Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the basis of historical cost in accordance with:

- the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102); and
- the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

2. Accounting policies

2.1 Subscriptions

Subscriptions are accounted for in the year in which they are received, except for subscriptions received in advance which are carried forward to the next year.

2.2 Other incoming resources

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- the Society becomes entitled to the resources;
- the trustees are virtually certain they will receive the resources; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Where incoming resources have related expenditure (for example, subscriptions) the incoming resources and related expenditure are reported gross in the SoFA.

2.3 Donations and legacies

Donations and legacies are only included in the SoFA when the Society has unconditional entitlement to the resources. During the year a generous donation was received from the estate of the late Trevor Fenemore-Jones. The Society is very grateful for this gift.

2.4 Tax recoverable on subscriptions, donations and gifts

Incoming resources from tax recoverable are included in the SoFA at the same time as the income to which they relate.

2.5 Branches

Although the regional branches of the Society are constituted under separate rules the income and expenditure of the branches are included in these accounts.

2.6 Taxation

The Society is a registered charity no 298062 and accordingly is exempt from taxation on its income and gains where they are applied for charitable purposes.

3. Trustees' expenses

During the year, travel and other out of pocket costs amounting to £1,282 were reimbursed to five members of the Council when appropriate claims were made (2024 £1,284 reimbursed to eight individuals).

One member of Council (P. Newble) was paid £500 for work on the video interview with Sir Mark Elder. No other member of the Council nor any person connected with them has received any remuneration in the year.

4. Donations, sponsorship and projects

Grants and other financial support given to institutions are a material part of the total resources expended by the Society. Elgar in Performance grants amounting to £6,666 were made to 16 organisations (2023 £8,665 to 11 organisations).

5. Restricted funds

Kay Trust

These funds were given with the proviso that the funds may not be used for routine running expenses but should be devoted to capital or other longer term projects.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Elgar Society

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Elgar Society (the Society) for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Society you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Society's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Society as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Adrian Benselin

3 Maylands Avenue
Breaston
Derbyshire
DE72 3EE

20 July 2025