

The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025

Published on the Elgar Society Website in April 2026
and presented to the Annual General Meeting on 19 July 2026

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1 January 2025 - 31 December 2025

A THE SOCIETY

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

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

Trustees
The following acted as Trustees during the period under review:

Stuart Freed	Philip Petchey (until 20 July 2025)
Caroline Gilderdale	Peter Smith
Liz Luder	Prof. David Young (resigned 20 February 2025)
Martyn Marsh	Malcolm Westwood (from 20 July 2025)
David Morris	Prof. Roger Allen (from 20 July 2025)
Myles Manders-Young (from 20 July 2025)	Sam Dobson

Elected Officers

Chair:	Stuart Freed
Vice-Chair:	Martyn Marsh
Secretary:	David Morris
Treasurer:	Peter Smith

Other National Post-holders

Archivist:	Post vacant
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	John Knowles	David L. Jones
Scotland	Ian Lawson	Kitty Parker
Southern	David Pearce	Post vacant, David Pearce Acting Secretary
West Midlands	Wendy Hill	Pamela Allen
Yorkshire & North-East	Howard Gregg	Malcolm Westwood

Advisers

Bankers:	Lloyds TSB
Independent Examiner:	Adrian Benselin

Honorary Posts and Awards

President – Sir Mark Elder CH CBE

Vice-Presidents - Diana McVeagh (deceased 2 July 2025), Dame Janet Baker CH DBE, Leonard Slatkin, Dr Christopher Robinson CVO CBE, Andrew Neill, Martyn Brabbins, Tasmin Little CBE, Julian Lloyd Webber OBE, Julian Rushton, Edward Gardner OBE (appointed 20 July 2025).

Awardees of the Elgar Society's Medal

1992	Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore
1992	Leonard Slatkin
1999	Jerzy Maksymiuk
2000	Tadaaki Otaka
2007	Andrew Litton
2008	Sakari Oramo
2009	Danube Symphony Orchestra
2009	Vladimir Ashkenazy
2011	Michael Kennedy
2011	Anthony Payne
2012	Barry Collett
2012	Jacek Kaspszyk
2012	Sir Colin Davis
2013	Sir Andrew Davis
2013	Sir Mark Elder
2015	Daniel Barenboim
2015	Diana McVeagh
2016	Martin Bird
2016	Teresa Cahill
2016	Alexander Walker
2019	Anastasia Vedyakova
2019	Adrian Brown
2019	Dame Janet Baker
2021	Christopher Bishop
2023	Neil Mantle
2025	Andrew Neill
2025	Florian Csizmadia

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 within its terms of reference.

There are four committees/working parties (1) Elgar in Performance and (2) the Branch Chairs' Committee, composed of the Chairs of the branches of the Society. Two additional working groups have also been formed to deal respectively with (a) Online presentations and (b) proposals for the Society's 75th anniversary.

Subcommittees/Working Parties active during 2025

Name	Chair/Convenor	Members
Elgar in Performance	Dr Roger Allen	Executive Committee, Peter Newble
Branch Chairs Committee	Philip Petchey	All other Branch Chairs
Elgar Online Group	Sam Dobson	Martyn Marsh and Chris Warsaw (North America)
75th Anniversary Group	Andrew Neill	Stuart Freed, Martyn Marsh, Chris Warsaw, Ruth Helen, Geoff Scargill, David Morris, Michael Trott, Jonathan Hope and Peter Smith

Council and Executive

The Council met three times during the year, twice online and once in person. The Executive Committee met twice, both times online. Much of the business was progressed by email and Zoom. The branch chairmen met twice, both times online.

Branches

During 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 2025 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. 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.

B ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (1 January 2025– 31 December 2025)

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 œuvre.

At national level, and with all due acknowledgement of branch activities, our efforts continue to be focused on fully rebuilding activities following the Covid-19 pandemic nationally and at branch level. The main developments during the year were:

- Branches have continued meeting following the Covid pandemic, although some are facing difficulties with fewer attendees and difficulty in recruiting Officers.
- Performances supported by *Elgar in Performance* and the education and special projects funding continued to increase and demand outstripped supply to the extent that grants for these areas had to be suspended at the end of the period. It is hoped to recommence grant-making in 2026, possibly at a reduced level.
- 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;
- During the year the Council has amongst many things:
    - received a report on the use of social and professional media;
    - 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.
    - Considered the need for Trustee Liability Insurance
    - Considered the development of the online discography
    - Considered awards and the appointment of an additional Vice President
    - Considered obtaining additional volunteer assistance through the 'Reach' scheme.

Elgar Society Journal: Under Kevin Mitchell's chairmanship, the editorial board (which includes Andrew Dalton, David Morris and Andrew Neill) continues to oversee the production of an informative and interesting *Journal* which is issued three time each year (together with the Society's *News*, edited by Peter James) and is distributed both in physical and electronic form. The *News* exists to inform members of current issues which may on occasion refer to matters that are raised in the *Journal*. The *Journal* is primarily for the publication of articles of a more academic nature. With distribution and postage costs constantly increasing, members are encouraged to accept on-line copies wherever possible.

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

Elgar in Performance EiP			2025		Budget from Council	£15,000
Date Considered	Recipient	Activity	Performance D	Venue	Granted	Confirmed	Budget Left
Jan-24	Oxford Bach Choir	Apostles	16.3.2025	Sheldonian Theatre	£1,000	Yes	14,000
Sep-24	Elgar Sinfonia/Adrian Brown	Psalms	22.6.2025	St Andrews, Holborn	£1,000	Yes	13,000
		Sospiri					
		Spirit of England					
Sep-24	Welwyn GC Music Society	From the Bavarian Highlands	15.3.2025	St Francis, Welwyn GC	£275	Yes	12,725
		Orchestral Songs					
24.12.2024	London Chorus	Music Makers	13.3.2025	Holy Trinity Sloane Sq.	£750	Yes	11,975
14.1.2025	English Music Festival	Piano Quintet	26.5.2025	Dorchester Abbey	£250	Yes	11,725
13.2.2025	Islington Choral Society	Kingdom	6.4.2025	Holy Trinity Sloane Sq.	£1,000	Yes	10,725
13.2.2025	Leeds Festival Chorus	From the Bavarian Highlands	12.7.2025	Roundhay, Leeds	£250	Yes	10,475
24.2.2025	Musica Collegia Chiemgau	Sospiri, Bach Fantasia and Fugi	25/6/7.4.2025	Obing, Übersee, Salzburg	£750	Yes	9,725
26.2.2025	Royal Philharmonic Orchestra	Sea Pictures	25.11.2025	Cadogan Hall	£500	Yes	9,225
3.4.2025	Shrewsbury Choral Society	Kingdom	28.6.2025	Shrewsbury Abbey	£1,250	Yes	7,975
3.7.2025	Dublin County Choir	Music Makers	17.10.2025	Whitefriars St C Dublin	£1,000	Yes	6,975
20.9.2025	Polish Chamber Musicians	Te Deum, Violin Sonata (2 perfs	22/27.11.2025	Warsaw	£500	Yes	6,475
16.9.2025	Chichester Singers	Apostles	15.11.2025	Chichester Cathedral	£1,500	Yes	4,975
29.10.2025	Christuskirche Karlsuhe	Gerontius	30.11.2025	Christuskirche Karlsruhe	£2,000	Yes	2,975

This leaves £2,975 unspent but there is a potential liability of £1,000 to Schwäbischer Oratorienchor for *Gerontius* in the event of its making a loss.

Demands during 2025 for funding from performing organisations greatly exceeded expectations and Elgar in Performance was therefore suspended pending review. The intention is for it to be reactivated within recalibrated financial parameters when circumstances permit.
Applications pending as at 3.2.2026:

- Monteverdichor Würzburg, King Olaf. 8.02.2026
- Strathaven Choral Society, Music Makers, May/June 2026
- Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra, Sea Pictures, 13.3.2026
- Amarillo Symphony Orchestra, Music Makers, 20.11.2026
- Worcester Concert Club, Violin Sonata,30.1.2027
- English Music Festival, Part Songs etc., 23/25.02.2026

Dr Roger Allen, Coordinator – Elgar in Performance

The *Journal*

During 2025 three further editions of Volume 24 of The Elgar Society Journal were published in April, August and December, running to 75 pages in April, 89 pages in August and a mammoth 112 pages in December.
The April issue opened with a tribute to Christopher Kent. Julian Rushton wrote the first part of an article on a reconsideration of Elgar's songs with piano. There followed Reflections on the Third Symphony by Simon Heffer. The conductor Florian Csizmadia provided an in-depth analysis of Christopher Hogwood's edition of the Variations and Joyce Chamberlain wrote on the influence of Sea Pictures.
In August Professor Rushton concluded his study of Elgar's songs. Andrew Penny wrote on a Northern Tour with the LSO in 1909 and Alice Elgar was the subject of a two-part article by Wendy Hill. The concert at Bray to celebrate Elgar's seventieth birthday organised by Frank Schuster in 1927 was fully examined by Kevin Allen and Stephen Connock wrote on Elgar and RVW on the Riviera accompanied by many colour photographs.
The December issue contained several heart-felt tributes to the scholar Diana McVeagh. Kevin Mitchell provided an article on the relationship between Elgar and Sir Arthur Bliss and Arthur Reynolds wrote on portrait images of Elgar, copiously illustrated from his own extensive collection of Elgar memorabilia. Wendy Hill concluded her study of Alice Elgar and the A.T.Shaw lecture by Christopher Morley and Kenneth Woods was printed. David Temple wrote on *The Kingdom* prior to his performance at the RFH in January 2026 and Anja-Rosa Thorning reflected on three performances of The Dream in Germany given in 2025
During the year five books and fifteen recordings were reviewed. Andrew Dalton wrote on Elgar's recording sessions in 1925 and Kevin Mitchell's '100 Years Ago…' columns reflected Elgar's life in that year.
We thank all our contributors, particularly our reviewers and once again we greatly appreciate the dedicated work of Mike Byde who carries out the detailed formatting of each issue often producing several versions before the final version is approved. We thank him for his invaluable work.

Kevin Mitchell with the Editorial Board of Andrew Dalton, David Morris and Andrew Neill

The *News*

The usual three editions were published in 2025 with the aim of combining Elgarian news and features with information from branches and the Society's officers. Among notable items was an article in April by David Owen Norris about his new completion of Elgar's Piano Concerto. Diana McVeagh's obituary featured in August's edition, and the December issue carried a long interview with Lani Spahr by Andrew Neill.
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) John Norris, Philip Petchey and Andrew Neill.

Peter James

Membership Report

The table of branch membership, as at 31/12/2025, is shown below. It should be noted that many members have nominated 2 branches, and the actual membership figure at the end of the year was 777, this to include Life Members, Hon Members and Vice Presidents. This shows a fall of 15 from the 2024 total.

The total number of new members joining in 2025 was 38.

There were more resignations and sadly more deaths this year. The total number of members removed from the register in 2025 was just over 55. This total includes 20 members who were removed for the non-payment of their subscription.

Branch membership	**2025**	**2024**	**2023**	**2022**	**2021**	**2020**	**2019**	**2018**
London	263	257	261	269	277	286	320	321
North America/Canada	51	50	51	49	49	52	49	42
North-West	97	99	104	108	114	119	120	117
Scottish	37	40	42	46	48	50	50	47
Southern	81	77	79	76	83	86	89	97
West Midlands	177	177	179	178	188	192	229	216
Yorkshire/North-East	56	56	58	55	52	52	55	53
Area Memberships								
South-West	23	30	31	33	41	45	54	58
East Anglia	39	40	43	44	54	54	56	57
East Midlands	20	21	24	27	31	34	37	31
No Branch/Area Affiliation	113	123	126	129	145	119	161	127

Chris Bennett

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 now consists of: three members Sam Dobson (Chair), Martyn Marsh and Chris Warsaw (North America). Sadly, David Young died early in the year and Marian Rutland (Bury St Edmunds) stood down for family reasons. 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.

As planned we provided eight talks during 2025 as follows. The date, title and speaker are listed with the attendance at each talk shown in brackets.

4 January 2025 Polonia – Elgar's last Symphonic Poem Michael Butterfield (44)
1 February 2025 'Et in Bavaria ego' - Elgar's journeys to the German South Wolfgang Rittmeier (31)
1 March 2025 Elgar the Violin Teacher Richard Westwood-Brookes (40)
19 April 2025 Elgar's Shed Music Phillip Brookes (24)
3 May 2025 Images of Elgar Arthur Reynolds (40)
25 October Anthony Payne's realisation of Elgar's 3rd Symphony Myles Manders-Young (30)
22 November Old, Fat, Lazy, Dishonest, corrupt, thieving, manipulative, boastful and lecherous, An appreciation of Elgar's Falstaff Stuart Freed (25)
13 December 2025 The Dream of Gerontius: Ardour and Ambivalence Michael Downes (27)

The established practice is that speakers who are Elgar Society members are not paid a fee. This year the standard fee for speakers was £150 and one speaker was paid a fee. Of course the group is always on the lookout for likely speakers on subjects of interest. We are aiming to present eight talks for 2026.
Overall, the subcommittee is happy with the management of ESO and the choice of speakers. The average attendance for Zoom talks in 2025 was 33. For comparison earlier years average attendance figures are: 34 in 2024, 31 in 2023 and 35 in 2022., showing that interest remains steady. All talks were recorded and requests for a link to recordings are made through Peter Newble. Up to the end of 2025 a total of 392 links to view have been requested on 182 occasions. 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. From 2026 it is intended to post onto Linked In.

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:

3 February	Elgar and Boult	Nigel Simeone
4 March	Elgar's choral music	William Vann
7 April	There's more to Holst than 'The Planets'	Chris Cope
12 May	A tale of three concertos	Daniel Grimley
9 June	Branch AGM; Recital of music for oboe, bassoon and piano	Helen Raggatt, Miles Chapman, Stephen Dickinson
6 October	Sea Pictures	Peter Newble
3 November	Do it yourself music research	Lewis Foreman
8 December	Elgar and the LPO	Andrew Neill, Matthew Freeman, Laurie Watt

Reports of the February to November meetings appear in the relevant issues of Elgar Society News.
In December, the publicised discussion on Elgar and the LPO was preceded by a wonderful performance of Elgar's String Quartet, played by the young members of the Beare's Quartet. The school-age students had been studying the work prior to a performance at the Royal Academy of Music. The standard was excellent and it was really encouraging to see young people so committed to this music.
Andrew Neill and his colleagues from the LPO record label told the story of the label's foundation and played many examples of the varied repertoire, including excerpts from the new recording of The Dream of Gerontius conducted by Edward Gardner.
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. Most of the talks were recorded and links can be provided on request for members who would like to hear them. For all Branch activities we are reliant on our committee and a number of others who help in a variety of ways and our thanks go to all of them.

Ruth Hellen

Ruth Hellen – Secretary, London Branch

North American Branch

The North America Branch is a virtual branch, except for our three-day conference which in 2025 took place in Cleveland Ohio, the details of which were reported in the *News*. North America members also sponsored the CD production of a performance of The Dream of Gerontius.
North American Branch is internally funded and makes no application to the Council for funding.

Arthur Reynolds

North-West Branch

Our branch membership has remained stable at just below 100 throughout the year, but attendance figures at our branch meetings are disappointingly down a little on previous years and our branch committee is again actively looking at ways to try to address this issue.
Our meetings in 2025 (apart from the AGM on 25 January, which was held via Zoom) were scheduled to be held as live events at our usual venue, Emmanuel Church, Didsbury, and they were as follows:

11 January 2025 Paul Hindmarsh was scheduled to talk about Anthony Payne's Realisation of Elgar's Third Symphony. Unfortunately, owing to very severe weather conditions and disrupted travelling arrangements on the day, this meeting had to be cancelled at very short notice.
08 February 2025 Arthur Reynolds (Chair of the North American Branch of the Elgar Society) gave an intriguing presentation on Elgar and Joachim which looked at the relationship between these two great musicians. He explained how Joachim was responsible for bringing to Britain the Austro-German musical ferment that nourished the spirit of Elgar's generation. Thanks to that transference, the German Romantic style would decisively influence the music of Edward Elgar. We also learned of Elgar's own opinion of Joachim's playing and how that was influenced by Joachim's knowledge of the lives, struggles and triumphs of the great composers.
08 March 2025 Simon Baggs, an accomplished professional violinist, made a welcome return to the branch to give an illuminating talk entitled Elgar's Music for Strings. He focused on four works: *Serenade for Strings*, *Elegy*, *Sospiri* and the *Introduction and Allegro for Strings*, all of which he talked about with great authority and enthusiasm, and his wonderful playing throughout as an accompaniment was a real bonus. What was particularly exciting about Simon's presentation was the way his devotion to Elgar's string music and his ability as a performer took us inside the music,
12 April 2025 Michael Jameson's presentation was on Albert Sammon, whom he described as arguably the most accomplished violinist this country has ever produced. Michael spoke intriguingly about the different aspects of Sammons' remarkable career from self-taught junior at the age of seven to eventually becoming one of the greatest violinists of all time. Many British composers dedicated their concertos to Albert Sammons. He played the Elgar Violin Concerto under the composer with the London String Quartet. In fact Albert became particularly associated with the Elgar concerto and it is estimated that he played it over 100 times in all. We heard some fascinating recordings.
10 May 2025 Tom Higgins spoke authoritatively about Elgar and His Concert Band Transcribers. Tom has had a distinguished career as an orchestral musician and as a conductor. He specialises in concert bands as both an arranger and conductor. He described how concert bands were common in Elgar's lifetime when they were often referred to as 'military bands', and how they differ from brass bands in the inclusion of reeds, as well as brass instruments, and larger percussion sections. Tom talked about and played various transcriptions of Elgar's works for brass, and he concluded by comparing the value of Elgar's transcriptions to those of other composers in bringing music to the general public in an accessible form.
07 September 2025 Our Annual Branch Luncheon which, for the first time, was held in the Hospitality Suite of Northenden Golf Club. This proved to be an excellent venue with good facilities, service and food, and we are certainly planning to use these facilities again in the autumn. After the luncheon, two of our branch members, who are professional musicians, provided a relaxing recital of music for violin and piano (including several works by Elgar) which thus provided an excellent conclusion to our luncheon event.
04 October 2025 The Revd. John Knowles (our North West Branch Chairman) gave a fascinating and very professionally produced audio-visual presentation entitled Elgar's Choral Songs (1907-1914). The ten songs chosen for discussion were all part songs (i.e. sung without accompaniment). They were: There is sweet music, Deep in my soul, O wild west wind, Owls, The Shower, The Fountain, Death on the Hills, Love`s Tempest, Serenade, Go song of mine, and we heard numerous excerpts from them given in magical performances by various choral bodies including the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, Cambridge University Chamber Choir, The Kings Singers, The Finzi Singers and the BBC Chorus (unaccompanied) the latter conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.
08 November 2025 Michael Butterfield spoke about Caractacus as an 'Underrated Masterpiece' which tells the story of the British Chieftain who fought the Romans on Elgar's beloved Malvern Hills. He explored the many fascinating details of Elgar's composition using numerous on-screen references to the details of Elgar's score, and he illustrated these also by playing many excerpts on the piano. In

doing so, he made a very convincing case to convince us of his personal opinion that this is indeed an underrated masterpiece.
06 December 2025 Alexis Paterson, a former Director of the Three Choirs Festival, gave an excellent and detailed description of the Music Festival and its 310 year history. It is the oldest music festival in Europe and was originally called 'The Music Meeting' when established in 1715. Alexis described the developments during the 18th Century and how, during the 19th Century, works by Elgar were included and Elgar conducted some of his own compositions. Alexis included various recorded excerpts to illustrate these developments.

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

Scottish Branch

The Scottish Branch continues to be an unfunded branch, with activities mainly limited to promotion of the national Society. Some individual members, however, are active on the musical scene, and take the opportunities they can to feature Elgar in performance.
Notable in 2025 was a magnificent performance in November of The Dream of Gerontius in Dundee, conducted by branch member Michael Downes. Michael also managed to have an article published in *The Guardian* in the week before the performance, commenting on the newly released film *The Choral*, featuring that work. The *Dream* had been performed previously, in February, and very well, by The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Ryan Wigglesworth. The Branch Chairman heard it in the atmospheric surroundings of Paisley Abbey, then went to leaflet the emerging audience in Edinburgh two days later, managing also to stand the conductor and soloist a drink afterwards.
The Branch continues to provide sponsorship to Scottish Sinfonia and advertise in their programmes. One of their concerts in 2025 featured Elgar – the Enigma variations under the baton of Branch Patron and member, Neil Mantle.

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 in 2025. We met in February to hear a presentation by Michael Trott at Winchester to report on his project with Hillary Elgar and the late Dr Brenda Watson to record the life and influence of Elgar's 'wonderful mother'. Copies of the book written by Michael, Hillary and Brenda were on sale. Andrew Dalton found his way from London to our Havant location on 22 March by what railway enthusiasts would recognise as a most precarious route from Victoria via the complex junction at Ford and Littlehampton, arriving eventually at Havant. The talk was certainly worth the trip, as the subject was 'Billy Reed – A Musician's Musician'. Andrew presented several virtually unknown recordings of Reed's own compositions, together with a large amount of photographic archive material. I should add that we are always grateful to members who do these presentations for basic travelling cost and devote much time to preparation.
Jacqueline Edwards came to Winchester on 5 April to speak about 'England's Britannia – Dame Clara Butt (1872-1936)'. Jacqueline's career as a professional mezzo-soprano was influential on her chosen subject, who was best remembered for giving the premiere in Norwich of Elgar's Sea Pictures, dressed in a mermaid outfit. On 10 May Dr Roger Allen was also in Winchester to present an expanded version of his Three Choirs Festival Elgar Society Lecture from 2024 entitled 'Elgar the Symphonic Poet – 'The Kingdom and the Central European Tradition'. He brought much of his detailed knowledge to share with those who did not make Worcester Festival.
On 27 September Chris Cope (Chairman of the Holst Society) came to Winchester and gave a much expanded version of his short address to the Three Choirs Festival in 2024, with a talk about Gustav Holst and his contemporaries. In his talk to an appreciative audience, he played examples of the *Cotswold Symphony*, *Egdon Heath*, *Hammersmith*, *Beni Mora*, and several part songs. There was, of course, an excerpt from The Planets.
There was no meeting in October because of a problem in booking our Winchester venue on a Saturday afternoon, which may in the future compound our difficulties. However, on 8 November, SB member Jeremy Neville gave a talk at Winchester about women composers, entitled, 'A Regiment of Women', which was well attended, including some non-members who had discovered us.
We have several speakers waiting to give talks in 2026 such as tempting Prof Jeremy Dibble down south to talk about CV Stanford, his life and times and relationship with other composers, including Edward Elgar of course!
However, we were deeply saddened by the sudden death of the Revd Stephen Wilkins in October as announced in the December Elgar Society *News*. An obituary has been prepared for the current edition. Stephen acted as our publicity man for many years, and I must say now, very firmly, that if we do not find a replacement with the knowledge of how to plan our publicity and enter details on our website, Facebook, etc, the Southern Branch will have to cease its current programme of activities. We are now desperately lacking in willing committee members.

Our favoured location is at Winchester and is the place that attracts the largest audiences, but it now seems to be not available on a Saturday afternoon. With the Society's current pressure on containing costs, finding somewhere else to meet at reasonable price will be very difficult. We have also struggled without a Branch Secretary for several years, but no one seems willing to take on the job! We have now lost the valuable asset of someone to manage the web site. It has to be up to our members to decide how we proceed, but we must have at least two more active committee members with the appropriate skills if we are to continue as an active branch with interesting programmes.
During my time as Chairman, I have watched older members who were once regulars, gradually fade away, not to be replaced by new members. Our meetings at Havant, despite it being a comfortable location with a café, have suffered from decreasing numbers such that the viability of the location is in doubt. Most of our Winchester area members seem unwilling to travel to Havant, which is a pity, as it has good sound and video facilities laid-on.
We are maintained financially by the subvention from the National Treasurer, and we also raise donations and raffle income at our meetings. We have sufficient funds in our local bank account to mount a limited programme in 2026 and we thank our local SB Treasurer for keeping tabs on our funds. However, we notice that the cost of venues and speaker expenses continues to increase.
It is a sad reflection on our 75th Anniversary year that we seem to be suffering the same problem as other branches, i.e. falling membership and increasing average age of members. Whilst we have tried hard over the years to interest younger people in membership, I suspect that the problem is a national one. Nevertheless, I will continue to spread the benefits of the Elgar Society in the events that I attend on a regular basis, such as the Three Choirs Festival and the BBC Proms at the RAH. I am sure my colleagues will do the same.

David Pearce – Chairman, Southern Branch

West Midlands Branch

Our Branch continues to hold its meetings at Holy Trinity Church Hall in Malvern. Our current membership is 175. In addition to our events (shown below) we continue to publish our bi-yearly Newsletter which is distributed to all our members, with electronic versions going to the Chairmen and Secretaries of other Branches.
Unfortunately, we had to abandon our proposed January meeting due to our speaker being involved in a car accident. Thankfully, he was uninjured and we hope that he will be able to speak to us at a later date.

Saturday, 25 February 2025: 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, 22 March 2025: The well-known Elgar researcher and writer, Richard Westwood Brookes, examined the controversial topic of whether Elgar and Jaeger were as such good friends as is often assumed. From correspondence and other sources, Richard thought that their relationship was much more on a businesslike level than a close friendship. He illustrated his point by describing two events which seemed to indicate a certain distance between the two.
Saturday, 26 April 2025: The AGM The AGM saw the election of a new Branch Secretary to replace Richard Smith who had served in this role for 13 years. We are already finding that our new Secretary, Pamela Allen, is proving an excellent replacement. Two new members were elected to the Committee, Clara Kendrick, who will take over Events planning, and Steve Marlow for will fulfil the publicity role. After tea, our Chairman, Wendy Hill told us how she had gone about compiling her thesis on Alice Elgar for Worcester University which has recently been published in the Elgar Society Journal.
Saturday, 17 May 2025: We welcomed the Chairman of the North West Branch of the Elgar Society, John Knowles, to talk about Elgar's music for the church. John's talk was in three parts and charted the revival of the Roman Catholic Church in 19th century and Elgar's connection with St.George's Church in Worcester for which he wrote a number of works. His talk was profusely illustrated with musical examples.
Thursday, 31 July 2025: The Elgar lecture at the 2025 Three Choirs Festival was given by the distinguished historian Professor Sir David Eastwood. Sir David, who from 2009 to 2021 served as Vice Chancellor of the University of Birmingham. Sir David first considered the idea of Absolute Music and how Elgar had interrogated this elusive concept in the Birmingham University's lectures he gave in the Autumn of 1905.He then considered how this concept was translated into Elgar's First and Second Symphonies.
Saturday, 20 September 2025: Although we were all perhaps expecting our Chairman, Stuart Freed, to concentrate his talk on the Elgar Cello Concerto, he advised us at the start that this would not be the case. He explained that although the story of the Elgar work was a well-trodden path he had chosen to put the genre into an historical context. He would investigate how the concerto as a form came into being and why it fell out of favour only to re-emerge with two masterly works, that of Dvořák and that of Elgar and comparing and contrasting these two exceptional concerti.

Saturday, 18 October 2025: It was with great pleasure that we were able to welcome Prof. Daniel Grimley to talk again to our members. In his talk Dan considered the role played by the cellist Beatrice Harrison in the composition and performance of three works: the Cello Concertos by Elgar and Delius, and Delius's Double Concerto. He reminded us that it is perhaps not realised that composers were often able to draw on the expertise of other musicians to improve certain passages in their works.
Saturday, 15 November 2025: Dr. Roger Allen spoke on Sir Thomas Beecham, Elgar, and Symphony No.1. He began by giving a brief biography of Beecham, who despite family wealth, was, like Elgar, initially considered an outsider by the music establishment. After tea Roger examined Beecham's relationship with Elgar particularly as regards his conducting the composer's First Symphony. This has always been a rather controversial subject. Many had accused Beecham of cutting sections of Elgar's Symphony when conducting the work, and it seems that this may possibly have happened during some of his performances.
Saturday, 6 December 2025: During his time working with the nursing team at Powick Lunatic Asylum, Ken Crump was able to discover much of the facility's history which had an enlightened approach to mental illness. Elgar became Band Master there in January 1879 and composed a large number of short pieces for the attendants' band who played at the dances. He described how the scores of these pieces were discovered and eventually passed to the late Barry Collett who was able to give their first performance for many years.

To ensure that maintenance of the two Elgar graves at St. Wulstan's Church in Little Malvern continues, Anne-Marie Grafton (of the Elgar family) has established a Trust for this purpose. Our Branch Chairman has been appointed as a trustee and will be the Branch link to the Trust. The surplus from the money that the Branch raised for the initial refurbishment of the graves has been handed over to the new Trust, and George Clifford and Son, who carried out the original excellent repair work, have been engaged to continue cleaning and any other needed repairs at two yearly intervals. Providing flowers and other enhancements will also be done by the Trust.

Richard Smith

Yorkshire & North-East Branch

Our 2025 season started with our Branch A.G.M. on the 18 January with a presentation of a watercolour of the Elgar Country that was made to Sally Hurst, the daughter of our retiring chairman, Professor David Young. Sadly, David died in May and the Branch was represented at his funeral by the Chairman and the Programme Secretary. We remember David with affection and gratitude for all he did for the Branch and for the wider Elgar Society.
We had a very successful programme of speakers for 2025 that commenced with Julian Rushton giving us a stimulating presentation, after our A.G.M., on how Caractacus could have become an opera had Elgar pursued it. On 22 February Charlie Perry, Choral Director for St. George's Cathedral, Southwark considered Elgar's Use of the Chorus in the Oratorios with particular emphasis on its challenging and demanding role in Gerontius. David L. Jones, the Secretary of the North West Branch, gave us a splendid presentation on Barbirolli and Elgar on 29 March, with rich archival and performance resources to illuminate his theme. On 26 April David Owen Norris gave us a *tour de force*, via his keyboard, of his realisation of Elgar's unrealised Piano Concerto, using Elgar's Sketches and Recorded Improvisations to develop his theme. Dr Aidan Thomson of the University of Galway (24 May) explored the Part Songs and Competitions for which they were composed, with concentration on the Op.53 Part Songs. On 28 June we welcomed Dr. Lewis Foreman who shared with us some of the fruits of his distinguished career in promoting and Recording British Music enabling less familiar music to be performed or recorded.
On 20 September Michael Trott introduced us to Ann Greening, Elgar's Mother and the considerable influence she had on her son's journey to musical achievement. On 18th October Jonathan Hope, Assistant Organist at Gloucester Cathedral, explored Elgar at the Console, discussing his Organ Sonata and illustrating the Vesper Voluntaries. Our speaker also played extracts from his transcriptions for organ of the *Froissart* Overture and the Concert Overture *In the South*. Finally on the 29 November the Ebor Singers under their director Paul Gameson , a Branch member, performed 'A Winter Garland of Choral music by Elgar and his contemporaries' in the Chapel of the Bar Convent bringing our year to a much-appreciated end.
Thanks to the sterling efforts of our Speaker Secretary, Paul Kampen and our Branch Secretary, Malcolm Westwood, and looking towards 2026 the Branch will enjoy a high calibre programme.
We are moving towards the completion of a Branch Constitution in the New Year.
My thanks to the Officers of the Branch for their dedicated work for the Branch and to them and other members of the Branch Committee for their continued support. Paul Grafton is stepping down after years of valued service for which we are very grateful.
Lastly a word of thanks to all our members and friends for their support of our programme this year.

Howard Gregg

C 2025 INITIAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND PLANS

During 2025 the Society has continued to build upon the successes of previous years. The difficulty in recruiting members who are willing to take an active part in the Society continues to be a concern, particularly with regard to branches, some of which struggle to fill all branch officer posts. At a national level, the Executive committee operates with a full complement of officers and the Council of the Society has been able to fill all vacancies. Nevertheless, as in previous years, I would encourage all members to come forward and offer their services either locally or nationally.

Overall membership of the Society remains stable. However, in 2026 the Society celebrates its 75th anniversary with a number of high profile events and it is to be hoped that these will result in, at minimum, a modest increase in membership.

Whist the upcoming anniversary will be fully reported in the 2026 report, much of the organisation of the events and publication of both recordings and printed material has taken place this year. The committee formed to plan the 75th Anniversary celebrations have met on a number of occasions, under the chairmanship of Andrew Neill and together they are to be congratulated upon delivering an outstanding series of events that began in November 2025 with a concert given by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the Royal Festival Hall. The LPO has produced a video of the concert, which was made available to Elgar Society members.

The Elgar in Performance scheme has continued to support performances of Elgar's music both here and overseas under the expert guidance of Dr Roger Allen. The future of the scheme is currently under review due to financial constraints, but it is hoped that after a brief suspension, the scheme will resume.

I am delighted to report that conductor Edward Gardner has accepted an invitation to become a Vice-President of the Society, joining a group of V-Ps who have each made a major contribution to the Society or to the life and music of Sir Edward Elgar. On a less happy note, the death of Vice-President, Diana McVeagh, has robbed the Society of a highly respected Elgarian and the musical world of a writer of distinction.

As has become traditional, the A.T. Shaw Lecture was once again delivered as part of the Elgar Festival. This year the speaker was critic Christopher Morley, who was in conversation with the Festival's Artistic Director, Kenneth Woods. The lecture was entitled "A Critic's View". As in previous years, the lecture was followed by a reception and lunch, held in the Royal Porcelain Museum, Worcester. A recital in the Henry Sandon Hall followed. Evensong and chaplet laying in Worcester Cathedral was followed by the traditional Elgar toast at The Firs.

The Society's *News* and *Journal* continue to thrive under the guidance of Peter James and a team led by 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.

As reported in 2024, the Society has handed over the responsibility of maintaining the Elgar graves to the Elgar family. This process has now been completed and a trust has been established to administer the funds and any work that may need to be carried out.

The Society's online offering has increased substantially over the last ten years. The website, https://elgarsociety.org/, continues to develop and to welcome both members and the general public into the Society. The site includes pages devoted to the history of the composer, upcoming events and the Society's latest News. The maintenance of the last of these has been taken over by new Council member Steve Marlow, who has included this within his publicity brief. My thanks go to him and for all the work he is doing.

Two other features of the Society's electronic offering are the continued success of both the online meetings, a series of talks and lectures organised and run by Sam Dobson, and the weekly emails that I send to members containing details of events, local and national, links to video and sound recordings and other items of interest provided by Society members.

There is no doubt that the coming year will present a range of challenges to the Society. Notwithstanding, I am confident that the upcoming anniversary year will be a great success and will enable the Society to rise to these challenges and assure its continued success into the future.

Stuart Freed, Chairman

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025 FOLLOW ON PAGES 13 to 16

The Elgar Society

Statement of Financial Activities

	2025			2024
	General Fund	Restricted funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Subscriptions	24,898	-	24,898	25,546
Gift Aid	2,804	-	2,804	2,809
Royalties	290	-	290	-
Investment income	2,374	-	2,374	3,557
Branch receipts	4,414	806	5,220	8,919
Other	-	-	-	100
Lunch receipts	1,049	-	1,049	1,084
Donations and Legacies	5,047	-	5,047	5,408
Total income	40,876	806	41,682	47,423
Expenditure				
Society objectives				
Journals & Newsletters	18,698	-	18,698	17,772
Branch Activities	15,841	-	15,841	20,100
AGM	-	-	-	163
PR & Advertising	617	-	617	425
Web site maintenance	961	-	961	573
On-line presentations and meetings	975	-	975	1,316
Chairman's lunch	1,472	-	1,472	1,355
Sundry	1,517	-	1,517	962
75th Anniversary	-	10,000	10,000	-
Elgar in performance	11,680	-	11,680	6,666
Recording sponsorship	-	13,000	13,000	-
Grant to Elgar Festival	6,000	-	6,000	5,000
Grants for concerts at the Firs	550	-	550	1,525
Elgar Medals	-	-	-	-
Book sponsorship	-	1,000	1,000	-
Administration				
Authorised exps Council & Executive	1,240	-	1,240	1,328
Re-branding and web site redesign	-	-	-	-
Membership administration	67	-	67	242
Total Expenditure	59,618	24,000	83,618	57,427
Surplus/Deficit	(18,742)	(23,194)	(41,936)	(10,004)
Branch account transfers	52	(52)	-	-
Balances b/f	92,135	102,710	194,845	204,849
Balances c/f	**73,445**	**79,464**	**152,909**	**194,845**

The Elgar Society

Balance sheet

	2025	2024
	£	£
Current accounts	16,237	10,024
Deposit account	38,636	60,732
Monmouth BS 90-day account	82,266	89,676
Branches' bank balances	36,633	40,066
Debtors and Accrued Income	1,379	2,000
Creditors	(22,242)	(7,653)
Net assets	**152,909**	**194,845**
Restricted Funds		
Kay Trust	57,407	81,407
Branches (London & West Midlands)	22,057	21,303
	79,464	102,710
General fund	73,445	92,135
Total funds	**152,909**	**194,845**

The Elgar Society

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025

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 Clive Garner Memorial. 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 £1,161 were reimbursed to seven members of the Council when appropriate claims were made (2024 £1,328 reimbursed to six individuals).

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 £11,680 were made to 10 organisations (2024 £6,666 to 16 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 2025.

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

19 July 2026