

**An evaluation of the teaching career of Sir Herbert Brewer
(Organist of Gloucester Cathedral, 1896 – 1928)
with particular reference to his articulated pupils**

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This dissertation is dedicated to three people who between them have inspired me and helped bring it into being:

Firstly to the memory of my mother, Janet Carpenter, who hearing me sing myself to sleep every night, and with a mother's blind belief in the inherent intelligence of her child, was inspired to enter me in for a scholarship audition for Guildford Cathedral Choir. When successful I was therefore admitted into the world of cathedral and choral music, and into what soon became one of my life's passions.

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Abstract

The main focus of this study is to evaluate the educational philosophy and influence on the careers of his teenage articed pupils of Herbert Brewer, the Organist of Gloucester Cathedral between 1896 and 1928. This involves analysing his approach to teaching with the evidence drawn principally from his memoirs, a prosopographic analysis of his traced pupils and the recorded experiences of his other traced pupils. Its primary aims are to challenge the reported negative experiences of his three more widely recognised articed pupils, Ivor Gurney, Herbert Howells and Ivor Novello and put them in context. Two main methods are used, the textual analysis of primary sources and a prosopographic analysis of seventeen traced articed pupils.

The research reveals that many of the accepted (negative) 'truths' about Brewer's relationship with Gurney, Howells and Novello most probably were not like they are now accepted at all. Another significant finding is that Brewer was by vocation a teacher and that many of his pupils and employers found him to be inspirational and caring. He was not just an organist who happened to also teach, for several years he taught in the rather less than encouraging surroundings of a boys public school. It was also revealed through the research that none of the three famous pupils came from secure family backgrounds but came from difficult circumstances which made them potentially very challenging students for Brewer to mentor. All four key players in my research were major contributors to 20th century culture. The research is helping us to have a fuller, more rounded, picture of them as people and gifted individuals and Brewer's vital role in the lives and careers of Gurney, Howells and Novello.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research examines the place of Sir Herbert Brewer in British music history, his educational philosophy and the effect he had on the careers of his teenage artiled pupils. Brewer was Organist of Gloucester Cathedral between 1896 and 1928, and the research was initially prompted by a sense that he has been given a raw deal by the biographers of his more well-known pupils, Ivor Gurney, Herbert Howells and Ivor Novello. Ivor Gurney was supremely gifted both as a poet and composer; Herbert Howells composed some of the best regarded music for the church in the twentieth century; Ivor Novello, whose place in musical history would have been assured if he had just composed the song *Keep the home fires burning*, went on to be a major composer, actor, playwright and impresario. Contrary to the established views that the relationship problems were all on Brewer's side, this research suggests that many of the difficulties that Gurney, Howells and Novello had with Brewer were as much to do with their own characters and 'issues.' Brewer was a teacher by vocation whose gifts were appreciated the most by averagely talented people who were prepared to graft – like Herbert Sumsion, his nominated successor at Gloucester, and others.

In particular, Brewer has a rough ride from Michael Hurd in his 1978 biography of Gurney. He treats him and the musical life of Gloucester Cathedral rather disparagingly. Hurd reports that Brewer 'does not appear to have been enthusiastic, (as a teacher of Gurney) but duly instructed his wayward pupil in the mysteries of harmony and counterpoint, piano and organ.'¹

Many other biographies and treatments of Novello, Gurney and Howells have been published, but none of them includes any balanced assessment of their training or of Brewer's involvement in it. Those of Gurney since 1978 appear to take their cue from Hurd. The first to appear chronologically was a special issue of the journal *Music and Letters* published in 1938, the year following Gurney's premature death.² It includes useful insights and remembrances from some of his friends and supporters including Marion Scott with whom he had become acquainted on his arrival at the Royal

¹ Michael Hurd, *The ordeal of Ivor Gurney*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.23.

² *Music and Letters*, XIX.1 (1938).

College of Music (RCM) in 1911, but nothing specifically about the training he received from Brewer just prior to this. Gurney was then neglected until Michael Hurd's biography mentioned above. More recently, in a 2011 biography, Eleanor Rawling quotes Hunt and Scott and describes Brewer 'a competent rather than inspiring tutor to Gurney.'³ A fuller and more measured treatment of the relationship and context is given in Blevins' 2008 joint biography of Gurney and Marion Scott. However, Pamela Blevins reports that 'Brewer did little to nurture and inspire the budding musician in Ivor Gurney.'⁴

The first traced academic study on Howells, who as well as being an articulated pupil, that is a young adult aged pupil being privately trained, was also a piano pupil of Brewer as a child, was a Royal Schools of Music dissertation from 1972 by Robert Spearing.⁵ Based on interviews with Howells, it makes no reference to how he found Brewer as a teacher. The same year Spearing produced an 80th birthday tribute to Howells.⁶ Following that Christopher Palmer published a study on Howells in 1978 which mentioned Brewer's role in passing.⁷ In 1992 (and revised in 1996) Palmer published a much fuller study.⁸ Following these the only further major biographical study of Howells was first published by Paul Spicer in 1998.⁹ It portrays Brewer as an 'authoritarian teacher and a harsh disciplinarian' whom Howells held in awe. Outline factual accounts of his life and career have been produced by Paul Andrews (*Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2011), Michael Kennedy (*Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 1985) and Spicer who contributed the entry for Howells in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

Novello was also both a child piano pupil and later articulated pupil of Brewer and he has his share of biographical treatments. Much of his personal archive, assumed to be material relating to his personal relationships and homosexual lifestyle, was

³ Eleanor Rawling, *Ivor Gurney's Gloucestershire: exploring poetry and place*, (Stroud: The History Press, 2011). p.22.

⁴ Pamela Blevins, *Ivor Gurney and Marion Scott: song of pain and beauty*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008). p.60.

⁵ Robert Spearing, *Herbert Howells: a biographical essay on his life and work 1892-1917*, (GRSM thesis, Royal College of Music, 1972).

⁶ Robert Spearing, *HH: A tribute to Herbert Howells on his 80th birthday* (London: Triad Press, 1972).

⁷ Christopher Palmer *Herbert Howells A study* (London Novello, 1978).

⁸ Christopher Palmer *Herbert Howells A celebration*, (London: Thames 1992, 1996).

⁹ Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, (Bridgend: Seren Books, 1998).

destroyed by Robert Andrews, his life partner, soon after his death in 1951.¹⁰ In that same year an official biography of Novello was prepared by the actor and show business journalist, Peter Noble. In fairness, he does credit Brewer with recognising Novello's musical talent, but he does not challenge or question Novello's and later Howells' assertion that Brewer told Novello that he had 'no future in music.' He does though add the proviso of unless he knuckles down and stops 'gadding about.'¹¹ Also in 1951 a biography of Novello by MacQueen-Pope, the theatre historian and publicist, devotes one sentence to his time with Brewer in Gloucester completely downplaying its significance.¹² A more complete biography, by James Harding, was published in 1996 which includes outlines of Novello's time both as a child and articled pupil of Brewer but makes little attempt to see the relationship from Brewer's perspective.¹³ Ten years later, in 2006, in response to Novello featuring as a character in the film *Gosford Park*, the first edition of David Slattery-Christy's autobiographical treatment of Novello was published. Slattery-Christy was the Ivor Novello consultant on the film, but his treatment of the composer's time with Brewer consists of one line where he does not even name his teacher. Brewer was apparently just the principal of the music school in Gloucester who 'declared Novello to be "too lazy to achieve anything."¹⁴

Brewer is principally known today for his pupils. Perhaps this is the main reason why a lack of research and interest in him as their teacher is more noticeable. Other cathedral organists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are also similarly neglected, but they generally did not have the same strategic and influential responsibilities as Brewer had. Possibly the nearest contemporary equivalent of Brewer was Haydn Keeton, the Organist of Peterborough Cathedral between 1870 and 1921. He numbered the young Sir Malcolm Sargent, later to be chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Proms, among his articled pupils.

¹⁰ David Slattery-Christy, *Ivor Novello: in search of Ruritania*, 3rd edition (London: ChristyPlays Publications, 2016). p.251.

¹¹ Peter Noble, *Ivor Novello: Man of the Theatre* (London: Falcon Press, 1951).

¹² Walter Mcqueen-Pope, *Ivor: the story of an achievement. A biography of Ivor Novello*, (London: W.H. Allen, 1951).

¹³ James Harding, *Ivor Novello: a biography*, (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 1996).

¹⁴ Slattery-Christy, p.29.

Given the lack of research in this area the present research is therefore important for several reasons. Firstly, it is the first time an attempt has been made to assess objectively Brewer's role in the training of some of this country's leading cultural figures of the twentieth century. All began their careers in the organ loft of Gloucester Cathedral under his tutelage. Beyond these, other leading figures in the world of music also spent periods as pupils of Brewer. These included John Dykes Bower later organist of St Paul's Cathedral, London, and Herbert Sumsion.

The present research is also important for the reason that, not only does it seek to assess his effectiveness as a teacher of the musically gifted, but also puts this in the context of his teaching skills over all his roles and settings during his career. There were several of these. Early in his career Brewer was organist and music master at Tonbridge School for a few years, having chosen this role above that of a cathedral organist position he was offered at the same time. This shows a commitment to the experience of teaching in different settings including tutoring those who were neither musically gifted nor inclined. In addition, while he was at Gloucester he organised organ recitals for school children alongside having individual vocal and instrumental pupils of all abilities.

Even without his more well-known articulated pupils Brewer would be worthy of a full biographical treatment and analysis, but prior to the present research it is believed that none had been attempted. He was a major cathedral-based musician at a time when standards were rising and a new generation of English-based composers was emerging led by Parry and Stanford at the RCM.¹⁵ He was a close friend and colleague of many of the leading figures of the day including, Elgar and Parry and he also co-directed the Three Choirs Festival for over three decades.

This research looks behind the possible reasons behind why Brewer's reputation as a teacher has been tainted. How much of his perceived character was due to statements and actions reported by Gurney, Howells, Novello and their friends and supporters and how much was due to his character and approach to teaching. He learnt his pedagogy in the mid Victorian period from the setting of being a staff member of a boys' public school. He was certainly driven; driven to take on extra work through his low cathedral salary and driven to accumulate honours. This

¹⁵ Spicer, p.23.

research weighs up the reported comments of Gurney, Howells and Novello about Brewer by their biographers. My approach is therefore from Brewer's angle and what others reported that he said to them.

1.1 Sir Herbert Brewer

Between 1896 and 1928 Brewer was Organist of Gloucester Cathedral. A local boy, who had himself been a chorister at the cathedral, he was responsible for the provision of the music at services in the cathedral and for training the all-male choristers, boys and men, of the cathedral's resident choir. Recognised as a leading church musician of his day, Brewer was knighted in 1926, an honour which came about partly through his close friendship with Elgar.¹⁶

This association with Elgar, the leading English composer of the time, is explained by the privileged and strategic position he occupied in the music profession by being based at Gloucester Cathedral. This brought with it the co-directorship of the Three Choirs Festival, one of very few major classical music festivals at that time. Brewer directed eight of these festivals over the course of over thirty years (there was a break during the First World War) which involved him every third year scheduling a week's concerts bringing together leading orchestras and soloists, commissioning new works from composers and introducing the audiences to new works and composers. It was therefore Brewer who introduced the world to the now iconic Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* in 1910, conducted by the composer.¹⁷ It was also Brewer who arranged the first performances of works by other major composers including Parry, Holst, Bliss, Howells, Saint-Saëns and Sibelius, performances often conducted by the composers themselves. In addition, he also was responsible for the invitation of the radical feminist composer Dame Ethel Smyth to conduct her own music, and the mixed race composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor to conduct his *Ballade in A minor*, having commissioned it from him for the Festival.¹⁸ He thus demonstrated a lack of prejudice that his era was not otherwise notable for. Importantly, he was also the director when the BBC first broadcast concerts from the Festival in 1925, introducing it to a whole new audience, and he was alternately conducting and playing the organ when it was first

¹⁶ Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 301-302.

¹⁷ Anthony Boden and Paul Hedley, *The Three Choirs Festival: a history*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), p.183.

¹⁸ *ibid*, p.165 and p.208.

commercially recorded in 1927.¹⁹ In 1927 the BBC dedicated an hour to broadcasting performances of him conducting his own works at the studio in Birmingham.²⁰

During his time at Gloucester he was in addition responsible for teaching children and adults of differing abilities, in groups and singly, including many private singing and instrumental pupils as well as the articulated pupils which are the focus of the present research. This research is a re-evaluation of the effectiveness of Brewer as a teacher, and in particular how effective he was as a teacher of all his traced articulated pupils. Of those articulated pupils the majority came from the aspiring lower middle classes, but all went on to make a career from music. Some achieved prestigious positions, for example organist of St Paul's Cathedral London and Dean of the Faculty of Music at the University of London. One of his ex-pupils rose to become President of the Royal College of Organists. In addition, many have left behind testimonies of Brewer's concern for their careers and indeed their lives.

Brewer was born in the Barton Street area of Gloucester in 1865, the elder of two sons born to Alfred and Cordelia Brewer. There was also a daughter. It was not a prosperous background. His father was a clerk at the local Probate Court and he grew up in Kingsholm and attended the local parish church. According to his memoirs, Brewer was always going to be a musician:

At a very early age I was passionately fond of music, a taste which was fostered by my parents, especially my mother. My father, being no mean performer on more than one wind instrument, led me to take an interest in orchestral music and military bands when I was quite small.²¹

His first piano teacher was a John Hooper, who advertised himself in the local media as a 'professor of music.' Brewer reports that: 'He held the post of organist at the Roman Catholic church in Gloucester and I often accompanied him and sat beside him on the organ stool and watched him play.'²²

Brewer stayed with his parents until he went to Oxford at the age eighteen in 1882, and he began his musical career as a chorister. It was his decision: 'it was my

¹⁹ Boden and Hedley, p. 208-209.

²⁰ A Herbert Brewer, *Memories of Choirs and Cloisters*, ed. by John Morehen (London: Stainer and Bell, 2015), p. 176.

²¹ *ibid*, p.1.

²² *ibid*, p.1.

ambition to become a chorister and I took the first opportunity of joining a church choir.²³ The music at his local (Kingsholm St Mark) church was not strong though and he soon left there. Sometime later, (in 1877) together with his brother, he successfully auditioned for the cathedral choir. Modestly he says that ‘the then organist C.H. Lloyd was not impressed by my singing, but he decided to admit us both into the choir, as he said, my performance on the piano displayed musicianship, and I could also look after my young brother.’²⁴ Brewer rose quickly and by the time his voice broke he had been solo boy and head chorister for four years. He later believed that ‘there can be no better training for a young musician than the life of a cathedral chorister.’²⁵ He was then taken on by Lloyd as an articled pupil, and during the same time held a few local organist posts in turn. He was joined in the cathedral organ loft by George Robertson Sinclair, later to be appointed organist of Hereford Cathedral. Frustratingly for the present research Brewer does not reveal much about his time as an articled pupil, limiting himself to: ‘As I look back I realize what a splendid training and preparation for these responsible positions we had as boys under the guiding hand of our old friend and master, C. H. Lloyd.’²⁶

In 1882 C. H. Lloyd was offered the post of organist of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford and, according to Brewer, invited his pupil to accompany him and be his assistant there. In July that year Brewer successfully auditioned for the post of organist at St Giles Church Oxford and therefore joined his old mentor in the city. In the early part of 1883 he competed successfully for the first open organ scholarship at the RCM which had just been opened by the Prince of Wales... ‘There I studied the organ with Sir Walter Parratt, composition with Sir Charles Stanford, counterpoint with Sir Frederick Bridge and violoncello with Mr Edward Howell.’²⁷ Again, frustratingly he does not say how he found them as teachers. However, Brewer was now in the mainstream of musical training, learning from some of the top names of the time. But more was to follow, as he goes on to explain. ‘I held this scholarship for only two terms, having successfully competed at the end of the Michaelmas term 1883 for the organ scholarship at Exeter College’²⁸ (University of Oxford). ‘The

²³ Brewer, p.1.

²⁴ *ibid*, p.2.

²⁵ *ibid*, p.6.

²⁶ *ibid*, p.10.

²⁷ *ibid*, p.20.

²⁸ *ibid*, p. 20.

journey to and fro several times during the week between Oxford and London proved too great a tax on my not over-robust health and for that reason I did not regret the exchange of scholarship from the RCM to Exeter College.²⁹

After Oxford Brewer was appointed organist of Bristol Cathedral, strongly supported in his application by Lloyd and Sir Walter Parratt, his organ tutor at the RCM. He took up residence in the city in December 1885. However, the previous organist appealed against his dismissal, and won the case. Therefore Brewer was again looking for a job. He returned to Oxford to the organ scholarship of Exeter College before being appointed organist of St Michael's Church, Coventry in 1886. This church was later (1918) raised to cathedral status, but in Brewer's time was a major parish church in a city that had grown rapidly in the nineteenth century from its medieval heart. Here Brewer found a supportive environment and presided over the formation of a voluntary all-male choir, the introduction of a weekly cathedral service and the rebuilding of the church organ. However, after two happy years bad feelings caused by internal church politics led to his decision to move on.

He was then offered two jobs. The first was that of organist of Bangor Cathedral, the other was organist and music master at Tonbridge School, a major boys' public school. On the face of it the Bangor job would have been a logical next step for him but he chose the latter giving as his reason that it had many attractions. The salary could have been one of these, but another is that he could have seen it as a way of honing his teaching skills. He therefore joined the English public school system with its then avowed aim of producing young men ready to take their places in running the vast British Empire.³⁰ He stayed at the school for four years, working hard to raise the status and performance levels of the music there. He also characteristically supervised the rebuilding of the school organ and founded a choral society in the town. During his time the school choir was invited by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral to give a performance in the cathedral. As a result of this Brewer was offered the job of cathedral organist, to be combined with his work at the school. However, this was found to be quite impractical and did not materialise. In 1895 he took and was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists

²⁹ Brewer, pp. 20-21.

³⁰ John Colmer, *E.M. Forster The personal voice*, (London: Routledge, 1975), p.75.

(FRCO). This is the qualification and standard that a cathedral organist then and now would be expected to hold. During his time at Tonbridge he also married and started a family. Brewer's wife is only mentioned in passing in his memoirs. However, in September 1894 he married the nineteen year old Ethel Mary Bruton, daughter of Henry William Bruton of the Gloucester firm of auctioneers and valuers, Bruton Knowles & Co. The wedding took place at St Mark's Kingsholm, Gloucester and C. H. Lloyd was Brewer's best man. Their first son, Charles, arrived during the following year.

In 1896 Brewer applied for the vacant organist's position at Liverpool Town Hall, again a curious career choice unless he was trying to broaden his experience. He was shortlisted, but then had a dream that the Gloucester post he had long coveted, probably since he had been Lloyd's leading chorister, was going to become available and he withdrew his application. A month later the dream came true, the Gloucester post was available and Brewer successfully applied having been warmly recommended to the Dean and Chapter by Stainer, Parratt, Parry, Bridge, Lloyd and his predecessor, Charles Lee Williams, who had resigned due to ill health. He therefore took up his duties in the city in March 1897 and remained in post until his death on 1 March 1928. Ironically, Lee Williams outlived him. He was only once tempted to leave. In 1918 he was offered the post of organist of Manchester Cathedral. However the Gloucester Cathedral authorities 'offered me several inducements to remain in Gloucester [...] and gave me such sympathetic support in every way that I decided not to sever my connection with Gloucester.'³¹ However, one last career decision he made was to take on the role of conductor of Bristol Choral Society in 1926. At this time, angina was starting to have a serious impact on his life, walking was more and more of an effort and he for some time had to slowly ascend to the organ loft one step at a time. His widow explained his decision to apply for the post by saying that 'his enthusiasm for work did not lessen.'³² On arrival in Gloucester as organist he and his young family had the use of a specially designated house in the Close, adjacent to the cathedral. Two more children arrived, Godfrey in 1901 and Eileen in 1905.

³¹ Brewer, p.131.

³² *ibid*, p.168.

Then as now Anglican cathedrals such as Gloucester were managed by a senior member of the clergy (then exclusively male) known as the Dean. The Dean chaired a group of other clergy on the cathedral staff known as the Chapter. Therefore, being both non-clergy and a member of what was then the still lowly regarded occupation of musician, Brewer held a very humble place in the hierarchy.³³ In effect, as organist, he was a resident tradesman providing a service and was regarded as such. In the highly hierarchical, class aware, late Victorian, early Edwardian society he would have been aware of that.³⁴ In his memoirs Brewer discusses his relationship with the cathedral precentor (the member of the cathedral clergy in charge of the music and therefore the member of the cathedral clergy who Brewer would have had most dealings with). He makes his feelings very clear:

The office of precentor is usually held by a Minor Canon. He is generally speaking a young man who has recently been ordained, and is, as is natural at that age, rather full of his own ideas. He possesses little real knowledge of music and is only an amateur in the art. Contrast with that of the position of organist. The organist has made music his life's study, and has attained his position by virtue of his musical gifts and ability, and is a man high up in his profession. It will readily be seen how unwise it is to entrust the choice and control of the music to the amateur in preference to the musical expert.³⁵

Brewer's son Charles later remembered growing up in the Close and was well aware of the local pecking order: 'Life in a cathedral precincts at the beginning of (the 20th) century was certainly amusing – an extraordinary mixture of kind heartedness, sequestered Victorianism and a strict regard for the old fashioned social levels.'³⁶ He recounts how his father's application to install a bathroom in the organist's house was rejected on the grounds that: 'The Deanery had never had a bathroom so surely the organist could do without one.'³⁷ There was also the unfortunate incident when Brewer bought a car, a new 1912 Swift, and built a garage: "[...] when the wife of one of the canons found that the ugly, drab, brick end of a shed belonging to another house and tenant, but facing her own windows about 30 yards away, had been converted into the neatly painted door of - horrors! - a *garage!* [...] and, what was

³³ Sir Frederick Bridge, *A Westminster Pilgrim* (London: Novello & Co, 1919), p.338.

³⁴ Charles Brewer, *The Spice of variety* (London: Frederick Muller, 1948), p.23.

³⁵ Brewer, p.33.

³⁶ Charles Brewer p. 23

³⁷ *Ibid*, p.24.

more, it was to house the *organist's* motor car! ³⁸ Such was the situation that Brewer, an ambitious musician and teacher had to practise his profession.

During his time at Gloucester Brewer directed the Three Choirs Festivals of 1898, 1901, 1904, 1907, 1910, 1913, 1922, 1925 and had done most of the planning for the 1928 Festival held in the year of his death. He also composed, not only for the Three Choirs Festival but for commissions from other festivals as well. He was a regular adjudicator of music competitions and his work was recognised by a succession of honours conferred on him. His FRCO in 1895 was followed by the (Trinity College) Dublin MusB in 1897. In 1905 the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred on him the Lambeth degree of Doctor of Music. In the following year he was awarded an honorary RAM, an award given to selected distinguished musicians who had not attended the Royal Academy of Music. During the year 1922 - 1923 he was the Sheriff of Gloucester, a period that occupies several pages of his memoirs. He was clearly proud to serve his city in this way. In 1926 he was given a knighthood in the New Year's Honours List for being the long serving organist of Gloucester and director of the Three Choirs Festival. This was three years after Elgar had first tried to use his influence to get him so honoured. In 1923 Elgar had sought the influence of Lady Stuart (better known as Alice Stuart-Wortley) to obtain this for him but feared that he did not have the goodwill of the RCM.³⁹ Why that should be so is not clear, but in the event it only delayed the honour. According to one ex-chorister he 'lusted after' a knighthood, but then once he possessed it claimed he only accepted it to please his wife.⁴⁰ How true this is cannot be proven, but he did seem to like accumulating honours and recognition.

Although beyond the scope of the research, it is important to note that Brewer was also a composer of no mean ability. His 150 or so compositions embrace chamber music, organ and church music, songs and part songs. His most substantial works are the cantata *Emmaus* written for the 1901 Three Choirs Festival and *The Holy Innocents* composed for the 1904 Festival. An assessment of his ability as a composer and his output was given by the editor of his memoirs, John Morehen, in a recent edition of the journal, *Cathedral Music*. He summarises as follows:

³⁸ Charles Brewer, p.24.

³⁹ Quoted in Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar, 2nd edition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982) p.302.

⁴⁰ Quoted in email to author from John Morehen, 12.5.2017.

Brewer is particularly comfortable when writing for his own instrument, the organ, where his twenty or so pieces show him to be equally adept at diatonic and chromatic writing and in both free and strict forms Although Brewer was not a composer of the top flight, he was certainly more than merely competent. He is master of the grand ceremonial style, very much at ease when writing for the 'big occasion.' Much of his church music demonstrates the potential of unison and octave writing, although he also exploits imaginative choral textures. His church compositions are well structured and are marked also by a strong sense of tonal direction, imaginative modulations, and an effective use of sequences. In his word-setting he avoids the tyranny of the four-bar phrase, and he is rarely guilty of false accentuation. His organ introductions and interludes are never routine, but invariably have something to say.⁴¹

Interestingly, in his son's memoirs there is a clue to what at least some of Brewer's aspirations were as a composer: 'He often said that he would have dearly loved to find a suitable libretto which would have enabled him to emulate his friend Sir Edward German, and produce a rival to *Merrie England*.⁴² There is evidence that towards the end of his life this was a definite aim, as his obituary in the *Musical Times* included, 'His real (composing) bent lay rather towards the lighter style. In his songs and instrumental pieces, especially those produced during the past few years, he discovered a vein of tunefulness that we associate with Sullivan and German.'⁴³

In summary, Brewer was fortunate in that his musical abilities were picked up early, encouraged and tutored by skilled professionals and the setting of the cathedral choir. He was a protégé of the young C.H. Lloyd, who subsequently rose to become one of the leading cathedral organists and musicians of the time, and went on to be trained by some of the top names of the day, including Stanford for composition (who was to also tutor Gurney and Howells – we have his opinion on them but not unfortunately on Brewer). Brewer was also clearly not lacking in confidence in his composing abilities as *Merrie England* was one of the most successful shows of its era. He was most evidently a teacher by vocation and honed his skills at a leading boy's public school, where as music teacher he was up against stiff competition for the boys' attention and commitment. From there he returned to his home cathedral to the humble position, in the Chapter's eyes, of organist, but he eventually won the affection and esteem of his city and was appointed Sheriff near the end of his career. His country recognised his achievements through his knighthood among many other honours. It can be said therefore that Brewer was an important all-round musician

⁴¹ John Morehen, 'Sir Herbert Brewer (1865-1928).' *Cathedral Music*, November 2015, 17-18 (p.18).

⁴² Charles Brewer, p.34.

⁴³ Quoted in Brewer, p.178.

and an influential figure in the music profession over a number of years. He is worthy of a fresh assessment and a fair consideration given to his contribution to the careers of his pupils.

1.2 Sources and research methodologies

The two main methods that are used in the present research are textual analysis of primary and secondary sources and prosopography. The analysis is primarily built around Brewer's own memoirs. They were published by his widow in 1931, three years after his death. Called *Memories of Choirs and Cloisters* they are generally an upbeat selective collection of his musical career highlights and carefully chosen anecdotes.⁴⁴ They very much conform to the stereotype of their time and genre, that of a selective, self-justifying version of the past. Unfortunately his various articulated pupils receive scant mention and he does not generally pass comment on his own teachers. However, the memoirs are valuable for giving Brewer's perspective on his teaching philosophy, career and his dealings with various committees and employers and the Three Choirs Festival. There are two references to articulated pupils running errands for him and one mention in passing of two of his more well-known ones. Ivor Novello was apparently 'light hearted' and Herbert Howells 'serious minded.' There is no mention of Gurney, most probably due to the fact that he had by this time (the mid 1920s) been confined to a Kent asylum for several years. This is even though he was already recognised as a great talent, including by Brewer. An assessment of Brewer's teaching style is attempted at the rear of the volume, where his widow admits that 'In his treatment of the choristers some may have considered him too severe.' One of those former choristers reports that 'Brewer was a strict – almost severe – disciplinarian, and any departure from his rigid code always met with its deserts; but I never knew him act unjustly or unkindly to those serving him.'⁴⁵

It is not known whether Brewer actually intended his memoirs to be published. His widow, Ethel, in her foreword to their published version wrote: 'My husband, who was often asked by his friends to write his reminiscences, amused himself by jotting down, from time to time, these recollections and anecdotes. He never revised or recast them, so they must not be taken to represent his final intentions.'⁴⁶ This is an

⁴⁴ A Herbert Brewer, *Memories of Choirs and Cloisters*, ed. by John Morehen (London: Stainer and Bell, 2015).

⁴⁵ Brewer, p.171.

⁴⁶ *ibid*, p.vii.

extremely interesting comment, for as will be seen below, there is a small amount of material in them that Brewer most probably would not have wanted to enter the public domain.

The second collection of memoirs, Charles Brewer's autobiography, was definitely prepared with publication in mind. It is also upbeat, but more candid and contemporary in terms of describing his personal relationships – although again his wife receives barely a mention. Charles was the oldest of Brewer's three children and was born shortly before his parents moved to Gloucester. He went on to have a distinguished career at the fledgling BBC from the mid-1920s. He was therefore at his most impressionable age when he was growing up in Gloucester and gives valuable insights into his father's character and his parents' life in the Cathedral Close.

The other main primary sources drawn on are the magazines for Tonbridge and King's schools, an example of an articulated pupil contract from 1946, obituaries of Brewer in the *Musical Times* and *Gloucester Journal*, the report on his funeral, also in the *Gloucester Journal* and the diary of Thomas Collinson a nineteenth century articulated pupil at Durham Cathedral.⁴⁷ These sources are selected as they provide contemporary contextual information on Brewer and the music profession.

The research draws heavily on autobiographical sources. Clearly they have their weaknesses as sources. John Tosh believes that the main general issues with them are that, their 'author's purpose is less to offer an objective account than to justify his or her actions in retrospect and to provide evidence for the defence before the bar of history.'⁴⁸ As records of events they are also often inaccurate and selective (both deliberately and accidentally) in the back up sources they draw on. They do, however, for all their faults represent the thoughts of an insider and may be revealing of a person's mentality and values.

The research approach was influenced by deconstructionism which believes that an autobiographical narrative is a useful source of information for study of ideas about the 'self' - how the writer conceives of 'self' over time. But from the most extreme

⁴⁷ Thomas Collinson, *The diary of an organist's apprentice at Durham Cathedral 1871 – 1875*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982).

⁴⁸ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 3rd edn. (Harlow: Longman, 2002), p. 61.

view of deconstructionism, autobiography is seen as essentially an act of self-deception.⁴⁹ A more pragmatic approach is that deconstructionism draws attention to textual features that should be attended to such as between the author, the narrator and the character (gaps that are often masked by the use of first person pronoun).

As David Carlson points out:

Rather than focus on the incommensurability of the 'selves' marked by 'I' ...an alternative interpretative approach to engage in a more systematic attempt to contextualise these various selves. Building on an awareness of the ambiguities of the 'signature' [...] postmodern autobiography studies recognise that an autobiography is likely to offer at least as much illumination of the period *during which* it was written as of the period *about which* it is written.⁵⁰

Prosopography is an attempt to bring together all the relevant biographical data that can be traced from groups of persons in a systematic way in order to identify common characteristics and patterns. I used prosopographic analysis on as many of Brewer's pupils as I could identify to see if any patterns and commonalities could be detected about their backgrounds and where their subsequent careers took them, thus providing another perspective on the effectiveness of Brewer as a teacher. Research identified seventeen such pupils, so a significant enough population existed for this sort of analysis. To uncover the pupil biographical data I searched both primary sources and literature. The primary sources included census returns, school/ college records, musician directories, relevant professional body records, press reports and advertisements. The results were recorded and analysed on an Excel spreadsheet and were synthesized; not just by separately analysing the answers in the questionnaire, but by combining and interpreting these data, analysing their sources and literature, sketching the wider historical context and offering explanations.

1.3 Structure of dissertation

This dissertation focuses on the effectiveness of Brewer as a teacher by examining all aspects of his character and teaching career. Following this introductory chapter the study is divided into three distinct sections. Chapter Two examines Brewer's approach to teaching, mainly drawn from his memoirs. Chapter Three is the prosopographic analysis of all the articulated pupils traced and Chapter Four examines

⁴⁹ David Carlson, 'Autobiography', in *Reading Primary Sources*, ed. by Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (London: Routledge), p. 180.

⁵⁰ Carlson, p. 180 – 181.

the reported experiences of Gurney, Howells and Novello in the context of those reported of other of Brewer's pupils. Chapter Five draws together the overall conclusions. The main conclusion is that many of the difficulties that Gurney, Howells and Novello had with Brewer were as much to do with their own characters and 'issues.' Brewer was a teacher by vocation whose gifts were appreciated the most by averagely talented people who were prepared to graft, and whose pupils went on to fill some of the top cathedral posts in the country.

Chapter 2: Brewer's approach to teaching

This chapter focuses on Brewer's approach to teaching as revealed by the language he uses to describe it in the various settings of his career in his memoirs. It shows that teaching was Brewer's vocation and it influenced every area of his life. He believed in the civilising power of music education in all its forms, and took every opportunity to impart its knowledge to those within his sway whether they were the unmotivated public school pupils of Tonbridge School, his choir boys at Gloucester and elsewhere, or his concert and recital audiences.

Brewer's widow described her late husband's approach to teaching as an 'iron nature combined with intense sensitiveness.' She believed these 'were the secret of (his) power to lead and to draw the best out of those who came under his control.'¹ Behind these was a well-developed pedagogical approach drawn from his natural character, his upbringing, the spirit of the age and his experiences in his career. His overarching attitude to his career was according to both his widow and son that, 'he always said, his work was his hobby.'² It was therefore something that he was passionate about and enjoyed.

To examine the context of the time in which Brewer was teaching, according to Ashley Berner, during the nineteenth century the bulk of teacher training shifted from theologically-based colleges to university departments. In consequence the primary source for understanding education shifted from theology to psychology.³ These changes altered the ways in which educators understood the nature of the child, the role of the teacher and the aim of education itself. Brewer was at school in the 1870s, and therefore would have been taught by people who would have seen the Bible as being the main source of knowledge on the nature of the child and how to teach and train them. The child was seen as a flawed individual born in 'original sin' and thus needed corporal punishment to help them develop a godly character. Brewer, like all his contemporaries, used such methods of punishment without question, and in fact saw it as a duty to do so. Indeed, when one of his pupils,

¹ Brewer, p.169.

² Charles Brewer, p.19 and Brewer, p.180.

³ Ashley Berner, *Metaphysics in educational theory*. (PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2008).

Novello was a Magdalen College, Oxford chorister, and later Head Chorister, the organist was John Varley Roberts. It is reported that: '(Varley Roberts) ruled the boys with a rod of iron and could be vicious in his use of physical punishment. Many a chorister had been thwacked across the head with a heavy prayer book or music score for real and supposed misdemeanours [...] (however, he) was beneath his frightening exterior [...] a kind and gentle soul [...] Underneath [...] he loved the boys and wanted the best for them.'⁴ The other cultural context to bear in mind when examining this time is to remember that to be homosexual during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Novello was, was a criminal offence and was to be for some time hence.

In that context, Brewer's teaching philosophy can be gleaned from his memoirs. His words reveal his assumptions and attitudes in several key areas including the intellectual and societal benefits of the teaching and learning of music, the role of the teacher and the status and expectations on the pupil. In addition to these general factors, some others emerge from Brewer's memoirs that are personal to him and his situation, but which may throw some light on why he approached his teaching duties the way he did. These include being a parent, his salary and attitude to money, his relationship to his teacher and mentor C.H. Lloyd, his concert programming and his desire to widen and educate audiences.

2.1 The intellectual and societal benefits of the teaching and learning of music

Brewer approached teaching music with the firm belief that knowledge and appreciation of it was inherently a 'good thing' both in terms of its intellectual benefits and as a civilising influence. He shows this by the language he uses about it throughout his memoirs. When describing his own background as a cathedral chorister he notes that 'my experience has been that boys who have a knowledge of music and a keen ear generally have a great advantage in learning over boys who have no sense of sound or pitch.'⁵ But at every level and in every way he believes that extending the knowledge of music was a noble thing to do, and that the people who took part in such activities should be applauded and rewarded. At Oxford

⁴ Slattery-Christy, p.22.

⁵ Brewer, p.4.

University he notes with approval that the University Musical Society of which he was President for a while 'did much for the advancement of chamber music in the university.'⁶ When he was Organist and Music Master of Tonbridge School he was appreciative of the fact that the headmaster 'was one of the few headmasters of the time who understood the value of music as part of a boy's education.'⁷ In other words he saw the world as Brewer saw it. Further than that, presumably on Brewer's prompting, the headmaster 'made a point of impressing on the boys' minds the privilege of singing in the choir. He also granted special favours to members of the choir, not only by entertaining them in a lavish manner – as he knew how – but by giving them extra half holidays through the term.'⁸ Later in his time at Tonbridge Brewer supervised the introduction of a new pipe organ in the school hall. This enabled him 'to give recitals to the boys ... I was able to make them acquainted with a quantity of modern music as well as the old classics by transcribing them for organ.'⁹

Wherever he went in his career, Brewer either continued existing practice or introduced free organ recitals for various sections of society. At Gloucester he continued the free monthly recitals established by his predecessor, Lee Williams. These were held in the winter months and to begin with consisted of organ solos, vocal and instrumental numbers and a choral item or two. They were originally intended for the very poor who could not afford the pleasure of a concert, and were financed by a few philanthropic citizens. Also in his time at Gloucester Brewer oversaw the provision of a short organ recital every Sunday afternoon throughout the year. In his memoirs he notes with approval a regular festival held at Tewkesbury every September in the years when Gloucester wasn't hosting the Three Choirs Festival. It was a one day festival of song, and Brewer's comment on it is revealing: 'These smaller gatherings for the enjoyment of pure and lofty music deserve all the encouragement that can be given them [...] they (further) sacred art where, without such help, it may languish [...]'¹⁰ Again, note the high place given to 'special' music that has civilising powers and the fact that he believed it was important to support

⁶ Brewer, p.24.

⁷ *ibid*, p.43.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.43.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.46.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.80.

initiatives like this in order to encourage the enjoyment of 'pure and lofty music' and the 'sacred art' of song.

Another incident is noted by Brewer in similar terms. During the 1920 Three Choirs Festival in Worcester, 'a wish was expressed by the citizens of Worcester that their poorer brethren should have an opportunity of hearing the festival choir after the performance of *Messiah*.' As a result the *Hallelujah Chorus* and another chorus, *Worthy is the Lamb* were sung outside the cathedral. Brewer comments with approval that among the crowds who 'greatly appreciated' this gesture, none did so more than the ragged little urchins who came under my notice.' He also adds, 'who can tell what far reaching effect it will have on those young minds.'¹¹ In the absence of their side of the story it is impossible to say what effect it had on them either at the time or later. However, Brewer clearly believed that the benefits of music reached beyond any class division and was able to improve any mind.

In a similar vein, soon after the Gloucester Cathedral organ was rebuilt in 1920 Brewer put in place his longstanding plan to arrange organ recitals for elementary school children. With typical organisational thoroughness, the plan was that 'at the beginning of the week a typed programme was sent out to the schools which (were) to attend, and the teachers read it aloud to the children who wrote it in their notebooks and in addition memorised the hymn.' As Brewer expressed it, 'The intention is to give the children the opportunity to become acquainted with the works of the great masters.'¹² Having been convinced of the power of education and in particular music education, Brewer saw it as his duty to impart knowledge of it and its appreciation. Characteristically, the last words he is reported to have spoken in the King's School the evening before he died were offering to provide seats for any interested older pupil for the Gloucestershire Orchestral Society concert he was due to conduct the next day, saying, 'It will be good for them; music has a considerable educational value.'¹³

¹¹ Brewer, p.143.

¹² Ibid, p.132.

¹³ *King's School Magazine*, Lent, 1928, p.4.

2.2 The role of the teacher

As well as a clear idea of the benefits of a musical education, Brewer also had equally clear ideas about his role as a music teacher. This is evident through his memoirs; beginning with how he enthuses about the relationships he had with the people who had taught him, who were exemplars to him in that role. As has been shown, as a child, his first music teacher was a John Hooper, who Brewer describes as 'having a musical taste far in advance of his time.' Whatever that meant. As well as a being a keyboard player, Hooper was also apparently 'a violinist of some ability' in the opinion not just of Brewer but also Elgar as well.¹⁴ Therefore he was someone worth aspiring to be like. However, he went beyond being a good example of a professional musician. John Hooper was the organist of the Roman Catholic church in Gloucester and, as has already been shown, Brewer 'often accompanied him and sat beside him on the organ stool and watched him play.'¹⁵ It was therefore almost the relationship of master and disciple. Brewer similarly describes with approval his relationship with C.H. Lloyd.¹⁶ In contrast, when Brewer at about the same time joined his first choir, the organist was 'an amateur' and 'a very poor performer.'¹⁷ He did not command respect therefore. Brewer believed that setting a good example was also an important role for the teacher. When describing his approach to his teaching responsibilities Brewer notes that:

I have always made a point of not missing a practice or a rehearsal of any kind when it has been at all possible for me to attend. I feel sure this has helped to bring about that esprit de corps which exists among the members of my choirs and societies. Slackness and lack of enthusiasm on the part of a choirmaster soon affect those who are placed under his control.¹⁸

Later, when Brewer was describing his experiences as a pupil of the King's School, in trying to capture its pedagogic setting he describes that, 'nearly all the forms (teaching groups) were held in one room, and the pandemonium caused by the masters (teachers) competing with each other in their attempts to drive the rudiments of Latin, Greek and arithmetic into the heads of all the boys, all at the same time, was indescribable.'¹⁹ The use of the word 'drive' is particularly revealing here. At this

¹⁴ Brewer, p.1.

¹⁵ *ibid*, p.1.

¹⁶ *ibid*, p.10.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.1.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 52.

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.4.

time it meant forcing through against resistance, like a pile being forced into the ground before constructing a building on top of it. A teacher then, in Brewer's mind, was someone who also had to be prepared, if necessary, to force education by all possible means into not always responsive pupils in unfavourable circumstances.

The ability to give 'sympathy' is also a quality that Brewer notes with approval existed in his mind in the characters of two people he looked up to in his early career. Hubert Parry, he said, was 'ever ready with sympathy and encouragement for those who intended adopting music as a profession,' and Sir Frederick Ouseley was 'sympathetic and kind hearted.'²⁰ In order to understand the sentiment behind those comments there is a need to understand what sympathetic meant at that time. Simpson and Sacken believe that the word sympathy was used before the word *empathy* emerged in the early twentieth century, and before then it included two dimensions: an immediate sensitivity to a person's feelings and an intelligent inquiry into a person's thinking.'²¹ The references above were using the latter meaning, and therefore meant in modern terms that Parry and Ouseley both showed an interest in him and respected him as a thinking human being. In turn, Brewer aspired to possess that quality.

Brewer became a full time teacher in 1892 when he joined the staff of Tonbridge School, a boys' public school. He was to stay for several years, thus demonstrating that he recognised his vocation as a teacher and his commitment to it. He introduces this period in his life by saying that, 'The attempt to obtain good results from boys who naturally preferred cricket and football to irksome but necessary piano practice was a somewhat disheartening task.'²² This sentence is as rich as any in Brewer's memoirs, revealing so many of the hidden cultural values of the time and place. Firstly, his assumption that the boys would 'naturally' prefer playing sport to artistic activities such as piano practice. One of Brewer's pupils at this time was the novelist, E.M. Forster, who most definitely would not have come under that category. But for Brewer to describe piano practice as irksome but necessary shows that he felt the boys had a low opinion of the subject he was endeavouring to teach.

²⁰ Brewer, pp.19 and 22.

²¹ Simpson and Sacken in *Journal of Philosophy & History of Education*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2014, p. 2.

²² Brewer, p.43.

Brewer however, was helped by his unshakable belief in the value of music education. He was therefore prepared and ready to stand his ground over its benefits to the boys and obtain 'good results' out of them, no matter what the cost. In this he was helped by having the support of the headmaster in his efforts. This leads to another of the pillars of Brewer's philosophy of education; freedom to do things his way and being respected as the professional musician to do so. As mentioned above, the Tonbridge School headmaster was one of the few headmasters of that time who understood the value of music as part of a boy's education, and who, importantly for Brewer, 'gave me a free rein to carry out my own ideas.'²³ This again is a phrase rich in cultural assumptions and revealing in what it says about Brewer and the setting in which he was working. This was not the first time he had worked in such a favourable (to him) environment. The post he held before Tonbridge was that of organist of St Michael's Church, Coventry, a place where he notes approvingly that he was employed by people who were 'sympathetic' – that word again – and who 'readily supported me in all my enterprises.'²⁴ It is not a surprise therefore to read that in Gloucester he was almost pleased that his employer, the Dean of the Cathedral, was 'not in the least musical' as 'he left musical matters unquestionably in my hands.'²⁵ Brewer clearly liked to be trusted, left to manage his department and make decisions as he saw fit.

Brewer also extended his teaching role and used his teaching skills in revolutionising and professionalising the preparation for the Three Choirs Festivals. Looking back to his first association with the Festival as a boy chorister from the perspective of the mid 1920s, Brewer recalled that:

The rehearsals in those days were held in the room in which Wesley died and which is now my drawing room [...] The Chorus was drawn from London, Oxford, Cambridge, Wells, Bristol, Leeds, Bradford, Cardiff as well as Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford. We rarely had more than twelve rehearsals at either of the three cities, and the entire chorus never met until the day before the Festival, when the final rehearsal was held.

²³ Brewer, p.43.

²⁴ *ibid*, p.37.

²⁵ *ibid*, p.54.

He continues, 'Compare this with the preparation for the Gloucester Festival in 1922 when I conducted some eighty rehearsals in addition to four combined rehearsals. The standard of choral performances was naturally not so high as now ²⁶ he adds modestly. His teaching vocation extended to all aspects of the professional posts he held throughout his career.

2.3 The role of the pupil

In Brewer's mind there was a firm and clear divide between the teacher and the taught. He gives several clues in his memoirs about the role he expected the pupil to play in this relationship. Firstly he expects pupils to be proactive. As a child musician he had ambitions to be a chorister, and he took the steps necessary to ensure that he became one. He also values young musicians being competitive, jostling for places against their peers in choirs and for exams and scholarships, as he did with the cathedral choir and various exams. As an example of this while he was a Tonbridge he introduced house music competitions where different sections of the school competed against each other in musical performances. However, alongside the encouraging and rewarding of initiative, he also believed that a pupil should take the advice of those who know better (his masters and parents) and be prepared to be entered for positions or exams. As Brewer describes from his own life: 'About the time I left the choir it was decided that I should enter for the local examination of the Royal Academy of Music.'²⁷ Even though he then goes on to describe how pointless the actual exam was, there is not a hint of criticism of the people who decided it would be good for him to take it.

Brewer also expects his pupils to have strong powers of concentration. He mentions this as a useful quality when discussing the chaotic scenes in the King's School when he was a pupil there, 'it had one advantage – it forced on boys the habit of concentration.'²⁸ And finally, he describes how, as he looked back on his career what qualities he expected in his choir boys. He notes that:

some hundreds of boys have passed through my hands, and from the first I have made it a rule that every boy should learn an instrument of some kind ... All the

²⁶Brewer, pp. 55-56.

²⁷ *ibid*, p.16.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.4.

boys read music fluently, and in consequence I have often been able to perform a new setting of the canticles or anthem with a minimum amount of rehearsal Then again, I find it a beneficial plan to question the boys as to the singing of the previous day's service, making them critical of their own performance.²⁹

Therefore he wanted them to take themselves seriously as young professional musicians, to take responsibility for their own performances and their place in the ensemble. If he had such high expectations of his boy choristers, it is clear he would have had even higher ones of his articulated pupils.

2.4 Being a parent

Alongside his career Brewer also raised a family. He had three children, two boys and one girl. Although the relationship is of a different nature and quality, his approach to fatherhood is worth examining as it may give clues as to how he would have approached the pupils in his various teaching roles. In his memoirs his children may only rate passing references, one being his heart warming description of once driving his car on holiday with his young daughter asleep on his arm.³⁰ Fortunately though, we also have the memoirs of one of his sons, Charles to draw on. As the generation after his father's, Charles is far more forthcoming about the more personal aspects of his life. However, even he talks about his father's 'public' qualities before describing anything about the personal relationship he had with him. At the end of his memoirs he does however say that:

the two years from the time I entered radio until his death (1926-1928) were very precious years. During that period he and I were closer together than we had ever been. He had been a stern father in my young days, but throughout my life I had admired his genius and longed to work alongside him as a servant of the public. Now it had come to pass, and he too knew that besides the normal advice of a father he had something else to offer and share with me. It was a precious link indeed.³¹

Throughout his memoirs Charles quotes his parents' and particularly his father's attitude to his troubled search for a suitable career. Charles did not have much of a say in the initial stages:

My parents had decided that I ought to become a doctor. It was a respectable calling and should bring in a little money, but there was no consideration given ... as to whether I had the natural aptitude for such a profession. At that time in my

²⁹ Brewer, p.51.

³⁰ *ibid*, p.122.

³¹ Charles Brewer p.268.

own mind the urge was for the stage or the army (in that order). To take up music for a living was ruled out by my father straightaway [...] His level business head knew how much mediocrity existed in the musical profession and what a poor living was to be made unless genius was there³²

Initially Charles was sent to Cheltenham College rather than the King's School in Gloucester. Tellingly on his 1909 application form to join Cheltenham College in reply to the question, 'For what profession is he destined?' the inked in reply reads, 'Boy says Army Surgeon.'³³ While at Cheltenham Charles became involved with the music making – what his father thought of that is not known - and at one point:

I was conducting our House Singing Competition (and) my father was asked to adjudicate. In his concluding remarks he passed dry and somewhat caustic comments on the conducting of our choir which highly delighted the audience who were aware of our relationship. I took it rather hardly, for, as I told him later, I had been careful to model my own conducting upon his own.³⁴

The incident Charles was remembering took place in 1912. The report of the competition in that year's *The Cheltonian* includes the following on Brewer's summarising: 'He passed in rapid survey over the merits and demerits of the various choirs. Here the tenors were 'woolly on the top', there the trebles were 'thin' [...] And one conductor seemed to think he was an animated windmill.'³⁵

This does not sound like the action of someone with 'sympathy,' but from what is known of Brewer's character this behaviour could have been motivated by many factors, and a desire to be fair and above board could have been one of them. Later on when the medical career predictably did not work out his father's next intervention came when Charles joined the Territorials in 1913:

the stage and the army were the two professions which really held an appeal for me. My parents were against the stage purely on the grounds of it being an erratic and unreliable source of income, while the army they dismissed under the mistaken notion that whatever branch one joined it was necessary to have a large private income to supplement one's pay.³⁶

The opposite of an erratic and unreliable income is a steady and reliable one. It is what most parents want for their children. The comment about needing to have a large private income to supplement one's pay in the army is interesting particularly

³² Charles Brewer, p.34 and p.267.

³³ Cheltenham College Archives: Location 70, Entries 1909.

³⁴ Charles Brewer, p.23.

³⁵ *The Cheltonian*, 1912, p.56.

³⁶ Charles Brewer, pp.40-41.

given Charles' alma mater, Cheltenham College's strong links with the military. It also echoes Brewer's need to supplement his meagre Gloucester Cathedral salary, and clearly was not an ideal way to live in his eyes.

Charles survived the War, and in 1919 was invalided out of the army. Despite everything he was still drawn to the idea of earning a living entertaining the public. However the war had not softened his father's views on the subject.' My father wanted me to gain an organ scholarship to Pembroke College Oxford, which was open to me.'³⁷ This opportunity could possibly have come about due to the longstanding links between the College and Gloucester Cathedral, whereby the Master of Pembroke College was a canon of the cathedral. Charles however did not take it up, and after a few of what his parents called 'flash in the pan jobs,' 'My level headed father was looking around for a career for me which offered me more security. He found it in the shape of a junior post with Somerset House – Inland Revenue, Income Tax Department. I greatly disliked the thought of it – but perhaps my father was right, and I could but try it.'³⁸ Charles was about twenty four years old by this stage. It was not a success, and following a few manual jobs he decided in 1926 to try the broadcasting business that had started just four years earlier. 'I asked my father, who had given some broadcast performances, to write to Mr J.C.W. Reith, the General Manager, and ascertain what hopes there might be of admission to the staff.' His father's initial reaction was 'dubious [...] Broadcasting was then in its infancy. It was still a company and not a Corporation. It was thought to be a "craze" – like roller skating, diabolo and paper bag cookery had been.'³⁹ However his father did write and Charles was taken on, and subsequently rose to the position of Assistant Director of Variety and, before his retirement, North American Director.

Through Charles' commentary, several of the characteristics analysed above can be seen. Firstly, until he was of an age to make his own decisions a pupil had to respect others' decisions made on his behalf. It is not known how this played out with Brewer's other children, but it took until his mid-twenties for Charles to be free to make a decision about his career, and even then his father wrote to the BBC on his behalf. Another interesting point is that although Brewer valued 'sympathy and

³⁷ Charles Brewer, p.92.

³⁸ Ibid, p.95.

³⁹ Ibid, p.267.

encouragement' in those who he looked to as he was contemplating a career in music, he clearly saw his son as a different case. This is seen most visibly in his harsh treatment of Charles at the school music competition, but also in pointing out instead the poor living to be made from music unless one was a genius. Having a steady income was important to Brewer, and maybe he was making the best of an ill remunerated career but wanted better for his son. He wanted Charles to have financial security, which is what he also wanted for himself and his family.

2.5 His salary and his attitude to money

The making of money and the importance of having a business-like approach to life are recurring themes in Brewer's memoirs. From his first reference to learning a Bach fugue on the organ in order to be given ten shillings by one of his masters at the King's School (the money was offered but never paid), to the coverage given to his astute handling of the finances of the Three Choirs Festival, the text is littered with examples and references to this side of his life.

The salary of his main career role, that of Organist and Choirmaster of Gloucester Cathedral, was not large by any standards, and the effect of this fact on his approach to teaching would have been to encourage him to take on a substantial number of private pupils of all abilities. These would be in addition to the articulated pupils that a person in his position would have seen it as their duty to take on. It would have also encouraged him to take on the invigilating of exams as another source of income (as he also did), making him excessively busy in the process. Evidence for his large number of pupils comes from his memoirs: 'Of pupils I have had many and varying ability [...] Then there are the "would-be" musicians – the private pupils.'⁴⁰ Evidence for his starting salary comes from the contract he was given on appointment to Gloucester. A copy exists in the cathedral archives. It shows that he was to be paid £150 per annum to be cathedral organist and £25 per annum to be Master of the Choristers making a total of £175.⁴¹ Hobsbawm quotes a comfortable middle class income in the early 1900s as being £700 - £1,000.⁴² A shortfall of several hundred pounds in other words.

⁴⁰ Brewer, p.111.

⁴¹ Music: Kirby 134.3

⁴² Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London: Abacus Books, 1994), p.181.

A contemporary of Brewer's, Sir Frederick Bridge, the Organist of Westminster Abbey commented in his autobiography that, 'My work at the Abbey did not fill all my time every day; nor must I admit was the salary of the Organist at all commensurate with the position and its duties.'⁴³ To put Brewer's situation in some context, it is known that both in 1883 and 1897 the salary offered to the appointed Organist of York Minster was £300 rising to £400 when the pension to the previous Organist ceased.⁴⁴ £400 was also the 1928 starting salary of Herbert Sumsion, Brewer's successor (£300 for being organist and £100 for being choirmaster).⁴⁵ How Brewer's salary worked its way up towards, and most probably beyond that figure in the intervening years is not known.

Brewer seems to have earned a reputation for his financial skills early in his Gloucester career, as he quotes from a local Leeds newspaper article at the time he had been commissioned to compose a new piece for the city musical festival in 1907. Under the heading 'Wealthy organists' was written, 'Dr Brewer is as good a judge of investments as he is of music. He has for a neighbour Sir Hubert Parry who can afford to entertain on a lavish scale in connection with the Festival at Gloucester Cathedral – and he is an organist also. It is clear that notes of music are not the only notes to which these musicians give their attention.'⁴⁶ His son also records that his father, 'once commissioned his lawyer to go to a very large sum for the purchase of a very small property. It was quoted as the highest price hitherto paid for a property of its size in Gloucester. But his judgement was not at fault, for at his death it was valued at nearly twice the original cost.'⁴⁷

Their relatively weak base financial position did not discourage the Brewers from their desire to live as the middle class professional family they saw themselves to be, and they relied heavily on Herbert's extra income streams and shrewdness in personal investments – he left a total of over £20, 737 in his will, or over one million

⁴³ Bridge, p.83.

⁴⁴ Frederick Lang, *The Anglican organist in Victorian and Edwardian England (c.1800 – c.1910)*. (PhD Thesis, University of Hull, 2004), p.191.

⁴⁵ Gloucester Cathedral Archives: Temporary Reference, Organ Box 2/9

⁴⁶ Brewer, p.101.

⁴⁷ Charles Brewer, p.19.

pounds in today's money.⁴⁸ This enabled them to afford public school fees, have live in servants, take rooms in London to attend shows, buy and run a car and extend their house to add a music room. As has been shown, Charles identifies one of his father's cars as being a new 1912 Swift. This is likely to have been the four seater County model which retailed at £285, or over £100 more than the annual salary Brewer received from the Cathedral. At that time there were around 100 small automobile manufacturers in the UK, total production was less than 16,000 vehicles per annum and cars were the preserve of only the wealthiest. The Swift Motor Company was based in Coventry and their cars were marketed as being very reliable, which would have appealed to Brewer.⁴⁹ No wonder he was keen to chase up payments for private lessons as he did with Howells. According to Spicer, 'Brewer was somewhat niggardly and was not prepared to allow any delay in the payment of his fee and sent his pupil home with an ultimatum to this effect.'⁵⁰ Some of his charges for pupils are known. It is known for example that Herbert Sumsion was charged £30 per annum in 1914 for being an articulated pupil, and Herbert Howells was charged three and a half guineas a term for being a piano pupil in 1905. With several pupils of each type his income would have mounted up. It would have done for any cathedral organist of the time it has to be said. The difference with Brewer was the business sense he had to go with his income to make the most of it.

Further evidence for his business sense is that his widow, in her assessment of her late husband wrote, 'A marked trait in his character [...] was his extraordinary business instinct. He would not be happy if any Society with which he was connected was in financial straits, and he would not rest until that Society had been put on its feet again and had a small nest egg in the bank.'⁵¹ One example of this is that the major reason behind his founding of the Gloucestershire Orchestral Society in 1901 was to help save Gloucester Choral Society money, by reducing the fees they would otherwise have to pay to book professional orchestras for their concerts.⁵² It involved him in an enormous amount of extra work but it helped the books balance. To give another example, when he took over the conductorship of the Three Choirs Festival

⁴⁸ Historical UK inflation: <http://inflation.iamkate.com> [accessed 21.7 2018].

⁴⁹ Email to author from Ron Walker of the Swift Society, 25.5.2017.

⁵⁰ Spicer, p.17.

⁵¹ Brewer, p.175.

⁵² Ibid, p.88.

it was by 'no means on a financially sound basis'; but he left it as 'one of the most prosperous and distinguished of provincial festivals, which is a tribute not only to his high musicianship, but also to his remarkable business acumen. Some twenty-four thousand people attended the 1925 Festival, and no less than £3,737 was handed over to charity.'⁵³

Clearly Brewer had a liking for the middle class life, and had a highly developed business sense. Pupils were valuable income to him, and the training of his articulated pupils, the main focus of this research, could have suffered as a consequence of his need and desire to increase his income by taking on extra work including numbers of pupils of all kinds. There is no evidence of that happening though.

2.6 His relationship with C.H. Lloyd

When Brewer left the cathedral choir as a chorister he was taken on by the organist C.H. Lloyd as an articulated pupil and was joined in the cathedral organ loft by fellow pupil, George Robertson Sinclair, later to be appointed organist of Hereford Cathedral. Frustratingly for the present research Brewer does not give much away about his time as an articulated pupil: 'As I look back I realize what a splendid training and preparation for these responsible positions we had as boys under the guiding hand of our old friend and master, C. H. Lloyd.'⁵⁴ However, it is hard to overstate the influence C H Lloyd had on Brewer and noticeable that the only terms of affection in his (what he thought would be unpublished memoirs) are for Lloyd. Brewer's relationship with Lloyd as his articulated pupil can be viewed as his 'model' for that type of relationship.

Lloyd first appeared in Brewer's life when the eleven year old Brewer auditioned to join Gloucester Cathedral Choir as a chorister. As shown earlier, it was not an auspicious start. Lloyd, the then young (28 year old) organist of the cathedral, was not impressed with his singing, but decided to admit both Brewer and his brother into the choir because he felt Brewer's performance on the piano displayed musicianship, and he could also look after his brother.⁵⁵ Within a year Lloyd had appointed Herbert Brewer head chorister and solo boy. Whether his singing had improved markedly, or

⁵³ Brewer, pp. 172-173.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, p.10.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, p2.

his innate musicality had helped him make the most of his voice is not known. But whatever the reason, Lloyd now clearly thought much of Brewer, and Brewer duly stayed to become one of his articulated pupils. Brewer held a lasting friendship with and affection for his mentor and gives him a fulsome tribute in his memoirs.

[...] his death (in 1919) on his seventieth birthday [...] came as a great blow to me. From the beginning of our acquaintance a bond of affection sprang up between us, and our friendship remained intimate until the end of his life; in fact I doubt if anyone knew him better than I did. We shared our joys and sorrows during the long period of forty-three years and his death caused a gap in my life that is impossible to fill. He was the most unselfish and generous of men, with an intensely keen sense of duty, and he consistently lived up to the very high ideals he had of life.⁵⁶

Brewer is also in admiration of the work Lloyd did at Gloucester:

Although very young at the time, I well remember the consternation in the musical world caused by the appointment of the young Oxford musician to succeed as Organist of Gloucester Cathedral one of the greatest musical geniuses of the last century, Dr S.S. Wesley. But the choice was soon justified, and the wholehearted way in which he threw himself into the musical life of the city immediately met with excellent results.⁵⁷

Lloyd reluctantly left Gloucester in 1882 on his appointment as Organist of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford. He was strongly advised to accept it by the Dean of Oxford and could not really turn it down. His reluctance was because of the prominence given the Gloucester organist's post by the Three Choirs Festival. He wanted to take Brewer, by then effectively his assistant at Gloucester, with him 'to accompany him and act as his assistant at Christ Church.'⁵⁸ There was an ongoing relationship; every time Brewer mentions commissioning music for one of his groups or festivals Lloyd's name is mentioned. He talks of their 'intimate' friendship as if it were unique. However it is known that Lloyd's principal 'intimate' friend was Hubert Parry.

Lloyd clearly was a huge influence on Brewer, but in the absence of any other details from Brewer it is hard to say exactly how that influence manifested itself.

⁵⁶ Brewer, pp. 117-118.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 118.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.19.

2.7 His concert programming and desire to widen and educate audiences

Another key aspect of Brewer's teaching philosophy was the keenness he displayed throughout his time as director of the Three Choirs Festival to commission and perform new music. He saw it as part of his remit as a teacher - to keep abreast of the times and to learn contemporary music, even to the extent of putting on performances of works he did not personally like. An example of that being the closing scene from *Salome* by Strauss 'with its ear splitting, nerve-racking, hideous discordant noises.'⁵⁹

Despite a Three Choirs commission being an unpaid one (which prevented Elgar from accepting such a commission more than once) there were some notable successes from his policy of attempting to commission new works for each of his festivals. As he later explained when looking back over the discussions he had while planning his first festival, 'I pointed out that if musical interest was not maintained, and if the programmes contained no novelties, the Festivals would soon cease to attract, and would pass away like other worn-out institutions.'⁶⁰ As was shown earlier, among the new composers and pieces he introduced to the Three Choirs audiences were the Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* in 1910 and the first performances of works by other major composers including Parry, Holst, Bliss, Howells, Saint-Saëns and Sibelius, performances often conducted by the composers themselves. Brewer was also responsible for the invitation of the radical feminist composer Dame Ethel Smyth to conduct her own music, and the mixed race composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor to conduct his *Ballade in A minor*, having commissioned it from him for the Festival, acting on the advice of Elgar.

It was also while Brewer was in post that the first radio broadcasts from the Festival were made thus enlarging the audience still further. They were organised before his son Charles had joined the staff of the BBC in 1926 and were of two of the secular concerts held at Shire Hall in the city during the 1925 Festival (Gloucester).⁶¹ These broadcasts unfortunately were not recorded, but some idea of the performance standards of the later Festivals of Brewer's time can be gained by surviving

⁵⁹ Brewer, p.128.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, pp.67-68.

⁶¹ Boden and Hedley, p.208.

recordings made by The Gramophone Company from the 1927 Festival (Hereford) including Brewer accompanying Elgar conducting the London Symphony Orchestra and the Three Choirs Chorus in extracts from his own *The Music Makers* and *The Dream of Gerontius*. Also recorded was a performance of Brewer conducting his own *Nunc Dimittis in D* which also had been composed for this Festival.⁶² Finally, in 1927 the BBC dedicated an hour to broadcasting performances of him conducting his own works at the studio in Birmingham.⁶³

In summary it can be said that teaching was Brewer's vocation. He was not just a musician who happened to have teaching roles within his job description. He believed in the civilising power of music education in all its forms and took every opportunity to input its knowledge to those within his sway whether they were the unmotivated public school pupils of Tonbridge School, his choir boys at Gloucester and elsewhere or his concert and recital audiences. His memoirs give several clues to his teaching philosophy and how it played out in how he approached his work. The context was the nineteenth century view of the child as a 'fallen' creature and the homosexual as a criminal. Brewer believed in the power of education and particularly music education as a civilising influence for all classes of society and he expected his pupils to show initiative, take responsibility for their own performance but also take correction and advice from their tutors. His business-like approach to life and his relationship with his mentor C H Lloyd were also clearly major influences on his life, but how they affected his approach to teaching remain unproven. Finally he saw it as part of his teaching vocation to keep abreast of new music and look for new audiences to influence for good with the civilising power of music education.

⁶² Boden and Hedley, p.209-210.

⁶³ Brewer, p.176.

Chapter 3: A prosopographic analysis of Brewer's articulated pupils

This chapter examines the articulated pupil training method and the career paths of the traced articulated pupils. These were aspiring professional musicians who undertook to be trained by him on a one to one basis. In assessing how effective Brewer was as a teacher of these pupils and how they built on his tutoring it is useful to learn their backgrounds and what careers they subsequently had after completing their training with him. This will reveal the sort of person who was attracted to this form of training with Brewer, whether local or from further afield, whether ex-cathedral chorister or not, how long they stayed with him and the positions they subsequently secured.

The method chosen was prosopography, which is the bringing together of all the relevant biographical data that can be traced from groups of persons in a systematic way in order to identify common characteristics and patterns. With the present research not all the biographical and career details are known about all the pupils. A lot is known about some, but with others there are gaps. By placing all the known facts alongside the gaps, patterns in terms of background and career can be identified. The analysis also helps in the understanding and sense-making of the known pupils as a group and reveals patterns in terms of their family backgrounds and careers. In addition it also helps in the understanding of the possible motives and ambitions of the group. It clearly also shows that, as expected, Ivor Gurney, Herbert Howells and Ivor Novello were exceptions to the general pattern of the expected and anticipated careers of an articulated pupil of a cathedral organist. A simplified version of the full table can be found in Appendix 4.

3.1 The Articled Pupil system

By the time Brewer was taking on articulated pupils at Gloucester Cathedral that method of training had been evolving over several centuries, having grown out of the apprenticeships available for membership of the medieval craft guilds. At its heart and in its purest form: 'Apprenticeship [...] was a contractual relationship between master and apprentice involving reciprocal obligations on the part of both parties. During the time of an apprenticeship, the master exercised the same rights and was liable to the same obligations as a father.'¹ An indenture was signed and a premium

¹ Lang, p.77.

was exchanged. According to Lang, citing Brown's 1886 *Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, musicians began to be referred to as being "articled" or "prenticed" to certain masters in the eighteenth century. He gives the example of Jonathan Battishill (1738-1801), who went on to be an acknowledged composer and the organist of several London churches. He began his musical education as a chorister under William Savage at St Paul's Cathedral, and later was taken on by him as an articled pupil.² Over the course of the nineteenth century the system became progressively more flexible as regards the length of time a pupil might spend with a master and also the legal arrangements behind the relationships. In some cases no legal document existed and the arrangement was done by 'gentlemen's agreement'.³ Typically organists would advertise vacancies they had for pupils in the trade journals of the time with wordings such as these examples from the *Musical Times* of November 1 1869⁴:

ARTICLED PUPIL – Mr. B. AGUTTER, Praeceptor and Organist of SS. Peter and Paul, Streatham (London), SW., has a Vacancy for an Articled Pupil to be prepared for the Musical Profession. If required, a Pupil's general education could be attended to.

THE ORGANIST of Queen's College, Oxford, has VACANCIES for Two ARTICLED PUPILS. Very superior advantages can be offered.

During the course of the century it was the default method of training for the aspiring church musician, 'a highly practical solution to the daily needs of the cathedral's music-making, whilst also providing a thorough musical education for those selected', as Spicer later described it.⁵ Brewer himself had been an articled pupil of one of his predecessors in the Gloucester organ loft, C. H. Lloyd, and later said of that time, 'As I look back I realize what a splendid training and preparation for these responsible positions we had as boys (George Robertson Sinclair was a fellow pupil) under the guiding hand of our old friend and master, C. H. Lloyd.'⁶ Brewer therefore appreciated it as a training method. About the same time as he was taking on pupils, Haydn Keeton, then the organist of Peterborough Cathedral was doing the same,

² Lang, p. 78.

³ *ibid*, p.112.

⁴ *The Musical Times* Vol 14 No. 321 p.1.

⁵ Spicer, p.19.

⁶ Brewer, p.10.

and one of his was the young Malcolm Sargent later to be appointed chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and of the BBC Proms.

A comparatively recent articulated pupil contract, in use by the Organist of Wells Cathedral in 1946⁷ gives an idea of the type of terms such contracts would include. It opens with the phrase that the (named) pupil, 'with the consent of his father, binds himself as apprentice or pupil for two years.' And it continues to define the relationship, giving the responsibilities of both sides as follows:

1. The pupil covenants with the Organist as follows:-
 - (a) That he will during the said term well and truly serve the Organist as an apprentice in the art or profession of an organist and choirmaster carried on by him at Wells.
 - (b) That he will diligently attend to the business and concerns of the Organist and will apply himself to all such studies in connection therewith as may be directed by the organist.
 - (c) That he will do no damage or injury to the Organist nor knowingly suffer or permit the same to be done without acquainting the organist thereof.
 - (d) That he will in all respects acquit and demean himself as an honest and faithful Pupil ought to do.

2. In consideration of the premium of EIGHTY POUNDS paid to the Organist in manner following namely: - On the commencement of the first year of the apprenticeship FORTY POUNDS and on the anniversary of the first payment FORTY POUNDS the Organist covenants with the pupil as follows:-
 - (a) That he will during the said term according to the best of his power, skill and knowledge instruct the Pupil or cause him to be instructed in the art or profession of an Organist and Choirmaster and in all things incidental thereto in such manner as he now practices or at any time hereafter during the said term shall practice the same.
 - (b) That he will not require the pupil to attend to the business or concerns of the Organist more than eight hours in any one day.
 - (c) That he will at the expiration of the said term use his best means to procure the Pupil's advancement in the Musical Profession provided that the pupil shall have well and faithfully served the said articles.'

Beyond the fact that this is a covenant agreement with both parties having undertakings to adhere to there are a couple of interesting uses of words. Firstly for

⁷ Email to author from Frances Pond (Library Manager, Royal College of Organists) 29.8.2016.

the pupil in point (a) he undertakes to 'serve' the Organist. This is in complete contrast to the modern philosophy of further and higher education where the tutor is there to serve the paying pupil. It is because in the apprenticeship system the pupil is not only learning from the master but is an assistant to him, doing some of the more mundane chores that need doing in the days before official assistants were appointed. In point (c) also in the pupil's section 'Organist' has to be a typing mistake. The word should surely be organ.

In the Organist's section in point (a) forty pounds a year is not an insignificant figure. It also means that the figure of thirty pounds a year that Sumsion quoted to Lang as being the fee Brewer charged his parents during the First World War was probably around the market rate for that time.⁸ In (c) it is also interesting to read that his responsibilities did not end the day the covenant expired. His pupil's subsequent career was also his responsibility and he undertook to 'use his best means to procure the Pupil's advancement in the profession ...' Procure means to obtain with care or effort. This suggests the Organist was expected to approach his colleagues at other institutions and push the claims for the pupil to be employed by them. Overall the relationship was quite unlike what is now regarded as the norm.

In curriculum terms, being an articulated pupil to a cathedral organist centred on being given organ tuition, learning how to accompany the cathedral's services, and musical theory, harmony and counterpoint lessons. Their attendance at many services was also expected and they were required to play the organ for them when asked. In addition they were expected to attend local music society rehearsals and concerts. And if their tutor organist had different 'generations' of pupils, senior pupils were often expected to teach younger students.⁹ Also, in order to help pay for their fees, and for extra experience, they often took up organist appointments at local churches.

A key primary source on the life of a cathedral organist's articulated pupil is the surviving diary of a nineteenth century pupil, Thomas Collinson (1982).¹⁰ Collinson

⁸ Lang, p.393.

⁹ Collinson, p.xix.

¹⁰ Thomas Collinson, *The diary of an organist's apprentice at Durham Cathedral 1871-1875*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982).

was a pupil of Dr. Philip Armes, then organist of Durham Cathedral, from 1871, but how typical his experiences were is hard to tell as it is the only source of its kind. However, through Collinson's diary we have a detailed picture of just how demanding the daily regime of life as an articled pupil could be. Collinson was regularly out of bed at five-thirty in the morning, and a typical day included attendance at the two services at the cathedral and their respective choir practices. His evenings were spent with his fellow apprentices making music at their master's house using the piano, harmonium and one of the apprentice's violins. With these they endeavoured to explore the music repertoire, or at least a limited part of it based on the tastes of their tutors.

In his diary Collinson does not mention the size of the premium that changed hands in order for him to be taken on by Dr. Armes. It appears to be quite common for both parties to be coy about the arrangements, which makes the figures in the Wells contract quoted earlier, and Sumsion's knowledge of his fee, unusual. Ten years before Brewer started at Gloucester Henry Fisher published his results of an extensive survey of the music profession. He reports that when musicians were asked what fees were usually paid by articled pupils only a small number responded.¹¹ Following extensive research on the cost of articled pupilship, Lang concluded that 'the amount of money (premium) that changed hands when an indenture was signed is unclear from the literature. The money involved varied from one teacher to another, depending upon the needs of the pupil and length of the apprenticeship.'¹²

In summary, one of Brewer's pupils, Herbert Howells, said this of his form of training, 'Articled pupils were taken at a time when the cathedral organist was the leader of music in the community [...] when many (perhaps the majority) of young organists received such a training instead of coming to the college of music, either because there were fewer opportunities and before there were grants and scholarships as there have been in more recent times.'¹³ Howells reported to Lang that he did not know how much was paid to Brewer to take him on. However, he did suggest that his

¹¹ Henry Fisher, *The Musical Profession* (London: Curwen, 1888), p. 161.

¹² Lang, p.83

¹³ *ibid*, p.377.

experience led him to believe that Brewer's pupils were able to work at their own pace. Sumsion reported to Lang that 'there were six or seven or more (pupils) at a time. We attended all services, in the organ loft, chorister rehearsals in the Song School, and had one piano and one organ lesson a week and showed our paperwork for correction more or less when we had some ready.'¹⁴ He also said that the pupils automatically studied for the Associate of the Royal College of Organists (ARCO) and FRCO and then BMus (external) 'if good enough.'

Another of Brewer's students, Arthur Pritchard, reported that he became an articulated pupil in 1924 and was then his only such pupil. He also says that the lessons consisted of one hour piano, one hour organ and about two hours harmony and counterpoint. He was also expected to attend the choral services, choir practices, rehearsals of local choral and orchestral societies and was expected to gain the ARCO and FRCO diplomas and begin to prepare for a university degree (external).¹⁵ The ARCO was, from its introduction in 1881, and still is the basic qualification for a church or cathedral organist and the minimum requirement for a professional appointment.

All Brewer's articulated pupils had the additional advantage of the presence of the Three Choirs Festival on their doorstep every third year. These were a good extra training ground and experience for his pupils, and included the chance to rub shoulders with and accompany rehearsals with nationally known professional musicians and taking part in or witnessing the performance of new works. This can be illustrated by some events that occurred during Brewer's tenure as festival director. For the 1901 Gloucester Festival, Brewer had composed an oratorio, *Emmaus*, but due to various difficulties had not managed to orchestrate it. Elgar heard of this difficulty and undertook to orchestrate it for him, saying when he sent the completed work in the post, 'there may be many errors but one of your pupils

¹⁴ Lang, p.393.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.398.

could look it thro.¹⁶ However, it would take a very self-confident teenage articed pupil to suggest correcting an Elgar manuscript.

Elgar also features in other Three Choirs incidents involving Brewer's pupils. One of those pupils, Howells, recalled of the 1910 festival:

... around about April I was brave enough to ask [...] whether there was to be any 'new work' at September's Meeting. (Brewer) seemed puzzled, slow to answer. He had, he admitted, heard of 'the strange composer' [...] who would be bringing a strange work, 'something to do with Tallis.' Lovely first week of September came. With it came the composer from Chelsea (Ralph Vaughan Williams) [...] I was seeing him for the first time. But what mattered was that it was Tuesday night, an Elgar night; a dedicated Elgar audience, all devotees of the by then 'accepted' masterpiece *The Dream of Gerontius* [...] But there, conducting a strange work for strings, RVW himself, a comparative (or complete?) stranger; and his Fantasy would be holding up the *Dream*, maybe for ten minutes? In fact, for twice ten, as it happened. He left the rostrum, in the non-applauding silence of those days, thanks be! And he came to the empty chair next to mine, carrying a copy of *Gerontius*, and presently was sharing it with me, while Elgar was conducting the first hearing I ever had of the *Dream*. For a music bewildered youth of seventeen it was an overwhelming evening, so disturbing and moving that I even asked RVW for his autograph – and got it.¹⁷

After the performance Howells met up with fellow articed pupil, Ivor Gurney and they are reported to have 'wandered the streets of Gloucester for hours unwilling to return home and unable to sleep from the power of the experience they had just shared.'¹⁸ They had just witnessed the first performance of the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

As well as providing an insight into the lives of Brewer's pupils at that time, this story has been much quoted from Howells' perspective, creating the myth that Brewer was out of touch with new music. All the other evidence suggests quite the opposite. Brewer had not only heard of Vaughan Williams he had commissioned the work from him. He may have been teasing the rather 'serious minded' teenage Howells.¹⁹ Their relationship will be analysed later, but it was not a harmonious one by any means.

¹⁶ Brewer, p.84.

¹⁷ Barry Still, ed., *Two hundred and fifty years of the three choirs festival of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester*, (Gloucester: Three Choirs Festival Association, 1977), p.22.

¹⁸ Hurd, p.23.

¹⁹ Brewer, p.111.

Howells was also present that year at another moment of Three Choirs and musical history thanks to being a pupil of Brewer. He was one of the first to hear Elgar's *Violin Concerto*. Fritz Kreisler was arguably at that time the leading solo violinist in Europe.

On the Wednesday evening Dr Brewer gave me a telegram for Sir Edward Elgar, who, for that week was renting a lovely house near the Cathedral. 'Take it across to Sir Edward,' he said. But give it to him yourself.' I took it [...] Waiting for the front door to open, I could hear sounds of a violin and piano. The door opened. I told the factotum I must give the telegram to Sir Edward myself. He asked me in, but with a polite warning. 'It might mean waiting. 'Sir Edward is upstairs with Mr Kreisler, practising.' He added, conspiratorially: 'I suggest you sit quietly at the top of the stairs, by the drawing room door.' I did just that, for about forty minutes, entranced by hearing what I later knew was the slow movement of the *Violin Concerto*.²⁰

The first semi-public performance of the *Concerto* had been played with Elgar at the piano and W. H. (Billy) Reed, the leader of the Festival orchestra earlier in the week. The session Howells is referring to occurred a few days later when Kreisler arrived to begin rehearsing the work in preparation for its first full public performance in London later in the year.²¹

Another incident involving both Howells and Elgar is recounted by Spearing, drawing on interviews with Howells in 1972. 'Howells was frequently lent the use of his teacher's study for private work. One day, while he was working there on an orchestration exercise for Brewer, the pencil was removed from his hand by a person who had silently entered the room; 'You shouldn't do it that way', said the intruder, 'Let me change it ... there, that's the way you do that.' On turning he found the intruder to be Elgar.'²² It is not known whether Howells was acting on the advice of his teacher, but Elgar was a consummate orchestrator, far better than Brewer who was to mark his work. Brewer himself described Elgar's orchestration of his (Brewer's) oratorio, *Emmaus* in 1901 as the work of a 'master hand ... an invaluable lesson to me.'²³

Finally, another of Brewer's pupils, Sumsion, recalled how when he was an articulated pupil and later as Brewer's assistant he was also the Festival Chorus accompanist.

²⁰ Still, p.22.

²¹ Boden and Hedley, pp. 184 – 185.

²² Spearing, unpaginated.

²³ Brewer, p.85.

Once, when acting in this role, he played for a rehearsal of *Gerontius* conducted by the composer. After it had finished 'Elgar came across to the piano to shake my hand and nod his thanks. He was a very shy man, as highly emotional people often are, and for him this was a rare gesture.'²⁴

These incidents show how close the articulated pupils of a Three Choirs organist were to contemporary giants of classical music. In theory this fact should have made Brewer more appealing to potential articulated pupils over an organist without such a strategic role. However, in practice it does not appear to have been the case as his traced pupils were almost all local.

3.2 The prosopographic analysis

Several of Brewer's pupils have already been referred to, but it is impossible to identify all the articulated pupils he had over the course of his time at Gloucester as the organist/ articulated pupil relationship was a purely personal arrangement between the two parties and not organised formally through the cathedral or anywhere else. The only clues about numbers are that Sumsion reports there were six or seven when he was taken on in 1915, but by 1924 Arthur Pritchard was reportedly the only one. The only clue in Brewer's memoirs is that he says that at the time of his setting up of the Gloucestershire Orchestral Society in 1901 he had 'many articulated pupils' and was able to fill several gaps in the horn section of the new orchestra with them.²⁵ Through his tenure he is likely to have had an average of around three such pupils at any time, with their tenures overlapping. A rough calculation therefore would suggest that there were probably around thirty in the total population.

The population used in the prosopographic analysis was identified through two stages of research. Firstly the names of pupils and likely pupils of Brewer were found by the online searching of local press sources through combining the search terms of 'Brewer', 'organ' and 'pupil.' Through this nineteen of Brewer's articulated pupils were traced, many through the classified advertisements pages and news items of local papers. Through further research on the nineteen the field was narrowed to seventeen who had enough information to contribute to the analysis of the population. In order to fill out as many details of their lives as possible both primary

²⁴ Still, p.49.

²⁵ Brewer, p.90.

sources and the literature were searched. The primary sources included census returns, school/ college records, musician directories, relevant professional body records, press reports and advertisements.

The pupils traced were:

	First name/initials	Year started as Articled Pupil	Year finished as Articled Pupil
Rowland	CF	1890s?	
Bennett	Harold Ernest	1890s	
Williams	JC	Pre 1900	
Porter	Ambrose	1900?	1907?
Morgan	Ivor A	1901	?
Underwood	Samuel William J	1901	?
Wyman	?	Pre 1902	
Matthews	Gilbert Percy	Pre 1904	
Gurney	Ivor	1906	1911
Organ	Harold Charles	Pre 1908	1915?
Howells	Herbert	1909	1912
Novello	Ivor	1909	1910
Sumsion	Herbert	1915	1917
Dykes Bower	John	1915?	1922
Tustin Baker	Reginald	1915	1918
Pritchard	Arthur	1924	1927
Cook	Melville	1928	1928 ²⁶

²⁶ Cook became articled pupil to Herbert Sumsion, Brewer's former pupil and his successor as cathedral organist after his death.

3.3 Pupils' origins and social background

The first point that needs to be made is that all Brewer's articulated pupils were male. In theory a girl or woman could have applied and been accepted, but at that point, and for some time after, the English Anglican cathedral music world was an exclusively male domain. The reason for this was the pre-Reformation origins of cathedral choirs where choirs of men and boys were maintained to sing the daily office and offer up Christian worship.²⁷

The majority of the traced articulated pupils were born in the county of Gloucestershire (14/17) with eight being born in the city itself. Only two travelled from any distance and one of those, Novello, had connections with Gloucester and had in fact spent some of his childhood in the city. It can therefore be said that the fame of Brewer and the extra opportunities provided by the Three Choirs Festival were not so great to particularly draw potential pupils away from their local cathedrals if they wanted that form of training. This probably partially explains why Brewer has been overlooked as a nationally significant figure despite having three nationally significant pupils.

Class background is potentially the most revealing of the social and cultural characteristics of a given group, but is however difficult to define. One useful indicator is the father's occupation and information on this has been traced for thirteen of Brewer's articulated pupils. The largest category is clerical. These could be seen as being aspirational parents, wanting their son to pursue their gifting and prepared to invest financially to help them do so. This contrasts markedly with Brewer's own attitude to his son Charles, to begin with actively discouraging him from making a career out of music. Howells' father was the painter and decorator, but this is slightly misleading as he was declared bankrupt and Howells was only able to take up a career in music through the generosity of the Bathurst family who could see his potential but also realised that his family could not afford to give him a musical education. With Howells, his biographer, Spicer also claims that it was the persuasive powers of his patron, Charles Bathurst that led to Brewer taking him on as an articulated pupil eighteen months after their less than satisfactory relationship

²⁷ Andrew Gant, *O sing unto the Lord*, (London: Profile Books, 2015), p.33.

when Howells was one of his piano pupils. The attraction for Howells was apparently that he ‘could smell freedom in the streets of Gloucester.’²⁸

Professional/managerial	Clerical	Manual	Other
Surgeon	Rent collector	Painter and decorator	Engine driver
Taylor	Corn Merchant's clerk	Woollen cloth worker	
Choir master and organist	Book salesman		
	Railway clerk		
	County Court Clerk		
	Tobacconist's and insurance agent		
	Patent medicine dealer		

Interestingly, one of the pupils, the son of the railway clerk, Arthur Pritchard reported that he was taken on at a reduced fee. He does not give reasons for this but it could conceivably be that his father's job would struggle to support the full payment. This also bears out Pritchard's belief that 'I should not have become a professional musician if he (Brewer) had not convinced my parents that I should become successful.'²⁹ This also shows again that Brewer could see further than a potential income from his pupils, and took seriously his teaching vocation to encourage potential in his pupils.

With educational background, nine of the pupils traced were educated at King's School Gloucester and were therefore choristers prior to moving on into the organ loft. It is also interesting to note that of the nine former King's boys four of their

²⁸ Spicer, p.17.

²⁹ Lang, p.399.

fathers were also in the clerical jobs category. Of the other ex-King's boys one father was a tailor (Gurney), one (Samuel Underwood) was an engine driver (although by the time his son was articled he was listed in the 1901 census as a grocer and shopkeeper), and one was a church organist (Ivor Morgan). Two were not possible to trace. At this time King's was not the well-run institution it was later to become. By the time Brewer returned to the city as cathedral organist in 1896, the school was in the middle of a long term decline that it only really emerged from after his death in post. The decline was initially in finances (the Dean and Chapter were short of money to invest in it), which led inexorably to a decline in morale and academic standards. There was also the opposition by the Dean and Chapter to any dilution of their control and their determination to preserve it principally as a choir school, which contributed to limit opportunities for the school's expansion for many years.³⁰ Brewer made his feelings about the school clear by sending his sons to Cheltenham College. One of them, Charles, remembers that 'it was natural that my parents should turn to Cheltenham, next door, and thick with educational establishments.'³¹ One of Brewer's pupils, John Dykes Bower (the son of the surgeon) was also educated at Cheltenham College but he is very much a statistical outlier.

Other schools attended by articled pupils include Lydney Grammar School (Howells), Magdalen College School Oxford (the choir school of the college chapel) (Novello) and Bells Grammar School Colford (Ambrose Porter). At this time these were fee paying schools, but with scholarship places. However, in the days before universal free state education they were the only type of secondary education available beyond the public schools. Of these pupils, Novello's was probably the most unusual journey. His mother had friends in Gloucester who lived on Elmbridge Road, and when he was a child sent him to stay with them, attend a local school, and have piano lessons with Brewer for a short period. She then entered him in for a choral scholarship to attend Magdalen College School, Oxford. He passed and went on to have a major singing career as a boy treble, rising to being a soloist and head chorister in the Chapel choir which was then directed by John Varley Roberts and considered one of the best in the country. Then his voice broke. One of his biographers believes that he could have stayed on at the school but was actually,

³⁰ *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, vol iv (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 338.

³¹ Charles Brewer, p.20.

“asked to leave” under a cloud. He had become so active and obvious in his homosexual behaviour with choristers and Dons that it could no longer be tolerated or swept under the carpet.³² His mother thought again of Brewer as they could not afford to send him to the University and Ivor’s ambitions were ‘vaguely musical: he saw himself as a conductor, as a composer perhaps, with maybe the theatre in the background.’³³ He was therefore sent back to stay with his mother’s friends in Elmbridge Road, Gloucester and re-joined Brewer, this time as an articled pupil.

It is also interesting to note that for eight of the articled pupils their mother’s occupation has been traced. They are wide ranging, due to the differing reasons that mothers were in employment between the need of an extra income and possessing a professional status. The extra income would have also helped pay their sons’ fees. Novello’s mother was a prominent singing teacher and conductor, Howells’ mother was a music teacher, Gurney’s mother was a machinist and Reginald Tustin Baker’s mother was a domestic cook (his father was the book salesman).

3.4 Pupils’ higher education and training

The expected academic route for Brewer’s pupils was to study for the examinations of the Royal College of Organists – ARCO and FRCO, and for an external university degree. Research showed that the majority of the traced pupils achieved at least the ARCO, but no conclusions can be drawn on his success rate because that amount of detail was not traced for all the population. Of the nine articled pupils where it has been traced that they moved on to higher education to complete their training, five moved on to the RCM (Gurney, Howells, Herbert Sumsion, Ivor Morgan and Arthur Pritchard). This college had been set up as the successor to the short-lived National Training School for Music in 1883 ‘in response to the inadequacies of the Royal Academy of Music.’³⁴ Unlike its rival, the RCM, through its visionary teachers including Hubert Parry and Charles Stanford and later on Ralph Vaughan Williams was ‘rehabilitating English music, and creating an environment in which it could flourish on its own terms and not as a pale imitation of another tradition.’³⁵

³² Slattery-Christy, p.26.

³³ Harding, p.19.

³⁴ Spicer, p.23.

³⁵ Ibid p. 23.

In 1905 Gurney passed the ARCO, and by 1908 was increasingly confident in his abilities as a composer: 'As much as he loved Gloucestershire he knew that opportunities for education and a career there were limited. During the Three Choirs Festival of 1910 he made the acquaintance of the leader of the orchestra, William 'Billy' Reed. 'Ivor had ample confidence in himself and during a rehearsal break ... showed him some of his violin compositions. Reed was impressed enough to encourage him to apply for an open composition scholarship at the RCM where he taught.'³⁶ Gurney duly left Gloucester in 1911 to study composition with Sir Charles Stanford having also been encouraged to do so by his godfather and unofficial mentor, Rev Alfred Cheeseman.³⁷ Gurney then persuaded Howells to follow him. Howells resigned his place as an articled pupil and devoted his time to composing. His decision was 'something to do with lack of money to maintain his position at the cathedral but it also gave him a chance to concentrate on the writing of the portfolio of works which he had to present to the RCM for consideration for the open scholarship in composition – his passport to study with Stanford.'³⁸

Of the other pupils who used being an articled pupil of Brewer as a stepping stone to the RCM we do not know what led them to take the decision to attend there rather than anywhere else. We only know where their careers subsequently took them which will be examined below.

With one pupil, John Dykes Bower we have his private tutor's career plan for when he entered Cheltenham College in 1918. In reply to the question on his application form 'for what profession is he destined' the reply on the form is, 'Probably the musical profession but I hope to be able to send him to Oxford when he leaves the college.'³⁹ In fact Dykes Bower went on to be organ scholar of Corpus Christi College Cambridge. The other Oxbridge graduate traced was Ambrose Porter who went to Oxford. Of the other higher education institutions attended by Brewer's pupils, four graduated from the University of Durham (Herbert Sumsion, Reginald Tustin Baker, Arthur Pritchard and Melville Cooke). Durham was also Gurney's choice, or rather that of his unofficial mentor, Rev Alfred Cheeseman, who also it has to said coached him for the matriculation exam and accompanied him to the university in 1907 when

³⁶ Blevins, p.73.

³⁷ Rawling, p.40

³⁸ Spicer, p. 25.

³⁹ Cheltenham College Archives: Location 80, Entries 1918.

he took it, and passed it. Cheeseman was a conscientious godfather to Gurney, and the fact he did this (and much more) for his godson should act as more of a criticism of Gurney's natural family than Brewer who had to treat all his pupils fairly, and would have wanted to.

Brewer not only encouraged his pupils to aspire to being academic musicians but also equipped them with the skills necessary and the confidence in their own ability to pursue such a path.

3.5 Pupils' work, social and professional characteristics and distinction

Of the seventeen pupils traced fifteen became cathedral organists, assistant organists, church or other organists. The other two are Gurney and Novello. This demonstrates that in general the chosen career path for an articulated pupil was in church or cathedral music, which is why their first aspiration was to study for and gain an ARCO. It also shows that in his bid to increase his personal income Brewer had not lowered his standards by taking on unsuitable pupils.

Of the cathedral organists, some achieved notable positions, and one (Sumsion) was Brewer's nominated successor. Sumsion had been appointed organist of Coventry Cathedral, but was released from this commitment to take over from Brewer in 1928.⁴⁰ Other cathedral positions achieved by articulated pupils include, Truro, Durham, St Paul's London (Dykes Bower), Sheffield (Tustin Baker), Lichfield (Porter), Hereford (Cook). In addition, two (Howells and Dykes Bower) were appointed to organist posts at Oxbridge Colleges. Howells was acting organist of St John's College Cambridge between 1942 and 1945 and Dykes Bower was organist of New College Oxford between 1929 and 1933. This shows that the soundness of the training given by Brewer and the value of having his name as a referee. It also shows that he took seriously his role as using 'his best means to procure the Pupil's advancement in the Musical Profession' as it was worded in the Wells contract.

A couple of Brewer's pupils went on to hold academic posts at the University of London. Howells was a professor of music between 1954 and 1964, Arthur Pritchard was dean of the music faculty for a period after 1966 and Sumsion was professor at the then recently established Curtis Institute music college in Philadelphia between

⁴⁰ Boden and Hedley, p.212

1926 and 1928. Brewer's former pupils also found themselves in academic posts in the London colleges of music. Howells taught at the RCM from 1920 onwards and Pritchard was professor of harmony at the Royal Academy of Music from 1947. Five pupils held posts at schools. Howells was Director of Music at St Pauls Girls School, London between 1936 and 1962, succeeding fellow composer Gustav Holst, and Sumsion was Director of Music at Cheltenham Ladies College between 1935 and 1968. In addition Pritchard, Organ and Bennett also taught at various schools during their careers. Two of Brewer's pupils also held high office with the Royal College of Organists (RCO), the principal professional body. Dykes Bower was president between 1960 and 1962 and was also made a CVO in 1962 and knighted in 1968. Melville Cook was on the council of the RCO between 1954 and 1966. In addition, many of his pupils achieved various scholarships, prizes, fellowships and other distinctions.

What this research also clearly reveals is that, as expected, Novello was a one off. He did not stay long with Brewer, the relationship ending on his seventeenth birthday, January 15th 1910.⁴¹ He initially returned to Cardiff, but then in 1913 moved into his mother's recently acquired flat over the Strand Theatre in London, which was to remain his London base for the rest of his life. He continued to compose and submit songs to the publisher, Arthur Boosey with limited success until 1915 when *Keep the home fires burning* was published to enormous acclaim which effectively set him up for life. From then on he could employ others to do his orchestrations. A couple of years later, in 1917, a show he was involved in, *Theodore & Co* was also a success. Here he shared the song writing duties with Jerome Kern. After the war he contributed to musical comedies, but in the 1920s he successfully switched to acting, initially in British films, and then on the stage. He starred in two Hitchcock silent films in 1927 and then briefly went to Hollywood, but found it too restrictive and soon returned to England where he switched to producing his own lavish West End musicals including *Glamorous Night* (1935), *The Dancing Years* (1939), *Perchance to Dream* (1945), *King's Rhapsody* (1949) and *Gay's the Word* (1951). He died in 1951 at the age of 58 from a coronary thrombosis, and his funeral was akin to a state occasion; huge crowds lined the streets on the way to Golders Green cemetery where he was buried. The funeral was also broadcast on the radio.

⁴¹ Noble, p.40.

Novello was steeped in the Edwardian musical comedies he had spent his youth watching and listening to. That influence is evident in his music. However he drew on a wide range of other musical influences, and as an adult his musical taste was eclectic taking in Bliss, Walton, Bax and even Schoenberg.⁴² Influences cited by Harding on Novello's music include Saint- Saëns, Mendelssohn, Faure and even Stanford and the other Victorian composers he sang as a boy. Though 'the music he loved best was Wagner's, Richard Strauss's, Ravel's and Debussy's, the composer who really shaped his own stage technique was Puccini of the vivid sweep and unabashed outright appeal to emotion.'⁴³

Howells went from Brewer and won a scholarship in 1912 to study with Parry, Stanford and Wood at the RCM. He was regarded in the 1920s as one of the most promising composers of his generation, based on his early output of chamber music, orchestral works and songs. Indeed Brewer commissioned music from him and scheduled his music in Three Choirs Festivals. However by the end of the 1930s the output had dried up and he was regarded more as an outstanding teacher - at the RCM and other places - than a composer. The sudden death of his young son in 1935 also rendered him 'too frozen to write,' and his fear of financial insecurity due to his family's situation as he was growing up led to him being reluctant to relinquish his teaching post at the RCM until well into his eighties. Both these factors led to the drying up of the stream of compositions. During the Second World War he was acting organist of St John's College Cambridge, and it was that appointment, together with a challenge from the Dean of King's College Cambridge, Eric Milner-White to compose a set of canticles, that led to his greatest flowering of composing and to the music of the Anglican liturgy that he is most associated with today. He had finally found the freedom to return to writing for the church over thirty years after leaving Brewer and Gloucester. 'Gloucester, in his childhood and youth, had been a two edged sword [...] leaving him with mixed feelings about church music in cathedrals [...] It took the sea-change of his son's death followed by the extremely happy period at St John's, Cambridge when he seemed almost as much involved at King's, to unlock the best of what had always been in him from Gloucester days and

⁴² Harding, p.214.

⁴³ *ibid*, p.213.

allow the real inspiration to flow.'⁴⁴ The last thirty years of his working life saw him compose more than twenty settings of the *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis*, several *Te Deums*, communion settings and many anthems. But of those it is the widely sung small proportion of them, the *Collegium Regale, Gloucester* and *St Paul's* settings, and the *Four Anthems* (including *Like as the hart*) that he is best known for today. The setting for Gloucester was commissioned by Sumsion, with whom Howells had a lifelong friendship, and that for St Paul's by another ex-Brewer pupil, Dykes Bower. Howells died in 1983.

Gurney preceded Howells at the RCM, arriving with a scholarship in 1911 to study composition with Stanford where an early nickname was 'Schubert' initially due to his physical similarity to the Austrian composer, but later also due to the high regard for his songs. His first successful published compositions were the *Five Elizabethan Songs* which he composed in 1912. However, his studies were interrupted by World War One in which he served as a private from 1915 to 1917 when he was wounded, gassed and discharged. Poetry was a secondary interest of Gurney's, really taking precedence when conditions in the trenches were not conducive to composing. His first book of poems, *Severn and Somme* was published in the same year as he was discharged. He then returned to the RCM, this time studying under Ralph Vaughan Williams. His second book of poetry, *War's Embers* was published in 1919. However he could not settle at the RCM, and the manic depressive illness he had suffered from since early adulthood prompted his family to have him declared insane and he spent the last fifteen years of his life in the City of London Mental Hospital at Dartford in Kent. He died in 1937. He wrote hundreds of poems and more than 300 songs, including the highly regarded two Houseman cycles, *Ludlow and Teme* and *The Western Playland* as well as instrumental music, including *A Gloucestershire Rhapsody* and *War Elegy* for full orchestra. Assessments of him as a musician were published in *Music and Letters* in 1938 by Vaughan Williams and his former fellow pupil and friend, Howells. (Their close friendship had cooled by this time for various reasons). Howells wrote of Gurney's song-writing 'There is indeed so much in Gurney that few English song-writers have possessed. It is my belief that not more

⁴⁴ Spicer, p.134.

than five or six since Dowland and Campion have brought to their task a literary perception equal to his.⁴⁵

Sumsion was also a composer of considerable gifts and his output included works for choir and organ as well as chamber and orchestral works. In his obituary for *The Independent*, Sumsion's former chorister, artiled pupil and employee, Donald Hunt wrote:

Great choral works such as Howells' *Hymnus Paradisi* and Finzi's *Intimations of Immortality* were first heard at Gloucester Festivals in Sumsion's period of direction. It follows then that Sumsion's own compositions would be in this same "English" mould, yet his music has a very distinctive style that endears it to performers and listeners alike. Word setting is always felicitous and, as might be expected, his accompaniments are imaginative - and playable. Church music has benefited enormously from his work, for his compositions in this medium have been wide-ranging. His *Evening Service in G major* (1935) has achieved immortality in the cathedral repertoire [...] There is also some fine chamber music which deserves wider recognition; nor should we forget the numerous works which have enriched the organists' repertoire, including a brilliant Ceremonial March, written when he was in his late eighties.⁴⁶

Finally, the research revealed some personal outcomes for three of Brewer's less well known artiled pupils. Ivor Morgan was one of his pupils around the turn of the twentieth century. He achieved the ARCO in 1900 and the FRCO in 1901 before being appointed as the organist of St Matthew's Church Stoke Newington. He was the second son of William Morgan, himself a church organist who had died suddenly in 1903. Morgan himself died that same year at the age of 21 within a few hours of what the local press report described as 'falling seriously ill.' He had evidently earlier won a scholarship to the RCM, previously been 'seriously ill' three years before his death but had appeared to have recovered fully. The report goes on to say that 'his progress (had been) most encouraging and he threw his whole heart and soul into his work' and further describes him as 'a lad of a singularly beautiful disposition and his death will be heard of with a wide and deep regret.'⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Music and Letters*, XIX.1 (1938), p.16.

⁴⁶ Donald Hunt 'Obituary: Herbert Sumsion' *The Independent*, 17 August 1995
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-herbert-sumsion-1596601.html> [accessed 24.6. 2018].

⁴⁷ *Gloucester Journal*, 14 October 1905, p.5.

Another pupil for whom more is known is Harold Organ.⁴⁸ Organ was a pupil sometime before the First World War. His father was the County Court Clerk and he himself was a cathedral chorister and King's School pupil before becoming an articulated pupil. Organ was the second of four children. His family lived in Brunswick Square, Gloucester. He entered the King's School in 1898 and went on from being a chorister to being an articulated pupil. While with Brewer he acted as his assistant and was also organist of St Michael's Gloucester. He composed a song: *Brittania's Call* in October 1914 which was published in the *Gloucester Journal* and sold in aid of a fund for Belgian Refugees. After leaving Brewer he was appointed assistant Music Master of the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Crediton and Organist of Holy Cross, Crediton. In 1916 he enlisted into the London Regiment. He married a Miss Nellie Wagner in Preston, Brighton in April 1917, the daughter of a former Gloucester postmaster and was killed in action 9 October 1917.

Samuel Underwood, who was with Brewer as articulated pupil and assistant at the start of the twentieth century, was at the time of Brewer's death in 1928 Organist of Stroud Parish Church and Conductor of Stroud Choral Society. He was 'a first class choir trainer'⁴⁹ and took over the training of that year's Three Choirs Festival chorus until Sumsion's arrival. He went on to be appointed the Conductor of Bristol Choral Society in 1929, succeeding Sir Thomas Beecham who had briefly held the position after Brewer's death, and held all three posts until his own death in 1958. In 1905 Brewer had dedicated his *Praeludium in E flat major* to him.

In conclusion the prosopographic analysis has shown that Brewer's pupils tended to be talented local ex-cathedral choristers from lower middle class backgrounds who went on to have successful careers in cathedral and church music. There were therefore no 'dud' pupils traced, just taken on by Brewer for the extra income they provided him with. The chance to be involved in the Three Choirs Festival was not in itself a draw for potential pupils, but the system was sound, and with Brewer some went on to have a major impact in the wider musical world. Being trained by Brewer could therefore be said to have been a good foundation for a successful career. What is different with Brewer is how three of his pupils went on to achieve notable success in their different fields of endeavour: Ivor Gurney, Herbert Howells and Ivor

⁴⁸ Robert Brunson, *The King's Men*, (Ross on Wye: In the Footsteps Battlefield Tours, 2014).

⁴⁹ Boden and Hedley, p.212.

Novello. None of them was the archetypal artichoked pupil, though Gurney was perhaps the nearest to this. It has to be said that being with him did not hold back their careers or discourage them from pursuing them, if nothing else.

Chapter 4: Gurney, Howells and Novello in context

This chapter puts the reported experiences of Ivor Gurney, Herbert Howells and Ivor Novello with Brewer in the context of what is now known about Brewer, the philosophy behind his teaching, and the reported experiences of others who experienced his teaching. By examining his reported relationships with all three in turn this evidence will be weighed against that of the reported experiences of others of his pupils and the opinions of his effectiveness as a teacher of his employers. It will show that there were several different narratives involved, and a more nuanced version of events is revealed, starting with the recognition that Brewer knew all three of them well before he took them on as articled pupils so he clearly saw potential in all of them. To begin with, an outline of what the three and their supporters said about Brewer's teaching of them is given:

Ivor Gurney

By the time Gurney arrived as an articled pupil Brewer already knew him well and had worked with him closely for the previous six years starting when he had passed the audition to join the cathedral choir. Brewer admitted him into the choir on that day and then trained him sufficiently well so that he developed into one of his more gifted choristers. Gurney was later described as 'a famous solo boy. People flocked to the cathedral to hear the beauty of his voice and the deep musical expressiveness of his renderings.'¹ Brewer clearly knew what he was getting when he accepted Gurney's application to become an articled pupil. He had believed in him, encouraged him and trained him from boyhood and he saw the potential in him to be a professional musician. However, what Gurney said about his experience of being taught by Brewer as an articled pupil is:

I would go to his house at the time fixed for my lesson and then Brewer would send me into the city to buy birdseed for his bird, or some other errand, and then when I got back he would say there really wasn't time for a lesson as he must go to the cathedral, and I would only get half a lesson or else he told me to come on some other day for one.²

¹ *Music and Letters*, XIX.1 (1938). p4.

² Quoted in Blevins, p.61.

Winifred Gurney, Ivor's sister, is reported to have remembered this time as:

Dr Brewer gave him little or no encouragement, according to what I heard my father say. He did not appear to praise or do anything to help him, but told my father that he would be proud if the music Ivor had written was his. I believe also that he took no part in Ivor's success at gaining the scholarship (to the RCM) whatsoever, either by encouraging him to go for it or help(ing) him in his composition. This I think would definitely spur Ivor on to his goal without help and make him difficult with Dr Brewer.³

Marion Scott, who Gurney first met when he started at the RCM, reported that she felt that under Brewer's casual and indifferent tutelage Gurney had merely become 'a practical if unpredictable musician.' Ivor's Gloucester friend Margaret Hunt was more severe in her appraisal calling Brewer 'neurotic and utterly selfish and interested in his own concerns.' According to Hunt, 'he never did anything to help either of his clever pupils (Howells and Gurney) and did not wish them to go to London.'⁴

Herbert Howells

Before he was an articled pupil Howells had not been a chorister but he did have piano lessons from Brewer. He later called them 'perfunctory' and found them rather disappointing. 'Brewer's method being: "This Saturday: the 1st Sonata by Mozart; next Saturday the 2nd Sonata by Mozart, and so on"'⁵ It was not a happy arrangement, and at one point his patrons, the Bathursts transferred the burden of paying for his lessons to his father who as a bankrupt could not afford them. There was a pause in the payments and Brewer was "'somewhat niggardly'" and was not prepared to allow any delay in the payment of his fee and sent his pupil home with an ultimatum to this effect.⁶ A couple of years further on Charles Bathurst intervened on Howells' behalf and persuaded Brewer to take him on as an articled pupil. What form this persuasion took, and how reluctant Brewer initially was and for what reasons, is not known. However, due to Howells' subsequent career and the initial impact he made when he arrived at the RCM it is most unlikely to have been because Brewer doubted his ability or potential.

³ Anthony Boden, *Stars in a dark night. The letters of Ivor Gurney to the Chapman family*, (Stroud: Sutton, 1986. Revised edition 2004), p.26.

⁴ Quoted in Blevins, p.61.

⁵ Quoted in Spicer, p.17.

⁶ Spicer, p.17.

In later life Howells described how as a young artiled pupil he ‘feared Dr Brewer as much as I revered him.’⁷ And several years after the experience, during 1917 he is quoted as referring to Brewer as ‘an entertaining dwarf.’⁸ This comment prompted Marion Scott to label Brewer ‘a dwarfed soul of the deepest dye’ and to observe ‘how future musical historians will pillory him!!’⁹ In a letter that same year to Harold Darke, a friend from the RCM as he contemplated taking on the role of Organist of Salisbury Cathedral, he wrote:

I must admit the joy I feel, on the other hand at this unexpected opportunity which presents the possibility of my building up in my mind a healthier and happier set of associations than those which have played havoc with that past of my musical state of mind which had relation to church music. I have talked to you enough of the sort of repugnance which even some of the best church music kindled in me – merely because it all filtered through that nasty mood which has been part of my musical mentality since Gloucester. Work under such conditions as Salisbury will present will be so pleasant, and the companionship of a man like Dr Alcock so very different from the inhumanity of Brewer.¹⁰

Howells’ diary for 1919 records that on January 11th:

A day in Gloucester with (fellow RCM student Arthur) Benjamin – he, marvelling at the cathedral, I at the stolid stupidity of the cattle which invade Gloucester on market days – particularly on Saturdays. Dr Brewer in the cathedral, played Bach’s *Passacaglia* as an act of grace to Benjy; and then took him to drink tea in his house in Palace Yard. Poor Benjy! He listened to the childish absurdities of Clark Whitfield’s *Evening Service in E* [...] and sure he marvelled at them more than at the Norman pillars close by!¹¹

When he was interviewed by Lang in 1969, Howells was reluctant to discuss his relationship with Brewer and Lang gained the impression that he had felt uneasy in his company.¹²

Ivor Novello

Brewer also knew Novello’s potential as a musician before agreeing to take him on as an artiled pupil having given him piano lessons when he was a child. During this time, when Novello was nine years old, he stayed with friends of his parents in Elmbridge Road, Gloucester.¹³ The official biography by Noble does not mention

⁷ Still, p.22.

⁸ Quoted in Blevins, p.61.

⁹ Ibid, p.61.

¹⁰ Quoted in Spicer, p.50.

¹¹ Quoted in Spicer p.21.

¹² Lang, p.376.

¹³ Charles Brewer, p.23, and email to author from Nick Gaze, Novello Appreciation Bureau, 30.8.2016.

Brewer by name for this period but says that this arrangement was made because Novello's mother, herself a successful professional musician, was worried that Ivor would be 'running wild' during her frequent absences from home. She also wanted to acquaint him with being used to being away from his mother and home. She had set her heart on him obtaining a singing scholarship at Magdalen College School, Oxford. It does not mention that he did not appreciate being sent away from his home, as Harding asserts. Charles Brewer later became friends with Novello and reported that, 'when pressed by my father as to why he did not show more application and keenness, he replied, "Well, my mother has a private income of three hundred a year, which I shall inherit, so there really is no need for me to work!"'¹⁴ Interestingly, Charles does not mention that Novello was also an articled pupil of his father's.

Noble, Novello's official biographer, reports his later spell as Brewer's articled pupil as: 'The good doctor confessed later that he had never had a lazier pupil in all his years of teaching. Constantly, and at length, he assured the boy that although he seemed to have undeniable musical talent, it would never develop until he stopped 'gadding about' and really started working.'¹⁵ The gadding about included collecting autographs of celebrities who visited Cardiff, writing playlets, scheming to live in London and sending dozens of songs to the publisher Arthur Boosey, a few of which were subsequently published. Nevertheless, when he finally left Brewer 'the good doctor pronounced him 'pretty well hopeless', declaring: 'You have no future in music.'¹⁶ Spicer quotes Howells as saying, 'poor Ivor (Novello) could never do his strict harmony and counterpoint. He used to get me to do it on the QT, as they say, which I did.'¹⁷

Novello's mother later wrote that Dr Brewer gave him 'little encouragement in his youthful attempts at composing.'¹⁸ Apparently though there were occasions when 'even Dr Brewer could not resist Ivor's charm and ... traduced by his friendly smile, he actually worked out the exercises he had set for him.'¹⁹ Harding also later quotes

¹⁴ Charles Brewer, p.23.

¹⁵ Noble, p.37.

¹⁶ *ibid*, p.40.

¹⁷ Spicer, p.19.

¹⁸ Harding, p.19.

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.19.

Brewer as telling Novello that 'You have no future in music' and also said that he had 'lacked a solid technical basis.'²⁰ When Lang interviewed Howells his recollection was that 'Novello was dismissed by Brewer, with the comment that he had no career in music.'²¹

The stay in Gloucester was reportedly 'blessedly short,' and finished on his seventeenth birthday.²² On the advice of Henry Wood, then the conductor of the Proms, his mother then sent him to another teacher, Lewis Prout in London. According to Harding, he 'was no more successful than Dr Brewer at inculcating the rudiments in him.'²³ Soon after it Novello himself linked up with Alec Robertson who also tried to tutor him in music composition. 'Ivor's music he could see, showed talent but, as Dr Brewer had said, lacked a solid technical base. Among the plans they discussed was to study orchestration together.'²⁴ Ivor was enthusiastic for a while then was distracted by other projects, ventures and ideas. In later years all his music was orchestrated by others and he was content to accept their expert assistance reportedly saying that tunes are what people want. They remember tunes, they do not remember orchestrators.

4.1 Brewer – the charge sheet

In summary it can be said that the following charges have been made against Brewer by his famous pupils or their associates. Between them, Ivor Gurney, alongside his sister and his father, Marion Scott, Margaret Hunt and Emily Hunt all accuse Brewer of a lack of commitment, with giving little or no encouragement to his composing, being selfish and neurotic and of not wanting Gurney to further his career in London. Howells similarly accuses Brewer of being 'somewhat niggardy', fear inducing and being inhumane. Novello's mother accuses him of giving little encouragement at his early attempts at composing and telling him he had no future in music.

Another factor to bear in mind is the stage in his career that Brewer had the three as his pupils. They were all with him in the years immediately preceding the First World

²⁰ Harding, pp. 20 and 22.

²¹ Lang, p.377.

²² Harding, p.19.

²³ *ibid*, p.19.

²⁴ *ibid*, p.22.

War. He had therefore been in post for around fifteen years, run his first three Three Choirs Festivals, had a teenage son of his own (relevant when it is considered that his articulated pupils were also teenagers) and two younger children.

Two of the key witnesses against Brewer and for Gurney are Margaret Hunt and Marion Scott. Margaret Hunt was also one of Howells' 'defenders.' It is worth trying to understand their perspective. Margaret Hunt was one of two sisters; the other was Emily, who lived nearby to Gurney's family in Wellington Street Gloucester. Both were professional musicians, and they saw themselves, alongside his godfather/mentor Rev Alfred Cheeseman, as providers of the stability and encouragement that he was not receiving from his rather overcrowded family home. His mother, Florence, was reportedly 'rather an unstable person with a tendency to dominate and push her husband and children. She often seemed complaining and cold.'²⁵ Of the Hunt sisters, Margaret played the violin and Emily the piano and Gurney's visits to them were frequent. Some of his early attempts at composing were dedicated to them for them to play. Margaret was the younger sister, though still fifteen years older than the teenage Gurney. The Hunts were a valuable source of musical encouragement to Gurney and he had an 'idealised love' for Margaret.²⁶ Years later in a poem he expressed how she had encouraged him:

*She had such love and after my music sent
Me out to woodlands, and to wander by meadow or bent
Lanes of Severn – I got into my music –
I would wander my soul full of air, and return to her quick ...*²⁷

There was therefore a strong bond between them, strong enough to bias her against his teacher.

Marion Scott first met Ivor Gurney soon after he arrived at the RCM and she was to become a lasting friend and champion of him and his work. She was at this time the College registrar and later recalled their first meeting as:

I saw coming towards me along a corridor [...] a figure which even in that place of marked individualities, appeared uncommon. For one thing the boy was wearing a thick, dark blue Severn pilot's coat [...] But what struck me more was the look of latent force in him, the fine head with its profusion of light brown hair

²⁵ Blevins, p.20.

²⁶ *ibid*, p.74.

²⁷ From *The First Violets*, quoted in Rawling, p.22.

(not too well brushed!) and the eyes, which, behind their spectacles, were of mixed colouring [...] ‘This’ I said to myself, ‘must be the new composition scholar from Gloucester whom they call Schubert.’²⁸

Theirs also was a complex relationship that has been thoroughly analysed by Blevins. She summarises their relationship as ‘Marion Scott’s abiding affection for Gurney deepened over time, but we know nothing of a physical relationship between them.’²⁹

With the accusation of the lack of commitment that Gurney complained about we only have his word that he was at the house at the fixed time. Other evidence points to Gurney himself having an erratic and disorganised lifestyle. This could have led Brewer to not know whether to expect him or not. As the above report continued ‘with his invincible independence of thought and action, fixed routine of any sort has always irked him.’³⁰ It is likely that their opposite behaviours led to clashes between them. Brewer’s busyness and liking and need for efficiency would not have worked well with Gurney’s high handed and casual approach to life. An example of this is reported by Howells that once when playing for morning service in the Cathedral and the great east window was aflame with light, Gurney saw it as a “pillar of fire” in his imagination and cried “God I must go to Framilode!,” walked out and stayed away for three days.³¹ It can be easily imagined how that sort of behaviour would have been received by Brewer, who nevertheless had managed to successfully coach him through the ARCO exam in 1905.

It is worth pointing out that Stanford, who taught Gurney at the Royal College of Music, is also on record as having thought him a difficult pupil. ‘Potentially he is the most gifted man that ever came into my care. But he is the least teachable.’³² (Stanford) was aware that ‘there were greater musicians about than himself [...] he told me (Marion Scott) that one of them [...] was perhaps the most promising composer alive.’³³ This is quite a claim from one of the leading British composers of his age, and someone who at that time was also teaching Vaughan Williams.

²⁸ *Music and Letters*, XIX.1 (1938), p.3.

²⁹ Blevins, p.74.

³⁰ *Music and Letters*, XIX.1 (1938), p.4.

³¹ Hurd, p.21 and Spicer, p.20.

³² Stanford quoted by Howells in *Music and Letters*, XIX.1 (1938), p.14.

³³ *Music and Letters* *Music and Letters*, XIX.1 (1938), p.7.

Howells later recalled an occasion when Gurney had written a song of which he was particularly proud and took it along to a lesson with Stanford. Howells sat on Stanford's right and Gurney on his left. Stanford gazed at the manuscript for a seemingly endless quarter of an hour, then took his gold propelling pencil from his waistcoat pocket and altered something. 'There m'bhoys' he said. 'There that will be half a crown.' Gurney, infuriated, looked him straight in the eye and said 'I see you've jiggered the whole thing!' Taking hold of Gurney by the scruff of the neck, Stanford shoved him out of the door, then leaned against the door, broke into a smile and said, 'I love the boy more each time.'³⁴ Gurney's capacity for friendship had worked again, but came up against his resistance to academic discipline and rigour.

It is interesting to note that Herbert Brewer's alleged response to Ivor Gurney's first request to try to gain a place at the RCM was not positive, apparently saying 'Why does he bother? He can get all he wants here.'³⁵ That is the only record we have of such an opinion, quoted by a Gloucester friend of Gurney's and one of his self-appointed mentors, Emily Hunt and has to be taken with caution. Also, as it is written it is impossible to know the tone it was expressed in. It could have been sympathetic.

Gurney's complex mental make-up is now better understood and the considered opinion is now that he was bi-polar and also had a continuing and debilitating stomach complaint.³⁶ Howells and Novello both also had their issues growing up which manifested themselves as their careers developed. A letter from Gurney to Howells from 1918 shows that whatever Howells privately thought of Brewer he still kept in touch with him. The letter records that Howells had rehearsed his own and Gurney's songs in Brewer's drawing room for a recital to be given by Dorothea Webb.³⁷ Spicer has summarised Howells' mental make-up, and in particular the effects on it of his father's then recent bankruptcy:

The young Herbert was caught up in it at the worst possible age. Being a rather pretty boy and the youngest of the family he was sent down to the butcher at closing time to ask for leftover scraps for the family to eat. It was pathetic and degrading and Herbert never forgot the experience which lay close to the surface throughout his life [...] it sowed the destructive seeds of self-doubt.³⁸

³⁴ Quoted in Boden, pp.45-47.

³⁵ Emily Hunt memory quoted in Hurd, p. 28.

³⁶ Rawling, p.10.

³⁷ R.K.R. Thornton editor, *Ivor Gurney Collected Letters* (Ashington: Mid Northumberland Arts Group, 1991), p.426.

³⁸ Spicer, p.30.

Later he added, 'The absence of light relief is the major problem in Howells' music for the listener generally, and one could gaze at navels for years in search of the psychological reasons behind it. It might be said that it simply was not his way; but his childhood family problems remind us that some people spend their whole lives trying to erase or at least ease their deeply scored emotional scars.'³⁹ They may also explain that both before and after marriage he had a continuous string of girlfriends, and his daughter Ursula later recalled that her father was 'ruled by sex. He was unbelievably attractive to the female sex and was just as attracted to them.'⁴⁰ Insecurity, for that is what self-doubt leads to, can also result in spiteful behaviour which is what the young Howells displays in his comments about Brewer. This could explain the 'poisoned dwarf' jibe and also the incident referred to in the last chapter where Howells claimed that Brewer had barely heard of Vaughan Williams despite having commissioned a work from him.

When Novello arrived as articled pupil it was as the ex-star chorister of a top Oxbridge college choir whose voice, and therefore raison d'être, had now left him. Whether it is true, as asserted by Slattery-Christy, that he had also been expelled from the College school for 'inappropriate behaviour' he was clearly exploring his sexuality and coming to terms with his homosexuality, and at a time when it was illegal to be so. Just over ten years earlier Oscar Wilde had been tried and convicted of gross indecency for having homosexual relationships. On top of those factors Novello had grown up in the shadow of and under the expectations of a domineering mother. His mother ('Mam') was Clara Novello-Davies an internationally-known singing teacher and successful choral conductor. The context of his life in his twenties, soon after this time, was summed up by Edward Marsh, an early mentor as: '(he) was bewildered by Novello's parents and declared that his father 'seldom did anything but amiably stare into space [...] the laziest man I have ever met.' Clara he found overbearing at times and so caught up in teaching she had 'little time for anything but her own exploits.'⁴¹ On another occasion he concluded that Novello, 'had received little guidance or understanding at home where there was seldom

³⁹ Spicer, p.165.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Spicer, p. 94.

⁴¹ Slattery-Christy, p.41.

much domestic harmony beyond what came out of the piano. It's times like these when one wishes he had a family life in the usual sense of the word – to have been properly taken care of.⁴² It is also interesting to note that immediately following recounting his father's time with Novello as a piano pupil Charles Brewer adds

the main point of the story, as Ivor has told me, is that Madame Clara-Novello-Davies never had £300 a year of her own, and the incident was merely early evidence of the fertile Novello brain thinking up stage plots – in this case with the motive of avoiding detested scales, arpeggios and exercises!⁴³

The charge that Brewer told Novello that he had no future in music has to be seen in the context of Brewer's sincerely given advice of knuckling down and stopping gadding about – in fairness this what Noble quoted Brewer as saying via Novello himself in the official biography.

It was therefore three incredibly gifted but troubled young men who Brewer had on his hands. With all three he knew them from teaching them as children, so recognised their potential to be professional musicians when he agreed to take them on as articled pupils. He did his best with them, drawing on all his teaching experience, recognised their talents and tried to encourage them. There was though a clash of personalities with all three, and all three ultimately moved on from him, developed their own voices, but took their 'issues' with them.

4.2 Other recorded articled pupil experiences

Against these reported experiences of Brewer's most naturally gifted pupils has to be set the recorded opinions of others. Ambrose Porter, an articled pupil in the early years of the twentieth century, is reported to have said at Brewer's funeral that:

As a master he had a most inspiring effect on his pupils and his method of training brought out especially the essential qualities of courage and self-reliance; moreover he always chose the better path of example rather than precept. His almost unbelievable efficiency, which no one could really appreciate who did not know him intimately, the careful and often anxious solicitude for the health and well-being of the articled pupils entrusted to his charge. I well remember a kind but firm rebuke when he discovered that a certain piece of orchestration had been done after midnight. And so one could continue.[...] the sympathetic understanding with which he entered into the difficulties of his pupils, and his whole hearted joy at their success. Truly his mission in life was to give happiness to others.⁴⁴

⁴² Slattery-Christy, p.43.

⁴³ Charles Brewer, p.23.

⁴⁴ *Gloucester Journal*, 10 March 1928, p.18.

More recently, one of Porter's own pupils has recalled that 'I know that Ambrose Porter valued his time with Brewer, but I cannot recall his talking to me on the subject. He was more proud of the fact that, as Brewer's Assistant, he taught Herbert Howells the organ!'⁴⁵

Another pupil of Brewer found it to be a positive experience. Arthur Pritchard wrote to Lang that 'it was a very full life and I cannot speak too highly of the tuition and general musical experience gained from a distinguished musician under these conditions.'⁴⁶

Allowing for the fact that there is rarely a negative eulogy given at a funeral, some of the words used to describe Brewer by Porter are instructive. His training method brought out 'courage and self-reliance' in his pupils. All three of Gurney, Howells and Novello could be said to have wanted more support from Brewer, but actually showed those qualities by moving on from him when they felt the time was right to take their training elsewhere. Clearly Brewer was not a teacher who thought it right to spoon feed or mollycoddle his pupils as the friends and relations of the three maybe thought he should. The sensitive trio probably also did not appreciate Brewer's 'kind but firm' rebukes as someone more secure would have done. Brewer treated his boy choristers as young professional musicians so would have expected the same sort of behaviour, attitude and strength of character from his articulated pupils.

4.3 Other pupils' experiences of Brewer

As well as articulated pupils, Brewer had many others through his career. Several have left their recorded experiences of being taught by him. Chronologically the first two, using the term teacher in its broadest sense, date from his time at Oxford in the 1880s. Both are in verse form and both were reproduced in his memoirs without comment.

The first verse was composed by (Sir) Henry Hadow then Dean of Worcester College. Evidently the two were close friends at Oxford and Hadow clearly used Brewer as a sounding board for his attempts at composing as the verse, originally inscribed on a published score of his, reveals:

⁴⁵ Email to author from Richard Lloyd 18.3.2018.

⁴⁶ Lang, p.398.

*If you want a reception that's bound to be truer
Than gushes of critic or snarls of reviewer,
I advise you, my song,
To retire from the throng,
And go knock at the door of Brewer, of Brewer.⁴⁷*

This credits Brewer with his giving straightforward honest advice, neither over criticising or over praising, which is a good quality for teacher. Clearly, since at that time he had no training and little teaching experience, it shows his natural gifts in that area.

The second is a sonnet that was dedicated to Brewer by Lionel Lyde, then a student of Queen's who Brewer reports had previously written verse for him to set to music. It was published in the Oxford Magazine in December 1895 after Brewer had left the university. He introduces it in his memoirs by saying, 'I left Oxford in December 1885, and thought I was leaving the University city for good; but as events turned out, my surmise proved wrong. On December 2nd the following poem by Lyde appeared in the Oxford Magazine.'⁴⁸

*Soft music steals athwart the evening air,
And creeps from wall to roof, from roof to wall,
Leaving its trembling echoes everywhere
To float awhile, then dreamily to fall.
But ever in the unshushed harmony
More than a swelling chorus woos my heart,
More than a glorious anthem 'tis to me,
It is the prayer of those who fear to part.
And through the mingled notes of praise one song,
Low, sad and tender comes – and comes from thee,
Breaking the happy memories, which throng,
Of what has been, henceforward, not to be.
My friend, my best beloved, thou art gone!
The chords are silent, and I am alone.*

Brewer's comment raises all sorts of questions: 'I thought I was leaving [...] for good [...] events proved me wrong,' not least why he included this incident in his memoirs, although he did not have a chance to edit them before publication. However it would take having Lyde's perspective before any conclusions could be drawn, as on its own this sonnet is not sufficient evidence for any conclusions to be drawn.

⁴⁷ Brewer, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 28-29.

The next written evidence on Herbert Brewer's teaching skills is by the novelist E M Forster, who was a pupil at Tonbridge School for most of Brewer's time there. Forster is on record as having disliked the philistinism of the English public school of the time.⁴⁹ He left Tonbridge for Cambridge in 1897 with prizes for Latin verse and English essays which signifies some application but does not prove he was happy there. In Forster's bildungsroman and most autobiographical novel *The Longest Journey* (1906) Tonbridge School is thinly disguised as Sawston School and there are a few references to the music at the school. In the first it is stated that 'The sound of a manly hymn, taken very fast, floated over the road from the school chapel.'⁵⁰ Another reference has: 'The proceedings terminating with the broader patriotism of the school anthem recently composed by the organist. Words and tune were a matter for taste.

*Perish each laggard!
Let it not be said
That Sawston such within her walls hath bred.*

'Come, come' he said pleasantly as they ended with harmonies in the style of Richard Strauss. 'This will never do. We must grapple with the anthem this term – you're as tuneful as – as day boys.'⁵¹

As Forster remembered correctly, Brewer did compose songs for Tonbridge. Patriotism as understood in Victorian public schools went alongside loyalty to their school. As Geoffrey Best has commented:

Loyalty to school and loyalty to country march closely together; and if loyalty to school sometimes did come closer than loyalty to country that would have been nothing strange to the soldiers at least as well accustomed to fight for the honour of the regiment as for their Queen.⁵²

Beyond these references, which give more of an idea of the culture Brewer was working within at this time than anything else, themes emerge from examining the surviving testimonies of Brewer's pupils of all kinds. These mirror the ones identified through Brewer's memoirs and are his perfectionism and his discipline.

⁴⁹ Douglas Hewitt, *English fiction of the early modern period*, (London: Longman, 1988), p.198.

⁵⁰ E M Forster, *The Longest Journey*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960), p. 210.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 162.

⁵² Geoffrey Best, *Militarism and the Victorian Public School in The Victorian Public School*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), p.144.

Perfectionism

With regards to his perfectionism, it seems he did always expect others to aim for the high standards that he set himself. According to Herbert Bryard, sometime assistant organist of Gloucester Cathedral after Brewer's time, Brewer was 'a splendid player who his most distinguished pupil once told me, never made a mistake.'⁵³ From the sentiment this is likely to have been Howells. The anonymous 'H.D', who was known to be a former chorister of Brewer's, contributed an appreciation to the *Musical Times* coverage of Brewer's death included the following:

Brewer had high ideals concerning the type of music worthy of performance in a place of worship. No unworthy music, no unworthy performance, was ever tolerated, and woe betide the person who tried to introduce either element into the worship music of the cathedral. It was no unusual thing for the organ to stop suddenly during the service, and for a face to appear above the organ screen, gazing down – perhaps as much in sorrow as in anger – upon some delinquent who had done rather less than his best. And the end was certain. After the service one of the many articted pupils would inform us that our presence was required either in the practice room, or (under more distressing circumstances) at the familiar study at Millers Green. And then the blow would fall [...]⁵⁴

His widow recalled that 'if [...] service went badly he would return home as depressed as he was elated if the choir had sung well.'⁵⁵ Arthur Pritchard reported to Lang that 'as a teacher he had very high standard and did everything possible to draw out the best from his pupils and choirs.'⁵⁶

These testimonies match those views gleaned from his memoirs in the last chapter. His use of the word 'worthy' is interesting. It could mean worthy of having his name associated with it as well as worthy of being heard in a church. The term can be applied to both the standard of performance and the quality of the music being performed. His widow's use of the words depressed and elated seem a bit extreme unless, as is likely, Brewer did all he could to elicit a performance out of his choir and the depression could come from feeling that he was losing his powers or maybe there was something else he could have done to improve the performance.

⁵³ Herbert Byard, 'The rebuilt organ of Gloucester Cathedral' *The Organ*, L1 (1972), 133-147 (p.144).

⁵⁴ Brewer, p.171.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.170.

⁵⁶ Lang, p.399.

Discipline

Discipline in this context is how Brewer tried to ensure that performances under his direction were more often than not 'worthy.' Harold Nicholson, a former chorister is reported as having said at Brewer's funeral that 'to us boys he seemed to be stern and even forbidding. Yet we never doubted his justness and we suspected all the time a kindness and geniality reserved for those not likely to take liberties.' He went on to add that Brewer was a 'stirling character [...] whose outward austerity once scared us.'⁵⁷ Another former chorister is quoted in Brewer's memoirs as saying 'Brewer was a strict – almost severe – disciplinarian, and any departure from his rigid code always met with its deserts; but I never knew him to act unjustly or unkindly to those serving under him.'⁵⁸

Nicholson's quote draws the question of what Brewer did to make the choristers believe that beyond the stern nature there was a kindness and geniality. The culture of the time was that childhood behaviour could be corrected by corporal punishment, and that was justice, motivated by kindness and a desire to do the right thing. That was the culture Brewer grew up in, and it was the culture he taught in. As shown earlier, when one of his pupils, Novello, was a Magdalen College chorister the organist (Varley Roberts) 'ruled the boys with a rod of iron and could be vicious in his use of physical punishment [...] (however, he) was beneath his frightening exterior [...] a kind and gentle soul [...] Underneath [...] he loved the boys and wanted the best for them.'⁵⁹

Not to believe this is to infer that Brewer and his ilk were sadists, and there is not the evidence to support that assertion.

4.4. Employer views

A further perspective can be gained from the recorded views of his employers. At the last concert Brewer directed at Tonbridge School the school magazine reported that the headmaster introduced proceedings with a speech 'saying how sorry we all were to be losing so kind and excellent a music-master, and calling for three cheers for Mr and Mrs Brewer.'⁶⁰ The school magazine also included an obituary on the occasion

⁵⁷ *Gloucester Journal*, 10 March 1928, p18-19.

⁵⁸ Brewer, p.171.

⁵⁹ Slattery-Christy, p.22.

⁶⁰ *The Tonbridgian*, 1897, p.1247.

of Brewer's death in 1928. Quite a tribute, given that his time on the school staff had ended over thirty years earlier. The obituary referenced that he 'did much in his day for the music of the school. He instituted 'sing songs' in Big School, and at least nine 'School songs,' for which he wrote or arranged the music were published by Messrs. Mathias & Strickland. Two of these, the *Carmen Tonbridgianse* and *The Fifteen Song* constitute an abiding memorial of his work here.'⁶¹

During his time at the school regular reports of his activities had appeared in the magazine. The 1893 edition included 'The improvements that the choir have made under Mr. Brewer has been strikingly shewn (sic) in the Chapel Service lately.' The same report by the anonymous author also included a passing reference to another of Brewer's shrewd initiatives 'The singing in the body of the Chapel, though not as hearty as it ought to be, has improved since every boy has been provided with a Psalter.'⁶² A write up of the 1895 Christmas concert included the following:

B.M.T. Gale gave *A Volunteer song* [...] the success of the evening; the chorus was taken up by the School with very great vigour, and an encore had to be given. In the last part-song, *Three merry dwarfs* the choir were quite at their best, and the concert was ended by the School song, *Gather round the standard*, in which the whole audience joined. *God save the Queen* followed, and as the audience left their seats cheers were given for Dr and Mrs Wood, the Masters, the Ladies, and Mr. Brewer.

Reference was also made in the report to the new organ that Brewer had had installed it 'proved its own excellence, and helped greatly towards rendering this concert quite one of the brightest we have had for some years past.'⁶³ Though not directly from his employers, in his memoirs Brewer also records:

When the time came for my departure from Tonbridge I was most touched by the generous gifts that were showered on me from all sides; but what appealed to me above all was the knowledge that one small boy had insisted on giving the whole of his pocket money to the presentation from the school. I felt my labours had not been in vain.⁶⁴

He had approached the post on joining the school believing that the boys would much rather be playing sport than making music, so it would have encouraged him to

⁶¹ *The Tonbridgian*, March 1928 p.125.

⁶² *Ibid*, 1893, pp.698-699.

⁶³ *ibid*, 1896, p.1092.

⁶⁴ Brewer, p.49.

know that at least one boy had appreciated his efforts and had developed a love of music making.

Although he was not a teacher at the school, Brewer's close association with the King's School included that of being a former pupil. It was as that that the school published an obituary for him in the Lent school magazine for 1928. He was also referred to in the editorial including a reference to his 'characteristic kindness' in offering to provide seats at the orchestral concert which he was to have conducted the next day. His last words as he left the room were reportedly that 'It will be good for them; music has a considerable educational value.'⁶⁵ In the main obituary S.J.A. Evans included the following telling comments:

The first thing that strikes any of us, when we think of him, was the enormous confidence he inspired. When he undertook a task [...] you knew that he was going to make it a success. The idea of failure never seemed to enter his head, and it consequently never entered yours [...] this was due to his extraordinary capacity for working out detail. He had a great gift of common sense. He simplified everything; and the result was that he could not only make any show go, but he could make you make it go. This is one of the marks of a great man. But we recognised in Herbert Brewer more than that, we knew him for a man with a great and undying enthusiasm. He was keen on US; on our cathedral and its services, on the choristers of many generations, on his old school [...] wider interests and public recognition never dimmed this enthusiasm; he knew everybody in our circle, and cared about everybody; he was always full of plans, sensible plans for improving this or that detail.⁶⁶

It is noticeable how both Tonbridge and King's use the word 'kind' to describe Brewer, at either end of his career. Clearly this was a quality he was born with, but yet it is a quality that his reported relationships with Gurney, Howells and Novello would suggest was not present in his dealings with them. More likely, he was trying to be kind in the only way he knew how.

Some indication of how Gloucester Cathedral rated Brewer came when in 1918 he was offered a post elsewhere. In his memoirs Brewer recounts why the move to Manchester Cathedral never happened. He neglects to say whether the offer was prompted by an application on his part or not, or whether if it was how enthusiastic

⁶⁵ *King's School Magazine* Lent 1928 p.4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, pp.6-7.

he was about a job which on the face of it was a step down from the status he enjoyed at Gloucester. He does note that:

When the Gloucester authorities heard of the proposal they offered me several inducements to remain in Gloucester. One was the augmenting by four extra men for the Sunday services. They also sanctioned my scheme for the rebuilding of the organ, and gave me such sympathetic support in every way that I decided not to sever my connection with Gloucester and declined the invitation to go the North.⁶⁷

Clearly Gloucester Cathedral did not want to lose him, and over twenty years had grown to appreciate his qualities and dedication to serving his home cathedral.

⁶⁷ Brewer, p.131.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The research objectives were firstly to assess Brewer's role in the training of some of this country's leading cultural figures of the twentieth century and other major figures in the world of English cathedral music. It also sought to trace the background and career paths of those and other articulated pupils of his and assess his effectiveness not only as a teacher of the musically gifted, but also in the context of his teaching skills over all the roles and settings during his career. The research also looked behind the possible reasons why Brewer had been tainted with the reputation that he had as a teacher. How much of his perceived character was due to a preoccupation with income and status, and how much was due to other factors such as the culture of teaching at that time and/or his upbringing.

There were many significant findings. The most significant was that some of the commonly quoted incidents between Brewer and Gurney, Howells and Novello are based on flimsy evidence and most probably did not occur in the way that they are commonly reported and repeated. Brewer was the most organised and business-like of men, whereas even Gurney's most ardent admirers said that he did not take kindly to having to commit to anything. Therefore the accusation that Gurney made to Marion Scott that Brewer had an unprofessional attitude to his lessons as reported in Chapter 4 has to be taken with at least a pinch of salt. Similarly Brewer kept himself abreast of contemporary music and commissioned Vaughan Williams to compose the *Tallis Fantasia* so the idea of that he just knew it was being submitted by 'a strange man from Chelsea' is nonsensical. My theory is that if he did say words to that effect he was just teasing the rather earnest teenage Howells, and maybe encouraging him not to take himself quite so seriously. Finally the assertion that Brewer told Novello that he had no future in music if it was actually said by Brewer in so many words is likely to have actually been part of a sentence that also included 'unless you knuckle down and learn the basics.' It was Novello's composing of *Keep the home fires burning* just a few years after leaving Brewer that set him up and enabled him to employ others to do the basics for him and thus render Brewer's wise advice look not so wise after all.

It was also discovered that teaching was Brewer's vocation. He was not just a musician who happened to have teaching roles within his job description. He believed in the civilising power of music education in all its forms and took every opportunity to input his knowledge to those within his sway whether they were the unmotivated public school pupils of Tonbridge School, his choir boys at Gloucester and elsewhere or his concert and recital audiences.

The background and career paths of all the traced articulated pupils of Brewer were also revealed. Most came from quite humble backgrounds but many had been musical enough to win places as cathedral choristers. All went on to have significant careers in music.

The final significant finding concerned Brewer's income, his shrewd business sense, and their possible impact on how he approached his various teaching roles. His initial income on appointment to Gloucester was just £175. When Sumsion took over from him in 1928 he started on a salary of £400. It can be assumed that Brewer's salary rose during his time at Gloucester, but we do know from Sumsion that he charged £30 per annum for articulated pupils in 1914. Assuming he had five a year that was £150 per annum from articulated pupils, plus income from other pupils. His private income was therefore likely to have been very significantly higher than that which he received from the cathedral. However, the research revealed that all his articulated pupils went on to have successful careers in music which suggests that when taking them on Brewer was more interested in their potential than their, or their parents' money. In fact, he agreed to take one of his pupils (Pritchard) on at a reduced rate such was his belief in that pupil's potential.

As a result the research has revealed a more rounded and nuanced picture of Brewer. He was not just a strategically significant musician but one who used his position as a platform for his teaching vocation. The successful and highly regarded spell at Tonbridge School between 1892 and 1896 shows that this was his vocation. In his memoirs he is not forthcoming about why he accepted that role as opposed to the cathedral post he had been offered at the same time. From what is now known about him, money would have been a factor, but it cannot have been the only one as he would not have stayed for so long as he did. Furthermore, the school leadership and the pupils both appreciated the work he did there. He in turn was convinced of

the civilising effect of music education no matter what the setting. This is the second significant finding. He also had a bold approach to concert programming, which grew naturally from his belief in the positive effects of music education, he had a shrewd business brain, his family life and the affection and appreciation he drew from his pupils and his employers.

Brewer's teaching vocation affected every area of his life to the extent that even if taking on pupils, both articled and otherwise had not the lucrative appeal that it had, I believe Brewer would have taken on pupils because of his vocation and firm belief in the inherent good of music education. His cathedral salary and his liking of the middle class lifestyle meant that he needed the extra income, and his professional pride encouraged him to seek a salary to match what he perceived as his status as a professional musician, but I still believe that his teaching vocation was much stronger than the other influences. Having said that, he had high expectations of himself and of his pupils and believed that natural gifting should be wedded to serious application as he had modelled in himself. I can now therefore see why Brewer's widow after his death described him as 'an iron nature combined with intense sensitiveness.'¹ He was undoubtedly very strict, and with the choir boys used corporal punishment when he felt it his duty, but this has to be seen in the context of the time when that was how things were done. His formative years were the middle of the nineteenth century. It also has to be seen in the context of his other characteristic 'intense sensitiveness' identified by his widow. This has two meanings: being easily hurt or damaged, especially emotionally and also being aware of the attitudes and feelings of others. Interestingly similar sentiments are expressed about Varley Roberts, Novello's choirmaster at Magdalen College Oxford.

As a result of this research Howells, Novello and Gurney and their relationship with Brewer can now be seen in a different light. As explained in Chapter 4, he clearly believed in all three of them otherwise he would not have taken them on as pupils – and for two of them he had known as piano pupils so had a clear idea of their potential. And many of the difficulties that they had with him were as much to do with their own characters and 'issues.' Gurney was a complex, disorganised genius. Howells was riddled with insecurities and an inferiority complex, Novello had his

¹ Brewer, p. 169.

insecurities but like Gurney was a complex genius. Unlike those for Howells, Novello and Gurney there is no Brewer Society to fight his corner. Brewer was seen in his best light as a teacher with averagely talented people who were prepared to graft – like Sumsion, his chosen successor at Gloucester, Pritchard and Porter.

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Appendix 1: Glossary

Bristol Choral Society

A large mixed-voiced choir based in Bristol, England and founded in 1889.

Canon

An ordained member of the Chapter responsible for administering a cathedral. **Minor Canons** are on the staff of the cathedral but are not members of the Chapter.

Chapter

The body that governs a cathedral and consists of the Dean and canons.

Cheltenham College

One of the many public schools founded in the Victorian period, it was opened in 1841. A Church of England foundation it is known for its classical, military and sporting traditions.

City High Sheriff

Brewer was actually incorrect when he referred to himself as the City High Sheriff, confusing it with the county High Sheriff. The office of Sheriff of Gloucester has existed since King John's Charter of 1200 gave the city the right to have two bailiffs drawn from the general meeting of Burgesses to perform the role of sheriff.

Counterpoint

The ability to say two things at once comprehensibly. In music it is the setting, writing, or playing a melody or melodies in conjunction with another, according to fixed rules.

Dean

The chief resident cleric of a cathedral and head of its Chapter of canons.

Gloucester Choral Society

A large mixed-voiced choir founded in 1845. For most of its existence it has been the custom to invite the cathedral organist to be the conductor.

Gloucestershire Orchestral Society

Amateur orchestra, now known as Gloucestershire Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1901 by Sir Herbert Brewer principally as a means of saving the money of Gloucester Choral Society, money which would otherwise go towards hiring professional orchestras.

The Gramophone Company

One of the early recording companies founded in the United Kingdom in 1898 and the parent organisation for His Master's Voice (HMV).

Precentor

From the Latin, 'praecentor', literally, the one who sings before. A precentor in an Anglican cathedral is the staff member who helps facilitate its worship.

Royal Academy of Music

The oldest UK conservatoire, founded in 1822. It received its Royal Charter in 1830, but faced closure in 1866 partly due to the founding of the Royal College of Music. However its fortunes improved from the time of the appointment of William Sterndale Bennett as Principal that same year.

Royal College of Music

London-based conservatoire and successor to the National Training School of Music which had been established in 1876 to make up for lack of suitable training supplied for professional musicians by the Royal Academy of Music. Founded in 1883 with George Grove as its first director, followed by Parry in 1894.

Royal College of Organists

Formed in 1864 with the aim of providing examinations and certificates to safeguard standards among organists. It received its Royal charter in 1893. The first examination was Fellowship (in 1866). Associateship status was also available and was given to candidates who were deemed satisfactory but had passed the Fellowship exam with a lower score. Associateship became an independent, lower examination (and a pre-requisite for entry to Fellowship) in 1881. By this stage, both diplomas had two sections: Practical (Pieces and Tests) and Written Work.

Three Choirs Festival

An annual music festival rotating among the cathedrals of Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester. It is one of the world's oldest classical music festivals with the earliest being held in first quarter of the eighteenth century (the exact date is not known).

Appendix 2: Significant figures mentioned in the text

Alcock, Sir Walter Galpin (1861 - 1947)

English organist and composer. Professor of Organ at the Royal College of Music. Organist Salisbury Cathedral, 1916 – 1947. During his career he also held organist positions at Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal. Played the organ at Westminster Abbey for the coronations of Edward VII, George V and George VI.

Armes, Dr Philip (1836 - 1908)

English organist. Chorister of Norwich and Rochester cathedrals. Articled pupil of John Larkin Hopkins at Rochester Cathedral. Organist Chichester Cathedral, 1854 – 1861. Organist Durham Cathedral from 1862. Professor of Music Durham University from 1897.

Bathurst, Charles (1867 - 1958)

1st Viscount Bledisloe, GCMG, KBE, PC. British Conservative politician and colonial governor. Governor-General of New Zealand from 1930 to 1935. He had inherited Lydney Park on the death of his older brother.

Benjamin, Arthur (1893 - 1960)

Australian composer and pianist. Studied RCM. Professor, Sydney Conservatoire 1919 – 1921 then joined RCM staff.

Bliss, Sir Arthur (1891 - 1975)

KCVO CH. English composer, conductor and administrator. Educated Cambridge University and RCM. Served in army during First World War. Career as a composer took off with the return of peace. Through Elgar's influence was commissioned to write what became *A Colour Symphony* for the 1922 Three Choirs Festival. Official appointments included, Director of Music at the BBC, 1942 – 1944 and Master of the Queen's Music in 1953. He continued to compose into his ninth decade.

Bridge, Sir Frederick (1844 - 1924)

English organist, conductor and composer. Chorister Rochester Cathedral, Organist Manchester Cathedral 1869 – 1875. Professor of harmony Owens College, Manchester (now University of Manchester), 1872 – 1875. Deputy organist Westminster Abbey, 1875 – 1882. Organist 1882 – 1918. First professor of music University of London 1903.

Clarke Whitfield, John (1770 - 1836)

English organist and composer. Born Gloucester. Organist St Patrick's Cathedral, Amargh, Trinity and St John's Colleges Cambridge and finally Hereford Cathedral in 1820. At the latter he composed two oratorios to be performed at the Three Choirs Festival thus setting a precedent that others of the organists followed, including Brewer.

Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel (1875 - 1912)

English conductor and composer. Studied RCM 1890, full time from 1892 – 1897. His cantata *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* was first performed at RCM, the first of three successful works based on Longfellow's poem. Other commissions followed but none achieved the same level of interest.

Darke, Harold (1888 - 1976)

English organist, conductor and composer. Studied RCM. Organist St Michael's Cornhill, 1916 – 1966 with wartime break as organist of King's College, Cambridge, 1941 – 1945 deputising for Boris Ord who was on war service. Organ professor RCM, 1919 – 1969. Founded St Michael's Singers.

Elgar, Sir Edward (1857 - 1934)

1st Baronet. OM GCVO. The leading British composer during most of Brewer's time, and many of his works remain in the international classical repertoire including the *Enigma Variations*, the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*, the *Cello Concerto* and the *Violin Concerto*, two *Symphonies* and *The Dream of Gerontius*. From his first appearance in the Festival orchestra to the end of his life, but most notably during the interwar years, his personality and presence grew to dominate the Three Choirs Festival and he often conducted his own works at them. He was personal friends with all three of the cathedral organists, whoever was in post at the time.

German, Sir Edward (1862 - 1936)

Welsh composer. Studied RAM 1880 – 1884, Played in theatre orchestras and soon started conducting. Musical director Globe Theatre (now known as the Gielgud Theatre) from 1888 and composed incidental music for Shakespeare's plays which made him famous. Most successful work, the patriotic operetta, *Merrie England* (1902).

Hadow, Sir William Henry (1859 - 1937)

CBE. English educational reformer and musicologist. Educated Malvern College and Oxford University. Warden and Vice Chancellor of University of Durham, 1916 – 1919. Vice Chancellor of Sheffield University, 1919 – 1930. Chairman of several committees which called for educational reform, producing a series of recommendations known as the *Hadow Reports*. He also wrote a number of publications on music and music theory including the *Oxford History of Music*.

Kreisler, Fritz (1875 - 1972)

Austrian-born violinist and composer. Entered Vienna Conservatoire at age seven. Abandoned early musical career for studying medicine and art and later joined Austrian army. Resumed music career in 1899. London debut 1901 and thereafter in the forefront of international soloists. In 1910 gave the first performance of Elgar's *Violin Concerto* which is dedicated to him.

Lee Williams, Charles (1853 - 1935)

English organist and composer. Assistant organist Winchester Cathedral, 1865 – 1870. Organist Llandaff Cathedral, 1876 – 1882. Gloucester Cathedral, 1882 – 1897.

Lloyd, Charles Harford (1849 - 1919)

English organist and composer. Studied Oxford University. Organist Gloucester Cathedral, 1876 – 1882. Organist Christ Church Cathedral Oxford, 1882 – 1892. Professor of Organ and Composition RCM, 1887 – 1892. Music Director Eton College, 1892 – 1914. Organist Chapel Royal from 1914.

Marsh, Sir Edward (1872 - 1953)

KCVO CMG English polymath, translator, arts patron and civil servant. He sponsored the Georgian school of poets and was the personal friend of many of them including Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon. He also had dealings with Ivor Gurney. As an art collector he influenced the development of contemporary British art by sponsoring emerging artists. As a civil servant he worked as Private Secretary to Winston Churchill, among other top ministers. He was also an influential figure in Britain's homosexual community.

Ouseley, Sir Frederick Gore (1825 - 1889)

English organist, composer, pianist and clergyman. Child prodigy. Studied Oxford University. Ordained 1849. Precentor Hereford Cathedral, 1855. Professor of Music Oxford University, 1855 – 1889, instituting formal exams for degrees of MusB and MusD. Founded St Michael's College Tenbury

Parratt, Sir Walter (1841 - 1924)

KCVO English organist and composer. Organist Magdalen College, Oxford, 1872 – 1882 and St George's Chapel, Windsor, 1882 – 1924. Professor of Organ RCM, 1883 – 1923. Professor of Music Oxford University, 1908 – 1918. Dean of Music London University from 1916. Master of the Queen's (King's) Music, 1893 – 1924.

Parry, Sir Hubert (1848 - 1918)

English composer, teacher and writer. Studied Oxford University. Entered business 1871 but gave it up three years later for music. Joined staff of RCM in 1883 becoming director 1894 until his death. Professor of music Oxford University, 1900 – 1908. His biggest influence was through his educational work, but he was also in the forefront of British composers at a time when Brahms and Bach were the favoured models.

Reed, William Henry (Billy) (1875 - 1942)

English violinist, teacher, minor composer, conductor and biographer of Sir Edward Elgar. Studied RAM. Founding member of the London Symphony Orchestra in 1904, and its leader between 1912 and 1935. Subsequently he became the orchestra's chairman. He also taught at RCM throughout his career. In 1936 wrote biography of Elgar, *Elgar as I knew him*. Their friendship really began when he was invited by Elgar to assist him with some problems he was having with his *Violin Concerto* in 1910. Reed was the first to play through sketches of the *Concerto*, and also the first to play it before an audience in a semi-public performance at the 1910 Three Choirs Festival.

Reith, John Charles Walsham (1889 - 1971)

1st Baron Reith KT GCVO GBE CB TD PC. Scottish founder of the BBC. Appointed first general manager when it was set up as the British Broadcasting Company in 1922. Established the tradition of independent public service broadcasting in the United Kingdom. Appointed managing director in 1923 and from 1927 was Director General of the British Broadcasting Corporation when it was created under a Royal Charter.

Roberts, John Varley (1841 - 1920)

English organist and composer. Organist Halifax Parish Church 1868 – 1882. MusB (1871) and MusD (1876) from Oxford University. Organist and choirmaster, Magdalen College, Oxford, 1882 – 1918. The choir during this time was widely regarded as being one of the best in the country. Published choir training manual 1898.

Smyth, Dame Ethel (1858 - 1944)

English composer and conductor. Studied Leipzig Conservatoire and in Berlin. First became known through her *Mass in D* first performed London, 1893. First three operas were produced in Germany. Active in militant campaign for women's suffrage and was jailed in 1911.

Stainer, Sir John (1840 - 1901)

English composer, organist, teacher and scholar. Chorister St Paul's Cathedral, 1849-1854, Studied Oxford University. Organist St Paul's Cathedral, 1872 – 1888. Professor and later Principal National Training School of Music. Professor of Music Oxford University from 1889.

Stanford, Sir Charles Villiers (1852 - 1924)

Irish composer, conductor, organist and teacher. Studied Cambridge University 1870. Organist Trinity College Cambridge, 1873 – 1892. Studied in Leipzig and Berlin, 1874 – 1876. Conductor Cambridge University Musical Society from 1873. Professor of Composition RCM, 1883 – 1924. Professor Music Cambridge University, 1887 – 1924. Conductor Bach Choir, 1885 – 1902.

Stuart-Wortley, Alice (1862 - 1936)

Daughter of the artist John Everett Millais and second wife of Lord Stuart of Wortley, a leading Conservative politician. A close friend of Elgar's she was known to him first as Alice, and then Windflower and became one of his creative muses, most notably for his *Violin Concerto*.

Vaughan Williams, Ralph (1872 - 1958)

English composer, conductor and organist. Studied at Cambridge University and RCM and later with Bruch and Ravel. Began collecting English folk songs in 1902. Musical editor *English Hymnal*, 1906. Professor of Composition RCM, 1919 – 1939. One of the leaders with Holst and others of the 20th century revival of English music in the wake of Elgar.

Wesley, Samuel Sebastian (1810 - 1876)

English composer, organist and conductor. Chorister Chapel Royal. Organist Hereford Cathedral 1832 – 1835, Exeter Cathedral 1835 – 1841, Leeds Parish Church 1842 -1849, Winchester Cathedral 1849 – 1865 and Gloucester Cathedral 1865 – 1876. Professor of Organ RAM from 1850. Tireless advocate for the improvement of standards of Anglican church music.

Wood, Charles (1866 - 1926)

Irish composer and teacher. Composition pupil of Stanford at RCM then taught harmony at RCM from 1888. Lecturer in harmony and counterpoint Cambridge University, 1897 – 1924 and Professor of Music from 1924.

Appendix 3: Timeline

1865 (Alfred) Herbert Brewer born 21 June, Gloucester. S.S. Wesley appointed Organist of Gloucester Cathedral.

1872 S.S. Wesley conducts first Three Choirs Festival performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* (Gloucester).

1876 C.H. Lloyd appointed Organist of Gloucester Cathedral.

1877 Brewer joins Gloucester Cathedral Choir and The King's School, Gloucester.

1878 Elgar makes his Three Choirs festival debut playing in the orchestra. (Worcester).

1880 Brewer becomes articled pupil of C.H. Lloyd. Parry conducts the premiere of his work *Scenes from Shelley's Prometheus Unbound* at the Three Choirs Festival (Gloucester), a work regarded by many as the birth of modern English music.

1882 Brewer appointed organist of St Giles's Church, Oxford and first open organ scholarship holder of Royal College of Music. Charles Lee Williams appointed Organist of Gloucester Cathedral.

1883 Brewer appointed Organ Scholar of Exeter College, Oxford.

1885 Brewer appointed Organist of Bristol Cathedral.

1886 Brewer appointed Organist of St Michael's Church, Coventry.

1890 Elgar conducts the first performance of his overture *Froissart* at the Three Choirs Festival (Worcester). Gurney born, Gloucester.

1891 George Robertson Sinclair's first Festival as Artistic Director at Hereford.

1892 Brewer appointed Director of Music and Organist of Tonbridge School. Three Choirs Chorus for the first time drawn only from local singers. Howells born, Lydney.

1893 Novello born David Ivor Davies, Cardiff.

1894 Brewer marries Ethel Mary Bruton.

1896 Brewer appointed Organist of Gloucester Cathedral.

1898 Brewer's first Festival as Artistic Director at Gloucester.

1899 Ivor Atkins' first Festival as Artistic Director at Worcester. Gurney joins choir of All Saints Church, Gloucester.

1900 Gurney passes audition and enters Gloucester Cathedral Choir and The King's School.

1901 Brewer founds Gloucestershire Orchestral Society (later Gloucestershire Symphony Orchestra). First performance of Brewer's *Emmaus*, orchestrated by Elgar who also conducted his *Cockaigne Overture* at the Festival in Gloucester.

1902 First Three Choirs complete performance of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*. (Worcester). Novello begins music lessons with Brewer.

1903 Novello passes audition and enters Magdalen College School, Oxford and the Chapel choir.

1904 Gurney a last minute stand in for a soloist at the Three Choirs Festival (Gloucester) in a performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. Howells' father declared bankrupt.

1905 Howells begins music lessons with Brewer.

1906 Gurney becomes articled pupil of Brewer.

1909 Delius conducts the first performance of his *Dance Rhapsody* (Hereford). Howells and Novello become articled pupils of Brewer.

1910 Vaughan Williams conducts the premiere of his *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (Gloucester). A life changing experience for Gurney and Howells. Novello leaves Brewer but has his first song published, *Spring of the year*.

1911 Fritz Kreisler the soloist as Elgar conducts the first Three Choirs performance of his *Violin Concerto*. Vaughan Williams conducts the first performance of his *Five Mystical Songs* (Worcester). Ivor Gurney wins composition scholarship to RCM.

1912 Parry conducts the first performance of his *Ode on the Nativity of Christ* and Vaughan Williams conducts the first performance of his *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* (Hereford). Gurney starts writing poetry seriously. Howells joins Gurney at the RCM.

1913 Saint Saëns conducted the first performance of his *The Promised Land*. (Gloucester). Gurney composes *Five Elizabethan Songs*.

1915 Gurney enlists into the 2nd/5th Gloucesters. Howells diagnosed with Graves' disease and given weeks to live but survives thanks to pioneering radium treatment. Novello's *Keep the home fires burning* is published.

1916 Howells composes first mature work, *Piano Quartet in A minor*, dedicated to 'The hill at Chosen and Ivor Gurney who knows it.' Novello enlists with the Royal Naval Air Service before being moved on to a desk job at the Air Ministry. Novello shares song writing duties with Jerome Kern for the hit London show, *Theodore and Co*.

1917 Gurney sustains serious gas injuries during third battle of Ypres. His first book of poems *Severn and Somme* is published. Howells appointed assistant organist of Salisbury Cathedral but forced by ill health to leave after a few months. Howells then receives grant from Carnegie Trust to assist R.R. Terry of Westminster Cathedral in editing Latin Tudor repertoire. Novello meets his life partner, Robert (Bobbie) Andrews, for the first time.

1918 Gurney is discharged from the army without a full pension. During the year he also has a failed relationship with Annie Drummond, a nurse, tells Marion Scott that he had spoken to the spirit of Beethoven and sends her a suicide note.

1919 Gurney resumes studies at the Royal College of Music. He also composes more than 40 songs, many of the highest quality. His second volume of poems, *War's Embers* is

published by Sidgwick and Jackson. He starts composing *Gloucestershire Rhapsody*. Novello appears in the British silent film, *The call of the blood*.

1920 Resumption of Three Choirs Festival after World War One. Elgar conducts his *For the Fallen* and Vaughan Williams the first performance of his *Four Hymns* (Worcester). Gurney moves back to London. Howells marries Dorothy Dawe and joins staff of RCM.

1921 Percy Hull's first Festival as Artistic Director at Hereford. Elgar conducts the first Three Choirs performance of his *Cello Concerto* with Beatrice Harrison as soloist. Gustav Holst conducts his *Hymn of Jesus*. Gurney formally leaves the Royal College of Music and fails to have his poetry published in one of the Georgian Poetry series edited by George Marsh. Novello makes his London stage debut in *Debareu*.

1922 First performances of *Colour Symphony* by Bliss and *Sine nomine* by Howells. (Gloucester). Gurney leaves the job at the Tax Office that Edward Marsh had secured for him and he is committed to Barnwood House Asylum and subsequently London Mental Hospital in Dartford, Kent. His third volume of poetry is turned down by Sidgwick & Jackson. However in the period up to 1926 he writes hundreds of poems, many of which are of publishable quality.

1923 First performance of *To the name above every name* by Bax. (Worcester).

1925 Dame Ethel Smyth conducts performances of the overture to *The Wreckers* and extracts from her *Mass in D*. First performance of *The Evening Watch* by Holst. The first broadcast of a Three Choirs concert by the BBC. (Gloucester). Howells appointed director of music at St Paul's Girls School. Novello appears in British silent film version of his 1924 play, *The Rat*.

1926 Brewer knighted.

1927 Novello appears in two Hitchcock films, *The Lodger* and *Downhill*.

1928 Brewer dies. His former articled pupil Herbert Sumsion is appointed to succeed him as Organist of Gloucester Cathedral and is immediately faced with directing a Three Choirs Festival, conducting a programme largely drawn up by Brewer. Novello appears in the British film, *The Return of the Rat* and his stage play *The Truth Game*.

**Appendix 4: Simplified version of the prosopographic spreadsheet
of Brewer's articulated pupils**

Surname	First name	Years as AP with HB		Place of birth	School attended	Father's occupation	Mother's occupation	Other professional education with dates
		Start	Finish					
Gurney	Ivor	1906	1911	Gloucester	King's Gloucester	Taylor	Machinist (1881)	RCM 1911
Howells	Herbert	1909	1912	Lydney	Lydney Grammar School	Painter and decorator	Music teacher	RCM 1912
Novello	Ivor	1909	1910	Cardiff	Magdalen School Oxford	Rent collector	Singing teacher and choral conductor	
Sumsion	Herbert	1915	1917	Gloucester	King's Gloucester	Corn Merchant's Clerk (1901)	Teacher (private school) 1911	Durham University; RCM
Dykes Bower	John	1915?	1922	Gloucester	Cheltenham College	Doctor. Surgeon (1891, 1901), consultant surgeon (1911)		Organ scholar at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
Tustin Baker	Reginald	1915	1918	Gloucester	King's Gloucester	Book salesman (1901)	? Domestic cook (1881)	BM (1924) DM (1934) Durham
Morgan	Ivor	1901	?	Newnham on Severn	King's Gloucester	church choirmaster and organist	Organist (1891)	RCM 1901

Pritchard	Arthur	1924	1927	Gloucester	King's Gloucester	Railway clerk (1911)		RCM
Rowland	C F				King's Gloucester			
Underwood	Samuel William J	1901	?	Gloucester	King's Gloucester	Engine driver (1876 marriage cert), grocer/engine driver (1891), grocer and shopkeeper (1901)		
Organ	Harold Charles	pre 1908	1915?	Gloucester	King's Gloucester	County Court Clerk		
Matthews	Gilbert Percy	pre 1904		Cirencester		Tobacconist and insurance agent (1891)	Household duties (1891)	
Wyman	?	pre 1902						

Porter	Ambrose	1900?	1907?	Coleford	Bell's Grammar School Coleford	Patent (?) Medicine Dealer (1891), photographer (1901), dealer in medicine (1911)	Dressmaker (1871), assisting in business (1911)	
Bennett	Harold Ernest			Gloucester shire		Woollen cloth worker (1891, 1901)		
Williams	J C	pre 1900						
Cook	Melville	1928	1928	Gloucester	King's Gloucester			Durham University BMus 1934, DMus 1940