George Lloyd and HMS Trinidad

The Last Night of the Proms in 2013 included George Lloyd's ***HMS Trinidad March*****,** in that part of the programme which, until 2008, was usually reserved for the Henry Wood *'Fantasia on British Sea Songs.'* The choice of Lloyd's rousing march echoes the role of the *Sea Songs* in some key respects, in particular the close association with real Naval engagements and with the life of the ordinary sailor, and the up-tempo rhythms which encourage audience participation. The story of Lloyd's experiences on *HMS Trinidad* and the origin of the *HMS Trinidad March* provide a fascinating, (although brutal and tragic) backdrop to the music itself, and that story is here told in full for the first time.
The ***HMS Trinidad March*** was originally written for Military Band, and the arrangement for full orchestra was completed in 1946, when Lloyd was recovering from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, also called shell-shock) at his wife's home in Switzerland. The orchestral version was broadcast on Swiss radio by the **Orchestra of the Swiss Romande**, under **Ernest Ansermet**, and lay in the archives of the **George Lloyd Music Library** until the Spring of 2013, when the original manuscript score was dusted off and prepared in a new typeset edition for the 2013 Proms.

At the outbreak of war in September 1939, George Lloyd's was just 25 and his career was clearly in the ascendant. He was considered to be among the foremost of the new generation of composers. As Harry Farjeon, Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music, quaintly put it, just two months before the war broke out:
" To have collected Covent Garden Opera House and the Lyceum Theatre before the age of 26 is not bad for a young composer. It is something like mounting on the first page of your stamp album a Mauritius and a Triangular Cape. … He is unique amongst our coming men."

For all George's success as a composer, he did not hesitate to volunteer for the Navy. That was hardly surprising in view of his family history. His English grandfather and namesake, Captain George Lloyd, had joined the Navy at 14 and had seen distinguished service in the Opium Wars, the Crimea and the Baltic, where he was decorated for his skirmishes against the Russians. George's father, William, was also a decorated military man, having volunteered for the Leeds Rifles, and ended the war as a Captain with a Military Cross on the front line at Ypres. George's uncle, Commander Selwyn Rawson, RN, another namesake whom he held in great affection and respect, had seen action in the naval battles of the First War. With this background, it was almost inevitable that he wanted to go to sea.

To George's dismay, the Navy would not accept him. At that time the Royal Navy had more than enough volunteers and not enough ships, so the standard was high. He had a weak heart from bouts of rheumatic fever as a child, and poor eyesight. Disappointed, he signed up as an Auxiliary Fireman, and began his fire watch duties in early 1940, but he was determined to go to sea, and he soon discovered that the Royal Marines wanted musicians. Following the success of his first opera, *Iernin,* George had come to the notice of the musical establishment, one of whom was Rutland Boughton, who had written "The Immortal Hour" - the longest running opera in English. Boughton and Will Lloyd (George's father) became acquainted, and it was Boughton who suggested that George might be accepted into the services as a musician. George followed up the suggestion. On 29th February 1940, Boughton wrote to him*: I am very interested to hear that you hope to join the Band of the Royal Marines - you are, in my opinion, the chief hope of British Music in the immediate*

future, and if that future is temporarily hindered your powers as composer, conductor, and orchestrator should enable you to serve most effectively in a military band. In the last war I served as a private, corporal, band sergeant, and finally as RAF bandmaster, and know from my own experience that while my time in the ranks was not of much use, my musical work was of some value—you are today in a similar position, I believe; so I hope the military authorities will be able to use you where you can be of most service to your country. Yours sincerely, Rutland Boughton

Before George could apply, he had to set out on a crash course to learn a second instrument, since he would be required to play a military instrument for official ceremonies, and a stringed instrument for concerts. George had been a pupil of the leading violinist of the day, Albert Sammons, and still had an excellent technique as a violinist, but a Royal Marine Bandsman needed a marching instrument as well as a concert instrument, so he chose the cornet. He had been training as a singer just before war broke out, and although his cornet playing was barely adequate, his violin playing, singing and composing skills tipped the balance and he was recruited as Bandsman RMB X1524 Lloyd into the Royal Marines School of Music at Deal, where he underwent basic training and was elevated to 'leading violin' in the Royal Marine Band.

By April 1940 he had settled in and was writing to his father about his slow progress on the cornet. Will had by then become an Admiralty courier, carrying code books (and a revolver) from London to the Naval ports throughout the country. Will replied:
Dear George
I'm so glad that your first experience of the Marines has been pleasant. Knowing your modesty I am sure you quaked when you found there was an audition – but these men who get to the top in their own line are not fools so I am sure they recognised that you do know the fiddle - even if not at your best – anyhow – proof – you are a leading violinist and I am delighted ! Also about the cornet which I think you will enjoy and I know you wanted to play. Don't get worried about the difficulty of getting the notes at first and the uncertainty. It takes months to get the lip muscles strong and when tired they give out – a little too much practice and you can't do one day what you did the day before. This rights itself in time and too strenuous practice does no good where lips are concerned. My best love and I'm sure things will go well, Dad
George evidently wrote asking if he could get a decent cornet. On 1st May, Will wrote back:
Thanks so much for your letter. It's odd that the combinations should be Military Band only and yet that they should enlist violinists. I don't understand it. As to the cornet I rang up Montague George of Rudall & Carte this morning to ask him if he had a cornet he could hire out. Being MG of course he said ""no" but he had one cheap etc. Etc. but after a bit of chat he said he would look up his stock and find out and write to me this afternoon. If he has one to hire and you'd care for it, I'll have it sent to you.
You know the cornet can be a lovely instrument, though in "musical" circles it has got a poor name through being vulgarised; though being used at one time in quite good orchestras as a substitute for the trumpet and through the poor variations (?) it was generally condemned to play as a solo instrument. But it can be very different to that if played with a sense of style. And originally was heard in recitals etc. There was a world famous cornettist called Levy: My mother heard him in the USA and said that his playing was really beautiful. But that is going back to the early 70's.

Tetrazini's dead. She was a really great singer: the most brilliant vocalist I ever heard, but with much else as well, a fine dramatic sense, so she was good all through, and a real sense of style. Nell Melba's intrigues kept her away after the first few years – that is kept her from the Opera House, and Albert Hall recitals do not do singers much good, if they have to depend on such.

George found it hard going as a new recruit at Deal, and he was miserable enough for his 15 year old brother Walter to write to his mother that he resolved to spend a whole week thinking of nice things to say to George to cheer him up! On 21st May, just after the Battle of France had commenced with the German Blitz Krieg and things were already going badly for the British Expeditionary Force , Will wrote: *We have known many black hours before, and we survived and so we shall do this time. It all seems strangely familiar! How's the cornet? I seem to live in a world of Royal Marines. Every time I go to the Admiralty one meets a crowd of them with bayonets fixed, and Lewis guns etc to say nothing of barbed wire entanglements, a wise precaution which I hope, and think, will not be used!*

After 3 months of drill, kit inspections and band practice, George was posted to *HMS Trinidad*, a brand new Crown Colony Class cruiser being built at HM Dockyard in Davenport, Plymouth. She was launched in March 1941, and was one of the fastest and most technically advanced and formidable vessels in the Navy. Her heavy armament comprised twelve 6" guns, which were controlled from a Transmitting Station, where a combination of radar, sonar, spotter planes, look-outs and about 16 highly trained operators used mechanical computers to calculate the exact elevation and bearing of the turrets in order to hit the enemy ships. The operators of Transmitting Stations were usually the men of the Royal Marine Band, and they had to collect data about their own ship's speed and course, the wind speed, the state of the swell, and the range and bearing of the enemy ship together with its speed, course, and its recent movements. They then had to translate this data into two numbers, adjusted according to the observed pattern of the previous salvo, and transmit the numbers to the turrets, all in the time it took the turrets to reload.

It was normal practice for the men who were going to fight the ship to be closely involved in her construction - that way they knew the ship inside out. They worked on the wiring of the TS, so they would know how the electrical and communications systems worked, how the watertight compartments were designed, and how to find their way around in the dark. They drilled and studied constantly and George spent 6 months learning gunnery, which his letters home reveal he found 'wearisome beyond words.'

When in harbour, the band entertained the sailors, but when at sea they had duties on the ship like everyone else, and George's primary job when at Action Stations was in the TS as the Telephone Switchboard Operator, although he also had to know how to operate the computers when required. He was selected for the Switchboard job because he had a loud voice - 6 years in opera houses and two years of voice training, coupled with a natural clear high tenor voice made sure of that. When *HMS Trinidad* was firing all her 6" guns the noise was quite literally deafening on deck, and even in the TS in the bowels of the ship, located between the magazines, the fuel oil tanks and behind 80 mm of armour plate, the man with loudest voice got to work the telephone switchboard, where he relayed the orders to and from the Bridge and the Gunnery Control Tower. It was almost certainly George's voice which later saved his life, as the switchboard was located next to the escape ladder when the TS was destroyed.

When not training as a gunner, George was busy with the band, and he either volunteered or was seconded to stand in for the bandmaster at rehearsals. He seemed to enjoy the playing, but not the concerts, or at least, not the audience, as he wrote to his father: *Now I must be off to play for a lot of individuals who can only realise that we have been playing once we cease making a noise. When the programme is finished there will be a lengthy pause. Is the band there? Yes, certainly; we have been exhausting ourselves for the last two hours in the endeavour to entertain you. Oh!! Well could you play such and such a piece for us? Delighted to do so; no matter that that particular piece is not in our library; anything will do. So we turn over our parts and begin the programme afresh – to everyone's huge delight. "It is an excellent band". "So willing to oblige" "The best disciplined unit on the ship". The band-master receives many compliments – and drinks. The band slinks out – thirsty.*

To make up for it, he and three other bandies formed a jazz quartet, called 'The Four Musketeers,' and entertained themselves and each other. His main buddy was 'Lou' Barber, so called because he could play the trumpet like Louis Armstrong, and he also was close friends with Bandsman Bill Evans, who became a go-between for George and his family when he was hospitalized. In his spare time he read voraciously, and was constantly asking for more books to be sent: *Thank you for sending me the book about Alexander. I shall enjoy reading it. You ask me if there is any book I would like. Yes, there is. It is a large and rather expensive book, I believe. So I would like you to see if it can be found second-hand at Charing X Road. It is called "The Influence of Sea Power on History" by an American called Manhan. Written about 60 years ago it is a sort of naval classic and it supposed to have, to quite an extent, been responsible for Kaiser Bills' anxiety about having a large navy. Since I find myself in a watery world it is just as well to try and understand a bit about it. I have just been reading a new book on this subject of our own sea power. It is curious how we always seem to neglect what has always proved to have been our two best means of defeating our enemies – i.e. undisputed naval supremacy plus small military adventures.*

And later: *I have just finished a book about the Moors in Spain by Washington Irving – a history of their final defeat. I didn't think he gave a particularly good account of the Moors' qualities. Perhaps by the time Ferdinand kicked them out they weren't of a great deal of consequence. But what lovely things they had done; I should like to see some of their buildings in Spain after having seen a little in Sicily.*

In lieu of nothing better I have also been reading a book about collective farming in Russia by the chap who wrote "And Quiet Flows the Don". Fortunately nobody seemed to get killed which I thought strange after the accounts one used to hear ten years ago of hundreds of thousands being starved. Perhaps that's just as well as our allies are now supposed to be the defenders of civilisation! It is strange how people's interests are always supposed to be occupied with how this or that sort of ideal state should be run. And yet there is almost no attention paid to how an ideal human being should behave; in fact we have no such thing. The middle ages did at least have their chivalrous ideal and whatever it's short comings may have been, a knight did have to try to live up to some sort of personal standard. Of course the churches still endeavour to tell us what to do but it seems to lack a concrete form and always will as long as states and masses of people are set above individuals.

As for old Newman, I should have thought it was time he stopped writing about Wagner. Since he is evidently getting a little tired of his old hero he has to try and turn him into a Nazi! You will realise what straights this war has brought me when I say that, much as I used to hate it, I would now willingly buy myself a ticket for Tristan! Yes, and I believe I'd sit right to the end. Anything for a sniff of the genuine thing, good or bad.
Within a few weeks of her launch, and while still fitting out, *HMS Trinidad* was attacked by bombers. Nancy had been able to find lodgings near George's barracks, and she describes the bombing raids in her diary.
"We had a full view of the bombing. I counted 6 fires, then when the 7th broke out they all turned into one. Many of the fire bombs fell all round us, and shrapnel from the bombs and the ack-ack fell on our roof. George was outside cursing these firebombs as they fell – they were terrifying nights for me."

In September 1941, *HMS Trinidad* was commissioned. It was then that the band-master wanted George to write a march for the ship, as soon as possible. He was given leave so that he could write it, and he managed to get it done before she sailed. She started Sea Trials in mid-September to sharpen up the crew and systems ready for action, and in December she took passage to Scapa Flow to join the Home Fleet. After she sailed from Plymouth, she docked in Glasgow, and the bandies had 24 hours leave, so Nancy went to see George. That was the last time she saw or heard from him for 6 months, until she had a letter from him, 'in writing just like that of a child learning its letters.'

At Scapa, the *HMS Trinidad March* had its first performance – in the aircraft hangar. George told the story in his own words in a pencil manuscript note:

"During the autumn of 1941, The Royal Marine Band in which I played joined a new cruiser – HMS Trinidad. While we were in Devonport getting ready to sail, the Bandmaster asked me to write the official march, which I duly did. Shortly afterwards, the captain informed the bandmaster that a friend of his, one of our very distinguished composers, had agreed to write a march for the Trinidad. When it was explained that one of the musicians in the band had already written one, the Captain said he would listen to both and decide which one he like. In due course the distinguished composer's manuscript arrived. The Bandmaster was not impressed. "How can we march to that? We can't about-turn and halt in seven-bar phrases - and all based on a silly old sea shanty." The piece was not popular with the musicians. One day the solemn judgement took place; the band assembled and the Captain, the Commander and the Captain of Marines sat in state and listened. To be fair to the distinguished composer's piece, we did not play it well – it had been very poorly rehearsed, unlike my own. At the end of the performance the Captain announced that he had decided to adopt Musician Lloyd's march as the official march of HMS Trinidad."

In a later interview for radio, and in various letters, George identified the distinguished composer as Ralph Vaughan Williams, and described the concert in the aircraft hanger and how RVW's march had gone to the bottom when the *Trinidad* was sunk - by which time George was in hospital. He noted that the original Full Score and band cards were written 'not in my best hand – due to the unstable sea.'

The manuscript music for his *HMS Trinidad March*, together with all the instruments

belonging to the now non-existent band, were taken off the ship and sent back home. When George was discharged in 1942, the RM School of Music, then in Scarborough, generously sent the Full Score and battered band cards back to George, and in 1990 he donated them all to the RM School at Deal - ' back where they belong' as he put it.

They were not long in Scapa Flow, and in January 1942 *HMS Trinidad* was nominated for convoy escort duties to Murmansk, through a narrow stretch of waterway between the North Cape and the pack ice. The German army controlled the North Cape, their submarines controlled the coastline, and the Luftwaffe controlled the skies, and any convoy had to have heavy defences to have a chance of running the gauntlet. The standard naval escort was two heavy cruisers, half a dozen destroyers, and a handful of minesweepers and trawlers on anti-submarine work. In January the Trinidad escorted convoys PQ8, to Murmansk, and PQ6 back to Scotland, before working as an interceptor and escort throughout February. In early March she was busy refuelling destroyer escorts and patrolling on the lookout for the German battleship *Tirpitz,* and on 23rd March she was deployed as close escort for convoy PQ13.

During these patrols, George was primarily an observer, scanning the horizon for enemy ships, which he described as a combination of extreme boredom and extreme tension. When a ship was sighted he would take up his place 4 decks below the waterline in the Transmitting Station.

On 29th March, the convoy dispersed following a gale, and *HMS Trinidad* remained on station as cover for them to reassemble. Vulnerable by staying in one place, she was spotted by German aircraft, and attacked by three destroyers. She was hit and caught fire, but her return fire damaged one enemy destroyer, which she then attacked with torpedoes, one of which malfunctioned and travelled in a circle, striking *Trinidad* on the port side and destroying the Royal Marine Barracks. The torpedo strike ruptured the oil tanks, and flooded the boiler room with oil which caused a major fire.

George describes what happened next:

"I am writing this account as I was the last to leave the TS and have always kept vivid memories of what took place. There were twenty one men in the transmitting station. Seventeen died. I was stationed close to the ladder, working the switchboard. The ladder was the only way of getting in or out. The explosion caused by the torpedo that struck the ship broke the communications between the computer stations and the gun turrets. Warrant Officer Gould (who was in charge) shouted to me to try to telephone the bridge but the lines were dead. Gould then ordered a sailor to go to the bridge and report our condition.

By this time oil had started to come through the hatch. I moved to the other side of the ladder to get away from it. As the oil became a strong cascade, Gould shouted 'Shut the Hatch'. No one moved. Everyone seemed to be completely paralysed and stayed glued to his position. The picture of these silent men standing motionless, the cold black oil engulfing their bodies, the tiny emergency light giving its dim light - this is a picture that will always live with me. Again Gould shouted 'Shut the hatch'. The oil was now up to our groins. Thomas Barber (Lou) our solo cornet went towards the ladder. I was very angry. I said to

myself "God, you can't do this to me, I have work to do". Lou was knocked backwards off the ladder by the force of the oil; he tried again; I went after him and pushed; he took the worst of the oil and swallowed a lot. (Later he had to have ribs cut out to get rid of the oil in his lungs).

I was some way up the first ladder when I lost consciousness and remember nothing until I crawled out of the hatch two decks up. Somebody did try after me but the huge hatch cover fell on him and broke his back so I was the last out of the TS. When I regained consciousness I was trying to haul myself out of the second hatch. Lou had disappeared. I lay on the deck totally exhausted and unable to move. Then I crawled across the mess deck and up a ladder to an upper deck where I lay down again. While I was there I heard a sailor from the deck below shouting 'Anyone below' 'Anyone below?'

I should have shouted that help was needed for the TS, but I had no strength. Later, another sailor passed by and told me to go to the Galley. I dragged myself there and I found Lou Barber, Corporal Palmer and some others"

32 men were killed in attack, including the 17 in the TS. *HMS Trinidad* was taken in tow and reached Murmansk, where she lay in the Kola inlet until steel plates could be brought from Scapa Flow to carry out repairs. The oil was pumped out of the TS, and the 17 bodies were recovered. When the repairs were carried out, part of a steering mechanism of a British torpedo was found, confirming that the ship had been struck by 'friendly fire.'

George was taken off and transferred to a hospital ship, and by mid April he had reached Aberdeen safely and was admitted to Kingseat Hospital, Newmacher - a Victorian mental asylum which had been taken over by the Admiralty for shell shock cases. George was by then in a poor state, unable to walk or to speak, with oil in his lungs, and a profound and severe shaking of his limbs and his head. His vision was affected, and his muscles were torn and swollen into lumps on his body.

The attack on the *Trinidad* was not reported on the wireless at first, but George's father Will found out through 'unofficial' channels. Nancy takes up the story:

Dad (i.e. William Lloyd) *had become an Admiralty courier, so had connections, and he learned that the Trinidad had been hit and that his son was not on the list of those missing or killed. That evening on the 9 o'clock news, the BBC announced it, and Mr Judd, (the housekeeper's husband) rushed to the sitting room and told Dad.*

'Did you hear the news? The Trinidad!
I was there with them, and heard what was said.
"What is the news Dad?"
'Nothing'
'Dad, you had better tell me, otherwise I will go and ask Mr Judd.'
'Now don't worry, the Trinidad has been hit.'
'And what about George?'
'He is not on the list of casualties.'

There was no news for many days – for three weeks we were left wondering. Eventually Dad was told where George was.
[One of the Bandsmen managed to get a message to William Lloyd, but by the time he got the message, George had been moved to Newmacher.] On 1st May, Will wrote to George:

"Bill" has given us an idea where you are. I rather fancied from the letter you'd only be there a day or two before being sent to a convalescent home, but as we've heard no more I fancy you are still at Scapa, so, if we get no news to the contrary I expect to come up and find out something and I hope see you: I shall do all I can for that you may be certain. I shall probably start on Monday. There's no (??) tomorrow and Sunday for various reasons is not the best day. I'm longing to see you.

What an experience! May you never have such another. How thankful we are you are alive. You will I fancy have just missed most of our letters, but you are back: that's the great thing, and I long to see you.

On 8th May, his Bandsman friend Bill Evans wrote to George: *"I hope you have come out of your coma, and did not have the nightmare at all. I trust your wife was not at all upset by your condition and that you feel better. "*

On 6th June, George wrote to his mother: *Thank you for your last letter. I am sorry I have not written before all being well Nancy and I will be home in about a fortnight's time, so I am looking forward to being with you all again. I am becoming stronger; I keep doing something all day – washing dishes in the galley, three hours in a warm bath, exercises to relax my body, a walk with Nancy, so I have no time to be miserable and by night am so tired I can't help sleeping.*

Nancy again: *I had the letter from him in child-like writing telling me what had happened, and this letter was smuggled to the post by one of the bandies. [Bill Evans] Dad was sent to Aberdeen, carrying his packets, and from there he went to Newmacher to see George. He arrived home at 9.00 am two days later.*

'Well Dad, have you seen George?'
'Yes, he is alright.'
'How did he look?'
'Alright.'
He was nervous, and I wondered if he was telling me the truth.
'Is he coming home on leave?'
'Not for the present.'
'Is he going to stay in hospital?'
Yes.''
He went for his breakfast, and I thought the matter over. I was convinced he was holding something back from me, so I made up my mind to go to Newmacher to see for myself. I went and told him.
'No, don't go just yet.'

(Unknown to Nancy, George had written another childlike letter to his father saying that Nancy must not come to see him.)
'You are hiding something from me.'
'Look Nancy, it is better for you not to go.'
That afternoon I went to the station, bought a ticket to Aberdeen, for the next day, and told Dad. He was very good – he told me which hotel to go to. I wrote to George to tell him I was coming and would wait for him outside the gates in Newmacher three days later. I got to Aberdeen at 8.00 pm and was lucky to get a room. I enquired from the porter how to get to Newmacher, and he told me to go to a room where there was a woman who went there every day.

Next day, I went with her, by bus. I got there, and waited and waited, but no George. Eventually I went through the gates, wondering where to go. There was one big stone building among a lot of bungalows all over the place. A car with an officer stopped and he asked me if I was looking for something. I told him about George and that he had not turned up. He went to find out, came back, and said that George would be with me in 10 minutes. I waited outside the gates, going up the hill and down.

As I turned around to go up again I suddenly saw George. Was I glad that I had a minute before reaching him to pull myself together? Could that really be George coming down the hill?

After greeting him, he said "Why did you come?
'Because I wanted to see you?'
'I did not want you to come.'
'Are you not glad to see me?'
'No, and I don't want you to come again. '
I had to leave him to take the bus to go back to Aberdeen.
Leaving, I said:
'I'll be back tomorrow.'
'I won't come to meet you.'
'I'll come back every day until I see you.' And off I went.
Back at the hotel, the woman who had shown me the way looked at me and said
'You need a whiskey'

She wanted to know everything about it, and I also told her that I had to stay around but could not afford the hotel. She suggested that I phoned Mrs. Irving, the head of the Red Cross in Aberdeen; I did so and the next morning I met her. She organised for me to stay at a farm half-way to Newmacher, and I saw George the next afternoon. After a few days he got used to the idea that I would be around, and met the bus each afternoon.

Little by little, I got him to him talk. When I felt on safe ground, I asked him:

'Why didn't you want to see me?'
'I could not bear the idea of you seeing me in this state.'

I must tell you how I found him. He had lost control of his nervous system – his muscles had

given way, and his locomotion was not functioning properly. His head was going from one side to the other, and his arms and legs were going all over the place. His body was full of large swellings, where the muscles had given way.

One afternoon he was very quiet, and hardly spoke.
I said 'What's the matter George?'.
'Nothing '
'Come on, out with it. '
'I think I am going blind.'
'Have you been to the oculist?' 'Yes'
'What did he say?' 'He could not test me, I was shaking too much.'
'Why do you think you are going blind?'
'Because everything goes black, all of a sudden.'
'How long does it last?'
'Sometimes quite a long time.'
That evening I phoned the eye specialist and blew his head off. I asked him to see George again, and even if he was shaking too much that he could not test, he should pretend to do so and tell George that his eyes are OK. He did so the next day.

(George continued to have blackouts and also impaired vision for some months, although he no longer feared he was going blind.)

I found out who was his doctor, and made an appointment. He told me that George had improved during the few days that I had been here, and suggested that I take him away for a week-end. I was convinced that George would not agree, but I asked him if he would discharge George and let me take him home.

'It is impossible – he will never get well. '
'Well, if you can do nothing for him, you had better let me try.'
'No, we cannot discharge him. You do not know what you are saying.'

I got in touch with Mrs Irving, and we had a long talk. She was the only woman allowed into the camp at any time of day or night. I explained the situation, and she was really wonderful. After a few days, she told me to go and see George's doctor again. I went. He did his best to dissuade me from taking George away.
'You do not understand what you would be undertaking. '
I said that I was sure I wanted to take him, to look after him.
'Very well, but you must understand that you will be completely responsible for him.'

There followed a correspondence between the Newmacher hospital and the Admiralty as to whether George could be discharged to the care of his family. It was agreed that his condition had improved, and it was authorised. He was discharged from the Royal Marines, and his papers give reason as 'psychoneurosis.'

Nancy continues:
Then I had plenty to organise, and to buy sleepers on the London train. We had to stay one night in Aberdeen. Next afternoon we got to the station. By then I had got used to George's uncontrollable shaking movements, but the public not so.

They went first to stay at West Wittering, in the home of George's old teacher, Miss Coombes, where Nancy began the slow task of nursing him back to health. She read everything she could about nursing, psychology, psychiatry, and in particular psychoneurosis, and over the next ten years she acquired a small library of text books. After three years his symptoms were improving, and within weeks of the war ending, he and Nancy travelled to Chateau D'Oex, high in the Bernese Oberland in Switzerland, Nancy's home and where they had met and married 9 years earlier. By now he had fewer blackouts, fewer nightmares and he was able to hold a pen and write normally. He was a civilian once again, and had a small naval disability pension to live on, and he began to think about returning to work as a composer.

After settling in to rooms high up in the house, in January 1946, he decided to make a start by orchestrating the *HMS Trinidad March,* and within a few months he had persuaded Ernest Ansermet to play it with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and it was broadcast on Swiss radio. George was back on track.

It was to be a long hard road to try to regain the prominence in the world of music which he had before the war, but within a year or two he was producing some his finest works. The Fourth and Fifth symphonies were both written in Switzerland, and it was there that he met George Estabrooks, his brother in law, who just happened to a be psychologist and the worlds leading authority on the treatment of shell-shock, but that is another story.

It took George 30 years to recover fully from the trauma of the torpedo strike. The loss of his comrades in arms, his band, and the guilt associated with the mere fact that he had survived, that he was the last man out, that the hatch had fallen as he left and killed a man, that he had been unable to call for help, all compounded the physical injuries, - the ingestion of oil, the torn muscles, the shaking and the loss of control.

Although he tried his best to re-establish his career from 1947, he realised in 1952 that his health could not stand the pressures of life in the fast lane of opera production and symphony concerts. He set about earning a living as a market gardener, and rehabilitating himself through physical labour.

In 1848, a hundred years earlier, George's God-Hero, Giuseppe Verdi, by then an internationally acclaimed composer at the age of 34, had returned to his roots and acquired a property 'so humble that I am ashamed to allow even my most intimate friends to see it', and became a farmer for the rest of his life. George followed suit, and made a virtue of necessity: As he put it, "If it was good enough for Verdi, it was good enough for me."

But that too is another story….

William Lloyd
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