Ivor Gurney: Missing Links
The Hunt Sisters, Winthrop and Calista Rogers, and Valentine Fane

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The Hunt Sisters: *A bond born of tragedy*

Tragedy and loss stained the early years of Emily and Margaret Hunt and continued to follow them throughout their lives. They endured the loss of their parents and siblings, watched their younger brother struggle with the stigma of a misunderstood illness that turned him into an outcast from society, faced separation from their family and suffered further when family secrets became public. Some of their experiences made them more sensitive to and aware of Ivor Gurney's troubles as a teenager and young adult.

Emily Hunt was born at Fawler, Oxfordshire on 25 January 1864, the youngest of five surviving children of William Sutton Hunt, a Gloucestershire man, and his wife Miriam (Hodges). William Hunt was a tenant farmer who paid rent of approximately £155 annually to the Duke of Marlborough, first at his Northleigh [North Leigh now] farm and later £600 per annum at the Fawler farm where the Hunt sisters were born [1] He was a hard worker who built his farm from 200 acres to 800 acres over a period of thirty years and provided employment for about thirty local men, women and boys. Their children came rapidly. [2] By the early 1860s Miriam's niece Annie Roberts was staying with the family perhaps as a helper or possibly as governess as well to their children. Annie was the daughter of Joseph Roberts another prosperous Oxfordshire farmer but it is not known if he owned the land or if he was also a tenant farmer.

When Miriam died in 1865, relatives observed that William was 'fortunate in having a good governess who has been with them for some time so she takes the entire management of the house'.[3] Perhaps the writer was referring to Annie Roberts who became William's second wife in 1867. He was 43; she was 29. Emily spent time away from her brother and sisters when she was sent to live with Annie's parents, possibly to be educated. She never knew her birth mother and we do not know what kind of relationship she had with her stepmother during her early life. Later she and Margaret would live with Annie.

William and Annie started their own family: Annie in 1869, Edith Mary in 1871, William who was born and died in 1872, and Ethel Margaret on 21 December 1874. Then in 1877, after fathering one son twenty-one years earlier, losing a second son and fathering eight daughters, William finally had a third son, his namesake William Sutton Hunt. But his joy was short-lived when it was discovered that the baby had a rare form of epilepsy that struck in infancy.[4]

There were other problems festering within the family. In February, 1878 a relative observed that 'Mrs. [Annie] Hunt and the older family [from the previous marriage] do not get on well. I think the older family to blame'. Then five months later in July, William's eldest daughter Miriam, working in Kent as a housekeeper, died unexpectedly at the age of 20 from a 'cerebral effusion and epilepsy'. A month later William Sutton Hunt, her father, was also dead but under mysterious circumstances.

He had appeared to be in 'good spirits' early on the morning of 17 August 1878 when he greeted his carter and gave him instructions for the day's work. By ten o'clock his workers, accustomed to seeing him several times a day, noticed that he was missing and began to search for him. When they approached the banks of the River Evenlode they saw Hunt's two walking

sticks on the ground and a hat floating in the water. They found his body at the bottom of the river.

When a police constable arrived on the scene, he found £9 10s in gold in Hunt's pockets along with other coins and a watch that was still running. There was no sign of violence but the constable was troubled by something: a white pocket handkerchief marked W. S. Hunt that was 'tied tightly around the neck of the deceased'. [5]

At the inquest, one of his workers said that Hunt had been 'low spirited for a few weeks past'. Several witnesses commented on the handkerchief. Hunt's physician reported that he had been treating him for a bad leg, and stated that in his opinion his patient had been of 'unsound mind for a fortnight'. He was puzzled by the handkerchief and could offer no explanation. No one could. The jury returned an open verdict of 'found drowned'.

At the time of his death William Hunt was 54 years old. He was in ill health that possibly jeopardized his ability to oversee the operation of his farm as he once did. Relations between his young wife and the children from his first marriage were strained. His eldest daughter had just died, something a juror attempted to point out only to have the coroner dismiss this fact as irrelevant. He probably knew that he would also lose his baby son. At the time, epilepsy bore a social stigma that branded its victims as 'cursed'. Parents were often forced to put their child into care outside the home, usually in asylums where they were separated from other patients because it was believed that epilepsy was contagious. A grim fate for any child.

Fourteen-year-old Emily Hunt was now an orphan while three-year-old Ethel Margaret still had her mother.

It is not possible to state exactly what happened next but it appears that half of the farm reverted to the landlord with William Hunt's eldest son, Charles, retaining the tenancy of the remaining 430 acres and paying rent of £287 annually to the Duke of Marlborough. Although William Sutton Hunt might have had some wealth, he had to pay very large rental fees and could not always rely on having good harvests each year to ensure a steady income. The financial status of Annie Hunt after her husband's death is not known.

She left Oxfordshire with her daughters Annie and Edith. Emily was not with them while Ethel Margaret was living with an aunt and uncle in Oxford perhaps for her schooling. The whereabouts of young William are unknown until he was about thirteen years old when he turns up living at the Infant Orphan Asylum at Wanstead, Essex with some 500 other boys and girls. Then he dropped out of sight until the early 1900s when he was confined to the lunatic asylum at Powick near Worcester.[6] He died there in 1907 at the age of 30.

Annie and her two daughters settled in Brighton, where she ran a boarding house either as the owner or as an employee. She was listed in the 1881 census as a woman of 'independent means', perhaps because she received help from three cousins who appear to have taken the Hunt family under their wing after William Sutton Hunt's death or because William left some of his estate in trust to Annie for her use and for the children's education.

Annie showed a strong business sense in selecting a location near the busy Marine Pier. Annie's parents had valued education and had sent at least two of their five daughters to a girls' school at Kidlington, Oxfordshire. Later, Annie would see to it that all of her daughters were educated and prepared to be independent and self-supporting if necessary. Three of the Hunt sisters studied music: Emily, Annie and Margaret.

Mrs. Hunt left Brighton in 1889 and settled for a while in Hammersmith before moving to Gloucester. Edith still lived with her mother and worked as a costume saleswoman in London while Annie had found employment as a governess in a small school in Enfield. Margaret

continued to live in Oxford with her aunt, now a widow. Edith married in 1892 and Margaret appears as a witness on the marriage certificate.[7] In 1893, Annie Hunt's financial condition improved when she inherited £400, a small fortune, from the estate of her father Joseph thus ensuring her status as a woman of 'independent means'.[8]

Emily was out on her own teaching at a girls' school in Hastings. The intervening years brought more loss. In 1884, Emily's sister and Margaret's half-sister Helen, a governess, died of heart trouble at the age of twenty-four at the home of relatives at Potters Bar.

In May 1891, Emily and her half-sister Annie went to South Africa, where other members of their family were living. Margaret joined them later, possibly in 1896, after leaving school. Emily and Margaret established themselves as music teachers and governesses, eventually settling in Grahamstown where they taught at a girls' school. According to a family member the Hunt sisters did 'very well' in South Africa.[9] Emily and Margaret sailed back to England to stay permanently around 1901 or 1902. They settled at 54 Wellington Street, Gloucester with Margaret's mother Annie, who took in lodgers. The Hunts continued to give music lessons.

Then tragedy struck again, this time with Margaret's full, and Emily's half-sister Annie in what must have been a terrible blow to them with its all-too-familiar scenario. Like their father, Annie Hunt Gill was found drowned in a river, again in unexplained circumstances. Annie had also gone to South Africa, where she married Charles Gill, a mechanical engineer originally from Newcastle. Their first child Charles was born in 1901 and in 1904, a daughter Enid.

The Gills were staying at Williamstone farmhouse, owned by Charles's father, at Slaggyford, Northumberland, where they were in the habit of spending several months during the summer. Charles Gill was soon to return to work in South Africa, leaving his wife and children behind in England. On Monday, 19 September 1904, Charles Gill, at the request of his wife, went by train to nearby Alston to purchase special food for the baby Enid who had been unwell the previous day. He noticed nothing out of the ordinary about his wife that morning but soon after he left, Annie walked out of the house to the nearby Tyne River leaving her children with the maid. Upon arriving home at 10 a.m., Charles did not find his wife at home. Thinking she might have gone to the train to meet him, he went back to the train station to look for her. In the meantime a neighbor hearing that Mrs. Gill was missing went to look for her along the river where he noticed footprints in the sand. He followed them and found her body in the river at a point where the water was only two feet deep.

Annie was fully clothed and she was still wearing her hat. There were no marks of violence on her body. Her physician told the inquest that she had complained of being 'unwell' and that she was suffering from 'giddiness in the head'. The coroner found 'no evidence as to how she came to be there'.[10]

'I suspect it was suicide as a result of postnatal depression and the fact that she was going to stay behind in England with the children while her husband returned to work in Africa,' observed her granddaughter Virginia Milnes, who has visited Slaggyford. 'But it could have been an accident caused by slipping on rocks trying to cross the river which is very shallow there as it is not far from its source. Luckily they didn't decide it was suicide as she wouldn't have been able to be buried in the local churchyard which is where she is.'[10]

Meeting the young Ivor Gurney in 1905 through his godfather and their friend the Reverend Alfred Cheesman must have been a bright spot for these two tragedy-laden women. They opened their home and their hearts to him, nurtured and encouraged his dreams and provided an intellectually stimulating safe haven away from the turmoil of his own home. At the time Gurney first got to know the Hunts, Margaret's mother was a part of the household but in 1907, she died

from a breast and lung cancer, the same year their brother William died in the asylum. It was another difficult year for Emily and Margaret, but the appearance of Ivor continued to be a joy for them despite his sometimes difficult behavior. Margaret, or 'Madge' as he called her, became his favorite and ultimately his early muse while her affection for him deepened into love, but a love that she held in restraint. Ivor composed music for the Hunt sisters and later captured his feelings for Margaret in his poetry, notably 'On a Memory' composed during his incarceration at the City of London Mental Hospital.

In May 1914, when Margaret Hunt added a codicil to her will, Ivor Gurney signed it as one of the witnesses. Margaret, who seems to have inherited some of the coronary problems on the Hunt side of her family died of 'mitral stenosis' on 3 March 1919, following an attack of the flu. Emily was with her when she died at home. Margaret left an estate of £1,672 and established a trust fund to provide income for Emily for the rest of her life.

For Gurney, Margaret's death at only forty-four left a void in his life. He continued to visit with Emily but it was Margaret who had fed his soul. 'My work was meant for her,' he wrote in 'On a Memory'.

Although Emily continued to live at 54 Wellington Street for many years, she eventually moved to Southampton, where she lived with a niece. She died of bronchial pneumonia at her niece's home on 4 January 1955, just a few weeks shy of her ninety-first birthday.

Winthrop and Calista Rogers: *Champions of contemporary music*

The music publisher Winthrop L. Rogers was one of Ivor Gurney's strongest and most committed supporters. His unexpected death at the age of 56 in 1921 was a major blow to Gurney that deepened when the operation of the firm fell to Rogers' daughter Calista who subsequently rejected the music he submitted. Both Rogers were American musicians who believed in the importance of contemporary music and sought through their individual endeavors to bring it to the public.

When Winthrop Lincoln Rogers was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts on 25 February 1865, it was a small but thriving industrial city across the Mystic River from Boston. It boasted wide, elm-lined avenues and elegant homes that spoke of prosperity. Many immigrants, largely from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland had settled there as well as American-born individuals who would go on to achieve fame, among them the actor, producer, popular song writer George M. Cohan ('Yankee Doodle Dandy', 'Give My Regards to Broadway'), composer Amy Beach and the writer Horatio Alger.[12]

Rogers' father Charles, a successful crockery merchant, was a very wealthy man by the standards of his day. If the value of his home is anything to go by, the family lived in a mansion. Winthrop Lincoln (his names honor John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and President Abraham Lincoln) was the second of four children. The family eventually relocated to Boston, where Winthrop attended the Boston Latin School, the oldest school in America, having been founded in 1635 and still in existence today. Here he received an education grounded in the classics, the humanities and in 'dissent with responsibility'. In addition to his academic studies, Rogers proved to be an 'exceptionally good violinist' who had a love of vocal music.[13]

As a young man, Rogers moved to New York, where he married Mary Kinsley in 1892. The couple had two children, Calista (b. 3 October 1893) and Jennie (b. 1899), born in Brooklyn. Rogers had joined the music publishing firm of G. Schirmer, serving first as the company

treasurer. Shortly before the First World War, he became the firm's representative in London. He eventually bought Schirmer's London business and established a new publishing company under his own name Winthrop L. Rogers Co., Ltd. He championed the music of British composers, among them Ivor Gurney, John Ireland, Peter Warlock, Roger Quilter, Frederick Delius and Frank Bridge. In addition to contemporary music, Rogers also published early music, notably the Reverend Edward H. Fellowes' 36-volume collection of Elizabethan madrigals as well as Dowland's songs for lute. *The Sackbut*, a forum for modernism and controversy edited by Peter Warlock, was published from his offices.

'Winthrop Rogers is not only willing to back my songs pretty hard – to take many more, but he has sold out the first edition of some of the Elizas – already,' Gurney wrote to John Haines on 10 October 1920. 'He also advanced me £20 when it was very badly needed. The most engaging publisher that ever was'. (CL, pp. 503-504) Rogers continued to accept Gurney's songs as well as his *Five Preludes* prompting him to call Rogers a 'prince of publishers'. (CL, p. 505) Gurney was feeling confident and excited about the increasing possibilities with Rogers when he received word in early December 1921 that Rogers had died. [14]

By the time Rogers' daughter Calista took over the operation as managing director of the publishing company immediately after her father's death, Gurney had begun his decline. The manuscripts he submitted to her were apparently in disarray and often difficult and confusing to read. Although she tried to fulfill her father's commitment to Gurney, she rejected the music he sent to her.

Calista Rogers' actions were not those of a hard or difficult woman who had seized control of the company and was determined to run it her own way. She possessed her father's values and shared his belief in the importance of new music. As a professional singer, she began championing contemporary music early in her career and would continue to do so throughout her life, often taking on vocal challenges that other singers shunned like the music of the American experimental composer Harry Partch. Like her father, she felt an affinity with early music.

Calista attended private schools in New York City and the Institute of Musical Arts. She studied with W. S. Constantino Yon, organist and choirmaster at St. Vincent Ferrar Church, New York; pianist and composer Isidor Luckstone (1861-1941), and conductor, composer, pianist, singer George Henschel (1850-1934), among others.

A soprano, Calista Rogers began her singing career early, performing for the YMCA in France when she was 20. She lived in England for a period in 1913 and 1914, for longer periods in 1919 and after her father's death.[15] She toured extensively in England and America. She was also a folklorist and often programmed French, Irish and Scottish folk songs in her recitals.

Calista made her English debut in January 1920 in a recital that included music by Scarlatti, Bach, Delius, Quilter and the American John Alden Carpenter. Marion Scott reviewed it. 'In her voice there was a fresh, almost boy-like quality, though her lower register has more in warmth than a boy's…One feels that the music means more to her than mere personal success. Her intonation is flawless as that of a sweet flute, her phrasing firm, her sense of rhythm delicate and discriminating,' Scott wrote.[16]

Writing in the *New York Times*, the critic H.C. Colles echoed Scott's observation about Calista's performance priorities when he wrote '…she put the music first in her thought, chose well, grouping her songs so as to contrast different types not in every singer's repertory, and devoted herself to their expression.'[17]

Before settling in Pasadena, California around 1930, Calista Rogers taught at the South End Music School in Boston and at Mills College in Oakland, California. She became a well-known

figure in Pasadena music circles, enjoying tenure as the assistant conductor of the Bach Society. She held an informal recital series in her Swiss chalet-style home on a tree-lined street in this Los Angeles suburb, taught composition and continued her singing career. She focused more on experimental music and the works of controversial contemporary composers like Arnold Schoenberg and Harry Partch, prompting some concert-goers to accuse her of exercising 'poor taste' in the music she chose to present to the public. Calista Rogers died in 1970 at the age of 77.

Valentine Fane, Ivor Gurney and 'The Wind'

> *'The Wind' only. Signed by IG 'Valentine Fane', which could account for its uncharacteristic style. Gurney used a number of pseudonyms. Written on the back of an Oxford University Press, letterhead, dated 6 March 1929. On this evidence, and assuming it is composed by him, the latest poem of Gurney's that we have.* **P.J. Kavanagh**, endnote, *Ivor Gurney, Collected Poems*, 2004 Edition

> *My own hunch is that other Gurney personae usually written off as lunatic fictions – Michael Flood, Frederick Saxby(sic), Valentine Fane, Griffiths Davies and so on: there were many – may yet turn out to be comrades from the trenches, those other persons he so loved.* **Arnold Rattenbury**, *LRB* 1999

On 6 March 1929, Ivor Gurney wrote out a poem titled 'The Wind' on the reverse side of an Oxford University letterhead. He signed it 'IG "Valentine Fane"', and it has long been regarded as the last significant poem he composed. But did Gurney actually write it or was it indeed a poem written by the poet Valentine Fane that he copied from a publication because it resonated with him?

During the asylum years Gurney was in the habit of using pseudonyms for his music (Michael Flood, Frederick Saxty [a friend of Gurney's godfather Alfred Cheesman], Griffiths Davies), for his essays (Richard Wayland) and occasionally for his poems (John Daniels, John Halflight), but would Gurney have knowingly borrowed the exact name of a living poet as his own? Is the poem in character with Gurney's poetic voice?

As his last productive period of writing poetry drew to a close in 1926, Gurney turned his hand to writing essays in 1927 and 1928, 'the time beyond which we have almost no music or poetry,' observes Philip Lancaster in his Archive notes.[18] After such a long poetic silence, would Gurney suddenly compose such a well-crafted, flowing poem devoid of his usual stylistic inversions, abstractions and gnarled phrases? As late as 1931, doctors at Stone House noted that Gurney continued to write poetry, but no known poems survive from that period. Were they among his papers destroyed by Joy Finzi in her infamous bonfire or by another hand – Marion Scott's or Ronald Gurney's?

Although the name 'Valentine Fane' might sound made up, Valentine Cecil Fane did exist and her poetry appeared in a variety of publications, including *Punch*.[19] She was born on 30 January 1893 in the vicarage at All Saints Church, Nazeing, Essex to Cecil Fane (1859-1948) and Alice Goddard (1867-1899). Valentine's grandfather Thomas Goddard was the vicar at All Saints. Her father, a wealthy man, was a civil engineer educated at Eton and a Peer who could claim ancestry to William the Conqueror and the Earl of Westmorland.

The young family settled at Maltings Farm in nearby Little Hallingbury but on 1 February 1899, Valentine's mother died -- the day after her thirty-second birthday and two days after her daughter's sixth birthday -- leaving her husband a widower with a young child. He and Valentine continued to live at Maltings Farm with her nurse and two servants but Valentine also spent time with her mother's parents. Nothing is known of her education but it is clear that she developed an interest in writing poetry at an early age. By the time of her father's remarriage in 1913, she was already a published poet.

The first poem by her that it has been possible to trace, 'The Woodland Legend', appeared in *The Windsor Magazine* in June 1912, when she was 19 years old. This was followed by 'The Woodland Country' in the November 1914 issue of *The Windsor Magazine*.[20]

In 1916 she submitted another poem, 'What's News?', to *Top-Notch*, an American pulp magazine that seems an unlikely outlet for a young English woman poet considering that it featured articles about cowboys, baseball and adventure fiction. However, Valentine was not the only English woman poet to be published in that issue. She was joined by Eileen Newton (1883-1930), from the Whitby area, whose poem 'Last Leave' has appeared in anthologies of First World War poetry.[21] Both Fane and Newton were in good company as *Top-Notch* published major writers including Jack London, Upton Sinclair and Isaac Asimov, and its pages were illustrated by some of the finest American artists, N.C. Wyeth among them.

The extant copies of Valentine Fane's published poems date from her late teens and early twenties. While they reflect the writing of a young poet searching for her voice, it is clear that she was a keen observer of nature and its moods. She was also a young woman searching for something elusive in her life – joy ('…grant me a little before I die').[22] At times her imagery is not unlike that of 'The Wind' – trees, wind, night images, restlessness. For example, in her poem 'A Prayer', she writes: '…The patterned shadows move on the orchard grass,/The branches tremble and stir as the wind goes by/Light across heaven vague cloud-wreaths gather and pass…'; '…the leaves tremble under the wind…'; 'A dream – a breath of the wind – a gleam in the dark…'. To her the moon is 'cold', uncaring, heedless of those who suffer but in the darkness she finds a spark, the one that might grant her the joy she seeks.[23]

In 'The Waveless Sea: '…the wind blows soft and free…'; 'The days are hot and weary, the long nights bring no rest…'.[24] One can perhaps detect the influence of A. E. Housman in a poem titled 'The Call', composed during the First World War: '…Like silver shine the quiet hills from foot to wooded brow,/And through the mist, with jingling teams, the lads go out to plough…'.[25] But all was not seriousness with Valentine Fane. She balanced her serious side with an easy wit and a satirical bent present in some of her lighter verse.

However, the trajectory of her own life, one of non-conformity, punctuated by loneliness, isolation, depression, eccentric behaviour and unspoken sorrows might well have contributed to the development of a more mature and introspective poetic voice capable of writing 'The Wind'.

When Valentine Fane was in her late teens, she attended an opera, a seemingly ordinary night out that would change her life dramatically. Sitting in the audience was John Barnard, a wealthy older man and landowner from a philanthropic Harlow family. According to a Fane relative, Barnard was immediately drawn to the young woman who sat nearby.[26] Once they were introduced, the attraction was mutual despite the difference in their ages: Barnard was in his early forties at the time. Exactly when she became his mistress is not known but when Valentine Fane's father remarried in October 1913, she was a bridesmaid and Barnard was a guest. They lived together at Barnard's home in Harlow until his death in 1918 at the age of 49. Unusually

for the time, Barnard was cremated. He left the bulk of his estate, property and personal items, to Valentine Fane as he planned to do as early as 1913, shortly after they met.

There are hints of a child. A four-line poem signed 'Valentine Cecil Fane' and written in perfect mirror writing suggests that she had given birth to a baby, a secret eventually revealed through a broken confidence. What became of the child, when it was born and who fathered it, if indeed there were one, is not clear. However, Valentine did live for a time in Wales with a relative, possibly as her niece Sheila Johnson suggests, to have the baby.

There is a gap in Valentine Fane's life until 1926, by which time she had two half-sisters and two half-brothers ranging in age from seven to 12. Because she was so much older than her siblings, she was removed from their lives and later from the lives of their children as they were from hers. She was living at High Wych, Sawbridgeworth on an estate she had inherited from John Barnard, in a large Georgian house standing rather like an island floating in the vast, lonely fields that surrounded her. Her property contained cottages for her workers, gardens, two ponds, barns and many animals that were very important to her.[27] She held shooting parties on her farms, seemingly contradicting her own love of animals.

In her later years, Valentine Fane was fair in appearance, slim but not tall and was regarded as 'quite clever' by family members. Her niece Sheila Johnson recalls her as a heavy smoker who wore skirts to her ankles, but who was gentle and 'lived a very different life'. By the 1950s, Valentine Fane was living and sleeping in the kitchen of her home. At one time part of the house was damaged by fire caused perhaps when she fell asleep while smoking, but these conditions did not drive her to seek living quarters in one of her cottages or, apparently, to repair the damage. She had built her life at High Wych and she continued to live there as it was. The dwelling was half the size it is now and had no gas. Water had to be drawn from a well. She kept chickens that had free run of the garden and were even allowed to join her in the kitchen. She also possessed a most unusual collection: one of classic automobiles, including a Bentley, which was possibly the vehicle she drove.

Valentine Fane was highly respected by her tenants and people in the area who always referred to her as 'Miss Fane'. She treated her workers with great kindness and generosity ensuring that they would be taken care of after her death. Towards the end of her life, the people living in one of her cottages took care of her and provided meals.

'The few times I saw my aunt she seemed so gentle. It would appear that in her younger days, she loved life but something went wrong,' observed Sheila Johnson. 'I wonder whether it was a broken heart at the loss of John Barnard, or another loss – a child perhaps – and the early loss of her mother that caused her to live as she did? There are unanswered questions, but 'The Wind' does seem to me to compare with my aunt's life and having seen where she lived in those surroundings I can almost hear her saying the words.'[28]

The details of Valentine Fane's life remain obscure. She was an outsider in her family, the much older sister and maiden aunt whose early life was one of privilege and bright hope. But something happened to her that marked a shift in her dreams and she eventually ended up living an eccentric existence alone on her isolated estate. Her poetry was the one current of stability in her life, the one that gave her the strongest identity within her family. Even her step-mother took enough pride in her work to paste copies of her published poems in a family album. However, with the exception of these few poems, the bulk of Valentine Fane's work appears to be lost. No manuscripts are known to survive.

As a result, there are more questions than answers to the riddle of who composed 'The Wind'. Why would Ivor Gurney choose the name Valentine Fane? It is a very unusual name, not one

that he is likely to have made up or drawn from thin air. It had to have some association for him. Did he know her? There is a very remote possibility that he did, as suggested by Sheila Johnson. When Gurney was training at Epping in the summer of 1915, Valentine Fane lived on the edge of Epping in Harlow. Had they met briefly? Did Gurney later recall her name when he was thinking about pseudonyms? In 1921, Gurney began using pseudonyms for his music stating 'I am Michael Flood for Pot Boilers now.' (CL, p. 507). If Gurney had composed 'The Wind' he would have known that it was a good poem, not a 'pot boiler', but one worthy of his own name, so why would he want to give credit to Valentine Fane? Or had he seen Valentine Fane's name in a publication as the author of 'The Wind' and relating to the poem and its message, had he copied it out putting his initials next to her name for reasons known only to himself?

Thus we are left with a puzzle: without a copy of the printed poem or a manuscript signed by Valentine Fane, we cannot state with any certainty that she composed the poem that bears Gurney's initials and her name nor can we state with absolute certainty that 'The Wind' is the work of Ivor Gurney who signed her name to a poem that might have been his own!

Valentine Fane outlived Gurney by nearly forty years, dying from pneumonia on 11 January 1977 just two weeks shy of her 84th birthday. However, several years before her death, she made a strange request. 'I desire,' she wrote 'that before my burial the doctor who may be attending me at my death or who shall pronounce life extinct shall first sever the main artery in my wrist in order to make certain that I am dead.'[29]

Notes

The Hunt Sisters

1. According to documents in the Oxford Record Office, a survey of 1847 and a directory for 1876, the chief landowners of Fawler and Charlbury parishes were Lord Churchill, The Duke of Marlborough and Lord Dillon.
2. Catherine (1854-1857), Charles 1856, Miriam 1858, Helen 1860, Caroline Jane 1862, Emily 1864.
3. Copy of a letter in the possession of Virginia Milnes.
4. According to a Hunt relation, the William born in 1877 was 'born with epilepsy' probably West's Syndrome, a very rare form of epilepsy, that strikes within a few months of birth.
5. 'Sad Case of Drowning', *The Oxford Times*, 24 August 1878. All quotations about the drowning were taken from this source. Collection of Virginia Milnes.
6. Edward Elgar played in the Powick band before William's time.
7. Edith and her husband John Simmonds emigrated to Nova Scotia. When Ivor Gurney's younger sister Dorothy left England in July 1924, she sailed to Nova Scotia with the intention of working at 'Domestic Farming'. Emily Hunt arranged for her to stay with Edith and John Simmonds at their farm in Egerton, Pictou County, Nova Scotia. Dorothy had saved $250 (Canadian), a considerable amount of money back then, to establish herself in Canada, where, according to an immigration document she intended to remain 'permanently'. She listed her occupation in Gloucester as 'clerk'. (Document provided by Ron Morris)
8. Approximately £48,000 by today's calculation.
9. The letter writer does not indicate which of the Hunt sisters were doing 'very well'. Collection of Virginia Milnes.
10. *The Hexham Herald*, Saturday, 24 September 1904. Collection of Virginia Milnes.
11. Correspondence with the author, 2 December 2010.

Winthrop and Calista Rogers

12. In 1908 a fire destroyed half of Chelsea, leaving the city in ruins, the elegance that Rogers had known reduced to ashes. The city never recovered.
13. *The Music Trade Review*, December 17, 1921, p. 21.
14. Boosey and Hawkes handles the Rogers' catalogue today.
15. Rogers lived at 15 Cheyne Gardens, London, in 1919, just down the street from Ralph Vaughan Williams who lived at 13 Cheyne Walk during the same time.
16. Marion Scott, 'English Notes', *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 March 1920.
17. H.C. Colles, 'Music: Miss Calista Rogers', the *New York Times*, 24 October 1923. Henry Cope Colles (1879-1943) was an English music critic, author and major contributor to *The Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

Valentine Fane

18. Philip Lancaster, Gloucestershire Archives, 'Essays, Reviews and other prose pieces', D10500/1/3 [ver.2 (3.vii.2011)].
19. Gurney used the name 'Valentine' on one other occasion. In late 1926, he wrote an essay perhaps with the *Christian Science Monitor* in mind for publication. He included a short poem – 'Folk that are of long delight and love to see dawn…' – and signed the manuscript '(Ivor Gurney.) Valentine Melterlin'.
20. I have not been able to locate printed copies of either poem.
21. I have not been able to locate a copy of this issue of *Top-Notch*. Newton was also the author of the poem 'Somewhere a Voice is Calling' that became a popular song composed by Arthur F. Tate in 1911 and was part of Irish tenor John McCormack's repertoire.
22. From 'A Prayer' published in *The Windsor Magazine* 1916.
23. Ibid. The few copies of Valentine Fane's early published poems were pasted into a family album by her stepmother. Private Collection: Sheila Johnson.
24. 'The Waveless Sea', published in *The Grand Magazine* in 1915.
25. 'The Call' – there is no indication where it was published or exactly when.
26. David Ferrand conversation with Sheila Johnson.
27. Valentine Fane's property has had three owners since she died in 1977. It has been fully restored and expanded with the barns now listed to ensure future preservation.
28. Correspondence with the author, June, August 2011.
29. Valentine Fane's Will, dated 24 January 1973.

Author's Note

I should be sharing my byline with Ron Morris, Virginia Milnes, Sylvia Montgomery and Sheila Johnson without whom this article would be a lot shorter, less accurate and less informative. Each has contributed in valuable ways that have made the Hunt sisters and Valentine Fane become more than just names associated with Ivor Gurney. They have helped me to bring them to life and, in the process, turn my curiosity to learn more about them into an adventure of discovery with some stunning surprises along the way.

There is nothing more breathtaking than to experience a statistical unlikelihood while doing research, but that's exactly what happened to me as I began to delve more deeply into the backgrounds of Emily and Margaret Hunt. I live in Brevard, North Carolina, a small community

anchored on the floor of a wide, fertile river valley in the southern Appalachian Mountains of the United States. Viewed from the air, it appears to sit in the middle of nowhere surrounded by thickly forested mountains that rise from 3,000 to 6,000 feet. Few Americans today have ever heard of Brevard, even fewer people from other countries and virtually no one when Margaret Hunt's aunt Mary Roberts Jenkins, her husband Albert and their six children settled here in 1872, only 11 years after Brevard's founding. It seems an unlikely place to pick up the trail of the Hunt sisters, but it was here that scattered pieces of the puzzle of their lives fell into place and where a photograph of Margaret Hunt had been tucked into a family album for some 120 years. Margaret and Emily Hunt never visited Brevard but Margaret's mother Annie Roberts Hunt kept her sister Mary informed about the family in England and in South Africa.

More information about the Hunt sisters came to light in England thanks to the tenacious research of Margaret's cousin Virginia Milnes, who resides almost within the shadow of Ivor Gurney's Stone House and Scotland-based genealogist Ron Morris, who has a family connection with Ivor Gurney, which is how all of this began (but more on that another time). Without them the details of the Hunt family would have remained buried. It was Ron Morris, living some 4200 miles away from me, who discovered the Brevard connection literally in my own back yard and led me to Sylvia Montgomery, Margaret's cousin and a Brevard native.

Meanwhile in England Virginia Milnes had spent some fifteen years trying to learn more about Annie Hunt Gill, the grandmother she never knew. It wasn't until Ron posted some of our discoveries on Ancestry.com that she was able to make the connection between Emily and Margaret Hunt and her grandmother, their sister. As a result, Virginia picked up their trail in England, visited the farm where Emily and Margaret had been born and the rivers where her great grandfather and her grandmother had drowned. She and Ron tracked down more family connections in South Africa and New Zealand, and Virginia was thus able to obtain copies of letters written as Hunt family history was being made. She also obtained copies of various documents that ultimately shed more light on the Hunt family. Sylvia Montgomery provided photographs, including the one believed to be of Margaret Hunt, as well as the history of Albert and Mary Roberts Jenkins in Brevard.

Today, the Brevard home of Mary Roberts Jenkins known as 'Bevere' and named after a place near Worcester, England, still stands on a low rise across the flood plane just two miles behind my home. It has a commanding view of the valley and the mountains, and the land surrounding it is still farmed. The Jenkins had purchased the house and more than 320 acres for $1,900 and farmed and raised sheep. Mary brought forget-me-nots with her from England and planted them around her new home. Albert Jenkins had been a corn merchant in England. At first they were not welcomed in the community because the closed-minded locals did not want 'foreigners' living among them so they tried to drive them away. In one instance they destroyed their entire cabbage crop and in another someone stole their prized ram. The Jenkins persevered and eventually became respected members of the community. They had three more children here and were active in St. Philips Episcopal Church in Brevard, where the church historian wrote the first history of the Roberts/Jenkins families only a few years ago. Many of Margaret's cousins still live in the county. One cousin recently surveyed my property but at the time I had no idea of the Hunt connection to Brevard or that I was talking to one of Margaret Hunt's cousins. Life is full of amazing, I-don't-believe-this surprises!

A few years ago my curiosity about Valentine Fane got the better of me and I began to root around for information. I discovered a reference to her on a Peerage site that listed her as the 'son' of Cecil Fane but references on Ancestry.com told a different story. Eventually I was able

to track down her half-nephew Christopher Langdon who put me in touch with Valentine's half-niece Sheila Johnson. Mrs. Johnson had not known her aunt well but she remembered her very clearly from visits to her home when she was a child. She also felt sad that she had not known Valentine better so she set about to do additional research -- talking to relatives, looking through archives, interviewing the current owners of her aunt's property, digging about in libraries -- that enabled me to piece together the complicated life of a promising woman who ended up living a lonely eccentric life on a rundown estate with her chickens, cigarettes, classic automobiles and memories. Mrs. Johnson's personal quest to learn more about her aunt is not over yet. I also owe thanks to Nazeing historian David Pracy, Virginia Milnes and Ron Morris who also provided me with additional information about Valentine Fane.

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