

THE HYMN SOCIETY

OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

BULLETIN 121

VOLUME SEVEN

NUMBER SIX

SPRING, 1971

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JAMES MONTGOMERY IN THE CHURCH OF TO-DAY

BY ERIK ROUTLEY

I neither wish to repeat what I wrote of Montgomery nearly twenty-five years ago (published in *I'll Praise my Maker*, 1951) nor to anticipate what may be said at our Summer Conference of him. I thought it worth while, however, to offer a few simple facts about his hymns as they appear to be in use at present. I have examined seventeen current hymn books, eleven English and six American. These are the *English Hymnal*, the *Church Hymnary*, the *Methodist Hymn Book* (with HS 1969 counting as one book) *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, the *B.B.C. Hymn Book*, *Congregational Praise*, *Hymns of the Faith*, *The Baptist Hymnal*, *Hymns for Church and School* and the *Anglican Hymn Book*: with these from America—*The Hymnal* (1940), *The Pilgrim Hymnal*, *The Hymnal* (Presbyterian) and the *Methodist Hymnal*, all their latest editions, and the *Canadian Hymnal* and *Hymn Book* (Episcopal), which are shortly to be conflated in one new united hymnal for Canada.

I found that in these seventeen hymn books there is one hymn of Montgomery's which does not miss a single one: that is 'Hail to the Lord's Anointed.' For good measure, it is one of the two of

his included in the *Parish Hymnal*. There is one hymn which is missed by only one book: 'Angels from the realms of glory' did not get into the English Hymnal. The next most popular is 'Prayer is the soul's sincere desire', which misses three, and then come 'Stand up and bless the Lord', missing four, and 'Pour out thy Spirit', missing five. In all these seventeen books, 31 hymns of Montgomery are used, and they are distributed as follows:

Congregational Praise (1951)	...	...	...	...	22	(17)
The Anglican Hymn Book (1965)	...	...	...	...	17	(15)
Hymns of Faith (1964)	...	...	...	...	16	(15)
The Hymn Book (Canadian Episcopal 1938)	...	...	...	...	16	(12)
Methodist Hymn Book (1933)	...	...	...	...	15	(9)
Church Hymnary (1927)	...	...	...	...	15	(13)
Baptist Hymn Book (1962)	...	...	...	...	14	(11)
The Hymnal (1940)	...	...	...	...	14	(14)
The Hymnary (Canadian United 1930)	...	...	...	...	12	(12)
Hymns Ancient and Modern (1950)	...	...	...	...	11	(10)
BBC Hymn Book (1951)	...	...	...	...	11	(13)
Pilgrim Hymnal (1958)	...	...	...	...	11	(11)
Methodist Hymnal (USA 1966)	...	...	...	...	10	(11)
English Hymnal (1906)	...	...	...	...	9	(8)
The Hymnal (Presbyterian USA 1955)	...	...	...	...	9	(10)
Songs of Praise (1931)	...	...	...	...	8	(7)
Hymns for Church and School (1964)	...	...	...	...	7	(12)

(The figures in brackets roughly indicate the weight given to Montgomery's hymns by expressing the proportion on the basis of a hymn book of 600 hymns).

A modern 'Julian' could therefore claim that about 31 of Montgomery's hymns are in 'common use'. I expect it could be shown not only that the hymns appear in the books as stated but also that they are genuinely in use. I notice, for example, that of the generous 22 in Congregational Praise, only two have not been used in my own church during the past 3½ years, and over a longer period all 22 have certainly been sung. I should doubt whether any of the hymns in 'common use' has turned out in practice to be a non-starter. The secret of this is partly in the remarkable reliability of Montgomery when he is on his best form, and partly in the fact that he always, in this 'canon' of 31, uses metres which are easily set to music. Of these 31 only 'Praise the Lord through every nation' is in a peculiar metre, and that is the metre of *WACHET AUF*, which is at last really getting the honour in Britain that it deserves.

This does mean that probably no hymn of Montgomery's ever inspired a great tune. They all seem, in the books, to take their tunes from the pool from which other hymns mostly in psalm tune metres take theirs. Only a few have settled down with tunes of 'their own'. 'Stand up and bless the Lord' is on the whole a

predictable partner for *CARLISLE*, 'Be known to us in breaking bread' of *BELMONT* and 'Angels from the realms of glory' of *LEWES* or of *IRIS*: but all these tunes were written in other contexts and may be found with other words. The one exception to this generalisation is perhaps 'Songs of praise the angels sang', which has inspired three twentieth century tunes: Martin Shaw's *RILEY* (*SP* 644) was a howler in setting the hymn in eight-line verses; its sense simply preludes that. *NORTHAMPTON* (*AM* 369) achieved a wide popularity in the constituency served by that book without convincing many other editors of its inevitability; and John Wilson's *LAUDS* (*HS* 64), certainly the most imaginative setting of this text, is now taking off for what one hopes will be a very successful journey. But then 'Songs of praise' is an unusually challenging text—it is a hymn which some editors understandably thought trivial enough to omit (the Americans don't take much to it and the Baptists and *BBC* left it out), but in which others see special distinction. Myself I have always felt that given the right tune (*LAUDS* is to me the right tune) it displays unusual and welcome richness, especially as a hymn for use just after Christmas.

That is, however, not what Montgomery usually does. He is normally in the best sense 'plain'. And just as only that hymn has inspired a good tune of its own, so it is fair to say that few if any of his hymns have been wedded with really lamentable partners. The most eminent example of that is 'For ever with the Lord', which on the whole was ruined by its association with an unusually dreadful tune. Probably it was that tune (which R.V.W. admitted to the first edition of *EH*) which diminished its chances of being a hundred per cent 'winner' in editorial choice. There was real danger at one time that a tune called *THANKSGIVING* would wreck the chances of 'Hark, the song of jubilee', but at least one or two editors have recognised that the proper tune, in the sense of being the tune originally written for that hymn, is *ST GEORGE'S*, *WINDSOR*: and in those circles (I myself move in them) in which 'Come ye thankful people come' arouses awkward questions at harvest time it is the more useful to be able to keep Elvey's tune alive: indeed, it is a commonplace tune in its own right, but it does offer an unexpected flexibility and strength as a setting of Montgomery's second verse (see e.g. *CP* 325 v 2).

The remarkable consistency with which editors have made their selections from Montgomery is sufficient testimony to his central position between those who used to be distinguished as evangelicals and catholics. There is a directness and a passion in his hymns which the Tractarians would have viewed with suspicion: *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in its first full edition of 1861 took only three of his hymns: 'Songs of praise', 'Hail to the Lord's Anointed' and 'Lord, pour thy spirit' (thus always altered in that book). The 'standard' edition with second supplement, almost exactly three

times as capacious, included thirteen, of which the 1950 edition omitted 'O Spirit of the living God' and 'Praise the Lord through every nation'. The English Hymnal was similarly cautious, but it could not resist including both the famous teaching hymns on prayer [78, 474]. The more domestic hymns of Montgomery died earliest: but his remarkable gift for combining authentic Christian teaching with missionary passion saw to it that in *EH* he has only one hymn fewer than Isaac Watts. There were others who rose to greater heights—and plumbed greater depths to be sure: what distinguished Montgomery, on the evidence of hymn books published from 100 to 150 years after he was writing, in his centrality. He maintained equally stable relations with catholic teaching of the church and with the evangelical passion of the revivalists. He wears remarkably well. Of contemporary hymn books it is only the *Cambridge Hymnal* that entirely overlooks him. There is nothing very surprising about that.

PERCY BUCK (1871–1947) A CENTENARY ASSESSMENT

BY LEONARD BLAKE

The current decade provides us with a large number of important hymnological centenaries. Hymn-writers and translators and hymn-tune composers born during the 1870's include C. A. Alington, G. W. Briggs, Geoffrey and Martin Shaw, Sydney Nicholson, Holst and Vaughan Williams; among those who died in the same period were Sir H. W. Baker, Edward Caswall, Catherine Winkworth, John Chandler, H. J. Gauntlett, Henry Smart, and S. S. Wesley. From previous centuries we shall be bound to recall at least Watts (b. 1674), Charles Coffin (b. 1676), William Croft (b. 1678), Montgomery (b. 1771), and Paul Gerhardt (d. 1676).

A less commanding figure than some of these, perhaps, but one whose work as a tune-writer entitles him to both recollection and some re-assessment on the centenary of his birth, was Sir Percy Carter Buck (b. 25th March 1871, d. 3rd October, 1947). Nurtured under Parry at the R.C.M., and then coming strongly under the influence of W. H. Hadow at Worcester College, Oxford, Buck was a life-long exponent of what Frank Howes has described as "the broad humane attitude to music and to musical education" which stemmed from those great figures of the English musical renaissance. He was organist for a few years successively at Wells and Bristol cathedrals before taking up in 1901 the directorship of music at Harrow School, with which his name has always been most firmly linked, and it was the special circumstances of Harrow Chapel that provided the incentive for nearly all his hymn-tune writing. He wrote little else in the way of church music: some organ works, of which only the charming preludes on 'In dulci jubilo' and

'The holly and the ivy' survive, two or three chants, and a handful of short anthems, though he played an important part with Fellowes and others in editing *Tudor Church Music* (1923) under the auspices of the Carnegie Trust.

The booklet *Fourteen Hymn Tunes*, published by Stainer and Bell in 1913 but long since out of print, is the core of Buck's work in this field. In a preface he explains how he had found unison singing to be the rule at Harrow, but an insufficient supply of tunes suitable for this purpose in "services which demand a dozen hymns every week". "The wisdom of John Farmer had provided a large number of Chorales, which I inherited with gratitude", he says; then follow some observations which are worth quoting in full, for they reveal the source of features which give Buck's tunes a special place in the hymnody of his period:

"My first thoughts turned to Plainsong,* which I have always thought the most beautiful form of unison-singing conceivable. A very few experiments, however, convinced me that this was too delicate a porcelain to be handled by such promiscuous body of singers. The experience, nevertheless, taught me two truths which I had not suspected. I found that a large body of untrained singers could readily learn to sing in irregular rhythm: that is to say, they rather relished the departure from the adamant four bar phrases of the normal hymn-tune. And I found, further, that they appreciated and sang well those little groups of notes on single syllables which are characteristic of melismatic Plainsong. In most of the tunes here printed one or the other of these features is incorporated, and they present little or no difficulty to the boys in actual performance."

I remember an afternoon in one of Buck's classes at the R.C.M., when he was talking, with that disarmingly easy, blue-eyed smile behind which we knew lurked an intensely acute and wise mind, about what made a good tune. To illustrate rhythmic monotony he sat down and played through MELCOMBE with metronomic rigidity, and asked us how we liked it. I have always thought that he was a little unfair to MELCOMBE, but there could have been no more vivid indication of his own ideals of rhythmic freedom in hymn-singing, and the need to escape from stereotyped 'minimty'.

The *Fourteen Tunes*† include several which have found a place

*He contributed harmonisations of four tunes (Nos. 18, 133, 153, and 156) to *A Plainsong Hymn Book* (Clowes, 1932).

†The names by which some of them are known in hymn books do not appear in this original collection: each is headed by the first line of words. Only one verse is given below each tune. The pages are printed only on one side, and are perforated, presumably so that they could be detached for more convenient use with books containing the complete words.

in standard hymnals, though only GONFALON ROYAL and MARTINS (*alias* ST SEBASTIAN) have been adopted at all widely. The former, written originally for 'Vexilla regis prodeunt' (hence its proud name), can easily be described as Buck's most popular tune, and has been set to a bewildering variety of hymns. Its fine forward thrust is greatly helped by the harmonic movement at the end of its first two phrases—the cadence in the dominant not being allowed to stand still; by the 'run-on' from the third to the fourth phrase; and by its melodic sweep, strongly characterised by the interval of the perfect fourth and the melismatic half-note groups, obviously influenced by plainsong, as are the final cadence and Amen. MARTINS, as pithily joyous an utterance as could be imagined for the citizens of heaven with their 'endless Alleluia', has the same free sense of adventure, combined with singableness: a lightness of touch which is found equally, if less exuberantly, in RESURRECTION MORNING (EH 136) and DRAW NIGH (EH 307). Note the melismata in these. DULCIS MEMORIA appears in *Clarendon* and *HCS* (its opening rhythm slightly altered in the latter, as allowed by the composer for the *Worksop College Hymn Book*, 1938, where it is set to 'My God, and is thy table spread'). It shows the plainsong influence most sensitively, yet entirely without conscious archaism: there is a 'run-on' from the third to the fourth phrase similar to that in GONFALON ROYAL, and the way the melody then quietly folds back on itself is masterly.

A very different affair from this is JUDICIUM, reprinted among the *Fourteen Tunes* by permission of the Proprietors of the Public School Hymn Book, since Buck had written it for the Latin 'Dies irae' in the first edition of that book (1903). Not only is it now to be found in *PHSB*'s successor, *HCS* (140) and in *Clarendon* (36): it is one of the very few tunes of its generation, and the only one by a public school composer, to have achieved a place in *The Cambridge Hymnal*—to sombre lines by T. S. Eliot. It moves with measured tread and strong, emotive harmonies to a final breakaway from rhythmic regularity which is most effective. Unfortunately the expressive directions, 'Quite slowly' *piano*, and markings for *crescendo* and *diminuendo*—presumably Buck's own—which were in *PSHB* have not been preserved in the later reprints, for they are a clear warning against a heavy, tub-thumping treatment. One of the most striking features of Buck's work is that he constantly avoided the pounding heartiness, the blatant *bonhomie*, and the overdone climatic effects to which public school composers have all too often been prone. It may be added that in the same way, despite his predilection for plainsong, he never affected a 'folky' idiom.

The hymns to which the remainder of the *Fourteen Tunes* are set are: the Latin 'Stabat Mater' (a broad sinuous melody, economical in construction, using both melisma and modulation with typical grace); 'Sweet the moments, rich in blessing' (marked 'For

treble voices': delightfully fresh and simple-hearted); 'Drop, drop, slow tears' (a not unworthy match for Gibbons's SONG 46); Ten-nyson's 'Strong Son of God'; three evening hymns—'O Strength and Stay', 'Saviour, again to thy dear Name we raise', and 'Sweet Saviour, bless us ere we go' (public schools have now largely lost the tradition of fervent communal Evensong to which these tunes eloquently testify); and finally, 'Praise God for Martin blest' (a saint's day hymn by Isabel Baynes Badcock in the unusual metre 64.64.64. The concise, vigorous tune seems to cry out for some dynamic words on a contemporary theme; it could very easily become popular).

The *Harrow School Hymn Book*, which first appeared in 1855, had gone through five editions before Buck's arrival in 1901. It was revised again in 1908 and 1927—the year of his retirement from the school. The seventh edition contained five of the *Fourteen Tunes* and seven others by him. MONT RICHARD, originally written for 'Ride on, ride on in majesty', is in *SP* (148) and *EH* (633). Its limited compass and economy of material, with Buck's favourite device of folding the melody back on itself gives it an austere strength. It is finally suited to massed unison singing but, as usual, he holds public school heartiness tactfully in check. HAMILTON HOUSE (*Harrow* 142, to 'Fight the good fight') and GLENCOT (224, to 'All hail the power') seem more self-conscious in the effort to avoid four-square marching rhythms. No doubt Buck was always aware that the freedom and subtlety which presented little difficulty to his schoolboys, with opportunities for regular practice, would not necessarily come off with the heterogeneous, unrehearsed congregations of ordinary churches. The one tune, HERGA, which he did write for a general hymn book (*AM* 1904—but it is not preserved in *AMR*)* is wholly in 'adamant four bar phrases'.

Of the other tunes in the *Harrow Book*, ST BARNABAS (126, to 'O Son of God, our Captain of Salvation') is entirely straightforward, built on a single melodic idea. MELLIFONT (15) enfolds 'Sun of my soul' with the warmth of D flat major—another contribution to the evening hymn repertory—while avoiding both a too obvious rhythm and over-ripe harmony. As in many other instances, Buck keeps his harmonic scheme fresh by eschewing a central full close in the dominant. DULCOT (80, to Herrick's 'In the hour of my distress') and PATER NOSTER (4, to 'My Father, for another night') show him in his most sensitive and unpretentious manner, yet each says something distinctive about its familiar metre. The latter tune was published separately in 1926 by the Year Book Press, with varied accompaniment for alternate verses.†

**AM* (Standard edition) 711.

†Buck wrote two versions of ST MAGNUS for the *AM* publication *A Selection of Tunes with varied harmonies* (1912), both of them more restrained than many of the elaborate affairs in that book!

The special conditions for which Buck's tunes were written encouraged him to pursue characteristics which may limit their common usefulness. Some may strike the man in the pew as too much like 'musicians music'. Some are allied to words which may now have had their day, and might not remarry with other words as easily as GONFALON ROYAL. But among the total of twenty-odd there is not one without interest. They cover a very wide expressive range, from the joyousness of MARTINS to the solemnity of JUDICIUM and the intimacy of DULCIS MEMORIA. They show skill and imagination in dealing with a great variety of metres. The conventional minim movement of HERGA does not lessen one's respect for such confident treatment—in ternary form—of a twelve-line stanza in 87's. The six IM tunes are as different from one another in rhythmic pattern as they all are from the MELCOMBE which I heard him pillory.

If nothing by Buck has made quite the impact of a LAUDATE DOMINUM (Parry), a THORNBURY, a DOWN AMPNEY or SINE NOMINE, his work, seen as a whole, gives him a high place among hymn-tune composers of his period. He speaks with a distinctive voice, and always with grace, among such figures as Parry, Stanford, Harwood,* Walford Davies, Nicholson, the Shaws, and Vaughan Williams, and in these days when conventional patterns in church music are increasingly suspect his freshness of approach may well commend him to further consideration by editors.

REFERENCE LIST FOR BUCK'S TUNES in some current books (provided by the Editor) with the first line of the text for which they were written.

	Harrow	EH	AM	HCS	others
DULCIS JESU MEMORIA, L.M. (Dulcis Jesu Memoria)	206			147	
DULCOT, 7.7.7.6. (In the hour of my distress)	80				
DRAW NIGH (EVENLODE), 10.10. (Draw nigh and take the Body)	156	307			
GLENCOT,, C.M. (All hail the power)	224				
GONFALON ROYAL, L.M. (The royal banners)	84	141	HT 55	7	CH, CP M, B & c
HAMILTON HOUSE, L.M. (Fight the good fight)	142				

*From whose copy of the *Fourteen Tunes*, inscribed "With kindest remembrances, P.C.B.", and now in the Colles Library at Addington Palace, I have been able to work in preparing this article.—L.B.

HERGA, 87.87. triple (Christians, sing the incarnation)	S 711		
JUDICIUM, 888.888 trochaic (Dias Irae)	41	140	Camb
MARTINS (St Sebastian) 10.10.7 (Sing Alleluia forth)	R 283	226	CP, B
MELLIFONT, L.M. (Sun of my soul)	18		
MONT RICHARD, L.M. (Ride on, ride on in majesty)	633		SP
PATER NOSTER, C.M. (My Father, for another night)	4		
RESURRECTION MORNING, 8:7.8.3 (On the Resurrection Morning)	136		
STABAT MATER, 8.8.7.8.8.7 (Stabat Mater)	87		
ST BARNABAS, 11.10.11.10 (O Son of God, our Captain)	126		

REVIEW: AN ESSAY IN LOCAL HYMNOLOGY

The Reverend D. M. Sale, formerly Vicar of Holy Trinity, Southwell, and now of Selborne, Hants, has with loving assiduity compiled a history of Nottinghamshire hymn writers under the title, *Hymn Writers of Nottinghamshire and their hymns*, copies of the typescript of which have been deposited with the Nottingham City and County Libraries. In 14 short chapters (57 pages of typescript) he has listed all the hymn-writers who had some discernible association with places in the county, and provides also a helpful map of places referred to in his text.

Some of the hymn writers are obscure: some, to judge by the samples of their work he quotes, it is kinder to leave in obscurity, but there are not a few whose names are familiar to to-day's hymn singers: the translators A. J. Mason and R. F. Davis, for example (R. F. Davis did the translation of *Corde Natus* at EH 613 which is now so well known from its use at the King's College carol service). Another EH name is that of Canon T. A. Lacey, and not all of us remembered that G. W. Briggs was a Nottinghamshire man. It's something of a surprise to come across Lord Byron, whom one didn't think was a hymn writer but whose *Hebrew Melodies* just about qualify him for mention. Bishop Wordsworth, whose diocese of Lincoln included Nottinghamshire at that time, naturally gets a substantial section.

Personally I think the importance of these 'county histories' of hymnody is less in reminding us of the curious doggerel which the less felicitous hymnographers produced than in recalling the social associations of hymn-singing and hymn-composition. Nearly all the writers Mr Sale mentions are nineteenth-century or earlier—I believe that Briggs is the youngest—and so their work comes from the ducal and agricultural period of Nottinghamshire's history. They are mostly parsons, so we can gather from their writings what sort of theology was being taught to the congregations in those parts. This is an aspect of history which could receive more attention; perhaps Mr Sale could have brought out this point a little more. There is work to be done on the answer to the question 'what sort of culture did our hymns emerge from, and to what sort did they speak?' Because if that question is studied we shall be enabled to see the productions of our own minor hymn-explosion of the 1960s a little more objectively. A man writes a hymn because it will say to his people what he wants to say and what he believes his hymn book doesn't say; so a study of the man and of the people is certainly not without value. We may well ask nowadays what inspires our hymnographers to write as they do, and if we see ourselves as part of continuing history we—not least the hymn-writers themselves—shall see what our limitations are, and how temporary are those pressures which we see as clamorous demands.

Mr Sale has done a devoted and valuable piece of work, and researchers will be glad that it has been made available.

E.R.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 1971

The Annual Conference, 1971, will be held at the Church of England College of Education, Keswick Hall, Norwich, Monday 19th to Wednesday 21st July.

Programme

Monday, 19th	2.30 p.m.	Meeting of the Executive Committee
	4.00 p.m.	Assembly Tea
	5.15 p.m.	Evensong at Norwich Cathedral
	7.00 p.m.	Dinner
	8.15 p.m.	The <i>NEW CATHOLIC HYMNAL</i> will be introduced by Geoffrey Laycock Chairman: Dr Bernard Massey
Tuesday, 20th	9.15 a.m.	Meeting of the Executive Committee
	10.45 a.m.	Coffee
	11.15 a.m.	Lecture: "American Folk Hymnody" by Dr Harry Eskew, (Dean of Music, New Orleans Baptist Seminary, Louisiana) Chairman: Revd Dr Erik Routley
	1.00 p.m.	Lunch
	2.15 p.m.	Annual General Meeting
	4.00 p.m.	Tea
	5.15 p.m.	Lecture: "Baptist contributions to English Hymnody" by Revd Eric P. Sharpe, M.A. Chairman: Revd F. Pratt Green
	7.00 p.m.	Dinner
	8.15 p.m.	Act of Praise in St Mary's Baptist Church, Norwich Dr A. L. Peck will introduce the hymns Organist: Cyril Pearce Conductor of the Choir: Geoffrey Laycock
		Breakfast
Wednesday 21st		

The conference fee will be £7.00, including transport to Norwich Cathedral and St Mary's Baptist Church.

Correspondence regarding the Conference should be addressed to the Secretary. Please book early.

to be held at the ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the Baptist Church in the City of Norwich, at the Church of England College of Education, Norwich, Monday 10th to Wednesday 12th July.

Programme:

Monday, 10th 2.30 p.m. Meeting of the Executive Committee
4.00 p.m. Assembly Tea

Tuesday, 11th 8.15 p.m. Entertainment at Norwich Cathedral
7.00 p.m. Dinner

Wednesday, 12th 8.15 p.m. The NEW CATHOLIC HYMNAL
will be introduced by Geoffrey

Chairman: Dr Bernard Massey
Tuesday, 11th 10.15 a.m. Meeting of the Executive Committee

Chairman: Dr Bernard Massey
11.15 a.m. Lecture: American Folk Hymn

by Dr Harry Eskew, (Dean of Music, New Orleans Baptist Seminary, Louisiana)

Chairman: Revd Dr Erik Roudy
1.00 p.m. Lunch

2.15 p.m. Annual General Meeting
4.00 p.m. Tea

2.15 p.m. Lecture: "Baptist contributions to English Hymnody" by Revd Eric P. Sharpe, M.A.

Chairman: Revd F. Pratt Green
7.00 p.m. Dinner

8.15 p.m. Act of Praise in St Mary's Baptist Church, Norwich

Dr A. L. Peck will introduce the hymns

Organist: Cyril Pearce
Conductor of the Choir: Geoffrey Laycock

Breakfast

Wednesday 12th

The conference fee will be £7.00, including transport to Norwich Cathedral and St Mary's Baptist Church.

Correspondence regarding the Conference should be addressed to the Secretary. Please book early.