

Delius: The Limpsfield Papers

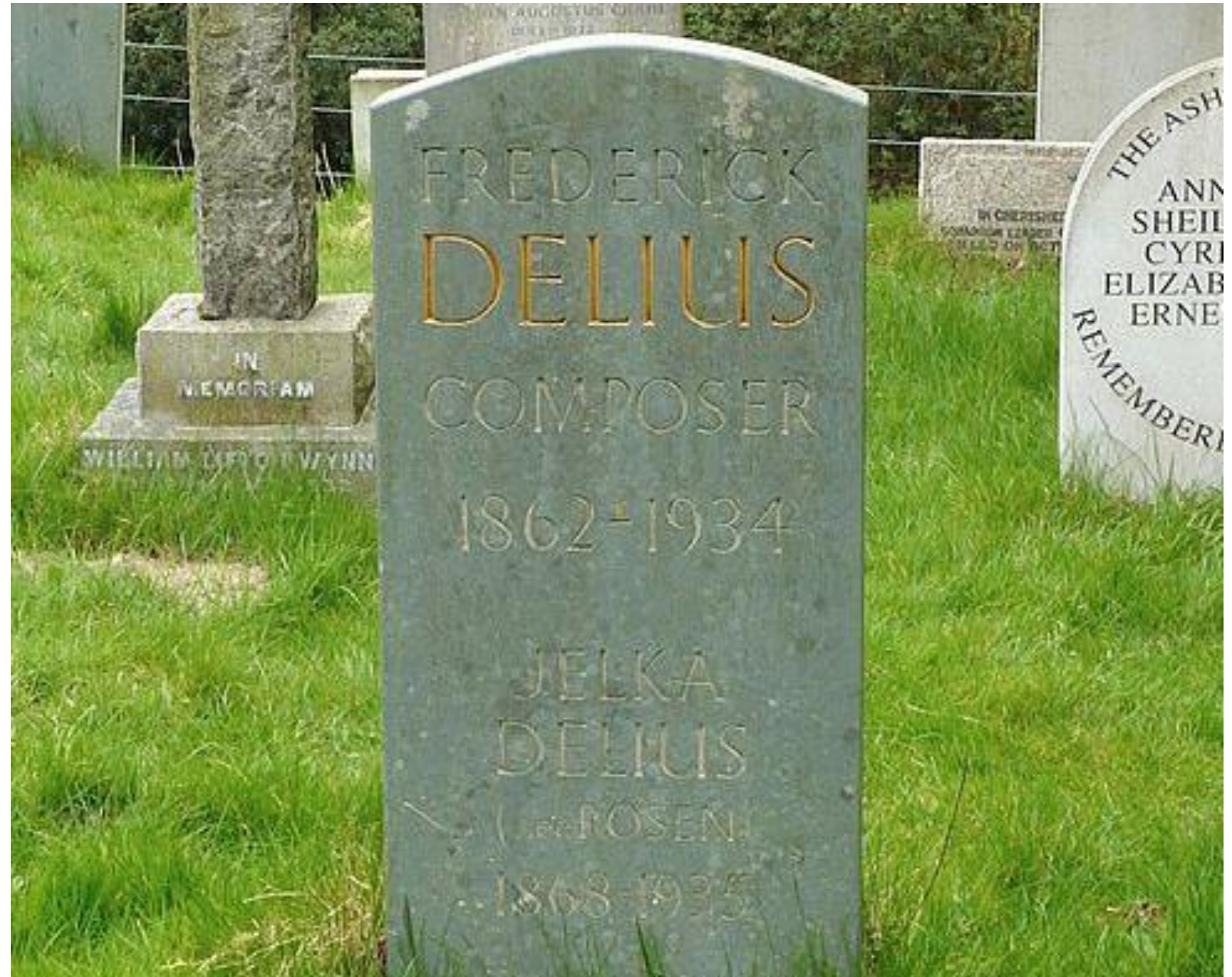
Graham Dixon

March 2025



Grave of Frederick and Jelka Delius

Limpsfield
Churchyard



Dramatis Personae

Frederick Delius – born in Bradford - studied in Germany - lived in Grez-sur-Loing south of Paris for his last decades.

His wife, **Jelka**, an artist of German ancestry;

Eric Fenby, a young man from Yorkshire - hearing that Delius was blind and paralysed, he offer to live in Grez-sur-Loing, to help notate the composer's final works.

Rev. Charles Steer – Rector of Limpsfield.

The Harrison Sisters – musicians, notably Beatrice and Margaret.

Sir Thomas Beecham – leading conductor, London Philharmonic.

Archie Brasier – the village undertaker.

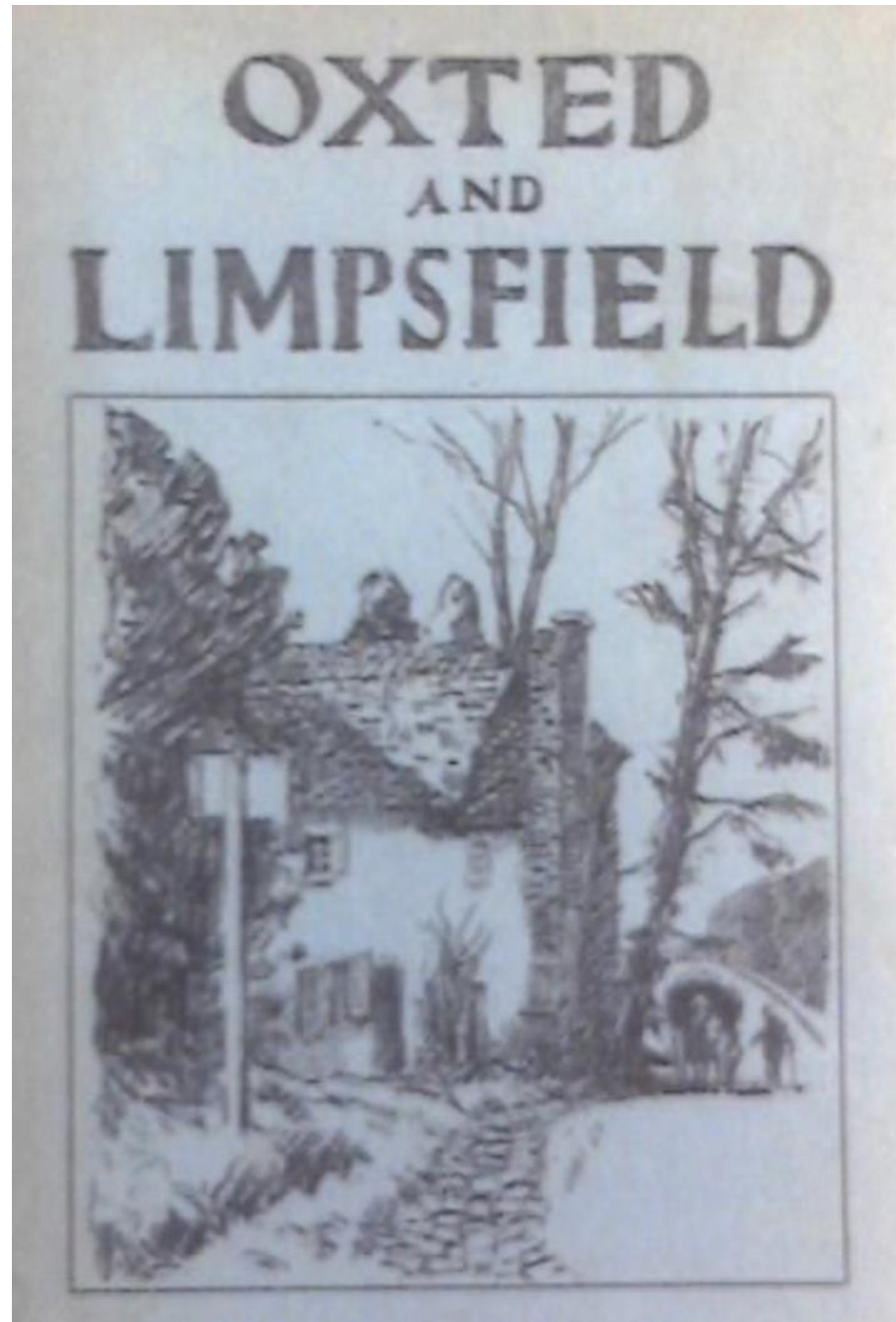
Delius House, Grez-sur-Loing



Cemetery, Grez-sur-Loing



Lewis G. Fry, *Oxted and Limpsfield and Neighbourhood* (1932)



ARCHITECTURAL.

ARTHUR KEEN.

LIMPSFIELD.

FEW places present the charm of the English village better or in more typical fashion than Limpsfield. At its north end a most dignified and picturesque church standing high above the road, approached by steps and by a long sloping path leading to a fine lych gate; a charming old Georgian rectory opposite, and an old Manor House separated from the churchyard by a wall such as is never built in these days. At the south end of the village a triangular green sloping up a steep hill, beset by fine trees, a picturesque inn at one corner, a fine old house, the Bower, growing out of the steep bank on one side, and a long low Georgian house nestling at the base of the hill on another side. Between the church and the green, the village street lined with old houses and cottages built of timber and plaster, of iron stone, sand stone, grey brick and red brick, set forward and back in endless variety and beauty and with hardly a modern building of any kind except a fake antique Post Office and workshop. A village set on strongly sloping ground with all the charm and interest that such a site implies: an architectural record of all times from the Norman Conquest onwards; the buildings mingled with the trees and walls of old gardens, backed up by the hills and with a great sand pit at one point giving warmth and richness to the colour of the whole.

Limpsfield PCC
[Minutes] 1928 -
Jan 18th 1935,
p.255.

Churchyard

~~The~~ A request from Messrs Harrison was discussed
"That Delius, the musician, now buried in France
be buried in Limpsfield Churchyard. Proposed
by Col. Colenso & seconded by Mr Laurence that
the request be ~~agreed~~ granted. - agreed.

Letter from Beatrice
Harrison to Rev.
Charles Steer

November 7th, 1934

Letter from Beatrice
Harrison to Rev.
Charles Steer

November 7th, 1934

I was 5.1534
 with William
 of the in
 of the in the
 the Limberlost
 Oxted
 Surrey
 November 7th
 Dear Mr. Steer.
 How good of you to send
 me the beautiful Post
 Communion Hymn. I
 do love the words, & they
 seem to comfort me.

Letter from Beatrice
Harrison to Rev.
Charles Steer

November 7th, 1934

...to make things
so easy, & smooth over
all the difficulties. I
do hope Sir Thomas Beecham
will supply all the details
you need.

With very kind regards

Yours sincerely
Beatrice Harrison

Daily Telegraph

Monday,
November 5th,
1934

WIDOW CHOOSES A SURREY GRAVE

The last resting-place of Delius, the great modern composer, who died in France last June, was chosen yesterday by his widow.

It is a spot in the heart of typically English countryside, where, in accordance with his last wishes, "the winds are warm and the sun is friendly"—in the graveyard of the fourteenth-century parish church of Limpsfield, Surrey.

Mme. Delius, the widow of the blind and paralysed genius, had already decided on the churchyard, and yesterday drove from London to choose the exact spot. The wretched weather, however, prevented her, in her frail state, from leaving her car, and she drove on to the home of her friends, Miss Beatrice Harrison, the cellist, and Miss Margaret Harrison at Oxted.

Mme. Delius explained her wishes to Miss Beatrice Harrison, who returned to the churchyard. There, in company with the Rector of Limpsfield, the Rev. Charles Steer, she carefully selected a sheltered site within the shade of a magnificent yew tree reputed to be hundreds of years old.

Letter from C.M.
Gomm

November 11th, 1934

Nov 11
11/11/34
SANDENHAM 2036.

ST MARGARETS,
54 ALLEYN ROAD,
DULWICH, S.E. 21.

To - Vicar of Limesfield

Rev^d Sir

Enclosed cuttings
deeply interest me as to
why Loeluis Remann can
be interred in one of our
beloved Churchyards.

I have on more than one
occasion had it thrust
home that such sacred
spots were for Parishioners

Final Response from Rev. Charles Steer

November 11th, 1934

Tel.: Oxted 512.

From
The Rev. C. Steer,
The Rectory,
Limpsfield,
Surrey.

December 7, 1934

Dear Mr Gomm,

Thank you very much indeed for your continued interest in the affairs of this Parish. I must apologise for not having written to thank you for the information you gave me on the 18th and 20th of November about Delius, which I consider most interesting.

You are no doubt rightly informed that the final decision as to burials lies with the Incumbent; but I should not have placed the request for this burial before my Church Council had I not been myself prepared to accede to it in case of their approval.

~~I see no reason to alter my decision. It has not been my custom~~
to enquire into the religious beliefs or non-beliefs of those who seek burial here, though I may mention that the description of Delius' attitude of mind in the news cuttings you were good enough to send does not at all tally with what I have been told by some who had the opportunity of knowing him intimately for many years. If, however, he was an unbeliever, I can only hope that his burial among our folk here may perhaps be of benefit to his poor soul, while it will not harm them.

Yours faithfully,



Frederick Delius

Baptism Record,
St Peter's Church,
Bradford
[now the cathedral]

January 29th, 1862

29 January 1862	18 July No. 606	Fritz Leber Theodore	William Elin Pauline	Delius
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Letter from Rev. Charles Steer to Jelka Delius

April 13th, 1935

Tel.: Oxted 512.

From
The Rev. C. Steer,
The Rectory,
Limpsfield,
Surrey.

April 13, 1935

Dear Mrs Delius,

Thank you so very much for your clear and detailed letter about the interment. Will you please excuse a typewritten reply ? You would never be able to read my handwriting.

I have not yet been able to see Miss Harrison; they were all out when I rang up this morning. I will, however, discuss the whole matter with her as soon as possible.

I do not think we can have the actual interment on a Sunday, as there are many things to be considered; a good deal of work in preparing and in filling in the grave; the impossibility of having the coffin in the Church on a Saturday night and Sunday morning, with all the Sunday Services going on, etc.

What I should suggest is that the actual interment should take place on the Saturday, either by using an earlier boat for the crossing, ~~or by coming by the boat you mention, but on the Friday.~~ The coffin could in the latter case remain in the Church that night, and the interment take place at a convenient time on the Saturday. On the Sunday, we could have a Memorial Service at the time you mention, 4 o'clock, with such arrangements as Sir Thomas Beecham would like to make, either inside the Church, or at the graveside, or both.

I should think it would be a good thing to inform the Home Office as soon as we have got the actual date and arrangements made; Mr Fenby could then come armed with any documents they might require.

We will, of course, arrange for the brick or tile lining of the grave, if the Undertaker will send measurements and let us know any other details which may be required.

I will shew Miss Harrison a copy of this letter, so that she may know exactly what I have said to you. Meanwhile, I remain

Yours very sincerely,



Letter from
Jelka Delius to
Rev. Charles
Steer

April 4th, 1935

GREZ-SUR-LOING (S & M)

10.4.1935

Dear Mr Steer,

Sir Thomas Beecham has
fixed my late husband's interment
at Limpsfield for May 26th that
is if that date suits you? As you
know he is always terribly busy but
the 26th of May was free. He says it
must take place on a Sunday so
as to make it possible for a number
of people to go to Limpsfield. Sir
Thomas told me to leave the arrangements

Letter from
Jelka Delius to
Rev. Charles
Steer

April 4th, 1935

Dear John.
I am writing to the Harrisons
too but I wanted first to let you
know all about our plans, after
your great kindness in making the
whole thing possible, which I so
^{deeply} ~~greatly~~ appreciate.

Yrs very sincerely
Jelka Delius

Letter from Eric Fenby to Rev. Charles Steer

May 6th, 1935

Greze-sur-Leing, (S et M)

France.

May 6th, 1935.

The Rev. C. Steer,
The Rectory,
Limpsfield,
Surrey.

*His copy
May 10
Home Office
I have informed
Canton*

Dear Mr. Steer,

I have fixed up all the arrangements with Mr. Brasier that concern him, and learn through him that you both think that the best way to deal with the coffin on its arrival on the Saturday night at Limpsfield would be for you to meet it at the lych-gate and conduct it straightway to the grave-side, have it lowered into the grave and covered temporarily with boards for the night, so that on the following day we should have part of the service in church and afterwards proceed to the grave-side for the final prayers. Mrs. Delius is in complete agreement with this suggestion. I hope that you have not had any difficulties with the Home Office and that all will go smoothly.

The coffin will cross by the 7.15 P.M. boat from Boulogne to Folkestone where Mr. Brasier will meet us at 8.45 P.M.

I am sending an outline of the arrangements to Sir Thomas Beecham so that all he has to do will be to provide what music he wishes to play.

May I thank you once again for all your great kindness and warm-heartedness in making this difficult undertaking possible. I appreciate it more than I can say.

Yours very sincerely,

Eric Fenby.

Order of Service

May 26th, 1935

LIMPSFIELD PARISH CHURCH

Burial of the late

F R E D E R I C K D E L I U S

4 p.m.

4 p.m. Burial Sentences
Ps. 130 De profundis (said)
Lesson. 2 Cor. IV.16 - V.10
Lord's Prayer
Collects

4.09 p.m. Orchestra to play selections from the
Composer's works.
(Time required for this to be obtained
from Sir T.Beecham)

4.x p.m. Leave Church by North door

4.x8 p.m. At Graveside
Sentences
Committal Prayer etc
Grace

4.x12p.m. Sir T.Beecham's Address

Note. No admittance to the Church till 3.30p.m.
after close of Children's Service

A portion of the Church will be reserved
for holders of tickets. Applications for
these to be made to Rev M.Williams, C/o The
Rectory, Limpsfield, Surrey

No alterations can now be made in these
arrangements.

May 21, 1935

Charles Steer
Rector

Bulletin de Renseignements

April 8th, 1935

Mairie,
Grez-sur-Loing

F. 187

PREFECTURE
DÉPARTEMENT 9 AVR 1935
BULLETIN DE RENSEIGNEMENTS

MAIRIE
GREZ SUR LOING
Le Maire soussigné a l'honneur de prier M. _____

de vouloir bien lui fournir les renseignements suivants :

N° _____

DEMANDE	RÉPONSE
<p><i>Vergent</i></p> <p>A _____, le - 8 AVR 1935 191</p> <p>Un agent diplomatique de l'ambassade britannique à Paris doit prochainement procéder, conjointement avec M^{me} Delius, à l'exhumation et au transport du corps du compositeur anglais Frédéric Delius. Je vous salue très reconnaissant de l'en vouloir me faire connaître la procédure à suivre pour ce transport de corps en Angleterre, pour</p>	<p>A Melun _____, le 16 AVR 1935</p> <p>1°)-demande sur timbre à 4.frs mentionnant le point frontière français, ou doit sortir le corps; cette demande devra être revêtue de votre avis en ce qui concerne l'exhumation et le transport.</p> <p>2°)- Joindre à cette demande le bulletin de décès.</p> <p>3°)- Le certificat médical.</p> <p>4°)- La somme de 6.frs en mandat poste pour coût du timbre de l'arrêté d'autorisation.</p> <p>Le pétitionnaire, en possession de l'arrêté d'autorisation timbré devra se rendre avec cette pièce au Ministère de l'Intérieur et à</p>

Mtes. Mores (10 7-13)
M. Imp. Allard

Letter from A.T. Wright, Surrey County Council

May 20th, 1935

Surrey County Council.

(PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENT).

A. T. WRIGHT,
Relieving Officer,
Vaccination Officer,
Collector and Registrar of
Births, Deaths and
Marriages.

Telephone: CATERHAM 128.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday, 9 to 10 a.m.; 3 to 5 p.m.
Tuesday, 5 to 7 p.m.
Wednesday, 3 to 5 p.m.
Thursday, 9 to 10 a.m.
Friday, 3 to 5 p.m.

118, CROYDON ROAD,
CATERHAM,
SURREY.

Ref.

Your Ref.

20th May 1935.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 18th inst, I beg to advise you that in the case of a body removed into England or Wales, from Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands or foreign country, dominion or colony etc, for disposal, a Certificate of No Liability to Register must be obtained from the Registrar of Deaths for the sub-district in which it is intended to dispose of the body.

The person applying for the Certificate is required to make a Declaration to the effect that the body has been removed into England for disposal, also to produce documentary evidence to this effect.

As regards the documentary evidence to be produced, H.M. Customs & Excise require that packages containing corpses shall on importation into the United Kingdom, be accompanied by the certificate of the civil registrar of the place where the death occurred, this certificate is required to be verified by the British Consul, this certificate may be produced to the registrar when the certificate for Disposal is applied for.

Entrance
Ticket

May 26th, 1935

LIMPSFIELD PARISH CHURCH

Sunday, May 26th, 1935

4 p.m.

Burial of the late

F R E D E R I C K D E L I U S

Admit Bearer to reserved portion
of the Church after 3.30 p.m.

Charles Steer, Rector

Surrey Mirror
and County
Post

May 31st, 1935

FREDERICK DELIUS AT REST.

MIDNIGHT BURIAL AT LIMPSFIELD.

SELECTIONS FROM HIS WORKS PLAYED
AT FUNERAL SERVICE.

A MOVING PERSONAL TRIBUTE BY
SIR THOMAS BEECHAM.

Frederick Delius, the great British composer, who died at Grez-sur-Loing, near Fontainebleau, in June last year, was laid to rest in the village churchyard at Limpsfield at midnight on Saturday. It was his wish that he should be buried in a country churchyard in the south of England and the Rector of Limpsfield (the Rev. Charles Steer) and the Parochial

Arnold and Ruskin raged and preached against the brutality, inhumanity and insensibility of that age. . . . Frederick Delius was born in a part of the world which was particularly odious to the kind of critical intelligence I have mentioned. . . . He grew up a rebel and dissident; he strove to escape and he did escape. He went to other countries and finally settled

Daily Telegraph

May 27th,
1935



Frederick Delius,
Serenade from
Hassan

Arranged for Organ
by Eric Fenby

FREDERICK DELIUS

SERENADE *Fred Delius*

FROM THE DRAMA
HASSAN

ORGAN
arranged by
ERIC FENBY

40c

By. Organ No. 4

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Evening News

May 30th,
1935

MRS. DELIUS BURIED BESIDE HER HUSBAND



Mrs. Delius, wife of the blind composer, was laid to rest beside her husband at Limpsfield Churchyard, Surrey, to-day.

Eric Fenby to
Rev. Charles
Steer

August 1st,
1935

*Mr. Johnson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Johnson*

PROPRIETOR
ALEX. MILLER

SCOTT'S HOTEL,

LANGHAM STREET,

LONDON, W.1

Aug. 1st 1935.

Dear Mr. Steer,

Mr. Johnson has just passed on your letter of July 31st. to me, and I am shocked to read its contents. In the first place the Harrisons offered to care for the grave and assured me that they would delight in it. That was one of the reasons why they first suggested this plan. I am sure that

Percival Callow
to Rev. Charles
Steer

May 18th, 1935

Buckingham House
Vinsbury Park N4
May 18.3 1935

Dr. Sir Enclosed is
a tribute to Delius, and I
shall be glad if you can
send me in the enclosed
stamped envelope the
time of interment. If you
care to make a postcard
of my poem and sell to

DELIUS:
Limpsfield
Churchyard May
24th [sic] 1935

by Percival Callow

DELIUS

Limpsfield Churchyard May 24th 1935

If from some happier clime he sees
This little band of devotees
His latest wish fulfill;
By them his ashes laid to rest
In Churchyard old — 'twas his request —
Upon a sunny hill.
Then deep and quiet his joy today,
While they, their avocations stay,
To do his gentle will.

Oh let us glory in the deed
Who now a mighty column lead
Along this reverent earth;
A Concourse, measureless, sublime
Whose end shall be the end of time,
And they proclaim the worth
Of Delius, great and glorious.

Light on Spiritualism and Psychical Research

June 6th, 1935

PSYCHIC FORECASTS FULFILLED

PASSING OF DELIUS AND HIS WIFE

By THE REV. CHARLES L. TWEEDALE
(Vicar of Weston)

READERS will remember that in June, 1934, I published in the columns of *LIGHT*, an account of how, on 31st January—four months before Delius died—during the night my wife was entranced and sang in my presence :

“ When the winds sing low, low, low,
When soft breezes blow, blow, blow,
Then I come for Delius go.”

I also told how my youngest daughter saw a red light in her room when she heard these words, and my daughter Marjorie heard the piano, which is in her bedroom, play without any one touching it : how we were told by the Spirit Communicator C——, that this portended Delius' passing ; how I placed this marvellous experience on record with the Editor of the *Wharfedale Observer*, and with Mrs. Black, Delius's sister, early in February, and how Delius died in June, 1934, when the winds sing low, and soft breezes blow.

I now give some account of how these wonderful forecasts anent the Delius family were further continued and fulfilled.

On 25th June, 1934, a little more than a fortnight after his death, about 12 noon, an apparition which we have often seen appeared and vanished through the door of my study, and my wife and I sat, and C——, one of our Spirit communicators, came and said : “ I have a message. I want you to ask the sister of Delius to look up and arrange all the facts about him—just as men did with me. This must be done within 24 months.”

March,” playing very loud and clear. She at once ran up to the room and found no one in it. She picked up the box and found that it was *not* wound up, and that the stop-catch was in operation to *prevent* the box playing, even if it had been wound up.

My daughter Dorothy, from the upper storey, had also heard the box playing “ The Bernese March ” at the same time, and sounding from the same room, and both girls remarked on how loud and clear it sounded. No one had been in the room where the box was for a considerable time previous. Three hours later, at 6 p.m., we heard the sad news over the wireless that Mrs. Delius had contracted pneumonia on her cross-Channel passage, and had been rushed to hospital in London, had listened to a record of the service on her sick-bed, and had passed away some time before the music was heard here, as foretold on March 7th.

The sounding of music in connection with both passings is remarkable. This is one of the most extraordinary and dramatic premonitions on record, proving the reality of the Spirit world and its incursion and intervention in the affairs of men. This account is true in every detail and particular, as can be documentarily and personally proved. (*All rights reserved*).

CLERGY AND SPIRITUALISTS

CO-OPERATION between a group of Church of England Clergymen and a group of Spiritualists is foreshadowed by decisions reached at a meeting held in London on Friday evening last (May 31st).

The meeting consisted of representatives of the recently-formed “ Order of the Preparation for the

Original Grave of Frederick and Jelka Delius

Limpsfield
Churchyard



Delius: The Limpsfield Papers

Graham Dixon

March 2025

